[1–2022]

# dějiny–teorie–kritika

history – theory – criticism

# Obsah | Contents

**3. Recenze a reflexe | Reviews and Reflections**

# "YOU HAVE TO DO IT WITH LOVE… ORAL HISTORY WAS SOMETHING I WAS NEVER PAID FOR..."

**said Alessandro Portelli (*1942), an eminent oral historian and scholar who gave us an interview in late May on the premises of Circolo Gianni Bosio archives in Rome. This important institution has been involved in the field of oral history and ethnomusicology in Italy for many decades. The status of oral history in Italy considerably differs compared to other European countries; on the one hand, it still must fight its way through academic institutions, on the other hand, however, it represents a remarkably strong and vibrant community. In addition to being largely responsible for initiating the cultural turn in the discipline during the 1980s, this community engages in large-scale research projects and has long been providing the global oral history field with some of the most significant texts. Petr Wohlmuth spoke with Alessandro Portelli in Rome in May 2022.**

**PW: Sandro, we have always understood your work as a work of someone who has contributed enormously to establishing oral history as a discipline and a field of study. I have read several times that according to you, oral history essentially goes against the grain of established narratives and ideologies. What are the current challenges we are facing?**

**SP:** Well, number one, I would say, we still have to deal with the dominant narrative that history comes from above, that there is no history from below, that history belongs to the institutions, and even though a lot of points we have been making have become accepted, this has taken place more in activist, or scholarly circles, rather than in common sense and the media. The media still seem to privilege the official narratives. The other thing is, of course, the question of the spoken word, the fact that orality has its own laws, and it must be understood as such. And the third problem, I think, is the question of thinking of memory as a process, rather than a deposit. I think, these are some of the points we have been making over and over again, but they still need to be made.

**PW: As I understand, the situation here in Italy has been considerably more difficult than in most European countries…**

**SP:** Well, we do have an oral history association, in fact, I am just about to meet with the new president of the Italian oral history association [Antonio Canovi, current president of AISO – Associazione Italiana di Storia Orale].[1] You might want to meet him. However, oral history has no recognized place in the university, in the academia. The entire oral history association is formed by junior academics or people outside academia, which, in a way, is positive, because it means that it retains its alternative character. I remember the question from our Prague meeting – has oral history lost its radical potential? Well, the fact that it is still marginalized means that it needs to maintain some of its radical potentials.

**PW: So, this works in Italy, right?**

**SP:** Well, more or less, yes. We have a new journal focused on oral history, popular culture, and mass culture, and Circolo Gianni Bosio is a part of the production [*Il de Martino*, the journal published jointly by Instituto Ernesto de Martino, AISO, Circolo Gianni Bosio and others].[2]

**PW: Nevertheless, you still experience a sort of glass ceiling situation here. Do you think it can be broken?**

**SP:** Honestly, I do not know. I have not seen anybody in Italy making a career out of oral history. I mean, I made a career in a different discipline, Luisa Passerini had to give up oral history in order to move ahead and most of the others are still in the junior ranks within academia or outside. So, what has changed is that the more established historians have to some extent recognized that oral history is a legitimate practice. They have basically recognized that memory is a political problem of the present, not just a matter of remembering the past.

1 Italian Oral History Association (AISO), http://aisoitalia.org (accessed on 25 September 2022).
2 *Il de Martino*, https://www.iedm.it/produzioni/editoria/il-de-martino/ (accessed on 25 September 2022).

**PW: I remember reading a preface to your The Battle of Valle Giulia,[3] where you made this point, that you and Luisa Passserini had been the only ones who had a tenure at university, on oral history…**

**SP:** It is still the same. Interestingly, Cesare Bermani, who was engaged in oral history before us, has been given an honorary degree by the University of Salerno – as an anthropologist, not as a historian! But, you know, it is a recognition of somebody who has spent all his life outside academia and now academia has come to recognize him. So, we have made some progress. I think my Fosse Ardeatine book[4] was the turning point which gained recognition from the established history field; not all traditional historians include oral history in their work but at least, we are not outside the gates anymore, we have gained some respect. In a way, the fact that we have become more respected has sometimes made… well, the younger academics today have much harder times than I did. And really, in order to make a living, they have to comply with academic standards more than I have ever had to. So, sometimes we do pay a price for this new respectability. It is a give and take.

**PW: Why do you think that the establishment within the traditional historians' community waited for your Fosse Adreatine book to finally show more respect to you and oral history?**

**SP:** Basically, historians were not fully aware that the real historical problem was not in "what happened" (which was very clear in the archival record) but "how it was remembered" – not the fact but the memory which was distorted and manipulated. The book came out at a time when the political and the academic world were realizing that memory is a cultural and political force of the present, not a mere reflection of the past.

**PW: You spoke about Cesare Bermani and his honorary degree in anthropology… well, in several countries oral historians have found their closest friends**

3 ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, RENATO OLIVIERI, *Conrad: l'imperialismo imperfetto*, Torino 1973. The book was published by Einaudi.

4 The first edition came out in 1999, see ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, *L'ordine è già stato eseguito. Roma, le Fosse Ardeatine, la memoria è un libro*, Rome 1999. The English translation was published in 2003 as ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, *The Order Has Been Carried Out. History, Memory and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome*, New York 2003.

**among historical anthropologists or microhistorians. Is this the case also in Italy?**

**SP:** My first book was published in the microhistory series by Carlo Ginzburg.[5] And I am still flattered that Carlo Ginzburg takes me seriously, but Carlo Ginzburg is a special one. Yes, we do have a closer connection with some of the anthropologists. Pietro Clemente and a few others … after all, Gianni Bosio, named his organization after Ernesto di Martino who was an anthropologist. And the whole question of the theory behind our work lies in breaking down the disconnection between anthropology and historiography So, yes, we keep a dialogue with the anthropological field.

**PW: What are your thoughts on the future of oral history in more general terms?**

**SP:** Well, I think that what I can see here is an increasing connection between young historians, young anthropologists, and young activists, and we are progressively moving towards new areas of investigation. A theme that has gained much interest among young anthropologists that we work with, including my son who is an anthropologist, is urban gentrification and urban displacement. Another field which has been increasingly explored is the relationship between folklore and popular culture, the studies of mass culture. Younger generations are keenly aware of the fact that they have their own history. From my own experience: oral history started out by trying to interview old people… and we still do, but we quickly realized that young people have life stories, too. And so, some of the most interesting recent work in the oral history field has been on the events taking place in Genoa in 2001, there have been at least two excellent oral history books, very different from each other, for both of which I wrote the introduction. Another thing which I have not followed much but I know that you have done so in Prague, is the history of the present pandemic. We have not done much research in the field although we do have a project here in Circolo Bosio which we are about to start. So, in a way, while we have not lost sight of the long-term memory and we are still, for instance, working with partisans and Shoa survivors, we feel that history is so fast that events which took place ten or twenty years ago are already a matter of history. So, that is the direction our work has taken.

5 ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, *The Battle of Valle Giulia. Oral History and the Art of Dialogue,* Madison 1997.

**PW: Regarding the 2001 Genoa events you mean, I guess, I fatti di Genova by Gabriele Proglio?**[6]

**SP:** Yes, Proglio's was one of the books I had in mind. The other one was a collective production by an alternative collective, the Nuovo Cinema Palazzo, which organized what they call "Circles on memory", where people sat around exchanging memories and sharing stories.

**PW: You also mentioned Covid research, the oral history of Covid pandemic. It is something that caused not exactly a controversy but a discussion of sorts. We ask ourselves – is not it too soon, is it not perhaps a topic for sociologists, or should we do our research in such an early phase of reflection?**

**SP:** In a way, I think there are at least two of three different layers here. One is, of course, that interviewing people about the present is more a task for sociologists rather than historians. We need time, time for events to become memory and history. This is one thing. Another thing is that memory is so fast that we had a first phase of the pandemic, during which people were singing from their terraces, showing solidarity - we will come out of this together… etc. But it has been completely forgotten because of what came after. Later, as you know, came the no vaxx controversy, and this is all that people talk about. That first particular phase has been wiped out of memory within a space of a year. And the third thing I have in mind is that there was an ad on a German television showing this elderly couple being interviewed about Covid in 2050, about the pandemic… so I think we will have to think of what happens to the memory of the pandemic as it becomes a long-term memory. When I speak in schools, I always make the point that while we know the memory of the Shoa or the Resistance because those who lived in those days carefully observed it and still remember it, how shall we know whether the memory of 2014 or 2020 lives on unless young people pay very much attention to the world in which they live in the present? I used to think that the difference was that the young generation, fortunately, had no such trauma as the war or other disasters – but now they do, they have the pandemic! So, it will be very interesting to listen in 2030 or 2035 to what they remember of the pandemic of the present.

6 GABRIELE PROGLIO, *I fatti di Genova. Una storia orale del G8*, Rome 2021.

**PW: So, the threshold of contemporary history depends on the inner workings of memory…**

**SP:** I would use the concept of collective memory within quotes; I think that memory is located in people's minds, it is deeply personal, and individual. I prefer to talk about shared memory, which means that sometimes you remember the same things because we had the same experience or because we shared our memory through exchange and narratives. As for what Pierre Nora and others call collective memory; I think that "public use of history" is more appropriate. It is public history rather than shared memory. Of course, public history has a lot to do with the ways we construct our memories.

**PW: In oral history, we often deal with people who somewhat unexpectedly "invade" our lives and history because of some disastrous event, such as war, migration etc. Who could be, in your opinion, the new marginalized or colonized subject who will in this manner "invade" and become the next major topic of oral history research?**

**SP:** You know, today we have a very illustrative example of marginalization. Refugees from Ukraine are welcome but refugees from Africa are not. This is an obvious example of racist marginalization. And I think that the question of multiculturalism or immigration is still very much a political question. In fact, one of the projects we have been working on deals with the music of immigrants as the new folk music of Italy. They are going to stay here. We have just recorded a new CD, called *Ius soli*[7] – the citizenship by the place of birth, which the Italian state is still unwilling to recognize, and we have a new CD coming out in a couple of weeks about the Gnawa music of Moroccan immigrants. Gnawa is the ritual music of Morocco, and we had this project on Moroccan ritual music in Italy, and this is what we are publishing in a couple of weeks. Because you know, we define folk music not so much in terms of the place of its origins but the historical expression of the presence of non-hegemonic classes. The non-hegemonic classes in this country today are largely immigrants, and their expression is Gnawa, *pasillo*, or whatever.

7 ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, LUCIANA MANCA et al, *Ius Soli – Canti e voci dell'Italia futura*, Udine 2021.

**PW: I noticed the other book by Gabriele Proglio, The Horn of Africa Diasporas in Italy. An Oral History,[8] for which Luisa Passerini wrote an introduction, published in 2020. He discusses many issues, probably also reflected in the research you did for Ius soli…**

**SP:** As soon as we began to realize that we had an immigrant issue present in Italy, the theme of immigration and the life stories of migrants became a major interest in the social sciences – sociology, anthropology, etc. What Proglio attempts in his work is to inject time in the picture, thus making it relevant to history as well. Another interesting thing is the use of the concept of "diaspora". I do think, however, that "diaspora" only conveys one side of the picture because it calls attention to the places of origins – but no matter where they come from, migrants have all come to the same place, and had to deal with the same state, the same bureaucracy, the same prejudice - again, the current situation of Ukrainian refugees is different – at least for the time being. We need a sister concept to "diaspora" – one identity spreading over many places - something like "synspora" (a made-up word for a new situation), many identities coming together in one place, retaining their distinct heritage but also changing it to make a life in the new environment,

**PW: The "synspora" of "neglected Italians" who live in Italy but have been excluded from political rights, representation etc. Projects like Ius soli clearly aim at helping their own empowerment and emancipation…**

**SP:** I do not think you can change the world with a CD, but I believe ours is a small contribution to creating a climate of ideas and an awareness more favourable to admitting that hundreds of thousands of young people born and raised in this country are not recognized as citizens. Italy still clings to its past as a country of emigrants only (we still have significant emigration out of Italy, though not many seem to notice), a country that wished somehow to retain its hold on its native citizens, and did so by appealing to "blood" and descent (people whose grandparents emigrated a hundred years ago may still have the right to vote in Italian elections while people who were born and raised here are not granted the same right). So, making a CD in which we collect "migrant" music and songs by children, for children, about children, is a contribution to changing the image that Italy creates of itself today.

8 GABRIELE PROGLIO, *The Horn of Africa Diasporas in Italy. An Oral History*, London 2020.

**PW: This is where oral history and social activism really meet. There are ongoing discussions about the so-called classic distinction by Lynn Abrams between "academic" oral history, based on the post-positivist interpretative paradigm, embodied mostly in published monographs, on the other hand, the activist "community" oral history, concerned more with "direct" transmission of the voices of their narrators, embodied mostly in large collections of published interviews.[9] Is there a distinction at all, is this "divide" relevant for you in any way?**

**SP:** Not much, because I think that I have been an academic all my life. I have no objection to academia, and I think that there are procedures and paradigms that academia elaborates on, and they are necessary. I think community history needs to learn academic history, and how to do history seriously. On the other hand, I do not think you can do oral history unless you have a personal commitment. So, the "academic" in the derogatory sense - "abstract", "self-referential" – is out of the question: you cannot do oral history unless you are personally involved unless you have a personal desire to learn, listen and do something about it. I think it is more of a dialogue than a contradiction.

**PW: I was just wondering if a discussion of this sort takes place in Italy as well.**

**SP:** I think that the form which prevails here is more activist. We are not as committed to giving back to the community, which the community already knows because they're the ones who told us. But what we ought to do is bring it out of the community, make sure that narratives, such as that of Terni steelworkers are heard outside of Terni. They were not in a position to have access to public discourse but we, as cultural workers, are. So, our contribution really lies in the fact that we help subjects who have been kept on the margins of public discourse get access to it.

**PW: So, we are on a mission, we have personal commitment, and this may be a provocative question, but can we change the world, as oral historians, not with just one CD but with our work as a whole?**

**SP:** Well, we can only try and see what happens. It is now more complicated because when we started, we had a sounding board. There were movements, there were political parties, there were unions. Today sometimes, we have a sense of

9 LYNN ABRAMS, *Oral History Theory* (2nd Ed.), London and New York, 2016.

isolation but to quote William Faulkner: "They may have killed us, but they have not beaten us, yet."

**PW: There are two oral history monographs I have in mind which have been considered as somehow changing the "big history". The first volume is your book on the massacre in Fosse Ardeatine – The Order Has Been Carried Out, and the second one is the book by Alistair Thomson on memories of Australian WWI veterans – The ANZAC Memories.[10] Can these or other books be understood as examples, where oral history has really made a breakthrough?**

**SP:** For one thing, the book by Alistair Thomson is a great book. A book that goes against the grain of a national narrative because it really deconstructs the basis of nationalism in Australia and New Zealand, and also because its stories are unforgettable. I would say that this is an exemplary book.

**PW: Would you add perhaps other titles?**

**SP:** On a completely different theme: an oral history of young generation by Luisa Passerini.[11] And after all, we all descended from Paul Thompson.

**PW: I think that especially the part of the book by Alistair Thomson which brings the story of one of the prototype soldiers, Fred Farral, can be seen as one of the mightiest takes of oral history against any established official narrative…**

**SP:** What good oral history does is deconstruct gender stereotypes, and Alistair Thomson did it very well.

**PW: You said once that basic military topics are not interesting for you at all but strangely enough, they're coming back to you even if rather indirectly. The whole Second part of your book The Battle of Valle Giulia is called "Part II. Wars" – you wrote about the Battle of Poggio Bustone or the massacre at Civitella Val Di Chiana.[12]**

10 ALISTAIR THOMSON, *The ANZAC Memories. Living with the Legend* (New Edition), Clayton, 2013.

11 LUISA PASSERINI, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy 1968*, Middletown (Connecticut) 1996.

12 ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, *The Battle of Valle Giulia. Oral History and the Art of Dialogue,* Madison 1997.

**SP:** I am very much interested in history but not in the military tactics, armaments, technology and organization of killing, or general strategies. What interests me is the way in which lives were affected and social relations changed – including those of the combatants themselves. An old lady in Terni once told me: "World War I, they fought it over there; World War II, we were all involved". Since the Spanish Civil War (or since the British bombings in Iraq in 1921), wars have been killing more civilians than soldiers – and as long as we claim that killing civilians is a war crime, war becomes a crime in itself. War is a global event par excellence, covering "high history" (politics, strategy), community ("our town was destroyed"), individuals ("my brother died in the war"; "my house was bombed"; I was raped" …)

**PW: Many people within the oral history community have been hotly debating the so-called digitalization of oral history – perhaps even as a new paradigm. What do you think about it, does digitalization bring a new paradigm for you?**

**SP:** You know, digitalizing as a way of archiving, we definitely try to digitalize all those tapes. Other than that, I am too old to learn new tricks and still believe in physical support, on a tape, on a CD. One interesting thing I don't know much about and what my friends in the US talk about is the digital oral history field. It is interesting but I do not know much about it and don't really know how to do it.

**PW: Yes, some talk about a possibility of creating a fully searchable and browsable collection, where we could work with a record as easily as with a text which can be safely tagged and organized. But it brings along another problem: creating of such collections may put aside what we have to do, and that is to interpret the narratives.**

**SP:** We are not sharing anything online. We may be too conservative from this point of view, but we feel that the words have been shared with us out of trust, they do not belong to us. And therefore, if you share them online when anyone can access and manipulate them… well, you never know how they are going to be used. But I think we should at least try to release a couple of minutes online so that people may get a sense of the voices. Still, we feel that anybody who wants to have access to our collections must have a good reason and we need to know why what they are using it for. I always forget to get a written permission release form because, basically, a release form means that I am protected, that I am free to do whatever I want with the document; but it does not protect the narrator,

it protects me. If I want to protect the interviewee, I have to make sure that the words that they entrust with me are not misused, so putting the collection online is tricky.

**PW: It seems that this attitude illustrates a certain difference between the oral history community in Europe and the US because it is quite common in the US oral history milieu to share huge collections of interviews online. In addition, we were affected by the new GDPR law. What is the situation like in Italy?**

**SP:** I have never seen any important oral history work which makes significant use of interviews online because the heart of such work is the encounter. In my Harlan Country book, I have quoted a few interviews that I had found online but these may have been four or five interviews out of two hundred.

**PW: How are we supposed to understand or decrypt the intersubjectivity, when using an interview recorded by someone else…**

**SP:** Recently, there has been an event in the neighbourhood of Rome celebrating events connected with the Resistance and I previously interviewed people who have been active and living in that neighbourhood and I passed them on. One thing which we are trying to develop is podcasts because it is a way of returning to the voice; we are beginning to work in that direction, podcasts.

**PW: What about the narrators who insist on anonymization. Is it a typical current feature in Italy? What is your experience?**

**SP:** I do not really encounter this very often. After all, when someone gives you an interview, it is because they want to be remembered (there have been a couple of cases, where I changed the name to protect the narrators, and they were upset: "I told you these things because I want my name to be in the story!) … On the other hand, some people may tell you things that they have done but they don't want to be associated with any more, so they do not want their names to be used. Or there may be other reasons for privacy, such as family and so on. After all, the words they gave us remain their property and they have a right to choose whether they want their names to be published or not. So, when they ask that their name not be included, I always make up a first and last name and inform the readers that I did this.

**PW: Some people say that oral history will be more important in the future because of the coming of "digital darkness" when traditional written sources will not be readily available to historians. What do you think about it?**

**SP:** I have been facing digital darkness myself. My book on Harlan Country has been translated into Spanish and half of the sources I quoted off the web are no longer available. So, if you quote a website, it may have disappeared in ten years, or changed its name, or whatever. So, the problem is not just that people are no longer using paper, but that even digital memory can be lost. I do not know whether oral narrative may replace documents, I am afraid that we may lose all of it – both documentary and personal memory because orality and all other dimensions of language are in a dialogue, they support one another, so the loss of one endangers all the rest as well.

**PW: In interviews, most people ask you questions regarding the theory and practice of oral history, but forgive me, very few people ask you questions of more personal nature. You have done an awful lot of work in the field of ethnomusicology, and it would be interesting to know what music is your favourite and why?**

**SP:** You know, I grew up with the narrative that I was tone-deaf, and I still believe that I am – and I am still training myself. This gives me a privileged position because I listen to music uncritically and therefore I … well, more or less, I like everything. What is my favourite music? I do not know, I grew up on rock'n'roll and then I discovered American folk music, Woody Guthrie and then Bob Dylan and then other folk songs, folk music, so… I am listening to Loretta Lynn in the car, and I am sort of eclectic but basically, I guess I have been shaped by listening to Woody Guthrie, that was it.

**PW: Do you have any hobbies, something unrelated to oral history and the academic community?**

**SP:** Well, I would like to go back to Terni and write another book about it. Because you see, oral history is not about the past, it is about the relationship of the present with the past. Now, I have written three books on Terni, in 1985, 2007 and 2014 – and the book from 2014 ended with Terni still identified as a working class, left-wing town. By 2016 Terni had become a radically right-wing town and basically de-industrialized. So, unless I write another book, all the stories I wrote will turn into a lie because they describe a town that no longer exists.

I had begun the project and then I was stopped by the pandemic, but yes, it is the one thing I would like to do. I guess Terni is my labour of love. You have to do it with love. Remember the *Preface* to my Harlan Country book is entitled "A love story". You see the point is, oral history was not my job. Oral history was something I was never paid for. Therefore, oral history has been my hobby, my job was American literature. And the same goes for music, it is not something I have been paid for. I just do it because I love it.

**PW: I understand that you have managed to capture the sense of deep affection of Terni working class for their history and heritage. Is this strong feeling of a loss – loss of heritage, imagination, loss of the source of powerful memories, feeling of belonging – is this loss perhaps one of the factors which pushed Terni towards the radically right-wing town?**

**SP:** The turn to the right came to Terni after ten years of dramatic working-class struggles – which, by and large, ended in defeat. So, it has to do with the sense of powerlessness, that all your struggles have been in vain, and with a sense (justified to quite an extent) that they have been abandoned by the official political left). And it is also connected with the fact that the dominant narrative no longer believes that industrial workers are the ones who keep the world running – now it's the service economy, financial sector… So, the pride and identity of the industrial working class are eroded and questioned. And then, of course, there is the general picture – the whole country has shifted to the right, and Terni is no longer an exception. One thing I'd say is that at this point Terni is a lot less interesting than it used to be, just another mid-size provincial town.

**PW: Could you name a couple of inspiring people or your favourite places?**

**SP:** Well, Giovanna Marini who is Italy's greatest musician, and Gianni Bosio. I think that anybody who has anything to do with memory should read *Beloved* by Tony Morrison. And, yes, there is also Leonard Cohen when it comes to memory, definitely. Regarding my favourite places, Terni, of course, then Aberdeen, I have always been a Scottish nationalist [smiles], New York, Harlan, La Plata, and I have just come back from Ecuador, and I was thinking if I should add Quito to my list of places of my heart. However, the place, where I literally walked the longest, was Prague on my last day. I do not know what I liked about Prague because you know, what you like about a place… I mean if you are from Rome, you do not like a place because of its monuments. You like a sort of texture. And I was fascinated on that day by the texture of the town… by all means,

part of that mystique of Prague was co-created by [Angelo Maria] Ripellino, but we can't help being there, reading Prague through Ripellino.

**PW: You are and have been also a man of politics, an expert. Oral historians, in particular, have been commenting on the fact that we are facing an enormous number of challenges here and now. What is your general feeling about the current political situation? Where are we heading and what is on the horizon, in your opinion?**

**SP:** I honestly do not know. One of my inspirations is Aldo Natoli who was one of the noblest figures in the Italian communist movement and he left the communist party in part following the invasion of Prague. And I remember that when interviewing him, I asked him: "What are you now?" And he said: "I am a Communist without a party." It is like being a Christian without the church, holding on to certain beliefs and values even if you know very well that this is not how they work in the real world, but still, you know, the idea of equality as a basis for freedom. I have no idea where we are going, in fact I have been invited to a conference by the Institute of Ukrainian Studies of the University of Toronto in Cracow and the reason I am going is that I want to know what they are talking about. So, I am really, you know, without a party and without a church, except for this little space [Circolo Gianni Bosio].

**PW: So, you are one of the 20th century's revolutionary orphans…**

**SP:** Yes, right.

**PW: You have mentioned La Plata… In your texts, you have said several times that in terms of oral history, there is a gap which should be bridged, based on the fact that here in Europe oral historians, usually have only superficial knowledge of what is going on in Hispanic oral history community.**

**SP:** Well, from that point of view, even more than Argentina… there are places like Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico… Brazil. Brazilian oral historians know everything that has been written in Europe, more than we do. We may know all English publications… I do not read German… but they know everything, plus, they have contact with living oral cultures! Right there! So, it is so rich, it is incredible. I have just come back from Ecuador and the same thing happened, you know, the presence of oral cultures is so powerful. So, this is very interesting! Argentina, La Plata, partly, because it is a magical place, it was designed by Free-

masons and you know, it is the most geometrical town in the world, and I get lost in it [smiles]. So, it is a magical place.

**PW: Sandro, thank you very much for the interview and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours!**