INTRODUCTION

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In this work, we focus our attention on the role of sound in the formation of local identities in the southern Italian region of Basilicata. Through a combination of text, photographs and sound recordings, we will concentrate on soundful cultural performances, including religious festivals and collective events meant to promote cultural heritage, as well as more informal musical performances. Throughout the book we will listen to tree rituals, carnivals, pilgrimages and archival sound recordings, to understand how in the acoustic dimension people mark space, organise action, take control of festivals or reaffirm local identities. Our approach, which we term ‘sonic ethnography’ and describe in chapter 1, is based on thirty years of fieldwork by a researcher native to the region (Scaldaferri), and on research combined with a work of photographic interpretation which has developed over two decades (by Ferrarini). It reveals how during such sound events tradition is made and disrupted, power struggles take place, and communities are momentarily brought together in shared temporality and space.

Our more general objective is to demonstrate how such an attention to sound and listening can reveal mechanisms and patterns that have been missed by earlier approaches. Going beyond a traditional attention to music as the main form of culturally organised sound, our sonic ethnography reveals the emergence of temporary communities around practices of listening and sound-making, whose workings are often deeply affective and embodied. Identities, ideologies and power do not simply resonate within these practices but are transformed by them – for example when certain sounds are used as markers of authenticity or to contest authority. Our work answers interdisciplinary calls to engage sound seriously, or even for an aural turn in the social sciences, by employing listening and sound-making both as research subjects and methods. On the one hand, we aim to provide rich ethnographies that demonstrate how by making, restricting, recording or playing back sound, people act in the world. Each of
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our chapters based on ethnographic research (1–5) centre around a function performed by sound – coordinating ritual action (chapters 1 and 2), expressing devotion and embodied involvement with the sacred (chapter 3), denoting a relationship with the past (chapter 4) or strengthening ties to a distant community (chapter 5). On the other hand, we also engage sound as a medium in which to conduct research and recording as an interpretive form of ethnographic representation. Thus, one of the two methodological chapters details Scaldaferri’s long-term practice of sound-making as a research strategy (chapter 6). Finally, to each of these six texts corresponds a ‘sound-chapter’, a composition of sound recordings that provides a complementary narrative in the acoustic medium itself.

While building on recent perspectives in the anthropology of sound and sound studies, we integrate them with an awareness of the ways the historical legacies of past research, whose afterlives keep surfacing throughout the book, have dominated most existing studies on the region. Tellingly, the diffusion and recontextualisation of this earlier research have often privileged ocularcentric interpretations and visual representations, and shifting the emphasis onto sound allows us to bring back in the frame the role of materiality and sensory experience. One of the transversal themes of this work is the transformation of the outcomes of this past research into resources upon which actors in the local politics of heritage can draw. The diffused awareness by some of the participants of the anthropological significance of the events we examine blurs the distinction between cultural performances – institutionalised and explicit representations – and performing culture – the enactment of aspects of social life (Schechner 1985). In this book we mostly examine the sonic components of events classifiable as cultural performances (chapters 1–4), which we privilege over an ethnography of the everyday because of their aspect of ‘aesthetic practices’ that ‘situate actors in time and space, structuring individual groups and identities’ (Kapchan 1995: 479). Rather than approaching cultural performances as distillations of culture, in the manner of Milton Singer (1972), we see them as culture in performance, that is, moments in which social and political matters are decided, fought over and made manifest in unpredictable ways. These performances share a strong element of self-representation, in which authenticity and tradition are renegotiated and innovations are made; therefore, we do not privilege them in order to look at static survivals or cultural fossils. Rather, we are interested in these performances as ‘time out of time’ in which people break with the ordinary (Falassi 1987), as ‘society in its subjunctive mood,’ as Turner wrote of the carnival (1986: 123), in which sound contributes to the creation of specific configurations of space and time. This also means that the communities we will be considering are
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sometimes limited spatially and temporarily to the performance, that is, they are acoustic communities (Truax 1984: 65–66) or communities of (sonic) practice that come together around a given event and might separate after its conclusion.

In this introduction we unpack how we interpret the connection between sound and the formation of local identities, starting with some clarifications on these two key terms. Subsequently, we trace the main steps in the entanglements of ethnographic research, creative practice and cultural heritage in Basilicata, providing important context for an outline of our own representational strategies in the book.

Sound and local identities

In this work we understand sound as the perception of acoustic phenomena through listening and the material resonance of vibrations that create relationships with an environment. In our approach we build on a tradition of scholarship that underlined the importance of treating a sonic setting as an acoustic environment (Schafer 1977), or in other words we go beyond a more traditional attention to music as a sonic equivalent of culture. In what we would call an ecological approach, we are interested in the relational and experiential aspects of sound that cut across dichotomies between nature and culture, non-musical sound and music. The term ‘ecological’ as we use it here does not refer to Schafer’s concept of acoustic ecology and its concern for noise pollution and lo-fi soundscapes, but rather to the capacity of sound to enact relationships between species, places and meanings (Feld 1996). In order to represent the acoustic environments that we encountered in their most complex form, we expanded our focus in this research beyond formal performances to include also the sounds of bells, tools, humans and animals at work. We were especially concerned with the way in which these sounds interact with multiple musical performances that are emplaced, recorded, amplified and understood in specific ways (Clarke 2005), creating ‘an acoustic environment in which listeners are active social participants’ (Samuels et al. 2010: 335).

Sound, in this ecological perspective, becomes a tool to mark ritual space and organise action, as in the cases analysed in chapters 1, 2 and 3. It can also serve as a marker of local identities, as in the case of the sounds of a rural world of the past described in chapter 4, or the recordings of the sounds of the home village made for the migrant communities in the USA (chapter 5). The concept of soundmark, coined by Schafer to refer to ‘a community sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by the people in that community’ (1977: 10), can be usefully expanded and applied to all these examples. Interestingly, in recent years definitions
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of intangible cultural heritage have started to include sounds of everyday life, thus giving an institutional – and in some cases financial – support to the connection between sound and local identities (Kytö et al. 2012; Yelmi 2016).

We approach the term ‘identities’ with a series of precautions. While we share on a general level the constructivist approach to identities that emerged from the 1970s, underlining their processual, fluid and contextual nature, we are also aware of the ways the analytical function of the term has been overestimated and overstretched (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). As a category of practice, however, we found the term to be a sensible way to describe how local communities ‘make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with, and how they differ from, others’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 4). Another concern has to do with the way the influence of postmodern theory, and in particular semiology, led to the characterisation of identities as a matter of expression, representation, or signification of belonging or difference (for example in Cohen 1985). This historical preference for a semiosis of identity, we argue, has often led to a neglect of the embodied and experiential dimensions of identity and community formation. By contrast, in analysing a locally produced video that re-enacts wheat harvest as it would have taken place at the end of the 1950s in the village of Acerenza, Marano (2001) underlines how the participants, from different age groups, recognised themselves in sensory experiences that created an aesthetic community in the original sense of the term *aesthesis*, that is, as a group sharing common experiences of perception (see also Cox 2002; MacDougall 1999; Meyer 2009), and performing similar evaluations and appreciations of them. Stokes has remarked how ‘[a] sense of identity can be put into place through music by performing it, dancing to it, listening to it or even thinking about it’ (1994: 24). We suggest that this observation can be equally well applied to sonic environments in which musical performances may be only one element or indeed may not be present at all. In this book, we discuss the emergence of aesthetic communities in the case of the communal work that forms part of the complex ritual labour for the *Maggio* festival in Accettura (chapter 1), the sonic appropriation of space by the bell carriers of San Mauro Forte (chapter 2), the ‘sonic devotees’ of the Madonna del Pollino (chapter 3) and the manual reaping competition in Terranova di Pollino (chapter 4). In all these situations, sound plays a crucial role in the sensory experience of the event, along with other modalities of perception and bodily participation.

These experiences are often characterised by a nostalgic element, an orientation to the past that complements the embodied concreteness of aesthetic communities with the attached meanings of imagined communities. Discourses of tradition and authenticity,
intertwined with the legacy of classic anthropological studies in the area, permeate most aspects of the situations we describe in this book, but are especially evident in the institutional politics surrounding the events themselves, given the current availability of regional funds to support cultural initiatives rooted in the past and classifiable as intangible heritage. To further complicate this frame, a warning should be made on the term ‘local’, since the often festive events we describe see the yearly return of emigrants who temporarily rejoin their communities of origin. Their presence and participation inject supposedly ‘local’ identities with a diasporic element that adds further layers to the local imaginaries concerning the traditional and the authentic. Some of the processes of reification and fixation of tradition were in fact started, for entirely different reasons, by emigrants such as Giuseppe Chiaffitella (chapter 5), who recorded the sounds of his natal village of San Costantino Albanese for his fellow migrants in the New York area (Scaldaferri 2014b). As is well known, for diasporic communities music can also create a strong sense of ‘local’ identity abroad (see for example Shelemay 2011). In other words, when we refer to ‘local’ communities or identities, it must be kept in mind that these phenomena are entangled in geographically extensive networks in which people, ideas and rituals have circulated for a long time. Such convergences of experiences and imaginaries in the sonic events that we analyse could be considered examples of what Kun has called an ‘audiotopia’, that is, ‘small, momentary, lived utopias built, imagined, and sustained through sound, noise, and music’ (2005: 21).

With this book we want to underline that an attention to sound-making, recording and listening practices can bring innovative contributions to the ethnography of an area that has already been the setting for a number of researches from different eras and approaches. From the anthropology of sound we draw the fundamental premise that in a soundscape both resonate and are shaped social practices, ideologies and politics. We are not so much primarily interested, however, in the way sounds are interpreted as symbols or representations of society, in the manner of the first ethnographies of sound in rainforest societies (Feld [1982] 2012; Roseman 1991; Seeger 1987). Our focus, in quite a few of the examples described, is rather on what sound does, and on what it allows people to do. The first three chapters, all in different ways, highlight ways in which sound allows the control of ritual spaces – at times used by the institutional powers to maintain their positions of privilege or by participants to subvert the established order. It is a perspective that draws on studies on the relationship between control of sound and power, or more generally between sound structure and social structure (Attali 1977; Feld 1984).
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In the interest of going beyond the label of ‘anthropology of sound’ that he coined in the 1970s, Steven Feld proposed ‘acoustemology’ to put a stress on the relationality of sonic ways of knowing and on ‘situated listening in engagements with place and space-time’ (2015a: 15). This shift towards listening as a relational process is evident in a number of studies on histories of listening in and beyond anthropology (Hirschkind 2001; Johnson 1995; Nancy 2007; Ochoa Gautier 2014; Szendy 2008) and signals a renewed attention to processes of perception. With Feld, we want to suggest that listening to the sounds of the events and situations that we describe in this book also means attending to histories of listening in which forms of power, ritual space and time, and values of authenticity all sound out simultaneously in layers.

Some of these histories are influenced by the interactions between the representations of Basilicata that circulated from after the end of the Second World War – especially novels, films and photographs – and the legacies of ethnographic research in the region – chiefly those that received institutional recognition. Therefore, we now move to providing context for the setting of our research and its histories of representation.

Basilicata: ethnographic and media imaginaries

Also known by the ancient name of Lucania, Basilicata is a largely mountainous region. At less than 10,000 square kilometres in area, and with little more than half a million inhabitants, it is only sparsely populated. Out of 131 municipalities, only the two provincial capitals, Potenza and Matera, can boast populations of over 60,000. The rest of the region is made up of small villages, which were traditionally based on an economy of small-scale agriculture and herding. With two coastlines, over the centuries a number of different peoples have arrived from afar, leaving traces that can still be detected today, starting with Greek colonists of the Magna Graecia era, followed by runaway monks of the late Byzantine Empire, and then by various medieval conquerors speaking a variety of languages. Centuries later, hardships and rural poverty pushed many Lucanians to migrate to North and South America, especially at the end of the nineteenth century, and after the Second World War towards northern Italy and the rest of Europe. The continuing outflow of young people is still one of the greatest problems of the region, since it results in the progressive abandonment of the countryside and the overall ageing of the population. Over time, these migratory patterns have created various diasporic communities that in some cases have maintained continuous relationships with their communities of origin, and especially in recent years have taken advantage of the internet and social media to rekindle their links.
Despite its touristic potential and the presence of abundant natural resources – including oilfields and waterways – Basilicata is still considered representative of some of the worst features of the Italian South, including political and economic clientelism (Zinn 2019) and rural underdevelopment (DiMaria 2018: chapter 4). Some of this renown is also based on the characterisation of the region’s rural and folkloric heritage as steeped in a timeless past, a characterisation that Italian social sciences have played a major part in creating.

In the period immediately following the Second World War, Basilicata was frequently the subject of social research, attracting both Italian and foreign scholars as well as photographers, filmmakers and journalists (Mirizzi 2000). As a result of this research, within the national intellectual debates of the time the region came to represent paradigmatic internal otherness, the home of the backward subaltern peasant. The work of Antonio Gramsci, with its emphasis on the opposition between hegemonic and subaltern classes (see Cirese 1973), inspired a particular strand of politically engaged research in the region, sometimes supported by the trade unions and the Communist Party, which had the aim of contributing to the liberation of oppressed peasants. This ideology, which was not exempt from a certain degree of orientalism (Faeta 2003), provided the framework for a number of ethnographies, journalistic inquiries, and literary and cinematic works.

Basilicata began to feature in the national media at the end of the 1940s, as a result of the coverage of the struggles of peasant groups for agrarian reform and the visits of politicians to the city of Matera. During the post-war reconstruction effort this city – which in the 1990s would become a UNESCO World Heritage site on account of its neighbourhoods carved in the rocky walls of a canyon – was described by Alcide De Gasperi, then prime minister, as a ‘national infamy’ and by Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the Communist Party, as ‘Italy’s shame’ due to the living conditions and extreme poverty of its inhabitants. But the factor that most triggered the interest of Italian intellectuals in the region was the publication of a novel by the painter and writer Carlo Levi. Exiled by the fascist regime in 1935–36 from his native Turin to the Lucanian village of Aliano, Levi drew on this experience in the novel, first published in 1945, 

*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (Christ Stopped at Eboli). In this work, the agrarian world of the southern peasants is characterised as marginal and archaic, but at the same time it is presented in a much more intimate and humanised way than had been the case in previous scholarly publications on the demography and economics of southern Italy. Read by many as an ethnographic account thanks to its lively detail, Levi’s novel became a must-read ‘political-emotional manual for all those who … cared about the fate of the other Italy’ (Carpitella in Agamennone 1989: 18).
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One of the many readers of Carlo Levi’s book was Ernesto De Martino, a key figure in the process of ‘discovery’ of Basilicata (Zinn 2015). He specifically discussed episodes and characters from Cristo si è fermato a Eboli in one of his essays (De Martino 1949; see Gallini 1995). A historian of religion and considered to be among the founders of modern anthropology in Italy, De Martino conducted a series of brief but important periods of fieldwork in Basilicata during the 1950s, focussing especially on magic and mortuary lamentations (De Martino 1958, [1959] 2015; Gallini and Faeta 1999). De Martino worked with an interdisciplinary team, variously composed of his assistant Vittoria De Palma, a photographer, a filmmaker, the ethnomusicologist Diego Carpitella and at times even a psychologist and a medical doctor. His methods often used song and music as a way into the lifeworlds of the peasants, since he had noticed the presence of music in their every-day and ritual life (Carpitella 1992: 28). In this regard he was greatly aided by the musicological expertise of Carpitella as well as by the support that he received from audio technicians of the national radio and the first Italian ethnomusicological archive, the CNSMP (Adamo and Giannattasio 2013; Ferretti 1993). This research centre later promoted further field research in Basilicata and beyond, including that of Alan Lomax who, in 1954–55, toured the country with Carpitella in order to record songs (Lomax 1956, 2008; Lomax and Carpitella 1957a, 1957b).

Other foreign researchers also became interested in the region around this period: among the best known are the sociologists Frederick G. Friedmann and George Peck, and the anthropologist Edward G. Banfield. In later years, they were followed by Nevill Colclough, Dorothy L. Zinn and Steven Feld. The latter worked in collaboration with local scholars on the sonic aspects of some important festivals during the early 2000s, and part of the outcome of this research is published in chapters 1 and 2 here (see Scaldaferri 2005; Scaldaferrri and Feld 2019).

The research produced by De Martino and his school not only inspired subsequent scholars, but also, largely on account of his use of audiovisual media, played a major role in the construction of an imaginary that had a significant influence far beyond the specialised world of academic social research, reaching out into the documentary arts and cinema. The first photographer to collaborate with De Martino was Arturo Zavattini, son of Cesare, one of the principal figures of Italian neorealist cinema in the post–war period. Through evocative black and white images, Arturo Zavattini’s work depicted life in the poorest neighbourhood of the village of Tricarico. These images have subsequently become part of the canonical iconography of the region. Ando Gilardi followed in Zavattini’s footsteps, collaborating with De Martino mostly while he was conducting research into magic. For
his part, Franco Pinna produced some of the most iconic images of the Demartinian corpus during field trips investigating funeral lamentations and the ‘game of the sickle’ in Basilicata (see image 0.1) and during De Martino’s particularly renowned research on Tarantism in neighbouring Apulia. All three photographers spent a brief but important part of their careers collaborating with De Martino, moving to photojournalism and set photography for Federico Fellini (in the case of Pinna), history and critique of photography (Gilardi) and direction of cinematography (Zavattini).

De Martino’s inquiries into ‘subaltern lifeworlds’, magic, and local forms of religion and superstition as existential countermeasures to the hardships of peasant life, amplified by the images by the photographers who worked with him, also spread beyond academic circles thanks to photographic essays published in mass circulation magazines and to his radio broadcasts (De Martino 2002). His work also influenced an important group of filmmakers, whose work focused on the same themes and which would later come to be known as ‘Demartinian cinema’ (Marano 2007: 29–67). In 1949, a law was passed to support documentary filmmaking that required cinemas to set aside a short slot for nonfiction films to be shown before the screening of the main feature and also assigned 3 per cent

0.1 San Giorgio Lucano, August 2018. Mural paintings based on Franco Pinna’s photographs of the game of the sickle, by painters Mattia Damiano (left) and Vincenzo Blumetti (right).
of the box office proceeds to these productions (Rizzo 2010: chapter 4). This encouraged filmmakers with backgrounds in experimental and art film to create a cross-fertilisation that generated new documentary forms, with the result that a broader general public was exposed to this imagery than ever before.

The directors of these short films were not specifically interested in ethnographic documentation or visual anthropology as such, but rather saw their films as creative and poetic enterprises, and they were not afraid to engage in experimentation. The first work of this kind is generally considered to be the short film on Lucanian funeral lamentation directed by Michele Gandin, *Lamento funebre* (1954), on which De Martino acted as an adviser and which featured field recordings by Carpitella. Later works by directors such as Lino Del Fra, Cecilia Mangini and Gianfranco Mingozi mixed documentary and fiction in approaching themes previously dealt with by De Martino across various different regions of southern Italy. However, the most important Demartinian director is widely considered to be Luigi Di Gianni, who, although also well known for his work in fiction and for his adaptations of Kafka, made a number of films in Basilicata, often incorporating explicit references to De Martino. The screenwriters who worked on these films included Pier Paolo Pasolini and Salvatore Quasimodo, a winner of the Nobel Prize in literature, while the soundtracks were often composed by electronic music experimentalists such as Egisto Macchi and Domenico Guaccero (Cosci 2015).

The imaginaries surrounding Basilicata also reached mass audiences through cinema masterpieces such as Luchino Visconti’s *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (*Rocco and His Brothers*) (1960), where ‘Lucania’ is evoked as the land of origin of the protagonists, who leave behind its misery, superstition and hardships to move to the northern city of Milan, at the time undergoing an economic boom. The ‘lunar’ landscapes of inner Basilicata (image 0.2), first described by Levi and also appearing in Gandin’s short film, appear again in Pasolini’s *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to St Matthew*) (1964), partly filmed on location in the Sassi area of Matera. The canyons and cave settlements of Matera would soon become a favourite Hollywood backdrop, still in use in more recent productions such as *The Passion of the Christ* by Mel Gibson (2004) and *Ben-Hur* by Timur Bekmambetov (2016) to name but two, which in turn generated film-related tourism and urban development (Ferrari 2016).

In sum, it is interesting to point out that the overlap between anthropological themes and creative practice was a feature of the best-known body of research on the area as far back as the 1950s (Schäuble 2019). The role of audiovisual media – especially photography, documentary or neorealist fiction films, and field recordings – was and
is fundamental in amplifying and propagating those ideas, which still reverberate in the discourse of local and institutional actors.

**Cultural and heritage policies**

The discourses developed in and around the research work of De Martino and his students in the 1950s and 1960s, along with the associated iconography, featured centrally in the imaginaries constructed about the region and consolidated over subsequent decades. Together with studies by other scholars, this work has had a lasting impact on an important branch of Italian academic anthropology and is widely considered foundational for Italian ethnomusicology. It has also been instrumental in shaping public policies regarding ‘demoethnoanthropological’ heritage, a term that began to circulate from 1975 in the domain of museums, public administration and university curricula. It has also reverberated in local identity discourses within the region itself, providing a vocabulary and a starting point for local cultural initiatives, many of which are aimed at promoting tourism.

Sound recordings, photographs and film footage taken in the areas where De Martino did research are commonly used in festivals, exhibitions and publications, and have become integral to local forms of

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0.2 Craco, August 2005. View from the old town, over the hills of central Basilicata.
touristic promotion. An emblematic example of the afterlife of anthropological research is represented by the work of Giovanni Battista Bronzini, which partly overlapped with the timeline of De Martino’s research, and provided what to this day is one of the dominant interpretations of the Maggio festival in Accettura (see chapter 1).

Interestingly, this has even happened in relation to practices and rituals that had originally been framed in a negative light, for example superstition and magic. With the passage of time and the consequent severing of the association of these practices with social marginalisation, they have been recontextualised through a discourse often pervaded instead by nostalgia. A remarkable instance concerns the village of Colobraro, whose reputation as the home of witches and bad luck was once so sinister that people in the region refrained from mentioning it by name, referring to it simply as ‘quel paese’ (that village). This reputation was immortalised and amplified by De Martino’s writing and Pinna’s images in Magic: A Theory from the South ([1959] 2015). Among the best-known pages of the entire body of De Martino’s Lucanian ethnography is the description of a troubled trip to Colobraro to record a well-known zampogna player, only for him to be found dead upon the researchers’ arrival. Equally famous are Pinna’s images of a local ‘enchantress’, who today continues to appear frequently as an icon of Basilicata in a surprising variety of local contexts (see chapter 7).

More than fifty years on, in Colobraro these practices have been absorbed as an identity marker and are enacted in a theatrical form during open-air shows that take tourists around the narrow alleyways of the village. Twice a week during the month of August, a group of local people, coordinated by a theatre director, take part in a performance that makes use of De Martino’s terminology and is opened by an exhibition of Pinna’s images.1 This initiative, started in 2011, has now become one of the main cultural tourism attractions in the region, drawing three thousand visitors on a single evening in 2018, a figure which represents more than twice the number of permanent residents in the village (image 0.3). A similar festival was started in 2012 in Albano di Lucania, another key destination of De Martino’s expeditions. This is explicitly entitled The Nights of Magic – a Journey in the Footsteps of De Martino.

Since the early years of the twenty-first century, processes of ‘heritagisation’ of tradition (Harrison 2013; Walsh 1992), and in particular of its documentary traces in the form of audiovisual media, have become ever more frequent and visible in Basilicata. The old rural world is becoming increasingly obsolete due to changes in lifestyle and economy, and is shifting its significance for the younger generations, who now mainly identify with it on an emotional level. But at the same
time, local institutions are increasingly committed to ‘rediscovering’ traditions, which are then often enshrined in museum collections and archives. Scholars of European heritage have underlined how these processes often privilege festivals as public moments when tradition is perpetuated and local identities are performed for the community itself and for the benefit of tourists (Boissevain 2008; Fournier 2013; Hafstein 2018; Kockel et al. 2019). These processes of ‘festivalisation’ (Richards 2007) also affect the heritage of Basilicata, and are part of more general trends of institutionalisation of culture in Europe (Macdonald 2013; Peckham 2003; Smith 2006).

Lucanian festivals, museums and other initiatives are often directly or indirectly funded by the European Union, via the creation of registers of intangible heritage in which the safeguard of cultural heritage overlaps with the creation of tourism packages. In 2014, for example, the regional government of Basilicata created a list of items of intangible cultural heritage (DGR 1198/2014) that was intended to ‘adopt future policies … funded by EU, state and regional resources … and to promote public cultural heritage for the benefit of tourism’.2 This list was established on the basis of a self-assessment carried out by each municipality and soon became a way for them to present a local identity to the outside world.
Based on this list, each municipality now receives a yearly financial contribution that is managed by local cultural associations charged with promoting events, exhibitions or performances such as that of Colobraro. A quick look at the list reveals the abundance of references to the jargon of anthropology and to sixty years of ethnographic research in Basilicata: among the themes are magic, carnivals, religious processions, tree rituals and wheat festivals, often with explicit references to De Martino’s visits – as in the case of the game of the sickle in San Giorgio Lucano.3

Another strategy to attract funding is the creation of networks of related events (Di Méo 2005), often making use of anthropological jargon in a number of different guises. In Tricarico, for example, the local tradition of carnival masks is the starting point for a festival called Raduno delle maschere antropologiche (Gathering of Anthropological Masks) (image 0.4). The festival centres around a parade of masks from various Italian and international contexts. The adjective ‘anthropological’ – note the social media hashtag #antropologico2018 – here, as elsewhere, has shifted its original meaning from a term designating academic research to one that identifies a particular event as culturally exotic and therefore appropriate for touristic promotion.

Doing research in Basilicata today means not simply being aware of past scholarship, but also to consider the new lives and uses to which this scholarship is now being put in this region. Here, perhaps more markedly than in regions that have had a similar history of research – for example in Apulia with the research on Tarantism (Lüdtke 2009) – anthropological knowledge has been re-packaged
and institutionalised, becoming fundamental to the assigning of public funds by local, national and even international agencies. Anthropologists are often asked to write reports that certify the authenticity and significance of festivals and cultural performances, though concepts are frequently misunderstood and lost in translation in the course of this process. Despite the importance in these discourses of keywords such as ‘tradition’, ‘continuity’ and ‘authenticity’, during the research for this book we often witnessed rapid change and transformation – for example in the case of the flourishing of initiatives and events surrounding wheat festivals during the 2010s (see chapter 4). Nonetheless, this background information is indispensable to understanding the phenomena we examine in this book, given the way in one form or another anthropological scholarship and discourses have become omnipresent in festivals, institutional structures and even everyday local experiences.

**Text, photographs and sounds**

This is a book that we envisioned, from its inception, as rich in photographic images. The decision to work with a combination of printed images and texts was in part inspired by the region’s tradition of ethnographic research and its association with extensive photographic documentation, as mentioned above and examined in more detail by Ferrarini in chapter 7. The format of the printed book has also allowed us to experiment with various different forms of relationship between text and image, and to explore their distinctive possibilities. The formats that we have employed are essentially of three different kinds, though all of them could be considered different interpretations of the photo essay genre (Sutherland 2016b). The first format is used in chapters 1 and 2, in relation respectively to the *Maggio* festival in Accettura and the carnival bells of San Mauro Forte. Here, the essays and the photographic sequences are developed as separate narratives that maximise the distinctive characteristics of each medium. This approach is embodied in the very layout of these chapters, since images and texts occupy separate sections. The photographic sequences encourage interpretations based on their internal narrative arcs, which are constructed around visually suggestive or rhythmic relationships between adjacent images. These sequences are not meant to act merely as illustrations of the text, and although they can sometimes be employed in that way by the reader, this is not what we would consider to be their primary function. Rather, we intend their relationship to the written text to be one of complementarity, where the text is given the task of putting forward arguments, of analysing and providing context. The images, on the other hand, put forward a
different kind of argument, one that is based on sensory evocation and
on oriented description, more personal to the photographer’s inter-
pretation and to his experience of the events. We use this strategy to
approach situations in which we want to highlight, through the per-
spectives of sensory anthropology, experiential aspects that have been
neglected in previous studies. Although the photographic sequences
appear after the essays, we encourage the reader to experiment and
skip to the images, then read the text, and perhaps come back to the
images with new eyes.

The second format that we have employed is exemplified by chap-
ters 3 and 5, in which the photographs are embedded within the text.
Despite their positioning, the role of the photographs within these
chapters is again not primarily illustrative. Rather, we think of them as
being in dialogue with the text and suggest that they can be viewed as
short visual essays in their own right. By contrast, in this introduction
and in the two methodological chapters 6 and 7, none of which is
based on ethnographic research, the images have the straightforward
role of providing supporting documentation.

The third form of relationship between text and photographs,
exemplified in chapter 4, consists of a photo essay about wheat festi-
vals. Here, after a short textual introduction, groups of images alternate
with text, in the manner of the classic magazine photographic essay.
Although here too there is a co-presence of images and text, as in
the second format described above, in this case the photographs dic-
tate the pace. The dominating narrative is the visual one, and the text
follows, adding depth of information or telling the backstory to the
images. The selection of images and their ordering, however, was also
made with the textual content in mind, so that this format represents
a middle way between the previous two. Here the reader can simply
look at the photographic sequence and then read the text, or experi-
ence everything in the order it is presented.

Sound constitutes the third component of this book, not a sec-
ondary or subordinated one but a narrative in its own right, able in
each instance to match, oppose or be independent from the textual
and photographic narratives. This autonomy of the sound narrative
is a function of the intrinsic specificities of a sonic event and of the
temporal flow in which it takes place, as opposed to the static nature
of texts and photographs. A further contrast inheres in the fact that
listening constitutes a distinctive way of knowing, a phenomenon that
has received much attention in recent years, most particularly in Feld’s

The first example of a ‘sound-book’, described as including ‘visual
and auditory illustrations linked with the text’, appears to have been
*Hunting by Ear*, a short book on fox-hunting which featured both
drawings and a 45rpm record (Koch and Broch 1937: 5). Later formats used cassettes or CDs, and recently web pages. In some cases, sound recordings serve merely as acoustic illustrations of situations described in the text, reproducing a textualist perspective that we tried to avoid in this book as much as possible. At the same time, the solution we wanted to pursue here was not simply to create sound documentation of ethnographic value following a creative approach, but to give the audio tracks analytical import by structuring them around key concepts, capable of dialoguing with the arguments of the texts and the perspectives of the photographs. We partly took inspiration from recent ethnographic ‘sound-books’ that give their audio component a primary role alongside text and photographs (e.g. Cox and Carlyle 2012; Feld et al. 2019).

Our solution has been to create sound-chapters, which complete the textual and photographic component of each chapter. With the exception of Steven Feld’s soundscape composition track, which is taken from a previously published work (Scaldaferri and Feld 2019), each sound-chapter was edited by Scaldaferri as an autonomous sound narrative to be listened to in parallel to reading the text and viewing the photographs, but also before or afterwards. The guiding principle of each sound-chapter is strictly connected to the argument of each text, for example control of space through sound and music (chapter 3), or creative interactions during fieldwork (chapter 6). At the end of the book a listening guide details the contents of each track.

Each sound-chapter comprises diverse kinds of recordings, deriving from more than thirty years of listening–research–interaction in the field (Scaldaferri 1994). These range from musical performances recorded during ethnomusicological research to ambiances and soundwalks, but also include archival materials. Their editing is not based on respecting a temporal or spatial coherence, but on the meaning that they can assume in the context of a montage. There are two editing principles at work: creating descriptive sequences of sounds (as in sound-chapters 1, 3, 4 and 6) or overlapping them in evocative and creative compositions (chapters 2 and 5). These representational choices derive from a historical path of convergence between the creative processes of electronic music, especially as represented by Luc Ferrari’s work, and those of soundscape composition, including Westerkamp and Truax in addition to some of Feld’s own work. The relationships and overlaps between the technical processes and creative approaches of these two strands are well documented and can be said to form a ‘continuum’ (see also Drever 2002; Rennie 2014).

The recordings may be used by the reader-listener to explore a variety of relationships. For example, those mainly centred on musical performances allow appreciation of the skills of single or groups
of musicians, the personae they enact in performance, their interaction with the surrounding context, and the competences and skills that enable them to dominate a sonic environment more effectively than with sheer decibels (see chapter 3). These recordings also reveal the innovative and creative nature of their interaction with more established traditional practices (see chapter 6). On the other hand, an attention to soundscapes and the various interactions contained within them allows the listener to grasp gestures and dynamics that synchronically reveal the complex and stratified power relationships between actors (see chapters 2, 3 and 4). Finally, a third type of recording emerges from archives that were not created for reasons of research but in order to connect migrants or assuage nostalgia (chapter 5). The relevance of these recordings lies in the cultural meanings that they evoke both for later generations and for researchers.

What is to be gained from putting photographs not only side by side with text, but also with a montage of sound recordings? Unlike the pairing of images and sounds in documentary films with a synchronous soundtrack, our approach in this book allows the reader-listener to switch off the images, as it were, and concentrate on sound only. As remarked by Henley (2007), the realist tradition of ethnographic documentary has long treated sounds other than the spoken word and music as merely an accessory to the visual, especially directly after the advent of easily portable cameras capable of synchronous sound. We feel that our approach to audiovisual representation steers away from this tradition towards a direction shown by ethnographic films inspired by more experimental filmmaking styles, such as those produced in recent years at Harvard’s Sensory Ethnography Lab or Manchester’s Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology. We never searched for a close correspondence between sound and photographic accounts, preferring instead to develop independent paths for each medium. When these narratives are experienced in juxtaposition, the evocative effect generated by the gaps left by the ‘asynchronous’ (Heuson and Allen 2014) lack of direct correspondence between sonic and photographic accounts can evoke sensations that go beyond the visual and acoustic, including, for example, a sense of the tactile qualities of the phenomena represented. In this way, we would argue, the representation of the two media in combination may be more akin to the fragmentary and multisensory nature of experience.

On the one hand, we use our approach to the juxtaposition of images and sounds to enrich the project with the perspectives of sensory anthropology (Cox et al. 2016). On the other, we recognise and pay tribute to the genealogy of artistic inflections in the history of social research in the region. We were also influenced by past experiences with similar book formats, especially a previous collaboration...
between Scaldaferri and Vaja (2006) and other collaborations between Scaldaferri, Vaja, Ferrarini and Feld (Scaldaferri 2005; Scaldaferri and Feld 2019) – all based on fieldwork in Basilicata. In Greece, Feld participated in two projects that used a similar formula and were very influential for us (Blau et al. 2010; Keil et al. 2002).

Finally, we would very much encourage the reader-listener to play and experiment with the juxtaposition of photographs, sounds and text that are presented in this book. In this way, we might, in effect, be giving up some of our authorial control over the work. But our hope is that by this means the reader-listener will be empowered to discover new pathways through the sensory experience of the sonic environments that we evoke as well as new interpretations of their significance.

Notes
2 https://patrimonioculturale.regione.basilicata.it/ (accessed 31 March 2020).