

Blue Zone aka the power of community

- a few days in Sardinia, during the carnival season -

We participated in an intensive, three-day learning process within the adult education mobility project of the Vivi Budapest Association (Dóra Fruzsina and Abdulwahab Nadia). Our goal was to participate live in the carnival traditionally held every year in Sardinia, to observe the dances, masks, customs and to record them on video and photo in their original environment.

day 1:

After a long day of travel, with a stopover in Rome, we arrived at the small airport of Alghero, where we immediately faced the living and prominent role of the local, traditional craft culture. The largest shop at the airport is a store selling traditional masks, textiles, jewelry, with the beautiful works of local craftsmen.

From the airport, we took a bus to our accommodation and the destination of the carnival, Macomer. After a short rest, we participated in the usual Friday evening rehearsal of the Macomer traditional dance group, the **Tradizioni Popolari Macomer**.

(https://www.facebook.com/associazionefolktradizionipopolarimacomer/?locale=it_IT).

The ensemble leader, Pinuccio, personally came for us and introduced us to the old and new members of the ensemble. After a short, kind introduction, we immediately turned to the dances. We were treated as members of the community, the leader of the ensemble taught us the steps and with a tight arm position, he also directed us in the circle with experience. By the end of the first rehearsal, we got into the common dancing of the **Ballod el Marghine**, the **Su passu torradu**, the **Danza, Dillaru** and the **Passu e trese** dances, we enjoyed participating in the rehearsal. After this community experience, we had a joint dinner with a couple of members of the ensemble and the ensemble leader, where we could discuss our dance experiences and plan the events of the next day together.

day 2:

Since transportation is quite difficult and there are not many services to the surrounding settlements on weekends, we rented a car so that we could visit a museum before the carnival. We traveled to Mammojada, an hour's drive from Macomer, in the morning, where we visited the **Museo delle Maschere**.

(<https://www.museomaschere.it/>)

museum.

As soon as we told where we came from and what we do, we were very kindly guided around the museum. In one of the exhibition halls, we even found a mask of the Busó of Mohács. We watched an artistic short film about the masks, the carnival traditions, the history and timelessness of the masks and customs, and we could even watch it twice, once in Italian, once in English.

We looked at the demanding museum shop, then we looked around Mammojada, the local mask making workshops, folk art shops and the many murals, all referring to the masks of Mammojada, folk culture, Sardinian identity. We tasted the local specialty, the **culurgiones** type of ravioli, with potatoes, mint and sage, we ate local bread, the **pane carasau**. After lunch, we returned to Macomer to start the carnival right away with the experienced guidance of our hosts. Avoiding the crowd, they led us to the preparation place of the paraders, mask wearers, where we could see how they prepare for wearing the big masks, they blacken their faces, bodies, dress up, the participants started to 'lose identity'.

All this to the sound of the accordion. Then the procession started, here too, thanks to our hosts, we could occupy the best places, we could see everything, from the front row. Traditional groups from the area and ensembles from other parts of Italy paraded one after the other.

The end of the day ended on the Main Square, where the band took the stage and the audience started dancing together. It was a great experience to take part in, to be part of the completely moving, arm-in-arm dancing, breathing crowd. We could try out the steps we learned the previous night in the rehearsal room and we could even peek at the steps of a more virtuoso dancer.

Day 3:

We woke up early to see the sea, we drove to **Bosa**. On the way, we stopped at a beautiful, 'nuraghe', the **Nuraghe Succuronis**, but unfortunately we could only photograph it from afar, from the road, the entrance was closed as it can only be approached with permission.

In Bosa, we went up to the castle, looked at the view, then hurried back to return the rented car on time. We had lunch in a local restaurant, then they came for us to go to the next carnival venue, **Ghilarza**. The young dancers of Tradizioni Popolari Macomer dressed up in costumes for the parade.

In Ghilarza, an ox cart came in front of the paraders, which carried the accordionist and the wine barrels, from which they continuously offered people. The girls and women offered homemade, carnival pastries. The Ghilarza carnival was more about the costumes and the dances, the procession stopped at several locations and people danced everywhere before they would have moved on. Special local masks were the completely white costumes, covered from head to toe, only a small part was cut out of the material for the eyes and nose. We saw more of these, they came out of the local

houses laughing and spoke in a changed, thin voice. At the evening dance party, we could again try and practice all kinds of dances that we have already learned.

day 4:

The morning was for rest, we had a lot to process already. In the afternoon, we participated in the rehearsal of another Macomer dance group, a community of an older generation, with whom, in addition to repeating the already learned, the Ballo del Marghine, the Su passu torradu, the Danza, Dillaru and the Passu e trese dances, we also taught Hungarian folk dance as a taster. After this, we gave our gifts, took photos and said goodbye, because the next day our bus left early for Alghero, the airport.

day 5:

On the way home in Rome, there was time for a quick visit to the Trevi Fountain and the Colosseum before the flight to Budapest took off.