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Uniform buttons within the context of the collection of the Waldes Museum of Buttons and Fasteners*

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Uniform buttons within the context of the collection of the Waldes Museum of Buttons
The study deals with uniform buttons in the collection of the Waldes Museum of Buttons and Fasteners in Prague-Vršovice, which was founded at the initiative of Prague industrialist and philanthropist Jindřich Waldes. Over the course of the museum's existence, from 1916 to 1945, the collection came to include more than 350 uniform buttons. This study tries to capture the significance of the collection at the Waldes Museum, both as exhibits in themselves, and as study material connected with the museum's publication work or the building of a specialised archive and library on the other. It also presents selected exhibits from the collection in question, together with other associated objects and specialised materials. The study draws on expert consideration of the preserved collection, original publications and materials from the Waldes Museum Archive[1] and specialised literature.

Keywords: Button, uniform, collecting, Waldes Museum Collection, Jindřich Waldes

Introduction

Uniform buttons – that is, buttons made for a specific uniform – were, and still are, popular and highly-specific collectors' items that have been included to a greater or lesser extent in many a private and public collection. High-quality production, an attractive appearance and the added symbolic value of the button all helped to ensure that uniform buttons were gathered in specialised collections[2] and in collections of a more general character. One such collection, created by the well-known factory-owner, collector and philanthropist Jindřich Waldes, later became the foundation of the collection held by the Waldes Museum of Buttons and Fasteners in Prague-Vršovice, which was active from 1916 to 1945. This study deals with the topic of uniform buttons within the context of that collection and institution, and thus the activities initiated by Jindřich Waldes – the creation of the collection, the initiative to create a collection of works on the button and the activities of the museum. Based on what we knew until recently,

* The study was compiled as the outcome of the Specific Research 2019 project, Výroba knoflíků v Anglii v letech 1750–1920 / The production of buttons in England 1750–1920, which was financed, under number 2116, by resources from a Student Grant Competition at the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Hradec Králové.

[1] Kept at the Museum of Glass and Jewellery in Jablonec nad Nisou. Contains 106 boxes of documentary materials and 6 boxes of printing blocks.

[2] One example of such a collection is "The Pitt Collection", gathered by Ronald Pitt, which contains livery buttons predominantly for the service staff of British, Irish and other European aristocracy.

it was assumed that uniform buttons were included within the collection merely to present the associated technology, which matches the profile of the part of the collection that focuses on the development of the button. However, it was shown during work with the assemblage that uniform buttons were gathered as a comprehensively processed collection of buttons in exactly the same way as other types.[3] Preparatory work for the study included expert processing of the assemblage in question, which concentrated on identifying individual preserved objects in a comparison with other sets and specialised literature. Specific items from the uniform button collection will be presented as part of the study.

Uniform buttons

A button is a type of fastener. To quote an encyclopaedia which was popular in the days of the Waldes Museum, *Masarykův slovník naučný*, it is a "type of clothing clasp. It is made of metal, glass, porcelain, wood, coconut shell, vegetable ivory ..., bone, horn, antler, mother-of-pearl, hard rubber, galalith, celluloid. Buttons have either an eyelet or 2–4 holes in order that they may be stitched to clothing."[4] Uniform buttons are solely intended for uniforms, defined in the same source as "a suit of the same cut and made of special material, prescribed at various corporations, for servants (livery), and in particular in the military. Its purpose is to distinguish them from civilians, and from enemies."[5] The definition in *Ottův slovník* (Otto's encyclopaedia) primarily mentions official military livery uniforms. The uniform, however, can also be work attire for the employees of transport companies, banks and factories (especially for public-facing employees such as porters, drivers, tellers). It is typical of all uniform buttons that they are made based on a specific licence and a specific order.

Buttons complement specific haberdashery accessories, badges and clasps or patches. The Waldes Museum Collection includes several smaller assemblages that combine buttons and badges from the Czechoslovak army between the World Wars and the American army at the time of WWI.

A uniform button is an aesthetic and a symbolic object in one. It is a functional, visible and integral part of the uniform. The style or the creative execution matters little: it is a specific chain of symbols and everything else is merely insignificant decoration. This is one of the reasons why there are few artistic elements depicted on these buttons. The depiction of family coats-of-arms, city crests or military symbols is an exact reconstruction of the template. Stylisation only occurs in complex crests as a result of miniaturisation. The visual attractiveness is secondary. If, however, this is the reason for a button's inclusion in a collection, it is essentially suppressing the primary meaning of the object. As stated above, uniform buttons were frequently deemed to be examples of the high-quality processing of metals, irrespective of the symbolism. Deciphering them requires the ability to read the symbols and know their meaning. The uniform button is an object of identification. It tells us the identity of the employer of the person who wears it on his/her uniform. In other words, it represents the person or entity that the person in question serves. As for military or civil service uniforms, buttons can signify membership of a division and ranking. Uniform buttons can also represent far more complex phenomena. Military buttons might reflect the complexity of the structure of the army, something that can

[3] For example, a collection of buttons with components of Wedgewood, fabric buttons or buttons with miniatures.
[4] Entry KNOFLÍK. *Masarykův slovník naučný: lidová encyklopedie všeobecných vědomostí. Díl III., H-Kn.* Praha: Československý kompas, 1927, p. 1038.
[5] Entry STEJNOKROJ. *Masarykův slovník naučný: lidová encyklopedie všeobecných vědomostí. Díl VI., R-S*. Praha: Československý kompas, 1932, p. 956.

easily be presented on as common and primitive an object as a button. Based on the button, the organizational classification of the soldier could be determined, often down to the level of battalion.

Most uniform buttons are made from metal by hammering – the more common method – or by casting. A high-quality tool or mould is required in both cases, with a quality engraver and model-maker at the beginning of the process and quality processing at the end. One of the characteristics of uniform buttons is their high quality. Diminished legibility and plasticity of the relief are the result of wear or exposure to unsuitable conditions.[6] As far as metals are concerned, the standard is for buttons to take on the appearance of silver and gold, whether through use of base metals and their alloys or by plating with precious metals. Other materials, such as fabric or thread (crocheted or knitted), can also be used for uniform buttons. This is typical of livery, when the button puts the finishing touches on the overall appearance of the specific traditional attire. We can observe this type of livery button at the Imperial Court in Vienna.[7] Less common materials include pressed horn, used for the military buttons of the Royal Ghurkha Rifles regiment[8] that serves in the British Army.

Let us not forget, however, that the button is a functional object too – a fastener – that in some cases was initially used as decoration, such as buttons for epaulettes and collars. In terms of how the button is attached to the fabric, an eyelet is undoubtedly typical of uniform buttons. Buttons with holes are practically non-existent. This, too, ranks them as more luxurious products.[9]

As was the case with other types of product, uniform buttons have undergone specific technological developments. Between 1790 and 1800, they were typically constructed using the principle of a wooden core coated in metal. They were stitched on to the fabric through the threaded reverse side of the button or through an eyelet made of catgut, as was typical of the buttons worn by the French army. Whereas fashion production struggled with the decline of craft processing and creative form in the second half of the nineteenth century, the production of uniform buttons was creatively based on the classic forms prescribed by laws or traditions. The buttons were also made of quality materials since it was expected they would be used for a long time.

This naturally offers up a comparison of uniform buttons and standard buttons produced for civilian fashion. One difference is the geographical demarcation of their use. We can say about fashion buttons that a particular design is popular in a certain area – Paris, Italy or across Europe – or that the customers who buy them are drawn from the middle classes of a certain region or from a rural area, etc. In general, we can say that fashion buttons are worn wherever they can be sold. Any trader can essentially order a particular design from a manufacturer and sell it anywhere. One end result is that it is entirely up to the customer how to use the button. In comparison, uniform buttons are ordered by a specific customer and have a specific field of usage. They are worn where specific uniforms are worn and must be stitched on in the prescribed way. It must also be noted, of course, that uniform buttons might be used more

[6] This most concerns items found in the ground.

[7] More in: SEIPEL, Wilfried, WIECZOREK, Alfried (eds). *Des Kaisers teure Kleider: Festroben und Ornate, Hofuniformen und Livreen vom frühen 18. Jahrhundert bis ins Zeitalter von Franz Joseph I. und Elisabeth*. Wien: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2000.

[8] The Gurkhas are soldiers from Nepal that serve in various foreign armies, including the British army.

[9] Buttons with holes were long considered to be inferior and were mainly used for inside fastening or bed clothing. Fashion buttons with holes did not appear regularly until the end of the nineteenth century.

than once, recycled on folk attire, for example, or used as a souvenir or amulet. This, however, is contrary to the original intended use. Men from the Mapuche tribe,[10] for example, wear belts decorated with buttons from French military uniforms[11] as a symbol of higher social standing.

In contrast to fashion buttons, the appearance of uniform buttons is consistent. Visual transformation comes with systemic or organisational change; a new ruler in a monarchy, the death of a leading member of the line in the case of livery buttons, or a change of "visual style" for enterprises or public administrations. Such transformations are associated with a change in social conditions. One example is found with changes in the Austrian Monarchy in 1804 and 1867 which required the replacement of uniform buttons in their entirety. As with fashion buttons, uniform buttons are manufactured in batches, with the total number depending on the number of people that will wear those uniforms. If we stick with the above example, it can be noted that before the First World War, some 415,000 men[12] were part of the Imperial and Royal Military in Austro-Hungary, so winning such a contract would have been very profitable for a button-maker.

Neither should it be forgotten that uniform buttons frequently became the inspiration for purely fashionable goods. The mass production of buttons made of pressed metals began in the 1870s. The second half of the nineteenth century is generally described as the era in which artistic craft waned. Gottfried Semper remarked on this in his work *Wissenschaft, Industrie und Kunst* (Science, Industry and Art). This was caused by succumbing to short-lived trends in fashion, the need to keep the price down and the short lifetime of the product accepted as a result. Manufacturers and merchants were looking for new designs wherever they could, and so began using uniform buttons as templates. Perhaps the most widespread was the use of an anchor and rope, a motif that appears on buttons to this day. Fictitious heraldic motifs are also common. It is important, in order to provide a full picture, to emphasise once again the aspect of quality and the lifetime associated with this shift in production. Fashion buttons are typically made of far cheaper materials that are susceptible to degredation. Ješek Hoffman remarks on this era with the words, "Alas, this stage of development is the fall of artistic industry. It is then in particular that the era of stamped metal begins, manufactured in great quantities and without any feeling".[13] He goes on to describe the present as a "confused, unrefined" time "suffering from a lack of tradition".

Uniform buttons are, on the one hand, demanding from the perspective of the collector and the collection curator, since they require knowledge of heraldry, state symbolism and the symbolism of other institutions, companies or societies, as well as the ability to correctly recognise individual details in the miniaturised depiction of the relevant symbol. On the other hand, given the correct identification, the button can precisely communicate its function, motif, era and area of creation, and in many cases the manufacturer too. This is often impossible for fashion buttons, at least without further contextual information. Uniform buttons can be used to create different series which are conditional on membership of an army, family, region, profession, manufacturer and the like, making them even more attractive.

[10] The Mapuche are given the post-Columbian name of the Araucanian in Leopoldina Auzingerová's text.

[11] AUZINGEROVÁ, Leopoldina. Berlínskými musey. Studie věnovaná knoflíku. In: *Zprávy musea knoflíků Jindřich Waldes Praha-Vršovice (Zprávy Waldesova musea knoflíků)*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1916, p. 3.

[12] JUNG, Peter. *Rakousko-uherská armáda za první světové války*. Brno: Computer Press, 2001, p. 4.

[13] HOFMAN, Ješek. *Průvodce sbírkami Waldesova muzea v Praze-Vršovicích*. Praha: Politika, 1916, p. 16.

The Jindřich Waldes Collection, the Waldes Museum

Jindřich Waldes (1876–1941) was a well-known factory-owner, collector and philanthropist, the co-owner of a successful company of global renown, Waldes & Co., based in Prague-Vršovice, with branches in Europe and the USA. The profits earned from his business not only enabled him to become an industrialist, but to devote his attention to collecting, mainly in the sphere of art.[14] He was entirely fascinated by buttons. This is plainly confirmed by his fundamental stance, that "the button, or indeed the way clothing is fastened, is a gauge of national culture in the true sense of the word and sometimes the way in which the culture of a nation is expressed".[15] His tendencies were almost evolutionist when it came to folk buttons and fasteners. He associated the button with other fasteners very closely, wanting to present the whole within the context of clothing in general for individual regions and for individual ethnic groups. However, he was also interested in the chronological development of buttons and fasteners in relation to technology and materials, fashion, art and culture in general. Waldes viewed the button entirely positively, as a singular representative of the level of technology, craft and creativity achieved by the group in question. We might say that he viewed this human culture, documented through the button, as the "successful culture" of which Zdeněk Kratochvíl spoke in his work "Konflikt intepretací", in which he says: "A successful culture is built on its technological and organisational ability, if possible harmonised with the emotional needs of individuals and their social bonds".[16]

Waldes began studying buttons at the end of the nineteenth century, at that time as an amateur. It was also then that he most likely started his collection. He was able to expand on that collection during numerous journeys abroad, around Europe and to the USA. He devoted his time to the button from various angles for many years.[17] He built contacts with experts, specialised institutions and magazines and endeavoured to lay the foundations of the "science of the button", although he never harboured ambitions of becoming a scientist himself. Instead he tried to bring in other experts for this. His first significant initiative, apart from building the collection, was to commission a far-reaching book about the button from Eduard Maria Schranka,[18] a Viennese writer whom he called his friend. The book was handed over at the end of 1915, but did not meet Waldes' expectations of a collective, all-encompassing monograph. After consulting other experts, he diplomatically said that the work required expanding. Schranka, we can assume from this, did not prove to be the right author. The book was never published, but one copy of the manuscript is stored in the Waldes Museum Archive. In this manuscript, one chapter in this unique work looks at the uniform button. The work

[14] Waldes' collecting activities are considered in the following publication: Patrik Šimon. *Jindřich Waldes: Sběratel umění.* Praha: Eminent, 2001. His life story and business activities are also c in detail in studies by Martin Sovák and Eva Králová, which were published in the anthology HRUŠKOVÁ, Kateřina et al. *Sborník semináře k 100. výročí otevření Waldesova muzea.* Jablonec nad Nisou: Museum of Glass and Jewellery in Jablonec nad Nisou, Praha: Kotěrovo centrum architektury, o. p. s, 2018.

[15] WALDES, Jindřich. Moje museum. In: *Zprávy musea knoflíků Jindřich Waldes Praha-Vršovice (Zprávy Waldesova musea knoflíků),* vol. 1, 1916, is. 1, p. 1.

[16] KRATOCHVÍL, Zdeněk. Konflikt interpretací? In: Lenka OVČÁČKOVÁ a kol., *O původu kultury – biologické, antropologické a historické koncepce kulturní evoluce*, Praha: Academia, 2017, p. 14.

[17] In his declaration on the foundation of the museum in the very first issue of the museum magazine *Zprávy musea knoflíků*, he states: "I have been interested in the button for several decades now". Given his birth date, we can assume that his interest therefore began at the end of the nineteenth century.

[18] Eduard Maria Schranka, b. 21 September 1850, Planá, d. 10 August 1916, Vienna. For more information, see https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Eduard_Maria_Schranka.

remains available in the Waldes Museum Archive, and is described in more detail below.

Waldes was also responsible for opening a museum, which eventually took on his own name – the Waldes Museum: Collections of Clothing Fasteners. The museum began life in 1916.[19] From the very outset it had the ambition of becoming a full scientific institution, where collection-building and exhibition work would be only two of many activities. Waldes endeavoured to make his museum an institute in the same vein as the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague or the Kunsthistorische Museum in Vienna. However, the museum only took this direction until 1919, when its first director and main scientific officer, Jan Ješek Hofman, departed. After his departure, the museum concentrated only on exhibition and awareness-raising work. The collection was subsequently expanded only slightly beyond the scope of the museum's first four years.[20] While Waldes concentrated on the button from the very beginning, museum director Ješek Hofman was interested in the phenomenon of fasteners as a whole. Both, however, drew on the assumption that clothing is a basic human need, that the fastener had become an integral aspect of this, and that it had developed progressively as far as basic form and creative and artistic processing were concerned. Hofman was very active in building contacts with various museums and institutions all over the world. He even tried to build contacts with the Metropolitan Museum in New York, at least in exchanging publication activity. He worked intensively on the expert processing of collections and on building expositions and had a healthy critical approach. The museum stagnated as a result of his departure, as well as Waldes' own revised view of the museum. The museum eventually closed in 1945. After travelling to and fro, a significant part of its collection became part of the collection fund at the Museum of Glass and Jewellery in Jablonec nad Nisou (MSB collection), temporarily at first (in 1973) and then on a permanent basis (on 1 January 1978).[21] Buttons and fasteners were sorted there under two separate sub-collections,[22] which jointly make up the "Waldes Museum Collection". This was declared an item of cultural heritage in 1999.

Dr Eduard Maria Schranka: *Der Knopf*

As Waldes wrote in 2016, "It seemed rather disagreeable to me that there is no extensive work, no encyclopaedia of the button as it were, in any world literature".[23] This explains his plan to bring out a specialised publication, the writing of which he entrusted to Eduard Maria Schranka. Unfortunately, we do not know when Schranka began working on the book. All we do know is that he presented Waldes with a typescript of a manuscript in 1915. It was written in German, was 120 pages in length and remains in the Waldes Museum Archive to this day. There are language corrections and a number of remarks, written in a minimum of two hands. We cannot say with certainty whether this was the only copy. The monography was entitled

[19] "Button" appeared in the name until 1918, when the museum was called Waldesovo museum knoflíků a šatních spínadel (Waldes Museum of Buttons and Clothing Fasteners).

[20] The activities of the museum are considered in more detail in HRUŠKOVÁ, Kateřina. *Sbírka Waldes*. Jablonec nad Nisou: Museum of Glass and Jewellery in Jablonec nad Nisou, 2014, and in the paper HRUŠKOVÁ Kateřina, Waldesovo muzeum knoflík a spínadel v letech 1916–1945. In: *Sborník semináře k 100. výročí otevření Waldesova muzea.* Jablonec nad Nisou: Museum of Glass and Jewellery in Jablonec nad Nisou, Praha: Kotěrovo centrum architektury, o. p. s, 2018, p. 30–33.

[21] Number in Centrální evidence sbírek (Central Record of Collections) administered by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic: MSB/002-05-14/255002

[22] The current sub-collections take the following names: Sbírka Waldes - spínadla a oděvní doplňky (Waldes Collection – Fasteners and Clothing Accessories) and Sbírka Waldes – knoflíky (Waldes Collection – Buttons).

[23] WALDES, Jindřich. Moje museum…, p. 2.

Der Knopf.[24] Waldes, however, was not satisfied with the book. The question is, of course, what his reason for deciding not to publish actually was. He wrote the following about the publication in his text "Moje museum" (My museum): "The material gathered so far has been provided with thorough and objective criticism and the proposals and stimuli that reached me on this occasion led me to the decision not to publish this monography in the format originally intended".[25] As his reasons, Waldes cited the aim to deal with the subject-matter for regions that had not until then been researched on account of the ongoing wartime conflict, and a desire to expand the publication as a whole with the contribution of other experts. My own view is that one of the problems was that Schranka considered the button too generally. Waldes saw the button as a fastener, an important object on clothing, an object that put the finishing touches to clothing and shaped it. Schranka took a broader view, considering, for example, other dimensions such as semantics, traditions, legends and the button in song or riddles. The text reads more like excerpts or notes from various types of source and literature. Waldes was most interested in the button *as a fastener* from the very outset. He was primarily concerned with what Schranka termed the "dress button", to which he devoted only one of many sub-chapters. On the other hand, it is clear that Schranka carried out a considerable amount of research. Moreover, he defines the science of the button, which he termed "Butonik", in the first chapter. His intention, however, never took hold.

Dr Schranka succumbed to serious illness in August 1916. There is nothing to suggest that anyone else took up the reins of his task. This uncompleted "project" shows how considerable Waldes' efforts were at that time to devote intense attention to the button. It must also be noted that Waldes evidently valued the work which Schranka had produced.

The work has a strong pro-German slant. It only deals with German-speaking countries and the northern Czech borderland. We can only speculate as to whether this was a result of the wartime period, with limited opportunities to travel, or Schranka's linguistic limitations. His literary background research is mostly based on German publications, with only two English publications. From a modern-day perspective, though, this bibliographical background research is the most valuable part of the work. It contains a number of titles that are very hard to find these days. One article is particularly worthy of note as far as uniform buttons are concerned. It was written by Baron Rudolf Potier[26] in 1876,[27] is entitled Kurzwarenindustrie (Knöpf) und Heerwaren, and looks at the issue of Viennese button production for the army. It points to the significant role of army contracts in the development of this industry, claiming that "[s]oldiers were the apostles of the button industry in Austria".[28] Potier also mentions period collections of uniform buttons[29] and he does not ignore an exhibition of buttons for hunting uniforms and livery that was held in the French pavilion at the World Fair in Vienna in 1873.

It must also be noted, however, that I came across a whole range of errors and inconsistencies

[24] Museum of Glass and Jewellery in Jablonec nad Nisou, Waldesova Museum Archive (hereinafter MSB WM Archive), box M61.

[25] WALDES, Jindřich. Moje museum…, p. 2.

[26] Full name: Rudolf Franz Josef Baron Potier des Echelles (1836–1912).

[27] The article was published as part of a series in the periodical *Wochenschrift des Niederösterreichischen Gewerbe-Vereines: Fachblatt für Gewerbe, Industrie und Handel*, vol. 37, p. 452–453, accessed 6 December 2019, https://books.google.cz/books?id=35thXdADGpMC&pg=PA452&hl=cs&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false

[28] SCHRANKA, Eduard Maria (1915), *Der Knopf: Ein Stückchen Kulturgeschichte*, Praha, 1915, typescript of a manuscript supplemented with corrections, rewritten at the Waldes & Co. plant, Prague – Vršovice, MSB WM Archive, box 64, p. 23.

[29] SCHRANKA, Der Knopf…, p. 9.

when working with Schranka's text and checking the information given. The use of the text therefore demands a highly critical approach.

How, then, does Schranka work with the uniform button? In the section devoted to history, he unfortunately only considers buttons for military uniforms. He deals with the use of buttons in the Austrian army, when between 1700 and 1867 – that is, until the first major overhaul of uniforms – two types of button were used: gold-plated for superior ranks and silver for subordinate ranks. He also mentions buttons as military insignia which in certain cultures had uses other than on clothing alone, such as in the decoration of a weapon. As examples, he presents the "fokoš", a hussar's axe, and decorations on the club-shaped staffs of the Xhosa people. The general shortcomings of Schranka's work – brevity, jumping from topic to topic – are clearly manifested in the passages about military buttons.

Schranka categorises buttons in the chapter entitled "Die Nomenklatur der Knöpfe".[30] At the beginning of the chapter, he sorts buttons by material, use, shape, wearer, name, location of production and method of attachment. In the list which follows, which contains 484 entries, he combines all categories together in alphabetical order. We can find uniform buttons, for example, in the entry "Armee Knöpfe" (army buttons), under which there are only two categories. The first includes buttons with two eagles – meaning the buttons on uniforms of civilian imperial and royal employees or in the army. The second group includes buttons showing the initials F.J.I., which is a specific type of military uniform button on the hat, referring to Franz Joseph I. Another type of button mentioned is the "Artillerieknöpfe" (artillery button), the description and development of which he devotes considerable attention to, and which is found again under "Militërknöpfe" (military buttons). "Beamtenknöpfe" (official buttons); "Bedientenknöpfe" (service buttons), including livery buttons and buttons for footmen; and "Berufsknöpfe" (buttons associated with an occupation), which he sorts according to the type of attire, are also included in this group. "Militärknöpfe" is the most wide-ranging entry in the whole list and contains buttons sorted according to the ranks in the Austro-Hungarian army. The list also includes the shorter entry of "Soldatenknöpfe" (soldiers' buttons), which makes reference to the entry mentioned immediately above. Livery buttons are found under the entry "Wappenknöpfe" (buttons with emblems).

Schranka's work could have been a good springboard for a genuinely all-encompassing publication, probably an encyclopaedia. It should be noted, however, that the book which Waldes originally intended was never published.

The uniform button in the Waldes Museum Collection

Unfortunately, we cannot say how many uniform buttons there were in the collection donated to the museum by Jindřich Waldes. The collection expanded considerably after the museum began its activities, between 1916 and 1920. Although the museum gradually began focusing on fasteners in general, buttons retained a dominant position as far as numbers and expert attention were concerned. Wherever the production material and technology or the theme were the same for both groups, mainly in the case of ethnographic assemblages, buttons and other fasteners were put on display and published together.

The museum presented itself outwardly mainly through its ethnographic collection, archaeological finds and valuable, crafted, artistic collections of English and French origin from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Profession buttons, buckles and badges were

[30] SCHRANKA, Der Knopf…, p. 39.

never included in these promoted groups, in spite of the fact that there are significantly more of them in comparison with the collections mentioned above. The original reference numbers are found on many buttons to this day. These numbers indicate that they became part of the collection during the first major wave of acquisition after 1916 and were part of at least the first, and in some cases even the second, version of the exhibition.

The collection contains a fine range of uniform buttons – buttons made for state administration, meaning military and civilian uniforms, including regional or municipal government. There are also buttons for private subjects, in particular livery buttons from the world of the aristocracy. These are joined by buttons used on the uniforms worn by employees of transport companies, banks or trading and manufacturing companies. For the sake of completeness, it is only right to also mention club uniforms.[31]

Uniform buttons were included in the collection as one of many examples of the form which buttons can take. This achieved the aim of the museum to present fasteners in all their forms.

At the same time, uniform buttons are a good example of how comprehensive the collection and the work of the museum and its staff and associates was in relation to individual topics. The museum programme aimed to enable researchers to study all possible materials, among which three-dimensional objects were merely one category. Actual collection pieces were accompanied by specialised literature, archival background research and a variety of images – photographs and negatives, reproductions and graphic art. Studies, essays and short stories on individual topics were published in the special periodical *Zprávy Waldesova muzea* (*Waldes Museum News*).

Even though, according to the circumstantial evidence we have, uniform buttons represented about 6.5% of the collection, making it a relatively sizeable assemblage in comparison with other collections, these buttons were never given as much attention in the exhibition and in the presentation and promotion of the museum as other assemblages. It is clear from all the preserved materials connected to the activities of the museum, however, that uniform buttons were seen and treated as a specialised subject-matter at the museum.

The assemblage was generally conceived as a collection of fasteners, within which the collection of uniform fasteners was predominantly made up of buttons, followed by clasps and buckles. The collection was supplemented by around three dozen military badges. The three-dimensional collection at the museum contained more than 15,000 pieces on record. The original reference numbers preserved on collection items testify to the initial size of the collection, as do printed materials, in particular a guidebook to the exhibition from 1918,[32] period photographs and lists of additions published in certain editions of *Zprávy Waldesova musea*. The original documentation, taken from 1916 onwards, mainly for items intended for the exhibition, unfortunately no longer remains.

Acquisitions for the collection were made through donations and systematic purchasing, primarily at auctions in Vienna, Berlin, Leipzig, Munich and, of course, Prague. Purchases were handled by associates of the museum and by its director, Ješek Hofman. Jindřich Waldes and his wife Hedvika were also involved in acquisitions, bringing home pieces for the collection from their frequent trips abroad. Given that most purchases were made abroad, the number of acquisitions was also influenced by customs burdens. This was partly compensated by the

[31] HUGHES, Elizabeth, LESTER, Marion. *The Big Books of Buttons*. Augusta, Maine: New Leaf Publishers, 1993, p. 773.

[32] HOFMAN, Ješek. *Průvodce sbírkami*…, 1919.

fact that purchases in Germany were officially made through the Dresden branch of Waldes & Co. Keeping track of additions to the collection is, unfortunately, hampered by the fact that no records remain for the collection and no additions book or reference cards have been found, even though various materials that we still have tell us that proper records were made.[33] The timeline of acquisitions can be partially reconstructed from the accounting documents we have and from information about new acquisitions in *Zprávy Waldesova musea*. Here we can see that uniform buttons were mainly obtained as gifts, with a few exceptions. Most of the uniform assemblage was included in the collection at the first stage in the life of the museum, from 1916 to 1919, while there was greater acquisition activity in 1934,[34] when Czechoslovak military badge collectors' cards became part of the collection.

Let us now concentrate on some of the acquisitions published. The first issue of the second volume mentions a single purchase of uniform buttons: "an assemblage of opulent livery and costume buttons".[35] "Two impressions of livery buttons"[36] were received as a gift in the second half of 1918, sent to the museum by the Duke Schwarzenberg Central Archive in Český Krumlov. Another "36 uniform buttons"[37] were received from M. Göbel from Munich. F. A. Borovský, Director of the Museum of Decorative Arts, donated a "livery fastener" to the museum collections at around the same time. Scenographer Karel Štapfer then donated other "dress and livery buttons" to the museum. The fact that the description is only general, however, means that we have been unable to specifically identify the acquisition.

The resulting collection contained buttons made for customers from Europe, the Near East, North and South America and North Africa. They were made sometime between 1800 and 1930. The contemporary assemblage of all buttons concentrated in the Waldes – Buttons collection (sig. WK) numbers 5,724 pieces, of which uniform buttons account for 361. The uniform collection contains buttons made for uniforms used by the organisational units of state administration, the army, public transport, and for non-governmental customers – the aristocracy, churches, banks, trading companies, private transport companies and factories. Here we should also mention a genuine rarity, the so-called "exposition buttons", which were created for the uniforms worn by staff at various trade fairs or exhibitions, often of continental or worldwide significance It is therefore an assemblage that presents the maximum possible range of the uniform button. On the other hand, it is clear that it was essentially created by chance and that the composition is imbalanced. The lion's share is taken by civilian buttons used by state administrations in Central Europe. The smallest group consists of buttons for private corporations.

Military uniform buttons

The buttons on military uniforms are "a typical symbol from the political, social, national, psychological and cultural perspective".[38] They are frequently the only part of the uniform to

[33] A new inventory of pieces was carried out as of 1917. Pieces were also sorted in four separate reference groups: collections, duplicates, attire picture archive and library. There was, alongside this, a so-called scientific or research record, which ordered pieces chronologically and technologically. The scientific record was maintained in Czech and German. Zprávy Waldesova muzea, *Sbírky*, vol. 2, no. 1, Praha-Vršovice 1917, p. 25.

[34] According to the information on the reverse of the card.

[35] Sbírky. In: *Zprávy Waldesova muzea knoflíků*, vol. 2, 1917, no. 1, p. 24.

[36] Sbírky. In: *Zprávy Waldesova muzea knoflíků*, vol. 3, 1918, no. 3–4, p. 69.

[37] Sbírky. In: *Zprávy Waldesova*…, p. 69.

[38] VOGELTANZ, Jan. *Stejnokroje 1848–1849*. České Budějovice: Karmášek, 2009, not paginated.

endure as a reminder. They are an aspect of military symbolism and their use is governed by binding regulations. As identifiers of membership of an organisational unit of the army, they are just as important as the colour of the uniform, badges, symbols and markings.

These are generally buttons made under public contracts. Three-dimensional processing is typical. The use of an established heraldic motif is not a condition, in contrast to the uniforms worn by state administration. The symbols are commonly associated with the characteristics of weapons or the number of the division. The colour of the metal used differs for different ranks.

The oldest uniform buttons in the collection were pieces from the Roman Empire that were used on military attire. Unfortunately, these have not been preserved. Only Roman legionnaires' buttons remain in the collection to this day. The largest part of the assemblage consists of buttons from the time of WWI that became obsolete on account of the political and social changes about to occur. These buttons were mainly worn by the soldiers of Austro-Hungary, Prussia, the Ottoman Empire and Tsarist Russia. The only tableau of military buttons from the permanent exhibition to have been preserved is highly valuable in this regard.

There are also examples of buttons worn by British infantry after 1855 and two buttons from the US Army, General Service, used by all branches of the Service, except the Engineers. According to the black veneering, these date back to 1902–1918 (Figure 1).

A button worn in France by the Republican Guard from sometime around 1793 is also highly-prized.

The collection also contains buttons from the Czech lands. There are buttons used by the uniformed bodies of the Czechoslovak Republic between 1921 and 1930 and collector's cards with buttons and badges from after 1930. These cards are also one of the last documented and recorded acquisitions made for the museum collection, in 1934.

Figure 1: *Uniform Buttons, The Great Seal of the United States, blackened bronze, Scovill MFG CO Waterbury (big) / BUTTON WORKS NY (small), USA, 1902–1918*, Ø 15.5–23.0 mm, MSB collection, inv. no. WK1843

Buttons on the civilian uniforms of state administrations

The largest assemblage of uniform buttons as far as number is concerned is that of civilian uniforms for state administrations. Buttons from Austro-Hungary and the Germanic lands, in particular Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony, prevail. These are found in the collection in several variations and duplicates. This is again caused by the change of symbolism in the interwar period. There are also buttons featuring the state emblem of the Kingdom of Prussia. Two interesting series of buttons also feature here. The first is a set of buttons for the state authorities of the Electorate of Hesse from the end of the nineteenth century (Figure 2). These consist of a coat of arms and an indication of the particular authority. The second series features quality brass buttons worn by the officials of Russian guberniya (governorates) from before WWI.

Figure 2 (a,b): *Buttons, Electorate of Hesse Authorities: railway, post, criminal court, brass or tin alloy, I. Forstmann, Cassel, Electorate of Hesse, after 1843*, Ø 21.7–23.7 mm, MSB collection, inv. no. WK1722, WK1724

Figure 3: *Button, Strasbourg Office for the collection of excise duty, tin alloy, France, until 1871*, Ø 22.6 mm, MSB collection, inv. no. WK1677

The buttons, which reflect a specific profession under the heading of state administration, were worn by people such as post office workers. One valuable example is a button from the uniform of a worker at the Strasbourg excise duty collection authority (Figure 3).

As far as buttons featuring a state emblem are concerned, we should certainly not forget the "informal" emblem of the French Republic, where the emblem is accompanied by Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur and a chain, dating back to the time after 1881, along with the motto "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité". The emblem was used after 1902. Buttons showing the state emblems of Bolivia and Chile are part of the same group, in both cases accompanied by a badge in the same style.

Figure 4: *Livery button, made for House of Beaufort-Spontin, brass, Heinrich Jauner, K. K. Hofkammergraveur, Wien, Austria, 1850–1900*, Ø 28.3 mm, MSB collection, inv. no. WK3223

Livery buttons

There are many types of livery buttons. As is also the case in other collections, the most abundant are the livery buttons of the aristocracy. One example is a button bearing the coat of arms of the Beaufort-Spontin family (Figure 4). A variant of the coat of arms is used after 1813, when the family settled in the lands of the Austrian monarchy. The miniature of the coat of arms is not particularly discernible on account of the many figures.

Another interesting chapter is written by the buttons worn by the staff of church dignitaries. These invariably show the single, specific emblem of one person and the buttons can therefore be dated with accuracy. By way of example we present a button showing the crest of ThDr. Bedřich Egon Fürstenberg, Cardinal and 6th Archbishop of Olomouc from 1853 to 1892 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: *Livery button, made for House of ThDr. Bedřich Egon Fürstenberg, silvered tin alloy, TW WIEN SUPERFEIN, Wien, Austria, after 1853*, Ø 29 mm, MSB collection, inv. no. WK1776

Figure 6: *Button, made for Egyptian Bonded Warehouses G. L., brass, 1900*, Ø 22.5 mm, MSB collection, inv. no. WK1792

Figure 7: *Button, made for tire company C.C. G.P. COH, zinc alloy, Germany, after 1895*, Ø 25.2 mm, MSB collection, inv. no. WK1732

Other uniform buttons

As mentioned above, employees in other professions also wear uniforms. The collection contains buttons that were mostly worn by employees in the transport sector, which in our case means railways, trams and maritime navigation. The first of these is represented by a button featuring a stylised locomotive and the inscription Berlin-Anhal.*tische* Eisenbahn, i.e. the Berlin-Anhalt Eastern Line, from sometime around 1860. Railways are also represented by an aesthetically attractive button collar badge from 1914, worn by the employees of the Austro-Hungarian railway. The dominant feature is the motif of a winged wheel, in the highly-purist stylisation that belongs to the pre-War period. The Americas are represented in this group by a button from the uniform worn by the Mississippi Delta Railroad in USA. The railway uses the emblem, in the form of a triangle, to this day.

Tram transport is represented by a button from the uniform worn by employees of the German city of Kassel (WK02037), accompanied by the city's crest. A company which was responsible for tram transport in what is now Turkey is represented by two buttons from the uniform worn by the Belgian banking institution Société Générale de Tramways, founded in 1874 by Banque de Bruxelles as a financial institution focussing exclusively on the development of tram transport abroad, in this case the Ottoman Empire. The inscription TRAMWAYS on the front is accompanied by the symbol of a half-moon and a five-pointed star. Shipping is represented by buttons from the uniforms worn at the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd Company, a Dutch shipping company headquartered in Amsterdam. The company was founded in 1899.

Trade is represented by a button from the uniform worn by an employee who evidently worked at the Egyptian Bonded Warehouses G. L. (Figure 6). Bonded Warehouses were found in port cities and served as warehouses for goods before clearance through customs. Manufacturing, meanwhile, is represented by a button from the uniform worn by factory employees of a company from Hanover, Germany that made pneumatic tires for vehicles of all kinds, marked with the initials C.C. G.P. COH (denoting Continental-Caoutchouc und Gutta-Percha Compagnie). The button dates back to 1895, when the name was registered (Figure 7).

Presentation in the exhibition

The museum exhibition was conceived chronologically. Special attention was devoted to technology in general and to the folk fastener. The button was presented within individual periods of time based on the technology of production and the material used. Uniform buttons were therefore incorporated in the category of metal fasteners from individual time periods. We can now only speculate as to the extent to which uniform buttons were presented. Only one complete exhibition tableau[39] from the exhibition remains, presenting military buttons from the uniforms worn by the forces of Austro-Hungary, Prussia, Tsarist Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Romania, Switzerland and Bavaria. There are 107 buttons in total, all made after 1861 and not later than during WWI. Some of the original designations are incorrect. The tableau comes from the first reinstallation of the exhibition, in 1919 and 1920, during which the original brown cardboard mats were replaced by cardboard covered with grey-blue felt. The buttons were also newly attached in such a way that they could be easily removed if required. Logical assemblages of all related objects were created at the Waldes Museum. The strict separation of the collection into buttons and other fasteners only occurred when putting the pieces on record at the Museum of Glass and Jewellery.

Uniform buttons and the publication work of the museum

If we were to concentrate only on the specialised texts in *Zprávy Waldesova musea*, we would not have much to work with. The first issue deals with uniform buttons more than other topics, with two articles focusing on the subject. The first text is taken from another periodical, which was common practice for *Zprávy Waldesova musea*. The author of the article was Richard D. Steuardt[40] from New York and was published in two parts under the title "Vojenské knoflíky z americké občanské války" (Military Buttons from the American Civil War).[41] It is possible that the acquisition of American military buttons and the inclusion of this article in the museum magazine are linked to Waldes' frequent journeys to the USA. The study is short, but densely packed with information about the classification of buttons, the organisation of the army, the designs on buttons, production and trade, and provides significant examples. The other text on uniform buttons is, by contrast, a melancholy short story that presents the buttons from a military uniform as an important item of remembrance for family and friends.[42] Military buttons are mentioned elsewhere in studies that focus on presenting the collections of other museums, but only very marginally so.

The museum's archive and specialised library

The museum began systematically building a specialised library and "archive of images" from the very outset. The materials preserved from both these collections were incorporated

[39] kw9/2018 a,b - The tableau was seriously damaged during the clearance of the museum by being cut into two.

[40] The name of the author was incorrectly stated as "Richard D. STENARD" in the first part published. Richard D. Steuart (1880-1951) was a prominent collector of buttons from the American Civil War. He came from Baltimore and his collection is mentioned in specialised literature.

[41] STEUART, Richard, D. Vojenské knoflíky z americké občanské války. 1. part. In: *Zprávy musea knoflíků Jindřich Waldes Praha-Vršovice (Zprávy Waldesova musea knoflíků)*, vol. 1, 1916, no. 1, pp. 8–12; STEUART, Richard, D. Vojenské knoflíky z americké občanské války. 2. část. In: *Zprávy musea knoflíků Jindřich Waldes Praha-Vršovice (Zprávy Waldesova musea knoflíků)*. vol. 1, 1916, no. 2, pp. 37–39.

[42] Knoflík z uniformy, In: *Zprávy musea knoflíků Jindřich Waldes Praha-Vršovice (Zprávy Waldesova musea knoflíků)*, roč. 1, 1916, č. 1, p. 23.

in the Waldes Museum Archive after the museum closed. As a result, we now know the sort of two-dimensional materials that potential researchers had available to them. One, for example, is a volume of art prints with coloured depictions of Württemberg military uniforms from 1638 to 1854, numbering 20 pages.[43] Other material focussed on uniforms takes the form of a set of glass negatives that capture modern uniforms and medieval armour.[44] The images are accompanied by photographs of soldiers from different armies.[45] Articles from Austrian and German periodicals in particular are among the specialised materials.[46]

Conclusion

Uniform buttons are a sizeable part of the collection to have been preserved from the Waldes Museum – Collection of Clothing Fasteners. They are also important in terms of what they tell us. Unfortunately, we cannot prove that they were part of the elemental museum collection to which founder Jindřich Waldes was devoted. Most buttons became part of the collection during the first stage of the existence of the museum, the most active in terms of acquisitions. Even if the collection of uniform buttons was created by chance, a relatively representative assemblage was gathered, containing the traditional buttons of military and civilian uniforms and livery and the buttons of private enterprises or those of the servants of aristocratic families and church dignitaries. We cannot say with certainty whether all the uniform buttons identified were included in the permanent exhibition at the museum, although we can assume this was the case at least for those that still have reference numbers and can confirm it for buttons on the only exhibition tableau of this type of object which remains. Uniform buttons were also the subject-matter of publication activity in the museum periodical *Zprávy Waldesova muzea*, albeit to a lesser extent than for other collections. Other study materials on the topic were also gathered in the form of images and articles from periodicals of the time to serve the needs of potential researchers. The subject of uniform buttons is also considered in the unpublished monography written by E. M. Schranka, *Der Knopf*. In spite of various objections to the creation of this work, its merit lies mainly in having processed extensive and still-unused background research into sources, literature and periodicals.

The aim of the present article was to encapsulate the significance of uniform buttons in the collection and the activities of the "Waldes Museum". Uniform buttons were treated in the same way as other assemblages at the Waldes Museum, but were not given as much exposure in publication work. The documentary materials we still have to this day are preserved in the Waldes Museum Archive and the three-dimensional pieces that have survived are kept at the Museum of Glass and Jewellery in Jablonec nad Nisou, where they can serve researchers as useful reference material on the subject. The legacy of the Waldes Museum and of its collection remains to this day.

[43] MSB WM Archive, box M03.
[44] MSB WM Archive, box M113.
[45] MSB WM Archive, box M141.
[46] MSB WM Archive, boxes M58, M68.

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"Bones in the sandbox": museum as "world picture" vs museum as "lifeworld"

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"Bones in the sandbox": museum as "world picture" vs museum as "lifeworld"
This article deals with the issues of museum communication and interpretation of museum exhibits in a philosophical and cultural context. As an example, it considers two different ways of presenting palaeontological material – specifically, the skeleton of a southern mammoth – revealing differences in how the semantic content is interpreted. The first method – the traditional approach of assembling the skeleton – gives a "world picture" of a certain era, as it appears to a palaeontologist. The second approach presents the skeleton in a "sandbox", representing how it was found during excavations, such that viewers deal not with the interpreted "ready-made" material, but with the contemporary experienced reality – the "life-world", the "raw" source material. This allows visitors to realize their own creative potential and to recreate the nature of the Pleistocene epoch in their imagination. Thus, through the mutual correlation of the roles exhibition's author and of the visitor as an interpreter, the semantic field of museum communication expands. In Heidegger's conception, a "picture of the world" hides the world rather than explains it, while the "life world" represents it as it is.

Keywords: southern mammoth skeleton, palaeontology, museum exhibit presentation, interpretation, Heidegger, world picture.

"Bones in the sandbox! Bones in the sandbox!" a five-year-old boy shouted, jumping in delight around an unusual exhibit in the Stavropol Museum of Natural History. Imagine the boy's amazement when his parents told him that those were the bones of a huge elephant that lived nearby in times immemorial. "Aren't elephants only able to live in hot Africa?" asked the

child. "And why are these bones so scattered around that they don't look like a skeleton at all? Who put them here in such a mess and why?"

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Italian palaeontologist Filippo Nesti produced a description of a fossil elephant, the southern mammoth (*Archidiskodon meridionalis*), endemic to the vast territory of Eurasia in the Early Pleistocene. Relatively full skeletons of this species are very rare and well-known. The first to be found (1825) is on display in the Paris National Museum of Palaeontology (part of the French National Museum of Natural History in Paris). The second (found in 1940 near Nogaysk in Ukraine and moved to the Zoological Institute in Leningrad in 1949) is in the Zoological Museum of the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. The third is housed in the Tbilisi Institute of Paleobiology, and two more, found in 1960 and 2007 are in the Stavropol Museum of Natural History respectively[1]. The academic significance of all the finds of remains belonging to this species lies in their value in clarifying and specifying the picture of the evolution of mammoth species and subspecies, while illustrating their diversity in the Late Pliocene and Early Pleistocene (2.6 to 0.7 million years ago).

Since 1962, when a skeleton of *Archidiskodon meridionalis* found in a sandpit near the town of Georghievsk was examined, restored and put on display in the exhibition space of the Nature Department of Stavropol Museum of Natural History, it has become the most prominent item not only of the palaeontological collection, but of the entire museum fund. With the museum's guides invariably pointing out the uniqueness of the find and describing the life of this specimen in detail, the mammoth's skeleton has acquired a symbolic meaning: the territory of the Stavropol region has become the birthplace of elephants and mammoths in visitors' minds. The myth that "Stavropol region is the birthplace of elephants" was born.[2] The skeleton, more than four meters high, had an inevitable impact on the visual structure of the palaeontological exhibition. Although the exhibition displays palaeontological objects which are no less rare – such as skeletons of extinct species such as a cetotherium whale (*Cetotherium cf. maicopicum*), a dolphin (*Anacharsis orbus*) and a rhinoceros (*Elasmotherium sibiricum*) – the southern mammoth skeleton, due to its huge size and expressively curved tusks, makes the strongest impression.

In 2007, the uniqueness of the skeleton from the sandpit in Georghievsk was challenged by yet another startling discovery: a second skeleton of the southern mammoth *Archidiskodon meridionalis* was found in Novoaleksandrovsky Administrative Okrug (Stavropol Krai). In the opinion of palaeontologists, multiple finds of almost full skeletons in one region of the territory of Russia represent extremely rare events in the history of science.[3]

The museum staff was overwhelmed with joy: the new acquisition significantly increased not only the size but also the value of the palaeontological collection. The ubiquitous media attention allowed all residents of the region – who were eagerly looking forward to seeing the second mammoth skeleton next to the first one – to share in this joy. However, the restoration

[1] GARUTT, Wadim E. A skeleton of the Southern Elephant, *Archidiskodon meridionalis* (Nesti, 1825), from a sand-pit near Georghievsk, Northern Caucasus, Russia. In: *Cranium, jrg.* 15(1), July 1998, p. 33–38.

[2] The expression "birthplace of elephants" in the Russian language has a sarcastic connotation: it generally refers to a place praised by local patriots (as a rule, exaggerating the merits of their small homeland). In this instance, the connotation is even deeper: the sarcasm consists in the refutation of sarcasm – the elephant (mammoth) remains were indeed found here.

[3] MASCHENKO, E.N., SCHVYREVA, A.K., KALMYKOV, N.P. The second complete skeleton of Archidiskodon meridionalis (Elephantidae, Proboscidea) from the Stavropol Region, Russia. In: *Quaternary Science Reviews* 30, 2011, p. 2273–88.

Figure 1: *The bones of the southern mammoth skeleton, after conservation and restoration, are displayed in the museum as a representation of excavations.* (Photo courtesy of the Nature Department of the Stavropol Museum of Natural History)

work required time and incurred significant costs, which prompted the museum staff to take an unexpected decision: after the most indispensable conservation and restoration work, the skeleton was displayed the way it was found: the excavation picture was reproduced (Figure 1).

Certainly, in the era of interactive museums and the fashion for performance, this decision seems neither revolutionary nor even extraordinary, but in this situation it turned out to be very creative.

The impression stirred by the "life-sized" representation of the excavation turned out to unprecedentedly strong, and the resulting excitement found its reflection in the public mind through the aforementioned meme: "Stavropol is the birthplace of elephants". Despite its sarcastic tone, this motto gave its name to one of the projects presented within the framework of a competition for a grant from the Vladimir Potanin Foundation (*A Changing Museum in a Changing World*). As a result of the activities of the museum staff and the media, the theme of mammoths and elephants became popular in schools, and all kinds of festivals, contests and quizzes – with an appropriately offbeat titles such as *Elephant Protection Day* – took place. An exhibition named *Elephants in My Life* was organised using materials provided by Stavropol residents, such as arts-and-craft items, essays and other literary works. Writing and art competitions, contests and festivals were held, and various types of memorabilia and other merchandise were made.

However, the sandbox exhibition was only temporary. After the conservation works were completed, the long and laborious process of reconstructing the skeleton lay ahead. As a rule, during preparation of an exhibition, its space is closed to visitors. However, the museum team decided otherwise: the visitors were allowed – indeed, encouraged – to witness the skeleton's

installation. As a result, the idea of an "expo-action" attraction, entitled *Putting the Elephant Back on Its Feet*, was born (Figure 2).

Figure 2: *The poster invites visitors to witness and participate in a rare event: the installation of the second southern mammoth skeleton in the exhibition space.*

Figure 3: *Young visitors watch the southern mammoth skeleton installation process in the exhibition space* (photo courtesy of the Nature Department of the Stavropol Museum of Natural History)

Figure 4: *The exhibit after the installation of the second southern mammoth skeleton* (photo courtesy of the Nature Department of the Stavropol Museum of Natural History)

The visitors witnessed the hard work of the museum staff; they could hear the conversations of experts and watch the action, ask questions, express their opinions about what was going on, offer help and even entice the museum staff to deliver impromptu lectures[4] (Figure 3).

When the reconstruction works were completed and the second skeleton finally took its place next to the first one (Figure 4), some of the visitors could hardly conceal their disappointment. The former exhibit representing the excavation turned out to be something more meaningful than just a momentary snapshot of the recently obtained valuable results. It provided visual images and information that were significant for the visitors and were telling them something important. Two almost identical skeletons next to each other look less informative than one restored (complete) skeleton and one skeleton in the natural environment (soil). The "bones in the sandbox" exhibit gave the visitors the opportunity to mentally assemble the skeleton into the shape of the nearby sample and then mentally reproduce an image of a living mammoth, thus finding confirmation of the authenticity of the images and the trueness of alaeontology.

The communicative peculiarity of a museum is the "authenticity" of the items which make up its collection. A museum holds "physical evidence" of existence (of life, of being). The verification process requires proof "here and now". Belief in objects and documents has, in the modern era, grown stronger than belief in God. A stamped document, a test-tube full of liquid – these are things made by man; they are symbols of authenticity and of reality (truth) in a way that is comparable to natural objects. What does a museum represent to its visitors? An image of the world? The truth about the world? A model of the world? Or the world itself?

[4] SHVYREVA, A.K. (2016) Find, save and pass on to descendants (the story of the acquisition of a single exhibit). In: *Ninth Prozritelev's readings. Materials of the Interregional Scientific-Practical Conference of November 24–25, 2016. To the 110th anniversary of the Stavropol Scientific Archival Commission*, p. 252–257. [In Russian].

A thing is real (true) because of the fact of its existence. But, if it is a museum object, there is something that it signifies. Napoleon's bicorne hat asserts the reality of the Great French Revolution and the European culture of the nineteenth century; archaeological ceramic finds assert the historicity of ancient cultures; palaeontological bones assert the historicity of extinct animal species. And what kind of truth do the bones of the southern mammoth that became extinct a million years ago tell a present-day person?

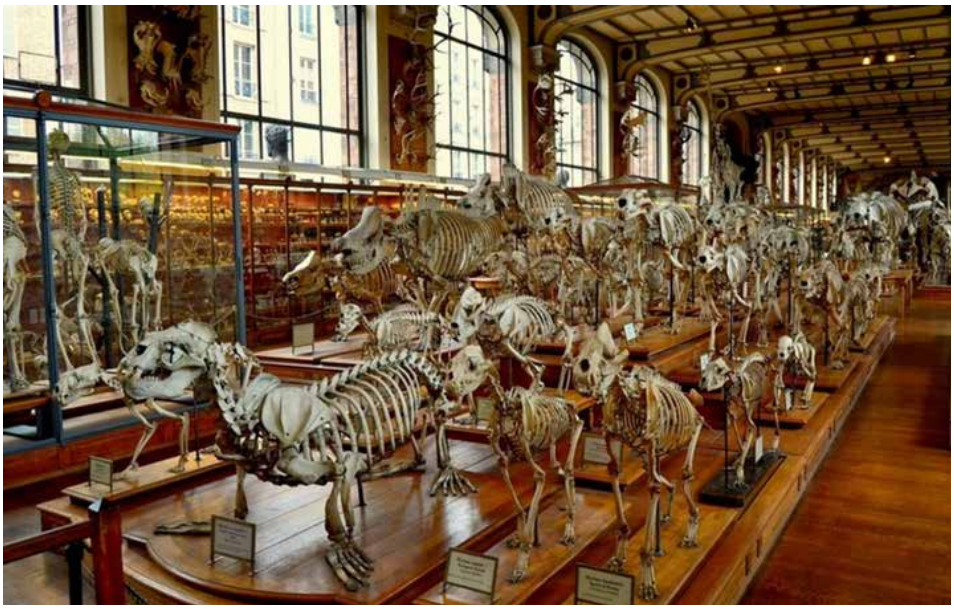

Figure 5: *A "skeleton parade" in the Gallery of Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy of the French National Museum of Natural History in Paris* (photo from http://www.stena.ee/blog/muzej-skeletov).

In palaeontological museums, visitors see skeletons of extinct animals accompanied by sculptures or pictures showing what they looked like. Undoubtedly, the images accurately depict the specimen which once existed and do not contradict scientific method and understanding. But what do we see? Do we see a bygone world, or an image of a bygone world born in the mind of a palaeontologist? What world picture appears in front of a visitor of such an exhibition? (Figure 5).

In our case it is important that the creative process of imagination begins not from the resulting image of the assembled skeleton, but from the image of the "resting bones", i.e., from what one could see if one were "lucky". Such a meeting with the past is a hundred times more valuable, since it happens directly, without intermediaries. Such a meeting has all the attributes of a real discovery, an insight, an exit from the Platonic Cave. A find in this instance remains a find, rather than a story about a find (even if not in a verbal, but in a visual form). A visitor intuitively feels that there is too much of the narrator in the story, and not so much of whatever the narrator is talking about. Why has a world picture become necessary? In order to hide the world. This is exactly what Martin Heidegger wrote about when he argued that the world in modern times had turned into a picture.[5]

[5] HEIDEGGER M. *The question concerning technology, and other essays.* New York: Harper & Row, 1977, p. 129.

The history of the modern museum's evolvement is inextricably linked with the dynamics of worldview frameworks: religion, philosophy, myth, poetic perception and so on.

The museum, by origin, inherited the features of its "ancestors": the temple (Mouseion/ Musaeum – Temple of the Muses), the depository and the educational institution. The initiation of temple construction in human history testifies to the emerging need to realise (materialise) the invisible sacral, to make it apprehensible, to make its sensory perception possible. It is quite likely that the birth of fine art was due to the same need for objectifying mental images. The division of the world into the sacred and the profane necessitated new behavioural customs: what may be done in the everyday (profane) space is unacceptable in the sacred space. Moreover, whatever is done in the sacred space should not be done in the profane space. Divine power and will are manifested in sacred times and sacred spaces. The secularisation of common perception (public consciousness) has not destroyed the sacred, but transformed it into a "law of nature", as independent from personal will (that is, as far beyond the control of people) as the sacred. A secular person also has a sphere of the daily (the routine), the changeable, the temporary, the controllable as well as a sphere of the eternal, the natural, the unshakable. A spectator in the theatre cannot influence the events taking place on stage, but can make visiting the theatre one of the events of his personal life. Overcoming naive visions of the cosmos through the method of philosophizing has allowed discovery of the sources of the endless birth of the myth. If the myth cannot be mastered (destroyed), it should be rendered an ally in mastering the world.

The first museums, which combined the functions of a temple and an educational institution, were the Temple of Lyceum, dedicated to Apollo Lyceum, and the Academy of Plato on the site of the sanctuary. Certainly, one should not overlook the fact that the temple staff were trained to perform sacerdotal functions even before then, but Plato and Aristotle philosophised not only on religious subjects in their Mouseions.

While the temple was born as a result of the need for realization of the sacred, the museum in the modern (or rather "modernist") understanding, starting from the 1830s, represents a reified "world picture". This reification occurs through removing things from the real (pragmatic) world and transferring them to the symbolic world.

The museification of a thing, be it unique or commonplace, is the process of changing the semiotic status of that object from pragmatic (signified) to symbolic (signifying). In other words, an object which is talked about and used becomes a thing through which something is communicated; it transforms from the subject of communication into a means of communication.

The museum "model of the world" is a secondary structure in relation to the "world picture" or the "model of the world" as phenomena of common perception (public consciousness). Just as facts are registered (recorded) as being initially loaded with theory, the selection of material (items) for a museum collection takes place based on the "world picture" of the museum specialist, on the museum's development concept, and so on.

Virtually any exhibition offers a "world picture" or, at least, a fragment of the "world picture". Hence the paradoxical conclusion: in order for the museum to represent the "lifeworld", the "lifeworld" should become the next "world picture".

At first glance, the world picture appears to be a comprehensive and systemised view of the world, a consistent depiction of its parts. And the fuller it is, the less distortedly it reflects the world in its entirety. However, as Heidegger convincingly pointed out, when creating a

world picture, something is brought into it by the creator and something is brought into it as a consequence of the act of its creation.[6] And here a semantic shift takes place: we perceive the world picture as the most comprehensive and, importantly, the most natural representation of the things which exist. But is it really so? "With the word 'picture'", Heidegger observes,

we think first of all of a copy of something. Accordingly, the world picture would be a painting, so to speak, of what is as a whole. But "world picture" means more than this. We mean by it the world itself, the world as such, what is, in its entirety, just as it is normative and binding for us. "Picture" here does not mean some imitation, but rather what sounds forth in the colloquial expression, "We get the picture" [literally, we are in the picture] concerning something. This means the matter stands before us exactly as it stands with it for us.[7]

But what is meant by "the matter stands before us exactly as it stands with it for us"? And what would "the matter stands differently" mean in that instance? This means that a representation (an image) of something, including the whole world, in the form of a picture, is not the only, and certainly not the best option for representation (depiction). To put the matter exactly "as it stands" means to choose some kind of representation. This choice may be accidental (the first option that comes to mind), or selected intentionally (for any reasons the author of the exhibit believes to be necessary).

The influence of the "world picture" on the interpretation of things, on the ways of compiling things in a collection, is described in detail by Jan Dolák in his article entitled *Thing in Museum. Museum Collection as Structure*. The author cites the arguments of the leading philosophers of the twentieth century and the contemporary age confirming the systemic nature of interpretation of a thing as such, and opposes Michel Foucault's concept of the museum as "a space of government [state power]". [8] A museum does not strive to collect everything. A museum as a "world picture" – or, more precisely, a "world portrait" or a "text about the world" – cannot reproduce all the attributes and characteristics of the world itself, just as there cannot be a text describing everything. At the same time, the critical nature of modern-age thinking certainly manifests itself in the museum sphere as well.

For the sake of consistency in using the metaphor of a picture, we can say that different artists, obviously, paint very different pictures, and even photographers are able to show their individuality in or bring their subjective viewpoint into their photographs. And although there are no special signs of subjectivity in the reconstructed skeleton, the intuitive craving for authenticity and primary-ness still exists as an implicit interest for a museum visitor. No matter how precise the copy is, the original remains an absolute value. Although the reconstructed skeleton is not a copy, it is unconsciously perceived by our contemporaries as something artificial and purely presentational. Meanwhile, the exact reconstruction of the place where the bones were discovered and the bones themselves look like – and essentially are – traces.

All this creates a fairly strong sensation of touching prehistoric reality for the visitor. There is even the feeling of involvement in the discovery, the illusion of being an eyewitness, or at least a person examining the "scene of the event" in order to form their own opinion. However, a skeleton might be assembled flawlessly in terms of technique – there is no subjectivity here, as each bone is either in its place or not, that is, the skeleton is either "right" or "wrong". Subjectivity begins with a contextual interpretation of the skeleton. The context is that the

[6] HEIDEGGER, *The question concerning technology*… p. 129.

[7] HEIDEGGER M. *The question concerning technology, and other essays.* New York: Harper & Row, 1977, p. 129.

[8] DOLÁK, Jan. (2018) Thing in museum. Museum collection as structure. In: *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 2, 2018, p. 25–35.

"background knowledge" of a palaeontologist might be subjective (otherwise there would be no academic discussions). As Heidegger continues:

"To get into the picture" [literally, to put oneself into the picture] with respect to something means to set whatever it is, itself, in place before oneself just in the way that it stands with it, and to have it fixedly before oneself as set up in this way. But a decisive determinant in the essence of the picture is still missing. "We get the picture" concerning something does not mean only that what is, is set before us, is represented to us, in general, but that what is stands before us – in all that belongs to it and all that stands together in it – as a system. "To get the picture" throbs with being acquainted with something, with being equipped and prepared for it. Where the world becomes picture, what is, in its entirety, is juxtaposed as that for which man is prepared and which, correspondingly, he therefore intends to bring before himself and have before himself, and consequently intends in a decisive sense to set in place before himself".[9]

So, what can be the aim of the authors of a museum exhibition? What exactly do they want to show the visitors, what ideas do they want to impart, and what analogies do they want to avoid? The most common wish of museum workers is rooted in the Age of Enlightenment, which gave birth to the idea of a public good related to the popularization of scientific discoveries and technical inventions. In this case, the "picture of the exhibition" is aimed at illustrating the picture of natural evolution or the picture of social development. Specialised exhibitions on the history of painting or the history of costume only confirm the general trend: a museum should confirm the knowledge acquired at school and strengthen interest towards the popularization of scientific knowledge. Heidegger continues:

Hence world picture, when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as picture. What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth. Wherever we have the world picture, an essential decision takes place regarding what is, in its entirety. The Being of whatever is, is sought and found in the representedness of the latter.[10]

We dare to put forward a hypothesis: a museum visitor intuitively searches for things which are not included in any paintings – as if they want to be alone (face-to-face) with things and have the right to draw the necessary pictures themselves or not to draw them at all. Traces turn out to be more valuable for direct contemplation than a reconstruction of whoever left these traces (no matter how realistic the reconstruction is). Visitors want to look at the traces and to finish drawing a picture of a phenomenon or an event of the distant past in their own imagination. And the point here is not even the fact that modern people suspect that someone else skilfully controls their impressions – although such a danger exists and it is realised. The main thing, perhaps, is that "touching" things from a bygone era is valuable in itself, it provides a direct and almost physical link to the past, which no stories and no recently made drawings can replace. No wonder that Heidegger wrote that as a result of the arrival of the new age, not only did the world turn into a picture, but also that the person inside reality ("*that which is*") turned into Subiectum. "That the world becomes picture is one and the same event with the event of man's becoming *subiectum* in the midst of that which is".[11]

[9] Heidegger, *The question concerning technology*… p. 129.
[10] Heidegger, *The question concerning technology*… p. 129.
[11] Heidegger, *The question concerning technology*… p. 132.

Without going too much into detail regarding Heidegger's philosophical concept aimed at overcoming subjectivity, we will point out only those negative consequences of the transformation of "just a person" into a "person as a subject" which are related to the issue of a museum exhibition. We are talking about the phenomena identified by Heidegger which determined the spirit of modernism: the art of modernism and the culture of modernism. "A third equally essential phenomenon of the modern period lies in the event of art's moving into the purview of aesthetics. That means that the art work becomes the object of mere subjective experience, and that consequently art is considered to be an expression of human life".[12]

The entirety of an exhibition, be it of historical or palaeontological material, or a work of art placed in the museum space, embedded into the "body" of the exhibition, turns the author of the exhibition into an experience organiser and a participant in a joint experience. An externally controlled experience might represent some kind of propaganda, an element of the system of education and upbringing, a means of socialization, and so on. The incomprehensible effect of this means of socialisation lies in the fact that it remains imperceptible for a very long time and only gradually gives rise to an unconscious desire to remove all kinds of intermediaries who are also subjects. And even if those intermediary subjects have no specific goal or bad intentions, why mix one's own subjectivity with someone else's (which, by the way, turns out to be in a priority position)? That is why the desire not to add someone else's experience (prepared in advance and, therefore, highly sophisticated) to your own experience should have sooner-or-later arisen in the minds of museum visitors.

Another essential phenomenon of modernism, identified by Heidegger, links the understanding of activity with the notion of culture in a new way.

A fourth modern phenomenon manifests itself in the fact that human activity is conceived and consummated as culture. Thus culture is the realization of the highest values, through the nurture and cultivation of the highest goods of man. It lies in the essence of culture, as such nurturing, to nurture itself in its turn and thus to become the politics of culture.[13]

Thus, culture becomes self-sufficient and turns from a means into a goal: culture for the sake of culture itself. Now culture is no longer a way of improving one's own soul (Cicero) and not a mechanism of transition from the world of nature into the realm of freedom (Kant), but something completely different. As follows from the quote above, culture becomes a kind of politics. This implies that the participant in an experience and the organiser of a joint experience has some kind of preset goal unknown to the visitor, which is inherent in any policy, including the cultural one. And this preset goal, this "someone else's subjectivity", becomes increasingly felt as typical museum visitors become more knowing.

Research in the sphere of the philosophy of science and the sociology of knowledge has allowed us to speak of the socio-cultural contexts of creation and the interpretation of scientific theories, including those pertaining to natural science. Therefore, not only art, not only the world of politics and history, but even pictures of natural reality appear to be increasingly dependent on culture, on society, on someone's prejudices and someone's interests. For instance, a display of fossils can assert the principles and paradigms of the evolutionary theory in the sphere of biology, thereby participating in its popularization. However, a visitor who has heard at least a bit about the disputes between the representatives of this school of biology and their opponents (Neo-Lamarckists or supporters of the gene drift concept)

[12] Heidegger, *The question concerning technology*… p. 116

[13] Heidegger, *The question concerning technology*… p. 116.

might feel a certain mistrust towards the exhibition, followed by suspicion and a desire to rid themselves of the world picture imposed on them.

The foregoing should not be understood as a demand for maximum non-participation of the exhibition creators in arranging the material or forming a certain picture with it. This is hardly possible and would be tantamount to the removal of the research staff from the museum. Equally meaningless would be a demand for creating exhibitions in the genre of the scene examination records. However, the relationship between the visitors and the organisers of a museum exhibition should acquire the quality of communication, that is, become as transparent as possible and even grow into the relation of partnership.

Worth recalling, in this regard, is the essay by Roland Barthes entitled *Shock Photos*, where the author describes a photo exhibition in the Galerie d'Orsay. Many photos that are intended to shock the viewer, in the opinion of the author, fail to do so, because it was the author of the photo who experienced a shock. The viewer may only agree with the author at the level of rational perception.

This is because, as we look at them, we are in each case dispossessed of our judgment: someone has shuddered for us, reflected for us, judged for us; the photographer has left us nothing – except a simple right of intellectual acquiescence: we are linked to these images only by a technical interest; overindicated by the artist himself, for us they have no history, we can no longer invent our own reception of this synthetic nourishment, already perfectly assimilated by its creator.[14]

The value of any museum exhibition consists in the fact that it should not (and cannot) offer a product already "chewed and digested" by someone. Even in the case of a strict conceptualization or an ideological message, there is still some kind of "gap", a space for the co-creation by the viewer.

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Professional standards in museum pedagogy in the international context

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Professional standards in museum pedagogy in the international context
Professional standards of museum work are defined by the clearly formulated International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics and by the activity of professional organisations on both national and international levels. The goal to establish the general requirements for the education of museum workers was mainly pursued by the ICOM and some of its committees. Since museum pedagogy has developed into an independent discipline and museum pedagogue (educator) has became a full-value profession, the specialised commissions within individual professional organisations and the efforts of individual researchers have helped to gradually transform these general requirements into specific standards of museum pedagogy. These standards reflect both the scope of activities and necessary competencies of museum pedagogues, and the expected quality of education practice in museums (best practice). The varied views of professional standards for museum pedagogues in the international context represent a source of inspiration in the sphere of Czech museum pedagogy, which is undergoing a dynamic development in several areas of its activities (educational practice, consolidated legislative position) and gradually formulating its own professional standards.

Keywords: professional standards, museum pedagogue, museum work, museum pedagogy

Introduction

Museum pedagogues – and museum pedagogy as an independent discipline – pursue not only direct education activities within individual institutions but also strive to achieve excellence and expertise in meeting the needs of museum audiences. In the Czech Republic, the problem of professional standards in the sphere of museum pedagogy represents a relatively topical subject of interest. In the international context, this issue has been paid attention repeatedly, sometimes also in close relation to the question of ethical standards of museum work. An increased interest in museum education in the past decade is also tightly connected with changes induced by the curricular reform in the Czech school system, which enabled a broader involvement of museums in formal education. However, the development of museum pedagogy as a discipline and museum pedagogue as a profession is boosted at both the practical and theoretical levels, not only by professional standards, but also by the specialised museum practice of individual

institutions, the possibility of professional association within the discipline, a varied offer of professional education,[1] and the possibility to study international literature[2] and to participate in internships.

Professional standards and museum work

The two most important factors involved in formulating the expertise and professional expectations of museums workers are ethical standards in the museum sphere generally, and the definition of certain specialised professional demands on individual jobs in museum institutions.

The basic definition of museum workers is contained in the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums, which emphasises their expertise, either via a professional qualification or relevant practical experience.[3] Museum professions, according to basic organisational classifications, cover the areas of administration, collection care, operations and services, and education.[4] They are characterised through the description of the scope of work and key activities, necessary competencies, required education and optimal practice.[5] The ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums is a reference tool for museums and museum staff, which sets the minimum norms of conduct and professional behaviour; every ICOM member commits to abide by this Code. Apart from the museum's fundamental activities,[6] the document also places emphasis on the relationship of museum workers to the general public

[1] This is particularly of university education (above all at faculties of arts and education) and non-university education (organised by professional institutions and methodological centres for museums), supplemented by one-time seminars, workshops or conferences.

[2] E.g. FALK, John H. and Lynn D. DIERKING. *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning*. Oxford: AltaMira Press, 2000; HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. *Museums and their Visitors*. 2nd ed. London, New York: Routledge, 1996; SANDELL, Richard (ed.). *Museums, Society, Inequality*. London, New York: Routledge, 2002; BOYLAN, Patrick and Vicky WOOLARD. *The Trainer´s Manual: For Use with Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*. Paris: UNESCO, ICOM, 2006. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001478/147869E.pdf; RUGE, Angelika (ed.). *Frame of reference for museum professions in Europe*. October 2007. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://www.kongreskultury.pl/library/File/rap.muzea/Zalacznik%203(1).pdf; LEGGET, Jane (ed.). *Staff and Training in Regional Museums*. Paris: ICOM – International Committee for Regional Museums, International Committee for the Training of Personnel, Murska Sobota: Pokrajinski muzej, 2011. [Accessed 13 December 2019, http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/icr/pdf/StaffAndTraining_WEB.pdf

[3] According to the current definition in the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums: "Museum professionals consist of the personnel (whether paid or unpaid) of museums or institutions as defined in Article 2, paras 1 and 2, of the ICOM Statutes, who have received specialised training, or possess an equivalent practical experience in any field relevant to the management and operations of a museum, and independent persons respecting the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and working for museums or institutions as defined in the Statute quoted above, but not persons promoting or dealing with commercial products and equipment required for museums and museum services." LEHMANNOVÁ, Martina (ed.). *Etické kodexy: Etický kodex ICOM. Etický kodex ICOM pro přírodovědná muzea. Dokument o profesi konzervátora-restaurátora*. [B. m.]: Český výbor ICOM, 2014, p. 36.

[4] EDSON, Gary. *International Directory of Museum Training*. London, New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 15 sq., 36–37.

[5] ZENETOU, Artemis A. Museum professional positions: Qualifications, duties, and responsibilities. In: GLASER, Jane R. and Artemis A. ZENETOU. *Museums: A place to work: Planning Museum Careers*. London, New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 65–123.

[6] Museums preserve, interpret and promote the natural and cultural inheritance of humanity; they hold primary evidence for establishing and furthering knowledge; museums that maintain collections hold them in trust for the benefit of society and its development; museums provide opportunities for the appreciation, understanding and management of the natural and cultural heritage; museums operate in a legal manner.

(particularly with regards to collaboration with communities),[7] professional erudition (that is, museum workers' competencies, education and shared expertise) and professional conduct. This involves familiarity with the relevant legislation, professional responsibilities, professional conduct, academic and scientific responsibilities, professional relationships and cooperation, and personal independence. Also addressed are associated aspects such as the illicit market, confidentiality of information, museum and collection security, exceptions to the obligation of confidentiality, and conflicts of interest.

The increasing general requirements for specific competencies in the content of museum work are reflected in the area of formal and informal professional education of members of the museum profession and in the formulation of both general and specialised demands on individual museum professions. As Eilean Hooper-Greenhill notes, "the professional identity of today's museum workers is characterised by constantly increasing demands on the acquired professional competencies and by the requirement of interiorisation of new strategies, values and methods. The present-day museum professionals are expected to have special competencies, particularly as regards the collections and museum audience."[8]

General expectations of museum and museology education, as expressed through the general curriculum of professional education in the field of museology, are defined above all by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The activities of ICOM reflect the challenges and needs of the museum profession and are mainly focused on professional cooperation and shared expertise, the furthering of knowledge and public awareness of museums, the education of museum workers, the improvement of professional standards, and the creation and promotion of professional ethics and cultural heritage protection. The problem of professional education is mainly addressed by the International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP), which directly participates in creating and supporting the basic general curriculum for training museum professions and establishing the necessary standards.[9] *The ICOM Basic Syllabus for Professional Museum Training*, which was issued by ICTOP in 1971 (and has subsequently been revised several times), delineated nine points within its recommended structure for educating museum workers, covering the most important areas of museum work:

1. Introduction to museology: development and mission of museums;
2. Organisation, direction and management of museums;
3. Architecture, equipment and spatial arrangement;
4. Collections: origin, associated records, system of arrangement and transport;
5. Scientific activity;
6. Protection and security of collections;
7. Exhibition making;
8. Audience;
9. Cultural and educational activity of museums.

Each of these nine umbrella areas was further split into a number of sub-topics, resulting in a document which represented a detailed standard for education in museology and museum

[7] Museums work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originate as well as those they serve; they hold resources that provide opportunities for other public services and benefits. The document also addresses, for example, the usage of collections originating from contemporary communities, displays, exhibitions and other events, interpretation of exhibits, presentation of "sensitive materials", publications and reproductions.

[8] HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. Changing Values in the Art Museum. In: CARBONELL, Bettina Messias. *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contents*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 556–575.

[9] Cf. EDSON, Gary. *International Directory of Museum Training*. London, New York: Routledge, 1995.

work. A supplement to this document (1981), in accordance with the original curriculum, emphasises the fact that despite a huge variety of activities within individual museum professions, the education of every museum worker should inevitably address five basic areas: i) museums, ii) collections, iii) administration, iv) exhibitions, displays and other public services, and v) material equipment. As a consequence of the modification of demands on education for museum professionals, the document was updated in 2000 under the title *The ICOM Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional Development* (subsequently revised in 2005). It defines five more broadly-conceived areas of competence, providing a general description of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to work in contemporary museums, and which should be included in the design of specific educational courses and programmes:

1. General competencies;
2. Museological competencies;
3. Management competencies;
4. Museum pedagogical competencies;
5. Competencies for the administration of collections.

All five areas are further split into many sub-areas and specified by particular topics. The document thus represents a relatively detailed and sophisticated curriculum of museology education which forms the basis for creating, modifying and revising both university and non-university museum and museology studies all over the world.[10]

The professional standards in the field of education in general are legislatively formulated in terms of professional qualities, characteristics of key professional activities, knowledge, values and attitudes most frequently characterised as a set of key professional competencies.[11] The standards for professional norms and indicators of the quality of professional practice should be defined within a professional discourse and disseminated widely within the professional community. Only a shared and interiorised professional standard can be a motivation for enhancing the quality of individual activities. An indispensable role is also played by the correct professional procedures acquired through best practice, that is, identifying desirable methods and approaches that lead to the fulfilment of standards. Such an approach reflects professional problems as they arise and can offer a step-by-step procedure for solving them.

According to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the professional standards in the museum sphere represent generally accepted levels of attainment (determining the quality of skills) that all museums are expected to achieve. General principles of best practice for museums in the field of education and interpretation are formulated as follows:

1. The museum clearly states its overall educational goals, philosophy and messages, and demonstrates that its activities are in alignment with them.
2. The museum understands the characteristics and needs of its existing and potential audiences and uses this understanding to inform its interpretation.
3. The museum's interpretive content is based on appropriate research.
4. Museums conducting primary research do so according to scholarly standards.
5. The museum uses techniques, technologies and methods appropriate to its educational goals, content, audiences and resources.
6. The museum presents accurate and appropriate content for each of its audiences.

[10] In detail, see MRÁZOVÁ, Lenka and Lucie JAGOŠOVÁ. Obsahové proměny kurikula brněnské muzeologie v letech 1964–2014. In: *Museologica Brunensia*, 2014, no. 2, p. 28–42.

[11] Cf. VAŠUTOVÁ, Jaroslava. *Profese učitele v českém vzdělávacím kontextu*. Brno: Paido, 2004.

7. The museum demonstrates consistent high quality in its interpretive activities.

8. The museum assesses the effectiveness of its interpretive activities and uses those results to plan and improve its activities.[12]

The museum pedagogue as a professional in museum education

The development of museum pedagogy as an independent discipline generates the need to define and more precisely characterise staff members who perform practical and theoretical work in this field.

Museum pedagogues (educators) represent the key profession which helps museums fulfil their educational mission.

In museum practice, the role of museum pedagogue is usually thought of as a profession. Perspectives on a profession specialising in work with museum audiences is addressed in the texts by, for example, Elisabeth Caillet's chapter on "Which competencies for visitor services specialists? A French perspective";[13] Chen Jianming and Huang Lei's "Visitor-oriented staff training – the museological concept and practice of a museum in China";[14] and Michele Trimarchi and Maria Laura Vergelli on "Professions and promotion in the museum sector – the Italian experience".[15] A museum pedagogue, with regard to the widely used terminology, can be understood as a specific profession which is well-established and relatively widespread in its professional practice (although in many cases it still has the form of a cumulative job, where museum education represents only one aspect of the professional activities in a museum). In other words, it is regarded as one of the museum professions. Not long ago (2017, with effect from 2018), this profession was provided for in the legislation pertaining to the Czech Republic's *Catalogue of Public Services and Administration Jobs*,[16] in the section on Culture (under the terminology "educator in culture"). This provision represents the apex of efforts thus far to establish the profession of museum pedagogy. The necessary initial stages took the form of inclusion within the *Czech National System of Occupations* (under the terminology "museum pedagogue") and the *National System of Qualifications* (under the terminology "museum educator").[17] The provisions of the Act on Pedagogical Staff do not yet enable use of the

[12] Ethics, Standards, and Professional Practices. In *American Alliance of Museums*. Accessed 13 December 2019, https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/core-standards-for-museums/

[13] CAILLET, Elizabeth. Which competencies for visitor services specialists? A French perspective. In: LEGGET, Jane (ed.) *Staff and Training in Regional Museums*. Paris: ICOM – ICOTP, Murska Sobota: Regional Museum, 2011. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/icr/pdf/StaffAndTraining_WEB.pdf

[14] JIANMING, Chen, LEI, Huang. Visitor-oriented staff training – the museological concept and practice of a museum in China. In: LEGGET (ed.) *Staff and Training* ...

[15] TRIMARCHI, Michele, VERGELLI, Maria Laura. Professions and promotion in the museum sector – the Italian experience. In LEGGET (ed.) *Staff and Training* ...

[16] See *Nařízení vlády č. 399/2017 Sb., o katalogu prací ve veřejných službách a správě*. 2017. Accessed 13 December 2019, https://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/32127/NV_399_2017__1_1_2018_.pdf

[17] See Muzejní pedagog. In *Národní soustava povolání*. Praha: Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://katalog.nsp.cz/karta_p.aspx?id_jp=102314; Muzejní edukátor. In *Národní soustava kvalifikací*. Praha: Národní ústav pro vzdělávání, 2006–2014. Accessed 13 December 2019, https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/kvalifikace-1123-Muzejni_edukator

term pedagogue in relation to the role fulfilled by museum pedagogues,[18] which undoubtedly affects the still insufficiently exploited potential of museums as institutions in both formal and informal public education.

The obligation for cultural institutions to be involved in education in the Czech Republic is contained in the document *State Cultural Policy for 2015–2020 (with an outlook until 2025)* and the issue of museum education is also included in the *Concept of Museum Development in the Czech Republic in 2015–2020*. The present effort to increase the professionalisation of museums logically tends not only to deepen the professional competencies, but also to intensify and improve cooperation between various museum professions, individual museums and related institutions at various levels of museum work.[19] However, in practice we often encounter a lack of awareness of the more detailed characterisation, the high level of expertise, and the real scope of work involved in being a museum pedagogue. The most distinct shift in this aspect in the past few years can be ascribed to developments in university education (further development of existing models and the emergence of new independent fields and specialisations in the follow-up to Master's studies), the development of new and existing forms of non-university education (courses, seminars) and, above all, the lively display of interest in all these forms. With respect to these historical developments (which, in the Czech and Slovak milieu, have mainly occurred in the last decade) it can be said that after the predominant monothematic orientation on case reports (so-called examples of best practice in creation of accompanying programmes), the spectrum of professional activities considered to lie within the scope of museum pedagogues has been extended in a desirable way. Furthermore, the focus has shifted, for example, to include more didactic methods and approaches, emphasise the pedagogical and psychological aspects of the work with various audiences, and to focus on reflecting on one's own work and provide support for further education through one-off seminars and longer courses).

In contrast to the professional community's significant interest in museum pedagogy as a whole, much less attention has been paid, in terms of publications and empirical research, to studying museum pedagogy as a profession. The major part of the research which has been conducted is tightly connected with the practical activities of museum pedagogues. Emphasis is put either on didactic activities (didactic methods and approaches), or on the community of visitors and their stratification (principles of pedagogical and psychological influence on individual audiences). To this day, we have only minimal research data on the profession and

[18] According to this Act, a pedagogical staff member, i.e. pedagogue, is narrowly defined as a worker who performs educational activity in a school or educational institution enlisted in the Registry of Schools and Educational Institutions, or in a social services facility. See Platné znění části první zákona č. 563/2004 Sb., o pedagogických pracovnících a o změně některých zákonů, s vyznačením navrhovaných změn a doplnění: Zákon č. 563/2004 Sb., o pedagogických pracovnících a o změně některých zákonů. In *Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy*. Praha: Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2013–2019. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://www.msmt.cz/file/34285/>.

[19] JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie, Otakar KIRSCH et al. *Muzejní profese a veřejnost 1. Nástin historie a současnosti vzájemných vztahů muzeí a jejich publika*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2016. Accessed 13 December 2019, https://archeo-muzeo.phil.muni.cz/media/3056324/muzejni_profese_a_verejnost.pdf

community of museum pedagogues and on their education.[20]

Professional standards in museum pedagogy in the international context

The problem of professional standards for museum pedagogues has already been addressed in the international literature, for example, in a short article from 1989 in the *Journal of Museum Education*;[21] however, this issue is mostly treated from methodological and practical perspectives by the professional organisations associated with museum pedagogy.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), in connection with its International Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA), refers to three documents on its website in the area concerned with museum education and cultural activities: Best Practice in Museum Education and Cultural Programmes (CECA); Best Practice Books (6 volumes), (ICOM-CECA/Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2017); and Education Toolkit, Methods and Techniques from Museum and Heritage Education (ICOM-CECA/LCM/Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland, 2017).[22] The CECA committee uses best practice as a tool for analysing an educational or cultural project that has been developed, in accordance with the responsibilities of CECA members to share any management tools that can bring them near to the "model project". This tool was proposed by Marie-Clarté O'Neill and Colette Dufresne-Tassé, and the topic has since been increasingly discussed at the European and global levels in annual conferences and regional workshops. The three goals of publishing this document are as follows: to manage and critically review the work of CECA members and supporters on conceiving, analysing and evaluating their educational and cultural projects; to instigate and support institutions and professionals in creating projects at the relevant level (in a comparable way), either individually, or within national or international groups; and to support the revision and broadening of programme presentations in annual meetings. In connection with supporting best practice, CECA offers an annual Best Practice Award and issues volumes of the *Best Practice Book*, presenting the results of professional activities and research conducted by CECA members since 2012.[23]

The hitherto not very deeply elaborated international *Professional Standards for Museum Educators* (2005)[24] were formulated by the Education Committee (EdCom) of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). Professional standards, from their perspective, represent a professional consensus about the "best practice". The process by which the standards evolve relies on the involvement of experts in the given area, who codify a suitable set of professional activities on the basis of a broad spectrum of experience. The standards are only recommended and their

[20] See, for example, STUCHLÍKOVÁ, Alice. *Profese galerijního pedagoga*. PhD thesis. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Pedagogická fakulta, Katedra výtvarné výchovy, 2012. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://www.is.muni.cz; JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie and Jitka KRÁLOVÁ. Aktuální kontury profese muzejního pedagoga. Reflexe kvalifikační profilace pracovníků v oblasti muzejní pedagogiky na příkladu Komise pro práci s veřejností a muzejní pedagogiku AMG ČR. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2017, p. 141–153.

[21] WILLIAMS, Patterson. Professional Standards for Museum Educators. In: *Journal of Museum Education* vol. 14, no. 3, 1989, p. 11–13. Accessed 13 December 2019, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10598650.1989.11510119

[22] Standards. In: *ICOM*. Accessed 13 December 2019, https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/standards/

[23] Best Practice. In *ICOM International Committee for Education and Cultural Action*. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://ceca.mini.icom.museum/publications-2/best-practice/

[24] *Excellence in Practice: Museum Education Principles and Standards*. Washington: American Association of Museums, 2005, p. 10. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://ww2.aam-us.org/docs/default-source/accreditation/committee-on-education.pdf?sfvrsn=0

aim is to support excellence through the development of criteria for evaluating (interpretive) efficiency. The professional standards offered by EdCom are based on three foundation stones: accessibility, accountability and advocacy. The document elaborates them out to six basic points:

1. a focus on audience and community;
2. diversity of perspectives – respect and understanding;
3. excellence in content and methodology of museum education;
4. advocacy for audiences – collaboration within the museum to promote the best interests of audiences;
5. advocacy for education's role in advancing the mission and goals of the museum;
6. dedication to learning and a commitment to nurture and develop an informed and humane citizenry.

However, the American Alliance of Museums also pays attention to the formulation of standards of professional work in other areas, which may be of key importance for museum pedagogues who participate in these activities as museum staff members. The most relevant example might be the area of museum exhibitions and the document *Standards for Museum Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence*.[25] The standards for museum exhibitions are organised into seven major and closely linked categories, followed by a detailed description (of what constitutes effectiveness for each category, and the listing of specific ways the category might be expressed in an exhibition):

1. Audience awareness. (The exhibition is developed with an articulated understanding of the intended visitors' prior knowledge, interests, learning styles, attitudes and expectations about the topic and the experiences planned for visitors.)
2. Evaluation. (Evaluation studies are conducted during development and/or after opening the exhibition to understand its impact on audiences in relation to the project's goals.)
3. Content. (Content is thoroughly researched and vetted for accuracy, relevance to exhibition theme/s, and the current state of knowledge of the topic.)
4. Collections. (The selection and presentation of objects furthers the intellectual content of the exhibition.)
5. Interpretation/communication. (The information/message of the exhibition is clear and coherent. If not, there is a good reason why not.)
6. Design and production. (The selection, design and production of interpretive media which effectively and engagingly communicate content.)
7. Human comfort, safety and accessibility. (The exhibition is designed such that the experience of the visitor, including their physical, intellectual and social well-being, is taken into account.)

The problem of professional standards and best practice has been addressed not only by international and national professional organisations, but also by individual authors who conduct research in this area and have published many works, from short studies through to extensive treatises. These works, moreover, may provide a counterweight to globally conceived recommendations and may better reflect the specifics of museum education (or only some aspects from among the wide spectrum of professional activities) in local conditions and

[25] *Standards for Museum Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence*. American Alliance of Museums, August 2012. Accessed 13 December 2019, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58fa260a725e25c4f30020f3/t/58ff73ed3e00bea8e746d4ce/1493136367751/2012+Standards+for+Museum++Exhibitions+and+Indicators+of+Excellence.pdf

practice. Examples include the works by Eva M. Reussner (2004; Australia and New Zealand)[26] and Susan Krogh Jensen (2019; Denmark).[27]

With regard to the fact that the Czech (and Slovak) museum sector is still gradually elaborating the professional standards for museum pedagogy, their current form can be only derived from the demands for professional competencies or based on the competency model outlined within the requirements for qualifications for museum educators. The standards can also be inspired by international activities in this field.

In the Czech Republic, the Committee for Public Relations and Museum Pedagogy, which exists within the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries, published, more than five years ago, its generally formulated view, which sees the mission of a museum pedagogue as someone who supports:

1. collaboration with other professional and interest associations within the discipline and interdisciplinary cooperation;
2. the development of the theoretical, methodical, methodological and practical base of the discipline in cooperation with academic institutions and methodological centres;
3. the formation and activity of working groups within the Committee for Public Relations and Museum Pedagogy, in accordance with topical trends and the needs of the discipline;
4. professional education;
5. the continuous mapping of the development and transformations of the museum pedagogical community, professional standards and trends in museum education;
6. the profession of museum pedagogues, their professionalisation and their stable position in the labour market.

The committee then formulated preliminary recommendations for the educational activity of museum pedagogues, which were based on the following general points on the spectrum of their expected activity (not only within institutions, but also within professional associations and education):

1. Museums should serve the public, not the other way around.
2. Museums are not only exhibitions.
3. Inspiration should be sought abroad.
4. The educator should be given a suitable position in the exhibition team.
5. The educator should share expertise with colleagues.
6. Programmes should be funded from the museum's budget.
7. Museums should focus on establishing a high-quality media policy.[28]

Reflections on best practice and on the professional community of museum pedagogues in the Czech Republic was later better formulated through a characterisation of museum pedagogues/educators (mainly of the scope of their work) in the *Czech National System of Occupations*, created with significant support from the international literature dealing with this profession, the scope

[26] REUSSNER, Eva M. Best Practices in Audience Research and Evaluation Case Studies of Australian and New Zealand Museums. *Visitor Studies Today*, vol. 7, no. 2, Summer 2004. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/31/173/1F-AD-27A-8-VSA-a0a6b1-a_5730.pdf

[27] JENSEN, Susanne Krogh. *From Generalist to Specialist: The Professionalization of the Danish Museum Occupation 1958–2018*. PhD thesis. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2019.

[28] Hlavní programové linie činnosti: Strategie výboru komise pro práci s veřejností a muzejní pedagogiku AMG a doporučení pro muzejněpedagogickou praxi. In *Asociace muzeí a galerií České republiky*. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://www.cz-museums.cz/web/amg/organy-amg/komise/komise-pro-praci-s-verejnosti-a-muzejni-pedagogiku/hlavni-programove-linie-cinnosti

of its activities and the required competencies.[29] A distinct shift in the formulation of demands on museum pedagogues within the competency model of the curriculum appeared with the establishment of a qualification standard for museum educators, which was included in the *National System of Qualifications*, with effect from 2016. The qualification standard defines eight areas of professional competence:

1. Familiarity with the current situation in museum education at home and abroad.
2. Ability to elaborate the museum's concept of and strategy for education.
3. Familiarity with pedagogical and psychological concepts related to museum education.
4. Ability to define the objectives of museum education.
5. Concept and elaboration of the museum's educational programme.
6. Ability to select and use appropriate didactical methods and forms of museum education.
7. Ability to present educational activity in the museum.
8. Ability to apply professional conduct and communication in museum education.

Each of these areas is further divided into several sub-areas. Candidates interested in taking acquiring the professional qualification of Museum educator (code: 82-041-T)[30] are examined on their knowledge and skills in all these areas. The study materials for this qualification exam address all areas in detail.[31]

The gradually refined view of museum pedagogy as a highly skilled profession with clearly formulated competencies, a specific scope of professional activities and continuously defined working standards is currently projected into the new concepts of study programmes, along with new legislative changes of the accreditation system of university studies in the Czech Republic. Several more-or-less traditional study programmes which train museum pedagogues for practical work in museums regularly revise their curricula and update the expected profile of their graduates. The current increase of interest in the problem offers space for the creation of university study programmes as well as completely new formats.

Conclusion

The social significance of cultural identity, and of the collection, preservation and presentation of cultural heritage to the general public in which the museum pedagogue takes an active part, is beyond any doubt. The museum pedagogue occupies a key position, as a link between the content/information and its recipient, and is responsible for the quality of this mediation process. Such professionals ensure that appropriate methods are applied to the educational aspects of the museum's activities, and that the institution's communications are easily understandable, as well as intellectually and emotionally effective. Deeper study of the profession of museum pedagogy and the community of people working in the field of museum education, as well as a clearer formulation of professional standards which take into account local conditions, can bring into the sphere of museums and museology a deeper understanding and more effective exploitation of the educational potential of museums in practice, and provide theoretical and empirical support and development for those studying to become a museum pedagogue.

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[29] See mainly the literature cited in notes 5, 4 and 2.

[30] Muzejní edukátor. In: *Národní soustava kvalifikací*. Praha: Národní ústav pro vzdělávání, 2006–2014. Accessed 13 December 2019, https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/kvalifikace-1123-Muzejni_edukator

[31] *Muzejní edukátor: Studijní materiál*. Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum, 2019. Accessed 13 December 2019, http://www.mcmp.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/vzdelavani/STUDIJNI_MATERIAL_2019.pd

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Museological school as a process of professional formation based on traditions and innovations: Crimean foreshortening

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Museological school as a process of professional formation based on traditions and innovations: Crimean foreshortening
In this article, we describe the activities of the "Museum Studio", which opened in Koktebel in 2016. The history of Russian museology and international experience are two important pillars on which the School is based. Today, the School is a platform for educational events and discussions with the participation of leading Russian and foreign experts. The platform has developed an innovative model of interaction with specialists seeking to improve their qualification level. The main ideas and formats of this model are covered in this article.

Keywords: museology, museum history, mid-career education, inter-museum cooperation.

The creation of the Crimean Museological School's "Museum Studio" was a vital event in the Russian museum world in the 2010s. The idea to open a museological school as a scientific, educational and discussion platform for museum specialists came to the experts from the "Russian Museum Encyclopedia" research group (New Institute for Cultural Research). The grand opening and the first session of the "Museum Studio" took place on May 27–29, 2016, in Koktebel (Republic of Crimea).

Why Crimea, and why Koktebel? The history of Russian museology, taking into account its wide sociocultural and geographical background, is deeply linked to the discovery and study of archaeological sites of the peninsula. The interest in the national history gave rise to significant museum projects in Russia and coincided with the discovery of the ancient heritage of Crimea. The wish to preserve Black Sea antiquities led to the creation of a number of private and museum collections.

Among the eminent Crimean museum scientists and organizers are Ivan Stempkovsky, Christian von Steven, Semen Bronevsky, and others. Without these people and the museums they created in Crimea, the national history of museums would be incomplete and deprived of its intellectual grace. Ivan Stempkovsky, an archaeologist, collector, member of scientific expeditions in Crimea, and, finally, the mayor of Kerch, wrote in 1823 about the need to "use all available means to amass works of art and preserve them in museums, study ruins and tombs, try to save the remains of ancient buildings from complete destruction."[1] Stempkovsky

[1] STEMPKOVSKIJ, Ivan. My´sli otnositel´no izyskaniya drevnostej v Novorossijskom krae [Thoughts on the search for antiquities in Novorossiysk region]. In: *Otechestvennye zapiski*. СПб, 1827, ch. 29, kn. 1, p. 62. [In Russian].

proposed to conduct a systematic research of historical objects covering a wide territory and including different types of objects, and also to classify and describe the findings. These proposals led to the idea of creating museums to carry out extensive scientific and collection activities.

Figure 1: *Maximilian Voloshin's House in Koktebel*, 1916

The first government-funded network of regional historical museums open to public was created in Crimea and its adjacent areas in the south of Russia in the first three decades of the 1800s. This network included the Museum in Nikolaev (1803), Feodosia Museum of Antiquities (1811), the Museum at Simferopol Men's Gymnasium (1812), Odessa Museum of Antiquities (1825) and Kerch Museum of Antiquities (1826). One of the first museum institutions was Nikitsky Botanical Garden near Yalta: the project was drawn up in 1813 by Christian von Steven and was based on the innovative idea to create a large botanical scientific collection. In 1869, the country's first military historical museum was opened in Sevastopol. In 1880, Aivazovsky Gallery, the first public museum of fine arts in the south of Russia was opened in Feodosia. In the early twentieth century, a cultural center of world significance – Voloshin House of the Poet[2] – was opened in Koktebel. On this occasion, the poet Andrej Belyi wrote: "It is not a house but a museum, and this museum is unique."[3] (Figure 1).

Today, Crimea's museum network includes approximately 50 government and municipal museums and is rapidly developing. Eight museum reserves play a leading role, including collections of over 200 objects of cultural heritage, such as Neolithic sites, ancient and early medieval settlements, kurgans and grave fields, Scythian and Roman hillforts, ancient hillforts, settlements, burial vaults, and necropolises related to the history of the Bosporan Kingdom.

[2] The House of the Poet in Koktebel is where the painter and poet Maximilian Voloshin created an art camp for writers and painters; his collected works of art and books is also preserved there.

[3] BELYI, Andrej. Dom-muzej M.A. Voloshina. [The House-Museum of M. A. Voloshin]. In: *Zvezda*. 1977, No. 5, p. 188. [In Russian].

Palace and Park complexes in Alupka and Livadia are among the most outstanding museum reserves in Crimea.[4]

Crimean cave towns and fortresses are also being gradually turned into museums, and archeological parks are being created. Cultural heritage and museums are an important resource not only for the cultural, but also for the socio-economic development of the region. If this positive trend continues, it will be possible to talk about creating a special historical and cultural territory and develop an economic program to use the cultural heritage. This line of Crimea development seems logical and quite promising.

The museological aspects of the School's work are inspired by the best traditions of museum development in the twentieth century. Crimea has also played an important role in this development. It was precisely in Koktebel, during the difficult post-revolutionary years, that the painter and poet Maximilian Voloshin pondered the best way to organize the educational system and creative institutions of the newborn country. "The goal is that not a single person remains a stranger to the joy of artistic creation,"[5] he wrote in support of his 1920s projects, which included the creation of the Public Art School, the Public Literary School, the Free Art Studios, and the Museum of Cimmerian Art. The most successful project was the creation of free summer studios for poets, writers and painters (Koktebel Art Studio). The project was supported by the government and lasted until the end of the twentieth century. As Voloshin wrote:

The coasts of Crimea have always been the focus of artistic and literary life of Russia. In summer, such Cimmerian areas as Sudak, Otuzi, and Koktebel became real art centers that gave tone and color to the whole life of the region and, moreover, had been true laboratories of creativity.[6]

Voloshin's idea of creating an Experimental Scientific and Artistic Studio in Koktebel is of particular importance to our project, the Crimean Museological School. According to Voloshin, the goal of the Studio was to "bridge the gap between the scientist and the painter." He added that scientists and art theoreticians would give lectures, and the Studio must publish works.[7] The ideas on which the Crimean Museological School is based (the main idea being to "bridge the gap" between museum theory and practice) clearly overlaps with the ideas of Voloshin's Studio.

For a period of 80 years, the Russian Institute of Cultural Research in Moscow was in charge of the protection and actualization of heritage by means of museums. Analysis of

[4] ZUBAREV, A.V. Muzejnaya set´ Respubliki Krym na sovremennom e´tape razvitiya [Crimean museum network at its current stage of development]. In: *Muzejny´e tetradi Kry´mskoj muzeologicheskoj shkoly´: Metodologicheskie, metodicheskie i informatsionno-spravochny´e materialy´*. Otv. red. N.M. Miroshnichenko, I.V. Chuvilova. Koktebel´–Simferopol´. No. 1, 2016, p. 60–61. [In Russian].

[5] VOLOSHIN, Maksimilian. Zapiska o napravlenii narodnoj xudozhestvennoj shkoly´ [Note on the work of the Folk art school]. In: *VOLOSHIN,* M*aksimilian. Sobranie sochineniy, t. 6, kn. 2. Proza 1900-1927.* O*cherki, stat´i, lekcii, recenzii, nabroski, plany´*. Pod red. V.P. Kupchenko, A.V. Lavrova. Moskva, 2008, p. 510. [In Russian].

[6] VOLOSHIN, Maksimilian. Proekt ob uchrezhdenii besplatny´x kolonij dlya poe´tov, pisatelej I xudozhnikov [Project on the creation of free summer art camps for poets, writers and painters]. In: *VOLOSHIN,* M*aksimilian. Sobranie sochineniy, t. 6, kn. 2. Proza 1900-1927.* O*cherki, stat´i, lekcii, recenzii, nabroski, plany´*. Pod red. V.P. Kupchenko, A.V. Lavrova. Moskva, 2008, p. 517. [In Russian].

[7] VOLOSHIN, Maksimilian. Zadachi E´ksperimental´noj nauchnoj i xudozhestvennoj studii v Koktebele [Tasks of the Experimental Science and Art studio in Koktebel]. In: *VOLOSHIN,* M*aksimilian. Sobranie sochineniy, t. 6, kn. 2. Proza 1900-1927.* O*cherki, stat´i, lekcii, recenzii, nabroski, plany´*. Pod red. V.P. Kupchenko, A.V. Lavrova. Moskva, 2008, p. 518. [In Russian].

the Institute's activities was the focus of our reflections about the future of our School. The Institute was founded in 1932 by the Government of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) as the Central Scientific Research Institute of Methods of Local History (from 1937 it was known as the Scientific Research Institute of Local History and Museum Work). During its entire existence, the Institute was a scientific and methodological center for the country's museums.[8] It conducted museum research, developed methodological guidelines and recommendations, established strategies and concepts for developing museums and the country's museum network, and published the first Russian textbook on museology, as well as museum dictionaries and the "Russian Museum Encyclopedia". The Institute also trained scientific personnel for museums. From 1952 to 1972, one of the founders of the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM), Awraam M. Razgon, a pioneer of Russian museology and museum education, worked in the Institute, where he wrote a significant portion of his works on museums.

In 1984, Awraam M. Razgon raised the idea of creating a Department of Museology in the Academy of Retraining in Culture, Art and Tourism (Moscow). The idea was to provide theoretical training to museum specialists. Collaboration between museum theorists and practitioners in a museum school is also practiced abroad. The most famous is probably the International Museum School in Brno (Czech Republic), opened in 1986 on the initiative of museologist Zbynek Z. Stransky. To some extent, the School in Brno served as a model for our School.

It is symbolical that the 1980s edition of Museum Working Papers, in which articles of leading museum theorists were published, also contains important ideas of Stransky and Razgon on the theme "Museology science or just practical museum work?" The question remains as to whether museum science is needed for the development of museum practice, and how these directions affect one another. However, the answer is still not as obvious as it should be for all museum specialists. In his short article, Razgon emphasizes that "museology studies the objects of reality – primary sources, objects of interest also of other branches, however, it has its *special view* in these objects and this fact demarcates the sphere of museology among other sciences" (emphasis by I. Ch.).[9] In the same edition, Stransky writes: that "the term museology or museum theory covers an area of a specific field of study focused on the *phenomenon of the museum*. We face here the relation of theory and practice" (emphasis by I. Ch.).[10]

Today we are witnessing changes in the museum sphere. Quite revealingly, this is manifested, among other changes, in a search for new terms and revision of not only the notion of the "museum", but also of its "phenomenon". In 1980, Stransky wrote about similar processes: "The recent manifestation of the crisis in the position of the museum reflected the contradictions between the requirements of the development of society, and the stage museums have reached."[11]

[8] In 2014, it was replaced by the New Institute for Cultural Research, an independent nonprofit organization for the development of research and projects in the field of culture and art. The museum component of the New Institute for Cultural Research is the Russian Museum Encyclopedia research group.

[9] RAZGON, Awraam M. Museological provocations 1979 by the Editorial Board. In: *MuWoP. Museological Working Papers. A debate journal on fundamental museological problems*. Stockholm, Sweden, No. 1, 1980, p. 12.

[10] STRANSKY, Zbynek Z. Museology – science or just practical museum work? In: *MuWoP. Museological Working Papers. A debate journal on fundamental museological problems*. Stockholm, Sweden, No. 1, 1980, p. 44.

[11] Ibid., p. 44.

For example, a serious problem in the country's museum sphere today is the shift from the basic directions of museum activities to management, marketing and virtual technologies. Young museum workers seem to be more involved in managerial and technological innovations, ignoring or simply having no idea about the national experience of museum practice and the basics of museology. All this negatively affects the development of the museum sphere in Russia.

Despite the complexity of these ongoing processes, the museum remains one of the most important sociocultural and scientific institutions. Moreover, its role in the life of modern society is constantly growing in relevance, making us feel the importance of theoretical reflection and analysis of practical activity, the significance of the forecasting function of science, that "special view" mentioned by Razgon. In this context, the words of his colleague Stransky are all the more relevant:

Today the problems of the museum's existence cannot be solved in the realm of practice. For the implementation of this task we need a special tool, enabling us to discover the objective sides of reality, to define its laws and to find the optimum ways of both solving daily tasks and working ahead. This task can be realized only through museum theory, moreover, through museology.[12]

Figure 2: *Fifth session of the School, 2020: students and lecturers*

Therefore, one of the School objectives is to comprehend innovations and analyze modern trends in museum practice, including foreign experience, relying on the best traditions of Russian museology, as well as national and regional historical and cultural traits. It is particularly important to transfer this experience to museums in small towns and rural settlements. The idea is that museum specialists from various regions of the country will receive advanced training (mid-career education) that will, above all, include the analysis of the main directions

[12] Ibid.

of museums' activities and work on mistakes. Specific goals must be set and achieved through the joint efforts of invited experts and employees of regional museums (Figure 2).

Each museum, regardless of its profile and size, gives visitors the feeling of belonging to the region's history and makes them think about the heritage that is stored there. Therefore, one of the School's objectives is to support and develop the regional identity of communities by increasing the effectiveness of museums' activities for the local population. A century ago, Voloshin expressed the idea, which is in harmony with our goals:

The main value of museum activities is not the collection of masterpieces, but an introduction to the knowledge of nature and life, as well as examples of its transformation. Museums must be local and represent the geological past of a region, its nature, historical development, folk art, folklore, and individual artistic transformations.[13]

Thus, key principles on which the Crimean Museological School is based are as follows:

1. The Crimean Museological School is a new educational and discussion platform for organizing and holding annual meetings of specialists to discuss vital issues related to the state and prospects of Russian museums, with the participation of leading Russian and foreign experts.

2. The creation of a museum school in Crimea is inspired by all the previous experience in developing the national museum sphere and is an innovative one-of-a-kind Russian project.

3. The Crimean Museological School is a joint project of the Voloshin Cimmeria Museum Reserve (Republic of Crimea) and the "Russian Museum Encyclopedia" research group (Moscow). The School cooperates with leading national and foreign museum centers, including the Department of Museology of the Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow), the Research and Education Center "Civil Society and Social Communications" of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (Moscow), the Scientific Museum Council of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Novosibirsk), and others.

Over the last four years, we have developed an innovative model of interaction with experts willing to improve their qualification. A significant part of the program is education. Our students can receive certificates of advanced training (mid-career education). For each session, a special program is developed covering some of the topics and directions in museum activities that, in our opinion, are most in demand today: education in museums, cultural actions, exhibition studies and display, preservation of museum objects, management and marketing. The first orientation session took place in 2016 under the theme "Why do museums need museology?" and included lectures on basic museum topics, such as "Museums and heritage", "Museums in a region" and "Museums and communication".[14] In fact, these topics determined the content of the School's next sessions. The classes are given by leading experts in the museum studies, conservation, and the use and management of heritage.

Practical issues also receive a lot of attention. In addition to workshops, experts from different Russian museums present their projects and studies in the format of discussions with

[13] VOLOSHIN, Maksimilian. Iskusstvo videt´ prirodu i ponimaniya xudozhestvenny´x proizvedenij (Chem dolzhny´ by´t´ narodny´e muzei) [The art of contemplating nature and understanding artworks (What is the purpose of a folk museum?)]. In: *VOLOSHIN, Maksimilian. Sobranie sochineniy, t. 6, kn. 2. Proza 1900-1927. Ocherki, stat´i, lekcii, recenzii, nabroski, plany´*. Pod red. V.P. Kupchenko, A.V. Lavrova. Moskva, 2008, p. 728. [In Russian].

[14] Lectures on these topics were published in the first edition of the «Museums notebooks»: *Muzejny´e tetradi Kry´mskoj muzeologicheskoj shkoly´: Metodologicheskie, metodicheskie i informatsionno-spravochny´e materialy´*. Otv. red. N.M. Miroshnichenko, I.V. Chuvilova. Koktebel´–Simferopol´. Vypusk 1, pp. 60-69. [In Russian].

the School's students. From 2016 to 2019, the reports presented included topics such as "The revival of Voloshin's estate in Koktebel as a historical cultural center", "Strategic planning in the museum", "Museum visitor profiles", "Introduction of museum pedagogy in preschool education" and more. It has become a tradition to invite a special guest lecturer – a foreign expert in museology and heritage protection – to give an orientation lecture at the beginning of each session. This helps our students towards a deeper understanding of modern trends in the development of museum theory and practice. In 2017, 2018 and 2019, the following lectures were given by museum experts:

- Dr Jan Dolák, Assistant Professor of Ethnology and Museology from Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia): "The thing as an object of museum collection and presentation".
- Dr M. Cristina Vannini, Director of the museum consultancy company "SoluzioniMuseali", Trustee of the Board of European Museum Forum (EMF/EMYA) (Italy): "Communication in contemporary museums: balancing tools, contents and audiences".
- Dr Matthias Henkel, Professor of European Ethnology and Archaeology from the University of Goettingen, founder of the "Embassy of Culture" Agency (Germany): "Old exhibits, new challenges and future perspectives. Working on museums as hubs of relevance".

Figure 3: *A lesson is conducted by Prof. Maria Kaulen*

The 2020 School schedule includes a lecture by Dr Darko Babić, Chair of Museology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (Croatia) on "21st Century Museum Management: importance of interpretation and literacy as management tools".

The School has recently adopted a new format, regularly conducting a seminar on "Preservation, musealisation, and actualization of historical and cultural heritage". The idea behind this seminar came from the scientific curator of the Crimean Museological School, the famous Russian museologist Maria Kaulen, and the unit discusses various museum heritage issues and looks for answers to difficult questions (Figure 3).

The Crimean Museological School uses a variety of work formats, including seminars, workshops, round-tables, literary evenings, film screenings and the programs "Museum Workshop" (for example, in 2019, a workshop was held called "New trends in museum design"), and "Museum Crossroads" (in 2019, experts from the Stroganov Moscow State University of Arts and Industry presented their design projects). In the course of lectures, business games and presentations, we discuss museum history, theory, and practice, sociocultural design, heritage management, and other issues. We also usually hold an event "Meet the Crimean Museums". The School's work is organized in a way that all participants are involved in close collaboration. They are free to exchange ideas and actively participate in discussions.

Our first and foremost task is to help museum specialists from different regions of the country to improve their qualifications and skills. However, we understand that the forma-

Figure 4: *Cover of the "Museums notebooks" edition* (issue 3, 2018)

tion of a true museum professional must start at university. Since 2017, the School has been holding a research and creative competition for student projects called "Exciting museology". Applications are collected over a period of three months from various universities (from Crimea to Siberia and Altai) with specialized museum departments. Projects are selected for the finals in which the School's students and members of the jury also participate. Currently, the competition covers are two areas "Museum projects" and "Museum research"; three prizes are awarded in each of these areas. The winners receive support in implementing their projects in museums; their reports are published in the School's publication (*Museums' Notebooks*) along with the lectures of museum experts. Over the three years the competition has been running, the following projects have received awards: "Ethnographic mosaic: dialogue of cultures", which focuses on the musealisation of a Simferopol city quarter; "Kökköz", a project of the Tatar eco-museum in Crimea; a research project called "The fate of the exhibition: 'Important stages in the development of Russian painting' that disappeared during the Second World War"; "Educational quest as a means of promoting ancient Russian heritage", and other projects.

As a result of each session, a new edition of *Museums' Notebooks* is issued including abstracts of lectures, references, notes on practical experience in museums, and student projects. Between 2016 and 2019, four editions were issued.[15] We hope that future editions will continue to offer insight into the results of our work, providing a helpful resource for museum specialists (Figure 4).

The Crimean Museological School "Museum Studio" is open to all museum specialists, including those who have only recently joined our community and those who have long been committed to the common cause. Over the four years we have been operating, museum specialists from different parts of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus have joined us as students and become our friends. The goal of our meetings is not only to teach but to learn from each other, to explore and discuss, while preserving the idea of high professionalism, openness, and accessibility laid down by our predecessors.

In 2020, the project received the Grant of the President of the Russian Federation for the development of civil society awarded by the Presidential Grants Fund. It shows that the Crimean Museological School has become an important platform for professional cooperation

[15] *Muzejny´e tetradi Kry´mskoj muzeologicheskoj shkoly´: Metodologicheskie, metodicheskie i informatsionno-spravochny´e materialy´*. Otv. red. N.M. Miroshnichenko, I.V. Chuvilova. Koktebel´–Simferopol´. Vypusk 1-5, 2016-2020.

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Musealisation of communism, or how to create national identity in historical museums

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Musealisation of communism, or how to create national identity in historical museums
The goal of the article is to critically analyse and deconstruct museum narratives about communism in East-Central Europe 30 years after transformation. The research material is museum exhibitions interpreted in accordance with the methodology of visual research (composition analysis, content analysis, analysis of material objects, and analysis of meanings). The first and most important museum type from the perspective of the memory cano The Act of 6 June 1997 Penal Code (Journal of Laws of 1997, item 553). Art. 125. § 1. Whoever destroys, damages or takes away a cultural object in an occupied area or in which military operations are taking place, violating international law, shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between one and 10 years. § 2. If the act concerns goods of particular importance for culture, the perpetrator shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for not less than 3 years. Art. 278. § 1. Whoever takes away someone else's movable property for the purpose of appropriation shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 3 months and 5 years. § 2. The same punishment shall be imposed on anyone who, without the consent of the authorised person, obtains someone else's computer program in order to gain financial benefits. § 3. In the case of an act of a lesser significance, the perpetrator is subject to a fine, limitation of liberty or deprivation of liberty for one year. § 4. If the theft was committed to the detriment of the closest person, the prosecution takes place at the request of the injured party. Art. 279. § 1. Whoever steals by burglary is punishable by imprisonment from one to 10 years. § 2. If the burglary was committed to the detriment of the closest person, the prosecution takes place at the request of the injured party. n, as it represents the official historical policy of most East-European states, is the so-called identity or heroic museum. Its purpose is not so much to show the truth about the past but to create the collective memory of a society and its positive self-image.

Keywords: historical museum, exhibition, communism, collective memory, narratives

Thirty years after the transformation, the canon of knowledge and remembrance of communism in the Central-Eastern European countries is still at the stage of development and, sometimes, stormy debates.[1] The communities' memory of the recent past remains divided and frequently full of contradictions, the degree of consensus being different in each case because it is closely linked not only with past socio-political circumstances but also with the course of transformation and a specific political and economic situation after the change of the political system.

In light of my studies, the thesis that there is one memory of communism shared by the whole region would be an exaggeration: too many differences both at the level of historical

[1] My studies conducted between 2014 and 2018 in European museums were funded by the National Science Center under grant no.: NCN 2014/13/B/HS3/04886

facts themselves and their representations exclude this possibility. It is possible, however, to distinguish certain processes and types of exhibitions that have appeared in most of the former Soviet bloc countries. A phenomenon common to the region is the introduction of official lines in the interpreting of communism that are materialised in museum exhibitions organised by large state institutions. The narratives endorsed by policy-makers usually present a coherent story of heroic nations fighting against the imposed regime that is treated as foreign to the "nature" of individual communities. This heroic-martyrological version of recent history is intended in all cases to perform identity-related functions and promote a positive image of particular countries in the world. Examples of museums pursuing such objectives are the European Solidarity Centre (Europejskie Centrum Solidarności, Poland), the House of Terror (TerrorHáza, Hungary), the Occupation Museum (Latvia) and the Occupation Museum (Estonia) and the Museum of Genocide Victims (Lithuania).

1. Poland: The Struggle for Independence

The European Solidarity Centre (ECS) in Gdansk was opened in 2014 in an edifice specially built for the purpose and resembling a ship. The exhibition content does not cover the whole period of communism in Poland but its most heroic period only—the history of the trade union "Solidarity", which is a symbol of the democratic anti-communist opposition. Events in Europe were marked only by some dates symbolic of the acts of social (civil) disobedience against communist authorities: 1953 (Berlin), 1956 (Hungary) and 1968 (Prague). The exhibition invokes moral categories, speaks the national language and, through its heroic narrative, revives the Romantic vision of Polish history dating back to the nineteenth century, when a partitioned Poland fought to regain independence.

The highlight of the exhibition is the victorious strike in the Gdansk Shipyard (then known as the Vladimir Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk) in 1980, which is extremely convenient from the perspective of heroic narrative. Having focused on steadfast resistance and rebellion, the narrative omits the questions of the widespread adaptation of the Poles and other nations to the system, their causes and far-reaching consequences. In this case, what is "forgotten", or rather consciously "erased", is the whole set of social attitudes that were deemed as inconvenient from the perspective of identity narrative. The exhibition also omits to emphasise the fact that the majority of Solidarity's demands were about social benefits rather than political issues, the goal of the strike being "socialism with a human face", not necessarily liberal capitalism. The clear narrative line and consistent narrative do not allow for ambiguities and disputes, which are now the dominant element both in the accounts of direct witnesses and in the comments of professional historians studying that period.

The authors of the exhibition (Jarosław and Beata Szymański) stress that its overriding goal was "to make visitors feel that it is a story about them", and the method for the attaining of this objective was the potential possibility of "the visitor's identification with the heroes of that time".[2] Identity and collective memory readily refer to those moments in history that strengthen the positive image of a given community, and easily reject that which is incompatible with its heroic picture. In the ECS presentation, the picture of communism, difficult and complicated in many respects, especially with regard to the attitudes of the society, takes on explicit dimensions of the heroic past, expressed in the struggle against the communist system.

[2] SZYMAŃSCY Jarosław and Beata, *Powstawanie wystawy stałej*. In: GOLAK Paweł, KERSKI Basil, KNOCH Konrad (eds), *Wystawa stała Europejskiego Centrum Solidarności. Katalog*, Gdańsk: 2014, p. 257.

Resistance was not, however, the only attitude towards the post-war situation; adaptation soon developed, while the authorities, although widely perceived as foreign, implemented certain national values and carried out social reforms that satisfied the expectations of significant sections of Polish society.[3] The adaptation did not disappear with years; on the contrary, it grew stronger. As many opposition activists and intellectuals emigrated, a large portion of society accepted the growing dominance of communists, either unwillingly or out of a sincere belief that the new system, for all its deficiencies regarded as temporary, was the realisation of the

Figure 1: *The European Solidarity Centre,* Gdańsk, photo Anna Ziębińska-Witek

dream of a people's Poland of justice and equality.[4]

The strike at the Gdansk Shipyard in August 1980 is presented at the exhibition as a turning point underlying the founding myth of not only the Solidarity trade union and a free Poland, but of the whole of Europe. The two most important objects-icons at the exhibition are the large charts with the listed demands of the strikers, and Gate No.2 of the Gdansk Shipyard, outside of the exhibition building, which is nevertheless an integral element of the narrative (it can be viewed from the windows of the exhibition halls).

Both the strikers' demands, written down by Arkadiusz Rybicki and Maciej Grzywaczewski, and the shipyard gate are symbols of the August 1980 strikes, well-known in Poland and Europe. The gate was the first place commemorating the shipyard workers shot and killed during previous protests; in August 1980 the pictures of the Mother of God and Pope John Paul II were hung on it, as well as the board with the demands and the banner with the motto: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" The Gate was also the meeting place of the strikers with their families. It was at this place, on 31 August 1980, that Lech Wałęsa, the leader of the strike, announced information about the signing of the Gdansk Agreement.[5]

[3] KERSTEN Krystyna, *Między wyzwoleniem a zniewoleniem. Polska 1944–1956*, London: Aneks, 1993, p. 12.
[4] KERSTEN Krystyna, *Między wyzwoleniem a zniewoleniem*, p. 25.
[5] GOLAK Pawel, KERSKI Basil, KNOCH Konrad (eds), *Wystawa stała Europejskiego Centrum Solidarności*, pp. 38–39.

These two objects ideally accomplish the ECS mission, which is to imprint the Solidarity trade union on Europe's memory. They are large and recognisable all over the world owing to the media. Contrary to appearances, the former feature is extremely significant in cases of historical reconstructions of phenomena or processes, for which it is difficult to find spectacular material evidence, while most existing objects are difficult to exhibit since they are highly "ordinary". Such exhibited elements as shipyard tools, safety helmets, tables or work records lack the appeal of those exceptional and valuable objects that turn into museum exhibits more easily and can be perceived at a cognitive or aesthetic level.[6]

In the subsequent galleries are references to the most important events, from the perspective of the heroic narrative, which preceded the strike at the shipyard. They are mainly political events and phenomena characterised by the highest dramatic intensity. These are the social protests of March 1968 and December 1970, the growing economic crisis and the accompanying strikes, as well as the establishment of the Committee for the Defence of Workers in 1976. At this point, in a way in passing, a significant item of information appears: that only a very slight portion of society was involved in opposition activities. Only an insignificant part of the exhibition presents the private life of the masses under the communist system: there is a small reconstruction of a furnished room in a typical apartment house. From the perspective of the heroic narrative, elements like these are not significant because they do not contain the right emotional charge.

A typical narrative device at the exhibition is the creation of the collective entity, "Polish society", on whose behalf and with whose consent a handful of oppositionists were active. The exhibition also emphasises the exceptional role of the Catholic Church in the Polish transformations. The narrative thus has two indisputable heroes: Lech Wałęsa and Pope John Paul II, whose pilgrimages to Poland are highlighted as events of high political significance. In this way Catholicism is shown as an inalienable element of Polish national identity.

This black-and-white picture and one-sided interpretation help build a strong sense of unity within the nation, but they do not help in critical thinking, in distancing oneself from the past and understanding complex historical processes. Formally, the exhibition is a realistic reconstruction of the past, neutral and objective by assumption; but this can never be attained in practice in the case of heroic exhibitions. The exhibition is characterised by the advantage of emotional factors over the intellectual, by an appeal to imagination, by patriotism (often on the verge of exaltation), political commitment to the battle of freedom and independence, and hero worship. In the ECS we are dealing with the formation of a Polish national identity, whose main component is a romantic desire for freedom, and the Polish nation is represented as entirely exceptional compared with other countries in the region.

2. Hungary: Shaping the Myths

Another example of the identity narrative being combined with the representation of the nation's image, prepared mainly for the needs of foreign tourists, is Budapest's "House of Terror" (*TerrorHáza*). The most noticeable elements in the case of the Hungarian exhibition are the simplified vision of the not so distant past and clear symbolism of the narrative. The opening of the museum (in 2002) was strongly politically motivated and linked with the election struggle conducted by the right-wing politician Victor Orbán.

[6] ZIĘBIŃSKA-WITEK Anna, *Historia w muzeach. Studium ekspozycji Holokaustu*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Marii Curie-Sklodowskiej, 2011, pp. 81–92.

The *TerrorHáza*, dedicated to the memory of both totalitarianisms—Nazism and communism—is housed in a Neo-Renaissance building of 1880, which the two governing regimes in Hungary chose as their headquarters. In terms of the narrative and aesthetic foundations of the exhibition, the *TerrorHáza* can be defined as a narrative historical museum organised in accordance with the so-called performative museology characterised by a transition from information to experience, from exhibition to staging, from thinking to feeling emotions.[7]

The past conveyed in the Hungarian museum is a reconstruction with conspicuous simulation elements. The authors of the exhibition have created a spectacle based on historical facts, which is intended to make history intelligible to tourists and acceptable to Hungarians. The *TerrorHáza* is, as a result, a kind of adapted presentation (a sort of mise en scène) of totalitarianism (mainly communism); the term is not used pejoratively but only as a category helpful in the analysing of the poetics of the museum. The exhibition shows distinct features of arrangement. Exhibits are, in the main, replicas of objects from different places and periods loosely linked to the communist era. The only original space in the museum is the torture chamber called "the gym", located in the basement, in which political prisoners were detained and tortured in the period 1945–1956. The exhibition catalogue presents an exact description of tortures.

The first hall of the museum, titled "Double Occupation", introduces the subject of the presentation. On a two-coloured, two-sided wall (the colours refer to the black and red regimes) there are monitors: one side represents the genocidal Nazi regime (Hitler and cheering crowds) and photographs from Bergen-Belsen, the other the communist regime (inter alia the Red Army, the signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pacts and fights for Budapest). In the next part of the museum there is a distinct overrepresentation of the communist regime.

The corridor of the Arrow Crossers and the hall of the Arrow Cross members are the only spaces entirely devoted to the active participation of the Hungarians themselves in the Nazi system. Hung from the corridor wall is an excerpt from the speech to the nation by Ferenc Szálasi, who took power in Hungary on 16 October 1944, and pictures of the exhumation of victims of mass murders committed by his organisation. In the room there are uniforms of Arrow Cross members and the ghostlike figure of Ferenc Szálasi himself, while the monitors screen parts of films showing deportations of Jews and propaganda materials.[8]

This comparatively small presentation devoted to the extermination of the Hungarian Jews belittles the role of the Hungarian Arrow Crossers in those events; the exhibition points out that the Hungarians were victims of the two systems rather than active executioners in the service of one of them. This is clearly implied by a portion of the exhibition in which two uniforms—Nazi and Soviet—placed on a rotating platform suggest a simple exchange of one occupation for the other. The domination of the communist period in the exhibition indicates, however, that it was somehow worse than the Nazi one.

The simulations are in principle conducive to the concealing of certain inconvenient facts, events or processes because they use extremely suggestive symbolism that directs the visitors' attention towards specific (and desirable) elements of a given issue. The anti-communist

[7] KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLET Barbara *The museum as catalyst*, accessed 9 August 2018, http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/vadstena.pdf

[8] Hungary devotes a separate museum to the extermination of Jews: the Holocaust Memorial Center. It is interesting in formal terms, with dominant virtual elements, sounds and digital pictures, but this cannot be the excuse for the absence of a proportionate representation of the Holocaust in the best-known and most popular museum in Budapest.

resistance among certain circles of the public was not invented for the purpose of the exposition but in Hungary the adaptation of the society to the system was considerable, and one cannot really speak of a mass opposition movement.

In the case of the House of Terror (in addition to omitting that content undesirable and inconvenient to Hungarians) the point is also to create and strengthen certain myths that naturalise crime by "squeezing" it into the conventional format of the museum narrative, which means an unavoidable reduction of actual places to a tourist space.[9] No museum is free from mythicising elements; however, with the kind of representation offered by the House of Terror the principal goal is apparently to create a myth.

The House of Terror, as intended, evokes emotional involvement and transforms the spectator into an actor and spec-actor. With similar reconstructions, one can also speak of the phenomenon of "suspension of disbelief", which means that the public accept the limitations of the medium, suspend a critical look for the duration of the visit, and sacrifice realism and logic for a good time and excitation or involvement. The exhibition instrumentalises the past for purposes of a current historical policy that are related to the favourable presentation of the Hungarian nation to the Western world (the museum is a great tourist attraction). Not without significance for the popularity of the place is the creation of an exceptionally uncritical self-image of Hungarians.

The House of Terror differs from the European Solidarity Center first of all by the language used. The ECS narrative refers to the language of moral reasons, creates a solemn, sublime mood, and seeks to restore an already non-existent community by invoking the heroic past, at the same time passing over painful and conflictual situations. Instead, there is an attempt to create the anti-communist myth of the opposition as the founding basis of a free Poland. The Terrorháza does not use sublime language; on the contrary, it contains many nostalgic, non-heroic elements (some features of everyday life in the communist state are warmly remembered). In her interview (with the telling title "I don't believe in objectivity", given to the Polish weekly "Tygodnik Powszechny"), Mária Schmidt argues that the authors of the exhibition were motivated by other objectives than only an objective representation of history: "They said that we were falsifying the history of the twentieth century. But I was sure that I wanted to move the hearts of the visitors to the museum, and make them emotionally involved in history."[10] The exhibition is also meant to evoke feelings of nostalgia: "(…) I regard it—says Schmidt—as something natural. Why shouldn't we feel nostalgic about the time when we were young? (…) everyday life under communism also had many advantages."[11] Nevertheless, we are still dealing with a highly identity-based museum creating the myth of Hungarians as the victims of two totalitarian regimes and with the patriotic narrative promoted by the state. In the museum, the mythologising elements predominate over nostalgic ones.

3. Latvia and Estonia: Double Occupation

The collective memory of the Baltic republics significantly differs from that of other countries in the region as the Soviet occupation, which began there in 1940 under the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, lasted an exceptionally long time: the Yalta and Teheran Conferences

[9] PIOTROWSKI Piotr, Auschwitz versus Auschwitz. In: *Pro Memoria*, 2004, no 20, p. 20.
[10] SCHMIDT Maria, Nie wierzę w obiektywizm. In: *Tygodnik Powszechny (dodatek specjalny)*, 2012, nos. 18–19, p. 16.
[11] SCHMIDT Maria, Nie wierzę w obiektywizm, p. 17.

tacitly accepted the incorporation of the Baltic republics into the Soviet Union. They regained independence as states only in 1991. During that time the societies of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia experienced the Nazi regime for a relatively short period (1941–1944; together with Belarus they were included in the Reich Commissariat East [Reichskommissariat Ostland]).

Accounting for or reviewing the past is difficult in this case inasmuch as the Baltic countries still have to cope with charges of collaboration with the Nazis and of being accessories to the Holocaust. The policies of the German occupiers in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were characterised, according to many scholars, by a comparatively low degree of repression and wide range of collaboration.[12] Even today, the Baltic societies remember long-lasting Soviet repressions far more clearly, with scant memories of the Nazi occupation and Holocaust. The situation is aggravated by Russia's policy, which the Baltic States may regard as hostile and as jeopardising their sovereignty.

The idea of juxtaposing and comparing the two regimes and the establishment of the occupation museums in Latvia and Estonia is aimed at attracting the attention of Western societies to disproportions in the perceiving of the two regimes. "East Europeans must now come to terms with the Holocaust and everything connected with it. West Europeans must get to grips with the Gulag. That's the only way both sides can come to an understanding", Valters Nollendorfs, deputy director of the Latvian museum, contends.[13] The author of the first concept of the exhibition in Riga, Paulis Lazda, admits that he had to resist pressures to reduce fragments of the exposition about the Nazi period in order to emphasise Soviet repressions.[14]

From the outset, Russia opposed the equation of fascism and communism in the two museums because this approach entirely reversed the vision of Russians until the *perestroika* as liberators of the Baltic societies from the Nazi regime. Opinion polls show that the Russian minority seldom visit the museums in Riga and Tallinn, and among Russian children who visited the museum in Latvia it evoked a sense of guilt because they identified with the "occupiers".[15]

The edifice of the present Museum of the Occupation of Latvia in Riga (*Latvijas Okupācijas Muzejs*) was built in 1971 to commemorate the centenary of Vladimir Lenin's birth. It is located right in the centre of Riga's Old Town but its colour, shape, building materials and general atmosphere strongly differ from those of the neighbouring buildings. Until 1991 this institution was a department of the Museum of Revolution and the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia replaced the previous one in 1993 as a private enterprise initiated by Paulis Lazda of the University of Wisconsin in cooperation with the Latvian Ministry of Culture. In 2006 the Latvian parliament passed a law, which permits the subsidising of the museum from state funds. The new institution entirely dissociated itself from the Museum of Revolution (and from the past), with nothing but several busts of communists remaining of the former exhibition, most of the collection having been transferred to the War

[12] WOJCIECHOWSKI Marian, *Czy istniała kolaboracja z Rzeszą niemiecką i ZSRR podczas drugiej wojny światowej?* accessed 7 November 2017, http://mazowsze.hist.pl/35/Rocznik_Towarzystwa_Naukowego_Warszawskiego/737/2004/25579/

[13] MARK James, Containing Fascism. History in Post-Communist Baltic Occupation and Genocide Museums.In: SARKISOVA Oksana and APOR Péter (eds) *Past for the Eyes East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989*, Budapest: Central European University, 2008, p. 350.

[14] MARK James, *Containing Fascism*, p. 350.

[15] GUNDARE Ieva, *Overcoming the Legacy of History for Ethnic Integration in Latvia*, accessed 4 February 2017, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ece/research/intermarium/vol5no3/latvia.pdf

Figure 2: *The Occupation Museum,* Riga *(2013),* photo Anna Ziębińska-Witek

Museum[16] in Riga.

The exhibition that I first visited in 2013 commemorated the Soviet (1940–1941), Nazi (1941–1944) and again Soviet (1944–1991) occupations. The two regimes were juxtaposed both through the intertwined symbols of the hammer and sickle and the swastika, and the enlarged photographs of the dictators: Hitler and Stalin, exhibited side by side.

The chronology of the tragic events in Latvia was illustrated with photographs showing the crimes and repressions towards society, with a strong emphasis laid on the responsibility of the Soviet Union for the destruction of this country and its economy, and the Sovietisation of the community. The comparison between the activities of the German and Soviet occupiers clearly demonstrated which regime was more destructive to the Latvians. For example, the part of the exhibition devoted to the first Soviet occupation strongly highlighted the terror and crimes of the Soviet secret services, and the introduction to the section on the Nazi occupation read as follows: "After a year of horror, the German army was welcomed as liberators", which is additionally illustrated with pictures of the exhumation of victims of the Soviets. The exhibition also stressed the unrelenting resistance by and the will to survive of the subjugated society, at the same time justifying those behaviours that are assessed from today's perspective as collaboration.

In 2018, during my second stay in Riga, the situation of the museum was entirely different. The building and the exhibition were closed, officially because of reconstruction and extension; however, as one of its employees told me, there were also political reasons. As long as the museum was an entirely private enterprise, it enjoyed independence. However, when the Latvian parliament began to have a say on its form, discussion on the shape of the

[16] The War Museum (*Latvijas Kara Muzejs*) is located in the fourteenth-century Gunpowder Tower within Riga's Old Town. It is one of the oldest Latvian museums, founded in 1916. The exhibition presents Latvia's military history from the ninth century to contemporary NATO operations.

edifice not "harmonising" with the buildings of Riga's Old Town was expanded by the debate resulting from the disagreement of the Russian minority (represented by the left-wing coalition: Harmony Center) with certain aspects of the exhibition. The main pivot of dispute was the use of the term "occupation" in reference to the Soviet presence in Latvia after 1944. The opponents to this term insisted that it would be more justifiable to use the term "illegal change of the regime".[17] The change would have to result in the complete remaking of the exhibition. Due to this "terminological" and, practically, political conflict, the date of re-opening of the museum is unknown, and the public can visit a temporary exhibition located in small rooms in the public administration building also housing the archive (city centre, at Raiņa bulvāris 7, but not within Riga's Old Town).

The establishment of the Museum of Occupation in Tallinn (*Okupatsioonide Muuseum*) meant, like in Riga, a shift in the collective memory from an almost total focus on the Soviet regime to the admission of the effects of Nazi occupation to Estonian consciousness. The museum, like the one in Latvia, is based on external subsidies. In Estonia, the greatest contribution to the foundation of the museum was provided by Olga Kistler-Ritso, who emigrated to the USA in 1949 and who, after the "singing revolution", became interested in the question of commemorating Estonia's occupation by the Soviet Union and the Third Reich. For that purpose she set up the Kislter-Ritso Estonian Foundation (*Kistler–Ritso Sihtasutus Eesti*). The Museum was opened in July 2003, and, despite its private character, its periodisation and contents were preceded by a conference of Estonian academics in 1998.

It is symptomatic that according to Heiko Ahonen, the museum's director, it should be organised in opposition to Western exhibitions of the Holocaust, where, he maintains, there is a church-like atmosphere and one should behave accordingly, which, he believes, prevents

Figure 3: *The Occupation Museum,* Tallin, photo Anna Ziębińska-Witek

the conduct of educational activities. In addition, he believes that the Holocaust museums are oppressive and that it is prohibited to express doubts in them, which makes it difficult for young people to actively approach this question.[18] The Occupation Museum in Tallinn was

[17] A conversation that the author had with Karlis Krekis on 12 January 2018.
[18] MARK James, *Containing Fascism*, p. 351.

meant to be free from those difficulties and designed in such a way as to provoke debate rather than give ready answers.

The glass and concrete building of the museum is also intended to commemorate, i.e. to function as a memorial to "the many victims buried in unmarked graves", as is underlined at the exhibition. The museum is located along the line running from the parliament to the national library situated nearby. Until 2007 this route was interrupted by the Bronze Soldier monument, and after it was removed, the straight line without breaks came to constitute a symbol of Estonia's independence and the uninterrupted road to freedom continuing from 1918 to 1991.[19] Over a dozen concrete suitcases in front of the entrance to the building symbolise tens of thousands of Estonians who left the country in 1944, fleeing from the Red Army, or who were deported to Soviet camps. The suitcases, a world-known symbol of deportations to concentration (and extermination) camps, in Tallinn draw a parallel between the Holocaust and Gulag.

In accordance with the formula presented at the exhibition, the Museum of Occupation's mission is to preserve historical memory which strengthens the identity of the nation and the state. The authors of the conception declare that the past should be commemorated regardless of whether it is something to be proud or ashamed of. In practice, however, at the exhibition there are no elements that could "bring shame" on Estonians; the abovementioned message only suggests that such events (i.e. collaboration with the Nazis) are part and parcel of the nation's past, which, nevertheless, is treated as the outcome of tragic circumstances for the state and society. The exhibition that I visited in 2015 commemorated two occupations: the Soviet occupation of 1940–1941 and 1944–1991, as well as the Nazi occupation (1941–1944). It did not present a consistent narrative, however; it was filled with objects that related mainly to the communist period, both at the political and daily-life levels.[20]

The museums of occupation in Latvia and Estonia are official spaces, visited by foreign visitors. Like all identity museums they create the founding myths of the two nations, which are: the fight for freedom and necessity to defend it. In their rhetoric, both museums emphasise the equal suffering of victims of both the Nazi and Soviet regimes—the differences between them are blurred, and the exhibitions do not accuse any ethnic groups of crimes: they are all included in the national martyrdom. However, the exhibitions clearly highlight the elements that show that it is the Soviet regime that is treated as the main external force whose aim was to entirely destroy the Baltic nations. The German occupation appears to be far less brutal, and those who fought against the Soviets (jointly with the Nazis) are presented as national heroes. It is on the fight against the Soviets that the new post-communist identity of the Latvians and the Estonians is founded. When writing about the now closed exhibition in the Latvian museum, Ieva Gundare stresses that over 70 percent of the artefacts and over 80 percent of the content related to the Soviet occupation (particularly emphasised being the population losses, deportations and Stalinist crimes). Some visitors, including history teachers, were in fact surprised that the term "occupation" was connected in any way with the Nazi period: it was

[19] The Bronze Soldier or the Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn was unveiled on 22 August 1947 on the third anniversary of the Red Army's entrance into the city, see BURCH Stuart and ZANDER Ulf, Preoccupied by the Past: The Case of Estonia's Museum of Occupations. In: *Scandia: tidskrift för historisk forskning*, 2008, vol. 74, pp. 53–73.

[20] The exhibition was changed in 2018. The quick changes of exhibitions demonstrate that the Estonian canon of knowledge of the past and the manner of its representation has not been fully developed and depends on the current political situation.

strongly associated only with the Soviets.[21]

4. Lithuania: Memory as a Form of Justice

The process of identity creation by remembering about sufferings and national disasters, which are redefined in favourable terms and gain a cathartic value, is best accomplished in the museal martyrdom trend. The best example of such an exhibition is the Museum of Genocide Victims (*Genocido Aukų Muziejus*) in Vilnius. This most important museum in Lithuania showing the crimes of communism was opened in 1992 (and reorganised in 1997) in the building previously housing the KGB (State Security Committee: Soviet secret services) headquarters, which was also used in 1941–1944 by the Gestapo (the Nazi secret state police). The Museum informs the public opinion about the suffering of the Lithuanian nation during the occupation, about resistance, about the occupiers and brutal methods that they used. The purpose of the museum is to collect, store and present historical documents evidencing the forms of physical and spiritual genocide committed against the Lithuanian nation, as well as the forms of resistance against the Soviet regime.[22] The initiative of converting the prison into a museum was launched by the Lithuanian Association of Political Prisoners and Exiles, and was financially supported by the ministry of culture and education, which means that the project conforms to the historical policy pursued by the Lithuanian state.

The ground floor and the first floor in the building present an exhibition devoted to Lithuania's history in 1940–1941, the guerrilla war until 1953, and to the subsequent activities of the occupiers and acts of rebellion of the subjugated population. The events that sealed Lithuania's fate were, as demonstrated by the exhibition, two Soviet-German pacts: the non-aggression pact of 23 August 1939 and the pact of 28 September 1939 on the division of areas of influence. There is no information on the daily life in the Sovietised country; only the ways of spending free time of the anti-Soviet partisans are shown. The curators focused exclusively on the repression of the communist regime against the Lithuanian nation (forced labour camps, deportations), and placed the strongest emphasis on the continuity of resistance, which (according to the vision presented in the museum) lasted incessantly from 1940 to 1991, only with its forms changing: armed struggle, hanging out national flags, distribution of leaflets, writing patriotic messages on the walls, organisation of demonstrations, publishing banned books, intensified activity of the Catholic Church or the dissident movement. The form of the exhibition is traditional: information charts, documentary photographs, and very few objects, mainly of symbolic significance.

Figure 4: *The Museum of Genocide Victims,* Vilnius, photo Anna Ziębińska-Witek

In accordance with the martyrdom trend's aesthetics, the principal and most important part of the exhibition is a genuine KGB prison housed in the basements of the building from the autumn of 1940, with the original prison cells of the early post-war years, which were not preserved, having been meticulously

[21] GUNDARE Ieva, *Overcoming the Legacy*…

[22] RUDIENĖ Virginija, JUOZEVIČŪTĖ Vilma (eds), *The Museum of Genocide Victims: A Guide to the Exhibitions*, Vilnius: (w/o date of publication), p. 3.

reconstructed.

The Museum reconstructs in detail both the living conditions of the prisoners and the administrative rooms of KGB officers. The exhibition also contains objects from other places, for example the door of the Lukiškės Prison (*Lukiškių tardymo izoliatorius kalėjimas*), notorious not only in Lithuania but all over the Soviet Union, because members of many nationalities were detained there. The central point of the exhibition in the Genocide Victims' Museum is the cell where executions were carried out: between 1944 and the early 1960s about a thousand persons were murdered in it, with only one third of them having been sentenced to death for anti-Soviet activities. The majority of the victims are buried in the mass grave at Tuskulėnai.[23]

The martyrdom trend in representations of communism is inspired by the symbolism and visual iconography found in Holocaust museums. What links these places is first of all the aim, to hand down the experiences of the victims, and second the basic exhibition strategy, to impact on the visitor's emotions through the genuine infrastructure and objects. Another shared element is the use of photographs of the victims, both portrait photos of the then living persons (prisoners, POWs) and controversial photos of their dead bodies (of those murdered and tortured). In all cases there is a clearly discernible tendency to personify the memory of the victims, and the emphasis on remembering and commemorating each of the murdered individually.

The main function of the exhibition in Vilnius is to symbolically pay homage to the victims and mete out justice to the perpetrators who avoided punishment because of the imperfect law or inefficiency of the courts. The fighting victim of the communist system is the ideal type of a freedom fighter, whose death gave the final and complete moral meaning to his/her activity. The few genuine objects owned by the prisoners, or at least copies of their letters, function as relics in the martyrdom trend. The exhibitions also show documentaries and eyewitness accounts recorded and played back on monitors. The heroic victims who died in the struggle are the germ of the founding myth of an independent Lithuania and their death as martyrs helps build the identity of Lithuanian society.

Conclusion

All the museums described above share features in common: they provide consistent narratives that guarantee the continuation of national identity, and popularise formative narratives consistent with differently understood raisons d'état and with the positive image of particular nations. This requires the making of difficult choices because the history of each nation is full of moments that contradict the heroic identity visions. The museums in question seek ways to "elevate" their community; consequently, they combine history with various ideas: progress, change, modernity, martyrdom or freedom.[24]

The narratives offered by their authors impose particular interpretations, organise and select evidence, and subordinate the objects that function as illustrations of narratives. All the media and technologies present in a museum, theatricalisation, creation of fictional spaces or dramatic lighting, also serve to impart information in such a way as to present a specific interpretation and manipulate the audience's emotions. Identity exhibitions obey the requirement of scientific presentation only to some extent, which means that the presented historical facts conform as

[23] RUDIENĖ Virginija, JUOZEVIČŪTĖ Vilma, *The Museum of Genocide Victims*, p. 16.

[24] For comparison of national museums see: *National Museum Making Histories in a Diverse Europe*, accessed 7 May 2017, http://liu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:573632/FULLTEXT01.pdf

a rule to the official historiography, whereas the choice of these facts and their interpretation tend to be controversial.

Identity narratives adopt a specific moral position and test the ethical judgments of visitors. They also seek ways to produce definite responses of empathy, feelings of right and wrong, and of justice or a sense of injustice. As a result of all these measures, the authority of the institution is supposed to remain undisputed, the (national) ideas and objects ("speaking for themselves") legitimising each other, which impresses on visitors that there is unquestionable and unmediated evidence in support of specific theses.

In addition to clearly presented positive heroes, the identity narrative requires the defining of an enemy. It is owing to the enemy that the history of heroism can confirm its weight and significance. The rules for the creating of the figure of the enemy at museum exhibitions are consistent with the obligatory patterns of historical narratives; moreover, this picture is influenced by memory discourses, cultural stereotypes and historical policy, as well as psychological and sociological mechanisms. Interestingly enough, the enemy (or "stranger/alien") is not as important as the enemy-hero relationship/tension, which, in many cases, is the foundation of museum narrative.[25]

In the case of exhibitions about communism the enemy could be individuals (such as General Wojciech Jaruzelski in Poland), institutions (e.g. secret services) or the Soviets, but usually it is an impersonal enemy in the form of the communist system. The hostile system at the exhibition is characterised by a set of features specific to totalitarianism: brutality, militariness, heartlessness, anonymity, a craving for all-embracing control and a striving to stay in power at all costs. This device particularly serves to create identity narratives that cannot exclude whole social groups, admitting that large portions of societies identified with the system or even managed it. A possible deconstruction of the picture of the enemy would weaken the whole story and destroy the dichotomy, and the narrative would be less heroic and less convincing. Instead, it would introduce unwelcome relativity, which would jeopardise the identity discourse.[26]

A serious problem in identity museums is the lack of space for dispute or even dialogue, the avoidance of controversies and varied opinions, and the depriving of the visitors of their own interpretation of the events represented. The most frequent case is that a differing comment is introduced into the identity narrative only when it supports the dominant narrative. The national identity emerging in this way has a mythological structure and conceals or entirely overshadows other narratives and possible potential interpretations. Obviously, the museum is not a place where historians are expected to argue or present a critical in-depth analysis of a given historical process. This is neither possible nor necessary; however, on the scale between a one-dimensional, selective narrative and a deeply analytical dispute there are intermediate values.

Identity museums identify with a particular vision of the past and with some of its actors, which in practice means that they represent the memory of certain events and processes rather than their history (in the meaning of historical science). In addition to this type of museum, there is a very strong nostalgic trend in the whole region in question,[27] but it is identity museums, which speak the national language and appeal to such concepts as freedom, heroism

[25] BOGUMIŁ Zuzanna, WAWRZYNIAK Joanna, BUCHEN Tim, GANZER Christian, SENINA Maria, *The Enemy on Display: The Second World War in Eastern European Museums*, New York-Oxford: Berghahn, 2015, pp. 133–136.
[26] BOGUMIŁ Zuzanna, WAWRZYNIAK Joanna, BUCHEN Tim, GANZER Christian, SENINA Maria, *The Enemy on Display*, p. 149.
[27] TODOROVA Maria and GILLE Zsuzsa (eds), *Post-communist nostalgia*, New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012.

and martyrdom, as well as creating the mythological structure of national museum narratives, that remain the most important instrument of historical policy from the perspective of each state in the region.

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VR technologies as an extension to the museum exhibition: A case study of the Silk Road museums in Samarkand

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VR technologies as an extension to the museum exhibition: A case study of the Silk Road museums in Samarkand
The geographical dispersion of the Silk Road generates a number of problems with the availability of its heritage for visitors. ICT can at least partially address these problems. This article discusses the concept of extending the Silk Road museums' offer with virtual reality (VR) technologies, which has been tested based on a virtual exhibition, developed through a long-term cooperation between Lublin University of Technology and museums in Samarkand in the field of 3D digitization and dissemination of their exhibitions. A survey of a group of spectators was conducted and its results are discussed. It revealed that VR is a promising technology, widely accepted among spectators and well suited for the specificity of the Silk Road museums, and it could be used primarily to complement traditional exhibitions.

Keywords: museum, virtual reality, virtual museum exhibitions, Silk Road, exploratory survey

1. Introduction

The classic approach to organizing museum exhibitions requires the visitor to physically visit different and often distant locations. In addition, it is troublesome for the visitor to assess (for example, based only on photographs, documents and other information published on a website) the extent to which the exhibition will be of interest to him/her. Finally, the greater the geographical dispersion the more time is needed for sightseeing; furthermore, the visitor may need to obtain appropriate travel documents and permits, and greater travel

and accommodation costs will be incurred, not to mention difficulties affecting people with disabilities. In some cases, interesting exhibits cannot be seen due to political instability or ongoing military operations. Recent unexpected events – namely, the global coronavirus pandemic, which has caused border closures and restrictions on travel and tourism, as well as the closure of cultural institutions such as museums – show the importance of digitising museum artefacts and making them available online.

The above-mentioned issues are particularly related to the heritage of the Silk Road, which is scattered over thousands of kilometres between culturally different countries (from China, through the Muslim countries of Central Asia and the Middle East, to Christian Armenia). Therefore, the idea of extending the offer of the Silk Road museums' exhibitions with elements utilising ICT techniques, and facilitating remote access to these resources, seems like an obvious, good and even desired solution. One technology that could be suitable for such purposes is virtual reality (VR), which enables museums to build virtual exhibitions presenting digital representations of real objects and their 3D surroundings, where a person is put into a state of immersion by means of a specialised headset. The viewer can behave as if in a museum, walking around the presented heritage artefacts, reading a story or watching audiovisual content concerning a particular object, moving his/her head to change the perspective, travelling around a replica of the museum's rooms and corridors, and so on. Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged here: it seems – and this was confirmed by our own research – that the desire to physically visit the museum, to soak up its atmosphere and so on, will not be eliminated for a long time.

Now let us consider some of arguments that make virtual exhibitions utilising VR technologies an interesting solution. First, a potential visitor can have a bit of fun while becoming, to a significant degree, familiar with a museum's offer, without physically visiting it. Second, the technical barriers are not high. It is easy to get affordable devices offering sufficient performance that would enable people to watch virtual exhibitions, even at home using their personal smartphones. Third, initiatives such as the European Year of Cultural Heritage,[1] Work Plan for Culture 2019–2022[2] and the United Nations Development Programme (Standard 4: Cultural Heritage[3]) as well as other initiatives run by local governments, stress the importance of sustaining the legacy of cultural and natural heritage and protecting it from destruction by human or natural forces. These initiatives have made it easier for museums to obtain funding to digitise their resources and present them in novel ways. Thanks to this, an ever-wider range of professional and amateur equipment for digitising and visualising resources in the 3D environment (in such a way that preserves not only the geometry and dimensions of a digitised object, but makes it photorealistic) is becoming widely available, with the indirect effect that it is also becoming cheaper. At last we are witnessing a generational shift toward an information society; a change that cannot be ignored. The use of VR technologies can be considered a part of the reconceptualisation of museum exhibitions targeting the upcoming Generation Z[4]

[1] European Year of Cultural Heritage, accessed 22 January 2020, https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/european-year-cultural-heritage_en.html

[2] Europa Nostra, *Work plan for culture 2019–2022*, accessed 22 January 2020, https://www.europanostra.org/work-plan-for-culture-2019-2022-eu-ministers-of-culture-make-the-legacy-of-the-european-year-a-priority/

[3] UNDP, *Social and Environmental Standards, Standard 4*, accessed 22 January 2020, https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%204.aspx

[4] PRIPORAS, Constantinos-Vasilios et al. Generation Z consumers' expectations of interactions in smart retailing: A future agenda. In: *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 77, 2017, p. 374–381.

(people born after 1995), characterised by being heavy users of technology and a generation who have never known the world without the Internet.

As we can see there are no significant technological barriers, but there are many factors that encourage the use of VR by museums. However, the main question is whether the cultural heritage community is willing to accept the idea of exhibitions in virtual reality and if so, in what capacity: as complementary content, or even as a replacement for traditional exhibitions that can be viewed on site at the museum? To investigate this, we have drawn upon a long-term collaboration between Lublin University of Technology and the Silk Road museums in Samarkand[5] to carry out exploratory research. Another motivation for choosing the Silk Road as a case study is the pioneering commitment of Lublin University of Technology in this region.

For the purpose of our research we prepared a virtual exhibition presenting digital copies of real objects owned by these museums. The objects were 3D scanned on site and transformed into precise 3D models by employees of Lublin University of Technology. In the course of collecting research material, we conducted person-to-person interviews[6] with museum professionals from regions connected by the Silk Road about the use of advanced ICT, including virtual reality, to improve the scope and availability of services covered by the museums. Another part of our research involved a survey of young adults belonging to Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2001) from Eurasia interested in heritage and innovative methods of presenting it, who were able to view our virtual exhibition. What makes our paper interesting is that it not only presents the state and possibilities of the use of VR technologies, but that it also offers feedback on this topic from a diverse group of people.

2. Background of the study

2.1. Virtual reality as a tool for presenting museum resources

In recent years, many museums around the world have undertaken the creation of digital exhibitions (for example, the National Museum of Singapore,[7] State Hermitage Museum in Russia,[8] and the Tate's recreation of Modigliani's Ochre Atelier[9]) and research in this area is conducted by international teams carrying out joint projects, including 3D-ICONS.[10]

Currently, in the broadly understood area of museology, several ways of presenting the content of available exhibitions have been implemented. The most important are:

- via "kiosks": interactive displays made available to visitors within the museum which might present descriptions, scans of documents, photographs, animations of selected

[5] 3D Digital Silk Road, accessed 22 January 2020, http://silkroad3d.com/

[6] These interviews were conducted in 2018 and 2019, in the course of events in which authors were participating, and the interviews were accompanied by demonstrations of the relevant technology.

[7] Explore virtual reality at the National Museum of Singapore this weekend – CNA, accessed 10 March 2020, https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/lifestyle/explore-virtual-reality-at-the-national-museum-of-singapore-this-9481696

[8] Jupiter Hall VR tour development for State Hermitage Museum, accessed 10 March 2020, https://nntc.digital/blog/vr-and-ar/jupiter-hall-vr-tour-development-for-state-hermitage-museum-/

[9] Modigliani VR: The Ochre Atelier – Behind the Scenes | Tate, accessed 10 March 2020, https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/modigliani/modigliani-vr-ochre-atelier

[10] 3D-ICONS Case Studies, accessed March 10th, 2020, https://www.slideshare.net/3dicons/3dicons-case-studies-43942076; 3D-ICONS Guidelines, accessed 10 March 2020, https://www.slideshare.net/3dicons/3dicons-guidelines

architectural objects, or other reconstructions based on 3D imaging;[11]

- virtual tours of the museum, often in the form of 360° panoramas with the option to switch between consecutive views;[12]
- catalogues of segments of the museum's collection made available via the Internet, sometimes as simplified 3D models of objects that can be rotated and scaled;[13]
- via virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), in which artificially created 2D elements or 3D models are superimposed on the actual camera image.

In 1991, thanks to the work of Tsichritzis and Gibbs,[14] the concepts of virtual museums (VM) and virtual reality (VR) were introduced into circulation. Although VR seems to be best suited for reconstructing places,[15] it has potential applications in the context of educational activities[16] or even in specific cases, such as museums of embroidery,[17] where 3D imaging can be mixed with other digitisation technologies. Lepouras et al. provided a useful description of examples of existing virtual environment (VE) systems used in museums that have implemented the idea of VR, exploring the possible degree of user immersion and installation costs.[18] The authors also presented their approach to creating a stationary VR museum. Another VR application design strategy and MNEME stereoscopic system is introduced by Barbieri et al.[19] and Bruno et al.[20]

The growing role of mobile devices and systems[21] has also influenced VR technologies. Jiménez Fernández-Palacios et al.[22] describe a mobile VR system built in the Unity environment using Oculus Rift, which, in combination with the Kinect driver, allowed users to interact with objects. Another mobile low-cost VR solution for popular smartphones is presented by

[11] CALLIERI, Marco et al. Artworks narrating a story: A modular framework for the integrated presentation of three-dimensional and textual contents. In: *Proceedings - Web3D 2013: 18th International Conference on 3D Web Technology*, 2013, p. 167–175.

[12] Khiva360, accessed 10 March 2020, https://khiva360.nazzar.uz/

[13] Cultural Heritage & History 3D models | Categories – Sketchfab, accessed 10 March 2020, https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/categories/cultural-heritage-history

[14] TSICHRITZIS, Dennis and GIBBS, Simon. Virtual Museums and Virtual Realities. In: *International Conference on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums*, 1991, p. 14–16.

[15] GONÇALVES, Alexandrino et al. An Approach to (Virtually) Recreate Historical Findings. In: *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress "Cultural Heritage and New Technologies", Viena, Austria*, 2005, p. 1–11.

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[17] SZABÓOVÁ, Nela. Úspechy výšiviek z produkcie Spolku Izabella na medzinárodnom trhu. *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2018, p. 95–103.

[18] LEPOURAS, George et al. Building a VR museum in a museum. In: *Proc. 2001 VRIC Laval Virtual International Conference, 16-18 May 2001, Laval, France*, 2001, p. 1–8.

[19] BARBIERI, Loris et al. User-centered design of a virtual reality exhibit for archaeological museums. In: *International Journal on Interactive Design and Manufacturing*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2018, p. 561–571.

[20] BRUNO, Fabio et al. From 3D reconstruction to virtual reality: A complete methodology for digital archaeological exhibition. In: *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2010, p. 42–49.

[21] ŻYŁA, Kamil. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Detection – from Psychological Checklists to Mobile Solutions. In: *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rethoric*, vol. 60, 2019, p. 85–100.

[22] JIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ-PALACIOS, Belen et al. Access to complex reality-based 3D models using virtual reality solutions. In: *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 23, 2017, p. 40–48.

Skulimowski et al.[23] Agnello et al.[24] focus on increased use of VR technologies to prepare virtual tours of historical objects. A classification of application-oriented VR installations that can be used in the area of cultural heritage was introduced by Carrozzino and Bergamasco,[25] and a six-step procedure for creating VR exposures, with practical notes, has been offered by Remondino et al.[26] The social consequences of VR technology are explored by Scrofani and Ruggiero,[27] who point out that its use allows museums to network more effectively within a shared cultural, geographical or thematic area. Finally, the achievements of cyberculture in the fields of education and the presentation and protection of cultural heritage (including technological elements such as VR, 2D and 3D) over the period 2012–2017, are analysed by Župčán.[28]

We are aware that due to the innovative nature of using virtual reality, it would be necessary to properly prepare museum staff and instruct potential content recipients. However, we do not see this as a blocker. What more according to above mentioned literature we could conclude, that the general public awareness about VR technologies is increasing and their setup is not a problem. In addition, the generational shift leads toward people well accustomed to technology being the base for modern VR solutions. From the perspective of the museum staff, operating 3D scanners and software for preparing a VR scene may be challenging, but only apparently. Use of 3D scanners requires manual dexterity rather than specialist technical knowledge.[29] In case of the software - the main principles of operation should not be a problem for technical employees. At last, we conclude that there is still a lot of space for research on mobile VR technologies as tools for disseminating museum resources, including their effectiveness and acceptance rate by its users.

2.2. Silk Road museums in Samarkand

Samarkand is a unique city on the Silk Road[30] located in the present-day Uzbekistan, which was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001. It owes its exceptional importance mainly to the preserved monumental buildings from the times of the fourteenth-century Mongol conqueror Tamerlane (also known as Timur) and his successors.[31] The three magnificent

[23] SKULIMOWSKI, Stanisław et al. Design and optimisation methods for interactive mobile VR visualisation. In: *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, vol. 710, 2019, p. 1–10.

[24] AGNELLO, F. et al. Virtual reality for historical architecture. In: *ISPRS Annals of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences*, vol. XLII-2/W9, 2019, p. 9–16.

[25] CARROZZINO, Marcello and BERGAMASCO, Massimo. Beyond virtual museums: Experiencing immersive virtual reality in real museums. In: *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 11, no. 4, 2010, p. 452–458.

[26] REMONDINO, Fabio et al. Design and implement a reality-based 3D digitisation and modelling project. In: *2013 Digital Heritage International Congress (DigitalHeritage)*, 2013, p. 137–144.

[27] SCROFANI, Luigi and RUGGIERO, Luca. Museum networks in the Mediterranean area: Real and virtual opportunities. In: *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2013, p. S75–S79.

[28] ŽUPČÁN, Ladislav. Platforma kultúrneho dedičstva v súčasnej kyberkultúre. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, p. 57–73.

[29] KĘSIK, Jacek et al. An approach to computer-aided reconstruction of museum exhibits. In: *Advances in Science and Technology Research Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2017, p. 87–94.

[30] HANSEN, Valerie. *The Silk Road: A New History*. Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 320; UNESCO, International Institute for Central Asian Studies. *Silk Road Memory of the World. Documentary Heritage Inscribe on the UNESCO "Memory of the World" International Register*. Mega Basim, 2015.

[31] POLUPANOW, S.N. *Architekturnye Pamiatniki Samarkanda*. Moscow: Uzdatelistwo Akademii Architektury CCCP, 1948.

madrassas (fifteenth to seventeenth century) located on Registan Square,[32] the Gur-e-Amir mausoleum from 1404 where Tamerlane was buried, the Bibi Chanum mosque complex (fourteenth-century), and the Shah-i Zinda cemetery complex (fourteenth-fifteenth century) are the places most visited by tourists.[33] The remains of the Ulugh Beg Observatory and the Mausoleum of St Daniel should also not be forgotten. In addition, there are several significant museums in the city, where both ethnographic exhibitions[34] and artefacts from excavations can be seen, including Afrasiab Museum, the Scientific-Experimental Museum-Laboratory of Samarkand State University and Samarkand Museum of Culture and History.

Afrasiab Museum is located in the ancient city of the same name, which was destroyed in the early thirteenth century by Mongols led by Genghis Khan. The museum contains more than 22,000 unique artefacts found in an excavation site of nearly 200 hectares. Items include glazed plates and dishes, pitchers, ossuaries and skulls of the inhabitants, as well as the famous frescoes known as the Ambassadors' Paintings or the Hall of Ambassadors Murals from the seventh and eighth centuries.[35]

The Scientific-Experimental Museum-Laboratory of Samarkand State University (SamSU) is a museum designed for scientific research and educational purposes. The collection presented in the museum covers pre-Islamic times, the period of development of the city of Afrasiab, as well as the Timuridan period. In addition, a replica of the students' room from the seventeenth-century madrassa was built in the museum.[36]

The Samarkand Museum of Culture and History has a collection of ancient artefacts, mediaeval ceramics, metal and glassware, as well as numismatic items from Central Asia, ancient Greece and Rome. The museum also has a rich ethnographic collection (about 20,000 pieces) of national clothing, including gold embroidery and carpets, mainly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The abovementioned museums do not have advanced digital infrastructure or collections digitised using 3D technology. Employees of Lublin University of Technology (LUT), during expeditions to Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) in 2017–2019, carried out pilot 3D scans aimed at selecting suitable methods, devices and parameters for a full-scale data acquisition project. On the same trip, LUT employees conducted seminars for academics and students at universities in those countries, presenting various available computer graphics solutions including 3D scanning, 3D printing and interactive virtual walks using mobile VR applications. Numerous conversations with local museum workers, scientists and students indicated a great deal of interest in these solutions, emphasising the importance of virtual

[32] MILOSZ, Marek et al. Determination of ceramic tile colour surface areas on the medieval Sher-Dor Madrasah mosaic in Samarkand – Problems and solutions. In: *Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*, vol. 16, 2020, p. 1–6.

[33] ARAPOW, A. and GLAUDINOV, B. *The Artistic Culture of Central Asia and Azerbaijan in the 9th–15th Centuries*, vol. IV: Architecture. International Institute for Central Asia Studies, 2013, p. 159–215; RAKHMANOW, Abusapikhan. Architectural Monuments of Samarkand in the Timurid Epoch. In: *Proceedings of the Workshop on Conservation and Management of Timurid Architecture, 21 April – 2 May 2008, Tashkent, Samarkand, Shakhrisyabz, Bukhara, Khiva*, Mega Basim, 2008, p. 32–43.

[34] ORIFJONOVA, Gulra'no Ravshan. Ethnographic collections of museums in Uzbekistan: samples of copper-embossing art. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, p. 235–240.

[35] AZARPAY, Guitty. The Afrasiab Murals: A Pictorial Narrative Reconsidered. In: *The Silk Road*, vol. 12, 2014, p. 49–56.

[36] MONTUSIEWICZ, Jerzy et al. The concept of low-cost interactive and gamified virtual exposition. In: *INTED2018 Proceedings*, 2018, p. 353–363.

exhibitions for mobile devices, and motivating the authors to undertake the research presented in this article.

3. Virtual exhibition development

For the purpose of our research, and on the basis of the literature review, as well as market research and analysis of the operation of various distribution platforms, we assumed that the VR application to be created will most commonly be used on mobile smartphones with the Android operating system. In this way, we hoped to ensure maximum availability of the created content for potential recipients, due to:

- the possibility for users to use their own devices (minimum requirements – Android version 5.0, magnetometer, Bluetooth, full HD screen between 4 and 6 inches) instead of having to purchase additional computer and projection equipment;
- the application's uncomplicated configuration for use (after installation, the application only requires users to define the profile of whichever VR frame they own);
- an uncomplicated hardware configuration (the application requires a smartphone, a VR frame and a Bluetooth joystick for operation – no additional cables etc. are needed).

We used the following tools during the development of our virtual exhibition:

- Google VR SDK as the main component responsible for image transformation and interactions generated by the application for the purpose of VR presentation running on an Android device;
- 3ds Max environment for processing acquired 3D scans and creating background objects;
- Unity graphics engine for creating a virtual scene and embedding application logic;
- Visual Studio development environment for creating scripts in the C# language, describing the logic of the application's operation (including interaction methods and their results).

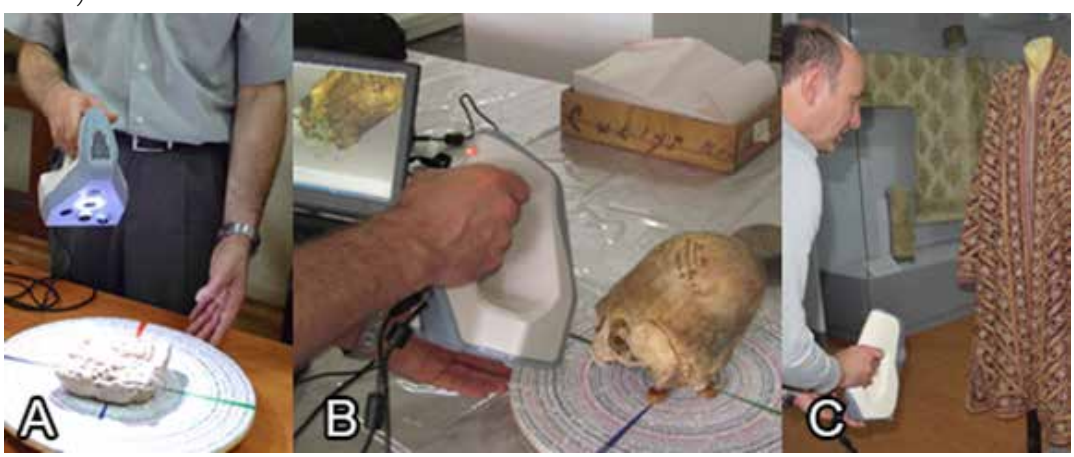

Figure 1: *3D Digitisation: a) Scientific-Experimental Museum-Laboratory (SEML), b) Afrasiab Museum, c) Samarkand Museum of Culture and History (SMCH)*

First of all, a general application skeleton was developed which could later be adapted to specific applications, such as 3C (cross-culture competence) studies. Next, the preparation of

3D models and designing the interior of virtual rooms began.

The models of the exhibits placed on the virtual stage came from three Samarkand museums and were acquired by means of 3D scanning (Figure 1). The digitisation process was performed by LUT employees with professional 3D scanners that use structural light: namely, Artec Eva and Artec Spider. These offered 3D point accuracy up to 0.1 mm and 0.05 mm respectively. The models acquired were initially recorded in the form of point clouds with textures, and then processed in LUT's "Lab3D" laboratory in the form of triangular meshes. Figure 2 presents examples of exhibits at different stages of processing.

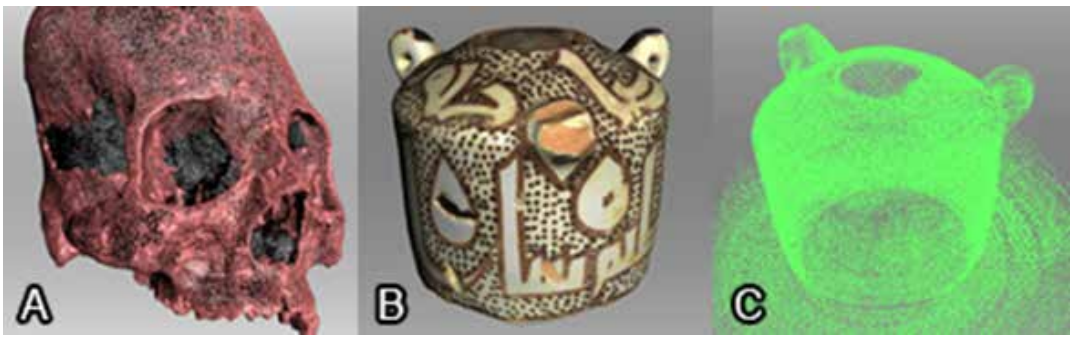

Figure 2: *Afrasiab Museum – 3D digital models: a) skull, second century CE – net model, b) glazed olive lamp, eleventh to twelfth century – photorealistic model, c) point cloud of the lamp object*

Twelve objects were placed in four rooms in the virtual scene (Figure 3), including four objects from the Scientific-Experimental Museum-Laboratory (jugs and a vessel for transporting mercury); seven from Afrasiab Museum (a ritually deformed skull, jugs, a glazed plate and an olive lamp); and one from Samarkand Museum of Culture and History (a nineteenth-century garment of Emir of Bukhara, embroidered with gold thread). The objects were selected to (1) present the diversity of Uzbekistan's cultural heritage through artefacts from the second to the nineteenth century; (2) be visually appealing to the average observer who might not be familiar with the culture of the region; and (3) present different objects in terms of how they are scanned and processed.

Figure 3: *View of the virtual scene in the Unity environment: left – view of the entire complex; right – view of Emir of Bukhara garment from the observer's perspective*

The relatively small computing resources of smartphones demanded action to facilitate the smooth running of the application. For this reason, the VR walk was limited to four rooms

and 12 objects. This reduced the average duration of the VR session for the participant, which resulted both in lower battery consumption and less risk of overheating the smartphone. All analytical scripts (written for the purpose of collecting data about participants' movement and actions) and interaction mechanisms were developed to be executed as rarely as possible and to make optimum (i.e. minimal) use of the device's memory. The 3D models were optimised (simplifying geometry by reducing the number of triangles and simplifying the texture) using manual and automatic techniques, in similar ways to previous projects the team had carried out.[37] All modifications of the 3D models were discussed with representatives of the museum community, to ensure that the important details of the exhibits were preserved.

4. Methodology

The main goal of this paper is to provide insight into the preferences of the general community interested in the cultural heritage of the Silk Road with regards to the idea of presenting museum exhibitions in virtual reality. Another goal is to identify the possible roles (either complementary or supplementary) that could be played by VR technology in context of traditional museum exhibitions. To achieve these goals, we decided to conduct exploratory research among a highly internationalised group of people – museum professionals involved in the management of Silk Road heritage and individuals interested in the cultural heritage of that region.

Before we introduce the research questions, two basic notions must be explained: the traditional and the virtual exhibition. From this point on, when we write "virtual exhibition", we have in mind a museum exhibition made using virtual reality (VR) technologies, consisting of digital representations of real objects, in which the viewer is put into a state of immersion using a specialised headset. By "traditional exhibition" we mean an exhibition that can be visited at the site of the museum, consisting of real objects, as well as audiovisual content, photographs, educational games and so on. In this type of exhibition, the viewer does not enter a state of immersion using any kind of VR equipment.

After analysing the situation concerning the use of VR technologies by Silk Road museums, we formulated the following research questions:

RQ1.Is the use of VR technologies a good complement to traditional museum exhibitions?

RQ2.Can the use of VR technologies improve accessibility of a museum exhibition's content?

RQ3.Can VR technologies lead to increased interest in museum exhibitions?

In order to answer these research questions, we took a bidirectional approach, conducting a set of interviews with professionals and a regular experiment involving young adults belonging to Generation Z.

The first direction involved face-to-face interviews with professionals from the regions connected by the Silk Road, including, but not limited to, those working in the museums around Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Interviews were conducted in 2018 and 2019, during events on the heritage of the Silk Road in which the authors were participating,[38] and were accompanied by demonstrations of the technology under discussion. The interviews were conducted as informal

[37] SKULIMOWSKI, Stanislaw et al. Design and optimisation ..., 2019, p. 1–10.

[38] The list of events can be found in the newsletter of the Department of Computer Science, Lublin University of Technology (https://cs.pollub.pl/news/?lang=en), as well as at http://silkroad3d.com/

meetings in quiet, separated places; questions were put to the participants and their answers recorded. The questions concerned the characteristics of the respondent, the possibility of virtual exhibitions either replacing or complementing traditional ones, the ability of virtual exhibitions to improve the accessibility of museum resources to the general public, and the ability of virtual exhibitions to increase the general public's interest in museum resources. The unique example of the Silk Road museums and their exhibitions was the background for the questions.

The second research direction, carried out in 2019, was a regular experiment involving young adults belonging to Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2001) who were interested in cultural heritage and innovative methods of presenting it. The experiment was divided into two parts: participants first viewed our virtual exhibition and then filled in a survey. All respondents were university students. We made significant efforts to seek the opinions of people from highly varied backgrounds – from a variety of countries, from at least 10 different parent universities (including foreign exchange students) and studying different subjects at university – in an attempt to counteract any bias in the results caused by selecting respondents of a homogeneous origin. We selected participants by asking them if they were interested in cultural heritage and in innovative methods of presenting it, in hope that they would want to be more involved in the research process and would express their opinions more freely and expansively.

For the purpose of the experiment we created a virtual exhibition presenting 3D-scanned museum objects from Samarkand. The exhibition was prepared using a Unity graphics engine and Google VR SDK for the Android platform. To demonstrate it, we used a Redmi Note 5 smartphone placed in a VR BOX frame (Figure 4) which was worn on the participant's head. Additionally, we provided respondents with a Mocute-050 Bluetooth controller to facilitate their movement across the exhibition. Thanks to the mobile character of this equipment, we had plenty of flexibility as to the location for the experiment: a computer laboratory was as suitable as a plain classroom or a conference room, as long as we were able to provide the participant with (1) a choice of posture – sitting or standing; (2) freedom of movement within the adopted posture; and (3) the absence of adverse environmental factors (noise, vibrations, smells, crowds and so on).

Figure 4: *The test setup: VR frame, Bluetooth controller with joystick, Android mobile device – image displayed on the smartphone with a division into left and right eye*

Our virtual exhibition consisted of four rooms. The first was a playground where the respondent could quickly become accustomed to our VR environment, learning how to move and display information about the presented objects; this usually took just a few minutes. The main sightseeing tour began with the second room. The time participants could spend in the exhibition was not limited, although due to its small size no respondent spent longer than 20 minutes – which was in accordance with our objectives when designing the exhibition. During the process, we monitored the respondents' movements in order to determine how much of the exhibition they visited and whether their answers were credible when they filled in the survey.

The second part of the experiment was the survey, which could be filled in only after finishing the VR demonstration. The survey covered demographic questions (age, sex, country of origin, course of studies, experience using VR, interest in cultural heritage) and then posed the following questions:[39]

Q1. Do you think that VR is a good way to complement a traditional exhibition?

Q2. Do you think that VR could become the basic method of presenting museum resources?

Q3. Do you think that a virtual exhibition could make you want to visit a traditional exhibition?

Q4. Do you think that availability of virtual exhibitions would make it easier for you to plan your visit to selected museums and exhibitions?

Q5. Imagine you did not have enough time to finish going round a traditional museum exhibition. Do you think that you could finish it using a virtual exhibition?

Q6. After seeing this virtual exhibition, do you feel encouraged to see another one?

Q7. Based on your whole experience, what is your level of satisfaction with virtual exhibitions?

For questions Q1 to Q7, respondents were first asked the question, then to rate how much they liked the idea on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most positive response) as an answer. We chose this approach instead of the 5-degree Likert scale, in order to obtain ordered values of constant interval being 1. This approach makes it easy for respondents to express answers, and also simplifies the statistical analysis. Respondents were also able to freely add their comments and remarks to the survey, thus were not limited by its authors' imagination.

To present the distribution of data we used a classical histogram and box plot diagrams, depicting the first and third quartiles, median and whether outlying values were present. To identify any correlations between responses to the main questions and respondents' demographic profiles (country of origin, sex) we used a Pearson's Chi-squared test of independence, followed by Goodman's Kruskal Tau test to check for effect size (strength of association). In the case of respondents' interest in cultural heritage and experience with VR, we used Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (rho). For each statistical test, the level of significance was set to 0.05. We used the R 3.6.2 environment for statistical computations and generation of plots presenting the analysed data.

[39] Our research was of a broader scope than the topic of this article. We only mention questions (and other data) that are within the scope of this article.

5. Results

5.1. Interviews with professionals

As outlined above, we conducted in-person interviews with influential professionals interested and/or involved in activities relating to the cultural heritage of regions connected by the Silk Road, including professionals who worked in museums in and around Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Their feedback, although unstructured, gave us many valuable ideas which were used when writing questions for the survey with younger respondents which formed the second part of our study.

We interviewed 20 people in total: 3 from Poland (none of whom worked for the Lublin University of Technology), 3 from Japan, 7 from Uzbekistan (including directors of partnering museums), 4 from Kazakhstan and 3 from Kyrgyzstan. The interviewees were mostly men, with only 3 women (from Poland, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan). We reached wide variety of professionals, from policy makers and directors to regular museum workers. Our respondents fell broadly into three age categories we can define as younger, middle-aged and older, with the youngest respondents in their 30s and the oldest in their 70s. Since the interviews were brief and informal, and were conducted with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, we were concerned that asking directly about respondents' age might be perceived by some as inappropriate, so instead we relied on these broad categorisations.

Despite the fact that our interviews were unstructured, we were able to collect enough data to quantify responses to an extent, by extracting the common topics and classifying the opinions. The experience of 45% (9/20) of respondents with VR technologies was classified as moderate;[40] the remaining 55% (11/20) had a low level of experience.[41] On analysing the content of the interviews, we did not observe significant influence of the respondent's country of origin or level of VR experience on the opinions expressed.

In RQ1, we asked whether VR technologies offer a good complement to traditional museum exhibitions. 79% of respondents (15/19) said that using VR is a very good idea, while 21% (4/19) were not convinced that VR has a significant role to play, although they were not against it. 75% (15/20) of respondents did not expect VR technologies to become the main method of presenting museum resources. Typical justifications included the limitations of the technology, its inability to act as a full substitute for personal travel to a museum, and the overwhelming number of tourists visiting museums in person – making use of real-world, not virtual, reality. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged here that we are constantly seeing a shift towards the information society, and that this could radically change the way museums are perceived, unless we educate people to treasure the current culture of visiting museums.

In RQ2 we asked whether VR technologies could improve the accessibility of museum resources to the broader public, especially in case of the Silk Road. Most of the evidence on this is qualitative in its nature, as it is related to the specificity of technology and the provision of access to those who are unable to visit the museum in person for a variety of reasons, such as disability, poverty, being forbidden to visit a particular country or disinclination to travel. Some indirect evidence was provided by the following responses which emerged from the

[40] "Moderate" experience = the respondent knows essentially what VR is, knows what kind of equipment is needed, understands how to run a VR application, and knows what main steps are and what artefacts are needed to create a VR application. Such a person will have personal experience of exploring a virtual reality environment, but does not have thorough knowledge of the aforementioned aspects and is not able to create VR applications themself.

[41] "Low" experience = the respondent only roughly knows the idea and purpose of VR, and has at least once been shown a demonstration of the technology.

interviews. 65% (13/20) of respondents felt that broadly accessible virtual exhibitions would be very helpful when planning a trip and choosing attractive places to visit, especially in the case of the highly scattered Silk Road museums. The remaining 35% (7/20), which included both younger and older respondents, were sceptical about whether VR could be of help. It is unclear whether their responses referred only their personal preferences, or whether they also tried to encapsulate the heterogeneity of all tourists of varied ages, preferences and so on. Finally, respondents discussed the idea of being able to finish sightseeing based on a virtual version of the exhibition where they were unable to complete their viewing of a traditional one, for example, due to the museum's closure, the late hour or to public transport schedules. 74% (14/19) said words to the effect of "Why not?" before noting that the experience would not be equal to visiting the traditional exhibition. The remaining 26% (5/19) did not agree that it was a good idea.

In RQ3 we asked whether VR technologies can increase interest in museum exhibitions. 25% (5/20) of respondents claimed that viewing a virtual exhibition would strongly influence their decision to visit a traditional one, 50% (10/20) were doubtful about whether a virtual exhibition would be the deciding factor and 25% (5/20) felt it would be irrelevant to their decision to visit a traditional exhibition. However, 85% (17/20) of respondents, after seeing the technology demonstrated, said they were interested in seeing another virtual exhibition. Respondents frequently mentioned the visual quality of the virtual exhibition and how easy it was to move around it as major factors determining its success. The responses of interviewees suggested generally that VR seems to be seen as a "catchy" and promising idea in the opinion of museum professionals. Including virtual exhibitions as part of its offer can also potentially improve the perception of a museum as prestigious, professional and modern, although it must not be forgotten that the quality of the VR offer can be a factor in either encouraging or discouraging interest in a particular museum, especially in case of young people, who are increasingly dependent on technology.

Aside from above-mentioned quantifiable data we were also able to extract more general thoughts expressed in the interviews. Directors of museums usually asked us about the cost of equipment and personnel training, as well as the technical requirements for deploying VR technologies in their museum. Regular museum workers were concerned about the usability aspects of virtual exhibitions and what training they would need in order to create and maintain virtual exhibitions. The oldest interviewees were concerned about technological barriers, which was not a concern among the youngest respondents; in fact, the younger interviewee was, the less problematic technology was for them. People who had noticeable experience in virtual reality emphasised that, due to the performance limitations of current endpoint devices, the ultra-realistic quality of a virtual exhibition (sound, graphics, smells, heat, etc.) might be impossible to achieve. They also mentioned the price of certain high-quality VR headsets as prohibitive. All of interviewees valued the role that virtual exhibitions might play in helping people access the assets of the Silk Road museums, which are scattered over long distances and thus expensive and difficult for tourists to visit. However, they also constantly highlighted the benefits and joy of visiting expositions in person and experiencing the atmosphere of real places – something that, in their opinion, cannot be fully achieved via virtual substitutes.

5.2. Experiment with Generation Z

In the second direction of our research, we aimed to investigate the attitudes of young people (Generation Z) interested in cultural heritage towards VR technologies and virtual exhibitions. This is very important aspect of our research, because these people will replace older generations as the future visitors to all kinds of museums.

Our experiment involved 50 individuals from nine countries, with 26 from Poland and 24 from other countries. The exact distribution of respondents' country of origin is presented in Figure 5. There were 36 men and 14 women. Age was limited at the planning stage to those who were adults according to Polish law (over 18 years of age) but born in 1995 or later. All respondents met these constraints. We asked our respondents to rate (from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest) their interest in cultural heritage (CH) and their experience with VR technologies (VR). Results are presented in Figure 6. As the histogram on the right shows, respondents' declared experience with VR was rather low, although the sample included a significant number of people with medium and high experience. Interest in cultural heritage, declared by respondents, was quite high and meets assumptions of our experiment.

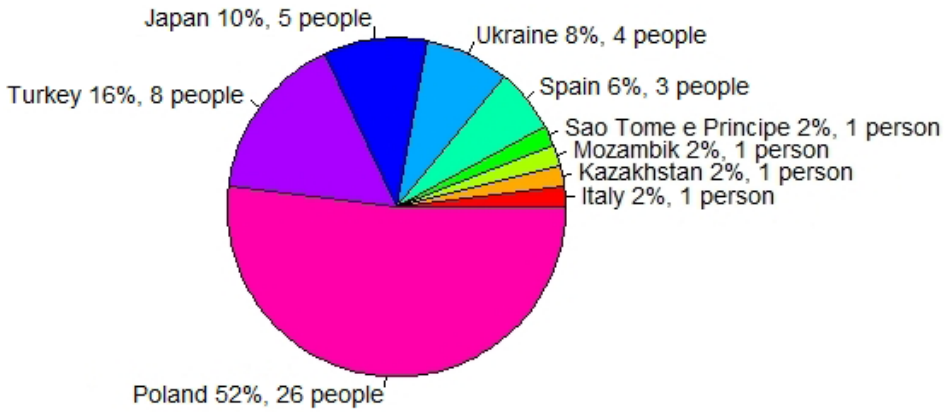

Figure 5: *Respondents' country of origin*

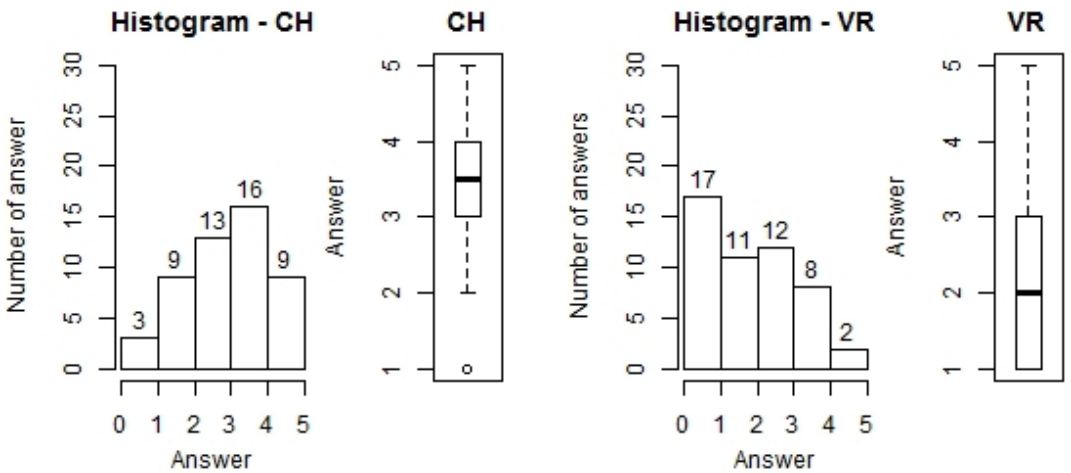

Figure 6: *Distribution of respondents' interest in CH (cultural heritage) and experience with VR*

We tracked respondents' movements as they explored the VR exhibition, and this data allowed us to conclude that all participants fully completed the virtual walk; that is, they visited all of the rooms and showed interest in the 3D models of artefacts from Samarkand that were presented to them. Next, they were asked the questions described in the methodology section. The answers were expressed as numbers from 1 to 5, 5 being the most positive response. Figure 7 presents histograms of answers for questions Q1 to Q7. Figure 8 presents box plots depicting the distribution of answers for questions Q1 to Q7.

According to respondents, VR is a good way to complement a traditional exhibition – the mode value for Q1 was 4; 62% of respondents rated this idea as 4 or 5. Only minor optimism was shown regarding the use of virtual exhibitions as the basic method of presenting museum resources (Q2) – the mode here was also 4, but only 44% of respondents rated this idea as 4 or 5. Answers to Q7 confirmed the important role of VR, as 63% of respondents rated their lifelong experience with VR as 4 or 5, the mode value being 4.

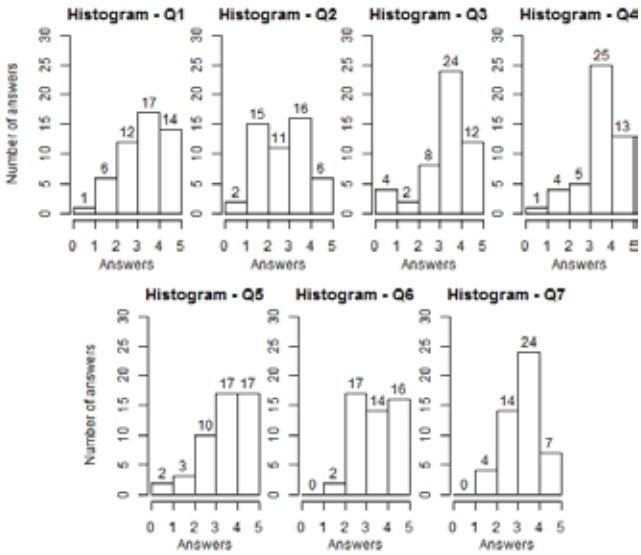

Figure 7: *Distribution of respondents' answers to questions Q1–Q7*

Qualitative evidence for VR technologies improving the accessibility of museum resources has already been discussed above – the assumptions made there apply here as well. Nevertheless, we asked respondents about two cases involving the use of VR revealed during the interviews with professionals. Many respondents stated that virtual exhibitions would be very helpful when planning a trip and choosing attractive places to visit (Q4) – the mode value was 4; 79% of respondents rated this idea as 4 or 5. Similarly, the idea of finishing a visit to an exhibition that had been interrupted by means of a virtual exhibition (Q5) was well received – the mode values were 4 and 5; 69% of respondents rated the idea as 4 or 5. However, we have to acknowledge here that 52% of respondents claimed in comments[42] that they would prefer the traditional way of viewing an exhibition, as VR is not able to provide the same experience and atmosphere.

Next, it was revealed that virtual exhibitions are good tools for advertising (that is, encouraging people to visit) traditional ones (Q3) – the mode value was 4; 72% of respondents rated the degree to which they would be encouraged as 4 or 5. Surprisingly, respondents' opinions on whether they would be encouraged to see another virtual exhibition after seeing the previous one (Q6) were not so straightforward – the mode value was 2, but 61% of respondents rated the degree to which they would be encouraged as 4 or 5.

[42] Comments were optional, thus this number might be even higher in reality.

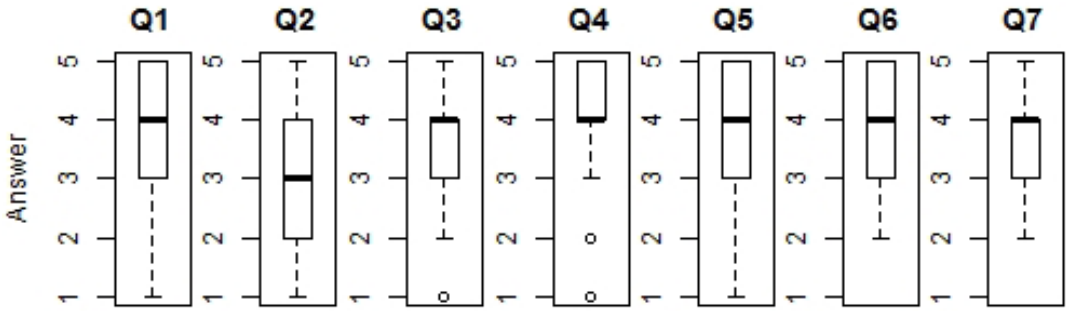

Figure 8: *Box plots showing distribution of respondents' answers to questions Q1–Q7*

The results of the statistical dependency tests can be found in Table 1. We did not find that respondents' country of origin influenced their answers to questions Q1–Q7 to any statistically significant degree. For each question we were unable to discard the null hypothesis (H0) that the two variables were independent (for each question, p-value > 0.05). Moreover, the tau value in each case indicated a negligible strength of association. Similarly, no dependence was found between respondents' sex and their answers, with one exception: a statistically significant dependence was revealed between sex and level of satisfaction with virtual exhibitions (p-value = 0.03; H0: the two variables are independent) but the strength of association was negligible (tau = 0.10). Moreover, we cannot conclude that respondents' interest in cultural heritage was correlated with their answers, with one exception – a statistically significant positive correlation of moderate strength in the case of question Q7, meaning that people who rated their interest in cultural heritage more highly also registered a high level of satisfaction with virtual exhibitions. Finally, we found no evidence that experience with VR was in any significant way correlated with respondents' answers. For each statistical test, the level of significance was set as 0.05.

In summary, according to the data collected during the experiment, we could answer positively to all of our research questions. What is more, our findings concerning Generation Z are in line with conclusions made after analysing the interviews with museum professionals.

Country of origin	**p-value**	0.13	0.18	0.52	0.24	0.48	0.55	0.10
	tau	0.16	0.19	0.14	0.20	0.19	0.15	0.18
Sex	**p-value**	0.23	0.42	0.34	0.37	0.45	0.74	0.03
	tau	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.10
Interest in cultural heritage	**p-value**	0.02	0.01>	0.82	0.15	0.01	0.13	0.01>
	rho	0.32	0.36	0.03	0.21	0.35	0.22	0.46
Experience with VR	**p-value**	0.29	0.69	0.50	0.08	0.69	0.17	0.67
	rho	0.15	-0.06	-0.10	-0.26	0.06	-0.20	0.06

Table 1: *Dependency among respondents' characteristics and answers to survey questions*

6. Conclusions

Based on the feedback we gathered, we can predict that virtual exhibitions will provide a good complement to traditional museum-based exhibitions. Museum professionals need not fear that VR will entirely replace traditional exhibitions in the near future. Most respondents (from both the experiment and the interviews) were unenthusiastic towards the idea of using virtual exhibitions as the basic method of presenting museum resources. Their opinions were based on the fact that VR is not able to fully replicate the atmosphere of visiting a real

exhibition at a museum. This could be interpreted as a result of the whole culture and set of emotions currently associated with visiting museums. Contemporary VR technologies are not able to fully replicate these emotions and or the stimuli that generate them, due to limitations on the level of detail, freedom of movement, smell, humidity, temperature, and the sense of a tangible experience of history, among others. Will this change in future, when the generation who do not know the life without the Internet are dominant? That depends on whether we are able to educate them to treasure the current culture of visiting museums.

When it comes to increasing the accessibility of museum resources, respondents mentioned some interesting cases where virtual exhibitions can complement, in a special way, traditional approaches to sightseeing. For example, they offer the ability to finish a museum visit that was interrupted for whatever reason; they can help people to choose especially interesting places to visit; and they can be a useful aid when planning a sightseeing route in detail. Another aspect of accessibility is the protection of cultural and natural heritage from destruction due to natural disasters, military operations or other man-made disasters. Thanks to 3D scanning techniques, as well as photogrammetry (a less precise approach), we can obtain and preserve a huge amount of spatial information which is unattainable by classic photography or film. It is possible to reproduce, dimension, maintain and renovate real objects based on their digital form. Virtual exhibitions are also a part of this accessibility aspect.

Respondents indicated clearly that they value the potential of VR technologies in the context of creating virtual museum exhibitions, and that virtual exhibitions could satisfy them in the above-mentioned cases, although to a limited degree. The majority also agreed that virtual exhibitions could potentially increase their interest in traditional exhibitions, which is good news for museums, as it suggests that ICT and traditional museology techniques can coexist, rather than the displacement of traditional museology techniques by digital technologies. In addition, with the ability to access to digital materials in advance, visitors from abroad with an interest in cultural heritage will be able to better plan their stay, which will further promote cultural heritage sites – and in particular the Silk Road heritage sites.

One very important group of people – unfortunately not covered by our research – consists of individuals who are unable to visit a traditional museum exhibition for various reasons, such as disability or legal prohibitions. It is of particular significance in case of the Silk Road heritage, which is dispersed not only in terms of distance, but also located across several highly diverse countries. In this case, virtual exhibitions can provide a substitute for onsite visits, or they can complement materials (such as photos and films) available, for example, on the museum's website. The availability of a virtual exhibition automatically improves access to the museum's resources for those who cannot visit in person. Whether VR technologies can increase such people's interest in a museum exhibition is not so obvious. On the one hand, they do not have much choice of methods for exploring the heritage of the Silk Road; on the other hand, there is the matter of their personal preferences, which might or might not be affected by issues such as medical conditions.

We did not record a significant number of opinions indicating dissatisfaction with the visual quality of the objects presented on our virtual exhibition. Some voices of dissatisfaction naturally appeared, but they tended to focus on the technical limits of VR graphics rather than the actual loss of visual quality as a result of compressing the 3D model to a size acceptable for a typical mobile device, so that device could handle the entire scene consisting of many rooms and objects. In discussions, some respondents emphasised the importance of sounds and small

objects not directly related to the exhibition, but they expressed these opinions only in response to our questions. Therefore, we can assume that these are not the most important elements of the exhibition, although we will explore this topic in future work.

The inclusion of virtual exhibitions based on VR technologies in their offer represents a kind of revolution for museums; it requires mental readiness for change among staff, as well as expenditure on training, equipment and ICT infrastructure. At the same time, we have communities ready for the digital revolution, and various governments around the world are taking action to protect their heritage by digitising objects in 3D. Using VR technologies to develop virtual exhibitions in the form presented in this article is not only affordable, but also in line with these actions.

It should be added here that the current events taking place at the time of writing – namely, the global coronavirus pandemic – will undoubtedly contribute to the reconceptualisation of how museums function and will change the current paradigm of preparing museum exhibitions for domestic and foreign guests. It can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that, just as distance learning is developing, so the implementation and development of new ICT technologies will allow virtual guests to visit museums from a distance and will provide better levels of satisfaction than are seen at present.

In summary, on the basis of interviews, discussions and surveys, and in the context of the presented case study, we conclude that the use of VR technologies as an extension to existing museum exhibitions 1) improves the availability of the exhibition, and 2) should lead to increased interest in the exhibition. VR technologies have, in the presented case study, proven to offer a good complement to the traditional exhibition. Naturally, the results of our research cannot be uncritically generalised to apply to the entire population, but we believe that these results were delivered based on an interesting and diverse group of respondents.

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How to exhibit a human mummy in a former monastery? The case of the body of Michael Willmann (1630–1706)

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How to exhibit a human mummy in a former monastery? The case of the body of Michael Willmann (1630–1706)
This paper discusses the mummified body of Michael Willmann (1630–1706) – one of the most outstanding painters of the Baroque period in Central Europe. Willmann's mummy was preserved in the crypt of the former Cistercian monastery church in Lubiąż, Silesia (Poland). The article presents the history of the mummy and possibilities for opening the crypt and displaying it to the public, following the example of similar expositions in Europe which have found respectful and sensitive solutions for presenting the bodies of the deceased (e.g. Capuchin Crypt in Palermo and Capuchin Church in Brno). Willmann's mummy is not only the body of an artist, but also a part of the cultural heritage of the Lubiąż Cistercians, making it worthy museification. This issue is particularly important in the context of the plans for establishing the Michael Willmann Museum in the former Cistercian monastery church in Lubiąż.

Keywords: Michael Willmann, mummy, the monastery crypt, Lubiąż, Cistercians, exposition

When, in 1738, the monks from the Cistercian monastery in Lubiąż in Silesia (Poland) went down to the crypt and opened the coffin of Michael Willmann, one of the most outstanding painters of the Baroque era in Central Europe[1] who had died in 1706 and was entombed among the deceased monks in recognition of his artistic contributions to the monastery, they could not believe their eyes. After his death, the artist's body had been placed in the crypt, where it had been preserved in an almost perfect condition. As described in the chronicle of Lubiąż Abbey, *Historia Domestica Lubensis*, the torso, head, legs and especially the arms remained "exceptionally intact and only in some places, by common law, turned to ashes".[2] The condition of Willmann's body was considered by the Cistercian monks to be almost a miracle which

[1] For more on the life and work of Michael Willmann, see: KOZIEŁ, Andrzej. *Michael Willmann i jego malarska pracownia*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2013 ("Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis", 3463, Historia Sztuki, 33), with earlier literature.

[2] "Extraordinarie Solidum et vix alicubi lege communi in pulverem reversum." *Historia domestica Lubensis Notitiis praeclaris repleta Conscripta à Reverendo P. Arnoldo Professo Lubensi p: t: S.S. Theologiae Professore.* [Leubus 1759], Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, manuscript, sign. IV F. 209, p. 104.

proved his true conversion to Catholicism.[3]

Figure 1: *View of interior of the monastery crypt in the former Cistercian church in Lubiąż.* Photograph by Martin Mádl

The mummified body of Willmann has fortunately survived to our times and is still located in the crypt of the former Cistercian monastery church in Lubiąż[4] (Figure 1). It is undoubtedly a cultural attraction of this place and a worldwide phenomenon, as it is the only such case known of among the great artists of the Baroque period. Unfortunately, although the monastery has not had a sacred function since 1940 and the entire Cistercian Abbey complex has been opened to the public since 1989, the crypt is closed and excluded from the tour. This is because Willmann's mummy is currently treated exclusively as the body of a deceased person. However, is this the only possible solution? The aim of this article is to show that although the mummified corpse of the artist deserves respect as the mortal remains of a deceased person, it

[3] According to a record in the preserved family chronicle of Willmann, the artist, who was born and raised in Königsberg in a Lutheran family, converted to the Catholic religion on 22 May 1663 in Kłodzko. See: Michael Willmann's family chronicle. In: RIVIUS, Gualtherus Hermenius. *Der furnembsten notwendigsten der gantzen Architektur angehärigen mathematischen und mechanischen Künst eygentlicher Bericht und verstendliche Unterrichtung.* Nürnberg: Peterius 1547, Prague, Strahovská knihovna, sign. AY XII 15.

[4] So far, the body of Michael Willmann has been mentioned in: WELS, Paul. *Kloster Leubus in Schlesien*. Breslau: Buchdruckerei der Schlesischen Volkszeitung 1909, p. 54; FUHRMANN, Heinrich. Ich fotografierte Michael Willmann. In: *Der Schlesier*, 18, 1966, no. 4, p. 5; MISZKIEWICZ, Brunon. Identyfikacja szczątków Michaela Willmanna w krypcie kościoła poklasztornego w Lubiążu. In: KALETYN, Tadeusz (ed.). *Lubiąż, klasztor Cystersów. Wyniki badań z lat 1988–89*. Wrocław: Wojewódzki Ośrodek Archeologiczno-Konserwatorski we Wrocławiu 1990, p. 15–18; KACZMAREK, Romuald, WITKOWSKI, Jacek. *Michał Ł. Willmann. Informacje dotyczące życia oraz pochówku w krypcie kościoła cysterskiego w Lubiążu*, In: KALETYN, Tadeusz (ed.). *Lubiąż, klasztor Cystersów. Wyniki badań z lat 1988–89*. Wrocław: Wojewódzki Ośrodek Archeologiczno-Konserwatorski we Wrocławiu 1990, p. 26–31; KOZIEŁ, ref. 1, p. 32–36.

is also part of the cultural heritage of the Lubiąż Cistercians and could be treated as a potential museum exhibit.

I

Michael Willmann died in Lubiąż on 26 August 1706 at the age of 76. The exact date of his death was meticulously recorded in the local Cistercian Abbey's register of the deceased, *Necrologium Lubense*.[5] After the funeral ceremony, the Willmann's body was, as an exception, placed in the monastic crypt located in the northern nave of the monastic church of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary in Lubiąż. This church was built during the baroquisation of a Gothic church in 1672–1680, and subsequently served as a new burial place for Cistercian monks. The particular conditions in the crypt, where there is constant air circulation and low humidity, caused the bodies of the deceased monks and Willmann to undergo mummification. As mentioned above, this was noticed as early as 1738, when the coffin with his body was first opened. In later years, the coffin holding the artist's corpse was opened many times. In 1901 (or 1902), it was opened by Jakob Caro, a Professor of History at the University of Wrocław. Importantly, during his visit to the monastic crypt, he took the earliest known photograph, showing the artist's mummy in its entirety[6] (Figure 2). It confirms previous textual accounts that the dressed corpse of Willmann, entombed in the monastery crypt, was completely mummified. What is more, it was in very good condition at that time, had suffered no major damage, and its authenticity was confirmed by a certificate

Figure 2: *The mummified body of Michael Willmann: its condition in 1901 or 1902*. Photograph by Herder-Institut, Marburg, sign. 47977

[5] "26. Augusti. / Item a. 1706 ob. Michael Leopoldus / Willmann, Pruthenus Regiomontanus, / expletis fere 76 aetatis annuis, / a picturae excellentia temporum / nostrum Apelles, et Ecclesiae / hujatis insignis splendor ultra / 40 annos iucola Lubensis et / Familiaris noster". See: *Necrologium Lubense*. Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, manuscipt, sign. IV. Fol. 214.

[6] The photograph taken at that time has been preserved in Günther Grundmann's archive at the Herder-Institut in Marburg (ref. 47977 and 47977a) and in the collections of the State Archive in Wrocław. See: KACZMAREK, WITKOWSKI, ref. 4, p. 27.

located between the artist's hands. To protect it from moisture and mechanical damage, the coffin was lined with wood shavings.

Unfortunately, the Second World War and the first post-war years were not kind to Willmann's mummy. The decision taken by the German authorities at the end of August 1944 to use the crypt as a storage area for works of art was of key importance to its fate.[7] By hiding the artworks in a religious crypt, the Germans hoped to protect them against potential destruction or theft by Red Army, which was approaching from the east. However, this ruse did not protect them from theft. After Lubiąż was occupied by the Red Army on 25 January 1945, the crypt was plundered many times and its contents were removed. What is worse, during these robberies, the mummified corpses of the monks and Willmann suffered greatly, as they were pulled out of their coffins, desecrated, burned and chopped. This situation did not end when the Soviet troops left the Cistercian Abbey in late 1947: the crypt continued to be plundered and the coffins with the corpses in them were destroyed.

Figure 3: *The mummified body of Michael Willmann: current condition.*
Photograph by Martin Mádl

This situation changed only in 1989, when the former abbey was taken over by the Lubiąż Foundation. It was then, on the initiative of the then Provincial Archaeological and Conservation Centre in Wrocław, that a team of scientists was established, which in July 1989 carried out complex archaeological and anthropological cleaning works in the monastic crypt.[8] The mummified body of Willmann was identified on the basis of a pre-war photograph. It was found in the western part of the crypt in a damaged coffin, located together with the bones of three monks and covered with rubble, wooden shavings and rubbish. Unfortunately, the mummy had been significantly damaged during the period of looting and devasta-

[7] For more on this subject, see: KOZIEŁ, Andrzej. Losy wyposażenia i wystroju kościoła klasztornego Wniebowzięcia NMP w Lubiążu po 1943 roku. In: KOZIEŁ, Andrzej (ed.). *Kościół klasztorny Wniebowzięcia NMP w Lubiążu. Historia – stan zachowania – koncepcja rewitalizacji*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2010, p. 137–138.
[8] KALETYN, Tadeusz. Prace porządkowe archeologiczno-antropologiczne w krypcie grobowej w kościele NMP w Lubiążu. In: KALETYN, Tadeusz (ed.). *Lubiąż, klasztor Cystersów. Wyniki badań z lat 1988–89*. Wrocław: Wojewódzki Ośrodek Archeologiczno-Konserwatorski we Wrocławiu 1990, p. 6–8.

Figure 4: *The mummified body of Michael Willmann –head, current condition.*
Photograph by Martin Mádl

Figure 5: *The mummified body of Michael Willmann – hands, the current condition.*
Photograph by Martin Mádl

tion of the crypt after 1945 it (Figure 3). In its lower part, from the waist down, the mummified soft tissues and clothing were irretrievably destroyed, and only a bare skeleton without tarsal bones remained. However, the upper part of the body, including the chest, head and hands, were fortunately preserved in their mummified state, in a comparable condition to that of the pre-war period. Minor damage to the mummified tissue and clothing had occurred only in the upper part of the skull and on the finger bones (Figs 4 and 5). After cleaning, Willmann's mummy was wrapped in linen canvas and placed in a new wooden coffin, in which a new document confirming its authenticity was also placed.[9] To honour the artist, who is sometimes referred to as the "Silesian Apelles", the coffin was placed in an prominent place, in the middle of the western part of the crypt, on a board with his given names, surname and dates of his birth and death (Figure 6).

Figure 6: *The coffin with the mummified body of Michael Willmann, current condition.*
Photograph by Martin Mádl

II

Currently, in the monastic crypt, Willmann's coffin is located alongside 101 wooden coffins (90 new and 11 reconstructed Baroque ones) containing the mortal remains of Cistercian monks. They are arranged in two rows, partly one on top of the other, across a narrow brick five-span crypt, which is 5 m wide, 3 m high and 27.5 m long and is covered with a barrel vault. The crypt has wide perforated air vents in its northern wall in the middle of each bay which provide adequate air circulation. The space between

[9] Ibid., Fig. 5.

Figure 7: *Self portrait of Michael Willmann, made in 1675, etched, printed on paper. The print belongs to Muzeum Narodowe in Warsaw.* Photograph by Muzeum Narodowe in Warsaw

the two rows of coffins with the bodies of monks creates a narrow passageway that leads to the western part of the crypt, where the coffin with Willmann's mummy is located. It is separated from the other coffins and positioned along the crypt at its western wall, on which a wooden cross was placed.

During the maintenance works in the crypt, the corpses of 93 monks were completed. The remains (mainly upper and lower limbs) of about 30 people remained which could not be matched to any of the arranged corpses.[10] The completed bodies of the monks are in various states of preservation. Only some of them survived in a mummified form with no cavities and a full skeleton. Most of them bear traces of the damage that occurred on the occasions when the crypt was plundered after 1945. Of these corpses, arranged by anthropologists, many are partly deprived of the already mummified soft tissues and clothing and have incomplete skeletons (mainly lacking skulls).

The bodies of the monks of the Cistercian monastery in Lubiąż were entombed in the crypt from around 1680. A full list of the crypt's inhabitants is contained in the aforementioned *Necrologium Lebense*, which was begun in 1615 and was kept until the monastery was closed down in 1810.[11] It shows that, together with regular monks, the crypt held abbots and priors of the abbey. At present, however, it is very difficult to identify their bodies due to significant damage to the corpses and the theft of a large proportion of the accompanying objects which were usually placed in the coffin together with the body during funeral ceremonies. At present, we can identify the mummified bodies of only one prior and one abbot with high probability, based on the provenance of the objects found near them during the maintenance works in the crypt.[12] In the tomb marked with the number 62 lies the well-preserved mummy of Prior Albericus Hilbrich (d. 1737). The similarly well-preserved mummy of abbot Johannes Reich (d.

[10] MISZKIEWICZ, Brunon. *Raport z prac porządkowo-segregacyjnych zmumifikowanych zwłok w krypcie w kościele NMP w Lubiążu*. In: KALETYN, Tadeusz (ed.). *Lubiąż, klasztor Cystersów. Wyniki badań z lat 1988–89*. Wrocław: Wojewódzki Ośrodek Archeologiczno-Konserwatorski we Wrocławiu 1990, p. 9–14.

[11] See: *Necrologium Lubense*…, ref. 5.

[12] WITKOWSKI, Jacek. Inwentarz zabytków ruchomych odkrytych w krypcie kościoła pocysterskiego w Lubiążu. In: KALETYN, Tadeusz (ed.). *Lubiąż, klasztor Cystersów. Wyniki badań z lat 1988–89*. Wrocław: Wojewódzki Ośrodek Archeologiczno-Konserwatorski we Wrocławiu 1990, p. 32–52.

1691) was laid in tomb marked number 64. He was one of Willmann's greatest patrons and the initiator of the Baroque reconstruction of the Abbey in Lubiąż.

Although the former abbey has been open to the public since 1989, the monastic crypt is, as mentioned above, closed and excluded from the tour.[13] Entrance to the crypt is permitted by the Lubiąż Foundation only for research purposes. This decision, which was made by the owner of the facility, was dictated by the fact that the crypt, which underwent maintenance after the devastation it suffered post-war, is considered to be the final resting place for the monks and Willmann.

The monastic crypt is currently the only room of this status in the whole Lubiąż Abbey complex. Since it was closed down in 1810, the monastic building was no longer used by the monks.[14] The monastery church was turned into a parish church and functioned as such until 1940. After 1817, the Abbot's Palace housed a horse stable, while the monastery itself has served as a hospital for the mentally ill since 1823. During World War II, the monastery buildings were used as a resettlement centre and internment location, and from 1943 as a research and implementation centre for the German army.[15] As it is known, in 1945 the building was taken over by the Russians, who set up a military hospital in the monastery's premises. After 1948, the Abbey's buildings were abandoned and it was not until 1956 that some of them were turned into a storehouse for books and works of art. Nowadays, more than thirty years after the acquisition of the building by the Lubiąż Foundation, most of the monastery rooms and the church are empty and have been waiting for many years for a sensible proposition for their use.

III

Although the monastic crypt in Lubiąż is the only one of its type known in Silesia, there are many places in Europe where the bodies of the deceased, mummified in a natural way, have been preserved to the present day.[16] For the most part, these are dry and airy church or monastic crypts and underground chambers adapted for burial purposes where the bodies of the deceased were placed in coffins, directly on the floor or special shelves. As one might expect, most such monuments are located in southern Europe, where the dry Mediterranean climate is conducive to the process of the natural mummification of corpses. This is why the largest known group of mummified corpses in Europe, consisting of as many as 1,852 dead bodies, survived to the present times in the catacombs created by the Capuchin friary in Palermo, founded in 1532 (Figure 8). The first friar there, Silvestro de Gubbio, was entombed in 1599 in an underground chamber prepared for this purpose. This chamber was gradually

[13] Sightseeing takes place all year round in groups with a guide who leads visitors along the marked routes of the extensive facility every hour. See: www.fundacjalubiaz.org.pl/dla_zwiedzajacych.php.

[14] For more on the history of the Cistercian abbey in Lubiąż after 1810, see: BOLLMANN, Aloysius. *Die Säkularisation des Zisterzienserstiftes Leubus*. Breslau: Ostdeutsche Verlaganstalt 1932; KALINOWSKI, Konstanty. *Lubiąż*. Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo 1970 (BRONIEWSKI, Tadeusz, ZLAT, Mieczysław (eds). "Śląsk w zabytkach sztuki"), *passim*; HARC, Artur, HARC, Lucyna, ŁUŻYNIECKA, Ewa. Lubiąż. In: WYRWA, Andrzej Marek. STRZELCZYK, Jerzy, KACZMAREK, Krzysztof (eds). *Monasticon Cisterciense Poloniae*, vol. 2: *Katalog męskich klasztorów cysterskich na ziemiach polskich i dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie 1999, p. 202–217.

[15] KOWALSKI, Jacek M., KUDELSKI, Robert, REKUĆ, Zbigniew. *Lubiąż. Na tropach wojennych tajemnic*. Łódź: Biuro Odkryć 2003.

[16] WUNN, Ina. Mummies in monasteries and churches: monks, popes and princes. In: WIECZOREK, Alfried, ROSENTHAL, Wilfried (eds). *Mummies of the world. The Dream of Eternal Life*. Munich – Berlin – London – New York: Prestel 2010, p. 152–159.

Figure 8: *The catacombs at the Capuchin monastery in Palermo.* Photograph by Wikimedia Commons

enlarged and functioned as a burial site until 1880.[17] Similar, although less numerous, groups of mummies can be found in many other places in southern Europe. Suffice to mention that only in Italy have the mummified bodies of as many as 19 Christian saints been preserved, and some of them, such as the mortal remains of Saint Virginia Centurione Bracelli, who died in 1651, are still in excellent condition and have been placed in a special display case currently exhibited in the Cathedral Church of Genoa.[18]

However, there have also been groups of mummified corpses found to the north of the Alps. Although they are sometimes located in the crypts of palace chapels or parish and cathedral churches – the best example of which are the preserved mummy of Sophie Andrássy-Séredy in the chapel of Krásna Hôrka Castle in Slovakia[19] and the so-called Lead Cellar (*Bleikeller*) discovered in 1698 in the basement of St Peter's Cathedral Church in Bremen[20] – they were most often in the crypts of monastic churches. One of the oldest is a group of corpses preserved

[17] PIOMBINO-MASCALI, Dario, AUFDERHEIDE, Arthur C., PANZER, Stephanie, ZINK, Albert R. Mummies from Palermo. In: WIECZOREK, Alfried, ROSENTHAL, Wilfried (eds). *Mummies of the world. The Dream of Eternal Life*. Munich – Berlin – London – New York: Prestel 2010, p. *357–361*.

[18] FULCHERI, Ezio. Mummies of Saints: a particular category of Italian mummies. In: SPINDLER, Konrad, WILFING, Harald, RASTBICHLER-ZISSERNIG, Elisabeth, ZURNEDDEN, Diether, NOTHDURFTER, Hans (eds). *Human Mummies. A Global Survey of their Status and Techniques of Conservation*. Wien–New York: Springer 1996, p. 219–230.

[19] BODORIKOVÁ, Silvia, BEŇUŠ, Radoslav, DÖRNHÖFEROVÁ, Michaela, HORVÁTHOVÁ-PRIPKOVÁ, Katarína, FUCHSOVÁ, Mária, MASNICOVÁ, Soňa. Pokus o identifikácju mumifikovaných l'udských telesných pozostatkov z hradu Krásna Hôrka (Okr. Rožňava, Slovensko). *Slovenská antropológia*, 20, 2017, p. 53–59.

[20] TACKE, Wilhelm. *Bleikeller im Dom zu Bremen, oder der Dachdecker, der kein Dachdecker war*. Bremen: Johann Heinrich Döll Verlag 1985.

Figure 9: *Glazed coffin with the mummified body of the architect Moritz Grimm, located in the crypt of the Capuchin church in Brno.*
Photograph by Michal Klajban, Wikimedia Commons

in the crypt of the monastery church of St Servacius in Quedlinburg, where the dead have been buried since the beginning of the eleventh century. One of the largest groups of preserved bodies in Central Europe, consisting of 265 human corpses, was found in a burial place which was accidentally discovered in 1994 during renovation works in the crypt of the Dominican monastery church in Vác in Hungary.[21]

According to the analysis of the preserved bodies and the content of historical accounts, not only monks but also lay people were placed in crypts after their deaths. Most often they were high-ranking people with associations to individual monasteries, perhaps as founders, patrons or benefactors. The best examples of this practice are those entombed in the basement of St Servacius Church in Quedlinburg, where the mummified mortal remains of the Saxon princes and their family members, starting with the Duke of Saxony and King of Germany, Henry I the Fowler (876–936) and his wife Matilda (895–968), are interred in adjacent crypts.[22] However, it often happened that lesser members of the laity who belonged to the monastic parish and had been of service to the monastery were similarly interred. An example is the crypt underneath the Capuchin monastery church of the Finding of the Holy Cross in Brno, where bodies of the dead were placed from 1656 to 1784. Among the approximately 200 mummified corpses gathered there were the mortal remains of approximately 50 lay people, including Baron Franz von der Trenck, the charismatic commanding officer of the Pandur troops, who died in 1749 in prison in the Brno fortress of Spielberg; and the local architect Mortiz Grimm (Figure 9), the author of the 1739 reconstruction of the crypt under the Capuchin monastery church, where he was interred together with his wife Ursula, his son Franz Anton and his daughter-in-law Maria Anna Josepha.[23]

A large proportion of the known crypts containing mummified bodies of the dead are open to the public. Sometimes public access is only on selected days of the year, in the form of a

[21] PAP, Idikó, SUZA, Éva, JÓZSA, László. Mummies from the 18th–19th century Dominican Church in Vác, Hungary. In: *Acta Biologica Szegediensis*, 42, 1998, p. 107–112.
[22] LABUSIAK, Thomas. *Stiftskirche St. Servatii Quedlinburg*. Döbel 2013.
[23] ZAPLETAL, Jaroslav. *Klášter s kostelem Nalezení sv. Kříže a Kapucínská hrobka Řádu Menších bratří kapucínů v Brně*, Brno: Fotep 2004.

special tour of the crypt for a group of spectators. This is how one can visit the crypt in the Franciscans of Primitive Observance Church in Kraków, which contains about 60 preserved bodies from the years 1672–1870, and is open to the public on 2 and 3 November for only four hours.[24] In general, however, places with preserved bodies of the deceased are open for sightseeing for most of the year, typically five or six days a week and for many hours a day. This applies to the largest and most interesting burial complexes in the catacombs at the Capuchin monastery in Palermo and the crypt of the Capuchin monastery in Brno. Visits to these places take place in groups with a guide (Palermo) or individually (Brno).

Of course, there are certain requirements involved in making sites with mummified bodies accessible to the general public. These requirements are based on the need to respect the site as the burial place of the deceased. It may involve the appropriate display of mummified corpses in special cases and glass coffins or in rooms separated from the public, with strict prohibitions on touching or photographing the corpses, using mobile phones, eating food and leaving rubbish. Another consideration is the need to maintain the specific microclimate inside the crypt which mummified the corpses and keeps them in this state. Therefore, humidity levels must be constantly monitored and the number of visitors and the frequency of visits limited to a level that will not disturb the delicate balance of the crypt's environment.

IV

There is nothing Polish law that stands in the way of making the crypt of the Cistercian monastery church in Lubiąż, along with the coffins with the mummified bodies of the monks and Willmann, available to the public. Polish law treats a corpse buried in its territory as a unique object which is nobody's property. It only imposes an obligation to treat it in an appropriate manner, that is, it prohibits desecrating or robbing the corpse, which in the penal code is considered a public order crime.[25] What is more, according to the law on cemeteries, the Lubiąż monastic crypt is considered a closed cemetery, and such a cemetery can potentially be shut down after 40 years from its last burial, and its area used for a different purpose, provided that any objects of artistic, historical or archaeological value are preserved.[26] Thus, the provisions of the Polish law allow for works to be carried out in the Lubiąż crypt in order to make it accessible to the public, but require that the mummified human corpses contained in it be treated appropriately. So what should be done?

There is no doubt that the religious crypt should retain its historical character as the burial place of the deceased, and all pro-exposure activities should be as limited as possible. Since the crypt space is relatively small, making it impossible to strictly separate visitors from the mummified bodies of the deceased, all of the bodies should remain locked in coffins, as before, and only a few should be adapted for exhibition purposes by replacing the lid of the

[24] SKOWROŃSKA, Małgorzata. Krypta z mumiami u reformatów na krótko otwarta, 29 X, 2009. In: www.krakow.wyborcza.pl.

[25] GARDOCKA, Teresa. Czy zwłoki ludzkie są rzeczą i co z tego wynika?. In: GOŁACZYŃSKI, Jacek, MAZURKIEWICZ, Jacek, TURŁUROWSKI, Jarosław, KARKUT, Daniel (eds). *Non omnis moriar. Osobiste i majątkowe aspekty prawne śmierci człowieka. Wybrane zagadnienia*. Wrocław: Oficyna Prawnicza 2015, p. 268–280.

[26] AFFEK-BUJALSKA, Barbara. Podstawy prawne ochrony cmentarzy. In: MICHAŁOWSKI, Andrzej (ed.). *Ochrona cmentarzy zabytkowych: materiały szkoleniowe pracowników Państwowej Służby Ochrony Zabytków oraz materiały z konferencji Organizacja lapidariów cmentarnych Żagań-Kożuchów 20-23 czerwca 1993*. Warszawa: Ośrodek Ochrony Zabytkowego Krajobrazu 1994 ("Studia i Materiały: Cmentarze", 1), p. 27–32.

coffin with glass.[27] This group would include the coffins with the bodies of Willmann, those identified as being of Abbot Reich and Prior Hilbrich, and the six best-preserved mummies of the remaining anonymous monks.[28] While the coffin with Willmann's body would remain in its current exposed position, the other glass-lidded coffins should be positioned along the passageway between the two rows of coffins leading from the entrance of the crypt to its western end, where Willmann's coffin is set. In this way, a simple tour route of this room would be created that makes it possible to see eight mummified monks (four on each side) as one approaches the greatest attraction of the crypt, which is undoubtedly the mummy of the "Silesian Apelles".

The tour of the Lubiąż crypt would take place only in guided groups and would be included in the permanent tour of the rest of the former Cistercian Abbey. Therefore, no information plaques would be introduced into the crypt, as they could interfere with its special character as a burial place of the dead. In any case, the small size of the room, with its low barrel vault, does not allow space for information boards. However, it would be necessary to install electric lighting and to conduct constant monitoring of the humidity levels in the crypt, allowing staff to potentially reduce the number of visitors if they were having negative impact on the microclimate of the room. Visitors would also be strictly forbidden from photographing the mummified corpses, using mobile phones, eating food or leaving rubbish. The opening of the crypt to the public would have to be accompanied by absolute respect for the corpses inside it.

This proposed project to adapt the Lubiąż monastic crypt to the requirements of an exhibition available to the public is not only in accordance with the Polish law, but also fully respects the guidelines for exhibiting human remains in museum facilities in Poland. According to the recommendations of the ICOM Code of Ethics, such remains should be "presented with the greatest sense of tact and with respect for human dignity common to all people".[29] Unfortunately, Polish museums have yet to develop a detailed code of conduct with regards to human remains, such as, for example, the one that has been in force in the UK since 2005[30] and in Germany since 2013.[31] Generally, international discussion on ethical guidelines for exhibiting human remains is concentrated almost exclusively on museums and deals first of all with ancient mummies and archaeological findings.[32] There is a lack of works which raise this issue in the context of the remains of early modern figures presented in monasteries or church interiors. In this field, we are forced to rely on our own sense and experience, as is the case with our proposition to assign a museum function to the currently empty Cistercian monastery church in Lubiąż (Figure 10) and to create the Michael Willmann Museum with his mummified body as

[27] This solution was used in the crypt of the Capuchin friary church in Brno, among others, in the case of the coffin of the architect Moritz Grimm (Fig. 9).

[28] These would the bodies in the coffins numbered 62, 64, 25, 36, 45, 63, 70 and 77. See: MISZKIEWICZ, ref. 10, p. 12–13.

[29] See: JASTRZĘBSKA, Ewa. Prawne aspekty eksponowania szczątków ludzkich w muzeach polskich. In: *Muzealnictwo*, 56, 2015, p. 183–189.

[30] Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk. See: CASSMAN, Vicki, ODEGAARD, Nancy, POWELL, Joseph. *Human Remains: Guide for Museums and Academic Institutions*. United Kingdom: Altamira Press 2007.

[31] Empfehlungen zum Umgang mit menschlichen Überresten in Museen und Sammlungen. In: http://www.museumsbund.de.

[32] See for example: ANTOINE, Daniel. Curating Human Remains in Museum Collections. Broader Considerations and a British Museum Perspective. In: FLETCHER, Alexandra, ANTOINE, Daniel, HILL, J. D. (eds). *Regarding the Death: Human Remains in the British Museum*. London: The British Museum 2014, p. 3–9.

Figure 10: *View of the former Cistercian church in Lubiąż, the current state.* Photograph by Jerzy Buława

one of the most important exhibits.[33]

Until 1943, there were at least 60 paintings by the artist and his workshop of various sizes and functions in the Lubiąż temple, which made up the largest complex of Baroque paintings in Central Europe made for a single church by a single artist assisted only by his collaborators. Therefore, the monastery's paintings were already, during Willmann's lifetime, treated as a kind of gallery his works, a situation which no other Central European painter of that time could boast of. Unfortunately, in 1943, as part of the evacuation of the most valuable elements of the monastery's furnishings, most of Willmann's paintings were taken from the altars or removed from the walls of the church and transported to a hiding place in the Benedictine monastery church in Lubomierz, and then hidden in two unknown buildings in Szklarska Poręba Średnia. After the end of World War II, these works were not returned to Lubiąż and are now scattered in churches and museums across Poland.[34]

The idea behind creating a Michael Willmann Museum in the Cistercian monastery church in Lubiąż assumes that the original appearance of the interior of the Lubiąż church would be reconstructed on the basis of a rich collection of archival photographs (Figure 11) and technical drawings.[35] In the current political climate, it is possible to return to the Lubiąż church not only the preserved paintings of Willmann and his workshop, but also other elements of its Baroque furnishings such as sculptures, stalls, the abbot's throne and the confessionals, which in most cases have also survived to the present day. Inside the church, these objects would become the basis of a unique museum exhibition in which any destroyed or lost elements of the original contents

[33] ORGANISTY, Adam, WYRZYKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Muzeum Willmanna, czyli "świątynia sztuki" w Lubiążu. Propozycje rewitalizacji kościoła klasztornego Wniebowzięcia NMP. In: KOZIEŁ, Andrzej (ed.). *Kościół klasztorny Wniebowzięcia NMP w Lubiążu. Historia – stan zachowania – koncepcja rewitalizacji*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2010, p. 149–166.

[34] See: KOZIEŁ, Andrzej (ed.). *Kościół klasztorny Wniebowzięcia NMP w Lubiążu. Historia – stan zachowania – koncepcja rewitalizacji*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2010, p. 165–634.

[35] These are the photographs and drawings from the former archive of Günther Grundmann, a pre-war Lower Silesian conservator. They are currently stored at the Herder-Institut in Marburg, the Art Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and the State Archive in Wrocław. See: KOZIEŁ, ref. 7, p. 134–135.

Figure 11: *View of the former Cistercian church in Lubiąż, before 1943*. Photograph by Instytut Sztuki PAN in Warsaw

would be recreated using modern multimedia tools.

Willmann's preserved mummy plays an extremely important role in the concept of this museum. Situated in a crypt open to the public, it would be, together with the mummified bodies of the monks, an eloquent testimony to the cultural heritage of the Lubiąż Cistercians and a unique museum exhibition, shown in its historical context and with full respect for the human remains. If created, the Michael Willmann Museum in the Cistercian monastery church in Lubiąż would most probably be the first museum exhibition in the world where a monastery's deceased patron and the author of most of the paintings exhibited in its interior would be physically present. After visiting Lubiąż, many visitors would be proud to say: I met Michael Willmann and admired his wonderful paintings.

Translated by Alicja Cimała

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Synagogue Decorations in Present-Day Ukraine: Practice in Preservation of Cultural and Artistic Heritage

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To the blessed memory of Scholar, Professor of Architecture,
Head of the Committee on Preserving the Jewish Heritage of Ukraine
Genrikh Iosifovich Filvarov
(1927–2015)

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Synagogue Decorations in Present-Day Ukraine: Practice in Preservation of Cultural and Artistic Heritage
There are approximately ten historical synagogue buildings left in Ukraine today which continue, to varying extents, to preserve their original wall paintings and decoration. A number of these were only recently discovered. The attempts underway, beginning in the early 2000s, to preserve as well as uncover old paintings often produce the opposite effect, destroying authentic works. The cultural significance of these historical landmarks requires that they be included in a single international register, along with supervision and an agreed upon preservation program designed individually for each. Synagogue wall paintings will inevitably perish unless ways of transferring this heritage are sought that will move these works to a different and more reliable "medium of cultural memory". Different, innovative approaches to museum preservation and ways of presenting these works to public view are called for. Among the tried and tested options are: reconstructing old synagogue interiors which contain wall or ceiling paintings; using motifs taken from the original paintings in new works being produced for the Jewish community; and work on exhibition projects, catalogues and two-dimensional reconstruction models.

Keywords: Ukraine, synagogue wall paintings, state, conservation, presentation

The historical heritage of synagogue wall paintings and its condition today[1]

To date, synagogue wall paintings comprise a relatively unknown – and, indeed, a nearly erased – element of Jewish culture and art; yet the world of Eastern European Jewry of the pre-Nazi period remains inconceivable without it. It is only in the last few decades that contemporary research has begun to delve into this area, attempting to bridge the chasm separating our understanding of this tradition, its evolution, hermeneutics, iconography and styles, from the potential originally invested in synagogue mural painting decoration in the past. The gap is a result of the catastrophic loss of the tradition as once embodied in the hundreds of synagogue buildings which have been destroyed by either human interference or the passage of time in the course of the twentieth century. This situation is the rule in virtually all of Eastern Europe, though some isolated regions form an exception, such as the Moldovan lands in Romania, where a large number of synagogues containing late paintings which date from the first half of the twentieth century have been preserved.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, numerous publications have appeared with a focus on issues in Jewish art and material culture. These texts have enabled the world community to appreciate the extent of the loss of the Jewish heritage, the weathering ruins and vacant dilapidated synagogue buildings, the remnants of precious and semi-erased painting decoration – all of these being the traces of a great and departed Jewish civilization, with which something needs to be done. As early as 2000, Rivka and Ben-Zion Dorfman, in their well-known work on *Synagogues without Jews*, wrote about the selective approach to costly restoration work to be done on the more significant synagogues, and the more modest approach to other landmarks needing to be clearly labelled as former synagogues which would subsequently be "used for respectable social purposes."[2] The same authors were also the ones who labelled this area as a sphere for "wise investments", singling out two primary motives for the preservation of this heritage: the cultural (the memory of the Jewish past) and the social (developing the tourism infrastructure). These deliberations were mostly concerned with the central and southeastern regions in Europe, without bearing upon the primary setting of Eastern European Jewish history in what is today Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. Their focus was overall on synagogues as historical and architectural monuments which contained wall and ceiling paintings along with other elements of décor.

As of today, we can confirm that meticulous preservation of the surviving Jewish heritage in many countries of Eastern Europe, such as Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and others, has facilitated the restoration of surviving works, their museification, and their becoming part of an identifiable and clearly demarked part of the culturally diverse landscape of these countries. All this is true quite regardless of the fact that in many of these regions almost no Jews remain today! This was the upshot of the appreciation arrived at by these states, by Jewish institutions, and by the international community, including the professional community, of the value of this cultural material and the importance of its memorialization so as to ensure a "historical trace",

[1] We are grateful to Elen Miriam Rochlin (Jerusalem) for her translation of the article into English. A glossary of Hebrew and Yiddish terms is provided at the end of the article.

[2] DORFMAN, Rivka and Ben-Zion. *Synagogues without Jews and the Communities that Built and Used Them*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2000), p. 4–7.

an objectification of memory, and the construction of identity.[3] To date, these monuments have been included in many guidebooks and lists of landmarks in particular cities and countries as part of their own heritage and treasure, an element of the totality of Eastern European Jewish culture.

The situation with synagogue wall paintings proved thornier, insofar as restoration strategies depended on the seriousness and extent of the losses in question, as well as the purposes for which the buildings would later be designated. Synagogues often contained paintings dating from different periods, with each stratum constituting a piece of historical and artistic testimony to the times of its creation, in need of being preserved and individually conveyed to later visitors. Thus the question of whether to uncover the lowest – older – stratum, dating from, say, the 1700s, at the cost of destroying the upper layer created in the early 1900s would always call for a careful weighing and consideration of alternatives. Restoration techniques also varied depending on whether the synagogue in question was to be made into a museum or to remain – or to once again become – a house of prayer. In the first case, proponents of academic restoration techniques could suggest a variety of technologies and approaches to preserving the old strata, making up for lost fragments with new painting or decorative images which would be different from the authentic painted original. In cases where it was to be a place of worship, the building would be returned to the community, which would then make its own decisions about whether to preserve the polychrome compositions in their original, often not very presentable condition, or to modernise the decorative elements to bring them into greater conformity with today's norms and tastes.[4] Clearly enough, all this would have a great impact on the fate of the paintings themselves.

However, as Israeli researcher Prof. Ilia Rodov has pointed out, as time passed, synagogue wall paintings naturally lost their artistic wholeness and original look simply due to the degredations of time, notwithstanding restorers' attempts notwithstanding to preserve them intact in their uninterferred with, often damaged or altered state. This is why, in addition to maintaining the physical remnants of the paintings, a complex assembly of visual, historical, folkloric and other types of evidence is required, which would provide an adequate impression of the system of interior decoration in any one particular synagogue and of the phenomenon of synagogal decoration as a whole.[5] These issues were the subject of discussion at a recent seminar organised by the Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which focused on the problem of researching, preserving and presenting synagogue wall and ceiling paintings to view.[6] Another reason for organizing this forum and open discussion was the presentation of the extensive project of the electronic Catalogue of Central and Eastern European synagogue wall paintings, conducted under the auspices of the Center for Jewish Art using materials collected on research expeditions over a period of more than 20 years (project

[3] Theoretical grounding for the issue of the impact which memory of the past has upon the construction of cultural identities is provided in the work of the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann, see: АССМАНН, Ян. Культурная память. Письмо, память о прошлом и политическая идентичность в высоких культурах древности. М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2004.

[4] RODOV, Ilia. Ars Brevis, Vita Longa: On Preservation of Synagogue Art. In: *Studia Hebraica*, 2011, no. 9–10 (2009–2010), p. 93–98.

[5] Ibid., p. 98–99.

[6] The conference took place on 14–16 September 2016, bringing together more than 20 leading specialists from many countries, whose work today determines the course taken in this area of Jewish art.

authors Boris Khaimovich, Vladimir Levin).[7] As per the authors' conception of the project, the catalogue encompasses paintings created as a part of traditional folk Jewish culture, with the exception of paintings in buildings constructed in a style associated with historicism. The purpose of this kind of interactive cataloguing of synagogue wall paintings is to document the visual and verbal testimony of items both preserved and lost, along with compositional themes and inscriptions within the paintings. This an open-ended project, which will continue to grow and extend its scope with the addition of new materials as they are uncovered, thus creating a foundation for future studies. In essence it is comparable with the extant program for searching for Holocaust victims, researching their fates and eternalising their memory.

The author of the present paper made a special report at this academic gathering, completing the overall picture with updated information on the condition of synagogue paintings in Ukraine. But a considerable number of finds have surfaced since the Jerusalem seminar; they have extended our understanding of the ongoing processes and of the perspectives stretching into the future in this area, and sum up their development at the current stage. All this forms the foundation of the present study, which should be prefaced with a certain preamble.

Everything noted thus far largely concerns lands to the west of former Soviet territory. For certain well-known reasons, moving away from the centre of Europe eastward, especially into the post-Soviet space, the situation with the preservation of the Jewish heritage and synagogue wall paintings (and with cultural landmarks overall) changes in far from the best way. The situation in Ukraine is no exception; it requires close attention and an immediate response, in order for us not to lose those crumbs which have still been retained and await our involvement. This action must, however, be thoughtful, delicate and professional.

Today, given the current stage of the research and familiarity with the archives and museum resources available in the Ukrainian region, we can count the surviving elements of Ukranian-Jewish heritage and assess the magnitude of the irreparable losses. If, on a contemporary map of Ukraine, we mark the locations of all the synagogues with wall and ceiling paintings ever known to have existed in these lands – this means over a timespan of at least two-and-a-half centuries, extending from the late seventeenth century into the 1940s – we would count at least fifty sites. Based on what we know of Jewish demographics and the centuries-long process in which the synagogue wall painting tradition spread, the real number may have been much higher, but we can at best form only an indirect impression of this. Many towns and *shtetls* were home to dozens of synagogues and houses of prayer, many of them containing wall and ceiling paintings, as was the case in Lviv and in Chernivtsi; this is confirmed by both verbal testimony and surviving artefacts.

Most of the wooden and stone synagogues containing paintings were located in Right-Bank and Western Ukraine, part of the territory of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Austria-Hungary, Romania, and a number of Eastern European states. The cultural uniqueness of these lands had an impact on the distinctive regional features of the painted decoration of the synagogues, which conformed to one single tradition overall.

The calamitous developments of the twentieth century, including wars, the Holocaust, atheism, the Soviet regime's antisemitism, and the careless handling of precious heritage items in subsequent decades, all account for the fact that the map of Ukraine today retains few more

[7] See: The Catalogue of Wall Paintings in Central and East European Synagogues http://cja.huji.ac.il/wpc/browser.php?mode=main (accessed 18 October 2019).

Figure 1: *Chernivtsi. Chevra Tehilim Synagogue, turn of twentieth century.* Photo by Anna Yamchuk, 2015

than ten sites where old synagogue wall paintings survive at all.[8] Some of these remaining sites are in deplorable condition and are effectively beyond repair. The Nazi occupation was, unquestionably, the main, though not the only reason for this state of affairs. Ukraine's "achievements" in post-war modernisation saw these buildings stand neglected for decades, without maintenance, or else they were used as warehouses and storage facilities, leading to all the associated problems one might expect with moisture and fungus. The wall paintings here were gradually being destroyed by time. It may seem bizarre today, but other than a few researchers, well-informed connoisseurs and tourists (most of them foreigners), few people entertained the notion that these items were rare surviving memorials of Jewish spiritual culture and art – the fragments of the once high-powered phenomenon of synagogue decoration.

Traveling through former Jewish *shtetls* and larger towns, even today one can often enough come upon picturesque epic ruins of synagogues – deserted, overgrown, or else piled over with discarded items and debris – their interiors bearing traces of paintings which have been smashed or come unstuck due to moisture and which are of little interest to anybody. Examples of buildings in this state include the half-destroyed synagogue in Stryj (1817) and the abandoned building of the Old Synagogue in Chortkiv (1771). The Chortkiv synagogue still preserves sufficient fragments of its decor to provide an impression of the former painting scheme in the prayer hall.[9]

Another instance is in the Hasidic *shul*, Chevra Tehilim in Chernivtsi. A Christian Baptist prayer house occupies this space today. In the crumbling strata of paint, the visitor of today

[8] All the Ukranian synagogues which contained wall paintings listed in this article were studied and recorded by the author Eugeny Kotlyar between 2003 and 2016.

[9] Синагоги України: Вісник Інституту Укрзахідпроектреставрація, Львів, 1998, no. 9, p. 140–141, 166–167.

may, with painstaking efforts, be able to discern certain narrative compositions and partly envision the painting scheme as a whole (Figure 1).[10] These historic paintings are disintegrating before our very eyes as the second storey, where the prayer hall of the synagogue was once situated, is constructed anew.

Almost nothing remains of the paintings in the synagogue of Rabbi Israel Friedmann, the Tzaddik of Sadygora (Chernivtsi). 2016 saw the reconstruction of the synagogue, at a speed unheard of in undertakings of this kind; moreover, the authors and the sponsors of the project tried to make the architecture and the decoration reflect, as closely as possible, the reality extant in the past.[11] Considering the miniscule traces of the original wall paintings which had survived, the connection between the new and the old paintings became rather theoretical and primarily symbolic, making this case symptomatic of the situation of many others.

In effect, there are only five buildings left to discuss, all of them former synagogues which have again become functional and where a unified painting ensemble may still be seen in the prayer hall in a state of relative completeness. They all date from the first half of the twentieth century and are located in Eastern Galicia (Lviv), Bukovina (Chernivtsi, Novoselitsa) and the Trans-Carpathian region (Uzhgorod, Khust).

Three of these monuments preserve narrative-symbolic decoration typical of the traditional synagogues of Eastern Europe. This tradition took shape in the course of earlier centuries, but continued to evolve over time. The present examples are the Tzori Gilead Synagogue in Lviv, the Beit Tefilah Benyamin Synagogue in Chernivtsi, and the New Great Synagogue in Novoselitsa (Northern Bukovina region). Tzori Gilead and Beit Tefilah Benyamin Synagogues, in Lviv and Chernivtsi respectively, are both still active today; the New Great Synagogue in Novoselitsa is not. The remaining two sites, in Uzhgorod and Khust (Trans-Carpathian region), provide instances of a different type of decoration: ornamentation typical of Reform temples, bearing a stylistic kinship to the Neolog synagogues in Hungary, constructed by the proponents of modernisation. The synagogue in Khust is currently functioning as a synagogue;[12] the one in Uzhgorod is not.

It bears noting that a number of unique sites have been discovered and documented in recent years, even though the general tendency at present is for the surviving remnants of synagogue decoration to disappear entirely. One of sites, the New Great Synagogue in Novoselitsa, Chernivtsi Oblast, was only recently discovered, when its wall paintings were uncovered beneath more recent layers of plaster in 2009.[13] Judging by the preserved inscriptions with donors' names, these wall paintings were created in 1919–1920. The name which appears next to the date of

[10] The study of these wall paintings, along with an attempt to reconstruct the entire system of painting decoration, appears in these publications: KUSCHNIR, Mykola, KOTLYAR, Eugeny; YAMCHUK, Anna (eds) *"How Goodly Are Thy Tents, O Jacob…" Wall Paintings in Bukovinian Synagogues.* Catalogue of the Exhibition. Chernivtsi-Kyiv: The Chernivtsi Museum of the History and Culture of Bukovinian Jews; Spirit and Letter, 2016, p. 26–39; KHAIMOVICH, Boris. *The Murals in the Novoselitsa Synagogue.* Kyiv: Spirit and Letter, p. 51–56.

[11] The authors are grateful to Dr Joseph Zissels, Chairman of the VAAD of Ukraine, and Mikhail Kraiz, leader of the synagogue reconstruction project, for acquainting him with the course of reconstruction of the building in October 2016 and detailing the project implementation process.

[12] Синагоги України, ref. 8, p. 149–150, 154–155.

[13] ЛИФШИЦ, Юлий. На грани забвения. In: Егупець. Київ: Дух і літера, 2010, no. 19, p. 401–423.

Figure 2: *Chernivtsi. The minor hall of the synagogue Groyse Shil.* Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2010

Figure 3: *Chernivtsi. The minor hall of the synagogue Groyse Shil. Wall paintings, late 1930s. Discovered in 2013.* Photo by Anna Yamchuk, 2015

the paintings (which could be the name of the artist or the donor) is Fishman.[14] Recent research by Boris Khaimovich indicates that the synagogue was painted by a certain master, Groyzgrow from Khotin, in the traditions of the "regional canon" of Boyan Hasidism.[15] This surviving building features an especially extensive series of late Eastern European synagogue paintings, enabling us to trace the spread of this iconographic system among the synagogues of Northern Bukovina.

After the discovery of the Novoselitsa paintings, it became evident that the same scheme served as the model for the paintings done in the Beit Tefilah Benyamin Synagogue in Chernivtsi in the 1930s; before this discovery was made, the synagogue had seemed one of a kind, with the regional origins of its painting decoration impossible to trace.[16] Two other recently discovered Chernivtsi synagogues display a similar thematic and compositional approach in their painting programme, which was read and expressed in different ways by the masters of the Chernivtsi circle.[17] Not only that, but, if we take our point of departure from painting strata dating from various periods, the differences are also indicative of different generations. This is the case with the vestiges of the wall and ceiling paintings in the abovementioned Chevra Tehilim Synagogue of the Vizhnitz Hasidim; the same can be said of the relatively complete painting cycle in the smaller hall of Groyse Shil Synagogue, which was cleared of debris in 2013 (Figures 2, 3). The paintings in Groyse Shil date from the 1930s, and are the work of the local painter Yitzhak Issachar Aizikovich (1882–1944), who left his name in the inscription in one of the compositional schemes. The fragments, found in 2015, of a painting stratum in the former Choral Synagogue in the town of Beregovo in the Trans-Carpathian region may be associated with the same group of works. The style represented in

[14] For details on the wall paintings in the Novoselitsa synagogue, see: КОТЛЯР, Евгений. Росписи синагог Северной Буковины в контексте восточноевропейской традиции. In: *Judaica Ukrainica. Peer-reviewed annual Journal in Jewish Studies*. Kyiv: The Publishing Center of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, 2012, vol. 1, p. 227–263; KHAIMOVICH, Boris. *"The Work of Our Hands to Glorify". Murals of Beit Tfilah Benyamin Synagogue in Chernovits: Visual Language of Jewish Artist*. Kyiv: Spirit and Letter, 2008.

[15] KHAIMOVICH, ref. 9, p. 41–48.

[16] KHAIMOVICH, ref. 13.

[17] KUSCHNIR, ref. 9. p. 26–55; KHAIMOVICH, ref. 9, p. 51–56.

these fragments shows them to be kin to the traditions of the wider region, such as the wall paintings of the synagogue in Khust mentioned above.[18]

The discovery of these paintings has provided researchers with unique material, suddenly opening the eyes of the public to the very existence of synagogue decoration as a practice, an artistic field that has not received much recognition or attention in the past. This has highlighted the critical importance of giving some thought to other surviving synagogue buildings in which paintings may be concealed beneath later layers of plaster. These finds can be considered an encouraging sign of the beginning of large-scale study of surviving synagogues throughout Ukraine.

Experience preserving synagogue decoration

Though an integral part of Jewish heritage, synagogue wall paintings did not attract due attention during the first decades of Ukraine's independence, when the rebirth of Jewish life began. Up until the early 2000s, Jewish communities were more concerned about issues relating to the restitution of former Jewish properties and reconstructing recovered synagogue buildings to serve new needs. Work of this kind was coordinated by the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage at the VAAD (Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities) of Ukraine,[19] along with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which provided communities with legal, practical and financial assistance.[20] In the early 1990s, a special program was set in operation to document synagogues located in Ukraine; it was implemented by the Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and continued to operate into the first decade of the twenty-first century. In the course of this period, research was undertaken pertaining to some four hundred synagogues, including a number where painting strata have been preserved. This work was done in coordination with the *Ukrzahidproyektrestavratziya* project (Western Ukrainian Reconstruction Project) in Lviv, whose staff prepared a special publication in 1998 about the synagogues of Ukraine with descriptions of more than 120 synagogues, including an evaluation of the condition of the surviving decorations.[21] A comprehensive study of Jewish landmarks, including Ukrainian synagogues, was published in 2005 under the supervision of Samuel Gruber as part of the open international program of the US Commission for the preservation of American heritage abroad.[22] But these organizations' work had no real impact on the project of preserving synagogue wall and ceiling paintings, due to the difficulty of combining the academic format of the research with the complex set of factors impacting the practical work that needed to be done locally. Considered in the larger scheme of things, the wall paintings did not at the time attract the attention they deserved, even though their existence was recorded in the process of these projects' work, as well as in the records of fieldwork expeditions kept by individual researchers and organised study expedition

[18] I thank Vladimir Katz, leader of the Jewish religious community of the town of Khust, for the guided tour and hospitality he showed me by accompanying me to Jewish sites, landmarks, and synagogues of Trans-Carpathia, as well as for his assistance in filming the interior of the Khust synagogue.

[19] ФИЛЬВАРОВ, Генрих. Историко-градостроительные особенности сохранения еврейского культурного наследия в Украине. In: Єврейська історія та культура в Україні: Матеріали конференції, Київ, 8–9 грудня, 1994. Київ: Асоціація юдаїки України, 1995, сс. 193–195.

[20] BEIZER, Michael. *Our Legacy: The CIS Synagogues, Past and Present*. Jerusalem: Gesharim – Moscow: Bridges of Culture, 2002, p. 53–82.

[21] Синагоги України, ref. 8.

[22] GRUBER, Samuel (ed.) *Jewish Cemeteries, Synagogues and Mass Grave Sites in Ukraine. The Report*. Washington: US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, 2005.

groups.

It is only during the last decade that the remaining sites containing synagogue wall paintings have become the object of special attention among researchers (such as Boris Khaimovich, Bracha Yaniv, Ilia Rodov, Samuel Gruber, Sergey R. Kravtzov, Vladimir Levin, Eugeny Kotlyar and others) and the Jewish public, as represented by major Jewish organizations, local communities and individual enthusiasts. This change was brought about by the new stage of development reached by Jewish life in Ukraine, which made the goal of the preservation and musealisation of Jewish heritage particularly pertinent. Aiming for this goal was in keeping with international practice, openness and the spirit of collegiality. At the same time, it is important to assess the experience accumulated in preservation work on surviving paintings in synagogue interiors. The experience accumulated to date of preserving extant synagogue paintings involves a variety of approaches, the choice of which is dependent on the particular situation in each case. In nearly all cases, this means an intricate compromise between the competing desires to reveal, preserve and renew old works. Today we are in a position to think through the achievements and the mistakes made in this area, given how often overly hasty or inadequately considered strategies have led to destructive consequences that are either obvious or latent. Let us take a look at a few telling examples involving different approaches to this problem.

1. Comprehensive reconstruction, with refurbishment of some of the paintings and restoration of individual painting cycles

Figure 4: *Kyiv. Schekovitzka (Podol) Synagogue, 1895. Wall paintings, mid-twentieth century.*
Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 1997

This approach was resorted to in the reconstruction of Schekovitzka Synagogue in Podol, Kyiv, built in 1895.[23] The wall paintings surviving to date, according to the testimony of its oldest members, are from the mid-1900s. The last refurbishment took place in 2003, when the building as a whole was reconstructed (Figure 4, 5).[24]

A roundtable discussion – which included leaders of Jewish organizations, prominent

[23] КАЛЬНИЦКИЙ, Михаил. Еврейские адреса Киева. Киев: Дух і літера, 2012, p. 133–142.

[24] КОТЛЯР, Евгений. Образ еврейского Ренессанса. К реконструкции Главной синагоги г. Киева. In: Ватерпас. Харьков, 2003, no. 45, p. 34–38.

Figure 5: *Kyiv. Schekovitzka (Podol) Synagogue, 1895. Wall paintings, mid-twentieth century. Refurbished in 2002.* Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2003

architects from the Ukrproyektrestavratziya Institute in Kyiv (which had the exclusive right to work with high-status architectural monuments), the Israeli architect-designer Aharon Ostraikher (who later assumed a leading role as a renovator of old synagogues in the Commonwealth of Independent States) and other experts – determined the conceptual framework and the strategy to be adopted in the reconstruction process. Behind the reconstruction efforts lay the desire to recreate the architect's original plan of 1894, which had never been implemented in full. The project's initiators aimed as much as possible to preserve elements which had artistic or historical value, sacrificing whatever required radical renovation. For example, the round inserts with paintings of the signs of the Zodiac, distributed along the balconies of the women's gallery, were preserved and restored, as were the four tondos with animal figures symbolizing religious virtues on the ceiling which were originally made in the 1950s. The architectural-decorative finishing of the interior was completely renovated in the course of the reconstruction, and new decorative elements were added, including the installation of original stained-glass windows (work of the artists Eugeny and Yelena Kotlyar). At the same time, old wall paintings of texts enclosed in frames, ornamentation and images of lions in front of the Torah Ark were entirely replaced with new pieces which were a better fit with the interior, which was now in an entirely different colour scheme. The total makeover of the building obviously required that some elements be given up, based on the understanding that the synagogue as a whole needed a new image as the main synagogue of the city and the country, and the locus of the Chief Rabbi of Ukraine's residence. In this way, a balance was observed between, on the one hand, maintaining the artefacts intact and restoring authentic and particularly valuable elements of the decorative finish, and on the other hand, conducting a carefully weighed and considered renovation of the architectural-artistic synagogue complex in its entirety, emphasizing the original stylistic elements.

2. Completely repainting the original mural

This approach can be seen in the case of the functioning Tzori Gilead Synagogue in Lviv, which was built in 1924. Up until 2006, the year when it was last comprehensively renovated, the building preserved its painting decoration, which dated from 1936 and was created by the

Figure 6: *Lviv. Tzori Gilead Synagogue. Wall paintings, 1930s.* Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2006

Figure 7: *Lviv. Tzori Gilead Synagogue. Wall paintings, 1930s. Refurbished the old paintings in 2006.* Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2012

well-known Lviv master, Maksimilian Kugel. Even though the paintings were damaged during the years of Nazi occupation, and later when the building was used as a storage facility, the losses suffered were not so serious that they ruled out traditional restoration methods – which was, in fact, the approach adopted by the synagogue's decision-makers.[25]

The purpose of the reconstruction was to renovate the prayer hall so as to accommodate the needs of the contemporary community. This is why, in addition to the repair work done on the facility and the replacement of the furniture, lighting fixtures and other equipment, the community leaders also refurbished the old paintings, aiming to preserve the historic ambiance and endow the interior with an aura of respectability. Authentic paintings were completely destroyed as a result: the artists simply did the paintings anew, in the process altering compositions and inscriptions which had been partly lost and using a different painting style and colour contrasts which were far in excess of the original. Thus, in the reworked composition, the view of the interior of the Temple in Jerusalem lost the inscription which once sat under it (Figures 6, 7), while the image of the Ark containing the Tablets of the Law was replaced by a *menorah*. Community leaders had evidently found it simpler to redo old compositions than to devote effort to the painstaking and costly process of restoration, which would in any case have produced less of an effect than the new paintings. This case instantiates the general rule that a functioning synagogue cannot be a museum; it is illustrative of the real dilemma between preserving a historical landmark as a museum piece of sorts, and restoring it so as to make

[25] RODOV, ref. 3, p. 96–98.

it usable in accord with its initial purpose, with all the inevitable loss of authenticity that this entails.

3. Conserving the paintings in tandem with the complete reconstruction of the building

This approach was adopted by Sataniv Synagogue, which dates from the late sixteenth/ early seventeenth century.[26] Reconstruction has been under way since 2013 and continues at the time of writing. Surviving painting fragments apparently date from the late nineteenth/ early twentieth century. Based on the synagogue's appearance to date, the reconstruction seems to be aimed at providing comprehensive reinforcement and renovation for parts of the building, while conserving and maintaining fragments of the original brickwork, carving and paintings intact, so as to make it possible to use the building as a museum in the future. Surviving painting fragments on the scuncheons have been conserved and marked out by enclosing rectangles. In this way, paintings, along with other old elements have been highlighted by partly plastered over and whitewashed walls, thus underscoring the architectonics of the interior space. This approach is evidently based on the example of Polish synagogue reconstruction, particularly in the Old and the High Synagogues in the Kracow suburb of Kazimezh. Unlike their predecessors, however, the restorers on this project clearly overstepped the limits in their desire "to enliven and make warm the walls of the miserable prayer room" (Rachel Bernstein-Wischnitzer) by including in it various elements which were in fact alien to it.[27]

We have no issues with the methods used to preserve painting fragments, but questions do arise in connection with many other remakes, such as the folding casements or wooden *bimahs* (raised platforms) that look strikingly different from those in old photographs. The approaches used here clearly point to an obviously superficial level of awareness of available iconographic material and the absence of dialogic contact with experts. Even more striking is the ostentatious marble floor, the polished wooden doors, the dividers pierced by lacey Chabad-Lubavitch *menorah* shapes, and the massive benches girding the prayer hall walls. This alien stylization destroyed the atmosphere of historic agedness and ascetic grandeur in one of the oldest fortress-type synagogues in Ukraine. Around the exterior we see an unwarranted fence, unmotivated by any historical evidence or references, rock-garden flowerbeds, fussy elaborate screens and marquees over the entrances, all of which add kitsch, distorting and devaluing the authentic look of the synagogue and the visual interaction it once had with its surroundings.

4. Museification of synagogue ruins, uncovering and conserving the painting stratum

An example of this kind of preservation can be found in the memorial-educational complex titled "Synagogue Space", unveiled in Lviv in September 2016, which includes the ruins of the "Golden Rose", the oldest synagogue in Ukraine, which was constructed in 1582.[28] The complex is part of an extensive international initiative by Lviv City Council, aimed at the memorialization of Jewish history and victims of the Holocaust, preservation of the common

[26] ЛИФШИЦ, Юлий. Натурные исследования здания синагоги XVII – XIX вв. в г. Сатанове Хмельницкой области. In: История евреев на Украине и в Белоруссии: Экспедиции. Памятники. Находки. СПб.: Петербургский Еврейский университет: Институт исследований еврейской диаспоры, 1994, вып. 2, p. 120–127.

[27] БЕРНШТЕЙН-ВИШНИЦЕР, Рахиль. Искусство у евреев в Польше и Литве. In: История евреев в России. Москва: Мир, 1914, т. XI: История еврейского народа, т. 1, p 394.

[28] For the history of the *Golden Rose*, see: KRAVTSOV, Sergey. *Di Gildene Royze. The Turei Zahav Synagogue in L'viv*. Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2011, vol. 3.

heritage, and creation of city memory spaces and their inclusion in the contemporary context.[29] Under the topmost layers of plaster, the synagogue conservation initiative's conservators (from the Ukrproyektrestavratziya Institute) partially uncovered barely discernible traces of ornamentation and inscriptions fitted into the margins of special charts framed by a decorative border. Decoration of this kind was typical of paintings in stone and wooden synagogues of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Unlike the previous case, the project's authors did not attempt to introduce any innovations, but rather created a living and dynamic street space open to dialogue, constructing a "space of silence" in order to preserve a documentary record of the past, conveyed by its grandiose but sparse remnants. An approach along these lines is, in the opinion of the authors, in harmony with UNESCO recommendations on restoring the former image and look of a historical monument, in such a way that enables the realisation of additional projects in the future, which may include the reconstruction of the synagogue itself.

5. Uncovering and reinforcing the painting stratum

Figure 8: *Novoselitsa. New Great Synagogue. The Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron: wall paintings, 1919–1920. Discovered in 2009*. Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2010

The only example of this approach is the case of the paintings in the abandoned Novoselitsa synagogue, which were discovered under the whitewash in 2008 and made fully visible a year later by Kyiv renovators.[30] The purpose of clearing away the most recent layers of plaster from the painting stratum was the desire to make the unique find, miraculously preserved, visible as soon as possible. Following the cleaning, the paintings were uncovered using a solution of

[29] For this project in detail, see: *The Space of Synagogues: Jewish History, Common Heritage and Responsibility* https://www.lvivcenter.org/en/space-of-synagogues/ (accessed 21 November 2019).

[30] The history of the clearing of the artwork is detailed in the article by Yuliy Lifshitz, who organized this work, see: ЛИФШИЦ, ref. 12.

Figure 9: *Novoselitsa. New Great Synagogue. The Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, wall paintings, 1919–1920.* Photo by Anna Yamchuk, 2015

pinene and plant oil, thus recovering the images' original vividness. The work was performed in a professional manner, and achieved its goal. But the outcome was that the paintings were left exposed, whereas previously the uppermost layer of chalk had, for many decades, protected them from destruction. Debates and discussions about putting the ensemble on display in the future have not yielded any conclusive results. One of the options, proposed by the private owner of the building, was to conserve the paintings in the same building, which was intended to serve as a cultural institution after renovation. A second option, put forth by Jewish agencies, was to transfer the stratum with the paintings to Chernivtsi, the regional capital, which has an active Jewish community and a museum – in fact, a variety of institutions generating a "museum-going stream" of visitors. Settling on a solution involves tackling questions of an organizational, financial and technical nature which apparently still remain open. Today, thanks to the dilapidation of the building, the paintings are in a critical condition; some of the fragments have been lost forever (Figures 8, 9). The building's owner, concerned about the prolonged inaction, has meanwhile started renovation work on his property on his own. At present it is difficult to guess what this monument's fate may be.

6. Using old painting motifs in new decoration

This approach was taken in the reconstruction of the synagogue residence of the Tzaddik Israel Friedmann in Sadygora, which was built in the late nineteenth century, between 1860 and 1890 (exact date unknown). The building's reconstruction, which took place between 2012 and 2016, was led by Mikhail Krayz, who worked in close interaction with the descendants of the Sadygora Tzaddik. The project was the upshot of perennial discussions and deliberations about

Figure 10: *Sadygora (now part of Chernivtsi). Former Rabbi Israel Friedmann's Synagogue. Traces of wall-paintings in the ruined building.*
Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2002

Figure 11: *Sadygora (now part of Chernivtsi). Rabbi Israel Friedmann's Synagogue. A new synagogue decoration.*
Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2016

the question of restoring the centre of Sadygora Hasidism for pilgrims who are also followers of the movement.[31] The very meagre material that remained for the renovators to draw on from the former luxuriously decorated synagogue of one of the most powerful nineteenth-century Hasidic *tzaddiks* meant it was only possible to form only an overall sense of the styles and the colour schemes used in the decorative wall paintings, and to take in little more than the spirit of the ornamentation. Fragments of painted engaged frames and curved ribbon-like shafts with their inner fields partly filled with climbing acanthus were adopted as basic motifs from the old decoration in creating the new paintings. This part of the decoration, reconstructed from the legacy of the past, also dictated the general colour scheme (Figures 10, 11). The scheme was thoroughly integrated into the new design of the interior of the interior, which combined traditional elements with postmodernism. Aharon Ostraikher, mentioned above in connection with the restoration of Schekovitzka Synagogue, used the motif of a blue sky with clouds, executed in a photorealistic manner, to decorate the coffered ceiling. This modern approach was combined with traditionalist stained-glass windows on the theme of the Twelve Tribes of Israel by the Chernivtsi artist Anatoly Fedirko.

[31] For this project in detail, see: Садгірську синагогу відкрили у Чернівцях після реставрації, https://acc.cv.ua/news/chernivtsi/sadgirsku-sinagogu-vidkrili-u-chernivcyah-pislya-restavraciyi-foto-15606 (accessed 22 November 2019).

It gladdens the heart that the thoughtful, integrated approach to the reconstruction of the building itself, was also manifested in the architecture of the new *ohel* of Israel Friedmann's family and his descendants at the local Jewish cemetery. In these examples, we can see a single architectural complex beginning to take shape, becoming the modern symbol of Ruzhin-Sadygora Hasidism, underscoring the status of this former Chernivtsi suburb. The approach evidences more than just a positive experience of reconstruction work of this type; it also shows ways of combining old heritage with modernity. This is thanks both to the strategy of meticulous recovery of the synagogue's architectural decoration – which involved the development of special new techniques for restoring bricks and stucco work – and to a pluralistic approach towards the interiors and decorations which brought together distinct historical eras in the synagogue's history and the contexts of memory which are bound up with them.

The approaches mentioned run up against a cluster of issues connected with preserving old paintings in their original condition; a lot depends on the condition, status and ownership of the buildings in question. In cases when the building is in use as a synagogue, the community itself often prefers to aim for a comfortable renovated prayer space, rather than an authentic monument bearing marks of destruction and decay. If the building is in a neglected condition, the question arises as to whether it is best to continue using it or to remake it into a cultural institution such as a museum or library – especially if the building is privately owned. In the case of the Novoselitsa synagogue, by leaving this problem unaddressed, it could be said that we have acquired this monument as an object of academic discourse, but may well lose it as a tangible item in reality. Finally, if the synagogue is managed by the community, with its paintings preserved without suffering the same ruin as in the synagogue in Khust, then it needs to be entrusted to international care, and efforts need to be coordinated between the building's owners and the community leadership to ensure the paintings' conservation. At the present stage, the options available make it problematic to undertake the costly transfer of a large-scale painting stratum from a decaying building to a facility that is specially adapted for this purpose, as is normally done in other countries. Even so, possibilities of this kind should not be dismissed out of hand, considering that very few surviving works remain. It is increasingly evident that these surviving works also cannot be left to the arbitrary discretion of property owners and their individual initiatives. Whatever the decision in each individual case, it appears to be of paramount importance to set up a separate register of monuments of this kind, to enter them in an international project, and to jointly provide for their conservation.

Ways of displaying synagogue decoration

Given the real situation in Ukraine today, it needs to be made clear that the issue of restoring to the old synagogue paintings an aspect appropriate for a historical monument, as well as achieving this for former synagogue buildings overall, is objectively bound up with a series of issues. First of all, there has been a drastic drop in Jewish population figures in Ukraine, and in the level of Jewish social activism, especially in more modest-sised towns – a circumstance which makes it difficult to obtain financing for projects of this kind, as well as calling into question whether these buildings will be made use of later. Second, without international support, it is extremely difficult to repurpose these buildings to make them into city museums – as has been done, for instance, in Poland, where the buildings were subsequently handed over to be managed by the state. Third, there is insufficient openness about these processes along with the failure of all interested parties to come together to solve these issues. Overall, sadly,

we confirm that the surviving works are in most cases doomed to vanish. Thus, along with the importance of eternalising the works that have already gone, the predicament of the surviving pieces compels us to search for other ways of preserving this heritage as a part of Ukraine's cultural tradition, and to think about transferring it to a different, more reliable carrier of memory. We are referring to the various means of museum-based preservation and display of this kind of heritage. Similar problems occupy experts throughout the world today, and various ways of addressing the question have been offered. This field has developed its own store of accumulated experience and perspectives, from which we need to single out the principal guiding elements and directions.

1. Making models of old synagogue interiors containing wall paintings for Jewish museums

Figure 12: *Replica of the bimah and vault paintings from Gvizdetz Synagogue. Warsaw. POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. 2013–2014.* Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2014

This approach can be traced in two well-known copies of synagogue wall paintings from the first half of the eighteenth century, recreated using wooden constructs. These are replicas of the ceiling paintings from the Khodoriv Synagogue (1977, James Gardner Studios, London) stored in the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv, and the vault and *bimah* paintings from Gvizdetz (2011–2014, Handshouse Studio, Norwell, US)[32] at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw (Figure 12).[33] Both synagogues were formerly located in lands which are today part of Ukraine. The new models recreate the paintings in the synagogues, which were documented prior to WWI in Alois Breyer's photograph collection – now held by the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.[34] The models' authors also attempted to reconstruct the colour palette of the paintings, taking as their point of departure old copies which were made during the pre-WWI period.[35] An important element of the program to reconstruct the paintings on the synagogue's domed ceiling was its educational aspect, associated with the openness and the popularisation of the project. While works on the dome were being undertaken in

[32] For the project in detail, see: *Replicating the Gwozdziec Wooden Synagogue* http://www.handshouse.org/#/gwozdziec/ (accessed 22 November 2019)

[33] On the creation of a replica of the wooden synagogue in Gvizdetz for the POLIN museum, see: https://www.polin.pl/en/news/2014/03/18/gwozdziec-synagogue-we-are-done (accessed 22 November 2019)

[34] The Tel-Aviv Museum of Fine Arts, the William G. Goldenberg Drawings Room, the Alois Breyer Photographs Collection of Wooden Synagogues from the Department of Engravings and Drawings. The author wishes to express his gratitude to Mrs Emmanuella Kahlo, the keeper of the foundation, for her assistance in work with this collection in 2012. See also: GOLDMAN-IDA, Batsheva (ed.). *Alois Breyer, El Lissitzky, Frank Stella—Wooden Synagogues*, Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, 10 July– 18 October 2014. Exhibition catalogue. Tel-Aviv, 2014, p. 38–77, 127–129.

[35] PIECHOTKA, Maria and Kazimerzh. *Heaven's Gates. Wooden Synagogues in the Territories of the Former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.* Warsaw: Krupski i S-ka, 2004, p. 113–159.

2011–2013, seminars were conducted in eight Polish cities (Sanok, Zheshuv, Cracow, Vrotzlav, Gdansk, Seynakh, Kazimezh and Schebzheshin) where students worked side-by-side with an international team of historians, architects and masters specializing in traditional carpentry and polychrome painting. The seminars took place in each city's synagogue, with local residents also invited to join and acquaint themselves with the values of the project, with Jewish culture and with the past of their city. Practical work on the model of the synagogue's domed ceiling was also in progress during these encounters. The direct interaction between the Studio's workers, the Association of the Polish Jewish Historical Institute and the Museum of the History of Polish Jews ensured the emergence of an effective strategy for working on the project, brought a level of professionalism to the discussions and increased the impact on the public.

2. Using motifs taken from synagogue paintings in Jewish communities' new construction projects

Figure 13: *Dnipro. Tekumah Jewish Center, Memory of the Jewish People and the Holocaust in Ukraine Museum.*
Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2012

This approach is expressive of the creative rethinking of tradition. The earliest example of this in Ukraine was the Memory of the Jewish People and the Holocaust in Ukraine Museum at the Tekumah Jewish Center in Dnepropetrovsk (now Dnipro) in 2012 (Figure 13). The design of the hall devoted to a display of the traditional lifestyle of Eastern European Jewry incorporates a collage of fragments taken from synagogue wall paintings in Khodoriv, Chernivtsi, Khorb and other places, to produce a cumulative impression of a traditional synagogue's liturgical space. The head artist of the museum is Victor Gukaylo. Our next example is Shtetl, the Jewish café in the Beit Dan Jewish Cultural Center in Kharkiv (2002, design by Eugeny Kotlyar). The popular zodiac motif from the Khodoriv synagogue wall paintings is incorporated into the decoration scheme as an expression of Eastern European Jewish culture. The Khodoriv zodiac motif also appears in a third context: decorating the synagogue in the Jewish community centre in Sumy, which opened in 2005. Here it appears in an altered colour scheme and with a different compositional structure. The twelve compositions are each displayed separately in a round frame, with three insets on each of the four walls (also designed by Eugeny Kotlyar). These instances exemplify the transference of synagogue decoration as part of the Jewish cultural tradition into a variety of the Jewish community's constructions: museums, cultural centres and synagogues. Such a presentation medium makes it possible to establish the works in the cultural consciousness of the generation of today, even though this type of presentation is far from being scholarly.

3. Exhibition projects

Figure 14: *Chernivtsi. Chevra Tehilim Synagogue. Digital reconstruction of the damaged ceiling paintings.* Computer graphics by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2015

Old and modern photographs of synagogue wall and ceiling paintings, along with studies, hypotheses and reconstructions, provide excellent material and a set of instruments for displaying this heritage in appealing exhibitions that can be creative, academic or educational. The only instance of this in Ukraine to date has been the project *How Goodly Are Thy Tents, Oh Jacob… Synagogue Wall Paintings from Bukovina*, which ran in 2015–16 and was curated by the present author in cooperation with the Chernivtsi Museum of Jewish History and Culture in Bukovina (project leader Mykola Kushnir), with research support provided by the leading Israeli specialists Prof. Ilia Rodov (Bar-Ilan University) and Dr Vladimir Levin (Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

The project involved eight Bukovina synagogues, four each from the territory of today's Romania and Ukraine. Each site was documented by a set of materials which included the painting programme, photographic reconstructions, and twelve descriptions of the most representative compositions in the paintings. Articles providing general background information made it possible to introduce the regional specificity of this tradition.

The special highlight of the project proved to be the development of two-dimensional reconstruction plans of the painting schemes and photographic displays. This made it possible to eternalise the surviving groups of paintings and make them visually accessible. In some cases,

Figure 15: *Chernivtsi. Chevra Tehilim Synagogue. Digital reconstruction of the ceiling paintings.* Computer graphics by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2015

as in the ruins of Beit Tehilim Synagogue in Chernivtsi, we were able to reconstruct part of a painting that had been all but lost. Certain elements of the painting were recreated based on the surviving details of the ceiling decoration; from this, the original appearance of the painted ceiling re-emerged (Figure 14). Superimposing the lost fragments upon the result produced a photo display which enabled the viewer to envision the ceiling in its original form (Figure 15) and appreciate its condition at present. Similar work on other parts of the paintings enabled us to recreate the painting scheme, except where compositions had been completely lost. The same kind of work was carried out for other synagogues which were in varying states of dilapidation. The result was a comprehensive exhibition catalogue[36] and a transformable mobile display. The first viewers saw it in the fall of 2016 in Chernivtsi (Figure 16) and Kharkiv; in early 2017 the exhibition moved to Kiev and it will in future be on display in Odessa, Bucharest, Vilnius and other cities. Of outstanding importance among the objectives achieved by the project is its success in demonstrating the specificity of synagogue wall paintings in Bukovina in the general context of the tradition of Eastern European synagogue decoration.

Figure 16: *Chernivtsi. The opening of the Wall Paintings in Bukovinian Synagogues exhibition. Art-Sweet Gallery. October 2016.* Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar

This experience suggests it is worth giving thought to whether a project along these lines might be implemented involving synagogue wall paintings throughout Galicia. Today we can already begin to pinpoint the particular features of these works, which are bound up with the influence of the Vienna school of decorative painting on the Eastern Galician region.[37] The Lviv school emerged as a result of this influence, leading to the appearance of local masters who created synagogue wall and ceiling paintings.[38] The styles defining this regional tradition can be appreciated in its leading preserved example: the wall paintings in

[36] KUSCHNIR, ref. 9.

[37] КОТЛЯР, Евгений. Восточноевропейская традиция росписей синагог и ее региональные центры на исторических землях Украины. К постановке проблемы. In: Вісник Харківської державної академії дизайну і мистецтв. Харків: ХДАДМ, 2010, no. 8, cc. 76–84.

[38] Among them: the Fleck brothers, Sigmunt Balk, Erno Erb, Maksimilian Kugel, and others. See: ГЛЕМБОЦКАЯ, Галина. Художники-евреи Львова первой трети XX века. Жизнь, творчество, судьба. Львов, 2015, p. 29, 129, 166–169.

Figure 17: *Lviv. Yakub Glanzer's Shul Synagogue, 1844. Traces of wall-paintings in the ruined building.*
Photo by Eugeny Kotlyar, 2016

Tzori Gilead Synagogue in Lviv, described above. Despite the recent loss of the original and the fact that the paintings had to be entirely redone in 2006–2007, we can confidently make some claims about its programme, iconography and artistic style. The paintings were created in 1936 by the artist Maksimilian Kugel, a member of the workshop circle associated with the Flack brothers. These masters painted synagogues throughout Galicia,[39] leaving behind them numerous sketches for synagogue wall and ceiling paintings in a distinctive style. Another significant example to flesh out the regional context of the tradition could be the only partly uncovered paintings in the Yakub Glanzer's Shul in Lviv.[40] The synagogue was built in 1844, rebuilt in 1912, and underwent a complete renovation after the pogrom of 1918.[41] The anonymous paintings, still concealed beneath the plaster, can presumably be associated with the time of this complete overhaul (Figure 17). The building belongs to the Jewish community; unlike the predicament of the Novoselitsa synagogue, its paintings do not need to be transferred to any other location and the future fate of the building is not a cause for concern. Clearing the painted stratum and its subsequent preservation may yield valuable information about the painting design, showing the connection between these decorations and the local traditions of the region. The synagogue paintings in Buchach, mentioned earlier, can also be coordinated with this category; they also need clearing, expert documentation and conservation, as a matter of urgency. Unfortunately, work of this kind is not possible in other regions of Ukraine, due to the absence of surviving artefacts.

Projects of this kind present rich content for exhibitions; this can include archival materials and research conducted in the pre-war years, as well as the opportunity to combine research projects with creative exhibitions following fieldwork expeditions and art plein airs. Some examples of projects along these lines are already available, such as the *Jewish Atlantis* project, (curator Eugeny Kotlyar, in collaboration with Hillel, a Jewish student organization). Even though it did not directly concern synagogue paintings, but rather dealt with the overarching theme of creative appropriation of the heritage of the *shtetl* and the former Jewish Pale of Settlement, it provided modern artists' vivid reflections on the overarching theme, with the

[39] Ibid., p. 390–391.

[40] We are grateful to Aleksandr Nazar, leader of the Sholom Aleichem Lviv Society of Jewish Culture, for his gracious assistance in the examination and photographing of the synagogue, as well as the discussion of ideas and perspectives of reconstruction and future use of the building for community needs.

[41] Синагоги України, ref. 8, p. 95–96.

Jewish context becoming part of the artists' list of thematic foci and creative experience.[42]

Figure 18: *A digitised model of the interior of the wooden synagogue in Smotrych, mid-eighteenth century.* Model by Sergey Biryukov and Eugeny Kotlyar, 2011

4. 3D Multimedia presentations

In the context of Ukranian synagogue paintings, this presentation format belongs, for the time being, with perspectives for the future, but it is a thoroughly realistic means of modelling both surviving and lost items in space. As such, it has enormous educational potential. Based on accumulated experience in creating replicas of synagogue interiors by means of paintings and 2D reconstructions, it seems feasible to make use of modern multimedia technologies to design 3D presentations with interactive navigation. The Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Beit Tefilah Center at the Technical University of Braunsweig have some experience to date in developing computerised models of synagogues. This experience enabled a team, with which this author was involved, to develop a digitalised model of the wooden synagogue built in the eighteenth century in Smotrych (Figure 18). It seems quite feasible to "superimpose" painting displays done by hand or by computer on the modelled parts of buildings, especially considering that we have a number of old photographs

[42] KOTLYAR, Eugeny (ed.). *"Jewish Atlantis". World of Shtetl in the Works of Kharkov Artists. Exhibition of Visual Arts in Conclusion of Project "Neshama: Through Art to Heart"*. Exhibition catalogue. Kharkov: Center for Eastern Studies at Kharkov State Academy of Design and Arts, 2012.

at our disposal. Certain compositions which did not make it into the frame of any of the historic photographs or fragments which have been lost can be indicated by special masking camouflage; the painted compositions most likely to have been there can also be indicated on the walls and vaulted ceilings. Displayed in a real architectural space, the paintings can open up and move, following the camera as it conveys a view of the synagogue's interior space. Using a system of interactive references and navigation, the semantics and iconography of specific compositions can be explained and presented to view, along with translations and interpretation of signs and inscriptions, the gimatrias of recorded dates, and so on.

Conclusion

This study – which presented the historical heritage and modern condition of synagogue wall paintings, along with methods and examples of their preservation, current and future possible practices, and various approaches and technologies for their presentation – suggests the following considerations. While the quality and condition of the wall paintings will inevitably have an effect on the possible strategies for preservation, as will the pragmatic reality of what is actually possible – and in Ukraine today, we are still far from the level of financing, technology and public enthusiasm seen abroad – there are nevertheless two universal considerations that need to be borne in mind. First, authentic strata must be studied as historical artefacts; they must be preserved, and sealed in their current condition either in situ or in a museum space especially created for this. The idea of creating a museum of synagogue wall paintings in one of the renovated synagogues has put forth by the VAAD of Ukraine, but so far no action has been taken to follow up on the initial proposal.[43] Second, wall painting decoration, as an area of cultural memory and living tradition, is not only a memorial (that is, an object and a repository of memory) but also an instrument of memory. Memory itself, according to Jan Assmann, not only preserves and recreates the past, but also reorganizes it "by means of changing contextual frameworks of the ever-surging-ahead present."[44] A carefully thought through use of this instrument, taking advantage of technologies that are available today or those which will become available in the future, will make it possible to preserve this memory of the past objectively and correctly, without the imposition of additional layers or distortions, thus establishing a bond between eras and generations. It would appear that exhibitions and multimedia formats are the most accessible and effective presentation formats for the lost and the disappearing phenomenon of synagogue decoration in Ukraine today. Even so, it is in all cases important to distinguish the object itself from the various types of interaction with it and the different kinds of interpretation, so as not to deprive future generations of the opportunity to work with a primary source. The openness of these projects to united international involvement – and the integration of Ukrainian expertise in the international process of studying and preserving synagogue decoration as a part of the heritage of humanity – is an essential precondition for making this possible.

[43] We are indebted to Dr Joseph Zissels for providing me with this information.
[44] ACCMAHH, ref. 2, c. 43.

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Glossary

Beit Tefilah (Hebrew): "house of prayer" – a building for Jewish religious services and a congregation of Jews who assemble for worship or religious study.

bimah, (pl. bihmas), (Hebrew): "platform" – a platform in the synagogue for reading the Torah scrolls.

Groyse Shil (Yiddish): "Great Synagogue" – one of the common names for the main synagogue in a town.

menorah (Hebrew): "lampstand" – the seven-branched candelabrum; one of the Jerusalem Temple implements; the oldest and most important symbol of Judaism and Jewish people

ohel (Hebrew): "tent" – a structure built around a Jewish grave as a sign of prominence of the deceased.

shtetl (Yiddish): "town" – a small town in Eastern Europe with a largely Jewish population; it is now used mainly to describe the Jewish townlets and the culture of East European Jews before the Holocaust.

shul (Yiddish): "school", "synagogue" (from Middle High German "schuol") – one of the names of the synagogue, common among the Hasidic communities.

tzaddik (Hebrew): "righteous one" – a spiritual leader of a Hasidic community; to whom the worshippers tended to ascribe outstanding qualities and mystic power. Among the Hasidim of Central and Eastern Europe, *tzaddiks* usually enjoyed an unlimited authority and influence, which often resulted in a tzadik cult.

Against the "Moonlight and Magnolia" myth of the American South. A new materialist approach to the dissonant heritage of slavery in the US: The case of Whitney Plantation in Wallace, LA

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Against the "Moonlight and Magnolia" myth of the American South. A new materialist approach to the dissonant heritage of slavery in the US: The case of Whitney Plantation in Wallace, LA
The article presents an analysis of the operations of the Whitney Plantation Museum, which opened in 2014 in Wallace, LA (USA), situated within the context of plantation heritage tourism in the American South. The argumentation offers an illustration of the significant transition, even though still of marginal character, of the dominant tendencies of representing slavery in heritage sites (plantation museums) devoted to cultivating knowledge about the history of the region. New materialist in its orientation, the analysis subscribes to the most fundamental assumption of this philosophical tendency, namely that knowledge is generated in material-semiotic ways, and applies this approach in an enquiry into the educational experience offered to visitors by this heritage site. The article argues that although the emergence of institutions such as Whitney Plantation is meant to pluralise the memorial landscape of a given community, rather than serving as multivocal spaces they tend to remain steeped in fragmentation.

Keywords: Dissonant heritage; slavery; plantation tourism; Whitney Plantation Museum; new materialism

Dissonant heritage: an introduction

Contemporary societies, in Macdonald's words, have become "obsessed with the disappearance of collective memory and its preservation" – a tendency that sits at the origin of the erection of diverse heritage sites "designed to remind us of histories that might otherwise be lost".[1] At the same time, the institutionalised memorial narratives (embodied in and propagated by museums, memory sites, educational institutions, etc.) tend to offer already interpreted versions of the past, often avoiding difficult or shameful tropes of history, silencing or belittling them. Hence, although current practices of memorialisation are predominantly related to the commemoration of collective traumas (such as genocide, torture, exploitation, catastrophes, massive killings, or violence), there is a discernible tendency to circumvent those traumatic stories which do not fit within the dominant authoritative narrative of the nation's history or in which the representatives of a given nation played the role of perpetrators of a crime. The sense of history of a community depends heavily on the available interpretive frameworks shaping the ways people tend to think about the past and its meanings. It is therefore of crucial importance to examine the hegemonic discourses pervading the processes of memory cultivation, both in reference to what societies struggle to remember and what

[1] MACDONALD, Sharon. *Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 1.

they choose to forget.[2] Heritage sites serve as important, although selective, vehicles for historical remembrance.[3] They also play pivotal roles in producing knowledge about the so-called "difficult past", "undesirable heritage", "dissonant heritage" or "heritage that hurts".[4] These labels are meant to signal "a heritage that the majority of the population would prefer not to have"[5] and are connected to what is often referred to in terms of "national" or "cultural" traumas.[6] Certainly, memory is far from being value-neutral[7] and, as Turnbridge and Ashworth argue, heritage must be seen as inherently dissonant – a contentious realm populated with group identities, interests and incompatible versions of history.[8] Although typically perceived as belonging to the past, heritage has to adapt to the different social and geographical demands of the present. The ways the difficult, or shameful, past is dealt with within the official memorial discourses produced in connection with material arrangements at heritage sites are therefore worth exploring, as the interpretations of the past these sites convey speak volumes about the current social tensions, revealing the problematic divisions of contemporary communities.

The official narrative about the role of slavery in the development of the US has held sway for over a century. The crucial function of the slaves to the operation of plantations in the mythic American South has until recently been either not included in the narratives offered to tourists visiting the heritage sites or presented as insignificant and of marginal importance.[9] As Du Bois noted in 1935,

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[2] See: BRUNDAGE, Fitzhugh W. *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

[3] For elaboration of notions of collective memory and memory as a cultural system, see, for instance, HALBWACHS, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992 or SCHWARTZ, Barry. Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln and World War II. In: *American Sociological Review*, vol. 61, 1992, no. 5, p. 908–927.

[4] The term "difficult past" was coined by William Logan and Keir Reeves (see: LOGAN, William, REEVES, Keir. Introduction: Remembering Places of Pain and Shame. In: LOGAN, William (ed). *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with "Difficult Heritage"*. London: Routledge, 2009, p. 1–14); the term "undesirable heritage" was used by Sharon Macdonald (see: MACDONALD, Sharon. Undesirable Heritage: Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg. In: *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 12, 2006, no. 1, p. 9–28); the term "dissonant heritage" was offered by Tunbridge and Ashworth (see: TUNBRIDGE, J. E., ASHWORTH, G. J. *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*. Chichester: Wiley, 1996), and the term "heritage that hurts" was used by Uzzell and Balantyne (see: UZZELL, David L., BALLANTYNE, Roy. Heritage that Hurts: Interpretation in a Postmodern World. In: UZZELL, David L., BALLANTYNE, Roy (eds). *Contemporary Issues in Heritage and Environmental Interpretation*. London: The Stationery Office, 1998, p. 152–171). For elaboration of similar ideas see: ALONSO, Anam M. The Effects of Truth: Representation of the Past and the Imagining of Community. In: *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 1, 1988, no. 1, p. 33–58; OOI, Ceng-Seng. Persuasive Histories: Decentring, Recentring and the Emotional Crafting of the Past. In: *Journal of Organizational Change*, vol. 15, 2002, no. 6, p. 606–620; VINITZKY-SEROUSSI, Vered. Commemorating and Difficult Past: Yitzhak Rabin's Memorials. In: *American Sociological Review*, vol. 67, 2002, no. 1, p. 30–52 and WAGNER-PACIFICI, R., SCHWARTZ, Barry. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past. In: *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 97, 1991, no. 2, p. 376–420).

[5] MACDONALD, Sharon. *Undesirable Heritage*… p. 9.

[6] See: NEAL, Arthur G. *National Trauma and Collective Memory*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.

[7] See: GREENE, Mark A. The Messy Business of Remembering: History, Memory, and Archives. In: *Archival Issues*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2003–2004, p. 95–103.

[8] TUNBRIDGE, J. E., ASHWORTH, G. J. *Dissonant Heritage*… p. 21.

[9] For exploration of this issue see: BUTLER, David L. Whitewashing Plantations: The Commodification and Social Creation of a Slave-free Antebellum South. In: *International Journal of Hospitality*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, 2001, p. 159–171 and EICHSTEDT, Jennifer, SMALL, Stephen. *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2002.

> the facts of American history have in the last half century been falsified because the nation was ashamed. The South was ashamed because it fought to perpetuate slavery. The North was ashamed because it had to call in the black men to save the Union, abolish slavery and establish democracy.[10]

This shame has led to major distortions of the official hegemonic narratives of US history and translated into strategies of negligence, or intentional marginalisation, of those memorial discourses that run counter to the formal (although fallacious) historical knowledge. Slavery, a state-supported system of violence and oppression, has not been officially remembered. This is due to the fact that the memory of this difficult past has been, as Modlin underlines, especially prone to dissonance,[11] as well as being characterised by tensions and uncomfortable interactions between visitors, academicians and operators of heritage sites. This dissonance is, as Dann and Seaton reveal, a result of the fact that cultural discourses tend to shape the past into cleansed national legacies, within which the history of the enslavement of Blacks simply does not fit.[12] Recently, things seem to have slightly changed, which is visible in the establishment of at least three major institutions: the Whitney Plantation Museum in Wallace, LA (2014); the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (2016) in Washington, DC; and the Lynching Memorial in Montgomery, AL (2018). The three heritage sites offer a radically different perspective on the shameful past of slavery in the US, looking at these problematic events from the point of view of African Americans, thus challenging the hitherto well-established narratives on how (or whether) the system of enslavement should be memorialised. This might signal a salient shift in paradigms of representing the history of slavery as a difficult component of national heritage. Certain modifications introduced within the past twenty years into the dominant discourse about the historical experiences of the enslaved offered at plantation heritage sites in the American South have also been documented, although evidence of these changes is still rather scarce.[13]

Taking a new materialist perspective, this article analyses operations of the Whitney Plantation in Wallace, LA. It is based on an ethnographic study conducted by the author on site in April 2015. Observation and qualitative methods were used as the primary means of investigation. Observation is here understood as a very complex and demanding process, which is not limited to sight, but rather includes joint, synaesthetic operations of touch, smell, hearing and seeing, and translating these sensations into complex embodied experiences and feelings. Obviously, these experiences are profoundly shaped by the researcher's previous knowledge and personal archives of memory. This approach necessarily includes a critical self-reflexive awareness and analysis of how these past experiences structure what is being researched and how they shape the formulation of conclusions. The article presents the outcomes of the fieldwork study that was thusly undertaken.

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[10] DU BOIS, W. E. Burghardt. *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935/2014, p. 117.

[11] MODLIN, Arnold E. Tales Told on the Tour: Mythic Representations of Slavery by Docents at North Carolina Plantation Museums. In: *Southeastern Geographer*, vol. 48, no. 3, 2008, p. 265–287.

[12] DANN, Graham M.S., SEATON, A.V. Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism. In: *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, 2001, p. 1–2.

[13] ALDERMAN, Derek H., BUTLER, David L., HANNA, Stephen P. Memory, Slavery, and Plantation Museums: The River Road Project. In: *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2015, p. 209–218.

My analysis offers an illustration of the significant transition, still of marginal character, of the dominant tendencies of representing slavery in heritage sites (Southern plantation museums). Whitney Plantation is committed to presenting "accurate historical tours touching on the culture, life and operations of New Orleans plantations, along with the history behind the Atlantic Slave Trade".[14] This is a part of larger tendency discernible in memory culture toward offering a more contested (multivocal) or fragmented[15] panorama of "tangled memories",[16] creating space for new, often subversive, ways of interpreting the past and pluralising the mnemonic landscape of a given community. This is achieved through a variety of means applied at contemporary heritage sites, from symbolic and discursive display strategies, through the emotional punctuation of employed historical narratives and production of empathetic identifications, to more affective or bodily techniques of generating knowledge. A closer look at their sensorial material dimension (which combines with their narrative and symbolic facets) sheds an altogether different light on heritage sites. This lets us more fully comprehend their "material-semiotic"[17] nature and how they productively assemble this with the (bodies of) visitors. As I want to make clear, it is not enough to approach such sites by looking exclusively at their discursive workings. Arguing in a new materialist spirit, the symbolic (or semiotic) dimension would not be operative without the material aspects that sustain and make meanings possible in the first place. As Boivin[18] underlines, the material facets of the place not only provide a medium through which social values become encoded and transmitted, but also act as significant agents enabling understanding and provoking feeling through both their physical features and the ways in which visitors engage with and use these features. My aim is to put emphasis on the aesthetic operations of the analysed heritage site. And, as I underline, the aesthetic must be understood in terms of material-semiotic encounters.

This article takes a supply-oriented approach to the analysis of the Whitney Plantation Museum, with an aim to contrast this memorial site with the well-established ways of representing regional heritage adopted by plantation museums in American South. Recently, the volume of scholarship exploring the experiences and demands of visitors to the plantation museums (that is, demand-oriented research) has been growing, but this article focuses on the design of the place, the use of the landscape and artefacts, in creating a specific perspective on the history of slavery and the experiences of the enslaved. The analysis subscribes to the most fundamental assumption of philosophical new materialism, namely that knowledge is generated in material-semiotic ways. Even though the extant scholarship clearly acknowledges the importance of material place, landscape, and artefacts for the creation of a desired narrative to be presented in heritage sites, as well as underlining the significance of the experience of moving from one place to another during the tour, the analysis of the tangled operations of plantation heritage sites from an explicitly new materialist perspective has not yet been undertaken. This article aims at partly closing this gap.

[14] Whitney Plantation, accessed 23 November 2020, www.whitneyplantation.org.

[15] See: VINITZKY-SEROUSSI, Vered. *Commemorating and Difficult Past*… and WAGNER-PACIFICI, R., SCHWARTZ, Barry. *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial*…

[16] STURKEN, Marita. *Tangled Memories*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.

[17] HARAWAY, Donna. Situated Knowledges. The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. In: *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1988, p. 575–599.

[18] See: BOIVIN, Nicole. *Material Cultures, Material Minds: The Impact of Things on Human Thought, Society, and Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Remembering slavery in the American South: the background

The South has a unique place in the popular American imagery and mythology. It has been romanticised and rendered nostalgic through the evocation of the "moonlight and magnolia" myth of idyllic countryside. Taking the form of selective amnesia, Southern nostalgia is translated into a systematic and deliberate negligence toward the gloomy misery and horrendous violence connected to the institution of slavery, so deeply inscribed in the history of this region. Even though the existence of the enslaved could not be omitted in the romanticised representations of the American South's past, slavery has been typically marginalised and trivialised, while the dominant marketed representations of black subservience have had very little in common with the harsh conditions and experiences the enslaved had to endure. This nostalgic portrayal of the American South spreads from novels, through advertising media, to films,[19] perpetuating the dominant "narrative economy"[20] of the benevolent white masters and their happy black servants.[21] As McPherson proves, such a nostalgic view of the American South, with plantations central to the region's development and wealth, is only possible through a purposeful collective act of disremembering or misremembering the region's deeply racialised past.[22]

The contentious legacy of slavery makes the history of the South profoundly problematic. As such, Southern heritage sites constitute a favourable location for studying racialisation processes, as they tend to reproduce the dominant racial identities, histories and discourses as well as perpetuate inequalities and discriminatory practices.[23] The plantation occupies a privileged place in the memorial landscape of the American South and, as Adams proposes, it plays a seminal role in shaping the official interpretations of Southern history and the understanding of the nature of race relations during the antebellum period.[24] As Dann and Seaton elaborate, the former plantations, to which the genesis of racial oppression in the US should be traced, have been rearticulated as heritage sites and count as important mnemonic

[19] See, for instance, such works as: YUHL, Stephanie E. *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005 or THOMPSON, Craig, TIAN, Kelly. Reconstructing the South: How Commercial Myth Compete for Identity Value Through the Ideological Shaping of Popular Memories and Counter-Memories. In: *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 34, no. 5, 2008, p. 595–613. Hoelscher, for instance, traces the origins of idealising Southern plantations to the period of the 1880s, when white inhabitants of the South tended to glorify the social life before the Civil Wars as a strategy of dealing with ongoing debates in the region regarding the problem of meaning of freedom for Blacks (see: HOELSCHER, Steven. The White-Pillared Past: Landscapes of Memory and Race in the American South. In: SCHEIN, Richard (ed). *Landscape and Race in the United States*. New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 46). As Hoelscher proposes, the paternalistic depiction of slavery as a benign institution connecting good masters and faithful slaves is an essential part of the mythology of the Old South that has been traditionally used by Whites to justify racial inequalities (see: HOELSCHER, Steven. Making Place, making Race: Performances of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South. In: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 93, no. 3, 2003, p. 657–686).

[20] CARTER, Perry L., BUTLER, David L., ALDERMAN, Derek, H. The House the Story Built: The Place of Slavery in Plantation Museum Narratives. In: *The Professional Geographer*, vol. 66, no. 4, 2014, p. 547–557.

[21] See: SUNDQUIST, Eric J. *To Wake the Nation: Race in the Making of American Literature*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

[22] MCPHERSON, Tara. *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

[23] For elaboration of these issues, see: INWOOD, Joshua F.J. Sweet Auburn: Constructing Atlanta's Auburn Avenue as a Heritage Tourist Destination. In: *Urban Geography*, vol. 31, no. 5, 2010, p. 573–594 and ZAKOS, Katharine P. Truth is Marching On: The Lasershow Spectacular at the Stone Mountain Park Confederate Memorial and the Changing Narratives of History. In: *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2015, p. 280–295.

[24] ADAMS, Jessica. Local Color. The Southern Plantation in Popular Culture. In: *Cultural Critiques*, vol. 42, 1999, p. 163–187.

places, dominating the current tourist landscape of the South.[25] The region is dotted with plantation museums, framed as primary tourist attractions. Currently there are close to 400 such destinations open for tours within the US, predominantly located in North Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia and South Carolina. Sadly, most of these heritage sites offer a very white-centric view of what life on the plantation looked like, focusing on the family of the owners and their possessions, while ignoring the crucial contribution of the enslaved to the construction and maintenance of the plantation houses, as well as to the production of the wealth enjoyed by the master's family. The dominant narratives play an important role in generating and legitimising knowledge of who is considered historically important for the particular place or region, as well as, by omission, whose historical contributions do not matter. Given the racial bias of these discourses, these sites participate in creating a particular view of the shameful history, translating into observable social injustices and practices of exclusion. The latter are manifest in, among other things, a tacit denial of the heritage claims of African Americans. The prevailing strategies of constructing history in most of the Southern plantation museums endeavour to create a distorted, inaccurate image of the past, dispossessing African Americans of their own legacy.[26] In Buzinde and Santos' words, these representational inequalities "not only annihilate the histories of marginalised groups from the official heritage narrative but also foster feelings of disinheritance and exasperate historical and contemporary issues of racism".[27] In a similar vein, Giovanetti underlines that the plantation serves as "a defining space for racial meaning and for the racial experiences of those who lived in it and those who live its legacy in the present".[28] As Alderman and Inwood notice, "the traditional neglect of African Americans within US collective memory has reflected and worked to justify a larger racial inequality in American life still felt far beyond memorials and monuments".[29]

Bearing in mind the increasing preoccupation with issues of public memory, the fact that interest in research on the legacies of enslavement has been growing should come as no surprise. These academic efforts explore the dominant discourses and material or performative strategies employed by the plantation owners, docents, managers and guides, as well as tourist expectations and preferences regarding the inclusion of the issue of slavery in plantation tours.[30]

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[25] DANN, Graham M.S., SEATON, A.V. *Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism*…

[26] BUZINDE, Christine N., SANTOS, Carla A. Interpreting Slavery Tourism. In: *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2009, p. 439–458.

[27] BUZINDE, Christine N., SANTOS, Carla A. *Interpreting Slavery Tourism*… p. 484.

[28] GIOVANETTI, Jorge L. Grounds of Race: Slavery, Racism and the Plantation in the Caribbean. In: *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2006, p. 5.

[29] ALDERMAN, Derek H., INWOOD, Joshua F. Landscapes of Memory and Socially Just Futures. In: SCHEIN, Richard, WINDERS, Jamie, JOHNSON, Juala (eds). *A New Companion to Cultural Geography*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013, p. 194.

[30] Recently, the volume of scholarly work exploring these topics has been growing. See, for instance: ALDERMAN, Derek H., BUTLER, David L., HANNA, Stephen P. Memory, Slavery, and Plantation Museums: The River Road Project. In: *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2015, p. 209–218; ALDERMAN, Derek H., MODLIN, E. Arnold. (In)visibility of the Enslaved Within Online Plantation Tourism Marketing: A Textual Analysis of North Carolina Websites. In: *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, vol. 25, no. 3–4, 2008, p. 265–281; ALDERMAN, Derek H., MODLIN, E. Arnold. Southern Hospitality and the Politics of African American Belonging: An Analysis of North Carolina Tourism Brochure Photographs. In: *Journal of Cultural Geography*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2013, p. 6–31; ALDERMAN, Derek H., MODLIN E. Arnold. On the Political Utterances of Plantation Tourists: Vocalizing the Memory of Slavery on River Road. In: *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2015, p. 275–289; BENJAMIN, Stephanie, ALDERMAN, Derek H. Performing a Different Narrative: Museum Theatre and the Memory-work of Producing and Managing Slavery Heritage at Southern Plantation Museums. In*: International Journal of Heritage*

Most of this research confirms the findings of Eichstedt and Small, published in 2002 in their seminal book entitled *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums*.[31] The two scholars, after studying the tourist offer of 122 plantation museums located in the American South, identified four main strategies through which the sites deal with the history of slavery and the contribution of the enslaved to the life of the Southern plantation as well as of the region in general. The majority of the studied sites (56%) perform "symbolic annihilation" consisting of the practical erasure of enslavement from the narratives of the offered tours, which focus exclusively on the owner's family and the architectural details of the mansion. Another 27% use "trivialisation and deflection", representing slaves as grateful servants to their morally upright and generous masters. In these cases, although the African American story is woven into the dominant narrative, a denigrating picture of the contribution of Blacks to the life of the plantation is offered. Another group of sites (4%) uses "segregation" strategies, by relegating the issue of slavery and the experience of the enslaved to separate locations or tours, so that the two histories are presented as mutually exclusive or unrelated. Only about 3% of the examined sites adopt a method of "relative incorporation", referring to the issue of slavery throughout the tour. Such an interpretative strategy embraces an inclusive perspective and is "much more likely to raise issues that disturb a positive construction of whiteness".[32] The research evidenced the tremendous dominance of the master-centred narrative and a tendency to ignore or romanticise the experiences of the enslaved, or what Butler calls a "whitewashing" of the history of the South.[33] This is achieved through a variety of means – narrative, material and performative. Even though the idea of presenting the heritage of slavery from the point of view of the enslaved is still very much an exception, recent research has demonstrated

Studies, vol. 24, no. 3, 2018, p. 270–282; BEST, Mechelle N., PHULGENCE, Winston F. Interpretation of Contested Heritage at an Attraction in St. Lucia. In: *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2013, p. 21–35; BUTLER, David L. Whitewashing Plantations: The Commodification and Social Creation of a Slave-free Antebellum South. In: *International Journal of Hospitality*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, 2001, p. 159–171; BUZINDE, Christine N. Discursive Construction of the Plantation Past within a Travel Guidebook. In: *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2010, p. 219–235; DANN, Graham M.S., POTTER, Robert B. Supplanting the Planters: Hawking Heritage in Barbados. In *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, 2001, p. 51–84; DAVIS, Patricia. Memoryscapes in Transition: Black History Museum, New South Narratives, and Urban Regeneration. In: *Southern Communication Journal*, vol. 78, no. 2, 2013, p. 107–127; DENNIS, Benjamin G., DENNIS, Anita K. *Slaves to Racism: An Unbroken Chain from America to Liberia*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2008; FORBES, Candace, ALDERMAN, Derek H., BUTLER, David L. Tourist Plantation Owners and Slavery: A Complex Relationship. In: *Current Issues in Tourism*, vol. 21, no. 15, 2018, p. 1743–1760; HANDLER, Richard, GABLE, Eric. *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1997; JACKSON, Antoinette T. Shattering Slave Life Portrayals: Uncovering Subjugated Knowledge in US Plantation Sites in South Carolina and Florida. In: *American Anthropologist*, vol. 113, no. 3, 2011, p. 448–462; JACKSON, Antoinette T. *Speaking for the Enslaved: Heritage Interpretation at Antebellum Plantation Sites*. New York: Routledge, 2016; MODLIN, Arnold. E., ALDERMAN, Derek H., GENTRY, Glenn W. Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums. In: *Tourist Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2011, p. 3–19; POIROT, Kristan, WATSON, Shevaun E. Memories of Freedom and White Resilience: Place, Tourism, and Urban Slavery. In: *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2015, p. 91–116; SMALL, Stephen. Still Back of the Big House: Slave Cabins and Slavery in Southern Heritage Tourism. In: *Tourism Geographies*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2013, p. 405–423; YANKHOLMES, Aaron, MCKERCHER, Bob. Rethinking Slavery Heritage Tourism. In: *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2015, p. 233–247; YANKHOLMES, Aaron, MCKERCHER, Bob. Understanding Visitors to Slavery Heritage Sites in Ghana. In: *Tourism Management*, vol. 51, no. C, 2015, p. 22–32.

[31] EICHSTEDT, Jennifer, SMALL, Stephen. *Representations of Slavery*....

[32] EICHSTEDT, Jennifer, SMALL, Stephen. *Representations of Slavery*… p. 10–11.

[33] BUTLER, David L. *Whitewashing Plantations*…

that a "growing number of plantations are incorporating slavery into their depictions of the antebellum past".[34] However, as Alderman, Butler and Hanna underline, "it would be unwise to characterise this as wholesale change".[35] And even if the narratives about the enslaved get incorporated into the plantation tours, it does not mean they are free from stereotypical historical myths.

The fact that the history of the American South is in heritage sites depicted from a predominantly white perspective must be approached in the broader context of the racial construction of public memory, which embodies the preferences of powerful social groups as to what they want to remember and what they would like to forget. In that sense, as Buzinde and Osagie underline, we should not think of plantation museums as "innocent edifications", but rather as tangible incarnations of the dominant social values. The two scholars connect studies on the prevailing portrayal of the history of slavery in the US and the discussion of the racial politics of plantation museums to the issues of cultural citizenship, pointing to the fact of whose heritage counts as legitimate in the leading authoritative memorial narratives.[36] The heritage industry is a location in which the dominant "racialised imagery and ideology" are sustained and perpetuated, "reinforcing the silences, stereotypes, and erasures in people's minds".[37] Worth noticing is the fact that the national landscape of memory, typically controlled by the dominant social groups and powerful elites,[38] embodies important tensions, translating into the sustenance of discriminatory practices (enacted on a symbolic level) and the perpetuation of social (or in this case, racial) inequalities. It does not mean, however, that the predominant landscape of memory is not contested. The marginalised groups tend to challenge the authoritative accounts spread by the memorial sites, offering counter-narratives and focusing on those aspects of the "factual" description of the history that have traditionally been omitted or belittled. There is an observable tendency for African Americans to reclaim their heritage by incorporating the issue of enslavement into the memorial landscape of the American South. Communities that are discriminated against struggle to use the same landscape that serves as a source of identification for the dominant groups to expose their own belonging, heritage and history. Consequently, the same scenery can potentially function within the different memorial narratives, being referred to by the representatives of different social (racial) groups as a basis for their collective identities. In what follows I will look at a plantation museum offering a slave-centric perspective and devoted to the presentation of the experiences of the enslaved. This goes counter to the dominant Southern historical discourses outlined above.

A different perspective: the case study

The Whitney Plantation, located on Louisiana's historic River Road in Wallace, LA, which is about a 40-minute drive from New Orleans, is owned by a (white) attorney, John Cummings. He originally bought this 1,700 acre property from a petrochemical company and since then has invested approximately $8 million to turn the place into the first plantation museum offering

[34] ALDERMAN, Derek H., BUTLER, David L., HANNA, Stephen P. *Memory, Slavery, and Plantation Museums*… p. 3.
[35] ALDERMAN, Derek H., BUTLER, David L., HANNA, Stephen P. *Memory, Slavery, and Plantation Museums*… p. 3.
[36] BUZINDE, Christine N., OSAGIE, Iyunolu F. Slavery Heritage Representations, Cultural Citizenship, and Judicial Politics in America. In: *Journal Historical Geography*, vol. 39, 2011, p. 41–64.
[37] EICHSTEDT, Jennifer, SMALL, Stephen. *Representations of Slavery*… p. 3.
[38] See: FOREST, Benjamin, JOHNSON, Juliet. Unravelling the Threads of History: Soviet-Era Monuments and Post-Soviet National Identity in Moscow. In: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 92, no. 3, 2002, p. 524–547.

a narrative from the viewpoint of the enslaved.[39] The owner was involved in developing the project (in cooperation with a Senegalese scholar, Ibrahima Seck) for 13 years before the place was opened to the public in 2014.[40] This sugarcane plantation was home to over 350 African slaves, who were involved in the extremely demanding production of molasses. Even though the museum is situated on the former plantation and makes use of a number of its original artefacts and infrastructures, some of the buildings had to be brought to the site from other similar places to fully reconstruct – and make visitors feel bodily engaged in – the experience of the enslaved. These relics include slave cabins, a church and a steel cage from the 1800s that served as a jail for mutinous or disobedient slaves.

This heritage site is meant to partly fill the void in the memorial landscape of the American South with regards to the fair and reliable representation of the experiences of the enslaved, challenging the whitened and romanticised accounts spread by other heritage sites in the region. Whitney Plantation functions both as a memorial and an educational site. It was designed to serve as a tribute to the lives of the enslaved and as an institution that offers a slave-centred perspective on enslavement as an institution constituting a necessary part of the history and economy of the American South. Even though it deals with a difficult past, the goal of the place is not to incite shame or resentment in visitors; rather, it is meant to do justice to what has not yet been adequately remembered and memorialised. Instead of using any entertainment techniques for producing knowledge about the past (such as costumes or staged performances, which are increasingly popular at a number of other Southern plantations), Whitney Plantation employs material-semiotic means of manufacturing an educational experience, drawing on the bodily-intellectual encounters of the visitors and the site/artefacts. Although similar strategies have also been incorporated into guided tours offered by other plantation museums, it seems that this site tells a completely different story, destabilising the dominant constructions and perceptions of the mythic American South embodied in the romanticised myth of "moonlight and magnolia". A new materialist perspective, preoccupied with the processes of generating knowledge, enables understanding of *how* the museum achieves this goal.

The tour offered to visitors to the Whitney Plantation combines symbolic and material means. This applies to both the way the story is presented (through employing a specific narrative and facilitating contact with material artefacts) and the ways in which visitors are encouraged to participate in the bodily-intellectual learning experience. In this sense, the intended design of the educational process rests on the idea of an "aesthetic encounter",[41] where the site and

[39] Another important plantation site situated across the Mississippi River at Natchez, LA, is Frogmore Cotton Plantation and Gins, which offers a meaningful experience of visiting slave cabins and a narrative on slave culture and customs. Rather than serving exclusively as a museum, the site is an operating plantation, which offers historical tours ("Cotton Then & Now" and "The Plantation Civil War"). For more details, visit www.frogmoreplantation.com.

[40] See: AMSDEN, David. Building the First Slavery Museum in America. In: *New York Times Magazine*, 26 February 2015,http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/03/01/magazine/builitng-the-first-slave-museum-in-america.html, accessed 21 February 2020 and RIDER, Polly. A History of the Whitney Plantation, America's First Slavery Museum. In: *The Culture Trip*, December, 2019, https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/articles/whitney-plantation-america-s-first-slavery-museum/, accessed 16 February 2020.

[41] For more detailed new materialist elaboration of the concept of "affective encounter" see GOLAŃSKA, Dorota. Affective Spaces, Sensuous Engagements: In Quest of A Synaesthetic Approach to "Dark Memorials". In: *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 21, no. 8, 2015, p. 773–790; GOLAŃSKA, Dorota. Terrifying Pleasures: In Quest of an Affirmative Approach to "Dark" Installation Art. In*: Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, vol. 12,

the visitor affect and are affected by each other, and where knowledge emerges as a material-semiotic assemblage.

The idea of "material-semiotic"[42] (or "material-discursive"[43]) entanglement is dear to the new materialist ways of thinking. As a significant correction of the social constructivist paradigm, it assumes that representation is not the only thing that matters. Rather, we should acknowledge that matter is as active as our interpretative frameworks, and that *matter* makes *mattering* possible in the first place. Hence, it is necessary to do justice to the agential faculties of materiality (and matter), that is, to the element that has typically been crossed out from the dominant Western philosophical accounts. Barad, in a new materialist spirit, calls for recognition of "the agential contributions of all material forces (both 'social' and natural')"[44] to the processes of knowledge production. Also, new materialist ways of thinking have salient implications for the conceptualisation of learning procedures, enabling acknowledgement of the dispersed agential capacities of all actors involved in the educational material-semiotic experience, and deconstructing the traditional binaries between the subject and object of knowledge/learning. Such an understanding of educational procedures requires a bodily-intellectual involvement with the context in which the processes of thinking/feeling/knowing are situated; it also calls for recognition of different practices and relationalities that contribute to the emergence of knowledge. Accordingly, visitors to the plantation are not passive learners. Rather, they engage in an intense, bodily experience involving the physical materiality of the place. The material artefacts/landscape do not serve solely as inactive means or vehicles for the intended symbolic narratives, operating instead as active agents effectively structuring the processes of generating knowledge. In the remainder of this article, I will focus on four aspects of the profound material-semiotic educational experience offered to the visitors at Whitney Plantation, looking at the landscape, the inhabitants, the violence and the context of the transatlantic slave trade, evoked as powerful tropes of the on-site learning process.

The landscape

Certainly, the physical environment and the movement of bodies in space are crucial to the procedure of knowledge production in heritage places, where, as Modlin, Alderman and Gentry observe, "retelling the past happens in and through places and landscapes"[45] subtly woven into the presented narratives and offering their own stories and affects. The landscape is not only a material setting wherein things happen, but it also actively participates in structuring *how* they happen.

The tour through Whitney Plantation is spatially conducted, and this spatial materiality contributes extensively to the knowledge with which the visitors leave the site. The guided journey starts in the old African American church, which originally served as a place where the enslaved could find temporary relief from their tough work and a shelter from the intolerable

no. 5, 2016, p. 1–17; GOLAŃSKA, Dorota. *Affective Connections. Towards A New Materialist Politics of Sympathy*. New York and London: Rowman & Littlefield Int., 2017.

[42] HARAWAY, Donna. *Situated Knowledges*... p. 585.

[43] See: BARAD, Karen. Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. In: *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2003, p. 801–831 and BARAD, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

[44] BARAD, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway*... p. 66.

[45] MODLIN, Arnold. E., ALDERMAN, Derek H., GENTRY, Glenn W. *Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy*… p. 5.

Southern heat. A projection of a short movie aims to familiarise visitors with the history of the place, which was initially home to German immigrants (the Heidel family), and to inform them about the idea behind the current shape and purpose of the site. A series of full-sized terracotta statues of enslaved children (an artwork by Woodrow Nash, commissioned by the current owner of the plantation) are scattered around the church and the whole property, to offer visitors an opportunity for a more emotional (perhaps even empathetic[46]) engagement with the situation of the slaves. This corresponds with the design of the museum tickets, picturing one of the statues along with a quotation of a memory of a former slave, interviewed within the Works Progress Administration's Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s and encompassing mostly the accounts of people who experienced enslavement as children. The site also pays tribute to the memory of the enslaved children in other places. Most meaningfully, a separate memorial located on the plantation is dedicated to the memory of 2,200 children who died in slavery in Louisiana before they reached the age of three. Visitors are encouraged to pause there and honour the memory of these enslaved children. An encounter with the statues of children during the initial phase of the tour has an evocative effect. The material figures, of natural size, situated in direct proximity to the visitors produce a feeling of helplessness and fear stemming from the involuntary, almost automatic identification with the fate of the enslaved children from the past, deprived of the most serene period of their life and forced to work for the owner's family. Later on, during the rather brief tour of the big house, the guide depicts responsibilities of these young children connected to the maintenance of the house (e.g. cleaning) and caring for the master's family (e.g. preparing hot water for bathing). The testimonies of former slaves, made available to visitors at different points, evidence these children's exposure to violence, and also to violence perpetrated against their parents and other family members. This casts a shadow on the whole experience of visiting the site.

After leaving the church, visitors embark on a guided walk through the property, pausing at memorial sites and visiting the remaining infrastructure. The initial view with which visitors are confronted extends across the vast area of the landscape (Figure 1). The terrain of the Whitney Plantation, basked in light of the southern sun, looks exceptionally picturesque and groomed, with spacious lawns, beautiful trees and nice buildings (especially the big house). This picture seems to be neat and natural, offering the visitors a brisk yet relaxing bodily experience connected to the stunning gorgeousness of the space and the splendid weather conditions – the caressing sunlight and sweeping southern heat, ideal for a slow walk. Yet, it must be kept in mind that landscapes are often fashioned with an intention to hide the real work that created them. This is a common strategy, adopted by most of the plantation museums, encouraging visitors to contemplate the beauty of their surroundings, sustaining the dominant romanticised and nostalgic portrayal of the American South. As Mitchell reminds us, "those who build the landscape are not the same as those who own the landscape"[47]. Realisation of this fact comes quickly in the course of the tour. The site provides visitors with a detailed account of the demanding unpaid work performed by the enslaved in the process of manufacturing the wealth of the plantation owners, as well as in taking care of the mansion they inhabited. The guide explains the arduous efforts invested in the cultivation of sugarcane and the production

[46] For elaboration of empathy in the context of plantation tourism, see: COOK, Matthew R. Counter-Narratives of Slavery in the Deep South: The Politics of Empathy Along and Beyond River Road. In: *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2015, p. 290–308.

[47] MITCHELL, Don. Landscape. In: SIBLEY, David, JACKSNON, Peter, ATKINSON, David, WASHBOURNE, Neil (eds). *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts*. London and New York: Tauris, 2005, p. 51.

of molasses, which guaranteed the prosperity of the plantation and assured a high quality of life for the master's family, translated into, among other things, the displayed soothing beauty of the property.

It is noteworthy that the depiction of the slaves' work in the fields is atypical for this kind of tourist attraction. Even though an increasing number of plantation heritage sites are tending toward incorporating some of the stories of the enslaved, they usually focus on those African Americans who were performing work in the house rather than in the fields. Usually, these people are referred to by the word "servant" rather than the term "slave", so as to mitigate the overall tone of the narrative and belittle the tremendous importance of slaves' work in the fields for both the property and the whole Southern economy. This, however, is not the

Figure 1: *A view of Whitney Plantation, Wallace, LA.*
Picture taken by the author during a research visit in April 2015.

case at Whitney Plantation. Here, situated within the exquisite and generous scenery of the site, visitors are forced to realise the fact that the peaceful and comforting charm of the vast, luminous landscape of the plantation is far from innocent. They come to understand that it was produced in the heat of Louisiana's weather (nice for walkers but atrocious for field workers) by those who were never meant to benefit from it. The initial sensuous experience of the mythic Southern vista, seemingly embracing the body of the visitor, is brutalised by the sudden understanding of the circumstances in which the landscape originally emerged and was subsequently maintained. This comprehension hampers earlier innocuous contemplation and bodily pleasure, forcing reflection on the inequality and abuse ingrained in the plantation's life.

The inhabitants

The predominant part of the Whitney Plantation guided tour is devoted to visiting the slave cabins, overseers' houses and barns. These buildings are central to the visitors' learning

experience. Most of the Southern plantation heritage sites in the region tend to avoid taking tourists to slave cabins, even when they are installed (preserved, reconstructed or replicated) on the plantation, leaving them occasionally to optional, self-guided visits. Small argues that in the vast majority of plantation tourist sites, slave cabins are not incorporated into the tourist narrative: "Although the mansions occupied by elite white plantation holders invariably garner most attention in heritage tourism, the slave cabins occupied by the majority of residents of the plantations provide insights into the institutionalisation of neglect".[48] This testifies explicitly to whose lives seem to matter more, for both the heritage industry and the dominant (most powerful) groups of American society. Whitney Plantation acquaints its visitors with the details of the slaves' life, exposing their harsh living and working conditions. Here, the cabins are made the chief element of the guided tour; visitors are invited in, offering a bodily experience of the space inhabited in the past by the enslaved and providing details (including biographical ones) of individuals' lives and the socio-cultural practices in which they engaged. Most of the narrative, however, is devoted to the meticulous description of the unpaid work they were forced to perform, making this dimension of the past operations of the site a highly important aspect of the educational process. The guide explains that sugarcane was a demanding and dangerous crop to grow and process. The juice extracted from sugarcane had to be heated in a series of huge open kettles, a significant number of which are still present on the plantation (Figures 2 and 3). Slaves were responsible for pouring the juice from one kettle to another as it reduced. This resulted in many serious injuries and, occasionally, even deaths. Visitors can touch and hold the preserved tools that slaves used in the fields or for performing other tasks and imagine the harshness and severity of their work. By revealing the details of plantation life and confronting visitors with material artefacts utilised by enslaved workers in the past, Whitney Plantation underlines the crucial contribution of slave labour to the economy and wealth of the American South, paying attention to how this work was performed, by whom, and for whose benefit.

Figure 2: *Slave cabins and kettles used in the production of sugar. Whitney Plantation, Wallace, LA.*
Picture taken by the author during a research visit in April 2015.

[48] SMALL, Stephen. *Still Back to the Big House...* p. 405

The tour of the big house is offered only as an experience complementing the earlier sightseeing of the slave cabins. Whitney Plantation pays attention to the hard work of slaves that was necessary to maintain the house and guarantee the prosperity of the property. This approach has little in common with typical strategies used in similar heritage sites where, as Carter, Butler and Alderman point out, "the principal and thinly veiled message embedded within … plantation museum narratives is that the original white inhabitants of the plantation house were industrious people who lived elegant and honourable lives".[49] As a rule, the emphasis on the white owners is also exemplified by focusing on the biographical details of their life, including tragic events such as those related to fatal illnesses and the loss of beloved

Figure 3: *Slave cabins and kettles used in production of sugar. Whitney Plantation, Wallace, LA.* Picture taken by the author during a research visit in April 2015.

children or other relatives of the master's family. Such narrative strategies remain in radical contrast with presentation of the experiences and biographies of the black inhabitants of the plantation. Most plantations do not mention the harsh and heart-breaking experience of African Americans, whose children were forcibly separated from them when they were sold to other plantations or when they died from untreated illnesses. None of them mention that the mortality rates among the enslaved were astounding. As Small underlines, "visitors hear little or nothing about the enslaved residents of the cabins in ways that individualise or humanise them (such as names, biographies, life experiences, cultural or religious practices, or their hopes, dreams, and aspirations)".[50] At Whitney Plantation, the usual balance between the amount of attention given to the white and the black past inhabitants of the property are upturned. This approach is partly based on work of Ibrahima Seck, a member of the History Department of Chikh Anta Diop University (also known as the University of Dakar) in Senegal, who now serves as Head of Research at the analysed heritage site. Seck has conducted extensive investigations into cultural connections between West Africa and Louisiana, with the aim of

[49] CARTER, Perry L., BUTLER, David L., ALDERMAN, Derek, H. *The House the Story Built*… p. 550.
[50] SMALL, Stephen. *Still Back to the Big House*... p. 419.

explaining patterns within the transatlantic slave trade. As a result of this research, more than 350 people whose enslaved labour contributed to the development of plantation have been identified by name, often "through legal records in which they were listed as assets of the property owner".[51]

The institution of slavery is presented as absolutely crucial to the development of the region and the individual slaves are given a proper place in the narrative offered to visitors. The bodily and performative strategies utilised in the material-semiotic educational process on site also facilitate the adoption of a slave-centric view and an understanding of the experience of the enslaved. The direct aesthetic encounter with the materiality structuring the plantation's life leaves impressions on visitors' bodies as they participate materially in the learning procedures. Discursive and corporeal means are employed to make it absolutely clear how radical inequalities structured the life of the region in the past, and how visible legacies of this violence remain today. Again, the educational process relies heavily on narrative-bodily techniques, turning visitors' bodies – through the facilitation of sensorial engagement with the objects and space – into active learning tools. The procedure assumes that the most effective educational means consist in encouraging visitors to experience an immediate sense of the site, rather than exclusively providing them with knowledge about it (where the latter approach demands some critical distance while the former rests on direct physical contact). The material and the semiotic combine with each other, making delineation of any clear boundaries between the narrative and the affective techniques impossible. The knowledge-generating experience takes the form of a material-semiotic entanglement.

The violence

Nowhere is the bodily experience of the visitors more explicitly employed in the learning process than when they are invited to go inside the rusted jail (Figures 4 and 5), located in the central part of the plantation, where insubordinate slaves were once kept. This constitutes one of the most intense affective encounters of the entire tour. It also, quite overtly, challenges the narrative of the benevolent masters typically evoked at plantation museums in the region. By offering bodily contact with this instrument of torture used to punish undesired behaviour, the museum openly breaks with this tendency to falsely represent the plantation owners – a fallacy that is predominant in popular culture and embedded in the memorial landscape of the region pointing instead to their cruel treatment of the slaves. This is complemented with a depiction of other means of torture and punishments used by the slaveholders to exert their power over the enslaved and force them into obedience. The guide describes, for instance, the procedure of crippling slaves who attempted to escape by cutting their hamstrings. This direct exposure to the means of violence used against the enslaved helps visitors to approach the plantation through the eyes of its black inhabitants. Interestingly, the visitors first see the big house when they are inside the jail, so the view is interrupted by bars from behind which they can visually appraise the architecturally stunning property of the masters, into which the field slaves were not allowed. Once inside the jail (entering the cage is presented as an optional activity, yet strongly encouraged by the guide), the visitors are meant to experience the grim feeling of helplessness and misery. This is one of the most meaningful moments of the plantation tour:

[51] CARFAGNO, Jacalyn. Well-fed, Happy Slaves? Go Inside the Old South Narrative and See For Yourself. Lexington Herald Leader. 16 August 2019, https://www.kentucky.com/living/travel/article232845142.html, accessed 16 February 2020.

Figure 4: *The jail, Whitney Plantation, Wallace, LA.*
Picture taken by the author during a research visit in April 2015.

Figure 5: *The jail, Whitney Plantation, Wallace, LA.*
Picture taken by the author during a research visit in April 2015.

the material experience of being confined in a cage, whose walls are heated by the burning sun, produces an overwhelming feeling of entrapment, defencelessness, vulnerability and humiliation directly inscribed on the visitor's body. These bodily sensations are paralyzing and nauseating, triggering painful reflection on the devastating impact of institutionalised forms of violence on the mind and body of the enslaved.

The merciless cruelty of the system of enslavement is also evoked through another memorial place, situated within the Whitney Plantation to pay tribute to the memory of the slaves who were murdered for their involvement in the largest slave revolt in the American South, which erupted in January 1811 on the German Coast of Louisiana. In its aftermath, a great number of slaves were condemned to death and executed by beheading. The heads of those killed

were planted on poles and exposed to the public to make it clear to other slaves what would happen if they rebelled against their masters. The memorial, created by Woodrow Nash, makes use of 63 ceramic heads mounted on steel rods and installed around the pond. As Carfagno explains, "cloths are tied around the heads in February when, each year, the ground is blessed. They represent crowns for the warriors who fought in the revolt".[52] Apart from serving as a commemorative site, the memorial is meant to help visitors to appreciate the harsh cruelty of the (legal) system of slavery and the unthinkably dehumanising treatment of the enslaved. Pausing at this exceptional and devastating memorial fuels reflection on the highly problematic and extremely vehement nature of the structure of abuse and violence on which the wealth of the American South was built. The objectifying attitude adopted by the white majority toward African Americans is also demonstrated on a commemorative plaque listing all the slaves who inhabited the Whitney Plantation alongside the price for which each of them was purchased.

The nature of the material-semiotic experience, in which the visitors engage bodily and intellectually when entering the jail, is revealing. It rests on the idea of inviting a kind of empathetic identification – felt bodily – with those brutalised by the oppressive institutionalised system of violence, so often presented via the paternalistic narratives that pervade the American heritage industry as well as teaching programs. The learning process in which visitors participate at Whitney Plantation rests on their profound, sensorial involvement with the site, which leaves memorable bodily-intellectual traces, prompting the processes of generating meaningful knowledge and recollections.

The slave trade

Since a new materialist understanding of knowledge production focuses on the complex entanglements of the material and the semiotic, situating the learning experience offered to visitors in the broader political context further enhances understanding of the troubled history of American slavery. Differently from other plantation museums scattered over the region, Whitney Plantation aims to connect the story of the individuals who once inhabited the site to broader historical and socio-cultural processes. In its self-guided section, the Plantation offers an overview of the history of the transatlantic slave trade, from fifteenth-century Portuguese slavers to the international structure of human trafficking in the nineteenth century. It focuses on the scale of the phenomenon and lists the main countries involved in this violent procedure, with Portugal and Brazil being the most significant traders. Visitors are informed that most of the slaves came from West Central Africa, and that 2.5 million of them were sold to the US. The role of slavery, not only in boosting production on Southern plantations and contributing to the wealth of the owners, but also in fuelling much of the world's economy, is made evident. This remains in accord with recent scholarship exploring these issues. Baptist, for instance, underlines the fact that both the system of transatlantic African slave trade and enslaved labour itself have been absolutely foundational to the rapid development of North American capitalism, rather than being an aberration from it.[53] Western economy and the affluence of white population in the antebellum American South relied completely on the institution of legalised violence against African Americans. Presenting the situation in this way sheds light on the fact that racist practices (including slavery) have, as Goldberg observes, been intersecting

[52] CARFAGNO, Jacalyn. *Well-fed, Happy Slaves?...*

[53] BAPTIST, Edward E. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.

with liberal economic approaches, paving the way for the establishment of the modern nation state.[54] As Berlin points out, "The American economy was founded upon the production of slave-grown crops, the great stables of tobacco, rice, sugar, and finally cotton, which slave owners sold on the international market to bring capital into the colonies and then the young Republic." He adds, "The capital eventually funded the creation of an infrastructure upon which rests three centuries of American economic success".[55] The wealth accumulated by Southern slave owners helped them secure access to political power and, subsequently, shape the dominant American values that pervade contemporary political culture. Such views do justice to the forced African American contribution to the establishment of the new state and its rapid growth, an input rarely acknowledged by any other memorial institution and largely omitted in educational programs.

Fragmented memory: concluding remarks

The analysis of the politics of memory and, especially, of whose interpretation of the past prevails, illuminates more general social conflicts and tensions. Sadly, a great majority of tourist sites located in the American South have adopted a white-centric perspective, marginalising the history and heritage of African American population and neglecting their contribution to the development of America's prosperous economy. Even though undoubtedly central to the growth of capitalism, the institution of slavery is seen as a rather shameful part of American history and remains an under-articulated trope of popular narratives depicting the South and its legacies. This translates into a tacit denial of the crucial role of African Americans in building American culture and prosperity, as manifested in the biased construction of the national memorial landscape. Certainly, this landscape is itself shaped by the most powerful strata of the population and reflects their interpretations of the past, which subsequently gain the status of the most authoritative and taken-for-granted knowledge. The recent appearance of heritage sites adopting a different perspective is a symptom of the tendency to offer a more tangled and, in fact, a fairer view of national history with its traumas, atrocities and crimes. This difficult heritage is undoubtedly dissonant and, as such, it has a thoroughly emotional character and fragmented nature.

As mentioned earlier, Vinitzky-Seroussin differentiates between "fragmented" and "multivocal" commemoration strategies.[56] The latter assumes that a given society or group demonstrates some ability to create a middle ground for conflicting memories and interpretations of the past. Memorial sites adopting a multivocal format aim to convey ambivalence, rather than conceal it, so that divergent audiences can share the same commemorative space, although for different reasons. This could also apply, I argue, to heritage sites, which do not necessarily display a memorial character (like plantation museums). Fragmented memory sites, as Vinitzky-Seroussin explains, do not attempt to find a compromise in their understanding of past events, but rather employ discourses aimed at specific type of audience. With the appearance of heritage institutions offering a counter-narrative to the system of slavery, as well as in the context of the

[54] GOLDBERG, David Theo. *The Racial State*. Malden, MA and London: Wiley Blackwell, 2001.

[55] BERLIN, Ira. Coming to Terms With Slavery in Twenty-First-Century America. In: HORTON James O., HORTON, Lois E. Horton (eds). *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*. New York: The New Press, 2006, p. 2. See also: BERLIN, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1998 and BERLIN, Ira. American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice. In: *The Journal of American History*, vol. 90, no. 4, 2004, p. 1251–1268.

[56] VINITZKY-SEROUSSI, Vered. *Commemorating a Difficult Past*… p. 31–32.

(albeit still marginal) incorporation of the history of the enslaved within a growing number of well-established plantation museums in the American South, the overall memorial landscape of this region seems to be shifting toward multivocality. Yet, a closer examination of the particular sites, including this article's case study of Whitney Plantation, leads to the conclusion that this landscape remains steeped in fragmentation, with different sites offering narratives and experiences tailored to different kinds of visitors. This might produce a false impression that the stories of the plantation owners and those of the enslaved remain somewhat unrelated to each other. Certainly, institutions such as the Whitney Plantation are unquestionably much needed within the highly unbalanced panorama of heritage sites in the American South. But further efforts to include more unprejudiced and unbiased accounts of the enslavement must be encouraged across the huge number of plantation heritage sites, bearing in mind that they serve as popular destinations for tourists and attract thousands of visitors yearly.

The new materialist approach, which focuses on the complex entanglement of the material and the semiotic in the processes of knowledge production, enables a more complete understanding of how knowledge about the past emerges at heritage sites. Obviously, it applies to both white-centric and slave-centric strategies of engaging visitors in learning experiences. However, taking into consideration the material character of discriminatory practices, as well as of trauma itself, the bodily-narrative techniques utilised to familiarise visitors with the painful experiences connected to the historical system of enslavement seem to offer a good analytical material for figuring out not only *what* knowledges are produced but also, importantly, *how* they emerge. This remains of particular salience, taking into account the social dimension of educational processes enacted on heritage sites and the continually present legacies of violence pervading the mnemonic landscape of the American South.

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African Art: The Journey from Ethnological Collection to the Museum of Art[1]

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African Art: The Journey from Ethnological Collection to the Museum of Art
This article aims to show the transformation in the way African art is displayed in museums which has taken place over the last few decades. Over the last 70 years, from the second half of the twentieth century, the field of African Art studies, as well as the forms taken by art exhibitions, have changed considerably. Since W. Rubin's controversial exhibition *Primitivism in 20th Century Art at MoMA* (1984), art originating from Africa has begun to be more widely presented in museums with a strictly artistic profile, in contrast to the previous exhibitions which were mostly located in ethnographical museums. This could be the result of the changes that have occurred in the perception of the role of museums in the vein of new museology and the concept of a "curatorial turn" within museology. But on the other hand, it seems that the recognition of the artistic values of old and contemporary art from the African continent allows art dealers to make large profits from selling such works. This article also considers the evolution of the idea of African art as a commodity and the modern form of presentations of African art objects. The current breakthrough exhibition at the Bode Museum in Berlin is thoroughly analysed. This exhibition, entitled *Beyond compare*, presents unexpected juxtapositions of old works of European art and African objects of worship. Thus, the major purpose of this article is to present various benefits of shifting meaning from "African artefacts" to "African objects of art," and therefore to relocate them from ethnographic museums to art museums and galleries.

Keywords: African art, museum, exhibitions, contemporary art, *Beyond Compare*

Introduction

The study of African and any other non-European art is a fascinating matter. On the one hand, it is driven by the thrust of recent multidisciplinary work on colonial discourse and decries the ethnocentrism of traditional anthropology. Such an opinion was presented by the American historian, Roy Sieber (1923–2001), who is considered to be the founder of the discipline of African art history in the United States:[2] "Many anthropological theories imply a cultural timelessness and, focusing upon the fiction of an ethnographic present, ignore the cumulative effect of changes (...), upon the shape of a culture and its art".[3]

On the other hand, the study of African art seeks to promote the aesthetic quality of art, while attempting to distance itself from the modernist exploitation of "primitive" or "tribal"

[1] The issues discussed in the article were the subject of author's research internship at the University of West Bohemia (Pilsen) [Západočeská*Univerzita* v *Plzni*] in the Czech Republic, financed by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) AGREEMENT No: PPN/BIL/2018/1/12/CZE/UMOWA/1.

[2] KREAMER, Christine Mullen. A Tribute to Roy Sieber. In: *African Arts*, vol. 36 no. 1, 2003, p. 12–23.

[3] SIEBER, Roy. Preface. In: GILLON, Werner. *A Short History of African Art.* London*:* Viking,1984, p. 12.

art, but all the while knowing that unqualified assertions of aesthetic worth – or even attention to aesthetic above social quality – are contrary to current theories in cultural studies.[4] Moreover, when considering traditional Sub-Saharan art, we should initially contemplate whether it is acceptable to look for a common aesthetic and cultural denominator for this whole geographical area.

Although it is beyond the scope of this article to present a comprehensive spectrum of the historiography and methodologies employed in the study and interpretation of the arts of Africa, it must be mentioned that the discipline certainly has been influenced by the methods employed in the field of anthropology. The most important of these approaches was to use its earlier evolutionary paradigm for documenting peoples and cultures and the "epistemological, methodological, ethical, and political implications" of anthropological field research, as George W. Stocking (1928–2013) pointed out in his famous text "History of Anthropology: Whence/Whither".[5] Thus along with art historical methods, Africanist art historians have employed participant-observation, surveys, questionnaires, oral histories and interviews – grounded in fieldwork – to uncover the forms, contexts, meanings, and intentions of "traditional" and "contemporary" artistic practices in Africa. In various regions without long-standing written methods for archiving information, these research strategies have been particularly relied upon in order to place the so-called traditional art forms within historical, cultural, stylistic and aesthetic contexts. Moreover, scholars in recent years have brought much transparency to African art studies, revealing and analysing the impact of colonial and neocolonial encounters, the museumification of African arts,[6] the role of the art market, and the effects of urban life and globalization on tradition-based expression.

Summarizing briefly this paragraph, it can be acknowledged that all scientific disciplines undergo significant changes over a period of time, with major upheavals usually occurring every few decades. As a result of this constant evolution of our understanding of science, in the late 1940s, Fritzl Saxl (1890–1948), the famous Austrian art historian, observed and confirmed strongly that art history is truly necessary for our understanding of art. He searched for an answer to this question in his infamous essay, shockingly entitled "Why do we need art history?" [7] Today, such a question could be easily formulated again, but this time in connection to another scientific discipline, namely anthropology.

Therefore, just like Fritzl Saxl in the 1940s, I would like to pose a similar question today: Do we still need anthropology in order to genuinely and legitimately study African art today? Is it really essential and indispensable? And from such a question we can arrive at a dreadful conclusion, do we still need ethnographic museums in order to showcase art objects from Africa?

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[4] For more on this, see: ETOUNGA-MANGUELLE, Daniel. Does Africa need a cultural adjustment program? In: HARRISON, Lawrence E & Huntington, Samuel P. (eds). *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. New York: Basic Books, 2000, p. 66–77.

[5] STOCKING, George. History of Anthropology: Whence/Whither. In: STOCKING, George (ed.). *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983, p. 9.

[6] Very interesting and still current reflections on the role of museums can be found in: GLUZIŃSKI, Wojciech. *U podstaw muzeologii*. Warszawa: PWN, 1980, p. 109–113.

[7] SAXL, Fritzl. Po co nam historia sztuki. In: BIAŁOSTOCKI, Jan (ed). *Pojęcia, problemy, metody współczesnej nauki o sztuce*. Warszawa: PWN, 1976, p.14.

The beginning: African art as "artificial curiosities" in Kunst- und Wunderkammers

In spite of the fact that a deeper kind of reflection on art and African cultures was a permanent feature of European interest at the end of the nineteenth century, the first encounters for Westerners with such works of art took place as early as the Renaissance period. The early stages of the collector's passion for terra incognita were initially manifested by the Portuguese Duke Henry the Navigator (Infante Dom Henrique, o Navegador) who, after the conquest of Ceuta by the Portuguese in 1415, began "to collect" African prisoners-of-war in Sagres, teaching them the Portuguese language so that they could be employed as guides in the colonizers' expeditions into the interior of the continent. In 1488, another renowned sailor, Bartolomeu Dias, succeeded in reaching the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa and initiated an important sea route to India and the Far East. In spite of these discoveries, the European exploration of Africa itself remained limited during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[8]

Since Renaissance times, some artefacts and relics obtained by Europeans in Africa have been included among the "artificial curiosities" in the so-called Kunst- und Wunderkammer or cabinet de curiosités.[9] Certain wealthy Europeans became quite enthusiastic collectors of these rare curiosities and displayed them with pride in their elaborate collection cabinets. Anything strange and remarkable deserved a place: exotic stones, pieces of coral, shells, reptiles, butterflies, mammals and plants, as well as coins, sculptures and textiles. Drawings of rare objects also often found a place inside these cabinets of curiosities. The most significant and valuable Kunst- und Wunderkammers from the Renaissance and Baroque periods include those that contain the vast collections of the Electors of Saxony, Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol and Emperor Rudolf II, who established what was perhaps the most spectacular Kunstkammer of all at the Prague Castle in the late sixteenth century,[10] to mention just a few.

It should also be emphasized at this point that African artefacts in Europe, unlike European and Asian "works of art", were of more significance to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century precursors of modern anthropologists than to art historians themselves. The artist, culture and true function and meaning of these objects were usually not recorded, being regarded as unimportant or insignificant. During the age of Enlightenment, many of these collections and cabinets of curiosities were donated to natural history museums, where they were categorized and classified in the name of science along with flora, fauna and skeletal remains. A typical example of such a procedure would be the original collection donated to the British Museum in 1753, which included 29 African objects.[11]

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[8] NOWAK, Bronisław. Początki obecności europejskiej w Czarnej Afryce. In: TYMOWSKI, Michał (ed). *Historia Afryki do początku XIX wieku*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Ossolineum, 1996, p. 765–792 and, TYMOWSKI, Michał. *Europejczycy i Afrykanie: Wzajemne odkrycia i pierwsze kontakty*. Toruń Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2017, p. 91–115.

[9] PAWŁOWSKA, Aneta. O potrzebie tworzenia kolekcji sztuki afrykańskiej. In: POPCZYK, Maria (ed). *Muzeum sztuki. Od Luwru do Bilbao*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo: Muzeum Śląskie, 2006, p. 276.

[10] DACOSTA KAUFMANN, Thomas. Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The Kunstkammer as a Form of Representatio. In: *Art Journal*, 1987, vol. 38, no. 1, p. 22–28 and FORMÁNEK, Václav; HEROLD, Erich KANDERT, Josef, *Africké umění* v *Československu: výstava v Letohrádku královny Anny v Praze, červen - srpen 1983*. [Exhibition catalogue]. Praze: Správa kulturnich zařízení MK ČSR v nakl. a vydavatelství Panorama, 1983, p.18–21.

[11] ŻYGULSKI, Zdzisław, *Muzea na świecie. Wstęp do muzealnictwa*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1982, p. 50–51 and DERRICOURT, Robin (2011). *Inventing Africa: History, Archaeology and Ideas*. London and New York: Pluto Press, 2011, p. 145.

African art objects in ethnological collections

Exploration and the beginnings of the colonial era ended the period dominated by curiosity collecting, in which collected objects served primarily as souvenirs. The classic cabinets of curiosities emerged in the sixteenth century, although more rudimentary collections had existed earlier. In addition to the most famous and best documented cabinets of rulers and aristocrats, members of the merchant class and early practitioners of science in Europe formed collections that were the true precursors to modern museums. Gradually, the gathered memorabilia brought from overseas journeys left the curiosity cabinets and began to appear in newly established ethnographic museums. Initially, African art was exhibited in ethnographic museums, which were created in the colonial era to reflect the remoteness between the metropolis and the primitive African world. Later, these museums turned out to be a true treasury of information about the "Black Continent".

Figure 1: *Musée du Congo, Tervuren, Belgium: one of five interior scenes,* 1897. Collotype.[12]

An excellent example of an ethnographic collection of great educational value is the compilation of objects from the Berlin Ethnological Museum, which was founded in 1873 and opened its doors in 1886 as the Royal Museum for Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde). But its roots go back to the seventeenth-century Kunstkammer of the rulers of Brandenburg-Prussia. By the time the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde was open to the public,

[12] Wellcome Library, Iconographic Collections, accessed 21 January 2020, http://catalogue.wellcomelibrary.org/record=b1180754.

it had already 10,000 African objects on display.[13]

In France the initial public displays of African objects reflected and celebrated mainly the French colonial endeavour. Temporary displays from 1878 onwards, created by Ernest Théodore Hamy,[14] led to the opening of the Musée d'Ethnographie at the Trocadero in 1882. Four years later, in 1886, an exhibition of the goods plundered by Pierre de Brazza (1852–1905) during the conquests of the West African Expedition attracted 30,000 visitors.[15]

The same colonial approach can be observed in the Royal Museum for Central Africa (Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika), situated in Tervuren in the Flemish Brabant in Belgium, just outside of Brussels. It was built to showcase King Leopold II's Congo Free State in the 1897 World Exhibition. The exhibition displayed ethnographic objects, stuffed animals and Congolese export products (coffee, cacao and tobacco). In the park, a temporary "Human zoo" was built – which in fact was a copy of an authentic African village, in which 60 Congolese people lived for the duration of the exhibition.[16]

It should be strongly emphasized that starting in the 1870s, in the aftermath of colonial conquests and exploratory expeditions, thousands of African sculptures arrived in Europe. They were placed on view in various museums, such as the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro and its counterparts in other European cities. At the time, these objects were treated as artefacts of colonized cultures rather than as artworks, and were very cheap, often sold in flea markets and pawnshops. The recognition of these ethnographic curiosities as art was not immediate. Deeper consideration concerning objects originating from Africa emerged in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. It was only then that celebrated literary works, such as *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad (1857–1924),[17] started to present colonialism not only as a great achievement but also as a truly destructive force, which was not simply concerned with exploring the continent, but also degenerated its inhabitants and corrupted their native culture.

Nevertheless, "primitive" (i.e. "African") culture only very rarely received favourable reviews from European critics; on the contrary, during the most intense years of colonial conquest, the African continent was treated mainly as a cheap source of slave labour, and its inhabitants were believed to have no civilization, not to mention culture or art.[18] The more unpleasant and hostile stereotypes have been used to support self-serving historical theories about Western domination. These have ranged from the prominent concept, based on the Darwinian theory of evolution, interpreted and popularized by Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), which proclaimed "survival of the fittest"[19] and was used to justify the European conquest of other continents,

[13] DERRICOURT. *Inventing Africa…,* p. 145–146.
[14] PAWŁOWSKA. O potrzebie…, p. 276–281.
[15] DERRICOURT. *Inventing Africa…,* p. 146.
[16] "Human zoos," also called ethnological expositions, were 19th- and occasionally 20th-century public exhibitions of humans, usually labelled as in their "natural" or "primitive" state. They were especially popular in the 1870s, when "Human zoos" could be found in Paris, Hamburg, Antwerp, Barcelona, London, Milan and New York City. GRALAK, Zofia. Ludzkie zoo – ciemna strona kolekcjonerstwa. In: *Hybris*, 2019 vol. 47, 2019, p. 56–74 and Blanchard, Pascal; Bancel, Nicolas; Boëtsch Gilles. *Zoos humains et exhibitions coloniales. 150 ans d'inventions de l'Autre*. Paris: La Découverte, 2011.
[17] CONRAD, Joseph. The Heart of Darkness. In: *Blackwood's Magazine*. February 1899–April 1899, vol. 165, p. 164–460, 460–621, 620–781.
[18] See also: PAWŁOWSKA, Aneta. Afryka – kontynent bez sztuki i historii? O relatywizmie kultury afrykańskiej. In: JANUS, Joanna & KNAPEK, Ryszard (ed). *Przeszłość bez historii*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Gnome, 2007, p. 66–75.
[19] SPENCER Herbert. Principles of Biology. Vol 1. London–Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1864, p. 444.

to the colonial ideology known as the "civilizing mission".[20] This vision of Africa and its inhabitants allowed many critics and art lovers to ignore the continent's many forms of artistic expression, treating such creations not as works of art (nor their creators as artists) but strictly as bizarre or strange objects whose proper place is, at best, in ethnographic museums. Opinions and attitudes towards African art were also determined by preconceived ideas and philosophies about race, as a result of which the creations of African artists were not categorized as true "art" in the Euro-American sense of the word.

Figure 2. *View of archaeological and ethnographic collections. Pitt Rivers Museum*, Oxford, 2017. Photo: J. Royan

At this point, I would like to recall the opinion of a prominent South African writer and painter known for his opposition to apartheid – Breyten Breytenbach (b. 1939), who is a white African descendant of the Dutch colonizers of South Africa. Thanks to his "double personality", he can speak on behalf of both opposing groups – the colonized Africans and the white colonizers:

It has always been peculiar to European cultures […] to conquer, subdue, explore, expand, and exploit; later to maintain conquered territories as sources of raw materials or as markets; to loot and gut the cultures found there, and then to collect their "artefacts" so as to "understand" the broken toys, the images and relics of a broken spirit, and ascribe a "meaning" to them. An anthropology, ethnology, even our modern-day "multiculturalism" […] are manifestations of greed, the urge for power over the rest of the world, the need to catalogue the "Other" and relegate him to a position of being, at best, "untouched by time", but always inferior.[21]

[20] LIEBERSOHN, Harry M. Introduction: The Civilizing Mission. In: *Journal of World History*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2016, p. 383–387.

[21] BREYTENBACH, Breyten. *Notes from the middle world*. Chicago: Haymarket Books. 2009, p.1 (emphasis in original).

Breytenbach, although he is white, understands well the negative aspects of colonizing Africa and the subjugation of its people. Similarly, he negatively perceives colonial museums as an expression of the greed and lust for power of the white colonizers.

Changes: Modernists and new interpretations of African artefacts

Suddenly, in the first decade of the twentieth century, certain proponents of the French Avant-Garde art movement in Paris (such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Henri Matisse, Maurice de Vlaminck and Andre Derain) began to take a vivid interest in sculptures originating from West and Central Africa. As a result of its influence on these artists' work, African art also came to the notice of art historians.[22] It was particularly appealing to those seeking creative inspiration from various impulses which their own culture defined as intuitive and primitive.

Such interpretations were founded on the myth of the "primitive man", which tells us more about the Western culture which created such terminology than about the other cultures it has been so readily applied to. Myths of the "primitive man" served as imagined alternatives that could both justify and challenge Western culture, or "civilization" as it was often defined. At various times and places, these myths have employed either demonic images of childlike but bestial savages or utopian visions of "noble savages" – primal, tribal peoples living in harmony with nature.[23] This romantic trope of "primitive simplicity and purity" has deep roots in Western culture and art. It is evident, for example, in Paul Gauguin's search for both the simple life in his sojourn among Breton peasants, and the exotic life in his escape to live among Tahitians. It can also be seen in the utilisation of non-Western art and ritual practices by the European Avant-Garde movement before the First World War, for example, through Cubism, Fauvism or the works of Die Brücke.

A parallel attitude was presented by Auguste Macke (1887–1914), a renowned German painter who was the leader of Der Blaue Reiter. He suggested that the work of African peoples was worth more to European visual culture than had originally been appreciated. He was shocked at the way "the connoisseurs and artists" had "banished all forms of primitive cultures to the fields of ethnology or applied arts"[24] and felt that, despite the stylistic differences, all art was created to give plastic form to intangible ideas; an intrinsically human trait.

Nevertheless, initially, in Europe in the early twentieth century, the appreciation of African objects purely as fine art was largely limited to private galleries. For example, in Paris, dealers such Paul Guillaume, Charles Ratton and Louis Carre played a significant role in the formation of major private collections of African art. One can observe a similar attitude to African artefacts presented by Stewart Culin (1858–1929), the curator of the Department of Ethnology at the Museum of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, who was among the first curators to recognize displayed ethnological collections as art objects, not as ethnographic specimens. This approach is evidenced in his exhibition entitled *Primitive Negro Art, Chiefly from the Belgian Congo*.

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[22] To see more: RUBIN, Wiliam (ed). *Primitivsmi in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, vol. 1–2, 1984; PAWŁOWSKA, Aneta. Picasso i Afryka. In: *The Artistic Traditions of non-European Culture*, 2009, vol. 1, p. 163–173 and PAWŁOWSKA, Aneta, Avant-gardists and primitivism. In: *Art Inquiry. Recherches sur les arts*, vol. 19, 2017 p. 153–169 as well as FLAM, Jack, DEUTCH Miriam. *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

[23] ROUSSEAU, Jean-Jacques (1762). *The Social Contract*, ed. BENNETT, Jonathan (2017), accessed 21 January 2020, www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/rousseau1762.pdf.

[24] MACKE, Auguste. Masks. In: HARRISON, Charles & WOOD, Paul (eds). *Art in Theory, 1900–2000: An anthology of changing ideas*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002, p. 96.

The exhibition opened in April 1923, and showed African objects he had acquired from dealers in Europe.[25] As Culin stated in the exhibition catalogue:

Apart from private exhibitions, designated as artistic, the objects of Negro art which are displayed publicly form part of museum collections of African ethnology and receive no special attention at the hands of ethnologists. The most notable collection is in the Museum of the Congo at Tervueren, Brussels, Belgium. Enormous collections exist also in the museums of ethnology of Berlin and other German cities, in London in the British Museum, in Paris at the Trocadero and in America in Washington, Philadelphia, Cambridge, Chicago, and in New York where the Museum of Natural History contains a vast hall of African ethnology in part derived from the Belgian Congo and presented by H. M. the King of the Belgians. In the majority of these collections their artistic significance is obscured by the wealth of material, and lost, not infrequently, in the efforts made for its elucidation.[26]

Figure 3: *Pavillon de l'Afrique-Équatorialefrançaise* [French Equatorial Africa Pavilion], 1931. Postcard. Collection of E. Jedlińska

As was already mentioned above, at the beginning of the twentieth century, growing recognition of African forms and aesthetics stimulated a slowly rising demand for African art objects in Europe. At first, the demand was limited largely to the Cubists and their immediate entourage. But by the 1910s and 20s, the demand for African art in Europe was already spreading to other sectors of society. In France, in particular, the end of World War I brought about an atmosphere which was conducive to engaging the interest of a wider public in the appreciation

[25] Research: African Art Exhibition of 1923, accessed 21 January 2020, https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/research/pna1923.

[26] CULIN, Stewart. *Primitive Negro Art, Chiefly from the Belgian Congo.* [Catalogue]. Brooklyn Museum: Department of Ethnology, 1923, p. 5.

and collection of African art.[27] The disdain in which Africans had previously been held by the great majority of France's population was replaced, after the war, "by a certain curiosity about the customs of these [African] people who had fought fiercely [against the Germans] and were now joyful partners in the victory celebrations".[28] The success of the African pavilion at the *L'Exposition Coloniale de Vincennes* in 1931 fuelled even further the demand for African objects in France.[29] Even after the Cubist movement had ended and many of the artists themselves had lost interest in African art, the market for African art, which they had inspired and helped organise, had already developed its own commercial and economic structure, enabling it to continue and flourish without their support.

Collections and exhibitions of African art after World War II

The first half of the twentieth century saw great changes in both attitudes and laws concerning African art and artefacts. Western interest in African art grew, and with it came new issues of authenticity and forgery.

Since World War II, important international conferences and conventions (for example, the Hague Convention of 1954 and the UNESCO Convention of 1970) have established an increasing level of protection for cultural property, and thus for African art. Moreover, Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and the Republic of the Congo all gained independence in 1960.[30] As the African colonies gained independence, some of them created institutions to honour and protect their cultural heritage. A good example of such an attitude was Ghana. When Ghana became an independent country in March 1957, the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board was created, and a National Museum opened in Accra as a part of the independence celebration. The National Museum featured works from Ghana and other African cultures displayed thematically with objects from different ethnic groups illustrating Ghana's varied cultural heritage. Nkrumah [the first Prime Minister and President of Ghana] also encouraged the National Museum to collect and display objects from African societies outside of Ghana, underscoring Nkrumah's pan-Africanist outlook. Casts of Benin bronzes, Egyptian antiquities and parts of mummies, Senufu masks from Cote d'Ivoire, Zulu wooden figures and beadwork from South Africa, Ife bronze heads from Nigeria, the Bushongo carvings from the Congo were acquired through exchange and included in the permanent exhibits and collections of the Ghana National Museum.[31]

While Ghana created museum exhibitions of African art, American and European museums, galleries and collectors became increasingly interested in African art. In the late 1960s and 1970s, it became trendy to collect "authentic primitive art" from Africa and other locations. In 1964, the Museum of African Art in Washington DC was founded by Warren M. Robbins (1927–2009), initially as a private and relatively small collection. In 1979, the collection, by then comprising about 8,000 objects, was taken over by the Smithsonian Institute. Eventually, in 1981, the Museum of African Art was renamed the National Museum of African Art.[32] Even

[27] STEINER, Christopher B., *African Art in Transit*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 5.
[28] PAUDRAT, Jean-Louis. From Africa. In: RUBIN, *Primitivism*…, vol. 1, p. 157.
[29] LAUDE, Jean. *The Arts of Black Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971, p. 20.
[30] NUGENT, Paul. *Africa Since Independence*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 58.
[31] KANKPEYENG, Benjamin W., DECORSE, Christopher R. (2004). Ghana's Vanishing Past: Development, Antiquities, and the Destruction of the Archaeological Record. In: *African Archaeological Review*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2004, p. 95.
[32] SIARCHIVES, accessed 21 January 2020, https://siarchives.si.edu/history/national-museum-african-art.

the largest art museum in the United States – The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City – opened a Michael C. Rockefeller Wing dedicated only to "Primitive Art" in 1982.

By the second half of the twentieth century, the field of African art, as well as the forms taken by art studies and exhibitions, had changed considerably. In order to illustrate the dynamic changes in the European approach to African Art, it is simply enough to recall William Rubin's famous and controversial exhibition, *Primitivism in 20th Century Art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York* (1984). At the heart of the debate at the time were the objects that Rubin had enlisted to back up his thesis of the affinity of "tribal" and modern art. Rubin's concern was to show that European artists and those non-European artists dubbed by modernism as primitive were driven by similar aesthetic premises and a similar attitude of mind.[33] It seems that further ground was broken when the Senegalese figurative sculptor Ousmane Sow and the Nigerian installation artist Mo Edoga (1952–2014) became the first Africans to be included in the prestigious exhibition *Documenta 9* (1992).[34] Since then, African artists have participated in all subsequent *Documenta* exhibitions (*Documenta 10*, *11*, and *12*), which are held in Kassel, Germany, every five years. It seems that the visibly growing process of engaging curators of African origin (such as Okwui Enwezor – the first non-European director, Chika Okeke-Agulu, Ugochukwu-Smooth, C. Nzewi, Missla Libsekal and Rujeko Hockley) in the creation of exhibitions of modern African art, particularly as a strategy to incorporate the voices of those represented, is one of the most important aspects of the "curatorial turn" of the twenty-first century, presented by Irit Rogoff in her significant essay entitled "Turning".[35]

Beyond Compare, is it really so?

At this point, in order to express the change in attitude towards art from the African continent, I would like to draw attention to the exhibition which was recently presented at the Bode Museum in Berlin (27 October 2017 – 24 November 2019).[36] This exhibition displayed a complete change of context in relation to African art, moving its presentation from ethnographic museums to a typical art museum. Initially, in 1897, when construction work on the museum's building began, the intention was that the institution should be strictly devoted to only to the most prestigious Renaissance art. Today the Bode Museum houses an extensive collection of sculptures from the medieval period to the late eighteenth century, as well as treasures from the Museum of Byzantine Art and the Numismatic Collection.

The display entitled *Beyond Compare* introduced splendid works of art from Sub-Saharan

[33] RUBIN, William, Modernist Primitivism: An Introduction. In: RUBIN, *Primitivism*…, vol. 1, p. 11–28.

[34] *Documenta* is an exhibition of contemporary art which takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany. It was founded by the artist, teacher and curator Arnold Bode in 1955 as part of the *Bundesgartenschau* (Federal Horticultural Show) which took place in Kassel at that time and was an attempt to bring Germany up to speed with modern art, both banishing and repressing the cultural darkness of Nazism. This first *Documenta* featured many artists who are generally considered to have had a significant influence on modern art (such as Picasso and Kandinsky). The more recent *Documentas* feature art from all continents; nonetheless most of it is site-specific. Every *Documenta* is limited to 100 days of exhibition, which is why it is often referred to as the "museum of 100 days.". Every *Documenta* is generally regarded as a highly prestigious and celebrated event in the art world. Accessed 21 October 2020, https://www.documenta.de/en/about#16_documenta_ggmbh.

[35] I. Rogoff explains that a turn – such as that toward linguistics in the 1970s – occurs when an academic discipline is in urgent need of being shaken up, perhaps to the point of discomfort. ROGOFF, Irit (2010). Turning. In: O'NEILL, Paul, WILSON Mick (ed.). *Curating and the Educational Turn*. London: Open Editions, p. 32–46.

[36] CHAPUIS, Julien, FINE, Jonathan, IVANOV, Paola (ed.) (2017). *Beyond Compare. Art from Africa in the Bode Museum*. [Catalogue of the Exhibition]. Berlin: Braus Berlin GmbH. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2017.

Africa from the Ethnologisches Museum into the magnificent Renaissance sculpture collection of the Bode Museum.

Figure 4: *Gothic figure of Christ as the Man of Sorrow and Gabon Mask from the exhibition Beyond Compare*, Bode Museum, Berlin, 2019. Photo: A. Pawłowska

Figure 5: *Gothic figure of St James the Greater and Ancestral Figure (Luba People) Democratric Republic of the Congo from the exhibition Beyond Compare,* Bode Museum Berlin, 2019, Photo: I. Gadowska

However, this exhibition raises also several important questions, for which there are no easy answers. What insights can we gain from the joint display of works of art with such different histories? What are the consequences of assigning to separate museums objects of art that once all belonged together in the collection of the Kunstkammer of Brandenburg-Prussia? Why were some of these objects classified as ethnological artefacts and others as works of art? The experimental juxtaposition of works from two continents reveals possible correlations on various levels, including historic contemporaneity, iconographic and technological similarities, and similar artistic strategies. Despite stylistic differences, striking similarities appear in the ways works of art function in both contexts. At the same time, comparisons also expose contrasts, as with depictions of motherhood, which rely on different visual languages in Africa and Europe and convey different messages. Unexpected similarities and differences become apparent: Renaissance sculptor Donatello's *Putto with Tambourine* seems to invite the Early Modern *Princess from the Kingdom of Benin* to dance. Michel Erhart's late *Gothic Virgin of Mercy* appears next to a power figure from the Congo (nkisi; pl. minkisi) which, like the Madonna, was also created to protect the community. The Romanesque Christ seated in *Judgment* from the Abbey Church of Gröningen and the large *Ngil* mask from the Fang region of Gabon or Cameroon both present awe-inspiring images of judges. Mythical heroes from Central Africa take their place among

late Gothic Christian figures and open up new perspectives on both collections. Thus, one can clearly see, the act of comparing and identifying is not neutral, but charged with socially defined prejudices, conventions and constructions of history: Why is one object treated as only "ethnographic," while another is regarded as genuine "art"? What distinguishes a fetish from a reliquary? It seems that in the eyes of the contemporary curators of this exhibition, the masters of both continents are equal and the objects of both of African and European origin, saturated with religious functions, gain the status of a true works of art.

On the other hand, when drawing due attention to the broadly understood term "indigenous Sub-Saharan art", it must be kept in mind that at least older African artefacts and artworks were never created with the intention that they might eventually be found in the collection of an admirer of so-called exotic art or in a Western museum collection. This is because they were dedicated to the community that created them, with some types of sculpture meant to be exposed in dark temples to which only members of a given community had access, whereas other sculptures had a commemorative, apotropaic value or served the function of a personal amulet. A very large proportion of the objects which made it to European collections were connected with live music and dance spectacles, such as masquerades, rites of passage or other religious functions, in which they played a significant role. Thus, all these sculptures, masks and other objects lose their meaning and cultural context forever when they are included in the cultural vision of the world of Western civilization and undergo musealisation in glazed and illuminated display cases. Therefore, no professional description or contextual presentation will restore the original function of the object.[37]

Conclusion: Reappraisal of the concept of African art presented in museums and art galleries

The immense African continent, with its range of different cultures, has produced many works of art that are original, expressive and represent aspects of the universal search for beauty.[38] These works, which came to light during the exploration of the continent, aroused a strong fascination among European art connoisseurs. This meeting of the cultures of Africa and of Europe has two aspects. Undoubtedly, knowledge of African art was a revelation and a radical inspiration for European artists, painters, and sculptors from Picasso and Braque to the German Expressionists. The other aspect, however, was African art's misappropriation, following the intrusion of colonization without any respect for the indigenous cultures which produced the art. This brutal transfer of Sub-Saharan artefacts to European museums and to private collections outside of Africa, culturally impoverished the continent. Thus, it has to be said that nowadays the best-known collections of African art heritage are found in Western museums and private collections. Additionally, these collections were largely established during the colonial period. Consequently, most African art was consigned to curio status and presented

[37] The issue of Polish museum collections of African art remains a relatively poorly recognised one. Among older studies can be recommended: KORABIEWICZ, Wacław. *Sztuka Afryki w zbiorach polskich*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Polonia, 1966, or more recently: NADOLSKA-STYCZYŃSKA, Anna. *Pośród zabytków z odległych stron. Muzealnicy i polskie etnograficzne kolekcje pozaeuropejskiej*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2011, p. 301–319. Thus, the issues related to the ways of presenting artefacts from Africa in the space of the contemporary museum are the subject of the project of "The Implementation Doctorate of the III Edition" (research project No. DWD/3/14/2019 of 30 October 2019, the contract between the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the University of Łódź) – project manager Professor Aneta Pawłowska, contractor MA Dariusz Skonieczko.

[38] To see more: PAWŁOWSKA, Aneta, Aesthetics and Art in Africa: Conceptual Clarification, Confusion or Colonization? In: *Art Inquiry. Recherches sur les arts* 2007, vol. 9, p. 271–291.

in ethnological collections. Although nowadays African art is very often presented in museums of art, the inevitable questions about the way in which they were acquired, and therefore also about their possible return to their country of origin, remain. The museums participate with an open and constructive attitude in the debates that are being held on this subject and do not shy away from constructive discussions about the future of African cultural heritage in Europe.[39]

In his valuable book, *The Predicament of Culture*, James Clifford raised the question of cross-cultural translations, challenging the notion of ethnographic authority and asking the fundamental question: "Who has the authority to speak for a group's identity or authenticity?".[40] His examination of this question is of great relevance to discussions on museum exhibitions as narratives of cultural production from Africa, and to considerations by African artists on and off the continent. Since the mid-1980s, there has been a significant shift in the strategies adopted by museums to enhance participation and to ensure that they remain responsive and relevant to the communities they serve. Of particular interest is the degree to which those who are the focus of an exhibition play a role in their own representation. Increasingly, museum professionals recognize the benefits of exhibition models that rethink the singular, authoritative voice of the museum and embrace the telling of complex, multivocal narratives resonant with the realities of lived experience. An example of such an approach is the Berlin exhibition discussed above. All these aforementioned difficulties and contradictions have compelled some scholars to question the very foundations of African art history, as well as its place in Western museums and art criticism.[41]

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[39] These issues were discussed at a scientific panel entitled "Afrykańskie muzea w XXI wieku — tożsamość i polityka" [African museums in the twenty-first century – identity and politics] on 30 October 2019 in the framework of the "Afryka na Koszykowej" in Warsaw. The discussion was conducted by Professor Hanna Rubinkowska-Anioł from the Department of African Languages and Cultures from the University of Warsaw. Accessed 21 January 2020, https://www.koszykowa.pl/bazy-danych/katalogi-centralne/134-debaty-miedzynarodowe/debaty-miedzynarodowe/4972-30-10-2019-afrykanskie-muzea-w-xxi-wieku-tozsamosc-i-polityka.

[40] CLIFFORD, James. *The Predicament of Culture*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. 1988, p. 8.

[41] Such a position is presented in, for example, a new permanent exhibition on art from Africa, entitled *Lebendige Traditionen, Kreative Gegenwart. Kunst aus Afrika* (The New World's Art of Africa) at the Fünf Kontinente Museum in Munich. Also, such an attitude is manifested in video work based on a critical interview, with the Congolese painter Francis Mampuya, "Tervuren invisible" (2007), https://boasblogs.org/dcntr/tervuren-invisible/ and in the film "Un-Documented: Unlearning Imperial Plunder" by Ariella Aïsha Azoulay (2019). For more on this, see: SALAMI, Gitti; VISONÀ, Monica Blackmun. A Companion to Modern African Art. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2013 and DE GROOF, Matthias. Statues Also Die – But Their Death is not the Final Word. In: Image & Narrative vol. 11, no. 1, 2010, p. 29–46.

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Protection of national heritage in the light of the applicable law and the actions provided in this area by police in Poland

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Protection of national heritage in the light of the applicable law and the actions provided in this area by police in Poland
The issue of national heritage is an inseparable element of the existence of every nation. The article presents the legal regulations aimed at the protection of cultural heritage in Poland, as well as statistical data relating to crime in this area. The solutions adopted by the Polish police in the field of the identifying and combating of crime against cultural property and national heritage are also described. Furthermore, the article highlights the most serious crime against the national heritage that has occurred in Poland in recent years. The subject article was prepared on the basis of the analysis of literature, existing legislation and two interviews with Polish police officers.

Keywords: national heritage, Poland, law, statistical terms

Introduction

The issue of national heritage is an inseparable element of the existence of every nation. In Poland, cultural heritage is perceived primarily as a material synonym for the products of the past by previous generations, as well as the achievements of contemporary Poles.[1] Therefore, cultural heritage consists of:

- monuments, material evidence of the past and products of nature (immovable monuments, movable monuments, museums and exhibitions, archives, library resources and the cultural landscape)—material heritage, and

[1] KOBYLIŃSKI, Zbigniew, Czym jest, komu jest potrzebne i do kogo należy dziedzictwo kulturowe [What is it, who needs it and to whom the cultural heritage belongs]. In: *Mazowsze Regional Studies*, 7, 2011, pp. 21–47.

● customs, oral communication, knowledge and skills as well as related objects and cultural space, which are recognised as part of their own heritage by a given community, group or individuals—intangible heritage.[2]

The most comprehensive definition of cultural heritage is contained in the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Importance of Cultural Heritage for Societies, holistically addressing its tangible, intangible and digital dimensions.[3] In the light of the above regulation, cultural heritage is an integral element of the cultural and creative sectors, includes resources, goods and material, non-material and natural knowledge passed down from generations, and can help in shaping the image of municipalities, cities and regions and make a significant contribution to the achievement of the goals of "Europe 2020" strategy and to the strengthening of social cohesion.[4] Cultural heritage is a shared value and a shared resource that, if properly valued, can help build a vision for the future. Preserving heritage, emphasising its values and guaranteeing its continuity is a common mission, responsibility and goal.[5]

The article presents the legal regulations aimed at the protection of cultural heritage in Poland. The content of chapter XI (devoted to criminal provisions) of the Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of monuments as well as criminal regulations concerning crime against monuments contained in the Act of the Penal Code of 1997 were analysed. Furthermore, statistical data relating to the crime in this area are also presented. Additionally, the reader is introduced to the organisational solutions that have been implemented in the activities of the Polish police as far as identifying and combating crimes against cultural heritage are concerned. The issue is also complemented by the discussion of the most serious crime in recent years against the national heritage in Poland, i.e. the theft of the Arbeit Macht Frei inscription from the former extermination camp in Oświęcim. The article was prepared on the basis of the analysis of literature, existing legislation and two interviews with Polish police

[2] UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, drawn up in Paris on 17 October 2003 (Journal of Laws of 2011, No. 172, item 1018), http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20111721018 (accessed 4 May 2020); Convention On the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in Paris on 16 November 1972 by the General Conference of the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture at its seventeenth session; Journal of Laws of 1976, No.32, item. 190, http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19760320190 (accessed 4 May 2020). See too MOSAKOWSKI, Zachariasz; BRYKAŁA Dariusz et al.: Watermills and windmills as monuments in Poland - protection of cultural heritage in situ and in open-air museums. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 8, 2020, Is. 3, p. 42; JAĎUĎOVÁ, Libuša: Ľudová umelecká výroba ako súčasť kultúrneho dedičstva. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 1, pp. 177-191; NAVRÁTILOVÁ, Lucie: Mikulášské obchůzky na Hornolidečsku jako součást kulturního dědictví regionu . In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 1, pp. 193-206; DENKOVÁ, Zuzana: Ľudové umenie baníkov v zbierke Slovenského banského múzea. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 2, pp. 137-151; KRIŠKOVÁ, Zdena: Kultúrne dedičstvo a jeho potenciál v kontexte udržateľného rozvoja (modrotlač ako kultúrnoidentifikačný prvok na Reprezentatívnom zozname nehmotného kultúrneho dedičstva). In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne deddičstvo*, vol. 6, 2018, Is. 2, pp. 95-106; DARULOVÁ, Jolana: Zachovávanie a prezentácia nehmotného kultúrneho dedičstva mesta (na príklade Banskej Bystrice). In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 6, 2018, Is. 2, pp. 107-119.

[3] CORNU, Marie, VAIVADE, Anita, MARTINET, Lily, HANCE, Clea (eds). *Intangible Cultural Heritage Under National and International Law: Going Beyond the 2003 UNESCO Convention*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020, p. 22.

[4] Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society Faro, 27. X.2005, https://www.nid.pl/upload/iblock/844/8445eee1eed20fe93856a52376d47eaa.pdf (accessed 10 June 2020).

[5] Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions: Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage in Europe (2015/C 195/04), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal content/PL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014IR5515&from= ES (accessed 8 June 2020)

officers.

Protection of cultural heritage in Poland in the light of applicable legal regulations

Activities aimed at the protection of cultural heritage in Poland take both legal and organisational dimensions.

The framework for the protection of cultural heritage is determined by the norms of international law, which are also reflected in the provisions of Polish law. One of the most significant international sources regulating the protection of the common cultural heritage is the Commission's recommendation 75/65 / EEC of 20 December 1974 to the Member States on the protection of architectural and natural heritage (Official Journal UE L of 28 January 1975, pp. 22–23). It interacts with the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in Paris on 16 November 1972 (Journal of Laws of 1976, No. 32, item 190). Today, more than 180 countries are signatories to the Paris Convention, including Poland. A tangible proof of the effectiveness of the adopted standards is the UNESCO World Heritage List, which already contains around 950 sites in 150 countries.[6] The Paris Convention is the common denominator for the protection of the most valuable monuments to the cultural and natural heritage of the entire globe. At present, effective protection of cultural heritage is only possible with the acceptance of its diversity.

Another international normative act, which constitutes an important regulation in actions for the protection of cultural heritage in Poland also, is the resolution of the Council of Europe of 13 November 1986 on the conservation of works of art and monuments (Official Journal UE C 320 of 13 December 1986, p. 3). In the context of the scope of regulation, immovable components of the material heritage of European culture are subject to special protection.[7] The above-mentioned provisions on the protection of European cultural heritage, although they do not create a coherent legal system, set the standards that have been adopted in the legal regulations concerning Polish cultural heritage.

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997, which is the most essential legal act in Poland, places the responsibility for the protection of cultural heritage on all public authorities in the country. In the preamble we read: "we are grateful to our ancestors for their work, for the fight for independence, paid for with huge sacrifices, for the culture rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation and universal values, referring to the best traditions of the First and Second Republic of Poland, obliged to pass on to future generations everything that is valuable from over a thousand years of achievements".[8] Pursuant to art. 5 of the constitution, "The Republic of Poland ... protects the national heritage and ensures environmental protection, guided by the principle of sustainable development", and according to art. 6 sec. 1 "The Republic of Poland shall provide conditions for the people's equal access to the products of culture which are the source of the nation's identity, continuity

[6] BIENIA, Kacper. Konwencje międzynarodowe w służbie ochrony dóbr kultury [International conventions in the service of the protection of cultural goods]. In: DOBOSZ, Piotr, ADAMUS, Michał, GUZEK, Dominika, MAZUR, Anna (eds) *Prawne wyzwania ochrony dóbr kultury we współczesnym świecie* [Legal challenges of protecting cultural goods in the modern world]. Kraków: Kasper, 2015, pp. 181–195.

[7] NAFZIGER, James A.R., KIRKWOOD PATERSON, Robert (eds). *Handbook on the Law of Cultural Heritage and International Trade*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014, p. 211.

[8] The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997, adopted by the national assembly on 2 April 1997, adopted by the nation in a constitutional referendum on 25 May 1997, signed by the President of the Republic of Poland on 16 July 1997 (Journal Of 1997, No. 78, item 483).

and development". Moreover, the content of art. 6 sec. 2 indicates that "The Republic of Poland shall provide assistance to Poles living abroad to maintain their links with the national cultural heritage".[9]

In Poland, culture and national heritage are nowadays perceived on many levels. They are referred to with regard to such aspects as: the organising of cultural activities,[10] copyright,[11] cinematography,[12] press law,[13] radio and television broadcasting,[14] library law,[15] archival law,[16] public sector information,[17] national heritage,[18] the protection of monuments,[19] artistic education,[20] the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding,[21] the transforming of sole proprietorships of the state treasury operating with the use of cultural goods into state cultural institutions,[22] memorial sites[23] and the restitution of cultural goods.[24]

The database of legal provisions relating to the subject of culture and protection of national heritage includes the texts of legal acts published in the Journal of Laws, the Polish Monitor, the Official Journal of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the texts of uniform legal acts prepared at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. In general, the issues of the regulation and protection of culture and national heritage in Poland are defined in 35 acts and 161 ordinances of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.[25] Acts referring fully or to a specific extent to the issue of the protection of culture and national heritage in Poland are included in the list of legal acts included in the bibliography.

After the political transformation that took place in Poland in the 1990s, a significant improvement in the protection of cultural heritage was brought by the Act of 21 November 1996 on museums (Journal of Laws of 2019, items 917 and 1726). This legal act, consisting of 40 articles, regulated such issues as: the collecting and cataloguing of cultural goods; the storing of the collected cultural goods in conditions ensuring their proper condition and safety, and the storing of them in a manner accessible for scientific and exhibition purposes; the organising of research and scientific expeditions and excavation works; as well as the conducting of educational activities in the field of cultural heritage protection.

Currently, the most vital legal regulation dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage

[9] Article 5 and 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997.
[10] Act of 25 October 1991 r. on organising and conducting cultural activity (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1983)
[11] Act of 4 February 1994 on copyright and derivative rights (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1231)
[12] Act of 30 June 2005 on cinematography (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 2199); Act of 9 November 2018 on financial support for audiovisual production (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 50)
[13] Act of 26 January 1984—Press law (Journal of Laws of 2018 item 1914)
[14] Act of 29 December 1992 on radio and television broadcasting (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 361)
[15] Act of 27 June 1997on libraries (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 1479)
[16] Act of 14 July 1983 on National Archive Resources and Archives (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 553 and 730)
[17] Act of 25 February 2016 r. on re-using public sector information (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 1446)
[18] Act of 21 November 1996 on museums (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 917 and 1726)
[19] Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of monuments (Journal of Laws of 2018 item 2067)
[20] Act of 7 September 1991on the Educational System (Journal of Laws of 2018 item 1457, 1560, 1669 and 2245)
[21] Act of 25 March 2011 on the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 640)
[22] Act of 15 January 2015 on transforming sole proprietorships of the State Treasury operating with the use of cultural goods into state cultural institutions (Journal of Laws 2015 item 337)
[23] Act of 28 March 1933 on graves and war cemeteries (Journal of Laws of 2018 item 2337)
[24] Act of 25 May 2017 on the restitution of national cultural goods (Journal of Laws of 2019 item 1591)
[25]http://bip.mkidn.gov.pl/pages/legislacja/prawo-w-dziale-kultura-i-ochrona-dziedzictwa-narodowego.php (accessed 10 June 2020)

in Poland is the Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of monuments.[26] Law enforcement agencies in Poland most often use this legal act to combat crime against cultural goods and national heritage. Within the scope of its regulation, this act implements the assumptions of Directive 93/7/EEC of 15 March 1993 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a member state (Official Journal WE L 74 of 27 March, 1993).[27] This legal act, consisting of 151 articles, in its content defines the subject, scope and forms of monument protection and care, and the principles for the creating of a national programme for the protection of monuments and the care of monuments, as well as for the financing of conservation, restoration and construction works on monuments and the organisation of monument protection authorities. In addition, the act defines the concept of a monument that signifies real estate or movable property, their parts or complexes, being the work of a person or related to his activity and representing a testimony to a bygone era or events whose preservation is in the public interest due to their historical, artistic or scientific value.[28] The act specifies what the protection of monuments is, and refers in particular to the actions taken by public administration bodies to: ensure legal, organisational and financial conditions enabling the permanent preservation of monuments and their development and maintenance, and the prevention of threats that may damage the value of monuments; prevent the destruction and misuse of monuments; counteract the theft, loss or illegal export of monuments abroad; control, by the state, the preservation and purpose of monuments; and take into account protective tasks in planning and spatial development as well as in the shaping of the environment.[29]

In the Act on the protection of monuments and the care of monuments, in chapter XI, devoted to criminal provisions, 18 articles also define crimes and offences[30] against cultural

[26] Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of monuments (Journal of Laws of 2003, No. 162, item 1568.

[27] Directive 93/7 of the European Economic Community of 15 March 1993 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State (Journal of Laws of the European Community, L 74 of 27 March 1993).

[28] Art. 3 of the Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of monuments (Journal of Laws of 2018 item 2067).

[29] SŁUGOCKI, Janusz. Problemy ochrony prawnej dziedzictwa kulturowego w Polsce: wybrane zagadnienia. Studia z zakresu nauk prawnoustrojowych [Problems of legal protection of cultural heritage in Poland: selected issues. Studies in the field of legal and systemic sciences]. In: Miscellanea, 1, 2008, pp. 39–49.

[30] Chapter 11, Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of monuments: Art.108. 1. Whoever destroys or damages the monument shall be punishable by imprisonment from 6 months to 8 years. 2. If the perpetrator of the act specified in sec. 1 acts unintentionally, is subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 2 years. Art.109. 1. Whoever, without a permit, exports a monument abroad or after taking it abroad, does not bring it to the territory of the Republic of Poland within the period of validity of the permit or, in the case referred to in Art.56a sec.8, within 60 days from the date on which the decision to refuse to issue another permit for the temporary export of the monument abroad has become final or from the date of receipt of the information about leaving the application for a subsequent permit for the temporary export of the monument abroad without consideration, shall be punishable by restriction of freedom from 3 months to 5 years. 2. If the perpetrator of the act specified in sec.1 acts unintentionally, is subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 2 years. Art. 109 a. Whoever counterfeits or remakes a monument in order to use it in the trade of monuments shall be subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 2 years. Art. 109b. Whoever disposes of a movable property as a movable monument or sells a monument as another monument, knowing that they are counterfeit or altered, shall be subject to a fine, restriction of liberty or imprisonment for up to 2 years. Art. 109c. Who, without permission or contrary to the conditions of the permit, is looking for hidden or abandoned monuments, including the use of all kinds of electronic and technical devices and diving equipment, shall be subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 2 years.

heritage.[31] In the case of all articles collected in the act, the subject of protection is the national heritage, and in the case of article 109a and 109b additionally, the authenticity of monuments in circulation.

The offence under paragraph 108 consists in the destroying or damaging of a movable monument (e.g. a painting or pulpit) or an immovable monument (e.g. a church or archaeological site). This provision distinguishes between different sanctions for offences committed intentionally and unintentionally. Art. 109 indicates the crime of taking a monument abroad with regard only to the items listed in art. 51 of the Act on the protection and care of monuments of 2003, as amended by art. 1 section 9 of the Act of 18 March 2010 on the amending of the

[31] Art. 110. Who, being the owner or possessor of a monument, has not properly secured it against damage, destruction, loss or theft, shall be punishable by detention, restriction of liberty or a fine. Art. 111. 1. Whoever searches for hidden or abandoned monuments without permission or contrary to the conditions of the permit, including the use of all kinds of electronic and technical devices and diving equipment, shall be liable to arrest, restriction of liberty or a fine. 2. In the circumstances of committing the offence specified in sec. 1 the court can order: 1) forfeiture of tools and items that were used or were intended to commit the offence, even if they were not the property of the perpetrator; 2) forfeiture of items derived directly or indirectly from the offence; 3) the obligation to restore the previous state or pay the equivalent of the damage caused. Art. 112. 1. Whoever violates the prohibitions or restrictions in force in the cultural park or its part, shall be subject to the penalty of arrest, restriction of liberty or a fine. 2. If the perpetrator of the act specified in sec.1 acts unintentionally, is punishable by a fine. Art. 113. Who, being the owner or holder of a monument recorded on the List of Heritage Treasures or in the register or other monument included in the provincial register of monuments, failed to notify the minister responsible for culture and protection of national heritage or the provincial conservator of monuments, respectively about: 1) damage, destruction, loss or theft of the monument immediately after becoming aware of the event, 2) the threat to the monument immediately after becoming aware of the threat, 3) change of the place of storage of a movable monument, within one month from the date of this change, 4) changes in the legal status of the monument, not later than one month from the date of their occurrence or becoming aware of them—shall be punishable by a fine. Art. 113a. 1. Who, within 14 days from the date of expiry of the authorisation referred to in Art. 51 sec. 3, did not notify about bringing the monument on the territory of the Republic of Poland, is punishable by a fine. The same penalty shall be imposed on who, in the case referred to in Art. 56a sec. 8, within 14 days from the date of bringing the monument to the territory of the Republic of Poland, did not notify the provincial conservator of monuments about bringing the monument. Art. 114. Anyone who prevents or hinders access to the monument for the monument protection authority that exercises powers under the act shall be subject to a fine. Art.115. Whoever has not immediately notified the voivodeship conservator of monuments or the head of the voivodeship (mayor, president of the city) or the director of the maritime office about the discovery, during construction or earth works, of an object that is believed to be a monument, and has not stopped any works that may be damaging or destroying for the found item and has not secured, using available means, the item and the place where it was found, is punishable by a fine. Art. 116. Whoever has not immediately notified the provincial inspector of monuments or the head of the voivodeship (mayor, president of the city) or the director of the maritime office about the accidental discovery of an object which is presumed to be an archaeological monument, and has not secured this object using the available means and the place of its finding, is punishable by a fine. Art. 117. Who without a permit or contrary to the conditions of the permit leads: 1) conservation, restoration works or conservation research on the monument registered in the List of Heritage Treasures, 2) conservation and restoration works, construction works, conservation or architectural studies on the monument entered in the register or construction works in its vicinity or archaeological research—shall be punishable by a fine. Art. 118. Whoever, without permission, places on the monument entered in the register: a technical device, advertising board or advertising device within the meaning of Art. 2 points 16b and 16c of the Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development, or an inscription, shall be subject to the penalty of restriction of liberty or a fine. Art. 119. Whoever does not follow the post-inspection recommendations referred to in Art. 40 sec.1 shall be subject to a fine. Art. 119a. Who, contrary to the obligation incumbent on him, does not keep a record book or keeps it in an unreliable or untruthful manner, shall be punishable by a fine. Art. 120. All matters set forth in Article 1 § 110–119a is based on the provisions of the Code of Conduct in misdemeanour cases.

Act on the protection and care of monuments and some other acts.[32] The content of art. 51 section 1 points out that when crossing the border, if the item does not require a conservator's permission, one should have a document with an art historian's opinion on the age of the item and a photo as well as the opinion of a museum, gallery or antiquarian shop about the value of the item. By the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 8 March 2011, model documents were introduced: the assessment of the time of the monument's creation and its valuation. Both documents are necessary for the transport of the monument abroad. If a person does not have these documents, the customs service, border guard or police must keep the item in accordance with art.109 and in the proceedings they must determine whether its exportation requires a permit from the office of the conservator.[33]

The offence under art. 109a can only be committed intentionally with the will of using a counterfeit or tampered monument in the trade of monuments. If a person modifies or counterfeits a monument for a purpose other than that specified in the act (e.g. makes a modern copy of the monument for their own collections), he or she is not subject to criminal record.[34] In the circumstance of counterfeiting a monument, the subject of the activity is the object that has been given the appearance of a monument (e.g. aging processes or adding an author's signature, whose paintings are considered monuments due to their historical, artistic or scientific value).[35] The subject of protection in this article is the national heritage and certainty in the turnover of monuments; the provision protects the credibility of the object placed on the market of monuments, both in direct sale (through galleries) and sale through auctions and online galleries.[36]

However, the offence under art. 109b can only be committed intentionally, but a perpetrator must know that the monument is altered or counterfeit. The act must be committed with a direct intention and in order for the perpetrator to be charged under this article, it must be shown that he knew about the imitation or alteration of the monument, and not merely that he suspected its inauthenticity.[37]

The provisions collected in the cited act also include offences where the monument itself is a protected good, and the ruling under art. 120 of this act in the cases specified in art. 110–119

[32] Act of 18 March 2010 on amending the Act on the protection and care of monuments and some other acts (Journal of Laws of 2010 item 474).

[33] Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 18 February 2011 (Journal of Laws of 2011, item 256).

[34] KOTOWSKI, Wojciech. KURZĘPA, Bolesław. *Przestępstwa pozakodeksowe. Komentarz* [Offenses outside the penal code: Comment]. Warszawa: LexisNexis, 2007, p. 612.

[35] GADECKI, Bartłomiej. Komentarz do art. 109a ustawy o ochronie zabytków i opiece nad zabytkami [Commentary on Art. 109a of the Act on the protection and care of monuments]. In: *Prokurator* [The prosecutor], 38, 2009, p. 105. [In Polish].

[36] ZALASIŃSKA, Katarzyna. Pojęcie muzealiów w prawie ochrony dziedzictwa kultury [The concept of museum objects in the law of protection of cultural heritage]. In: WŁODARSKI, Józef. ZEIDLER, Kamil (eds) *Prawo muzeów* [The law of museums]. Warsaw: Wolters Kluwer, 2008, pp. 13–14.

[37] PŁYWACZEWSKI, Wiesław. Nielegalne transakcje na rynku dzieł sztuki. Etiologia i fenomenologia zjawiska oraz możliwości przeciwdziałania [Illegal transactions in the art market: Etiology and phenomenology of the phenomenon and the possibility of counteracting it]. In: SZAFRAŃSKI, Wojciech. ZALASIŃSKA, Katarzyna (eds) *Prawna ochrona dziedzictwa kulturowego* [Legal protection of cultural heritage]. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2009, pp. 207–210.

is based on the provisions of the Code of Conduct in misdemeanour cases.[38]

Article 110 most often applies to historic buildings that have been abandoned by the owner. Many mansions and palaces, where the owner did not secure the roof, fell into complete ruin after a few years. It refers to the failure to fulfil the obligation imposed by law and the failure to act by the owner of the monument, but also by its owner (user).

Searching for hidden or abandoned monuments, including using all kinds of electronic and technical devices and diving equipment without the required permit or contrary to its conditions, is an offence under art. 111. It is an offence within the meaning of the above provision to search for hidden or abandoned historical objects without the required permit at all, and after obtaining such permission, but against its conditions.[39]

The offence contained in art. 112 consists in the violating of the integrity of the cultural park, and the provision sanctions the violation of prohibitions or restrictions in force on the territory of the cultural park. This regulation covers all types of work on the entered area, including construction, earthworks, drainage works, changes in the architecture of the site, tree felling, etc.

The provision of art. 113 applies to the proprietor of a monument as well as its owner or tenant. For the occurrence of the offence, it does not matter whether the perpetrator acted intentionally or not. This act consists in the failure to act to which the entity is obliged under the law. The obligation to notify the conservator by the owner or holder of a monument applies only to monuments entered in the register of monuments.

Article 113a concerns the failure to notify the voivodeship conservator of monuments only about the bringing into the territory of Poland of a monument for which a permit was granted. The import of any other monuments into Poland does not require registration with the conservation services and is legally allowed.[40]

Article 114 has a very broad approach to the issue of preventing or hindering access to a site or object by employees of monument protection authorities. The authorities for the protection of monuments should be understood as: the minister responsible for culture and protection of national heritage, on whose behalf the tasks and competences in this respect are performed by the General Conservator of Monuments and the voivode, on behalf of whom the tasks and powers in this regard are performed by the voivodeship conservator.

Art. 115 defines the conditions for the occurrence of an offence consisting in the failure to notify the voivodeship office of the conservator of monuments or the local commune head, city president or mayor about the discovery of a monument during earthworks or construction works. This article applies when, for example, employees do not immediately notify the conservator when, during the construction of a new building in the old town, the medieval foundations of buildings that no longer exist are found.

Art. 116 specifies the conditions for the occurrence of an offence consisting in the failure

[38] PŁYWACZEWSKI, Wiesław. Grabież oraz niszczenie dziedzictwa kulturowego i przyrodniczego – rozważania na tle zjawiska mowy nienawiści [Plunder and destruction of cultural and natural heritage: considerations against the background of the phenomenon of hate speech]. In: *Santander Art and Culture Law Review*, 3, 2017, p. 24. [In Polish].
[39] ANTONIAK, Patrycja. CHERKA, Maksymilian. ELŻANOWSKI, F., WĄSOWSKI, Krzysztof. *Ustawa o ochronie zabytków i opiece nad zabytkami. Komentarz* [Act on the protection and care of monuments: Comment]. Warsaw: Wolters Kluwer, 2010, pp. 73–74.
[40] GADECKI, Bartlomiej. *Ustawa o ochronie zabytków i opiece nad zabytkami. Art. 108–120. Przepisy karne. Komentarz* [Act on the protection and care of monuments. Articles 108–120. Penal provisions: Comment]. Warsaw: C. H. Beck, 2013, pp. 127–129.

to notify the voivodeship office of the conservator of monuments or the local commune head, president of the city or mayor of the discovery of an archaeological monument in any place in the country. This article applies if, for example, a man does not immediately notify the conservator when he finds a stone axe or fragments of pottery during work in the home garden.

Article 117 lists works which are an offence to carry out at an object entered in the register of monuments without a permit or against its guidelines. It is also an offence to conduct construction works or archaeological research without the consent of the conservator in the vicinity of a monument entered in the register.[41]

Article 118 concerns the placing of devices, advertisements, boards and inscriptions only on monuments entered in the register of monuments without the consent of the conservator. This is a condition for the offence.

The offence included in art. 119 consists in the failure to comply with post-inspection recommendations, is a consequence of conservation supervision and is aimed at the enforcement of these recommendations. In the form of a decision, the conservator orders, for example, the strengthening of the construction of city walls within 30 days; if this deadline has been exceeded and the works have not been started, this gives grounds for an offence under this article.

Based on the above legal act, as well as other criminal provisions (e.g. criminal code, misdemeanours code), public administration bodies (e.g. the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) and law enforcement agencies (e.g. the police, prosecutor's office) prosecute perpetrators of crimes and offences against the cultural heritage.[42]

The Act of the Penal Code of 1997 also includes criminal provisions on crime against monuments. They are represented in chapter XVI—Offences against peace, humanity and war crimes, and in chapter XXXV—Offences against property.[43] An offence under art. 125

[41] ŁUCZAK, Marek. *Policja w walce o zabytki* [Police in the fight for monuments]. Szczecin: Zapol, 2011, p. 32.

[42] ZALASIŃSKA, Katarzyna. *Ustawa o ochronie zabytków i opiece nad zabytkami. Komentarz* [Act on the protection and care of monuments: Comment]. Warsaw: C. H. Beck, 2020, p. 79.

[43] The Act of 6 June 1997 Penal Code (Journal of Laws of 1997, item 553). Art. 125. § 1. Whoever destroys, damages or takes away a cultural object in an occupied area or in which military operations are taking place, violating international law, shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between one and 10 years. § 2. If the act concerns goods of particular importance for culture, the perpetrator shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for not less than 3 years. Art. 278. § 1. Whoever takes away someone else's movable property for the purpose of appropriation shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 3 months and 5 years. § 2. The same punishment shall be imposed on anyone who, without the consent of the authorised person, obtains someone else's computer program in order to gain financial benefits. § 3. In the case of an act of a lesser significance, the perpetrator is subject to a fine, limitation of liberty or deprivation of liberty for one year. § 4. If the theft was committed to the detriment of the closest person, the prosecution takes place at the request of the injured party. Art. 279. § 1. Whoever steals by burglary is punishable by imprisonment from one to 10 years. § 2. If the burglary was committed to the detriment of the closest person, the prosecution takes place at the request of the injured party. Art. 284. § 1. Whoever appropriates someone else's movable property or property right shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 3 years. § 2. Whoever usurps the entrusted property is subject to the penalty of imprisonment from 3 months to 5 years. § 3. In the case of an act of a lesser significance or misappropriation of property found, the perpetrator is subject to a fine, limitation of liberty or deprivation of liberty for one year.§ 4. If the misappropriation was to the detriment of the closest person, the prosecution takes place at the request of the injured party. Art. 291. § 1. Whoever obtains or helps to dispose of an item received by means of a prohibited act, or accepts or helps to hide it, shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 3 months and 5 years.§ 2. In the case of an act of a lesser significance, the perpetrator is subject to a fine, limitation of liberty or deprivation of liberty for one year. Art. 292. § 1. Whoever, on the basis of the

lies within the jurisdiction of the prosecutors of the Institute of National Remembrance; the offence is not statute-barred. It occurs when cases involving monuments appearing in the register of war losses of cultural property of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage are conducted.

There is no separate article on the theft (or theft with break-in) of monuments in the Penal Code, nor is it included in the Act on the protection and care of monuments. Cases regarding the theft of monuments are conducted as ordinary thefts. The only distinction is the inability to discontinue the proceedings due to negligible social harmfulness, because if the object is by definition a monument, it is of great importance for culture, and its preservation, due to its artistic and historical value, is in the public interest. In cases under art. 291 or 292, if the offence concerns the placing of a monument on the market when the perpetrator knows that it has been counterfeited or tampered with, article 109a of the Act on the protection and care of monuments shall apply. Art. 294 of the Penal Code concerns crimes of particular importance for culture. In this case, it enforces the stricter penalties provided for theft, misappropriation or receiving of stolen goods (up to 10 years imprisonment) if the subject matter has a special cultural significance, which must be confirmed by witnesses in their testimonies or by court experts.

In administrative proceedings carried out by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, at the first and second instance, support is often required for the opinion of external experts who have knowledge and experience in working with monuments protection.[44] The decisions made determine what is most valuable in monuments and prevent changes unfavourable to them. On the other hand, after the completion of these proceedings, legal assistance is necessary in the field of representing the Minister of Culture and National Heritage before the Provincial Administrative Courts and the Supreme Administrative Court. This service is provided by law companies specialising in administrative court proceedings.

The legal advisor and lawyer coerce results from the provisions of the procedure before the Supreme Administrative Court, which a public administration body is obliged to apply. Activities of specialised entities in the field of representation before administrative courts affect the durability of decisions made by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and thus the effectiveness of the system of protection of cultural heritage.[45]

Crime against cultural goods and national heritage in statistical terms

Statistical data on all crime categories in Poland is kept by the police, which is the largest uniformed institution responsible for the protection of security and public order in the country. According to data published by the police, crimes prosecuted

accompanying circumstances, should and may assume that it was obtained by means of a prohibited act, acquires or helps to sell it, or accepts or helps to hide it, shall be subject to a fine, restriction of liberty or imprisonment for up to 2 years. § 2. In the event of a significant value of the item referred to in § 1, the perpetrator shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 3 months and 5 years. Art. 294. § 1. Whoever commits the offence specified in art. 278 § 1 or 2, art. 284 § 1 or 2, art. 285 § 1, art. 286 § 1, art. 287 § 1, art. 288 § 1 or 3, or in art. 291 § 1, in relation to property of significant value, is punishable by imprisonment from one year to 10 years. § 2. The same penalty shall be imposed on the perpetrator who commits the offence specified in § 1 in relation to goods of particular importance for culture.

[44] MICHALAK, Anna, GINTER, Artur. *Ustawa o ochronie zabytków i opiece nad zabytkami. Komentarz* [Act on the protection and care of monuments: Comment]. Warsaw: Wolters Kluwer, 2016, p. 114.

[45] http://www.mkidn.gov.pl/pages/posts/ochrona-dziedzictwa-kulturowego-od-strony-prawnej-8434.php (accessed 8 June 2020)

under the Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of monuments constitute only a small fraction of a percentage of the total number of all identified prohibited acts.[46] In 2018, 87 crimes[47] penalised in the above-mentioned act were recorded, while in 2017 there were 91, and in 2016, 90 such prohibited acts were found. Furthermore, in 2018 there were also 478 crimes prosecuted under the Act of 6 June 1997, Criminal Code, and related to prohibited acts violating national cultural assets or national heritage. The breakdown of individual offences under the Criminal Code is as follows:

- Art. 278 of the Criminal Code (theft)—212 crimes were found.
- Art. 279 of the Criminal Code (theft by breaking into a facility)—214 crimes were found.
- Art. 284 of the Criminal Code (embezzlement of property)—5 crimes were found.
- Art. 262 of the Criminal Code (insulting the corpse, human ashes or resting place of the deceased)—32 crimes were found.
- Art. 294 of the Penal Code (crimes of particular importance for culture)—15 crimes were found.

As can be seen from the above data, crime against cultural goods is contemporarily presented in a small quantitative dimension, but it should be remembered that these are often acts that irreversibly harm artefacts representing Polish national heritage.

Mechanisms used by the Polish police in fighting crime against national heritage

Actions taken to ensure the safety of cultural heritage include not only the development of an effective legal system, but also the actual actions of the authorities obliged to prevent and combat crimes in the discussed scope.[48]

On 3 November 2004, an agreement was signed among the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Culture, the Commander-in-Chief of the police and the Commander-in-Chief of the border guard on cooperation in combating illegal exports or imports of monuments from abroad by providing mutual assistance in the field of control activities, exchange of information and experiences as well as training.[49]

Another agreement between the General Conservator of Monuments and the Police Commander-in-Chief was signed on 10 March 2005. It concerns cooperation in the field of preventing and combating crime against monuments. In March 2007, the management of the General Police Headquarters ordered the creation of teams dealing with this issue in several voivodeship police headquarters, and the appointment of coordinators in the remaining ones. On the other hand, the National Team for Combating Crime Against National Heritage began to function in the police headquarters itself, which was dissolved in 2013. Its tasks at the police headquarters have been taken over by two part-time coordinators, while teams or coordinators at voivodeship police headquarters operate within the structures of criminal

[46] In 2018, a total of 795,444 crimes were recorded in Poland (source: Police Headquarters in Warsaw).

[47] Article 108 sec. 1—72 crimes, Art. 108 sec. 2—6 crimes, Art. 109a—1 crime, Art. 109c—8 crimes. Source: http://cennebezcenne.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-1-2-GRAJEWSKI.pdf (accessed on 2 February 2020)

[48] SEPIOŁ, Radosław. Teoretyczno-filozoficzne założenia prawodawstwa w zakresie ochrony dziedzictwa kulturowego [Theoretical and philosophical assumptions of the legislation on the protection of cultural heritage] In: DOBOSZ, Piotr, GÓRNY, Witold, MAZUR, Anna, KOZIEŃ, Adam (ed.) *Klasyczne i nowe formy ochrony zabytków w europejskiej przestrzeni dziedzictwa kulturowego* [Classic and new forms of monument protection in the European cultural heritage space], Kraków: Studio Cubus, 2019, pp. 311–332.

[49] Published in the Official Journal No. 6 of the Police Headquarters of 2004 under item 29.

departments.[50] It should be mentioned that in the structures of criminal departments of voivodeship headquarters there is a part-time coordinator or a part-time team to fight crimes against the national heritage, depending on the organisational structure of a given police unit and the need to monitor the threat of this type of crime in a specified area. The cooperation within the police consists in particular in the exchange of information between the part-time national coordinator for monuments at the police headquarters, located within the structure of the Criminal Division of the Criminal Bureau, and the part-time coordinators performing activities in the voivodeship police headquarters. The cooperation concerns activities covering not only domestic but also international matters. In addition, information is exchanged on threats and crimes related to the loss and destruction of cultural heritage, and measures are taken to coordinate the counteracting and combating of crimes against cultural goods in the country and abroad. There is ongoing cooperation with the National Revenue Administration and border guard, as well as with other institutions, in particular with the National Heritage Board of Poland, the National Institute of Museology and Collection Protection, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and voivodeship conservators of monuments.

On 8 February 2018, at the seat of the Department of Monument Protection of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, an agreement was signed on cooperation in the field of the preventing and combating of crime against monuments and other cultural goods. The purpose of the agreement is broad cooperation and the exchange of information between the conservation services and the police, as well as efficient coordination of actions taken in connection with crime against cultural heritage.

Moreover, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage cooperates with the National Revenue Administration, border guard, the National Heritage Institute or the National Institute of Museology and Collection Protection, as well as with provincial conservators of monuments.

Polish police representatives actively participate in works of the CULTINET group which represents an informal network of contact points for cultural goods in the EU. The network was established on the basis of the EU Council Resolution No. 14232/12 of 4 October 2012.[51] Its purpose is to facilitate the exchange of non-operational information and to improve cooperation between competent authorities in the member states. In addition, the network is to enable the sharing of experience in the field of the preventing and combating of crime against cultural goods, and to complement the activities undertaken within the existing structures of the European Union, on the basis of the applicable EU regulations. Police representatives also participate in meetings of the Interpol Group of Experts on the theft of cultural goods (IEG). During the meetings, the representatives of law enforcement agencies of EU member states and the representatives of other institutions, such as UNESCO,[52] CEPOL,[53] the World Customs Organization and others, have the opportunity to exchange information on the most important problems related to the disclosure and combating of crimes against cultural goods.

[50] GRAJEWSKI, Adam. Przykłady spraw realizowanych przez Zespół do Zwalczania Przestępczości Przeciwko Dziedzictwu Narodowemu [Examples of cases carried out by the Team for Combating Crime Against National Heritage]. In: ŁUCZAK, Marek (ed.) *Służby w ochronie dziedzictwa Europy wschodniej* [Police services in the protection of the heritage of Eastern Europe]. Szczecin: Pomorskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 2016, p. 65–84.

[51] Council Resolution 14232/12 of 4 October 2012 on the creation of an informal network of law enforcement authorities and expertise competent in the field of cultural goods (EU CULTNET).

[52] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

[53] European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training

A crucial initiative in the field of the protection of cultural heritage provided in recent years by the police in Poland, voivodeship offices and the Catholic Church is the *Program of Labeling Movable Monuments Collected in Sacred Objects*. As part of this programme, monuments (e.g. paintings, icons, sculptures) located in churches are secured with appropriate micro particles, which are visible to electronic readers, and current photographic documentation of the object is prepared as well as conservation documentation being checked and verified.

Figure 1: *Arbeit Macht Frei* (work makes you free), after being recovered by the police and restored. Source: State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim.

The theft of the Arbeit Macht Frei inscription from the former death camp in Oświęcim as the loudest example of crimes against the national heritage in Poland in recent years

On 18 December 2009, four perpetrators stole the inscription Arbeit Macht Frei from the former death camp in Oświęcim. They were commissioned by the Swedish citizen Anders Hoegstroem, who in the past belonged to the neo-Nazi Nordic National Party and headed the National Socialist Front organisation. In total, five Poles were involved in the crime, including thieves and intermediaries.

The historical inscription Arbeit Macht Frei (work makes you free) appeared above the camp gate in July 1940. The letters of the three words cut out of sheet metal were welded between two metal tubes, and everything was assembled in the camp locksmith's shop. There is an account that prisoners, especially as part of minor sabotage or to spite the Germans, mounted the letter "B" upside down in the word Arbeit (work).

Such inscriptions were also found in other death camps, including in Terezin, Dachau and Gros Rosen. The inscription above the gate of Auschwitz was over five metres long and the letters were 30 cm high. The inscription was heavy and attached to two wooden poles. After the liberation of the camp in 1945, Red Army soldiers decided to steal the inscription. They loaded it on a railway car that was going to the East. Coincidentally, former prisoners of the camp who worked on the railway realised what the Russians were trying to remove from Poland. They bribed the guard guarding the train and the monument was hidden in the building of the town hall in Oświęcim. After the opening of the State Museum in Oświęcim in 1947, the inscription returned to its place.

From time to time, the inscription underwent conservation procedures. In 1996, the pipes were welded at the flat bar that attached the inscription, which became 15 cm longer. On the one hand, the inscription was rigid, and on the other, there was a hinge, which made it possible to lift the structure and allow any transportation to take place. The museum also tried

to get a copy of the inscription, which was used in 2006 during the renovation of the original. However, three years later, when the thieves appeared, the original was already back above the gate of the museum.

Actions taken by the police led to the arrest of the perpetrators and the recovery of the stolen monument 24 hours after the theft. The behaviour of the perpetrators, who did not have the appropriate equipment for theft, helped in this and after reaching Oświęcim, when they could not cut off the inscription with their metal shears, they went to a 24-hour construction hypermarket to buy a hacksaw and socket wrenches to unscrew the screws securing the inscription. At around 11:30 p.m. they were filmed by cameras in the store and at the cash register. After the theft, the perpetrators hid the inscription on property belonging to the family of one of them and informed the client about it. As a result of the immediate reaction of the media, which reported the theft around the world, the client most likely got scared of the public reaction to this crime and made contact with the Polish police. Anders Hoegstroem, trying to dissociate himself from this crime, provided information that, as a collector of historical memorabilia known in Europe, he received an offer from an anonymous Pole to buy the stolen inscription. In a year of further trial steps, including the testimony of the repentant perpetrators of the theft, a European Arrest Warrant was issued for the Swede, and after his arrest in February 2010, he was handed over to the Polish prosecutor's office. In 2010, the principal and the main contractors of the theft were convicted, and the sentences were handed down without a trial because the defendants expressed their willingness to submit to the punishment voluntarily and asked for a sentence without trial.

This unprecedented event resulted in a profound reorganisation of the museum's security system. The technical protection systems of the facility have been significantly expanded (CCTV system, access control systems, telemetric traffic control systems) and the full-time employment of security staff protecting all the facilities belonging to the museum has been expanded. The original of the Arbeit Macht Frei inscription was deposited in a guarded warehouse and a copy of it was mounted above the entrance gate. It should be emphasised that despite the agreement signed on 10 March 2005 between the General Conservator of Monuments and the Police Commander in Chief on cooperation in the field of preventing and combating crime against monuments, there were no task forces in the police at that time that would deal strictly with the preventing and combating of crime against cultural property and national heritage. Officers whose scope of duties was extended to include the implementation of tasks related to the prevention and combating of crime against monuments did not receive any training. At that time, such activities in the aspect of crime prevention were the responsibility of cultural and educational institutions, museums and collectors' associations. On the other hand, the procedural activities of the police consisting in the disclosing of the perpetrators of crimes against cultural property and national heritage were carried out by criminal service officers who usually did not have any specialist knowledge in this field, which many times resulted in a failure to detect or prove the guilt of perpetrators.

Opinions of police officers—voivodeship coordinators for the combating of crime against cultural goods and national heritage on the effectiveness of actions provided in this area

As part of the obtaining of research material for the article, two interviews were conducted with experts who, as part of their official duties, deal with the combating of crime against

cultural goods and national heritage.

The first interviewee was a warrant officer class II who acted as the voivodeship coordinator for the combating of crime against cultural property and national heritage. He has been dealing with this issue for 6 years and, moreover, he carries out other tasks falling within the scope of the activities of the Criminal Department of the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Białystok, where he has been serving for several years.

Podlaskie Voivodeship is the most ethnically and culturally diverse region in Poland. Various nationalities and religions have been adjacent to this area for centuries. In addition, it borders with Lithuania and Belarus, and the northwestern border of the voivodeship is 5 km from the Kaliningrad Oblast belonging to the Russian Federation. This means that there are many objects significant for the culture and identity of the Polish nation in this area and the officers of the Podlasie police every year deal with crimes against the national heritage, not only to the detriment of Poland, but also consisting in attempts to smuggle into the EU territory cultural artefacts from former Soviet Union countries.

Officers acting as voivodeship coordinators for the fight against crime against cultural goods and national heritage (there is only one such police officer in each voivodeship) cooperate with voivodeship conservators of monuments in the exchange of information and experience, and the coordination of activities to ensure effective protection of monuments against criminal activities. On the other hand, cooperation with other services (e.g. border guard, customs service) or organisational units of the police is carried out according to general rules. Moreover, at the central level, in the Criminal Office of the Police Headquarters in Warsaw, one of the officers performs the function of the national coordinator for the protection of monuments.

In Podlaskie Voivodeship, the most common criminal procedure currently against monuments and cultural heritage is searching for monuments without the required permit or contrary to the issued permit. The destruction of archaeological sites is also associated with illegal exploration. Another quite popular crime is the destruction of monuments, both movable and immovable. The first ones are often destroyed by incompetent maintenance or an attempt to restore. In the case of immovable monuments, there are mainly acts of vandalism or actions by construction and development companies. In terms of smuggling, artefacts of culture, Poland is rather a transit country, and icons, paintings, replicas of firearms and melee weapons, historical tableware, jewellery or decorations stolen in the East are most often delivered to wealthy collectors from Western EU countries. International criminal groups, mostly consisting of citizens of the former Soviet republics, are active in this regard, and thefts are very often commissioned by the owners of private collections. In the opinion of the expert participating in the interview, very often the trade of monuments takes place in a closed group of "collectors" and they, being aware that a given item may come from a crime or an illegal source, do not put these items up for sale at auctions generally available to a wider audience. The sale takes place directly between the owners of the collection or via the internet in auctions on the so-called darknet. In addition, verification of the authenticity and legality of the origin of the artefacts sold is also very difficult, especially when the documentation concerning a certain monument is incomplete or very modest, which makes it difficult or impossible to unequivocally state that a given item is the same as the one listed in police databases as stolen. Sometimes items are incorporated into other objects or are altered, which also significantly hinders the possibility of their identification. Criminals, introducing the stolen cultural property into official circulation, count on a number of practical and legal factors that make it difficult

to convict the perpetrators and recover the work for the previous owners.

The expert participating in the interview also pointed out that currently there are few officers in the structures of the Polish police who have education in such fields as broadly understood art or archaeology, and an even smaller group of people with this type of education deal with issues related to cultural goods and national heritage.[54]

The second expert participating in the interview was an officer with the rank of lieutenant who has been serving in the Central Police Investigation Bureau for 20 years. It is an elite investigative service of the Polish police of about 2,000 officers, which deals with the combating of the most serious criminal offences, with particular emphasis on organised crime groups.[55] The interview participant stated that within the framework of actions taken against organised crime in Poland, the issues of protection of cultural goods and national heritage are very rare. So far, there has been no special police operation to introduce an undercover agent into the collectors' milieu to identify and combat illegal art trafficking. Other forms of operational work, such as, for example, the controlled granting of financial benefits, controlled purchase[56] or police encouragement to cooperation,[57] are also not used in cases related to the combating of the crime of trafficking in works of art. The mechanisms of the functioning of the underground market of trade in works of art in Poland are not well worked out so far. The fighting of this type of crime takes place "on the occasion" of combating other most serious forms of activity of organised crime, such as economic crime (tax fraud, smuggling, insurance crimes), drug crimes (production, trafficking) or criminal crimes (human trafficking, kidnapping for ransom, homicides).

In the system for the training of police officers, the issues of protection of cultural property and national heritage occur only to a minimum extent. Classes on specialised professional training courses for policemen are, in practice, limited to signaling that this form of crime occurs and belongs to the area of economic crime. Every year, all police schools in Poland (Katowice, Słupsk, Piła, Legionowo) and the Police Academy in Szczytno organise over 90 different types of specialist training for officers, but none of them is entirely devoted to the issues of the protection of cultural property and national heritage. As part of three specialist courses,[58] the issues of protection of cultural property and national heritage are discussed by

[54] Source: Interview with Warrant Officer Łukasz (full name of the policeman for the sole information of the authors) from the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Białystok. The interview was conducted on 11 June 2020 by Izabela Nowicka.

[55] Source: Interview with Commissioner Maciej (full name of the policeman for the sole information of the authors) from the Central Police Investigation Bureau, Police Headquarters in Warsaw. The interview was conducted on 27 June 2020 by Jacek Dworzecki.

[56] Pursuant to art. 19 section 1 and 2 of the Act of 6 April 1990 on the Police (Journal of Laws of 1990 item 179) operational and reconnaissance activities aimed at verifying previously obtained reliable information about the crime and determining the perpetrators and obtaining evidence of the crime may consist in: covert acquisition, sale or seizure of items derived from the crime, forfeited or whose production, possession, transport or trading are prohibited; accepting or giving a financial benefit; submitting a proposal to purchase, sell or take over items derived from crime, forfeited or whose production, possession, transport or trade are prohibited; submitting a proposal to accept or give financial benefits.

[57] Police encouragement to cooperation represents activities undertaken by officers from the Criminal Intelligence Departments of Voivodeship Police Headquarters, the Police Headquarters and the Central Police Investigation Bureau, consisting in obtaining and servicing personal information sources. Personal sources of information are civilians with the status of a police informant, police associate or agent.

[58] These are: A specialist course in activities aimed at securing property with elements of supervision over these activities; A specialist course for police officers in the use of the information resources of the National Police

the lecturers to a minimum extent (it comes down to the presentation of the assumptions of the agreements of 10 March 2005 and 8 February 2018 concluded among the Police Commander in Chief and the General Conservator of Monuments and the Director of the Department of Monument Protection of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage).

Officers dealing with organised crime who encounter issues related to the protection of cultural goods and national heritage in the course of their proceedings raise their level of knowledge in this area on their own and, if possible, observe the market for the circulation of works of art and monuments (usually via the internet) .

In the international dimension, the combating of crime related to the protection of cultural goods and national heritage requires close police cooperation both at the central level (formation management) and at the tactical level (local police units). A significant role in this respect is played by the police liaison officers accredited on the territory of another country, as well as joint centres of cooperation between border and police services as well as customs. An example of such effective cross-border cooperation is The Polish-Slovak Police and Customs Cooperation Centre in Barwinek, where officers from the Bieszczady Border Guard Unit in Przemyśl, the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Rzeszów, the Podkarpackie Customs and Tax Office in Przemyśl and the Voivodeship Directorate of the Police Corps in Preszów and the Criminal Financial Office in Bratislava are on duty. The cooperation is implemented on the basis of the Agreement between the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on cooperation in combating crime and cooperation in border areas, which was signed in Warsaw on 23 March 2004.

The centre has a supportive nature, it is used to exchange information and provide support to police activities concerning border protection and customs activities in border areas. Its basic tasks comprise:

- collecting and exchanging information essential for ensuring safety and public order as well as detecting crime in border areas, including the use of available databases;
- providing assistance in activities related to the search for people and things;
- mediating the transmission of requests for mutual police assistance;
- providing assistance in establishing contacts between the competent authorities of both countries;
- developing analysis, statistics and evaluations based on information obtained from the operation of cooperation centres;
- participation in the preparation of proposals for the development of cross-border police and customs cooperation as well as cooperation in the organisation and implementation of joint training;
- assisting in activities in the field of preventing and combating crime in border areas and coordinating joint patrol activities;
- providing assistance in activities related to the conduct of cross-border surveillance;
- participation in the coordination of activities related to conducting a cross-border pursuit;
- participation in the coordination of activities related to the preparation and implementation of the transfer and reception of persons;
- participation in the organising of working groups, sending of consultants and

Information System, other police systems, non-police systems and the National Criminal Information Centre; A specialist course in combating economic crime.

holding of working meetings on specific cases of criminal activity.

The centre has repeatedly assisted specialised units of the Polish (Central Police Investigation Bureau) and Slovak (NAKA) police in jointly undertaken actions against organised crime groups, which acted, inter alia, in the countries of the Visegrad Group and dealt with economic crime, including illegal trade in works of art.

In the opinion of both police experts participating in the interviews, the provisions of Polish law relating to the protection of cultural property and national heritage are sufficient and do not deviate from such legal standards in other European countries. On the other hand, a drawback in the process of identifying and combating criminal offences in the field of illegal trade in works of art or other cultural goods is still the lack of specialised police units (Teams, Sections[59]) investigating in this regard. Moreover, experts believe that joint, international initiatives (police actions, training sessions, seminars combined with the exchange of experience) in combating illicit trade in works of art are too rare. In their opinion, EUROPOL, CEPOL and FRONTEX should be more active.[60]

Conclusion

The legal regulations in force in Poland and actions taken by the state administration, aimed at ensuring the security of the national heritage, correspond to global trends and constitute an element of international initiatives undertaken in this area. The presented legal regulations of an administrative and criminal law nature play an extremely important role. The fact is that criminal provisions are subsidiary to insufficient administrative regulations. An important issue is also the criminal policy conducted in Poland, which in the context of the protection of cultural goods and national heritage has assumed a specific, organisational dimension.[61] The preventing and combating of all breaches of the security of cultural heritage requires the coherent, organised and integrated actions of many entities.[62] There is no doubt that crime against cultural heritage is evolving, which requires new methods and forms for the identification and prevention of this kind of phenomenon. An important element of the adopted strategy is to educate society and make society aware of the importance of the national heritage for a certain nation.

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[59] The team consists of 5 to 8 people and Section 8 to 15 people who carry out tasks within the structures of the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in the field of combating crime against cultural property and national heritage.

[60] European Border and Coast Guard Agency

[61] HEŁPA-LISZKOWSKA, Katarzyna, 2013, Dziedzictwo kulturowe jako czynnik rozwoju lokalnego [Cultural heritage as a factor of local development]. In: *Studia Oeconomica Posnaniensia*, 6, 2013, p. 5–18.

[62] TIJHUIS, Edgar. The Trafficking Problem: A Criminological Perspective. In: MANACORDA, Stefano. CHAPPELL (ed.) *Crime in the Art and Antiquities World: Illegal Trafficking in Cultural Property*. New York: Springer-Verlag, 2011, p. 88.

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