National Museums and the Negotiation of Difficult Pasts

Conference proceedings from EuNaMus, European National Museums:
Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen,
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Dominique Poulot, José María Lanzarote Guiral & Felicity Bodenstein (eds)
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Editors

Dominique Poulot, José María Lanzarote Guiral & Felicity Bodenstein

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Introducing Difficult Pasts and Narratives

Dominique Poulot (University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)
Text translated from French by Felicity Bodenstein

The relationship between museums and difficult pasts, between museological discourse and individual or collective sentiment, is of particular relevance to the highly topical issue of the link between history and memory. The panorama of ties between memory and heritage that research in the field has been establishing over the last generation is most revealing. Both terms have benefitted from nearly unprecedented success, echoed by the growing field of study that has consecrated their usage, and which appears in a sense to be taking over the interest that was formerly dedicated to the writing of history. Much like the way in which the ideas of Michel de Certeau had provided essential intellectual anchors in the 1970s, centred on the metaphor of historical practice as a funeral rite, and on the sharp critique of the division of academic work and research strategies, it was the configurations of history through memory and heritage that left the greatest mark on the decades of 1980 to 2000. The first apparent paradox in this new context, is the idea of bringing together notions related to processes of heritage and objects or places linked to memories of suffering and trauma.

From the Art of Memory to the Force of Memory

The establishment of memory as a field of enquiry in the social sciences is largely due to the work of the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) and more particularly to his work on collective memory from *The Social Framework of Memory* (1925) to *The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land* (1941) (Halbwachs, 1997). By collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs was referring to the shared memory of different social groups or families, as a means of maintaining their identity. Individual memory develops accordingly, in interaction with social memory, through social networks that change over time together with the entire range of representations of the past. (Marcel, Mucchielli, 1999). On memories themselves, Halbwachs writes that "there is no point seeking out where they are kept in my brain, in some other hidden part of my mind, to which only I have access, as they are recalled to me from the outside, and the groups that I'm part of, constantly offer the means to rebuild them, as long as I look to them and adopt at least temporarily their way of thinking. [...] It is in this way that one can speak of the existence of a collective memory and the social frameworks of memory, and it is because our individual thoughts are framed by and participate in this memory that we are capable of remembering" (Halbwachs, 1994: VI). The epistemological choices of the sociologist were always clear on this issue as can be seen from the notes that he made of visits for his election campaign at the *Collège de France*, and a chair that he baptised *collective psychology*. The defenders of hermeneutics, literary or artistic, were against him, whilst the "real" scholars of society supported him in his perspectives for a new interpretation of collective psychology (Halbwachs, 1999).

These ideas can be observed in the formulation of Pierre Nora's introduction to the *Lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1984) entitled "Between Memory and History". The historian considers most

particularly the sociological constructions dealing with the contemporary break with traditional societies: "The silent memory of a group that it unites, which is the same as to say, as Halbwachs did, that there are as many memories as there are groups: that memory is by nature multiple and multipliable, a collective, plural and individualised. History, on the contrary, belongs to all and no one, this gives it a universal vocation". This strict division between memory and history has several consequences. One is that 'real' or 'true' memory has taken refuge in the body's knowledge (Nora, 1984: XXV) - an idea, which revealingly, was already evoked in the precedent collection *Making History* an unthought-of, an unthinkable condition of history – "in gestures and habits" (Revel, Peter, 1974). The other consequence is that history began to block out memory, erasing it for the benefit of academic knowledge, certainly rigorous and critical, but devoid of life and closed up in archives, museums, collections and libraries. Thus, tradition was lost, the experience of it dissolved, provoking a flood of words: one only speaks so much of memories because there are (hardly) any of them left. Memory acquired in this way "the beauty of death", to borrow an expression of the time (Certeau et al., 1970) as the result of a process that combined long and short time.

The first aspect of this affirmation was the place that memory and its most traditional instruments held in a long history of a battle against forgetting. In his grand history of forgetting in the West (Léthè, 2004), Harald Weinrich demonstrated the progressive disappearance of the tradition of the art of memory (Yates, 1966). From the Enlightenment onwards, the capacity to remember took a step back behind the faculty of reasoning, it even came to be seen as a secondary faculty, if not disdainful, it was no longer shameful to admit to lacking in it. In the rapidly declining reality of memory, the development of critical history, as defined by Reinhart Koselleck, played its part, by privileging theoretical analysis to the detriment of the experience of actors and witnesses, giving rise to a professionalization of history based on the archives – that is to say on the collection of verifiable and stable information. In a certain philosophical history of historicism, in which Nietzsche's famous considerations played a major role, the progress of scholarly erudition came to represent the burden of a past that weighed limitlessly on the present.

But in the course of the 1980s, the notion of 'memory' suddenly came to occupy an important place in the different social sciences, tied to changes in contemporary history and particularly to what some designated as a crisis of the future of school and academic history, and what was known as a "breakdown in transmission"; but also related to certain repressed issues and the crisis of national memories. In the years 2000 it was the turn of the archive to occupy the forefront of social science discourse: the successive works of Jacques Derrida and the remarkable echo they received illustrates these new representations. The notion of 'cultural' memory appeared as central, coinciding logically with of a kind of hegemony of cultural history in the study of contemporary issues. One of the principal interpreters of this turn, Aleida Assmann, observed that the study of memory is based on three principals: its volatile, malleable nature, irreducible to a closed or determined archive; a past that only bears on society through the representations that it gives rise to as elaborated and received in specific contexts; lastly memories are characterised by their heterogeneity, or rather their incompatibility, establishing a memorial landscape that is being constantly reconfigured. In accordance with these three aspects, cultural memory, supported by some classic frames (monuments, museums and archives) but also by the artifices of contemporary media related to an age of technical reproducibility, plays a role of

unprecedented importance in the public sphere, fuelled by claims that lead to new memorial obligations. Thus the diagnosis of the German historian seems to contradict Pierre Nora's evocation of a disappearance of memory for the benefit of history.

Both however actually share the same analyses, which sees a new kind of memory taking over from a form of living memory. Aleida Assmann evokes a memory of daily communication whose temporal horizon is about three generations long and which is strongly affected by those who lived at the time of the events in question. On the contrary, after about eighty years, cultural memory is made up of a corpus of texts and images that may be considered as objectified or institutionalised. It is, in other words, a kind of institutionalisation of culture that leads to a potentially usable and updatable kind of memory. According to Assmann, this force of memory was able to follow on from the "art of memory" that was effaced around 1800, and it is a response to several factors of transformation. The first is the passage of time, determined to deal with the change from an intergenerational memory to a purely mediatised form of memory that no longer bears any direct relation to the past. The second element of transformation is linked to changes in political life that can bring about a selection of necessary memorial references, or traumatic events that require a form of therapy that leads to the re-emergence of specific memories. Such social contexts as generational change when no privileged witnesses gain legitimate status, provoke the disappearance of older experiences and lead to the erasure of memories. Lastly media can of course dramatically change the content of cultural memory as proven by the appearance of a North American cultural memory through the series *Holocaust* in 1978.

Similar attempts to consider the emergence and the transformation of memory can be found in the writings of other historians but often with the accompanying effort to establish a clear demarcation line between the intellectual responsibility of scholarly critique and the cultural production of 'memory' invented and cultivated by the media of any period, in order to better distinguish between scholarly curiosity and more common uses of the past. Paul Veyne thus distinguishes in his own terms between 'historical knowledge', or 'scholarly' history and a more polymorph reality, "the collective memory of the national past, commemorations, stories, monuments and ritual of great political and religious events, legendary or authentic and that are dear to the society in question" (Veyne, 1987). It is in fact foreign to the past, which is destined to be forgotten, purely and simply: "collective memory is just a metaphor; national memories and the radical historicity of men are two separate things. Those memories are merely representations, more institutional than spontaneous, but supported by education; far from authentic memories, they are more or less tendentious truths. In contrast to individual memory, communities instantly forget their past, except when an institution takes on the task of conserving them and of elaborating some selected bible, destined for an interested usage". The author sums up his inventory as "radical historicity", "individual memorisation", the "(generally forgotten) past of society", "institutionalised souvenirs and legends", "finally, historical knowledge (…) a small and autonomous phenomenon". Whilst this thesis is voluntarily provocative, it tells us of the common aspiration of contemporary historiography to detach itself absolutely from the grasp of memory, and from any kind of assimilation with heritage.

From the classic age of heritage to the idea of historical criminality

However, and quite paradoxically so, the study of memory-heritage in contemporary cultural life has become a central issue and a topic for methodological experimentation. In trying to grasp the part of heritage in history, it is necessary to ask oneself about the frames and divisions that exist. Material temporality, that which Bernard Lepetit (1999: 137) called "solidified time" in reference to urban landscape, acquires value in the name of attachments, convictions but also scholarly rationalisations and political gestures. Heritage studies (or 'patrimoine' in French), offer a privileged field for the evocation of three principal issues: that of the construction of history through works of art and material objects; that of citizenship in liberal *bourgeois* societies of nineteenth century (and the forms of appropriation and the figures of exemplarity and adhesion that it produced); finally that of an exchange of perception and knowledge that such historians as Michelet bear witness to.

Discourse on heritage began as a kind of celebratory discourse specific to artistic literature in the form of an "exaltation of the city and the nation as its works and traditions" as summed up by André Chastel, from Julius von Schlosser (1984). In modern times antiquarian writing undertook to establish lists of works and collections of the histories of town [1] : such as the work of cavalier Jaucourt with his geographic entries in the Encyclopaedia. Such is the classic definition of heritage whose long history is rooted in a desire to illustrate the glories of the city – of Rome with the Capitole and its historical humanist collections. In the eighteenth century the antiquarian tradition was built on different historical specialities that constructed their curiosity thanks to such "museums" of utensils, cut gems, costumes etc. such as the museum of epigraphical monuments in Verona established by the Marquis Maffei (1675-1755) that presented antique inscriptions in chronological order from the origins of the Barbarians, as material for the *studiosi*.

If one assumes the idea that the birth of modern history came about through the "fusion of the antiquarian and the historian" (Momigliano, 1983), then in practice this can be observed in the progressive articulation of a relationship between objects that represent the everyday life of the past, so dear to the antiquarian of the *Ancien Régime* and then to the archaeologist, or works of art that occupy the connoisseur and history as established by scholarly literature. The first museum of history was the *Musée des monuments français*, founded by the French Revolution and which Michelet identified as the *incipit* of his vocation, characterising it as a resurrection of the past (Michelet, 1879: 39).

From this emblematic episode onwards, the museography of history was defined by its capacity to make the past reappear faithfully in the present – whilst guaranteeing at the same time scholarly truth. But of special importance in this episode in the configuration of the principle of heritage (*patrimoine*) was the struggle against "vandalism", which we won't develop here. However, it allows us to understand that the definition of heritage is not purely cognitive, but also very much related to the affirmation of responsibilities, and from a normative position in relation to future generations.

In the French case, the erasure of the *Ancien Régime* from objects of memory was accompanied by a reconfiguration of the notion of the collective in the nineteenth century. The relationship between conservation and the nation becomes obvious when most monuments, whose "beauty belongs to everyone" to quote Victory Hugo, became the incarnation of a new imagined

community in its making (Anderson, 1991). One of the most spectacular manifestations of this are the interventions that emerged to form a set of conservation and restoration practices of historical monuments applied in the name of a culture of national transmission (Thomas, 1980 and 1998). It became a civic act to consider and tour the local objects of the "petite patrie" (Chanet, 1999), establishing a set of practices, popular and scholarly cultural forms that brought aesthetics and politics, sublime and nostalgia, into resonance with each other (Marchand, 1996). Archaeology in particular, provides the expression of the value of *in situ* and of the homeland, used in multiple demonstrations of traditionalisms and revivals (Hutchinson, 2001 and Gossiaux, 1995).

In opposition to the multiplicity of interests that drive collectors of material heritage, and the general perspective of science, the heritage process itself stakes its claim on a narration of origins, when the nation began to become "conscious of itself as a nation" (Pierre Nora). Heritage materials provided a frame for the future, at once an archive and a laboratory for the auxiliary sciences of history – as was the case of the Museum of the national archive that opened in Paris in 1867. This work ideal is accompanied by a growing sense of pedagogical responsibility: the museum visit contributes, in parallel to mandatory education, the growing diffusion of newspapers etc. to the establishment of "imagined communities". Certain history museums came to include libraries and research centres, they edited and distributed manuals, as was the case of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum of Nuremberg (1852) or the Ossolineum of Lvov (1817) – driven by a progressist and cumulative idea of the past, in the service of a patriotic enterprise. It is the high point of the marriage between heritage and history-memory.

The possibility of being *transported* into the past that haunts the visitor is proof of the efficiency of modernity's artifices in the valorisation of living spaces, but also of the effects of the collective experience of the history tale or novel, from Guizot to Walter Scott. The concept of the "chronotope" developed by Mikhaïl Bakhtine (1978: 384), that is to say a space-time, a human universe that simultaneously determines a period and a spatial configuration, underlines the power of place, the monument, the castle etc. in historic experience[2]. Following on from this, Universal Exhibitions, cultivated a retrospective ambition, providing an impetus for many an historic exhibit; building whole "streets" of nations, or "ethnographic villages" where one could make the lived experience of a lost world, heightened by accompanying folkloristic activities. Identically reproducing the life that has been lived appeared as the response to the Rankien ideal of restitution "that which really happened" as one overview. In the museum, this process brought about a naturalisation of history, that is to say a *mythologisation* (as defined by Roland Barthes), using more and more elaborate artifices. The consolidation of the Nation-State coincided with an increasing consummation of invented traditions, in the service of a consolidation of "imagined communities". The colonial world, and the unprecedented situations of governance that it generated, also provided a privileged theatre for the invention of traditions, as exercises in innovative and efficient social engineering.

The first articulations between history, memory and heritage in the nineteenth century can be exemplified by an episode in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. In her essay on "Places for history" Arlette Farge shows how Flaubert's two heroes experimented three different ways of attaining knowledge of the past: "first they tried to make themselves and their home appear as something from the past through the appropriation of old things, visible traces, visiting monuments, grasping feverishly

for anything that had lived before. This first form of knowledge quickly led them to recognise their total ignorance of the facts of the past". From there, they tried to establish and notably to interrogate the memories of the last witnesses. Then finally, they set about writing history themselves, that of the Duke of Angoulême. So, the three stages envisaged all three elements, heritage, memory and history. We can see that Flaubert in his time identifies heritage with archaeology and museums, which appears as totally legitimate ("they had become archaeologists, and their house resembled a museum") – it was the first, insufficient step towards historical consciousness. By bringing together what Flaubert called the « quincaillerie », translatable as hardware or junk, he provides an evocation of the practices of the antiquarian of the *Ancien Régime*, anxious to dominate history with one overview of his collection, as Arlette Farge asks: "what historian does not dream of seeing it all laid out before him?", like Pécuchet, who, from his bed, can perceive the view of all of his objects united. To this one should add the visit to monuments, "in order to see history live, in public space". One might develop a much more detailed reading to show all the different characteristics that Flaubert attributed to this episode in his novel – the mortuary, even deathly aspect of this collection in the eyes of certain visitors.

With *The Modern Cult of Monuments*, written in 1903, Aloïs Riegl (1858-1905) invented a new subject, at a time when he was himself in charge of monument conservation: the process of heritage in its relationship to art history. Riegl distinguishes three possible forms of memorial value in a monument: the initial intentional commemorative value, historic value - which appeared with the Renaissance (Forero-Mendoza, 2002) but that was stabilised in the nineteenth century through the institution of conservation-restoration devoted to maintaining an original state - and lastly the age value, which one might also think about as the value for the future, and whose relation to restoration is eminently problematic.

The essay identifies the democratic instantaneity of the relationship to ancient monuments as the principle that explains the further extension of the meaning of heritage in an age of the masses, which he believes will be dominated by sentiment – *stimmung* – and not but the idea of erudition up until then tied up with the historical monument (Gubser, 2005). In fact, once it is the passage of time that confers its value upon the monument, any kind of artefact, trace from the past becomes capable of taking on a monumental significance, no matter what its original status may have been. In the course of the twentieth century, the distinction between high art and the art of the masses, between the artwork and the artefact, will disappear leaving only the added value that might be attributed to any kind of trace. The interest in the intentional monument can only decline, as the aim of such a monument is always to put the past into the present, to make it at every moment pertinent and topical. It is the distance, on the contrary that is at the heart of the modern interest for the non-intentional monument, as it refuses absolutely to partake in a past-present, to work in a memorial way, to erase its age. Better still its ruinous appearance or signs of ageing are its principle, it is a monument of the past exclusively dedicated to time elapsed.

The demonstration puts emphasis on the necessity of envisaging different temporalities – that is to say distinguishing between age in itself, objectively inscribed on the monument as patina, as the accidents or even as the partial ruin of the structure, historicity and finally original intentionality, the memory of which can be maintained by faithfulness to tradition. The resolute opposition to essentialism that is manifest in the *Cult* places the accent on the values of relations and associations in heritage terms: age, position in a temporal sequence, its belonging to a

"rhythm" or to a development, historical meanings appear as determinant of a history that is always open. In this sense, his approach opens up a new era in the appreciation of the monument and its relation to time. On the one hand the "time" of the ancient monument is not the scholarly time of historian, it is perhaps that of the archaeologist as envisaged by George Kubler (1973), as the form of time, in any case it is a new kind of time. On the other hand, the generalisation of the 'ancient' monument as "any human creation provided it bears evidence of having been subjected to the trials of time" is major change of scale.

In the mid-twentieth century, the propositions of Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History* written in 1940, shortly before his suicide in Port-Bou brought in a new mutation. Henceforth, it becomes necessary to write history "against the grain", that is to say from the point of view of the defeated, against the historicist tradition of writing history from the point of view of the victors. If Benjamin is referring to class war, influence by Nietzsche and by Marxism, the formula may be applied more widely to a large part of the twentieth century situation in terms of the relationship between heritage and history writing. According to him "whoever dominates always holds the heritage of the victors. (…) All those who have claimed victory participate in this triumphal procession where today's masters walk on the bodies of those to this day vanquished. As has always been customary, it is to this triumphal procession that the booty belongs; that one might define as cultural property. There is no document of culture that is not also a document of barbarism. And the same barbarism that they partake of, also partakes in the process of their transmission from one hand to another." (Benjamin, 1971-1983). Most subsequent criticism of heritage processes build on this formulation, as do indeed the possibilities of a counter-heritage, that we see and partake of today, either *in situ* or in the museum[3].

Preservation as the Duty of Remembrance

Taken in the classic sense, the heritage process tends to preserve the past through its material traces: its intention is to valorise rather that criticize, at least up until recently and in the vast majority of cases. Heritage is the sanction of a judgement of value bearing on the quality of the pieces, whilst history adopts more voluntarily an archaeological principle, attaching itself to banal things, happily sharing the opinions of ethnographers who have shown interest in debris since Marcel Mauss. Such a heritage making process can only clash with historical practice, which, on the contrary, is dedicated to not being selective in its sources and its objects in terms of their quality. Reduced to its most basic points, this opposition might be assimilated to the great divide between historians and art historians, the latter of course accusing historians of neglecting to take into account the aesthetic quality of their documents.

The recent development of the meaning of heritage today has been intimately related to professional as well as amateur historical practice that intend to make the results of academic research accessible to the public, but also to accompany more general historical knowledge with the familiarity of a relationship to the local, the *petite patrie* in order to better cultivate a sense of national community. The movement for the preservation of historical monuments, sites, archaeological finds but also more minor and marginal objects, forms of *bric-à-brac,* can thus be directly related to a provincial writing of scholarly history but are also related to popular uses of history and the inventions of memory. Competition for recognition and legitimacy has always characterised the relations between the historian and the heritage specialist. The challenge of

sharing scholarly authority became all the more crucial as the heritage process from "the ground up" was legitimated by the interest of populations, and the persistence or renewal of attachments was no longer the exclusive capacity of outside expertise, representing some specific scholarly discipline.

The range of activities and interventions related to archaeology, whether monumental or not, and on museums largely constitutes what one has come to call since the 1970s in the Anglo-Saxon world, *public history*. It is in the course of that decade that in North America particularly, new professionals whose role became defined as the promotion and the diffusion of academic knowledge, for the public, for specific communities, began to establish themselves. Due to their academic training, they are however also capable of criticising the institutions and practices of historical vulgarisation itself. In Europe, in a more or less regular way, and following a similar inspiration, consideration of the public usage of history has been on-going, as much in terms of critical approaches to the former notion of heritage and its newer perspectives – with, for example, the new museology movement. This preoccupation with heritage was not however absent from the earlier experiences of historians, if we think about the "public" aspect of the historian's work, of his relationship to familial, religious, community heritage, material as well as immaterial and more generally to the attention given to the inscription of the past through the forms of towns, the features of buildings or of monuments. In the historian's work, the perspective of heritage represents a sentimental claim or political belonging, or at the very least a desire to figure in a specific continuity of language, style, region.

In the course of the last decades, his incorporation of heritage has lead the historian to undergo an examination of conscience, and to produce historical work that goes beyond the recording of objects of heritage. The considerable success of "heritage" in public discourse and collective practice has lead certain historians of contemporary times to diagnose a quashing of historical references. Since his 1985 book, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, David Lowenthal has assimilated heritage conscience with a representation of the past appropriated by a community to exclusively instrumentalised ends, dedicated to promoting a local or identity driven past that is hardly occupied with authenticity and even less with truth but rather devoted to glorifying a voluntarily mythicized memory. Heritage is no longer considered as a social accessory or as a means of popularising history, but as a foil: it incarnates a false conscience of the past, and its relationship to the duty of memory has become suspicious.

Through the introduction of new museographical practices, witness narratives, virtual and real environments etc., museums today intend to use the experience of each visitor to develop his or her individual capacity to interpret history. The aim is to provoke and promote a more active interaction between the visitor and the museum. The museum wants to develop an historical culture that is transmitted through the acquisition of analytic tools: less that of reading a narrative, and rather related to the analysis of documents, contexts, collecting practices, staged in a suitable way. Simultaneously, unprecedented attention is given to the political and public uses of the past and history, leading museums to question the provenance of their collections, and historical reconstitutions based on a process of selection and choice, selective omissions, to become more aware of the responsibility inherent to practices of exhibition.

Indeed, the most recent generation of establishments can be characterised by its call on family and personal memories, that seek to incarnate the utopia of democratically shared research and

historical writing, or at least to establish a general call to all to contribute in bearing witness to history. The practice of collecting memories in museums dedicated to the Holocaust, or to terror, genocide or more generally speaking difficult memories is a major manifestation of this phenomenon. These museographies relate of course to different national cultural policies but also to historical cultures that are more or less tolerant, promoting alternative models to the academic writing of history, complementary to classical erudition. They can help renew the professional's perspective, but they also carry the risk of the instrumentalisation of historical knowledge by defending specific interests and perspectives that up until now were denied or held as negligible. In certain cases, the museum becomes a forum where public discussion on issues of memory and history can take place. Relying on the collaboration of social and political movements, such museums promote particular memorial points of view and values that are present in civic and political debates. The past is conjugated in the present according to the discontinuous, particularised rhythm of commemorations and exhibitions that run in parallel to such events. This is most obviously the case when it comes to evoking traumatic stories.

Tanya M. Luhrmann (2010) perhaps best summed up the current situation in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, "Trauma is the great psychiatric narrative of our era. There are two ways to tell the story of the discovery of the importance of trauma. One is the long and difficult struggle for the recognition of the suffering and the rights of victims. In this version of the story, the relationship between the event and the injury is real, and the surprise is the slow awakening of the clinical observers to see what is so clearly to be seen. The other way to tell the story is as a shift in representation, from one moral accounting to another, a change in ethical vision rather than scientific knowledge. Here the relationship between the injuring event and the sustained hurt is not illusory, but it is much more complex." Indeed, Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman, respectively a doctor/sociologist and a psychiatrist-anthropologist have attempted to establish a global anthropology of traumatism (Fassin, Rechtman, 2009). Whilst their case studies look at particular disasters and specific crimes, they all have a global character. The Universalization of these diverse situations, notably in relation to the notion of the victim, is the object of much debate and criticism. There are, they say, three consequences of the emphasis on the trauma of individuals as a perspective on world events: personalization, psychologizing, and the production of emotion. They argue that it becomes difficult for the humanitarian to see the politics on the ground without the haze of emotionality through which the individual stories are filtered. The very insistence on the emotional specificity of the story means that all trauma stories sound similar: they are histories without history. "Both before and after the tsunami, the survivors in Aceh were already victims of political domination, military repression, and economic marginalization. Both before and after Hurricane Katrina, the people of New Orleans were already victims of poverty and the discrimination that reinforced class inequalities through racial distinctions. Trauma is not only silent on these realities; it actually obscures them." (Fassin, Rechtman, 2009: 281)

The recognition of the global character of these traumatic events is so widespread as to seem banal, and is examined in the university courses and research centres, academic journals throughout the world dedicated to such issues as genocide but also in the network of specialised museums and memorial sites[4]. One theme is central to the issue of the future of memory in the production of museums and memorials and in the studies dedicated to them: the values of

memorial representations of such crimes as terrorist attacks, genocide and massacres develop, as the duty of memory and its relations to universal human rights.

This increasingly dynamic conception of memory is the most convenient way to think about the usefulness of memorials and museums - often accepted as a given. Jay Winter recently provided a reflexion on transitions, entitled "Remembrance as a Human Right". "The transitions, he wrote, in which human rights figure are multiple. The first is the transition from war to peace. The second is the transition from dictatorship to democracy. The third is the transition of the status of victims of violence from that of passive sufferers to active participants in the redress of the crimes from which they suffered. The fourth is a perennial matter. It refers to the transition from norm to practice, from rhetoric to material justice, in the on-going history of human rights abuses we all share. (...) And yet while we cannot forget human rights, we must respect the human right to forget. For there are different strategies of transition, some entailing moving away from dwelling on the pasts, others reconfiguring stories about the past so that they can stand as sentinels, as reminders of what we must never do again" (Winter, 2011: X).

Of course, it is a known fact that visits to sites of historical atrocities are not of an obvious pedagogical efficiency, and that on the contrary they may even provide incitement for others. For example, Timothy Mc Veigh, the author of the 1995 bombing of Oklahoma City Murrah Building that killed 168 people, visited the Waco site in Texas after the disaster (80 members of the Branch Davidian sect were killed by a fire after a police raid). "Witnessing actual events and their consequences caused something of a transformation in his mentality. The fact that Mc Veigh himself had been a visitor to a disaster site is not mere irony" (Blasi, 2002: 172-173).

But beyond the well known debate surrounding the effects of these visits, the aim of the papers of the Brussels Conference edited here is to examine how memory studies are related to an intellectual form of deconstruction on the one side but also (and notwithstanding the fact that this has been observed to be an irritating effect of such visits) to the recognition of the value of trauma studies in accentuating the importance of processes of affective mediation. The opposite effect however also remains to be measured, that is to say, the force of resistance in responding to such tragic events, and also quite simply the fact that visits to museums and memorials are not always experienced in a 'memorial' way but are also part of an entertainment industry. In an era of dematerialisation, the memorial museum opposes the force of the place, if not of the monument, the museum as a place that incarnates a singular time. As Aleida Assmann wrote, about such cases, one must give attention "to a problem that confronts all visitors to a place that is at one and the same time a museum, a crime scene, and a memorial" (Assmann, 2011: 365).

Debris has been transformed into relics and the weight of material culture is manifest in the visitor practices that in certain contexts recall religious pilgrimage. Curators and academics are confronted in these contexts with a form of melancholy that is a state that the former need to take into account and that the later consider sometimes as being part of the foundation of their discipline, as Michael Ann Holly (2002) eloquently suggested was the case of art history[5].

Can heritage practices be a critical tool in examining the past?

Three issues are principally addressed in this report. The first section deals with cases related to conflicting representations of "natural" and ethnic communities. With a focus on the Mediterranean, the papers examine museum policies in dealing with conflicts related to displaced

communities, in the borderlands between Italy and the ex-Yugoslavia or the case of the contested religious heritage of Greek Cypriots.

Andrzej Jakubowski uses two recent cases to show the paradox of appropriation and territorialisation in relation to heritage protection: the exchange of a certain number of medieval paintings between national museums of Czech Republic and Slovakia (1994) and the on-going dispute between Italy and Slovenia about 'the negotiation of difficult pasts' (the artworks evacuated by the Italian administration in 1940 from Istria, nowadays known as the Slovenian Littoral). It explores how the recent post-Cold War wave of state succession in Europe has affected the integrity of state art collections. It considers the different points of view - heritage focused, historical, and legal – that can be adopted in relation to the allocation of cultural property in cases of state succession. One can observe to what an extent "two interconnected, though often conflicting, principles: territorial provenance (origin) of cultural assets and human linkage with such material" (A. Jakubowski) interplay reflecting two well known and opposing theories of nation building and its principles. More fundamentally, such episodes illustrate how easily the principles of heritage protection, established since the nineteenth century in the context of the identification of the classical notion of the territorial nation state, can be questioned when territorial relations are reconfigured to form new "imagined communities".

Ilaria Porciani has looked at a case that is even more revealing in terms of Italian identity, that of Fiume as "a synecdoche for Italian nationalism". She has provided us with a fascinating description of the activities of the Istrian and Dalmatian communities after World War II and the birth of the Fiume museum deeply connected with the violent memory of war and the victims of political violence. In 2004 a day for the memory of the *Foibe* victims was established to provide an official frame for commemoration whilst the museum archive itself has become involved in a scientific dialogue that benefits from the emergence of a new generation of Slovenian and Croat community counterparts.

In the last case study in this section, in which Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert and Alexandra Bounia present the fascinating case of museums as spaces where a threshold effect, to use an expression by Victor Turner, expresses the disappearance of a former community along with the symbols that were part of its identity, in the face of a new emerging community. Museum foundations that have been the consequence of modern revolutions used to desacralize past identities are a well-known phenomenon. This case study looks at the division of Cyprus and the question of religion, but also the propaganda aspect of heritage conservation and the mutual accusations in terms of destruction. This analysis shows that in the context of a difficult coexistence, such institutions bring issues of ownership and restitution of cultural property to the forefront, at the same time as religious and national representation.

The second section focuses on the role that national museums play in handling historical issues that are socially and politically sensitive. Soviet rule in Estonia provides an example of the manipulation of museum policies in the context of dictatorial regime changes. A comparative study of the representation of the Holocaust in contemporary Germany and Britain and question of the Gulag Museums in Russia provide examples of the problems inherent to representing such traumatic events.

An obvious part of the history of museographical propaganda has been totalitarian museum instrumentalisation. Kristin Kutma's article demonstrates the Stalinist construction of

museographical narratives in Estonia and their fate up until the 1987 exhibition piloted by the communist party. In the most recent incarnation, the national narrative of the museum has, since 1990, shown the Estonian nation and national sovereignty as having been threatened by two enemies (the Red Russia and Nazi Germany). This "narrative of national history (…) focus(es) on ethnic Estonian experience, and (shows a) relative incapacity of any form of more inclusive representation of a shared history with other groups or communities".

Using themes addressed by Benedict Anderson, Silke Walther has undertaken a comparative analysis of the representation of the Holocaust in Berlin and London. This approach remains marginal in the field of heritage studies, very much dominated by monographical subject treatment. However the interpretative gain through comparison is obvious, particularly in this case as it allows for a parallel between two ways of according the narrative of Jewish genocide to specific and very different national contexts and its mobilisation in relation to the memory of their respective communities. Simultaneously, the reference to the Washington museum and more generally to North American museography allows her to introduce a third comparative element, opening up a perspective on the transatlantic acculturation of museum models and architectures.

Paul Williams, well know as the author of one of the first overview books dealing with memorial museums, has provided a study of the Perm-36 and the Gulag museum in Moscow, describing a museology that is attentive to the architectural project and interior design and their communication possibilities. His expert opinion provides a review of the conditions necessary for the possible success of such museums, related as much to their location, geography and authenticity as to the available content or "story," and social and political support. The aim is to take measure of how such museums can reach the status of legitimacy and play the same role as other well-established international memorial museum models that attract a sizable and increasing audience for what has been called "dark tourism."

The question of what these conditions for success might be is also implicit to Rossitza Guentcheva's study of the museum of socialist art that opened on the 19th of September, 2011 in Sofia, however it remains impossible to answer as the museum itself has not yet clearly defined its purpose. This case represents a fascinating laboratory type situation, in terms of its national and institutional context, the necessary representation of the socialist history of the country, in the wake of the disappearance of all references to this past from public space. As analysed by the author it is related to a set of "three different problems", those being: "the image of socialism represented in a new art museum", "the nature of socialist realism in art", and of creating new museum environments that would speak to a global audience". But the solutions are far from being established, and expectations cannot be satisfied by a unique focus on totalitarian Stalinist art at the expense of other forms of artistic representation from the decades 1960-1980.

In all of the cases envisaged in this section, as stated by Paul Williams, "national memorials that document disturbing pasts can be geared towards both political reconciliation and social reawakening" but they must also go beyond the emotional reactions that they provoke: "unexpected social passion might result from it, as evidence and stories (...) might flow into the expression of other public dissatisfactions". In the case of museums in former communist Europe, the difficulty is to attain a form of generality, based on the western model of the global museum, and not to remain entrenched in its interior history and its debates, at the risk of not

being able to overcome the difficulties related to the restitution of an historical context. The question of how a genuine museum of communism should look, remains difficult to solve, as has been shown by the Bulgarian case caught between "the role of the Second World War and the place of the communist party as vanguard in the fight against fascism, the role of the Holocaust and the memory thereof in the establishment of a tradition of remembering communism, as well as of the role of museums in contemporary society in general" (Rossitza Guentcheva).

The third section of this report deals with cases related to the restitution of anthropological remains and cultural assets. This area of research related to the postcolonial critic, is tackled from a theoretical point of view through case studies coming from Northern Europe. By going beyond the legal aspects of restitution issues, these studies examine the historical significance of using objects from the past as expressions of collective identity. Fredrik Svanberg looks at a question that is drawing increasing interest in museums of anatomy and physical anthropology (after having been the object of general discomfort, leading to dissimulation and silence) and that is the policy to be adopted in the matter of collections of human remains. Numerous research projects have been undertaken to provide interesting new historical knowledge in this field, fuelled by new debates on contested heritage and repatriation issues. For Svanberg: "Anatomical collecting may illustrate better than in most other instances the re-contextualisation and situating of objects that museums achieve". In particular the disappearance of personal elements of information in favour of the use of the body in the classification and demonstration of diseases or racial features, reveals the museums formidable capacity to radically recontextualize material of all kinds.

Eva Silvén has focused on the case of Sami pieces from three Swedish national museums in Stockholm: the Nordiska Museet (cultural history), the National Historical Museum (history/archaeology) and the Museum of Ethnography (third/fourth/non-Western world). By looking at two specific kinds of objects, she follows "the shifting fate of objects (...) as actors in social networks". This contribution to the social life of things sheds light on the power relations between people and institutions. Lill Eilertsen concentrates on the administrative structure of the Sami museum networks and the project called Recalling Ancestral Voices – Repatriation of Sámi Cultural Heritage. The slow pace of the repatriation procedure is explained by the complexity of the administrative and political structures and by the differences between Norwegian and Danish, the latter dealing with their imperial history, and developing a particular culture of negotiation, which though it was a long process, has given rise to very concrete results.

All of these contributions illustrate the coexistence of different object statuses and regimes of value, situated at the crossroads of the private and public sphere, of life experience exhibited but also of the narrative written in parallel to these. Behind the glass box, exhibited along a trajectory that goes from the singular biography to great narrative of the nation, collections especially assembled for the museum constitute a corpus of singular objects. Presented as belonging to a space, transformed or no longer existant, these objects appear at once as the witnesses of an original culture and as the fruit of the museum's selection process. Their former use value, its relation to the body, to the real conditions of their acquisition, etc., generally disappears behind categories of classification and exhibition. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to claim that the museum depoliticizes or dehistoricizes history, as many interpretors of its role have done over recent years. The objects that can be found there are part of regimes of production, of historicity and different technologies, all of which feed new regimes of memory. The success of war

museums, or museums dealing with conflicts is a phenomenon that historians, aware of the civic implications of their discipline, should greet as positive rather than deplore. As Jay Winter wrote at the beginning of the twenty-first century in his reflections on the "Memory Boom": "In our profession, we should be grateful that history sells; one reason that it is such a popular and moneymaking trade is because it locates family stories in bigger, more universal narratives. One way to understand the huge growth and financial viability of museums and fiction set in the wars of the twentieth century is to see them as places where family stories are situated in a wider, at times universal context." (Winter, 2001)

Museums have always been caught in the tension between the display of a collective self-presentation, and the embarrassment of a self-knowledge of collective failures, however today they may represent shame as well as images of glory, as a political means of enhancing the present greatness of the country (Poulot, 2008). The glory or the shame of a community as displayed in museums can be used to emphasise the authority of tradition, provoke various emotions in people, and expose these emotions to a contest of values. Glory and humiliation may be regarded as complex social processes in which the value of events and people is determined by developing a broad set of agreements concerning symbolic and social meanings.

Notes

[1] Relatively unexamined in the French case, these questions have been considered in England, see Rosemary Sweet, *The Writing of Urban Histories in Eighteenth-Century England*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997.

[2] "le chronotope détermine l'unité artistique d'une oeuvre littéraire dans ses rapports avec la réalité [...] En art et en littérature, toutes les définitions spatio-temporelles sont inséparables les unes des autres et comportent toujours une valeur émotionnelle [...] l'art et la littérature sont imprégnés de valeurs chronotopiques, à divers degrés et dimensions. Tout motif, tout élément privilégié d'une oeuvre d'art, se présente comme l'une de ses valeurs".

[3] A contemporary version of this position was expressed by Valdimar Hafstein in a keynote of the first congress of the Critical Heritage Association, asking "when and under what conditions is the protection of heritage not a means of dispossession", quoted by Laurajane Smith, (2012) *International Journal of Heritage Research,* 18, 6: 539.

[4] http://www.sitesofconscience.org/: « Sites of Conscience use the past to engage people in making a difference in the present. Nearly 300 museums, memorials, historic sites and initiatives in 47 countries have joined our network to date ».

[5] "The 'rhetoric of mourning' that has engendered and connected so many late 20th-century studies in the humanities is one devoted to the incomplete and the missing: fragments, allegories, ruins, retreats from definitive meanings. Yet the practice of art history provides an interesting twist on this characterization. The very materiality of the objects with which we deal presents historians of art with an interpretative paradox absent in other historical inquiries, for the works are both lost and found, both present and past, at the same time".

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Shifting Borders and Community Identities

National Museums in the Context of State Succession:
The Negotiation of Difficult Pasts in the Post-Cold War Reality

Andrzej Jakubowski (Polish Academy of Sciences)

Abstract

The paper explores how the recent post-Cold War wave of state succession in Europe has affected the integrity of state art collections. Firstly, the paper explains the content and nature of legal principles regulating allocation and distribution of national cultural treasures in cases of state succession. Secondly, it discusses their actual implementation in relation to two recent cases: apportionment of cultural material between Czech Republic and Slovakia (1994) and the ongoing dispute between Italy and Slovenia on the title to the so-called 'Istria's Jewels' and their future allocation. The first one refers to the exchange of certain number of medieval paintings between national museums of Czech Republic and Slovakia fundamentally driven by the principle of territorial origin and historical provenance. The issue of 'nationality' of the objects has not been raised. Inversely, the dispute between Italy and Slovenia is profoundly marked by what one may call 'the negotiation of difficult pasts'. Accordingly, this case concerns the status of the artworks evacuated by the Italian administration in 1940 from three coastline municipalities of Italian Istria, nowadays known as Slovenian Littoral or Primorska. As a result of WW II, the region was transferred to Yugoslavia. Italian inhabitants of the region emigrated or were forced to emigrate. The status of the Istrian art treasures, currently preserved in the National Gallery of Art in Trieste, remained pending. The dissolution of Yugoslavia has brought the issue to light. Indeed, Italy and Slovenia have to face legal questions regarding the fate of disputed art treasures and overcome bitter memories of the past. Within this context, the paper attempts to (re)locate the role of national museums in the broader discourse on cultural reconciliation. It advocates the view that nowadays such institutions need to be perceived both as major actors and efficient instruments in cross-border cultural co- operation.

Introduction

The paper explores how the recent post-Cold War wave of state succession in Europe has affected the integrity of state art collections. In particular, it focuses on the role and significance of national museums in the processes of dissolution of multinational states. Firstly, it explains that the allocation and distribution of national cultural treasures in cases of state succession have since the end of WW I been essentially based on two customary principles: i) territorial origin of artworks; ii) cultural significance of such items for new nation-states and their newly formed museum institutions. Secondly, the paper discusses the actual implementation of these principles in relation to two recent cases: division of cultural material between the Czech Republic and Slovakia (1994) and the ongoing dispute between Italy and Slovenia on the title to the so-called 'Istria's Jewels' and their future allocation. The first one refers to the exchange of a certain number of medieval paintings between national museums of Czech Republic and Slovakia fundamentally driven by the principle of territorial origin and historical provenance. The issue of the 'nationality' of the objects has not been raised. By contrast, the dispute between Italy and Slovenia is profoundly marked by what one might call 'the negotiation of difficult pasts'. Accordingly, this case concerns the status of the artworks evacuated by the Italian administration in 1940 from three coastline municipalities of Italian Istria, nowadays known as Slovenian Littoral or Primorska. As a result of WW II, the region became a part of the Free City of Trieste, and was eventually transferred to the independent Republic of Slovenia. Italian inhabitants of the region emigrated or were forced to emigrate. The status of the Istrian art treasures, currently preserved in the National Gallery of Art in Trieste, remained pending. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the independence of Slovenia have brought the issue to the light: Slovenia has demanded the return of the objects, invoking the principle of territorial provenance, while Italy has argued that the treasures are entirely of Italian origin, on the one hand, and preserve the traumatic memory of the war refugees, on the other. Within this context, this paper attempts to (re)locate the role of national museums in the broader discourse on cultural reconciliation. It advocates the view that nowadays such institutions need to be perceived both as major actors and efficient instruments in cross-border cultural co-operation.

State succession and the issue of cultural property - territorial and national principles

The term 'state succession' refers to factual situations that arise when one state is substituted for another in sovereignty over a given territory (O'Connell 1967: 3). According to the definition adopted by the International Law Commission (ILC), state succession means "the replacement of one state by another in the responsibility for the international relations of territory" (UN 1974: para 3). This wording is repeated by two conventions codifying the international law on state succession: the 1978 Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of Treaties (1978 Vienna Convention) (UN 1978), and the 1983 Vienna Convention on Succession of states in Respect of state Property, Archives and Debts (1983 Vienna Convention) (UN 1983). Arguably, such an approach has also been shared by the prevailing international practice and legal doctrine (International Law Association (ILA) 2008: annex; Shaw 1994: 41; Müllerson 1994: 137). Similarly, the distinction between the succession of states, concerning the relationship between at

least two state actors – predecessor and successor – and the succession of governments, referring to the change of government within one state, is widely recognized. However, the classifications of political events that may give rise to succession of states as well as the evaluation of their prerequisites and legal consequences remain disputable, due to the fact that state succession has to deal with complex political dynamics of power. Thus, the opinion that there are no general rules on state succession, which primarily follow political considerations rather than legal principles, is not uncommon in literature on this issue (Dumberry 2007: 3-4; Degan 1999).

For the purposes of methodological clarity, it seems necessary to make a distinction between territorial and legal aspects of state succession. In other words, state succession has a double nature, which consists in the transfer of sovereignty over a given territory, on the one hand, and succession in rights and obligations – pre-existing legal situations related to the territory, on the other (Verzijl 1974: 3-7). Accordingly, territorial succession (*e.g.* cession of territory, dissolution (dismemberment) of a multinational state, the gaining of independence on the part of former dependent (colonial) territories) constitutes 'title' – the cause for succession in other matters such as treaty obligations or other existing legal interstate situations and engagements, debts, administration, nationality of inhabitants, state property, state archives, etc. State succession in this second instance also relates to the fate of material elements of cultural heritage and international obligations related to them.

State succession to state cultural property (tangible cultural heritage) belongs to the second sphere of succession *i.e.* succession in pre-existing legal situations, as it regards assets situated or originated from a territory to which succession relates. More precisely, the material aspect determines the inclusion of tangible cultural heritage in the broader legal framework of state succession in matters of state property.

Broadly speaking, the legal regime on the passing of state property is conditioned by the category of territorial succession. However, certain principles are applicable to all cases. As a general rule, upon succeeding to the territory of the predecessor state, the successor state succeeds to all state property of that prior state, wherever it may be located. Accordingly, real (immovable) property of the predecessor situated in the territory to which succession relates, shares the destiny of that territory and passes to the successor state. The regime on state succession to movable state property is more complex as it is driven by the consideration that such a category of property is not distributed merely on the basis of fortuitous location at the date of state succession (Siehr 1993: 126). Hence the paramount criterion for the distribution of state movable property is the connection with the activity of the predecessor state in respect of the territory to which the succession of states relates. In cases of dissolution of a multinational state, the principle of 'equity' is generally applicable. This provides the division of movable property in 'equitable proportions' (Czaplinski 1999: 61-73).

The inclusion of material cultural heritage in the legal regime of state succession to state property may seem understandable and logical. Yet, the objectives driving the passing of state property from the predecessor state to the successor state profoundly differ from those pertinent to the succession of cultural material. In the first case, a paramount consideration is to provide the successor state with all the instruments indispensible to the efficient exercise of territorial sovereignty. Inversely, the control of material cultural heritage does not constitute a necessary factor to exercise sovereign powers. It primarily regards the linkage between the territory, its

human communities and collective cultural identity, though some property may also have strong symbolic connotations, embodying sovereign legitimacy to a given territory, e.g. royal regalia. In addition, material cultural heritage is not always state property and may belong to a variety of local and religious entities, private individuals, etc. In principle, state succession does not affect the private property of non-state entities, but it often happens that private rights to the disposal of cultural property are restricted by national legislation (Jakubowski 2012: 372).

Furthermore, it is notable that the consistent application of the regime of state succession to movable cultural items raises some other ambiguities. For instance, the provisions on equitable partition cannot be arguably perceived as adequate with regard to the distribution of cultural property. In particular, this refers to historical objects and works of art of universal international value. Such objects create serious problems since 'there are no clear-cut criteria in cultural property law as to their home state, domicile or nationality' (Siehr 1993: 126-127). Therefore, the evaluation of their local or territorial pertinence and connection with the activity of the predecessor state is questionable and hardly possible to determine.

For these reasons, international practice and legal doctrine recognize two reasons for such a 'derogation' or 'modification' of the general regime of state succession to state property, justified by cultural considerations. Accordingly, the first reason flows from the principle of self-determination of peoples in its "external" meaning – referring to situations where a people breaks free from an existing state and forms its own state by means of secession or decolonization. In such an event, it may have a claim to recover its cultural identity by repatriation of cultural objects lost and removed in the past (Vrdoljak 2008: 53-56). Thus, a clear linkage between independence, cultural development and the physical restoration of cultural material has been established. It is however disputable whether this principle has ever been applied in international practice (Chechi 2008: 174-181).

The second reason for the derogation of the general regime on state succession to state property in respect of movable cultural property consists in the correlation of the principle of the territorial origin of such items and the principle of the major significance of a cultural object for the cultural heritage of the successor state. The role of these principles for the allocation and distribution of tangible cultural heritage in the practice of state succession is fundamental. Accordingly, the principle of the territorial origin of state cultural property was developed in the nineteenth century for the purposes of peace-treaty negotiations conducted by the newly unified nation-states of Germany and Italy with Denmark and Austria, respectively (Kowalski 2001: 141).

Apparently, the combined principles of territorial origin and cultural significance were widely applied in relation to the allocation and distribution of artworks and other national treasures during the post-WWI period and the dismantling of multinational empires. However, the concretization of such a linkage in state practice and legal doctrine was not consistent. Nonetheless, it has been observed that the practice of peace treaties generally applied the idea of repatriation of cultural material to places where they originated from or to the regions whose "intellectual patrimony" they formed (de Visscher 1949: 836-837). However, these considerations, even when legitimate, served only as the basis for negotiations between the states concerned and they were not treated as binding rules of international law. Moreover, the prevailing state practice questioned the principle of cultural significance to the successor state, in favour of the principle of 'inviolability of collections forming an organic whole, the completeness

of which is in itself of world-wide value' (de Visscher 1949: 836). In addition, the rights of successor states based on the territorial linkage (provenance) of certain cultural treasures were often challenged by the principle of their great importance to the intellectual patrimony and cultural identity of the predecessor state.

It is clear that the principle of territoriality within the area of state succession in matters of movable cultural property, though providing easily predictable solutions, cannot be consistently applied to all the scenarios. This is particular true in the case of the profound post-WWII changes to territorial boundaries in Europe, followed by the displacements of entire national and/or ethnic groups. Some of the post-WW II peace treaties provided for an unconditional restoration of those properties originating from the ceded territory. In other cases, certain *de facto* solutions were applied to the problem at hand: the priority of the collective cultural rights of a group over the general principle of territoriality was tacitly recognized. In fact, in a few cases, cultural property was dislocated and followed the destiny of displaced, expatriated communities. On the other hand, the process of decolonization showed a common and firm disagreement of predecessor states (former colonial powers) to share the cultural resources acquired during colonialism with the newly independent postcolonial states. It has been argued that the cases of decolonization should be governed under a rather vague *ex gratia* regime of 'return', based more on moral considerations rather than any legal principles (Kowalski 2001: 162-163).

In fact, international practice has manifested a common reluctance of states in applying any legal argumentation in respect of the allocation of cultural property in state succession. In a number of recent cases, the actual returns have been made on the basis of moral considerations or *ex gratia* gestures in the framework of friendly relations between states. Such gestures constitute a highly convenient diplomatic instrument for predecessor states. Through the voluntary return of the most claimed objects, they manifest their 'good faith' and may often avoid long-lasting legal disputes and political controversies on the status of all cultural property removed from the territory to which succession of state relates. In addition, the increasing incidence of international cultural heritage law for interstate relations may affect the solutions accorded between states in respect of the allocation of cultural property. In particular, the role of the general procedural principle of co-operation in the sphere of cultural heritage cannot be underestimated. This principle introduced at the universal level by the 1945 UNESCO Constitution (UNESCO 1945), and the subsequent 1966 UNESCO Declaration of Principles of International Cultural Co-operation (UNESCO 1966) is driven by the common concern of the entire international community in the protection of cultural heritage in its local, national and global dimensions (Chechi 2012: 362-368). Moreover, it is also recognized that cultural co-operation and protection of cultural heritage serve as efficient tools in post-conflict reconciliation and stabilization of states and their boundaries (Odendahl, Peters 2009: 263-279).

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent dissolution of the Cold War political and territorial system have once again opened up the question of the allocation and distribution of cultural property in state succession. In this light, it seems necessary to recall the approach taken by the Institute of International Law (IIL). At the 2001 Vancouver session, the Institute adopted a recommendation entitled 'State Succession in Matters of Property and Debts' (ILL Recommendation) (ILL 2001). Under Article 16, reaffirmed the principle of territoriality applicable to the allocation of state property, based on the criteria of close connection and

equitable apportionment. Then it introduced a special regime for the movable property of major importance to the cultural heritage of a successor state (Article 16(5), and Article 16(6)). Accordingly, the 'property that is of major importance to the cultural heritage of a successor state from whose territory it originates shall pass to that state'. It also recommended that 'such goods shall be identified by that state within a reasonable period of time following the succession.'

Apparently, these two principles are also nowadays valid in respect of the allocation of cultural property in state succession, though they are of a non-binding nature. In relation to these, Yves Huguenin-Bergenat distinguishes four major non-binding principles applicable to the allocation of movable cultural property (Huguenin-Bergenat 2010: 246-260). These are extensively based on the settlements in matters of cultural property allocation in the case of the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in light of current tendencies in international law. Accordingly, the first rudimentary principle is defined as territorial provenance (origin) of cultural assets, which is combined with the second principle – the preservation of cultural heritage. The linkage between these two principles is crucial, as the protection of cultural property in its original historical, geographical and cultural contexts constitutes one of the major fundaments of international cultural heritage law. Thus, the significance of certain objects for the cultural heritage of a successor state needs to be balanced by the local or regional value of a given object. Yet the applicability of these two principles can be challenged by the principle of the integrity of collections of a universal value. In some cases, the distribution of state cultural property may be based on the principle of equitable division. The concerned principles have been applied in succession agreements in recent cases of multinational state dissolutions: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union. However, their actual implementation in interstate practice has been rather disappointing as only the Czech Republic and Slovakia managed to finalize the division of state cultural property.

Dissolution of Czechoslovakia

The events of the national and democratic movements in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR) initiated in March 1988 led to the "Velvet Revolution" in the autumn of 1989. This ended the leadership of the Communist Party. In the last weeks of that year, the democratic opposition came into power. On December 29th a new president, Vaclav Havel, was chosen and in 1990 the first free parliamentary elections took place since 1946. In the same year the CSSR was replaced by a new federal state: Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (CSFR). However, it became obvious that the interests of the two countries were drifting in different directions. In 1992, due to political and economic tensions, the CSFR Federal Assembly decided on the dissolution of the federation. On 13 November 1992, the Constitution Act 541 on the apportionment of property of the Czech and Slovak Republics (Czechoslovakia 1992a) was passed. Immediately, on November 25th the Federal Assembly voted the Constitution Act 542, which formally ended the existence of Czechoslovakia as of the 31st of December 1992. The dissolution of the CSFR took effect on 1st January 1993.

General rules of the division of state property and the cultural exemption

The CSSR's state property comprised all immovable and movable property, including final rights, interests, and obligations of the CSSR or its organizations, situated in the state territory and abroad. Under Article 3 of the Constitutional Act, the division of state property was based on the

principle of territoriality and generally followed the regime of Article 18 of the 1983 Vienna Convention. Accordingly, both Republics acquired the immovable property situated in their territories, and part of the movable property connected with the activities of the state in those territories. The property was divided proportionally by the populations of the two Republics, in all other questions not settled in conformity with the territorial rule (2:1 in favour of the Czech Republic). Under Art. 9, a special bilateral commission was established in order to implement the 1992 decision. This led to the conclusion of a number of detailed agreements adopted by the two successor states of the CSFR from 1993 onwards.

As regards the allocation of state cultural property, in the vast majority of cases this was based on territorial and institutional appurtenance. All the problematic cases were excluded from the general distribution of state property and were to be settled by a special bilateral commission established by the Czech and Slovak agreement on the reciprocal arrangement of cultural heritage issues, signed in 1993. By 1995, all the solutions to these controversies were finalized and no external arbiters or experts were called on (Bojnicky Altar 1995).

Czechoslovakian cultural property at the date of state succession

Following the "Velvet Revolution" and the democratization of political life, Czechoslovakia had to confront a number of questions concerning the matter of cultural heritage. It is important to mention however that they mainly referred to the consequences of WWII, in particular, war looting, confiscation and post-war nationalization of private collections. In fact, there were no controversies relating to the interwar period. This was due to the fact that between the years 1918-1938 there were no particular displacements of museum items between the respective territories of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Moreover, before the creation of the dual federal republic in 1918, the history of these two countries evolved separately under the Habsburg rule.

The crucial period for the cultural patrimony of Czechoslovakia began in 1938, when the Munich Agreement was concluded. This sanctioned the annexation of the ethnically German territories of Sudetenland to the Third Reich and the transfer of other border provinces to Hungary and Poland. The partition of Czechoslovakia was concluded in 1939, which led to extensive transfers of population and the persecution of Jews under the Nazi administration. This was followed by subsequent war plunders and the post-war creation of a new political and social order. As a result of the 1945 Potsdam Agreement, German nationals had to leave the territory of Czechoslovakia. There were also extensive exchanges of minority groups with Hungary. In addition, the new socialist Czechoslovakian administration issued a series of regulations, the so-called Beneš decrees, which expropriated the enemy property, in particular the property of German, Austrian and Hungarian nationals (Frommer 2005). Further Czechoslovakian legislation also nationalized property of wealthy landowners. The same fate was shared by the abandoned Jewish heritage. Hence the post-war period was characterized by substantial displacement of populations and the nationalization of private art collections. As a consequence, state museums of post-war socialist Czechoslovakia acquired many displaced, looted or confiscated cultural objects. Sometimes items taken from Slovak territory were added to Czech collections, and vice versa.

After the "Velvet Revolution", democratic federal Czechoslovakia had to confront all these questions, which generally focused on the restitution of cultural property. This was settled by the

privatization acts passed in 1990 and 1991. Arguably, the implementation of these regulations required more complex legal solutions than the distribution of state cultural property after the 1993 dissolution. The territorial displacement of cultural objects between the two countries was not particularly frequent and was difficult to settle since during the circa fifty years of post-war history of Czechoslovakia, both republics kept separate national collections. Therefore, all interstate controversies relating to the situation of cultural heritage were decided in the first few years after dissolution. However, both states still have to constantly deal with private claims. The solutions applied to state succession of state cultural property of the former Czechoslovakia relate to two sets of issues: distribution and allocation of state cultural objects; and succession to state archives and library collections.

The 1993-1994 Czech-Slovak agreements on the exchange of cultural objects

At the beginning of 1993, immediately after the official split of Czechoslovakia, the two republics signed a bilateral agreement on the reciprocal arrangement of cultural heritage issues. This appointed a special Czech and Slovak commission responsible for the allocation of certain displaced cultural objects of state property. The negotiations began in 1993 and concluded in 1994 (Odendahl 2005: 155). On 26 September 1994 in Brno the two states signed the Agreement on the Exchange of Certain Objects of Cultural Heritage (Czechoslovakia 1994), it referred more particularly to a group of medieval paintings.

The Czech Republic was obliged to hand over ten tables forming the XIV century polyptych of St.Mary with Saints (Bojnicky Altar) by the famous *Trecento* Florentine master Nardo di Cione. The altar constitutes the only entirely preserved work of this artist. It came from the vast art collection created in the second part of the nineteenth century by a Hungarian aristocrat, Count János Pálffy (1829–1908), one of the most renowned collectors and antiquarians in Central Europe. He placed his collections in several residences in Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Paris as well as in his country houses situated on the present territory of Slovakia, which at that time constituted a part of the Hungarian Crown. He chose the medieval castle of Bojnice as his residence-museum. Among other artworks, he installed there the polyptych of Nardo di Cione. In his will, Pálffy bequeathed the core of his collection of paintings to the National Picture Gallery in Budapest, and bound his heirs to keep the residences in Bojnice, Vienna, Budapest and Pezinok as public museums. In addition, the art collections had to be entirely preserved in their original place. However, after his death and after the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, this collection was dispersed between different successors, and at the same divided by the new state borders - the majority of Pálffy's lands, including the Bojnice Castle, were situated on the territory of the newly created Republic of Czechoslovakia from 1919. In the interwar period, the heirs of János Pálffy sold many precious pieces of art, and in 1939 the castle and surrounding lands were purchased by a private person. Finally, after WWII the residence and its furnishing were nationalized and some artworks, including the Bojnicky Altar, were sent to the National Gallery in Prague (Ciulisová 2006: 201-209).

During the negotiations after the split of the federal state, the Czech Republic agreed to transfer the altar to Slovakia provided that the latter would give an equivalent of ten paintings from the same epoch. Consequently, both republics decided to exchange the paintings whose detailed list was annexed to the 1994 Agreement. In this way, the cultural objects were returned

to Slovakia on the basis of the territorial link with the place where the collection had been originally established. It also seems that the artistic integrity of the castle-museum was taken into consideration. However, the handing over of the property was not based on a gratuitous contractual agreement between the two successors of the CSFR. Inversely, Slovakia had to pay the Czech Republic a certain 'compensation' in nature.

Eventually, the return of the Bojnicky Altar to Slovakia took place on the 15th December 1995. The official ceremony of the vesting of paintings was celebrated on December 18th and was widely commented on in the mass media and perceived as a "national" success. For the occasion, in 1997 a special Slovakian postage stamp was issued.

As regards the apportionment of state library collections, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia did not cause any particular difficulties. Both states had separate national libraries and separate state archives. After the "divorce" of 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia decided on the delimitation of certain "federal" records, which in the vast majority continued to be preserved on the territory of the Czech Republic. For instance, such a solution was applied with regard to the important, politically as well as historically, archive of the former socialist Ministry of the Interior. In Prague the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre (Československé dokumentačni středisko) was also established in 1999, which gathers exiled Czechoslovak archival heritage produced during Soviet domination.

Thus, the division of state cultural property of the CSSR constitutes a model example of a friendly dissolution of a multinational state. Furthermore, it fits into the legal pattern worked out on the occasion of Austro-Hungarian relations in the interwar period. Moreover, in the process of amicable separation, both successor states of CSFR tended to maintain close cultural and scientific relations. Certain more precise provisions are to be found in the 1992 bilateral agreement (Czechoslovakia 1992b) with regard to good-neighbour relations and the rights of minorities, which provided for the reciprocal obligations to preserve and protect the other party's cultural heritage and monuments (Art. 15), reciprocal promotion of language and cultural cooperation (Art. 8, 14, 16), including combating the illicit cross-border transfer of cultural material (Art. 19).

Dissolution of Yugoslavia and the heritage controversy between Slovenia and Italy

The second case-study in this paper concerns the controversy between Slovenia and Italy with regard to state succession and the so-called Istria's Jewels. This involved almost one hundred works of art from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries by the most prominent artists of the Republic of Venice, such as: Benedetto and Vittorio Carpaccio, Cima da Conegliano, Alvise Vivarini, Jacopo Palma il Giovane and Giambattista Tiepolo (Hoyer 2005). Until 1940-41, these art treasures had been preserved in three coastline municipalities of Italian Istria: Koper (Capodistria), Piran (Pirano), and Izola (Isola), nowadays known as the Slovenian Littoral or Primorska. In 1940, before the war against Yugoslavia, Italian authorities decided to evacuate the most valuable works of art from the Eastern borderlands, including objects from the churches and museums of Istria. The removal, ordered for preservation reasons, was done in conformity with domestic Italian legislation and was approved by the local and Church administration (Magani 2005).

Initially, the objects were gathered at a collection point in the province of Udine. In 1943, some of them were returned to the owners, *e.g.* a priceless group of paintings from Saint Anne's Church and Monastery in Koper (Algeri, L'Occaso 2005: 87-98). The majority of the works of art evacuated from the Slovenian Littoral were, however, sent to Rome, where they remained sealed in wooden crates for the next sixty years. In 2005-2006, some of these objects were exhibited at the Revoltella Museum in Trieste.

As a result of post-WWII decisions, the Istrian peninsula became the territory of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). However, the allocation of 'Istria's jewels' has never been settled. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Slovenia – one of the SFRY successors states – asked for the return of the evacuated objects to the places where they had been commissioned and from which they had been taken.

Historical background

For centuries, the coastline municipalities of Piran, Koper and Izola had been under the rule of the Republic of Venice. After the fall of the Republic in 1797, sovereignty over the multi-ethnic territory of Istria passed several times between the various Napoleonic states and Austria. Eventually, the 1815 Congress of Vienna granted the entire territory of Venice with its Istrian and Dalmatian settlements to Austria, which already controlled the important commercial cities of Trieste and Fiume (Rijeka) on the Adriatic cost. In 1866, Austria ceded Venice and Veneto in favour of Italy, whereas the Istrian peninsula and the city of Trieste remained under Austrian rule. After WWI, and the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, Istrian peninsula was transferred to Italy. In this way, Italy gained control over a great part of the territory of the Republic of Venice and managed to recover a number of artworks of Venetian provenance.

The situation completely changed as a result of the war against Yugoslavia and the final defeat of Italy in WWII. On the basis of the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty (Italy 1947), Italy ceded its Adriatic islands, the city of Rijeka and a large part of Istria to the SFRY. The Eastern coast of the Istrian peninsula (including the municipalities of Koper, Piran and Izola) and the area of the city of Trieste formed the separate Free Territory of Trieste (FTT), which was not however considered as ceded territory in the meaning defined in the treaty (Art. 21.4). The FTT remained divided between Allied military control and Yugoslavia according to the post-war demarcation line, though the 1947 Treaty established it as a neutral unitary entity with its own civil administration. The northern part of the FTT with the city of Trieste (Zone A) was controlled by the Allies and the southern part with Primorska (Zone B) by Yugoslavia. In 1952, Italy obtained administrative powers in Zone A, and in 1954 (London Memorandum) (FTT 1955) the division of the FTT between Italy and the SFRY was agreed. The part of the coast, comprising the municipalities of Koper, Piran and Izola, was transferred to the Socialist Republic of Slovenia. Subsequently, under the 1975 Treaty of Osimo (Italy 1976), Zones A and B of the FTT were definitively divided and incorporated into the previously administrating states.

The 1947 Treaty obliged Italy to restore to Yugoslavia an extensive array of cultural material relating to the ceded lands, based on the rudimentary criterion of territoriality. In the execution of this treaty, in 1961 Italy and Yugoslavia signed an agreement on the regulation of restitution of cultural property. This did not, however, regulate the allocation of art objects evacuated from Zone B of the FTT. In the following years, Italy and Yugoslavia did not manage to solve the

issue. In fact, the 1975 Treaty of Osimo did not contain any provisions on the allocation of cultural material from Zone B, though certain attempts to address the question were made during the treaty negotiations at Osimo. Accordingly, the representatives of both states exchanged diplomatic notes, in which they agreed that the issues relating to cultural property pertaining to the Free Territory of Trieste would be considered after the entry into force of the 1975 Osimo Treaty (Jakubowski 2010: 233).

Subsequently, the delegations of both states met a few times to discuss the issues. At the intergovernmental level, the talks between the SFRY and Italy ceased in 1988 (Žitko 2005: 79). Slovenian Church authorities undertook separate negotiations. These were possible thanks to the formal division of the diocese of Trieste and the diocese of Koper ordered by the Holy See in 1977 (Jakubowski 2010: 233). Some talks also took place on the professional level between art historians from Slovenia and Italy.

The question of the allocation of Istria's art treasures was extremely delicate due to the difficult history of the region and its inhabitants. In particular, Italian Fascist assimilationist policies towards all national and ethnic minorities before WWII fed hostile attitudes amongst the Slavic and Italian inhabitants of Istria. The following Italian invasion of Yugoslavia, and the cruelty and crimes of war only strengthened anti-Fascist and anti-Italian sentiment. The escalation of the conflict led to ethnic cleansing pursued by Yugoslav troops, especially in Istria in 1943-1949, completed by the expulsion of practically the entire Italian population from Istria and Dalmatia. In such circumstances, the removal of Venetian works of art was perceived by the Italian exiles as a rightful act of preservation of their collective identity and historical memory. Thus, any legal solutions with regard to these treasures were hindered because of the strong emotions attached to cultural heritage and the old rancour flowing from bitter memories.

Negotiation of Difficult Pasts

Following the dissolution of the SFRY, Slovenia was the only SFRY successor state that brought a claim against Italy for the repatriation of cultural objects. The first exchange of notes took place as early as 1992 and both states agreed to find a solution in respect of the implementation of the 1975 Osimo Treaty, including the issue of cultural property (Žitko 2005: 81). The question became public in 2002, when Italy decided to open the sealed wooden boxes containing the Istrian masterpieces, stored in Rome. On this occasion, it was revealed that Italy did not provide adequate conditions for the preservation of the objects. Hence the paintings were in urgent need of restoration. That same year, Slovenia proposed to set up a commission in order to discuss the future of the artworks. In 2004, the questions concerning the repatriation of cultural property to the Slovenian Littoral were submitted at the session of the Slovenian-Italian commission for adopting the program of cultural co-operation between both states (Žitko 2005: 81).

The legal argumentation for the claims of Slovenia against Italy was prepared before the dismemberment of the SFRY. At the conferences in 1987-88, Croat and Slovene experts held that the list of demanded cultural property would be based on four criteria: territory, date of removal, category of property, and available documentation of the removal. Accordingly, the claims referred to the artworks originating from the territories ceded in 1947 and those of Zone B of the FTT, removed in the period 1918-1954 (from the end of WWI until the split of the FTT). The objects being claimed not only concerned state-owned cultural items but also those of

public property. Apparently, the latter would also comprise ecclesiastic property. Relevant proof of removal was provided. The basis for the repatriation of the objects was based on the provisions of the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty and on the exchange of notes at the Osimo negotiations.

In 2005, Slovenia issued a formal request to Italy (Siehr 2005: 507), and presented an official motion to the ICOM Legal Affairs and Properties Committee, asking for assistance in the settlement of the dispute (Jakubowski 2010: 235). Basically, Slovenia argued that under the 1947 Peace Treaty, Italy was obliged to hand over all cultural material removed from the territories ceded to Yugoslavia, comprising the territory of the Republic of Slovenia. Moreover, as Slovenia succeeded to the 1975 Osimo Treaty, the 1975 exchanges of notes on the allocation of cultural material removed from Zone B of the FTT were also binding.

Italy, for its part, carried out careful restoration of the disputed artworks, and in June 2005 the exhibition of 21 objects (paintings, bronzes and wooden sculptures) was opened in Trieste. The majority of items came from the churches of Koper, Piran, and from the Regional Museum of Koper. As explained in the exhibition catalogue, the objects would be permanently transferred to the National Gallery of Art in Trieste (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica di Trieste) (Jakubowski 2010: 236). The choice of the city was not accidental. Trieste was the formal administrative capital of the entire FTT, which also included the three municipalities concerned in Zone B. Thus, it may seem that by placing the removed objects in this city, all of Italy's obligations under the 1947 Peace Treaty have been fully complied with. In other words, the objects of this act were returned to the territory of the FTT.

A formal statement by the Italian government in response to Slovenia's request of 2005 has not been officially published, but it can arguably be reconstructed on the basis of the few opinions expressed by the representatives of the Italian government. Accordingly, it is argued that there was no obligation to return the artworks to Slovenia, since Italy had a right and duty to evacuate and displace its cultural treasures endangered by war operations. The items requested by Slovenia came from Zone B of the FTT, which formally passed to the SFRY only in 1975 on the basis the 1975 Osimo Treaty. Thus, the objects removed from Zone B do not enter into the categories of cultural items that are to be returned to Yugoslavia under the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty. Furthermore, the 1975 Osimo Treaty did not contain any restitution clauses.

Apart from this, it has been stressed that the legal status of the evacuated cultural property was not equal, since it comprised objects of state, private and ecclesiastic property. After the Second World War, many private owners fled to Italy. In a similar way, the property of Italian Catholic parishes was entirely transferred together with the local communities. For instance, it happened that a convent, from which the artworks were taken in 1940, was subsequently closed and relocated to Italy by the communist government of the SFRY. Thus, the rightful owners of the paintings were no longer domiciled in the ceded territory. Finally, some Italian politicians argued that the artworks in question are monuments of Italian culture and were created by Italian communities illegally expatriated from the ceded territories. Thus, the exposition of the Italian artworks in Trieste could be the only acceptable solution.

In this context, it appears essential to quote the response given by Famiano Crucianelli, Under-Secretary in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the parliamentary interpellation of 19 February 2007 (Jakubowski 2010: 236-237). Referring to the on-going talks with Slovenia and

to the possibility of formal negotiations on the status of the Istrian treasures, as agreed in 1975, the Under-Secretary argued that Italy was under no international obligation imposing the restitution of the objects concerned, since they had been transported within the territory of Italy. Consequently, Italy was free to change the place of their preservation on the basis of the domestic regime for the protection of national patrimony. Moreover, the evacuation had been concluded prior to war operations. Therefore, the question of the removal of the Istrian treasures could not be examined in light of the international regime on the protection of cultural property in the event of war, according to which cultural property unlawfully displaced under occupation has to be returned to its place of origin. Finally, the question of the Istrian treasures could not, in any case, be discussed in terms of due restitution. It could, however, be seen in the broader framework of bilateral negotiations in matters of cultural relations, enjoyment and access to the objects in question, their conservation, study and research.

A much more emotional response was given by the Under-Secretary in the Italian Ministry of Culture, Vittorio Sgarbi, who on various occasions expressed the view that the disputed artworks were "completely Italian". Therefore, they should belong to their cultural heirs – Italian exiles from the ceded territories. In this regard, Sgarbi recalled the cases of repatriation of cultural items to indigenous communities who created them. Accordingly, he invoked the significance of the linkage between art treasures and the memory of displaced human communities. For these reasons, the return of the evacuated art treasures to Istria would be against the dignity of exiles and such a sacrifice cannot be demanded by the Italians, Slavs or the entire international community (Sgarbi 2005: 40-41).

The principle of cultural co-operation

The controversy between Italy and Slovenia illustrates just how emotionally and politically marked the question of the allocation of cultural property in state succession can be. Undoubtedly, the disputed artworks removed from public institutions and museums are territorially linked to the Istrian municipalities under the sovereignty of Slovenia. Therefore, the legal argumentation of Italy is not convincing in certain aspects. Even if one accepts the argument that the obligation to return the cultural objects under Art. 12 of the 1947 Peace Treaty does not apply to the artworks removed by Italy from Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste, it does not, however, exclude the right of Slovenia to the state cultural property of these territories. In such cases, the successor state would be entitled to claim the reintegration of its cultural treasures, based on the rudimentary principle of territoriality. In addition, Yugoslavia and Italy, during the bilateral negations at Osimo in 1975, agreed that the issues relating to cultural property, works of art, and archives pertaining to the Free Territory of Trieste needed to be considered. As mentioned, such negotiations have never produced any effect and the evacuated objects have remained carefully hidden for more than sixty years in wooden crates. Nowadays, Slovenia can invoke both treaties as well as an exchange of letters between the SFRY and Italy.

However, it must be stressed that the art treasures from Istria can by no means be treated as property looted or unlawfully displaced during war. The majority of objects were evacuated by the Italian administration in 1940 from the territories under Italian sovereignty for preservation reasons and in conformity with the law applicable at the time of removal. In this regard, the

Italian position needs to be fully supported. In addition, the collective rights of the exiles to control their cultural heritage need to be taken into account.

It appears that in respect of issues such as the status of 'Istria's Jewels', the best way of settling the claims is through close international cultural co-operation. Importantly, current interstate practice shows that actual agreements in respect of the fate of tangible cultural property may find a wide range of solutions based on international cultural cooperation, far beyond mere allocation and distribution considerations. From the above listed legal positions of Italy and Slovenia, it appears that both states consider this solution as a certain compromise, perhaps within the broader framework of the protection of European heritage. Indeed, the cultural legacy of Venice is of great importance to the entire Western civilization, beyond nation-oriented considerations. Thus, it seems crucial to enable the study of these masterpieces *in situ*, taking as a point of reference the entirety of artistic and symbolic programmes, whose essential part constitutes the artworks in question. This would lead to the recovery of the historical and artistic context of Venetian art. Such an approach would also be in line with international standards, postulating the preservation of cultural property in its places of origin. In technical terms, both states could apply the policies of long-term deposits and loan exchanges. Yet it needs be recognized that the receiving state (Slovenia) shall be obliged to provide adequate measures of protection and conservation. Moreover, it seems crucial that Italy, representing the communities who created the artworks, and Slovenia, the country of origin (historical context), would jointly decide on the exposition, management and common narrative of the history of the Venetian municipalities in Istria. If such requirements *were fulfilled, the* case of Istria's jewels would contribute to the intercultural dialogue and final post-conflict reconciliation of both nations.

Final remarks

The legal regime on the allocation of cultural property in cases of state succession and it is founded on two interconnected, though often conflicting, principles: territorial provenance (origin) of cultural assets and human linkage with such material. The concept of territoriality arises from the triad: nation-territory-cultural heritage is essentially rooted in the idea of European nation-state. In the last fifty years, the principle of territoriality was however accommodated within the framework of the preservation of cultural heritage. The linkage between these two principles is crucial, as the protection of cultural property in its original historical, geographical and cultural contexts constitutes one of the major fundaments of international cultural heritage law. Therefore, the settlements on the allocation of cultural material need to be balanced by the local or regional value of a given object.

Arguably, such territorial and protective approaches do not take into account the interest of a number of stakeholders, other than states. In other words, they do not refer to the value of cultural heritage for society, *i.e.* the human cultural communities, groups and individuals that have created or maintained a given heritage and who therefore may have an interest in not rescinding such human link because of territorial vicissitudes and changes involved in state succession. The above-described case-studies have shown that the territorial principle can be fully applied only in the cases of state succession processes, which do not cause any rupture between cultural communities and their heritage. Inversely, the allocation of cultural treasures in the situations that affect profound ethnic and nationals configurations cannot be easily solved without involving

painful consequences for cultural communities. How can these conflicting interests be reconciled? Is the principle of territoriality, derived both from international norms on state succession and cultural heritage protection, already challenged by the emerging human-oriented principle of the enjoyment of cultural heritage?

It appears, that nowadays the promotion of cross-border cultural relations may create a convenient platform for settling more difficult problems that originate from past displacements of cultural material or other cultural injustices. Moreover, the practice of amicable cultural agreements also provides and facilitates mutual protection and preservation of tangible cultural heritage situated in respective territories of the states involved. Thus, the objective of protection and access to cultural heritage becomes more and more relevant to the processes of state succession.

In this context, the role of national museums is fundamental as they often constitute the reservoirs of the values significant for a given national community and its heritage, and also physically preserve the majority of disputed items. Thus, the policies applied by such institutions in terms of access, joint custody and management, and long-term deposits may provide indispensable tools for cultural, national, ethnic and political reconciliation in cases of state succession.

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Conflicts, Borders and Nationalism:
The Fiume Archive-Museum in Rome

Ilaria Porciani (University of Bologna)

Abstract

The Fiume Museum in Rome offers at first sight nothing spectacular and certainly does not qualify as 'national'. However, it can help focusing from a new perspective on the construction of an (imagined) community and the role of museums to build cohesion and identity; the process of constructing material heritage in order to materialize the nation and crystallize a center for the community; the construction of an historical narrative on traumas, identities, national belonging and contested heritages.

Moreover, following the story of this museum helps consider the politics of memory as often overlapping with a clear public use of history. Two examples are perfect cases in point. D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume 1920– technically speaking a putsch against the will of the Italian government and international diplomacy – was a powerful rhetoric tool in Mussolini's hands. It created a myth while the battle was taking place: the so called 'bloody Christmas, the heroic sacrifice of Fiume's defenders - in short the myth of the 'mutilated victory'.

Even more than Istria, Fiume is a synecdoche for Italian nationalism. After World War II the birth of the Fiume museum and the activity of the Istrian and Dalmatian community was deeply connected with the violent memory war on the *foibe* – the natural pits in the carsick area where about 3000 victims of political violence were thrown (dead or still alive) from 1943 to 1945). In 2004 – under the second Berlusconi government – a special law created the day of the memory of the *Foibe* victims.

Borders

The little Fiume Museum and archive is located in Via Antonio Cippico, at the edge of Rome Laurentina, beyond EUR, thus distant from the monumental buildings representing the nation, and even further away from the city of Fiume itself, located on the eastern coast of the Adriatic and now belonging to Yugoslavia under the name of Rijeka. Why, therefore, start from this periphery to discuss historical narratives related to nation? And why, therefore, end up in a small apartment where one has to ring the bell – only in the afternoon – in order to be let in into a still unfinished and quite provisional museum to see objects which can hardly compete with the treasures of heritage to be seen just a few miles away – a museum which exhibits nothing spectacular at first sight?

After World War II a number of displaced persons from Fiume as well as from Istria and Dalmatia had been housed in the hangars where the workers had provisionally lived during the construction of EUR. Today, this area, called the 'Giuliano Dalmata' district recalls in every street name or monument the 'exodus' that followed the war. There, starting in 1956, the displaced persons assembled diverse items such as printed documents and manuscripts, replicas, paintings, parcels of tombstones and even earth and water from Fiume's sea and rivers, thus laying the cornerstone of a site of memory and pain but also of research: the Archivio Museo Storico di Fiume. In fact, although it does not qualify as 'national', and although it is rather peripheral, this institution can help focus from a less obvious perspective on a number of issues: the (re)construction of an (imagined) community and the role of museums in building cohesion and identity; the process of constructing material heritage in order to materialize the nation and crystallize a centre for a dispersed community; the construction of a historical narrative on traumas, identities, national belonging and contested heritages.

It can also help reconsider different kinds of borders: primarily, geo-political borders and their perception, in an area that has been one of disputed borders – not without fierce conflicts. If this is true for Istria as a whole, it is perhaps even more so for Fiume, the important port on the Mediterranean that enjoyed the status of *Corpus separatum* (separated body) under the Hungarian Crown from the late eighteenth century and was again, after being occupied by the French, restored to the Habsburg empire. Given its importance and its peculiarity, the city enjoyed a highly distinctive status, being defined a 'porto franco', or else it was granted different kinds of autonomy even when it was once again annexed to the Hungarian crown in 1867, shortly after the *Ausgleich*.

Secondly, account should be taken of the borders perceived as essentially ethnic. However, we should also bear in mind the peculiarity of this frontier area, which has constituted for a long time a somewhat hybrid space of multiethnic realities, as recognized by the more serious scholarship. Thirdly, social borders also need to be taken into account. While in Istria they seem to clearly overlap with the ones perceived as ethnic, in Fiume matters are more complicated and intertwined. Fourthly, linguistic boundaries were extremely important in Fiume because they were crucial when the city became Italian under fascism and underwent, along with other areas of Istria, a radical policy of italianisation. Later, the linguistic borders were to play a decisive role in the attribution of the population to one or the other state, after World War II, in the bitter struggle between Italy and Yugoslavia. But these linguistic borders were much more porous than usually described, given that the frontier was (and usually is) a place of multiple linguistic usages.

Other boundaries are involved: those between research and public use (and often abuse) of history. The narrative developed around Fiume figures prominently in Italy's memory wars. In recent decades it has played a crucial role in the revisionist discourse put forward in the press and among historians, as well as in the political agenda of the Right. A great deal of the right-wing and neo-fascist demonstrations from the 1950s to the 1970s revolved around the question of Fiume, of Istria, and the *foibe* – the Karst pits into which Italians were thrown dead or alive in the last phase of the war and shortly thereafter – and of the revision of the borders with particular attention to the so-called B-zone (occupied by Yugoslavia and including Fiume, while the A-zone was an area of Anglo-American occupation). Moreover, it was around the issue of the *foibe* that the historical revisionism became a matter of political discourse, public history, and public use of history. This issue was one of those most closely embraced by neo-fascist and right wing politicians, while the Left was for a very long time silent.

Thus Fiume, after having been connected after World War I with events of high political significance for Italian nationalism and fascism, was again frequently in the headlines during early 2000 when the debate concentrated on the issue of a new memorial law on the *foibe* broke out. It was then that the transition from an almost private memory of the exiles to a public memory, recognized by the state, was accomplished. Following the July 20th, 2000 law instituting the day of memory (named 'giorno della memoria' in order to commemorate the Shoah and the many Italian soldiers and activists deported to concentration camps), the new law devoted to remembrance (it: 'giorno del ricordo') was enacted on March the 30th. It indicated February 10th (UN resolution on the free territory of Trieste) as the day of the remembrance in memory of the victims of the *foibe*.

In this regard, it is worthwhile adopting, as Giovanni De Luna has done (2011), a 'wide-angle lens' that broadly encompasses the proliferation – not only in Italy – of days of memory and the relative laws, and the endeavour at least since the Ciampi presidency to solicit the construction of a shared memory. It will suffice, again drawing on what De Luna has written, to highlight the stages of a debate that well illustrates the coalescence of different interests around these issues. On 26 October 2001 the *Alleanza Nazionale* deputy Roberto Menia, former leader of the youth movement connected with the Movimento Sociale Italiano in Trieste, presented a first proposal for 'granting recognition to the relatives of the *foibe* victims', commemorating the defence of Italy's eastern border by army detachments such as the X Mas or Mussolini's *bersaglieri* battalion. Menia also proposed the institution of a day of memory on January the 20th to commemorate 10 January 1947. The centre-left instead advocated March the 20th, the day of departure of the last fugitives from Pola. In fact, the day finally selected commemorated not so much the *foibe* victims as the 'diktat' of Paris and the 'cynical and criminal intent of the victors'. A close reading of these texts shows that apparently at stake was not the issue of *foibe* but rather the painful matter of the borders. The debate was also joined by a rather reluctant left, which promoted a reading of the law in terms of 'shared memory' (the expression used by senator Milos Budin quoting the secretary of the Democratici di Sinistra, Piero Fassino. Interestingly enough, as Giovanni De Luna also pointed out, the political debate almost completely ignored the results of historical scholarship, citing only generic and imprecise sources and historical evidence – as is often the case of the double track of the public use of history and the historians' work. Thus only those few who advanced concerns and doubts about the opportuneness of enacting this new memorial

law cited the documentation produced by the Italian-Slovene commission or the *Quaderni della resistenza* published by the regional committee of Venezia Giulia.

In the public arena, this issue never lost its strong polemical character (De Luna: 2011), as is clear from the posters of right-wing activists calling for demonstrations on remembrance day, and which were often ripped up by left-wing activists. To provide just one example, in January 2012 a meeting on the *foibe* promoted by the right-wing activist group *Studenti per la Libertà* was banned by the deans of the political sciences faculty in Florence for fear that it would cause a riot. However, other borders are involved, such as those dividing disciplines. This would first entail adopting a museum studies approach together with the historical one.

Moreover, the issues at stake here are extremely sensitive, and require the use of other tools. Feelings of belonging and loss are crucial, as well as a constant confrontation with death and its representations. Eradication and fragmentation marked the destiny of a community that had to choose whether to remain under very difficult conditions or to leave (and few of them experienced distant exile in the USA or Australia). But estrangement marked also the lives of those who stayed in Italy and were often made to feel unwelcome, facing hostility, mistrust, misunderstanding, embarrassment, and subject to rancor if not open discrimination, likened to fascists or aliens. It will therefore be helpful to employ the instruments of anthropology, as Pamela Ballinger has done in her excellent book. This helps to deal with the above issues and to frame a broader context of public use of history and communication for the *foibe* drama. For instance, she observes the usefulness of the contiguous domain of documentary films, such as the one produced by Claudio Schwarzenburg, head of the Comune di Fiume in Esilio, which draws heavily on wartime propaganda films. Hence the last border considered here is the highly permeable one between history and anthropology.

Fiume: a synecdoche for Italian nationalism

Fiume is a microcosm of all the themes of nationalism, going back to its complex relationship with the Habsburg Empire. Moreover, the case of Fiume is a perfect demonstration of the classic issues of protonationalism (from religion to ethnic identity). It focuses on the most terrible traumas as well as the difficult relationship with a nearby fatherland that is at the same time very distant. It is for many reasons a synecdoche, a perfect case in point of Italian nationalism outside of Italy.

It is useful to recall the sequence of events for a non-Italian audience. The Italian national council proclaimed Fiume to be Italian on the 30th of October 1918, after the end of the war and the abandonment of the city by the Austrian. President Wilson opposed the proclamation and ordered the grenadiers to abandon Fiume. In May 1919 seven grenadier officers assembled and swore to liberate Fiume or die in the attempt. In September 1919, the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio reached Fiume, which he had chosen for a demonstrative action of exceptional impact. He constructed an intense and dramatic, solemn and sacred occasion around the 'Christmas of Blood' in which the battleship Andrea Doria, captained by admiral Thaon de Revel, shelled the city. This was not merely another dramatic episode replicated in a narrative of great intensity. It was also, as Cattaruzza amongst others has written, a sort of trial putsch that subsequently would be of great benefit to the fascists, who perpetuated the memory of this episode. The so-called 'Regency of Carnaro' proclaimed on 8 September 1920 came to a sudden end. The Treaty of

Rapallo between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was signed on the 12th of November, 1920. Fiume was to be abandoned. On December 28th, in face of the 'express threat of bombardment intended for the total destruction of the civil population' (Ballarini, Stelli, Micich, Loria, 2010), 'Commander' D'Annunzio resigned.

However, between Italy or Yugoslavia there was a third option: that proposed by the *indipendentisti* a group mindful of Fiume's ancient status as a free city. From 1920 to 1922, they created a free state of Fiume, which finally had to surrender to the annexationists. The constituent assembly went into exile at Portolè, protected by the king of Yugoslavia, and Fiume was annexed to Italy in 1924. When Fiume, Istria and Dalmatia were annexed, the fascist regime imposed the forced Italianization of the language and the education system, and even of surnames, which were mangled into Italianized versions. But it was during the Second World War and immediately thereafter that Fiume – as well as Istria – was again a contested territory riven by conflict. It became a war zone from the moment Italy declared war on Yugoslavia (1941). In 1945 Tito's partisans entered the city of Fiume. The *foibe* – as said, the Karst pits into which were thrown, often after being bitterly humiliated and tortured, so many men and women who certainly were not all fascists or compromised with the past regime – were only the tragic tip of the iceberg (Cattaruzza, Dogo, Pupo: 2000; Pupo 2003). Subsequently, the long exodus from Fiume merged with those from Istria and Dalmatia. Despite further proposals of a free state – rejected by Yugoslavia – the story concluded with the imposition of a hard choice on the inhabitants. They were granted, not the right to self-determination, but only the choice between the two states, a choice determined by language, and other obvious and perhaps also less obvious constraints. As regards Fiume, which in 1945 had 47,839 inhabitants, around 80% of the population chose exodus.

In regard to this episode, the concept of a 'black exodus' beginning after 8 September 1943 when the former fascists abandoned Istria has been advanced, but it is much debated and by now discarded by the most attentive historiography. Pupo argues that, while in Zara the exodus was an evacuation caused by the bombing, in Fiume the autonomists were attacked even more when they were antifascist as they could more easily claim to play an important role. Consequently, such professional groups as trade unionists, for example, were also liquidated.

More recently, the concept of exodus has also been contested, as well as the possibility of using the terms of genocide or ethnic cleansing (obviously non-neutral notions propounded by particular constituencies) in reference to this exodus. The idea of applying the more correct concept of forced transfer of a population, within the context of a much more extensive phenomenon that involved central-eastern Europe in its entirety, has also been put forward.

Whilst the long exodus of the Italian population of Istria and Dalmatia corresponds fully to other histories of forced migrations, it also has a particular feature. 'A population identifiable at national level and which was once politically, economically and socially dominant in a multinational territory', it has recently been written, 'was liquidated and forced to emigrate, not unlike what happened to the Poles of western Ukraine or to the Germans of the Bohemian provinces. Nevertheless, even if the final outcome was substantially similar, the events were more complex (also because they were much more protracted than in other cases)' (Ferrara and Pianciola, 2012: 357). Accords among states for the transfer of the population and expulsion

measures were lacking and there were no precise plans for 'cleansing' these areas of Italians. But there were specific pressures both political and social that clearly applied to the Italians.

I have gained useful insights for this study from reflection on how, in other parts of the world, symbolic acts and joint commemorations have been constructed so that reconciliation is at the centre of complex and necessary practices. Reference to South Africa's Day of Reconciliation on December the 16th as well as to the district six museum in Cape Town (Mceachern, 1998) seems apposite. In relation to Istria and Fiume one must consider what happened and what remained 'after the violence' – to quote the title of a fine book by Triulzi – and one must deal with a traumatic past of repressions. Sometimes the practices that have produced Museums and that in turn are produced by them and rotate around them, can be a way of coming to terms with a traumatic past without becoming imprisoned by it. Recourse to a concept like that of 'source community' may help to bring into focus the essence of the museum as a source of identity both for the community that produced the items conserved in museums or collected them (a community as a source) and their descendants (Peers, and Brown: 2003). In short, one must think about such practices as a dual movement, a two-sided relationship, in constant dialogue between museum curators, even though they have been solicited or directed to various extents by politics, and successive generations. Finally, one should not underestimate the outcomes of dialogue and research undertaken by museums such as the museum-archive in its dialogue with its Croatian counterpart.

A lost fatherland: the Fiume Archive-Museum in Rome.

> The Yugoslav communist regime rewrote history after 1945 as if from year zero, and, going back in time, it systematically cancelled everything that did not correspond to the ideological vision propounded as the 'democratic and progressive' truth . In Fiume, everything was brutally erased, beginning with the symbols that for centuries, under all political dominations, had marked the city's identity: its coat of arms, the two-headed eagle and the Latin motto, the flag of the city, its patron saints, all place names (not just the few introduced by fascism), and so on. Furthermore, in 1948, a Yugoslav government decree unified Fiume with the Croatian Susak. The new Rijeka was to have nothing to do with the historic Fiume, which had never existed. Only the Croatian Rijeka had ever done so, and removed from it, moreover, was anything that might disturb the coherent ideological rewriting of its history, such as, for example, the great tradition of Croatian Catholicism. In short, it was necessary not only to erase the historic Italian presence in the city and to reduce the multiethnic and multicultural Fiume to Rijeka, but also to recast Croatian Rijeka according to the new Marxist-Leninist canons (Stelli:2010).

This passage immediately furnishes – *a posteriori* – an interpretative key to the standpoint of the founders of the Fiume Archive- Museum.

Fig. 1: Overview of the presentation at the Fiume Museum. Photo: Ilaria Porciani.

The museum was created as an act of exhumation, reassembly, reconstruction and recovery of a memory and an identity, but also of a lost materiality. It is a place of memory that starts from objects and fragments saved from destruction. These are the things that remained after the loss, and they can be described as relics. Significantly, the museum does not contain only manufactured items. Stones, soil, even water from the Gulf of Quarnaro and the River Eneo are integral parts of the exhibition and of the discourse on the roots of the national belonging. Stones are also present outside the Museum as monuments. This is the case of the Karst boulder taken from the battlefields of 1915-18 placed in front of the Casa della bambina Giuliano Dalmata, the house of the little girl from Dalmatia and Venezia Giulia and unveiled on the fourth of November 1961, the day after the 'day of victory'. Equally central, dominant and constant is the presence of death, essentially (but not only) as bereavement to be assimilated, or rather sublimated into a religious process narrated as an ordeal: an educative death, a *morte educante* (teaching death), as in the title of an important article written by Marino Raicich, of Fiume origin. Fiume (D'Annunzio's 'Fiume of Italy') is at the centre of the discourse but subsumes the entire story of exile and death. It comes as no surprise when the visitor is confronted in the first room of the museum with a caption describing World War I as the 'War of Redemption' .

The website explicitly states that the museum revolves around a *sacrario* – a 'sacred memorial' – commemorating the people from Venezia Giulia and Dalmatia 'fallen for their Italian fatherland'. The objects that immediately confront the visitors most succinctly and symbolically recount the story of the nation: the soil, the language, the religion. And, of course, the flags and their colours replicated in numerous forms, until the last Italian flag taken away from Fiume.

Even before one's eyes dazzled by the bright light of early afternoon in Rome have adjusted to the gloom of the museum, one sees stones and soil, with mess-tins from the First World War and a cross. To the right is the statue of St. Vito, the Fiuman saint (in truth, recovered not from the city on the Quarnaro but from the first church dedicated to the patron saint and constructed in the Julian-Dalmatian village of Rome). It partially conceals a 1924 manifesto extolling the fascist annexation and Mussolini. To the left is an enormous, looming bust of Dante, the father of the language and so influential in forging the identity of the Italians, but also the figure to whom the Società Dante Alighieri, so decisive (on several occasions) in mobilizing the irredentists, was dedicated.

Fig. 2: The bust of Dante Alghieri. Photo: Ilaria Porciani.

Fig. 3: *Un mondo che non existe più.* **Collage by Massimo Gustovich. Photo: Ilaria Porciani.**

Further on, more stones. Small fragments are attached to the summit of a collage produced by Massimo Gustovich and entitled *Natale Fiumano*. To call this touching painting 'material' is inadequate. Combined with the photographs of monuments that frame a Christmas tree are ampoules containing water from the Gulf of Quarnaro and the River Eneo, shells, sand and shards of rock.

Fig. 4: A fragment from Fiume's eagle symbol. Photo: Ilaria Porciani.

On the ground floor, there are other stones, this time engraved: fragments chiselled from the 'indeficienter' inscribed in the Fiume coat of arms, an enormous bas-relief map of the city of Fiume and its gulf created by E. Bombig in 1899 and one of the first donations to the museum by his niece Maria Bombig exiled in Varese; a fragment from Fiume's eagle symbol set on the civic tower demolished by the Yugoslav occupants after their entry into the city on 3 May 1943;

and then street numbers also bearing the Italian names of streets and alleys recalling the relationship with Venice: Viale delle Brazza, Calle dei Pescatori, Salita del Ricovero; the memory of Romanity – Calle Arco Romano – the relationship with the patron saint Piazza San Vito – and the D'Annunzian epic: Viale dei Legionari. Toponymy in Fiume (as in many other countries of central Europe) underwent violence, and exhibiting fragments of the Italian names subsequently banned serves to affirm and revitalize memory. The museum's curators date the donation of the street numbers with Italian toponomy to the period following the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, when fragments still remaining in less frequented and dilapidated back lanes of Fiume were recovered.

Death – as we shall see in the conclusions – is constantly present, and it is a recurrent *leitmotif* throughout the entire museum.

Objects telling a story: from the most ancient times to the 'Diet of Nobody'

The narrative proceeds in chronological order interspersed with thematic parentheses. The initial texts are very modest and indicative of an evident shortage of means that has long marked the museum, recognized as an archive of exceptional historical interest and therefore endowed with public funds in 2004. They deal with history over a long period. One of the first captions briefly alludes to the existence of the Illyrian tribes of the Giapidi and Liburni who "from the most ancient times had inhabited the region bordering on the Quarnaro when the legions of Caius Sempronus Tutinus began the conquest (129 BC) which was completed under Octavian. A wall was constructed from the foothills of the Julian Alps to the River Eneo in defence of Roman Istria". Other captions inform the visitor that Tarsatica was already the centre of the Liburnia when the barbarians invaded in the sixth century, 'without, however, overwhelming the coastal towns and the strongholds of the interior, which preserved their freedom'. In around 800, Charlemagne destroyed Tarsatica, but later, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the 'terra sancti Viti ad Flumen' arose from its ruins.

The tension between the Latins of the coast and the Slavs of the interior as stressed, for example, by the current curator Marino Micich in his study on Fiume, does not seem emphasised in the museum, even if – as Ernesto Sestan pointed out – the Roman characteristics of the area were probably able to survive because the civil inferiority of the Croatian dominators meant that the dominated were left with substantial autonomy (Sestan: 42).

> Meanwhile constituted in the twelfth century – as in the rest of Italy – was the Commune, and after various vicissitudes Fiume passed to the Habsburgs in 1465. The commune grew in strength and the official language was curial Latin, while the populace spoke the Venetian vernacular.

Very little is said about early modern times, nor about the eighteenth and nineteenth century history of Fiume – and partly Istria and Dalmatia – and no reference is made to the complex coexistence of various ethnic groups that Ernesto Sestan emphasised in his book on Venezia Giulia. This book, it is worth mentioning, was extremely non-partisan and made no concession to the then virulent nationalist rhetoric, despite being originally written in 1947 at the invitation of De Gasperi to oppose arguments against the tendentious memoirs of the Split lawyer Josip Smodlaka, foreign minister under Marshal Tito.

> Glance at some document on the demographic composition of the city, at the surnames of the patrician families or the citizenship registers; you will see a variegated inventory of surnames, Italian, Croatian or of indefinable origin, nothing comparable with the impression of authentic Italianness that one gains, upon conducting the same investigation, in the Istrian towns, or even Trieste, or with the evident coexistence of Germans and Italians and Slovenes in Gorizia, in relation to different social categories. In Fiume the tangle of nationalities seems to bear no relationship to the social status of individuals: one finds Italian, Slavs, Germans among the patriciate, among the middle class, and among the plebes. Even more than the Triestians in Trieste, the Fiumans in Fiume had to feel essentially, entirely Fiuman and to be bilingual or trilingual according to relations among the towns, although the German influence seems rather weak compared with Italian and Slavic (Sestan, 1997: 67).

The museum does not insist on these aspects, but prefers to introduce the history of the city with the aid of some eighteenth-century views and its large collection of passports from the legacy of Anthonio Allazzetta – a Fiuman – donated to the museum by his sons Amedeo and Anteo, by the 1960s successful professionals in Genoa. A series of advertisements and photographs of shops and cafes, theatres and clubs provide an overview of Fiume's commercial life and of Italian sociability in the city.

Further references to the history of Istria concern the Dieta del Nessuno (Diet of Nobody), the episode commonly interpreted as the strong assertion of Italianness. In the crucial year of Italian unification – 1861 – as the Vienna government awaited the election of deputies from the Istrian *Landtag*, the latter protested twice by nominating 'Nessuno' (nobody). The episode was a moment of great visibility for the Italian propensity of the Istrians.

Instead, no mention is made of 1848, even though it was a turning point, since it was the year in which the Croatians occupied the city. As Ernesto Sestan explains with his usual precision: 'they resorted to force in order to assert their claims on Fiume, taking advantage of a situation that made them paladins of the Viennese government against the Hungarians of Budapest.' The *Memorie* of Carlos De Franceschi, who witnessed the events (Sestan: 84 -85), emphasise the class-based nature of the ethnic oppositions that was by those years already visible. The Croatian peasants accompanied by their women joined the soldiers as they entered the city to pillage it. They came holding large bags, and went first to the expensive shops on the main street. On the other hand, the hostility of the Italian population was directed against the Croatian gymnasium, the institution that in the eyes of the citizenry represented the principal factor of Slavization.

The city was occupied by the Croatians until 1867, when the Fiumans welcomed Hungary's protection by averting the risk of falling under Croatia's domination, and they were compensated to the extent that they continued to enjoy some form of autonomy since the city never lost its status of separate body. In the thirty years between Fiume's re-incorporation into Hungary to the celebrations of the millennium, the identity of the citizens was essentially hybrid: they all felt themselves to be "as much Fiuman as Hungarian citizens" (Volpi, 51-3). But at the end of the century, amid greater Hungarian centralization, conflicts arose between Italians and Hungarians. They centred on the gymnasium when the governor became president of the textbooks control committee, and the teachers were subjected to closer supervision.

From Italian Nationalism to a 'Vain Hope'

The section devoted to the school is relatively large in both the museum and the archive. It consists mainly of legacies of educational material, often produced by women, most of whom

were primary school mistresses or at any rate teachers, who continued to cultivate the memory of the exodus through teaching activities which involved their pupils during the years of exile (Micich 2010). Particularly well exemplified by exhibits is the activity of the Hungarian schools. Gemma Harasim, the Fiuman teacher who was a contributor to the authoritative journal *La Voce* and wife of the eminent pedagogist Lucio Lombardo Radice, highlighted the distinctive nature of Fiume's educational system: after the Italian elementary schools, the children had to attend the 'city schools' in which both the German and Hungarian languages were compulsory. The languages were "imposed by the government, which had created a fictitious need for them through their introduction in all the institutions dependent upon it". But even at a time of incipient tensions, Gemma Harasim emphasised in 1909 in the pedagogic periodical *I Nuovi Doveri*, that this trilingualism could be "a spur to mental activity, a reinforcement of memory, a healthy intellectual exercise" (quoted in Sistoli Paoli 2010: 23-56).

Given its story, it comes as no surprise to find that the museum closely follows the history of Fiuman nationalism, starting from the first years of the century.

As one of the explanatory panels states fierce polemics ensued between the Italian and Hungarian newspapers. The commune opposed the Hungarian schools with its own Italian ones, and numerous patriotic clubs were created, such as the *Casino Patriottico*, the *Circolo Italia*, the *Club Alpino Fiumano*, and the *Canottieri Eneo*. The periodical *La Giovane Fiume* was founded.

In 1907 also founded was *l'Italia all'Estero*, which forcefully denounced rapid Magyarization and the Hungarian nationalist policy (Volpi 2003: 47). In 1912, the *Giovane Fiume* society – whose activities are documented in the museum with objects and flags – organized a pilgrimage from the Julian towns to the tomb of Dante in Ravenna, where Icilio Bacci made a speech to Italianness. "The association [the caption states with an emotive use of the present tense] is dissolved, Bacci is exiled, and the government introduces the state police so loathed by the Italians of Fiume."

The D'Annunzian phase is rightly preceded in the museum by a lesser known episode that also introduces the theme of the aspiration to a free state of Fiume: in October 1918, in fact, the Fiume deputy Andrea Ossoinack had demanded that the separate body of Fiume be granted self-determination. But most of the exhibits consist of photographs of volunteers and Roman 'legionaries', of funeral ceremonies in honour of the victims of the 'Christmas of Blood', of proclamations, orations, and D'Annunzian texts, as well as newspapers and banners that convey the entire rhetoric of the 'Fiume of Italy' preached by the poet. Of enormous size – but partly concealed by the already-mentioned statue of Saint Vito – is the poster of January 1924 addressing the "Citizens of Fiume!" immediately after the Nettuno Convention which completed definition of the frontiers between the kingdom of the Croatian Serbs and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Italy. This gigantic poster, celebrating not only D'Annunzio but also the Roman genius of Mussolini, was signed by various political parties (*Partito Nazionale Fascista*, *Partito Popolare* and *Partito Nazionale Democratico*) and movements such as the *Arditi*, but also by such diverse associations as the *Gioventù Cattolica* and the Masonic lodges, the Red Cross and the *Dame della Carità*, as well as by the federations of teachers and workers, and organizations like the *Club Alpino Italiano*. The poster concludes by declaiming: "We hereupon raise our first salute to our Dead, and in their glorious name we pledge our endeavour to work for their ordained greatness". The rhetoric on Fiume – here as elsewhere in the museum – is that of nationalism and of fascism:

"There is no point recalling the vicissitudes of our anguished and faithful waiting. Our thoughts instead go to those radiant youths who gave their lives for the glory of this day".

Fig. 5: "Citizens of Fiume!". Photo: Ilaria Porciani.

The sequence concludes with an even more dramatic poster: that of 15 June 1946, which recalls the forced abandonment and the fear at the onset of the Yugoslavian occupation: "The women and infants of Fiume implore you: Defend us! Save us! We can withstand no longer. Spies, police terror, arrests, also the anti-fascists struck down". Thus introduced is the photographic sequence relative to the Yugoslav occupation.

Considerable space is devoted to the often-neglected story of the free State of Fiume. The story is told with the help of documents and objects, engravings, announcements of public rallies, newspapers and photographs of Riccardo Zanella, head of the Fiuman autonomist party, and of its leading representative, Mario Blasich (1878-1945), a doctor and politician, deserter from the Habsburg army who fought with the Italians in the First World War. The Fiuman autonomists were regarded as extremely dangerous by the Yugoslaves, who feared their great influence. Blasich was killed, and so were other leaders of the movement.

Also testifying to the protracted campaign for a free state of Fiume rooted in the Habsburgian privileges and the city's history is a poster of the Movement for the Free State of Fiume placed next to a flag on a pole which protrudes until it almost grazes the visitor. This poster, which after the Second World War, appealed to America, stated there could be "no doubt as to the honesty of the America fatally become our protectress". The struggle to maintain Fiume's status as a free city was doomed to failure, however.

> Unfortunately Minister De Gasperi must fight his battle with his hands tied because all the parties that form the government coalition support the rights of our city. He has therefore had to start his defence of the Italian rights from the Wilson line, rather than from the much more legally valid basis of the Treaty of Rapallo. Hence our cause is compromised from the outset. Nevertheless, I believe that not all hope is lost. [letter addressed to deputy Andrea Ossineck exhibited in the Museum]

In conclusion, a panel questions what has been termed "A Vain Hope":

> Of no use are the desperate efforts of the CLN in Pola and Trieste as they battle both locally and in Paris and Rome, where main points of effective support are the Julian Committee and the Dalmatian Assistance Committee. The 'market' among the great powers is in fact already settled. After Fiume, Zara and the islands, allocated at the outset to Yugoslavia, it is the Istrians that, with the 'French line', bear the weight of the sword of Brennus thrown on the scales of Italian reparations.

Fig. 6: *Foibe* in Istria. Photo: Ilaria Porciani.

The tone of the captions is obviously impassioned, and the language resounds with the painfilled Fiuman rhetoric. The photographs of the *foibe* bear an eloquent title: "Genocide".

Death is constantly present. It is present in the rather few photographs of corpses recovered from the *foibe* and laid on the ground while waiting to be identified. But it is also present in the photographic documentation that recalls the departure – on the ship Toscana – of the coffin containing the mortal remains of Nazario Sauro, carried away at the time of the exodus. Sauro

had deserted from the Habsburg navy and been executed. He was considered a martyr in Italian Fiume. The caption is striking. "Images of the exodus. The dead depart as well".

Fig. 7: "Images of the exodus. The dead depart as well". Photo: Ilaria Porciani.

Death is also expressly narrated as holocaust. It is present in D'Annunzio's speeches, in the celebration of the holocaust, in the depiction of Istria as encircled by a crown of thorns, and also in a series of recent paintings, not all of artistic value but nevertheless messages of pain. Other panels narrate the composite history of abandonment and loss also in terms of monumental landscapes and cultural heritage. "What These People Have Left" is the title of a section that emphasises the Roman and Venetian architecture in Fiume and Istria.

The donors

The objects taken with them by exiles were surprising at times, and not always small. The DVD *Vivere in Esilio. Memorie del Villaggio Giuliano-Dalmata di Roma* edited by Emiliano Loria and produced in 2010 by the *Associazione per la Cultura Fiumana Istriana e Dalmata* of Lazio shows the abundance of household utensils left in a Trieste warehouse by those who departed. These are objects of everyday life, even very modest ones like small implements, but also bedside tables, desks – and even an astonishingly large quantity of entirely normal chairs, certainly of no great value, and today one might find it surprising to see what the exiles took the trouble to take with them. Evidently, there was a strong desire not to leave anything behind, to take everything away that was transportable. These are objects that testify to a tenacious attachment which is difficult to consider coolly. They are totems, tokens of painful abandonment of beloved places, and of the desire to cling to things.

It is perhaps solely in light of this only apparently incongruous set of items that one can understand the meaning – their anthropological dimension as donations – of other objects either exhibited in the archive-museum or conserved in its depository. There are objects of everyday life, children's toys, small things that would well fit into Ohran Pamuk's museum of innocence. But there are also items that the curators had removed from the sight of the public because they were considered as too distressing: of these, I was shown the shirt of a *foibe* victim whose family was allowed to exhume his corpse – an extraordinary concession. We can observe here an extreme form of martyrology, painful and harsh. Although the contexts are very different, it is difficult not to think of the shirts of the Risorgimento martyrs exhibited in some museums.

The book of donors, together with the announcements published in one of the refugee magazines, *Difesa Adriatica* (no. 14, 7-14 June 1964), reveals an extensive network – 375 names for the first six years – which has enabled the archive-museum to assemble all these disparate objects, as well as bequests of documents, books, periodicals, and flysheets; indeed, in some cases, entire libraries on Fiuman topics. Significantly, the list of donations was partly published in the Fiuman press. The archive-museum as a space open to the public, with its 500 square metres of expository space, the library containing around 5000 volumes and periodicals, and an archive of at least 40,000 documents, have at the same time constituted a point of reference and a pole of attraction for the Fiuman exiles. This movement has interwoven with another one of voluntary participation in the purchase of the museum's spaces. At the time of the dissolution of the *Ente Nazionale Lavoratori Rimpatriati e Profughi,* one of its members, Oscar Fabietti, anticipated the sum required to acquire a space in which to collect donations and documents, together with the *Associazione Libero Comune di Fiume.* Subsequently, it was the refugees who made 'gifts' carefully itemized in *La Voce di Fiume*, the magazine of the free commune in exile.

Involved in both cases were exiles of different political persuasions and belonging to different associations. The resulting panorama is so diversified that the 'leopard skin' metaphor can be aptly used to describe it. It would have been almost impossible for me to find my way through this thicket of associations of similar names without the useful historical text *Sintesi storica delle associazioni istriane, fiumane e dalmate in Italia e delle associazioni italiane nei territori ceduti dal 1947 ad oggi* published in 2011. This enabled me to draw a map from the first associations to the one founded in 2000 and called the *Mailing List Histria*, which amongst other things has promoted initiatives relative to litigation on abandoned property. But the list is still incomplete, even though it comprises 29 large associations (affiliated to which are a number of smaller ones like *Fameia Capodistriana, Cittanovese, Ruvignisa, Umaghese*) and 91 periodicals in total. This gives a good idea of the fragmentation, exaggerated localism, and frequent litigiousness of these initiatives.

Of course, the amount of donors, though substantial, is small compared with the huge numbers of the diaspora. Especially if one takes into consideration from Fiume alone, 90% of the inhabitants, equal to around 38,000 people, were exiled, whilst the overall figure for the Istrian, Julian and Dalmatian exodus is much greater: it amounts to the around 220,000 people who went to Italy, to which must be added the approximately 80,000 who found refuge in America and Australia, mostly through the International Refugee Organisation (Micich 2010: 23-43).

The register of donations allows one to draw a map which encompasses Venice and Veneto and large parts of the composite geography of the diaspora: Rome where hospitality was found at though in harsh conditions, by 12,000 Fiumans, Istrians and Dalmatians, and then Florence,

Varese, Genoa, Modena, Bologna, Bolzano, and many other cities besides (Orlić 2007:33 .68). By contrast, entirely absent from the museum is the extra-European exodus, the huge number of '*partiti*' (those who left) who took nothing with them or at least have donated nothing to the archive-museum, men and women who settled in an 'elsewhere' distant from Italy. And also absent are the '*rimasti*', those who preferred or were forced to remain in Fiume.

Individuals are present, but also associations, some of them headquartered in Istria. Hence a certain relationship with the *rimasti* continues. By means of the register of donations it is possible at least partly to reconstruct the small constellation of the Fiuman leagues, and of the various associations, from the Eneo rowing club to musical ones (for instance, the *Associazione Tartini* which bore the name of an illustrious Istrian musician, although he is usually considered Italian), the Fiume section of the *Lega Nazionale e l'Associazione del Libero Comune in Esilio* with offices in Padua. The *Libero Comune in Esilio* – an institution symbolically headed by a 'mayor' as if to confirm the aspiration to government of the city – publishes the periodical *La Voce di Fiume*, which serves as a link between *partiti* and *rimasti*

It is also worthwhile considering the issue of gender. Out of 375 donors, a considerable number – 102 according to a calculation made by the museum and available in its archive – were women. In fact, the number increases if one inspects the lists of the donors more closely. In many cases the women act as intermediaries for the donations of the libraries of male exiles, under whose names they are registered. These women have enabled the museum to acquire books, documents, libraries, and materials from family archives often consisting of manuscripts, newspaper clippings, or photographs: all of which can be seen in the Archive-Museum or have been stored in drawers and cupboards.

This aspect prompts consideration of the memory conservation practices adopted by the first museums of the Risorgimento, where it was mainly the wives, daughters, and sisters of patriots who lovingly preserved their objects, relics, and keepsakes and then donated them to the museums. The works of Massimo Baioni have well evidenced the sacred value of items which 'scientists' – scholars of Risorgimento history – would find difficult to include among historical testimony. These were only not manuscripts and documents but also items with a strong affective charge that instead belonged in the sphere of private sacredness. They were small objects: handkerchiefs, spectacles, buttons, locks of hair, and even teeth – as in Mantua – or bloodstained shirts, which were transformed into testimonies of martyrdom, secular relics of the religion of the fatherland. These women often constructed a discourse intensely interconnecting family and nation; and they often had the honour of seeing their surnames inscribed in the national pantheon. Here – more than a century later – close analogies appear.

Women also transmit objects of memory, sometimes also of domestic and apparently exclusively private memory, but whose significance in this context is striking because they testify to the abandonment of the country but also of the home, to transit through reception centres or the sheds and then to finding again, after a long time, and far from Istria, the protection of four walls.

I have mentioned objects owned by the museum but not displayed to the public. The curator explained to me that some objects and images that might upset children on school visits to the museum had been removed from the sight of visitors. Only after talking to him for a long time did he show me, for example, the bloodstained shirt of a *foibe* victim or fragments of gravestones.

Nevertheless, photographs of lacerated bodies recovered from the *foibe* are very visible in the entry hall.

Absent instead is another genre of domestic items that could depict family or social life but also the symbolic sphere; namely food, so important for constructing the sense of home – and of the homeland – and the national, or regional, identity. Food, so replete with identitarian signs, to which Francesca Angeleri and Daniela Piu devoted in 2009 an interesting DVD entitled *Magna Istria*, is absent, and so are the recipes and the dialect names of the cherished possessions left behind by the *partiti*.

Conclusions

What is exhibited in the museum is only part of a more complex discourse: an elementary narrative through images and objects that has interwoven with more detailed research, documentation, collection and verification of sources. But also of popularization: consider the involvement of schools from Rome and Lazio, and the organization of student trips to Istria connected with a visit to the Risiera di San Sabba, the concentration camp after World War II also used to house exiles from Istria.

The volume of the journal *Fiume dall'Esilio al Ritorno. Cinquant'Anni di Attività della Società di Studi Fiumani 1960-2010* 1960-2010 published in 2010 allows us to follow all the stages of the research activity, undertaken primarily by the *Società di Studi Fiumani* and by *Associazione per la Cultura Fiumana Istriana e Dalmata nel Lazio*, and the *Federazione delle Associazioni degli Esuli Istriani*. This work should also be compared with studies on these topics by scholars at several Italian universities, often associated with the University of Trieste, on the one hand, and research centres in Istria, primarily that of Rovigno, on the other. It is there that more extensive and substantial studies have been produced, while the archive-museum in Rome instead engages mostly in the recovery of fragments of narrative and the detailed analysis of individual cases. But its activity is important in collecting documents on specific aspects of Istrian-Dalmatian and Fiuman history, as testified by articles in the journal *Fiume. Rivista di Studi Adriatici*. Note the title, which is intended to mark continuity with the six-monthly journal *Fiume* produced by the first *Società di Studi Fiumani* and published in Fiume between 1923 and 1940.

However, it seems to me that the most interesting aspect of the activity of the Archive-Museum is its endeavour to move beyond fierce acrimony and establish a dialogue that creates new opportunities for analysis, study and knowledge. And this is all the more possible with the new generation. Of particular importance are the joint initiatives – unthinkable only a few decades ago – undertaken in Fiume-Rijeka.

Marino Micich was born of exiles from Zara in Rome. He told me that when he was a child he asked his father to help him understand who he was, given that he spoke dialect at home, Serbo-Croat with other exiles, Albanian with his mother, and Italian with his schoolmates. His personal story well explains why he chose as an epigraph for his chapter in the book entitled *Fiume nel Secolo dei Grandi Mutamenti* a quotation from Miklós Vásárhelyi, one of the survivors of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956:

> My parents were Hungarian, my wet-nurse Croatian, my teachers Italian, my governess German, my schoolfriends and playmates Fiuman, therefore Italian, Croatian, Slovene, Istrian and Dalmatian. The first syllables that I heard were Hungarian, the first song Slavic,

the first sentences Italian, but among ourselves we all spoke our gentle Fiuman dialect[...]. I knew Hungarian, but I learned to count in Italian. My native city was a multicultural cradle which influenced me for the whole of my life (Micich 1999).

Conferences and seminars on Fiume have been organized in Italy and in Croatia, in partnership with other institutions, most notably the Lazio Region. Significantly, in relation to one of the poles that have advanced the claims of the exiles, seminars have been organized in collaboration with the rightist group *Azione Universitaria* created in 1996 as a section of the right wing *Alleanza Nazionale* party. The reference is to the seminars held at the Sapienza University of Rome in 1998 on Italian cultural identity in Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia from Campoformio to the present day, D'Annunzio the politician (2000), and World War II in Venezia Giulia. By contrast there is no collaboration with Italian universities other than La Sapienza, although projects have begun with the foundation of the Vittoriale – the villa on Lake Garda where Gabriele D'Annunzio lived – the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail, or more recently the Academy of Hungary.

The main international initiatives were launched in 1995 with a conference on 'Fiume Autonomy' (1896 – 1947) and 'Riccardo Zanella' (Trieste 1995), organized in collaboration with the popular (not state) university of Trieste. Organized in the following year was the first Rijeka-Fiume conference, with the cautious title *Itinerari Culturali*, followed in 1999 by another conference held in Rijeka-Fiume, 'Fiume in the Century of Great Changes' and by an important initiative on 'Fiume, A Crossroads of People and Cultural Itineraries' (Rome 2005) in which Claudio Magris and Laszlo Csorba participated.

In her broad account, Pamela Ballinger recalls the new interest in the issue of the *foibe* due to the appeal by judge Petitto, published in 1995, intended to find further witnesses to the Italian massacres in Slovenia. In the context of those years, in an Italy also marked by the Priebke affair, the project was mooted to create in Rome a museum of genocides, including the Inquisition, the Holocaust, and the extermination of Native Americans. However, this project was never truly developed. The debate on the *foibe* – Ballinger suggests – should be understood within this context. It was then that the discussion on the specificity of the *foibe* developed, with different opinions on their nature as ethnic cleansing – as historian Gabriele De Rosa suggested – or on their complex long-run background. It is difficult to put debates on display in museums. However, one should note that the different voices of this debate are absent in the museum.

The endeavour by the Archive-Museum to engage in dialogue with Slovenia and Croatian historiography is nevertheless useful. Acquiring a not exclusively Italian point of view and opening the door to scientific cooperation certainly does not mean forgetting the traumas experienced on either side, across a time-span that is difficult to reduce to the years of the Second World War and which more correctly should also include the previous decades – as has been suggested from several scholars. In my view, an activity of this kind cannot open the way to an shared memory, but through knowledge, analysis of the sources, and dialogue it may foster debate and open the way to reconciliation.

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'Reluctant Museums': Between a Church and a Museum. Displaying Religion in Cypriot Museums

Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert (Cyprus University of Technology) and
Alexandra Bounia (University of the Aegean)

Abstract

In the 1990's a new kind of museum appeared in the North, mainly Muslim, part of Cyprus: Orthodox Christian churches that have been dis-used after the events of 1974, were turned into icon museums. In these museums, religious objects (mainly icons) have been displaced, ironically not from their natural place, which is the church, but from their original function, which is that of worship. Furthermore, the administration and ownership changed from their legal owners (the church of Cyprus and the Greek Orthodox people) to that of an occupying force of a different religion of the self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC).

After briefly presenting the on-going claims made by both Greek and Turkish Cypriot authorities regarding the destruction of religious sites and the illegal trafficking of religious objects, this paper will examine issues of cultural ownership and "heritage wars" as these are exemplified in the the five icon museums, currently under the supervision of TRNC's "Department of Antiquities and Museums". These museums seem to take different forms depending on the national claims of the two communities. For the Republic of Cyprus, they are either seen as proof of the purposeful and continuous cultural destruction of Christian religious sites or as spaces which are temporarily «out of order» due to the Turkish occupation and which will resume their normal function as soon as a solution is found. On the other hand, for the TRNC, icon museums are the answer to Greek Cypriot accusations for cultural destruction and a public display of respect and religious tolerance. As a result, these museums are in limbo between permanent, neutral institutions (as museums are supposed to be) and temporary, emotional ones. These 'reluctant museums' bring to the forefront issues of ownership and purpose, of religious and national representation, of restitution of cultural property and peaceful cultural co-existence.

Introduction

One sunny day a Greek Cypriot taxi driver drove a group of tourists to the location of St. Barnabas monastery in the northern, occupied part of Cyprus. The tourists were interested in visiting an icon museum located in the monastery. When they arrived at the location they paid the three-euro entrance fee and entered the monastery. When inside, the tourists started examining the icons and reading the labels which clearly marked the depicted saint's name and the icon's date of creation. On the other hand, the taxi driver, who was admitted for free since he was escorting the tourists, made the sign of the cross and started kissing the icons in the iconostasis. [1] When he finished, he turned around and was surprised to see the group of tourists staring at him. An uncomfortable silence prevailed. No one said or did anything (personal communication with taxi driver).

A very interesting conflict of receptions has just been described. As a Greek Orthodox Christian entering what he perceived to be a church, proper, with religious icons, he proceeded to the for him natural act of paying respect to St. Barnabas and the other saints. The tourists, entering what they perceived to be a museum, seemed to be shocked by the display of religious worship that involved handling the exhibited items. After all, museum objects are not supposed to be touched or handled in any way. A sign on the wall indicated that even flash might harm the icons.

The controversial performer Pierre Pinoncelli attempted to piss and smash in 2006, for the second time (the first attempt was in 1993), one of the official replicas of Duchamp's «fountain» (Lichfield 2006). His aim was to return the specific museum item to its original function, that of a urinal. He was fined 200,000 euros for this attempt. Curiously, the taxi driver was not sued, thrown out of the museum or even reprimanded for kissing the icons and thus returning the museum items to their original function – that of worship. His act was not a conscious performance directed towards the art world or even a political statement. He simply perceived the space as a church and therefore a sacred space for worship, a 'mistake' easily made since St. Barnabas Icon Museum is currently in limbo between a church and a museum – a religious space for worship and a space for preservation, education and aesthetic appreciation. But in order to understand the space's double identity we need to examine the broader political and cultural conflict which surrounds the five icon museums that exist today in the northern part of Cyprus.

Religious and Heritage Wars

Since the intercommunal conflicts between Greek and Turkish Cypriots that began in the early 60s and lead to the Turkish invasion in 1974 which divided the island in half, political as well as cultural wars find expression in the local and international arena. The Republic of Cyprus publicizes as much as possible the cultural destruction of religious sites as well as the lack of religious rights in the northern, occupied part of Cyprus. It is well documented that art looters took advantage of the lack of control in the north of the island after 1974, and methodically removed and illegally exported items of cultural and national value (see Jansen 1986 for a detailed presentation). European police investigators described the situation as 'one of the most systematic art looting operations since the Nazis plundered the countries they occupied during World War II' (Miller and Kinzer 1998). The Church of Cyprus, the department of Antiquities,

the Byzantine Museum in Nicosia, private institutions and foundations are working towards the location and repatriation of stolen Cypriot antiquities and religious objects. A few successful law cases involving the repatriation of icons and frescoes illegally removed from churches received a lot of publicity internationally (Rose 1998; Sullivan 1991). The most famous ones are those of the Kanakaria mosaics, the Christ Antiphonitis frescoes and the Evthimianos church frescoes (Rose 1998). All items involved in these court cases were returned to Cyprus and are housed in the Byzantine Museum in Nicosia or are about to be returned. At the same time, the Turkish authorities claim that religious sites are not only neglected and destroyed in the northern, but also in the southern part of Cyprus. Mosques and other Islamic religious sites, such as cemeteries, have been reported to be as either vandalized or demolished.

Attempts for an objective report of the destruction of cultural heritage started as early as 1975. Right after the Turkish invasion, UNESCO sent Jacques Dalibard, a Canadian architect, to Cyprus to examine and report the preservation or destruction of cultural heritage in both the northern and southern parts. The report was censored and cut down from about 120 pages to only 9. In the published version, Dalibard mentions that some of the mosques in the southern part of Cyprus were vandalized but later repaired. When he examined churches, archaeological excavation sites, monasteries, castles and museums in the north, Dalibard found some buildings in a bad state, some museum objects missing and some icons stolen. Through his multiple visits, Dalibard observed that Greek Cypriot authorities made more progress in restoring Muslim religious sites than Turkish Cypriot authorities restoring Christian religious sites. Turkish Cypriots claimed that they lacked the budget, facilities, expertise and staff in order to restore and preserve the various cultural sites (Dalibard 1976). A Council of Europe Report from 1989 also confirms this (der Werff 1989).

More recently, Greek and Turkish Cypriot Architects listed and evaluated Greek and Turkish Cypriot religious buildings built before 1974. The project was funded by the United States Agency for International Development and the United Nations Development Program. 505 Greek Cypriot and 115 Turkish Cypriot religious buildings were recorded, documented and evaluated (CCEAA and CCTA n.d.). Destruction is evident in both churches and mosques but there is no information regarding the time of destruction in order to determine whether or not the destruction was a direct effect of the 1974 invasion.

Greek-Cypriot Claims

Various Greek-Cypriot reports mention the destruction of 500 or so churches (Chotzakoglou 2008; Iliades 2011; UDHC 2009) in the northern part of Cyprus but again it is not clear what percentage of the religious sites were destroyed after 1974. In a more realistic report, the website of the Cyprus embassy in Washington DC states that as a result of the events in 1974, 133 churches, chapels and monasteries have been desecrated, 77 churches have been converted into mosques, 18 are used as depots, dormitories or hospitals, 13 are used as barns, 1 was converted into a hotel and one is used as a school of fine arts (Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Washington D.C. n.d.).

Referring to the destruction and alternative uses of churches Chotzakoglou (2008) mentions:

> The only exception to the Turkish practice is the Anglican Church of St. Andrew in Keryneia and only those of the Maronite churches – which were not transformed into military camps,

stables and museums – demonstrating in a effort [sic] to display so-called free exercise of their religious duties and so-called freedom of choice of religion, that is given to the population residing in the northern occupied part of Cyprus (Chotzakoglou 2008: 33).

It seems that all alternative uses of churches are placed under the same category as military camps and stables ignoring the fact that some uses, like those of museums, might contribute towards the at least partial preservation of the building and its contents. As the general rapporteur on the architectural heritage send by the Council of Europe in 1989 reports, 'as long as no reuse brings irreversible change to the churches in question and as long as the icons are kept in store, I cannot criticize it as such' (der Werff 1989:14). Furthermore, allowing Anglican and Maronite churches to function is viewed by Chotzakoglou as a purely propagandistic tool.

Additionally, Chotzakoglou (2008) argues that the destruction and misuse of churches, takes place under the watchful eyes of the occupying army and:

> … reveals a well organized plan for the desecration of Christian holy places. These entire actions serve the political target of extinguishing every single Greek trace of the occupied part of Cyprus reminding the Greek past and frustrating their rightful owners in their efforts to return to their fatherlands. (Chotzakoglou 2008: 49).

Greek Cypriot authorities see the desecration of churches as a deliberate tool for erasing the Hellenic and Christian identity of the north (Balderstone 2010; Jansen 1986). This is a crucial point because the Greek Cypriot identity is perceived as being threatened. Considering that a museum's aim is to preserve and promote its collections, the creation of icon museums in the occupied part of the island contradicts this point of view. A Greek Cypriot churchgoer was shocked when she heard about St. Barnabas' Icon Museum. She asked in disbelieve: '*They* are exhibiting *our* icons?' (her emphasis). She could not understand why 'they' – Turkish, Muslims – would be preserving and promoting 'our' – Greek, Christian – heritage. It is possible that the fact that religious objects of one community are displaced and displayed by another community can create personal psychological barriers to both communities.

Turkish-Cypriot Claims

On the other hand, the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (TRNC) Public Information Office (2009) states that:

> The problem of maintenance of cultural heritage is not an issue that is only affecting North Cyprus. The Turkish-Muslim heritage in South Cyprus is also in urgent need for cleaning and restoration. There are many Turkish-Muslim cultural monuments including mosques, baths, fountains and cemeteries in South Cyprus that are in very bad condition due to rough handling, negligence and willful destruction.

According to the same website, 16 out of 106 mosques located in the Republic of Cyprus have been totally destroyed, 61 mosques are in a state of neglect and most graveyards are neglected or destroyed. Furthermore, it is stated that:

> … the Turkish Cypriot authorities are doing their best, with limited resources, to protect and preserve the diverse cultural monuments in North Cyprus. Considering the meager financial means and total lack of international assistance due to the Greek Cypriot policy of isolating the Turkish Cypriot people, the performance of the Turkish Cypriot authorities is praiseworthy.

Lack of international assistance due to the fact that the TRNC is not recognized by any country apart from Turkey is often used as an argument and an explanation for the neglect of

Christian religious spaces. However, priority was given to restoration projects of Ottoman buildings such as the Büyük Han over for example the important Lusignan Cathedral of Nicosia (Cormack in der Werff 1989). Balderstone (2010) offers another explanation about this neglect. She argues that the misuse of churches might be due to Turkish secularism as much as anti-Greek or anti-Christian sentiment. Turkish Cypriots were traditionally less religious than Turkish settlers. It is argued that for some Turkish Cypriots a ruin, of a church or any other building, is still a ruin that can be utilized in other ways, even as a stable.

In conclusion, the Republic of Cyprus and the church of Cyprus publicize as much as possible the destruction of their religious heritage and use any political and legal tools available in order to repatriate and preserve it. At the same time, they publicize the preservation of mosques in the south. The Turkish authorities defend themselves by claiming lack of resources and support while suppressing reports of destruction. In their efforts to make clear, strong and straightforward points, both sites seem to offer a one-sided view of the problem. Most publications on these issues simplify and omit important information that is necessary for a more balanced and objective point of view.

Icon museums in the Turkish occupied part of Cyprus: a museological view

After 1974, icons from the occupied areas were stored in the Kerynia Castle. The icons were stamped, catalogued and stored (Papageorgiou 2010). Even though Dalibard in 1975 found the storing conditions to be 'far from ideal', he also found the catalogue of religious items 'quite advanced' (Dalibard 1976: 5). However, from 1975 till 1981 the archive was significantly altered (Jansen 1986). Nusret Mahirel, an archaeologist who worked at the Kerynia Castle in 1975, reported that upon examining the archive and icons in 1982, he found the books falsified and 225 icons missing (Papageorgiou 2010). The director of the museum at the Kerynia castle as well as Aydin Dikman, the mastermind behind several illicit exports and sales, were captured by the Turkish authorities but were subsequently freed. The English professor R. Cormack who visited Cyprus in 1989 as a member of the Council of Europe delegation, which investigated the Cypriot cultural heritage, reported that only 19th and 20th century and a few 18th century icons remained in the Kerynia Castle (der Werff 1989).

The year 1989 is an important one for Cypriot cultural battles. The much-publicized Kanakaria frescoes case was in the news and marked an important victory for the Republic of Cyprus. The stolen mosaics were reclaimed and returned to Cyprus. Furthermore, the report of the Council of Europe delegation the same year stated that most cultural destruction in Cyprus 'has occurred in the north and is the result of looting' (der Werff 1989:11). It seems that in response to the accusations that TRNC was involved in illicit trade of icons, the Turkish authorities proceeded in the creation of five Icon Museums. Conveniently, four of them were officially created between 1990 and 1994. The first icon museum opened in 1990 in the Archangelos Michael Church located within walking distance from the Kerynia castle. The collections of the icon museums come from different churches located in the occupied north. Missing icons were replaced with other, mainly newer icons. The only museum which retains the original icons on the iconostasis seem to be the St. Mamas Church and Icon Museum in Morphou which was opened as an icon museum much later, in 2004.

The five icon museums under the supervision of TRNC's Department of Antiquities and Museums are: 1. the St. Barnabas Icon and Archaeological Museum in Famagusta (Mağusa, opened in 1992); 2. the Archangelos Michael Church in Kerynia (Girne, opened in 1990); 3. the Iskele Icon Museum in Trikomo (Iskele, opened in 2001); 4. the St. Mamas Church and Icon Museum in Morphou (Güzelyurt, opened in 2004) and 5. the Agios Ioannis Church and Icon Museum in Famagusta (Mağusa, opened in 1994). The last one (Agios Ioannis Church and Icon Museum) is located in a restricted area and was closed to the public at the time of this research.

St. Barnabas Icon and Archaeological Museum (Famagusta, opened in 1992)

The St. Barnabas Icon and Archeological Museum is the biggest and most well-known icon museum in the northern part of Cyprus. Apostle Barnabas was born in Cyprus and, along with St. Paul, was responsible for spreading Christianity in his native country. St. Barnabas monastery is considered one of the most sacred sites in Cyprus and many Greek Cypriots were baptized there before 1974. The monastery was build in 477A.D. to celebrate the discovery of St. Barnabas' body but the present structure was built by Archbishop Philotheos in 1756 (Department of Antiquities and Museums n.d.,a). The church was operational till 1976 when the three brother monks who operated the monastery moved to the southern part of Cyprus. The St. Barnabas monastery and Icon Museum consists of a church now serving as an icon museum, a monastery now housing an archaeological collection, and about 100 yards from the monastery, a chapel containing the empty tomb of the saint.

According to the handout available at the museum, the Turkish authorities began restoration work on the monastery and church in August 1991 while more icons were added to the collection in 1992 (Department of Antiquities and Museums n.d.,a). Furthermore, the rooms of the monastery, which once housed monks and pilgrims, have been turned into an archaeological museum and the rooms at the entrance into an administration office and a shop. The shop sells rugs, postcards, guide-books and souvenirs. Interestingly, this might be the only shop in Cyprus that sells small icons of St. Barnabas alongside key rings featuring whirling dervishes.

On the walls of the church's interior hang icons mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries. Under each icon a label in English and Turkish states the depicted saint's name and the icon's date of creation. The icons are not arranged chronologically, by provenance or artist, but by their subject matter. For this reason we observe the interesting effect of having four icons of Archangel Michael next to each other or three icons of St. George killing the dragon. This 'typological' arrangement is especially strange for an Orthodox Christian since it would have never appeared in a functional church. It is equally strange for an archaeologist specializing in Byzantine art and culture, since the criteria for arranging and organizing byzantine collections are usually different.

On the iconostasis we observe another unusual arrangement. The icons are curiously misplaced. The bottom tier includes two icons of Christ on the left of the gate. Furthermore, the top tiers house icons of varied sizes with some vacant spaces. We can assume that some icons (if not all) have been replaced or rearranged. As a matter of fact, it was reported that 36 icons were stolen from the church in 1988. Some of them were found, but the ones dating from the 17th century are still missing (Papageorgiou 2010). However, instead of having the icons re-arranged in the Orthodox tradition, the curators seem to have arranged the icons quite randomly.

Fig 1: Interior of St. Barnabas Icon Museum, 2011, photograph by the authors

Archangelos Michael Church in Kerynia (Giren, opened in 1990)

The Archangelos Michael Church in Kerynia seems to house the most carefully planed icon exhibition of the four museums examined. Since June 11th 1990 this religious building from 1860 has been turned into a museum. According to the handout available at the entrance, the collection includes icons dating from the 19th century or later; some are icons that belong to the specific church, while others were collected from unspecified churches in the area. The oldest icon is dated from 1714 (Department of Antiquities and Museums n.d.,b.).

Out of the four museums examined, this is the only one that contains a special museographic arrangement: specially-constructed, freestanding panels and cases accommodate the icons. This demonstrates a more careful consideration for the arrangement. Like the St. Barnabas Icon Museum, the icons are arranged thematically but in a more subtle way. The labels under the icons include only the name of the depicted saint in English and Turkish.

Furthermore, a wall text provides information about the representations most commonly found in icons and the material used. Another wall text provides a short history of the museum. In addition, unlike the St. Barnabas Icon Museum solely lit by its windows or large chandeliers, the curators of the Archangelos Michael Icon Museum have installed special lighting for each panel. Unfortunately, without the proper planning for a museum, the electricity wires are visible on the walls along with the extensive damages caused by the humidity (despite recent restoration in 2004). In addition, the icons seem to be badly in need of restoration.

Fig 2: Interior of Archangelos Michael Church, 2011, photograph by the authors

Iskele Icon Museum in Trikomo (Iskele, opened in 1991)

The Iskele Icon Museum in Trikomo opened its doors on the International Museum Day on May 23rd 1991. The building that houses the icons is the church of Panayia Theotokou which was built in the 12th century while different additions were added until the year 1804. Rare frescoes from the 12th and 15th centuries decorate the church (restored in 1966), while icons from this and other churches in the northern part of Cyprus are arranged around the walls of the church (Department of Antiquities and Museums n.d.,c). A Turkish newspaper reported the theft of the icons from the iconostasis in 1984 (Papageorgiou 2010).

The icons do not seem to be arranged in any particular manner. Just like St. Barnabas Icon Museum, wooden panels support individual icons with a small label attached at the lower part. The label offers the name of the saint in English and Turkish. Again, no information about the date or provenance of the icons is displayed. Furthermore, some icons are displayed on tripods while wooden poles with rope surround the tripods, probably to protect them from curious visitors or faithful Greek Cypriots.

Fig 3. Interior of Iskele Icon Museum, 2011, photograph by the authors

St. Mamas Church and Icon Museum in Morphou (Güzelyurt, opened in 2004)

The St. Mamas Church and Icon Museum in Morphou is located next to the 'Museum of Archeology and Nature' and is the most 'reluctant' of all icon museums examined. Despite the sign outside that reads 'St. Mamas Church and Icon Museum' and the fact that there are some icons arranged on the walls of the church, quite clearly this museum feels more like a church than a museum.

The icons in the iconostasis seem to be in the right place, the light comes from the large chandeliers, candles are standing in the candle holder and no labels are visible anywhere. Furthermore, St. Mamas' sarcophagus, which is believed to ooze a balm that can heal eye and ear diseases (Department of Antiquities and Museums n.d.,d) is surrounded by eye- and ear-shaped silver and wax offerings. St. Mamas operates as a church once a year on September 2nd, the saint's name day. Visiting the church in November, the smell of frankincense is still in the air.

The iconostasis was recently restored thanks to funding from the U.S. agency for International Development (UDHC 2009). The icons in the iconostasis are protected with large glass panels while smaller newer icons of the same saint are located directly below them. This is common practice in Orthodox Christian churches. Smaller icons are used by churchgoers for paying respect, in order to preserve the older icons. Finally, the icons on the surrounding walls seem to be arranged by size alone. The TRNC promotes St. Mamas church as an example of restoration and preservation of Byzantine art. However, according to Papageorgiou (2010), the silver and gold case with St. Mama's bones was stolen and dismantled while the saint's bones were discarded since they had no commercial value.

Fig 4. Interior of Mamas Church and Icon Museum, 2011, photograph by the authors

Icon museums: preserving or destructing

Created as a response to political and cultural conflict and still functioning in an unstable political situation, icon museums in the northern part of Cyprus satisfy only the minimum requirements to justify the title of museum. This is evident in the lack of more careful and meaningful arrangements of the collections, the incomplete labels that lack information about dates, materials used, provenance or artist, the one-page handout in Turkish and English ignoring the needs of Greek visitors, the minimum security and the total lack of educational or other programs, events or relevant publications. As a result, the icon museums in the northern part of Cyprus seem to serve the purpose of a 'sign'; a sign whose sole existence is to argue for the preservation of Christian art by an occupying force (regardless if this is achieved or not).

Icon museums in the northern part of Cyprus seem to take different forms depending on the national claims of the two communities. For the Republic of Cyprus, they are seen as proof of the purposeful and continuous cultural destruction of Christian religious sites, as propaganda tools, or as spaces which are temporarily 'out of order' due to the Turkish occupation and which will resume their normal function as soon as a solution is found. On the other hand, for the TRNC, icon museums are the answer to Greek Cypriot accusations for cultural destruction and a public display of respect and religious tolerance. As a result, these museums are in a limbo between permanent, neutral institutions (as museums are supposed to be) and temporary, emotional ones; they are 'reluctant' museums. The St. Barnabas icon museum, the largest icon museum in the northern part of Cyprus, receives most of the publicity when it comes to the icon museums examined. Interestingly, it is either envisioned as the 'saviour of the Christian art of

Cyprus' or another version of its systematic destruction. Two short documentaries featuring St. Barnabas monastery nicely demonstrate these two very different perspectives.

The Supreme Master Television, a non-profit channel airing news and programs that foster peace, produced a 15-minute TV program as part of the series 'The world around us' about St. Barnabas Icon and Archaeological Museum (supreme Master Television 2011). The documentary aired on October 2nd 2011 and the narration is in Turkish with subtitles in several languages (no Greek). One of the tour guides of St. Barnabas, Zehra Akpinarlar, talks about the story of St. Barnabas, the history of the monastery and the religious ceremonies that take place at the church. Interestingly, the documentary places an enormous emphasis on the religious practices that take place at the monastery, especially the devotional act of lighting candles.

When describing the process of lighting candles at the church, Akpinarlar mentions that since 2003 'many orthodox Greeks visit this place and pray, make wishes here. They believe that all wishes made here come true'. Furthermore she mentions that since 2005:

> … every year a ceremony would begin to be organized. This is a ceremony which that is held via privileges that the ministry gives [with permission from the Ministry of Antiquities and Museums of the Turkish authorities]. And Cypriot Greeks from the Southern part here [sic] from June 11, organize a ceremony for 2-3 days. And they often visit the church, they make their wishes, they pray.

Even though the documentary narrative seems to be respectful of the Christian Orthodox practices, the descriptions, especially that of lighting candles, are extremely simplified to the extent that it resembles descriptions of tourists throwing coins into a fountain and believing their wishes will come true. By reducing a complex and meaningful religious act into a simple light-a-candle-and-make-a-wish procedure demonstrates a distance and insensitivity to orthodox religious practices. Furthermore, the documentary tries to demonstrate that Greek Cypriots exercise freely their religious rights. However, candle lighting is not a service per se. The only real religious service is the mass that takes place once a year and only after receiving permission from the Turkish authorities. The Republic of Cyprus claims that it restricts the religious rights of Greek Cypriots who are unable to use the church for regular services.

Towards the end of the presentation, the documentary reassures viewers that the museum houses icons mainly from the 18th century and that '[T]he church of St. Barnabas is exactly as it was when its last three monks left it in 1976. The church pulpits, wooden lectern, and pews are still in place.' This is echoed in the popular website 'North Cyprus' (n.d.) where the information must have come from. As we have seen, the church furniture might still be intact but valuable icons were stolen.

Another documentary, this time produced by the Public Information Office (PIO) of the Republic of Cyprus, offers a completely different story. 'Where Heaven Falls Prey to Thieves' (Amara Films and Klaus Gallas, 2008) is directed by Dr. Klaus Gallas, an art historian and Byzantine expert who supports the Cypriot church in its efforts to repatriate religious items smuggled from the north. The 18-minute English documentary describes the 'systematic destruction and plundering of all the Orthodox churches and monasteries in the Turkish occupied north by order of senior officers. These are not Turkish Cypriots'. The last sentence distinguishes Turkish Cypriots from the Turkish army and settlers. The PIO makes it clear that the Turkish army and settlers are responsible for this destruction and not Turkish Cypriots, the

only ones recognized as 'Cypriots' by the Republic of Cyprus. The St. Barnabas Icon Museum is offered, not as an example of religious respect and cultural preservation as presented in the Turkish documentary, but as another example of destruction. According to Gallas:

> Even this Christian site famous in the life of St. Barnabas, nephew of St. Mark the Evangelist fell victim to art theft after 1974. The monastery that is opened to tourists today as an icon museum is a *farce*. Nothing remains of the original precious decoration of the church. Worthless icons of the 19th and 20th century are exhibited here in a haphazard manner whilst the museum is self-proclaimed as the *saviour of the Christian art of Cyprus* (emphasis in the original, Amara Films and Klaus Gallas 2008).

According to the documentary, the oldest and most valuable icons of the church were removed and probably sold on the international art market. Newer, less valuable ones replaced the missing icons.

Conflicting information also exist for other icon museums. For example, a Kerynia website mentions that Archangelos Michael Icon Museum: '… enables the preservation of valuable icons that were saved from theft and looting after 1974, when many churches in Cyprus had these icons stolen from them.' (All about Kerynia n.d.). At the same time the official website of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Cyprus Republic mentions that thirteen 19th century icons have been stolen from the church of Archangelos Michael (Antiquities Department n.d.). Furthermore, it is mentioned that icons dating from the 16th and 17th centuries and a gospel with precious stones have been stolen from the same church. Even though it is possible that both claims are true, the message presented is conflicting. While the TRNC argues that its actions preserve Christian art, the Republic of Cyprus points out the serious destruction that takes place in TRNC's territory.

Conclusions

The physical setting of an object as well as the way it is displayed can determine its identification as an artwork or a religious item (Clarke 2003). For example, African masks, intended by their makers for use in religious services, are displayed as artworks in museums all over the world. To achieve their identification as high art, and thus place the emphasis on their aesthetic, historical and educational value, curators isolate the objects on white walls or glass cases, illuminate them with 'boutique lighting' and offer explanatory texts (Clarke 2003). This approach decontextualizes objects from their original uses as well as disassociating them from their original users. Instead, objects stripped from the aura of their previous lives, are offered for admiration to a new audience. Similarly, the devotional significance of an Orthodox icon can predominate in a church whether its art, historical and educational significance is accentuated when displayed in an art museum (Gaskell 2003; Liakos 2001). In order to illustrate this, Gaskell (2003) refers to the double identity of the famous 'Virgin of Vladimir' that is exhibited at the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. Three times a year this icon is removed from its case and transferred to a church connected to the museum for liturgical use. This was a compromise achieved after the Patriarchate of Moscow reclaimed the icon. Conveniently, the significance of the icon changes according to the location where it is exhibited. Furthermore, as Liakos (2001) discusses, the presentation, arrangement and organization of exhibitions hide serious ideological issues that need to be addressed and understood.

But what happens when the devotional space, in our case a church, is the same as the museum space? The discussion about the use of worship spaces as museums has been long in other Orthodox countries as well (Konstantios 2008). In our case, all five icon museums are housed in churches while in some cases, like in the case of the St. Mamas' Church and Icon Museum, nothing much has changed. The arrangement, lighting or displays remain the same as in the pre-1974 church. Furthermore, once a year, on the Saint's name day, the museum assumes its other identity and functions as a church. The most important characteristic of these museums seems to be their reluctance to accentuate the aesthetic, historical, educational or devotional value of their collections. This contributes to feelings of uncertainty and the fact that visitors' perceptions prevail over any curatorial intentions.

When describing an exhibition of Indian sculpture at the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, Guha-Thakurta (2007) talked about the 'curious double identity as both a state art treasure and a liturgical object' (Guha-Thakurta 2007:632). The author also commended on the feelings of unease and indignation that some South Asian viewers have when confronting Indian religious imagery in American museums. According to Guha-Thakurta (2007):

> Their disconcert comes from a conviction that the 'true' life of these sculptures (certainly in the past, but even in the present) are as worshipped gods, and that their very place in a museum is an offence to their ritual existence. (Thakurta 2007: 630)

This feeling of disconcert, is not unlike the feeling Greek Cypriots must experience when visiting St. Barnabas museum. Icons assume the same double, shifting identity as Guha-Thakurta's Indian sculpture. Greek Cypriots seem to value the icons' liturgical and ritual value over their aesthetic one, while tourists are mainly concerned with their historical and aesthetic value.

Often, a lack of empathy can be observed in cases of museums exhibiting religious items coming from other cultures or countries. For example, Hemenway (2010), a native American Indian tribal repatriation specialist, felt angry and betrayed because museums did not consider his tribe's beliefs seriously when requesting the return of human remains. Most museums consider human remains as 'collections' or 'archaeological findings' while for the tribes those are sacred items in need of burial. According to the author, the museums were ignoring moral and ethical obligations. Similarly, most of the icon museums examined demonstrate a lack of empathy for the religious values of Orthodox Greek Cypriots. For example, the displaced icons in the iconostasis, the typological approach of arrangement and the Supreme Master TV documentary simplifying complex religious ceremonies demonstrate a lack of interest in Orthodox religious beliefs. As Balderstone (2010) has put it when referring to St. Barnabas Icon Museum, '[A]s a tourist site it is well done. But for Greek Cypriot pilgrims there is no sense of the venerability of the place' (Balderstone 2010: 235).

In conclusion, assuming the role of both a church and a museum, these institutions bring to the forefront issues of ownership and purpose, of religious and national representation, of restitution of cultural property and peaceful cultural co-existence. More research is necessary to explore the following questions: How is the double identity of spaces and contents influence visitors' perceptions and museum uses? How does nationality and religion influence how icon museums are perceived and used? Do Greek Cypriots experience icon museums in the northern part of Cyprus in the same way as they do in the south? Does the fact that icon museums in the

north are housed in churches and run by an occupying force influence Greek Cypriot experience and how? Further research will allow elaboration and possible responses to all the above questions.

Notes

1   Iconostasis is a wooden or marble partition or screen, decorated with icons that separates the sacred part of the church from the rest of it. (Webster's New World College Dictionary, 2010).

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Traumatic Memories of War and Dictatorship

Contested Memory and Re-configured Master Narratives: Museum Institution in Totalitarian Regimes

Kristin Kutma (University of Tartu)

Abstract

This paper starts with the conceptualization of museum as an institution of memory, in order to investigate how national museums have handled difficult pasts, conflicting stories or contested objects. It will take a closer look at the institutional experience of Estonian museums under the conditions of repressive political regimes in the 1940s and 1950s, with a longer discussion of the Stalinist period and the constraints of the Soviet museum system. This paper looks at institutions and the fate of collections in order to provide a survey on how collections were transformed in the course of these decades. The institutions introduced here are the Estonian History Museum, the Art Museum of Estonia, and the Estonian National Museum. The profound reorganizations, destructions and redistributions that occurred have determined the collections, as they exist today while defining the fate of particular museums. The other focus is on the interpretation of the Second World War and its representations under transformative socio-political conditions and in the period of post-Soviet transition.

Introduction

This paper addresses the issue of uses of the past via contested representations in national museums under the conditions of a totalitarian regime and occupation. The narratives presented in museums unavoidably go through certain ideological manipulation in such situations of violent political rupture that impacts both the narratives presented but also the collections of objects testifying to different narratives as well as on the professional staff taking care of and managing these depositories or constructing displays. In order to investigate how national museums have handled difficult pasts, conflicting stories or contested objects, this paper proposes to focus on the conceptualization of museum as an institution of memory and then look at the institutional experience under the conditions of repressive political regimes. The timeframe under more detailed analysis here covers the decades of the 1940s and 1950s, particularly the Stalinist regime and the constraints of the Soviet museum system. This paper looks at institutions and the fate of collections in order to provide a survey on how collections were transformed in the course of these decades. This historical perspective is all the more important as these profound reorganizations, destructions and redistributions have determined the collections as they exist today and help to understand the fate of particular museums. The other focus is on the interpretation of the Second World War and its representations in the period of post-Soviet transition.

Memory

National museums have constructed and manipulated the past for particular ends. However, as the result of situations of war and conflict, shifts of state authority and changes of political regime foreground substantial problems related to ownership and restitution, contested master-narratives, and targeted manipulations of the representation of national memory. A museum conceptualised as a 'site of memory' (cf. Nora 1989) works with the perceived and transformative power of objects that have been extracted from their original environment and re-inscribed into a symbolic landscape. Politics of memory relate in an ambivalent way to the museum institution, capable of presenting a packaged form of memory and history to tell a particular story of the past. The theorist of social memory, Paul Connerton claims among other seminal statements that societies deliberately choose to encode memory with the support of material culture (Connerton 1989), and this explains the proliferation of museums that are based on the intricate relationship of 'the past in the present'. Maurice Bloch contends in turn that all narratives of the past have to be understood in terms of the nature of the society in which they are told (Bloch 1992).

Remembering – particularly as a collective endeavour – of national history depends on regimes of power, being dependent on the narratives allowed or accepted in the public imaginary. Modern perceptions of memory emerged from the awareness of the conflicting representations of the past and the effort of different groups to claim their version of it for anchoring identity politics (cf. Gillis 1994: 8). Memories are actively produced as representations that are "open to struggle and dispute" (Radstone 2000: 7), being an eternal battleground, subject of tensions between the individual and collective, the public and private. Memories, though, are a product of selection that is based on an interaction between opposing terms: disappearance (i.e. forgetting)

and preservation, both being defined and controlled by positions of authority (see Todorov 2001).

As public institutions the role of museums is to contain representations that provide a narrative of national memory. They acquire, however, a paradoxical position in the representation of controversial historical experience, or conflicting narratives of the past under the pressures of a totalitarian regime. In their capacity to define and preserve prescribed knowledge, museums are designated with particular significance in reference to national memory. Museographical representations engage the potential of temporal collapse when they implement the intentional inversion of time and place that gives the story being told a political purpose - to create a celebrative, coherent 'narrative' that is a foundational premise for teleological national memory.

The general setting

The founding of an independent state of Estonia in 1918, the forced annexation with the Soviet Union and its aftermath in the post-Second-World-War period, as well as the regained independence in 1991 frames three distinct phases in the creations of new master narratives that each depended on the contestation of the previous ones. In this study of how the museum institution re-positioned itself we can differentiate the transitions according to three distinct historical periods: the first Soviet occupation (June 1940 to July 1941); Nazi-German occupation (August 1940 to September 1944); the second Soviet occupation (October 1944–1991). One should add that in Estonia the Second World War continues to be a seminal 'site of memory' that still produces contradictory representations (Kõresaar 2011: 10). The final part of this paper takes a look at its representation in the museum display under transformative socio-political conditions, while the first part of this paper discusses the destructions, manipulations and suppressions that took place in Estonian museums in the decades of the 1940s and 50s. The cases used here are the History Museum and the Art Museum in Tallinn (the capital on the north coast) and the Estonian National Museum in Tartu (second largest city and intellectual hub in south-central Estonia).

They will be used to show how the establishment of the Soviet museum system reorganized, redistributed and repressed across national collections, buildings, and museum personnel, whereas the Nazi-German occupation denoted a re-shifting of political positions, but also additional repressions and loss both from personal and institutional perspectives. While museum representation was deemed quite marginal first for the new regime and then due the difficult conditions of wartime, the second Soviet occupation took up a profound re-writing of history and used the representative significance of museum display as part of targeted ideological propaganda. The general circumstance can be observed by tracing how collections were transformed in the course of these decades, a process that in a distorted way has also defined the makeup of certain museum collections today and conditioned where those museums stand in the current social imaginary. It could be argued that the concept of 'permanent display' got rather reversed or distorted, as due to those tragic decades nothing remained in its previous state or location. The same applies also to the personal histories of museum personnel.

These transformations and the tragic events related to them could, however, be publicly told and discussed or even revealed only recently, in the past decades. This has been a part of a process of reclaiming national history, which has characterized public re-configuration of national

experience. At the same time this new narrative (or even the old one, for that matter) did not manage to extend to minority positions,whose representation appears to have been relatively excluded from the re-writings of the period. Thus the re-writing of a particular experience in European history, i.e. the narrative concerning the Second World War, has not occurred in the Estonian museum setting in a critical and detailed manner yet[1].

First re-configurations

The Molotov–Ribbentrop pact of 1938 led to the *Umsiedlung* of the Baltic Germans, that is to say the exodus of nearly the entire ethnic group to Germany. Baltic Germans were the once ruling landowning and administrative minority, whose property and museum collections had played a significant role in cultural heritage. Amongst those who left the country, was most of the personnel of the *Provintsiaalmuuseum*, the predecessor of the Estonian History Museum (see Kuldna 2002). However, this relocation, selling and abandonment of Baltic German heritage, as well as the subsequent establishment of Soviet military bases implied a contradictory consequence for the collections of the museum institution in general as these painful changes brought about numerous additions in ethnographic, art and cultural artefacts to museum collections.

In 1940, the manipulation of the accession of Estonia to the Soviet state denoted that all private ownership was abolished and the museums were appropriated by the state. Institutions were closed, redistributed and reorganized: private bodies or foundations governed by respective societies were nationalized while thirteen museums (out of the total of thirty-nine) whose scope did not match the Soviet ideology were liquidated (Kukk 2009: 692; Raisma 2009a: 790). From three former national museums (run as foundations) the new regime created four so-called 'central state museums' that would correspond to the all-Soviet model: revolution museum, history museum, ethnographic museum, and museum of figurative art (Kukk 2009: 694). The Soviet museum system was meant to erase or censor the previous historical (and particularly national) narratives, purge collections of 'suspicious' material, introduce a centralized system of museum governing and management (including ideological monitoring), in order to introduce a new, Soviet narrative of state and nation where the guiding role was that of the Russian nation. This was particularly obvious in history museums, making them thus into specialized propaganda institutions in the Soviet cultural and academic sphere. These institutions were considered to be the 'outposts' of the ideological front whose displays had to promote the Communist Party, present historical events through the prism of class struggle, advance cultural revolution, as well as give evidence of the supremacy of the Soviet system over the capitalist past. The focal point of social development was fixed on the Russian revolution while the Estonian historical experience had to be merged into and governed by this master narrative (cf. Raisma 2009b).

In 1940 and 1941 museum collections were rather substantially re-distributed between the central museums (with little regard to museum professionals or local interests), which testified to the aim of destroying the previous museum system, as well as of eradicating the national narrative of independent Estonia. The newly established **State History Museum of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic** (with an annex of a Revolution Museum) partly received the collections of the ideologically detrimental Museum of the War of Independence, the Estonian Police Museum, and the Estonian Postal Museum, all closed down (Rosenberg 1961: 52; Raisma 2009a: 790).

Substantial parts of the History Museum's previous collections were divided between other museums, in order to build up the Soviet system of thematic museums. For example, the *Provintsiaalmuuseum* collections of sculptures and paintings were taken over by the State Art Museum, while the impressive Natural Science collections were transformed into a separate **State Museum of Natural Sciences** (cf. Kukk 2009: 698–699). On the other hand, the History Museum received artefacts of cultural history (deemed non-representative from the point of view of Estonian ethnology) from the Estonian National Museum.

Following the decision of the Education Council of People's Commissars, the Soviet regime also nationalized the Estonian National Museum that had been inherently intertwined with the narrative of Estonian nation-building and state-making. It was divided into two new distinct institutions: the State Ethnographic Museum that was profiled more narrowly for the preservation and research of material culture, and the State Literary Museum, to house the sub-units focusing on collecting verbal lore, written documents and books. Also the Art Museum of Estonia was transformed into Soviet state property and thus renamed in 1940. Members of the museum staff remained in their positions and were not affected too much at first, aside from the History Museum whose Baltic German specialized and professional museum personnel had left before the Soviet invasion. The year 1941, however, saw the beginning of political purges that brought with it many personal tragedies and suffering. Two consecutive directors of the Art Museum were arrested and deported to Siberia, one of them incriminated as a spy (Kukk 2009: 695). In the Estonian National Museum, the whole institution was gravely devastated when the Museum director was imprisoned, presumably due to his professional position, and eventually killed in a Soviet prison camp in 1942 (Viires 1993: 6).

Inhibitions of occupation and warfare

The German occupation seems to have brought about a return to the previous national narrative (first, with the restitution of the former names of the institutions), which nevertheless had to demonstrate the dominant presence of Germans in Estonian history, while the ideological focus was profoundly transformed (e.g. at History Museum was organised an exhibition titled 'The Combat of Germany with the East'). On the other hand, the issue of property ownership concerning the Baltic German heritage was raised when works of art and buildings were reclaimed. The ruling regime and the conditions of the war brought about additional hardship with the requirement to accommodate military troops, particularly at the magnificent mansion of the Estonian National Museum (cf. Astel 2009: 200). In general, however, the museums as ideological institutions do not seem to have been a priority for the German administration, let alone the museum personnel. In the Estonian National Museum, researchers turned the situation to their advantage when they continued carrying out fieldwork, collecting items, and claiming new geographic territories for ethnographic study by following to the east, into the Finno-Ugric regions the advancing German troops that had as former parts of Russia been inaccessible in the previous decades (Laid 1997: 237; Viires 1993: 6–7).

Things began to change radically when the battlefront turned into a retreat of the defeated German troops and active warfare swept once again across the territory of Estonia, including heavy bombing of the cities of Tallinn and Tartu. In the course of 1943 and 1944, Estonian museum personnel risked their lives for nearly a year by transporting museum collections into

safety, mostly to heated manor house cellars of central and western Estonia, but also when trying to protect the valuables (artworks and precious metal, as well as weapons) from German soldiers who were hunting for them (Astel 2009: 195–202).

Based on the difficult conditions and violent shifts of political power, the whole idea of 'national heritage as property' became physically problematic. To boot, practically all of the three museums lost their facilities. The Raadi Manor housing the Estonian National Museum in Tartu was destroyed during the war, though the collections that had been evacuated from the military zone remained largely intact. Aside from the vast museum facilities, the Estonian National Museum lost the majority of its qualified staff who fled Estonia out of fear of the persecution of the re-established Soviet regime (Viires 1993: 7). During the Soviet bombing of Tallinn in 1944 the Art Museum facilities were burnt down with a substantial part of the applied art collections and museum library, whereas most of the painting collections were saved, apart from those that had been taken to Germany (Kirme 2007: 25–26).

Stalinist re-configurations

The transformation of the museum landscape was thus a physical one. The Museum of Natural Sciences was established in the former premises of the History Museum, which was housed and exhibited in temporary facilities after the war. Finally in 1952 the museum move to its present location in Great Guild Hall of the medieval old town of Tallinn where the first permanent display was opened only in 1956.

After the destruction of its previous premises, the Estonian National Museum moved in 1945 to the first floor of the former courthouse in the Tartu city centre with extremely limited display facilities, whilst the ruins of Raadi were turned into a military base and subsequently an airfield. This museum appeared too suspiciously and inherently linked to the pre-Second World War independent Estonian Republic, and therefore the related memory needed to be erased. Under the Soviet rule, the museum that had lost its collections of art, political history and books became mutilated into an ethnographic museum-cum-archive with very limited display facilities in the process, with the name changed into Ethnographic Museum in 1952.

After the war, the Art Museum reopened in an apartment until it hit what seems a jackpot in comparison with the other two institutions: after being reorganized into the Tallinn State Art Museum, it was able to move to the Kadriorg Palace which had served as the seat of administrative power (Estonian, Soviet and Nazi-German). But first the Museum had to share the building with the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Estonian SSR, including the removal of displays for government receptions (five times in 1946, seven in 1947, and eleven in 1948). In addition, the wings of the Palace were divided into apartments, which left less space for the growing collections. This situation ended only gradually around the turn of the 1960s. (cf. Teder 2008).

The alternating Soviet–German–Soviet occupations meant substantial changes and a re-writing of the master narrative of representation with each transition, but the most profound transformations were brought about in 1945 when the Soviet regime set about promulgating its positions. Perceived by the new rule to be important ideological institutions, all central museums where ordered to open their doors (even in the substitute facilities) to the public with new displays by November 1945, to celebrate the anniversary of the Great Socialist October

Revolution. In 1946 the History Museum and the National Museum were incorporated into the system of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR, which followed the Soviet model of centralized research, museum and archival institutions. Museums were under the control of the central government and financed by the state through the Academy of Sciences.

The previous redistribution of museum collections was continued with the return of the Soviet rule. It also brought about a selective 'purge' of the historical collections: items and artefacts to be forbidden from the Soviet perspective were removed, while documents and books considered politically suspicious had to be deposited in a restricted and censored archive. Specific elements of national memory had to be erased; others needed to be rearranged and retold. The museum personnel tried to adopt the demands of Soviet ideology in their museum displays. Nevertheless, in 1945 and 1946 the whole administrative and scholarly staff of the History Museum was arrested and repressed by the Soviet regime: eight men and seven women were interrogated and indicted for planning an armed revolt, based on the weapons and literature assembled (See Annist 2002.). The irony in this tragedy was related to the fact that these artefacts were part of the prepared exhibit of the heroic defeats of the Soviet army. The men were sentenced to ten, and women to eight years of prison camp in Siberia. This incident was part of the larger repression of Estonian intelligentsia, during which the acting director of the National Museum was arrested and held in prison for a year (Viires 1993: 8). For the Estonian National Museum, the Stalinist period of persecution and oppression meant the loss of the building, as well as the decimation of the museum's personnel: those who did not flee were forced to resign, particularly in the 1950 political purge campaign, following the 1949 mass deportations and in connection with the forced collectivization of farms and rural private property. The status and quality of academic ethnographic studies was reduced and narrowed in general considerably due to its being labelled a 'nationalist' field. The topics Estonian ethnographers focused on during this period included farm architecture, agricultural tools, and traditional costumes celebrating the past peasant society. Their historical perspective on material objects provided also a more comfortable level of evolutionistic descriptive approach, which provided an opportunity to avoid ideological manipulation, related to social contextualization in the Soviet present. The positions of the museum directors and researchers became heavily politicized and censored until the second half of the 1950s. (See Astel 2009.)

After the mass deportation of about twenty thousand people to Siberia in 1949, which was followed by forced collectivisation of rural property, the next blow targeted again particularly intellectuals in 1950/51 causing additional political repression of museum personnel (imprisonment, deportation, loss of jobs). Purges took place in the History Museum of politically sensitive objects, which included documents and items that referred to independent statehood, as well as items deemed insignificant, i.e. without relevant historical or artistic value according to the Stalinist ideological or aesthetic norm. For example, 185 paintings, 307 graphic sheets and 46 plaster sculptures were destroyed, and more than 400 kilograms of artefacts made of precious metal were melted in 1951, and in 1953 more than 14 kilograms of photographic negatives were destroyed (Peets 2005; Raisma 2009a: 789–790). Also the document archives were newly systematized and censored, so that by 1960 more than 111,500 items had been handed over to the State Central Archive (Rosenberg 1961: 53). Thus the memory deposit of the Museum was changed drastically, mostly in relation to the Estonian national narrative concerning the first half

of the twentieth century. The displays reflected the interpretation of history in concurrence with the ideological issues highlighted by the Communist Party (who guided the ideological interpretations by the state). In the fifties and sixties the permanent exhibitions set the main emphasis on the Great Socialist October Revolution and its guiding force for the following decades.

In the Art Museum, the best part of Estonian art from the first half of the twentieth century was firmly shut up in reserves. The first exhibitions after the war could still present national elements, but since the early 1950s, the onset of Stalinist repressions meant that the emphasis of museum display was laid on Estonian art preceding the October Revolution (for example, limited to a few artists who had studied in St. Petersburg), and the works of art in the so-called Socialist Realist style, i.e. pertaining to works created already in Soviet Estonia. In this period, applied (decorative) art began to thrive because of the possibility of focusing the artistic skills and expression solely on the aesthetic; at the same time the style of the thirties inspired by folk art was reintroduced. From the end of the fifties and through the following political thaw of the early sixties, Estonian art developed its 'protective mechanism' via applied art (attributed with the lowest rank in the hierarchy of art ideology) against the trends of Sovietization of the Socialist Realism (Helme & Kangilaski 1999: 141).

The described re-configurations of the national narrative in Estonia during the Stalinist regime in the forties and fifties brought about a total reorganization of the museum system according to ideological regulations and agenda administered according to the model established by Moscow, where everything 'national' was substituted by 'state' (nation and state were not considered an equivalent). This meant a complete 're-writing' of the master narrative in museum representation, alongside with transformations and relocations of museum collections. Starting from 1946, all decrees and regulations concerning museums were sent down from Moscow (Jeeser 2009: 26). In the Soviet framework, museums became institutions of ideology, instruments in memory manipulation of what to present and how it should correspond to the Soviet master narrative in the clearly hierarchical and highly centralized cultural policy system[2]. The displays presented to the public were controlled by the central Soviet government: the exhibits had to be checked and approved by *Glavlit*, whose very last regulative instruction was issued and adopted in Estonia in the year 1988 (Raisma 2009b: 72)[3].

Under Soviet rule, the museum was transformed into a propaganda institution that was called upon to present history from the reworked Soviet Marxist-Leninist perspective of the communist socio-political progress. History was perceived as a didactic space where the narrative of economic and military domination prevailed, with a firm focus on events and impersonal numerical data deemed politically correct. In the Soviet master narrative personal experience or memories did not exist or matter. This ideological frame caused the development of a permanent exhibition inherently focused on the presumed progress of the means of production, positioning economic history and (inequalities of) social class as a central issue (Raisma 2009b: 89–90), but also communist revolution and the presentation of the victorious Great Patriotic War from the Soviet perspective. The nearly total neglect of cultural history and rather exclusive focus on previous economic strife and particular representation of class struggles with in addition Soviet military heroism, was clearly a strategy intended to erase the memory of an independent Estonian Republic (relabelled as oppressive, capitalist, and bourgeois). It had to be replaced by the

promotion of a teleological narrative of the making of the 'new Soviet nation', guided by the idea of progress, leading to the communist future of the proletarian state. However, for major as well as other local museum institutions, the significance of 'national' became tacitly equivalent of 'ethnic Estonian', and their particular agenda of preservation and safeguarding continued regardless of the official requirement and constraints of public display. This meant the tacit preservation of contested memories. Such an oppositional transformation brings forth the dynamics of memory culture under suppressive regime.

Representations of the Second World War

The last part of this paper takes a closer look at contested master narratives in permanent museum display contexts lending opportunity for the consideration of particular representations of the periods under discussion in this report. This is based on the juxtaposition of two exhibits presenting relatively oppositional narratives of the Second World War at the History Museum. The displays introduced here were held consecutively but during very different stages of the socio-political rupture of the turn of the 1990s.

The situation of the Estonian History Museum was representative of the general state of museums when they shifted from a Soviet propaganda institution to the representation of historical experience in a drastic transformation: the last Soviet period permanent display opened in 1987, on the eve of revolutionary changes it was not yet able to reflect (Raisma 2009c: 107). On the other hand, the 1987 display thus concurs in essence with the prevalent Soviet-period presentation of the Second World War, or to provide a correct term of the time, of the Great Patriotic War where Estonian historical experience could be presented only as an immanent part of (and defined by) the established Soviet narrative of that war. The major themes displayed were military battles that could present victorious military operations by Soviet generals and memorialize the heroic deeds of the Red Army in the course of the Great Patriotic War. This representational narrative focused predominantly on the myth of the Soviet nation as the winner and the Soviet political stereotypes of warfare: the 'us' were the Soviet (Estonian) nation and the Red Army, 'they' – the radically demonised enemy of 'the fascist Germany' (Kõresaar 2011: 17). Representations of personal experience, war-time collaboration in occupied territories, or war criminals were nearly non-existent, being completely marginalized, which has been explained by the official ideological requirement to retain and present the grand narrative of the united spirit of the Soviet nation – no negative light was allowed to cast a shade over that image (ibid: 23). The same principle was applied in the representation of the Holocaust: it was not extracted from the fate of Soviet citizens in general, while the evil was 'ex-territorialized' as a phenomenon generated in the West and not on Soviet territory (cf. Onken 2004).

The 1987 exposition was the last permanent display opened under the political condition of the Estonian SSR where the museum professionals were obliged to follow the orders of the Estonian SSR Communist Party Propaganda and Agitation Department (Kõresaar 2011: 11). In 1990 the display was quickly changed to concur with the socio-political situation providing a public transformation of the representation of Estonian history, particularly the presentation of the Stalinist period, which was nevertheless inherently tied to the elaboration of the experience of the Second World War. The display did not, however, undergo a substantial transformation from a museological or museographic perspective, but limited itself to the alteration of the narrative

substance, to render a different story in a basically similar framework. Historians studying in detail the Baltic experience of the mid-twentieth-century conflicts and their aftermath have stated that the Second World War actually ended for the Baltic nations only after their liberation from the Soviet regime and the re-establishment of independence in 1991 (Onken 2004). Ene Kõresaar who has studied the change of the representation of the Second World War at the History Museum display has pointed out the following major features[4]. Her study on the transformation of memory culture during the transition years in Estonia and the treatment of the Second World War in the History Museum's permanent exhibitions in the late eighties and the early nineties indicate that these displays were both relatively conservative in essence: both departed from a linear temporal concept in presenting events according to chronological sequence and a closed narrative, which functioned as "a memorialisation" (Kõresaar 2011: 17). The new exhibit signals a major alteration, however, in its agenda of "a nationalization of war experience" (ibid.). The 'us' in this narrative were the Estonian nation and national sovereignty that were threatened by two enemies (the Red Russia and Nazi Germany); the central figures of the 'us' were those fighting for the freedom of Estonia, whereas the eventual end of the Second World War did not bring freedom but alternating occupations. One of the focal points of the display was to present material that could not even be collected before, and to tell another version of the war experience, where atrocities of war or criminal acts became blurred in relation to the agency and role of Estonians. The main victims caught in the wheels of this narrative were Estonian citizens; the destruction caused by German occupation was presented from the perspective of factual data with a rather laconic listing of numbers of losses and pointing out their form, and the victims' ethnic or national origin. The previous, relatively emotional, presentation was juxtaposed with a terse depiction of the "realities of an occupation" (ibid.: 27), whereas no distinct part of the display was attributed to the Holocaust in contrast to the specific and central role that it has been given in the European memory regime. The re-interpretation of the Second World War presented by the permanent display in Estonian History Museum in 1990 was initiated from another perspective: from the fate of the Estonian nation and the independent state, in a narrative that perceived Estonians either as victims of the Soviet occupation or fighters against the communist regime. It has been claimed that museum exhibition is a practice of commemoration, which mediates a specific picture of history that represents but also shapes the identity of a particular group (ibid.: 10). The early nineties were the period for reclaiming a narrative of national history that would turn the public focus on ethnic Estonian experience, as a rather exclusive master narrative from a particular nationalist perspective that was based on stories not told before, forgotten or stories whose display was forbidden, stories of silenced suffering, which in that transformative phase of restored national independence meant a relative incapacity of any form of more inclusive representation of a shared history with other groups or communities.

Notes

1   E.g. the presentation of Holocaust derived from the Soviet propagandist anti-Nazi representation which did not particularly engage with the fate of the Estonian Jewish community.

2   Cf. passages from the brochure on the basics of Soviet museology: "For a long time the central theoretical problem in Soviet museology has been the question of how to apply museum exposition better to propagate scientific and political knowledge with an aim of furthering the Marxist-Leninist worldview of the audience" (Luts 1979: 3–4); and "A museum display should lead the visitor to conclusions that would help to generate (or substantiate) the dialectic and Marxist worldview" (ibid: 17).

3   *Glavlit* = the Main Administration for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press under the USSR Council of Ministers. This last document was titled "Instructions for the procedure of preparing exposition materials for public display in museums and exhibits and presenting them for check-up to the USSR *Glavlit* organs" (Raisma 2009b: 72).

4   Kõresaar was able to carry out this research relatively recently, because the permanent exhibit remained basically the same between 1990 and 2007, when it was taken down for substantial renovation of the museum institution in general; the 1987 display had already been carefully documented by the museum personnel (cf. Kõresaar 2011: 12).

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"Imagined Communities" in Contemporary Holocaust Exhibitions of the 1990s. A comparison of Berlin und London

Silke Walther (University of Bochum)

Abstract

Remarks on the *crisis of representation* have not adequately tackled the problem of how the genocide of millions of Jews and the ensuing damage for millions of Europeans might be presented within the frame of museum-based exhibitions after the end of the cold war. Since the eighties, the on-going musealization of the history of the Holocaust has merged with a flourishing memory culture. Moreover, postmodern reflections upon the event that used to be called "Holocaust" have already become part of the current museum culture. Memorial sites, Holocaust narratives and iconic images of previous press campaigns get connected in various curatorial efforts to mediate the past within a post-traumatic museum landscape. This paper examines the merging of history and memory of the Shoa within the frame of the new hybrid called "memory museum". My comparative analysis is focussed on two widely discussed exhibitions that were opened around 2000 to create a (trans-) national collective memory of the Shoa for a contemporary museum audience.

"Imagined Communities" and the Musealization of Holocaust Remembrance

Museums have always shaped "memories" for clearly defined communities as their nineteenth century mission included the issue of identity building. According to Benedict Anderson, affiliation to an "imagined community" used to be interwoven with the agenda of nationalism in the age of Western imperialism. Anderson introduced the term to differentiate between an actual community and an abstract idea of that political community in order to explain why the people in South Asia adopted the Western "ideology" to think of themselves as being members of a nation (Anderson, 1983: 15; 16; 20).[1] Phenomenologists know about the crucial role of mediated mental activities, commemorabilia, that enable us "to pay homage to people and events" we have never known face-to-face (Casey, 1987: 218). Based on some ideological framework, symbols, rituals, commemorative acts can bring about the affiliation to a *communitas* of people. Anderson's constructivist approach explores how imagined communities controlled the affiliation to an abstract nation, but his concept is equally suited to explore other acts of mediation through commemorative acts; in this case the commemoration of the extinction of about six million European Jews called the *"The Holocaust"* used to be strongly tied to collective acts of remembrance in the public sphere of the post-war era (1945-1989). Within a deeply traumatized post war culture, public acts of commemoration communicated the acceptance of collective guilt the majority of German people had failed to acknowledge for decades. Memorial sites were erected from the 1950s' onwards either to preserve the original sites of mass murder or to provide an infrastructure for commemorating the victims of the Shoa in public. In Israel, Yad Vashem was opened in 1953 and soon became a hallmark of national Holocaust remembrance and a site for the affirmation of group identity. The "imagined community" that was commemorated at the nation's official site of mourning used to be a community of victims. It became a national duty to register lost relatives at the Yad Vashem archive. This register lists two million persons that "have been granted certificates of commemorative citizenship". (quoted in Stier, 2003: 122)[2] The affiliation to a community of victims appeared as perfectly natural as long as there was a living active community of Holocaust victims. It ceases to make sense if the infrastructure or the ritual produces a victimized identity for succeeding generations that stroll like any other tourist in the "Valley of Lost Communities" of the Yad Vashem memorial complex. Mourning site rituals dedicated to the lost people were part of a vivid post-war memory culture before they gradually swept into the international museum-exhibition context that changed previous modes of representation. Although museums are far from being the most important catalyst of a meanwhile post-traumatic, pluralist culture of Holocaust remembrance, their contribution to the problem of Holocaust representation is crucial as they present histories, discourses, images, artefacts to a pluralist "post-Holocaust" public. This public is well-informed, but more and more unlikely to share a collective memory of the historical event.

Aleida Assmann points out that mainly four post-Holocaust "communities" might share a "collective memory" of the historical event and its consequences: (1.) Jewish communities and Israel as a nation, (2.) Germans and Germany, (3.) any other European country affected by Germany's programme of genocide, and (4.) the allies of the Second World War (Assmann, Conrad, 2010). However, as memories are never disinterested in the Kantian sense, the

"desperate need to freeze time and establish memory of the past" must appear as a rather problematic desire if it is not embedded in a lively, discursive culture of negotiation and reflection. Assmann argues that the contemporary propaganda of anti-Semitic political leaders makes it necessary for a transnational community to defend a shared "collective" memory. But should this memory be collected, stabilized and, to a certain degree, become neutralized by museological operations? In 1999, the International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research Network (ITF) located at Washington envisioned a supra-national or "global Holocaust memory" that should be distributed through a worldwide network of cooperating institutions. Museums were recommended to preserve and carry this transient heritage across the threshold of the new millennium. The declared goal is an inclusive "memory community" with a shared political, United Nations agenda around the world (Assmann and Conrad 2010, 113). However, the ITF's universalist approach underestimates the problem of authorship and context in the museum. The inclusion and mediatization of memory is at odds with the museum's role in contemporary societies: a social sphere where controversial interpretations of a difficult past can be negotiated for the sake of mutual understanding. Even if a standardized Holocaust memory were possible, it would be a composed compromise *for someone.* In any case the quality of a shared UN memory would depend on how issues of political persecution, genocide, terrorism and displaced minorities were framed. In his discussion of the impact of memory culture on American Memorial Museums, Philip Gourevitch distinguishes between the ITF's classical agenda of Holocaust education and attempts "to internalize" that lesson in tolerance in order to make it "a form of memory" (Williams 2012, 113).

In contemporary culture, apparently contradictory processes overlap and intersect: an accelerated musealization of the Holocaust since the seventies, the steady growth of the museum-exhibition-complex since postmodernism, and a flourishing, popular memory culture that revolves around "images" and "narratives". This contemporary condition locates the museum at the intersection of "the twin dialectical currents of memory" on the one hand and "forgetting" on the other hand:

> How a museum expresses that tension is consequentially a crucial expression of cultural attitudes toward memory, and an understanding of the ideology behind any museum's organization and presentation becomes crucial … How and through what media a particular museum tells its story become essential components of its place (the place it creates for itself) in contemporary culture and community. (Stier, 2003: 114-115)

Musealization and memorialization of the Holocaust continue to be powerful driving forces. Museums have a vague notion of who constitutes their community. Carol Duncan points to the fact that museum representations demonstrate the institutional power to define, control and express shared beliefs of a past or contemporary community (Duncan 1998, 474-475). Assisted by electronic media, installations and exhibition design, museums are today in a better position than ever to create powerful threedimensional "pictures" or environments. Although the crisis of representation has been discussed at length, analysis of the new kind of permanent Holocaust exhibitions have been largely ignored so far. Curated exhibition design and audio sources influence the visitor's perception and might even provoke a response to staged pictures or environments demanding empathy and "action" according to the museum's narrative. Some critics fear that the new media favour social interaction and weaken reflection and understanding

(Hans Martin Enzenberger quoted in Stier, 2003: 186). Rosen thinks museums should avoid to be identification projects or attempt to re-enact the cultural metaphor of trauma (Rosen 1997). It can be assumed that shared memories encourage affiliation to a community, but what about contradicting memories?

What might be the impact of an identity-focussed memory culture that transforms previous modes of telling and showing in Holocaust exhibitions? How can a museum balance "history" and "memory" without losing sight of its obligation to a balanced view? What might the on-going interpretation of the Holocaust as a powerful metaphor mean for a museum that is dedicated to educational duties? What does the sight of mugs, spoons and glasses excavated since the seventies at Polish death camp sites awaken in viewers that were not born in the seventies? How can the museum defend its obligation to transparency when so many contradicting voices and interests are competing to become part of a museum representation?

The contemporary trend to establish permanent thematic Holocaust exhibitions in metropoles occurred after the proliferation of special Holocaust museums and appears dependent of that preceding turn towards "memory museum" or "monument-as-museum". The American Holocaust museum belongs to the large group of memorial museums that negotiate identity, war and victimhood. The specialized Holocaust Museum is located "at the twin dialectical currents of memory and forgetting". Hornstein and Stier read musealization as evidence of "the increasing need to seize memory" for the sake of generational transmission (Stier, 2003: 114; Hornstein, 2003: 2-6). The irreversible decrease of first or second generation memory of the Shoa has been answered with a range of collecting and recording activities since the seventies. The complex history of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) mirrors these changing strategies to keep a social memory alive because it integrated large amounts of videotaped testimonies of survivors' fates and presented more than 700 films.

The museum was planned from scratch since the seventies and opened in 1993 as the nation's first Holocaust memorial museum. The compromise solution was a monumental building and a new type of Holocaust exhibition that demanded identification and participation. It is significant that the representation of the large community of American Jews is presented as a part of the nation's multitudes. The shared experience of survival and immigration creates the central icon of the storyline, the survivor-immigrant whose retrospective testimony of the crimes against humanity are integrated into a comprehensive survey of the history of the Second World War and America's fight against European totalitarianism. A vast amount of military archival sources has been plotted for a mediated, dramatic survey in which the visitor finds himself either in the role of the U.S. soldier or in the role of the victim.[3] This type of museum offers an instructive, yet oppressive pilgrimage from suffering to salvation. The visitor receives the identity card of a member of the USHMM's composed Holocaust family and is expected to move from "passive unaware inhabitant of the nation" to "active vigilant citizen". Linenthal explains the force of the display should spur empathy with the victims, but also positive action in real communities (Linenthal, 1995: 13). The American-Jewish architect in charge, James Ingo Freed, visited former killing grounds in Poland to get in touch with the authentic sites:

> there in Auschwitz on my first night in the camp it all fell apart for me, and I began to cry, and a sort of angry passion shook me, and I knew I had to do this [to design the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at Washington, S.W.] for those who were gone and

who we must remember. (J.I. Freed quoted in Weinberg, Elieli, 1995: 184 introduction without pagination)

Freed's negative revelation and rebirth as member of a transnational Holocaust family fit with the board's intention to build a bulwark against forgetting. The building is a psycho-engineering structure that creates pseudo-sacrality and a monument to the extinguished "Holocaust family" (Stier, 2003: 112).

Saloni Mathur argues that critical museology "must examine the cultural, historical, and political atmosphere of the societies in which museums operate, and that shape their agendas and exhibition practice" (Mathur 2012, 514). This essay is a first sketch that follows a comparative frame. It cannot provide a typology of different exhibition types in European museums of history and museum of Jewish Culture. My intention has been to explore how the large and complex topic of *Holocaust representation* has been treated in new permanent exhibitions that were developed between German unification and the millennium. This decade had to reconcile an enlarged European perspective with a more traditional memorial landscape. I decided to choose museum extension projects that give evidence of the contemporary trend to combine memorial, museum and the mediatisation of memory. The reopened Jewish Museum Berlin is a specialized culture museum that would not have fitted well had not Libeskind added a further connection to memory culture. The Imperial War Museum used to be dedicated to national military history before it interpreted the Holocaust as a paradigmatic memory of war in Europe.

The Jewish Museum Berlin: Reflections on Discontinuity

Quite contrary to the premature diagnosis of a continuing postmodern amnesia, the decade of the nineties was characterized by a continuing obsession with the past and with "making monuments". This was, as my second example shows, not an exclusively German phenomenon. After the end of the cold war the majority of public monuments, especially those dedicated to political leaders or systems, looked tarnished by ideology. In the decade following German reunification, ‚history' and ‚the museum' continued to be powerful epistemological models to negotiate a self-reflective national consciousness. Berlin already had a remarkable museum landscape, but in the decade after reunification all the mandates for expansion and renewal were open due to the shattered tectonics of two German memory cultures. The question of what should be remembered by whom and to what purpose was central to many debates during the nineties. With the final decision to build a new *Memorial for the Murdered Jews in Europe* the issue of Holocaust commemoration became chained to a further expansion of the reorganized museum landscape.

Jewish museums are suited for any re-evaluation of museum representation as they usually revolve around objects, rituals, and recollection. In comparison with a highly artificial Holocaust Museum, the Jewish Museum Berlin (JM) can refer to its own historical tradition that ended in 1938. The old museum was dedicated to many cultural activities of the community. Due to a politics of total annihilation nothing except a small baroque building remained after 1945.[4] Plans to found a new Jewish Museum in the old building evolved in a decade that was driven by further museum expansion and a conceptualist turn towards site-specific Holocaust remembrance. The museum should keep the memory of the Jewish pre-war community, approximately 560,000 Jewish-German citizens, alive and visible.[5] This interest in mapping the traces of a lost Jewish

community was present in several art projects of the decade and oriented the whole museum project in a completely new direction. Moderate plans to add a new wing to the old baroque palace were superseded by Daniel Libeskind's large-dimensioned architectural project (1996-2001) in which the Holocaust became the axis around which all other chains of signification revolve. The American architect explains his personal concept, the translation of Jewish collective trauma into spatial dimensions. The sequence of spaces is intended to offer the experience of absence, difficulty, denied access (to spaces in-between) and arbitrariness. Libeskind feels that the Holocaust has left an enduring emptiness at the core of German culture. He characterizes the building as his subjective reflection of the "*void*". These extend through all floors as inaccessible blocks that disrupt the visitors' movement - like reminders of the physical, intellectual and social destruction of the Jewish body. For Paul Virilio, any artistic creation that is intended to create "a Holocaust feel", however metaphorically, signifies a thanathopic impulse (Virilio, 2003). But Peter Eisenman (2004: 204) designed his "Topography of Terror" with a similar sensibility for "bodily memory": the experience of 2,711 concrete slabs that are narrativised ("*Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*").[6] Libeskind's 48 pillars in the museum's "Garden of Exile" echoe Eisenman's turn to the sublime.

Fig. 1: Perpective view of the jagged main building of the Jewish Museum Berlin with Holocaust Tower and Garden of Exile designed by Daniel Libeskind, Illustration in: Lampugnani, Vittorio/Sachs, Angelis (1999) Museen für ein neues Jahrtausend. Ideen, Projekte, Bauten, Prestel, München/London/New York, p. 103.

The new building for the JM has a jagged floor plan that symbolizes the exceptional fate of German-Jewish communities (fig. 1). The lines in the ground plan have ten directional changes. They symbolize "broken life threads" and connect persons and places of pre-war Jewish Berlin that Libeskind found worthy to be remembered: Artists, musicians and intellectuals represent "German culture". For Libeskind, these are the "hundred thousands of Jewish citizens that are no longer there." (Dorner, 2006: 17)[7] The places where they once had lived helped to shape the form of the building so that "the history of the Jews is living, even in its absence, in its permanent potential." (Libeskind quoted in Hornstein, 2003: 46-47) Christian Boltanski's "*House*

of the Missing" (1990) is a more playful, conceptual approach to this everyday culture of German-Jewish coexistence in pre-war Berlin (fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Christian Boltanski (*1944), Missing House. Grosse Hamburger Strasse 15-16, Illustration in: Schneede, Uwe (1991) Christian Boltanski: Inventar, Exhibition Catalogue Hamburger Kunsthalle (12.4. - 9.6.1991), Hamburg 1991, p. 106, Prometheus Bildarchiv e.V.

This permanent installation in the former Jewish quarter of the city traces the absence of vanished inhabitants of the bombed and destroyed apartment block at Grosse Hamburger Strasse. The wall of the adjacent house is hung with several labels that indicate the names, professions and life data of former residents. The space between the buidings is transformed into a "space of memory".[8] Libeskind and Boltanski have a similar interest to give missing people a disturbing presence among the living. The jagged building is Libeskind's "House of the Missing": a space that was created to reflect absence, death, is the architect's response to a traumatized past of his parent's generation. His own "post-memory" reflection on the exceptional fate of the German-Jewish community of the city adds a dark, elegiac note: "The visitor to this museum has to keep in mind that it is not easy to put continuity together across that which is forever gone" (Hornstein 2003: 57). There is an obvious tension between the architect's concept of an empty monument and the museum organization's decision for a multi-media survey exhibition that covers more than two thousand years of Jewish Culture. Many contemporary Jewish museums avoid Libeskind's priorization of the Holocaust, but in Berlin the architecture plays the leading role. The museum's narrative begins with a bow to the Louvre tradition: The visitor steps into the labyrinthine subterranean corridors and must choose between the "Axis of the Holocaust" or the "Axis of Exile" (fig. 3) that lead either into the dead end of the unheated "Holocaust tower" or to the exterior adjacent "Garden of Exile" (Israel). Only the "Axis of Continuity", illuminated by white strip lighting, leads to a steep staircase that connects a subterranean exhibition of "stranded objects" in minimalist showcases with the main exhibition space on the upper two levels.

Fig. 3: Jewish Museum Berlin, Basement, Axis of the Holocaust, Axis of Continuity, © Jewish Museum Berlin/Press 672/0, Photograph: Jens Ziehe.

The fluorescent ‚Line of Hope' refers to the recollection of a concentration camp survivor who on being interviewed said a white line in the skies had kept her alive. This story is provided by Libeskind in his ‚Trauma' essay and is also repeated in the JM museum guides (Libeskind in Hornstein 2003: 43-58). The production of meaning in culture museums usually relies on artefactual representation: objects are being transformed into artefacts. This mode of representation is a difficult task in any museum that deals with the Holocaust, but particularly if there is nothing left to be put on display. The private foundation that runs the museum decided to present "surviving" objects from Jewish-German everyday life given by donors and other supporters. The objects shall confront the visitor with fragments of a lost "authentic" individual life.[9] This paradigmatic shift towards the fate of families of a pre-Holocaust Berlin leads to the fabrication of "micro-narratives". As very little is known about the original owners of the "objets trouvés", the history of how they got into the collection is exhibited. Letters give evidence of Frieda Neuber's deportation, but also of the dancer Steffi Messerschmidt who dreamt of a bright future on Europe's stages in the late twenties. A sewing machine reminds of the tailor Paul Guteman who was expelled to Poland in 1938, torn apart from wife and child.[10] Director W. Michael Blumenthal thinks that the Holocaust should be reconsidered with regard to the history of German ethno-nationalism and racism, but also from the perspective of individual biographies and popular everyday culture to reach a larger museum public that is neither in touch with Jewish culture nor with the complicated history of German-Jewish relations.[11] The JM's narrative has been developed to inform mainly non-Jewish visitors of the mechanism of socio-political exclusion from a national community. The assemblage of "surviving objects" in the underground

underscores the catastrophic dimension of this unrepresentable event, but it also leads to a new perception of donated gifts that are transformed into "authentic" sources.

The emptiness of the basement is not continued on the upper floor where Jewish culture in general and German-Jewish life since the Middle Ages are presented on two levels expanding over 3,000 square metres. The curator Kenneth Gorbey, assisted by Würth & Winderoll exhibition design, developed a rich illustrated history book for families and school classes. The aim is to explain how Jewish citizens lost their national identity, their jobs and possessions, and finally their lives. Photographs that were given to the JM are presented in photo-album-style in a section devoted to the role of family life (1850-1933) for a burgeoning middle-class. "Influential citizens" that contributed to innovation in culture, industry, science, and the arts are presented and honoured in a typical bourgeois Biedermeier environment. Lower social classes are strikingly absent from this representation of typical German-Jewish life: the portrait paintings, photographs, teddy bears and other objects given to the institution solely refer to the middle-class. The social norms and preferences of this class are presented as the thriving forces of German industrial progress and innovation in all fields of culture (1870-1933). The representation of the donors' recollected Berlin childhood has a rather Benjaminesque effect that is reinforced by the many photographs from various family albums: Contrary to Benjamin's thoughts on the loss of aura in reproduction the aura is produced by the dominant family frame that is built around the photographic image (Walther, 2009: 379). A positive effect is that throughout the exhibition, individually memory appropriated by the institution is included and made visible. The disadvantage is that the concluding section overshadows all of the objects on display.. The guided tour climaxes with a documentation of the killing of European Jews in concentration camps, followed by the post-war Auschwitz Trial.[12] The "present room" makes aware that descendants of this pre-war "imagined community" created through the means of museal representation are living everywhere, except in Germany (fig. 4). In contrast to American-Jewish identity building in the USHMM, the JM presents the history of a growing tension between "being Jewish" and "being from Germany". The history of the Jews is reflected from politico-historical constellations of the past (ethno-nationalism) and the present (a reunified national community in Europe) in order to reinvest the Holocaust with meaning for a contemporary German public. The perspective of a meanwhile aged community that shares the experience of persecution, flight and exile dominates the storyline and leads to a telling exclusion of Jewish life in Berlin between 1945 and the present.

Fiig. 4: Jewish Museum Berlin, Present Room (Jewish Families after 1945), Photo: Silke Walther

The Imperial War Museum London: Spectatorship and Body Horror

Didactic aesthetics of Holocaust memorial museums usually include the "*never forget*" message whereas the reframing of images of atrocity related to the destruction of European Jewry has become part of a changing discourse on voyeurism, spectatorship and the horrific sublime in contemporary art. Gerhard Richter's montage of pornography and corpses in his *Atlas* project was an early reflection on photographic representation, consumptive spectatorship, and the assumed mass-media commodification of ‚Holocaust imagery'. [13] Long before the latest spectacularization of Nazi atrocities in contemporary art (and afterwards in museum exhibitions) emerged, Saul Friedlaender wondered whether the obsession with Nazism as well as the discourse that ceaselessly elaborates it is only interested in the past or rather an expression of profound fears projected on the past? (Friedlaender, 1984: 19).

My second case study demonstrates how such fears shape the staged image of the past in museum exhibitions by making more or less obvious reference to a common post war experience that could only be shared retrospectively, i.e. after having been popularized through the media and the museum. A museum team that seeks to reconcile its already national historical narrative with the "collective memory" of, for example, the Second World War or its aftermath, might define problematic ‚chapters' in this survey as a burden to be mastered or might continue ‚making monuments' by framing events and heroes worthy to be remembered for the sake of self-assurance in times of crisis. Reflecting on the dynamics of "collective memory works", Irwin-Zarecka observes that it might not be enough to

> restrict our inquiries to tracing the vicissitudes of historical knowledge or narratives. We must also ... attend to the construction of emotional and moral engagement with the past. (Irwin-Zarecka, quoted in Stier, 2003: 150)

The British popular and scientific engagement with the history of German facism has been intense, with the paradoxical effect that most Britains are so well-educated on Germany's Nazi crimes that this difficult past seems more real to them than to their German contemporaries. The Imperial War Museum London (IWM) used to keep exclusively the memory of Britain's military battles alive before it recently turned towards the more complex ‚chapters' of the past by choosing the Holocaust, an event that denies complete representation as well as complete musealization. The institutional experience in handling historical documents would have permitted a more profound and self-reflective reassessment of the "attempted annihilation of European Jewry", but making the Shoa more meaningful in a contemporary multi-ethnic post-Commonwealth British society obviously demanded to find a balance between historical events as "hard facts" and history, as *we* remember it.'[14]

A history museum specialized in the art of warfare and renowned for its multi-media surveys of the World Wars seems not the ideal spot to "explain" and "illustrate" the history of the Holocaust for a twenty-first century audience, "especially for young people". (Imperial War Museum, 2000: 1-2) War technology makes up large parts of the artifacts that were usually presented as the result of progress and power (fig.5).

Fig. 5: Imperial War Museum London, Main Gallery, Photograph: Silke Walther, with kind permission of the Imperial War Museum.

The Holocaust exhibition was developed during the nineties (1996-2000) when the museum needed to brush up its programme to attract a larger museum public. A functional five-storey extension wing was erected to have sufficient exhibition space for the new permanent exhibition. The inauguration in June 2000 by Her Majesty the Queen was broadcasted as an event of national

significance. Having seen the museum exhibit, Esther Brunstein, one of the invited survivors whose personal recollection became part of the exhibition narrative, felt "taken back to a time when Evil reigned supreme."[15] The integration of survivors' recollections of their suffering, fear and loss has been criticized as a much too strong emphasis on Nazi destruction politics. Although this prioritization of persecution politics and the genocide indicates an awareness of political and intellectual discourses of the decade, the exhibition functions also as a ‚monument' by honouring very different groups in British and East European history for their resistance against Nazi terror "The murdered European Jews and the allied servicemen" are happily united as a ‚community of victims': "they gave their live to defeat Nazism".[16] The universalization of victimhood is ahistorical but useful to create an "imagined community" that shares the same belief in Western liberal democracy at all times and places. In the case of genocide, empathy with individual persons dehumanized by the historical context has often proved to be impossible; on the other hand as empathy easily translates into identification with victors, the Jewish "survivor-as-witness" plays a crucial role in the IWM's representation of the Holocaust. An abundant collection of British survivors' taped testimonies has been used to stabilize the coherence of the museum's comprehensive institutional narrative on battles against foreign enemies. It is no coincidence that Sir Edmund Burke's thoughts on the spread of *Evil* are presented together with videotaped reflections on the meaning of *Auschwitz* in the last room of the exhibition. Bearing witness and giving evidence of Nazi crimes in all possible details is one major educational goal of this richly illustrated survey which, due to large amounts of historical sources, particularly films, photographs and posters, also incorporates styles of imagery tied to the symbolic language of Nazism and anti-Semitism.[17]

The British team cannot be criticized for having restaged the U.S. Holocaust Memorial's more dramatic exile-and-salvation-plot. There are some structural similarities between the American and the English exhibition narrative as both are based on the history of the war against totalitarian Germany and Europe. Both plots present the allied forces' joint efforts to defeat fascism and to end the war. At the IWM, the "American" mode of display, especially the frequent use of large film screens and the use of simulacra, were rejected in favour of a firm grounding in historical facts and a seemingly documentary chronicling of events. The exhibition team cooperated with many Jewish memorial sites and cultural foundations to present the history of the Holocaust in a European-wide dimension, including the Nazi terror in East Europe's *Bloodlands*.[18] The result is a historically more accurate "liberator's plot" that is mixed up with filmed, photographed and written historical documents and taped ‚testimonies'.[19]

The period covered by the new Holocaust exhibition had to bridge the gap between IWM's famous sections on the two World Wars and the section on post-war conflicts. The exhibition is subdivided into two parts extending on two floors in a dim-lighted gloomy atmosphere that contributes to a discomforting feeling of Foulcauldian control. Part I covers the spread of Nazi ideology in the seedbed of European antisemitism between the wars (1918-38) and Hitler's successful transformation of the political system according to NS Aryan racial theory. Showcases with china, furniture, personal belongings, suitcases and a map visualizing emigration flows illustrate the disintegration of the (German) Jewish community. Part II downstairs proceeds with the German occupation of Poland, deportation and murder in Eastern Europe by SS execution squads, a detailed portrait of the "*Death camp industry*" and the liberation of the concentration

camps in the large *"Rescue-and-Survival"*-part which ends with allied jurisdiction and execution of Nazi leaders.[20] Patriots might leave with the comforting conclusion that darkness has always been beyond the nation, in remote places.[21] The IWM's tradition of the object-driven artefactual representation is continued and leads to sometimes rather surreal encounters between "stranded objects" and "advanced killing technology" in one and the same section (Foucault, 1977).

"Life before the Nazis" begins with Jewish Germans' stories on their childhood and 24 enlarged family portraits juxtaposed with Hitler's black metaphysics of war.[22] Hitler's and Goebbel's hate speeches resound in this first part that was intended to sum up all the facts *and* theories that are somehow related to the Nazi's genocidal programme. The representation of the enemy (Hitler, the SS guards, execution squads, and the whole bureaucratic machinery of destruction) occupies large parts of the tour through the dark and sometimes spins off in the wrong direction. SS uniforms, weapons, *"Mein Kampf"* and the Olympic Games seen through Riefenstahl's lens are a neo avant-gardist flirt with fetishized icons. Iconic images are used to portray "Nazi Germany" in Part I. This perhaps too strong attention on the "enemy" stimulates empathy with a threatened historical, Jewish minority in Britain and abroad. Like in the JM, the exhibition provides a frame of reference in which the ‚national family' of the war years and the persecuted Jewish community are reunited as a community of witnesses of the same historical event. The plot is based on a binary structure of competing ‚communities': victims and their persecutors. There is an almost Barthian emphasis on the indexical nature of portrait photographs of victims and their relatives in this ambitious reconstruction of a ‚lost community'.

The aim of showing **how** the European Jews were dehumanized and killed is successfully achieved. However, the reliance on an inherited photojournalistic mode of giving evidence for the sake of empathy and information leads to a problematic repetition of the allied forces' photographic regimes.[23] It would require further information on the provenance of the heterogeneous photographic material that makes up the "documentary mode"**.** The use of photographic reproductions in larger-than-life scale is a weak point of the theatrical section that shows execution commandos near Vilna in action. Just as the photographer was part of the peeping crowd, the visitor is forced to become a witness and bystander gazing at appalling violence.[24] In front of the crime scene, broken glasses and keys excavated at the site of destruction are presented in illuminated showcases. Letters thrown from the train to Auschwitz are part of a presentation of typical individual fates that point towards the millions of untraceable deaths. Throughout the tour it depends on the visitor's sensibility if he or she follows the explanatory museum texts or listens to the victim's voice pitched to stir the commemoration of an imagined ‚Holocaust family'. As the storytelling is mainly addressed to a general public, empathy results from the strikingly familiar tone of these last letters: *"promise to be brave"*.[25] Both Holocaust exhibitions in Berlin and London contain arranged galleries of portrait photographs, but the London exhibition pushes the identification game further by creating photo galleries of former Ghetto inhabitants and of prisoners at Auschwitz-Birkenau (The Imperial War Museum, 2011: 32)[26]. The installation design confronts visitors almost rhythmically with the sight of victims and their enemies. In a sequence of rooms dedicated to the victim's passage to Auschwitz, the path leads through the reconstructed model of a Belgian railway cattle waggon that resounds with survivors' voices recollecting their traumatic deportation experience.[27] The emphasis on giving evidence has caused a striking cult of relics that has been originally developed

at the Auschwitz memorial museum in the post-war era. The display of traces, like hair, glasses, combs and shoes, creates emblematic exhibition objects that point towards industrialized mass murder at the death camp, the un-representable act of killing (fig. 6-7).

Fig. 6: Imperial War Museum, Holocaust Exhibition, Inside the Camps: Main Showcase with objects found at concentration camp sites, Photograph: Imperial War Museum London 2000, Andrew Putler/James Johnson: The Holocaust Exhibition at the IWM London, London 2011, p. 44-45.

Fig. 7: Imperial War Museum, Holocaust Exhibition, Artefacts in Showcase illustrating life in the camps, Photograph: James Johnson, in: Imperial War Museum (2011) The Holocaust Exhibtion at the IWM London, Belmont Press, London, p. 48-49.

The largest section "Inside the camps" presents a large plaster model of the Auschwitz-Birkenau II complex depicting the selection process of Hungarian Jews in May 1944 in front of a showcase filled with shoes, books, and glasses left by gassed victims (fig. 8). The accurate reconstruction of the Death camp industry gives amassed evidence of the destruction of the Jewish body, but the idea to single out Auschwitz as the Nazi's "most perfected killing technology"(The Imperial War Museum, 2011, 30) is, although in harmony with the IWM's war focus, not beyond criticism. Only Auschwitz, not Chelmo or Bergen-Belsen, can be understood

as a powerful emblem of the whole totalitarian system that demands no further comment. But the displayed objects of the artefactual representation have been excavated at different grounds and are presented as authentic objects giving evidence of Auschwitz crimes. These relics will inevitably become less meaningful if the museum visitor meets the same piles of shoes or hair in Holocaust exhibitions around the world. There is an obvious need for authentic objects, but it is debatable if the pile of hair from Madjanek memorial museum must become a commodified exhibition object at London, Berlin, or Washington. The weakness of this exhibition is the uncommented use of photographs and the loyalty to institutional habits of representing history as an illustrated chronicle of events that proceeds in an undisturbed documentary mode.
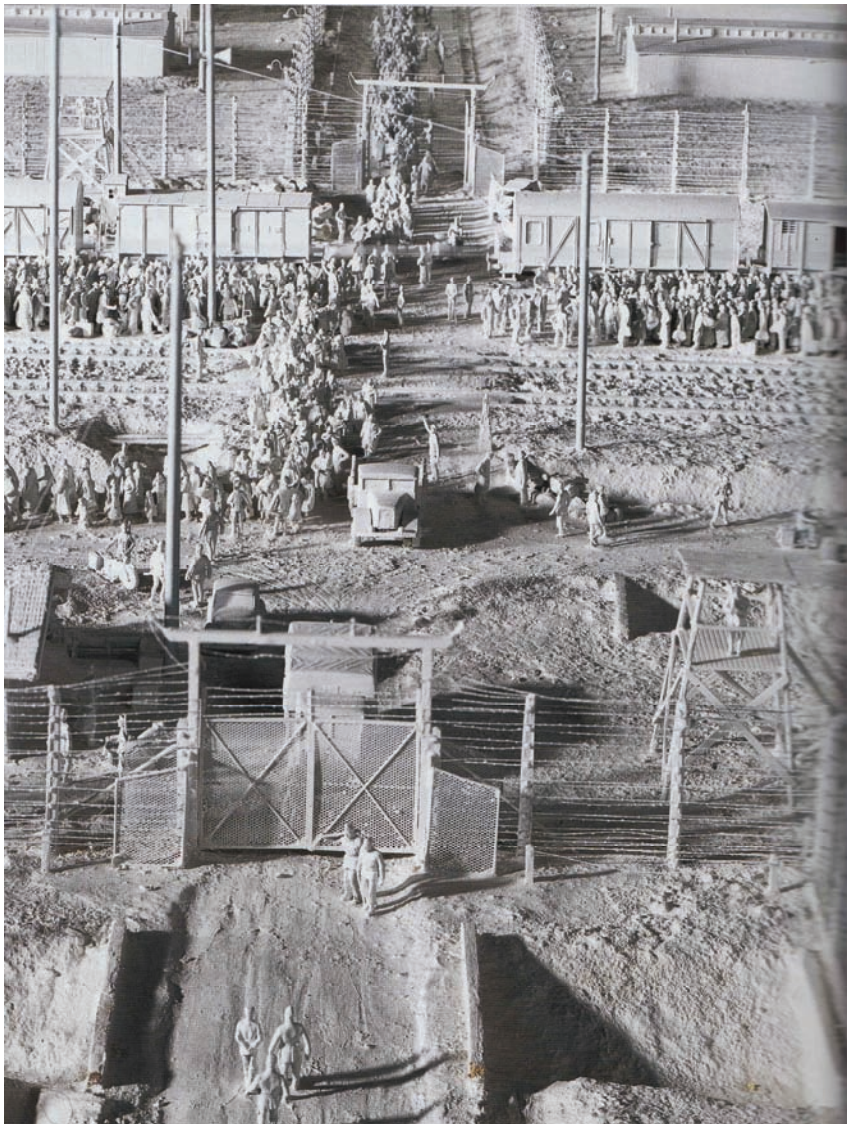

Fig. 8: Imperial War Museum, Holocaust Exhibition, Detail from a plaster model of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp featured in the exhibition showing the selection of Jews from the Berehevo ghetto, May 1944, photograph by Chris King, in: Imperial War Museum (2011) The Holocaust Exhibtion at the IWM London, Belmont Press, London, p.46.

Conclusion

Both museums have developed exhibition narratives that address and create imagined communities in order to reassess the meaning of the Holocaust for the present. In Berlin, Libeskind's reflection of the void provides a frame of reference that leads to a strong emphasis on recollection and reflection of a lost community at the centre of Germany's capital. Libeskind reconceptualized the American-Jewish Holocaust memorial tradition for Berlin. The trope of 'trauma' to which the architect refers is closely related to specific discourses on Jewish identity that meanwhile have become an integral part of cultural criticism. Historical trauma implies real injury and victimhood with long-term political, psychic and moral consequences whereas metaphorical trauma is a postmodern breed of Holocaust memory culture. The contemporary treatment of the Holocaust as metaphor needs site-specificity, like in Libeskind's approach. Although this building provides an equally supportive environment like the USHMM, the museum's survey exhibition avoids a metaphorical reading of 'trauma' as it could only be read from the perspective of real victims of the Shoa and would be misleading in a chronological survey on the history of the German Jewry for Germans. Education after Auschwitz is geared towards the future avoidance of dysfunctional political and social systems. The narrative framework of the exhibition display mediates between "stranded objects" and a social community that is constructed around these objects. By naming places and persons of a vanished Berlin culture the museum produces a discourse of cultural remembrance.

The Imperial War Museum exhibition creates a witnessing community according to an already mediated experience of previous press campaigns after 1945. It integrates survivors' oral testimony from its own collection to enhance the storytelling of the main plot. The IWM narrative avoids further de-historicising, but it uses the iconic survivor to increase the moral authority of "Britain" fighting against Hitler. The team has sacrificed too much space to mirror evil and to sketch the victim's passage through the hell of war to post-war peace. The imagined community of "British people" bears witness to the crimes that others committed against a Jewish community. In contrast to the Jewish Museum, the IWM pictures the vulnerability of the human body in order to raise empathy, a visual strategy that is similar to the USHMM's more participatory engagement. More information on the reproduced visual resources would improve the exhibition as the narrative remains silent about what we see and why we see it in this arrangement. Although the IWM avoids creating Freed's "Holocaust feel" it has unconsciously created a national community of post-war spectators in order to convey the "highest values and truths" (Duncan 1998, 474-475) of this imagined community to visitors whose identities might span a range of affiliations.

The preliminary result of my comparison leads me to the following conclusion: (1) The ITF's concept of a global Holocaust memory is likely to foster forgetting instead of making the history of the Shoa instructive for a European future. (2) The loss of embodied social memory should not increase the traffic of commodified "Holocaust artifacts" in metropolitan tourist sites. (3) There is no disinterested "collective memory" of the Holocaust, but individual recollections and a globally circulated visual heritage of photographs and films. A global memory unanchored in the social would be meaningless as we cannot but interpret the Holocaust according to the changing "lenses" through which we see the world.

Notes

1   Anderson refers to Ernest Renan's "essence of a nation" (1947): all members share common beliefs and even what they have forgotten holds them together. The nation is a concept that needs acts of imagining a totality of members sharing the same (political) values.

2   A display reads "Fulfill your obligation by registering your dear ones."

3   The concept of bearing witness is explained in my discussion of the IWM exhibition.

4   The Jewish Museum Vienna shares a similar fate and was reopened in the same decade. Chief curator Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek decided to confront visitors with emptiness as, in her view, a return to the pre-war Jewish Museum Vienna was not possible (Greenberg, 2003: 235-236).

5   These statistics and a total of ca. six million victims of the Holocaust in Europe are given on the wall in the JM basement. The system of intersecting axes visualizes movements of a fleeing population from Berlin. An electronic map in the exhibition gives more information.

6   Libeskind and Eisenman are influenced by the discourse of the architectural sublime and are spatializing absence in a site-specific surrounding. They "attempt to embody the ambiguity and difficulty of Holocaust memorialization in Germany" and consider, as Young (Young 2003 in Hornstein 2003: 76) the space between memorial and the viewer who experiences this metaphorical "space of memory"..

7   "Whatever happens in this city, it will have to do with hundred thousands of Jewish citizens that are no longer there." Daniel Libeskind "Zwischen Geometrie und Sprache", Interview (April 1994)..

8   Christian Boltanskis project was carried out at Grosse Hamburger Strasse 15-16 in Berlin while Libeskind developed plans for the JM.

9   This "authenticity effect" results from displacement and recontextualization within the museum's body (Azoulay, 1994: 92).

10 My examples are part of the basement display that I studied in September 2011. The JM homepage offers further information on acquisitions, f.ex. Letters of Frieda Neuber.

11 http://m.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/kommentar-das-juedische-museum-ein-begehbares-buch-127376.html (10.09. 2001)

12 Typewriters, photo-murals and documents picture the infrastructure of a typical concentration camp, (Beeck, Clemens, 2011: 70-81).

13 The concentration camp photographs are found on panel 17-18 in the Atlas project (begun 1962) and discussed in Buchloh, 1999.

14 Diane Lees in Imperial War Museum (2011) The Holocaust Exhibition London, 3.

15 "Queen opens Holocaust Exhibition", BBC News Online 6 June 2000
    http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/778774.stm.

16 Quote from a wall text. The exhibition "centres on the murder of Jews, but also shows the suffering of the many others whom the Nazis enslaved and murdered" (Imperial War Museum, 2011: 3). The discourse was fueled by Giorgio Agamben's essay on "Homo Sacer" edited in English translation by Stanford University Press 1998.

17 The discourse on witnessing in the nineties has given up Susan Sontag's famous assumption that the confrontation with violence in photographs causes a new trauma in onlookers, see Meek, 2010: 131.

18 Synder, T. (2010) Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin, London. Snyder describes the work of killing squad in East Europe. The IWM team worked with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's photo archive, the Yad Vashem Archives, Israel, the KZ Gedenkstätte Dachau, the Panstwowe Muzeaum Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Chelmo concentration camp museum. Seven historians supplied research results for the portrait of East Europe under Nazi terror.

19 The historiography of the Second World War and the Shoa had to rely on the limited military sources collected by the allied U.S. and British army. Storytelling in the USHMM stresses the perspective of the liberator by placing the visitor in the role of soldiers ("retrospective eyewitnessing"). The British variation pays more attention to East Europe, but the liberation-section resembles the American model.

20 This moral lesson is also relevant in the JM's aftermath-section to strengthen the trust in jurisdiction. In London, a photo-gallery of executed Nazi ‚killers' is juxtaposed with abundant archival material on the liberated camp.

21 The quotation of the statesman Sir Edmund Burke at the exit reads "For Evil to triumph it is only necessary for good men to do nothing."

22 In comparison to Berlin, the names of the persons are missing in the arrangement. A looping videotaped interview with Ruth Forster introduces her as a typical German girl ("I was one of them"). Hitler's "war is the origin of everything" competes with Swing Music.

23 The USHMM Washington supplied archival sources, but the portrayal of Nazi bureaucrats of the genocidal industry, fanatic scientists and industrials has a specific British flavour.

24 This refers to the section "Killing Squads, Poland".

25 The deportation section contains letters thrown from a train from Malines to Auschwitz in July 1944. The usual ‚*Forget me not*‛ common in soldiers' letters to their families turns into tragedy when placed next to a cattle-waggon. A letter of Oswald Jacobi ends:"promise to be brave."

26 These "galleries of faces" are a montage of reproduced Auschwitz registration photographs.

27 I was not permitted to take photographs of the display. The use of simulacra, like the cattle truck, has been derived from American Holocaust exhibitions that need to engage their audience by referring to cinematic representations of the Holocaust dramas (Bernstein, 1994: 429).

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Treading Difficult Ground:
The Effort to Establish Russia's First National Gulag Museum

Paul Williams (Ralph Appelbaum Associates, New York)

Abstract

This essay focuses on two emerging Russian institutions – Perm-36 Gulag Museum, Perm, and the Gulag History Museum, Moscow – to consider challenging questions about how, and why, the murder of around 15 million people through the Gulag system might be remembered in Russia. This topic represents a new and courageous intervention into the Russian landscape of public memory. During my professional contact at both institutions, conversation often turns to what I can share about comparable sites of this kind – particularly European Holocaust memorials that lie on authentic sites of genocide. Although the Gulag predated – and far-outlasted – the Holocaust, these European sites are the primary Russian reference point for this kind of national commemoration.

This paper is structured around three important issues that make a contemporary Russian politics of recognition problematic, *vis-à-vis* Holocaust memorials. First, it was socialist government-sanctioned designers and sculptors who, eager to expose these sites as evidence of Fascist atrocity, created the early (and sometimes defining) features of Holocaust memorials. The issue of how – or whether – to avoid this ideologically-driven formal design vocabulary is pressing. Second, beyond Germany, most European nations have managed to frame the Holocaust as a foreign perpetration of atrocity. These Russian memorial museums be unprecedented public attempts at historical self-incrimination. In discussion, an often-raised question is whether Russians are "ready for this topic." This prompts another question: whether disturbing national histories are histories presented too soon, or whether they defy some impenetrable sense of national selfhood? Third, national memorials that document disturbing pasts can be geared towards both political reconciliation and social reawakening. While the political excavation of Perm-36 and the Gulag Museum at this point appear geared towards the former, might there be unexpected social passion around the result, where evidence and stories retrieved from the forced labour camps flow into other public dissatisfactions in the contemporary era. Addressing these three questions, my paper will describe my professional fieldwork at Perm-36 in comparison to my work at European Holocaust memorials, and, using my findings from my Memorial Museums research, I suggest ways forward for this Russian case.

The remote industrial city of Perm sits at the edge of the Ural Mountains, nearly 1,200 km east of Moscow. From Perm, another three hours drive through barren countryside brings you to an unexpected outpost: a camp gate, behind which lie the remains of wooden barracks, administrative buildings, and security features of a Gulag (forced labour) camp designated Perm-36. **(Fig 1)** These buildings, mostly hastily constructed by prisoners from the surrounding forest in 1946 and emptied of prisoners only in 1988, are the best-preserved physical remains of the Gulag phenomenon. Tours lead handfuls of visitors – more in summer, virtually none in winter – through the harsh, minimal, mostly empty timber buildings, signposted and differentiated according to their functions and security features. Guides use scattered remnants from the site – shovels, bunks, latrines, propaganda poster stands – as staging points to describe the punishing routines of daily life for the several thousand prisoners typically held there at any one time.

Fig. 1: Perm-36 exterior. Image copyright author.

Back in Moscow, on the upscale, boutique-lined Ulitsa Petrovka, sits the incongruously unglamorous Gulag History Museum. The courtyard features a reconstructed watchtower and barbed wire fence and twelve large photographs of prominent political prisoners who died in the Gulag, such as theatre director Vsevolod Meyerhold and Comintern chief Nikolai Bukharin. **(Fig. 2)**. Upon entry, visitors are greeted by guides dressed in period Gulag guard's uniforms, who direct visitors through the museum. This includes a mock-up of a Gulag barrack and camp office with costumed mannequins, and several modest galleries with objects and documents in glass display cases. **(Fig. 3)** The exhibitions are an incongruous mixture of scenic make-believe

and hard evidence, set within crumbling hallways that speak of the institution's paltry budget. Like Perm-36, its visitors often number only a handful at any one time.

In this essay I will explore how this pair of institutions present different opportunities and limitations for the retelling of this difficult subject in Russia's recent past. Before proceeding, I first want to establish some bare facts, so that the gravity of the Gulag (Gulag is a Russian-language acronym for the state agency that oversaw it) can be appreciated: approximately 18 million people were admitted to Russian labor camps and another 6 million were exiled to camps beyond the borders of the USSR between 1930 and 1960. (Appelbaum 2002: 579-586). This involves only the era of the Gulag system, officially speaking; the system was reduced in size following Stalin's death in 1953 and officially dissolved in 1960. However, forced labor continued at select camps, such as Perm 36, for additional significant numbers of political prisoners right through to 1988.

Fig. 2: Moscow Gulag Museum exterior. Image copyright author.

The total population of the camps in any one year varied from 179,000 in 1929 to 2.9 million in 1953 distributed between at least 476 separate labour colonies over these decades (Ivanova, Flath & Raleigh 2000, 188). Each colony had a collection of many smaller camps, more manageable in size. According to a 1993 study of archival Soviet data, a total of 1.6 million people died in the Gulag between 1929 and 1953 (Rosefielde 2009, 67). These estimates exclude the deaths due to (non-reported) mistreatment, which happened frequently, and would bring the total somewhere between two and three million. Historian's estimates range anywhere from 4 to 10 million. We will probably never know the exact number.

Fig. 3: Recreated scene of interview with KGB officer. Image copyright author.

In its core 1929-1953 period, most Gulag inmates were not political prisoners, although significant numbers of political prisoners could be found in the camps at any one time. A person could be imprisoned for such misdemeanours as petty theft, absences or lateness from work, jokes about the Soviet government or its officials, interest in *bourgeois* books or music, having lived or travelled abroad, or, having been a prisoner of war during World War Two, (as this meant not sacrificing one's life for the nation) – these were punishable by imprisonment of several years. About half of the political prisoners in the Gulag camps were imprisoned without trial (Ellman 2002, 1151-1172).

During the Stalin era, leaders of the Communist Party considered repression through imprisonment as a tool for securing the normal functioning of the state system, as well as preserving and strengthening the positions of their social base – the working class – in society. It was an institution intended to isolate class-alien, socially dangerous, disruptive, suspicious, and other disloyal persons (real and imaginary) whose deeds and thoughts were not perceived as contributing to the strengthening of the Marx-inspired "dictatorship of the proletariat." In terms of ideological justification, the Gulag arrangement was deemed superior to the capitalist prison systems, since the ideological emphasis was on re-educating "criminals" through labour to become rehabilitated citizens of the workers' state. In reality, however, labour far outweighed re-education in prisoners' experiences.

After having appeared as an instrument and place for isolating counterrevolutionary and criminal elements, the Gulag, because of its principle of "correction by forced labour", quickly became an independent branch of the national economy that profited from the cheap labour force provided by the prisoners. At its height in the early 1950s, one in twenty Russians laboured in the Gulag. It was also part of a forced eastern population redistribution policy that used very cheap labor, under the extreme conditions of the east and north, to extract natural assets through logging, mining, canal, and railroad construction, and the Soviet atomic project. As Anne Applebaum has written, prisoners worked in industries ranging from logging, mining, construction, factory work, and armaments, and lived in "a country within a country, almost a separate civilization"(Appelbaum, 2003: 26). The Gulag had both punitive and economic functions. Although it appeared as an instrument and physical place for isolating counterrevolutionary and criminal elements, because of its principle of "correction by forced labour," it quickly became an independent branch of *the national economy secured on the cheap labour force presented by prisoners* (this is a repetition of above).

Leaving aside this overview, I want to focus now on the new opportunities for interpreting and displaying this history for the Russian public, and the increasing numbers of foreign visitors who tour the country. For Western visitors interested in twentieth century Russian history, the current lack of monuments to the victims of the Gulag is striking, when considered alongside other nations that have created memorials to atrocities in their own country, including cases as diverse as Holocaust memorials in Germany, genocide memorials in Rwanda, or memorials to the *desaparecidos* in Argentina and Chile. There are a few scattered monuments – perhaps half a dozen abstract concrete sculptures in parks and public squares in as many cities – but no national monument, well-recognized place of mourning, or interpretive complex. The types of public spaces (urbanized or rural, specifically dedicated to the memory of mass violence or not, used on a permanent basis or just for a short time) set aside for commemoration are extremely variable. Some memorials are directly linked to execution sites, burial sites, internment sites or forced-labor camps - such as the Vorkutlag memorial in Vorkuta, Siberia, or those of the Boutovo site on the outskirts of Moscow, for instance (Anstett, 2005). No truly high-profile museum has been attempted to date. While this indeed reflects the political flammability associated with exhuming this particular topic, it should also be noted that Russia does not otherwise boast many other museums or heritage sites dedicated to modern social history. For various reasons, both political and cultural, it is not a country – unlike others of the former communist bloc in central and

Eastern Europe – that has instigated new heritage projects documenting the trials and triumphs of the twentieth century.[1]

Both Perm-36 and the Moscow Gulag Museum are now looking to professionalize their permanent exhibitions and expand their institutions' stature with a view towards becoming primary sites of memory for this globally under-recognized and materially underrepresented historical event. Since their creation, Perm-36 (which opened to the public in 1996) and Moscow's Gulag Museum (which opened in 2001) have been low-key, bare bones, mostly volunteer-run institutions that remain little-known among Russians. Both now hope to quickly evolve into major national institutions. Perm-36 is looking to secure funding to develop within its buildings full, media-rich exhibition environments that will bring to life and add context to its original barracks. With a light-touch approach to the existing architecture - films, audio-visual projections, and multimedia digital environments are planned. This, it hopes, will bring many more bus tours from Perm, and establish Perm-36 as a site of pilgrimage similar to Europe's Holocaust concentration camps memorials. In 2011 Moscow's Gulag Museum received notice that it can shift premises into a much larger repurposed building with 3,000 square meters of exhibition space, in which it seeks to tell a comprehensive national story of the entire Gulag system. Both museums seek emotionally compelling exhibitions that will be brought up to the highest international standards, along with storage for collections, space for public and education programs, functional facilities, signage and branding, and other institutional amenities.

Coming from a museum planning and interpretation perspective, I am interested in what these contrasting opportunities can offer; how these quite distinct institutional models can explain this national story in a manner that is historically comprehensive, politically savvy, and appealing to Russians. In the remainder of this essay I will gauge the prospects for these projects through the consideration of three conditions. These are: first, location, geography and authenticity; second, the available content or "story," and its likely social and political support; and third, genre likeness – that is, how these institutions might fulfil the form and functions of other established international memorial museum models that have created a sizable and increasing audience for what has been called "dark tourism" (Williams, 2007; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Sharpley, Stone et al., 2009).

First, let us turn to the issue of geographic location and its relation to visitorship, the Gulag, and the wider issue of historical authenticity. I begin from the premise that physical location has particular ramifications in terms of the imaginary geo-historical placement of the Gulag. It is a topic popularly conceived in terms of physical separation and alienation. This presents an issue for the Moscow Gulag Museum, which is set to become a more visible heritage option among the other art and history museums in its increasingly tourist-friendly inner city. Both the current and future sites of the Moscow Gulag Museum have no site-specific relation to the historical phenomenon. For foreign visitors, the site does not feel "foreign," nor physically emblematic. It may well have considerable appeal for international tourists, who are typically fascinated by the appallingly evocative drama of the topic. Yet, for Muscovites in this urban atmosphere, the Gulag may feel distant, like an unreliable concern. Its displays may feel exhibitioner, in the sense of representing an abstracted topic, rather than embodying it. While in reality the greater Moscow region had the greatest cluster of gulags, and contributed the largest number of inmates, the theme of *isolation* is primary in the Russian mind, allowing the past to feel like, to use David

Lowenthal's phrase, "a foreign country" – both temporally and geographically (Lowenthal, 1999). Puncturing this myth will be a primary challenge for this museum.

Due to its remote location, Perm-36 will necessarily involve a pilgrimage of sorts: the city of Perm has few other attractions (although, at the time of writing, its modern art scene is burgeoning), and the road from there – a three hour journey arriving by car or bus – only adds to the feeling of alienation. It reasonably understands itself as sharing a position and appeal akin to Eastern European Holocaust memorials – many of which require a similar trek or pilgrimage into difficult places. The powerful notion of ostracism has spatial and geographic connotations, and may have added appeal for those who visit Perm as a kind of extreme or dark tourism. Yet Russians themselves, many of whom will find this terrain mundane, may be less interested. Given that comparatively lowly-paid Russians may be unlikely to spend hard-earned vacation money on such a trip, there is a risk that Perm-36 will be regarded as a sort of "Gulag theme park" for foreigners. Connecting with ordinary Russians will also be the challenge faced by this museum. If the Moscow Museum has an issue with authenticity among locals and tourists alike, Perm-36 has a different problem; tourist-draw for locals.

To move to the second topic that's important in this discussion: the different stances that these institutions hold in terms of the cultural and political viability of their narratives. The new site marked for the Moscow Gulag Museum is being touted as the home for the Russian Federation's first National Gulag Museum, and has the support of the Ministry of Culture, Moscow's mayoral office, and the Federal Archive Agency.

Perm-36, by contrast, was founded through community activism. In the late 1980s, during the period of Gorbachev's glasnost, a group of former Perm residents, along with Russians from across the country, decided to found a local chapter of *Memorial*, a national organization that advocates for human rights and preserves the memory of the past with a view towards fighting the recurrence of tyranny in the present. Many of its original members were camp survivors. The camp's timber sawmill was put back into use, and this group rebuilt the parts of the camp that had fallen into disrepair – or had been destroyed after closing by KGB agents and interior ministry police (Appelbaum, 2003: 28). Since its opening, Perm-36 has been largely reliant on funding support from global NGOs and foundations, and American non-profits in particular. Perm-36 is a key member of the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, a New York-based organization, and is affiliated with other sites such as the District Six Museum in Cape Town, the Liberation War Museum, Bangladesh, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Atlanta.

It is anticipated that the Moscow museum will be limited to the official Stalinist era. The continuation of the system after 1953 is off limits. The post-Stalin Gulag history is the principal story of Perm-36, which was repurposed to hold the Soviet Union's most important intellectual dissidents from the early 1970s until the late 1980s, including Sergei Kovalev, Natan Sharansky, Vladimir Bukovsky, and Anatoly Marchenko. The museum impinges more directly on Russians' recent memory. Many of its survivors are both living and well-known, and play an active role in the human rights, literature, and theatre scenes in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Israel. Additionally, many of these people are critical of the repressions and political imprisonments of the current Putin era.

Without forcing too distinct a division, we can summarize that one institution hopes to be a truly Russian institution working within a state-sanctioned interpretation of this history, and will be held responsible for meeting citizens' expectations. Its aim may be the communication of the idea: *it's our history to own, for better or worse.* By contrast, Perm-36 understands the Gulag as an example of a politically unnatural institution, foreign to a universal culture of human rights. Aiming to host wider programs and workshops concerning current state repression and political imprisonment, it communicates an idea that might be resumed as: *it's an alien history to be condemned, for the global good.*

Third, we might consider the relation of Gulag museums to other genocides and crimes against humanity. Central to this way of thinking is a comparative sense of the numbers of victims and repressive motives of the Gulag. My Russian colleagues on these projects are especially interested in what I can tell them about Central and Eastern European Holocaust memorials. Although the Gulag predated and far-outlasted the Holocaust, these European sites are the primary reference point for this kind of national commemoration.

In terms of museological display, one key point of comparison is iconic artefacts – the "stuff" of the Gulag. To what extent are original remnants required for a topic that has no unique and evidentiary object base beyond either remote sites, or the testimony of prisoners? The issue is not veracity and denial – most Russians accept that Gulags existed. However, there is increasing popular doubt about attempts to frame the Gulag as an absolute evil. To many Russian minds, many inmates were common criminals, and most – at least three quarters – returned home. For older generations, they are additional depressing reminders of a broader phenomenon: surveillance, hunger, soulless work and propaganda weren't limited to the Gulags. If the aim of a Gulag museum is to whallop current-day Russians through a clear emotional strike, then perhaps wooden barracks, an assortment of tools, on-site propaganda films, and an assortment of diary entries or testimonies may not provide this. This set of signifiers, in other words, was not unique in the twentieth century Russian experience.

Comparisons with international historical memorials to atrocities – and the Holocaust in particular – is also acute in terms of design approach: the early and sometimes defining features of Holocaust memorials were carried out by Socialist government-sanctioned designers and sculptors, eager to expose these sites as evidence of fascist crimes. The design language is one now well-recognized: typically, remnant objects are elevated to semi-sacred status – any authentic remainders are imbued with the ability to embody the event. To communicate the multitude and repetition of the phenomenon, piles are favoured – glasses, suitcases, hair, for the Holocaust, perhaps matched by shovels, shirts, and propaganda posters for the Gulag. Also, the landscape itself has its own poetics of absence, communicated through the contrast between the bleak machine-like utility of its functions, and its current abandonment and silence. In conversations with Russian architectural and exhibition designers, the issue of how – or whether – to avoid this Holocaust-inspired formal design vocabulary is pressing.

There's another problem with the Holocaust comparison: outside Germany (and many admirable attempts among occupied nations to show complicity), other European nations have managed to frame the Holocaust as a perpetration of atrocity from a foreign nation. The Gulag Museum and Perm-36 Museum will be one of the first public attempts at historical self-incrimination in Russia's modern era. In discussion with stakeholders of both institutions, I am

quite often asked how to gauge whether the Russian public is *ready for this topic*. I'm never sure how to answer. Would eventual readiness mean that these museums haven't fulfilled their goals as slightly shocking appeals to conscience? Is being at least a little *before-ready* in fact the key to an exhibition that can force public discussion, shifting it into a realm of controversy, and perhaps following, activism? Indeed, we might ask: are nationally "disturbing histories" just factual histories presented too soon, or histories that defy some deeper entrenched sense of national selfhood?

Further reflecting on this question of "readiness," we need to consider the current state of Russian popular memory towards the gulag. 25 years after glasnost and 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there have been no trials, no truth and reconciliation commissions, no government inquiries into what happened in the past, and only small, endangered sites featuring lectures and public debate. The reasons for this are not hard to fathom. Life is genuinely difficult in Russia today, and most Russians, who spend all of their time trying to cope, do not want to discuss the past. They feel that the Stalinist era was a long time ago, and a great deal has happened since. The memory of the camps is also confused in Russia by the presence of so many other atrocities: horrific war, famine, collectivization, and on-going repression. Why should camp survivors – some of whom (many people may suspect) deserved it – get special consideration?

In an all-pervading system that lasted decades, the lines of perpetrator and victim are unclear. As Anatoly Khazanov puts it:

> The majority of Russians consider themselves, and rather gladly, not accomplices but innocent victims. They were always the victims; the perpetrators were the others, although there is no consensus on who exactly these perpetrators were. The culprits were Stalin and his henchmen, communists, fascists, imperialists, Jews and other non-Russians. A certain homogenisation of victimhood through the construction of an 'us–they' opposition is taking place. 'Us' has become an undifferentiated category, and 'they' an abstract evil. (Khazanov, 2008: 302).

This discussion is further confused by the link made between the discussion of the past that took place in the *glasnost* era of the 1980s and the total collapse of the economy and the dramatic worsening of living standards during Yeltsin's brief era of democratic and media freedom of the 1990s. *What was the point of talking about reviewing the past and talking about all of that*, several people have said to me: *It didn't get us anywhere.*

There is an additional question of pride. Many older Russians experienced the collapse of the Soviet Union as a kind of personal and national defeat. While the old system was heavily flawed, the USSR was at least powerful. And now that they are less powerful, they do not want to hear that it was also stricken by some kind of mass political deformity. It is perhaps for this reason that polls since the 1990s have routinely suggested that Russians view Stalin's era as largely positive (Gorlizki & Vital'evich, 2006: xxiii).

It is additionally possible to explain this absence of popular feeling about the tragedy of European communism in the West as the logical result of a particular set of circumstances. The passage of time is a significant factor: Communist regimes did, in truth, grow less reprehensible as the years went by. Leonid Brezhnev's administration is now viewed as benign, even if he was responsible for a great deal of destruction. Archives were closed, as they continue to be. Public access to Gulag campsites and even entire cities – such as Perm and Vladivostok – was forbidden. No television cameras ever filmed the Soviet camps or their victims, as they had done

in Germany at the end of the Second World War. No images, in turn, meant that the subject, in our image-driven culture, doesn't really exist for most Russians in a fully embellished manner. These content and media issues, combined with the prevailing ambivalent social attitude that most Russians hold towards this subject, mean that both Perm-36 and the Moscow Gulag Museum face a considerable battle to alter the gulag heritage landscape.

In conclusion, national memorials that document disturbing pasts can be geared towards both political reconciliation and social reawakening. While for both Perm-36 and the Moscow Gulag Museum the political excavation of this topic is primarily geared towards the former, unexpected social passion might result from it, as evidence and stories retrieved from the forced labour camps might flow into the expression of other public dissatisfactions. The failure to fully absorb the lessons of the past has consequences for ordinary Russians too. The popular Russian failure to delve properly into the past may mean that the echoes of the Gulag system, and Soviet repression more broadly, are not widely apprehended in current social and political life. These issues include the Russian insensitivity to the slow growth of censorship, the continued, heavy presence of the secret police, and apprehension and fear over public activism. As well as documenting the past, then, these museums have an important intervention to make into helping Russians understand how they arrived at the present.

Notes

1 See, for instance, the Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilnius, Lithuania, The Memorial of the Victims of Communism and Anti-Communist Resistance, Sighet, Romania, Terrorháza ('House of Terror'), Budapest, Hungary, The Stasi Museum, Berlin, Germany, and the Museum of Occupations, Tallinn, Estonia.

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Past Contested: The Museum of Socialist Art in Sofia

Rossitza Guentcheva (Department of Anthropology, New Bulgarian University)

Abstract

The museum of socialist art opened on the 19th of September 2011 in Sofia. Its establishment followed years of complaint from the side of a host of Bulgarian intellectuals and public figures bemoaning the absence of an adequate national institution dealing with the memory of the socialist period (Vukov 2008, Kazalarska 2011). Until then, this part of Bulgarian history was conspicuously absent from the permanent exhibits of national and regional history museums. Even the sites of former labour camps and prisons for political detainees have managed to escape from the global museumizing impulse of the late 20th and the early 21th centuries. As Nikolai Vukov ironically writes, the most prominent case of a museum of the socialist past was the house of the former communist leader Todor Zhivkov in his birthplace, the town of Pravets, which was maintained by the local people to commemorate Zhivkov's important role in recent Bulgarian history (Vukov 2009). Although the new museum of socialist art had become a source of controversies long before its opening, since its inauguration it has found itself at the epicentre of a virtual war waged not only on its contents, but also on its name, location, management, and legal status.

My paper attempts to trace these disputes, analyse the memory wars in which the museum of socialist art got enmeshed, and also place these debates in a larger European perspective. It will attempt to reflect on the questions and problems, which arise when art is used as a means to remember, narrate, and exhibit socialism. The paper is based on four in-depth interviews with the museum's director, the chief curator of the exhibition and her assistant, in December 2011 and June 2012, as well as press coverage of various issues concerning the museum, from 2010 to 2012. I have visited the museum five times, once in November 2011, twice in December 2011, once in March 2012, when a new exhibition was opened in its inner hall, and once during the Long Night of Museums in May 2012.

The museum's genesis

The idea for the museum's establishment dates back to January 2010 when the Bulgarian ministry of culture developed a *Provision about Leading Museums in the Capital* (Kontseptsiia za vodeshti stolichni muzei, 2010), which was fully endorsed by the Council of Ministers on 10 February 2011. Discussed exclusively in the light of cultural heritage, the document recommended the foundation of a museum of totalitarian art, together with either the establishment or the relocation of three other museums, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the National Museum of Visual Arts, and the Museum of Sofia. The Provision emphasised the lack of a museum of the most recent history of the country, pointing out also that none of the "immovable" materials from that period was legally protected by a statute of cultural treasure. It stressed that Sofia was among the very few capitals of former socialist states, which lacked a museum dedicated to the period of totalitarianism. The document mentioned the possible place of such a museum – in one of the capital's districts, Durvenitsa, next to buildings that were property of the ministry of culture, and on the territory of the traffic police complex - all this provided that traffic police would be relocated to a new administrative building that was under construction at that time. The goal of such an initiative was to create a "museum environment where representative examples of art produced during our recent past will be exhibited." The Provision mentioned that the exposition would consist of an open-air exhibition, in a park, to be joined, potentially, by an indoor exhibition. It underlined the apt selection of the location, namely outside the historical centre, in a place "not encumbered by another historical meaning, which will allow the impartial reception of the exhibition."

Fig. 1: The museum building. Photograph by Rossitza Guentcheva

The museum opened on September 19ᵗʰ, 2011, officially as the museum of socialist art, at a sumptuous ceremony in the presence of the prime minister, the ministers of culture, of finance, of internal affairs, of defence, of regional development, and the mayor of Sofia. It consists of a statue garden of 7500 square meters and an indoor exhibition space of 550 square meters. There is also a small room adjacent to the museum shop where one can watch a 1-hour long film – a collage of excerpts from short documentaries produced during the socialist regime.

The statue garden features sculptures of prominent communist Bulgarian and world leaders (Lenin, Dzerzhinsky, Che Guevara, Georgi Dimitrov, Dimitur Blagoev, Todor Zhivkov, as well as his wife and daughter), but also anonymous sculptures - of workers, volunteers, guerrilla fighters, and sculptural compositions, dedicated to various events – *Republic*, *Requiem*, *Victory*, *Day First*, *Arrest*, *The Red Square*.

Fig. 2: Museum garden. Photograph by Rossitza Guentcheva

Almost all sculptures date back to the socialist period, yet there are sculptures made before 1944, such as *Head of a Worker* of Ivan Lazarov, made in 1937, and the bas-relief *The Third Class* of Ivan Funev, from 1935. The majority of the statues belong to the National Art Gallery and the Ministry of Culture, yet some municipalities have also sent statues, such as the municipalities of Sopot, Sliven, Dimitrovgrad, and Haskovo. Several months prior to the museum's opening, the chief curator sent out letters to all state museums and galleries in the country, asking them to identify materials for the future exhibition. Few came up with appropriate suggestions, while some made proposals for "sots-art curiosities" that were declined by the curatorial team – such as the collected works of Lenin, from bakelite and singing, or a portrait of Todor Zhivkov made of plastic beads, from the town of Tutrakan. Emblematic are two sculptures donated by industrial

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enterprises – the first, *Composition*, was property of the military production plant in Sopot; the other – a statue of Vassil Kolarov - was donated by the Sofia branch of the Hyundai car company in November 2011.

One can safely say that the concept for the statues' arrangement belongs to the Bulgarian minister of culture, Vezhdi Rashidov, himself a sculptor. He not only pushed the idea for founding a museum of totalitarian art; he took an active part in bringing some of the sculptures from the province, travelling himself to pick them up and fetching them to Sofia. Then during the arrangement of the garden he was at the site practically every day, overseeing the work of the crane and the construction of the pedestals, as well as giving directions on how exactly the statues should be oriented. In the words of the museum staff, his vision was purely aesthetic, and - as the curatorial team further describes the process - he would try various positions and angles until finally reaching a satisfactory decision.[1]

The indoor exposition – in a hall that was previously a workers' cantine - features works of prominent Bulgarian painters - in fact, belonging to the canon of Bulgarian artists in the 20th c., among whom Dechko Uzunov, Zlatiu Boiadzhiev, Tsanko Lavrenov, Nikola Tanev, Bencho Obreshkov, Stoian Venev – all of them names that both ordinary people and art historians hardly associate with socialist art.

Fig. 3: Indoor exposition. Photograph by Rossitza Guentcheva

Again, the majority of the paintings are from the socialist period, yet there are paintings dating prior to 1944 – from the early 1940s, like *Milk Shop* of Ilia Beshkov (1942) or *The Bombardment of Sofia* of Tsanko Lavrenov (1944). The collection is representative neither of the art produced during the socialist regime, nor of the style defined as socialist realism. As the chief curator says, it is a representation of the socialist idea that goes beyond specific historical periods and artistic

styles. The exhibition, according to her, is a manifestation of the best in Bulgarian art in the second half of the 20th c. - it is pure art, of the highest quality that painters during the socialist period were able to produce.

The museum's reception

The reception of the museum of socialist art is complex and multilayered, marred by a myriad of controversies. The construction workers who hastily refurbished the building were the first to react to the museum's exhibition. In pictures they made for themselves and their families in June 2011, they showed some of the sculptures before arrangement, faces on the ground, fallen in strange poses, scattered around. Commenting on the photos, the construction workers complained chiefly of belated salaries and broken promises, but they also made jokes about the curious positions of the statues. This is one of the very few instances, which discloses how the public reflects on the socialist past through narrating local, current everyday problems, embedding the museum artefacts in personal stories and lives.

A central debate – one that preceded the opening of the museum – concerns its name and the abrupt but silent and furtive substitution of the notion of totalitarian art by socialist art, which took place in the summer of 2011. Journalist Hristo Hristov, who has been researching the files of the communist Secret Police and maintains a website on "decommunization" (Durzhavna Sigurnost.com), insists that "totalitarian is the historically correct terminology." "Socialist", he continues, is a notion imposed by the Bulgarian Socialist Party that is the heir of the former communist party from before 1989, and was used by that party to explain the transition from capitalism to communism. Hristov's Internet site contains a disclaimer, stating that "it will put in brackets the word 'totalitarian' after the official name of the museum authorized by the Ministry of Culture, since it is the historically true notion defining the communist era - a practice adopted both by the European Parliament and the Bulgarian National Assembly (November 2009)" (desebg.com). Prof. Velislav Minekov, Chairman of the Control Commission of the Union of Bulgarian Artists, and son of one of the sculptors presented in the museum garden, states that substituting socialist for totalitarian is a dangerous act since it signifies a departure from the initial and officially approved concept for a museum of totalitarian art. This change has not been sanctioned by the Council of Ministers, he says, what makes it an initiative of an individual agent ("sole trader"), flagrantly bypassing the law (Minekov 2011). Asked why the museum is of socialist, and not of communist, art, the minister of culture responds that this should not matter, because this is one and the same ideology, namely the ideology of socialism – and even Jesus Christ himself propagated very similar ideas (Rashidov 2011).[2]

But perhaps at the core of the debate around the museum of socialist art is the content of the exhibition. It has been called disgraceful, lawlessness, absurdity, an example of ignorance, and even a joke. Prof. Velislav Minekov, who is among the most vocal critics of the new museum, stated that the selection of the sculptors and painters to be included in the exhibition revealed a desire for revenge on the part of the curators offended by these authors' modesty, workmanship and public recognition. In addition, the museum features artists who were persecuted and censored during the communist period for their "formalism" and propensity for "western influences" (like Alexander Zhendov, for example, or Nikola Tanev, who was once interred at the Kutsian labour camp). At the same time, the critique goes, the very censors, despots, and

party parasites among the artists active during communist times are missing. Thus marginal works with an overt political character stand side by side with valuable works which survived by chance and despite the pressure of the communist party. The curators were blamed also for including in the exposition sculptures and paintings of artists who are still alive, and who had not been asked whether they would agree to their works being placed in such a museum, despite the fact that they are the property of the National Art Gallery. They were summoned to look at foreign expertise in correctly representing socialism, namely the House of Terror in Budapest and the museums of occupation in the Baltic states. The critique concludes with the supposition that the real goal of the museum of socialist art is to postpone the foundation of an authentic museum of communism, by pushing this idea to the background.

The curatorial team was also accused of withholding their vision, not making it explicit, and not standing by it to defend it during the debate. In fact, except for the small labels indicating the author, the title, the year, and the owner of a particular artwork, there is no text in the museum (except for one tablet at the entrance produced by the PR division of the ministry of culture). Nor is there a brochure to explain what socialist art is and how the exhibition was constructed. Curator Svetlana Kuiumdzhieva (2011), mounting a scathing critique against the absence of curatorial stance and the lack of responsibility for the exhibition, calls the museum "a museum of what?" and refers to it as "the so-called museum of socialist art". Deploring the lack of clear definitions, artist Adriana Chernin (2011) puts the museum in quotation marks (i.e. "museum"), claiming that it is not a museum at all, and not even an exhibition. Defining it as farce and display of nonchalance, she pejoratively notes that it is about "the art of *that* time".

Critical voices against the museum of socialist art came not only from journalists and people engaged in artistic production, but from the right-wing political parties in Bulgaria as well. Nikolai Vukov (2012) describes their protest, formulated in an official declaration against the museum's purported attempt to rewrite history and rehabilitate communism. It decried the lack of critical reflection on communism and appealed for presenting the authentic nature of totalitarianism that would document the pain of victims of violence and denounce the criminal nature of the regime. The declaration recommended adding photos of the communist terror as well as including other forms of artistic production - like music, poetry, theatre – or, alternatively, display everyday objects from the communist period.

Some participants in the debate focus on the legal status of the museum. The fact that it is a branch of the National Art Gallery – hence, not a separate museum in itself, in a legal sense - is seen by some people as an instrument of manipulation, so that if and when the museum becomes threatening to the political power it could be easily and quickly shut down. In fact, from a strictly legal point of view, the museum is not even a branch – it is a non-registered entity and the worst aspect of this undocumented status is the fact that the museum doesn't have its own budget for a second consecutive year. This transient and ephemeral character of the museum is often combined with criticism against the museum's location – namely outside the centre and major tourist routes, so that it becomes "hidden", unattractive, and unreachable for the visitors. As the museum's detractors conclude, despite the establishment of the museum of socialist art, a museum of communism is still missing in Bulgaria.

Notwithstanding this vigorous public disapproval, the museum has its admirers and proponents, chiefly among ordinary citizens, but also among foreigners coming from a host of

countries, as the museum's book of opinions testifies. The book of opinions is in itself a curious institution – it is a ubiquitous pre-1989 practice, rarely to be found in other types of museums. The one in the museum of socialist art displays the predominant satisfaction of the viewers with the exhibition, who are overwhelmed with the beauty of Bulgarian art. The majority of the writers of book entries are convinced that "art is art, in spite of time" (29 September 2011), stating that "we are happy that the wonderful works of famous and talented Bulgarian artists are preserved and now accessible to everyone. We want more" (30 September 2011). These comments follow closely the minister of culture's vision of art as timeless; they even mention him explicitly, quoting his words and stances. Yet whilst the Bulgarian public might have been influenced by reading the press, citing the official position on the museum, which was widely advertised by the media, the reaction of foreigners is identical and it could hardly be the outcome of similar processes. "Beautiful idea to document the past", reads an entry in the English language of September 29th, 2011. Comments in Russian, French, German, Croatian, Italian, and other languages disclose similar fascination with the exhibition. "Bravo! Thanks!", wrote Robbie Drogheda from Ireland on 6 October 2011 and continued: "a very fantastic collection of artefacts, an important document of a dark past, reminding us all that to ignore the past is to repeat it." Some of the visitors conceive of the museum as a history museum *per se,* narrating the story of the socialist regime. "What we saw in the museum, was indeed like that", wrote T. Mirchev on 19 or 20 November 2011.[3]

A somewhat surprising positive attitude to the museum of socialist art is published in issue #4 of the *Piron* online journal, dedicated to the Museum (with a capital M) – unexpected, because the issue as a whole is quite critical of the recent museum policy of the Bulgarian ministry of culture. In an article entitled "A Museum against Irony" Raiko Baichev (2011) welcomes the opening of the museum of socialist art, which he perceives as a guardian protecting the socialist memorials from ironic interpretation. He distinguishes three stages in the memory of the socialist period – a first one, dominated by total rejection, black & white evaluations, and destruction of monuments in the 1990s, followed by a second phase of irony, relying on Kosturica-like caricature and satire. Now, says Raiko Baichev, we are on a third stage, when irony should be superseded, in the name of a relaxed, uncomplicated understanding, and the museum of socialist art is the instrument that will make the public cast off their propensity for judgement. While finding many of the statues and paintings "beautiful", he recommends that the museum be expanded to include objects of everyday life under socialism, which could affect the visitor more strongly and deeply. What Sofia needs, he concludes, is not a museum of socialist art but a museum of socialism in general.

The museum in the context of Bulgarian research on socialist realism

Exhibiting art from the period of socialism as a way of reflecting on and representing the recent past is not a novel idea be it in Bulgaria or further abroad. Prior to the establishment of the museum of socialist art, there were special exhibitions dedicated to painting during socialism in Bulgaria, the difference being that none of them were permanent. In 2008 and 2009 for example, the current chief curator of the museum of socialist art made two separate exhibitions in the National Art Gallery, the first entitled "Paintings from an epoch", and the second, "Images from the underground". Both featured works owned by already dissolved institutions that had existed before 1989 – the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Central Committee

of the Democratic Communist Youth Union [Komsomol], the Central Union of the Fatherland Front, etc. Symptomatically, the two exhibitions did not mention socialist art, but talked rather about the "pre-democratic past" and the "official art of two periods – the first, after 1944, is a period of drastic party administering, while the second, the period of mature socialism, imposes state and public control over culture". The curatorial approach received high praise as "devoid both of nostalgia and of irony towards the Bulgarian visual experience from the time of socialism" (http://www.glasove.com/obrazi-ot-podzemieto-1730). Other temporary exhibitions focused on Bulgarian artists who had lived in the period of socialism, but worked in isolation, sometimes completely refusing to exhibit their paintings and not selling even a single work. The 2010 exhibition entitled "Art in isolation" - with Nikolai Ushtavaliiski as curator - set again in the National Art Gallery in Sofia - also abstained from defining socialist art, talking instead about "working away from the official line of artistic developments" (Kalcheva 2010).

This terminological quandary - which lies also at the heart of the most ardent critiques against the museum of socialist art at the moment - is chiefly due to the lack of sufficient research on artistic practice during socialism in Bulgaria. When discussing totalitarian art as specific for the art landscapes of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and Stalinist Soviet Union, the Bulgarian scholar Chavdar Popov (2004: 23-4) emphasises the absence of interest among local art historians in elucidating the nature of socialist realism within Bulgarian arts. He singles out two books that deal – albeit partially - with problems of totalitarian art and both of them are not in the field of art history. They are respectively the work of a philosopher and a historian, each analyses the unification of artistic life in Hitler's Germany, the creation of specialised bodies regulating art and culture, the political mythology of totalitarianism, as well as the role of art as one of the most effective propaganda tools.[4] This delay in addressing the specifics of socialist realism should come as no surprise since even Nazi art, as Chavdar Popov mentions, comes to the fore of scholarly inquiry only in 1970s Germany, when a new generation of art researchers locate their subject in the wider debate on the nature and character of fascism in general. Similar long-term disregard and forgetting cover Italian fascist art too, and the reasons are common – the persistent conviction that fascist art has no aesthetic value, that it is morally reprehensible to deal with even this facet of barbarian regimes, and that it does not form a coherent, homogeneous object worth of investigation (Popov 2004: 13-15).

Yet no matter how scanty, research on socialist realism in Bulgaria does exist and is most likely to expand in the near future as the memory of socialism is politicized, tending to be seen as an undisputed democratic credential on a global scale, and therefore, bestowing on former socialist regimes the duty – and not only the right – to remember. One of the first to reflect on art during socialism is cultural studies expert Dimitur Avramov, who – in a series of articles published between 1968-1992 - compares Bulgarian artistic and literary enterprises in the short 20th c., conceiving of them as engendered by the revolutionary changes in modern art of the 20th c. Although he seems to privilege literature as the most dynamic field where the relationship between culture and power is constantly evolving, he does reflect on socialist realism in a larger frame, positing a point of change in the early 1960s. He describes the Bulgarian intellectuals of that time as aware of the "oppressive, stifling and suffocating atmosphere of totalitarian ideology" of the previous decade, as longing for new endeavours and free expression, but equally

concerned whether a new dogma would not simply substitute the former one, requiring them only to repeat and illustrate directives imposed from above (Avramov 1993: 415).

In the recent years, it is again literary scholars who are the most vocal in pressing the reflection on socialist realism and its embeddedness in the culture of the Bulgarian socialist society. Plamen Doinov perceives of socialist realism not only as an aesthetic and artistic trend, but primarily as an institutional phenomenon, linked with the hierarchical connections between the state and the nationalised literary institutions. He sees it as a colonial experience whereby the Soviet artistic model is brought down on Bulgarian culture through a trajectory parallel to the direction of power influences emanating from Moscow and incorporated by Sofia. Doinov, however, acknowledges that socialist realism in Bulgaria has had "a certain practice pre-dating 1944, being popular under a different name – new artistic realism." He also distinguishes specific traits of Bulgarian socialist realism and thus speaks of a local, household variant of socialist realism, quoting anthropologist Gerald Creed's notion of domesticated revolution [applied otherwise to the Bulgarian socialist countryside] (Doinov 2011, Doinov 2008, Nedelchev 2008). Doinov also distinguishes five phases of Bulgarian socialist realism, i.e. a phase of competition (1944-1948), normative socialist realism (1949-1956), debatable socialist realism (1957-1968/9), all-encompassing (omnivore) socialist realism (1970-1984/5), and the last one – the phase of mimicry and declining socialist realism (1985-1989).

Some Bulgarian art historians also put the dimensions of socialist realism in the focus of their research. Ruzha Marinska (2009) investigates the Union of Bulgarian Artists and the Joint Artistic Exhibitions it had organized between 1960-80s as a structure and conceives of it as "a Machine", where all instruments of managing and controlling artistic life were concentrated. She points out that during the selection process there were practically no high quality paintings that would be rejected on political grounds. Ruzha Marinska explains this with pervasive auto-censorship that assured conformity with imposed directions and stylistics and concludes that the resulting artistic production did not constitute a canon but a silent pact between the system and the artist, which was rejected only by a handful of painters. Anzhela Daneva (2009) finds the first signs of a thaw in artistic life (what she calls "liberalisation") after 1956 and in the early 1960s, with the appearance of an alternative visual language, consisting of more varied themes and subjects, and increased vitality, independence, and subjectivity. And last but not least, there comes the vision of socialist realism of Svilen Stefanov (2008), who claims that socialist realism continues well after 1989, in fact until the end of the 1990s. He sees a period of classic socialist realism only between 1948 and 1956 and assumes that what followed in the 1960s was "post-socialist realism", which he defines as the artistic counterpart of a later, second phase of authoritarian art, when "diversity" became the official doctrine.

The museum in the European context

Though criticised and scorned by the Bulgarian public for its work, the museum of socialist art in Sofia has, at least implicitly, relied on some of the outcomes of local research on socialist realism. It displayed the idea that socialist realism's core lay in the late 1940s and early 1950s, asserting that it had predecessors prior to 1944 worth showing together in the framework of one single exhibition. But the museum – again implicitly and inadvertently – also follows some of the patterns that govern the process of exhibiting socialist realism outside of Bulgaria, despite

repeated accusations of not having a clue of how the socialist past is museumized in the rest of the former Eastern Bloc countries.

A Gallery of Socialist-realist Art in Zamoyski Palace and Museum in Kozłówka, near Lublin, in the south-eastern part of Poland, exhibits paintings and sculptures from the period of socialism. The Palace was used as a depository of the Polish ministry of culture during the socialist period where – since 1961 – a substantial collection of socialist realist paintings was housed. The socialist realist art was stored there after it was decided that because of its Stalinist and pure propaganda character it had become obsolete and no longer needed in a society where socialism was already successfully built. The gallery opened in 1994 and five years later went under the auspices of the local authorities of the province of Lublin. Its collection consists of paintings, plaster casts of sculptures as well as bronzes, posters, and graphic art. What is different from the Bulgarian museum of socialist art is the inclusion in the exhibition of objects the viewer would associate with socialism – like kitchen utensils, string of paper rolls, kitchen furniture, evoking a sense of nostalgia. The visitors also explore the exhibition accompanied by music – upon their entering songs from the socialist period start being played. The guidebook to the gallery comments on the "uncomfortable paradox" that some of the artists exhibited in the Palace are world famous, like for example sculptor and Holocaust survivor Alina Szapocznikow, thus capturing their stance at once as rejected in their quality of socialist artists and acclaimed as a source of national pride. The guidebook also flatly declares "the gallery shows clearly that totalitarian regimes of all kinds pose great danger to humanity".[5]

The National Art Gallery in Vilnius, Lithuania, is another attempt to reflect on socialism through art, which could serve as a parallel to the museum of socialist art in Sofia. Housed in the building of the former Museum of Revolution of the Lithuanian SSR, the art gallery was established in 2001 and opened in 2010 as a branch of a national state museum, the Lithuanian Art Museum. The paintings and sculptures created during the socialist period are arranged in a manner emphasising the history of artistic styles. Socialist realist art is exhibited in the hall entitled "Art and ideology" and shows the struggle of artists trained in a different tradition to comply with the requirements of the new norm as well as their complex predicaments in abiding by it. Dedicated to "The Significant Form", the next hall endeavours demonstrating the boundaries of experimentation with modernist painting during the Soviet regime. The visitor's path continues in the hall entitled "Between Myth and Reality" devoted to the generation of 1970s artists who abandoned both socialist realism and experimentation with form, painting instead everyday objects and fantasy worlds. The last hall, "The Limits of Reality" explores the uneasy process of negotiation between official canons and individual experimentation, exhibiting abstract and photo-realist works of art. In this way, the gallery's approach to socialist realism appears similar to the approach of the museum of socialist art in Sofia in that it regards art produced during socialism as valuable and of high quality, as worth exhibiting for its own sake. At the same time, it is much more intricate, in pledging to exhibit the nuances of artistic negotiations, the tensions between art and power, the influence of pre-WWII pictorial traditions on socialist realism as well as the contribution of Lithuanian artists-emigrants.[6] As Egle Rindzeviciute points out, in Lithuania this vision of socialism proposed by professional museum experts and curators is warmly welcomed, after a host of amateur projects that surmised the period in the last two decades, placing the accent on trauma, deportations, violence, and terror.

Elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe one can observe other attempts to define socialism through art, like for instance the statue parks in Hungary (Memento Park in Budapest), Lithuania (Grutas Park, colloquially known as "Stalin World") or Russia (Muzeon Park in Moscow, called also the "statue cemetery"). Dissociated from paintings, the dismantled socialist era sculptures are exhibited in the open air not as artistic products but as artefacts of a past epoch. Some of them stand on their pedestals, carefully arranged as in the museum of socialist art in Sofia, whilst others are either brought down to earth, on the grass, often below the eye-level of the visitor, or are simply thrown out there, left in their fallen form. The Muzeon Park in Moscow is an interesting example for it not only had recently acquired 300 statues of victims of communism (exhibited as a single group), but is building a collection of contemporary post-1991 sculpture, while also actively restoring the socialist realist statues. Pledging to make the park "a unique Art Park, internationally renowned … and in harmony with Moscow's image of a European capital", the Muzeon is making a move at re-infusing socialist realist sculpture with aesthetic and artistic value, thus taking it out of history and memory debates and returning it back to art (http://www.muzeon.ru/muzeon).

And to go beyond Central and Eastern Europe, a fresh initiative in conceptualising the relationship between art and power comes from the field of art history. David Elliott, at the behest of the Council of Europe, proposes an exhibition that would look at the development of art in Europe and globally after World War II. Entitled "A Question of Values: Art, Power, and Freedom in Europe and Beyond, 1939-2012", this project builds on Elliott's former exhibition "Art and Power. Europe under the Dictators, 1930-1945", which was among the most influential sources for the elaboration of the notion of totalitarian art in the 1990s.[7] The new exhibition intends to focus on the "fundamental *similarities* between different states, cultures, viewpoints and perspectives during this time, even though these similarities were often expressed by adherence to conflicting positions within the same broad settlement of culture and power" (Elliott 2010). In it, art production from the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc will be compared to that of Western Europe, the USA, and China in a bid to demonstrate that the beginning of globalization has its roots in the impact of World War II. This would mean analysing the disputed past of socialist regimes within an entirely new framework - that of globalization and cultural mobility.

Conclusion

With the opening of the museum of socialist art in Sofia in the fall of 2011, the Bulgarian public was summoned to reflect at once on three different problems, on which there is no already established consensus nor any profound academic research to help deal with them. It was faced with the image of socialism represented in a new art museum in a moment when there was still insufficient tradition of historical writing on the socialist past, with discussing the nature of socialist realism in art, and with creating new museum environments that would speak to a global audience. Thinking about the socialist period through art has proven a volatile issue at a time when the public still oscillates between a vision of socialism as a regime of terror, violence, and suppression of freedom and its vision as a period during which ordinary everyday practices functioned as weapons of the weak in subverting the state's totalitarian impulse.

On the other hand, the Bulgarian audiences, already familiar with existing museums of socialism in Central and Eastern Europe, use these foreign images and representations in an

attempt to understand the nature of the socialist years in Bulgarian history and to give advice on how a genuine museum of communism should look like. Yet the attempt to import this outside knowledge is bound to trigger novel debates, so far non-existent among local historians and artists, i.e. the role of the Second World War and of the place of the communist party as vanguard in the fight against fascism, the role of the Holocaust and the memory thereof in the establishment of a tradition of remembering communism, as well as of the role of museums in contemporary society in general. After an initial phase of silence on communism in the early 1990s, and a subsequent explosion of endeavours to elucidate the character of socialist regimes in the former Eastern bloc, it now seems that an increasing number of museums and galleries in Central and Eastern Europe – and also elsewhere – move beyond reflection on the nature of communism, to concentrate instead on exhibiting the clashing interpretations and representations that have circulated in the last two decades. While the Bulgarian public still hesitates between a "totalitarian approach" to communism and an "everyday-life-objects approach" to it, European institutions of memory have begun exhibiting and representing the manner in which local versions of communism have been so far commemorated and museumized. While the participants in the Bulgarian memory wars quote already existing models as sources of emulation and imitation, the proponents of this new type of memory culture in Central and Eastern Europe are engaged in a completely different comparative endeavour. They begin looking away from purely national contexts, seeking comparative frameworks on a global scale, which could present communism and the memory thereof as part of global phenomena taking place in the second half of the Twentieth century.

Symptomatic for the memory wars going on in Bulgaria in relation to the museum of socialist art is the response of the museum staff to the devastating critiques it had provoked since the autumn of 2011. The chief curator has announced that the indoor exhibition could only be temporary because of the lack of space. In March 2012, the first exhibition of paintings was replaced with a new one clearly designed to counter the main attacks against the museum. This time it is on totalitarian art, defined as a dark period in the Bulgarian cultural sphere, between 1944-1953/6. A visitor unfamiliar with Bulgarian art history may hardly tell the difference, despite that this second exposition comes with a two-page brochure on totalitarian art, which costs 1 EUR and could be purchased in the museum shop. It seems that the main transformation has consisted in removing the paintings from the 1960-1980s and supplying almost nothing in terms of text and context. Rather than going supranational and global, the museum has taken a narrower perspective, further shrinking and curtailing its own initial vision, going deeper into the shadow of a contested past.

Notes

1   My attempt to meet Vezhdi Rashidov and talk to him about his vision of the sculpture garden proved unsuccessful.
2   More on the name of the museum on http://www.monitor.bg/article?id=307426 (accessed 5 December 2012).
3   To be sure, critical opinions are not lacking among the visitors publicly sharing their opinion in the guest book. However, they are not numerous and are practically nonexistent. "Not a single critical word about the thousands victims of the communist labour camps. Nor about the Bulgarians repressed, jailed, and persecuted by the totalitarian regime. In this form, the museum is useless!", wrote Vladi Georgiev, who had left a Facebook address of a page called "The communist crimes in Bulgaria after 9 September 1944".
4   These are Zhelev (1982) and Krachunova (1999).
5   This paragraph follows Guichard-Marneur (2011).
6   This paragraph follows Rindzeviciute (2011).
7   For a review of "Art and Power", shown in London, Barcelona & Berlin in 1995, see Lyttelton (1996); for a review of the exhibition's catalog, see Griffin (1996).

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Restitution of Human Remains
and Cultural Assets

Anatomy at the Museum:
Bodies Represented, Collected and Contested

Fredrik Svanberg (National Historical Museums, Stockholm)

Abstract

A major part of current repatriation claims, debates and conflicts over contested European collections concerns the heritage of human remains from old anatomical collections created in relation to anatomical museums now closed or significantly transformed. The history of anatomical collecting as well as the museum and research use of these collections in the 19th and 20th centuries is quite little known beyond a general historical frame. New research projects are on the way, however, revealing interesting new historical knowledge in this field which gives new perspectives on the "dark" history of the latest two centuries as well as new backgrounds to current debates on contested heritage and repatriation issues.

Introduction

Though there are very famous grand anatomical museums in Europe, such as the *Musée Fragonard* just outside Paris, the *La Specola* in Florence or the *Hunterian* in London, there have been no national museums specifically dedicated to anatomy. A central function of national museums, however, has had a very close relationship to anatomy and that is the presentation of human bodies intended to represent human collectives and national majorities and minorities in particular. Such representations were in the past often closely guided by anatomical specialists and by a body of knowledge of races and people types produced by the anatomical branch of medical science in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

National museums have staged countless exhibitions using crucial anatomical components: pictures, dioramas, statues and actual human remains to represent peoples. National museums have also collected human remains by the thousands in close cooperation with anatomists and all in all the relation between anatomy and museums, both national and others, is surely an important one to anyone interested in the general history of the museum as institution.

Though the relation between anatomy and the representation of nations and of national peoples in museums is very interesting and will be briefly sketched here, I would like, in this context, to focus my attention on the European landscape of specifically anatomical museums and their history since this is an important background both to understanding the influence of anatomy in national museums and to that of the important current debates over human remains in collections. I will do this by drawing chiefly on examples from Sweden that I am currently doing research on.

I will argue that in order to understand and handle current debates on human remains in museums, a more comprehensive understanding of the background of such remains in anatomical museums, or in anatomical collecting generally including how and why they were collected, exhibited and previously used in other ways, is badly needed. Most old collections of human remains have a background in anatomy or in contexts closely related to anatomy though they are currently often kept in museums other than anatomical, such as national historical or archaeological museums.

The anatomical background of human remains in museums is often forgotten or quite incompletely known. The once vast and impressive landscape of anatomical museums connected to European universities has for the greater part dissolved leaving behind little trace of its old form and is disconnected from scientific medicine. The heyday of anatomical collecting and display ended in the 1930s and during WWII, following the shocking understanding of the consequences of the production of knowledge of races and of the idea of anatomical people. This shift was sometimes followed by conscious attempts to erase disturbing memories from that phase of anatomical collecting by dismantling museums, hiding or even destroying collections, as will be illustrated from the Swedish example.

The current situation of anatomical museums collections is that a gradual rediscovery and new research interest is underway. The rediscovery process is for the most part critical of practices of the heyday period c. 1850–1950 and related to a steady flow of demands for repatriation and resti-

tution from minorities, first peoples and post-colonial nations. In some countries there have been significant debates and a new sensitivity has developed in cultural institutions, not the least in Britain (Jenkins 2011).

People types in the Brussels museum landscape

To gain an idea of the general influence of anatomy and in particular the idea of people types in the classical European national museum even a superficial view at some museums in Brussels may go a long way.

The first exhibition of the *Royal museum of the armed forces and of military history* was set up in the Jubilee palaces by Jubilee park in Brussels in 1910 for the world fair of that year. The first great hall of the museum seems to contain a more or less completely preserved exhibition from that time. A further great hall was opened in the 1920s to display uniforms and equipment from WWI and then successive halls and exhibitions have been added (www.klm-mra.be).

In the 1910 and 1920s halls a great number of full size contemporary representations of people can be seen, clearly representing ideas of people types of those times as derived from anatomy (fig. 1). The 19th century Belgians are all pinkish with healthy red on their chins and strong cheekbones. The representations of defeated Arabs and Congolese are brutish with blunt though equally stereotypical features. In the 1920s exhibition of WWI the characteristic national stereotypes were chiseled out to the brink of the absurd. The Germans have little bent-up moustaches, the French big noses and the British boast reddish complexions.

Anatomy and race plays an even greater role in the famous *Royal museum for Central Africa* in Tervuren just outside Brussels. The museum was set up by king Leopold II in close connection to his colonial project in the Congo and inaugurated in its present building in 1910 (www.africamuseum.be). A grand and famous representational program with life-size statues is to be found in the building complex.

The entrance rotunda contrasts images of civilizing Belgians as noble, elevated, even guilded, with gloomy, dark and week Congolese at lower levels (fig. 2). Life-size sculptures in various exhibitions include the infamous "Leopard-man", a terrifying representation of a Congolese legend, as well as other works intended to illustrate the projected superstition and lowliness of the Congolese (fig. 3; Morris 2003).

These are museum stories of us and them, told through the medium of anatomical sculptures. In the basement I found a temporary exhibition about the early 20th century sculptor Arsène Matton who was commissioned to journey to Leopoldville (present Kinshasa) in the Congo in 1911 to make plaster casts of living people to be used as anatomical examples of people types (fig. 4).

These two Brussels museums are good examples of the relations between anatomy and museums in the twentieth century. These relations were thus obviously by no means confined to the area of collecting but to the full range of representing people in museums (cf. Norindr 1996). Racialized sculptural programs and collections of plaster casts intended and indeed used to represent people types can be found in a great many museums as scattered and forgotten remains of anatomy in the museum.

Fig. 1: People types exhibited at the Royal museum of the armed forces and of military history in Brussels. Photo and copyright: Fredrik Svanberg.

Fig. 2-3: Belgians and Congolese as represented in the entrance rotunda of the Royal museum for Central Africa in Tervuren (left) and Congolese as life-size sculpture in the exhibitions (right). Photo and copyright: Fredrik Svanberg.

Anatomical museums

Modern anatomical museums grew out of seventeenth century anatomical theatres and were for the most part closely related to different medical departments at universities and anatomical institutes in particular.

The history of modern anatomical museums goes back at least to the earliest anatomical theatres in universities the first of which was set up in Padua in 1594. The anatomical theatres were also centers for collecting and places for anatomical exhibitions as can be seen in well-known seventeenth century engravings of such theatres.

The anatomical theatre of Leiden, for example, had quite an impressive anatomical exhibition with elaborately mounted skeletons of humans and animals set up to illustrate accompanying Latin aphorisms. This theatre was beautifully restored some years ago and is currently used in a modern museum context (www.museumboerhaave.nl).

In the eighteenth century, the enlightenment brought about a renewed interest in comparative collecting leading to the establishment of great new anatomical collections later turned into museums, such as the *Vrolik* in Amsterdam and the *Hunterian* in London. The techniques of making wax models and of conserving and preparing corpses were also refined in the eighteenth century, as can still be seen in the famous eighteenth century specimens of La Specola in Florens or Musée Fragonard outside Paris.

Fig. 4: The remains of a 1911 project to make plaster casts of living Congolese people intended for use as the representation of people types. Photo and copyright: Fredrik Svanberg.

Anatomy, as a dawning science, was preoccupied with the exploration of and attempts to understand the human body as a biological phenomena. The popularity and importance of the techniques developed for preparing and exhibiting, however, anatomy also played a role in the making of cultural bodies.

As can be seen in the obvious examples of the famous so-called "anatomical Venus" of La Specola or the amazing exhibits of Musée Fragonard, the performative acts of making and exhibiting such elaborately *constructed* and staged bodies says as much about their makers as it does about human anatomy as such and they open up the way to a whole range of cultural interpretations.

In the nineteenth century, anatomical collections were gradually classified according to a more systematic medical science. Anatomical collecting now developed in accordance with a new modern evolutionary style as adopted by the museum (Alberti 2009, 2011; Åhrén 2009; Bennett 2004).

Older anatomical systems such as phrenology gave way to evolutionary classification and refined theories of race and human types based on mass scale comparative anatomical measuring. It was then that anatomical museums were filled up with thousands of measured human skulls in rows. Western nationalism and colonialism created needs for new bodily definitions of us and them in the form of people types which anatomy stood ready to deliver, allowing exhibitions of dioramas of specific peoples including their "typical" anatomical bodies to become very common.

The Uppsala case

In Sweden the modern struggle to define anatomical Swedishness started in the 1870s, culminating in mass measurements of conscripts in about 1900 which were compared to measurements of prehistoric archaeological skeletons leading up to a period in which race biology had a strong societal position well into the post WWII era (Svanberg 2012). Anatomical research had strong positions at institutes with well developed collecting and museum facilities in the universities of Uppsala, Lund and the Karolinska institutet medical university in Stockholm. These institutes as well as the Ethnographical museum in Stockholm had great collections. These are all in storage now, the two university collections having been transferred to historical museums.

Anatomy in Uppsala has a history going back to the seventeenth century and in a current research project concerning the modern period, starting in the 1840s when anatomy in Uppsala was thoroughly reformed along new principles, I am looking at the collecting and museum aspects of anatomy here more specifically. The anatomical institute revolved around teaching and research and a complex process concerning the constant inflow of human bodies for dissection, preparation and collecting. Uppsala had the greatest anatomical collection in Sweden, once comprising some 6 800 objects, mostly human remains, and including more than 2 000 skulls. This was a great pride until the war and there are unrealized plans in the 1930s for a major new exhibition building at the anatomical institute intended to house the collection.

In the morbid, grand race biological publication *The Swedish Nation in Word and Picture* of 1921, commissioned by the Swedish society for race-hygiene, the anatomical museums and their makers were highlighted:

> Edward Clason deserves at the same time to be remembered as the real creator of the Anthropological-anatomical Museum of the Anatomical Institution in Uppsala, the largest in Sweden. By means of untiring diligence and the most unsparing labour, he has here collected material of inestimable value. In the same way the principal part of the honour of founding the anthropological department in the Anatomical Museum in Lund belongs to C. M. Fürst. The museum of the Caroline Institute in Stockholm, which is especially valuable from the standpoint of comparative anthropology, is chiefly the work of Anders and Gustaf Retzius and Professor Albert Lindström. (Ramström 1921, p. 44f).

Post-war attitudes to this collection seem to mainly express the desire to forget about it. Most of it was stored in the 1960s and its previous contexts and use quite deliberately forgotten. Since the

1990s there is a growing interest in the old anatomical collections. This interest was fueled principally by repatriation claims made by different groups and in Sweden mainly the Sami. Repatriations have recently been made from the Uppsala collection to a Hawaiian group and to the Sami.

Though about 200 or so objects in the collection come from other countries or national minorities, most of them have a different, though presently unknown background. There were 3 000 or more human remains once present according to the preserved catalogues, but from where and under what circumstances did they enter the collection? The context, collection and display practices as well as the relations to the growth of anatomy as a science and to the developments of race research of the collection is also more or less completely unknown.

The collections currently form the basis for a museological research project, "The Headhunters, Museum Anatomicum and the Social Dynamics of Collecting" at the National Historical Museum in Sweden, that will study this collection with particular attention to how it´s objects may be seen as mediating social actors in a network of *relations* between museums, individuals, places and source communities, as well as how the range of *practices* relating to this collection have been and are socially productive.

Collecting the other

In 2010, Malin Masterton of Uppsala university defended her thesis in bioethics, *Duties to Past Persons: Moral Standing and Posthumous Interests of Old Human Remains*. Masterton makes a philosophical argument for the rights of dead persons, or rather for a restriction of the uses that the afterworld could rightfully make of human remains (Masterton 2010). Though a good argument, it seems slightly lacking of history set in relation to what actually went on in anatomy in Uppsala. Masterton is currently working at the Biomedical Centre of Uppsala, where parts of the old anatomy collection are still on public display to this day, making most specific use of past persons without obvious restraints (fig. 5).

Collecting was obviously a crucial component of early anatomy. Empirical knowledge of the world was to be established through the study and comparison of material objects (cf. Johannisson 1997, Åhrén 2009). To anatomy, those objects were human remains, or rather, as we shall see, living people transformed into objects by specific processes. Building a museum and the associated work with acquisition, display and the making of catalogues was of central importance at the institution in Uppsala. This can easily be seen in the priority of space at the comparatively small institution building: vast space was afforded the collection on display. Catalogues were kept and updated by the professor personally and in the university yearbook large spaces were accorded to the yearly description of collection growth.

Fig. 5: Skeletons of the Uppsala collection, as currently kept. Photo and copyright: Fredrik Svanberg.

The system of collecting of the anatomical institution had two major sources of acquisition: preparations attained through dissection and archaeology. Human remains coming from archaeological excavations (and from close cooperation between anatomy and archaeology) made up roughly one third of the collection.

At the institute, the main activities were teaching and research. Students had to pass an extensive program of dissections and there was a constant flow of dead bodies through the institute. Little is known of where these bodies originated in the early years but from sometime in the late nineteenth century, the Swedish anatomical institutions were legally allowed to use the bodies of people from poorhouses for dissection. This was little known outside a narrow circle within medicine, however, and inmates at the main body providing institution for Uppsala anatomy, the *Allmänna arbetsinrättningen* in Stockholm, most probably had no idea that they would

be sent to Uppsala to be cut up and possibly prepared for post mortem display if they could not provide their own burial costs after death.

Human remains entering the collection were de-identified. There are very few names registered in the catalogues besides the many names of anatomists that prepared the specimens. The typical loss of identity and previous life-history of objects entering collections is to be expected as it is a basic principle of collecting – the collected object is always made an example of the categories in the collection – but from an ethical point of view this seems more serious when human remains are concerned. The transformation of living people into specimens making up anatomical examples went through a process of death and its rituals, transportation to Uppsala, body storage, dissection and more or less complex preparation.

Anatomical collecting had many dimensions. The first was the development of modern anatomical knowledge and its applications for medicine and secondly the pedagogical value of the collection. The training of doctors through dissection is still an important part of medical training.

From a social point of view, however, the first thing to consider is that only some people were collected and indeed collectable. In principle, the anatomical collection is a collection of social others. In the evolutionary scheme of late nineteenth and early twentieth century, upper class westerners were on top and not only did they contrast themselves to indigenous populations inside and outside Europe but also to the lower classes. The bulk of the specimens on display in Uppsala came from poor Swedish people who died without the means to provide for their own burial. They were complemented by specimens from criminals, asylum inmates, self-murderers and by the skulls of indigenous people. There were many Sami, but also skulls from Greenland, Hawaii, Teneriffa, Ceylon, the South pacific, Africa, Japan, South America and elsewhere. In particular executed criminals seem to have been more or less ritually taken apart and collected down to the smallest pieces as a sort of continued penalty (cf Gustafsson 1995). The main activity with the prehistoric and historical bones coming from archaeology was cranial measurement in order to make them speak of the evolution of physical swedishness.

The professors, as well as thousands of students of medicine passing through the institution, could conveniently contrast themselves as white, upper-class, superior people to the others of the collection. The transforming tools of dissection, advanced preparation and museum display worked as powerful techniques for social differentiation and social confidence (cf. Åhrén 2009, pp. 33ff). The professors were in charge of the classification of people "types" so significant of nineteenth century physical anthropology and with profound social implications. Indeed, when the touring "People type exhibition" of 1919 was staged by the Swedish society for race-hygiene (leading up to the Race biological institute), the medical professors family trees were displayed as examples of highest quality swedishness.

Collecting as socially productive

Museum collecting is not primarily about the handling and management of heritage objects and information systems. The whole thing needs to be seen the other way around. Collecting is first and foremost about the management of the world *outside* the collection that collecting achieves as

a practice. It is a meaning making machinery to manage the world. Collecting as a practice *does* manage objects and information in the interior of museums, but that is just one side of it and the most important management going on is the ordering of the external world. Collection systems manage collectors rather than the opposite and that is the real point of them.

Material objects play a crucial but little investigated role for the social, as have been discussed within the growing field of material culture studies during the last two decades (Miller 1987; 2005, Schiffer 1999, Latour 2005, Olsen 2010). What role do things play in enabling and securing social life (Olsen 2010:2)? Collecting should be seen as a specific way of trying to *regulate* ways of mixing and the configuration of social entities and social life. I wish to approach museum collection with perspectives concerning the social contexts and consequences of collecting and collections management (Pearce 1995, 2004; Bennett 1995, 2004; Knell 2004, 2008; Svanberg 2009). Focus will be placed on collecting and collectors rather than collections as such, processes rather than product and meaning rather than knowledge (Pearce 2004).

With the dismantling of its museums, anatomical collecting and its display was forgotten, though this was certainly an important part of late turn of the twentieth century history and of the making of modernity. Human remains that nobody knows from whom or from where they came filled the storage rooms of other museums. The anatomical collection is a source of information about these museums and the collection of persons as modern historical phenomena. Furthermore, due to their relations to specific places, communities and individuals, the collected objects are also the mediators of these relations between the museum, its former and current staff (and even the group or nation running the museum), and the people and places concerned.

This becomes especially obvious in repatriation cases (Gabriel & Dahl 2008), when the mediating role and agency of objects in the development of relationships may become highly significant. It may be claimed, however, that though repatriation cases will increase the symbolic charge of museum objects, *the potentials* for the new roles played by objects were actually there from the beginning due to their nature as situated museum objects with documented collection circumstances and links to places, communities and people. Thus it can be argued that, in one sense, any museum collection can be seen as, analyzed and also used as a set of potential social relations. Though this perspective may be particularly interesting to museums themselves, being public institutions geared to social interaction, this is not a common way to view collections.

The locations from which objects were collected, and the source communities there (Peers & Brown 2003), will in the current project be seen and analyzed as nodes in a network, linked to the museum administrating the collection and the group of people (Swedes, anatomists) administrating the museum. The links consist of the collected objects, thus acting as social mediators. The relations between the nodes, then, would first have been determined by the nature of the expeditions or other contexts in which the objects were acquired. These relations were maintained and mediated by the collected objects (actants) and possibly effected by the ways in which the objects were used in different ways up until now.

The images of "others" constructed by using the collected objects (in exhibitions and books for example) may thus be seen as part of the making of relations. In some instances the social

potential of the collected objects have recently been fully activated as source communities are now claiming parts of the collection, others predictably to follow.

Collection processes

Based on the described background it may be claimed that what can be called the collection process is an important key to the deeper understanding and background of many current cases of contestation and restitution claims regarding collected human remains.

Material objects out there, in the material world outside the museum, are most often tied to a whole range of different contexts in which they have relations to people, places and events. Their meaning and use may alter significantly several times. What the museum does in its meeting with this complex world of objects is first a very selective choice on what to collect, and then it places the selected object in a themed information system, most often with a very small number of key categories. The object gets locked in classification and made to exemplify and tell the story decided by the museum, most often not of itself.

The museum thus provides a new context and as we have seen concerning the anatomical collection, this context may change over the years.

Anatomical collecting may illustrate better than in most other instances the re-contextualisation and situating of objects that museums achieve. When collected in Uppsala, the names and life-histories of once living people were erased, making parts of them examples of either anatomical phenomena such as diseases or of racial and other body "types".

In cases of restitution claims, what is visualized and at stake is really the specific themes and contextualisations made by museums. Museum history and use of objects will always be up for review in such cases. If the museum was truly a neutral place, there would be no need for restitution.

Researching collecting circumstances and collection history is often most revealing and may change initial restitution claims significantly. Recent investigations on some collections of the Ethnographic museum in Sweden, for example, revealed that ethnic attributions on collecting expeditions in the arctic made some 140 years ago were vague and more or less incompatible with current circumstances.

I think that current research on collecting and collections history is gradually transforming the repatriation debate, making it more complex, which may be seen in the recent UTIMUT collection of articles, for example (Gabriel & Dahl 2008).

Conclusions

Based on the previous discussions on anatomical collecting it may now be stressed that what is contested or "difficult" is not simply stuff being *kept* in museums, but *contextualized* stuff with *specific histories of museum use.* That which is contested is often contested *because* of these specific histories and investigations into museum and collections history may then significantly alter views on contested remains.

The understanding of *collection processes* is more generally a crucial key to the understanding of the formation of "heritage" and the specific contexts in which museums position their objects.

To better understand issues of contestation and restitution, as well as the roles of museums, collection histories and collection processes are therefore important to research further.

Anatomical collecting, the collection of human remains, is especially significant to the understanding of museum collecting more generally since it brings such collecting and the use of objects by museums to its point.

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Breaking the Ice:
Conflicts of Heritage in the West Nordic Regions

Lill Eilertsen (University of Oslo)

Abstract

Of all the Nordic countries, only two have ratified the ILO convention 169 on indigenous peoples on behalf of a minority group: Norway in 1990, and Denmark in 1996. The minorities in question are the Norwegian Sámi and the Greenlandic Inuit. These two peoples share a history of cultural and political discrimination, but also a growing awareness of their cultural and indigenous identity from the 1970s onwards. Cultural historical museums were established in both areas during the following decades, yet the oldest and largest collections of Sámi and Greenlandic material were to be found in the institutions of their former suppressors. This paper compares Norwegian/Sámi repatriation processes to those of Denmark/Greenland.

In 1981, a huge collection of watercolours was handed over to the Greenlandic Home Rule Government as a first step in the process of repatriating 35 000 items from the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen to Greenland's National Museum in Nuuk. The process was completed in 2001 and is acknowledged by UNESCO as an exemplary one, providing general guidelines for cooperation on the subject of repatriation. The earlier and more conflictual cases of reacquisition of Icelandic and Faroese cultural heritage, demonstrates however that successful Danish repatriation strategies have developed only gradually. Repatriation of Sámi heritage from Norwegian institutions has not been an equally smooth process as the Greenlandic one, and is mainly connected to human remains. The return of the skulls of two beheaded leaders of a social-religious revolt taking place in Kautokeino in 1852 became a symbolic victory. The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History (*Norsk Folkemuseum*) is in these days about to transfer half of its collection to Sámi museum institutions, and in 2011 a delegation of Norwegian and Sámi museum professionals went to Nuuk in search of inspiration for the work that lies ahead.

Introduction

Over the past decades Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark have come to terms with their own history of colonial endeavours, revealing the discrimination of minority groups (Katherine Goodnow 2008:ix). International conventions have been ratified, and political schemes developed, with the aim of righting the wrongs of the past. Yet, of all the Nordic countries, only two have ratified the ILO (International Labour Organisation) convention 169 on indigenous peoples on behalf of a minority group: Norway in 1990, and Denmark in 1996 (www.ilo.org). The minorities in question are the Norwegian Sámi and the Greenlandic Inuit.

The Sámi people represent one of a small number of European indigenous cultures and have their historical residence in the multi-state area of *Sápmi*, which reaches across the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. Greenland, in contrast, is an island, in fact the *world's biggest* island, situated far from its former colonial mainland, in the Arctic areas between Canada and Scandinavia (Utimut-return 2004:39; www.eu.nanoq.gl).

From the 1950s onwards influence from international anti-colonialist and indigenous peoples' movements contributed to gradually improving the political situation of both the Sámi and Greenlanders. The ILO Convention has proven useful in preserving and promoting their respective cultures, and in particular their languages (UN, PFII/2008/EMGI/14). Thus, after centuries of political suppression, governmental assimilation and missionary projects, these indigenous peoples are once more permitted to appreciate and cultivate their own respective cultures. As a part of their cultural ambitions and nation building strategies, they manage their own museums in which they display their cultural heritage. Yet the similarities between their situations have proved to be superficial.

Taking a view of the museum situation of Sámi and Greenlanders, I aim to demonstrate how repatriation processes are likely to reflect the political will of *both* majority and minority groups to come to an agreement on how to address and deal with a difficult past. Even if the repatriation of cultural heritage material and human remains may serve as a vehicle for "breaking the ice" between an emergent nation and its former suppressor, this is not necessarily what happens. The cases under consideration are interesting in this respect, since the repatriation issue has been met with very different strategies from the Danish and the Norwegian authorities, and not least from their respective indigenous peoples. The repossession of Sámi material from Norwegian institutions to Sápmi has not been an equally smooth process as in the Greenlandic case, and I will argue that the differences between those processes are partly dependent on the political situations of the Sámi and the Greenlanders, as well as on a divergent conception of *nation building*.

But heritage conflicts in the West Nordic regions are not exclusively connected to the nation building processes of *indigenous* peoples. Denmark has a long lasting and complicated colonial history including both the race for land in Africa, India and America during the seventh and eighteenth centuries, as well as the continued rule over Norway's former North Atlantic possessions (Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands) following the dissolution of the Dano-Norwegian union in 1814. Denmark's colonial period came to an end in 1979, with Greenland's acquisition of home rule (some would say it ended with the Greenlanders gaining access to the Danish Parliament in 1953). Yet, in spite of their governmental independence, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are still part of the Danish Kingdom. Iceland achieved full sovereignty in 1944.

Common to all former Danish colonies in the West-Nordic area, the focus of the present report is the decisive role played by their respective national museums in shaping distinct national identities, along with the appeal to representations of a pre-colonial past.

Repatriation of cultural historical and archaeological material collected by Danish officials has carried on since 1971, initially as a result of tough political negotiations (e.g. in the case of Iceland), and later on in the shape of peaceful cooperative projects (e.g. in the case of Greenland). Before I delve into Denmark's handling of the Greenlandic heritage conflict and compare it to that of the Norwegian Sámi repatriation issues, I wish to shed light on the gradual development of Danish repatriation strategies by presenting the more conflictual cases of reacquisition of Icelandic and Faroese cultural heritage.

The Icelandic manuscripts: a hard-won match of restitution

Between 1971 and 1997, 1,807 Norse Mediaeval manuscripts – *Sagas* concerning local history and families, heroes and kings, mythology, skaldic literature, religious texts, legal documents and manuscripts documenting the Icelandic law – were returned to Iceland as a gift from Denmark. This was however not a process *initiated* by the Danes, but rather a result of "several generations of discussions, two legal cases, seemingly endless negotiations and 25 years of restitution agreements" (Nielsen 2002:2-3, 68th IFLA). An important reason for the conflict was that both countries regarded the contested material as their own national and cultural heritage. A quick brief on the history of Iceland and its relation to the Danish empire will make it easier to understand how and why.

Due to the strong tradition of Icelandic writing, Iceland is one of few European countries whose origins we know with a great amount of certainty. *Islendingabók* – an early book on the Icelanders – was written by the Icelandic Priest *Ari Fróði Þorgilsson* in the late 1100s, as was probably *Landnámábok*, a book concerning the first settlers (Ødegård 1998:30-34). Within the literature of the Sagas, the period between 870 and 930 is referred to as the *landnam* period – the age of the settlers. The settlers arrived mostly from Norway (and from Norse settlements in the British Isles), where the high standard of shipbuilding made it possible to travel great distances at sea. They established a national parliament (the Old *Alþingi*), and adopted Christianity ca. 1000 AD. Two bishoprics were set up, and the country divided into parishes. The Icelanders were taught to use the Latin alphabet, but retained their own language in spoken and written form. When, in the 13th Century, a civil war erupted between a number of powerful petty kings, the Icelanders had long since begun their production of the valuable Saga manuscripts (Making of a nation 2008:16-19; Nielsen 2002:3). By the time of the Old Covenant of 1262-1264, Iceland was incorporated into the Mediaeval Norwegian Empire, and the civil strife ended under the legal code of the Norwegian king. In 1380, King *Håkon VI Magnusson* died, leaving the Norwegian throne to his Danish wife, *Queen Margrethe I*. Norway entered into a union with Denmark, bringing Iceland with it, and in 1397, Margrethe introduced the Kalmar Union between the Nordic kingdoms, which ended with Sweden's secession in 1523. Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands remained subjects of the Danish king, who soon forced the Icelandic church to become Lutheran. Danish royal power over Iceland was extended in the years to follow, with the imposition of a trade monopoly in 1602, and the introduction of absolutism in 1662. The Monarch's power was however exercised by officials, mostly represented by Icelanders

(www.thjodminjasafn.is). As a consequence of the Kiel Treaty of 1814, Denmark lost Norway to Sweden, whereas Iceland remained under Danish rule (Nielsen 2002:2).

De facto Copenhagen served as capital of Iceland for almost 400 years. This meant for example that, the Danish empire's only university was situated there[1] until 1911 when Iceland acquired its own institution (Thór 2007:72). Prior to this, Icelandic scholars and priests received their education at the Danish Royal University. An accord dating back to 1579 allowed less affluent Icelanders to study in Copenhagen, granting a scholarship and three years of free accommodation after they passed their matriculation exam[2] (Thór 2007:72 -74). Not surprisingly, Icelanders collected many of the Saga manuscripts themselves. The famous Icelandic philologist, *Árni Magnússon (1663 - 1730)*, collected thousands of manuscripts from all over the island, bequeathing them at his death to the Arnamagnean Foundation of the University of Copenhagen. The foundation has remained under the particular management of the Arnamagnean Commission (*Den Arnamagnæanske Kommission*) since 1772 (Nielsen 2002:3; www.arnamagnaeanskekommission.ku.dk).

The Icelandic Saga literature preserves a written language that is closer to modern Icelandic than Shakespeare is to modern English (Greenfield 1989:4). Naturally, its myths, folklore and historical information have provided symbolic elements to the development of national cultural identity in Iceland, and historical manuscripts and documents retained in Denmark's Royal Library and in the privately founded Arnamagnean Collection have consequently served as both inspiration and justification during the Icelandic struggle for independence from the very start. The first claims to the Saga manuscripts were raised as early as the 1830s by Icelandic authorities. In 1843, the Icelandic *Alþingi* was re-established, at this time just as an advisory organ, yet reflecting a growing nationalism among Icelanders. *Jón Sigurðsson* (1811 - 1879), an Icelandic scholar working with the Arnamagnaean Collections' of old Saga literature, as well as The Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (*Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab*) and the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters (*Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab*), attended the Alþingi in 1845, presenting national ambitions on behalf of his people. Residing in Copenhagen, he exerted political influence on the Danish government and fronted an Icelandic independence movement beginning in the 1850s that ended with Denmark granting Iceland a constitution and limited home rule, in 1874. In a renewed exhibition that opened in June 2011 in his childhood home in Hrafnseyri, Arnarfjörður, to mark the bicentenary of his birth, Sigurðsson's discovery and publication of old documents and records on Icelandic governmental history is presented as a key contribution to the Icelandic campaign for self-determination (Friðriksson 2011:11-16).

The Icelanders had to wait until 1925, seven years after Iceland became a sovereign state, before a minor 'repatriation' of historical *administrative* archives and documents actually took place. When the Republic of Iceland was founded in 1944, the Icelandic Parliament, Alþingi, decided on the construction of a new building to house the National Museum of Iceland (at that time located within the National Library) as a gift to the nation, spurring the first official request for those manuscripts deemed a part of the Icelandic *cultural* heritage (Making of a Nation 2008:7; Greenfield 1989). The request caused intense public debate in Denmark in the 1950s and 1960s, especially since the claim included manuscripts from the privately founded Arnamagnean Collection, and objections against the Icelandic repossession of the manuscripts were raised by academics as well as by members of the general public (Nielsen 2002:3). Nevertheless a law

referring to the expropriation conditions in Section 73 of the Danish Constitution was passed in 1961, dividing the Arnamagnean Collection into two, thus granting in accordance with the foundation's charter, the University of Iceland administrative authority over manuscripts and other archival material considered part of Iceland's cultural heritage. However, the enactment of the law was deferred for four years by the votes of one third of the Danish parliament and finally passed again on 26 May 1965. The law, and its relevance to the Danish Constitution, were then questioned once more, this time during legal proceedings brought before the Danish Supreme Court, but the plaintiffs lost the case in 1967. A treaty on the restitution of the manuscripts was finally made in 1970, and ratified in 1971. The manuscripts were restored and photographed for reproduction beforehand, in order to secure continued research and publications in Denmark (Nielsen 2002:3-4). The law outlined which parts of the material were considered part of the Icelandic cultural heritage, and which should thus be returned: "all diplomas concerning Iceland, either in the original version or in transcript, and other archive material rightly belonging to local and private Icelandic archives" (Section 1, subsection 2 – cited in Nielsen 2002:4). Manuscripts written or translated by Icelanders on the subject of Iceland or Icelandic conditions were included, as well as Icelandic literature, both transcripts and originals, from the late Middle Ages (Section 1, subsection 3 cited in Nielsen 2002:4). As for the manuscripts retained in the Royal Library, the law states as follows: "in addition, the Flatøbogen and the Codex Regius of the Eddic poems (by the Elder Edda) are to be restituted" (Section 2 cited in Nielsen 2002:4). The 1971 committee constituted by representatives from the Universities of Iceland and of Copenhagen also sorted out and recommended documents, presenting 11 restitution lists to the Prime Minister. 141 manuscripts were released from The Royal Library during the period of repatriation, and 1 666 manuscripts and 76 fascicles from the Arnamagnean Collection that included 980 Norse manuscripts – about 700 Icelandic and 280 Norwegian, but also manuscripts of Danish, Latin, Swedish and other European origins. The Icelandic manuscripts, which remain in the two institutions in Copenhagen comprise mainly non-Icelandic materials, such as histories of the Danish and Norwegian monarchies.

Today, the repossessed Saga manuscripts physically constitute exhibitions or parts of exhibitions in a wide range of Icelandic museums and national institutions. Several of these manuscripts, those regarded as culturally and historically the most valuable, are exhibited in the National Library in Reykjavík, but the National Museum, appointed "guardian of the nation's heritage" (Hallgrímsdóttir 2007), also has certain essential manuscripts on display. So do the National Archive and the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies established in 1972 (Sigurðsson & Ólason 2004; www.arnastofnun.is). But the role of the Saga manuscript in preserving and promoting an Icelandic cultural identity *today* is perhaps most strongly attested by the selection of mediaeval penmanship on permanent display in the exhibition *Mediaeval Manuscripts – Eddas and Sagas* in the public Culture House, inaugurated in 2000 as "a common centre for Icelandic cultural heritage institutions with high-quality exhibitions on selected national treasures" (www.thjodmenning.is).

In spite of the fact that most of the Saga manuscripts originate from the 14th and 15th centuries (Nielsen 2002:3), and several from even later periods, the returned manuscripts are seldom used to present the history that Icelanders share with the Danes. An exception is the Bible of Bishop Guðbrandur Þorláksson, printed at Hólar in 1584. It was the first translation of the entire Bible

printed in Icelandic, and serves as a key object in a section of the National Museum's permanent exhibition "The Making of a Nation". In this section, called "Under Danish Rule", we learn how the Reformation in Iceland incited a series of conflicts ending with the execution of the last Catholic bishop, *Jón Arason* (1484-1550), which furthermore initiated a period of increasing Danish power and influence over the colonies (www.thjodmenning.is). We are also informed that we know little of the life of ordinary people in Iceland during this period of time, as the later manuscripts are more often religious texts. "The Making of a Nation" presents Danish royal authority not only as causing a reduction of freedom for the Icelanders, but also inciting progress in business, and spurring the Icelanders to take their "first steps into the modern world" (www.thjodmenning.is).

The pew-ends from Kirkjubøur

The Faroe Islands are situated in the North Atlantic, halfway between Norway and Iceland. The first settlers here were Irish monks, who were displaced by Norwegian Vikings in the 800s. The islands were Christianized in 999, and from 1111, *Kirkjubøur*, the southernmost village on *Streymoy* (on the west coast), was established as its first diocese. From 1152, Kirkjubøur was subject to Nidaros Diocese in Norway, and it served as an episcopal residence during the Middle Ages (www.faroeislands.dk; Young 1982; Mortensen 2008). The white washed parish church, *Ólavskirkjan* (St. Olav's church), was built as part of the Catholic episcopate in the 1200s, and remains the oldest church still in use on the Faroe Islands today. It was from this church that a delicate mediaeval church interior with pews holding beautifully carved pew-ends (*Kirkjubøstolarnir*) was removed and brought to Copenhagen. This occurred in 1875, one year after a thorough restoration of the church had been initiated. Albeit not as contested as the case of the Icelandic manuscripts, the return of these pew-ends to the Faroe Islands was likewise a lengthy process followed by discussions on the origin and purpose of these eminent pieces of craftsmanship.

The restoration of Ólavskirkjan in the early 1870s was the immediate cause of the decision to remove its interior. As early as 1860, the ocean swells had threatened to rupture the ground on which the church is resting, and in the light of the building's poor condition, the ruin of another mediaeval church on Kirkjubøur, located further from the shoreline, was considered for restoration, namely the larger fourteenth century cathedral *Magnuskatedralurin*. It was (and still is) popularly referred to as "*Mururin*" (the Wall), since it is merely a ruin. The project was halted, however, supposedly due to weak support outside of the *Sydøststrømø* parish, to which Kirkjubø belonged. The project was closed down in 1868 (Krogh 1988:21). Following this, restoration of the old parish church (Ólavskirkjan) remained the only alternative. The scope and methods required for this rescue operation were discussed over several years. Common to every report and discussion, however, was the emphasis on the preservation of the ancient pieces of church interior (Krogh 1988:23).

The concern for the interior was, however, set aside when the master builder from Tórshavn, (the Faroese capital), *Guðbrandur Sigurðsson* (date of birth unknown), began to restore the parish church in the early 1870s. He had previously built a church in Suðuroy (which was later moved to Hov), and was also responsible for the radical reconstruction of the church in Tórshavn (today's Tórshavn cathedral) in the mid-60s. Sigurðsson held true to the contemporary neo-gothic ideal in

reconstructing the parish church at Kirkjubøur. He raised the walls in order to construct an arched vault, inserted pointed arch windows and added a church spire on the rooftop. The new pew system of evenly shaped chair blocks contributed to a radical change in the atmosphere of the church. It was consecrated in 1874 by Dean *Venceslaus Ulricus Hammershaimb* (1819-1909), a well-loved Lutheran minister who contributed to the formation of a Faroese identity by collecting folklore and founding a Faroese written language (Krogh 1988:24; Joensen 2003). Even if the reconstructed church was a fine example of contemporary style, the locals regarded its interior as "simple" compared to the original. The mediaeval pieces of furniture were however no longer compatible with the restored church room, and the pew-ends were in their current state not deemed robust enough for ordinary use. But their value as antiquities was recognized, and together with the district governor (H. Finsen), Dean Hammershaimb wrote a letter to the Ministry of Church and Education (*Ministeriet for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsenet*) in Copenhagen, proposing that they take care of the antiquities in exchange for financial support for the commission of a new altar piece for Ólavskirkjan. The Ministry forwarded the letter to the Royal Museum of Nordic Antiquities (Det Kgl. Museum for Nordiske Oldsager), a precursor to Denmark's National Museum (*Nationalmuseet*), and the board replied that the museum was interested in some of the pieces: the bishop's throne, a copper plated cross and the eighteen pew ends, thus leaving the rest of the interior (a series of wooden figures, a decorative Madonna sculpture, and the church's old altarpiece) in Kirkjubøur (Krogh 1988:23-27).

The pew-ends, comprising the most remarkable part of the parish church interior, received particular attention when they were registered in the museum's protocol in 1876. Yet a thorough study of them was not made until archaeologist and military captain, *Daniel Bruun* (1856-1931), met with eager questions about the "Kirkjubostolarnir" from his Faroese friend, *Jóhannes Patursson* (1866-1946). Patursson was a wealthy local farmer with a nationalistic spirit and a strong interest in cultural history. Bruun got to know him in the course of his many travels to the Faroese Islands, when performing archaeological and cultural historical research on behalf of the National Museum. Patursson proposed that the coats of arms on the pew-ends would be helpful when studying Faroese (cultural) history, and he turned out to be right. Bruun identified the coats of arms of both *Erik of Pomerania* (1382-1459) and his consort, *Philippa of England* (1394-1430) on one of the most elaborate pieces. Erik was the Nordic Kalmar Union's first King, and he married Philippa on the 4th of October 1406, thus Bruun concluded that the benches were made between this date and 1430, the year of the Queen's death. This assumption corresponds with a later C-14 dating (Krogh 1988:21-31).

The uniqueness of the carved pine boards is linked to the quality of their craftsmanship. Two of the eighteen pew-ends clearly deviate from the others in terms of style and quality, in that they are simpler and lacking in any pictorial motif. But the sixteen remaining pieces have been identified as sophisticated craftsmanship originating from a prominent – perhaps Norwegian – workshop for church furniture from the first half of the 15th Century. Every motif depicts a religious scenario or portrait, yet the variations in the shape of each wooden piece reveal slightly different functions, e.g. two of them have served as prayer desk gables. A further three are asymmetrically shaped, and depict more complex scenarios, e.g. the Virgin Mary both in a mother-and-child scenario and in a Visitatio-motif in which she is depiced as kissing Elisabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist. It is on the latter that we find the royal coats of arms that

led Bruun to his conclusion (Krogh 1988:28-70). But for what church it was produced and who was responsible for the production of the church interior, remained, at this point in time, an unsolved puzzle.

In 1901, when the aforementioned farmer, Jóhannes Patursson became member of the Danish Parliament, he stood at the forefront of a Faroese national movement, and used the opportunity to demand that the pew-ends be returned (Krogh 1988:30, 111; Joensen 2003:48). Patursson was allegedly close to making an agreement on repatriation, but the process was interrupted by the fact that he was not re-elected for the Parliament in 1906. From that year onwards, two political parties, *Sambandsflokkurin* (the Union Party) and *Sjálvstýrisflokkurin* (the Independence Party) dominated the political field on the Faroe Islands (Patursson naturally belonged to the latter). The two parties illustrate a duality in the Faroese identity. In fact, secession from Denmark never attained 50% of the population's votes, which is remarkable compared to e.g. Iceland, where almost 100% voted for sovereignty. But if the national movement on the Faroe Islands has perhaps been less accentuated than in the other Nordic nations, it has been sufficiently influential to lead the Faroese to demand the return of national documents and ethnographic material for a national museum and archive (Joensen 2003:45-51). The interior from Ólavskirkjan remained a central case in every question of repatriation.

Patursson, who served as a parliamentarian in several rounds during the early 1900s, made renewed demands for the pews in 1918, 1919 and in 1928-36. None of them led to any action, nor did those of the later *Dean Jakúp Dahl* (1878-1944) (Krogh 1988:111-112). In 1955, it was decided that the Faroese National Board was to enter into negotiations with the Danish government and Denmark's National Museum about the repatriation of Faroese cultural heritage. The staff of the museum *Føroya Forngripasavn* in Tórshavn however stated that the material retained in Denmark would need thorough registration before any repatriation could take place. The need for a proper museum building was also highlighted. Yet the negotiations continued, and when the Danish Prime Minister, Hans Christian Hansen (1906-1960), visited the Faroe Islands in 1958, a demand for the Bishop's chair and the pew-ends was presented anew. The historical value of the unique pieces of Nordic mediaeval church furniture however made Denmark's national antiquarian conclude that they belonged to the National Museum of Denmark. He moreover argued that the pews were not even of Faroese origin, referring to the research of *Tage E. Christiansen* (1918-1984), inspector at the National Museum of Denmark from the late 1940s until his death.

Christiansen had taken part in a joint Faroese-Norwegian-Danish archaeological research project on Kirkjubøur between 1953 and 1955, and was intensely preoccupied with the origin of the pews and gables. While Captain Daniel Bruun had suggested that the interior was prepared for Mururin, Kirkjubøur's unfinished cathedral, Christiansen deemed it more likely that the pews were intended for a larger, probably royal church on the Norwegian west coast, similar to the Apostle church (Apostelkirken) in Bergen, which had been demolished in 1531 (Krogh 1988:30-32, 70-74, 111-113). He completely denied any possibility of the benches having been designed for the allegedly unfinished Mururin, and in a referendum from a meeting on the possible repatriation of the chairs from 1958, Christiansen argues that the arrangement of the pews in the parish church (which was known from nineteenth century reports) could not have been original, as both the wooden boards and their painted decorations appeared to have been adjusted to fit

the church room. Christiansen's thesis about the Norwegian origin of the pew-ends was largely accepted, and they were exhibited as examples of "Norwegian mediaeval art abroad" at Norway's National Collection of Antiquities, in connection with the Norwegian 11th centennial national anniversary in 1972 (Krogh 1988:71-74).

Times were changing, and in 1977, six years after the repatriation agreement with Iceland had entered into effect, the Danish Ministry of Culture finally agreed to repatriate the pew-ends and chair gables. This happened despite the uncertainty about their origin, but on the condition that a proper museum building with sufficient exhibition facilities would be established beforehand (Krogh 1988:116). The new building of *Fornminnissavnid* (the Faroese National Museum) was however not completed until 1995, and the Kirkjubøur chairs were not returned until 2002 (www.fornminni.fo).

It is worth noticing that in 1988, the Danish archaeologist and architect Knud J. Krogh published "Kirkjubøstolene og Kirkjubøur" (The Kirkjubøur chairs and Kirkjubøur), in which he raised questions about the assumption that the Magnus Cathedral had never been completed. Pointing to contemporary archaeological finds, he offered a new interpretation of the building remains, and found it most likely that Mururin had been roofed and put to use at some point in time. He moreover legitimized the theory of the pew-ends actually having been created for a Faroese church, e.g. by pointing to a coat of arms depicting a ram as the central motif. The walking ram was the official Faroese coat of arms during the middle ages, and was reintroduced with the Home Rule Act of 1948 (Krogh 1988:66-70, 75-102, Mortensen 2008:10-13). What conclusively convinced Krogh about the interior having been intended for the Faroese diocese, was the interrelatedness of the motifs of the aforementioned prayer desk gables that was revealed through interpretation on the basis of a letter written in 1420 by the German *Johannes Teutonicus* (?-1430), who was appointed Bishop of the Faroe Islands in 1408. Teutonicus wrote that a church for St. Brendanus and a memorial chapel for the godly bishop Erlendur had recently been erected at Kirkjubøur, and that he was in the process of repairing an older church. The latter may have been Mururin. Bishop Erlendur, who was never canonized, and undoubtedly St. Brendanus, corresponds very well with the figures on the gables (Krogh 1988:103-110). Hagiographic research has later confirmed that the St. Brendan's cult had spread from the Rhine estuary to the Nordic countries, and that German traders probably introduced it to the Faroe Islands. We also know that Eric of Pomerania established international fishery agreements that included the West-Nordic islands (Mortensen 2008:17-19). The Faroese case demonstrates that repatriation processes are likely to produce new knowledge about historical environments. Our image of the mediaeval Kirkjubøur is certainly changed; from a poor, desolate diocese with one small parish church and an unfinished cathedral, to a buzzing, international trade center with the economy to establish and run three churches in parallel.

Greenland: an exemplary process of repatriation

Indigenous peoples around the world admire Greenland for its many achievements in the promotion and protection of the rights of its indigenous people (UN: PFII/2008/EMGI/14). The Greenlanders' estimated success is however not solely linked to the ILO 169 ratification, but also to post-colonial political trends in the wake of WWII, as well as the prior experiences with the decolonization processes of Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Like most former colonial

territories, Greenland underwent a piecemeal process towards self-government: First with a period of UN-supported decolonization leading to the island becoming part of the Danish Kingdom in 1953, then with home rule in 1979, accompanied by a contract on repatriation of national archives and Greenlandic museum material, and, following a referendum in 2008, also self-rule, implemented in 2009. The local government is now in control of the police and courts, a greater share is taken of revenues from its natural resources, and Greenlandic (Kalaallisut) has become the *only* official language. Many Greenlandic residents see the latter development as a step towards independence from Denmark (Jensen 1983; BBC News 21 June 2009; Breukel & al. 2010; www.dk.nanoq.gl). The repatriation of museum material following the introduction of home rule has played an especially important role in this process, as for the Danish government it was a means of signalling respect for Greenlanders' need to elaborate and preserve a separate *national identity*.

In 1982, a large collection of watercolours – most of which are painted during the mid-1800s by the Greenlandic huntsman *Aron of Kangeq* (1822 - 1869) – was handed over to the Greenlandic home rule government by the Danish Queen *Margrethe II*. The watercolours were of special symbolic value to the Greenlanders, as Aron holds the title of Greenland's national painter. His pictures offer a unique *inside* perspective of Greenlandic life and folklore (Thuesen 2007:343; Utimut 2004:21). The former seal hunter also depicted the first meetings between Greenlanders and European missionaries, including conflicts and violent episodes (Rosing and Hagen 1986:250; Kaalund 1997). Ethnologist *Signe Rink* (1836 - 1909), the widow of colony inspector Rink (1819 - 1893) who invited Aaron and other Inuit to send him drawings and recorded legends of tales, wittingly separated the pictures with motifs of conflict from the rest before presenting them to the National Museum of Denmark in 1905 (Rosing & al. 1986). The Rinks moved to Norway in the 1880s, bringing the "less fortunate" watercolours with them, and the pictures are retained today in the magazines of the Cultural Historical Museum (*Kulturhistorisk museum*) in Oslo. It is worth noticing that none of Aron's pictures are on exhibition in Greenland's National Museum today, but his motifs are distributed on postcards and posters.

The return of the watercolours however initiated a lengthy process of repatriating 35 000 items from the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen to Greenland's National Museum and Archives (*Nunatta Katersugaasivia*) in Nuuk in accordance with the gradual improvement of storage and exhibition facilities in the latter. The agreement stated that both Greenland and Denmark should retain a representative collection of objects, thus the ground was prepared for future cooperation between the two national institutions, strengthening the scientific ambitions of Greenlandic museum professionals, as well as Greenlandic research in general. A bilateral Greenland Secretariat located at the National Museum of Denmark was instrumental during the process of repatriation that lasted until 2001, recording protected archaeological sites and monuments for a database to document the repatriated material. In 1999, an Arctic research centre – SILA – was established at the National Museum in Denmark, in response to the lack of a continuous scholarly environment concerned with Arctic and Norse archaeology. The centre became an integral part of the museum in Copenhagen after the repatriation process had been completed, and a new contract was signed between the two national museum institutions agreeing that the purpose of SILA is "to carry out advanced research based on the museum collections in Denmark and Greenland, to support the scholarly environment of Arctic and

North Atlantic archaeology in its widest sense, and to facilitate the exchange of researchers within the Danish Realm" (www.natmus.dk). Providing general guidelines for cooperation and scientific development on the subject of repatriation, the Danish-Greenlandic repatriation process is acknowledged by UNESCO as exemplary (Baily 2007; Utimut – return 2004; Rosing & al. 1986).

Repatriation of Sámi material

Just like the National Museum of Denmark in 1982 offered the newly established Nunatta Katersugaasivia a large proportion of their Greenlandic collection, the Swedish Museum of Ethnography deposited its Sámi collection in Ájtte, the new Swedish Mountain and Sámi Museum opening in Jokkmokk in 1989, in an act of repatriation. None of the 11 Sámi museum institutions established in Norway during the 1970s, 80s and 90s were offered anything similar to this (WP2 Sápmi; Recalling Ancestral Voices: 51). Two of the oldest, richest and largest collections of Sámi material in Norway are situated in the Norwegian Museum of Cultural Heritage (*Norsk folkemuseum*) in Oslo (transferred from the University of Oslo´s Ethnographic Museum in the 1950s) and in Tromsø Museum in Northern Norway. Yet there has been no transfer of *museum* items from Norwegian institutions to Sámi museums so far (2012). The only case of a museum artefact having been repatriated to the Norwegian area of Sápmi is that of a sacrificial stone, a *sieidi*, displaced from Gárgovárri Mountain in Kautokeino (*Guovdageaidnu*) in 1906 and exhibited first in the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo, later in the Norwegian Museum of Cultural Heritage, before it was transferred to Sápmi in 1997 and returned to the same spot in 1999 (Pareli 2007). This was an isolated event spurred by claims from a local community that their fishing luck had diminished following the removal of the stone, and did not reflect any organized wish for repatriation of ethnographic Sámi material in general.

Repatriation of collection items from Norwegian museums has indeed been discussed in Sámi museum circuits, but in contrast to the Provincial Council of Greenland, which began to question the ownership and storage of Greenlandic cultural material outside Greenland as early as 1976, museums were simply not on the list of priorities when the Sámi Parliament (*Samediggi*) was established in 1989 (Samediggi, museum report 2004). One reason might be the one presented in a museum report produced by the parliament itself; that the Sámi museums lacked sufficient funding and support from the Norwegian Government, and that other political issues (the right to land and water, protection of languages, etc.) were considered to be priorities at this stage (Samediggi, museum report 2004). Another possible explanation is that judicial rights and international agendas concerning the status of indigenous people drew the Sámi's attention to what archaeologists refer to as "the reburial issue", initiated during the 1970s by indigenous peoples in America who argued that the activities of collecting, studying and exhibiting human remains for scientific purposes showed a lack of respect for the descendants of the dead (Hubert 1989; Schanche 2002; Gabriel 2002). Resting their case on the museum field, the Sámi instead focussed on the repossession of human remains from scientific institutions, which turned into a drawn-out process that proved painful to those involved.

The skulls of Hætta and Somby

In Norway, as in Sweden and Finland, hundreds of Sámi graves were opened during the 19th and early twentieth centuries by or under the auspices of scientists. Sámi skeletons actually became

something of a commodity. Any objections to this "business" from the locals were ignored, and with the exception of Orthodox Church leaders in the village of Neiden in the North Eastern parts of Norway, Norwegian priests did nothing to prevent these acts (Schanche 2002:100). Yet disinterring graves was not the only method used by Norwegian Scientists to collect Sámi human remains. The very first Sámi-Norwegian repatriation case is a particularly conflictual one, and related to the skulls of *Mons Aslaksen Somby* (1825 - 1854) and *Aslak Jacobsen Hætta* (1824 - 1854) who were executed after having led a social-religious Sámi revolt against Norwegian officials in Kautokeino (Finnmark County) in 1852. Their bodies were buried outside of Kåfjord Church Yard, but their decapitated skulls were shipped – against Norwegian law – to The Royal Frederick University in Christiania (today's University of Oslo) (Schanche 2002:99; Bull 1997:206).

Enquiries with regard to repatriation began to be voiced as early as 1976 (the same year as the Greenlanders initiated an early debate on the location of Greenlandic cultural heritage), initially with a request from a relative of Hætta, but the Anatomical Institute claimed to have only one skull – that of Mons Somby. In 1985, when a relative of Somby forwarded an official claim for Somby's skull, the Anatomical Institute opposed the request, arguing that the skull was *their* property, and that they would refuse to help a brutal murderer like Somby become a martyr (Bull 1996:276; Schanche 2002:99-133).

The Kautokeino rebellion was in fact a brutal one, resulting in the killing of a Norwegian merchant and a police officer, and wounding several more. Whether these killings were politically, religiously or personally motivated has been discussed in several documents and treatises (Zorgdrager 1997). The mental state of the two key rebels has in fact been questioned, in light of the fact that, both before and after the killings, they made the literal claim that one of them *was* God Almighty (Sørnes 2009:276-277). It may seem strange that a revolt that in any case was not primarily politically motivated has been allowed to become a symbol of Sámi resistance and activism, especially since, in so doing, many of the partaking Sámis were violently forced to join a smaller party of religious fanatics. Yet this was the first organized Sámi riot, and it does indeed reflect the general situation and challenges of Sámi communities during the nineteenth century.

The revolt took place one year after the local authorities had several Sámi arrested for disturbing Mass first in Skjervøy community and subsequently in Kautokeino. Additional fines amounting to the total cost of the trials spelt ruin for the arrested Sámi. Both had no previous criminal record, and they were guilty of no more than verbal attacks on Norwegian priests (Zorgdrager 1997:410). In fact, it was a priest who initiated the violence, beating his parishioners with a stick and a hymnal (Sørnes 2009, *ibid*). The epidsodes of disturbance during the mass must be understood in the context of a pietistic revival movement initiated by Swedish-Sámi preacher *Lars Levi Laestadius* (1800 - 1861), which had garnered wide support among the Sámi people in the Scandinavian countries from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. On the one hand, Laestadianism protected the Sámi from the emerging problem of alcoholism, and provided a belief system compatible with parts of their former shamanistic religion (Zorgdrager 1997:419). On the other hand, it brought them into conflict with the Norwegian church, as well as with Norwegian liquor sellers. *Ole Isaksen Hætta* (1822-1912), the local police officer in Kautokeino, was accused of supporting the religious group, and was accordingly deprived of his position, being replaced by a Swedish officer of bad reputation – *Lars Johan Bucht* (1813 - 1852). Bucht was a friend of the salesman *Carl Johan Ruth* (1818 - 1852), keeper of the local inn (Sørnes 2009:278).

Both men were killed in the revolt, thus the humiliation and degradation of Sámi in Katuokeino has definitely played a part in the escalating situation.

In 1852 the Russian Tsar also closed the Finnish-Norwegian border, causing serious problems for local reindeer herders as they lost important grazing grounds. Even if the Norwegian government replied by denying Finnish Sámi access to Norwegian territory, thus protecting the grazing fields of "Norwegian" reindeers, the economic situation was overall a tough one for the ethnic minority of Sámi in Norway. Their traditional way of life was now being threatened in every aspect (Zorgdrager 1997).

The repossession of the skulls of Somby and Hætta to Sápmi has been important, not only to their relatives, but to the Sámi as a people. A humble and honest apology from their former oppressors for their disrespectful treatment of their dead has long been expected. Following a renewed demand from the President of the Sámi Parliament in 1996, followed by massive media attention, the University Board finally decided to return the skulls (Schanche 2002:110-111). Hætta's cranium was discovered in Copenhagen, where it had been exchanged for a pair of Inuit skulls.

Then, on the 21st of November, 1997, two small Sámi sleds beautifully decorated with heather and moss, and containing the crania of Hætta and Somby, were buried in Kåfjord Churchyard. Relatives of Hætta and Somby attended the funeral along with representatives of the Sámi and the Norwegian government, the latter officially regretting the act of confiscating the skulls and exhuming Sámi skeletons in the name of science. Bishop *Ola Steinholt* (1934 - 2009) left it to God to judge the people involved in the 1852 revolt (Rapp 1997).

The repatriation of Somby's and Hætta's skulls definitely serves as a paradigmatic case of repatriation in Norway, paving the way for the Sámi Parliament's right to control all research on Sámi skulls and skeletons, as well as for a later repossession of human remains. An interdisciplinary committee was additionally established for the purpose of developing guidelines for research on Sámi skeletons and remains. There have been some reactions to the fact that a political organ is allowed to deny scientific research, both to Norwegian and Sámi academics (e.g. Holck 2000:44; Buljo 2008).

Last year, on the 25th of September, a second round of repatriation and reburial of human remains took place, this time in the previously mentioned area of Neiden, situated in the border areas of Norway, Finland and Russia. The *Skolt Sámi,* or *East Sami,* as they are also called, is a Sámi minority related to indigenous peoples on the Russian Kola Peninsula, and are mainly Russian Orthodox. 94 human skulls of Skolt Sámi were reburied following an Orthodox memorial service (*Parastos*), and the Vice Principal at the University of Oslo, *Ragnhild Henum* (1967-) expressed regrets on behalf of the University of Oslo for the unlawful intervention against an indigenous group. Representatives of the Norwegian Government also attended the ceremony. Protests against the reburial were reissued by Norwegian scientists, as well as by Skolt Sámi fearing that potential insights into their origins would be buried along with the skulls (Ruud and Nilsen 2011; Karlsbakk 2011).

Nation Building in Sámi and Greenlandic Museums

The border situation of the Skolt Sámi clearly demonstrates that, quite unlike Greenland, Sápmi is an area of historically mixed ethnicities, integrated within several nation states. This of course

complicates the processes of political unification, as well as cooperation in the field of cultural politics, both within and across the state borders. Territorializing across state borders is today limited to the Sámi minority group of reindeer herders, with separate conventions regulating the activity. The Sámi political institutions and organs established within and crossing over the states of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia are indeed contingent to the varying cultural and minority politics of the respective countries that govern them. As a result, the regional Sámi museums in Norway encompass Norwegian counties and Sámi areas rather than representing transnational Sámi regions, except from the Lule Sámi museum in Drag (Nordland County), which partly addresses a Swedish Sámi audience (EuNaMus WP2; www.reindrift.no).

The cultural political situation of the Sámi is further complicated with Sápmi being constituted by culture and language based subdivisions (roughly divided in East, Central and South Sápmi) within which each respective Sámi group now dwells, and in which are spoken at least four distinctly different languages. By comparison, *Kalaallisut*, the official language of the Greenlanders consists of three main dialects, which, with a little effort, may be comprehended by representatives of all Greenlandic Inuit (norden.org). Of course, Greenlandic Inuit culture is also diverse, and 22 museums with a varied degree of activity and visitors are scattered across the island's vast area (www.museums.gl). Yet the decision to establish a unifying national museum institution in Nuuk must have been an easy one, considering that both the academic competence as well as the tourist industry is concentrated here, in this still rapidly growing university-city. Besides, there are no railways, no inland waterways, and virtually no roads between towns on Greenland, making an extensive distribution of resources appropriate.

The concentrated scientific and museological competence provided by a national museum like *Nunatta Katersugaasivia* in Nuuk can not be found in any Sámi museum institution. It is only fairly recently that Sápmi has been regarded as a nation, and aspirations of nation building in the Sámi museums have developed gradually. Most Sámi museums started out as regional or local institutions representing local varieties of the Sámi culture. Sápmi has proved to be a far more complex cultural field than what was communicated during the early years of the Sámi's political struggle for cultural recognition, when the reindeer herders – in 2000 constituting only 10% of the total population – were allowed to become the very symbol of Sámi culture (Sápmi – becoming a nation). Now Sámi identity is being renegotiated in new museums focusing on typical Sámi labour traditions previously disregarded, such as the coastal Sámi more focused on fishing. Thus, when the Sámi Parliament was granted administrative authority over all Norwegian Sámi museums in 2002, after having openly criticized Norwegian museum policies, the Sámi President, *Sven-Roar Nystø* (1956-), decided that no single museum should attain the position of 'The National Sámi Museum'. Accordingly, all museums currently under the administration of the Sámi Parliament share national responsibility for preserving and promoting Sámi culture.

The Norwegian Sámi Parliament in fact expresses an *ethnic* rather than a *civic* nationalism, reflected in their museum politics. Folklorist *Olav Christensen* (1955) has studied museum institutions in Finnmark County, the northernmost parts of Norwegian Sápmi, and has found that they do not reflect the cultural diversity of the area. The exception is South Varanger Museum (*Sør-Varanger Museum*), with its exhibition "Boundless water" referring to the Pasvik River being surrounded by three countries and a variety of cultures. The exhibition inspired Christensen to initiate the research project "Co-existence and conflicts in a multicultural

borderland – representations of ethnicity and ethnic relations in Finnmark museums" (*Samvirke og motsetninger i et flerkulturelt grenseland – representasjoner av etnisitet og etniske relasjoner ved museer i Finnmark*). The fact that Norwegians, Sámi and Kvens, another national minority group prevalent in parts of Finnmark, have co-existed and intermingled for centuries, is not communicated in any of the other institutions visited by Christensen. Christensen interprets this evident ethnocentrism as a result of the Sámi Parliament's political agenda (Christensen 2008). An ethnic nationalism is also revealed through the Norwegian Sámi Parliament's struggle for exclusive judicial rights to land and water for Sámi. The Parliament's politics have been criticized by other national minorities residing in the area, as well as by Norwegians. Considering these conflicts, there are hardly any chances of Sápmi as a nation ever becoming more than a cultural and social construct.

Greenlandic museum authorities were of course never confronted with the same challenges as their Sámi counterparts. Greenlanders reside in a separate territory, and only a small minority (ca. 10 %) of them are of Danish origin (www.eu.nanoq.gl). Yet instead of cultivating a separate Inuit identity, Greenlandic museum professionals have chosen to develop a scientific profile embracing the total picture of Greenlandic history, and no requests have been made for the repossession of Greenlandic human remains from Danish institutions (Gabriel 2002). Greenland's National Museum has in fact been granted responsibility for Greenlandic human remains, but has chosen to let this material stay in Copenhagen, except of course from the famous mummies from Qilakitsoq. These exceptionally well-preserved bodies from the 1400s, with intact clothing, give a unique impression of the Inuit Saqqaq Culture (Greenland National Museum and Archives). Representatives of other indigenous peoples have expressed disgust at the exhibition, and protests from Greenlanders, who entertain a strong death taboo, made the museum professionals rearrange it in a separate room so that those who do not want to see it may choose to pass it (Gabriel 2002; Nielsen 2002). The calm beauty and dignity of this exhibition may have contributed to its gradual acceptance. Anyhow, in having decided to display these bodies, the National Museum of Greenland has revealed itself to be a scientific, rather than a political institution. I am not arguing that this is a situation representative of Greenlandic politics as a whole, and maybe it is a virtue of necessity, as Danes still hold prominent positions on Greenland, but the island's inhabitants clearly display a will to live and work together with those of Danish or mixed origin, as they do not refer to themselves as Inuit but simply refer to themselves as *Greenlanders.*

Future plans for repatriation of Sami material

In order to modify the impression I have given of Sámi museums serving simply as political tools for the Sámi Parliament, as well as of the Parliament lacking in dedication to the development of the Sámi museums as scientific institutions, I will now focus on processes going on in the Sámi museum field today that will change the future picture. The Sámi Parliament has in fact recently listed the needs for improvements of their museum institutions, stressing an increase in scientific and conservation competence. In 2006 and 2007, three Nordic Sámi museums recorded Sámi objects in Scandinavian institutions outside of Sápmi in a project called "Recalling Ancestral Voices – Repatriation of Sámi Cultural Heritage". Besides providing an overview of existing Sámi material, the project aimed to secure and develop mutual respect between Sámi museums and non-Sámi museums administering old and significant Sámi collections. Approximately 70 000

objects were recorded. The Norwegian Museum of Cultural Heritage (*Norsk Folkemuseum*) is in charge of the oldest and largest single Norwegian Sámi collection, and is presently willing to transfer half of it, 2200 artefacts, to Sámi museum institutions (Harlin 2008:195). A plan for repatriation has finally been outlined, and was formalized in March 2012 (Bååstede: Tilbakeføring av samisk kulturarv, 2012)

This initiative did not, however, come from the Sámi Parliament, but was taken by the board of the Folk Museum (the Norwegian Museum of Cultural Heritage). Partaking in the huge collection of Sámi material, both the Folk Museum and the Cultural Historical Museum (KHM) in Oslo, are members of a Sámi museum association (*Samisk museumslag*), and, following an agreement between the two, a decision was made to initiate a process of repatriation of parts of the collections with the Sámi museums. The Sámi Parliament was contacted in 2008, and a work committee established in 2009 (Leif Pareli 2011). Repatriation is a resource-intensive process, and the needs of the Sámi museums are being documented in on-going processes (White paper no 8, 2011 – 2012 "The Activities of the Sámi Parliament 2010"). A similar process is going on in Stockholm between the Nordic Museum (*Nordiska Museet*) and the Swedish Sámi. Important Sámi collections also constitute a part of the *National Museum* in Helsinki, Finland, yet no plans concerning these have so far been developed there.

Conclusion

With reference to the examples of Sámi and Greenlandic repatriation processes, we have seen that the status as indigenous people may be applied very differently in order to make museums defend and develop a national identity, depending on the political situation of the people in question. The Sápmi situation indicates that explicit political agendas tend to collide with scientific aims, as well as the ideal of museums serving the role of critical social institutions. It turns out that the Sámi museums focus on Sámi ethnicity, and leave out cross-cultural perspectives. The scientific focus of Greenlandic museum authorities demonstrates that a national identity is not necessarily dependent on an ethnic focus in a narrow sense.

The answer to the question of why repatriation processes were not initiated earlier between Norwegian and Sámi museum institutions is as complex as the cultural political situation of the Sámi itself. Complicated administrative and political structures at the museums, the young Sámi Parliament's political priorities, the relatively recent financial responsibility granted to the Sámi Parliament, as well as the slow progression of repatriation issues in European museums in general, represent different explanations. Moreover, Norwegian authorities do not share the step-by-step experience of repatriation of a former colonial empire like Denmark. The cases of Iceland and the Faroe Islands show that the Danish National Museum's generosity in questions of repatriation developed only gradually.

The recently outlined plan for repatriation of Sámi cultural heritage, *Bååstede,* indicates that the Sámi museums are entering a new era of scientific focus and enhanced cooperation with non-Sámi institutions in the interest of mutual exchange of competence. Not surprisingly, a delegation of museum professionals from the Norwegian Museum of Cultural Heritage (Norsk Folkemuseum) and the Norwegian Sámi museums went to Nuuk in 2011 in search of inspiration for the work that lies ahead.

Notes

[1] A University was in fact established in Christiania (Oslo) already in 1811, but Norway left its union with Denmark in 1814.

[2] The system was continued until Iceland became a separate nation in 1918, but the University of Copenhagen kept influencing life and culture in their former colony during the first half of the nineteenth Century as university teachers and professors, as well as bishops, still had their education here (Thór 2007:72 -74)

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Contested Sami Heritage: Drums and *sieidis* on the Move

Eva Silvén (Nordiska Museet, Stockholm)

Abstract

This paper is about some objects of Sami origin and their movements between different museum contexts in an historical perspective. The study forms a part of my contribution to the research program "The sociomaterial dynamics of museum collections", which includes three Swedish national museums in Stockholm: the Nordiska Museet (cultural history), the National Historical Museum (history/archaeology) and the Museum of Ethnography (third/fourth/non-Western world). My part of the project involves the Sami collections in these museums. For this paper, I have chosen to focus on two categories of objects – drums and *sieidis* – and the possibilities of analysing their role as actors in social networks and how they contribute to construct and maintain power relations between people and institutions.

Introduction

This paper forms a part of my contribution to the overarching research program "The sociomaterial dynamics of museum collections", where I, together with Lotten Gustafsson Reinius (the Museum of Ethnography) and Fredrik Svanberg (the National Historical Museum), look into objects and issues at our three museums that in some way have been disputed or handled as problematic: Sami collections, human remains and repatriation. The dynamic interplay between material practices and social processes of change will be analysed with emphasis on turning points in collecting, classification, display and storage, as well as the movement of objects to, from and between the museums. Our underlying idea is that museum objects have a strong ability to define identity and social relations, and to create both conflict and reconciliation. Special interest is directed towards objects which after a long period of invisibility are activated – renamed, reordered, recycled, moved from storage to the exhibition space or vice versa, or replaced in other museums or locations. Our work hypothesis is that these actions form a fruitful analytical starting point for the study of cultural and social change (Gustafsson Reinius, Silvén & Svanberg 2012).

In an introductory paper on this subject, I considered the movements of Sami collections between our three national museums, thereby identifying the Sami as a part of Sweden's cultural history (the Nordiska Museet), a historical/archaeological phenomenon (the National Historical Museum), an ethnographic/non-Western one (the Museum of Ethnography) or – later on – as an indigenous people in their own right (Ájtte, the Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum) (Silvén 2011). As a theoretical point of departure, I then indicated actor-network-theory, how the collections have become significant actors in social networks, together with museums, scholarly fields, political bodies, the Sami society and private collectors (e.g. Latour 1998, 2005). In this presentation I will narrow the scope to two categories of objects, inspired by such concepts as "the cultural biography of things" and the method of "following the object" and how these methods can be used to analyse materiality's role in shaping social systems of value, power and aesthetics (Kopytoff 1986; Czarniawska 2007). My empirical examples will be sacred artefacts like ceremonial drums and *sieidis* in the collections of the Nordiska Museet, objects that illustrate particularly well the ideas of "The sociomaterial dynamics of museum collections" according to both new ethical considerations and new claims from indigenous groups. Consequently, although more indicated than developed in this short overview, a third theoretical category will be the concept of "decolonising/indigenous methodologies" (Smith 1999, Porsanger 2004), where knowledge and meaning are defined from alternative positions, compared to earlier research.

Sami cultural heritage

The Sami are an indigenous people, with their traditional lands stretching over northern Sweden, Norway, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia – today the transnational area *Sápmi*. For centuries there has been an intense circulation of Sami material heritage outside the Sami society, involving both museums and private hands. Collecting was particularly active from the last decades of the nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth and the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm, the national museum of cultural history, was an influential actor. The museum's Sami collections contain around 8,000 single objects, mostly relating to different aspects of everyday

life – living, housing, cooking, clothing, handicraft, hunting, reindeer herding etc. – but to a small extent also sacred and spiritual artefacts, less than 100 items, mainly acquired during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Due to a division of the collections between the national museums, in principle no human remains are kept in the Nordiska Museet; those few once held there have been deposited at the National Historical Museum. For now I will leave the issue about human remains aside and concentrate on non-human artefacts.

From its opening in 1873, the Nordiska Museet became a center for Sami collecting, field studies, research and exhibitions (Hammarlund-Larsson 2008; Silvén 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). This position was further strengthened in the late 1930s, 40s and 50s when the ethnographer Ernst Manker became the first curator for the Sami collections, to which he contributed himself with field research, questionnaires, photographs, objects, publications etc. The collecting at both ethnographic and cultural history museums was at this time to a great extent characterised by transferring objects and knowledge from the periphery to the center, from inside or outside the country to the national museums in the capital.

In *Sápmi* as a whole, these movements were reversed in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, due to growing Sami political activism and the strengthening of regional institutions in the north of Fennoscandinavia. In Sweden, the authority of the national museums in the capital was questioned, and in 1980 an exhibition at the Nordiska Museet was postponed half a year, due to a serious conflict between the museum and the Sami representatives (Silvén 2009). In 1989, a new museum opened in northern Sweden: Ájtte*, the Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum in Jokkmokk, northern Lapland. As an act of repatriation, the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm deposited its Sami collections there, and at the Nordiska Museet collecting slowed down dramatically. The old periphery started turning into a new center, the "nation" *Sápmi*, as a node in a global indigenous community.

Utilising my ongoing work, I will here outline the fate of some Sami drums and *sieidis* related to the Nordiska Museet. My main interests are not in current reclaiming and repatriation processes as such; instead I focus on analysing the dynamic movements of objects in a historical perspective, through different actors and networks, thereby depicting the biographies and trajectories of objects and collections. Why were the artefacts acquired by the museum and why returned? What power relations do they indicate or shape? What have been the political, social and cultural consequences of taking them from *Sápmi,* moving them around, and then back again? How to explain that Sami also helped bring them to the museum? How has the interest and influence of Sami actors in these processes changed over time?

In the current repatriation discourse, it can be noticed that the act of physical restitution is not the only way for indigenous peoples to take control of their heritage. Other possibilities are joint exploration of collections (Clifford 1999; Brown & Peers 2006) or the locating of objects kept in museums and other institutions and entering them into databases. Ájtte has contributed to several inventories of that kind, presented as a way to repatriate information about Sami heritage, but possibly this could also work as a first step in a physical restoration process (Recalling...; Edbom 2005; Kuoljok 2007; Harlin 2008). Yet another way to exercise control is to promote indigenous scholarly research, re-examine earlier source material and document indigenous conceptions that might challenge established interpretations of Sami heritage – or simply more actively integrate the Sami point of view in current research.

Fig. 1: A Sami delegation appointed by the government studying drums in the custody of the Nordiska Museet, 1945. From the left: Mattias Kuoljok, John Utsi, Anna Gustafsson, Ernst Manker (curator), Gustaf Park, Petrus Gustafsson, Isak Parffa and Nils Erik Kuoljok. Photo: Nordiska Museet.

The drums

The Sami ceremonial drums are testimonies of traditional Sami religious beliefs, where the *noaidi* – the shaman – used the drum to communicate with the gods, at times entering into a state of trance. But the drum could also be kept and used by ordinary people for predicting the future and for making important decisions in everyday life (Manker 1938: 17; Westman & Utsi 1998; Westman 2005; Virdi Kroik 2007). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the authorities defined the use of the drums as superstition and sorcery, which made them valuable as collectors' items among the owners of cabinets of curiosity and as ceremonial gifts between people in power in contemporary Europe (Manker 1938: 72). When the Christian mission reached Sápmi, many drums were confiscated – sometimes burned, sometimes damaged – and at

times their owners were brought to court, punished or in some cases even executed (Manker 1965: 113 ff.; Rydving 1991: 29 ff.; Rydving 2004/1993: 54 ff., Granqvist 2001). Some families didn't deliver their drums to the court, explaining that they were kept in the mountains (Manker 1938: 434 ff., 452). Even today drum remains can be found under rocks and stones in the Sami landscape, but nobody knows if they were once hidden or buried. If found, the drums are mostly left undisturbed in their secret places (Virdi Kroik 2007: 80 f.).

In parallel to their destruction, drums were also delivered to state owned research institutions and colleges and later on transferred to the National Historical Museum (Manker 1938: 450). Over the centuries, many researchers and writers showed interest in the drums, but the most significant texts were written in the middle of the twentieth century, by the above mentioned Ernst Manker. In the beginning of the 1930s, together with his wife, he searched European museums and collections and found around 80 Sami drums (71 + 6 "unauthentic" + 4 without drumheads) which he presented in one of his major works, *Die lappische Zaubertrommel* in two thick volumes (Manker 1938, 1950). The title means "The Sami witch-drum", but nowadays they are usually called ceremonial drums, shaman drums or Sami drums. In this work Manker described the traditional Sami religion and its beliefs, where after he examined every single drum in its materiality – how it was made, what material and what kind of technique had been used, constituting the base for the classification of the drums in various form categories, related to different geographical areas (Manker 1938). A fascinating detail that sheds special light over the biographies of the drums is that the names of the former owners are written on some of the confiscated drums, most of them still readable almost 300 years later (Manker 1938; Virdi Kroik 2007: 69 f.).

Manker's thorough material approach was a substantial contribution to earlier drum research. It had, on the one hand, focused on the role of the *noidi* in Sami religion and his use of the drum, on the other hand, on the supposed meaning of the figures on the drumhead, according to Sami cosmology (Manker 1938: 20; 1950: 139 ff.). However, Manker put the same effort in copying, identifying and trying to understand the signs on the drums as in his description of the other material features (Manker 1950). He interpreted the brownish-red figures – coloured by alder bark – as a kind of story-telling, about the real world and the world of the gods. His many publications, both scientific (above) and popular (Manker 1965), made this image world accessible for generations of readers, and the symbolic figures came to inspire, among others, contemporary artists in their work. Successively the signs have also been used for popular culture and tourist purposes, even in Sami contexts. Today they can be found on t-shirts, coffeecups, lighters, key chains and other souvenirs, a use that sometimes has been questioned on ethical and ethnopolitical grounds.
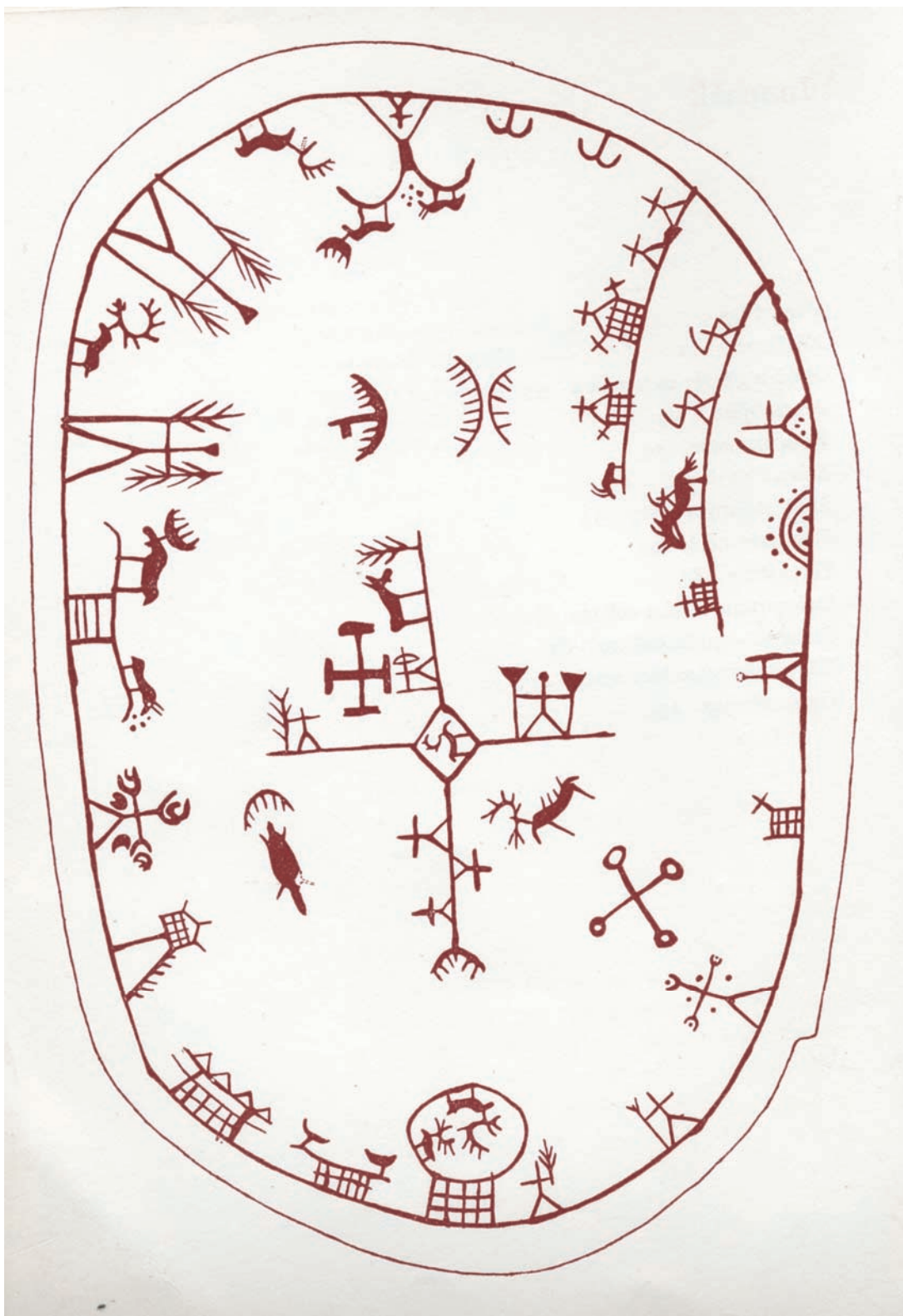
Fig. 2: Ernst Manker's copy of the drawings upon a drum from Lycksele, southern Lapland, where he interprets the figures as mythological beings as well as elements from real life (Manker 1965: 8).

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Fig. 3: The design of the lighter is copied from one of Manker's drawings of reindeer on the drums (Manker 1950: 35).

Among the known drums, 34 are in the custody of the Nordiska Museet, the rest scattered across different European museums, thus a part of a common cultural heritage (Edbom 2005). In 1943, 25 of the drums at the Nordiska Museet were deposited from the National Historical Museum as a result of Manker's ambition to bring the Sami material heritage in the national museums of Stockholm together in the Nordiska Museet, thereby creating there a "Lappish central museum" (Hammarlund-Larsson 2008; Silvén 2010, 2011). The transfer from the Historical Museum was significant; from symbolising state superiority over Sami culture and identity, the drums were now turned into a representation of traditional Sami religion in a foundation for Swedish cultural history, the Nordiska Museet. Four of the drums in the collection are today on long term loan to museums in the north, another ten deposited at Ájtte, as a kind of repatriation. At Ájtte, most of those drums are on display in the permanent exhibition *Trumtid* – "Drum Time" (Westman & Utsi 1998).

In connection with the Sami political mobilisation of the 1960s and 70s, Sami people became interested in the traditional religion and the drums, as both material and immaterial heritage. Today there are people performing drum ceremonies, making copies of historical drums or making new drums with symbols of modern life, representing our own time (Lindquist 1997). Not surprisingly, there are different opinions both inside and outside Sami society about this use of heritage. For example, the inclusion of one of the Sami handicraft artist Helge Sunna's modern drums in an exhibition at the Museum of Ethnography started a debate within the museum about what should be considered as "authentic Sami art" (Durand 2010: 102). The responsible museum curator and Sunna meant that the "authenticity" of the drum lay in the creator's knowledge of the tradition, the environment and the materials used, as well as in his ability to express his own vision of contemporary Sami culture. The critics, however, recognised only "authenticity" in the reproduction of the traditional forms of the past centuries (ibid.).

Fig. 4: In the Nordiska Museet there are two drums on show in the permanent Sami exhibition. To the left one from northern Lapland, depicted in Johannes Schefferus' *Lapponia* **(1673/1956: 127) after it was collected for the Swedish chancellor Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie as a document over Sami culture and religion (Manker 1938: 18, 785 ff.). To the right a small one from Jokkmokk, northern Lapland, with an unusual form, compared to the known types in museum collections, and consequently questioned as "false". Photo: Mats Landin, Nordiska Museet. (Inv.no. 228846, 73190a.)**

Fig. 5: A contemporary Sami drum, made by Helge Sunna in 1999, for the Museum of Ethnography. Around the frame the traditional drum symbols. To the left a helicopter, multi-storey buildings and cars, to the right people going alpine skiing and bird hunters with rifles. In the center the Sami flag and the rocket base Esrange in Kiruna, located in the middle of *Sápmi*. **Photo: Museum of Ethnography. (Inv.no. 2001.18.1.)**

Right now, there are no formal claims for restitution of the drums in the Nordiska Museet. But there is a popular opinion, saying that the drums ought to be kept in the Sami area or in the Sami central museum, Ájtte. It's said, that if you listen carefully you can hear the drums in the Nordiska Museet mumbling and humming, longing to "go home". Another story tells about how happy the drums that were brought to Ájtte were when they arrived, jumping all night long and triggering the burglar alarm, again and again.

The *sieidis*

In the landscape there used to be special places and objects, known by the term *sieidi,* which the Sami regarded as sacred (Manker 1957, 1965: 87ff.). These could be a part of a cliff, a remarkable stone or an unusually shaped piece of a tree, mainly formed by nature but sometimes adjusted by people. The *sieidis* out of stone are the most common type in museum collections. According to the traditional religion they were worshiped together with offerings like reindeer antlers, meat and fat. Among the mobile *sieidis* many were removed from Sápmi in times when the Sami didn't appreciate them as heritage, as they do today – sometimes with the aid of Sami people, sometimes against their will. There are nearly 40 *sieidis* in the collections of the Nordiska Museet, most of them taken from the mountains by travellers, scholars and tourists and after some time in private hands donated to the museum. Today such collections are questioned, regarding how the objects are kept according to traditional values, and if they should be in the museum at all instead of being returned to their original setting.

If we compare the biographies of the *sieidis* to the corresponding ones of the drums, there are certain differences, although both kinds of artefacts may have ended up in the same museum collection. The drums have a long history of being kept in governmental custody since they were confiscated during the Christian mission, which was one way of colonising the north and subordinating the Sami to the Swedish nation state. The background of the *sieidis* is, on the other hand, rather an effect of colonising the north by tourism and travelling, but also by direct museum collecting. *Sieidis* were one object category that Artur Hazelius, the founder of the Nordiska Museet and the connected open-air museum Skansen, was particularly interested in when he sent out his "collectors" in the 1890's, with the aim of acquiring a material base for his new museums (Hammarlund-Larsson 2008: 91 ff.).

To continue the comparison: the drums have a public history. As material heritage they have been researched in several ways and their symbolic figures have been used in artworks as well as in popular representations of "Saminess". Both contemporary drums and different kinds of replicas are manufactured today. The history of the *sieidis* as collectors' items is of a more obscure character. After entering the museum collections, most *sieidis* have been stored, barely researched (except Manker 1957), some of them displayed, but mainly left in peace. In parallel to the popular narratives concerning the drums, it has even been questioned if all the stones defined as *sieidis* in the museum collections really are authentic, or if the collectors were enticed by the Sami into carrying away ordinary stones, leaving the sacred ones behind. Like the narratives about the drums, these stories are not necessarily believed to be true, rather they are means to express feelings and wishes among the Sami.

Fig. 6: Today there is one *sieidi* on display in the Nordiska Museet. It originates from Sorsele, southern Lapland, where people still can retell the story of how it was abducted in 1925 and taken to the National Historical Museum. In 1943 it was deposited to the Nordiska Museet, together with the above mentioned drums (Manker 1957: 239 f.). Catalogue card, Nordiska Museet.

However, there are *sieidis* challenging this pattern and becoming individuals with a publicly known biography. For these *sieidis* it is possible to reconstruct their itinerary from the original setting through the hands of professional or amateur collectors to private homes or museums. The most well-known case is the story of one *sieidi* from Sieberboullda in Sirges Sami *siida* (community) in northern Lapland (Manker 1957: 170 f.; Kuoljok, Kuoljok & Westman Kuhmunen 2010). It was brought from its original location by two young noblemen, in the year 1900, during an adventurous mountain trip. After long-winded negotiations with the Sami guides, the visitors were assisted in bringing the *sieidi* with them (and some others, too). In 1905 one of the men donated it to the Museum of Ethnography, where it was placed outside the backyard entrance door, together with a totem pole from Canada (repatriated in 2006). In 1947 the *sieidi* was borrowed by the Nordiska Museet and Ernst Manker for his new Sami exhibition, *Lapparna* – "The Laps", where it was given a prominent position surrounded by other *sieidis* from the

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museum's own collections. According to Manker, the Sami Mattias Kuoljok, who collaborated strongly in the making of the exhibition, watched the arranging of his ancestors' divinity with mixed feelings, "... a sense of reverence that nevertheless didn't lead him to oppose the mounting of the sieidi. The context appeared justifying to him" (Manker 1957: 170). In 1981 the *sieidi* was also included in the following exhibition *Samerna* – "The Sami", in both cases representing traditional Sami religious beliefs and the idea of sacred places and artefacts. After insistent demands it was finally returned to the Museum of Ethnography in 2002, in order to be deposited at Ájtte together with the rest of its Sami collections.

Fig. 7: The mounting of the sieidi from Sieberboullda for the 1947 Sami exhibition in the Nordiska Museet. Photo: Lennart Nenkler, Nordiska Museet.

In Ájtte, the *sieidi* was once again integrated in an exhibition about religious beliefs – the earlier mentioned *Drum Time* – but this time together with its biography, including a detailed description of how it was brought from the mountains, according to a newly found diary of one of the young noblemen. Beside its own biography, the *siedi* was also telling a story about the circulation and use of Sami heritage, a new dimension in the narratives of Sami history. The transfer to Ájtte was marked by an official and emotionally charged ceremony with participants from the Sami community concerned, Ájtte and the Museum of Ethnography (Ohre 2003; Kuoljok, Kuoljok & Westman Kuhmunen 2010). Despite having spent a long time in other hands and being branded by the collectors' inventory numbers, objects like drums and *sieidis* are obviously still experienced as authentic and affecting. Independent of what people believe in or not, these artefacts are today given new meaning and are handled with respect, according to history, heritage and religion.

Fig. 8: "Sieidi back in Sápmi. A happy and affected Apmut Kuoljok beside the returned sieidi." *Fjärde Världen* 2003:1.

Conclusion

Sami representations in heritage and museums have always contributed to defining Sami identity and the societal position of the Sami. Museum collections and exhibitions correspond to changes in ideas and politics, but they also form a dynamic power that itself creates and reinforces change. By following the shifting fate of objects – in this case drums and *sieidis* – it is possible to analyse their role as actors in social networks and how they contribute to construct and maintain power relations between people and institutions. The method also offers the possibility of understanding the changing interpretation and assessment of museum objects and collections, especially when connected with conflicts and negotiation processes, inside as well as outside the Sami society. Materiality plays a central part but is not restricted to the tangible artefacts, it includes also a variety of imaginative representations. But the actual physical movement of objects to and from different places plays a central part in this performance. Place matters in the shaping of centres and peripheries, nations and identities, in the current global indigenous discourse.

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Based on the papers presented at the international conference "National museums and the negotia-tion of difficult pasts", this report examines how museums attempt to represent the most contested and in some cases "unspeakable" elements of the past.

National museums are increasingly called upon to provide forums for dealing with highly sensitive issues of traumatic past events – particularly those related to situations of political violence.

The first section of the report deals with cases related to conflicting representations of "natural" and ethnic communities. With a focus on the Mediterranean, the papers examine museum policies in dealing with conflicts of displaced communities in the border lands between Italy and the ex-Yugoslavia or in the contested religious heritage of Greek Cypriots.

The second section focuses on the role national museums play in handling historical issues that are socially and politically sensitive. The Soviet rule in Estonia provides an example of the manipulation of museum policies in the context of dictatorial regime changes. A comparative study of the representa-tion of the Holocaust in contemporary Germany and Britain and the question of the Gulag Museums in Russia provide examples of the problems inherent in representing such traumatic events.

The third section deals with cases related to restitution of anthropological remains and cultural assets. This area of research, related to the postcolonial critique, will be tackled from a theoretical point of view through case studies coming from Northern Europe. By going beyond the legal aspects of restitution issues, these studies examine the historical significance of using objects from the past as expressions of collective identity.

The conference proceedings and its reports are produced within the three-year research programme EuNaMus – European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, coordinated at Tema Q at Linköping University (www.eunamus.eu). EuNaMus explores the creation and power of the heritage created and presented by European national museums to the world, Europe and its states, as an unsurpassable institution in contemporary society. National museums are defined and explored as processes of institutionalized negotiations where material collections and displays make claims and are recognized as articulating and representing national values and realities. Questions asked in the project are why, by whom, when, with what material, with what result and future possibilities are these museums shaped.

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