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# The Museum as a Laboratory of Change

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*The Museum as a Laboratory of Change*
The article deals with the impact of temporary educational exhibitions in Polish national museums on the nature of the knowledge they produce, protect and disseminate. Analysed data were collected during a year-long, qualitative research study with the use of such tools as in-depth interviews, focus groups, research walks and desk analysis of documentation produced during the creation of the *Power of the Museum* exhibition at the National Museum in Krakow. The primary research question is how the museum's ecology of knowledge (Rahder, 2020) reacts when the decision-making order is transformed and a new type of meta-exhibition is built. The article aims to describe the mechanisms that stabilize museum knowledge traditions when the environment in which they operate is changed internally and externally.

Keywords: museum's ecology of knowledge, museum as a laboratory, temporary exhibitions

The formation of the institution of the museum is an important part of the history of collectioning and the emergence of the modern *episteme* based on organised ways of looking and viewing.[1] In museums, people learn to perceive the world, to imagine the past and value it, and to visualise and decode the relationships between objects extracted from socio-cultural and natural reality.[2] Museums are also forms of reification of this reality, as they create models of what is important and worth preserving in a given culture. Then they become "temples" protecting artefacts that are considered heritage in a space where time is suspended.[3] However, they sometimes also happen to be agents of change, when they take on the function of a "forum" and are organised as inviting places that facilitate opening a dialogue about community, belonging, identification or power relations and principles of representation.[4]

Discussions about the role of museums in Poland in the recent decades can be viewed as successive attempts to position museums between the above poles. The turn to education,[5]

[1] CRARY, Jonathan. *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999; POPCZYK, Maria. *Estetyczne przestrzenie ekspozycji muzealnych*. Kraków: Universitas, 2008.

[2] LIVINGSTONE, David. *Putting Science in Its Place. Geographies of Scientific Knowledge.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

[3] DUNCAN, Carol. *Civilizing rituals: Inside public art museums*. London: Routledge, 1995.

[4] DUNCAN, Carol. *Civilizing rituals…*; SKUTNIK, Jolanta. *Muzeum sztuki współczesnej jako przestrzeń edukacji.* Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2008.

[5] SZELĄG, Marcin (ed.). *Edukacja muzealna w Polsce. Sytuacja, kontekst, perspektywy rozwoju. Raport o stanie edukacji muzealnej w Polsce.* Warszawa: Narodowy Instytut Muzealnictwa i Ochrony Zbiorów, 2012.

the concept of the critical,[6] participatory or relational museum[7] are expressive initiatives of designing facilities that, while still performing the functions of collecting and preserving collections, focus on co-shaping sociocultural reality. Despite the diverse sources of inspiration influencing various trends and proposals,[8] they relate directly to the demands of the New Museology and change the hierarchies of the basic functions of museums.[9] Specific exhibitions carried out in the spirit of working with and for the benefit of the community move the museum in the scope of culture towards the position similar to that occupied by laboratories in the 19th century with regard to nature.[10] They regulate the movement between their interiors and exteriors, enculturating objects of various types and subjecting them to a certain social arrangement, and then through research and exhibition experiments produce knowledge to induce change in the world outside them as well.[11]

Research organised around exhibitions and museums designed and conceived in this manner addresses not only the artefacts deemed valuable to the institution but also the nature of the audience, the mechanisms of perceiving and recepting the exhibition,[12] and the social environment of the institution.[13] The exhibitions prepared on the basis of this research address topics related to the processes of knowledge production regarding artefacts and reveal the relationship between the strategies of creating collections and exhibitions and the participatory and "epistemological functions of the museum".[14]

Museums remain places of production and presentation of knowledge about the past and the present, which, by establishing hierarchies of values for this knowledge, shape the nature of memory policies while programming the cultural future. This continuity of functions is combined with changes in the knowledge environment in museums. In this context, Graham Black[15] notes that the creation of contemporary museum exhibitions is tainted with constant conflict between the construction of meanings that support specific knowledge traditions and efforts to preserve pluralism and social inclusion through engaging the viewer as an active creator of content at every level of the museum experience. Hooper-Greenhill, on the other hand, pointed out from the historical perspective that: "the realities of museums have changed many times. Museums have always had to modify how they worked, and what they did,

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[6] PIOTROWSKI, Piotr. *Muzeum krytyczne*. Warszawa: Rebis, 2011.

[7] BYSZEWSKI, Janusz, PARCZEWSKA, Maria. *Muzeum jako rzeźba społeczna.* Warszawa: Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski, 2012.

[8] BISHOP, Claire. *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship.* London; New York: Verso, 2012; SIMONE, Nina. *The Participatory Museum.* Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010.

[9] FOLGA-JANUSZEWSKA, Dorota. History of the Museum Concept and Contemporary Challenges. In: *Muzealnictwo*. Warszawa: Narodowy Instytut Muzealnictwa i Ochrony Zbiorów, 2020, pp. 37–59.

[10] In this context, Janusz Byczewski and Maria Parczewska's Creative Education Laboratory (Laboratorium Edukacji Twórczej) is not just a metaphor, but can be referred to the scheme that organizes any laboratory space (BYSZEWSKI, Janusz, PARCZEWSKA, Maria. *Muzeum*…).

[11] KOHLER, Robert. *Landscapes and Labscapes: Exploring the Lab-Field Border in Biology.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002.

[12] GAROIAN, Charles R. Performing the Museum. In: *Studies in Art Education*. Milton Park:Taylor & Francis, 2001, pp. 234–248.

[13] JEFFERS, Carol. Museum as Process. In: *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*. Champaign: UI Press, 2003, pp. 107–119.

[14] MOSER, Stephanie. The Devil is in the Detail. Museum Displays and the Creation of Knowledge. In: *Museum Anthropology*, Arlington: American Anthropological Association, 2010, pp. 22–32; JAGODZIŃSKA, Krystyna. *Witryna z zabawkami: Testowanie muzeum partycypacyjnego.* Kraków: Muzeum Zabawek Kraków, 2023.

[15] BLACK, Graham. *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-First Century*. Milton Park Abingdon Oxon: Routledge, 2012.

according to the context, the plays of power, and the social, economic, and political imperatives that surrounded them."[16]

Recognising or supporting the above trends rarely goes hand in hand in contemporary museological studies, with in-depth analyses focused on how the positioning and use of a particular temporary exhibition as a laboratory of change within a particular epistemic framework affects thinking about what is the knowledge that is protected and transmitted by a museum institution. The following study is intended to complement the state of research in this area. This article was written as a result of research work on the ecology of knowledge[17] at the National Museum in Krakow, which we conducted in 2021 with Agata Cabała in connection with the exhibition *The Power of the Museum* (*Moc muzeum*). From January to December 2021, we conducted 10 focus interviews with educators–curators, the exhibition coordinator, educators from various museums in Krakow, exhibition curators from the National Museum in Krakow, conservators working on *The Power of the Museum* (*Moc muzeum*) exhibition, the exhibition coordinator, the head of the National Museum Prevention Department, and teachers working in the Decks of Culture (*Pokłady Kultury*) program. We also conducted three interviews with the exhibition's keepers. Conversations were conducted via the MS Teams platform and in person (as much as possible when security rules during the COVID-19 pandemic applied). Each interview was recorded and transcribed. In addition, a curatorial tour was recorded and transcribed. An integral part of the study was direct observations of workshops prepared by museum educators. We tried to recognise the spectrum of perspectives from which the exhibition is viewed, the diversity of information it has produced and the practices it has initiated. By analysing the files documenting the creation of the exhibition, the narratives associated with the curatorial tours, the documentation of the exhibition and the commentary on the exhibition in the form of *The Power of the Museum Anti-Guide* (*Antyprzewodnik po wystawie Moc muzeum*), we also tried to trace the relationship between the process of creating the exhibition and the situation in which it began to function as an autonomous whole.

The exhibition cited here has become a key to understanding the way the museum functions as a complex knowledge environment in which discursive practices themselves are discursivised. This recurrence was inherent in the very nature of the exhibition that showed the process of creation and reception of museum exhibition spaces. Our research on "knowledge about knowledge"[18] was combined with an analysis of the process of creating a temporary exhibition about exhibitions.

The museum, in the perspective adopted here, is an institution that organises the complex, polycentric, diverse and often disordered knowledge environment of the modern world. This institution manages knowledge in modern societies, producing a separate, partially isolated internal environment and controls the flow zones between its interior and exterior. Thus, it is close to the aforementioned laboratory, created as one of the spaces for the production and

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[16] HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge. London: Routledge, 2015, p. 1.

[17] "Ecology of Knowledge" is an epistemic framework used by Micha Rahder to describe and incorporate many other epistemic frameworks into her analysis. It is a form of conducting research - and not an object, place or space. "Ecology of Knowledge" is characterized by paying unique attention to the fact that every form of knowledge, the way it is produced, transmitted and used, emerges from a network of complex relationships and intra-actions between human minds, bodies, institutions, documents, technologies and more-than-human landscapes (RAHDER, Micha. *An Ecology of Knowledges: Fear, Love, and Technoscience in Guatemalan Forest Conservation.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

[18] STRATHERN, Marilyn. *Relations: An Anthropological Account.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.

accumulation of modern knowledge, alongside such institutions as the zoo, botanical garden, hospital or observatory. The history of the museum from this perspective can be perceived as the history of the creation of conditions for the production of knowledge, the protection of this knowledge or its dissemination. Ultimately, the activities of museums were organised around practices such as acquiring objects and creating collections, preserving and conserving, organising and describing collections, conducting research, exhibiting collections, displaying the results of research and providing educational activities. Thus, the museum is an institution that transforms objects, words and ideas into knowledge and then reconnects them to the social and natural order, while controlling the nature of these connections. At the same time, it is a knowledge environment with well-defined boundaries, institutionally organised which exists in a network of relationships with other knowledge environments – scientific, artistic, activist, collector and local communities – that are organised from the bottom up.

In this context the art museum occupies a distinct position. It is a place that allows for practicing the scientific disciplines and creating forms of administration in the field of art history and historic preservation, yet it extends to other areas (history, anthropology, ethnography, sociology, neuropsychology, pedagogy, etc.). However, the knowledge transferred by the institution reaches further, beyond scientific knowledge and educational activities that translate into conservation, research and exhibition practices. This also involves procedural knowledge of bureaucratic norms and – not publicly communicated – technical instructions that allow the creation of the exhibition as a meaningful space around which are organised the practices of transmission of the knowledge produced and recorded in the scope of the temporary exhibition. It must be added that the national museum is a special case of an institution that cares for a large collection of exceptional importance; at the same time, its structure is very complex and expressively hierarchical at the level of knowledge and power relations.

In the epistemic traditions and frameworks we have studied, the exhibition is a multisensory space that is also a complex message. It is a convention that spatialises knowledge and uses recodings between several sign systems (visual, phonetic, semantic, symbolic[19]). The exhibition is at the same time treated as a repository, a spatialised knowledge and a program – a set of rules to make sense of the experience based on looking and walking. On the other hand, the objects organised in the form of exhibitions are the primary carriers of the knowledge being conveyed (often of autotelic value, and here also constituting a metonymy of the nation's history). Therefore, in analysing *The Power of the Museum* exhibition as a laboratory of change, I will use semiotic tools compatible with the above means of conceptualising the exhibition.

I define knowledge in a museum situation as anything that is shared, mutually communicated, disseminated or concealed within exhibition and exhibition-related forms of communication. The knowledge may be pre-conceptual and derived from how the human body functions in the world and in the museum. In this sense, knowledge has its origins in individual forms of experiencing reality and exposure, which, when passed on, can be referred to as action and memory programs.[20] Memory becomes knowledge only when it is transformed into a shared value that is organised, stored and transmitted according to certain conventionalised dispositions.[21] These dispositions allow for the stabilisation of "knowledge traditions," that is,

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[19] FOLGA-JANUSZEWSKA, Dorota. *Muzeum: Fenomeny i problemy*. Kraków: Universitas, 2015, p. 13.

[20] ŁOTMAN, Jurij, USPIEŃSKI, Borys. O semiotycznym mechanizmie kultury. In: JANUS, Elżbieta, MAYENOWA, Maria Renata (eds.). *Semiotyka kultury*. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1997, pp. 147–170.

[21] GOMÓŁA, Anna. Kulturowa rola pamięci i jej historia utrwalona w polszczyźnie. In: ADAMOWSKI, Jan, WÓJCICKA, Marta (eds.). *Pamięć jako kategoria rzeczywistości kulturowej*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2012, pp. 61–74.

the relatively economised instruments for producing and transmitting specific information; the forms that this information takes and the ways to transmit it; the codes that organise it and allow it to be decoded. The knowledge tradition itself can be both a repository and a program for organising the world, acting on it, and thinking about it.[22] A museum exhibition understood as a space filled with meanings is such a tradition, and at the same time – especially when we focus on temporary exhibitions – it can be a laboratory of change for this tradition.

From this perspective, which allows us to discuss knowledge about knowledge and exhibitions about exhibitions, it is possible to study the emerging and already functioning mechanisms of models of continuity and change in the nature of museum knowledge in the situation of the emergence of the specific factor of meta-reflection and self-description of the exhibition perceived as a system of representation.

## Reversing the order

*The Power of the Museum* is a temporary exhibition, and nowadays temporary exhibitions are becoming spaces and programs of innovation. They often result from specific research projects and are involved with experiments in new educational ideas. By their very nature, they allow for a tighter intertwining of the ongoing activities of producing scientific knowledge and generating new knowledge from participatory activities with the expository form of administration. They can also be considered as a way to respond to current trends and tendencies.

Creating temporary exhibitions offers an opportunity to go beyond organisational patterns, including the attempts, increasingly popular in Poland, to have educators take over the role of curators. It is often through these types of bold efforts that museums undergo transformation and become increasingly accessible.[23] Temporary exhibitions are used as marketing tool and as ways to increase attendance and revenue, but they also create a relatively safe place to experiment with new ways of thinking about the museum's role in the immediate social environment. Thus, they allow museums to become involved in ongoing discussions about the challenges of the modern world and provide an opportunity to make museums agents of social change.

*The Power of the Museum* is an example of this kind of temporary exhibition. It proved to be a comprehensive laboratory for changing the knowledge environment at the level of conceptual, organisational, staging and educational work. Its creation required a partial reversal of the structural order prevailing at the National Museum in Krakow. The mechanism of this cultural phenomenon has been worked out by cultural anthropologists focused on the theory of ritual. The hallmarks of this kind of play on norms, values and symbols include a rejection of existing hierarchies, a focus on the process rather than the effect of the work, the minimisation of differences between participants in the process, getting rid of thinking in terms of ownership and autonomy, and appreciation of fun and frivolity. Reversal rituals are often accompanied by profanity, mixing the profound with the mundane and seriousness with laughter.[24] The above-mentioned symptoms were noticeable when visiting *The Power of the Museum* and when analysing the dynamics of exhibition creation.

[22] BARTH, Fredrik. An Anthropology of Knowledge. In: *Current Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, pp. 1–18.

[23] TZORTZI, Kali, KOUKOUVAOU Katerina. Temporary Museum Exhibitions as Tools for Cultural Innovation. In: KAVOURA, Androniki, KEFALLONITIS, Efstathios, GIOVANIS, Apostolos (eds.). *Strategic Innovative Marketing and Tourism*. Cham: Springer, 2019, pp. 57–65.

[24] TURNER, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. London: Taylor and Francis, 2017.

Let us start with creating an inventory of the basic levels at which the work on exposure reversed the structural order of the institution, becoming a model laboratory of change at the organisational level. First, there is the gesture of entrusting the role of curators to educators, which has reversed previous hierarchies of knowledge and the ways in which it is transmitted. In the current models of exhibition production at the National Museum of Krakow, it is the curators who act as scholars, presenting the results of their research in accordance with certain permanent rules of museum presentation. Educators, on the other hand, remain translators converting the provided content into forms accessible to particular audiences. The educational program is a superstructure for the exhibition, understood as a form of presentation of objects and knowledge about the objects or topics to which these objects relate. *The Power of the Museum* was a project in which educators took their place at the centre of the exhibition-making process and bear responsibility for producing, organising and transmitting knowledge at all stages and through all available media.

Another shift was related to the replacement of a single person being responsible for the content layer (curators who customarily work individually or in small groups) with a collective body – a team of educators cooperating and negotiating the final shape and tone of the exhibition among themselves and representatives of other departments. The shift in the area of knowledge production from the individual subject to the collaborative subject working on the exhibition as a result of dialogue created great potential for free manipulation of symbols, conventions and content. According to the curators of *The Power of the Museum*, developing a common perspective mediating between diverse sensibilities, ideas, experiences and areas of expertise was an intense undertaking of social imagination. We understand this undertaking, following David Graeber, as the part of everyday life that involves “trying to decipher what other people are feeling and driven by”.[25] This allowed for the reconciliation and consolidation of new reference points. In the case studied, this process occurred primarily among educators but the applied dialogical model influenced the forms of cooperation and alignment of perspectives with representatives of other museum departments, as well as the creation of a specific model of the viewer and of reception of art.

In addition to reversing the order associated with the institutional layer of exhibition production, *The Power of the Museum* from the outset was an attempt to create an exhibition aligned with the trends of the educational turn, but also the one that pays attention to the findings of research on the development of museum audiences. It placed the recipient at the centre, and the main criterion for its quality was accessibility and inclusiveness. It manifested itself in the application of universal design standards and, above all, in the adaptation of message forms and content to the widest possible audience. The goal of educators in the function of curators became that no one at the exhibition should feel excluded because of the formula adopted.

The last of the reversals designed by the curatorial team can be placed at the level of the development of the exhibition theme. The gesture of making the core motif of the exhibition a device for producing meanings and organising bodily forms of interacting with cultural artefacts was to bring the popular contemporary form of meta-commentary to its liminal form. The language of the exhibition has been used by educators taking roles of curators in such a way that it can unveil itself, comment and open the viewer to what usually remains the

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[25] GRAEBER, David. *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*. Brooklyn: Melville House, 2016.

unnoticed framework of the ritualised way of receiving a work of art. *The Power of the Museum* itself was a meta-commentary and a program of change regarding the exhibition as part of the museum's knowledge environment.

## Forms and meanings

Cultural practices of reversing the order are often unsustainable and instead of performing a transformative function they perpetuate the existing structure. On the other hand, it should be noted that they open up the possibility of change by initiating the collective work of imagination often frozen in the thicket of bureaucratic procedures sustained by a certain hierarchy of power. In this article, however, I am not interested in the long-term effects caused by the exhibition as a laboratory of change and its impact on organisational structures. I also do not want to open a discussion on how to perpetuate these transformations. Instead, I am interested in what this change reveals and how the knowledge environment reacts to it. This is because I found that specific shifts in the area of organisational practice and the construction of a particular form of hierarchical knowledge transmission caused different kinds of discussions. Reconstructing the broad spectrum of reactions to the exhibition talking about exhibitions – both in the process of designing and building it and in summarising the results of the collaboration – allowed a better understanding of the semiotic–material dynamics that simultaneously ensure the sustainability of the museum's knowledge environment and enable its change.

The first level of discussion triggered by the intentional reversal of the above-mentioned orders included themes related to the collections and ways of presenting their value in the form of exhibitions. Curator–educators have repeatedly highlighted – through official messages, curatorial walks, workshops and in conversations with us – the importance of explaining that an art exhibition is created as a statement in a heavily codified language based on rules that are sometimes overt and sometimes hidden and internalised by creators and viewers. This resonated with the adopted curatorial strategy, which consisted largely in unveiling, commenting on and changing the rules governing the creation of the exhibition at the level of the criteria for selecting and ordering the works, as well as building a multi-sensory perceived spatial message.

Creating an exhibition in the form of a meta-commentary, where the language of the exhibition has been a means to talk about the language of the exhibition, was an important starting point to address the influence of the form of the exhibition on the process of decoding meanings and to address the relationship between these orders in museum environment. This is explicitly articulated, among others, by Dorota Jedruch in the *Anti-Guide*, noting that "In museum practice, one usually seeks a method of exhibiting art in which a curator is as much absent as possible and the work is as present as possible. And in our exhibition, the artists' works are pieces of a puzzle in which they sometimes play a secondary role".[26] This can be supplemented by another, less formal statement: "this exhibition is not the result of a scientific study of a group of collections, but of a scientific study concerning exhibitions".[27] Educators in the role of curators also often pointed to the need to look at the exhibition as a message and the importance of asking what ways this message can be experimented with. Conversations within the team of educator–curators were focused on methods to present the exhibition as a specific language that can be learned by knowing the rules that organise it. This shift in the

[26] GRZELAK, Anna, JĘDRUCH, Dorota, KAPRALSKI, Sławomir, KUNIŃSKA, Magdalena, MACHETA, Danuta, MRUGAŁA, Katarzyna, SENDYKA, Roma, SKOWRON, Filip, SZCZERSKI, Andrzej, ZAGUŁA, Joanna. *Antyprzewodnik po wystawie Moc muzeum*. Kraków: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 2021.

[27] RAoMM EK 17 (Research Archive of *Moc Muzeum* – transcription corpus - paragraph).

level of reflection served an educational purpose: unveiling the form simultaneously became a way of learning it. The exhibition "was built to make the visitor familiar with the museum".[28]

This approach, as already mentioned, sparked discussion in many departments, both during the creation of the exhibition and at the level of evaluating its effects. With the change within the formula of the organisation and nature of the exhibition, separate voices emerged at the level of official and unofficial assessments. Comments on the shifts described can be divided into the following types:

1) pointing out the dangers of blurring the criteria for valuing a museum collection;
2) addressing the problem of the appropriate form and choice of meta-exposure topics taken; and
3) applying the question of the relevance of the artwork to curatorial practice.

All of them were reflections on the function and value of the object itself at a time when the exhibition and the accompanying process of its creation focused on various ways of contextualising and decontextualising the work.

For an exhibition conceived as a system of representation with specific modalities of relations between code, content, objects and various visual signs, the educator–curator experiment was a question of the extent to which form, artefact and transmitted content influence one other, and to what extent they remain independent. This experiment resulted in two standpoints. The first of these was constructivist, according to which knowledge in the museum experience is created dynamically and in the web of relations. The meanings of objects are not permanent, and formal and thematic changes can affect the nature of objects in their relationship to the spatial relationship of people associated with them. The second standpoint involved naturalising objects as individual, authentic and autotelic carriers of values and meanings. Knowledge of these objects in this perspective can be discovered or hidden, available or unavailable, presented correctly or falsely. The common field delineated by the epistemic framework encompassing both standpoints concerns the belief that the form of the exhibition, the artefacts and the content conveyed influence one another and impact the meanings communicated.

## Artefacts and content

The second level of discussion stems from the findings of some of the employees that emerged during the interviews. *The Power of the Museum* defends the thesis that there is no single correct form of exhibition to convey a particular content. Such a viewpoint seems paradoxical in the context of the argument presented a moment ago. However, it makes sense when we consider that this is an exhibition that focuses not on the objects and their relationship to the arrangement, classification and perception layers but on building a message around the idea that an exhibition is the relationship of objects to these layers. This shift changes the status of the work of art as a knowledge-bearing artefact.

Educators, in their role of curators, admitted that they "put these objects together a bit provocatively, because, of course, there are exhibitions that arrange items thematically, around islands, issues. Chronology in museums is not always present. There are quite a few exhibitions that break with it on certain levels. We sometimes arranged items in a rogue fashion".[29] All

[28] RAoMM K 27.
[29] RAoMM EK 54.

participants in the process recognised that they were touching one of the main axes that organise museums' orders of knowledge: "we agreed to a project that perhaps sometimes treats exhibits from its own collection in a controversial manner".[30]

This strategy resonated with discussions on the selection of works which took place within departments and between them. Discussions often veered to highlighting the need to protect the object and arguing in favour of exhibitions that capture artefacts or natural objects as essential things on their own. One voice interestingly follows the paradox of *The Power of the Museum* in its complicated relationship to the exhibits: "to me it is of great value that some of these objects can simply be shown".[31] For the employee quoted here, the subordination of the work to a specific theme did not prevent the appreciation of the object itself. At the same time, during discussions with another department, there were negotiations about whether an object of real importance and significance should be exhibited outside of a context showing its unique value ("the object has been used as part of a mosaic, not as a value in itself, and the significance it had was not presented"[32]).

The stake in these discussions in the museum knowledge environment is the status of the work in relation to the status of the content conveyed in the exhibition. This situation is permeated by the belief, diagnosed earlier, that form and content are inextricably linked, and objects can lose value or be undervalued if the form is inappropriate for them. Educator–curators, while building an exhibition about an exhibition and focusing on the role of the language of the exhibition in the formation of meanings and audience profiles, at the same time evoke the question of whether specific content can actually be conveyed through various objects and creative ways of formally attaching specific meanings to them. Or perhaps the content is variable, and it is the objects that remain the medium leading to "true knowledge"?

The oft-appearing insistence on the value of the work itself is combined with the modern museum episteme which separates objects that are new from those which are old, the real from the replicas, and those representing something in a series from those meaningful as isolated wholes.[33] The object stabilises form and content and is the main organising instance of "real knowledge" as well as the form of its transmission. Educator–curators, on the other hand, seem to present a position in which content is the most important point of reference and can be conveyed through different texts and different coding options.

Behind this intricate web of assumptions about the exhibition as a system of representations with certain constitutive features, there is another common belief regarding the persistence of the so-called code memory, which allows artefacts to be recognised as valuable despite their recontextualisation.[34] Any conversation about objects in relation to the exhibition strategy of *The Power of the Museum* is a way of stabilising that code, at the point where it is used to tell a story about itself. The discussion allows maintenance of the continuity and hierarchy of knowledge when, within the framework of an expository system of representation, the form is recognised as the determinant of content, and the object is recognised as the means leading to the presentation of that content.

[30] RAoMM KO 11.
[31] RAoMM K 11.
[32] RAoMM KON 10.
[33] HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. Museums…, p. 196.
[34] ŁOTMAN, Jurij, USPIEŃSKI, Borys. O semiotycznym mechanizmie…

## Object and body

Another change designed by the educator–curators is to break the ritualised form of visiting, to encourage spontaneity within the viewer, and to use the language of the exhibition to unveil the corporeal aspect of the museum experience, which is often based on disciplining the viewer in such a way as to orchestrate the cognitive process around the sense of sight connected directly to the intellect.[35] The creators of the exhibition deliberately created a situation in which they revealed that all the senses participate in the reception and interpretation of the exhibition, and that even the place where the images are hung is a decision from the scope of shaping the arrangements of our bodies as receptors of visual stimuli. The room that directly concerned the relationship of the body to space was a place for experiments: on the height at which paintings were hung, the angles at which they were arranged, and placing additional set pieces that allowed the body to be put in positions not associated with the reception of museum works. The curators, aware of the game they are playing with habits, described it as follows:

> we want to focus attention on our bodies and in what way they influence our perception, our thinking, our behaviour in a given space. When talking about this hall, we sometimes start with a performance by Zorka Wollny, who a few years ago invited dancers and recorded the way they imitate the behaviour of visitors.[36]

The discussion prompted by the arrangement described here helps establish the impassable limits of this experiment. These are set by an ethic of conservationist care. Collection care specialists and exhibition supervisors controlled the framework of interaction with objects and modelled corporeal forms of reception, first at the level of selecting display solutions and later at the level of policing the autonomy of objects. The criterion at a starting point has always been related to the safety of the work exposed to mechanical and biochemical damage and decay processes. The museum's exclusion of an object from the world with the goal of stopping time and entropy has a long tradition, but institutionally and scientifically it took the current familiar shape in the early twentieth century with the emergence of the function of collection care specialists with scientific knowledge of physics and chemistry. This led to greater control of the environment where artefacts are stored and displayed in terms of, for example, lighting and humidity.

The museum as a place for preserving collections has a lot in common with laboratory spaces, but on a different level than has been exposed so far in this text. This is the place where environmental conditions are produced and controlled that allow objects to function as stable artefacts existing outside of time. Thus, museums create a clear dividing line: on one side is man and nature, and on the other is heritage and artwork, which must be preserved by radically excluding it from the domain of social and natural phenomena, only to include it again in a moment, but under highly controlled conditions. "These are our requirements, we just won't give up some things for the sake of artistic vision"[37] – this quote indicates the importance and significance of activities that are part of the institution's protective mission at the level of material heritage conservation.

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[35] O'DOHERTY, Brian. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

[36] RAoMM EM 110.

[37] RAoMM KON 36.

However, in the discussion triggered by the attempt to fund a sphere that allows bodies to realise themselves in relation to the object and space, we are interested in the emergence of a set of arguments regarding the real impact of such an action on the situation of the recipient. At a basic level, we are still dealing with the use of the force of regulations to control bodies in the museum environment. This makes the relationship between the visitor and the object within the act of viewing the exhibition remain a highly ritualised activity. In turn, this ritualisation, involving the elimination of danger from visitors, is linked to the conventions of the visit at the museum as an act of disembodied looking. Saving the past and producing an oculocentric subject have long gone hand in hand.[38]

Visitors, even when experiencing their own corporeality, experience it in relation to the artefact only through the medium of sight. From this angle, another game of educator–curators with visitor perception related to stimulating other senses – smell, hearing, touch – turns out to expose the boundaries of the relationship between object and viewer. Spontaneity and multisensoriality as modalities of museum cognition used at interactive narrative exhibitions come from a different order than the works themselves. The duality that is created can be explained by the insoluble dilemma that *The Power of the Museum* reveals – in what way can objects excluded from time, society and nature be included again by transcending the models of gaze-based forms of relationship building and knowledge transfer? In curatorial practice, this dilemma is transcended by creating situations of collaborative collection building and co-curatorial practices with local communities whose voices are given equal weight to those of experts. In the same way, the educational program serves to integrate new methods of presenting the knowledge into the described environment of knowledge. The gesture of disengaging and reengaging the object in knowledge circuits while maintaining partial isolation underlines another common ground in the described knowledge environment.

## Textbook and exercise book

If you take a look at *The Power of the Museum Anti-Guide* (*Antyprzewodnik po wystawie Moc muzeum*) you will notice a principle that connects it to the exhibition itself. Artworks, illustrations and texts are arranged in a set of exercises that allow you to test how a museum exhibition works in practice. At the exhibition itself, visitors also find a whole host of tasks that puts them in the role of an active subjects who confront their experience, knowledge, attitudes and competencies with the topics proposed by the educator–curators. The human body is a theme in the gallery space and the visitor is encouraged to think about this, for example, by journalling; the *Anti-Guide* provides a diary space in which to do this. At the exhibition, however, visitors do not observe examples that illustrate the curator's theses: they test the selected solutions themselves.

These endeavours lead to another goal that educators-as-curators wanted to achieve. They created an exhibition not only about exhibitions but one that also incorporates the experience of museum visitors in the perimeter of their own self-reflection. This theme came up repeatedly during the curatorial tour:

*The Power of the Museum* is the power of the visitors themselves, namely all of us. We, visiting the exhibition, are becoming part of it. Our bodies, our minds, our memories, our life

[38] CRARY, Jonathan. *Suspensions*…, pp. 11–79.

experiences, our education – this is what we bring to a museum exhibition and this shapes our perception.[39]

I will not pay particular attention here to embedding these thoughts in the constructivist model of museum education.[40] Instead, I would like to point out that the above shift can be interpreted as a change in thinking about the exhibition as a model for organising and transferring knowledge. The exercise book in this sense replaces the anthology and the canon.

Thinking of the exhibition as an anthology combines with centring it around the artefacts and their autotelic value. It also organises the modality of museum knowledge along the line running from discovering the work of art to discovering the principles that emerge from specific realisations put together. This model clarifies the nature of the discussions associated with the earlier planes of change and correspondence. When curators advocate treating the artwork as central, they recognise it as the axis of the organisation of the code and the content conveyed. In this perspective, code and content emerge from objects as knowledge objectified through the lens of aesthetics, art history or other scientific disciplines.

In my opinion, the important remark by Andrzej Szczerski found in the *Anti-Guide* was formulated based on these standpoints:

curators, abandoning the role of authorities speaking ex cathedra in the name of equal discussion with the public, only maintain appearances. They still remain the ones who are more important – they are the ones who determine the terms of the debate, as the authors of both the questions asked in the surveys and, most importantly, the exhibition itself.[41]

While the statement is about the power of curators, it is closely related to responsibility for works. From this perspective, curators are not subjects of knowledge who create rules and principles of reception, nor do they establish any valid systems of values. They are the ones who reveal them. The power of curators is first and foremost the power of the works. Curators are their representatives.

*The Power of the Museum* gives curators the powers of rule-makers and commentators. This gesture involves a shift from thinking about anthologies to thinking about exercise books. Herein hides another paradox. The exhibition unveils the language of the museum exhibition and allows the viewer to acquire competences related to the use of this language, but at the same time it shows its generative power – the exhibition is normative; it establishes and stabilises new, more open, more dynamic (but still existing) rules for interacting with art.

The shift in focus here shows the dynamics of the knowledge environment, which starts to be conceptualised as a system of naturalised rules. When they are discursive, some members of the museum team consider these rules inviolable or secondary, putting the artworks back in the foreground. This oscillation between treating an exhibition as a system of rules and treating an exhibition as a collection of valuable artefacts is an attempt to stabilise the relationship between form and meaning in a situation where form has been presented as meaning-making and objects are subordinated to it. Statements that insist on the legitimacy of one of the above orders, and thus also one model of the relationship between words, contexts and objects at the level of official messages and unofficial conversations, enables greater flexibility in the process

[39] RAoMM O 2.

[40] HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. *Museums and Education: Purpose, Pedagogy, Performance.* Abingdon Oxon: Routledge, 2010.

[41] GRZELAK, Anna, JĘDRUCH, Dorota, KAPRALSKI, Slawomir, KUNIŃSKA, Magdalena, MACHETA, Danuta, MRUGAŁA, Katarzyna, SENDYKA, Roma, SKOWRON, Filip, SZCZERSKI, Andrzej, ZAGUŁA, Joanna. *Antyprzewodnik…*

of creating exhibitions, which, in the epistemic frame described above, is always a process of adjusting the stabilising code to the object while maintaining the underlying meanings and values of the exhibits. As long as the exposition can be good or bad, can contain errors or be devoid of them, the above mechanism works and allows to ensure the continuity of knowledge with shifts between code (exercise book) or object (anthology).

## Recipients and visitors

The shifts described above are also combined with a change in thinking about the recipient. The findings of the research taking place in proximity to *The Power of the Museum* are part of a much larger discussion in this context regarding the formation of perceiving the visitor in terms of dialogue, participation, conversation and co-creation of exhibitions. This discussion has a long tradition all over the world and in Poland.

*The Power of the Museum* was addressed to everyone. This audience might be considered too broad, but the exhibition's creators consciously argued for this kind of profiling of the exhibition. The first argument concerned the accessibility and openness of the museum institution, while the second was related to the desire to grow attendance and open up to the diversity of visitors. At a basic level, it can be considered one of many contemporary ways of bridging the deep gap between the practices of museum professionals and the practices of visitors, which Hooper-Greenhill, among others, has written about:

The experience of the museum, its collections, and its specialist processes, was different on either side of this divide. The lack of knowledge of the work of the curator constituted the visitor as ignorant and the curator as expert in respect of the collections. [42]

The analyses of the collected materials indicate that the team's discussion regarding the audience triggered by *The Power of the Museum* was organised on the axis of creator/commentator, amateur/specialist, everyone/chosen one. In many statements the visitor was either the one who evaluated, verified and pointed out mistakes or the one who learned, experienced and underwent change. In our view, this constant oscillation between the two extremes made it possible to perceive the exposition simultaneously as a repository and as a curriculum, regardless of shifts regarding the status of knowledge itself, the modality of representation and its secondary hierarchies.

The oscillation between the two extreme audience models outlined here hides something more – thinking about the relationship between the world of the exhibition and the world outside it. Each institution delineates own boundaries, marks the inside and outside, and then puts them into general categories. The laboratory of change we study here is an attempt to negotiate these boundaries. The exhibition was intended to be a mediator between the museum community and the visitor community. *The Power of the Museum* shortened that distance while teaching the visitor that the museum is a place in which to feel comfortable. Model museum visitors who are non-specialists can gain knowledge in an area previously unknown to them.

The democratisation of institutions and the policy of making knowledge available, combined with this conception of the recipient, is linked to the conceptualisation of the world outside the institution as a place that can be changed for the better. When boundaries become somewhat fluid, actions taken by institutions can affect the entire community, of which the museum becomes a part. One area where this influence is at play is the ordering of chaotic knowledge environments with the tools of an orderly environment of institutions. Another is

[42] HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge.* London: Routledge, 2015, p. 200.

the co-creation of art and knowledge, such as in the case of the relational museum.[43] When, on the other hand, the primary recipient is characterised as being a professional, the entire model changes. The connoisseur and the critic belong to the museum. Outside the institution, within this model, the knowledge environment is not a chaotic or disordered yet changeable knowledge environment, but rather a profanum space which people enter in order to interact with art and thus affirm their own identity. They do not assume that everything around them should be changed, and the museum can be an ally. Rather, they see the museum as an island. The exhibition, in this sense, protects a specific and distinct community of people and objects (this carries class implications). From this standpoint, the priority of the institution's activities is not the transmission of knowledge understood as transformation of audience and culture, but rather knowledge as a form of preservation, ensuring its continuity. The initiative by educator–curators to open the exhibition to all audiences reveals the tension described here and shows how it allowed the museum's activities to span the gap between protecting itself from the world and changing that world.

## Summary

At the outset, I asked whether and how the realisation of a particular exhibition has enabled shifts in complex, museum-based knowledge environments, changing the understanding of what is the produced, protected and transmitted knowledge. I treated the meta-thematic temporary exhibition *The Power of the Museum* as a laboratory of change. I analysed the responses it evokes from the museum community and visitors.

I have come to the conclusion aspects that are often treated as separate and opposing visions of the museum, knowledge, audiences, exhibitions and objects are in fact part of a single environment that is self-updating and responsive to internal and external changes. These reactions are based on two underlying ways of positioning the museum versus broader knowledge environments. The first one is based on organising exhibition activities as a form of enriching the structural diversity of the environment and overcoming the "entropy of structural automatism".[44] The second is based on the desire to organise and discuss the exhibition as a self-model of the museum, which is a form that organises the institution and the world, bringing order and removing contradictions.

The exhibition, within the epistemic frame described here, is treated as a sign convention, an expression of care for the permanence of the texts that make up a given knowledge tradition and the permanence of its code. The museum as it stands now takes care of these two levels of knowledge organisation. This is made possible by the museum model, which considers objects as autonomous forms, separate from the world, to be introduced into various socio-cultural circuits, paying particular attention to the fact that form shapes meanings which in turn affect reality itself. That is why the self-updating of the museum's knowledge environment must allow both changing the codes and modelling the meaning of objects. *The Power of the Museum* triggered self-regulatory mechanisms at these two levels. We recognise that these are the mechanisms that maintain the sustainability and identity of the changing environment of knowledge and the traditions distinguished here, despite the following changes in thinking about the museum and the transformation of the museum experience. The dynamic updating

[43] BYSZEWSKI, Janusz, PARCZEWSKA, Maria. *Muzeum*…

[44] ŁOTMAN, Jurij, USPIEŃSKI, Borys. O semiotycznym mechanizmie…

and reorganisation of the field here goes hand in hand with the refreshing of the knowledge automodel.

So it emerges that a temporary exhibition as a laboratory of change need not be considered only in terms of the audience, the museum's mission or the institution's goals. *The Power of the Museum* was, first and foremost, part of the history of museum knowledge circles organised around the idea of temple and forum, self-modelling and implementing models of change. Such environments allow knowledge to remain sustainable while the world and the epistemic framework that organises it undergo constant change.

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## War in European Museum Narratives and Cultural Memory

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*War in European Museum Narratives and Cultural Memory*
The article examines how the war narrative is displayed in modern European museum exhibitions, particularly in light of new museology and cultural memory trends in Germany and Poland. The study recognises that the contested nature of cultural and historical contexts influences the process of representing cultural memory in museum narratives. It combines the theoretical approach of museology with specific museum practices. Using case studies from the Bundeswehr Museum of Military History, Dresden, Germany; the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, Berlin, Germany; and the Museum of the Second World War, Gdansk, Poland, the author examines the impact of challenging issues centred on cultural memory of the war in museum exhibitions over recent decades. The study underlines the significance of innovative approaches to museum exhibitions that display the experience of war and contribute to social dialogue and sustainability.

Keywords: war, museum narrative, permanent exhibition, cultural memory, forced migration

## Introduction

Memories and experiences of war continue to haunt individuals long after the conflict has ended. The interpretation of the history of World War II and the assessment of its significance for Ukraine has links to the country's postcolonial search for national identity and its geopolitical choice between Russia and the West.[1] The construction of Ukrainian historical memory of World War II has been complicated by the inconsistent endorsement of different and contradictory manifestations of memory politics during years of independence.[2]

The war of Putin's regime against Ukraine also affects the perspective on these narratives and how they are dealt with. Complex social and political issues and historical and cultural factors drive the ongoing war in Ukraine. As a result, it has had devastating humanitarian consequences, with countless civilians impacted by violence, forced migration, displacement and other forms of humanitarian crises. Eliciting meaningful ways of communicating cultural

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[1] ZHURZHENKO, Tetyana. Chuzha viina chy 'spilna Peremoha'? Natsionalizatsiia pamiati pro Druhu svitovu viinu na ukrainorosiiskomu prykordonni [Foreign war or common victory? Nationalizing the memory of World War II on the Ukrainian-Russian border]. In: *Ukraina Moderna*, Vol. 18, 2011, p. 102.

[2] VERBYTSKA, Polina & KUZMYN, Roman. Between amnesia and the 'war of memories': politics of memory in the museum narratives of Ukraine. In: *Muzeológia a Kultúrne Dedičstvo/Museology and Cultural Heritage*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 2, pp. 23-34.

memory about the war becomes essential in the present and for working towards a more peaceful future.

In the aftermath of 1989, the representation of cultural memory, particularly regarding the traumatic events of the twentieth century, became a battleground for reconstructing and re-evaluating the past, both in post-communist Eastern Europe and in Western European countries.[3] Maria Mälksoo highlighted four central "mnemonic communities" in the context of the European memory regarding World War II: Atlantic–Western European, German, East–Central European and Russian.[4] Their memories of the war centre around different events: one group focused on D-Day of 1944 and the Allied Victory in Europe on 8 May 1945; they also recalled the manifold traumas resulting from bombing raids and total defeat; another group remembered the trials of undergoing Nazi and Soviet occupations and derived benefits from the expensive triumph in the "Great Patriotic War".[5]

This perspective provides an opportunity to explore how changes and differences in the political and cultural landscape have influenced museum narratives. By examining the theme of war in museum narratives, it is possible to observe changes to the cultural memory of this historical event. It is particularly relevant for Poland and Germany, where the Second World War remains a crucial reference point in discussions about national identity and historical interpretation following the events of 1989.

This paper examines innovative approaches to presenting war in museum narratives in Germany and Poland, focusing on the challenging issues of cultural memory and its impact on museum exhibitions. The research focuses on selected exhibitions based on innovative museum practices that reflect conceptual changes fostering critical social engagement with the legacies of war. The research is based on the authors' fieldwork investigating museum exhibitions and communicating with curators in Germany and Poland from November 2022 to April 2023. The research focused on the Bundeswehr Museum of Military History in Dresden; the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation in Berlin; and the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk.

## Innovative approaches in museology that challenge dominant narratives

How we understand and experience historical events substantially affects our perspective on the present and future. It can shape individuals' values and promote a particular interpretation of history and current affairs.[6]

Especially significant in the context of this paper is an analytical framework developed by Björkdahl et al. to evaluate the impact of memory politics on the quality of peace in societies undergoing a transition from conflict. The researchers focus on the interplay between sites, actors, narratives and events, which they call "mnemonic formations". These clusters play a

[3] RADONIC, Ljiljana. Post-communist invocation of Europe: memorial museums' narratives and the Europeanization of memory. In: *National Identities,* vol. 19, 2017, No. 2, p. 269.
[4] MÄLKSOO, Maria. The memory politics of becoming European: The East European subalterns and the collective memory of Europe. In: *European journal of international relations,* vol. 15, 2009, No. 4, p. 654.
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[6] WNUK, Rafal & MAJEWSKI, Piotr M. Between Heroization and Martyrology: The Second World War in Selected Museums in Central and Eastern Europe. In: *The Polish Review*, vol. 60, 2015, No. 4, p 3.

significant role in shaping the politics of memory surrounding a significant issue, phenomenon or event related to the conflict.[7]

According to Rothberg, memories of tragic events are subject to change due to manipulation, oblivion or suppression, as well as various social, psychological and political factors that situate such memories within new contexts. In these contexts, they interact with other cultural representations that occurred not only during the events being remembered but also before and after them.[8]

Macdonald highlights that the defining characteristic of "difficult heritage" is its contested place concerning contemporary identity.[9] Even in exhibitions that are explicitly transnational or comparative, depictions of the Second World War are nearly always associated with the nation-state or, at the very least, with national viewpoints, sources and topics.[10] On the other hand, as Thiemeyer argues, modern museum representations focus on individual experiences. They may aim to be less nationalistic, but they still take into consideration the respective national characteristics in museum representation due to the different historical memory and reference frameworks.[11]

Rothberg's definition of multidirectional memory is relevant to museums which present the war since, if they aim to function on a transnational level, they can establish links and connections between diverse war histories and memories.[12]

The abovementioned considerations stimulate museums to explore new strategies for challenging dominant narratives. One of the main innovative museology approaches is to introduce the anthropological perspective into museum exhibitions, shifting from a narrow focus on military history to a more inclusive representation of universal human experiences of violence and suffering – and not only from the perspective soldiers but also of civilians.[13] Emphasis on the human aspect of war allows visitors to engage with personal testimonies and artefacts and recognises the importance of incorporating oral histories and individual experiences.[14]

Jaeger suggests that the transnational approach in museology embraces diverse perspectives and voices, creating transnational constellations that enable comparisons between regional and national narratives.[15] This strategy prioritises the representation of diverse viewpoints and

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[7] BJÖRKDAHL, Annika, BUCKLEY-ZISTEL, Susanne, KAPPLER, Stefanie, SELIMOVIC, Johanna M. & WILLIAMS, Timothy. Memory politics, cultural heritage and peace: Introducing an analytical framework to study mnemonic formations. In: *SSRN Electronic Journal, 2017,* No. 1, pp. 1-18.

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[9] MACDONALD, Sharon. *Difficult heritage: Negotiating the Nazi past in Nuremberg and beyond*. London: Routledge, 2010, pp. 2-5.

[10] ERLL, Astrid. Wars we have seen: Literature as a medium of collective memory in the 'age of extremes'. In: LAMBERTI, Elena & FORTUNATI, *Vita Memories and Representations of War*. Leiden: Brill, 2009, pp. 41-42.

[11] THIEMEYER, Thomas. *Fortsetzung des Krieges mit anderen Mitteln: Die beiden Weltkriege im Museum*. Leiden: Brill Schöningh, 2019.

[12] ROTHBERG, Michael. Multidirectional memory: *Remembering the Holocaust in the age of decolonization*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2009.

[13] THIEMEYER, Fortsetzung des…, p. 19; JAEGER, Stephan. *The Second World War in the Twenty-First-Century Museum*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020.

[14] WHITLOCK, Gillian. *Salvage: Locating lives in the migration museum*. In: *Life Writing*, vol. 14, 2017, No. 4, pp. 427-440.

[15] JAEGER, *The Second…,* p. 33.

experiences and is based on reflective practice that values transparency and trust within and beyond the museum.[16]

Museum practitioners and researchers are reconsidering museums' role as social and knowledge-based institutions which engage visitors in dialogue regarding contemporary social issues.[17] Sandell argues that museums can contribute to the process of social and political change as moral agents and sites.[18] This approach contributes to restoring peace and facilitating reconciliation in society. The concept of "narratives of transformation" highlights the museums' significance in promoting principles of social impact, shaping a fresh museum model that prioritises dialogue and social sustainability.[19] This requires implementation of a community engagement strategy that encourages visitors to actively reflect and share their experiences of the past within the museum.

## Memory Culture and the Museum Landscape in Germany

In the years following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the memory reconciliation process of the two halves of Germany involved a critical approach to the Nazi past and an acknowledgment of German responsibility for the crimes committed during the war. This was reflected in the establishment of new museums and memorials, such as the Topography of Terror museum in Berlin, which focuses on the Nazi machinery of terror and repression, and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, which acknowledges the genocide committed against the Jewish people.[20]

New aspects of the memory of the Second World War emerged in German public debate in the twenty-first century. In this context, the curator of the Military Museum in Dresden Dr Gerhard Bauer, noted:

> We have to reflect on how the use and the abuse of power and the role of the military, as well as human voices and virtues, are linked and how they were and can be employed under certain circumstances (political or other crises, for instance).[21]

In addition to examining the perpetrators' perspective, attempts began to place the discourse of the victims together with concepts such as "air war" or escape and expulsion at the centre of the collective memory.[22]

Holocaust memorial sites at former concentration camps – Buchenwald, Dachau and Sachsenhausen – have special meanings in cultural memory in Germany. These sites introduced a specific documentary presentation style known as "historical documentation" that uses

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[16] LYNCH, Bernadette. *Reflective debate, radical transparency and trust in the museum*. In: *Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 28, 2013, No. 1, pp. 1-13; JAEGER, The Second…, p.34

[17] JANES, Robert R. & SANDELL, Richard. *Museum Activism*. London: Routledge, 2019, p. 27.

[18] SANDELL, Richard. Museums, moralities and human rights. Taylor & Francis, 2016.

[19] JAEGER, The Second…, p. 34.

[20] THIEMEYER, Thomas. *Polyphonic and close to the person. How German museums recall the Second World War today.* In: KALAZNY, Jerzy, KORZENIEWSKA, Amelia & KORZENIEWSKI, Bartosz (eds.). *Druga wojna światowa w pamięci kulturowej w Polsce i w Niemczech: 70 lat poźniej (1945-2015).* Gdańsk: Muzeum II Wojny Światowej, 2015, pp. 81-105.

[21] BAUER, Gerhard. 'Interview in framework of the research project: Cultural Heritage in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies.' By VERBYTSKA, Polina. MHM Abteilung Museumsbetrieb/BMVg/BUND/DE. March 28, 2023.

[22] Ibidem, p.97.

objects as sources to enable them to function as witnesses.[23] This approach has influenced various historical museums in Germany and was successfully implemented in the new permanent exhibition opened in the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, and Reconciliation in Berlin in 2021.

The expulsion of Germans within the context of National Socialist rule and warfare was a subject of intense public and scientific attention. Consequently, numerous discussions arose regarding the focus of the Documentation Centre. The conceptual framework and the core aspects of the exhibition concept were developed by an academic advisory council in partnership with the Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, and Atelier Brückner design office in 2016.[24] The Foundation's director and historian, Gundula Bavendamm, explained the concept of the Centre:

> Following the Foundation's mission, we contextualise the Flight and Expulsion of the Germans in the European context. Therefore, we open up a broader panorama and outline a European history of forced migration. The Germans are one example among others.[25]

## Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation

The permanent exhibition is structured thematically and chronologically, spanning two floors and three sections. The first section focuses on the European perspective of forced migration, specifically during the twentieth century, while the second section contextualises it within the framework of World War II and Nazi policies of expansion, occupation and extermination.[26]

Aside from the exhibition's focus on the expulsion and displacement of Germans, it also includes the direct relationship with other expulsions, presenting in particular the extensive displacements in Eastern Central Europe from 1944 to 1948. However, this paper focuses on the most distinguishing characteristics of the exhibition section on "The Century of Refugees – Forced Migration in Europe" regarding new museology trends.

This exhibition is organised around thematic islands and presents a comprehensive overview of the causes, processes and consequences of forced migration from twentieth-century Europe up to the present day. Particular attention is given to documentation sources that explore issues related to terminology and discourse, such as the meanings of nation and nationalism, force and violence, and the experience of transitory camps.[27] It is worth mentioning that the exhibition delves into the role of international law in mitigating and penalising expulsion. The exhibition conveys its main messages through various exhibits such as photographs, testimonials and interviews with contemporary witnesses linked to refugees' experiences. It encourages visitors to think critically and engage with the topics' controversies.

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[23] THIEMEYER, Thomas. *Work, specimen, witness: How different perspectives on museum objects alter the way they are perceived and the values attributed to them*. In: *Museum and Society, 13*(3), 2015, p. 405.

[24] BAVENDAMM, Gundula, FRÖHLICH, Uta, KAMP, Andrea, MOLL, Andrea, WENSCH, Johanna & ZIEMER, Daniel. *Konzept für die Dauerausstellung*, Berlin: Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung, 2017.

[25] EGLAU, Victoria. *Der schwierige Umgang mit einem Trauma der Deutschen. [The Difficulty of Dealing with a Trauma of the Germans. Center Flight and Expulsion],* Zentrum Flucht und Vertreibung https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/zentrum-flucht-und-vertreibung-der-schwierige-umgang-mit-100.html, 2021.

[26] BAVENDAMM, Konzept für…, p. 4.

[27] Ibidem, p. 11.

The exhibition section on "Terminology and Controversy" explains the specific terms used throughout the display, such as expulsion, deportation, forcible resettlement, population exchange, evacuation, flight, ethnic cleansing and transfers. The exhibition makes a clear differentiation between ethnic cleansing and genocide, with the latter involving the intentional and organised extermination of groups based on their ethnicity, race, nationality or religion.[28] The overview installation highlights this differentiation through the portrayal of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust as examples.

Through case studies from different periods, the thematic island "Nation and Nationalism" explores this phenomenon, examining the context and manifestations of nationalism and the dynamics that have led to the marginalisation, expulsion and extermination of certain groups.[29] The case studies include the suspicion and deportation of citizens believed to be agents of foreign powers during World War I, the nationalism and propaganda of the Nazi regime and the nationalist historical politics during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Finally, the thematic island addresses the opinions and perspectives of visitors.

The exhibition's thematic island, "Force and Violence" focuses on the violent nature of flight, expulsion and forced resettlement and its impact on those affected. The exhibition showcases various contemporary witness accounts from different historical contexts to illustrate the various forms of violence. In particular, this exhibition section emphasises the asymmetry between the people perpetrating the violence and the victims.

**Fig. 1:** *The thematic island "Nation and Nationalism" at the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation.* Photo by P. Verbytska.

Refugee camps have become a symbol of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries' traumatic history. The exhibition's "Transit and Temporary Camps" section provides a historical and thematic overview of camps established for expellees and refugees, including internment, deportation, reception and transit camps.[30] It examines this phenomenon from various angles, providing insight into the experiences of those living in the camps and their challenges.

Displacement and expulsion represent major turning points in people's lives. In the subsection on "Loss and New Beginning" visitors can hear stories told by nine figures that present the real experiences of people with refugee backgrounds in today's Germany. Some were expelled from their homes in Central and Eastern Europe as ethnic Germans after 1945. Others fled

[28] BAVENDAMM, Konzept für…, p.14.

[29] Ibidem, p.15.

[30] Ibidem, p.15.

South Vietnam as boat people from 1979 onwards, or arrived as war refugees from the former Yugoslavia after 1991. Their reflections were recorded in a Berlin film studio and are presented interactively in the exhibition.

The "International law and human rights" thematic island emphasises the importance of international law in countering state violence and the interplay between political, moral and legal norms. This section raises essential questions about law and accountability, especially in modern wars and conflicts. It explores how expulsions can be prevented today, how people's perceptions of justice and humanity had evolved by the end of the twentieth century, and the relationship between individual rights and collective rights in the in the current century and the last.[31] Visitors can find additional sources in the Library and Testimony Archive's collection at the Centre,[32] which covers Germans' and other nations' forced migration experiences in Europe and the world.

In the foyer on the first floor, the vast space housing the spacious introductory section of the exhibition "The Century of Refugees – Forced Migration in Europe" is also used to communicate with visitors. When I visited the museum in November 2022, visitors were being encouraged to share their opinions concerning solidarity with Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees during the war.

## The Bundeswehr Military History Museum, Dresden

The Federal German Army Museum of Military History has, since 1990, been Germany's national museum of military history, run and funded by the Federal Ministry of Defence.[33] The Military and Historical Museum's new permanent exhibition concept, developed in 2011, focused on the cultural history and "the anthropological side of violence regarding war as one of the forms of violence".[34] Defining the museum's mission, its curator Gerhard Bauer stated:

> Our mission is to tell the history of German armed forces from the Middle Ages to our times in an international context, thereby constantly examining and analysing how humanity performed regarding power and violence. The use of force that exerts it and who suffers from it is not just limited to the military but common to humanity.[35]

The old building and the new extension of the Museum of Military History offer visitors two different approaches to military history.

> To be able to offer views on history/military history from different angles, we have two museums within one. There is an exhibition which is chronologically ordered, encompassing all periods between the Middle Ages and the twenty-first century, and then there is a parcours confined to Daniel Libeskind's modern building treating topics like

[31] BAVENDAMM, Konzept für…, p.16.
[32] Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation. *Konzept für Bibliothek & Zeitzeugenarchiv*. Berlin, 2018.
[33] BAUER, *Interview in…*
[34] PIEKEN, Gorch. Contents and Space: New Concept and New Building of the Militärhistorisches Museum of the Bundeswehr. In: *Museum and society*, vol. 10, 2012, No. 3, pp. 163-173.
[35] BAUER, *Interview in…*

"War and Memory", "Politics and the Use of Force" or "The Military and Technical Progress".[36]

**Fig. 2**: *The "Transit and Temporary Camps" section of the exhibition at the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation*. Photo by P. Verbytska.

The vertical structure within the extension provides a new context for thematic exhibitions, providing visitors with a deeper understanding of meaning, experience and historical phenomena.

A transnational approach and the principle of presenting multiple perspectives underpin the design of the permanent exhibition. As Bauer noted:

> The geographic position of Germany always ensured that German states never could and would act entirely on their own. German issues all too often became international issues. So, our topics must be regarded from at least two sides. This applies to military operations, civilians' wartime experiences, minorities, or gender issues. War and violence in all their shapes and their consequences, such as displacements or "ethnic cleansing", are represented as everyday experiences, not just as purely national ones.[37]

The thematic section of the permanent exhibition, "Dresden View", is an example of the presentation of the memory discourse of "victims" on the topic of "air war" drawing on new concepts in museology. In particular, it focuses on the destruction of Dresden and

[36] Ibidem.

[37] BAUER, *Interview in…*

two other European cities, Wielun and Rotterdam, during the Second World War.[38] The new extension forms a symbolic link with Dresden and its destruction in the Second World War in

**Fig. 3**: *The Library and Testimony Archive at the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation.* Photo by P. Verbytska.

**Fig. 4:** *Space for communication with visitors in the foyer on the first floor at the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation.*
Photo by P. Verbytska.

[38] PIEKEN, *The Bundeswehr…,* p. 55.

**Fig. 5:** *The old building and the new architectural extension of the Bundeswehr Museum of Military History, Dresden.* Photo by P. Verbytska.

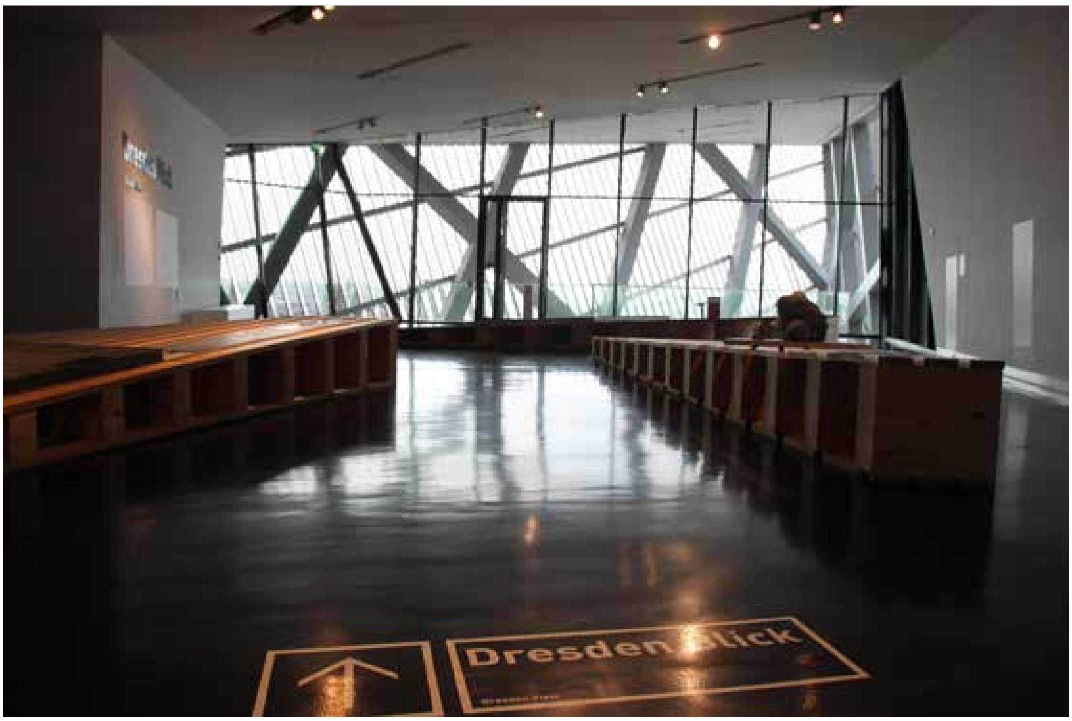


**Fig. 6**: *The thematic exhibition "Dresden View", Bundeswehr Museum of Military History, Dresden.* Photo by P. Verbytska.

February 1945. With an acute angle of 40.1 degrees, the wedge-shaped museum extension has the same shape as the destroyed area of the city.[39]


**Fig. 7**: *Paving stones from the town of Wielun in Poland devastated by the German attack on 1 September 1939*. Photo by P. Verbytska.

The exhibition starts with paving stones originating from the town of Wielun in Poland, which was devastated by the German attacks early on the morning of 1 September 1939. This attack by the Wehrmacht marked the beginning of World War II.

From one side, the terrace within the exhibition area at the wedge offers visitors a tremendous panoramic view of the modern Dresden. On the other side, visitors can examine a picture of Dresden taken from a German reconnaissance plane on 15 February 1945, showing the city's historical centre lying in ruins. Pavement slabs from Dresden's Johannstadt district which were struck by four incendiary bombs are embedded in the floor in front of the glass facade.

According to Dr Gerhard Bauer, a multi-perspective approach is one of the main principles of the exhibition:

> In some sections of the exhibition, we quote personal accounts of two people having experienced the same event but being of different ages, standing on opposing sides, or coming from different social backgrounds.[40]

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[39] PIEKEN, Gorch & ROGG, Matthias. *The Bundeswehr Museum of Military History: Exhibition guide.* Dresden: Sandstein Kommunikation 2012, p. 19.

[40] BAUER, *Interview in…*

The biographies and varied life experiences of Dresden's residents affected by these dramatic events are presented in this exhibition section. For example, it tells the story of a nine-year-old German boy called Manfred Pucks lost his whole family the night bombing raids on Dresden. It also presents the life of a Jewish girl, Henny Wolf, who was saved from the city's destruction as she had been deported that day to a concentration camp. After the war, Henny visited schools as a contemporary witness to discuss her wartime experiences.

The exhibition also features exhibits such as a photograph of Rotterdam, Netherlands, following its destruction in 1941, and fragments of the Orphan Girl sculpture created by Dutch sculptor Johannes de Graef in 1763 for the Rotterdam orphanage. The German Air Force's bombing of Rotterdam on 14 May 1940, destroyed the orphanage and the entire city


**Fig. 8**: *Fragments of the Orphan Girl sculpture from Rotterdam, Netherlands.* Photo by P. Verbytska.

centre. This section of the exhibition displays the biography of firefighter Jaap Timmers. The attack had a profound impact on his life, resulting in the loss of his younger brother and the destruction of his hometown. As a result, he refrained from speaking German and avoided traveling to nearby Germany for the remainder of his life.[41]

## Polish memory narrative controversies

After 1989 a reconceptualisation of the Polish memory of the war started to emphasise the heroism and sacrifice of the Polish people in the face of Nazi terror and Soviet aggression. Rather than hosting collections of historical artefacts, Polish museums began to function as "mediums for popularising history".[42]

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[41] PIEKEN, *The Bundeswehr…,* p. 192.
[42] WNUK & MAJEWSKI, *Between Heroization…*, p. 4.

The establishment of new museums in Poland is government-supported and influenced by politicians. The Museum of the Second World War vividly illustrates the struggle over interpreting Polish history in political and historical discourse. In particular, right-wing politicians, including the Law and Justice Party leaders, criticised the museum's concept developed by the team under the leadership of former director and famous historian Pawel Machcewicz, arguing that the exhibition focused too much on people's suffering and minimised Polish heroism. This phenomenon, described as a "Poland-centric perception" by Miroslav Karwat,[43] seeks to persuade others that Poland played the more significant role and that "Polish conditions were the most worthy of memorising universally".[44]

The battle over the interpretation of Polish history in the museum embodies conflicting perspectives.[45] As Pawel Machcewicz noted in the interview, this controversy became one of the most public issues in Poland, having a significant impact on what people think about history:

> We managed to create an alternative approach to history to this prevalent approach promoted by the government. More than 300,000 people visited the museum in the first six months after it opened.[46]

## Museum of the Second World War, Gdansk, Poland

This leading exhibition aims to show Europe and the world the wartime experiences of Poles and other nations of Central and Eastern Europe. These experiences were, in many respects, different from those of Western Europeans. The exhibition also emphasises that Poland fell victim to two sets of aggressors/ occupiers and that the effects of the Second

**Fig. 9:** *Museum of the Second World War, Gdansk, Poland.* Photo by P. Verbytska.

[43] KARWAT, Miroslav. W oparach polonocentryzmu. In: KOWALSKI, Piotr (ed). *Polacy o sobie. Współczesna autoreleksja: jednostka, społeczeństwo, historia*. Łomża: Stopka, 2005, p. 404.

[44] WAWRZYNSKI, Patryk. The Usage of Politics of Memory in Polish Foreign Policy: Present State and Perspectives. In: *Copernicus Journal of Political Studies*, 2012, No. 1, p. 68.

[45] SANDER, Martin. Hero worship at all costs? The dispute over the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk. In: *Témoigner. Entre histoire et mémoire. Revue pluridisciplinaire de la Fondation Auschwitz*, vol. 126, 2018, p. 124.

[46] ETGES, Andreas, ZÜNDORF, Irmgard & MACHCEWICZ, Pawel. History and politics and the politics of history: Poland and its museums of contemporary history. In: *International Public History, vol.* 1, 2018, No. 1, p. 6.

World War defined the course of Polish and European history until 1989.[47] The museum's building is divided into three zones reflecting the relationship between past, present and future. The past is presented underground, the present in the square around the building, and future in the tower, a dominant modern feature. Its above-ground part is shaped like a sloping prism with a triangular base.

The permanent exhibition combines a chronological and theme-based layout: the tour leads from a section on the origins of the war, through the sections showing the successive phases of the conflict, to its conclusion and a narrative devoted to its consequences. This is reflected in the division of the exhibition into three main blocks: "The Road to War", "The Horror of War" and "The Long Shadow of War".[48] Museum curator Zambrzycki underlined in the interview the unique mission of the museum in the context of European cultural memory:

> The Second World War Museum in Gdańsk is an institution that talks about the universal experience of war. We talk about war because – like all our society – we want to live in peace. In the leading exhibition, we show many phenomena that do not fit into mainstream narratives or are marginalised because they occur on the periphery. Here, we can mention the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the phenomenon of the Polish Underground State, or the Central European uprisings: the two Warsaw uprisings, as well as those in Prague and Slovakia. Hence, the exhibition is essential for Poland and the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe. The leading exhibition is a warning, a kind of memento.[49]

The permanent exhibition showcases the course and character of the conflict by highlighting the individual experiences of diverse nationalities and regions of Europe – not just famous personalities but

> [t]he lives of civilians and ordinary soldiers, the silent heroes of the war who had to endure occupation terror, bombing, starvation, and displacement. The Museum of the Second World War phenomenon lies precisely in this: in showing the everyday life of ordinary people – like most of us.[50]

The most controversial element of the museum narrative regarding West and East European cultures of memory is the correlation between Nazism, communism, and the origins of Soviet totalitarianism. This theme passes through different parts of the exhibition. The exhibition consists of original artefacts, reconstructions, iconographic materials, sound and film recordings, and multimedia installations to evoke emotions from visitors. Immersive aspects of the permanent exhibition implemented throughout the museum create an engaging visitor experience. The visual layout of the permanent exhibition highlights the main messages and impacts visitors' perception at the emotional level.

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[47] WNUK, Rafal, MACHCEWICZ, Pawel, GALKA-OLEJKO, Oliwia, JASINSKI, Łukasz & DANILUK, Jan. *Muzeum II Wojny Światowej: katalog wystawy głównej*. Gdansk: Muzeum II Wojny Światowej, 2016.

[48] Ibidem.

[49] ZAMBRZYCKI, Marek. 'Interview in framework of the research project: Cultural Heritage in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies.' By VERBYTSKA, Polina. Curator/chief exhibition Officer of the Exhibition Department of the World War II Museum in Gdansk, March 7, 2023.

[50] ZAMBRZYCKI, Marek. 'Interview in framework...

For instance, in the first section of the permanent exhibition, "The Birth and Expansion of Totalitarianism", the main thread of the narrative is devoted to the forces striving to overthrow the existing order: Nazism, fascism, communism and Japanese imperialism. This axis shows totalitarian movements and systems as factors brutalising European politics and consciousness, thus paving the way to World War II and then leading it consciously in a criminal direction, in violation of international law and demonstrating complete contempt for human beings.[51]

The exhibition highlights the contrast between the idealised depiction of the world presented by the official propaganda of the three European totalitarian regimes and the harsh realities of repression, ruthless rule, collectivisation and the Great Famine of the 1930s in Ukraine. This contrast aims to reveal the darker sides of totalitarian regimes and their impact on society. Additionally, the exhibition explains the role of totalitarian ideologies in instigating the Second World War. The exhibition presents the Soviet Union as a communist state of mass terror. This narrative is illustrated by exhibits in the form of an original hand-mill from a village in Ukraine; a Nagan revolver – part of the equipment of the Red Army and Soviet security organs in the interwar period, and thus symbolising terror; and sculptures of Lenin and Stalin documenting the cult of the individual.

**Fig. 10:** *Corridor to the section on "Collusion between Hitler and Stalin" at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk, Poland.* Photo by P. Verbytska.

Visitors traverse a narrow corridor lined with historical flags to access the exhibit on the "Collusion between Hitler and Stalin". On one side, Nazi flags adorned with the swastika are displayed, while on the opposite side, red flags symbolising the USSR with the hammer and sickle accompany the path. These flags include original standards from both nations, carefully secured within frames. A significant point of this section involves the presentation of replicas showcasing the secret agreement between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union, signed on 23 August 1939. The documents are showcased in German and Russian languages, featuring the signatures of Ribbentrop and Molotov.

The narrative of the exhibition section called "Attack from the East" concerns the Soviet aggression against Poland and its immediate consequences. It is represented by a massive curtain of vertical stripes separating the space, on which a film is projected showing the Red Army entering the territory of the Republic of Poland and imposing the Stalinist regime. On the other side of this curtain, symbolising the severing of the

[51] *Museum of the Second World War: Regulamin konkursu na opracowanie projektu ekspozycji Muzeum II Wojny Światowej*, accessed April 20, 2023, https://docplayer.pl/18292848-Regulamin-konkursu-na-opracowanie-projektu-ekspozycji-muzeum-ii-wojny-swiatowej.html.

eastern part of Poland seized by the invaders, visitors encounter a number objects: a document describing the persecution of Polishness by the Soviets and the cooperation with the occupier by some national minorities in the territories seized by the USSR; the banner of the Polish 6th Heavy Artillery Regiment, which hid in September 1939 in Lviv, which was later transported to the Recovered Territories in 1945; a propaganda poster from the Soviet daily *Pravda*; and a photograph of Red Army troops knocking over Polish border markers in September 1939. One interesting object is a border marker in the form of a stone tablet from the Polish–Soviet frontier (1921–1939) on the river Zbrucz in 2008. The Zbruch ran along part of the pre-war Polish–Soviet border. In the autumn of 1939, the new Soviet administration purged the lands it occupied of the Polish state and national symbols. Some of the border tablets were thrown into the Zbruch.

The central element of the narrative design of the section on the "Partition of Poland" is a table with a red line and the names of cities on both sides of the border. The table corresponds to a simplified map separated by a graphically emphasised demarcation line symbolising the partition of Poland by both invaders. A video showing a joint parade of the Red Army and the Wehrmacht and photographs showing the demarcation of the German–Soviet border, as well as two exhibits – a fragment of barbed wire and a Polish border board with an eagle which the invaders threw into the Zbrucz River after 17 September 1939 – bear similar messages from the new border.

The space dedicated to "Annexation of countries in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939–1940" consists of two parts. The first refers to the design of the so-called red corners, quasi-religious propaganda performances created in virtually every public institution and workplace under Soviet occupation. Objects exhibited in this section illustrate the totalitarian regime policy implemented in places annexed to the Soviet Union in 1939 and 1940, including territories from Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as two regions of Romania (Bessarabia and Bukovina), demonstrating the reign of terror against leadership elites and "class enemies", mass deportations and ubiquitous communist propaganda. For example, there is a 1941 communist

**Fig. 11:** *Section on "Holocaust" at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk, Poland.* Photo by P. Verbytska**.**

propaganda poster aimed at Latvians stating that "Everyone must vote on January 12 1941 to elect the proletariat's best representatives"; a Soviet propaganda poster featuring Stalin which glorifies Soviet military power; photos of the exhumation of bodies of Estonian victims of Soviet occupation in Troi Forest on the outskirts of Tallinn, 1941; and documents detailing investigations by the Soviet secret service (1939–1940).

The design of the section devoted to the terror of occupation regimes opens with a monumental inscription "TERROR". Visitors must walk between these letters to access the room, which displays a cattle car for a train that was used during the war to transport people. The Soviet regime used such wagons to deport Polish citizens and its own people to gulags in the east, while the Germans used them to transport people displaced from lands incorporated into the Reich, including forced labourers, prisoners sent to concentration camps, and Jews to sent to extermination centres. This space is the starting point for exploring the subsequent


**Fig. 12**: *Section on "Terror" at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk, Poland.*
Photo by P. Verbytska.

spaces of the sections on "Terror" and "Holocaust". The section illustrates how repression was an integral part of occupation in all conquered countries – the differences lay only in the type and scale.[52]

Under the exhibition's transnational approach, the phenomena and events of the war are reflected through regional, national, European and global prisms. In particular, the exhibition

[52] Museum of the Second World War..., p.105.

emphasises that World War II began in Gdańsk and that the city was one of the reasons for its outbreak.

The section entitled “After the War” displays a demolished street scene featuring a Soviet T-34 tank amidst the rubble. It symbolises the Red Army’s liberation of Poland from German occupation but also serves as a reminder of the Soviet’s subsequent domination in Poland and other Eastern European countries. Display cases throughout the scene illustrate the scale of the losses during the war, with particular attention to the dead, representing a panorama of different countries of Europe and the world. This section shows that World War II claimed tens of millions of lives and reduced much of Europe and Asia to rubble.

**Fig. 13:** *Section entitled “After the war” at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk, Poland.* Photo by P. Verbytska

## Discussion

Regarding the consequences of analysis, the museum exhibitions not only display innovative trends but also demonstrate the impact of cultural memory on their narratives. Museums are not neutral when it comes to the established social and political constructs; indeed, they continue to maintain them[53] and their narratives result from the “authorised heritage discourse”.[54]

In exhibitions about the Second World War, a noticeable conflict exists between national histories and identities versus global or universal perspectives, evident in almost all countries.[55] Considering the political constellations in which the museum exhibitions analysed here were developed, it is unsurprising that the tension between national, regional and global perspectives on history and European cultural memory challenges the contemporary museum landscape. This tendency is particularly significant for Poland and Germany, where the Second World War remains a critical touchstone in discussions regarding national identity and historical interpretation following 1989. From this perspective, the most contentious aspects of the museum narrative on the culture of memory in West and East Europe pertain to the connection made between Nazism and communism and the characterisation of the Soviet totalitarian regime.

The exhibition at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk vividly represents the Eastern European perspective in commemorating the war. At the same time, in the last decade, the museum has become a site of conflict between politicians and historians due to the challenge of balancing national identity and a global perspective on history in the exhibition.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that some changes were introduced to the permanent exhibition at the Museum of the Second World War in response to criticisms from right-

[53] HODSDON, Laura. Visitors’ discursive responses to hegemonic and alternative museum narratives: a case study of Le Modèle Noir. In: *Critical Discourse Studies*, vol. 19, 2022, No. 4, p. 402.
[54] SMITH, Laurajane. *Uses of heritage.* Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2006, p. 29.
[55] JAEGER, *The Second…,* p.17.

wing politicians in October 2017. One of the modifications involved removing videos and photographs from the last section of the exhibition. The original film depicted wars, conflicts, and violence after World War II, including scenes from the war in Syria, the conflict in Ukraine, and refugees fleeing these conflict zones. These scenes were no longer available for public viewing. Instead, a four-minute cartoon animation called "Unconquered", produced by the Institute of National Remembrance, was shown in its place.[56] The animation resembles a computer game and portrays Poland's heroic struggle for independence from 1939 to 1989.

In this context, the responsibility of museum exhibition curators has increased significantly in recent years, due to the interference of memory politics in museum practice. This raises a number of questions concerning the legal protection of exhibition concepts and their authors' rights.[57]

## Conclusions

Despite Poland's and Germany's different historical experiences and memory cultures, their museum landscapes share common approaches and practices that employ innovative ways of narrating the Second World War in permanent exhibitions. There has been a gradual change as museums strive to transcend national boundaries and escape the previously dominant national narratives of victimhood and perpetration towards a more complex and multifaceted approach to remembering the war.

Despite political influence on cultural institutions introducing new museological trends into museum practice, the memory of the Second World War is gradually being shaped by a broader spectrum of voices and perspectives. This provides an opportunity for a more diverse and multifaceted narration of the war, including a more varied range of historical, social and cultural perspectives. It also recognises museums' assets to serve as effective cultural media for a peaceful future, fostering democratic social transformation.

The representation of war in Berlin's Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation is an example of the integration of pluralistic perspectives into an exhibition narrative of forced migration from the twentieth century to the present. The museum exhibition is based on historical research and oral testimonies, acknowledging its significant role as a bearer of cultural memory.[58] In the exhibition, particular attention is given to documentation sources that explore issues related to terminology and discourse. The Bundeswehr Military History Museum in Dresden's new permanent exhibition focuses on the cultural history and the anthropological side of the violence of war in the context of the memory discourse and new museological concepts. The narrative presented at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk emphasises a transnational approach to displaying the events and occurrences that unfolded during the war in Poland and throughout Europe and the world, while representing an Eastern European perspective on those events.

The most distinguishing features concern the new museological approaches implemented in these exhibitions: anthropologising the exhibition narrative; presenting the experience of violence and suffering; refusing follow the traditional model of heroes and victims; integrating

[56] ETGES, ZÜNDORF & MACHCEWICZ, *History and…,* p. 4.

[57] JAGIELSKA-BURDUK, Alicja & JAKUBOWSKI, Andrzej. 'Narrative Museums' and Curators' Rights: The Protection of a Museum Exhibition and Its Scenario under Polish Law. In: *Santander Art and Culture Law Review*, vol. 6, 2020, No. 2, p. 171.

[58] ASSMANN, Aleida. *Geschichte im Gedächtnis: Von der individuellen Erfahrung zur öffentlichen Inszenierung,* Vol. 6. Munich: CH Beck, 2007, p. 154.

multiple narratives and pluralistic perspectives; balancing national, regional, and transnational perspectives; introducing new themes (occupation, persecution, forced migration); and addressing present-day issues and challenges.

Based on personal communication with museum curators, it is worth underlining museums' role in engaging with contemporary social and political issues, such as military conflict, violence, forced migration and human rights. As cultural institutions, these museums have addressed the ongoing wars in Syria and Ukraine and presented them meaningfully and engagingly. By providing visitors with a deeper understanding of these conflicts, museums play a crucial role in promoting empathy and awareness.

The narratives they present employ immersive spaces, interactive displays and personal testimonies, encouraging visitors to reflect critically on the circumstances of war and the implications for contemporary society.

The museums introduced changes in how visitors communicate with the presented stories and created opportunities to transform people's experiences, encouraging critical narrative analysis. Such goals can be achieved through engaging visitors with the exhibition on both a cognitive and an emotional level, using a model of communication that enables the visitors to exchange ideas and information, facilitating communication between members of the public, and organising the community engagement activities within and beyond the exhibition space. Another key approach is to focus on youth, teaching them to solve problems by looking for non-violent solutions.

Integrating new museological approaches into their permanent exhibitions has effectively revitalised these museums, establishing an environment for communication, learning and conversation on the theme of the past and contemporary armed conflicts. International experience of new museological practice in war museums in Europe is crucial in the case of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Finding meaningful ways to commemorate and communicate the legacy of war through museum exhibitions contributes towards a peaceful future. Such efforts provide support to societies affected by war.

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# The concept of small museums from an international and local perspective: starting points for further research in the Czech Republic[1]

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*The concept of small museums from an international and local perspective: starting points for further research in the Czech Republic*
The study deals with the question, what is a small museum and what are its specifics compared to other museums. Based on available foreign and local sources, it summarizes the current state of research which is largely focused on searching for the consensus on how to clearly define this type of museums. The study is based on the published results of key research in the past twenty years, it outlines selected approaches to the characteristics of a small museum and summarizes its typical features. Analogously, it looks at the state of research in the Czech museum sphere, where the topic of small museums has been repeatedly opened, examined and debated from different perspectives of professional activities and professions in a small museum. The study raises the question of how to effectively build on this state of research and develop it further within the Czech Republic, where this type of museums seems to be insufficiently mapped so far.

Keywords: small museum; micromuseum; museology; museum pedagogy; museum education; museum exhibitions

## Introduction

In the recent period, the long and heatedly debated revision of the international museum definition was successfully completed within the framework of the ICOM organization, and its updated version was adopted at the 2022 general conference in Prague. Debates over its form logically reflected diverse views and different concepts of how to define a museum at the level of individual regions and states. Along with these discussions, some other related issues have been reopened. Space for them was offered, for example, in the monothematic issue 2022/1 of the Czech periodical *Museologica Brunensia*, dedicated to different regional specifics and views on the optimal form of the international museum definition and future perspectives. For all of them, we can name, for example, the concept of the so-called **metamuseum**, which

[1] The article is a result of the project: Ministry of Education, youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, AKTION Czech Republic – Austria 96p7 „Open Round Table of Museology II."

Fernando Echarri[2] introduced in his study as the fifth generation of museums, an institution that is interdisciplinary, flexible, adaptable, open, independent, etc., capable of effectively reflecting both individual challenges and challenges in society as a whole and satisfying the needs and expectations of visitors. The updated museum definition can thus also be an impulse to considerations about whether the definition of sub-terms should be revised in a similar way, including the concept of specific types of museums, among which we can also include **small museums**.

The exhibition and education practice of museums is generally influenced not only by the professional focus of the institution and the specialization of its collections, but in the same fundamental manner also by the extent of these collections and the premises in which they are presented to the public, the number of employees the museum has and the environment in which the museum operates. Educational activity in a small museum has its own specifics and cannot simply be understood as a reduced form of the pedagogical activity of larger museums. Sometimes it is small museums that benefit from closer ties with their audience, implement the innovations in education more dynamically and can inspire other museums in a number of ways.

Long-term ongoing debates are held about the question of how to satisfactorily and unambiguously define a small museum, which makes museological research on this topic quite difficult. In addition to the number of employees, the basic criteria by which small museums are usually defined include the founder, position within the museum network, number of collection items, legal form, and in some cases even the annual budget. In a global perspective, however, there is no consensus on how to set up specific values in a quantitative way for the individual criteria mentioned (especially regarding the number of employees, collection items, or the budget). On the contrary, the researchers are united in determining one of the fundamental conditions defining a small museum, namely at least a certain degree of professionalization of the given museum.

In research into their daily practice, small museums are usually associated with phenomena such as accumulation of functions and time burden. The importance or even inevitability of cooperation with other organizations and involvement of volunteers in the activities of the museum is emphasized. Attention is also drawn to the direct impact on the prestige of the museum and its staff, since a small museum – at least in smaller towns – is more "within reach" for its audience. If using its potential, it can be a place fostering the development of personal ties and becomes an integral part of the life of the local community. The Czech musealist Jiří Žalman says about small museums: "*Small museums are definitely not less important museums. They have quality collections, they have their audience and they have options to reach the audience. It is just a matter of how to use these possibilities*."[3]

The study therefore focuses on the analysis of what is understood under the term small museum in an international and local context, using the example of museums in the Czech Republic. This basic analysis in a number of cases indicates the ties of small museums to

[2] ECHARRI, Fernando. The metamuseum as the future of the museum institution? In: *Museologica Brunensia* [online]. 2022, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 4–9 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/_flysystem/fedora/pdf/MuseologicaBrunensia_2022_1_05.pdf>.

[3] ŽALMAN, Jiří. Malá muzea (přednáška na semináři v Plzni). In: *Věstník AMG* [online]. 2007, no. 2, p. 9 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/UserFiles/file/vestnik%20AMG/Vestnik_AMG_2_07.pdf>.

the audience as well as the prerequisites for their presentation and education activities, which should be investigated in more detail in the future.

## Which museum is "small"? Reflection on selected foreign research studies

The issues and specifics of small museums have been paid attention to for a relatively long time in museological literature, research and in the museum practice. However, most attention has been paid to this topic in the past twenty years. This is particularly related to the efforts to define a small museum and to the existence of professional associations that have been created for this type of facilities – for example, the *Small Museum Association*[4] or the *Association of Independent Museums*.[5] Thanks to them, the employees of these institutions can associate and use a platform for mutual support and sharing of experience. Individual authors or representatives of professional organizations in the museum sphere have also tried to define small museums at various extent and depth and reveal the current state of common practice. The published conclusions can thus provide the basic data for a deeper understanding and serve with their methodology and research conclusions for possible comparison with local research studies.

If we investigate the issue of small museums internationally and in different regional contexts, we can base ourselves on the extensive survey conducted by the *American Association for State and Local History* (AASLH). Within this association, there is a specialized section named *Small Museums Committee*.[6] This section tried to reach 6,500 respondents from the USA in its own survey from 2007,[7] and from the returned 455 responses they created a certain "working" definition of a small museum. This was intended to serve as a reference point for the basic distinction between small and other museums. The top three criteria for identifying a small museum generated within the survey include an annual budget of less than $250,000, the fact that they operate with a small staff with multiple responsibilities, and that they employ volunteers to perform key staff functions. These basic criteria are subsequently supplemented by other more precise criteria from other thematic sources outside the conducted survey, namely the spatial dimensions of the museum, the size and scope of the museum's collections, etc. According to data provided by the AASLH, most museums in the USA are considered small, including history museums, art museums, various historical monuments and buildings as well as "general" museums, referred to in Czech terminology as regional or national history museums, which mainly have mixed collections. Aware of the complexity of distinguishing in common museum practice, which museum is small and which is not, AASLH ultimately comes to the following key and statement: "*If you think you are a small museum, then you are a small museum.*"

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[4] *SMA Small Museum Association* [online]. [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://smallmuseum.org/>.
[5] *Association of Independent Museums* [online]. [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://aim-museums.co.uk/>. On the importance of mapping museum institutions and defining independent museums, see also e.g. CANDLIN, Fiona. *Micromuseology: an analysis of small independent museums*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016, pp. 9–10; CANDLIN, Fiona. Surveying museums: What's in and what's out? In: *Mapping Museums Lab* [online]. 13 November 2017 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <http://blogs.bbk.ac.uk/mapping-museums/2017/11/13/surveying-museums-whats-whats/>.
[6] Small Museums. In: *AASLH American Association for State and Local History* [online]. [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://aaslh.org/communities/smallmuseums/>.
[7] What is the definition of a small museum? Survey Results. In: *AASLH – Small Museums Committee* [online]. Atlanta, 2007 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <http://download.aaslh.org/small+museums/Small+Museum+Survey+Results.pdf>.

The Canadian researcher Justine Lyn[8] also formulates her observations from practice when identifying the difference between the work at a small museum and the situation in large museums. When comparing large and small museums, she perceives three strong distinguishing features, which in her opinion are:

- departmentalisation: individual departments for specific museum activities do not overlap much in a large museum, while in a small museum, in contrast, you have to be a "jack-of-all-trades";[9]
- education: in small museums, interdisciplinarity is very common – that is, education is more practical and less specific, for a museum educator it is absolutely common to switch from one topic or discipline to another in individual projects (exhibitions, educational programmes);
- scope and extent of the collection: smaller museums are often community museums – that is, they collect local history and relate to the place of their activity rather than to general history, which is, on the contrary, typical of large museums.

Significant contribution to the issue of research and support for the further development of small museums was also made by the *American Alliance of Museums* (AAM),[10] which co-published the six-volume edition of the *Small Museum Toolkit* (2011), compiled by the editorial duo of Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko and Stacy Klingler.[11] In individual volumes, it deals methodically with individual prominent spheres of activity in the context of small museums, such as governance, financial management, human resources, relations with the audience, interpretation, and administration of small museums. The survey (2016), which is worth mentioning in connection with AAM, was carried out as a follow-up to the *Small Museum Accreditation Academy* project. It was aimed at connecting the education of the concerned staff of small museums and the examination of the conditions of their working in practice. Participants were offered eight educational modules in the form of webinars. According to the team of authors, the project in its intended form did not work very well and had to be modified due to the extreme workload of its participants. Based on this, Alison Titman as one of the authors adds one more statement about small museums, namely that "*there is little time in small museums*".[12]

The British author Fiona Candlin brings an incomparably deeper empirical insight into the issue under review in the past decade. Since she published the results of her research in the

[8] LYN, Justine. The Differences Between Small and Large Museums. In: *University of Toronto, Mississauga* [online]. [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://sites.utm.utoronto.ca/historyinternships/blog/03162020-2304/differences-between-small-and-large-museums>.

[9] Some of the aspects encountered in a small museum, e.g. the necessity of being prepared to work on a wide range of different activities, are also demonstrated by examples of reflective practice, e.g. in an article by Lindsey Steward. See, STEWARD, Lindsey. Reaction: The Value of Small Museums. In: *Medium* [online]. [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://medium.com/@steward.lindsey/reaction-the-value-of-small-museums-fbeac606e678>.

[10] Cf. Operating practices of small museums. In: *RelicRecord* [online]. [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://relicrecord.com/blog/operating-practices-of-small-museums/>.

[11] Individual volumes of the publication deal with the following professional activities of small museums: 1) Leadership, Mission, and Governance, 2) Financial Resource Development and Management, 3) Organizational Management, 4) Reaching and Responding to the Audience, 5) Interpretation: Education, Programs, and Exhibits, 6) Stewardship: Collections and Historic Preservation. For more details, see CATLIN-LEGUTKO, Cinnamon, KLINGLER, Stacy (eds.). *Small Museum Toolkit*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2011.

[12] TITMAN, Alison. What Small Museums Need (& Don't). In: *American Alliance of Museums* [online]. 20 June 2018 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.aam-us.org/2018/06/20/what-small-museums-need-dont/>.

form of a comprehensive monograph, we can look at this issue in much more detail, including a methodological grasp of this research and a more profound interpretation of the data and their placement in a wider context.[13] This remarkable work and its results are worth to be paid more attention.

In her publication, she confirms that there is no terminological uniformity and agreement on what to consider a small museum, let alone what kind of museum is "mid-sized" or "large". Even when defining a small museum according to the number of paid employees,[14] she compares the different opinions of individual researchers or professional organizations. According to them, a small museum has fewer than ten (Kenneth Hudson), or fifteen or fewer employees, and a **very small museum** has only one or two employees (Museum Association, UK). Alternatively, another approach suggests that only the museums which employ solely volunteers should be considered small museums (Arminta Neal). For Fiona Candlin, small museums combine low incomes, a small number of employees and relatively limited spatial capacity.[15] Based on her qualitative survey from 2015, she investigated approximately 60 small museums, located in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, for which she uses the specific term **micromuseum**. She formulated this term as a reaction to the discussion on the concept of **mini-museums** (Raphael Samuel) and also as an allusion to the limited spatial possibilities they usually have.[16]

When defining her research focus, she bases herself on the situation in the 1970s and 1980s, when not only in the United Kingdom, but in Europe and North America as a whole, there was a trend of numerous newly emerging "museum-like" organizations that had some common features. They were considered small in the sense that they had less than ten paid employees, were independent organizations, and were interested in topics or fields that did not fall within the area of interest of academic disciplines. Their name usually included the word 'museum', although their concept showed a number of differences from traditional museums. Fiona Candlin therefore focused her attention on investigating this specific phenomenon – small independent museums with one object of activity (monothematic museums),[17] which she named micromuseums.[18] The decision to investigate these organizations was supported not only by the fact that these museums have greatly transformed the existing "museum sector", but also that they have so far attracted very little attention from the scientific community. The author states that if researchers have already paid attention to this cultural phenomenon, then it was rather in connection with the search for the causes of the growing number of such smaller museums, no

[13] CANDLIN, *Micromuseology: an analysis…*

[14] In this way, we could further investigate the diverse approaches of researchers to other criteria on the basis of which small museums can be defined, namely according to the size of the audience (i.e. the annual visitor numbers), the amount of income (the annual budget of the organization), spatial dimensions (e.g. the total area in m$^2$ available to the museum), and the extent of the collections (total number of collection items).

[15] Ibidem, p. 6.

[16] Ibidem, p. 12.

[17] Thus, she does not include museums oriented to local history in her survey – these museums are "general" and not narrowly focused on one specific subject or field of human activity. Also not included were museums established by corporations, which are very often quite well funded and professionally managed and usually in practice also adhere to normal standards of museum work. Ibidem, p. 13.

[18] Micromuseums are defined by Fiona Candlin as follows: "*collections that are variously run by trusts, businesses, special interest groups, and private individuals, and are open to the public; that concentrate on types of objects, themes, or individuals, that fall outside of the traditional academic compass, occupy a low level in the hierarchy of traditional academic classificatory tables, or that take a non-scholarly approach to subjects that could be encompassed by academe; and finally, are small insofar as they have relatively low visitor numbers and / or modest incomes and/ or occupy a physically limited space*." Ibidem, p. 12.

matter if some researchers considered them a product of Thatcher's policy, characterized them as a manifestation of cultural stagnation or as a result of growing historical awareness among people. However, no one has investigated these individual organizations in more depth,[19] although such a shift of research interest from dominant to marginalized organizations could better show the heterogeneity of museums and reassess the current museological debates.[20]

Due to the location of the survey, it was necessary for the author to define these museums as "independent", which is also interpreted in different ways – for example, as museums that are not directly managed by the state or territorial administrative units. In the 1980s, the *Museums and Galleries Commission on Independent Museums* (UK) defined a typology of **independent museums** (the first three classes included large organizations with professional staff and museums established by local authorities, the other three types were small, community museums run on an amateur basis, then corporate museums, operated by companies in the framework of public relations, and finally privately owned museums). Regardless of size, history or form of governance, this classification system assumed an administrative establishment independent from public authorities.[21] Since the 1990s, the *Museums Association* has revised the museum definition, introducing the legal term "hold in trust". It implies that the museum is not the owner of the collection, but is responsible to the public for its management – that is, the name museum began to be associated with public ownership and a certain form of management and long-term protection of the collections. This new definition thus meant that museums no longer included entities directly owned by individuals, families or "for-profit" companies, and the category of independence was attributed only to those organizations that had the status of a charitable or some other corresponding organization. Later, some publications introduced the additional designation of "private" or "business" museums. So, strictly speaking, micromuseums, at least at the time of the author's survey, were not among the officially recognized museums, and for this case the useful term **museum-like organization**[22] appears in the professional literature. For this reason, many micromuseums may be negatively labelled as poor imitations of traditional museums, although many of them may actually carry out all professional museum activities, ranging from collection, preservation, thesauration and interpretation to various forms of presentation of collection items. This anabasis of gradual specification of which facility is or is not officially a museum, and how to treat it normatively, is undoubtedly inspiring for the Czech museum environment. Here, specifically these burning questions have already been discussed for several years and a debate is held about a plan to prepare the process of registration and accreditation of museums according to clearly set criteria, and the inclusion of this goal in the medium-term concept of museum development pursued by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

Along with the effort to define the micromuseum, Fiona Candlin gradually refined the methodology of her research and also some criteria, filtering the selection of adequate institutions for her survey sample. A critical analysis of professional practice turned out to be completely useless for her, because many micromuseums do not reach even the most basic standards of care for the collections and for exhibition or education activities. Therefore, the

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[19] In the opening chapter of the book, the author also reflects on why other researchers before her did not focus on the topic of micromuseums and what difficulties and specific obstacles such research entails, from definition and methodology through to practical aspects, including logistic problems.

[20] CANDLIN, *Micromuseology: an analysis*…, pp. 1–5.

[21] Ibidem, p. 9.

[22] Ibidem, pp. 9–10.

author adapted her research design and the methods and techniques used to the fact that micromuseums cannot be investigated using the common methodological procedures. She focused on identifying the specific characteristics of micromuseums.[23] In order to comply with the requirement of the institution's openness towards the public, as a fulfilment of one of the typical features of a micromuseum, the author understands it as the accessibility of micromuseums to "strangers", i.e. not only to friends and acquaintances. And at the same time, she adds the condition of at least a certain degree of publicity, i.e. that the micromuseum makes its existence known (e.g. by a notice board in front of the building, leaflets, websites – ideally through all these forms).[24]

The survey has yielded a number of very interesting findings reflecting the conditions of practice, which are undoubtedly valid not only in the region in question. The investigated micromuseums are not only located in the town centres and smaller municipalities, but more often on the outskirts or in their vicinity, so they are not easily accessible by public transport. They also have poorly designed or even non-existent websites as well as limited opening hours (e.g. they are only accessible during the summer holidays, only on certain days of the week and specific opening hours, or they are only open by prior arrangement by telephone).

Another identified feature of micromuseums is a non-standard relationship to academic disciplines. They deal with specific topics that may or may not be the subject of interest of some of the current academic disciplines. Also, micromuseums can take a scientific approach to their collection holdings, but according to the author's findings, this is generally not the case.[25]

Since the operating costs are largely provided outside of state funding, micromuseums are mainly dependent on income from the sale of tickets or small goods (souvenirs). Considering their usual low attendance, this means that they do not generate significant income and therefore have to manage their operation on a low budget. The practical impact of this situation is, for example, that showcases or display boards and labels are home-made or that various temporary devices are used. Also, they usually cannot afford to hire professionals. They may therefore lack human capacities, professional competences, finances or interest in following various regulations, recommendations and professional standards (safety, hygiene, instructions establishing optimal conditions for storing and exhibiting collection items, developing interpretation strategies, etc.).

In the case of micromuseums, staff can include owners, paid employees as well as unpaid family members and volunteers, practically anyone of whom can be a curator at the same time.

[23] The research data included lengthy field notes and extensive photo documentation of the micromuseums. Thus, one of the main methods used was observation. Attention was paid to the external (surrounding landscape, neighbouring buildings) and internal environment (entrance hall, other interior spaces, way of marking), scope of micromuseums, location of collections, and forms of display (museum showcases, arrangement of exhibited objects, lighting). Observing and interviewing the micromuseum staff also proved essential. It has explored what is the role of employees in museums and how their presence contributes to promoting attendance. The analysed data also comprised, for example, visitor books, online resources or museum guides. CANDLIN, *Micromuseology: an analysis…*, pp. 14–15, 17.

[24] The current trend emphasizes the need for museums to be inclusive, open to the public in all its diversity, respecting the principle of equal opportunities for all and also listening to the opinions of communities. At the same time, however, the Museums Association does not recognize the existence of informally operated facilities, thus reserving the desired participation only for authorized environment (i.e. officially recognized museums). This is in direct contradiction to the principle of democratisation, which should, on the contrary, bring openness and recognition to other types of museums as well. Ibidem, p. 11.

[25] Ibidem, p. 6 et seq.

A micromuseum is run by a few people, very often for little or no financial reward. Curators from micromuseums are mostly unable to improve their current practices and – if they do not have professional competences – it seems practically pointless to try to do so at all. We can hardly think of micromuseums as examples of good practice. What can significantly damage their position in the eyes of the general public is the labelling of micromuseum representatives (founders, curators) or collections by journalists as crazy, eccentric or freaky. On the other hand, the great advantage of micromuseums in relation to visitors is that the chance to meet specific employees and curators here in person is significantly higher than at large museums. Micromuseum owners often ask visitors about the reason for their visit, and this identity of the visitor then logically influences the course of the visit; these museums are often looking for enthusiasts to collaborate with. A visit to the micromuseum also takes place directly depending on individual employees – visitors may or may not be greeted upon arrival, shown around the museum or left for an individual tour. The contact with curators or other representatives of the micromuseum thus can be intense or, on the contrary, none at all.[26] Among the special features of micromuseums is a somewhat different form of interaction with the public than is customary in other types of museums. Micromuseums tend to be more open to professional dialogue with visitors and equal, two-way communication, even on the basis of collegiality and mutual sharing of expertise. The visitor may be the one who may know some information that the curators of micromuseums do not have, and thus contribute to the interpretation of some collection items (e.g. identification of people in photographs).[27]

Another essential area in the characterization of micromuseums is their exhibition activity, or micromuseum permanent exhibitions. We meet here with both basic forms of display, namely in situ and in context, sometimes even in the same place. There are therefore both mimetic presentations, using "period rooms", installations of arranged objects in a reconstructed environment, etc., as well as the concept of exhibiting according to certain classification schemes, based on the natural scientific or technological systemization, or on historical ties. Exhibits can also be contextualised using more extensive captions, audio commentary or textual materials (catalogues, brochures). On the other hand, in some micromuseums, the exhibiting has no specific structure, and we usually do not even come across the modernist style of these displays. Compared to other types of museums, micromuseums are significantly less selective in what they exhibit – in other words, they tend to include (almost) their entire collection holdings in their permanent exhibitions. Micromuseum curators may deliberately hide valuable collection items, usually out of concern for their safety. The number of exhibits can thus make it difficult to perceive the chronological timeline, or the internal structuring of the thematic arrangement. This can give the visitor the impression of overfilling, absence of differentiation, it can be frustrating and making orientation difficult, all the more so if there are no introductory texts or the curator does not attend to the visitor. Micromuseums that are run by individuals or families usually bear the imprint of these people so strongly that the theme of their museum is usually presented from their own perspective – these museums are from someone, from somewhere, about something, and that is what makes them so different. The functioning of micromuseums is also significantly determined by the fact of whether at all and

[26] CANDLIN, *Micromuseology: an analysis*…, pp. 13–16, 157.
[27] Ibidem, p. 168.

to what extent they are connected to the place where they operate, or to a group of people, the local community. This distinguishes them greatly from museums that do not have these ties.[28]

Even though the micromuseums analysed are a specific type of facilities and cannot be understood as synonymous with the definition of small museums, many of the drawn conclusions seem to be valid or very close to the situation of small museums. Thanks to this, it is possible to verify the monitored criteria also at small museums and compare the results with those of the author.

## The state of research on the issue of small museums in the Czech Republic

Following the state of research on small museums abroad, we can also look for analogous sources in the field of Czech museology, namely at the level of individual researchers, professional institutions and organizations and their theoretical works as well as practical projects and empirical outputs. More than fifteen years ago, the issue of small museums in the Czech Republic began to receive increased attention from the local professional organization uniting museum workers and museologists, the *Czech Association of Museums and Galleries* (AMG), under the leadership of Jana Hutníková, a member of the executive of this organization.[29] She and her team are behind the *Malá muzea* project (Small Museums),[30] which was implemented in 2006–2009, with the ambition of investigating local small museums and publishing the information found. The survey among small museums, which AMG understands, based on the initial working definition, as institutions with a maximum of 10 employees, was attempted by the working group in 2007. Out of 150 approached museums – AMG member institutions, only 35 responses were returned, whereupon this data and research results are not further publicly communicated for little return. So we have practically no research data on Czech small museums.

On the other hand, a different situation can be observed in the field of publishing activities, for which the Association uses its own platform, *Věstník AMG*. It is published in printed and electronic versions six times a year and is distributed to all member organizations and individual members. During the period under review, several monothematic issues were published on the topic, namely in 2008 (Small museums), 2019 (Problems of small museums) and 2021 (Presentation of history in small museums).[31] From the beginning of the project to the present, a number of short articles on the issue of small museums have also been published in other issues of the journal – both more general texts and specific reports from some museums, focused on selected aspects of their activities (e.g. museums based on the work of volunteers, scientific activities of small museums, education without the job position of a museum educator, creation of new exhibitions, merger of museums, etc.).

[28] CANDLIN, *Micromuseology: an analysis*…, pp. 169–171, 182.

[29] See e.g. HUTNÍKOVÁ, Jana. Téma: malá muzea. In: *Věstník AMG* [online], 2008, No. 2, pp. 12–14 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/UserFiles/file/Vestnik/vestnik2_2008.pdf>.

[30] Projekt Malá muzea. In: *Asociace muzeí a galerií ČR* [online]. [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/web/deni_v_oboru/mala-muzea>.

[31] See *Věstník AMG* [online], 2007, No. 2: Radosti i strasti „malých" muzeí [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/UserFiles/file/vestnik%20AMG/Vestnik_AMG_2_07.pdf>; *Věstník AMG* [online], 2019, No. 4: Problematika malých muzeí [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/UserFiles/file/2019/AMG/4_19_komplet_mensi.pdf>; *Věstník AMG* [online], 2021, No. 3: Prezentace dějin v malých muzeích [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/UserFiles/file/2021/Vestnik/3_2021_komplet_mensi.pdf>.

If we strive to map small museums with regard to the current state of museum practice, we can primarily rely on data provided by the AMG. Thanks to the mapping of its membership base, it provides quantitative data on the distribution of small museums in the Czech Republic, but attention can also be turned to the activities of some AMG expert commissions. In 2023, the *Committee on Public Relations and Museum Pedagogy*[32] organized its conference *Current trends in museum presentation and education* on the topic of *Education in a small museum*. The three-day conference included lecture sessions, workshops and other formats of knowledge exchange. They were devoted to the following thematic areas: education in a small museum – possibilities, research, results; inspiration from abroad; examples from local practice; small museum and community. Attention was focused on the insight into the current educational work of small museums and stimulated discussions on the following questions: What benefits and opportunities can educational work in a small museum bring that, on the contrary, larger museums often do not have or do not use? What spectrum of subjects can the museum cooperate with and which infrastructures can it enter? How is it possible to achieve closer ties and better reach to the audience? What are the pitfalls, but also the benefits, of a small work team in the museum and possible accumulated job positions, which may also include the scope of a museum educator? In 2024, the Committee plans to publish a thematic proceedings volume from this professional meeting as its completely new publication format. Until then, we can therefore only rely on the knowledge gathered on the basis of our own participation in this conference.

So, based on the knowledge obtained, how can we formulate the basic characteristics of a small museum, as it is understood in the environment of the Czech Republic? According to the working group at the AMG, a small museum is difficult to define, but we can define what makes these museums different:

- museum profile, small number of employees (0–10) and accumulation of functions;
- different founders (municipality, region, association, company...);
- collection-building programme (regional, national-historical, municipal, memorial, specialized, and corporate museums);
- position within the network of museums;
- different number of collection items and collection value (from dozens of pieces to hundreds of thousands; common as well as unique collection items);
- different legal forms.[33]

Jiří Žalman still adds the necessity to involve volunteers as well as various societies and communal associations in the museum activities. He also points to the indisputable influence of small museums on the community and their contribution to the development of civil society.[34] Among other researchers who have published on the issue, we can mention Petr Beránek, who in his article focused on small **regional museums** and their role as community centres. He remarks that when defining a small museum, we must also take into account how the museum is viewed from the public's perspective. The public can even perceive branches of large museums as small museums and regard them as "independent" museums. According to

[32] Komise pro práci s veřejností a muzejní pedagogiku AMG. In: *Asociace muzeí a galerií ČR* [online]. [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/web/amg/organy-amg/komise/komise-pro-praci-s-verejnosti-a-muzejni-pedagogiku>.

[33] Projekt Malá muzea. In: *Asociace…*

[34] ŽALMAN, Malá muzea…, pp. 8–10.

Beránek, approximately 40 % of Czech museums and museum branches fall within the category of regional museums.[35] Jan Lhoták directly connects the designation of small museums with **former district museums**. According to him, the connection to the catchment area rather condemns these museums to the role of information institutions and source of knowledge for the academic environment. He thus indicates their difficult position in the field of scientific work and their limited possibilities of full-fledged professional publishing activities, which must be quite frustrating for the professional staff.[36]

In addition to organizations that are considered "official" small museums, we can also identify facilities in the Czech environment that largely correspond with the foreign term micromuseums, the numbers of which also significantly increased since the 1990s. In the case of the Czech Republic, this type of facilities is referred to as **mini-museum** or **village museum** or even bears the designation directly in its name. Martina Ščučková devoted her master's thesis to their investigation in a selected region of the Czech Republic.[37]

For a successful planning of further research on small museums, it is essential to know the initial quantified data on their number and distribution. We can currently draw such aggregate data only through the AMG and the analysis of its membership base. Based on the 2022 annual report,[38] the AMG had a total of 529 members (combining institutional, individual and honorary members). For the purposes of determining the membership fees, the membership base is further categorized according to the number of employees. From the point of view of defining a small museum, we are interested in category IV of museums with up to 10 employees, which includes a relatively large number of 183 institutions.[39] If we would tolerate a higher limit for the number of employees to define a small museum, then we could also use category III of museums with 11–25 employees, which includes another 66 AMG member institutions. Their membership in the AMG can be seen as a certain guarantee that this main professional museum organization in the Czech Republic perceives them as official museums.

So, what are the primary partial conclusions that we can draw from the museum practice in the Czech Republic, verified by individual interviews, joint discussions and the study of various sources?

In the Czech museum practice, not only the category of museum facilities with up to 10 employees is considered small museums. Those with up to 25 employees also consider

[35] Petr Beránek defines a regional museum in the Czech environment with the help of three criteria. The museum unit meets at least partially the legislative definition of a museum, i.e. manages a registered collection, or part of it, and at the same time has a maximum number of employees of up to ten people. Added to this is the characteristic of the managed collection, which, with exceptions, includes objects from the place where the museum operates, or from the natural catchment area. BERÁNEK, Petr. Regionální muzeum jako komunitní centrum. Smysl „malých" muzeí v 21. století. In: *Museologica Brunensia* [online], vol. 8, 2019, No. 2, p. 43 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/handle/11222.digilib/141874>.

[36] LHOTÁK, Jan. Malá muzea a akademické prostředí – poddaný služebník a přehlíživý feudál, anebo vztah s potenciálem plodného partnerství? In: *Muzeum: Muzejní a vlastivědná práce* [online]. 2022, vol. 60, No. 2, pp. 93–97 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://publikace.nm.cz/file/21bbdda5049db62397d8ccfc5dcf8bb6/38160/10_Lhotak.pdf>.

[37] ŠČUČKOVÁ, Martina. *Sonda do vesnických muzeí*. Brno: Masaryk University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Archaeology and Museology, 2016. MA thesis.

[38] Výroční zpráva Asociace muzeí a galerií České republiky, z.s. za rok 2022. In: *Asociace muzeí a galerií ČR* [online], 27 April 2023, p. 37 [accessed 2023-10-20]. Available from www: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/UserFiles/file/2023/AMG/Vyrocni%20zprava%20AMG%20za%20rok%202022.pdf>.

[39] This number needs to be further revised, because among the AMG members are not only museums, but also, to a small extent, e.g. university departments.

themselves to be small museums. The research also revealed the fact that even employees of small branches of large museums perceive their museums as small. It is a situation where a small branch operates as a detached workplace, often far away from the museum's main building, sometimes even in another municipality. Another common feature is the limited number of employees of a given branch and a significant accumulation of their work activities (e.g. an employee opens the building, sells tickets, guides through an exhibition or implements an educational programme and at the end of the working day in some cases also cleans the premises).

Not all of the examined facilities have museum in their name – this refers to the still missing and therefore not yet resolved issue of future registration and accreditation of museums, which is planned for the long term in the Czech Republic. A number of these examined institutions are not independent entities, but are integrated or inseparably connected with, for example, a community centre, information centre, library or archive.

When examining the professional focus, a wide range of topics and fields of the museums and their collections is revealed. Among them are both dominantly represented regional museums with mixed collections, as well as (monothematically) specialized museums. The following basic spectrum of their thematic profile was identified: science, technology and transport (cars, wagons, roads); heavy industry (mining, metallurgy, iron industry); art (especially fine arts); crafts and various human activities (milling, glassmaking, healthcare, gastronomy); historical events and phenomena ("Iron Curtain", Czechoslovak fortifications); local personalities (from the fields of literature, painting, music); religious sphere.

## Conclusion

Whether we work only with the concept of a small museum or we also reflect on others that are used and closely related to the issue, such as micromuseum, mini-museum, mid-sized museum, metamuseum, museum-like organization, etc., we find certain essential features that distinguish this type of institutions from other museums, whether we call them large, major or traditional. The designations used mainly reflect their operational limits that are given by the premises and staff they have at their disposal. As a typical feature of small museums, the understaffing is often emphasized, together with the usual accumulation of work activities. Small museums are not only limited by the number of up to ten or possibly fifteen employees, but they can also be institutions that have no permanent employees at all, but rely on the work of volunteers. Various other characteristics of this type of museums are also discussed, e.g. ties to its place of operation and to local communities. The researchers unequivocally agree that the requirement for a necessary degree of professionalisation is used to clearly distinguish which of these facilities are to be considered real museums and which are not.

With regard to the terms used in the Czech specialized literature, we can note almost exclusively the designation "small museum". On the other hand, a look at the practice shows in many cases that facilities corresponding in their type to a micromuseum, as understood by Fiona Candlin, are named mini-museum or village museum. The Czech environment, just as the environment abroad, thus reflects the heterogeneity of the museum sphere and the variety of existing facilities, which are collection-building institutions and represent diverse forms of musealisation phenomena in the present. If we focus strictly on small museums, we perceive them in the Czech environment, according to the prevailing similarities from the specialized literature, as professional organizations with limited human, spatial and financial capacities.

In practice, based on the primary data collected, it is evident that their representatives see a number of common features which influence or limit their daily operations. As it turned out, a more profound, qualitatively conceived analysis of small museums in the Czech Republic is noticeably lacking. We can explain its absence as probably one of the main reasons why this topic has been cyclically reopened in an almost unchanged form of content, but without any noticeable progress. The lack of deeper knowledge of the actual situation can rather lead to simplification and resorting to proclamations of problems and pitfalls, instead of finding ways to support small museums in further development of their potential.

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# Great Moravian jewellery and its presentation in exhibitions[1]

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*Great Moravian jewellery and its presentation in exhibitions*
Ever since the first pieces of Great Moravian jewellery were found in early medieval burial grounds, which began to be intensively and extensively explored mainly in Moravia after 1948, it was clear that these were not only elite goods related to the highest social class in Great Moravia of that time, but also exhibition objects that bear the hallmark of exclusivity. Their artistic beauty, the expensive material from which they were made, as well as the craftsmanship with which they were created, were and still are a sure guarantee for the exhibitor that they will interest the public in some way. The paper focuses mainly on large exhibition events, which from the 1960s presented Great Moravian jewellery not only to the Czech, but also to the foreign audience. At the same time, it briefly outlines the future, which is connected with presentation of these exceptional archaeological finds, and which is in the hands of the Moravian Museum in Brno.

Keywords: Great Moravian jewellery, elite goods, exhibition, Moravian Museum

## Introduction

Above all, precious jewellery and clothing components made of gold, silver and gilded copper alloys are attractive archaeological finds that are of interest not only to experts, but also to lay public as exhibition objects. They are considered as evidence of presentation of the highest strata of Great Moravian society and the skills of early medieval jewellers. They give evidence not only of the high level of craftsmanship of their creators, but also of the artistic sensibility and period style. At the same time, by studying them, it is possible to follow up the technology of their production and trace their origin and spread in the Great Moravian society based on the manufacturing traces.

It is mainly the beauty and the artistic and artisanal qualities of these personal ornaments, and not only those from Great Moravia, that fascinated their discoverers and subsequently the public. That is why they are considered rewarding exhibition objects, which the visitors to exhibition institutions (museums, galleries) could admire during various exhibitions in both far and recent past. Exhibition projects are also planned in the future to present these unique objects to the general public.

[1] The article is an output of the project: Specifický výzkum MUNI/A/1329/2022 "Muzejní prezentace II – moderní přístupy a trendy v muzejní prezentaci".

## The exhibition "Great Moravia" – 1960s

In the past, the first major opportunity for the presentation of the results of archaeological excavations, which mainly in the territory of Moravia uncovered numerous assemblages of this precious jewellery, occurred in 1963 as part of the celebration of the 1,100th anniversary of the arrival of the Byzantine mission in the territory of Great Moravia. Czechoslovak archaeology of that time, focused on research into the oldest Czech and Slovak history and issues of the Great Moravian period, thus got the opportunity to present the results of excavations, which, especially after 1948, received great support from the then state and its regime. And it was also the case with the jubilee year of 1963.[2]

The exhibition, which was held in 1963, was entitled Great Moravia and had the subtitle "*exhibition about the first common state of the ancestors of the Czech and Slovak nations, held on the occasion of the 1,100th anniversary of the arrival of the Byzantine mission in our countries and the origins of Slavic writing*".[3] The exhibition itself was one of the events that were organized as part of the jubilee. Based on a resolution of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the organization of these events was entrusted to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Subsequently, a commission of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was established for the preparation of the scientific evaluation of Great Moravia.

The largest and most significant cultural event within the framework of this jubilee, which was prepared for a wide professional and lay public, was the extensive exhibition Great Moravia, which was installed in the exterior and interior of the House of Arts (Dům umění) in Brno on an area of 2,000 m$^2$. The author of the libretto was Josef Poulík from the Institute of Archaeology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Brno. This institute thus played a fundamental role in the preparation of the exhibition, even though other institutions connected with the research of Great Moravian sites also took part in its realization.

Great Moravian jewellery from Moravian strongholds and burial grounds was displayed in the exhibition space in one of the halls on the first floor in a glass showcase in the middle (Fig. 1). Over 1,300 archaeological finds, 268 photographic exhibits and almost a hundred drawings and plans were displayed in the exhibition. More than 180,000 visitors saw the exhibition in Brno.[4]

## Nitra

After the striking success of the Great Moravia exhibition in Brno, there was an effort to move this exhibition to Slovakia – to Nitra. During the exhibition in Brno, however, objections came from the Slovak side regarding the demand for a greater representation of the Slovak part of the Great Moravian territory, especially in connection with re-evaluation of some facts related to the issue, which supposedly spread, in a distorted or misrepresented form, not only among the professional, but also among the lay public in the past years.

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[2] In various reports regarding the 1100th anniversary, we can find mentions of support from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and decisive political figures, see e.g. FILIP, Jan. Velkomoravské jubileum. In: *Archeologické rozhledy*, 1963, p. 539.

[3] See accompanying text for the exhibition held in Brno. *Velká Morava: výstava o prvním společném státě předků českého a slovenského národa, pořádaná u příležitosti 1100. výročí příchodu byzantské mise do našich zemí a počátků slovanského písemnictví. Brno – Dům umění, srpen–říjen 1963*. Brno: Dům umění, 1963.

[4] STAŇA, Čeněk, Boris NOVOTNÝ, TICHÝ, Rudolf. *Oslavy Velké Moravy. Přehled výzkumů 1963, 1964*, pp. 68–70.

The preparatory committee for the organization and arrangement of the Great Moravia exhibition in Nitra, in cooperation with the author of the exhibition Josef Poulík, revised and supplemented the scenario of the Brno exhibition and enriched it with two other closed sections: Activities and significance of the Byzantine mission of Cyril and Methodius, and Byzantine and Great Moravian traditions in literature and arts.

**Fig. 1:** *Visitors to the "Great Moravia" exhibition in Brno in 1963.*[5]

The authors took this step, among other reasons, because in Slovakia the Great Moravian idea and the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition played a positive and progressive role, in contrast to the western parts of the then Czechoslovakia, where this idea and tradition also had a negative role, especially during the period of national revival and formation of the national and later state awareness.

Modifications of the exhibition in Nitra required the expansion of the exhibition space, which in the interior reached an area of 1500 m$^2$.[6] The exhibition was installed in the hall of the Culture and Leisure Park (Park kultúry a oddychu) in Nitra and was presented as the result of a great work effort of a team of archaeologists from the whole of Slovakia in cooperation with some Slovak museums and science institutions. The organizers of the exhibition were the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Slovak National Council – Department of Education

[5] Unprocessed archival holdings *Velká Morava – výstava*. Archives of the Institute of Archaeology Brno (ARÚB). VM1113.

[6] TOČÍK, Anton. *Veľká Morava: výstava o prvom spoločnom štáte predkov českého a slovenského národa, usporiadaná z príležitosti 1100. výročia príchodu byzantskej misie do našich krajín a počiatkov slovanského písomníctva, Nitra – Park kultúry a oddychu, apríl–máj 1964*, p. 4.

and Culture. The exhibition was viewed by 120,000 visitors. Accompanying events included lectures, cultural and sporting events.[7]

## Prague

After the successful presentations in Brno and Nitra, the Great Moravia exhibition was to be moved to Prague, directly to the seat of the head of state at Prague Castle, to the Vladislav Hall. This space meant a new task for the organizers of the exhibition, as it was necessary to combine the antiquity and historical significance of this place with the exhibition, which had a unified concept and was to be presented using modern installation means. The Prague exhibition thus in fact became a completely new exhibition not only thanks to the overall architectural concept, but also to the new arrangement of exhibits. The scientific data for the exhibition was provided by the Institute of Archaeology in Prague, which collaborated on the task with the institutions that participated in the exhibitions in Brno and Nitra.

The part of the exhibition consisting of objects taken from the Brno exhibition was again supplemented with some exhibits from Nitra. Subsequently, objects were added to the exhibition that were supposed to express the relations of the Bohemian environment to the Great Moravian centre and capture the situation in the period when Bohemia took over political leadership after the Great Moravian era. The Prague exhibition was thus considered the most complete exhibition and represented the highlight of the jubilee event in Czechoslovakia. Within this exhibition too, Great Moravian jewellery had a significant position, as shown by the selection of personal ornaments in this publication.[8]

Due to the great success of this exhibition and the repeated requests from abroad, a series of foreign selective reinstallations was planned and realized in the following years. Between 1965 and 1968, visitors could see the exhibition, which presented originals of Great Moravian jewellery, in Athens (June 1965), Vienna (spring 1966), Mainz (June–September 1966), Wrocław (autumn 1966/winter 1967), Stockholm (spring 1967), West Berlin (autumn 1967) and East Berlin (spring 1968). Even though there was interest in the exhibition from other countries as well, it was decided to end this travel, as the whole project required considerable manpower and financial resources from the Czechoslovak side.[9]

## "Great Moravia and the Beginnings of Christianity" – exhibition in 2014–2015

Another large and very representative exhibition presenting Great Moravian jewellery took place as part of the celebration of 1150 years since the arrival of Constantine and Methodius in Great Moravia. The celebrations of this jubilee started in 2013 with an international conference at Velehrad and were to continue with an international touring exhibition.

The exhibition was entitled "Great Moravia and the Beginnings of Christianity" and it was one of the outputs of a project within the Programme for the Support of Applied Research and Development of National and Cultural Identity of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic (NAKI) entitled "Great Moravia and 1150 Years of Christianity in the Middle of

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[7] TOČÍK, Anton. Výstava Veľká Morava v Nitre (18. IV. – 30. V., 1964). In: *Slovenská archeológia*, vol. XIII, No. 2, 1965, pp. 453–457.

[8] FILIP, Jan. *Výstava Velká Morava, její smysl a poslání*. In: *Výstava Velká Morava. 1100 let tradice státního a kulturního života*. Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd Praha 1964. pp. 12–13; tab. IV–VI; VIII–LIII.

[9] Correspondence regarding the further continuation of the exhibition, which took place within the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Brno. Unprocessed archival holdings *Velká Morava – výstava*. Archives of the Institute of Archaeology Brno (ARÚB).

Europe". The principal investigator in the project was the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Brno in cooperation with the Moravian Museum.

The project was aimed at protection, presentation and education in the field of archaeological cultural heritage in the form of hitherto non-public holdings of finds from important archaeological sites and its aim was to obtain new knowledge through analyses of material not yet published. These results were subsequently to be presented to the general public as part of a unique exhibition, where significant funerary assemblages were to be displayed together with reconstructions of relevant burials, spatial reconstructions of selected Great Moravian churches, 3D visualizations of these churches (interiors and exteriors) and other attractive exhibits.[10]

The exhibition was actually presented in the Palace of Noble Ladies (Palác šlechtičen) at the Moravian Museum in Brno (November 2014 – February 2015), in the Imperial Stables at Prague Castle (April – June 2015), and at the Bratislava Castle (August – November 2015).[11]

Great Moravian jewellery played a significant role not only within the project and the exhibition itself. Its unique visual qualities predestined it to play a major role in promoting the exhibition as well. Since the exhibition project took place at a time when the availability of the Internet[12] and the massive expansion of social networks among Internet users allowed those interested in this issue to follow the preparation of the exhibition, the events connected with the exhibition and its transfer and dismantling, the golden, gilded and silver objects became ideal to capture their attention.

Great Moravian jewellery – a gold pendant decorated with granulation and a glass imitation of almandine inlay from Mikulčice, placed on a black background, appeared on the poster that invited to the exhibition in all three above-mentioned cities. It was also placed on the front page of the exhibition catalogue. Golden jewellery was part of advertising materials. Visitors to the exhibition could also purchase copies of Great Moravian jewellery (mainly earrings).[13] A photo of Great Moravian buttons placed in one of the glass tube showcases then served the principal investigator in the project, the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Brno, as the PF card for 2016.[14]

In the exhibition itself, jewellery was presented to visitors in a very impressive way, especially in the section entitled "Elites of Great Moravia". Glass tubes in combination with dark or transparent accessories intended for a better presentation of the exhibited objects, the dark

[10] *Velká Morava a 1150 let křesťanství ve středu Evropy*. Information on the project [online]. Brno: Archeologický ústav AV ČR v Brně [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://www.arub.cz/velka-morava-a-1150-let-krestanstvi-ve-stredu-evropy/. The project also had its own website, which was supposed to introduce visitors to the progress of the project. The web link of the project iabrno.cz/velkamorava/projekt.htm is currently no longer functional.

[11] KOUŘIL, Pavel. Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství. Úvodní slovo. In: KOUŘIL, Pavel (ed.). *Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství*. Brno: Archeologický ústav Akademie věd ČR Brno, p. 15.

[12] *Výstava Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství*. Video invitation to the exhibition in Prague, which was distributed, for example, through the account of the Moravian Museum operated on the YouTube platform. Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7LKR5C2qEU. Another very widely used platform for spreading the invitation and promoting other events related to the exhibition was the Facebook social network, where the project page *Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství* was directly created [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://www.facebook.com/VelkaMoravaAPocatkyKrestanstvi.

[13] *Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství*. In: Facebook, a post from October 21, 2015 [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://1url.cz/CuVUk.

[14] *Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství*. In: Facebook, a post from January 6, 2016 [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://1url.cz/QuVU3.

environment in which these tubular showcases were located, or the chosen lighting, all of this provided visitors with a unique opportunity to get into relatively close contact with the exhibited artefacts and to admire their unique and fragile beauty (see Fig. 2).[15] In total, 60,000 visitors saw the exhibition at all three locations.[16]

**Fig. 2:** *Exhibition "Great Moravia and the Beginnings of Christianity – Elites of Great Moravia".*

The success and attractiveness of this exhibition appealed to the Polish Muzeum Początków Państwa Polskiego w Gnieźnie (Museum of the Origins of Polish State in Gniezno), which in 2017 decided to install this exhibition in the premises of the museum. The exhibition opened in December 2017 and lasted until June 2018.[17] The loaned artefacts were limited to objects that are stored in the collections of the Moravian Museum and the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Brno. Nevertheless, after 50 years, several dozen pieces of original Great Moravian jewellery were loaned to the Polish museum.[18]

The exhibition was adapted to the local exhibition premises, but Great Moravian jewellery once again formed the core of the exhibition space. In this case too, an ornament was chosen as

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[15] See photos from the exhibition: KOUŘIL, Pavel. *Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství. Úvodní slovo.* In: KOUŘIL, Pavel (ed.). Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství. Archeologický ústav Akademie věd ČR, Brno, p. 469. Other photos from the exhibition were mainly presented on the already mentioned Facebook page of the project.

[16] *Výroční zpráva o činnosti a hospodaření za rok 2015*. Brno: Archeologický ústav AV ČR, Brno, p. 9 [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from: https://www.arub.cz/ke-stazeni/.

[17] "*Wielkie Morawy*". Basic information about the exhibition in Gniezno, Gnieźno: Muzeum Początków Państwa Polskiego w Gnieźnie [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://en.muzeumgniezno.pl/wystawa,18,wyszukiwanie.html.

[18] *Výstava "Wielkie Morawy" v Hnězdně*. Archives of the Centre of Slavic Archaeology, Moravian Museum (CSA MZM). Stored at Uherské Hradiště.

the central object on the poster that invited visitors to the exhibition. It was a golden crescent-shaped pendant decorated with granulation, which was found in Mikulčice.[19]

## Great Moravian jewellery in virtual space

Large exhibition projects, which involve unique objects with incalculable historical value, objects made of precious metals or objects that are completely unique even in their category, are very demanding in terms of funding and human resources. Institutions that want to present these objects on such a large scale often have to look for external financial resources, which are mainly found in various projects focused on cultural heritage, its presentation and preservation.

The development of modern documentation of archaeological finds, including Great Moravian jewellery, brought about new possibilities of their presentation.

Three-dimensional documentation not only enables to create a faithful virtual copy of the objects in case of their degradation or destruction, but with regard to heritage preservation, it helps to limit the physical handling of particularly fragile and rare originals. And last but not least, it makes it possible to present these objects in a very attractive way to the general public, as demonstrated by the virtual exhibition project *Great Moravian Mikulčice virtually*, which took place as part of the NAKI II project implemented by the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Brno.[20]

Within this exhibition project, holographic projection, innovative 3D printing and augmented reality were used as the highlights in an attractive presentation of the mentioned archaeological artefacts.

Holography is a modern method that enables to generate seemingly three-dimensional objects using a two-dimensional image recording medium. In this case, the authors achieved a three-dimensional image using a rotary projector. The holographic rotary projector consists of rapidly rotating arms on which RGB diodes are placed. The arms are rotated so that the observer does not perceive their movement. The flashing of individual diodes is synchronized with the rotation speed so that a colourful moving image is obtained. This image seems to be transparent, giving the impression of an object floating freely in the space in front of the spectator.

For the presentation using this method, a pair of the most elaborate buttons from Mikulčice were selected, so-called double-shell buttons, which belong to the top achievements of jewellery craftsmanship and are classified as movable national cultural heritage which cannot be commonly displayed. Thanks to the high-quality digital model, it was even possible to print one of the specimens on a 3D printer, both in original size and in a tenfold enlargement – these plastic buttons became haptic exhibits available to all visitors. The extremely enlarged details of the model offered the viewers a "fly-by" through its filigree decoration in a projection on the wall.[21]

Due to the growing popularity and availability of documenting archaeological artefacts in 3D, the authors of the aforementioned project also decided to use this method for the documentation and subsequent presentation of Great Moravian jewellery. High-quality 3D models were obtained and subsequently presented thanks to the photogrammetry method.

[19] *"Wielkie Morawy"*. Muzeum Początków Państwa Polskiego w Gnieźnie. In: *Facebook*, a post from December 4, 2017 [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://1url.cz/9uVIB.

[20] KRUPIČKOVÁ, Šárka, POLÁČEK, Lumír, ŠINDELÁŘ, Jiří. *Velkomoravské Mikulčice virtuálně/Great Moravian Mikulčice Virtually*. Brno: Archeologický ústav AV ČR Brno, 2022, pp. 9–12.

[21] Ibidem, pp. 93–95, obr. 40: a–c.

Especially for jewellery, the authors developed a system where the resulting 3D model of one artefact consists of more than two hundred images. These models can subsequently be appreciated by interested members of the general public as well as professional archaeologists.[22]

Since a part of this project[23], which also focused on the documentation of selected movable finds using the aforementioned state-of-the-art photogrammetric methods, took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, its authors decided to present their preliminary results also on the Facebook platform and on the website of the project.[24] The objects documented in this way have proved very suitable for these purposes, because in a time of limited possibilities, also regarding the visits to museums and galleries, it was possible to introduce those interested in history and archaeology to the results of the latest research in this field in a very attractive way.

In the end, the project applicants could also present their results in a real exhibition, which took place in the premises of the research base of the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences Brno at Mikulčice-Trapíkov in 2022.[25]

## Permanent exhibition "Great Moravia"

Among the current exhibitions, where visitors can learn more about Great Moravian jewellery, the permanent exhibition of the Moravian Museum "Great Moravia", which has been on display in the Dietrichstein Palace in Brno since the 1990s, plays a unique role. In the centre of the exhibition is the so-called treasury, where visitors can see copies of the most famous and most beautiful pieces of jewellery found at archaeological sites in Moravia, especially in Staré Město u Uherského Hradiště, Mikulčice and Pohansko u Břeclavi.[26]

Although it may seem that the exhibition is outdated as regards the method of presentation, it is still satisfactory from the point of view of presenting the craftsmanship of early medieval jewellers and their creativity. It also gives an idea of how high must have been the status of those who wore the ornaments, especially women, in society at the time.

## Future

Great Moravian jewellery and objects associated with early medieval elites have been the subject of intense interest for many researchers, but also for visitors to not only specialized exhibition institutions.

One of the projects, which is directly related to the presentation of Great Moravian and early medieval jewellery in general, should be implemented in the very near future.

In 2024, it is planned to open unique exhibition and education premises in the area of the Archaeological Open-Air Museum in Modrá near Velehrad, the so-called "Treasury of Great

[22] KRUPIČKOVÁ, POLÁČEK, ŠINDELÁŘ. Velkomoravské Mikulčice virtuálně..., pp. 99–102.

[23] The official name of the project was *Virtual Scientific Model of Great Moravian Mikulčice: a system of interactive documentation, presentation and archiving of long-term systematic archaeological excavations* and was planned for the years 2018–2022. Brno: Archeologický ústav AV ČR Brno [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://starfos.tacr.cz/en/projekty/DG18P02OVV029#project-main.

[24] *Mikulčice-Valy*. Available from www: https://www.facebook.com/mikulcicevaly and on the website of the project [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://mikulcice-valy.cz/.

[25] Exhibition "*Velkomoravské Mikulčice virtuálně*". Invitation to the exhibition and poster [accessed 2023-10-10] available from www: https://1url.cz/BuVIf.

[26] Inventory of objects displayed in the permanent exhibition "Great Moravia". Dietrichstein Palace Brno. Archives of the Centre of Slavic Archaeology, Moravian Museum (CSA MZM), Brno.

Moravia"[27], where the Moravian Museum – Centre of Slavic Archaeology acts as a scientific guarantor.

In the newly built space, a set of faithful copies, made in gold and silver, will gradually be placed and supplemented by replicas of the most precious items of early medieval artisanal craftsmanship, which were discovered during archaeological excavations in Staré Město, Uherské Hradiště-Sady or in Modrá itself, as well as in Mikulčice, Pohansko u Břeclavi and on other sites. The replicas and copies will be produced by people who are masters in their field not only in the Czech Republic, but also internationally. Over time, their creations should be complemented by other objects that come from other parts of Central Europe, which were influenced by Great Moravia in the 9th century.[28]

## Conclusion

The presentation of Great Moravian jewellery has already been a very prestigious task from the beginning. It was often displayed during important jubilee events, which also enjoyed great support from important state institutions in the form of patronage granted by, for example, presidents and church dignitaries. These large-scale exhibition projects were and still are very financially demanding, therefore it is necessary for the curators of these unique objects to seek external resources for their implementation, primarily in the form of various grants. The projects are also demanding as far as human resources are concerned, and their implementation requires a significant amount of manpower from the institutions involved. And last but not least is the fact that sometimes these objects are better off in depots, where the conditions are set up to protect them.

Therefore, it is currently possible to follow up trends that focus on details related to those rare objects rather than on quantity. These exhibitions present certain partial issues related to the research focused on jewellery, e.g. production techniques, materials or the details of individual exhibits, which they try to bring as close as possible to the audience. All this is also made possible thanks to the development of 3D documentation methods, the availability of the Internet, IT technology and so-called smart products. Certain role in this was surely also played by the COVID-19 pandemic, which for some time, not only in the Czech Republic, closed the exhibition spaces for their visitors and also limited the possibilities of museum loans.

Nevertheless, it is possible to assume that the originals of Great Moravian jewellery will leave their safe storage facilities to a greater or lesser extent in the future and will be presented to the general public in their full beauty not only in our country, but also abroad.

[27] *Klenotnice Velké Moravy/Treasury of Great Moravia*. Visualisation of the exhibition space. Modrá: Archeoskanzen [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from: https://1url.cz/juVIv.

[28] Press release of the Moravian Museum „*V archeoskanzenu v Modré na Uherskohradišťsku vzniká unikátní Klenotnice Velké Moravy*". Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://1url.cz/kuVgr.

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*Výstava Velká Morava a počátky křesťanství*. Video invitation to the exhibition in Prague on YouTube. Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum [accessed 2023-10-10]. Available from www: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7LKR5C2qEU.

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# Preparation and realization of compact touring exhibitions on the example of exhibition projects of the Masaryk University[1]

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*Preparation and realization of compact touring exhibitions on the example of exhibition projects of the Masaryk University*
The article focuses on the specifics of the preparation and realization of compact touring exhibition projects. In the introductory theoretical part, it deals with the issue of museum communication and museum presentation, their means, approaches and forms, on the basis of which several types of exhibition projects are distinguished. Special attention is paid to touring exhibitions, their specifics and possibilities in relation to the public. In the empirical part, the article contains several examples of the preparation and realization of compact touring exhibition projects, implemented in the field of Museology at the Masaryk University in Brno.

Keywords: museum presentation, compact touring exhibitions, museum suitcase, student exhibitions, Masaryk University in Brno

## Museum presentation as a basic means of communication

The mission of museums is to collect, preserve, manage and present mainly three-dimensional relics of nature and human society, primarily for the purpose of dissemination and development of culture and science.[2] This places the museum in a unique and irreplaceable position among cultural and memory institutions. The aforementioned tasks of the museum are associated with a number of different professional activities, but the presentation activity of the museum is undoubtedly the most visible. Without this activity, the museum would not fulfil its social mission and functions.[3] The museum is known and perceived in society through exhibitions which create its image, help it demonstrate its professional and scientific erudition, but also the exhibition-making skills as a whole. We classify exhibiting as one of the main professional activities of the museum, through which it communicates, mainly visually, with its visitors. The museum thus provides visual and intellectual access to the collections for the needs of sharing knowledge, thereby participating in cultural-didactic and educational activities

[1] The article is a result of the project: Ministry of Education, youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, AKTION Czech Republic – Austria 96p7 „Open Round Table of Museology II."

[2] BENEŠ, Josef. *Muzejní prezentace.* Praha: Národní muzeum, 1981, p. 22.

[3] HOOPER-GHREENHILL, Eilean. *Museums and Education : purpose, pedagogy, performance.* London: Routledge, 2007, p. 1.

in society.[4] At the same time, it creates space for relaxation, entertainment and aesthetic enjoyment, which essentially ranks museums among communal and social institutions[5] where people meet, gain new knowledge and experiences, simply put, spend their leisure time in a meaningful way.[6]

In the long term, the museum has been creating its basic communication channels, through which it addresses not only the "habitual and frequent" visitors who regularly return to the museum's premises, but also acquires new ones through them. The museum's communication channels and public relations are mainly created by getting to know the needs and expectations of the visitors in order to be able to satisfy their requirements,[7] influence their consciousness on the rational and the emotional level,[8] and to convey information.[9]

Although the museum can communicate with the public in various ways, e.g. through lectures, discussions on current topics, demonstrations of various activities, publications, etc.,[10] the natural means of communication between the museum and the public is primarily the environment of an exhibition,[11] which is mainly targeted at gaining knowledge about the value content of the museum's authentic collection items.[12]

In the exhibition space, the museum communicates primarily with the help of a permanent exhibition, temporary exhibitions, or more rarely through the presentation of a study depot.[13] While the purpose of a permanent exhibition is to present the main focus and specialization of the museum based on its collection holdings, temporary exhibitions usually respond to current topics resonating in society. Following the visitor, the permanent exhibition is conceived more generally, for various different educational, generational or social groups.[14] Since it is a long-term display of the core of the museum's collection-building activities,[15] the permanent

[4] BENEŠ, Josef. *Kulturně-výchovná činnosť muzeí*. 1. díl. Praha: SPN, 1981.

[5] LORD, Gail Detxer. Museum as Social Institutions. In: LORD, Barry – LORD Gail Dexter, MARTIN, Lindsay (eds.). *Manual of Museum Planning : Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012, p. 41; KESNER, Ladislav. *Muzeum umění v digitální době. Vnímání obrazů a prožitek umění v soudobé společnosti*. Praha: Argo a Národní galerie, 2000, p. 34; FYFE, Gordon. Sociology and the Social Aspects of Museums. In: MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006, pp. 35–36; GEISLER, Robert, NIEROBA, Elźbieta. Museum transition toward market-oriented identity: between social issues and public policy. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 10, 2022, Is. 4, pp. 5–25. doi: 10.46284/mkd.2022.10.4.1

[6] DEAN, David. *Museum Exhibition : Theory and Practice*. New York : Routledge, 1996, p. 2; FALK, John H. – DIERKING, Lynn D. *The Museum Experience*. New York: Routledge, 2011, p. 109 sq.

[7] CROOK, Elizabeth. Museums and Community. In: MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006, p. 171; HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. Studying Visitors. In: MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006, p. 363; HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. Counting visitors or visitors who count? In: LUMLEY, Robert (ed.). *The Museum Time-Machine*. London: Routledge, 1988, pp. 213–217.

[8] BENEŠ, Josef. *Základy muzeologie*. Opava: Slezská univerzita, 1997, p. 120.

[9] FORET, Miroslav. *Marketingová komunikace*. Brno: Computer Press, 2011, p. 17; WAIDACHER, Friedrich. *Všeobecná príručka muzeológie*. Bratislava : SNM, 1999, p. 131.

[10] HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. *Museums and their Visitors*. London: Routledge, 1994, p. 37.

[11] DEAN, Museum Exhibition…, p. 3.

[12] TIŠLIAR, Pavol, ČERNUŠÁK, Tomáš, LOSKOTOVÁ, Irena. *Výstava v archivu*. Brno: MUNI Press, 2019, p. 26.

[13] KAČÍREK, Ľuboš, RAGAČ, Radoslav, TIŠLIAR, Pavol. *Múzeum a historické vedy*. Krakov: SSP, 2013, p. 45; TIŠLIAR, Pavol. Museology as a University Subject in Slovakia: History, Program and Course Design. In: *European Journal of Contemporary Education*, vol. 6, 2017, No. 1, pp. 160–161.

[14] RODNEY, Seph. *The Personalization of the Museum Visit : Art Museums, Discourse, and Visitors*. New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 24.

[15] MAROEVIĆ, Ivo. The Exhibition as Presentative Communication. In: *Into the World with the Cultural Heritage. Museology – Conservation – Architecture*. Petrinja 2004, p. 127.

exhibition should have something for all visitors, regardless of their age, education, social origin, etc. The temporary exhibition, on the other hand, is a short-term event, which is usually aimed at a specific age group or otherwise defined group of visitors. This enables to specialize the exhibition more deeply and more accurately, thus addressing a specific type of visitors in a far more targeted manner, fully adapt the exhibition language,[16] i.e. the exhibition's means of communication, to their needs and thereby enable an easier understanding and acceptance of the message of the exhibited topic.[17] The exhibition language is thus a set of means of expression that are used in certain connections and relationships,[18] with the aim to visualize the thought.[19] The effectiveness of museum communication itself thus largely depends on its adaptation to the needs of a specific audience[20] and the appropriate handling of the interpretation of the topic chosen. The museum thus presents a topic primarily through authentic evidence, which provides tools and means to represent the exhibited topic,[21] and not the other way around. It is therefore essential to be able to adapt the exhibition language to the visitor, inclusive of the exhibition space in which the permanent or temporary exhibition is presented.[22]

Z. Z. Stránský saw the fulfilment of the social mission of the museum presentation mainly in making reality accessible again through its relatively authentic documentation on a qualitatively new level.[23] A similar opinion was also published by F. Waidacher, who emphasized that the museum exhibition is an interpretive presentation of various situations, which are based on authentic evidence.[24]

Successful communication with the visitor thus places emphasis on the thematic concept, context, on the expression of an idea, and not on collection items – presented objects whose task is to help express our ideas and support them with existing tangible evidence. If we would like to specify and distinguish the museum communication from general communication, then the museum communication is primarily about the integration of a collection item into the communication process, its integration into the communication task,[25] which Z. Z. Stránský described as the transformation of the thesaurus into a communication medium.[26]

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[16] ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Petra. *Muzejní expozice jako edukační médium 1. díl. Přístupy k tvorbě expozic a jejich inovace.* Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2014, p. 51; STRÁNSKÁ, Edita, STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Základy štúdia muzeológie.* Banská Štiavnica : UMB, 2000, p. 73. Stránský also called it a museum-presentation language. STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Archeologie a muzeologie.* Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2005, p. 128; BAYER, Herbert. Aspects of Design of Exhibitions and Museums. In: *Curator*, IV/3, 1961, p. 258; HILLIER, Bill, TZORTZI, Kali. Space Syntax : The Language of Museum Space. In: MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006, pp. 282–301; LAZZERETTI, Cecilia. *The Language of Museum Communication : A Diachronic Perspective.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

[17] BENEŠ, Muzejní prezentace..., p. 43; STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Archeologie a muzeologie.* Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2005, p. 127.

[18] BENEŠ, Muzejní prezentace…, p. 47.

[19] STRÁNSKÁ, STRÁNSKÝ, Základy štúdia…, p. 73.

[20] HOOPER-GREENHILL, Museums and their…, p. 51; WAIDACHER, Všeobecná príručka..., p. 153.

[21] BENEŠ, Muzejní prezentace..., p. 15; WAIDACHER, Všeobecná príručka…, p. 149.

[22] LORD, Barry. Modes of display. In: LORD, Barry, LORD Gail Dexter, MARTIN, Lindsay (eds.). *Manual of Museum Planning : Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations.* Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012, p. 213.

[23] STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Úvod do studia muzeologie.* Brno: UJEP, 1979, p. 104.

[24] WAIDACHER, Všeobecná príručka…, p. 149.

[25] PLOKHOTNYUK, Vladimir, MITROFANENKO, Ludmila. Semiotic models in museum communication. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 6, 2018, Is. 1, p. 21.

[26] STRÁNSKÝ, Archeologie a muzeologie..., pp. 126–127.

Strengthening, intensifying and improving the communication itself is then also the task of design,[27] but also of forms, methods and means of museum presentation.

In terms of typology, the exhibition projects are quite diverse. They differ from one another in their concept, form and method of presentation, but also in different aspects that pursue various points of view (aesthetic, emotional, didactic, entertaining, etc.). In the exhibition practice, these forms and approaches are usually combined with each other, or one of them may significantly prevail with regard to the presented topic and goals of the exhibition project.[28]

The present-day modern exhibition presentation is usually no longer based on the presentation of solitaires, or on a formalistic approach (mainly the presentation in galleries), where the collection item is put to the foreground without context.[29] Conceptually, the basis of present-day museum presentation is most often formed by two prevailing approaches. One of them is the interpretive (conceptual) approach, where the emphasis is mainly placed on the content interpretation of the problem, i.e. on the contextual aspect of phenomena within the topic treated. In this approach, contextualisation primarily regards the interpretation and explanation of the issue in context, it emphasizes the description, individual exhibits are semantically interlinked and, together with other supplements and means of expression, create a comprehensive picture of the presented issue. The contexts, or their reconstructions, and phenomena are derived from the exhibited objects. The second, often sought-after, approach is a narrative, giving some kind of story, through which the topic is contextualised and the message of the exhibition project is depicted. The narrative can contain stories of people, animals, but also various things – objects. The plot of such a story usually progresses chronologically and often also contextually explains various events, phenomena, interesting things, etc., documented by authentic exhibits.[30] Narratives make it possible to express feelings, emotions, attitudes and opinions more easily, directly with the help of an involved character (object) or through a storyteller. The narrative concept can stimulate the visitor's imagination and perception of complex abstract concepts. The narrative form of the exhibition concept allows people to imagine themselves in an unknown world[31] and can also have a relatively significant success in the field of interactive experience and participation of the visitor. The story and its characters do not have to be directly real, it can be a fictional story with an invented plot and characters, or a combination thereof.[32]

In addition to the mentioned dominant approaches in today's museum presentation, we should mention, at least briefly, some other approaches, which at the same time emphasize the predominant typological characteristic of the exhibition. A special type is virtual exhibition,

[27] BAYER, Aspects of Design…, p. 257.
[28] WAIDACHER, Všeobecná príručka…, pp. 155–157.
[29] ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Muzejní expozice…, p. 134; INGEMANN, Bruno. An Essay on the Communicative Museum. In: DROTNER, Kirsten – Schrøder, Kim Christian. *Museum Communication and Social Media : The Connected Museum*. New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 292; KOLAŘÍKOVÁ, Veronika. The museum exhibition in the context of dispozitive analysis. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 10, 2022, Is. 3, p. 7. doi: 10.46284/mkd.2022.10.3.1.
[30] LAZZERETTI, The Language of Museum Communication…, p. 36.
[31] RAPPOLA, Tiina. *Designing for the Museum Visitor Experience*. New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 25.
[32] ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Muzejní expozice…, pp. 132–133.

different from the other types in its online form of presentation, which has recently been gaining in importance.[33]

- Aesthetic exhibition emphasizing the exhibits, with an emotional effect on the visitor (often used in galleries)
- Comparative exhibition, whose concept is based on opposites
- Didactic exhibition with educational functions, explaining and interpreting information about the object
- Interactive, or participatory exhibition with an effort to actively involve the visitor in the content of the exhibition
- Dynamic exhibition, comprising moving objects that enliven the exhibition space
- Entertaining exhibition with the aim to cheer up, make happy or simply help to relax

Current trends in museum exhibitions are not only based on static displays, showing objects. Present-day exhibition projects contain, in addition to direct interactive elements that can activate and involve the visitor in a certain activity during the exhibition tour, also various accompanying programs and activities related to the exhibition. Their role is relatively broad. From the point of view of the museum presentation itself, they can significantly help to interpret the exhibition's message, but they also allow an evaluative view of the knowledge that the visitor gained by attending the exhibition in the exhibition space. From the visitor's point of view, through targeted object-based learning, they can create a new and unusual experience, motivate, entertain, inform, but especially help to gain new knowledge in a simple, informal way.

Museum presentation thus represents the basic means of communication of the museum, the main goal of which is to address the visitors, to be able to present the exhibited topic in such a way that they understand its principal meaning and mission, intended by the author of the exhibition project. At the same time, the goal of the exhibition activity's message should also be a certain stimulation of curiosity, support of feelings, learning and human experience,[34] which are evoked in a certain form on the part of the visitors as their reaction "to what is seen". In this context, the museum presentation is not a goal, but in many regards rather a means.

The modern museum environment creates a natural space for the realization of exhibition projects. But at the same time, this environment does not have to be the only space in which the museum presentation can take place. A specific type of exhibition projects in this regard is mainly the touring exhibitions, the concept, preparation and realization of which are often specially adapted to their content and mission.[35]

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[33] BOYLAN, Patrick, WOOLARD, Vicky (eds.). *The Trainer's Manual: For Use with Running a Museum : A Practical Handbook*. Paris: Unesco, 2006, p. 24. The specific form of presentation of natural and cultural heritage in the form of the Ecomuseum is also successful. See for example KOŠTIALOVÁ, Katarína. The specific museum presentation forms of cultural heritage in rural areas, based on the example of the Hont ecomuseum and educational public footpath. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 10, 2022, Is. 2, pp. 5–22. doi: 10.46284/mkd.2022.10.2.1; CORRAL, Óscar Navajas. Ecomuseums in Spain: an analysis of their characteristic and typologies. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 1, pp. 7-26.

[34] DEAN, Museum Exhibition…, p. 6.

[35] JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie – TIŠLIAR, Pavol – KIRSCH, Otakar – FRECEROVÁ, Monika. *Muzejní výstava na cestách : Specifika putovních výstav do škol, muzeí i dalších veřejných institucí*. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 2022.

## Touring exhibition and its specifics

The touring exhibition is generally adapted to presentation at various different places, in different institutions, i.e. not only in a museum, but also in a non-museum environment that is not specially prepared or adapted for presentation purposes. The effort to realize a flexible touring exhibition consists mainly in taking into account its frequent mobility, and this moment resonates especially during the entire preparatory phase of the exhibition project. Preparing and realizing a touring exhibition is a time-consuming and in many ways certainly also specialized work.[36]

Touring exhibitions can be divided into several groups. They can have the character of large exhibition projects, focused exclusively commercially. In this case, an exhibition is prepared and realized, for example, for large exhibition grounds. Displayed are mainly various substitutes, replicas or models, and such an exhibition is usually created by a specialized company-studio, focused on professional commercial creation of exhibitions, which employs not only a team of interior architects, but also designers, graphic artists, technicians and various specialists for specific scientific fields. Commercial exhibitions are usually held for a period of interest of the paying public, they are thematically mainly focused on attractive problems of society, technology, natural sciences or other fields that evoke a considerable amount of astonishment and wow effect in the public (the visitors), and often have a peculiar character with the aim of attracting as many paying visitors as possible. This is also reflected in the entire presentation form, which combines often even curious scientific information with a high proportion of the visitor's experience, attraction and interactivity. The presentation forms include top modern technologies, for example virtual reality, 3D imaging, etc.,[37] which enhance the experience of the presented topic. There is no doubt that the preparation of this type of touring exhibition requires not only good ideas, high-quality professional workmanship, skilful management, but also relatively considerable financial resources.[38]

Another type of touring exhibitions is represented by museum exhibition projects, which are prepared for further possible touring directly in the museum environment. These exhibitions are based on authentic collection items and in their basic form, they do not differ from classic museum exhibition projects. Their goal is to present the topic and message of the exhibition in a way that will attract the widest possible audience in other museums as well. The use of authentic objects is a big advantage of touring museum exhibitions compared to commercially oriented exhibitions. During their travels, touring museum exhibitions can be additionally supplemented or changes can be made with some parts of the thematic units of the exhibition and displayed exhibits, which may come from the collection holdings of the museum in which the exhibition is being held at the given moment. Touring museum exhibitions are also specific

[36] PIACENTE, Maria. Traveling Exhibitions. In: LORD, Barry, PIACENTE, Maria. *Manual of Museum Exhibitions. Second edition.* Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014, p. 209.

[37] ŻYŁA, Kamil – MONTUSIEWICZ, Jerzy – SKULIMOWSKI, Stanislaw – KAYUMOV, Rahim. VR technologies as an extension to the museum exhibition: A case study of the Silk Road museums in Samarkand. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 8, 2020, Is. 4, pp. 73–93. doi: 10.46284/mkd.2020.8.4.6; ŽUPČÁN, Ladislav. Platforma kultúrneho dedičstva v súčasnej kyberkultúre. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 1, pp. 57–73.

[38] PIACENTE, Traveling Exhibitions..., pp. 207–208.

by the fact that when planning them, it is necessary to take into account mainly financial resources related to transportation and insurance.[39]

Another type is a touring exhibition, which is created for the purpose of presenting topics in a non-museum environment. In this case, frequent recipients are mainly school facilities, but also the premises of other memory and cultural institutions (archives, libraries), or public administration buildings or other public spaces. It is obvious that these facilities do not have suitable conditions for presenting original authentic collection items. It is not just about securing the necessary basic climatic conditions, but about a whole range of technical and safety prerequisites, including the problems with indemnification and protection of objects during the transfer and display of collections.[40] Therefore, in the case of a non-museum environment, preference is given to an exhibition project based on various substitutes, mock-ups, models as well as exhibition panels, combined with prepared accompanying activities, for example in the form of a comprehensively elaborated museum suitcase.[41] F. Waidacher described this type of exhibition as a marginal exhibition, which is oriented primarily conceptually, informatively and illustratively.[42] This group also includes exhibitions held in buses ("museum buses"), trains or other mobile exhibition projects[43] that actively search for, and travel directly to, their visitors. In this way, compact touring exhibitions are created, usually not demanding much space. This type of exhibitions is also important as a possible supplement to an already existing permanent or temporary exhibition held in a museum, thus drawing attention to this exhibition, but also as one of the possibilities to actively address the public with the presented topic. Touring exhibitions can also be inclusive, overcoming barriers, when reaching places where the museum environment is less accessible.[44] The advantage of a compact touring exhibition is the possibility to transfer the educational mission (including museum education) of the prepared permanent or temporary exhibition in a compact form outside the museum, to the public. This method of presentation and communication is particularly effective in relation to the school environment.

A compact touring exhibition can also cover new current issues, based on the specialization and focus of the museum's collection holdings and on topics treated by its curators. The realization of such an exhibition can also precede a larger exhibition project that is still being prepared, or its selected thematic units.

Although the cooperation between museums and schools has been working for many years and schoolchildren visit museums in the form of various pre-planned and prepared excursions,[45] this does not mean that this cooperation must be sufficient. Thus, with the help

[39] PIACENTE, Traveling Exhibitions..., p. 211; TOMÁŠKOVÁ, Marianna. Mobilita múzejných zbierok. Postupy a zásady pri manipulácii so zbierkovými predmetmi mimo ich uloženia v depozitároch. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 5, 2017, Is. 2, pp. 169–181; also MAXIMEA, Heather. Planning for exhibition and collections support space. In: LORD, Barry, LORD Gail Dexter, MARTIN, Lindsay (eds.). *Manual of Museum Planning : Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012, pp. 235–245.

[40] MAXIMEA, Heather. Planning for exhibition and collections support space. In: LORD, Barry, LORD Gail Dexter, MARTIN, Lindsay (eds.). *Manual of Museum Planning : Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012, pp. 235–245.

[41] TALBOYS, Graeme K. *Museum Educator's Handbook*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 111–112.

[42] WAIDACHER, Všeobecná príručka…, p. 154.

[43] JAGOŠOVÁ et al. Muzejní výstava…, pp. 12 and 64.

[44] Ibidem, p. 67.

[45] KAČÍREK, Ľuboš, TIŠLIAR, Pavol. Múzejné exkurzie vo vyučovaní : minulosť a súčasný stav na Slovensku. In: *Museologica Brunensia*, vol. 2, 2013, no. 3, pp. 10–15; KAČÍREK, Ľuboš, TIŠLIAR, Pavol. The benefit of museum visits for the formal education of children in primary and secondary education in the Slovak Republic. In: *Terra Sebus : Acta Musei Sabesiensis 9*. Sebes : Muzeul Municipal "Ioan Raica", 2017, pp. 491–506.

of a compact touring exhibition, the museum can actively go to schools and proactively deepen this cooperation. Nowadays, it is a good standard for professional curators to prepare various thematic lectures or talks on current social issues for school students. Combining such museum activities with a thematically focused compact touring exhibition then significantly increases the effectiveness of the presented problem with the audience, all the more when the expert lecture is supplemented by the educational potential of the exhibition, which is realized through the museum educator.[46] At the same time, the museum educator can use several didactic methods and approaches, not only to captivate the audience, but also to convey in a simpler and informal form even more difficult topics, not only to younger visitors.[47]

A specific of compact touring exhibitions is their design. Such an exhibition can be based on elements that are easily available to us and, if possible, inexpensive. Such properties are mainly found in two-dimensional material, copies of photographs, facsimiles and xerocopies of archival documents, various printed materials or graphic elements placed, for example, on the exhibition panels, but also various models, mock-ups, copies, substitutes, which do not completely replace the original, but work well as an illustrative aid. Nowadays, it is possible to use the potential of cheap 3D printing to create interesting illustrative 3D models. These can become part of a simple installation or can be used as a direct part of accompanying programs, for example a prepared museum suitcase (box) for object-based learning.[48] It depends on our financial resources and, of course, especially on the ideas needed to prepare the exhibition project. In a school, a simple model of a panel exhibition accompanied by a suitcase full of interesting things can be more effective than a panel exhibition combined with several small showcases, since working with the suitcase involves touch or other sensory organs in addition to visual perception.[49] Working with a museum box – suitcase, usually containing various substitutes and models, applies the didactic principles of illustration and develops, above all, an empirical way of learning.[50]

Among the key characteristics that a compact touring exhibition should meet are mainly portability, durability, easy maintenance and, of course, simple installation. It is advisable to make it simple, light, preferably modular, but also durable,[51] so that the planned travelling of the exhibition is not unnecessarily complicated by complex repairs.

## Compact touring exhibitions on the example of exhibitions created at the Department of Museology at the Masaryk University in Brno

Within the follow-up Master's studies in museology at the Department of Archaeology and Museology (DAM) at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno, more space is also given to the field of museum exhibitions. In addition to the theoretical approach, this also includes a practical part focused on the preparation and realization of exhibitions. Students thus have the opportunity to try out different forms, procedures and approaches used in museum presentation and to gain their first experience and skills in exhibition making already during their studies. The multifunctional atrium of the DAM building, reconstructed and in

[46] JAGOŠOVÁ et al. Muzejní výstava…, pp. 74–78.
[47] Ibidem, pp. 78–82.
[48] JAGOŠOVÁ et al. Muzejní výstava…, p. 83.
[49] For more details, see MERTOVÁ, Soňa. *Muzejní kufřík : metodický materiál.* [online, 2023-01-03] <http://www.mcmp.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/vzdelavani/metodicke_texty/METODIKA_KUFRIK.pdf>
[50] JAGOŠOVÁ et al. Muzejní výstava…, pp. 86–87.
[51] PIACENTE, Traveling Exhibitions…, pp. 211–212.

many respects modularly modified, is available for this purpose. The atrium functions as a proper exhibition space where small-scale exhibition projects can be realized. At a biennial basis, students organize a larger project of a touring exhibition. Since the field of exhibition management in the Master's degree in museology is complemented by several subjects from the field of museum pedagogy, there is room for the systematic elaboration of an exhibition project, which includes not only the exhibition itself, but also accompanying activities in various forms. In 2018, these starting points gave rise to the basic concept of our exhibition projects, including the preparation and realization of a compact touring exhibition, which is mainly intended for primary and secondary schools, a museum suitcase, containing accompanying activities and, finally, a handbook that elaborates the topic of the exhibition in more detail, but also offers instructions on how to work with the exhibition and individual components of the museum suitcase and explains the possibilities of implementing the accompanying activities. The mentioned parts of the exhibition project are primarily realized by museology students under the supervision and guidance of pedagogues.

Since 2018, three larger student exhibitions have been prepared in Brno. The target group for all three projects consisted of middle schoolers and high school students, i.e. they targeted the age group of 12 to 18 years. These are young people whose ability of abstract thought and basic scientific thinking are maturing, and we tried to use these prerequisites. The exhibition language as well as all accompanying activities were adapted to the mentioned age group. Thematically, the exhibition projects took into account the curriculum of selected school subjects and fit into the overall framework of the educational programme. They mainly covered the fields of history, social science, ethics or aesthetics. With regard to the interconnection of the treated topics with social and cultural impacts, there were also cross-subject connections to other teaching subjects, e.g. to Czech language and literature, Art education, but also to Biology, Geography, etc.

Since the Museology section at Masaryk University does not intentionally build its own collection holding, we collaborate in the preparation and realization of the exhibition with many museums or other cultural institutions, either in the form of various loans of objects, substitutes and copies or by providing visual or other usable material.

The basis of all exhibitions consists of exhibition panels, displayed exhibits, and the use of video technology. The travelling part then consists primarily of exhibition panels, using a simple roll-up with its own stand system. Their main advantages are low space requirements, high mobility and easy handling, i.e. easy portability and storage, undemanding transport and quick installation. The exhibition panels are supplemented by a museum suitcase containing copies, replicas, 3D models, etc. and various aids related to the accompanying activities.

## The exhibition *Baráky u Svatobořic : Pohled do dějin 1914 – 1950* (The barracks at Svatobořice: A look into the history 1914–1950)

The first exhibition project, based on the above-mentioned foundations, was an exhibition thematically focused on the history, significance and legacy of the Svatobořice internment camp,[52] which is connected to several years of successful efforts of the local community in the village of Svatobořice-Mistřín in South Moravia (Kyjov region, Hodonín region) to create a

[52] TIŠLIAR, Pavol, MAŽÁROVÁ, Monika, JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie. *Baráky u Svatobořic : Pohled do dějin 1914 – 1950.* Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2019.


**Fig. 1:** *The exhibition Baráky u Svatobořic : Pohled do dějin 1914 – 1950 in Secondary school of informatics, postal administration and finance Brno.* Photo: author.

dignified monument in the original area of the internment camp.[53] The exhibition was opened in the premises of the Memorial and Museum of the Internment Camp in Svatobořice in May 2019.

The topic of the exhibition in Svatobořice is a relatively complex issue, which comprises not only the history of the camp in 1914–1950, when the purpose of the camp has changed quite often (refugee, emigration and internment camp, old-aged home, home for sick, and hospital camp), but also the difficult fate of many people, including small children, who went through the internment camp during World War II. In terms of capacity, it was one of the largest camps in our region, and its scope was undoubtedly not only local. The topic therefore required the search for broader contemporary contexts, related not only to the history of southern Moravia, but also the Czech Republic or Czechoslovakia as a whole, and in some moments also to wider Central European contexts. We used a diachronic and a synchronic research approach, and at the same time, in addition to broader interpretations, the topic also reached into micro-history, basically to the level of an individual's fate. When treating the topic, it was thus impossible to avoid the expression of various emotions, assessment and expression of good and evil, mutual tolerance, coping with the period of oppression, solving various economic and social, but also cultural problems of the inter-war and war periods of the 1st half of the 20th century. It is therefore a relatively complex issue, complicated by the effort to adapt it in an understandable form to the target audience of the exhibition, namely middle schoolers and high school youth.

As regards the basic approaches to the topic, dominant was the interpretation of individual phenomena and their contextuality, containing some elements of the narrative. The preparation of the exhibition project mainly consisted of a thorough archival research in several archives,

[53] https://www.svatoborice-mistrin.cz/turista/internacni-tabor-svatoborice/internacni-tabor/ [online 2023-03-13].

libraries, several museum collections, but also in the collection of the municipality of Svatobořice-Mistřín, which was made available to students.

The topic of the exhibition is divided into seven thematic units, which do not only directly copy the historical stages of the development of the camp, although their chronological order was respected. With regard to the rich but also complicated history of the camp, we focused primarily on capturing the main elements of the development. The opening paragraph on the exhibition panels outlines the essence of the thematic focus. The opening paragraph and the explanatory texts contain a highlighted selection of essential ideas/words/keywords, which make it possible to read within a short time the main and essential ideas contained in the thematic unit and make it easier for students to orient themselves in the sub-themes of the exhibition.

The pictorial material includes mainly reproductions of period photographs, documenting the gradual development of the camp complex. Visual design also comprises reference elements, tables, plans and floor plans of the camp, maps of Austria-Hungary and of the Czech Republic. Special mention should be made of drawings and paintings by selected interned artists, as well as photographs of preserved handiwork of internees (bone and leather brooches, rag dolls, etc., provided for the exhibition by several museums) and selected quotes from the memoirs of internees. For the sake of clarity, one of the panels serves as a timeline with the most significant events from the history of the Svatobořice camp listed in brief.


**Fig. 2:** *Museum suitcase from the exhibition Baráky u Svatobořic : Pohled do dějin 1914 – 1950.*

The first thematic unit was the establishment of a refugee camp and its gradual construction development in the years 1914–1920. The second unit is devoted to the Czechoslovak emigration station (1921–1933), through which thousands of people, mainly from the eastern regions of Czechoslovakia, have passed in search of work and happiness abroad. The motif of the

**Fig. 3:** *Elementary school students´ activity with the museum suitcase and its result. Primary school and kindergarten Brno.* Photo: author.

third panel is the placement of the Brno home for sick and old-aged (1921–1935) in the Svatobořice camp. For a long time, the area of the camp also became the headquarters of the gendarmerie station (1923–1942) in Svatobořice. In the next thematic unit, more space is given to the establishment of the internment camp (1942–1945) and the events that preceded it. The fifth thematic unit, comprising two panels, is focused on everyday life in the internment camp (1942–1945). It mentions its division into male and female sections and points to the relatively strict daily routine and labour duties of the internees. Small children were also interned in the camp. A special thematic unit deals with the post-war period of development, when the camp regained the form of a refugee camp (Greek refugees), but also played the role of an old-aged home and a hospital centre. Finally, the last panel is mainly intended to promote the local Svatobořice Memorial and Museum of the Internment Camp, which is managed by the municipality of Svatobořice-Mistřín.

The museum suitcase belonging to the Svatobořice exhibition contains a comprehensive programme of activities. Their number was quite large and the basic educational programme for the exhibition was relatively wide-ranging. The learning objectives were defined in three areas. The first was related to terminology and its correct understanding in order to define the concepts of the refugee camp and the concentration camp, including individual forms and types, and the difference between them. The second objective was aimed at the historical development of the Svatobořice camp in 1914–1950, and finally, using the example of Svatobořice, students had to demonstrate how general history is reflected in the regional context, but also in the fate of an individual. The suitcase also contained objects and tools for the basic educational programme, planned for two lessons.[54] The students were meant to use various copies, replicas, substitutes, 3D models, etc., which were linked to a specific period of the development of the camp, or symbolized a certain phenomenon. The suitcase thus contained a replica of a doll, a gendarme cap, a hat worn by Jewish men, an enamel sign with the inscription: "*Today's ration exhausted*", referring to the difficult conditions in the camp and the rationing system, as well as other objects.

During the educational programme, students are divided into 3–4 groups and each of them receives its own "package", containing objects, but also copies of various documents, photos, scaled-down exhibition panels or their parts and other items related to a specific stage of the development of the Svatobořice camp. The result of their research is their own design of an

[54] TIŠLIAR et al. Baráky u Svatobořic…, pp. 57–59.

exhibition panel – poster, which would capture some moments considered essential by them. Afterwards, they presented their panel designs to the other classmates.

Except for the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Svatobořice exhibition was and currently still is touring very successfully in primary and secondary schools, especially in the region of southern Moravia.

## The exhibition *Doba (před)covidová : Epidemie v minulosti a současnosti* (The (pre-)COVID era: Epidemics in the past and present)

The second large-scale exhibition project was realized during the COVID-19 pandemic and was thematically inspired by this issue. We dealt with the history of epidemics that affected Central Europe and especially the region of southern Moravia.[55] Although the same basic concept of the exhibition project was used, consisting of exhibition panels, a suitcase and a handbook, a different method of presentation was applied and we also separately published a collected volume of student materials and articles, which was the result of student heuristics in the preparatory part of the exhibition.[56]

**Fig. 4:** *Picture from the educational programme for the exhibition Doba (před)covidová : Epidemie v minulosti a současnosti.* Photo: author.

We interpreted the history of epidemics as a reminiscence of health and social crises in the past, where the selection of individual thematic units was also connected with the environment of South Moravia. The target group as well as the focus of the touring exhibition on the school environment remained the same.

**Fig. 5:** *The character of Prof. Raška is stylised and animated on the exhibition panels.*

In the case of this exhibition, the authors were not afraid to experiment, to extend the stories also by fictitious dialogues or monologues "mentioning death" as a result of the disease. The authors decided on a more personal approach to the presentation of the topic and incorporated also some

[55] TIŠLIAR, Pavol, MAŽÁROVÁ, Monika. *Putovní výstava: Doba (před)covidová : Teoretický, koncepční a empirický pohled.* Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2021.

[56] JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie, TIŠLIAR, Pavol (eds.). *Doba (před)covidová : Epidemie v minulosti a současnosti. Materiály a statě.* Bratislava: MKD, 2021, 273 p.

distinctive elements of the narrative into the presentation. They were primarily represented by one of the most important Czechoslovak epidemiologists, Prof. Karel Raška, who made Czechoslovak epidemiology famous for his successes against smallpox epidemics. He contributed to the definitive suppression of this disease, which has accompanied human society practically since prehistoric times. In the exhibition, K. Raška acts as a guide, an enlivening element that actively participates in various dialogues, discussions or plays the role of an explanatory expert. He goes through individual epidemics and holds a dialogue with important discoverers of diseases, but also of medicines, or with various personalities who directly experienced the epidemic. The character of Prof. Raška is stylised and animated on the exhibition panels, with the aim to make him more accessible to the target group of young visitors. Narrative elements are also found in other parts of the panels, where other figures of the aforementioned discoverers and personalities come to life and explain facts related to individual diseases. A combination of the context and elements of the narrative thus created the prerequisites for a simpler understanding of the issue. It was also supplemented with interesting graphic visuals. In addition to photographic materials, schematic pictures in various versions were used as a special element. The schematic depictions refer to relationships, connections, but also conflicts. Their nature is primarily illustrative and explanatory. We also used specially designed graphical symbols (pictograms) not only for quick recognition and easier remembering of the problem, but also as a meaningful and apposite reference element close to the present-day young audience, which is used to working with pictograms on social networks.

In this exhibition, many reference and explanatory elements were used. The first group is represented not only by the aforementioned schematic depictions, but also by tables, graphs, map sketches supplemented with other data with an interpretative dimension. The texts were divided into an opening paragraph, which was often symbolically retold by Prof. Raška or another historical figure, and the accompanying texts that dealt with selected focus questions. An enlivening element on the panels is the question "*Did you know...*", which was used to explain something significant or to point out some rarity or curiosity.

Conceptually, the topic was divided into 14 thematic units. In addition to the timeline with mostly only approximate dates and estimated numbers of victims of individual epidemics, the first topic was about human society as a part of living and evolving nature. People domesticated various wild animals, which in large quantities became the reservoir of various diseases and infections that became endemic to man. That is why one of the elements of this panel is a map with domesticated animals, but also with pictograms symbolically indicating various ways of transmission of diseases.

Other panels were already dominated by the topics of individual epidemics. Starting with the epidemic of the first plague, through smallpox, on which Prof. Raška holds a dialogue with Edward Jenner, who came up with the idea of how to vaccinate and prevent this disease. We also dealt with typhus, cholera and tuberculosis, which in the 19th century were widespread diseases that affected social and cultural life. We have not left out venereal diseases, syphilis and HIV-AIDS, which are also frequent causes of death, but we know how to protect ourselves from them.

Influenza in its various forms can also be a dangerous viral disease. That is why even Prof. Raška does not underestimate it and explains to the schoolchildren that it is a frequent and unpredictable disease. The panel mentions the difficult times of the so-called Spanish flu and

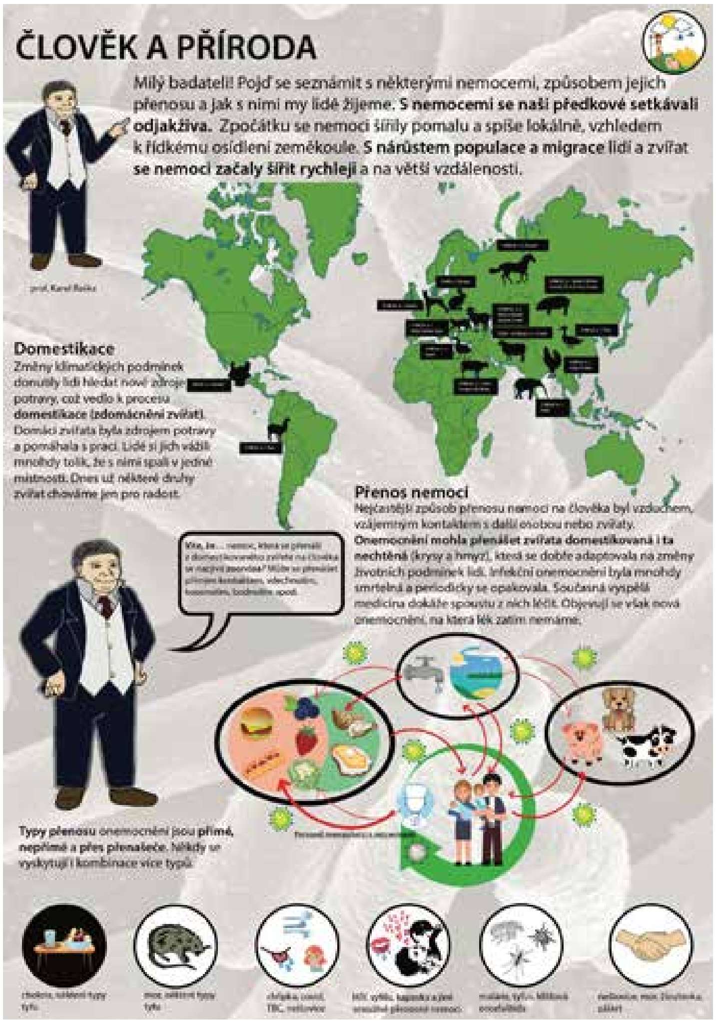


**Fig. 6:** *Sample of the exhibition panel Man and Nature.*

a sad story is told by the talented expressionist painter Egon Schiele, who died together with his wife from the Spanish flu.

The issue of the COVID-19 pandemic was elaborated by students in two panels, which are dominated by the manifestations and reflections/feelings of isolation, empty streets, individual loneliness and fear of the unknown, i.e. feelings that the society experienced at the time of the culminating pandemic. Therefore, these two panels let us feel a stronger, but simply expressed, symbolism of the mentioned emotions.

The last thematic unit with the symptomatic title "*How to deal with epidemics?*" is mainly devoted to hygiene and anti-epidemic measures, including vaccination.

Another part of this exhibition project is a suitcase with accompanying activities and a handbook with the same functions as in the previous touring exhibition.[57] The educational programme is in many ways linked to the concept of the exhibition. The motif is a relatively near future, taking place in 2121, when humanity is experiencing another viral pandemic. But our ancestors left us a legacy, maybe even some medicine, which is hidden in a locked suitcase. We need to find the key to it by searching in cultural, historical and natural-scientific contexts. The educational programme uses worksheets referring to exhibition panels, various photographic and other three-dimensional material (e.g. respirator, bandage, disinfectant gel, protective mask of a plague doctor, protective clothing, test tubes, etc.), with which the students work and are looking for clues. The expected result is, in addition to finding the key to the suitcase, mainly the discussion on individual objects and problems that the students encountered during the search. The expected benefits of the activities are not only the students' acquired knowledge of the history of epidemics, using specific examples, but also the knowledge from the fields of biology, chemistry and geography, where

[57] TIŠLIAR, MAŽÁROVÁ, Putovní výstava…

students get familiar with viruses and bacteria, their natural environment and the contribution of science in dealing with various diseases, generalizing epidemics as a natural part of the life of human society.

Several public institutions, including museums, also showed interest in this exhibition. However, it is offered as a priority to schools.

## The exhibition *Slované – život a smrt* (The Slavs – life and death)

Finally, the latest touring exhibition, which was opened in June 2023, is thematically related to one of the main specializations of the Department of Archaeology and Museology. It is focused on the early medieval period and is related to the arrival and life of the Slavic population in the region of southern Moravia. The original material basis of the exhibition consisted of a rich study collection of archaeological artefacts at the DAM, which is the result of long-term archaeological research and excavations in southern Moravia, especially at the Pohansko stronghold near Břeclav, but also in Mikulčice. Chronologically, we focused on the period from the arrival of the Slavs (6th century) to the demise of Great Moravia (beginning of the 10th century), a state whose centre was situated in present-day Moravia. Individual thematic units were focused on the areas of material and spiritual culture and burial rites, that is, they were directed towards the history of everyday life.

This exhibition project also used a concept where the exhibition consisted of a panel presentation, which is considered the basis of the travelling part of the exhibition, and a showcase

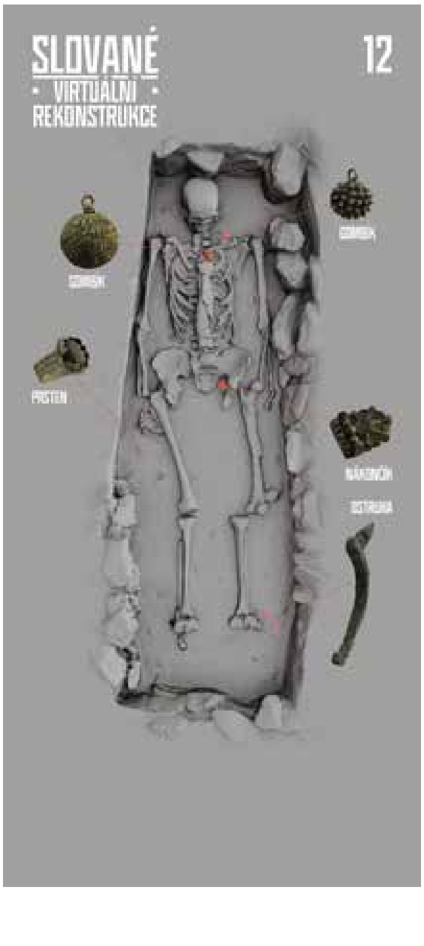


**Fig. 6 & 7:** *The use of virtual reality in the exhibition Slované – život a smrt.*

part with displayed exhibits and audiovisual presentations of the chosen issue. A special part of the exhibition is the reconstruction of a grave find, created using the 3D printing, but also a hologram with 3D scans of selected artefacts. In addition, we also used virtual reality. It represents one of the interactive elements, which with the help of 3D glasses displays an inhumation grave with positioned artefacts that can be picked up and examined

**Fig. 8:** *Educational programme with pupils using objects from the museum suitcase. Photo: M. Molnárová.*

in detail using the remote control. These artefacts are Great Moravian buttons, a finger ring, a belt end, a spur, and other items, that is, objects that the Slavs wore. The VR glasses have also become part of the museum suitcase, so they will travel together with the exhibition panels.

Conceptually, the exhibition was divided into three main thematic units. In addition to the timeline, which chronologically captures the most significant historical events, the first thematic unit deals with the arrival of the Slavs, settlement conditions and ways of living. In the second part, focused mainly on material culture, the students got familiar with what the Slavs have produced, i.e. with crafts and agricultural activities, especially clothing and jewellery. The third thematic block was mainly devoted to spiritual culture, changes in burial rites, original paganism and newly adopted Christianity. The topic is presented primarily contextually and interpretatively. The fundamental graphic motif became fire as one of the main elements worshiped by the Slavs. The exhibition panels also contain other interesting graphic visuals and drawings that enliven individual thematic units and are complemented by many photographic reproductions of reconstructed objects, which the Slavic people have used in everyday life. Similar to previous museum projects, an opening paragraph was used, indicating the content of the panel.

In addition to the mentioned VR glasses, the museum suitcase also contains other substitutes and replicas. There is a replica of a typical Slavic ceramic vessel, made by a special method. It dates back to the 8th–9th centuries. An important element of the prepared educational programme is the so-called pagan idol from Kouřim, depicting faces, probably of the Slavic pantheon. This wooden statuette, which is one of the oldest sculptural works in the Czech Republic, was 3D printed for our needs. In addition, the suitcase contains replicas of Great Moravian buttons, a cross, but also wax tablets and a metal stylus, with which the more educated Slavs were taught to write in Glagolitic script, which was brought to Great Moravia by the brothers Constantine and Methodius. The objects in the suitcase are either metal replicas or 3D printed copies.

The educational programme for the exhibition is set in a story in which students observe the funeral of one of the Slavic men. The story will allow them to explore important aspects of Slavic culture, customs and everyday life. The grave goods and artefacts of the buried man serve as a key to understanding the past of the Slavs and their legacy that continues to the present. In this educational programme, students also work in groups and together create one large worksheet. Each group receives one object (ceramic vessel, belt end, cross, idol), fills in their worksheet and searches for contextual information about the given artefact on the exhibition panels. After filling in the worksheet, each group informs the other classmates about the results of their search.

## In conclusion

Compact touring exhibition projects are quite widely used, especially in the non-museum environment. Although they mostly do not contain authentic collection items, but are rather based on various replicas, substitutes and models, their importance for the museum institution can be considerable. Either in the form of an active marketing notification of a standard exhibition in the museum's premises, or created for informational purposes and dealing with topics that resonate in the relevant museum with regard to the specialization of its collection holdings. They thus offer the possibility of cooperation with communities, schools and other interest organizations, or simply draw attention to the existence of a museum in the region.

For the field of Museology at Masaryk University, this type of exhibitions has become the basis of an active collaboration with primary and secondary schools, since the touring exhibition projects are primarily aimed at the school environment. At the same time, they are also the result of cooperation with various museum facilities, as a great deal of information which is part of the exhibition project is secured, for example, by loans from these institutions. For museology students, it is the preparation and realization of an exhibition that contains all the essential elements of exhibition making in museum practice. It enables them to work comprehensively, from the elaboration of the topic, through the preparation of the storyline and contextual relationships of individual parts of the exhibition, to its direct implementation, including graphic visuals. At the same time, we consider it very beneficial to use the knowledge of the students' deeper thematic orientation for the preparation of an educational programme and other accompanying activities, which are subsequently realized in schools together with the exhibition and explain and interpret its selected thematic parts and problems in a simple, playful and stimulating way. At the same time, selected students can lecture the educational programme in schools and thus gain new experience in the field of museum pedagogy.

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# Exedrae as a tool of social visibility[1]

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*Exedrae as a tool of social visibility*
The article is focused on the public presentation of (not only) influential persons – the aristocracy, high-ranking citizens (euergetes and benefactors) in ancient Greece in the period from the end of the 5th century BC to the 2nd century AD – through structures known as *exedrae*. These architectural features, located on sites that are part of the cultural heritage, can still be found *in situ* in the entire Eastern Mediterranean region. Presented will be case examples of *exedrae* and their connection to social presentation as well as the issue of the primary purpose of their construction. In conclusion, two cases of these type of structures and its fate will be mentioned in connection with its removal from the original findspot in effort to present it in a museum.

Keywords: exedrae, scholae, social situation, euergetism, benefactorism, social visibility

## 1. Introduction

*Exedrae* represents a so-called small architecture that can be implemented as part of the musealization process. Apart from their form and primary purpose, these structures mainly carry the information that provide insight into the social situation. For this reason, the exedrae can represents link between archaeology and museology with both successful and unsuccessful musealization process, which can be delicate matter in the context of preserving the valuable information which these structures carried.

As part of the reciprocal link between archaeology and museology, the focus is primarily laid on the preservation and presentation of archaeological finds, which, based on their nature, can be stored in a depot, and occasionally (or permanently) displayed in temporary or permanent exhibitions. The theoretical foundations of these scientific disciplines and their mutual relationship within the framework of archaeological and prehistoric museology were summarized by Kirsch[2] in his inaugural dissertation, where he also addressed the concept of the most important representatives from Czechoslovakia. Within the formation of the archaeological phenomenon as part of museology as a science, it is, above all, necessary to

[1] The article is an output of the project: Specifický výzkum MUNI/A/1329/2022 "Muzejní prezentace II – moderní přístupy a trendy v muzejní prezentaci".

[2] KIRSCH, Otakar. *Mezi teorií, praxí a ideologií. K vývoji speciálních muzeologií v českých zemích v letech 1948–1989*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, habilitační práce. 2020, pp. 127–129.

mention in this context the works of archaeologists Jiří Neustupný[3] and Karel Sklenář,[4] even though they primarily paid attention to objects of movable material culture. Their ideas and works laid the foundations for the formation of the relationship between archaeology and museology, especially in the field of prehistoric and historical archaeology in the Central European region. The museologist Zbyněk Zbyslav Stránský[5] has described in his publication classical archaeology in the context of architecture. He paid his attention to fragmentary and often schematic descriptions of buildings, which, according to him, were related to a form of presentation and preservation of various objects. On the example of his text on Delphi, in which he describes individual shrines standing in close proximity to the *exedrae* of Argos mentioned in the text below, we can see the way of choosing and describing "representative" buildings without considering the wider context. In the case of classical archaeology, however, it is often necessary to approach the problem specifically, i.e. based on the type of material culture – movable and immovable, but above all considering the written sources and the whole social context. Within (not only) classical archaeology, it is necessary to see the differences between objects of material culture that can be removed from the original place of discovery and transported to a museum or memory institution within the musealisation process, and objects that do not allow this process due to their nature, such as, for example, architecture.

**Fig. 1:** *Benches from the eastern end of the Stoa at the Amphiareion of Oropos, Attica.* CC: Athanasios Sideris

The article will discuss the form of social and historical presentation related to architectural structures called *exedrae*. From the point of view of mobility, it is possible to place *exedrae* on a

[3] NEUSTUPNÝ, Jiří. *Otázky dnešního musejnictví. Příspěvky k obecné a speciální museologii.* Praha: Orbis, 1950.

[4] SKLENÁŘ, Karel. K úkolům archeologie v muzeích v 7. pětiletce. In: *Muzejní a vlastivědná práce.* Praha: Národní muzeum, 1982, no. 2, pp. 65–127.

[5] STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Archeologie a muzeologie.* Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2005, pp.137–145.

certain boundary, since they represent the so-called "small architecture". Their removal from the original place is not impossible but this act of separation from the original context may or may not cause damage or deterioration of this type of structures as will be described below.

## 2. The term *exedra* and its definition

The term *exedra* comes from the ancient Greek phrase *ex hedra*[6]. However, the interpretation of this term is variable, as it could refer to any niche equipped with benches,[7] whether in private houses or public spaces or a social room.[8] Within ancient sources, this term is also diversified to single-standing benches,[9] *exedrae* in the form of niches in buildings equipped with benches[10] or monumental halls or parlours.[11] Due to the wide scope that this term represents within architecture, it is necessary to define this issue structurally. The attention will therefore be focused primarily on free-standing and publicly accessible stone benches. In terms of dating, the article will describe *exedrae* from the period of their early appearance, i.e. from the classical period (5th century BC) to the Roman period – in this case the 2nd century AD. From a geographical point of view, *exedrae* were found throughout the Eastern Mediterranean with parallel examples of structures identical in design and purpose from Pompeii, called *scholae*[12] based on a preserved inscription.

The issue of *exedrae* of the type defined in this article was previously comprehensively and comparatively treated in a single publication by Susanne Freifrau von Thüngen in the form of a catalogue monograph.[13] The periods that preceded and followed the publication of the

[6] ἐξ-έδρα. LIDDEL, H. G. – SCOTT, R. *A Greek-English Lexicon.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940, accessed November 31st 2023, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aalphabetic+letter%3D*e%3Aentry+group%3D144%3Aentry%3De%29ce%2Fdra

[7] Exedra. BAHNÍK, Václav (ed.). *Slovník antické kultury.* Praha: Svoboda, 1974, p. 206.

[8] Exedra. KRAUS, Jiří (ed.). *Slovník cudzích slov (akademický).* Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 2008, p. 275.

[9] As, for example, described by SCHICHE, Th., CICERO, Marcus Tullius. *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum.* Leipzig: Teubner, 1915, 5.2.4, accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:latinLit:phi0474.phi048.perseus-lat1:5.4; NIESE, B., FLAVIUS Josephus. *De Bello Judaico Libri VII.* Berlin: Weidmann, 1895, 1.422 accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0526.tlg004.perseus-grc1:1.422; MEINEKE, A., STRABÓN. *Geografika.* Leipzig: Teubner, 1877, 13.4.5 accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0099.tlg001.perseus-grc1:13.4.5; Ibidem, 17.1.8 accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0099.tlg001.perseus-grc1:17.1.8

[10] Niches that open into free space on at least one side are described by PLASBERG, O., CICERO, Marcus Tullius. *De Natura Deorum.* Leipzig: Teubner 1917, 1.15 accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:latinLit:phi0474.phi050.perseus-lat1:1.15 or KIRSOPP, Lake – OULTON, J. E. L. – LAWLOR, H. J., EUSEBIUS. *The Ecclesiastical History,* vol. 1–2. London, New York, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1926–1932, 10.4.45 accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg2018.tlg002.perseus-grc1:10.4.45

[11] OATES, Whitney, J. – O'Neill, Eugen, Jr., EURIPIDES. *The Complete Greek Drama.* New York: Random House, 1938, 1449 accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0006.tlg016.perseus-eng1:1425-1472; KROHN, F., VITRUVIUS, Pollio. *De Architectura.* Lipsiae: B. G. Teubner, 1912, 5.11.2 accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:latinLit:phi1056.phi001.perseus-lat1:5.11; Ibidem, 6.3.8 accessed October 21st, 2023, http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:latinLit:phi1056.phi001.perseus-lat1:6.3.8

[12] MOLNÁROVÁ, Miriam. Štruktúry typu schola v Pompejách – symbol a ukážka moci príslušníkov pompejskej aristokracie na príklade štruktúr určených na odpočinok. In: *Studia archaeologica Brunensia.* Brno: Masaryk University Press, 25(2), 2020, pp. 5–34, ISSN 2336-4505 (Online). DOI: https://doi.org/10.5817/SAB2020-2-1

[13] THÜNGEN, Susanne F. von. *Die frei stehende griechische Exedra.* Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1994. ISBN 3-8053-1471-X

above-mentioned work are characterized above all by the brief inclusion of *exedrae* within studies of either an architectural or epigraphic nature, mostly with a focus on one specific site. The author's ambition is to focus primarily on the *exedrae* as a place of social function within the social visibility of the donors or people connected through the inscriptions to these *exedrae*. Secondary two case studies will be briefly presented as the examples concerning the issue of transporting such small architecture within the musealisation process and its pros and cons.

## 3. Occurrence and use of *exedrae*

The occurrence of public *exedrae* can be observed on various types of sites. In the necropolises, they had a double purpose – when placed on the main road, they were pure rest areas, when placed in tombs, they had a dual function. Firstly, they were used as a place for rest and gathering of the family of the deceased during commemoration ceremonies. At the same time, however, they served as base on which the sarcophagus with the remains (burial) of the deceased was placed. Within the cities, they were found along the main roads, but also in the buildings of public life areas, such as the agora and the acropolis. In sacred precincts, they were

**Fig. 2:** *The Exedra of Pamphylidas*. CC: Miriam Molnárová (archive of the author)

often built again along the main roads, and in this case also processional route, in the vicinity of temples or in the areas of stoas. A special example is the *exedrae* in the vicinity of temples, which were not freely accessible to the general public. The last specific issue associated with *exedrae* is the threefold type of funding, including the construction of the *exedrae* themselves, statues and dedicatory inscriptions, or a combination of all three, at public, private and combined expenses. Individual cases will be outlined in the text below.

In connection with the accumulation of exedrae at individual types of sites, sometimes numbering up to dozens of specimens, and their specific location, a question arises of the primary purpose of their construction. Were they primarily a place for rest or a display of individuals? In some cases, there are specimens whose function as a place for rest can be determined with certainty. Such type of benches can be found, for example, in the sacred precinct of Amphiareion at the site of Oropos in Attica, dated to the 4th century BC. These simple rectangular stone benches, which stood on legs resembling lion's paws, surrounded both of the terminal rooms of the stoa located on the north-eastern and south-western sides of the building, leaving a gap for the door.[14] In this case, the benches represented a place intended for *enkoimesis*, i.e. ritual sleeping or incubation of pilgrims who visited this sanctuary[15] to obtain advice, oracular response or healing (not only) from the ancient Greek hero Amphiaraos (Fig. 1).

In certain cases of specific *exedrae*, on the other hand, it is questionable whether their primary purpose was to serve as a resting place. This question arises due to their overall inaccessibility, even in a publicly available place, where the given *exedra* could not be used for sitting. An example can be the *Exedra* of Pamhylidas, which is located directly under the Propylaea of the Temple of Athena Lindia, on the acropolis above the city of Lindos on the island of Rhodes. The inaccessibility of this *exedra* as a place for rest is due to its placement on a platform with an average height of up to 150 cm (Fig. 2).

## 4. Honorific and commemorative presentation in the context of *exedrae*

As it was already indicated in the introduction to the article, *exedrae* in Antiquity were not used only for the purpose of rest, but also presentation, as the bases or pedestals for statues and dedicatory inscriptions. Unfortunately, the statues, mostly made of bronze or local types of stone, have not survived to this day. However, traces of the placement of the statues can still be seen on the exedrae in the form of depressions left by the small bases of the statues or footprints. The absence of these statues is mainly due to the material they were made of, in most cases bronze, which was often remelted and recycled. Stone statues also did not escape the fate of being damaged or completely removed from their original place for the purpose of "recycling" a specific *exedra*, and in later periods they were destroyed as a result of the rise of monotheistic religions (mainly Christianity and then Islam). Within this issue, it is possible to gain an insight into the social situation based on preserved inscriptions that connect the existence of the statues with specific persons. The portraits or inscriptions that the *exedrae* bore were by no means uniform or strictly tied to one specific social class. For this reason, considering the high number of *exedrae* that can be found in the Eastern Mediterranean[16], this chapter will outline examples of *exedrae* that are related to representatives of various social classes. Two ancient sites will serve as case studies. Delphi, specifically the sanctuary

[14] COULTON, J. J. The Stoa at the Amphiaraion, Oropos. In: *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, vol. 63, 1968, p. 169, ISSN 2045-2403 (Online). DOI: 10.1017/S0068245400014313

[15] LUPU, E. Sacrifice at the Amphiareion and a Fragmentary Sacred Law from Oropos. In: *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, vol. 72, 2003, No. 3, pp. 321–340, ISSN 1553-5622 (Online). DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/3182024

[16] The number of *exedrae* so far represents around 200 specimens from the entire Eastern Mediterranean region. The number of these structures is based on the author's own research during the preparation of her dissertation.

of Apollo and the famous oracle, and the area of the acropolis of Athena Lindia in the city of Lindos on Rhodes. The selected sites have yielded large numbers of *exedrae*, among them specimens intertwining different social strata, forms of funding, but also individual conceptual and presentational rarities in the context of decoration and presentation, on the basis of which they were chosen for this article.

4.1 *Delphi*

Considering the number of preserved *exedrae*, Delphi is a rich site. There are specimens of individual Greek *poleis*, city-state leagues, slaves, and influential benefactors. Despite this, in Delphi there are rare examples of honorific monuments of Hellenistic kings, who, with the exception of mainly the dynasty of Pergamon, did not pay much attention to this place.[17] The presentation of royal power and benefactorism can be seen in the example of an *exedra* with honorific statues, which Attalus I had built near the *opisthodomos* of the Temple of Apollo[18] after the victory of the Aetolian League over the Gauls in the 3rd century BC.[19]

In Delphi, it is possible to find *exedrae* at the south-eastern end of the Sacred Way, but also in the area called *Aire*[20] or *Halos*[21], located along the Sacred Way in the open space between treasuries and the Stoa of the Athenians. This area represented a place without monumental buildings but with numerous honorific statues, where the Delphic annual festivities and processions were taking place.[22] During the aforementioned festivities, the *exedrae* placed here could have served primarily as thrones for priests and cult initiates, but also for important and high-ranking citizens – judges, archons and other officials.[23]

Slaves represented the lowest class of people in ancient Greece without civil rights. Despite this fact, it is possible to find dedications left by slaves on two selected *exedrae* that were located in the *Halos* area. These semicircular *exedrae* bore templated inscriptions dedicated to Apollo. According to the inscriptions, which, based on the list of ruling archons, can be dated to the 3rd century BC, we are informed that the act of paying 5 silver coins for a given inscription helped each slave to gain his freedom.[24]

Other *exedrae* that can be found right at the beginning of the Sacred Way are monumental bases built by the city of Argos, used for the commemorative and honorific presentation of

[17] GRZESIK, Dominika. *Honorific Culture at Delphi in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2021, p. 95. ISBN 978-90-04-50247-5

[18] THÜNGEN, Susanne F. von. Die frei stehende griechische Exedra..., pp. 53–56; PARTIDA, Elena, C. Architectural Elements and Historic Circumstances that Shaped the Sanctuary of Delphi During the So-called 'Age of the Warriors'. In: COURTILS, Jacques des (ed.). *L'architecture monumentale grecque au IIIe siècle a.C.* Bordeaux: Ausonius Éditions, 2015, p. 39. ISBN 978-2-35613-144-7

[19] STILLWELL, Richard, MACDONALD, William L., MCALLISTER, Marian Holland (eds.). *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017, p. 265. ISBN: 9780691654201

[20] SCOTT, Michael. *Delphi: A History of the Center of the Ancient World*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014, p. 294. ISBN: 978-0-691-15081-9

[21] THÜNGEN, Susanne F. von..Die frei stehende griechische Exedra..., pp. 53–57.

[22] GRZESIK, Dominika. The Power of Space and Memory: The Honorific Statuescape of Delphi. In: *Antichton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 29.

[23] PARTIDA, Elena, C. Architectural Elements and Historic Circumstances..., p. 39.

[24] After THÜNGEN, Susanne F. von..Die frei stehende griechische Exedra..., pp. 56–57.

influential citizens and legendary heroes in the form of bronze statues.[25] The first one dates to the 5th century BC. In this period, Delphi became a spectacular place for the presentation of heroic and monumental Greek history. On the semicircular *exedra* of Argos, called the *Exedra* of the Epigones,[26] the story of the Seven against Thebes[27] was retold. The second *exedra*, standing exactly opposite the *Exedra* of the Epigones, is the *Exedra* of the Kings (or Heroes) of Argos. However, the interesting thing about this *exedra* is the way it was placed, right next to the Spartan stoa, which commemorated the victory over Athens. This *exedra*, with its location, thus directly hindered access to the mentioned stoa.[28] In the case of this *exedra*, it is evident that these structures did not have to represent only tools of a certain form of social presentation, but also a kind of political expression of a certain disagreement or rivalry between individual city-states. In the context of the *exedrae* recycling phenomenon, the aforementioned *exedra* was still used to bear another statue in the 2nd century AD, under the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius. Centuries after the original construction of the *exedra* itself and the statues, the city of Argos had a statue of Marcus Aurelius Ptolemaios – a poet who won the Pythian Musical Games – erected on this *exedra*.[29]

One of the most interesting persons of his time linked to the site of Delphi, not only in the context of *exedrae*, is Herodes Atticus. This influential benefactor from the 2nd century AD was known primarily for his building activities in various locations of ancient Greece. One of his most monumental achievements – the Odeon of Herodes Atticus – can still be found in excellent condition in Athens today, also due to extensive reconstruction in the 1950s, which enabled the use of this "Herodeon" for various, especially musical, performances to this day.[30] A prominent *exedra* was built at Delphi by the Delphic *polis* to honour Herodes for his rich donations. The structure was located in the *Halos* area near the exedrae which bore the inscriptions from slaves. In the case of this *exedra*, a combined type of funding is known, in which the basic structure, together with the statue of Herodes, his son and his wife, was paid for from public funds, and then, after its completion, Herodes Atticus had statues erected on this *exedra* for his other descendants.[31]

### 4.2 *Lindos*

The second selected location, which is important in the context of the occurrence of *exedrae*, is Lindos in the south-eastern part of the island of Rhodes. This city, built on a rocky

[25] PARTIDA, Elena, C.: I DIADOKHI POLITIKON DINAMEON STIS DELPHIS KAI I EPIRRI TIS STIN ARKHITEKTONIKI DIAMORPHOSI TI IERATIKI TOPII [The Succession of Political Forces in the Bulletins and their Influence on the Architectural Configuration of the Priestly Landscape]. In: *ARKHAIOLOYIKO ERGO THESSALIAS KAI STEREAS ELLADAS 4,* Bolos: IDEA & I.I.D., I.D. and TYPOS, 2015, p. 877. ISSN: 1790-7039 [Greek]

[26] GRZESIK, Dominika. *Honorific Culture at Delphi*..., p. 152.

[27] SCOTT, Michael. Delphi..., p.133; The story of the *Seven against Thebes*, see SMYTH, Herbert. AESCHYLUS. *Seven Against Thebes.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1926, accessed October 28th, 2023 http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0085.tlg004.perseus-eng1:1-38.

[28] SCOTT, Michael. Delphi..., p. 146.

[29] Ibidem, p. 362; BOURGUET, Émile: *Fouilles de Delphes, III. Épigraphie. Fasc. 1, Inscriptions de l'entrée du sanctuaire au trésor des Athéniens.* Paris: Boccard, 1929, ID 1 89.

[30] VASSILANTONOPOULOS, Stamatis, L. – MOURJOPOULOS, John. The Acoustics of Roofed Ancient Odeia: The Case of Herodes Atticus Odeion. In: *Acta Acustica United with Acustica*, vol. 95, 2009, no. 2, p. 291. ISSN: 2681-4617. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3813/AAA.918151

[31] GRZESIK, Dominika. The Power of Space and Memory..., p. 29.; GRZESIK, Dominika. *Honorific Culture at Delphi*..., p. 154.

promontory directly above the bay, was patronized by Athena Lindia, whose temple was located on the acropolis overlooking the modern town.[32] Considering the number of *exedrae* at this place and their fragmentary state of preservation, three specimens representing different forms of presentation and commemoration – personal and historical – will be described in the following text.

**Fig. 3:** *The Exedra with Trireme*. CC: Miriam Molnárová (archive of the author)

The first, perhaps the most famous *exedra* and the only one of its kind can be found at the northern foot of the acropolis, directly under the fortification wall and the stairway leading to the Dioiketerion, dating to the 14th–15th centuries AD.[33] The originality of this *exedra* lies primarily in its design. The *exedra* itself, dated to 180 BC, consisted of stone blocks smoothly transitioning into the decorative motif of a *trireme*, carved into the rocky massif on which the entire acropolis was situated (Fig. 3). From the preserved inscription we learn that the city of Lindos had it built in honour of Hagesander, son of Mikion, for his good will towards the inhabitants of Lindos. The dedication also mentions other honours that the city paid him besides the *exedra*, namely a golden crown, a portrait (made of bronze, which has not been preserved to this day) and the so-called *proedria*,[34] i.e. the privilege of a "seat of honour". On this *exedra*, there is also a preserved inscription of the author who made this work – Pythokritos,

[32] PAPACHRISTODOULOU, Ioannis, Ch. *Lindos: Brief History – the Monuments.* Athens: Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Archaeological Receipts Fund, Directorate of Publications, 2006, p. 9. ISBN: 960-214-505-6

[33] Ibidem*,* p. 20.

[34] Proedria. BAHNÍK, Václav (ed). *Slovník antické kultury...*, p. 507.

son of Timochares.[35] It was Pythokritos, a native of Rhodes, who made the famous Victory of Samothrace – a monumental statue of the winged goddess, who is also associated with the Rhodian fleet by being positioned as the figurehead at the bow of ships. In relation to the decorative design of this *exedra*, it is possible to connect Hagesander with the navy. Despite the non-preserved sources, we can infer that he must have had a high rank in the Lindian navy because of his status, which was granted to him based on his actions.[36]

Another *exedra*, which is still located in close vicinity of the Propylaea on the acropolis, is the *Exedra* of Pamphylidas. This *exedra* is unique due to its height, which does not enable to use it as a place for rest, as was already mentioned in the opening chapter, but also due to its long presentation history. The origins of this *exedra* go back to the end of the 3rd century BC, when a statue of Pamhylidas, son of Telesarchos, was erected here by Phyles of Halikarnassos.[37] According to the preserved inscription,[38] this *exedra* originally presented only Pamhylidas, who was a priest of Athena Lindia and Zeus Polieus.[39] However, considering the numerous depressions after small statue bases and footprints and the entire group of inscriptions located on the back rest, it is clear that this *exedra* was also used for other family members even two centuries after the statue of Pamhylidas[40] was erected (Fig. 4). On this *exedra*, thanks to the extensive inscriptions, we can recognize the family relationships – biological, marital and adoptive ties within a wider family, whose members continuously held priestly positions, just as the central figure of Pamhylidas. Apart from the male members of the family, a female statue with an inscription from this family was also placed on this *exedra*.[41] A dedicatory inscription was thus placed under each statue of a family member, helping to understand their family relationship with other depicted family members as well as their functions within the city. An exceptional

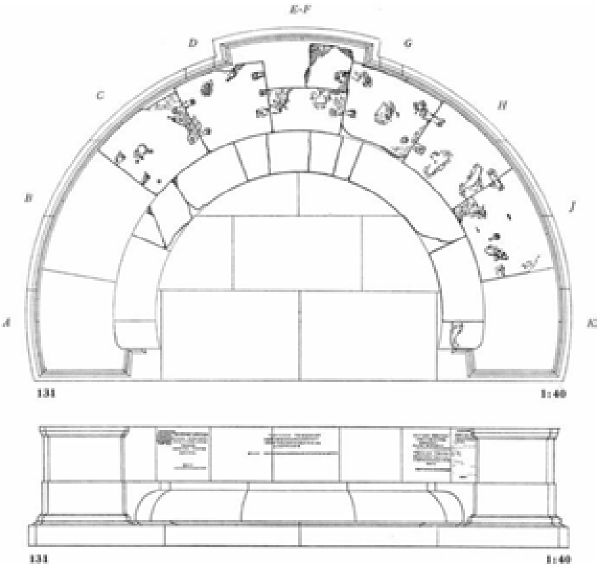


**Fig. 4:** *Drawing of the Exedra of Pamphylidas.* CC: Keesing, Catherine, M. 2022.
*After von Thüngen, Beil. 24.*
Source: researchgate https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Pamphylidas-exedra-in-the-sanctuary-of-Athena-Lindia-on-the-Acropolis-of-Lindos_fig4_361784502 [accessed November 7th, 2023]

[35] MA, John. *Statues and Cities. Honorific Portraits and Civic Identity in the Hellenistic World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 31. ISBN: 978-0-19-966891-5; BLINKENBERG, Christian. *Lindos. Fouilles et recherches, 1902-1914.* Vol. II. Inscriptions. Copenhagen Berlin: De Gruyter, 1941, ID 169-171.

[36] PAPACHRISTODOULOU, Ioannis, Ch. Lindos...,, p. 22.

[37] Ibidem, p. 24.

[38] BLINKENBERG, Christian. Lindos. Fouilles et recherches..., ID 131.

[39] KEESING, Catherine, M. Ἀνεπίγραφοι. The Pragmatics of Unnamed Portraits. In: DIETRICH, Nikolaus – FOUQUET Johannes (eds.).: *Image, Text, Stone: Intermedial Perspectives on Graeco-Roman Sculpture.* Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2022, p. 99. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110775761-004 ISBN 9783110775761

[40] THÜNGEN, Susanne F. von. *Die frei stehende griechische Exedra...*, p. 91; BLINKENBERG, Christian. *Lindos...,* ID 131a-f.

[41] BLINKENBERG, Christian. Lindos. Fouilles et recherches..., ID 131d.

and perhaps even more interesting feature, untypical of the Hellenistic period, is the depiction and placement of three children's statues on this *exedra*, which stood next to the central figure of Pamhylidas.[42] Unfortunately, inscriptions that would shed light on the personalities of the mentioned children and their identification were never added to this *exedra*.

The last selected *exedra* from the area of the acropolis of Lindos that is described in this article is the votive *exedra* of Emperor Tiberius, dated to AD 17–19. To this day, this *exedra* has been preserved in a fragmentary state. Individual stone blocks were found in the vicinity of the place where the "reconstructed" *exedra* stands today.[43] However, it is still possible, on the basis of fragmentary inscriptions and massive depressions in the form of footprints, to identify the dedication and to place this *exedra* in a social and historical context. An inscription, which is still preserved on the *exedra* in its entirety, shows that this *exedra* was dedicated to Emperor Tiberius by the city of Lindos.[44] Along with his larger-than-life-size statue, which was placed at the centre of the *exedra*, there also were three other statues of members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Based on the inscriptions, we can identify a larger-than-life-size statue of Tiberius' adoptive father and predecessor Augustus, as well as his biological son Drusus the Younger (also Drusus Minor). The last person, although quite disputable, might be Germanicus – Tiberius' adopted son, who died under mysterious circumstances in AD 19, during his stay in Antioch.[45] The dedication and construction of this votive *exedra* are not surprising given the relationship that Tiberius had with Rhodes. At the turn of the eras, after the exposure of various scandals and love affairs of his wife Julia, he partly withdrew from his official duties and retired to the island. The political and private situation of Tiberius in this period are unclear, primarily due to contradictory and hazy contemporary testimonies by ancient authors. It is for the mentioned reason that Tiberius' retirement to Rhodes is still a subject of debate.[46] However, Emperor Tiberius visibly had a positive affection for the island, which is evidenced (not only) by the *exedra*, dedicated to him by the city of Lindos.

## 5. *Exedrae* and musealisation – case studies of the *Schola* of Mamia in Pompeii and the bench of Gaios Kreperios in Eleusis

A rare examples of an effort to transport and then display this type of archaeological structures in a museum is known from Pompeii and Eleusis. A *schola*, dedicated to the priestess Mamia,[47] was shortly after its discovery in 1763 transported to the museum in Portici, where it was displayed in the courtyard. After less than two decades, in 1784, it was again dismantled in parts and transported back to Pompeii, where it was positioned in its original place. Unfortunately, this act resulted in extensive damage and structural changes to this *schola*. The fundamental change was the destruction of a massive stone block that bore the dedicatory inscription. The process of transportation thus damaged the inscription, on which two letters are missing to this day.[48] At the same time, the side arm rest, decorated in the shape of a lion's

[42] KEESING, Catherine, M.: Ἀνεπίγραφοι..., p.100.
[43] THÜNGEN, Susanne F. von. *Die frei stehende griechische Exedra*..., pp. 128–129.
[44] [Λ]ίν[διοι τ]ο[ὺς] εὐ[εργέτα]ς. The whole inscription is recorded in BLINKENBERG, Christian. Lindos. Fouilles et recherches..., ID 414.
[45] THÜNGEN, Susanne F. von. *Die frei stehende griechische Exedra*..., p. 129.
[46] LEVICK, Barbara M. Tiberius' Retirement to Rhodes in 6 B.C. In: *Latomus*, vol. 31, 1972, No. 3, pp. 779–813. ISSN 0023-8856.
[47] MOLNÁROVÁ, Miriam. Štruktúry typu schola v Pompejách... p. 23.
[48] M[am?]miae P(ubli) f(iliae) sacerdoti publicae locus sepultur(ae) datus decurionum decreto. MOMMSEN, Theodor. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum X¹: Inscriptiones Bruttorum, Lucaniae, Campaniae.* Berolini: G. Remeirum, 1883, ID *998*

**Fig. 5:** *Detail of the damage to the Schola of Mamia, Pompeii.* CC: Jörn Kobes.
Source: db.edcs https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder/$J_D_06369_1.jpg [accessed November 7th, 2023]

claw, has been moved significantly (Fig. 5).[49] As mentioned at the beginning of the article, the *exedrae*, or in the case of Pompeii, *scholae*, do not represent structures that are impossible to move and incorporate into the museological process. But, unfortunately, the case of the *Schola* of Mamia adequately proves that even in the case of movable architecture, the likely result is a lesser or greater damage, which directly affects the evidence related to the social situation, as was the (although only partial) damage to the inscription on this *schola*.

The bench from Eleusis is a contrary example. A marble bench of simple rectangular shape standing on four pairs of lion's claws, bearing the dedicatory inscription of the businessman of Gaios Kreperios, son of Gaios dated to the 1st century BC[50], which was originally located elsewhere within the sanctuary.[51] Today this bench is housed in the Eleusis Archaeological Museum in a practically undamaged state (fig. 6).

[49] KOCKEL, Valentin. *Die Grabbauten vor dem Herkulaner Tor in Pompeji.* Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1983, pp. 57–59. ISBN 978-3805304801; CAMPBELL, Virginia. L. *The Tombs of Pompeii: Organization, Space and Society.* New York and London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 157–158. ISBN 9781317611394. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315750187
[50] CLINTON, K. The Eleusinian Mysteries: Roman Initiates and Benefactors, Second Century B.C. to A.D. 267. In HAASE, W. (ed.) *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (ANRW) / Rise and Decline of the Roman World. Band 18/2. Teilband Religion (Heidentum: Die religiösen Verhältnisse in den Provinzen [Forts.]).* Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1989, p. 1507. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110855708-015. ISBN: 3-11-001885-3
[51] PALINKAS J. L. *Eleusinian Gateways: Entrances to the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis and the City Eleusinion in Athens.* Atlanta: Emory University, PhD. Dissertation. 2008, p. 190

**Fig. 6:** *Stone bench from the sanctuary in Eleusis, currently in Eleusis Archaeological Museum.*
CC: Athanasios Sideris

It is of course necessary to state the fact that destructive transports were taking place primarily in the time of the 18th century AD. Today, more emphasis is placed on the movement and preservation of monuments of small architecture, helping the conservation not only of these monuments but also of the surviving inscriptions enlightening the social situation associated with them.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of the presented article was to prove the role of importance for social visibility in *exedrae*, which are still found *in situ* at cultural heritage sites in the Eastern Mediterranean and on the Apennine Peninsula. Considering the mentioned examples from the sites of Delphi and Lindos, it is clear that these *exedrae* cannot be connected to one specific social class. In this case, the *exedrae* and the inscriptions or statues placed on them represent the evidence of diverse individuals, starting with the class of slaves, through influential citizens of their time, holding either official or religious positions, to the highest-ranking personalities of kings and emperors. The *exedrae*, which presented locally engaged citizens or families, thus help to understand and reconstruct the social situation on a wider scope than what we know from the comprehensive historical works by ancient authors as well as modern researchers.

In the context of *exedrae*, it is important to think about what these structures represented to ancient man – a wealthy citizen, a visitor to sanctuaries asking the Gods for healing or advice, but also an ordinary pilgrim. The search for an answer to this question is a long research journey involving the study of architecture, epigraphy, social studies and prosopography as well as aesthetics and psychology.

*Exedrae*, showing a certain form of presentation – whether of individuals, myths, heroic stories or even history – could represent an imaginary bridge between archaeology and museology in both an educational and a presentational context, without being removed from their original location and damaged. Reconstructions of the *exedrae* and their original appearance are possible thanks to modern technologies – primarily 3D reconstructions and partly also virtual reality, which are relatively widespread today. In this regard, a wide space now opens to new research and analyses, which are mainly induced by the methodological approach from the time of the first excavations and investigations until the mid-20th century. They focused their attention primarily on monumental buildings, so that *exedrae*, which are classified as "small architecture", were pushed into the background. For this reason, one should be aware that history and the course of events did not depend only on the "great" personalities of their time, but often also on unknown individuals who, albeit on a small but not insignificant scale, influenced the regional history and moved it forward.

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