Problems of preservation, protection and restoration of cultural heritage objects and museum collections in the conditions of war

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Problems of preservation, protection and restoration of cultural heritage objects and museum collections in the conditions of war
The article is devoted to the problem of the preservation and restoration of objects of cultural heritage – monuments and museum collections – in the conditions of war. The article's analysis is supplemented by a brief overview of how mankind has approached the protection of its material cultural heritage in historical times. According to data verified by UNESCO, as of November 21, 2022, 218 sites have been damaged in Ukraine since the start of the war on February 24, including 95 religious sites, 17 museums, 78 buildings of historical and/or artistic significance, 18 monuments and 10 libraries.[1] The experience of the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian war has once again proven the insecurity of cultural heritage sites and museums in the face of conflict. The authors analysed the Ukrainian experience of protecting monuments, the effectiveness of these efforts, and various ways of preserving the cultural heritage of

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[1] UNESCO. Damaged cultural sites in Ukraine verified by UNESCO, accessed 25 November, 2022 www.unesco.org/en/articles/damaged-cultural-sites-ukraine-verified-unesco.

peoples during wars. The discussion closes with conclusions on possible remedies for the destruction of material cultural objects in Ukraine.

Keywords: monuments, cultural heritage, Russian–Ukrainian war, destruction

Introduction

War damage to buildings and museum collections and their subsequent recovery (or restitution in the case of looted artworks) has been the subject of numerous books, including those by Lynn H. Nicholas,[2] Robert Bevan[3] and Jeanette Greenfield[4]. The damage done to libraries and archives by armed conflict in the twentieth century has been thoroughly documented in a report for UNESCO'S *Memory of the World* project.[5] The application of international conventions with regard to the protection of cultural property against acts of war has also been studied by Patrick J. Boylan (1993),[6] Kevin Chamberlain (2004)[7] and Jacek Dworzecki et al. (2020).[8]

The originality of this article lies in the fact that it is based directly on the events associated with the full-scale phase of the Russian–Ukrainian war. Despite the coverage of the events of this ongoing war in the mass media, scientific sources analysing these events and have not yet appeared. The majority of descriptions during the war tend to be journalistic, and the main topics tend to concentrate on the military and economic spheres. As the experience of history shows, in-depth studies appear much later, after a certain time after the end of military operations, when there is an opportunity to objectively perceive these events in time and assess them properly.

The authors of the presented material provided their vision of only one aspect related to social life during the war – the protection, preservation and restoration of monuments, museums and museum collections, paying only cursory attention towards increasingly negative attitudes towards Russian imperial monuments within Ukraine.[9]

One of the features of the current war is Russia's massive destruction of the historical and cultural heritage of Ukraine, the looting of museums in the occupied territories and the removal of exhibits. Religious buildings are among the most widely destroyed and damaged objects of historical and cultural heritage in this war. The majority of destroyed religious buildings, as of

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[2] NICHOLAS, Lynn H. *The rape of Europa: the fate of Europe's treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War*. New York: Knopf, 1994.

[3] BEVAN, Robert. *The destruction of memory: Architecture at war*. London Reaktion Books, 2006.

[4] GREENFIELD Jeanette. *The Return of Cultural Treasures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

[5] HOEVEN, Hans, Van Albada, Joan. *Memory of the world: lost memory. Libraries and archives destroyed in the twentieth century*. Paris UNESCO, 1996.

[6] BOYLAN, Patrick J. *Review of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague Convention of 1954)*, [Report CLT-93/WS/12]. Paris: UNESCO, 1993. Accessed November 25, 2022, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000100159.

[7] DWORZECKI, Jacek; NOWICKA, Izabela; URBANEK, Andrzej; KWIATKOWSKI, Adam. Protection of national heritage in the light of the applicable law and the actions provided in this area by police in Poland. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, 8(4), 2020, pp. 177–198.

[8] CHAMBERLAIN, Kevin. *War and cultural heritage: an analysis of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols*. Leicester: Institute of Art and Law, 2004.

[9] ZIĘBIŃSKA-WITEK, Anna (2020). Musealisation of communism, or how to create national identity in historical museums. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, 8(4), 2020, pp. 59–72.

the end of November 2022, were in the Luhansk, Donetsk, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions.[10]

Thus, the research of the international scientist team focused on the following areas:
- causes and consequences of the Russian–Ukrainian war, including in comparison with the events of the Second World War;
- practical recommendations for the protection of monuments on the territory of Ukraine;
- a historical view of the importance of heritage conservation in relation to different
- communities in different geographical destinations;
- global experience of the destruction, preservation and restoration of monuments and museums;
- practical recommendations for the protection of monuments on the territory of Ukraine.

Conflicts not only target human lives, but also have profound effects on human values, cultures and religions. Increasingly, modern conflicts target symbols of culture to destroy identities, leading to the intentional destruction of cultural heritage; however, this damage can also be accidental.

The specific topic of this article determined the scientific methods of research – namely, historical analysis, cultural analysis and comparative analysis. Historical analysis offered a way to analyse the causes of the degradation of Russian society, including in terms of culture and universal values, thereby determining the causes of the brutal war in Ukraine and comparing these events with similar events of World War II.

Cultural analysis was used to analyse the problem of society's attitude to monuments that represent the imperial past and today's invaders.[11] Comparative analysis enabled us to compare the events of World War II and the Russian–Ukrainian war, including the protection of monuments and preservation and restoration of museum collections. Methods for restoring monuments and museums in post-war periods globally was also analysed.

The protection and restoration of monuments in the twenty-first century is becoming a global challenge. Post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction became an increasingly important issue following the destruction of cultural heritage sites in countries such as Afghanistan, Georgia, Kosovo, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, Syria and Yemen. Many more sites globally are at

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[10] UNESCO, Ukraine: over 150 cultural sites partially or totally destroyed. accessed November 25, 2022, www.unesco.org/en/articles/ukraine-over-150-cultural-sites-partially-or-totally-destroyed.

[11] For more on the method of cultural analysis, see: TREHUBOV, Kostiantyn; DMYTRENKO, Andrii; KUZMENKO, Tetiana; VILDMAN, Igor. Exploration and restoration of parts of Poltava's town fortifications during the Northern War and elements of field fortifications used in the Battle of Poltava in 1709. In: *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie – Journal of Heritage Conservation*, 61(1), 2020, pp. 91–100, and SPIRIDON, Petronela; SANDU, Ion. Muselife of the life of public. In: *International Journal of Conservation Science*, 7(1), 2016, pp. 87–92; TIŠLIAR, Pavol. K rozvoju muzeológie v kontexte ďalšieho budovania prípravy absolventov na príklade bratislavskej muzeológie. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo,* 7(2), 2019, pp. 183–194.

risk.[12] The development of cultural heritage frameworks and guidance is key to addressing the multi-faceted challenges of reconstruction.

As early as the post-WWII period, international organisations recognised the need to create conventions or laws to protect cultural sites and artefacts in conflict zones in order that the devastating destruction would not be repeated. In 1954, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was created to ensure the worldwide protection of cultural heritage in times of war. New organisations were also needed to monitor and implement the laws created to protect cultural heritage. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was established in 1945 in response to the destruction of cultural heritage during World War II.[13] UNESCO today focuses on the preservation of cultural heritage throughout the world supports countries in preserving their educational and cultural resources. UNESCO collaborates with other international organisations covering various areas of cultural heritage conservation, including the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the International Council on Museums (ICOM), the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) and the International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). These organisations work together to protect cultural heritage in conflict zones. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental organisation "dedicated to the conservation of the world's monuments and sites"[14] and its work focuses on historic architecture. It also assists the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in evaluating the list of cultural heritage sites nominated to be placed under the protection of UNESCO.

It is worth at this point recalling the activities of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), established during the ninth session of the UNESCO General Conference in 1956 in New Delhi.[15] The centre was established in Rome in 1959 to develop and promote the preservation of cultural heritage through. It encourages, among other things, interdisciplinary cooperation in the field of heritage protection between representatives of various sciences including conservators, archaeologists, museums, architects and urban planners, as well as institutions such as museums, libraries and archives. ICCROM, through its flagship programme on First Aid and Resilience for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis (FAR), and in partnership with the Maidan Museum and the Heritage Emergency Response Initiative (HERI), organised a two-day online workshop on developing a collaborative damage and risk assessment methodology for heritage sites damaged or at risk of destruction. The workshop, which took place on 11 and 12 April 2022, was attended by over 77 professionals from museums, art institutions, memorial sites, archives, cultural departments, research institutes and universities, as well as non-governmental and private cultural institutions

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[12] For more on the problems of heritage conservation outside Europe, see, for example, PAWŁOWSKA, Aneta. The white man's burden. From colonialism to postcolonialism – discourse on non-European art and its position in the artworld form the perspective of the 2020s. In: *Art Inquiry. Recherches sur les arts*, XXIII, 2021, pp. 143–168; GRYGLEWSKI, Piotr; IVASHKO, Yulia; CHERNYSHEV, Denys; CHANG, Peng; DMYTRENKO, Andri. Art as a message realized through various means of artistic expression. In: *Art Inquiry. Recherches sur les arts*, XXII, 2020, pp. 57–88, 2020.

[13] UNESCO, The Advisory Bodies, accessed December 5, 2022, whc.unesco.org/en/advisorybodies.

[14] International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), accessed December 5, 2022, http://www.icomos.org/en/.

[15] International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), accessed December 5, 2022, www.iccrom.org/about/overview/history.

from 14 regions in Ukraine, including Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Donetsk and Crimea.[16]

Before proceeding directly to the analysis of the practical experience of protection and restoration of monuments, museums and museum collections, let us briefly analyse the socio-political problems that determined the nature of the Russian–Ukrainian war.

First of all, it is worth analysing the overt and hidden processes that have been going on in Russian society for the last decades. Many of these trends involve the active promotion of a regressive outlook, directed towards an artificially glorified past. For example, we can observe excessive heroization of history, as well as the redirection of culture away from the future and towards the cultural and aesthetic principles of the past. We also see a rise in the deployment of religious sensibilities and aesthetics within a patriotic narrative, through the transformation of religion into a source of political propaganda and the merging of government policy with ideologies of the Russian Orthodox Church. This merging of the religious and the spiritual is expressed through excessive fascination with symbolism and mysticism, which historians and political scientists deploy as allusions to World War II.

Historical approaches to the destruction and preservation of cultural heritage

From earliest times, people have attached significance to certain places or monuments. Among many peoples, such places were considered to possess immaterial power. This reasoning is evident in the concepts ancient Polynesians of *rāhui* and *mana*.[17] Similarly, healing powers were attributed to special places such as caves and springs in many European sites, as we know from traces of offerings to various deities from the Bronze Age onwards – and from those still made today, albeit more commonly under the aegis of Christian mysticism rather than pagan. The same kind of continuity is found in many places around the world. In Latin America churches were built on pre-Hispanic monuments, resulting in a continuity of religious associations in a particular place. Such behaviour ensured the cultural continuity with ancestral beliefs so important for the local community's sense of unity.

Conscious care of historical places is encountered in ancient times. In Greek and Roman temples and other places of worship people were not allowed to remove stones, pick plants from the ground, cut down trees, build, cultivate or dwell.[18] One such example is found in the ancient Greek city of Olympia. The Greek geographer and author of *Periegesis tes Hellados*, Pausanias (second century CE), writes of seeing the last of the original wooden columns of the seventh-century BCE Heraion sanctuary before they were replaced by marble columns. He specifies that this was done because the ancient structures were falling apart and not simply due to changing tastes – on the contrary, people would have stood in religious awe of the ancient temple and been afraid to desecrate it by making changes. The first known decrees concerning the preservation of monuments of the past appeared during the Roman Empire. Emperor Vespasian (1st century CE) might be considered one of the first restorers; he called himself the

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[16] Protecting endangered heritage in Ukraine, accessed December 5, 2022, www.iccrom.org/news/protecting-endangered-heritage-ukraine.

[17] HARRISON, Rodney. *Reassembling Ethnographic Museum Collections*. In: HARRISON, Rodney; BYRNE, Sarah and CLARKE, Anne (eds.), *Reassembling the collection: ethnographic museums and indigenous agency.* Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2013, pp. 3–37 and BARLOW, Cleve. *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key concepts in Māori culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 15–17.

[18] POMIAN, Krzysztof. Zbieracze i osobliwości, Warszawa Państwiwy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1996, p. 23.

"protector of the public edifices and a restorer of the private ones",[19] issuing the first known pieces of legislation addressing cultural matters. His particular merits include recommending copies be made of the 3,000 bronze tablets that melted during the fire at the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. We also know of the edicts of Emperor Alexander Severus (208–235 CE) in 222 and Constantine the Great (306–337 CE) in 485 forbidding the demolition or removal of decorations from buildings. In the Early Middle Ages a few conservation measures were carried out, less out of historical respect than out of a desire to save monuments that had become objects of veneration. The monuments in question were damaged by earthquakes, natural disasters and wars. They were usually not restored but rebuilt, with the surviving parts preserved only insofar as they could contribute to the new structure.

However, Theodoric (476–526), King of the Goths and Imperial Governor in Italy took action to protect the monuments of the past, entrusting the duties of conservator – *architectus publicorum* – to the courtier Cassiodorus (Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus (485–583). Protection was extended to buildings such as the Marcellus Theatre, Circus Maximus and Appia Claudia aqueduct in Rome.[20] The protection and care of the monuments was later taken over by Catholic church and championed by popes. Many ancient temples were saved by adapting them into churches. Two popes – Benedict II (684) and Gregory II (735) oversaw the restoration of the Pantheon. Despite these laws and actions, however, many objects of ancient architecture could not be saved from destruction.

During the Renaissance, a period associated with the discovery and study of the art of antiquity, European societies behaved passively and indifferently towards the protection of historical sites. During this period, the popes did great service in saving monuments, publishing decrees on the protection of monuments of the past by popes such as Pius II Piccolomini (1462), Sixtus IV della Rovere (1474) and Julius II della Rovere (1510). Pope Leo X entrusted Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, better known as the painter and architect Raphael, with the office of Conservator of Monuments and Antiquities by bull issued in 1515. This office was dissolved with Raphael's death in 1521. Pope Paul III, on the other hand, issued a *Breve* in 1534 in which he ordered the care of ancient monuments and appointed the Latino Giovenale Manetto as curator. Popes Julius III (1556), Pius IV Medici (1562) and Gregory XII also appointed conservators. Monuments in Rome such as the Egyptian obelisks and the columns of Emperor Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were protected.[21] The Renaissance also saw the development of art collecting and the emergence of museology, based on collections acquired during excavations of ancient ruins.

During the Baroque period, from the seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, a considerable number of monumental ancient buildings were demolished. For example, the Ripetta Bridge over the Tiber was built in 1704 with stones from the Colosseum, while bronze ornaments were taken from the Pantheon and melted down to build St Peter's Confession. The intention was to dismantle the tomb of Cecilia Metella in the Via Appia and use the material for constructing the Di Trevi fountain. Old buildings were eagerly replaced by new contemporary

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[19] JORA, Octavian-Dragomir; APĂVĂLOAEI, Matei-Alexandru; IACOB Mihaela. Cultural heritage markets: Are traders traitors? Winners and losers from cross-border shifts of historical artefacts. In: *Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society*, 13(2), 2018, p. 901.

[20] GOSZTYŁA, Marek; PÁSZTOR Peter. *Konserwacja i ochrona zabytków architektury*. Rzeszów: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Rzeszowskiej, 2013, p. 33.

[21] KARMON, David. *The Ruin of the Eternal City: Antiquity and Preservation in Renaissance Rome*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 47–75.

buildings.[22] No attention was paid to the fact that these old buildings bore witness to the achievements of past centuries. Many buildings have undergone numerous transformations in processes referred to in modern times as "Baroqueisation". The rebuilt buildings from the medieval and Renaissance periods were given Baroque facades, new tower shapes and interior decoration. Only ancient art was treated with greater reverence.

In the mid-eighteenth century, a number of significant changes emerged in the perception of the preserved cultural heritage of past generations, related among other things to the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum. In the same period, from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, the concept of art history began to develop. In 1711, during works in Resina near the volcano Vesuvius, a worker unexpectedly came across the remains of a wall from the Roman period. The forgotten Roman city of Herculaneum was thus discovered. Excavations began in 1738, conducted, among others, by Karl Weber, Franscisco la Vega Giuseppe Fiorelli and Antonio Sogliano.

The end of the eighteenth century saw major political upheavals. The Great French Revolution of 1789 caused great damage to historic buildings but also contributed to the development of heritage conservation activities. The authorities of the French Revolution issued decrees that extended protection to works of art. At the same time, increasing numbers of scientific and historical societies were founded concerned with the care and presentation of cultural heritage.

Many scholars qualify the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era as one of pioneering achievements in the formation of modern conservationism.[23] In 1790, Aubin Louis Millin used for the first time the phrase "historical monument" (in French "monument historique") in a report to the Constituent Assembly on the occasion of the demolition of the Bastille. Thus the term "historical monument" became a symbol of the pre-revolutionary period, the Ancien Régime. The idea of preserving a site associated with the Ancien Régime did the rounds and the Assembly, at the instigation of Talleyrand, passed the decree of 13 October 1790 creating the Monuments Commission, whose task was to investigate "the fate of monuments, arts and sciences". In 1791, Alexandre Lenoir was entrusted with the creation of the Museum of French Monuments, opened in 1795, where he collected the fragments of architecture he had saved from destruction in the years before.[24] The second very important event from this period was the creation of the Musee Central des Arts in the Louvre in 1793, which included royal and private collections.

The nineteenth century saw a significant growth of interest in preserving outstanding examples of the material heritage of humanity for future generations. There were number of notable historic preservationists from this period. Among the most prominent and influential for many generations were undoubtedly Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879), John Ruskin (1819–1900), Camillo Boito (1836–1914) and Alois Riegl (1858–1905).[25]

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[22] E. Małachowicz, Konserwacja i rewaloryzacja architektury w zespołach i krajobrazie, Wrocław 1994, pp. 26–28.

[23] SAX, Joseph L (1990). Heritage Preservation as a Public Duty: The Abbé Grégoire and the Origins of an Idea, In: *Michigan Law Review*, 88(5), 1990, pp. 1142–1169.

[24] Frédéric Rücker, *Les origines de la conservation des monuments historiques en France (1790–1830), Jouve et Cie, Paris,* 1913.

[25] YAZDANI Mehr Shabnam. Analysis of 19th and 20th Century Conservation Key Theories in Relation to Contemporary Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Buildings. In: *Heritage* 2(1), 2019, pp. 920–937.

The twentieth century and the perception of the need to protect the material heritage of humanity

A key document related to the first half of the second century was the Athens Charter, created in 1931. This document was prepared by the International Museum Bureau, which was established after the First World War to examine issues relating to heritage conservation, the restoration of historic buildings, and even the rebuilding of entire cities that had been destroyed or damaged during the war. It is worth highlighting that Athens Charter was the first international document to encourage modern conservation policies. This document sensitised not only architects and conservators and museologists but also the general public to issues related to the material heritage of humanity. As a result, as the US entered the Second World War, American General Dwight D. Eisenhower warned his soldiers against destroying cultural monuments in Europe. In an eloquent speech to the troops in June 1944, on the eve of the Normandy invasion, Eisenhower assigned the American soldiers a special and extremely important responsibility: they were not only to defeat Nazi Germany but also to protect Europe's cultural heritage. He pointed out the inseparable relationship between civilisation and its productions and impressed upon the troops their responsibility for protecting both.

> Shortly we will be fighting our way across the continent of Europe in battles designed to preserve our civilization. Inevitably, in the path of our advance will be found historical monuments and cultural centers that symbolize to the world all that we are fighting to preserve. It is the responsibility of every commander to protect and respect these symbols whenever possible. [26]

In this interpretation, it is the duty of every army commander to protect and respect these symbols whenever possible. One country particularly affected by the destruction wrought by World War II was Poland. The country was brutally attacked in September 1939 by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.[27] Adolf Hitler presented the aggressive military policy of his Third Reich in *Mein Kampf*. One passage particularly relevant to our discussion here proclaimed, "Take away a nation's monuments and within a generation it will cease to be a nation." [28] In this formulation, the road to the destruction and plunder of the Polish national heritage was drawn.

In practice, from the beginning of the occupation titled art historians, as high SS functionaries, indicated which works of art and other cultural assets should be taken in to German collections, and which could or even must be liquidated. As a result of such definitions, Warsaw monuments – among them the homes of the composer Frédéric Chopin and the poet Adam Mickiewicz – were destroyed. In relation to movable monuments and historical buildings, the German occupying forces (in addition to a practical view of their usefulness) were guided by the division into objects which they associated with Germanic or European (e.g., Italian) culture. This is because they considered such objects worthy of preservation, while others, in their view, were of importance only to the 'sub-humans' and therefore not worthy of preservation. A decree by the Nazi Governor Hans Frank dated 6 February 1940, entitled *Die Neue Deutsche Stadt Warschau*

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[26] Letter from May 26 1944 as quoted in HENSEL, Howard M. (ed.). *The Law of Armed Conflict: Constraints on the Contemporary Use of Military Force.* Routledge: Bodmin, 2007, p. 58.

[27] On September 1, 1939. Poland was attacked by the German Reich, and on September 17, 1939 the Soviet Union joined the attack.

[28] *Mein Kampf* as qtd. in RYMASZEWSKI, Bohdan. *Polska ochrona zabytków.* Warszawa: Schorlar, 2005, p. 97.

(New German City Warsaw), provided for the liquidation of all Warsaw monuments except for the Royal Łazienki Park in Warsaw[29].

Today, we can hear clear resonances of these Nazi strategies and decrees in the false claims of Russian President Vladimir Putin that there is no such thing as a Ukrainian history, language or culture separate from Russia's. And we can see all too clearly Hitler's attempts at cultural obliteration reflected in the deliberate targeting and destruction of Ukraine's monuments of cultural heritage today.

After World War II, international organizations recognised the need to create conventions and laws to help protect cultural sites and materials in conflict zones, so that such devastating destruction could not happen again. In 1954, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was created to assure the protection of cultural heritage around the world in time of war. New organizations were also needed to implement and support laws created to preserve cultural heritage.

The growing perception of the cultural heritage of individual countries as a public good of all humanity is evidenced by the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference of States convened by UNESCO in 14 May 1954, the Hague.[30]

However, these new institutions and conventions have often proved powerless in the face of armed conflicts that have erupted after the Cold War period. A case in point from recent decades is the destruction caused by the war in the Balkans. One of the most famous examples is the 1993 attack on Stari Most, a bridge in Mostar, by the paramilitary Croatian Defence Forces. The Ottoman bridge was interpreted as a symbol of the Bosnian Muslims. Alongside the bridge itself, the surrounding neighbourhood – an almost perfectly preserved vestige of the Ottoman period – was entirely destroyed. Another case from the same period was the destruction of the Orthodox monastery of the Annunciation of Žitomislići in Herzegovina by Croatian forces.[31] Elsewhere, at the end of the Abkhazian war against Georgia in 1993, armed forces threw grenades at the building that housed the Abkhazian Archive. The documents held there reflected Abkhazian identity, but documents that told the story of Greek, Jewish, Armenian and Russian communities, symbolising the multi-ethnic nature of Abkhazian society before the war, were also destroyed.[32]

An infamous example of wartime destruction of world cultural heritage in the Middle East region can be found in Syria, which has been engulfed in a decade-long civil war. The city of Aleppo, Syria's largest city and home to 2 million people, took a heavy toll in 2012–2016. The unique architecture of the old city had led to it being designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 2006, Aleppo held the title of Capital of Muslim Culture. As a result of the war, entire neighbourhoods were devastated, along with UNESCO World Heritage sites. The covered *suk* (marketplace) of Al-Madina was partially burnt down. The 45 m minaret of the Umayyad mosque, which dates back to the eleventh century, also collapsed during the fighting. Many other instances of destruction were documented in the old city. Another example of destruction

[29] RYMASZEWSKI …, pp. 98–99.
[30] UNESCO, *Standard-Setting at UNESCO Conventions, Recommendations, Declarations and Charters Adopted by UNESCO (1948 – 2006),* Vol. II, Brill, Leiden 2007, p. 44.
[31] AUWERA, van der Sigrid (2012). Contemporary Conflict, Nationalism, and the Destruction of Cultural Property During Armed Conflict. In: *Journal of Conflict Archaeology,* 7(1), 2012, pp. 49–65.
[32] AUWERA …, p. 56.

in Syria is Palmyra. In 2015, jihadists destroyed a number of unique Palmyra monuments, including several burial towers from 44–103 CE. Moreover, they brutally murdered the famous Syrian archaeologist Khaled el-Asaad, who had been looking after the monuments of Palmyra for more than 50 years. Islamic State (IS) tried to extract information from him about the museum' treasures, which had been hidden from them. In 2017, another IS attack on the city damaged facade of Palmyra's Roman amphitheatre.[33]

The safeguarding of cultural property during wars in the twentieth century – selected examples

The twentieth century witnessed massive destruction of material cultural heritage in Europe as a result of two extremely bloody and brutal world wars but also the conflict in the Balkans. The twenty-first century promises to be similar in terms of the destruction of material culture. An interesting summary of how material culture assets are secured during wars was collected in the exhibition entitled "Culture Under Attack", presented from 5 July 2019 to 5 January 2020 at the Imperial War Museum. The creators of this London show asked how we can protect the treasures deposited in the world's museums from armed conflict. One part of this exhibition was Art in Exile, depicting the dramatic decision to evacuate the Imperial War Museum's collection in 1939. Carefully going around all the galleries in the museum, the museum curators assessed and marked each work in the building on a scale of 1 to 4. Marking the numbers on the wall with chalk, they indicated the most valuable works in the collection destined to be deported and secured in the remote country houses of the museum trustees. In the end, 586 works were prioritised for evacuation – less than one per cent of the entire collection. Ultimately, the Imperial War Museum escaped heavy losses during air raids on London by the Luftwaffe (German air force). These operations, which lasted from late April to late June 1942, included deliberate attacks on Britain's historic cities, causing widespread damage, hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries. Attacks on historical and cultural targets – primarily Exeter, Bath, Norwich, York and Canterbury – were known as the "Baedeker raids", referencing a series of German tourist guidebooks, and were in retaliation for the RAF's bombing of the historic German city of Lübeck two months earlier, on 28–29 March.[34]

Around the same time the Imperial War Museum was evacuating its collections, during the summer of 1939, the Louvre Museum closed for three days under the pretence of "repair work". In fact more than 4,000 art pieces were moved to Château de Chambord in the Loire Valley (see Figure 1).[35]

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[33] *Syria 'finds body of archaeologist Khaled al-Asaad beheaded by IS'*, accessed November 25, 2022, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55977964.

[34] https://heritagecalling.com/2019/07/04/englands-historic-cities-under-attack-the-baedker-raids-1942/

[35] CACHIN, Françoise. *Pillages et restitutions: le destin des œuvres d'art sorties de France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale : actes du colloque organisé par la Direction des musées de France le 17 novembre 1996 à l'amphithéâtre Rohan de l'école du Louvre sous la présidence deFrançoise Cachin.* Paris: La Direction A. Biro, 1997.

Figure 1: *The removal of the protected statue of the Winged Victory of Samothrace from the Louvre from the Grande Gallerie of the Louvre September 1939.* Photograph by Pierre Jahan, Archives des museés nationaux.

At the heart of the Imperial War Museum's "Culture Under Attack" exhibition was an attempt to answer the question of why some leaders try to erase or exploit culture while others risk everything to protect, celebrate and rebuild it. This is a question that should be asked especially today (this article was written in November–December 2022), as, in the course of the war in Ukraine, the country's precious monuments are being irretrievably destroyed by the Russian aggressors. It seems that the destruction is the result of the criminal actions[36] of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who, displaying all the characteristics of a modern despot, seems to believe that the destruction of a nation's material culture will cause its integrity and militant spirit of resistance to atrophy. These conclusions serve as one of the main justifications for waging war on and occupying Ukraine. Since its illegal occupation of Crimea, and parts of

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[36] Under the terms of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Accessed November 25, 2022, www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/war-crimes.shtml

Luhansk and Donetsk in 2014, Russia has carried out extensive and coordinated actions to marginalise, undermine and, ultimately, eliminate the tangible and intangible manifestations of Ukrainian culture. President Putin seeks not only to control Ukrainian territory, but also to erase Ukrainian identity and culture and impose the Russian language, along with a manipulated, chauvinistic, militaristic version of Russian culture, history and worldview.

Marjana Varchuk, the director of communications at the Khanenko Museum in Kyiv, which was partially damaged in an airstrike on October 10, 2022, summarises Russia's actions destroying Ukrainian culture as follows:

> Destroying our culture is the purpose of everything the Russians are doing. Culture and language strengthen our nation, they remind us of our history. That's why the Russians are shelling our monuments, our museums, and our history. That's what they're fighting with. They want to destroy everything and substitute our history.[37]

It should be added at this point, that the Declaration of ICOMOS marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Stockholm 1998) also resonates with the events of the Russian–Ukrainian war, as it enshrines the right of every nation to its own heritage, which Russia denies. These include the denial of fundamental rights, including the right to have the authentic testimony of cultural heritage, respected as an expression of one's cultural identity within the human family; the right to better understand one's heritage and that of others; the right to wise and appropriate use of heritage; the right to participate in decisions affecting heritage and the cultural values it embodies; and the right to form associations for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage.[38]

War in Ukraine – some selected proposals to secure monuments

As the war in Ukraine is still in the acute conflict phase it is difficult to present all the relevant ways of safeguarding the country's material heritage. A noteworthy example is the relocation of movable objects from museums such as the National Art Gallery in Lviv to institutions outside Ukraine. A shipment of support for the National Art Gallery in Lviv set out from the National Museum in Poznan at the beginning of the conflict in March 2022. The items delivered to the gallery included primarily materials for protecting museum objects, as well as interlining, cardboard boxes, filling materials, a roll for winding canvas removed from frames and crates for paintings. The transport also included food and medical supplies collected by the staff of the National Museum in Poznan.

The carefully packed works of art were transported safely to Poland, and from 29 November 2022, the public could view one of the most important collections transported from Lviv – the work of the artist Jacek Malczewski (1854–1929) – at an exhibition entitled "Idę w świat i trwam. Obrazy Jacka Malczewskiego z Lwowskiej Narodowej Galerii Sztuki" [I go into the world and I last. Paintings by Jacek Malczewski from the Lviv National Art Gallery]. Thus, the tragic events unfolding in Ukraine allowed the Polish public in Poznań to come into contact

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[37] Marjana Varchuk, in-person interview with consultant of PEN America, October 11, 2022, in: Ukrainian Culture Under Attack: Erasure of Ukrainian Culture in Russia's War Against Ukraine, accessed November 25, 2022, https://pen.org/report/ukrainian-culture-under-attack/

[38] ICOMOS. *The Stockholm Declaration: Declaration of ICOMOS marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1998, accessed November 25, 2022, www.icomos.org/en/what-we-do/focus/human-rights-and-world-heritage/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/372-the-stockholm-declaration.

with priceless works of art, which were additionally restored and processed for the catalogue accompanying this exhibition.[39] The exhibition expresses the fragility of heritage and its value, presented as a story of solidarity; it explores the work of the artist in wartime, the museum employee, questions of what heritage is and how to save it, and what needs to be protected and for what reasons. These questions are all are highlighted even more strongly in the face of war.

The exhibition's title is taken from a poem by Reiner Maria Rilke. It refers to what is movable, fragile and uncertain, but also to what is eternal and important. The second concept that ties the exhibition's narrative together is Wisława Szymborska's poem, *The End and the Beginning*.[40]

> *Po każdej wojnie*
> *ktoś musi posprzątać*
> *Znośny porządek*
> *sam się przecież nie zrobi.*
>
> [After every war
> someone has to clean up.
> Things won't
> straighten themselves up, after all.][41]

In this study we barely touch on the impact of the war on Ukrainian society, but we will analyse one aspect related to cultural heritage, in particular monuments, museums and museum collections. During the eight months of occupation, until December 2022, , Russians looted the Kherson Local History Museum and the Art Museum and took away all the exhibits.[42] Paintings from the Kherson Museum were seen in the Central Tavrida Museum in Simferopol, Crimea. The occupiers stole almost 100 ancient pieces of jewellery from the Melitopol Museum, among them the golden diadem of the Huns.[43] Before the occupation, the funds of the Kherson Art Museum included 10,000 paintings, among them a collection of icons of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and a collection of porcelain, and paintings by Soviet-era artists. Original paintings by Arkhip Kuindzy and Ivan Aivazovsky were taken from the Museum of Local History and the Mariupol Art Museum. Since the invasion, the Russians have looted dozens of museums in the east and south of Ukraine.

As recent events have shown, the Russian army is at war not only with Ukrainians but also with monuments on the territory of Ukraine. For example, in Borodianka the Russians fired at a monument to Taras Shevchenko, shooting it in the temple and forehead, and a monument to Archangel Michael, which was shot in the head.

It is not only buildings and people that suffer from rocket attacks but also monuments. One common means of cultural heritage protection that has been widely implemented in Ukraine is

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[39] Correspondence between A. Pawłowska of December 8, 2022 and Bartosz Skaldawski, Deputy Director of the National Institute of Museums and Collections Protection in Poland.

[40] Idę w świat i trwam. Obrazy Jacka Malczewskiego z Lwowskiej Narodowej Galerii Sztuki, accessed November 25, 2022, https://culture.pl/pl/galeria/ide-w-swiat-i-trwam-obrazy-jacka-malczewskiego-z-lwowskiej-narodowej--galerii-sztuki-galeria.

[41] SZYMBORSKA, Wisława (1993). "Koniec i początek", accessed November 25, 2022, https://literatura.wywrota.pl/wiersz-klasyka/40477-wislawa-szymborska-koniec-i-poczatek.html. Translated by Joanna Trzeciak.

[42] Ukraine museum in "shock" after Russian looting spree. Radio France Internationale, accessed December 25, 2022, www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20221223-ukraine-museum-in-shock-after-russian-looting-spree.

[43] Defense of Ukraine, accessed December 25, 2022, https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1579224814480343043.

the protection of monuments with sandbags, metal "cases" and protective nets. These means of protecting monuments and other material cultural assets has its roots in the defence of Paris during the First World War. At that time, sandbags began to enter the cityscape of Paris on a large scale. To protect famous monuments from bombardment and shrapnel from shells, the city's inhabitants constructed piles of sandbags, stored important works of art in safe places, and removed stained glass windows from cathedrals and other buildings. Another creative method of protection was to reinforce the windows with grids made of tape, although the efficacy of this method against a blast was never tested. Nevertheless, it provided a kind of psychological protection against the grim backdrop of war.

During the Second World War, a simplified approach to protecting monuments with sandbags was used during Nazi attacks on cities in France or Britain (Figure 2). There are photographs and descriptions, for example, of protective scaffolding and sandbags set up around the base of the Luxor Obelisk on the Place de la Concorde in Paris (May 1940) and sandbag-protected garden sculptures in Versailles.

Figure 2: *Structure with bags to protect the Quatre-Parties-du-Monde fountain in the Jardin Marco Polo in Paris from German bombing, 1918.*

Returning to 2022 and Ukraine, statues of the Duke de Richelieu (Figure 3), St Princess Olga and St Cyril and Methodius (Figure 4), Hetman Pyotr Konashevich-Sagaidachny, and St Volodymyr on Volodymyr Hill were placed in special cases and covered with a protective cloth. Monuments to Mykola Lysenko, Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, Hryhoriy Skovoroda, Lesya Ukrainka and Taras Shevchenko were also placed in special cases. The protection of Ukrainian monuments with sandbags began in early March 2022, but more advanced protection

technologies were subsequently developed. A statue of Mykhailo Hrushevskyi was protected using new technology, in the form of a reinforced scaffolding frame in-filled with sandbags and covered with a layer of Bakelite plywood on top of the scaffolding. The walls of the case are separated from the monument by 20 cm, and its sides are painted in neutral colours, although a painted image of the statue and information about Hrushevskyi can be seen on one of the monument's faces. This new system for protecting monuments during military operations was created in response to the current war. It was designed by the architectural firm Balbek, which has responsible for protecting monuments from destruction during the war, together with the Alliance of Monument Conservators of Ukraine and the Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Kyiv State Municipal Administration.[44]

Another project supporting Ukraine in preserving its historic cultural heritage is the SUM project, coordinated by 4CH (European Centre of Competence for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage). SUM's activities consist of rescuing digital documentation of Ukrainian cultural heritage. These digital texts, images, drawings and 3D models will be extremely useful for restoring and, if necessary, reconstructing damaged cultural property, and for preserving and transmitting Ukrainian culture and history to future generations. Ukrainian datasets have started to be uploaded via the internet and securely stored on servers. Approximately 100 terabytes are currently in pending or have already been transferred, in a project involving a huge range of organisations, from large urban institutions to relatively small museums outside the main centres. The transfer takes time due to the intense difficulties on the Ukrainian side in collecting the datasets and maintaining an internet connection in conditions of war.[45]

Figure 3: *Protection of the Duke de Richelieu Monument on the Odessa embankment with sandbags.* Photo by Serhiy Belinskyi. March 2022.

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[44] See Balbek Bureau, RE:UKRAINE MONUMENTS, accessed November 25, 2022, www.balbek.com/reu-krainemonuments-eng#big.
[45] See Project SUM – Save the Ukraine Monument www.4ch-project.eu/sum/.

Figure 4: *Protection of the monument to St Princess Olga and St Cyril and Methodius with sandbags.* Photo by Yulia Ivashko. October 2022.

A separate issue, and one generating considerable debate, relates to the fate of monuments of the imperial past, namely, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Today, the events of the Russian–Ukrainian war have exacerbated this issue in Ukrainian society, and in many cases such monuments have been spontaneously dismantled and destroyed, painted with patriotic inscriptions and graffiti, or painted in different colours. Public opinion is divided on this issue: some citizens believe that these monuments should be destroyed altogether; others argue that many were created by prominent sculptors and should be transferred to appropriate exhibitions dedicated to totalitarian art; and yet others believe these monuments, which have long been interpreted as works of art, should be preserved in place.

A typical example of this is the discussions in Poltava regarding the Column of Glory, a monument to Colonel Kelin, Commandant of Poltava Fortress in 1709, and the monument that marks where Peter I rested after the Battle of Poltava that same year. From the moment of their installation, these monuments represented powerful means of imperial propaganda,[46] and from the very beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014, local citizens have been attempting to find ways to neutralise their propaganda aspect. In 2014, the yellow and blue national flag and the red and black Ukrainian Insurgent Army flag (which in modern Ukraine is considered a combat variant of the national flag) were installed on the Glory monument, next to the gilded

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[46] TREHUBOV, Kostiantyn, DMYTRENKO, Andrii, KUZMENKO, Tetiana, VILDMAN, Igor. Exploration and restoration of parts of Poltava's town fortifications during the Northern War and elements of field fortifications used in the Battle of Poltava in 1709. In: *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie – Journal of Heritage Conservation*, 61, 2020, pp. 91–100.

eagle at the top of the column symbolising the victory of the Russian army in the Battle of Poltava. Smaller monuments to Colonel Kelin (Figure 5) and at the resting place of Peter I (Figure 6) were simply covered with construction nets in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. (On Colonel Kelin's statue, the sculpted lion sculpture at its base was a popular backdrop for selfies; as can be seen in the picture, the netting has been cut away at the bottom to reveal the lion so that people can still pose with it.) The monument to the nineteenth-century Russian poet Pushkin arguably looks strangest. With the beginning of the large-scale Russian invasion on February 24, 2022, people were reminded of Pushkin's role as an imperial propagandist and quite critical inscriptions, some of them obscene, regularly appeared on the monument until the city authorities wrapped the monument in black cloth (Figure 7).

Conclusions – some recommendations for effective support for the protection of material cultural property during the ongoing conflict on Ukrainian territory

Despite the fact that the Russian–Ukrainian war is in an active phase, calls for the development of a "Marshall Plan" for Ukraine are increasingly being heard around the world. With the support of international partners and UNESCO, as well as private donors, initial measures are being taken to digitise cultural archives threatened with destruction by the conflict. Once archived, copies of the materials can be safely housed abroad so that they are not destroyed. Preserving these cultural artefacts for posterity will hinder and prevent efforts to eradicate Ukrainian culture. In addition, based on the latest experiences of preserving cultural heritage in war zones, it would also make sense to engage international heritage institutions and local heritage professionals as an integral part of humanitarian disaster response. For it is only by ensuring that efforts to save cultural heritage, to analyse its condition on an ongoing basis, and to provide materials to protect sites from collateral damage are coordinated between the various agencies, local authorities, the military and public initiatives that the greatest damage can be effectively contained.

The experience of Poland, whose historical and cultural heritage was damaged on a massive scale during both world wars, can be very useful when it comes to restoring historical and cultural heritage. Examples of the destruction wrought by World War I can be found in Kalisz, Kazimierz on the Vistula, Janowiec, Krasnystav and Horlice. Cities that suffered 50–90% destruction in World War II include Warsaw, Gdynia, Gdańsk, Szczecin, Wroclaw, Poznań and many others. One unique aspect of the Polish experience was the authenticity of the reconstruction, achieved using old drawings and photographs for the conservation works. The most famous example of such mass reproduction was the Old Town in Warsaw, but in fact similar works were undertaken throughout Poland, in the historic centres of Poznań, Gdańsk and Wroclaw.[47] In Warsaw's Old Town, comprehensive conservation measures were undertaken, with the reproduction of the original environment based on cartographic documentation of the historical district. The opposite approach was taken in the historic Old Town of Szczecin, where new objects were included in the historical environment, but with respect to the historical

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[47] CHYLIŃSKA, Dagmara, MUSIAKA, Łukasz. Military museums in Poland – between the past and the future. In: *Muzeologia a Kulturne Dedicstvo,* 8(3), 2020, pp. 5–39.

facade lines and scales.[48]

The tragic impacts of the Russian–Ukrainian war on cultural heritage can be analysed from the point of view of ICOMOS's Dresden Declaration (1982),[49] based on the materials of the symposium "Reconstruction of Monuments Destroyed by War". From this document, we can identify some key issues that will be relevant in the restoration of Ukraine after the end of the war. It highlights the importance of:

- understanding the need to preserve and restore objects of historical and cultural heritage from the point of view of their intangible, intellectual and spiritual value;
- awareness of the heritage preservation process as a connecting link between the people and their land;
- awareness of measures to restore and restore historical objects and museum collections as evidence of history and preservation of the memory of humanity;
- interpretation of the restoration of the monument for the reasons of its meaning and content, in addition to purely conservation measures;
- observance of special care for the process of restoration of monuments destroyed by the war.

The active inclusion of cultural heritage in the reconstruction agenda after war can be a positive force for both social reconstruction and reconciliation. Therefore, priority should be given to the reopening and accessibility of cultural institutions in liberated areas. It seems equally important to ensure that cultural rehabilitation, vitality and continuity are an integral part of post-war reconstruction and recovery efforts, including through the involvement of cultural practitioners at all stages of reconstruction and restoration. In many post-war situations, there is evidence of a desire among the population to immediately restore the heritage destroyed by the war and to revive traditions that were obsolete before the conflict.[50] This concern corresponds to a strong psychosocial need to restore what is familiar and valued after a period of violent disruption of normal life. It can be summed up in the concept of the "thread of continuity" that people seek when the rhythm of daily life is disrupted.

[48] KUŚNIERZ-KRUPA, Dominika. Protection issues in selected European historic towns and their contemporary development. In: *E3S Web of Conferences,* 45, 2018, pp. 1–8 and ORLENKO, Mykola, IVASHKO, Yulia, KOBY-LARCZYK, Justyna, KUŚNIERZ-KRUPA, Dominika. The influence of ideology on the preservation, restoration and reconstruction of temples in the urban structure of post-totalitarian states. In: *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie – Journal of Heritage Conservation,* 61, 2020, pp. 67–79.
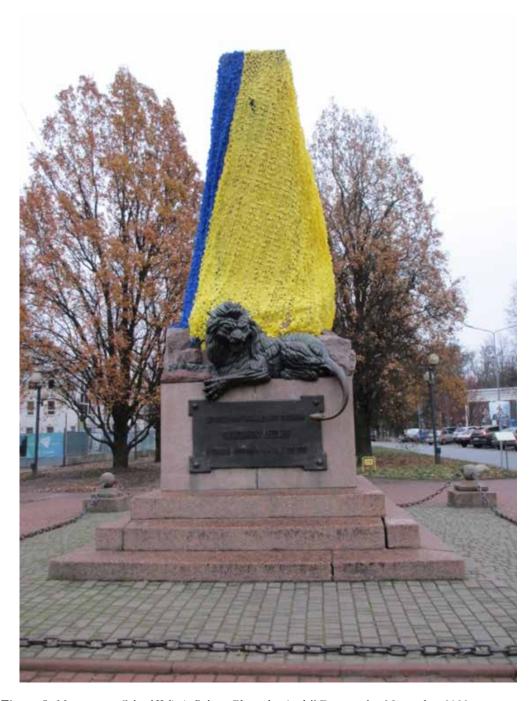
[49] ICOMOS. Declaration of Dresden on the 'Reconstruction of Monuments Destroyed by War', 1982, accessed November 25, 2022, www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/184-the-declaration-of-dresden.

[50] ZIĘBIŃSKA-WITEK, Anna. Musealisation of communism, or how to create national identity in historical museums. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo,* 8 (4), 2020, pp. 59–72, and ORLENKO, Mykola; IVASHKO, Yulia; KOBY-LARCZYK, Justyna, KUŚNIERZ-KRUPA, Dominika. The influence of ideology on the preservation, restoration and reconstruction of temples in the urban structure of post-totalitarian states. In: *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie – Journal of Heritage Conservation,* 61, 2020, pp. 67–79.

Figure 5: *Monument to Colonel Kelin in Poltava.* Photo by Andrii Dmytrenko. November 2022.

Figure 6: *Monument at the resting place of Peter I in Poltava.* Photo by Andrii Dmytrenko. November 2022.

Figure 7: *Monument to Pushkin in Poltava.* Photograph by Andrii Dmytrenko. November 2022.

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