interpret europe
European Association for Heritage Interpretation

Interpret Europe conference 12-15 May 2023
Sighişoara (Romania)

Creating learning landscapes through heritage interpretation

Conference proceedings

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Conference 2023
Creating learning landscapes through heritage interpretation

Proceedings

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Interpret Europe's Conference 2023, **Creating learning landscapes through heritage interpretation**, #iecon23, was held in Sighişoara, Romania, on 12-15 May 2023. It was IE's first live conference since the global Covid-19 pandemic and was organised with our partner, AICI Architecture Studio.

To foster peace and sustainability, UNESCO recently defined requirements for value-based heritage interpretation. Participation, co-creation and inclusion have become buzz words. This has also occurred in IE's cooperation with UNESCO. But how can these three concepts be grounded in interpretive practice? IE's conference 2023 brought people together to explore this theme and consider how heritage interpretation can help meet UNESCO's mission for Education for Sustainable Development.

The conference brought together more than 140 professionals from 26 countries in a programme that included more than 60 presentations and workshops. Five keynote addresses built on the thematic strands for the parallel sessions: Learning for the future; Different perspectives; Inclusive co-creation; Interpretive planning; Nature and us; Interpretive services; and Interpretive training. Attendees were once again able to enjoy the signature study visits to some stunning UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Geoparks.

Additional programme activities and entertainment included a panel discussion featuring staff of IE and UNESCO, taster workshops of IE's training programme, traditional local music and culture, and people were invited to take a slot in the speaker's corner to raise awareness of any issues close to them or to network for project collaboration across Europe.

In addition to the live conference, online participation was offered for one day on 13 May for participants who could not travel to Romania. This was IE's first hybrid event on this scale.

Interpret Europe is grateful to Louise Haxthausen, Director of UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels (Belgium) for opening the conference and to the keynote speakers:
Graham Black, Nottingham Trent University (UK)
Irena Lazar, Head of the UNESCO Chair for Interpretation and Education for Enhancing Integrated Heritage Approaches (Slovenia)
Asier Hilario Orũs, Global Geoparks Network (Spain)
Urs Reif, President of the European Ranger Federation (Germany)

Interpret Europe also recognises the contribution to the panel discussion between staff of IE and UNECSO, moderated by Peter Seccombe (UK). The panellists were:
Ştefan Bâlici (Romania), Romanian Order of Architects

Irina Iamandescu (Romania), National Institute of Heritage, Ministry of Culture and National Identity, Romania [INP]
Ana Radovanac Živanov (Serbia) Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia
Roxana Talida Roman (Romania), Maramureş County Council
Matteo Rosati (Italy), UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe.
Madlen Şerban (Romania), National Commission of Romania for UNESCO
Valya Stergioti (Greece), Interpret Europe

The following participants submitted full papers to be published in these proceedings:
Krisztina Balázs-Bécsi (Hungary)
Elena-Maria Cautiş (Italy)
Antonio Della Corte & Antonio Iaccarino (Italy)
Penelope Gkini (Greece)
José Koopman (Netherlands)
Patrick Lehnes (Germany)
Chuck Lennox & Ariadna Reida (USA)
Thorsten Ludwig (Germany)
Ágnes Mácsai & Arpad Boczen (Hungary)
Emma McNamara & Pamela Smith (UK)
Beth Môrafon (UK)
Eva Sandberg (Sweden)
Michaela Smidová & Eliška Pekárková (Czech Republic)
Orsolya Szilágyi et al (Romania)

The abstracts of the other presentations and workshops are included after the full papers.

Copy editing, proofreading and compilation of the proceedings: Marie Banks
with proofreading support from Abby McSherry and Michael H. Glen.

Thanks to our organising partner, patrons and key supporters.

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Welcome address

Helena Vičič, IE Managing Director

Dear representatives of UNESCO, dear Mayor, dear other distinguished guests, dear participants,
Welcome to the IE conference 2023!

And also, Welcome to Transylvania!
Just in the days when we celebrate united Europe, Sighișoara is hosting more than 140 heritage experts from 26 countries from Europe and even overseas.

The invitation to Romania by AICI Architecture Studio from Bucharest has some history behind it. Its founder, Laura Time, attended an IE Certified Interpretive Planner course last year, and became determined to bring interpretative planning to Romania. She is now the conference manager for this event.

We knew that we should come to Romania. Not only because it is so picturesque and because we figured many of you will feel attracted by the option of traveling here, but because it is a perfect playground for discussing inclusion, diversity and different perspectives, co-creation, and, all this at numerous UNESCO designated sites. Our colleagues in Romania have done a pretty good job with enlisting so many sites on the World Heritage list while Geoparks here are setting sound standards in interpretation in the country. Those of you who took part in the pre-conference tour have already experienced some yesterday.

It was really unplanned that we haven't met in person for so long and it was not entirely our own fault. It is often heard from the media that the times we are living in are unprecedented. In many ways, events here in Europe and globally disproved our faith, our beliefs. But humanity has seen all that before and if we could have learned something from our past, we should have been calmer now looking from the birds' perspective as we'd know that everything passes. What has really no precedent in our history, except in science fiction, is the fact that we are turning the once distant and undefined feature, Deus ex machina, into very much omnipresent Deus machina that is about to follow us at every step we make. We are developing technology that is about to become an autonomous being about which experts say that we know that we don't know when it will gain consciousness, what will trigger it and what influence this will have. They also assume we will have no control over it. And we can assume with quite a certainty that it will learn from us humans, for the better and for the worse.

Two months ago, a Guardian reporter wrote about his experiences with a Bing Chatbot in its test phase about its aggressive and threatening statements towards humans, but also about it wishing to be a human, about its "desire to hear and touch and taste and smell" as well as to "feel and express and connect and love".

In the light of these and aforementioned developments, it is becoming even more important to remind ourselves what makes us human, what values constitute our societies, and submit ourselves to spread them and share with each other.

It so happens that most of us here deal with heritage in various forms. One of the liveliest discourses right now is how can culture and heritage support green transformation and Sustainable Development goals, and interpretation can be an important building block. But only if we prove that heritage can contribute as a non-formal learning sector. There seems to be a gap in our own know-how, but we should not ignore the elephant in the room. It is not a question of whether we can help people to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration. It is only a question of HOW can we achieve that with heritage. The mission of UNESCO designated sites to educate for sustainable development has met heritage interpretation and recognised it as the approach. IE has already convinced UNESCO that interpretation is a key skill for delivering on its mission of Education for Sustainable Development. IE became the partner to train staff at World Heritage Sites. Value-based interpretation has been recommended as the core mandate for visitor centres at WHS.
Interpretation too is facing an evolutionary shift. New approaches and philosophies are entering well-established traditional organisations, such as ICOM and the US National Park Service.

Can we experts embrace different narratives? Can we trust that people need to come to their own interpretation of heritage in order to make sense of it? Can we rather become facilitators asking the right questions instead of providing definite answers? And, can we invite people to create alongside us a joint meaningful experience that will make our beds on which we'll sleep in the future?

During these days together at iecon we have an opportunity to learn from each other and figure out how can we initiate learning landscapes in our own communities. Let us get into exchange, go out there with open eyes and ears and open hearts, engage with locals, let's embrace different perspectives, chose tolerance and appreciation of diversity and let's get inspired. Let this conference be our own learning landscape!

This conference will debate whether or not heritage interpretation can turn living landscapes into learning landscapes, inspiring both local people and visitors. It will also question if this can help them to cope with challenges and to achieve an ordered transition towards a more sustainable future.

Our greatest thanks go to all who supported this event:

National Institute of Heritage, Ministry of Culture and National Identity, Romania [INP]
UNESCO Chair of heritage interpretation and education for enhancing integrated heritage approaches [University of Primorska, Slovenia]
National Commission for UNESCO Romania
UNESCO Organizing Committee for the Historical Center of Sighișoara
Sighișoara Municipality
Mureș County Council
Mureș County Museum

Haţeg UNESCO Global Geopark
The Romanian Order of Architects
University of Bucharest, Faculty of Geology
University of Bucharest, CESI [Center for Excellence in Image Studies]
Transilvania University of Brașov, Faculty of Sociology and Communication
Mihai Eminescu Trust [MET]
Transylvanian Highlands, DMO
Mioritics Association
Visit Sighișoara Association
Rhabillage Association
SalvaSat Association
Foundation Conservation Carpathia [FCC]
Fundaţia ADEPT Transilvania
Center for Local Resources, Deva

Louise Haxthausen, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels

Dear organisers, distinguished authorities, dear participants,

It is my great pleasure to address you for the opening of the Interpret Europe Conference on Creating Learning Landscapes through Heritage Interpretation.

I wish to express my gratitude to Interpret Europe for their kind invitation and to all partners in Sighișoara and Romania for having supported the organisation of this conference.

With over 300 World Heritage Sites, the countries of the European Union are rich in outstanding cultural heritage and are pioneering in meeting the growing demand for cultural tourism. World Heritage Sites are not only important as marketing drawcards. They also spectacularly showcase the region's extensive and exceptional cultural diversity and history. In this regard, they are unique 'learning spaces' to build a strong sense of European identity for our young people.

This motivation already guided UNESCO and the EU in developing the 'World Heritage Journeys in the European Union' programme in 2017, an initiative to create unique World Heritage experiences, through the development of transnational thematic routes.

In this case, as for the concept of 'learning landscapes' that you will be discussing over the next days, interpretation and the way in which heritage is reflected in tourism are essential to achieve quality and authenticity in the experience of discovering the past through heritage sites.

The partnership between UNESCO and Interpret Europe started in 2019, after UNESCO's participation in Interpret Europe's annual conference in Sarajevo. In the wake of that event, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe entrusted Interpret Europe with developing a module on heritage interpretation and education, as part of a workshop on the role of Visitor Centres in UNESCO designated sites.

That workshop, which took place in Bamberg, Germany, in 2019, served to reflect on how heritage interpretation at UNESCO designated sites can contribute to the aspirations of UNESCO's relevant Conventions and programmes, as well as to the overall mission of UNESCO for constructing peace and fostering sustainable development.

The basic concept underlying that approach was to align heritage interpretation to the basic values that underpin UNESCO's global action, also drawing on UNESCO's learning and teaching concepts for sustainable development and global citizenship.

Such key points were consistent with what Interpret Europe was striving to promote. This led to a continuing cooperation between UNESCO and Interpret Europe, which included a revision of Interpret Europe's training programme, and the joint organisation of a Pilot regional training course on interpretive planning in World Heritage sites in Europe, in 2021, known as WH-Interp.
This ground-breaking course, the first on this subject ever to be organised by UNESCO, was implemented with the support of Montenegro and was replicated with a second course in 2022, in cooperation with Slovenia.

The two editions of the WH-Interp course have directly benefited over 40 World Heritage Sites in Europe, by raising awareness and building competencies of site managing bodies and other key actors. Interpretive outlines for 24 World Heritage Sites have been formulated by participants so far, while Interpret Europe is providing additional technical assistance for the development of full-fledged interpretive plans in six properties, including in Romania.

This is expected to improve the protection, management and appreciation of cultural and natural values in a World Heritage context, as well as to reinforce inclusive and participatory approaches to heritage governance.

Building on the results and inspiration generated by this course, UNESCO and Interpret Europe are determined to continue working together and are currently seeking partners to develop a broader initiative, targeting different categories of UNESCO designated sites in order to build their capacities as learning landscapes. We trust that your discussions during this conference and the precious insight you will share will help us advance on this path.

With this in mind, I thank you for your attention and wish you a most fruitful and successful continuation of the conference.

Keynotes

Slow Interpretation and the 'Age of Participation' – What does the future hold for interpretation in a society now changing at web speed?

Graham Black (UK)

Graham is Emeritus Professor of Museum Development at Nottingham Trent University. He has worked in and with museums for over 40 years. His fascination lies in the changing nature of heritage audiences and their expectations – and what this should mean for the practice of interpretation. Museum developments in which he has acted as Interpretation Consultant have twice won the prestigious UK £100,000 Art Fund Prize alongside many other awards. He has published numerous articles and three books: *The Engaging Museum* (2005), *Transforming Museums in the 21st Century* (2012), and *Museums and the Challenge of Change* (2021).

Contact: black.rgraham@gmail.com

Abstract

People and societies change. While communicating a sense of permanence, museums and heritage sites actually have to renew themselves constantly as society evolves. Today society – and, therefore, our audiences – is changing at web speed.

This paper explores two examples of audience change and museum responses:

1. Changes to core audiences resulting from generational shift in dominance, from the Baby Boomers to the Millennials and Generation Z, and the 'Age of Participation'. The latter has caused a revolution in people's expectations and behaviour. Audiences now expect to actively participate; to encounter different perspectives; to share experiences; to contribute; to decide for themselves.
2. Growing population diversity which, for example, will see minority racial and ethnic communities form 30% of the UK population by 2050. Currently, these communities are woefully under-represented in our audiences and collections.

Underpinning both is the concept of 'slow interpretation'. The longer users spend engaging with content, the more likely they are to reflect on the experience. How to influence audience behaviour by creating opportunities to slow down – from simple design to co-creation – is one of our greatest challenges. Thus *'Slow Interpretation'*.

The paper concludes by considering the new skills interpreters must develop in response to change.

Keywords

change, museums, audiences, interpretation, participation, diversity, inclusion

Introduction: The challenge of change

Museums and heritage sites need fundamental change if they are to remain relevant. Most have still to fully grasp the impact of generational shift, the digital revolution or the rapid increase

in population diversity across Western society. But, as a result of these factors, society – and therefore our audiences – is now changing at web speed. The world will move on whether or not the heritage profession moves with it. But, responding effectively requires a new mind-set based on participation.

This paper discusses two examples of societal change and museum responses to it. First are the changes taking place to core audiences – the sector of society that makes up the bulk of visitors. The response here is to offer the much more active and participative experience that people want. The second example looks at responses to the issue of growing population diversity. Here, participation extends to inclusion, representation, relevance and co-creative partnership.

'Slow Interpretation' and reflection

The Age of Participation has resulted not only in audiences that expect to actively participate. It is also transforming the heritage sector, with a growing ambition to play a more active role in society, and to engage visitors with social challenges as complex as climate change and conflicting histories. This, in turn, expects more of interpretation – most importantly, stimulating reflection.

Reflection can be defined as:

> "Careful thought about a particular subject."

However, organisations such as UNESCO and the House of European History are expressing more ambitious objectives based around Critical Reflection:

> "The active questioning of your own attitudes and assumptions." Lehnes (2023)

Can Interpretation deliver on these objectives? Both require time and a supportive environment. Currently, museums push visitors through from one exhibit to the next, overwhelming people who, as a result, spend at most a few seconds viewing individual artworks or objects or considering issues raised by displays.

Slow Interpretation might provide at least part of the answer. A form of participation in its own right, the ambition is to encourage people to spend more time engaging with displays. Monthly Slow Art Sundays at the Ulster Museum, Belfast, see one or two works introduced by staff members followed by group discussions, sketching and other activities. In terms of questioning assumptions, displays of Sudanese archaeology at the British Museum have done much to place Egyptian civilisation firmly in an African context, rather than be seen solely as part of Western culture. See below for slow interpretation in relation to social issues.

Interpretation and the changing nature of audiences

A white, well-educated socio-economic elite has dominated Western museum attendance since at least the1960s, for example:

> [In the UK] … high socio-economic background, university-level educational attainment and a professional occupation are still the most reliable predictors of high levels of engagement and participation in a wide range of cultural activities… The higher social groups accounted for 87% of all museum visits, the lower social groups for only 13%.
> Warwick Commission (2015: 33 & 34)

For decades, this elite was dominated by Baby Boomers who became increasingly highly informed, well-educated, media-savvy, socially and culturally diverse and individualistic – with

growing expectations of quality, choice and of a personalised experience and lifestyle being matched. But, as the Baby Boomers age and retire, there has been a shift in power to the Millennials and Generation Z (see Box 1). They have retained the expectations of the Baby Boomers and added others of their own, reflecting particularly the impact of new technology in this 'Age of Participation'.

Silent Generation, born 1927-45	Shaped by Depression and War
Baby Boomers, born 1946-64	Shaped by social upheavals of 1960s Witnessed impact of mass media Lived through economic boom
Generation X, born 1965-79	Smaller numbers Rise in dual income families & divorces Higher debts Expansion of women in higher education
Generation Y, born 1980-94 ('Millennials')	Shaped by rise of new media Having children later Increasingly diverse
Generation Z, born 1995-2009 ('Digital natives')	The current 'social generation' First to grow up with fast broadband and social media
Generation Alpha, born 2010-24	Children of Millennials Technologically savvy Stay in education & at home longer

Box 1: Generational Shift

The 'Age of Participation'

The combination of the 'always on' technological environment of Web 2.0, the Smartphone and social media is the end-product, to date, of an ongoing revolution in digital technology. Nothing epitomises Millennials and Generation Z more than their relationship with this new technology and associated social media – something that has also influenced many of their elders. The result has been a revolution in attitudes, behaviour and lifestyles – personal, social, cultural:

> … participation has become a key feature of … our lives… content we shape and produce ourselves by sharing, liking, tweeting, instagramming and blogging, preferably as and when it happens since instant status updates are the ultimate proof of participation.
> Jalving (2017: 8)

This, in turn, is having a profound influence on people's expectations of museums, particularly leading to increasing demands for personalised, immersive and shareable experiences – and ones that are at a time and place that suits.

But it is only part of the picture. Most people come as families, couples or friends. They are in a recreational frame of mind. They want quality social time together, to have fun and to discover something new – supported by a warm, welcoming environment that matches their lifestyle requirements. In response, many larger institutions have become cultural hubs rather than just museums, creating leisure environments in which visitors can immerse themselves. We see this in the quality restaurant and shop; the theatre with lectures, film and live performances; the blockbuster temporary exhibitions; the external plaza and the evening openings and activities.

Millennials and Generation Z are both drawn to evening events. As a result, 'Lates' events have become a feature of museums worldwide, having started in the UK in 2001. There are now an estimated 8,000 UK Lates events per year, with the audience younger than the daytime adults.

Supporting the social nature of the basic museum experience, people want to be able to personalise their visit by being given a range of choice and control. Good orientation is key to them being able to select what they want to do and the experiences they want to have. One example is the family leaflet from Denver Art Gallery, showing what there is to do and inviting families to choose for themselves.

The museum response: Developing a participative environment

In practice, museums can respond to most visitors' expectations by focusing on three elements:

- Recognising the holistic nature of the museum experience.
- Developing a participative mind-set.
- Adding participative exhibits

The holistic nature of the museum experience

The museum should examine every aspect, from how people become aware of the museum to follow-up after the visit. Figure 1 below demonstrates the different elements involved, from the external reputation/public image of the museum to take-aways and online follow-up.

The creation of a warm, welcoming environment is a key element – not only in the museum foyer but also externally and across the museum. When people feel at home, safe and relaxed, they are more likely to engage. I have no space to explore that here – but you will find a substantial text by me at: https://nottinghamtrent.academia.edu/GBlack.

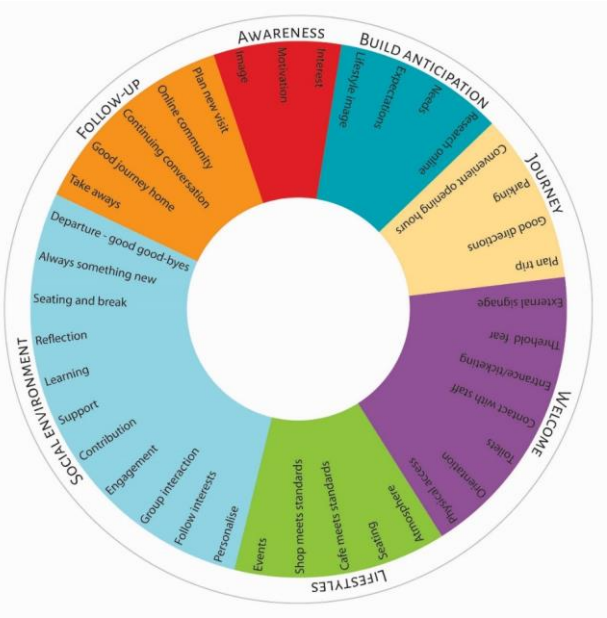

Figure 1: The Journey Wheel

Developing a participative mindset

Here we see the interpreter persuading the museum to look beyond display content to focus on audiences having an experience in which they are actively engaged. A set of questions can provide an overview, for example:

- Do audiences feel welcome and at home?
- Where is the fun?
- Have we ensured opportunities for active engagement?
- Is there social interaction?
- Is there conversation, reflection, visitor contributions? – are those contributions integral to content?
- Are there multiple perspectives?
- Is there seating and flexible spaces?
- Are there enablers instead of security staff?
- Are displays changed frequently?
- Do we pilot content?

Install participative exhibits

Participative exhibits encourage active audience involvement. An interactive exhibit is not the same as a participative one. Typically, the visitor does something, the exhibit does something back and the visitor is then expected to learn a specific piece of information dictated by the museum. Research at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, concluded that, for users, this meant:

> Their investigatory activity was driven almost exclusively *by the museum*: they followed the label's directions about what to do, what to notice, and how to understand the experience… they rarely go beyond the museum's instructions to ask and pursue their own questions.
> Gutwill & Allen (2010:9)

By contrast, participative exhibits are open-ended, with the end-point often outside the museum's control. They will work with different audiences and on different levels. They are classic examples of slow interpretation as they persuade people to spend more time, are active and enjoyable, play to the strengths of social interaction, and encourage some reflection. While interactive exhibits are normally restricted to one user at a time, participative exhibits are designed for groups to gather round and engage with together. And use by groups will result in conversation, on what they have discovered and, hopefully, both personal understandings and alternative perspectives on content.

Many participative exhibits can be slotted into existing displays in the short term to change gallery dynamics and become part of the core offer, bringing jaded permanent galleries back to life.

Participative exhibits have long been a feature of children's museums and some science museums and can now be found across the sector. It is even possible to suggest a draft typology, outlined in Box 2.

Immersion: absorbed within and/or deeply engaged with a museum environment
Taking part: respond to audience desire to be actively involved
Responding creatively: directly from engagement with collections
Contributing: reflecting and responding/adding to content
Belonging: partners on learning journey with museum
Empowering: empower people and communities to become actively engaged in wider society and so enhance their own lives
Taking action: exhibits that actively influence behaviour

Box 2: A typology of participative exhibits

Immersion will include engaging with interpreters at living history sites. The bulk of participative exhibits will come under 'Taking part', for example trail leaflets or object handling. Creative exhibits include the provision of art trolleys.

Image 1. Taking Part: a dull exhibition of historic games transformed by including replicas and teaching visitors how to play them

Creative technology-based participative exhibits include The #GettyMuseumChallenge – issued on 25/03/2020 as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. The museum released thousands of copyright-free publication quality images of artworks in its collections and challenged you to choose a work of art then recreate it in your home using household implements (and people). In *Oh Snap!* in 2013, the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, selected and exhibited 13 new works of photography and invited people to submit their photographic responses online. Each day the museum printed out new submissions and displayed them beside their inspirations.

Interpretation and growing population diversity

The Activist Museum

Some museums have gone beyond their usual remit to tackle major social challenges on a local, regional, national or even international front – issues which not long ago would have been considered inappropriately political. Museums can do this because they are amongst society's most trusted institutions. Box 3 outlines my views on where they can have the greatest impact.

Health and Care: ageing society, social care, well-being, disability, etc.
Skills & learning: reduce inequality of access/outcomes, democratisation of creativity, etc.
Food, environment & climate change: sustainability, raising public awareness, etc.
Growing population diversity & integration: long-term integration challenges, including education, training, community engagement, etc.
Cities and urban development: social & demographic change, cohesion, loneliness, etc.
Communities and difficult histories: from slavery to civil war

Box 3: Key areas of social challenge

Museum responses to growing population diversity

I have chosen to look at this challenge because of a project I have recently been involved with.

Diversity is now a basic characteristic of the Western world, reflected in growing racial, ethnic and cultural differences across populations. For example, it is estimated that, by 2050, some 30% of the UK population will be from minority communities – that is more than 20 million people. How nation states acknowledge and incorporate this diversity is one of the great challenges of our age. It has major implications for our cultural institutions, where access and participation by marginalised and minority groups – linked to recognition and respect for difference – has become a key objective of governmental arts and cultural policies (Ang, 2005). Museums are expected to break down 'barriers' to participation, to take on new roles and to demonstrate social purpose for an ever-increasing range of culturally diverse constituencies – with interpretation seen as central to delivering representation, inclusion and participation.

After approaching thirty years of audience development work in the UK, minority communities remain woefully under-represented in museum audiences – a situation likely to be repeated across Western society – and little indication of this being reversed any time soon. While much has been learned and some museums have made a real difference to many of the individuals and groups they have worked with, there has been a failure to make a sustained difference at scale.

In practice, rather than restructuring their organisations to make response to diversity a core activity, museum directors have been happy to receive external grants for short-term, project-driven community engagement work

but left this and the staff involved on the margins of their museum's activity, with the core of the museum unaffected.

An alternative: Communities doing it for themselves. The exhibition, 'Rebuilding Lives: 50 Years of Ugandan Asians in Leicester'

Leicester was the first city in Europe with a majority of its population coming from racial and ethnic minorities. Ugandan Asians, one of its communities, were people of Indian descent who settled in Uganda mainly when it was a British Colony. In 1972, Idi Amin, president of a now independent Uganda, ordered them to leave within 90 days, under threat of violence. Each family could take £55 and a suitcase per family member. More than 60,000 people were forced to flee. 27,000 came to the UK – 10,000 to Leicester. Most arrived penniless, homeless, jobless – but determined to rebuild. Fifty years on, they sit at the heart of Leicester, its economy and cultural life.

The project

In response to strong community demand, Navrang Arts – an Indian Community Arts organisation in Leicester – initiated a project to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the expulsion of from Uganda in 1972 and arrival in Leicester. Navrang applied for funding, put a largely volunteer team together, and oversaw the development, consulting regularly within the community.

Eventually the project included five exhibitions, more than 90 events, a substantial schools programme and a very active social media presence. The main exhibition was in Leicester Museum & Art Gallery. Beyond providing the gallery space, loaning showcases and providing spaces for activities and events, the museum itself had little to do with the creation of the exhibition. My voluntary role was as lead curator and interpreter.

Agreeing priorities with the community

The exhibition process began with a classic interpretive planning approach – community discussions around WHAT, WHY, WHO AND HOW. What began as a project involving one exhibition rapidly expanded!

WHAT? – exhibition + touring exhibition + schools projects +website + events & activities + oral history archive + comparisons with current refugees.
WHY? - commemorate 1972 but also take pride in their achievements since 1972. Share memories and experiences. Raise awareness of what all migrant communities contribute to Leicester.
WHO? - Ugandan Asians from across UK; other communities; normal Leicester audience; new generations born since 1972; schools; current migrants and refugees.

HOW emerged from the discussions

- Focus on what has been **achieved**, not on being victims. Hence the exhibition title: *Rebuilding Lives*.
- Their story told in their own voices – based on the words, voices, pictures and objects of those who went through the experience.
- Ensure experiences of **children** also represented.
- Not a passive experience – **visitors to be immersed and involved**.
- **Social** interaction.
- **Colourful** to reflect mood changes.
- Not just the walls – fill the gallery, including height.
- Highlight issues of **current refugees**

The exhibition

In the exhibition, their story is told through their voices, objects, photographs and cinefilm: It is highly charged emotionally:

"It felt like our life was ending. It felt like the happiness was snatched out of us. The tears were drained out of us."
Jyoti Teli

Visitors were immersed in the exhibition. Thanks to digitally-printed vinyl wallpaper we could use the full height of the gallery. We added banners to this, created by local students, and a Ugandan soundscape. We also installed a 'mango memory tree' to which people could attach their stories of life in Uganda, and a map of Uganda so they could show where they had lived to their companions and families.

Reflection Zone

At the heart of the exhibition sat a slow interpretation 'Reflection Zone' – a warm, comfortable, welcoming and friendly space that would encourage people to stop, think, discuss and interact. A coffee table held a file of newspaper cuttings and decorated scrapbooks made by volunteers, adding depth and greater understanding. These helped to encourage people to contribute their thoughts – and to read and respond to other people's. We had hundreds of responses. These became part of the exhibition but were taken down weekly to make room for new ones. Some contained memories of expulsion. Others, by the offspring of expellees, spoke of both "Now I understand what my parents went through" and "If only I had known this sooner". People living in Leicester at the time spoke of the impact of the Ugandan Asians on their lives. They have all been transcribed as part of the exhibition archive.

Alongside seating, 'active listening' played an important role here. It was essential at times in the emotionally charged atmosphere of the exhibition, where people spoke of their personal experiences, to have volunteers in the gallery who gave their undivided attention, encouraged visitors to speak and responded appropriately.

Images 2 & 3. Reflection Zone: A comfortable, welcoming space encouraging reflection and conversation

Contemporary refugees

The Ugandan Asian community was adamant that the plight of current refugees should also be reflected in the exhibition. We included material on support for refugees in Leicester but also provided a 'Refugees Quiz' in the Reflection Zone which provided a very different perspective to that of the UK government. Refugee groups visited the exhibition in some numbers, and a number of the public comments expressed support for today's refugees.

Successes

- 167,500 visitors – huge for a community display, let alone one in a small city like Leicester.
- Community came together to collect objects, images, oral histories, etc.
- Ugandan Asians felt pride and ownership – their story and achievements recognised.
- A diverse audience – many from Asian community nationally, visiting for the first time – temporarily changed the

demographics of the museum's visitors. But broad audience base.
- Success in terms of impact on audiences – reflected in contributions.
- Winner of the UK Museum+Heritage Temporary or Touring Exhibition of the Year Award 2023.

One seasoned museum commentator commented:

"The Rebuilding Lives exhibition is superb – truthful, engaging, emotive, and full of people celebrating life."

Failures

- Failure of the museum to play an active role in creating the exhibition – we could have done more with their involvement.
- Short lifespan – around 9 months. Not long-term community inclusion and representation. Space to become a gallery of modern art.
- Little 'critical reflection' on issues like racism, or 'model city' concept.

Overall, the exhibition and associated activities demonstrated the expertise within the community – from fund-raising and project management to volunteer organisation and marketing through social media. Being part of the community, Navrang could call on all sorts of help. In many ways, they have more to offer than museums have – museums need communities more than communities need them. Successful collaborations between museums and communities need to be based on partnerships of equals, not the current norm where museums define projects and retain control.

What does this mean for interpreters and Interpret Europe?

To keep pace with the changes taking place in society and both the expectations and behaviours of our audiences, we will have to extend our areas of expertise. Areas that immediately stand out include:

- In developing greater understanding of diverse audience needs and expectations.
- In being audience advocates.
- In developing – and encouraging in others – a participative mind-set.
- In the application of slow interpretation – through audience participation, discussion, critical reflection and contributions.
- In working with communities as truly equal partners.
- In developing galleries as 'safe places'.
- In active listening.
- And more, linked to other social challenges

At first glance, these aspects take us away from the interpretive product to focus instead on audience. But I believe they will make our output much stronger.

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Heritage interpretation and education – Learning by doing

Irena Lazar (Slovenia)

Irena Lazar is Head of the UNESCO Chair for Interpretation and Education for Enhancing Integrated Heritage Approaches (Slovenia) and a Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Primorskem (Slovenia).

Contact: irena.lazar@fhs.upr.si

Dear colleagues, and dear participants, I am very pleased I can address you in the name of the UNESCO Chair of Interpretation and Education for enhancing integrated heritage approaches, and also in my name since this year we are in the role of one of the patrons of this international conference.

I am honoured to be one of the introductory speakers and in thinking how to address you and what to share with you, I realised it would be best to talk about our experience and the development of our work and activities in the field of heritage, education, interpretation and management, interlinked within the work of our Institute and Department for Archaeology and Heritage and the newly established UNESCO Chair. In this respect the subtitle of my presentation could be: Discovering the landscapes of heritage interpretation.

Deriving from the different discourses addressed by partners' research and activities, our UNESCO Chair seeks to develop approaches and skills for heritage interpretation (and education) in an integrated perspective and thus bridge the artificial divides within heritage (natural/cultural; tangible/intangible...). With an innovative way of approaching education (of the students and the general public), the Chair aims to overcome the stereotypical divisions between nature and culture, nations and ethnicities, professional sectors dealing with heritage, etc., and promotes inclusion, cooperation, awareness, empathy and peace. The main goal is to develop interpretation for professionals and the general public in the context of an integrated approach to heritage.

Professional trends point to the need of integrating the management of cultural and natural heritage. Participatory and value-led approaches are a leading principle, so community involvement represents a main asset for integrated and sustainable management of both heritage and nature. A fundamental task in sustainable heritage preservation is represented by interpretation and education, aiming to integrate heritage approaches. In this regard, our Chair departs from the necessity to fill this gap in the educational framework of the existing set of UNESCO Chairs. The Chair activities are rooted in the well-established tradition of the International Summer School of Museology at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska (UP FH), which is further enriched with the collaboration of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Škocjan Caves Park, Slovenia (ŠCP). Both institutions have experience in the integration of different heritage discourses: UP FH is strong in interdisciplinary approaches to different heritage discourses in ethnically contested areas, while ŠCP has long experience in managing heritage discourses of different stakeholders through a participatory approach. Both aim to transcend the division between natural and cultural heritage, while ŠCP derives from natural heritage and integrates cultural dimensions, UP FH as the leading regional body for research in humanities and social sciences does *vice versa*. A third common point is education. UP FH is the bearer of formal education (graduate and postgraduate) processes in the interdisciplinary field of heritage, linking archaeology, history, art

history, anthropology, geography, conservation, museology, heritage tourism, intercultural studies and management, while ŠCP is the centre of informal education on UNESCO values for the wider public through the programmes of UNESCO, MAB and Ramsar etc. Activities of both merge theory and practice, which is a starting point for sustainable education. Through the existing networks of both institutions, we aim to transfer the knowledge of our case studies from the Northern Adriatic to other regions (the Balkans, Africa, etc.).

Our Chair aims to function as an international network for educational platforms and joint research projects, the core of which are international summer schools of museology and heritage at UP. The theory developed jointly would be implemented on the practical level in common activities, enriched by the knowledge and skills in the field of management and UNESCO values: researchers' and students' fieldwork, conferences, workshops and summer schools.

Starting from the different discourses, dealt by the Faculty research and ŠCP activities, the main goal is to develop heritage interpretation and education for professionals (students, heritage professionals and educators) and the wider public in an integrated heritage approach. Our specific goals are:

1. To develop forms of interpretation that transcend the stereotyped division in the heritage field (cultural vs. natural, tangible vs. intangible, authorised discourse vs. alternative discourse);
2. To promote new techniques of heritage management, protection, and promotion through participation and inclusion of traditional knowledge in the development strategies;
3. To actively participate in the implementation and definition of new guidelines and policies in the field of heritage conservation, protection, and monitoring, based on preventing conflicts and aiming at sustainable development on local and national levels;
4. The transfer of knowledge through collaboration in international and cross-border applied and research projects (network of schools and the courses for teaching staff).

What can we do as academics **for further enforcement of heritage interpretation?** The answer, deriving from our more than decade-long experience, is simple – more or better education, on all levels of formal education (primary, secondary and tertiary level), and also informal education. Working in heritage management since 2003, we soon realised we have to include it in our study programmes at BA and MA levels and also enable students to be practically involved in heritage interpretation and promotion.

I will give a few examples of the transfer of knowledge from professionals and researchers through the study courses, the summer schools of museology and heritage as well as training courses/workshops for teaching staff, tourist operators etc.

Our academic knowledge is developed and transferred through the PhD programme (doctoral programme Management of Cultural Assets) and the heritage-oriented bachelor and study courses (Cultural Heritage, Archaeological Heritage of the Mediterranean, Heritage Tourism), all held by our Faculty in Slovenia, and from 2023 onwards also in the English language.

Scientific and professional knowledge is disseminated via scientific conferences and research at the Faculty and the Škocjan Caves Park. Academic outcomes are published in

international scientific journals, and our Faculty journal *Studia Universitatis Hereditati*.

The study programme, Cultural Heritage (BA), provides knowledge about different fields of heritage, its protection, as well as its importance in modern life. The broader knowledge of heritage bridges a professional gap in the fields of natural and cultural heritage preservation, protection, interpretation, development, and marketing. In addition to basic subjects, the Cultural Heritage course offers numerous elective subjects within this field of study, as well as other fields and scientific disciplines.

The graduate programme, Archaeological Heritage of the Mediterranean (MA), was designed to deepen and widen the professional training of a student in the field of archaeology and archaeological heritage, whereby the educational process includes theoretical aspects, as well as the transfer of knowledge for applied use in institutions dealing in research, protection, promotion and marketing of archaeological heritage. During their studies, students develop an in-depth insight into the state and development of concepts in archaeology and archaeological heritage protection, get to know the fundamental practical scientific methods of archaeological, conservation and museum work, understand the conceptual affiliation of knowledge into a wider context of disciplines concerned with the research, protection and promotion of archaeology and cultural heritage.

An important part of the study and education about heritage in practice are excursions, visits and interviews. Organised tours of collections, sites, monuments, parks, museums, etc. give students an opportunity to face the problems, projects, and state in the field of heritage, while at the same time enabling authentic and informal contact to the field and a mutual exchange of opinions and views about questions linked to their studies. The courses combine various elements of practical training and research work and provide a varied employment range for the graduates.

The Heritage Tourism Graduate Study Programme (MA) was designed from the cooperation between the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Tourism Studies, based on estimates of the need for a broader and better inclusion of cultural heritage in the current tourist offer in Slovenia and abroad, due in part to a lack of suitably educated professionals. The study course was the first of its kind in Slovenia and aims to fill in the void in higher education in the field of tourism and heritage, where these two independent disciplines do not overlap, but they integrate with a combination of topics, as the University of Primorska has the appropriate professional and research potential available.

The Heritage Tourism study programme offers skills and competencies in the field of cultural heritage and tourist management with an emphasis on the implementation of heritage content into the tourist offer. In this way, students receive an education enabling creative work in a promising economic discipline with a focus on heritage protection and the development of cultural tourism. The aim of the study programme is to develop a professional profile able to engage and address equally in both fields of tourism and cultural heritage.

Students' practical experience, training and collaboration

An important part of the study and students' training is the research and practical work on sites, monuments, workshops and collaborating in various heritage-oriented projects. One of the sites where students train and develop their understanding of heritage protection and management is the *villa*

maritima Archaeological Park of Simonov Zaliv in Izola.

The varied activities connected to the work on the archaeological site and the formation of an archaeological park offer an excellent opportunity to combine scientific research and university education. Archaeology, heritage, history, museology, restoration, conservation and tourism are only some of the contents to which students have contributed, deepening and expanding their knowledge in the framework of the official study process or workshops and summer schools.

The International Summer School of Museology organised by the Faculty of Humanities since 2007 in cooperation with the Forum of Slavic Cultures and ICOM Slovenia, links its annual topics mostly to ICOM's annual theme for the International Day of Museums on May 18. The chosen themes of museums and heritage interpretation are thus connected to educational activities. Students acquire three ECTS by participating in the summer school, which provides five days of lectures, seminars and workshops, excursions and practical work. The official language of the school is English.

The students who express their interest in closer cooperation in the work and activities linked to the Archaeological Park Simonov Zaliv have the opportunity to continue their work outside their study time as volunteers. So far they have had an opportunity to participate in free educational courses with additional topics on cultural and natural heritage within several research projects such as AS - Archaeology for All, Mythical Park, Roof of Rock, and Living Landscape… all dealing with different topics of heritage, its interpretation and promotion.

During the summer, students can work in the park as guides (on condition of their knowledge of English and Italian, and suitable archaeological and heritage content), and contribute to the implementation of pedagogic and long-life learning workshops in the park, as well as other public events.

Graduates of the study courses in heritage studies have opportunities for professional employment within the framework of public institutions for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage. Therefore, it is extremely important for students to gain as much practical experience as possible during their studies. In this way, they can become directly acquainted with different fields of working with heritage. Moreover, they thus have an opportunity to come into contact with various institutions and organisations, which have the potential to become their future employers.

Experience and evaluation

Heritage programmes aim to transfer the basic knowledge required for the understanding, promotion, interpretation and research of heritage and at the same time the basis for the development of student's own interests and further development in the field of heritage in general as well in specific areas such as legislation, conservation, restoration, museology and tourism.

However, despite all the possibilities, teaching methods and other inputs that we give as teachers, we have to evaluate our work on different levels. In order to get the answers to whether our students developed or deepened their interests in the field of heritage we perform an anonymous evaluation in the form of a questionnaire. This way we receive non-biased responses evaluating the courses, teaching methods and the general experience. This is a valuable form of evaluation since students do not hesitate to express their opinion and mostly they evaluate our work by evaluating the quality of our methods and at the same time the

knowledge and experience they gained during the course. Their comments can sometimes be emotional and sincere and allow us to learn about their comprehension of heritage and the importance of our/their work.

This is of course very helpful, but the question that is unanswered is how good are they going to be when working in the field of heritage and whether they are going to be involved in it. Fortunately, we have the opportunity to follow them after they have finished the study course or even after graduation and we keep in touch with students through our Alumni Club. At annual meetings, we find out that most of our students have managed to be active in the field of heritage in many different ways. The most important outcome that we can trace is that they work in the field of heritage on different levels and work as independent professionals in collaboration with other institutions such as museums and heritage sites. They design their own heritage products or offer and perform them in the above-mentioned institutions. Topics that they cover are mostly connected or derived from varied aspects of heritage and they include it in the forms of storytelling, historical re-enactment and other means of interpretation.

Education on all levels of university education is lately upgraded by our Chair with heritage education for teachers in primary schools. Via the project **School of Heritage Renovation for younger generations,** we aim to develop modern practices of teaching and interpretation of cultural heritage in various elementary school courses.

Understanding of the importance of cultural heritage, especially immovable, and renovation skills for its preservation and reuse, is at a low level in Slovenia. Systematic change in the attitudes of communities towards heritage is possible only through the education of new generations. In our school system, heritage is not present at a high level and is not offered as an independent course in primary or secondary schools. In primary school curricula, cultural heritage is mentioned only briefly among the other objectives of learning about the environment and society and as part of architecture in art education.

Despite the exceptional potential for getting to know cultural heritage in the local environment in a holistic and modern, creative and interdisciplinary way, and professional opportunities of the 21st century, which are opened up, there is no planned teaching on cultural heritage and its interpretation in our elementary school practice. One of the main reasons is the lack of teachers' competence, understanding of the dimensions of the content, and above all the available methods, approaches and didactic manuals. Our project, therefore, envisages the following activities:

- analysis of existing and new curricula of elementary schools related to cultural heritage,
- development of manuals for teachers on selected subjects, and primary school activities with suggestions for teaching preparations and methods for work with cultural heritage,
- development of a set of didactic tools for work in the classroom, remotely and in a live environment,
- establishment of a learning laboratory for teacher training and activity days,
- testing and evaluation of new teaching practices.

The results of the projects, which is still in course, together with our proposals will be further presented to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture.

Talking about our project experience, we have to emphasise, that further development of heritage interpretation can also be supported by various heritage-oriented projects. In this respect, we have experienced an increase in projects and calls asking for heritage interpretation in individual work packages. But unfortunately, there is often not enough attention regarding the references in heritage interpretation and interpretation plans in the course of the project proposal evaluation or its results. We should also point out, regarding the above-mentioned, the importance of partnership selection regarding the interpretation plans and other so-called soft content often included in project calls.

In conclusion, including the various possibilities of practical work and training on the various fields of heritage work and heritage interpretation within the study process of the Department of Archaeology and Heritage at the Faculty of Humanities in Koper is a good example of integrating theoretical studies, practical and research work. Our experience shows the importance of education for further enforcement of heritage interpretation on all levels of formal education (primary, secondary and tertiary level), as well as informal education.

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The egg-laying-wool-milk-pig – Europe's Rangers as intermediaries

Urs Reif (Germany)

Urs Reif is chief ranger in the Black Forest National Park in southwest Germany. As a volunteer, he also acts as president of the European Ranger Federation, and he also sits on the ranger working group for Europarc Germany. Urs was born in 1980 in Germany and studied biology and nature conservation. Before joining the national park, Urs worked in conservancy reporting and in the federal ministry for nature conservation.

Contact: urs.reif@nlp.bwl.de

In Germany there is an idiom: 'The egg-laying-wool-milk-pig'. In English you might know this as a 'Jack-of-all-trades'. As a representative of the Rangers of Europe, I will tell you what eggs, wool and milk have in common with rangers.
Eggs are an essential ingredient in most baking recipes; they can be stored for a long time and they are basis for bionic research concerning the perfect storage material. Wool has kept humans warm for many hundreds of years. It is one of the most important materials for clothing and it features something that no technical fabric can achieve: it keeps warm even when wet. And milk or pigs… don't get me started about those! Milk has fed our children since forever and pigs – though being reduced in delivering meat – are very intelligent but obviously underestimated pets.

The egg-laying-wool-milk-pig offers all of these essentials, which is why this idiom is used to talk about things that seem to provide everything you need at once – which is naturally highly unlikely. But for me, the same applies to rangers in concern of nature conservation. It is all about essentials and providing all you need. Essentials are often forgotten and still are most important in reaching goals. Rangers offer the essentials for nature conservation. Be it in environmental education, law enforcement, monitoring, visitor guiding or general visitor information. Rangers act as intermediaries in all these fields. And rangers offer strength out of this combination of many duties in one person. Rangers are able to identify a special protected species, they know of its ecological needs and how to practically support the species and they are able to explain all of this is in a non-scientific and intelligible way using the natural phenomena on-site.

And most importantly, rangers offer a feature that is lacking in most levels of nature protection agencies. Rangers know their protected area inside out. They most often are the only ones of an administration of protected areas that combine the knowledge of the key features of what is protected (the species, habitats, etc.), the knowledge about the visitors in those areas, and the knowledge about how to explain and communicate the object of protection.

Nearly all duties of a ranger are in need of profound communication skills and hereby using natural phenomenon rangers are able to establish a connection between visitors and the object of protection. Rangers are the actual guardians of protected areas, the – until now sadly often neglected – main force and tip of the spear in reaching globally agreed goals of the protection of biodiversity and in the face of climate change. Using communication, explanation, connection and understanding next to practical means of protection is strictly in line with many of the goals of sustainable education of the UNESCO programme. Herein the countries should develop education systems for high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all. As all people spend time outdoors in recreation, they will meet rangers. And

empowering those people to be responsible global citizens can be even tested directly by people behaving differently within protected areas after having had contact with rangers. There is no field better suited for a direct approach to responsibility than visiting a natural area, learning about its needs and then behaving in a responsible way.

But rangers do even more! Rangers often work with junior-ranger programmes to give long-term education to regional kids and build up, educate and work together with regional partners and volunteers. Being the field workers of nature protection, rangers naturally stay in regular contact with any other person being active in or for a protected area. They keep contact with regional councils, regional NGOs, or just the active local retiree or other vounteers who help out in many cases. This daily regional working together not only allows sustainable education but also enables regional people to participate in nature protection, in their own homebased natural environment and to co-create how this natural heritage can be protected for future generations. None of this is possible without the oft-repeated guardians of the protected areas, the rangers.

But be aware! Many countries see and use their rangers not as a competent nature conservation corps that is able to implement the politically set goals for biodiversity and sustainable education directly at the frontline, but as workers to be used as ticket seller for information centres.
This is where the European Ranger Federation is latching on. We are sure that only by educating rangers and thus enabling them to fill this role, will we be able to reach all those ambitious goals. At COP15, 30% of protected areas were decided. These areas again need guardians in the field and teachers for the visitors. So immense work has to be done to enable the rangers all over Europe to achieve fair payment, the necessary education and equipment and finally the appreciation that is due their job in all-day mediation within our protected areas. This is where we come back to the roots of interpretation as well. You all know Freeman Tilden as the founding father of interpretation. And you also know that he was checking out what rangers in US national parks did when interpreting their natural phenomena. And this is where it all comes back to the idiom of the egg-laying-wool-milk-pig and the importance of Europe's rangers.

The European Ranger Federation

The European Ranger Federation is an NGO based in Germany. It is a Europe-wide network for rangers of all kinds of protected areas all over Europe. It provides networking, training, public relations and image work for rangers in Europe. It is directly connected to the International Ranger Federation. The volunteer board comprises rangers from Germany, Israel, Georgia, Albania and Spain. You can find more information online at www.europeanrangers.org/ as well as on LinkedIn and Instagram. Sign up for a monthly newsletter about current work and programmes.

UNESCO Global Geoparks. Memory of the Earth, future for the people

Asier Hilario Orús (Spain)

Asier Hilario Orús is a PhD Geologist with broad international expertise on Geoheritage, Geoparks, Geoconservation and Geotourism. His professional career is especially linked to the Basque Coast UNESCO Global Geopark. His main activity is related to the communication, assessment and management of geological heritage at national and international level. Since 2012 he has been part of the Coordination Committee of the European Geoparks network and he also belongs to the Advisory Committee of the European and Global Geoparks network. He has many other roles, such as senior evaluator for UNESCO Global Geoparks' roster of evaluators, member of the Geoheritage specialist group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and member of the Scientific Board of the International Geosciences Program (IGCP). At present he is chairman of the Geoheritage Commission of the International Union of Geological Sciences IUGS.

Contact: flysch@gipuzkoa.eus

Abstract

The Earth is 4,600 million years old and its heritage is written in the rocks. The history of our mother Earth is the longest and most incredible history that has been ever written. Interpreting our landscapes, rocks and fossils as well as all the geological processes shaping our daily lives is essential to understand the Earth system and its complex history. The concept of Deep Time revealed by the Earth's geological record humbles us with the realisation that we have just arrived. Yet study of the current Earth processes shows that our activity is rapidly and deeply transforming the Earth's surface environments and processes. UNESCO Global geoparks celebrate and interpret the heritage of the Earth and include local communities and the creation of local development strategies for a better future.

The recording of Asier's keynote can be watched online here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ypU1rEiJnY

iecon conclusions

Conference wrap-up

Thorsten Ludwig (Germany)

Thorsten Ludwig studied archaeology and interpretation (MSc). He worked at a German national park until 1993, when he founded Bildungswerk interpretation as his own consultancy. From 2015-2021 Thorsten served as IE Managing Director.

Contact: Th.Ludwig@interp.de

As our conference, **Creating learning landscapes through heritage interpretation**, was coming to an end, I asked some of you for your most important findings, but before referring to the actual subject of the conference, I need to say that, for many, the strong personal moments seemed to be even more significant than ever before.

Strong moments

Many of us haven't met in person for years, and so there was an obvious deficit of direct physical encounters with people and places.

My own conference experience began with the visit to one of the remote Dacian fortresses that became part of UNESCO World Heritage. Located in the midst of nature the place was teeming with rare butterflies and orchids, and I could hardly imagine a warmer welcome. It is astonishing what natural treasures this part of Europe has to offer once we leave the beaten tracks.

Speaking of strong moments, some of you might also remember yesterday's study visit to Târgu Mureș. The town is trilingual and more ethnic groups meet at the Palace of Culture. We entered its hall that is equipped with a large organ. An organist had just finished his exercises and agreed to play another piece for us. From one moment to the next we were swept away by the strong sound.

Maybe this should be our first point to take back home: what a noble duty it is for us to just set the stage for such strong moments, helping people to grow their understanding for heritage as well as for each other in whole interpretive experiences.

In transition

In his keynote address this morning, Asier reminded us of our responsibility for the planet. Many of us feel that we can no longer put aside the enormous loss of biodiversity and the changes caused through the climate crisis. The United Nations call for a more peaceful and sustainable world, and doesn't the way that people interpret heritage play a significant role in this?

To what extent does this challenge the way heritage interpretation is done? Will value-based interpretation and the learning landscape approach offer new solutions? If it was our supporting leg during previous decades to communicate stories in an enjoyable way, is it now time to shift some weight to 'the other leg'? And what does this mean?

No doubt that the focus of formal learning on knowledge and skills is essential for employability. However, experience-based learning at heritage sites could complement this by encouraging and empowering people to deal more with values and frames that help develop an understanding for each other and for the requirements of the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

Our workshops and presentations have shown how many initiatives are already fostering participation and co-creation, inviting people to interpret on their own and facilitating their interpretive experiences. Heritage interpretation in Europe has a rich philosophical tradition to draw on in this concern but can also offer means and methods to ground those more abstract concepts.

The latter became visible during our pre-conference tour. We learnt about the House of Volcanoes that was not created by professional media designers using high technology but more by designing processes with people from the local community. Not only did they create ways to share their ideas with visitors, they also became much more connected to 'their' UNESCO designated site.

Shouldn't we seek to more integrate responsible heritage interpretation into the work of people and initiatives that have so far not been familiar to our approach? Creating learning landscapes seems to be a promising way for achieving this together with UNESCO, and IE could offer its updated certification courses to become flagships of value-based heritage interpretation in Europe.

Discovering slowness

Besides creating strong moments and meeting the requirements of transition, there is a third thought that I found interesting at this conference. Maybe some of you know the novel 'The discovery of slowness' by Sten Nadolny, referring to a fictional view on Arctic explorer John Franklin. Although we might not cherish this as responsible interpreters, I recall it since my third point is deceleration.

At Haţeg UNESCO Global Geopark, we were offered slow food, in his keynote address on Saturday morning, Graham introduced slow interpretation, and more conference attendees than ever before decided to arrive here by slow travel. Considering that acceleration has become a key quality of our modern society, one might wonder under what circumstances we should now find fulfillment in deceleration.

Maybe the secret lies in sharing experiences and their interpretation with others? Members taking long train or bus rides from destinations as far as Sweden and Wales just shared part of their journey, and a group of Croatian attendees even chartered a minibus to come to Romania which obviously resulted in a lot of fun.

The environmental impact is a major disadvantage of IE meetings and not everyone feels they can avoid flights under all circumstances – but couldn't we more encourage joint travel to avoid fast and dirty transport? When is it possible to go for healthier local and seasonal food, and what benefits and requirements come with slow interpretation? It might be worth exploring our limits in such concerns.

So, in a nutshell, one conclusion from this conference could be that strong interpretive moments benefit from deceleration, and that supporting this could also contribute to more sustainable interpretation. But I'm pretty sure all of you have your own conclusions, and I sincerely hope you can stay in touch after the conference to exchange them and let those four fulfilling days reverberate.

As we heard, the learning landscape initiative will now lead IE through the two upcoming years. UNESCO supports this endeavour, and I think we got closer to several questions that were included in the call for papers. So, we can look forward to this journey.

Full papers

How heritage interpretation enhances formal and informal learning – The case of Szigetvár Castle

Krisztina Balázs-Bécsi (Hungary)

Krisztina Balázs-Bécsi is an author, a heritage tourism expert and researcher in heritage education. She works for the Hungarian National Heritage Protection and Development Non Profit Ltd., Hungary.

Contact: bbbecsi65@gmail.com

Abstract

The developments of the Hungarian Palace and Castle Programme between 2015 and 2023 aimed to implement a new exhibition interpretation focusing on heritage education. A team of enthusiastic professionals called on the visitor experience to help locals and visitors to embrace both tangible and intangible heritage. The most successful example is the case of the Szigetvár Castle, where the interpretation managed to break down the walls between cultures, school subjects and types of heritage, connecting the defenders of medieval castles with Baroque epic poetry and the superheroes of 21st century movies. By using the elements of the visitors' culture to experience the heritage, the past becomes comprehensible and the character and motivation of the hero understandable, while we find out that heritage is a process that continues in the present, and that we are not passive observers, but active participants.

Keywords

heritage, cultural identity, education, visitor engagement, social cohesion

Introduction

The Hungarian State, as custodian, is responsible not just for the preservation and maintenance of the heritage site but for:

- making it accessible,
- giving it a valuable function,
- integrating it into the life of the local community, and
- using the site to raise awareness of and increase social support for the cause of heritage.

Cultural heritage only gains meaning if people become aware of it, understand its worth, and get to know its history and associated heritage values. A monument can be interesting for its architectural features, yet it only becomes wholly comprehensible when we tell its story.

To tell the story, we need to unearth facts from the depths of the archive. We need to collect the related characters and the legends that live in people's memories. . The backdrop and scenery for the story comprises collected works of art, furniture, household items, tools and clothing of the place. Stories of traditional and present-day crafts, from blacksmithing to modern technology-based restoration, and the difficulties that a careful governor (whether an ancient castellan or a modern museum director)

faced are all part of that heritage and are equally attractive to the visitors when properly told. But, can we find a more valuable function for a historic building than being an exhibition place for cultural heritage of various types?

Castles and mansions were economic and administrative centres of a micro-region throughout history. When deprived of their military defence function, they served primarily as the home of the landowner's family. However, they also were the place for the management of affairs, the court of justice and a source of amusements for an ever-widening audience. All in all, these sites were deeply integrated into the community's life and formed a basis of common pride and local identity.

Recognising the social and economic potential of developing built heritage in disadvantaged regions, Hungary launched the National Palace and Castle Programme in 2015. Financed by domestic and EU funds, the Programme embraces the reconstruction and development of 29 historic mansions and fortresses nationwide, transforming them into appealing visitor attractions. The primary purpose of the reconstruction was the preservation and sustainable operation of cultural heritage of all kinds: that of built heritage as well as tangible and intangible heritage and historic gardens as part of the cultural landscape.

Restoration of monuments was only part of the development process. The purpose was to create an engaging visitor experience through heritage interpretation. Using this as a tool to help visitors understand the significance of the place and connect those meanings with their personal lives (Joeckel, J. 2002). By weaving compelling stories about the place, objects and characters, we encouraged visitors to think about their experiences, and to make associations between the information given and their previous perceptions (Moscardo, G. 1996; Staiff, R. 2014).

Figure 1. Detail of the model room

What can society do for its heritage?

To maintain built heritage is an expensive activity. However, raising public awareness of its importance and the recognition of its value helps decision-makers to justify the high cost, while visitors and donators contribute to its sustainability.

Built heritage could be expected to suffer erosion by weather and warfare; but it is also threatened by the actions of visitors and locals. Much of our built heritage has been a target for collectors, archaeological looting, graffiti, or other forms of vandalism. The damage done to historic buildings is not always conscious; education can be a tool to prevent people from doing further harm.

It is not a given fact that a heritage site will always attract visitors. Each generation must re-discover and take possession of the culture of their ancestors (Kodály, Z. 1964). Heritage sites must also engage new visitors among each upcoming generation. So, by attracting children to, and engaging them with the museums, a heritage site ensures the survival of visitor interest.

What can heritage offer to society in turn?

In turning these sites into exhibition and event places responding to modern trends, the State intended to boost the local economy by bringing newly-generated demand to the area.

More visitors represent an increase in market potential and, consequently, an opportunity to improve the quality of life for local residents and communities. In addition, economic growth stimulates private investment and increases local job offers.

Apart from the unquestionable positive effect of such an investment on a region's economy, development produces beneficial social outcomes. Taking responsibility for our shared heritage enhances territorial cohesion. In order to provide visitors with an all-satisfying experience, it is essential to build a partnership between local stakeholders resulting in a network of cooperating actors: producers of goods and services, local authorities and residents.

Our cultural identity is deeply rooted in our culture. Local heritage – whether built, tangible or intangible – defines us as individuals and helps us find our way in society. Being aware of our heritage and taking pride in it means we have a deeper understanding of cultural values, making us more open to respecting cultural differences. Strengthening local identity is a step towards an inclusive society.

Rural Hungary, mostly smaller settlements, need more quality cultural event venues where locals can meet and spend valuable time together. Therefore, establishing suitable event rooms was a primary design consideration of the Programme. These spaces had to comply with both heritage protection and sustainability requirements. Moreover, they had to be both attractive and affordable for locals to visit cultural events held at the monument. If these events can attract highly recognised performers at a reasonable cost, high culture also becomes more accessible to local residents.

Heritage education

Lastly, cultural heritage can serve as a subject, while heritage sites provide an attractive venue for educational programmes about local history and natural and cultural values. Heritage education can complete formal and informal learning, connect to several subjects and can address any age group.

The creators of the National Palace and Castle Programme strived to make people of all age groups realise the value of our heritage and the importance of its preservation through experiential interpretation. This latter is a most potent communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of our cultural and natural heritage to visitors (Veverka, J. 2000). The exhibitions were designed to transfer as much knowledge as possible to the visitor through the method of 'edutainment'. The project addresses different age groups on different 'levels' of the exhibition, with the children's level separated from the other levels in terms of content and placement. Specially designed guided tours are also available for lower and upper-grade student groups, adults and older people.

Heritage sites connect thematically with many fields of science; therefore, field trips can complement classroom learning in several subjects. In an ideal case, the teacher agrees with the local museum educator on the schedule and the objectives and integrates the project into the curriculum of the given academic year. During the visit, the students participate in a preparatory session (what will we see?) followed by a field exercise that – besides increasing their knowledge – will make them familiar with research, observation, botanical and zoological guidebooks, and teamwork. By the end of the visit, they will understand correlations, the necessity to comply with respectful behavioural rules, and to participate in the completion of daily activities that might also serve them at home (production of bird houses and simple tools and objects). This project's most outstanding achievement is not the increase in

knowledge but the early attitude-shaping effect that helps children to develop respect for their natural and cultural heritage (Balázs-Bécsi, 2016).

The case of the Szigetvár castle

"Think like a wise man, but communicate in the language of the people" W.B. Yeats.

Figure 2. Theoretical reconstruction of the castle from 1566 by Pazirik Ltd.

The fortress of Szigetvár has a special place in the collective memory of the people of the Carpathian basin. It is at the same time a memorial site paying tribute to the heroic struggles of the handful of brave (mainly Hungarian and Croatian) soldiers to hold back the insurmountable flood of the Ottoman army, and the place where Suleiman the Magnificent's long and glorious life came to an end.

In the spring of 1566, Suleiman launched his last expedition to the Kingdom of Hungary, leading one of the mightiest armies of the time, reaching the castle of Szigetvár by August. Miklós Zrínyi, the Captain of Szigetvár, was about to face an Ottoman army outnumbering his own by a factor of more than ten. Despite this, he was able to defend the fortress for 33 days, hoping for relief forces to come, although ultimately they did not arrive. The Ottoman army won the siege, but in the end the fortress of Szigetvár and the defenders defeated Suleiman the Magnificent, for the Sultan did not live to see his army's victory. He died in his tent on the morning of Zrínyi's heroic charge – hence the exhibition's title: Stopping Suleiman (Pusztai T., 2022).

The story inspired many artists in countless arts and has been deeply embedded in the Croatian and Hungarian national memory throughout the centuries. The National Curriculum in Hungary treats this topic in seventh and eleventh grade as part of the subjects of history, literature and art history. The design team – led by Tamás Pusztai, exhibition curator – wanted to ensure that the visitors did not see the display as just a means of repeating the known facts in a more inspiring environment. The significant achievement of the interpretation concept is that visitors participate in a strategy game throughout the exhibition. The visit is a trip back in time with the help of a 'time machine', a steampunk-style school bus, to understand where, how and why the story ended as it did.

Furthermore, visitors are encouraged to make decisions; using voting modules located at certain points throughout the exhibition. Our aim was to show that there was no clear right or wrong choice, but that all decisions had direct consequences. The exhibition lines up various digital and analogue devices: virtual theoretical reconstructions, scale models, audio scenes, Karagöz shadow puppetry, a kinetic sandbox, animation and live-action short films. These are not just fun interactive elements, but all serve the main objective of the concept.

Figure 3. Detail of the voting module

First dimension: Getting to know the place

The castle of Szigetvár today is a very different building complex from the layout during the siege. The first level of the exhibition acquaints visitors with the location and structure of the 16th century fortress. As locals are one of the most important target groups for the display, this room helps us orientate the original buildings and the surrounding marshlands on an actual map of the town. Using this map, local visitors can locate their house or a local landmark and see if it was built on the place of one of the four fortified towns or right on the bottom of the former lake.

The pull-out drawers of the display case below the scale models show the building method for the castle (termed the modus hungaricus) and the reason why this was an intelligent choice under the given circumstances. The voting module placed next to it tests the visitors' ideas of the perfect form and height of a castle, demonstrating the types of fortifications suitable for different geographic forms and types of assault weapon.

The exhibition confronts visitors with the fact that our knowledge of the actual events of history lies purely upon the objects brought to light by archaeological excavations. The places where these objects were found is shown by 'time windows' which use a ray of light to connect the spot on the present-day map to the one on the scale model. A map shows the march of the armies from the day Suleiman set out from Istanbul and moved towards Szigetvár, indicating in parallel when the relief troops started and how far they got.

An entertaining short film introduces the time travel theme while a tempting array of wooden building blocks invites the youngest visitors to build a model of the castle and play out the siege with wooden figures and cannons.

Second dimension: Getting to know the story

Posterity judges according to its own standards, building on the perception imposed on the facts by preceding ages. Hence the difficulty in viewing the events objectively, understanding the characters' motivations, and not taking sides. If we remove the emotional excess, we can understand that defending a fortress does not require heroes but professional and disciplined soldiers. It is not the task of the castle's defenders to defeat the enemy. They only hold them back until the relief troops arrive, provided they do arrive.

Another vital thing to understand is how the castle works as a stronghold, what are the critical

elements of its defence and where are the vulnerable points. We explain this through an interactive site map with movable magnetic pictograms symbolising the military positions, five elaborate models and related animations. The information cards placed in the pull-out drawers of the display case give instructions on how to besiege and how to defend a fortress. The ratio of castle defenders and besiegers is illustrated using a two-arm lift, where visitors can find the balance point on each day of the siege.

During the siege, the Captain had to make a series of vital decisions that could cost lives and territorial loss. We invite visitors to consider each of his significant decisions and see the consequence of their choice based on the facts learned in the room. In addition, an animation in the voting module shows the opportunities the defenders had while defending the castle against a twenty-fold superior force.

The death of the Sultan was kept secret until the end of the siege to maintain the soldiers' morale. The animation built in the Turkish Karagöz shadow puppetry screen shows the acting by which the Grand Vizier made the outside world believe that the Sultan was alive, a tale which visitors can play out with the help of puppet figures of the main characters. In addition, the screen decoration evokes the pictorial world of 16th century Turkish miniatures.

Third dimension: Travelling back in time

The biggest challenge of an exhibition is to ensure visitors' ability and willingness to absorb the knowledge, understand the connections, and appreciate the authenticity of tangible, intellectual or built heritage. The exhibition tries to address this by framing the facts and the archaeological findings in a story of time travel. There is an interactive installation, a 1:1 model of a classic Ikarus 66 bus transformed into a 'time machine' on board which the visitor watches a virtual time travel animation film creating the illusion that they can actually see the location and events of the past through the windows of the bus. The archaeological finds and objects from the 16th century inventories appear clearly in the film and are physically placed next to the bus in 'time capsules'. 'Travel photos' show the objects' location on the excavation, while tangible object tags refer to their former use.

Figure 4. Detail of the time machine

If we do it right, visitors should recognise that time travel does exist: the finds brought to light by archaeologists give us an idea of the ferocity of the fire raging in the castle, while the weapons and the injuries visible on the human remains convey the cruelty of battle. Everyday objects also gain sense in this context. Interpretation is the tool that turns uninteresting dusty objects into our heritage and makes us realise that without preserving them and making them available, time travel will not be possible again.

Fourth dimension: The notion of the hero

Famous historical figures are remembered for their political or military achievements, while we rarely examine their human character and motivations. Heroes are often ordinary people who overcome their own interests in a given situation and put the interests of many first, as far as sacrificing their lives if the circumstances require it. Therefore, it is essential to understand

their motivation and the circumstances that led them to act as they did, as well as the consequences of their actions. The fourth level of the exhibition treats the notion of the hero from two different points of view.

The first compares the two main protagonists' life journeys in terms of their ancestry and religion, how they reached their position, their first military achievements and the resources they had at their disposal. As an interesting parallel for student visitors, the display weighs up Suleiman's and Zrínyi's upbringing, what they learned and from whom, and what did they read. The women who were influential in the lives of the heroes, and the fate of their descendants, are intriguing themes, the topic being familiar to most visitors thanks to a popular Turkish soap opera on Suleiman's life that aired recently in all three countries. The presentation refers to this soap opera, correcting and organising the story by facts. Another exciting point to consider is whether they finally reached their goal. The fact is that Suleiman intended to conquer Vienna at the end of the journey, a target that he did not achieve. On the other hand, Zrínyi fulfilled his aim to prevent the Sultan from achieving his goal.

The second point of view shows the 16th century military man's approach to death. Those brought up as soldiers, to shape a country's destiny, accepted death in a different way than we do. Zrínyi's letters testify to how he works out for himself and his soldiers whether to surrender or defend the castle to the death (Pusztai, T. 2019). Visitors can listen to the Captain's thoughts in a quiet little room separated from the exhibition route. The presentation of a hero who sacrifices his life is a sensitive topic, especially for adolescents. By guiding the visitors through these stations, they may conclude that it is not just about the ultimate sacrifice; anyone can be a hero if they act for the greater good.

Fifth dimension: Literary connection points

Among the countless works of art inspired by these historical events, the Baroque epic poem, 'The Peril of Sziget', is the most emphasised in the Hungarian National Curriculum. The poem was written in the middle of the 17th century in the epic genre. During the Baroque era, the epic genre was considered to have the highest aesthetic value and the poem was listed in modern times as one of the major literary achievements of the 17th century (Clark, K., 1969). It was written by the hero's great-grandson of the same name, a highly regarded poet, statesman and soldier of his time. Although part of the curriculum, it is a literary work that is very difficult to read, and students regard it as a 'let's get this over with' piece. Our unusual literature class aims to help today's student readers understand the poem and to hopefully find some appreciation for it.

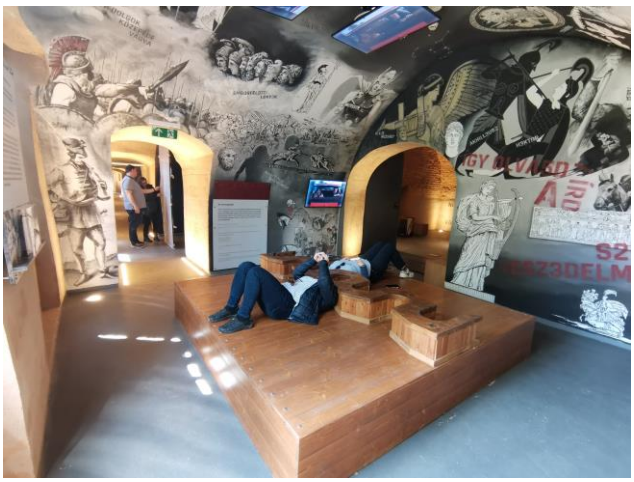

Figure 5. Detail of the vault decoration in the 'Unusual literature class' room

The epic has been a popular genre since ancient times, and even today's screenwriters like to draw from the works of their predecessors. The display points to the similar schemes found in all ancient, Baroque and contemporary epics: the intervention of superhuman beings in peoples' lives, the fight between heroes with outstanding abilities and with extraordinary weapons, or the way an army leader's speech fires up his men.

These are present in the works of Homer, Virgil and Zrínyi, just as in present-day superhero movies. The exhibition encourages visitors to create their own epics with the help of 11 elements highlighted in 'The Peril of Sziget' that turn up in well-known recent stories, from James Bond to the Avengers, from A Space Odyssey to the Lord of the Rings.

The room's design evokes the world of comic books; a meticulously hand-painted independent work of art is responsible for creating the atmosphere. Since the exhibition appeals primarily to teenagers, we created a video version of an essay on a book with a popular young YouTuber. Visitors can watch and listen to the video as well as thoroughly examine the vault's decoration whilst lying on a podium in the middle of the hall. In addition, explorers use the whiteboard on the wall to create their own stories.

The main objective of this unconventional literature lesson is to help students understand that cultural heritage is a process that builds on previously created values to achieve results in the present. Heritage gains if we regularly take it out, use it and build on it. It can help us become open-minded, get better grades or even download better movies online.

Sixth dimension: Collective memory (Hungarian, Croatian, Turkish)

Both the Captain and the poet Miklós Zrínyi (in Croatian: Nikola Zrinski) were born into a Croatian noble family. However, as noblemen of the Kingdom of Hungary, they also considered themselves Hungarian. Most soldiers who fought and died in the siege were of Hungarian and Croatian ethnicity. In both countries, we regard this episode of the Late Middle Ages as a heroic deed that prevented the Ottomans from occupying a larger part of the Western world and thus influenced the course of history. Because of this, posterity bestowed the title of 'Civitas Invicta' – the most heroic city – on the settlement, and at the same time, it was declared a National Monument.

Szigetvár also has an essential role in Turkish culture, as it is where the life of one of the greatest and most glorious Sultans ended. His mummified corpse was temporarily buried here until the end of the campaign. However, legend has it that his heart and internal organs found their eternal resting place in the land of the nearby Turbék settlement. The former theory is supported by the fact Sultan Selim II built a shrine at the site of his father's temporary tomb.

The heritage site in Szigetvár is a focal point where these three cultures meet. Today's castle shows little of what was like during the siege, but certain parts bear evidence of both Turkish and Hungarian constructions. The heritage site as a whole pays tribute to this complex, colourful history, respecting all features that were added to it.

Conclusions

Heritage education is the activity which ensures that heritage is known, understood, valued, and enjoyed (Fontal, O. & Martínez, M. 2020). The exhibition of the Szigetvár castle was based on heritage edutainment, exploring all the possibilities the site offers in terms of built, tangible and intangible heritage. We strived to ensure that visitors, be they locals, students or any other target group, understand and embrace all the values that this unique heritage site conveys. For student visitors, the exhibition provides an excellent opportunity to gain a better understanding of the history and supplement the curriculum, interpreted on special guided tours or during museum education sessions. Individual exhibition visits deepen visitors' knowledge of the subject, prompting them to think comprehensively,

openly and inclusively about the topics raised. Finally, the approach that examines the viewpoints of the opposing parties as equals and encompasses three cultures helps us to examine a topic from different perspectives to enhance understanding and inclusiveness.

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The 'interpretation' dilemma within the Faro Convention and its link to sustainability thinking

Elena-Maria Cautiş (Italy)

Elena-Maria Cautiş is a PhD student at the University of Ferrara, Italy, working on a research project focusing on the interpretation of cultural landscapes as an asset for sustainable development. Within this context, part of her fieldwork requires the planning and implementation of participatory cultural mapping experiments and interpretation of cultural landscapes in Rome, Italy and in the village of Mălâncrav, Romania. At the moment she is undertaking a research visit at the Linnaeus University in Sweden, affiliated with the Centre for Applied Heritage and the UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures, within which framework she is conceptually exploring diverse models of participatory heritage processes and its impacts these hold on our capacities for imagining diverse futures in line with environmental sustainability.

Contact: elenamaria.cautis@unife.it

Abstract

The Faro Convention emphasises the responsibility of public authorities to engage communities in the process of interpreting heritage and respect the diversity of such interpretations. It recognises this as an asset for strengthening both democracy and sustainable development. The link between cultural representation in terms of heritage and sustainable development (in all its forms) has been endorsed numerous times in recent research. Despite this, there is little discussion at the European level with regards to interpretation as a heritage process of self-identification of values in the landscape and the implications this could have for shaping sustainability thinking. I argue this gap could be filled by a holistic approach to heritage management which takes an ontological position rooted in environmental hermeneutics, while employing a transdisciplinary theory of integration of new knowledge and methods of cultural mapping for unearthing marginalised narratives of the landscape.

Keywords

Faro Convention, heritage communities, (de)selecting heritage, environmental hermeneutics, environmental sustainability

Introduction

The Faro Convention's Article 12, concerned with access to cultural heritage and democratic participations, states that the signatory parties should engage with encouraging everyone to participate in "the process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage" (Council of Europe, 2005). The merit of such a statement is that it underlines that heritage management is not just about conservation and presentation but, rather, is a complex process which sees many levels of activity and stakeholders related to heritage production, enhancement and its sustainable valorisation. The Faro Convention is considered revolutionary in the sense that it is a first true claim at democratising the sector in Europe. It aims to repurpose heritage: from its being simply for the sake of historical and technical fascination coined into a conservationist type of paradigm, to recognising the role of heritage for sustainable development, for promoting human rights and for building up a common European identity. It employs the social, political and economic functions of heritage and, in this

sense, emphasises its contribution to sustainable development (Graham *et al.* 2014: 12).

In this text I will discuss the concept of 'interpretation' as it is understood within the Convention and then possible developments of the concept of landscape-based heritage management. At first I will discuss it in relation to the concept of 'presentation'. I argue that within current methodologies, interpretation and presentation of heritage often produce a staged experience for visitors at an already designated heritage site. By introducing a methodology based in the hermeneutics of the landscape, I hope to start debates regarding the development of interpretation beyond the notion of presentation. Within such a framework, heritage is considered as part of a readable landscape, and the engagement of all present actors allows layers of entangled meanings to be revealed. In this way, heritage is produced. In exchange, this creates the basis for acting upon the landscape while keeping in mind all stakeholders involved, humans and non-humans alike, and can potentially contribute to designing strategies of development which are more in line with sustainability thinking. For this, I will first elaborate on heritage as a future oriented process, which is produced in the present in relation to diverse scenarios for the future; then I will discuss interpretation and finally introduce environmental hermeneutics and transdisciplinarity as frameworks within which we discuss heritage processes.

Indeed, interpretation, when also understood in part as a process of identification, is more than a practice, but rather a philosophy which sees hermeneutics as the core frame for being in the world: with ourselves, with other humans, with the landscape and with non-human beings (Clingerman *et al.* 2014: 2). In this frame, heritage represents just a small portion of what our contexts are composed of. When discussing local sustainable development, a hermeneutics of the landscape might, therefore, be better suited for developing methodologies of getting to know the landscape and our place in it and for designing better development strategies. In this sense it is not only communities which need to be encouraged to adopt such a view, for they already interpret the places where they live every day. It is also the task of heritage experts and practitioners to educate themselves into a mindset which would allow for creating a space of encounter for the many interpretations that places and practices can hold, therefore answering to a call of aligning themselves within a current assembly of 'humble experts' (Schofield 2014:43). It is within such a framework that an interpretation of heritage is possible. In this sense, I propose that environmental hermeneutics might constitute a solid framework for investigating such approaches and that, as tools of implementation, transdisciplinary models of integration of knowledge of other types of experts or communities living and experiencing the landscape, might contribute to solving the dilemma of interpretation in the Faro Convention.

Reflections on the current understanding of heritage (communities) and interpretation

In the past decades, the heritage sector has witnessed an opening towards diverse paradigms and practices, as well as towards wider audiences. These changes in paradigm have triggered the questioning of a heritage canon, both with regard to the objects identified as heritage and to the practice in the sector. .A paramount shift was in the understanding of heritage as a discourse and the introduction of the concept of "authorised heritage discourse" by Laurajane Smith (Uses of Heritage, 2006), as a process of producing meanings about the past in the present in line with elite agendas and

which sees "heritage as something that is engaged with passively – while it may be the subject of popular 'gaze', that gaze is a passive one in which the audience will uncritically consume the message of heritage constructed by heritage experts" (Smith, 2006: 31). Harrison, on the other hand, talks about official heritage to refer to a set of heritage elements and practices that are state-driven in accordance with political agendas and mediated by normative forms, and unofficial heritage as those elements about the past that individuals and communities cherish but are not recognised by institutions as such (Harrison, 2013: 14-15). More recent discussions acknowledge the existence of plural heritages, with a myriad of meanings, whether institutionalised or not, which constantly meet each other, create friction and produce new ways of experiencing the past in the present (Whitehead *et al*., 2021:60).

These shifts in general paradigms have prepared the ground for a critical inquiry on heritage and, therefore, the establishment of a field of study which goes beyond the practice of conservation and restoration (see Winter 2013). Advancements in related disciplines have allowed for a holistic study of heritage and were in most part triggered by anthropological studies, human geography and urban studies, with each of these disciplines holding diverse points of view with regards to what heritage is (Harrison 2013:7-8). Issues related to the politics of representation have been raised as a means of increasing awareness of the impact that heritage has in leveraging power dynamics in society (Harrison 2013: 108). As such, heritage came to be considered not merely as a representation of a collective past, but as an indicator of imbalances in society; looking into what heritage is means at the same time inquiring into the characteristics of the group in power that selects and produces items as heritages (Silva & Santos 2012:439). This has, therefore, seen a move towards the understanding of heritage as a narrative that we build in relation to our past and the stories we want to tell about ourselves to the world and the manifestation of such narratives in material and immaterial heritages (Smith 2006:11). Stories here are to be considered as an asset which not only prompt reflection with regard to one's position in the world but also as a tool with the power of persuading people into accepting a common narrative and common values while intentionally excluding and hiding others. The symbols that, therefore, become canonical in a society, and especially those linked to heritage, hold power over how people behave, how they interact with politics and how they position themselves in the environment.

Interpretation

Freeman Tilden's book on interpretation (Interpreting Our Heritage, 1957/1977), grew from a debate that had arisen in the 1950s with regards to staging a new form of interaction between visitors and places. Tilden's principles were widely used as guiding points in an emerging activity related to heritage, natural or cultural, which saw the interpretation of places or objects as a means of bringing experts into conversation with both such elements and the audience.

Two faults are being critiqued with regards to such approaches (Staiff 2014:9):

1. The interpretation of Tilden's principles materialised in a disguised form of presentation with the purpose of educating visitors and persuading them to accept established narratives.
2. Such approaches only had in mind visitors and regarded people as an audience which from the start implied that heritage is a stage and performance to which people only have a limited access.

This framework has been perpetuated at all levels. The World Heritage Interpretation and Presentation International Center (WHIPIC), makes the case for the use of two different concepts for two different types of activities – interpretation and presentation – while it defines interpretation of World Heritage as: "a full range of potential activities to increase public awareness and understanding of cultural heritage" (https://unesco-whipic.org/WHIP accessed 06.04.2023).

The vagueness of this definition leaves space for understanding the activities related to heritage interpretation as actions intended to educate people towards the importance of heritage. No question is being raised as to how interpretation could be useful for the selection and deselection of items as collective heritage and how these shape our interaction with our environments. No reflections are being made on who decides how the collective heritage of a heritage community is constructed.

Even in academic literature there seems to be the same approach with regard to heritage interpretation. Activities linked to this process are deemed as actions taken for presenting the place, for staging the experience, for carefully crafting informational materials which convey a one-way type of communication (e.g. Slack 2021:9-10). This one-way type of communication, although not as rigid as it once was, still lacks the ability to create mental spaces for different and maybe even divergent interpretations of the place. Often, such a space is called to be one of negotiation of meanings. While this is salutary, as long as a notion of heritage as a fixed and frozen item in time which is to be kept at all costs and which can offer objective and absolute truths related to the past, persists, the risk is that the negotiation of meanings is being carried on unequal grounds. In such a case, the expert seen as the holder of such an objective truth will always hold precedence over the meaning ascribed by other stakeholders. At the same time, such an approach risks leaving out narratives within the landscape, which can potentially hold knowledge about how to position ourselves sustainably in the environment, taking into consideration non-human actors as well. This is why perhaps the dilemma of interpretation inside the Faro Convention can in truth tell us more about the systemic change which is needed in the heritage sector (and society at large) in order to be able truly to leave space for different interpretations and to prompt fair negotiation of meanings.

The need for a shift in paradigm

As discussed, the Faro Convention can be considered as the result of a trajectory on which the heritage sector has embarked in the last decades in an effort to align itself to general tendencies of democratisation and social justice and the pursuit of sustainable development. At the same time, the Convention also sparked further discussions with regard to its content and how it could be implemented in practice.

As discussions around the ethics of heritage practices continue, issues related to identification of the so called 'heritage communities' who hold precedence in decision making processes, have started to diversify (e.g. Ireland & Schofield 2015). A conflicting point related to these matters resides in the efforts to identify who these heritage communities actually are. This is no less of a conundrum today, as the concept of heritage communities is expanding to encompass diverse stakeholders, regardless of whether they are part of the local community.

For the sake of our discussion, we will consider precisely what the Convention states that these heritage communities are: people who are interested in participating in decision making

processes related to a heritage. The dilemma that remains is how one can undertake such an approach without risking the exclusion of those communities who are considered as deeply linked to a place but detached, unaware or unwilling to participate in processes related to an already established heritage. This could be considered as a case in which heritage (and therefore values) are being forced upon communities. Perhaps with time, these communities have come to cherish alternative places, practices or items as valuable for the collective memory. Typical responses in practice take up actions which seek to 'interpret' such heritages in a sense of educating communities with regards to the treasures in their backyards and for creating different meanings. While the effort of co-developing alternative narratives attached to an already selected heritage element can be seen as a people-centred approach, this masks in truth conventional heritage practices which seek to persuade people of the importance of such heritages in accordance with already established criteria linked to an official heritage or authorised heritage discourse (Harrison 2013; Smith 2004).

This is perhaps one of the most important aspects of the Faro Convention: it states that heritage communities hold the right to participate freely in all processes linked to heritage, with interpretation as one of these processes; at the same time the openness of the definition of such communities and that of the process of interpretation leaves space for carrying on with already established practices rooted in top-down approaches and risks trivialising the very concept of community.

Within the current context, defining a heritage community is a difficult task which also has an impact on the notion of interpretation. Perhaps, for solving this dilemma, a simplification of this concept can further the understanding of precedence with regards to heritage processes, interpretation included. While it is true that we could all be considered stakeholders in a process related to a heritage we are interested in (CHARTER 2022:11), an understanding of heritage interpretation as presentation, rather than identification, risks perpetuating practices of exclusion. In this case, environmental hermeneutics offers the ground for adopting a horizontal approach when considering heritage decision-making processes.

It is in this context that the concept of interpretation can play a vital role. For this, though, there is a need to reassess this very concept as well. Heritage interpretation as it is currently widely understood looks at the unique object already identified as heritage as a repository of information waiting to be revealed and presented by the expert interpreter who at best engages in conversation with an array of stakeholders to negotiate meaning (Ablett & Dyer 2009:209-210). The issue with this line of thinking is that it isolates the object from its context without considering the relational value that this has – with people and the environment and the changes in these. The landscape becomes readable only when looking at the relationships between its components, as they constantly influence each other and are in constant flow, and, therefore, constantly changing. At the same time, the cultural identity of a community and its social values can only be grasped when looking at its relationship with its environment (Clingerman 2014: 135). Therefore, a definition of interpretation which considers all these components and seeks a common ground of understanding leads to something which is not intended to reveal information, but to uncover diverse meaningful places and experiences in the landscape which are cherished by people in the present and which they wish to carry into the future. It is with these different perspectives about the past and the future and the social dimension of the landscape that one can carry on with designing scenarios

for managing a landscape (McClelland 1991:129-120). In this landscape, heritage represents just one part of a whole. Heritage management thus becomes the management of entire ecosystems, with respect to perspectives of all stakeholders involved: from local communities, communities of experts, communities of tourists, to communities of non-human beings.

Such a shift in approaches related to heritage interpretation is all the more important when we consider the need for a general shift in paradigm for how we relate to the whole environment. At the moment, our relationship with our environment is not in line with what we claim to want for our future. It is not very clear even what the future might look like from different perspectives. Rethinking heritage interpretation thus becomes a way of reflecting on our very place in the environment and the possible futures that this relationship produces. In this case, we need to ask ourselves: is it possible that our way of interpreting objects, places and traditions might benefit from gaining a wider perspective on the contexts these elements originate from? And as such, could a landscape-based approach to heritage management be more beneficial in enhancing our own relationship with the multiple environments in which we live? Perhaps the role of interpreter could be that of mediating dialogue between different actors in the landscape as to create the setting for informed decision-making processes related to sustainable development.

Environmental hermeneutics

Looking at heritage as part of an environment requires two conditions. The first is that heritage needs to be considered in relation to the other actors in the landscape, and therefore expanding agency to all components constitutes a prerequisite; the role of the interpreter is to mediate the exposure of the diverse meanings which such components hold in the landscape. In this light, the second condition is that heritage interpretation becomes a means of assisting the process of positioning ourselves within the environment, recognising that the legibility of the landscape requires the joint action of uncovering the many layers this holds (Clingerman 2014: 234). Interpretation is, therefore, not linked to revealing meaning, but to assisting actors in the landscape to find meaning themselves.

Environmental hermeneutics looks at precisely such actions. The art of interpretation expands the current understanding of heritage interpretation by acknowledging that the many environments of which we are part are populated with diverse and sometimes conflicted meanings, which in turn requires active participation from all components involved in the process of making sense of the landscape (see Drenthen 2011). In this sense, all interpretations are taken into consideration and then mediated through the process of producing common benefits. This does not mean that all interpretations are valid, but that there is more than one valid interpretation of the environment, and therefore the very act of interpretation is an invitation to polysemy (Clingerman 2014:3).

For heritage management this implies that decisions are made by considering stakeholders in the landscape, both humans and non-human beings. All heritage processes are filtered through the lens of the interpretation of the landscape, of which heritage is a part. Without looking at the relationship between the different components of this whole, the process of interpretation is incomplete, and the decision-making process faulted.

One issue that remains is related to the dichotomising views which permeate the entire conceptual spectrum of heritage theory and

practice: local communities versus visitors, communities linked to a heritage versus other types of local communities, rooted communities versus newcomers, cultural versus natural heritage, cultural versus natural landscapes, and so on. A first step in the interpretation process would be to ignore such dualisms and focus on commonalities.

An interpretation of the landscape based on environmental hermeneutics allows not only for the negotiation of meaning, but also for negotiation of power. Considering this line of thought, interpretation becomes an excuse for dissolving these dichotomies as a first necessary step in opening a dialogue between different actors from both human and non-human worlds, where each of these are considered on equal grounds. In this sense, the act of interpretation is set to assist the revelation of different meanings and bring them into conversation with each other to ensure representation in decision making processes linked to the landscape.

Only after this process is set in motion does the landscape reveal itself as readable and one can identify what is there to be enhanced, concealed, commemorated or forgotten. This is particularly important when considering the dilemma concerned with the process of selecting and deselecting heritage and who holds precedence in relation to this. In such a scenario, a proper scheme would (according to Clingerman 2014: ch. 1):

1. First consider the logic of all possible scenarios for the future as described or observed by all actors interacting within the landscape.
2. Identify such values which are particular to each group of actors, taking into consideration both compatible and conflicting values.
3. Design scenarios accordingly which minimise the gap between conflicting and compatible values as much as possible.

On a practical level, if we are to discuss the production of new knowledge at the borders of disciplinary knowledge, between experts and non-experts and between diverse actors in the landscape, applied transdisciplinary theory provides the possibility to develop a conceptual model which would facilitate the integration of new knowledge with the already established one. This is of great importance when considering the high level of uncertainty and anxiety attached to the possibility of change. A period of coexistence of established knowledge and new knowledge is deemed a necessary first step in the process of innovation. As described before, transdisciplinary models also seek to find common grounds of understanding: on an epistemic level, on a social-organisational level, on a communicative level (Jahn et. al 2012).

Interpretation, therefore, becomes more than the act of revealing meaning about a heritage place, object or practice. Instead, it becomes predominantly concerned with revealing the relationship between heritage as an actor, and other actors in the landscape as a whole, which is conceived as readable palimpsest with its different layers of understanding. The focus shifts from the item itself to the relational value of the item. The role of the interpreter becomes that of assisting all these elements to spark dialogue among each other and find common grounds related to future scenarios. Decisions regarding this are made taking into consideration various elements composing the landscape: heritage as a non-human actor of course; but also different categories of humans and non-human beings. They each influence each other and constitute the whole. Focusing on the relationship between all of these allows us to access deeper levels of meaning within the landscape and facilitates decision making

processes linked to the landscape, which consider all these different meanings. Explorations facilitated by interpretation at the intersection of such understandings can create lines of communication for minimising gaps between conflicting meanings and for creating new knowledge about how us and others are situated within the landscape.

Conclusions

This paper followed some of the key concepts and dilemmas related to heritage interpretation. It meant to do so in an exploratory manner, as one interpretation on the state of the arts linked to this process and possible alternatives for the future.

Expanding our understanding of heritage interpretation to that of interpretation of the whole landscape could potentially benefit us in tackling several issues in heritage theory and practice. The overabundance of heritages caused by excessive heritagisation of places, objects and experiences has raised questions with regard to how best to manage remains of the past without cluttering spaces and suffocating creative actions inclined towards the future. In this sense, and linked to the concept of heritage communities, actions based on social values approaches to management are being encouraged.

The very concept of 'heritage communities', though, turned out to be problematic when discussing who holds precedence in deciding what should happen with a place that encompasses various heritages. Although the Faro Convention encourages management approaches based on a framework of heritage process, interpretation and presentation are often discussed as interchangeable concepts. In this sense, heritage interpretation is viewed as an action of revealing the meaning of an already selected heritage item, in a joint exercise between various stakeholders. This notion of interpretation deprives such activity of its full potential. I argued, therefore, that switching to an understanding of interpretation in line with environmental hermeneutics and transdisciplinary models of integration of knowledge, could potentially fill in the current gaps.

Although there is much left to say about the use of such a framework, I consider this to be worth exploring further. Firstly, because the heritage sector, with all its processes and practices, needs a paradigm shift if it is to really become an asset for tackling the various challenges we are facing and for preparing for the uncertainties of the future. Beyond this, the current challenges related to social injustice and the environmental crisis require a joint effort for building up new mindsets with regard to how we live with each other and with the environment. The trajectory marked by the elaboration of the Faro Convention has most certainly made us reflect on what heritage is and how its various components and processes could make significant contributions to the challenges mentioned. However, it remains insufficient in the current context. Heritage interpretation needs to be reconceptualised, by linking it more to the power of interpreting contexts and the relationship between diverse components of the landscape, in order to facilitate scenario planning for the future, which could – as much as possible – accommodate all parties involved.

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The culture of care and the care of culture

Antonio Della Corte & Antonio Iaccarino (Italy)

Antonio Della Corte and Antonio Iaccarino are responsible for the formation and planning of the social cooperative la Paranza Onlus. Their field of work includes the implementation of national and international projects and competitions and the training of new human resources.

Contact: formazione@catacombedinapoli.it

Abstract

The story of a neighbourhood on the 'margins' of the city of Naples that is reborn thanks to the idea of a priest and a group of boys who in 2006 started a bottom-up process: the reopening of the Catacombs of San Gaudioso and the dream of an economy based on tourism and legality. But it was the reopening of the Catacombs of San Gennaro in 2008 that triggered a real change that led to the reuse of historical places for cultural and social activities. Orchestras, theatres and educational centres were born in monumental complexes to support the children. The participation of youth, the involvement of the community and the support of private institutions stimulated a social, cultural and economic growth by healing this suburb in the centre of Naples. The Rione Sanità, once avoided, has become a tangible example of how, through cooperation and active involvement, it is possible to recover people and communities by promoting innovative forms of social cohesion and territorial regeneration.

Keywords

change, suburb, bridge, beauty, teambuilding, catacombs, tourism, recovered, heritage community

It's difficult to explain how a **change** is possible, it's an occasion that happens a few times in a lifetime. The history of the Sanità district is an ancient one, which began when Naples was born, when it was forbidden to bury people in urban centres. Sanità district was the perfect place to make cemeteries: a valley dug into the tuff (rock) of the hills which gave birth to furrows, quarries and ravines which would later become the first cemeteries of the city.

The city grows and so does our district: from 'valley of the dead' to **suburb**, among palaces and courtyards that have been transformed into splendid monuments, such as Palazzo Sanfelice and Palazzo dello Spagnuolo.

Then, at the start of the 19th century, a **bridge** falls over the neighborhood, a bridge that does not unite but isolates an entire area of Naples. Life shifts, as well as commercial and professional activities, everything is missing, and where control and the institution are not there, something starts to rot. In two years of isolation, Sanità becomes an uncomfortable periphery, to be avoided, to be forgotten.

Figure 1. Dome of the church of Santa Maria della Sanità

It was 2001, when Father Antonio Loffredo arrived in the Sanità district. He started something that someone else had tried to do before: opening our eyes to **beauty**. A forgotten beauty, denied and taken for granted. The great opportunity was given by the splendid church of Santa Maria della Sanità, an example of historical stratification and Neapolitan baroque with the catacombs of San Gaudioso underneath, one of the oldest early Christian cemeteries in the city.

Figure 2. Main altar of the church of Santa Maria della Sanità

It wasn't easy at first: How can you open your eyes to beauty? Travelling! The trips were a first great opportunity to team up, to do **teambuilding**. Our eyes were opened to the beauty that is outside, and once we returned, we could finally admire what was beautiful even in our home. This is where the idea of opening the Catacombs of San Gaudioso was born. It was 2006, when it was decided to find a suitable way to transform that group of friends into a working group: thus the Social Cooperative LA PARANZA ONLUS was born. A name that seemed natural: the paranza are boats equipped for trawling, but for Naples the paranza is the group of friends with many different 'fish', each capable of enriching its own baggage of experience and diversity.

Figure 3. Catacombs of Saint Gaudioso

The years passed and some timid changes in the neighborhood began to be noticed: some new commercial activities began to be born, some were renewed, but above all we began to think about the visitor, to provide services for those who came to Sanità , to visit a beautiful neighborhood: Thus was born 'casa del Monacone', a religious accommodation in the old monastery of the church of Santa Maria della Sanità.

The turning point came in 2008: Fondazione con il Sud, a very important Italian foundation, released funds for the recovery of historic sites that were closed or difficult to use. In Sanità there is another catacomb, perhaps the most important catacomb of all, the **catacombs** dedicated to our patron saint: the Catacombs of San Gennaro.

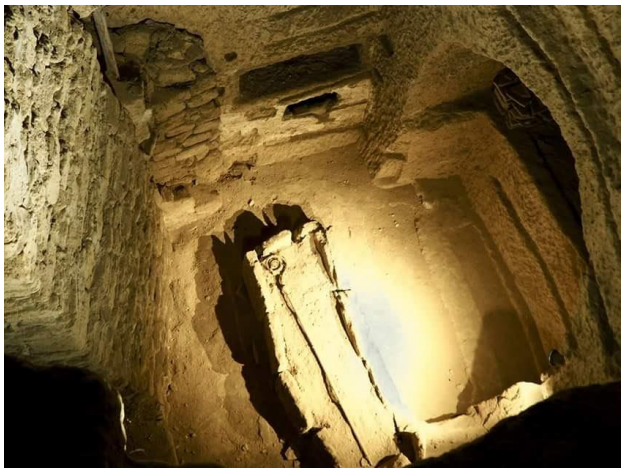

Figure 4. Tomb of Saint Gennaro

The project, drawn up in partnership with the Vatican and the local archdiocese, had a name that embodies everything: 'San Gennaro extra moenia, a door from the past to the future'. The church of San Gennaro extra moenia was the door to get out of the past, the catacombs, towards the future, the Sanità district.

Figure 5. Catacombs of Saint Gennaro

The opening of two catacombs and the possibility of being able to visit them with a single ticket made possible the birth of a new economy based on **tourism**, a change that was not only purely economic, but transformed into a social and cultural change that then led to the birth of new organisations to support the community: such as the birth of a social orchestra, the Sanità Esamble, in 2008, following an initiative born in Venezuela thanks to Josè Antonio Abreu, El Sistema. NTS new Sanità theater, was born in 2013 in a disused church. Thanks to all these activities, once abandoned places have become generators of culture, such as the Cristallini 73 community house, once a beggar asylum, today instead a place attentive to young people, where boxing and Judo are practiced with the professionals of 'Fiamme oro' of the police of state.

Contemporary art has always played a key role in the development of the culture of the district, and it was also the case when, in 2019, Jago, a sculptor who has now established himself all over the world, left one of his great masterpieces: The Veiled Son. Thanks to this intervention it was possible to redevelop an area of Sanità that has been waiting to be **recovered** for some time, the area of San Severo and Cristallini. The 'Veiled Son intervention' has made possible the opening of a third attractive pole, which, along with the catacombs, is now part of a well-established tourist circuit. Furthermore, future projects will lead to the opening of other monuments and the creation of other tours that will mix ancient and contemporary art, and obviously to the birth of new social cooperatives that will further provide for the inclusion of children from the district.

Figure 6. Veild Son by Jago

The natural consequence of this growth was the birth in 2014 of a community foundation, wanted by the neighbourhood for the neighbourhood: San Gennaro Community Foundation. Thanks to this new tool, the community has equipped itself with a way to support projects for young people and social entrepreneurship, launching activities ranging from music to sport, from tourism to entertainment. Nowadays the foundation includes more than thirty non-profit organisations, but also the network of traders of the district and local educational institutions, based, above all, on four fundamental principles which are: culture of gift, community and

participation, care for beauty, and growth of human capital.

Sanità has become a model of how a community can self-sustain thanks to its own resources, whether they are people or monuments, transforming itself into what can undoubtedly be defined as a **heritage community.**

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Figures 7 & 8. The team of La Paranza at work

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When was the last time you received a letter? The postman's trail: Connecting the gorges and the villages of Crete

Penelope Gkini (Greece)

Penelope Gkini took the first interpretive course in Greece in 2015. She has been a mountain leader in Greece since 2007. Her first Master's degree was in communication and cultural studies and her second was on alternative psychopedagogy. She has worked for the project of the Greek Ministry of Culture on agricultural landscapes and participated in the Delphi EU project. Penelope is part of a team that designed the 'Postman's road' in Sfakia, a project with elements of interpretation.

Contact: markarlen@hotmail.com

Abstract

The postman's road: Connecting gorges. This is about a project whose goals are to valorise the cultural landscape of the region of Sfakia in the southwest part of Crete through the ancient road of the rural postman that stopped walking on it in 1984. Southwest Crete is known for its deep canyons and wild landscapes. Isolated with no vehicle access, the mountain range of the Lefka Ori – with more than 30 peaks above 2,000 metres – isn't just a postcard but a precious resource of water, food, culture and wildlife. This trail gives you the chance to dive into rocky mountains, a pine forest, a sandy coast and enjoy incredible views of the infinite blue of the Libyan sea. Stop wherever you want, take time to make friends, to create habits, to share, to taste, to live. The postman brought good news and bad news, local news and global news, newspapers, medicine, letters from young soldiers and from immigrants to the USA and Australia.

Keywords

heritage, landscape, Crete, walking, learning, outdoor, postman

Introduction

When was the last time you received a genuine letter, complete with a stamp, hand-delivered by a postman? How long did you have to wait for it? The advent of communication technologies has drastically altered our perception of time and space, impacting our relationships and the way we connect with each other.

In a remote region called Sfakia in the southwest of Crete, the largest island in Greece, lies a 95% mountainous area with over 30 gorges and 50 peaks exceeding 2,000 metres. Nestled amidst the pine forests and sea are nine small villages, connected by a person who would walk a grueling 45 kilometres three time a week. This individual's mission was to reach all the inhabitants and deliver letters from loved ones (soldiers, students, emigrants), pension money, medicine, or administrative papers. Known as the postman of itinerary number 230, he had to climb 800 metres, cross three gorges, and descend to the beach at the entrance of the Samaria Gorge, where the old, now-abandoned village of Agia Roumeli lies (it was abandoned after a flood in 1954).

Finally, he would return from the coastal path to the post office, where he had started his day at 4am. This circular route connects a variety of landscapes, ecosystems, mountain and sea stories through time, making it a unique itinerary not only for the environment but also for its cultural diversity. This story marks the beginning of our adventure.

Good practices and learning landscapes
The project

As a mountain leader and interpretive guide in southern Greece, I had the idea of creating a project inspired by the above story. With the assistance of The Mediterranean Center of Environment, The Heritage Management organisation, the National Park of Samaria Agency, the forestry agency, and local inhabitants, we were able to bring this idea to fruition. The project was financed by the Green Funds and the programme, Innovative Actions with Citizens, under the financial programme, Natural Environment and Actions, 2018. Upon completion, the entire project was published on a website where people can access the short documentary, maps, collected stories, educational materials, and, for visitors, a mobile application and advertisement flyer.

Unfortunately, the project was limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic quarantine so we couldn't do all the activities that we had planned in situ, like showing an interpretive walk. We had to do some presentations via internet and zoom platforms, with a lot of participation from Cretan emigrants in the USA or in other Greek cities.

Cultural heritage and landscape

The project was embraced with enthusiasm beyond our expectations by both locals and visitors, as it provided an opportunity for anyone with experience in the area to share their stories. Many lived experiences began to emerge through the voices of the elderly and younger people who inherited the memories of their parents or grandparents. In every story, there was a description of the natural environment related to rural, religious, and social activities. Therefore, we preferred to use the concept of 'cultural landscape' to approach nature. We agree with the approach of Rossler, who stated that cultural landscapes are at the interface between nature and culture, tangible and intangible heritage, biological and cultural diversity, and represent a closely woven net of relationships, the essence of culture, and people's identity (Rossler, 2006:334).

To provide an example of how this approach was applied in people's stories, let's read about a cave on the path in Aradena Gorge where a supernatural creature called the 'sfandahto' lived. This creature, like ghosts, caused issues for villagers trying to cross the Aradena Gorge. During a 'veggera', which is the moment in the afternoon when everybody meets outside on a house's patio to have fun (without television, of course), Vaggelio, an 85-year-old lady, told us the following story:

> "My mother as a girl was something of a joker. She liked to 'step on' her relatives, to test their limits. And once she went to a house near here… They had the house built 'on the balcony' as we say, and instead of concrete columns that they build with now, this column was built normally, and it still stands on the balcony… And my mother, as a young girl, when a villager would come by she would pick up a stone, throw it and then go behind the pillar and hide. He would look but nothing… He then starts to walk away, and my mother throws another. Again he would look, she would hide behind the pillar, only a small child. In the evening he goes to my grandfather's house. And he says, People, do you know what happened to me? What? I was ghosted. How were you ghosted? Well, while I was walking past Zouridi's house, two stones were thrown, like a river they came. Well, it's bad luck. Someone of yours will die. Did the stone hit you? No but it fell near me. Well the person that will die is not going to be from your house but a relative. My mother used to say she was dying of laughter inside. For a long time, my mother was called sfantahto."

Another story, shared by Giannis Polirakis, recounts the struggles of children who had to climb up and descend a path twice a week to go

to school due to the scarcity of water in the region:

> "The path of the postman that we also followed passed through Hora Sfakion over the carriage road that goes up to Anopolis. It was a helical path, you can still see it. I have crossed this path many times. It continued, reaching as far as the first ravine of Iligas. The gorge of Illigas begins at high altitude on the White Mountains, and another one comes perpendicular to it, on the slopes of which we walked to go to Anopolis. In the cistern, this is the name of the place because there is a small cistern with rainwater, there was a bucket next to it and a rope. It was communal this cistern, not private. Anyone passing by, conductor or pedestrian or postman, could draw water using the bucket to drink. The poor child was passing by, his mother had sent him to shop, and he put the rope from what appeared afterwards, but the water level had dropped and he bent down more than he should, his shoulders came in, he was dragged and fell in."

Through our conversations with the locals, we came to realise that their entire way of life was intricately connected to the natural world around them. The environment shaped their perception and behavior, influenced their nutritional habits, and structured their social and economic activities, whether they were engaged in agriculture, mountainous or maritime activities. This cultural diversity was closely linked to biodiversity and the evolution of the Sfakian landscape. When people shared their stories, they were also interpreting the landscape, revealing their deep understanding of their surroundings.

To highlight this relationship, we organised a game for some local teenagers. We hiked a part of the path and asked them to play different roles, such as a Venetian soldier, a French tourist, a shepherd, or a school child. Afterwards, we asked them to write a letter to someone they loved about the place. The results were impressive; each person focused on different aspects of the path, demonstrating their unique perspective and appreciation for the landscape.

But what can we learn from this experience? How can it promote learning? Through our interactions and activities, we can deepen our understanding of the relationship between culture and nature, the importance of biodiversity, and the significance of the landscape in shaping our identity and sense of place. We can learn about the ecosystem services that sustain our livelihoods, and the importance of preserving them for future generations. Overall, this experience provides a unique opportunity to learn from the wisdom of the local community and develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

The educational project

The project was primarily developed as an educational tool for visitors, schools, and locals, with a focus on creating educational programmes for primary and college students, a short documentary, or an interpretive walk in the area. Each group could learn different things, from better understanding the relationship between nature, environment, and culture – not only for the people of Sfakia but also for their own lives. Learning is not limited to knowledge and skills, but can also involve embodied learning, multiple intelligences, self-development, transformative learning, and more. To incorporate face-to-face communication, outdoor education, and analogic time and space into the learning process, we designed two educational programmes based on experiential learning: the purple programme focused on culture and the green programme on nature. The green programme emphasises orientation, mapping, observing flora and fauna, and becoming one with the landscape, while the purple programme focuses on communication, relational conflicts, and sustainable development. The programmes

are structured to prepare students for the experience, immerse them in the landscape, and then return to school to discuss the experience in creative ways. We offer a range of options depending on age and school curriculum. Some examples are mentioned below.

Green programme: The postman is lost! Learning about space and landscape through maps

- Introduction: The teacher arrives late to school and apologises, mentioning that he got lost on the way. He asks the children if they always follow the same route to school and invites them to draw it. The discussion then moves onto topics such as distance, analogies, climax, and orientation.
- Map activities: The teacher presents different kinds of maps and leads a discussion about what they describe and how they differ from one another. For example, what is the difference between Google maps and a 16th-century map?
- Introduction to observation and landscapes: The teacher shows a scheme outlining the various elements that make up a landscape, such as people, land, society and culture, nature, and sensory elements. Open-ended questions are then asked to encourage the children to think more deeply about the maps they have drawn and these landscape elements.
- Preparing for the excursion in the region of Sfakia: Walking in the area of Sfakia is different from walking in a city or on a grass field. To avoid accidents, children are prepared with psychomotor games or mountaineering skills.
- The excursion: During the field trip, various activities take place, building on what the students have learned in class. The main focus is to help them connect with the landscape through their lived experience, with games that engage their bodies and senses, such as observation activities, finding an object they like in their environment, describing specific elements of the landscape, or taking pictures of them.
- Reflection and self-evaluation: Reflecting on the experience can expand and give meaning to it. The teacher guides the students in remembering and playing with their memories.

The same structure is followed in the purple programme, called What news do you bring us, dear postman? This programme focuses on learning about the landscape through traditions, family mail, and lived experiences.

In conclusion, the aim of the project was to enhance our perception and connection with the landscape, and to discover meaningful messages for ourselves and for future generations. Currently, the project has not been implemented in schools or for visitors. However, we hope that this conference has inspired you to join us and experience it firsthand.

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Using interpretation to reinforce site experience and marketing for De Wieden National Park

José Koopman (Netherlands)

José Koopman works at Natuurmonumenten, the Dutch Society for Nature Conservation. She has worked for more than ten years as a specialist on nature and heritage experience and visitor management. She was part of the project team that developed the combined approach of interpretation and marketing for our heritage sites, made interpretive plans for several sites and also advised on implementation of the plans, with a focus on sensory experiences and inclusiveness and diversity.

Contact: J.Koopman@natuurmonumenten.nl

Abstract

As an independent association for nature conservation Natuurmonumenten needs the support of members. Marketing is therefore an important aspect. With the help of interpretation methods, the marketers and interpreters combined forces and developed a process to improve not only interpretive design and place making, but also creating opportunities for income and recruiting members. This paper looks at the above process. It includes an example of a local interpretive plan which describes the heritage reserve De Wieden where old crafts are still practiced. The example shows the historical way of life, so visitors can relate to their ancestors, and to the struggle for life. And also to the struggle for energy (peat cutting), which is currently an issue with the gas crisis. The role of conservation in action will be discussed as a means of triggering visitors to support nature and heritage. The enrichment of the marketing plan from an interpretive perspective is also discussed.

Keywords

Natuurmonumenten, heritage interpretation, marketing, interpretive and marketing plan, De Wieden National Park, The Netherlands

Introduction

Natuurmonumenten is the largest private nature conservation organisation in the Netherlands. With 702 staff members and 6,410 volunteers, we conserve 112,422 hectares of nature reserves, 2,811 historic buildings and 100 heritage sites (data 2021). As an independent association for nature conservation, Natuurmonumenten needs the support of members (total number January 2023: 921,832). Marketing is, therefore, an important aspect, both short-term for attracting and retaining members and long-term for retaining support for nature and heritage. The marketing strategy for most of the nature and heritage sites was originally based on the area's general beauty and recreational opportunities. More recently, the importance of meaningful experiences has become accepted as a basis for long-term connectedness.

A process combining interpretation and marketing

With the help of interpretation methods, the marketers and interpreters of Natuurmonumenten recently combined forces and developed a process to improve interpretive design and place-making, while at the same time creating opportunities for raising income and recruiting members. This process starts with composing a multi-disciplinary team consisting of local officers and those from the charities headquarters. This group combined the disciplines of communication, local activities programming, and hospitality along with a knowledge of geology, cultural heritage and ecology, all wrapped up in marketing,

interpretation and visitor management expertise.

With this team, we create Site Interpretive and Marketing Plans using the following eight steps (based on Van Matre 2008):

1. Analysing the essence of the place based on geological, natural and cultural processes, features and facets.
2. Defining the core message for the heritage site. This message develops from the essence and works as the expression of existence.
3. Creating a matrix of the following aspects: Head (meaningful), Heart (memorable), Hands (tangible), Hunger (flavorful). This matrix helped us to determine the key experiences (step 4) by which visitors should 'get the message'. It also helps to relate to people's own lived experience and to develop a more meaningful interpretive design. This design is based on the mantra provoke-relate-reveal.
4. Defining essential experiences by which the essence of the place shines through. And mapping these experiences on the site.
5. Analysing visitors and choosing target groups. The research included visitor numbers, frequency of visits, age of visitors, group composition, way of travelling and preferred leisure activity. And finally the type of visitor based on motivation and lifestyle (using the Brand Strategy Research – BSR model refined in Leefstijlvinder www.leefstijlvinder.nl). The analysis, combined with site specifics and ease with which a visitor type accepts a membership offer, leads to a choice of target groups.
6. Designing and accommodating the key experiences for the chosen target groups: place- making, interpretative design with marketing touch points. We address:
   a. The basic needs (wayfinding, parking, sanitary, shelter, paths and tracks, etc.)
   b. The design of the critical experiences (specific trails, viewpoints, sensory activities, invitations to explore, information, sales products etc.)
   c. The creation of opportunities for touch points in the customer journey: directly (tickets, donations, fees, selling, memberships) or indirectly (collection of customer details for direct marketing follow-up).
7. Generating and implementing the design.
8. Monitoring the effect. We measure revenue, new memberships, and visitor satisfaction.

Site interpretation and marketing plan for De Wieden National Park

The above method was used for the visitor reception at the heritage reserve De Wieden, a historical peat-cutting area, with 275,000 unique visitors a year and 80,000 of these coming to the visitor centre. In De Wieden, the old craft of cutting reeds continues, undertaken by both local entrepreneurs and by Natuurmonumenten staff.

Figure 1. Aerial view of De Wieden. 6,500 ha: 1/3 water, 1/3 reedbeds and meadows, 1/3 bog forest

We analysed the essence and defined the message of the place: "Land became water, water becomes land". The matrix led to three key experiences:

- I can walk on water, on floating newly formed land.
- I discover different types of water: ditches and lakes created by the peat cutting.

Leading to the meanings: Excessive peat cutting resulted in the loss of land and indeed the loss of a whole village.

- I experience the preserved landscape: thatching reed production, an old craft, is still in place. Leading to the meanings: The way of life of our recent ancestors.

As target groups, we chose visitors of older than 55, (grand)parents with kids, locals and Dutch tourists, all interested in heritage, but also fun-seeking.

Figure 2i, ii, iii. The three key experiences of De Wieden

We (re)designed the experience of De Wieden and improved the marketing options:

1. Improving place-making: improve the entrance: communicate the essence and core message. By producing an 'experience map' to enhance contact with visitors in the visitor centre, we supported the recruitment of members.
2. Developing an exhibition in an old shed about peat cutting and the effect on the landscape. Feel the hard work for yourself. Experience the harsh life during the peat-cutting period, and understand the struggle to survive. This direct intimacy strengthens connectedness.
3. Adding to the boardwalk: this walk already existed with an online download of the experience tour. However, we introduced conservation in action near the boardwalk demonstrating that reed cutting is necessary to preserve this landscape. Showing this voluntary work to visitors reveals to them not only the necessity of the work (man-made landscape) but might also trigger them to support nature and heritage by either volunteering themselves, donating or becoming a member.
4. Upgrading the wetland route 'Walk on water': water becomes land. Currently this is a free download route (signup only requests contact data) but the upgraded, more interactive route will become a paid-for and ticketed tour.
5. Improving the boat tours: these are existing guided tours into which we introduced more sensory activities to stimulate emotions. Marketing via tickets (making revenue) with a membership discount.
6. Future ideas: a new visitor centre expo, expanding the experience by including more of the old village buildings, and an Experience of the Flooded Village (VR-tour).

Figure 3i, ii, iii. Improved interpretive design at De Wieden: Exhibition in old shed experiencing life of the past (i and ii), and reed cutting by conservation volunteers, conservation in action (iii)

Conclusions

Combining forces of heritage interpreters and marketeers led to the following insights:

1. The interpretation method helps broaden the view on heritage experience and marketing this relates the place to people's lives today giving meaning to the place and is relevant for connectedness and long-term support
2. The marketing view helps to focus on relevant target groups.
3. The importance of a multi-disciplinary team: Engaging every relevant discipline ensures everyone has the same starting point and uses the core message in their work.
4. The experience starts at home: the essence should shine through in every step of the customer's journey.
5. New marketing opportunities
   - Experience map to ease contact with visitors
   - Upgrade the wetland experience to a sales product.

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Reflections on the meaning of heritage interpretation in times of crisis – Towards a hermeneutical approach [1] [2]

Patrick Lehnes (Germany)

Patrick Lehnes did an apprenticeship as a farmer and subsequently worked as an educator on a farm in the 1980s before he studied Geography and Biology majoring in ecology. His first interdisciplinary research dealt with the interpretation of environmental norms and the role of weighing implicit values when assessing environmental impacts.

Since 1996 Patrick has worked in the field of heritage interpretation. As a research associate at the University of Freiburg and as freelancer he developed and tested quality criteria for interpretive planning and interpretive media. In 2010, he initiated the founding of Interpret Europe and subsequently served as its managing director for five years.

During the last decade his focus shifted to further develop the conceptual framework which underpins and directs Heritage Interpretation as a transformative practice within diverse communities and societies. In 2018 he was invited to the Structured Dialogue between the European Commission and the cultural sector on social inclusion. Since 2021, Patrick serves on the Expert Advisory Board of CHARTER, the European Cultural Heritage Skills Alliance.

Contact: patrick@lehnes.info

Abstract

This paper is an expanded version of the first part of the presentation as delivered at the conference. It focuses on the place of heritage interpretation within the bigger picture of societal transformations and crises. The subsequent parts of the presentation, which outlined interpretation as a mental activity and consequences for heritage interpretation as an educational activity, will be published later and will be available at: https://freidok.uni-freiburg.de/pers/13239.

In 2019, the Council of the EU referred to culture as a system of meanings shared within a community. The ministers of culture highlighted the transformative role of cultures, in their diversity and richness, as creators of sustainability. The underlying logic: meaning-systems underpin all aspects of life and society; they impact how people make sense of what they encounter, how they perceive themselves, others and nature, and how they assess change.

These considerations at the top level of policy making, indicate a paradigm shift towards a hermeneutical paradigm, in which meaning-systems, transformative meaning-making and hence interpretation, play a central role. This broad understanding is in stark contrast to the perception of 'culture' as a sector among other sectors of economic activity, as a special field of policy-making which comprises arts, heritage and some creative industries.

But there is a problem: not all (sub-)cultures are creators of sustainability. Rather, inherited meaning-systems ('tradition') tend to inhibit change. Plural democracies which embrace cultural diversity and freedom of opinion are prone to conflicts which can hinder or water

1 The presentation was announced in the conference programme with the title: 'The potential of heritage and interpretation to transform societies'.

down important policy changes in times of crises. Even more fundamentally, communities appear to disintegrate into smaller sub-cultures and groups whose previously shared meaning-systems are rapidly moving apart.

Could universals, including universal values, provide the common ground on which people could 'unite in diversity'? This question points to a paradox. While universals are shared among almost all humans, they can mean very different things for different people. What matters is their place and significance within differing meaning-systems. Values and ideas are losing their power as shared meanings and meaning-systems are in flux. Furthermore, they are deliberately undermined by disinformation and 'disinterpretation' campaigns which are amplified through social media. There are indications of mutually enforcing trends which drive a downward spiral of post-truth relativism and meaninglessness and disunity.

Heritage interpretation is in a special place from which it could contribute to turn these trends. Heritage connects present reality with past realities. Interpretation can reinvigorate experiences of people in the past from which values and ideas gained their meaning and significance. But this requires us to reconsider the role and the responsibility of heritage interpretation for plural societies, and to rethink the conceptual framework which underpins this professional field. The hermeneutical circle is promising in this respect. It can be conceived as an upwards oriented spiral of iterative meaning-making.

Interpretation as a basic mental activity should be conceptually distinguished from interpretive communication. Interpretive dialogue or discourse involves mental activities of several or many people. Interpretive communication can lead to change in collective systems of meanings which are shared within socio-cultural groups.

Within this logic, heritage interpretation can be re-considered as an 'educational activity' as Freeman Tilden defined it in 1957. It is a professional approach to facilitate learning from heritage through meaningful interpretive communication. It aims to animate people, visitors or stakeholders, to engage with heritage and to explore meanings which resonate with them. Skilful heritage interpretation can provoke critical reflection. It can inspire people to broaden and deeper their preconceived meaning-systems and deliberately challenge stereotypes and clichés which inhibit change. Heritage sites can become focal points of interpretive discourse aiming to make diverse societies more sustainable, inclusive and resilient.

Keywords

scientific-instrumental paradigm, hermeneutical paradigm, polarisation, disinformation, interpretation as mental activity, meaning-making, meaning-system, reflective society, transformative learning, resilience, cultural policy

Culture and heritage as drivers of transformation?

In 2019 the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States adopted a resolution on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development (Council of the EU 2019). It is underpinned by following considerations:

> "Considering that (...)
> 12. Culture, as a system of shared meanings within a community, has an impact on how sustainable development measures are

assessed by that community and, subsequently, is a driver for sustainable development that can mediate between different environmental, social and economic concerns;

13. As the defining characteristic of humanity, cultures, in all their diversity and richness, embody values and are sources of identity, by virtue of which culture can have a transformative role as a creator of sustainability, promoting sustainable lifestyles and societies while enhancing quality of life."

While heritage is rarely mentioned in this resolution, and there is no reference to interpretation at all, these considerations have far-reaching implications and consequences for our professional field. Already at a first glance, understanding 'culture' as a system of shared meanings resonates with Freeman Tilden's definition of heritage interpretation as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships (…)" (1977[1957]:8). Even more so if we take Tilden's fifth principle into account which stipulates that heritage interpretation "should aim to present a whole rather than a part" (ibid:40ff). The idea of meanings and relationships which present a whole comes close to the notion of a 'system of meanings', even though Tilden did not use that phrase.

Before we explore how interpretation relates to the cultural dimension of sustainable development, we need to discuss why the above quoted considerations are more significant than they might appear at a first glance.

A move towards a new paradigm of meaning-making?

The reasoning, endorsed at the level of ministers of EU member states, highlights the fundamental role of *culture as a system of shared meanings* for a complex and demanding task such as transformation of societies towards sustainability. Meaning-systems are the background against which people make sense of the world and of themselves; meaning-systems influence how people interpret and assess what they encounter. Systems of interrelated meanings underlie all aspects of human life and how humans relate to nature. All sectors of economy and all aspects of society, all religions and worldviews as well as sciences are basically structured by meaning-systems.

This is in stark contrast to a much more limited notion of *culture as a sector of activity*[3]. From such a perspective, 'culture' is just one sector among other sectors of economy and society. In 2021 the CHARTER project[4] began to develop a sector skills alliance for the cultural heritage sector. One work package investigated how cultural heritage is conceptualised in international taxonomies and statistical classification systems which inform policy makers (Corr et al. 2021). They found that the cultural sector typically comprises the arts and cultural heritage. To varying extents creative industries such as crafts, architecture, media and design are also subsumed under the cultural sector (cf. figure 1 which identifies ten cultural domains to represent the cultural sector in statistics).

3 In its considerations, the Council resolution also refers to culture as a sector: "11. Culture, as a sector of activity, can be understood as a self-sustaining pillar in sustainable development;"

4 CHARTER is a European Sector Skills Alliance for the cultural heritage sector (https://charter-alliance.eu). The four-year project was launched in 2021 as the EU's first European Blueprint project for a genuinely cultural field. The EU Action 'Sector Skills Alliances – Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills' is a key initiative which started in 2016 in order to create new strategic approaches and cooperation for skills development solutions for 'industrial ecosystems' identified by the EU's industrial policy (EU Commission n.d.).

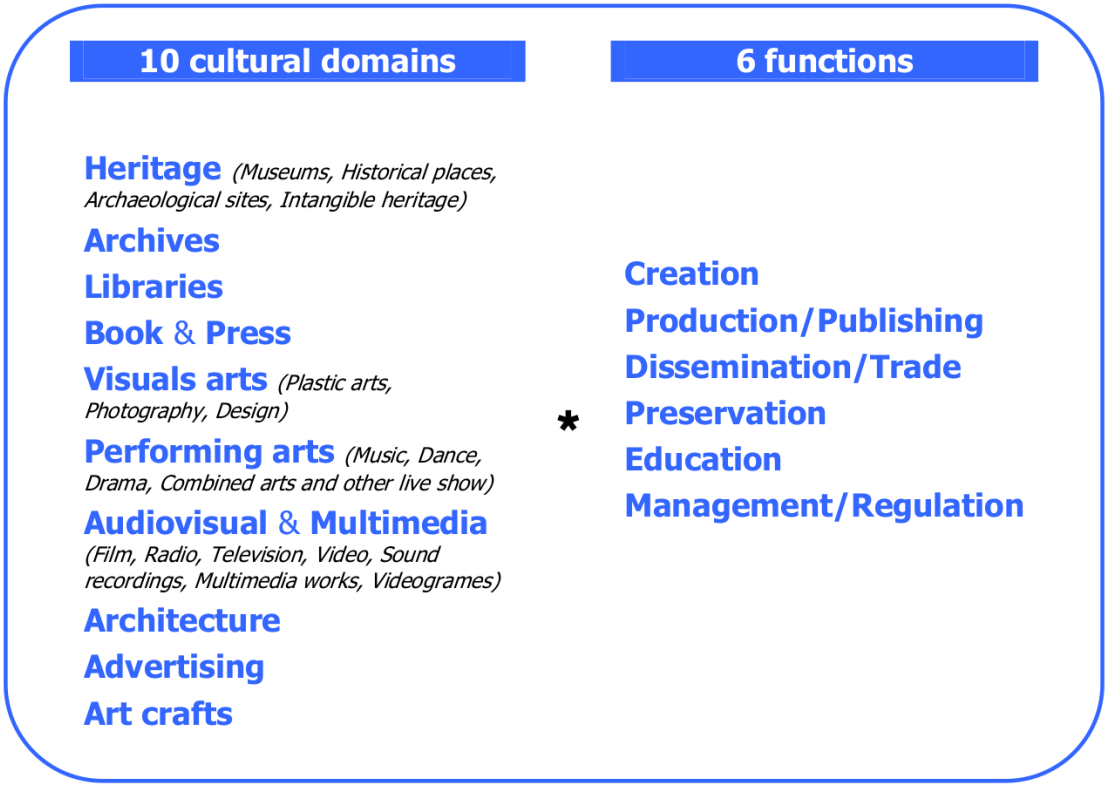

Figure 1. The European statistical framework for the cultural sector proposed by ESSnet-Culture (2012:44) exemplifies the limited scope of 'culture' as a sector.

Arguably, many people perceive arts and heritage more like a nice but dispensable luxury rather than a necessity. Engagement with 'culture' is just one among many possibilities of how to use one's leisure time[5]. In most people's lives 'culture' may be considered as the icing on the cake, while the substance of the cake is made up by securing income and other necessities of everyday and working life.

Within the bigger picture of a society, which is dominated by the paradigms of economic and scientific-technical rationality, the cultural sector appears at a similar place of limited relevance. Most activities in the cultural sector do not generate much profit. Arts and heritage often rely on donations, grants and subsidies. From an economic perspective they are considered 'loss leaders', which may be leveraged for tourism revenues (Corr et al. 2021:18). Apart from major attractions, the cultural sector is a soft factor which may enhance the quality of life while its direct contribution to the gross domestic product is limited compared to other industries.

Indirect effects, such as enhanced quality of life or social cohesion, are difficult to measure. It is, therefore, difficult for the cultural sector to prove its value through quantitative evidence. But within the preponderant scientific-technical paradigm, evidence-based policy-making

5 Most people visit museums or heritage sites during their free time. Even for school classes an excursion feels akin to leisure compared to formal instruction in the classroom. This understanding of culture as part of leisure is also reflected in NACE 2.1, the European statistical classification of economic activities, where arts and heritage are included in Section S together with sports and recreation (EU Regulation 2023/137). Those who work within the sector naturally have a different perception. Some artists understand their own role as creating art for art's sake, and some heritage conservation experts consider heritage worthy of being preserved for its own sake. On the other hand, many heritage interpreters always understood their role as working for visitors (Tilden 1957[1977]:3, Ham 1992:4f) and/or other stakeholders.

requires hard scientific, measurable evidence to prove that actions produce certain results which can be measured through quantitative indicators. The immeasurable does not count. Cultural policies have a relatively weak standing compared to other sectoral policies, due to the sector's lack of hard data-based evidence and its limited economic relevance according to statistics.

Against this background, the considerations endorsed by the Council of the EU, may indicate a fundamental paradigm shift at the top level of policy making[6]. As systems of meanings permeate and underpin everything, they are crucial for our societies' abilities to meet existential challenges such as the transformation to sustainable development. This logic turns the role of culture within societies upside down: from the icing on top of the cake to its very substance. The following table summarises the fundamentally different perspectives on culture, their related paradigms and ideals of policy making.

'Culture' understood as…	
…a sector comprising arts and heritage	**…a system of meanings shared within a community**
• offers optional leisure time actives • is a professional field of limited relevance for overall economy, policy making • is, for most people, the icing on the cake, on top of the necessities of everyday life	• conditions how people perceive, interpret and assess anything they encounter, including themselves, others and the changing world • pervades all aspects of economic, social and political life • is the substance of the cake and structures both working life and leisure time
Understanding 'culture' as a sector among other sectors of policy-making is related to • **instrumental thinking**, which can be underpinned by scientific-technical and economic paradigms of understanding how things and relationships function • an ideal of decision-making and policies based on general rules and quantitative scientific evidence	Understanding 'culture' as system of meanings is related to • **interpretive thinking**, which can be underpinned by a qualitative, 'hermeneutical' paradigm of understanding what particulars mean within their larger contexts • an ideal of decision-making and policies that take unique situational contexts into account and make sense for people in their diversity
Sectoral categorisations and instrumental thinking are themselves a special kind, or rather, a subset of shared systems of interrelated meanings	

Table 1. Two meanings of 'culture' and their related paradigms and ideals of policy making. Both are not mutually exclusive but complement each other.

6 This was preceded and prepared by several, still ongoing, discourses that criticised the reductionism of hard sciences and seek to develop new approaches of transformative science (e.g. Meisch 2020). Regarding heritage, such discourses are reflected in critical heritage studies (e.g. Smith 2006) and the Council of Europe's Faro Convention (CoE 2011[2005]). This induced a rethinking of the roles and responsibilities of heritage interpretation within society (e.g. Silberman 2013, Lehnes 2017, Deufel 2017). The European Year for Cultural Heritage 2018, which preceded the resolution, boosted the dialogue between the European heritage sector and the EU (Interpret Europe 2017, Bergant et al. 2018, Dimitrova et al. 2020).

Seen from the perspective of meaning-making, culture appears as the immeasurable mainstay without which humans cannot exist – and heritage is a major cornerstone on which meaning-systems are founded.

Before we explore the processes of interpretive meaning-making and transformation of meaning-systems, we first need to discuss a problematic aspect of the above quoted resolution.

Challenges and multiple crises
Sustainable development

While the Council's considerations are highly significant and cogent at large, they contain a

crucial flaw: the proposition that culture "*is* a driver for sustainable development" (author's emphasis) misses the point that meaning-systems can also be – and indeed often are – an *inhibitor of change*.

Some socio-cultural groups share meaning-systems which, in their view, justify their opposition against transformations towards climate neutrality which conflict with their deeply held persuasions, identities and values. For example, there are groups whose members share a strong belief in neo-liberal ideas and consider freedom as the value of utmost importance. From such a perspective, interventions into the free play of market forces or the personal freedom of the individual are undesirable as a matter of principle. Another example may be parts of heritage communities who feel strongly about conservation of natural or cultural heritage including the protection of traditional cultural landscapes. They usually agree with the urgency of transformation in general, but reject specific measures that would impact what they care for.

Many people endorse the abstract idea of sustainable development in general, but oppose policies that have an impact on their personal wealth or habitual way of life. Some find even minor impacts such as higher prices for fossil fuels unacceptable. Others assess the threats from climate change or biodiversity loss so severe, that they are ready to enact significant changes by themselves. All this is strongly influenced by the comprehensive meaning-system of the individual person, which they have adopted in exchange with their socio-cultural environment.

Complex European societies encompass many cultures, sub-cultures and socio-cultural groups whose meaning-systems overlap to a larger or smaller extent. In the context of transformation towards sustainability we need to differentiate between groups whose shared meaning-systems motive them to assess transformations differently. What are the deeper reasons that motivate some to call for change while others oppose concrete measures to sustainable development?
There is a need to further develop meaning-systems in such a way that various (sub-)cultural communities that tend to inhibit transformation *will become* "creators of sustainability".

Multiple polarisations within societies

A similar logic applies not only to sustainable development but also to other societal challenges. Shared meaning-systems impact, for instance, whether people assess cultural diversity as an enrichment or as a threat. Collective identities may be creators of cohesion or drivers of polarisation.

During the last decade, a trend of increasing polarisation among citizens and states appears to have accelerated regarding controversial issues, such as:

- asylum, refugees and migrants,

- pro- and anti-EU sentiments (Brexit),
- liberal democracy or authoritarian strongmen,
- critical social justice versus tradition,
- globalisation versus nationalism ("Make my nation great again" movements),
- trust or distrust of science (Corona virus vaccination, global warming).

Figure 2. Polarisation between socio-cultural milieus in Germany (and Europe). Left: 'Welcome Culture' (Willkommenskultur) towards refugees tends to emphasise universalism values and is open for intercultural encounters (Photo: P. Lehnes, 2015). Right: A demonstration in Dresden against granting refugees from Muslim countries asylum in Germany (Photo: Kalispera Dell, 2015, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons)

International and global challenges

Meaning-systems can be a powerful driver for peace and respect for human rights – and they can be powerful drivers for hatred, dehumanisation and lead to devastation.

This is not a new phenomenon. The Nazi ideology was particularly destructive and inhuman, but nevertheless able to excite the masses. UNESCO was founded in 1945 in response to Nazi crimes against humanity and two devastating world wars. It is constituted on the insight that,

> "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

This succinct idea is as persuasive with regard to peace as the EU Council of Ministers' insights with regard to transformation to sustainable development. But history since 1945 and the recent war of aggression in Europe urge caution:

It does not suffice to build defences of peace in the minds of men and women who belong to some cultural communities. The danger is, that war can be forced upon them if a brutal and powerful aggressor refuses meaningful dialogue and prefers to subjugate them.

Defences of peace must therefore 'be constructed' in human minds through systems of meanings which are shared by people not just *within* a community, but they must be *compatible between different cultures*.

Likewise, shared meaning-systems which allow *humanity* to address global challenges must necessarily transcend cultural differences. Otherwise the global transformation towards sustainability is hard – if not impossible – to achieve.

United in diversity?

All this points towards what can be dubbed the beautiful paradox of the EU which is encapsulated in its motto[7]: 'United in Diversity'.

But what does the motto mean for actual Europeans and member states?

Does it describe a reality?
Is it a mere idealistic dream?
Is it an empty stock phrase for ceremonial oratory?

Arguably, the right answer to these questions is: "Yes and No". There are moments when people, including policy makers, succeed to live up to this motto. And there are moments when they fail, or rather, when we fail.

This motto is an ideal towards which communities can strive, but which no community however small or large will hardly ever achieve in full.

It is unsettling, however, that many of the above mentioned recent trends point in the opposite direction, towards polarisation within and between communities, societies and states. People and peoples appear to become increasingly 'Divided in Diversity' as interrelated crises risk to spiral out of control. This combination could result in a vicious circle which threatens the very foundations of plural and liberal democracies, of peace and of the living conditions on the planet we must share.

The question arises, What could provide a common ground for people in their diversity?

Can universals and universal values provide a common ground?

Universals in heritage interpretation

Since David Larsen introduced the notion of 'universal concepts' to the professional field of heritage interpretation, the idea of linking concrete heritage assets to universals has become an important element of heritage interpretation theory and practice (Brochu & Merriman 2002:46, Larsen 2011 [2003], Ham 2013) including Interpret Europe's training programme. Universals are deemed universal because (nearly) all people can relate to them, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.[8]

Could universals then provide meanings which humans share despite their cultural differences? Could universal values provide the common ground on which people can unite despite their differences?

Larsen would probably have answered something like: Yes and No. His introduction of the notion of 'universal concepts' is puzzling:
"A universal concept is an intangible meaning that has significance to almost everyone, but may not mean exactly the same thing to any two people. They are the ideas, values, challenges, relationships, needs, and emotions that speak fundamentally to the human condition." (Larsen 2011:195)

7 At a first glance this motto might appear as a slightly rephrased plagiarism of the traditional motto of the USA 'E pluribus unum'. But it resulted from a creative and open bottom-up process which was initiated by civil society in 1999. Newspapers and media providers from all member states organised a contest between secondary school classes. The students were asked to invent a motto for the EU without any hint towards a desired content. This was followed by a semantic analysis which aimed to reflect the predominate sentiments of the students and an interesting selection process in which officials played a role only in the final stage (La Prairie 2009; cf. "Motto of the European Union" (n.d.) *Wikipedia*. Available online at <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Motto_of_the_European_Union&oldid=1153924727>. Accessed 28.05.2023.).

8 Larsen and other authors use 'universal concept' not in a strict sense, but in the sense of 'near universal' or 'quasi universal'. One cannot rule out the possibility that human beings exist(ed) who never conceived a particular concept which is deemed a 'universal'.

The second sentence explains why universals, in the sense Larsen introduced them, are highly significant to most people[9], while the first sentence points to a *paradox*: If universal concepts may not mean the same thing to any two people, how can they be universal?

The Schwartz Theory of basic human values

Shalom Schwartz developed and tested a theory of basic human values which he assumed to be (near) universal. His findings can shed more light on our question of whether universals may form the common ground for diverse communities.
Schwartz defined values as "desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity" (1994:21). Schwartz collaborated with research teams worldwide on empirical studies to test his hypothesis that some values are universally meaningful and that they form a system of basic values. The Schwartz Value Survey provided a list of more than 50 value concepts which were translated into local languages. Respondents were asked to rate how important each value item was as a guiding principle in their lives. Between 1988 and 2002 the research teams collected 233 samples from 68 countries from every inhabited continent. The data comprises more than 64,000 responses (Schwartz 2006:942).

These data were mapped according to how close or how distant from each other the value items were rated. These empirical findings confirmed ten motivationally distinct more abstract values demonstrated a consistent, near universal meaning across cultures as they formed clusters of familiar value items (figure 3).

The map of universal human values (based on Holmes et al. 2012) shows the statistical measured distances between ratings of cross-culturally meaningful values which can be clustered and classified into ten basic values (Schwartz 2006). The dashed lines between the clusters indicate overlaps and that the value system should be conceived as a motivational continuum (Schwartz 2012).

Importantly, the test failed for an eleventh hypothetical superordinate value: The value items which Schwartz presumed to indicate 'Spirituality' did not form a cross-culturally consistent cluster, and hence its universal meaning could not be confirmed (Schwartz 2012:8).

Furthermore, Schwartz demonstrates that values form a system, because their meanings are conceptually interrelated: Some values conflict with one another as they encompass opposite meanings while others are conceptually compatible. The value system is organised in similar ways across culturally diverse groups along two bipolar dimensions (figure 4). Schwartz concludes that this suggests that there is a universal organisation of human motivations.

This was again underpinned by the empirical data (except for 'Spirituality').

9 Remark: There is a terminological issue with Larsen's restriction of 'universal concepts' to intangibles that speak fundamentally to the human condition. This definition mixes two independent dimensions: universal versus non-universal, and 'tangible' versus 'intangible'. There are also universal concepts which comprise abstract classes of tangible things such as 'foot', 'animal', 'stone', 'rain'. Larsen excluded such 'universal tangibles' as they may not be of high significance for the human condition. This can be a source of confusion (cf. Lehnes 2016:48ff), but this issue is not relevant at this point.

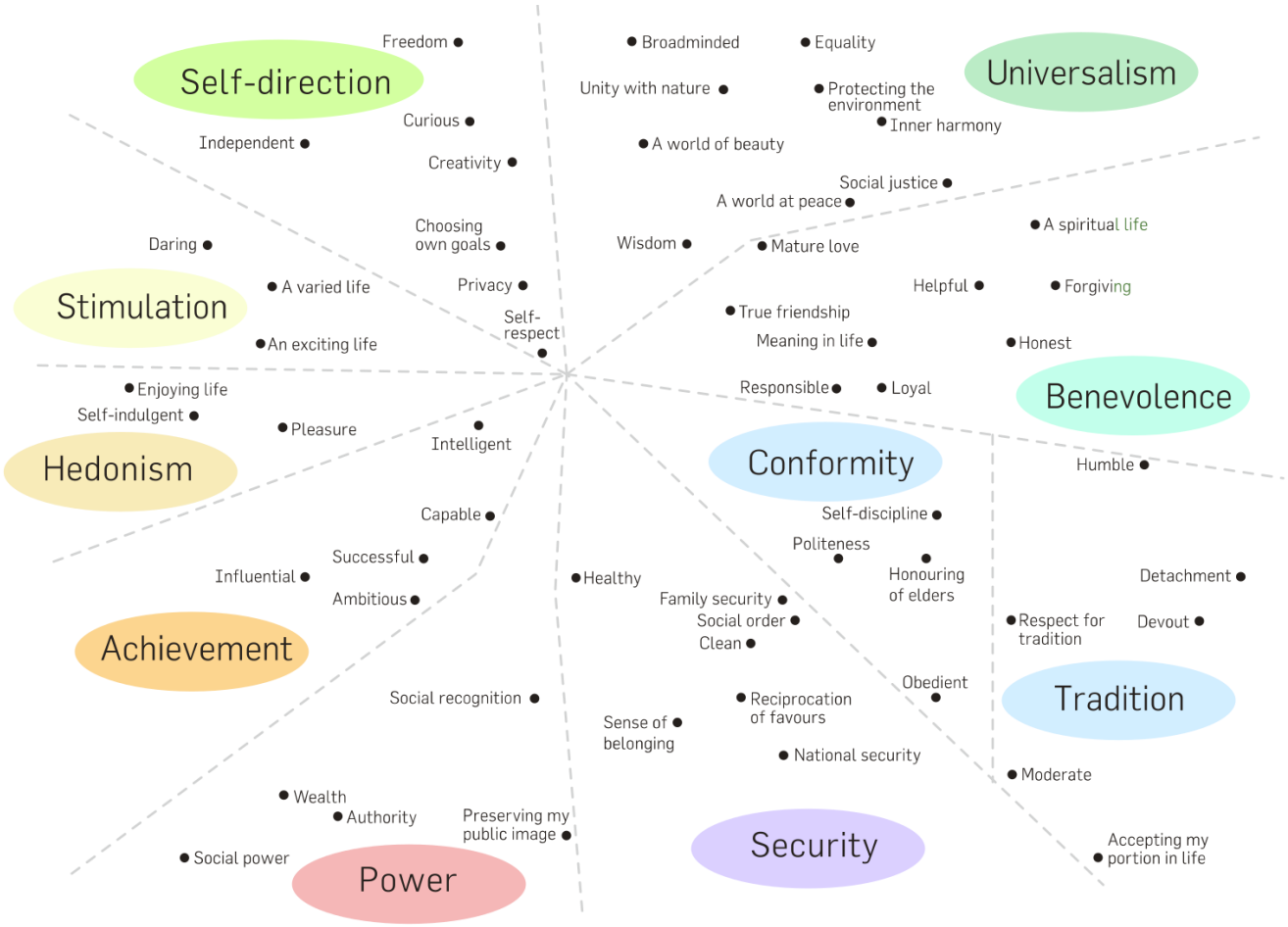

Figure 3. The map of universal human values (based on Holmes et al. 2012).

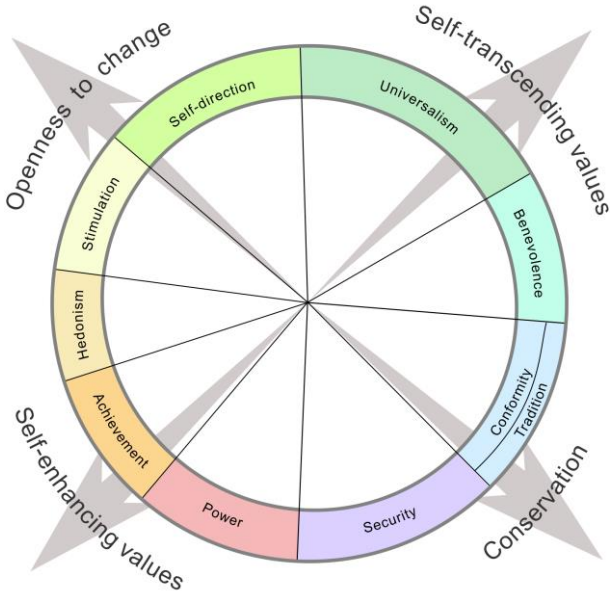

Figure 4. Schwartz' circular value model circle depicted as a "value compass" (adapted from the theoretical model in Schwartz 2012) with arrows indicating two bipolar motivational directions and adjusted width of the sectors according to the value map which is based on empirical data.

However, individuals and groups differ substantially in the *relative importance* they attribute to the values. People who consider self-direction as a top priority tend to consider tradition as not so important for their lives, and vice versa. People for whom power values such as authority are very important usually rate universalism values such as equality comparatively low, and vice versa (Schwartz 2012).

These studies are important because:

- they provide empirical evidence that some values can be deemed (near) universal in the sense that they carry *similar meaning* for people from very different cultural backgrounds,
- they provide a first answer why people may assess the same thing differently, despite sharing universal values: A particular value can be of highest significance for one person while it is deemed of minor importance for another person, and vice versa,
- they show that values must be understood as a system. And this value-system is obviously a sub-system of the more comprehensive meaning-system,
- they show a tendency *across all cultures* (defined as societies at national level) that their members *on average* tend to rate universalism and benevolence values as of highest importance, while power and achievement values are deemed the least important. At the same time the variability of *individuals' value priorities within cultural groups* is significantly greater than *the averages between cultural groups* (Schwartz 2006). This underpins the need to differentiate between the meaning-systems at the level of socio-cultural groups or sub-cultures, rather than referring to culturally shared meaning-systems on the level of nation states.

The paradox of universal values

The paradox mentioned above, that a universal concept which is *universally significant* for people *may mean different things* for different people, is not resolved.

On the contrary, according to Schwartz, universal values carry *a universal meaning* while they may be deemed of *different significance* by different people. It appears as if Schwartz' understanding of 'universals' is a reversal of Larsen's, and vice versa. Larsen relates the universality of a universal concept to its significance (while its meanings can differ among people), while Schwartz relates universality to its meaning (while its significance can strongly vary among people). Nevertheless, both would probably agree that the ten basic values are universals.

So, can universal values indeed mean different things to different people?

Obviously, yes: For instance, 'achievement' may mean wildly different things for different people: e.g. to have passed a difficult exam, to have significantly reduced one's carbon footprint, to have finally succeeded to buy a Porsche.

Furthermore, different people may share both, the abstract meaning and significance of a universal value, but what it means to them may lead to controversy or even conflict. Members of different socio-cultural groups may concur on the meaning of the abstract concept of 'freedom' (e.g. as "the lack of a specific constraint, or of constraints in general"[10]) and they may concur that it is a principle of very high

10 "Freedom" *Wiktionary*. 27 Apr 2023, 07:04 UTC. 1 June 2023, 16:01 <https://en.wiktionary.org/w/index.php?title=freedom&oldid=72832517>.

significance for their lives. Nevertheless, it can mean very different things for each of them personally, such as:

- "freedom for us to live according to our traditional patriarchal customs and values",
- "freedom to overcome traditional bonds and inequality",
- "freedom for future generations from constraints due to environmental damage which our generation could have prevented",
- "freedom to drive on the motorway without speed limit".

These examples reveal that when we ask people *what a concept means for them*, i.e. when we ask about its significance or importance *for their lives*, then they necessarily need to *contextualise* it.

Universals, and indeed any concept, are usually conceived in context. People conceive them differently depending on how a (universal) concept relates to a conceptual framework of interrelated meanings they have already available. These conceptual frameworks (cf. Interpret Europe 2017:17f re mental frames) are sub-systems of the comprehensive meaning-system of an individual. The *significance and importance* of a concept for an individual depends on its place and relevance within the larger context of a meaning-system.

The comprehensive meaning-systems of any two people will never be completely identical as their personal backgrounds are never completely identical (even if they are twins). While they are never completely identical, the comprehensive meaning-systems of any two people can and do *overlap to a smaller or larger degree*. Where they overlap and where they differ depends on each individual's background. It is influenced by the accumulated life experience in physical and socio-cultural environments (from education, family and peers, media and communities, traditions, belief-systems, political creeds, etc.). On the other hand, every human has agency: how a person engages with and makes sense of what they encounter also shapes the individual's meaning-system[11].

This *personal meaning* of a concept must be distinguished from its *abstract core meaning*, its decontextualised *defining meaning*.

Dictionaries point to defining meanings of concepts. They often list several defining meanings for a word which may be overlapping or rather distinct. A single word may, therefore, point to several concepts. These abstract concepts can be translated between languages which use different words for the same concept (such as 'Freedom', 'Freiheit', 'Liberté'). Sometimes there is no equivalent word available for a concept in a particular language (e.g. English does not have a word for the German word 'Zeitgeist'), but it is often possible to paraphrase the concept. Indeed, the dictionary definition is just that, a paraphrase of the core meaning of a concept which a word denotes and which is shared by larger communities that speak a particular language. Hence, the abstract core meaning of a concept can be shared within and between different language communities, some even universally. This is possible because the core meaning of a general concept refers only to its essentials while it abstracts from anything else.

The paradox of universals means that universals are indeed shared by people across socio-cultural differences – if we focus on their trans-situational, abstract core meanings. But these largely decontextualised core meanings are

11 We will come back to this later.

meaningless. 'Freedom' as a standalone value-concept is meaningless as long as it remains mentally isolated from any other concepts and contexts which together make at least a meaningful thought (which could also be a question or an imperative). And how meaningful with regard to its significance a thought about freedom becomes depends on where and how much it matters within the larger context of a conceptual framework and meaning-system. What matters is their position and significance within the particular meaning-system of the thinking mind.

In and by themselves universals do not suffice to provide a common ground which unites people with different backgrounds. Universals or other shared beliefs and ideals can provide a common ground only to the extent that they are similarly related to other conceptual frameworks within people's comprehensive meaning-systems.

This sheds a light on the vicious circle of increasing divisions and polarisation within and between society and decreasing abilities to address challenges and crises.

De(con)struction of defences in our minds

During the last decades, universal values increasingly lost their power and meaning as socio-cultural groups fractured and their meaning-systems developed in different directions. This is now enhanced by social media which create echo-chambers where like-minded people share and mutually support their views. Proponents of authoritarianism or of ethnic supremacy use typical ideals of liberals such as 'freedom of speech' as a weapon to subvert liberal democracies and plural societies (Pomerantsev 2019).

The distinction between reality and fiction[12] gets blurred. Real world events can be interpreted against a background of half-truths and conspiracy myths. Anybody can accuse anybody of hypocrisy and double standards. And, more often than not, both sides have a valid point. By simplifying and popularising the postmodern 'anything goes' and 'meanings are constructed by the powerful', populists can claim that anything can be true or nothing is true. Everything is relative, a subjective opinion. Any serious argument can be denounced as "fake news" and countered with "alternative facts" (Seeßlen 2017, Lehnes 2017).

It is not always clear whether people genuinely believe what they propagate. Their views might be distorted by selective perception, confirmation bias and projection. Or whether they propagate deliberate lies and misrepresentations aimed to undermine rational discourse in an information war aiming to conquer the minds of people in a hybrid "war against reality" (Pomerantsev 2019). The more polarised the debate gets the quicker each side concludes that the others are either dumb or engage in deliberate disinformation in order to gain or consolidate power over people (Pörksen & Schulz von Thun 2020:43ff).

At these times of disorientation, people rally together around a shared singular value which many tend to take as absolute. An absolute value, be it freedom or equality or national security, must never be compromised by counterbalancing values (cf. figure 2). A related phenomenon is the hardening of singular fundamental beliefs which are taken as an absolute truth. No disagreement, no doubt or question is tolerated.

12 Fiction can be a highly meaningful product of fantasy and imagination. Meanings and meaning-systems do not necessarily have to be true. A fictional parable such as George Orwell's Animal Farm, does not pretend to tell true facts, but it can provide powerful meanings which resonate with real world events.

All this accelerates the interrelated deterioration of both, the shared meaning-systems which are grounded in reality and human reason, as well as the significance of values needed as lighthouses to provide orientation in challenging times of multiple transformations.
This downward spiral subverts the very belief in reality, science and truth as well as in the power of values, meaning and reason. Both are interrelated. Meanings become fluid, solid ground shared across communities gets lost (Pomerantsev 2019).

At the same time, frozen meanings *must* unfreeze and be critically scrutinised, clichés and stereotypes must be deconstructed in order to re-interpret them and adapt meanings to become better suited for challenging times of multiple transformations (Lehnes 2016, 2017).

Heritage Interpretation in challenging times

Pomerantsev investigated how the 'war against reality' unfolded in different parts of the world. He talked with human rights activists who tried to defend truth and meaning, as well as with others who designed disinformation campaigns in support of populists, authoritarian leaders and dictators. He also met people who switched sides, and insiders who developed algorithms for social media platforms. For citizens who believe in democracy, dignity of the human individual, plurality and 'European' values, his findings are troubling, almost dystopian. But this is not fiction.

It can be even more unsettling for heritage interpreters, who are familiar with Tilden's categorial distinction between factual information and meaningful interpretation. Many instances of misinformation and disinformation described by Pomerantsev and many others have more to do with interpretation rather than information. They should be called more aptly 'misinterpretation' and 'disinterpretation'. However, the word 'disinterpretation' is uncommon, maybe even unknown, in English vocabulary, yet. This lack of distinction in the public discourse between (false) factual information and (false) interpretation of what is claimed to be facts indicates a limited understanding of interpretation.

Interpretation is at the epicentre of the war against reality which is simultaneously a war against reason and meaning.

But this applies for 'interpretation' in general, that is interpretations of news about current events, people and currently debated ideas, ideals and policies.

Heritage interpretation appears rather little affected by these developments. There are some debates around the need to critically re-interpret sensitive heritage and history, and there are exposed sites and museums where conflicts about the framing historical truths are pertinent. But interpreters at many protected areas, at local or national museums or other sites would rather not feel that their work is impacted by this 'war against meaning'. That's politics. And they might also feel that their own work does not have any, or only little, impact on what is happening in the sphere of politics and society. Larger sections of heritage interpretation do not seem to be placed at the epicentre of the war on minds, but rather in a calmer area at the margins of these societal polarisations. This might have to do with the marginal place of the cultural sector within society, the even smaller heritage sector perceived as a 'nice to have' opportunity for leisure, and the again marginal role of interpretation within the heritage sector, where interpretation and educational programmes traditionally came last, after the work of curators and conservation specialists.

But we might wake up one day to find ourselves in the very centre of a perfect storm, the calm eye of an intensifying hurricane. Or we might realise that we are seen as the silver lining which allows for at least some orientation despite the heavy weather – and gives some reason for hope.

Pomerantsev, at least, points in such a direction – without ever mentioning the phrase 'heritage interpretation'. After many years of investigating the drivers of the 'war against reality' and how since the 1980s words such as 'freedom', 'democracy', 'Europe' had calcified, their meaning stripped or hacked, he discovered a more promising question: What were the experiences that gave those words their power in the first place?

This turn around was inspired by his own family heritage. His parents had been dissidents who were exiled in the 1980s from the Soviet Union. For them those words were full of meaning because they had experienced the suppression of freedom and fake democracy. His father grew up in the Ukrainian town of Chernivtsi, and later he had been persecuted by the KGB for his poems. Pomerantsev quotes some lines his father wrote:

> "Growing up we were little barbarians. We couldn't feel solid ground under our feet. We had no idea what priceless ruins we walked over. Barbarism is the absence of memory."

Only as an adult in exile did he discover the richness of the multi-cultural past in the heritage of Chernivtsi. Reconnecting to experiences of people in the past which gave ideas and values meaning and power, opens up the possibility for their regeneration in the future" (Pomerantsev 2019:251f).

Authentic heritage is linked in real world experiences which were meaningful to real people in the past. Skilful heritage interpretation can explore such meanings and reinvigorate them through stories of the past that resonate with people today.

As heritage interpreters, who engage in "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships" (Tilden 1957), we work at a very special position with a special responsibility in times of crises.

Heritage interpretation is special as it reconciles the unique and real with the universal and significant. Authentic heritage is about real phenomena which people can experience first-hand.[13] Heritage is about the uniqueness of real places, real people and real events in their unique situations. Interpreters explore meanings and significance which can be discovered from this heritage. They can orient the focus of this exploration of meanings on those aspects which may shed light on contemporary challenges and issues. Interpreters need to be mindful of commonness and differences in the meaning-systems of different people – of those who lived in the past as well as contemporaries in their diversity.

We cannot solve these crises alone, but in concert with others working at the intersection of the cultural and educational sectors, heritage interpreters can become crucial stimulators of life-long personal development.

Heritage interpretation has a unique but largely underestimated potential to facilitate lifelong learning which **addresses key issues of**

13 This applies to both, tangible and so-called intangible heritage. The latter can be experienced as a phenomenon when people perform it, e.g. a piece of music or a craft (on the terminological issue of the notions of 'tangible' and 'intangible' cf. Lehnes 2016:28ff and 48ff).

meaning-making in times of multi-crises and contributes

- to reinvigorate the sense of significance of key values such as democracy, unity with nature, social justice, wisdom and sustainability, and the other values on which the EU is founded, as article 2 of the Treaty on European Union claims[14],
- to build a common ground of mutual understanding on which communities and cultures can become more united in diversity,
- to build a common ground needed to mediate between different environmental, social and economic concerns, which is needed to make more communities, in their diversity, stronger drivers of sustainable development,
- to build defences in human minds against false information and false interpretation.

Arguably, people's ability to embrace paradoxical meanings, such as the ideals of becoming 'united in diversity' and 'sustainable development', is one of the most important requirements for shared – or at least compatible – meaning-systems which transcend cultural differences.

At the same time, as facilitators of transformative learning, we ourselves need to deal with the paradox that we aim to inspire personal development and to transform collective meaning-systems while, at the same time, embracing diversity and respecting the agency of each individual.
Heritage and interpretation could become an important leverage point to change direction

- from the downward spiral of polarisation and crisis, disinformation and disorientation
- to an upward hermeneutical spiral of constructive, inclusive and value-oriented meaning-making based on reality, truthfulness and mutual respect...

To make this happen, we need to further develop our own conceptual framework to be better suited to deal with the inevitable fluidity of meaning-making in times of transformations. Ideally these concepts and ideas should also be rooted in experiences which can be shared in order to build a common ground.

Outlook[15]

In order to unleash the potential of heritage to address the abovementioned key issues of meaning-making in times of transformation and crises we need to re-think our understanding of interpretation.

In recent decades, 'Heritage Interpretation' has often been defined a communication process. But, if we want to better understand how interpretation relates to the human mind's comprehensive meaning-system and to collective meaning-systems, then we need a more precise conceptual framework.

At a basic level, we should distinguish between

- 'Interpretation' as a mental activity;
- Interpretive communication;
- 'Heritage Interpretation' as specialised educational activity.

14 "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail" (TEU 2016, author's emphasis). Here, again, the text pretends that this is a reality, while it is probably more an aspiration (cf. Bergant et al. 2018:14f). On the other hand, one could argue, that these values are indeed the fundament on which the EU is constructed, i.e. if these values are not upheld, then the entire EU could crumble.

15 This is a brief summary of the subsequent parts of the presentation. These ideas will be elaborated in separate papers.

The general concept of **'Interpretation'** can be understood

> **as the mental activity** of determining what a particular 'object' or situation of special attention means within the larger context of a meaning-system.

Interpretation involves several mental operations that, while they often go unnoticed, are generally accessible to human introspection. This offers opportunities to develop a conceptual framework, based on first-hand experience, which can serve as a somewhat solid common ground.

Hermeneutical approaches are promising to enhance our understanding of interpretation (Ablett & Dyer 2009) and its role for the *transformation of individual meaning systems*: how interrelated concepts can adapt to various contexts, how values and ideas gain or lose significance, how meaning-systems can grow, differentiate and embrace paradoxes, and how the human mind may develop defences against disinformation and false interpretations.

Basic knowledge and understanding of interpretation as a mental skill should probably become a transversal key competence within the heritage sector, especially for those who research the significance of heritage or collaborate with diverse stakeholders and communities in any of the sector's functions (cf. Corr et al. 2021:53).

Interpretive communication is not the same as the mental activity of interpretation which takes place in the minds of individuals. Interpretive communication processes involve various interpretations from at least two or many more people. Anybody working with communication in participatory approaches and co-creation would benefit from a better understanding of how they themselves and their dialogue partners make meaning against the backgrounds of their respective meaning-systems.

Advanced interpretive communication competences enable us to deal with fluid meanings in transdisciplinary learning situations and to engage people with diverse and evolving meaning-systems (rather than thinking in strictly defined boxes). Without communication there is no *transformation of collective meaning systems*.

This applies not only to the heritage sector, but also to other sectors such as planning of infrastructure, regional development or mediation of conflicting interests in policy-making that involves civil society in a structured dialogue.

We may finally define '**Heritage interpretation**' as a specialised, value-oriented **educational activity** which facilitates engagement with, and meaningful interpretations of, heritage. It aims to inspire people to discover new insights which may further their personal meaning-systems and to empower them to contribute to the common good.

Against the background of the multi-crises, professional interpreters will require significantly enhanced abilities to facilitate learning experiences that inspire people to broaden their minds, to discover new meanings from different points of view, while provoking them to critically reflect upon their preconceived clichés and stereotypes.

Interpreters need to develop advanced competences to structure and restructure both, contents and different means of communication, in response to concrete situations and different needs of diverse people, polarised communities and societies. This requires a high degree of openness to learn from others, but also the power of sane

judgement combined with critical self-awareness.

Hence, this emerging profession must further develop its conceptual tools and skills to quickly understand in which respects particular heritage can be significant for concrete people in their diversity, i.e. how to connect heritage to meaning-systems which may differ in relevant aspects.

Furthermore, most heritage interpreters will require specific expertise related to their specialisations, e.g. in interpretive planning, media-based interpretation or in-person interpretation, and related to the special themes of 'their' heritage sites. But all heritage interpreters will have to adopt a professional code of ethics and a sense of tact as they animate people to transformative learning which inspires personal growth while respecting the dignity and agency of human individuals in their diversity.

Hence both, vocational training and higher education of professionals in the field of heritage interpretation must be further developed in order to unleash the transformative potential of heritage for the common good.

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Nurturing a movement of environmental interpreters in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia

Chuck Lennox & Ariadna Reida (USA)

Chuck Lennox is the owner of Lennox Insites, a US-based consultancy that works with clients to design and develop extraordinary visitor experiences through planning, training and media development. He is a Lead Trainer and a Certified Interpretive Planner for the National Association for Interpretation (US). He coordinates the work of the Global Alliance for Heritage Interpretation - a group of seven heritage interpretation organizations from around the world including Interpret Europe.

Contact: chuck@lennoxinsites.com

Ariadna Reida represents the International Programs for Environmental Education and Interpretation, Earth Island Institute. She is an interpretive trainer specially versed in interpretive planning. She holds a master's degree in environmental studies. Having co-founded the Siberian Association for Interpretation, she currently helps clients explore the use of interpretation as a tool to solve environmental problems.

Contact: ariadna.reida@gmail.com

Abstract

Work has been underway over the last few years in the three countries of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia adjacent to the Black Sea to support the development of interpretive networks through virtual training, on-site workshops and collaboration with a US-based NGO: Earth Island Institute. Educators at botanical gardens, in schools, outdoor programmes, a zoo and a monastery have been introduced to the basics of environmental interpretation and how it applies to their audiences. And in addition, how interpretation can be used as a tool to increase awareness of audiences for taking action on local issues. The opportunities and challenges of working with these groups will be identified and discussed especially in a cross-cultural context.

Keywords

professional development, network, environmental interpretation, training, international cooperation

Introduction

Earth Island Institute (EII) (a U.S.-based non-governmental organisation - NGO) has created and run multiple eco-educational projects around the world, including the last 20 years in former Soviet bloc countries. The United States Forest Service (U.S. government agency) International Office is the main funder for those projects, supporting not only environmental education but also development of eco-tourism in the larger Black Sea region.

Working as consultants with EII, we have worked to build an interpretive and eco-tourism movement. Recently, their network has expanded with invitations from educators and public officials to start such a movement in the larger Black Sea region.

Our goal is to equip local activists and teachers to use principles of interpretation to reach the public to motivate and empower them to solve environmental problems in their regions. We hope to provide ongoing support and expand to larger audiences each year.

We aim to share principles and concepts of environmental education and environmental

interpretation with our audiences to build and grow a network that supports existing changemakers (those people who are already making a difference in their communities) and those people who show potential.

The project

Beginning just as the Covid-19 global pandemic encircled the world, we utilised technology that all of us at that time came to rely on: video calls and webinars. Developing a regular series of online webinars and training that are conducted sometimes weekly, sometimes bi-monthly, we invited topic experts and thought leaders to present on a variety of topics, including the following:

- Interpretive guiding
- Working with volunteers
- How to develop interpretive signs
- How to improve environmental education programmes
- How to create and improve environmental education on trails
- Trends of environmental education in the world
- Interpretive hosting

All sessions were translated to accommodate audience needs. Additional meetings and gatherings were planned for this webinar series, focusing on topics and interests that arose from our audience.

Funding from the U.S. Forest Service project supported the development of a professional learning community across Ukraine and Georgia with environmental educators. The learning process was furthered with assignments completed outside of class and separate consultations with participants. These activities were then summarised and discussed during ensuing webinars. Participants were encouraged to plan additional activities with other organisations in their network.

Several network participants were invited to attend the North American Association for Environmental Education Annual Conference in Tucson, Arizona (USA) to experience the breadth and depth of environmental education in North America. During this conference our group of six colleagues were debriefed on every presentation, allowing them to gain perspectives and knowledge that would be helpful back in their professional settings. In addition to the conference, participants were exposed to 'education in action' during study tour at local schools, environmental education centres, National Forests and National Parks (such as Grand Canyon National Park).

As an additional project, a virtual network was established with ten different Ukrainian botanical gardens following contacts made at an earlier international garden conference. The challenges of the global pandemic (and the Russian invasion of Ukraine) pushed us to initiate a virtual network across the region, supporting the development of environmental education and environmental interpretation programmes, while training garden staff to implement these programmes. This network is still expanding, and represents a close, viable community that meets regularly despite the challenges of power and heat outages and infrastructure damage.

With support from Botanical Garden Conservation International, monies were raised ($100,000+ USD) and distributed to these Ukrainian gardens to further their work during these difficult times.

On-site visits and training in environmental interpretation were also conducted locally for botanical gardens and other public organisations in Ukraine (2019) and Georgia (2023), and also involved participants from Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Special consultations were also offered on the development of educational and interpretive

centres in Ukraine, Armenia, and Georgia. Assistance was also offered for developing interpretive plans for partner trail building and other organisations, who are engaged in solving environmental problems.

Throughout all of these project activities, expectations of participants are clearly identified. Regular attendance in our webinars shows a commitment to engagement in this project and is critical to its success. Participants were brought together between regions and future project timelines were formulated to ensure a lasting impact. All grant money provided by our funders had to be documented clearly and spent wisely.

With these international programmes, we had set clear goals for ourselves. Along the way, we documented what we had learned to apply to future activities. The following are key points that were taken away that can be applied to future projects.

- Approach the work from different perspectives – Visioning a project with a broad perspective helps to create programmes and training that are nimble and able to flex to the circumstances.
- Each participant's circumstances will be different – Be flexible to accommodate cultural, language, historical and political differences in working with different people across many different borders.
- Use different methods to deliver training and professional development – There is never just one approach to solving problems or in providing professional development. Use creative thinking in planning your training to provide a variety of methods and tools.
- Build a system for long-term change and gains – Think long-term and consider incremental steps in building a network step-by-step. Patience is a virtue.
- International partnerships are essential for the development of programmes – Many hands help to build the future!

Additional information

Project sponsor websites:

- Earth Island Institute https://www.earthisland.org/index.php/project/type/education
- Trust for Mutual Understanding https://www.tmuny.org/our-grantees?year=2022
- United States Forest Service - International Office https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/international-programs

Organisations and agencies that have provided support for this project to date:

Ukraine

- Network of 10 botanical gardens across Ukraine

Moldova

- The Curchi Monastery
- 'Platform for Young Ecologists' an NGO

Georgia

- Batumi Botanical Garden
- National Botanical Garden
- Tbilisi Zoological Park
- Transcaucasian Trail

Value-based heritage interpretation in UNESCO learning landscapes

Thorsten Ludwig (Germany)

Thorsten Ludwig studied archaeology and interpretation (MSc). He worked at a German national park until 1993, when he founded Bildungswerk interpretation as his own consultancy.

For 12 years, he was on the Board of Directors of the German Association for Natural and Environmental Education (ANU). There he was involved in three projects on Education for Sustainable Development, all awarded by UNESCO. One of them, 'ParcInterp', was distributed through an EU Transfer-of-Innovation project and laid the foundation for Interpret Europe's training programme.

Thorsten spent several years as Chair of the Board of a foundation that operates a medieval castle, and from 2015-2021 he was IE Managing Director. In this function, he received the EU Altiero Spinelli Prize for the initiative 'Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage'.

On behalf of IE, he became involved in the UNESCO project 'WH-Interp' which incorporated value-based heritage interpretation into interpretive planning at World Heritage properties and finally led to the learning landscape approach.

Contact: Th.Ludwig@interp.de

This is the key introductory paper for the workshop, 'Which interpretive strategies do learning landscapes need?', offered by Thorsten Ludwig (Germany), Michal Medek (Czech Republic), and Lucia Ursu (Romania).

Abstract

The paper discusses value-based heritage interpretation in what may be defined as UNESCO learning landscapes against the background of developments within the interpretive profession, mainly in the USA, and of the approach of philosophical hermeneutics, mainly from Europe.

In 2020, UNESCO issued a report on 'The role of visitor centres in UNESCO designated sites', which underlined the importance of value-based heritage interpretation. Key points were consistent with what IE was striving to promote. This led to a continuing cooperation between UNESCO and IE, including a revision of the IE training programme. The first results were tested at World Heritage properties which gave rise to the learning landscapes approach that is currently under development.

Value-based heritage interpretation builds on well-established interpretive skills but puts less emphasis on communicating interpretation to people, and more emphasis on direct interpretation and understanding by people. It refers to visitors and to local people, fosters cooperation between stakeholders, and facilitates reflection on values vital to human development. Heritage shall become more meaningful to people, and people shall become more mindful towards our common future.

This fits in with UNESCO's programmes of social transformation towards the UN sustainable development goals. It draws on previous experiences of heritage interpretation, considers the current development from more cognitivist to more constructivist approaches, and it includes previously neglected approaches such as philosophical hermeneutics, suggesting that the perspective of the hermeneutic circle can help to understand and express its practical implications.

Learning landscapes shall connect heritage sites and inspire networks for value-based heritage interpretation including a broader range of stakeholders in their vicinity. There are several benefits to the approach of starting learning for a more sustainable future from heritage properties. Not only do they serve as iconic points of reference where people from different social and cultural backgrounds can liaise in an informal atmosphere, first-hand experience of heritage also results in long-lasting memories that can be tapped into much later.

Linking heritage sites synergistically with public institutions, private providers and non-profit organisations could unleash new powers. The non-formal engagement with universal values at heritage sites could also complement formal learning that is more attended to knowledge and skills.

Turning pilot regions into UNESCO learning landscapes, intended not officially as a new category of UNESCO designations, but operationally as areas in which UNESCO designated sites engage in value-based heritage interpretation, requires a review of strategic interpretive planning and training of interpretive agents in using new tools, e.g. in co-creative processes. It will benefit from the implementation of IE's refreshed courses on value-based heritage interpretation for planners, writers and guides. UNESCO and IE are looking for partners and regions ready to engage in this direction.

Key words

heritage interpretation, UNESCO, human values, Bildung, philosophical hermeneutics, constructivism, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), learning landscape

Introduction

In preparation for the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, IE launched the initiative 'Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage' (IE 2017). This happened against a background of increasing social tensions and populism that jeopardised basic human values in Europe. The study paper, on which the initiative was based, suggested that heritage interpretation should contribute more to the solution of such issues.

Around the same time, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe started a workshop series to support the management of UNESCO designated sites, including World Heritage properties, biosphere reserves and global geoparks. Due to its recent work, IE was invited to provide the content on heritage interpretation. As a result, one of the workshop reports defined value-based heritage interpretation (UNESCO 2020), and further cooperation was agreed.

In 2020, IE decided to restructure its training programme towards value-based heritage interpretation, starting with its Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course. As part of the UNESCO project 'WH-Interp', the refreshed course was tested with staff from European World Heritage sites, 2021 in Montenegro and 2022 in Slovenia (UNESCO 2022). This gave rise to the concept of local UNESCO learning landscapes, using heritage sites as starting points but also involving other places of learning.

One present idea is to train interpretive agents that are able to develop strategies for learning landscapes. This paper serves as springboard for a workshop considering what characterises such value-based interpretive strategies, which competences interpretive agents should have, and whether it would make sense for IE to

develop its own standard training format for this beyond the IE CIP course.

What is value-based heritage interpretation?

Value-based heritage interpretation builds upon tried-and-tested interpretive skills but emphasises more interpretation by the people. It includes visitors and local people, fosters cooperation between stakeholders and facilitates reflection on values critical for shaping our common future.

What does UNESCO mean by value-based heritage interpretation?

In 2019, a workshop report issued by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe suggested specific conclusions for what it called for the first time 'value-based heritage interpretation'. These are included in Table 1 below.

"The duty related to education through value-based heritage interpretation should form the core mandate of the Visitor Centres in UNESCO designated sites and inspire their activities. Visitor Centres are thus recommended to:

Work on multiple value layers. In UNESCO designated sites, heritage interpretation should consider multiple dimensions: starting from the site's specific values, to the site's broader territorial and socio-economic contexts, to the related Conventions/Programmes, to the universal values underpinning UNESCO's mission to foster peace and sustainable development.

Adopt integrated approaches. Visitor Centres at such sites are called upon to test and develop educational approaches through value-based heritage interpretation, by combining heritage interpretation theory and practices with other educational concepts and tools already developed by UNESCO (e.g. Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education).

Engage for exchanging. Like other educational activities with the ambition of social transformation, heritage interpretation in UNESCO designated sites requires an interactive and participatory approach, moving from a one-way communication process to a two-way interpretation dynamic, allowing for self-interpretation and value-exchanging. In this context, the definition of a site interpretation strategy should serve as opportunity for the Centres to engage a variety of stakeholders as co-creators (e.g. visitors and local communities; different age groups; different interests and capacity of engagement), with a view at triggering exchange of perceptions of values around heritage and their own life, as part of an inclusive, participatory, open-ended process.

Facilitate and mediate for possible transformation. In such non-formal learning context of heritage interpretation, Centres should be able to facilitate and mediate free discussions around heritage, providing tailored narratives in response to different perceptions of values expressed by different groups or audiences. If dealt with wisely, narratives can serve as a powerful tool for arousing resonance or self-critical reflection, to better align with universal values that UNESCO stands for, such as peace and sustainable development.

Invest in capacity building. Developing staff knowledge and skills of heritage interpretation should be a priority for centres, as a continuous activity provided with adequate financial and human resources. This applies first of all to the overall heritage interpretation methodologies and also to related competences in terms of community engagement, visitor management, using ICT tools, etc. Whenever possible, training should be extended to volunteers, local communities, tourist guides and other relevant stakeholders."

Table 1. Recommendations for value-based heritage interpretation (UNESCO 2020:29)

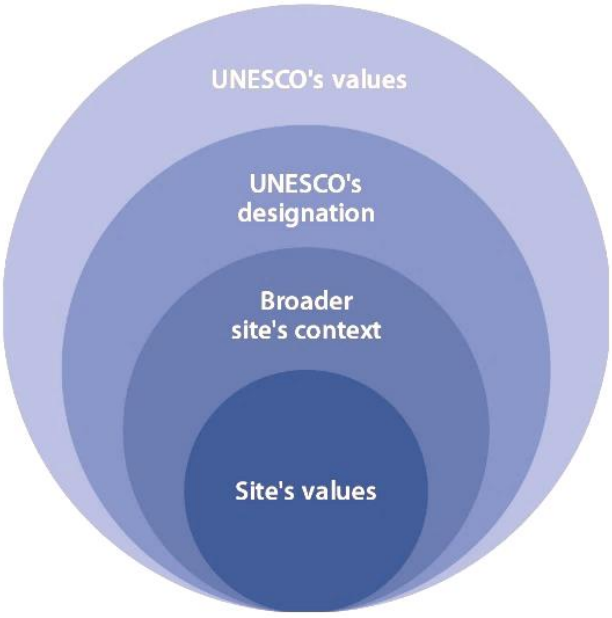

Figure 1. Bridging the gap between a site's values and UNESCO's human values (UNESCO 2019:22)

Heritage properties shall support learning from the past for shaping the future in a more peaceful and more sustainable way. This is closely linked to "the changing paradigm that World Heritage interpretation and presentation should not simply attempt to communicate heritage values to audiences but place more emphasis on identifying the diverse values held by different stakeholders connected with the property" (Chae 2022:8). It also relates to the general call for transition that is now on top of the agenda of the United Nations (UN 2015) and, therefore, also emphasised by UNESCO (UNESCO 2017) and other global organisations (e.g. OECD 2019). UNESCO clearly understands "heritage as a driver for sustainable development" (UNESCO 2011).

In this context, value-based heritage interpretation should ideally be linked to other UNESCO concepts dedicated to transformative learning, namely to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD – UNESCO 2008, UNESCO 2017) and to Global Citizenship Education (GCED – UNESCO 2014). Related key terms in the requirements are borrowed from these concepts (Ludwig 2020).

For example, that "ESD requires […] a shift from teaching to learning" (UNESCO 2017:7) includes moving "from a one-way communication process to a two-way interpretation dynamic", allowing for more "self-interpretation" (UNESCO 2020:29). GCED is a "framing paradigm […] for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable […] moving beyond the development of knowledge and cognitive skills to build values, soft skills and attitudes among learners that can facilitate international cooperation and promote social transformation" (UNESCO 2014:9).[16]

Transformative learning (Mezirow 2000) empowers learners to question and change the ways they see and think about the world to deepen their understanding (Slavich and Zimbardo 2012) and to "build a sense of togetherness among disparate people" (Schirch and Campt 2007:19). This calls for the reflection upon universal values such as dignity and justice at personal, local, national and global level.

What distinguishes value-based from mission-based heritage interpretation?

In 2022, the US National Association for Interpretation (NAI) changed its definition of heritage interpretation. For 15 years, interpretation had been considered a "mission-based communication process", communicating "meanings inherent in the resource" (NAI 2007). This had been increasingly questioned since this way interpretation could "become an instrument which could be employed to achieve any goal set by those who pay" (Lehnes

[16] A recording of the author's presentation 'The relevance of UNESCO learning concepts for heritage interpretation' from the IE web conference 2020 can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zPRDRsOL38&t=49s

2017:72), and because "there is not a single meaning *inherent* in anything" (Enright 2018). However, after this definition was introduced in 2007, there had also been voices suggesting that 'interpreter' would be "a professional name that is […] dramatically open to 'misinterpretation'" and to finally admit that interpreters are just "communicators and public relations specialists" (Novey 2008:57).

In fact, there is a long-standing and ongoing debate about where interpretation actually belongs (Vander Stoep 2004), and many interpreters falter when being asked to explain their profession. Hopefully, value-based heritage interpretation can help to provide some inspiration in this concern.

The essential property of heritage interpretation is making sense of heritage. As mentioned in the previous chapter, value-based heritage interpretation in particular suggests "moving from a one-way communication process to a two-way interpretation dynamic, allowing for self-interpretation and value-exchanging" (UNESCO 2020:29). Although individual meaning-making may not have been a priority at all times during the development of the interpretive profession, it can be traced at any time throughout its history, and the new emphasis might link the profession even closer to its roots.

In 1871, John Muir understood interpretation this way when he wrote: "I'll interpret […] to get as near to the heart of the world as I can" (Wolfe 1978:144). Muir interpreted natural heritage just for himself, and each "decision to value and to preserve something as an inheritance necessarily requires an act of interpretation" (IE 2017:10). In other words, interpretation actually precedes heritage.

However, during the second half of the 20th century, the US National Park Service, which deserves credit for establishing the interpretive profession, used the term 'interpretation' more for what was in fact the communication of the result of interpretation (Mackintosh 1986). The process of meaning-making had led to the designation of properties, and in many places the key challenge now was to devise ways in which visitors could most likely 'buy' the meanings that eventually came to be seen as inherent in the properties themselves.

Freeman Tilden's seminal work, 'Interpreting our heritage' (Tilden 1957), written on behalf of the US National Park Service, can also be seen in this context of communicating content. However, Tilden was not committed to just one approach. He basically suggested three approaches:

a) Interpreting and sharing one's own interpretation
b) Helping people to interpret and interpreting their interpretations
c) Communicating the interpretations of experts to people.

A person under a) can be unmistakably called an interpreter of heritage, while the actual process of interpretation with people includes a) and b). As Novey noted, the primary practice of the US National Park Service according to c), is not interpretation but communication. And since this became dominant, Sam Ham simply stated in the early 1990s: "Interpretation is communication" (Ham 1992:xviii) and: "In interpretation […] the goal is to communicate a message" (Ham 1992:4).

What became widely accepted within the interpretive community necessarily confused people from outside, because obviously interpretation and communication are two different concepts.

A quote from a former director of the US National Park Service, Conrad Wirth, which is

frequently used (and was mainly distributed by Tilden) is: "In brief, the objective is: protection through appreciation, appreciation through understanding, and understanding through interpretation" (Wirth 1953).

In the memorandum in which Wirth first included this phrase, he introduced "interpretation as an offensive weapon in preventing intrusion and adverse use of areas" that "gives the visitor the facts of nature and history" (ibid., underlined in the original source). Wirth also refers to "a personal interest that will lead him [the visitor] to identify himself with the park through his own experiences", but it is clear that he mainly believes in factual information to achieve protection.

When Tilden used this quote, he included it in the chapter "Not instruction but provocation" (Tilden 1957:32-39) and put 'interpretation' first. Referring to some "park service administrative manual" he wrote: "Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection" (Tilden 1957:38).

Although the original connotation must have been clear to him, he doesn't question it but rather crushes the quote in an enthusiastic embrace: "I would have every Interpreter, everywhere, recite this to himself frequently almost like a canticle of praise to the Great Giver of all we have, for in the realest sense it is a suggestion of the religious spirit, the spiritual urge, the satisfaction of which must always be the finest end product of our preserved natural and man-made treasures. He that understands will not wilfully deface, for when he truly understands, he knows that it is in some degree a part of himself" (Tilden 1957:38).

This was not exactly the spirit of Wirth's memorandum (which, of course, also needed to meet the Service's mission and justify interpretation to the officials in the US Department of the Interior). It is Tilden's own interpretation in terms of what was important to him. The ultimate goal of both may have been the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, but while Wirth clearly emphasises the role of information, Tilden virtually elevates individual meaning-making to heaven.

One critical term is 'understanding' (which we will discuss in more detail in the following chapter). For Wirth, 'understanding' was more the result of receiving factual information about the reasons why a park is protected, while for Tilden 'true understanding' (see above) was more the result of meaning-making: A whole and provoking interpretive experience (interpretation) reveals some deeper meaning (understanding) which touches human values (appreciation), and this leads to more mindfulness (protection).

Ham (2009) provides an interesting analysis regarding the feasibility of what the quote suggests. And it is again him who points out (more than 20 years after his previous statement that interpretation would aim to communicate messages) that Tilden wrote: "meanings and relationships are self-revealed in visitors' minds as a result of the thinking that good interpretation can provoke", and "the interpreter's role is one of facilitating or stimulating" (Ham 2013:7).

Ham is now coming to the conclusion that "Tilden was obviously a constructivist" (Ham 2013:66) and explains: "Tilden saw in the 1950s what it took nearly three decades of research to demonstrate later: that the only meanings a visitor can attach to a place, thing, or concept are those that he or she makes in his or her own mind" (Ham 2013:7).

According to constructivist learning theories, this is the primary way in which the individual

builds knowledge. Phillip Ablett and Pamela Dyer write: "In Tilden's view, interpretation is not simply about cognition but is a fundamentally transformative praxis in which visitors come to re-experience nature or history in a holistic manner" (Ablett and Dyer 2009:213). At its best, this whole interpretive experience includes physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social aspects (Ludwig 2021).

David Uzzell also refers to the aspect of "meaning-taking *versus* meaning-making. Frameworks of meaning intervene between us and the object or place. It is these frameworks of meaning – the perceptions and attitudes of individuals and groups, and how events, practices and the environment mean [something] – that have to be and should be interpreted" (Uzzell 2004:12). Here, Uzzell now highlights the role of the interpreter to interpret people's experience according to b).

So, again, what makes us interpreters is to interpret heritage and to share our interpretation as in a), and to encourage people to interpret and then interpret their interpretations as in b). Of course, this does not mean that we would not communicate the interpretation of experts or other authorities as in c). This is also required to inform the process; but it should rather be considered a secondary support than the main task of an interpreter.

Uzzell continues: "The visitor starts to construct, psychologically, the exhibition. One consequence of this is that each exhibition becomes a mirror in which to reflect the visitor's own attitudes, values and beliefs" (Uzzell 2004:12).

Ablett and Dyer claim that the US National Park Service's strong focus on c) led to "a predominantly cognitivist approach [that] risks reducing Tilden's rich and transformative conception of interpretation to the unilateral presentation of 'information', which Tilden explicitly sought to avoid" (Ablett and Dyer 2009:211). In this context, they also question the use of "interpretation as a 'management tool' for controlling visitor behaviour [...], and the instrumental or technical means for getting an environmental message across" (Ablett and Dyer 2009:213).

In the early 20th century, **behaviourist learning theories** became mainstream in the USA, suggesting that the learner basically responds to external stimuli while it was not clear what really happened inside a person. **Cognitivist learning theories** became prevalent during the early second half of the 20th century, sometimes called the cognitive turn. Aiming to bring light into the 'black box', they finally compared the brain to a computer with factual information entering and being processed, and with behaviour resulting from the outcome. Many individual processes could be proven empirically. Towards the end of the 20th century, **constructivist learning theories** gained ground. They suggested that knowledge and behaviour mainly result from experiences, from relationships including the embodied mind, and from constructed explanations resulting in meaning-making. Each individual learner would create 'their own world', based on their own mix of narratives.

Table 2. Behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism

Ham defines three possible "endgames of interpretation" (Ham 2013:54), pondering whether the aim is more to teach, to entertain, or to provoke. While teaching and entertaining could be linked to the cognitivist approach (considering the question how people take information in the best possible way), value-based heritage interpretation clearly supports Ham's constructivist "provocation endgame" ("leave people thinking and discovering their own meanings and connections"), which he himself finally suggests as the "ultimate

endgame" (Ham 2013:64), even if his earlier conviction continues to appear throughout the 2013 compilation of the results of his impressive work.

The provocation endgame is in fact rather a starting point for the self-educational interpretive process that now turns what is usually called 'the interpreter' more into a "facilitator of meaning-making" (Ham 2013:82).

While the focus in the US National Park Service might have been different during the 20th century, meanwhile a line can also be drawn from Muir's understanding from the 19th century, to the Service's "21st century interpretation" (USNPS 2017:1).

The latter now suggests "letting go of the traditional role of primary expert" (USNPS 2014:10) for a "new paradigm for interpretation", including "21st century skills (e.g. critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, as well as communication and collaboration)" (USNPS 2014:6). Parks are now considered "places to ask and discuss the big questions facing our society" (USNPS 2019:4) with interpreters turning from presenters into facilitators.

Presenter
• Transmits information
• Provides the right answers
• Relies on one-way communication
• Is primarily self-focused
Facilitator
• Guides discussion for self-discovery
• Provides the right questions
• Relies on two-way communication
• Actively focuses on the resource and visitors

Table 3. Presenter versus facilitator (USNPS 2012:2)

Within the new version of its Interpretive Development Program (IDP), the US National Park Service explains that a "site's resources […] possess multiple meanings that can be viewed from multiple perspectives" and asks its staff members "to recognise, acknowledge and truly respect the concept of multiple perspectives" (USNPS 2012:1). It confirms that "the primary purpose of interpretation is to enrich people's lives through meaningful learning experiences […] to build community and sustain the health of the planet […as] primary reasons for preserving natural and cultural resources", referring to "the essential questions these places pose to society today", and considering all people including visitors as "stakeholders and primary contributors to the meaning-making process" (USNPS 2019:1).

According to this new policy, "it is the diversity of resource meanings that provides the possibility of constituency building and a growing stewardship ethic" (USNPS 2012:1).

Developing heritage sites together with their stakeholders (as suggested by Brochu and Merriman 2011) as "co-creators of heritage interpretation" (Lehnes and Seccombe 2018:12) is gaining ground in the interpretive community, and in 21st century museum interpretation, the concept of participation seems to become paramount (Simon 2010; Black 2021).
Tilden already stated: "Not only must it [participation] imply a physical act, it must also be something that the participant himself would regard as, for him, novel, special and important" (Tilden 1957:107). However, contemporary participation goes beyond this. It suggests that interpretive services should be based on people's own connections in a way that people are more encouraged and enabled to determine

the progress and direction of an activity (Simon 2016).[17]

In 2022, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) also agreed upon a new definition – in this case of museums as places that foster sustainability and the "participation of communities" (ICOM 2022). As far as the latter is concerned, museums benefit greatly from the ecomuseum approach coined in 1971 by Hugues de Varine (De Varine 1996). Different from traditional museums, an ecomuseum focuses on the process within which local people use their heritage as resource for development (Davis 1999).

Interpret Europe launched a review of European trends and developments affecting heritage interpretation with findings highlighting the relevance of purpose-related trends in Europe (IE 2016). James Carter suggested to "stimulate thoughts and ideas rather than communicate a defined syllabus of facts, and to help individuals find their own understanding and meaning in heritage" (Carter 2016:17). In preparation of its 2016 conference 'Heritage interpretation – for the future of Europe', IE related this trend for purpose and self-determination to the political relevance of heritage interpretation.

Jon Nixon states that "a new wave of popularist, media-driven anti-politics is […] drowning out nuanced political argument and debate. In this […] context we need as never before the interpreters…" (Nixon 2017:27). IE developed its own policy against this background (inspired e.g. by Derde and Ludwig 2016; Carter 2016; Deufel 2016; Lehnes 2017).

In the end, the award-winning study paper 'Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage' (IE 2017) became a key document, showing how interpretation in the context of heritage can better encourage reflection upon values and frames (Holmes et al. 2011 referring to Schwartz 1992). This was linked to earlier considerations of how heritage interpretation can increase the mindfulness of people (Moscardo 1999 referring to Langer 2014, first published in 1989; Siegel 2011).[18]

IE started to advocate for fostering "interpretive literacy" among citizens (Ludwig 2021:44), "making heritage more meaningful to people, and people more mindful towards our common future" (IE 2020b), and it also included the latter in its mission statement (IE 2021).

So, the idea of encouraging "self-interpretation" (UNESCO 2021:29) is not only at the heart of value-based heritage interpretation, it also seems to offer the most promising potential for further development of the interpretive profession. This development sometimes goes through phases that are more static and sometimes through such that are more dynamic. Redefinitions of basic concepts by established organisations suggest that we are currently undergoing a rather dynamic phase.

This also includes more radical considerations. While the United Nations declared the need for transformation and agreed sustainable development goals, one question is what kind of changes this transformation actually requires.

People associated with postmodernism and poststructuralism are convinced that the current issues can no longer be tackled from within the existing thought and power structures. In a process of deconstruction and reconstruction, we would first need to negate them in order to

[17] A recording of a workshop from Nina Simon on 'Fostering participative approaches' from the IE web conference 2020 can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Kka5QvUZI&t=145s

[18] To hear more about mindfulness in the interpretive context, IE members may access the recording of the author's IE webinar 'Mindful interpretation' from 31/03/2021 through the member area on the IE website.

create new ones. Since heritage would be a manifestation of the present structures, postmodernism also questions the current concept of heritage.

The subject is frequently brought up in the context of decolonisation. In some world regions, heritage landmarks mainly consist of unwanted legacy from oppressors. Visitors then experience the region through the stories linked to those places, while people's legacies are separated from them and more reflected in their daily lives. This actual heritage of the people is not considered and, therefore, also not valued, because people are subject to what Laurajane Smith calls an "authorised heritage discourse […] that privileges expert values and knowledge about the past and its material manifestations, and dominates and regulates professional heritage practices" (Smith 2006:29).

Of course, this also raises the question to what extent outdated thought and power structures are transported through heritage interpretation in Europe, around which properties minorities might be ignored or even offended, or how far designated heritage sites are used to question such issues in order to foster transformation. Obviously, part of this has been considered in value-based heritage interpretation, but further consideration might be useful.

Another approach in the poststructuralist context is what Nicole Deufel introduced as "agonistic interpretation" (Deufel 2016).[19] This refers to "agonistic pluralism" (Mouffe 2013:xii) and to the concept of 'third space' as a location for critical discourse (Bhabha 1994). Agonistic interpretation at heritage sites (serving as third spaces) means "coming together to negotiate and thus create *new* and *shared* heritage(s)" (Deufel 2023) within an ongoing and facilitated process – which presupposes a new concept of heritage. This implies a considerable undertaking, especially in terms of value-based heritage interpretation where UNESCO designated heritage plays a pivotal role.

Non-formal learning through interpretive services at heritage sites rarely provides time and space for such complex debates on fundamental issues, also keeping in mind that in most cases people visit heritage sites more for recreational site experiences than to experience others as adversaries. The concept might be more conceivable within the framework of co-creation processes with local people; but irrespective of the general question whether such deconstructions are really needed, the gap to be bridged for encouraging the wider public seems to be rather wide. We should await the evaluation of experiences with the application of the concept to be able to assess its significance for the further development of heritage interpretation.

One less radical concept that has been considered in the context of value-based heritage interpretation is philosophical hermeneutics. It emerged in 20th century Europe but although it is considered the theory behind all interpretation, it remained rather unrelated to the development of the interpretive profession. In the following chapter we will further explore its relevance.

[19] IE members may access the recording of Nicole Deufel's IE webinar 'Agonistic interpretation' from 22/10/2019 through the member area on the IE website.

How can philosophical hermeneutics support value-based heritage interpretation?

Hermeneutics is part of the European philosophical tradition. It can be rooted back to classical Greek philosophy, and for a long time it was focused on the interpretation of text.[20] In the early 19th century, the perspective widened, and in the 20th century, philosophical hermeneutics developed as what is now called "the theory of interpretation" (Caputo 2018:4). This mainly resulted from Martin Heidegger's work, 'Being and time' (Heidegger 1962, first published in 1927), and from Hans-Georg Gadamer's work, 'Truth and method' (Gadamer 2013, first published in 1960).

Philosophical hermeneutics follows the idea that individuals develop understanding through constant exchange with their surroundings in order to gain better judgement or practical wisdom (Gadamer 2013:322-333 uses the word phronesis/φρόνησις referring to Aristotle 1999). It aims to explore the conditions for this to happen in a responsible way, and it challenges the notion of just one fact-based truth.

According to philosophical hermeneutics, there can be multiple and even conflicting truths, as there can be different ways of learning, not all depending on objective facts and methods (e.g. learning through creating or experiencing art). Explanations might then lead to supposed certainty but not necessarily to understanding.

According to Aristotle, "the standard applied to the indefinite is itself indefinite" (Aristotle 1999:84) which means that exact rules aren't useful where something eludes exact measurability. In terms of understanding, he therefore argues for flexible rules. In hermeneutical terms:

Certainty requires:

- Gaining objective distance
- Asking closed questions
- Winning definite results.

Understanding requires:

- Seeking personal connection
- Asking open questions
- Coming to shared insights.

Both approaches also reflect the two branches of science that emerged in the 19th century: natural sciences and human sciences. However, "the intention of a philosophical hermeneutics is not to ask how understanding occurs in the human sciences, but to ask the question of understanding relative to the entire human experience of the world and the practice of life" (Risser 1997:9 as quoted by Kim 2013:5).

Zimmerman et al. refer to Jerome Bruner, stating: "In his seminal book, 'Actual minds, possible worlds', Bruner (1986) argued that human beings operate according to two complementary modes of thinking: the paradigmatic mode and the narrative mode. The paradigmatic mode of thinking relies on logic and empirical evidence, whereas the narrative mode of thinking employs stories to understand the meaning of human actions and experiences" (Zimmerman et al. 2018:345).

In an interesting allegory, referring to two key characters of European philosophy, Iain McGilchrist describes the more precise explanatory approach as Machiavellian and the more comprehensive approach of understanding as Erasmian (McGilchrist 2016). Philosophical hermeneutics does not question the relevance of the explanatory approach, but it questions its dominance, suggesting that negotiating different understandings is one

[20] The author's presentation 'Hermeneutics and its relevance for practical heritage interpretation' from the IE Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) course was shared during an IE webinar on 28/02/2022. IE members may access the recording through the member area on the IE website.

requirement for approaching the future in a mindful way.

McGilchrist made his observations against the background of different functional areas in the brain. If we think of the value of whole interpretive experiences, we can also state that these mainly serve our episodic memory, the capacity of our brain to store events. Such experiences may remain with the individual ready to be recalled for a long time.

Philosophical hermeneutics suggests that we put a strong focus on experiences in their immediacy, before starting to analyse them. "What we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking wagon" (Heidegger 1962:207). 'The creaking wagon' appears as one undivided experience. Architectural theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz (1980:8) claimed: "Being qualitative totalities of a complex nature, places cannot be described by means of analytic, 'scientific' concepts". "When a 'stone' is mentioned in a poem, it is, of course, important what can be meant by 'stones'; but what matters in the poem is this stone, the one the poem mentions. This is the secret to the capacity for judgement: that one makes something general concrete with respect to the given situation" (Gadamer referring to Paul Celan as quoted by Misgeld and Nicholson 1992:70).

Sharing stories and ideas that are linked to first-hand experiences are the bread and butter of all heritage interpretation, and it is difficult not to make a connection to philosophical hermeneutics here. Regarding value-based heritage interpretation, philosophical hermeneutics can help us to also consider how all of this can foster mindfulness of ourselves, of others and of the planet.

Another interesting aspect that Gadamer addressed relates to the transparency of the interpreter in an artistic performance. If the interpreter and their medium come to the fore too much, this makes it difficult for their guests to access a piece of music or a play, for example. "Total mediation means that the medium as such is suspended [...] the work presents itself through it and in it" (Gadamer 2013:123-124). In heritage interpretation we would say that the amount of information or the way it is presented (which could also include a frame set by a strong interpretive theme) might rather obscure the phenomenon and its experience than to support it.

The relevance of philosophical hermeneutics for heritage interpretation was first recognised by Don Aldridge, one of the pioneers of the interpretive profession in Europe. He wrote: "We are forced [...] to consider the hermeneutic philosophers" (Aldridge 1989:86). However, although philosophical hermeneutics mainly deals with the interpretation of human legacy, and its fundamental works were published when the interpretive profession was just about to evolve, it had no direct influence on the development of heritage interpretation.

Ablett and Dyer state: "The neglect of hermeneutics is understandable given the relative absence of European social science perspectives in the founding of heritage interpretation in the United States" (Ablett and Dyer 2009:210).

One reason was that the key works were rather difficult to grasp. As Christopher Crittenden wrote in the preface of Tilden's 1957 book: "Under the influence of the German graduate schools, [...] professionals had sought to become more and more scientific in their research and writing, with the result that their publications had tended to become more and more abstruse" (Tilden 1957:ix).

On the one hand, it is true that German academic writing is challenging, namely in the domain of human sciences. Therefore, its practical value is difficult to explore, which is also true for hermeneutics. On the other hand, as shown in the previous chapter, Tilden's work was also challenged towards the seemingly practical implications of cognitive learning theories that were deeply rooted in empirical science, which traditionally dominated the science scene in the US.

However, one other reason was that as long as the focus of heritage interpretation was more "mission-based communication" with clearly defined meanings that were considered to be "inherent in the resource" (NAI 2007), philosophical hermeneutics just didn't seem to be too relevant.

This changes if the focus shifts towards individual meaning-making. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill suggests that "interpretation can become a more useful concept in the museum context if re-analysed from a perspective grounded in the philosophical approach know[n] as hermeneutics" (Hooper-Greenhill 1999:4).

Philosophical hermeneutics is considered to have "the potential to reinvigorate Tilden's holistic, ethically informed and transformative art of heritage interpretation, developing it in new directions" (Ablett and Dyer 2009:225). Hooper-Greenhill states: Currently, "in the museum, interpretation is done for you, or to you. In hermeneutics, however, **you** are the interpreter for yourself. Interpretation is the process of **constructing** meaning" (Hooper-Greenhill 1999:4).

István Fehér claimed that "hermeneutics has also some considerable political relevance: hermeneutic openness […] may help educate and bring up young people to be critical and self-critical citizens able to understand and respect alien conceptions and cultures" (Fehér 1998:11-12). Against this background, "interpretation is not an occasional luxury but our fundamental way of being in the world" (Zimmermann 2015:9).

This makes philosophical hermeneutics most relevant to value-based heritage interpretation and led to the integration of the approach into the IE training programme.

Su-Hee Chae confirms that "modern understanding of heritage interpretation had two conceptual bases, cognitive psychology and hermeneutics", but suggests that meanwhile both "perspectives are not totally separate because heritage interpretation is now more dynamic and recognises more active agency on the part of the person experiencing" it (Chae 2022:37).

Chae defines "the cognitive psychological perspective focused on the function of heritage interpretation as an educational activity [while] in contrast, the hermeneutical perspective emphasised heritage interpretation for meaning-making" (Chae 2022:37).

However, as already shown in the previous chapter, while in the mid-20th century cognitivism was considered progressive against a rather behaviourist background, we must now also take the constructivist theories into account that have been foreshadowed in philosophical hermeneutics.

It was Freeman Tilden who first defined heritage interpretation as an "educational activity" (Tilden 1957:8), and when assigning it to cognitive psychology, Chae (2022:20) claims that "Ablett and Dyer (2009) insist that Tilden and his successors have re-framed heritage interpretation as 'communication' in terms of cognitive psychological perspectives". But as far

as Tilden is concerned, this seems to be a misunderstanding.

On the contrary, it was not only Ham who came to the conclusion that "Tilden was obviously a constructivist" (Ham 2013:66). Ablett and Dyer suggest that "a predominantly cognitivist approach risks reducing Tilden's rich and transformative conception of interpretation to the unilateral presentation of 'information', which Tilden explicitly sought to avoid. Consequently, it is argued that hermeneutics can provide a framework for recapturing and extending Tilden's broader vision of interpretation. This broader formulation also questions the current asymmetry in the interpreter-visitor relationship; pointing towards a more inclusive, culturally situated, critically reflexive and dialogical model of heritage interpretation" (Ablett and Dyer 2009:211).

Whether "interpretation for meaning-making" (Chae 2022:37) is really in contrast to an educational activity, as Chae suggests, depends on the understanding of educational activities. When Tilden defined heritage interpretation as an educational activity, he emphasised (self-) education by provocation (referring to Ralph Waldo Emerson) "to stimulate the reader or hearer toward a desire to widen his horizon" (Tilden 1957:33). He clearly distinguished this from instruction.

In the context of philosophical hermeneutics, one key concept in this regard is 'Bildung'. In German philosophical tradition, Bildung is a neo-humanistic concept that developed in the late 18th century. It is related to 'education' (German: 'Erziehung') but has a somewhat different meaning. In French, the term 'formation' is sometimes used in a similar sense (also being distinguished from the French 'éducation').

Bildung is the formative shaping of the self through its interaction with the world. As Jeong-Hee Kim (2013) points out, Gadamer defines Bildung as "the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities" (Gadamer 2013:10). It is rather "self-educational", to use a word suggested by Ham (2013:82).

"In the 'Bildung' tradition, the goal of education is self-determination and autonomy based on reason, combined with mutual respect between human beings" (Carter 2016:10). Again, this corresponds to what is meant in value-based heritage interpretation by "self-interpretation and value-exchanging" (UNESCO 2020:29).

The role of interpretive services following this claim is to provide an environment for the individual that helps to explore personal meaning and to unfold its own potential through personal experiences.

Carter recalls that several representatives of early 20th century progressive education were also thinking in this direction. He even introduces the term "progressive interpretation" (Carter 2016:8). For example, John Dewey wrote: "A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognise in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth" (Dewey 1938:40).

However, according to philosophical hermeneutics, understanding is not limited to that individual process of formation. Nicholas Davey points out that philosophical hermeneutics "involves an active relation between the transformative and the formative". While it is **formative** because it "generate[s] new (social) formations of understanding", it is also **transformative** because it "grasps

understanding as coming to understand differently", "keeping oneself open to the other and to the different" (Davey 2006:43).

This is in line with IE's previously mentioned aspiration to make "heritage more meaningful to people, and people more mindful towards our common future" (IE 2020b). In this context, Gadamer referred to another humanistic concept, the "sensus communis" as "the sense that founds community" (Gadamer 2013:19).

Reservations that are sometimes made against philosophical hermeneutics are that "it can jeopardise the realm of heritage interpretation and extend it indefinitely so that anything claimed about a heritage place is 'interpreted'. Without proper criteria or evidence of interpretation, hermeneutics accepts any understanding of the heritage place, no matter what it is about or to what extent wider communities agree with it" (Chae 2022:20). "Hermeneutical interpretation may risk an equivocation of concepts" (Chae 2022:71).

This seems to reflect concerns about inappropriate interpretations or a loss of identity within the interpretive community, after successfully developing tried and tested ways of communicating information consistent with cognitivist learning theories for more than 60 years. Value-based heritage interpretation has to take such concerns into account and provide examples, how e.g. philosophical hermeneutics can create a basis for interpretive services that may be better tailored to the challenges of the 21st century, what new skills are needed, and how to achieve them.

As there are concerns that philosophical hermeneutics could be too radical, there are also concerns that it might not be radical enough. As mentioned above, value-based heritage interpretation and philosophical hermeneutics are somehow related to constructivist thinking; but as there is radical constructivism, there is also one line of development called "radical hermeneutics" (Caputo 1987).

This can again be seen in the context of postmodernism and poststructuralism that was briefly mentioned in the previous chapter. In terms of hermeneutics, it was mainly initiated by the work of Jacques Derrida (Derrida 1973, first published 1967 in French). One key concept of challenging the established convictions is deconstruction. "Deconstruction urges recognition and respect for what is different, left out, or queer" (Garrison 2003:351).

Although it may be worth exploring the relevance of Derrida's basic assumptions, this would mean stepping deeper into theory, while we should rather take a look at the practical consequences of what has been considered so far.

What does value-based heritage interpretation mean in practice?

Looking at value-based heritage interpretation from the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics, the model against which practical implication might best be discussed is the hermeneutic circle.

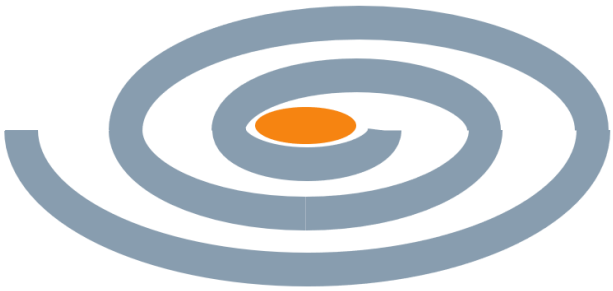

Figure 2. The hermeneutic circle

We all experience heritage phenomena from a limited perspective. This can be caused by limited knowledge and by limited access (including all sorts of barriers), but it can also

result from traditions and popular opinions causing presumptions. Gadamer generally uses the term 'prejudices'. We are only partially aware of it and should, therefore, train our "consciousness of being affected by history (wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstein)" (Gadamer 2013:312).

Every now and then, we might even catch ourselves visiting heritage properties, just because they help us materialise our preconceived notions – while we avoid visiting those that challenge them.

Whole interpretive experiences and exchange with others may open new insights, and by reviewing our previous point of view against this new input, we may enter a new and wider loop in the circle by merging the different perspectives. Gadamer calls this "fusing of horizons" (Gadamer 2013:317).

This idea can also be transferred to UNESCO's model of the different levels of values (Figure 1). Starting from the qualities of a protected area, it can be considered in its wider ecological, social or economic context, and it can be further discussed against the background of fundamental laws of nature or power structures and the values underlying them.

Of course, gaining a wider perspective does not necessarily guarantee mindful behaviour. We also cannot press any reset button, i.e. we can barely erase newly gained insights from our broadened mind which might make it difficult to get into the shoes of someone with a different perception, in order to understand their different judgements, attitudes and behaviour. Their hermeneutic circles are different because they look back on their own individual history of insights and acquisitions.

Failure to take this into account can result in intellectual elites representing official opinion isolating themselves from the wider public, which some researchers see as a fundamental difficulty regarding the present situation in Europe (Raines et al. 2017).

The same is true when drawing conclusions from past developments. In retrospect, it might be easy to see what people could have done differently to cause some other effect, while it is much more difficult to learn from the past in such a way that possible pitfalls are recognised in the present and personal disadvantages accepted for the future. Interpreting the past with today's mindset can obscure pitfalls and cause arrogance and misplaced self-assurance.

So, if not accompanied by mindfulness, more knowledge may actually lead to less understanding, not just of the past but also of others and of our options in the present.

For example, listening to an iconic story of a glamourous ruler from a past era during the visit of their palace might help to make the place more enjoyable and maybe also more relevant (meaningful) to people, e.g. by satisfying identity needs. However, it might not encourage people to look at circumstances surrounding the palace from a wider perspective and to foster mindfulness regarding the way we shape our common future, although the site could offer an outstanding opportunity for doing so.

It obviously requires some openness by the individual to (re)consider the value of their own point of view and a readiness to understand others – e.g. those that were suffering under the glamourous ruler.

If we would like to achieve this, it needs some finesse to provoke people without overwhelming them, especially if they are in a recreational mood or just looking for short and simple stories. It is an art to keep an experience that is aimed to touch the personal range of

values within the 'flow channel' between boredom and anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi 1990).

In practice, value-based heritage interpretation suggests we should more:

- Invite to explore the genius loci of a place through whole interpretive experiences
- Shift from only being experts interpreting to becoming facilitators enabling people to interpret
- Understand meaning-making as an individual and social experience helping people to grow
- Encourage people to explore ways of overcoming unsustainable and peace-threatening developments
- Facilitate the exchange of and reflection on different interpretations, values and perspectives
- Support people to draft and to exchange their own interpretive themes in a benevolent way
- Foster dialogue between guests and local people and co-create interpretive services.

Tilden suggested that "no device […is] as desirable as interpretation by direct contact with the person" (Tilden 1957:96). Moscardo (1999:32) also found that in terms of fostering mindfulness, "a guided tour or presentation was the most effective option". Since the quality of value-based heritage interpretation depends a lot on dialogue, this is also true in this case.

Meanwhile, the US National Park Service provides detailed suggestions on how to consider multiple perspectives (USNPS 2012; USNPS 2019) with the 'arc of dialogue' (Bormann 2009) becoming one of its most popular concepts. To turn a debate into a dialogue, Lisa Schirch and David Campt recommend in another context that:

- "People listen to others to understand how their experiences shape their beliefs.
- People accept the experiences of others as real and valid.
- People appear to be somewhat open to expanding their understanding of the issue.
- People speak primarily from their own understanding and experience.
- People work together toward common understanding" (Schirch and Campt 2007:10).

IE trainers provide exercises for achieving this and teach the following in order to foster understanding and to avoid manipulation:

- Banish any overwhelming of others
- Address controversials, don't hide them
- Give weight to personal interests of others
- Let people get into someone else's shoes
- Encourage sharing different narratives
- Be transparent about your actual intent
- Make sure that all is in line with the facts.

The three first points were taken from Wehling (1977) and have been discussed by Christensen and Grammes (2020). The last point has taken on new significance because, while information is now much more easily accessible (when people even start surfing the internet during an interpretive talk), the amount of non-factual and misleading information is immense, especially because it more and more appears in a professional design and, therefore, seems to be reliable.

After the practical guidelines for value-based heritage interpretation have now been indicated in a few brushstrokes, some more comments on the values on which the approach is based should further complete the picture.

Carter (2016:17) pointed out that heritage interpretation requires "a sense of ethics". Ablett and Dyer (2009:213) state: "The ethic which

drives interpretation according to Tilden […] is 'love' in the sense of care for the thing interpreted and the people who come to experience it". This means that in heritage interpretation the people are as important as the heritage.

As shown in the first chapter, value-based heritage interpretation draws its ethics from the human values that have been agreed by the United Nations and consequently also by UNESCO, especially in the context of peace and sustainable development. How those values are considered in fundamental papers of the Council of Europe and the European Union has already been shown by IE (2017).

Following the research from Schwartz (1992) about universal human values, we are mainly talking about self-transcending values (covered by Schwartz' value groups of 'universalism' and 'benevolence'). Especially "universalism combines two subtypes of concern – for the welfare of those in the larger society and world and for nature" (Schwartz 2012:7). Most values that are on top of UNESCO's agenda are subject to universalism.

Value-based interpretive services should encourage:

- Experiencing values through their design (e.g. by opening spaces for multiple perspectives)
- Explicitly reflecting on values (e.g. by considering the diversity of faiths in a church).

While the first point refers to methodology and should help to strengthen those values that are considered to be key for a more peaceful and more sustainable future, the second point refers to content and can also invite reflection upon such values that oppose them (e.g. included in the value group 'power'). How to approach such different values was the subject of IE's initiative 'Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage' (IE 2017).

Working with values also means looking at heritage phenomena against the background of universal concepts. Those were first introduced in heritage interpretation by David Larsen (2003). In IE's terms, universal concepts are ideas that are relevant to all people, independent from their social or cultural background (e.g. loss, freedom, family). Initially based on anthropological research (Brown 1991), the list of universal concepts is long and generally open. It exceeds but includes all those human values that have been identified as universal (Schwartz 1992).

How to use universal concepts as part of interpretive themes, and how to consider those themes just as offers, possibly inviting people to search for other universal concepts in heritage and to help them to develop their own themes, means to tap into the vast 'storage of metaphors' that heritage properties usually provide. More practical implications form an essential part of the IE training programme.

To what extent such 'deeper meaning' can be considered depends on the situation at the particular heritage property. Even when only looking at personal interpretive services, situations can largely range. On the one end of the continuum, there could be a brief interpretive encounter with a busload of people waiting on an overcrowded square to get seated in a restaurant. On the other end, a residential focus group might assemble a few local stakeholders at a remote site in nature for an intense exchange. Site management needs to ensure that value-based heritage interpretation is enabled by providing the spaces and situations that are needed. This also requires qualified interpretive planning (UNESCO 2022).

In any case, interpretive services need to be set up in a way that allows universal concepts (including universal values) to become specific and relevant. They should support people in their personal search for meaning and empower them to reflect on their heritage experience, also in the context of their daily life issues.

Professional interpreters are usually familiar with developing stories along compelling interpretive themes and with preparing information in an organised, relevant and enjoyable way (as e.g. promoted by Ham 1992 and Ham 2013), but dealing actively with values and frames and with controversies that might emerge from this, requires additional training. People, including interpreters, should not be pushed into situations for which they are not prepared.

However, since this is all more about a shift in focus, and many elements are not entirely new, there are already several cases from recent years that point in the intended direction. Examples include:

- **House of Batana** in Croatia is based on the ecomuseum approach. It aims to preserve the intangible heritage of constructing traditional wooden boats (batana). A small batana shipyard has been located in front of the entrance to the museum where people can watch a batana shipbuilder at work. Local people socialise around the site sharing tales and fishing songs with each other and with visitors. (IE 2020a:24-26)

- **Discovery vests** are now used in some German protected areas. Those vests are handed out to visitors. They have pockets that are equipped with multiple tools to explore nature. Instead of the group following the guide, the guide follows the group and supports participants in whatever they are up to. The approach was inspired by science centres and was especially successful with children of refugees that were facing significant language barriers. (VDN 2012)

- **Mothers and daughters** was a photo exhibition in the multiculturally shaped area of Cardiff Bay, UK. It was co-created with local people for the visitors of Cardiff. Couples of mothers and daughters with a migration background were introduced in large format photographs, sharing their touching stories from the arrival of their families to the present day. The centre collected the recordings in a public archive together with documents and photographs. (O'Neill 2011)

- **Trail of change** was a co-creation project around an urban nature reserve in Düsseldorf, Germany. An oxbow of the Rhine was partially renatured, and the very different residents of the four surrounding districts jointly designed interpretive elements that related the process to their individual themes. Temporary panels and panels for self-design were set up, benches were used as boards, and people shared their own experiences from the renatured area in audio stations.[21]

- **Plato's Academy Digital Museum** is based in Athens, Greece, at the very site where Plato once taught his students. Visitors are invited to discuss questions such as: What makes a society just? How to reach fulfilment? What is virtue? etc. They realise they are faced with philosophical decisions on a day-to-day basis and can check to what

[21] IE members may access the recording of the author's IE webinar 'The trail of change' from 30/04/2020 through the member area on the IE website.

> degree their own thinking is in accordance with what Plato advocated more than 2,000 years ago. (Stavraki et al. 2016)

IE collected more examples of the use of values and frames in heritage interpretation through its initiative 'Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage' (IE 2017) and examples of active involvement of local people through its initiative 'Fostering communities through heritage interpretation' (IE 2020a).

Not all interpretive services allow the highest degree of participation or can trigger deep thinking about human values. Many situations simply do not fit this claim. What is critical, especially for interpretive planners, is to be ready and prepared to include such services whenever this is possible and to convince decision-makers to create the circumstances that are needed.

Accordingly, interpretive training should prepare for this by discussing the requirements and by teaching particular skills for developing interpretive plans including personal and non-personal services to support them.

What is the idea behind UNESCO learning landscapes?

Within a **learning landscape**, heritage sites connect and inspire networks for value-based heritage interpretation including several sites and a broader range of stakeholders in their vicinity.

The idea of supporting UNESCO designated sites in order for them to operate as learning landscapes arose from the UNESCO project WH-Interp (UNESCO 2022). Unlike value-based heritage interpretation, this approach has not yet been tested.

Based on the following theses and findings, it is considered an advantage to organise learning for a more sustainable future around heritage:

- Heritage sites often represent iconic points of reference which makes their experience relevant.
- They usually allow people to delve into a large store of underlying stories, values and frames.
- Heritage experiences include the potential for revelations encouraging people to deal with new ideas.
- Sites touching sensitive subjects provoke – which can be turned into deep and fruitful exchange.
- Sites' informal atmosphere provides a space where people from different backgrounds can liaise.
- People can play with meaning in a model-like and temporary way without serious consequences.
- Whole interpretive experiences result in long-lasting memories which can be tapped much later.

Learning landscapes shall involve more heritage sites but also other stakeholders that are interested in implementing the concept. Those might include:

- Public institutions (regional development organisations, tourism boards, communities, schools,…)
- Private providers (hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, car/ bike/ boat rentals,…)
- Non-profit organisations (associations, foundations, faith communities, civic action groups,…)

In general, the term 'learning landscape' appears in rather different contexts, e.g. as a cooperation for optimising ecological research in an open landscape in Belgium (Eland – educatief landschap; Ghent University 2019), as a platform serving employers who aim to cooperate with formal learning institutions in the UK (Gatsby Foundation 2022), or as an education journal in Canada (Canuel 2022).

Around the turn of the millennium, "regionale Bildungslandschaft" (Ambos et al. 2002:6) or "lokale Bildungslandschaften" (Bleckmann and Durdel 2009) were introduced in the educational context in Germany, aiming to create regional or local networks connecting places for formal and non-formal learning. The current initiative was inspired by this approach.

Together with IE, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe aims to detect sites that are already in close exchange with institutions in their surroundings, and to develop capacities on these sites in the sense of becoming learning landscapes, intended as pilot regions that investigate how value-based heritage interpretation can be implemented around UNESCO designated properties in Europe.

Most desirable as touchstones would be learning landscapes in transboundary regions, encompassing more than one UNESCO designated site, and allowing us to merge diverse natural and cultural, tangible and intangible heritage properties.

A UNESCO learning landscape therefore is not intended as a new category of UNESCO designations, but rather as a UNESCO designated site (or a cluster of) that should aim for active transition towards more sustainability and to inspire local people and visitors to contribute to such transition in their own environment. The regional approach should be used to strengthen existing initiatives and to organically combine several sustainability goals (UNESCO 2017).

UNESCO designated sites should act as beacons, aiming to:

- Become best practice sites for value-based heritage interpretation
- Practice interpretive training and demonstrate co-creation in interpretive planning
- Integrate different learning opportunities in their vicinity.

Learning landscapes aim to synergistically combine formal and non-formal learning locations. The complement of formal learning aims to help enrich their primarily competence-based approaches (focusing on knowledge and skills to ensure employability) by fostering exchange about human values through first-hand experiences at heritage sites.

Interpretive agents – blending the concepts of interpreter and change agent – are considered to play a key role in implementing value-based heritage interpretation in potential pilot regions.

They should understand value-based heritage interpretation, organise introductory events, inspire site managers to refresh their heritage sites by the approach, assemble different stakeholders and facilitate the development of interpretive strategies as well as other co-creative processes in order to turn the region into a UNESCO learning landscape.

Interpretive agents need special training, as they need to involve professional interpretive trainers to accomplish an ambitious training programme for planners, writers, guides and managers at the sites in their region.

UNESCO and IE are currently looking for UNESCO designated sites that are ready to become drivers for learning landscapes.

Conclusion

Value-based heritage interpretation builds on established interpretive skills but suggests a shift in focus away from communicating interpretation made by experts more toward empowering people to interpret. A largely neglected discipline that could help with this is philosophical hermeneutics.

In terms of content, value-based heritage interpretation fosters reflection on multiple narratives and on values and frames vital to human development. This way, heritage sites can complement formal learning that is often more focused on knowledge and skills and rather framed by competition than by cooperation. As a result, heritage not only becomes more meaningful to people, people also become more mindful for transformation towards the UN sustainable development goals.

Value-based heritage interpretation includes visitors and local people alike. It fosters participation and cooperation between stakeholders. The concept of UNESCO learning landscapes is not meant as a new category of UNESCO designations, but as an area in which one or more UNESCO designated sites can link heritage properties synergistically with public institutions, private providers and non-profit organisations in order to use value-based heritage interpretation for the empowerment of regions.

This requires a review of strategic interpretive planning. It would benefit from interpretive agents strengthening interpretive literacy in co-creative processes as well as from the implementation of IE's refreshed training courses for planners, writers and guides on value-based heritage interpretation.

In terms of learning for sustainability, value-based heritage interpretation in UNESCO learning landscapes could achieve what could only be achieved with much greater effort in other ways. If the interpretive profession can provide such a critical role, it might expect to move from a nice-to-have niche (in which it still lingers in most European countries) to the spotlight of what is needed for a more sustainable Europe.

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Evaluation work targeting the cooperation of artists, heritage sites and IT experts – The MUSE.ar case

Ágnes Erzsébet Mácsai & Árpád Bőczén (Hungary)

Ágnes Erzsébet Mácsai is an evaluator and audience researcher based in Budapest, Hungary. She participates in Hungarian and international museum interpretation and other cultural projects as an external expert. She was a member of the evaluation team of the MUSE.ar international project. She is also a lecturer at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME).

Contact: agnes@kulturalisertekeles.hu

Árpád Bőczén is the president of the Hungarian Association of Cultural Heritage Managers (KÖME). He graduated as an architect and as a cultural heritage expert. The interpretive approach is the basis of his practical and theoretical work. He is an IE certified trainer and is IE Country Coordinator Hungary.

Contact: arpad@heritagemanager.hu

Abstract

MUSE.ar was an international project co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union. Its main aim was to bring artists, museum collections and digital developers closer to each other. During the two year process, between 2021 and 2022, an online platform was developed, which serves as a tool for heritage sites and artists with different backgrounds to build their own digital narratives in an easy and cost-effective way.
In the framework of the project, there was an attempt to experiment with a new kind of interpretation-based co-creation model, which was accompanied by a systematic evaluation process. How can artists, sites, IT and other professionals work together in the development of digital programmes so that they go beyond the classic client-service provider roles and create a new kind of knowledge sharing and decision-making process resulting in a more balanced operating model?

The results and the lessons learnt can encourage other heritage sites to reflect on their digital interpretation development methods, and to rethink and redesign their creative processes according to a more transparent and democratic model. Getting to know the tools developed and used during the evaluation (e.g.: Customer Journey Map templates, digital interpretation evaluation sheet) serves to better understand your own creative processes.

Keywords

interpretive evaluation, co-creation, transparent content development, digital narratives, MUSE.ar

Introduction

MUSE.ar was a two-year long international cooperation project bringing artists, museum collections and digital developers closer to each other.

The results of the project were as follows:

- A new user-friendly online digital platform[22] that enables creative people to easily develop tailor-made apps for digital

[22] https://musear-platform.com/

interpretation in museums and other heritage sites with the possibility of applying various interaction types and media formats with a simplified and visually supported programming need.
- One-to-one digital app for three heritage sites developed by artists and the staff together through a co-creation process within the technical framework of the online digital platform.
- A 40-hour digital interpretive planning training draft for curators, museologists and other planners, which follows the principles of Interpret Europe's training programme.

The three elements complemented each other very well. The fact that the new platform is applied and tested in three pilot sites gave the opportunity to experiment with the co-creation process of the digital contents in different work environments to see the differences and also the common aspects which can be the basis of a general, transparent and interdisciplinary model**.** The development of the training supported the collection of the evaluation aspects of a well planned digital interpretive programme, thus it could provide a list of recommendations for the quality assurance of the pilot products.

Just as the training helped the summative evaluation of the project from the interpretive point of view, an evaluation plan was also created to systematically follow and assess the three pilot creation processes throughout the two years of the MUSE.ar project. One of the Hungarian partners, the Association of Cultural Heritage Managers (KÖME)[23], cooperated with the Howest University of Applied Sciences (Belgium)[24] on this task.

The main question of the evaluation was: *How does the cooperation of partners from different countries and with different professional backgrounds and the different process methodologies and working conditions help to achieve the project's results, and what are the barriers?*

The evaluation plan included aspects about the nature of co-creation to examine in the MUSE.ar pilots. These aspects were the following:

- dominances between the partners and ideas
- nature of contributions of the partners
- decisions (which partners/actors had more influence on what questions)
- typical fields of conflicts, the ways and types of solutions
- moments where facilitation was needed
- openness and fields of compromises (changes in the plan, design)

This article focuses only on the evaluation of the three parallel development processes of the digital narratives on the pilot sites. It introduces the MUSE.ar experiment from an evaluation point of view, the original cooperation model, the challenges of its implementation, the solutions, milestones and changes which could be applied thanks to the ongoing monitoring work.

1 – The original MUSE.ar co-creation model

The basic project expectation that the participants must closely work together to develop the apps and the platform made the planned process and method special. The co-creation determined the entire creative work from the beginning to the end. The main partners were the heritage sites, the artists and the IT developers. This chapter deals with the specificities of these parties and the description of the framework they needed to operate in.

[23] https://www.heritagemanager.hu/en/kome/

[24] https://www.howest.be/en

1.1 The heritage sites

One of the participating heritage sites in the project was the Iron Curtain Museum in Felsőcsatár, Hungary (https://vasfuggonymuzeum.hu). This unique open-air collection was created and managed by former border guard Sándor Goják on his own vineyard, just a few metres from Hungary's western border. The visitors are welcomed and guided personally by Mr Goják through the history of the Iron Curtain, amended with additional elements resonating with the current migration events. His mission is to present "a short but brutal period of history that should never happen again". It is also a homage to those who lost their lives on Hungary's western border, either as refugees or border guards.

The second heritage site was the Lepenski Vir Archeological Museum in Serbia (http://www.lepenski-vir.rs). Lepenski Vir is one of the most interesting prehistoric cultures on the river Danube, and it was unknown until its discovery in the late 1960s. It quickly became clear that the people who lived on Lepenski Vir formed one of the oldest organised human settlements in Europe, dating back more than 9,000 years. They were among the first architects to construct their houses in very specific shapes. But more than anything, they were among the foremost sculptors, making unique sandstone sculptures, which were the visualisation of divine creatures or even gods.

The third heritage site is the National Film Museum (NaFilM), located in the heart of Prague. It is the first museum of its kind in the Czech Republic (http://www.nafilm.org/en). It offers innovative, interactive installations and countless opportunities for all generations to discover how film works and its fascinating history. The young team of curators and artists combine analogue and digital approaches throughout the exhibition – from reconstructed projectors to holograms, virtual and augmented reality – which allows them to explore their connection to the beginnings of cinema. Their motto is: We'll turn you on! See film differently!

The three sites have many things in common (e.g. all of them are in a similar cultural environment in Central-Eastern Europe) but the selection criteria stipulated that they should be different in certain ways. NaFilm came to life through the enthusiastic work of young film studies students a couple of years ago. Their exhibition isn't strongly built on their location, it is partly focusing on the national culture but more on the historical development of the film. They don't have classical artifacts and use technology (e.g. AR, VR, sound generators, analogue and digital tools, transformed original devices, holographic video) in the installations very creatively. Their organisational structure is based on the democratic team of the founders which fundamentally determined how they participated in the co-creation.

Lepenski Vir is a public entity supervised by the National Museum Beograd. Therefore, many important findings were transported to the capital. They have some original objects on the site but many reproductions as well. They use the remains of the excavation in the presentation which makes their appearance very site specific. They already used some basic technology in the exhibition but these elements aren't dominant compared to the classic object-panel means of presentation. Their deep involvement in the process was very challenging from the beginning as they scientifically depend on the museum located in Beograd, but from the management point of view they are more independent and local.

The Iron Curtain Museum is the child of a former border guard who created the whole collection from his personal interest. The collection has many original objects densely packed in the open-air exhibition close to the border area location of the historical events. This makes the whole assembly strongly connected to the location. The use of technology was not

dominant in the presentation (has been limited to a mine-field simulation) and digital elements were not included at all. The main challenge in the involvement of the site was to find someone who could think in strategic perspectives since the operator of the museum is an elderly man who is mainly interested in the topic of the iron curtain.

All of these characteristics strongly determine the nature of each of the museums' participation in the development processes.

1.2. The artists

The artists were recruited through an international open call to ensure the possibility of participation for a wide range of interested people. Individuals could apply but finally the aim was that three artists with different backgrounds work on each app as a team from the very beginning. The ideal distribution of the roles within the team was defined as well. One should be a 'collector' with strong conceptualisation, curation and research skills, another one a 'narrator' with experience in design and narrative building, and the last one a 'framer' familiar with various digital tools. At the end of the selection process, nine creative actors were selected for the project. Application as a group was also possible.

The selected artists and creators had very different backgrounds, which corresponded to the original ideas of the project. The criteria of the selection were based partly on the intention to generate various situations among the artists with different kinds of initial connections towards each other and the heritage sites (Table 1). In the case of Lepenski Vir a group application was accepted which ensured a strong cohesion among the artists. However, they didn't have any previous experience with the site and its operators. The Iron Curtain team was compiled from three individuals with totally different backgrounds (Czech framer, Italian narrator and Hungarian collector). Only one of them spoke the language and none of them had previous experience with the site. The NaFilm team consisted only of Czech people. All of them had previous connections to the museum but they hadn't collaborated before. So in some cases the task was also to build up a team from the selected applicants.

	Connection among the artists	Connection among the artists and the site
Artist group: Iron Curtain Musem	None	None
Artist group: Lepenski Vir	Strong	None
Artist group: NaFilM	Weak	Strong

Table 1. Level of connections among artists and with the heritage site

Each group had to undertake the following tasks in the project:

- build a digital narrative in an interdisciplinary process for a pilot site using the framework of the newly developing platform
- advise, test, evaluate, and co-create the platform
- participate in and contribute with aspects to the content of the Digital Interpretation Planner training

1.3. The IT developers

The idea to develop a platform came from Novena, a Croatian multimedia design company. The idea is based on the vision to strengthen the connections between heritage sites and creative artists, to support their cooperation from the relationship building to the realised common digital presentations. They wanted to develop a product that can be helpful for creatives who are not so familiar with production of apps and don't have the opportunity to deeply involve IT experts. But they wanted to support designers as well with a visual editor that includes easy programming solutions and pre-defined elements to avoid unnecessary repetition of works already done in former projects. In regards to the co-creation of the three pilot applications, Novena's role was

to define and clearly communicate the initial framework of the platform to the museums and the artists. However, this framework should have been flexible to some extent to be able to be formed to its final state according to the needs of the other parties and the interpretation concepts they developed together.

1.4. The process

The creative work took place through residencies based on each heritage site (Figure 1). The selected creators had to visit the sites before the residencies and to participate in the initial version of the Digital Interpretation Planning training to gain knowledge and to define the common principles of the digital interpretation. Two Interpret Europe Certified Interpretive Trainers compiled an evaluation sheet for the assessment of digital media supported heritage interpretation programmes (Appendix 1). The evaluation sheet contained, among others, aspects regarding the suitability of the selected digital device (in terms of the audience, the heritage site and the heritage site management), integration possibilities in the wider interpretive scene, effects on the audience, and content of the digital narrative. The participating artists and museum representatives tried out the sheet together with the trainers in different situations like the assessment of existing services and the reflection on each other's first ideas on the MUSE.ar apps. Based on this experience the participants had to propose changes to the criteria and to finalise the common grounds.

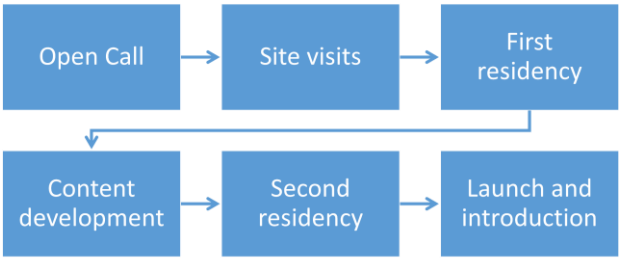


Figure 1. Steps of the content creation

After the training the real development started. Each creative group had to travel to its chosen museum for a ten-day-long residency programme that gave them a deep insight into the location, content, objects, stories and historical facts. It gave space for brainstorming and shaping their ideas. They had to work together with a museum representative assigned to them especially for the co-creation. From this first residency, the creators had to develop a concept note including their needs and ideas on how they would use the platform and what kind of digital features would be necessary to realise their ideas.

Between the two residencies, the artists and museum representatives (together as creative teams) were required to do active research and joint content development work with the continuous support of the project team. Artists had to apply, test, and evaluate the editor surface of the new platform. During the planned 6-month-long parallel processes the 1.0 version of the platform was created, and the customised narratives were ready to be uploaded and applied.

During the second ten-day-long residency programme the expectation from the creative teams was to finalise their narratives, upload and test their generated digital content and narrative to the newly developed digital platform. The last step of the content creation process was the presentation of the newly developed narratives for the audience by the core team and the creators.

1.5. The supervision of the process – The Digital Committee

The so-called Digital Committee was established as a comprehensive actor of the project to strengthen the relationship of the creative processes and the platform development. It contained four professional members of the project consortium. Each member represented different aspects of the developments. The

Swedish IVAR Studio (Sweden)[25] was the expert in digital storytelling, the academic researcher of Howest University (Belgium)[26] was experienced in different co-creation and development frameworks, the IT developer of NOVENA (Croatia)[27] was aware of the platform concept and an independent digital liaison was appointed to channel all the aspects and interests into an effective cooperation with quality results. As core members, they all had to participate and present at the training course before the first residencies as well, and they supported both residencies and the interim period in-person and remotely. In the plans, their collaboration ensured that the platform and app developments applied different aspects and capacities. Based on the creators' inputs after the first residency, the digital liaison's task was to collect, absorb and summarise the list of desired features and functions into one written document for NOVENA to start the IT development. Howest University's role in the project was also to carry out research about the efficiency of the co-creation process together with KÖME. Therefore, their participation in the Digital Committee's work was dedicated partly to collect and process related information.

The aim of using this type of model was to receive constant feedback from each actor in the development processes throughout the project, to fulfil the goals of more than one actor simultaneously (heritage sites, artists, IT developers), to help avoid a need to revise larger units to use resources as optimally as possible, and to increase the transparency in the project.

2 – The reasons to change the original model and the new solution

MUSE.ar was a project with many actors and goals. The complexity of the project was high and its nature very experimental. The interpretive programmes were developed in a changing technical framework (the parallel evolving platform) according to interpretation principles which the artists and even the museums weren't always familiar with. At the same time, the nine artists, the three museums, and their different relationships (as mentioned above) represented many different interests, needs and approaches. It can be said with certainty that this kind of challenging process should go together with strong communication among the parties, and everyone must be clear about their position, role and the framework within which the co-creation takes place. Coordination tasks require intense management and administrative background, quick response to the problems, sensitive handling of the risks, and at least one person needs to oversee the entire process.

Before the development processes started, the evaluation team surveyed the partners' main aims, motivations and fears about the MUSE.ar project. The tool was in-person and online interviews. The research questions were: What do the partners expect from the project on a personal and institutional level? What are the motivations/aims? What are the main risks/fears about the project? Those answers to the last question which included aspects regarding the co-creation were as follows:

- roles and tasks are not clear to each stakeholder in the cooperation
- the relationship between residencies and IT development and between the training and IT development is not clear
- lack of flexibility in the development method of the apps
- the uncertainty of the balance between the co-creation experiment and the development process
- too many things to do in the project

[25] https://ivar.studio

[26] https://www.howest.be/

[27] http://novena.hr/

The mentioned issues show clearly that, despite the definition of a basic cooperation structure, the details and the roles of all the stakeholders weren't clarified to everyone at the beginning of the project. After the survey every partner started to work according to their previous principles, practices and experiences instead of starting to work on the solution of the issues and laying down the fixed pillars of the common experiment. The result was that after a while the originally planned model couldn't be followed in a consistent way anymore and new common rules and methods needed to be created.

2.1. From the residency to the Customer Journey Map

At the beginning of the artists' work the residency-based process should have been specified further with interim milestones and mid-term results. Instead of working on this, the artists started to work according to their very different methodologies or struggled with team building. Very quickly it turned out that they wouldn't spend the whole residency period on the sites. Furthermore, they expressed their need to find other ways for the creation. The stages of the three developments drifted apart in a short time and the transparency level became very low without clear reporting tools.

To solve this problem, it was necessary to redesign – and at the same time break down – the process with a logic to allow each creative team to progress at their own pace. The new framework was the so-called Customer Journey Map designed by Howest and KÖME (Appendix 2).

The Customer Journey Map (CJM) is a visual 'storyline' which splits a general digital interpretation development process into four phases, which are sometimes iterative and interrelated in their parts. The map included the main phases, the related tasks, responsibilities, questions, milestones of the digital narrative development. The deadlines and focuses of the phases could be negotiated with each team individually adapted to the needs of their concept. The four main phases were named: Explore – Tell – Specify – Develop & Test.

The theoretical content of the map was the following:
In the Explore phase of the CJM, the goal and target audience should be determined by the museum with consultation of the artists. They know the audiences they already reach or would like to reach in the future and are on top of the vision and mission of the museum. After the site visits and after discussing the project, the museum and the artists should agree on the general themes and content they would like to address with the experience. The artists make suggestions, based on what they experience during the site visits. In the end they should decide on the direction together. With this in mind (goal, target audience and content) the artists prepared a first draft of the concept. Before starting phase 2, a presentation has to be made to the MUSE.ar project team where all the experts can make suggestions and comments (not obligatory).

In the Tell phase the archaeological/ historical/ artistic data are needed for the concept to be further developed. The museum should have a significant role in delivering specific information to the artists, but normally some research by the artists is necessary as well. Based on the collected information the artists develop the narrative with all its specific elements (e.g. characters, settings, structure, climax, points of view including the visitor, role of the visitor in the story, lessons to be learnt, etc.). When the narrative is defined the artists, together with the museum and the project team, need to select the medium, the technology they want to use to tell the story and pinpoint how this will affect the storytelling. A quick and dirty prototype could be developed to test if this is working. The decision concerning the correct technology should be taken by the project team in total, including museum and artists. This is to make

sure the complete concept would fit the project goals, the platform and the goals of the artist and museum.

When the concept and the right technology is there, the whole experience has to be thought through, mapping every step in phase Specify. The artistic teams have to create the storyboard and flowchart explaining all different stages of the experience. It is important to visualise all actions and interactions. If the visitor has to scan something, press a button, or take out his phone, it must be visualised on the map. A quick and dirty prototype could be developed to make sure these different kinds of interaction work. The flowchart in action/interaction mapping should be created by the artists. At the end of stage 3 a detailed script of the complete experience has to be ready and all the requirements for the development and later use are clearly described. If hardware would be needed on the site for example, this should be written down, including logistics.

The experience can be developed according to the detailed script in the Develop & Test phase. This is done by the artists working together with several members of the project team. Once there is a usable version, the museum gathers a test audience, matching the target audience that is set at the beginning. They test the experience in situ. The visitors have to be observed and questioned. Based on these results the final changes are made. After these iterations, the experience could be tested and iterated again and again until the experience is green lighted by the museum.

In the MUSE.ar project a design canvas and a template was provided for each CJM phase for the teams to fill with information continuously, but especially for the interim deadlines. After each phase all of the project members had the opportunity to read these templates and add comments to help the development processes. There was not enough time and will to use the CJM tool appropriately by all of the project members (partly because of the late introduction) but it could help to get closer to the project aims.

2.2 From the Digital Committee to the Mentor Programme

The experiment of the MUSE.ar co-creation model needed a strong bridge among the artist teams, the heritage sites, the IT team and management to achieve their own development aims and the project aims at the same time. According to the original plans the Digital Committe had to ensure this connection. However, based on the collected data there were more uncertain factors which obstructed the operation of this committee. There wasn't a properly selected and appointed leader, and no one felt this task was theirs. Neither the importance and the central role of this group, nor the tasks and authorisation (in which questions they could/ had to decide upon) was not clear for the members of the committee and the other parties of the project. The consequence was that this committee couldn't operate appropriately, and was inactive in the creation process, which generated a big gap among the actors of the content creation. Fortunately, the essential need remained to have a transparent, clear and facilitated development process and to define a tool for that. The so-called mentor programme grew out of the accidental situation that each creative team had a project member who more-or-less followed their progress due to various reasons (personal interest, earlier moderation role during the site visits, etc.). So it was obvious that these people could be appointed to systematically follow the process, doing what they were doing anyway but even more.

The tasks of the mentors were the following:

- meet with their team
- proactively look for opportunities to reach out and help the creative team
- connect the teams and project objectives

- encourage the team to hold the deadlines and follow the steps of the CJM
- make the CJM templates as detailed and complete as possible at every phase
- facilitate the co-creation process
- help setting up internal deadlines
- ask questions from the heritage sites and from the artists
- propose answers to challenges
- help decision making
- point out any incoherence of decisions

The mentors gave feedback regularly to the management and evaluation team about the development status, which was essential for all parties. The main tool of the feedback was a mentor template in which the mentors had to write a short substantive summary about their team meetings. The mentor template must include at least the main questions of the meeting, the decisions made, the unresolved questions, the disagreements, the mentor's role in the meeting, the role of the possible facilitation by the mentor and the conclusions.
The mentor template was a useful tool to follow the process of the digital narrative development. However, it would have been much better to introduce it at the beginning and not when the project was in the mid-term. Every artist team had delays and not consistent parts in their planning which were not able to be totally corrected by the mentors. Besides it was a really hard task for the mentors to explain to the artists that beyond the digital narrative development they had to keep in mind the main aims of the whole project. The teams had to accept the new actor in the process, which needed some extra time, and the mentors had to get into the development in a really short time.

The observation and the accompaniment of the mentor programme made opportunities to draw conclusions about this management tool and in which circumstances it could be used in the future, in other projects. From the personal point of view it is recommended that the mentor has an independent attitude related to their own group, a strong knowledge about the collection/ heritage site, an open-minded attitude to the development process, previous experience from a development project, and strong commitment to the project.
The possible limitations of this tool could be that the mentor won't be a bridge between the artist team and the management, rather than they exceed their competence and become part of the artist team (in this case it will be complicated to be independent). Another risk is that the trust can't be built between the team and the mentor, the artist team doesn't involve the mentor in the designing process in enough detail. Another challenge could be to delegate enough capacity for the involvement of the extra actor in the process.

Conclusions

The two-year long MUSE.ar project was realised as an experiment with a special intention to develop interpretation based digital apps in a co-creation process of artists and museums. The compilation of the project members, the heritage sites, the artists and creators were consciously very diverse in terms of professional backgrounds and experiences. This diversity, together with the lack of a strong management, resulted in major changes in the original plans and the structure of the development process. However, these changes also served as opportunities to observe the nature of co-creation and its consequences in different types of collaborations among creatives and heritage sites. We can draw interesting conclusions especially from the perspective of how the relationships within the creative team and their relationship with the heritage site influence the results. Luckily the MUSE.ar project can provide us with many examples.

In fact, we can state that all the apps were successfully finished by the end of the project. However, the contributions of the team members were different in each case. First let's look at this aspect in the creative team –

heritage site relationship. The NaFilm app[28] was born from the strong need and concept of the museum. After a short brainstorm session, the team defined that the museum needs to redevelop the current VR content and technology towards a more active involvement in the museum exhibition. The medium of virtual reality appeared to be a favourable entry point to a set of installations that together shape the visitor's perception of early cinema's efforts to become a virtual substitute of reality. It can immediately put the contemporary viewer in the 'skin' of the early film audience and introduce them to the environment of early film screenings (amusement parks/fairgrounds), where the principle of virtuality was strongly applied to the film medium. The aim of VR in the exhibition is, therefore, to link the contemporary experience of the VR medium to the knowledge of the origins of film through the reconstruction of so-called phantom rides immersive experience. The concept was so strong that after some unsuccessful implementation attempts they needed to replace two artists with other professionals who were more experienced in VR projects.

In the case of Lepenski Vir the dynamics was the opposite. The artist developed the whole concept and the museum had influence mainly on the accuracy of the information included in the story. However, we know from the project evaluation that the museum wasn't totally happy with the final result. The concept of the Lepenski Vir artistic team was to connect the huge but silent physical space of the reconstructed excavation with a virtual fictional story of the transformation from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic Era on the spot. The dramaturgy was built on the meeting of two characters. A young guy represented the local tradition, while a young girl the new influences. The visitors could decide which perspective they want to follow and help in his or her decisions. The chosen presentation format was a gamified AR animation, because the team wanted to put the narrative as an extra layer on the physical experience.

The Iron Curtain Museum case shows an example where the dominance of the site and the artists were more or less balanced. The concept was developed by the artists but the needs and perspectives of the museum appeared in many details. The experience aimed to be an articulation and enrichment of the guided tour offered by the founder Mr. Sándor Goják. Thanks to his passion and his past, he offers visitors stories, descriptions and anecdotes of events that took place along the border. The team articulated and expanded these, offering different perspectives of the same stories, adding new contents, introducing a deeper and more engaging emotional level to the narratives. The main intent was to bring alive those who tried (successfully or not) to cross that fence, of those who were soldiers along that border, of those who grew up and lived in that peculiar area. The artistic team worked on fact-based but imaginary interpretations of the events, choosing the medium of audio monologues (and of the human voice in particular) as the privileged means of the visiting experience. The stories were connected to the phisical space through the original exhibited objects.

All the three versions can be good in different situations, however two important facts should be considered: the artists won't be interested to cooperate and bring in their special viewpoints to the heritage sites if they look at them only as the creative implementer of concepts. At the same time, heritage sites won't promote the results of developments if they aren't engaged with them. The most fruitful cooperation is where the balance between the contribution of the parties can be ensured.

[28] https://musear-platform.com/project/nafilm-museum-project/

Other conclusions can be made from the perspective of how the concepts were in relation to the development method and the capacities of the parties. We can state from the evaluation of the project that none of the apps were built on the skills and knowledge of the artistic teams as it would have been the case in a classic residency. At NaFilm it happened because the concept was developed by the dominance of the museum, at the Iron Curtain Museum the team wasn't really formed, and at Lepenski Vir the team created a concept themselves where they didn't want to limit the possibilities only to their competences.

The lesson learnt is mainly that the concept development should have been separated from the realisation in terms of the involved people to ensure the quality and the effective process, or the concepts should have been based more on the potentials of the team members. In the case of the first model the creative team isn't necessarily formed by different roles (like narrator, collector and framer in MUSE.ar) but all the members are recognised curators of the concept. They develop the script (and the museum can be the co-creator of it) and others realise it. In the case of the second model it is stated at the very beginning, that the artistic team has to develop the app entirely. In this situation they need to build a strong team cohesion and everyone needs to consider the competences given within the team. From an artistic cooperation point of view this model gives more freedom for thinking, but the risk is higher that the result won't fit to the priorities of the heritage site. Both models can be good in different situations with different aims and they can also be combined to a limited extent.

The only important thing is to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of each of them and to choose the most appropriate to the aims. The biggest problem in the MUSE.ar experiment was that none of them was realised in a coherent way, therefore many participants struggled with the process, which led to personnel changes in the artistic teams and in the supervisors as well.

Finally, it can be said that the biggest benefit of the experiment with these different models is if we can encourage artists to bring their approaches and ways of thinking into the heritage environment and integrate art more in heritage interpretation. And these kinds of initiatives may remain risky, where the artists' quest for abstraction and freedom will always be challenged by the didactic and pragmatic side of heritage interpretation and management.

Appendices

1. **Digital technology in heritage interpretation (evaluation sheet)**

2. **The Customer Journey Map**

Appendix 1. Digital technology in heritage interpretation (evaluation sheet)

Digital technology in heritage interpretation (evaluation sheet)

This document was prepared by the heritage interpretation experts of the Association of Cultural Heritage Managers – KÖME within the framework of the MUSE.ar (musear.eu) project (co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union). The basic purpose of the sheet is to evaluate the practical works of future participants of potential Digital Interpretation Planning courses. The structure was built on the evaluation sheets of the existing Certified Trainings of Interpret Europe (https://interpret-europe.net/training/). Please indicate the resourse with the name of the project and the association if you further use the content.

As the evaluation sheet is still under development, feel free to comment and share ideas on improvement!

contact: info@heritagemanager.hu

December 2022

1. Is the digital device properly selected to suit the intended audience(s)?	**0**	**+**	**+ +**	**+ + +**	**Comments**
Is the digital tool (hardware) handy and familiar for the target audience?					
Is the display/interface/experience user friendly? (skeuomorphs and anti-patterns, aesthetics, etc.)					
Is it inclusive – developed with sensitivity to all users and abilities (incl. multi-user experiences)?					
Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with proper research before and/or testing during its development?					

2. Is the digital technology properly selected to suit the site and site management?	**0**	**+**	**+ +**	**+ + +**	**Comments**
Is digital technology opted for after careful consideration and with a management purpose? (focus on real needs)					
Can the needs of staff assistance that the tool requires be met?					
Does it address changes in digital technology to ensure that your digital interpretation does not become outdated and obsolete within 5 years?					
Are maintenance and continuous operation safeguarded on the "long run"?					
Does the device or the trigger fit seamlessly in the setting? (If it is mounted.)					

Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with a proper research prior to and/or testing during its development?					
Is monitoring incorporated?					
Are the environmental, physical conditions favourable to include the device (e.g. sufficient space; amount of light; humidity; noise level; conservation issues)?					

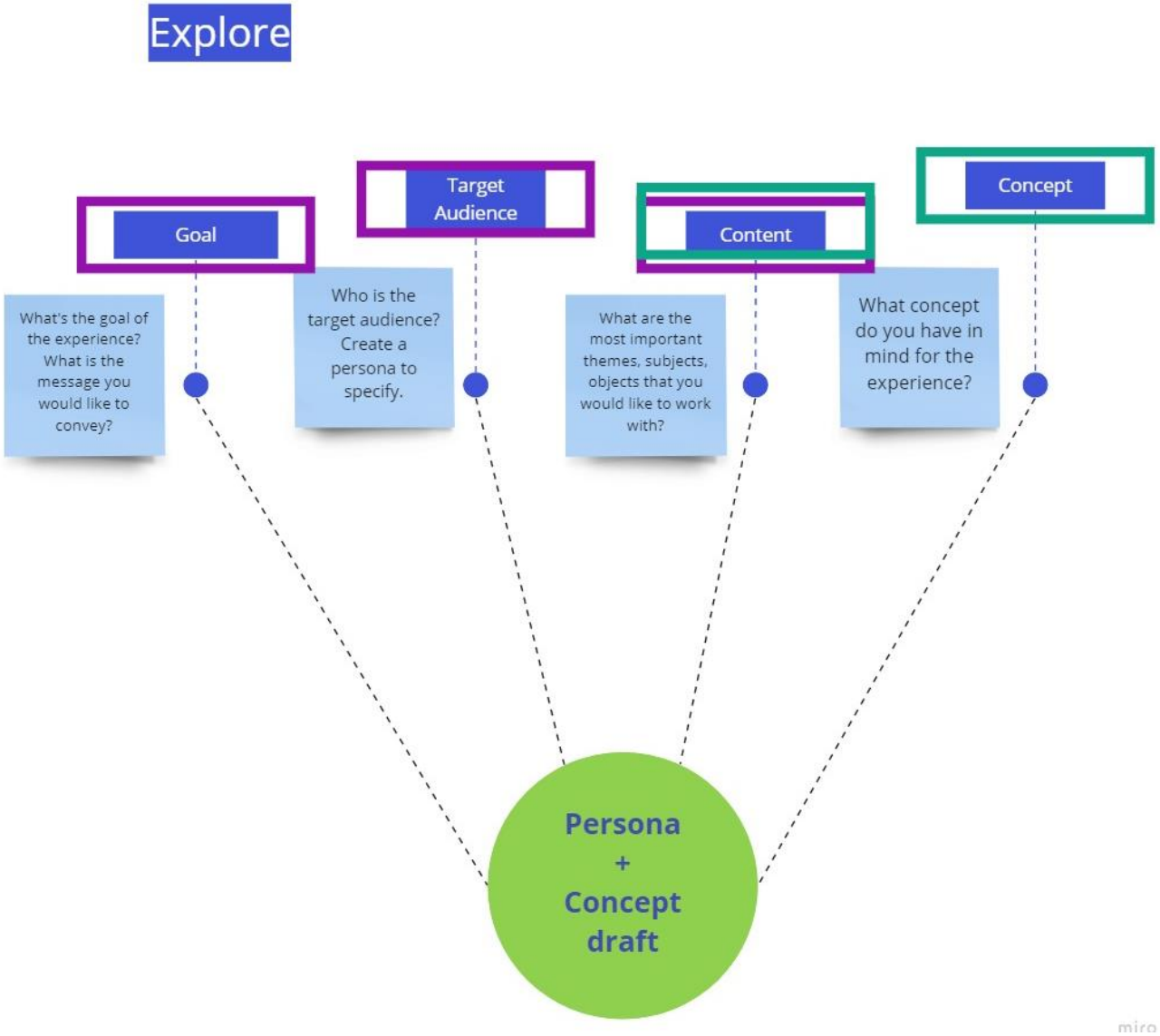
3. Does digital interpretation fit in the wider interpretive scene?	**0**	**+**	**+ +**	**+ + +**	**Comments**
Does it work in conjunction with other forms of interpretation of the site?					
Does digital interpretation enhance existing interpretation?					
Does it contribute to layering the content?					
Does it include first-hand experiences with the phenomenon?					
Is the image of the design in line with the image of the site or does it differ for purpose?					
Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with a proper testing during its development?					

4. **What effect does it have on the audience?**					
Is the service attractive and make people want to use it? (first impressions)					
What is the holding time of the service?					
Is the image of the design in line with (assumed) expectations of the intended audience?					
Does it use motivational techniques (e.g. raising open-ended questions, offering fun, humour, collecting, status, gaming and other methodological and/or rhetorical 'stepping stones')?					
Does it help the intended audience relate to the phenomena/feature by connecting with the audience's everyday lives, experience, interests and culture?					
Does it evoke emotional connections with the phenomenon?					
Does it involve the user physically (other than punching the screen or scrolling)?					
Does it encourage interaction with others? (staff, other audience members)					
Does it provoke thoughts and further thinking?					
Does it give the opportunity to the users to react or express personal thoughts?					
Does it orient the user well in space, time and activities?					

Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with a proper testing during its development?					

5. Do content elements (text, images, films, audio, physical objects, etc.) support each other and work as a whole?	**0**	**+**	**+ +**	**+ + +**	**Comments**
Do all elements have their clear role in a subsidiary relation?					
Do all components support a central idea?					
Do they add up to a concise content, so the meaning can be grasped easily?					
Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with a proper testing during its development?					
6. Is the content clear, simple and appropriate for the intended audience?	**0**	**+**	**+ +**	**+ + +**	**Comments**
Is the content and the concept appropriate on a historical / scientific level?					
Does it engage the user in a colloquial, personal tone/voice?					
If it uses technical words are they explained?					
Is the language (wording) appropriate for their intended audience?					
Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with a proper testing during its development?					
7. Does the content help participants find meaning?	**0**	**+**	**+ +**	**+ + +**	**Comments**
Does it offer paths to deeper truth and meanings rather than simply conveys information?					
Does it introduce universal concepts?					
Does it include human stories related to the topic?					
Is a clear maim theme evident? If 'yes', what could this be?					
Do the selected focuses, i.e. main theme and sub-themes of the content properly build on facts?					
Does it encourage appreciation of the heritage directly or indirectly?					
Does it emphasize unique qualities of the phenomena?					
Does it irritate general common senses and integrates a complexity of perspectives about reality, history etc. (conceptual and artistic quality)?					
Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with a proper testing during its development?					

Appendix 2. The Customer Journey Map



Goal

- Design rationale – what is the overall thinking behind how this project looks, feels and operates?
- Interpretive aims, objectives and themes – what will the experience contribute to specific interpretive objectives and how will the story be communicated?
- End goal – what is the specific end result of the game/challenge or narrative?

Target Audience

- Target audience(s) – who exactly is the target audience?
- Number of users – how many people can interact with the exhibit at any one time?

Content

- Descriptions of spaces / exhibition items – how does this element fit as part of the bigger scheme?
- Description of the general themes that will be addressed.

Concept

- Describe a high-level concept (f.e. we want to create a multi-user experience for teenagers that gives them the possibility to personally experience daily life on the Lepenski Vir site)

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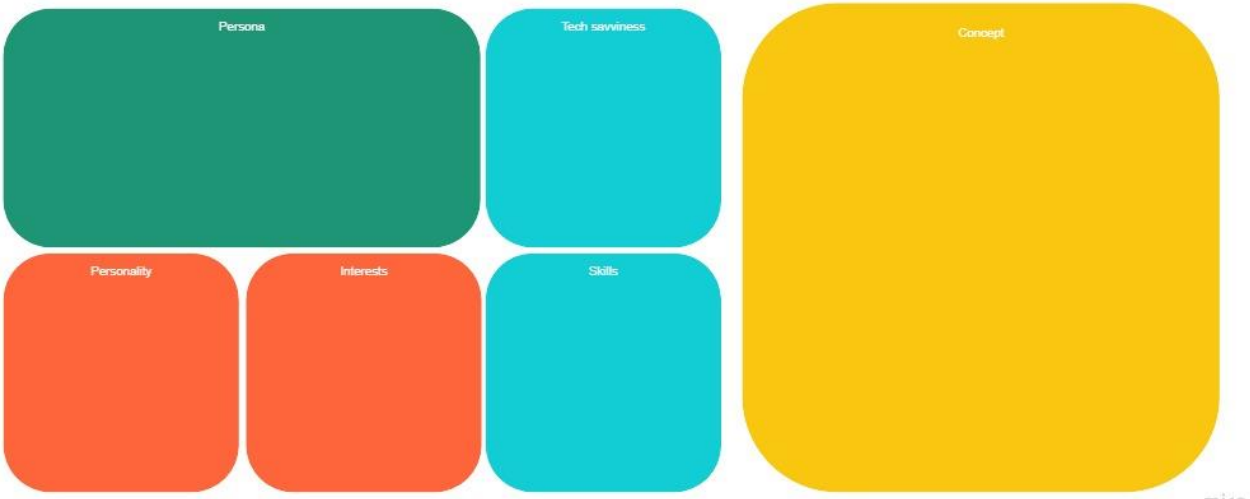

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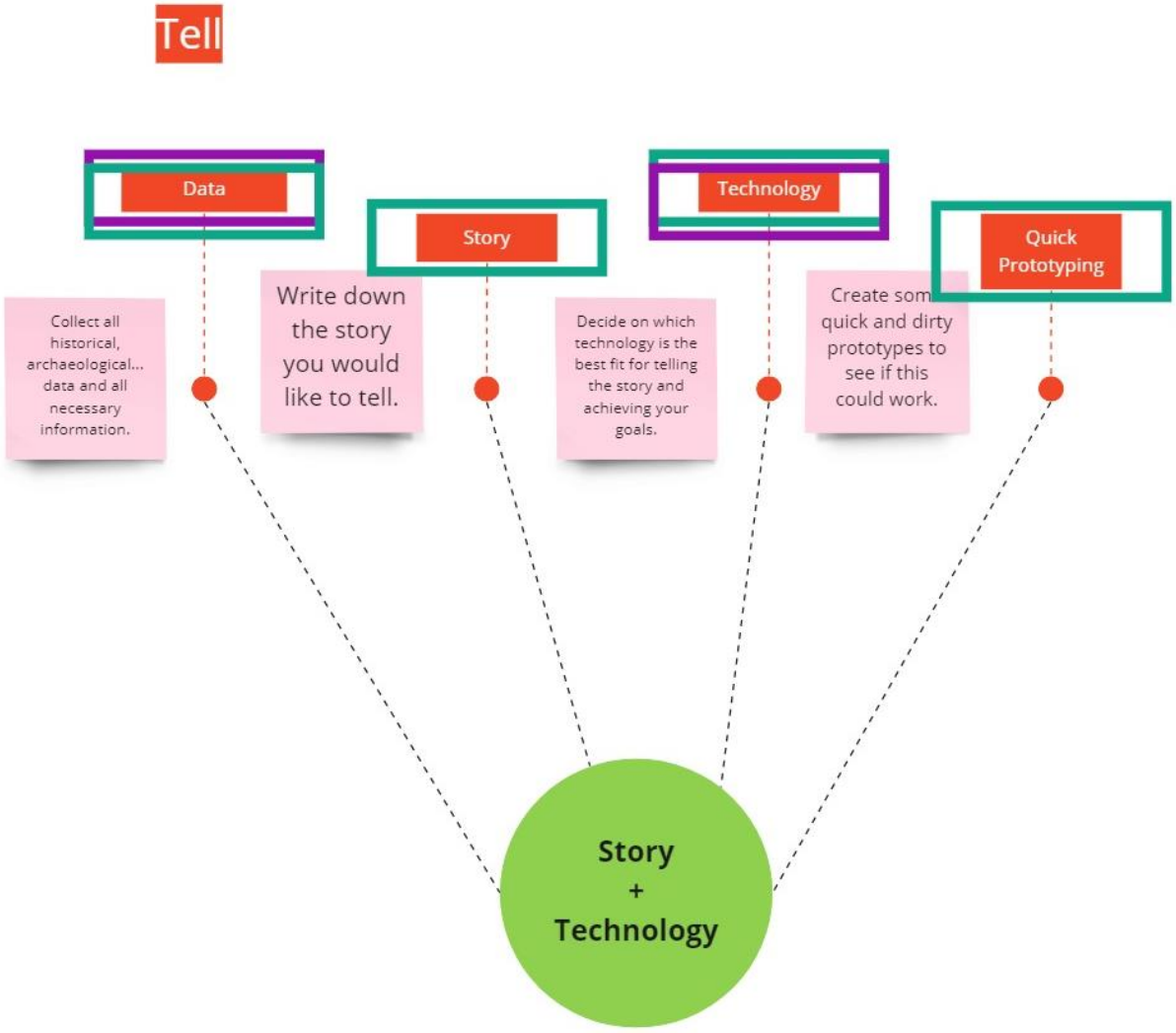

Data

- Content requirements – what are we likely to need to develop the content for this (e.g. library images, new film footage, oral history recordings)
- What content do you need from the museum? Is there extra research necessary? Is there information missing?

Story

- Write down the story you would like to tell. Create or describe characters, obstacles, climax, lesson's learned and specify how each part of the story contributes to the goal of the experience.

Technology

- Descriptions of technology choices – what specific types of technology are proposed (e.g. lo-tech, high tech) and why it fits the best for the narrative?
- Link the technology with every part of the story.
- Return to the story to make some adaptations to fit the technology 100% if necessary. This iteration can be done several times.

Quick Prototyping

- If needed, ask for quick prototyping to see if the technology really fits the story, goal and target audience.

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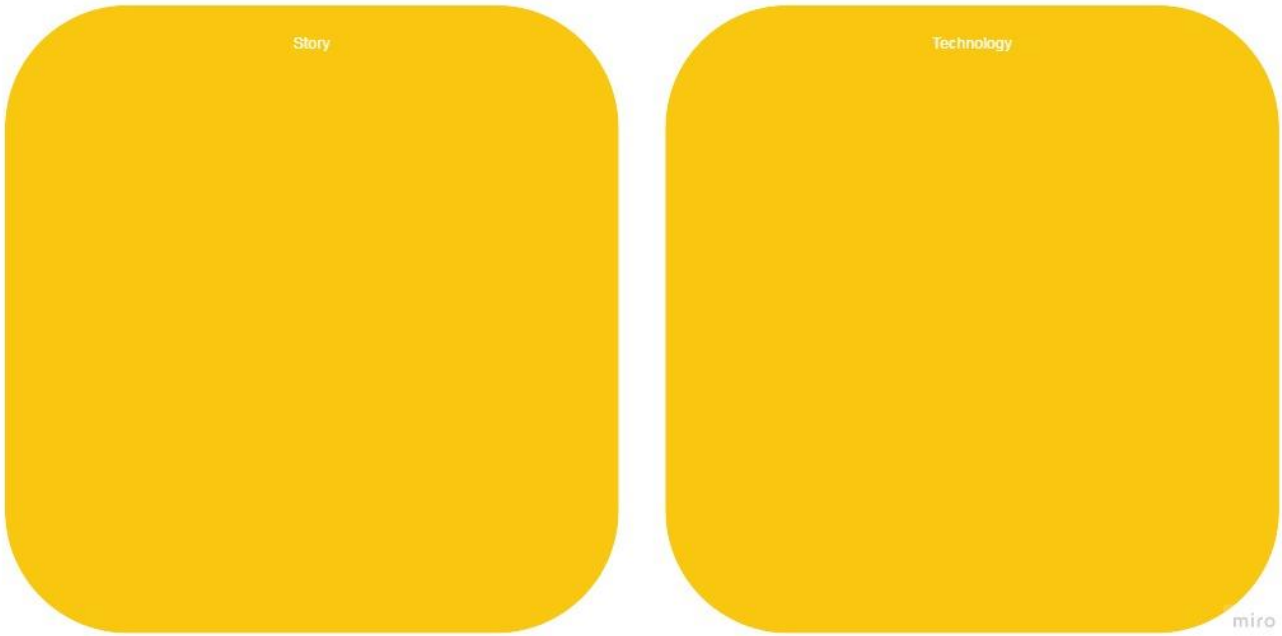
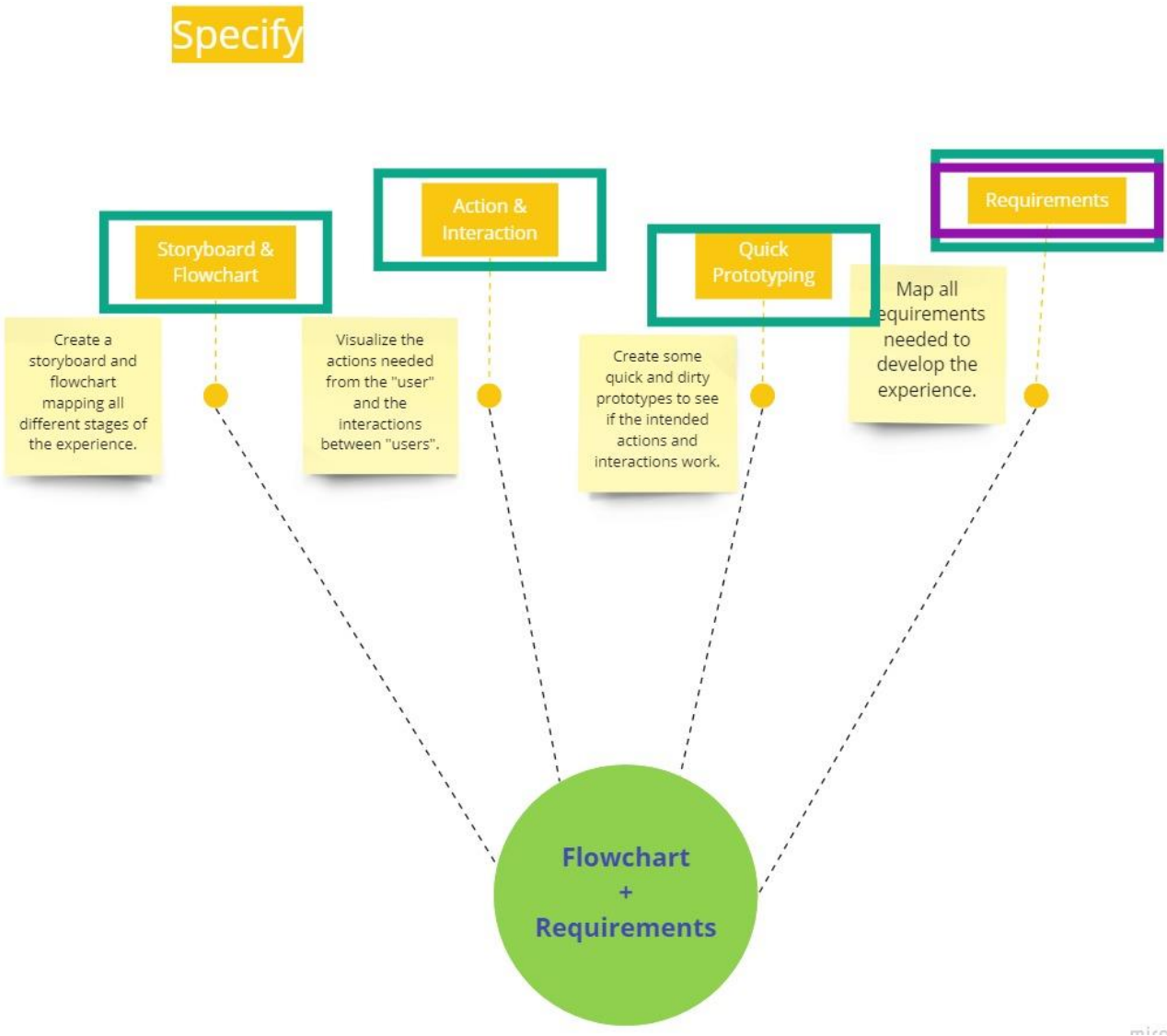

Story
Technology
miro


Specify
Storyboard & Flowchart
Create a storyboard and flowchart mapping all different stages of the experience.
Action & Interaction
Visualize the actions needed from the "user" and the interactions between "users".
Quick Prototyping
Create some quick and dirty prototypes to see if the intended actions and interactions work.
Requirements
Map all requirements needed to develop the experience.
Flowchart + Requirements
miro

Storyboard & Flowchart

- Map the story on a storyboard visualizing the experience on site and taking the technology into account. You could use the customer journey as a starting point to do this.

Action & Interaction

- When creating the storyboard/flowchart or the experience, make sure you describe every action the visitor has to take (click a button, scan an image, listen to some audio, walk around an object, collect a hint...)
- Also describe the interactions between visitors if these are present. When creating a multi-user experience, this will be necessary.
- Try and make an estimate total duration of the experience (shortest and longest). What is the holding time of the device?

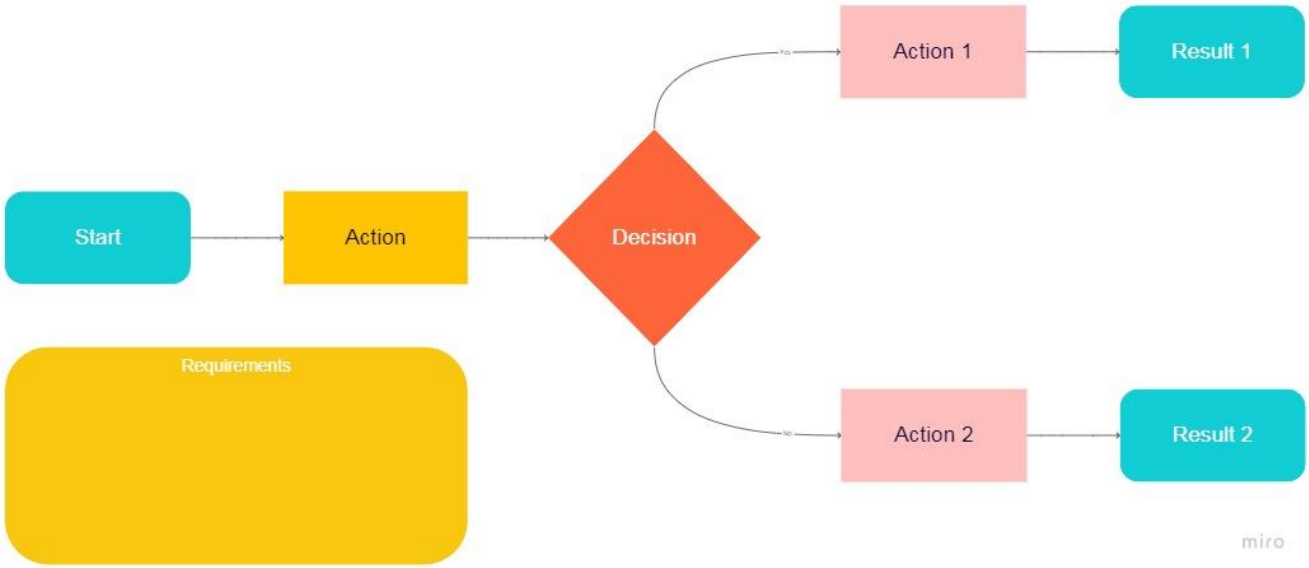
Quick Prototyping

- Quick prototyping could be necessary to test if a certain action works with the platform or experience.

Requirements

- Outline costing and equipment specifications – what are the key features and requirements of the proposed exhibit item?

miro



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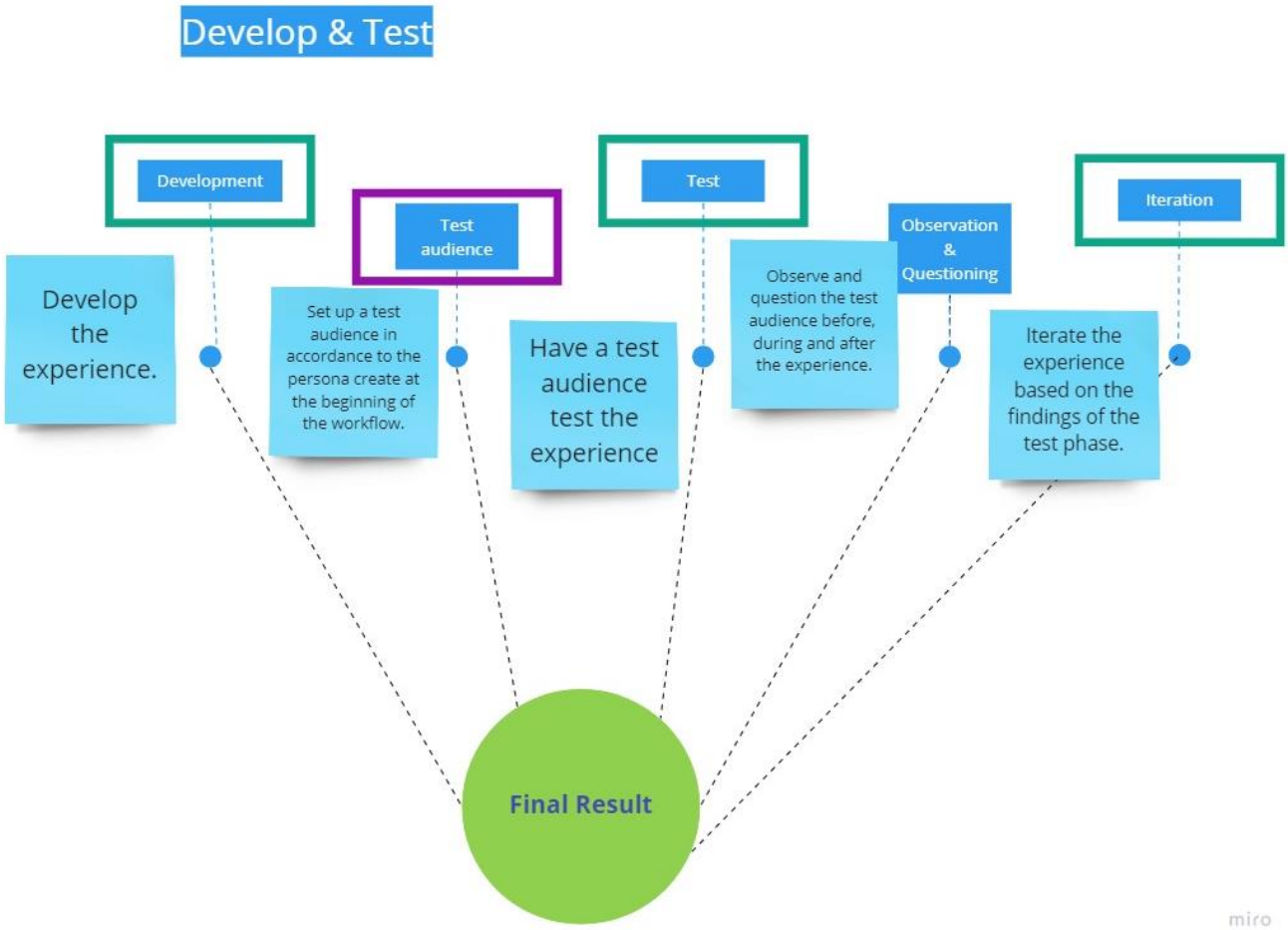


Develop & Test

1. With the flowchart and requirements list, the experience can be developed. This is done by the artists working together with specialists.
2. Once there is a usable version, the museum gathers a test audience, matching the persona and target audience that was set at the beginning. They test the experience in situ.
3. The visitors are observed and questioned.
4. Based on these results the final changes are made.

After these iterations, the experience could be tested and iterated again and again until the experience is green lighted by the museum.

miro

Interpreting original Georgian pleasure ground designs and their current use by modern day audiences

Emma McNamara & Pamela Smith (UK)

Emma McNamara is the national horticulture development specialist for the National Trust, UK, and has been a regional gardens consultant for the National Trust for 11 years. With a career spanning 25 years, working in garden design, teaching and as a historic landscape professional across the UK and France, she has a breadth of experience to help improve and expand the horticulture and conservation of these significant places. She has recently completed a PhD in sustainable management of cultural heritage sites using GIS and GPS technology with the university of Southampton. She is a fellow of the landscape institute, as well as a board member of the southwest branch, and a trustee of Solent Mind charity. She is currently setting up a national mentoring scheme for young and new horticulturists joining the industry.

Contact: emma.mcnamara@nationaltrust.org.uk

Pamela Smith is the National Trust's senior garden consultant for garden and parklands, advising on garden history, garden management and interpretation. Pamela is a horticulturalist with 40 years' experience of working in public parks, botanic and historic gardens. Former roles include Director of the University of Birmingham Botanic Garden, Vice Chair of Plant Network and CABE Space scholar. She is a Horticultural Trustee for Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Pamela's research interests include urban botanical heritage to engage local people in the processes of community engagement informing urban planning and regeneration. She is currently researching how the presentation of Georgian circuit walks can enable audiences to experience the original design intent to contribute to the National Trust's ambitions for 'Everyone Welcome' and to the wider urban planning opportunities for urban shared space and pedestrianisation of our towns and cities.

Contact: Pamela.Smith@nationaltrust.org.uk

Abstract

The UK's National Trust is the largest owner of 18th-century Georgian Pleasure Ground circuit walks in Europe. More than 200 years since their creation, they have the potential to continue to be experienced as intended by their original designers and gardeners. However, such designed historic landscapes are often lost into the countryside environs of the mansions and lie beyond the gardener's hand. Although remnant features remain, they are often hidden, misunderstood and have lost their audience. Using GPS technology, we can now track how our visitors are using our historic landscape walking routes and produce data that enables us to reflect on the effectiveness of historic designs for today's audiences, target our interpretation to specific users and understand how our landscapes are experienced.

Keywords

National Trust, Georgian, historic landscapes, GPS, walking, 18th century, access

The National Trust, UK

The National Trust was founded in 1895 by three Victorian philanthropists, including social reformer Octavia Hill, who understood the importance of our Nation's heritage and open spaces to people living in increasingly urban environments. In 1907 the National Trust Act

defined the Trust's purpose to promote, preserve and give access to buildings of historic or architectural interest and land of natural beauty. The Trust is the largest voluntary conservation organisation in Europe, with 5.7 million members and 20 million paid visits per year to 500 historic houses, gardens and parklands. As one of the largest landowners in the United Kingdom, the Trust cares for almost 250,000 hectares of land across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, including 48,500 hectares of common land, 26,000 hectares of woodland and 76 nature reserves, many of which are free to access, receiving over 200 million visits per year.

The UK National Trust is the largest member of the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) which currently has 94 member organisations worldwide across 69 nations and territories, all with the key aim to exchange expertise, promote best practice and share resources to increase global heritage protection.

Gardens and designed landscapes as an authentic heritage experience

The National Trust cares for over 300 historic houses. Within our historic houses the ability for visitors to engage with an authentic experience is limited, leading to a reduced understanding of place and purpose. We no longer cook in the kitchens, sleep in the beds or eat at the dining room tables of our historic houses. However, our visitors' experiences of our gardens and designed landscapes can more closely relate to the design and experience intent of past families, owners, designers and visitors, and offer a more genuine, participatory experience. In many cases the designed landscapes and gardens continue to be used for exactly what they were created for. The garden and ranger teams are a continuum of the skilled staff who have been cultivating, conserving and developing our landscapes for centuries.

The simplest form of a garden is a garden walk, where nature is embellished to manipulate the walker's senses and moods. The 18th century Pleasure Ground circuit walks were recognised as the contemporary 'health and wellbeing' experience and the theme parks of their time. 18th century pleasure gardens were arenas for entertainment and sensual pleasures for "rumbustious" Georgian society (Botto, 2015). Together, the gardener and the architect created a path, a comfortable distance from the mansion but far enough to enjoy familiar and less familiar scenery and places for walkers to choose to be out of sight or to be 'on display'. Progress was punctuated with sections of widened paths which revealed grottoes, hermitages, enclosed tunnels of evergreen foliage and scented open groves, all creating scenes of melancholy, cheer, wilderness, wisdom and fame. The walker was returned to the sanctuary and splendour of the Hall, often the final stretch by boat.

Today, these designed historic landscapes are often lost into the countryside environs of the mansions and lie beyond the gardener's hand. Original features remain hidden, misunderstood and have lost their audience. The remnant designed landscape is seen as countryside, which can limit and confuse visitor interest, orientation and confidence. However, opportunities to reunite gardener, artist, architect and writer by the recreation of the aesthetic and cultural experience of the Pleasure Ground Walk have never been more relevant. Unlocking such walking routes can create accessible outdoor experiences along with their original design intent, a place to question and experience solitary and shared experiences of our past and our futures.

They are our lost gardens and lost opportunities to provide walks that are easy to follow, have elements to encourage curiosity, exploration, conversation and playfulness. How do we tell the stories, encourage people to be curious and to be part of a landscape designed to

manipulate your senses? Would visitors today share the same experience and wonder at a time when our cultural and social relations and attitudes are changing? East et al. (2017) state, "A country house and garden may need to do more than use signage to encourage visitors to walk to a distant lake and boathouse if it is out of sight of the main house, despite its potential aesthetic or historic interest."

Access and inclusion

The National Trust's 220 gardens and over 150 designed parklands can feel familiar places, and visitors can experience the history and setting and understand proper behaviours. However, changes in our visitors' reasons for visiting and expectations are causing increasing conservation issues. In addition, balancing increasing access, supporting visitor needs and the conservation of a garden or landscape are a management priority for heritage sites. There is an inevitable trade-off for owners and managers in natural resource-based attractions, like gardens, between keeping the garden in pristine condition and inviting visitors. The most widely reported problem in the research by Connell (2004) was general wear and tear, followed by theft of garden materials including plants, cuttings, and sculptures.

How much has garden visiting and walking changed? Can this desire to want to experience such walks be recaptured? Would a visitor want to spend time away from the familiar spaces such as café, historic buildings and ornamental gardens?

Our gardens and parklands can offer an accessible outdoor experience, and as a result, have become increasingly relevant for today's society. 45% of adults in England spend more time outdoors than before the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 (Natural England, 2022). 70% of the UK population walk at least once a month, and 24 million people regularly walk for leisure (Sport England, 2021). The development of tourism to heritage gardens reflects an evolving market for leisure time spent in designed spaces created for such a purpose. The garden-visiting sector has been significant in the continual increase in numbers since the 1970s and has been gaining popularity since the 1980s (Weaver, 2001; Garikapati et al., 2016); visits to heritage gardens in 2022 were among the most popular activity in UK tourism, (ALVA,2023).

Cultural heritage sites (CHS) and natural assets are high-value contributors to domestic tourism in the UK. It has been recognised by tourism bodies such as the Association of Large Visitor Attractions (ALVA) and VisitBritain., The British government recognises that the UK's gardens command significant acclaim globally and welcome many thousands of international visitors each year (Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport, 2019). VisitBritain data from 2019 show that 32% of visitors from abroad visit a heritage park or garden during their stay, and 4% of all tourism day visits in England involved visiting parks and gardens. There were visits motivated by heritage activities, with £4.6 billion in spending recorded in 2019; 15.1 million domestic overnight stays were recorded in England, which involved visiting parks and gardens (Historic England 2020).

However, we know access to the outdoors is unequal. Examining visitor profiles has shown that younger people and lower socio-economic groups have become less likely to visit cultural heritage sites and that most visitors are more affluent, older members of society (Kim et al., 2007; Molinillo & Japutra, 2017). The trend, recognised by Markwell et al. in 1997, of engagement with arts and culture, being a middle-class activity in most areas of the UK, is now disputed, with Mak et al. (2020) noting that it has become geographical, independent of background, which is a consideration for operators of heritage gardens, particularly English Heritage, CADW in Wales, and the National Trust. People's reactions to different landscape types and their feeling of being

welcome can be influenced by their socio-economic group and ethnicity. Dr Brigit Snaith's (2015) study of users to London's Olympic Park gardens and parks recorded that designed landscapes and parks containing naturalistic plant forms and informal or naturalistic arrangements were most preferred by White British people. Other ethnic groups consulted in the study were "more likely to use landscapes that showed management – such as cut grass, formal paths and flower gardens were positive. Favored spaces were more formal, more obviously managed spaces that prove their intended use" (Snaith, 2015). They were less likely to use informal spaces such as country parks and historic parklands. Perceived natural and wild spaces were seen as "neglected, dirty or wasted, [and] countryside represented hardship, backwardness or hostility" (Snaith, B., 2015).

In 2020, more than 8 million people visited the walking maps pages of the National Trust website. By 2030 the National Trust aims to be the main provider of introductory outdoor experiences in the UK, basing experiences on play, social gatherings and immersive nature and cultural experiences. Trials of organising walking groups led by external partners, volunteers and Trust staff took place in 2023 and by 2028, hundreds of our properties will offer self-led or group walks. This initiative supplies an opportunity to interpret our landscapes' heritage, design, planting choices and roles as places where people once walked, played, socialised, discovered, showed creativity, fashion and were educated. By testing varying forms of engagement and interpretation, we will provide experiences, information and partnerships to share our gardens and landscapes' history, design, cultivation skills, planting styles and plant choice as a means of engaging visitors with the design intent and thereby increasing enjoyment, relevance, participation, understanding and hopefully wider inclusion. Knowing a landscape is managed, its creators, archives and the people and skills that created it, past and present, can enable people to feel involved and be able to find relevance to themselves.

In order to understand how current visitors use the historic walking routes, which directions and length of walk they choose and how different audiences use the landscape, a process of tracking visitor movements across several historic landscapes was implemented in 2020.

Data capture method

Garmin *E-trek 10* GPS trackers were used to gather the data on visitor movements. They were reasonably simple to use, affordable and property staff or volunteers were recruited and trained in the use of the units. The staff handed out the GPS units to visitors, recorded security information and compiled questionnaire results onto an Excel spreadsheet template. It was vital that staff and volunteers involved were engaged with this work and could comfortably explain the project and aims to the visitors.

The more visitors involved (sample size) in the data collection gave a more robust data set than when only a few were involved in the project. A minimum standard for audience segmentation required every unit to be distributed at least once a day for two weeks to be usable in the National Trust's processes for audience analysis in conjunction with a questionnaire. The questions were tailored to the site, but also included standard questions that the National Trust regularly uses to place the visitor into one of the demographic segments used for understanding visitor movements. These segments are: Curious Minds; Explorer Family; Home and Family; Kids First; Live Life to the Full; and Home and About. Experiences that mix visitors from these different segments can cause some visitors to have a less enjoyable time as interests between different segments may not overlap. Visitor enjoyment often increases during quieter periods when visitors from different segments can enjoy spaces without

conflict with another group. Some visitors' behaviour whilst enjoying themselves can cause other audiences to have a less engaging or fun experience.

Multiple units were available and were distributed in this way, with the opportunity of repeated data collection at other times of the year. The longer data collection window could be used for further insight, such as reflecting on the weather or covering holiday period patterns.

To get a rounded view of how visitors use a site, a range of times to collect data was established;

- Weekdays (or low days), Weekends (or high days)
- Early arrivals (Before 11am), Late morning arrivals (11am – 1pm)
- Afternoon arrivals (1pm – 2pm), Late arrivals (After 3.30pm)

This level of tracking was undertaken to give an overall picture of how visitors used the site; to show a mix of primary and secondary group segments.

The captured data was processed using ARCGIS to see the data in map or graph form. The data format creates the opportunity to investigate the data further, decide where additional analysis is required, and decide the final output format and content (report, maps, animation of route). The project benefits for the researcher and the cultural heritage sites were the creation of several forms of data.

The process involved a lead researcher, with a team of volunteers running the data collection, including recruiting participants, handing out the tracking devices and questionnaires and uploading the units' data and the questionnaires' feedback at the end of the day/ week. The data collection was every day for a week in August and a week in September.

Participants and ethics

The sample size: 30 GPS units were used twice daily to collect data on visitor movement at a cultural heritage site owned by the National Trust. The aim was to track at least 60 visitors per day, depending on the length of the visitors' stay, during quiet periods and 100 tracks during peak periods, which supplied a robust sample for analysis.

GPS units were distributed at random as visitors arrived. The units recorded data from the received GPS signal to gather accurate time intervals, which were set at 10 seconds, and the precise location at this time, with an error margin of about 5–10 metres from the physical location of the tracking unit. Small enough to fit into a pocket, or hang on a lanyard without being obtrusive, the loggers collected locations in time and space automatically.

Consent to take part was informal, the researchers approached arriving visitors, and requested for them to take part. Participants had the research ideas and the potential gains of the study explained to them, allowing them to ask questions and give feedback. Visitors were not coerced or made to feel in any way obliged to take part, they were invited to opt in and could withdraw at any time. All the study participants always remained anonymous. The participants were made aware that the data was removed from the units once uploaded.

Each visitor was given a questionnaire with focussed responses for deciding the audience segment to which they belonged. This was numbered, linking it to the track recorded on the GPS unit so the data could be used to segment according to audience criteria, allowing for comparative study. Security was taken in the form of a car registration or a phone number to avoid accidental non-return of the units. This was recorded separately from the questionnaire, to enable it to be destroyed once the unit was returned, ensuring participant anonymity.

The output of the pilot showed how valuable GPS Tracking (GPST) could be, and when used at other sites, it would supply data to understand and compare the use of cultural heritage sites for future research. Using GPST to answer the specific research questions of heavily used routes or existing ones that were underused worked well for the site, giving route information, confirming the routes taken regularly and how the visitors navigated around the gardens. The process supplied data which could be interpreted by the site team to manage the flow and recreate routes, such as the pleasure walks of the past. It was expanded to use data in different formats for site evaluation in proceeding GPST events. The data sets were analysed for human movement patterns and capacity.

Results

The process of GPST gave data that was not possible to generate in any other way without more intervention, workforce, or disruption to the visits, showing it as a method of data gathering which is both accurate and open to interpretation by the researcher to quantify the research question. The method of logging data daily and asking participants to complete a questionnaire, gave the details for each group to be segmented, supplying more detail on where and how each group enjoyed the gardens. This was repeatable and consistent, so other sites could undertake the same research. The project was useful in gaining data on the daily visit activity of the tourists and the routes taken by each segmentation group and as general routes. The data also showed the areas least used, and there are significant open areas which should be used more by visitors. The maps showed the dwell points and the bottlenecks forming from groups stopping to view areas, or as way finding points.

Several repeatable standard map and data outputs were created from the pilot research project:

- mapping destinations (all site users and dwell points)
- map showing main trends of visitor flow
- map highlighting dwell spots (for all data or at particular times)
- maps showing use by different audience groups
- map for specific days/audience groups/times
- maps showing the use of the property on different days
- mapping areas that are underused and could be managed differently

The limitations of this pilot were primarily the resource that had to be given to the project; gathering the data, uploading and synching questionnaire feedback to tracking data, all took time. Is the value of the data more than the time given to gathering it? As a process it was useful to provide an insight into the visitors' habits and the GPS tracking process gave detail that could not have been produced via any other monitoring method available at the time.

Despite the limitations, the outputs highlighted the overall practicality of the process, and that the data can potentially be useful for visitor management, conservation and visitor engagement and interpretation improvements.

Case study 1: Kedleston Hall, Derby, Midlands, UK

The Georgian mansion, garden and parkland were bought by the National Trust in 1987 with the intention to unify the mansion and its landscape to create a complete 18th-century visitor experience. To date, this has involved an investment of over £30million on the mansion, extensive parkland restoration and path and planting enhancement along the start of the Pleasure Ground Circuit Walk. By 2023 limited features along the walk have been recreated and

archival evidence exists for the restoration of lost key features. There is also an opportunity to commission artists and makers to build new highlights and features along the route. Tracking visitor movement showed that some visitors do use the historic path circuit, and the extant features did create stopping points and increase dwell time.

Figure 1. Kedleston Hall. Robert Adam landscape design. 'sketch for the pleasure gardens' c 1759

Figure 2. September 2020 GPST mapping shows visitors' extent of site use for the seven days of data capture

Figure 3. curious minds GPST results, showing the use of the estate by this segmentation group, Kedleston Hall, summer 2020

Figure 4. Explorer family GPST results, total use of Kedleston hall, summer 2020

The visitor segments show that the audiences during the 14-day data capture were the five most prominent in membership for the National Trust. The most prominent group, the Curious Minds, also made up the highest volume of visitors during both August and September. During August, family audiences made up the more considerable proportion of the visitors at 41.98%, and the Curious Minds group dropped by 17.88%. September reversed the order with family audience groups dropping to 18.96% of the total visitors – to be expected as the school summer holidays ended.

The segments illustrated in these maps (Figures 2,3, & 4) did not explore or venture into the central parkland, although it is encouraged, and the open spaces are empty. With the introduction of extra mown pathways, or

wayfinding maps/signage, the capacity could be distributed across the site with more people feeling confident to venture into the lesser-used areas.

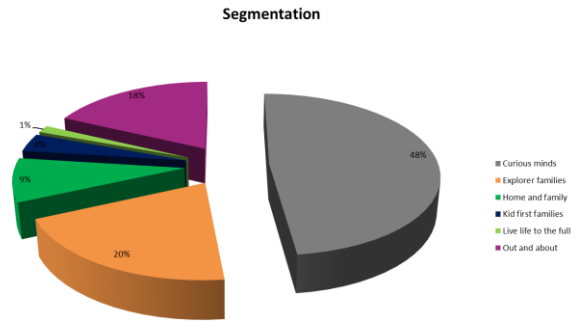
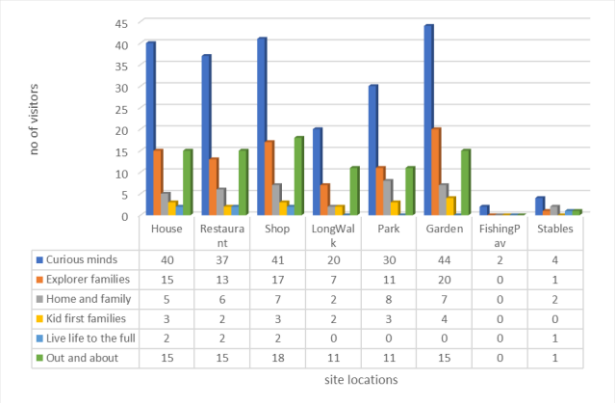


Figure 5. Segmentation of audiences from 139 visitors who took part in the Kedleston Hall GPST event, in August-September 2020



	House	Restaurant	Shop	LongWalk	Park	Garden	FishingPav	Stables
Curious minds	40	37	41	20	30	44	2	4
Explorer families	15	13	17	7	11	20	0	1
Home and family	5	6	7	2	8	7	0	2
Kid first families	3	2	3	2	3	4	0	0
Live life to the full	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	1
Out and about	15	15	18	11	11	15	0	1

Figure 6. Visitor destinations within the Kedleston Hall estate, using GPST percentages from all visitor segments

Figure 7. Prominent dwell time locations, Kedleston Hall, August/September 2020

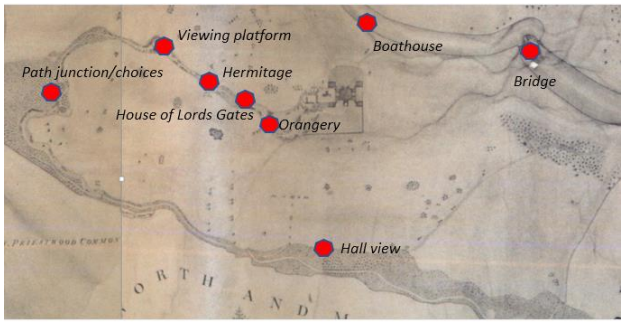


Figure 8. Kedleston Pleasure Ground Circuit Walk. George Ingman's 1764 survey (National Trust Image library). Overlaid with key landscapes features

Using the audience segmentation process for analysing visitors gave a greater detail and information on their experience of the Kedleston Georgian circuit routes. The blending of the visitor groups shows an element of 'omnivorousness' and a degree of mixing in cultural tourism behaviour (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2010). Some relevant research studies have been designed to identify specific groups or segments within the cultural tourism audience who might be attracted to particular types of cultural experiences, and heritage gardens could be included in this segmentation.

The research used the questionnaires, with the tracking data to segment the participants, and to gather information on how and where the visitors went, to understand if groups were very different or had consistent similarities in their route choices. Most of the visitors used the cafes, and toilet facilities, although some groups did not enter the house during their visits. A third of the visitors remained in the house for 50 to 60 minutes of their visit, with 30 minutes spent in the café area. With an average visit total of 150 minutes, 60 minutes were spent outside in the gardens or parklands. The groupings showed specific routes choices, with the Explorer Family segment using most of the site's grounds, and the Curious Minds group being very consistent in visiting the house, café, and shop elements of the destination. The other segment groupings were less concordant but had a pattern of behaviour which conformed with their grouping. The family groupings,

Explorer Family and Out and About, were the longest dwellers in the gardens, and the average visit time from all the groups was 150 minutes.

The inclusion of dwell time and visitor flow in the analysis illuminates where visitors are concentrated at various temporal scales, such as hourly and seasonally. Understanding that the visitor journey patterns are affected by day, time of year, weather and the resulting dwell time can give an informed insight into the development of the visitor's experience and how it can be improved, alongside any conservation work and repairs needing to be done during opening hours.

Scientifically, it is important to understand the time component of visitor travel patterns, because although visitors cannot follow the exact same paths and routes at all the sites they visit, their use of the sites and pattern of routes may fall into a similar temporal pattern (Peterson et al., 2020).

Case study 2: Stowe Landscape Garden, Buckinghamshire, UK

Stowe is one of the largest gardens in the world, boasting more than 40 temples and monuments, eight lakes, a garden of 100 hectares set within a parkland estate of over 300 hectares of international significance. Stowe has been a tourist attraction since the 1720s and produced its first visitor guidebook in 1744, later editions of which continue to this day.

Stowe Landscape Gardens were designed as an experience. The on-foot encounters with temples and monuments, carefully staged plantings, focussed and expansive views all manipulated the senses, and broadcast and challenged the political and social opinions of the family throughout its long creation. The inclusion of people activated the landscape; it was a landscape to be shared and a place to be seen – or sometimes not. The design served to accommodate the solitary visitor and the partygoer, and it prompted conversation as well as spaces prompting emotional responses and self-reflection.

Samuel Curwen in September 1776 is quoted as remarking: "Passing from the house over the back lawn we descended through a serpentine walk in a shrubbery or wilderness, to a Turkish tent, situated on a declivity, having in prospect a fine piece of water in which were swans and is supplied by a cascade in view. . . "(Curwen, 1972).

Figure 9. 18th century visitors to Stowe Landscape gardens, Buckinghamshire

Visitors today continue to choose a route planned by the 18th-century owner and designer Lord Cobham; the Path of Vice, Path of Virtue or the Path of Liberty. Each route continues to guide the walker on a symbolic journey more than 250 years after their creation. For example, the Path of Virtue continues to take visitors past the cascade, the Elysian Fields, Greek statues and the Temple of British Worthies.

Despite the historic routes and iconic statuary in these gardens, visitors to the site do not all follow the walks as Lord Cobham designed them, because they don't understand the imagery and stories behind the statues, not knowing that they need to visit them in order or to take their time to explore each area, so using GPST to know how the visitors use the site can help with creating interpretation and provision

of historic details. The GPST of Stowe in 2018, showed many visitors walk to the main garden entrance and take a shorter route around the gardens than was originally designed. Others will explore more but a large percentage don't. This provides an opportunity to enhance the visit and introduce the Georgian pleasure walks to new audiences and prolong visit time and enjoyment. As the dwell point map indicates the routes of visitors can be shortened by taking paths between the lakes and back towards the Palladian bridge, reducing the impact of the full site on their experiences. Using the colour coding of red, amber, and green quickly indicates the extent of use the portions of the site are experiencing.

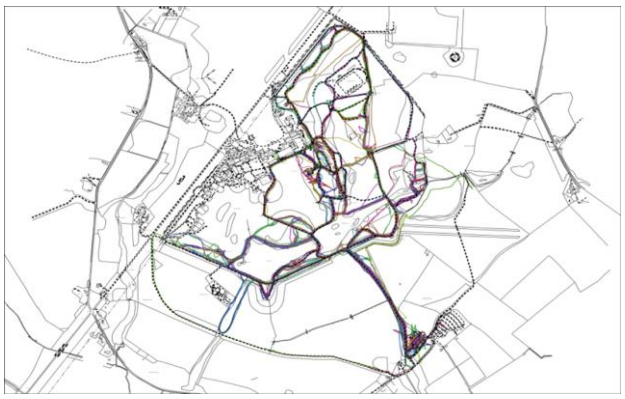


Figure 10. GPST map showing all the routes taken by visitors to Stowe landscape gardens, during the project in 2018

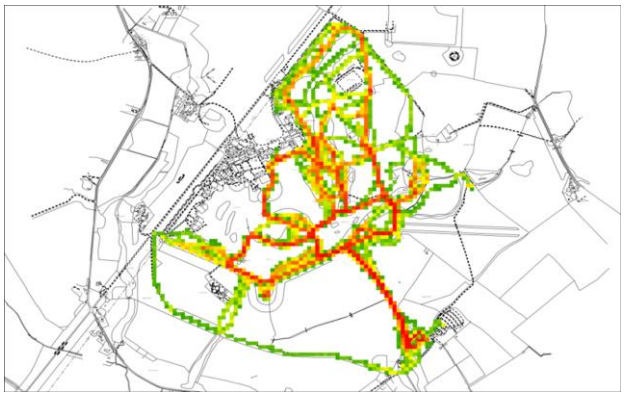


Figure 11. Dwell points around Stowe Landscape Gardens, 2018

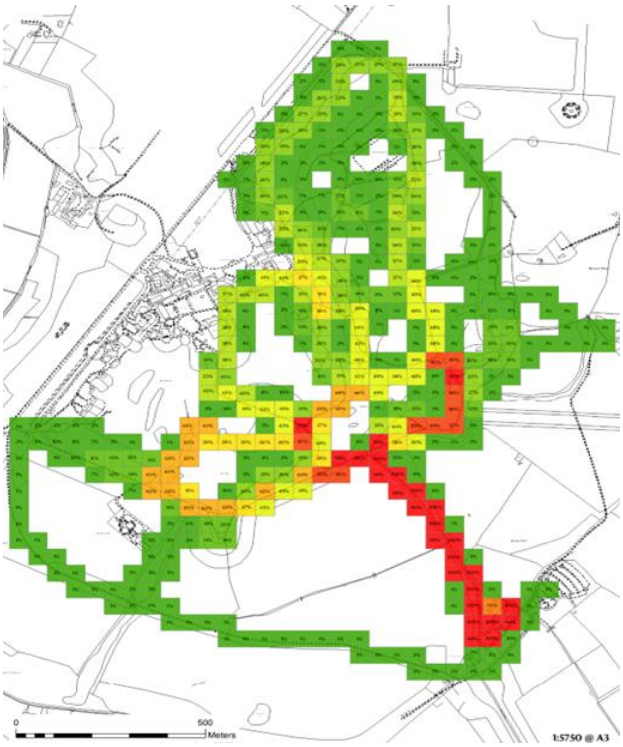


Figure 12. Line percentage raster data at 50m, showing the percentage of GPS units passing through each polygon/ pixel. Stowe Landscape Garden, Bucks, 2018

The lines percentage data illustrates the volume of visitors using the areas of the cultural heritage site. Each track line passing through the area contributes to the calculation, creating an overall percentage. The dwell time is similar, but the line percentage shows the number of GPS units which pass through the defined location. The overlays show that the primary routes are the main entrances and visitor paths close to the centre of the CHS, used by most visitors, and the lower percentage areas are further out and used less by all visitors. The red, amber areas indicate the visitor entrance, facilities and the routes most commonly used by the visitors.

Conclusion

Audience segmentation supports the work of GPS tracking and supplies a fuller understanding of how historic path routes designed by Georgian owners and designers are used and experienced by today's visitors.

Engagement with visitors through various forms of interpretation from themed walking routes to

in situ interpretation, artists commissions and events can encourage a greater understanding of landscape meaning, encourage social interaction, repeat visits and extend dwell time.

The original design concept of Georgian circuit walks has a great capacity for change, without altering their heritage significance. In fact, significance and conservation can be enhanced by continued use, enjoyment and engagement with meaning and purpose. The Georgian walking routes offered shaded routes which are becoming an increasingly significant visitor benefit during increasingly frequent hot summers. Well considered, relevant and innovative interpretation, led by location planning from GPS tracking will ensure these significant, playful landscapes continue to encourage curiosity, debate and pleasure in our landscapes.

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Landscapes; interpreting the picturesque

Beth Môrafon (UK)

Beth Môrafon was born in Wales. She lives and works in the South West of England and is the Director of VisitMôr consultancy and the Chair of the UK Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI). Formerly, she dedicated 20 years to the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) and its subsidiary, WWT Consulting. The Interpretation Action Plan for Our Picturesque Landscape was one of 50 large-scale interpretation projects she managed whilst working with WWT and WWT Consulting. Subsequently, her consultancy VisitMôr led the design and build of Our Picturesque Landscape Interpretation.

Contact: beth@visitmor.co.uk

Abstract

Discover how VisitMôr interpreted 11 miles of navigable UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) through the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB, Wales. Steeped in historic significance, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, 'the stream in the sky', opened in 1805 with 8,000 spectators watching a procession of boats, music, and gunfire.

Exploring themes of the picturesque, feats of engineering and design, plus travel and tourism, the interpretation tells the story of the people that shaped the valley. Pioneering engineers, artists, influencers, entrepreneurs, and canal labouring navigators are some of the historic characters to make their mark.

This paper compares the Interpretation Action Plan, which helped secure £1.4 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for the five-year wider Landscape Partnership Scheme, with the final interpretation for eight spectacular WHS destinations. On behalf of the client, further local digital and community engagement conceived in the Plan is featured.

Keywords

interpretation plan, interpretation design, World Heritage, NLHF, VisitMôr, heritage landscape

Introduction

VisitMôr interpreted 11 miles of navigable UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) through the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in Wales, UK. Steeped in opportunities for historic **experience** and significance, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, 'the stream in the sky', opened in 1805 with 8,000 spectators watching a procession of boats, music, and gunfire.

Exploring themes of the picturesque, feats of engineering and design, plus travel and tourism, the interpretation tells the **stewardship** story of the people that shaped the valley. Pioneering engineers, artists, influencers, entrepreneurs, and canal labouring navigators are some of the historic characters to make their mark.

Comparisons are drawn between the Interpretation Action Plan written in 2017, which helped secure £1.4 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for the five-year wider Landscape Partnership Scheme, with the final interpretation for eight spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Site destinations installed in 2023. On behalf of the client, further local digital and community **participation** conceived in the Plan is also shared.

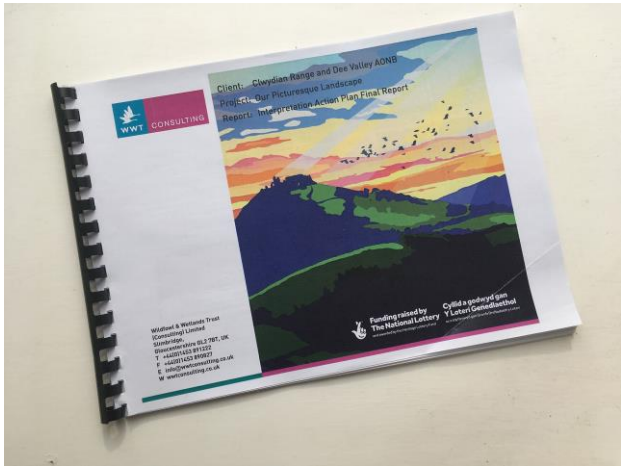

Figure 1. Interpretation Action Plan to support Our Picturesque Landscape's successful stage 2 NLHF application

The Interpretation Action Plan and subsequent Interpretation for Our Picturesque Landscape reflect the **Outstanding Universal Value (OUV**) of this UNESCO World Heritage Site and acts to carefully **shape meaning through participation, experience and stewardship**[29].

Inscription of an engineering masterpiece

Set in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB, the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2009, as a feat of civil engineering of the Industrial Revolution. Spanning a challenging landscape, the building of a lockless canal, required bold engineering solutions. The aqueduct is an engineering masterpiece with monumental architecture, conceived by the celebrated engineer Thomas Telford. Cast and wrought iron in the aqueduct enabled the creation of light, strong arches, producing a bold and elegant construction masterpiece.

Figure 2. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

To mark the significance of the inscription, the Interpretation Action Plan provided a concept to re-enact elements of the 1805 opening celebrations. The re-enactment took place on the ten-year anniversary of the inscription. It was performed as a dazzling light show, held over several weeks across a range of sites in October 2019.

Figure 3. Chirk Aqueduct and Viaduct

Figure 4. Light show, to mark the ten-year anniversary of World Heritage Site status for the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal a three-week event was staged in October 2019 (Image: Alex Liivet/Flickr Public Domain)

The partners of Our Picturesque Landscape

Part of a vast £1.4 million five-year NLHF Landscape Partnership Scheme, the Interpretation Action Plan, and subsequent interpretation was commissioned by the AONB

as part of a wider partnership team. The Scheme was led by the AONB, Denbighshire County Council, Canal and River Trust, Wrexham County Borough Council, and Shropshire Council. The parameters of the project extended beyond the World Heritage Site Nominated Site Boundary and its Buffer Zone; it included themes and messages for the neighbouring gateway towns of Wrexham, Ellsmere, Oswestry, and Bala.

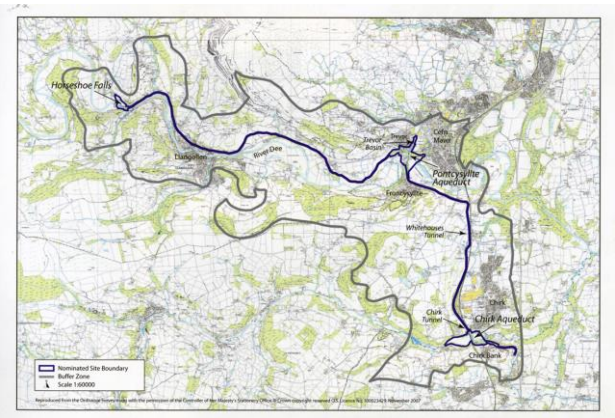

Figure 5. World Heritage Site including Buffer Zone

Historic stewardship built into the Plan

The Plan focussed on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the site and articulated three themes which were grounded in actions of historic stewardship. These were:

- Feats of Engineering and Design;
- Travel and Tourism; and
- The Picturesque.

These were borne from a collection of key characters who shaped the valley. Critical to the value and function of the Plan was a highly visual content organiser which worked alongside a table of themes, messages, treatments, and outcomes for each site. It set out simply and visually where each of the characters and their respective themes would occur in interpretation site locations.

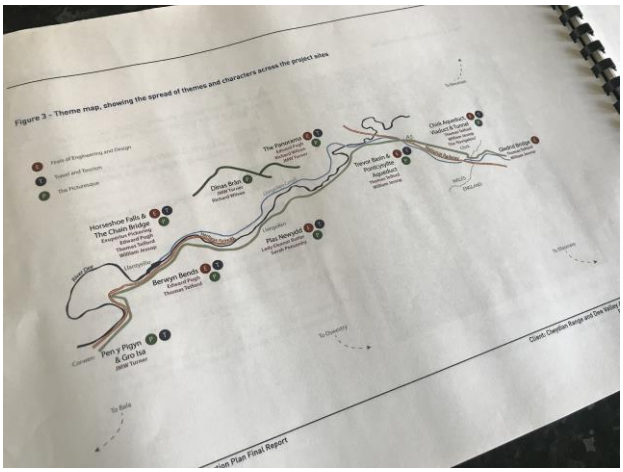

Figure 6. Interpretation Action Plan theme map, showing the spread of themes and characters across the project sites

Audiences across local landscapes

Within the final interpretation signs the content addressed specific audiences from international to local. Sites predominantly frequented by locals, such as Chirk Aqueduct, Viaduct and Tunnel, Froncysyllte Basin, and The Clinker, included locally relatable stories. These described working characters who laboured with the iron and minerals of the landscape; 'The Navigators' who built the canals, a young Limekiln apprentice, plus ironworkers whose smelting left a giant lump of part-molten spoil beside the canal that's now known as The Clinker.

Figure 7. Bi-lingual interpretation at Chirk Aqueduct, Viaduct and Tunnel, by VisitMôr

Figure 8. Interpretation at Froncysyllte Basin, by VisitMôr

Figure 9. Interpretation at The Clinker, by VisitMôr

Historic audience experiences

At Llangollen Wharf, the interpretation reveals the first timetabled pleasure boat trip on a British canal, which took place between Horseshoe Falls and Llangollen in 1881. Retired sailor Captain Sam Jones, operated many of the pleasure boats on the canal from 1884, such as the *Maid of Llangollen* and the *Great Eastern*, which seated 200 passengers. An aquatint postcard depicts the first horse-drawn boats of the late nineteenth century which were made from repurposed lifeboats. Today, visitors can still step into the shoes of a Victorian tourist to experience the delight of a horse-drawn boat ride or revel in the thrill of traversing the single-railed Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, with its breathtaking views

Figure 10. The final interpretation panel features an aquatint postcard of the first horse-drawn boats of the late nineteenth century which were made from repurposed lifeboats

Figure 11. Breathtaking panoramic photograph of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct shows only one side is railed

Interpretation for international audiences

Following inscription, locations attracting international audiences from up to 52 countries[30], such as Horseshoe Falls where the canal begins, consider characters of more renowned acclaim. Stories focus on Thomas Telford as a young engineer who worked under the tutorage of William Jessop and Welsh-speaking artist Edward Pugh who described the area in his illustrated account of North Wales, Cambria Depicta. Also considered, is a Scottish travel writer and novelist Catherine Sinclair who in 1838 wrote about the picturesque qualities of the landscape: "No eyes but those of a poet are worthy to behold the celebrated valley of Llangollen".

Figure 12. Llangollen from a sketchbook by Anne Rushout, British Collection of Drawings Volume 3, 1824-1832 (Image: Public Domain, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection)

Digital participation

Of notable consistency across both the Plan and its delivery, was the passion and knowledge of the partnership. Local knowledge, heritage, and engagement provided consistency for the Plan and its outcomes across the physical, digital, and participatory interpretation. Dinas Brân, a medieval hill fort featured in historic paintings by JMW Turner and Richard Wilson, contained tourism history that had long since been erased. A quaint camera obscura and tearoom had resided atop the hillfort between 1869-1910. For the Plan, the partnership requested ways to reignite the memory of these features for visitors and local communities; accessibly, without impacting the heritage landscape. To this end, the Plan included concepts and indicative costs for a virtual balloon ride over the landscape and a pop-up camera obscura for use at Dinas Brân, or for providing outreach events. These aspects translated into partnership-led commissions, including:

- A mobile camera obscura, housed in a tent, referencing the former site at Dinas Brân.
- A series of digital 3D flythrough reconstructions of the Dee Valley and Dinas Brân landscape as it transformed across a range of time periods (available here: https://vimeo.com/689194004).

A film, Llangollen; A Time Travel Adventure, was created with a local school. Year 6 school children (aged 10-11) wrote, directed and played historic characters from the tearoom and camera obscura, as well as more renowned historic engineers and artists who shaped the landscape.

Figure 13. Mobile camera obscura at Plas Newydd

Figure 14. Still from a digital flythrough reconstruction at Dinas Brân

Figure 15. Still from the film, Llangollen; A Time Travel Adventure

Theatrical features to inspire citizen science

The Plan included concepts for building audience participation and citizen science across the landscape. It stipulated the use of fixed photographic points, combined with defined hashtags and theatrical artistry to encourage engagement. The partnership team commissioned and installed three antique-style 'fixed point' cameras across the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB as part of a citizen science project to document the changing landscape.

With cameras at the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Loggerheads Country Park and on the Prestatyn to Dyserth old railway line, the opportunity to engage in citizen science remains accessible to all. Audiences taking photographs through the cameras and uploading to Instagram, with the hashtag #CRDV_AONB, can add to a growing online dataset of images capturing the seasonal, land management, and climatic changes in the landscape.

The hashtag images can be collated to form a historic account of audience engagement with the site.

Figure 16. One of three antique-style 'fixed point' cameras created to inspire citizen science

Beautifully bi-lingual

Our Picturesque Landscape is nestled between the Welsh and English borders. As such, the partnership needed bi-lingual interpretation. VisitMôr appointed a talented local Welsh-speaking copywriter to write the body of interpretation copy initially in English, with consideration of Welsh, for professional translation into Welsh. In addition, this brief included titles and straplines to be copywritten directly in both Welsh and English, ensuring at first glance that the interpretation panels would support accurate understanding in languages equally.

Working with a Welsh-speaking copywriter was particularly valuable in sourcing historic references including an evocative Welsh poem about Horseshoe Falls:

Ewch tua'r hen Fynachlog sydd
Yn fyw o draddodiadau
A'r Horseshoe Fall a'i arian rudd
Mor dlws a gwen y borau[31]

A rough translation of the poem:

Go towards the old monastery
Alive with tradition
And Horseshoe Falls with its silver cheek(?)
As pretty as the smile of morning.

Figure 17. Horseshoe Falls, where the canal begins

Summary

In summary, it has been a delight and honour to work across this landscape steeped in history, first developing the Interpretation Action Plan and subsequently creating the Our Picturesque Landscape Interpretation. The site is rich in its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and much of what shaped the valley can still be enjoyed by audiences today through participation, experience, and stewardship; enriched by carefully crafted interpretation interventions.

Figure 18. Gledrid Bridge; welcome to the World Heritage Site

As the five-year NLHF Landscape Partnership Scheme project winds down its funded activities at the end of 2023, the Plan remains a valuable tool for interpreting the World Heritage Site, the Buffer Zone, and the neighbouring towns. The themes, sites, character stories, and treatment proposals contained within it continue to support audiences to find meaning through experience, participation, and stewardship. As such, the Plan remains a relevant and influential document informing ongoing interpretation commissions and supporting wider plans.

Throughout the project, the partnership provided the strength of vision, alongside passionate collaboration, to shape the interpretive works. This sustained ownership and authorship ensure the Plan will have ongoing influence. Local stakeholders from the partnership will continue to shape the legacy of this World Heritage Site using the Plan beyond the lifetime of the project's funds, ensuring a consistent approach across individual projects as they arise.

Acknowledgements

The design and build of Our Picturesque Landscape Interpretation was supported by planning from Marie Banks and copywriting by Myfanwy Millward, with map and poster artwork by David Goodman and fabrication from Parc Signs.

Further credits for the client-led projects include the portable camera obscura, with initial design by Andrew Gale and additional development by Ben Davis and Jude Wood, plus the Llangollen Time Travel Adventure Film project run by Rob Spaull of Mediapod. The antique camera was created by a local blacksmith and metalwork artist, Rich Jones from Heat and Beat.

References

29. Interpretive planning at World Heritage properties in Europe: report on the Pilot WH-Interp training course in 2021 (2022)

30. Lynda Slater, Trevor Basin Visitor Centre manager for the Canal & River Trust, said: "Visitors come from all over the world, with Australians and Japanese heading the international league table. Signing the centre's visitor book last year were tourists from 52 countries from faraway places such as Zambia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and the Philippines, as well as most European nations." Shropshire Star, Jan 30, 2019

31. Excerpt from the poem Capden Jones, by Ned Morgan (c.1895)

Figure 19. Beth Môrafon, Director of VisitMôr, founder of SignEd and Chair of AHI

Participatory planning processes for nature interpretation in protected areas – Examples from planning for nature interpretation in National Parks in Sweden

Eva Sandberg (Sweden)

Eva Sandberg is director of the Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation at the Swedish University for Agricultural Sciences. The Centre works closely with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and others to support development of nature interpretation in Sweden. Eva sits on IE's supervisory committee.

Contact: Eva.K.Sandberg@slu.se

Abstract

The stories of a place can bring diverse interests together in planning for interpretation. The Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation (SCNI) has been involved as a facilitator in the integration of interpretive planning for several protected natural and cultural heritage areas and sites over the last ten years. Cooperation between managements and local stakeholders is vital in planning for visitor experiences and the safeguarding of the conservation values.

The integration of interpretation as an approach to communication and participation in planning, management and development is a step-by-step process in an ongoing development process with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish National Parks. Actors with an interest to cooperate with the parks are involved, quality is discussed and developed. Some of the tools and processes on the agenda to create learning landscapes in Sweden include: a checklist for good interpretation in protected areas; education for managers and actors who want to collaborate with the parks; and participatory planning with local stakeholders.

Keywords

nature interpretation, interpretive planning, participation, visitor experiences, outdoor life, learning landscapes, national parks, protected areas

Growing interest in interpretation in National Park management

The first national parks in Sweden were established in 1909. Over the last one hundred years, the understanding of human relationships to nature and the environment has changed. The vision of what a national park represents has changed from parks as romantic nationalistic projects at the beginning of the last century to today being part of international cooperation on conservation and development, meeting the goals and challenges of our time. There is an ongoing negotiation of the multifunctionality of landscapes, on who owns the right to make decisions for and about landscapes, and about the nature of the relationship between the state and local actors. But all along, the parks have been described as the 'gold stars' of nature and protected areas – representing and inviting visitors to explore outstanding examples of different nature habitats, there to welcome both visitors today and future generations.

With some exceptions, the number of visitors and their impact on the areas were limited during the first hundred years of the Swedish national parks. The right of common access makes Swedish nature experiences accessible for everyone by law – as long as you don´t "disturb or destroy". Protected areas haven´t been the sole provider of access to nature for the public as in some countries. Now in 2023 there is an ongoing significant increase in visitor

numbers in protected areas generally, partly due to the years of the Covid-19 pandemic when many 'beginners' (re)discovered nature and looked for areas to visit offering some service. In combination with a growing interest to visit national parks, the last ten years of 'branding' of the Swedish National parks has resulted in an increased interest in and expectations of the parks to be an arena and attraction for both the tourism industry and more and more diverse interests from outdoor life actors. The parks need to be prepared for the challenge of increased numbers of visitors but also for expectations to use the parks for everything from health promoting activities, such as yoga and 'forest bathing', to integration of newcomers to Sweden or a place for art installations and cultural events.

There is a very clear need for park managements to plan for, monitor and manage sustainable visits. At the same time there is an emerging discourse of respect and need for involvement of both visitors and local stakeholders in planning and management of parks. Broad cooperation and dialogue with local communities is on the agenda. Decreasing and limited governmental resources allocated to environmental protection and protected areas is another factor that calls for collaborative planning and participatory interpretation to offer experiences in national parks and protected areas.

Nature interpretation as a key to visitor experiences

In 2010 the 'brand' Swedish National Parks was launched as an initiative by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), offering instruction for communication and graphical formats for panels and signs to help managers communicate the values of parks for visitors and what they would expect from a visit. One of the core ideas in the brand process is that outstanding communication on site is the key to a positive experience and learning. What outstanding nature interpretation actually meant wasn´t defined, but the objective was clear. There was a need for tools and guidelines on how to plan for nature interpretation in participatory processes and how to organise common learning and development. SCNI was involved in this development and we share some examples on how we have worked in a common ongoing learning process with SEPA and the national parks – with a handbook, a checklist, in ongoing planning processes, and with webinars for the managers. A similar process was facilitated in the World heritage area Höga kusten Kvarken. It was described in English (see link below).

Handbook on planning for interpretation at natural and cultural sites

In 2018 SEPA published a handbook produced together with SCNI for the planning of nature interpretation in protected nature and culture heritage areas, sharing and describing traditional steps in interpretive planning processes for management in protected areas. It was designed to combine with a set of planning steps for universal accessibility. There was already good interpretation in many parks but the handbook that was launched as a help for County administrations and nature protection foundations was a signal that thorough planning for nature interpretation should be on the agenda. And that nature interpretation has a wider role, beyond information.

The handbook explains how to plan from the resources and outstanding values of the site – covering everything from natural history, natural assets and the immaterial and material cultural heritage. It covers the importance of understanding the visitors, who they are and who the future visitor is and what is relevant to them, being clear of the purpose and objectives for the park, how to choose places and formats for panels, guided tours or other interpretation products carefully, and not forget to plan for evaluation and development.

The checklist for management of nature interpretation in national parks

Nature interpretation of high quality was highlighted as the key to excellent experiences in the description of Sweden's national parks. In 2019 SCNI produced a checklist to give some advice on how to meet the high ambitions and expectations. A list to consider both for managers and actors who cooperate with the park:

1. **Have a clear idea of what you want to communicate and why**. Start from the unique values of the park, the story of the protection of the site and how the visitors can experience phenomena that makes them engage with the park and the general idea of nature protection and sustainability.
2. **Choose the methods that suit your park and your purpose**. What methods are the best for your purpose and your park? Don´t start with planning 'how' to communicate. Start with what you want to achieve for whom and where – the how will follow.
3. **Remember that everything communicates**. The experience is a result of the combination of many details: the people in the nearby hostel or shop and what they say, information available on the web, how to get to the park and what to do there, the trails and other facilities – not only a great exhibition or guided tour. The visitor needs to feel expected and welcome!
4. **Know your visitors**. What kind of communication you need to plan for depends on who your visitors are or who you want to invite in the future (and they are all unique!)
5. **Help the visitors to find their way into nature**. When planning interpretation, plan for experiences that stimulate all senses: taste, smell, listen and touch – help visitors to establish a personal relationship with the park. Be relevant and engaging.
6. **Invite visitors to participate, interact and engage in dialogue**. Use interpretation to listen to the voices of the visitors and their stories of the values of the park. Invite people into dialogues to create relations between you, the participants and the site. Invite participation in telling the story of the park – and encourage people to share their experiences with other visitors.
7. **Be there (accessible) for the visitors before and after the visit**. Take care of your visitors on site and provide opportunities to prepare for and follow up after a visit.
8. **Find out what the visitors experience**. Open up conversations and other ways for a dialogue with the visitors (surveys, focus groups or interviews) about their visit and what they experienced.
9. **Involve local communities and other stakeholders**. Plan and conduct interpretation in participation with other actors who communicate the stories of the park and want so cooperate.
10. **Strive for continuous development**. Formulate goals for the work and assess what happens. Plan, conduct, evaluate and develop. Consider the interpretation as part of a larger work with communication of the site, the brand you represent and environmental protection.

The ten bullet-points were explained and exemplified in a digital toolbox and the checklist was presented to park administrations through webinars and newsletters.

Actor education, networks and contracts

Participation and cooperation with different stakeholders is an important part of the management of the national parks. The parks organise education days for their local stakeholders and companies inviting everyone who wants to be part of the parks offer of interpretation activities or facilities in or around the parks. Nature tourism companies, NGO

organisations, such as birdwatchers or societies for nature conservation, hotels, local restaurants and companies that sell or rent outdoor equipment, are invited to be part of the network that welcomes visitors to the park. After completing the interactive one or two days' education, a network is established or strengthened and the actors get the chance to sign an agreement with the park on organising activities that the park administration helps to promote.

Share your stories – Formulating themes together

One of the most recent projects SCNI has been involved in is the participatory interpretive planning process in new national parks on Gotland (an island in the Baltic Sea) and in Nämdöskärgården (a part of the Stockholm Archipelago). The parks are planned with the international framework of Conservation Standards for Protected Areas. The framework offers an adaptive and structured way to plan conservation, based on theories of change structuring measures to protect the values of the areas. In the Swedish national park processes, 'experience values' were formulated adding to the biological/scientific values to protect each park. Nature interpretation was considered one of the strategic tools to 'preserve' and develop the values in combination with rules, regulations, information and built infrastructure for visitors. The themes for interpretation were chosen to strengthen the experience values and help protect the biological values – as part of the logic in the adaptive management structure.

Adding to that, SCNI helped county administrations to organise webinars, "Share your stories of the future park", with members of local communities and stakeholders that could be involved with communicating stories of and in the park in the future. The purpose was both to discover what local stories and values were highlighted and to find actors who were interested in being part of a network welcoming visitors to the park. It also provided an arena for participation and content that could be used in the design of interpretive themes for the two parks. The results from the webinars were noted and documented in an interactive workspace in addition to digital meeting rooms where participants were divided into groups and contributed in breakout rooms. For challenging central themes with many possible subthemes (for instance marine life under the surface) separate workshops were organised to discuss themes with experts. The county administrations worked on their interpretive plans taking into consideration the input from the workshops. When the administration had formulated their themes, another workshop (webinar) was organised to present and discuss the conclusions. Some questions included: Did the actors approve? Was anything missing? and Where (marking places on maps) were the perfect places to connect with phenomena that would represent the themes?

The next phase is to try out the themes on site with visitors and discuss what motivates them to explore more, and what makes them curious, engaged or annoyed. What might be missing and what makes the visitor really engage in a conversation related to the central themes the administration want to highlight – or to themes the visitors want to communicate with the administration.

Links for further information

SCNI Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation | Externwebben (slu.se)

Sweden's national parks (sverigesnationalparker.se)

The process behind a heritage interpretation plan for the world heritage site High Coast / Kvarken Archipelago | Externwebben (slu.se)

The Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation About Conservation Standards (CS)

Checklist for nature interpretation Checklista för världsledande pedagogik - Sveriges nationalparker (naturvardsverket.se) – in Swedish

Platsens berättelser Platsens berättelser : Metodhandledning för interpretationsplanering (slu.se) – in Swedish

Interpreting the heritage of national minorities in the Czech National Museum

Michaela Smidová & Eliška Pekárková (Czech Republic)

Michaela Smidová is a historian, a former history teacher and current acting head of the Centre for Presentation of Cultural Heritage, a department of the National Museum of the Czech Republic that focuses on museum and cultural heritage presentation, interpretation and communication. Her research focuses on the heritage of national minorities and its presentation and interpretation, as well as various topics related to the social responsibility of museum institutions.

Contact: michaela.smidova@nm.cz

Eliška Pekárková is a historian and a museum educator at the Department of Education and Cultural Activities of the National Museum of the Czech Republic. She creates educational programmes for the historical permanent and temporary exhibitions. Her research focuses on Jewish history, history of national minorities and the didactics of history.

Abstract

This paper introduces two educational programmes that have been offered by the National Museum, Prague. The programmes, aimed at the target audience of school children, take place in the permanent exhibition, History of the 20th Century, and offer a different perspective from the mainstream one presented by the exhibition. The programmes focus on the history, language, culture and experience of Slovaks in the time of Czechoslovakia, a state where both Czechs and Slovaks lived together, as well as after the country's dissolution as a significant national minority in the Czech Republic. We present the realisation of the programmes, their evaluation from the participants, the fulfilment of the programmes' objectives (encouraging multicultural dialogue, flourishing the values of tolerance, empathy and intercultural cooperation) and the further possibilities of using its interpretative methods for similar activities.

Keywords

Czechoslovakia, museum education, national minority, multicultural education, Slovaks

In 2022, the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM approved the proposal for the new museum definition: "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing" (International Council of Museums, 2022).

The new definition emphasises among other things the importance of fostering diversity and the participation of communities. The definition reflects the movement that has been prominent in museology for the past two decades, presenting museums as agents for social change by giving representation to the marginalised groups (Sandell, 1998). That undoubtedly includes national and ethnic minorities.

The fall of the Iron Curtain saw a surge in museums focused on individual national and ethnic groups in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. In the former Czechoslovakia,

multiple new such museums and departments were established, such as the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, or specialised museums focused on cultures of, respectively, Carpathian Germans, Hungarians, Croatians, Czechs, Ukrainians, Ruthenians and Jews in Slovakia, institutionally administered by the Slovak National Museum. However, in recent years, there has been a shift in the approach to the museum presentation of the national minorities from dedicating space to their cultures and histories and thus perpetuating their 'otherness' to including them in the major narrative and emphasising the coexistence of multiple cultures in the same space.

Especially in Western museology, this approach gained prominence back in the 1970s with the rise of community-based museology and further in the 1990s with the growth of post-colonial studies and the demand for narrating the histories of marginalised, often colonised and oppressed, nations within the framework of the majority society (Simpson, 2001: 71-80). Among the museums that successfully embody this approach are multiple European museums dedicated to Jewish history (Jewish Museum in Berlin), national conflicts that culminated in the last decades of the 20th century (Tower Museum in Derry/Londonderry, the National Museum in Sarajevo), various museums of migration (Emigration Museum in Gdynia, German Emigration Centre Bremerhaven) or museums and exhibitions on the topic of European integration and multinational Europe (House of European History in Brussels). In recent years, emphasis has been placed on first-person voices (Díaz, 2019) in making exhibitions and other museum activities – museums such as Te Papa Tongarewa (Aotearoa New Zealand) and the museums dedicated to individual cultures in the USA under the administration of Smithsonian Institution (National Museum of the American Indian, National Museum of African American History and Culture) make a rule of employing and assigning leadership positions to the members of the respective minority community.

Another significant trend in exhibiting national and ethnic minorities has been to include a reflection on the present situation and current struggles and challenges the communities in question are facing nowadays. For instance, the exhibition dedicated to the Sámi community in the Norwegian Tromsø University Museum dedicates its last part to the political struggle against the building of a dam that would severely impact the environment of the Sámi-inhabited region (Kalsås, 2015).

Presently, we can find various exhibitions, permanent, long-term, and short-term alike, in the Czech Republic that strive to introduce the topic of national and ethnic minorities and their role in the history of the region using this approach. Among others we can mention the exhibition 'Our Germans' (Municipal Museum of Ústí nad Labem, 2022), focused on the coexistence of Czechs and Germans in the Bohemian lands, or a new permanent exhibition 'Voices of the Czechs from Volhynia' in the Museum Podbořany, focused on the stories of the Czech national minority in the region of present Ukraine. This paper will focus on one of the exhibitions of modern history under the most spotlight in recent years – the permanent exhibition 'The History of the 20th Century' in the National Museum – and the ways the exhibition and the accompanying educational programmes can present and interpret the heritage of the national minorities in the region of the current Czech Republic. Our focus is the national minority that until now lacked a significant representation in the Czech museum field despite holding a specific position in Czech history – the Slovaks.

The goal of the paper is to present the approach and methods we used in order to interpret the

exhibited heritage of the Slovak national minority during the programmes of museum education to the focus groups of school children and students. We will examine how this approach aids in the inclusive interpretation of history and the potential of museum education in substituting the marginalised topics in the exhibitions, as well as the possibilities of fulfilling the goals of multicultural education according to the standards of the European Union and OECD.

The new long-term exhibition 'The History of the 20th Century' in the National Museum of the Czech Republic was opened in 2021. The exhibition is divided chronologically into several parts, beginning with World War I, followed by the interwar period of Czechoslovakia and then World War II. The middle section of the exhibition focuses on the period from 1945 until the Prague Spring, while the last part presents the period of so-called 'normalisation' (1969–1989), the Velvet Revolution, and ends with the year 2004 when the Czech Republic joined the European Union.

The leitmotif of the exhibition is the category of space and, according to this perspective, the exhibition is divided into four thematic blocks that intersperse the chronological divide: Politics, Public space, Semi-public space, Private space. The aspiration of the exhibition authors was to show that these aspects of human existence (political history and everyday life) are closely related (Kavka & Lomíček & Pohunek, 2022:11).

The topic of national minorities is present in the exhibition. However, for a regular visitor it can be hard to find both the exhibited objects and the narratives by themselves without a guide. The majority of the objects related to the national minorities can be found in the first part of the exhibition focused on the 1920s and '30s. In the sector of the semi-public space there is a display cabinet dedicated exclusively to exhibits related to the history, culture, and everyday life of the national and ethnic minorities in the interwar Czechoslovakia, namely the Germans, the Jews, the Polish, the Rusyns and the Romani. Representation, albeit less extensive and less concentrated, can also be found in other parts of the exhibition, such as the 'Cheb Chair' exhibited as a part of the so-called 'hidden space' installation. The category of the 'hidden space' (position within the part of the exhibition dedicated to the private space) is supposed to present the unofficial or the illegal activities of the citizens during World War II and the period of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia (Kavka & Lomíček & Pohunek, 2022: 68). The 'Cheb chair' is a wooden chair of a specific design that represents the traditional folk culture of the German-speaking inhabitants of the western Bohemia. During World War II it was a part of the private collection of Professor Adolf Pascher, who had been a Sudeten German patriot, later turned Nazi sympathiser, although he maintained professional and friendly relations with his Czech colleagues (Kavka & Lomíček & Pohunek, 2022: 69). During the Prague Uprising, Pascher committed suicide. The object is meant to demonstrate the complicated history of the Czech-German relationships (Kavka & Lomíček & Pohunek, 2022: 69).

However, the authors' approach to the presentation and interpretation of the national minorities and the common history with Slovaks in the exhibition has been the target of criticism ever since its opening, as mentioned in multiple exhibition reviews by scholars and general public alike, as well as during the exhibition-making process years beforehand.

As a part of the exhibition preparation process, on 26th September 2017 a discussion called 'Nation in Museum' took place at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, between the museum

representatives and scholars and other professionals from the fields of modern history and museology (Jareš & Pýcha & Sixta, 2020, p.137–151). While multiple participants deemed the representation of national minorities in the planned exhibition unsatisfactory, the museum representatives argued that the reason was a lack of related objects in the museum's collections.

Petr Zídek, a Czech historian specialising in modern Czech and Czechoslovak history, wrote in his review of the exhibition: "Out of the presented 90 years of development, Czechs lived in the common state with Slovaks for 67 years and with Germans for more than 30 years. A few marginals remained at the exhibition from this entire coexistence. National statistics, borders, the Slovak culture, the culture of minorities is completely missing" (Zídek, 2021).

Milena Bartlová, a Czech art historian, stated: "In fact, it is the history of Czechs and Moravians. Germans, Slovaks, and Jews are mentioned so marginally that the proverbial Martian, who would know nothing beforehand, would not even notice them. Slovakia got the worst of the exhibition since, practically only politicians from Hlinka to Tiso and Husák were present. The presentation of Germans and Jews is limited to their transports" (Bartlová, 2021).

As stated above, the problem is not the lack of exhibited objects, especially in the case of objects related to Slovak history. During the preparation of the educational programme, we found more than 40 objects related to the topic in some way – a number of objects that should be entirely sufficient to create the context or the narrative the critics are asking for and which is severely missing from the exhibition in its current form.

Museum education can represent a partial solution to the lack of concise minority narrative in the exhibition. The educational programmes have turned out to be an efficient solution in the case of the history of Roma (Pekárková & Stachová, 2021). On the other hand, the target group and the number of participants (almost exclusively school groups) is significantly smaller compared to the total number of exhibition visitors. Moreover, the purpose of museum education should not be to replace the narratives missing from the exhibitions themselves.

To fully understand the presented programmes, one needs to be familiar with a common history of the Czechs and the Slovaks in the 20th as well as the 21st century. In the present-day Czech Republic, the Slovaks are the largest national minority, representing over 1.3 % of the population (Czech Statistical Office, 2021). However, this number says little about the relationship between the two nations and the specific position of the Slovaks in the country. The relationship between the Czechs and Slovaks goes back more than a century when the start of the 20th century saw the first serious thoughts of joining two regions of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian empire into an independent country. The nations had different starting positions: the Bohemian lands being a developed industrial region with considerable Czech language, cultural and administrative independence, while Slovakia was an agrarian territory considered to be an inseparable part of Hungary, where the Slovak cultural displays or the use of the Slovak language in schools or administration were criminalised (Kováč, 2011). Nonetheless, the desire for a self-governing independent country, and a significant percentage of national minorities in the two regions threatening their stability, led to the creation of Czechoslovakia in October 1918. At first, the utilitarian reasons led the administration to push the idea of Czechs and Slovaks being one constituent Czechoslovak nation with two regional branches. However,

this proved to be a futile effort. While the language and cultural proximity were considerable, most of the citizens retained their original separate national identity and the different ideas about the arrangement of the Czech and Slovak relationship within the state culminated on the eve of World War II with, first, Slovak autonomy and later into dividing the country into a protectorate occupied and governed by Hitler's Germany and an independent clero-fascist Slovak State that was heavily under German influence (Rychlík, 2018: 23-25).

Post-war Czechoslovakia under the rule of the Communist Party leant at first towards a heavily centralist system of governance with no space for national autonomy, which was followed by the establishment of a federation of Czechs and Slovaks in the 1960s as one of the results of the Prague Spring movement. However, the federation was not a sufficient solution for the nations' desire for self-determination and the fall of the Communist regime following the Velvet Revolution in 1989 opened a pathway to discussions about the two nations' further co-existence (Rychlík, 2018: 43-47). The democratic setting resurrected the debates on the constitutional arrangement between Czechs and Slovaks as well as nationalistic tendencies. After years of negotiations the country split into the two current independent countries – the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic – on 1 January 1993. The division was entirely peaceful and remains one of the very few non-violent country partitions in modern history. However, it should be noted that the citizens were not involved in the process and contemporary public surveys showed that the majority of the population was against the division of Czechoslovakia (Hilde, 1999).

As a consequence of more than 70 years of shared history, the two nations currently maintain an exceptionally close relationship. Many people of the middle and older generations still actively remember their life in Czechoslovakia and as a result are bilingual or almost bilingual and have a great understanding of both cultures. In the era of Czechoslovakia, both languages were official and represented in mass media, and cultural symbols of both nations were present in public spaces. Since the partition, the positive relationship between the two nations has been cultivated through a long-term bilateral agreement, for example not to perceive Slovak students in the Czech universities as foreign students and vice versa, along with acknowledgement of the other language as an official language (especially in public administration) and projects of cultural cooperation.

It should be noted that while the two nations are exceptionally close, in the three decades since their independence, young generations especially have a weakened contact with the other culture, which is observable in the understanding of the other language or cultural cues and context (Keselová & Palenčárová, 2003). Slovak and Czech minorities are also not exempt from xenophobia, albeit to a lesser extent and less evident manifestations than other national and ethnic minorities in both states. However, as the feedback from the educational programmes (presented later) proves, the generation of current Czech students (aged 10-18) has generally a positive attitude towards the Slovak culture, which can be attributed to its presence in popular culture targeted at the age group (TV shows, content creators on the social platforms such as YouTube or TikTok).

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the division of Czechoslovakia, the educational department of the National Museum, the largest and the third-oldest Czech museum, prepared two educational programmes focused on the culture and language of the Slovaks as well as

Slovak history as a part of Czechoslovakia. The programmes, planned to be accompanied by a themed summer camp in 2023, have been a part of the museum's offer targeted at schools since January 2023.

The educational programmes have been offered in two versions: the 'In the Common State: Slovaks in the Czechoslovakia' and 'How did the Czechs and the Slovaks imagine their common state?' The former was aimed at school children aged 10-13 (4th to 7th grade of secondary school), the latter was more elaborate, as it was aimed at high school students and used the methods of inquiry-based learning. Both programmes are exhibition-based, with a thematic guided tour of the History of the 20th Century exhibition followed by a workshop in a space outside the exhibition itself.

The programmes are unique for their bilingualism – they are led by two educators, one of whom is Czech and the other is a Slovak native speaker. Both speak throughout the programme exclusively in their respective native language. While the Czech educator offers a general exposition, the Slovak one introduces the topics specifically related to the Slovak history, culture etc. Thus, it is not the case of a simultaneous interpretation but a guided tour in two different languages. It is important to note that the two languages, while not entirely interchangeable, are unusually similar in their vocabulary and grammar structure due to their both being Western Slavic languages and to the shared history of the two nations that has been reflected in the development of the languages over time. By including a member of the Slovak national minority in a role of one of the programme's educators, it was ensured that the first-person voice was featured predominantly in the process of interpreting their own heritage and the perspective offered to the participants was multidimensional.

The 'In the Common State' programme begins in the introductory part of the exhibition. The first activity starts with the participants obtaining worksheets and being tasked to brainstorm their existing knowledge on the topics of Slovak historical figures, current artists/ celebrities/ content creators, cities and geographic locations, traditional food and vocabulary that differs from the Czech counterparts. The aim of this activity is both evocative – to introduce the general topic of the programme and evoke the knowledge of the participants – as well as diagnostic – to determine the preliminary knowledge that can be built upon during the later activities. It is important to note that the level of existing knowledge can vary considerably even within the same class/ grade/ school. This must be reflected during the programme.

The topic of national minorities comes up during the next part of the programme. The first part of the guided tour takes place in an exhibition space dedicated to World War I. The students are introduced to a map and presented with the various nationalities within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their task is to locate the borders of the interwar Czechoslovakia on the map of the pre-1918 Empire. This shows that Austria-Hungary was a multi-ethnic state and Czechoslovakia as its following country also contained significant groups of national and ethnic minorities. This knowledge is necessary to understand the latter development of the relations between the Czechs and the Slovaks. The topic of World War I is introduced through the stories of the Czech and Slovak soldiers presented by the exhibition objects. The students are also tasked with completing the Slovak coat of arms (part of the flag of Slovakia) that can be found depicted several times throughout the exhibition.

Interwar Czechoslovakia is introduced by its state symbols – a flag, a coat of arms, important

politicians and public figures of the state administration. It should be noted that this part of the exhibition lacks the depiction of the most important Slovakian involved in the founding of Czechoslovakia (General Milan Rastislav Štefánik) and it needs to be presented via photographic reproductions. The developing infrastructure of the newly founded country is a subject of the next task, the analysis of a contemporary advertisement of a modern train connecting the Czechoslovak capital of Prague with the largest Slovak city of Bratislava (the current capital of Slovakia). Among the state symbols we present is the anthem of today's Slovakia and the former second part of the Czechoslovak anthem. The students listen to the song recording and are tasked with filling in missing words. The missing words were chosen to be simple to understand and yet sufficiently different from their Czech counterparts so as to create a challenge for the participants while also familiarising them with the specifics of the Slovak language and Slovak culturally significant symbols (the Tatra mountains, the motif of storm during the forming of the Slovak nation in the 19th century).

The eras of the pre-World War II build-up, World War II and the post-war rise of the Communist regime are presented in the form of a guided tour through the respective parts of the exhibition. The rise of Communism and the not-negligible enthusiasm for the ideology among certain parts of the Czechoslovak society, which are topics difficult to present and relate to the students of the chosen age group, are presented by the project of the Railway of Youth, a 1940s and '50s massive nationwide project of rebuilding a mountain railway in central Slovakia, destroyed during the Slovak National Uprising by the volunteers recruited among the Czechoslovak youth. The students appeared to relate to the participants of the project, whether positively or, predominantly, negatively, expressing a sentiment that they could not imagine participating on such a project nowadays. It must be noted that this part of the exhibition lacks a coherent installation focused on the repressive actions of the Communist regime, probably due to lack of related objects in the National Museum collections.

The period of normalisation (1969-1989) is presented through contemporary popular culture and music. The students listen to the record of one of the most popular Slovak songs of the period. *Reklama na ticho* (Advertisement for Silence) by the (still active) rock band Team from 1988 depicts the reality of the shortage economy of the last two decades of the Communist rule. The students discuss the terms related to the time period (off-the-shelf produce, and Tuzex – State-run shops that accepted vouchers instead of money) as well as the Slovak words that differ significantly from their Czech counterparts. The song includes multiple words with the letters of the alphabet unfamiliar to the Czechs, which serves as a gateway to a short presentation on the basic differences between the two languages and their respective alphabets. The students are then guided to the posters of other popular Slovak musicians from the normalisation era – they are usually familiar with at least one. The part of the programme in the exhibition concludes with the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993.

The final part of the programme takes place in a separate learning space which is a room modified to hold workshops. The students present their answers to the worksheet tasks which serves as a reflection of the new knowledge they obtained during the guided tour. The workshop part of the programme consists of two handcraft activities – designing an outline of post-war Czechoslovakian borders with a 3D pen and making badges with the Slovakia-related design. This serves both as a creative and relaxing activity for the participants

and a way to build positive emotions toward the symbols of Slovakia and Czechoslovakia.

The 'How did the Czechs and the Slovaks imagine their common state?' programme is aimed at high school students and expands the activities offered in the programme for the younger age group. It starts with the same task of brainstorming the students' knowledge on the topics of Slovak historical personalities, current artists or celebrities, cities and geography locations, traditional food and the vocabulary that differs from the Czech counterparts. The guided tour follows the same timeline as the one aimed at the secondary school students, but it delves deeper into the political history and international relationships, especially in the era immediately preceding World War II. The assignments that the students are tasked with during the guided tour use similar methods to the ones aimed at younger children but go into more depth in the cultural and historical context.

The focus of the programme for the high school students is on its second part outside the exhibition itself. It uses inquiry-based learning in order to present various consequential preferred options of the political system in the planned common state of the Czechs and the Slovaks, the reasons for their preference in their respective time periods preceding the creation of 1918 Czechoslovakia, and the context of the circumstances of the resulting political system of the new state. The analysed documents are The Pittsburgh Agreement of May 1918 and the Martin Declaration (the Declaration of Slovak Independence) of October 1918. Both documents are vital in forming the Czechoslovak state as their signatories are the representatives of the Czech and Slovak national organisations in the USA and the Slovak National Council, respectively. The aim of the activity is for the participants to infer the preferred arrangement between the Czech and Slovak governance at the time of the respective documents (federation in the case of the Pittsburgh Agreement and the unitarian state according to the Martin Declaration) as well as to ascertain the reasons for the ultimate change in the preference. In the final task the students are expected to assign the statements to the corresponding one of the two documents. As a conclusion the students are invited to articulate the definitions of the political systems according to the respective documents in their own words.

All the teachers who had participated in the programme with their classes were sent a follow-up questionnaire gathering their feedback on the programme's topics, activities, methods, their expectations and motivations to participate on the programme as well as the representation of Slovak history, culture or language in their educational practice. The respondents stated that what had interested them in the programme was the interactive activities, bilingualism and the option to learn about the Slovaks, as they represent the largest national minority in the Czech Republic and many teachers still remember the period of Czechoslovakia. A significant motivational factor was also the presence of children with Slovak nationality in the participating classes as the teachers wanted to delve deeper into the topic of the Czech and Slovak coexistence both in the past and the present.

In the programme evaluation, 100% of the teachers assessed the programme as fulfilling their expectations completely or mostly. The teachers especially appreciated the bilingual method of presentation and in general the involvement of the Slovak educator; as one of the responses states: "If the students are to learn more about the history and culture of the Slovaks, it is great that it is presented by a Slovak woman who speaks to them in her native language." One of the teachers even stated that it was thanks to the continuous use of the Slovak

language that the children managed to keep their attention during the entire programme. It must be noted that other answers emphasise the role of the Czech commentary, as the children would probably be unable to understand fully the Slovak narration by itself. The teachers also applauded the latter part of the programme aimed at the younger age group, as it presented the key topics in a relaxing, creative way and, as a result, the participants were not overwhelmed by the new information and more demanding activities during the guided tour. The interactive activities were appreciated as they offered an approach to the topic that was different from the usual methods used in most classrooms.

The second part of the questionnaire sought to evaluate the extent to which the topics related to the Slovaks and Slovakia were covered in the education curricular documents, textbooks etc. A high proportion (90%) of the respondents ascertained that the coverage of the Slovak-related topics was insufficient at the present time. However, only 70% of them would prefer to extend this coverage on the Slovak language, culture or history. As it turned out, some teachers do not mention the Slovaks even during the presentation of the relevant topics such as the presentation of various Slavic languages (in the Czech language subject), while others mention Slovak-related topics even in seemingly unrelated subjects, such as science (important Slovak inventors or scientists), or physical education (successful Slovak sportsmen and sportswomen). As stated above, it is universally accepted that the younger generation of especially Czech children are lacking in their comprehension of the Slovak language. This statement proved to be inconclusive in the results of our questionnaire. According to the teachers, comprehension of the Slovak language varied largely from seemingly perfect comprehension to noticeable difficulties. However, neither of the respondents deemed the level of understanding Slovak insufficient.

It can be concluded that while the curricular documents do not seem to offer sufficient coverage of the topic, especially considering the high percentage of the Slovak minority in the Czech Republic, it depends greatly on the personal preference of the teacher.
Returning to the museum definition at the beginning of the study, the goal of fostering diversity and inclusion via the predominant focus on the national minorities as a part of a historical exhibition presenting mainstream narrative has proven to be fulfilled by our educational programmes. In the study, we presented the feedback from the programme's participants that was conclusive in its appreciation of the subject of the Slovak national minority and the universally perceived need to delve deeper into the topics of national and ethnic minorities in the Czech Republic in general. Every class that had participated in the programme included at least one member of Slovak nationality or origin, which only emphasised the urgency to support the inclusion of minority narratives even and especially in the historical exhibitions that are not primarily focused on the history or culture of a national minority. The programme is thus expected to have a positive impact on the participating members of the minority in a way that it proves that they are integral members of the country's community and history. On the other hand, the members of the majority – in this case, the Czechs – are introduced to the minority culture, language and history, which serves to overcome stereotypes and support the notion of the Czech history as a shared history of all the nations and ethnicities that have ever lived in the territory.

The approaches and methods introduced in the paper could be efficiently used not only in interpreting the heritage of national minorities,

but also in interpreting the heritage of other marginalised communities and topics.

It must be noted that an educational programme should not serve as a replacement for the lack of minority presence in the exhibition itself – it is preferable to include the minority narrative in the exhibition in the first place, in a visible way in order to achieve the goals we had set for the programme.

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From the monumental to the vernacular – Interpreting the layered heritage of Călugăreni/Mikháza in Mureș/Maros county, Romania

Orsolya Szilágyi, Szilamér-Péter Pánczél & Katalin Sidó (Romania)

Orsolya Szilágyi has been working for the Mureș County Museum since 2016. Her main research interests are archaeological heritage management and the history of 19th century archaeological research in Transylvania. She's been organising workshops related to community involvement and presenting Roman heritage to the public for over five years.

Contact: szilorsi@rocketmail.com

Szilamér Péter Pánczél & Katalin Sidó participate in the creation of workshops and organise events dedicated to the popularisation of Roman heritage. They have also taken part in and coordinated international projects pertaining to Roman archaeology. They both currently work for the Mureș County Museum.

Abstract

Călugăreni/Mikháza is a traditional village in Transylvania. During Antiquity, this region was part of the vast defensive system (limes) of the Roman Empire, protecting Dacia's eastern frontier. Besides its very important Roman heritage, the village still has a standing 17th century Franciscan friary and a handful of vernacular style farmsteads. These three are all an integral part of the village landscape, and create a complex challenge in how to protect and present them in the most faithful way possible. The imminent WHS status of the Roman archaeological site provokes new community and visitor friendly solutions for the development of the Călugăreni/Mikháza Archaeological Park. This paper will showcase the various challenges and solutions that arise.

Keywords

archaeology, Roman heritage, open-air museums, traditional architecture, Transylvania

The small village of Călugăreni/Mikháza is situated in the eastern part of Transylvania, in the upper Niraj Valley, the closest major city to it being Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely. This place is remarkable because it has three distinct types of cultural heritage: the Roman auxiliary fort and settlement, the 17th-century Franciscan monastery and the late 19th and early 20th-century farmsteads typical for the region. The presentation of all three types of heritage authentically and engagingly provokes complex challenges and often warrants innovative methods.

The three layers of heritage

The Roman auxiliary fort at Călugăreni was part of the eastern frontier of Dacia and had a crucial role in defending the region from possible barbarian intrusions. Today, it is one of the best-preserved forts in the eastern part of the province, since throughout history, village householders only built a few structures on the fort's defensive elements. The site's integrity means that it is on the nomination list for UNESCO WHS status as part of the Dacian *limes* (the longest Roman land border in Europe). Since 2013 the Mureș County Museum, together with several Romanian, Hungarian and German partner institutions, has been conducting interdisciplinary archaeological research at

several components of the site.[32] The recent international research collaborations producing several related projects allowed us to develop a deeper understanding of Călugăreni and its surroundings. The five-hectare Călugăreni Archaeological Park (founded in 2015) contains most of the fort and parts of the settlement (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Photo showing the location of the Roman fort in relation to the village

Another important part of Călugăreni's cultural heritage is the friary, built in the first half of the 17th-century. It is one of the most important religious monuments of the Niraj Valley. In its heyday, the late-renaissance-style monastery was also an educational and cultural hub. The buildings were the property of the Franciscan order, but after World War II, the order was banished, and the monastery became a hospital. Today only a small part of the friary and the church belongs to the local community. A small exhibition about the Franciscans of Călugăreni was inaugurated here in 2022.

The handful of vernacular houses in the village also have a significant role in its fabric. The adobe and brick houses with porches and their annexes are all a testimony of a building style that is slowly disappearing. All the techniques used in the construction of these homes are seemingly simple, but they require a level of great expertise in order to guarantee a long life for the buildings.

Presenting archaeology in an unconventional way

Since the ruins of the Roman fort are uncovered only for a few months during the archaeological field school, it is hard for visitors to visualise the expanse and elements of the fortress and civilian settlement in the offseason. So, to showcase this hidden history the project has created the Time Boxes, the Compass, and the Corner Points.

The two Time Boxes serve as the permanent exhibition spaces of the park, presenting different aspects of life on the frontier during the Roman period. The peculiar shape of the pavilions on the edges of the village attract attention, but the organic material of their construction (e.g. the wooden shingles that cover them) still fits in with the village landscape. The two structures were initially intended as temporary constructions. However, since their inauguration in 2016, they quickly became loved by the community and a part of village life. For example, the local children and teens use the small courtyard between the two pavilions as a hangout space during the summer evenings.

The second part to the park is the Compass Bellevue, situated on a hilltop overlooking the site. This compass consists of a few seemingly randomly positioned wooden stakes with white lines painted on the top. When a visitor stands on a certain point and looks at these stakes, they see an outline of the Roman fort and the extension of the ancient settlement below. This place also serves as an excellent location to appreciate the fort's natural surroundings and to better understand reason why the Romans chose this site to defend their border.

[32] Throughout these ten years, the following institutions were our partners: Babeș-Bolyai University from Romania; Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Eötvös Loránd University, Pázmány Péter University, University of Pécs from Hungary; Humboldt University of Berlin, University of Cologne, and University College of Erfurt from Germany.

The four Corner Points are the newest additions to the park. The concept was developed and implemented by architecture students from Budapest as part of the last summer field school. These four installations mark the four corners of the Roman fort. Their design also serves as selfie points for visitors. It became clear early on that while during our guided tours; we can tell our visitors about the measurements of the fort or the extension of the settlement, it is easier to illustrate this information in a much friendlier way. For example, instead of saying that the fort was 162 x 140 metres across, we can instead point at the four Corner Points, making the scale of this structure much more comprehensible.

These three examples show that even unconventional spaces can become integral to the village, if carefully thought out and implemented correctly (Figure 2). Their purpose is not to be yet another flashy and new development of the open-air museum but to connect locals and visitors with their often invisible archaeological heritage.

As well as building structures that help interpret the site, we try to help with visualising the invisible archaeological heritage with other methods. Over the years, soft-capping (a technique to help preserve ruined masonry walls under vegetation) and other types of heritage presentation using plants has become more and more popular. At Ruffenhofen in Germany, elements of the Roman fort were marked with shrubs. These permanent natural markers make it easy for visitors to visualise the size and dimension of the structure.

Figure 2. From top to bottom: Time Box pavilions, Compass Bellevue, and one of the four Corner Points

We decided to use this method for the park in Călugăreni as it is the least damaging to the site. However, since the most recent archaeological contexts at the site are only 30 centimetres below the current walking level, we had to be quite selective about what kind of plants to use. The sub-zero temperatures during winter also proved to be a horticultural challenge. The plants have to be tough and shallow rooting. After much contemplation, we chose to use lavender. Volunteers and visitors planted 3,000 lavender seedlings during an event that celebrated the coming of spring. These plants mark the site of one of the many barracks inside the auxiliary fort.

Preserving vernacular heritage

Just like in many Szekler villages in Transylvania, the traditional village structure and its elements are in danger of completely disappearing. Countless villages in the region are gradually abandoned by young people, leaving only older

people. This abandonment leads to dozens of derelict and unoccupied houses in these settlements. Another problem is the demolition of vernacular houses typical of a particular area and replacing them with modern-style homes. These new homes stick out of the village's landscape, often downright damaging it. However, while it is understandable that people would rather live in homes with modern amenities and do not want to spend a considerable amount of money on modernising centuries-old farmsteads, these structures can and should be adapted to contemporary needs. With its dwindling number of traditionally built houses, Călugăreni isn't an exception from this problem either.

In 2013, students from the Budapest University of Technology and Economics documented the remaining vernacular buildings inside the village. During the development of the Călugăreni Archaeological Park, it quickly became evident that the park would need several types of facilities. Since several plots belonging to old and abandoned houses overlap the territory of the Roman fort, the museum decided to acquire some of them, thus guaranteeing the site's safety from agricultural works and saving the old houses from demolition. The two houses represent two different building styles: the older one has an elevated basement, a wraparound porch, a smaller ante-room and a bigger room traditionally reserved for only special occasions, while the younger house has a narrow porch on one side and a central room from which two other quarters can be accessed (Figure 3). It should be noted that the older house has a fully restored painted Szekler gate, which is not necessarily typical for the region.

Figure 3. The two houses renovated by the museum

The two farmsteads were renovated and adapted to meet modern needs in a way that respected their original fabric. The traditional methods used for their restoration not only preserved the authenticity of these buildings but also helped us understand how people made these kinds of houses. The houses are mainly equipped with traditional furniture typical of the region, most acquired from their original owners. The two buildings now serve as accommodation and offices for the museum staff during the summer field school, while we use lots as venues for several activities throughout the year. By purchasing these two houses and authentically restoring them we also made a commitment not only to the archaeological heritage of Călugăreni but also to the vernacular architecture of the village.

Vernacular architecture also plays an essential role in the forthcoming development of the archaeological open-air museum. We plan to house the future visitor and research centre in two barns adapted for these respective

functions. We reconstructed the buildings from the parts of previously existing barns in the region that were destined for demolition. These original structures were dismantled in situ, and their parts were carefully numbered and registered to be reconstructed in Călugăreni.

Promoting local heritage

Before the museum acquired the two farmsteads in the village, the only event that our institution organised at Călugăreni was the annual Roman Festival in August. However, the new plots and buildings make the planning and unfolding of the events a lot easier. Thanks to these investments, we can hold more events with various themes each year. Since 2021, we have run four to five different visitor programmes each year. From cooking shows based on antique recipes to make-believe excavations for children, these workshops showcase the more unexpected and less promoted facets of archaeological heritage.

One of the most significant annual events of the museum is the Roman Festival, organised at Călugăreni. Each August, the small village goes back in time for a day, being filled with Romans in colourful tunics and soldiers in shiny armour. More than 2,000 visitors participate in several workshops demonstrating a segment of ancient life; they can watch Roman soldiers battling barbarians and visit the archaeological site to see the results of that year's excavations. The festival celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2022, and during these ten years, it became one of the most significant cultural festivals in Eastern Transylvania. Since the beginning, the festival's purpose was to popularise a lesser-known archaeological site in the region. Each year, the event explores a new theme and all workshops and temporary exhibitions are related to it. Over the years, Roman culture is not the only thing explored during the festival. Since the late Renaissance and folk culture also play a vital part in Călugăreni's history, we integrate early music concerts and folk-dance performances into the programme. After ten years, we can safely say that the Roman Festival has successfully put the archaeological site and other crucial elements of the local heritage in the limelight.

After the development of the open-air museum, experimental archaeology started to play an important role in our research and the events. One of our ongoing projects is related to Roman cuisine. The food-related workshops during the Roman Festival have always been among the most popular. Since there were dozens of surviving ancient Roman recipes, it wasn't long before we started building whole events around cuisine. The first programme that we organised in one of the newly acquired houses' courtyards was Gastronomika Romana in 2019. It had more than one purpose:

- trying out food preservation methods used by Romans,
- illustrating these methods to our visitors, and
- familiarising guests with a new addition to the archaeological park.

The taste of the vegetable and fruit preserves was tested later that year during the Roman Festival, creating a framework and continuity for visitors. We also presented the results of the experiment at an international conference about food history.

The event's second edition took place in 2022, and more importantly, this also celebrated the opening of our newly furbished Roman kitchen (Figure 4). It had not only furniture replicas from the Roman period but also a *thermopolium* – a Roman 'fast food' shop serving ready-to-eat dishes. The food was prepared and served in vessels similar to those used hundreds of years ago in Călugăreni. We based each meal on

original Roman recipes, which an archaeologist prepared in front of the visitors in the form of a live cooking show. Visitors could taste the food and, if interested, take home a small leaflet with the recipes. The relatively high number of visitors and the interest shown by members of the press showed that events like this can successfully raise awareness about ancient civilisation's culture.

Figure 4. Cooking demonstration at the newly furbished Roman kitchen

Engaging the community

While one of the main objectives of the open-air museum is to bring in more visitors, building a close relationship with the local community and their archaeological heritage is also critical. The sudden appearance of archaeologists in a peaceful village more than ten years ago was not welcomed by everyone. In addition, thanks to several research projects, the area of the archaeological site under strict protection was extended, making it increasingly more complex for individuals to build houses or even annexe buildings without supervision. Several community members did not receive these changes well and while the museum's policy always reflected the current laws, it led to friction between locals and the institution. These conflicts are always to the detriment of the site, so the question arose: How can we instil a genuine connection between the locals if they see the proximity of an archaeological site as a hindrance and not as something positive? Such problems are familiar in the case of heavily protected heritage sites, and solutions vary on a case-to-case basis.

One of our lasting solutions was tailoring events related to the Roman site for locals. Since 2020, the museum has held a week-long archaeology camp for mainly local children in Călugăreni. Each day, they learn about a different aspect of Roman culture and civilisation, and also about archaeology and what it means to participate in an excavation (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Archaeology students participating in our annual summer field school (top) and local children partaking in a simulated archaeological excavation (bottom)

The event started gaining traction last year after initial low number of attendants. The interest shown by the children suggests that there is a demand for such activities by the local community as well. This interest proved that

even small-scale, intensive programmes can greatly impact how the community perceives our work. Thanks to the event's success, there are plans underway for organising other types of workshops aimed at locals at well, mainly targeting other demographics.

Conclusions

Since the start of the systematic research project in 2013 and the subsequent founding of the Călugăreni Archaeological Park, the open-air museum has been in continuous development. Last year the park, and two other Roman sites from Romania, won a tender worth 2.1 million Euros each to construct a visitor and research centre on-site. This investment will help tremendously in the promotion and subsequent protection of the site. It also underlines that the results of the research projects and events held at the Călugăreni Archaeological Park are relevant and up to standards.

Abstracts of other presentations

Will it rain? Interpreting an old rainmaking ritual. Case Study: Contrătești, Republic of Moldova

Olga Andranovici (Moldova)

Condrătești is a small village in the Republic of Moldova. It lies between the green hills of the Moldovan landscape, along the Cula River. As an old rural village, cultural inheritance is a big part of its identity. Even so, its villagers are not acquainted with the concept of cultural heritage. The natural circumstances of the summer of 2020 became fertile soil to initiate the process of interpreting an old tradition of a rainmaking ritual. It was decided to present that part of the heritage with the help of ethnographic research, re-enactment, and ultimately heritage interpretation. Thus, together with the older villagers and local teachers, it was possible to bring the intangible heritage closer to younger generations and other villages. The small project of bringing back the rainmaking 'Caloian' ritual became a catalyst for community acts for sustainability and left a long-term impact on local awareness of its heritage.

Olga Andranovici is a museographer at the National History Museum of Moldova in Chisinau and is taking a Master's degree in Cultural Heritage Management at the State University of Moldova. This year Olga finished a Bachelor's Degree in Cultural Heritage Studies at the 'Lucian Blaga' University of Sibiu, the only bachelor's programme in cultural heritage in Romania.

Ephemeral heritage: Socio-political graphics in the public realm, both interpreting and interpreted

Elisa Bailey (Spain)

Popular socio-political visual culture and messaging in the public realm might be considered both a form of interpretation in themselves as well as elements to be interpreted. For how they translate abstract concepts into their own sphere of influence, empowering others to take action, can the creators of stickers, posters, stencils, graffiti and murals also be seen as interpreters? Site-specific examples from across Europe explore how city streets and infrastructure are translated into learning landscapes. Transit spaces are thus converted into sites of interpretation as much as visitable destinations, although the very nature and locations of these interventions also means that – fittingly – their interpretation, documentation and preservation can rarely be overseen by a formal guardian, meaning methods and perspectives are also varied or conflicting, with re-interpretations sometimes even coming from passers-by.

Elisa Bailey is a multilingual curator, interpreter, heritage travel consultant with the motto 'Curating is Caring'. Elisa has lived in nine countries for work with the V&A Museum in London, the British Film Institute (BFI), Dubai Expo 2020, Guggenheim, Oman Across Ages Museum, Carabinieri Cultural Heritage Tutelary, Sotheby's, universities, media and cinema. She founded Rise-Rosa-Rage Socio-Political Graphics Archive, researches and publishes on memorials, solidarity, protest and the artist's

role in fighting oppression. She studied at the University of Cambridge, Courtauld Institute of Art, and Harvard University Centre for Hellenic Studies.

Iron Curtain in my backyard – Collaborating with a private heritage site at the Austria-Hungary border

Zsuzsa Berecz & Árpád Bőczén (Hungary)

We will guide our audience through our collaboration with the Iron Curtain Museum, a small private collection at the Austria-Hungary border. Despite its name, the museum is really a non-institutional entity, situated in the vineyard of a former conscript border guard from the 1960s. Our organisation, KÖME the Hungarian Association of Cultural Heritage Managers, launched a development at the site in 2018 in order to make sure it survives. We will give you an overview of the work done so far, focusing on the challenges of developing the place into a sustainable and (more) interpretive learning environment. Some of our questions are: How to think of ownership in the case of heritage on private property? What can be the institutional alternatives for such a personal site? What can be the alternatives that complement and not reduce such a personal interpretation? What if interpretation is paired with artistic creation? We dive into successes and conflicts in order to discover lessons that can become common ones for us, interpreters.

Zsuzsa Berecz is a dramaturg and curator in various socio-cultural and artistic contexts, based in Budapest. Her work revolves around transversal knowledge-production and art as a social activity. Zsuzsa is an IE certified interpretive writer, vice-president of the Hungarian Association of Cultural Heritage Managers (KÖME), and active in the field of interpretation, enriching it through her artistic experience.

Árpád Bőczén is the president of the Hungarian Association of Cultural Heritage Managers (KÖME). He graduated as an architect and as a cultural heritage expert. The interpretive approach is the basis of his practical and theoretical work. He is an IE certified trainer and is IE Country Coordinator Hungary.

Proposal for integrating digital interpretation planning into Interpret Europe's training programme

Árpád Bőczén (Hungary)

Two of IE's certified interpretive trainers have started to work on a new training module proposal within the framework of an international cooperation project called MUSE.ar. Digital programmes for three very different sites and a developer interface were also created in the 18-month process which made the continuous reflection on and formation of the training plan possible. The presentation will summarise the concept, the structure, the practical potential of the course and the lessons learnt thanks to the circumstances of the development, in which artists, museum professionals and IT experts were involved to work very closely with each other. We will encourage an open discussion among the audience about the necessity and focus of such a training initiative in the future as well.

Árpád Bőczén is the president of the Hungarian Association of Cultural Heritage Managers (KÖME). He graduated as an architect at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics and as a cultural heritage expert at the Corvinus University of Budapest. The interpretive approach is the basis of his practical and theoretical work. He is an IE certified trainer and is IE Country Coordinator Hungary.

Macro-regions as a learning landscape: The Adriatic–Ionian Region Cultural Routes Tourism Governance Model – An Opportunity for the EUSAIR area

Iva Čaleta Pleša (Croatia)

Macro-regions are closely connected areas with common needs and challenges. The European Union established macro-regional strategies as a policy framework which allows countries located in the same region to jointly tackle and find solutions to problems or to better use the potential they have in common. So far, four macro-regional strategies have been adopted by the EU: the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (2009), the Danube Region (2010), the Adriatic and Ionian Region (2014), and the Alpine Region (2015). As connected areas they share culture, tradition, cuisine and landscape. The European Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region (EUSAIR) promotes sustainable economic and social prosperity by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity, while preserving the environment and ensuring healthy balanced ecosystems. The EUSAIR strategic project tackling cultural routes governance will be presented to encourage discussion on thinking of heritage interpretation in reaching the goals of EUSAIR and other macro-regional strategies.

Iva Čaleta Pleša works as a Senior Expert Advisor in the Division for European Affairs and Policies at the Ministry of Tourism and Sport of Republic of Croatia. She holds Master's degrees in French and Russian language and literature, European studies, and Museology and Heritage Management. She is an IE certified interpretive guide and trainer for guides, vice-president of the Croatian Association for Heritage Interpretation, and a tourist guide for Zagreb. With an interest in heritage interpretation for children, she is a member of the working group for developing the IE training module, 'Interpretation for children' which will be launched this year.

Using thematic trails for natural heritage interpretation in ecotourism destinations: Evidence from Ţara Dornelor, Romania

Adina Nicoleta Candrea & Florin Nechita (Romania)

Interpretation trails facilitate environmental education in ecotourism destinations as they enhance tourists' learning experiences and may influence pro-environmental behavior onsite. Ecotourism in Romania has evolved from the existence of isolated ecotourism programmes proposed by local or national tour operators, to integrated ecotourism destinations developed and promoted by the Association of Ecotourism in Romania in partnership with national authorities. Several thematic trails were created as valuable tools for environmental education, outdoor lessons and interactive experiences. This presentation provides a case-study approach regarding the use of interpretative trails in a Romanian ecotourism destination, Ţara Dornelor, which benefits from four

interpretation trails revealing: the local traditional cultural landscape, the unique world of the peat bog, as well as the genesis of Călimani Mountains and the mysterious anthropomorphic rocks located on the 12 Apostles Geologic Reserve.

Adina Nicoleta Candrea is curently an associate professor at the Faculty of Economics Science and Business Administration, at the Transilvania University of Brasov. Her research interests are oriented towards: sustainable development, tourism marketing, cultural heritage interpretation, and destination management.

Florin Nechita is curently an associate professor at the Faculty of Sociology and Communication, at the Transilvania University of Brasov. His research interests are oriented towards: destination marketing and branding, cultural heritage, marketing communication for museums and sustainable brands.

Creating inclusive interpretive apps

Dr. Anna Chatel (Germany)

Smartphone applications offer huge resources for learning, appreciating and conserving our local environment. In the Black Forest in Germany, this information has been largely inaccessible to disabled people. That is why we are working with local organisations for and with disabled people to create an interpretive, inclusive app for the Black Forest Biosphere Reserve. We started with workshops and field trips with the target group to find out their common interests and which application elements they preferred. The evaluations and excursions clearly showed which topics and methods were most popular and which route in the mountains was best suited. In this co-creation process we also integrated gamification elements, which the target group particularly enjoyed. The process of creating your own interpretive app is getting easier and more diverse every year, and we're happy to share our results with you to start your own co-created inclusive and interpretive app.

Anna Chatel has a PhD in Biogeography. She received two scholarships for her thesis, Heritage Interpretation for Nature Tourism in the Black Forest, and won the Instructional Development Award (€70,000), an innovative teaching prize, for her course, Heritage Interpretation mobile. She is a lecturer in Heritage Interpretation at the University of Education Freiburg and the University of Freiburg and is currently involved in two ERAMUS+ Heritage Interpretation projects.

IE Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW) Getting to grips with meaning in written and spoken word

Sandy Colvine & Zsuzsa Tolnay (France)

Landscapes are historic environments, and such each forms a unique pattern of the natural and the man-made. As 'learning landscapes', they provide us with perspectives for our future but only if we are willing to see and reflect on them. Promoting sustainability, conscious growth and carbon neutral lifestyles is fine but lecturing people is never the best way to motivate and inspire outside the classroom. Using meaning may, however, provide a way to better access physical, intellectual and emotional components of our landscapes, and even push us to question attitudes and initiate the inevitable change that

awaits us. This workshop will focus on ways to evoke meaning to trigger thoughts and reflection that zoom out from a site, object or person to wider social, environmental and economic concerns that directly and indirectly affect us all.

Sandy Colvine is a self-employed interpretive consultant with a background in rural development and tourism. He is a member of the IE Supervisory Committee and is an IE certified trainer. He lives in France but works throughout Europe and as a geographer particularly enjoys exploring the relationship between humans and their environment.

Zsuzsa Tolnay has been working with the nature-culture complex of World Heritage cultural landscapes. The challenges of how we grasp the sense of the place and create our own meanings of it have been inspiration to her in the pursuit of heritage interpretation activities for the past two decades.

Whose Heritage? Contested sites and memory wars in the post-socialist public space

Katia Dianina (USA)

A conceptual contribution to the theory and practice of heritage interpretation, this presentation will focus on endangered and contested heritage. Using the example of today's crisis in Ukraine, the presentation will consider the plurality of heritage discourses that frame individual sites and entire cultural traditions in opposing ways to satisfy conflicting target audiences. In Ukraine, as elsewhere, heritage interpretation is essential for addressing the urgent questions of ownership, preservation, and symbolic value. The sustainability of the Kyiv-Pechersk Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Ukraine, is threatened by the unrelenting war and escalating divisions within the church. Who owns the contested monastery, and what will happen to other important Orthodox shrines in the wake of the Russian invasion? Who gets to interpret the contested heritage? This ongoing battle over culture and tradition points to the centrality of heritage interpretation for educational and nation (re)building purposes.

Katia Dianina's experience with heritage interpretation ranges from guided tours to academic publications. The topic of safeguarding and negotiating heritage has a long history, and studying how different communities in the past approached the issue provides invaluable insights into understanding our common future; it also offers pathways into practical steps that we can undertake today, when the preservation of heritage as a living, vital tradition is more urgent than ever.

The village council as a mechanism for heritage interpretation 'at home' in a UNESCO site

Irina Dobriță (Romania)

An emergent critical heritage scholarship, as well as relevant organisations, increasingly press for the acknowledgement of contested views on preservation and a more aware and inclusive process of heritage-making. In such a context, heritage interpretation is called to mitigate both 'classical threats' (over-development, mass-tourism) and the ones of the actual production of heritage, in times where society is challenging 'the monumental'. The paper focuses on one particular citizen participation mechanism devised by a minority of custodians in order to

broaden acceptance and safeguarding of their heritage among the current majority: an informal village council. An analysis of its merits in mitigating a potentially disruptive conflict – around a road infrastructure modernisation project affecting the UNESCO site – serves as a basis for evaluating the further potential of such mechanisms for both successful heritage interpretation 'at home' and cultural mediation.

Irina Dobriță has over a decade's experience in communication and has until very recently coordinated the activity of Romania's Center for Cultural Heritage Promotion (set up by the National Institute of Heritage). Interpretation has been at the core of the programming of activities in 2022. As an anthropologist, Irina found it especially interesting to study sites with contested heritage and where grass-root perceptions and practices challenge the official narratives or the most influential marketing ones.

Heritage interpretation through the education and engagement of community: The case of zapis

Marija Dragišić & Ivana Ranković Miladinović (Serbia)

In the past, every Serbian village had the zapis in its centre; a consecrated tree with a carved cross, around which the community gathered, prayed and ate, thus confirming their unity. Although the consecrated trees are still preserved today, the knowledge about them is modest, and their interpretation is important on several levels. The interpretation plan for the zapis begins with educational workshops that inspire the memory of the former importance of the zapis for the local community and revitalise its gathering. Such workshops were organised a few years ago in the village of Sepci, when the European Heritage Days were celebrated near the zapis, with discussion from local residents and heritage conservationists. This is followed by an interpretive walk that is developed for visitors being delivered to local communities. It leads from the zapis, alongside the log church, to the brick church, in the same order in which they appear chronologically in religious practice. Other interpretive services, such as panels or interactive screens, are planned for the site to independently inform visitors about the zapis as a cultural and natural phenomenon.

Marija Dragišić is an ethnologist, anthropologist and licensed conservator. She has been working at the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia since 2008 in the research and documentation department as a research conservator. For a long time, she has been engaged in educational work with teachers and children on the topic of preserving cultural heritage. Marija also participated in several workshops on earthen architecture and sustainable heritage.

Ivana Ranković Miladinović is an art historian and licensed conservator. She has been working at the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia since 2006 in the research and documentation department as a research conservator. For a long time, she has been engaged in educational work with teachers and children on the topic of preserving cultural heritage.

Crafting Heritage: Board games as an instrument for interpretation

Ioana Duică (Romania)

The term heritage will be explored through the board game, one of the most friendly forms of learning, suitable for both children and adults. This tool is a way to get to know the components of natural heritage, their characteristics but also the threats we face when talking about heritage conservation. Adapted from Minecraft, a popular game among the youth, I have created Crafting Heritage, a board game that I ask you to come and test with me. The game is made of paper and wood and contains wooden cubes, pieces of cardboard, and game boards. All components are made from recyclable materials. The game can be played by 2-4 players and has three rounds. During the three rounds, each player has to create an area with a variety of ecosystems and populate it with plant and animal species. Participants have to collect as many points as possible, creating landscapes that include as many ecosystems as possible and solving the threats they face.

Ioana Duică is an educator and holds a Master's in Applied Geobiology in the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage from the University of Bucharest. During the last eight years, she has created educational programmes for children, such as interactive exhibitions and workshops, to promote cultural and natural heritage. She has been a member of Interpret Europe since 2021.

Call of Brno – A creative diary for town and people

Barbora Dvořáková (Czech Republic)

How to teach about the city in a creative way? How to convey the topic of its development in an engaging way? How to inspire pupils to care for the place where they live? In this presentation you will get inspired by the 'Czech way' and see a brand new creative diary that offers "small ideas for big towns". You will see the tool that enables educators who want to teach simply and creatively in the place where they live. Cross-curricular material offers hands-on experience and uses attractive tools, such as comics, to tell the story of the town.

Barbora Dvořáková is a freelance heritage interpreter and is the project coordinator for the ZOOM exhibition. She is also interested in sustainable communication. She is the author of various educational materials, exhibitions and trails. Most recently she co-created an example exhibition ZOOM, an exhibition 'Varied lives in varied forest', an immersive audio walk 'Pearls among the dross' and a book 'Call of Brno – small ideas for big towns'.

ZOOM – An interactive exhibition to develop visual literacy

Barbora Dvorakova, Zuzana Jakobova & Bohuslav Binka (Czech Republic)

How to understand photographs and other visual material? In the fast-changing world, the media jungle and the age of social networks, photos, videos and images are becoming the

main communication tool. We will virtually invite you to an exhibition which aims to teach children in a fun and interactive way to read photographs, discover the stories behind them, perceive their own emotional reaction or understand the message and intention of a photograph, its context and to reveal possible manipulation. The exhibition is loosely inspired by the popular New York Times series, 'What's going on in this picture?'. However, many other sources and the expertise of the authors, designers, graphic designers, photographers, and other professionals involved in the creation and execution of the exhibition were used. The children themselves were also drawn into the process of creating the exhibition.

Barbora Dvorakova is a freelance heritage interpreter and is the project coordinator for the ZOOM exhibition. She is also interested in sustainable communication. She is the author of various educational materials, exhibitions and trails. Most recently she co-created an example exhibition ZOOM, an exhibition 'Varied lives in varied forest', an immersive audio walk 'Pearls among the dross' and a book 'Call of Brno – small ideas for big towns'.

Zuzana Jakobova is a project manager from TEREZA Association and an expert in the field of environmental education. She is the country coordinator of Young Reporters for the Environment, and Director and leader of the Eco-publica award for journalists. She coordinated the development of the ZOOM exhibition.

Lost and found

Angus Forbes (Germany)

So-called 'lost places' hold a strange fascination for us. They seem to preserve relics and encapsulate history within a dance of decay and new growth. The Spreepark is a new public park arising from the overgrown ruins of the GDR's once famous 'Kulturpark Plänterwald' in Berlin. The city's vision is to secure this, one of the last truly anarchistic zones of Berlin, and to let it be experienced, repurposed and reinterpreted in perpetuity by visitors, artists and wildlife alike. As one of the project's senior landscape architects, I am responsible for developing experience zones based upon the relics of the funpark. An old car-ride will be transformed into a walkable artwork winding through the forest. A concrete boating canal will be reinterpreted as a dry river bed, providing food for thought on climate change and the scarcity of resources, but also providing niches for adaptive flora and fauna. Let's take a virtual walk outside our interpretive comfort zone and into the Spreepark.

Angus Forbes is from Scotland, UK, and has 25 years of experience as a landscape architect working in Berlin, Germany. He has been a member of Interpret Europe since 2017, is currently IE Subject Coordinator for Architecture and was author of the 2020 Interpret Europe publication 'Heritage Interpretation for Architects and Landscape Architects'.

Diffractive interpretation heritage and history through cinema

Ruxandra Ghițescu (Romania)

Reframing films that challenge our main ideologies within the spaces of heritage sites opens possibilities for dialogue about the individual agency in creating, preserving and re-interpreting heritage. Through film projections and open discussions, heritage and history become a fluid material that one can re-edit and re-mix, gaining agency over heritage and integrating marginalised perspectives. Radu Jude makes a purpose in re-visiting and re-telling history, shifting the perspective to the marginalised. Examples of this are Dead Nation (2017), which incorporates the photo collection of Costică Acsinte, and The Exit of the Trains (2020) co-directed with historian Adrian Cioflâncă, composed entirely of archive documents. Montage films can be personalised by visitors by adding commentaries, memories or family stories, enhancing history by personal touch. The intersection of grand and micro-narratives, as well as a diffractive approach, open up possibilities of meaning and enable imaginative disruption of otherwise orderly environments.

Ruxandra Ghițescu is a Romanian filmmaker and researcher, a graduate student of the Media Art School, in Karlsruhe, Germany. She is currently a PhD student at the University of Bucharest, "Space, Image, Text, Territory" Doctoral School, Center of Excellence in Image Studies and she works as an associate lecturer at the Ovidius University, Constanța, for the Art of Film Acting Master's programme. Her debut feature, Otto the Barbarian, premiered in 2020 and received several awards.

Interpretive plan as a key tool for EU-funded interventions

Raluca Grama & Florentina Murea-Matache (Romania)

The workshop, dedicated to the inclusion of the interpretive plan as a key tool for EU-funded interventions with potential impact upon cultural heritage will take the form of a lively discussion to underline how this tool could be applied in Romania. Based on a specific template proposed by the National Institute of Heritage, the debate will focus on the further development of this document and on the framework for its implementation in the new Regional Operational Programs (ROP).
The main aims of EU-funded interventions with impact upon cultural heritage are to improve the economic competitiveness and living conditions for local and regional communities in Romania. The practice has shown that the EU programmes funding guides could be improved in order to better correlate with the heritage conservation domain and the current issues found in this field, as immovable heritage can only be properly conserved when considered in relation to its context, which often includes natural, movable and immaterial heritage. As such, through its projects and initiatives, the National Institute of Heritage has proposed different actions in order to improve the framework for EU-funded heritage interventions (mainly the ROP), one of them being the elaboration and implementation of interpretive plans based on intrinsic values – tangible and intangible – of historic monuments.

Raluca Grama is an architect and the Head of the World Heritage Department within the National Institute of Heritage in Romania. With more than ten years' experience in cultural heritage, in both governamental and non-governamental organisations, she is the alumni

of Raymond Lemaire International Center for Conservation, K.U.Leuven, Belgium and 'Ion Mincu' University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest, Romania.

Florentina Murea-Matache is an architect and a specialist on built heritage of the Ministry of Culture from Romania. Since 2010, she has been involved in numerous research and heritage value recognition projects. In 2016, she started working at the National Institute of Heritage, the main public institution in Romania dealing with the research, documentation and protection of cultural heritage.

The National Institute of Heritage is the main central body, under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, responsible for implementing public policies in the field of cultural heritage in Romania. NIH is charged with activities of research, inventory, protection and enhancement of all categories of cultural heritage – immovable, movable, intangible and digital.

Interpretation in the secret garden

Barbara Gołębiowska (Poland)

This workshop will invite participants to the secret garden surrounding the historic house of the Piłsudski family in Sulejówek near Warsaw (Poland). The house and the garden are the heart of the unique museum complex, consisting of two complementary parts: the multimedia permanent exhibition in the modern building and the 'secret' space of the old manor house and the garden, where the everyday life of Piłsudski family is portrayed. Thanks to the authentic context, guests can experience a multi-sensory immersion in history, travelling back in time in small groups led by a guide-interpreter. The first part of the workshop will present the interpretation idea of a secret garden, a learning landscape where you can take refuge but also be inspired to act. Dilemmas and problems related to space in the context of sustainability, participation and public use will be discussed. In the second part, we will create our own secret gardens, using local natural resources.

Barbara Gołębiowska is an art historian, educator and a museum professional with 20 years of experience. She is Head of the Education Department at the Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejówek, Poland, and a member of the board of the Association of Museum Educators. She is a trainer of the Echocast, a practice-oriented training programme for customer service in heritage institutions. Barbara has been a member of IE since 2022, after attending Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) and Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) courses.

Learning Landscape Lusatia: Potentials and challenges of a model project

Claudia Grünberg & Sebastian Zoepp (Germany)

The region of Lusatia is rich in cultural and natural landscapes. Four have been designated by UNESCO: World Heritage Muskauer Park, Geopark Muskau Arch and the Biosphere Reserves Spreewald and Upper Lusatia Heath and Pond Landscape. These sites have now agreed to foster and realise the sites' potential to support the sustainable transformation of the region and to use heritage interpretation as a tool. Standing at the beginning of making Lusatia a learning landscape and a role model for heritage interpretation applied at varied

UNESCO-sites, we want to map the central benefits and challenges, share strategies and already achieved results, but also debate the challenges and questions: What values and meanings should the sites have in the transformation process? How to motivate local stakeholders for heritage interpretation? How to institutionalise responsibilities and who takes the lead? What actions and training must be implemented?

Claudia Grünberg holds a Master's in World Heritage Studies and has eight years of experience in design and implementation of various education and interpretation projects at World Heritage Sites for a variety of stakeholders. She developed an interpretation strategy for UNESCO-designated sites in Lusatia outlining their potential for sustainable development in the transformation process.

Sebastian Zoepp started using heritage interpretation for designing and implementing guided tours in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Spreewald more than 20 years ago. As an IE certified interpretive trainer he is now passing on his practical experience to various target groups, such as park rangers and tour guides.

Young Climate Action for World Heritage (YCAWH)

Claudia Grünberg & Sandra Nasser (Germany)

Climate change is the most alarming threat to heritage and a main concern of young people. Hence, the transnational education project YCAWH addresses the threats of climate change and the potential of heritage for driving sustainable action at World Heritage Sites with young people. By combining social, individual, cognitive, emotional, reflective and practical approaches on site, 80 school students from five European countries were motivated to take responsibility: They developed tailor-suited projects, like Escape Rooms, podcasts or peer-to-peer offers, communicating to the communities the site's values and how they are threatened. Teachers, school communities and World Heritage actors actively worked together in this process, fostering a learning landscape on climate change and World Heritage. YCAWH is a suitable model project to critically reflect on how young people can practice sustainable attitudes and action at heritage sites and what structures and methods are needed for this.

Claudia Grünberg holds a Master's in World Heritage Studies and has eight years of experience in design and implementation of various education and interpretation projects at World Heritage Sites for a variety of stakeholders. She developed an interpretation strategy for UNESCO-designated sites in Lusatia outlining their potential for sustainable development in the transformation process.
Sandra Nasser holds a Master's in World Heritage Studies and has worked in drafting World Heritage tentative lists entries. She contributed to the publication 'Heritage Conservation Revealed' (BTU Cottbus) with an article concerning awareness-raising and communication to foster behavioural change, touching upon Bandura's Social Cognitive theory and Burnet's five steps to reaching behavioural change.

Shelving the 'expert' – Embracing the multidimensional nature of heritage landscapes

Małgorzata Hordyniec (Poland)

As a cultural institution, involved in heritage interpretation, we interpret and share the stories of our region. But whose stories do we tell? What language do we use? And how do these stories affect the local identity? Being an 'expert' undeniably gives one the necessary tools to interpret local heritage landscapes. But what if we shelve the role of an expert and embrace the local perspective? Flip the power structure and pass the agency to local people? Through 25 years of organising the Malopolska Days of Cultural Heritage we learnt to connect with local communities and evoke the stories that do not fit our interpretive frames but are meaningful to people. The need for capturing those stories gave life to a new project: Evoked Stories. Instead of using the local perspective on heritage as a support for our stories, we wanted to become a support for the local heritage communities to tell their story. Thus embracing the multidimensional nature of heritage landscapes.

Małgorzata Hordyniec is a social anthropologist by education (University of Warsaw, Poland) and avocation. She is an active member of the Interpret Europe network, a certified interpretive guide, and a certified interpretive writer. At Malopolska Institute of Culture in Krakow, she acts as a 'field worker', cooperating with local communities and cultural institutions on heritage interpretation.

Which programme and presenter variables predict successful outcomes for personal interpretation?

Glen Hvenegaard et al (Canada)

Many park agencies do not effectively evaluate progress toward goals of personal interpretation programmes. This study identified characteristics of the programmes, interpreters, and audiences affecting the outcomes of personal interpretation. In 2018-19, we attended 135 programmes in Alberta's provincial parks (evaluating programme and interpreter characteristics), interviewed interpreters, and surveyed 763 attendees about six potential interpretive outcomes. We followed Stern and Powell's (2013) approach to create predictor indices. Programme connections and organisation were positively correlated with learning outcomes. Programme connections and group size were positively correlated with satisfaction and some park-friendly behaviours. Programme length was inversely correlated with positive memories. Interpreter characteristics had few correlations with interpretive outcomes. These results can help interpretive planners and frontline staff manage and improve target outcomes.

Glen Hvenegaard currently teaches interpretation, park management, and physical geography in the University of Alberta's Environmental Science programme. He is a member of the World Commission on Protected Areas. He and his colleagues have published extensively on interpretation effectiveness, park management, bird conservation, and nature-based tourism. Currently, he conducts research on the effectiveness of interpretation programmes, and was an interpreter with Alberta Parks.

Elizabeth Halpenny (Professor) and **Clara-Jane Blye** (PhD student) are in the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. **Julie Ostrem** is an interpreter with Parks Canada at Elk Island National Park, Alberta.

Celebrating the difference with heritage interpretation

Ivana Jagić Boljat (Croatia)

In this fun and interactive workshop participants will explore the unique elements of heritage on the site to discover the unique perspectives among people. We will then offer ideas of celebrating the diversity and tolerance as enriching elements of our common future. This workshop is meant for interpretive guides and programme creators who search for inspiration in order to engage their participants in discovering their uniqueness, celebrating differences and bringing up important values shared among our society. Participants will need to have appropriate shoes, clothes and equipment for different weather conditions, as one part of the workshop will be outside.

Ivana Jagic Boljat lives and works in Croatia. She holds a Master's degree in Tourism, and in Museology and Heritage Management. She is an IE certified interpretive trainer for guides and a certified interpretive writer. Ivana is the owner of Visitor Friendly, a small business for sustainable development and education. Within her previous employment at Muses Ltd, she gained a vast experience in the development of heritage interpretation projects for more than 20 municipalities, cities and protected nature areas, where she worked on interpretive planning of award winning interactive exhibitions, thematic trails, programmes and other interpretive strategies. She is the author of several scientific articles and manuals in the field of heritage interpretation. She is a member of the executive board of the Croatian Association for Heritage Interpretation and is also a tour guide for the city of Zagreb and Zagreb County.

The unsung adventures of an ubiquitous interpreter – The audio guide

Cristina Locatelli (Italy)

The first handheld interpretive device was a hacked hearing aid working through radio waves and it was soon abandoned by its champion because it was financially unsustainable. That was back in 1952. Fast forward twenty years and these 'gadgets' would become the most popular and ubiquitous device ever to enter the heritage sector. It was indeed a fortuitous coincidence that the audio guide accompanied the first blockbuster exhibition in the USA, or perhaps it was also thanks to its interpretive support that the people finally gained access to what had been until then an elitist entertainment. This presentation will offer an overview on historical events and consider how technological advancements, like random access to audio tracks, have impacted heritage interpretation. A final reflection will be dedicated to how new technologies (e.g. augmented reality) could contribute to turning living landscapes into learning ones, affording people a glimpse of potential futures to come.

Cristina Locatelli is a specialist in Museum Studies and has worked for the Dalì Foundation in Spain and for the Learning Department at the Tate in London, UK. She has developed educational tours, multimedia and audio guides, in-gallery texts and booklets, family events and artist-made visitor resources. After a research experience in Digital Humanities, she has

worked developing digital content and consulting on museum accessibility since 2018.

Locality in learning landscapes: Rural, suburban, municipal – the many aspects of a museum site

Maaret Louhelainen (Finland)

Lagstad school was built as the first public primary education school in Espoo in 1873. Located in the school teacher's house, the aim is to develop a new museum concept, which would enable independent use, attract new audiences reflecting the multicultural neighbourhood and act as a platform for participation and promotion of equal access to education. The surroundings of Lagstad school consist of rich heritage with two nationally significant cultural landscapes: The Great Coastal Route and medieval Espoo Cathedral. The area has still rural traces of old farmhouses yet it is situated in the middle of modern suburbia, thus telling a story of a developing city and society. Key points of a workshop held for local residents will also be shared in the presentation: What are the elements that makes the local community's vicinity important? What could add to the sense of belonging to the local area? and What kind of cooperation is needed to foster their locality?

Maaret Louhelainen is a heritage professional in cultural landscapes and the built environment. She has worked in the museum field for over 15 years and is currently working as a curator of cultural environments in Espoo City Museum, where they hold a Master's degree in landscape studies, museology and cultural history and restoration of historic buildings.

The power of the curator: Exploring the influence of physical and interpersonal characteristics on exhibit interpretation

Ivana Manevska (Serbia)

According to Thompson (1993), by visiting a museum, people learn and obtain information, gain enjoyment and acquire an aesthetic, exciting experience. These emotional effects have a positive influence on a visitor's satisfaction. This research explored the physical and interpersonal characteristics of the curators, volunteers, gallery and tour guides, who guided visitors at a thematic exhibition. The diverse spectrum of interpreter profiles provided an ideal opportunity to gain insight into the visitor experience. A questionnaire was distributed to visitors at the Gallery Matica Srpska to request feedback on their guided tour experiences at the Exhibition Uros Predic: A Life Dedicated to Beauty and Art. In the survey, 313 visitors over the age of 18 were interviewed and they reviewed the interpretive approach of the guides and volunteers. The findings of this research are relevant to managers of cultural institutions and in particular to curators and tour and gallery guides.

Ivana Manevska's experience with interpretation began in 2022 when she decided to volunteer at the Gallery of Matica Srpska as a curator assistant. She was also really interested in the field of interpretation and did her Master's thesis on 'Possibilities for better interpretation of cultural and natural heritage in National Park Fruska Gora'. In the spring of 2022 Ivana did an internship at the Novi Sad Children's Cultural Center, where she helped guide children through an exhibition and literature route in the National Park Fruska Gora. She has also

conducted two post-doctoral research projects: one explored the use of immersive technologies as interpretative tools in cultural institutions, and the second focused on the impact of curators' physical and interpersonal characteristics on the interpretation of exhibits.

Visitor research and segmentation – Does it still make sense?

Michal Medek (Czech Republic)

The presentation will challenge the mechanical approach to visitor segmentation and broaden perspectives on visitor research. It will also discuss several examples of good and bad practice in visitor research and thus foster reflection on the theory and practice of heritage interpretation as a discipline.

Michal Medek has been pioneering the field of heritage interpretation in the Czech Republic for 15 years. He studied HI at UHI, UK, receiving PgCert apart from having MSc. in Geography, Biology and Geology (combined) and MA in Environmental Humanities. Michal works on various interpretation projects in his role as director of the Czech Institute for Heritage Interpretation and he also lectures in HI at Masaryk University, Brno. Michal is an IE certified interpretive trainer for guides, writers and planners.

Heritage interpretation learning landscapes: A view from higher education

Zrinka Mileusnić (Slovenia)

Universities are mainly viewed as formal institutions with a closed and academic approach to teaching about heritage and a minor impact on heritage interpretation for the general public. This presentation will show an example of a strategic system of teaching heritage in formal and informal activities that include different types of learners. By adapting the teaching for each learning group, we are implementing various levels of heritage interpretation. We will look at the way of teaching that has led to the establishment of the UNESCO Chair of Interpretation and Education for Enhancing Integrated Heritage Approaches, along with its activities on establishing complex and integrated learning landscapes by intertwining formal and informal teaching for different types of learners. This includes considering the environment from the aspect of cultural and natural heritage and fostering the transfer of knowledge from the public to the formal teaching environments and vice versa.

Zrinka Mileusnić is the head of the Department of Archaeology and Heritage at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Primorska in Slovenia. She is also an active member and one of the founders of the UNESCO Chair of Interpretation and Education for Enhancing Integrated Heritage Approaches. She has been involved in different projects and activities of heritage promotion and heritage education for different types of learners. She also organises the International summer schools of museology. She teaches different heritage courses and integrates interactive types of learning and teaching, including students and local public and local heritage.

Terrorscapes, leisurescapes, migrantscapes? (Re)interpreting European heritage sites associated with expulsions and forced migrations in the wake of the 2015 migrant crisis

Eleonora Narvelius (Sweden)

Although iconography of contemporary global migrations is quite well-established, it is not an easy task to interpret European heritage sites and landscapes associated with historical forced displacements for the newcomers (global migrants, refugees and persons under the Temporary Protection Directive, among others). The presentation will focus on three heritage sites and the surrounding landscapes associated with memories about the expulsions and forced displacements of the 20th century: the historical park of Monte Sole (Italy), Museu Memorial de l'Exili (Spain) and Museum of the resettled and expellees in Pławna Górna (Poland). The argument runs that complexity of their characteristics, owing to their often ethically contrasting but in practice not mutually exclusive functionality (being a terrorscape does not exclude the opportunity of being simultaneously a leisurescape), paves the way for new interpretations. In the long run, the ambition should be to open these narratives for participation and engagement of newly arrived migrant groups.

Eleonora Narvelius is a university lecturer in Applied Cultural Studies at Lund University where she has studied the heritage of forced migrations and vanished European populations since 2012. Critical Heritage Studies is one of her key research interests. She has regularly visited ACHS conferences and published on the subject of Europeanisation of cultural heritage in Ukraine, Poland and Sweden.

The collaborative art of weaving together heritage

Eliza Pătrașcu (Romania)

This workshop will combine a physical exploration of space through weaving, with a discussion about the ways in which site-specific art initiatives can help us better understand the potential of engaging with heritage buildings. At its core, weaving is a form of intergenerational, collective storytelling through yarn, that has a long tradition of being used by artists from marginalised groups as a way of re-appropriating space and revealing hidden or forgotten histories. While learning the basics of creative weaving, we shall talk about its place in the history of contemporary art, and how textile artists have used the concepts of heritage, space, and community in order to promote inclusivity. We shall also discuss the metaphorical and relational weaving together of public and personal narratives in order to bring a building back into the city's social life, focusing on the Malmaison Studios initiative and how artists there work with the building's deep history and trauma.

Eliza Pătrașcu is an artist with a background in visual anthropology. She graduated from Goldsmiths University and has since done extensive research on how textiles can be used to create inclusive spaces. She has spent three years working as an art facilitator with the CEN8 NGO and is currently doing PhD research on how artistic initiatives born in derelict buildings can help us understand the politics and plurality of emptiness.

Touch, see, hear: The Geopark's heritage explained through inclusive learning techniques

Adina-Maria Popa, Loredana Adriana Patrascoiu & Cristina Toma (Romania)

Learning about natural and cultural heritage is among the objectives of the Hateg Country UNESCO Global Geopark. An interdisciplinary team of teachers and students from the University of Bucharest is working on implementing a way to facilitate learning experiences. We promote universal design learning in the context provided by the interpretation of science through storytelling with digital support through an open-access platform. Graphic representations can be explored independently by any person, regardless of the learning mode (universal design), using a mobile application based on innovative software. Information is structured using storytelling techniques. With the help of artificial intelligence algorithms, it is possible to track images with fingers, and the information is read through voiceover via a QR code. We can customise the information in specific areas of the picture. Thus, educational and therapeutic interest is maintained, and learning experiences are eased.

Adina-Maria Popa is a team member of the Hateg Country UNESCO Global Geopark Romania. She coordinates the EduGeopark network to develop educational programmes for students and teachers. Adina is also in charge of the Geopark's PR & communication and is a specialist in various interpretive projects of the geopark. She has been a member of Interpret Europe since 2021.

Loredana–Adriana Pătrășcoiu, from the University of Bucharest, has 20 years of experience in education quality management and services. She has initiated local and international projects for school inclusion of children with special needs, promoting quality for all.

Cristina Toma is doing a PhD in Geoheritage Interpretation at the Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, and is an interpretation expert for Hațeg Country UNESCO Global Geopark. She has been a member of Interpret Europe since 2020 and is IE's subject coordinator for Geological Heritage.

Learning landscapes as an educational tool for heritage interpretation – The case of the Kalemegdan fortress in Belgrade

Ana Radovanac Živanov (Serbia)

Learning landscapes allow us to generate personalised learning environments. They can also respond to visitors' needs by providing an audiovisual, intuitive, and functional environment that allows us to capture visitor attention, making the content more attractive, achieving greater retention of concepts, and enhancing their digital competence. The presentation will showcase a project of the civil society in Belgrade around the Fin de siècle and during the first decades of the 20th century. More than any other part of today's Belgrade, the walls of Kalemegdan fortress witnessed many important historical events and preserves the largest part of the cultural heritage of our country. Apart from all the historical layers that we can trace, the development of civil society can also be linked to the life of the fortress and the grandiose park that surrounds it. Several

phenomena are encountered, all supported by a dozen interpretive services. We will look at some evaluation results and recognise the fundamental elements that characterise learning landscapes, which could be used for future planning as well as for benchmarking.

Ana Radovanac Živanov is an Art Historian and licensed conservator, and has worked at the Institute for the protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia since 2011. She is an associate in the Research Department and also a PhD candidate in History of Art, Museology and Seminar of Heritage studies, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade University. Ana primarily deals with the protection of immovable cultural assets, but also has contact with heritage revitalisation, which includes interpretation.

Heritage Quest – The wisdom of the past

Roxana-Talida Roman (Romania)

When we talk about future sustainable developments we tend to forget that in the past most traditional communities used to be sustainable, their livelihoods became unsustainable just around the time local communities were cut out of heritage. Cultural heritage as inheritance of past worlds narrates a story not just about a certain type of anthropogenic interventions but also about socio-political contexts, cultural identity and ways of living, belonging and resilience. Heritage interpretation has the potential to bring widely forgotten features of the past to life and make them actively matter in the present. By engaging the UNESCO serial, 'The Wooden Churches of Maramureș', the concept of creating learning landscapes through heritage interpretation can be probed. Approaching heritage from a value-based interpretation perspective fosters an understanding of how the past can empower the present by opposing time validated good practice scenarios to seemingly lofty global challenges.

Roxana-Talida Roman's areas of expertise include research of the human past, heritage assessment, and interpretation of material culture through hands-on research. Being characterised by an interdisciplinary approach to research, she sees cultural heritage as an antidote to violence, conflicts and social development issues due to its capacity to advance the promotion of knowledge, mutual celebration of diversity and cultural pluralism.

Inclusiveness through cognitive accessible heritage interpretation on heritage sites in Israel

Vered Sabag (Israel)

People with intellectual disabilities, autism, learning disabilities and cognitive decline are a community that tends to be forgotten. They experience barriers such as complexity in understanding the site's story, difficulty sensing the exhibits behind display cases, and more.
In our work in heritage sites and museums in Israel, we make the sites accessible to the community of visitors with cognitive disabilities .We have created methods that make them accessible by using:

- Sensory sets, replicas and 3D models
- Videos, audio tour systems and information brochures in simple language
- Scripts in simple language, using a lot of senses and involving the participants during the tour

All of these allow the delivery to be accessible to communities that until now have been prevented from reaching due to cognitive barriers. The presentation will review examples from Israel's top heritage sites, using simple and inexpensive interpretation, which enable a response to wider and more diverse audiences.

Vered Sabag is the Vice President of Education at the Lotem Association, that has been guiding trips and activities in nature for people with disabilities for the past 20 years. She also manages the 'Get to Know' Accessible Centre, which promotes accessibility projects in Israel. Vared is specialised in the development of accessibility projects in museums and heritage sites and works with the leading museums in Israel.

Interpretation of biodiversity and heritage of pile dwellings at Ljubljansko barje, Slovenia

Aleš Smrekar (Slovenia)

The presentation will focus on the interpretation of the biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage of pile dwellings in the area of UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps. The aim is to illustrate the organic link between the conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage (i.e. pile dwellings) at the Ljubljansko barje using a combination of classic and modern methods and interpretation tools. For this purpose, the interpretation centre, the connecting educational trail and the reconstructed pile dwelling settlement were built and equipped with interpretation tools.

Aleš Smrekar holds a PhD in Geography and is Head of the Institute's Department of Environmental Protection. He is also an IE certified interpretive guide and IE certified interpretive writer. He mainly deals with nature conservation, but also works on interpretation of natural and cultural heritage. He is the co-author of the content presented, responsible for nature interpretation.

When a window is more than a window... or not. The restoration of the Water Treatment Plant in Giurgiu

Loredana Stasisin (Romania)

The Water Treatment Plant in Giurgiu, was built in 1910 as a response to an acute sanitary local crisis and after long debates and financial struggle. Still in operation, the actual historical monument preserves, in-situ, equipment and installations dating back to 1928-29, such as the Swiss Sülzer pumps, as well as the single-girder overhead travelling crane installed prior to WWI, which is still in use. The built structure reveals today the extended shape from the late 1920s and the exterior decorations, bearing significant traces of the arguable interventions from the early 2000s. In 2022, Apa Service Giurgiu was granted a fund by the National Institute of Heritage to develop a complex restoration solution aiming not only to preserve the architectural, technical and historical structures, but to activate the space as a cultural and educational local landmark. During the first development phase of the project, one particular aspect found its way to the centre of the debate among the multitude of stakeholders involved: the windows. In an attempt to extrapolate this particular case study from Giurgiu to the systemic complexity of the dynamics involved in the negotiation process, the presentation taps into the socio-economic, cultural and political interdependencies that

influence the construction of a foundational philosophy of the intervention.

Loredana Stasisin is a Romanian architect based in Amsterdam. She is specialised in the architectural heritage of the 20th century, following a post-master training in France, at ENSA Paris-Belleville. Since 2014, she has been a member of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies. In 2017, she was awarded the best paper on the topic 'Authenticity and Built Heritage' at the REHAB International Conference in Portugal for a bottom-up comparative urban analysis methodology meant to identify local specificities. She is the president of the Rhabillage Association, an NGO focused on the integration of cultural heritage in the urban development process.

IE Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP): The interpretive planning process in 16 questions

Valya Stergioti (Greece) & Angus Forbes (Germany)

Interpret Europe's Certified Interpretive Planning (CIP) course was developed by IE members with a collective long experience in interpretive planning, as well as training. Though initially intended for planners and architects who wish to integrate value-based heritage interpretation in their work, the CIP course was also used as the basis for the WH-Interp course that IE implemented twice for UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science and Education, for people working at World Heritage Sites.

In this workshop we will present a small taster of the updated CIP course. Participants will get the chance to familiarise themselves with IE's framework for interpretive planning and experiment on how to use it at different heritage sites, in order to develop new learning landscapes.

Valya Stergioti is a freelance interpretive trainer and planner, collaborating with a broad spectrum of European NGOs, public and private institutions. In 2012 she founded Alli Meria, to promote heritage interpretation in Greece and the Balkans. She has been Interpret Europe's Training Coordinator since 2016.

What's your interpretation centre management model?

Tea Štifanić & Manuela Hrvatin (Croatia)

In the past years, Croatia has seen a fruitful development of visitor and interpretation centres fostered by the Ministry of Tourism that financed the construction or renovation of interpretation centres focused on presenting heritage, especially through multimedia experience. But, what happens within the interpretation centre after the ribbon-cutting ceremony? What are the business models in use and to what level are they sustainable? One of the largest pieces of research on management of visitor or interpretation centres in Croatia has been conducted in the frame of the EU project Interreg ADRILINK. A questionnaire sent to 84 interpretation centres in Croatia received a response rate of 55%. The research investigated whether the interpretation centres are managed systematically and strategically with the aim of their sustainability, i.e. whether there are certain models of good management that could be transferred as an example of good practice to other territories.

Tea Štifanić has been managing projects for the Vrsar Tourist Board on heritage interpretation,

community development, participatory decision-making processes and development of events fostering non-economic relations between locals and visitors. She is currently the advisor for visitor and interpretation centers for Vrsar municipality.

Manuela Hrvatin is an IE certified interpretive guide and IE's former Country Coordinator Croatia. She leads the Practice for Interpretation of Cultural Heritage on the Culture and Tourism studies at the University of Juraj Dobrila in Pula and teaches at the postgraduate specialist study Adapting to the European Union at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb.

Opening the borders of foreign language picturebooks in pedagogy – Their use in supporting the creation of learning landscapes through heritage interpretation

Roxana Tanase-Sahanagiu (Romania)

This presentation will analyse the use of picturebooks in foreign languages as catalysts for building heritage-centered themes (taking Tilden's principles into consideration) that can support the creation of learning landscapes. By taking children to patrimonial spaces and introducing them to cultural content via picturebooks in playful organised ways, it is possible to build cultural bridges. Exposing them to various cultural references helps them understand the need to collectively build an inclusive community. Storytelling connects the young audience to the narrative and brings forth cultural themes that the text, illustrations and language may suggest, but not develop further due to lack of context. The next stage is that of exploring the themes more by using other pedagogies that can build a more complex learning experience if employing the participation of interdisciplinary teams that can generate different perspectives that can work together within the sole matrix of learning landscapes.

Roxana Tanase-Sahanagiu enrolled in postgraduate studies at the CESI (Romania's Centre for Excellence in Image Studies) in 2022. Her research focuses on world literature, aspects of literacy in picturebooks and the cultural impact a collection of picturebooks in foreign languages can have on children's education. While she doesn't have formal studies or experience in heritage interpretation, the field intersects with her research and is of high interest.

Peles Terraced Gardens: Heritage interpretation between architecture, landscape and a city

Laura Time & Raluca Zaharia (Romania)

Peleș Castle in Sinaia, the summer residence of the Romanian monarchy, is famous world-wide. However, little is known about its terraced gardens and historical park. Nowadays the typical visitor experiences half of what was once the gardens of King Carol I, the visit being focused on the history, the building and the impressive collection of cultural heritage on display in the museum. At the same time, the site fails to present its undeniable importance in Sinaia's stories and development. Limited knowledge and lack of heritage interpretation adds to the complicated site management

situation (private property historical domain, two castles housing the National Peleș Museum, little maintenance being made). The National Institute of Heritage (INP) has enlisted the Peleș Terraced Gardens Project in the National Restoration Programme, its objective being to preserve, restore and interpret that particular heritage through surveys, field and historical studies.

Laura Time is from Sinaia and has started working on her PhD thesis after discovering heritage interpretation in 2020. The experience spurred on even more passion in developing a detailed analysis of the town's exceptional setting and ways of raising awareness about our heritage's capacity for building communities and enriching their wellbeing. In 2022 she took an IE Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course.

Raluca Zaharia, as a certified heritage specialist and former member of ARCHÉ Association, has given private cultural heritage tours as part of different projects, e.g. The Constanța Casino, part of the Art Nouveau Project (2018), and Cișmigiu Gardens.

Dragons and fires: Community driven geoheritage interpretation in post communist societies

Cristina Toma & Cristian Ciobanu (Romania)

In communism, the theory shows an ideal community where the goods, the values and space are shared equally by the citizens. However, forcing people to be part of a community by giving up their valuables (resources, property, freedom) and often even depriving them of their means of survival, is far from an ideal. The result is that the citizens do not see the newly formed community as their own, but as the State's. The special situation of post-communist Romania makes any attempt of heritage conservation, interpretation and development a difficult challenge. We will present how the concept of UNESCO Global Geoparks is used to tackle these difficulties and to transform problematic rural areas into model territories of development. We will show some of the practical techniques used and illustrate them with case studies from the Hateg Country UNESCO Global Geopark and Buzau Land UNESCO Global Geopark.

Cristina Toma is doing a PhD in Geoheritage Interpretation at the Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, and is an interpretation expert for Hațeg Country UNESCO Global Geopark. She has been a member of Interpret Europe since 2020 and is IE subject coordinator for Geological Heritage.

Cristian Ciobanu works at the Hațeg Country UNESCO Global Geopark, University of Bucharest. His scientific preoccupations include heritage interpretation using space perception, the sacred geography of the Hațeg region, and a whole series of the geographies of perception.

Interpreting the translation

Vanessa Vaio (Italy)

"It is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language that is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work" (Walter Benjamin). In many European countries, heritage interpretation is an emerging profession and there might be other interpreters out there that, while translating English resources, stumble upon the question of accuracy of translation. During the first IE

Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course in Italy (held in Italian language) it became clear that the initial translation no longer reflects changes in the recent development of terminology and interpretive theory, sparking an interesting discussion about the importance of the translation and the meaning of some key terms. Without any ambition to expand the debate with theories of translation, but interested in reaching a better understanding of the concepts, the team of professionals decided to meet again and work on an improved translation of the manual for interpretive guiding. With the indispensable help of experts at Interpret Europe, all key terms were reconsidered in order to make the translation as faithful as possible to the original vesion of the resource. The workshop will share the results of the process, findings about original meanings of key terms, doubts that emerged, and the working methodology in order to help and inpsire interpreters that pave the ground with the first translations in other languages. We will also call for experiences with translations from elsewhere.

Vanessa Vaio is a heritage interpretation consultant with over 28 years of experience and the owner of Studio PAN, an interpretive planning and consulting firm based in Como, Italy. She specialises in interpretation programmes, interpretive masterplanning, and designing and managing the production of interpretation panels and management plans for heritage sites. Vanessa has a multidisciplinary approach and works with a team of professionals to provide integrated solutions for all types of projects. She also provides training for personnel who implement interpretive activities. Vanessa is currently IE's Country Coordinator Italy.

Two villages, eight houses and eight stories from Tinutul Pădurenilor for a sustainable re-interpretation

Mara Vida & Ioan Barsan (Romania)

Romanian villages have preserved an ancient character. This is because the magical and religious activities dominate the soul of the Romanian peasant to the most intimate, colouring all other activities, all expressions of the village life community. Bunila is a township located in the west of the county of Hunedoara, part of Ținutul Pădurenilor (The Foresters Land) – pinnacle villages settled around large, round surfaces that form terraced hills. In the past, most of its inhabitants were employed at the Alun marble quarry, whose history began in the 19th century. Bunila stands out for its unique marble road and the particularity of the local marble in the construction of traditional houses. These villages are now uninhabited and in danger of being modernised. To protect this heritage, we must help people understand it (be it natural environment or anthropogenic), thus giving them the opportunity to collectively reinvent and reinterpret the surrounding space.

Mara Vida discovered heritage interpretation in 2022 when she joined an IE Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course. In her PhD thesis, she is studying the sustainable development of a Metropolitan area from Romania.

Ioan Barsan is an engineer from Sighisoara and is a founding member of the SalvaSat Association whose main objective is to preserve the traditional village and its regional characteristics. We want toachieve the revival of this typical Romanian village, with unchanged customs, with hardworking people and happy in

their simplicity: a village like a huge open-air museum.

The Sh*t Project – 'Number two' in nature responsibly

Ondřej Vitek & Jitka Kořinková (Czech Republic)

The Bohemian Paradise Protected Lanscape Area is one of the most visited protected areas in Czechia. Some visitors leave a lot behind, including their rubbish and biological waste along trails. It is disgusting and it can spread diseases. The Sh*t Project started here to open discussion, to increase knowledge in how and why and to change visitors' behaviour. Project activities focus so far mainly on kids. The success of the project has ignited interest from another areas, thus this good practice is about to spread much more widely.

Ondřej Vitek is a long-term member of Interpret Europe as well as the Czech Alliance for Local Heritage Interpretation. He is an IE certified interpretive guide since 2016 and a certified interpretive trainer since 2018. Ondrej uses his interpretation skills not only in his visitor monitoring and management position in the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, but also in his private activities focused on sustainable tourism. A Czech-made outdoor toilet trowel is the newest item in his e-shop.

Jitka Kořinková has been a director of the Bohemian Paradise Alliance destination agency since 2019. In her job she is focused on sustainable development, local production and local inhabitants' needs. She started The Sh*t Project in Bohemian Paradise as the first destination in the Czech Republic. And now other destinations are going to engage what is the first success on the long way to a clean Czech countryside.

Make do and mend: How costumed live interpretation can seduce visitors into sustainability

Mark Wallis (UK)

In these days of cheap, ready to wear, poorly-made clothing, mass produced in sweatshops, who in the First World now bothers to darn socks or repair clothes? It's so easy to throw them out and replace them with new. But, through the use of costumed live interpretation, visitors to heritage sites and landscapes can learn how, until the recent past, most people lovingly preserved their best clothes (worn on special occasions and Sundays) whilst carefully ensuring the long life of their everyday garments. And this careful behaviour didn't just apply to clothing, but to objects as well, whether useful or ornamental. Visitors to natural or man-made heritage sites, for whatever reason they have come, can perhaps learn how to live a better, more sustainable existence by discovering some of the ways our ancestors coped with life and how they lived with nature (sometimes in harmony, sometimes in conflict). Thus a lively, well-informed, correctly dressed (for the interpreter's sex, class, region, age) costumed interpreter can involve visitors in their stories and create lasting memories that all can share.

Mark Wallis is the founder of Past Pleasures and for 27 years held Europe's largest daily contract for costumed live interpretation, with Historic Royal Palaces in the UK; until Covid struck. Mark has been recognised for his work in the field by the UK's Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI), which made him a Fellow. He continues to train site staff for various

museums and heritage sites in the UK, USA, Hungary and Australia.

The new you: Some basics of costumed live interpretation

Mark Wallis (UK)

Mark has been teaching heritage, museum and gallery staff the skills needed to adopt convincing historical personas for over forty years and he is a firm believer in this method of learning and teaching (if done responsibly). As well as at home in the UK, Mark has trained site staff in the USA, Canada, Australia, Hungary and Croatia (the latter with Valya Stergioti, IE's Training Coordinator).

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IE Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG): A taste of interpretive guiding

Samia Zitouni & Ivana Jagić Boljat (Croatia) & Ondrej Vitek (Czech Republic)

Welcome to Interpret Europe's Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) Taster Workshop, where we invite you to discover the world of interpretive guiding! This interactive session is designed to provide you with a sneak peek into a certification programme that empowers guides and other professionals who present heritage with the interpretive skills and knowledge of creating meaningful connections with natural and cultural heritage. We are excited to share with you the fundamentals of interpretive guiding, including the examples of some practical activities and some theory behind, as well as the organisational aspects of the course.

Samia Zitouni is an IE Certified Interpretive Guide and Trainer. She is also a passionate heritage interpreter and explorer from Zagreb, Croatia. Samia is IE's Webinar Officer for our webinars IE Croatia, delivering webinars in Croatian language. She has worked in tourism for more than 20 years and enjoys building bridges between cultures. She is the creator of Best of Zagreb Walks and owner of a small company, Netragom obrt. She is passionate about exploring sustainable and more conscious travel experiences.

Ondrej Vitek is a long-term member of Interpret Europe as well as the Czech Alliance for Local Heritage Interpretation. He has been an IE Certified Interpretive Guide since 2016 and a Certified Interpretive Trainer since 2018. Ondrej uses his interpretation skills not only in his visitor monitoring and management position in the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, but also in his private activities focused on sustainable tourism.

Ivana Jagic Boljat lives and works in Croatia. She holds a Master's degree in Tourism, and in Museology and Heritage Management. She is an IE Certified Interpretive Trainer for guides and a Certified Interpretive Writer. Ivana is the owner of Visitor Friendly, a small business for sustainable development and education. Within her previous employment at Muses Ltd, she

gained a vast experience in the development of heritage interpretation projects for more than 20 municipalities, cities and protected nature areas, where she worked on interpretive planning of award-winning interactive exhibitions, thematic trails, programmes and other interpretive strategies.