



International Workshop

Constructing and (Re)Presenting Cultural Heritage: Imperial, National, and International Constellations in Eastern Europe - Leipzig, 4-5 May 2023

Organizers: Katja Castryck-Naumann, Yvonne Kleinmann & Stefan Keym

What can be considered as cultural heritage is the result of not only a multitude of negotiations by a broad spectrum of actors that affect self-understanding as well as positioning in the world, but also of changing sociopolitical orders. In reflecting on this perspective, the workshop “**Constructing and (Re)Presenting Cultural Heritage: Imperial, National, and International Constellations in Eastern Europe**”, organized by the coordinators of EEGA’s RA4 “Cultures of Internationalism and Internationalism of Cultures”, **Katja Castryck-Naumann, Yvonne Kleinmann** and **Stefan Keym**, focused on the multifaceted history of the cultural heritage of Eastern Europe.

Cultural heritage in Eastern Europe has often been studied for individual countries in the region. Moving beyond this singular focus, the workshop looked at its construction and (re)presentation from a comparative and transregional point of view. We are guided by the assumption that increasing global interconnections and transfers have played a formative role in the understanding of cultural heritage in the region. Considering the multiple changing and overlapping sociopolitical orders in Eastern Europe, the interplay of imperial, national, and international constellations in debates and practices of cultural heritage under the global condition have been explored.

The workshop also addressed the question of how states, nationalities, and smaller social groups in Eastern Europe have represented themselves in the world and thus positioned themselves in global contexts. It was discussed whether the construction and representation of cultural heritage for the region in the 19th century was particularly important for the nations without a state as well as to what extent transnational and global references have (also implicitly) played a role.

One aspect of the long history of cultural heritage, which becomes increasingly important to consider owing to Russia’s ongoing war against Ukraine, concerns the issue of protecting cultural heritage that is in danger of destruction in times of conflict. Currently, sites of cultural heritage in Ukraine are under threat – a situation that is similar to other parts of the world both past and present. Many artists and cultural workers are fleeing from war-ridden Ukraine or are facing enormous political pressure in Russia. Therefore, the workshop sought to bring back into focus the consequences of war for sites and activists of cultural heritage.

After a warm welcome by **Lena Dallywater** as representative of the EEGA and an introduction to the themes of the workshop by two of the organizers, the presentations started. In the first Panel, **Natalia Syrotynska** presented the “Bohohlasnyk” a collection of spiritual songs by Pochaiiv. The collection shows a multilingual Polish, Ukrainian and Latin language heritage. Syrotynska highlighted especially the ancient Greek influences visible in lyrics and melody of the collection. Next, **Dorothea Warneck** gave an overview of the evolution of the Jewish museum in Mikulo/Nikolsburg (Moravia) since the interwar period and how it was connected to other Jewish museums in CEE.

Panel 2 featured a presentation on the industrial heritage of Łódź by **Geert Castryck**. Drawing on his previous research on the cultural heritage of post-industrial cities, Castryck highlighted how Łódź had developed similarly to i.e. Manchester. He also made clear, that transregional entanglements played an important role in the cities development. **Rahim Rahimov**’s presentation dealt with the history of the Real School in Shusha, which played a major role in Armenian and Azerbaijani history. Rahimov was mainly concerned with the

question of how influential the Real School was on the development of Azerbaijani society, producing some of the most important public figures. The presentation caused a lively discussion about the controversies around cultural heritage claimed by people in conflict.

Lizaveta Lysenka, the sole presentation in Panel 3, acquainted the audience with *Pesinary*, a Soviet Belarusian Vocal and Instrumental Ensemble, and how their work is an important point of reference for the current regime of Belarus, as well as underground culture and protests. A central point was, how closely tied Belarusian identities are to this day to Soviet history and heritage.

In Panel 4, **Melinda Harlov-Csortán** characterised three different phases of managing cultural heritage in Hungary in the recent past, specifically the time before 1989, the time around the regime change and a new phase since the EU accession. To demonstrate this, she centred her presentation around the influence of the UNESCO criteria for heritage sites on Hungarian cultural policy. **Maria Skivko** talked about the development of Samara into a more attractive destination for tourism and the actors and strategies behind it.

Panel 5 featured **Dominika Czarnecka** and **Thomas Ruhland**. Both presentations dealt with colonialist collection practices. **Ruhland** focused on the practices of human skull collection for racial research on the Kalmyk people. Some of these skulls are still in the collection of the University of Halle, as well as other research institutions. **Czarnecka**, drawing on her experience of researching non-European ethnographic collections in Poland, spoke about the de-Germanization of such collections on Polish territory after 1945. This only partly documented practice increased the difficulty of tracing an objects history.

The last panel centred on Ukraine. **Teresa Mazepa** and **Taras Demko** presented the Ukrainian Live Classic project that presents Ukrainian musicians and composers to an international audience. The question which criteria the project uses to determine the identity of musicians as Ukrainian in the centuries before the development of national identities and the nation state sparked an intense discussion. Afterwards, **Oksana Yurkova** spoke about her experience digitizing photos of the interwar period from small Ukrainian museums. Her work demonstrated the importance of digitizing material heritage, as it is often impossible to anticipate when the material objects may be destroyed. Digitization also makes it easier to trace objects, which increases the chances of them being returned eventually.

During the final discussion, the participants shared ideas on possible future events, bringing together multiple projects and building connections between academic researchers and “heritage workers”. Another topic of interest was to work more on conflictual and unwanted heritage, as their importance had made its way into the conference.