



Today's mood: Volunteering for heritage

I travelled to Finland for the first time in the summer of 2019. I flew over this very intricate puzzle of deep blue sea and lush green islands to reach the region of Proper Finland and be part of a very exciting volunteering project. "Traditional wooden techniques at a farm museum" was organised by the Regional Museum of Finland Proper – the name Finland was in medieval times applied only to the south-west part of Finland – and the City of Laitila, in partnership with European Heritage Volunteers. Twelve volunteers from all around the world participated in the project.

The Kauppila Farm Museum was our work site for two weeks. Supervised by three work instructors, we were divided into two groups to complete a shingle-roof replacement, revive sections of traditional spruce-wood fences and restore the dark red colour on the façade of the Kauppila Farm Museum.

Besides this work, I got acquainted with some aspects of Finnish culture. I managed to understand the Finns' high esteem for forests and tranquility, a cultural aspect which will soon turn into intangible heritage. I loved the sauna close to the lake, and the flat ry-

bread. But most of all, right at the end of the programme, I realised that the Finnish community enjoys sticking and working together for a greater good. This is how I found out what *talkoo* is.

In the following paragraphs I would like to gradually let you into the *talkoo* mood, by describing the rich heritage context and its transgenerational worth: the host museum and the techniques we, the volunteers, learned.

So, the working site was accessible by a refreshing four to five kilometres bike ride. We first saw the windmill, the well and the sauna, which was a "must" for

every household. The Kauppila Farm Museum is composed of the main house and a few annexes spread over approximately two hectares of land. The main house is four-winged, so it also has an interior courtyard. Two wings were designed for storage – milk shed, granary and meat storage –, and the other two to accommodate the farmers. A hallway separated this living space into two. On the right hand side lay the heart of the house – the large family room – *tupa* that must have housed every meal together, a large oven, sleeping spaces, long tables and benches to accommodate every member of the household. A small bedroom with finer furniture and embroidered textiles was accessible from this large living room. In the attic above there is additional lodging space, perhaps intended for the farm's staff. To complete this picturesque setting, each floorboard, ceiling beam, wooden utensil, and clay bowl tells a very intimate and warm story. Up to twenty souls could have lived here at once.

Since the predominant material here is wood, we moved to working on the shingle-roof of a shed in the open-air museum. A few steps were necessary to carry out this task successfully. We removed the old shingles and any nails stuck on the underlying beams. We used shovels and hammers. Then we learnt how to overlap fir shingles to avoid water penetration and maximise the life expectancy of this replacement up to another twenty years. Every other shingle is nailed in at a precise point. When shingles are placed correctly, one cannot see any nails from the ground.

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Behind the surface of archaeological excavations

When visiting a heritage site, museum, or exhibition, one usually does not reflect that what one sees is the result of countless specialists working in various fields. They are at work a long time before a site can be presented to the public – at the site itself, but also at other sites, in archives and laboratories. Excavations provide essential knowledge about heritage sites as well as about our history in general. But what does the daily life of an archaeologist look like?

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Exploring heritage during the pandemic

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, museums, galleries, and heritage sites across the world had to close their doors for the safety of all. Yet art and culture were still available online, and sometimes presented in surprising ways. Accessing heritage digitally led to earnest reflections about our relationship with material heritage in the modern age. Can we still feel close to heritage when separated from it by a computer screen?

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Iconoclasm: Now and then

In June 2020, protestors in Bristol toppled a statue of merchant Edward Colston in the city and dumped it into the harbour. The protestors felt the statue should fall, as Edward Colston was involved in the slave trade and should not be recognised in such a public and adulatory manner. Others deplored the act as vandalism and an erasure of history. Yet iconoclasm itself is a historical act that can be traced back to the Romans. Popular opinion and political motivations have always shaped our public monuments.

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Special focus: Ore Mountains

In 2019, the Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Mining Region was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The region is an outstanding cultural landscape covering an area of almost seventy square kilometres in Germany and Czechia. The region has a history of over 800 years of mining, contains countless heritage sites, and has been a key influence in the development of mining technology all over Europe and beyond. Despite the termination of mining practices, its rich intangible heritage is alive till today.

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The ghost of the Thurmhof Schacht

Even though silence seemed so normal in the mining town of Freiberg, on one wintry night in 1950, it was especially deathly quiet. The residents of the two-story house in Thurmhof Schacht could hear every sound from their surroundings. Then, late at night, sudden noises started coming from the ground. The basement had been sealed by the previous owners and never then reopened. The area had previously been a working mining site and thus the residents refrained from exploring it further. However, this sound continued throughout the winters. After months of speculation and ghost stories, the entrance to the basement was unsealed, and there it was! A water wheel!

Not only a water wheel, but a "functioning" water wheel from the water system of the Freiberg mining area, from a former shaft called Thurmhof Schacht. The news spread and various authorities came about to determine the condition of the wheel. Given the consciousness among the residents of their mining heritage, this find was extremely precious.

The mining history of Freiberg goes back to the Middle Ages. Mining operations, which had begun in 1168, ceased in 1968 after 800 years. During those years, the town had perished and been reborn despite the two great fires that destroyed it. It now stands as a witness

to the grit and perseverance of its residents to preserve their heritage, driven by the local phrase „Everything comes from the mine.“ Since the wheel is the last surviving, functional and accessible water wheel in the Freiberg mining area, it could be said that the discovery of the wheel was of extreme importance to the community.

Home to the oldest university of mining and metallurgy in the world – the Freiberg University of Mining and Technology – the town has been inclined towards the protection and preservation of its mining heritage. The mining association Saxonia Freiberg Foundation, whose aim is to "research, maintain and preserve the mining and metallurgical customs and the mining and metallurgical tradition of piety in the Freiberg region", was established in 1993. Since its inception the association has been a means to keep the miners' traditions alive. The basic working of the association is based on community self-engagement.

After the discovery of Thurmhof Schacht water wheel in the 1950s, the work to repair and clean the wheel started in 1985 and a new set of stairs were constructed to make it easily accessible. Thereafter, the structure remained abandoned until the year 2009 when it was only accessed for educational purposes. A new set of management plans were

made in the 2010s to repair and clean the wheel to make it accessible to the public. Saxonia Freiberg Foundation then took up the charge by providing funds of 15,000 Euros and maintaining the site following the conservation. However, it was established that the visitations to the Thurmhof Schacht will be restricted to 300 people per year due to the fragile condition of the shaft. The task of conservation of the wheel was carried out by oldest family-run mill-wheel construc-

tors in Germany, who replaced the axis of the wheel.

Of the original members involved in the shaft's conservation process six elderly gentlemen still volunteer to show the tourists around on occasion. In spite of all the difficulties faced to save this small but irreplaceable part of heritage, the mysterious ghost of the Thurmhof Schacht has endured.

■ Vibhuti Yadav & Zeinab Zahran





Stone Age 101

Life in the Stone Age is a mystery. But luckily, there is a place where we can learn and experience this period of human history both in a scientific and in a fun way.

On the outskirts of the sleepy village of Albersdorf, in northern Germany, an open-air museum is located which aims to reconstruct life from the Stone Age period. It consists of true-to-scale outdoor reconstructions of huts, gardens, and open fire places. There is even a pond with water plants. Half of the museum is a grassy field, for play and work; the other half is a forest, for hunting and gathering. There are alleys and wooden pathways that connect different locations, creating an exciting walk for the visitors. Once you enter the museum you are allowed to stay as long as you'd like. You can even sleep there, which some people indeed do.

Despite the playfulness as described above, everything is based on sound archaeological sources and has genuine scientific value! The open-air museum is actually a field for experimental archaeology. Every year, new elements are added making it worth revisiting. And these experiments don't end with architecture or landscape design, they also stretch into the realm of intangible



heritage. The members of a local association, vigorous in spirit and warm at heart, regularly dress in Stone Age outfits and act out daily life of our prehistoric ancestors.

In this article we compiled three interviews that will give you a 101 lesson about the Stone Age. You will soon agree that this is a secondary world meant for your alter-ego to dwell there and be happy.

Dr. Rüdiger Kelm, Managing Director of the Open-Air Museum

What is an open-air museum?

Open-air museum means it's primarily outdoor-based, rather than a "classic" indoor museum with collections and exhibitions, such as the Museum of Archaeology and Ecology of the County of Dithmarschen in Albersdorf. Both institutions, which are under the same management, interact educationally and provide visitors the chance to see the original findings and other scientific information upon which the reconstructions in the Stone Age Park are based. The reconstructions and models in the Stone

Age Park give a living experience of the circumstances of life in prehistoric times.

What are the challenges and advantages of maintaining such a specific museum?

One challenge is the development and realisation of educational programmes which are both interesting for schools and tourists while maintaining scientific accuracy. But it is a privilege to develop such an interesting institution, in such a beautiful landscape. It is also a privilege for our staff, especially for our educators, to get such direct and emotional reactions to our programs and to our Stone Age Park as a whole.

What will the Stone Age Park look like in ten years?

In ten years, we will have built the so-called "Stone Age House" which will be a new museum building at the entrance of the Stone Age Park. In our Park area, we will develop more infrastructure for the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic surroundings. We will also install permanent museum educators for the different time periods. The whole Stone Age Park will be better structured to offer a

living experience about the oldest times of human history.

Volker Heesch,
Head of the working group

Are the clothes made out of animal skins comfortable for daily use?

Stone Age clothes look great! The visitors are very thrilled when you wear Stone Age clothing, especially if you allow them to wear a piece of it. However, leather-clothes are much different from clothes made out of cotton or wool fabric. They are heavier, but stronger. Wet leather needs a lot of time to dry and during the drying process it becomes hard and you have to walk in it to keep it soft. But you don't need to wash it, and you can wear it for many years without getting worn.

How do children react to Stone Age activities?

Most children are very surprised about education in the Stone Age. They know that there was no school and the Stone Age children didn't study reading or writing. But when we tell them that a ten-year-old child could shoot and skin a rabbit by himself, make a fire with a pie-



ce of wood, and cook the rabbit over the fire – as well as build a small hut and live over the summer alone in the woods – the children are very astonished!

Erika Drews, Chairwoman of the Stone Age Park Friends' Association

What was your main motivation to engage with the community at the Stone Age Park?

I like to do pottery, spinning, and weaving, and it was possible to practise these in the Stone Age Park. For the past four years, I have been the chairwoman of the Stone Age Park Friends' Association, a local group of 730 members. Every year, we have a community of 40 to 50 participants living in the Hunter and Gatherer Age part of the Stone Age Park doing experimental archaeology.

What can we apply from the Stone Age to live more sustainable today?

People in the Stone Age had very good knowledge about nature, for example about edible plants. Also, there was no need to transport fruits or vegetables around the world. They used nearly every part of an animal, not only the meat, but also the bones, furs, skins, horns. So there was very little waste.

The Stone Age Park is a great place for all of us to wonder if we could have lived like our ancestors did 3,000 years ago. If you are living a zero-waste lifestyle, you will rediscover old environmentally-friendly tricks. If you are a lover of museums and being outdoors, this is the perfect mixture of history and fresh air.

■ Mariana Martinho & Petar Petrov



City explorers

Sundays in Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, are ordinarily calm, if not a bit sleepy. But suddenly the melancholy mood was disturbed! Sofia was rocked by a tribe of raucous children shouting, jumping, and pointing excitedly at the historic buildings. Each child wielded a sharp yellow pencil and a big map. Small groups of kids stood immersed in discussion while others tried to orient the map impatiently. Their parents were also there – either restoring order or gazing up at the buildings themselves.

This happens every time when architect Magdalena Rajeva organises the "City Explorer" tour. It is an extraordinary event that encourages children and their families to learn about Bulgaria's rich architectural heritage with fresh eyes.

Rajeva is one of the founders of the non-profit association "Architectural Workshops for Children". She and her colleagues, as well as architecture students, develop practical classes for primary school-aged kids. A series of lessons introduce basic architectural concepts in a fun way. The children usually cut cardboard, build models with sticks and clay, or collect samples

of unique textures, sounds, and colors. They often ponder what it would be like to live in a village versus the city, or if they lived in the future. In one lesson, after watching Star Wars, they tried to build a fantastical city inspired by the movie out of bright plastic plaques and transparent glue.

"It all started with the simple desire to spend more time with our children, to be together even when we work. They inspired us with this format and showed us the path," said Rajeva.

The "City Explorer" tour is a different

kind of workshop. It is an outdoor weekend adventure. Commonly held in Sofia and Plovdiv, it can be arranged in any other town. All you need is an array of interesting buildings, a map, and mom and dad as navigators.

With these tours, Rajeva promotes the idea that the city is like an open book and architecture can be an educational tool. The historic buildings in particular are among the best for this purpose – they can yield a wealth of knowledge. She argues that the children can practice all their school sub-

jects – not only history and the arts, but also math, music, geography, and even gymnastics.

"Can you play the notes of this building for me?" Rajeva asked the children. "For each window clap your hands, and for each column stomp your feet". The first attempts are always clumsy, but quickly the children get the idea, perfect the rhythm, and soon they are making a lot of noise. "Historic buildings often follow rules of symmetry and repetition," she explained. "They form an order. We are searching for it from left to right and back from right to left."

After this short music lesson it is time for architectural gymnastics. If you stand straight and hold your hands to the body you are a column. If you lift them up to 90 degrees – you are a cantilever. Two children can form an arch easily by holding hands. This is just the warm-up. The real exercise is to "build" with these elements the nearby heritage site. Some of the kids play the role of the arched entrance while the others knock on an imaginative door and ask if they can come in.

During the tour, the little explorers have to look around very carefully be-

cause there is an extra mystery task. They have to find some particular architectural details and put them in the correct order. Suddenly an amazing world emerges: eagles, lions, and exotic plants appear on the walls of historic buildings.

One of the tasks that Rajeva spends a lot of energy on is the illustration of the city's changes. She compares archival photos with the current streetscape. The children immediately spot a missing sculpture or a window filled with bricks. But Rajeva insists on naming all the additional elements from our time that are attached to the historic facades and which often block their unique character. Some that make the list are hanging cables, air-conditioning machines, or flushing adds.

At the end of the tour, Rajeva concedes that her goal is not to prepare future architects. Instead, she wants to encourage teamwork, discovery, critical thinking, and above all, for the children to think of new, creative solutions. But one thing is for sure. From the next day on, heritage will never look boring.

■ Petar Petrov



Digging the history: The daily life of an archaeological excavation



When visiting a museum or an archaeological site, people usually don't think about who brought the artefacts to those rooms. Archaeologists aren't usually well-known figures, but their work is really important to bring heritage back to life and uncover history. Then, why is their daily life on the field so unknown, even for those people who enjoy the sites, the artefacts and the history?

Archaeological excavations usually imply that the people working on the field live together for the time the digging takes place. This means that for the first few days on a site, you are sharing your time and space with strangers.

"The first couple of days are always a bit like moving to a new school, you don't know anyone and the work is new, different, exciting." Eoin Byrne, Irish archaeologist

The housing is, in many cases, not in houses per se. Schools, youth hostels and campsites are some of the most common places that archaeologists take over during their campaigns. This means that there is usually one space for relaxing and eating, which may also double as laboratory space for the daily tasks.

"Fieldwork concept is a whole different lifestyle. It's a unique way to experience

the world." Judyta Olszewski, Polish-Canadian PhD candidate

The first day at the excavation demands an explanation of the site itself as well as of the forthcoming work by the person in charge. In many cases, the first days also imply some gardening, weeding or hard digging of the first soil layers, using pickaxes and shovels.

"Fieldwork is the way I feel more connected with the past population and it is a liberating feeling." Uxue Pérez-Arzak, Spanish PhD candidate

Once that modern topsoil layer has been removed, the full archaeological work can start, with careful digging. The spaces that are being excavated, the different structures that are found and even the different soil layers are all carefully registered. Every excavation site has its own map of the different soil layers or stratigraphic units that have been excavated.

"I am moved to think that I am following the clues of the lives of other people who were in that same place a long time ago." María Camps Graupera, Spanish archaeologist

Registering means that every artefact, structure or soil layer has to be written up, photographed or drawn and its coor-

dinates and heights are taken. Labels are created for the bags of artefacts collected. Depending on the research, some soil samples are taken for further investigation. The pictures, coordinates and heights are combined to create photogrammetric models of the site to have as much information available at the time of the interpretation.

"Every time I am in a site working I feel I get the Nirvana: everything is happiness, well-being, calm and peace." Daniel Pérez Legido, Spanish freelance archaeologist

Living together means that free time is also shared. Most teams use their free day to go investigating their surroundings. This usually involves visiting other archaeological areas!

"You feel like you're in a bubble, it's like you're isolated from the world." Jose María Pout Lezaun, Spanish archaeologist

Restorers are working side by side with the archaeologists. Their specific tasks vary depending on the excavation's organisation but mainly they are in charge of extracting delicate artefacts and reconstructing fallen walls.

"My favourite would be probably looking after individual small features myself or processing the finds." Graham Nevin, Irish archaeologist in a commercial company

Some excavations complete their field work with talks for the team and the people of the surrounding locations. Mostly, these talks are related to the work that is being done in the site and as a way to bring the local population closer to the archaeological work, and raise awareness for the need to take care of their heritage. Visits are also common, from local people, schools and journalists that want to get a glimpse of what the archaeologists are doing. Often, the team will appear – covered in dirt – in the local newspaper, radio or TV station while the director explains what they are doing and what is the goal for the campaign.

"Fieldwork is both going on an adventure and arriving home." Mar Vergara Martín, Spanish archaeologist

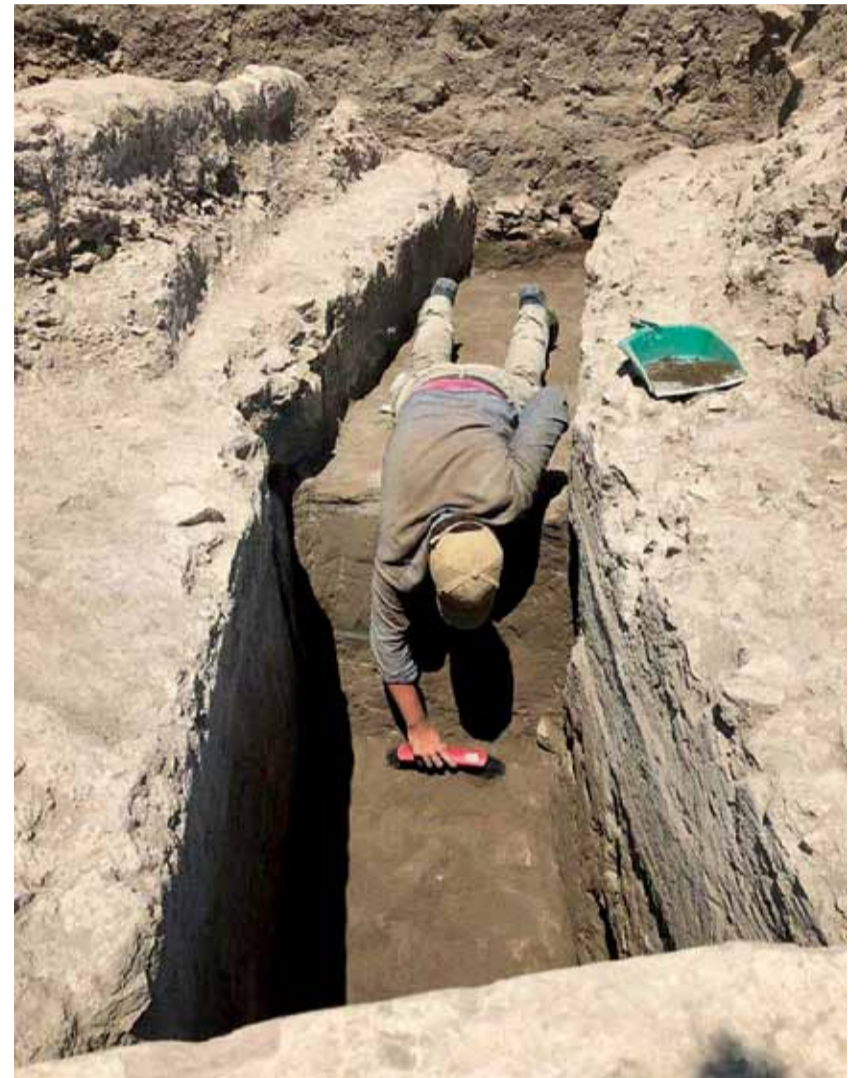
The last day is always bittersweet, it means finishing all the open tasks, leaving everything ready for visits or to cover the site to avoid damage to the remains. But it also means to party and celebrate with the team, those strangers who have become your family for some weeks.

"An excavation is an accumulation of feelings all together. It is a really hard, physical work, but it gives you a lot of emotion and expectation." Sonia Sequera Pineda, Spanish archaeologist in a commercial company

In the fieldwork, you go deep into archaeology, but also into heritage and history. You get to discover the past – one of the best feelings an archaeologist feels. We do a lot of different tasks while on fieldwork and all of them are important. All of those tasks bring history back to life and allows everyone to enjoy those heritage sites.

Next time you visit an archaeological site, or you walk into a museum, think of all those archaeologists that dig up in weird positions, ending up covered in dust and exhausted after the whole day under the sun or in a cave, but who enjoy their work as much as they can.

■ By Aida Loy Madrid



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The shingle placement was respectful of the natural fir fibre which can avoid unnecessary water leaks inside the shed.

This farm needed separate space for living and working. A wooden fence is used for this since the 13th century. Maybe even the Vikings had something similar. The fence was made completely out of wood. First, juniper was used, but in order to protect this rare substance, spruce became preferable. In terms of elasticity and durability, the two wood types are comparable. This traditional fence is called *riukuaita*. We travelled to the nearby forest to gather the raw

materials – the small spruces. Large spruces acted as the main supporting poles. They needed approximately fifty centimetres of sharpening at one end to stick in the soil and burning on the same amount to avoid water damage. Almost perpendicularly, we placed slimmer spruce beams. All these were supported by braided long "ribbons" of split spruce bark. I admit that this last part was the hardest and most time-consuming. The result is satisfying to watch and extremely durable – up to thirty years.

Finally, the two teams reunited to cook the natural paint needed for the

façade of the main house. The recipe required water, rye flour, linseed oil, iron sulphate and iron oxide, in precise proportions. Water and rye flour were the first to boil. The oil is added for elasticity and the sulphate for durability. The oxide granted the vibrant dark red colour which was very fashionable during the 17th century. Then ochre climbed to the top of the trendy colour palette charts. The cooking process required constant stirring and approximately five hours of boiling in a large iron container covered on the exterior for equal heat distribution. This natural dye protects the wood for fifteen to

twenty years while letting it breathe naturally. We had almost enough to finish painting the façade.

During our farewell gathering, we praised each other while admiring the long-lasting results of the team's work. Members of the community joined this gathering and seemed impressed with the immediately visible improvements after only two weeks' work. I think setting an example can be "extra"-communitarian when it comes to heritage.

Members of the local community taught us *talkoo* – a local way of working together, voluntarily, for a set aim and provided an incentive to continue

the work on the farm museum. Perhaps Arne and Martta Kauppila wanted to build a sense of community when they donated their property to Laitila Municipality in 1971, in order to become a farm museum.

This reminded us of the values of local heritage and investment towards its future maintenance. Besides the friends and pretty landscape which we will always remember, traditional wooden architecture techniques have been passed to us to keep and employ when needed.

■ Sorina Neacșu



Norwegian folklore and the art of bringing legends to life

The Norwegian landscape is filled with stories of mythical creatures and fairy tales. The stories have served an important function in giving people an explanation for natural phenomena and how the wild and enchanting, but also dangerous, Norwegian landscape was created. Exploring the natural world and Norwegian intangible cultural heritage is therefore closely linked and should be enjoyed as a journey through the landscape. This is now possible with the new storytelling app Hidden which seeks to bring the myths to life through augmented reality technology.

Myths and nature

In Norwegian folklore the landscape is filled with “hidden people”, such as elves and Haugafolk who were invisible to most humans. Also known as people of the underground, they interacted with humans and animals alike and could become visible only if they wanted to show themselves to humans or if a person was in possession of a special hat. The stories of these mythical figures are often local and connected to unexplained alterations in the landscape around the farm or the animals’ behaviour. People could locate where these invisible helpers or tormentors resided because they were believed to live in mounds, often very visible in the flat farming landscape.

The most famous and characteristic creature from Norwegian folklore is the Troll, a monstrous ugly being with a large nose, messy hair and sometimes three heads. Living in caves in the mountains, the trolls are not friendly to humans, and in several stories they seek to kidnap

beautiful princesses or eat humans when they smell “a Christian man’s blood”. The main obstacle for trolls is that they are not very smart and they freeze to stone when the sun rises. In terms of the myths connection to the landscape this is where the trolls are most visible. Norway is a country known for its fjords and mountains, and the people believed that many of these mountains were fossilised trolls who were captured for eternity as they tried to hide from the sun.

The trolls also served a purpose in explaining many large rocks, “trollstones”, situated on strange places that could not possibly have been moved by humans. It was believed that the trolls had thrown these stones when they were fighting each other. In addition to shaping the landscape the trolls also played a role in disciplining people, making them stay inside during the night and not working on holidays – if humans made too much



noise the trolls would become angry and cook them for dinner.

Another myth deeply connected to the landscape and natural phenomena that has a similar disciplinary aspect is the story of the Northern Lights. It was believed that the magical light on the winter sky could capture you if you were outside in the dark. These stories were told to children so they would not venture outside in the cold and dark night.

The streams and waterfalls of the Norwegian landscape were believed to be inhabited by the Neck, a shape-shifting creature luring in the waters. There are many different stories about the Neck, including one where he turns into a horse and tricks young children to sit on his back and kidnap them. In Norway he is famous for being the master of playing the violin and if someone wanted to learn the art, they had to befriend him. Like many of the other creatures in Norwegian folklore he can be very dangerous and dark, but he can also be helpful to those who know how to approach him. His duality might be linked to the equal dual nature of the element and landscape with which he is linked. The many streams and violent waterfalls of the Norwegian landscape are both enchantingly beautiful, like his music, and very dangerous if you act carelessly.

The legends come to life

The trolls and other mythical creatures are still popular stories, but their importance has been declining with the coming of the modern era. With scientific explanations and other entertainment occupying more of people’s everyday



life, people no longer continue to tell the myths and local stories from one generation to the next. Therefore, many stories, especially the more local ones connected to a specific farm or village, and the rich intangible heritage are in danger of disappearing.

The founders of the new Hidden app wanted to do something about this by engaging young people with their cultural heritage by telling the stories in a new way through mobile technology. In the app there are hundreds of stories available for the user – but they have to walk to the actual location of the selected story to get full access. A map shows the user where to go and gives basic information on whether it is a story about a troll, or a hulder – a beautiful mythical woman like creature with a cow –, or information about a historical site. By linking the stories to the place of origin it seeks to preserve the heritage in the environment in which it was created.

The most innovative aspect of the project is to bring the creatures from the myths and legends to life with the use of augmented reality technology (AR). This technology makes it possible to see and experience the mythical creatures as a part of the reality through the smartphone. Professional artists, programmers and graphic designers worked for months to bring to life these mythical creatures from Norwegian folklore so that humans finely may see them as they shape and interact with the landscape around them. Through visualising storytelling the app seeks to capture the attention of younger users as well as highlighting the importance of experiencing the stories in the landscape they are a part of. The same technology is also used to visually “reconstruct” historical buildings, sites, and ruins so the users may explore it in an accessible way.

■ Wanda Marcussen

Assassin’s Creed and cultural learning: Separating fact from fiction

My favourite thing about playing Assassin’s Creed: Origins wasn’t the ability to leap off of rooftops or defending my avatar against packs of ravenous wolves. Thrilling, but what I valued most were the details. A feature that drew me to Assassin’s Creed was the bonus Discovery Tour, which allows players to break away from gameplay and freely explore educational, factual content as their avatars enabling an immersive, virtually first-hand cultural education. I couldn’t help but wonder to what level were elements portrayed in Assassin’s Creed: Origins factually based on research. How accurately were these historical elements depicted? How much cultural and history education took place during the game, specifically while playing in the Discovery Tour mode?

Assassin’s Creed is an open-world, action-adventure video game released by Ubisoft studios in 2007. Set within different historical epochs it revolves around the eternal struggle between the Assassins, representers of peace and free will, and the Templars, a sect representing order and control, drawing inspiration from Ubisoft’s Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time and Alamut, a novel by Vladimir Bartol (1938). Assassin’s Creed’s gameplay is addictive; its open-world format allows endless exploration of landscapes in hi-res detail. Assassin’s Creed: Origins introduces lead character Layla Hassan, researcher for the fictional Abstergo Industries who embarks on a journey as assassin Bayek. The journey begins at the end of the Ptolemaic period (49–43 BC) in a civilisation that had already existed for years, supporting a

rich and varied culture that included an established Greek presence.

Fact versus fiction

One of the first things Maxime Durand, historian and lead World Designer of Assassin’s Creed, addressed during a conference was the issue of representing distances in ancient Egypt. Geographical distances in the game map have been condensed, allowing the player to move from region to region with speed. Elements like manipulated topography have been selected from factual history and adapted for the game. We should take these changes at face value: it is a game, not a history lesson, but that doesn’t mean that some learning can’t take place during play. Indeed the game has been researched and developed by a large group of historians and experts, a level of expertise that is evident whether you embark on campaigns or explore temples. Jonathan Ore interviewed in 2017 one of the experts behind the game design, Evelyne Ferron, on the challenges of building a virtual ancient Egypt. Ferron expressed some challenges faced during research on ancient Egypt. Ferron’s extensive research was translated into gameplay – farming, animals, trade routes, costume such as the clothes worn by a priest, even climate were sewn together to create a sprawling reflection of ancient Egypt. While fictional elements were extracted from historical facts to weave immersive gameplay,

other elements were kept as close to fact as possible. Historically, mummification was perceived as a sacred and private practice by Egyptians, so when the game designers wanted to portray a mummification ritual carried out in a temple in front of a crowd, Ferron stepped in to offer advice against it. Separating fact from fiction is challenging but manageable, there are elements that are lost in translation or compromised for the sake of more immersive storytelling but they may indeed stimulate an interest in the culture itself.

Follow me to Ancient Egypt

The devil is in the detail and the game was filled with those. From plants to wandering animals, burial treasures found in pyramids, each minor detail has been developed with obvious care. While some elements have been developed in tandem with experts, most events in the main gameplay are distorted facts fictionalised for the game. It’s still exciting to explore, but should be taken with a grain of salt. Doing away with the bloodthirsty violence, neck-stabbing and looting, the Discovery Tour enables exploration of different cities and histories of the Egyptian civilisation with the same visual imagery and movements as gameplay; a virtual museum encouraging the player to access ancient Egyptian in a way perhaps previously unseen – first person virtual discovery of a huge civilisation that today is reflec-

ted in ruins. One is able to explore community, trade and other parts of ancient Egypt in-depth and up close provides an interesting and relatively educational journey if one chooses to delve deeper behind the fiction. As some fans of the game familiar with hieroglyphs pointed out, the hieroglyphs that adorn most of the temple walls in the gameplay and Discovery Tour are in fact close to accurate. An archaeologist and fan of the games went so far as to try and decipher them, posting her progress on Twitter and gathering a lot of interest. A research-centred programme that sparked from Assassin’s Creed: Origins was the Hieroglyphics Initiative, developed by Ubisoft, Google Arts & Culture and the British Museum in 2017. The project uses Artificial Intelligence machine learning to assign a specific line of code to each known hieroglyph, allowing researchers to rapidly decipher the hieroglyphs in the game and also allowing for a rapid exchange of data between researchers and developers. The project was developed after the game was released, and the end result was the Fabricus project, an open-source data-sharing initiative that brought deciphering processes to the public. As I imagine the implications of gaming and cultural learning, it is back to the Animus for me now, onward to more adventures, with another burning question in mind – where can I go next?

■ Lianne Oonwalla



Virtual heritage: Responding to Covid-19

Just after breakfast at the start of a beautiful spring day, I'm gazing at the ancient walls of the Colosseum. It's crowded of course, but I'm not bothered. In fact, I'm relaxing on my couch, still in my pyjamas. It's April 2020, and the closest anyone is getting to Rome's most iconic building is through a virtual tour. The Covid-19 pandemic forced many lives to a standstill, and heritage sites, museums and landmarks along with it. Like many businesses, the heritage sector promptly adapted by going online — at least, as much as possible.

The virtual Colosseum tour features stunning 360-degree panoramic photos and even offers birds-eye perspectives that a normal visitor would never see. But it can't capture the heat of a Roman afternoon, the feeling of dust caught in your throat, the sensation of awe when standing among ancient bricks. Of course, reducing a three-dimensional structure to two dimensions, no matter the resolution, can never quite compare. But what about paintings? Surely, classical museums can make the transition online with more ease?

Yet it's not always the case. The quality of virtual museums varies widely from site to site. The most unimpressive are those that simply allow a "visitor" to

jump in a stilted fashion from gallery to gallery, while looking at pictures of the artefacts they could have found in any Google search. As with the Colosseum, the quality of these digital reproductions is often incredible — if one "visits" the Louvre online, one can get a far closer look at the finer details of the Mona Lisa than ever possible in life. Not to mention the luxury of examining at your leisure, which could never be managed in Paris, where the painting is perpetually swarmed by a crowd of frantic tourists snapping photos.

Despite their high resolution, these paintings fail to evoke the same feeling of awe. Perhaps this is because of the modern scepticism of the digital image, and how we've become desensitised to online images, no matter how high their quality. Photos and videos can be edited and enhanced to an incredible degree — how can we tell if the northern lights are really so vibrant, or van Eyck's detail so fine? Besides, without the comparison to our physical selves, everything becomes standardised, limited to the dimensions of our laptop screens.

There's also a sense of psychological dissociation. Looking at the Mona Lisa online puts it on the same plane as

looking at your friends' cat pictures on Instagram. Without the frame of the museum, a cultural consumer loses the psychological parameters which help them to appreciate the artefacts on display.

For most of us, interacting with heritage is a physical experience. Often, heritage is tied to travel; it's part of a process of cultural immersion that amounts to a temporary change in our daily lives, extending not only to what we see, but what we eat, where we go, and what we do. Without this element, we are not only taking heritage out of its setting but taking ourselves out of the setting in which we are most disposed to appreciate it.

But there are positives to online heritage as well. In addition to the advantages of closer and more careful examination, digitisation is undoubtedly a step towards more egalitarian cultural heritage. Sites that are potentially cost prohibitive or inaccessible to less able-bodied persons are now only a click away. Ultimately, online heritage opens up doors rather than closing them. After all, threats to heritage sites are mounting, making virtual adaptation not just an experiment but an imperative in heritage management. With sites under siege due to global warming, urbanisation, overcrowding, as well as the simple passage of time, a suitable means for preservation is needed now more than ever.

Of all the online heritage options that emerged during lockdown, interactive ones were the best. The Dutch Instagram account Tussen Kunst en Quarantaine created a platform in which people stuck social distancing at home could recreate their favourite paintings with objects found around the house. The idea went viral, with photos pouring in from all over the world, and was quickly adopted by the social media accounts of several museums, including the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and Los Angeles' Getty Museum.

Sorina Neacșu, a cultural manager from Romania, also took part in the challenge. She recreated Pablo Picasso's 1937 portrait of Marie-Therese Walter, which hangs in the Musee Picasso Paris. Neacșu said it was a good idea to keep the audience engaged, as well as to distract herself from the stressful situation going on around her. She describes her process: "Firstly, I thought and looked for one resembling me a little bit. Secondly, I wanted that artwork to be part of a museum collection closed during the pandemic. This second criterion was important because I wanted to have a small contribution towards promoting museums." Ultimately, she felt that taking a detailed look at the painting reminded her how important it is to see the original piece. This highlights an important aspect of this means of online heritage — not only does it foster interaction and inspire creativity but encourages people to visit the real-life galleries when it is safe to do so.

Such projects are a reminder that we are not just observers in the cultural heritage process, but active contributors to it. If anything, this crisis has proved that it's in our nature to adapt creatively and find inspiration even in the darkest of times. Though our bodies might be on lock down, our need for cultural expression cannot.

■ Lindsay Taylor

Questioning traditions



Traditions are the building blocks of culture and heritage. When most people attempt to explain their cultural heritage, they often talk about the various traditions that are practised in their country or their family. But where do these traditions come from? Who decides when a certain practise becomes an unquestionable tradition? Why does society accept most traditions without question?

Perhaps we should be questioning our traditions more. Some customs today are modern incarnations of ancient practises, yet others are much more recent. Either way, the people who developed them, did not live in today's contemporary world. Our world faces many challenges that our ancestors could not have dreamt of. An exponentially growing population is placing considerable strains on our natural resources, which will only worsen as time progresses. This issue is further exacerbated by the effects of climate change. We depend heavily on what the earth has to offer, yet some of our traditions require us to be quite wasteful of these precious resources.

Sometimes these unsustainable traditions take the form of massive festivals that are centred around the mass-usage of a particular resource. At the Carnival of Ivrea in Italy, revellers participate in the Battle of the Oranges. According to Lara Statham of Turin Italy Guide, this tradition that began in 1808 wastes over 700 tonnes of oranges each year. Spain's annual food fight festival, La Tomatina, began as an accident in 1945 according to La Tomatina Tours. Over the years, this fluke has evolved into a full-blown tradition where attendees pelt each other with 120 tonnes of tomatoes. The ancient celebration of Holi in India is celebrated across the country and across the world in countries with Indian migrant communities, including several European countries, with multiple large festivals where participants spray each other with water and coloured powders. While originally made from more sustainable materials for a smaller population, these powders are currently mass-produced from 95% cornstarch. It is also estimated that 30 litres of water per person is used at these festivals. Even if you only count the 2.2 million Indians living in Europe according to the Non Resident Indians Online database, that is still at least 66 million litres of water wasted on this tradition annually what does not even take into account the fact that all those people also have to take a shower after the festivities or that this festival is also celebrated by many other non-Indians living in

Europe. These traditions are fun and have cultural meaning, but can we continue to celebrate this excessive waste of food and water in good conscience when these are precious, scarce resources?

Though these localised practises can be problematic, widespread customs pose a larger threat to maintaining a sustainable future. One such tradition is the Christmas tree. Though its initial usage dates back to pre-Christian Europe, it did not become widespread in the modern era until Queen Victoria of Great Britain began using one in her home in 1840, as Alison Barnes of History Today states. Now, it just would not feel like Christmas without a Christmas tree for the billions of people who celebrate the holiday in 160 countries around the world. There are a few different options available of acquiring these trees. Many people prefer to get a real tree for that authentic Christmas feeling. Every year millions of trees are chopped down to decorate homes for only a few weeks before being tossed in the rubbish pile. Many of these trees come from tree farms where the owners not only grow them for this exact purpose, but also replant more trees to replace the ones lost. This sounds like it could be sustainable, until you take into account the water used to grow the trees and the emissions generated from transporting them from the farms to the stores where they are sold. The other popular choice is to purchase a plastic tree. Plastic is not great for the environment, but at least it can last for many years if cared for properly. Another less common option is for a family to reuse the same living tree for many years by replanting it during the year. Not everyone has access to this more sustainable option though. However, as sustainability becomes more mainstream, perhaps local governments can make public land available for this purpose.

Traditions are important, and they have the power to help us define ourselves. However, it is vital that we begin to scrutinise these practises instead of accepting them without question in perpetuity. Allowing these traditions to evolve into more sustainable versions can help us achieve a more viable future. After all, heritage is dynamic and constantly evolving because the people who practise it are always developing and living in a changing world. It is time to pay more attention to the realities of the world in which we live and to apply them to our beloved heritage traditions.

■ Lisa Brown





Physical and symbolic mobility

The Boboli Obelisk

Modern setting and Ancient Egyptian origin

People move, commodities move, ideas move, and – maybe more surprisingly – monuments move too. Architecture – in its broadest sense – is mostly regarded as earthed and place bound. But if we take a closer look, the notion of the immobility of architecture gains fissures.

One of the first monuments to catch the eye of a modern visitor to the historical Boboli Gardens in Florence is a 6.23 metres high obelisk made of rose granite which is situated just behind the elongated Palazzo Pitti on a central axis. The obelisk, together with a large granite basin, marks the centre of the amphitheatre, which opens on the palace's back façade.

Unlike its bichrome base designed by the Florentine architect Gaspare Paoletti (1727–1813) the obelisk itself is obviously not a product of a modern workshop. The monolith granite block originated from Aswan in southern Egypt and was carved during the reign of Pharaoh Ramesses II (reigned 1279–1213 BC). The hieroglyphic inscription adorning all four sides of the obelisk mentions the Egyptian deity Atum who was the chief god of the ancient city of Heliopolis. Therefore, it seems likely that the monument was initially erected in this city, although the original spatial setting remains unknown.

Roman adventures

In the late 1st century AD under the Roman emperor Domitian, the obelisk was removed to Rome where it decorated the temple complex of the Egyptian goddess Isis on the Campus Martius, the so-called Iseum Campense. Though legal acquisition did sometimes occur, the violent removal of works of art to Rome was already a well-established practice in the Late Republican period (133–27 BC), when Roman generals extracted sculptures and other valuable objects from sanctuaries all over Greece. In the case of the Heliopolitan obelisk, the monument was removed from its original context and experienced a change of function in its new setting, although it was fittingly integrated into a sanctuary of an Egyptian goddess. Meanwhile, it can be assumed that most Romans could not read its hieroglyphic inscription – which, however, did not really matter because it was the obelisk's materiality and specific otherness, in this case “Egyptian” appearance, which attracted the Romans. Not least, the monument in the Iseum Campense was only one of several ancient Egyptian obelisks in Rome.

In the 16th century, the cardinal Ferdinando I de Medici (1549–1609), an offspring of the famous Renaissance banking family, acquired the obelisk and re-erected

it in his Roman villa's garden complex on the Pincian Hill. In this context, the obelisk served yet another function: the solar symbolism of the gilded orb on top of the monolith as well as the four bronze tortoises fitted into the Medici family's astrological and political representation. Moreover, the fact that the obelisk was found on the Campus Martius, which – according to legend – had once been in possession of Rome's last Etruscan king Tarquinius Superbus, was used to propagate the Medici's ambitions to establish a Tuscan kingship in the region referred to as Etruria in antiquity. Soon, the monument was turned into a fountain, following the fate of other obelisks in Rome.

Adorning Florence and symbolic transformations

Finally, the Grand Duke of Tuscany Leopold (1747–1792) decided to relocate the obelisk to Florence in the late 18th century. The monument left Rome in June 1788 and was probably shipped from Rome to Livorno where it continued its journey by land. One can easily imagine the troubles surrounding the transportation of the heavy monolith – which only bears witness to the high amount of symbolic importance, or, indeed, cultural prestige, ascribed to the Heliopolitan obelisk. Eventually in 1790,



the obelisk was set up in the amphitheatre of the Boboli Gardens, taking the place it still occupies today.

Fifty years later, the larger one of two ancient granite basins, which had also been set up in the Villa Medici's garden complex in Rome, was transported to Florence and positioned immediately north of the obelisk forming a monumental ensemble. The Florentine architect Pasquale Poccianti (1774–1858) planned to elevate both monuments on a stepped, oval foundation assembling them, together with two female bronze figures, into a splendid fountain complex oriented towards the palace's back façade. However, the project was never completed and modern visitors to the Boboli Gardens are greeted by the provisional arrangement dating back to the middle of the 19th century.

The Boboli Obelisk exhibits an ext-

raordinary mobile biography: ancient Egyptian Heliopolis – Imperial Rome – Renaissance Villa Medici – 18th century Florence. The ancient Egyptian obelisk was torn out its initial setting and repeatedly inserted in different spatial and cultural contexts which ascribed new meanings to the monument. Meanwhile, the acting persons show a common fascination with ancient Egyptian culture; a phenomenon lasting over many centuries. The movement of the Boboli Obelisk through space and time, not least, illustrates that architecture and architectural monuments can also be mobile, resulting in new spatial constellations and the creative engagement – by fascination with the alien other and/or via absorption into already existing symbol systems – with other cultures.

■ Samuel de Oer Almeida

Culture rooted in nature

Trees as cultural heritage



Trees are part of the non-human natural world, but looking at the cultural heritage from all over the European continent and beyond it is obvious that the celebration and mythical importance of trees, as well as the trees' functions for construction and food production, are also a crucial part of our cultural foundation.

The World Tree

The World Tree, also referred to as the Tree of Knowledge or Tree of Life, is

a classical image in many religions and philosophies from around the world, which often depicts the tree as a centre pillar that connects the underworld, the known world and the heavens. In Norse religion and mythical tradition this tree is known as Yggdrasil and played a crucial part in the cosmology of ancient people in most northern parts of Europe. It is widely accepted that the cosmic tree was believed to be an ash tree. An important story containing Yggdrasil is the myth of when Odin hanged himself in order to

gain knowledge of the runes, the alphabet and sacred symbols used for divination in the north. This is also connected with the ash tree's association with wisdom, knowledge divination in folk belief, which made the ash a sacred tree for the Vikings, sometimes referred to as Aesceling meaning “Men of Ash”.

In addition, the trees' significance was visible in the everyday life of people and in traditional Norse sacrifice rituals. It would have been normal for every farm to have a *tuntre*, a farmtree, which was important to uphold order on the farm and protect people and animals from danger. The *tuntre* was a local representation of the Yggdrasil tree and people sacrificed to the tree so that it would hold control over the “cosmos” of the farm in the same way the Yggdrasil upheld order in the entire universe. In addition to sacred trees belonging to every farm and the private sphere, there were also some more important trees of public religious value. In Scandinavia the most famous was the Sacred Tree of Uppsala, which is believed to have stood next to the temple of Uppsala.

The Sacred Oak

Sacred oaks are associated with the mysterious druids, who today are associated with the ancient people of the British Isles. The ancient Romans described the druids as powerful and wise priests of the Celts, but their exact identity and function is hard to pinpoint, as the source material is inconsistent. However, their link to sacred oaks and groves in general has fascinated researchers and new religious communities for centuries. It is believed that the oak tree played an especially important part in the religious practice of druids and a widely accepted theory is

also that the name druid means, “knowing [or finding] the oak tree” in Celtic. In Pliny the Elder's descriptions of the druids, he describes the Ritual of Oak and Mistletoe. In the ritual the druids are said to be climbing a sacred oak and collecting mistletoe berries, which they used for medicinal purposes and possibly to access spiritual realms. The oak might have been one of the widest celebrated trees in Europe in ancient and pre-Christian times and considered sacred amongst many different cultures across the continent. For example the Greeks considered the oak to be of special importance, where they consulted with the oracle Dodona, second only to Delphi, which was located in a sacred oak grove. Also in Gaul and among the Germanic tribes some of the most well-known sacred trees, often known as Irminsul, were oak trees, including the Donar's Oak, dedicated to Thor. An Irminsul is believed to have been cut down by Carl the Great during his crusade against the Saxons in the 8th century AD.



The Goddess and the Olive Tree

Further south in Europe, another tree is widely celebrated and considered sacred since ancient times: the olive tree. Crucial for cultural and economic development all around the Mediterranean, the tree also possesses a sacred and mythical dimension. This is possibly most visible in Greece. Athens, the centre of the ancient Greek world, was the city of the goddess Athena and mythology tells us that it was the olive tree that made the Athenians choose the goddess of war, fertility and wisdom as their protector. Athena competed with Poseidon over the favour of the people of the new rising city and they each presented the people with a gift. Poseidon created a spring of saltwater at the Acropolis, while Athena created the olive tree and gifted it to the people. The people chose the olive tree, which thereafter became a fundamental ingredient in their culture and civilisation, both in terms of cooking, construction and celebration of kings and athletes, and the city celebrated the goddess by taking her name. Today a moria, an especially important and sacred olive tree, stands on top of the Acropolis. A descendant of the original tree gifted by Athena, the tree symbolises the city's close relationship with the goddess and the importance of the tree in Greek culture through time. On Crete, it is also possible to visit some extraordinary olive trees and learn about another myth connected to sacred trees. One of the oldest olive trees in the world is believed to be located at the island, the Olive Tree of Vouves. The exact age of the tree is not determined, but it is believed to be several thousand years old – yet it still produces new olives every year.

■ Wanda Marcussen

Damnatio memoriae

The last few years have brought increased debates around the cultural significance of toppling monuments. It is enough to remember the heated discourse around the fate of the statue of slave trader Edward Colston, which was torn down from its pedestal during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests in Bristol.

However, iconoclasm is nothing new. Though to some it seems like a radical reaction, it's actually a longstanding tradition that stretches back to ancient Rome, where defacement of statues was a way to express public disapproval. In response to extreme misdeeds, Romans would erase all traces of someone's image and name, a practice called "damnatio memoriae." To be excised from the collective memory of the city was a punishment worse than death in a city where public image and legacy were paramount. In the 16th century, Roman citizens would



use an old statue's base to post signs for venting their frustrations about politics and public life in general. These "talking statues" became a voice for the ordinary people of the city, almost like an early bulletin board.

Throughout the centuries, cases of "vandalism" continued whenever collective values needed readjustment. History is most often decided in the public eye. It's natural for a society's perspective to change, and the cultural landscape will reflect this. But the question remains on how to dispose of unwanted memorials.

An act of destruction can become a memorial of its own. Whether memorialised through photography, video, or another art form, a toppling statue serves as iconic imagery. No less powerful is an empty pedestal, which makes the removed object all the more conspicuous for its absence.

Removing a statue from its plinth does not mean it should be destroyed forever. Statues still serve a purpose as historical artefacts. Much debate has surrounded the educational value of statues. Many who argue that statues should remain claim that they have the power to teach about history, while those who want their removal dismiss this as a naive interpretation of how the public interacts with art. There are better ways to learn complex history than through a public monument, and the fact remains that a statue is an inherent glorification of its subject — simply adding an explanatory plaque does little to change this.



But that doesn't mean that these monuments lack historical value. To historians, statues can provide crucial evidence, not necessarily about the time-period of the person they represent, but about the time-period in which they were erected. If not destined for a long-term storage space, these statues should have a new life in a museum, where the context of their dark history can be fully appreciated by the public at leisure. In this way, statues can continue to "talk" to us, sharing with us not the idealisation of an individual, but insight into the growing values of a society.

An example of this is the Memento Park in Budapest. The park was set up as a way to store the city's Soviet statues, creating a space where the country's

difficult past is commemorated through the monuments, without them staying in Budapest's public spaces. The park works almost like a massive "idolised" Soviet square, with the many monuments placed in symmetrical orientation with the flower bed shaped as a red star in the middle. The site embodies that importance of context. By playing all the monuments in the same space, their narratives are re-contextualised from official, unquestionable "storytellers" to "fossils" of history. This is further heightened by the small exhibition space opened outside the park, which outlines the history of the country's communist dictatorship. On the other hand, the pieces themselves do not have any descriptions apart from the name of the square or

street they originally stood. This allows visitors to imagine the original interaction with monuments, which lacked "context" combined with the physical sensation of the tall, powerful monuments towering over the visitors.

Iconoclasm and the re-contextualisation of existing monuments and other heritage have been an important way of questioning dominant historical narratives. But what do we have to consider when creating our present "monuments" and narratives? What can we do in the present to create and represent European heritage and institutions that include more diverse voices and that are able to cast a critical eye on the past?

■ Karen Kiss & Lindsay Taylor

The mystery of the beheaded sculpture of the Queen of Pannonia

Have you ever dreamed about finding a piece of historical sculpture and winning a prize? If so, there is still a chance for you! In case you go to the small village Mali Stapar in Serbia, you will see an imposing sculpture called the "Queen of Pannonia". More broadly, if you are seeking to find the missing part of this sculpture and get a reward, you may find inspiration in this article.

Proudly shining at the Great Bačka Canal, the statue was a symbol of the new branch of the canal.

The original canal, built between 1793 and 1802 by brothers Jožef and Gabriel Kiš, connects the Danube to the Tisza. The construction of the canal was initiated by the Austrian Emperor Franz I and was an important event in the history of Bačka region because the canal was vital for regulating water levels in the urban area, especially in arable land, pastures and meadows.

The excavation of the original canal was carried out by around 4,000 workers, including prisoners from the Austrian wars with France. In the first decades after its excavation, between 70,000 and 80,000 tons of goods per year were transported through the canal, including cereals, salt, wine, tobacco, wood, coal, sand, construction materials, metals, and more. Basically, the canal represented the most economical route to transport large quantities of agricultural products and construction materials.

In the second half of the 19th century, General Istvan Tir, a naturalised Briton of Hungarian descent and builder of the Corinth Canal in Greece, accepted the proposal from the Habsburg monarchy to extend the canal adding a branch leading to Novi Sad. Tir convinced English investors to invest one million pounds to build the extension of the canal. This new branch of the Great Bačka Canal, which starts at Mali Stapar and leads to the Danube near Novi Sad, is 69 kilometres long and intended for irrigating large areas of state land.

The excavation of the new canal began in 1872. General Istvan Tir managed to ensure the presence of the Austrian Emperor and Hungarian King Franz Joseph I at the ceremony on this occasion. Franz Joseph, accompanied by a steamship, was warmly welcomed by the residents when he travelled through the Great Bačka Canal to Mali Stapar where the extension works would begin to lay the cornerstone. With a copy of the Law on Canals and one silver copper and Hungarian gold coin, he laid the foundation for the future memorial statue, the "Queen of Pannonia". Then, with a silver spoon, he poured a little plaster into the monument's foundation, which marked the end of the ceremony and beginnings of the excavations.

Over seven metres high, the monument was made of stone and built in classical Roman style and offers paths to a deeper meaning of the values of the Great Bačka

Canal. The sculptor of the monument is not known. It was believed that the statue represented Empress Maria Theresa, but today we know that it represents the "Queen of Pannonia".

The "Queen of Pannonia" is not only a symbol of a remarkable event in the history of the Great Bačka Canal, but also a driver of the preservation of damaged monuments in Serbia.

Legend says that in 1915 – in difference to Hungarian sources which claim that it happened in 1919 –, local Serbs tied the statue with ropes and tried to tear it down because of their displeasure and defiance towards the Austro-Hungarian government. However, they only managed to take off her head and throw it into the canal. Moreover, the authorities promised a reward to the person who found the lost statue's head. Unfortunately, there was never any trace of the head, and it remains unidentified to this day.

Interestingly, folklore has been weaving a story about a golden chariot with treasure hidden beneath the monument – but this chariot, too, remains a mystery. An inscription about the event is carved below the Hungarian crown of St. Stefan on the monument's front side. In addition, this inscription is also damaged, and the words are difficult to read. On the south side, under a stone garland of laurel leaves, it is written that engineer Istvan Tir erected the monument.

With a helmet on her head and a sword



in her right hand, the statue was situated on a giant pedestal, proudly looking at the horizon of the canal. Originally, a beautifully wrought iron fence was also surrounding the monument. Nowadays, the pedestal is sprayed with graffiti and covered with numerous inappropriate inscriptions. Additionally, extreme weather events such as storms, rain and the high temperature have impacted and permanently degraded the sculpture.

Yet, representing a masterpiece of human creative genius, the statue still in-

creases the attractiveness of its natural surroundings, especially when viewed from a small hill or the opposite side of the canal. It also demonstrates the urgent need to monitor and better understand measures that need to be taken to increase the resilience of cultural heritage. I understand that this statue should not only be well preserved but also be lived, promoted and shared by heritage practitioners and interpretive planners.

■ Rea Terzin



Parenzana: A narrow gauge railway history in Istria



The year 2021 was declared as the European Year of Rail, and the celebration emphasised the attributes of sustainability, safety, and innovation for this important mode of transport, which was often the flagship of continental development throughout history.

These keywords promoting the benefits of rail in the European future encourage our reflection on the importance of the railway, and make us think of how the spatial heritage of the railway permanently shaped the landscape.

Heritage railways nowadays refer mostly to narrow-gauge railway lines with buildings along the route. Many of those European railways are still operating and maintaining railway scenes from the past. Unfortunately, some are no longer in use and some are not even fully preserved, but they can be repurposed to recreational, education, ecological routes. This way, historical railway scenes remain present in the memory of the lo-

cal population and are even revitalised through railway routes and buildings.

This is the case of Parenzana, a former narrow-gauge railway that once connected Trieste, Italy via Koper, Slovenia with Poreč in Istria, Croatia. Today it's a hiking and cycling route, which winds through the green hills, over the stone bridges and tunnels, connecting picturesque villages and small towns like Buje, Grožnjan, Motovun, Oprtalj, Završje, Vižinada, and other places in northwest Croatian peninsula, Istria, which is rich in natural and cultural heritage and gastronomic specialties.

Although neither the train nor the rails have been preserved, while walking along the Parenzana one can almost hear the whistling of a locomotive or see the merchants and peasants with wicker baskets rushing to the wagons with their products to sell them at the markets in Trieste or Poreč. It is not hard to imagine wagons full of satisfied customers coming back home, chatting and showing newly-

bought fashion pieces from Italy, and boys without tickets hopping on the slow train by the way.

History of the railway and its end

Parenzana spans a 123 kilometres long stretch, starting in Trieste's San Andrea Station in Italy, moving through today's Slovenia, ending in Poreč (Parenzo) in Croatia. It was built during the Austro-Hungarian Empire between 1900 and 1920. On the initiative of Istrian municipalities, it was in operation from 1902 to 1935. Parenzana was built to connect northwest parts of Istria, all 33 small towns and villages from Poreč to Buje in Croatia, with Trieste in Italy as an important trading centre.

The railway had a slight slope, with its highest peak at only 311 metres above sea level. The average speed was only 25 kilometres per hour, since it was built as a narrow-gauge steam engine railway with only 760 millimetres track width, due to

lower rail taxes for this type in the monarchy. Along the trail many objects were built, like 9 tunnels, 6 viaducts, 11 bridges, numerous stops and railway stations, the biggest ones in Trieste, Buje and Poreč. Divided freight, luggage and passenger wagons were driven by a steam locomotive.

The Parenzana employed many residents and encouraged the development of railroad villages and towns through the export of goods from Istria to Trieste like olive oil, vine, wood, hay, fruits, vegetables, salt. Station buildings were inhabited by railway employees coming from abroad with their whole families.

After the fall of the monarchy, Parenzana was ruled by the Italian State Railways until 1935. It was then, after 33 years of operation, that the wagons stopped transporting passengers, tobacco and olives because road forms of transport became more cost-effective. Through the following years the railway assets, including rails, were sold to other companies.

There was a story, although its authenticity has never been confirmed, that Italian authorities dismantled the railway and sent the building material to Africa, then Italian Ethiopia. But it never arrived there, as the ship with allsteel and wood from Parenzana sank in the Mediterranean Sea. Some old Istrians refer to Parenzana as the Istrian Titanic due to this story.

After 1935, Parenzana – with its numerous bridges, viaducts, tunnels, railway stations and facilities – was abandoned.

New life to the old route

Parenzana route remained largely preserved with its bridges, tunnels and stops, except from parts intersected by new highway. The biggest part of it has been converted into a bike and walking route through revitalisation projects funded by the European Union as a joint project of Croatian and Slovenian municipalities. In the name of health and friendship, it started on the 100th anniversary of the railway and lasted

until 2014. In this period, the bicycle and walking path was arranged, safety fences on viaducts and bridges were installed, the Museum of Parenzana in Livade was established, an original locomotive model set on the trail, milestones replicas, information and signalling boards and resting stops were placed along the trail, and even a former school building in Buje was renovated as a hostel. Also, training grounds have been arranged in cities Piran, Izola, Motovun and Poreč, with many Bike & Bed offers, bike renting stops and services.

Along Parenzana, small towns offer a variety of culture, like a film festival in Motovun and truffle festivals in Livade, Oprtalj or Motovun. Today, it is a route of the importance of Istria, according to the county spatial plan.

So, years before the European Year of the Rail, in Croatian Istria, Slovenia and a small part of Italy, innovation and sustainability were justified through revitalisation of the railway route. Once a flagship of development of northwest Istria, it is today one of the most visited biking and hiking paths of the region. Even with only its route preserved, reusing the railway route from the past once again filled the path with life, connecting past and future, people, goods and towns.

■ *Mina Plančić*



Traversing Transylvania: Romania's new pilgrimage route

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

This quote has served as inspiration for countless individuals since Emerson penned it in the mid-19th century, but for the Tasuleasa Social Association in Romania, it also served as a blueprint. The organisation has set an ambitious goal for themselves: to showcase the natural beauty of their country, from one end to the other. For their trail, Via Transilvanica, the association drew inspiration from the Camino de Santiago, a beloved pilgrimage route that leads to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Having already arranged an annual foot race that runs through a mountain trail called Via Maria Theresia, it seemed only natural to transpose this idea to a larger scale and create a route that bisects all of Romania.

The trail begins in northeastern Romania in the town of Putna, the final resting place of 15th century ruler Stephen the Great. It then crosses through Transylvania, eventually concluding at the country's southwestern border. When complete, the project will encompass 1,200 kilometers and include hundreds of landmarks and cultural sights. To com-

plete the trail in its entirety could take up to several weeks, but Tasuleasa Social Association encourages hikers to adjust the length of their trip to their needs.

When asked what makes Via Transilvanica special, executive director Ana Szekely remarked on how the association made the concept of the pilgrimage route their own. To add a special twist, Tasuleasa Social Association commissioned a stone marker to measure each kilometer on the trail. The stones, which weigh around 230 kilograms each, have been marked with an iconic orange "T". They are also decorated with reliefs reflective of the identity and character of the region, carved by students from a local arts university. Thanks to these unique carvings, Ana Szekely remarks that "we are not only looking at road signaling, but possibly at something that might become the longest outdoor art exhibition."

The decision regarding which landmarks to include on the route involved multiple actors. From the outset, it was clear that the focus would be on natural rather than cultural heritage, showcas-

ing the unspoiled Romanian landscape. But Tasuleasa Social Association recognised that the decision couldn't be theirs alone, so they involved local communities and governing bodies and accounted for their ideas and wishes while constructing the path. "We always looked for people who were eager to help us with choosing the right trail, because locals know their land better than anyone else," Ana Szekely explains. As a result, their trail includes a rich tapestry of various cultural, ethnic, historical, and geographical landmarks, each showcasing the individualities of the region. Of course, not everyone could be included, and some communities felt excluded if the trail passed them by. But Ana sees this as a positive sign. The enthusiasm and interest from the locals suggest that perhaps the trail can be expanded someday and encourage those already involved to take an active role in their section of the trail. "A project like this belongs to everyone," Ana Szekely says, "this is one way in which this road could unite us."

With such an ambitious undertaking before them, Tasuleasa Social Associ-



ation predicted it would take ten years to complete the project when they began. Yet, just two years in, they've already completed 800 kilometers of the path. Despite this unprecedented speed, there's still miles to go before they sleep. Beyond the physical completion of the trail, Tasuleasa Social Association will need to market the trail as a potential destination, as well as maintain the fi-

nished part of the trail for hikers in the coming months and years. Though the route is yet unfinished, Ana Szekely invites everyone to come enjoy the breathtaking beauty of Romania. She leaves you with a definitive promise: "We guarantee that a day into your trip, you'll want more and more."

■ *Lindsay Taylor*



Landscape and houses: The storytellers

When a stranger arrives in the region of Schneeberg, they will observe the picturesque surrounding and see some unexpected things in the landscape. What seems to be a natural part of the scenery is not always the case! One can see tranquil small lakes, substantial mounds, and hills with nicely formed forest areas on top of them. All these supposedly natural features of Schneeberg's countryside are in fact shaped by specific human activity over the past 800 years.

Everything came from the mining

The lasting impact of the mining activity in the region is visible nowadays both nearby and inside towns and villages. Remarkable steep mounds appear to be his-

torical depositions of mining material, and they hide thousands of meters of mining tunnels beneath the surface. They also pinpoint the locations of former minefields, with shafts, tunnels, and safe exit doors at the end of the hill. Most of the woods in the area were cultivated with fast-growing trees, and used in the past for constructing the mine tunnels. There are plenty of artificial lakes, formed to retain the main valuable source of energy for processing mining materials in various locations. Those were parts of the cultivated water management system with channels, today only used by locals for fishing and relaxing. Also, the view of mild natural forms is sometimes interrupted by unexpected phenomena in natural vistas that rise abruptly from the greenery in its sizes, such as chimneys,

factories, processing plants, mining shafts constructions, or stamp mills in the meadows.

Understanding the evolution of the mining cultural landscape is difficult without knowing the long rich history of mining, dating from the 12th century until the 1990s, which defined the landmarks and influenced today's characteristics of the townhouses.

Imposing landmarks

If we time-travel through the past, we will see how landmarks bear witness to the change of focus in human activity in the area. As the most visible thing in the landscape, landmarks provide a unique look to the area of Schneeberg. The construction of the highest church tower of St. Wolfgang church in Schneeberg has been a focal point for the community ever since it was constructed in the 16th century and still dominates the modern townscape. With the industrialisation of the region came the shift in perspective. New landmarks emerged because of the post-mining production activities. The "Schindlers Werk" blue dye factory emerged because of the extraction of cobalt ores and the production of blue dyes, and it is still active today. Among the manor and storehouses is a high rising chimney that symbolises the strive for production. The extraction of uranium during the 20th century was de-

finied by its own ostentatious monuments such as the uranium factory and the miners' hospital in Erlabrunn.

Unique houses decorations

Mining has not shaped only the landscape, but also influenced art, architecture, and culture. Black stone slabs roofs are characteristic of both old and new houses of Schneeberg, and that perfectly evokes the view of the city from the church tower. Slate slabs – long-lasting, easy formable for steep and rounded roofs and even façade decorations – were one of the products of the region, a local material significantly exported in history.

Locals have a special way to tell the story of mining history with special features they embed on the façades of their houses and in gardens. Some symbols, some urban ornament or furniture, or models of children's toys, made of metal or more often wood, because handicrafts were additional incomes in the region, arose as a result of working with wooden remains from mining.

Hammer and chisel, basic tools for the most common method of mining, when laid across each other make an international symbol of mining, and can be seen on almost every house or building. So-called Schwibbögen – carved light holders as a reminder of the value of the light in mining – as well as wooden figures of



the miners and incense burning figurines on houses are very common, too. They are also an integral part of the Christmas mountain models or of the pyramids, the front garden models and decorations in the stylised form of the mining hill showing the story of the mining process. Also, little black wagons in the backyards decorated with flowers marked with the well-known mining greeting "Glück auf" – Good luck – are an addition to the storytelling of the mining.

The connection with the ancestral miners is still alive! All these living testimonies of mining heritage visible in the landscape and on homes convey the strong relationship with the past and build an unbreakable bond within the local community in and around Schneeberg.

■ Joanna Markova & Mina Plančić



The secret behind the blue colour

The fascinating history of the blue pigment in the Ore Mountains is quite mysterious. We all remember how we felt when we first saw the flashing blue colour hidden in the blue factory's storage! We loved the moment we opened the box, and the blue colour was the very thing to which our desire clung.

We discovered how the cobalt-blue was extracted from the mineral through traditional process. And who would have imagined that this shiny and brilliant blue pigment derived from the purple raw material becomes blue after being fired in a certain way? Yet this prestigious cobalt-blue pigment has been exported in many countries causing the creation of various artistic traditions all over the world.

So, dive into the world of blue!

From purplish to the blue pigment

The mining town of Schneeberg was founded in response to silver ore mining, but the Baroque aesthetic which the town has today is the result of cobalt ore mining. The Schneeberg mining landscape played an essential role in cobalt mining and blue dye production from the 17th to the 19th century and was the leading producer of blue pigments in Europe. Colours of cobalt-blue were most often used on porcelain, tiles, and even laundry – to turn yellowish laundry white again. Essentially, cobalt-blue pigment was shipped from Saxony worldwide.

The story started with this silvery appearing mixture, containing cobalt. The blue pigment was known at least since the Middle Ages, during the smelting process of the silver and called the "silver robber". It was discovered in the Ore Mountains that cobalt could be used to

produce the blue pigment. However, the milestone was accrued in the first half of the 18th century when the former miners took advantage of the cobalt mineral. The word "cobalt" was most probably derived from the German word "Kobold" which means gnome or unscrupulous rascal. The cobalt mineral has a silvery appearance but when it interacts with the weather, it shows purple colour. It is a mysterious thing that men could have known how to produce blue pigments from this silvery and later purplish material back in history.

Schneeberg and its surroundings became an important industrial place for cobalt-blue pigments through five active blue colour factories, and the production process has been constantly developed so that the cobalt-blue produced in the 19th century was significantly improved from the one previously used.



Processing of the cobalt-blue and transition to the ultramarine-blue

The production process of the cobalt-blue had three steps: The first phase was to distinguish the elements and minerals from the raw material to proceed. For example, arsenic – a very poisonous substance – was one of them! Then, the workers had to combine cobalt ore with other raw materials, and finally to heat it up, melt it, and pour it into the water.

The oldest of the blue dye factories was the "Schindlers Werk" smalt works which Erasmus Schindler founded in Zschorlau in 1650. The manor house and the warehouse which do exist till today are two of Saxony's oldest and most characteristic blue dye factory buildings. This factory is still operating and had been producing blue dye till recent times even though cobalt-blue production stopped in 1860. In the same year, the cobalt-blue production was replaced by the production of ultramarine-blue since ultramarine was less expensive to produce and provided better results for colouring paper and laundry. Additionally, the ultramarine-blue required less amount of colour than cobalt-blue, which took up a great deal of raw materials.

There is something special about the ultramarine process: The workers had to be trained for up to ten years to produce a quality ultramarine-blue colour. All the mixed materials needed to be heated up for three days to 900 degrees. Workers controlled the temperature with a metal tool, but also with their eyes as optical measurement tools for this heating process. In other words, workers had to go through ten years of training to control the process by using their eyes as an optical device



to calculate when and how to lower the temperature!

The ultramarine colour was used mainly for internal and exterior wall paints. However, ultramarine production stopped in 1996 because of environmental regulations.

Blue colour as representation of richness and wealth

Who would have imagined that this famous cobalt-blue would become a representation of the wealth, richness, and pride of the Ore Mountains region? Interestingly, did you know that the blue pigments produced in Schneeberg were used to colour Venetian glasses, Portuguese tiles, Meissen and Chinese porcelains and ceramics, and Holland's wares as well as applied by artists from many countries?

Blue exists in every piece in Schneeberg, and it represents the symbol of richness, wealth and being superior as well as pride. For example, when you check the traditional miners' costumes

during their Christmas celebrations, the miners with blue pants were superior to the others hierarchically. Yet, they wanted to incorporate white colour into their costumes to demonstrate the "whitest appearance" possible because the blue pigment was tough to remove from clothes. Their goal was to convey a clear message that the blue pigment was processed flawlessly by the workers.

For people living in the region, blue was something more, a sense of pride and rich history; for us too – the cobalt-blue is not just a colour. It is a witnessing story of the technological mining advancement, living and working environment, as well as the culture and traditions of the Ore Mountains. In short, the blue dye production in Schneeberg is a symbol of remarkable events in the mining history, and perhaps, in us, someone very old still hears the mechanical sound of the process of heating the living pigment of the blue.

■ Rea Terzin & Gözde Yildiz



Shining a light on the past of the Ore Mountains

A journey through the meanings and symbolic values of light in the Ore Mountains opens a window to the close relationship of lighting tools and mining tradition in the region, a history that has lasted more than 700 years. Mining impacted the development of connected traditions, handcrafts and the life of the local residents.

Arriving to the Ore Mountains in an early spring, our eyes are full of different shades of green. It was the last day of April, and the locals welcomed us with a bonfire ceremony. As taught by the locals, the burning of bonfires comes from an ancient tradition when inhabitants gathered around the bonfire to celebrate the onset of spring.

The variety of items related to light everywhere has caught our attention. When cruising through the streets of the villages and small towns one cannot overlook the lamps and candles that are often accompanied by figures of miners, on the houses' façades, in the craft shops, on the signage at road junctions. The surroundings give us hints about the importance of lights in daily life and traditions of the Ore Mountains.

The most commonly seen arched lighting in the region has a specific motif, generally composed by four figures and lamps or candles above the arch. What do those figures represent? Why did they become symbols? How is the craft connected to the mining history of the region? And how the light was brought into the deep underground tunnels?

The symbolism of the arched lighting

The local residents know the stories quite well and were more than happy to explain the tradition and the symbolism of lighting. In the "Centre for Folk Art of the Ore Mountains" in Schneeberg a variety of local crafts are displayed. The



wooden miniatures of the arched lighting that we have been seeing all around can also be found there.

A lady from the Centre explained us that the arch is a representation of an entrance to a mine, and the figures depicted inside are the region's main activities such as mining, wood carving and lace-making. The two figures in the middle holding the arch on their heads are the miners, showing that the mining industry played a crucial role in the development of the region. On the left and right side the traditional handcrafts are represented. A wood carver is working on a new figure and a woman creating a twisted lace pattern using a bobbin technique developed in the region in the beginning of the 16th century. Both handicrafts have a connection to mining. The excessive amount of trees that were cut during the mining activities impacted the development of wood carving tradition. Selling the wooden works of art became an additional way to earn a living for miners. The bobby lacing was a way for women to entertain themselves, while husbands were gone most of the time. In the middle lower part, the crossed hammer and chisel are the main mining tools that workers used.

In addition, the candles on the top part represent the torches and lamps that were

used by miners underground. We noticed that the number of candles varies from seven to ten or twelve. Based on a tour guide, the number seven could represent seven days of creation in the Bible. However, through multiple conversations with residents later we realised that the number of candles might not hold a specific common meaning.

From candles to electricity

But miners did not just use candles underground. What kind of lamps were in use? To find out about the development of lamp technology we visited the Fundgrube Wolfgangsmassen – the former



Wolfgangsmassen Mine – and had the opportunity to interview the members of the related mining association. Together with Karsten Georgi we went deeper into the history starting from candle use to electricity. Karsten Georgi led us to a room where many old objects were stored and it seemed that time would have stopped there.

From Karsten Georgi we heard that the miners used a variety of different light sources: the wood resin at first, then animal fat for the hand lamp. The oil lamp, known as "Schneeberger Blende", was popular from the 17th century until 1927. After that, the carbide lamp was used, and then the electric lamp. The story told by the locals added so much fun to our journey of finding the hidden stories of lighting. Karsten Georgi, like all the other people we met here, is really enthusiastic about the tradition and fully satisfied our curiosity.

The shining light from the past

Light has not only a functional purpose for the miners, but carries a symbolic meaning. The life of a miner was not blessed with sunlight as most of the day was spent underground digging the ore for the processing. The winter months were especially difficult as the work started before the sunrise and ended after sunset. Miners were under a tight schedule. They hardly saw the sun, and the lamp they



had would be the only light they saw in their world of mining. It guarded and ensured a happy exit. Imagine going down in a cold and dark mine when the lamp that is hanging around your neck is the only way to bring vision in an otherwise hostile environment. Without the lamp a miner would have to use the memory and tactile senses to find the way back or would be lost in labyrinths of tunnels.

Therefore, lighting became a symbolic representation of life in mines and was used as a way to celebrate and support the horrific efforts that workers were putting into it. The miner figurines holding a lamp mostly carved from wood were placed on the windows to guide the exhausted workers back home. After the 1850s, the motif changed to the aforementioned arched lighting.

Heritage is lighting our future

Although all the mining activities have stopped in the Ore Mountains since some time, the interconnected stories and legends continue to be vibrant in local life. Every year near Christmas, the light festival called "Lichtelfest" which links mining traditions and modern customs attracts many tourists.

The stories of the miners are still alive in the mountains, in the lighting decorations, and in the memories of the people. The light that shone on the miners represents a hope for them, as well as the mining industry was a hope for the local development. As the arched lighting indicates, the mining activities became a driven engine for the prosperity of the Ore Mountains. The legend will continue to shine on the people, since the abundant intangible and tangible heritage is bringing beautiful memories and values to every one arriving at the Ore Mountains.

■ Anna Grigoreva & Jiayao Jiang

Dressing up for the last shift



It is nothing new that the tangible legacy of mining is visibly present even in the remotest parts of the Ore Mountains. However, this UNESCO World Heritage site also draws heavily on the intangibility of the traditions and commemorations associated with the physical spaces and the memory of the mining boom period. And when it comes to the inherent connection between tangible and intangible heritage, objects can be a very useful source. This is the case of the famous uniforms worn by miners' associations in

the so-called *Bergparaden* – the miners' parades – or the *Mettenschicht* – the last shift before Christmas –, events that happen annually in most towns of the region. Once you visit the Ore Mountains, you will notice the relevance of these textile fragments of the past for the local communities due to the constant visual references to these uniforms in various museums, associations, and events.

If you are lucky enough to visit the locality in the weeks that precede Christmas – the period when the whole region turns into a magical place –, you will probably be able to experience one of the parades that happen in different towns of the Ore Mountains. The famous events gather thousands of people who are interested in preserving the local heritage, the legacy of the mining system, and honoring the shared past of the region and its connections.

However, historically speaking, the miners' parades have changed over the centuries and, back in the day the purpose was a bit different than in these days. In the past, this type of collective ceremony was linked to the visit of important people to the mining region – such as the King or other powerful authorities. Also, the *Mettenschicht* represents the final mi-

ners workday before Christmas, which was historically celebrated by the miners with a meal, songs and a sermon. The earliest mention of the *Berghabit* – the miners' uniforms – and the miners' parades was registered in the 17th century, while first regulations on the miners' uniforms were stated in the beginning of the 18th century. The uniform consisted of black jackets, white trousers, and knee pads; however, throughout the years the *Berghabit* changed due to regulations around the region, and it was abolished in 1869 with the change of the mining law.

As in many cultures around the world, symbolism is present in celebrations and festivals, and the miners' parades in the Ore Mountain aren't an exception. Velvet, buttons, colors, specific clothes, the kind of hat, detailed decoration – in the miners' parades in the Ore Mountains everything has a meaning or a reason. For example, workers in the cobalt blue factory used to wear blue trousers in reference to the pigment produced within their business, while laborers employed in functions revolving around the mining system wear yellow trousers. But do not forget: not only the colors and symbols were important in these events, but also the presence of the tools used in the

daily work. Marching with tools was and still is nowadays a matter of pride and a way to value each profession involved in the mining process. Wise and old people also had their own place in the parades: right at the back you would find the retired miners wearing black uniforms with lace collars and buttons decorated with the traditional figures of a hammer and a pick, symbolically "ending" the event. Nowadays the uniforms are worn in specific events and especially in the annual parades – usually held in December –, promoting the intangible symbols of the miner's life.



But do not worry if you are not able to visit the region during Christmas time! In Schneeberg, for example, you can also come across a big miners' parade during summer! How amazing is it to witness a historical tradition while having an ice cream? If the idea sounds good to you, start planning your visit to the lovely town for the 22nd of July, the annual celebrative date for the local miners of the region – and be prepared to immerse in the over 700 years old mining tradition of the Ore Mountains!

■ Blanca Calvo Alonso & Angelica Vedana



Life seen through magnificent mining folk art

Every living person on this planet at some point of their life feels the need to tell and retell stories, especially when those stories are personal ones. Some prefer to tell the tales of other people. Some people write, paint, photograph, sing and the common man creates folk art. Through his creations he expresses himself, his thoughts, feelings, actions, his way of living and captures the times in which he lived. Often one can see all of the above on a single folk art creation. Traditional art is a man's way of leaving his mark on this world.

In the Ore Mountains, since the High Middle Ages everything revolves around mining. The Ore Mountains pulsate in

the rhythm of the *Knappen* anvils, as the miners are called. As a result, the folk art in this area reflects the lives of the miners and the lives of their families. In fact, the miners themselves are the creators of this type of art through their handiworks, be it woodwork, metal or ivory, in the form of small decorative figurines, ornaments, religious motifs, to everyday items.

At first glance the artworks may seem to have been a pastime. These finely made creations are far from that: the miners made them in order to resell them as another source of income in times of financial crisis or unemployment. The small handicrafts in most cases are

carved from wood due to the lucrative wood manufactory at the time, but there are examples made from the other aforementioned materials. Artistically speaking, the wooden figures and the ivory works make the most representative examples of this "mining" activity. Each piece is so rich in details that one can physically feel the love and the devotion of its creator. Beautifully done, they give the observer the impression that they will come to life at any moment, as in a scene from a Disney movie.

The museum of mining folk art in the little town of Schneeberg has exhibited a large number of samples of this applied traditional art. Made by highly skilled hands, one notices that they speak volumes about their creators and their surroundings. Various elements from mining life are depicted, such as the natural landscape, settlements, underground mines, church and home interiors, celebrations, festivities, religious values, funerals, families and familial relations, community relations, working atmosphere, holiday and everyday clothes, work attire, as well as minor daily activities. The miners as a central motif and the "center" of the Ore Mountains can be seen even in the carved nativity scenes where Joseph and the three wise



men are portrayed as miners in a typical setting of the region. Even the cave is not a typical cave that comes to mind when thinking of the nativity scene, rather a traditional house from the area.

Though mining themes dominate, looking deeper one can also detect that these handiworks tell stories not only of the miners, but also the "forgotten" people of the Ore Mountains. The people in the background who are not historically "on the map" when speaking about this region, for as we know everything comes down to miners – the ones who were the support system of the miners and also accompanied the mining activities with their "small" contributions as

housewives, farmers and craftsmen. The people who lived their whole lives in the shadows of the miners and their calling but who apparently deserved to be represented on their creations.

This stunning mining folk art, these handcrafted creations are the true storytellers of a miner's life and of the world he has lived in, a time long since passed. They are a tangible witness of his thoughts, feelings, desires, devotion, and aspirations. At the end one can only conclude that indeed everything in the Ore Mountains revolved around the miners, but not everything of value lay in the mines.

■ Efosrinija Parevska



Digging deeper: The women of the Ore Mountains

All that glitters isn't gold. It could be silver, copper, tin, zinc or any other metals found in the Ore Mountains. The sloping streets and misty corners of Annaberg paint a medieval picture of miners on their way to work. For centuries mining was a male-dominated industry; but what about the women of the Ore Mountains? What was their legacy and how did they contribute to society?

In 2019, the transboundary German-Czech Mining Cultural Landscape Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, attracting international attention and local pride. Banners hung in all corners of the Saxon mining towns, proclaiming "Wir sind Welterbe!" (We are World Heritage!). Mining has stimulated economic and cultural growth in the region since 1168, when the first silver was found near Freiberg.

In this celebrated heritage, women seem almost invisible at first sight, with their contributions to both cultural and economic development not as widely discussed as their male counterparts. The town of Annaberg is a good place for an introduction to the women of the mining region, and digging deeper, we fit together an interesting history.

A picture speaks a thousand words

The uphill climb through Annaberg is refreshing, with a lovely reward at the top – the alluring St. Annen Church, dedicated to St. Anne, the patron of mining. The foundation stone for the church was laid in 1499 under the governance of the first parish priest to serve the town, and its long late Gothic halls are home to many artistic treasures of both religious and historic importance. Walking across the threshold, our eyes immediately fall on the three altars. To the left lies the miner's altar, famous for



a painting on its rear by artist Hans Hesse. Illustrating the daily life of the region, the painting shows men doing hard labour: separating ore and extracting minerals, transporting heavy carriages and building houses. However, there is only one woman depicted in the altar painting, standing in front of a wooden barrel, cleaning ore.

Another element of the church are the balustrades on either side of the arch displaying gender normative iconography. The ten phases of life from birth to death are represented through the ages of men and women. Depicted with corresponding animal allegories, they clearly define the gender roles expected

in the society of that time. Men look noble and courageous – their images tend to be more diverse, whereas the females appear more con-generic and indiscreet. The ages of the women are whimsically compared to birds and are defined through relationships to the men, home or children, whereas the men's ages are linked to rising ranks, bravery and wealth, and are represented as proud animals.

The business that boomed

Not all the women of the Ore Mountains kept quiet in a society where their voices were minimised to those of "housewives".

One woman took matters into her own hands. Barbara Uthmann (1514–1575) was the wife of a rich businessman in Annaberg, who took on responsibility for his business after he passed. Barbara Uthmann is known for establishing the bobbin lace making industry in the region. A true entrepreneur, she provided steady income for women in the region, which was crucial for them in order to provide for their families and for the economic development of the town. Barbara Uthmann met resistance from authorities and other powerful businessmen who were uncomfortable with a woman taking this role in society, but her legacy is deeply intertwined with the region's heritage.



The Ore Mountain lace making culture is still a very important part of the region's heritage, and classes are offered to children and adults interested in learning the craft. In the village of Frohnau, one can simultaneously explore the mining and lace making heritage. Here, an 18th century manor house once inhabited by the owners of the Frohnauer Hammer, a hammer mill across the street, has been converted into a museum. Tours are available and guides demonstrate traditional lace making techniques passed down through almost 500 years. The ensemble interestingly highlights the divided domains of men and women; on one side of the street is a museum, where women's lace making is demonstrated by professionals, and on the other side you can visit the beautifully preserved mill, where men smelted extracted metals in the old days.

Times are changing

Eventually, after a prosperous history, the mines closed down permanently in 1968, though some are now used for research purposes. In 2008, approximately 800 years after the first mines were opened in the region, the German govern-

ment finally passed a law allowing women to enter the mines for work, study and research. Eleven years later the first woman was deployed into the mines by Bergakademie Freiberg, marking one of the biggest changes in the mining history of Saxony.

An exploration of Annaberg clearly reveals the position held by women in old mining societies. Bound to temporary "above-ground" jobs, they worked equally hard, polishing stones, counting freshly minted coins, or in the case of entrepreneurs like Barbara Uthmann, quietly contributing to the town's economic and cultural growth. However, the output of the mines slowly declined in the 1600s and the mining society became an even more exclusive "elite brotherhood" of miners. Women were pushed towards "safer" jobs like tanning and textiles. Despite the gradual exclusion from mining jobs, women like Barbara Uthmann created their own paths, improving the situation for themselves and the women that came after them.

■ Iren Bagdasarian,
Wanda Marcussen & Lianne Oonwalla





A stroll in Brittany's hidden gem



Visiting the beautiful region of Brittany, in the furthest west corner of northern France, most tourists limit themselves to the better-known sights, such as Rennes, St. Malo and Dinan. But leaving these crowded cities behind, you may be surprised by the smaller but beautiful places you will come across in the Breton countryside.

Just outside Dinan, in the north-east of the region, a short walk on the green banks of the river Rance will lead you to the little village of Lèhon. The water stream will take you beyond a wide bight, after which the stone roofs of mediaeval buildings will appear in between the trees. Crossing the little stone bridge that connects the banks of the Rance you'll believe you've fallen into a painting.

The village of Lèhon is a small entanglement of stone houses with their doors and shutters colourfully painted in red, blue and green, with flower pots at each window. If you happen to get to Lèhon on a sleepy autumn afternoon, the quietness of the place that pervades the place will accompany you in its discovery.

The village was once protected by a fortress built in the 12th century on a rocky hilltop with a strategic view on the Rance's valley, and its ruins are restored and open to the public. Abandoned in the 15th century and converted in a stone quarry, the conservation works started in 2004 focused on the preservation of the ruins in their contemporary configuration, freeing them from the outgrown vegetation and permitting citizens and

visitors to rediscover the feudal castle.

The visiting tour brings you up the hill through walkways and stairs to the open courtyard of the castle and the remains of the watchtowers, from which on a clear day you can enjoy the sight of Dinan's castle.

The stone streets will lead you to a flowery square where is situated St. Magloire Abbey with its small church. Founded in the middle of the 9th century, this former Benedictine monastery was established as a high spiritual place, and site of pilgrimage on the banks of the Rance. Returning from Paris at the beginning of the 12th century, after they had fled the Scandinavian invasion two centuries earlier, the monks regained possession of the abbey's ruins and star-

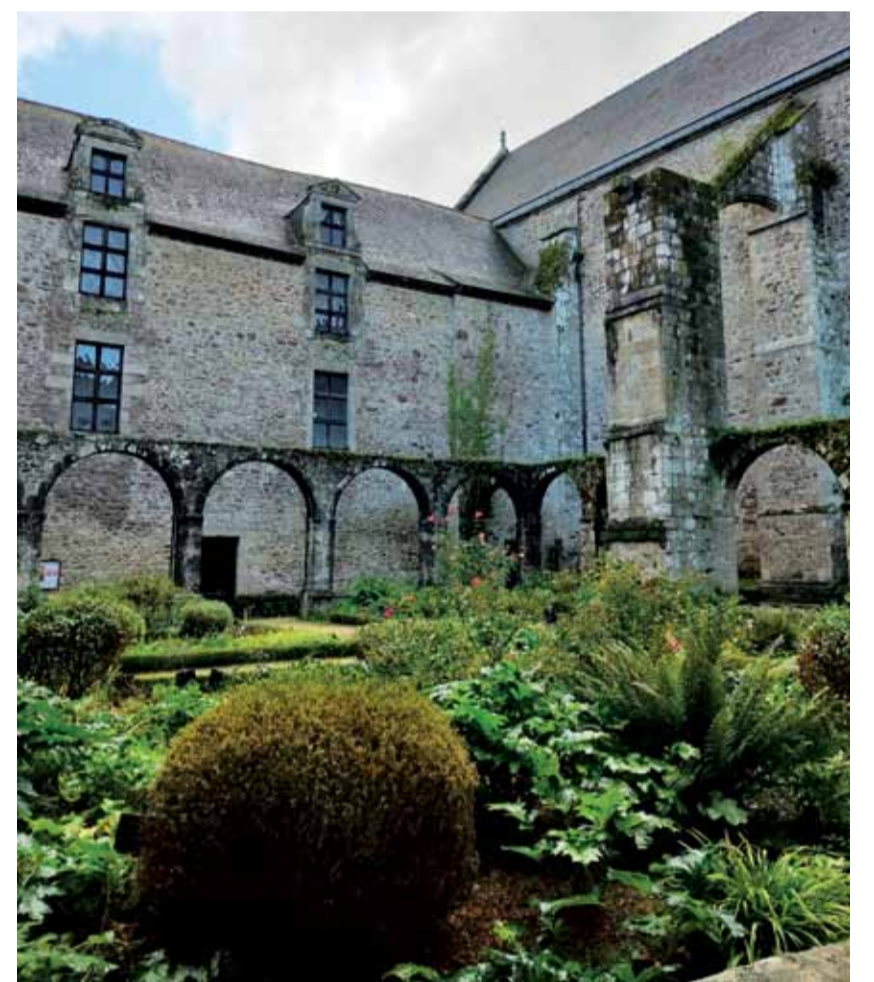
ted its reconstruction. All the spaces relating to the monastery's life were arranged around the cloister and underwent a heavy refurbishment in the 17th century, from which only the refectory remains nowadays in its original medieval appearance.

It was the monks and their patrons who shaped the development of the village that remained for a long time as a commercial base in that part of the region. St. Magloire Abbey is nowadays abandoned by the monks but all its spaces, the cloister, the refectory and the small church are open to visitors. The gardens on the two sides of the building extend the abbey's ground to the river-

banks, where a crown of trees partially hides the sight from the river. It is not a surprise that the monks settled here in this place where recollection and peace take all their meaning.

Today, Lèhon has been able to combine its ancient architecture with modernity. The spaces of the abbey, including its cloister, host every year many exhibitions of painters and photographers. The same atmosphere pervades the cloister, with its stone walls and a sequence of open arcs on each side, it is the beating heart of this wonderful corner of paradise on Earth.

■ Silvia Frattini



The Ottoman tower-house of Rhodes

Home to the Colossus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the island of Rhodes is also famous for having been the headquarters of the Medieval Knights of Saint John. Their surviving fortifications encircling the old town are nowadays on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Yet the period that

came after the Knights is less known. Do you happen to know who succeeded them as overlord of this small Mediterranean island? In 1522, the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent defeated the Knights and led his forces into the town of Rhodes. There started a new era that was to last nearly 400 years. The

Ottomans dotted Rhodes with beautiful mosques and hamams that one can still see while taking a stroll in the old town today. This article will take us outside the city walls in an adjacent area that once upon a time was full of gardens and orchards and a few Ottoman tower-houses.

The metallic rings on the interior walls perplexed the architect in charge of the restoration work taking place at the Toptsubasi Manor. "Were these used to keep the windows in place once open?" he asked Ms. Melike, the last tenant of the Ottoman tower-house complex and descendant of the family that once upon a time owned the land and its edifices. "No, Mr. Paris," she responded. "They were used to hang the hammock of the baby in a place where the breeze would keep the baby cool in the warm summer days."

You can still find these rings in one of the rooms of the second floor of the main building, the tall building that towers over the orchard. An Austro-Hungarian coin from 1816 was found built into the tower-house and Ms. Melike who informed the architect that her grandfather had been born in that house helped Mr. Paris date it to between 1816 and 1870. That is the closest we can get to the construction year of the main tower while the smaller buildings of the complex seem to antedate it.

Given that no other tower-houses survive on Rhodes, we are lucky that the Toptsubasi Manor has made it to the present. During the Second World War, the complex was expropriated by the Ita-

lian state. The idea was to demolish it and build houses for the Italian public servants who would serve on the island. The war put the plans on hold and when, after peace was finally concluded, Rhodes was united with Greece, the Toptsubasi Complex passed over to the Greek state. Years of disuse and neglect led the complex to a dilapidated state. Then in the mid-1980s, the Municipality of Rhodes took the matter into its hands. For about seven years, architects, engineers and masons spent their days taking care of a little-known gem from Ottoman times.

Nowadays the restored tower-house is home to public and municipal services. Thanks to this, anyone interested in the building may enter. Visitors will be mesmerised by the high arch of the ground floor that smoothes out the austere lines of the ceiling. Unfortunately, after a good period of serving as a coffee shop, the second-biggest building remains inaccessible. But you cannot miss the pool in front of it where in the hot summer days Ms. Melike would bathe with her childhood friends.

That was a long time ago... Would you dive that deep in history and visit the Ottoman tower-house of Rhodes?

■ Artemis Papandreou



From just granaries to heritage: The hórreos

Granaries are a common storage space for communities since the development of agriculture. These buildings are necessary to keep the grain dry and away from animals during the whole year. But in the region of Asturias, in the north of Spain, there is a special kind of granary that outlines the landscape and represents more than storage space for the communities. To know more about them and what is happening with them in the region, we talked with Fernando Mora Rodríguez, archaeologist and specialist in *hórreos*.

These granaries, called *hórreo* (*horru* in Asturian) and *panera* are raised granaries supported by four pillars made in stone or wood. The granary itself is made from local wood, mostly chestnut or oak, by carpentry, without any metal joints. To access them they have a stone stair. The *hórreo* has a square floor plan with a top decoration on its roof, while the *panera* has a rectangular floor plan and two top decorations on the roof.

The oldest documented *hórreos* are dated to the 16th century but seemed to be the last representation of an even older tradition as these constructions are documented in books from the 13th century.

These buildings are not only present in Asturias, but it is in this region where they became an important part of the landscape and the symbols of the region. Fernando Mora Rodríguez points out that these buildings have become a symbol of the region as they are not only granaries,

they show us the way of life in the Asturian countryside, they are part of its landscape. These buildings are now present even out of the countryside as decorations, sold in miniature in the souvenir shops. But this is not new, the *hórreo* has been a symbol already for a couple of centuries.

The *hórreo* represents not only an important heritage construction and part of the landscape but also saves important immaterial heritage related to it like its construction techniques. These techniques and the work related to them have been identified and dated back to the 18th century and for that time it is possible to join the building with the constructor.

The situation with this heritage is controversial right now. On one hand, the use of the *hórreos* as granaries is decaying as the Asturian countryside is getting depopulated. With this situation, the caring and



restoration of the buildings is also disappearing. This leaves these wooden buildings more vulnerable to the elements.

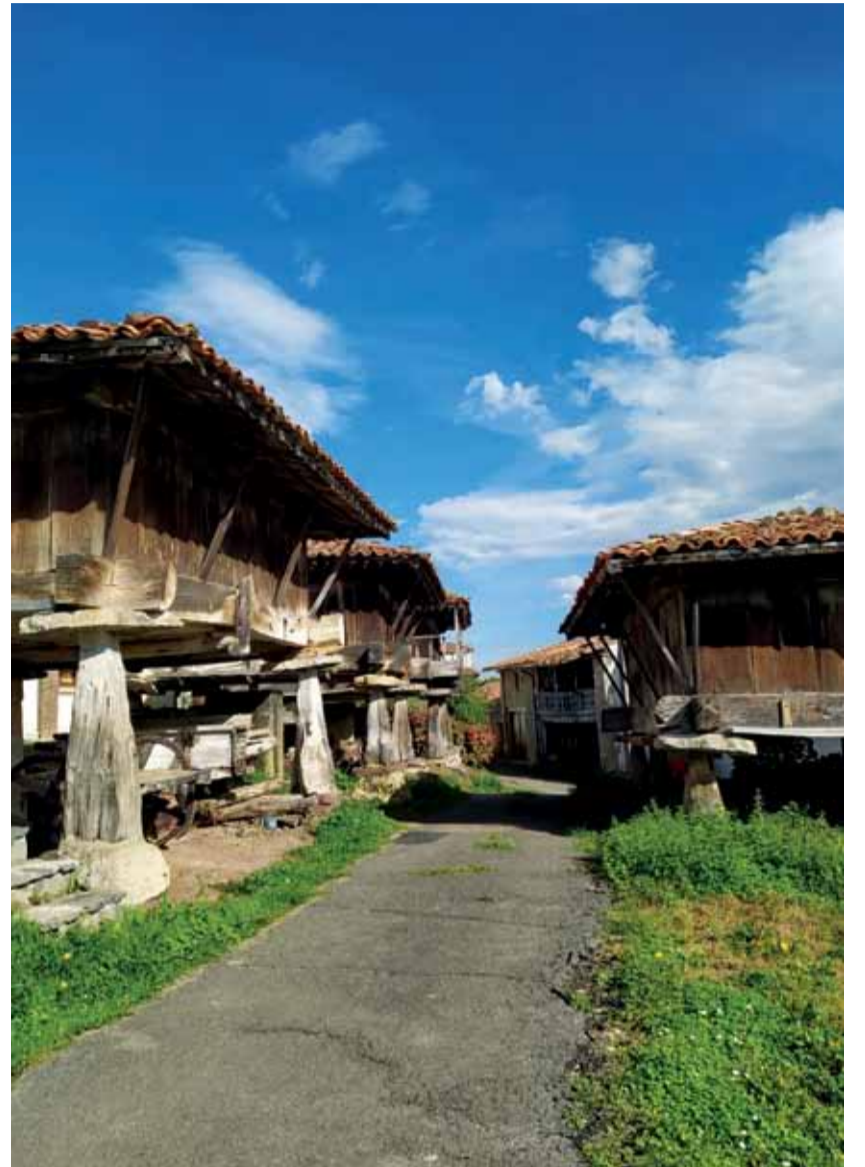
But, several specialists, like Fernando Mora Rodríguez, and associations like the “Asociación de Amigos del Hórreo Asturiano” he belongs to, in cooperation with the regional government are creating a series of measures and plans to avoid the falling of all these buildings. These new measures are based on three main ideas: to select specimens, give prestige again and change their use.

There is not a total number of *hórreos* and *paneras* in Asturias but the estimation is around 25,000. With this amount, it is obvious that not all of them can be saved. For this reason, the specialists work on a document to try and save as many as they can based on their importance, history, decorations, and construction techniques.

Giving prestige again means to make people realise how important these buildings are for the regional landscape and heritage, and ultimately making sure that *hórreos* and *paneras* are included in the heritage list and the heritage regulations.

Changing the uses the specialists are trying to find new uses for these granaries, out of the farming ones, that are respectful with their structures but that makes people interested in them and their conservation.

From granaries standing next to farms to pieces that can teach us about heritage. The Asturian *hórreos*



and *paneras* are the pride of the region and its inhabitants. Now, they are trying to get the fame and respect they deserve in Spanish national heritage. They are landmarks that teach us the importance of the rural land-

scape and how important it is to not let history slide through our fingers just because it is set in a small, rural village.

■ Aida Loy Madrid

The former summer camps Forgotten monuments of Italian Rationalism

Whilst traveling along the Italian coast, it is possible to find big abandoned buildings shaped in bizarre ways: the edifices of the former summer camps. Few know that some of these buildings could be considered one of the highest expressions of Italian rationalism in the panorama of the European architectural experimentation of the twenties and thirties.

From the end of the 19th century the climatic colonies phenomenon arose along the coasts – but also in the mountains. It was founded in order to host young boys and girls in a wholesome context where they could sunbathe and enjoy sports sur-

rounded by nature, far from unhealthy cities. Over the decades, the colonies developed both from the point of view of their social role and of their architectural shapes as places dedicated to children's education and health in Italy. At the beginning of the 20th century, according to regional construction traditions, these places were organised in large pavilions, which progressively developed into masterpieces of Rationalist architecture during the Fascist regime. They gradually became anonymous buildings without any architectural quality and, by the sixties, they were completely overwhelmed by the advent of mass tourism.

It was in the period between the two World Wars, under the fascist dictatorship, that the summer camps and the whole Italian Rationalism movement found their maximum of expression. In 1938, in Italy there were more than 4,800 colonies, all aiming to draw children to the Fascist doctrine. They were like small barracks in which the architecture played the key role of translating the ideals of the regime into spaces and indelible forms in children's memory. In this respect the spatiality of buildings assumed a major position in which different shapes must correspond to different functions. A monumental entrance represents the physical act of entering a community and the large ramps, facing the sea, show the little soldiers' parades. It was the young architects who took advantage of the opportunity to work on buildings that have not been strongly typed, with a new freedom of expression and experimentation, trying to insert Italian architecture into the Rationalist movement that was imposing itself in the rest of Europe. The intention was to purify the architecture of the aesthetic components, freeing the forms from the decorative apparatus, but this research would not reach a unitary architectural style and their desire for a new monumentality, the autarchic dream of a renewed Roman civilisation, would not be realised. However, this experimentation left almost forgot-



ten jewels of pure Rationalism. Worthily of particular note among these, are the so-called “Talking Architectures”: big monobloc buildings whose planimetry recalls the mobility, machines as images of modernity with a strong and symbolic value in the Futurist panorama. Some “Talking Architectures” represent planes or ships and others a seaplane nestled on the beach.

The colonies' buildings were designed to be seen from above, from an airplane, to reaffirm their relationship with Modernism and the Fascist will to enhance the grandeur of architecture, symbolic and expressive of the regime, compared to the smallness of individual men. Children lived in huge spaces which were shaped in excessive and metaphysical forms and where even daily activities took on emphatic rhythms. Starting from the post-Second World War period the phenomenon of summer camps slow-

ly waned due to the progressive disappearance of the premises they had been built for. The health emergency could be controlled by medicines, the education of the new generations had passed into the hands of families and schools and, above all, and the advent of mass-tourism led millions of Italian families to spend their holidays at the seaside. Now, along the coasts stand the skeletons of the buildings that used to host the colonies, abandoned memories of a different era. The historical and architectural value of these buildings has been recognised as expressions of the uniqueness of Italian Rationalism and have become part of the safeguarded Italian cultural heritage.

However, we are still far from understanding what role they could play in contemporary society. What will their future be?

■ Silvia Demetri





Berat: The city of one thousand and one windows



There are many places that often come to our mind, because they have left us great impressions or beautiful memories. The reasons for this can be many, but there is always a uniqueness which we keep as a vivid memory for a long time.

As for me – if I had to choose some of the most beautiful places in Albania, undoubtedly one of them would be the city of Berat. And for this choice “the city of one thousand and one windows” has many reasons to give...

Located in central Albania, Berat remains today the most iconic historic town in the country and the most visited by tourists. This city is a living testimony of the coexistence of various cultural and religious communities down the centuries. It features a castle, locally known as *Kala*, most of which was built in the 13th century, although its origins date back to antiquity the 4th century BC. The citadel

area contains many Byzantine churches, mainly from the 13th century, as well as several mosques built under the Ottoman era from 15th to 19th century. Since 2005, the old town has been recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.

Two wonderful elements of Albanian cultural heritage are preserved in Berat: Ottoman architecture and Byzantine art.

The neighborhoods of the old town are Mangalemi and Gorica, which are separated by the river Osum, and *Kala* – the castle – on the hill. Berat has been listed as one of the most beautiful towns in Europe, widely known as a great example of a well-preserved Ottoman town. It is one of the world’s oldest continuously inhabited cities, and a beautiful combination between Eastern and Western cultures, between Christian and Islamic heritage.

Walking through the ancient stone alleys of the citadel we will see a real

oasis of Byzantine culture. Buildings from Roman times, and medieval churches decorated with outstanding murals, frescos and Byzantine iconography are numerous. The most well-known sites of Byzantine art inside the castle walls are the Church of St. Mary of Vlacherinae that lies in a perfect harmony with the hill, the Church of the Holy Trinity with its imposing great architectural style and the Iconographic Museum Onufri, named after a famous medieval Albanian painter.

Although later in time, the Ottoman Empire has left visible traces throughout the architecture of the town, in typical houses and public buildings. The Mangalem quarter has perfectly preserved this treasure, and is visible to this day. Near the street running down from the fortress the mosque is located, built in 1827 in Ottoman style. It has a handsome portico and an interesting external decoration of flowers, plants and houses painted on the surface. The panoramic Ottoman architecture is in perfect harmony with the older part of the city.

“It is a landmark, a shining white cliff like a vault of heaven, upon which are situated numerous towers, churches, belvederes and pavilions. A city surrounded by vineyards, and houses with beautiful rose gardens.” (Evlia Çelebi – Ottoman chronicler from 17th century)

The special and unique architecture of this city experienced major influences from several civilisations that amazingly, have managed to coexist together for centuries.

This is what makes Berat so unique among other historic towns. If we add here the establishment of a small Jewish

community in the city in the 16th century, then with no doubt we can consider Berat a small jewel on the great mosaic of cultures and civilisations.

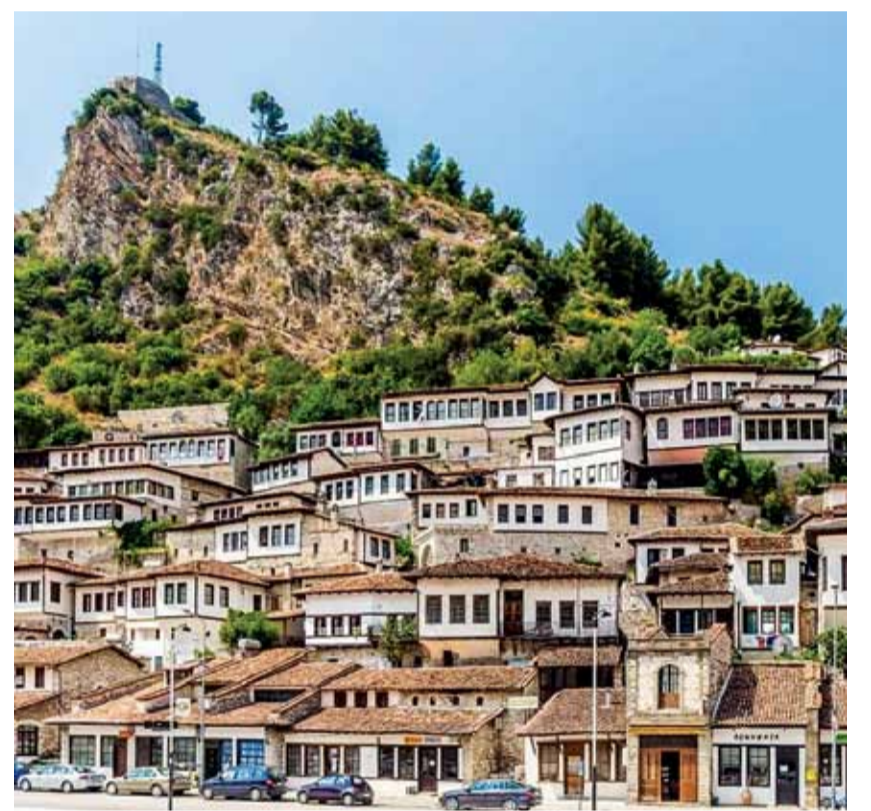
Many wonder how the nickname “the city of one thousand and one windows” came to be.

What is certain is that no one has claimed to have counted all the windows. However, in Albanian language this epithet is almost identical with the other phrase: “one above another windows”; it looks more like a game of words. The reason behind the nickname is probably due to the skyline landscape formed by the white houses of Berat and their windows, which look like they are “climbing” on the city’s hills. When vi-

siting the city for the first time, one can instantly notice its panorama of “never ending windows”. And this breathtaking landscape has remained so for centuries, to bear witness for its history and heritage.

No other city can represent Albania better than Berat, it has become now one of the important cultural centers of the country. Throughout many historical transitions the city has strongly preserved its values, thus becoming an example for many other cities in preserving their cultural heritage, and yet, at the same time following the trend of modernisation and development.

■ Ledio Karaj



Jewish heritage of Halberstadt: A story of memory and identity



Situated at the foot of the Harz Mountains in the state of Saxony-Anhalt in Germany, Halberstadt is a town full of religious architecture and timber construction. A medieval town with impressive structures, Halberstadt has much to offer to anyone who visits it. However, one of the lesser known aspects of the town is its Jewish heritage.

Jewish history in Halberstadt

The first presence of Jews in Halberstadt dates back to 1261. The bishops protected the Jews and they could live in the town after paying an annual fee. The Jewish quarter was located next to the bishop’s residence and the Christians and Jews lived together. After the Thirty Years’ War, Halberstadt became part

of Brandenburg-Prussia and the Elector then allowed Jews to enter trade, “butcher according to their ways” and have a synagogue. Later, the community developed into the most important Jewish settlement in Central Germany. Halberstadt also functioned as the seat of the chief rabbinate overseeing the area up to Minden and Hameln. In conjunction with the ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment a process of Jewish acculturation into the non-Jewish society took place, and Halberstadt became a place linking tradition and modernity.

At the end of the 19th century, Halberstadt was home to a Jewish population which seemed as if it would remain indefinitely. The Jewish community showed their attachment to the town by building

new facilities for a Jewish school and an old people’s home. The most important activity was the purchasing of a large patch of ground for a third cemetery “for eternity”.

But, with the Nazi’s power on the rise, the situation changed dramatically. On April, 12th, and November, 22nd, 1942, around 400 Jews of Halberstadt were deported and murdered.

Jewish cemeteries

Cemeteries come across as a heritage of memory and can sometimes also be uncomfortable, pertaining to their condition and history. The Jews in Halberstadt were welcomed by the town and its people to an extent where leaving the town wasn’t a question even with the rise of the Nazi power. The three cemeteries tell this story of hope and faith.

“As Pierre Nora said, cemeteries are great lieux de memoire, they are places of memory and it doesn’t matter if they are Jewish, Christian or non-religious we should care about them because at the end they are the most explicit example of the evolution of the cities.” Paula O’Donohoe Villota, Coordinator at European Heritage Volunteers

Each of the three cemeteries in Halberstadt has its own feature which distinguishes it from the others. With elements from the then prevalent architecture, the gravestones clearly depict the overtime change in ornamentation and material.

Walking through these unkempt cemeteries makes one wonder about the tragedy that the families of these people buried in these locations had to endure. With the help of Moses Mendelssohn Academy, the European Heritage Volunteers has documented this heritage of memory over the past three years.

“The most important reason to preserve them is to maintain the memory of Halberstadt as a multi-religious and multi-cultural city and also the heritage of such an important Jewish community in Europe. To preserve the cemeteries helps to maintain the memories of the Holocaust and illustrates how the European Jewish communities disappeared and how anti-Semitic attitudes developed in Europe.” Paula O’Donohoe Villota, Coordinator at European Heritage Volunteers

Synagogue, mikveh and adaptive re-use

The Moses Mendelssohn Academy is an important advocate of history of



the Jewish Enlightenment. The Academy preserves the Jewish heritage in the town and imparts this knowledge to the visitors by organising city tours, seminars and educational trips. One of its most interesting projects to visit is the Berend Lehmann Museum. The street view doesn’t disclose that behind a house looking as a simple residential building the former synagogue was located. Some walls of the synagogue are preserved, and the building houses an exhibition on the history of Jews in Halberstadt and Judaism in Germany as well as an original mikveh, a Jewish ritual bath. With traces of what used to be, the structure has been adapted to the needs of today, yet giving the visitor a peek into history.

Conclusion

The town of Halberstadt, its connection to Jewish heritage and traces of built heritage, leaves behind many questions. This town’s history is incomplete without mentioning the town’s Jewish population. The subject though remains uncomfortable. With respect to preservation and identity, one of the central questions is “Should a heritage such as a cemetery, which is unused and not maintained and which invokes uncomfortable feelings, be preserved?” Some may say yes, while others might deny but a visit to Halberstadt may give a clearer picture.

■ Meetal Gupta



Shop signs: Overseen traces of the past

Do you know what happens every time when a foreign friend comes to visit me in Barcelona? Instead of visiting the Sagrada Familia, we go to visit the Raval neighbourhood. It is one of the most multicultural neighbourhoods in Europe and hides a lot of heritage within itself.

One of the most important artistic movements which left their traces in Barcelona was modernism, also known as Art Nouveau. It was developed at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century and played an important role in all artistic disciplines – in architecture, literature, and music. Modernism wanted to recover traditional and artisanal techniques linked to glass, ceramics, mosaic and other materials without renouncing industrial advances and apply them to

free, modern concepts. One of the major representatives of the movement was Antoni Gaudí who created the Sagrada Familia, Casa Batlló and other buildings iconic for Barcelona. However, we should not only think about the big monuments, but also about the urban landscape in general or the smaller artistic elements which are characteristic for the architecture of that period. To the most eye-catching of these elements belong the commercial signs of the stores.

Shop signs in Raval neighbourhood are testimonies of history and development during the 20th century. These elements are an intrinsic part of the businesses to which they did belong. However, when businesses close or change ownership there come up conflicts. This problem heightens in the Raval neighbourhood

where rapid changes happen due to the neighbourhood's high level of multiculturalism.

If you walk through this neighbourhood, you will see many current premises with commercial signs more than hundred years old. For example, in Carmen Street we can find signs of “Farmacia Carmen” or “Bar Muy Buenas”. They are of different materials, styles, and shapes – for example the pharmacy uses mosaics and the bar glass and wood. The shop signs give to the urban landscape a unique significance related to how they belong to the community that lives there.

Currently there are regulations to protect this special heritage, but they are not sufficient enough what is why changes of the businesses have caused

destruction of countless shop signs; numerous others are in poor condition.

But there are also projects to recover these elements and to preserve them as part of the historical memory of the city and of the people they belong to. Since modernism recovered crafts, some of these commercial signs are protected since they stand out due to their artistic quality showing Catalan and natural symbols. Throughout the neighbourhood one can find various artistic techniques applied at commercial signs. For example, the sign of “Bar muy buenas” was destroyed by the old owner, but the new owner decided to restore it.

We live in a society of constant change and adaptation, but we can learn from the errors of the past and the present. The commercial signs in Raval neighbour-

hood are true examples of the impact of the traditional skills and the artistic expressions of the past, they are part of the urban landscape and of the identity of the community that lives there. This urban landscape is part of our daily life, and we embrace it along with our memories and experiences.

In Barcelona, the shop signs are overshadowed by more iconic heritage sites of the city, such as Sagrada Familia, Park Güell or La Pedrera. I encourage everyone to observe the small architectural details that are part of our daily life. We should be aware that without these elements urban landscapes would not be unique nor represent the community that lives there.

■ Raquel Castillo Sagredo



Giaveno: A chromatic transformation

Colour is one of the important fragments of the perception which helps to define a place by decoding it within our memory. It is an important way to create the image or sense of “this” place or “that” place through the colour-scape that is one of the stratifications of memory's landscape.

Colour planning is an urban design tool which had its executive origin in the historical trajectory of the city of Turin, dating back to the 1850s. Yellowish and reddish hues had been dominantly used at the building façades within the historic centre of the Turin and its surrounding area, and these emblematic colours had become the important characteristics to describe the city's overall image and charisma. In fact, the yellow perceived in Turin and its suburbs, known as Turin's yellow, later became fashionable for other places in Italy, including surrounding villages in Piemonte region.

The colour planning invented in Turin in the 19th century was subsequently elaborated by Prof. Giovanni Brino from

Polytechnic University of Turin in 1978, who also prepared environmental colour plans for various other Italian and French cities. The Turin Colour Plan from 1978 was the first operative regulation in Italy in which the yellow, red and blue were prescribed as emblematic colours to be applied on the façades that define the fundamental streets and squares of the city. How these colours have become symbolic for Turin is a long historical process that caused the emergence of Turin's yellow or Piemonte's yellow.

It would be interesting to know the story behind Piemonte's yellow and how it became the primary colour to memorialise many cities in Piemonte, as well as other cities in Italy and France. It was most probably derived from the landmark building of Turin that is Casa Antonelli designed by architect Antonelli in the 1850s and its original façade's colour using in a polychromatic manner yellow, reddish and blue hues. In Piemonte, we might see many cities and villages in these colours because the historic building

façades are hued in these three main colours. Giaveno, located at the Salgone Valley on the western border of the Metropolitan City of Turin, was one of those villages in Piemonte designated by Prof. Giovanni Brino in 1987 in the means of colour uniformity based on his previously described approach.

The dominance of the yellowish hues used in the city feels like looking at something through a yellow filter, reminding of a resort. For example, a holiday home that is mainly used for seasonal purposes, in which whole furniture or objects are usually covered by white sheets to prevent them from becoming dusty. When someone comes to spend a certain period, some of those white sheets are removed from the objects which brings a place to life for those periods.

The concept of “transience” might be interesting to describe these places; they are not stable, but rather they are places in transience as their users are in motion. It is interesting to define a city or a place by using Benjamin Walter's description

of Naples as a “porous city” that was later over-used for capturing the contemporaneity of Italian cities for understanding the contemporaneity. Another to use is Orhan Pamuk's description of Istanbul as *hüzün* – a melancholy that was based on memories regarding the city.

If one can analyse the city of Giaveno through defining within a capsule term, it might be the “transient” city which perfectly shows the city's temporariness characteristic. It is not a static city, but rather, it represents a conduit city that is generally used as an alternative location in summertime or vocational periods by the local people of Turin. This character of the city, being in a state of “transience”, is seen from the yellowish filter of the façades which are reminiscent of the covered furniture in holiday homes to protect them from the dust.

Recently completed research, conducted by Polytechnic University of Turin and coordinated by Prof. Silvia Gron, proposes new polychromatic alternatives in various colours and tones for those

historic building façades. Although the city's overall image is changed via different colours, the city's character as being in a state of “transience” is strengthened, as if someone has come back to home for a while and has removed the covered sheets from some objects and furniture to live temporarily. There are some angles within the city which seem like livelier parts due to a different colour composition of the façades, on the other hand, there are also streets that are still defined by this yellowish colour due to the building's historical character, which gives impressions of those covered, non-used objects. Accordingly, the city represents one of the significant examples of chromatic transformation, exemplified through the use of colour as a tool for place-making and image-creation in the present, or as sense-defining to provide continuity between the past and contemporaneity.

■ Gözde Yildiz





European Heritage Times is a digital newspaper containing stories about European heritage written from a personal point of view.

In 2015, it started as a joint initiative of European Heritage Volunteers and Europa Nostra under the name Heritage Times, and since 2019, it is continued by European Heritage Volunteers as European Heritage Times.

Young authors from all over Europe with diverse cultural, educational, and professional backgrounds, and mostly aged between 22 and 35 years, report on heritage-linked themes from their home countries and other locations in Europe where they have encountered different aspects of heritage.

The range of topics varies greatly and aims to illustrate the richness and diversity of European heritage. Apart from "standard" cultural heritage, European Heritage Times explores cultural landscapes, industrial heritage, and intangible heritage too.

Special focus is given to overlooked and endangered heritage sites, as well as to civil society's engagement with heritage at local and regional levels. All in all, European Heritage Times focuses on awareness-raising and boosting young voices dedicated to heritage.

The authors contribute to European Heritage Times writing on a voluntary basis as well as handling photo uploads, proofreading, managing social media channels, and various other background tasks. The management of European Heritage Times itself is also carried out on a voluntary basis.

The stories are published on the European Heritage Times website which is linked with various social media channels. A printed edition of European Heritage Times is also published on an irregular basis.

We hope you enjoy reading the 2022 printed edition of European Heritage Times!



New authors join European Heritage Times in an annual rhythm. Applicants should have passion for writing and heritage-related topics and shall commit to actively contributing to European Heritage Times for at least one year. In result, each year a group of twelve to fifteen new authors are selected, marking a new cycle of European Heritage Times.

The selected applicants are invited to a week-long Introduction and Training Seminar. There, knowledge about different aspects of heritage, journalistic issues, and European Heritage Times itself is shared. In addition to this, the seminar

provides a space where the future authors can exchange their backgrounds and motivation, get to know each other, and establish personal and professional relationships which enable them to actively spread the message about European cultural heritage upon returning home.

At the same time, the Introduction and Training Seminar provides the authors deeper insight to a particular region and its cultural heritage. As part of the training process, the future authors create teams of two to three and write articles about the heritage-related aspects of the particular region.

The seminars for the first two cycles

– in 2016 and 2017 – were held at the Wieland Estate in Oßmannstedt near Weimar. This Baroque manor house, which is surrounded by a sprawling estate, was home to Christoph Martin Wieland, one of the leading figures of the Enlightenment and an early advocate for promoting pan-European cultural connections.

For the third cycle in 2018, the seminar started at Wieland Estate before the authors joined the European Cultural Heritage Summit, which was held in Berlin for the occasion of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

In 2019, the seminar was held in the city of Freiberg as it coincided with the inscription of the Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Mining Region in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

After a two-year break caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2022, the Introduction and Training Seminar for the fifth cycle was held once more in the Ore Mountains – in the city of Schneeberg. As a result, several pages of the 2022 printed edition of European Heritage Times are dedicated to this region and its rich tangible and intangible heritage.

The next seminar is planned for January or February 2023. Applications to become an author of the 6th cycle of European Heritage Times will be accepted until the end of October 2022.



European Heritage Volunteers has been active in the field of heritage-related education and volunteering for heritage for over 25 years. Its main objective has been to provide a platform that reaches out to heritage sites which are in need of support or visibility, while at the same time addressing the gap in opportunities for young heritage professionals wishing to contribute to ongoing efforts in heritage conservation and to gain practical skills to complement their academic education.

The European Heritage Volunteers Programme consists of training courses and volunteering projects which take place at various sites across the wider European cultural space each year. It is aimed at young heritage professionals, students of heritage-related fields and heritage enthusiasts who wish to obtain a comprehensive understanding about conservation and restoration practices, traditional techniques, handicrafts and heritage appreciation. The training courses and volunteering projects are led by technical instructors specialised in their respective fields, and are facilitated by a team of trained group coordinators.

The topics addressed on each course or project reflect the needs of the particular heritage site and the local partners as well as the diversity of cultural expressions in European heritage. They may focus on urgent interventions, the revitalisation of abandoned heritage sites, on traditional handicrafts or on archaeology. Courses and projects taking place in historic parks or in the context of cultural landscapes are integrating topics related to climate adaptability and resilience strategies, providing an ideal platform to raise awareness on these topics of current urgency. Besides those main fields of interventions, there are plenty of others – research, documentation, interpretation, archival work, and the very wide field of intangible heritage.

European Heritage Volunteers is based on a wide European network of partners that connects the expertise of heritage professionals with the engagement of civil society activists. It provides trend-setting educational experiences that enable a look at heritage in the context of its history, present use and future development, while bringing multiple benefits and new motivation to community involvement and local empowerment. European Heritage Volunteers has organised over the past two decades more than 200 training courses and volunteering projects in almost 30 European countries that has seen participation from more than 2,800 young heritage professionals and students from heritage-related fields coming from more than 70 countries worldwide.



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