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National *lieux de mémoire* and the European Heritage Label. Some Reflections on the Case of the Gdańsk Shipyard¹

Abstract: In the context of increasing interest in a common European heritage or European *lieux de mémoire*, this paper will propose reflections on Europeanization of national *lieux de mémoire*, exemplified by the intergovernmental and Union “European Heritage Label” initiative. Furthermore, the proposed reflection will examine the process of the institutional invention of European heritage in the context of a gradual expansion of the European Union and of a strong need to forge on the Old Continent a new representation of the past. The paper will refer as well to the concept of heritage, its political use and perspectives in which the concept of political myth/mythology is applicable.

The article will examine the process, actors and context in which the Gdańsk Shipyards were/are used in the supranational context. The additional objective of this paper will be to focus on the change of meaning that this national site underwent while leaving the pure national context and reaching the European level. In other words the paper will try to answer the question of the nature of European semiotization / Europeanization of this national *lieu de mémoire*.

Key words: European heritage, Europeanization, mythology, *lieux de mémoire*, Gdańsk Shipyard, European Heritage Label

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Introduction

The fall of the Communist Bloc and the gradual expansion of the European Union has meant that a strong need has been felt on the Old Continent to forge a new representation of the past. On the one hand, this has to take into account the heterogeneous, multinational and cosmopolitan aspects of Europe, but also – on the other hand – must attempt to secure its common and irreducible element. Heritage plays an excellent role in this regard. By appealing to national history, memory and *lieux de mémoire*, heritage is becoming a new tool for describing a common, European past.

Initiatives connected to the utilisation of the notion of heritage at the level of the European Union show its potential for building/reinforcing the European supranational community. One may say that today, at the start of the 21st century, the history experienced by the nations of Central Europe in the 1980s and 1990s has undergone a re-enchantment of the past and *lieux de mémoire*, in that they now possess an interpretive accent *à l'euro péenne*. This fascinating process is taking place within the European frame of reference.

Heritage at the beginning of the 21st century

Heritage is a tool for reinterpreting the past, whose imagining and visualisation easily ties itself with collective memory, values and ideology. In this perspective, it seems valid to classify it as a type of “visual ideology”² as coined by Nicolas Hadjinicolaou. Markus Tauschek shares a similar view, describing it as “project of bureaucracies”³ and referring to Valdimar Hafstein’s “ideological process.”⁴ In this understanding, heritage intricately interweaves a politically charged axiology with bureaucratic procedures in its creation, classification, conservation, protection and often instrumentalization and banalization.⁵ One can say that heritage is the expression of the power of the living over the dead and never the other way round. Heritage is the inter-

² H. Nicos, *Art History and Class Struggle*, London 1978, p. 95.

³ M. Tauschek, “The Bureaucratic Texture of National Patrimonial Policies,” in: R.F. Bendix, A. Eggert, A. Peselmann (eds.), *Heritage Regimes and the State* (Göttingen Studies in Cultural Property, Vol. 6), Göttingen 2012, p. 165 (whole text 165–212).

⁴ V. Hafstein, “Claiming Culture: Intangible Heritage Inc., Folklore©, Traditional Knowledge,” in: D. Hemme, M. Tauschek, R. Bendix (eds.), *Prädikat HERITAGE. Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen*, Berlin 2007, p. 76 (whole text 75–100). Lit. cited after Tauschek, *The Bureaucratic Texture of National Patrimonial Policies*, p. 165.

⁵ D. Brett, *The Construction of Heritage*, Cork 1996.

pretation and representation of the past built with the support of contemporary axiology, appealing to different, contemporary objectives – political, economic and social.

Gregory Ashworth, in reference to the institutional, political and bureaucratic roots of heritage, wrote that:

Heritage is actively used for many political and social purposes, including the legitimization of political ideologies and justifications at many spatial scales; the inclusion or exclusion of social and cultural groups; or the promotion of the cohesiveness, identification and well-being of groups and individuals. It can even be argued that as heritage is a contemporary creation called into being in response to specific contemporary requirements, then all heritage has, by definition, some use in, or for, contemporary society.⁶

Laurajane Smith claims that there is no such thing as heritage. Instead, there is discourse which determines and brings it to life. It has an imperative character and does not brook opposition, determining the way in which we think, speak and write about heritage. Referring to Michel Foucault, she says that:

The discursive construction of heritage is itself part of the cultural and social processes that are heritage. The practice of heritage may be defined as the management and conservation protocols, techniques and procedures the heritage managers, archaeologists, architects, museum curators and other experts undertake. It may also be an economic and/or leisure practice, and/or a social and cultural practice [...] of meaning and identity making. These practices, as well as the meaning of the material 'things' of heritage, are constituted by the discourses that simultaneously reflect these practices while also constructing them.⁷

She holds that it is a process that identifies, classifies, legitimises and manages the past which is regarded as heritage. By its very nature it is political, since it is connected with power, partial, as it is dependent upon choice, and questioned, as it generates opposition and controversy. Bella Dicks also stresses this discursive nature when she writes that it is a discourse which encompasses highly valued cultural facts generating and reinforcing feelings of identity and belonging to a certain place, time or community. Heritage is a strategy to make people more conscious, and to provide them with more information about a shared past. As a result of this activity, one may experience the past and ascribe it values which, in the form of heritage, become visible, understandable and can even be visited.⁸

⁶ G.J. Ashworth, "Heritage in Fragments: a Fragmented Instrument for Fragmented Policies," in: M. Murzyn, J. Purchla (eds.), *Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century. Opportunities and Challenges*, Cracow 2007, pp. 29–30. See also: B. Graham, G.J. Ashworth, J.E. Tunbridge (eds.), *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy*, London–New York 2000.

⁷ L. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, London 2006, p. 13.

⁸ B. Dicks, *Culture on Display: The Production of Contemporary Visibility*, Buckingham 2003; for discussion of the theory see: Anico Marta, "Representing Identities at Local Municipal Museums: Cultural Forums or Identity Bunkers?," in: M. Anico, E. Peralta (eds.), *Heritage*

Some authors emphasise the constructivist aspect of heritage and its political engagement in the public space. In their understanding, heritage is both a social and political construction which is not homogeneous in time, because it is determined by the historical, social and political context defining what meanings are ascribed to heritage and how it should be interpreted.⁹

The discursive perspective of reflection on the socially constructed past indicates its deeply intentional, selective, and historically contextual character. It is both an expression of the procedures and rigours of its creation, the social actors taking part in the process and, finally, from the perspective of the institutions that either create or exploit it. This is the most modern face of the symbolic violence, which the past is subjected to, as well as the existing traditions, history and memories.

Heritage possesses a strong potential for an alliance with politics. It is used either to complete the national historical narrative, or to act as its strong emotional counterweight. It plays a crucial role in the process of constructing and maintaining common identity. It is the factor which allows the community to find its axiological anchor in the past and symbolically define its shape and borders. In addition, heritage appears in the context of identity, power, authority and even control. It is thus not a neutral notion, unengaged or indifferent. It is always engaged or in the possession of someone. The ownership connected with heritage conditions it strongly, because its adoption is decided upon by a community, which is not immediately its heir, but becomes one upon consensual decision.

Heritage is a choice related to the past, but always made in the present and whose currently pursued needs and goals define the values which are transmitted to the next generation.¹⁰ In this sense, heritage is an ongoing process and not a one which is set in stone. It is a relation of the present to the past, within which values, meaning and emotion are central, constituting the foundations of the feeling community. In other words, heritage is an axiological and interpretative colonization of the past, which is communicated in the present with an eye on the future. At the same time, heritage is experienced as logical, and thus furnished with values and meaning. In this understanding, heritage is another face of myth, which is also to be found in politics.

and identity: engagement and demission in the contemporary world, London–New York 2009, p. 63.

⁹ F.E.P. Kaplan, "Making and remaking national identities," in: S.P. Macdonald (ed.), *A Companion to Museum Studies*, Oxford 2006, pp. 152–169.

¹⁰ G.J. Ashworth, J.E. Tunbridge, *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, Chichester 1996, p. 6.

New mythologies in post-communist times

The weakening of the Communist regimes and their eventual collapse in Europe after the 1989 awakened the need in this part of the world to find new certainties, values and narrations to help fill the gaps left by the mythologies, which had until then made sense of the past and present and created a mirage of what would be in the future. The loss of one myth led the way for a new one to replace it. As Tismaneanu wrote: “Political myths are responses to the sentiments of discontinuity, fragmentation, and the overall confusion of the post-communist stage.”¹¹

In the European context, the opinion of this author loses none of its relevance, especially the fact that myths are to be found at the heart of the policy, that they give a clear interpretation of past defeats and future successes, mobilize energy and, as a result, easily shape social action. Tismaneanu added that the main function of a myth is not the one of description, but rather in the imagining of a reality which is related to a certain political goal.

The narration of the return to Europe by the countries of the former Communist bloc and the alternative story experiences of the eternal presence in Europe of this part of the world met the post-1989 political situation perfectly. Soon, however – following the enlargement in 2004 – there was a need to find a common narrative and identify with the common heritage expressed in the Carolingian part of Europe, and beyond this, to open the door to broader participation in developing a symbolic consensus discussed by societies, which had until then explained their existence by appealing to an entirely different axiology and narrative. European heritage is the next mythical form of experiencing the past, but one which has a supranational character and is shaped by the participation of academia.

The search for a supranational mythology matches the hypothesis posed on the subject of the post-communist world by Tismaneanu: “Humanity is once again confronted with such issues as the value and desirability of technological progress, the role of parties in democratic politics, and the possibility of new forms of human organization beyond parties, nations, or ethnic states.”¹² Thus the notion of European heritage meets the needs of this part of the world, where all national mythologies to differing degrees and with differing effects have become compromised. In this respect, the situation of European heritage is so difficult, because it is a counterweight (or complement) to the often still powerful mythologies of the previous, pre-1989 world.

¹¹ V. Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation. Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe*, Princeton, N.J. 1998, p. 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

The essence of the mythological dimension of European heritage, experienced as a supranational mythology, is also described by Tismaneanu: “We know, however, that human beings need frames of reference. They need relatively stable images with which to identify, galvanizing figures of a better order, and explanations for perceived or real failure. In other words humans need political myths.”¹³ And furthermore: “Thus my approach does not treat myth as a necessarily mendacious vision of reality but as a narrative that is able to inspire collective loyalties, affinities, passions, and actions. Its propositions do not make sense because of rational coherence, but in spite of it.”¹⁴

European heritage and weakening of grand narratives

Gerard Delanty believes that the growing interest in the notion of heritage – and European heritage in particular – is coinciding with a clear process of the weakening of grand narratives. Thus, the notion of European heritage and the discussion around its values are an expression of a broadly understood reflection which – as Delanty notes – is connected to the need to find a symbolic basis for the EU. This need is itself an expectation that, following the collapse of communism and the subsequent expansion of the EU, a new and common interpretation of the past would occur together with the widening of the “discursive space of Europe.”¹⁵ On the one hand, European heritage is understood as a proposal to accept the achievements and the consequences of the actions of previous generations. In this sense it has the potential to find, account for, rehabilitate and harmonise different interpretations of the past (European heritage as a space for the coexistence of varying – sometimes opposing – interpretations of the past). On the other hand, it is not only an expression of harmonising and accounting for what until now was regarded as an expression of diversity, but also to constitute an answer to the need to define a fundamental element which will be the consensus for the symbolic construction of a supranational community. The tension between these two visions of European heritage is both noticeable and striking.

Delanty writes that European heritage is (1) an expression of a political tradition which interprets the past and puts emphasis on freedom, democ-

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁵ G. Delanty, “The European heritage from a critical cosmopolitan perspective,” *LSE Europe in Question. Discussion Paper Series*, 2010, No. 19 (February), p. 18; G. Delanty, “The European heritage: History, memory, and time,” in: Ch. Rumford (ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of European Studies*, London 2009, pp. 36–51.

racy, social justice, liberalism, peace, constitutionalism, republicanism etc; (2) formalising the idea of unity in diversity; (3) regarding the past as a trauma and (4) – finally – leading to a cosmopolitan vision of heritage.¹⁶ Thus European heritage as an expression of unity in diversity means reshaping the interpretation of the past proposed thus far, in search of a kind of heritage which is found beyond national discourse, namely in the local or regional space. This idea was outlined precisely by the Maastricht Treaty, which, whilst respecting the national and regional aspects, accentuates the common European heritage. This perspective suggests that

a conception of the European heritage that is not defined in the terms of what might be termed ‘Old Europe’, namely a western European oriented definition of the European heritage. With the enlargement of the EU, there is clearly a need for a wider definition of the European heritage to include the various forms of Europe: Central, Eastern, and Balkan Europe. In addition to this, the notion of unity in diversity draws attention to the regional plurality of Europe below the national level.¹⁷

European Heritage Label¹⁸

Any search for an institutionalised form of European heritage that is an answer to the pressing need to define the past in new – pan-European and EU-based – frames of reference takes on exceptional importance at the beginning of the 21st century. The European Heritage Label initiative responds to this need. The idea of a European certificate was considered in the context of reflection on the European dimension of memory, cultural goods, monuments, landscapes, *lieux de mémoire* and testimonies of European culture.¹⁹ The process of marking the remnants of the past and putting them in European terms demonstrated the need to specify the procedures which particular sites had to satisfy. The first outline of this was presented in Bonn (18 April 2006) and

¹⁶ See: R. Oittingen, “Cosmopolitan versus nationalist visions: Rem Koolhaas’ Exhibition ‘The Image of Europe,’” in: M. Rampley (ed.), *Heritage, Ideology, and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe. Contested Pasts, Contested Presents*, Woodbridge 2012, pp. 175–194.

¹⁷ G. Delanty, “The European heritage from a critical cosmopolitan perspective,” *LSE Europe in Question. Discussion Paper Series*, 2010, No. 19 (February), p. 13.

¹⁸ This part of the article is an abbreviated version of my text “Anek. Znak Dziedzictwa Europejskiego,” in: K. Kowalski, *O istocie dziedzictwa europejskiego – rozważania*, Kraków 2013, pp. 177–183.

¹⁹ The first concepts of the initiative of the European Heritage Label were discussed during “Rencontres pour l’Europe de la Culture talks” (2–3 May 2005). The exact schedule of the talks, and a summary of their content, can be found at http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/dossiers-presse/europe-culture/DP_europe.pdf [accessed on: 2 November 2014].

in Granada (27–28 April 2006).²⁰ Work on the registration procedures began in Paris (10 July 2006) at a meeting of representatives of 20 EU member states and the European Commission, and continued with similar participants in Athens (6 October 2006).²¹ It was there that the first list of sites with a chance of becoming emblems of Europe emerged. At the top of this list was the Acropolis in Athens. At a meeting in Madrid (25 January 2007), the representatives of 17 EU member states and the European Commission agreed on the criteria for selecting sites, as well as deciding on the technical, logistical and communicational issues that they expected the European Heritage Label project to encounter in the realisation stage.

The message of the Madrid meeting was to form a pan-European network of sites. The label's European character meant that it complemented the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes. At the same time, though, those who conceived it sought to distance themselves from the UNESCO World Heritage List, whose entries represent universal, rather than European, values.²²

The document signed in Madrid specified the conditions which had to be satisfied by the sites in order to make their way onto the Europe's emblematic list.²³ In a general sense, it was expected to express the European identity as a result of many centuries of blending of cultures within the borders of the European cultural space. The chosen sites were also to act as a source of knowledge on the continent's culture and history. They should, it was specified, express not so much a national as a transnational and ultimately European character of the past and of the natural environment. In other words, associated as a network, they became a system of texts that can be read and interpreted separately, but only gain symbolic depth thanks to the synergy of meanings among them all. What was to develop was a multilevel and at the same time self-referential system of texts given for interpretation.

²⁰ *Un label pour le patrimoine de l'Europe*, "La lettre d'informtion. Ministère de la culture et de la communication," June 2006, No. 138, p. 6. Text available (1 November 2012) at <http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/var/culture/storage/mag-culture/138.pdf> [accessed on: 12 November 2014].

²¹ Representatives of 19 states and the European Commission. Based on the chronology produced by the French Ministry of Culture, available (1 November 2012) at http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/politique-culturelle/patrimoine_europeen/labeleuropeen.pdf [accessed on: 12 November 2014].

²² Article 1 clearly presents the issues of European heritage from the point of view of the role they play in European integration. See also: *Règles de procédure*, art. 1 (no page number) at http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/politique-culturelle/patrimoine_europeen/labeleuropeen.pdf [accessed on: 12 December 2014].

²³ The procedure guidelines for the European Heritage Label as an intergovernmental enterprise are available in the post-conference documents; see *Règles de procédure*, art. 1 and art. 2 and *Critères d'attribution* (no page numbers) at http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/politique-culturelle/patrimoine_europeen/labeleuropeen.pdf [accessed on: 12 December 2014].

Specific principles for the site selection were enumerated during the Madrid meet up. Firstly, these were to be places of cultural and historical importance for the member states. Secondly, the authors intended to categorise architectural works and sites whose value would be assessed from the point of view of European history, its art and science. Thirdly, particular places and landscapes and archaeological locations (including underwater ones) were deemed to be important. Fourthly, non-material heritage was considered, which they defined as symbols, values and artistic trends.

Member states played a huge role in the selection procedure for the sites nominated at the Madrid conference. “When the process of drawing up a European heritage list began in 2007, a procedure was developed which designated the principles for the award of this distinction in very general terms. According to its resolutions, the most important role in this process is to be played by the member states, who identify sites meeting the set criteria. Each country participating in the programme utilises its own mechanism for choosing sites located within its borders.”²⁴ In other words, the classification procedure placed the initiative on the member states, which had the right to nominate candidate sites. It was the member states which decided which sites to nominate and which arguments to use during selection. As a result, it was the national interpretations of the past that lay at the basis of the final list, and the selection was dictated by a particularistic vision of what elements of the national output should be seen as European heritage. At national level, then, there was a guarantee of institutional control of the interpretation of the past, its traces to be marked by a European label. The member states had not only an active right to nominate, but also a passive right to ignore certain sites, facts, or interpretation thereof. This makes the list interesting for two reasons. First, the selection says much about Europe. Second – however – with the list comes its informal reverse side. This list of “the great absentees” is much harder to analyse, but, I admit, it seems equally striking as the list itself. This is the list of European *lieux d’oublie* (places of forgetting), *lieux de immémoire* (places of non-memory), and often also *lieux de drame européen* (places of European drama).

The originators of the idea saw European heritage as having a character emblematic of Europe and representing purely European values. The associative nature of the list was supposed to result in a symbolic synergy obtained thanks to interpretation of the sites which with their unique subtlety placed the emphasis more on a European perspective than a local and national level. By allusion, the local and/or national became the European. The values and meanings associated with specific sites (freedom, democracy, peace, recon-

²⁴ A. Suchorzewska, “Znak dziedzictwa europejskiego szansą na poznanie historii wspólnej Europy,” in: T. Grodecka, J. Sobczak (eds.), *Prawna ochrona zabytków*, Toruń 2010, p. 293.

ciliation, rational Enlightenment ideas etc.) combined to form a shimmering and intuitively experienced Europe. It was becoming a landscape of meanings. For the founders of the European Heritage Label at least, Europe is a sophisticated combination of metric space with the values of the here and now recognised as European. It has been constructed as a cultural landscape, as well as – to put the idea somewhat differently – an intentionally designed text of culture complemented by its contextual interpretation.

The celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome (25 March 2007) gave many countries an opportunity to officially inaugurate the European Heritage Label and place it at their selected and accepted sites. On 19 March 2007, the label was received by Cluny Abbey, Robert Schuman's summer house in Scy-Chazelles and the Popes' Palace in Avignon. One week later, the Acropolis received its badge. As the materials of the French Ministry of Culture reported, homage was thereby paid to the place in which European democracy was born.

A total of 68 sites were included on the intergovernmental list, nominated by Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland.²⁵

Finally, on 16 November 2011, the intergovernmental project was converted into a European Union initiative.²⁶ The European Parliament and Council of the European Union's decision invoked Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the first point of which stated that "The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore."²⁷

In its selection guidelines, the Parliament stipulated that sites which already possessed the badge in its intergovernmental form could apply for the

²⁵ Ph. Belaval, B. Favel, F. Quemarec (eds.), *Label Patrimoine européen. Sites/European Heritage Label. Sites*, Paris 2011. Publication available (1 November 2012) at http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/politique-culturelle/patrimoine_europeen/patrimoine_europe.pdf [accessed on: 7 December 2014]. It contains a list and description of all sites with the European Heritage Label in its intergovernmental guise. An analogous description of sites can be found on the website of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport: <http://www.mcu.es/patrimonio/MC/PatrimonioEur/Historico/RedSitiop.html> [accessed on: 7 December 2014].

²⁶ Decision No. 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing European Union action for the European Heritage Label (OJ L 303, 22 November 2011, p. 1).

²⁷ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, art. 16, point 1, Official Journal of the European Union, 30 March 2010, C83/47–C83/199.

EU version of the European Heritage Label, but would have to go through the selection procedure again.²⁸

In terms of aims, the Parliament cited “stressing the symbolic value and raising the profile of sites which have played a significant role in the history and culture of Europe and/or building of the Union.” The decision also suggested that the label was to contribute to improving “understanding of the history of Europe and the building of the Union, and of their common yet diverse cultural heritage, especially in relation to the democratic values and human rights that underpin the process of European integration.”²⁹ The list of sites decorated with the label is therefore an expression of a new approach to the past, which differs from the previous perspective in terms of the emphasis placed on what is defined as local, regional and national, and what the European message expresses for the past.

A carefully devised EU mechanism is now in operation to generate the list of sites with a European Heritage Label. These are supposed to be emblematic for the European Union. This means an institutionalised heritage of Europe *in statu nascendu*. In this context, the suggestion that heritage is not a map of what there is, but of what there should be, takes on further significance.

The European Heritage Label for the Gdańsk Shipyard

On the 28th of January 2009, a European Heritage Label was unveiled on gate 2 of the Gdańsk Shipyard.³⁰ It referred to three objects. The first was the gate itself, the place where Lech Wałęsa spoke during the August strike (1980) and where 10 years before the first workers had been killed by the militia members in December 1970.³¹ The Label also referred to the work safety and hygiene room, which during the strike was the headquarters of the strike

²⁸ Art. 2, point 1, Decision No. 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing European Union action for the European Heritage Label (OJ L 303, 22 November 2011).

²⁹ Art. 3, point 2a and 2b, Decision No. 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing European Union action for the European Heritage Label (OJ L 303, 22 November 2011).

³⁰ Three Polish sites possess a European Heritage Label: the Cathedral of SS. Wenceslas and Stanislaus on Wawel Hill in Cracow, the Lech Hill in Gniezno, the city of Lublin – a symbol of European integration ideas, supranational heritage of democracy and tolerance and a cultural dialogue between the East and the West.

³¹ See: the Gdańsk Shipyard application submitted by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage to the European panel of experts working on the list of objects to be awarded a European Heritage Label. Source: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

committee. It was in this building that talks were held between the workers and the government and it was here, on the 31st of August 1980, that the Gdańsk Agreement was signed. The final place which the Label refers to is the Solidarity Square with the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard workers of December 1970. It is connected with the tragic events of December 1970 and the Katyń massacre (1940). In addition, the monument contains an urn with the earth from the catacombs of Rome. It was a gift from the Pope John Paul II and on the wall of the square there is an inscription taken from Psalm 29 from the Bible: “May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace.” There is another inscription in the central part of the wall “They gave their life for you to live in dignity” and a quote from John Paul II: “Let the spirit come down and renew this earth – Amen.” The monument itself bears a quotation from the poetry of Czesław Miłosz:

You who wronged a simple Man
 Bursting into laughter at the crime,
 (...)
 Do not feel safe. The poet remembers.
 You can kill one, but another is born.
 The words are written down, the deed, the date.
 (...)³²

The symbolism of the Gdańsk Shipyard is remarkable:

It was here that a powerful social movement was created in 1980, related to the “Solidarity” Trade Union (“Solidarity” Independent Self-Governing Trade Union), which after 9 years of peaceful fighting led to the fall of communism in Poland. The victorious idea of freedom went beyond national borders. Other nations of Central-Eastern Europe followed the example of Poland: Hungarians, Czechs, Germans from Eastern Germany, Romanians and Bulgarians. In subsequent years, the freedom movement also covered the nations of the Soviet Union. In 1991 the Soviet Union was dissolved, again peacefully.³³

In other words, from the supranational perspective, the Gdańsk Shipyard is a symbol of the overthrow of the Yalta system and its European value stems from the role that this *lieu* played in the process of change, leading in Poland to the Round Table talks (6th February–5th April 1989), elections on the 4th of June 1989, the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1991) and, finally, unification with Europe as emphasised by the accession of many Central European states to the European Union (2004).

³² Cz. Miłosz, “You who wronged,” transl. R. Lourie, in: Cz. Miłosz, *The Collected Poems: 1931–1987*, New York 1988.

³³ Point 6 of the Gdańsk Shipyard application submitted by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage to the European panel of experts working on the list of objects to be awarded a European Heritage Label. Source: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The Gdańsk Shipyard as well as the figures and events connected with it, chiefly in the 1970's and 1980's, play a particular role in Polish national memory. This site constitutes a *lieu de mémoire*³⁴ and romantic symbol which is strongly tied to national drama, bloodshed, violence, dedication, victims, glory³⁵ and even – as some wish to interpret the events of the 1980's – a place which bears traces of the stigma of betrayal and cooperation with the oppressive Communist regime in Poland.³⁶ The Shipyard is particularly associated with the political and social transformation and the victory against an oppressive system: this is a multidimensional *lieu national de drame, de victoire et de gloire*. The natural result is a subtle synergy of the Romantic-National, the political and the civic which is completed by a religious, Catholic component. The past contained within the Shipyard and the values associated with it are, to the degree of being the most important, *lieu national de mémoire* of the Polish road to freedom.³⁷ Alongside the Shipyard one can see the Trade Union "Solidarity," Lech Wałęsa, John Paul II and the Round Table on this national list.³⁸

The memory deposited in the Shipyard has the nature of a national palimpsest which arose as a result of stratification, domination and blurring, but also as a result of renewing, regaining and finally rereading that which had been hidden beneath the successive layers of meaning. And, it is this meaning which has become the subject of not only academic reflection but also social experience and political instrumentalization.

The interpretations of this *lieu* are by their very nature contextual and selective and its symbolic potential is exploited to justify successive political, economic, social and educational goals. One might think that the national memory of the Shipyard is undergoing successive narrations, formulated and expressed in the face of these expectations. In this manner, this *lieu de mémoire* achieves the tasks presented to it by the demands of the present.³⁹

³⁴ See: M.-C. Lavabre, F. Mayer, A. Marès (eds.), "Mémoires du communisme en Europe centrale," *Cahiers du Centre français de recherches en sciences sociales*, 2001, No. 26; A. Marès (ed.), *Lieux de mémoire en Europe centrale*, Paris 2009; Ch. Delsol, M. Masłowski, J. Nowicki (eds.), *Mythes et symboles politiques en Europe centrale*, Paris 2002.

³⁵ On the return of Romantic literature and the Romantic means of experiencing the reality during the strike period in August 1980, see: M. Janion, "Nigdy przed mocą nie ugniemy szyi," *Pismo*, 1981, No. 3, pp. 5–18; M. Janion, "Ojczyzna, Solidarność, Romantyzm," *Czas*, 1981, No. 15, pp. 16–18. See: J. Kubik, *The Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power*, Pennsylvania 1994.

³⁶ See: S. Cenckiewicz, P. Gontarczyk, *SB a Lech Wałęsa: przyczynek do biografii*, Gdańsk–Warszawa–Kraków 2008.

³⁷ See: J. Tischner, *The Spirit of Solidarity*, San Francisco 1984.

³⁸ This is by no means a complete list. Its role is just to show the national context in which the Gdańsk Shipyard functions.

³⁹ M. de Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien*, Paris 1990.

To use the term of Zygmunt Bauman,⁴⁰ the liquid modernity around this *lieu* generates different – consistent and inconsistent – discourses tied to different local, national and European truths. Narration about the Shipyard is both multifaceted and far from unified or – to put it differently – there is no single narrative about this *lieu de mémoire*, but rather there are many.

The meaning of the Gdańsk Shipyard is subtly evolving. The interpretations, associations and emotions are functionally changing to meet the needs required of this *lieu*. It is an ongoing process and the Poland's accession to the European Union only served to emphasise this new frame of reference. It launched the Europeanization of this place,⁴¹ and including the Shipyard on the list of places awarded a European Heritage Label was a political-bureaucratic consequence of this symbolic shift. At the same time, the new political frame led and is still leading to the reinterpretation of this national *lieu de mémoire*.

From the broader perspective, one may say that awarding the Shipyard a European Heritage Label is an example of the Europeanization of national places of memory. In such situations, a new frame of reference fosters a reflection on the painful past of Central Europe, away from the constraints of the national frame, and shifts it to the European metalevel where the local/national interpretation plays a secondary role or is usually either absent or ignored. In this transnational perspective, the complexity, contradictions and problematic aspects of the local/national interpretation of places of memory weaken in the face of their European potential.

The heritage termed European is thus a result of a selection – historical, political, ideological and also bureaucratic – to which both, the traces of the past and the historical narrative, institutions, collections and exhibitions constructed around them are subjected. Thus the Gdańsk Shipyard, on the national level, symbolises the Polish triumph of freedom over the Communist regime. When the Shipyard enters the realm of certified European heritage, it becomes the bearer of rather more universal values. Firstly, it symbolizes freedom and the struggle to attain it *tout court* (Europe is a space of freedom which has been fought for) and – secondly – a reminder that the historic unification of the western and central parts of Europe was only possible thanks to the sacrifices which had to be made in the struggle to overthrow the Communist system.

⁴⁰ Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge 2000.

⁴¹ See, for example, the creation of the European Solidarity Centre.

Conclusions

At the beginning of the 21st century, European heritage is the cultural equivalent of the cosmopolitan European project. It is made even more interesting by the fact that in the face of the grand historical narratives weakening, it makes allusions to them, but, in terms of its non-narrative form, it is distant from them. The strength and advantage that it has over other tools utilised thus far in experiencing the social gains of the past, lies in the fact that it enables the control of the past and shaping of it in order to optimally meet the requirements of the present. European heritage is the past of Europe served *à la carte*.

The debate around European heritage thus centres on the national memories and the means of their selection and use, which are themselves the results of the current challenges faced by Europe. The substance of the past is therefore engaged in the political project and thus this is why the heritage of Europe may not be separated from the political. As Delanty claimed, the fact that there are different memories ensconced in European heritage allows particular societies to interpret history and identify their relationship to it.⁴² However, their strong anchoring in the national experience is a barrier to their utilisation at the European level. This means also that European heritage is not merely an accumulation of memories or histories constructed and experienced by the different communities living in Europe. It is a notion which refers to them, but constitutes their redefinition – a new, European semiotization of the past.

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⁴² G. Delanty, “The European heritage from a critical cosmopolitan perspective,” *LSE Europe in Question. Discussion Paper Series*, 2010, No. 19 (February), pp. 1–19.

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