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ACCESSING CAMPSCAPES: INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES FOR USING EUROPEAN CONFLICTED HERITAGE

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Scattered throughout Europe, former camps built for mass internment and/or extermination connect us in a particularly powerful way with the history of terror and with the political and genocidal violence that shaped a great part of the short twentieth century. Yet, as much as they serve as spaces through which efforts can be made to understand a 'common' European recent past, the variety of national/local/ethnic/religious narratives that lay claim to them transforms *campscapes* into unique prisms through which our increasingly troubled present, and the political reconfigurations in which it emerges, can be studied. Caught within and between multiple social and cultural contexts, opposing political agendas, conflicting (re)presentations of the past, 'ownership' claims, and divergent practices of memory making, *campscapes* reflect and embody the inherently layered, dynamic and contested character of the 'European project' and the processes that underpin the construction of its conflicted and conflicting heritage. As such, although readily susceptible to appropriations and political instrumentalizations, *campscapes* are endowed with the capacity to evoke a variety of understandings and remain open to expression (and analysis) in many registers: the material, experiential, political, and symbolic.

The intention of the project *Accessing Campscapes: Inclusive Strategies for Using European Conflicted Heritage* is to draw into conversations diverse scholars and professionals whose theories and practices gather around *campscapes* in order to bring into focus the complexities of former camps, while also critically exploring the challenges they pose, and animating discussions on their future. By engaging with the conflicted pasts and often contested afterlives of former Nazi and Stalinist era camps, we look at their increasingly contested role in the context of growing competition between the Holocaust paradigm and other war memories, Euroscepticism and populism. This e-bulletin serves as a platform for sharing our research, raising questions, exchanging ideas and extending our thinking on *campscapes* – constructed as polivocal and multifaceted material, spatial, cultural, aesthetic, and political phenomena. Structured around *concepts, cases, and perspectives*, the contributions will address emerging problems, explore conceptual and theoretical issues, and perform critical interventions into public and scholarly discourses. The first issue presents our project and, in three different strands, develops the theme of materiality.

iC-ACCESS: PROJECT PRESENTATION

01

'Accessing Campscapes: Inclusive Strategies for Using European Conflicted Heritage' looks at traces of twentieth-century mass violence and terror as tangible reminders of the "age of extremes" and their present uses in (trans)national contexts. In most post-war European countries, former Nazi internment camps have become icons of antifascist resistance and the Holocaust, thus playing a consistent role in postwar European memory of totalitarianism and genocide. At the Eastern European center of the Holocaust, where there are entanglements with the difficult legacy of state socialism, many former 'terrscapes' are still contested spaces, where consecutive internments of prisoners by occupying powers transformed the victims of one event into the perpetrators of another. This entanglement of remembering with forgetting and the silencing of competing narratives show the strong connection between heritage, storytelling and the politics of identity. This poses a serious challenge to museums, remembrance institutions, civil society organizations, activists, critical academics and educators tasked with the development of new and alternative narratives to make such spaces even more relevant.

The innovative contribution to research from iC-ACCESS stems from the complementarity of seldom related disciplines, such as heritage studies, material culture studies, conflict archaeology, memory studies and digital humanities, enabling it to channel interdisciplinary research perspectives from the growing academic interest in contested heritage. We explore what has become, in the European context, a dominant set of issues: the dynamics affecting the staging and presentation of some Holocaust camps into heritage, and the forgetting of others; the acknowledgement and presentation of campscapes in Eastern Europe; contested Holocausts 'paradigm', and simmering older ethnic/regional tensions exacerbated by the present EU crisis affecting the identity and future of the European integration project. Therefore, iC-ACCESS addresses the present and future role of the camps as monuments of the twentieth century, the "century of camps", in the dynamic context of the process of European integration and the current (financial, geopolitical and 'refugee') crisis.

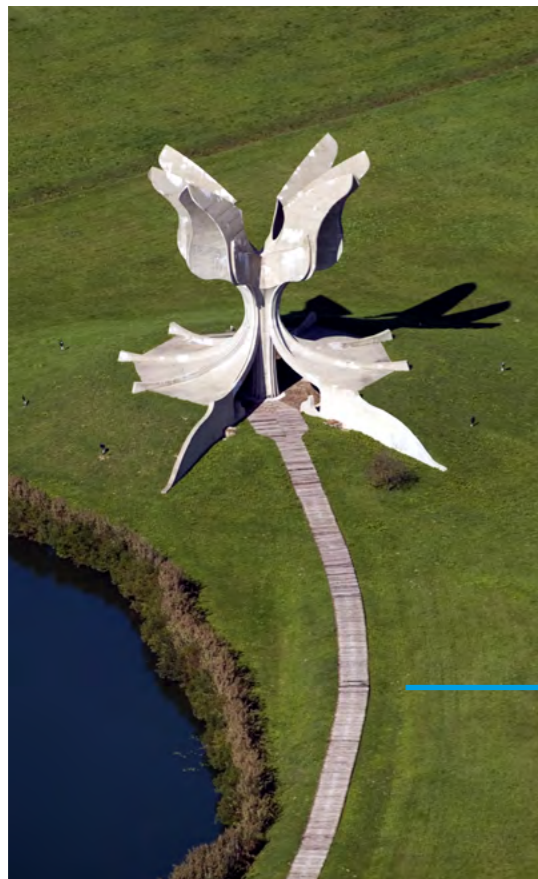
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Starting from the issue of materiality, the project relates forensic research, archaeological practices and historical truth-finding to memory works, narratives and museum displays. Innovative pilots use state-of-the-art, hybridised archaeological techniques (digital and non-invasive) in order to identify and visualize hidden material remains within the selected campscapes. At the same time, they 'produce' new meanings regarding unknown or hardly known sites and objects. Our aim is to assess the role of testimonies in increasing accessibility and visibility for visitors of such sites; as well as to explore the potential of new technologies of virtual reality to map and connect competing memories on campscapes. The project is a collaboration between University of Amsterdam, Norwegian University of Science and Technology Trondheim, Staffordshire University, University of West Bohemia Pilsen, Freie Universität Berlin and Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona. Over the next three years to September 2019, we will carry competing narrative analysis in the context of postconflict transformation and conduct fieldwork at key campscapes across Europe: Westerbork (The Netherlands), Treblinka (Poland), Falstad (Norway), Jasenovac/Donja Gradina (Croatia/ Bosnia-Herzegovina), Bergen-Belsen (Germany), the former Roma camps Lety (Czech Republic), and the former uranium labour camps in the Jáchymov region (Czech Republic).

The project benefits from the support of ten associate partners relevant for the sites: the Bergen Belsen Memorial, the Lidice Memorial, Postbellum, The Westerbork Memorial Center, Museum of Struggle and Martyrdom in Treblinka, Falstad Memorial and Human Rights Museum, Jasenovac Memorial Museum, and the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies.



iC-ACCESS project members at the Westerbork Memorial Center. Photo: S. Wierenga



The Jasenovac Monument to the victims of the Second World War Ustasha atrocities designed by Bogdan Bogdanović. Courtesy of the Jasenovac Memorial Museum.

STORYTELLING: CAMPSCAPES AS NARRATIVES

Our team assesses the dynamics of competing postwar memories of Nazi, state socialist and fascist terror at work in European spaces. This can potentially offer new perspectives, beyond the tools used in other disciplines, working towards a more inclusive way of storytelling that integrates different histories and divergent memories at our key sites. To achieve this, we will explore comparatively how 'heritage as narrative' is articulated by national, transnational and local experiences and by tropes of resistance, collaboration, occupation, victimhood and perpetration. Our focus is on the processes of signification and appropriation in dominant and counter-historical discourses and memory narratives, and how they might and, more often than not, do overshadow complementary or conflicted perspectives.

We do so through analyses of existing narratives relating to camps (represented in testimonies, literature, historiography, juridical proceedings, public media, memorials and education), by examining of historical discourses and their specific biography in museum display, and through investigation of the sites' historical transformations in the context of post-1989 transnational and transcultural dynamics of memory. This concerns in particular commemorations of specific victim groups at camps where conflicted histories are silenced (if not erased by monumental redesigns) or spatially appropriated by different memorial communities. We address both the competing memories and politics of identity relating to the legacy of the Second World War and the Holocaust as well as of Eastern European experiences of terror and repression. We also consider the competing use of tropes such as 'occupation' and 'genocide' after the 1990s Yugoslav Wars, as well as within the current context of the European Union's eastward enlargements. We also highlight the growing attention placed on long-silenced postcolonial war memories of camps and massacres, which has



Memorial at the site of the former extermination camp in Treblinka designed by Adam Haupt and Franciszek Duszerko. Photo: C. Sturdy Colls.

resulted in an intensification of a series of memory wars on the issue of ‘the guilt of nations’. To understand how these narratives function within museum and media contexts, our team carries out interviews with stakeholders and curatorial and educational teams, conducts alternative historical research and a “data mining” of previous research (raw material and mediatized research outcomes), analyses visitors’ behavior, and, last but not least, investigates the ontological role of researchers working with such sensitive histories.

On a theoretical level, we adopt an integrated, interdisciplinary, relational and comparative approach to campsites, in order to capture the dynamics of their development while doing justice to their complex, layered ontologies. Through this approach, our team treats campsites as loci of conflict, competition and contestation articulated through representations, practices and materialities. We take narratives as inscribed into landscapes of terror (including campsites designed for hiding crimes and misleading victims) and perpetuated by their discursive, visual, spatial and material organization as memorial sites. Our research is focused on the nodes of conflicted histories, contested heritage and competing memories, where mediated representations of the past relate to (or collide with) the spatially-framed experiences of visitors.

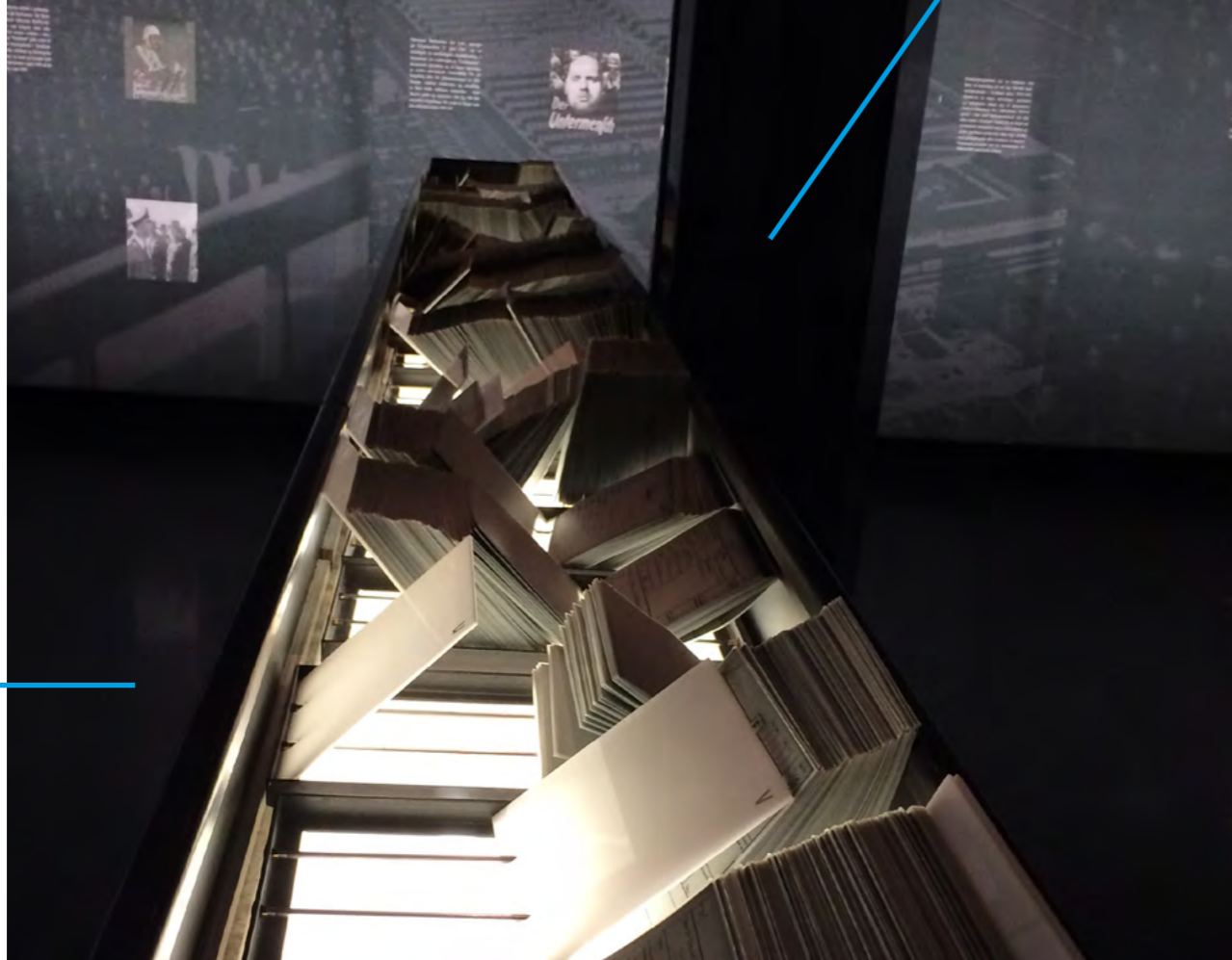
Rob van der Laarse, Zuzanna Dziuban, Andriana Benčić, Dana Dolghin, Nanci Adler, Carlos Reijnen (University of Amsterdam)

LIVED HISTORY: TESTIMONIES AND CAMPSITES

In the digital age, audiovisual testimonies are not only important sources for historical research on campsites but also integral for visitor experiences in contemporary memorials. Facilitating empathy towards victims and deeper, personalized insight into the events, they play crucial roles for both museum narratives and also dominant constructions of the past validated by the ‘authority’ of experience and the ‘authenticity’ of place. By exploring and representing individual testimonies and personal stories, memory makers and multipliers have a major influence upon what aspects of history are highlighted and which are, in turn, backgrounded or foreclosed. Yet, oral history interviews, precisely because of their idiosyncratic and personal character, also support differentiated understanding of painful memories of conflict in the twentieth century. Our team aims to collect, analyse and rethink interview collections pertaining to our selected camps in order to open up paradigmatic presentations of their histories, analyse and evaluate museum narratives and supplement sparse contextual information relating to the sites.

We study the (past, present and future) role of audio and video testimonies in safeguarding, understanding and valorizing campsites. While these individual stories can provide accounts of previously uncharted microhistories or become an additional source regarding representations of victimhood, agency or responsibility, they also provide a new cause for reflection and experimentation. In addition to examination of the ways in which audio and audiovisual testimonies are being employed in historical research, memory studies, political activism, public and private institutions, we also examine critically the historical, social and political contexts of their collection and archivization. By counterpoising archival collections of personal testimonies with historical simplifications of conflicted pasts, our team conveys the multiple perspectives on individual experiences circumscribed to campsites.

The museum exhibition at the Falstad Centre - Memorial and Human Rights Museum. Courtesy of the Falstad Centre.



MATERIALITY OF CAMPSITES AND UNCOVERING THE INVISIBLE

Our team evaluates the role that material culture plays in enhancing or suppressing knowledge concerning Nazi and Stalinist era campsites. We adopt a broad definition of materiality which includes an array of material objects (including personal belongings, weapons, tools, domestic items and clothing), structural remnants (including buildings, barracks, fences and guard towers, and extermination infrastructures), and human remains and forensic trace evidence (including the DNA of buried victims).

In relation to the discourse analyses undertaken by our partners working on campsites as narratives and the site analyses carried out by the Mapping Campsites team, we focus on the role of material evidence in the development of camp memorials and heritage sites. Given the

The research conducted by our team responds to debates in (critical) oral history regarding the usage of testimonies in non-academic environments and the limitations and ethics regarding survivor testimonies. As part of the overall project, our task is to create an Online Archival Guide of interviews to assist researchers, memorial museums, educators and other multipliers in tracing relevant data. Through case studies, we also explore the use of selected interviews in exhibitions, on websites, in educational materials and commemorative events. Our objective is to provide recommendations and guidance for an appropriate use of oral history interviews at campsites. This will be achieved through conceptualization, development and realization of a prototype of an online display environment that presents survivors' experiences to today's visitors to an exemplary memorial, exploring the potential for a virtual dialogue between testimonies, archaeological findings and current campsites.

Nicolas Apostolopoulos, Cord Pagenstecher, Verena Buser (Freie Universität Berlin)



Falstad Camp excavations (2014), field laboratory and artifacts. Photo: M. Jasinski.

recent upsurge in archaeological investigations at conflict sites, our team examines the ways in which material traces and forensic evidence have been used by revisionist groups, educators, the media and the public to engineer alternative interpretations of Nazi and Stalinist atrocities. We will achieve these aims through site surveys with a specific focus on critically evaluating the presence/absence of material culture within key sites, conducting observations focusing on visitor interactions with material culture and public archaeology activities in the form of workshops which encourage engagement with material evidence.

We aim at producing advanced documentation of material elements at sites selected for the project, and at organizing community cataloguing and conservation events, as well as material storytelling events. Although the benefits of such post-memory activities for meeting the aims of this project have been demonstrated through pilot projects undertaken by team members,¹ we recognise that insufficient attention has been paid to the ethical challenges which surround the uses of material culture relating to mass violence and contested memories. Therefore, our Materiality of Campscapes team demonstrates the role that materiality can play in enhancing site narratives and in education.

Marek Jasinski, Hans Otto Frøland, Kristoffer Grini, Gunnar Hatlehol
(Norwegian University of Science and Technology Trondheim)

¹ Gilly Carr and Marek Jasinski, Sites of Memory, Sites of Oblivion: The Archaeology of Twentieth Century Conflict in Europe, Re-enacting the Past, in: Michela Bassanelli and Gennaro Postiglione (eds.), *Museography for Conflict Heritage*, Milan 2013; Marek Jasinski, Memories of War and War on Memories: Painful Heritage of WWII in Norway – Archaeological Surveys 2007 – 2012, in: Marek Jasinski and Leiv Sem (eds.), *Painful Heritage: Studies of Cultural Landscapes of the Second World War*, Trondheim 2015; Marek Jasinski and Lars Stenvik, Landscape of Evil. Archaeology and Nazi POW Camps in Norway: A New Approach, in: Marianne Neerland Soleim (ed.), *Prisoners of War and Forced Labour: Histories of War and Occupation*, Newcastle 2010; Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions*, New York 2015.

MAPPING CAMPSCAPES

The Mapping Campscapes team draws upon state-of-the-art techniques derived from archaeology, forensic investigation, geography and digital humanities to locate, record and digitally preserve landscapes of mass violence, including traces such as objects, structural remnants, graves and infrastructure. Traditional forms of archaeological excavation are no longer the only means to search for buried remains and, in conflict and genocide investigations, recent research has demonstrated that these methods may not be wanted, needed or appropriate.² Recent advances in non- and minimally invasive archaeological methods offer the potential to account for sensitivities surrounding conflict sites and provide a detailed analysis of complex landscapes.³

We use novel applications of satellite remote sensing, airborne and terrestrial laser scanning (LiDAR), drones (UAVs), terrestrial topographic and geophysical survey, and archaeological excavation (as appropriate) to record and digitally preserve each of our case study campscapes. The process of mapping extends beyond the boundaries of camps to raise awareness of interconnected spaces and forgotten narratives to which they relate. This approach results in the production of highly sophisticated, 3D landscape models that also incorporate aerial imagery, photographs and maps, and which provide state-of-the-art educational tools.

By way of a theoretical framework, we include empirical research regarding the many ethical, religious, political and social challenges that surround campscapes; many of which have limited access to sites and

¹ Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions*, New York 2015.

² John Hunter, Barrie Simpson and Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Forensic Approaches to Buried Remains*, London 2015; Pavel Vařeka and Zdeňka Vařeková, Stan i perspektywy badań archeologicznych nad reżimem komunistycznym na terenie Czech [State and perspectives of the archaeological research of the Communist regime in the Czech Republic], in: Olgierd Ławrynowicz and Joanna Żelazko (eds.), *Archeologia totalitaryzmu. Ślady represji 1939-1956* [Archaeology of Totalitarianism. Traces of Repressions 1939-1956], Łódź 2015.

shaped the narratives surrounding them. These results feed into the project team's own professional practice and form the basis of project reports and publications in order to provide advice to other researchers and professionals. We bring together research in conflict archaeology and digital tools to complement findings and perspectives on materiality offered by our partners working on material culture and show how materiality can be harnessed for historical reflection. At the same time, we rethink memorialization perspectives and presentations identified by the team working on competing narratives to provide an accurate and complex historical reading of each space.

Caroline Sturdy Colls, Kevin Colls, William Mitchell, Mick Britton, James Butcher, Michael Branthwaite (Staffordshire University), Pavel Văreka, Zdeňka Vărekova, James Symonds, Jindřich Plzák (University of West Bohemia Pilsen)



Archaeological fieldwork at Treblinka. Courtesy of the Staffordshire University.

DIGITALITY: RETRIEVING CAMPSCAPES

It is widely acknowledged that digital tools allow “access to heritage without factual, time or location constraints”.⁴ 3D/4D environments can facilitate the integration of a wide range of information, foster greater awareness amongst younger generations and encourage greater engagement with the past. Virtual and augmented reality can be particularly useful at sites where no or few visible remains survive above ground, as they can substitute traditional visitor experiences and provide an understanding of the campscape as ‘place’. Although the benefits of utilizing digital tools in the mapping and visualization of conflict and genocide has been demonstrated in historical and juridical investigations of historical cases, their potential has arguably not yet been fully realized. In fact, digital media and tools associated with sites of conflict and war have often been restricted to historical material on web-based platforms. In addition, such platforms mostly focus on individual conflict sites in isolation rather than addressing (trans)national relationships. Only in a few instances, during previous work undertaken by the project team, have state-of-the-art tools been used to present archaeological and spatial data.⁵

That is why our team uses and examines the potential of digital tools to offer new possibilities to connect local, national and global audiences to access conflicted heritage. The Digitality team is tasked with creating a digital network of 4D reconstructed sites through the assimilation of the 3D visualisations generated by our partners working on the mapping of the camps and the subsequent layering of documentary evidence

¹ Catherine Ledig, The Faro Convention and the Information Society, in: Heritage and Beyond, Strasbourg 2009, 162.

² Paul Verschure et al., Spatializing Experience: A Framework for the Geolocalization, Visualization and Exploration of Historical Data Using VR/AR Technologies, Proceedings of the 2014 Virtual Reality International Conference, New York 2014; Caroline Sturdy Colls, Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions, New York 2015.



Tablet application developed for, and with the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, by SPECS, UPF. Courtesy of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

(e.g. material traces, oral testimonies, photographs, media, narratives and memories) connected to landscapes, monuments, memorials and museums provided by our colleague analysing narratives, testimonies and materiality at and of the campsites. Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Mixed Reality (MR; VAMR for all three) and other forms of digital media will also be used to map and connect campsites. The result will be interactive, spatial tools that can be used online, within museums, within campsites and in the classroom. Validation studies will be performed to examine their effectiveness with novice and expert users. A series of 'community actions', in the form of travelling exhibition and crowdsourcing activities, will be undertaken in order to disseminate these tools, encourage engagement with conflict heritage, and promote cultural dialogue between generations and conflicting communities. Off-site/remotely, virtual digital tools will be consequently used to enhance the education possibilities of these sites. Using the results of research undertaken by our partners, we will seek to re-contextualize historical material relating to each of the case study sites and illustrate connections between campsites. Our team will critically reflect on the ethical challenges surrounding the use of digital media in relation to sensitive and traumatic pasts, and provide new ways to visualize and raise awareness regarding campsites.

Paul Verschure, Sytse Wierenga (Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona)



Virtual reconstruction of the Bergen-Belsen camp. The installation "Here, Space of Memory" at the Wiener Library, London, April - October 2015 by SPECS, UPF. Courtesy of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

MATERIALITY: A SHORT THEORETICAL OUTLINE

02

Materiality and material culture have always been foci within archaeological research. In the disciplinary field of history, though, attending to both aspects constitutes a more recent development. However, during the past decades, the 'material turn' has also been gaining momentum in this discipline, increasingly transforming its theory and practice.¹ According to Andrea Pellegram, "in western society the debate about objects as conveyors of messages, or vehicles of expression in an iconographic language of things, has been of growing influence since it first entered academic debate in the 1960s, when structuralism drew parallels between objects and language."² Since then, theoretical ventures into materiality have nevertheless undergone many and, at times, radical transformations. For one, it has been effectively acknowledged that the parallel between language and things does not exhaust the richness of their reality. Material culture differs from linguistics in many ways, not least because of its diversity: it virtually explodes the moment one gives any consideration to the vast corpus of material worlds that surrounds us.³ In what follows, I briefly sketch the travels and shifts of the concept of materiality, focusing on its role in archaeology, "the discipline of things".⁴

At present, there are two main ways of understanding materiality. The more traditional of these perceives materiality simply as a product of human culture, building upon and sustaining the strong dichotomy between subject and object. According to Mark Leone, "the whole productive idea of using artefacts to reconstruct the whole of an extinct society saw artefacts as leftovers, not as essential to the very existence

1 Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, Introduction, in: Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (eds.), *Writing Material Culture History*, London/New York 2015.

2 Andrea Pellegram, *The Message in Paper*, in: Daniel Miller, *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*, Chicago 1998, 103.

3 Daniel Miller, Introduction, in: Daniel Miller (ed.), *Material Cultures*, 5-6.

4 Bjørnar Olsen, *In Defence of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*, Plymouth 2013.



Personal belongings from the hidden mass graves in Kiev-Bykovnia. Photo: M. Jasinski.

of social life.”⁵ From this perspective, archaeological records from the past (objects, structures, and cultural landscapes), after exhausting their functional existence, become passive carriers of incomplete information about the past and not a part of the past society itself. The second and more recent way of perceiving materiality is based on the view that materiality is not merely a product of cultural worlds but an integral and entangled element of it: objects and landscapes have their own unique qualities and profoundly shape the reality we inhabit. Materiality, in this view, not so much passively carries meanings endowed in it by cultures and societies as constitutes a dimension without which a culture could not exist.⁶

Poststructuralism played an important role in studies of material cultures during the last three decades of the twentieth century. This paradigm has brought along the notion of “material culture as text” which, in turn, opened up the field of research on material culture to textual approaches inviting multivocality, free interpretations, construction of stories, narratives, etc. Based on this, a paradigm of post-processualism was adapted to archaeology in the works of Ian Hodder in the early 1980s,⁷ instantiating a move away from positivist processual methodologies and their perception of archaeological records as ‘evidence’ and a source of objective knowledge about the past. Now things were constructed as ‘signs’ caught within broader processes of signification. This new theoretical approach allowed for a completely novel lens through which to view archaeology and quickly became very popular, especially among young adepts and students due to its openness for free and theory-driven readings of the archaeological record and – because

⁵ Mark Leone, *Beginning for a Postmodern Archaeology*, in: *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 17 (2007) 2, 206

⁶ Marek Jasinski, *Materiality of the SS Prison Camp Falstad, Central Norway*, in: *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, forthcoming.

⁷ Ian Hodder, *Symbols in Action*, Cambridge 1982; Ian Hodder, *Post-processual Archaeology*, in: *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* (1985) 8.

of its insistence on inherent subjectivity of interpretation – the fact that it guaranteed a freedom of sorts from strict research procedures. Nevertheless, while post-processualism was asserting its dominance as the new leading paradigm in archaeology, a new set of ideas and intellectual reflections on materiality was entering the stage in sociology and anthropology, bringing to the fore the importance of focusing on the inherent qualities of things viewed as more than merely sites of inscription of cultural meanings. As early as the second half of the 1990s, it became increasingly clear that post-processualism was something of a dead end in the theoretical development of archaeology and the closely related spheres of material culture studies.

These new key theories of materiality developed within the disciplinary field of sociology and anthropology in the 1980s have amply demonstrated that social worlds were as much constituted by materiality as the other way around. This was reflected in the shift of focus from things, structures and landscapes as invested with meaning (material culture) to relations between humans and things, the latter considered both in their irreducible difference or otherness as things and in their constitutive role in shaping human realities and actions. According to this view, social worlds create materiality that, in turn, influences social worlds to the highest degree – materiality is omnipresent in social worlds and they cannot exist without material dimensions. Seen from this perspective, materiality it is not merely a product of culture but constitutes its subject and its integral constituent. Culture is an endless combination of hybrid and heterogeneous forms of coexistence of and interactions between humans and materiality. This new paradigm has also been a starting point for the rise of various approaches to the phenomenon of materiality as being qualitatively different from texts or testimonies.⁸

⁸ Daniel Miller, *Introduction*, 3.

The most prominent role in transforming the conceptualizations of materiality can be attributed to Actor-Network Theory (ANT) developed by Bruno Latour and his colleagues as “Science for Social Scientists”, who focus on how the structure of knowledge could be analysed through interactions of various actors and networks.⁹ Taking as a vantage point relationality and entanglements between of humans and objects, people and things, this approach works against existing conceptualizations of them as opposed or autonomous. Rather, according to ANT, social reality consists of assemblages in which both people and things play different but equally important parts. In the words of Bjørnar Olsen, “a society is [...] a complex fabric of intimate relations that link and associate people and things – in short, a collective in which humans and nonhumans cohabitate and collaborate.”¹⁰ In this, moving beyond theoretical approaches reductively attributing agency exclusively to humans, ANT not only sees objects as parts of social networks but also as actors exerting their own forms of agency. Based on the principle of generalized symmetry, it therefore works towards a more equal distribution of agency between human and non-human actors and assumes their equal analytical treatment.

At the outset of the twenty-first century, these new impulses started to penetrate archaeology and studies of material culture, at first as innovations within a broader understanding of materiality and later on as a new set of approaches, which are now called symmetric archaeology. References to the symmetric approach began to occur in archaeological publications around 2003 in the works of authors such as Bjørnar Olsen and Christopher Witmore, building upon further developments of ANT

⁹ Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society*, Massachusetts 1983.

¹⁰ Bjørnar Olsen, *In Defence of Things*, 138.

and proposing a new theoretical paradigm for the field.¹¹ According to Michael Shanks, “symmetry is an epistemological and ethical principle developed in the social study of scientific practice”.¹² His 2007 essay connects symmetrical archaeology to major trends cutting across humanities and social sciences since the 1960s and to key components of archaeological practice – relational ontologies, mixtures of past and present, people and things, biology and culture, individual and society. “Symmetrical archaeology is a present culmination of effort in archaeology to undercut modernist dualities and to recognize the vitality of the present past. Symmetry adds new force to the claim that archaeologists have a unique perspective on human engagements with things and materiality in general, on social agency and constructions of contemporary identity.”¹³ ANT theory is now being broadly used in archaeological research, which locates at its center interactions between people and things and the ways through which they reciprocally constitute one another. And although it is still too early to assess how other elements of the symmetrical framework will transform archaeological practice, the recognition that “materiality matters” has become a disciplinary commonplace.

Marek E. Jasinski (Norwegian University of Science and Technology Trondheim)

¹¹ Bjørnar Olsen, *Material Culture after Text: Remembering Things*, in: *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 36 (2003) 2; Bjørnar Olsen, *Scenes from a Troubled Engagement: Post-Structuralism and Material Culture Studies*, in: Christopher Tilley at al. (eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture*, London 2006; Christopher Witmore, *Christopher, On Multiple Fields. Between the Material World and Media: Two Cases from the Peloponnesus, Greece*, in: *Archaeological Dialogues* 11 (2004) 2.

¹² Michael Shanks, *Symmetrical Archaeology*, in: *World Archaeology* 39 (2007) 4, 589.

¹³ *Ibid.*

FINDINGS TRAPPED IN A STATE OF IN-BETWEENNESS

03

In June 2013, during their excavations at the Sobibór extermination camp, the Israeli and Polish archaeologists Yoram Haimi and Wojciech Mazurek found two meters below the ground a tiny nametag bearing the name of David Jacob Zak – an eight-year-old Dutch boy who must have been carrying it when being gassed and cremated there exactly seventy years before. David, or ‘Deddie’ as his nickname was, was born in the Jewish neighbourhood of Amsterdam and taken away on 3 April 1943 with his parents to the Jewish deportation site Hollandsche Schouwburg. From there they were deported to the SS concentration camp Vught. Yet on 6/7 June, all 1,300 children below the age of sixteen were separated from their parents and transported in two trains to the Jewish transit camp Westerbork. From there, 3,017 people, including 1,147 children, were transported on 8 June 1943 to the camp at Sobibór.

Sobibór functioned as one of three Nazi-German Aktion Reinhardt extermination camps, where from spring 1942 until the revolt of October 1943 around 250,000 people were murdered in its gas chambers. After the escape of 365 prisoners, the Germans decided to demolish the camp and wipe-out any traces of it by planting trees, thereby changing the extermination site into peaceful forest that still exists today. Except for a long series of war crime trials, testimonies and oral history, no historical records of the camp exist. Yet, during the past decade, forensic archaeology, employing digital and non-invasive techniques to identify hidden material remains within former campsites, has become an important source of knowledge about the structure of the former camp. In addition to this emergent role of truth-finding and crime scene investigation as pertaining to the camps, however, Holocaust archaeology has also become a tool for representation and memorialization.¹ Facing a future without survivors, it offers a new bridge to the past, fostering a transnational identification with victims and a sense of belonging far beyond one’s direct relatives.

¹ Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions*, New York 2015.

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David Zak and his family. Copyright: NRC Handelsblad.

David Zak's name tag. Courtesy of the Joods Digitaal Monument.



In this sense David Zak's name tag might be regarded as a material manifestation of what Marianne Hirsch with regard to the Holocaust has labelled postmemory, and which she described as a transitory stage between personal, lived memory and mediated, cultural memory.² Although Hirsch relates postmemory in her work mainly to family photographs and stories of a second generation of children of Holocaust survivors, I would like to use it in a broader sense. Postmemory, for me, refers to a transitory stage of memory works, mnemonic artefacts and cultural representations signifying the rediscovery of 'forgotten' memories in a postconflict society – a public musealisation and mediatization of personal memories and family archives providing access to the past for those who did not have direct experience of the events.

Needless to say, already in 1944-1945 for the Allied 'liberations' of Nazi concentration camps, testimonies, photography, film and exhibitions became crucial media in communicating the magnitude of the 'hidden' Nazi war crimes to the those 'who did not know'. According to this postwar genocide narrative, war crimes were visualized through the lens of war photographers and filmmakers with the piles of dead bodies used for forced confrontations in US denazification campaigns, such as in Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen³, and staged by exhibitions of human belongings and remains, like the hundreds of shoes and glasses, and the heaps of human hair in the barracks of Majdanek and the large vitrines of the 1955 permanent exhibition of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. If these early visualisations and materializations of mass murder were closely related to Raphael Lemkin's notion of genocide (1944) as applied to the Nuremberg tribunals on Nazi war crimes (1945-1946),

² Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, New York 2012.

³ Cora Sol Goldstein, *Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany*, Chicago/ London 2009.

today's dominant, individualized postmemorial gaze might be traced back to the media coverage of the Israeli Eichmann trial (1960-1962). This was the first trial where victims were admitted to testify in court against a perpetrator whom they had actually never met. This new agency attributed to formerly anonymous Holocaust victims – sharing their personal, traumatic camp experiences in a global, mediatized court case – attracted huge attention among public intellectuals and a younger protest generation. The Eichmann trial marked the emergence of "the era of the witness" during which increasingly more personal testimonies would travel from the court room to libraries, cinemas and TV screens as part of a worldwide Holocaust memory boom.⁴

In contrast to the earlier narrative of magnitude, this victimhood-centred narrative has become dominant among postwar generations with only indirect memories of mass violence and Nazi war crimes. Starting with mediatized testimonies like Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* (1948) and the Auschwitz memoirs of Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel (1956/1958), personal stories have become key to this emotional turn. Originally published in small languages like Dutch, Italian and Yiddish, after being repackaged as Holocaust bestsellers, they paved the way for Hollywood movies like the American 1980s mini-series *Holocaust*, *Sophie's Choice* (1982) and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993). In correspondence with the global human rights discourse, this "selling of the Holocaust"⁵ also determined to a large extent the representation of victims of mass violence in a new kind of memorial museum.⁶ Just like Holocaust fiction, Holocaust museums mediatize victimhood by creating performative spaces for consuming the lessons of a painful past. Combining museum, educational and memorial functions mostly for diasporic communities and touristic visitors far removed

⁴ Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, Ithaca/ London 2006.

⁵ Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler. How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold*, New York 2000.

⁶ Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities*, Oxford 2007.

from the European terrorscape, they have developed a strong narrative for offering visitors an off-site Holocaust experience, using universal icons of victimhood to connect the contradictory tendencies of individualization and globalisation. By means of postmemory tools like family photos and portraits, letters and diaries, Holocaust museums create emotional bonds between victims and visitors. Such personal objects help visitors experience the magnitude of mass killings and at the same time identify with the dehumanized victims by giving them a name and a face when confronted with the intimacy of their earlier, prewar family life.

When visiting extermination camps like Auschwitz or Treblinka such discursive-material scripts signify for visitors an even more incomprehensible cruelty than the off-site constellations of urban memorial museums. Actually, because of the emotional interaction of visitors' spatial-historical experiences, these "trauma site museums" profit from their indexical relation to the crime scene, as visitors literally walk in the footsteps of the victims – and/or the perpetrators.⁷ This also applies to archaeological findings, like earrings, necklaces, bracelets, drinking cups, worn-out shoes with steel laces or hidden coins, hairpins, combs, homemade toys and spoons, or house keys, which are found in still-traceable garbage dumps, cemeteries and crematoria, or in mass grave pits. After being changed from waste into artefacts, such in situ displays of personal objects in museums make visitors figuratively 'touch' the violently killed persons who wore them. Tracing these belongings back to the original owners actually transforms them into the last signs of those who died anonymously thousands kilometres from home at the unknown killing sites – and, in more general terms, this turns archaeology itself into a performative act of cultural, if not political, signification.⁸

⁷ Patrizia Violi, Trauma Site Museums and Politics of Memory, in: *Theory, Culture & Society* 29 (2012) 1, 36–75.

⁸ Rob van der Laarse, Francesco Mazzucchelli and Carlos Reijnen (eds.) *Traces of Terror, Signs of Trauma, Versus* 119 (2014).



Archaeological finding exhibited in the Warsaw Katyń Museum.
Photo: R. van der Laarse.

Because of this, findings like David Zak's name tag, or that of the six-year-old Lea de la Penha (another finding of Haimi's team at Sobibór from 2011), function for survivor communities and postmemory visitors as a contact point with a terrible and silenced past. Haimi therefore called Lea's identification tag his most touching finding at Sobibór and framed her in the Anne Frank tradition as "the girl of Sobibór".⁹ Yet the finding of a third plate, in late 2013, of the twelve-year-old Amsterdam Jewish girl Annie Kapper did not attract much fresh publicity in the Dutch press. The reason might be that in the meantime a remarkable heritage conflict had arisen over the ownership of David Zak's identification tag: it was reclaimed by his eighty-year-old niece Lies Caransa-de Hond, who recalled on Dutch television how Deddie protected her as a four-year old child while waiting in April 1943 at the Amsterdam Hollandsche Schouwburg for their deportation to Westerbork. Lies Caransa-de Hond survived the war because she was together with hundreds of other children smuggled out of the theatre and kept in safety. David's name tag appeared to her as an "angel from heaven", because after her return from hiding she "didn't have anything from him, just some photos". Yet, according to Polish law, archaeological findings, including the excavated belongings of Dutch victims of former Nazi German extermination camps, are regarded as national property and not allowed to leave the country. Notwithstanding governmental support for the David's family's moral claim that "it belongs not to Poland, but to us",¹⁰ the Polish State Museum Majdanek, which supervises the Sobibór excavations, offered David's niece – to her astonishment – only a replica of the tag. The original, of which a photo is printed in Majdanek's latest museum guide, will become part of the permanent exhibition of the new museum planned at Sobibór.

⁹ Aron Heller, Israeli Archaeologist, Seeking Truth About his Family, Digs into Nazi Death Camp, in: The Times of Israel, 22 August 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-archaeologist-digs-into-nazi-death-camp/> (26 November 2016).

¹⁰ Liesje de Hond, interviewed at the Dutch website from the NPO History Broadcast Andere Tijden, Liesje en Deddie. Anderen tijden. Alle kinderen op transport, in: NPO Geschiedenis, 2 May 2016, <http://www.npogeschiedenis.nl/nieuws/2016/april/Liesje-en-Deddie.html> (9 November 2016).

Thus archaeological findings in a museum context may offer visitors both genocide-centred 'evidence' of war crimes and victimhood-centred post-memory 'experiences'. Yet outside the museum context, the same object may return to its origin as a personal or family property and change into a highly contested 'semiophore', a thing with multiple meanings for different 'owners' as a finding, an artefact, and a memorial. In other words, Deddie Zak's name tag might be considered from a curator's point of view a postmemory tool for visitor's identification, while from a survivor's perspective this might be regarded a disgraceful act of disowning, if not looting. Most important though, this cultural property conflict over Sobibór name tag makes clear that the current transnational Holocaust paradigm is not as hegemonic and universal as often thought. For although Holocaust narratives tend to become strongly globalized, the original crime scenes are still very much localized. To put it differently, personal memories might easily 'travel', but the sites themselves are mostly fixed into local and national canons of memory. Many material remnants and findings of conflicts are trapped in this binary state of in-betweenness.

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THINKING CONFLICTED HERITAGE THROUGH CAMPSCAPES

04

On the grounds of the Dutch Memorial Camp Westerbork, visitors are made aware of the site's history rather laconically. It is through the monumentalization of its largely empty space that 102,000 people persecuted as Jews, Roma and Sinti, and a number of resistance fighters are remembered here as victims of Nazi war terror. Most of them lived for a longer or shorter time in the former Nazi concentration and transit camp before being transported from July 1942 to September 1944 to Auschwitz, Sobibor, Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt. Paradoxically, the largely empty field of the former camp is made fathomable by the imposing residence of the camp commanders. One of the few remaining material traces of the original campscape, the commander's house, offered a panoptic view on the atrocities of the weekly transports to the East which were invented and executed with orderly precision by two of its residents, the SS officers Erich Deppner and Albert Konrad Gemmeker. Established after the German 'Kristallnacht' in 1938 as a centralized German-Jewish refugee camp, five years after the war this former refugee, transit, and postwar Dutch internment camp (for fascist collaborators), was used as a resort for Moluccan Christian families (mostly members of the Royal Netherlands Colonial Army) who were relocated to the Netherlands after the decolonization of the former Dutch East Indies. They lived at the site, then renamed Schattenberg, up to its final demolition around 1970, when the campscape became the new destination for fourteen 25-meter-wide, dish-shaped antennas of ASTRON, the Westerbork Radio Telescope, for which it had to turn into a zone of silence.

Despite the solemn intention of its symbolic topography, memories attached to the site continue to evince divergent affective responses: while for the former inmates of the camp and their relatives "Westerbork" represents a reminder of suffering, for members of the Moluccan community, forced out of their homeland and later out of their 'kampung' on the empty moors of Drenthe, "Schattenberg" articulates a tragic

04



Reconstructed barrack at the premises of the Westerbork Memorial Center. Photo: S. Wierenga.

memory of loss. In this fluid dynamics of remembrance, representing one's own story often engenders divisive claims of inscription on and authority over a memorial site, further obscured by the contingency of representations. Thus in Westerbork, the national monument established on the Netherlands War Remembrance Day, 4 May 1970, came into public awareness at a time when the Shoah was gradually becoming a historical topos for politics and sovereignty claims worldwide¹ – even though the Dutch Jewish community had not been invited and at that time still showed no interest in protecting the site. In the same decade, the Moluccan national cause would unexpectedly turn violent in the Netherlands with the hijacking of two passenger trains and a school with children by radical Moluccan activists from the former Schattenberg community. It fostered such traumatic memories both in Dutch society and among the Moluccan minority that – with the exception of a small, nostalgic Moluccan 'kitchen memorial' – a mnemonic relationship to Westerbork/Schattenberg has until today hardly been created. Susceptible to the tension between the campscape as a marker of individual and collectivized experience, on the one hand, and as invested public space conveying specific narratives on the past, on the other, Westerbork illustrates the intrinsic layering of memorial sites caught in a broader cultural and political dynamic.

What this shows is that access to such sites requires more than a critical inquiry into how they relate to transnational memory spaces structured by the Holocaust paradigm, human rights discourses, and

1 Daniel Levy and Nathan Sznajder, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, Philadelphia 2006. For a critical consideration of the history of Westerbork, see Rob van der Laarse, *Kamp Westerbork*, in: Madelon de Keizer and Marije Plomp (eds.), *Een open Zenuw. Hoe wij ons de Tweede Wereldoorlog herinneren* Amsterdam 2010, 306-317; Dirk Mulder, *Een vormgegeven verwerking*, in: Dirk Mulder and Ben Prinsen (eds.), *Bronnen van herinnering*, Assen 1993, 20-52; Nationaal Monument Westerbork, Herinneringscentrum Westerbork, <http://www.kampwesterbork.nl/nl/museum/kampsterrein/monumenten/nationaal-monument-westerbork/index.html#/index>

European identity politics.² Campscapes appear today in many forms with multiple textures within very different international constellations, as sites of memory and mourning, cemeteries, protected monuments, etc. Each site establishes its own specific mode of relating material traces, mnemonic practices and cultural representations to the complex historical topography of Nazi and Stalinist era terror in twentieth century Europe (foremost, to their camp infrastructure) as well as to the current geopolitical topography of memory. It thus becomes critical to understand how campscapes are expected to function in various memory cultures, what is remembered, why, by and for whom, and in whose name.

Today, walking as a visitor through Westerbork, we are expected to reflect, to remember – and most particularly, to identify: for it could have been you! The site constructed as inherently traumatic, implicitly foregrounds a static consideration of the past through the lens of victimhood – one that confines complex and often contradictory subject positions to universalizing and moralizing constructions of righteousness and guilt.³ Yet the much more complex chain of ideological and political events that actually shaped the camp's history and present form, might be lost if its entry point is merely suffering and loss. Biographical trajectories conveyed in judicial documents and ego-documents of camp inmates and survivors make clear how the lives of a multicultural and international group of people – both victims and guards – changed in a short span of only 2,5 years during the period of transportations (1942-1944) during which even the borders between victims and guards had become fluid, as demonstrated by the (mostly German-Jewish) camp police, the *Fliegende Kolonne*, whose members had even become a Nazi-collaborating 'nobility' in the eyes of some Dutch-Jewish witnesses. A critical investigation of

2 See for instance Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, Princeton 1995; Samuel Moyn *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Cambridge 2010.

3 See for instance Susanne C. Knittel, Introduction, in: *The Historical Uncanny*, New York 2014.

the mechanisms and politics guiding the processes of the postwar making and remaking of the campscape might equally explain why the relative absence of the Moluccan history at the site is increasingly controversial.

If at present certain meanings have been lost, it is often the materiality of such sites that presents, preserves and frames their potential meanings. For unlike ex post urban war memorials and museums, in situ material traces offer an indexical link to past events and play a significant role in visitors' expectations and processes of signification.⁴ Made to hold enduring claims of justice,⁵ clarify skewed, biased and revisionist claims of the past, traces are conjured to stabilize symbols of affective relevance, mobilize official politics and serve to utter stories otherwise impossible to convey or voice. No less important therefore is the extent to which campscares' materiality is perceived as 'evidence' of war crimes, or/and as a guarantee of historical authenticity and standards of preservation. Taking as a vantage point the intersection between representations, materialities and practices unfolding at the sites, a study of campscares could therefore unravel how they reflect a wider canonization (or erasure) of particular historical and political connotations, and elucidate the role of authorized heritage discourses⁶ and competing memories.⁷

After all, campscares function as more than historical monuments; they also act as theatrical spaces performing their 'pieces' for many sorts of audiences. The curatorial, aesthetic and display strategies determine how the site is symbolized and meant to be experienced through its scripted

4 Compare the introduction to Rob van der Laarse, Francesco Mazzucchelli and Carlos Reijnen (eds.), *Traces of Terror, Signs of Trauma: Practices of (Re)presentation of Collective Memories in Contemporary Europe* (spec. issue *Versus* 119 (2016), 3-20.

5 Susan Buckley-Zistel S. and Stefanie Schäfer (eds.), *Memorials in Times of Transition*, Cambridge 2014.

6 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, London/New York 2006.

7 Rob van der Laarse, *Ils nous l'ont fait: Muséographies des mémoires concurrentes après 1989*, in: Delphine Bechtel and Luba Jurgenson (eds.), *Muséographie des violences en Europe central et ex-URSS*, Paris 2016, 213-233.

storylines.⁸ A critical analysis of the decision-making and selection processes concerning the narratives and imageries, testimonies and types of exhibitions chosen and preferred – whether it is the subjectivities of victim or perpetrator, or agents produced or foregrounded on the site – is crucial for understanding how the sites work on and upon their multiple audiences and (re)tell their specific stories. Yet what is told and not – in publications, museums and campscares – and what is kept backstage (stored in the archives so to speak), is not only determined by the wish of curators but also guided by the ethics of critics and shaped by expectations of both survivors and visitors. In this vein, 'reading' campscares shows the development and changes of the sites through time, and the ways in which they interact with research environments, survivor communities and other interest groups accommodating various configurations of expectations and demands. It also shows how camp memorials themselves act as agents imposing specific interpretations and affective responses through carefully orchestrated readings, experiences, spatial and bodily practices shaped by a range of communications varying from a continuous (re)designing, staging and exhibitions, to school lessons, publications and media events.

When considering the effects and paradigms the site produces, reproduces and transmits, narratives of campscares – irreducible to the purely textual realm – become a laboratory for new emerging intersections of knowledge production. Since stories told at and through campscares not only help make the sites understandable but also invite visitors to identify and relate affectively to the pasts they embody, it is the dynamic discursive-material narratives that present one of the

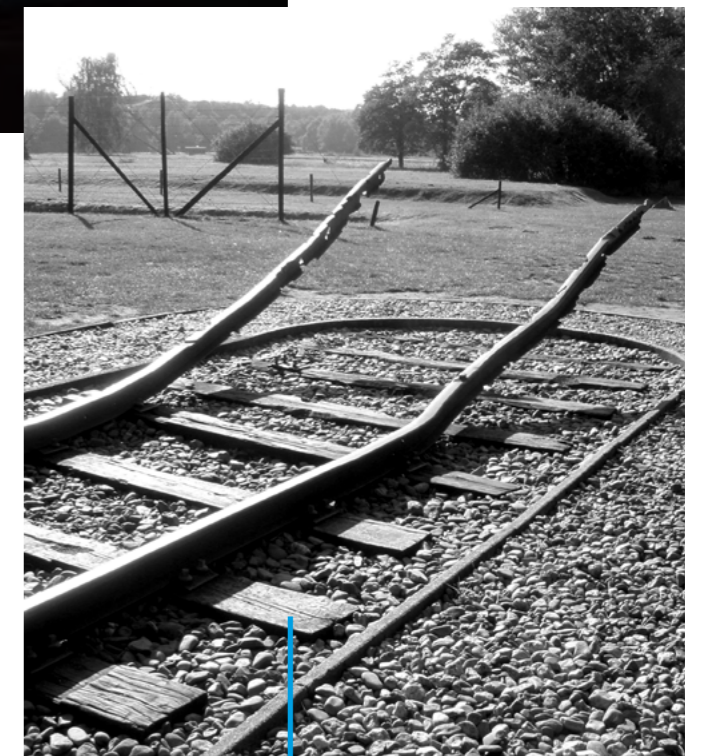
8 The theatre metaphor should of course not be taken too literally, as campscares are not free to choose and elaborate the historical events 'told' at and by the sites. Compare also David Duindam, *Signs of the Shoah. The Hollandsche Schouwburg as a site of memory* (UvA PhD 2016), and Iris van Ooijen, *Kampen als betwist bezit. De hedendaagse omgang met de kampen Westerbork, Vught en Amersfoort als herdenkingsplek, herinneringsplaats en erfgoed site* (VU PhD 2016, Amsterdam, forthcoming).

most contentious aspects of memorials. Engaging genealogically and discursively with narratives 'attached' to 'terror- and traumascapes', political and historical events again redirect attention to the contingency of their meanings inherently tied with political articulation (or, in conflicted situations, even to political mobilization). As such, campscape narratives, both emergent and well-established ones, enable us to understand the effects of politicized uses of heritage, conflicted histories and disputed memories concerning violent historical pasts. These are particularly conspicuous in the current age of digitization and transnationalization, and with the rise of right-wing populism. In this regard, the appropriations of particular narratives for the benefit of either victims groups, particular institutions, and national(ist) agendas, or even politics of recall and reconciliation, not only show how competition informs memory dynamics, but also how certain perspectives become silenced, overlooked, forgotten, or deemed 'taboo' as well as being normalized in memory-centered debates around identity and othering. Building on this recognition, iC-ACCESS aims to offer foreground access to backstage archives, while bridging the gap between authorized discourses and 'alternative facts' with mutual trust.

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Camp Commander's House at the former camp Westerbork. Courtesy of the Westerbork Memorial Center.



The National Westerbork Memorial designed by Ralph Prins. Photo: S. Wierenga.

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