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## Ukrainica abroad

### A resource between science, state-building and international relations

Already during the national and cultural revival at the time of Perestroika, an independent cultural and history policy of Ukraine was considered an important factor of and precondition for achieving state sovereignty and was thus connected to high expectations among the public. This was reflected by the *Declaration on the State Sovereignty of Ukraine* of July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1990, where it said, among others: “Those national and historical cultural goods as being in the territory of the Ukrainian SSR are the undeniable property of the people of the Republic. The Ukrainian SSR reserves the right to retransfer any national, cultural, and historical goods as being outside the borders of the Ukrainian SSR to the property of the Ukrainian people”.<sup>1</sup>

One consequence of the state's history policy support of culture was the working out of the programme *Archival und Manuscript Ukrainica* (Архівна та рукописна Україніка) by the *Academy of Sciences of Ukraine* (since 1994 – National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Національна академія наук України). Usually, terms such as *Britannica* or *Ros-sica* refer to bibliographic collections covering the entirety of the references and evidence of a certain country. However, even before Ukraine's declaration of independence of the year 1991 the term *Ukrainica* was used in a much more comprehensive sense. *Archival and Manuscript Ukrainica* is a comprehensive programme for working out an apparatus for the description and administration of retrospective information whose purpose is the recording, description, and establishment of a national information database for all documentary sources concerning the history of Ukraine. The developers of *Ukrainica* emphasize that the work done in the context of the programme is supposed to make access to information easier which is indispensable for society, state and science. As thus the *Ukrainica* programme obviously aims at safeguarding the informational independence of the

country, it was granted the status of a state programme in 1992.

A crucial element of *Ukrainica* is the creation of standardised principles for the description of certain groups of sources as well as for bibliographic and museum collections. Thus based, *Ukrainica* does not only refer to the entirety of the national archival stock and Ukrainian museum collections and library resources but goes much further, as the programme is supposed to also cover collections which are outside the country.

The following is supposed to give a short overview of the development and the goals of *Ukrainica* in the context of state history and cultural policy both in the Ukrainian People's Republic ((UNR) or the Hetmanate (1917-1920)) and after Ukraine's independence in 1991.

#### ***Ukrainica* – the creation of an idea**

The creation of the term *Ukrainica* was connected to the founding of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 1918, to which there also belonged a scientific library which was to become the future *National Vernads'kyj Library of Ukraine* (Національна бібліотека України імені В. І. Вернадського). At the same time there also developed a broad social consensus about the necessity to run continuous registers of all publications concerning Ukraine and to make them accessible. A special *Ukrainica* department of this library had the task to document and collect all books and manuscripts all over the world which had either been published in the Ukrainian language or were dealing with Ukraine's nature as well as with the histories and cultures of the Ukrainian people as well as of those peoples who were living in the territory of Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

Even at the beginning of the activity of the *Ukrainian Central Rada* (Українська Центральна Рада), convened in Kyiv in March, 1917, its leading members

made the task of the protection of culture and the re-transfer of historical cultural goods one of the fundamental principles of the state's science and cultural policy. At the heart of these aspirations and practical measures there was the retransfer of national cultural goods (such as the sanctuaries of Cossacks) which during the period of the Russian Tsars had been transferred to the then capitals of the Empire, Moscow and St. Petersburg, as well as to other cities in Russia. Among the first activists concerning the issue of the restitution of Ukrainian cultural goods and particularly the archival and museum stocks there counted the delegates of the All-Ukrainian Teachers' Congress happening in Kyiv in early 1917. And just a few days later the issue of the restitution of the Cossack treasures as well as of some objects from Petrograd to Kyiv was on the agenda of a meeting of the executive of the Central Rada. For this purpose, teams of Ukrainian experts were founded in both Russian capitals whose task was, among others, to work out those lists which were supposed to provide the basis of the intended *Ukrainica* catalogue.<sup>3</sup>

Representatives of the humanities, many members of the Ukrainian national movement and leading representatives of the political parties and institutions among them, very actively contributed to the listing and protection of the cultural goods both in the period of the Ukrainian People's Republic and later of the Ukrainian Hetmanate. Many of them considered it their task to deconstruct the Imperial narratives and to confront them to their own national narratives. Among the leading active persons in 1917-1921 there counted many proven historians as well as amateurs and enthusiasts who were dealing with the history of the Ukrainian lands and were perfectly familiar with the archive and museum collections. The collapse of the empires as a result of World War I provided them with the possibility to combine their own scientific interests with their participation in the further development of the Ukrainian state. Such a new policy served the purpose of overcoming the alienation of the entire Ukrainian nation from its historical and cultural heritage, which among these circles had since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century been considered a great injustice and a negative factor when it came to the development of the Ukrainian culture. The ethnologist, archaeologist

and art historian Mykola Biljashivs'kyi (Микола Біляшівський, 1867-1926), who was one of the leading experts of Ukrainian history and in 1918 authored the first law on the protection of memorials of history and culture, formulated a programme as early as in 1917 which stipulated that museum collections should be registered independently of their form of ownership (private or state) and were to be put under state protection.<sup>4</sup>

According to the provisions of the Peace Treaty of Brest, in 1918 the Ukrainian People's Republic started preparations for peace negotiations which were supposed to happen with the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and in the context of which the restitution of Ukrainian cultural goods were supposed to be a key issue. In the course of these preparations as well as of the peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia in 1918 Kyiv was working intensively on formulating the negotiating position which concerned the restitution of archival and museum stocks. Specifically for this purpose an inter-authority commission was established. It was tasked with formulating those Ukrainian demands as concerned the restitution of cultural goods by Russia and to compile first lists of stocks and collections. The selection criteria which were supposed to form the basis of the demands by the Ukrainian state were as yet not finally fixed. Also the clarification of how the demands were actually to be implemented were unprecise at that stage and were primarily limited to demands to make written traditions and objects accessible for research and to allow for copies. At the same time, a list of the most important collections was made, the restitution of which the Ukrainian People's Republic decided to demand. Among them there counted e. g. the archival stocks of religious organisations and of local courts which were stored at archive storages in Moscow and St. Petersburg and even in Warsaw.<sup>5</sup>

The liveliest debates, however, were about the question of the criteria according to which the belonging of paintings to the Ukrainian culture was supposed to be decided. Very active participants in this debate were particularly the prominent Ukrainian art historians Hryhoriy Pavluc'kyi (Григорій Павлуцький, 1861-1924) and Dmytro Antonovych (Дмитро Антонович, 1877-1945) who also compiled lists of

appropriate objects of art. (The latter was the son of the outstanding Ukrainian historian and founder of modern Ukrainian historiography as well as of the so called Kyiv School of Historians, Volodymyr Antonovych, Володимир Антонович, 1834-1908). In the spring and summer of 1918 both attended the meetings of the expert commission and worked out important proposals. Among the decisions made by the commission there counts a special resolution on the superior nature of the demand for the restitution of the works of Taras Shevchenko (Тарас Шевченко 1814-1861) from the *State Historical Museum* (Государственный исторический музей) in Moscow (this referred to a self-portrait from the year 1857 and to some other works). The remaining works of art proposed by the commission for restitution were included into the overall list, to which a description of the selection criteria was added. The first part covered the works by artists who considered themselves Ukrainian and had created works which “were characterised by a marked Ukrainian nature as well as by [Ukrainian] imagination”. According to the commission, among those artists whose works were supposed to return to Ukraine “without exception”, there counted the five artists Volodymyr Borovykovs'kyj (Володимир Боровиковський), Mykola Ge (Микола Ге), L. Levic'kyi (Левицький), and Anton Losenko (Антон Лосенко) as well as the sculptor Ivan Martos (Іван Мартос). To a second category there belonged the works of those artists who, “after they had left Ukraine, were sometimes influenced by the Russian character when it came to their work”. Their works were supposed to be exempted from restitution if they were “typically Russian“. The artists Oleksij Venecianov (Олексій Венеціанов), Ivan Krams'koj (Іван Крамської), Illya Repin (Ілля Рєпін), and Mykola Yaroshenko (Микола Ярошенко) were given as examples. A third category concerned the works of artists of non-Ukrainian origin “whose work was sometimes influenced by the Ukrainian character“. In this concern, there was the suggestion to demand the restitution of “works which are typical for Ukraine“. On the whole, the list included the names and short characteristics of 107 artists. Apart from those who have already been mentioned, these were Ivan Ajvazovskiy (Іван Айвазовський), Fedir Aleksyeyev

(Федір Алексєєв), Oleksij Antropov (Олексій Антропов), Kostyantyn Bohayevs'kyj (Костянтин Богаєвський), Isaak Brods'kyj (Ісаак Бродський), Serhij Vasylykivs'kyj (Сергій Васильківський) and others.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, based on the principle of distribution, the Ukrainian side advocated the inclusion of a clause into the agreement with Russia which should concern the restitution of cultural goods which had been transferred from Ukraine. The details of this distribution were supposed to be agreed by way of a special treaty which was supposed to be signed later. For the clarification of these issues, a cultural commission as a part of the Ukrainian delegation to the peace negotiations was established. The situation was made difficult not least by the fact that the Ukrainian experts interpreted the principle of distribution in different ways and sometimes even fundamentally doubted it. Thus, it remained unclear how this principle should be implemented in practice – to determine the share, should the quantitative relation of the Russian and the Ukrainian population or that of the Ukrainian and Russian territories be the criterion? Finally the Ukrainian delegation included a clause into the final text of their project which demanded the restitution of the fifth part of the collections of the museums of Moscow and St. Petersburg.<sup>7</sup> However, the preliminary version of the text initialled by both parties, of June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1918, did not consider any Ukrainian demands concerning the restitution of historical and cultural objects and collections, as this document was almost exclusively dedicated to economic issues. In the autumn of 1918, against the background of aspirations by Soviet Russia to found a Ukrainian Soviet Republic, all work on the text of the treaty and in particular the mutual agreement on the restitution list was terminated.

After the failure of the independent Ukrainian state the policy which concerned the listing and protection of cultural goods developed under completely different geo-political conditions. Since the early 1920s the situation in this field was characterised by a strengthening of state control (handing collections over to the state administration, the creation of a network of state archives and museums, and the mass confiscation of objects of value for the purpose of giving them to the central Soviet institutions or of selling them to

foreign countries) as well as by the constant growth of the influence of the former metropolitan city of the Empire. The preparations for the Peace Treaty of Riga, which ended the Polish-Soviet War, demonstrates that the Soviet-Ukrainian delegation (which was independent only on paper) did not consider issues of the national cultural heritage to be very important, although by initiative of the Polish side it was always in the focus. For the Ukrainian Soviet government, its participation in the negotiations to the Riga Peace Treaty was the first experience of being a subject of international relations. In the context of this treaty it was finally agreed that those archival stocks and other cultural goods as had been transferred from Poland to Russia since the First Partition of Poland in 1772 should be given back. Until the early 1930s work continued in Ukraine on identifying Polish archive, museum, and book collections and on transferring them to Poland. Similar to Poland in the Treaty of Riga, also Ukraine with its later agreements with the three Baltic states considered the protection of its own collections to have top priority.<sup>8</sup>

The work done in the context of identifying and giving back Polish cultural goods raised the interest also of the Ukrainian experts in the fate of those collections which had at different times been taken away from Ukraine or had been evacuated during World War I yet never been given back. The establishment of the state archive administration created the most important organisational preconditions. The main task of the archive administration was the establishment of a *State Archival Fund* (Державний Архівний Фонд, the entirety of all archive materials kept in one state) as well as the protection of archives – that is principles which were supportive to research in the field of *Ukrainica*.<sup>9</sup> A report by the leading Ukrainian archivists Dmytro Bahalij (Дмитро Багалій, 1857-1932) and Viktor Barvins'kyj (Віктор Барвінський, 1880-1940) on the archival stocks kept in Russia, which was published by the official journal of the state archive administration and to which an extensive register was added, marked the beginning of more systematic work at a higher organisational level.<sup>10</sup>

The subsequent research, those stocks and collections the restitution of which was demanded by the government of the Soviet Ukraine, based on the lists

compiled by the archive administration, were divided into two groups, in view of the circumstances under which they had been taken from Ukraine. To the first group there were attributed stocks of Ukrainian origin which, in the course of evacuation measures or due to the centralisation of archival stocks, had been transferred to the Imperial capitals (Moscow and St. Petersburg) or to other cities outside Ukraine. The second group consisted of archive collections or parts of them which, although they had developed under the aegis of the Imperial authorities, referred exclusively to Ukrainian territory (e. g. materials of the so called *Little Russian administration* – Малороссийский Приказ) and of certain groups of documents among the Senate stocks or correspondence by the Ukrainian hetmans). Whereas to the restitution of most of the documents belonging to the first group there were no objections by the Russian experts, they rejected the criteria for the second group as being only insufficiently founded or unfounded at all, while referring to the principle of the indivisibility of archival stocks as well as of their territorial reference (pertinence principle). To achieve an agreement between the two Soviet Republics (Ukrainian SSR and RSFSR), an inter-Republic special commission was established.<sup>11</sup> In the mid-1930s the work on the exchange between Russia and Ukraine was completed.

Somewhat different was the situation in the museum field. On the one hand, the formulation and justification of Ukraine's restitution demands was supported both by the activities of the experts, which had been dealing with the protection of Ukrainian cultural goods since the time of the Ukrainian People's Republic, and by Lenin's decree on *The Handing Over of Trophies to the Ukrainian People* of December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1921, as well as by the Ukrainization policy of the 1920s. On the other hand, the campaign for the confiscation of Church property, against the resistance of the community of Ukrainian experts, resulted in irreparable losses for Ukraine. Like also in the field of archives, the Ukrainian Soviet government actively supported the restitution of Ukrainian collections and tasked its official representative in Moscow with collecting information about the whereabouts of objects, objects of art, and manuscripts of Ukrainian origin which were kept outside the Republic.

Since the year 1926, registers were systematically prepared which built on research in the Ukraine in the years 1918-1919. Like already at the time of the Ukrainian People's Republic, the scientists of the *Ukrainian Academy of Sciences* were to play a leading role with studying and researching. This continuity is also reflected by the attempts and efforts to apply the 'distribution' principle which had already been discussed in the course of the preparations for the Russian-Ukrainian peace agreement of 1918. The result was the Ukrainian government-approved *Preliminary Register of Those Historical, Cultural, and Artistic Works as Being Provided for Restitution*.<sup>12</sup>

Due to Ukrainian-Russian disagreements concerning the fields of both museums and archives, by the end of the 1920s it became necessary to establish bodies and commissions at the Union level which were entitled to solve the issues which were disputed among the Ukrainian and Russian Soviet Republics. Whereas concerning the field of archives this function should be held by the *Central Archive Administration of the USSR* (Главное Архивное Управление) concerning the exchange of museum exhibits a parity commission was established. The decisions by these bodies produced the result that until the beginning of the 1930s more than 10,000 objects and 15 archaeological collections were transferred from Russian museums and libraries to Ukraine.<sup>13</sup>

In sum, it may be stated that despite immense dangers and losses the period between 1917 and the end of the 1920s was of utmost significance for the protection of cultural goods in general and for the development of ideas concerning archival *Ukrainica* in particular. This period was characterised by the rapid development both of state archival and museum and library work in Ukraine, however also in other parts of the former Russian Empire. Wars, revolutions, and most of all the collapse of the empires resulted in paying more attention to practical steps in the context of the registering and restitution of cultural goods. The Ukrainian tradition of archaeographic work since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the active participation of Ukrainian humanities scholars in political work provided strong stimulations for the theoretical development of the idea of an overall state archive fund as well as for the systematic work on the preservation

and restitution of *Ukrainica*, which had effect still in the early 1930s. Only with the renunciation of the liberal Ukrainization policy of the 1920s and the beginning of Stalin's repression, which aimed at cultural actors and scientists in Ukraine, this work was terminated for good.

### ***Ukrainica* in the cultural and history policy of the 1990s**

After for many years the fate of those objects of the cultural and written heritage of Ukraine which were kept abroad had been no part of the public discourse, by the end of the 1980s it attracted public attention again, when in the USSR there happened debates on the archival holdings and collections of so called war trophies from World War II. In this context it turned out that at many archives and cultural institutions of the USSR a number of documents and works of art were secretly kept whose origins had to be clarified. This new information was also taken into account when it came to determining the priorities which were supposed to be valid for Ukraine's cultural policy. For example, the *Programme of the Main Directions of Cultural Development in Ukraine until 2005* (Комплексна програма основних напрямів розвитку культури в Україні у період до 2005 року), approved by the *Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR* (Рада Міністрів УРСР), provided among others measures for clarifying the fate and, if necessary, the restitution of historical documents, objects of national significance, and other Ukrainian cultural goods, to make cultural, educational, and scientific use of them. For this purpose, in October, 1990, the government established a *Republican Commission for the Search and Return to Ukraine of Historical and Cultural Property Located Abroad* (Республіканська комісія з розшуку та повернення в Україну історичних і культурних цінностей, що знаходяться за її межами) which was tasked with the search for and the retransfer of historical and cultural valuables which were kept outside Ukraine. Apart from the outstanding Soviet-Ukrainian historian, corresponding member of the *Academy of Sciences*, and leading staff member of the Institute of History, Fedir Shevchenko (Федір Шевченко, 1914-1995), a number of well-known figures from science, culture and

art counted among its members. Specialists from the fields of museums, archives and libraries as well as representatives of civil society organisations – for the moment on an honorary basis – contributed actively to the work of the commission.<sup>14</sup>

Only a few weeks after Ukraine's declaration of independence had been confirmed by the referendum of December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1991, the law on the *Foundations of Ukrainian Cultural Politics* (Основи законодавства України про культуру) was passed on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1992. It introduced the concept of a “common (цілісна) Ukrainian national culture” as an important factor of the preservation and existence of the Ukrainian nation. Based on such a utilitarian understanding of the role of culture, from all cultural goods the law picked out those which were of crucial significance for the national consciousness and should thus be included into the state register of the national cultural heritage. However, the lawmakers did not succeed with solving all contradictions of the definition of the ‘common national culture’: within the country it was supposed to include both the Ukrainian culture and the cultures of national minorities, however outside Ukraine, in the diaspora, it remained to be of a clearly ethnic nature.<sup>15</sup> Later, particularly in the 1990s, the listing and use of cultural goods as well as the measures for pursuing their fate or clarifying their whereabouts were perceived as an issue which was important for society which did not only become the subject of a number of acts of law-making but were also considered a resource and means of the political struggle.

Despite the sometimes heated political debates and the deep economic crisis, during the 1990s most political forces considered the protection and restitution of cultural goods which were kept abroad a predominant task in the field of cultural policy. Anticipatively, it shall be pointed out that this broad consensus was fixed in the 1996 constitution of Ukraine. The section of the constitution which was dedicated to the cultural heritage included a clause according to which the state should take measures to make sure “a restitution [...] of cultural goods of the Ukrainian people which are beyond the borders“. This regulation was maintained without any change also by later versions of the constitution.<sup>16</sup>

However, even before the constitution was passed, at the beginning of the 1990s, the state's policy serving for the protection or restitution of cultural goods kept abroad had been much stimulated both by law-making and by international initiatives. In 1987 the *Cultural Fund* (Фонд Культури) was founded, which was headed by the Ukrainian poet Borys Olijnyk (Борис Олійник, 1935-2017) and, among others, initiated and implemented the “Return” programme (Програма «Повернення»). Although the restitution of a number of works of art and documents to Ukraine was owed to this initiative, probably another decision in this field played an even bigger role. By proposal of the head of the already mentioned *Republican Commission* for tracing down and retransferring historical and cultural goods to Ukraine, Fedir Shevchenko, a *National Commission* (Національна комісія з питань повернення в Україну культурних цінностей) was founded. This was an important step towards the institutionalisation of work in this field. This *National Commission* existed until the end of the 1990s, at first as an independent state authority, before in 1997 it was made subject to the Ministry of Culture. At this time, the well-known cultural historian Oleksandr Fedoruk (Олександр Федорук, \*1938) functioned as the head of this commission; among the 15 members of the *Scientific Coordinating Council* there were representatives of the biggest Ukrainian museums, of the state archive administration, of the *National Academy of Sciences*, as well as of the Foreign Ministry.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, in the first half of the 1990s, the legal regulation of all fields of archives and museums was concluded which formed the basis of all archives and museum collections in Ukraine, regardless of their form of ownership. In 1993 the law *On the National Archive Fund and the Archival Institutions of Ukraine* was passed, and two years later the law on the work of museums. Both acts of law-making mentioned objects, archival holdings, as well as collections of manuscripts and books which were relevant for the history of Ukraine and were kept abroad. The law *On the National Archive Fund and the Archival Institutions of Ukraine* postulated “particular attention” by the state when it came to these objects. A re-edition of this law, passed in 2001, formulated the

preconditions for the retransfer of integral elements of the National Archive Fund from foreign countries – the existence of thus-related international agreements as well as thus-related decisions by the national parliament. Furthermore, the re-edited archive law obliged the executive organs to “take measures for completing the National Archive Fund by documents belonging to the cultural heritage of Ukraine which are in foreign countries and by documents of foreign origin which refer to the history of Ukraine [...]”. All measures necessary for this had to be funded as high to priority.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time Ukraine initiated the signing of an agreement which determined the restitution of cultural goods to their each respective countries of origin. The thus-related document, which was supposed to establish mechanisms for solving controversial issues in this field, was signed by the heads of state and government of the eleven members of the *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CIS) in Minsk on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1992. As a continuation of the diplomatic offensive, the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, in his declaration *On the Restitution of National Art Treasures* of November, 1993, explained the basic principles of Ukraine's policy and in this context emphasized the great extent of the loss of nationally significant objects as well as other historical and cultural valuables Ukraine had suffered on its way to independence. From this, he said, there resulted the following tasks for the community of Ukrainian experts: the extent of loss had to be clarified and to be documented by way of registers of Ukrainian cultural goods which were irretrievably lost or had been taken abroad. At the same time Kravchuk emphasized that Ukraine did not insist in the restitution of all lost memorials of its history and culture without exception. However, as a priority he named the restitution of objects of national significance and of historical and cultural valuables which had been illegally taken out of Ukraine. To achieve these goals, Ukraine obliged itself to strictly keep to international agreements and conventions concerning this field as well as to the thus-related resolutions by the *UN General Assembly*. At the same time he particularly pointed out that this readiness for the negotiating and passing of bilateral agreements also concerned cultural valuables, “in-

cluding those which during World War II had been exported from other countries as war trophies and had secretly been stored at special depositories”. This initiative by Ukraine was supported by UNESCO, and in the following year there happened a first international conference under its patronage which summarised the current state of the research of the fate of Ukrainian cultural goods particularly during World War II. One of the results of the conference was an appeal to the President of the Russian Federation to allow Ukrainian scientists access to documents kept at Russian archives.<sup>19</sup>

The great amount of work done for the retransfer of written heritage to Ukraine is evidenced by the fact that in 2007 the government decided the establishment of a *Central State Archive for Ukrainica from Foreign Countries* (Центральний Державний Архів Зарубіжної Україніки). Its main tasks were the retransfer of written tradition of the Ukrainians to Ukraine which were in foreign countries, the storage of already returned written material, as well as making those elements of the national cultural heritage accessible to science which are outside the country.<sup>20</sup>

### **The state programme on *Archival and Manuscript Ukrainica***

In summer, 1990, at the first congress of the *International Association of Ukrainists* in Kyiv, the L'viv historian Yaroslav Isajevych (Ярослав Ісаєвич, 1936-2010) made the proposal to compile a catalogue of *Ukrainica*. However, it was supposed to not only include bibliographic information but also information about individual documents and archival collections dedicated to the history of Ukraine. Later the chairman of the *International Association of Ukrainists* and the first elected director of the L'viv *Institute of Social Sciences*, Isajevych was a well-known historian who, most of all after his stay at Harvard in 1988, had far-reaching connections to the Ukrainian diaspora.

The initiative for a concept for *Ukrainica* started by Isajevych and other participants in the Kyiv congress was taken up by the shortly before re-established *Archaeographic Commission of the Academy of Sciences* (Археографічна комісія Академії Наук), which soon after was changed into the *Archaeographic Institute* named after Hrushevs'kyj. This new

institute attempted to build on the rich traditions of archaeographic work in the Ukrainian lands during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as on the outstanding work by Mychailo Hrushevs'kyj (Михайло Грушевський, 1866-1934) who, as the head of *Archaeographic Commission* of the Shevchenko Society in L'viv (Наукове товариство імені Шевченка) and later as the head of the *Archaeographic Commission of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences*, had in the 1920s not only provided the foundations of source research but, as the head of the *Central Rada*, also embodied the leading role of Ukrainian historians at the time of Ukrainian independence in 1917-1921.<sup>21</sup>

After the draft of the *Archival and manuscript Ukrainica* programme had been discussed in Kyiv in October, 1991, in 1992 it was given the status of a state programme among whose main tasks there counted the “compilation of a database of written *Ukrainica* which shall be as complete as ever possible”. The term written *Ukrainica* covered several groups of materials: firstly, materials which are immediately connected to the life of the people in Ukraine in the past. Secondly, it refers to materials which indirectly refer to the history of Ukraine. Thirdly, the overall complex also covers written records which are not immediately connected to Ukraine's history. The fourth group consists of materials on Ukrainians or representatives of other ethnic groups which are connected to Ukraine. Finally, the last group of materials contains written *Ukrainica*, “materials on Ukrainian topics which have been created outside its borders and are kept there”.<sup>22</sup>

The work in the context of the *Archival and Manuscript Ukrainica* programme included the systematic description of stocks at Ukrainian archives (until the 19<sup>th</sup> century) as well as the descriptions and registers of the manuscript collections of museums and libraries. It was intended to identify and catalogue, by way of the same procedure, also written *Ukrainica* at archives, museums, and libraries in Russia and other former Soviet republics (first of all Belarus and Lithuania). Furthermore, there was the proposal to compile more topical registers on the basis of assessments and research at the manuscript departments of museums and libraries in other countries. These works were planned in detail in the context of Ukrain-

ian-Polish cooperation. For the purpose of the technical implementation and the publication of the work results, a national computer database was supposed to be established and a Monumenta series of indexes, catalogues, and registers of written *Ukrainica* was supposed to be published.<sup>23</sup>

Since the late 1980s there was a broad consensus in Ukraine about the necessity of the registering, protection, and – if necessary – the retransfer of national cultural goods. This consensus resulted from the fundamental changes of the late Soviet society. They liberated concepts of the past from ideological constraints, which significantly increased the value of historical sources.

In Ukraine in the 1990s the deconstruction of Soviet historical narratives and the establishing of new ones were considered an important means of the safeguarding and strengthening of the state's independence. Whereas cultural actors and representatives of societal organisations which actively supported the retransfer of cultural goods considered these the restoration of historical justice, not without reason political parties counted on the sympathy of voters if they actively dealt with the topic of restitution. Ukrainian historians tied in with the experiences of their predecessors in the 1910s-1920s and presented a comprehensive programme on the recording and description of written sources on Ukrainian history at home and abroad. Soon this programme found support by the state, which, however, was rather of a symbolic nature in the years of the economic crisis.

## Conclusion and prospects

After the February Revolution of 1917 and with the creation of the *Central Rada* in Kyiv, the increased focus on the fate of cultural heritage at home and abroad was characterised by several factors. This was on the one hand due to the development of a new language and cultural policy as well as to the desire to provide the new state with legitimacy by way of referring to the distant past and the rich culture. Another important factor for the focus on the issue of historical heritage was human: among the outstanding and influential figures of the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Hetman state there were many historians who even in the pre-war period had



paid much attention to the collecting, maintaining and researching of document collections. Ukraine's declaration of independence of 1918 provided them with new possibilities not only in the political but also in the scientific field, such as in the form of new research projects by way of which previously inaccessible historical collections could be identified and recorded. As early as in spring, 1918, the first results of research for the *Ukrainica* catalogue were summarised. In July, 1918, the *List of archival materials selected for restitution by Russia to Ukraine in the course of a meeting of the cultural commission of the Ukrainian peace delegation* was presented. It was the result of the work done in preparation for a Russian-Ukrainian peace treaty and which many Ukrainian researchers rightly so consider the first consolidated register of archival *Ukrainica* in foreign countries.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1920s, the paradox of the development of archival sciences in Ukraine in general and in the field of written *Ukrainica* in particular was that on the one hand precisely at that time the organisational preconditions for systematic work in this field were created, while on the other hand the confiscation of church property, the end of Ukrainization policy, the centralisation of administration, and finally the repressions against the majority of the community of experts in the 1930s made all further work in the field of registering and exchanging cultural goods impossible. Thus, not only an organisational hub as well as a network of archives was created in the form of the state archive administration, but also the concept of a standardised archive fund was formulated and made the basis of work. The leading Ukrainian archivists agreed that individual elements of Ukraine's entire archive fund should no longer remain outside the Republic and were subject to immediate and unconditional restitution. Although the lists of Ukrainian archival collections compiled by Bahalij and his colleagues were based on the results of earlier research, at the same time the thus connected restitution demands could be more substantiated, due to changes in the organisation and management of archives.

Also the participation of Russian and Ukrainian specialists in the preparation and implementation of the provisions of the Riga Peace Treaty of 1921 played an important role. At that time, expert circles

of the RSFSR developed important ideas of the indivisibility of an archival collection. However, these opinions, which were often presented as an objection in the course of restitution negotiations, were not the most important and not the only obstacle in the process of the retransfer of Ukrainian archival collections. An as important problem was the reason given why certain documents should be considered to belong to the Ukrainian history or culture. During the period of Ukrainian independence in 1917-1920 as well as in the 1920s, part of the demands by the Ukrainian side was based on the principle of origin and thus on the respective written material belonging to the Ukrainian history and culture, whereas another part was justified by the principle of the "distribution" of the cultural heritage among the parts of the former Empire. The latter principle, adopted from the European practice of those days, was no longer implemented after the breaking off of the negotiations on the Russian-Ukrainian peace treaty of 1918.

A difficult task was also the identification of certain materials and collections when it came to their reference to the Ukrainian culture and history. Apart from the absence of a Ukrainian state over long periods of history, the complex and extended zones of intercultural contacts posed a difficulty: it was "[...] gigantic border areas and cross-overs with other cultures which influenced the development of the national culture of the Ukrainian nation".<sup>25</sup>

The continuities of Ukrainian history policy become particularly obvious by the example of the archive and manuscript *Ukrainica*. Similar to the years 1917-1920, when the existence of the new Ukrainian state was justified by a centuries-old history and culture, the declaration of independence of Ukraine of 1991 refers to the 'one thousand years old tradition' of the state structure.<sup>26</sup> Against this background, much significance was placed on the creation of one's own state archive fund as well as on the completion of art collections and collections of other valuables. Historical materials were supposed to not only legitimate the founding of the Ukrainian state but to also contribute to overcoming the alienation of the people from their own rich history and culture. Thus, both at the beginning and at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the registering, the protection, and the restitution

of cultural goods from foreign countries became a political task of great significance.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an active policy by the state in the field of archival sciences opened up new possibilities for successful work on the compiling of archival and manuscript *Ukrainica*. No less important, however, were the activities of outstanding historians who devoted their profound knowledge to the service of the new state. This successful cooperation of politics and science was embodied by Ukraine's first head of state, the historian Mychajlo Hrushevs'kyj. His lifework inspired many Ukrainian humanities scholars, not least those who, in the early 1990s, contributed to the development and implementation of the *Archival and Manuscript Ukrainica* programme.

Since 1992 much has been achieved in the context of this programme. Criteria and technical parameters for the description of documents and manuscripts were determined<sup>27</sup>, overviews and archive guides on *Ukrainica* in several countries were compiled<sup>28</sup>, and finally a number of restitutions of archival materials both to Ukraine and from the Ukraine to foreign countries were prepared and executed.

The digital age opens up new possibilities for the solving of disputed issues concerning the restitution of cultural goods. At the same time, the Russian Federation's barbaric way of dealing with archives and museum collections in the occupied territories of Ukraine makes protective measures urgent to a degree which has not been seen in Europe since World War II.

## Endnotes

1. The text of the *Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic* can be found at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/55-12#Text> (last access 07.10.2024). See also: I. M. Мельникова, *Декларація про державний суверенітет України 1990 р.* [I. M. Melnykova, Declaration on the State Sovereignty of Ukraine 1990], in: Україна в міжнародних відносинах. Енциклопедичний словник-довідник. Вип. 2. Предметно-тематична частина Д-Й. [Ukraine in international relations. Encyclopedic dictionary-reference. Vol. 2. Subject-thematic part Д-Й.], ed. by M. M. Варварцев [M. M. Varvartsev], Kyiv 2010, pp. 11-12, here: p. 12.
2. В. Копанєва, *Бібліотека як центр збереження інформаційних ресурсів Інтернету. Рукопис* [V. Kopanyeva, The library as a center for preserving of the Internet information resources. Manuscript], Kyiv 2009, p. 144.
3. Actually, in summer-autumn 1917, the issues of the protection and restitution of cultural goods were several times on the agenda. Сергій Кот, *Повернення і реституція культурних цінностей у політичному та культурному житті України (20 – початок 21 століття)* [Serhii Kot, Return and restitution of cultural values in the political and cultural life of Ukraine (20<sup>th</sup> – early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries)], Kyiv 2020, pp. 218-230.
4. See Микола Біляшевський, *Наші національні скарби* [Mykola Biljashevs'kyi, Our National Treasures], published by Shljakh publisher's [Without place] 1918. On his person see: В.О. Горбик, Е.М. Піскова, *Біляшівський, Микола Федотович* [V. O. Horbyk, E. M. Piskova, Biljashevs'kyj, Mykola Fedotovyč], in: *Енциклопедія Історії України* [Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine], vol. 1: A-B., ed. by Valerij A. Smolij et. al., Kyiv 2003, p. 295.
5. Kot 2020 (as note 3), pp. 230-231, 233, 261. Сергій Кот, *Олексій Нестуля, Українські культурні цінності в Росії: перша спроба повернення, 1917-1918* [Serhii Kot, Oleksij Nestulja, Ukrainian cultural values in Russia: the first attempt of its restitution, 1917-1918], Kyiv 1996.
6. Content and quotations in this section from: Kot 2020 (as note 3), pp. 255-256.
7. Ibidem, pp. 235, 240, 244.
8. І.С. Стрикун, *Ризький мирний договір 1921 р.* [I.S. Strykun, The Riga Peace Treaty of 1921], in: Україна в міжнародних відносинах. Енциклопедичний словник-довідник, вип. 4, предметно-тематична частина П-Я. [Ukraine in international relations. Encyclopedic dictionary-reference, vol. 4. Subject-thematic part П-Я.], ed. by M. M. Варварцев [M. M. Varvartsev], Kyiv 2013, pp. 116-118, here: p. 117. Деніс І. Гетьман, *Повернення і реституція історико-культурних цінностей в українсько-польсько-російських відносинах (1920-ті – 1930-ті роки). Дисертація на здобуття наукового ступеня кандидата історичних наук. Рукопис* [Denis I. Hetman, Return and Restitution of Historical and Cultural Property in Ukrainian-Polish-Russian Relations (1920s-1930s). Dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences. Manuscript], Kyiv 2010, pp. 31-55, 81, 85.
9. One important factor for the unfolding of this work was, among others, the fact that both the archive administration and the state museum institutions were subject to the People's Commissariat of Education, which made coordination much easier. Hetman 2010 (as note 8), pp. 88-89.
10. Ibidem, pp. 93-94. In their explanatory notes the authors of the report stated the objectives of the compiling of the register as follows: "The reconstruction of the state archive fund in its entirety, by way of bringing together those archive materials which once were part of it and which, due to historical circumstances, are now outside the borders of Ukraine, is the first task of the Central State Archival Service of Ukraine.", quoted after: Тетяна Г. Боряк, *Концепт «Україніки» у практичній діяльності з розшуку та повернення Архівної Україніки з Росії (1917 – сер. 1930-х рр.)* [Tetjana H. Boryak, The concept of «Ukrainica» in the practical activity of searching for and returning of the archival Ukrainica from Russia (1917 - mid-1930s)], in: Спеціальні історичні дисципліни [Special historical disciplines]. no. 18, 2011, pp. 38-43, here: p. 40.
11. Hetman 2010 (as note 8), pp. 96-100, 112-113.
12. In this context, Hetman points out to the great differences of the ways in which the distribution principle had been interpreted in 1918 and in 1926-1927; Hetman 2010 (as note 8), pp. 132-160, especially: pp. 150-151.
13. Hetman 2010 (as note 8), pp. 161-184.
14. Kot 2020 (as note 3), p. 719.
15. The Law *Foundations of Ukrainian Cultural Politics* came into force on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1992: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2117-12#Text> (last access: 23.04.2024).
16. Constitution of Ukraine, Art. 54. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80#Text> (last access: 11.09.2024).
17. Kot 2020 (as note 3), pp. 717, 750. On the commission see also: Володимир Тихенко, *Проблеми реституції культурних цінностей в сучасній Україні (за документами ЦДАЗУ)* [Volodymyr Tykhenko, Problems of the restitution of cultural values in modern Ukraine (according to the documents of the Central State Archives of Ukraine)], in: Архіви України [Archives of Ukraine], no. 1 (322), 2020, pp. 173-186. The commission published a number of documentations and compilations in its own series *Повернення культурного надбання України: проблеми, завдання, перспективи* [Returning the cultural heritage of Ukraine: problems, tasks, prospects].

18. Ukraine's law *Про Національний архівний фонд та архівні установи України* [On the National Archive Fund and the Archival Institutions of Ukraine] (2001), Art. 5, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3814-12#Text> (last access: 07.10. 2024). Ірина Б. Матяш, *Архівна Україніка в Канаді: історіографія, типологія, склад* [Iryna B. Matiash, Archival Ukrainica in Canada: historiography, typology, composition.], in: Український історичний журнал [Ukrainian Historical Magazine], no. 4, 2007, pp. 153-175, here: p. 153.
19. Quoted after: Kot 2020 (as note 3), p. 758. On this see also: Тукхенко 2020 (as note 17), p. 177-179.
20. Владислав Г. Берковський. *Центральний державний архів зарубіжної україніки* [Vladyslav H. Berkovskiy, Central State Archive for Ukrainica from foreign countries], in: Енциклопедія історії України [Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine], vol. 10, ed. by Валерій А. Смолій та інш. [Valerij Smolij et. al.], Kyiv 2013, pp. 461-462.
21. For more on this see: Марія Ю. Кулініч, *Архівна Україніка: історія повернення, типологія, джерельно-інформаційне значення (1991-2014 рр.)*. Дисертація на здобуття наукового ступеню кандидата історичних наук. Рукопис [Marija Ju. Kulinich, Archival Ukrainica: history of return, typology, source and information value (1991-2014). Dissertation for obtaining the scientific degree of candidate of historical sciences. Manuscript], Kyiv 2015, pp. 11-12.
22. *Архівна та рукописна Україніка. Матеріали розширеної міжвідомчої наради по обговоренню Державної програми «Архівна та рукописна Україніка»* [Archival and Manuscript Ukrainica. Materials of the extended interdepartmental meeting to discuss the State Program «Archival and Manuscript Ukrainica»], ed. by Василь Ульяновський and Геннадій Боряк [Vasyl Uljanovskiy and Hennady Boriak], Kyiv 1992, pp. 5, 9.
23. *Ibidem*, pp. 10-15.
24. Boryak 2011 (as note 10), p. 39.
25. Archival and Manuscript (as note 22), p. 19. Also Patricia Grimsted Kennedy pointed out to these problems: Patricia Grimsted Kennedy, *Trophies of War and Empire: the Archival Heritage of Ukraine, World War II, and the International Politics of Restitution*, Cambridge, MA, 2001, p. 137.
26. Ukraine's law 2001 (as note 18).
27. Геннадій Боряк, *Камеральна археографія і археографічна україніка: теорія та методика актуалізації архівної документальної спадщини (Дисертація)* [Hennady Boryak, Chamber Archaeography and Archaeographical Ukrainica: Theory and Methods of Updating of the Archival Documentary Heritage (Dissertation)], Kyiv 1996.
28. *Архівна україніка в Канаді: довідник* [Archival Ukrainica in Canada: a guide], ed. by Ірина Матяш та інш. [Iryna Matiash et. al.], Kyiv 2010. *Україніка в збірках Австрії: Бібліотеки, Архіви, Музеї. Попередній довідник* [Ukrainica in Austrian collections: Libraries, Archives, Museums. Preliminary index], ed. by Павло Ричков [Pavlo Rychkov], Kyiv 1993. *Архівна україніка у Великобританії: поперед. ают. перелік матеріалів* [Documentary Sources Relating to Ukraine in Repositories in the United Kingdom. A preliminary Check-List], compiled by Джанет М. Хартлі [Janet M. Hartley], Kyiv London 1993.

## Abstract

Shortly after Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991, a comprehensive programme for the description and management of retrospective information was developed at the Academy of Sciences in Kyiv – *Archival and Manuscript Ukrainica*. Its main purpose was to identify all documentary sources related to the history of Ukraine (e.g. archival documents and manuscripts) and to record and describe them in a national information database. According to that, the *Ukrainica* not only refers to the entirety of archival

holdings and Ukrainian museum collections and library resources in the country, but also to traditions located outside the country. With the resumption of work on the *Ukrainica* in the 1990s, the idea of a catalogue of the *Ukrainica*, as it had been developed during the period of the Ukrainian People's Republic (1917-1918), came back into focus of public interest. The article highlights the institutional and personal continuities and ruptures, and briefly outlines the political and social contexts, enabling a classification of 'Ukrainica' in the context of contemporary historical developments.

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## Title

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