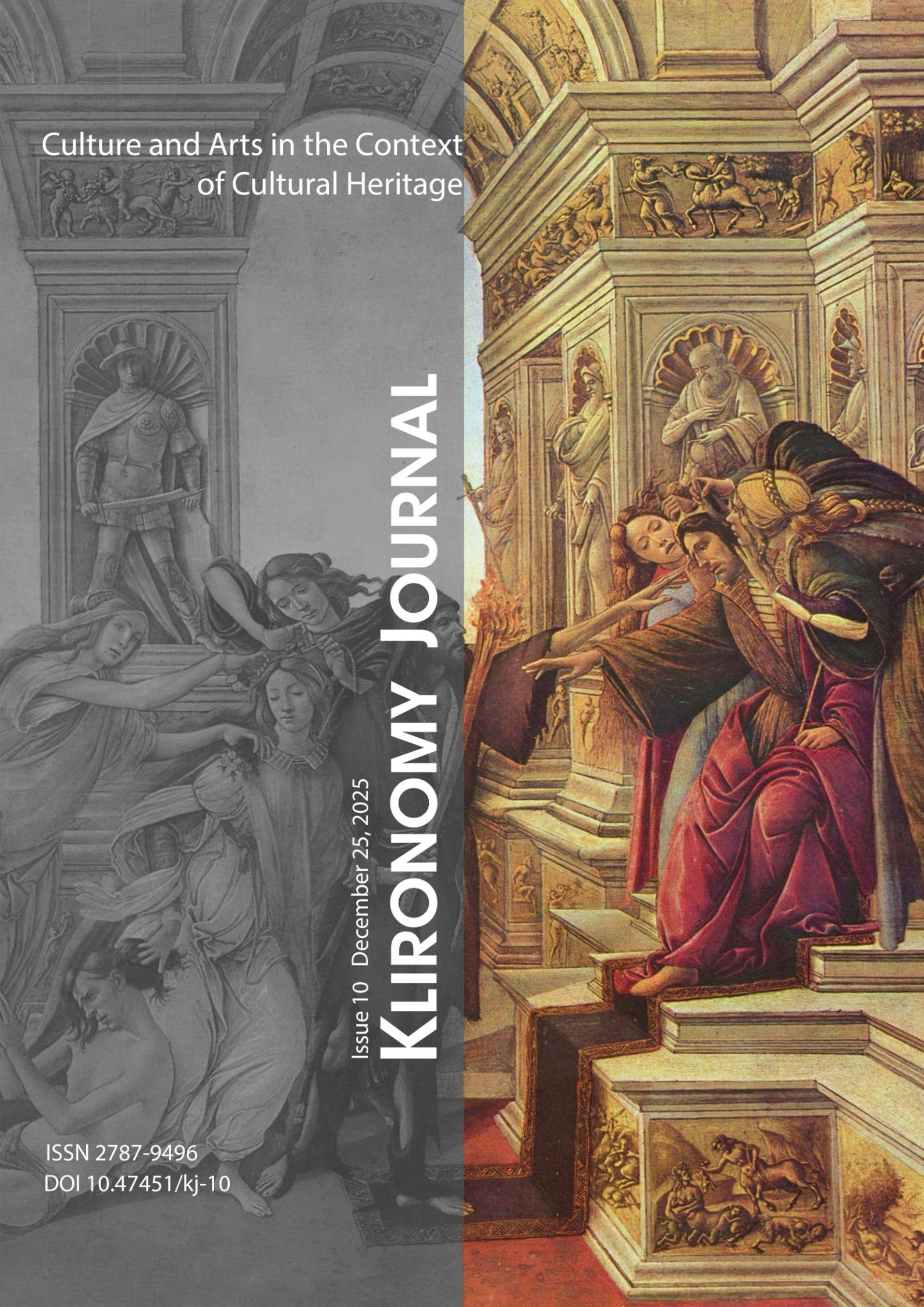


Culture and Arts in the Context
of Cultural Heritage

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CULTURAL HERITAGE IS INTENDED FOR THE MEMORY OF THE FUTURE

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Klironomical Methods for the Study of Cultural Heritage: From Philosophical Reconstruction to Applied Analysis ^[1]

Abstract:

The relevance of the study is determined by the need for a methodological renewal of cultural heritage research in the context of the expansion of the subject field of heritage studies and the increasing attention to intangible forms of culture, memory, and cultural continuity. Contemporary practices of cultural preservation require instruments capable of linking philosophical reflection with applied analysis and managerial decision-making. The study problem is associated with the fragmentation of the methodological apparatus of heritage studies, the dominance of normative–procedural models, and the insufficient elaboration of the philosophical foundations of value, historicity, and responsibility in the analysis of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This limits the explanatory potential of existing approaches and their ability to address the processual nature of cultural continuity. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the systematisation of klironomical methods for the study of cultural heritage and in the substantiation of klironomy as an integral methodological system that brings together philosophical, analytical, and applied levels of analysis. For the first time, a set of 25 klironomical methods is presented, and their applicability to tangible and intangible heritage is demonstrated within a unified methodological logic. The subject of the study is klironomical methods for analysing the processes of preservation of culture and art. The object of the study comprises the processes of preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage as forms of historical continuity. The study aims to substantiate klironomical methods as a methodological transition from philosophical reconstruction to applied analysis of cultural heritage. The methodological framework of the study is based on philosophical reconstruction, categorical and axiological analysis, comparative-klironomical and matrix analysis, as well as methods of klironomical diagnostics, expertise, and design. The study generalises the ideas and approaches of J. Assmann, A. Assmann, P. Ricœur, P. Nora, F. Choay, L. Smith, R. Harrison, and other scholars of the philosophy of memory and heritage studies, as well as the author’s klironomical concept. The essence of the study consists in identifying the philosophical foundations of klironomical methods, critically analysing the methodological limitations of heritage studies, and developing an integral system of methods for analysing the preservation of culture. It is demonstrated how the philosophical categories of value, canon, and historicity are consistently translated into analytical and applied research instruments for the study of cultural heritage. Particular attention is paid to the differences and interrelations between tangible and intangible heritage within the klironomical approach. The author concludes that klironomical methods constitute an independent methodological system that ensures both philosophical depth and applied applicability in the analysis of cultural heritage, and confirms the validity of klironomy as a methodological bridge between the philosophy of culture and the practices of preserving culture and art.

Keywords: klironomy, cultural heritage, heritage studies, cultural memory, historical continuity, tangible heritage, intangible heritage, methodology of cultural preservation, philosophy of culture.

Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, cultural heritage studies acquired a stable interdisciplinary character and came to occupy an important position at the intersection of the philosophy of culture, cultural anthropology, art history, museology, archival studies, cultural policy, and international law. However, despite the institutional maturity of this field, a fundamental methodological problem persists, associated with the gap between the philosophical understanding of culture and the applied practices of its preservation. In most contemporary studies, heritage is considered primarily as an object of management, protection, restoration, or legal regulation, while questions of value, selection criteria, historical continuity,

and the responsibility of the subject often remain either implicit or are fragmentarily borrowed from various philosophical traditions without their systematic integration.

The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that, under conditions of globalisation, the acceleration of historical time, the digitalisation of cultural memory, and the intensification of conflicts surrounding interpretations of the past, the limitations of purely institutional and technocratic approaches to cultural heritage preservation become increasingly evident. Contemporary practices of cultural protection more and more frequently encounter situations in which formally correct procedures fail to ensure the preservation of meaningful continuity, and cultural objects and practices lose their connection with living traditions, communities, and historical experience. This leads to phenomena such as museumification, the stylisation of the past, the ideologisation of the canon, and the reduction of heritage to a symbolic resource of cultural policy or tourism.

In this context, the need for a methodological transition from the description of individual preservation practices to the analysis of the philosophical and conceptual foundations that make the preservation of culture possible as a meaningful historical process acquires particular significance. It is precisely at this level that the demand arises for methods capable of linking the ontology of culture, the axiology of value, criteria of cultural selection, mechanisms of continuity, and forms of social legitimation within a single analytical framework. Without such a framework, cultural heritage studies remain fragmented and are unable to answer the question of why and on what grounds certain forms of culture are recognised as worthy of preservation.

The relevance of the klironomical approach is conditioned by the fact that it is oriented not towards individual heritage objects, but towards the analysis of the preservation of culture as a specific form of historical duration. Klironomy considers cultural heritage not as a set of monuments or practices, but as a process of selection, canonisation, interpretation, and transmission of meanings over time, embedded within the social, institutional, and symbolic structures of society. This makes it possible to overcome the methodological gap between the philosophy of culture and cultural heritage studies and to form a coherent analytical toolkit applicable both in theoretical research and in the applied sphere.

Consequently, the relevance of this study lies in the need to systematise klironomical methods as an independent methodological set capable of ensuring a transition from the philosophical reconstruction of the foundations of cultural preservation to their applied analysis in contemporary cultural heritage research. The development and description of such a set of methods constitute an important step towards renewing the methodology of cultural heritage studies and towards forming more reflexive and responsible practices of preserving culture and art.

The study problem is formed at the intersection of two interrelated, yet methodologically disconnected fields of inquiry—the philosophy of culture and applied cultural heritage studies. On the one hand, the philosophical tradition has long developed the categories of historicity, memory, value, tradition, and cultural continuity; but these developments most often remain at the level of theoretical reflection and are not transformed into operational research methods. On the other hand, cultural heritage studies possess a well-developed applied toolkit, but to a large extent rely on normative, institutional, and managerial models in which the philosophical foundations of cultural preservation are either not articulated or are replaced by procedural and legal criteria.

The core problem lies in the absence of an integral methodological system capable of linking the philosophical understanding of culture with the practices of its preservation. In existing studies, methods for analysing value, selection, and canonisation of cultural forms are

often borrowed fragmentarily from different disciplines—philosophy, sociology, anthropology, art history—without forming a unified analytical language. As a result, cultural heritage research becomes methodologically eclectic: the same phenomena are interpreted as historical sources, tourist resources, objects of identity, or elements of cultural policy, without clarifying the criteria on the basis of which such distinctions are made.

A significant aspect of the problem is also the gap between the description of cultural heritage and the analysis of the processes through which culture becomes heritage. In most applied studies, attention is focused on objects and practices that have already received institutional recognition, while the very mechanisms of selection, legitimation, and exclusion remain in the background. This leads to the naturalisation of the canon and to the perception of heritage as a “given” rather than as the result of historically conditioned decisions involving experts, institutions, communities, and state structures. The absence of methodological reflection on these processes hampers the critical analysis of memory conflicts, disputes over authenticity, and tensions between universalist and local models of cultural preservation.

An additional dimension of the research problem is connected with the limited applicability of existing cultural heritage research methods to intangible and processual forms of culture. Language, customs, rituals, forms of collective memory, and practices of everyday life are difficult to analyse within frameworks oriented towards the fixation, cataloguing, and protection of objects. As a result, there remains a risk of reducing living forms of cultural continuity to museum or archival representations, which contradicts the very logic of preserving culture as historical duration.

Under these conditions, there emerges a need for a methodological rethinking of the research tools used to analyse cultural heritage. The problem addressed in this study consists in identifying and systematising such methods that would, first, preserve the philosophical depth of cultural analysis; second, ensure the operability and applicability of methods in applied research; and third, make visible the normative and value-based foundations underlying preservation practices. It is precisely this task that determines the turn to klironomical methods as a possible solution to the identified methodological contradictions.

The scientific novelty of the study is determined both by the chosen research perspective and by the manner in which the methodology for studying cultural heritage is conceptualised. In contrast to existing works in the field of heritage studies, which are predominantly oriented towards the description of institutional practices, regulatory regimes, or individual cases of preservation, the study for the first time proposes a systematic consideration of klironomical methods as an autonomous and coherent methodological set. Such an approach makes it possible to move beyond the fragmentary borrowing of philosophical categories and to present the preservation of culture as a distinct analytical dimension of the humanities.

A fundamentally new aspect of the study is the shift from the analysis of individual philosophical concepts of cultural preservation to their methodological operationalisation. In this study, klironomy is considered not only as a theoretical framework within the philosophy of culture, but also as a set of methods applicable to the analysis of real processes of institutionalisation, legitimation, and transmission of cultural meanings. This makes it possible to connect the philosophical reconstruction of the foundations of cultural continuity with the applied analysis of practices of cultural heritage preservation, something that has not previously been undertaken in a systematic form.

The novelty of the study also lies in the development of a typology of klironomical methods encompassing philosophical, analytical, and applied levels of cultural heritage research. For the first time, a structured distinction is proposed between methods aimed at identifying the

ontological and axiological foundations of cultural preservation and methods oriented towards the diagnosis, evaluation, and design of processes of cultural continuity. Such a distinction makes it possible to overcome the methodological indeterminacy characteristic of many interdisciplinary studies and to establish a clear logic for the application of klironomical methods depending on the study task.

An additional aspect of scientific novelty is the inclusion of klironomical methods in the discussion on the contemporary development of heritage studies. The study demonstrates that the klironomical approach does not oppose existing directions in heritage research, but rather offers their methodological deepening through the explicit articulation of the value-based, normative, and historical foundations of cultural preservation. In this way, the study contributes to forming a more reflexive and conceptually grounded methodology for the study of cultural heritage, capable of considering both the philosophical and applied dimensions of the preservation of culture and art.

Within the framework of the study, the subject of the study is constituted by klironomical methods of studying cultural heritage, considered as a set of philosophical, analytical, and applied instruments aimed at identifying the foundations, mechanisms, and forms of preservation of culture and art. These methods are analysed not in isolation, but in their interrelation and functional unity, forming an integral methodological system of klironomy.

The object of the study comprises the processes of philosophical reflection, institutionalisation, and practical preservation of cultural heritage, including the formation of value foundations, criteria of cultural selection, the canon, mechanisms of continuity, and subjects of responsibility. The object of the research encompasses both theoretical models of cultural preservation and real practices of heritage studies in which these models find applied expression.

The study aims to systematise klironomical methods for the study of cultural heritage and to substantiate their applicability for the transition from the philosophical reconstruction of the foundations of cultural preservation to the applied analysis of contemporary heritage studies practices.

To achieve the stated purpose, the study envisages the solution of the following study objectives:

- identify the philosophical foundations of klironomical methods in the context of studies of cultural memory and historical continuity;
- analyse the methodological limitations of heritage studies with regard to tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- systematise klironomical research methods and present them as an integral methodological system;
- distinguish between philosophical, analytical, and applied klironomical methods;
- demonstrate the specificity of applying klironomical methods to tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- substantiate klironomy as a methodological transition from philosophical reconstruction to the applied analysis of cultural heritage.

The formulated aim and objectives define the logical structure of the study and determine the sequence of analysis of klironomical methods as an instrument of philosophical and applied interpretation of cultural heritage.

The results of the study are addressed to a wide range of specialists whose professional activity is connected with the analysis, interpretation, and preservation of cultural heritage at

both theoretical and applied levels. First and foremost, the work is oriented towards researchers in philosophy of culture, philosophy of history, and humanities methodology, for whom the systematisation of klironomical methods may serve as a basis for the further development of theoretical models of cultural continuity and the preservation of culture and art.

An important target audience of the study consists of specialists in heritage studies, museology, archival studies, cultural anthropology, and art history who are interested in the methodological deepening of applied cultural heritage research. The proposed system of klironomical methods may be used for the critical analysis of existing practices of heritage protection and management, as well as for the development of more reflexive research strategies that consider the value-based and historical foundations of cultural preservation.

The results of the study are also intended for experts and practitioners involved in the formulation of cultural policy, the management of cultural heritage objects, and the development of programmes for the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage at national and international levels. Klironomical tools may be applied in the preparation of expert assessments, the evaluation of the cultural significance of objects and practices, and the design of institutional and educational mechanisms of cultural continuity.

In addition, the materials of the study may be of interest to teachers and students in the humanities, including philosophy, cultural studies, history, museum studies, and related disciplines. In an educational context, the developed methodological framework may be used to form a holistic understanding of cultural preservation as a philosophically grounded and socially responsible process that goes beyond narrowly applied procedures of heritage protection.

Methods

The methodological foundation of the study is formed by general scientific methods of cognition, which ensure the integrity of the analysis and make it possible to systematise heterogeneous philosophical and applied material related to the study of cultural heritage.

The method of analysis is applied for the step-by-step examination of various approaches to the study of cultural heritage presented in the philosophy of culture, heritage studies, cultural anthropology, and normative documents in the field of heritage protection. Within the framework of this study, analysis makes it possible to decompose the complex phenomenon of cultural preservation into individual components—value foundations, selection criteria, mechanisms of continuity, institutional forms, and subjects of responsibility—in order to identify their functional roles in the processes of cultural inheritance.

The method of synthesis is used to integrate the results of analysis into a coherent methodological model of klironomical research on cultural heritage. Through synthesis, individual elements of philosophical and applied knowledge are brought together into a system of klironomical methods, which makes it possible to demonstrate the internal interconnection between the theoretical foundations of cultural preservation and the practices of heritage studies. In the study, synthesis serves as a tool for moving from fragmented approaches to an integrated klironomical framework.

The systemic approach is applied to consider cultural heritage as a complex, multi-level system that includes symbolic, social, institutional, and temporal dimensions. Within the framework of this study, the systemic approach makes it possible to analyse cultural preservation not as a set of isolated measures, but as a process in which philosophical ideas, normative frameworks, and applied practices form an interconnected structure of cultural continuity.

The method of classification is used to organise klironomical research methods and to distinguish them according to functional levels—philosophical, analytical, and applied. In the course of the study, classification makes it possible to identify groups of methods oriented towards the reconstruction of the foundations of cultural preservation, as well as methods aimed at the diagnosis, evaluation, and design of processes of cultural inheritance.

The method of typologisation is applied to identify stable types of methodological approaches to the preservation of cultural heritage and to compare klironomical methods with existing directions in heritage studies. In the study, typologisation is used in the formation of a comprehensive picture of methodological strategies, making it possible to demonstrate the specificity of the klironomical approach and its place within contemporary humanities scholarship.

The application of these general scientific methods ensures the logical consistency of the research and creates a foundation for subsequent recourse to philosophical and specialised klironomical methods of cultural heritage analysis.

Alongside general scientific methods, the study employs philosophical methods that ensure conceptual depth of analysis and make it possible to consider cultural heritage not only as an object of empirical description, but also as a phenomenon possessing ontological, axiological, and historical foundations.

The historical-philosophical method is applied to analyse the evolution of ideas concerning the preservation of culture and art in various philosophical traditions. In the course of this study, this method is used to identify the conceptual foundations upon which ideas of cultural continuity, canon, value, and responsibility for the past were formed, as well as to demonstrate how these ideas were subsequently reflected in contemporary approaches to the study of cultural heritage. Historical-philosophical analysis makes it possible to connect klironomical methods with their theoretical origins and to avoid reducing them to purely applied instruments.

Categorical analysis is used to clarify and systematise the key concepts underlying the klironomical approach, such as “culture”, “heritage”, “value”, “canon”, “continuity”, “memory”, and “responsibility”. Within the framework of the study, this method makes it possible to identify semantic distinctions and normative dimensions of these categories in different theoretical contexts and thus to create a conceptual foundation for constructing a klironomical methodology for heritage studies.

The hermeneutic method is applied to the interpretation of philosophical texts, cultural practices, and discourses related to the preservation of culture. In this study, hermeneutics is used to reveal meanings that are not always explicitly articulated in normative documents or applied heritage studies, but which nonetheless shape ways of understanding the past, cultural identity, and historical continuity. This makes it possible to identify the implicit value assumptions underlying heritage preservation practices.

The phenomenological approach is used to analyse cultural heritage as an experienced and interpreted phenomenon, rather than solely as an institutionally fixed object. In the course of the study, this approach makes it possible to consider the experiences of communities and individuals for whom cultural heritage constitutes part of the lifeworld, thereby complementing institutional models of cultural preservation with an analysis of the subjective and intersubjective dimensions of cultural memory.

The combined application of philosophical methods ensures the methodological coherence of the research and creates a theoretical basis for transiting specialised klironomical methods of analysis, oriented towards the study of cultural heritage preservation processes in their philosophical and applied dimensions.

A key place in the methodological structure of the study is occupied by specialised klironomical methods aimed at analysing the preservation of culture as a specific form of historical continuity. Unlike general scientific and philosophical methods, these methods are developed within klironomy itself and are directed towards identifying, systematising, and interpreting the mechanisms through which culture is transformed into heritage.

Klironomical reconstruction is used to identify the implicit foundations of the preservation of culture and art within philosophical theories, cultural practices, and institutional models that do not contain explicit reflection on heritage. In the course of this study, this method is applied to reconstruct the philosophical premises of value, canon, and continuity underlying contemporary approaches to heritage studies, which makes it possible to trace their genesis and conceptual limitations.

Matrix-based klironomical analysis is applied as a basic analytical tool for the systematisation of research material. The essence of this method lies in examining cultural heritage through a set of interrelated dimensions—ontological, axiological, normative, temporal, and socio-legitimational. Within the framework of the study, this method is used to compare different approaches to heritage research and to identify which elements of the klironomical matrix are articulated and which are ignored in specific methodological models.

Comparative klironomical analysis is aimed at comparing different philosophical and applied scenarios of cultural preservation. In this study, this method is used to compare the klironomical approach with dominant methodologies in heritage studies, as well as to identify differences between institutional, normative, and philosophical models of cultural heritage preservation across different scholarly traditions.

Klironomical matrix modelling is applied to construct integrated analytical models of cultural preservation that combine philosophical foundations with applied mechanisms. Within this study, this method is used to provide a synthetic representation of the system of klironomical methods and to demonstrate the logic of the transition from philosophical reconstruction to applied analysis of cultural heritage preservation processes.

Klironomical diagnostics is used to identify vulnerable areas and breaks in cultural continuity within existing heritage preservation practices. In this study, this method is applied at the theoretical level—to analyse the methodological limitations of cultural heritage research (heritage studies) and to identify those aspects of cultural continuity that remain outside its field of attention.

Klironomical expertise and prioritisation are aimed at substantiating criteria for the selection of cultural objects and practices subject to preservation. Within the study, this method is used for the critical analysis of normative and institutional mechanisms of heritage selection and to demonstrate the necessity of philosophically grounded criteria of cultural significance.

Klironomical design is applied to analyse and construct institutional and social mechanisms of cultural preservation. In the course of the study, this method is used for the conceptual comprehension of how klironomical principles may be integrated into heritage studies, cultural policy, and heritage management practices.

The combined application of specialised klironomical methods makes it possible not only to systematise existing approaches to the study of cultural heritage, but also to substantiate klironomy as a methodological bridge between the philosophical comprehension of culture and the applied analysis of its preservation processes.

Literature Review

The formation of heritage studies as an interdisciplinary field is associated with the institutionalisation of cultural heritage protection and with the expansion of international normative regimes in the second half of the 20th and the early 21st centuries. Already at the level of foundational documents, it is evident that the field has developed around the tasks of identifying, preserving, managing, and publicly legitimising heritage: from the classical principles of conservation and restoration articulated in the Venice Charter to subsequent discussions of authenticity and cultural significance (*International Charter...*, 1964/1965; *The Nara Document on Authenticity*, 1994). Subsequently, the institutional framework expanded significantly through the recognition of intangible heritage and the development of procedures for its inventorying, representation, and transmission (*Convention...*, 2003; *Operational Directives...*, n.d.). As a result, heritage studies have become established as a field in which a normative vocabulary—“authenticity”, “integrity”, “value”, “significance”, “protection”, “management”—functions as a central methodological resource of research.

However, it is precisely the normative “proceduralism” of the field that generates one of its key methodological effects: research approaches are often constructed around already recognised heritage objects and practices, that is, around what has already passed through the institutional filter of selection. On the one hand, this renders the field practically oriented and applicable to cultural policy. On the other hand, such an orientation contributes to the naturalisation of heritage as a “ready-made” cultural fact and reduces attention to the processes through which culture is transformed into heritage: the mechanisms of selection, exclusion, canonisation, and legitimation (*Smith*, 2006; *Harrison*, 2012). In other words, heritage is fixed as the result of management and protection, while its genesis and philosophical foundations often become secondary to administrative procedures.

The critical turn in heritage studies was precisely associated with attempts to expose this apparent neutrality of heritage and to demonstrate its constructed character. In the works of L. Smith, heritage is interpreted not as a thing, but as a social practice within which power relations and normative representations of the past are reproduced; it is here that the key concept of “authorised heritage discourse” emerges, defining legitimate ways of speaking about culture and thereby shaping the canon (*Smith*, 2006). R. Harrison develops this line of inquiry by showing that “heritage” functions as a critical category for analysing contemporary regimes of knowledge and identity, in which the selection of cultural forms is inseparable from political decisions and institutional infrastructures (*Harrison*, 2012). Collective research presented in handbooks on contemporary heritage studies further emphasises the plurality of methodologies—from discourse analysis and anthropology to critiques of cultural policy—while simultaneously demonstrating that the field often advances “from below” through the accumulation of case studies and thematic strands rather than through a unified theoretical system (*Waterton & Watson*, 2015).

At the same time, the critical tradition, while expanding the horizons of heritage studies, retains several persistent limitations. The first is the dominance of analyses of discourses and practices over the philosophical reflection on the foundations of preservation. Researchers may convincingly demonstrate how institutions and experts “produce” heritage, yet the question of why the preservation of culture possesses normative force at all—what grounds the value of cultural duration, and how memory, historicity, and responsibility towards the future are interconnected—often remains either bracketed or addressed only fragmentarily through borrowings from theories of memory and identity (*Halbwachs*, 1950; *Nora*, 1984; *Ricoeur*, 2000). In this sense, critical heritage studies frequently diagnose the problem of “power over the past”

but do not always provide a systematic instrument for analysing the philosophical legitimation of cultural preservation as a historical task.

The second limitation is connected with methodological fragmentation. Heritage studies are inherently interdisciplinary, yet interdisciplinarity often takes the form of a “mosaic” of methods: legal analysis in intangible heritage (*Lixinski, 2013*), politico-institutional critique of international regimes (*Meskeell, 2018*), anthropological studies of cultural practices (*Prats, 1997*), and analyses of conflicts and competing narratives (*Silverman, 2011; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996*). While such plurality is productive, it complicates the creation of a unified explanatory language: identical phenomena are described through incommensurable categorical frameworks (identity, resource, law, tourism, memory politics), and transitions between them often remain methodologically unarticulated (*King, 2024; Waterton & Watson, 2015*). As a result, heritage research frequently turns into a set of parallel “modes of description” that are difficult to integrate into a coherent theory of cultural preservation.

The third limitation concerns the asymmetry between object-oriented and process-oriented analyses of heritage. Normative documents underlying heritage protection practices presuppose the fixation and formalisation of an object: a monument, a site, a practice, or an element of intangible heritage. Even in the case of intangible heritage, institutional logic requires description, inventorying, and reporting, which creates the risk of the “objectification” of living traditions and their transfer into a regime of representation (*Convention..., 2003; Operational Directives..., n.d.*). Heritage critics note that such a logic may generate the illusion of preservation while simultaneously entailing the loss of cultural context and semantic dynamism: tradition is “preserved” as a list of characteristics or as an “object of display”, yet ceases to function as a practice of transmission (*Smith & Akagawa, 2009*). Consequently, the methodology of heritage studies proves strong in procedures of recognition and accounting, but less effective in describing cultural continuity as a long-term, changing, and conflictual process.

The fourth limitation becomes evident in situations of dissonant and contested heritage. Research demonstrates that heritage often functions as a resource of conflict: different groups compete for interpretations of the past, for the recognition of “their” objects, and for the exclusion of “alien” symbols (*Silverman, 2011; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996*). Under such conditions, normative criteria of significance and authenticity prove insufficient: the conflict does not revolve around the “fact” of value, but around who has the right, and on what grounds, to define the meaning and status of a cultural object. L. Meskeell shows that international heritage regimes may reproduce political asymmetries and institutional interests while masking them with rhetoric of universalism and peace (*Meskeell, 2018*). This exposes a methodological problem: descriptions of conflict and managerial solutions do not substitute for philosophical analysis of responsibility, legitimation, and the limits of canonisation.

The fifth limitation is associated with national heritage regimes and identity politics. Studies of antiquity, archaeology, and national imagination demonstrate that heritage preservation is closely linked to the project of the nation: the selection and interpretation of the past contribute to the legitimation of collective identity (*Hamilakis, 2007*). Similarly, in the Asian context, heritage management policies and cultural diplomacy show that heritage becomes an instrument of national interests and external representation (*Akagawa, 2014; Pai, 2013/2014*). These works are methodologically important, as they reveal the structural duality of heritage: it claims universal value, yet operates within national and geopolitical strategies. Nevertheless, here too there is often a lack of an instrument capable of connecting empirical descriptions of heritage policy with a philosophical analysis of criteria of cultural value and historical duration.

Sixth limitation is the insufficient integration of the philosophy of time and historicity into the methodological core of cultural heritage studies. Although memory studies have become an important intellectual foundation of the field, they are not always translated into a systematic methodology of cultural preservation. The concept of “sites of memory” emphasises that memory is institutionalised and materialised in symbolic forms, yet it does not in itself establish criteria for what exactly should be preserved and why (*Nora, 1984*). The theory of collective memory demonstrates the social nature of remembrance; however, it leaves open the question of normative responsibility and the long-term prospects of culture over time (*Halbwachs, 1950*). Ricoeur’s triad “memory—history—forgetting” brings the problem into the realm of ethics and interpretation, but in applied heritage research these philosophical distinctions are often reduced to the rhetoric of “preserving memory” without analytical elaboration (*Ricoeur, 2000*). The Assmannian tradition of cultural memory places emphasis on institutional forms that secure cultural duration, yet within cultural heritage studies it is likewise frequently employed as a theoretical background rather than as the foundation of a methodological system (*Assmann, J., 1992; Assmann, A., 2003; Macdonald, 2013*).

Finally, it should be noted that the field of cultural heritage studies increasingly recognises the need for methodological reflection and systematisation. A telling development is the turn towards explicit discussion of methods and methodologies as an independent subject of inquiry: contemporary syntheses seek to clarify which methods are employed, what their epistemological foundations are, and how they relate to normative and critical frameworks (*King, 2024*). Nevertheless, even with this shift, the problem of a conceptual “bridge” between the philosophical level of understanding cultural preservation and the applied level of analysing heritage practices remains unresolved. In particular, practical heritage protection regimes rely on documents such as the Venice Charter, the Nara Document, and the Burra Charter, yet the interpretation of their categories (authenticity, significance, cultural value) often remains procedural and does not disclose the philosophical premises of cultural responsibility (*International Charter..., 1964/1965; The Burra Charter..., 2013; The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994*). Similarly, the Faro Convention translates the issue of heritage into the domain of social value and participation, but methodologically it does not replace philosophical analysis of value criteria and the boundaries of canonisation (*Framework Convention..., 2005; Convenzione di Faro, 2005*).

Consequently, the methodology of cultural heritage studies demonstrates a high level of institutional and applied maturity, yet it faces fundamental limitations: (1) a normative–procedural reduction of the philosophical foundations of cultural preservation; (2) fragmentation and eclecticism of methodological tools; (3) the dominance of object-centred logic over the analysis of processes through which culture becomes heritage; (4) the insufficiency of methods for analysing conflicts, exclusions, and dissonant heritages; (5) weak integration of the philosophy of historicity, duration, and responsibility into the operational apparatus of research. It is precisely the identification of these limitations that provides the basis for turning to klironomy as a methodological system oriented towards analysing cultural preservation as a form of historical continuity and as a normatively articulated social process (*Buychik, 2019; Buychik, 2024*).

The philosophical foundations of cultural heritage research are formed at the intersection of the philosophy of culture, the philosophy of history, theories of memory, and the ethics of historical responsibility. Unlike applied and normative approaches within cultural heritage studies, the philosophical tradition does not initially address procedures of protection or management, but rather the question of why culture should be preserved, how the past

continues to act in the present, and what forms of responsibility arise in relation to cultural duration. It is at this level that the conceptual premises are established without which the methodology of heritage studies lacks normative depth.

One of the fundamental philosophical currents that has influenced the understanding of cultural heritage is the theory of collective and cultural memory. In the classical work of M. Halbwachs, memory is considered a socially mediated phenomenon formed within group structures and symbolic systems, rather than an individual psychological property (*Halbwachs, 1950*). This approach is fundamentally important for heritage research, as it demonstrates that the preservation of the past is not a neutral reproduction of facts, but is always linked to social frameworks of interpretation. However, the theory of collective memory in itself does not provide an answer to the question of normative criteria of preservation: it explains how society remembers, but not why certain forms of the past should be preserved.

The further development of the philosophy of memory is associated with the works of J. Assmann, in which a distinction is introduced between communicative and cultural memory. Cultural memory is understood as an institutionalised form of duration that ensures the transmission of meanings beyond the living memory of generations (*Assmann, J., 1992*). This distinction has direct methodological significance for heritage studies, as it allows museums, archives, canons, and rituals to be analysed as mechanisms for fixing cultural duration. At the same time, Assmann emphasises the normative character of cultural memory: it always presupposes selection, stabilisation, and symbolic codification of the past. A similar line is developed by A. Assmann, who analyses “spaces of memory” as forms of institutional and symbolic consolidation of historical experience (*Assmann, A., 2003*). In the context of cultural heritage studies, these concepts are often used as a theoretical background; but their philosophical potential is far from always translated into a methodology for analysing processes of canonisation and exclusion.

A significant contribution to the philosophical understanding of heritage is made by the concept of *lieux de mémoire* proposed by P. Nora. Nora demonstrates that sites of memory emerge under conditions of the loss of living tradition and represent an attempt to compensate for the rupture between past and present through symbolic and institutional forms (*Nora, 1984*). For the methodology of heritage research, this means that the preservation of culture is not a natural continuation of tradition, but is instead associated with a crisis of historical continuity. At the same time, the concept of sites of memory identifies a symptom but does not offer a universal criterion for assessing the cultural significance of preserved forms, which limits its applicability as an independent methodological foundation.

A more developed philosophical perspective is offered by P. Ricoeur, who examines the relationship between memory, history, and forgetting as an ethical and hermeneutic problem. In his interpretation, the preservation of the past is linked to responsibility for interpretation, recognition of the plurality of narratives, and awareness of the inevitability of forgetting as a structural element of historical experience (*Ricoeur, 2000*). For cultural heritage research, this implies the necessity of moving beyond the simplistic logic of “preservation at any cost” and of addressing questions concerning the limits of canonisation, the admissibility of exclusions, and responsibility for interpretative decisions. However, in applied heritage research, Ricoeur’s problematic is more often used declaratively and rarely becomes the basis for operational methodological procedures.

The philosophy of culture also offers important foundations for analysing heritage through the category of value. In her *Allegory of Heritage*, F. Choay (*1992*) shows that the modern concept of heritage is the result of historical development and reflects a transformation in society’s

attitude to the past—from utilitarian and symbolic use to aesthetic and historical reflection. This analysis demonstrates that the very concept of heritage is neither universal nor immutable and therefore requires philosophical reconstruction in each specific historical context. For the methodology of heritage studies, this conclusion implies the need for continuous revision of the categories and criteria of cultural significance in use.

The philosophical and political dimension of cultural preservation is vividly manifested in the works of S. Settis, devoted to the critique of the commercialisation and instrumentalisation of cultural heritage. He shows that under conditions of market logic and political pressure, heritage is increasingly treated as a resource rather than as a form of historical responsibility, which leads to the erosion of its cultural meaning (*Settis, 2002*). These ideas complement critical approaches within heritage studies, while at the same time making more explicit the philosophical problem of the conflict between economic, political, and culturally normative foundations of preservation.

The philosophical foundations of cultural heritage research are also reflected, albeit indirectly, in normative documents. The Faro Convention of the Council of Europe introduces the concept of the value of heritage for society and emphasises the role of communities and citizens in preservation processes (*Convenzione di Faro, 2005; Framework Convention..., 2005*). Despite the applied nature of the document, it implicitly contains the philosophical idea of responsibility and participation as the basis of cultural continuity. Similarly, debates on authenticity in the Nara Document reflect a philosophical shift from universalist criteria towards cultural-historical pluralism (*The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994*). However, these philosophical implications rarely become the subject of systematic methodological analysis within cultural heritage research (heritage studies).

Consequently, the philosophical foundations of cultural heritage research form a complex and multilayered theoretical field that includes theories of memory, philosophy of history, axiology of culture, and ethics of responsibility. These approaches make it possible to conceptualise cultural preservation as a normatively and historically charged process associated with the selection, interpretation, and transmission of meanings over time. At the same time, within heritage studies, philosophical concepts are more often used fragmentarily and do not coalesce into an integrated methodological system. It is precisely this gap between philosophical depth and applied operability that creates the preconditions for turning to the klironomical approach, which seeks to integrate the philosophical foundations of cultural preservation into a systematic analytical toolkit for the study of cultural heritage (*Buychik, 2019; Buychik, 2024*).

The formation of the klironomical approach is associated with an attempt to overcome the identified methodological limitations in cultural heritage research (heritage studies) by integrating the philosophical foundations of cultural preservation into a coherent research system. Unlike the dominant directions of heritage studies, klironomy is not initially oriented towards the description of individual objects or practices, but towards the analysis of cultural preservation as a specific form of historical duration that includes processes of selection, canonisation, interpretation, and the transmission of meanings over time (*Buychik, 2019*).

The methodological specificity of klironomy lies in a shift of the research focus from the institutional outcome of preservation to the very process of the transformation of culture into heritage. Whereas in heritage studies heritage is most often considered as a set of recognised objects and practices, the klironomical approach interprets it as a dynamic structure formed as a result of historically conditioned decisions, value preferences, and normative attitudes. In this respect, klironomy is conceptually close to philosophical theories of cultural memory, but seeks

to translate them into an operational methodological language applicable to the analysis of real practices of cultural preservation (*Assmann, J., 1992; Assmann, A., 2003*).

An important stage in the formation of the klironomical approach was the recognition of the limitations of both normative and critical models of cultural heritage research (heritage studies). Normative documents such as the Venice Charter, the Nara Document on Authenticity, and the Burra Charter establish procedures and principles for heritage protection, but do not address the question of the philosophical foundations of cultural value and historical responsibility (*International Charter..., 1964/1965; The Burra Charter..., 2013; The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994*). Critical directions in heritage studies, by contrast, reveal the social and political conditioning of heritage, but often remain limited to the analysis of discourses and power relations, without offering a systematised methodology for analysing cultural continuity as a long-term process (*Smith, 2006; Harrison, 2012*).

Klironomy is formed as a response to this methodological divergence. It proceeds from the premise that the preservation of culture cannot be reduced either to procedures of protection or to critiques of institutional discourses, since at its core it constitutes a normatively meaningful historical process. In this context, the klironomical approach integrates the philosophy of memory, the philosophy of history, and the axiology of culture into a unified analytical framework that makes it possible to consider heritage both as a result and as a process of cultural continuity (*Nora, 1984; Ricoeur, 2000*).

A key feature of the klironomical approach is the development of the klironomical matrix as a tool for the systematic analysis of cultural preservation. This matrix includes interrelated dimensions: ontological (the status of culture and art), axiological (value and significance), normative (criteria of selection and canon), temporal (historicity and duration), and social-legitimational (subjects and forms of responsibility). Unlike the eclectic set of methods characteristic of cultural heritage research (heritage studies), the klironomical matrix establishes a structured research logic, making it possible to correlate philosophical foundations with applied practices of cultural heritage preservation (*Buychik, 2024*).

The formation of the klironomical approach is also associated with the expansion of the analytical field beyond material heritage. Studies on intangible heritage emphasise that cultural practices, rituals, and forms of collective memory cannot be adequately understood within object-oriented models (*Lixinski, 2013; Smith & Akagawa, 2009*). Klironomy takes this conclusion into account by conceptualising intangible heritage as a processual form of cultural continuity that requires analysis of mechanisms of transmission, interpretation, and adaptation, rather than mere documentation and representation.

At the international level, ideas close to the klironomical approach are reflected in normative documents oriented towards community participation and the recognition of the social value of heritage. In particular, the Faro Convention emphasises the importance of cultural heritage for society and introduces the concept of collective responsibility for its preservation (*Convenzione di Faro, 2005; Framework Convention..., 2005*). Klironomy, however, takes a further step by proposing methodological tools for analysing how this responsibility is formed, distributed, and implemented within specific cultural and institutional contexts.

An important contribution of the klironomical approach lies in its ability to connect philosophical and applied levels of analysis. Unlike purely theoretical models in the philosophy of culture and practice-oriented studies of cultural heritage (heritage studies), klironomy offers a system of methods applicable both to the reconstruction of the philosophical foundations of cultural preservation and to the analysis of contemporary practices of cultural policy, museum activity, and heritage management. In this sense, the klironomical approach functions as a

methodological “bridge” between philosophical reflection and applied research on cultural heritage (Byychik, 2019; Byychik, 2024).

Consequently, the formation of the klironomical approach reflects an aspiration to overcome the methodological fragmentation of cultural heritage research and to create a holistic system for analysing the preservation of culture and art. By integrating philosophical foundations of memory, value, and historicity with the applied objectives of cultural heritage research (heritage studies), klironomy establishes an independent methodological perspective oriented towards understanding cultural heritage as a process of historical continuity that requires a normatively and philosophically grounded approach.

The literature review conducted shows that contemporary cultural heritage research constitutes a well-developed, institutionally established, and interdisciplinary field with an extensive applied and normative toolkit. Normative documents produced by international organisations, as well as methodological developments within heritage studies, have created a stable foundation for the identification, protection, and management of cultural heritage. At the same time, the analysis of scholarly sources reveals a number of systemic limitations related to the methodological structure of this field.

First, the literature in heritage studies demonstrates the dominance of a procedural-normative approach to cultural preservation. Despite the development of critical strands and the expansion of the research field, the preservation of cultural heritage is most often conceptualised through the prism of management, expertise, and institutional legitimation of already recognised objects and practices. This leads to insufficient reflection on processes of selection, canonisation, and exclusion of cultural forms, as well as on the philosophical foundations of cultural value and historical responsibility.

Second, philosophical concepts of memory, historicity, and cultural duration, developed within the philosophy of culture and the philosophy of history, exert a significant influence on the theoretical background of heritage research but are rarely translated into operational methodological models. Theories of collective and cultural memory, concepts of *lieux de mémoire*, and philosophical interpretations of time and forgetting are used fragmentarily, primarily as interpretative frameworks, which limits their potential for the systematic analysis of cultural preservation as a historical process.

Third, the literature review reveals methodological fragmentation within cultural heritage research. The diversity of disciplinary approaches—from anthropology and sociology to international law and cultural policy—contributes to the richness of empirical material, but simultaneously complicates the formation of a unified analytical language. As a result, different aspects of heritage are analysed in parallel, without clear correlation with shared categories of value, time, canon, and the subject of responsibility.

Fourth, the analysis of works devoted to intangible, contested, and dissonant heritage demonstrates the limitations of object-oriented models of cultural preservation. The cataloguing and institutional fixation of cultural practices often lead to a reduction of the processual character of cultural continuity, which contradicts the logic of preserving living traditions and forms of collective memory. These limitations are particularly evident in contexts of cultural conflict and competing interpretations of the past.

Fifth, consideration of forming the klironomical approach in the literature allows the conclusion that it has significant potential as a methodological alternative and complement to existing strands of heritage studies. Klironomy proposes a holistic analytical framework oriented towards the study of cultural preservation as a normatively conceptualised process of historical duration. The integration of philosophical foundations of memory, axiology, and historicity with

applied tasks of cultural heritage analysis makes it possible to overcome the identified methodological gaps and to develop a systematic research toolkit.

Thus, the results of the literature review confirm the necessity of further developing klironomical methods as an independent methodological set. The identified limitations of existing approaches substantiate the transition to an analysis of philosophical and applied klironomical methods in the subsequent sections of the article and establish the conceptual foundations for interpreting the research findings.

Results

Systematisation of Klironomical Methods for the Study of Cultural Heritage

The formation of an integrated system of klironomical methods for the study of cultural heritage constitutes one of the key results of the present research. In contrast to existing approaches in heritage studies, where analytical methods are presented in a fragmented manner and dispersed across different disciplinary traditions, the klironomical approach makes it possible to assemble disparate research tools into a unified methodological configuration oriented towards the analysis of cultural preservation as a form of historical continuity. Within the framework of this study, 25 klironomical methods (*Table 1*) have been systematically identified for the first time, encompassing the philosophical, analytical, and applied levels of cultural heritage research.

This system of methods is formed on the basis of a fundamental distinction between heritage as an object of protection and heritage as a process of the transmission of meanings. This distinction makes it possible to avoid reducing klironomy to an applied technique of cultural resource management, while at the same time preventing its reduction to purely theoretical philosophical reflection. As a result, klironomical methods are structured as a hierarchically and functionally interconnected system in which philosophical methods establish the foundations of analysis, analytical methods ensure the structuring of material, and applied methods make it possible to proceed to the diagnosis, expert assessment, and design of cultural preservation processes.

A significant outcome of this systematisation is the inclusion within the set of klironomical methods of those oriented both towards material cultural heritage and those applicable to the analysis of intangible forms of culture. While material heritage presupposes work with objects, spaces, and artefacts, intangible heritage requires the analysis of practices, forms of memory, rituals, languages, and modes of transmitting experience. Within the klironomical system, these differences do not lead to a rupture in methodology; on the contrary, they emphasise the necessity of a multi-level analysis in which object-based and processual forms of culture are examined within a unified logic of historical duration.

The presentation of the complete set of klironomical methods also makes it possible to establish a distinction between methods aimed at identifying the foundations of cultural preservation and methods focused on the analysis of specific practices within heritage studies. Philosophical klironomical methods are oriented towards the reconstruction of value-based, normative, and temporal preconditions of preservation, whereas analytical and applied methods are directed towards the study of mechanisms of selection, legitimation, and institutionalisation of cultural heritage. Such a differentiation eliminates the methodological ambiguity characteristic of many interdisciplinary studies and establishes a clear logic for the application of klironomical methods depending on the research task.

Consequently, the systematisation of klironomical methods in the form of an integrated set makes it possible to consider klironomy not as a set of isolated analytical techniques, but as an autonomous methodological system. This result provides a foundation for the further differentiation of methods according to functional levels and for their consistent description in the context of analysing material and intangible cultural heritage.

The differentiation of klironomical methods by functional levels represents the next stage of systematisation and makes it possible to clarify the internal structure of the established methodological set. Within the framework of this research, klironomical methods are distributed into three interrelated, but not identical, groups: philosophical, analytical, and applied. This division is not hierarchically disciplinary in nature, but rather functional and methodological, and it reflects different levels of analysis of cultural heritage preservation processes.

Philosophical klironomical methods constitute the theoretical foundation of the entire system and are aimed at identifying the fundamental preconditions of cultural continuity. This group includes methods of klironomical reconstruction, categorical analysis, analysis of value, criteria of cultural selection, canon, historicity, and the subject of preservation. Their primary function is to clarify how culture is understood as meaningful and worthy of preservation, and which normative and temporal foundations underlie this recognition. These methods are applicable to both material and intangible heritage, as they operate at the level of meanings, values, and historical representations that precede any institutional fixation.

Analytical klironomical methods occupy an intermediate position between philosophical reflection and applied analysis. Their task consists in structuring research material and identifying relationships between different dimensions of cultural preservation. This group includes matrix klironomical analysis, comparative klironomical analysis, klironomical modelling, analysis of the multiplicity of klironomical scenarios, and analysis of publicity and legitimation. These methods make it possible to translate philosophical foundations into analytical schemes suitable for comparing different traditions, institutions, and practices of heritage preservation. In the context of material heritage, they are used to analyse ensembles, historical landscapes, and institutional protection regimes, whereas with regard to intangible heritage they are applied to the study of forms of transmission, representation, and public recognition of cultural practices.

Applied klironomical methods are oriented towards the analysis of specific situations of cultural heritage preservation and towards the development of practice-oriented solutions. These include klironomical diagnostics, expert assessment and prioritisation, analysis of risks and institutional threats, klironomical design, mapping of preservation actors, critique of representation and exclusion, as well as methods of digital klironomy. These methods make it possible to work with empirical data, normative regimes, and institutional structures, identifying vulnerable zones of cultural continuity and opportunities for its sustainable support. In the case of material heritage, applied methods are directed at objects, infrastructures, and legal protection regimes, whereas with regard to intangible heritage they focus on analysing the conditions for the reproduction of practices, community participation, and the preservation of transmission contexts.

Such a three-level differentiation of klironomical methods demonstrates that klironomy does not oppose theory and practice, but rather constructs a consistent methodological linkage between them. Philosophical methods establish the foundations and criteria, analytical methods ensure structuring and comparability, while applied methods make possible the transition to practical analysis and the design of processes for the preservation of cultural heritage. This

differentiation creates a methodological basis for the further consideration of klironomical methods in their philosophical and applied dimensions.

The correlation of klironomical methods with the main types of cultural heritage makes it possible to clarify their analytical potential and to demonstrate the universality of the klironomical approach. Within the framework of the present study, the distinction between tangible and intangible cultural heritage is considered not as a basis for separating methodologies, but as a difference in research emphases within a unified system of klironomical methods. This approach fundamentally distinguishes klironomy from object-oriented models of heritage studies, in which tangible and intangible heritage are often analysed separately and with the use of incommensurable methodological tools.

In the analysis of tangible cultural heritage, klironomical methods are oriented towards identifying the semantic and normative foundations underlying the preservation of objects, ensembles, and cultural landscapes. Philosophical methods are employed to reconstruct value-based conceptions of authenticity, historical significance, and the symbolic status of material forms of culture. Analytical methods make it possible to structure the relationships between objects, institutional regimes of protection, and public forms of legitimation. Applied klironomical methods, in turn, are used to diagnose vulnerabilities, to assess preservation priorities, and to design sustainable models of institutional support for tangible heritage.

With regard to intangible cultural heritage, klironomical methods shift the focus from the object to the process. Here, philosophical methods of analysing memory, continuity, responsibility, and historical duration acquire key importance, since intangible forms of culture exist primarily as practices of transmission and interpretation. Analytical klironomical methods are used to identify scenarios of the reproduction of traditions, forms of public recognition, and mechanisms of canonisation of intangible practices. Applied methods are directed towards analysing the conditions for preserving the context of transmission, community participation, and minimising the risks of reducing living cultural forms to museum or archival representations.

A significant result of such a correlation is the demonstration that klironomical methods are not rigidly bound to a specific type of heritage, but are adapted to the specificity of the cultural phenomenon under study. The same method, for example klironomical reconstruction or the analysis of criteria of cultural selection, can be applied both to material objects and to intangible practices; in this case, it is not the logic of the method that changes, but the level and character of the analytical focus. This ensures methodological continuity of analysis and makes it possible to consider tangible and intangible heritage as interconnected forms of cultural continuity.

Thus, the results of the systematisation of klironomical methods allow several generalising conclusions to be drawn:

- 1) klironomical methods form a holistic and internally coherent methodological system encompassing the philosophical, analytical, and applied levels of research into cultural heritage;
- 2) this system is applicable to both tangible and intangible heritage without loss of conceptual integrity;
- 3) the differentiation and correlation of methods by functional levels and types of heritage create a basis for a consistent transition from philosophical analysis of the foundations of cultural preservation to applied research into specific practices of heritage studies.

These conclusions establish a logical framework for the further consideration of philosophical and applied klironomical methods in the subsequent paragraphs.

Philosophical Klironomical Methods

Philosophical klironomical methods of reconstruction and categorical analysis are aimed at identifying those semantic and normative foundations that precede any applied practices of cultural heritage preservation. Within the framework of the present study, these methods are used to reconstruct implicit conceptions of the value of culture, the mechanisms of its transmission, and the conditions under which cultural forms are recognised as worthy of preservation. Unlike descriptive and normative approaches in heritage studies, philosophical klironomical reconstruction makes it possible to analyse not only institutional decisions, but also the philosophical presuppositions that render these decisions possible and legitimate.

Klironomical reconstruction is applied as a method for identifying historically changing models of attitudes towards culture and art. It allows one to trace how, in different philosophical and cultural-historical contexts, conceptions of memory, canon, authenticity, and continuity were formed, which underlie contemporary heritage preservation practices. In the course of the present research, this method is used to correlate contemporary categories of heritage studies with philosophical theories of cultural memory and historicity, which have demonstrated that the preservation of culture is always associated with normative choice and the symbolic stabilisation of the past (*Assmann, J., 1992; Assmann, A., 2003; Ricoeur, 2000*).

Categorical klironomical analysis constitutes the next stage of philosophical inquiry and is aimed at the systematic clarification of the basic concepts employed in the discourse of cultural heritage preservation. Within the study, such categories as value, criterion, canon, memory, continuity, authenticity, and responsibility are analysed. This method makes it possible to identify semantic divergences between philosophical interpretations of these categories and their procedural use in normative documents and applied heritage studies. For example, the concept of authenticity in a philosophical context is associated with historicity and interpretation, whereas in institutional practices it is often reduced to formal features of compliance (*The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994*).

Categorical analysis acquires particular significance when examining the differences between tangible and intangible cultural heritage. With regard to tangible objects, the categories of authenticity, integrity, and historical significance are most often interpreted through physical characteristics and spatial parameters. In the case of intangible heritage, the same categories acquire a processual character and are linked to conditions of transmission, performance context, and the participation of tradition bearers. Categorical klironomical analysis makes it possible to avoid a methodological rupture between these types of heritage by showing that the distinction is not ontological but analytical in nature and requires an appropriate adjustment of the research focus (*Smith & Akagawa, 2009*).

An important component of philosophical klironomical methods is the analysis of the canon as a specific form of cultural stabilisation. In the present study, the canon is considered not as a fixed list of cultural values, but as a dynamic mechanism of selection and legitimation that depends on historical context and institutional conditions. The klironomical analysis of the canon makes it possible to trace how certain cultural forms acquire the status of heritage, while others are displaced or marginalised. This approach correlates with critical heritage studies that point to the social and political conditionality of canonisation, while supplementing them with a philosophical analysis of the normative foundations of this process (*Harrison, 2012; Smith, 2006*).

The use of methods of reconstruction and categorical analysis within the framework of philosophical klironomy makes it possible to establish a connection between historical models of thinking about culture and contemporary practices of its preservation. These methods define the conceptual coordinates of the study, within which tangible and intangible cultural heritage are regarded as forms of historical duration that require meaningful normative and philosophical analysis.

Axiological and temporal klironomical methods are oriented towards identifying the value-based and temporal foundations of the preservation of culture and art and constitute the next level of philosophical analysis within the klironomical approach. Unlike reconstructive and categorical methods, which are primarily aimed at clarifying the conceptual apparatus, these methods make it possible to investigate how the recognition of cultural significance is formed and how the preservation of culture correlates with conceptions of time, historical duration, and responsibility towards future generations.

Klironomical axiological analysis is used to identify the foundations of cultural value and the principles of its recognition. Within the present study, this method is applied to compare different models of value present in the philosophy of culture, normative documents, and heritage studies practices. The analysis shows that the value of cultural heritage is not universal or self-evident, but is formed through processes of historical and social selection based on aesthetic, historical, identity-related, and symbolic criteria (*Choay, 1992; Lowenthal, 2015*). With regard to tangible heritage, axiological analysis makes it possible to reveal the tension between the aesthetic, historical, and utilitarian value of objects, whereas in the case of intangible heritage it reveals the dependence of value recognition on the viability of practices and their significance for the bearers of tradition (*Smith & Akagawa, 2009*).

Closely related to axiological analysis is the klironomical analysis of criteria of cultural selection, aimed at investigating the mechanisms through which distinctions are drawn between what is subject to preservation and what falls outside the heritage canon. Within the framework of the present study, this method is applied to the analysis of expert, institutional, and public criteria for the selection of cultural forms. With regard to tangible heritage, this is manifested in priorities of restoration, protection, and the inclusion of objects in registers, whereas with regard to intangible heritage it is reflected in procedures of recognition, inventorying, and the representation of cultural practices. The analysis demonstrates that criteria of selection are always normative in nature and reflect a particular philosophy of culture and history, even when they are presented in the form of formally technical procedures (*Convention..., 2003; Framework Convention..., 2005*).

The temporal dimension of klironomy is revealed through the klironomical analysis of historicity and time, aimed at examining the ways in which the past, present, and future are conceptualised within practices of cultural preservation. Within the study, this method is used to identify differences between retrospective models of preservation, oriented towards the fixation of a lost past, and processual models that presuppose the maintenance of cultural duration and the adaptation of traditions over time. At the philosophical level, this analysis is grounded in the distinction between memory as the actualisation of the past and history as interpretative reconstruction, as well as in the recognition of the inevitability of forgetting as a structural element of historical experience (*Nora, 1984; Ricoeur, 2000*).

The application of temporal klironomical methods makes it possible to reconsider the differences between tangible and intangible heritage. Tangible objects are most often incorporated into regimes of preservation oriented towards the stabilisation of form and the minimisation of change, whereas intangible heritage presupposes the continuity of

transformations and adaptations. Klironomical analysis of historicity makes it possible to avoid opposing these models, instead viewing them as different ways of sustaining cultural duration depending on the ontological status of heritage. This is particularly important in the context of critiques of the museum and archival reduction of intangible forms of culture, which may lead to the loss of their living temporal dimension (*Harrison, 2012; Macdonald, 2013*).

Consequently, axiological and temporal klironomical methods expand the philosophical foundation of research into cultural heritage, making it possible to link the analysis of value and criteria of selection with conceptions of time and historical responsibility. They prepare the transition to the consideration of the subject of preservation and the mechanisms of the implementation of cultural continuity, which becomes the object of the next analytical step within philosophical klironomy.

The analysis of the subject of preservation completes the examination of philosophical klironomical methods and makes it possible to connect the axiological and temporal foundations of cultural continuity with the question of responsibility for its maintenance. Within the klironomical approach, the subject of preservation is considered not as a pre-given institutional unit, but as a historically and normatively constituted position that includes various levels of participation—from experts and state structures to communities and individual bearers of cultural practices. Such an analysis fundamentally differs from administrative models of heritage studies in which the subject of preservation is often identified with a governing body or a professional community.

In the study, klironomical analysis of the subject of preservation is used to identify ways of distributing responsibility for cultural heritage. With regard to tangible heritage, the subject of preservation is traditionally institutionalised and linked to state and international protection structures, expert communities, and legal regimes. In the case of intangible heritage, subjectivity assumes a more distributed and processual character, since the preservation of practices is impossible without the participation of tradition bearers and local communities. The klironomical approach makes it possible to regard these differences not as a methodological obstacle, but as different forms of the realisation of cultural responsibility conditioned by the specificity of heritage (*Convention..., 2003; Smith & Akagawa, 2009*).

The concept of publicity acquires particular significance in the analysis of the subject of preservation. Klironomical analysis of publicity and legitimation is aimed at identifying the mechanisms through which cultural forms acquire public recognition and the status of heritage. Within the present study, this method is used to analyse the interaction between experts, institutions, and public actors in processes of cultural canonisation. Publicity is considered not as an external addition to heritage preservation, but as a structural condition of its sustainability, since without public recognition cultural continuity remains confined within the framework of narrowly specialised practices (*Macdonald, 2013*).

Klironomical analysis of the subject of preservation also makes it possible to identify tensions and asymmetries of responsibility that arise in conditions of contested and dissonant heritage. In such situations, different groups claim the right to interpret and preserve cultural forms, which renders impossible a universal solution based exclusively on expert criteria. The philosophical klironomical approach makes it possible to view these conflicts as manifestations of differences in historical experience and value orientations, which require not elimination, but meaningful inclusion in processes of cultural preservation (*Silverman, 2011; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996*).

Thus, concluding the analysis of philosophical klironomical methods, the following conclusions may be formulated:

- 1) philosophical klironomical methods constitute the conceptual foundation of the entire system of klironomical research and are aimed at revealing the semantic, axiological, and temporal preconditions for the preservation of culture and art;
- 2) these methods make it possible to overcome the reduction of heritage to an object of protection, considering it instead as a form of historical duration and a normatively meaningful process;
- 3) philosophical klironomical methods ensure analytical continuity between tangible and intangible cultural heritage, demonstrating that the distinction between them requires not a change of methodology, but an adjustment of the research focus.

These conclusions create a theoretical foundation for the transition to the consideration of analytical and applied klironomical methods aimed at the study of specific practices of cultural heritage preservation.

Analytical and Applied Klironomical Methods

Analytical klironomical methods constitute an intermediate level between the philosophical foundations of klironomy and its applied instruments and are intended for the structuring, comparison, and interpretation of empirical and normative material in the field of cultural heritage preservation. Their function consists in translating the philosophical categories of value, historicity, and responsibility into analytical models that make it possible to work with specific cultural situations without losing the conceptual integrity of the research.

A central position within this group is occupied by matrix-based klironomical analysis, which is applied for the systematic examination of cultural heritage through a set of interrelated dimensions. Within the framework of the study, this method is used for the simultaneous analysis of the ontological status of heritage, its axiological significance, mechanisms of canonisation, temporal logic, and forms of social legitimation. The matrix-based approach makes it possible to avoid a linear description of heritage and to reveal tensions between different levels of its preservation, which is particularly important when analysing complex cultural assemblages that include both material objects and intangible practices.

Comparative klironomical analysis is applied to the comparison of different cultural traditions, national models of preservation, and institutional heritage regimes. Unlike classical comparative analysis, which is oriented towards identifying similarities and differences, the klironomical approach emphasises differences in the foundations of cultural continuity and in value criteria. Within this study, this method is used to analyse the differences between object-oriented models of safeguarding material heritage and processual models of preserving intangible forms of culture, as reflected, in particular, in international normative documents and the practices of their implementation (*Convention...*, 2003; *Framework Convention...*, 2005).

Klironomical modelling is aimed at constructing analytical scenarios for cultural heritage preservation with due consideration of multiple factors and actors. This method is used to identify possible trajectories of the development of preservation processes depending on changes in the institutional environment, value priorities, and forms of community participation. With regard to material heritage, modelling makes it possible to analyse the consequences of different strategies of restoration, use, and museumification, whereas with regard to intangible heritage it allows for the assessment of the sustainability of transmission practices and the risks of their formalisation and reduction (*Harrison, 2012; Macdonald, 2013*).

The analysis of the plurality of klironomical scenarios complements modelling and is oriented towards rejecting a single normative solution in favour of recognising the pluralism of pathways for cultural preservation. Within the study, this method is used to demonstrate that

the preservation of cultural heritage cannot be reduced to a universal algorithm and is always dependent on a specific historical, social, and cultural context. This approach is particularly significant when working with contested and dissonant heritage, where different preservation scenarios reflect competing interpretations of the past and different forms of cultural identity (*Silverman, 2011; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996*).

A distinct place among analytical klironomical methods is occupied by the analysis of publicness and legitimation, which is aimed at investigating the modes of public recognition of cultural heritage. Within the framework of the study, this method is used to analyse how cultural forms move from a local or professional context into the sphere of public significance and how consensus or conflict is formed around their status. With regard to material heritage, this is manifested in public debates on the restoration and use of objects, whereas with regard to intangible heritage it is reflected in issues of representation, community participation, and the institutional recognition of practices (*Smith, 2006; Waterton & Watson, 2015*).

Consequently, analytical klironomical methods provide a methodological linkage between philosophical reflection and applied analysis, making it possible to structure complex processes of cultural heritage preservation and to consider the specificities of both material and intangible forms of culture.

Applied klironomical methods of diagnosis and expertise are oriented towards the analysis of specific situations of cultural heritage preservation and the identification of factors that threaten the sustainability of cultural continuity. Unlike analytical methods, which are aimed at structuring and interpreting research material, applied methods work with empirical data, institutional regimes, and heritage management practices, making it possible to move from description to evaluation and the substantiation of decisions.

Klironomical diagnosis is used to identify the current state of cultural heritage from the perspective of its capacity for reproduction and transmission over time. Within the present study, this method is applied to both material and intangible heritage, albeit with different analytical emphases. With regard to material objects, diagnosis is aimed at analysing physical condition, institutional protection, normative status, and symbolic significance. With regard to intangible heritage, klironomical diagnosis focuses on analysing the conditions of practice transmission, the degree of involvement of tradition bearers, and the sustainability of the social context of reproduction. This approach makes it possible to consider the state of heritage not merely as a technical or quantitative indicator, but as an indicator of the vitality of cultural continuity.

Klironomical expertise and prioritisation complement diagnostic analysis and are aimed at substantiating decisions regarding the preservation, support, or transformation of cultural forms. In the course of the present study, this method is used to identify differences between the formal significance of heritage and its actual role in cultural memory and identity. Expertise in the klironomical sense is not reduced to confirming compliance with established criteria, but presupposes an assessment of the value-based, historical, and social foundations of preservation. Prioritisation, in turn, makes it possible to determine which elements of cultural heritage require primary attention under conditions of limited resources and institutional capacities, which is particularly relevant for both material and intangible heritage (*Convention..., 2003; Framework Convention..., 2005*).

The analysis of risks and institutional threats represents another key applied klironomical method used to identify factors capable of disrupting processes of cultural continuity. Within the study, this method is applied to the analysis of both external and internal threats to heritage preservation. For material heritage, such threats include urban pressure, commercialisation,

inadequate restoration practices, and the loss of use-contexts. For intangible heritage, the principal risks are the formalisation and museal reduction of practices, the disruption of intergenerational transmission, and the displacement of local traditions by dominant cultural narratives (*Harrison, 2012; Meskell, 2018*).

The distinctive feature of klironomical risk analysis lies in the fact that threats are considered not in isolation, but in their connection with the value-based and normative foundations of cultural preservation. This makes it possible to identify situations in which institutional protection measures are formally implemented yet, in practice, undermine cultural continuity, for example through the loss of community participation or the transformation of heritage into a symbolic resource devoid of living content. In this respect, the klironomical approach extends traditional models of risk management by incorporating philosophical and social dimensions of cultural heritage preservation into the analysis.

The application of applied methods of diagnostics, expertise, and risk analysis makes it possible to move from a general understanding of the klironomical foundations of cultural preservation to specific evaluative procedures aimed at supporting sustainable forms of cultural continuity. These methods lay the groundwork for the subsequent consideration of project-institutional klironomical instruments that ensure the active formation of conditions for preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Project-institutional klironomical methods are oriented towards the active formation of conditions for cultural heritage preservation and represent the final element of the applied level of klironomy. Unlike diagnostic and expert methods, which are primarily aimed at assessing states and risks, these methods focus on designing sustainable models of cultural continuity and on structuring the interaction of preservation actors within institutional and public spaces.

Klironomical design is used to develop strategies for cultural heritage preservation based on identified value-based and temporal foundations. Within the framework of this study, this method is applied to model forms of intervention that are not limited to the protection or fixation of cultural forms, but are directed towards maintaining the conditions for their reproduction. With regard to tangible heritage, klironomical design presupposes the integration of objects into cultural, educational, and social environments, which makes it possible to avoid their isolation in the form of “museum relics”. With regard to intangible heritage, this method is oriented towards creating conditions for the transmission of practices, maintaining linguistic and ritual environments, and stimulating the participation of tradition bearers.

The mapping of preservation actors represents a method for identifying and analysing the agents involved in the processes of cultural heritage preservation. Within the study, this method is used to structure relations between state institutions, professional communities, local groups, and individual bearers of cultural practices. For tangible heritage, mapping makes it possible to identify institutional chains of responsibility and zones of intersecting interests, whereas for intangible heritage it is particularly important for fixing the role of communities and informal actors, without whom the preservation of practices becomes impossible. Such an approach makes it possible to avoid reducing the subject of preservation to a single institutional instance and to consider the plurality of forms of cultural responsibility.

Klironomical critique of representation and exclusion is aimed at analysing the ways in which cultural heritage is represented in the public space and which forms of culture become marginalised or excluded from the canon. Within the framework of this study, this method is used to identify asymmetries in the representation of cultural forms arising in museum exhibitions, educational programmes, and cultural policy. With regard to tangible heritage, this may manifest itself in the prioritisation of monumental objects at the expense of everyday

culture, whereas with regard to intangible heritage it appears in the standardisation and symbolic fixation of practices that fail to reflect their internal diversity and dynamics (*Silverman, 2011; Smith, 2006*).

Methods of digital klironomy complement the project-institutional toolkit and are oriented towards the analysis and use of digital technologies in cultural heritage preservation processes. Within the study, this method is applied to assess the potential of digital platforms, archives, and interactive environments in supporting cultural continuity. For tangible heritage, digital klironomy opens up possibilities for modelling, visualisation, and documentation of objects, whereas for intangible heritage it enables the recording of processes of transmission, linguistic practices, and forms of collective memory without reducing them to static descriptions. At the same time, the klironomical approach emphasises that digitalisation is not an end in itself and requires critical analysis of its impact on the living cultural environment (*Meskel, 2018*).

Thus, concluding the analysis of applied klironomical methods, the following conclusions can be formulated:

- 1) analytical and applied klironomical methods form a coherent toolkit that makes it possible to move from the philosophical comprehension of cultural preservation to the analysis of specific practices and institutional decisions;
- 2) these methods demonstrate the universality of the klironomical approach with regard to both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, adapting to their ontological and processual specificity;
- 3) project-institutional klironomical methods make it possible to consider cultural heritage preservation not as a reaction to loss, but as the active and responsible formation of conditions for cultural continuity.

These conclusions create a methodological foundation for the final analysis of klironomy as a transfer methodology between philosophical reconstruction and applied analysis.

The Transition from Philosophical Reconstruction to Applied Analysis

The logic of the methodological transition from philosophical reconstruction to applied analysis constitutes one of the key results of this study and makes it possible to demonstrate the internal coherence of the klironomical approach. Unlike linear research models, in which philosophical reflection and the practical management of cultural heritage exist as autonomous levels, klironomy constructs a consistent methodological trajectory between them, within which each stage of analysis prepares the next.

The starting point of this transition is formed by philosophical klironomical methods oriented towards the reconstruction of the foundations of cultural value, historicity, and responsibility. It is precisely at this level that an understanding is formed of why culture is subject to preservation and how the distinction between tangible and intangible heritage is worth considering in research. Philosophical reconstruction and categorical analysis establish semantic coordinates without which applied decisions become either arbitrary or purely procedural. Thus, the philosophical level is not opposed to practice but fulfils the function of the normative and conceptual foundation of analysis.

The next stage of the methodological transition is associated with analytical klironomical methods, which translate philosophical foundations into structured research models. Matrix-based and comparative klironomical analyses, modelling, and the analysis of multiple scenarios make it possible to correlate value-based and temporal categories with specific cultural situations and institutional contexts. At this level, philosophical distinctions between object and process,

canon and continuity, memory and historicity acquire an analytical form suitable for comparison and interpretation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The transition to applied analysis is performed through methods of diagnostics, expertise, and design, which rely on the results of the philosophical and analytical stages. Klironomical diagnostics and risk analysis employ philosophically grounded criteria of value and continuity to assess real conditions of cultural preservation. Project-oriented and institutional methods, in turn, make it possible to transform analytical conclusions into strategies and models oriented towards supporting cultural duration rather than merely ensuring formal compliance with regulatory requirements. In this way, the applied level of klironomy proves to be not autonomous, but derivative of the preceding stages of methodological analysis.

A significant result of this transition is the elimination of the gap between theory and practice that is characteristic of many studies of cultural heritage. Within the klironomical approach, philosophical foundations do not remain at the level of abstract reflection but are consistently incorporated into analytical and applied procedures. This ensures methodological continuity of the research and allows the preservation of cultural heritage to be considered as an integral process encompassing semantic reconstruction, analytical interpretation, and the practical formation of conditions for cultural continuity.

The substantiation of klironomy as a transfer methodology between philosophical theory and applied analysis of cultural heritage completes the presentation of the research results and fixes their conceptual significance. Within the klironomical approach, the preservation of culture is viewed not as a set of disparate practices of protection, management, or representation, but as a normatively and historically meaningful process requiring the coordination of philosophical foundations and practical decisions. It is precisely the ability to ensure such coordination that distinguishes klironomy from existing models of heritage studies and defines its methodological specificity.

Klironomy functions as a bridging methodology primarily because it integrates philosophical categories of value, historicity, memory, and responsibility into the operational toolkit of analysis. Unlike approaches in which the philosophy of culture is used merely as an interpretative background, the klironomical approach translates philosophical foundations into a system of methods applicable to the analysis of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This makes it possible to consider normative documents, institutional practices, and managerial decisions not in isolation, but in relation to broader conceptions of cultural continuity and the historical duty of society.

The transfer character of klironomy is also manifested in its ability to unite different types of cultural heritage within a single methodological logic. Tangible and intangible heritage within the klironomical approach are not opposed as requiring fundamentally different methods, but are analysed as different forms of manifestation of cultural duration. This makes it possible to avoid methodological fragmentation and to construct a comparable analysis of objects, practices, forms of memory, and institutional regimes of preservation. As a result, klironomy creates a common analytical language applicable to various cultural contexts and levels of heritage preservation.

A significant aspect of this bridging methodology is klironomy's orientation towards process rather than solely towards the result of preservation. Unlike models focused on the fixation and protection of already recognised objects, the klironomical approach emphasises the conditions of formation, transmission, and transformation of cultural forms over time. This renders klironomy particularly significant for the analysis of intangible heritage, where preservation is impossible without considering the dynamics of practices and the participation

of tradition bearers, while at the same time extending its applicability to tangible heritage, considered in the context of use, interpretation, and social significance.

Finally, klironomy as a transfer methodology makes it possible to rethink the role of the researcher and expert in the field of cultural heritage. Within the klironomical approach, the researcher is not limited to description or to assessing compliance with established norms, but acts as an analyst of cultural continuity, capable of identifying value foundations, risks, and prospects for the preservation of culture. This expands the methodological horizon of cultural heritage research and creates the prerequisites for a more responsible and reflexive interaction between theory, practice, and cultural policy.

Consequently, the results of the study show that klironomy can be justifiably regarded as a bridging methodology linking philosophical reconstruction and applied analysis of cultural heritage. It ensures the methodological integrity of research, the integration of different levels of analysis, and the possibility of a systematic consideration of cultural preservation as a form of historical continuity, which confirms its significance for the development of both theory and practice in heritage studies.

The conducted analysis of the methodological transition from philosophical reconstruction to applied analysis makes it possible to formulate the following generalised conclusions:

1. The results of the study demonstrate that the klironomical approach possesses internal logical coherence and does not presuppose a rupture between the philosophical and practical levels of analysis of cultural heritage. Philosophical klironomical methods form the normative and semantic foundations of research, which are consistently unfolded in analytical and applied procedures.
2. Klironomy demonstrates its effectiveness as a bridging methodology that ensures the translation of philosophical categories of value, historicity, memory, and responsibility into an operational language for analysing concrete practices of cultural heritage preservation. Such translation makes it possible to avoid both abstract theorisation detached from empirical reality and the reduction of cultural preservation to a set of administrative and technical procedures.
3. The transition from philosophical reconstruction to applied analysis within the framework of klironomy confirms the possibility of a unified methodological approach to tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The distinction between them is interpreted not as a basis for methodological separation, but as a need to differentiate analytical emphases within the general logic of cultural continuity and historical duration.
4. The klironomical approach makes it possible to rethink the role of the analyst and expert in the field of cultural heritage, expanding it from the assessment of compliance with normative criteria to the identification of value foundations, risks, and prospects for cultural preservation. This renders klironomy methodologically significant not only for theoretical research, but also for practices of cultural policy, expertise, and heritage management.

Thus, the conclusions confirm that klironomy represents an integral methodological system capable of linking philosophical reflection and applied analysis and of ensuring a conceptually grounded transition from the theory of cultural preservation to the analysis and design of real practices of cultural continuity.

Discussion

The comparison of klironomical methods with those of heritage studies makes it possible to clarify the methodological specificity of the klironomical approach and to determine its contribution to the development of cultural heritage research. Heritage studies have emerged as

an interdisciplinary field with a strong applied orientation, grounded in normative regimes of heritage protection and in a well-developed infrastructure of expert practices, which is reflected both in scholarly syntheses and in international documents regulating the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage (*Convention...*, 2003; King, 2024; *Operational Directives...*, n.d.). At the same time, klironomy demonstrates a different methodological vector: it considers heritage not only as an object of management and protection, but primarily as a process of cultural continuity, involving selection, canonisation, interpretation, and the transmission of meanings over time (Buychik, 2019; Buychik, 2024).

The key advantage of the klironomical approach lies in its systemic character and in the presence of an internally coherent structure of methods that links philosophical reconstruction, analytical modelling, and applied diagnostics. In heritage studies, methodological plurality often assumes an eclectic form: legal, anthropological, sociological, and politico-critical approaches coexist alongside one another but do not always form a unified conceptual apparatus suitable for comparable research (Waterton & Watson, 2015). Klironomy, by contrast, proposes a matrix logic of analysis that makes it possible to retain within a single research field the ontological foundations of culture, axiology, criteria of selection, temporality, and social legitimation, thereby reducing the risk of methodological fragmentation and enhancing the explanatory potential of analysis.

The advantage of klironomy is also manifested in a more rigorous articulation of the value foundations of cultural preservation. In normative–procedural models of heritage protection, value is often fixed through a set of formalised criteria oriented towards the recognition of the significance of an object or practice, which is necessary for managerial and legal procedures (*International Charter...*, 1964/1965; *The Nara Document on Authenticity*, 1994). However, such formalisation may obscure the philosophical nature of value choice as well as the historical conditionality of selection criteria. Klironomical axiological analysis, by contrast, treats value as the result of a historically and socially conditioned normative decision linked to canon, memory, and responsibility, thereby bringing klironomy closer to philosophical theories of cultural memory and historicity (Assmann, J., 1992; Ricoeur, 2000).

A comparative consideration of tangible and intangible heritage further reveals the advantages of klironomy as a methodology capable of providing a unified logic of analysis for both types of cultural heritage. Heritage studies recognise the specificity of intangible heritage and enshrine it in relevant international documents; but the applied apparatus often retains an object-oriented inertia, which contributes to the fixation of practices in the form of catalogues and representations (*Convention...*, 2003; Smith & Akagawa, 2009). Klironomy, on the other hand, is initially constructed around a processual logic of continuity and is therefore more sensitive to the conditions of transmission and reproduction of intangible forms of culture, as well as to the risks of their reduction and symbolic standardisation (Harrison, 2012; Macdonald, 2013).

Alongside these advantages, the comparative analysis also reveals the limitations of institutional and applied models that lack philosophical reflection. In particular, normative regimes of heritage protection are effective in ensuring procedures for the safeguarding of objects, but prove less effective in analysing conflicts of memory, dissonant heritage, and competing interpretations of the past, where issues of legitimation, subjectivity, and responsibility become central (Silverman, 2011; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Critical strands of heritage studies partially compensate for this deficit by exposing the social and political conditionality of heritage; however, they may also be confined to the description of discourses

and power mechanisms without the systematisation of the philosophical foundations of cultural continuity (*Harrison, 2012; Smith, 2006*).

Consequently, the comparison of klironomical methods with those of heritage studies shows that klironomy offers methodological advantages associated with systemic coherence, axiological and temporal depth of analysis, as well as with a unified logic for the study of tangible and intangible heritage. At the same time, this comparison demonstrates that institutional and applied models lacking philosophical reflection have a limited potential in the analysis of processes of canonisation, conflicts of memory, and the normative foundations of cultural preservation, which confirms the need to expand the methodological field of research through the klironomical approach.

The methodological contribution of klironomy to cultural heritage research is manifested primarily in the expansion of the analytical subject field and in the reorientation of research attention from objects of protection to processes of cultural continuity. Unlike approaches in which heritage is conceived predominantly as a set of recognised tangible or intangible objects, klironomy regards it as both the result and the process of normative selection, interpretation, and transmission of cultural forms over time. Such an expansion of the subject field makes it possible to include in the analysis not only institutionally fixed elements of heritage, but also marginal, transitional, and not yet canonised forms of culture that are significant for understanding historical duration.

A significant contribution of the klironomical approach lies in strengthening the role of the subject of preservation within the methodological structure of cultural heritage research. In heritage studies, the subject of preservation is often implicitly identified with institutional management structures, expert communities, or international organisations, whereas klironomy introduces a more complex and differentiated model of subjectivity. Within the klironomical framework, the subject of preservation is understood as a constellation of actors involved in processes of cultural continuity, including communities, bearers of tradition, professional groups, and civil society. This makes it possible to conceptualise cultural preservation as a distributed form of responsibility rather than as an exclusively administrative function.

The axiological dimension of klironomy also significantly expands the methodological horizon of cultural heritage research. The klironomical approach emphasises that the recognition of cultural value cannot be reduced to formalised criteria of significance or universal value, since it is always connected with a historical choice and a normative decision. The inclusion of axiological analysis at the core of the methodology makes it possible to identify the hidden foundations of canonisation, as well as to analyse value conflicts arising from the confrontation of different cultural narratives and identities. This is particularly important for the study of dissonant and conflictual heritage, where formal criteria prove insufficient for explaining the processes of recognition and exclusion.

Equally significant is the strengthening of the role of historicity and temporal analysis within klironomical methodology. Unlike retrospective models of preservation oriented towards fixing a lost or disappearing past, klironomy considers heritage as a form of duration that connects the past, the present, and the future. Such an approach makes it possible to analyse the preservation of culture not only as a reaction to loss, but also as the active formation of conditions for the continuation of cultural practices and meanings. The temporal dimension of klironomy is particularly productive in the analysis of intangible heritage, where the stability of cultural continuity depends on the ability of traditions to adapt and transform over time.

Taken together, the expansion of the subject field and the strengthening of the role of the subject, axiological reflection, and historicity make it possible to regard klironomy as a

methodological development of heritage studies rather than as their negation. The klironomical approach complements existing research and applied models by introducing philosophically grounded categories and ensuring a deeper understanding of cultural preservation as a normatively and historically meaningful process.

Despite the identified methodological advantages of the klironomical approach, the conducted research has a number of limitations that must be considered when interpreting the obtained results. These limitations do not undermine the integrity of the proposed methodological model, but they do indicate directions for its further testing and refinement.

The first limitation is related to the need for extended empirical validation of klironomical methods. Within the framework of this article, klironomy is presented as a systematised methodological set that has undergone philosophical and analytical elaboration; but many applied methods require further testing on diverse empirical materials. This applies in particular to klironomical modelling, the analysis of multiple scenarios, and project- and institution-oriented methods, the effectiveness of which may vary depending on the type of heritage, the scale of analysis, and the social context. Thus, the proposed system of methods should be regarded as open and subject to refinement in the course of subsequent applied research.

The second limitation is determined by the dependence of applied klironomical models on the cultural and institutional context. Processes of cultural heritage preservation differ substantially depending on national traditions, legal regimes, levels of community participation, and dominant conceptions of cultural value. In this sense, klironomy does not offer a universal algorithm applicable without adaptation to any cultural space. On the contrary, it presupposes contextual adjustment of methods and the recognition of a plurality of legitimate scenarios of cultural preservation, which simultaneously constitutes its methodological advantage and a source of analytical complexity.

An additional limitation is connected with the balance between philosophical depth and the operational applicability of klironomical methods. The strengthening of axiological and temporal reflection expands the explanatory potential of research, but may complicate the direct integration of klironomical approaches into existing managerial and normative practices oriented towards formalised procedures. This requires further work on aligning klironomical tools with the language of cultural policy, expertise, and heritage management without losing their philosophical richness.

Consequently, the limitations of the research indicate not the inadequacy of the klironomical approach, but the necessity of its further development, empirical refinement, and contextual adaptation. Awareness of these limitations creates a foundation for formulating new research tasks and for expanding the scope of application of klironomical methods in related scientific and practical fields.

Prospects for the further development of the topic of this research are connected with the deepening of both the theoretical and applied dimensions of the klironomical approach. At the theoretical level, a relevant direction is the further philosophical elaboration of the categories of cultural continuity, responsibility, and canon, considering new forms of cultural dynamics, including hybrid and transnational cultural processes. This presupposes the expansion of klironomical analysis beyond national frameworks and a more active inclusion of comparative studies aimed at identifying differences in the philosophical foundations of cultural preservation across various cultural traditions.

At the applied level, a promising direction is the development of empirical research aimed at testing klironomical methods in specific cases of preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Of particular importance here is the analysis of urban and regional cultural landscapes,

practices of local memory, and forms of community participation, where the klironomical approach can demonstrate its capacity to integrate philosophical reflection with practical design. Such studies will make it possible to refine the tools of klironomical diagnosis, expertise, and modelling with regard to the diversity of institutional and socio-cultural conditions.

A separate direction for further research is the development of digital klironomy, oriented towards a critical analysis of the role of digital technologies in the processes of preserving cultural continuity. It appears promising to investigate how digital platforms, archives, and interactive environments can contribute to sustaining living forms of cultural transmission without reducing them to static representations. This requires the development of klironomical criteria for evaluating digital practices of cultural preservation and the analysis of their impact on forms of memory, participation, and public legitimation.

An important direction for the development of the research topic is the application of klironomical methods in the sphere of cultural policy and education. The integration of the klironomical approach into educational programmes and cultural development strategies may contribute to forming a more reflexive attitude towards heritage and to strengthening the role of civic responsibility for cultural preservation. In this context, further research may be directed towards the development of methodological recommendations and analytical models adapted to decision-making practices in the field of cultural heritage, which will make it possible to expand the social and institutional impact of klironomy as a scholarly and applied discipline.

Conclusion

The conducted study makes it possible to formulate the main conclusions reflecting the achieved results and their methodological significance. First of all, it has been established that klironomical methods form an integral and internally coherent methodological system in which philosophical, analytical, and applied levels do not exist in isolation but are interconnected through a consistent logic of transition from the reconstruction of the foundations of cultural preservation to the analysis and design of specific practices. The systematisation of 25 klironomical methods (*Table 1*) has demonstrated that klironomy is not reducible to a set of individual research techniques but represents a structured methodological field capable of encompassing both tangible and intangible cultural heritage within a unified analytical framework.

The second key conclusion is the confirmation that klironomical methods ensure the simultaneous combination of philosophical depth and applied applicability in the analysis of cultural heritage. Philosophical klironomical methods make it possible to identify the value-based, temporal, and normative foundations of cultural continuity, without which preservation practices inevitably become reduced to formal and procedural solutions. Analytical and applied methods, in turn, translate these foundations into an operational language of diagnosis, expertise, modelling, and design, thereby enabling the application of the klironomical approach in real institutional and cultural contexts. Taken together, this confirms that klironomy is capable of overcoming the gap between the theoretical comprehension of cultural preservation and the analysis of cultural heritage research practices (heritage studies), while maintaining both conceptual rigour and practical relevance.

The significance of the results of the conducted study manifests itself at several interrelated levels, reflecting both the theoretical and practical potential of the klironomical approach. First and foremost, the obtained results are of fundamental importance for the development of klironomy as an independent scientific discipline. The systematisation of klironomical methods and their detailed description in the context of analysing tangible and intangible cultural heritage

make it possible to clarify the subject matter, methodological apparatus, and research objectives of klironomy. This contributes to its institutional formation and strengthens the status of klironomy as a science oriented towards the comprehensive study of the preservation of culture and art as a form of historical continuity.

Equally significant is the contribution of the study to the renewal of the methodology of heritage studies. It has been shown that the klironomical approach does not oppose existing directions in cultural heritage research but complements them by addressing identified methodological limitations. The integration of philosophical reflection, axiological analysis, and the temporal dimension into the research toolkit makes it possible to expand the explanatory potential of heritage studies and to rethink their applied models. In particular, klironomy facilitates a shift in research focus from procedures of protection and management towards the analysis of processes of canonisation, cultural responsibility, and historical duration, thereby opening new perspectives for theoretical and comparative research in this field.

The practical significance of the study results lies in the possibility of applying klironomical methods in real practices of preserving culture and art. The developed system of methods can be used in expert activities, cultural policy, museum and educational practice, as well as in processes of strategic planning for cultural heritage preservation. The klironomical approach makes it possible to substantiate decisions not only from the standpoint of normative compliance but also with due regard to value-based, historical, and social factors, thereby contributing to a more responsible and sustainable formation of conditions for cultural continuity. In this sense, the results of the research create a foundation for the practical implementation of klironomy in various spheres of work with cultural heritage.

The final generalisation of the study results makes it possible to confirm its conceptual completeness and to verify the achievement of the stated aim. In the course of the study, klironomy was consistently substantiated as a methodological bridge between the philosophy of culture and the applied analysis of cultural heritage. It has been demonstrated that the klironomical approach provides a linkage between the philosophical reconstruction of the foundations of cultural continuity and the analysis of concrete practices of preserving culture and art, thereby eliminating the gap between theoretical reflection and applied models of heritage studies.

The system of klironomical methods proposed in the study forms an integral methodological foundation for the further development of both theoretical and applied studies. The systematisation of 25 klironomical methods (*Table 1*), their differentiation by functional levels, and their correlation with tangible and intangible cultural heritage create a stable analytical framework suitable for philosophical analysis, comparative research, and practical expertise. Thus, klironomy acquires instrumental completeness, enabling the expansion of its application in new cultural, institutional, and technological contexts.

The final outcome of the conducted study is the step-by-step and substantively justified achievement of the study purpose and the resolution of all tasks formulated in the Introduction. The purpose of the study, which consisted in the development and theoretical substantiation of klironomical methods for researching cultural heritage as a connecting link between philosophical reflection and the applied analysis of practices of preserving culture and art, was achieved through the consistent unfolding of the klironomical approach from philosophical foundations to the operational level of analysis. In the course of the work, it was demonstrated that klironomy is capable of integrating the philosophy of culture, the philosophy of memory, and the philosophy of historicity with the analytical and applied methods of heritage studies, thereby forming a coherent methodological system.

As part of addressing the first objective, the philosophical foundations of klironomical methods were identified within the context of studies of cultural memory and historical continuity. An analysis of philosophical concepts of memory, canon, historicity, and responsibility made it possible to demonstrate that klironomical methods are grounded in a long-standing tradition of the philosophy of culture and the philosophy of history, within which the preservation of culture is conceived as a normatively meaningful process of the transmission of meanings over time. This ensured the conceptual depth of the klironomical approach and established the theoretical coordinates for subsequent methodological analysis.

The second objective was addressed through a critical analysis of the methodology of heritage studies, aimed at identifying its limitations in working with tangible and intangible cultural heritage. It was shown that normative-procedural and institutionally applied models effectively ensure the protection and management of heritage; however, they possess a limited capacity for analysing processes of canonisation, cultural responsibility, and historical duration. The identified limitations substantiated the need for a methodological expansion of the research field and created the prerequisites for the introduction of the klironomical approach.

The resolution of the third objective was expressed in the systematisation of klironomical research methods and their presentation as an integral methodological system. In the course of the study, a set of 25 klironomical methods (*Table 1*) was formed and described, encompassing various levels of analysis of cultural heritage. This systematisation demonstrated that klironomy possesses an internal structure and cannot be reduced to a set of disparate analytical techniques, but functions as an independent methodological system.

The fourth objective was implemented through the differentiation of philosophical, analytical, and applied klironomical methods. This differentiation made it possible to demonstrate the functional specificity of each level and to reveal their interrelation within a unified methodological logic. Philosophical methods ensure the identification of the foundations of cultural continuity, analytical methods translate these foundations into structured research models, and applied methods provide the assessment and design of processes of cultural preservation.

The resolution of the fifth objective consisted in demonstrating the specificity of applying klironomical methods to tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In the course of the study, it was proven that the distinction between these types of heritage does not require fundamentally different methodologies, but rather presupposes an adjustment of the analytical focus within the general logic of the klironomical approach. This made it possible to consider material objects and intangible practices as interconnected forms of cultural continuity, subject to unified philosophical and methodological foundations.

Finally, the sixth objective was addressed through substantiating klironomy as a methodological transition from philosophical reconstruction to applied analysis of cultural heritage. It was shown that the klironomical approach eliminates the gap between theory and practice by ensuring a consistent progression from the philosophical comprehension of the value and historicity of culture to analytical models and applied instruments of diagnosis, expertise, and design. In this way, the methodological soundness of klironomy and its potential for the further development of the theory and practice of preserving culture and art were confirmed.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

Table 1. Consolidated table of klironomical research methods

No.	Klironomical method	Brief description
1	Klironomical reconstruction	A philosophical method aimed at reconstructing implicit models of cultural preservation in theories of culture, history, and memory.
2	Categorical klironomical analysis	Analysis of core categories of cultural preservation (value, canon, memory, continuity, responsibility) and their conceptual transformations.
3	Klironomical axiological analysis	Examination of value foundations underlying the recognition of cultural forms as worthy of preservation.
4	Analysis of criteria of cultural selection	Identification and critical assessment of normative and expert criteria determining inclusion or exclusion from cultural heritage.
5	Klironomical analysis of the canon	Study of canon formation as a dynamic and historically contingent mechanism of cultural stabilisation.
6	Klironomical analysis of historicity	Investigation of temporal models (past–present–future) structuring cultural preservation and historical continuity.
7	Klironomical analysis of time and duration	Analysis of cultural preservation as a form of historical duration rather than static fixation.
8	Analysis of the subject of preservation	Examination of actors responsible for cultural preservation (institutions, communities, citizens) and forms of responsibility.
9	Klironomical matrix analysis	A systemic method integrating ontological, axiological, normative, temporal, and social dimensions of heritage.
10	Comparative klironomical analysis	Comparison of cultural traditions, preservation models, and heritage regimes based on their foundations of continuity.
11	Klironomical modelling	Construction of analytical models representing possible scenarios of cultural preservation.
12	Analysis of multiple klironomical scenarios	Identification and evaluation of alternative trajectories of cultural preservation in different contexts.
13	Analysis of public legitimacy	Study of mechanisms through which cultural heritage gains public recognition and social validation.
14	Klironomical diagnostics	Assessment of the current state of cultural heritage in terms of its capacity for historical transmission.
15	Klironomical expertise	Expert evaluation of cultural heritage based on value, historical significance, and continuity rather than formal criteria alone.
16	Klironomical prioritisation	Determination of preservation priorities under conditions of limited resources and competing values.
17	Klironomical risk analysis	Identification of cultural, institutional, and symbolic risks threatening heritage continuity.
18	Analysis of institutional threats	Examination of how legal, administrative, or economic frameworks may undermine cultural preservation.
19	Klironomical project design	Development of preservation strategies aimed at sustaining cultural continuity rather than mere protection.
20	Mapping of preservation actors	Identification and structuring of stakeholders involved in cultural preservation processes.
21	Analysis of institutional infrastructure	Study of institutional systems supporting or constraining cultural preservation.
22	Klironomical critique of representation	Critical analysis of how heritage is represented in museums, education, and public discourse.

23	Klironomical analysis of exclusion	Identification of cultural forms marginalised or excluded from recognised heritage canons.
24	Digital klironomy	Analysis of digital tools and environments as means of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage.
25	Integrated klironomical assessment	Holistic evaluation combining philosophical, analytical, and applied klironomical methods in a single framework.

Liviu Dănceanu – A “classic” Composer of Postmodern Music ^[2]

Abstract:

Composer, musicologist, conductor, professor, essayist Liviu Dănceanu (1954–2017) remains a remarkable personality in Romanian musical culture in the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Liviu Dănceanu would have turned 70 this year. On this anniversary occasion, the National University of Arts “George Enescu” from Iași joined the initiatives of other Romanian universities to organize a commemorative event as a portrait *in memoriam*, integrated in the 26th edition of the Romanian Music Festival. The cameral concert dedicated to Liviu Dănceanu took place on October 15, 2024, in the “Eduard Caudella” Hall in Iași, with eight works from different stages of the composer’s creation, performed by the Archaeus Ensemble that he founded, coordinated and supported from its beginnings, in 1985, until the end of his life, which occurred in 2017. This Contemporary Music Workshop has carried forward the ideals of its creator to the present day, continuing the line of promoting new compositions that appeared after 1970, considered postmodern and/or contemporary. This study aims to analyse the position that musicological researchers give to Liviu Dănceanu in the historical context of Romanian music and we aim to observe the reception of Liviu Dănceanu’s works nowadays, having as a point of reference the program of the concert performed in Iași by the Archaeus Ensemble.

Keywords: anniversary concert, composer portrait, postmodernism, contemporary music.

Introduction

Associated with the period of postmodern music, also called “contemporary”, *Liviu Dănceanu* (1954-2017) is nowadays more than a representative figure of the postmodernism in the second half of the 20th century, which took root in Romanian musical culture after 1970. His musical language is a synthesis between avant-garde modernism and the archetypal, Byzantine and folkloric roots of local music, highlighting Dănceanu’s work as a point of reference in the context of contemporary Romanian culture, as an author who became a “classic” when we speak about the history of our music.

Composer, musicologist, conductor, teacher, hermeneut and thinker of great strength, theorist and publicist with an intense, prolific activity, with a protean spirit, Liviu Dănceanu remains a prominent figure of the Romanian musical avant-garde, with a compositional style that combines the complexity of experimental techniques and innovative sound languages with the West-European compositional tradition and Byzantine music, sometimes inserting elements of humour, parody and pastiche, treated with a vigilant, agile and intellectually refined spirit.

Liviu Dănceanu was a complex, encyclopaedic personality of the Romanian musical culture of the 20th and 21st centuries, endowed with multiple talents, a broad and comprehensive thinking and a brilliant mind. Beyond these abilities and professional skills, he has remained in the memory of all those who knew him as a man of extraordinary kindness, human understanding, high moral and cultural standards, a sensitive man, able to perceive music, poetry, life in general from a particular perspective.

The study’s novelty lies in an integrated reception-oriented profile of Liviu Dănceanu that combines two analytical layers: (1) how post-2000 Romanian historical-stylistic syntheses and musicological writings position Dănceanu within national postmodern/contemporary music, and (2) how this positioning is tested and specified through a concrete contemporary performance context—the 15 October 2024 commemorative concert in Iași by the Archaeus Ensemble, used as an empirical reference for observing present-day reception.

The subject of the study is the musicological reception and historiographic positioning of Dănceanu's legacy in Romanian musical culture (i.e., how researchers define his place, significance, stylistic identity, and contribution within the post-1970 postmodern/contemporary paradigm).

The object of the study is Dănceanu's creative output and its contemporary cultural articulation, examined through his postmodern/contemporary compositional language as described in scholarly discourse, and the performance-based "portrait in memoriam" format (the 2024 Iași program) as a point of reference for reception today.

The study aims to analyze the position that musicological researchers assign to Dănceanu in the historical context of Romanian music and to observe how his works are received today, using the Iași commemorative concert program as the principal reference point.

To achieve the purpose, the study sets out to:

- map and systematize post-2000 musicological interpretations of Dănceanu's place in Romanian postmodern/contemporary music (e.g., in historical-stylistic syntheses and major scholarly assessments);
- identify the main stylistic/technical vectors attributed to Dănceanu in scholarship (e.g., heterophony, adapted spectralism, polystylism/metastylism, historically synthetic strategies);
- conduct analytical case-based readings of selected works performed at the 2024 concert (the author focuses on *Aliquote* op. 63, *Panta rei* op. 82, and *Heptaiib* op. 123) to show how compositional concepts materialize in practice and to connect discourse about "technique" with discourse about "meaning";
- synthesize what the concert-as-commemoration format reveals about Dănceanu's contemporary relevance and "classic" status in Romanian culture, understood through reception and institutional memory.

The article's results are primarily addressed to musicologists and researchers of Romanian music history, especially those working on post-1970 contemporary/postmodern trends, performers and ensemble directors engaged in contemporary repertoire (given the performance-analytic anchoring in the Archaeus Ensemble program), educators and students in higher music education dealing with contemporary compositional techniques, stylistic historiography, and reception studies.

Methods

The analytical method is employed as a fundamental general scientific approach aimed at decomposing complex phenomena into their constituent elements in order to reveal internal structures, relationships, and dominant features. In this study, analytical procedures are applied to examine musicological interpretations of Liviu Dănceanu's work, as well as to isolate key stylistic, compositional, and aesthetic characteristics attributed to his music in post-2000 scholarly discourse and in the analysis of selected compositions presented in the commemorative concert program.

The method of synthesis is used to integrate disparate analytical observations into coherent conceptual conclusions. As a general scientific tool, synthesis allows individual findings to be assembled into a holistic interpretative model. In the present research, synthesis is applied to combine historiographic assessments, stylistic analyses, and performance-based observations, resulting in an integrated view of Dănceanu's creative legacy as a "classic" figure within Romanian postmodern music.

The historical method is applied to consider the studied phenomenon within its temporal and cultural development. In general scientific research, this method enables the reconstruction of processes in their historical continuity. In this study, the historical method is used to situate Dănceanu's compositional output within the broader evolution of Romanian music from the late 20th century to the early 21st century, as well as to contextualize the composer's reception within changing musicological paradigms.

The comparative method serves as a tool for identifying similarities and differences between artistic phenomena, scholarly interpretations, or stylistic models. In this research, comparative analysis is applied to contrast different musicological assessments of Dănceanu's work found in post-2000 Romanian scholarship, as well as to compare stylistic features across selected compositions included in the commemorative concert program, thereby clarifying the specificity of his postmodern idiom.

The method of generalization is used to derive broader theoretical conclusions from individual analytical cases. As a general scientific approach, generalization enables the transition from particular observations to conceptual interpretations. In this study, generalization is applied to formulate conclusions regarding Dănceanu's position in Romanian music history and his recognition as a "classic" composer of postmodern music, based on both scholarly discourse and contemporary performance practice.

The systemic approach is employed to examine the research object as an interconnected whole rather than as a collection of isolated elements. In the context of this study, the systemic approach allows the integration of compositional analysis, historiographic evaluation, and reception studies into a unified methodological framework, treating Dănceanu's legacy as a complex cultural system encompassing creative output, scholarly interpretation, and institutional memory.

The musicological analytical method is employed as a core discipline-specific approach aimed at examining compositional techniques, musical language, and structural organization of works within their stylistic and aesthetic contexts. In this study, musicological analysis is applied to selected compositions by Liviu Dănceanu performed at the commemorative concert, allowing for the identification of characteristic features of his postmodern idiom, including heterophonic textures, timbral thinking, and the integration of historical stylistic references.

The stylistic and historical-stylistic analysis method is used to identify and interpret stylistic markers and compositional strategies within broader historical frameworks. In the present research, this method is applied to situate Dănceanu's works within the trajectory of Romanian postmodern and contemporary music, clarifying how elements of modernism, postmodern synthesis, and historical allusion interact in his compositional practice.

The reception-oriented method is applied to examine how a composer's work is perceived, interpreted, and contextualized within contemporary cultural and institutional settings. In this study, reception analysis focuses on the commemorative concert dedicated to Liviu Dănceanu, treating the concert program and its performance context as indicators of the composer's current status, relevance, and canonization within Romanian musical culture.

The performance-analytical method is used to explore the relationship between compositional structure and its realization in live performance. In the context of this research, this method is applied to analyze how Dănceanu's compositional concepts are articulated through interpretation, ensemble interaction, and timbral balance in the performances by the Archæus Ensemble, thereby linking written musical structures with their performative embodiment.

The interpretative (hermeneutic) method is employed to uncover semantic, symbolic, and conceptual layers of musical works beyond their formal organization. In this study, hermeneutic interpretation is applied to selected compositions in order to elucidate philosophical, metaphorical, and expressive dimensions of Dănceanu's music, particularly those connected with ideas of continuity, transformation, and postmodern recontextualization of musical tradition.

The historiographic analysis method is used to examine scholarly narratives and critical discourse surrounding a composer's work. In this research, historiographic analysis is applied to post-2000 Romanian musicological literature in order to identify prevailing interpretations of Dănceanu's creative legacy, assess shifts in evaluative criteria, and determine how his position as a "classic" of postmodern music has been constructed in academic discourse.

The case-study method is employed to conduct in-depth analysis of selected representative examples within a broader phenomenon. In the present study, the case-study approach is applied to specific compositions and a concrete commemorative event, enabling a focused examination of how abstract musicological concepts and historiographic claims are realized in actual artistic practice.

Literature Review

Scholarly literature devoted to Liviu Dănceanu and to the broader context of Romanian contemporary and postmodern music forms a heterogeneous body of sources that includes interviews, analytical articles, historiographic syntheses, aesthetic reflections, and composer-authored theoretical texts. Taken together, these materials provide a multifaceted framework for understanding Dănceanu's creative identity, stylistic orientation, and cultural positioning. At the same time, the literature reveals a fragmentation between personal testimony, critical reception, and historical contextualization, which substantiates the relevance of the present study's integrative approach.

A significant group of sources consists of interviews and dialogical texts that document Dănceanu's reflections on music, aesthetics, and the role of the composer. Apostu's interview (2017) represents one of the most extensive first-person sources, offering insight into Dănceanu's artistic biography, compositional thinking, and intellectual background. Conducted in a conversational format, the interview reveals the composer's views on musical language, tradition, and innovation, as well as his critical stance toward contemporary musical culture. In the present study, this source is used to contextualize analytical observations within the composer's own conceptual horizon and to correlate scholarly interpretations with authorial self-reflection (Apostu, 2017).

Similarly, the interview conducted by Baltazar (2016) focuses on the ethical and communicative dimensions of Dănceanu's musical thought. Emphasizing the notion of "communion through music," this text highlights the composer's understanding of music as a space of shared meaning rather than purely formal construction. For the purposes of the present research, this interview provides valuable material for interpreting Dănceanu's postmodern orientation not as ironic distance, but as a search for meaningful interaction between sound, performer, and listener (Baltazar, 2016).

Another category of sources includes early critical and lexicographic references that situate Dănceanu within Romanian musical discourse. Crețu's article (1985) represents one of the earliest scholarly assessments of the composer's work, written during the late socialist period. Although limited by the ideological and aesthetic constraints of its time, the article identifies key traits of Dănceanu's musical language and acknowledges his emerging individuality. In this

study, Crețu's text is used as a historical reference point, illustrating how early critical reception framed the composer's work prior to the development of postmodern discourse in Romanian musicology (Crețu, 1985).

Berg's dictionary of famous words, expressions, and quotations (1969), while not directly concerned with music, provides a broader cultural and intellectual background relevant to the interpretative dimension of the study. The dictionary is employed as an auxiliary reference for understanding the semantic and philosophical vocabulary that informs discussions of reflection, ambiguity, and cultural memory—concepts that recur in both Dănceanu's writings and the scholarly literature on his music (Berg, 1969).

A central role in the literature is played by composer-authored theoretical and reflective texts, which articulate Dănceanu's own aesthetic position. In his chapter "Scholarly Music and the End of Its History," Dănceanu (2007a) critically examines the crisis of modernist paradigms and the exhaustion of linear historical narratives in art music. This text provides a theoretical foundation for interpreting his compositional practice as a response to perceived historical rupture. In the present study, this source is used to link Dănceanu's music to broader postmodern debates on historicity, continuity, and stylistic plurality.

In the essay "Between Clarity and Ambiguity," Dănceanu (2007b) addresses the tension between intelligibility and openness in musical expression. This reflection is particularly relevant for understanding the composer's preference for layered meanings and controlled indeterminacy. The study draws on this text to support hermeneutic interpretations of selected works, emphasizing the deliberate balance between structural clarity and semantic multiplicity (Dănceanu, 2007b).

Dănceanu's book *The Apocalypse of Scholarly Music* (2009) represents a polemical and philosophically charged critique of contemporary art music institutions and practices. Although rhetorical in tone, the book articulates a coherent worldview that informs the composer's creative decisions. In this research, the book is used to contextualize Dănceanu's critical stance toward institutionalized modernism and to explain his positioning within postmodern discourse (Dănceanu, 2009).

The edited issue *Bi-polarity* (Dănceanu, 2014) further develops these ideas by presenting a platform for discussing dualities such as tradition and innovation, system and freedom, and structure and expression. This publication is treated in the study as evidence of Dănceanu's active role not only as a composer, but also as an intellectual mediator shaping contemporary musical debate (Dănceanu, 2014).

A substantial body of literature situates Dănceanu within broader historiographic and stylistic frameworks of Romanian music. Sandu-Dediu's monograph (2002) provides a foundational overview of Romanian music between 1944 and 2000, establishing historical and institutional contexts essential for understanding Dănceanu's generation. This work is used to position the composer within the late 20th-century musical landscape and to identify continuities and ruptures in stylistic development (Sandu-Dediu, 2002).

Dediu's contribution to the collective volume *New Histories of Romanian Music* (2021) extends this perspective by focusing on compositional developments after 1960. The author's analytical treatment of postmodern tendencies and institutional dynamics provides a crucial framework for interpreting Dănceanu's work as part of a larger generational and stylistic constellation. In the present study, this source supports the classification of Dănceanu as a representative figure whose work exemplifies key trends in Romanian postmodern music (Dediu, 2021).

Garaz's article on postmodern music (2012) offers a theoretical examination of postmodernism as a reinvention of musical art after the perceived end of modernity. By outlining characteristic features of postmodern musical thinking, this text informs the study's methodological approach to stylistic analysis. It is used to align the interpretation of Dănceanu's compositional strategies with established theoretical models of postmodern music (Garaz, 2012).

Georgescu (2015) addresses the contribution of older generations to the fulfillment of Romanian music, emphasizing continuity and legacy. This perspective is relevant for understanding the notion of "classic" status attributed to Dănceanu in the present study. Georgescu's work is used to support the argument that Dănceanu's oeuvre represents not merely an individual achievement, but a formative contribution to national musical culture (Georgescu, 2015).

Several studies focus specifically on analytical and interpretative readings of Dănceanu's music. Petecel-Theodoru (2014) examines the composer's work through the lens of completeness and integrative thinking, highlighting the coherence of his stylistic and philosophical approach. This article provides detailed analytical observations that are incorporated into the present study's discussion of compositional structure and expressive intent (Petecel-Theodoru, 2014).

Vasilii (2015) explores the dialectic between "music as reflection" and "reflection of music" in Dănceanu's work, offering a philosophically oriented interpretation of his compositional language. This source is particularly important for the hermeneutic dimension of the study, as it articulates the reflective and self-referential qualities of Dănceanu's music (Vasilii, 2015).

Taken together, the reviewed literature demonstrates that Liviu Dănceanu has been the subject of sustained scholarly attention across several decades, encompassing interviews, theoretical writings, critical analyses, and historiographic syntheses. However, these sources often remain compartmentalized, focusing either on personal testimony, stylistic description, or historical placement. The present study addresses this gap by integrating these perspectives and by examining Dănceanu's work through the combined lenses of musicological analysis, historiography, and contemporary reception, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of his position as a "classic" composer of postmodern music.

Results

The reception of Liviu Dănceanu's work in the volumes of historical-stylistic synthesis published after 2000

Ever since 2002, when musicologist Valentina Sandu-Dediu, shortly after the passage between centuries and millennia, published the first volume of a synthesis of Romanian music between 1944–2000, Liviu Dănceanu was perceived both as a leading representative of the *avant-garde generation* of composers, by exploring new ways of producing sound and experimenting with elements of musical theatre, and also as a musician concerned with "*personal re-actualizing of tradition*", thanks to his series of "approximate" genres and forms (*quasi-fuga, quasi-ricercar, quasi-concerto, quasi-symphony, quasi-opera*). Later, his works entitled *History* are considered from the perspective of the diachronic traversal of styles and languages of the past, entering the "*field of Romanian musical postmodernity*" (Sandu-Dediu, 2002, pp. 199-200).

After a decade, in 2012, the musicologist Oleg Garaz draws the chronological delimitations of postmodernism, considering as "the incipient period of postmodernism, even if with a certain

degree of approximation, the time segment between the turning point of 1968 and 1979, when Lyotard finalizes his report.” (*Garaz, 2012, p. 8*) Considering this temporal delimitation in Liviu Dănceanu’s case, his compositional work, his musicological writings and his conducting and artistic activity in general can be categorized in this phase of the Romanian music history, tracing some personal, original directions and at the same time consolidating previous traditions, from a perspective of recovery, synthesis and reintegration of them in the actuality of the compositional phenomenon. Of course, the generalized perception of composers is a reprehensible one in relation to possible historical categorizations, aesthetic classifications or stylistic sorting, but, in the case of Liviu Dănceanu, “the gradual emergence, in waves, of postmodernity” (*Garaz, 2012, p. 31*) is obvious in his own creation, through the successive stages through which it has been configured, transformed and reconfigured, from the assimilation of the heterophony absorbed from the long relationship with his mentor, Ștefan Niculescu. Passing through the experimental phases that aimed at the quasi-traditionalist approach to genres and forms, instrumental theatre, partial aleatorism, spectralism with inverted harmonics, mathematical proportions, Liviu Dănceanu has reached in the last two decades of existence the stage of the diachronic journey towards the compositional languages of the past from the systematizing, integrating and reinterpetative perspective of the present. Thus, Liviu Dănceanu’s *perpetual mobility* among genres, styles, currents, languages, timbres and compositional techniques became his *compositional stylemark*, the generative code for his entire musical thought.

Closer to the unexpected end of his life is the study accomplished by the musicologist Laura Otilia Vasiliu, from Iași, entitled *Liviu Dănceanu—Reflection of Music vs Music of Reflection*, published in 2015, in which the composer’s personality and thought, as well as the establishment of the *Archaeus* Ensemble, which became the centre of interest of his entire musical activity, are considered as evolutions derived from an original structure, from a generative nucleus – the *archetype*. “The archetype principle is that of the gradual configuration of form from the fundamental sound and intermittent appearances. It dominated the aesthetics of Dănceanu, who owed this idea to Constantin Noica” (*Vasiliu, 2015, p. 79*). In the researcher’s view, Liviu Dănceanu’s work can be delineated into *three main stages*, named in the study: “1978–1985. *Composition versus musicology*”, “*Recoveries I (1988–1994). Byzantine music*” and “*Recoveries II (after 1995). Composition—interpretation—musicology*”. This demarcation into three periods of work reflects the musician’s multiple affinities, orientations, oscillations between the directions of his compositional, musicological, conducting, literary and publicist activity, on the one hand, but also his pendulations between archetypal sources, languages, techniques, styles, musical trends, on the other hand. The point of intersection between all these paths and ramifications remains the *Archaeus* Ensemble, a landmark of stability and consistency over time, with a path closely linked to the life of its founder and keeping alive his creative energy through the continuation of his concert activity and the perpetuation of his music.

After Liviu Dănceanu’s passing (in 2017), reflecting on his position in the large stylistic pool of stylistic trends, orientations, sources and compositional techniques existing in Romanian music after 1960 (in the second volume of *New Histories of Romanian Music*, 2021), the well-known Romanian composer and musicologist Dan Dediu places him, on the one hand, in the area of novel techniques, due to the use of *heterophony* and the application of *the theory of musical syntaxes*, methods deeply embedded in his creative thinking as a result of the years of mentorship and the bond created with the composer Ștefan Niculescu, being in the area of the “compositional constellation” generated by his “encyclopaedic, olympian and world personality” (*Dediu, 2021, p. 360*). On the other hand, Liviu Dănceanu is also included in the category of musicians who

have appealed to adapted techniques, such as *spectralism*, in the version of the *lower harmonics*, used in the Trombone Concerto entitled *Seven Days—Concerto for Barrie* (1991) and in the chamber works *Andamento* (1994) and *Aliquote* (1994), emphasizing the investigation of the natural resonance of sound and the experimentation of mathematical principles in the musical field. Adapted techniques also include *polystylism* and *metastylism*, which became particularly obvious in the compositions of his last period (approximately after the year 2000) in which appear frequent references to past trends and styles, both academic, Western European and folkloric, Byzantine, being inserted into his music with a rhetorical, objective attitude, typical for the *stylistic historicism*, but with a refreshing, playful approach to reinventing tradition as if created in the context of our times: *History II* (1998), *Panta rei* (2001), *Beverdillini* (2001), *Exercises of Admiration* (2004), *Heptaih* (2011). A last category in which Dan Dediu places Liviu Dănceanu at the end of his study is the *vernacular*, imagined by the author as a novel aesthetic direction, based on the originality and uniqueness of the “poetic uniqueness of the Romanian ethos” (Dediu, 2021, p. 398) in the context of the intensely heterogeneous and cosmopolitan music of the 21st century.

Liviu Dănceanu’s imaginative force reaches points and directions so diverse in their aesthetic and stylistic essence that we arrive at Umberto Eco’s phrase—*opera aperta*, understood as open work/opera, but also as *a work in movement* or a *moving work*, as the composer himself states in an article published in *România literară* [*Literary Romania*], entitled *Between clarity and ambiguity*: “Due to the virtual composition and re-composition of the component parts, a work/an opera in movement can take on the appearance of narrative music, being in the presence of a phenomenon of non-identification of the work with itself, and of the highlighting of new aspects after each aesthetic consumption.” (Dănceanu, 2007a)

In all these historical, musicological or internet sources, we notice the dense perceptions, consistent in ideas generated by the impact of Liviu Dănceanu’s compositions on listeners and researchers. His works are characterized by stylistic diversity, versatility and an extraordinary sense of balance of form, language, expression, often adopting an aesthetics of paradox by harmonizing opposites, merging tradition with avant-garde, integrating abstract symbolism with instrumental theatre. Dănceanu’s music can sometimes be perceived as playful, intellectual, sometimes absurd, surrealist, with many incongruities embedded in a striking dramaturgy, or, on the contrary, it can be perceived as a return to the archaic ethos of modal, primordial sonorities, which add a meditative, transcendental dimension to his creation.

Analytical considerations on the works performed by the Archaeus Ensemble at the Romanian Music Festival in Iași, 26th edition, 2024

The anniversary concert, conceived as a compositional portrait *in memoriam*, prepared and performed by the *Archaeus* Ensemble, would have been, of course, an occasion of joy and celebration, to celebrate the 70th birthday with one of the most brilliant musicians of his generation, Liviu Dănceanu. Previously, I had the opportunity to participate in a concert performed by the members of the ensemble in Iași, conducted by the composer himself, on the same stage of the “Eduard Caudella” Hall of “Alecui Balș” House, during the 17th edition of the Romanian Music Festival in 2013.

After 11 years, we took part in the legacy left by Liviu Dănceanu to posterity, through the musical works and the carefully chosen words for the descriptions of the scores, which took shape and sound in real time thanks to the *Archaeus* Ensemble, which he founded, directed and supported until the end of his life. According to Loredana Baltazar in an article published online in 2016, “the artistic trajectory of composer and professor Liviu Dănceanu is to a large extent

to be found in the destiny of the *Archaeus* Ensemble” (Baltazar, 2016). The performers whom we had the opportunity to listen to in Iași, during the 2024 edition of the festival, were: Rodica Dănceanu (piano), Cristian Balaș (violin), Alexandru Matei (percussion), Ion Nedelciu (clarinet), Șerban Novac (bassoon), Ana Maria Radu (oboe), Andreea Țimirăș (cello), under the musical direction of the conductor Mircea Pădurariu.

Out of the eight works performed by the *Archaeus* Ensemble at the Romanian Music Festival in Iași, I will focus on three opuses, due to the different compositional conceptions that emerged at the basis of each of them, determining three of its many contrasting musical horizons: the application of mathematical principles and proportions—in *Aliquote* op. 63,—the intention of historical synthesis, by bringing back and recontextualizing stylistic traditions in postmodernity—as he does in *Panta rei* op. 82—and the archaic Byzantine vein of Romanian musical culture—explored and masterfully exploited in *Heptaiib* op. 123.

Aliquote op. 63

Composed in 1984 at the request of the *Chromas* Ensemble of Trieste and the organizers of the *Trieste Prima '94* festival, *Aliquote* op. 63 is a challenging work, both interpretatively and analytically (Figure 1). The work is intended for a chamber ensemble made up of flute/oboe, clarinet, bassoon, piano, guitar/viola, cello, to which are added various adjacent percussion instruments (*chimes, tom-tom, maracas, gong, raganella, ucelli*), based on a complex mathematical calculation with prime numbers and simple ratios, arriving at a dense, complicated sonic whole, according to the indications given by the composer in the score’s preface. This whole is characterized by ubiquity and isotropy, having an egg-like internal distribution, i.e., homogeneous and dense in all directions within it. The term “aliquot” defines – in its original, mathematical sense—a part of a whole, contained within it a certain number of times. At the musical level, the principle of the aliquot is found both at the level of syntax and musical macrostructure, and in the sonorous material, expressed in this case by natural harmonics, approached as parts (i.e., aliquots) of an entity (in this case, the fundamental sound—D).

This phenomenon and compositional principle is suggested by the Latin expression pronounced by the performers throughout the work and very poignantly at the end—*Ab uno disce omnes* [“By one you can know/judge all”]—taken from the ancient epic *Aeneid* II by the Roman poet Vergilius (ca. 70 BC – 19 BC), referring to the episode in which the Greeks entered the city of Troy by the famous method of a wooden horse (Figure 2).

The insertions of the human voice and of the various adjacent percussion instruments outline the idea of a whole that can be decomposed into its parts (aliquots), according to the order predetermined by the composer. The composer’s intuition of proportions is fascinating, as is his agile sense of balance, in order to avoid excess, redundancy or, on the contrary, lack of support for the musical dramaturgy.

Thus, any element that contributes to the construction of the discourse—a melodic succession, a rhythmic formula, a particular technique or a constructive principle—is carefully and measuredly exploited by the composer, highlighting his ability to calibrate the duration of the prolongation of an effect, such as certain pedals, insistences, timbral associations, certain “waves” or dynamic contrasts in relation to the conceiving thought over the sections or the whole work.

Panta rei op. 82

A representative work for the historicizing, synthesizing perspective on the past is *Panta rei* op. 82, which was composed in 2001, at the request of the festival “Two Days and Two Nights of New Music” in Odessa. In Greek, *Panta rei* means *Everything flows* and is an expression reduced to its essence of meaning, based on the idea attributed to the Hellenistic philosopher Heraclitus, according to whom all things come into being through the conflict of opposites, and the sum of things—that is the “whole”—flows like water. The work composed by Liviu Dănceanu stands out both for its virtuoso writing and for its “mosaic, miscellaneous aspect (like crystalline schist), each layer being taken from a diachronic traversal of stylistic periods that have defined the language of European music in the last millennium”, as the composer himself states in the brief Romanian preface to the manuscript.

The opus is made up of a succession of 13 sections that unfold in a continuous, uninterrupted movement, but each moment marked distinctly in the score (*Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism, Romanticism, Modernism, Post-Modernism, Ethnical, Archetypal, Jazz, Rock-Rap*) brings a certain compositional gesture, captured through a new type of discourse or a different writing, sometimes through certain sound suggestions that refer to certain historical-stylistic periods. The composer has added an introduction, called *A priori*, and a conclusion, called *A posteriori*, to the opening and the end of the composition.

Initially, the work exposes a sinuous chromatic line, exposed on the piano and composed of semitones that “flow” uniformly, predominantly downwards, in sixteenths, suggesting the musical thread, the warp, the sonorous material from which the discourse of future artistic epochs will be woven. The *Middle Ages* take up this line of sound in the oboe, but with a diatonic intonational structure where the only chromatic chromatics are B flat and B natural, followed by clarinet and bassoon, which develop their parts on the principle of horizontal linearity, supported by the interventions of the violin and cello which run parallel, in perfect fifths, in prolonged durations, recalling the tradition of *cantus firmus* used as monody and later in the parallel organum.

Renaissance takes over the musical line played by the violin in sixteenths, applying polyphonic imitation with the entry of the clarinet, then the cello and piano, at perfect octave intervals, in a manner similar to the motet and madrigal genres, but without prolonging this moment too much. *Baroque* and *Classicism* follow each other in an increasingly concise and condensed unfolding, in 2/4-time signature, by overlapping different types of arpeggiated figurations or gradual fragments combined with changing notes, passing notes, échappées notes, built through patterns of harmonic sequences, with brief flashes of potential melodies, exposed by oboe and violin, as in a quick dialog, created by the complementarity of musical lines. *Romanticism* emerges on the way, as a consequence of the accumulation of previous procedures. In this section, these techniques become sketched, compressed, suggested by the discourse of instruments that bring the gesture of specific themes and accompaniments from 19th century scores (e.g., the 3/4 meter and the waltz movement, with counter-time on the first beat) ([Figure 3](#); [Figure 4](#)).

Modernism is marked by the 5/4-time signature and the sudden change of the writing which, although it keeps the profile of the chromatic motif from the beginning, becomes fragmented due to its irregular circulation in the ensemble instruments and the accompaniment generated by sounds arranged in a mosaic in the score, in the manner of pointillism.

Postmodernism, although more visually organized, creates an effect of deconstruction of the initial compositional idea through rhythmically calculated entries for each instrument, in a succession of alternative measures, followed by the sections for *ethnic, archetypal* and *jazz* categories,

which bring particular elements such as melodic ornaments, polyrhythm and vertical polymeter, unconventional timbral effects, chords and syncopations specific to entertainment music.

The tensional climax is reached in the section entitled *Rock-Rap*, where the members of the ensemble also have vocal interventions, with spoken text based on rhythmic structures indicated in the score. The performers quote maxims, sayings, proverbs belonging to classical thinkers, mentioned by Liviu Dănceanu in the *Addenda** at the beginning of the manuscript (Figure 5).

Finally, the last section entitled *A posteriori* brings back the chromatic line from the beginning, this time in an ascending and conclusive way. Throughout the 13 sections, the musical discourse that unfolds is cursive and chaotic at the same time, unidirectional and eclectic, unfolding at a speed that may seem fulminating for the average human capacity to receive such dense and varied music. However, perhaps the purpose of this quick foray into the history of musical styles that have succeeded one another over the last 1000 years is to remind us that, while on a cosmic level, time may be eternal, synchronous, overlapping past, present and future, for human, terrestrial existence, time flows linearly, life is always moving forward and flashing by in relation to the universe.

***Heptaih* op. 123**

Liviu Dănceanu's music is often like a show of stylistic allusions and refined parodies, which open unexpected perspectives on tradition and modernity to the listener. Another work that emphasizes the complex thinking and the kaleidoscopic image generated by his music is *Heptaih*, which exploits and synthesizes tradition in a different approach in terms of language, style, sonorous syntax, as well as semantically and spiritually.

Heptaih, op. 123 was composed in 2009, at the request of the *Macedonian Music Days* festival. The title, an obvious reference to the archaic echos, sums up the semantic force of the figure (Figure 7) both in a timbral context, through the number of instruments involved in the discourse (oboe, clarinet, bassoon, percussion—which contains vibraphone, gong, chimes,—piano, violin, cello), and through the sections named after the modes used in this work. The echos on which the composer has built the musical edifice of *Heptaih* are *Protovarīs*, *Leghetos*, *Lydios*, *Phrygios*, *Plaghios deuterios* and *Protos*, which follow one another in a specific order designed to symbolize a path of states specific to religious meditation, like a pilgrimage—as Liviu Dănceanu would say—among many ethos and topos.

Beginning in the grave, solemn and deeply introspective atmosphere that the *Protovarīs* mode creates, due to its association with the prayers of repentance in the archaic Byzantine tradition, the sonorous discourse has a modal construction initially made up of semitones that gravitate melismatically around B, through *glissandi* and chromatic undulations that circulate from one instrument to another, as in a feverish and involuntary search.

A state of possible certainty settles with the new section, entitled *Leghetos*, in 5/4-meter signature, when a simple but penetrating melody unfolds, intoned by the oboe and subsequently accompanied by the rest of the instruments. They enter successively, one or two beats apart, generating a heterophonic texture that covers the initial monody with other similar melodic contours, but more sinuous and offset by triplets, hemiolas, syncopations. The modal foundation in this section is explicitly displayed in the discourse of each instrument by the insistence on the sound-centre E and especially in the lower register of the piano, by those deep

* Translation: “What is not worth saying is sung.” (Beaumarchais); “As you sow, so shall you reap.” (Cicero); “The vanity of vanities and all are vanity.” (David); “Much ado about nothing.” (Shakespeare); “Look and pass!” (Dante); “The earth has room for all.” (Schiller); “Everything flows.” (Heraclitus).

octaves whose resonance amplified by the pedal generates the image of a heavy anchor, dropped into the depth of the sonorous discourse (Figure 6).

Lydios, on the other hand, emphasizes the polyphonic imitation of a motif derived, somehow, from the previous melody, but melodically transformed by the insertion of two augmented seconds (A flat—B and D flat—E) and rhythmically treated through multiple variations including augmentation, diminution, division of some durations, all of which are sometimes perceived distinctly, in a row, other times synchronously and polyrhythmically.

In contrast to this clearly organized section on the modal, metric and syntactic levels, reaching a cadence in unison on G, the next sound area, marked with the *Phrygios* indication, brings a generalized freedom in all sound parameters: melodic fragments similar to Romanian doina, that are improvisatory and richly ornamented, played by the cello, then clarinet, bassoon and, later, by the rest of the ensemble, in tempo *ad libitum* and alternative meters. We note the harmonic pedals made up of quartal chords played by the vibraphone and the minor sevenths intoned by the chordophones (by overlapping violin and cello), arriving, on page 14, at a vertical harmonization, similar to a chorale, based on sounds drawn from natural harmonics arranged in different registers.

In the *Hypodorios* section, the heterophony returns, this time with more breadth and expressiveness, the composer requesting in the score a *molto legato sempre* performance. Each individual line of sound develops a warm, serene melos, which dissipates into a mobile and intensely melismatic texture, whose modal centre is D. The vibraphone and the piano together constitute the contrasting element in relation to the other instruments, due to their synchronous, unison development in higher time signatures.

The culminating point is reached in the penultimate section, entitled *Plaghios deuterios*—VIth echo or *Hypolidios*, the plagal of the second echo, *Lydios*, according to the study written by Despina Petecel-Theodoru (*Petecel-Theodoru, 2014, p. 54*)—due to the evolution of the sonorous lines towards the high register of each instrument and the insertion of chromatic elements, in a dense texture with increasingly shorter and accelerated note values. The state of tension brought about by these details of writing is typical of the *Plaghios deuterios* mode, whose use in oral practice also includes microtones, and is found in the penitential troparia and in the chants of Passion Friday (Figure 7).

The transition to the final part of the work is accomplished by setting the modal foundation on D for all instruments. From this point, a last meditative melody starts in a heterophonic motion, similar to the second section, *Leghetos*, where this melodic line was first exposed. The ethos of the mode used in the conclusion and mentioned in the score—*Protos*—creates a state of spiritual equilibrium and inner conciliation, thanks to the simplified, diatonic discourse, centred on D, with an airy, diaphanous writing, with uncomplicated and powerful harmonies, suggesting a return to simple, original musical phenomena (Figure 8).

Thus, the composer's conception on the modes arranged in seven sections on the seven instruments of the *Archaeus* Ensemble is visible by layering the initial monody in a musical writing that alternates the homogeneous arrangement with heterogeneous polyphony, unison and modal counterpoint that intertwine and deploy in a perpetual motion, clearing up, in the end, in a general unison on D, in a noble consonance.

After this wandering among ideas, states, agglomerations, rarefactions, areas of quivering and persists above sonorous anchors, the words of the musicologist Despina Petecel-Theodoru came to my mind, who published during this summer a particularly sensitive portrait of the composer, in a high articulation, with areas of great depth of thought, as well as poetic insights. She wrote the following idea: "Liviu Dănceanu is always unpredictable, always different, each

page of the score is different from the previous and the following ones due to the variety of rhythmic, agogic, harmonic formulas, which he modifies and permutes, which gives dynamism and variety to his compositional approach.” (*Petecel-Theodoru, 2014, p. 59*)

Discussion

The results of the study demonstrate a high degree of relevance both for contemporary musicology and for broader discussions concerning cultural memory, canon formation, and the mechanisms of reception in postmodern musical culture. By focusing on Liviu Dănceanu as a representative and emblematic figure of Romanian postmodern music, the research contributes to the clarification of how individual creative trajectories become stabilized within national and transnational musical historiography.

One of the key contributions of the study lies in its reception-oriented perspective, which allows the composer’s legacy to be examined not solely through historical distance or abstract stylistic classification, but through its active presence in contemporary performance and institutional practice. The analysis of the commemorative concert format reveals how musical works are recontextualized and revalidated within present-day cultural frameworks, thereby confirming Dănceanu’s status as a “classic” not in the sense of historical closure, but as a continuing point of reference for artistic and intellectual discourse.

The findings are particularly relevant in the context of postmodern music studies, where the notion of “classical status” often remains theoretically ambiguous. By demonstrating that Dănceanu’s music functions simultaneously as a product of postmodern aesthetics and as a stable component of institutional memory, the study offers a model for understanding how postmodern composers may enter the canon without relinquishing the principles of stylistic plurality, reflexivity, and historical self-awareness.

Furthermore, the study contributes to Romanian musicology by synthesizing dispersed scholarly perspectives into a coherent analytical framework. Previous studies have addressed Dănceanu’s work from various angles—biographical, analytical, philosophical, or historiographic—but rarely have these perspectives been integrated within a single study that connects compositional analysis, scholarly reception, and contemporary performance practice. The study demonstrates that such integration is not only methodologically feasible, but necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the composer’s cultural significance.

At a broader level, the results are relevant to studies of cultural continuity in post-1960 European music. By situating Dănceanu within the long-term evolution of Romanian music after the decline of modernist teleologies, the research highlights the role of composers who mediate between historical consciousness and postmodern reconfiguration. In this sense, the findings resonate beyond the national context, offering insights applicable to comparative studies of postmodern music in other cultural traditions.

Despite the coherence of the analytical framework, the study process revealed a number of methodological and structural challenges that merit critical reflection. One of the primary difficulties concerns the heterogeneity of the source material. The literature on Liviu Dănceanu encompasses interviews, composer-authored essays, analytical articles, and historiographic syntheses, each operating with different methodological assumptions and evaluative criteria. Integrating these sources into a unified analytical narrative required careful differentiation between authorial self-interpretation, critical reception, and retrospective historiographic assessment.

A related problem arises from the inherently subjective nature of reception-based analysis. While the commemorative concert provides a valuable empirical reference point, it represents

only one institutional and performative context. The interpretation of such an event as evidence of canonical status necessarily involves a degree of inference, as reception is shaped by multiple factors, including programming policies, institutional agendas, and audience composition. The study addresses this limitation by situating the concert within a broader historiographic and cultural framework, but the issue nonetheless underscores the need for caution in generalizing reception-based conclusions.

Another challenge concerns the temporal proximity of the study object. The analysis deals with a composer whose legacy is still actively negotiated within contemporary culture. Unlike studies of historically distant figures, research on recent or near-contemporary composers lacks the stabilizing effect of long-term historiographic consensus. As a result, evaluative judgments remain open to revision, and the criteria for “classical” status are not yet fully codified. This situation complicates attempts to draw definitive conclusions, but it also constitutes a productive tension that reflects the dynamic nature of postmodern musical culture.

The study also encountered limitations related to the availability and accessibility of performance documentation. While analytical readings of selected works were supported by concert programs and scholarly descriptions, comprehensive performance recordings and archival materials were not always available for systematic comparison. This constraint restricted the scope of performance analysis and highlighted the broader issue of documentation practices in contemporary music culture.

Finally, the study revealed a relative scarcity of explicitly reception-oriented studies in Romanian musicology. While stylistic and historical analyses are well represented, fewer works address how music functions within present-day institutional and cultural contexts. This gap necessitated the adaptation of methodological tools from reception studies and performance analysis, underscoring the interdisciplinary nature of the research but also pointing to an area where further methodological development is needed.

The findings of the study open several promising directions for further research. One important avenue involves the expansion of reception-oriented analysis to a broader range of performances and institutional contexts. Comparative studies examining how Dănceanu’s music is programmed and interpreted across different ensembles, festivals, and cultural settings would provide a more nuanced understanding of his contemporary reception and canonical status.

Another perspective direction lies in comparative postmodern studies. Situating Dănceanu alongside other European composers who emerged in the post-1960 period would allow for the identification of shared strategies and national specificities in postmodern musical thought. Such comparative work could contribute to a more integrated European perspective on postmodern music, moving beyond isolated national narratives.

Further research could also focus on the pedagogical dimension of Dănceanu’s legacy. Investigating how his music is represented in academic curricula, analytical textbooks, and compositional training would shed light on the mechanisms through which postmodern music enters educational canonization. This line of inquiry would complement the present study’s focus on performance and historiography, extending the analysis to the sphere of musical education.

Another promising direction concerns interdisciplinary approaches that connect musicology with philosophy, cultural studies, and institutional theory. Given Dănceanu’s own engagement with aesthetic and philosophical questions, future studies could explore the relationship between his compositional practice and broader intellectual currents, such as postmodern theories of history, identity, and meaning.

Finally, further research may address the role of archives, documentation, and digital media in shaping the reception of contemporary composers. As musical culture increasingly relies on digital dissemination, understanding how recordings, online platforms, and digital archives contribute to canon formation will become increasingly important. Applying such perspectives to the study of Dănceanu's music would extend the study into new methodological and technological domains.

In sum, the Discussion confirms that the study's results are not only relevant for understanding the creative legacy of Liviu Dănceanu, but also for advancing methodological and theoretical debates in contemporary musicology. By identifying both achievements and limitations, the research lays the groundwork for future investigations that can further clarify the processes through which postmodern composers attain enduring cultural significance.

Conclusion

Overall, Dănceanu's work is situated at the intersection between experiment and reverence for musical history. Making use of heterophonic writing techniques, partial aleatorism, inverted spectralism, instrumental theatre, mathematical proportions, rigorous formal processes and constructive strategies to bring music to a new level of artistic expression, the composer later turns to the musical languages of the past, acquiring a playful-recuperative attitude in reinterpreting styles, trends, syntaxes and even famous themes, until reinventing them in new contexts and approaches with a fresh, postmodern breath. His creation is not only an accumulation of sophisticated musical techniques, but also a philosophical reflection on the condition of contemporary music.

His artistic ideas and messages, conveyed both through his compositions and theoretical writings, outline a perpetually restless meditation on the state of contemporary music, as suggested in the volumes of essays, philosophical reflections and aesthetic debates: *Implosive Essays* (α -1998, β -2001, γ -2005), *The Book of Instruments* (2002), *The Book of Dances* (2004), *Partially Sonorous Diary* (2009), *Seminars in the Key of C* (2009), *Figurations and Fulgurations* (2011), *The Cursive Arial Diary* (2017—a volume of memories and confessions of exceptional literary value). Especially in his philosophical work, *The Apocalypse of Scholarly Music* (Dănceanu, 2009b), the musicologist Liviu Dănceanu expresses his concerns about the ephemerality of this art and the fragility of musical culture in the face of historical, social and cultural changes. This sentiment also comes through in his music, which often contains breaks with rhetorical effect, moments suggestive of states of anxiety, ridicule, sometimes even despair, but also notes of introspection or resignation, highlighting the idea that music itself is an art of passing and transformation.

Even though Liviu Dănceanu left us on October 26, 2017, his music, his ideas, his writings, the memory of his concerts and lectures are what prolong his existence beyond the Great Threshold. In his own words, “after all, no one and nothing is indispensable except the sun and the belief that, even if I know that the latter will win, I love life and not death.” (Apostu, 2017, p. 24)

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

The image displays four pages of a musical score for the piece 'Aliquote' by Liviu Dăncăanu, op. 63. The score is arranged in two columns and two rows. The top-left page (numbered 10) features an orchestral arrangement with staves for Flute (Fl), Oboe (Ob), Clarinet (Cl), Bassoon (Fg), Horn (F), Trumpet (T), Violin (Vl), Viola (Vla), and Violoncello (Vc). The top-right page (numbered 11) continues the orchestral parts, adding the Flute (Fl), Oboe (Ob), Clarinet (Cl), Bassoon (Fg), Piano (Pf), Cymbal (Chif), Snare Drum (Timp), Violin (Vl), and Violoncello (Vc). The bottom-left page (numbered 12) introduces vocal parts, including Soprano (Sopr), Alto (Alto), Tenor (Tenor), and Bass (Bass), alongside the Flute (Fl), Oboe (Ob), Clarinet (Cl), Bassoon (Fg), Piano (Pf), Cymbal (Chif), Snare Drum (Timp), Violin (Vl), and Violoncello (Vc). The bottom-right page (numbered 13) continues the vocal and orchestral parts, including Soprano (Sopr), Alto (Alto), Tenor (Tenor), Bass (Bass), Flute (Fl), Oboe (Ob), Clarinet (Cl), Bassoon (Fg), Piano (Pf), Cymbal (Chif), Snare Drum (Timp), Violin (Vl), and Violoncello (Vc). The score is written in a standard musical notation with various dynamics and articulations.

Figure 1. Liviu Dăncăanu, Aliquote, op. 63, excerpt from the manuscript score, pp. 10-13

Figure 2. Liviu Dănceanu, Aliquote, op. 63, excerpt from the manuscript score, p. 34 (the end)

(Clasicism)

Figure 3. Liviu Dănceanu, Panta rei, op. 82, fragment from the sections Baroque—Classicism. Excerpt from the manuscript score, p. 8

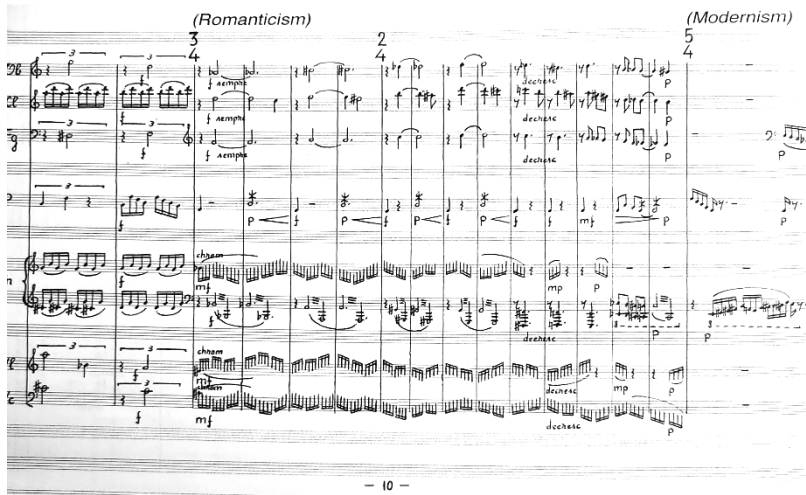


Figure 4. Liviu Dănceanu, *Panta rei*, op. 82, fragment from the sections Romanticism—Modernism. Excerpt from the manuscript score, p. 10

A D D E N D A

"Ce qui ne vaut pas la peine d'être dit, on le chante" (**Beaumarchais**)

"Ut sementem feceris, ita metes" (**Cicero**)

"Haveil havulim hacoil haveil" (**David**)

"Much ado about nothing" (**Shakespeare**)

"Guarda e passa" (**Dante**)

"Raum fur alle hat die Erde" (**Schiller**)

"Panta rei" (**Heraclit**)

Figure 5. Liviu Dănceanu, *Panta rei*, op. 82, fragment from the section Rock-rap. Excerpt from the manuscript score, p. 16

Figure 6 shows two pages of a musical score. The left page is numbered '- 3 -' and the right page is numbered '- 4 -'. The section is titled '5 Leghetos'. The score is written for a full orchestra, with staves for Oboe (Oe), Clarinet (Cl), Bassoon (Ba), Horn (Hr), Trumpet (Tr), Violin (Vln), Viola (Vla), Violoncello (Vcl), and Double Bass (Vcb). The music features intricate rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'mp' (mezzo-piano).

Figure 6. Liviu Dănceanu, *Heptaih op. 123*, fragment from the section *Leghetos*. Excerpt from the manuscript score, pp. 3-4

Figure 7 shows two pages of a musical score. The left page is numbered '- 18 -' and the right page is numbered '- 19 -'. The section is titled 'Plaghios deuterios'. The score is written for a full orchestra, with staves for Oboe (Oe), Clarinet (Cl), Bassoon (Ba), Horn (Hr), Violin (Vln), Viola (Vla), Violoncello (Vcl), and Double Bass (Vcb). The music features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'mp' (mezzo-piano).

Figure 7. Liviu Dănceanu, *Heptaih op. 123*, fragment from the section *Plaghios Deuterios*. Excerpt from the manuscript score, pp. 18-19

The image shows two pages of a musical score. The left page is numbered -21- and the right page is numbered -26-. The score is for a piece titled 'Protos' by Liviu Dănceanu. The tempo is marked '6/4 Protos'. The score includes staves for Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Ba.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The right page features a 'M. Chimes' section. Dynamics include 'pp' and 'ff'.

Figure 8. Liviu Dănceanu, *Heptaih* op. 123, fragment from the final section *Protos*.
Excerpt from the manuscript score, pp. 21 and 26

The Stedley Art Foundation Collection: Between Private Initiative and The Public-Private Space [3]

Abstract:

The relevance of this study is determined by the growing role of private art foundations and collections in shaping the contemporary cultural landscape and transforming traditional models of institutional representation of art. In the context of rethinking the boundaries between the private and the public, such initiatives acquire particular significance for art history, museum studies, and cultural theory. The research problem lies in the insufficient scholarly examination of private collections as hybrid institutional forms operating within the public cultural space. Existing studies tend to address either museum institutions or private collecting practices separately, without offering an integrated art-historical analysis of their interaction. The scientific novelty of the study consists in a comprehensive art-historical interpretation of the Stedley Art Foundation collection as a hybrid institutional model situated between private initiative and the public-private space. For the first time, the collection is analysed not only as an assemblage of artworks, but as a dynamic cultural mechanism that generates curatorial narratives, educational contexts, and alternative forms of public access to art. The subject of the study is the set of conceptual, curatorial, and institutional mechanisms through which the Stedley Art Foundation collection functions at the intersection of private collecting and the public cultural environment. The object of the study is the Stedley Art Foundation collection as an integral artistic and institutional phenomenon within contemporary Ukrainian art. The study aims to identify and analyse the specific features of the Stedley Art Foundation as a space in which private collecting initiative intersects with public cultural discourse. The methodological framework of the research is based on art-historical, institutional, comparative, philosophical, and axiological methods, as well as the analysis of curatorial practices, visual narratives, and empirical interview material. The study generalises and critically engages with the works of Ukrainian and international scholars and practitioners, including V. Blikhara, L. Levchuk, B. Pylypushko, V. Sakharuk, G. Poberizhna, K. Tsyhykalo, J.-C. Marcadé, and others, whose research addresses aesthetics, private collecting, institutional critique, and contemporary artistic practices. The research examines the principles of collection formation, curatorial strategies, and models of public representation implemented by the Stedley Art Foundation, with particular attention to the role of ethical and aesthetic values in shaping institutional identity. The collection is interpreted as a meaning-producing space that integrates artistic heritage, contemporary discourse, and public engagement. The study concludes that the Stedley Art Foundation represents an alternative model of an art institution in which private ownership does not limit, but rather expands the possibilities of public cultural communication. The findings demonstrate that such hybrid institutions play an increasingly important role in the development of contemporary art, the transformation of cultural landscapes, and the redefinition of the relationship between private initiative and public responsibility.

Keywords: private collection, Stedley Art Foundation, public-private space, contemporary art, art institutions, collecting practices, curatorial strategies, institutional critique, cultural representation.

Introduction

In the contemporary cultural landscape of Ukraine, the role of private artistic initiatives is becoming increasingly prominent, as they move beyond purely collector-oriented practices and acquire the features of public cultural institutions. One illustrative example of this type of institution is the Stedley Art Foundation, whose activities unfold at the intersection of the private initiative of the art collector Stella Benyaminova and an open, socially oriented artistic space.

The relevance of the study is conditioned by the need to conceptualise new models for the functioning of art foundations in the context of the transformation of museum, exhibition, and

curatorial practices of the early 21st century, as well as by the lack of comprehensive art-historical research devoted specifically to hybrid forms of “public private space”.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in a comprehensive art-historical interpretation of the Stedley Art Foundation collection as a hybrid institutional model operating at the intersection of private initiative and public private space. For the first time, the collection is examined not only as an assemblage of artworks, but as a dynamic cultural mechanism for representing contemporary art, forming curatorial narratives, and developing alternative models of access to artistic heritage. The study introduces the Stedley Art Foundation collection into the scholarly discourse of Ukrainian art history within the framework of institutional critique, emphasising its role in transforming the relationship between private collecting, public engagement, and cultural policy.

The subject of the study is the set of conceptual, curatorial, and institutional mechanisms through which the Stedley Art Foundation collection functions at the intersection of private collecting and the public–private cultural space. This includes the principles of collection formation, curatorial logic, models of representation and communication with audiences, and the socio-cultural roles performed by the collection within contemporary artistic discourse, while maintaining its private ownership status.

The object of the study is the activity of the Stedley Art Foundation as an institutional entity within the field of contemporary art, while the subject of the study comprises the mechanisms of interaction between a private collection and the public cultural environment, including exhibition strategies, communication models, and the socio-cultural functions of the foundation.

The study aims to identify and analyse the specific features of the Stedley Art Foundation as an example of contemporary institutional practice that combines private initiative with public cultural discourse.

To achieve the purpose, the study sets out to accomplish the following objectives:

- outline the theoretical foundations for the study of private artistic institutions;
- analyse the conceptual approaches to the formation of the collection and the public activities of the foundation;
- determine the place of the Stedley Art Foundation within the broader context of the contemporary artistic process.

The results of the study are addressed to art historians, cultural scholars, curators, museum professionals, researchers of contemporary art, as well as to all those interested in current forms of functioning of artistic institutions within the contemporary cultural space.

Methods

The methodological framework of the study is based on works in the theory and history of art, philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics, as well as albums of artists’ works from the collection of the Stedley Art Foundation. In particular, the research draws on studies by J.-C. Marcadé, K. Tsyhykalo, V. Blikhar, L. Levchuk, B. Pylypushko, V. Sakharuk, and S. Hlasenko, as well as works by Ukrainian and international art historians devoted to issues of private collecting and public cultural practices, and interviews with the owner of the art collection, Stella Benyaminova.

The study employs a set of general scientific methods that ensure the systematic character and scientific verifiability of the results obtained. The analytical method is used to identify the structural, substantive, and institutional features of the Stedley Art Foundation collection, as well as to distinguish between the private and public components of its functioning. The

synthetic method makes it possible to generalise individual art-historical, curatorial, and institutional characteristics of the collection into an integral conceptual model of a “public private space”. The comparative method is applied to compare the activities of the Stedley Art Foundation with other forms of private collections and contemporary art foundations, which allows its typological specificity to be outlined. The systemic approach ensures consideration of the collection as an integrated cultural mechanism in which collecting, representation, and communication with the public are combined. Inductive and deductive methods are used to formulate generalisations and theoretical conclusions regarding the transformation of boundaries between private initiative and public visibility in the contemporary art environment.

The study applies a range of philosophical methods that make it possible to conceptualise the Stedley Art Foundation collection within broader ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of contemporary culture. The dialectical method is used to analyse the tension and interaction between private initiative and public visibility, which shape the contradictory yet dynamic nature of the “public private space”. The phenomenological approach allows the collection to be considered as a space of immediate aesthetic experience and interaction between the viewer and the work of art beyond rigidly institutionalised museum models. The hermeneutic method is applied to interpret curatorial narratives, exhibition concepts, and the semantic layers of artistic practices represented in the collection. The axiological approach makes it possible to identify the value orientations of the collection in the context of the cultural responsibility of private collecting. Ontological analysis contributes to understanding the collection as a particular form of cultural being that combines the materiality of works of art with the immaterial sociocultural processes of their public actualisation.

The study also employs a set of art-historical methods aimed at a comprehensive analysis of the Stedley Art Foundation collection in artistic, historical-cultural, and institutional contexts. The formal-stylistic method is applied to analyse the plastic, compositional, and figurative-expressive features of the works included in the collection to identify their stylistic dominants and artistic strategies. Iconographic and iconological methods are used to interpret subjects, symbolic motifs, and semantic layers of artistic images within contemporary cultural and social narratives. The historical-artistic method makes it possible to examine the formation of the collection in relation to stages in the development of contemporary Ukrainian and global art. Contextual analysis allows artistic practices represented in the collection to be correlated with curatorial concepts, exhibition solutions, and the institutional environment of their representation. Attributive and typological methods are applied to systematise works according to authorship, genre, and media characteristics, contributing to a more precise understanding of the artistic structure of the collection and its conceptual integrity.

Literature Review

Contemporary scholarly discourse on private collecting and its role within the public cultural space is characterised by a growing interest in the transformation of institutional models, curatorial agency, and cultural mediation. Within the broader field of art history and cultural studies, private collections are increasingly examined not merely as accumulations of artworks, but as active agents shaping artistic narratives, interpretative frameworks, and modes of public access to cultural heritage. This shift in scholarly focus provides an essential theoretical background for the present study, which addresses the Stedley Art Foundation collection as a hybrid institutional phenomenon situated between private initiative and public-private space.

A substantial theoretical foundation for analysing the ethical, aesthetic, and value-based dimensions of cultural practices is provided by works in aesthetics and philosophy of art. The

teaching manual edited by Blikhara (2018) offers a structured overview of ethical and aesthetic categories, emphasising the interdependence between aesthetic perception and moral orientation. This framework is particularly relevant for the present study, as the Stedley Art Foundation collection is conceptualised not only as a visual assemblage, but as a value-driven cultural project in which aesthetic choices articulate ethical positions. The manual supports the interpretation of the collection as a meaning-producing space where aesthetic criteria shape curatorial narratives and institutional responsibility.

Similarly, the comprehensive textbook on aesthetics by Levchuk et al. (2010) provides a classical theoretical grounding for understanding art as a form of cultural cognition and symbolic communication. The authors' treatment of aesthetic experience as a mediator between individual perception and collective cultural meaning informs the present study's approach to analysing the interaction between private collecting and public reception. This source is used to contextualise the Foundation's activities within broader aesthetic discourses and to substantiate the interpretation of the collection as a mediator between personal vision and public cultural dialogue.

Primary empirical insight into the internal logic of the collection is drawn from the author's interview with the collector Stella Beniaminova (2025). This interview constitutes a key source for understanding the motivations, principles, and value orientations underlying the formation of the Stedley Art Foundation collection. In the present study, the interview is used not merely as biographical material, but as an interpretative lens through which the ethical and aesthetic philosophy of the collection is articulated. It allows the research to connect curatorial strategies and institutional decisions with the personal worldview of the collector, thereby illuminating the subjective dimension of private initiative within a public-oriented cultural framework.

A number of sources are devoted to the analysis of individual artists whose works form the conceptual core of the collection, thereby contributing to an understanding of its artistic structure and internal coherence. Yevgeniya (2014) examines the oeuvre of Oleksandr Zhivotkov, focusing on materiality, formal experimentation, and the artist's engagement with the philosophical dimensions of painting. This study is instrumental for analysing Zhivotkov's role within the collection as a figure representing continuity between modernist traditions and contemporary artistic language. In the present research, Zhivotkov's work is interpreted as a key element in the Foundation's strategy of privileging depth, introspection, and ethical resonance over decorative or market-oriented considerations.

The publication "Breathing Form": Oleksandr Sukholit (2021) addresses the sculptural practice of Sukholit, emphasising the organic relationship between form, material, and archaic cultural memory. This source is used to situate Sukholit's work within a broader art-historical trajectory that connects archaic traditions, modernism, and contemporary sculptural thought. Within the context of the present study, Sukholit's inclusion in the collection exemplifies the Foundation's commitment to artists whose work embodies a synthesis of historical consciousness and contemporary expression.

Pylypushko's (2018) doctoral dissertation on the phenomenon of "internal emigration" in the work of Oleksandr Aksinin provides a critical framework for understanding artistic resistance and autonomy under totalitarian conditions. This research contributes to the present study by contextualising Aksinin's graphic works as manifestations of ethical and intellectual independence. The dissertation supports the interpretation of the Stedley Art Foundation collection as a space that preserves and reactivates artistic practices marginalised by dominant ideological systems, thereby reinforcing the collection's role in institutional critique.

The meta-historical perspective offered by Poberizhna (2016) in her analysis of Johann Sebastian Bach provides an important philosophical parallel for understanding the collection's emphasis on continuity, transcendence, and cultural universality. Although focused on music, this work is employed in the present study as a conceptual reference for interpreting the collection's aspiration to integrate visual art into a broader meta-historical and philosophical horizon. It supports the argument that the Foundation's curatorial logic is grounded in an understanding of art as a transhistorical and transdisciplinary phenomenon.

Sakharuk's (2020) monograph on Mykola Trokh contributes to the analysis of photography within the collection, offering a nuanced interpretation of Trokh's position in Ukrainian photographic culture. This source is used to contextualise the Foundation's selective engagement with photography as an artistic medium that resists postmodern irony and spectacle. The study reinforces the interpretation of the collection's photographic component as aligned with ethical clarity, aesthetic restraint, and personal authenticity.

The album Oleksandr Dubovyk. Album No. 27 (2023) serves as both a documentary and interpretative source for understanding Dubovyk's symbolic language and philosophical orientation. In the present research, this publication is used to analyse the role of Dubovyk as a central figure in the collection's narrative of Ukrainian modernism and intellectual art. The album supports the argument that the Stedley Art Foundation positions Dubovyk not merely as an artist of historical significance, but as a thinker whose work facilitates dialogue between philosophy, ethics, and visual form.

Oksametny's (2015) article on Dychenko's mission provides an important contextual background for understanding the genealogy of private collecting in Ukraine. By examining Dychenko's role as a collector who preserved nonconformist art during the Soviet period, this source allows the present study to situate the Stedley Art Foundation within a lineage of private initiatives that functioned as alternative cultural institutions. The article is used to establish historical continuity between earlier forms of private collecting and contemporary hybrid institutional models.

Hlasenko's (2020) philosophical work *The House of Pure Light* contributes to the conceptual vocabulary used in the analysis of spirituality, ethics, and cultural introspection. Although not directly focused on visual art, this source is employed to contextualise the collector's emphasis on inner development, ethical purification, and resistance to mass cultural superficiality. It supports the interpretation of the Foundation's activities as grounded in a broader philosophical worldview that transcends disciplinary boundaries.

Finally, the scholarly publication by Tsyhykalo and Marcade (2021) on Oleksandr Dubovyk provides an art-historical and semiotic analysis of signs and symbols in Dubovyk's work. This source is crucial for the present study's examination of the semiotic and conceptual dimensions of the collection. It also demonstrates the Foundation's active role in producing scholarly knowledge, thereby reinforcing its status as an institution that combines collecting, research, and publication.

Taken together, the reviewed literature forms a multidimensional theoretical and empirical framework for analysing private collecting within the public cultural space. At the same time, it reveals a significant gap: despite the availability of philosophical, aesthetic, and artist-centred studies, there has been no comprehensive art-historical analysis of the Stedley Art Foundation collection as an integrated institutional phenomenon. This gap substantiates the relevance and scholarly validity of the present study, which addresses the Foundation as a representative example of a hybrid institutional model operating at the intersection of private initiative and public cultural responsibility.

Results

Today, Ukraine has a considerable number of private collections of visual art that play an exceptionally important role in the systematisation, preservation, and popularisation of Ukrainian fine art of the 20th and early 21st centuries. This article addresses the principles of artistic selection, formation, and the artistic and stylistic characteristics of one of the most significant art collections in contemporary Ukraine—the collection of Stella Benyaminova, founder of the Stedley Art Foundation.

Stella Benyaminova maintains that she loves and values high art. According to the custodian of rarities, specific principles and approaches to collecting are applied when people are taught how to collect, but today it is impossible to teach a person how to be a person. Many factors influence this, above all upbringing; everything around us should encourage self-knowledge and self-improvement. There must be an inner desire to reach this state and understanding, and only then does a prepared and conscious individual turn to art and culture.

Culture is diverse: there is high culture and mass culture. Therefore, everyone chooses their own path, and there are no universal principles or approaches to collecting. The collector's fundamental principle is to love art—to love not oneself in art, nor oneself within the fashionable collectors' circle that gathers popular artists, but to love art within oneself. Above all, art must be known. Before one can love it, one must understand what art is. And this, in fact, cannot be taught.

The owner of the art collection lives and collects according to the principle that aesthetics shapes ethics. For her, aesthetics is multifaceted. It may be quite simple—flowers in a vase—or it may be vivid, beautiful, and colourful, something that can affect any person. For Stella Benyaminova, however, everything is different, because she arrived at her own aesthetics from within herself: “I moved through the social perception of aesthetics towards my individual perception of it. And perhaps somewhere inside I felt that personality which, as the artist Oleksandr Zhivotkov said, already seeks colour in art, in painting, in music.”

For the collector today, art is primarily an aesthetic phenomenon; it is not apathetic, nor does it represent kitsch aesthetics. For her, art is deeply internal, chaste, and formative—it shapes her ethics, her environment, and her social circle. Aesthetics generally forms ethics, because if one embraces kitsch and provocation, proper ethics will not emerge; instead, one arrives at something entirely different. Contemporary society has significantly simplified and lowered its understanding of high aesthetics and high culture. Today, once again, we stand on the threshold of a renaissance—a new, forgotten revival. We have forgotten the aesthetics that shaped people at the dawn of their formation. What distinguishes us from the crowd is precisely this enduring difference between high culture and mass culture.

There are collectors who chase left-wing artists, and there are collectors who prefer right-wing artists, but Stella Benyaminova seeks herself and the art that has been embedded in her by the Creator: “Because every person is born as a blank page, yet inside there is a certain genetic component, a code formed by generations of our ancestors, and it exists within each of us. In order to decode myself and understand who I am, I need precisely the art that shapes me and is far stronger than the society that surrounds me, because I do not chase society. I delve into myself in order to understand who I am,” the collector emphasises. The art that assists Stella Benyaminova in this process includes the works of Oleksandr Zhivotkov and Oleksandr Sukholit, the art of Oleksandr Aksinin, and the music of Johann Sebastian Bach—everything that connects her to an understanding of high culture.

Genre scenes were popular and aesthetically pleasing until the 20th century. Everything in them is correct and beautiful: a cottage, flowers, a lovely landscape, a small human figure. All of this is harmonious and aesthetic, yet it does not shape the collector, because it has already existed and belongs to the past. The 20th century, however, gave us freedom. It introduced abstraction, symbolism, and surrealist modes of understanding. All of this profoundly strengthened Stella personally and enabled her to enter into dialogue with art—with any painting, sculpture, graphic work, or photographic artwork. At the same time, the collector notes: “It is I who become the viewer, and I myself complete within me what even the artist might not have been able to invent consciously. Here, one already works on the level of the subconscious.”

What genre composition could there be in the work of Oleksandr Zhivotkov, when he allows himself to invent the genre? Birds are flying above a road. The question arises: where are they flying? Why are they flying? Where does this road lead? This is already a philosophical mode of understanding. For the guardian of memory, it is important consciously to traverse the entire philosophy and history of art through creativity—e.g., through the work of Oleksandr Zhivotkov—from Plato to the present day. The 20th century is a unique century that allows this entire path to be traversed using a contemporary language. Contemporary artistic language is the language of quantum physics; it is the language of modern avant-garde art that enabled the owner of the art collection to be a free individual—free from genres, stereotypes, and interpretations taught in academies of art. Although such foundations are necessary and fundamental, once one has pushed off from them, one has the right to soar to the stars.

Among contemporary media, photography is also represented in the collection of the Stedley Art Foundation. The collector favours collecting artistic photographs by Mykola Trokh. Trokh was a serious photographic artist. Thanks to the researcher Valerii Sakharuk, who thoroughly studied his work, the figure of Trokh emerged for her as that of an outstanding photographer, since in Ukraine Boris Mikhailov is far better known as a fashionable figure. However, Mikhailov’s photography does not resonate with Stella. It is postmodernism, a phase she has already passed through and which never captivated her. Trokh is acknowledged as an honest and pure photographer who lived and worked during the 1990s. Within that decade, he remained faithful to his ethics and aesthetics. This was close to her, as the collector herself also personally lived through the 1990s. Trokh proved to be the photographer who led her away from the cultural photography of Boris Mikhailov.

In sculpture, it was precisely Oleksandr Sukholit who opened up within the guardian of rarities the very concept of sculpture: archaic sculpture, Greek plastic art, and Renaissance sculpture. Through Sukholit, Stella Benyaminova traversed the entire history of art in sculpture. From archaic forms to Greece, from Mycenae to Greece and to high antiquity, then to the Renaissance—a rebirth once again. From Greek sculptures of Apollos and Venuses to Michelangelo, from Michelangelo to Rodin and Maillol, and onward to Sukholit—this is a classical line. Archaic sculpture begins with the Trypillian culture and the Mycenaean civilisation, passes through Greece, and then, in the 20th century, returns once more to where we arrived: to Modigliani and Brâncuși. Once again, we return to archaic origins.

Therefore, for the owner of the art collection, the sculptor Sukholit represents everything that already belongs to the history of art; everything about him has already been said. Sukholit and Zhivotkov armed themselves with the contemporary language of the 20th century, the language of the avant-garde, the language of true modernism in its broad sense. These artists emerged from modernism and went through the entire path of formation and quotation without moving into postmodernism; they preserved the purity of line and aesthetics, which in turn generated ethics for the individual. Thus, having acquired the language of modernism, today

they make it possible, through the language of contemporary art, to preserve that genuine naturalness within oneself which must exist, because we are all unique; we cannot march together in a single formation and have a single branded artist. Stella asserts: “Everyone seeks their own line in art, their own path. O. Zhivotkov and O. Sukholit revealed to me through visual art what I then carried into music, literature, and philosophy, and all of this enriched me as a person.” (*Author’s interview...*, 2025)

The artist Oleksandr Dubovyk is also regarded by the collector as the pinnacle of the art of the Ukrainian Sixtiers, because at that time, in the era of socialist realism, habitual genre conventions, and Soviet aesthetics, Dubovyk practically gave her the opportunity to experience modernism through his works and his symbolism (*Oleksandr Dubovyk...*, 2023). Dubovyk is a thinker, and his understanding of life is particularly compelling: who are you on this earth, and where are you going as a human being? (*Figure 4*) He turns to Kant’s ideas, to moral laws, to quantum theories, and to his own singularity, thereby purifying himself. Through this catharsis, one gives birth to something new within oneself. And what is the new? It is the forgotten old. Thus, in the history of art and philosophy, everything ultimately revolves around Plato.

Born in the 20th century and living today in the 21st, Stella Benyaminova does not seek to be a collector of antiquity or of earlier epochs. Even with regard to the Trypillia culture, which she hardly collects at all, the art connoisseur nevertheless turned her attention to Trypillia because it is the only culture on Earth that connects her with all people living on the planet. It is a culture that dates back to the Eneolithic period, and from it the collector found it easy to take her point of departure—from archaic origins—and then traverse the entire history of art. The owner of the art collection emphasises: “In practice, I am not a collector of Trypillia. It interested me as a beginning, as an impulse, and afterwards—of course—the 20th century. This is a difficult and complex century that gave each of us freedom of choice. I have a composition by Henry Moore, I have an original by Alberto Giacometti in my collection, there are such valuable works, but at the same time I never wanted to own brands that are already recognised, for example Brâncuși. There is no point for me in collecting that.” (*Author’s interview...*, 2025)

For the patron, it is better to have ‘one’s own’ Sukholit in the collection, because Sukholit is a distinctly Ukrainian sculptor. Stella does not wish to invest financially in world art, nor to invest in artists who are already deceased and can no longer be helped. It is better to purchase works by living Ukrainian artists—artists whom one is still able, first, to understand, and second, to study and explore, to live and empathise with in the present time. The art connoisseur is happy to be living today in the era of Zhyvotkov, Sukholit, and Dubovyk.

Stella Benyaminova is interested in the avant-garde as the principal movement that emerged in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century. She is drawn to the Ukrainian history of the 20th century, which, in her view, is easier to comprehend precisely through the prism of the Ukrainian avant-garde.

Stella Benyaminova stood at the origins of the formation of the Museum of the Avant-Garde in Kyiv. All of this she learned from Ihor Dychenko (*Oksametny*, 2015). She did not know him personally, but studied his archives and researched his collection through the works that later entered her own collection. In this way, the custodian of rarities succeeded in assembling works by the Boychukists (*Figure 1*), Narbut-related themes, the school of Suprematism, scenographic compositions by Khvostenko-Khvostovyi, and others. She was interested in Dychenko as a collector who, during the Soviet period, gathered works that were rejected by official ideology and misunderstood by many other collectors. Only a rather narrow circle of art connoisseurs collected anything similar.

Stella has always been interested in what was collected by only a few, rather than what was amassed by the majority of seekers of rare objects. The avant-garde was born and made it possible to have a multi-vector orientation in the history of Ukrainian and world art. In this way, it becomes easier for us to engage in dialogue with the world. And the artists represented in the collection of the Stedley Art Foundation are world artists, regardless of whether the world has officially recognised them or not. The time of Malevich has already passed. Malevich set his direction, and virtually the 20th century began with him and ended with him. It is clear that most artists of the 21st century carry the history of Malevich within themselves.

However, following only his path has become tedious. Kazimir Malevich's Square is his manifesto. Lucio Fontana also created a manifesto when he cut the canvas and declared that it was enough to remain within the territory of the canvas; it was time to go beyond it. Therefore, Stella is interested in artists who today are searching for the newest forms—forms that were forgotten throughout the history of art. We have arrived at a moment when it is already necessary to give birth to spirituality. Spirituality is ethics; it is what resides in the depths of the soul, yet it is obscured by Instagram, social networks, bloggers, and fashionable figures in the vast world of the internet. One longs to come home and quietly enter into dialogue with good music, a good film, a good philosopher—but this is not given to everyone. Everyone is rushing somewhere, and this everyday routine is the same for all.

In the morning, we get up and watch the news... then we go to bed. Even the war that we are enduring under missile strikes, in hellish conditions—yet this war, as director Andrii Zholdak said, “wars are all the same”. One person kills another; war gives rise to hatred. The enemy came to us with hatred and wants us to drown in it. But only through high art, through our own high culture, is Ukraine capable of winning, because it is love that must prevail. This feeling of love must overcome within us the savagery and inhumanity that the enemy seeks to revive. Therefore, high art is rebirth. Art cultivates us, distinguishes us from barbarism, destroys hatred within us, and instead lifts us above this perishable, suicidal world. For Ukraine, this rebirth must take place now, and it is precisely today that we must arrive at it.

Stella Benyaminova collects various schools and movements; for example, she has a particular fondness for Odesa nonconformism. It so happened that her collection came to include works from the 1980s by leading Odesa artists of that period—V. Khrushch, V. Maryniuk, V. Tsiupko, and L. Yastreb.

The owner of the art collection appreciates the creative experiments of the intellectual artist Leon Tarasevych, although he remains little known to the wider public. The Lviv artist Oleksandr Matviienko, for instance, with whom the collector had friendly relations, represents true Ukrainian pop art. The artist did not cross the boundary into shock value or mass appeal; his pop art is beautiful, pure, ethical, and aesthetic. It is a kind of meditative pop art. For the collector, Matviienko is one of the best contemporary artists, who, unfortunately, has passed away.

Thus, within the field of vision of the custodian of artefacts are the Lviv, Odesa, and Kharkiv art schools. For the collector, the notion of regions is rather relative. For example, the artist Oleksandr Aksinin (*Figure 3*) was born and lived in Lviv, yet for her he is a world artist. As Stella Benyaminova rightly notes: “Only when an artist rises above the local does he become global, does he become comprehensible to the world. That is why I am interested in those artists who, while remaining within various local regions of Ukraine, were able to rise—armed with the local, the folk, the individual, the original—and, having risen above all this, are capable of uniting us all.” (*Author's interview...*, 2025)

In the art of collecting, it is as if you string together those “emeralds” and create a beautiful chain, a threaded strand that becomes a unifying principle. For example, the Boychukist school, works by whose representatives are present in her collection, is essentially Byzantium. That is, we say that from Byzantium we move to the Boychukists, and from the Boychukists we can move on to the circle of Mykola Kryvenko (*Figure 6*). When he was friends with Parajanov, those drawings that are preserved at the Stedley Art Foundation are magnificent. This school made it possible to create in Ukraine such much-needed mosaic panels and frescoes that originated in Byzantium.

Vitalii Kokhan and Kostiantyn Zorkin are among the young artists included in the Stedley Art Foundation collection, because the art connoisseur often saw their works at land art projects by Anna Hidora in Myropillia (*Figure 7*).

The collector appreciates the fact that Vitalii Kokhan, who is also an admirer of Oleksandr Zhyvotkov’s work, remains faithful to pure art. Kostiantyn Zorkin impressed her by the fact that he starts from Gilgamesh. These artists build upon profound foundations. If we speak of Gilgamesh, this is the foundation of foundations, the beginning of everything, preceding Homer, the Aeneid, and all that followed; yet one cannot begin everything with the Aeneid. One must look at what came first. Kostiantyn Zorkin, Vitalii Kokhan, and other artists today speak to us about this beginning in the contemporary language of art. They have been, are, and will be, because such pearls exist in the history of art. And it is important for her to string them together in her collection.

The first artwork appeared in Stella Benyaminova’s collection long ago; it is kept in her mother’s house. In Soviet times, for some reason everyone was told that we were all the same, that we were Soviet youth. The collector studied at one of the central schools in Kyiv and saw that life in a professor’s home was different from that in the home of a caretaker’s daughter. She began to reflect on why we were told that everyone was the same, all builders of communism, while in reality everyone lived differently.

It was there that she developed the thought of who she wanted to be and what kind of interior she wanted to create in her own home. The first paintings were acquired for the interior; they were not even genre works, but colouristic compositions. For the collector, the painting itself, as such, was important. She has been looking at it for many years since her first acquisition on Andriivskyi Descent. She was accompanied by Professor of Immunology Ninel Mykhailivna Berezhna, who worked at the Institute of Oncology. It was she who led Stella there and encouraged her to purchase her first painting. That first painting was monochromatic, in dark tones, and later the owner of the art collection reflected that she began her collecting with such a work and eventually came to Zhyvotkov. Although the collector went through a path of very bright, beautiful, genre paintings, at first glance interior works, splendid pieces, it is impossible to come to “your” artist without going through a path of mistakes, trials, forgeries, masterpiece acquisitions, and various curiosities.

During her period of growth, which Stella experienced at the end of the 1980s and 1990s—a difficult time—there was a phase when she did not engage in collecting art because she needed to build her business and repay debts. Yet overall, she was always drawn to art and to Kyiv’s creative intelligentsia. In the 1990s she was immersed in a different environment, and later it so happened that a significant role in her formation as a collector was played by a diplomat—the Ambassador of Italy to Ukraine, Yolanda Brunetti-Getz—who instilled in Stella a love for high art.

The Ambassador opened the eyes of the future founder of the Stedley Art Foundation to many things, helping her understand that there is an audience from the 1990s that has remained

at the same level of development, and there are people who have crossed that boundary—the boundary of money and the desire for power and shock value—for whom self-development is more important and valuable: listening to opera, going to the philharmonic, reading a quality book. Then this path will lead you to your artist. Probably everyone has such a path. “There are a million roads that God gives us. But there is only one that will lead you to yourself.” This is a quote from the favourite contemporary Ukrainian writer of the art collection’s owner, Symor Glasenko (real name is Oleksandr Protsiuk) (*Hlasenko, 2020*).

In her collecting practice, Stella Benyaminova chose depth rather than breadth, because a path of breadth would mean buying “everyone and everything” in order to own many works from different schools and movements. This did not interest her, because a guardian of rarities does not need to prove anything to anyone. Instead, it is important for her to prove to herself who she is, what she is doing in this life, and why one should collect works of art at all. We will all die; we are not eternal. Every person wants to be happy. And to be happy means to know oneself, to know one’s roots, and to understand the structure of the world. One must burn vanity within oneself. Vanity is when we run after what is fashionable, what is imposed upon us, when we are told to buy a fashionable artist for large sums of money. When you enter the flats of some collectors, you count how much money is hanging on their walls. This was of no interest to her, because you still remain in a crowd: “Once I told Kostiantyn Doroshenko that in the 1990s we all dreamed of leaving the crowd of the poor, because we were all poor. Then I entered the crowd of the rich, and now I have left the crowd of the rich and come to myself” (*Author’s interview..., 2025*).

The collector believes that a work of art finds her itself. Stella Benyaminova has developed the gift of seeing—when you look and understand that a particular painting must be in your collection. To acquire this gift, one must walk one’s own path and pay attention to no one and nothing else. One must cultivate a strong person within oneself, someone who allows themselves to say that this painting touches them. Most importantly, one should not be afraid, having acquired a work, to hang it in one’s home. Such a work may look unusual to other connoisseurs who, when entering your home, look for what is familiar and ubiquitous—the same artists or works similar in subject matter or composition.

In her choices and acquisitions, Stella Benyaminova listens to many opinions. Sometimes she pretends to be uninformed in order to hear the truth. Evidently, her consciousness requires such a state and such behaviour. There are intuitive acquisitions of artworks, and there are conscious ones. Often, intuition works first, and consciousness comes later. Afterwards, the guardian of rarities consults art historians and other collectors, but in any case, her intuition prevails. When intuition is supported by knowledge, this becomes a one-hundred-per-cent victory in acquiring a valuable work.

The owner of the art collection always strives to support her knowledge not only through consultations with selected art historians, but also through her own knowledge of art history and her visual experience of the finest examples of art in world museums. Only self-development and the completion of this demanding school can yield a positive and high-quality result in collecting. If one does not go through this school, one cannot become a professional specialist in the field of art, let alone a collector. Stella often emphasises: “Why should I listen to someone else if I want to hear myself? But to hear oneself, of course, one must go through this school. I studied with the art historian Paola Volkova, and the philosophers Merab Mamardashvili and Alexander Pyatigorsky. It is impossible to understand the history of art if you do not know the history of philosophy and the history of music.” (*Author’s interview..., 2025*)

Unfortunately, everything around us is often one-sided, with ordinary people presenting themselves as great experts. If works by Boychukists or representatives of modernism appear, Stella acquires them only with reliable provenance (*Figure 2*). For example, if a composition comes from the collection of Ihor Dychenko, the art collector, fully trusting this person and the quality of his collection, will acquire the work without hesitation. Dychenko is an outstanding art historian, collector, and patron. Everything that a person of great stature can embody as a personality is embodied in Ihor Dychenko. Thus, Stella follows his path, learns much from her predecessor, and adopts his life stance and principles of collection formation.

Today, the research, publishing, and project activities of the Stedley Art Foundation, in addition to its founder Stella Benyaminova, are carried out by three art historians: Kateryna Tsyhykalo, Tetiana Voloshyna, and Mariia Dotsenko. Each of them has the opportunity within the institution to pursue her own research direction. Kateryna Tsyhykalo works with sculpture; she studies the oeuvre of Sukholit and the sculpture present in the Stedley Art Foundation collection, predominantly sculpture of the 20th century. Her interests also include Trypillian culture.

In addition, she has an intriguing topic—Oleksandr Dubovyk, Mykola Kryvenko, and his dialogues with Serhii Parajanov. She is currently working on this book, as book publishing is one of the institution's core areas of activity.

The book that Kateryna prepared on Dubovyk is *Symbols–Signs of Oleksandr Dubovyk* (*Tsyhykalo & Marcadé, 2021*). She collaborated with Jean-Claude Marcadé, a world-renowned art historian who also holds Dubovyk's work in high esteem. It was Marcadé who consistently defended the recognition of Kazimir Malevich as a Ukrainian artist on international platforms.

At present, Kateryna Tsyhykalo is working on a major scholarly publication dedicated to the 95th anniversary of Oleksandr Dubovyk, in which the researcher will offer a deeper exploration of the artist's oeuvre. Each year, the Stedley Art Foundation publishes his reprints and art books; this is also one of the foundation's core areas of activity, as the institution seeks to share the knowledge that comes into its possession. Dubovyk's ideas are invaluable, and therefore the foundation decided that they must be published and made accessible to Ukrainian society.

Tetiana Voloshyna is engaged in research on the work of Oleksandr Zhivotkov. Mariia Dotsenko is processing the archives of Ihor Dychenko that have entered the institution. The collector quite rightly observes: “Even if you already love and collect art, you have no right to keep it only for yourself. Art does not belong to me; it belongs to the world. And I believe that our institution has already outgrown itself. Therefore, three art historians, in my view, will not be sufficient in the future to continue developing this institution.” (*Author's interview..., 2025*)

During the war, when state art institutions (museums) keep works of art in storage, people need to live, not merely survive. In wartime, society must live life to the fullest; we cannot live halfway, because if you live halfway, you are already dying. It is difficult now to endure and not lose one's sanity. Having passed through the purifying experience of war, art helps us preserve within ourselves not hatred, not malice, and not fear, but strength, will, and love. All of this is given to us by art.

For this reason, during the war, the collector donated part of the collection to the new Museum of the Avant-Garde, which was established in Kyiv in 2024. The Stedley Art Foundation consistently submits works to exhibitions held not only in Ukraine, but also in Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom, and New York. In 2024, the institution organised a full-scale exhibition in Padua, which was highly appreciated by Italian cultural centres, including the

National Gallery in Padua. The art foundation also organised an exhibition of Oleksandr Zhivotkov.

Stella Benyaminova often reiterates her position: “When you share art and give people the opportunity to see it while engaging in dialogue with authentic works, you grasp its highest magic. If you feel this magic, you remain with this art forever. And if you look at a reprint, you will never see or feel that magic. That is why it is important to show original works; it is important that these compositions work for people, because you live here and now. Today it is important for me to be happy. And if it is important for me to be happy, then I want as many people as possible to feel this happiness too, even in the conditions of a terrible war.” (*Author’s interview...*, 2025)

Discussion

The relevance of the research is determined by the growing role of private artistic initiatives in shaping the public cultural space and transforming traditional models of the institutional representation of art. In the contemporary art environment, private collections increasingly perform functions traditionally associated with public museums and galleries, participating in the formation of curatorial narratives, cultural policy, and mechanisms of access to artistic heritage. The Stedley Art Foundation collection represents a demonstrative example of such a hybrid model; however, it has not yet been the subject of systematic art-historical analysis. Within the context of current discussions on institutional critique, the boundaries between the private and the public, and new forms of cultural mediation, the study of this collection acquires particular significance for understanding contemporary processes in collecting, curatorship, and the representation of art.

In the course of the study, a number of problems characterising the functioning of the Stedley Art Foundation collection within a hybrid model between private initiative and a public–private space was identified. First, a lack of clearly defined institutional boundaries between private collecting and public representation was observed, which complicates the determination of the collection’s status within the system of cultural institutions. Second, an asymmetry was identified between curatorial autonomy and public responsibility, whereby the private nature of governance is not always accompanied by established mechanisms of scholarly reflection and public accountability. Third, the collection demonstrates limited integration into academic discourse, caused by fragmented documentation, insufficient cataloguing, and the absence of sustained research programmes. A separate issue concerns the tension between the conceptual coherence of the collection and the variability of exhibition practices, which affects the stability of interpretative narratives. Taken together, these problems underscore the need for a theoretical rethinking of the role of private foundations as full-fledged actors within the public cultural space.

The results of the study indicate that the Stedley Art Foundation collection functions not merely as an assemblage of artworks, but as a dynamic institutional mechanism in which private initiative is transformed into a form of open cultural space. The analysis confirms the appropriateness of examining the foundation within the framework of contemporary debates on the “public private space”, where the boundaries between private ownership and public representation of art are fluid and subject to conceptual reinterpretation. Comparing the activities of the Stedley Art Foundation with theoretical models of institutional critique makes it possible to assert that the foundation develops its curatorial and communicative strategy, alternative to classical museum practices. At the same time, it is evident that the flexibility of its organisational structure facilitates a prompt response to current artistic and socio-cultural

processes. The findings expand current understanding of the role of private art collections in shaping the contemporary cultural landscape and confirm the relevance of further research into similar institutions within the interdisciplinary field of art history and cultural studies.

In light of the results obtained, further development of research on private art collections as hybrid cultural institutions appears both relevant and necessary. The scholarly community is encouraged, first, to expand comparative studies of private foundations across different regions in order to develop a typology of models of the “public private space” in contemporary art. Second, an interdisciplinary approach that combines art history, cultural anthropology, museum studies, and the sociology of culture is of particular relevance for the comprehensive analysis of mechanisms of cultural mediation within private collections. Third, a promising direction involves the development of methodologies for the scholarly cataloguing and archiving of private collections, which would facilitate their integration into academic circulation. Special attention should be given to the study of curatorial strategies and institutional critique in the activities of private foundations as factors shaping the public discourse of contemporary art. The inclusion of the Stedley Art Foundation case within a broader theoretical framework makes it possible to consider it as a representative model for further research into the transformation of relations between private initiative and publicness in the cultural space.

Conclusion

The study of the Stedley Art Foundation collection in the context of the interaction between private initiative and the public–private space makes it possible to delineate the specific features of contemporary transformations in the institutional forms of art’s existence. The analysis demonstrates that the Foundation’s collection goes beyond the traditional understanding of a private assemblage, functioning as an open cultural resource with a clearly articulated curatorial position and a pronounced public orientation.

It has been established that the activities of the Stedley Art Foundation shape an alternative model of an art institution in which the principles of autonomy of private collecting, responsibility towards the public, and strategies of cultural communication are combined. The collection emerges not merely as a set of artworks, but as an integrated meaning-producing space that generates new narratives about contemporary art, its social functions, and the mechanisms of legitimation.

Particular attention is paid to the role of curatorial practices and exhibition strategies that ensure the openness of the collection to interpretation and dialogue. In this context, the Stedley Art Foundation demonstrates a shift from a model of elitist ownership towards a publicly oriented cultural environment, where private status does not restrict but, on the contrary, expands the possibilities for the representation of art.

The results obtained provide grounds for considering the Stedley Art Foundation collection as an important factor in the contemporary artistic process in Ukraine, one that actively influences the formation of the cultural landscape, the development of non-state institutions, and the rethinking of the boundaries between the private and the public in the sphere of art. The study opens prospects for further scholarly research in museum, institutional, and collection practices of the 21st century.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix



Figure 1. Oksana Pavlenko. *Reaper*. 1920. Paper, pencil, coloured pencil. 18.2×20 cm. Stedley Art Foundation Collection



Figure 2. Les Lozovskyi. *The Most Holy Mother of God*. 1921. Paper, tempera. 30.4×23.3 cm. Stedley Art Foundation collection.

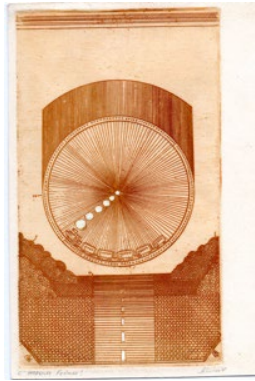


Figure 3. Oleksandr Aksinin. Happy New Year! 1975. Paper, etching. 15×8.6 cm. Stedley Art Foundation Collection



Figure 4. Oleksandr Dubovyk. Untitled. Ukraine. 1995. Paper, gouache. 40×40 cm. Stedley Art Foundation Collection



Figure 5. Oleksandr Sukholit. The Creation of Eve from Adam's Rib. 1988. Gypsum block, carving. 79.5×40 cm. Stedley Art Foundation Collection



Figure 6. Mykola Kryvenko. Untitled. 1982. Paper, watercolour, author's technique. 18.4×25.7 cm. Stedley Art Foundation Collection



Figure 7. Kostiantyn Zorkin. From the series "Spring". 2020. Paper, ink. 18.3×25.6 cm. Stedley Art Foundation Collection



Figure 8. Oleksandr Zhivotkov. Mother's Hands. 2022. Wood, cardboard, mixed media (artist's technique). 162×121.5 cm. Stedley Art Foundation Collection

Circus Arts in Ukraine (2015–2025): Critical Perspectives on Artistic and Educational Development ^[4]

Abstract:

The relevance of this study is determined by the critical condition of circus arts in Ukraine, which, between 2015 and 2025, have faced systemic decline in both artistic production and professional education amid profound socio-political challenges. In the context of limited scholarly attention to contemporary circus processes, the topic acquires particular significance for art studies and cultural policy research. The research problem lies in the absence of an integrated analytical approach to understanding the interrelation between creative practices, educational systems, and institutional governance in Ukrainian circus arts during the contemporary period. Existing studies remain fragmented and do not adequately address the structural causes of stagnation and regression within the field. The scientific novelty of the study consists in its comprehensive critical analysis of circus arts in Ukraine within the unified framework of artistic and educational processes, combining historical reconstruction with institutional and art-critical perspectives. For the first time, contemporary developments are systematically interpreted in continuity with both Soviet and post-Soviet models. The subject of the study is the problem of the development of circus arts in Ukraine in the context of creative and educational processes from 2015 to 2025. The object of the study is contemporary circus arts in Ukraine as an artistic and educational system. The study aims to identify the causes and analyze the underdevelopment of circus arts within artistic and educational processes over the specified period. The research methodology is based on historical, analytical, comparative, art-critical, circusological, pedagogical, and institutional analysis methods. The study draws upon and generalizes the contributions of Ukrainian and international scholars and practitioners, including I. Lvova, D. Orel, Yu. Romanenkova, C. Stjernebjerg, D. Sharykov, and L. Shevchenko, whose works address circus pedagogy, directing, genre studies, and institutional development. The study examines the evolution of circus arts from the Soviet period to the present, identifies key factors contributing to decline — such as ineffective management, erosion of educational standards, and the withdrawal of state support — and evaluates their impact on artistic production and professional training. Particular attention is given to the transformation of educational institutions and the loss of ensemble-based creative traditions. The author concludes that the current stagnation of Ukrainian circus arts is systemic in nature and exacerbated by the absence of coherent cultural policy and long-term institutional responsibility. The preservation and revitalization of circus arts require a strategic focus on educational continuity, engagement of master practitioners, and the restoration of integrated artistic and pedagogical models.

Keywords: art management, art and culture, circus arts, circusology, circus genres, circus directing, circus product, creative process, creative project, teamwork, educational process.

Introduction

Academic research on the issue of circus art development is scarce, as domestic art critics have paid little attention to this issue, whereas practitioners have most often resorted to short interviews in popular magazines. These publications did not meet the requirements of scholarly analysis. Most existing studies consider factors of individual circus genres in the context of the educational process, through the methodological and scientific components prism, without sufficient reference to how these processes are developing today. As a result, scholarly research on this topic is fragmented and incomplete.

One of the key issues in contemporary circus arts is the in-depth research and systematic examination of the development of its genres, as well as the critical analysis of the creative production process, which together form an integral part of circus studies, also known as circusology. Circus studies have been conducted only since 2017 at the Kyiv Circus Academy in response to the importance of this field and the scarcity of scholarly studies on circus genres.

Interest in circus arts, with their diversity of genres, original circus programs, shows, and acts, has made comprehensive research into this art form particularly relevant today. Studying the contemporary state of circus arts in Ukraine from 2015 to 2025 is especially important, as this period saw both the development of new, original genres and the simultaneous onset of decline and regression. These processes have had a significant impact on the creative activities of the Kyiv National Circus, as well as on the artistic and educational practices of the Kyiv Circus Academy.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its unique formulation of the research problem, which offers a critical analysis of the development of circus arts in Ukraine in the context of creative and educational processes from 2015 to 2025. For the first time, the study provides a detailed analysis of the development of circus arts in the Soviet era placing the particular emphasis on their development in the contemporary context. In addition, the work evaluates, and analyzes art-critical opinions and perspectives of theorists and practitioners published in periodicals.

The subject of the study is the problem of circus arts in Ukraine in the context of creative and educational processes in 2015–2025.

The object of the study is the development of circus arts today.

The study aims to identify the causes and examine the problem of the underdevelopment of circus arts within both the artistic and educational processes from 2010 to 2025.

To achieve this objective, the study addresses the following tasks:

- define the framework for the development of circus arts in creative and educational processes during the Soviet period;
- reveal the positive aspects of the post-Soviet process of the 1990s and early 21st century;
- explain the problems that began to predominate in 2015–2025.

The target audiences for which the study results are intended include both theorists and practitioners. With a clear and open research process in this field, the artistic process can be improved when its practitioners—directors, artists, and circus managers—pay attention to important comments in critical reviews and publications, as well as summaries of circus programs, noting obvious flaws and shortcomings. Art critics in circus studies also help theoretically refine and improve the development of such a complex form of artistic culture as circus.

Methods

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in general scientific approaches that are widely applied in humanities and art studies, particularly in research addressing the historical development of artistic practices and educational systems. These methods ensure conceptual rigor, analytical consistency, and interpretive reliability in examining the evolution of circus arts in Ukraine within creative and educational contexts between 2015 and 2025.

The historical method is employed to reconstruct the development of circus arts as a culturally and institutionally embedded phenomenon. In general, this method allows researchers to analyze artistic processes in their temporal sequence and socio-historical conditioning. In this study, the historical method is applied to trace the formation of the Ukrainian circus system during the Soviet period, its transformation after independence, and the subsequent dynamics observed between 2015 and 2025. This approach makes it possible to identify long-term structural continuities and ruptures that have shaped both artistic production and professional education in circus arts.

The principle of historicity and chronological analysis serves as a methodological foundation for organizing the research material in a coherent temporal framework. As a general scientific principle, historicity requires phenomena to be examined in relation to the specific conditions of their emergence and development. In the study, this principle is implemented by structuring the analysis around distinct historical phases—Soviet, post-Soviet, and contemporary—allowing for a systematic comparison of institutional models, artistic practices, and educational strategies across different periods.

The analytical method is used to decompose the complex phenomenon of circus arts into its key components, including artistic production, educational processes, managerial structures, and state cultural policy. As a general research tool, analysis enables the identification of internal relationships and causal mechanisms within a system. In the study, analytical procedures are applied to examine the causes of decline and stagnation in circus arts, with particular attention to ineffective management decisions, institutional monopolization, and the erosion of state support mechanisms.

The method of synthesis complements analytical procedures by integrating disparate findings into a coherent conceptual interpretation. In general, scientific research, synthesis allows for the construction of holistic models that explain complex processes. In this study, synthesis is used to formulate generalized conclusions regarding the current state of circus arts in Ukraine and to outline possible directions for their future development by combining historical data, analytical insights, and critical evaluations of educational and artistic practices.

The comparative method is applied to identify similarities and differences between various models of circus development. As a general methodological approach, comparison facilitates the evaluation of national systems within broader international contexts. In the study, this method is used to contrast the Soviet and post-Soviet Ukrainian circus system with Western and non-European models of circus organization and education, thereby highlighting structural advantages, systemic deficiencies, and missed opportunities for adaptation.

The method of generalization is employed to derive broader theoretical conclusions from empirical observations and case-specific analyses. In scientific research, generalization allows individual findings to be elevated to the level of conceptual interpretation. In this study, generalization is used to formulate overarching assessments of the artistic and educational crisis in Ukrainian circus arts, situating these conclusions within the broader discourse of contemporary art criticism and cultural policy analysis.

The art-critical method is applied as a specialized analytical approach traditionally used in art studies to evaluate artistic phenomena through professional criteria such as form, composition, genre structure, performative quality, and aesthetic coherence. In the context of this study, the art-critical method is employed to assess the creative outcomes of circus productions in Ukraine between 2015 and 2025. It allows for the identification of artistic degradation, stylistic simplification, and the loss of ensemble-based dramaturgy in contemporary circus performances, particularly in state-supported institutions.

The circusological method is used as a field-specific analytical tool aimed at examining circus arts as an autonomous artistic system with its own genres, techniques, professional traditions, and educational mechanisms. As a specialized methodological framework, circusology integrates elements of art criticism, pedagogy, and performance analysis. In this study, the circusological method is applied to analyze the evolution of circus genres, the transformation of professional training models, and the erosion of institutional continuity within Ukrainian circus arts during the studied period.

The historical-comparative method is employed to examine the development of circus arts across different historical and institutional contexts. As a specialized extension of comparative analysis, this method enables the evaluation of artistic and educational systems within specific temporal frameworks. In this study, it is used to compare the Soviet model of centralized circus organization and education with post-Soviet and contemporary Ukrainian practices, as well as with selected Western and non-European circus traditions, revealing structural imbalances and systemic misalignments.

The method of institutional analysis is applied to study circus organizations and educational institutions as structured systems governed by administrative, managerial, and regulatory mechanisms. As a specialized research method, institutional analysis focuses on power distribution, governance models, and decision-making processes. In this study, the method is used to examine the functioning of the Kyiv National Circus and the Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Performing Arts, identifying the impact of administrative monopolization, ineffective leadership, and the absence of state cultural policy on artistic and educational outcomes.

The pedagogical analysis method is employed to investigate the structure, content, and effectiveness of professional training in circus arts. In educational research, this method allows for the evaluation of curricula, teaching strategies, and learning outcomes. In the study, pedagogical analysis is applied to assess changes in circus education, including the reduction of comprehensive training, the prioritization of competition-oriented preparation, and the marginalization of ensemble and repertory-based performance practices.

The method of expert interpretation is used to incorporate professional judgments derived from the author's long-term practical and academic involvement in the circus field. As a specialized qualitative method, expert interpretation allows for the contextualization of empirical observations within professional standards and disciplinary knowledge. In this study, the method supports the critical evaluation of artistic processes, educational reforms, and institutional decisions that are not fully documented in official sources but are evident within professional practice.

The prognostic (modeling) method is applied to outline potential directions for the future development of circus arts based on the identified trends and structural problems. As a specialized analytical tool, prognostic modeling enables the formulation of theoretically grounded scenarios. In this study, the method is used to propose conceptual prospects for restoring artistic integrity, educational continuity, and institutional responsibility within the Ukrainian circus system.

The methodological framework of this study combines general scientific and specialized research methods to ensure a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis of circus arts in Ukraine within the artistic and educational contexts of 2015–2025. General scientific methods provide a structured foundation for examining historical continuity, institutional dynamics, and systemic transformations, while specialized methods enable in-depth analysis of circus arts as a distinct artistic and pedagogical domain.

The integration of historical, analytical, comparative, and synthetic approaches allows the study to reconstruct the evolution of circus arts, identify key factors contributing to their decline, and assess the consequences of managerial and educational decisions. At the same time, specialized art-critical, circusological, pedagogical, and institutional methods make it possible to evaluate creative processes, professional training models, and governance structures from an expert disciplinary perspective.

Taken together, this methodological synthesis ensures the validity of the study's findings and supports a well-grounded interpretation of both artistic and educational challenges facing contemporary Ukrainian circus arts, while also enabling the formulation of informed conclusions and future-oriented recommendations.

Literature Review

The existing body of scholarly literature on circus arts is characterized by thematic fragmentation and methodological specialization. Most studies focus either on the historical development of the circus, on pedagogical methodologies for individual circus disciplines, or on selected aspects of circus directing and management. While these works provide valuable insights into specific components of the circus system, they rarely offer an integrated perspective that connects artistic production, professional education, and institutional governance within a single analytical framework. This limitation is particularly evident in studies addressing the contemporary stage of circus development in Ukraine.

A significant group of sources is devoted to professional training and pedagogical methodologies in circus disciplines, forming an essential foundation for analyzing the educational dimension of circus arts. Horbachevskyi (2025) examines illusion and manipulation as specialized circus genres, offering a structured methodological guide for training illusionists within professional circus education. This work is valuable for the present study as it illustrates the persistence of genre-based specialization in Ukrainian circus education and highlights the technical and pedagogical requirements that must be supported institutionally to sustain artistic quality.

Kashevarov, Orel, and Sharykov (2021) address stage and technical training in circus genres, with particular emphasis on safety standards, arena organization, and equipment usage. Their research provides a comprehensive overview of the infrastructural and technical conditions necessary for professional circus practice. In the context of this study, this source is used to evaluate how the deterioration of material and organizational conditions has negatively affected both educational and artistic processes in Ukrainian circus institutions.

Further developing this line of inquiry, Kashevarov, Orel, and Sharykov (2024) focus on aerial gymnastics as a genre specialization, offering a detailed classification of apparatuses and training methodologies. This publication is particularly relevant for understanding the depth and complexity of contemporary circus pedagogy and for demonstrating the gap between advanced methodological knowledge and its inconsistent implementation within Ukrainian educational institutions during the period under study.

Orel's works occupy a central place in the literature on circus pedagogy. His article on formal and technical features of aerial gymnastics (Orel, 2018) provides a genre-specific analytical framework, while his later study (Orel, 2020) examines the challenges of teaching acrobatics in higher art education institutions. These studies are used in the present research to assess the transformation of educational priorities in circus training, particularly the shift from comprehensive professional formation toward narrowly competition-oriented outcomes. Orel's instructional manual on acrobatics (Orel, 2024), as well as the joint publication on vaulting acrobatics (Orel & Sharykov, 2024), further reinforce the argument that Ukrainian circus pedagogy possesses a strong methodological base that remains underutilized at the institutional level.

Another important cluster of sources addresses circus studies (circusology) as an academic field and the broader cultural role of circus arts. Romanenkova (2018) discusses the place of circus studies within Ukrainian humanities, arguing for its recognition as an independent

scholarly discipline. This work is fundamental for the present study, as it provides theoretical justification for treating circus arts not merely as entertainment but as a complex cultural phenomenon requiring systematic academic analysis. In her later work, Romanenkova (2020) explores the modern Ukrainian circus school as a tool of national cultural representation, emphasizing its potential role in the global cultural space. This perspective is used in the study to highlight the contrast between the symbolic cultural significance of circus arts and their current institutional marginalization.

The international dimension of circus studies is represented by Stjernebjerg (2017), whose master's thesis analyzes how contemporary circus revitalized the art form through innovative approaches to gravity, movement, and aesthetics. Although focused on non-Ukrainian contexts, this study provides an important comparative backdrop, allowing the present research to situate Ukrainian circus arts within broader global trends and to identify missed opportunities for creative and institutional renewal.

A separate group of sources is devoted to circus directing and artistic production, which are central to understanding the creative processes examined in this study. Lvova (2021) analyzes circus directing and show business within the entertainment industry, paying particular attention to marketing and public relations strategies. Her comparative approach, which contrasts Ukrainian practices with Western models, is used in the present research to contextualize managerial and promotional deficiencies in Ukrainian circus institutions.

Shevchenko's contributions further develop the theme of circus directing. Her 2023 study examines the current state of circus directing and its adaptation within higher education, while her instructional manual (Shevchenko, 2024) focuses on the role of tricks and arena imagery in constructing a circus act. These works are instrumental for analyzing how directing principles are transmitted—or distorted—within educational settings and how this affects the artistic coherence of contemporary circus productions. The collaborative manual on equilibristics (Shevchenko et al., 2024) complements this analysis by illustrating genre-specific directing and training practices.

The work by Sharykov, Orel, and Herasymenko (2023), which examines the uniqueness of Cirque du Soleil within the context of circusology, provides a valuable comparative case study. By analyzing a successful contemporary circus model, this source is used to contrast institutional strategies, artistic innovation, and educational integration with the Ukrainian situation, thereby reinforcing the study's critical conclusions.

Institutional context is further supported by materials from the Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Performing Arts (*n.d.*), which serve as an empirical reference point for analyzing the organizational structure, educational programs, and official positioning of Ukraine's leading circus education institution. These materials are used to correlate formal institutional claims with observed educational and artistic outcomes.

Taken together, the reviewed literature demonstrates that while Ukrainian and international scholars have produced substantial research on individual aspects of circus arts—such as pedagogy, genre specialization, directing, and cultural representation—there remains a notable absence of integrated studies addressing the interrelation of creative, educational, and institutional processes in the Ukrainian circus between 2015 and 2025. This gap directly informs the relevance and originality of the present study, which seeks to synthesize these dimensions within a unified analytical framework and to provide a comprehensive critical assessment of contemporary Ukrainian circus arts.

Results

The development of circus arts during the Soviet era had a centralized, state-controlled format. The state fulfilled the role of the primary sponsor and regulator, determining both the direction and the formats of its development. This system was particularly evident in the period from 1960 to 1992.

The artistic process revolved around stationary state circuses unified under the structure of the “SoyuzGosTsirk” (Union State Circus), the main operating company. This network included the circuses of the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR, the Russian SSR, the Georgian SSR, the Kazakh SSR, and other Soviet Union republics.

The educational process, which included training professional circus performers such as acrobats, jugglers, equilibrists, illusionists, and clowns, was also entirely supervised and funded by the government.

The artistic process involved the creation of mass circus acts, which comprised large-scale circus performances. This process was fundamentally different from the approach applied to the circus arts development in Western countries. In the West, circus traditions were primarily sustained through circus family dynasties and travelling tent circuses, rather than through centralized state institutions. In the West, state-supported and state-regulated circus art existed in Canada with Cirque du Soleil and in Hungary with the Budapest State Circus. However, it is worth emphasizing that professional circus education in these countries was largely organized through private studios, which were not always professional in nature. These studios often relied on members of circus dynasties or touring performers, whose involvement was typically short-term.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, during the period of independent Ukraine (1992–2015), the state did not establish a comprehensive strategy to ensure the structured development and functioning of circus arts in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the absence of such a strategy led to a tragic decline in the field. This includes:

This situation was characterized by several key factors:

- the absence of legislation regulating circus institutions, including their development, funding mechanisms, operational oversight, and the rights and obligations of these organizations;
- the absence of a clear strategic vision for the development of circus art, which would preserve the existing achievements in circus performance, professional expertise, established programs, and genres, as well as promote cooperation with Western models of circus development (France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Canada) and Eastern traditions (China, Mongolia, and India);
- the withdrawal of state control over the educational process at specialized institutions, specifically the Circus College, and the absence of a coherent developmental framework for its development. At that time, the curriculum encompassed not only circus disciplines but also vocal, dance, and stand-up training.

Initially, this vacuum was mitigated by the substantial achievements of the past, specifically those gained in both artistic and educational fields during the Soviet period. However, as Ukraine entered a period of socio-political instability and the state funding was critically reduced, the process of decline and stagnation in the circus arts field reached such a point at which meaningful change became virtually impossible. For instance, the state stopped commissioning major circus programs, and its neglect of professional circus performers (acrobats, aerialists, jugglers, clowns, illusionists, and equilibrists) resulted in the mass relocation and emigration of

the leading artists to Western countries, where they could continue pursuing their professional careers and achieve financial independence.

A certain transformation took place in the Circus College, which was converted into a municipal institution and later reorganized as an academy. In this new format, the primary focus gradually shifted away from circus arts training toward vocal, directing, and theatrical. As a result, the circus department, despite certain positive aspects within the educational process, became effectively monopolized by a single family, the Pozdnyakovs. Being far from renowned circus performers, they succeeded in adapting the entire circus department of the Academy to serve their family's professional interests. Training was oriented almost exclusively toward participation in international competitions and employment in Western circus institutions. This model generated specific financial benefits through collaboration with impresarios representing various circus organizations, and this process unfolded with the full acquiescence of the administration of the Kyiv Circus Academy.

Admittedly, a small number of graduates from the circus department remained in Ukrainian circuses for a limited period. In most cases, however, they relocated to work in circus institutions abroad, including those in the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Hungary, Poland, and China.

The course of events could have taken a more positive direction, provided factors had been properly acknowledged and certain improvements implemented. The first concerned sustained engagement by the Ministry of Culture and Arts of Ukraine with the circus sector, particularly with regard to the financing and stationary state circuses operations, which in practice was scarce. The second factor is related to the Kyiv Circus Academy. Despite the arrival of new professional staff, specifically graduates of the 1990s with substantial expertise and experience in Western circus companies and productions, and despite the strengthening of the academic component of education, meaningful reform did not take place. Since 2016, bachelor's and master's degree programs have been introduced at the Academy, significantly enhancing the institutional status and academic quality of higher education in circus arts under the educational program Circus Genres. Despite these developments, they failed to produce systemic change. First of all, it was the unwillingness of the Pozdnyakov family to pursue professional development and innovation, including the creation of large-scale ensemble productions for graduating young circus artists. Instead, the educational process was reduced to a financially driven, self-serving model oriented toward the interests of a single family. It should be noted, however, that the Academy did periodically produce skilled professionals in specific circus disciplines.

Secondly, the appointment of a new Academy leadership at the beginning of 1999. It was a person who lacked fundamental knowledge of circus arts, as well as a clear understanding of, or willingness to develop, the educational process in this field. Their role was largely limited to formal administrative oversight of the circus program, a situation that effectively enabled the private interests of the Pozdnyakov family to persist without institutional challenge.

Notably, since 2017, the Department of Circus Genres at the Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Performing Arts has begun to develop the field of circusology—research focused on the theory, methodology, and artistic practice of circus arts.

More than 30 scientific publications have been published in specialized scientific journals, both Ukrainian and international, with academic indexing. In addition, textbooks have been produced on topics including acrobatics (*Orel, 2024*), vaulting (*Orel & Sharykov, 2024*), aerial gymnastics (*Kashevarov et al., 2024*), equilibristics (*Shevchenko et al., 2024*), illusion and

manipulation (*Horbachevskyyi, 2025*), methods of teaching circus disciplines (*Sharykov, 2024*), and circus directing (*Shevchenko, 2024*).

Despite these achievements, the work largely went unnoticed and lacked support from the administration, even though the Department was the only one in Europe publishing its own professional literature on circus genres. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine, and shortsighted leadership policies have all contributed to a period of stagnation in the field.

It is worth emphasizing that on the surface, the development of the circus program at the Academy appears impressive. However, when delving deeper, numerous inconsistencies and failures become immediately apparent. The same applies to the artistic circus scene in Ukraine as a whole. At present, state circuses are both unprofitable and largely neglected, as the government is focused not on fostering art and culture but on the ongoing military conflict in the country.

Discussion

The results of this study are highly relevant in light of the current condition of circus arts in Ukraine, as they provide a structured and evidence-based understanding of the systemic problems affecting both creative production and professional education between 2015 and 2025. By integrating historical analysis, institutional assessment, and art-critical evaluation, the research clarifies the underlying mechanisms that have led to stagnation and regression within the circus sector. This relevance is further reinforced by the fact that the identified problems extend beyond isolated artistic failures and reflect broader structural deficiencies in cultural governance, educational policy, and managerial practice.

The findings contribute to the academic field by addressing a notable gap in contemporary circus studies, where recent developments have remained insufficiently examined. At the practical level, the results offer an analytical foundation that can be used by cultural administrators, educators, and practitioners to reassess existing strategies and to initiate informed discussions on the future development of circus arts in Ukraine.

During the research process, several interrelated problems were identified that significantly complicate the study and development of circus arts in Ukraine. The first problem is the scarcity of systematic academic research on contemporary circus arts. This deficiency is largely due to the reluctance of theorists—particularly art critics—to engage critically with ongoing processes in the circus field. Socio-political instability and the marginal status of circus arts within the hierarchy of cultural disciplines have contributed to a superficial or fragmented scholarly treatment of the subject.

The second problem concerns the position of practitioners themselves. Many artists and educators demonstrate limited willingness to critically reflect on the structural and artistic shortcomings of the field. As a result, professional discourse often remains confined to technical or performative aspects, avoiding broader questions of institutional responsibility, educational quality, and long-term artistic strategy. This lack of reflexivity weakens the potential for internal reform and hinders the emergence of a cohesive professional community capable of advocating for systemic change.

The third problem relates to institutional and governmental factors. Due to the ongoing military conflict and broader socio-economic pressures, state authorities and administrative bodies overseeing circus institutions tend to deprioritize cultural development. Consequently, issues such as ineffective management, the erosion of educational standards, and the decline of

repertory-based artistic production remain largely unaddressed. This administrative indifference exacerbates existing problems and reinforces the cycle of stagnation identified in the study.

The results of this study open several perspective directions for the further development of research on circus arts. One important avenue involves expanding comparative analysis between Ukrainian circus institutions and successful international models, particularly those that integrate artistic innovation, professional education, and sustainable management practices. Such research would allow for the identification of adaptable strategies capable of revitalizing the national circus system.

Another promising direction lies in the deeper exploration of circus education as a distinct pedagogical field. Future studies may focus on curriculum design, assessment methods, and the balance between artistic tradition and contemporary innovation. Particular attention should be paid to the role of ensemble-based training and repertory production, which historically constituted a core strength of Ukrainian circus arts.

Finally, further research should address the institutional and policy dimensions of circus development, including legislative frameworks, cultural funding mechanisms, and governance models. By combining art-critical, pedagogical, and policy-oriented perspectives, future studies can contribute not only to academic knowledge but also to the formulation of practical recommendations aimed at restoring the artistic and educational integrity of circus arts in Ukraine.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that both academic research and the broader development of circus arts in Ukraine—encompassing artistic production and professional education—are currently experiencing a pronounced phase of decline and stagnation. These processes are not episodic but systemic in nature and have been further intensified by the ongoing military conflict. The study demonstrates that the crisis of contemporary Ukrainian circus arts is rooted in long-term structural deficiencies rather than in temporary external disruptions.

The research identifies several interrelated underlying causes of this situation, including the absence of a coherent state cultural policy aimed at supporting circus arts, the lack of effective regulatory and institutional frameworks, and the erosion of a comprehensive educational model capable of sustaining professional continuity. The findings clearly indicate that short-term managerial or commercially oriented strategies are insufficient for preserving the artistic and pedagogical integrity of circus arts.

The results of this study provide a foundation for the further development of both academic research and practical initiatives in the field of circus arts. One perspective direction involves the application of the study's conclusions to comparative research, particularly in relation to international circus models that successfully integrate artistic innovation, professional education, and institutional sustainability. Such comparative studies may contribute to the formulation of adaptable strategies for revitalizing Ukrainian circus institutions.

Another important prospect concerns the development of evidence-based recommendations for cultural policy and educational reform. The research outcomes may serve as a conceptual basis for revising curricula, restoring ensemble-based training and repertory production, and strengthening the role of master practitioners in professional education. In the long term, these measures could facilitate the restoration of artistic continuity and the reestablishment of circus arts as a significant component of national cultural life.

The primary aim of the study—to identify the causes and examine the problem of the underdevelopment of circus arts within artistic and educational processes from 2010 to 2025—has been fully achieved. Through a comprehensive historical, analytical, and institutional examination, the research has revealed the key factors contributing to the current crisis condition of Ukrainian circus arts.

Each of the research objectives formulated in the Introduction has been addressed individually. First, the study defined the framework for developing circus arts during the Soviet period, demonstrating the role of centralized state support and structured professional education in sustaining artistic quality. Second, the research revealed the positive aspects of the post-Soviet period of the 1990s and early 21st century, highlighting the residual strengths inherited from the Soviet system and the initial potential for transformation. Third, the study explained the problems that became predominant between 2015 and 2025, including managerial inefficiency, institutional monopolization, and the withdrawal of state responsibility for cultural and educational development.

Thus, the study confirms that the preservation and advancement of circus arts in Ukraine depend not on short-term or market-driven considerations, but on the recognition, protection, and transmission of artistic and pedagogical achievements accumulated over decades. The engagement of experienced master practitioners and the restoration of institutional responsibility are identified as essential conditions for ensuring the future viability of circus arts as both an artistic practice and an academic field.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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Ukrainian Svolokey as an Element of Cultural Heritage ^[1]

Abstract:

The relevance of the study is determined by the need to reassess traditional elements of Ukrainian vernacular architecture as carriers of complex cultural meanings and as integral components of cultural heritage. This relevance is further reinforced by the necessity of a more active integration of knowledge about Ukrainian material culture into the European scholarly discourse. The study problem lies in the fragmentary treatment of Ukrainian *svolokey* in existing scholarship, where they have most often been mentioned episodically as constructional or decorative details rather than analysed as a coherent group of culturally significant artefacts. As a result, their historical development, semantic complexity, and heritage value have remained insufficiently conceptualised. The scientific novelty of the study consists in the holistic interpretation of *svolokey* as a stable cultural phenomenon combining structural, artistic, symbolic, and museological dimensions, as well as in the application of a diachronic and comparative European perspective to their analysis. The subject of the study is the cultural and historical process of the formation, functioning, interpretation, and preservation of Ukrainian *svolokey* within traditional culture. The object of the study is Ukrainian *svolokey* — massive wooden ceiling beams used in residential and ecclesiastical buildings from the late 16th to the early 21st century — considered as objects of material culture and carriers of immaterial meanings. The study aims to provide a comprehensive generalising characterisation of *svolokey* as an important element of the cultural heritage of Ukrainians. The study is based on general scientific, cultural studies, and klironomical methods, including analysis and synthesis, historical and comparative analysis, semiotic and symbolic interpretation, and approaches to cultural continuity and museumification. The study engages, in a generalised manner, the scholarly contributions of historians of architecture and art, ethnographers, cultural theorists, and literary figures whose works reflect or interpret the material, symbolic, and memorial dimensions of traditional Ukrainian dwellings. The essence of the study consists in tracing the historical use of *svolokey*, systematising their folk typology, analysing their decorative and artistic features, reconstructing their semantic roles in ritual and everyday practices, and examining their transformation into museum and heritage objects. Particular attention is paid to their function as sacral and symbolic axes of the traditional house and to their place within a broader European context of wooden ceiling constructions. The author concludes that Ukrainian *svolokey* represent a multifaceted heritage phenomenon whose cultural significance extends far beyond their technical function, and that their analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of Ukrainian traditional culture and its position within the European heritage landscape.

Keywords: Ukrainian heritage, folk construction, svolok, dwelling.

Introduction

The cultural heritage of Ukrainians is exceptionally rich and diverse. One of its principal segments within the context of traditional culture is associated with housing. The inhabitants of Ukraine treated the dwelling with profound respect. Owners sought to ensure that the microcosm created within residential buildings was comfortable for family members and protected from harmful external influences. As evidenced by the records of ethnographers of the 19th and 20th centuries, already during the construction process householders and carpenters endeavoured to secure prosperity for the families of new settlers. Consequently, the building process was accompanied by a variety of ritual practices. An important participant in these rituals, as well as a key structural element, was formed by strong, massive wooden beams, which across most of the territory of Ukraine in the 19th and early 21st centuries were referred to as *svolokey* (Figure 1; Figure 2; Figure 3). These beams constitute the object of the present study. Its aim is to provide a generalising characterisation of *svolokey* as an important element of the cultural heritage of Ukrainians. The main objectives of the study are as follows: a brief outline of the history of the use of *svolokey* in Ukrainian culture; a description of their folk typology; and a

conceptual discussion of their semantics and the history of their museumification. The research methodology is based on the principles of objectivity and historicism and includes methods of analysis and synthesis as well as comparative analysis.

Individual Ukrainian *svoloky* have been discussed repeatedly in scholarly publications. However, comprehensive studies addressing them as a coherent group of artefacts remain scarce. I would note an article published in 2024 and co-authored by author and Nadiia Babkova, which examines *svoloky* from the late 17th to the 18th centuries originating from one region of Ukraine that at the time was known as the Hetmanate (*Shcherban & Babkova, 2024*). A similar lack of generalising research on *svoloky* can be observed in other European countries. A brief overview of such studies is presented in the article “Historical Wooden Ceilings in Waidhofen an der Ybbs, Austria” (*Lichtenschopf et al., 2024*). Also published in 2024, this work focuses on the ceilings of a single Austrian settlement, many of which incorporate carved *svoloky* in their construction. The very fact that scholars from different European countries have shown interest in such artefacts in the mid-2020s attests to the topicality of the subject. In the present case, this relevance is also conditioned by the need for a more active integration of knowledge about Ukraine into the European scholarly discourse. The results of the study may be utilised by historians, ethnologists, and art historians in the preparation of general scholarly works as well as specialised studies.

The scientific novelty of the study is determined both by its subject focus and by the research perspective within which Ukrainian *svoloky* are examined not merely as architectural or technical elements, but as a complex phenomenon of material and immaterial cultural heritage. In contrast to the majority of previous works, in which *svoloky* were mentioned fragmentarily—primarily in the context of folk construction practices, interior decoration, or local ethnographic observations—this study for the first time proposes their holistic interpretation as a stable element of the cultural system, endowed with structural, symbolic, semantic, and museological dimensions.

The novelty of the study also lies in the diachronic approach applied to the analysis of *svoloky* as a historically evolving group of artefacts spanning the period from the late 16th to the early 21st century. This long-term perspective makes it possible to trace transformations in their functions, forms, decorative practices, and semantic meanings across different historical epochs. Within a single analytical framework, the study systematises data on constructional types, folk typologies, regional features of production, ritual practices associated with the installation and use of *svoloky*, as well as the stages of their museumification and contemporary reproduction.

An additional innovative aspect of the study is its positioning of Ukrainian *svoloky* within a broader European comparative context. Rather than being treated exclusively as a nationally specific phenomenon, *svoloky* are analysed as part of a wider European tradition of wooden ceiling constructions. This approach allows for identifying both shared structural principles and culturally specific trajectories of development, thereby contributing to the expansion of European scholarly discourse through the systematic inclusion of Ukrainian material that has hitherto remained underrepresented in synthetic studies on folk architecture and material culture.

The subject of the study is the cultural and historical process of the formation, functioning, semantic interpretation, and preservation of Ukrainian *svoloky* as a significant element of traditional culture. At the subject level, the study examines the activities of folk craftsmen, householders, local communities, and later institutional actors—such as museums, researchers, and architects—who have participated in the creation, use, interpretation, and transmission of meanings associated with *svoloky*. The subject dimension also encompasses traditional beliefs

and practices of the Ukrainian population, reflected in ethnographic records, folklore, life-cycle rituals, and calendar customs, as well as scholarly interpretations of these phenomena developed within historical, cultural, and art-historical research.

The object of the study is Ukrainian *svoloky*—massive wooden ceiling beams used in residential and ecclesiastical buildings on the territory of Ukraine from the late 16th to the early 21st century—considered as objects of material culture and as carriers of immaterial cultural meanings. As an object of research, *svoloky* are analysed in their structural, decorative, symbolic, and museological dimensions, including preserved in situ examples, museum artefacts, archival descriptions, iconographic sources, and written and oral testimonies concerning their use and perception in traditional culture.

The study aims to provide a comprehensive and generalising characterisation of Ukrainian *svoloky* as an important element of the cultural heritage of Ukrainians, encompassing an analysis of their historical development, functional purpose, folk typology, semantic meanings, and processes of museumification within both national and broader European cultural contexts. Achieving this purpose involves not only the description and systematisation of empirical material, but also its conceptual interpretation from the perspectives of cultural studies and klironomy, understood as an approach focused on identifying the mechanisms of preservation and transmission of cultural values over time.

To achieve the stated aim, the study addresses a number of interrelated study objectives:

- trace the history of the use of *svoloky* in traditional residential and ecclesiastical architecture in Ukraine from the late 16th to the early 21st century;
- characterise their structural and functional features in different types of buildings and regions;
- systematise the folk typology of *svoloky* recorded in ethnographic sources and oral testimonies;
- analyse decorative forms and artistic features of carved and painted *svoloky* as manifestations of folk art;
- reveal their semantics within the system of traditional Ukrainian beliefs, including sacral, apotropaic, and symbolic functions;
- examine their role in life-cycle and calendar rituals;
- identify representations of the *svolok* in Ukrainian literature and visual culture;
- analyse processes of museumification since the early 20th century and contemporary practices of reproduction;
- define the place of Ukrainian *svoloky* within the European context of study on wooden ceiling constructions.

The results of the study are addressed to a broad scholarly audience in the humanities. First and foremost, they are intended for historians of culture, ethnologists, cultural theorists, and art historians engaged in the study of traditional architecture, material culture, and folk art in Eastern and Central Europe. The findings may also be utilised by museum professionals, heritage preservation specialists, and exhibition curators in the attribution, interpretation, and display of objects of vernacular wooden architecture. In addition, the study may be of interest to restoration architects and practitioners working with the reconstruction or stylistic reinterpretation of traditional built environments. In an educational context, the results can be applied in teaching courses in cultural studies, ethnology, architectural history, and heritage studies. Finally, the article is oriented towards an international academic readership and aims to

promote the more active integration of knowledge about Ukrainian culture into European and global scholarly discourse.

Methods

The methodological framework of the present study is grounded in a set of general scientific methods that ensure the conceptual coherence, analytical rigour, and epistemological reliability of the research. These methods make it possible to examine Ukrainian *svoloky* as a complex cultural phenomenon situated at the intersection of material structures, symbolic meanings, and historical processes.

The method of analysis is employed as a fundamental cognitive procedure aimed at the systematic examination of the constituent elements of the research object. In general, scientific terms, analysis involves the decomposition of a complex phenomenon into its individual components in order to identify their properties, functions, and internal relationships. In the present study, analytical procedures are applied to the examination of the structural features of *svoloky*, their decorative elements, inscriptions, semantic motifs, ritual functions, and contexts of use. Through analysis, the study differentiates between constructional, artistic, symbolic, and social aspects of *svoloky*, allowing each dimension to be examined in its specificity before being reintegrated into a holistic interpretation.

Complementary to analysis, the method of synthesis is used to reconstruct the integrity of the phenomenon under study by integrating analytically isolated elements into a coherent conceptual whole. As a general scientific method, synthesis enables the identification of systemic relationships between heterogeneous data. In this study, synthesis is applied to combine architectural, ethnographic, folkloric, literary, and museum-related evidence into an integrated understanding of *svoloky* as elements of cultural heritage. The method makes it possible to articulate how structural functions, decorative practices, ritual meanings, and historical transformations interact to form a stable cultural complex rather than a set of unrelated attributes.

The historical method occupies a central place in the study, as it allows cultural phenomena to be examined in their temporal development and contextual embeddedness. In general, scientific terms, the historical method is aimed at reconstructing processes of emergence, transformation, and continuity over time. In this research, it is used to trace the evolution of *svoloky* from the late 16th century to the early 21st century, identifying key stages in their functional, decorative, and semantic transformation. The historical method underpins the chronological structuring of the material and enables the interpretation of changes in *svoloky* in relation to broader socio-cultural, religious, and technological processes.

Closely related to the historical method is the principle of historicism, which serves as a general epistemological guideline rather than a discrete technique. Historicism presupposes that cultural phenomena can only be adequately understood within the specific historical conditions of their formation and use. In this study, historicism informs the interpretation of *svoloky* by preventing anachronistic readings of their symbolism and functions. Ritual practices, decorative motifs, and inscriptions are analysed in relation to the worldview structures, belief systems, and social norms characteristic of the periods in which they emerged, rather than being evaluated through contemporary conceptual frameworks alone.

The method of comparison (comparative analysis) is applied as a general scientific tool for identifying similarities and differences between phenomena across spatial, temporal, or cultural contexts. Comparative analysis is essential for distinguishing universal features from culturally specific ones. In the present research, this method is used to compare Ukrainian *svoloky* across

different regions of Ukraine, as well as to juxtapose them with functionally analogous ceiling beams documented in other European countries. This approach allows the study to determine which characteristics of *svoloky* are locally specific and which reflect broader European construction traditions, thereby situating the Ukrainian material within a wider comparative framework.

The method of classification is employed to organise empirical material into structured categories based on shared characteristics. As a general scientific method, classification facilitates the ordering of complex data and supports analytical clarity. In this study, classification is used to systematise different types of *svoloky* according to folk typologies recorded in ethnographic sources, as well as according to constructional features, decorative techniques, and functional roles. This method enables the articulation of typological distinctions that are meaningful both within traditional culture and for contemporary scholarly interpretation.

The method of generalisation is applied to derive broader theoretical conclusions from individual observations and case studies. In general, scientific practice, generalisation allows researchers to move from the particular to the general without losing empirical grounding. In the present study, generalisation is used to identify recurring patterns in the use, decoration, and semantic interpretation of *svoloky* across different regions and historical periods. On this basis, the study formulates overarching conclusions concerning the cultural significance of *svoloky* as a stable element of Ukrainian heritage.

The systemic approach is utilised as a general methodological orientation that views the object of study as a system composed of interrelated elements. In scientific methodology, a systemic approach emphasises the analysis of relationships, functions, and structures rather than isolated components. In this research, *svoloky* are examined as part of the broader system of traditional dwelling culture, which includes architectural space, ritual practices, symbolic centres of the house, and social relations. This approach makes it possible to understand *svoloky* not merely as constructional details, but as elements integrated into the spatial, symbolic, and social organisation of the dwelling.

The structural-functional method is applied to examine the relationship between the physical structure of *svoloky* and the functions they perform within the dwelling. As a general scientific method, it focuses on how structural features enable or condition specific functions. In the present study, this method is used to analyse how the position, size, and material of *svoloky* relate to their load-bearing role, their visibility within interior space, and their suitability as carriers of inscriptions and decorative motifs. At the same time, the method allows for the interpretation of how structural centrality contributes to their symbolic and ritual significance.

The method of interpretation plays an important role in the analysis of symbolic and semantic aspects of *svoloky*. In general, scientific terms, interpretation involves the attribution of meaning to empirical data within a coherent conceptual framework. In this study, interpretative procedures are applied to inscriptions, carved motifs, folkloric narratives, and ritual practices associated with *svoloky*. The method enables the reconstruction of culturally embedded meanings while maintaining analytical distance and critical evaluation of sources.

The principle of objectivity functions as a core methodological requirement guiding the selection, analysis, and presentation of material. In scientific research, objectivity entails minimising subjective bias and grounding conclusions in verifiable evidence. In the study, objectivity is ensured through the use of diverse source types, critical evaluation of ethnographic testimonies, and cautious differentiation between documented practices and later

interpretations. The principle underlies the balanced treatment of both pagan and Christian elements in the semantics of *svoloky* without privileging one explanatory model a priori.

Finally, the interdisciplinary method is applied as a general scientific strategy that integrates approaches and data from multiple disciplines. In this study, insights from history, ethnology, cultural studies, art history, and museum studies are combined to achieve a comprehensive understanding of *svoloky*. The interdisciplinary method allows the study to transcend disciplinary limitations and to address *svoloky* simultaneously as architectural structures, artistic artefacts, ritual objects, and heritage items.

Alongside general scientific methods, the study employs a range of cultural studies methods that make it possible to analyse *svoloky* not merely as material artefacts, but as culturally meaningful objects embedded in systems of symbols, values, practices, and collective representations. These methods enable a transition from descriptive and structural analysis to the interpretation of cultural meanings and functions.

The cultural-historical method is applied to examine *svoloky* as products of specific cultural epochs and social environments. Within cultural studies, this method focuses on the interrelation between material forms and the cultural contexts in which they emerge and function. In the study, the cultural-historical method is used to interpret changes in the form, decoration, and use of *svoloky* in relation to shifts in religious worldview, social organisation, aesthetic norms, and modes of everyday life. This approach allows the study to situate individual artefacts within broader cultural processes rather than treating them as isolated survivals of folk tradition.

The semiotic method plays a key role in the analysis of the symbolic dimension of *svoloky*. In cultural studies, semiotics is concerned with the investigation of objects as sign systems that convey culturally encoded meanings. In this study, the semiotic method is applied to carved motifs, painted ornaments, inscriptions, and spatial placement of *svoloky* within the dwelling. Particular attention is paid to recurring symbols such as crosses, rosettes, floral motifs, dates, and personal names, which are interpreted as signs operating within a culturally shared semantic field. This method makes it possible to reconstruct layers of meaning that were intelligible to historical actors but may not be immediately evident to the modern observer.

The symbolic-interpretative method is used to analyse *svoloky* as focal points of symbolic concentration within the traditional Ukrainian house. In cultural studies, this method emphasises the interpretation of symbols as carriers of collective values, cosmological models, and social norms. In the study, symbolic interpretation is applied to the role of *svoloky* in rituals connected with house construction, weddings, birth, calendrical celebrations, and death. Through this method, *svoloky* are understood as elements that mediate between the everyday and the sacral, structuring domestic space as a meaningful cultural environment rather than a purely functional one.

The hermeneutic method is employed to interpret textual and narrative sources related to *svoloky*, including ethnographic descriptions, folklore records, literary texts, and archival materials. In cultural research, hermeneutics focuses on understanding meanings within their historical and cultural horizons. In this study, the hermeneutic method is used to contextualise recorded testimonies of craftsmen and householders, ritual formulas, and literary representations, avoiding literalist or reductive readings. This approach allows for a nuanced interpretation of sources that often combine descriptive, normative, and symbolic layers.

The anthropological approach is applied as a cultural studies method oriented towards understanding *svoloky* through the practices and experiences of the people who produced and used them. In cultural anthropology, material objects are viewed as integral components of lived

culture. In the study, the anthropological approach informs the analysis of everyday interactions with *svoloky*, such as touching them during rituals, hanging cradles from them, or addressing them in verbal formulas. This method foregrounds the embodied and experiential dimensions of *svoloky* as part of domestic life.

The method of cultural contextualisation is used to situate *svoloky* within the broader symbolic structure of the traditional Ukrainian dwelling. As a cultural studies method, contextualisation seeks to understand cultural objects in relation to surrounding elements and practices. In the study, *svoloky* are analysed in connection with other key components of the house interior, such as the stove, the icon corner (*pokuttia*), and the spatial organisation of rooms. This method allows the study to demonstrate how *svoloky* functioned as part of a coherent cultural model of domestic space.

The comparative cultural method is applied to identify similarities and differences in the cultural meanings attributed to ceiling beams in different European traditions. Unlike purely structural comparison, this method focuses on symbolic functions and cultural interpretations. In the study, Ukrainian *svoloky* are compared with analogous elements in other European contexts to determine whether similarities in decoration and ritual use reflect shared symbolic models, parallel cultural developments, or processes of cultural transmission. This approach strengthens the interpretative dimension of the study and situates Ukrainian material within a broader cultural landscape.

The method of cultural memory analysis is employed to examine how *svoloky* function as carriers of collective memory. In cultural studies, cultural memory refers to the ways societies preserve and transmit knowledge about the past through material objects, narratives, and practices. In this study, *svoloky* are analysed as repositories of historical information encoded in inscriptions, dates, names, and symbolic motifs, as well as through their preservation in museums and heritage sites. This method enables the interpretation of *svoloky* as material anchors of memory that connect individual households to broader historical narratives.

Finally, the interpretative museological approach is applied at the intersection of cultural studies and museum studies. This method focuses on how cultural objects are recontextualised and reinterpreted when transferred from everyday use to museum space. In the study, it is used to analyse the processes of museumification of *svoloky* since the early 20th century, including changes in their semantic status, modes of display, and interpretative framing. This approach allows the study to trace how meanings attributed to *svoloky* have evolved in response to institutional practices of heritage preservation and public representation.

The final methodological layer of the study is constituted by klironomical methods ([Buychik, 2024](#)), which make it possible to conceptualise Ukrainian *svoloky* explicitly as objects of cultural heritage and to analyse them in terms of continuity, preservation, transmission, and reconstruction of cultural meanings over time. Within this framework, klironomy is understood as an integrative approach focused on the mechanisms through which cultural forms are maintained, reinterpreted, and legitimised across historical periods.

The klironomical approach serves as the overarching methodological orientation of the study. In its essence, this approach is concerned with identifying how cultural values embedded in material objects persist beyond the conditions of their original production and use. In the study, the klironomical approach is applied to *svoloky* as long-lived elements of the built environment that have retained cultural significance despite changes in architectural practices, social structures, and symbolic systems. This approach enables the analysis of *svoloky* not merely as remnants of the past, but as active carriers of heritage meanings within evolving cultural contexts.

The method of cultural continuity analysis is employed to trace the persistence and transformation of *svoloky* across different historical epochs. In klironomical terms, continuity does not imply static preservation, but rather adaptive transmission of cultural forms. In this study, the method is used to examine how *svoloky* continued to function as meaningful elements from the early modern period through the 19th and 20th centuries, including phases of simplification, decline in everyday use, and later revival. This analysis makes it possible to identify both stable core features and variable elements conditioned by historical change.

The method of semantic inheritance analysis focuses on the transmission of meanings associated with *svoloky* across generations. In klironomy, semantic inheritance refers to the ways in which symbolic meanings are preserved, modified, or reinterpreted over time. In the study, this method is applied to ritual practices, symbolic motifs, and inscriptions connected with *svoloky*, allowing the reconstruction of how sacral, protective, and commemorative meanings were inherited, transformed, or partially lost in different periods. This approach highlights the non-material dimension of heritage embodied in material objects.

The method of heritage value attribution is used to identify and substantiate the cultural significance of *svoloky* within contemporary heritage discourse. In klironomical methodology, value attribution involves the articulation of criteria by which objects are recognised as heritage. In this study, the method is applied to assess *svoloky* in terms of historical, artistic, symbolic, and memorial value. This allows the study to move from descriptive analysis to normative evaluation, clarifying why *svoloky* merit inclusion in heritage protection, museum collections, and scholarly narratives.

The method of museumification analysis occupies a central place within the klironomical framework. In klironomy, museumification is understood as a key mechanism of heritage preservation and reinterpretation. In the study, this method is used to analyse the processes through which *svoloky* were transferred from everyday architectural contexts into museum and exhibition spaces from the early 20th century onwards. Particular attention is paid to changes in function, meaning, and perception that accompany this transition, as well as to the role of museums in shaping public understanding of *svoloky* as heritage objects.

The method of heritage reconstruction analysis is applied to examine contemporary practices of reproducing and reintroducing *svoloky* into modern architectural environments. In klironomical terms, reconstruction is not limited to physical replication but includes symbolic and cultural reactivation. In this study, the method is used to analyse cases where newly carved *svoloky* are produced for newly built houses, often drawing on historical models. This allows for an assessment of how heritage forms are selectively reinterpreted and adapted to contemporary cultural needs.

The normative-analytical method is employed to examine implicit and explicit norms governing the preservation and interpretation of *svoloky*. In klironomy, norms play a crucial role in determining how heritage is classified, protected, and represented. In the study, this method is used to analyse museum practices, scholarly classifications, and heritage narratives that influence the status of *svoloky* as cultural assets. This approach enables the identification of gaps between scholarly knowledge, institutional frameworks, and public perception.

The method of heritage integration analysis is applied to assess the position of Ukrainian *svoloky* within broader European and global heritage contexts. In klironomical methodology, integration refers to the incorporation of local heritage phenomena into transnational cultural narratives. In this study, the method is used to compare Ukrainian *svoloky* with analogous ceiling beams in other European traditions, evaluating the potential for their inclusion in comparative

heritage studies and international scholarly discourse. This reinforces the study's contribution to the visibility of Ukrainian cultural heritage beyond national boundaries.

Finally, the prospective klironomical method is employed to outline potential directions for the future preservation and study of *svoloky*. In klironomy, prospective analysis focuses on anticipating challenges and opportunities in heritage transmission. In the study, this method informs reflections on the risks of loss, the role of documentation and digital recording, and the importance of interdisciplinary research for the sustainable preservation of *svoloky* as elements of cultural heritage.

Literature Review

Butich and Rinsevich (2006) compile and publish documentary materials (“universals”) issued during the Hetmanate period under Ivan Mazepa, which contain administrative, legal, and socio-economic evidence of early modern Ukrainian realities. In the study, this source is used as an early documentary attestation for the term *svolok* and its contextual appearance in relation to wooden constructions, enabling a historically grounded dating of the concept and its usage in the late 17th and early 18th-century milieu (Butich & Rinsevich, 2006).

Buychik (2024) offers a systematic theoretical exposition of klironomy as a science of cultural heritage, including its conceptual apparatus for analysing preservation, transmission, value attribution, and heritage legitimisation. This monograph is used in the study to underpin the klironomical methodological layer: it provides the conceptual vocabulary for treating *svoloky* not simply as structural components but as heritage objects whose meanings and values are preserved, transformed, and reactivated through museumification, reconstruction, and scholarly interpretation (Buychik, 2024).

Chepelyk (2000) analyses Ukrainian architectural modernism and, more broadly, the cultural logic through which vernacular forms were reinterpreted and institutionalised in modern architectural projects. In this study, the work is used to contextualise 19th-century and early 20th-century practices of stylistic revival and “folk style” construction, helping to interpret the reintroduction of artefacts and motifs associated with the Cossack era—including *svoloky*—into representational architecture and heritage-oriented design (Chepelyk, 2000).

De la Fliz (1996) publishes ethnographic and folkloric albums containing visual and descriptive documentation of Ukrainian everyday life and domestic interiors, including depictions relevant to the spatial placement and cultural context of ceiling beams. The study uses this source as an iconographic and ethnographic record supporting the reconstruction of the domestic environment in which *svoloky* functioned, particularly for illustrating how such beams were embedded in lived interior space rather than existing only as isolated museum artefacts (De la Fliz, 1996).

Lichtenschopf et al. (2024) examine historical wooden ceilings in Waidhofen an der Ybbs (Austria), describing ceiling constructions that include beams comparable in function and, in some cases, decorative treatment to Ukrainian *svoloky*. This source is used in the study to establish a European comparative perspective, demonstrating that functionally analogous ceiling-beam traditions exist beyond Ukraine and enabling the research to pose a crucial interpretative question: whether similarities reflect independent parallel development or cultural transmission across European regions (Lichtenschopf et al., 2024).

Masliichuk (2004) investigates materials related to the everyday life of the Cossack elite in Sloboda Ukraine in the 17th and 18th centuries, with attention to objects, interiors, and the material world of the social milieu. In this study, the source is used as contextual evidence for the presence and cultural framing of interior structural elements in elite domestic settings; it

supports early attestations of *svoloky* in Kharkiv-related contexts and helps situate the beam within the broader “world of things” characteristic of early modern Ukrainian life (*Masliuchuk, 2004*).

Myrnyi (*1920s*) is a literary work in which domestic ritual practices and symbolic actions related to protective markings (including cross signs) are represented in narrative form. In the study, this text is used as an illustrative cultural witness demonstrating how protective signs and sacral practices were imagined, narrated, and circulated in Ukrainian cultural memory, thereby complementing ethnographic evidence concerning the sacral and apotropaic semantic field associated with interior elements such as *svoloky* (*Myrnyi, 1920s*).

Pavlenko (*1927*) discusses Ukrainian folk woodcarving, including principles of decorum, restraint, and the functional integration of carved ornamentation within vernacular architecture. The study uses this source to support the art-historical interpretation of carved *svoloky*: it helps justify why the beam became a privileged locus of carving and why decorative concentration on specific structural elements (rather than ubiquitous carving) aligns with vernacular aesthetic logic and architectural integrity (*Pavlenko, 1927*).

Shcherban and Babkova (*2024*) provide a focused scholarly analysis of carved support beams of the Hetmanate period, offering empirical descriptions, typological considerations, and interpretative insights into 17th- and 18th-century artefacts. In this study, the article is used as the most directly relevant specialised precedent for early modern *svoloky*: it supports attribution practices, demonstrates the research potential of inscriptions (including exceptional socio-legal information), and substantiates the claim that comprehensive syntheses of *svoloky* as a class of heritage objects remain scarce (*Shcherban & Babkova, 2024*).

Shevchenko (*1949*) collects the canonical works of Taras Shevchenko, including texts and documentary materials that contain symbolic references to *svoloky* and the Cossack past. In the study, this edition is used to substantiate the literary and symbolic dimension of *svoloky* as cultural signs: Shevchenko’s use of the “beam with words” as an allegorical motif demonstrates how the *svolok* could operate as a condensed symbol of historical memory and cultural loss within Ukrainian national imagination (*Shevchenko, 1949*).

Taranushenko (*2012*) is a major scholarly work on the wooden monumental architecture of Left-Bank Ukraine, providing architectural-historical analysis of constructional systems and structural components in ecclesiastical wooden buildings. This source is used in the present study to ground the discussion of *svoloky* (or functionally analogous beams) in church architecture, clarifying their roles in binding wall structures and supporting ceilings and thus extending the phenomenon beyond domestic space into the sphere of sacral architecture (*Taranushenko, 2012*).

Tereshchenko (*1930*) presents ethnographic-architectural materials on laying foundations and building a house, including detailed testimony from a carpenter and descriptions of ritual sequences connected with construction. The study relies on this source as a key ethnographic foundation for reconstructing construction-stage rites and the ritual handling of the central beam; it supports the analysis of *svoloky* as participants in social practice and as loci where material building processes intersect with blessing formulas, symbolic transactions, and the formation of a sacral domestic core (*Tereshchenko, 1930*).

Voitovych (*2015*) examines folk demonology of the Boyko region, documenting beliefs, omens, and ritual techniques associated with domestic space and its components. In this study, the work is used to evidence region-specific semantic and ritual interpretations of ceiling beams, particularly in relation to death-related beliefs and practices (e.g., cracking as an omen,

drilling/raising a beam in liminal situations), thereby strengthening the argument that *svoloky* carried protective and liminal functions within traditional belief systems (Voitorych, 2015).

Yurchenko (1968) addresses wooden architecture within a broader multi-volume history of Ukrainian art, including evaluations of artistic woodcarving and the place of architectural carving in 18th- and 19th-century cultural development. The study uses this source to substantiate an authoritative art-historical assessment of carved *svoloky* as outstanding examples of Ukrainian architectural wood carving, thus supporting the claim that these beams should be considered not only technical elements but also significant artistic phenomena (Yurchenko, 1968).

Zaveriushchenko (2024) analyses the concept of the house within the Ukrainian wedding conceptual sphere, discussing ritual actions and symbolic objects relevant to domestic space during weddings. In the study, this source is used to support the interpretation of *svoloky* as active components of wedding ritual practice (e.g., restrictions on passing beneath the beam, recording gifts, tapping the wedding bread, fixing the wedding tree), thereby providing a conceptual and ethnolinguistic complement to earlier ethnographic records and reinforcing the beam's role as a sacral and symbolic axis of the dwelling (Zaveriushchenko, 2024).

Results

Title

The earliest facts known to me concerning the use of the term “*svolok*” in relation to Ukrainian wooden structures date to 1695 and 1715. They refer to constructions required for the installation of a water mill at the Pyatnytskyi Monastery (Chernihiv Regiment) and to the interior of a house in the city of Kharkiv (Butich & Rinsevich, 2006, p. 190; Masliuchuk, 2004, p. 277). The word is etymologically related to the nouns *volok* (a type of fishing net), *volokno* (“fibre”), and the verb *volochyty* (“to drag” or “to pull”). Its etymology is Slavic and conveys the meaning “that which draws together” or “that which binds.” This is a unique designation for such beams within Europe. For example, people predominantly used the feminine noun *matitsa* for similar structural elements (derived from the word *mother* and also denoting the female bodily organ “womb”). Although in certain regions of present-day Ukraine terms of foreign origin were also used alongside this designation, *svolok* has remained the term most commonly employed in the literary language. In view of this, the author uses the term *svolok* as a generalised designation.

In Austria, such beams form part of a specific type of ceiling known as the *Riemenbalkendecke*. Local researchers have adopted the English term “*girder*” as an equivalent for the beam under discussion (Lichtenschopf et al., 2024) (Figure 3). Ceilings of a similar structural type, supported by *svoloky*, were likewise commonly found in Ukraine.

Location and Structural Functions

In traditional residential buildings in Ukraine, there was usually one, or more rarely two, *svoloky* per room. As a rule, they supported the ceiling beams, and where the floor area of the room was small, they directly carried the ceiling boards themselves. In wooden structures, these structural elements also “tied” together the upper parts of the walls (acting as clamps that restrained the outward expansion of the walls under the pressure of the roof) and helped to significantly reduce the load imposed on them. The ceiling itself served to protect rooms from cold and precipitation that could penetrate through the roof, and it separated the residential from the non-residential space of the house or, in multi-storey buildings, divided the floors.

In addition, such beams were often used in Ukrainian wooden churches: they bound the walls of domes and the upper sections of log walls (*Taranushenko, 2012, p. 121*) or were employed to support the ceiling. The oldest example bearing a Cyrillic inscription (dated 1669) has survived to the present day in the Church of All Saints in Dobříkov (Czech Republic), which was originally constructed in the Ukrainian village of Velyka Kopania as an Orthodox church.

Folk Typology

Across the territory of Ukraine, ceilings with beams of the construction type under study have, since ancient times, been used by representatives of various ethnic groups. I am familiar with them from the houses of Ukrainians (in all regions), as well as Armenians and Poles (in the western lands). The “folk” typology characteristic of Ukrainians of the Middle Dnipro region as of the first third of the 20th century was recorded in the summer of 1929 by Andrii Tereshchenko from the words of a peasant carpenter who had built 15 houses. According to this typology, the cheapest beams, ordered by poorer builders, were “plastered *svoloky*”. They were made of “poor-quality wood” and therefore were coated with clay and, like the walls and ceiling of the house, whitewashed. The next type, “washed *svoloky*” (*Figure 3*), were made of “good-quality wood” and thus were neither painted nor plastered. When these beams became soiled, they were washed with water. Representatives of the 3rd group, “painted *svoloky*”, ordered by wealthier householders, were similar to the “washed” ones but painted “on the sides and underneath” in green or red. These *svoloky* were often decorated with paint depicting “all kinds of flowers—*rozhy*” (the folk name for roses). At times, the year of the house’s construction was inscribed on them, and Golgotha was depicted in the centre. The final type comprised “carved *svoloky*” (*Figure 1; Figure 2*), on which “roses, various flowers”, the year of construction, the owner’s surname, Golgotha crosses (*Tereshchenko, 1930, p. 52*), and other details were carved. The diverse decoration of *svoloky* belonging to the latter two groups testifies to the important role of such objects in the embellishment of interiors and in marking their sacral cores during construction. If a householder from the Dnipro region lacked the means to produce new *svoloky*, he transferred those already used in older houses. As a result, more than ten such objects dating to the 18th century have survived to this day. In the Carpathians (in particular, in the Boyko region), by contrast, *svoloky* that had been dismantled were burned (*Voitovych, 2015, p. 60*). This constitutes one of the reasons for the scarcity in this region of preserved *svoloky* from the early modern period.

Painted and carved *svoloky* were the principal decorated structural elements in the interiors of Ukrainian houses. In general, the decoration of walls and ceilings in traditional Ukrainian dwellings and wooden churches up to the 19th century was usually very restrained. In houses, apart from *svoloky*, it was placed—save for rare exceptions—near doorframes, windows, along the perimeter of the room beneath the ceiling, and on stoves. In churches, decoration was applied to the “clamps”. Folk “designers” were able to “exceptionally aptly integrate carved elements... with the architecture as a whole, and it is beyond doubt that the use of carving elsewhere, both in churches and in houses, would have been superfluous” (*Pavlenko, 1927, p. 8*).

History of Use

The oldest known house in Ukraine featuring a *svolok* (of the simplest form, without decoration, from the village of Samary, Ratne District, Volyn Region) is dated to 1587 on the basis of an inscription on its wall. It is currently exhibited at the National Museum of Folk Architecture and Life of Ukraine.

The next group of *svoloky* is dated to 1659–1793 and originates from individual settlements across most geographical regions. This group includes only carved (*rizani*) *svoloky* bearing dates or references to their owners, which make relatively precise attribution possible (Figure 1; Figure 2). Given the considerable passage of time since then, marked by numerous cataclysms, only a small number of such beams have survived to the present day. Only a few remain in situ within houses, while others are kept in museums and heritage reserves. In total, 31 artefacts have been identified directly, and data on a further 26 have been examined through publications and archival materials. With only a few exceptions, these beams bear inscriptions, a substantial proportion of which constitute striking examples of the art of lettering. The information contained in these texts enriches our understanding of the biographies of representatives of the social milieu of the time and records blessing formulas and apotropaic texts. One artefact contains information about an exceptional case relating to customary law (Shcherban & Babkova, 2024).

Svoloky are among the most visually compelling monuments of material culture of the early modern period in the history of Ukraine. According to the well-founded assessment of the architectural historian P. Yurchenko, in the 18th century their “artistic decoration” belonged to “the finest examples of Ukrainian architectural wood carving” (Yurchenko, 1968, p. 68). Despite the fact that analogies to certain decorative elements of *svoloky* can be found among functionally similar objects produced by other European peoples (Germans, Poles, Slovenes); see, e.g., Lichtenschopf et al. (2024), as integral works of art a significant proportion of Ukrainian *svoloky* of the 18th century constitute a distinctive phenomenon. Their originality is conditioned by the fact that, although the culture of the inhabitants of Ukraine during the early modern period generally developed in line with trends characteristic of large parts of Europe, it acquired specific expressive features. These depended on the peoples with whom local communities bordered, the influences they absorbed as a result of particular historical processes, and the traits of mentality that formed in the course of their cultural development.

To date, no systematic inventory has been compiled of Ukrainian *svoloky* of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries that possess cultural value. Only individual items are mentioned in scholarly publications. Based on personal observations, there are grounds to assert that, under the influence of a number of factors, the decoration of *svoloky* became simplified from the mid-18th century onwards. Across most areas of Ukrainian settlement, by the mid-20th century they gradually fell out of everyday use, although in many buildings old *svoloky* continue to be used for their original purpose to this day.

In different regions of Ukraine, the traditions of producing *svoloky* were broadly similar, yet certain distinctive features can be identified. For example, in the western regions, from the 18th to the early 20th century, they were made exclusively from coniferous wood, whereas in the Dnieper region deciduous trees were also used.

Semantics

Svoloky appear in scattered examples of folklore, the earliest of which date to the 19th century. The information recorded in these sources concerns the moment when the beam was installed in the house and its subsequent functioning. With regard to the former, several texts have survived that differ in detail. For example, according to the testimony of a craftsman recorded in the early 20th century in relation to wooden houses, the process unfolded as follows. A team of carpenters invited by the client began work only after the “senior carpenter” pronounced “Lord, help us” or “God, help us” and made the sign of the cross. The previously prepared parts of the house were then assembled, notches were cut on the *svolok* and the rafters,

after which everything was dismantled again; the *sokhy* (the base for the walls) were laid, and the structure was reassembled. Once the walls had been erected, the *svolok* was “brought into the interior of the building and laid lengthwise along the house on two supports on the ground”. A sheepskin coat and a coin were then placed beneath its ends, and those present drank together, saying: “God grant that the house be warm and prosperous.” Next, the *svolok* was “laid in place”: a tablecloth was spread at its centre, and ritual towels (*rusbnyky*) were placed under its ends. After the meal, the hostess removed them: the towels were taken by the senior master, and the tablecloth by the hostess. This signified that “the hostess takes God for herself, and the master takes the saints.” (*Teresbchenko, 1930, pp. 50–51*)

It should be noted that precisely at the centre of many decorated Ukrainian *svoloky* there was an image of the Cross of Golgotha—the instrument of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In the same place, various types of rosettes were quite often depicted, particularly in the late 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries, and sometimes coats of arms (either of the Russian Empire or owner). Thereafter, the *svolok*, together with the *pokuttia* (the place where icons were kept) and the stove, became a kind of sacral centre of the dwelling, used during key or crisis periods in the life of the family (*Figure 3*). In particular, during wedding rituals the *svolok* featured from the outset to the culmination of the ceremony. For instance, at the matchmaking stage the envoys of the groom were not permitted to step beneath it until consent to the marriage had been obtained. The best man recorded the gifts for the newlyweds on it. A kneading trough with dough for the wedding bread (*korovai*), as well as the finished bread itself, was lifted up to the *svolok* and lightly tapped against it “for good fortune”. If the wedding tree (*hiltse*) was sufficiently large, its top was tied to the *svolok*. Newborn children were touched to it, and their cradle was hung from a specially driven hook attached to it (*Zaveriusbchenko, 2024, p. 41*).

The *svolok* also featured in beliefs associated with death. If it cracked, this was perceived as a portent of the householder’s departure “to the other world”. To ease the death throes of a person (e.g., a witch), the *svolok* in their house could be raised or drilled (*Voitovych, 2015, pp. 54, 129*).

During key periods of the ritual calendar, the “power” of the *svolok* was ritually “reinforced”. For example, on 18 January (the eve of Epiphany) crosses were drawn on it with consecrated chalk or a candle, while before Easter crosses were marked with a candle. On Christmas Eve, a spoonful of *kutia* was thrown at it (or simply at the ceiling), and the grains that stuck were counted in order to predict the future harvest (*Zaveriusbchenko, 2024, p. 41*). Incidentally, the well-known Ukrainian writer Panas Myrnyi recorded in his novella *Ancient and Modern Misfortune* that a householder scraped off and gave a sick woman to drink the image of a cross drawn in soot from a Passion candle (*Myrnyi, 1920s, p. 10*). Summarising the data on the semantic field of Ukrainian notions associated with *svoloky*, one may cite M. Hrushevskyi’s view that this beam provides protective cover over the family (*Zaveriusbchenko, 2024, p. 41*).

The image of the *svolok* was employed by classics of Ukrainian literature as a symbolic motif. In particular, Taras Shevchenko, in the mystery play *The Great Vault*, used the image of a “*svolok* with words” (i.e., an ancient one), which had been “burnt to charcoal”, as an allegory of the final destruction of Ukraine’s Cossack heritage by the Muscovites after the Battle of Poltava in 1709. Moreover, he depicted early modern *svoloky* in two drawings and corresponding etchings (*Elders and Gifts in Chyhyryn, 1649*), included in the album *Picturesque Ukraine* (1844).

A carved *svolok* with an inscription, as an important attribute of the Cossack era, was used in the construction of the well-known guest house on the Galagan estate in Lebedyntsi. Built in 1854–1856 by commission and at the expense of the estate owner, according to a design by the architect Ye. Chervinskyi (1820–1890), it was intended to recreate the dwelling of

representatives of the general officer elite of the Hetmanate of the second half of the 17th and 18th centuries as it was imagined by contemporary Ukrainian scholars (including T. Shevchenko). Evidently under the poet's influence, the estate owner—who was personally acquainted with him—formulated the aim of the project as follows: “so that our architecture might be revived just as our poetry has been revived in the mouths of poets.” V. Chepelyk described this building as “the firstborn of the revival of the folk style” (*Chepelyk, 2000, p. 27*). A cross and the inscription “This house was built to revive the memory of the life of our ancestors in the minds of their descendants” were carved on the *svoloka*. Taras Shevchenko highly praised the house in his *Journal*, calling it “an aristocratic, yet good and exemplary undertaking.” (*Shevchenko, 1949, p. 265*)

From the beginning of the 20th century, the museumification of such objects began, along with their exhibition in historical and local history museums. The largest collections were assembled by M. Biliashivskiy for the Kyiv Museum of Arts, Industry, and Science; by D. Yavornytskyi for the Katerynoslav Museum named after O. Pol; and by K. Moshchenko for the Natural History Museum of the Poltava Provincial Zemstvo. From the 1970s onwards, *svoloky* could already be seen in the interiors of dwellings transferred to open-air museums in the cities of Pereiaslav and Kyiv. In the 1990s and 2000s, the production of newly carved *svoloky* for newly built houses began. A striking example of this trend is provided by the buildings belonging to the former President of Ukraine, V. Yushchenko.

Discussion

In many scholarly works that mention Ukrainian *svoloky* and were published prior to the early 2020s, emphasis was placed on their pagan symbolism, while the Christian dimension was effectively ignored. At present, it is desirable to trace the roots of beliefs concerning the semantics of *svoloky* and to compare them with those characteristics of representatives of other European ethnic groups. An attempt should be made to distinguish pre-Christian elements and to understand the reasons for the adoption of Christian ones. It is also necessary to consider Ukrainian *svoloky* as part of a building tradition common to many European countries. Of particular interest among them are the carved *svoloky* of the late 17th to the first half of the 18th century, for which analogies have been identified, inter alia, in Austria. It is important to determine whether, in this case, we are dealing with a discrete emergence of the custom of decorating ceiling beams in a similar manner, or whether this represents the result of the transgression of a phenomenon from Western Europe to the East. A separate aspect of the discussion may be constituted by an analysis of the specific features of the musealisation of these structural elements of buildings.

The findings of the study open several promising directions for further research into Ukrainian *svoloky* as elements of cultural heritage. One important avenue concerns the systematic expansion of comparative European analysis, aimed at identifying whether similarities between carved and decorated ceiling beams in Ukraine and other regions of Europe represent independent parallel developments or the result of cultural transmission across historical networks of contact. Such research would benefit from coordinated interdisciplinary collaboration combining architectural history, dendrochronology, and art-historical stylistic analysis. A second direction involves the creation of a comprehensive inventory and digital corpus of Ukrainian *svoloky* from the 19th and early 20th centuries, a period that remains insufficiently documented despite its significance for understanding processes of simplification, decline, and transformation of traditional forms. This would enable quantitative and spatial analyses of regional variation and contribute to heritage protection strategies. Further research

is also required to deepen the semantic analysis of *svoloky* by distinguishing pre-Christian, Christian, and syncretic layers within their symbolic repertoire and by situating these meanings within broader systems of domestic sacrality and folk cosmology. From a klironomical perspective, particular attention should be paid to contemporary practices of reconstruction, reproduction, and reinterpretation of *svoloky* in modern architecture, assessing their role in the active transmission of heritage rather than mere stylistic revival. Finally, future studies may focus on the museological representation of *svoloky*, analysing curatorial strategies, narrative framing, and visitor perception in museums and open-air heritage complexes, thereby contributing to a more reflexive and theoretically grounded integration of these artefacts into national and European heritage discourse.

Conclusion

Wooden ceiling beams, which in the Ukrainian literary language are usually referred to as *svoloky*, constitute an important element of cultural heritage, a source of information for historical and cultural research, and an ornament (often an underestimated one) of museum collections. Their use in Ukrainian wooden structures—both domestic buildings and churches—has been documented since the 16th and 17th centuries. A folk craftsman from the Middle Dnieper region in the first third of the 20th century distinguished four groups of *svoloky*: *mazani* (plastered), *myti* (washed), *farbovani* (painted), and *rizani* (carved). This “folk” typology remains a “living” one and encompasses all artefacts for which information is currently available. Painted and carved *svoloky* preserve images and inscriptions that represent an important source of historical and cultural information. The richly decorated beams of the fourth group, preserved from the 1690s to the 1740s, constitute striking examples of woodcarving.

In addition to their structural and decorative functions, *svoloky* in the folk culture of Ukrainians also fulfilled symbolic and sacral roles within dwellings, as evidenced by disparate folklore materials, the earliest of which date to the 19th century. The information recorded in these sources relates to the moment of installing the beam in the house and to its use in various ritual practices that accompanied the life of the family as a whole and of its individual members. The image of the *svolok* was employed symbolically by classics of Ukrainian literature (notably Taras Shevchenko). From the mid-19th century onwards, such objects themselves became one of the significant elements of a new architectural style based on the achievements of folk builders of the early modern period. Since the beginning of the 20th century, they have been among the important carriers of information about contemporary architecture. *Svoloky* are seen by large numbers of visitors to museums and heritage reserves as visually attractive components of Ukrainian dwellings and as bearers of historical information. Some knowledgeable Ukrainians continue to use them in private homes and public buildings.

The present study has achieved its stated aim of providing a comprehensive and generalising characterisation of Ukrainian *svoloky* as a significant element of the cultural heritage of Ukrainians. Through an integrated cultural-historical and klironomical approach, *svoloky* have been examined not merely as constructional components of traditional buildings, but as complex heritage objects that combine structural, decorative, symbolic, and memorial functions and that have retained cultural relevance across several centuries.

In addressing the first study objective, the study has traced the history of the use of *svoloky* in Ukrainian residential and ecclesiastical architecture from the late 16th to the early 21st century, establishing their long-term presence and documenting key stages in their functional and formal transformation. The analysis of structural and functional characteristics has demonstrated that *svoloky* played a central role in the spatial organisation of traditional dwellings and wooden

churches, simultaneously fulfilling load-bearing, binding, and spatially organising functions. The task of systematising folk typology has been fulfilled through the reconstruction and interpretation of vernacular classifications, which remain analytically relevant for contemporary scholarship and encompass the full range of known artefacts.

The study has also successfully addressed the objective of analysing decorative forms and artistic features of *svoloky*. Painted and carved beams have been shown to constitute important examples of Ukrainian folk woodcarving, with inscriptions and ornamentation serving as valuable sources of historical, social, and artistic information. The semantic analysis has demonstrated that *svoloky* occupied a key position within the symbolic structure of the traditional house, functioning as a sacral and protective axis closely connected with rituals of construction, marriage, birth, calendrical celebrations, and death. In fulfilling the task of examining literary and cultural representations, the research has shown that the image of the *svolok* entered Ukrainian cultural memory as a condensed symbol of historical continuity and loss, thereby extending its significance beyond the material sphere.

The objectives related to museumification and contemporary practices have likewise been achieved. The study has demonstrated that since the early 20th century *svoloky* have become important museum artefacts and elements of heritage display, undergoing semantic recontextualisation within institutional frameworks of preservation and interpretation. At the same time, contemporary practices of reproducing carved *svoloky* in newly built structures have been interpreted as forms of heritage reactivation rather than simple stylistic imitation. Finally, by situating Ukrainian *svoloky* within a broader European context, the study has clarified their place in comparative research on wooden ceiling constructions and highlighted their potential contribution to transnational heritage discourse.

Overall, the study confirms that Ukrainian *svoloky* represent a multifaceted heritage phenomenon that integrates material construction, artistic expression, symbolic meaning, and cultural memory. The successful resolution of all study tasks demonstrates that *svoloky* is worth regarding not as marginal or purely technical elements of folk architecture, but as culturally central objects whose study contributes to a deeper understanding of Ukrainian traditional culture and its place within the European heritage landscape.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

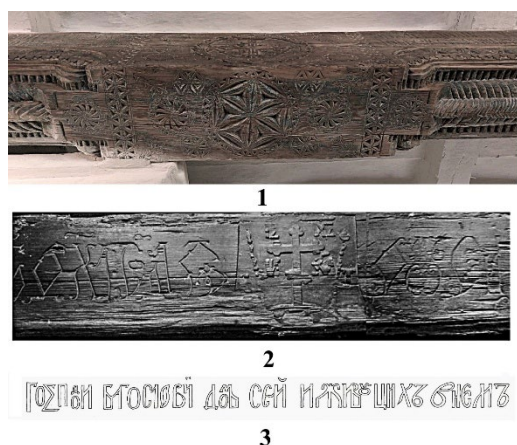


Figure 1. 1. Central section of the lower plane of an early 18th-century svolok in the interior of the “Tanner’s House” at the Museum of Folk Architecture and Everyday Life of the Middle Dnipro Region (Pereiaslav). 2. Central section of the front surface of a *svolok* dated 1716 from Pereiaslav. Exhibition of the Museum of Decorative and Applied Arts of the Kyiv Region at the Museum of Folk Architecture and Everyday Life of the Middle Dnipro Region (Pereiaslav). 3. Fragment of a blessing inscription on a *svolok* dated 1741 from Zhovnyne. Drawing by T. Menchynska.



Figure 2. 1. Fragment of a svolok dated 1705 in the interior of the Ivan Kotliarevskiy Museum-Estate (Poltava). 2. *Svolok* from the 1730s in the interior of the “Miller’s House” at the Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Life of the Middle Dnipro Region (Pereiaslav).



Figure 3. Inhabitants of the Yerchytiske community of Kyiv Governorate in a room with a *svolok*. Drawing by D. P. de la Fliz, mid-19th century (p. 219)

Psychological and Pedagogical Foundations for the Formation of the Musician-Pedagogue under Contemporary Challenges ^[6]

Abstract:

The relevance of the study is determined by the profound social, educational, and wartime transformations that significantly affect the professional mission and personal sustainability of contemporary educators, particularly in music education. Under conditions of social instability, digitalisation, and increased psycho-emotional pressure, the formation of a musician-pedagogue requires renewed theoretical reflection grounded in humanistic and learner-centred educational values. The novelty of the study consists in its integrative psychological and pedagogical conceptualisation of forming the musician-pedagogue under contemporary challenges, including wartime realities, digitalisation, and the growing influence of artificial intelligence in education. Unlike traditional approaches, the study foregrounds the personality of the musician-pedagogue as a central value-bearing, emotionally resilient, and culturally responsible subject of the educational process. The subject of the study is the psychological and pedagogical foundations of forming the personality of the musician-pedagogue as a professionally competent, value-oriented, and psychologically resilient educator. The object of the study is the process of forming a teacher of musical art within the realities of an unstable and digitalised educational environment. The study aims to provide a theoretical substantiation of the psychological and pedagogical foundations for forming the personality of the musician-pedagogue capable of effective professional functioning under contemporary social, wartime, and educational challenges. The study employs theoretical methods, including analysis, synthesis, generalisation, and systematisation of scholarly sources, as well as comparative and historical-pedagogical methods to interpret the evolution of the musician-pedagogue's professional role in the context of tradition and innovation. The study draws upon and synthesises the scholarly contributions of Ukrainian researchers in pedagogy, psychology, music education, and educational innovation, including works. The study substantiates that the formation of the musician-pedagogue under contemporary challenges is grounded in the integration of professional competence, humanistic value orientations, emotional awareness, and psychological resilience. It demonstrates that music-pedagogical activity transcends purely instructional functions and acquires psycho-emotional, therapeutic, and socially supportive significance, particularly under conditions of war and social instability. The conclusions confirm that effective music-pedagogical activity in the 21st century requires a harmonious combination of humanistic pedagogical traditions with innovative, learner-centred, and digitally informed approaches, while preserving the central role of the educator as a bearer of culture, empathy, and ethical responsibility.

Keywords: personal development, psychological resilience, humanistic values, artificial intelligence, music-pedagogical activity, music therapy, innovative processes.

Introduction

The 21st century places numerous demands on the formation of the contemporary professional, including personal qualities, knowledge, abilities, skills, competences, values, and resilience. In educational activity, which today takes place daily under the difficult and dangerous conditions of war, the organisation of learning reaches a new level of responsibility and the formation of new experience, where the primary task is the preservation of citizens' life and health. In this context, modern teachers face a complex range of professional and personal challenges: alongside traditional pedagogical tasks, there has emerged a need to act effectively in conditions of distance and blended learning, to work with children who have experienced traumatic events, to resist professional burnout, to maintain internal motivation, and not to lose faith in the humanistic vocation of education as a space of support, development, and hope for achieving a dignified standard of living, among other aims. Therefore, research into the psychological and pedagogical aspects of the formation of the musician-pedagogue will

contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence their success, self-determination, professional growth, and developmental potential.

The novelty of the study lies in its integrative psychological and pedagogical conceptualisation of forming the musician-pedagogue under contemporary challenges, including wartime realities, digitalisation, and the growing influence of artificial intelligence on education. Unlike traditional approaches that predominantly focus on methodological or didactic aspects of music education, this research foregrounds the personality of the musician-pedagogue as a central, value-bearing, and psychologically resilient subject of the educational process. The study introduces a holistic model that combines professional competence, humanistic value orientations, emotional awareness, and psychological self-regulation as key components of pedagogical effectiveness. A distinctive contribution of the research is its emphasis on the therapeutic and psycho-emotional dimensions of music-pedagogical activity, particularly in the context of war-related trauma and social instability. The article substantiates music-pedagogical practice not only as an educational activity but also as a resource for emotional support, recovery, and social cohesion. Furthermore, the study critically examines the role of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, arguing for their integration into music education without the loss of its humanistic essence. By bridging pedagogy, psychology, musicology, and contemporary educational innovation, the research expands the theoretical framework for understanding the professional identity of the musician-pedagogue in the twenty-first century. This interdisciplinary synthesis constitutes a novel perspective within current music-pedagogical and educational research.

The subject of the study is the psychological and pedagogical foundations of the formation of the personality of the musician-pedagogue as a professionally competent, value-oriented, and psychologically resilient educator under contemporary social, wartime, and educational challenges.

The object of the study is the process of forming a teacher of musical art within the realities of an unstable and digitalised educational environment.

The study aims the theoretical substantiation of the psychological and pedagogical foundations for forming the personality of the musician-pedagogue capable of professional functioning under conditions of contemporary social transformations, wartime challenges, and the rapid development of digital technologies.

To achieve the stated purpose, the study pursues the following objectives:

- analyse the impact of contemporary transformational processes on developing the personality of the music teacher;
- characterise the relationship between tradition and innovation in the professional formation of the musician-pedagogue of the 21st century;
- reveal the educational potential of music in shaping the value-based worldview of the individual;
- determine the role of pedagogical mastery, spiritual depth, and psychological resilience in music-pedagogical activity;
- substantiate the significance of music-pedagogical activity as a means of psycho-emotional support for the individual under conditions of societal challenges.

The results of the study are intended for a broad academic and professional audience involved in music, arts, and pedagogical education. They may be of particular relevance to students of higher pedagogical and arts education programmes who are preparing for professional activity in music education. The findings are also addressed to university lecturers and teacher educators responsible for the design and implementation of music-pedagogical

curricula. In addition, the research may be useful for practising teachers of musical art and arts disciplines in general secondary education institutions, as well as leaders of creative collectives. Finally, the materials of the study may serve as a theoretical and methodological resource for psychologists, music therapists, and researchers exploring the intersections of education, art, emotional well-being, and humanistic values in contemporary society.

Methods

The methodological framework of the study is based on a combination of general scientific and special research methods that ensure a comprehensive and interdisciplinary analysis of the psychological and pedagogical foundations of forming the personality of the musician-pedagogue under contemporary challenges. The selected methodology reflects the theoretical nature of the research and is aimed at conceptual analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of existing scholarly knowledge. By integrating approaches from pedagogy, psychology, philosophy of education, and music pedagogy, the study seeks to provide a holistic understanding of professional formation in conditions of social transformation, wartime realities, and digitalisation of education.

The method of analysis was employed as a fundamental general scientific tool for examining theoretical concepts and scholarly approaches relevant to the research problem. It enabled a detailed examination of pedagogical, psychological, and music-pedagogical literature addressing professional competence, value orientations, emotional resilience, and personal maturity of the musician-pedagogue. Through analytical decomposition, key components of music-pedagogical activity were identified and examined in relation to contemporary educational challenges. This method also facilitated the exploration of music as an educational, cultural, and therapeutic phenomenon. As a result, analysis provided a structured understanding of the multidimensional professional identity of the musician-pedagogue.

The method of synthesis was applied to integrate diverse theoretical perspectives into a coherent conceptual framework. It allowed the combination of findings from pedagogy, psychology, and musicology into a unified model of professional formation. Through synthesis, isolated theoretical positions concerning humanistic values, emotional awareness, and psychological resilience were interconnected and interpreted as mutually reinforcing elements of pedagogical effectiveness. This approach supported the conceptualisation of music-pedagogical activity as a space that unites educational, artistic, and psycho-emotional functions. Consequently, synthesis contributed to the development of integrative conclusions reflecting the complexity of contemporary music education.

The method of generalisation was used to identify common patterns and tendencies emerging from the analysis of scholarly sources and contemporary educational practices. It enabled the formulation of general principles related to learner-centred education, humanistic pedagogy, and resilience-oriented professional development. By generalising individual theoretical insights, the study articulated broader conclusions applicable to diverse educational contexts. This method ensured that the research findings transcend isolated cases and contribute to the theoretical advancement of music-pedagogical studies. As a result, the conclusions gained both conceptual depth and practical relevance.

The method of systematisation was employed to organise and structure key concepts, categories, and approaches within the research framework. It facilitated the logical ordering of theoretical constructs related to personal development, psychological resilience, pedagogical mastery, innovation, and music-pedagogical activity. Through systematisation, the interrelations between pedagogical, psychological, and artistic components were clearly delineated. This

method ensured internal consistency and conceptual clarity throughout the study. Consequently, systematisation strengthened the methodological coherence and transparency of the research design.

The comparative method was applied to identify similarities and differences between traditional and contemporary approaches to the formation of the musician-pedagogue. It enabled a systematic comparison of pedagogical models, value orientations, and professional roles across different educational paradigms. Through comparative analysis, the study examined how humanistic pedagogical traditions interact with innovative learner-centred and technology-enhanced approaches. This method also facilitated the identification of convergent trends in music education, such as the growing emphasis on emotional resilience, creativity, and interdisciplinary integration. As a result, the comparative method supported a balanced interpretation of continuity and change in music-pedagogical practice.

The historical-pedagogical method was used to analyse the evolution of the image and professional mission of the musician-pedagogue within the broader context of educational history. It enabled the examination of pedagogical ideas and practices across different historical periods, highlighting their influence on contemporary conceptions of music education. By situating current challenges within a historical continuum, the study demonstrated the persistence of humanistic values in music pedagogy. This method also allowed the identification of transformations in the educator's role in response to social, cultural, and technological change. Consequently, historical-pedagogical analysis reinforced the theoretical grounding of the study and contextualised contemporary innovations within long-standing pedagogical traditions.

In conclusion, the integrated use of general scientific and special research methods ensured the methodological rigour and interdisciplinary depth of the study. The applied methodological framework made it possible to examine the formation of the musician-pedagogue as a complex, dynamic, and value-oriented process. By combining analytical, synthetic, comparative, and historical perspectives, the study achieved a comprehensive interpretation of contemporary challenges and professional requirements. This methodological approach provides a solid foundation for the validity of the research findings and supports their applicability within both academic discourse and educational practice.

Literature Review

The theoretical foundations of modern pedagogy, the emphases of vocational training and higher education, the psychological and pedagogical foundations of teachers' professional development, innovative teaching and learning methods, as well as the use of artificial intelligence in educational and scientific activities and its impact on the professional development of educators, are addressed in the works of Ukrainian scholars N. Avsheniuk and H. Tovkanets (2022), O. Vishnevskiy (2006), O. Zakhar (2024), A. Kolomiets and O. Kushnir (2024), V. Pidyachyi (2023), N. Sofii (2007), among others.

The formation of the future musician-pedagogue under contemporary conditions is a complex, multidimensional process that involves the preparation of a new type of specialist—a bearer of cultural and spiritual values, innovative thinking, digital literacy, project and research competences, and self-development—capable, through musical art, of creating a space of education, culture, support, inspiration, motivation, and both internal and external resources. These components determine not only the level of the specialist's professional competence, but also their capacity to influence the formation of individuals prepared for responsible life in society. Contemporary educators emphasise the significance of the value-oriented educational

and cultural orientation of the educational process, pointing to the need to “reconsider the strategy and tactics of teaching towards modernisation, attractiveness, and effectiveness, and to prioritise the formation of meanings, values, and aesthetic tastes of today’s youth.” (*Hnativ, Shunerych, & Hordieieva, 2025, p. 64*)

Music-pedagogical activity in the contemporary world is capable of becoming an important factor in preserving identity and in educating the Person of Culture. L. Romankova reveals the set of qualities that a future graduate of a higher education institution should possess for effective self-realisation within the space of the global knowledge society, noting that “the cultural sphere is the most sensitive component of global civil society, as it is grounded in a spiritual substrate that can be perceived only by a ‘person of culture’.” (*Romankova, 2017, p. 120*)

Special attention should be given to scholarly research on health-preserving technologies in education. The influence of musical art on mental health, which is important for the future of Ukrainian society, is examined in the works of Ye. Dudnyk (*2023*), while the use of music therapy in the educational process is explored in the studies of V. Draganchuk (*2016*), V. Koshel and M. Novyk (*2020*), and L. Romaniv and O. Pishak (*2024*), among others.

At the same time, the issue of harmoniously combining the humanistic tradition of music-pedagogical education with innovative technologies—particularly the use of artificial intelligence and music-therapeutic approaches—as factors supporting professional identity, psycho-emotional well-being, and the personal growth of the musician-pedagogue requires further scholarly analysis.

Results

Contemporary personal development takes place under the multidimensional influence of social, cultural, informational, and technological factors. At present, personal development is one of the most relevant topics and a prerequisite for success as a basic human need. Success is most often defined as a process of developing abilities and realising personal potential, as well as “a positive result of activity, the achievement of a goal, and the maximum self-realisation of the individual.” (*Skoryk, 2022, pp. 10–11*) Therefore, education is called not only to transmit knowledge, but also to create conditions for the formation of happy, successful, and self-fulfilled individuals.

Modern personal development is increasingly oriented towards a harmonious integration of intellectual, emotional, and value-based spheres. It is precisely such a holistic model of personal development that enables an individual to adapt to the rapid changes of the contemporary world while preserving humanistic orientations and cultural identity. The formation of a successful personality is impossible outside the laws of beauty and goodness, outside culture, and outside the formation of the Person of Culture. “Today, the actual formulation of the question of which person a modern higher education institution should form—‘a person of the market’ or ‘a person of culture’—reflects the confrontation of two opposing concepts of world order: materially oriented and spiritually oriented... Those who look to the past gravitate towards the material factor, while those who look to the future strive for higher spirituality. By all indications, the cultural sphere is now coming to the fore as the most sensitive component of global civil society, since it is grounded in a spiritual substrate that can be perceived only by a ‘person of culture’.” (*Romankova, 2017, p. 120*) In scholarly research, the concept of the “person of culture” is interpreted as an individual who possesses a high level of spiritual, moral, and aesthetic consciousness, is capable of value-based comprehension of the world, dialogue with cultural heritage, and responsible creative self-expression. Such a person

not only assimilates the cultural achievements of society, but also actively reproduces and enriches them in their own activity, maintaining a connection between tradition and modernity.

Musical art, owing to its emotional and semantic nature, acts as one of the leading means of educating the Person of Culture and as a space of spiritual support under conditions of war and contemporary socio-cultural challenges. Through music, creativity, improvisation, and dialogue, the individual learns to live through complex emotions and to find harmony between external chaos and their inner world. “The universe of music, which has long been an integral part of human culture, not only satisfies our sensory appetites, but also penetrates deeply into the psychology and physiology of our organism.” (*Dudnyk, 2023, p. 89*) Music becomes a language of support, hope, and faith in victory and the future; it heals, helps recovery, and enables individuals to feel their own value and belonging to culture and humanity as a whole. “Music, like literature, visual art, philosophy, and the like, introduces a person into a certain system of values, thereby performing a specific pedagogical function. Every author (writer, artist, etc.) educates through their creativity and, in this sense, is a pedagogue.” (*Vishnevskyi, 2006, p. 21*)

In contemporary society, pedagogical activity emerges as one of the most socially significant forms of service to the individual and the community, since it is precisely through education that future conscious, educated, spiritually developed, and goal-oriented citizens of the state are formed. In this context, a special role belongs to music-pedagogical activity and to the personality of the musician-pedagogue, who combines personally and professionally significant qualities and competences, among which a prominent place is occupied by emotional and aesthetic culture, social responsibility, creativity, innovativeness, the capacity for interdisciplinary integration, support of psychological well-being, and many others. “The future teacher of musical art is, first and foremost, a facilitator of creativity, musical-aesthetic experience, and the cultural growth of the contemporary generation of pupils.” (*Fedorets, 2025, p. 50*)

The vocation of the contemporary teacher of the twenty-first century is manifested not only in the aspiration to transmit knowledge, but above all in the ability to see in the learner a unique personality, to support their individual developmental path, and to inspire the search for personal meanings and self-knowledge. An important component of the teacher’s professional mission is also continuous self-improvement, reflection on one’s own activity, and readiness for personal and professional growth and motivation under conditions of dynamic social change. Thus, O. Vishnevskyi emphasises that “no other profession provides such constant ‘recharging’ with optimism and youthfulness as teaching, for the teacher constantly deals with youth, with a child’s soul not yet damaged by life.” (*Vishnevskyi, 2006, p. 29*)

Consequently, contemporary social and educational challenges necessitate a rethinking of traditional approaches to pedagogical activity. Under conditions of digitalisation, the development of artificial intelligence, generational change, and growing information flows, priority is given to the formation of creative thinking, emotional intelligence, the capacity for self-reflection, communication, and conscious life choice. Learner-centred education, grounded in subject–subject interaction, creates conditions for the development of each child’s uniqueness and their successful adaptation to a dynamic world. “Do not teach children in the way you were taught—they were born in different times... School is a model of society, and when speaking of human rights, equality, and freedom, the child’s personality must be placed at the centre of all activity so that it becomes a mediator in the interaction of the subjects of learning.” (*Sofii, 2007*)

The effectiveness of a successful educational process is determined by many factors, among which the search for innovative teaching methods and principles that are consonant with contemporary conditions and needs plays an important role. It is precisely through the harmonious combination of traditional values and educational innovations that the teacher is able to facilitate the formation of a generation of young people who will make conscious, responsible, and internally motivated choices of their life path. “A competent pedagogue must, first and foremost, possess a system of psychological and pedagogical knowledge about basic mental processes, the characteristics of human development, methods of educational activity and forms of organising learning activity, and subject knowledge in the relevant fields of science, among others.” (*Avsheniuk & Tovkanets, 2022, p. 38*)

Thus, the ability to think innovatively—to generate new ideas and approaches—becomes an essential skill. Innovation is one of the leading methodological principles of contemporary education and includes new teaching methods, new ways of organising classes, integrative and interdisciplinary connections, and the organisation of research and project-based activities, among others. The greatest innovators are not necessarily those who possess the most original idea; more often, they are individuals or teams who use their creative potential to develop a new perspective or a more effective way of conveying an idea. Comprehending or transmitting new ideas in an innovative and engaging manner, approaching problems from new viewpoints, and developing new solutions are qualities that are in demand and highly valued by society and employers.

Innovative processes and the digitalisation of the educational space open up new opportunities for music-pedagogical activity; at the same time, however, they pose new ethical and professional challenges for educators. The use of digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and online tools requires the musician-pedagogue to demonstrate a high level of media literacy, critical thinking, and a responsible attitude towards the content and forms of teaching and learning. Pedagogical innovations are implemented through the educator’s own personal resources and professional mastery (communicative abilities, professional skills, motivation, etc.), as well as through the acquisition of new abilities and skills (the desire for self-improvement, the engagement of additional resources—tools, methods, technologies, etc.). Taken together, all these factors enhance the overall effectiveness of innovative approaches in education. Consequently, these trends encourage the introduction of new educational courses into the training of the contemporary teacher of musical art. For example, one such course is the elective discipline “*Modern Technologies and Organisational Strategies in Arts Education*” from the general training cycle of the field of knowledge A Education, subject specialisation A4.13 Secondary Education (Arts. Musical Art), which is taught to full-time and part-time students at the second (Master’s) level of higher education at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. The course was developed to provide students with the necessary knowledge for implementing innovative arts lessons, interactive forms and methods, and the use of online resources to support the processes of teaching and learning arts in general secondary education institutions.

Today, personality formation occurs not only within the boundaries of formal education, but also within the space of digital communication, social networks, and media culture. In the era of artificial intelligence, the ability to analyse, communicate, listen and hear, work in a team, and independently seek answers to tasks and questions is extremely important. “The duel ‘human versus artificial intelligence’ has begun. Despite the fact that artificial intelligence learns quickly, does not become fatigued, and requires relatively small financial investments, it remains ‘non-competitive’ in areas where creative thinking, intuition, emotionality, emotional intelligence, empathy, interpersonal skills, contextual understanding (especially in psychology),

moral values, soft skills, and others are involved. Therefore, the main goal of contemporary education is to educate a new generation characterised by creativity, innovativeness, a propensity for non-standard thinking and decision-making, and a high level of emotional and aesthetic culture.” (*Hnatin et al., 2025, p. 68*)

In this context, particular importance is attached to the preparation of a teacher capable of combining innovative technologies with the humanistic values of education. It is worth recalling that the term *pedagogy* derives from two Greek words: *paidos* (child) and *ago* (to lead). Accordingly, pedagogical thinking must correspond to the new demands of life.

Contemporary scholarly research increasingly emphasises that “the introduction of artificial intelligence tools into the educational process opens up new opportunities for the professional development of educators, particularly in terms of the personalisation of learning, the automation of routine processes, and the expansion of access to educational resources. At the same time... no algorithm is capable of replacing live pedagogical interaction, empathy, and the moral responsibility of the teacher.” (*Zakhar, 2024, pp. 104–105*) The personality of the musician-pedagogue is their principal professional instrument. No methods, technologies, or programmes are capable of compensating for the absence of sincerity, empathy, inner culture, and personal maturity. It is precisely through personal example that the teacher transmits values and shapes aesthetic taste and attitudes towards art and life in general. As noted by A. Kolomiets and O. Kushnir, “artificial intelligence in scientific and educational activity should be regarded not as a substitute for pedagogical work, but as an auxiliary tool whose effectiveness directly depends on the level of professional culture, ethical awareness, and digital literacy of the educator.” (*Kolomiets & Kushnir, 2024, pp. 45–46*)

An essential professional competence of the teacher under conditions of rapid social change, the digitalisation of education, and the instability of the contemporary world is a thorough understanding of the psychological determinants of personality development. Today, the educator must not only adapt to new technologies and learning formats, but also preserve the value-based core of the profession—genuine attention to the inner world of the individual. Awareness of the psychological aspects of personal development, the capacity for empathy, and pedagogical support of learners’ self-determination are not additional, but fundamental components of the professional competence of the modern teacher. Issues related to the preservation of physical and mental health, the development of internal resources, the capacity for self-regulation, and emotional resilience acquire particular urgency under conditions of the current military aggression. Consequently, the need to introduce various health-preserving technologies into the educational process becomes evident; scholars define these as “favourable learning conditions for the child in school and higher education institutions (the absence of stressful situations, the adequacy of requirements and teaching and upbringing methods); the optimal organisation of the educational process (in accordance with age, gender, individual characteristics, and hygienic standards); and a complete and rationally organised motor regime.” (*Romaniv & Pishak, 2024, p. 561*)

Under contemporary conditions, music-pedagogical activity increasingly goes beyond the boundaries of traditional teaching and approaches therapeutic practice. Music becomes a means of emotional support, psychological recovery, and rehabilitation, especially for children who have experienced the traumatic consequences of war, the loss of home, or separation from loved ones. In this process, the musician-pedagogue acts as a guide to a safe emotional space in which it is permissible to feel, to make mistakes, to search for, and to discover inner resources.

Today, the therapeutic function of art and the use of art practices, particularly music therapy, are extremely relevant and lie at the intersection of scholarly research in psychology,

medicine, art studies, pedagogy, sociology, and related fields. “From a pedagogical perspective, music therapy can be an effective means of optimising the educational process aimed at the formation and development of a distinctive new psychoculture which, in the opinion of scholars, may give humanity a chance for survival and flourishing in the future.” (*Koshel & Novyk, 2020, p. 6*)

Music therapy is used in various countries worldwide for the treatment of somatic and neuro-psychological disorders. Art practices are understood as innovative educational technologies that employ art-based techniques, contribute to the activation of individuals’ internal resources, and enhance their adaptive capacities. “Advanced experience of foreign music-therapeutic centres shows that the involvement of musicologists and practising musicians in cooperation with medical professionals is effective. This is due to the need by the need for knowledge of music theory and history for selecting appropriate repertoires for listening, mastery of musical instruments or vocal skills for joint music-making with the patient (for example, when verbal contact is impossible for certain reasons), and so forth. Therefore, music psychology and therapy should be an integral part of the training of specialists in music and music-pedagogical fields.” (*Draganchuk, 2016, p. 8*)

The contemporary world is changing very rapidly, and predicting what it will be like in the future is rather difficult. The ability to adapt to change, maintain inner stability, understand one’s emotional state and learn to regulate it, and think critically helps individuals navigate conditions of uncertainty. The development of emotional-volitional processes, effective thinking, and purposeful action in response to contemporary challenges contributes to the formation of one’s own developmental trajectory and one’s personal and professional life path. Investigating the impact of the level of development of cognitive processes on work capacity, V. Pidyachyi notes: “If cognitive, emotional, and volitional processes are developed at a sufficient level, an academic and pedagogical worker demonstrates good work capacity, productivity, creativity, and adaptability to life and work. When these processes are reduced or impaired, this leads to problems with concentration of attention, memorisation, decision-making, emotional stability, self-control, and self-regulation.” (*Pidyachyi, 2023, p. 128*)

Under conditions of constant tension, information overload, and wartime realities, the problem of psychological resilience of the musician-pedagogue becomes particularly acute. It is often the musician-pedagogue who absorbs the experiences of children, while remaining a person with their own fears, anxieties, and losses. Therefore, the formation of the personality of the musician-pedagogue today is impossible without the development of self-regulation skills, conscious experiencing of emotions, prevention of professional burnout, and the preservation of inner balance.

The formation of emotional resilience of the musician-pedagogue is one of the key factors of their professional effectiveness under contemporary challenges. Emotional resilience implies the ability to recognise one’s experiences, regulate emotional reactions, and maintain inner equilibrium in situations of tension and uncertainty. For the musician-pedagogue, this is particularly important, as their professional activity involves constant emotional interaction with children who often require support, acceptance, and a safe space for self-expression.

The development of emotional resilience occurs through reflection on one’s pedagogical experience, a conscious attitude towards professional difficulties, and the use of artistic and musical practices as means of self-regulation. In this context, music functions not only as an instrument of influence on learners, but also as a resource for the educator’s own inner recovery, helping to prevent professional burnout and to maintain psychological well-being.

Discussion

The results of this study are highly relevant in the context of contemporary social, educational, and wartime realities, which significantly transform the professional mission of the musician-pedagogue. The study confirms that music-pedagogical activity today cannot be limited to the transmission of knowledge or the development of performance skills. Instead, it functions as a multidimensional practice that integrates educational, emotional, cultural, and therapeutic components. This expanded understanding responds directly to the increased psycho-emotional vulnerability of learners and educators under conditions of war, instability, and accelerated digitalisation. The study substantiates the necessity of reorienting professional training towards the development of psychological resilience, emotional awareness, and value-based responsibility. In this sense, the obtained results address an urgent demand within contemporary education systems for educators capable of sustaining both pedagogical effectiveness and humanistic integrity.

Another aspect of relevance lies in the confirmation of music as a powerful resource for emotional support and recovery. The findings demonstrate that music-pedagogical activity acquires particular significance in situations of trauma, stress, and social disruption, where traditional instructional models prove insufficient. By highlighting the therapeutic and supportive dimensions of music education, the research contributes to a broader understanding of education as a space of care, safety, and restoration. This perspective is especially important for post-war reconstruction processes, where education plays a central role in rebuilding social cohesion and psychological stability. The study thus reinforces the idea that the musician-pedagogue is a key mediator between cultural heritage and contemporary human needs. The relevance of the results is further enhanced by their applicability to both formal and non-formal educational contexts.

The study is also relevant in light of the growing influence of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in education. While technological innovation offers new opportunities for personalisation and access, the findings emphasise that such tools cannot replace the human-centred essence of music education. The study demonstrates that the effectiveness of digital and AI-based tools depends on the educator's value orientations, ethical awareness, and professional culture. This conclusion is particularly significant in debates surrounding the future of education, where technological efficiency is often prioritised over emotional and cultural dimensions. By reaffirming the central role of the teacher's personality, the research contributes to a balanced discourse on innovation and tradition. Consequently, the results provide a timely response to current educational transformations.

Despite the growing body of research on music education and pedagogical innovation, the study reveals several unresolved problems within this field. One of the key issues is the fragmentation of existing approaches, which often address pedagogical, psychological, and artistic dimensions separately. Such compartmentalisation limits the ability to conceptualise the musician-pedagogue as a holistic professional whose effectiveness depends on the integration of these dimensions. Many studies focus either on didactic techniques or on performance training, neglecting the emotional and value-based aspects of professional formation. This imbalance reduces the capacity of educational models to respond adequately to contemporary challenges, particularly those related to trauma, stress, and social instability. The present research highlights the need for integrative frameworks that overcome disciplinary boundaries.

Another significant problem concerns the insufficient attention to the psychological well-being of educators themselves. While much study addresses learners' emotional needs, the psychological resilience of teachers—especially music educators—remains underexplored. The

study demonstrates that the musician-pedagogue often absorbs the emotional experiences of learners while simultaneously coping with personal stress, fear, and loss. However, existing training programmes rarely include systematic preparation for emotional self-regulation, burnout prevention, or reflective practice. This gap leads to professional exhaustion and undermines the sustainability of music-pedagogical activity. Addressing this problem requires a rethinking of professional standards and training priorities.

A further challenge lies in the uncritical adoption of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in music education. While innovation is frequently presented as an unquestioned good, the study shows that technological tools may weaken the humanistic essence of education if applied without ethical and pedagogical reflection. The lack of clear guidelines for integrating AI into music-pedagogical practice creates risks related to depersonalisation, emotional disengagement, and the erosion of value-based interaction. Moreover, the rapid pace of technological change often exceeds educators' capacity for meaningful adaptation. This discrepancy highlights the need for critical frameworks that balance technological advancement with human-centred pedagogy. The study thus identifies a pressing need for deeper theoretical and ethical analysis in this area.

Based on the findings of this study, several promising directions for further research can be identified. First, there is a clear need for the development and empirical validation of integrated models of training musician-pedagogues that systematically combine pedagogical, psychological, and artistic components. Such models should explicitly address emotional resilience, self-regulation, and value-based reflection as core professional competencies. Future studies could explore how these competencies are formed at different stages of professional education and how they influence long-term professional sustainability. Comparative research across different cultural and educational contexts would further enrich this line of inquiry. This direction would contribute to the establishment of more resilient and humanistically oriented educational systems.

Another important direction involves the expansion of research on music-pedagogical activity as a form of psycho-emotional support. While the therapeutic potential of music is increasingly recognised, its systematic integration into educational practice remains limited. Further studies could investigate the effectiveness of specific music-based interventions for children and young people affected by war-related trauma and social instability. Interdisciplinary research involving psychology, pedagogy, and music therapy would be particularly valuable in this regard. Such studies could also inform the development of evidence-based guidelines for educators. This direction holds significant potential for post-war educational recovery and social rehabilitation.

Finally, future research should focus on the ethical and pedagogical implications of digitalisation and artificial intelligence in music education. There is a need to examine how technological tools can support, rather than undermine, the humanistic mission of the musician-pedagogue. Studies could explore models of digital pedagogy that enhance emotional engagement, creativity, and cultural continuity. Particular attention should be paid to the role of the educator as a mediator between technology and human values. By addressing these questions, further research can contribute to shaping a future-oriented yet ethically grounded vision of music-pedagogical education in the 21st century.

Conclusion

The formation of the personality of the musician-pedagogue under contemporary social, wartime, and educational conditions emerges as a holistic, multidimensional, and humanistically

oriented process that integrates professional mastery, value orientations, and personal maturity. The effectiveness of music-pedagogical activity is ensured by the harmonious integration of pedagogical traditions of humanistic education with innovative learner-centred, reflective, and project-based approaches. Music acts as a powerful factor in the spiritual, emotional, and value-based development of the individual, while music-pedagogical activity transcends its instructional function and acquires psycho-emotional and socially supportive significance. Under conditions of increased emotional burden, the professional activity of the musician-pedagogue requires a high level of psychological resilience, emotional awareness, and well-developed self-regulation skills. The contemporary musician-pedagogue thus appears not only as a bearer of knowledge and performance skills, but also as a person of culture and empathy, capable of creating a safe educational and emotional space for the child's development and recovery.

A promising direction for further scholarly research is the development and testing of models for training musician-pedagogues oriented towards the integration of pedagogical, psychological, and artistic components of professional activity. Further study is also required of the potential of music-pedagogical activity as a resource for the psycho-emotional support of children and young people, particularly under conditions of wartime trauma and social instability. Additionally, research into the impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence on preserving the humanistic essence of music education and on the formation of the personality of the 21st-century educator remains highly relevant.

The purpose of the study—to provide a theoretical substantiation of the psychological and pedagogical foundations for forming the personality of the musician-pedagogue capable of professional functioning under contemporary social, wartime, and educational challenges—has been fully achieved. The research demonstrates that the professional formation of the musician-pedagogue must be understood as a holistic and humanistically oriented process that integrates professional mastery, value orientations, emotional awareness, and psychological resilience. Through interdisciplinary analysis, the study confirms that music-pedagogical activity extends beyond instructional functions and acquires psycho-emotional and socially supportive significance. The proposed conceptual framework substantiates the central role of the teacher's personality as a bearer of culture, empathy, and ethical responsibility. As a result, the aim of the research has been realised through a coherent theoretical model aligned with contemporary educational realities.

The first study objective—to analyse the impact of contemporary transformational processes on developing the personality of the music teacher—has been successfully addressed. The study demonstrates that social instability, wartime conditions, digitalisation, and the expansion of artificial intelligence fundamentally reshape professional expectations and psychological demands placed on educators. It is shown that these transformations intensify emotional burden and require educators to develop adaptive capacities, resilience, and reflective competence. The analysis confirms that traditional pedagogical models are insufficient when isolated from psychological and value-based dimensions. Consequently, the research substantiates the necessity of rethinking music-pedagogical training in response to complex contemporary challenges. This objective is fulfilled through a comprehensive interpretation of transformation as both a risk and a developmental opportunity.

The second study objective—to characterise the relationship between tradition and innovation in the professional formation of the twenty-first-century musician-pedagogue and to reveal the educational potential of music in shaping a value-based worldview—has also been achieved. The study demonstrates that pedagogical traditions of humanistic education remain

foundational, even as innovative, learner-centred, and project-based approaches gain prominence. Music is shown to function as a mediator between cultural heritage and contemporary meaning-making processes. Through its emotional and symbolic dimensions, music supports the formation of ethical sensitivity, aesthetic taste, and cultural identity. The research confirms that innovation does not negate tradition but recontextualises it within new educational forms. Thus, the objective is realised through a balanced conceptualisation of continuity and renewal in music-pedagogical education.

The third study objective—to determine the role of pedagogical mastery, spiritual depth, and psychological resilience in music-pedagogical activity—has been systematically fulfilled. The study establishes that professional effectiveness in music education depends not only on methodological competence but also on the educator’s inner maturity and emotional stability. Psychological resilience is identified as a key professional quality under conditions of prolonged stress, emotional involvement, and social uncertainty. The analysis highlights the importance of self-regulation, reflective practice, and emotional awareness in preventing professional burnout. Pedagogical mastery is thus conceptualised as an integrated quality that unites technical skill, ethical consciousness, and personal balance. This objective is achieved through a comprehensive synthesis of psychological and pedagogical perspectives.

The fourth study objective—to substantiate the significance of music-pedagogical activity as a means of psycho-emotional support for the individual under conditions of societal challenges—has been convincingly addressed. The study demonstrates that music possesses a unique therapeutic and supportive potential, particularly relevant in contexts of war-related trauma and social instability. Music-pedagogical activity is shown to create a safe emotional space for expression, recovery, and resilience-building. The research substantiates the integration of art practices and elements of music therapy into educational contexts as a justified and necessary response to contemporary challenges. This objective confirms the expanded social mission of the musician-pedagogue in modern society. As a result, music education is positioned as a vital resource for both personal development and collective recovery.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that is no conflict of interest.

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Decorated Cannons of the Hetmanate Period as Figurative and Symbolic Monuments of the Ukrainian Baroque ^[7]

Abstract:

The relevance of the study lies in the need for a comprehensive understanding of Cossack artillery of the 17th and 18th centuries not only as a category of military weapons, but also as a significant phenomenon of Ukrainian material and symbolic culture of the Baroque period. In the context of contemporary Ukrainian realities, marked by the destruction, displacement, and marginalisation of cultural heritage, this issue acquires particular importance from the perspective of klironomy as a discipline concerned with the preservation of cultural memory. The study problem is defined by the insufficient scholarly attention paid to the figurative, symbolic, and ideological dimensions of decorated Cossack cannons. Previous studies have predominantly focused on technological, military-historical, or descriptive aspects, leaving the internal semantic structure of cannon decoration and its role in the visual legitimation of power largely unexplored. The novelty of the study consists in the interdisciplinary interpretation of decorated cannons of the Hetmanate period as figurative and symbolic monuments of Ukrainian Baroque culture. The article introduces a holistic analytical model that integrates art-historical, iconographic, semiotic, and klironomical approaches, allowing cannon decoration to be conceptualised as a coherent symbolic system rather than a set of isolated ornamental motifs. The subject of the study is the system of figurative, symbolic, and compositional meanings embodied in the artistic decoration of Cossack cannons of the 17th and 18th centuries. The object of the study comprises bronze decorated cannons commissioned by Ukrainian hetmans and members of the Cossack senior officers and preserved in museum collections of Eastern Europe. The study aims to conduct an interdisciplinary analysis of these artefacts as figurative and symbolic monuments of the Baroque era. The study employs a wide range of methods, including historical and chronological analysis, art-historical examination of Baroque stylistics, iconographic and semiotic interpretation of decorative motifs, as well as comparative analysis and attribution. The theoretical foundation of the study is based on the works of V. Modzalevskiy, P. Zholtovskiy, D. Stepovyk, A. Makarov, V. Paliienko, O. Malchenko, A. Buychik and other scholars who have contributed to the study of Ukrainian Baroque art, artistic metalwork, and Cossack material culture. The study demonstrates that the decoration of cannons constituted an integral symbolic system that transformed weapons into a “cultivated universe” of the Baroque worldview. Three key groups of decorative elements are identified: phytomorphic motifs (including acanthus, grapevine, rose, and the symbol of the “heart” as an expression of Ukrainian cordocentrism), zoomorphic images (the lion and the unicorn as embodiments of strength and divine protection, the nightingale as a herald of victory), and epigraphic elements (titular inscriptions recording social hierarchy and status). The conclusions of the study confirm that the compositional organisation of cannon decoration was based on the principles of vertical dynamism and triadic unity, corresponding both to the technological structure of the cannon barrel and to the Christian symbolism of the Trinity. It is established that decorated cannons functioned as instruments of political legitimation and as visual confirmations of the status of the Cossack senior officers as bearers of state authority, faith, and Baroque cultural identity.

Keywords: cannons, Cossack elite, museum collections, Baroque symbolism, Ukrainian historical and cultural heritage.

Introduction

The relevance of this article is conditioned by the need for a comprehensive understanding of Cossack artillery as a unique phenomenon of Ukrainian material and spiritual culture of the Baroque period. In the period from the late 17th century to the last quarter of the 18th century, cannons appear not only as a type of artillery firearm, but also as highly artistic monuments saturated with symbolism, heraldic signs, and emblematics that reflect the worldview of the Cossack elite, ideas of statehood, and the sacral protection of the faith. Of particular importance is the fact that a significant part of these artefacts is today located outside Ukraine

or preserved in isolated museum collections, which is a consequence of historical processes of colonial removal of cultural valuables.

In the contemporary context of military hostilities on the territory of Ukraine, the topic acquires even greater urgency: systematic destruction of Ukrainian museums continues, monuments are being damaged, and museum exhibits are being looted in temporarily occupied territories. This makes the study of the artistic decoration of cannons from the period of the Hetmanate not only academically significant, but also important from the standpoint of klironomy—as the documentation, interpretation, and preservation of cultural heritage for future generations. The analysis of symbolism, ornaments, and inscriptions on cannons makes it possible to reconstruct fragments of lost historical memory and to counteract cultural erasure. Thus, turning to decoratively embellished examples of senior-officer and hetman artillery as figurative-symbolic monuments of Ukrainian Baroque constitutes a substantial contribution to contemporary scholarly and heritage-protection discourse and serves as an instrument for affirming Ukrainian cultural identity under conditions of military threat.

The novelty of the present study lies in the comprehensive interpretation of Cossack artillery of the 17th and 18th centuries not merely as military artefacts, but as figurative and symbolic monuments of Ukrainian Baroque culture. Unlike previous studies that focused predominantly on technological, military-historical, or descriptive museological aspects of cannons, this study proposes a holistic analytical model that integrates art-historical, iconographic, semiotic, and klironomical approaches. Such an interdisciplinary perspective makes it possible to reveal the internal symbolic structure of cannon decoration as a coherent visual language that articulated ideas of power, faith, legitimacy, and noble identity within the culture of the Hetmanate.

A further innovative contribution of the study consists in the systematic identification and interpretation of three interrelated groups of decorative elements—phytomorphic, zoomorphic, and epigraphic—considered as components of a unified allegorical programme. The article introduces the concept of the cannon barrel as a “cultivated universe”, in which technical force is transformed through Baroque aesthetics into a sacralised and ideologically charged object. By applying the principles of klironomy, the research reconceptualises decorated cannons as carriers of cultural memory and symbolic continuity, thereby expanding the methodological boundaries of heritage studies and contributing to contemporary discussions on the preservation and reinterpretation of Ukrainian material culture under conditions of historical loss and military threat.

The subject of the study is the system of figurative, symbolic, and compositional meanings embodied in the artistic decoration of Cossack cannons of the 17th and 18th centuries, including phytomorphic ornamentation, zoomorphic imagery, heraldic representations, and epigraphic inscriptions, as well as their semantic functions within the Baroque worldview of the Ukrainian Cossack elite.

The object of the study comprises bronze decorated cannons of the 17th and 18th centuries, produced on commission for the Ukrainian Cossack senior officers and hetmans and represented in museum collections of Eastern European countries.

The study aims a thorough interdisciplinary analysis of decorated cannons of the Ukrainian Cossacks as figurative-symbolic monuments of the Baroque era.

Achieving this purpose involves addressing the following tasks:

- analyse elements of artistic decoration (phytomorphic, zoomorphic, and heraldic)⁵
- reveal their metaphysical content;

- examine the architectonics of cannon barrels.

The results of the study are addressed to historians, art historians, cultural studies scholars, and museum professionals engaged in the study, preservation, and interpretation of early modern material heritage. The article may be of particular interest to specialists in Ukrainian Baroque art, military history of the Hetmanate, and heritage studies, as well as to curators and researchers working with museum collections of artillery and decorative metalwork.

In addition, the materials of the study are intended for university lecturers, postgraduate students, and students of the humanities whose academic interests include symbolism, visual culture, and the interdisciplinary analysis of artefacts. Beyond the scholarly community, the findings may also be relevant for heritage practitioners and cultural policy experts concerned with issues of documentation, musealisation, and the protection of cultural memory in the context of contemporary military and political challenges.

Methods

The methodological framework of the study is grounded in a set of general scientific methods that ensure the consistency, validity, and interdisciplinarity of the research. The application of these methods made it possible to conceptualise decorated Cossack cannons as complex cultural phenomena situated at the intersection of military history, art history, and heritage studies.

The method of analysis was employed to decompose the artistic decoration of cannons into individual components, including phytomorphic, zoomorphic, heraldic, and epigraphic elements. This approach enabled the detailed examination of each decorative motif, its formal characteristics, and its symbolic content, as well as the identification of internal structural relationships between separate visual elements within the overall composition of the cannon barrel.

The method of synthesis was applied to integrate the results of the analytical stage into a holistic interpretative model. Through synthesis, individual decorative features were reassembled into a coherent symbolic system, allowing the author to interpret cannon decoration as an internally consistent figurative and semantic programme rather than as a random accumulation of ornamental details. This method proved essential for substantiating the concept of the cannon as a “cultivated universe” of the Baroque era.

The systemic approach was used to consider decorated cannons as elements of a broader cultural and symbolic system of the Hetmanate period. Within this framework, artillery was analysed not in isolation but in relation to contemporary worldview paradigms, political ideology, religious symbolism, and artistic conventions of Ukrainian Baroque culture. This approach made it possible to reveal the functional interdependence between form, symbolism, and social representation.

The method of generalisation was applied to identify recurring patterns and typological features in the decoration of cannons produced for the Cossack elite. On the basis of comparative observations, common principles of composition, symbolism, and stylistic expression were formulated, enabling the classification of decorative elements and the formulation of broader conclusions concerning their metaphysical and ideological significance.

The historical method served as a general scientific foundation for situating the analysed artefacts within their socio-political and cultural context. By correlating specific cannons with historical figures, events, and processes of state formation, the study ensured the contextual accuracy of interpretations and avoided anachronistic readings of symbolic imagery.

The study employs the historical method, which makes it possible to trace the origins of cannons, the conditions of their production, and their connections with the political events of the 17th and 18th centuries and the destruction of Ukrainian statehood. The author uses chronological analysis to date individual artefacts and to correlate them with specific figures of the Cossack senior elite. A significant role is played by the art-historical method, aimed at analysing the stylistics of Ukrainian Baroque, the plasticity of ornamentation, and the compositional principles of casting. Through an iconographic approach, phytomorphic, zoomorphic, and emblematic motifs are interpreted as carriers of symbolic meanings.

The museum method is also applied, involving the study of artefacts from the collections of Ukrainian, Polish, and Russian museums, as well as the description of their state of preservation and exhibition context. In parallel, a heritage-protection approach is employed, within which cannons are considered unique monuments of material heritage requiring documentation, attribution, and protection. The author conducts attributional analysis, identifying patrons, craftsmen, and the functional purpose of artillery objects.

A substantial role is played by the comparative method, whereby Ukrainian examples are compared with European Baroque traditions and local features of ornamentation. The comparative approach makes it possible to identify both universal Baroque motifs (acanthus, palm, laurel) and regional symbols. The article also actively applies semiotic analysis, aimed at interpreting the symbols of the heart, animals, plants, and inscriptions as a sign system of the period.

The structural and compositional method is of particular importance and is used to investigate the architectonics of the cannon barrel and the principles governing the placement of decoration. The author adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining history, art history, and museology. Special attention is given to the application of the method of klironomy (*Buychik 2019; Buychik 2024*), as cannons are interpreted as bearers of cultural memory and symbolic continuity of the Cossack elite. Within the klironomical approach, these objects are conceptualised as transmitters of values, faith, power, and identity.

Thus, the combination of general scientific methods with specialised art-historical, iconographic, semiotic, and museum approaches ensured a comprehensive and balanced methodological strategy. The general scientific methods provided the conceptual framework for structuring the material, while specialised methods enabled the in-depth interpretation of artistic and symbolic content. Within this integrated methodological model, the application of the klironomical approach played a unifying role, allowing decorated cannons to be interpreted as bearers of cultural memory, value transmission, and symbolic continuity. Such a methodological synthesis not only corresponds to the interdisciplinary nature of the research object but also expands the analytical potential of contemporary studies of Ukrainian Baroque heritage.

Literature Review

In preparing this article, the works of V. L. Modzalevskyi, P. M. Zholtovskyi, D. V. Stepovyk, A. M. Makarov, V. I. Paliienko, O. Ye. Malchenko, N. V. Babkova, A. K. Andruh, and others were used. In general, the historiography of the study of cannons of the Cossack elite is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines military history, art history, and the interpretation of the symbolic component of Baroque art.

The scholarly research of V. Modzalevskyi (*1921*) laid the foundations for the study of the history of Ukrainian casting, which is essential for understanding the technological context of artillery production. The comprehensive monographs by P. Zholtovskyi (*1972; 1973*) on artistic

metalwork and casting in Ukraine make it possible to classify cannons as objects of high art by analysing their aesthetic qualities. In his article, D. Stepovyk (1988) examines the system of Baroque tropes, which helps to decipher the metaphysical meaning of the vegetal ornaments on cannons. The book by A. Makarov (1994) is key to interpreting the cordocentric worldview of the Cossack officer elite through the symbol of the heart in the decoration of artillery weapons. The article by V. Paliienko (1994) investigates Ukrainian artillery preserved in museums of the Russian Federation and records the scale of the removal of the cultural heritage of the Hetmanate.

A series of works by O. Malchenko provides a detailed account of the artistic decoration of cannons from the time of Ivan Mazepa, revealing the role of patronage in the development of cannon casting. In his studies, the scholar also analyses the morphology of Hlukhiv artillery, which makes it possible to identify local features of cannon production. His research into the album of F.Y. Telotta helps to reconstruct the appearance of lost cannons on the basis of 18th-century graphic sources. O. Malchenko (2008; 2011; 2013; 2016a; 2016b; 2017) pays particular attention to the stylistics of the decorative work of the Balashevych masters, which is important for the attribution of specific artefacts.

The author of the study, N. Babkova, in her previous article considers cannons as military and political kleynods, emphasising their status-related character within Cossack society. In that article, the researcher applies the method of klironomy, which makes it possible to interpret cannons as transmitters of values and identity (Babkova, 2015). The article by A. Adruh (2021) is devoted to an analysis of metal sculpture in Chernihiv, which helps to contextualise cannon decoration within the general development of Baroque sculpture on the territory of Ukraine. The description of the collection of V. Tarnovskyi, prepared by M. Blakytyni (2013), is fundamental for the study of surviving examples of artillery in Ukrainian museums.

The scholarly output of previous researchers outlined above will enable the author to identify a synthesis of European emblematics and local symbols, such as the nightingale or the tree of life. The inclusion of works from art history is justified by the need to analyse the architectonics of cannon barrels and the principles of the “vertical dynamics” of decoration. Studies of zoomorphic images in specialised literature help to elucidate the magical and protective functions attributed to cannons. A comprehensive analysis of these sources demonstrates that the Cossack cannon was not merely a weapon, but also a “cultivated universe” of the Baroque individual. Such a broad historiographical overview once again underscores the necessity of protecting Ukrainian heritage.

Buychik and Tomanek (2023) emphasise the fundamental importance of studying the cultural heritage of the territory of the Republic of Ukraine as a dynamic and multilayered field of scholarly inquiry, particularly in the context of global discourses on heritage preservation and identity formation. Their work highlights the theoretical and methodological challenges inherent in documenting, interpreting, and valorising material and immaterial cultural assets under conditions of historical disruption and contemporary conflict, arguing for an integrative, interdisciplinary research paradigm. This perspective resonates with and reinforces the present study’s focus on the symbolic and cultural dimensions of artefacts, such as decorated artillery, as carriers of collective memory and cultural continuity.

Buychik (2019) presents klironomy as an emerging interdisciplinary science focused on the preservation of cultural heritage through a structured conceptual apparatus that unites philosophical foundations, cultural theory, and applied heritage-protection practice. The monograph systematises key categories (heritage, cultural memory, value, continuity,

responsibility) and outlines methodological principles for identifying, documenting, interpreting, and safeguarding cultural objects as carriers of historically transmitted meanings.

Buychik (2024) further develops this framework by expanding klironomy into a comprehensive scientific model of cultural heritage, detailing its theoretical scope, research logic, and applied instruments for contemporary heritage management. The book strengthens the methodological dimension of klironomy by proposing an integrated approach to analysing heritage phenomena (material and immaterial) as systems of value transmission and social legitimation, thereby providing a relevant conceptual basis for interdisciplinary studies that interpret artefacts—such as Baroque-period objects—as bearers of cultural memory and identity.

The results of the study are intended for historians, art historians, museum professionals, cultural studies scholars, as well as students of the humanities. The material will be useful for all those interested in the military history of the Hetmanate and seeking to understand the place of Ukrainian Baroque art within the broader European cultural context.

Results

The private artillery of Ukrainian hetmans and colonels constitutes a unique embodiment of artistic casting of the Baroque era, representing the grandeur and aesthetic refinement of the national foundry tradition. Decorated cannons of the 17th and 18th centuries function as figurative and symbolic monuments that combine mystical zoomorphic images, refined vegetal ornamentation, and representational images of their owners. As a result of Ukraine's military and historical development and its interactions with neighbouring states, a vast body of these artefacts was removed beyond the borders of the country or lost. The few surviving examples have become priceless relics of the Cossack era, enabling the reconstruction of the spiritual world and political ambitions of the contemporary senior elite. Today, these unique works of art are dispersed across different countries, which necessitates a detailed examination of the specific museum collections in which they are preserved.

Museum collections in Ukraine contain eleven cannons dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. One cannon is held in the collections of the Polish Army Museum in Warsaw. A significantly larger number of cannons belonging to the Cossack senior officers are preserved in Russian museums (twelve items). The destruction of Ukrainian statehood by the Russian government during the 18th century, together with the confiscation of Cossack insignia into imperial repositories—of which hetman and senior officers' artillery formed a part—resulted in the loss of a vast corpus of material monuments of the Cossack era and transformed the remaining examples of cannon art still visible in museum displays and collections into priceless artefacts.

The private artillery of Ukrainian hetmans and colonels comprises works of Baroque artistic casting, as it manifests splendour, ornamentality, an exuberance of imagination, and the grandeur of the national foundry tradition. Analysis of the decoration of the surviving Cossack cannon specimens provides grounds for identifying three principal elements of ornamentation: vegetal (phytomorphic) ornament, animal (zoomorphic) imagery, and heraldic and emblematic representations.

Phytomorphic Ornament

One of the principal compositional motifs in the decoration of cannon barrels was phytomorphic ornamentation, in which images of various forms of acanthus leaves, grapevines, and palmettes occupied a dominant position. In the muzzle section of the barrel, figurative

festoons (lambrequins), bouquets, and garlands were particularly popular, into which allegorical anthropomorphic and decorative zoomorphic elements were woven or with which they were intertwined. The ornamental patterns of most cannon specimens are characterised by S- or C-shaped forms. Frequently, the S-shaped ornament formed a heart-like configuration, as seen on the cannons of Colonels M.A. Borokhovych of 1693 and 1697 from the collection of the Russian Hermitage, the cannon of Colonel P.S. Hertsyk of 1692 from the collection of the Russian Central Military-Historical Museum, the cannon of Colonel I.F. Novytskyi of 1692 from the collection of the Polish Army Museum in Warsaw, and the mortar of 1698 cast to the order of Hetman I.S. Mazepa from the holdings of the Russian Military-Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineer and Signal Troops (*Malchenko, 2011*).

The use of the image of the “heart” in Ukrainian culture of the 17th and 18th centuries was interpreted by the scholar A.M. Makarov in his book *The Light of Ukrainian Baroque* (1994) as an allegory of the metaphysical centre of the Ukrainian cosmos, the “eye of the soul” that perceives the “light of truth”. He associated it with the aesthetics of the “cordial impulse” and with cordocentrism as a source of morality in the Ukrainian worldview. Within the milieu of the Cossack elite, the use of the symbol of the “heart” testified to the level of piety in contemporary society, which was nourished by religious motifs and the symbolism of Baroque art.

Local phytomorphic motifs were also an obligatory component in the decoration of cannon barrels. From the world of flora, preference was given primarily to species well known to the Ukrainian people, cherished by them, and endowed with noble qualities. According to D.V. Stepovyk (1988), these characteristics were transferred to a particular noble Cossack lineage and thus seemed to ennoble it. However, the register of phytomorphic symbols encoded in the decorative ornamentation of cannon barrels of the Cossack elite was rather limited.

The acanthus was the king of Baroque ornamentation. In no decorative system did a plant occupy such a significant place as in Baroque art. Despite its popularity in Antiquity and the Renaissance, within the artistic system of the Baroque the image of the acanthus leaf transcended the bounds of a purely decorative element. Unlike the static orderliness of Renaissance models, the Baroque acanthus acquired extraordinary plastic expressiveness: its lines became tense, twisted, and filled with inner movement. This transformation of form reflected the Baroque worldview, in which life was perceived as a continuous flow of energy.

On bronze cannon barrels cast during the time of Ivan Mazepa, acanthus scrolls framed the coats of arms of the owners and military symbols, transforming the weapon into an object of high art. Such decoration not only emphasised the status and wealth of the elite, but also carried a profound meaning: the life-affirming force of the acanthus on an instrument of death symbolised the idea of a “holy war” and the defence of the faith.

The metaphysical content of this image is revealed through the dialectic of suffering and triumph: owing to its natural sharpness, the acanthus was often identified with the crown of thorns, symbolising the path through trials towards victory. In the Ukrainian context, acanthus shoots on cast cannons were often interwoven with grapevines or sunflowers, combining universal European emblematics with a local life-affirming worldview. Thus, the acanthus leaf appears as a universal instrument of the Baroque which, through aesthetic excess, glorifies spiritual strength and state grandeur (*Malchenko, 2008*).

In contrast to the celebration of life, cannon barrels of the Cossack elite also employed a folk motif concerning the mortality of all living things: among the flourishing flora appear images of poppy heads, symbols of eternal sleep and repose. For example, the symbolic image of a poppy head is depicted on the barrel of the cannon “Lev” of 1705, cast to the order of

Hetman I.S. Mazepa (currently located outdoors at the Russian State Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve “Moscow Kremlin”), as well as on the cannon of the Hadiach Colonel M.A. Borokhovych of 1697.

An obligatory element in the decoration of Cossack cannons was palm branches. In Christian symbolic tradition, the palm was a symbol of the victory of life over death, of resurrection and immortality. The palm branches with which the road of Christ to Jerusalem was strewn symbolised His suffering and His victory over death. Ukrainian founders of the Baroque period used the allegory of the palm branch as a symbol of the victory of the soul over earthly passions, an image of the defence of the Christian faith and of military triumph. In combination with acanthus leaves, the depiction of a palm branch emphasised the idea of the eternal spiritual development of the owner of the cannon barrel. The conjunction of palm branches with a laurel wreath underscored glory, both earthly and heavenly, and the sacred feat of the Ukrainian hetman (*Zoltovskyy, 1973*). All three elements are present on the mortar of 1698 cast to the order of Hetman Ivan Mazepa (preserved in the collections of the Russian Military-Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineer and Signal Troops).

A fairly widespread motif on the cannon barrels of the Cossack elite was the rose, often depicted in the form of a “ruzha”, rosette, or rosetta. In Baroque art of the period, the rose symbolised not only beauty, but also holiness and prayer, as it was associated with the rosarium or rosary, a chain of prayers addressed to the Mother of God. On bronze cannons of the Cossack elite, alongside laurel and acanthus, the rose softened the severity of military attributes, transforming the weapon into part of a “cultivated” universe. Here it functioned as a symbol of nobility and belonging to the European chivalric circle, in which the flower was a sign of elevated feelings and chosenness (*Zoltovskyy, 1972*).

For the ornamentation of Cossack cannons, foundry masters employed various types of rosettes: six-petalled, multi-rayed (“sunflower”), and the rosette known as the “Wheel of Jupiter”. O.Y. Malchenko believes that on cannon barrels these symbols signified the “place where light was born”, since they were most often depicted on the torus in the breech section of the barrel (the cannon of Colonel P.S. Hertsyk of 1692; cannon barrels made for the city of Konotop in 1697 from the holdings of the Russian Military-Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineer and Signal Troops; the cannons of Colonels I.F. Charnysh of 1713 and M.I. Myloradovych of 1717 from the collection of the Chernihiv Regional Historical Museum named after V.V. Tarnovskyy), or on the ends of the trunnions, where this ornamental motif fitted particularly well (the cannon “Lev” of 1705, the mortar of 1698, and the cannon of M.I. Myloradovych of 1717) (*Malchenko, 2017*).

At the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, a tradition emerged in Ukrainian art of completely filling the background of a work with plant ornamentation. This tendency also affected the decoration of Ukrainian cannon barrels. Foundry masters sought to cover their products with a continuous “ornamental carpet”, the principal artistic motifs of which were four-petalled and tulip-shaped flowers with branches and leaves. For example, on the cannon “Lev” of 1705, despite the gradual narrowing of the barrel towards the muzzle, the plant ornament maintains its proportions and does not become distorted. If imagined as being unfolded onto a plane, it indeed resembles a rectangular carpet that seems to envelop the cannon barrel.

On certain cannons, the effect of a completely filled background was created by floral shoots—“vazons”—arranged along the central axis of the cannon barrel or localised in its muzzle section. The so-called “vazon”, with symmetrically curved branches that “grow” from the centre of the composition, was the most favoured ornamental motif of Ukrainian folk masters (*Makarov, 1994*). On the barrels of the cannon “Lev” of 1705 and the mortar of 1698,

the shoot-“vazon” motif is less branched and is visually perceived as two separate ornamental forms that together create a unified composition. Similar stylised plant shoots, filled with simple geometric forms—dots, strokes, droplets—most often constitute the floristic ornament, in which the intricate pattern of stems with numerous bends and curves testifies to the influence of Baroque art.

The use of shoot-“vazon” motifs is closely associated with the allegory of the World Tree or Tree of Life. Closely linked to the latter is the symbolic composition “Christ the True Vine”, which appears on almost all surviving examples of cannon barrels cast at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. Its presence on weaponry transformed the cannon into an instrument of “holy war” and the defence of the Christian faith. For the Cossack elite, this served as a visual confirmation of their status as “knightly defenders” of Orthodoxy.

Thus, phytomorphic ornamentation was the dominant element in the decoration of cannons of the Cossack elite and played a key role in shaping their figurative and symbolic content. The use of acanthus, palm branches, roses, grapevines, and “vazon” motifs testified to a synthesis of pan-European Baroque emblematics with local Ukrainian symbolic tradition. S-shaped compositions in the form of a “heart” represented a cordocentric worldview and emphasised the piety and spiritual reflection of the Cossack elite. The combination of life-affirming plant motifs with symbols of mortality (poppy heads) formed a Baroque dialectic of life and death characteristic of the idea of “holy war”. Overall, phytomorphic decoration transformed the cannon from a utilitarian weapon into a sacralised artistic object that represented the nobility, faith, and state-building ambitions of its patrons.

Inscriptions

Alongside ornamentation, inscriptions played a special role in the artistic decoration of cannons. Introduced into the artistic structure of the casting, they significantly enhanced the decorative character of the cannon barrel’s composition. The compositional function of letters, words, and phrases embedded within the linear decorative background often brought the entire decorative scheme of the cannon into focus, imparting a sense of unity and completeness. This is particularly evident on the mortar of 1698 and on the cannon of I.F. Charnysh, where the dedicatory inscription is visually perceived as a continuation of the phytomorphic ornament.

Long phrase-based texts, grouped into several lines, intensified the decorative and planar character of the composition and contributed to its conventionality, that is, to the decorative quality of the overall section of the cannon barrel. Such a manner of decoration was designed for the simultaneous perception of word and image, which heightened the emotional impact on the viewer. Within the milieu of the Ukrainian Cossacks, extensive text was often perceived as an ornament or a sign containing additional aesthetic information. For example, on the cannons of I.F. Novytskyi from 1692 and M.A. Borokhovych from 1697, the ribbon inscription placed on the breech section of the barrel performed an additional role: it balanced this part in relation to the muzzle section, which was somewhat weighed down by a bulky cartouche (*Malchenko, 2013*).

At times, the inscription performed a delimiting function, visually separating different sections of the cannon barrel and establishing certain emphases required by the patron. This can be observed, for instance, on the cannon *Lev* (Lion) of 1705, where information about the patron of the weapon (Hetman Ivan Mazepa and the head of the Hetmanate artillery, Friedrich Königsegg) is distributed across different parts of the barrel in accordance with the hierarchy of power. A similar approach was adopted by the author of the cannon of Hetman Kyrylo Rozumovskyi from 1753, which is housed in the collection of the Russian Military-Historical

Museum of Artillery, Engineer Troops, and Signal Corps. The extensive dedication to the hetman himself, concentrated around the family coat of arms, is separated from the mention of the General Quartermaster S.V. Kochubei by a special band on the barrel. This indicates the secondary nature of the latter information, which was subordinated to the dedication to Hetman K.H. Rozumovskyi.

The only exception in which text acquired a dominant compositional significance in cannon decoration during the period of Ukrainian Baroque is the series of cannons of Hetman Kyrylo Rozumovskyi from 1753 and 1759, preserved in the Russian Military-Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineer Troops, and Signal Corps. On both cannon pieces, the textual dedication entirely prevails over the other few decorative elements, even over the large depiction of the Rozumovskyi family coat of arms. Thus, on these cannon units, inscriptions constituted the central element of decoration, serving as the sole illustration with multilayered meaning (*Babkova, 2015*).

In general, representational and explanatory inscriptions on the cannons of the Cossack senior officers were, in their functional purpose, very close to the book decoration of the Baroque period. In the case of cannon barrels, foundry masters were tasked with reflecting in inscriptions the name of the patron or owner of the cannon, his full title, his social status within Cossack society, his monetary contribution to the payment of the commission, and, more broadly, with emphasising his grandeur and nobility in every possible way. A skilfully executed “title” inscription could sometimes replace the owner’s coat of arms, as on the “unicorn” cannon of P.S. Hertsyk. Conversely, a coat of arms without an explanatory inscription did not fulfil its representational function, as exemplified by a Cossack cannon bearing a coat of arms based on the Polish heraldic emblem *Przyjaciel* from the Chernihiv Regional Historical Museum named after V.V. Tarnovskyi. To this day, scholars have been unable to identify the owner of this cannon (*Blakytynyi, 2013*).

Thus, inscriptions on cannon monuments of the Cossack elite fulfilled not only an informative but also an important compositional and decorative function, integrating into the overall artistic structure of the artefact. Title texts served as a means of representing social status, hierarchy, and the political legitimisation of hetmans and colonels. In certain cases, the inscription became the central element of the decoration, completely dominating other visual components. The spatial placement of texts reflected power subordination and deliberately emphasised the priority of the principal patron. In their functional character, cannon inscriptions were akin to the title pages of Baroque books, which testifies to the transfer of literary and emblematic principles into the sphere of artistic casting.

Zoomorphic Images

In addition to ornamental and titular–presentational inscriptions, the cannons of the Cossack senior officers were lavishly decorated with symbolic zoomorphic images. An analysis of surviving examples of Ukrainian cannon casting of the 17th and 18th centuries preserved in museum collections has made it possible to identify the principal animal images depicted on officers’ and hetmanate cannons: the unicorn, the nightingale, the wolf, the lion, and the dragon. During the period in question, the conception of artillery as a magical weapon associated with mysticism, incantation, or sorcery was quite strong. According to a generally accepted view, the most powerful cannons were those that embodied the magic of a particular beast. The likening of a cannon to a wolf, lion, unicorn, nightingale, or dog reflected a belief in the might of the animal image depicted on the barrel, together with all its martial and supernatural qualities. In official descriptions of the artillery parks of the Cossack state of the 17th and 18th centuries,

clerks referred to cannons bearing symbolic images precisely in these terms: “lion,” “wolf,” “dragon,” or else “under the lion,” “under the wolf.” Such inscriptions meant that the given cannon was under the symbolic protection of the lion or the wolf (*Modzalevskyyi, 1921*).

The use of animal imagery on cannon barrels had a mystical and symbolic character. The animal figures employed on cannons were not isolated symbols but formed certain extensive, often hierarchical groups. One such classification was associated with the idea of the four elements: aquatic animals symbolised water, reptiles symbolised earth, birds symbolised air, and warm-blooded beasts symbolised fire. It is precisely animal imagery that dominates the decoration of cannon pieces preserved to the present day. Images of birds occur far less frequently. The symbolic meaning of each particular animal depended on its place in the worldview of Baroque art, as well as on the pose and setting in which it was depicted. On the cannons of the Cossack senior officers, only images of animals in motion—active action, unfolding and application of energy—are encountered (*Malchenko, 2016a; Malchenko, 2016b*).

On the cannon of Colonel P.S. Hertsyk of 1692, on one side of the piece a unicorn runs into battle against the enemy, while on the other it appears as a dignified lord among various animals—deer, wild boars, and reptiles—that honour it to the sounds of the viola and gamba (*Paliienko, 1994*). In general, the image of the unicorn on this particular cannon sample has a dual meaning. On the one hand, according to the canons of Baroque artistic symbolism, it is an embodiment of swiftness, strength, and the ability to overcome any enemy. It was regarded as the only animal capable of opposing the lion, which hinted at the extraordinary power of the cannon. On the other hand, the unicorn was perceived as a symbol of Christ. Its single horn was interpreted as a symbol of Divine truth and the unity of the Son with the Father, which was meant to “sanctify” the weapon for the defence of the faith. According to legends, the horn of the unicorn neutralised poison. On a weapon, this symbolised the “purification” or protection of the Cossack host from enemy intrigues and evil.

A significantly larger number of cannon pieces have survived bearing the more straightforward and unambiguous, in terms of interpretation, animal symbol of the lion. On the cannons of Colonels I.F. Novytskyi of 1692 and M.I. Miloradovych of 1717, as well as on the hetman’s cannon of 1705, there is a depiction of a lion in the moment of a leap. This zoomorphic symbol is quite clear and universal for all world cultures familiar with the lion.

If among mythical animals only the unicorn could defeat the dragon, then among real ones only the noble lion—the symbol of might and power—could do so. Therefore, the depiction of the lion on officers’ and hetmanate cannons symbolised the struggle of the Ukrainian state against the southern non-Christian countries—the Ottoman Empire and its vassal, the Crimean Khanate. Accordingly, the image of the lion on the cannon of 1705 allegorically emphasised the role of Hetman Ivan Mazepa in the confrontation with the Muslim threat. On the cannons of Cossack colonels, the symbolic image of the lion conveyed the idea that the colonel’s authority and nobility rested on military force. Here the lion is the living support of the lineage, which “carries” the owner’s name into the public and political sphere. In Baroque emblematic art, the lion symbolised an ever-vigilant guard. This was a clear signal: the colonel personally bears responsibility for the peace of his land, and the cannon is the instrument of this “lion-like” vigilance (*Makarov, 1994*).

In contrast to the symbols of the unicorn or the lion, the figurative depiction of the wolf did not have a positive semantic content in the Baroque cultural tradition. Most often it retained the negative, sombre connotations inherited from the Middle Ages. Therefore, only one Cossack cannon preserved to the present day bears an allegorical image of a wolf. O.Y. Malchenko (*2017*) considers this to be a manifestation of the direct influence of Russian cultural tradition on the

masters of Ukrainian foundry work. On the muzzle of a small cannon of 1693, housed in the Russian Military-Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineer Troops and Signal Corps, an image of a wolf's maw is cast, while on the breech there is an engraved coat of arms depicting a lion fighting a winged dragon. The combination of zoomorphic images with palm leaves may indicate the interpretation of the analysed cannon as a symbol of the infernal fury of a tamed wolf, whose master is the owner of the cannon barrel in all his might and Christian strength.

The symbolism of the nightingale as an element of cannon decoration is represented on the cannon of Colonel I.F. Charnysh of 1713. The entire surface of this small weapon is adorned with vegetal ornaments. The barrel bears a cast family coat of arms of a representative of the Cossack senior officers and presentational inscriptions, beneath which a nightingale on a branch is depicted. The bird symbol is organically combined with a poetic allegory as a means of associative image construction. According to the commissioner's intention, the image of the nightingale was to be interpreted concretely and precisely, since it carried the principal ideological burden of the entire decorative programme of the cannon. It is expressive, fanciful, crowned with rich decorativeness, and rooted in an ancient Slavic tradition: the nightingale is a bird that sweetly announced victory. In Ukrainian folk tradition, the nightingale has always been associated with joy and happiness, with carefree delight, especially when the bird is depicted among branches (*Zboltovskyyi, 1973*). The use of this symbolic image in artillery decoration, in the emblematic language of the cannon, was intended to inspire viewers with joy and to evoke memories of the euphoria of victory.

Birds were also cast among the garden-like décor on the cannon "Lion" of 1705. Against the background of vegetal symbolism generally characteristic of Ukrainian Baroque, the transmission of figurative meanings through feathered creatures and the delight in birds was perceived as an interesting decorative motif.

In general, the system of allegorical images on cannon samples was perceived by representatives of contemporary Ukrainian society as a system of living individualities endowed with a formidable, just, and for the time being hidden power, capable of leading their owner to unquestionable victory. This was seen as the principal promotional feature of Cossack cannon barrels, especially those cast by order of hetmans: the emphasis on the patronage of higher powers over those Christian knights who defeat non-believers in battle. Victory, in the view of the creators of artistic cannon symbolism, was the result of a complex interaction between heavenly forces and human deeds. The authors of symbolic images sought to convey to viewers the wisdom, strength, and nobility of their addressee through the images of particular creatures.

The use of specific symbols, decorative elements, and ornamental motifs, and their placement on cannon pieces, was directly connected with the architectonics of these military units. Emblems, ornaments, and inscriptions were usually composed by foundry masters on the vertical part of the barrel and formed a circle at the muzzle and near the trunnions; angels on cannons from Konotop, birds among branches on the cannon "Lion," acanthus ornaments in bands. In addition, the principle of "vertical dynamics" was taken into account on cannon samples, whereby images, inscriptions, and decorative elements were arranged one above another, creating a certain subordination and hierarchy of individual parts within a single whole. In general, cannons demonstrated a well-established arrangement of images and decorative accents that had taken shape as early as the Renaissance period (*Malchenko, 2016a; Malchenko, 2016b*).

For example, the most important presentational elements—coats of arms—together with textual dedications to the commissioners of the cannons were usually cast on the breech of the barrel. The coat of arms was accorded a rather significant place in the architectonics of cannon

decoration. Most often it was harmoniously integrated into the overall decorative fabric of the cannon and, on lavish cartouches, was perceived as a stylised ornamental form (*Babkova, 2015*). Thereafter, the foundry masters presented the principal symbolic image of the barrel or a dedication to a person of lower rank than the owner of the artillery piece, but who had also sponsored its manufacture. Thus, on the cannon “Lion” of 1705, with a dedication to Hetman Ivan Mazepa, there is an inscription mentioning the head of the hetman’s artillery, Friedrich Königseg.

On the section of the barrel behind the dolphins, in addition to ornament, a zoomorphic symbol was often depicted: a lion, a dragon, or a wolf, which was meant to guard the muzzle of the cannon—the place from which fire and projectile emerge. Another important part of the weapon—the touch hole—was also decorated with animal images or with small icons bearing symbolic depictions of saints (*Modzalevskyi, 1921*).

The highest point of the cannon barrel, its muzzle end, most often resembled either a decorated column capital or served as a prototype of the heavens crowning everything depicted below. For all strata of Ukrainian Baroque-era society, the most comprehensible symbols of heaven were images of angels.

Of the nine generally accepted angelic ranks, within the system of Cossack cannon decoration masters most frequently reproduced seraphim. The image of seraphim in Baroque art embodies heavenly fire, divine love, and the highest hierarchical proximity to God. Unlike the static Middle Ages, the Baroque endowed these beings with extraordinary dynamism, emotional tension, and decorativeness. Angelic faces, executed in accordance with the canons of Ukrainian visual art, are depicted on the cannon “Unicorn” of 1692, on the artillery of Colonel I.F. Novytskyi of 1692, and on the cannon created for the city of Konotop in 1697 (*Malchenko, 2008*).

Often angels were cast with symbolically rendered wings and arranged in a single row. Their images, crowned with haloes, formed a narrow decorative band that united the entire muzzle section of the barrel into a completed composition. In contrast to other symbolic images, angels were distinguished by the generalised nature of their designs and the absence of iconographic modifications across different cannon samples. The modelling of the images did not impress with a richness of plasticity and was characterised by a certain static quality. In the free fields on either side of the angelic row, phytomorphic ornament was usually placed.

Thus, the analysed decorations of Cossack cannons with zoomorphic symbols have made it possible to determine that animal motifs constituted one of the most expressive components of the symbolic embellishment of cannons belonging to the Cossack senior officers. The images of the lion, unicorn, nightingale, wolf, and dragon endowed the artillery with magical and sacral properties of an “ever-vigilant guard.” The unicorn and the lion functioned as allegories of military might and divine protection, while at the same time symbolising the defence of the Orthodox faith. The semantics of animal images were shaped through interaction with Baroque cosmology, the idea of the elements, and conceptions of “sacred war”. Taken together, zoomorphic depictions created a system of allegorical characters through which ideas of victory, honour, and the nobility of the cannon’s owner were conveyed.

Rules of Composition

A high degree of decorativeness on cannon barrels of the Ukrainian Baroque period was achieved by foundry masters through generalisation and the application of principles of statics and symmetry. The symmetrical composition of cannon decoration manifested itself as a principle rather than as a perfectly symmetrical applied pattern. On cannon monuments whose

technology aspired to the greatest possible symmetry, symmetry performed an organising role in the composition of decorative elements. An important role was also played by the craftsman's intuitive striving for orderliness, completeness, and the integrity of the work. The symmetrical architectonics of cannon decoration were associated with statics, calmness, and balance. The closer a composition was to absolute symmetry, the statelier it appeared. In such cases, the cannon produced an impression of concealed power and unshakable tranquillity. To emphasise these sensations, certain symbols with symmetrical configurations were also employed (*Adrub, 2021*).

However, elements of symbolism that required an accentuated internal dynamism were predominantly depicted asymmetrically. For example, images of mythical and real animals and birds in motion were usually placed on the right side of the barrel, in its muzzle section, and positioned above the central horizontal axis: a unicorn and a lion running on the cannons of Colonels P.S. Hertsyk and I.F. Novytskyi from 1692; a lion in a leap on the cannon *Lev* ("Lion") of 1705; and a dragon in a leap on the cannon of Colonel M.I. Miloradovych from 1717.

In the compositions of cannon products, a carefully considered decorative logic can be discerned. All surviving examples of officers' cannon casting contain three compositional nodes in their inseparability, linked by semantic and harmonising relationships. Triadic unity constitutes a cornerstone principle in the construction of decorative compositions, since the number three has always symbolised completeness, stability, and perfection. In the Christian tradition, triangles, figures composed of three triangles, three angles, or other intersecting figures symbolise the Trinity—the existence of God in three hypostases. This principle of decoration corresponded to the three technological parts of the cannon barrel: the breech, the middle section, and the muzzle (*Makaron, 1994*).

Thus, the compositional organisation of cannon decoration was based on the principles of symmetry, vertical dynamism, and triadic unity, which corresponded both to the technological structure of the barrel and to the Christian symbolism of the Trinity. The most important representational elements (coats of arms and inscriptions) were concentrated in the breech section, while zoomorphic images predominantly guarded the muzzle zone. Symmetry performed an organising function, creating a sense of concealed strength and monumental calm. The asymmetrical placement of animal figures in motion emphasised the internal dynamism and martial energy of the weapon. Overall, the composition of cannon monuments emerged as a carefully conceived hierarchical system in which each element occupied a defined place and carried a specific symbolic meaning.

Discussion

The study examines the artillery of the Cossack senior officers not merely as military artefacts, but as figurative and symbolic monuments of Ukrainian Baroque culture. The decorative elements of cannon barrels function as representational narratives that combine phytomorphic, zoomorphic, heraldic, and epigraphic components. They were intended to sacralise military power and to legitimise the social status of the owner. At the same time, a key problem in the study of decorated cannons lies in the fragmentary preservation of these monuments of the material heritage of the Ukrainian Cossacks, since a significant part of the Hetmanate's artillery was lost or removed beyond the borders of Ukraine. This complicates the construction of a comprehensive typology and the tracing of stylistic evolution.

The interpretation of such symbolic images as the acanthus, palm branch, lion, unicorn, and birds attests to a synthesis of pan-European Baroque emblematics with local worldview conceptions of Ukrainian society in the Cossack period. However, the boundaries between

borrowed artistic models and autochthonous symbolic systems remain insufficiently delineated. The mechanisms of artistic transmission between foundry centres have likewise not been fully clarified. The influence of individual commissions by members of the Cossack elite on the formation of decorative canons also requires separate analysis.

In the klironomical dimension (*Buychik, 2019; Buychik, 2024*), cannons emerge as carriers of the cultural memory of the Hetmanate. Nevertheless, their contemporary musealisation often retains an object-centred and descriptive character. The semantic layers of ornamentation and inscriptions usually remain outside the focus of exhibitions. This foregrounds the problem of curatorial strategies and the narrative structuring of museum displays. As a result, artillery is perceived primarily as technical weaponry rather than as the symbolic heritage of Baroque culture.

Contemporary military realities significantly intensify the challenges associated with studying examples of decorated casting from the 17th and 18th centuries. The destruction of museums, damage to collections, and the looting of cultural property underscore the urgent need for digital documentation and inter-institutional cooperation. The creation of a unified register of Cossack cannons and the development of digital museumification are becoming important instruments for heritage preservation.

Issues requiring further discussion include the representation of the concept of “sacred war” in cannon decoration, the adaptation of Baroque visual language to local codes, and the role of digital practices in compensating for physical losses. No less important is the search for a balance between authenticity and interpretative presentation in contemporary museums.

The results obtained in this study open several promising directions for further research. First, a more detailed comparative analysis of decorated cannons of the Hetmanate with contemporaneous European artillery from Central and Western Europe appears particularly relevant. Such a comparison would allow for a clearer differentiation between pan-European Baroque iconographic conventions and specifically Ukrainian symbolic codes, as well as for the identification of channels of artistic transmission between foundry centres.

Second, further research is needed on the regional schools of cannon casting within the territory of the Hetmanate and neighbouring regions. A focused examination of local workshops, masters, and patronage networks could contribute to the reconstruction of stylistic lineages and the attribution of currently anonymous artefacts. This line of inquiry would also deepen understanding of the relationship between individual commissions by members of the Cossack elite and the formation of stable decorative and symbolic canons.

A third important direction concerns the expansion of klironomical analysis to issues of contemporary musealisation and digital heritage. The creation of comprehensive digital catalogues, three-dimensional models, and unified registers of surviving Cossack cannons would make it possible to compensate, at least partially, for the irreversible loss of many monuments. Such digital practices would also enable new forms of symbolic interpretation, comparative visual analysis, and narrative presentation within museum and educational contexts.

Finally, further interdisciplinary research should address the broader cultural semantics of the concept of “sacred war” and political legitimation as expressed through artillery decoration. An in-depth study of how military objects functioned simultaneously as weapons, sacral symbols, and instruments of social representation would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Baroque visual culture as a whole. In this sense, decorated Cossack cannons may serve as a productive case study for analysing the interaction between power, faith, aesthetics, and cultural memory in early modern Europe.

Thus, the manuscript delineates a promising interdisciplinary field that integrates historical, art-historical, museological, and klironomical approaches to the understanding of artillery heritage as an important component of Ukrainian and European cultural memory.

Conclusion

Summarising the results of the study of the artistic decoration of Cossack artillery of the 17th–18th centuries, it may be concluded that the decorated guns of the Hetmanate period constitute unique figurative and symbolic monuments of Ukrainian Baroque. The analysis conducted made it possible to identify three key groups of decorative elements: phytomorphic ornaments, zoomorphic images, and heraldic-emblematic representations, which together reflect the worldview of the Cossack elite of the time.

The intermediate findings of the research indicate the profound metaphysical content of each element. Phytomorphic ornamentation, in particular S-shaped forms resembling a “heart”, embodied the idea of Ukrainian cordocentrism and the piety of the patrons. The use of acanthus, palm branches, and rose flowers transformed the weapon into a sacral object symbolising “holy war”, the victory of life over death, and the nobility of its owner. Motifs of “flowerpots” and the “grapevine” associated the artillery with the symbolism of the Tree of Life and the defence of the Christian faith.

Inscriptions on the barrels not only enhanced their decorative quality but also fulfilled a clear representational function, consolidating social status and hierarchy within Cossack society. Titular inscriptions often replaced or complemented coats of arms, emphasising the state grandeur of hetmans and colonels.

Zoomorphic images (the lion, unicorn, wolf, and nightingale) endowed the weapons with the magical character of an “unsleeping guard”. The lion and the unicorn symbolised invincible strength and divine truth, while the nightingale acted as a herald of joy and victory.

The compositional structure of the decoration was based on the principles of “vertical dynamism” and triadic unity, corresponding to the technical division of the gun into three parts and at the same time alluding to the Christian symbolism of the Trinity. The use of seraphic images in the muzzle section was interpreted as a prototype of heaven and divine fire.

The primary purpose of the study—to conduct a thorough interdisciplinary analysis of decorated cannons of the Ukrainian Cossacks as figurative and symbolic monuments of the Baroque era—has been fully achieved. Through the integration of historical, art-historical, iconographic, semiotic, and klironomical approaches, the research has demonstrated that Cossack artillery of the 17th and 18th centuries functioned not merely as military equipment, but as complex cultural artefacts embodying worldview, ideological, and representational meanings characteristic of Ukrainian Baroque culture.

The first study task, which involved the analysis of the elements of artistic decoration (phytomorphic, zoomorphic, and heraldic), has been successfully accomplished through the systematic examination of preserved cannon specimens from museum collections. The study identified the dominant role of phytomorphic ornamentation, the expressive symbolic function of zoomorphic imagery, and the representational significance of heraldic and epigraphic elements. This analytical classification made it possible to reconstruct the internal structure of cannon decoration as a coherent visual language rather than a random assemblage of motifs.

The second task—revealing the metaphysical content of decorative elements—was addressed by interpreting ornaments and images within the broader framework of Baroque symbolism and Ukrainian cultural tradition. The analysis demonstrated that vegetal motifs conveyed ideas of life, resurrection, and spiritual continuity; animal images embodied concepts

of divine protection, vigilance, and victory; and inscriptions articulated social hierarchy, legitimacy, and noble identity. In this way, cannon decoration was shown to encode complex metaphysical meanings related to faith, power, and the concept of “sacred war”.

The third study task, focused on examining the architectonics of cannon barrels, was fulfilled through a structural and compositional analysis of decorative arrangements. The study established that the organisation of visual elements was governed by the principles of vertical dynamism, symmetry, and triadic unity, corresponding both to the technological structure of the cannon and to the Christian symbolism of the Trinity. This finding confirms that the spatial distribution of ornament, imagery, and inscriptions was intentional and ideologically meaningful, reinforcing the perception of the cannon as a hierarchically ordered symbolic whole.

Taken together, the resolution of these tasks confirms the internal consistency of the research design and validates the proposed interpretative model. The study substantiates the view of decorated Cossack cannons as “cultivated universes” in which technical force, artistic form, and symbolic meaning are inseparably linked. By achieving its stated aim and addressing each research task in a systematic manner, the article contributes to the advancement of interdisciplinary studies of Ukrainian Baroque heritage and highlights the potential of klironomy as an analytical framework for interpreting material culture as a bearer of cultural memory and identity.

Thus, the study demonstrates that the system of allegorical images on gun barrels was perceived by contemporaries as a “cultivated universe”, in which technical power was harmoniously combined with high aesthetics. Cossack guns functioned not merely as instruments of death but as visual confirmation of the status of the Cossack officer class as “knight-defenders” of Orthodoxy and bearers of European Baroque culture. Despite the fact that a significant portion of these monuments has been lost or removed to foreign museums, the surviving artefacts remain invaluable evidence of the flourishing of domestic foundry art. The results of the study underscore the need for further research and popularisation of this heritage as an integral component of the pan-European cultural context.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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Illustration in Ukrainian Children's Books: National Tradition and European Visual Practices ^[8]

Abstract:

The relevance of the study is determined by the increasing role of visual culture in the context of digitalization and the growing influence of visual media on children's perception, imagination, and identity formation. In contemporary humanities, there is a clear need to reconsider illustration not merely as a decorative supplement but as a meaningful cultural phenomenon within children's literature. The research problem lies in the insufficient systematization of children's book illustration as a carrier of national cultural codes, particularly within Ukrainian book graphics. Existing studies often address illustration fragmentarily, without integrating historical, semiotic, cultural, and comparative perspectives into a unified analytical framework. The novelty of the study consists in the interdisciplinary conceptualization of illustration in Ukrainian children's books as an independent artistic and communicative system. The study introduces a comparative model that reveals the interaction between national traditions and European visual practices while emphasizing the cultural specificity of Ukrainian illustration. The subject of the study is the artistic, stylistic, semiotic, and cultural features of illustration in Ukrainian children's books in relation to European visual trends. The object of the study is illustration in children's books as a component of book graphics and visual communication. The study aims to identify and systematize the artistic, stylistic, and cultural principles of illustration as a form of national visual code. The methodological framework includes analytical, comparative, historical-chronological, systemic, art-historical, semiotic, and cultural approaches. The study draws upon the scholarly works of V. Zaitseva, A. Buihasheva, H. Novik, P. Zemtsova, P. Nodelman, M. Nikolajeva, and other researchers in the fields of book studies, illustration theory, and visual culture. The study examines the historical foundations of Ukrainian book graphics, analyzes contemporary illustrative practices, and compares Ukrainian and European approaches to children's book illustration. Special attention is given to stylistic diversity, the interaction of traditional and digital techniques, age-related design principles, and the role of illustration in visual communication. The results demonstrate that contemporary Ukrainian illustration integrates national artistic traditions with innovative visual strategies, preserving the high cultural and aesthetic value of the children's book. The authors conclude that illustration functions as a significant factor in shaping children's visual perception and national identity, positioning Ukrainian book graphics as an independent and culturally meaningful phenomenon within the European and global artistic context.

Keywords: children's book, illustration, book graphics, Ukrainian illustration, visual communication, national identity, book design.

Introduction

Illustration is an integral component of a children's book, shaping not only the aesthetic image of a work but also influencing the child reader in the processes of perception, imagination development, and identity formation. The artistic design of children's books functions as a medium for transmitting a nation's cultural and visual codes, while simultaneously representing the continuity of artistic traditions and the individual stylistic explorations of contemporary artists.

Ukrainian book graphics have deep historical and artistic roots that have developed under the influence of both local traditions and European cultural processes. Research into the evolution of Ukrainian book graphics emphasizes a continuous synthesis of national and international artistic experience, which has resulted in the formation of a distinctive visual language of the book in Ukraine. This synthesis is evident across the fields of design, graphic art, and traditional narrative means (*Zaitseva & Buihasheva, 2021*).

This phenomenon is particularly evident in children's books, where illustrative visual solutions are closely connected with cultural codes, folk motifs, and linguistic forms, allowing the child not only to read the text but also to visually "experience" a national fairy tale or tradition.

Scholarly studies of contemporary Ukrainian book graphics demonstrate that since the 2000s there has been a significant increase in attention to professional design and illustration in children's publications, largely due to the activity of Ukrainian illustrators and the development of the publishing industry. A thorough analysis of the work of specialists in this field makes it possible to identify new stylistic approaches, compositional solutions, and artistic means that influence the formation of the visual environment of the children's book as an independent work of art (*Novik & Zemtsova, 2021*).

This indicates an urgent need for a systematic examination of illustration not merely as a decorative element, but as a fully-fledged component of book art that operates in close interaction with the text, cultural codes, and national identity.

Despite the existence of individual publications on the graphic features of children's book illustration, there is still a lack of comprehensive scholarly research that considers illustration specifically within the context of Ukrainian book graphics as a form of national artistic code. In this regard, it is necessary to systematize the historical and artistic origins of Ukrainian book illustration; the stylistic and compositional principles of children's illustration; the interaction between text and image within a national cultural context; and contemporary trends in the development of book graphics in Ukraine.

Such study will contribute to the theoretical understanding of the role of illustration in shaping the Ukrainian children's book as an artistic phenomenon and will also serve as a foundation for further art-historical and practical developments in book design.

Overall, this topic is urgent for contemporary humanities scholarship, as it integrates aesthetic, cultural, and social dimensions that define the place of Ukrainian book graphics within the global cultural space and in the process of educating the young reader (*Zaitseva & Buihasheva, 2021*).

The novelty of this study lies in its systematic conceptualization of illustration in Ukrainian children's books as a bearer of national visual and cultural codes rather than as a purely auxiliary or decorative element. Unlike earlier studies that examine children's book illustration primarily within isolated art-historical, pedagogical, or design-oriented frameworks, this research integrates historical-artistic, semiotic, cultural, and comparative perspectives into a unified analytical model. The study advances the field by positioning illustration as an active agent in the formation of national identity and cultural memory within childhood visual experience.

A distinctive contribution of the research is its focus on Ukrainian book graphics as a coherent visual tradition shaped through continuous dialogue with European artistic practices, rather than as a peripheral or derivative phenomenon. The article introduces a comparative framework that reveals both shared European tendencies and specifically Ukrainian stylistic, symbolic, and compositional features.

Furthermore, the study expands existing scholarship by addressing contemporary illustrative practices in the context of digital transformation while demonstrating the sustained relevance of traditional artistic techniques. The research also offers a refined interpretation of illustration as a component of visual communication that interacts dynamically with text, typography, format, and materiality.

Another novel aspect is the systematic analysis of age-related design principles and regulatory standards as integral factors shaping illustrative solutions. By synthesizing theoretical

analysis with concrete visual practices, the study bridges the gap between abstract cultural theory and applied book design. Overall, the research fills a significant gap in Ukrainian and international scholarship by providing a comprehensive, interdisciplinary understanding of children's book illustration as an independent artistic and cultural phenomenon.

The subject of the research is the artistic, stylistic, semiotic, and cultural characteristics of illustration in Ukrainian children's books in their interaction with European visual practices.

The object of the research is illustration in children's books as a component of book graphics and visual communication.

The study aims to identify and systematize the artistic, stylistic, and cultural principles of illustration in Ukrainian children's books as a form of national visual code within the broader European artistic context.

The objectives of the study are:

- analyze the historical and artistic foundations of Ukrainian book graphics in children's literature;
- examine contemporary illustrative practices in Ukrainian children's books;
- identify key stylistic, compositional, and semiotic features of illustration;
- compare Ukrainian and European approaches to children's book illustration;
- determine the role of illustration in the formation of children's visual perception and national identity;
- systematize age-related and regulatory design principles influencing illustrative solutions.

The results of the study are intended for scholars in the fields of art history, cultural studies, book studies, and visual communication; for illustrators, graphic designers, and publishers working with children's literature; for educators and students specializing in design and the humanities; and for professionals involved in the preservation and development of national cultural heritage within contemporary visual culture.

Methods

The analytical method involves the decomposition of the object of study—the illustration of a children's book—into its constituent elements, including stylistic features, compositional solutions, execution techniques, interaction with the text, and cultural symbols. Synthesis, in turn, makes it possible to integrate these elements into a holistic understanding of illustration as a complex system. In this study, this method is applied to generalize heterogeneous data on Ukrainian and European book graphics and to formulate comprehensive conclusions regarding their development.

The inductive method is used to move from the analysis of specific illustrative examples by individual Ukrainian and European artists to the identification of general trends in contemporary children's book design. Conversely, the deductive method enables the verification of general theoretical propositions—such as the role of illustration, the influence of the reader's age, and national visual codes—through their examination in concrete visual material. Comparative analysis is employed to juxtapose Ukrainian and European practices of children's book illustration and to identify both shared and distinctive features in stylistic approaches, materials, and design strategies. Within the framework of the study, this method allows for the delineation of the specificity of Ukrainian book graphics within a broader European cultural context.

The historical-chronological method involves examining illustration in children's books within the dynamics of historical development. In this research, it is used to analyze the historical

and artistic foundations of Ukrainian book graphics and to trace the evolution of artistic approaches from traditional forms to contemporary design solutions.

The systems approach makes it possible to consider the children's book as an integrated artistic object in which illustration, text, typography, format, and materials are closely interconnected. Within the study, this method ensures an understanding of illustration as a component of the overall system of visual communication.

Art-historical analysis focuses on the examination of the artistic form of illustrations, including style, visual language, composition, color schemes, techniques, and materials. In this study, art-historical analysis is applied to explore the work of Ukrainian illustrators and to identify the characteristic features of contemporary Ukrainian book graphics.

Compositional analysis concentrates on the study of the compositional organization of illustrations, the placement of images and text on the spread, and the balance of visual accents. In this research, it is used to analyze layout practices in children's publications and to determine patterns dependent on the reader's age group.

The semiotic approach enables the interpretation of illustration as a system of signs and symbols. Within the scope of the study, this method is applied to analyze national, cultural, and folkloric codes embedded in the visual imagery of Ukrainian children's books, as well as to elucidate their influence on the formation of a child's identity.

Cultural analysis allows illustration to be examined within the context of sociocultural processes, traditions, and values. In this research, it is used to conceptualize the children's book as a carrier of cultural memory and a means of transmitting national artistic heritage.

The graphic-analytical method is based on the examination of actual design solutions in contemporary children's publications from the perspectives of functionality, ergonomics, and aesthetics. In the study, it is applied to assess the compliance of illustrative design with age-related, psychological, and regulatory requirements for children's books.

The typological approach enables the classification of illustrations according to type (full-page, half-page, spot illustrations, initials), style, and function. In this research, this method is used to systematize visual design practices in children's books and to identify their role within the overall structure of the publication.

Literature Review

In Ukrainian academic discourse, issues of graphic art and illustration are traditionally associated with the study of national artistic traditions, the history of the book, and the development of design (*Butko et al., 2024; Fedorenko et al., 2023; Fedorenko et al., 2025a; Fedorenko et al., 2025b*). Comprehensive historical and art-historical studies of Ukrainian book graphics are presented in works devoted to the evolution of illustration from manuscript books and Baroque engraving to contemporary design practices. Such studies emphasize the synthesis of folk ornamentation, icon-painting traditions, and European artistic influences as the foundation for the formation of the visual language of the Ukrainian book.

The contemporary state of Ukrainian book illustration, particularly in children's publications, has been actively analyzed in scholarly articles since the early 21st century. A significant contribution to the study of modern illustration was made by H.V. Novik and P.O. Zemtsova, who examine illustration as an integral component of book design and emphasize the growing role of professional artistic execution in Ukrainian publishing since the 2000s. The authors highlight the diversity of stylistic approaches and the combination of traditional and digital techniques in the work of Ukrainian illustrators (*Novik & Zemtsova, 2021*).

Important for this research are the studies by V. Zaitseva and A. Buihasheva, in which children's book illustration is considered within the context of cultural memory, national identity, and the European artistic space. These works emphasize that Ukrainian book graphics develop through constant dialogue with European trends while simultaneously preserving distinctive national visual codes (*Zaitseva & Buihasheva, 2021*).

In international scholarly tradition, research on children's book illustration has a long and systematic history. One of the seminal works in this field is Perry Nodelman's *Words About Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books*, in which illustration is viewed as an equal narrative element that generates meaning through interaction with the text (*Nodelman, 1988*). The author emphasizes that it is precisely in children's books that the relationship between word and image is fundamentally inseparable.

Further development of this issue is presented in the works of Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott, particularly in *How Picturebooks Work*, which analyzes the semiotic nature of illustration and its role in the cognitive and emotional development of the child (*Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001*). The researchers interpret illustration as a system of signs that conveys cultural, social, and ideological meanings.

The cultural context of children's books is examined in detail in the works of David Lewis, who emphasizes that illustration reflects not only the author's intent but also the values of the society in which the book is produced (*Lewis, 2001*). This approach is particularly important for the analysis of national codes in the visual language of children's publications.

European studies also focus on the impact of digital technologies on contemporary illustration. Research devoted to 21st-century children's book design highlights a tendency toward the integration of traditional artistic techniques with digital tools, which does not diminish but rather transforms classical stylistic practices (*Salisbury & Styles, 2012*).

The analysis of Ukrainian and international scholarly sources demonstrates that the problem of children's book illustration is most often addressed fragmentarily—within individual disciplines or national contexts. At the same time, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies that would integrate historical-artistic, semiotic, cultural, and design approaches specifically to Ukrainian children's book graphics.

Thus, the present study fits logically into the contemporary academic discourse while simultaneously addressing an existing research gap by offering a systematic analysis of illustration as a carrier of national cultural codes and an important factor in the formation of children's visual culture within a European context.

Results

Contemporary Trends in Children's Book Design in Ukraine

In recent years, modern digital technologies have significantly transformed the publishing industry. It is worth noting that this process has also had a negative impact on publishing, as an increasing number of people prefer electronic or audiobooks to printed editions. However, it is equally important to acknowledge that digital art introduces new and unconventional means of expression into the book. As a result, the printed book acquires new qualities and roles, becoming an object of collecting and a work of art. For this reason, the contemporary children's book requires non-standard design solutions and innovative ideas that help illustrators, artists, and designers create a “high-quality, holistic image that contributes to the development of the narrative and establishes the overall mood of the book” (*Maniukhina & Shulska, 2016*).

The widespread use of computer graphics in Ukraine as a standard tool for illustrators are also worth noting. The application of graphic editors and specialized devices, such as graphic tablets, is successfully combined with traditional materials, including various types of paint and graphite pencils. Through this synthesis, the visual design presented to the reader is characterized by vivid, saturated colors (*Yefimova, 2015*).

It is important to emphasize that stylistic trends in contemporary Ukrainian illustration are extremely diverse. The classical illustrative style—relatively realistic and highly detailed—is represented by the works of Vladyslav Yerko, Andrii and Olha Duhinykh, Kost Lavro, Kateryna Shtanko, and Oleh Petrenko-Zanevskyi. Minimalist and stylized illustrations, influenced by contemporary European trends, are exemplified by the works of Anna Sarvira, Polina Doroshenko, and Yevheniia Hapchynska (*Figure 1; Figure 2*).

An analysis of these artists' works reveals a wide variety of styles and materials employed by illustrators and demonstrates that there is no single dominant style or artistic technique in Ukrainian illustration.

A clear example of this diversity can be found in the fairy-tale illustrations of V. Yerko: they are highly detailed and meticulously rendered, yet no element within the composition appears accidental (*Novik & Zemtsova, 2021*).

As early as 2014, Romana Romanyshyn—a Ukrainian illustrator whose book received the Opera Prima Award at the Bologna Children's Book Fair—remarked in an interview with The Old Lion Publishing House that, unfortunately, many contemporary Ukrainian publishers were guided primarily by the desire to maintain their market position. According to the illustrator, bookstore shelves were often filled with publications whose low-quality design was compensated by overly bright, eye-catching imagery, while their stylistic solutions differed little from the well-known Disney aesthetic. Romanyshyn emphasized that this issue stemmed not from a lack of artists, but rather from a lack of courage and originality on the part of publishers.

Illustrator Andrii Lesiv also notes that “book illustration has very broad boundaries and today is not limited to a bright picture featuring a prince and a princess.” Both Romanyshyn and Lesiv agree that the contemporary children's book should demonstrate “absolute freedom—in themes, in illustrations, and in materials”. According to Romanyshyn, “today a children's book may look nothing like a book at all”. When asked what a children's book might resemble instead, the illustrator responded: “a sculpture, a kinetic artifact, an art book” (*The art of children's books..., 2014*).

Romanyshyn's statements are confirmed by the publication *Ptakh Abetka*, illustrated by Iryna Panarina and published by the well-known Ukrainian publishing house Ranok in 2019. The originality and appeal of this edition lie in the technique used to create its illustrations: rather than being produced with traditional materials such as watercolor or colored pencils, or developed using contemporary digital software, the illustrations were created using embroidery floss threads (*Figure 3*).

Another compelling example supporting Romanyshyn's views is the edition of *Forest Song* by Lesia Ukrainka, illustrated by Polina Doroshenko. This publication stands out due to Doroshenko's distinctive authorial approach and technique. The illustrator works in mixed media, combining appliqué techniques with colored pencils, paints, and liners (*Figure 4*).

Doroshenko consistently employs mixed techniques and seeks a unique artistic approach for each new project. Her most renowned illustrated edition is *Forest Song* by Lesia Ukrainka, published by Osnovy Publishing House and included in *The White Ravens 2014* international catalogue of children's books. For the same publisher, Polina Doroshenko has recently illustrated *Fedir's Fables*.

Features of Children's Book Design in Europe

In addition to studying the Ukrainian market, it is important to understand European trends as well. The European children's book market is remarkably large and diverse; therefore, it is necessary to identify the key tendencies and trends in the visual design of children's books in order to determine the direction and development vector of the proposed project.

In recent years, modern digital technologies have significantly changed the situation in both the Ukrainian and European markets. The development and implementation of digital platforms and technologies have had a substantial impact on the possibilities of children's books. This has led to progress not only in the content of literary works but also in their formats on the market. It is important to note that the popularity of printed books has been maintained despite these changes: printed editions still occupy a larger share of the market than electronic books. However, with the advancement of digital technologies, e-books have begun to gain popularity due to their accessibility on devices such as tablets and smartphones. The appeal of electronic books is increasing not only because of interactive components such as audio and animation, but also due to their portability, which allows readers to enjoy texts without the need for optimal lighting conditions. Nevertheless, printed books have not lost their relevance, which confirms their timeless nature and their strong connection with the traditional reading experience (*Children Picture Book Market...*, 2023).

The convenience of modern technologies has been acknowledged not only by readers but also by designers and illustrators. Not only have the media for storytelling changed, but so have the methods of creating illustrations. The use of computer software has become widespread due to its practicality; but traditional styles have by no means disappeared from the pages of children's literature. The softness and rich textures of traditional techniques remain highly valued. Many illustrators strive to recreate these textures using digital tools, thus combining the convenience of computer-based work with the uniqueness and organic qualities of strokes, spots, and textures inherent in traditional materials (*International Trends...*, 2023).

In terms of style, it is important to note that children's book design in Europe, much like in Ukraine, is not confined to a single clearly defined style with strict limitations regarding materials or color palettes. However, one of the most widespread approaches can be identified as the so-called "cartoon style". This style is characterized by exaggerated features that depart from realistic representation. In fact, it encompasses a wide range of variations, as the degree of exaggeration can be relatively subtle or highly pronounced. This style is most commonly used in books intended for younger audiences (*Figure 5; Figure 6*).

A notable example of this style can be found in the works of German illustrator Ira Sluyterman van Langeweyde. Her style can be described as "cute" or "naïve" (*Figure 7*).

Despite the apparent simplicity of van Langeweyde's style, her illustrations are rich in details that engage the reader. They successfully combine the lightness and airiness of watercolor textures with simplicity, expressive forms, and a soft yet vivid color palette. The visual world carefully created by the illustrator on paper using watercolors and colored pencils harmoniously conveys innocence, charm, and the playfulness of childhood, while also evoking a sense of wonder in the viewer (*The 9 most...*, 2024).

Another representative of this style is Isabella Mazzanti. An illustrator of Italian-Polish origin, she also prefers traditional materials such as watercolor and colored pencils for the realization of her projects. Although Mazzanti creates comics for teenagers and adults, her portfolio also includes children's books. Her illustrations for *The Fairy Garden* by Giorgia Bachtorn attract readers with their bright colors and charming style. Examples of Mazzanti's

works can be seen in the Appendix (*Figure 8*). Her illustrations are vivid and rich, characterized by a simplified style yet filled with engaging details for close observation. In each work, the viewer is struck by the thoughtful combination of colors that highlight all essential elements. No object in the illustration appears accidental, nor do its color or scale.

The widespread popularity of this style among illustrators is further evidenced by the works of French illustrator Julie Mellan. Like van Langeweyde and Mazzanti, Mellan uses watercolor to create exceptionally soft and delicate illustrations, often featuring charming animal characters as protagonists. Her watercolor illustrations are characterized by a bright and saturated color palette that remains gentle and pleasing to the viewer. Mellan's works, which can be seen in the Appendix (*Figure 9*), impress with the softness and fluidity of the depicted forms.

Like the aforementioned illustrators, Mellan works exclusively with traditional materials, particularly watercolor. In response to a question from a social media user about whether she had experimented with digital drawing, Mellan stated that she had not, although she plans to purchase an iPad Pro to develop color tests for her illustrations. The illustrator explained her strong commitment to traditional techniques by her deep affection for watercolor and her limited proficiency in digital drawing. "It seems interesting, but in my view, it will never replace real paper", Mellan wrote on her Instagram profile in response to the question.

After analyzing these works and styles, it can be confidently stated that despite the widespread use and popularity of computer software among illustrators, traditional materials for creating remarkable illustrations filled with engaging, humorous, and charming details will never be forgotten or abandoned. Watercolors, colored pencils, pastels, gouache, and tempera remain highly valued among illustrators and will not lose their relevance due to the softness of their colors and the originality of their textures. Therefore, it can be concluded that traditional styles and materials have not receded into the background and continue to be in demand and actively used by European illustrators (*International Trends...*, 2023).

Key Practices in the Visual Design of Children's Books

For adult readers, illustrations serve as a pleasant supplementary key to the text. In children's books, but illustrations constitute the primary source of information, while the text primarily functions to explain the depicted content.

Additionally, a pattern in children's book preferences has been observed: "children tend to prefer books in which illustrations occupy more than twenty-five percent of the space." (*Samiya, 2021*) This preference arises not only because most children find it easier to understand a so-called "graphic" code—i.e., illustrations—than the "verbal" code of the story text itself, but also because studies have shown that large, bright illustrations effectively attract and hold the attention of young readers.

It is also important to consider the target age group when developing the visual design of a book. This is partly due to specific regulations in Ukraine regarding the formatting of children's publications. The size of the main text is particularly crucial. For the first age group—children under 6 years old, of early school age—the main text should be set at 14 pt or larger. For the second age group, the main text should also be at least 14 pt, while for children in grades three to four, it should be 12 pt or larger.

There are also restrictions regarding the number of hyphenations per page. In addition, the printing of the main text must adhere to specific standards: the use of colored inks for the main text is prohibited, and the number of text columns per page should not exceed two.

Reverse or "inverted" fonts are also prohibited in children's publications (*Figure 10*). Light-colored text on a dark background is allowed only in areas intended for scanning, such as menus

in computer programs. It is worth noting, but that reading white or very light text on a dark background can cause eye strain. The difficulty arises because light-colored letters are often spaced closely together, and reflected light can scatter across adjacent words and letters, complicating word and letter recognition and thereby reducing overall readability. In contrast, dark text absorbs surrounding light, making it easier to distinguish individual words and letters (*The problem...*, 2023).

Another key aspect in designing visual content for young children is the accurate depiction of the text. Realistic, expressive illustrations should faithfully convey the author's narrative. Images created by the illustrator should not distort or misrepresent the real world.

There are also specific rules regarding hyphenation. For the first age group, the number of hyphenations per page should not exceed four; for the second age group, no more than eight. Recommended illustration coverage is at least 50% for children under 6 years and at least 35% for children under 10 years. Paper quality is also essential: optimal whiteness and opacity facilitate text perception for children.

Requirements for visual design are guided not only by psychology and pedagogy, which study how children perceive the world, but also by children themselves. Surveys indicate that children expect illustrations to be “primarily beautiful, bright, cheerful, kind, and clear, with characters that seem alive.” (Ohar, 2002)

Detail is critical in creating “alive” images. E. Ohar notes: “Individual objects in the visual design of a children’s storybook must correspond ‘down to the smallest detail’ with their verbal descriptions. Young viewers take the artist’s imagined world seriously and verify its authenticity.” (Ohar, 2002) Research further shows that detailed illustrations provide more cues about the story, and children enjoy finding these details, which serve as “keys” to understanding the narrative. Sparse illustrations on a full-page spread fail to provide sufficient cues, and less detailed images hold children’s attention less effectively (*The Importance...*, 2018).

The level of detail should also correspond to the target age group. Younger children benefit from simpler forms and brighter colors, whereas older children respond better to more detailed illustrations with complex character silhouettes and richer color schemes (*How to Design...*, 2021).

Realism is another critical factor. Illustrations help children understand the story before they are fully able to read independently (*Samiya, 2021*). They are indispensable for children learning to read or with reading difficulties, as they aid in visualizing the narrative. Illustrations also allow children to imagine objects or beings they have never encountered, including mythological or fantastical creatures such as dragons or mermaids (*Picture Books...*, 2016).

For this reason, researching the real world and the subjects to be depicted is essential. Realistic representation helps make the illustrated objects appear authentic to readers and allows illustrators to identify distinguishing features, making characters, landscapes, and objects more recognizable and understandable (*How to Design...*, 2021).

The layout of text and illustrations is equally important. Practical placement of text alongside images is as vital as the book’s aesthetic quality. A book’s design should be visually appealing while facilitating easy reading and comprehension (*Bondarenko & Halchynska, 2021*).

There are rules regarding the allocation of space for text and illustrations. Layout decisions also depend on the age of the intended readers. For children aged 3 to 5, illustrations dominate the page, as early readers are either unable or only beginning to read independently. Full-spread, detailed, and colorful illustrations help convey the story, with text occupying roughly one-quarter of the spread (*Figure 11*).

As readers grow older, illustrations play a less central role. For children aged 6 to 10, books generally feature full-page illustrations. These remain colorful and detailed, often depicting multiple characters (*Figure 12*). Half-page illustrations are also common: while maintaining detail in foreground elements and characters, the background is simplified due to the smaller format.

Another type is the “spot” or “inline” illustration, usually occupying up to a quarter of a page, surrounded by text on three or four sides. These illustrations are simpler, with limited detail and color, often black, dark blue, or green, and serve primarily to enliven the text (*Figure 13*).

Initial letters, or “drop caps”, are another feature. A drop cap is a large, decorative letter at the beginning of a paragraph, chapter, or section, often occupying multiple lines and adorned with ornamental patterns or small compositions (*Figure 14*). Drop caps are used to highlight and decorate text and are frequently red, though blue or green may also be used, often in uppercase or Gothic-style fonts.

A key trend in children’s book design is the balance of text and illustration on a spread. The younger the intended reader, the larger, more detailed, and more prominent the illustrations, and the smaller the amount of text. As the reader’s age increases, the illustrations simplify, shrink, and play a smaller role.

Another important consideration is the distance between text and illustration, which must not be less than 6 millimeters. Illustrations must be free of defects that could hinder perception, such as color inconsistencies, misaligned images, mirrored elements, unblended paints, or insufficient contrast.

From the analysis conducted in the first section, we can conclude that the rise of digital technologies has a significant impact on publishing - both positive and negative. Contemporary Ukrainian illustrators are not limited to traditional techniques and materials, such as paints and colored pencils, nor to digital software; they employ a wide range of techniques and unconventional materials for illustration design. Despite the growing popularity of digital tools, the use of traditional materials in Europe remains strong. Key principles in designing children’s book illustrations include determining the target age group, selecting the appropriate size and type of illustration, choosing font size and drawing style, and prohibiting the use of inverted fonts.

Discussion

The results obtained in this study are highly relevant for contemporary humanities scholarship due to their interdisciplinary nature and integrative analytical framework.

First, the study contributes to art history by expanding the understanding of children’s book illustration as an independent artistic phenomenon rather than a subordinate visual supplement to the text. By systematizing stylistic, compositional, and semiotic characteristics of Ukrainian illustration, the study enriches scholarly discourse on national schools of book graphics.

Second, the findings are significant for cultural studies, as they demonstrate how illustration functions as a mechanism for transmitting cultural memory and national identity to younger generations. This perspective aligns with current debates on visual culture, identity formation, and the role of childhood media in shaping collective values.

Third, the comparative analysis of Ukrainian and European practices provides a valuable contribution to transnational studies of visual culture, highlighting both convergence processes and the preservation of distinctive national visual codes. Such results are particularly relevant in the context of globalization, where local traditions risk being obscured by dominant international aesthetics.

Fourth, the study's emphasis on the interaction between traditional artistic techniques and digital technologies responds directly to current scholarly interest in the transformation of artistic practices in the digital age. The findings show that digitalization does not eliminate traditional illustration methods but rather reshapes and recontextualizes them.

Fifth, the study has methodological relevance, as it demonstrates the effectiveness of combining art-historical, semiotic, cultural, and design-oriented approaches in the analysis of children's books. This integrated model may serve as a methodological reference for future studies in book design, illustration, and visual communication.

Finally, the results are applicable beyond purely theoretical discussions, offering a scholarly foundation for further applied research in publishing studies, design education, and cultural policy related to children's literature.

During the course of the study, the author encountered a number of conceptual, methodological, and practical challenges. One of the primary difficulties was the fragmented nature of existing scholarship on children's book illustration, which is often dispersed across art history, pedagogy, design studies, and cultural theory. This fragmentation required extensive synthesis to construct a coherent analytical framework.

Another challenge involved the limited availability of comprehensive, systematized studies specifically devoted to Ukrainian children's book illustration, particularly those addressing its role as a national visual code. As a result, the research relied on integrating disparate sources and reconstructing broader patterns from case-specific analyses.

The comparative dimension of the study also presented methodological difficulties, as Ukrainian and European illustrative practices are embedded in different cultural, institutional, and publishing contexts. Ensuring analytical balance without reducing national specificity or oversimplifying European diversity required careful methodological calibration.

An additional challenge was related to the dynamic nature of contemporary illustration practices, especially in the context of rapid digital transformation. The constant emergence of new techniques, tools, and hybrid formats complicates attempts to produce stable classifications or typologies.

The analysis of age-related design principles and regulatory requirements posed further difficulties, as such standards vary across national contexts and are subject to ongoing revision. Interpreting these norms within a broader cultural and artistic framework required careful contextualization.

Finally, the inherently visual nature of illustration presented a methodological challenge, as verbal academic analysis must translate visual phenomena into conceptual and terminological structures without reducing their aesthetic complexity. Addressing this issue demanded a careful balance between descriptive precision and theoretical abstraction.

A promising direction for further scholarly research is an in-depth study of illustration in Ukrainian children's books from an interdisciplinary perspective—at the intersection of art history, perception psychology, pedagogy, and cultural studies. In particular, investigating the influence of visual imagery on the formation of children's value orientations and national self-identity is of high relevance.

Special attention should also be paid to the transformation of traditional artistic tools in digital environments, as well as the study of new formats of children's books—art books, interactive and hybrid editions—where illustration extends beyond the boundaries of the classical page. Systematic research into the work of individual Ukrainian illustrators is also promising for understanding the formation of the contemporary visual canon of children's literature.

Future studies could focus on a comparative analysis of Ukrainian book illustration with leading European schools, which would allow for a clearer delineation of the unique features of national book graphics and define its place in the global artistic landscape.

Overall, the development of this research direction will contribute not only to the theoretical understanding of illustration as a vital component of book art but will also have practical significance for publishers, designers, and illustrators interested in creating high-quality, culturally rooted, and competitive Ukrainian children's books.

Conclusion

The conducted research established that the illustrative design of Ukrainian children's books is a complex, multi-layered phenomenon that integrates artistic-aesthetic, cultural, psychological, and pedagogical dimensions. In children's literature, illustrations perform not merely a decorative function but act as a full-fledged means of visual communication, significantly influencing text perception, imagination development, emotional sensitivity, and the formation of a child's national identity.

It was analyzed that Ukrainian book graphics possess a deep historical and artistic foundation and develop through a continuous dialogue between national traditions and European artistic trends. This synthesis is most prominently manifested in children's literature, through references to folk motifs, symbolism, ornamental structures, while simultaneously embracing experimentation with form, style, and materials.

The study of the contemporary state of illustration in Ukrainian children's publications revealed an increase in the professional level of book design since the 2000s, active use of digital technologies, and at the same time, the preservation and continued relevance of traditional artistic techniques. It was found that contemporary Ukrainian illustrators do not confine themselves to a single stylistic direction but work across a wide spectrum of artistic languages—from meticulously detailed realism to minimalist, conventional, and conceptual solutions.

A comparative analysis of Ukrainian and European practices in children's book illustration allowed us to conclude that, despite globalization and the influence of mass culture, the printed children's book retains its value as a unique artistic object. Illustrations play a particularly important role in this, as their carefully considered composition, color palette, level of detail, and correspondence with the reader's age ensure the integrity of the book's artistic image.

Special attention was given to the practical aspects of illustrative design in children's publications. It was determined that the effectiveness of a visual solution depends on a clear consideration of the reader's age group, adherence to regulatory requirements for font, composition, and illustration, as well as the harmonious integration of text and imagery. It was demonstrated that for younger audiences, illustrations are the dominant source of information, whereas their role gradually transforms from explanatory to supplementary with age.

The purpose of the study—to identify and systematize the artistic, stylistic, and cultural principles of illustration in Ukrainian children's books as a form of national visual code within the European artistic context—has been fully achieved. Through an interdisciplinary methodological framework, the research has demonstrated that illustration in children's literature functions as an independent artistic phenomenon that integrates aesthetic, cultural, semiotic, and communicative dimensions. The study confirms that Ukrainian children's book illustration not only reflects national traditions but also actively participates in their reinterpretation and transmission within contemporary visual culture.

The first research objective, which involved analyzing the historical and artistic foundations of Ukrainian book graphics in children's literature, has been accomplished by tracing the

continuity of national illustrative traditions and their interaction with broader European artistic processes. The study established that Ukrainian book graphics developed through a synthesis of folk ornamentation, symbolic imagery, and European stylistic influences, forming a distinctive visual language that remains identifiable in contemporary children's publications.

The second objective—to examine contemporary illustrative practices in Ukrainian children's books—was addressed through the analysis of current publishing trends, artistic techniques, and design strategies. The research demonstrated a significant professionalization of illustration since the early 21st century, characterized by stylistic diversity, experimentation with materials, and the active use of both digital and traditional techniques. This analysis confirmed that contemporary Ukrainian illustration resists stylistic uniformity and instead operates within a pluralistic visual paradigm.

The third objective, focused on identifying key stylistic, compositional, and semiotic features of illustration, was fulfilled by examining visual structure, color palettes, levels of detail, and symbolic content. The study showed that illustrations in Ukrainian children's books function as complex semiotic systems that encode cultural meanings, narrative cues, and age-specific perceptual strategies. These features ensure the coherence of the book as an integrated visual-textual artifact.

The fourth objective—to compare Ukrainian and European approaches to children's book illustration—was achieved through a comparative analysis of illustrative styles, materials, and design philosophies. The results revealed both shared tendencies, such as the integration of digital tools and the persistence of traditional media, and distinctive national characteristics rooted in Ukrainian cultural symbolism. This comparison allowed for a clearer positioning of Ukrainian book graphics within the European visual landscape without reducing its cultural specificity.

The fifth objective, which aimed to determine the role of illustration in the formation of children's visual perception and national identity, was addressed by analyzing the pedagogical, psychological, and cultural functions of visual imagery. The study confirmed that illustrations play a central role in shaping children's imaginative experience, emotional engagement, and early cultural identification, particularly in younger age groups where visual perception precedes verbal comprehension.

The sixth objective—to systematize age-related and regulatory design principles influencing illustrative solutions—was successfully resolved through the examination of layout norms, typographic standards, and compositional requirements for different age categories. The research demonstrated that effective illustration design depends on a balanced consideration of aesthetic quality, perceptual psychology, and regulatory constraints, ensuring both artistic integrity and functional readability.

In summary, the conducted research provides a comprehensive and methodologically grounded understanding of illustration in Ukrainian children's books as a culturally significant visual practice. The study not only confirms the achievement of its stated aim and objectives but also establishes a solid foundation for future interdisciplinary research and applied developments in book design, illustration, and cultural heritage studies.

Thus, the illustrative design of Ukrainian children's books emerges as an independent artistic phenomenon that shapes the visual culture of future generations while simultaneously representing national book graphics within the broader European and global context.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix



Figure 1. Illustration by V. Yerko for H. C. Andersen's book "The Snow Queen"



Figure 2. Illustration by Ye. Hapchynska for Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland"



Figure 3. Illustration by Irena Panarina for "PtakhAbetka"

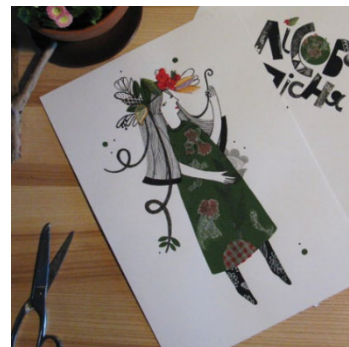


Figure 4. Illustration of the main female character by Polina Doroshenko for Lesya Ukrainka's "Forest Song"

Appendix



Figure 5. Illustration by Renan Porto



Figure 6. Illustrations by Isabella Mazzanti for the book "Fairy Garden"



Figure 7. Illustrations by Iryna Sluiterman van Langevelde



Figure 8. Illustrations by Isabella Mazzanti for the book "Fairy Garden"



Figure 9. Illustration by Julie Mellan



Figure 10. Illustration using reversed typography

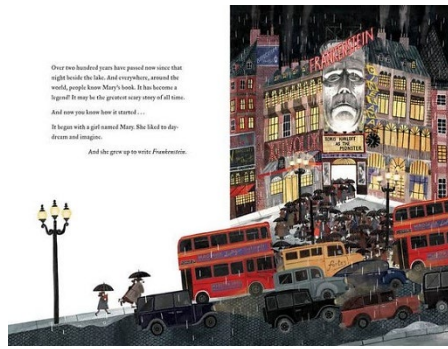


Figure 11. Example of a full-spread book illustration



Figure 12. Example of a full-page book illustration

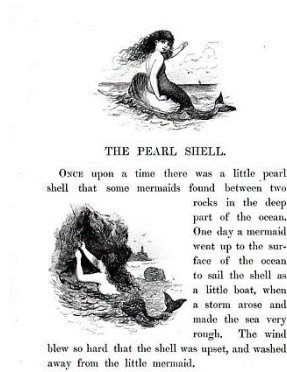


Figure 13. Example of a spot illustration used at the beginning and within the text



Figure 14. Example of a decorated initial at the beginning of the text



The Phenomenon of Heorhii Narbut: Graphic Creativity and Tradition in the Contemporary Ukrainian Sociocultural Dimension ^[9]

Abstract:

The relevance of this study is determined by the growing scholarly and societal interest in the formation of Ukrainian national identity amid contemporary sociocultural transformations, as well as by the necessity to reconsider the role of visual culture and graphic design as instruments for its representation. In this context, the creative legacy of Heorhii Narbut emerges as a unique phenomenon that combines national tradition with modern artistic exploration, forming the foundation of Ukrainian graphic culture and retaining its significance within the contemporary artistic and design environment. The subject of the study is the representational capacity and adaptability of the Narbut letterform as an element of graphic design and as a medium for transmitting Ukrainian identity in contemporary sociocultural realities. The object of the study is the creative output of Heorhii Narbut. The study aims to examine the role of Heorhii Narbut in shaping Ukrainian national identity through the prism of his graphic legacy. The research objectives include outlining the artist's innovative artistic concepts and analysing the representational potential of the Narbut letterform within the contemporary Ukrainian sociocultural dimension. During the study, a significant body of sources was analyzed in strict adherence to a chronological framework, allowing for the reconstruction of the historical context in which Narbut's work developed, as well as the tracing of the dynamics and thematic content of publications across different historical periods. Publications by scholars from the first half of the 20th century, including émigré researchers working abroad (F. Ernst, M. Zerov, M. Burachek, I. Mozolevskiy, I. Krushelnytskyi, et al.), proved to be invaluable. Among contemporary studies, particular attention was given to the works of S. Bilokin, P. Biletskyi, M. Filevych, Ye. Hula, O. Kovalov, V. Krychevskiy, V. Mitchenko, V. Panchenko, M. Mudrak, and others. This systematic and chronologically structured approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of scholarly interpretations of Narbut's graphic legacy and allowed for an assessment of its significance for the development of modern Ukrainian culture and graphic arts. The methodological foundation of the study is an interdisciplinary approach, necessitated by the multidimensionality of the research object and the need to combine general scientific, historical-cultural, and art-historical methods. Specifically, the study employed analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, systemic, socio-cultural, and contextual analysis, visual-communicative analysis, historical, chronological, and analytical methods, comparative-historical methodology, semiotic and interpretive (hermeneutic) approaches, and the method of systematization. The integrated application of these methods enabled a deep and holistic comprehension of Narbut's creative legacy. Special attention is given to the continuity between historical heritage and contemporary practice: even under conditions of war, Ukrainian designers actively engage with Narbut's artistic principles, interpreting his typographic works as a source of inspiration for the creation of contemporary typefaces. Talented practitioners do not merely experiment with forms but consciously draw upon Ukrainian cultural roots and artistic traditions, which today constitute a powerful basis for the preservation of national identity. Therefore, the findings of the study can be applied in the practical work of contemporary designers and serve as a theoretical and methodological foundation for training specialists in Graphic Design in higher education institutions, fostering the integration of historical heritage into contemporary artistic and design practices.

Keywords: Heorhii Narbut, graphic design, Narbut letterform, contemporary typefaces, Ukrainian identity, national originality.

Introduction

In contemporary humanitarian discourse, intangible cultural heritage is regarded as one of the key factors in preserving collective memory, worldview orientations, and symbolic systems that shape the identity of both individual communities and humanity as a whole. It accumulates the experience of generations, consolidates value-based models, and ensures the continuity of

cultural development, through which nations preserve and reproduce their historical subjectivity in a globalised world. In this sense, the cultural heritage of a particular people possesses not only local but also universal significance, entering the global cultural space as a unique mode of interpreting reality.

At the same time, in situations of political conflict and military confrontation, intangible culture often becomes an object of deliberate manipulation, appropriation, or devaluation, transforming it into a field of ideological struggle and cultural resistance. Under such conditions, processes of social consolidation around core cultural values intensify, while traditional cultural assets acquire renewed resonance within the contemporary sociocultural space, functioning as sources of actualized meanings and new forms of interpretation.

In the context of the existential challenges facing Ukraine as a result of the full-scale war—waged by the Russian Federation not only as an armed conflict but also as a form of cultural and ideological aggression—particular importance is attached to the issue of national self-awareness. The understanding of cultural heritage as a bearer of collective experience and value-based meanings becomes a key prerequisite for preserving historical continuity, social cohesion, and the formation of a symbolic space of cultural resistance. Within this framework, art transcends the boundaries of a purely aesthetic domain, acquiring worldview-shaping and identity-forming significance.

The Russian aggression that began in 2014 and escalated into a full-scale war on 24 February 2022 has intensified the need for a deeper rethinking of Ukraine’s historical and cultural experience. Contemporary challenges demonstrate the necessity of engaging with national cultural heritage (*Butko et al., 2023; Butko et al., 2024*) as a source of societal resilience and recovery, as well as of reconsidering the foundations of national identity formation under conditions of prolonged external pressure (*Fedorenko, 2023; Sizova et al., 2024*). In this context, cultural memory emerges not only as a means of preserving the past, but also as a tool for interpreting the present and constructing images of the future.

Particularly significant scholarly and cultural value is attached to engaging with the creative heritage of Ukrainian artists of the early 20th century—a period marked by an active search for forms of national self-expression and the formation of an independent artistic language. The art of this era may be regarded as a kind of artistic manifesto in which tradition and aspirations for modernization, historical memory and visions of the future were brought together. At the same time, a substantial part of this artistic legacy remained outside comprehensive scholarly interpretation for an extended period, especially under the conditions of the totalitarian Soviet regime, as a result of political repression and ideological exclusion from the cultural canon.

Within this context, a special place is occupied by Heorhii Narbut—an outstanding Ukrainian graphic artist and illustrator, as well as one of the founders and the first rector of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts—who played a decisive role in shaping the symbolic visual language of the Ukrainian People’s Republic during the first third of the 20th century. His graphic legacy, deeply imbued with historical and ethno-cultural motifs, laid the foundations for the development of Ukrainian visual identity and national typography. The combination of profound rootedness in folk tradition with modern artistic thinking ensured the lasting relevance and influence of Narbut’s graphic works, which accounts for their active reinterpretation within contemporary design practices (*Fedorenko et al., 2025a; Fedorenko et al., 2025b*).

At the same time, attempts by the Russian Federation to appropriate Ukrainian cultural heritage continue to be observed, including the creative legacy of Heorhii Narbut. In public and professional discourse, he is frequently misrepresented as a “great Russian artist,” while his artistic achievements are presented outside their historical and national context (*Malichenko,*

2024). This situation underscores the urgent need for a scientifically grounded re-evaluation of his heritage.

All of the above determines the relevance of the study. The study aims to examine the role of Heorhii Narbut in the formation of Ukrainian national identity through an analysis of his graphic legacy. The research objectives include outlining the artist's innovative artistic ideas and analysing the representational potential of the Narbut letterform within the contemporary Ukrainian sociocultural dimension.

The subject of the study is the representational capacity and adaptability of the Narbut typeface as an element of graphic design and as a medium for transmitting Ukrainian identity in contemporary sociocultural realities.

The object of the study is the creative legacy of Heorhii Narbut.

The study aims to examine the role of Heorhii Narbut in shaping Ukrainian national identity through the prism of his graphic legacy.

The research objectives include outlining the artist's innovative artistic concepts and analysing the representational potential of the Narbut letterform within the contemporary Ukrainian sociocultural dimension.

The results of the study may be applied in the professional practice of contemporary designers and may also serve as a theoretical and methodological foundation for the training of specialists in Graphic Design in higher education institutions.

Methods

The methodological framework of the study is based on a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach, determined by the multidimensional nature of the research object and the necessity of integrating general scientific, historical-cultural, and specialized art-historical methods. This approach enables a holistic interpretation of Heorhii Narbut's graphic heritage as an artistic, cultural, and identity-forming phenomenon.

General scientific methods—including analysis and synthesis, as well as induction and deduction—were applied at the stages of selection, systematization, and interpretation of both theoretical and empirical material. Their application made it possible to identify the specific features of scholarly publications devoted to Narbut's oeuvre, to distinguish the corpus of international research, to document the ideological inertia and fragmentary character of interpretations during the Soviet period, and to trace the intensification of Ukrainian academic studies in contemporary historiography.

The method of systems analysis allowed Narbut's creative output to be examined as an integrated artistic and communicative system in which visual imagery, cultural-historical context, and national-symbolic components are interwoven. In combination with the method of synthesis, this approach facilitated the identification of internal relationships between graphic forms, typographic solutions, and the ideological narratives of the period.

The historical method was employed to analyse the artist's creative activity within the context of the sociocultural and political processes of the first third of the 20th century, particularly the First World War, the period of the Ukrainian People's Republic, and the formation of national cultural institutions. This made it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the factors shaping the Narbutian style and its ideological and semantic dimensions.

The method of contextual analysis was applied to investigate interconnections between the artistic forms of Narbut's graphic works and the sociocultural conditions of their creation and subsequent actualisation. This approach enabled an assessment of the extent to which historical, ideological, and communicative environments influenced the functioning of the authorial

typeface, as well as the identification of both processes of transformation and elements of stylistic continuity.

The application of chronological and analytical methods, together with the method of classification, facilitated the formation of a structured historiographical foundation for the study. This made it possible to trace the stages in the development of Heorhii Narbut's authorial typographic style, to determine the historical and cultural conditions of its evolution, and to delineate the chronological boundaries of the representational scope and adaptation of the Narbutian typeface as an element of graphic design and a medium for transmitting Ukrainian identity within the contemporary sociocultural space.

The method of sociocultural analysis was employed to examine the role of Narbut's graphic heritage in shaping contemporary perceptions of national identity, the symbolic capital of culture, and practices of actualizing historical heritage under conditions of social transformation, ideological challenges, and cultural confrontation.

The comparative-historical method made it possible to identify both common and distinctive features of artistic processes occurring in Ukraine and beyond its borders, to trace parallels between European modernist trends and national forms of artistic expression, and to define the specificity of the Ukrainian cultural context.

The method of systematisation was employed to organise heterogeneous empirical and theoretical material, including scholarly publications, visual samples of Heorhii Narbut's graphic heritage, and contemporary design projects that reference Narbutian stylistics. Systematisation was carried out according to thematic, stylistic, and functional criteria, which made it possible to identify stable typological features of the authorial typeface, trace transformations in its figurative and semantic content, and determine directions for its adaptation in contemporary graphic design. The application of this method ensured the internal coherence of the study and provided a foundation for further comparative and analytical examination.

The interpretive (hermeneutic) method was used to analyse the figurative and symbolic content of Heorhii Narbut's graphic and typographic solutions within a broader cultural and worldview context. This approach enabled the identification of multiple layers of meaning in his work as a carrier of national identification codes and elements of cultural memory.

Specialized art-historical methods occupied an important place in the research. In particular, formal and stylistic analysis was applied to examine the compositional, graphic, and technical characteristics of Narbut's typographic solutions, while the comparative method was used to determine their influence on contemporary graphic design and visual communication practices.

The semiotic method was employed to interpret the artist's graphic oeuvre as a sign-symbolic system integrating elements of Ukrainian Baroque, folk tradition, and modernist artistic thinking, thereby enabling the transmission of national meanings in visual form.

The method of visual-communicative analysis was used to examine the functioning of the Narbutian typeface as an instrument of visual communication capable of conveying national meanings within contemporary media and design environments. This method made it possible to assess the effectiveness of adapting historical graphic forms to current communicative tasks.

At the final stage of the study, the method of theoretical generalisation was applied to systematise the obtained results, formulate conclusions, and determine the extent to which the stated research objectives had been achieved.

All methods were carefully selected and adapted to the objectives of the study, ensuring the precision, objectivity, and scholarly validity of the research findings.

Literature Review

Scholarly discourse devoted to the artistic legacy of Heorhii Narbut long remained fragmented and uneven in its development. For decades—particularly during the Soviet period—the artist’s name was subject to ideological restrictions, which resulted in the limited representation of his heritage within Ukrainian cultural space and academic research. Only in the post-Soviet and contemporary periods has a gradual revival of scholarly interest in Narbut been observed, accompanied by the systematisation of approaches to the interpretation of his oeuvre.

In this context, the article by V. Prodaniuk is particularly indicative, as it offers a comprehensive analysis of the principal historiographical trajectories in the study of Narbut’s creative legacy, encompassing pre-revolutionary, Soviet, Ukrainian émigré, and contemporary domestic research traditions (*Prodaniuk, 2024*). The author emphasises that, alongside Mykhailo Boichuk and Vasyl Krychevskyi, Heorhii Narbut emerges as one of the founders of modern Ukrainian art, whose influence on the development of national graphic art shaped artistic processes over subsequent decades.

Among the earliest scholars to address the figure of Heorhii Narbut were F. Ernst (*Heorhii Narbut, 1926*), M. Burachek, M. Zerov, and S. Taranushenko (*Special issue..., 1926*). A particularly significant role in the early scholarly reception of the artist’s work was played by the journal *Bibliolobichni visti*, on whose pages’ materials devoted to Narbut’s life and artistic heritage were actively published throughout the 1920s.

In 1925, F. Ernst published the article “The Posthumous Exhibition of the Works of H.I. Narbut” (*Ernst, 1925*), followed the next year by the studies “Heorhii Narbut: Life and Work. Posthumous Exhibition of Works” and “Heorhii Narbut and the New Ukrainian Book” (*Special issue..., 1926*). The same periodical also published, in 1926, Yu. Mykhailiv’s “Fragments of Memories about H.I. Narbut” and P. Biletskyi’s “Memories of Narbut”.

An important source for reconstructing the artist’s biography and creative output is the memoir article by painter, educator, and actor M. Burachek, “Memories of H. I. Narbut,” published in 1927. This work ranks among the earliest publications to document little-known facts from Narbut’s life and to outline—at a time when his contribution was still insufficiently recognised—the scale of his significance for Ukrainian art (*Burachek, 1927*). In the same year, M. Zerov published the memoir “My Meetings with H. I. Narbut” in *Bibliolobichni visti* (*Zerov, 1927*), while art historian, architectural historian, and museum professional S. Taranushenko contributed the publication “A Recollection of Narbut” (*Taranushenko, 1927*).

Beyond the journal *Bibliolobichni visti*, other significant works devoted to the artist also appeared. In particular, in 1926 the periodical *Ukrainski visti* published an article by I. Mozolevskyi entitled “Posthumous Exhibition of the Works of Graphic Artist H. Narbut in Kyiv” (*Mozolevskyi, 1926*). Of considerable scholarly interest is also the study by S. Taranushenko, “Motifs of Old Ukrainian Art in Narbut’s Works,” in which the author analyses Heorhii Narbut’s graphic oeuvre through the prism of old Ukrainian artistic traditions and identifies historical prototypes of his compositional and figurative solutions (*Taranushenko, 2016*). A distinct milestone in the interpretation of the artist’s legacy is represented by the art-historical essay by I. Krushelnytskyi, published in 1930 (*Krushelnytskyi, 1930*).

With the establishment of Soviet power, which systematically restricted the possibilities for Ukrainian cultural self-identification, a tragic chapter emerged in the historiography of Heorhii Narbut’s life and work, associated with the destruction in 1933 of the so-called *Narbut Collection*. This memorial volume was prepared through the collective efforts of the artist’s colleagues and associates following the posthumous exhibitions held in Petrograd (1920) and Kyiv (1926), the

publication of memoirs in *Bibliolohichni visti*, and the establishment of a special editorial committee headed by F. Ernst. The collection included articles by leading scholars of Ukrainian art, among them F. Ernst, E. Gollerbakh, D. Mitrokhin, P. Neradovskyi, V. Sichynskyi, S. Taranushenko, S. Yaremych, etc.

Due to financial difficulties and severe ideological restrictions, the volume was printed only in 1933; however, the entire print run was destroyed directly at the printing house after a number of contributors were declared “politically unreliable”. Subsequently, most individuals involved in the project were subjected to repression, and the study of Heorhii Narbut’s creative legacy was effectively placed under an unofficial ban by the Soviet authorities.

As a rare exception, isolated publications appeared outside the USSR. In particular, in 1935 an article by V. Zonnenberg-Fedorovskyi entitled “Art on Ukrainian Postage Stamps (Narbut and Ukrainian Stamps)” was published in Austria (*Zonnenberg-Fedorovskyi, 1935*).

Thereafter, a significant portion of research devoted to Heorhii Narbut was produced in Ukrainian émigré and foreign editions. In 1943, V. Sichynskyi published a comprehensive overview of the artist’s creative legacy in the study *Yurii Narbut, 1886–1920. Kraków–Lviv* (*Sichynskyi, 1943*). In 1948, I. Vyhnanets released a memoir-style article on Narbut in Munich (*Vyhnanets, 1948*). Particular attention to the state-building dimension of the artist’s activity was paid by O. Ohloblin, who in 1951 published in the United States the article “Yurii Narbut’s Work on the Creation of the Ukrainian State Emblem and the State Seal (From the Archive of Yurii Narbut)” (*Ohloblin, 1951*). Personal recollections of the artist were also contributed by V. Bobriievych, published in New York in 1961 in the edition *Za synim okeanom* (*Beyond the Blue Ocean*) (*Bobriievych, 1961*).

Within the territory of the Soviet Union, studies devoted to Heorhii Narbut were virtually absent from the 1930s until the late 1950s. Only after a partial relaxation of censorship restrictions did the biographical study *An Outline of Life and Creative Work* by P. Biletskyi appear in 1958 (*Biletskyi, 1958*). Subsequently, the scholar published a series of works on Narbut’s life and artistic legacy and, during the 1960s–1980s, established himself as one of the leading researchers of the artist’s oeuvre not only in Soviet Ukraine but across the USSR more broadly.

In 1983, P. Biletskyi prepared for publication an album of works by the renowned graphic artist, issued by the Kyiv publishing house *Mystetstvo*. The publication consisted of two parts: a biographical essay and 88 reproductions of Heorhii Narbut’s works (*Biletskyi, 1983*). The album was printed in large circulation in Ukrainian, Russian, English, French, German, and Spanish. Within this edition, P. Biletskyi proposed interpreting Narbut as the “founder of Ukrainian Soviet graphic art” (*Biletskyi, 1983*).

At the same time, like most publications of the Soviet period, Biletskyi’s studies were significantly shaped by ideological directives and censorship constraints, resulting in an incomplete and distorted presentation of the artist’s biography and creative achievements. In particular, the publication *Heorhii Narbut* omits information on the artist’s graphic projects related to the state symbolism of the Ukrainian People’s Republic. The Kyiv period of his work is presented in an extremely condensed manner, with insufficient detail and evident ideological distortion of the historical context. Moreover, the period of 1917–1920—associated with Ukraine’s struggle for independence—is almost entirely bypassed, as are Narbut’s conscious efforts to affirm the Ukrainian right to national identity. As a result, this fundamentally important dimension of the artist’s legacy remained largely outside scholarly reflection.

During the same period, in the 1970s, Serhii Bilokin—another prominent researcher of the life and work of Heorhii Narbut—published a number of articles that nevertheless remained embedded within Soviet historiographical paradigms. In these works, the artist’s creative legacy

was interpreted through the ideological concept of the “fraternal unity” of Russian and Ukrainian cultures (*Bilokin, 1974*). In the 1980s and 1990s, the scholar continued his research into Narbut’s biography and artistic heritage (*Bilokin, 1982; Bilokin, 1983*). At the same time, historian I. Hyrych aptly noted that it was Serhii Bilokin who “truly introduced Heorhii Narbut into the scholarly context of his era” (*Hyrych, 2023*).

Of particular relevance to the present study is the popular-scholarly work “*The Chronicle of the Life and Work of Heorhii Narbut*” (*Bilokin, 2010*) by S. Bilokin, on which the author worked from 1965 until the mid-1980s with the support of S. Taranusenko, M. Trubetska, and A. Horska. This comprehensive study documents 404 dated biographical facts that represent the artist’s life and creative path; Narbut is defined by the author as “the first star of the Executed Renaissance—Heorhii Narbut” (*Bilokin, 2010*).

Following the publication of the fundamental works by P. Biletskyi and S. Bilokin in the mid-1980s, further study of Heorhii Narbut’s legacy in Ukraine was largely limited to isolated publications in scholarly and publicistic periodicals. These include, for example, research by V. Krychevskyi on the period of Narbut’s activity at the Ukrainian Academy of Arts (*Krychevskyi, 1997*); Y. Malaniuk’s study “*The Unique One: On the Graphic Art of Yurii Narbut*” (*Malaniuk, 2001*); S. Makhun’s article “*The Genius from Narbutivka—a Painter of Coats of Arms and Emblems*” (*Makhun, 2015*); V. Mitchenko’s work “*Stylistic Features of Heorhii Narbut’s New Alphabet*” (*Mitchenko, 2016*); N. Trifonova’s study “*Heorhii (Yurii) Narbut and His Role in the Development of Independent Ukraine*” (*Trifonova, 2016*); V. Panchenko’s article “*The Creator of Ukrainian Artistic Neo-Baroque*” (*Panchenko, 2015*); and M. Filevych’s research “*Heorhii Narbut’s ‘Ukrainian Alphabet’*” (*Filevych, 2018*). At the same time, until 2020 no monographic study had been published that would comprehensively examine the artist’s biography or creative achievements.

In the contemporary period, there has been a noticeable increase in scholarly interest in the artistic legacy of Heorhii Narbut. To mark the 100th anniversary of the artist’s death, the publishing house *Rodovid* released two fundamental works that significantly expanded the source base for Narbut studies: the collection “*Reconstruction of the ‘Narbut Collection’ Destroyed in 1933*”, edited by Serhii Bilokin (*Bilokin, 2020*), and the monograph “*The Imaginative World of Heorhii Narbut and the Making of a Ukrainian Brand*” by Myroslava Mudrak (*Mudrak, 2020*), published in Ukrainian, English, and French.

The collection edited by S. Bilokin constitutes a reconstruction of the memorial “*Narbut Collection*”, which was destroyed in 1933 as a result of ideological repression. The realisation of this project became possible due to preserved fragments of the original publication that had remained in the editor’s personal archive. The volume is supplemented with an introductory essay by S. Bilokin, memoirs of Narbut’s contemporaries (including Mykola Zerov and Vasyl Krychevskyi), fragments of the artist’s autobiography, his correspondence, as well as art-historical texts from later periods. Edited under the general supervision of A. Bilousova and B. Zavitii, the book contains over 300 illustrations and represents an important source for a comprehensive understanding of the artist’s creative legacy (*Bilokin, 2020*).

Myroslava Mudrak’s monograph “*The Imaginative World of Heorhii Narbut and the Making of a Ukrainian Brand*” proposes a conceptually new approach to interpreting Narbut’s oeuvre by examining it within the context of the formation of a Ukrainian cultural brand. The author argues that in his graphic works the artist succeeded in visualising centuries-old cultural traditions and historical codes that shaped the uniqueness of Ukrainian identity. By imbuing these images with modern, state-building meanings, Heorhii Narbut created a system of visual symbols that combined an orientation toward the Western European cultural sphere with a deeply rooted national artistic tradition (*Mudrak, 2020*).

In contemporary scholarly discourse, increasing attention is paid to the role of Heorhii Narbut in the formation of Ukraine's national brand, as well as to his contribution to the development of national graphic design and typographic systems. In particular, V. Mitchenko, in the studies “*Aesthetics of Ukrainian Handwritten Typeface*” (Mitchenko, 2007) and “*Stylistic Features of Heorhii Narbut's New Alphabet*” (Mitchenko, 2016), analyses the artist's typographic work as an integral authorial system and emphasises the uniqueness of Narbut's type design. V. Panchenko focuses on the analysis of Narbut's Alphabet, revealing its figurative-plastic and typographic characteristics (Panchenko, 2015). The graphic specificity of Heorhii Narbut's Alphabet is examined in detail by M. Filevych, who highlights the synthesis of decorativeness and constructiveness in the artist's visual language (Filevych, 2018).

Ya. Melnyk and Yu. Shtets explore the compositional and artistic features of Narbut's book graphics, as well as the potential for their adaptation within contemporary graphic design practices (Melnyk & Shtets, 2021). The significant contribution of Heorhii Narbut as an artist-reformer to the development of art education and graphic art in Ukraine is outlined by O. Fedoruk (Fedoruk, 2017). Within the framework of interpreting the artist's legacy as an integral component of contemporary cultural discourse, particular attention should be given to M. Chadiuk's publication “*The Power of a Nation in Revival*” (Chadiuk, 2018), as well as to the collective monograph by Ye. Hula, O. Kolisnyk, T. Kuhai, and O. Maznichenko, “*Heorhii Narbut as an Apologist of Contemporary Ukrainian Graphic Design*” (Hula et al., 2018).

A detailed analysis and systematisation of a substantial body of scholarly sources covering various stages of historiography—from studies of the first half of the 20th century to contemporary academic concepts—make it possible to form a comprehensive understanding of the degree to which the phenomenon of Heorhii Narbut, his creative achievements, and his artistic influence have been explored. The synthesis of contributions by both Ukrainian and international scholars demonstrates an evolution in approaches to interpreting the artist's graphic and typographic legacy, shifting from descriptive and biographical interpretations toward interdisciplinary cultural, design-oriented, and theory-driven studies.

Results

Innovative Ideas and Artistic Methods of Heorhii Narbut

The artistic legacy of Heorhii Narbut became a defining factor in the development of the Ukrainian graphic tradition of the 20th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, when book graphics was only beginning to take shape as an independent field, Narbut was effectively the first artist to undertake a consistent and purposeful reform of this sphere within the territory of pre-revolutionary Russia. Owing to his close attention to the technical aspects of printing, his works acquired exceptional significance, and the artist himself gained recognition as an innovator of the book arts (Ernst, 1926). O. Lahutenko notes that Narbut's creative output reflects a transition from the aesthetics of Art Nouveau to the typographic design of the 1920s (Lahutenko, 2012).

Ye. Hula and co-authors, noting that Heorhii Narbut was already during his lifetime justifiably recognised as one of the most outstanding European graphic artists, identify the principal factors that exerted a decisive influence on his artistic development, namely:

- ancient Ukrainian painting and graphic art of the 17th and 18th centuries;
- the heraldry of Ukrainian noble families, as well as the graphics of Ukrainian manuscripts and early printed books;

- the influential artistic association *Mir iskusstva* (World of Art), active at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (*Hula et al., 2018*).

The uniqueness of Narbut's artistic practice lies in the fact that his innovative ideas and distinctive artistic methods found realisation across a wide range of artistic genres and applied fields (*Fedorenko, 2025b*). His genre spectrum encompassed virtually all areas of graphic production demanded at the time, including book graphics, mural painting, silhouette cut-outs, coats of arms and heraldic design, postage stamps, banknotes, seals, the design of diplomas, certificates, and postcards, bookplates, playing cards, costume sketches, as well as covers and title pages of periodicals. This diversity of activity enabled H. Narbut not only to expand the boundaries of graphic art, but also to shape a recognisable aesthetic of the Ukrainian national style.

It is also important to note that Narbut generously shared his professional experience with his students. As memoirs and contemporaneous accounts indicate, he developed a personal pedagogical method for training young artists. The system of artistic education in Narbut's workshop was focused primarily on book graphics. He offered his students an educational path that closely mirrored his professional trajectory. Student work began with copying typefaces from Ukrainian early printed books of the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as book covers from the period of the French Renaissance (*Ernst, 1926*). Mastery of letterform design was regarded as the key to understanding the specificity of graphic language.

The next stage involved the design of book covers, which encouraged students to develop an understanding of the principles governing the architectonics of a closed graphic composition. Within cover design, priority was given not to illustrative narration but to compositional balance and structural restraint, linear rhythm, the articulation of dominant elements, and the subordination of secondary ones. The primary compositional task was to integrate letterforms, ornament, and imagery into a coherent whole. Work on each assignment required the study of artistic monuments, analysis of historical styles, and an understanding of the specific plastic language characteristic of a given period.

The design of book covers enabled students to grasp the quintessence of Narbut's understanding of graphic art. Heorhii Narbut possessed a remarkable ability to perceive the overall rhythm of a particular plastic style with precision and sought to transmit this sensitivity to his students. Young artists were thus able to master his drawing methods directly. In this way, training in the art of letterforms facilitated an understanding of graphic language, while cover design fostered a sense of composition and rhythm. Narbut instilled in his students an appreciation of the harmonious integration of letterforms, ornament, and imagery, as well as a commitment to stylistic accuracy in rendering the distinctive features of different historical periods. At the final stage of the course, Narbut worked alongside the students, allowing them to assimilate his approaches and techniques through direct practice (*Labutenko, 2012*).

A true cultural treasure and a key element of Narbut's distinctive visual art is the *Narbut letterform*. He worked on its development purposefully and with exceptional diligence during the final two years of his life—his Kyiv period. The typeface he created acquired distinctive features by combining elements of printed Ukrainian early modern fonts with characteristics of Ukrainian cursive scripts from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Narbut successfully resolved the complex challenge of unifying these diverse writing structures into a coherent and harmonious composition (*Bilorutseva, 2021*).

Contemporary graphic artist, calligrapher, type designer, and educator V. Mitchenko, analysing Narbut's innovative approaches in this field, notes that his art of lettering gravitates toward the aesthetics of Art Nouveau, with its characteristic decorative forms; the aesthetics of

Futurism, in which forms exhibit conditional dynamism; and the tendencies of Constructivism (Mitchenko, 2007; Mitchenko, 2016).

The renowned *Narbut letterform* became a foundational element in the development of Ukrainian typographic design and, in the words of V. Mitchenko, represents "...a distinctive formula of his visual art, which continues to live on in the contemporary visual environment of Ukraine." (Mitchenko, 2007)

In the course of his work on letterform covers, title pages, and the project of the Ukrainian alphabet, Heorhii Narbut developed a series of new compositional techniques that demonstrate the evolution of his approach to letterform and the principles of its organisation. The artist significantly expanded the range of modular typefaces, whose plastic properties served as the foundation for the creation of his original hand-drawn letterforms. Alongside the use of classical Empire-style typefaces, Narbut, according to F. Ernst, planned the development of a typeface in two variants—a lighter version with a similar design and a Baroque version intended for art publications. This systematic approach indicates the artist's gradual orientation toward a transition from individual hand-drawn inscriptions to the structured development of modular alphabets.

An analysis of Heorhii Narbut's graphic compositions demonstrates his exceptionally subtle perception of the conditional spatial plane of the paper sheet and his masterful use of the so-called third—"conditional"—dimension within two-dimensional graphics. These observations correspond to the reflections of P. Biletskyi, who noted the characteristic reduction of spatial depth illusion in Narbut's compositions.

A thorough analysis of Narbut's letterform specificity was conducted by V. Mitchenko. Examination of 14 hand-drawn letters created for the Ukrainian illustrated alphabet (Figure 1), as well as individual letters from the title of the journal *Nashe Mynule* (1918), allowed for the identification of the structural basis of this letterform system. This basis was classical Roman type, onto whose structural scheme the artist superimposed elements of Old Rus' manuscript writing of the 11th century. The proportions of the main strokes in both systems are 1:5, while the ratio of letter width to height is 4:5.

The connecting strokes in the newly created letterform vary between 0.1 and 0.3 of the width of the main stroke, bringing them closer to the proportions of uncial script. At the same time, unlike the traditional variable-width uncial, Narbut's letterform is monospaced, reflecting the artist's deliberate intention to modernise the classical Cyrillic tradition of the 11th to 13th centuries (Mitchenko, 2016).

The most innovative feature of this letterform is the use of obliquely elongated wedge-shaped cuts. Their prototypes can be identified as modernised vertical cuts of Ukrainian uncial scripts of the 11th to 13th centuries, as well as transformed cuts in late 14th-century uncial and in the new Ukrainian uncial of the 16th century. Through this reinterpretation, the artist transforms triangular vertical cuts into elongated oblique triangles, resulting in new conditional spatial and dynamic properties of the letters.

To explain this effect, it is appropriate to refer to the theory of V. Favorsky, who compared the principal groups of letterforms to abstract geometric shapes and determined their positions within a conditionally spatial layer of the paper. According to Favorsky, the triangle is perceived as penetrating the spatial depth of the sheet, whereas the rectangle of a vertical stem appears to lie on its surface. The interaction of these oppositely directed graphic forms endows the letter body with enhanced plasticity.

Similar reflections were expressed by O. Bohomazov, who in his treatise *Painting and Elements* observed that the triangular form actively moves toward the centre of the composition,

whereas the rectangular form tends to slow this movement (*Bobomazov, 1996*). The interaction of such multidirectional elements within the construction of a letter complicates its internal organisation, resulting in a form that appears spatially dynamic yet enclosed within the contours of its external outline.

To integrate individual letters into a coherent word composition, Narbut developed a complex system of fine horizontal dynamic notches that regulate the rhythm and direction of letter movement within a word. Another characteristic technique is the transformation of the terminals of broad vertical and inclined stems into triangular forms. In particular, in the inscription of the magazine *Nashe Mynule* (“Our Past”), the vertical stems of the letter И and the inclined stems of the letters Н, Л, М, and А acquire conditionally spatial properties precisely through the conversion of rectangular terminals into triangular ones, functionally corresponding to the role of large inclined notches in the Ukrainian alphabet typeface.

Alongside triangular notches, the alphabet project also incorporates large drop-shaped terminals for rounded and curved letter elements. For example, in the letter З, the inclined triangular notch is combined with a drop that completes the construction at the lower part of the sign. Similar elements can be hypothetically reconstructed in the letters Ж, Я, and V, which the artist did not have time to execute. Comparable techniques are also observed in Cyrillic manuscript monuments, notably in certain letters of the *Peresopnytsia Gospel*.

Another characteristic device is the placement of decorative dots and strokes on thin vertical and diagonal letter stems, as exemplified in the title of the journal *Nashe Mynule*. This technique, known from Cyrillic manuscripts of the 12th century, in Narbut’s work serves to further reduce the illusion of spatial depth of letter elements, ensuring the integrity of their conditionally spatial organisation.

Thus, the Narbut typeface emerges not merely as formal visual ornamentation, but as a coherent artistic and typographic system that retains its relevance in the contemporary visual environment of Ukraine. The key features of this letterform include a refined sense of the conditional spatiality of the pictorial plane; the modernisation of Ukrainian uncial scripts of the 11th to 13th centuries, with consideration of later transformations in the 14th and 16th centuries; the modification of broad strokes and letter terminals; the constructive interaction of graphic forms of varying shapes; and the use of decorative elements as a means of spatial–plastic organisation of letterforms.

The Representational and Adaptive Potential of Narbut’s Letterforms in Design Practices

Today in Ukraine, alongside the development of digital and typographic technologies, a clear trend can be observed toward the active revival of type creation. Contemporary graphic designers continue to experiment and to devise original solutions in the art of letterforms, often drawing upon historical models as sources of inspiration. In this context, Heorhii Narbut’s letterform art attracts particular attention, serving not only as a creative reference but also as a field for stylistic experimentation.

It should be noted that Narbut’s letterform legacy encompasses only a portion of the handwritten letters created as part of the original Ukrainian illustrated alphabet. The complete set of letters was not finalised during the artist’s lifetime. On the one hand, this produces a sense of incompleteness; on the other, it establishes a distinctive precedent for later artists and designers, who continue to develop contemporary typefaces based on Narbut’s unfinished letterform corpus.

The first attempt to develop a font based on Heorhii Narbut's work was undertaken by the Kyiv-based type designer Oleg Snarskyi in the 1970s. The task he set for himself seemed impossible without a complete alphabet. Accordingly, Snarskyi initially focused on supplementing the missing letters in Narbut's alphabet, which required close study of Narbut's stylistic approach, careful reconstruction of the underlying design logic, and detailed analysis of his works. The designer's meticulous efforts culminated in the creation of a font executed on the basis of Narbut's letterform achievements (*Dudnyk, 2014*) (*Figure 2*). Among Snarskyi's other fonts, particular attention is drawn to "Decorative Narrow Ukrainian, after H. Narbut" (*Figure 3*).

The next stage in the evolution of Narbut-inspired letterforms was associated with the type designer Hennadii Zarechnyuk, who in 2001 introduced the typeface *NarbutAbetka*, based on the *Ukrainian Alphabet* and incorporating the work of O. Snarskyi (*Figure 4*). Around the same period, in the 2000s, Zarechnyuk released another typeface, *NarbutClassic* (*Figure 5*).

In 2014, the Ukrainian typeface *Kalyna* (*Figure 6*), inspired by the works of Heorhii Narbut, was created by the Lviv-based design studio 2D Typo.

The release of the typeface *Narbutorum* sparked lively discussion within the professional community. Renowned type designer Dmytro Rastvortsev presented this project in 2014 at the international calligraphy and typography festival *Ruthenia* (*Rastvortsev, n.d.*). That same year, the work was showcased at the Behance Portfolio Review meeting, which brought together designers from across Ukraine. The typeface attracted significant professional attention due to its balanced integration of Narbut's original ideas with contemporary requirements of graphic design. As the designer noted, his primary goal was to preserve the distinctive stylistic features of Narbut's letterforms to the greatest extent possible while adapting them for practical use in the present day (*Dudnyk, 2014*) (*Figure 7*).

The *Narbutorum* typeface possesses a number of distinctive features that differentiate it from other designs, including:

- multiple variants of the same letters, enabling combinations according to a defined logic and thereby imparting a recognisable style and expressiveness to the text;
- the use of historical alternative forms characteristic of Narbut's authorial style, such as the small yus in place of "Я," the sigma in place of "С," as well as variant forms of the letters "М," "N," and "И," which enhance authenticity and tonal richness;
- the preservation of characteristic ligatures, underscoring national stylistic traits inherent in Narbut's graphic heritage.

Today, official websites offer a wide selection of typefaces available for free download. For example, the UkrFonts.com platform provides numerous Ukrainian typefaces, including those that explicitly foreground national identity (*Trifonova, 2016; Ukrainian typefaces, n.d.*) (*Figure 8*).

In addition, fonts are distributed through online marketplaces such as MyFonts. As early as 2014, this platform featured the Ukrainian typeface *Kalyna* immediately after its creation (*Kalyna, n.d.*) (*Figure 9*).

The Narbut typeface remains relevant and is widely used in Ukraine, particularly in the design of official government documents (*Trifonova, 2016*). The proprietary typeface *Narbut* has also gained popularity among graphic designers worldwide. Its variations are available on the Rentafont platform (*Narbut typefaces, n.d.*) (*Figure 10*). This platform features the work of contemporary graphic artists. Notably, in the collections "Ukrainian Fonts" and "Fonts with a Ukrainian Character," four typefaces by Homenko stand out (*Figure 11*).

The *Homenko* typeface, created in 1965 by Vasyl Homenko (1912–1984), reproduces Narbut’s tradition of asymmetric serifs and for a long time remained the only typeface with a distinctly Ukrainian stylistic profile. In 2010, Hennadii Zarechnyuk and Viktor Kharyk developed a typeface inspired by Homenko’s design, which became the basis for subsequent refinements. In 2020, it was revised and modernised by K. Holovchenko.

The contemporary digital version developed by Zarechnyuk was expanded into a full type family that meets modern typographic requirements. This typeface is particularly suitable for setting text in small sizes due to its high legibility, while its expressive style also allows for effective use in display and decorative compositions.

Narbut-inspired typography continues to function as an important element of the visual culture of contemporary Ukraine. Kyiv-based designer Bohdan Hdal, drawing on the works of H. Narbut and V. Krychevskyi, created a typeface for the renamed metro station “Square of Ukrainian Heroes,” *Zvirynetska* (Figure 12). The aim was not only to update the visual style of the former name, which had Stalinist origins, but also to convey the theme of Ukrainian heroism. Hdal selected the Cossack cross as the principal symbol, since it appears in the coats of arms of Ukraine’s law enforcement agencies and administrative units and also has deep historical roots (Lanovets, 2025). The letters “N” and “U” became focal points, with the former echoing Narbut’s characteristic design through an extended “leg”.

Thus, Narbut’s distinctive letterforms are more in demand than ever among contemporary Ukrainian graphic designers. New typefaces continue to be developed on their basis, enhancing the visual expressiveness of textual material and enriching the cultural space with a recognisable national character. They not only function as a tool of visual communication but also contribute to the preservation and international promotion of Ukrainian identity.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Heorhii Narbut’s graphic and letterform legacy continues to function as an active cultural resource within contemporary Ukrainian design practice rather than as a purely historical phenomenon. The analysis confirms that Narbut’s letterforms are not merely preserved or replicated, but are continuously reinterpreted, adapted, and transformed in response to current sociocultural and technological conditions. This process reveals a dynamic continuity between historical graphic traditions and contemporary visual communication.

At the same time, the study highlights a fundamental problem: the absence of a clearly articulated methodological framework for working with incomplete or artistically driven letterform systems in modern typographic practice. Narbut’s original alphabet was never finalised as a complete typeface, which raises questions concerning the boundaries between faithful reconstruction, creative interpretation, and authorial intervention by contemporary designers. This issue becomes particularly significant in the context of digital typography, where functional completeness and technical adaptability often come into tension with the preservation of historical stylistic integrity.

Another important aspect concerns the representational function of Narbut’s letterforms. Their frequent use in state symbolism, cultural institutions, and identity-oriented design projects indicates a strong and stable association with Ukrainian national identity. However, this also entails the risk of stylistic canonisation, whereby Narbut-inspired forms may become fixed visual markers rather than evolving design instruments. The balance between cultural representation and creative flexibility therefore remains an open problem for both designers and researchers.

Furthermore, the adaptive potential of Narbut's letterforms in contemporary design practice reveals both opportunities and limitations. While modern designers successfully integrate these forms into diverse media—ranging from digital typefaces to public visual environments—the degree to which such adaptations preserve semantic depth and historical awareness varies considerably. This raises the question of whether contemporary reinterpretations contribute to the meaningful continuation of Narbut's artistic principles or function primarily as stylistic quotations detached from their original cultural context.

In this regard, further research may address several key questions:

- How can the adaptation of historical letterforms be methodologically justified within contemporary design practice?
- Where does the boundary lie between reinterpretation and distortion of an artist's original visual language?
- To what extent can Narbut's letterforms remain adaptable without losing their cultural specificity?
- How does the global circulation of Narbut-inspired designs influence perceptions of Ukrainian graphic identity in an international context?

Addressing these questions may contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of historical graphic heritage in contemporary visual culture and support the development of more reflective and responsible design practices that are rooted in national tradition while remaining open to innovation.

Conclusion

The study of the graphic creative legacy of the Ukrainian artist, graphic designer, and public figure Heorhii Narbut within the contemporary sociocultural dimension has demonstrated the multifaceted nature and uniqueness of his artistic output. Particular attention has been paid to the development of his distinctive authorial letterform style, which not only attests to the artist's high level of professional mastery and retains relevance for contemporary graphic designers, but also represents an unprecedented synthesis of ethnic and cultural traditions formed over a long historical period in the development of the Ukrainian people.

From a worldview perspective, a defining feature of Narbut's approach to the realisation of creative ideas in graphic art lies in his aspiration to preserve, reconstruct, and represent value systems shaped over centuries within global artistic practices, while simultaneously integrating them with the cultural heritage of the Ukrainian people and his own subjective accents, interpretations, and reinterpretations of forms and meanings. This approach contributed to the formation of new models of identification within the sphere of graphic perception.

An objective and comprehensive examination of the stated topic became possible through a systematic analysis of the source base. It was established that sources reflecting Narbut's creative path, achievements, and authorial vision can be reasonably classified into four main groups, which together illustrate the dynamics of historiographical development.

The first group consists of works from the first third of the 20th century produced by scholars who were contemporaries of Narbut and directly observed or documented his artistic activity. These sources contain extensive biographical descriptions, factual material, quotations, fragments of correspondence, sketches, and other primary evidence, enabling a detailed and well-grounded analysis of the artist's work.

The second group is formed by publications created by Ukrainian émigré scholars who, as a result of political repression under the Soviet regime, were compelled to work abroad under relatively free intellectual conditions.

The third group includes studies produced within the USSR. This period was not homogeneous: while from the 1930s to the late 1950s research on Heorhii Narbut was virtually absent, from 1958 onward—amid a partial easing of the state system—biographical works devoted to his life and artistic activity began to appear. At the same time, almost all publications of this period bear the imprint of the totalitarian regime, as the material was presented through ideologically conditioned narratives, characteristic distortions of political discourse, or through the omission or deliberate disregard of objective facts.

The fourth group comprises contemporary scholarly studies that emerged after the restoration of Ukraine's independence in 1991. A particularly noticeable intensification of interest in Narbut's work has occurred over the past decade, during which Ukrainian researchers have systematically examined diverse aspects of his artistic legacy—from graphic design and letterform systems to the historical and cultural significance of his oeuvre.

Overall, this chronologically and methodologically structured approach provides a foundation not only for reconstructing the historical context of Heorhii Narbut's artistic activity, but also for forming a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of scholarly interpretations of his creative legacy and for determining its significance for contemporary Ukrainian culture and the development of graphic art.

The aim of the article was to investigate the role of Heorhii Narbut in shaping Ukrainian national identity through the prism of his graphic legacy. The research objectives—namely, outlining the artist's innovative artistic ideas and analysing the representativeness of the Narbut letterform within the contemporary Ukrainian sociocultural dimension—were achieved through the application of a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach. This approach was determined by the multidimensional nature of the object of analysis and the necessity of integrating general scientific, historical-cultural, and specialised art-historical methods, which ensured a holistic interpretation of the artist's creative legacy in the context of both its historical evolution and contemporary relevance.

The study established that the genre spectrum of Heorhii Narbut's graphic work encompassed virtually all key areas of graphic practice of the early 20th century, including book and magazine graphics, mural painting, silhouette compositions, heraldry and coat-of-arms design, the design of postage stamps, banknotes, seals, diplomas, certificates, and postcards, ex libris, playing cards, costume sketches, as well as the design of covers and title pages for periodicals. A special place within this multidirectional creative activity is occupied by the formation of his distinctive authorial letterform style—now known as the Narbut letterform—which has become one of the most expressive components of his artistic legacy.

It was demonstrated that the formation of this letterform style was decisively influenced by Old Ukrainian painting and graphic art of the 17th and 18th centuries, the traditions of Ukrainian family heraldry, the artistic language of manuscript and early printed books, as well as the aesthetic principles of the *Mir Iskusstva* movement, which was influential at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The organic synthesis of these sources with Narbut's individual artistic vision enabled him to create an original typographic system that combined historical continuity with the modernist aspirations of his time.

In the contemporary context of the development of digital and typographic technologies in Ukraine, there is a noticeable intensification of processes related to the creation of new typefaces and the reinterpretation of historical typographic models. Contemporary graphic

designers increasingly turn to national visual heritage as a source of conceptual inspiration and stylistic solutions. In this sense, Heorhii Narbut's letterform art emerges not only as a historical phenomenon, but also as a relevant creative resource that offers broad possibilities for experimentation and interpretation in contemporary design.

It is substantiated that the Narbut letterform functions today not merely as a formal visual attribute, but as a coherent artistic and typographic system capable of organic integration into Ukraine's contemporary visual environment. Its key characteristics include a refined sense of the conditional spatiality of the pictorial plane; a modernised reinterpretation of Ukrainian uncial scripts of the 11th to 13th centuries, taking into account their transformations during the 14th to 16th centuries; the variability of broad strokes and letter terminals; the constructive interaction of graphic masses of different shapes; and the active use of decorative elements as a means of spatial and plastic organisation of letterform structure.

The adaptability of this typographic system ensures its effective application in contemporary graphic projects, provided that historical authenticity is preserved and contemporary design requirements are met. In this context, the work of Ukrainian graphic designers who engage with Heorhii Narbut's legacy contributes to the affirmation of national visual identity and the promotion of the Ukrainian cultural brand at the international level—an objective that acquires particular significance in the face of current sociopolitical challenges.

The experience of Heorhii Narbut convincingly demonstrates that design transcends purely form-making activity, functioning as a carrier of cultural memory and a tool for shaping value orientations. Through visual imagery and typographic solutions, design is capable of influencing modes of perceiving history, culture, and national identity, thereby bridging modernity and tradition and reactivating the heritage of the past within the conditions of the present.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix



Figure 1. Letters designed by H. Narbut for the Ukrainian Illustrated Alphabet



Figure 2. Typeface based on H. Narbut's Ukrainian Alphabet. O. Snarskyi, 1979



Figure 3. Typeface Decorative Ukrainian Narrow, inspired by the works of H. Narbut. O. Snarskyi, 1979

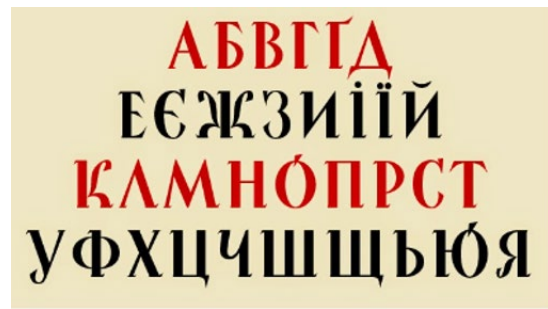


Figure 4. Typeface NarbutAbetka, H. Zarechniuk, 2001

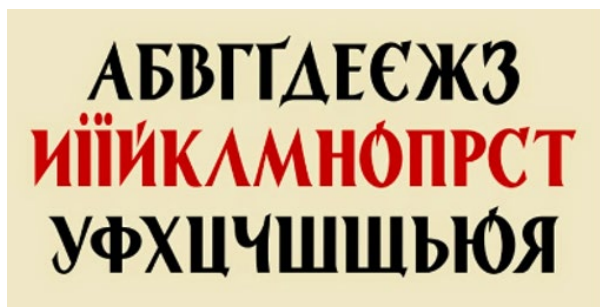


Figure 5. Typeface NarbutClassic, H. Zarechniuk, 2000s



Figure 6. Typeface Kalyna, L. Turetskyi, A. Aleksandrova, 2014



Figure 7. Typeface Narbutorum. D. Rastvortsev, 2014

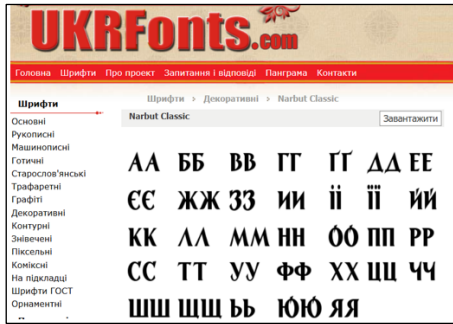


Figure 8. Typeface NarbutClassic by H. Zarechniuk (Ukrfonts.com platform)

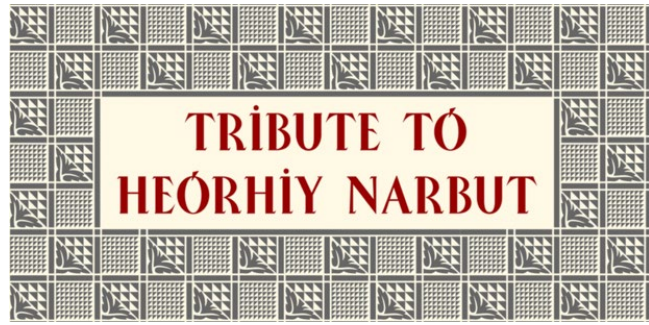


Figure 9. Typeface Kalyna by O. Aleksandrova and L. Turetskyi



Figure 10. Typefaces Narbut (Rentafont platform)



Figure 11. Homenko typefaces (Rentafont platform), by H. Zarechniuk, V. Kharyk, and K. Holovchenko

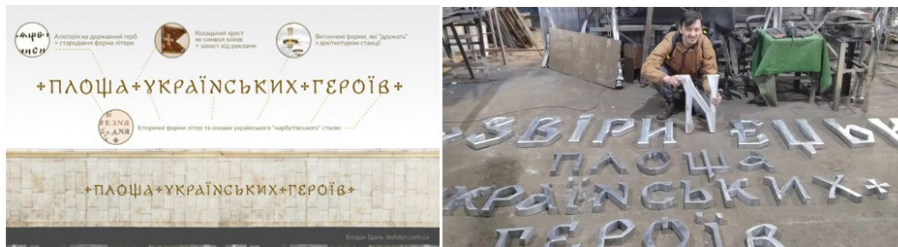


Figure 12. General view of the Square of Ukrainian Heroes metro station and typographic signage for the stations Square of Ukrainian Heroes and Zvirynetska. Typeface by Bohdan Hdal

The Problem of Lustration in Polish Cinema ^[10]

Abstract:

The relevance of this study is determined by the enduring impact of lustration on collective memory and cultural self-reflection in post-communist Poland. Despite the formal completion of key legislative stages, lustration continues to function as a source of moral, psychological, and symbolic tension within Polish society, which is actively articulated through national cinema. The research problem lies in the insufficient scholarly attention paid to the representation of lustration in Polish feature cinema as an autonomous cultural discourse. While lustration has been extensively examined from legal, political, and historical perspectives, its cinematic interpretation as a medium of meaning-making and trauma processing remains underexplored. The novelty of the study consists in its interdisciplinary approach, which conceptualises lustration not merely as an institutional mechanism but as a culturally mediated process articulated through cinematic narratives. The article introduces a conceptual analysis of key cinematic constructs—*teczki* (files), *klamstwo* (lie), *zdrada* (betrayal), and the figure of the “evil UB officer but a good cop”—and traces their diachronic development in Polish films from the early 1990s to the mid-2020s. The subject of the study is the cinematic discourse on lustration in Polish feature films. The object of the study is Polish feature cinema produced after 1989 that directly or indirectly addresses the problem of lustration and the legacy of the communist security services. The study aims to identify and analyse the key conceptual frameworks through which the processes of lustration are represented and interpreted in Polish feature cinema. The study employs a combination of general scientific methods and specialised cultural-analytical approaches, including discourse analysis, narrative and semiotic analysis, comparative and historical-cultural methods, and the concept of cultural trauma. The study refers to the works of scholars in the fields of transitional justice, memory studies, and post-communist transformation, including Roman David, Lavinia Stan, Michael Nalepa, Cynthia Horne, Natalia Letki, Piotr Grzelak, Jan Woleński, and Nataliya Minyenkova. The article analyses a corpus of Polish feature films produced after 1989 and demonstrates that cinema constructs a distinct cultural language for engaging with lustration, shifting attention from legal procedures to moral ambiguity, personal responsibility, and collective trauma. The findings reveal the stability of key cinematic concepts across different historical periods and highlight cinema’s role in shaping reflective rather than punitive attitudes towards the communist past. The study concludes that Polish feature cinema functions as a significant space for the cultural interpretation of lustration, contributing to ongoing processes of memory formation and ethical reflection in post-communist society.

Keywords: lustration, Polish cinema, collective memory, cultural trauma, transitional justice, post-communist society, cinematic discourse, moral ambiguity, communist past.

Introduction

Poland belongs to the group of countries in which the process of lustration assumed a specific and protracted character. As a result of so-called “wild lustration”, governments and individual politicians brought their political careers to an end, while not only professional careers but also personal lives were destroyed. This tragic experience of purging state power and society of the legacy of the totalitarian past became not merely a political instrument but also a collective trauma of Polish society. National cinema did not remain indifferent to these processes: various aspects of lustration became one of the popular themes of Polish feature films. The study of the problem of lustration through the prism of cinema appears to us to be relevant and compelling for the following reasons: first, cinema influences collective memory and may serve as a tool for working through traumatic experience; second, without processes of transformation it is impossible to understand contemporary Polish identity and the national character of Polish society.

The scholarly corpus on lustration is sufficiently diverse and contentious, and many questions still lack definitive answers. The works of Roman David, Adam Czarnota, Lavinia Stan, Paweł Żaczek, Jan Holiński, Piotr Błażek, and other scholars are devoted to various aspects of lustration practices in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in particular their role, place, and consequences in processes of democratic transformation. Issues of lustration have also been examined by Polish authors (Agnieszka Opalińska, Natalia Letki, Piotr Grzelak, Jan Woleński, Paweł Gontarczyk, Sławomir Cenckiewicz) and Ukrainian scholars (Stanislav Shevchuk, Valerii Kravchuk, Iryna Orlovska, Nataliia Minenkova). At the same time, in our view, the theme of lustration in Polish cinema remains insufficiently explored, although certain aspects—most notably representations of the special services in Polish cinematography—have been studied by Natasha Kocharovska-Ruzhitska and Jacek Nowakowski. The emergence of new films, as well as the disclosure of previously unknown facts, creates additional opportunities for research. Accordingly, the aim of this article is to outline the specific features of the representation of lustration processes in Polish cinema, in particular to identify the key concepts through which this problem has been articulated in Polish feature films.

The novelty of the present study lies in its interdisciplinary focus on lustration not as a solely legal, political, or historical phenomenon, but as a culturally mediated process articulated through Polish feature cinema. While lustration has been extensively examined within the frameworks of transitional justice, constitutional law, and post-communist political transformation, its cinematic representation has remained marginal in scholarly discourse. Existing studies have tended either to analyse institutional mechanisms of lustration or to approach cinema as a secondary illustrative source, rather than as an autonomous discursive field shaping collective memory.

This article introduces a conceptual shift by treating Polish cinema as an independent analytical lens through which the social, ethical, and psychological dimensions of lustration are negotiated. The research identifies cinema not merely as a reflection of political processes, but as an active medium that produces meanings, symbols, and moral evaluations of the communist past. By isolating and systematising key cinematic concepts—*teczki* (files), *klamstwo* (lie), *zdrada* (betrayal), and the figure of the “evil UB officer but a good cop”—the study demonstrates how lustration is translated into a language of cultural trauma, personal responsibility, and moral ambiguity.

Furthermore, the novelty of the study consists in tracing the diachronic development of these concepts across Polish feature films produced from the early 1990s to the mid-2020s. This temporal perspective makes it possible to observe how cinematic narratives evolve alongside changes in legal frameworks, public debates, and memory politics, thereby revealing cinema as a dynamic space of ongoing reinterpretation rather than a fixed repository of post-communist experience.

The subject of the study is the cinematic discourse on lustration in Polish feature films, understood as a system of narrative strategies, symbolic figures, and key concepts through which the experience of lustration is interpreted, evaluated, and emotionally framed within Polish society.

The object of the study is Polish feature cinema produced after 1989 that directly or indirectly addresses the problem of lustration, including films that depict the activities of the communist security services, the disclosure of archival materials, the moral consequences of collaboration, and the social repercussions of revealing the past.

The study aims to identify and analyse the key conceptual frameworks through which the processes of lustration are represented and interpreted in Polish feature cinema.

- According to the purpose, the study pursues the following research objectives:
- outline the specific features of the Polish model of lustration that determine its cinematic representation;
 - identify the corpus of Polish feature films that construct narratives around lustration and related themes;
 - analyse the concept of *teczki* (files) as a symbol of power, blackmail, and “materialised past” in Polish cinema;
 - examine the figure of the “evil UB officer but a good cop” as a mechanism for working through the negative legacy of the communist system;
 - explore the role of *kłamstwo* (lie) as a structural and existential condition shaping cinematic narratives of lustration;
 - interpret *zdrada* (betrayal) as a forced and traumatising experience produced by systemic coercion.

The results of this study are addressed primarily to scholars and researchers in the fields of cultural studies, film studies, memory studies, and post-communist transformation, particularly those interested in the cultural dimensions of transitional justice and the politics of memory in Central and Eastern Europe.

At the same time, the article may be of interest to historians, legal scholars, and political scientists who examine lustration from institutional or normative perspectives, as it offers an alternative interpretative framework that foregrounds cultural representation and collective experience. Finally, the findings may also be relevant to film professionals and educators seeking to understand the social functions of cinema in processing historical trauma and shaping post-authoritarian identities.

Methods

The methodological framework of this study is based on a combination of general scientific and specialised cultural-analytical methods aimed at examining the representation of lustration in Polish feature cinema. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the research problem, lustration is approached simultaneously as a historical, legal, political, and cultural phenomenon articulated through cinematic discourse. The methodological design allows for the analysis of both the structural features of film narratives and the symbolic mechanisms through which collective memory and cultural trauma are constructed. Particular emphasis is placed on methods that make it possible to interpret cinema as an active medium of meaning-making rather than as a passive reflection of social processes. The selected methods ensure analytical consistency between the theoretical premises of the study and the empirical material examined in the Results section.

The method of analysis is employed to decompose the complex phenomenon of lustration into its constituent semantic, narrative, and symbolic elements as they appear in Polish feature cinema. Lustration is treated not as a monolithic process, but as a multifaceted cultural construct articulated through characters, plot structures, visual motifs, and key concepts. In this study, analytical procedures are applied to individual films, scenes, dialogues, and character types in order to identify recurring representations of power, guilt, responsibility, and trauma. Special attention is given to the ways in which abstract legal and political processes are translated into cinematic images and narrative conflicts. Through analysis, the research isolates core conceptual units such as *teczki* (files), *kłamstwo* (lie), and *zdrada* (betrayal). This method provides the foundation for further interpretative and comparative work.

The method of synthesis is used to integrate the results of the analytical examination into a coherent interpretative framework. After identifying individual narrative motifs and symbolic structures in separate films, the study synthesises these elements to reconstruct the overall cinematic discourse on lustration. Synthesis enables the transition from fragmented filmic observations to generalised conclusions about how Polish cinema conceptualises and evaluates the communist past. In this research, the method allows for the articulation of shared patterns across films produced in different decades and under different political conditions. It also facilitates the construction of a unified model of cinematic representation that connects legal, moral, and emotional dimensions of lustration. As a result, lustration emerges as a culturally mediated process rather than a purely institutional one.

The inductive method is applied to derive general conclusions from the examination of specific cinematic cases. The study analyses a selected corpus of Polish feature films produced after 1989 and uses the observations drawn from these individual works to formulate broader interpretative claims. Through induction, recurrent narrative strategies and conceptual patterns are identified across different films, directors, and historical contexts. This approach makes it possible to establish typological features of the cinematic discourse on lustration without imposing predetermined theoretical schemes. Induction is particularly important for revealing how similar meanings are reproduced through diverse plots and characters. The method ensures that the conclusions of the study are grounded in concrete empirical material.

The deductive method is used to apply general theoretical propositions from the fields of transitional justice, memory studies, and cultural trauma theory to the analysis of Polish cinema. Established scholarly concepts concerning lustration, collective memory, and post-authoritarian transformation serve as interpretative frameworks for reading specific film narratives. Deduction allows the study to test how abstract theoretical models function when confronted with concrete cultural representations. In this research, deductive reasoning is employed to interpret cinematic figures such as the former UB officer or the informant as embodiments of broader social and ethical dilemmas. The method helps to situate film analysis within a wider academic discourse. As a result, cinematic texts are integrated into interdisciplinary debates on post-communist transformation.

The systemic approach is applied to examine Polish cinema as part of a broader socio-political and cultural system. Lustration is analysed not in isolation, but in connection with legal reforms, political debates, institutional changes, and memory politics in post-communist Poland. This method makes it possible to understand cinema as an active participant in the process of negotiating the past, rather than as a passive reflection of external events. In the study, films are contextualised within specific historical moments, such as amendments to lustration laws or public controversies surrounding archives and de-ubecisation. The systemic approach highlights the interdependence between cinematic narratives and societal transformations. It thus reinforces the interdisciplinary character of the research.

The structural-logical method is used to organise the internal architecture of the research and to ensure consistency between its theoretical premises, analytical sections, and conclusions. This method guides the sequential presentation of the material, moving from historical and legal context to cinematic analysis and conceptual interpretation. Within the study, it supports the clear differentiation between sections devoted to institutional aspects of lustration and those focused on its cultural representation. The structural-logical method also underpins the coherent development of arguments within the Results section. By maintaining logical continuity, the research avoids fragmentation and redundancy. This method contributes to the overall clarity and scholarly rigour of the article.

The method of generalisation is employed to formulate broader conclusions based on recurring patterns identified in the analysed films. After examining individual cases and narrative elements, the study abstracts common features that characterise the cinematic treatment of lustration in Poland. Generalisation allows the research to move beyond the level of isolated film analysis and to propose interpretative categories applicable to Polish cinema as a whole. In this study, it is used to conceptualise lustration as a cultural trauma and a moral dilemma rather than solely a political mechanism. The method also supports the identification of stable cinematic archetypes and symbolic structures. As a result, the findings gain explanatory value beyond the specific corpus of films.

The method of abstraction is applied to isolate key conceptual categories from their concrete cinematic embodiments. In the research, concepts such as *teczka*, *klamstwo*, *zdrada*, and the archetype of the “evil UB officer but a good cop” are treated as analytical constructs rather than as mere plot devices. Abstraction enables the study to detach these concepts from individual narratives and to examine their broader symbolic and cultural significance. This method is essential for identifying the underlying logic of cinematic representations of lustration. It allows the research to focus on meaning-making processes rather than on descriptive detail alone. Through abstraction, the study formulates a conceptual map of the cinematic discourse on lustration.

Discourse analysis is employed to examine Polish feature cinema as a form of public and cultural discourse through which lustration is articulated, legitimised, or problematised. This method allows the study to move beyond individual films and to analyse recurring patterns of meaning production, narrative framing, and evaluative language. In the research, cinematic discourse is understood as a space where legal, moral, and emotional interpretations of the communist past intersect. Discourse analysis is applied to dialogues, narrative conflicts, and character positioning in order to identify dominant and marginalised interpretations of lustration. Particular attention is paid to how categories such as guilt, responsibility, and victimhood are constructed. This method enables the identification of cinema as an active participant in memory politics.

Cultural analysis is used to reveal the system of values, symbols, and collective representations embedded in cinematic narratives about lustration. The method treats films as cultural texts that encode social attitudes toward the communist past and its moral consequences. In this study, cultural analysis helps to uncover how Polish cinema negotiates notions of justice, betrayal, honour, and professional ethics. It also allows for the interpretation of cinematic images as expressions of broader cultural anxieties and tensions characteristic of post-communist society. Through this method, lustration is analysed not merely as a political procedure but as a culturally charged experience. The approach situates film narratives within Polish cultural traditions and memory frameworks.

Film narrative analysis is applied to examine the structure of cinematic storytelling in films addressing lustration. This method focuses on plot construction, character development, narrative perspective, and conflict resolution. In the study, narrative analysis is used to identify typical *сюжетные модели*, such as the revelation of a hidden past, moral testing of protagonists, and the absence of a reconciliatory ending. It allows for the examination of how suspense, tragedy, and moral ambiguity are produced through narrative means. By analysing narrative strategies, the research demonstrates how lustration is framed as an unresolved and traumatic process. This method highlights the role of storytelling in shaping viewers’ emotional and ethical responses.

Semiotic analysis is employed to interpret the system of signs and symbols through which lustration is visually and narratively represented. The method focuses on recurring objects, images, and metaphors, such as files, archives, uniforms, closed spaces, and acts of destruction. In this research, semiotic analysis is used to decode the symbolic meanings of *teczki* as embodiments of power, blackmail, and “materialised past”. It also enables the interpretation of visual oppositions, such as visibility versus concealment and speech versus silence. Through semiotic analysis, cinematic elements are read as carriers of culturally shared meanings. This method deepens the understanding of how abstract historical processes are transformed into visual language.

The historical-cultural method is applied to situate cinematic representations of lustration within specific historical and socio-political contexts. This approach allows the study to correlate film narratives with particular stages of the lustration process in Poland, including legislative changes and public debates. In the research, films are analysed in relation to the periods in which they were produced, revealing shifts in interpretative emphasis over time. The method helps to explain why certain themes intensify or recede in different decades. It also highlights the interaction between cinema and evolving memory politics. As a result, cinematic discourse is understood as historically contingent rather than static.

The comparative method is used to identify similarities and differences in the representation of lustration across various Polish feature films. This approach enables the study to compare narrative strategies, character archetypes, and conceptual emphases in films produced by different directors and in different historical moments. In the research, comparison reveals stable motifs, such as the power of files or the figure of the compromised professional, alongside variations in moral evaluation. The method supports the identification of typological patterns within Polish cinema. It also allows for the avoidance of overgeneralisation based on a single film. Through comparison, the study establishes the internal diversity of the cinematic discourse.

The method of collective memory analysis is applied to examine how Polish cinema participates in the construction and transmission of shared interpretations of the communist past. Films are treated as media through which collective memories are shaped, contested, and emotionally processed. In this study, the method is used to analyse how traumatic experiences of collaboration, surveillance, and disclosure are transformed into cultural narratives. It also reveals the role of cinema in stabilising or challenging dominant memory frameworks. Collective memory analysis highlights the tension between forgetting, remembering, and reinterpretation. This approach situates cinematic representations within broader processes of societal remembrance.

The hermeneutic method is employed to interpret the deeper meanings embedded in cinematic texts. This approach focuses on understanding rather than explanation, emphasising the contextual and interpretative nature of meaning. In the research, hermeneutic analysis is applied to dialogues, character motivations, and moral dilemmas portrayed in films. It allows for the interpretation of silence, ambiguity, and contradiction as meaningful narrative elements. The method helps to uncover latent meanings related to guilt, fear, and responsibility. Through hermeneutics, films are analysed as texts that require interpretative engagement rather than literal reading.

The method of cultural trauma analysis is used to conceptualise lustration as a collective traumatic experience rather than a completed historical episode. This approach enables the study to examine how cinema represents the long-term psychological and moral consequences of living under coercion and surveillance. In the research, cultural trauma analysis is applied to

narratives of betrayal, forced collaboration, and irreversible moral damage. It helps to explain the absence of reconciliation and the prevalence of tragic endings in films about lustration. The method frames cinema as a space for working through unresolved trauma. This perspective reinforces the interpretation of lustration as an ongoing cultural process.

The interdisciplinary approach underpins the entire research design by integrating insights from cultural studies, film studies, history, political science, and legal scholarship. This method allows the study to address lustration simultaneously as a legal mechanism, a political conflict, and a cultural experience. In practice, interdisciplinary analysis enables the correlation of cinematic representations with legal norms, institutional practices, and theoretical models of transitional justice. It prevents reductionist interpretations limited to a single disciplinary perspective. The approach ensures analytical depth and conceptual coherence. As a result, the study offers a comprehensive interpretation of lustration as a multidimensional phenomenon.

The combination of general scientific, cultural, and interdisciplinary methods provides a comprehensive analytical toolkit for examining the cinematic discourse on lustration in Poland. The applied methodology makes it possible to identify recurring conceptual patterns, narrative strategies, and symbolic structures across different films and historical contexts. By integrating analytical, interpretative, and contextual approaches, the study avoids both descriptive reductionism and excessive abstraction. The methodological framework ensures that the conclusions drawn are grounded in systematic analysis of the film corpus while remaining theoretically informed. This integrated approach enables a nuanced understanding of lustration as a culturally mediated and historically contingent process represented in Polish cinema.

Literature Review

A substantial body of scholarly literature conceptualises lustration as a core mechanism of transitional justice in post-communist societies. Roman David's monograph offers a comparative analysis of lustration policies in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, focusing on personnel systems and the political logic behind vetting procedures (*David, 2011*). This work provides the theoretical foundation for understanding the specificity of the Polish model of lustration and is used in the present study to contextualise cinematic representations within broader regional patterns.

Similarly, Lavinia Stan's edited volume examines various instruments of transitional justice in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, including lustration, trials, and memory policies (*Stan, 2009*). The collection situates lustration within a spectrum of post-authoritarian responses to the past, which informs the interdisciplinary framework of this research. The later volume edited by Stan and Nedelsky synthesises twenty-five years of post-communist experience, highlighting long-term consequences and unresolved tensions (*Stan & Nedelsky, 2015*). This perspective is employed in the study to interpret the persistence of traumatic motifs in Polish cinema decades after the political transition.

Michael Nalepa's work analyses transitional justice through the metaphor of "skeletons in the closet", emphasising political bargaining, delayed disclosure, and strategic silence (*Nalepa, 2010*). This approach is particularly relevant for interpreting cinematic narratives centred on concealment, postponed revelation, and moral compromise. The theoretical insights from this study support the analysis of *klamstwo* (lie) as a systemic condition in Polish films about lustration.

The political logic underlying lustration processes in Central Europe is examined by Williams, Fowler, and Szczerbiak, who propose a "post-communist politics" approach that explains variations in lustration outcomes (*Williams et al., 2005*). Their analysis helps to situate

Polish cinema within a context of ongoing political conflict rather than completed democratic consolidation. This perspective is used to explain the recurrent depiction of lustration as an unresolved and destabilising process in film narratives.

Natalia Letki explores the relationship between lustration and democratisation, arguing that lustration often produces ambivalent effects on political trust and institutional legitimacy (Letki, 2002). Her conclusions are applied in this study to interpret cinematic scepticism toward official verification procedures and moral judgments. Legal aspects of lustration are addressed by Cynthia Horne, who analyses international legal rulings and their implications for the rule of law (Horne, 2009). This work provides an essential normative background for understanding the tension between justice and legality reflected in Polish cinematic discourse.

From a legal-philosophical perspective, Liviu Damsa conceptualises lustration as a form of administrative justice aimed at achieving societal closure (Damsa, 2011). This notion is critically engaged in the present study, as Polish films often demonstrate the impossibility of such closure and instead foreground enduring trauma and moral ambiguity.

Polish-language scholarship offers in-depth analyses of the domestic debates surrounding lustration. Piotr Grzelak's monograph documents the political struggle over lustration in Poland, including controversies surrounding archives and institutional reforms (Grzelak, 2005). This work is used to contextualise cinematic representations of *teczki* (files) as instruments of power and blackmail. Jan Woleński interprets lustration as a mirror reflecting broader societal divisions and moral dilemmas (Woleński, 2007). His reflections inform the interpretation of cinematic figures caught between guilt, denial, and self-justification.

The legal framework of lustration and de-ubecisation is grounded in Polish legislation, particularly the 2006 Lustration Act and the 2016 amendments concerning pensions of former security service officers (*O ujawnianiu informacji...*, 2006; *O zmianie ustawy...*, 2016). These legal sources are used in the study to correlate cinematic narratives with institutional changes and public debates.

The cultural and linguistic dimension of lustration discourse is addressed by Kwiecień, Łaziński, and Bartmiński, who analyse socially significant words and expressions in contemporary Polish language (Kwiecień et al., 2019). Their work is employed to explain the semantic evolution of the term *teczka* and its transformation into a powerful cultural symbol in the 1990s. This linguistic perspective supports the semiotic analysis of cinematic representations of archives and files.

Dorota Goska examines the fragile process of working through the communist past in Polish public culture, highlighting unresolved tensions and narrative instability (Goska, 2013). Her reflections provide a broader cultural backdrop for understanding why Polish cinema often avoids clear moral resolutions and favours ambivalence.

The publicistic discourse on lustration in Poland is analysed by Nataliya Minienkova (2017), who examines journalistic narratives of the 1990s and their role in shaping public perceptions. This work complements the cinematic analysis by demonstrating continuity between media discourse and film narratives. Minienkova's earlier study (2016) synthesises arguments for and against lustration in Central and Eastern Europe, providing a comparative framework used to situate Polish cinema within broader regional debates.

Finally, film-specific sources, such as materials related to *Różyczka* (2010), are used as supplementary contextual references to clarify production backgrounds and real historical prototypes of cinematic plots. These sources support the interpretation of films as culturally embedded texts rather than autonomous artistic artefacts.

Results

Features of the Lustration Process in Poland

1. The origin of the term “*lustration*” was not associated with the protection of democratic values. This meaning emerged only in connection with the processes of transformation in post-communist countries. It was precisely at the end of the twentieth century that lustration became a widespread practice of the “new” post-communist regimes, a mechanism for the “purification of society” and the rotation of elites.

2. The Lustration Act in Poland was adopted only in 1997, following unsuccessful attempts in the early 1990s. In 1998, the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN; Polish: *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*) was established. The lustration law was amended in 2001–2002, 2006, and 2017. The Polish model of lustration is unique due to its subject matter (that is, the definition of the content of “punishment”): it was not employment or cooperation with the secret police (SB, *Służba Bezpieczeństwa* of the Polish People’s Republic, *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*) that was condemned, but rather the concealment of this fact itself (lying; Polish: *klamstwo*), which constituted the grounds for a ban on holding public office for a period of ten years. Persons born after 31 July 1972 were not subject to lustration. Prior to the adoption of the new law in 2006, the verification of lustration declarations was carried out by the Warsaw Court of Appeal, while oversight was exercised by the Commissioner for the Public Interest. In 2006, these two institutions were abolished, and the functions of verification and disclosure of information were transferred to the Institute of National Remembrance; however, the subject matter of lustration remained unchanged.

3. Previous studies of the scholarly discourse on lustration provide grounds for asserting that: (1) lustration in Poland was delayed and extended over time; (2) it had a retrospective character, that is, it was primarily aimed at establishing historical justice (the disclosure of information about informants—secret collaborators (TW, *tajny współpracownik*) of the special services (SB, *Służba Bezpieczeństwa*, WSW, *Wojskowe Służby Wewnętrzne*); and (3) it caused serious complications both for the political system and for individuals (*Minienkova, 2016*) (few informants voluntarily admitted the fact of cooperation; most sought to conceal it, and, when exposed, categorically denied it).

4.

The Specificity of Representing Lustration Processes in Polish Feature Cinema: Content and Key concepts

For the analysis of the problem, Polish feature films produced after 1989 were selected that are devoted to lustration in Poland or address this topic indirectly: *Psy* (1992, directed by Władysław Pasikowski), *Korowód* (2007, directed by Jerzy Stuhr), *Rysa* (2008, directed by Michał Rosa), *Różyczka* (2010, directed by Jan Kidawa-Błoński), *Kret* (2010, directed by Rafał Lewandowski), and *Napad* (2024, directed by Michał Gazda).

By analysing feature films that directly or indirectly address lustration, the following key concepts were identified through which directors convey the essence of lustration practices in Poland: “*teczki*” (“files”), “*zły ubek, ale dobry glina*” (“a bad UB officer but a good cop”; slang *glina*—policeman; Polish *ubek*—a pejorative term for an officer of the political police, *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*), “*klamstwo*” (“lie”), and “*zdrada*” (“betrayal”). These will be examined in greater detail.

The concept of “*files/dossiers*” (Polish *teczki*) is a key element in the implementation of lustration. In the course of their work, security service officers—contemptuously referred to in Poland as “*ubeks*”—created dossiers on individuals whom they managed to induce into

cooperation. These files contained a document of consent, colloquially referred to as a “*lojalka*”. Such files repeatedly became instruments of blackmail. In Władysław Pasikowski’s film *Py* (1992), a scene depicts the destruction of documents at night at a rubbish dump. In addition, the burning of files is mentioned in a conversation between SB (Polish *Służba Bezpieczeństwa*) Captain Stopczyk and a major from the same service:

– *Stopczyk, co Wy tam palicie?* (Stopczyk, what are you burning there?)

– *Ja? Radomskie, ale jak Pan major woli, to Franz ma Camel.* (I’m smoking Radomskie, but if the Major prefers, Franz has Camels.)

The hasty destruction of documents of the political police and the party apparatus was one of the unifying factors of most political transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe (*Minienkova, 2016, p. 121*). In Poland, the elimination of documents also took place: as noted by the Polish researcher P. Grzelak, a significant part of the SB archives was destroyed between June 1989 (the contract elections to the Sejm) and April 1990 (the dissolution of the SB) (*Grzelak, 2005, p. 17*). Many other scholars and politicians were likewise convinced that the archives of the SB and the Polish United Workers’ Party had been liquidated; this fact was also confirmed by the so-called “Michnik Commission” (*Woleński, 2007, pp. 39–40*). Moreover, as the Polish researcher Jan Woleński notes, at that time there was a widespread belief in Polish society that the destruction of archives and the slowing down of the lustration process were part of a compromise between the authorities and the opposition, reached during secret negotiations prior to the “Round Table” talks in Magdalenka near Warsaw (*Woleński, 2007, p. 34*).

The film *Korowód* (2007) by Jerzy Stuhr, often referred to in the press and by the director himself as “*pierwszym polskim filmem o lustracji*” (“the first Polish film about lustration”), also demonstrates the “power of the files”. The film was made at the time of another attempt to amend the lustration law, in particular by expanding the range of persons subject to lustration screening (university staff from adjuncts to rectors, members of the Polish Academy of Sciences, etc.), with the total number increasing from 27,000 to between 400,000 and 700,000 (*O ujawnianiu informacji..., 2006*). It is therefore no coincidence that, alongside professors, the film presents the vivid figure of a rector, played by Jerzy Stuhr himself. The rector urges an accused professor to fight and not to resign from the post of vice-rector, adding that he believes in his colleague’s innocence and is himself unconcerned, since “*Ja całą komunię byłem w partii, nas nie wolno było werbować, i wiesz do dziś to oplaca się*” (“I was in the party throughout the communist period; we were not allowed to be recruited, and you know, to this day it pays off”). Thus, the dossier acquires greater ontological weight than living speech, and files were often fabricated, a point also emphasised in scholarly research. Files are also mentioned by another professor in the film, Zdzisław Dąbrowski (played by Jan Frycz), who decides to disappear from life by staging his own death out of fear that his file as an informant (KO, *kontakt operacyjny* “Kolega”) will be disclosed and everyone will learn that he was a secret informer.

In another feature film, *Różyczka* (2010) by Jan Kidawa-Błoński, the “process of creating a file” is depicted. SB Captain Roman Rożek (Robert Więckiewicz), in order to carry out an assignment to compromise Professor Adam Warczewski (Andrzej Seweryn), persuades his lover to meet the professor and inform on him, after which he personally compiles the dossier, giving the case the codename “*Różyczka*”. The screenplay was based on the real-life story of Paweł Jasienica, whose second wife was an SB informant (*Różyczka, 2010*). Here, the file appears as the antithesis of intimacy: personal feelings are transformed into protocol entries, depriving the individual of subjectivity.

Files also appear in the film *Kret* (2010) by Rafał Lewandowski. SB Captain Stefan Garbarek (Wojciech Pszoniak) hides the dossier on the main character deep underground in a forest along

with others, and later sells it to the son of his former informant, Paweł, who decides to free his father from the captain's blackmail. The remaining files the captain keeps for himself, saying "...to was nie dotyczy..." ("...this does not concern you..."). In court, Captain Garberek publicly admits that Paweł's father, Zygmunt Kowal, was not his agent; as becomes known later, Zygmunt paid for this confession. Thus, files are not merely documents but instruments of multidimensional blackmail that destroy human lives. Attention should also be paid to the fact that the extortionist—the SB captain—explains his behaviour by the fact that the authorities deprived him of his pension and that he needs something to live on; that is, this is his "means of survival". In this way, the director highlights the painful public debate on *de-ubecisation* (Polish *dezubekizacja*) that has been ongoing in Poland since the early 1990s. Various political parties proposed depriving former Security Service employees (1944–1989) of privileges, in particular by reducing pensions. Between 2006 and 2009, work on a relevant law was carried out, and after prolonged and fierce debates the document was adopted (*O ujawnianiu informacji...*, 2006), with amendments introduced in 2016 (*O zmianie ustawy...*, 2016).

Thus, in Polish cinema "*teczki*" (files) acquire a sacred and at the same time demonic significance. They symbolise a "materialised past", an "instrument of blackmail" capable of destroying the present. It should also be noted that the expression "*teka/teczka*" (file) acquired a new meaning in the 1990s. Whereas previously in Polish the word *teka/teczka* denoted an object—most often a school item—for carrying things, in 1996 the *Dictionary of Contemporary Polish* for the first time recorded the phraseological unit "*mieć na kogoś teczkę*" ("to have a file on someone"), meaning to possess compromising material and to blackmail someone. In February 2016, the word *teczka* was selected as the keyword of the month (*Kwiecień et al., 2019, p. 67*). In addition, in the early 1990s another phraseological unit entered Polish political vocabulary containing the word *teczka*: "*czarna teczka*" ("black file"), meaning a compromising document. The expression derives from the black briefcase that presidential candidate Stan Tymiński displayed during the 1990 election campaign, claiming that it contained compromising material on Lech Wałęsa.

One of the most intriguing paradoxes of contemporary Polish cinema is the concept of the "evil UB officer, but a good cop." It is grounded in a social conflict: on the one hand, Polish society despises the "UB officer" as part of the repressive system of the Polish People's Republic; on the other, it admires him as a "good cop." Such a UB officer is Captain of the political police Franciszek Maurer, the protagonist of the film *Psy (Dogs)*. The image created by actor Bogusław Linda became an icon of transformation and an example of the deconstruction of communist canons. Maurer is a cynical yet principled policeman who continues to hunt criminals despite the fact that the system itself has betrayed him—he did not pass the verification procedure. His catchphrases—"W imię zasad, skurwysynu" ("In the name of principles, you son of a bitch") and "Porządek tu robię" ("I am restoring order here")—serve to legitimise violent methods. He is positioned as the "last just man" standing against absolute evil. His language is cynical and uncompromising: "Czasy się zmieniają, ale Pan zawsze jest w komisjach" ("Times change, but you are always on the commissions"), says F. Maurer to the head of the lustration commission that barred him from working in the newly established structures. "A kto umarł, ten nie żyje" ("Whoever has died is no longer alive"), says Franz before passing judgement on his former friend who betrayed him. These phrases have become iconic; every Pole knows them.

However, it is not only the figure of Franz Maurer that embodies this archetype: a similar hero is created in the film *Napad (The Heist, 2024)*. The protagonist, Tadeusz Gadacz, is a retired UB officer who is invited to help solve a shocking murder in a bank. Gadacz knows how to

speak to criminals because he is part of the same dark matter—the old system. In the film, Major Gadacz is set in opposition to bureaucracy. He is a man of action, whose past in the Security Service is presented as a harsh but necessary school. Here, the concept of the “good cop” is realised through effectiveness and professionalism.

In our view, the “evil UB officer, but a good cop” functions as a way of working through negative experience. The film offers the viewer a clear explanation: “Yes, they were part of evil, but their professional skills are what protect us today from chaos.” This creates a discourse of professional ethics that stands above politics. The UB-hero becomes “good” at the moment when he fights for justice.

The Polish model of lustration was unique: it was based not on excluding former informants of the special services, but on acknowledging the very fact of cooperation; this alone was sufficient to continue performing public functions in the new democratic state. Despite the mildness of the model, few politicians confessed; most continued to deny. It is therefore no coincidence that another concept through which the problem of lustration is revealed in films is *klematstwo* (“lie”). In films about lustration, this is a key element around which the plot is constructed. In the film *Kret* (*The Mole*, 2010), falsehood is noble—the protagonist Zygmunt Kowal lies to his son out of love, in order to preserve the integrity of his world. In *Różyczka* (*Little Rose*, 2010), lying is an instrument of manipulation—Roman Rożek “creates” a love story between his informant and a professor in order to turn it into a denunciation. In *Korowód* (*Round Dance*, 2007), the concept of “lie” acquires a specific intellectual and academic colouring: a university professor, Zdzisław Dąbrowski, uses deception by planting compromising material on a colleague in his struggle for a woman’s affection. In *Psy* (*Dogs*, 1992) and *Napad* (*The Heist*, 2024), lying is a condition of the environment. The protagonists, Franz Maurer and Tadeusz Gadacz, are convinced that “everyone lies”—lying is systemic. “Jestem dobry w zagłądaniu ludziom pod skórę, bo każdy jest zakłamany jak i ja” (“I am good at looking under people’s skin, because everyone is as mendacious as I am”), says T. Gadacz. For this very reason, cynicism and violence become the only modes of existence and struggle for these heroes. Thus, in all films about lustration, “lie” takes different forms, yet everywhere it possesses destructive power. What all types of lies share is the *umiklanie* (entanglement) of the lying characters: living in falsehood becomes a condition that cannot be overcome without destructive consequences; a happy ending is impossible.

Another concept that exposes the problem of lustration in Polish feature films is *zdrada* (“betrayal”). Why did people from different social backgrounds become informants and then have to conceal this for their entire lives? This is a key element in the stories of the protagonists in *Kret* (*The Mole*, 2010), *Korowód* (*Round Dance*, 2007), and *Różyczka* (*Little Rose*, 2010). Zygmunt Kowal from *The Mole*—a trade-union leader at a mine in Silesia—agreed to cooperate and became an informant because he was blackmailed under difficult life circumstances: his wife was ill, and an SB officer promised to transfer her to a better clinic; after her death, the threats resumed—the removal of his son. The university professor in *Round Dance*, who had been recruited already during his student years, was also subjected to intimidation—the threat of his father’s dismissal from work. An interesting example is the story of Kamila in *Little Rose*: she agreed to inform on the professor because she could not refuse her fiancé—he forced her, and she yielded. Through “betrayal,” all the characters became victims and were compelled to live double lives, in fear.

Discussion

The relevance of the findings obtained in this study is determined by the continuing incompleteness of processes of coming to terms with the communist past in Poland and in Central and Eastern Europe more broadly. Despite the formal completion of the main stages of lustration legislation, the cultural, moral, and psychological consequences of lustration continue to shape public consciousness. The analysis of Polish feature cinema demonstrates that lustration remains not a “closed chapter” but a source of persistent symbolic tension that is regularly reactivated in cultural representations.

The particular significance of the findings lies in their demonstration of cinema as an autonomous mechanism for interpreting and working through traumatic experience, rather than as a secondary reflection of political decisions. The materials presented in the *Results* show that Polish cinema develops its own language for addressing lustration, in which legal categories give way to existential and moral questions. This makes it possible to regard cinema as an important element of the public sphere that influences the formation of collective memory and ethical orientations within society.

The relevance of the study is further reinforced by the fact that the key concepts identified (*teczki*, *klamstwo*, *zdrada*, and the figure of the “evil UB officer but a good cop”) prove to be stable and reproducible over a period of more than three decades. This indicates the structural nature of the problems associated with lustration and the impossibility of resolving them exclusively through legal means. The findings show that even as political contexts change and generational distance increases, cultural models of interpreting the past persist and adapt to new conditions.

Of particular contemporary relevance is the shift identified in the study from a binary logic of “perpetrator versus victim” towards zones of moral indeterminacy. As demonstrated in the *Results* section, Polish cinema avoids direct condemnation and instead favours complex, ambivalent images in which characters appear simultaneously as agents of the system and as its victims. In the current context of polarised public debates, such an approach acquires special significance, as it encourages a reflective rather than punitive attitude towards the past.

The research findings are also relevant from a comparative transitional justice perspective. The Polish cinematic experience reveals an alternative model of cultural engagement with lustration, distinct from narratives of definitive rupture with the past. This makes it possible to use the conclusions of the study in analysing other post-communist and post-authoritarian societies where legal cleansing processes have been accompanied by prolonged cultural conflicts and moral dilemmas.

Finally, the relevance of the *Results* materials is determined by their practical value for contemporary research in memory studies, cultural studies, and film studies. The conceptual structures identified in the article can be applied in further analyses of new films, media texts, and artistic forms addressing the problem of the past. Thus, the findings of the study not only describe existing representations but also provide analytical tools for interpreting ongoing processes of cultural engagement with lustration.

One of the principal problems encountered in the study of lustration in Polish cinema is the inherent complexity of the subject matter itself. Lustration represents an intersection of legal norms, political struggles, moral evaluations, and personal biographies, which makes it resistant to univocal interpretation. Cinematic narratives further complicate this complexity by translating institutional processes into emotionally charged stories centred on individual fate. As a result, any analytical attempt risks either oversimplifying the phenomenon or losing analytical clarity

amid its multidimensional nature. This study addresses this challenge by focusing on recurring conceptual structures rather than attempting an exhaustive reconstruction of historical events.

A second significant problem concerns the fragmentary and selective nature of cinematic representations. Polish feature films do not aim to provide comprehensive accounts of lustration processes but instead highlight particular episodes, characters, or moral dilemmas. This selectivity may create an impression of distortion or exaggeration, especially when films foreground exceptional cases rather than typical experiences. For the researcher, this raises the methodological question of how far cinematic material can be treated as representative of broader social attitudes. In this study, this problem is mitigated through comparative analysis of multiple films produced in different periods, allowing stable patterns to be distinguished from isolated narrative strategies.

Another difficulty lies in the temporal distance between the historical events of lustration and their cinematic reinterpretation. Films produced in the 1990s differ significantly in tone and emphasis from those created in the 2000s and 2010s, reflecting shifts in political climate, generational change, and evolving memory politics. This diachronic variation complicates attempts to formulate unified conclusions about “Polish cinema” as a whole. The study therefore treats cinematic discourse as dynamic and historically contingent, rather than as a homogeneous body of representations. Nevertheless, the need to balance continuity and change remains a persistent analytical challenge.

The interpretation of moral ambiguity constitutes another problematic aspect of the research. Many Polish films deliberately avoid clear moral judgments, presenting characters who simultaneously embody guilt and victimhood. While this ambiguity is central to the cultural significance of cinematic representations, it complicates analytical categorisation and normative assessment. The researcher must therefore refrain from imposing external moral frameworks that might obscure the logic of the films themselves. In this study, hermeneutic and cultural-trauma approaches are employed to respect the internal ethical complexity of cinematic narratives, though this necessarily limits the scope of definitive moral conclusions.

A further problem relates to the uneven availability and status of source materials. While some films and archival documents are well documented and widely discussed, others remain marginal or difficult to access, particularly for international audiences. In addition, secondary sources on Polish cinema and lustration are unevenly distributed across languages, with a significant proportion available only in Polish. This linguistic and material asymmetry constrains the scope of comparative engagement and may influence interpretative emphasis. The study addresses this issue by combining Polish-language scholarship with international literature, though full symmetry cannot be achieved.

Finally, the research faces the broader epistemological problem of analysing cultural memory processes that are still ongoing. Lustration in Poland continues to generate political debate, legal amendments, and new cultural representations, which means that any scholarly interpretation remains provisional. New films, disclosures, or institutional changes may alter the symbolic landscape analysed in this study. Consequently, the conclusions should be understood not as final assessments, but as analytically grounded interpretations of a particular historical moment. This openness reflects both a limitation and an inherent feature of research into living cultural memory.

Further research on the theme of lustration in Polish cinema may proceed in several interrelated directions. One promising avenue involves expanding the corpus of analysis to include contemporary films, television series, and streaming productions that address the communist past and its aftermath. The growing role of serial formats and digital platforms offers

new narrative strategies and audience engagements that may reshape the cultural interpretation of lustration and related themes.

Another important direction concerns comparative analysis beyond the Polish case. Examining cinematic representations of lustration and transitional justice in other post-communist countries—such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, or the Baltic states—would allow for the identification of shared motifs and national specificities. Such comparative research could clarify whether the conceptual structures identified in Polish cinema represent a regional pattern or a distinctive national model of cultural memory.

Future studies may also benefit from a closer engagement with reception studies and audience analysis. Investigating how different generations and social groups interpret films about lustration would provide insight into the social effectiveness of cinematic narratives. This direction would make it possible to assess the extent to which cinema influences public attitudes toward the communist past, responsibility, and reconciliation, rather than merely reflecting existing views.

Another promising line of inquiry lies in the intersection of cinematic discourse with other media forms, including literature, theatre, and digital journalism. Analysing intermedial connections could reveal how narratives of lustration circulate across cultural domains and reinforce or challenge each other. Such an approach would deepen understanding of the broader cultural ecosystem within which cinema operates.

Further research might also focus on the ethical dimension of representing former security service officers and informants. A more detailed philosophical and ethical analysis of cinematic portrayals of guilt, coercion, and moral compromise could contribute to debates on responsibility under authoritarian regimes. This would allow for a more explicit dialogue between film studies, moral philosophy, and transitional justice theory.

Finally, longitudinal studies tracing changes in cinematic representations over time would provide valuable insight into evolving memory politics. By systematically comparing films produced in successive decades, future research could more precisely map shifts in narrative tone, moral evaluation, and symbolic emphasis. Such studies would help to clarify how cultural engagement with lustration develops as historical distance increases and new social challenges emerge.

Conclusion

The conducted analysis of the Polish cinematic discourse on the theme of lustration makes it possible to draw the following conclusions. The theme of lustration in Polish cinema is represented in a multifaceted manner. The cinematic discourse portrays both the stories of the “executioners” (UB officers) and those of their “victims” (informants). The overall narrative of the analysed feature films is not aggressive or antagonistic; it does not incline the viewer towards condemnation, but rather towards empathy and understanding. The key concepts of the cinematic discourse on lustration include “files” (*teczki*)—“social bombs” capable of destroying a person’s reputation and life within a matter of hours; “lie” (Pol. *klamstwo*)—the foundation of a double life that becomes a national tragedy; “betrayal”—a forced weakness under the pressure of the communist machinery; and “*the evil secret police officer but the good policeman*”—a way of working through the negative experience of overcoming the communist past.

The purpose of this study—to identify and analyse the key conceptual frameworks through which the processes of lustration are represented in Polish feature cinema—has been fully achieved. The study has demonstrated that Polish cinema develops a distinct cultural language for addressing lustration, one that shifts the focus from legal procedures to moral ambiguity,

personal responsibility, and collective trauma. In addressing the first research objective, the study has outlined the specific features of the Polish model of lustration that condition its cinematic representation, particularly its retrospective orientation and emphasis on disclosure rather than exclusion. The second objective has been fulfilled through the identification and systematic analysis of a corpus of Polish feature films that directly or indirectly engage with lustration and the legacy of the communist security services.

The remaining research objectives have likewise been addressed through detailed analysis of key cinematic concepts. The study has examined the concept of *teczki* (files) as a symbol of power, blackmail, and the materialised past, revealing its central role in structuring cinematic narratives of fear and exposure. It has analysed the figure of the “evil UB officer but a good cop” as a cultural mechanism for working through the negative legacy of the communist system and negotiating professional ethics beyond political judgement. Furthermore, the concepts of *kłamstwo* (lie) and *zdrada* (betrayal) have been interpreted as existential conditions imposed by systemic coercion, shaping narratives of entanglement and the impossibility of moral closure. Taken together, these findings confirm that Polish feature cinema functions as a significant space for the cultural interpretation of lustration, contributing to ongoing processes of memory formation and ethical reflection in post-communist society.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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Adaptive Reuse of a Cultural Heritage Building in Sofia: “Theme” and “Character” in the Interior of the Old Excelsior Cinema ^[1]

Abstract:

The relevance of this study is determined by the ongoing loss and functional degradation of historic cinema buildings in the central areas of European cities and the growing need for methodologically grounded approaches to their adaptive reuse as cultural heritage sites. Under conditions of fragmented renovations and utilitarian transformations, early 20th-century cinema interiors require reinterpretation not merely as architectural shells but as carriers of cultural memory, spatial experience, and technological history. The study problem lies in the absence of integrated methodological models for the adaptive reuse of cinema interiors that simultaneously address spatial logic, material authenticity, acoustic qualities, and socio-cultural function. Existing approaches often prioritize architectural envelopes or visual aesthetics while neglecting the interior as a complex cultural system. The novelty of the study consists in the development and application of a conceptual and methodological framework for the adaptive reuse of early twentieth-century cinema interiors based on the operationalization of the concepts of “theme” and “character” as analytical and design tools. These concepts enable the translation of archival, spatial, and material research into coherent interior adaptation strategies. The subject of the study is a methodological model for the adaptive reuse of early twentieth-century cinema-theatre interiors within cultural heritage contexts. The object of the study is the interior of the former “Excelsior” cinema (later renamed “Assen Zlatarov”), located in the historic center of Sofia, Bulgaria, considered as a representative example of early urban cinema architecture. The study aims to develop an interdisciplinary methodology for the adaptive reuse of historic cinema interiors that preserves their identity while enabling contemporary functional, technical, and cultural use. The study methodology combines archival-documentary analysis, spatial and structural investigation, historical and technological contextual analysis, and material survey, followed by the synthesis of findings into an adaptive reuse model. The study draws upon and generalizes the ideas of architectural conservation theorists, researchers of Sofia’s urban and cultural history, scholars of early Bulgarian cinema, and contemporary approaches to adaptive reuse and interior design. The core of the study lies in conceptualizing the cinema interior as a culturally active system in which proportions, acoustics, materials, and patterns of use jointly shape historical identity. Based on the analysis of archival drawings, historical sources, and surviving material layers, an adaptation model is proposed that maintains technological and cultural continuity while accommodating new uses. The results demonstrate that successful adaptive reuse of historic cinema interiors requires the integration of historical knowledge, spatial analysis, and material authenticity into a unified design logic. The proposed framework positions adaptation as a culturally responsible practice that ensures continuity of identity and reactivation of the public and cultural role of historic cinema interiors in contemporary urban life.

Keywords: architecture adaptation, interior project; cultural memory; historical identity; early sound cinema-theatre; interior detail.

Abbreviations:

BNR is Bulgarian National Radio;

UACEG is University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy;

Introduction

In the early twentieth century, cinema-theatres shaped the cultural and architectural identity of Sofia’s historic centre. These public processes showed technological progress, aesthetic development, and helped preserve cultural memory, especially through their interiors. “Excelsior”–“Assen Zlatarov” cinema, stands out as a key example of this early urban cultural infrastructure, with its interior reflecting both identity and atmosphere.

Through the adaptation process, the author creates a specific scenario that balances the preservation and interpretation of original interior qualities with the need to meet current functional, technical, and investment demands. This dual nature invites us into a problem-solving mindset in which the risks of diluting historical integrity are balanced by the potential benefits of revitalizing these structures for modern use.

This approach can create significant cultural, aesthetic, and economic value from these historic spaces. The article looks at how the ideas of “theme” and “character” can guide the adaptation of early 20th-century cinema-theatre interiors, focusing on the “Excelsior” Cinema, later known as “Assen Zlatarov” after the communist government in Sofia.

The analysis shows that successful adaptation depends on a clear and logical framework. Here, the theme shapes the narrative, while character comes from how original materials, spatial development, and new changes interact. Just preserving historic elements is not enough; the materials themselves tell the story.

Carefully studying the texture, feel, and acoustic qualities of these materials adds depth to the theme. Surviving finishes like plaster, wallpaper, natural ceramics, wooden floors, and gypsum details represent identity and history, making the building’s past both real and meaningful.

The novelty of this study lies in its conceptual and methodological approach to the adaptive reuse of early 20th-century cinema interiors as cultural heritage. Unlike prevailing studies that focus primarily on architectural envelopes, urban history, or technical restoration, this study foregrounds the interior as a culturally active system shaped by spatial logic, material authenticity, acoustic properties, and social practice. The study introduces the concepts of “theme” and “character” as operative methodological tools that translate archival, spatial, and material analysis into a coherent interior adaptation framework. By doing so, the study advances adaptive reuse theory from descriptive interpretation toward an applied, design-oriented methodology capable of guiding interior interventions in historically layered cinema buildings.

The subject of the study is the methodological framework for adaptive reuse of cinema-theatre interiors of the early 20th century, with particular emphasis on the conceptual roles of “theme” and “character” in interior design decision-making within cultural heritage contexts.

The object of the study is the interior space of a former cinema-theatre building located in the historic center of Sofia, Bulgaria, originally known as “Excelsior” and later as “Assen Zlatarov”, considered as a representative example of early urban cinema architecture and its subsequent transformations.

The study aims to develop and substantiate an interdisciplinary methodology for the adaptive reuse of early 20th-century cinema interiors that preserves historical identity while enabling contemporary functional, technical, and cultural use through the integration of archival research, spatial analysis, material investigation, and design interpretation.

To achieve the stated aim, the study pursues the following objectives:

- analyze archival architectural documentation, historical sources, and visual materials to reconstruct the original spatial organization and cultural context of the cinema interior;
- examine the spatial and structural characteristics of the cinema hall, including proportions, circulation, sightlines, and acoustic behavior, as carriers of heritage value;
- identify and assess surviving material layers and decorative elements as tangible expressions of historical identity and cultural memory;
- investigate the impact of technological transformations, particularly the transition from silent to sound cinema, on interior spatial and material configuration;

- synthesize historical, spatial, and material findings into an operative adaptation model based on the concepts of theme and character;
- evaluate the potential of adaptive reuse as a culturally responsible strategy for revitalizing historic cinema interiors within contemporary urban environments.

The results of the study are intended for a multidisciplinary audience, including architects, interior designers, conservation specialists, heritage researchers, and urban planners involved in the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The findings are also relevant to scholars in architecture theory and heritage studies, as well as to cultural institutions, municipal authorities, and decision-makers responsible for cultural heritage management and urban regeneration policies.

Methods

This study uses four steps method, combining historical-documentary analysis, spatial and structural investigation of the cinema hall, material analysis—including plasters, decorative elements, and finishes—and turning findings into an adaptation model. This approach helps fully understand how interior adaptation connects the original architecture with today’s needs.

Thus, the methodological approach frames adaptation as both a technical and cultural process, grounding design decisions in evidence and documentation rather than intuition. The concepts of “theme” and “character” are employed as operative instruments, linking research findings to design strategy. To further strengthen the relationship between archival evidence and design intervention, a table or structured outline mapping each archival finding to its corresponding design proposal is recommended. Such tools, enable a transparent tracing of the logic and basis loading of each reconstruction decision.

Archival Documentary Research

Archival architectural analysis of the original drawings, old photos, and printed sources is a mostly common practical way to rebuild the hall’s original layout, design logic, and cultural context.

The building changed over time, highlighting both original features and the damage caused by later changes to the property, use, and misunderstood renovations (*Tenev, 1997*).

The strategy to preserve and expose the saved authentic details is a part of material cultural design thinking , choosing textures that fit the historic style, and adapt the layout for new uses while keeping authenticity and continuity (*Gancheva, 2021*). This approach gives a solid basis for decisions, showing what to keep, what to change, and what changes should be visible. It supports adaptation strategies that respect history and look to the future.

Historical analysis shows that the early growth of cinema-theater in Sofia was connected to the rise of a new Sofia urban audience, especially the growing middle class with more cultural interests and time for leisure and culture. Cinema quickly became part of Bulgarian city life; by 1913, Sofia had three permanent cinemas (*Kardzhilov, 2023b; Stoyanova, 2016*). This early setup and business model led to later innovations and local productions, such as the early Bulgarian film “Balgaran Is Gallant (1915)” (*Stoyanova, 2016*).

The image of a building throughout history is represented in the Appendix (*Table 1*).

As the Cinema became an important social event in Sofia, spaces like foyers halls and entrances played an important role, the growth of audiences increased the impact of building typology.

Thus, the latter building complicated their function and became more social and places for cultural communication.

Adaptive reuse should aim to bring back the social parts of the cinema experience—like arrival, gathering, and transition spaces—not just focus on the main hall.

Spatial and Structural Investigation of the Cinema Hall

Spatial and functional analysis looks at the audience hall as a set of connected spaces, considering size, proportions, sight-lines, acoustics, and how spaces relate. The aim is to find qualities and limits that can guide new uses while keeping the hall's character.

The hall is viewed as a space where sightlines and sound define its heritage value. Updates should respect the current layout and see its limits as design opportunities. For example, the balcony's slope can inspire a new seating layout.

Thus, the spatial logic of restored plans can guide new pathways or audience flows. This model helps with decision-making, how well the interior can support new uses, with theme and character as main principles. These methods create a framework that treats interior adaptation as both a technical and cultural change.

The study connects research evidence to design decisions through a clear and open process. In this approach, “theme” and “character” are real criteria for adaptation, not just terms. The framework shows adaptive reuse as a responsible cultural practice based on careful spatial analysis (*Table 3*) (*Figure 1*; *Figure 2*).

Historical and Material Analysis Including Plasters, Decorative Elements, and Finishes

The transition from silent to a sound cinema have developed not only the film language but also the organisation of a cinema hall space, its acoustics, and furniture materials. In 1930 in Bulgaria, “Modern Theatre” publicly announced the installation of Western Electric sound technology, with engineering support and public media attention.

The global technological development of early 20th century period led to interior transformations, most of which are acoustically important. The cinema hall can be seen as a “sound space”, shaped by layers of technical updates over time. Adaptation should include this history of technology as a key part of the interior's space.

Bulgarian sound feature film with first incorporated speech and music was “The Revolt of the Slaves”, which premiered on 2 October 1933, marking a new stage in Bulgarian cinema (*The Revolt...*, 2018).

This event starts the evolution of cinema halls, so they focused more on acoustics and materials, using curtains, fabrics, acoustic wall treatments, and special details around suspension systems and the projection booth.

Today, using modern materials like wool-felt wall panels that recall historic acoustic linings can improve sound quality while maintaining a sense of continuity.

A good preserved in images hystorical example from this period is the “Pachev” cinema-theatre hall (opened 30 October 1926; active until 1944), which had noumerous seats, a balcony, a waiting hall, a café, and early sound equipment (*Kardzhilov, 2023a*).

Early 20th-century events show the need of similar spaces as type and context, such as the Excelsior Cinema hall. These comparisons support the development of design criteria.

The same feature is typology-based rather than only the specifics of the space. Such analysis reinforces the argument for prioritizing acoustics, spatial zoning, and foyer culture.

To demonstrate the capacity of materials to embody memory, the study proposes the identification and display of select surviving elements—such as original plasterwork or panels—within the renewed interior (*Table 4*).

Thus the strategy serves to connect historical and contemporary layers, reinforce historical identity, and foster confidence in the adaptive reuse process (*Huaroc, 2024*).

As a conclusion, material analysis helps identify and explain the value of surviving elements and their place in the renewed interior. Showing how real fragments give the adaptation a strong foundation, strengthening memory through real materials instead of copying the past (*Adaptive reuse..., 2025*).

Turning Findings into an Adaptation Model

The meaning of this process is to organise the key features from the research into a clear, structured frame that could lead future adaptive interior projects, especially for the former specific historical structures. Based on the definitions, the graphics could be proposed as a logical interior image of the intervention (*Table 5*) (*Figure 1; Figure 2; Figure 3; Figure 4*).

Literature Review

The literature relevant to the adaptive reuse of early twentieth-century cinema buildings in Sofia forms an interdisciplinary body of sources that combines architectural conservation theory, urban cultural history, cinema studies, and contemporary design discourse. Together, these works provide the historical, theoretical, and methodological foundations for understanding cinema interiors as cultural heritage and for developing responsible adaptive reuse strategies.

A fundamental theoretical framework for architectural conservation is provided by Jokilehto's *A History of Architectural Conservation* (2009). Jokilehto conceptualizes conservation not merely as the preservation of material fabric, but as an ethically grounded cultural process that mediates between historical continuity and contemporary use. His emphasis on authenticity, historical layering, and cultural significance is particularly relevant for cinema buildings, whose interiors often underwent multiple transformations driven by technological change and shifting social functions. Jokilehto's approach supports the understanding of adaptive reuse as a value-based intervention rather than a purely technical operation, framing interior adaptation as an act of cultural interpretation rather than stylistic imitation.

Urban historical perspectives on Sofia are extensively represented in Tenev's *Three Hundred Thousand Sofia and Me Between the Two World Wars* (1997). This source offers a detailed narrative of Sofia's urban development during the interwar period, contextualizing the emergence of cinema halls within broader processes of modernization, demographic growth, and cultural diversification. Tenev's reflections highlight cinema as a social institution embedded in everyday urban life, serving as both a technological novelty and a collective cultural experience. His work provides crucial insight into the spatial and social role of cinema buildings within the city's historical fabric, reinforcing the argument that their interiors are carriers of urban memory rather than isolated architectural objects.

Complementing this urban-historical perspective, journalistic and archival contributions by Gancheva (2021) published by the Bulgarian National Radio focus specifically on the cultural practice of going to the cinema in old Sofia. These texts reconstruct the experiential dimension of early cinema-going, emphasizing foyers, entrance halls, and transitional spaces as essential components of the cinematic ritual. Gancheva's work underscores the importance of non-screening spaces in shaping cultural memory and social interaction, thereby supporting adaptive reuse strategies that prioritize arrival sequences, gathering zones, and spatial transitions alongside the main hall.

Similarly, Stoyanova's article (2016) on the first cinemas in Sofia provides a historical overview of the emergence of permanent cinema halls in the early 20th century. By identifying the earliest venues and their spatial characteristics, this source situates cinema architecture within the broader evolution of urban entertainment infrastructure. Stoyanova's contribution is particularly valuable for understanding typological patterns, including seating arrangements, hall proportions, and the integration of cinema functions into mixed-use urban buildings.

The technological transformation of cinema interiors is addressed in detail by Kardzhilov (2023b) in his analysis of the introduction of sound equipment into Sofia cinemas during the early 1930s. This study documents the profound spatial, acoustic, and material consequences of the transition from silent to sound cinema. Kardzhilov demonstrates that sound technology reshaped not only projection systems but also wall treatments, ceiling designs, seating layouts, and acoustic volumes. This historical insight reinforces the argument that acoustics constitute an integral part of cinema heritage and must be treated as a cultural value in adaptive reuse projects rather than as a purely functional requirement.

The historical significance of early Bulgarian sound cinema is further emphasized in the Bulgarian National Radio archival publication (2018) dedicated to *The Revolt of the Slaves*, the first Bulgarian sound film. This source situates sound cinema within national cultural history and highlights the symbolic role of cinema halls as sites of technological and artistic innovation. By linking interior transformations to broader cultural milestones, the publication supports an understanding of cinema interiors as witnesses to cultural modernization processes.

Kardzhilov's (2023a) archival study of Cinema "Pachev" published in *Spisanie KINO* provides a concrete comparative case that enriches the typological analysis of early cinema interiors. Through detailed documentation of spatial organization, seating capacity, balcony structure, and auxiliary spaces such as cafés and waiting halls, this source offers a tangible reference for evaluating surviving cinema interiors in Sofia. The "Pachev" cinema exemplifies how architectural typology, social function, and technological adaptation converged in early cinema design, making it a valuable benchmark for adaptive reuse strategies.

Beyond local historical sources, contemporary architectural discourse on adaptive reuse is represented by Huaroc's article (2024) published on ArchDaily. Huaroc examines international adaptive reuse projects that intentionally contrast old and new materials to highlight historical layers rather than conceal them. This approach aligns with current heritage theory that values legibility, material honesty, and temporal stratification. The article provides a broader design-theoretical context that supports the use of contemporary materials as interpretative tools rather than imitative replicas, reinforcing the methodological orientation of adaptive reuse as a dialogical process between past and present.

A complementary design-oriented perspective is offered by the ISCD publication *Adaptive Reuse in Interior Design: Giving Materials a Second Life* (2025). This source focuses on interior-scale interventions and emphasizes material reuse as both an ecological and cultural strategy. The discussion of tactile qualities, material aging, and sensory experience directly informs interior adaptation methodologies, particularly in heritage contexts where material authenticity contributes to spatial character and emotional resonance. The ISCD text supports the argument that interior adaptation should engage with existing materials as active carriers of memory rather than neutral surfaces.

Recent scholarship has also contributed systematic frameworks that strengthen the methodological transparency of adaptive reuse practice and offer evaluative criteria for assessing outcomes in heritage contexts. Arfa et al. (2022) provide a significant contribution by moving from an extensive literature review toward a consolidated "model of practice" that structures

adaptive reuse as a phased process grounded in evidence, heritage values, and decision traceability. Their model conceptualizes reuse not as a single design act but as an iterative trajectory that includes preliminary value identification, diagnostic analysis of the existing fabric, stakeholder and feasibility considerations, strategy formation, and post-intervention evaluation. This process-oriented approach supports the present study's emphasis on linking archival documentation, spatial analytics, and material survey to an explicit adaptation model. In particular, Arfa et al.'s framework legitimizes the need for tools that map research findings to design actions, reinforcing the study's position that adaptive reuse must be accountable and logically reconstructable rather than intuitive or purely stylistic.

Complementing process models, Vafaie et al. (2023) advance the field through a systematic literature review that synthesizes "success factors" for the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings. Their analysis consolidates recurring determinants across international research and practice, clarifying that successful reuse depends on a multidimensional balance between cultural significance, functional performance, technical feasibility, economic viability, governance, and stakeholder alignment. Importantly for interior-focused adaptation, the authors emphasize that heritage value is frequently compromised when interventions prioritize short-term functional gains over authenticity, legibility of historical layers, and the experiential qualities of space. This review strengthens the interpretative stance of the present research in which "theme" and "character" operate as criteria that protect cultural meaning during transformation. It also provides a broader evaluative lens for cinema-theatre interiors, supporting the argument that proportions, acoustics, circulation logic, and material authenticity should be treated as core heritage attributes rather than secondary design variables.

Taken together, these two studies enrich the literature base by supplying (1) a structured methodological logic for adaptive reuse (Arfa et al., 2022) and (2) a synthesized evaluative perspective for judging adaptation outcomes (Vafaie et al., 2023). Their integration into the present review reinforces the article's central claim that adaptive reuse of early twentieth-century cinema interiors requires a rigorous framework capable of translating historical evidence and material continuity into coherent design decisions while maintaining cultural identity and public meaning.

Taken together, these sources form a coherent body of literature that frames cinema interiors as complex cultural artifacts shaped by social practice, technological innovation, and urban development. Historical and journalistic accounts reconstruct the cultural significance of cinema-going in Sofia, while architectural conservation theory provides ethical and methodological grounding for adaptive reuse. Contemporary design discourse further expands this framework by articulating strategies for integrating historical layers into modern interior solutions.

This literature collectively underpins the study's focus on "theme" and "character" as operative concepts in interior adaptation. By combining historical evidence, material analysis, and spatial interpretation, the reviewed sources justify an approach to adaptive reuse that seeks not merely to preserve fragments of the past, but to reactivate cinema interiors as culturally meaningful spaces capable of sustaining continuity within contemporary urban life.

Results

Theoretical Framework: "Theme" and "Character" in the Adaptation of a 20th-Century Cinema-Theatre Interior

The Concept of “Theme” in the Interior

About interior architecture, a theme is a guiding idea that shapes a design by bringing together context, history, and function.

The “theme” appears in how space is organised, the materials chosen, and the dominant atmosphere, helping the design elements to follow the building’s identity. In adaptation projects, the theme turns historical knowledge into a modern spatial plan, making the design clear and culturally connected rather than merely following a style.

When used in design, a theme connects original features with new changes by bringing together historical, technological, and social aspects in the interior’s identity. In heritage interiors, the theme links past and present by keeping cultural memory alive through planning and interpretation, rather than simply copying old styles.

Therefore, the thematic approach helps balance the old interior with a change. The new uses are possible while the building’s story continues.

Adaptation of space in a cultural heritage building is a process of finding a middle ground between preserving important features and meeting today’s needs. The interior shares its history through thoughtful use of structure, space, and materials, not by copying the past.

The Concept of “Character” and Interior Adaptation

The character of an interior comes from the way structure, materials, size, light, sound, and layout work together. How people experience the space and its atmosphere creates a clear identity and improves the visitor’s experience. Character also shows how the entire new concept lives with the building’s history, proving that changes have been successfully integrated.

Character is an important way to judge the quality of adaptation, showing if new changes fit in or just fill space. It links sensory experiences like light, sound, and touch to the building’s heritage, making sure updates keep the interior’s cultural and emotional meaning.

Historical and Spatial Context: Cinema as an Urban Cultural Function in Sofia

There is a close connection between the cinema hall and the close neighborhood with its residential buildings. Especially the attached to the hall building with flats, which is also a cultural heritage site.

Throughout different historical periods and political regimes, the cinema had several names—“Opera,” “Royal,” “Excelsior,” and “Assen Zlatarov”—each reflecting changes in city culture, ownership, and policy.

The possible scenario for renovating and adapting the latest storage into a new multifunctional hall should include all the historical layers, not just the imitative ones.

The interior space could be left with visible traces, creating continuity and spatial logic.

After sound films arrived around 1930, modernization continued, and the 1930s and 1940s saw improvements in layout and acoustics. Cinema “Assen Zlatarov” is a good example of the subject (*Gancheva, 2021*).

The arrival of new technologies, most notably sound, transformed both architectural and interior space envelopes, placing new demands on acoustics and technical systems. Modernization touched every aspect: equipment, room proportions, the spacing between seating arrangements, and the wall cladding. In any future adaptation, acoustics and technical features must be seen not as afterthoughts, but as integral to the heritage and spirit of the space.

A modernist functional model—simplified volumes, improved sightlines, a specific stage zone, and an optimized balcony slope—was increasingly applied to the new cinema interior.

Despite the lack of details and lost ornamentation, these interiors preserved key characteristics of the traditional cinema hall: a strong longitudinal visual axis (*Jokilehto, 2017*), an acoustic volume with proportions—height equal to width of the hall, and a sense of representational public space.

Reducing decorative elements did not mean losing identity. Instead, identity shifted toward performance, experience, and technical ability.

Proportions, spatial rhythm, and acoustic qualities, not decoration is the most important factors for the researched space. Adaptation should focus on keeping these main spatial features, even when adding new uses.

The use of sound in the movies is a fact that has major importance for the cultural practice and interior design. Technologically, the sound brought new materials for absorption and damping, as well as specialized enclosures, making acoustics a priority in the new spaces.

Contemporary adaptation incorporates this technological heritage into the site's narrative. By the mid-twentieth century, cinema buildings continued to evolve through renovations. After private ownership was restored, the hall was further altered: parts were converted into ground-floor shops, and the balcony and main hall were used for storage. This period damaged all of the interior surfaces.

Unsophisticated interventions over the body of the building's functions could damage the core of the heritage structures.

Original construction could be damaged by adding new imitative layers and materials, as well as installations and air conditioning. Restoring its cultural role means bringing back the flow of spaces and public areas.

So that is the reason adaptive reuse should focus on restoring key elements such as screening, performance, and gathering, which are essential to keeping cultural memory alive.

Discussion

The results obtained in this study demonstrate a high degree of relevance for contemporary architectural practice, heritage studies, and interior design theory, particularly in the context of adaptive reuse of early 20th-century cinema buildings. The analytical framework developed and applied in the results confirms that interior adaptation of cultural heritage structures cannot be reduced to technical renovation or stylistic restoration. Instead, it must be understood as a culturally embedded process in which spatial logic, material authenticity, technological memory, and social function interact as interconnected components of heritage value.

One of the most significant outcomes of the research is the substantiation of “theme” and “character” as operative analytical and design categories rather than abstract interpretative notions. The results show that these concepts function as methodological instruments capable of structuring decision-making throughout the adaptive reuse process. By linking archival documentation, spatial analysis, and material investigation to a coherent thematic narrative, the study demonstrates how interior design can actively mediate between historical identity and contemporary use. This approach addresses a critical gap in adaptive reuse practice, where interventions often rely on intuitive or stylistic solutions lacking explicit methodological grounding.

The study results also highlight the importance of treating cinema interiors as complex cultural systems rather than isolated architectural shells. The spatial and structural analyses reveal that the heritage value of cinema halls resides not only in decorative elements, but primarily in proportions, acoustics, sightlines, and circulation patterns shaped by early cinematic technology and social practices. By foregrounding these factors, the study contributes to a shift

in heritage discourse from object-centered preservation toward process-oriented interpretation in which cultural memory is sustained through spatial experience.

Another relevant contribution lies in the emphasis on material authenticity as a carrier of historical meaning. The results demonstrate that surviving layers of plaster, decorative finishes, and acoustic treatments are not merely remnants of the past, but active mediators of memory and identity. The proposed strategy of exposing, integrating, and reinterpreting these materials within a contemporary interior framework supports an understanding of adaptation as a dialogical process rather than a reconstructive one. This finding is particularly relevant in post-socialist urban contexts, where heritage interiors have often suffered from neglect, functional degradation, or insensitive alterations.

From a broader disciplinary perspective, the results validate adaptive reuse as a culturally responsible alternative to demolition and replacement, especially in historic urban centers. By demonstrating how a former cinema can be reactivated as a multifunctional cultural space without erasing its historical layers, the study provides an applied model that aligns cultural sustainability with contemporary functional and economic demands. In this sense, the findings contribute not only to academic discourse but also to professional practice and heritage policy discussions.

Despite the growing interest in adaptive reuse, the research highlights several persistent problem areas that continue to limit both theoretical development and practical implementation in this field. One of the central problematics concerns the fragmentation of disciplinary approaches. Architectural conservation, interior design, cinema history, and urban studies often operate in parallel rather than in dialogue, resulting in adaptive reuse projects that address material preservation without sufficiently engaging spatial experience, or that introduce contemporary functions without a clear understanding of historical significance. This fragmentation complicates the development of integrative methodologies capable of addressing the full complexity of heritage interiors.

Another major issue identified through the discussion of results is the tendency to prioritize visual aesthetics over spatial and acoustic integrity. In many adaptive reuse projects, especially those involving former cinema halls, interventions focus on surface treatments, decorative references, or symbolic gestures, while neglecting the deeper spatial logic that defines the character of the interior. The loss or distortion of proportions, sound behavior, and circulation patterns can undermine the very qualities that constitute the heritage value of cinema spaces. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of clear evaluative criteria for interior character within existing conservation frameworks.

The study also reveals a methodological gap in dealing with technological heritage. Early cinema interiors were shaped by specific technological regimes, particularly the transition from silent to sound film, which introduced new acoustic demands and spatial configurations. However, contemporary adaptive reuse projects often treat these technological layers as obsolete rather than historically significant. The absence of systematic approaches for interpreting and integrating technological memory into interior adaptation leads to interventions that erase critical aspects of cultural history. This problem reflects a broader challenge within heritage studies: the insufficient conceptualization of technology as a cultural value embedded in space and material.

Another problematic aspect concerns the status of authenticity in interior adaptation. Traditional conservation theory has largely focused on architectural envelopes and structural elements, leaving interior spaces in a more ambiguous position. As a result, interiors are frequently subjected to more radical transformations justified by functional or economic

arguments. The study demonstrates that such approaches risk severing the connection between space and cultural memory, particularly in buildings whose social significance is closely tied to interior experience. This raises unresolved questions about the limits of acceptable change and the criteria by which interior authenticity should be assessed.

Finally, the research exposes the lack of standardized methodological tools for translating archival and historical research into design decisions. While archival documentation is often used to justify restoration choices, the process by which historical findings inform contemporary spatial solutions remains insufficiently transparent in many projects. This opacity weakens the scholarly credibility of adaptive reuse interventions and makes it difficult to evaluate their cultural legitimacy. The absence of structured models linking research evidence to design outcomes remains a significant challenge for both academia and practice.

Building on the obtained results, several directions for further research can be identified that would contribute to the advancement of adaptive reuse theory and practice. First, there is a clear need for comparative studies examining multiple cinema buildings across different urban and cultural contexts. Such research would allow for the identification of typological patterns and variations, enabling the refinement of analytical frameworks applicable beyond individual case studies. Comparative analysis could also clarify how local social, political, and technological factors influence the character of cinema interiors and their adaptive potential.

Second, future research should further develop methodological tools for integrating technological heritage into interior adaptation. This includes systematic studies of acoustics, projection technologies, and material innovations associated with early cinema, as well as their spatial implications. By treating technological systems as integral components of cultural memory, researchers can contribute to more nuanced adaptive reuse strategies that preserve not only visual but also sensory and experiential dimensions of heritage interiors.

Another promising direction involves the expansion of material-based research methods. Detailed investigations into aging processes, material patina, and tactile perception could deepen understanding of how materials communicate historical continuity within adapted interiors. Interdisciplinary collaboration with material science and conservation technology could support the development of design strategies that balance preservation, performance, and sustainability.

Further research is also needed to elaborate evaluative criteria for interior character and thematic coherence. Developing assessment frameworks that can be applied during both design and post-occupancy phases would enhance the accountability and cultural rigor of adaptive reuse projects. Such criteria could support heritage authorities, designers, and stakeholders in making informed decisions and in articulating the cultural value of interior interventions.

Finally, future studies should explore the social reception and contemporary use of adapted cinema interiors. Investigating how users perceive, interpret, and engage with historically layered spaces would provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness of adaptive reuse strategies. This user-centered perspective could bridge the gap between scholarly interpretation and lived experience, ensuring that adaptive reuse not only preserves cultural memory but also reactivates it within contemporary urban life.

In conclusion, the discussion of results confirms that adaptive reuse of cinema interiors represents a complex and multidimensional field requiring integrated theoretical, methodological, and practical approaches. The study contributes to this field by articulating a framework that foregrounds theme and character as central instruments of interior adaptation, while also revealing key challenges and directions for future research aimed at strengthening the cultural, spatial, and experiential foundations of heritage reuse practices.

Conclusion

This paper presents the results of a two-year research period and aims to propose a possible methodology for interior design thinking and applied definitions to preserve the lost identity through the adaptive reuse of a former cinema hall.

The study demonstrates that successful adaptive reuse of a former cinema hall must be based on a multidisciplinary approach, combining archival research, reconstruction of layouts, finding the historical context, spatial logic and authentic material study and evaluation.

The importance of material analysis is great and helps identify and explain the value of surviving elements and their place in the renewed interior. It gives an image of the surviving fragments is a strong foundation for the adaptive process, strengthening memory through real materials instead of copying the past.

With precise steps, the graphics illustrate the process within the research. The results of implicated definitions form a methodology that could lead to more profound links with the history of the space, materials, structure and identity.

This approach is based on the supportive role of adaptation and the reuse of old historic structures, as a most culturally responsive practice. It gives balance and full historical integration, offering “theme “—“character” balance—a framework for similar heritage sites.

This study set out to develop and substantiate an interdisciplinary methodology for the adaptive reuse of early twentieth-century cinema interiors that preserves historical identity while enabling contemporary functional, technical, and cultural use. The conducted research demonstrates that this aim has been fully achieved through the consistent integration of archival research, spatial analysis, material investigation, and conceptual interpretation within a coherent adaptive reuse framework.

The first research objective—analysis of archival architectural documentation, historical sources, and visual materials—was successfully accomplished through the reconstruction and interpretation of original plans, photographs, and documentary evidence related to the “Excelsior” cinema. This analysis enabled the recovery of the original spatial logic, functional organization, and cultural context of the interior, establishing a reliable historical foundation for subsequent design and analytical decisions.

The second objective—examination of the spatial and structural characteristics of the cinema hall—was achieved by treating the interior as a system of interconnected spaces defined by proportions, circulation, sightlines, and acoustics. The study demonstrated that these spatial parameters constitute primary carriers of heritage value, often exceeding the significance of decorative elements. This finding confirms that the preservation of spatial logic is essential for maintaining the character and experiential identity of historic cinema interiors.

The third objective—identification and assessment of surviving material layers and decorative elements—was fulfilled through detailed material analysis of plasters, finishes, and interior details. The research established that authentic material fragments function as tangible mediators of cultural memory and identity. Their integration into the adaptive reuse strategy provided continuity between historical and contemporary layers, reinforcing the interior’s narrative authenticity without resorting to imitative reconstruction.

The fourth objective—investigation of technological transformations, particularly the transition from silent to sound cinema—was addressed by situating acoustic requirements and material adaptations within their historical and cultural context. The study demonstrated that technological heritage, especially acoustics, represents an integral dimension of cinema interiors and must be incorporated into adaptive reuse strategies as a cultural value rather than treated as a purely technical constraint.

The fifth objective—synthesis of historical, spatial, and material findings into an operative adaptation model—was achieved through the conceptualization of “theme” and “character” as methodological instruments. These concepts enabled the translation of research evidence into design logic, ensuring traceability between analytical findings and proposed interior interventions. As a result, adaptive reuse is framed not as an intuitive or stylistic act, but as an evidence-based and culturally accountable process.

Finally, the sixth objective—evaluation of adaptive reuse as a culturally responsible strategy for revitalizing historic cinema interiors—was fulfilled by demonstrating how the proposed methodology supports the reactivation of public, cultural, and social functions while preserving historical identity. The case study confirms that adaptive reuse, when grounded in interdisciplinary analysis and material authenticity, offers a viable alternative to demolition or superficial renovation, particularly in historic urban contexts.

In conclusion, the research confirms that adaptive reuse of cinema-theatre interiors constitutes a complex cultural practice requiring integrated theoretical, methodological, and design-oriented approaches. By foregrounding interior space as a culturally active system and by operationalizing the concepts of theme and character, the study contributes a transferable methodological framework applicable to similar heritage sites. The results support the understanding of adaptive reuse as a sustainable and culturally responsive practice capable of ensuring continuity of identity and renewed relevance of historic interiors in contemporary urban life.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

Table 1. A study of the elevation (Facades) images and conditions through the period 1970-2025



1 Frontal entrance facade Archive picture from NAG-Sofia



2 Frontal entrance facadePicture from 2012



3 Frontal entrance facade2025

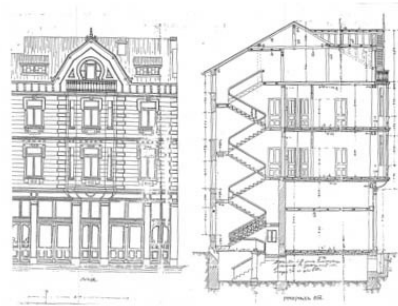


4. Side -facade-2025
(no traces from pre-existin windows)

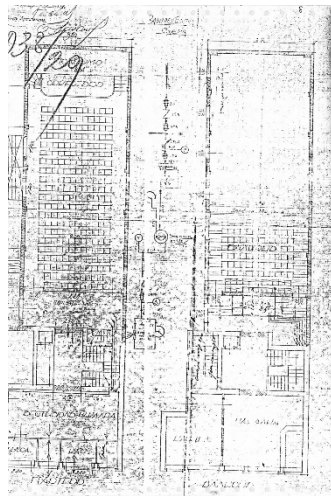


5. Side -facade-2025

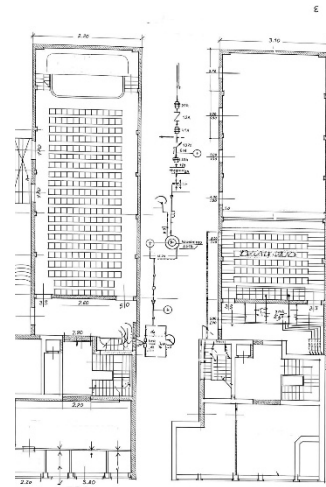
Table 2. Original and restored layouts of the cinema spaces and ground floor of the entrance level in the linked house



1. Elevation from bul. "Rockfeler". 1911. Than called "FACE"



2. Approved Original Plan-layout of level 0.00. Plan-layout of cinema balcony with electrical installation layout



3. Restored drawing of Approved Original Plan-layout of level 0.00. Restored layout of cinema balcony with electrical installation layout

Table 3. Spatial analytics of the new concept

1



The Core principal. The hall is treated as a system of interconnected spaces. The section through the hall, gives an image of:

- possible new roofing function: green roof and garden
- possible layout for the stage,
- layout for the hall
- layout for the balcony in its original capacity.

2

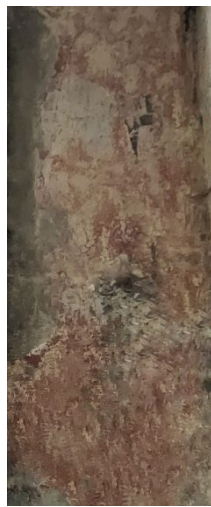


Design logic has to concern the front house, used as a gathering space and entrance.

Table 4. Gathering the pieces of time—surviving material analyses



1. Authentic layers of plaster



2. Authentic plaster + wallpaper

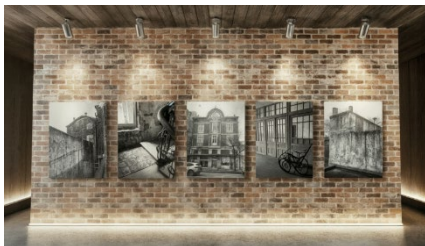


3. Decorative Gypsum board



4. Decorative ceiling plaster.

Table 5. Turning findings into an adaptation model



1. Image of interior adaptation, projecting art as a black and white photographs from artefacts from the real environment in the future interior space.



2. Image of the cinema hall, with applied authentic plaster image.



3. View from the adapted version of the stage.



Figure 1. The existing layout of the entrance level 0.00, with possible access

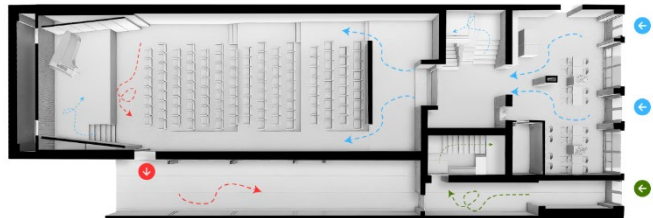


Figure 2. The adapted layout of the entrance level 0.00, with possible access

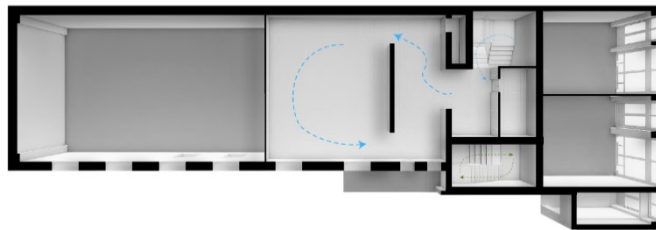


Figure 3. The existing layout of the entrance level +2.80, with possible access

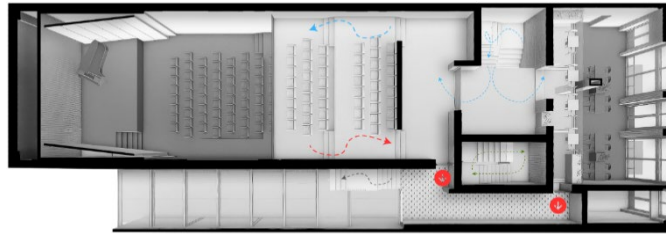


Figure 4. The adapted layout of the entrance level +2.80, with possible access

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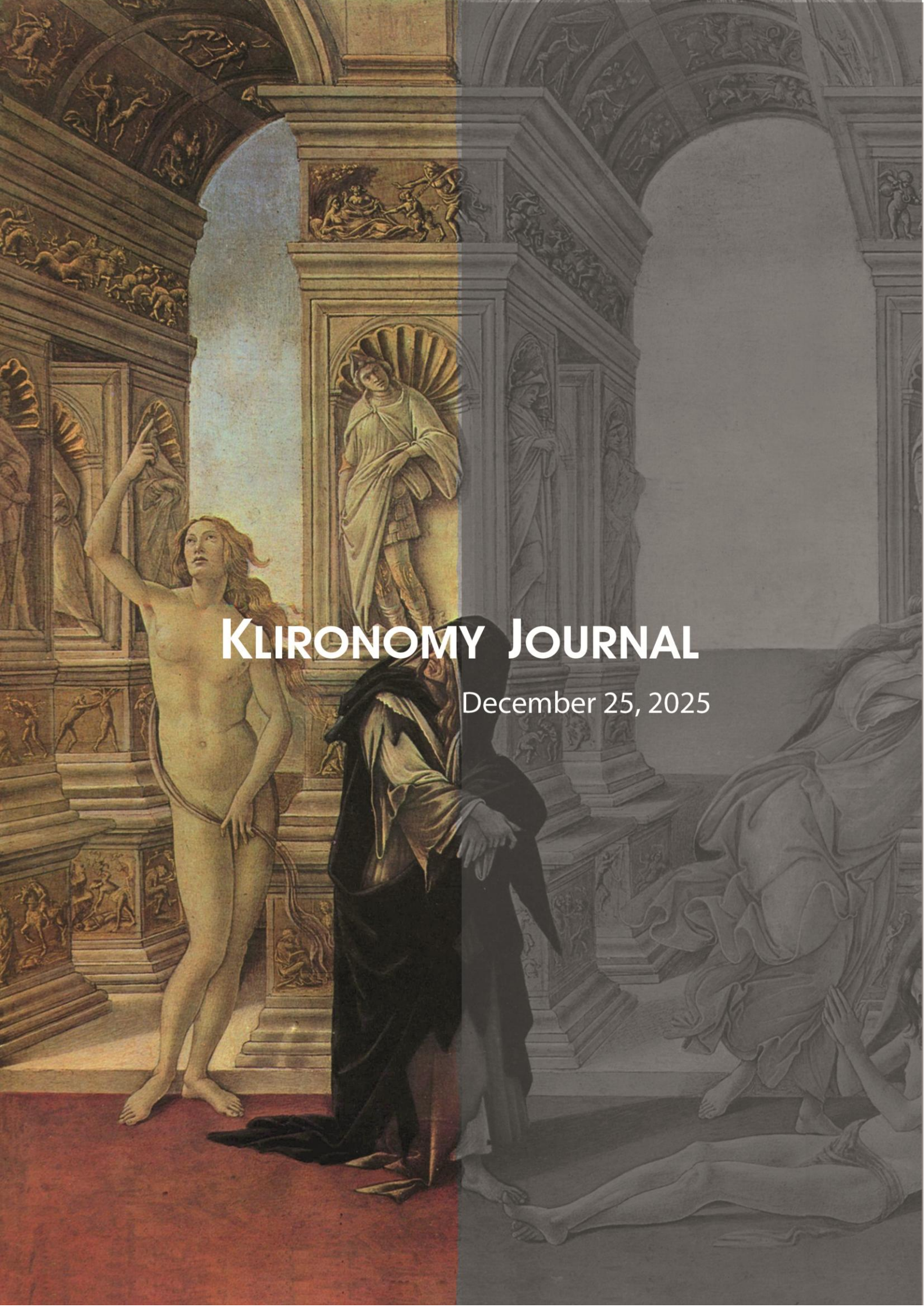
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