



Summer Study Trip “The medieval fortresses in Germany: comparative analysis in the context of heritage preservation and museum education”, August 1-12, 2016

During August 1-12 2016, a group of 13 BA and MA students from the Faculty of History and Geography of the “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University, supervised by Professor Sergiu Musteata, with the support of DAAD, made a summer study visit to Germany. During these 12 days, we visited many cities, castles, museums, universities, which gave us the opportunity to better know the history of this country, as well as the culture, mentality and lifestyle of its people. We had the opportunity to attend classes by specialists in the field, to get acquainted with new methods of protection and conservation of monuments, to visit historical exhibits.

On August 2, we had a meeting with Dr. Gabrielle Rasbach and Dr. Hans-Ulrich Vob at the German Archaeological Institute in Frankfurt. We had a guided tour through this institute, particularly through its library. The library is rich in scientific papers collected worldwide, including in Moldova. We got acquainted with methods of preserving old books that must be protected from light and moisture. Similar techniques are used in our country, although we do not have books as old as those from the Institute’s library. Then, Dr. Vob gave us an overview of his scholarly projects. In the afternoon, we visited the Archaeological Museum in Frankfurt. There we saw a Lego exhibition with scenes from the Roman period. It’s a great attraction, especially for children.





On the third day of our trip, we visited a Roman fort in Saalburg and two castles (Koningstein and Kronberg). We were able to get acquainted with their history and to admire their peculiar architecture. The fort offers a good perspective on the daily life of a Roman soldier. For the first time in our life, some of us had lunch in a tavern at a Roman fort. Even during this rainy day, which created a lot of inconveniences, we could not stop the impulse to know and see as much as possible.

August 4 also was very busy. We visited the RGZM (Romisch - Germanisches Zentralmuseum) in Mainz. We were greeted by the director, Prof. Markus Egg. He showed us some artifact restoration workshops. This allowed us to get a general overview in the field of artifact restoration. It was a great new experience for





us because in our country the necessary conditions for organizing such workshops are lacking. In addition, during the visit we discovered a unique way of presenting an exhibition. This was an original method, which included re-enacting of historical personalities, among the artifacts, by the institution's employees. The trip through the city was also very interesting. Prof. Markus Scholz showed us the most beautiful and historically important sites of the city. We were most impressed by the reconstructed ruins of a Roman amphitheater and by the devotion that the Germans have for conserving cultural heritage. The day ended with a visit to the museum of ancient ships. The processing and analysis of waterlogged wood in the museum's laboratory was also an unforgettable experience, considering the fact that the wood can be thousands years old.



On Friday, we visited the city Rudesheim on the Rhine. This is a city with a great architecture, specializing in wine production. This aspect provoked a strong sense of homeland nostalgia, because we also have a centuries-old tradition of vine cultivation and winemaking. The people here seemed cheerful and welcoming. We were deeply impressed by the museum of musical instruments in this town, which contained a big number of instruments, some dating from the nineteenth century. Many of them operate with their original mechanisms. Some of us were able to ride a cable car, admiring the beauty of the town from above. On this day we also visited two castles, Burg Sooneck and Marksburg. The geographical location of those castles is impressive, which allowed their inhabitants to better defend from enemies. It is amazing that the people in the Middle Ages could make such durable constructions at very high altitudes.

On Saturday we visited the Romisch-Germanisches Museum in the city of Cologne. Apart from a large number of exhibits, sculptures, funerary stones, the museum has conserved in situ mosaics featuring the Roman god Dionysus. The city's cathedral impressed us very much with its extraordinary stained glass windows and gothic architecture.

On 7 August 2016, we visited the following locations: Drachenfels, Schloss Drachenburg, Nibelungenhalle, and the University of Bonn. Each location taught us something new about: the role of the landscape in the construction of roads (access roads to the castle / fortress); the education system of the University of Bonn; differences between excavations carried out in Germany and Moldova; the different methods of protection and recovery of cultural heritage in Germany and the Republic of Moldova. From the point of view of a student interested





in history and cultural heritage, Schloss Drachenburg is very interesting. It is a relatively new building, dating from 1882 - 1884. The location is impressive, and the owner has preserved the spirit of the German nation, which dominated throughout the modern period. This can be seen in the paintings on the walls of the castle. At the moment, the castle is the property of the state. It is beautifully preserved, both in terms of outside infrastructure and the interior, with a lot of original furniture and glassware. This can serve as a good example for both specialists and politicians in Moldova, in terms of protecting the cultural heritage.

According to the student Natalia Guzun, the highlight of the day was the visit to the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Bonn. "The Archaeology Institute has defined its lines of research very clearly, of which the most important are: classical archaeology, Egyptian archaeology European archaeology, Mongolian archaeology etc." Natalia noted. "Compared to Moldova, we can say with regret that the Archaeological Agency works inefficiently, it has no clearly defined practical or financial policy that could contribute to archaeological scholarly research," Natalia said "The programs offered by the Institute of Archaeology in Bonn allow both professionals and students to be actively involved in its activity, so students can gain experience and specialize," the student Mariana Cebotari added.

On August 8, 2016, we visited two charming cities: Alsfeld and Erfurt. Our first impressions were that these towns have a special and unique harmony with their medieval, neoclassical and contemporary architecture. Besides the fact that these towns boast a rich historical legacy, they are clean and well maintained. It gave us the opportunity to discover some wonderful German city infrastructure. There are some medieval towns in Moldova as well. Orhei, unlike Alsfeld,



is not so well preserved, but archaeological excavations have uncovered defense walls, two churches, one stone and one wooden house and many archaeological objects. In Alsfeld everything is very well maintained, as the local population welcomes and supports the city's architectural heritage. There is also a conscious policy to preserve important cultural heritage buildings in the city.

We can say that both medieval towns are living examples for their inhabitants' love of history and architectural preservation. "I noticed that people here opt for cultural growth and heritage preservation. The focus is primarily on the local level, on a local policy of development. They invest in, exploit and promote the wealth inherited from the past, leading to ever increasing living standards. This represents a model for others. We achieved very important things in our visit to Germany. I understood that change starts from each one of us and that history needs protection. We can achieve that only by working in collaboration with each other. We must be open to the world," Olesia Cotiujanu said.

In the following days, we visited several historical sites, such as the town of Weimar, the Wartburg castle and the town of Budingén. We had the best impressions when we had the opportunity to sleep in a vintage hotel from Budingén, which was previously a monastery. Here we felt like the pilgrims from the Middle Ages, who had found shelter at night in stormy weather. The atmosphere was amazing.

The guides were very professional. The classes and guided tours that were presented during sightseeing served as a good practice in perfecting our English speaking skills. Also, this motivated us even further to improve our knowledge of foreign languages (English, German, and Russian) and to overcome language barriers.



In general, the trip was well-organized in terms of the itinerary and objectives. It was remarkable that the visit managed to combine several types of objectives: fortresses, research centers, universities. We left with very good impressions. Another strong point of this visit was that the objectives set for the students assumed knowledge of several related fields, including history, archaeology, anthropology, geography, etc. This allowed students to consolidate knowledge they already gained and make comparisons between theory and practice.

A particular aspect that we liked was the many narratives that the cultural monuments were associated with. We concluded that there are a lot of ways to attract the visitors' attention to an event or a place. The monuments that we visited are preserved and restored with authentic materials, the access roads to monuments are well kept, and everything is visitor friendly. This also shows good management of the available funds.

The main goal of the visit, from our point of view, was to analyze how conservation and protection of cultural heritage is organized in Germany and to borrow relevant elements in this respect. It is a good experience, which, we hope, will help us to make changes in our country, applying the German model. During the study visit to Germany, we learned the history of the visited cities, museums, castles; we became familiar with the archaeological and science projects carried out by archaeologists in the discovery of Roman cities in Germany; we found out about new techniques for restoration of glass, wood, metal; we acquired new perspectives to promote cultural heritage. We also became acquainted with new models of planning interactive museums, including museums arranged directly on site. We were exposed to museum activities meant to attract the pub-



lic, featuring practical conservation of historical monuments, e.g., Roman walls left intact in the underground car park in Cologne, the museum in Saalburg etc. During our trip, we have noticed new methods of interactive guided tours and techniques to capture the tourists' attention. We analyzed the education of European citizens in the spirit of cultural heritage protection. Finally, we learned from the local population the right way to combine freedom with responsibility. This study visit to Germany was the first experience of this kind for most of us, our first visit to another European country, apart from Romania. During this visit, we learned many good and useful things that will serve as a guide for a lifetime. Apart from issues related to our specialty (history, archaeology, castles, museums, and cultural heritage) we were profoundly impressed by German culture, infrastructure, city architecture, transportation etc. We liked the behavior of the locals. We liked their simplicity, openness and sincerity. The way we were welcomed on the first afternoon by our colleagues from the Archaeological Institute in Frankfurt should be particularly emphasized. The frequent use of bicycles also deserves appreciation, as well as the setting up of special areas for this type of transport.

Finally, we would like to thank our DAAD partners, without whom this trip would not have been possible. We also want to give our thanks to Mrs. Yevheniya Kralyuk – the guide who was with us during these 12 days, providing us with detailed information. We are open to new ideas for collaboration and we will urge our peers to participate in such projects in order to improve their professional skills.

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