

## HEIMATMUSEUM IN OSIJEK

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### INTRODUCTION

The history of museum institutions in Osijek until recently was limited to the history of the Museum of Slavonia (originally the Museum of the Free and Royal City of Osijek), which, for the first half-century of its existence, had an isolated status across the entire eastern Croatian region. Due to the enduring presence of this institution, or rather the lack of similar ones, a wide variety of cultural heritage items with diverse provenance accumulated within it. Over the course of a century and a half, internal challenges – such as operating in “inadequate” rather than proper facilities, with insufficient equipment and limited personnel – were occasionally compounded by external hardships caused by the whims of Mars, resulting in the museum sometimes having to close its doors entirely, as it was during World War I when it was requisitioned for use as a hospital for the wounded. The situation during World War II was much more complicated and dangerous due to the threat of permanent closure of the museum under the pressure of National Socialist ideology, which sought to Germanize everything, including the rich cultural heritage in the museum of a city that was destined to become the future capital of Donauland. With the aim to

appropriate cultural heritage as an institutional tool, the newly established German local history museum – called the Heimatmuseum in Osijek at the beginning of the war was intended to serve this purpose. Its brief existence, the harsh confrontations between the new communist authorities and key figures of the previous regime, and the general post-war tabooing of wartime events in the city contributed to the museum’s obscurity. It has only recently been mentioned, but in passing and as part of broader thematic discussions.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the increasingly inferior position of cultural institutions as the war progressed, the short existence of the museum, the unknown postwar fates of some participants, the small number of preserved museum objects, and the destroyed archival materials, it is difficult to present a systematic history of the German museum in Osijek. Furthermore, it is particularly challenging to determine the exact number and type of objects housed in the museum, so only a rough outline of this unique phenomenon can be constructed from the partially preserved sources.

### THE INCEPTION OF THE IDEA FOR THE MUSEUM’S FOUNDING

The establishment of the Heimatmuseum did not just happen *ad hoc* after the entry of the German army into the city and the beginning of wartime conditions. To the contrary, it was a prepared move by the German community and a symbolic expression of the change in the social and political climate, similar to, for example, the change of the city’s official name to Osijek – Esseg.<sup>2</sup> When it occurred, it was certainly the result of the local desire of

the German community and a broader plan approved in Germany at that time. However, the very idea of establishing such a museum in Osijek dates back to the pre-war period and developed gradually in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as did everything else related to the awakening of national consciousness among Germans, the search for minority rights and self-organization to preserve their national identity. These efforts were further encouraged by events in the mother country. In other words, the development of the museum from idea to establishment should be viewed in the context of the transition of Germans from fighting on the cultural and educational front to fighting on the political front.

The first proposal for the establishment of the German local heritage museum was submitted by Stjepan Frauenheim<sup>3</sup> on December 8, 1937, during a meeting of the Cultural and Charitable Association of Germans (German: Kultur- und Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Deutschen),<sup>4</sup> founded a year earlier in Osijek. The proposal was accepted, and at the same meeting, a working committee was established for this purpose (Stjepan Frauenheim, Franz Holzschuh, Franz Groß and Adam Gerard).<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of 1938, he informed his colleagues from the Association, who had been involved in various ways with the City Museum<sup>6</sup> (Archaeological Club *Mursa*) and with whom he had been since the club's inception in 1933, that "the German nationals are establishing their own museum, and they have chosen him as the director. He would donate numerous collections, which contain valuable objects for the history of Osijek."<sup>7</sup> However, nothing substantial was done towards the actual establish-

ment of the museum until the beginning of the war.<sup>8</sup> It was only the distinctive Alois (Lujo) Plein<sup>9</sup> who proposed an exhibition of works by Hugo Conrad von Hötzendorf<sup>10</sup> for May 1940, to be held at the German community home, which was then located at the address Zagrebačka Street 25, in one of the family houses. The association at that time had modest means, as evidenced by their request for contributions for the planned exhibition ("einen kleinen Betrag").<sup>11</sup> Cultural activities intensified during the war, when the preconditions for the establishment of the museum were, controversially, somehow met – space, materials, and financial resources.

Thus, the idea of establishing a regional national museum came from non-professional individuals, amateurs, while its realization required someone more qualified. However, since the Association, and later the German community, consisted of not many intellectuals,<sup>12</sup> they had to be found outside of Osijek. By chance, two individuals with the same name and surname were found, both of whose work related to cultural heritage. The first was German archaeologist Robert Rudolf Schmidt, who had been in Croatia, specifically in Vukovar, since 1938, working on archaeological excavations at Vučedol. He is known for discovering the Vučedol Dove/Partridge and numerous other important artifacts. Most notably he was known as an expert who promoted and made this prehistoric culture widely known after the war when, although completed in 1940, he published the major work on the research *Die Burg Vučedol* (Zagreb, 1945). He was broadly educated, an expert in archaeology, geology, ethnology, art history and psychology, with experience in founding institutions

(Institute for Prehistory in Tübingen) and organizing museum exhibitions at the Institute and elsewhere (Stuttgart, *Die Kunst unserer Vorzeit*, 1920). Even then, his unfulfilled goal was to build a central institute for the study of Central European prehistory. He already had museum experience in Croatia, as an exhibition was organized in Zagreb in 1939 consisting of 84 crates of extraordinary items from Vučedol. After all this, he proposed the establishment of the State Institute for Yugoslav Prehistory in Belgrade and, within this framework, cooperation between the museums in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Belgrade, and discussed the scope, goals and issues concerning the building, staff and funding.<sup>13</sup> The second Rudolf Schmidt was a historian from Novi Sad, where he worked at the Vojvodina Archives. Before the war, he had already made significant contributions to the history of Vojvodina, but he was also known in Croatia for the *Ilok Statute* from 1525, which was found in Vienna and published in Zagreb.<sup>14</sup> Among his other interests, he also researched the history of Jews in Vojvodina.

The brief history of the Heimatmuseum will thus be closely connected with three main individuals: one amateur (Plein) and two experts (archaeologist Schmidt and historian Schmidt).

## WAR AND THE HEIMATMUSEUM

The consequences of the radical political and social upheaval were beginning to be felt by all citizens of Osijek, with the most severe impact on those of Jewish descent, whose dignity was first threatened, followed by their property, and ul-

timately their very lives. In the escalating violence, the persecution of art owners<sup>15</sup> began within the first month of the war. It was carried out by some members of the newly established (April 13, 1941)<sup>16</sup> German National Group in the Independent State of Croatia (Deutsche Volksgruppe in Unabhängigen Staat Kroatien), with which the institutions of the Ustasha regime<sup>17</sup> would be in a simmering conflict, especially concerning cultural heritage. The first recorded cases of the expropriation of art objects are particularly illustrative, as they generally reflect the power dynamics of that time, the manner and direction of actions toward certain owners, legal irregularity and uncertainty, and the confusion of local authorities in dealing with the situation. Given the identification of the owners, the preserved items in museums from these events and official records in the archives, it can be concluded that the aftermath of these incidents still persists today, leaving the status of these artworks unresolved.

Since the repercussions of these events appear to be serious, it is necessary to present them in more detail within the context of the time, sources and contemporaries' perspectives.

The beginning of the looting of artworks from apartments in Osijek, after the German army entered the city on April 11, 1941, varies somewhat according to witnesses and sources. The claim by journalist Ivan Flod that the looting of artworks began immediately, mainly in the apartments of Jews and Serbs, and under the "expert" supervision of Lujo Plein, who knew where the most valuable artworks were located,<sup>18</sup> can only be partially accurate in that Plein knew where the most valuable collections were

kept. However, this information was also known to any member of the Archaeological Club *Mursa*, as this was frequently discussed among the club members, who were, in fact, contemporary artists (e.g., Ivan Roch, Josip Zorman, Mihajlo Živić and Josip Leović), as well as prominent Osijek collectors like Hermann Weissmann,<sup>19</sup> who was once a member of the Board of Directors and Supervisory Board of the club.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, one of the first two victims of this looting was neither Jewish nor Serbian. It was, in fact, Ivan Govorković (Govorkovich), the owner of the *Pharmacy of Mary, Help of Christians* in Desatičina Street, who was officially recorded as a Roman Catholic, as was his wife Irma (Maria), née Sozeszler,<sup>21</sup> who seemed to have been a greater collector than her husband.<sup>22</sup> On May 28, he formally complained in writing to the City Council of Osijek, stating that about five weeks earlier, Plein, a certain Piller, Jr. and two other unknown individuals had knocked on his door.<sup>23</sup> Without any order or confirmation from the competent authorities, they categorically demanded that he hand over a painting by the artist Aron<sup>24</sup> depicting “a man with two horses in a winter landscape”<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 1)<sup>26</sup>, which he was forced to do. He further adds: “My late wife, seriously ill at the time, got out of bed, went to the staircase, and handed them the painting. When she asked for a written receipt, they stated that she would receive it later, which never happened.”<sup>27</sup> A similar complaint was filed ten days earlier (on May 17) by another pharmacist, Hugo Fuchs, who owned the *Pharmacy of St. Trinity* on Županijska Street.<sup>28</sup> He stated that Plein had taken three paintings by the artist Mücke<sup>29</sup> from his apartment at the address Stross-

mayerova 14 about three weeks earlier, without any official confirmation:

1. “Dr. Garconi, former doctor in Đakovo (size approximately 30 x 40), oil painting”<sup>30</sup> (Fig. 2)
2. “Girl, daughter of the former director of the bishop’s estates in Đakovo (in an oval), oil painting”<sup>31</sup> (Fig. 3)
3. “Parish priest or canon Anaković from Đakovo, oil painting approximately 20 x 30 cm”<sup>32</sup> (Fig. 4).

He also added: “In addition to the mentioned paintings, Mr. Plein Lujo took an old diploma of Dr. Garconi from my apartment” (Fig. 5).<sup>33</sup> Fuchs’ complaint seems to have left the city administration taken aback, as on the very same day, the paper *Hrvatski list (Croatian Newspaper)* published, in fact their own, brief article titled *Mandatory Registration of Old Art and Historical Monuments with the City Museum*. Based on the legal provision number LXXVIII-1935. Z. p. / 1941. from May 15, 1941, all citizens of Osijek who possessed art, cultural-historical, and “natural heritage” were urged to register them with the museum curator, Franjo Buntak, PhD, within 48 hours. The City Administration was to decide what would be stored in the museum. Offenders, who would not cooperate, were facing up to five years in prison and fines. The article then detailed the types of items demanded for registration: paintings, drawings, sculptures, items of artistic craftsmanship, numismatic collections, old charters, documents, old books, etc.<sup>34</sup> The article was written by Buntak, but it was actually a proclamation from Osijek’s mayor and president of the Archaeological Club *Mursa*, Milan Blažeković,<sup>35</sup> who later stated in the Archaeological Club *Mursa* (on June 3, 1941) that the submissions were

made by Jews and some Croats,<sup>36</sup> and that the public would be given a chance for subsequent submissions. Some citizens sent lists of what they owned to Buntak, that is, the Museum, as soon as the article appeared in *Hrvatski list* (on May 17, 1941), while others personally came to report their artworks. Greater collectors, such as lawyer Hermann Weissmann and pharmacist Ivan Govorković, eventually donated their collections to the Osijek Museum. Weissmann did so because he foresaw what would ultimately happen, a fact he already indicated in his memo to Buntak, while Govorković followed his wife's final wish. Plein, who had been collecting artworks from houses for several days and, as we have seen, forcibly took some – all while attending meetings of *Mursa* – believed that the mayor's invitation in the newspaper did not align with the government's *Legal Provision on the Prohibition of the Alienation and Export* and thus requested an interpretation of the *Provision*.<sup>37</sup> German circles ignored the *Provision*, believing that items of German origin should be entrusted to the State Leadership of the German National Group in Croatia (Landesleitung der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Kroatien) as the competent authority, rather than the museum. After all, they had already organized the painting exhibition *Deutsche Malkunst in Kroatiens-Slawonien 1800-1941*, which lasted from June 1 to 15, 1941, and was accompanied by a catalogue (Fig. 6). Buntak and Blažeković visited the exhibition and recorded some comments in their memo to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Education.<sup>38</sup> They noted that two of the stolen paintings were exhibited – *Parish Priest Anaković* and *Girl* – with the first one marked in the exhibition catalogue's

appendix<sup>39</sup> (entry no. 51) as the property of the *Deutsches Heimatmuseum*. The second painting was not listed in the appendix, and its ownership was not indicated, but it was reproduced in the catalogue itself (Franz Mücke, *Mädchenbildnis*).<sup>40</sup> It is also noted that the other two stolen paintings were not exhibited, even though they would have been appropriate for the exhibition based on their characteristics. An interesting observation is that *Skizzenbuch von der Wanderschaft durch Syrmien II* (entry no. 33 in the catalogue's appendix) is also marked as the property of the *Deutsches Heimatmuseum*, although Hermann Weissmann, during his submission of items to the City Museum, verbally stated that this work was similarly stolen, just like those of Govorković and Fuchs. With this knowledge and the complaints in hand, Buntak and Blažeković requested instructions and responses from the Ministry on how to handle the German National Group:

- Are members of the German national minority obliged to report artworks and historical items regardless of origin, and who has the authority to oversee this – the City Administration or the leadership of the German minority?
- Should behavior such as that depicted in the lawsuits be allowed, or should action be taken against such perpetrators and those who have already committed these acts?
- Can artworks stolen from private residences in the manner described in the lawsuits be considered the property of the German National Group (the file refers to "Kulturbund")?

The City Council, specifically Buntak and Blažeković, further requested responses

and indicated that they would reissue the *Order on the reporting of antiques, artworks, historical, and natural monuments* in the newspapers. They noted that a new regulation would be required if there was a need to list items belonging to Jews and Serbs. From the freely translated content of the memo, it is clear that Buntak (City Museum) and Blažeković (City Administration) are seeking legal grounds for any actions concerning the artworks of citizens, while the German National Group shows no concern about this matter. This issue sparked a dispute between Buntak and Plein in the forum of the Archaeological Club *Mursa*, where Plein advocated for entering Jewish homes and sealing items of archaeological and artistic value, to which Buntak responded that there was no legal provision or legal basis for such actions. Plein replied that cultural assets of German origin were not to be considered in this context, only those of Croatian origin.<sup>41</sup> In the background, a conflict between pro-Croatian and pro-German factions within the club was intensifying. After the events that took place in early June 1941, Buntak had had enough and resigned later that month, taking up a new position in Zagreb.<sup>42</sup> He was succeeded by the retired professor and Osijek historian Josip Bösendorfer, who took on an even greater burden than Buntak in addressing issues related to cultural heritage.<sup>43</sup>

With Buntak's departure, Plein seemed to have withdrawn as well, now quietly dedicating himself fully to organizing art exhibitions<sup>44</sup> at the Heimatmuseum<sup>45</sup> and working at the Office for Art and Science (Amt für Kunst und Wissenschaft), where he was appointed by Branimir Altgayer as the head.<sup>46</sup> Due to the need for a more specialized person at the museum, histori-

an Schmidt, who had worked for a time at the Office for Statistics (Amt für Statistik) of the German National Group, was appointed as the director at the end of 1942. He also became the head of the museum's Department of History (Geschichtliche Abteilung des Heimatmuseums). He was assigned an apartment in the house of Bela Friedmann, another former Jewish property, which had been seized after its owner was sent to a concentration camp. Archaeologist Schmidt would also play a role in the Heimatmuseum's operations, but in adapting it to his own needs, particularly with his desire to continue archaeological research in Sarvaš, near Osijek. To do this, he first needed to find funding, so he turned to powerful figures in the Reich, such as Walther Wüst, PhD, the rector of the Munich University and director of the research society Das Ahnenerbe,<sup>47</sup> to explain the importance of his work, which shed new light on the cultural connections between pre-Hellenistic Greece and the North. Since Schmidt's intentions were supported locally by the German National Group, Plein's task was to make himself available to Schmidt, which he enthusiastically accepted, as it was the only scientific work that the Office for Art and Science had the opportunity to support. At the end of 1941, the leadership of the group found and provided Schmidt with a house at Zagrebačka Street 7, close to their headquarters. Schmidt's connection to the Heimatmuseum was most evident in his intention to place future archaeological finds in that museum, rather than in the City Museum in Osijek, as he had previously arranged with Viktor Hoffiller, the director of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. Hoffiller told him that everything must be approved and

in accordance with Croatian laws on the protection of cultural heritage,<sup>48</sup> to which Schmidt agreed, acknowledging state control and the retention of the finds within the country. The costs of the excavation, which would last two years, would be considerable, while the German National Group was spending its resources on equipping his house, where he established the Institute for Prehistory (Institut für Vorgeschichte), a place for processing and preparing findings before publication. When, in early July 1942, two important figures from Ahnenerbe arrived in Osijek from Berlin, Schmidt introduced them to his plan for the establishment – in fact, the legal establishment – of the German Heimatmuseum, where he intended to present his findings, circumventing the original agreement.<sup>49</sup> For this reason, he expected some financial assistance from the Heimatmuseum, considering that the excavation was in the interest of the museum due to the planned placement of the findings there, rather than in the Osijek City Museum. Although this was meant to be an important part of enriching the museum's collection, it also needed, or at least should have had, other departments, such as a museum, gallery, archives and library. Thus, Plein, alongside paintings, began collecting furniture, old posters, newspapers, documents, archaeological and ethnographic items, etc., mostly of German characteristics. As evident, his office and the Heimatmuseum were the most active in the years 1941 and 1942 in organizing art exhibitions.<sup>50</sup> However, the problem was that such exhibitions could be set up, while the work of a real museum was not possible without meeting basic material conditions and a statute aligned with Croatian laws, approved by the

Croatian authorities. On the other hand, archaeologist Schmidt was in a hurry due to the Sarvaš findings accumulating in his house. Therefore, he began writing the statute himself, and later, following the instructions of leader Altgayer, he used statutes of the Sarajevo and Zagreb museums as models.<sup>51</sup>

It became clear to Hoffiller, unofficially the main figure in Croatia for museum matters, that there would be problems with the Heimatmuseum regarding jurisdiction and the rights to specific museum objects. Therefore, in June 1942, he arrived in Osijek to continue the implementation of what had been started on February 26, 1942, when the Osijek City Municipality transferred the museum collections, museum library, painting collection, and archive into state ownership to protect them from the Germans.<sup>52</sup> They were suspicious that nationalization was being carried out only in Osijek, although it had been announced for all city museums in the Independent State of Croatia. When Hoffiller ordered the newspapers to be transferred from the museum's storage in the building of the elementary school in New Town, which was predominantly inhabited by Germans, to the museum building, the local leader of the group, Skreptschuk, concluded that they would be hidden or burned, since the oldest ones were mostly in German. He also speculated about how Hoffiller would transfer all the stone monuments to Zagreb.<sup>53</sup> It seems that everything was slowly turning into a race against time for the German side as well, which, through higher instances, was exerting pressure on the Independent State of Croatia's authorities to confirm the statute as quickly as possible.<sup>54</sup> The pressure was successful, and the Ministry

of National Education of the Independent State of Croatia approved the statute in a very short time, on December 4, 1942.<sup>55</sup> At that time, historian Rudolf Schmidt, PhD from Novi Sad was appointed as the museum director, while Plein organized visits for German students and Germans from outside Osijek to the museum, where an exhibition of period furniture, artworks, documents, and other items related to German culture was set up from the museum's collection.<sup>56</sup>

Just when archaeologist Schmidt's work ran into a crisis in 1943 due to a lack of funds, Ahnenerbe contacted him, requesting the completion of the work in Croatia and his return to Germany to present the results. This was not convenient for him at the time, as he no longer had a job or a place to live there.<sup>57</sup> He would only leave after the major Allied bombing of the Lower Town of Osijek in June 1944. At that time, the findings from Sarvaš, along with items from the Heimatmuseum, were being prepared for shipment to Germany due to deteriorating conditions. The Sarvaš material was packed into six crates, with one crate containing items from other excavation sites. Before leaving, Schmidt handed over the crates to the local branch of the group (Unterdrau), which then passed them on to the Heimatmuseum. From Germany, archaeologist Schmidt wrote to historian Schmidt, requesting the urgent shipment of all the material to Vienna, from where it would be further transported as military cargo to Marquartstein on the Austrian border, where he was at the time.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, the director of the Heimatmuseum received an order to travel to Germany for three months in order to handle the shipment of materials from Croatia.<sup>59</sup> In the

end, the items from the Heimatmuseum and archaeological materials were shipped from Croatia in two shipments. The first shipment left at the beginning of November 1944 to the Lämberg Castle (Czech Republic), which was then under the German forestry administration, and the second shipment followed in the next few days to the same location. The preparator from the Heimatmuseum painted some crates due to a lack of new ones, changing their labels, which later caused confusion in the inventories and misunderstandings with other custodians of the materials in the castle who had received items from different directions. In total, there were 107 crates of material from Osijek,<sup>60</sup> of which 35 contained the so-called political archive of the German National Group, while Rudolf Schmidt's books were stored in 49 crates. There were also several crates containing archival documents, Robert Rudolf Schmidt's reference library, crates with archaeological findings, crates with paintings from the Heimatmuseum's gallery, one private crate from Hans Nemeth (Geschäftsführer) with paintings, and one filing box belonging to Rudolf Schmidt with 180,000 index cards, filled with information on the history of German settlement in the southern Danube region.<sup>61</sup> The Lämberg Castle, where R. Schmidt and his family were housed, was supposed to serve as temporary accommodation until the end of the war. In the meantime, Schmidt was to engage in scientific analysis of the objects, and his salary was to continue coming in from Osijek. By the end of the war and for months afterward, nothing was heard in Osijek about the fate of the items from the Heimatmuseum, and the people connected to the German museum had disappeared. The State Museum

in Osijek immediately began the search for the looted archaeological and other items that belonged to the citizens of Osijek, seeking restitution. Referring to the decision of the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia from February 29, 1945, regarding the protection and preservation of cultural monuments and antiquities, the museum requested the presence of the Administration of State Goods in Osijek during the opening of, among other things, the apartments of key individuals – R. R. Schmidt (Zagrebačka Street) and Lujo Plein (Kapucinska Street).<sup>62</sup> He suggested to the competent authorities to interrogate Plein, as he was considered to be knowledgeable about the fate of the items from the Heimatmuseum and the Sarvaš findings, due to his former role as the head of the Office for Art and Science of the German National Group.<sup>63</sup> News about the missing items did not surface until the summer of 1946, when rumors began circulating that they were in Belgrade. Danica Pinterović informed Hoffiller, her former professor and reinstated director of the Archaeological Museum, that the items were said to be in the Committee for Culture and Art of the Government of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Hoffiller immediately notified the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia, which officially contacted the Committee in Belgrade. The response they received stated that there were no historical excavations there. Following this reply from Belgrade, Hoffiller advised the Ministry of Education to have someone investigate further on their next travels to Belgrade on official business.<sup>64</sup> However, the following month (in October), it was confirmed that the items were

indeed in the Committee for Culture and Art of the Government. The total repatriated collection consisted of 111 crates that had arrived at the Committee under unknown circumstances at the end of 1945.<sup>65</sup> However, the Secretary of the Committee, Vlado Madarić, officially informed the Osijek museum that the objects had been in their possession only since October 21, 1946.<sup>66</sup> Due to the large volume of material from the Zagreb Archaeological Museum, several staff members were sent to assist with sorting and cataloguing the items.<sup>67</sup> The Committee appointed a Commission for Reviewing the Repatriated Material, consisting of curators from the Belgrade Art Museum, the director of the Zagreb Archaeological Museum, Viktor Hoffiller, PhD, an official from the Committee, and Marko Maletin, PhD, the director of the State Archives in Novi Sad. The Commission established that out of the 111 crates, eight had already been opened and catalogued. According to the inventory, the crates contained 21 boxes of archaeological and museum material, two pieces of equipment, 66 crates of library and archival material, five crates of writing and drawing materials, six crates of manuscript material, and eleven crates of private belongings. Additionally, 18 paintings, oil on canvas, were separately packed in paper.<sup>68</sup> Hoffiller suggested that sixteen crates of archaeological material from Sarvaš and Vučedol, as well as two crates with paintings by Waldinger, Hötzendorf and Mücke, be sent to Zagreb.<sup>69</sup> Hoffiller proposed that the sixteen crates containing archaeological material from Sarvaš and Vučedol, as well as two crates with paintings by Waldinger, Hötzendorf, and Mücke, be sent to Zagreb. It was suggested that the remaining two crates with

paintings be allocated to the Osijek museum, as the paintings originated from there, and one crate of old weapons was proposed for the Military Museum in Belgrade. For the Belgrade Art Museum, it was proposed to allocate five crates of writing and drawing materials and two crates of equipment, while Zorka Simić-Milovanović requested one more painting by Pavel Đurković, a Serbian 19<sup>th</sup>-century artist whose works were already housed in the museum. Marko Maletin proposed that all archival and historical documents be handed over to the Archives of Vojvodina in Novi Sad, explaining that they had been taken from the State Archives in Novi Sad – Petrovaradin, what it was formerly called. He also requested manuscripts and notes of Rudolf Schmidt and books relating to the history of Vojvodina and Hungary. Regarding this proposal, the Commission suggested forming a new committee to review and sort this material. Finally, the Commission left the decision on the fate of the eleven crates of R. Schmidt's private belongings to the Government Committee.<sup>70</sup> From the list accompanying the commission's report, it can be seen that the largest number of crates contained books – 42 of them. In the end, the Committee made an official decision to transfer eighteen crates, from Hoffiller's proposal, to the Department of Culture and Art of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia, which would then distribute them between the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb and the museum in Osijek.<sup>71</sup> The crates were immediately shipped to Zagreb, but the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia appointed a Commission for the Division of the Repatriated Material only on July 14, 1948, because

an exhibition of findings from Sarvaš was held at the Archaeological Museum, which lasted almost the entire summer of 1948.<sup>72</sup> The division of the material was done in two stages. First, paintings were handed over to the Osijek museum (on July 19, 1948),<sup>73</sup> and then the archaeological material (on August 11, 1948).

The compiled list reveals paintings stolen from Ivan Govorković ("7. Toni Aron, oil on canvas, return in winter") and Hugo Fuchs ("17. Mücke, oil on canvas, girl, 18. Mücke, oil on canvas, portrait of parish priest anaković"). The portrait of Joseph Garzonj is not explicitly listed, but it could, for example, be hidden under the entry or serial number "13. unknown master, male portrait." Garzonj's diploma does not belong to this collection of artworks, and it is unclear how it ended up in the museum. Subsequently, some written materials, such as those from archaeologist Schmidt, arrived, but without any list or handover, so the possibility of such a method of arrival cannot be excluded. Bösendorfer later learned that some items (paintings and drawings of Slavonian towns and castles, sphragistic and diplomatic material) had mistakenly ended up in Novi Sad, and so he requested their return to Osijek from the Committee for Culture and Art. The Committee rejected this as an unfounded assumption.<sup>74</sup> This completes the overall picture of how the repatriated material was distributed.

In the post-war period, historian Rudolf Schmidt continued to stay in the Lämberg Castle for a while, from where he sought to return to the new, communist Yugoslavia. For this purpose, on July 25, 1945,<sup>75</sup> he filled out a questionnaire from the newly established Yugoslav representation in Prague. In it, he stated that he had been

appointed the director of the museum of the German National Group in Osijek and had excavated a prehistoric settlement in Sarvaš in 1942 and 1943. Although historian Schmidt had indeed worked with the archaeologist in the field, it was only in his capacity as the director of the institution that partially funded those excavations. Among his claims, he mentioned how he had saved the archive of the Serbian National Council in Novi Sad, thus saving the lives of many distinguished Serbs from Hungarian revenge. It is unclear what exactly he meant by this, but he continued by saying that he had also saved an individual, Lieutenant Bingulac, from the Ustasha, and when he was arrested by the Germans, Schmidt intervened with the military authorities on his behalf, though, as he noted, unsuccessfully. Instead of receiving approval to return, Schmidt was declared a war criminal in absentia by the Yugoslav Embassy, accused of looting cultural goods, and was arrested in Czechoslovakia and placed in a camp in October/November 1945. However, Yugoslavia did not request his extradition for a trial. He was not extradited to Yugoslavia, and his further fate remains unknown.<sup>76</sup>

The archaeologist Robert Rudolf Schmidt passed away on March 14, 1950, in Marquartstein, Bavaria.

## CONCLUSION

The German national and local museum in Osijek – Heimatmuseum – was conceived during peacetime as a means of preserving the national identity and cultural heritage of Germans in Osijek and Slavonia. In such a time, it might have functioned as a heritage institution despite organizational problems and the fact that the German

population in Slavonia had assimilated much more than in Vojvodina, which meant less support for such ideas. These problems carried over into the wartime period, which might explain why the realization of the museum idea was reduced to just a few individuals, such as Alois Plein. For example, the heirs of painter Adolf Waldinger were eager to donate and sell his works to the museum, but no one directly participated in the establishment of the museum. National Socialist doctrine and anti-Semitism fuelled the looting of artworks, which unnecessarily endangered the most vulnerable and strained relations with Croatian cultural circles. The feigned rigidity and monolithism of the German National Group in everything, including the structure of cultural institutions, would have been laughable and comical if not for the tragedies it caused, as shown by the case of an elderly woman from Lower Town who was reported for saying that fascist flags were as red as Bolshevik ones. Excessive offices and the attempt to gain complete control over life, including cultural matters, hid the true state of affairs. As one internal inspection at the end of 1943 revealed, the museum had neither registries nor inventories, let alone work logs, so everything had to be rebuilt from scratch.<sup>77</sup> This also caused far-reaching problems with the identification of items to this day. The question remains how the City Museum could make inventories of thousands of books, while the Heimatmuseum couldn't even catalogue its paintings. The answer may lie in the sentimental connection or lack of connection to the cultural heritage items. The activity of archaeologist Robert Rudolf Schmidt in the Heimatmuseum was entirely incidental. He subordinated ev-

erything to archaeology, which is why he never selected collaborators from whom he wouldn't gain benefits for his work and research. How else could one explain his simultaneous association with an SS officer, Sievers, who was sentenced to death at the Nuremberg Trials, and making mocking comments about the German army? Historian Rudolf Schmidt worked relentlessly on his career, accepting director positions and fleeing from situations and places where he couldn't gain privileges. He left chaos behind in Novi Sad, and did the same in Osijek.

All in all, it is difficult to find a more controversial cultural institution in the history of the city of Osijek than the Heimatmuseum. It started with promise, but ended poorly, as did the fate of all its collaborators.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ante Grubišić, "Arheolog dr. Robert Rudolf Schmidt u Hrvatskoj," *Osječki zbornik* 26 (2002): 107–131; Ante Grubišić, "Zasluge dr. Josipa Bösendorfera u spašavanju kulturne baštine tijekom i neposredno nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata," in: *Intelektualci i rat 1939.–1947.: Zbornik radova s međunarodnog skupa Desničini susreti 2012.*, dio 1., eds. Drago Roksandić and Ivana Cvijović Javorina (Zagreb: FF Press, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 2013), 487–508; Ante Grubišić, "Spašavanje kulturne baštine tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata i poraća na osječkom području," *Povijest u nastavi* 33, no. 1 (2022): 245–276.

<sup>2</sup> According to one from a series of provisions ("on the recognition and establishment of German place names") dated October 30, 1941, concerning the rights of Germans in the Independent State of Croatia. The document is a manuscript long ago provided by the late Nikola Mak, then president of the German National Community (Volksdeutsche Gemeinschaft) in Osijek. See: Ivan Flod, *Opkoljeni Osijek* (Osijek: ms., s. a.), 37.

<sup>3</sup> Frauenheim was a well-known Osijek journalist, critic, editor and newspaper publisher during the interwar period. However, during the war, he became overtly antisemitic, publishing works reflecting such views. As a "specialist on Jewish issues," he moved to Zagreb in 1942 to work in the press office. Immediately after the war, he was convicted and executed by firing squad. *Arheološki klub "Mursa": zapisnici sjednica 1933.-1944.*, ed. Ante Grubišić (Osijek: Muzej Slavonije, 2005), 219.

<sup>4</sup> The association was founded in 1936 as a countermeasure to the previously established Kulturbund, headquartered in Novi Sad. It was founded by Branimir Altgayer, whom Flod refers to as the modest secretary of the Horse Breeding Society in Osijek. In reality, however, Altgayer was a trained officer of the Austro-Hungarian army, a politically wavering figure in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the son-in-law of the wealthier Osijek merchant family Černuta. He also held civilian jobs, one of which is mentioned by Flod. Altgayer was convicted and executed in 1950 in Zagreb. For more, see: Flod, *Opkoljeni Osijek*, 11; Vladimir Geiger, "Saslušanje Branimira Altgayera vođe Njemačke narodne skupine u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj u Upravi državne bezbjednosti za Narodnu Republiku Hrvatsku 1949. godine," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 31, no. 3 (1999): 575–638.

<sup>5</sup> Museum of Slavonia (hereinafter: MSO), Documents Collection (hereinafter: DZ), Record of the meeting of the Cultural and Charitable Association of Germans in Osijek (Kultur- und Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Deutschen in Esseg) 1936–1941, dated December 8, 1937, inv. no. MSO-242750.

<sup>6</sup> The City Museum had only one curator, Vjekoslav Celestin, who served in this role for over forty years until his death in 1936. He was succeeded in 1937 by a young historian, Franjo Buntak (Zagreb, September 2, 1910 – Zagreb, December 14, 1985), who came from Zagreb. Buntak held the position of curator until the onset of the war, when he returned to Zagreb.

<sup>7</sup> *Arheološki klub "Mursa,"* 123.

<sup>8</sup> The problem arose at the beginning of the war because some Germans acted as if the museum had existed all along, even though it was never officially registered.

<sup>9</sup> He was born on March 28, 1894, into the family of Elias Plein, a belt maker from Osijek, and Anne (née Pauly), as one of eight children. Unmarried, he lived with his three unmarried sisters (Adela, born in 1892; Anna, born in 1888; and Maria, born in 1896), who were homemakers, at 14 Kapucinska Street. In the interwar period, he was the first to engage with the distinctive Essekorsch dialect, and during the war, he dabbled in German theater in Osijek. Regarding his interwar activities, particularly his writings on the Essekorsch dialect, Flod notes that it was his sole occupation, primarily funded by contributions from Osijek's Jewish citizens. He also frequently offered his modest singing abilities to the Osijek theater and the Croatian Singing and Music Society *Kuhač*. According to Oto Švajcer, Plein spent some time in the Valpovo camp after the war, after which he vanished. However, Velimir Petrović states that he passed away in 1973 in Austria (in Stainz near Graz). State Archives in Osijek (hereinafter: HR-DAOS), German National Community in the Independent State of Croatia (Deutsche Volksgruppe in Unabhängigen Staat Kroatien), fonds 58, box 113; *Zavičajnici grada Osijeka 1901. – 1946.*, eds. Stjepan Sršan and Vilim Matić (Osijek: Državni arhiv u Osijeku, 2003), 629; Lujo Plein, *Die essekerische Sprechart: Gesammelte Gespräche aus den Osijeker Gassen und Peripherie*, Band 1 – 5 (Osijek: Eigenverlag, 1929–1938); Alois Plein, "Esseg als deutsche Theaterstadt," in: *Das deutsche Theater in der königlichen Freistadt Esseg 1776-1907: Mappe 1* (Osijek: Amt für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1942), s. p.; Flod, *Opkoljeni Osijek*, 86; Grubišić, "Arheolog dr. Robert Rudolf Schmidt u Hrvatskoj," 127, note 127; *Esekerski tekstovi – Essekische Texte*, ed. and tr. Velimir Petrović (Osijek: Njemačka zajednica – Zemaljska udruga Podunavskih Švaba u Hrvatskoj, 2012), VII, note 7.

<sup>10</sup> Alois Plein, *Hugo Conrad von Hötzendorf – Gedenkschrift* (Osijek: 1940). As early as 1933, within the framework of the Archaeological Club *Mursa*, Plein proposed establishing a gallery and cataloguing privately-owned artworks, which were abundant, with a particular emphasis on Hötzendorf's works in private collections. He later suggested an exhibition of this painter's works and contributed to its preparation under the club's organization. Additionally, he worked on an exhibition of Osijek's antiquities to commemorate the

130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city's proclamation as a free royal city. *Arheološki klub "Mursa,"* 22, 58, 134, 138.

<sup>11</sup> MSO, DZ, MSO-242750, records from March 4 and April 8, 1940.

<sup>12</sup> Flod, *Opkoljeni Osijek*, 141.

<sup>13</sup> His work in Croatia has already been described (see note 1).

<sup>14</sup> *Statut grada Ilaka iz godine 1525.*, ed. Rudolf Schmidt, *Monumenta historico-juridica Slavorum meridionalium* 12 (Zagreb: Nadbiskupska tiskara, 1938).

<sup>15</sup> Later, in September 1943, it was revealed that movable property in nationalized assets constituted only 2.58%, and of that percentage, only a portion was made up of artworks and books, which ended up in state museums and libraries. It was also believed that more movable property had ended up in private hands through thefts and abuses than in state hands, from where they were sold or given away cheaply to various individuals, institutions, and organizations. However, this small percentage did not mean a small number of movable items in Osijek, as seen in the preserved archival documents (HR-DAOS, People's Committee of the City of Osijek, fonds 67). Many organizations, institutions, and societies, including those outside Osijek, took movable property from Jewish homes and apartments, as documented in preserved records (witness statements). Some were taken by a delegation from the Main Ustasha Headquarters from Zagreb for the needs of local offices. In any case, it concerns a large amount of household items, including paintings and clocks whose artistic value is unknown, as are the names of many owners and the types of items, regarding the notes "unknown Jews" and "unknown things." Attempts to buy these items cheaply from Jews or store them with acquaintances and friends were prevented by the authorities, who imposed strict penalties, which were published in local newspapers. Nada Kisić Kolanović, "Podržavljenje imovine Židova u NDH," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 30, no. 3 (1998): 445–446; Grubišić, "Zasluge dr. Josipa Bösendorfera," 490, note 12.

<sup>16</sup> Flod, *Opkoljeni Osijek*, 23.

<sup>17</sup> First of all, the Office for Economic Renewal, established on May 3, 1941, was responsible for the

nationalization of property, which also included the property of fleeing Serbs. The office later changed names, one of which was the State Directorate for Restoration (popularly known as "Ponova"), and among the people of Osijek, it was referred to as the "directorate for plunder." Zlata Živaković-Kerže, "Podržavljenje imovine Židova u Osijeku u NDH," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 39, no. 1 (2007): 105.

<sup>18</sup> Flod, *Opkoljeni Osijek*, 86. There would sometimes be a broader discussion about private collections, of which there were quite a few in Osijek, such as in early 1940, prompted by a request from Josip Matasović, the editor of the magazine *Narodna starina*, asking for an article to be written about private collections of artistic craftsmanship in Osijek. *Arheološki klub "Mursa,"* 171.

<sup>19</sup> The case of Hermann Weissmann is particularly interesting and has already been described, but more in relation to the city museum. See: Andreja Šimičić, "Tragom umjetničke zbirke dr. Hermanna Weissmanna, s osrvtom na djela u Muzeju Slavonije," *Osječki zbornik* 35 (2020): 95–106; Gabrijela Baričić et al., *Priča o nezaboravu: ostavština Hermanna Weissmanna u muzejskim ustanovama Osijeka*, exhibition catalogue (Osijek: Muzej Slavonije, 2020).

<sup>20</sup> *Arheološki klub "Mursa,"* 66.

<sup>21</sup> *Zavičajnici grada Osijeka 1901.–1946.*, 261.

<sup>22</sup> Andreja Šimičić, "Tri portreta Artura Schiffera u Muzeju Slavonije Osijek – trenutak sačuvan za budućnost," *Osječki zbornik* 31/32 (2016): 54–55.

<sup>23</sup> It is possible that he was targeted by the German "nationals" due to his affiliation with the Freemasons, who were detained in camps and released, except for those of Jewish descent, or because of his wife's Jewish roots.

<sup>24</sup> Anton (Toni) Aron, Osijek painter (Osijek, September 30, 1858/1859 – Leipzig, October 31, 1920).

<sup>25</sup> The title of the painting (oil on canvas, 34 x 51 cm, MSO-206071), *Coming Back Home in the Snow*, is actually a translation of the title (note) on the back of the painting, *Heimkehr im Schnee*, created during Plein's time, when it was in the Heimatmuseum. This is supported by another note on the same location, written in pencil and the

same handwriting: "1941 durch Plein sichert / von Apotheker Govorković gestellt für Heimatmuseum" ("In 1941, secured by Plein from pharmacist Govorković for Heimatmuseum"). After the war, when the painting was transferred to the Museum of Slavonia, it was inventoried in 1950 under the signature S-434 as *Horses and Coachman Before the Stable* (on the back). The painting is signed at the bottom left with "AA 879."

<sup>26</sup> I would like to thank my colleague and curator of the Painting Collection, Andreja Šimičić, for all the kind assistance with the images from the collection of the Museum of Slavonia cited in this paper, as well as their corresponding catalogue descriptions.

<sup>27</sup> HR-DAOS, City Administration, Presidential Files, fonds 6 (hereinafter: HR-DAOS – 6), box 5795, file no. 29/41, "Izjava Ivana Govorkovicha," May 28, 1941 (transcription; typewritten). The file also contains the original handwritten version of the complaint. The file briefly summarized in: Hrvoje Volner, "Gradsko poglavarstvo Osijeka i Holokaust," *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu* 55, no. 2 (2023): 274.

<sup>28</sup> HR-DAOS – 6, box 5795, file no. 29/41, "Izjava Huge Fuchsa," May 17, 1941 (preserved in manuscript and typewritten transcription).

<sup>29</sup> Josip Franjo Mücke (Nagyatád, 1819 (?) – Pécs, October 1, 1883), a well-known painter in the Osijek community of the time, who also worked in Vukovar, Đakovo, and Zagreb.

<sup>30</sup> The author of this painting (oil on canvas, 53 x 42 cm, MSO-206069) from the collection of the Museum of Slavonia was previously unknown, as was the person portrayed. However, according to the statement of Hugo Fuchs, the painting depicts Dr. Joseph Garzonj (Garzoni) and was painted by Josip Franjo Mücke. That the painting in the Museum (MSO-206069) is indeed this painting is confirmed by the inscription on the back: "unbek. slav. – deutscher Maler: Männerbildnis / von apotheker Fuchs 1941. durch Plein f. Heimatmuseum sichergestellt" ("unknown Slavic-German painter: portrait of a man / secured by pharmacist Fuchs in 1941 for the Heimatmuseum by Plein"). The inscription was removed during restoration, but it is known from working photographs by the restorer

Zlatko Bielen. The time of the initial inventory in the Museum (1950) and the old signature S-432, which is in a series with others, further confirm this. The preserved medical diploma of Garzonj from the same source may serve as confirmation of the identity of the person portrayed.

<sup>31</sup> The painting (oil on canvas pasted onto wood, 35 x 28 cm, MLU-S-438) currently titled *Portrait of a Girl in a Landscape* is housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, having been transferred there from the Museum of Slavonia along with the rest of the collection that established the Gallery of Fine Arts in Osijek in 1954. It was recorded in the inventory book of the Museum of Slavonia's paintings collection under the inventory number S-438 in 1950. As with the previous pieces, a similar inscription is written in pencil on the attached paper: "F. Mücke: Mädchenbildnis / v. apotheker Fuchs 1941. durch Plein für / das Heimatmuseum / sichergestellt" ("F. Mücke: portrait of a girl / secured by pharmacist Fuchs in 1941 for the Heimatmuseum by Plein"). In addition, there is another pencil inscription, likely much older, possibly referring to the age of the girl in the portrait ("9 years and 10 months old"), signed, as noted, by "father," whose name is illegible.

<sup>32</sup> The painting (oil on canvas, 24.5 x 20.5 cm, MSO-206073) titled *Portrait of Priest Franjo Anaković* from 1860 is part of the Collection of Paintings at the Museum of Slavonia. It was recorded in the Museum of Slavonia's inventory book under the inventory number S-438 in 1950. It is signed at the bottom right with "Mücke / 1860."

<sup>33</sup> The Museum of Slavonia, Collection of Diplomas, MSO-226802 (60 x 40.5 cm). This is a diploma written in Latin on parchment with a hanging seal in a copper box. The diploma was issued by the Medical Faculty in Vienna in 1804 to Joseph Garzonj from the vicinity of Ljubljana. It is believed that Bishop Mandić brought him to Đakovo for service. The land registry states that he lived on the main street in Đakovo in a small house ("klein Häusel"), where his wife lived after his death. In 1860, the family donated the house to a certain "Katharina Schwarzmaijer." Željko Lekšić, "Đakovačka glavna ulica: Zgrade i njihovi vlasnici od sredine 19. do početka 21. stoljeća," *Zbornik Muzeja Đakovštine* 7 (2005): 187, notes 112–113.

<sup>34</sup> *Hrvatski list* 135 (7115), May 17, 1941. This is actually a somewhat freer interpretation of the *Legal Provision on the Prohibition of the Alienation and Export of Antiques and Artworks, Cultural, Historical, and Natural Monuments from the Territory of the Independent State of Croatia* from May 12, 1941, enacted at the proposal of the Minister of Religious Affairs and Education. According to this provision, owners were required to store art objects in safe places because the main intent of the provision, aside from what is written in the title, was to protect cultural heritage from wartime destruction, as well as the subsequent *Warning Issued to Owners of Antiques* by the Conservation Institute in Zagreb, based on the aforementioned provision. The *Warning* states that the agents would inventory, photograph, and study the items in the houses, and these items were to remain in the possession of the owners, except in cases where it was impossible to care for them, in which case they should be handed over to museums for safekeeping. Martina Juranović Tonejc, "Zakonska regulativa u zaštiti pokretne baštine u doba Nezavisne države Hrvatske," *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 33/34 (2009/2010): 17–18.

<sup>35</sup> *Arheološki klub "Mursa,"* 194. Milan Blažeković (September 9, 1878 – April 14, 1946) came to Osijek in 1924. He was the president of the Archaeological Club *Mursa* from 1934 to 1945, and during the Independent State of Croatia, he briefly served as the mayor of Osijek from April to June 1941. In August 1945, he was sentenced in Osijek to fifteen years of hard labour. He died in the Stara Gradiška camp. Grubišić, "Zasluge dr. Josipa Bösendorfera," 491, note 16.

<sup>36</sup> Among the owners of valuable artworks, mostly paintings, were Milovan Pinterović, Zlatko Adler, Pavao Fischer, Robert Willheim, Žiga Krauss, Žiga Weissberger, Ante Brlić, and others, as well as owners of copies of some paintings and similar "artworks."

<sup>37</sup> It seems that the order was incorrectly published in the newspaper. Additionally, when it arrived the day before the newspaper publication (May 16) from the Ministry, it was without a number, meaning it could not be processed officially. Therefore, a new one had to be requested. This correspondence, which is important because it contains other significant information, was drafted and signed by

Blažeković in his capacity as mayor and Buntak on behalf of the city museum. Plein likely referred to one of these two reasons mentioned above. HR-DAOS – 6, box 5795, no. 29/41, memo from the City Council of Osijek to the Ministry of Religion and Education, June 18, 1941.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> It is not known to us if an “appendix to the exhibition catalogue” has been preserved anywhere, nor is it mentioned in the Osijek bibliography. However, it is possible that there was a printed list of the exhibited paintings in the form of a leaflet that has not been preserved.

<sup>40</sup> *Bilderausstellung “Deutsche Malkunst in Kroatien-Slawonien 1800-1941,”* exhibition catalogue (Osijek: s. n., 1941), s. p.

<sup>41</sup> *Arheološki klub “Mursa,”* 193–194.

<sup>42</sup> Grubišić, “Zasluge dr. Josipa Bösendorfera,” 492.

<sup>43</sup> Bösendorfer performed this difficult task with such ethics in his approach, not only with the objects but also with the citizens, so it is no surprise that he remained in his position as the director of the museum after the war. The activities of the city museum and Bösendorfer during the Second World War have already been presented (see note 1).

<sup>44</sup> Among the more notable exhibitions, for which catalogues remain, are the exhibition dedicated to Adolf Waldinger held in April 1942 and the exhibition *Hugo Conrad von Hötzendorf und Adolf Waldinger*, opened on July 11, 1943. Both were accompanied by catalogues, with brief texts written by Plein, and were organized by the Office for Art and Science of the German National Group. *Friihlingsaustellung: Adolf Waldingers Zeichnungen (1843-1904)*, exhibition catalogue (Esseg: Das Amt für Kunst und Wissenschaft, Der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Kroatien, 1942); *Hugo Conrad von Hötzendorf und Adolf Waldinger*, exhibition catalogue (Esseg: Das Amt für Deutsche Volksgruppe im Unabh. St. Kroatien, Volksgruppenführung, Amt für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1943).

<sup>45</sup> The issue of space for the Heimatmuseum was resolved in April 1941 when, by a state “donation,” they received a house from Jewish ownership (Žiga Deutsch, the director of a tannery) at the corner of streets Jägerova and Desatičina (Fig. 7).

<sup>46</sup> Zdravko Krnić, “Prosvjetna i kulturna djelatnost Njemačke narodne skupine u NDH,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 10, no. 2 (1978): 8–19.

<sup>47</sup> For information about this organization, see: Grubišić, “Arheolog dr. Robert Rudolf Schmidt u Hrvatskoj,” 117, note 59.

<sup>48</sup> MSO, DZ, Ostavština Schmidt (*Schmidt Estate*) (hereinafter: OS), box 8, R. R. Schmidt to W. Sievers, March 1, 1942. Two weeks later, the approval from the Minister of Religious Affairs and Education of the Independent State of Croatia for excavations on Vlastelinski Hill near Sarvaš included two conditions: the excavations must be supervised by the director of the Croatian State Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Viktor Hoffiller, and all excavated material should primarily be transferred to the Croatian State Museum in Osijek, with some items sent to the Croatian State Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. MSO, DZ, OS, box 8, “Dozvola iskapanja u Sarvašu,” April 22, 1942.

<sup>49</sup> In Sarvaš, Schmidt had considerable success as he discovered settlements from all prehistoric cultural periods, rich in findings. His Institute of Prehistory, located in the basement rooms of his house, was filled with materials.

<sup>50</sup> It should be noted here that these were also a series of smaller exhibitions in addition to the three already mentioned. Exhibitions were held by Hans Roch, Helle Reyman, and Franz Wilhelm from Osijek, as well as by Oskar Sommerfeld and Franz Fürst from Ruma. Flod, *Opkoljeni Osijek*, 87.

<sup>51</sup> MSO, DZ, OS, box 5, J. Petrović to R. R. Schmidt, September 29, 1942.

<sup>52</sup> The name of the Osijek City Museum was then changed to the Croatian State Museum in Osijek. This avoided the potential declaration of the City Museum as German and allowed for the mediation of various seized objects, as the law required, to be transferred to a museum that must be state-owned.

<sup>53</sup> MSO, DZ, Files of the German National Group – Deutsche Volksgruppe (hereinafter: DVG), box 3, memo from local leader (“Ortsleiter”) S. Skreptschuk to the Office of Statistics (R. Schmidt), June 12, 1942 (transcript). Stefan Hemmerling Skreptschuk is a prime example of a rigid German in Osijek during wartime, one of the reasons why the German National Group lost support even among

its own members. He was impressed by the similarity to Joseph Goebbels, except that he did not limp. Before the war, he was the regional leader of the Kulturbund in Bjelovar, where he was also a representative for Singer sewing machines. At the beginning of the war, leader Altgayer invited him to Osijek and appointed him district leader of "Middle Drava." He was the only professional leader and the director of the company Tehno-import. With a high income, he lived in a five-room Jewish apartment, and it was said that he accepted bribes for mediating on behalf of Serbs. Both Pavelić and Altgayer decorated him for his fight against "Balkan-Bolshevik gangs" with an award he always wore on his uniform. He briefly fell out of favour with Altgayer after claiming that the leader had become involved with a German nurse, which was overheard by his wife, who then threw him out of the house, turning him into a homeless man. Because of this, Altgayer slapped him during a meeting of the leadership of the German National Group just before the end of the war on October 9, 1944. However, Skreptschuk still received two wagons to transport looted property to Germany at a time when it was impossible to secure even one wagon for dozens of German families Flod, *Opkoljeni Osijek*, 65, 138–140.

<sup>54</sup> MSO, DZ, OS, box 8, W. Sievers to S. Kasche, November 6, 1942 (transcript).

<sup>55</sup> The statute was published in the official gazette of the Group, *Verordnungsblatt* (no. 11/12), on December 31, 1942.

<sup>56</sup> Krnić, "Prosvjetna i kulturna djelatnost," 26.

<sup>57</sup> SO, DZ, OS, box 7, R. R. Schmidt to H. Krieg, May 10, 1943.

<sup>58</sup> MSO, DZ, DVG, box 3, R. R. Schmidt to R. Schmidt, August 28, 1944. The archaeologist informed high military circles in Germany, without whom nothing could be done at the time.

<sup>59</sup> MSO, DZ, DVG, box 3, "Stabsbefel Nr. 14," September 27, 1944.

<sup>60</sup> MSO, DZ, DVG, box 3, R. Schmidt to Truhart, January 3, 1945; list of items stored in the castle, compiled by R. Schmidt, director of the Heimatmuseum, October 21, 1944.

<sup>61</sup> MSO, DZ, DVG, box 3, Luig to Truhart, October 24, 1944. The authenticity of the content was con-

firmed by R. Schmidt with the seal of the German National Group.

<sup>62</sup> Other Germans for whose apartments the presence of a museum curator was requested: Josip Franjo Schmidt, Gabor Pfeifer, Stjepan Frauenheim, and Josip Meier. MSO, DZ, Museum Documentation (hereinafter: MD), memo from the State Museum in Osijek to the Directorate of State Property for the City of Osijek, June 19, 1945.

<sup>63</sup> MSO, DZ, MD, memo from the State Museum in Osijek to the Regional People's Liberation Committee, June 27, 1945.

<sup>64</sup> Archive of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb (hereinafter: AAMZ), Files on Sarvaš, memo from the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia, July 23, 1946; memo from the Ministry of Education to the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, August 17, 1946; memo from the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb to the Ministry of Education, September 4, 1946.

<sup>65</sup> AAMZ, Files on Sarvaš, "Zapisnik Komisije za pregled repatriiranog materijala iz Čehoslovačke," October 26, 1946 (copy).

<sup>66</sup> MSO, DZ, MD, memo from the Committee for Culture and Art of the Government to the State Museum in Osijek, October 21, 1946. The Committee requested a list of items taken ("from your museum"). To the uninformed Committee, Bösendorfer responded with a brief report on the Sarvaš excavation and Lujo Plein. MSO, DZ, MD, memo from the State Museum in Osijek to the Committee for Culture and Art of the Government of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia, October 24, 1946.

<sup>67</sup> AAMZ, Files on Sarvaš, "Izvještaj o službenom putovanju u Beograd I. Degmedžić, Z. Belošević, J. Pavelića i N. Kasuna," November 4, 1946.

<sup>68</sup> Pictures separately packed in paper: "PAVEL DJURKOVIĆ – male portrait, PANCIAMI – Landscape, TONCILO, RISTA – girls, GARILLA – Flower seller, UNKNOWN ARTIST – female portrait, man smoking a pipe, male portrait, child portrait, beggar, Madonna, Landscape with a bridge (2 pieces), Portrait of an older lady, Landscape with postal carriage, Landscape with scythe, Landscape with various figures, Female portrait with décolletage bust, Man with a smile." AAMZ,

Files on Sarvaš, "Zapisnik Komisije za pregled materijala repatriiranog iz Čehoslovačke," October 26, 1946 (copy); "Spisak sanduka primljenih iz Čehoslovačke" (copy).

<sup>69</sup> Bösendorfer sent memos about these paintings to various addresses, and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he attached a list of the paintings, made from the memory of someone familiar with them. For some of Mücke's paintings, he mentioned that the Eltz family had lent them to the Heimatmuseum but never received them back, while the paintings by Adolf Waldinger were supposedly transferred to a German museum after an agreement with the Waldinger family. Incidentally, Bösendorfer was the only one to later express doubt that the items were in Austria or Germany. MSO, DZ, MD, memo of J. Bösendorfer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia, March 11, 1947; memo of J. Bösendorfer to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia, April 12, 1948.

<sup>70</sup> AAMZ, "Zapisnik Komisije za pregled repatriiranog materijala iz Čehoslovačke," October 26, 1946 (copy). Among the documents of the German National Group (MSO, DZ, box 2), lists of items from four crates are preserved – marked no. 1, 2, 14, and 18. Crates no. 1 and 2 contained the personal belongings of R. Schmidt, mostly clothing. In crate no. 14, according to a list likely compiled by R. R. Schmidt on May 26, 1944, titled *Dem Kroat. Archaeologischen Museum in Agram gehörigen Schädeln aus verschied. Funden*, there were ten skulls from Vučedol, two from Bapska, and two from Kormadin. In crate no. 18, which was listed by R. Schmidt on April 25, 1944, there were ten skulls from various periods and different, mostly Vojvodina, locations, as well as four heraldic documents from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, a fair privilege from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, four different seals, and a *Charta Italica* from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>71</sup> AAMZ, "Odluka Komiteta za kulturu i umjetnost Vlade FNRJ," October 28, 1946 (copy).

<sup>72</sup> MSO, DZ, MD, memo from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia to the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, July 14, 1948 (copy). The Commission consisted of: Viktor Hoffiller, PhD, director of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb; J. Bösendorfer, PhD, director of the Museum of Slavonia; Prof. Vladimír Tkalčić, director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb; Zdenko Vinski, PhD, curator of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb; Draginja Zdenčaj, officer of the Museum Department at the Ministry of Education.

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<sup>73</sup> MSO, DZ, MD, "Zapisnik o primopredaji slika," July 19, 1948.

<sup>74</sup> MSO, DZ, MD, memo from J. Bösendorfer to the Committee for Culture and Art of the Government of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia, July 28, 1948; memo from the Committee for Culture and Art to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia, August 17, 1948. Bösendorfer was alerted to the wrongly directed items by Ivica Degmedžić, curator of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, who participated in the inventory and distribution of repatriated materials in Belgrade.

<sup>75</sup> HR-DAOS, German National Community in the Independent State of Croatia, fonds 58 (hereinafter: DVG – 58), box 20, "Upitnik: Rudolf Šmit (Schmidt)."

<sup>76</sup> Zoran Stevanović, "Rudolf Šmit i pljačka arhivske građe: Pljačka i uništavanje Državne arhive u Novom Sadu u Drugom svetskom ratu," *Arhiv: časopis Arhiva Jugoslavije* 18, no. 1/2 (2017): 97.

<sup>77</sup> HR-DAOS, DVG – 58, box 20, "Tätigkeitsbericht für den Monat Dezember 1943."

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## HEIMATMUSEUM U OSIJEKU

Za vrijeme Drugoga svjetskog rata zajednica Nijemaca u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj osnovala je zavičajni muzej (Heimatmuseum) u Osijeku prema predratnoj ideji. Međutim, od vremena ideje do vremena ostvarenja političke su se okolnosti drastično promijenile. Borba Nijemaca na kulturnome i prosvjetnome planu pretvorila se u onu na političkom planu. Radikalni dio vodstva njemačke zajednice počeo je provoditi otimanje nekih umjetnina iz privatne imovine osječkih gra-

đana, pogotovo onih židovskih korijena, kakvo je navedeno u ovom radu. Kontroverzan je bio i prostor u koji se muzej smjestio jer je bila riječ o kući protjeranog Židova. Osnivači muzeja ignorirali su državnu uredbu s početka rata o prijavi umjetnina Gradskom muzeju jer su smatrali da se ona ne može odnositi na kulturnu baštinu njemačkog podrijetla, što je stvaralo napetost s lokalnim vlastima i lokalnom kulturnom javnošću. Potkraj rata svi predmeti iz muzeja i arheološki nalazi s tadašnjih iskapanja u Sarvašu koji su trebali biti smješteni u Gradski muzej, ali ih je preoteo njemački muzej, odvezeni su željeznicom u pravcu Njemačke, no završavaju u dvoru Lämberg u Čehoslovačkoj. Repatriacija i povratak predmeta u Osijek odvijali su se uz velike poteškoće sve do 1948. godine preko Beograda i Zagreba u kojima je ostao dio predmeta. Usto, kako muzej u vrijeme postojanja nije vodio nikakvu muzejsku dokumentaciju, današnja identifikacija predmeta uvelike je otežana.