

MONIKA BOGDANOWSKA*

'THING', 'ARTEFACT', 'LISTED OBJECT', OR THE CRUX OF THE MATTER.

RZECZ – ARTEFAKT – ZABYTEK, CZYLI O ISTOCIE RZECZY

Abstract

The key basis of conservation-restoration intervention involves stages of recognition of the object in question. The knowledge obtained at each stage allows subsequent steps to be defined. During this process, an ordinary 'thing' turns into an 'artefact' – a source of complex information. These data are processed and used in assessment, which in turn influences the 'positioning' of conservation-restoration treatments. Ascribing certain values results in a shift in an object's status, which may be 'listed' or 'registered' and as a result may gain legal protection. Case studies will prove the thesis that the whole process influences the very essence of the object.

Keywords: cultural heritage, conservation-restoration, monuments' protections

Streszczenie

Podstawą podjęcia działań konserwatorskich lub restauratorskich jest etap tzw. rozpoznania przedmiotu prac. Na mocy uzyskanej w ten sposób wiedzy podejmowane są dalsze kroki. W toku postępowania zwykła rzecz staje się źródłem różnych informacji – artefaktem. Informacje te są selekcjonowane i służą do przypisania artefaktowi określonych wartości, co z kolei wpływa na „pozycjonowanie” metod postępowania konserwatorskiego lub restauratorskiego. Przypisanie określonych wartości powoduje także, że artefakt może stać się zabytkiem – czyli obiektem chronionym prawnie. Tezą artykułu jest twierdzenie, że cały ten proces wpływa na istotę samego obiektu. Dowodzenie zostanie przedstawione na wybranych studiach przypadku.

Słowa kluczowe: dziedzictwo kulturowe, konserwacja-restauracja, ochrona zabytków architektury

* PhD, Arch., Monika Bogdanowska, Division of Freehand Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology.

'...for everything in things is ordered once and for all with as much regularity and as much correspondence as possible...' G.W Leibniz.

1. Concepts: a thing, an artefact, a listed object, an object. The crux of the matter.

1.1. Thing

The concept of a 'thing' is related to a single, autonomous, specific, physically existing entity. This simplified philosophical classification corresponds to the sense in which this term will be discussed in this paper. From a conservator's point of view (here understood as the point of view of a person dealing with the protection and preservation of things from the past), the type of a thing is of no specific importance. The need to preserve applies to a monumental wall painting, polymer toothbrushes in the Auschwitz museum, stone reliefs at Angkor Wat, a crocheted napkin from the turn of the century, a cultural landscape with a 'chessboard' of fields, or casemates infiltrated with convicts' blood.¹

The process in which a thing – an object – enters human consciousness, has been aptly described by Rainer Maria Rilke: "One day your attention was drawn to its persistence, peculiarity, nearly dramatic seriousness typical of all things; didn't you notice then that this object, almost against its own will, became overtaken by beauty you'd never expect to find there? If such a moment ever existed, now is the time to recall it. It is the moment when objects re-enter your life. None of them can do it unless you let them surprise you with the beauty you could not have expected".²

Therefore a thing would come into existence once noticed and consciously perceived – not necessarily as a result of a longer reflection, but also in a sudden moment of illumination. The entire process of assessment of a thing which follows – the selection of steps to be taken, an in-depth analysis – is strictly dependent on knowledge, and requires attention and sensitivity. It is thanks to the latter that we are able to see the thing in itself.

1.2. Artefact

In the Polish language, the term 'artefact' has been appropriated by archaeology.³ It should not be so. It deserves to gain a more widespread application as a useful term denoting any work created by human hands. In the context of this discussion, this term will be used in reference to a thing which is a carrier and a source of complex information and potential values that may be identified in the cognitive process. In consequence, an artefact is defined as a thing which has already gained our attention, abounds with information and is being intellectually processed.

¹ At this point one should note that 'things' (Sachen), along with nature, writing, language, music, behaviours and customs, belong to the categories of historical sources listed by Erich Keyser in *Die Geschichtswissenschaft: Aufbau und Aufgaben*, quoted in: K. M. Kowalski, *Artefakty jako źródła poznania*, Uniwersytet Gdański, 1993, p. 17.

² R. M. Rilke, *Auguste Rodin*, translated by Witold Wirpsza, Kraków 1963, p. 120.

³ Things which are historic sources, are classified into artefacts – man-made objects, and ecofacts – all other remains of human existence, see K. M. Kowalski, *Artefakty...*, p. 14 – 15

1.3. Listed object

When analysing a relationship between a people and objects from the perspective of conservation, it is necessary to distinguish several critical milestones. The first one is the discovery already mentioned above; the extraction or separation of the thing from the plethora of other things. The second stage is the process of cognition, which involves assessment and valuation, while the third involves the extraction of recognized values at the expense of those which were classified as less important. In practice, the third stage is a pivotal point for the existence of the thing, as such. From a conglomerate of complex information, it is converted into a carrier of selected values, a 'listed object' – a recognized item presented for social use. This is the meaning of the term which will be used in this work.

1.4. Object

This term is one of the most useful in the lexicon of conservation and restoration. It may designate any item, but also something which is the object of specific procedures or operations. In this work, this term will be used in the latter sense.

2. Value

If we analyse value as a quality of a thing, a certain type of incongruity becomes apparent. A thing, as such, potentially has a multitude of values, but from the perspective of the assessing person, it has only the values the assessor will attribute to it.⁴ As in Mikel Dufrenne's concept of a work of art and aesthetic experience, according to which the work of art **may, but does not have to** offer an aesthetic experience, a thing **may** initiate a valuation analysis. The situation of a thing is even worse, because if it is found to possess no value, it will be treated as worthless, unworthy of anyone's attention, not to mention preservation.

In the context of conservation, it is important to note that the protection of things is a consequence of values attributed to them. The first step in the process of value attribution must be 'cognition' which results in 'knowledge'. However, to limit results to 'scientific cognition' and 'scientific knowledge' would be a simplification, or even a misrepresentation, as the process of cognition involves the development of certain relationships between the evaluator and the evaluated item. The deeper the cognition and the broader the resultant knowledge, the more complex and multilayered the set of values surrounding the thing becomes. It seems that at certain moment, the process is bound to get out of control and then the evaluator is at risk of running into 'Danger' and the related 'Paradox'. The Danger involves adding so many values that they would create a complex which would become a value in itself, blurring the thing underneath.⁵ Meanwhile, the Paradox comes from the fact

⁴ Such an assumption may be rephrased into a conclusion that a thing as such has no values at all. They appear only when the thing is recognized.

⁵ One example is the simulacrum – a term introduced by Baudrillard, and meaning (in brief) something which does not exist, but operates in a non-real space, "simulating" its real existence. J. Baudrillard, *Symulakry i symulacja*, (trans.) Sławomir Królak, Warszawa 2005. This term was adopted, inter alia, in the heritage industry, where the mass recipient does not need the original, but is satisfied with certain easily digestible narrations, presented in an attractive form, for example as an

that all values may become annihilated in view of the one value that may be vested in the thing even by one person – the emotional value. Stanley Cavell, a philosopher, aptly summarized this idea, and though he referred to works of art, his conclusion is generally applicable to any other thing as we are “concerned with them, and care about them; we treat them in special ways, invest them with a value which normal people otherwise reserve only for other people... They *mean* something to us, not just the way statements do, but the way people do.”⁶

Probably no other technical, technological, iconographic or other issue we deal with in heritage protection involves similar complexity to the process of discovery of and attribution of value to objects. The value (as already mentioned) is the only rationale for an object’s protection and preservation. However, this issue involves an additional surprising aspect: the analysed object is only a starting point – an inspiration for the search of values which are eventually found (even if not in a completely conscious manner) in ourselves. This is the most important type of a coupling: by attributing a value to an object, the conservator reflects himself in it, as the attributed values are the reflections of values that a specific person finds important. Meanwhile, listed objects of commonly recognized value offer a means of reflection for a society, nation or humanity.

If such a reasoning seems excessively theoretical, speculative and detached from reality, the pragmatic dimension of valuation should be reemphasized. It is the complex of values attributed to an object that determines further conservation procedures. If the usable value is lower than the historic value, an old car may be donated to a museum of technology. When the historic value prevails over artistic value, we do not mind the cracked veneer of an old piece of furniture.

Both the theory of conservation and legal regulations introduce a nearly military regime into the world of values: they have been recognized, defined, while their presence (or the lack of it) within an object must be discovered and substantiated in compliance with clearly defined rules. Polish law distinguishes historic, artistic and scientific values and it is their presence (discovered and substantiated) that provides grounds for extending state protection to an object.⁷ Such cases are simple. However, this issue becomes much more fascinating if we examine other values attributed by people, groups, or societies, as the catalogue of such values is significantly longer. Appelbaum lists over a dozen of them⁸ and interestingly, she openly refers to the material-financial value, which we often refuse to discuss, considering its presence unworthy of the world of Conservators’ Memorabilia. Having at our disposal over a dozen types of value, we may build complexes of values, already discussed above, constructing them around the objects, through the process of cognition.

exhibition. K. Kowalski, *O istocie dziedzictwa europejskiego – rozważania*, Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, Kraków 2013.

⁶ S. Cavell, *Music Decomposed*, *Aesthetic Today*, (ed.) Morris Philipson, Paul J. Gudel, New York: New American Library, 1980, p. 533, quoted in: B. Appelbaum, *Conservation Treatment Methodology*, Barbara Appelbaum, 2010, p. 92

⁷ The act of 23 July 2003 on protection and maintenance of monuments and historic objects, title 1(3).

⁸ These values are: artistic, aesthetic, historic, usable, research, educational, the value of „oldness” and “novelty”, market (financial) value, sentimental value, “relational” value (connection to an important persona or event), memorial value, and, finally, the value arising of the unique nature of an object B. Appelbaum, *Conservation Treatment Methodology*, Barbara Appelbaum, 2010, p. 86-114.

What is extraordinary about the process is the dynamic nature of the complexes, their changeability, as values appear and disappear or fade away, only to re-emerge later. A conservator participating in this process attempts to build a hierarchy that would set a direction for further proceedings.

The attribution of value is an element of a specific repeatable cycle within which a person deciphers meanings, uses them to attribute values and by attributing values re-reads the meanings, re-defining the thing... Obviously a different person is involved at every stage – a representative of a different generation, a different culture and naturally, other conservators. This is why each valorisation process is dependent on the historic context and since the assessment is culture-dependent, perhaps it has a unique value in itself – it is an immaterial testimony to its time. In consequence, the history of conservation theory is a rich source of information about the attitude of various generations to works belonging to their past and offers an interesting picture of civilisational changes.

3. Case study

3.1. Case One: Old clothes and dirty shoes

The topic of concealed objects discovered during building overhauls comes up rarely and then usually as a curiosity. As a rule, if such items are found at all, we should rather assume that the things recovered by workers refurbishing old houses – as long as they did not have obvious value – have been simply thrown away and nobody since has bothered about their fate.⁹ The practice of hiding various personal items in buildings dates back to the Middle Ages. Over the centuries, Europeans transposed it to new areas they settled; hiding places, called “cache” from French, have been found in houses in North America and Australia.¹⁰ The largest European discoveries, such as the 'Mühlberg Ensemble' from Kempten, Allgäu, include hundreds of objects (!) deposited in one place, possibly over centuries.¹¹ The concealed objects include mostly certain items of clothing (e.g. underwear, baby caps), and accessories, such as handbags or gloves, or personal items of little objective value, yet each carry a clear message about their owner's personality – boules, packs of cards, keys. Shoes and boots are among frequently hidden objects, as it seems that they were attributed the strongest apotropaic powers. Often such items created sets symbolizing particular members of a family.¹²

Substantially, we may speak of three major reasons for concealing such objects. Two of them are quite obvious – these are 'construction-related' needs (filling an empty space,

⁹ Polish studies speak of “findings”, yet refer mostly to the objects of undisputed historic or sentimental value: documents, coins, military artefacts, etc.

¹⁰ M. Chris Manning, *Homemade Magic: Concealed Deposits in Architectural Contexts in the Eastern United States*, idem, *The Material Culture of Household Apotropaia in the Eastern United States*, www. Academia. edu., [on-line], pdf.

¹¹ R. Atzbach, *Concealed Leather and Fur Finds from Kempten/ Allgäu (Germany)*, Institut für Archäologie, Bauforschung und Denkmalpflege Universität Bamberg, [on-line], pdf.

¹² D. Eastop, Ch. Dew, *Context and meaning generation: the conservation of garments deliberately concealed within buildings*, *The Object in Context: Crossing conservation boundaries*, Proceedings of the IIC Munich Congress, Munich, 2006, p. 17- 22.

reducing vibration, insulation) and the need to conceal personal 'treasures'. However, the third reason, which seems to be the most common, is also the most intriguing – it is the protection of the household against magic. For this very reason, to prevent bad spirits from entering the house, items were either placed in cavities (door, window lintels, near chimneys), or in empty spaces, e.g. under the floor. The rituals related to their 'immuring' were not homogenous – certain garments were purposefully damaged, which is referred to by academics as a “ritual murder of things”.¹³ The examination of these practices is additionally hindered by the fact that, as they were prohibited at the time, they are absent from official historic narratives, so the owners of the caches, or persons who discovered them, preferred not to disclose their existence publicly.

The importance of “old clothes and dirty shoes” is of absolutely unique value for the history of craftsmanship, material culture and history in general. One needs to consider the fact that clothes (and, in practice, fabrics and leather), worn for long periods of time, modified, repaired, eventually completely disintegrated. Meanwhile, caches are treasuries full of really unique pieces. Frequently they are the source of the only known preserved types of clothes from previous periods.

When it comes to the conservation of such items, a number of approaches are possible. However, two of them – discussed by Eastop and Dew – are worth a broader discussion, since they directly concern the realm of values. When the preservation of an object's history before discovery is found valuable, only then is the item secured, along with all of its creases, damage and dirt marks and is exhibited in this condition.¹⁴ (For instance it is interesting to note that the shoes from Mühlberg Ensemble are still soiled with the mud from Medieval streets). However, if the important quality is believed to be the method of manufacture or the original form of a specific item, it is subjected to restoration and extensive reconstruction.

In consequence, in order for an item to be preserved, it has first to be noticed. The next stage involves examination and assessment, which is followed by a relevant conservation procedure. Finally, the item protecting a household against evil forces, a guarantor of health and prosperity for its inhabitants, or simply someone's precious personal effects, find their way into a museum. The scale of the potential values of an item is decimated and their nature is changed. It becomes an historic object: an exhibit on display, a catalogue number in a warehouse.

3.2. Case two: the toilet

Building facilities hold a special place among things and artefacts. This is not only a consequence of their size and their prevailing usable function, but also their level of complexity. If we approach an old church the same way we approach an artefact which (for a historian) is a combination of historic sources and for a conservator or restorer, an object of specified values that deserve to be exposed and preserved, we can see the entire complexity of its structure. It is not only the construction system and materials, but also the manner of timber processing and type, its age and its growth record, which when subjected to dendro-chronological study, will provide us with information on climatic transformations hundreds of years ago. Furthermore, it involves the entire interior arrangement, starting with items

¹³ Ibid, p. 18.

¹⁴ Ibid, fig. p. 20 - 21.

with more or less recognized artistic value, such as altars, sculptures, or paintings, through to uniquely precious relics of ancient artisan's techniques: plasters, stone flooring, nails, locks and padlocks and often also obsolete technical equipment: old electric wire, sockets or discharge pipes. Many of them will have undergone a number of different procedures over the decades, which, when studied, extends our knowledge of technical and civilisational development. Each such item is a carrier of priceless information and each forms an artefact. Nonetheless, as manifested (particularly in the case of architectural objects), the system of values classifies them into significant, less significant and insignificant.

Aside from numerous kinds of internal fittings, particular elements of the structure also deserve our attention; usable functions, laws governing safety and security, effective standards of finishing, work necessitating modernisation to upgrade buildings in order to meet challenges brought about by developmental changes. Any elements which fail to meet new requirements are potentially at risk. For obvious reasons, toilets fall into this category.

Although toilet towers can still be found in some castles (e.g. Teutonic castles, or the toilet tower in the Wawel castle, Krakow), they are normally presented as interesting forms of architectural composition – they have not performed their intended function for centuries. As this is the case with royal toilets, obviously the 'secluded places' in ordinary townhouses, manors or even palaces, were destined for oblivion. If they somehow survived, it is only at the level of layout. In this context, a unique case is the "secret chamber" preserved in the tower of the collegiate church in Klimontów.¹⁵ Probably in the second half of the 18th century, a toilet was constructed in a unit on the second level of the church tower. At a certain stage, the space stopped being used as a vicar's flat and perhaps because of its location, it didn't undergo any refurbishment or modernisation. This may be why the secret chamber was preserved until the late 1990s, with all of its equipment and even functions and is possibly the only facility of this type dating back two hundred years.

This artefact makes us realise how poor our knowledge is of the everyday life of people from distant periods. Our focus on artistic beauty or scientific value places the mundane, everyday items out of our sight. A monument restorer sees the monument's historic structure and its most precious elements, but everyday things – rusty mailboxes, warped doors, or worn out steps, are hardly ever amongst them.

However, if we approach an edifice as a complex of artefacts, all of which are information carriers, we can identify its unique and exceptionally complex value. These numerous records, even if sometimes indecipherable today, are worth preserving. Perhaps new generations will scan them with lasers in scientific labs, or find values which are of no importance to us today. We need to be aware of the fact that when a thing dies, the information it carries is lost to us forever. Once we demolish casement windows, floorboards covered with hundreds of layers of wax, lime plasters evenly laid by skilful artisanal hands – all of the complex records stored in these artefacts will be irreversibly lost. How much of the historic record will survive in wooden stairs if a conservator irretrievably deprives them of their privilege to squeak? Where will the scent of Medieval cellars used to store inhabitant's useful utensils go, once they become lit with LED lights reflected in impeccably smooth floors and filled with the discreet murmur of air conditioners? When modernising a building, we don't think of preserving its scent,

¹⁵ K. M. Kowalski, *Artefakty...* p. 109.

temperature, air flow along staircases, or the echo of steps in the hall. All of these values – qualities of unquestionable authenticity, are protected by the rachitic fortifications of the mundane; worn things: sagging wooden gates, cracked ceramic tiles in the hall, paint peeling off wrought iron balusters. Nothing special, but when we look at an artefact from the ontological perspective, the substance is an inherent feature of its identity. In consequence, it comprises the **entirety** of a historical building with all of its elements.

3.3. Case study three: stones

At the beginning of the 19th century in England, listed objects were divided into living ones, which still performed their function and the dead – deserted and neglected, whose history had come to its end.¹⁶ In the case of living facilities, it was assumed that their function would be preserved by modernisation and adaptation, meanwhile dead monuments became in a way frozen in time and space, by the removal of secondary elements which distorted their form.¹⁷ Taylor discusses the case of Stonehenge as a good example of the impact of social demand, fad, or the taste of a period on the approach to the protection of heritage. The stone circle, dating back more than four thousand years, became part of a shared broader consciousness, as a personification of a romantic vision of the passing of time, a secret of extinct cultures – it was painted by Turner and described by Byron. This vision justified conservatory non-interventionism: the paintings and pictures from the end of the 19th century show most of the megaliths creating the cromlech overturned on the ground. The dominant value of the object was its existent condition – the 'frozen' damage being a testimony to the passing of time. Stonehenge was covered by conservatory protection in 1882 and thereby became an officially protected monument – a paragon of the technical capacity of people from the Neolithic era. The fall of one of the megaliths in 1900 was not considered 'romantic' – on the contrary, the event was interpreted as a signal urging specialists to take up *in situ* work and commence archaeological studies. At that stage, two options were discussed: the conservation approach and in contrast, a 'constructionist' vision involving the restoration of the alleged original layout of the megaliths. The 'Constructionalist' view prevailed and several stones were raised and concreted in place. Although it may seem that the site has been fully examined, new elements of the complex are still being discovered¹⁸ and archaeological studies continue to this day.

Stonehenge was generally accessible until the 1970's, but excessive visitor numbers posed a threat and today the site may be viewed only at some distance. However, we must ask, what are the visitors looking at? According to certain more critical authors, all they see is an engineers' reconstruction made fifty years ago which was deprived of its history.¹⁹ English Heritage members responsible for the monument recently declared their willingness to review the guidebooks and add the recent history of the restored facility,

¹⁶ This classification pertained the monuments of architecture.

¹⁷ J. Taylor, M. Cassa, *Representation and intervention: the symbiotic relationship of conservation and value*, [in:] Conservation and Access. Contributions to the London Congress 15-19 September 2008, IIC London, 2008, p.7-11.

¹⁸ R. M. J. Cleal, K. E. Walker, R. Montague, *Stonehenge in its landscape: Twentieth century excavations*, English Heritage, 1995.

¹⁹ www.Indymedia UK, Roger Taverner, *How They Rebuilt Stonehenge 500 years ago*, [online] <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2005/12/330623.html?c=on> Accessed 3 03 2015

which were documented in photographs leaving no space for illusion as to the scope of works.²⁰ Are visitors, amazed by the scale of the technical capacity and muscle strength of people living several thousand years ago, aware of the fact that the megaliths were erected using the most potent cranes in the United Kingdom and the stones owe their stability to concrete foundations?

Only with further development of research and conservation thinking it become obvious that Stonehenge is an explicit part of the cultural landscape and is interrelated with thousands of larger and smaller elements located around the area. During the works and with the aim of ensuring accessibility to visitors, such interconnections have, to a large extent, been destroyed. Aerial views are staggering: the remains of earth structures are intersected by express ways and a path to the cromlech's interior.²¹ Recently a decision was undertaken to construct a pavilion which could serve as an exhibition space presenting Stonehenge history. The crux of the matter is that a sacred place of cult, recognized as an artefact and legally protected as a monument, is standing by, irreversibly injured. Archaeologists have removed even the smallest bones of sacrificed animals, megaliths were re-erected by mechanical cranes and new developments have damaged items connected with the cromlech. In the new pavilion, the original monument, deprived of its truths, will be replaced with a simulacrum²² which, in an accessible and visually friendly form, will provide interested visitors with information about the Stone Age.

The history of conservation and restoration in the last century abounds with stories of facilities which, initially labelled as 'monuments', quickly became marketed as tourist products, highlights of museum collections, "miracles" displayed for the public to view, "curiosities" worth seeing. These objects were restored, made legible, more attractive, but often also uprooted from their original context and taken away from local communities. One can hardly disregard doubts as to the true motives behind such actions. To what extent is the aim the protection of heritage rather than just greed, or the willingness to enhance the attractiveness of a site for potential 'stakeholders'? There is also another important question we must answer: What is the object in its essence – which for a conservator should be the potential carrier of historic messages?

4. Summary

It is not by accident that it was John Ruskin, the father of conservation, who foresaw the threats generated by the mass production of 'things'. His prophecies came true: 'Man as Manufacturer' became a consumer. Nearly one hundred years later, Hans-Georg Gadamer accused the industrialized world of destroying 'things', uprooting rituals and cult.²³ In our world, the sense of existence of an item deprived of its individual features which resulted from an artisan's persistence, or long possession by another person has been challenged. In the 21st century, a thing has been reduced to the category of an object of desire: the satisfaction of the instinct for possession sets the limit for the object's short presence in

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ www. The Megalithic Portal, [online] <http://www.megalithic.co.uk/modules.php?op=modload&name=a312&file=index&do=showgall&gid=287>, [Accessed on 7 03 2015]

²² See footnote 5.

²³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Rozum, słowo, dzieje*, Warszawa 1979.

human life. Afterwards, it is destined to end up in the trash, to liberate space for another whim. We are the first generation in the history of civilisation that has made lack of durability a desirable quality.

In this context, at the turn of millennia, an important question re-emerges: why are we protecting 'what has become of the past'? Ancient cultures preserved things because, among other things, they recognized the unity of all elements of the visible and invisible world, which translated to their respect for material objects. Modern cultures, which aim at conquering the world with their reason, set for themselves the task of identifying the essence of things, when perceived as possible sources of inspiration. Meanwhile, contemporaneity, which combines consumptionism with a strong demand for entertainment, makes us approach heritage from the perspective of utilitarianism. This is why one of key values which motivates our efforts to protect monuments is their material – actual and potential – value, that is; the capacity to generate profits. Focusing the conservation and restoration debate on *imponderabilia*, disregarding the foregoing aspect, may suggest that the discussion is detached from reality. However, on the other hand, perhaps it would be worthwhile to consider leaving calculations to economists or marketing specialists and continue to concentrate on the examination of the essence of the thing, because otherwise who, if not a conservator, is to deal with this issue?

5. Conclusion

An item touched, repaired, smoothed by wear, cleaned and present in the lives of more than one generation acquires human features in a way. Its materiality is subjected to the passing of time – it is getting older just like people and gradually is losing its strength to persist; succumbs to inevitable degradation finally to return to its origin – Nature. In the very short life span of durable objects, a human life is just a spark. Whether in this limited period, people manage to discern the essence of what they are looking at still remains the biggest challenge for conservation.

References

- [1] Appelbaum B., *Conservation Treatment Methodology*, Barbara Appelbaum, 2010
- [2] Cleal R. M. J., Walker K., Montague R., *Stonehenge in its landscape: Twentieth century excavations, English Heritage, 1995*
- [3] Eastop D., Dew Ch., Context and meaning generation: the conservation of garments deliberately concealed within buildings, *The Object in Context: Crossing conservation boundaries, Proceedings of the IIC Munich Congress, Munich, 2006, 17 – 22.*
- [4] Kowalski K. M., *Artefakty jako źródła poznania*, Uniwersytet Gdański, 1993
- [5] Kowalski K., *O istocie dziedzictwa europejskiego – rozważania*, Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, Kraków 2013
- [6] Taylor J., Cassa M., *Representation and intervention: the symbiotic relationship of conservation and value*, [w:] *Conservation and Access. Contributions to the London Congress 15–19 September 2008, IIC London, 2008, 7 – 11.*