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Taking on the Ugandan Footsteps of Czekanowski. Building an Ethnographic Collection in the Era of Mass Tourism

ABSTRACT. The article describes the process of creating the exhibition Polish Way of Learning of the World at the Museum in Żory, which presents the achievements of scholars of non-European cultures. Most of the figures shown at the exhibition had an insurgent past. They were forced to leave the country by the tsarist authorities or exiled to Siberia. Professor Jan Czekanowski, who is considered one of the Fathers of Polish ethnology, has become one of the main characters of our exhibition. The article deals with the problem of contemporary collecting. It raises the question whether it makes sense to create ethnographic collections a hundred years after Czekanowski's research. Creation of a contemporary collection is a registration of the present life. In comparison with the "old collection", it shows the changes and mobility of traditional cultures. We cannot stop at presenting the old times because in that case it would not be a true picture. The visitor of such an "old" exhibition can travel to the country presented and experience a cognitive dissonance, i. e. the clash of ideas taken from the museum with the reality found in the field.

KEYWORDS: Czekanowski, Uganda, ethnographic collections, exhibition, changes

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По угандским стопам Чекановского. Формирование этнографической коллекции в эпоху массового туризма

АННОТАЦИЯ. В статье описывается процесс создания выставки «Польский путь постижения мира» в Музее в городе Жоры, на которой показаны достижения исследователей неевропейских культур. Большинство фигур, представленных на выставке, имели мятежное прошлое. Царская власть вынуждала их покинуть страну или ссылала в Сибирь. Профессор Ян Чекановский, считающийся одним из отцов польской этнологии, стал одним из главных героев нашей выставки. Статья обращается к проблеме современного коллекционирования. Автор поднимает вопрос о том, насколько оправдано создание этнографических коллекций сто лет спустя после исследований Чекановского. Создание современной коллекции способствует фиксации жизни в настоящее время. В сравнении со «старой коллекцией» она демонстрирует изменения и изменчивость традиционных культур. Мы не можем ограничиться представлением старых времен, поскольку в таком случае картина не будет соответствовать действительности. Ведь посетитель такой «старой» экспозиции может отправиться в представленную страну и испытать когнитивный диссонанс — столкновение идей, почерпнутых в музее, с реальностью в поле.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА:

Чекановский, Уганда, этнографические коллекции, выставка, изменения

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THE POLISH WAY OF LEARNING THE WORLD

Already at the early stages of building the new seat of the Museum in Żory, it was decided that the permanent exhibition would refer to non-European topics, which from the beginning of the museum's existence had been a determinant of its originality.¹ In the beginning of 2014 it was specified that the subject of the new exhibition would be the Polish explorers having conducted field research outside Europe. The "exotic plot" was kept, but shown through the prism of Polish history. One could ask what Polish history has to do with the studies of non-European cultures. All it takes to understand that is to do a simple experiment. On the timeline, mark the struggles for independence after the fall of the First Polish Republic and indicate those moments when Polish scholars began their studies in distant lands. One can easily notice that after every unsuccessful uprising there was a "flood" of Polish traveling researchers coming from among exiles and political refugees. The performed query has clearly showed that their collections are rarely available in Polish museums. The lack of exhibits related to the work of these scholars is most often due to the fact that they worked for foreign customers. Czekanowski can serve as an excellent example of such a situation — his collections are housed in German museums. Later he also worked for the *Kunstkamera*, the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg.²

Most of the researchers presented at the exhibition have uprising past — specially those from the nineteenth century. As the result, they were very often forced by the tsarist authorities to leave the country or exiled to Siberia. It is thanks to them that Siberia has become better known and described, and also more modern.³ These people contributed to the global scholarship and were the key figures in the development of some regions, especially Siberia.⁴

To present the achievements of Prof. Jan Czekanowski and the culture of peoples of the area he studied, a group of employees of the Municipal Museum in Żory went to Uganda in June 2014. Their main purpose was to obtain objects for the museum. This article presents reflections resulting from the comparison of the ethnologists' field work in the early twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

¹ In Poland, museums with non-European collections are very rare. As we knew that the "exotic thread" was popular and somehow defined our character in the eyes of the audience, we decided to continue this path of development.

² The *Kunstkamera* also houses collections by Waclaw Sieroszewski, Bronisław Piłsudski and many others (Беляева-Сачук 2019).

³ In the late twentieth century, Siberian miners still used the benchmarks (permanently stabilized geodesic marks) placed by the geologist Aleksander Czekanowski.

⁴ The data of the Polish Academy of Sciences show about two thousand Polish researchers from the Russian Asia. It is suggested that every third inhabitant of Siberia has Polish roots, and together with Russian exiles they formed the first local intellectuals.

JAN CZEKANOWSKI

Professor Jan Czekanowski (1882–1965) initially planned to make his professional career in the army. “He hoped that as an officer he would visit all of Russia, he wanted to travel in the footsteps of his great-uncle Aleksander Czekanowski (1833–1876), a researcher of Russian Asia. He became an artilleryman, he taught mathematics to recruits, mostly illiterate. He introduced them to the decimal system by comparing it to the military hierarchy, the only thing they knew by heart. During an inspection, the tsarist colonel, examining one of the recruits, learned that zero meant ‘colonel’. This was the end of the military career of Czekanowski, who, instead of eastwards, then travelled to Switzerland to study anthropology in Zurich under the then famous professor Rudolf Martin” (Kotarska 1973). After completing his studies in Zurich and defending a PhD dissertation in 1907, he started working at the Royal Folklore Museum in Berlin. In the same year, he took part in a German interdisciplinary academic expedition organized by the Duke of Mecklenburg Adolf Frederick, which headed to the African Great Lakes area and the Aruwimi forests (1907–1909). His collection (about 4,000 items), field research and subsequent publications turned out to be a great success, which also influenced the Professor’s further career. The most important of these was undoubtedly the five-volume work *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo-Zwischengebiet*,⁵ which is still considered “one of the basic works in the world anthropological and ethnographic literature about Africa” (Kuczyński 1994: 349). According to many authors, Czekanowski concludes the nineteenth-century era of great African travelers and explorers (Kuczyński 1994: 281; Kotarska 1973: 11).

In the years 1911–1913, he worked at the *Kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg, where he dealt with African collections. Czekanowski registered several African collections, and in 1912 brought a large collection (714 collection numbers) of objects belonging to the peoples from South, East and West Africa titled “Weapons, artifacts, musical instruments and other” (MAE № 2026) (Беляева-Сачук 2019: 164) from the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde. Later Czekanowski moved to Lviv, where in 1913 he became the head of the Department of Anthropology at the local University, and in 1934–1936 he was its rector. As a scholar, he was able to combine extensive knowledge gained during his field research with theoretical considerations. “He harmoniously combined the biological approach to man with the cultural one, extending it to include social and political aspects. He was not only an anthropologist in the classical biological sense, but also an ethnologist and linguist” (Piasecki 2012).

⁵ J. Czekanowski’s *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo-Zwischengebiet* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1911–1927) appeared as part of a collection of works presenting the research results of the other members of the expedition (J. Czekanowski, Eg. F. Kirschstein, M. Weiss, and others, 1910–1927).

BUILDING THE COLLECTION

While building the ethnographic collection for the museums in Leipzig and Berlin, Professor Czekanowski undoubtedly paid attention to the originality of the objects and their relationship with the cultures studied. Nowadays, looking at his collections, we see “old” items, but it should be remembered that when they were bought they were still in use, and for the audience of that time they were “new”. Undoubtedly, African art — then entering Western “salons” — attracted the viewer’s attention more, but it did not reflect the everyday life of African communities. This was done by the everyday objects collected by the Professor, and they take us into the African reality.⁶ The Museum in Żory has been following this path from the very beginning, which is why everyday objects are an essential part of our collections.

The fieldwork of the employees of Żory museum “a hundred years hence” was facilitated by Professor Czekanowski, as he precisely described his workshop and thus provided material from the point of view of collecting the most valuable items. In his works and comments (Czekanowski 1911, 1924, 1927, 1958, 2014) they were drawings of objects in use in the early twentieth century. In the second volume of the above-mentioned work *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo-Zwischengebiet*, which was especially helpful in the research, there are many drawings and photos of the objects obtained by the Professor. Most of them were also included in the Polish edition of the report from the expedition that was published after World War II (Czekanowski 1958).

In order to be well prepared for acquiring museum objects in the field, before going to western Uganda on the “Czekanowski route”, we visited museums where one could see objects of traditional culture from the first half of the twentieth century.

Today, the issue of destroying traditional cultures by mass tourism is often raised. This is not a new claim, as it already appeared in the early twentieth century (Wikan 1992; Barth 1993). It then became clear to ethnologists that this new mass phenomenon would have an impact on the traditional cultures visited by incomers. Therefore, when describing contemporary reality, they should take into account the context of the changes taking place. We create museum collections to illustrate the reality of different cultures to the visitor. However, we cannot stop at the stage of the first researchers from a hundred years ago. The museum collection should show the process of changes taking place. That is the reason why we bought not only items used in the old days, but also modern ones created with touristic purposes. Such a juxtaposition of the “old” and the “new” allows us to observe the changes taking place in the societies.

⁶ Bronisław Piłsudski already mentioned this in a letter to Stanisław Witkiewicz: “The museums should be for the public, as long as it can resemble life. So the interiors should be recreated” (Kuczyński 2016: 85).

An example is the dishes woven from natural fibers that were described and drawn by Czekanowski. Nowadays, in addition to dishes made of traditional materials, there are also dishes made of industrial raw materials. Containers with inscriptions are also a new phenomenon—in the times of Czekanowski, writing was practically unknown among the indigenous people in this area. A large number of industrial or post-industrial items appear in use. Of course, the collections we have obtained are from a completely different era, but they perfectly show the continuity of tradition on the one hand and the inevitable changes on the other. Some of the items described by Czekanowski are still in use in the early twenty first century, others have slightly changed and some cannot be found at all.

THE PURPOSE OF THE EXPEDITION

The main purpose of the expedition of our museum employees to Uganda in 2014 was to collect exhibits and information about them. It was also an excellent opportunity for ethnological observations allowing capturing the process of changes taking place in the areas described by the Professor. In the over one hundred years that have passed since the Professor's stay there, major economic, social and political changes have occurred. Nevertheless, some of the phenomena described by our predecessor could also be observed (e.g. salinas in Katwe). The implements used by the inhabitants of these areas has changed significantly, and today industrial products dominate. Handicraft products are rare, actually only various types of braided objects (mats, containers, baskets), sometimes ceramic products, can be found at the markets. In spite of the 100 years gap, our methods of acquiring the exhibits were the same as those of Czekanowski, i. e. the main places for shopping were markets or farms. Our predecessor's situation was much easier as the (traditional) "ethnographic objects" he was interested in were in common use. We operated similarly to our great predecessor, i. e. made purchases at the market, took photographic documentation, and conducted interviews about the purchased items.

Czekanowski complemented collections for the museums in Leipzig and Berlin, which he called "ethnographics" (Czekanowski 1958: 207). He also emphasized the problems related to the transportation of the acquired objects: "They caused so much trouble and caused huge expenses for transport" (Czekanowski 1958: 428). At that time, he sent to Leipzig 418 objects (single copies and sets) from Fort Portal loaded into 19 cases received from the German consulate in Entebbe (Czekanowski 1958: 203). We could not count on such help. A contemporary Polish museum worker acquiring objects in the field has to be almost self-sufficient, so the purchased objects we packed in lightweight plastic boxes brought from Poland and baskets bought on the spot,

which, by the way, are perfect for transporting even delicate ceramics. During the entire trip, we collected 198 objects and sent them to Poland by air.

Apart from the difficulties in finding objects in the field, there is one more fundamental difference between the Professor's and our ways of working. Professor Czekanowski was creating collections for museums that wanted to have complete ethnographic illustrations of particular cultures. Back then, the items used by the peoples he visited were "traditional", while products of European or industrial origin were still rare. All items in use were made by hand by the users themselves, or bought by them at large fairs. It was enough to go to a market or visit a random farm to buy interesting museum objects. In the early twenty first century, you have to visit many places to find traditional handicraft products not intended for tourist traffic. Therefore, the collections we obtain are of a slightly different nature.

THE RESEARCH AREA

The main task of the expedition was to reach the areas in Uganda where professor Czekanowski conducted research from December 1907 to February 1908, and collect objects that would allow illustrating the cultures of the local peoples. We selected for our research the area between Katwe and the areas along the eastern slopes of the Rwenzori Mountain Range up to Fort Portal, and then along the Semuliki River up to Lake Albert.

On the north-eastern shore of Lake Edward there is a location called Katwe, described by Czekanowski. The basis of its economy — same as it was in the early twentieth century — is not agriculture, but salt mining and trade. Nowadays, Katwe is no longer an "inconspicuous settlement" but quite a large village of several thousand inhabitants, mostly consisting of comfortable brick houses. Professor Czekanowski recalled that there were Bakondjo (Bakondjo) farmlands around Katwe, and he also saw farms of Bahima shepherds (Czekanowski 1958: 154). These two peoples apparently dominated this area in those days. Currently, from the ethnic point of view, the situation is more complicated, as apart from the Bakondjo and Bahima mentioned above, representatives of other ethnic groups live there.

Heading north from Katwe, the road leads to Kasese. Czekanowski stayed in this town from 3 to 4 January 1908 (Czekanowski 1958: 157–158); at that time the population of Kasese amounted to several hundred people. "The vast majority were Bakondjo. In addition to them, there was a large colony of Banyoro farmers imprisoned by the King of Tooro. The few Bahimas, who were the local nobility, ruled. (...) The most troublesome was that they were unable to adapt to the monetary economy introduced with the collection of the hearth tax, which was paid in cash" (Czekanowski 1958: 158). In 2011, the town had a population of 101 679 people of different ethnic groups, including

the Konzo and Tooro (Batoro), Banyankole, Basongora and Bakiga (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kasese>).

To the north of Kasese there is a small town of Hima. Czekanowski stayed there on January 4, 1908. Back then it was a small, inconspicuous settlement which did not attract the researcher's attention, as he only mentioned that they were walking across a "completely unused pasture" (Czekanowski 1958: 159). Today it is quite a large town, with a cement plant completely dominating it.⁷

13 km north of Hima there is the village of Rwimi,⁸ known today mainly for the large market where people from the area meet. Czekanowski, who visited it on 5–6 January 1908 describes this place as Wimi. At that time, there was a "stage shelter", the area inhabited by Bakondjo and Banyoro. Back then it was a small settlement treated as a place of trade. There must have been some fairs since the ethnologist develops the theme of trade, commodity prices and taxes (Czekanowski 2014: 160). When we were passing through Rwimi in June 2014, there was a market there, and the sale was dominated by vegetables, fruit and industrial products. We purchased the objects for the museum not at this grocery market, but at the stall outside.

The largest city we visited during our stay in western Uganda (on the "Czekanowski route") was Fort Portal, where Czekanowski stayed from January 7 to 25, 1908 (Czekanowski 2014: 163–208). He described the place as a large settlement, where the streets were wide and neatly kept—which cannot be said of them today. During his stay in the capital of the Kingdom of Tooro, the researcher conducted ethnographic and anthropological research.⁹

In the early twenty first century, Ugandans dominated markets, small retail shops and stalls selling souvenirs for tourists. Tourists could buy souvenirs without leaving Kampala, the capital of the country. Meanwhile in the early twentieth century, "Kampala had a disastrous health conditions" (Czekanowski 2014: 101). Today a large selection of souvenirs can be found at street stalls (e. g. Natete Road in Kampala), at markets intended for tourists (e. g. next to the Parliament building in Kampala) or in shops next to hotels. An example of this is the Mary's Craft and Card Shops in Fort Portal. There is primarily a large selection of braided products and *tapa*¹⁰ fabrics.

One can get the impression that everything is made for the tastes of tourists. Our conversation with the shop staff shows that not only tourists, but also town or city residents buy traditional items made by craftsmen. For

⁷ Today Hima is probably the most famous place among those visited by the Professor — because of the cement produced here, called "Hima".

⁸ Rwimi, a small locality on the Kasese–Fort Portal road (Kasese district).

⁹ In his diary, he noted: "After all, the most important duty was to conduct anthropological research, since it was much more difficult to obtain credits for anthropological research than to obtain credits for more effective ethnographic research" (Czekanowski 2014: 159).

¹⁰ Tapa, an easy-to-produce material, had its equivalent in most primeval cultures. It is made of bark of various trees, primarily those of the mulberry family.

example, wedding guests ordered a set of spices for the bride wrapped in *tapa* (int. Margaret, Olive). This material, although in the past it was used for everyday purposes, is still used to make items for various ceremonies, decorative elements and souvenirs for tourists.

THE “OLD” COLLECTION

During our stay in Uganda, we obtained about 70 objects illustrating the cultures of the peoples described by Czekanowski in the early twentieth century, as well as over 100 items illustrating the process of change. The largest group consists of everyday objects, including various types of containers, tools and musical instruments. We bought objects in shops next to museums (craftsmanship no longer in use, e.g. wooden sandals), stalls with souvenirs for tourists, at fairs, roadside stalls (in case of items still in common use), and finally at farms from their recent owners.

In the small village of Kyaniovu (Masaka District) inhabited by Ganda farmers, I met a craftsman making *tapa* using traditional methods with wooden pestles. We bought from him the above-mentioned tools [MŽo / A / 2242–2244], raw material (bark), a semi-finished product and finished rolled material, as it is sold to traders [MŽo / A / 2289–2290]. At the time when Czekanowski was in Africa, *tapa* was used to make clothes and also as bedding—it was mentioned by the present inhabitants of Kyaniov {picture 01}. Nowadays in Uganda, *tapa* products are used during wedding ceremonies (the bride’s equipment),¹¹ but it is primarily used in the souvenir industry {picture 02}. The disappearance of this traditional material already took place in the early twentieth century. The pictures published by Czekanowski are dominated by costumes made of factory fabrics, while traditional ones are rare (Czekanowski 1911: tabl. 40, pp. 43, 63). We also bought a handbag and sandals, the former made of *tapa*, hand-sewn, its front decorated with a multi-colored embroidered genre scene [MŽo/A/2364]. Embroidery is made using dyed vegetable fibers. Handbags of this type are used by elegant women from various ethnic groups, and are also eagerly bought by tourists.

Many household appliances and tools described by Czekanowski can be found today. They can still be bought at fairs, small shops, and are in constant use in rural households. These include baskets: two of the purchased ones called *kureti*¹² (ttj)¹³ can be found in Czekanowski’s works [MŽo/A/2297,

¹¹ Such products can be purchased, among other places, at Mary’s Craft and Card Shops in Fort Portal.

¹² The first, round and tall one, is used to transport fruit. Czekanowski attributed this type of baskets to the Konzo people living in western Uganda (Czekanowski 1958: 107, picture 13, item “a”). The second one, oblong, is used to transport vegetables and fruit, it is often found at vegetable markets and is made by Chiga (Bachiga) men from the vicinity of Kabare. A similar object is drawn by Czekanowski (1958: 107, picture 13, item “a”).

¹³ Language codes according to SIL International, available on ethnologue.com, conform to ISO 639-3.

MŽo/A/2300] {picture 03}. The traditional equipment of a homestead also includes braided *entemere* plates (nyn), *echibo* bowls (lug) and a *kataru* tray (ttj), the former used to serve fruit [MŽo/A/2350, MŽo/A/2348–2349, MŽo/A/2352]. The tray is used to clean grains from impurities; we bought it from the recent user who previously bought it at the market in Hima {picture 04}. Czekanowski attributed such items to the Konzo (Bakondjo) people living in western Uganda and believed that they were “plates woven using the Great Lakes technique” (Czekanowski 1958: 107, picture 13, item “i”). Wooden *entebbe* (ttj) stools are used in the same way in the village and in cities. One was purchased in Hima [MŽo/A/2254] and the other in Fort Portal [MŽ/A/2255] from their recent Tooro users {picture 05}. The same stools are also sold in gift shops. Czekanowski presents such a stool as a homeware of the Konzo people (Czekanowski 1958: 129, picture 21, item “f”). In the countryside, it is difficult to imagine a homestead without the machete *omuhoru* (cgg), now also factory-made, but very clearly referring to the traditional shapes of the mosque. Drawings of machetes from the early twentieth century can be found in the works of Czekanowski, who calls this type of tool a cleaver and attributes it to the people of Konzo (Czekanowski 1958: 117, picture 16, item “e”; 1924: 366, picture 67). We purchased two machetes of this type, both in the areas inhabited by Batwa; they are popular throughout western Uganda and used to remove weeds from the field [MŽo /A/ 2281–2282].

The items that have fallen out of common use include wooden double plates *ihungu* (cgg); vegetable dishes are served on the right plate, e.g. *matoke* (banana pulp), and meat and sauce on the left one. One plate of this type was bought from a blacksmith who trades in souvenirs for tourists [MŽo/A/2259]. Plates of this type were popular in the area, many such items are found in Western museums.

Various types of traditional dishes and containers typical of this part of Africa, which the Professor mentions, are still in use and can be found in many places in Uganda, both at markets and in private houses. The shape and technique of manufacture of the purchased containers refer to items used by the inhabitants of Central Africa in the early twentieth century. Woven containers *endiiro* (nyn) [MŽo/A/2232, 2234–2236] are particularly popular, they can be easily bought at local markets.¹⁴ In their case, one can also observe the process of changes taking place in Uganda both in the technical and belief fields.¹⁵ One of the dishes bought, the one with a set of hanging ropes [MŽo/A/2353], is described by Czekanowski who calls it “a basket in a net (to be carried in the Bahima way)” (Czekanowski 1958: 107 picture 13, item “j”; 1924: 387, picture 139).

¹⁴ In restaurants, dishes are still served in this type of container. According to the restaurant staff, they are used to “store warm things”.

¹⁵ One of the purchased objects is made of vegetable fibres and synthetic tape [MŽo/A/2234]. Another one has an Arabic inscription “Bismillah”, an object clearly addressed to a Muslim customer and testifying to the increase of followers of this religion [MŽo /A/2236].

Other types of containers are those for storing liquids (e.g. milk) and dairy products. They are made of wood, gourds or clay. Even nowadays, in traditional houses of southwest Uganda, one can find a small elevation *ordziedzie* (nyn) located inside a house to the left of the entrance. There are milk containers made of wood (black) and calabash (natural color) with a braided cover {picture 06}. Czekanowski described the place for storing milk (*Wand mit Milchgefässen*) as exemplified by a hut from the Kingdom of Gisaka (Kissaka) in Rwanda, where containers made of gourds were dominant (Czekanowski 1911: table 6).

The musical instruments described by Czekanowski are still in common use. They can be bought in many places in Uganda where the main customers are locals, but they can also be found at tourist souvenir stalls. In a roadside shop in the small town of Kayazanga (Masaka District) we purchased the following drums: *engoma garabi* (lug) and *engoma y'empuriza* (lug) [MŽo/A/2270, MŽo/A/2271]. Nowadays they are used by music groups as well as during religious ceremonies in the Anglican Church (Czekanowski 1924: 435, picture 190; 1911, table 40) {picture 07}. Flutes, rattles, kalimbas and zithers known throughout Uganda are especially popular. In Kampala, Natete Road, at one of the stalls we bought a syrinx *enkwans* (lug) [MŽo/A/2415] {picture 08}. Czekanowski called this instrument “harmonica”, ascribing it to the Bakondjo people (Czekanowski 1958: 126, picture 20, item “a”; 1924: 384, picture 126). In the same place we also purchased *ensege* rattles (lug), which Czekanowski attributed to the Konzo people living in western Uganda [MŽo/A/2416] {picture 09} (Czekanowski 1958: 124, picture 19, item “b”; 1924: 385, picture 130).

THE “NEW” COLLECTION

Creating a collection that presents a particular culture, one should take into account the process of ongoing changes. Malcolm Crick from Deakin University (Melbourne) notes that cultures and objects derived from them, by definition, undergo changes and modifications (1988). Therefore, museum collections should include both old objects presenting the traditional culture and modern ones, even if they are factory-made. By confining ourselves to old, traditional objects, we risk creating a false image of culture that is limited to historical aspects and ignores the phenomena of today. As a result, creating an exhibition based on such a collection, we would present the visitor with a false, unreal image of the culture as something permanent and unchangeable. When looking for objects from Czekanowski’s times in Uganda, we did not limit ourselves to traditional items, those that can be seen in museums and which are known from literature.

A serious problem for a museum worker is determining the authenticity and originality of the purchased product. A better determinant seems to be the

question of “use” in the sense of whether the object has ever been used or made with the local user in mind. Professor Jacek Łapott puts it this way: “From the point of view of ethnology, and especially museum ethnology, an original object is one that was created in response to local demand and was used by local community. (...) In this case, its aesthetic qualities are irrelevant in our understanding of the word” (Lapott 2009: 122).

Everyday objects used in modern households were obtained not only on the “Czekanowski route”, but also from various places during our stay in Uganda. We bought a large collection of everyday objects made by contemporary post-industrial artisans at a market in Mbale (eastern Uganda). It was a set of items used in a modern household [MŽo/A/2283, 2380–2385, 2391, 2408–2412, 2419].

Another place where the process of changes is easy to observe is the Kasese market. There you can not only buy, but also take a closer look at the production processes of contemporary everyday objects. We purchased an original multi-functional round basket with two handles. According to the saleswoman, “it was used as a shopping basket, for storing fruit and vegetables, as well as for keeping food in it. It also served as a gift wrap or could be a gift itself” [MŽo/A/2295, MŽo/A/2296]. Interesting examples of items woven from plastic tape are women’s handbags made by women, this type of bags having appeared with a new material, which is plastic tape [MŽo/A/2361, MŽo/A/2362]. The latter objects are an example of changes taking place in the cultures of the peoples living in Uganda. As soon as a new raw material for factory production appears, it is used in the production of everyday objects. New manufacturing techniques have also emerged.

Another category of the objects we have purchased is souvenir art, which, of course, is rarely addressed to the local recipient. It is natural that every tourist wants to return home with a souvenir from the country he has visited. For tourists who prefer convenient shopping, there are shops at hotel receptions or at the large market next to the Parliament building in the capital. Souvenir art offered in shops and stalls reacts lively to the needs of the market.¹⁶ If the seller notices that customers are asking for specific items, the market will be inundated with them very quickly. The most common souvenir art refers to the traditional art of the ethnic groups visited by tourists, but above all it responds to the expectations of tourists. In the case of Uganda, animal sculptures deserve attention, especially gorillas, as for many tourists gorillas are the main purpose of their stay in this country.

Mass tourism is associated with the phenomenon of commodification of culture, i. e. the inclusion in trade of those areas of life that have so far been excluded from it. As Anna Wiczorkiewicz notes, “things and actions

¹⁶ I analyzed this problem in West Africa on the example of the Dogon people of Mali and the Somba of Benin (Buchalik 2018: 101–126).

are beginning to be assessed in terms of their commercial value. Traditional costumes, customs, rituals, religious and artistic objects become commodities. When the demand increases, more can be produced, while also the form is being adapted to the tastes of the buyers” (Wieczorkiewicz 2008: 68). This is also the case with souvenir art, which is most often made in workshops located near the stalls, as it happens on Natete Road near Backpackers Hostel.

The items offered to tourists vary in quality and are not always associated with local cultures. Sellers offer what is in demand, what the potential customer is interested in. The situation is different in museum shops. There, the products of local craftsmen are offered, clearly referring to the exhibits presented in the museum exhibitions. Buying objects there, you can be sure that they are characteristic of the people living in a given area and made according to tradition. In certain ways, modern museums can be compared to an enterprise that produces services and goods.¹⁷

* * *

In the case of Uganda, cultural tourism is marginal, as nature and sightseeing tourism dominate.¹⁸ The guide from the Sipi Falls Tour Guide believes that “the most important things to do in Uganda are gorilla trekking, mountain climbing, nature, waterfalls, animals, and national parks. Uganda is one of African tourism leaders”. He clearly emphasizes natural attractions, as for the traditional culture, he speaks about it positively but without too much enthusiasm: “Well, that’s also interesting” (int. Cherotwo). Ethnic tourism is only an addition to the natural assets of the country. An example can be the mentioned Batwa people, whom tourists visit while visiting gorillas in the Bwindi National Park. Looking at the roadside signs, you get the impression that the nature dominates, and the national parks are Uganda’s main tourist attractions.¹⁹ Therefore, the souvenirs offered to tourists focus mostly on animal subjects, while among ethnic items only musical instruments deserve attention. Masks and sculptures — so popular in West Africa — are rare in the Ugandan souvenir market.

The division between the “old” objects, meaning those from Czekanowski’s times, and the “new” ones is somewhat artificial because many of the “old” items function perfectly today. For instance, objects that still function well in modern Uganda are various types of woven containers, such as *endiiro* (nyn) and *ekibo* (ttj). They are often described in literature presenting African art and also eagerly bought by tourists. The purpose of distinguishing the “contemporary collection” was to show how the traditional culture reacts

¹⁷ John Urry points out the problem of treating a museum as an enterprise (2007: 194).

¹⁸ The mentioned types of tourism are classified as cognitive tourism. A detailed typology of tourism can be found in the study devoted to world tourism geography (Jeřdrusik 2010: 44–45).

¹⁹ Even in Katwe — according to the guide — “in the rainy season, tourists come to photograph flamingos” (Kassim).

to technological innovations. It does not turn away from them, but creatively introduces those new possibilities to everyday life.

Finally, it is worth asking whether creating ethnographic collections a hundred years after the first pioneers of African Studies makes sense? In the case of Polish museums, which do not have “old” objects, it is a kind of catching up. On the other hand, creating a “contemporary collection” is a registration of the present life, which will tomorrow look different. In comparison with the “old collection”, it shows the changes, their pace and the mobility of traditional cultures. Such a clash gives a chance to show distant cultures in a mobile, dynamic way. If we stop at the old days, it will smell like colonialism and, above all, we will be far from creating a true image of a living culture. After seeing such an “old” exhibition, a visitor who goes, for example, to Uganda may experience a cognitive dissonance. His ideas taken from the museum exhibition will collide with the reality found in the field. In the early twentieth century, the aforementioned Bronisław Piłsudski pointed out that museums should collect objects of everyday life in order to be able to show the reality in which people live.²⁰ In the end of that century, the American sociologist Dean MacCannell puts it this way: “Ethnological exhibitions in museums allow modern tourists to come into direct contact with traditional lifestyles” (MacCannell 2002: 130).

The modern man is bombarded with various, often contradictory information. The museum should do everything possible to remain a reliable source of knowledge. The visitor should know that the information from the museum may sometimes be incomplete, but never false. This is the purpose of creating museum collections. Exploring distant corners of the world can start in museums.

INTERVIEWEES

1. Cherotwo, age ~35, profession: tourist guide, Sironko.
2. Kassim, age ~30, profession: tourist guide, Katwe.
3. Margaret, age ~40, profession: saleswoman in a gift shop, Fort Portal.
4. Olive, age ~40, profession: saleswoman in a gift shop, Fort Portal.

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²⁰ Working for the Tatra Museum, Piłsudski collected everyday objects of the inhabitants of Podhale, while most of the collectors concentrated on collecting folk art.

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