

DIÁNA VONNÁK

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PROFILE

I am an anthropologist of heritage, cultural and memory politics, and urban change in Eastern Europe. I am interested in the links between political economy and discourse in how the past is managed and mobilised. My work focuses on how heritage institutions and professionals work in contexts of crisis, revolutions, armed conflict and rapid political change.

Since 2014, I have worked predominantly in Ukraine, focusing on how the Maidan revolution, the Donbas war and later the escalation of the Russian aggression in Ukraine shaped the mandate, vision and stakes of heritage and memory institutions.

My current research explores how legacies of past violence, especially displacement and mass repression gain new traction in the ongoing war in Ukraine, what this means for local memory activists in Halychyna (Galicia), and for Polish-Ukrainian relations.

I have worked as an applied researcher and consultant for clients like FCDO, the British Council, and in grants funded within programs like H2020 and EU JPI-CH. I managed a large-scale UAV surveying of Jewish heritage sites across Central-Eastern Europe.

I am a published author and translator. My debut book won the Margó Award for Best First Book and was shortlisted for the Libri Award in 2022. In 2023 I was awarded a Junge Akademie fellowship by the Berlin Art Academy in 2023-4. I translate Ukrainian poetry into Hungarian, most recently a collection of selected poems by Serhiy Zhadan.

EDUCATION

2020 PHD SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY (viva passed in May 2020)
DURHAM UNIVERSITY
Supervisor: Dr. Tom Yarrow

Dissertation: 'Heritage Preservation and the Transforming State in Lviv, Ukraine.'
2013 MA SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY (Distinction, 74.75%)
DURHAM UNIVERSITY
Supervisor: Dr. Ben Campbell
Dissertation: Solar Energy Use in Transforming Women's Communities in Ladakh.

2012 BA CLASSICS (First), UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED, Hungary
2012 BA LIBERAL ARTS — PHILOSOPHY (First), EÖTVÖS LORÁND
UNIVERSITY, Budapest, Hungary

NON-DEGREE AFFILIATIONS AND AWARDS

2023-2024 Junge Akademie Berlin Fellow, Berlin Art Academy
2016-2019 External affiliate, Vienna University, Doktoratskolleg Galizien
2015-2016 Center For The Urban History Of Eastcentral Europe, Lviv
Guest Researcher: Urban Heritage Conflicts At Lviv's Unesco Heritage Site
2011-2012 Guest Student, Department of Philosophy, Central European University

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- 02/2025 – POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER (MEMPOP project)
Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic
- 09/2022 – COURSE CONVENOR, MENTOR (Invisible University for Ukraine), Central
European University, Hungary/Austria
- 03/2023-
01/2025 RESEARCH FELLOW (DECOPE project)
Heritage, History and Politics, University of Stirling, UK
- 01/2022 – POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE (Donbas in Focus project)
01/2023 University Of St. Andrews, UK
- 09/2020 – TEACHING FELLOW, PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGY
08/2021 Department of Anthropology, University College London, UK
- 02/2018 – GUEST LECTURER
07/2018 Department Of Ethnology, University Of Pécs, Hungary
- 10/2014 - JUNIOR (PHD) RESEARCHER
01/2018 Max Planck Institute For Social Anthropology, Germany

APPLIED RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY

- 08-10/2024 Research Consultant, Mapping Actors and Networks in Ukraine, FCDO,
UK
- 02/2019 – Project Manager (UVA Survey of Jewish Cemetery Sites in
09/2020 Central and Eastern Europe), European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative
- 12/2018 – Senior Consultant, Milestone — Solutions Lab, Hungary
02/2019
- 02-08/2018 Associate Researcher (Open Heritage project), Metropolitan Research
Institute, Hungary
- 10/2013 – Research Intern, Durham Energy Institute,
01/2024 Durham University, UK

PUBLICATIONS

- forthcoming* Vonnák, D. 'Caring for the Carers: Wartime Heritage Work in Ukraine.' In Saloul, I.,
Britt Baillie (Ed.), *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Cultural Heritage and Conflict*. Palgrave
Macmillan, London [past peer-review]
- forthcoming*,
2025 Vonnák, D. and Otrishchenko, N.: 'Collecting Testimonies in an Ongoing War:
Precarity, Solidarity and the Glass Ceiling in International Academia' In: Linda Green,
Maria Six-Hohenbalken, Nerina Weiss (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Mass Violence*.
London: Routledge [past peer-review]

- 2025 Vonnák, D., Jones, S., Munch Rasmussen, J., Hardy, S.: *Mobilising Care for Cultural Heritage in Russia's War Against Ukraine*. Research Report; University of Stirling.
- 2024 Fedirko, T., Vonnák, D., Chernousova, D., Gulenok, O., Yakovenko, M., Diepeveen, S., Pohjonen, M. and Weigand, F.: *Crowdfunding as Political Participation: Military Aid and Elite Resilience in Wartime Ukraine*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- 2024 Vonnák, D. 'Should Have Known', In: Ostap Sereda, Balázs Trencsényi, Tetiana Zemliakova and Guillaume Lancereau (eds.): *Invisible University for Ukraine. Essays on Democracy at War*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press pp. 120-127
- 2023 Vonnák, D. This Happened to Us for the Second Time War-preparedness, Risk, Responsibility and the Evacuation of Donbas Museums in 2022. *Museum and Society* 21 (2): 4-16.
- 2020 Carmel, P., Gruber, R. E., Szemző, H., Tönkö, A., Vonnák, D. *Jewish Cemeteries and Sustainable Protection*. The ESJF Handbook of Sustainable Heritage Tourism. ISBN 978-3-9822085-5-8
- 2019 Csizmady, A., Hegedüs, J., Vonnák, D. A housing regime unchanged: The rise and fall of foreign-currency loans in Hungary. *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 10 (2): 3-33.
- 2019 Csizmady, A., Hegedüs, J., Vonnák, D.: Lakásrezsims és a devizahitel-válság: intézményi és egyéni stratégiák. *Szociológiai Szemle* 29(1): 4-32.
- 2017 Vonnák, D. 'Lafrenz Samuels, Kathryn & Trinidad Rico (Eds). Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 23(3):634-35. doi: 10.1111/1467-9655.12665.
- 2016 Vonnák, D. 'Review of Schofield: Who Needs Experts? Counter-Mapping Cultural Heritage'. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 22(2):442-44.

INVITED TALKS

- 05/2024 *Konkurencia, szövetség, ellenőrzés? Civil kezdeményezések és az állam a háborús Ukrajnában [Competition, alliance, accountability? Civic initiatives and the state in wartime Ukraine]*
Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian National Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary
- 02/2024 (with Marianna Berényi): *Megőrzés élesben: múzeológia a háborús krízisben [Rescue in practice: museum work in armed crisis]*
Netnoworking Winter School, Novi Kneževac, Serbia
- 11/2023 *Stepping in, Helping out, Competing with...? State and civic actors in Ukraine's wartime heritage work*
School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK
- 11/2023 *A Professional Community of Care: wartime civic professional mobilisation in the heritage sector in Ukraine; Contested Heritage. A multilevel analysis of the securitization of heritage and its challenges for EU and UN actorness (COHERE)*, University of Leuven, Belgium
- 05/2023 *Wartime Heritage Rescue in Ukraine: Cooperation Beyond the State*
Prisma Prisma Ukraina – Research Network Eastern Europe, Berlin, Germany
- 11/2022 *Museum Evacuations: Learning from the Challenges.*
En/counter/points lecture series, Newcastle University, UK

10/2019 *Governing a City Against the Vertical State: Lviv's quest for decentralisation*; Gellner Seminar, Charles University, Prague, Czechia

CONFERENCE PAPERS

09/2024 *Leninfall: Negotiating devaluation and decommunisation in Ukraine since 2014*. Destruction by Design – V&A Culture in Crisis Programme; Dundee, UK, 20.09.2024

06/2024 *Exhibiting Ukrainian Avant-Garde in Wartime*; 7th Biennale Association of Critical Heritage Studies, Galway, Ireland, 3-6. 06. 2024

09/2023 *The Orphaned Synagogue in the Urban Space. Why Do We Recall Them?* Jewish or Common Heritage? (Dis-)appropriation of Synagogue Architecture in East-Central Europe since 1945. German Historical Institute, Warsaw and POLIN Museum, 12-14.09. 2023

10/2022 *Rescuing and Safeguarding Museum Collections in Ukraine*. Danyliw Seminar, Ottawa, Canada, 12-13.10.2022

06/2018 *Ukraine's new Lenins: Art and a decommunising state*. Royal Anthropology Institute, Art, Materiality, and Representation, London, UK, 1-3. 06. 2018

11/2017 *Unlikely Alliances: Orthodox Jews and Ukrainian Nationalism against a Holocaust Memorial in Lviv*, Danyliw Seminar, Ottawa, Canada, 16-18. 11. 2017

06/2017 *Museum or Lavra? Debating Institutional Legacies in the Lviv Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Life*, Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies—Heinrich Böll Stiftung—Working Group on Religion in the Black Sea Region. Kyiv, Ukraine.1-3 06.2017.

06/2017 *Changing Functions and the Politics of Representation in the Lviv Museum of the History of Religion and Culture*. ASEES-MAG Summer Convention. Lviv, Ukraine 27.07.2016

11/2016 *UNESCO on the Ground in the Restoration of the Golden Rose Synagogue in Lviv*. Transnational Perspectives on Heritage in Eastern and Central Europe. International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) Justus Liebig University Giessen, 23-25. 11. 2016.

06/2015 *Altar and archaeology: the peculiar memory culture of a museum/church in Lviv*. International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF), Utopias, Realities, Heritages 12th Annual Congress. Zagreb, Croatia 22.06. 2015.

02/2015 *Beyond Truth and Fiction: The Status of Normative Narratives of Heritage in Lviv*, Ukraine. CEELBAS—Oxford University Approaches to Narrative in the Russian and East European Context: Theory, Practice, Method. Oxford, UK 06. 02. 2015.

02/2014 *Traditional Architecture and Renewable Energy in Ladakh*. Durham Energy Institute, Durham, UK. 19.02.2014

10/2013 *Virtual maps, actual scenes in Leb city*. Royal Anthropological Institute Annual Postgraduate Conference, Aberdeen, UK. 28.10.2013

CONVENED EVENTS

- 2023: Chairing two discussions about Ukrainian literature at wartime with Ostap Slyvynskyi at Central European University's Invisible University of Ukraine
- 2022: Co-convenor (with Viktoria for the semester's seminar series University of St Andrews.
- 2022: Co-convenor (with Victoria Donovan) and chair of a seminar series for oral history interviewers of the '5 am 24th February 2022: Testimonies of War' project, where scholars experienced in working with trauma gave talks, followed by discussions I moderated (12x90 min)

- 2019: Raising the Velvet Curtain, chair and moderator of a book launch for 3 new books of Slovak fiction in Heffer's Bookshop, Cambridge, UK, by Ursula Kovalyk, Ivana Dobrakovova and Balla.
- 2013: Co-organizer (with Christopher Akiki) of the Postgraduate Conference of the Department of Anthropology, Durham University
- 2011-2: Founder and co-convenor (with Dóra Peszlen) of the year-long debates on religious studies at the open university lecture series 'Myth, Magic, Logos' at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

2019-	Poetry Editor, Versum Online Translators' Collective, Hungary
2020-1	Acquisition Editor, Park Publishing, Hungary
2021	Module Leader (Creative Writing In English), Milestone Institute, Hungary
2017-2018	Editor-At-Large, Asymptote Journal, Remote

LANGUAGES

Hungarian (native)
 English (fluent)
 Ukrainian (fluent)
 Russian (intermediate)
 Latin (intermediate)
 German (basic reading)
 Polish (basic reading)