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THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FORMER PRISONS AS MUSEUMS

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Annotation:

The article is devoted to modern approaches to the museumification of former prisons. Studies of the museumification of prison facilities involve the study of the processes of repurposing former places of 171 detention; the study of the organization of sightseeing activities and the analysis of the impressions of visitors to prison museums. The article summarizes the Canadian and French experience, including prison museumification strategies and the typification of tour guides. The French Virtual Museum of Justice is considered as an example of the implementation of an integrated approach to the preservation of places of deprivation of liberty as objects of cultural heritage.

Keywords: museum; prison; museumification; excursions; guide; cultural heritage; virtual museum; exposition.

Annotatsiya:

Maqola sobiq qamoqxonalarni muzeylashtirish bo'yicha zamonaviy yondashuvlar o'rganilgan. Bu turdagi ob'ektlarini muzeylashtirish bo'yicha tadqiqotlar sobiq qamoqxonalarni qayta joylashtirish jarayonlarini o'rganishni o'z ichiga oladi. Shuningdek, ekskursiya faoliyatini tashkil etishning o'ziga xos xususiyatlarini o'rganish va qamoqxona muzeylariga tashrif buyuruvchilarning taassurotlarini tahlil qilish jarayonlari ham tahlil etilgan. Maqolada Kanada va Frantsiya tajribalari, shu jumladan qamoqxonalarni muzeylashtirish strategiyalari o'rganilgan. Ozodlikdan mahrum qilish joylarini madaniy meros ob'ekti sifatida saqlashga kompleks yondashuvni amalga oshirishga misol sifatida Frantsiya virtual Adliya muzeyi misolida ko'rib chiqildi.



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Kalit so'zlar: muzey; qamoqxona; muzeylashtirish; ekskursiyalar; qo'llanma; madaniy meros; virtual muzey; ekspozitsiya.

Аннотация:

Статья посвящена современным подходам к музеефикации бывших тюрем. Исследования музеев и пенитенциарных учреждений включают изучение процессов перепрофилирования бывших мест содержания под стражей; изучение организации экскурсионных мероприятий и анализ впечатлений посетителей тюремных музеев. В статье обобщается канадский и французский опыт, включая стратегии музеев и тюрем и типизацию гидов. Французский виртуальный музей правосудия рассматривается как пример реализации комплексного подхода к сохранению 172 мест лишения свободы как объектов культурного наследия.

Ключевые слова: музей; тюрьма; музейные каникулы; экскурсии; гид; культурное наследие; виртуальный музей; экспозиция.

Throughout history, every nation has had its own unique path, often represented through museums that serve as sites for presenting the truth about their past. Imprisonment and detention have long been the most common forms of punishment for criminals. However, debates on whether such punishment is effective or popular have persisted for a long time. Critics of imprisonment often describe prisons as "schools of crime" and advocate for alternative forms of punishment, especially for minor offenses. Despite this, complete abolition of prisons at the current stage of human societal development is not feasible. However, there exists an opportunity to deter crimes by showcasing the grim consequences of criminal acts and learning from historical mistakes.

It is worth noting that the study of converting prisons into museums remains underexplored. This indicates that the issue of prison conversion has an interdisciplinary nature and cannot be viewed solely as a technological process for preserving cultural heritage. Therefore, it is insufficient to merely document the architectural aspects of former prisons; deeper investigations are required.



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Additionally, the options for repurposing old prison facilities are expanding annually. One of the most common uses is as settings for films.

For instance, the film *Inside the Walls of Folsom Prison* (1951) depicts the chaos and violence within California's Folsom Prison during the 1920s. The film's uniqueness lies in its authentic portrayal, as it was shot inside the 100-year-old prison, offering a more genuine representation than even the best Hollywood sets.

Another famous example is the SIZO 2 Museum in the Butyrka District, which has strict requirements for access and document use. Access is granted only to individuals with legal standing, and the scientific goals and objectives of their work must be clearly linked to criminal investigations. Initially built as a fortress by order of Catherine II, the Butyrka prison later went through various political stages, highlighting political crimes of different eras.

The Gulag History Museum, located in a former prison building, provides insights into the political repression carried out by the NKVD.

Similarly, Ohio State Reformatory gained fame as the filming location for *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994).

The conversion of former prisons into hotels and other hospitality venues has become a global trend. For example, HI Jail Hostel in Ottawa is housed in the former Carlton County Jail, and Jail Hill Inn in Chicago operates successfully in a 150-year-old building that served as a prison until 1977.

In some cases, former prisons have been converted into commercial real estate. For example, the former prison of Saint-Michel de Rennes (France) now houses restaurants, nightclubs, and discos.

Other transformations include turning prison buildings into residential facilities, as seen in Rummelsburg (Germany) and Bourg-en-Bresse (France). Law enforcement agencies have also used former prison facilities for training and equipment testing. Social projects have also emerged. For instance, the Bay View Correctional Facility in New York became a social justice center for women, while the Fulton Correctional Facility in New York opened a reintegration center for former inmates.



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Examples include the transformation of prisons into art spaces, such as Reading Gaol in Berkshire, England, and the integration of the former Saint-Paul Prison into the campus of Lyon Catholic University.

Modern prison museums have mostly been established between 1961 and 2010, with significant growth after 1970. Despite their growing popularity, the ethical implications of turning prisons into museums remain controversial. Advocates emphasize the importance of preserving old prisons as cultural heritage sites, while critics question the morality of converting such spaces into recreational areas. Moreover, the public accessibility of these prisons might negatively impact the authority of penitentiary systems.

Research from Canadian scholars has shown that the outcomes of prison repurposing are directly tied to funding structures. For example, many prison museums in Canada are managed by regional organizations dedicated to preserving cultural heritage.

Some prison museums are entirely state-dependent, such as the Canada Penitentiary Museum in Kingston and the Police and Corrections Museum in Prince Albert. These institutions promote the idea of protecting prisoners' rights and dignity and advocate for the abandonment of outdated practices such as physical punishment.

Studies on visitor impressions, including interviews and surveys, reveal diverse perspectives. Some visitors question the effectiveness of harsh treatment of prisoners, while others advocate for returning to older practices, viewing them as appropriate responses to crimes. Regardless of opinion, museums remain the primary means for accessing the realities of imprisonment.

In France, several institutions have been converted into museum spaces, such as the "19th–20th Century Children and Justice" Exhibition Center and the National Gendarmerie Museum.

The idea of a prison museum in France dates back to 1889 but was only realized a century later with the establishment of the National Prison Museum near Paris in 1995. Located in the former Fontainebleau Castle, the museum showcased prison cells, baths, and other facilities but closed in 2010.



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