HERITAGE FOR ALL

A Contribution to the Inclusion of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Archaeology: A Polish Perspective

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This paper discusses the results of project entitled *Heritage for all: Perception of the past and archaeological heritage by people with intellectual disabilities*, which the authors carried out on a group of 14 young individuals who were diagnosed with intellectual disabilities. The project aimed to detect how the past is perceived and conceptualized by students with learning and cognitive problems and how we, archaeologists and museum workers, can transfer knowledge about the past to them in a more appropriate way. This paper also provides a context for a need for inclusive archaeology as a way of practising archaeology as a discipline of social and cultural value for present-day people. Despite the limited number of people approached during the research and the specific character of education for people with intellectual disabilities in Poland, some conclusions can be drawn. First of all, participants in the project understood the past not as abstract, historical events, but rather as actions related to their personal experiences. Secondly, they remembered more about the past when it was shown and explained to them in an active, participatory way.

Keywords: inclusive archaeology, intellectual disabilities, past, heritage, materiality, experience

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies are complex social systems which comprise people with intellectual disabilities[1] (Beauchamp *et al.* 2014). In this paper we claim that the past (various ways of seeing and experiencing it) and heritage are contextual: they can be differently valued, perceived and understood. For example, children notice different things and appreciate them differently (e.g. Högberg 2007) than their parents and grandparents. Moreover, one thing may be perceived differently by a "person with some disabilities" and by a person with none.

It can be said that until the present day archaeologists have not devoted much of their time and concerns to the ways of understanding the past by different groups of people. Indeed, there has been in general a growing archaeological concern with ways of seeing and valuing the past and heritage (e.g. Holtorf 2007; Fairclough 2008; Palmer 2009; Harrison 2013). This is especially noticeable in public archaeology (e.g. Merriman 2004a, 2004b; Madsuda & Okamura 2011), postcolonial archaeology (e.g. Liebmann & Rizvi 2008; Lydon & Rizvi 2010), community archaeology (e.g. Högberg 2008; see also Holtorf 2010; Kobiałka 2014) and the newest trend in this kind of archaeological thinking – *inclusive archaeology* (e.g. Philips & Gilchrist 2012; Beauchamp *et al.* 2014; Corbishley 2014; Sayer 2014; McDavid & Brock 2015). All of these research areas expand archaeologists' knowledge of the meaning of their work and its perception in the contemporary world. Nonetheless, acknowledging individuals with learning and cognitive problems as active members of our society and those who also can teach us something about their ways of understanding the past is still underdeveloped (but see e.g. Philips & Gilchrist 2012; Beauchamp *et al.* 2014). Thus, in this article our aim is to appreciate different ways of seeing the past and archaeology and help public archaeology to be accessible for various groups of people.

In Poland there has been limited interest in inclusive archaeology so far. Our project entitled *Heritage for all: Perception of the past and archaeological heritage by people with intellectual disabilities* (in Polish: *Archeologia dla wszystkich: Postrzeganie dziedzictwa archeologicznego przez osoby z niepełnosprawnością umysłową*) was one of the first attempts of this kind. The project was carried out in 2014 in cooperation of the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the School of Special Education in Żary (western Poland). The intentions of the field research were to raise research questions concerning the

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1   We use the terms "disability", "people with intellectual disabilities" etc., being aware of the very simplicity of the terms and their historical limitations.

perception and value of the past and heritage for people with intellectual disabilities, taking as a case study a group of 14 young students from the school in Żary. During our research, we tried to find answers to the following questions: How do the participants in the project understand the concept of the past? Bearing in mind the limited number of people approached during the research and the specific character of education for people with intellectual disabilities in Poland, we were also looking for answers concerning the time scale used by our participants. We also asked: How do they reason about the past based on various traces? And finally, does visiting heritage sites influence their understanding of the past, and if so, how? The answers we received and the conclusions we draw from them have cultural and historical limitations. Nonetheless, our observations might offer a glimpse into how individuals with learning difficulties and cognitive problems experience the past in Poland, and they might be compared with other case studies concerning similar issues in other countries (e.g. Rix & Lowe 2010).

In what follows, we describe more closely the ways in which people with intellectual disabilities can be approached. After that, we concentrate on research that can be conceived as examples of inclusive archaeology. The next part of the paper is a short description of our project on which this paper is based. Finally, the last part is an analysis of the field research: different ways of perceiving and valuing the past by people (young Poles) with intellectual disabilities. Our main conclusion is that our participants value the past in a specific way: the past is not a general (abstract) history for them but it is what relates to their own lives, their own experiences. The past is a kind of experience.

DEFINITIONS OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES USED IN THIS PAPER

For a long period of time ableness and disability have been treated ahistorically. That is to say, disability seemed to be an objective fact that could be cured by careful medical and/or psychological supervision (see e.g. Foucault 2006). Recent theories on ableness, disability and queerness, for example, the so-called "crip theory", challenge the assumption of disability as an ahistorical category (McRuer 2006; Shakespeare 2006; Kafer 2014). To simplify, distinctions between "what is normal" and "what is abnormal", "what is ability" and "what is disability", "who is able to function in society" and "who is unable to function in society" and so on, are historically, culturally and socially constructed. Bearing in mind this dependency we decided to study how individuals

with learning and cognitive problems may understand the past, taking into account the ways they talk about it and approach it.

Our project involved archaeologists and educators specialized in teaching individuals with intellectual disabilities as well as a psychologist and a cognitive scientist. Before starting our research, we consulted the research methods with these professionals and adjusted them to our research group.

Due to the limitations that result from defining what it means to be intellectually disabled, scholars find it hard to unequivocally characterize and categorize intellectual disabilities. There are many definitions and trials to test it, most of them based on IQ tests combined with tests of various skills (social, practical, conceptual). The definition which tries to characterize the problem in a very broad way is the one presented by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. According to it, intellectual disability is:

> [...] a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18. Intellectual functioning – also called intelligence – refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on. One way to measure intellectual functioning is an IQ test. Generally, an IQ test score of around 70 or as high as 75 indicates a limitation in intellectual functioning. Adaptive behaviour is the collection of conceptual, social, and practical skills that are learned and performed by people in their everyday lives.

> Conceptual skills – language and literacy; money, time, and number concepts; and self-direction.

> Social skills – interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, naïveté (i.e., wariness), social problem solving, and the ability to follow rules/obey laws and to avoid being victimized.

> Practical skills – activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone. (http://aaidd.org/intellectual-disability/definition#.VZ-RMW_ntmko, accessed 1 November 2015)

According to Jolanta Lausch-Żuk (2001:150), in a cognitive sphere of life people with intellectual disabilities are characterized by imprecise and slow perception. Their range of concentration is very low, their memory short-lived and mechanical. They have specific and pictorial thinking, no (or very low) ability to perform logical operations, and difficulties in creating abstract concepts. Their language is poor and they often make

mistakes while speaking. In the social sphere of life, they have a visible urge to make social contacts and they understand simple social situations; they can communicate and cooperate. While working with such individuals, it is crucial to determine the goals that are set for them (e.g. Lausch-Żuk 2001:157).

Research conducted in Poland unfortunately confirms that individuals with intellectual disabilities in most cases are not treated as rightful members of society and local communities (e.g. Majewski 2011:89–105; Zawiślak 2008). This is especially observable when taking into account their ways of spending time after school, work – their "free-time". They are often perceived as not talented and not having any interests other than television programmes or toys (Cytowska 2011:363). Educators and parents tend to have lower expectations of them, and this seriously confines their development. Of course there are also possibilities for people with intellectual disabilities to spend their free time in an active way. In Poland special theatrical and singing or painting workshops are organized, during which individuals with intellectual disabilities may socialize with other people and learn new skills (Stefańska 2011:417–445). Mostly, however, they spend it in front of a computer or television set, and this hinders them from showing their skills and competences (Cytowska 2011:363). Additionally, one of the most common mistakes that have been made by people who work with students with learning and cognitive problems, or by the rest of society, is to treat these people as children. They are infantilized, and thus the activities and classes proposed for them do not cover the needs, age and experience of the people taking part in them. The workshops and classes are often the same as for children (Cytowska 2011).

As Lausch-Żuk (2001:163) claims, it is important to remember a few things while organizing activities with individuals with learning and cognitive problems. They include the following:

- Individual approach to each person,
- Taking into account the possible span of perception of people with intellectual disability,
- Classes should be strictly compliant with the goals,
- Duration of classes must respect the degree of difficulty.

Thus, before launching any project which involves "people with intellectual disabilities" each researcher has to prepare for it very carefully. Working with such people is not the same as working with children (as is often assumed), and therefore classes and activities should be organized in a very detailed way with regard to the individual needs and skills of the participants. Each group of "people with intellectual disabilities"

is different; hence, classes should be prepared each time for each group in an individual manner. We followed the above-mentioned methodology while organizing the archaeological project that put into practice an inclusive archaeology perspective.

INCLUSIVE ARCHAEOLOGY: INCLUDING THOSE NOT YET INCLUDED

Inclusive archaeology is a quite new archaeological approach. It may be interpreted as a branch of public archaeology which is "any endeavour in which archaeologists interact with the public, and any research (practical or theoretical) that examines or analyses the public dimensions of doing archaeology" (McDavid & Brock 2015:165). Because public archaeology concerns society as a whole, its concepts and practices are often directed towards a general public. By contrast, inclusive archaeology focuses on specific groups of people and treats them (or tries to treat them) individually. The main idea of inclusive archaeology is to provide opportunities for people who have been omitted by archaeologists to learn more about archaeology, the past and heritage, among other things. In other words, inclusive archaeology *includes* in the mainstream those who have been outside of it so far (Greenberg 2009:45).

In various countries (especially Anglo-Saxon ones) there have been organized projects which include people who have been under-represented in archaeology (e.g. the Inclusive Archaeology Education Project developed by the Workers' Educational Association in Yorkshire and the Humber or the Inclusive, Accessible, Archaeology project (IAA) organized by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA), the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), English Heritage and Oxford Archaeology). Archaeological projects engage and include children, elders, people with physical impairments, people with learning difficulties and sometimes people with intellectual health problems (Philips & Gilchrist 2012), up to and including homeless people (e.g. Kiddey & Schofield 2010, 2011; Crea *et al.* 2014), to mention a few. For example, the IAA project addresses the issues of disability in archaeology. Its main goal is to change the emphasis from "disabled" to "abled" and actively engage students with physical impairments and learning problems. The participants in the project took part in archaeological fieldwork training and then shared their experiences, both positive and negative.

Another project that concerns individuals with intellectual disabilities in archaeology is the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) inclusive archaeology project. It was developed to provide opportunities

for people under-represented in archaeology. It included adults with learning difficulties, mental health service users, and members of black, Asian and minority ethnic communities (300 participants in total). The main goals of the project were:

1. To demonstrate to the wider community that heritage is a collective historical legacy […].

2. To provide opportunities for people not normally engaged in archaeology […].

3. To demonstrate how archaeology can develop a wide range of skills, both specific and transferable, build confidence and self-esteem and promote a sense of well-being and help community cohesion.

4. To develop a strategic regional network of local partnerships involving agencies and organisations from across a range of sectors (digability.wordpress.com, accessed 1 November 2015).

During the project participants were asked, among other things, to bring an object that could be found by archaeologists some day in the future. Then the organizers and participants discussed whether the object would survive and how archaeologists could interpret it (Beauchamp *et al.* 2014).

These projects are of great importance to contemporary society and archaeology. They embody archaeology as a social and cultural endeavour. However, to work with people pushed to the margin of society, working in more effective and satisfying ways for both sides, in the first place we need to know how to present the past to those people and how to show it to them. In our project we decided to analyse how individuals with learning and cognitive problems understand the past and how they see and experience heritage. The general aim of the project was to create models of presenting the past and heritage which would be adjusted to the special needs of "people with intellectual disabilities".

HERITAGE FOR ALL: PERCEPTION OF THE PAST AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE BY PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES – A POLISH PERSPECTIVE

As we mentioned in the previous sections, people with intellectual disabilities are characterized by different organizations according to their cognitive system, thus they perceive reality in several ways. But, how

do they perceive the reality which is not directly available, is it abstract or past reality? Our project entitled *Heritage for all: Perception of the past and archaeological heritage by people with intellectual disabilities* was an attempt to answer to this issue.

One of the most significant facts while analysing understanding of the past among individuals with learning and cognitive problems in Poland is that they do not attend history lessons as part of their school education. This may, to a certain extent, contribute to the lack of perception of the past as a series of historic and historical events. Although studies in the field of education of individuals with intellectual disabilities indicate that the use of special techniques (e.g. visualizations, communication of information in small pieces and learning through experience) can help them to understand abstracts concepts such as time (Owen & Wilson 2006), the results of many other studies show that problems with understanding abstract concepts are rooted in deficits of cognitive functioning (Hayes & Conway 2000; Schalock *et al.* 2002; Schalock *et al.* 2010, Burack *et al.* 2011). For this reason, we assume that even if they have had possibilities to be educated in history, due to different organizations of their cognitive system, their understanding of the past might still differ in relation to people without intellectual disabilities. Problems with meaning and acquisition of abstract concepts are related to the cognitive dysfunctions, not only to the lack of educational opportunities. This assumption is also confirmed by the results of our project.

Fourteen students with intellectual disabilities and learning problems (6 females and 8 males) participated in the project. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 23 years old. Participants in the project were characterized by psychologists and pedagogues as having mild or moderate intellectual disability. The project was divided into two parts:

1. psychological research concerning the understanding of the concept of the past by people with intellectual disabilities (during this part of the project we asked our participants to explain what they associate with the past – verbally and through drawings. We also examined how they perceive the depth of time and what is their ability to reason about the past on the basis of the various kinds of traces);

2. excursion to the early medieval hill fort in Bieniów and the local museum (this part was intended to inform us whether such places and visits have the potential to change the understanding of the past among "people with intellectual disabilities").

An important criterion for carrying out the project was interdisciplinary cooperation and a multifaceted discussion of the ways of perception of

Figure 1. Participants in the project during a visit to the hill fort in Bieniów. Photo: Kornelia Kajda.

the past by "people with intellectual disabilities" (figure 1). Therefore, the project was conducted not only by the authors, but also by the specially trained educator, a psychologist and a cognitive scientist.

TRACES OF THE PAST AND THEIR PERCEPTION BY PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

One of the most important features of archaeological narratives about the past are various types of traces which, in popular belief, allow us to reconstruct the life of past societies (e.g. Holtorf 2010). These traces (predominantly artefacts) are also the most popular objects exhibited in archaeological museums. Bearing in mind this popular way of exhibiting the past, in one of our experiments we investigated how different groups of individuals with learning and cognitive problems cope with reasoning about the past on the basis of given traces of it (see also Owen & Wilson 2006; Janeslätt 2009).

In this experiment, each of the participants was asked to describe two drawings (one after another) (figures 2 & 3). The instruction that was given to the participants was the following: "Tell me what you see, what's going on in this picture." The time for answer was unlimited.

Figure 2. Stimulus number one used in the first experiment.

Statements of the participants in the experiment were recorded using audio recording equipment and then transcribed. The drawings used in the experiment were created in order to stimulate talking about the past. For example, traces of a dog were placed in the first picture (illustrating the playground). This could suggest that in the past the dog was walking across the place. In the sandbox, we can see mud pies and scattered toys, which could suggest that in the past somebody was playing at this place. In the second picture illustrating an encampment of ancient people, one can find scattered bones. This may be interpreted to show that in the past a certain person killed or ate some animal. One can also notice a broken tree – something had to have happened to the tree in the past and this is the reason the tree is broken now.

In the case of the stimulus number one, only three participants indicated that something could have happened earlier/in the past. With respect to the stimulus number two, only one person referred to the past. In the experiment, we investigated which of the objects drawn on the stimulus were noted by the participants as the first ones. In other words, we examined which element in picture one (figure 2) and picture two (figure 3) is the most crucial for our students. The most common response in the case of stimulus number one was a "playground" (5 answers), followed by "children" (4 answers). Other answers in this group relate to inanimate objects (swing, house, clouds). In one case, the figure of house was identified as the present place of living.

Figure 3. Stimulus number two used in the first experiment.

In the case of stimulus number two, "people with intellectual disabilities" drew attention to the different types of items (5 answers) most frequently. Subsequently, there were elements of nature (4 answers) and men (4 answers). In one case, there was no reply. In the majority, students did not refer to the past (prehistory) while describing drawing number two. Only in one case did we obtain the answer "picture shows primitive people". In conclusion, it should be noted that our test group paid little attention to who was performing the various activities. These results suggest that participants in our project did not directly link artefacts and their reference to the past events and to the people (past societies) who created them hundreds or thousands of years ago.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST BY INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

If we want to engage new social groups in archaeology (in our case, students with learning and cognitive problems), one of the key issues is an answer to the question: how do these groups understand the concept of the *past*? Is this understanding similar to that proposed by archaeologists or different? In order to answer this question, we asked the participants in the project to tell and draw what they associate with the past.

Figure 4. *This is me during the holidays by the sea. It reminds me of the past.*

Figure 5. *I drew two older people and a child who is jumping into the water. I saw this situation in the past.*

Our goal was to recognize how our students think about the past using different modes of representations (images and words).

In the first part of the experiment, the participants were asked to draw something that they associate with the past. There was no time

Figure 6. *This is my ex-girlfriend. She reminds me of the past.*

limit in this task. After completion of the drawing the researchers interviewed the participants about created representations. Each answer was recorded. In the second part of the experiment participants were given worksheets with the written word "past". The task was to write, one under the other, the associations which they have with the concept of the past. This experiment was designed to recognize the semantic network related to the concept of the past (its size and complexity). In the case of the participants who have problems with writing, the researchers helped in noting down their associations related to the concept of the past.

Among the associations given by the participants (in both words and drawings), we distinguished two types of responses: group 1 – associations that relate to the events of their life, and those associated with the loved ones; group 2 – erroneous associations, related to the present or the future (which indicate that not all participants understand the concept of the past in a conventional way).

The first group of associations can be illustrated by the following answers:

Person 1: *I associate the past with: bicycle accident*;[2]
Person 2: *I associate the past with: parents (I lost both parents)*;
Person 3: *I associate the past with: love, joy, first love*;

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2   For the purpose of this paper all quotations of the participants of the project were translated from Polish into English by us.
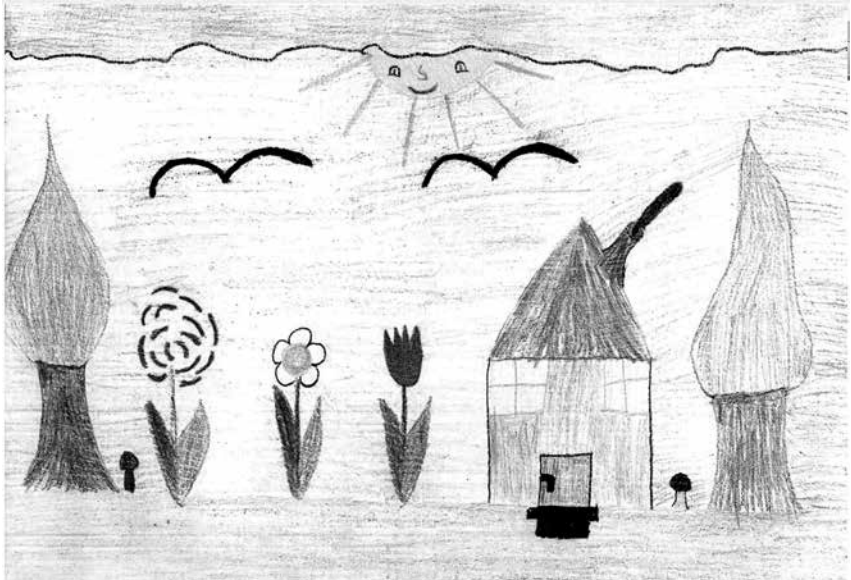
Figure 7. *This is my home and garden.*

An understanding of the past, in the context of the life events, was also revealed in drawings created by the participants in the project. For example, participants drew holiday memories (figure 4), events that they had witnessed (figure 5) or people associated with their lives (figure 6).

In addition to the responses which suggest that the group of students here understand the past in the contexts of their lives, it should be noted that in many cases we obtained results indicating that the past is confused with the present or future by the project's participants. Moreover, some individuals do not have a concept of the past. This observation can be illustrated by the following answers:

Person 4: *I associate past with the things that happen the next day*;
Person 5: *I associate past with weather: sun, rain, wind*;
Person 6: *Past? I do not associate it with anything*;

The analysis of the drawings also indicates the lack of reference of the word "past" to its temporal aspects. For example, some participants drew places associated with their present lives (figures 7 & 8).

Results obtained in the first experiment allow us to formulate two conclusions. First, the concept of the past is understood by the project's participants in the relation to their lives. Second, the past is not distinguished from the present or future in some cases. From an archaeological point of view, a fact that is particularly interesting is that only in one case did we note a response in which the past was understood as a his-
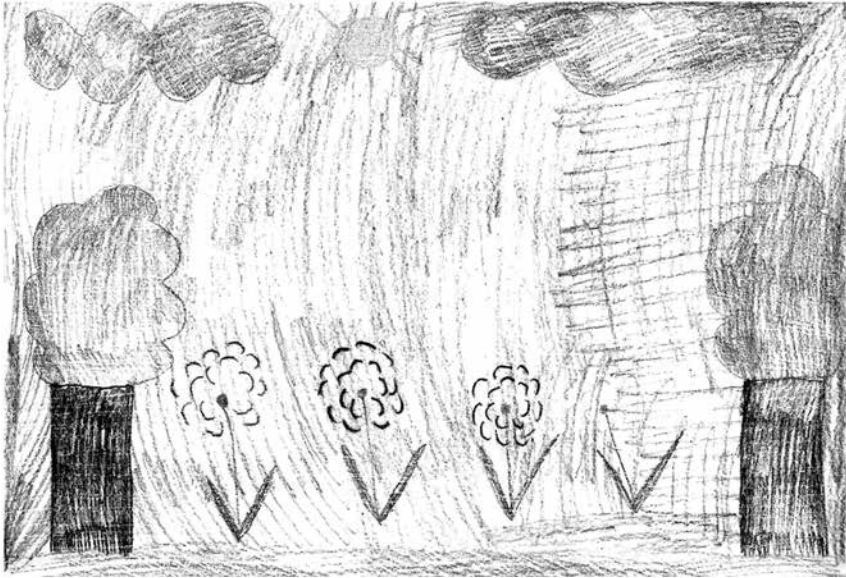
Figure 8. *I drew a meadow. Just like that. I do not associate it with the past.*

Figure 9. *I drew dinosaurs. Once I watched a scary film about them.*

torical event, not event related to life (strictly speaking one of the project's participants drew dinosaurs) (figure 9). These results prompted us to carry out a second survey. This time we examined how our group of students with intellectual disabilities perceive the depth of time.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT SOMETHING HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO?

In our second experiment we asked the participants to say what it means for them that something happened recently, a long time ago, and a very long time ago. The main goal of this experiment was to verify whether our results from the previous experiment – that our students do not perceive the past as consisting of historic and historical events – receive additional confirmation. The question was prepared in such a way as to reconstruct how teachers, museum workers and guides tell different groups of people about the past. For our experience it seems that while talking about it, they mostly refer to the time scale (e.g. something was made a very long time ago, a thousand years ago, in the past), thus we also wanted to detect how such ways of talking about the past are understood by our group of students. Because we did not want to suggest to them any way of understanding the timescale, our question did not relate to any happenings from the past, whether connected to general events or the ones which related to the lives of the project participants.

As a result, we noted that for most participants the time scale is associated with their lives. Giving as the examples events that happened recently, a long time ago and a very long time ago, the respondents referred to the events that they experienced or they referred to the periods of time (days, months, years) which correspond to their biographies (scale of life). The replacement of units of time (something abstract) by the events of life is a characteristic phenomenon here. Observations that were mentioned can be illustrated by the following answers:

Person 1: recently – *I was on a walk*; long ago – *I was in the store to do some shopping*; a very long time ago – *I was not in a church*;
Person 2: recently – *I fell off the bike, it was a month ago*; long ago – *I fell out of a tree, it was a year ago*; a very long time ago – *I had an argument with a colleague, it was eight years ago*;
Person 3: recently – *it means an hour ago*; long ago – *it means last year*; a very long time ago – *it means three years ago*;

Apart from the two cases in which ancient people and dinosaurs were mentioned (although in an incorrect order), among the rest of the responses the understanding of time which would correspond to the time scale used by archaeologists and historians (long duration scale) does not appear. Also, two out of fourteen students did not provide any answers. Three others gave incomplete answers (which may suggest the lack of the concept of time scale). These results confirmed the observa-

tions from the first experiment: our group of students do not perceive the past in its historical dimension.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

In addition to the psychological experiments, we also organized, as part of the project, an excursion to the hill fort dated to the early medieval period and to the local museum located in Bieniów (Lubuskie Province). During the trip participants in the project had the opportunity to experience the history of this place and the "life of the past societies". The visit was organized in order to ascertain whether our students would change their perception of the past after the visit. After the excursion, we asked the participants in the project to draw what they associate with the word "past".

The analysis of the drawings painted by the project's participants indicates that the excursion organized by us had a minimal impact on the ways of thinking about the past. Most of the students drew contemporary objects observed during the trip or drew the same objects which they had painted before the excursion (during experiment number one). Only one person drew a scene related to the past (an image of how people

Figure 10. *I drew how people hunted in the past.*

Figure 11. *I drew the house of the guide ("Chatka Henia") and the forest which we saw during the trip.*

Figure 12. *I drew my house. I associate it with the past.*

hunted in the past) (figure 10). Selected examples of the drawings are presented above (figures 11 & 12).

PAST IS NOT HISTORY

Past and history are very similar concepts in general reasoning. At the most elementary level, history is a series of past events and an academic discipline that studies them. However, our research indicates something completely different. For our group of 14 young Poles with intellectual disabilities, there are no grandscale historical narratives which enable them to comprehend the past as events that happened many years or centuries ago. Along the same lines, there are also no references to the minor historical events which are important only to small groups of society. Conversely, the concept of the past shared by the project's participants strictly refers to their personal, individual lives. The past, for them, is what happened to them and what had an impact on their course of life, mood or feelings. In other words, the past is a personal issue. Moreover, some of the participants did not manifested any understanding of the concept of the past (they confused the past with the future or referred it only to the present time). Thus, we presume that some of our students had problems with diachronic thinking, not only in the reference to historical events but also to the events related to their lives.

The results indicate that we cannot treat individuals with learning and cognitive problems (their way of thinking about time) similarly to children. Although we do not know any psychological studies on the perception of the prehistoric past by children and their understanding of it, there are some psychological investigations on diachronic tendencies among children which may be helpful in construing the results of the experiments we conducted. Thus, psychological analyses suggest that children with undistorted development acquire diachronic tendency (the ability to reason about the past or the future on the basis of current situation: e.g. puddles mean that it was raining) between 7 and 12 years of age (Montanegro & Parratday 1992; Montanegro & Pons 1995; Pons *et al*. 2002). The ability to perceive diachronic transformations (qualitative changes occurring over time, e.g. caterpillar turns into a butterfly) develops around the age of 11–12 years (Maurice-Naville & Montanagro 1992; Tryphon & Montenegro 1992). The third element of diachronic thinking – diachronic synthesis (ability to compress various activities to the whole unit, e.g. shopping, cooking, cleaning a house → preparation for birthday) appears progressively between 7 and 12 years of age (Pons & Montenegro 1999; Montanegro *et al*. 2000; Boucher *et al*. 2007). All in all, the understanding of the past among the studied group is rather different from the mainstream archaeological narratives. There are already accounts of alternative ways of experiencing the archaeological

record/heritage where senses, materiality and embodiment play a crucial role (e.g. Hamilakis 2013; Kobiałka 2013).

Hence, we suggest that there is a conceptual difference between the past, as it is understood by our students, and history. A general concept of the past (without references to their own lives) is not applied by them.

DO THE PAST AND HERITAGE MATTER?

For the two last decades, more or less, scholars of various academic disciplines have been emphasizing for the importance of opening up the scientific discourse to contemporary society (Cornelis 1996; Derry & Malloy 2003; Nind *et al.* 2003). It is also often stated that all social groups ("physically disabled people", representatives of various ethnic groups, black people, children, elder persons, to mention only a few) should be included in the process of knowledge/heritage creation and popularization. This inclusion is visible, for example, in the creation of new possibilities to visit various museums and exhibitions (e.g. the Archaeological Museum in Poznań organizes visits for groups with learning and cognitive problems; Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum runs an educational project "Difficult, Easy Words" designed for people with intellectual disabilities), or in engaging different social groups in archaeological/historical projects (e.g. the WEA project). This opening up of science is an approach worth following, but it should be done with a lot of reflexive thinking. While creating such projects we should always have in mind the group of people that we want to engage, its needs, possibilities and expectations.

When considering individuals with intellectual disabilities, it is worth studying the ways in which they see the things/exhibitions. Special excursions are of great importance to them but probably not as much due to their educational values and rather due to the opportunity to experience the adventure, the materiality of the past, so to speak, as well as something other than the repetitive everyday activities. As our research shows, the excursion to the medieval hill fort and local museum did not "widen the knowledge of the past societies" of the students, nor did it show another version of history. The explanation for this may be that this history was not their personal past, not their personal experience. Knowing more about the past and heritage is our (archaeologists', historians', heritage managers' etc.) expectation: such a goal for heritage is actually very *non-inclusive*, and so is the learning value as it is a standardized normative view of heritage. What the participants in the project remembered most was the "Chatka Henia" (the house of the guide

in the forest) and the archery contest that we organized. For the participants the history/heritage becomes *their past* through the senses, an active participation in experiencing the past, the materiality of touched things (replicas of archaeological findings).

Thus, we claim that promotion of heritage and telling our students about its importance was valuable when it related to the individual experience of these persons and not to the general events connected to the history of humankind. Individualization of visits may make history more attractive and memorable. However, we – archaeologists, historians – should not expect different groups of people to understand the past as a series of historical events and that they should be interested in it. These were only our projections and assumptions which do not correspond to the expectations of the students. Past and heritage matter, but only in a limited way. They matter only when they refer to individual experiences and everyday life and when they are not abstract ideas and representations of events/people that existed in a general past, not precisely their own.

Lack of an understanding of the past as history does not mean that individuals with intellectual disabilities should be excluded from various archaeological projects. Quite the opposite; the results obtained in our study indicate the need for reflection on the goals that are set in our projects. The case study described in this article shows that promoting heritage and knowledge of the past should not be our main aim. Past and heritage (even when not seen in a common way) can be important for some people because of the recreational and entertainment values. Therefore, the inclusion of different groups of people should not be based strictly on transferring knowledge about the past but on the recreational and entertainment values combined with sharing some information about prehistory and history. The point worth highlighting in this context is that we let the guide to talk to the students about the hill fort in – let us call it – a typical archaeological or historical way: "Now you see the remains of a hill fort dated to the Early Middle Ages. This is a place where people lived centuries ago. The hill fort has the shape of a ring, and so on…" As a matter of fact, we were not surprised that such a typical archaeological narrative had a minimal impact on the students. The elements of the excursion to the local museum and medieval hill fort which were not directly connected to the past events and informative effects of the trip but to the entertainment and atmosphere of playfulness were remembered by the participants in the project the most. In fact, it can be presupposed that this could be the case for most people.

After the trip none of the participants drew or spoke to us about the hill fort when we asked them to tell and draw their associations with the past. However, many of them focused on and memorized the "Chatka

Henia" which they could enter and touch objects displayed in it; they also remembered hunting for a wild boar. This suggests that the knowledge was transferred to our students in a more effective way when it was done by action which engaged them directly. In this regard, the study confirms many pedagogical assumptions that direct contact with and experience of the materiality of the past/pastness (Holtorf 2013) is among the most effective ways of engaging with archaeology and heritage.

CONCLUSION

Without any doubt, inclusive archaeology is one of the most important branches of contemporary archaeological research. At the most elementary level, any inclusive archaeology approach aims at archaeology as a discipline that should be of cultural and social value. Archaeology is not only about more detailed reconstructions of prehistoric societies. Indeed, such archaeology is still important and has its own value. However, it seems that the future of archaeology lies in archaeology as a science that engages contemporary societies. There are already branches of archaeology that successfully practise such research. One could refer to public archaeology, community archaeology or postcolonial archaeology, to mention but a few. Inclusive archaeology is another example of such approaches.

This paper is a result of our research among 14 young students with intellectual disabilities from the Special School in Żary. It has aimed to broaden the perspectives of inclusive archaeology approaches. In a nutshell, we wanted to *include in* archaeological thinking the perception and value of the historical materiality of individuals with learning and cognitive problems. Although most archaeologists claim that there are many ways of participating in the archaeological environment, the issue of how people with intellectual disabilities think of the past has not been a subject of detailed studies. Accordingly, we conducted interviews among students and we observed them during a visit to the local museum and archaeological site. Of course, we are aware that the test group, that is to say, 14 individuals, is insufficient to draw any definitive conclusions regarding how people with intellectual disabilities perceive and value the past and its material remains. Nonetheless, there are some interesting observations to be drawn from the field research. In our opinion, the way of how the participants narrate the past is one of the most interesting and intriguing.

During the last decade, it has been often highlighted within archaeological discourse that things as such mean nothing. It is through *nar-*

rative that they gain meaning and significance. In other words, stories behind artefacts are more important than artefacts themselves. Or, as Cornelius Holtorf (2010:391) has recently stated, "archaeology matters when its meta-stories matter". Our research shows something completely opposite. There are groups of people for whom meta-stories *do not* matter. The research suggests that our participants can perceive artefacts in different ways than we do. It is not clear to them that artefacts are related to past events and to the people (our ancestors) who created them in the past. Moreover, past for them does not mean general events (*meta-stories*) that created humankind. Along these lines, at this crucial point there is no difference between a person with or without disabilities. For most of us the past is what happened to us (*micro-stories*): it is their individual experiences that matter more than grand narratives of humankind. What matters is what directly influenced them. This observation has to be taken into account by museums and heritage managers, among others, during their work. Society as a whole consists of many groups of people. Not all of them perceive and *narrate* the past in the same way. This is also a crucial challenge which inclusive archaeology has to face in the near future. Without including people with intellectual disabilities, inclusive archaeology will not be truly an inclusive archaeology at all.

The so-called intellectually disabled persons are very *able*. It is we, archaeologists, historians, heritage specialists, who are rather unable to conceive of their creative and specific abilities. Fortunately, this has been slowly changing, partly thanks to inclusive archaeology.

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