
NEW DEFINITION OF THE MUSEUM: ITS PROS AND CONS

Proceedings of the conference

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Proceedings of the conference held on 7th–8th March 2022 in the Technical Museum in Brno

Jan Dolák—Josef Večeřa (eds.)

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Authors: Bc. Karolína Bukovská, Doc. PhDr. Jan Dolák, Ph.D., Mgr. Tomáš Drobný, Mgr. Pavel Holman, Mgr. Jakub Jareš, Mgr. Františka Marcinová, PhD., PhDr. Petra Mertová, Ph.D, Mgr. Václav Rutar, PhDr. RNDr. Richard Senček, Ph.D., Mgr. Jiří Šabek, PhDr. František Šebek, Mgr. Pavla Vykoupilová

Reviewers: PhDr. Oskar Brůža, PaedDr. Tibor Díte, PhDr. Daniel Hupko, PhD.

Technické muzeum v Brně, Purkyňova 105, 612 00 Brno / www.tnbrno.cz

Editorial staff: Mgr. Pavla Stöhrová, Bc. Sandra Strapková

Translations: EKO Překlady s.r.o.

Pre-print preparation: Matěj Málek

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INTRODUCTION TO DEFINING A MUSEUM

Jan Dolák

Comenius University Bratislava

How can we name things precisely? The issue of naming, of producing definitions, is one that has engaged philosophers since time immemorial. Since Aristotle at the latest, endeavours at categorizing and classifying things in some way have been increasing, including making collections, e.g. of plant and animal samples, and creating a hierarchical system, developing syllogism, a kind of logical argument in which one statement (conclusion) is deduced from two other propositions (premises), etc. Aristotle (384–322 BCE) is considered the founder of so-called syllogistic logic. A definition (from Latin *de* = from, away and *finis* = boundary, i.e. *definitio* = bounding, limiting) is an ideally unambiguous determination of the meaning of a particular term. The term which is defined is also called the *definiendum* (Latin for “what is to be defined”), while the description of the meaning of the defined term is called the *definiens* (Latin for “defining”). Redefining (*redefinition*) then describes the determination of a new definition replacing the previous one. Logicians use expressions such as “various ways of subject determination” (Gottlob Frege), they write of intension and extension of terms (Rudolf Carnap) and of the most general terms comprising the heights of various hierarchies as categories (Aristotles, Kant). Definitions then have predefined forms, definitions can be nominal and real, analytical and synthetic, etc.

Evidently logicians don't have an easy job. Museum specialists around the entire world, however, have got into frequently fierce disputes over whether their particular combination of words and sentences, often put together on a purely emotive basis, is the most precise definition of the museum concept. As if years working within the museum world and plenty of self-confidence is enough to formulate a globally accepted definition. Many museum definitions have appeared over the course of the centuries. I am sure that the authors of some of these carefully considered each word and phrase. I doubt that others did. So on the basis of “wise words come from wise men”, I consider it something of a challenge to claim that it was at this particular time that this or that phenomenon came into the concept of a museum, or that “from this time” this or the other is considered a museum. The popular statement that, “a museum is a museum,” attributed to Czech poet Petr Bezruč, is a circular definition, or a form of tautology in which nothing is said other than A equals A.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has also been endeavouring to find the right definition for the word “museum” for decades. Its International Committee for

Museology (ICOFOM) began intensive efforts focused on this issue under the presidency of France's François Mairesse, with the work then continuing under Brazil's Bruno Brulon Soarez. Some of the hundreds of studies looking at the definition of a museum include large encyclopaedias and collective monographs¹, writings from the most renowned figures in the field,² and in fact within the Slovak-Czech context I myself have made some contribution towards the global debate.³

Following the failed submission of a proposed definition at the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto, Japan, a major breakthrough is anticipated at the ICOM General Conference in Prague in August 2022. This is one reason why our domestic museologists did not want to stand on the sidelines of global debates on the definition of a museum. Thanks to the kindness and organisational commitment of the Technical Museum in Brno and with the assistance of ICOM's Czech National Committee, the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries, in particular its museology committee and the generous support of our Slovak partners, a specialist seminar took place at the Technical Museum in Brno on 7–8 March 2022 entitled: *Nová definice muzea, aneb její klady a zápory* (New Definition of a Museum, or its pros and cons). We really didn't mind that at that time ICOM had not submitted a new definition for debate. The meeting allowed us to grasp the issue to its full extent. Dozens of leading representatives of the Czech and Slovak museology and museum world took part in the seminar, and a total of fourteen talks were given, with some of those contributing supplying their texts, which comprise the contents of these proceedings. Not everyone, of course, focused strictly on the creation of a new definition. Some noted shifts in the concept of museums in the past, some spoke mainly on the current concept, significance and mission of museums, often making use of notable domestic and international examples, perhaps also with reference to ICOM's Code of Ethics. The submitted proceedings are thus a significant demonstration of the level of contemporary Czech and Slovak museology. The texts vary in their genre. They include scientific studies, academic articles and minutes. Overall, the seminar took place in more of a traditionalist style, with the words "collect", "public", and "education" the most frequently used. Most participants did not consider the issue of a new definition of a museum to be an absolutely pressing one, which was confirmed by surveys amongst Czech and Slovak museum representatives. But being a traditionalist, or a conservative, does not

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- 1 DESVALÉES, Andre—MAIRESSE, Francois (eds). *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*. Paris: 2011; DAVIS, Ann—DESVALÉES, Andre—MAIRESSE, Francois (eds.). *What is a Museum?* München: 2010.
 - 2 STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Zbyoslav. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: 2005. GLUZINSKI, Wojciech. *U podstaw muzeologii*. Warszawa: 1980; APPADURAI, Arjun (ed.). *The social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1986. BENEŠ, Josef. *Základy muzeologie*. Opava: 1997; PEARCE, Susan. M. *Museums, Objects and Collections*. Washington: 1992.
 - 3 DOLÁK, Jan. Some remarks on museum terminology. In: *Museology: back to basics*. Morlanwelz: 2009, pp. 199–208. (ICOFOM study series; 38); DOLÁK, Jan Some remarks toward the ICOM museum definition. *Museum*.—no. 6 (2017), pp. 33–38. (published by the University of Beijing); DOLÁK, Jan. Some remarks toward the ICOM definition. *Museology and culture: museum and heritage, city, sacred and museum definition*. Taipei: 2018, pp. 526–536.

mean being backward. We are well aware that the traditional concept of “in situ” museums (the village of Vlkolínec in Slovakia, the village of Wuzhen in Zhejiang, China, most castles and chateaux) and “in fondo” museums (most museums) is not obsolete, but rather expanded by a mix of these approaches, and by a copious number of other elements. Exhibitions often feature living animals, such as fish at the Prácheň Museum in Písek and the Moravian Regional Museum in Brno. The most attractive “object” in the history-focused museum in Jenštejn is the nest of bats, including their rather pungent faeces. Guides at Canada’s Writing-on-Stone park while showing ancient Indian rock carvings also like to show visitors the local insects, and the shaping of soft rock into so-called hoodoos.

These are just some examples of various hybrid approaches to museum documentation and presentation. In the vast majority of cases, we should welcome these mostly creative mixes. The problem of determining where a museum begins and where it ends is not so much a museological one as an administrative one. When organisations apply for financial support, tax relief or to join national or international associations, it is then that we should be determining whether the particular organisation is or is not a museum.

The job of the new definition, hopefully set in Prague, is not to classify museums in some way. They have been a part of the culture or memorial organisations since time immemorial. The job is rather to define the museum in the true meaning of the word, that is to delimit them, to separate them from similar establishments. This should not be a negative definition. There is no list of what museum documentations or presentations should not contain. We’ve got to tackle the problem from the other side; that is to say a positive list of those hallmarks *which when arranged as a whole* form the unique concept of a museum. According to Josef Beneš, a museum must fulfil a documentation and communication role. There is rarely dispute over collections being “open to the public”. Thus private collections of paintings accessible to just a small circle of the owner’s friends, or a shrine in New Caledonia only accessible to tribal members, are undoubtedly a part of our heritage, but they are not museums. Definition-wise, it become more difficult to tackle the mission of “documenting”.

Archives also document, as do the historical collections of libraries. And here this can in fact refer to anything. I know of archives where besides the usual objects of “writing culture” (stamps, seals, etc.) they also contain very old herbariums.

The “museum” did not begin with the dancing of ancient man to the rhythm of music, even though this was played on a flute made from bone. It certainly didn’t begin with the records of scribes who noted down who had provided the amount of wheat demanded to their overlords, which we can see in ancient societies. The “museum” rather began with the killing of a bear and the creation of a necklace from its teeth. The man was showing on his neck (an illustration of ostentation): look at me, I am a mighty hunter, I have killed a bear. These premises also apply today at a time of an explosion of oral history, and at a time when any sounds or images can be transmitted by the latest technology. Here, in my opinion, that required “separation” of the museum from other organisations, although we cannot call for some obligatory percentage representation of three-dimensional objects, is somehow genetically linked.

MOVING ON THE DEFINITION OF A MUSEUM—WITHOUT PHILOSOPHY OR POETICS

Jan Dolák

Comenius University Bratislava

Since time immemorial, people have endeavoured to understand and explain the world by surrounding themselves with physical objects. For these reasons, over time we began to create the facilities we now call museums. Roughly 60 years ago, a new university discipline began to take shape—museology—and it is no surprise that it focused on and continues to focus on various museum concepts. In my opinion, Z Z Stránský and Wojciech Gluzinski went the furthest in this museological and philosophical reasoning.¹ Josef Beneš has even put together a short dictionary.² This method of reasoning, including reflecting on various changes in society and documenting these, will undoubtedly continue even after the ICOM General Conference in Prague in August 2022.³ Today,⁴ we are faced with a distinctly different challenge: to formulate a definition for the International Council of Museums—ICOM. As such, I think it is crucial to fundamentally differentiate two basic approaches.

1. A philosophical/museological approach.
2. Creating a definition for the International Council of Museums.

Thus there is the *philosophical/museological analysis* of museums on the one hand and the *definition of a museum* for the museums association on the other hand—*these are not the same things*. Thus, museology should be a kind of background, a knowledge of matters, an awareness of where museum activities can reach, in what different ways museums can be perceived. This

1 STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Zbyslav. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: 2005. GLUZINSKI, Wojciech. *U podstaw muzeologii*. Warszawa: 1980.

2 BENEŠ, Josef. *Muzeologický slovník*. Praha: 1978.

3 According to Gluziński, a museum is “only and foremost a manifestation, a material objectification of consciousness, expressing actions and interactions in certain systems”. Gluzinski’s argument is a powerful one, but immediately unusable for the needs of defining a museum.

4 The lecture was delivered at the beginning of the conference *The New Definition of Museum, Its Pros and Cons* at the Technical Museum in Brno on March 7, 2022.

in-depth knowledge can then be used to formulate a definition of museums for ICOM. Here there is no longer much room for philosophy. ICOM needs a simple, apt, concise definition which is also understandable and substantive, and certainly strictly apolitical. This definition must be sufficiently broad and encompassing, yet also constraining.⁵ Every ICOM president or official providing grants in different countries of the world must know immediately when grant applications are submitted whether they involve a museum or not, and whether that particular organisation can become an ICOM member or receive a museum grant or not. In the vast majority of cases, this person is neither a philosopher nor museologist. Thus we should formulate an ICOM definition *without philosophy or poetics*.

Why just museums?

We should note that museology's closest disciplines—archival science, library science and cultural heritage care—are not holding such intensive debate on how they should be defined. Nor does the international association of philosophers aim to definitively determine what metaphysics or ontology actually mean, and meetings of sociologist associations do not vote on what society is, or whether there even is such a thing. This leads to two core premises.

1. The museum world is so specific that the definition of a museum has needed to be investigated in depth for dozens of years.
2. The museum world has succumbed (and not for the first time) to the endless desire for gnoseological manifestations and self-definitions which do not result in much of any use.

The frequent argument that an ICOM definition offers inspiration for national legislation is easily demolished. I know of no country which would incorporate an ICOM definition into its legislation. The Czech Republic, for example, dealt with nonprofit issues in its own way, while Slovaks did not look at nonprofits at all in its Act no. 206/2009 Zb. The Slovak approach leads to a fundamental question. If a particular facility fulfils all the functions (hallmarks) of a museum, do we need to bother looking at its accounting? Personally, I think the whole agenda regarding the definition of a museum is a hypertrophied one, but if ICOM feels the need to change, let's offer a helping hand.

5 See Baruch Spinoza—Omnis determinatio est negatio (Determinateness is negation). A deeper analysis of the statement of the famous Dutch-Jewish thinker from his letter to his friend was given by Martin Hemelik from Vysoká School of Economics in Prague. HEMELÍK, Martin. *Determinatio est negatio*. E-LOGOS/2004. Available at: <https://e-logos.vse.cz/pdfs/elg/2004/01/06.pdf> [cit. 7.1. 2022].

Background on the history of defining a museum within ICOM

ICOM has worked on different museum definitions, initially based on French language (with subsequent translation into other languages), and later based on English. French museologists in particular, influenced by structuralist or post-structuralist philosophy, often refer to the fact that people perceive the world in the language they think in, i.e. differently according to the language they speak.

Later, the definition incorporated the expression *in the services of society and its development*, which is sometimes replaced by expressions such as “*to the benefit of society*”, etc. This raises a core question. What has homo sapiens sapiens created “*to the detriment of society*” over the tens of thousands of years it has existed? A piece of flint, a North Korean or British machine gun, a Russian or American nuclear bomb? Who can make this determination? A machine gun in the hands of German fascists during the Second World War was undoubtedly on the side of evil, while it stood on the side of good when captured by Slovak partisans. But absolutely nothing has changed in terms of its actual definition. The fact that the words “*to the benefit of society*” are not just the hallmark of museums, was also noted by French philosopher Bernard Deloche.⁶ Deloche asks whether this expression refers to the moral good, or to happiness, and correctly notes that healthcare, education and the legal system are also of benefit to society. We could add, with some scepticism, whether Country A’s legal system, or the system of international law and its application, are always necessarily perceived as to the good of society in Country B.

At an international level, I was personally involved in “definition discussions” for the first time in 2005 at an ICOFOM symposium in Calgary, during which the so-called Declaration of Calgary determined that museums are not *nonprofit*, but rather *not for profit*.⁷ When I asked what the difference was between these two expressions, native speakers told me that *not for profit* means that the organisation is not focused on profit, but some profit is welcome. I am not entirely sure whether all native speakers of English understand this minor difference in the same way, nor how one could translate the expression into different languages (so it is distinct from *nonprofit*). This leads me to Finding 1.

F1: When determining the right sentences to use, we may sometimes end up dealing with verbal gymnastics.

In 2008, I pointed out at a meeting of the ICOFOM Commission in Liege, Belgium, that a museum is not an institution in the true sense of the word. Peter van Mensch concluded the following hour-long rather contentious and heterogeneous discussion by lamenting that we are entirely unable to agree on what an institution actually is. From this, I formulate Finding 2.

6 DELOCHE, Bernard. Definition of Museum. In: DAVIS, Ann—DESVALÉES, Andre -MAIRESSE, Francois. *What is a Museum?* München: 2010, p. 118.

7 This shift was also reflected in the definition at the General Conference in Kyoto.

F2: While we might come to an agreement at a general conference that a museum is an institution, we each have a different idea of what that word means.

I have never come across any response to this discussion or a published definition of an institution—organisation. From this finding, and from many similar ones, I formulate Finding 3.

F3: There is very limited dialogue conducted on the definition of a museum, although there are a large number of dialogues in which each party does not listen to the other.

The most visible outcome of the current efforts is the concise dictionary, *Key Concepts of Museology*,⁸ written by renowned museologists from French-speaking areas, and put together by André Desvallées and Francois Mairesse. The same team of authors also wrote the large *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*.⁹ I consider these works the true greatest achievements of museological terminology. Even so, these authors' concepts seem a little tight, that is to say overly Francophone. Today, the extensive *Dictionary of Museology* is currently being produced,¹⁰ again edited by Francois Mairesse. Also of high quality is the compendium, *What is a museum?*, published by Christian Müller—Straten publishers in Munich.¹¹ Today, however, there are an inexhaustible number of texts available which discuss the definition of a museum.

The wording of a definition was produced for the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto, but it was not adopted by the conference. It was neither a bad nor a good definition; it was not a non-definition. Polish museologist Magdalena Lorenc described the wording as a political manifesto.¹² The flowery text provides a definition of a museum as seen from the position of a middle-class person within the Euro-Atlantic civilisation. No definition of a museum should contain expressions such as *democratising*, *polyphonic*, *for critical dialogue*, etc. Not even the word *inclusive*, ostensibly neutral, is appropriate.¹³ Do the Technical Museum in Brno, or the J V Stalin Museum in Gori, Georgia promote planetary well-being?

8 This dictionary has been translated into many languages, with the first "non-ICOFOM" language being Czech: DESVALÉES, Andre—MAIRESSE, Francois. *Základní muzeologické pojmy*. Brno: 2011.

9 DESVALÉES, Andre—MAIRESSE, Francois (eds). *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*. Paris: 2011.

10 It is being published in French by publishers Armand Colin and in English by publishers Routledge.

11 DAVIS, Ann—DESVALÉES, Andre—MAIRESSE, Francois (eds.). *What is a Museum?* München: 2010.

12 LORENC, Magdalena. Polityczność nowej definicji muzeum ICOM, czyli manewrowanie transatlantykiem wśród gór lodowych. *Muzealnictwo*, r. 61, pp. 164–171.

13 There are three basic forms of coexistence between persons or groups of different cultural circles. 1. Assimilation, meaning a significant or complete merger with the majority community (e.g. in the USA in the 19th century and first half of the 20th century). 2. Integration, in which the individual maintains some of his own culture, but respects and observes the principles of the majority community (e.g. laws, use of the majority language, etc.). 3. Inclusion, meaning merely living next to each other without any due features of integration. Minimising social, spatial and cultural integration leads to the creation of parallel societies. While some praise the principle of "differences enrich us", others consider the creation of parallel societies as today's greatest problem. So inclusion is not a neutral expression.

Probably? Or not? Who has the power to determine something like that? What would have to happen for a museum to acquire or lose this characteristic? Is there *well-being* in Auschwitz? In terms of the facilities I suppose so: there is a large car-park, the site is flat, it is easy to move around. But in other ways? I strongly recommend the *Kyoto wording remain in the history books of the discipline* and that something else be focused on. We would surely agree that it is better to leave the current definition as it is than to adopt a worse definition.

Expressions such as “*democratising*”, “*inclusive*”, etc. are common expressions mainly within the Euro-Atlantic civilisation.¹⁴ Europe has the largest number of members of ICOM, and evidently it will mostly be Europeans at the General Conference in Prague. I would caution against Europe “steamrolling” the rest of the world with its current vocabulary. This might lead to a breaking of cohesion, something which is already rather fragile.

A definition of a museum for ICOM should include only arbitrary expressions, somehow measurable. If we can agree what we understand by the expressions “*communication*”, “*collection*” or “*permanent*”, we are able to evaluate in some way if these requirements are met. Non-arbitrary expressions such as “*feeling of wellbeing*” should not be a component of any definition.

Who wants to change the definition?

The ICOFOM international committee did not have a large influence on the change of definition. First of all, it was established in 1977, and secondly its members were not involved in the crucial discussions. The ICOFOM committee was invited to take part in definition discussions prior to the General Conference in Kyoto, and ICOFOM’s then-president, Francois Mairesse, resigned his membership of the committee in protest at its conclusions. Thus the initiator of the changes is not ICOFOM, but rather someone else. So who? It is not easy to ascertain exactly. They evidently work at ICOM’s Paris headquarters, comprising various museum managers, some chairs of ICOM national associations or other national associations, etc. Perhaps their efforts at producing a new definition are just an attempt to “go down in history”. Another reason might be that organisations have already joined ICOM which are not true museums, and they now “legitimately” claim their rights.

Methods

ICOM chose the right method for creating a museum definition prior to the GC in Kyoto. It set up a committee of experts which was tasked with discussing and putting together the wording

14 A few dozen responses to the ICOM questionnaire from different continents or regions do not provide relevant information on the vocabulary and ways of thinking of the billions of people who live here. This text is being written in mid-March 2022, when the ICOM Define—Standing Committee for the Museum Definition—submitted five different, in fact very similar proposals from which the final draft will be selected for the General Conference in Prague.

of a new definition, to explain why it uses particular words, and to submit the wording to the floor of the general conference. The failure of this endeavour was evidently the result of the composition of the committee.

Prior to the GC in Prague, ICOM chose an entirely different method. They called on the general public to vote themselves on what the definition should contain.¹⁵ Non-ICOM members are also called upon to take part in the survey. It should be noted that I do not know any organisation in the world whose own fundamental concepts should be formulated by non-members. We are witnesses to a kind of all-out “crowdsourcing”, rejecting deeper expertise. I still believe, however, that explaining the concept of a museum requires some kind of expert knowledge. I trust that all respondents taking part are experts in particular aspects of work in museums, but how many of them are actual experts on the logical construction of definitions, on the coherent system of first-order logic? I do not imagine that everybody working in libraries and archives, from cleaners to top management, could contribute towards the definition of a library or archive. Never mind the recommendation that twenty words would be optimal. Carefully written results from the questionnaires are certainly not without value, and they bring some knowledge for that part which I termed “philosophical-museological” above. Undoubtedly a large number of bachelor’s theses will be written investigating which continent or country worked harder in giving their responses, what terms they preferred, and what they shunned. The filled-in questionnaires, however, do not bring a lot to the table in regard to a practical solution for the definition for the international organisation. A cursory glance makes at least one shortcoming clear, this being the lack of verbs. So should we change some nouns to verbs? Perhaps the word “collection” to “collect”? Shall some sentences begin: Museums collect... ? This approach would undoubtedly have a large number of opponents. A number of museums, which we call *in situ* (*in loco*), devote minimal or even no time to active collecting. These are, for example, castles or chateaux with essentially permanent interior furnishings, but we can also include important palaeontological or archaeological sites, various memorial or sacred sites, etc. These museums, so to say, „have it all collected“ already. How many of the most common words are we going to choose for our museum definition? Twenty, thirty, or more? Unfortunately, this survey, as could be anticipated, resulted in a certain frequency of words, which we cannot consider to be politically, or even ideologically, neutral (democracy), are unverifiable and merely fashionable (sustainability), or not accepted everywhere in the world (forest, wood). Certainly, even a sacred wood can sometimes be considered a museum. But this is just one of the many forms that museums take. If we wanted to include all forms a museum can take in the definition, the definition could easily be three pages long.

In order to be able to define a museum, you should:

- Be able to get down to the very core of your *mother tongue* in order to formulate terms and sentences well. You need a good knowledge of English, the language international debates are conducted in.
- Have a *knowledge of museum work and museological studies* in regard to terminology, within the Slovak-Czech context this means knowledge of the works of Z. Z. Stránský, J. Beneš, M. Lalkovič, V. Rutar, R. Senček and others.
- Have *general knowledge of the creation of definitions, logical sentence construction, be focused on logically correct and incorrect statements*. In this regard, I would refer to the works of logicians—e.g. Bernard Russell, Alfred Tarsi, Kurt Gödel, Marián Zouhar and many others. The discipline known as terminography is today a separate subject.¹⁶
- We need to realise that the *definition of a museum cannot be scientifically calculated*. We can only use a *stipulative* definition (C. G. Hempel), i.e. whatever the expert community agrees a museum will be. Astronomers also previously considered Ceres and Pluto to be planets, but today they are no longer so. Yet nothing changed in regard to the actual objects themselves (the satellites). Rather there is a consensus of the *experts*. While natural science and physics require the creation of *prescriptive definitions*, social sciences strive for a precise *descriptive* definition, which describes and explains.

The science dealing with the way of drawing conclusions, including sentences, is called logic. Within its frame, the so-called Illocutionary act has been studied and developed for sixty years (John Austin, John Searle, Marian Zouhar and many others). Putting it simply, a sentence can be descriptive and express a state or claim or, conversely, it can be prescriptive and express a promise or wish. Even if we all agree on the direction in which museums should progress, the “Prague definition” must capture the current state of affairs. No promises or wishes, i.e. prescriptive words, can be part of the definition.

New definition

But what should any definition for ICOM look like? It should be *concise*, *not offensive* to anyone, yet also *apposite*. The final wording could comprise three parts.

16 SCHWARZ, Josef. Vybrané teoretické a metodologické problémy terminografie: poznatky z tvorby České terminologické databáze knihovnictví a informační vědy (*Selected theoretical and methodological problems of terminography: findings from the creation of the Czech terminological database of librarianship and information science*). In: National Library, *Library Review*, 2003, No 1, pp. 21–41. Available at: <http://full.nkp.cz/nkkrr/NKKR0301/0301021.html>

- a) A preamble—a descriptive discussion of museums, in which some terms from the ICOM questionnaire, or from the ICOM Code of Ethics could be used—this part is not essential,
- b) the actual definition,
- c) comments, explanations.¹⁷

Let us move on to the actual definition. A majority opinion prevails amongst experts in a number of aspects. A museum should be *permanent (but not perpetual)*, *accessible* and *not primarily focused on financial profit*. We also want to include business museums (often part of joint stock companies) and special museums like the Jewish Museum in Prague which are not nonprofit in the true sense of the word within the museum family. Here I can reproduce from Czech legislation the sentence: *museums do not generally make a profit*. The Czech Museums Act has been in force for over twenty years, and I am not aware of any suggestion of issues with this paragraph. I am not against a different formulation, however.

To whom should a museum be open, however? Society or the public? The word society might be interpreted as a “closed society” (members of a sports club, or an indigenous tribe). The term “public” seems broader than society to me, as the broadest expression, and automatically includes all minority groups (the disabled, members of racial, ethnic and sexual minorities, etc.), whose participation in museums is today heavily emphasised.

A museum is open to the public and generally does not make profit

But what is a museum? Probably not an institution.¹⁸ According to economists (Thorstein Veblen) and sociologists (Jan Keller, Jan Sokol, Jan Jandourek), an institution is a generally established, practised and approved method of transferring acts and relationships. Organisations are a more or less permanent, purposeful societal formations with a clear border, membership, internal division of activities, etc. So duels and usury were institutions, and today marriage, banking, healthcare, museum sphere, etc. are. So a person can never be an employee of an institution, but rather something “within” the institution, and so some organisation. Within institutions are some organisational groupings—organisations i.e. within museology (the museum sphere) these are mainly museums, but also relevant authorities focused on the work of museums, and departments of museology, etc.

So a museum is a permanent organisation. Using the word organisation, however, might give the impression that museums can only be rather formal, with a charter, a statute, a codified internal structure, etc. But even very small, less formally organised museum

17 The use of comments would not be an entirely revolutionary step. Until the GC in Vienna in 2007, the definition of a museum contained similar comments (clarifications), from which we ascertained that zoos are also considered to be museums.

18 DOLÁK, Jan. Some remarks on museum terminology. In: *Museology : back to basics*. Morlanwelz: 2009., pp. 199–208. (ICOFOM study series: 38).

facilities will also have to have the opportunity to become ICOM members. In one text, I used the displeasing expression organisational unit¹⁹ and used a comparison²⁰ with a shoemaker who repairs shoes. We probably don't perceive the shoemaker as a fully fledged organisation, but rather he is some kind of unit, subject to business and tax laws, occupational safety rules, etc.

So a museum is a permanent organisation (organisational unit)

But what actually *differentiates museums* from other organisations? Often a list of the activities of a museum comes to mind—it chooses, selects, preserves, restores, conserves, prepares, exhibits, mediates, etc.

So I propose the wording: *Museums communicate their collections.*

When somebody has a collection, it is evident that they previously selected objects and performed “maintenance” work on them (conservation, restoration, preparation), and they have to store them somewhere and record them. The word *their* must be in the definition so as to exclude from the museum family mere exhibition halls without their own collections which exhibit all kind of things, sometimes also loaned from museum collections.

The word *communication* covers all the museum's outward-driven activities—exhibitions, shows, educational museum programmes, anything about the collections and the museum on the internet, etc. This word seems more general to me than *presentation*, for example.

Are we limiting museums with the word collection, or heritage? The expression heritage is extremely broad, including everything we have taken from previous generations and want to continue to maintain and perhaps develop. So this includes customs, ways of behaviour and mother tongues. The word collection seems more appropriate to me; more limiting. In a number of countries in the world, museums are considered to be *historical buildings used for presentations of a museum character of location (palaeontology or archaeology), and also whole territories*. In the Czech Republic, this would include the Lednice-Valtice site, and in Slovakia the UNESCO site of Vlkolínec. We also include ecomuseums as museums, which in some cases encompass large inhabited areas. As H de Varine-Bohan says, an ecomuseum does not have visitors, but inhabitants. An exact formulation for what a collection is will have to be left to national legislation. So:

A museum is a permanent organisation which communicates its collections. A museum is open to the public and generally does not make profit.

I am convinced it is essential to produce a concise definition. The more words or expressions a definition contains, the greater the likelihood that something is left out, or other things

19 DOLÁK, Jan Some remarks toward the ICOM museum definition. *Museum*.—no. 6 (2017), pp. 33–38. (published by the University of Beijing).

20 DOLÁK, Jan. Some remarks toward the ICOM definition. *Museology and culture: museum and heritage, city, sacred and museum definition*. Taipei: 2018, pp. 526–536.

will be effectively duplicated, and in this case a dictionary of art can be of use. Historians of architecture correctly point out that any decoration or addition to some buildings would only disturb their clarity, usefulness and effect. In other words, they say: Less is more. Adding more that is good does not necessarily make it better.²¹

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21 The statement “less is more” is attributed to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who in fact took it from his teacher, Peter Behrens. It was first used in Robert Browning’s poem, *Andrea del Sarto* (1855).

WHY DO WE NEED A NEW MUSEUM DEFINITION, AFTER ALL?

Václav Rutar

National Technical Museum

“...the almost fifty-year old definition, which underwent just one major change at the 21st ICOM General Conference in 2007, is a part of the ICOM Statutes, and museology students logically encounter it during their course. The Czech Republic’s Act no. 122/2000 Coll. on the Protection of Collections of Museum Character provides a similar wording for its definition of the term “museum” (if considerably expanded), which was added to it in 2004...”

During this period of constant seminars and consultations focused on a narrow terminological view of our discipline, many authors are providing brief perspectives on the development of the term being investigated at the start of their studies. Thus, we can read multiple times about the beginnings of the *Musaeum*, a temple dedicated to the Muses, and its later conceptually more understandable use of the term in descriptions of the Alexandria Museum. This museum is considered a place of philosophical discussions, closer to a prototype set of buildings linked to knowledge than to protecting and interpreting material heritage. The understanding of museums as places specifically for protecting and exhibiting collections did not actually come about until the 18th century.

Even today’s familiar understanding of the museum as an “institution” leads us to understand the word as a description of a “building” in which cultural material is kept. The public now has access to this, as it did over the entire 19th century. The 20th century witnessed a small shift in emphasis away from the word “building” (this is when the museum becomes used in reference, e.g., to an open-air museum, while the second half of the century sees the use of the term in the nascent ecomuseums, and, e.g., community museums). We can encounter some definitions which include botanical and zoological gardens, etc., as museums.

There was a major shift in determining the definition of the term “museum” at the UNESCO, ICOM and ICOM Chile conference in Santiago de Chile on 20–31 May 1972, as a result of which the Declaration of the Roundtable of Santiago came into force in 1973. During discussions, new terms are introduced into museological discourse—participatory museology, social museology, postcolonial, community museum... in regard to community museum, dealt with in Chile in the context of the introduced term, *Museo Integral*, there is an emphasis on integrating the museum into the community. The definition wording, with minor modifications, became official in 1974, and it was introduced into the ICOM Statutes (although

still with the word “intangible” missing). The importance of the Chilean conference in work on this issue is also confirmed by the fact that the International Committee for Museology (“ICOFOM”) chose commemoration of 50 years since the above noted date as one of the main topics for its work in 2022.

During the 1970s, the term “institution” began to become increasingly commonly understood differently, and even replaced in the works of some authors. Within discussions, the interpretation of the word “museum” as a “centre of social transformation” begins to appear, and this proves to be fundamental in subsequent years. In this regard, it is worth remembering the definition written by Zbyněk Z Stránský in 1980—Stránský does not write of museums as an institution, but rather understands it as a “form for realising a specific, museological relationship of man to reality...”. The key aspect of this definition, however, is in its second part. Without stressing political connotations (as was often the case in other definitions in Eastern Bloc states), he says that, “... this form is not permanent, changes and will change as there will also be change in the historical and social orders and the specific contents of this relationship.”

In regard to terminological events within ICOM, in my opinion ICOM, set up in 1977, played the most significant role. The breadth of topics within museology, which are processed in annual studies and conferences needn't be stressed. The terminology itself was and still is one of the most important issues in the committee's activities. From the outset, ICOFOM collaborated with CIDOC (the committee for documentation) in creating *Dictionarium Museologicum*, which was published in a number of editions, during the first half of the 1980s, with the last edition issued in 1986. It began to work on a separate study in 1993—work on the *Thesaurus of Museology* began, and despite a slight delay this was first published in 2010 as *Concepts of Museology* (published in Czech as *Základní muzeologické pojmy*, 2011) and an expanded edition was produced in 2011 as *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*. In the period after 2000, we should also make note of the ICOFOM conference in Calgary on 30 June—2 July 2005. Again, the term “museum” was one of the main topics here—results were supported by the ideas of Peter van Mensch and Zbyněk Z Stránský, in particular in regard to their application in clearly established museum functions—research, protection and communication. The main outcome, however, was the term “intangible”, which was incorporated into the definition in 2007 at ICOM's 21st General Conference in Vienna. Thus this word was only included in the definition more than 30 years after its official introduction (1974).

In relation to the newly introduced terms, it should also be noted that the definition was further added to in a number of interpretations. The broadest interpretation was the result of work by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics—alongside the “short” definition contained in the ICOM Statutes in Part 3 Definition of Terms, located in Section 3 the Institute adds another nine areas, including botanical and zoological gardens, and also science centres, planetariums, non-profit galleries, nature reserves, ... Certainly not all of these, however, can be included amongst the noted main functions of museums (selection, protection, education, enlightenment, etc.).

The most prominent study in the subsequent period which developed museological terminology was ICOM's previously mentioned Concepts of Museology—as well as the term “museum”, which is interpreted in five ways (related to areas, periods, theoretical focus), the authors also incorporated another twenty terms here, in many cases for definitions already established (institution, education, heritage). Emphasis was also placed on investigating the terms museology, public, ethics and society, which had a major impact on ICOM's further work.

Discussion on a new definition was re-opened at the 24th General Conference in Milan in 2016. By January 2017, the Standing Committee on the Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials (“MDPP”) had been set up. In December 2018, the ICOM Executive Board (“EB”) had adopted the MDPP recommendations, alongside a set of eight parameters. Consultation was held with over 900 participants, and five versions of possible definitions were created, and then submitted to the EB in June 2019—which was to select the definition which was to be voted on at the 25th General Conference in Kyoto. Due to the lack of co-operation between the EB and MDPP, however, voting was postponed. François Mairesse and others took a critical stance—Mairesse considered the prepared definition as more a declaration of fashionable values (democratisation, well-being). There was also criticism that the definition should be simple and clearly focused on the term itself. In his report from the Kyoto discussions, John Fraser says that, “the committee has offered useful recommendations for civic action that fit well with the museum form, but those purposes should not be construed as a definition of what museums are.” Many parties expressed the opinion that the new definition seemed more like a political statement which in no way accepted the diversity of museums and how they work. Twenty-four ICOM committees with representatives of a number of states (France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Canada, Russia) rejected a vote. It was also noted that the submitted definition lacked a number of core terms in their original form (education, intangible, tangible). Thus, implementing this new definition could have had a negative impact on the legislation of selected countries. It should be noted here that legislation often incorporates a definition directly impacting co-operation between state and museums.

Following postponement of the vote, MDPP EB proposed a comprehensive methodology in September 2019 for further work and processes. Unfortunately, once again there was not sufficient EB involvement, and at the end of the year the MDPP's work was terminated. By January 2020, however, the work formally continued in a committee now given the new acronym MDPP 2. In March, EB received a new methodology again, however as before there was insufficient collaboration, resulting in a number of committee members withdrawing—Léontine Meijer-van Mensch, Hilda Abreu Utermohlen and Suay Aksoy (who also resigned from her position as ICOM President) all expressed their severe criticism of the lack of co-operation—the EB is accused of not observing the established procedures, of a lack of transparency, passivity and indecision. Reference is made to unfair political games and a lack of solidarity. A number of national and international ICOM committees also made negative statements on the entire situation (all in June 2020).

The situation gradually settled down in the second half of the year, and a new solution and work procedures were sought. On 7 July 2020, ICOM's main criteria for selecting the most appropriate words were submitted. Their first webinar was held a few months later on 10 December 2020, during which a new system of work was submitted—this was planned for the period from December 2020 until 10 May 2022 with a total of eleven steps, during which four consultations were to take place. Included in this period is an introduction to methodology, assessment of the situation in Kyoto, selection of approx. twenty words important for a definition and other work with them according to established methodology (qualitative and quantitative analysis, meaning maps...).

Five definitions have been published from the end of February 2022, put together on the basis of the terms of selected committees. These definitions are to be assessed during the final fourth consultation, and submitted for completion to MDDP2. The EB's statement and published results must be submitted to the 26th General Conference in Prague on 20–27 August 2022.

The methodology for constructing a definition is based on a selection of terms within seven different areas (*Entity—Entity qualifiers—Objects—Action—Experience—Social Values—Target*)—roughly 5-6 terms were progressively selected in each of these areas in consultation with the committees (national, international and also affiliated organisations). These were then used to “construct” the mentioned five definitions. Below, I provide a brief description of the selected terms, and in some cases also ICOFOM's specific approach (if it differed from the words adopted, or if it added new ones). In some places, I have also included other ICOM representatives' understanding of the issue.

Entity (what a museum is)—the main ones chosen were *Institution* (80%), *Space*, and *Place*. In their explanation, the term “institution” is presented mainly in connection with the terms organisation, non-profit and permanent. Space is understood as a public, or digital, space open to the public. Finally, “place” is interpreted mostly from a physical, or architectural, perspective. It is evident from the ICOFOM results (here *Museum nature*) that of the three presented terms, *Space* is preferred, which is described in a broad way also incorporating eco-museums, digital museums (cyberspace), community centres and on-line museums. Here, “museum” is not linked solely with a building or institution, but to an open space (fulfilling other definition parts). For many other committees, however, the term is considered vague, and more specific boundaries are not determined for it.

In the group of *Entity qualifiers* (what qualifies/determines a museum), there are mainly two already established words—*Non-profit* and *Permanent*, but also three new ones—*Inclusive*, *Sustainability* and *Accessibility*, which we can assume will be inserted into the new definition. Accessibility is of course also linked to the most frequently mentioned phrase here—*Open to public* (78%). ICOFOM (*Legal Aspects*) assessed the selection a little differently—as well as the common terms *Non-profit* and *Public*, they also include words from the opposite end of the spectrum, specifically *Profit* and *Private*. This is quite an unusual perspective—if we look at the mentioned Concepts of Museology, or the vocabulary of selected main words

for the prepared definition, these cannot be found. In ICOM materials, however, we do find remarks on some apparently evident terms given by individual committees. The International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (“CAMOC”), for example, states that the term “Non-profit” is not applicable to community museums, where heritage can be utilised within a “business model”. Similarly, “Professional” cannot be used in regard to many community or private museums. Furthermore, “Permanent” cannot be easily used in regard to ecomuseums or “individual-run” museums where there is not an obvious need for permanence and they can be linked to one-off events.

Objects (what museum objects are)—the most important term here is *Heritage* (92%), which most commonly appears alongside *Tangible/Intangible*, and so incorporates “all natural or man-made goods and values”. Amongst the most commonly requested terms are in particular *Culture* and *Memory*, general terms linked to museum activities in all possible interpretations. In particular, the term “memory” is irrefutable and represents the very core of museum work. Instead of the term *Objects*, ICOFOM uses in my opinion the more accurate term *Museum content*, and besides *Heritage* they also highlight *Collections* and *Knowledge*. They also note the importance of the word *Media*, which is closely linked to collection and showing a collection. In this area, CAMOC provides an interesting interpretation of the word *Heritage*. They say that it is an emotional term and it evokes memories linked to emotions, and not to historical facts. In some cases, the term *Heritage* is interpreted together for both tangible and intangible heritage—such that this division need not be utilised.

Action (what museums do), understood as a function, includes traditional terms—*Researches* (93%)—*Displays/Exhibits*—*Educated*—*Conserves*—*Communicates*—*Preserves*—*Interprets*. ICOFOM, which in its submitted results uses the more precise term *Museum functions*, chooses on the basis of many years of terminological work, again more clearly, the following terms—*research*, *preservation*, *exhibition*, *education*, *conservation*, *documentation*. From the perspective of general museum terminology, a term is lacking here which would link directly to the activities around building collections. Terms like acquisition or selection, paradoxically, do not play a main role in preparations for a new definition, even though “acquisition” is a word clearly established in today’s definition. Some of the committees promote other terms too—e.g. *Participate*, *Connect* and *Restore*.

Experience (what experience people acquire in museums). The newly submitted term here is *Dialogue*, which implies an emphasis on the increasing openness of museums. For a long time, museums’ communication channel has no longer been perceived as one-way. The process of communication is now firmly linked to inclusivity and participation. The educational purpose is no longer interpreted solely using the traditional idea of education—knowledge can be shared, learning can be informal, or perceived as life-long education. Some of the most commonly proposed terms include *Enjoyment/Entertainment*, *Knowledge*, and the new suggestions of *Reflection* and *Curiosity*, which are also linked to *Discovery*. ICOFOM, which interprets the terms under the descriptor *Museum missions* adds alongside the purposes given in the old definition also *Emancipation* and *Study*. It also includes community museology, and

participatory-type communication. In an overview of the limits of use of some terms, inclusivity is also mentioned—“Isn’t it a better word to feel welcome?”

Social values (what values the museum creates)—here one of the most fundamental new terms appears again, or is included. It is an expression which has been introduced into museums in recent years and which is clearly the basis for specifying the openness of museums—*Inclusivity*. This term is closely related to the general *Service to society* and *Accessibility*. Museums’ accessibility is also highlighted in Czech legislation in the need for territorial, time, economic and physical accessibility, although the idea does not include a deeper understanding of the term offered. The main terms within the overall summery also include *Authenticity*. ICOFOM (*Social role*) also includes amongst its important terms *Participation*—the terms “democratisation” and “well-being” are seen as contradictory. It was these two terms which became the most problematic in 2019, and it was because of them that the newly chosen definition acquired the reputation of a political manifesto, or of making use of “fashionable” terms. In a separately created group entitled *Museum values*, the terms *Respect*, *Tolerance* and *Resilience* are also included as essential.

Finally, the last important area is *Target* (for whom museums are designed, and what the nature of their relationship is). Logically, this category includes *Public/Society*, and the most common and undoubtedly another fundamental part of the prepared definition is—*Open to public*. The term “public” is replaced in some definitions with *Community*. The importance of the connection between museum and visitor is complemented by the offered participation, collaboration, partnership. ICOFOM again uses a broader term—*Stakeholders*—which helps to expand the interpretation. This does not just involve a target group of visitors, communities or people in general. The interpretation also includes other museums, the media...

The methodology selecting the right terms appears to be the right one—we need, however, to remember that a definition isn’t just a set of selected words, but rather words put together and, according to a number of practitioners I agree with, also a clear and succinct definition allowing for an understandable translation. When we look at the definition prepared for Kyoto, a definition comprising two paragraphs and containing many words which do not allow for consistent interpretation and understanding within a highly diversified global society, it does not fulfil any of these requirements.

The listed terms are now in the new wording, considering how increasingly important they appear during this eleven-step journey. The creators, however, often include terms which are understood differently in different parts of the world, and even in different committees. The word *Community*, for example, especially in English, can be interpreted as community engagement, serving the community, a museum space for dialogue..., while *Open to Public* can be perceived as public meaning visitor, or it could mean a focus on the public in its programmes... *Education* might mean formal learning, life-long learning... and even the important term *Inclusivity* can engender a number of interpretations—does it mean securing an inclusive approach, or an inclusive presentation?

The endeavour at using terms of the most general possible character, as understandable as possible by diverse communities, may be problematic in giving examples, where they

do not retain their clarity. Are museums really accessible on the basis of their inclusivity to all? Might the price of tickets not play a role, for example, preventing access to members of certain groups? Can a museum unambiguously commit itself to presentations within environmental protection when technical museums display a number of objects which have had/have an impact on nature and relate to the climate crisis? How can we consider collections as contributing towards human dignity when some of them were essentially stolen in history? Is the term non-profit absolutely essential for museums? Should access to museums be free of charge?

The difficult to grasp contexts of globalisation, communities, inclusivity and cultural diversity have led to a lot of misunderstandings within museology. Misunderstandings are generally dealt with by trying to find shared terms, and putting these together in a definition. These are then tested out in communications, and then further modified if necessary by finding other differences in contexts with different perspectives. And so we don't always fully understand each other, and we go back to the current agreements at general levels which do not result in differences. And so then—*why do we need a new museum definition, after all?*

EVOLUTION OF THE DEFINITION OF A MUSEUM

Pavel Holman

Technical Museum in Brno

The origin of the word “museum” can be found in Ancient Greece, where it was used to describe the Temple of the Muses. In Greek, the name of this temple was Mouseion (Μουσεῖον), and this is generally transcribed into English as the Musaeum, or Mouseion. The Muses were goddesses of science and the arts, and they had temples at various sites.¹ Over time, the name “Temple of the Muses” came to be used for other institutions of a scientific and learning nature.² The first and most famed was the Musaeum in Alexandria, Egypt. This was founded by King Ptolemy I Soter in around 300 BCE, who charged Demetrius of Phalerum, with building it. Demetrius had previously been based at the Lyceum in Athens, founded by Aristotle and later led by another major scholar, Theophrastus. The Musaeum included the famed Great Library, which is considered the largest library of the ancient world. At its height, it was said to contain 700 thousand scrolls and the works of various scientific disciplines, and also fiction, poetry and drama. There were also collections in the Musaeum which were used in science and in teaching—botanical, zoological, anatomical, physical and astronomical collections. The Musaeum ceased to exist in the 5th century CE, as one of the last pagan institutions of antiquity.

There were a number of similar institutions in the ancient world, and their existence was based on the political, societal, religious and economic situation in the ancient world. Some of them ceased to exist at around the time of the beginning of the Common Era, or in the first centuries of the Common Era, while others survived up to the 4th and early 5th century AD, when Christianity became the only permitted religion as a result of decrees by Emperor Theodosius I. Temples and academies, as symbols of paganism and the pagan world,

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- 1 The Muses were the daughters of the god Zeus and Mnemosyne, Goddess of Memory, and escorts to the God Apollo. Calliope was patron of epic poetry and heroic song, Euterpe of music and lyric poetry, Erato of love poetry, Thalia of comedy, Melpomene of tragedy, Terpsichore of dance, Clio of history, Urania of astronomy and mathematics, and Polyhymnia of hymns and choral songs.
 - 2 Educational and academic institutions were founded in the ancient world in the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE. In Athens, these included Isocrates' sophist school, Plato's Academy, Aristotle's Lyceum and Epicurus's Garden. Similar institutions were also set up in other cities. The largest and most important institution was the Musaeum in Alexandria, which we might compare with today's academies of science and also universities.

were closed or destroyed. Thus, the word “musaeum”, or its modified form, “museum”, disappeared for a number of centuries.

The word reappeared in the 15th century during the Renaissance, which saw renewed interest in the ancient world and its ideas. The making of collections also developed, to some degree developing on its ancient form, and in many cases similar objects were collected. At this time, collections were mainly secular in nature, although some may have continued to contain religious objects. The form of collections was also influenced by contemporaneous science, in particular in terms of what was collected and how the collection was arranged. Collections are miniature versions of the world, designed to help in one’s understanding of the world, and also fulfilling a representational role, in particular in the case of the collections of monarchs and aristocrats. Terminology and the words for various types of collection also developed. Most commonly, collections were referred to using the word cabinet, or kammer (from German) with an epithet describing the type of collection. In Italy, the words studiola or galleria were used. At the end of the 15th century, the descriptor museum began to be used again. The first use of the word is usually said to be for a part of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s collection—Museo dei codici e cimeli artistici (collection of manuscripts and gemstones). Florence was famed for its processing of gemstones, and there were a large number of workshops there, some of whom also worked for the House of Medici. Precious stones, transformed into gems, cameos, Florentine mosaics, jewellery, containers and furniture decoration, comprised a large part of the family collection. Lorenzo de’ Medici set them apart as a special collection, which he termed “museum”.³ In subsequent centuries, collections of scientific nature in particular, focused on a particular discipline or number of disciplines were termed museums. It should be added that the vast majority of “cabinets” were multidisciplinary, bringing together objects of various nature. Those focused on a single discipline were the exception. Beginning in the 16th century, the word “museum” was also used in another meaning—it was used in literature to refer, for example, to works bringing together perhaps stories from a particular country, myths and legends or scientific findings regarding objects of a similar character. The major Italian 16th century collector, Ulisse Aldrovandi, for example, wrote the book *Musaeum metallicum*, which was essentially a work of mineralogy presenting prevailing opinions on various minerals and ores.⁴ It was not a catalogue of Aldrovandi’s collection.

Some of the most renowned collections of the time described as museums were, e.g., Danish physician, natural historian, ethnographer and historian Olaf Worm’s Museum

3 The family had long been interested in collecting cut gemstones. Cosimo de’ Medici began the collections, and successors built upon them. The Medici family endeavoured to employ skilled stone cutters, and later trained up new ones, who could create new items for their collections, and also objects for sale. In 1588, Ferdinando I de’ Medici established Opificio delle pietre dure, which was an academy for stone cutters, and it also held a study collection. The academy is still running today. See, e.g., ACIDINI LUCHINAT, Cristina. SCALINI, Mario (Hrsg.). *Die Pracht der Medici. Florenz und Europa*. 1. dif. München, London, New York: Prestel—Verlag, 1998, p. 108. ISBN 3-7913-2063-7.

4 ALDROVANDI, Ulisse. *Musaeum metallicum in libros IV*. Bononiae: Baptistae Ferroni, 1648.

Wormianum in Copenhagen,⁵ polymath Athanasius Kircher's Museum Kircherianum in Rome, and Museum Richterianum in Leipzig,⁶ and others.

We can also find the word "museum" used in some works of theoretical literature. However, nowhere is a definition in the true sense of the word given. In his work *Inscriptiones*, Samuel Quicchenberg only uses the word "museum" once, which he does in referring to a group of objects which together comprise a collection. He does not develop the idea further, however.⁷ The term is looked at in more detail by Caspar Friedrich Neickelius in his book, *Museographia*.⁸ Its first chapter describes all the types of collections of the time, including the museum. Neickelius first notes the ancient origin of the word and the institution, which served scientific research and philosophers. According to Neickelius, there were similar institutions operating at his time, but they included books and objects from various areas. The author then names kinds of collections, which together with specialist publications a collector puts together in a museum (art, natural objects, antiques, coins and medals, man-made artefacts). He also lists examples of museums of the time, e.g., Museum Kircherianum created by Jesuit scholar, Athanasius Kircher, in Rome,⁹ which was one of the most significant collections in the 17th century.

In the 17th century, we can also find the word "museum" in Comenius's *Orbis pictus*, where the term is given one entry. In Comenius's conception, however, the museum is a place of study where one can find information one needs. Comenius writes: "The Study is a place where a Student, apart from Men, sitteth alone, addicted to his Studies, while he readeth Books, which being within his reach he layeth open upon a Desk, and picketh all the best things out of them into his own Manual, or marketh them in them with a Dash, or a little Star, in the Margent."¹⁰

The next work to use the word "museum" and attempt to explain it is not a museological work, but in its time it played a large role in the development of knowledge. This was France's renowned *Encyclopédia*, which incorporates the entry "museum", written by famous philosopher, Denis Diderot. His idea of a museum is the institution as we perceive it today.

5 WORM, Olaf. *Museum Wormianum. Seu historia rerum rariorum, tam naturalium, tam artificialium, tam domesticarum*, Lugduni Batavorum: Apud Iohannem Elsevirium, 1655.

6 HEBENSTREIT, Johann Ernst. *Museum Richterianum continens Fossilia, Animalia, Vegetabilia*. Lipsiae: Casparus Fritsch, 1743.

7 QUICCHENBERG, Samuel. *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimmi...* München: ex officina Adami Berg, 1565.

8 NEICKELIUS, C. F. *Museographia, oder Anleitung zum rechten Begriff und nutzlicher Anlegung der Museorum oder Raritäten –Kammer...* Leipzig und Breslau: Michael Hubert, 1727, pp. 5–6.

9 Two catalogues for this collection were produced in the 17th and 18th centuries: BUONANNI, Filippo. *Musaeum Kircherianum. Sive Musaeum P. Athanasio Kircherion in Collegio Romano Societas Iesu...* Romae: Georgius Plachi, 1709. and KIRCHER, Athanasius. *Romani Collegii Societas Iesu Musaeum Celeberrimum...* Amsterodami: Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge, 1678. For more on Kircher himself, see, e.g. *Magie des Wissens. Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) Universalgelehrter—Sammeler—Visionär*. 1. vyd., Dettelbach: Verlag J. H. Röhl, 2002, 216 pp. ISBN 3-89754-211-0. or FINDLEN, Paula (ed.). *Athanasius Kircher: the last man who knew everything*. 1st ed., London, New York: Routledge, 2004, 465 pp. ISBN 0-415-94016-8.

10 KOMENSKÝ, Jan Ámos. *Orbis sensualium pictus*. Leutschoviae: Typis Samuelis Brewer, 1685, p. 199.

The first two museums in today's sense of the word were also opened in the 17th century. In 1671, the collection of the Amerbach family was opened to the public in Basel, the city having received ownership of it, forming the basis of the future Historical Museum. Then in 1683, the Ashmolean Museum was founded at the University of Oxford.¹¹ Other museums were founded in the eighteenth century. The most well-known of these is the British Museum, set up in 1753 as a museum celebrating the British Empire. The French Revolution was a landmark, when parliament nationalised some collections, turning them into four large museums, the most well-known of which are the Musée du Louvre and the Musée nationale d'histoire naturelle. In subsequent years, the idea of public collection institutions spread across Europe, and shortly afterwards in other continents, and it could be said that museums were set up en masse. In addition, private, company and institutional collections remained in existence. Sometimes, these private collections were transformed into publically accessible museums.

Over the course of the 19th century in Europe, and in the 20th century on other continents, museology evolved as a theoretical discipline looking at collecting and museums. Many of its theoreticians endeavoured to define what a museum was, with greater or lesser reflection in practice. During the 20th century, various museum associations got involved in discussions on the definition of a museum—national and international, general and specialist associations. They also endeavoured to define what a museum was, and incorporate the outcome into their statutes or charters. Most widely applied was the definition created by the International Council of Museums, and this is commonly used across the world. Definitions written by museologists mostly did not achieve broad public acceptance. However, it is not the subject of this article to present and analyse these.

Within the Czech lands, we encounter the common use of the term “museum” from the 18th century, when it was used in regard to a number of collection institutions. An actual definition of a museum, however, was not written down until the last century. Probably the most well-known example of a museum is the mathematics museum in the Clementinum, which was officially founded in 1722 and opened to the public in 1723 on the occasion of the coronation of Charles VI as King of Bohemia. Its full name was Museum Mathematicum Collegii Clementini, but the word “museum” was not specially defined. It was a scientific collection which served scientists for their research and students in their studies, providing visual aids and used for representation. It contained various scientific instruments (clocks, globes, models, etc.), plants and animals, rocks, minerals, mechanical devices, ethnographic material, portraits of renowned scientists, coins and medals. It closed following the dissolution of the Jesuit Order in 1773. Its parts were progressively transferred to other institutions, or were lost. Some of the natural artefacts remained in the Clementinum, and in 1775

11 This museum was set up from the inheritance of Elias Ashmole, who bequeathed to the university his humanities collection and natural history and ethnographical collection, which had been created by John Tradescant Sr. and John Tradescant Jr., which he had acquired on the basis of an agreement. A selection of objects from the original collections is today exhibited in a special room of the Ashmolean Museum.

the *Museum Naturae Pragense* was set up and opened to the public. This collection was owned by Prague's German University in 1882, from where it moved to the National Museum after 1945. Again, the word "museum" was not explained in any way.

The establishment of these institutions ushered in the era of museums being set up from the early 19th century. Considering the extent of what was then the Kingdom of Bohemia, the oldest museum was the Szersznik Museum, founded in 1802 in Cieszyn (today part of Poland). This was followed by regional museums—Opava in 1814, Brno in 1817, Prague in 1818. In subsequent years, museums were not founded because the political situation prevented it. Only with the adoption of the 1861 constitution, and then federal law, did the situation allow museums to be set up, with dozens established. Despite this, no definition in the true sense of the word was ever produced during the entirety of the century. While we can find explanations of what a museum is in the statutes of the museums and museum associations, in fact these were just descriptions of the particular institution. They stated what the institution should do, what it should collect, from what territory, and how it should look after the collection, but these were not definitions of a museum. Not even museology theorists such as Kliment Čermák, Lubor Niederle, Karel Adámek and others created a definition. In their works, they merely generally explained what a museum is, and what its mission and main activities are.

Various encyclopaedias written during the 19th and 20th centuries contained an entry for museum. Again, these were not definitions, but rather general characteristics and most entries also incorporated examples of types of museums in different countries, or special entries for certain museums or types of museum.

Let us begin with how perhaps the most famed and valued encyclopaedia of the time—*Ottův slovník naučný*—explains the term. The introduction to the "Museum" entry notes the ancient origin of the word, Alexandria's *Musaeum* and ancient collections in general. Subsequently, it states: "Since the end of the Middle Ages, the expression museum has been used for a collection of interesting and rare objects within the natural science and art fields. Later, the expression museum was mainly used for a collection of art objects, while in recent times, museums are devoted to art and science collections of all types. So we have anatomical, botanical, zoological, mineralogical, geological, physical, natural science, historical, prehistorical, national, anthropological, military, maritime, postal, industrial, economic, hygiene, business, national costume museums, museums for industry, art, etc. In museums of this kind, generally found in capital cities, most commonly at universities, technical universities, industrial schools, etc., they show the system and historical development of different branches of science, art industry, etc., their creations and products, imitation preparations, tables, diagrams, etc. Displays of pictures are often referred to using the term pinacothèque or gallery, while museums of sculptures use the term glyptothek (the Glyptothek in Munich, the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen)."¹² The entry continues with more anecdotes from the history of museums and collecting, and presents selected museums in certain countries. The same

work has another two entries related to museums, specifically *Museum království českého*¹³ (the Museum of the Kingdom of Bohemia) and *Musea průmyslová*¹⁴ (Technical Museums). The former entry describes the history and then-current state of the National Museum, while the second describes the phenomenon of decorative art and technical museums.

Another important encyclopaedia was *Masarykův slovník naučný*. Like *Ottův slovník naučný*, its entry begins with the ancient origin of the word and mentions the *Musaeum* in Alexandria. It then names a number of foreign and domestic museums, followed by a characterisation of museums: “The main purpose of museums is to preserve the relics of previous eras for future generations. Thus the museum’s main focus is on conserving antiques. Museums are also institutions for researching sources and documents, especially within history, archaeology and science, and they also educate the public. Museums contain collections of historical sources, various objects which are important documents of human activities in antiquity or in the past, collections of a scientific nature, art artefacts. Museums usually contain libraries, reading rooms, archives and manuscript, photography, phonography departments, etc. Museums are also often important organisational factors in scientific work, generally published scientific journals. Museums are often either central, collecting material from all disciplines, or specialist (anatomical, anthropological, zoological, botanical, mineralogical, archaeological, technological, national, criminological, economic, business, technical, military museums, etc.). Central museums are generally in a capital city, and specialist museums are based at universities. Rural museums collect items which mainly have a relationship to their site and its surroundings, and are nationalist in nature.”¹⁵

Post-1945, a number of encyclopaedias which published which included the word “museum”. What all these encyclopaedias have in common is that they contain not just the entry “museum”, but also entries for selected museums in Czechoslovakia, or today in the Czech Republic, and around the world. Most of them include the entry “múseion” (*musaeum*). Encyclopaedias published after 1959 provide the definition of a museum as contained in Act 54/1959 Coll. on Museums and Galleries in their introduction to the entry. This is either given word-for-word, or else it is loosely paraphrased. This trend disappears for encyclopaedias published from the mid-1990s onwards.

Let us first recall the definition given in Act 54/1959 Coll.¹⁶ This is given in para. 2 and goes as follows: “Museums and galleries are institutions which on the basis of investigation, or scientific research, systematically collect, professionally manage and process collections of tangible documentary material on the evolution of nature and society, on artistic creation or other kinds of human activity using scientific methods, and utilise these collections

13 *Ottův slovník naučný*, díl 17., Praha: Vydavatel a nakladatel J. Otto, 1901. pp. 892–902.

14 *Ottův slovník naučný*, díl 17., Praha: Vydavatel a nakladatel J. Otto, 1901. pp. 902–903.

15 *Masarykův slovník naučný*. Díl IV., Ko-M, Praha, 1929. p. 1093.

16 An Act on Museums was written in the 1930s by the Museums Associations. Due to various events, and especially the outbreak of the Second World War, this act was never adopted. It was considered, however when writing the 1950s act, but modified so as to conform to the new regime.

for cultural and educational outreach purposes.”¹⁷ Subsequent paragraphs then describe in detail the basic functions and activities of museums.

The definition in the act is used, for example, by the encyclopaedia *Příruční slovník naučný*, and it adds a typology of museums to it. The entry reads: “Museum—an institution which on the basis of investigation, or scientific research, systematically collects, professionally manages and processes collections of tangible documentary material on the evolution of nature and on artistic creation or other kinds of human activity using scientific methods, and utilises them for outreach purposes. We differentiate museums according to their scope into: *central* (national and central museums with nationwide scope, focused, specialised in a particular field); these include science, historical, technical, literary, theatrical and music museums, etc., in these fields these museums are central museum workplaces; *regional* (run with a significance of regional/district nature); regional museums in combination with each other document the evolution of nature and society within a particular region. Usually all the museum activities in larger regional institutions (South Bohemian Museum in České Budějovice, West Bohemian Museum in Plzeň, North Bohemian Museum in Liberec, Zdeněk Nejedlý Museum in Hradec Králové, East Bohemian Museum in Pardubice, Vysočina Regional Museum in Jihlava and Gottwaldov, Regional Museum in Olomouc, West Slovak Museum in Trnava, Regional Museum in Bojnice, East Slovak Museum in Košice etc.) are in the field of natural and social sciences, while smaller institutions have a core specialisation within a main and typical field; *town* museums usually document the history of the town and its surroundings. — *Muzeum—monument*, focused on a significant event or person and developing outreach and educational activities with the help of a museum of a higher type. *Museum exhibition*, a permanent exhibition of selected (typical) museum collections documenting a particular topic in mutual relations based on the field or mission of the museum. *Museum collections*, collections of tangible documents of scientific or artistic value which need to be protected so they are preserved for the future.”¹⁸ This entry reflects changes which Czech museums underwent in the 1950s, and especially in the 1960s, and the creation of a hierarchical network of museums.

Malá československá encyklopedie gives a similar description. It reads: “Museum—an institution which on the basis of investigation, or scientific research, systematically collects, professionally manages and processes collections of tangible documentary material on the evolution of nature and on artistic creation or other kinds of human activity using scientific methods; it utilises these collections for cultural and educational outreach purposes. There are a total of 247 museums with 273 branches and 105 separate monuments in Czechoslovakia (of which there are 180 museums with 186 branches and 55 separate monuments in the Czech Socialist Republic, and 67 museums with 87 branches and 50 separate monuments in the Slovak Socialist Republic), which are components of a single network of museums, galleries and specialist exhibitions in the CSR or SSR, and divided into a) a network

17 *Sbírka zákonů Republiky československé* roč. 1959, částka 22, published 25 July 1959.

18 *Příruční slovník naučný*. díl 3, M-Ř, Praha: Academia, Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1966, p. 239.

of centrally run organisations (in the CSR museums run by the Ministry of Culture and other departments, or else by social organisations, in the SSR the Central Museums and Galleries Administration, other departments and social organisations); b) a network of museums run by councils, c) a network of business museums. According to type these encompass central, regional, district museums, and also town and business museums. According to profile, museums are specialist (including business), regional with specialisation and regional. Territorial scope and topical focus are determined by statute.”¹⁹

Ilustrovaný encyklopedický slovník also uses the definition in the act: “Museum—a scientific educational establishment which on the basis of investigation, or scientific research, systematically collects, professionally manages and processes collections of tangible documentary material on the evolution of nature and human society within its scope of competence.”²⁰

Other encyclopaedias try to make their entry shorter and more condensed. These only give the most basic characteristics of the institution. There is also an entry for museum in some specialist encyclopaedias and dictionaries, e.g. technically-focused ones. Let us now give the wording of definitions in just some encyclopaedias.

Encyklopedie Universum writes: “Museum—specialised buildings or spaces for keeping and exhibiting artworks or historical, scientific or technical collections.”²¹

And Technický naučný slovník—“museum in the ancient world, originally temple of the muses, then gradually institutionalised scientific and philosophical associations (schools) which focused around museums; later transferred to collections of art, historical and other objects and to the buildings or places in which they are stored.”²²

In another version of *Technický naučný slovník*, a museum is, “an institution which on the basis of investigation and scientific research, systematically collects, professionally manages and processes collections of tangible documentary material on the evolution of nature and human society.”²³

Finally, according to *Všeobecná encyklopedie*: “A museum is a public collection of art, cultural historical, scientific and other material and also the institution which collects, stores and processes this material and which makes it accessible to the public through exhibits, or through print and talks.”²⁴

As stated above, the characterisation of a museum is found in the statutes of individual museums. The vast majority of these state what the museums should do: what activities

19 *Malá československá encyklopedie*. Díl IV., M-Pol, Praha: Academia, 1986. p. 378.

20 *Ilustrovaný encyklopedický slovník*. Díl 2., J-Při, Praha: Academia, 1981. p. 597.

21 *Universum. Všeobecná encyklopedie*. Díl 6, Mb-Op. Praha: Odeon, 2001. p. 269. ISBN 80-207-1068-X.

22 *Technický naučný slovník*. IV. díl, M-O, 2. Revised and expanded edition. Praha: SNTL—Nakladatelství technické literatury, 1983. p. 180.

23 *Technický slovník naučný*. Díl 5, M-O, Praha: Encyklopedický dům, 2003, ISBN 80-86044-16-5 and 80-86044-23-8. p. 211.

24 *Všeobecná encyklopedie ve čtyřech svazcích*. díl 3, M-R, Praha: Nakladatelský dům OP, 1997. ISBN 80-85841-35-5. p. 215.

and from what time period and territory. There are some exceptions. The West Bohemian Museum of Decorative Arts in Plzeň expands the museum's activities to include a commercial aspect. Visitors to exhibitions should be taken to a museum store, where they can buy some of the items viewed. The Statute states: "The job of the institution is to support specialist learning and education in manufacturing circles, in particular in terms of technology and art. It should help wide swathes of society in refining and elevating the taste of the audience, i.e. collectors and customers so that their understanding and correct appreciation of labour is expanded and consolidated; considering technical construction and artistry and also the practical use of the products and works of all branches of art. The museum should also support education, provided in all the detailed areas at schools and educational institutes of all kind."

Here I shall also state how the Union of Czechoslovak Regional Museums perceives a museum in its statute. Museums: ... collect material to ascertain the situation in precisely defined prehistorical, historical, regional, cultural, economic and natural regions.

Important figures of 20th century Czech museology also focused on defining a museum. Although J F Svoboda did not give a direct definition of a museum in his work, *Principles of Czech Museology*, he does list the important features which a collection must fulfil in order to be called a museum.²⁵ These are the following:

- a) "it is organised as a research institution according to principles for scientific work, and especially it has a precise work programme;"
- b) "it has public right and is public property;"
- c) "it systematically collects, professionally conserves and purposefully stores objects and documents of at least one scientific field;"
- d) "it prepares objects acquired for scientific processing, in which it allows scientific checks;"
- e) "it publicly exhibits objects for general learning purposes in which exhibitions are in line with current scientific knowledge and the need to teach the broadest swathes of society about the museum's content."

Svoboda was also responding to the prevailing situation in which most museums were founded by a museum association. According to him, there was a need to differentiate terminologically between museums and museum associations. The existence of an association did not imply the existence of a museum.

One of the doyens of Czech museology, Jiří Neústupný, also characterises the term "museum" in his work, *Muzeum a věda* (Museum and Science).²⁶ Specifically, in Chapter 11

25 SVOBODA, J. F. *Zásady českého muzejnictví*. Praha: Svaz českých muzeí, 1949. p. 7. Svoboda also states here that the term "museum" is misused at that time, because it is not protected. Thus "museum" must be precisely defined.

26 NEÚSTUPNÝ, Jiří. *Muzeum a věda*. Praha: Kabinet muzejní a vlastivědné práce při Národním muzeu v Praze, 1968. p. 150.

he looks at the terms “museum” and “museology”. He states that publications to that time only rarely define the term “museum”. He then characterises the activities of a museum and looks at their typology and what institutions can still be considered museums. In the end, he defines the term “museum” from two perspectives.

The first perspective is based on museums collecting sources, undertaking scientific and research and educational work within scientific disciplines. “In this concept, ‘museum’ can be defined as an institution which purposefully collects, preserves and scientifically processes sources of knowledge about nature and society, and uses them for scientific educational activities, particularly exhibitions, within a particular scientific discipline or group of disciplines. They contribute towards museological theory and practice.”

The second perspective considers them as historical institutions which, however, need to be differentiated from similar institutions. “In this concept, a museum would be an institution which purposefully collects and preserves transferred tangible (substantive) or extinct sources of knowledge of nature and society within a scientific discipline or group of disciplines. In its scientific and scientific educational work, in particular exhibitions, it makes use of these sources and other sources from the same scientific discipline which similar institutions keep. It contributes towards museological theory and practice.”

Another prominent figure of Czech museology—Josef Beneš—created an entire museology dictionary of terminology. Unfortunately, this work did not do well, and it is little known even amongst experts. It is still worthy of note, however. Some of Beneš’s definitions are interesting, and they could be used by today’s museologists. Amongst other examples, he defines “museum” as follows: “marks a public cultural institution which within the division of labour with other institutions—systematically creates and stores collections of tangible documents on the evolution of nature or society within a defined territory, or particular field of human activity and utilises these to develop science, culture and education, in particular through exhibiting them to the general public.”²⁷

Finally, here is Zbyněk Zbyslav Stránský’s definition of a museum: “The current institutional form—its essence—through which man’s specific relationship to reality is realised, i.e. the museality relationship. Its existence is characterised by the fulfilment of a documentary communication role. Establishments which do not fulfil this dialectical role are not museums in the true sense of the word. This institutional form arose and developed under particular historical societal situations. It is thus not a permanent form, and it will and must change in accordance with other societal developments if man is to preserve that specific relationship to reality.”²⁸

Despite these attempts by major Czech museologists, none of their definitions gained traction amongst the experts. From the mid-1950s, either the definition within the Act on

27 BENEŠ, Josef. *Muzeologický slovník*. Praha: Národní muzeum, Ústřední muzeologický kabinet, 1978. 169 pp.

28 STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. *Úvod do studia muzeologie*. 1st ed. Brno: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, Fakulta filozofická, 1980. 167 pp.

Museums was used, or later the definition adopted by the international organisation ICOM was used. Within the history of Czech museology, we see attempts at defining the term “museum”. They were few in number, however, and whenever definitions were produced they were not applied in practice.

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WHERE IS THE MUSEUM WORLD HEADING IN THE MIDST OF EARLY 21ST CENTURY CHANGES?

František Šebek

Institute of Historical Sciences, University of Pardubice Faculty of Arts and
Philosophy

Modern museums have evolved and the emphasis on elements of their activities has changed. Today, emphasis is placed on higher quality new forms of communication between museum and public. There are a growing number of institutions which are considered to be museums, but which do not build up collections. Here an important criterion is the definition of the term “museum”. In terms of logic, we need to observe certain rules in defining a term. In this paper, we analyse the definition of the term “museum” according to ICOM’s Code of Ethics for Museums. The proposed new definition as given in the wording adopted at the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto does not fully conform to this, however. Of the updated proposals of March 2022, the author believes Proposal 2 (and to some degree Proposal 5) are acceptable. It is particularly important to enshrine the vital role of museums in creating museum collections within the definition. Otherwise, this would result in irreparable social damage and it would mark the start of an upheaval in the museum world.

There have been modern museums within European culture for over 200 years, and these have taken on various forms during their development. In the most general sense of the word, I understand museums to be certain establishments offering the public remarkable displays of collected objects which are of historical value. They have had a long genesis, going back to ancient times, and hypothetically even further. When the museum phenomenon was in its infancy, we can speak of a “proto-museum” phase. Modern museums then developed alongside changes in social circumstances. During this time, the emphasis on different segments of their activities also changed.

The earliest period until the end of the 19th century was typically marked by an emphasis on building up collections. The intensive collection of material items documenting the traditions of national history and culture, or the uniqueness of the region, including its landscape and natural environment, became a part of political events in the Czech lands in particular.

This period also saw the nascence of a type of regional museum, and these have remained for the much part the same in their core principles to the present day, and in a sense they represent a unique phenomenon within the European museum context.¹

This collection-building activity then caused increased interest in museum collections as sources of scientific interest. In the final decades of the 19th century, it was under this influence that some fields of history were fully constituted, e.g. ethnography, numismatics and archaeology. A number of museums also began undertaking field research and investigating the environment in which they were selecting objects for their collections. Domestically, this trend became more prevalent from the 1960s, when university qualified staff were employed by museums as collections managers. Museum collections represent crucial and indispensable source bases for a number of scientific disciplines.

Increasing scientific interest in ever-growing collections from roughly the early 20th century gave rise to calls for improving the conditions they were stored in. This occurred to a greater extent after the Second World War, and in Czechoslovakia from roughly the 1960s. To the present day, the conservation, restoration and general protection of collections is an integral component of considerations of the activities of those museums which have not lost sight of the fact that they are institutions with collections.

Some time at the start of the 20th century, public interest in museums was seen to be fading. Ideas were focused on changing ways of accessing collections. Following the First World War, occasional exhibitions began to be organised in addition to more clearly set-up exhibitions. Following the Second World, there were intensive efforts at finding ways to improve the quality of installations; exhibition activities increased. Even so, public interest in museums did not increase proportionally, aside from the fact that museums activities in Czechoslovakia were forced to follow the diktat of the Communist regime. From the end of the 1980s, and especially from the early 21st century, efforts at rejuvenating exhibition projects were particularly focused on making use of interactive features, and improving the effectiveness of programmes by using new museum pedagogy methods, using modern marketing methods, etc. The latest issues are the effective use of digital and AT technologies, and in particular expanding the range of different forms of communication with the public and museum products available. The appearance of many museums is changing. While the presentation of museum collections through exhibitions remains a vital way of making them accessible to the public, it is far from the only method today, and furthermore they communicate findings acquired through studying them and interpreting their role in society to the public.

And no wonder! We're living in a turbulent time, characteristic for deepening globalisation. Many differences between traditional cultures (civilisations) are becoming blurred, while at the same time different attitudes amongst different interest groups in the population are becoming radicalised, leading to increasing conflicts between them. Modern AT

1 For more, see ŠEBEK, František. *Historický vývoj sítě muzeí; právní postavení regionálních muzeí. In: Regionální muzea v době reformy veřejné správy v ČR. Praha: AMG 2000, pp. 6–9.*

technology is penetrating ever deeper into our lives and as a result is transforming our perception of the surrounding world, ways of thinking and mentality, and also our values. All of this is bound to impact the museum world too.²

There are so many entities today which describe themselves as public “museums” that we are not able to ascertain how many of them have already abandoned the original form of collection-building institutions. Within the Czech Republic, there are around 490 museums which officially submit annual statistical reports on their activities and are considered museums. Of those, scarcely 70% represent collection-building institutions (they represent 53% of those in the Central Registry of Collections).³

If we aren't to lose the ability to mutually agree, we need to come to a consensus on a definition for the term “museum”. This also has a practical significance. For example, as well as entities for whom looking after their collections is a core activity, those without collections and with a different costs structure, but nevertheless called “museums” also apply for grants awarded from government budgets for museums. Similarly, it is misleading to evaluate efficiency and measure cost-effectiveness if the group you are looking at do not have the same structure of activities and costs.

That famous pendulum of history has swung over the course of time from a preference for creating collections to the need to use them as a source of science, and then to improving the conditions of their storage and then on so that efforts at improving exhibition activities and the expansion of other forms of work with the public have come to the fore. Somewhere in the middle of that imaginary swing of the pendulum, during a certain middle phase in the mid-1970s, ICOM decided to formulate its Code of Ethics for Museums, which also contains the definition of a museum.⁴

So if we accept the importance of the requirement for a clear definition of the term being considered here, we should at least briefly turn our attention to the basic rules for creating definitions in terms of the scientific discipline of logic.⁵ According to this, a definition

2 For more with reference to other publications, see ŠEBEK, František. Doba je v pohybu: Bude se měnit vztah muzeí k veřejnosti a tím i kvalifikační požadavky na zaměstnance muzeí? In: *Muzejní profese a veřejnost 2 /Reflexe edukačního fenoménu v současné muzejní praxi/*. Eds. Lucie JAGOŠOVÁ—Otakar KIRSCH. Brno: Ústav archeologie a muzeologie FF Masarykovy univerzity 2018, pp. 8–16.

3 For more details, see Šebek, F. Otazníky nad sítí a strukturou muzeí ČR. In: *Muzeum a změna IV. / The Museum and Change IV: Sborník z mezinárodní muzeologické konference v Národním muzeu v Praze 12.–14. listopadu 2013*. (edd. J. BUKAČOVÁ—A. KOMÁRKOVÁ). Praha: AMG 2014. ISBN 978-80-86611-63-1, pp. 20–23.

4 The Code of Ethics of Museums was formulated and approved in 1976 at the 15th ICOM General Assembly in Buenos Aires, and its updated wording was approved at the 20th ICOM General Assembly in Barcelona in 2001, with the final revision approved at the 21st General Assembly in Seoul in 2004. For the Czech translation of the document see *Profesní etický kodex ICOM*. (ed. TLACHOVÁ, Kateřina). Praha: Český výbor ICOM a AMG 1994. p. 7. For the wording of the revised code of 2004 in Czech, see *Etické kodexy* (ed. LEHMANOVÁ, Martina). Praha: Český výbor ICOM 2014, p. 35. ISBN 978-80-260-7405-2.

5 For more on this, see TVRDÝ, Josef. *Logika*. (Vysokoškolské rukověti, řada duchovnědná, sv. 5). Praha: Melantrich 1937, pp. 95–98.

expresses the meaning of a particular term by drawing out the core attributes of the described phenomenon or object, which must form a comprehensible logical whole. Such a set of attributes might include in addition to primary and secondary attributes also supplementary attributes, which are the consequence of one of the primary or secondary attributes. The meaning of the term may evolve and change. If we leave out, add to or modify any secondary or additional attribute, this changes its properties, or parameters. But if we leave out or change basic attributes, the meaning of the term changes, and so it then refers to a different term (different meaning). Attributes which express the meaning of a term in its definition must of themselves be clear and unambiguous; they cannot be ambiguous expressions (judgements) allowing for different interpretations of meaning.

The current definition of a museum in the ICOM Code of Ethics in English is as follows:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

The core attributes of the term thus formulated are:

1. A museum is a permanent institution. The very word “institution” deserves a more detailed interpretation. It is perceived differently in many countries. It is sometimes considered a synonym for the word “organisation”, elsewhere it is a general and generic term (i.e. some institutions can be organisations). The word “institution” should in our case (I believe) be perceived in line with the Latin origin of the word more as a kind of “establishment”⁶ with a certain legal subjectivity. This assumes the existence of a document in which the subject and objectives of activities and elementary rules of their fulfilment are normatively expressed. Alongside the statement that it is institute, the attribute of its permanence is added. This means that it must be established for an indefinite period, because only then can the undertaking arising from the other attribute be achieved, that being that collections are permanently preserved. This cannot be achieved in principle by any subject set up with a pre-determined date at which it ends its activities, established for a limited period.

The other requirement given, that it is a “non-profit” institution, is debatable in my opinion at the current time. Personally, I think this is justified, but its rigour is in question. Any further comments on this topic would be outside the framework of

6 For more detail, see, e.g. *Latinsko-český slovník* (sestavili Josef M. PRAŽÁK a kol). Praha 1940 (14th edition), p. 678. For more on the problem also see DESVALLÉES, Andrés—MAIRESSE, François a kol.: *Základní muzeologické pojmy* (translated from the French original by LightPoint in Brno). Brno: Technické muzeum v Brně 2011, pp. 29-30. ISBN 978-80-86413.

this paper. In terms of the logic of definition construction, this is a secondary attribute. If we accept the requirement for the non-profit nature of the institution, then the other characteristic that it is an institution “open to the public” is merely a supplementary attribute. This follows on from the characteristic of the non-profit nature of the institution, and also from the commitment to open the collection (communicate it) to the public. We can also determine that the statement that the institution acts “in the service of society” is a supplementary attribute, i.e. that it is a public benefit institution. This characteristic of the definition is also expanded by the statement that it is done in the service of society and “its development” (another supplementary attribute). In my opinion, this formulation is too vague.

2. A museum acquires tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment. I think that in the definition on the nature of collection activities, the substance implied in the expression “acquires” heritage would be better captured by the term “creates collections”. This is because many objects in collections are deliberately created by the museum itself and its workers (e.g. through producing digital and video documents), and also because it’s not just about a quantitative growth of collections, but also the qualitative aspect, which is expressed by an increased informative value of objects (and collections) through their investigation and research into the environment in which they are acquired.
3. A museum conserves its acquired collection. This comprises a broad range of activities: preventive conservation, remedial conservation, restoration, and also preparation, protection and depository regimen, security management.
4. A museum communicates its collection (to the public). Other attributes given in the definition linked to this proclamation are secondary attributes, or supplementary attributes. The most important form, exhibiting collections, is highlighted. Other forms of presenting collections and disseminating information acquired during their study were unjustifiably sidelined.

If we look at the entire text from a formal perspective, it does not have any major errors. In terms of content, it accepts besides the museum’s institutionality, also three primary activities (creating collections, storing them, opening them to the public). Interaction between museum and public should probably be better expressed.

The attempt at updating the definition led ICOM to produce a new proposal, its form coming out of the General Conference in Kyoto and this currently goes as follows:⁷

Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and

7 I took the wording here from a survey produced on the issue in 2021 by the Department of Archaeology and Museology of Masaryk University in Brno’s Faculty of Arts.

challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.

From a purely formal perspective in terms of logic rules for defining terms, it is hard to come up with a positive assessment here. There are a large number of ambiguous expressions, often close or identical in meaning. The primary attributes of the formulated meaning of the term are hard to find, and they do not create a coherent whole. From a formal perspective, it is not the definition of a term, but rather a proclamation on the recommended focus of museum activities, almost with the characteristics of an ideological political manifesto.

A new formulation for the definition of a museum emerged in March 2022, which the relevant ICOM committee submitted for discussion in five versions.⁸ If we think that it is essential that the definition enshrines the basic three mutually conditional activities of museums (creating collections, storing them, opening them to the public), then I think Proposal 2⁹ is acceptable, and perhaps also Proposal 5. Both of these are based on the current definition, adding what is missing from it: expanding on museums' activities in relation to the public, more involvement of acquired knowledge in different forms of communication in society. Proposal 2 better attempts to express this "new" hallmark of museums in its definition. Even so, there are expressions (supplementary attributes) which are ambiguous and unnecessary remnants of the wording adopted in Kyoto.

Comparing the ICOM definition, the Kyoto document and some of the definition proposals from March 2022 (Proposals 1, 3 and 4), as well as occasional discussion within the domestic environment, it appears that those voices which claim that the core essence of a museum is not creating collections, that some "museums" need not be institutions with collections and it is enough when just "some museum functions" are fulfilled are growing stronger. I think this is a grave error and a tendency which, if it were to prevail, would be socially damaging. We need to realise that man's natural (instinctive) expression is to preserve objects documenting a disappearing reality, which he needs as a substantive memory. They then become an important element of cultural memory. A person without cultural memory

8 These wordings are accessible at the ICOM Czech committee office website, including in Czech translation.

9 The wording of this proposal in English (see previous note): A museum is a permanent, not-for-profit institution, accessible to the public and of service to society. It collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits, tangible, intangible, cultural and natural heritage in a profession, ethical and sustainable manner for research, education, reflection and enjoyment. It communicates in an inclusive, diversified and participatory way with communities and the public.

would no longer be a cultural being.¹⁰ We can illustrate the indispensability of substantive memory for man using many examples. Likely all of us have kept some mementoes of our childhood, of our past. They have an emotional effect, support our imagination, and keep on evoking memories. They are catalysts to the recognising and remembering thought process. The power of substantive memory is in its authenticity. There are well-known cases in which some families lost all their property during the floods in Moravia in 1997, and one family member at the time considered the greatest loss to be the loss of an album containing the photographs of her deceased parents and grandparents. She felt that she had lost her past forever: she felt uprooted. We could add that at a certain level of social development, the museum began to create and store substantive memories. This involves the professional creation and protection of collections to a high degree of quality, and these activities are without doubt irreplaceable. Tangibly, for example, in documenting modern history, art or the changing natural environment. Similarly, they are a difficult to substitute partner in documentation undertaken through archaeological methods, etc.

If museums are not acknowledged this irreplaceable (crucial) role in the definition of the term, the museum world will begin to crumble and collapse. The word “museum” will only carry on as a marketing tool used to evoke a feeling of nostalgic association with the mystery of antiquity. If museums are not aware of their core basis, their irreplaceable role in creating substantive memory and evaluating it as elements of cultural heritage, if this activity is not improved at a professional level, and if this does not lead to a lively debate with the public on the past, present and future, and if they do not also become a place of various forms of appealing communication, then they will lose competitiveness in the globalising population leisure-time market.¹¹

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F-MUSEUM

Richard R. Senček

The Slovak Mining Museum, Banská Štiavnica

The issue of defining a museum, which is currently being intensively discussed, cannot be positively concluded without a certain “visionary” perspective. The new definition, if based on the assumption that it can be derived, should reflect the dynamic development of a modern society. Hyperreality, virtual world and digital space is no longer merely a theme for sci-fi movies, as it is here and ever more penetrating into everyday life. To think that a museum is not unaffected by these trends is not open-minded. Not only the space, but also the interactions of society and its thinking change. Trends evolve quickly and need to be captured. Can a museum exist in digital space? Can a real museum exist or—using the words of Jean Baudrillard—is it a simulacrum in hyper-reality? If a real digital museum does exist, what is its character like and what are its collections like? Does museality exist in this space? These are some of the questions that arise from the position of museums in this new space and the questions that the author asks, too. Knowing the answers can help to better understand the functionality of museums and to contribute thereby to the formulation of a new definition reflecting the given completely new virtual space. The letter “f” in the title of this paper signalizes two possible poles of conclusion: f as a futuristic regular museum or f as a fictitious (pseudo)museum.

Preface

The debate on the definition of a museum is not new, nor is it the only one not to cause problems. This is because a museum has a number of forms and approaches to activities and a lucrative trademark to begin with, whereby even institutions that are not lucrative per se can often hide under the trademark of a museum. Thus, it is necessary at all to define a museum? Is it not merely an attempt to get this institution to move forward in a predetermined direction? Is it not more important to make sure that the name itself be used correctly? One may ask whether it is possible without a meaningful and factual definition or whether it is merely a commotion “in a vicious circle”. Regardless of these facts, defining a museum as such and deciding whether it is able to exist adequately even in the modern environment of virtual space, it is necessary to define the factual concrete base first, i.e., the circumstances which are *sine qua non* for the existence of every museum. The base, without which a museum cannot exist. Where are we to look for something that is characteristic for a museum institution, something that only a museum has? In order to be able to find something like this, it is necessary to “look back into the past” and try to understand the very essence and meaning of the museum concept.

The attribute of truth

People have been collecting items for a long time. It is practically impossible to find out exactly what led to the creation of specific set of objects, for example, from an archeological find. The reasons for the emergence of this interesting cultural phenomenon have not yet been clearly identified. One may however assume that somewhere “in the background” was a set of power-oriented or religious factors, perhaps related to certain economic or aesthetic values and the effort to preserve them, as Zbyněk Z. Stránský wrote: *In the beginning, there was a human tendency to preserve things contrary to the nature of change and extinction, in a meaningful shift of certain entities of reality. This is reflected in the many myths of various early cultures, but even later during the formation of philosophical and early rational thinking.*¹ The concentrated objects were a confirmation, a guarantee of a certain reality. Whether it was a philosophical or mythological idea, an attribute of power, or something else, it basically does not matter in the context of the problem under study. The confirmation or assurance applied to the presented or empirical truth, whereas the objects represented a confirmation of the reality presented. It does not matter whether the given fact is true from today’s point of view, for it is important that it was true for the society of that time. One always has to think at the level of contemporary facts and options of a coherent society to be able to verify the presented truth. Interpretation of such collected sets is very difficult without preserving the context, especially with regard to archeological finds. Zbyněk Z. Stránský often mentions an ethnological example of such preservation as protection against destruction in time. He took the example from Claude Lévi-Strauss in the attempt at explaining the function of special totems named *churinga*. It is one example of initial gathering of objects with the aim to preserve and protect them against destruction in time, but Claude Lévi Strauss also draws attention to their documentary value, comparing them to contemporary archives: *Churingas are a tangible testimony of the mythical era of the alcheringas: were it not for them, it would still be possible to phantom the era, but it could not be physically substantiated. Likewise, even if we lost all our archives, our past would not be liquidated, but it would be stripped of its diachronic flavor, if one may use this expression. It would still exist as the past, but it would only be preserved in reproductions, books, institution, an even in certain situations—and all that would be mostly recent or not a long time ago and spread out synchronically. The value of archives is that they mediate contact with pure historicism for us.*²

Confirmation of reality cannot be achieved without the attribute of truth which is present in the coherent link to the given reality or facts and somewhere in the “fog” of history. Collections therefore are the beginning of the truth line that winds through the history of collecting activities and museums to this day.

1 STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: Masaryk University, 2005, p. 142. ISBN 80-210-3861-6.

2 LÉVI-STRAUSS, Claude. *Myšlení přírodních národů*. Prague: Dauphin, 1996, pp. 293–294. ISBN 80-901842-9-4.

The development from the initial collecting to musealization is complex. A number of different approaches and developmental stages of preserving, collection-creating and exhibiting have become a museological phenomenon. However, no matter which form of these museum form was analyzed, the attribute of truth was found everywhere and usually the stronger the closer it was to the present. Gradually, this attribute not only became one of the distinguishing features, but also a *physically substantiated* reality, i.e., authentic *sine qua non* musealization. Namely, in the selection process, the sub-musealization process must prove the truth attribute of the matter under analysis. This usually happens on the basis of confirmation by the witnesses of the musealized reality, i.e., the proof of a coherent link of the potential museological exhibit to the documented reality. Objects that can witness a musealized reality as its attribute of authenticity must be proved, but proving it as musealized reality does not necessarily make the object a museological exhibit. In addition, the object that is a witness of reality should also have an evolutionary (representative) value. Zbyněk Z. Stránský adds: *Selection is therefore oriented on such elements of musealized reality as have an evolutionary meaning, both in the dimension of origin and extinction, as well the dimension of overreaching, i.e., general evolutionary meaning that represents cultural and memorial values, i.e., museality.*³ Potential museological exhibits must prove authenticity (veracity) to the documented phenomenon, but it must also have other characteristics that other analogous potential exhibits lack. In simple terms, it is necessary to select the most representative authentic witness of the given reality, in which the truth attribute is immanently included in relation to the object that *physically confirms the reality*.

Legitimization

The attribute of truth has already become an important shaping factor that is condition for museums, despite the ambiguity of this concept. Society is above all gradually realizing the scientific significance and educational potential of museums, which must be based on a truthful basis. However, the museum concept referred to various institutions and was not in the past, nor is it in the present clearly defined. Even today, there is no real restriction on what is and what is not a museum, as the designation can be used for institutions that similar to a museum or otherwise. Slovak, Czech, or European (global) legislations do have a definition or the museum concept, but the concept is not protected in any way or manner. Nobody can prevent the term “museum” to be used for a “pub”, for example, even though the generally accepted meaning of a pub has little in common with a museum. Unfortunately, there are many examples of such examples in the virtual space. The websites and social networks contain countless institutions that are museums by name only. The term museum is attractive for its external appearance, rather than its essence (which is not clear and difficult to define).

3 STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. Úvod do studia muzeologie. Brno: Masaryk University. 2000, p. 40. 2nd ed. ISBN 80-210-1272-2.

It does not help to wishfully hope for a change. The term “museum” was, is, and will often be used for various purposes. Moreover, the ambiguity of the term „museum“ stems from opposite efforts that push for a change of the very essence of the meaning of the concept in the direction of these institutions’ educational purposes for science and research or, alternatively, as entertainment parks. These efforts have also been here from the early museum forms and pre-museum times.

One of the main reasons is the attribute of truth which is integrated in the basic concept of museums as institutions which society perceives them and currently seeks them to define. This proves that the value of the museum concept is highly valued by society. Therefore, there exist pressures that try to exploit the outward purposes of museum (as mentioned above), but also inwardly attack the attribute of truth. Umberto Eco noted this fact as follows: *Historical cabinets of curiosities have preserved for us above all pictorial likenesses and engravings in their catalogs. Some of them consisted of hundreds of small shelves with stones, muscles, bones of exotic animals and masterpieces of taxidermists who were able to create non-existent creatures.*⁴ The question is why? What was the reasons for falsifying reality and creating non-existent creatures is quite obvious. Man, traveler, adventurer, charlatan or a pseudo-scientist needed to make himself visible, prove his theories with factual “catching” arguments. Whether these people were deceived or were deliberately deceiving others is not important. Important is that these objects were created to physically substantiate the facts they claimed. But why was it necessary to put them in museums or display them in wonder shows or curiosity cabinets? The reason was legitimization. Museums and their predecessors presented their collections in their time as genuine (true) artifacts as a certain guarantee of veracity. For the given man, getting a false or ludicrous object into such an institution was to have yet another trustworthy argument of veracity for the facts he claimed. Moreover, if he managed to sell it to the institution, the matter gained an economic aspect, and it did not matter, whether the institution was private or public.

Analogous legitimization of objects more or less deliberately pretending to be true witnesses of reality can also be found in other areas of society. As an example of the cult of relics, Umberto Eco mentions again: *Relics were the most revered gems of medieval treasure. The cult of relics is not exclusively Christian. For instance, Plinius talked about relics that were precious to the Greco-Roman world: e.g., Orpheus’ lyre, Helen’s sandal or the bones of a monster that attacked Andromeda...*⁵ The trend continues and culminates with Christian collection of relics, as Umberto Eco mentions in connection with the St Vitus Cathedral in Prague: *In the St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague are the skulls of St. Adalbert and St. Wenceslas, St. Stephen’s sword, a fragment of Christ’s cross, a tablecloth used at the Last Supper, St. Margaret’s tooth, fragment of the tibia of St Vital, St. Sophia’s rib, St. Eoban’s chin, Moses’ cane, Virgin Mary’s dress.*⁶ The authenticity of at least

4 ECO, Umberto. *Zpověď mladého romanopisce*. Prague: Argo. 2013, p. 129, ISBN 978-80-257-1028-9.

5 ECO, Umberto. *Bludiště seznamů*. Prague Argo. 2009, p. 173. ISBN 978-80-257-0164-5.

6 ECO, Umberto. *Bludiště seznamů*, p. 173.

some of these objects can be doubted, but the author gives an example of even more obvious absurdities: Old chronicles state that in the 12th century one German cathedral kept the skull of a twelve-year-old St. John the Baptist...⁷ Many more analogous examples could certainly be found. The Church at the time represented a supreme credible authority in the society and therefore, if the Church considered an object authentic, so did all the believers. No substantial questions were ever raised—just like in the case of the skull of the 12-year-old St. John the Baptist. Regardless of the authenticity of the objects, they were presumed physically genuine in their time. If the Church and later the museums had not displayed such presumably true attributes, nobody would have produced false relics or mythical creatures, which eventually became part of the given institutions' collections. Perhaps, it is a bit paradoxical that these objects are deemed in the light of the attribute of truth today, despite the fact that they usually are genuine witnesses of falsification in the past. Truth attributes are present also in other forms of collecting activities, but the form and manifestation of it are adapted to the specific objective of this activity. For example, a collector—numismatist does not need a special physical proof of reality, because the items he collects, i.e., coins, bear all the necessary attributes and the context of the reality does not interest him. But the authenticity of the coins is very important to collector.

It is also possible to describe as a paradox the fact that the forging, deceitful, or forcefully sensational activity is seemingly the most visible part of the truth attribute, which in reality is not present at all. The meaning or purpose of the existence of the abovementioned institutions is based on the presentation and confirmation of facts. Their collections, or objects they concentrate for this purpose must have a proven coherent connection to the given reality⁸ and that cannot be achieved without the attribute of truth. Legitimization of fraudulent objects is based either on a false coherent link or on a non-existent link with other links or on the inability to verify the veracity of the given coherent reference link.

Virtual museum space

Further development led to the creation of internal ties within the collections and their relationship and response to society. The truth attribute became more and more important. Efforts were made to “clean up” collections from counterfeits and nonsense. Especially at a time when museum collections were considered databases of information of relevance to applicable sciences, it was important to make sure that the information reflected the original reality as closely as possible. The truth attribute begins to correlate with authenticity and forms the basis for museality. In the subsequent stages of development, the museum phenomenon detached itself from the concept of collection as a scientific database of applied sciences.

7 ECO, Umberto. *Bludiště seznamů*, p. 176.

8 The primary role of relics is to physically confirm the existence of something sacred or a sacred event, not to prove its holiness, which is from this point of view a secondary context.

The internal structure of collections has also changed—from systematized collections structured according to hierarchic classifiers to documentation of reality in the form of selected authentic representatives of the reality. The truth attribute in authenticity becomes a *sine qua non* of the whole musealization process. The shift from primary/original collections to the creation of documented collections in the context with the phenomenon of the attribute of truth has become a concept of unavoidable importance.

However, development has not stopped and mankind entered the digital era and virtual world. Museums cannot stagnate and new reality must adapt. The new space brings pitfalls, but also new possibilities. However, the new museum phenomenon was also evolving and has reached the point of systematized musealization and defined its mission on the principles of authentic reconstruction of documented reality. What are the options for cooperation of the classical museum in the real world with a virtual environment? Can a virtual museum exist, at least on a theoretical level? Cooperation is possible, of course. Museums use the new space in multiple ways. They communicate on the Internet, create websites, digitalize and present their collections, mediate information and makes it globally available. From this point of view, museums have extraordinary opportunities to reach the public to an unprecedented extent. By analogy, real museums use modern technologies that allow better access to information and more attractive appearance for the visitor. It is a natural development, a progress. Problems arise only when these modern technologies begin to replace the ideological basis, or which museums exist.

The use of virtual space is quite natural in terms of the evaluation of collections, as it is part of the third phase of the musealization process. Digitalized exhibits on the Internet, clear digital databases or other forms of mediation are analogous to catalogues, books, expositions and other forms of presentation. It is just another form of presenting existing exhibits in a real museum. Thus, the designation of the website must be perceived in the given context. It is not about the specific museum, it is about its outputs in digital form. Ján Dolák takes a similar view on this issue: *Museums publish their collections in printed catalogues, which have had a certain impact for decades, especially among researchers. Digitalization projects are quasi "catalogues of collections", but their impact is much greater, thanks to remote accessibility, and should be evaluated as such. In fact, it is a technological revolution, which only real specialists could imagine some thirty years ago, far less than some kind of a museological revolution.*⁹ Physical exhibits constitute a bottomless source of information, characteristics and stages that cannot be replaced by digitalization and it is unlikely that the future will bring the means to do so. Such a virtual space which could be called a real museum does not exist, except for its existence as a presentation or, at best, research facility. This applies to all similar analogies in the virtual space as well as to "museums" that do not have a real physical facility or, in

9 DOLÁK, Jan. *Teoretická podstata muzeologie*. Brno: Technical Museum in Brno, 2019, p. 96, ISBN 978-80-87896-67-9.

short, where the “virtual museum“ does not have its real counterpart built in stone.¹⁰ In all such cases, it is a fictitious museum.

Thus, if these facilities are to be designated as fictitious museums, we have to ask ourselves, whether such museums can exist at all and be considered analogous to real physical museums and function in this context as *ad hoc* “real” museums. After all, digitalized exhibits are no authentic witnesses of the give reality, i.e., they do not have the attribute of museality. An analogous situation is, for instance, a photograph of a museological exhibit in a secondary documentation. In order to be able to speak of a “real“ virtual museum, it is necessary for this museum in virtual space to undergo the complete process of musealization and constantly enhance its museality. This is conditioned by the fact that such objects that are authentic witnesses of the musealized reality, from which the best specimen are selected, also exist. Virtual space does actually offer such objects. A classic example is digital photography. If a photograph depicts an event that is the subject of musealization and the photograph is the best representative of the event, it most probably will be the bearer of museality. The virtual world has created a great number of entire systems of purely virtual character that do not have a direct equivalent in reality. Apart from websites, e-mails, videos, music, computer games, databases, specific virtual arts, programs, and many other forms that should be musealized, they can only be musealized in their own, i.e., digitalized form. Provided that a correct and complete process of musealization is observed, it is possible to create a genuine “true” virtual museum, i.e., a futuristic museum of the future.¹¹

Source code

The problem seems to have been solved. Digital objects will be musealized to become digital collections bearing genuine museological value, for which museums exist. However, virtual space is an artificial space and therefore is subject to different principles than real space. Every digital object is just a long list of ones and zeros in the source code. The code is not derived in any way from the character of the material it is bearing. Thus, it does not matter whether it is recorded on a hard disc or hypothetically printed out on paper. However, such digital record can be liberally copied without any loss, whereby each copy is not a copy but a new original, which is not possible in the real world. From an axiological point of view, however, this creates a fundamental problem. If there exist two or more originals, which one is the potential museological exhibit, i.e., the actual bearer of museality? At some point, it will be impossible to differentiate and prove which of the records is the genuine and authentic witness. What happens to the exhibit in this case? Will it be lost or can museality be attributed to all originals?

10 On the Internet, practically anything may be called a museum. The situation is similar to the past when the museum concept was still being formulated. This chaos makes the meaning of the term museum even more generalized and ambiguous.

11 It is reasonable to assume that the development in the given context is still in its infancy.

The question remains open. In the virtual world, there are no copies. Perhaps, in certain cases, we may speak of imperfect copying, but it does not solve the given problem anyway, nor does it have effect on it. Moreover, there is no point in contemplating how to distinguish any given virtual originals in the future (were it possible at all), as the very nature of does not make it possible. Therefore, it is questionable, whether it is possible to solve the given problem factually and methodically or arbitrarily.

The third “f”

Virtual space is a dynamically evolving phenomenon that offers an endless number of possibilities from today’s point of view. New products and forms are constantly being created. Mediation and presentation options are also being improved and offer more and more options. No wonder that the digital worlds increasingly penetrates reality. Likewise, the new space generates pros and cons. The whole digital world is a space that was created by man, so it is an artificial world, yet it adapts to man’s needs with positive or negative consequences for society. As stated above, creating a “genuine” virtual museum is quite complex and requires a conditional acceptance of this idea in the contemporary stage of cognition.

Recently, a new trend can be observed. Pseudo-museums are being created in the virtual space, which claims to be “real” museums, while not only ignoring the musealization process and museality, but also collections per se. These institutions (websites) do not seek authentic witnesses of reality or the most suitable selected representatives—instead, they model pseudo-reality according to their own criteria. In this way, they can depict virtual reality, for example, prehistoric fauna and flora, or present life in various communities and nations, historical events or personages and practically everything in this virtualized manner. All the programmer needs is some information to be able to create an illusion or imagination, respectively, which he then animates to create a similitude of life. Thus, he presents something that does not exist, but it is recognizable merely by mediation. He creates hyperreality, which at first sight is beautiful (more beautiful and attractive than reality), but it is false. In essence, these creations are fabrications that are supposed to substitute for non-existent collections. Regardless of the trustworthiness of the information to the programmer, to some extent, they always are products of fabrication that is not substantiated by authentic testimony.

However, such illusion can be beneficial in the educational process and other similar activities. Moreover, it can be used by museums as a visual supplement, but it can never replace the authentic testimony of a real collection. Whenever such a fact is presented as a museological exhibit, i.e., when it is presented as a bearer of museality, it is a fraud. It is a case of hyperreality that changes, distorts and falsifies reality. It is a simulacrum of the 3rd degree. Such an illusion does not have the attribute of truth, nor is it an authentic witness of a musealized fact. Thus, it cannot be a representative selected in the process of musealization. These illusions, virtual images or reconstructions do not *physically confirm any facts*, because they only create it *ex post*. Particularly absurd is these objects were directly produced to become part of a pseudo-museum and the creation of a real collection is not even

considered. Can this be a museum? No, illusion is an illusion and fabrication is a fabrication. The main problem is that these objects are fabrications throughout their entire existence, i.e., from the initial idea to create them. A genuine virtual museum cannot be created this way, because a museum comprised of fabrications is a museum of deceptions.

We now have to ask, why this vehemence to make illusions and fabrications part of a proper museum? Would it not be easier to create an institution comprised of won intentions and based on own rules of presentation? History is revolving. Once again, it is about legitimization, analogy of deceptive mythical creatures or the skull of 12-year-old St. John the Baptist. In order to confirm the authenticity of these illusions and their imperfect veracity, they would have to be under the umbrella of a trustworthy institution, as a museum certainly is. By analogy, it is as if Disneyland wanted to be classified as a scientific technological park. Of course, Disneyland does not have to do so, because it mediates its own reality and presents it to its visitors. Visitors know what to expect and they get it, they are not deceived. In the museum context, man relies on obtaining knowledge and experience based on truth.

As stated above, even a “proper” museum can use virtual means, i.e., reconstructions, 3D presentations, etc. What is the difference then? Well, there is a difference, as long as museums support the musealized reality by authentic witnesses. Virtual elements must always be in a supplementary position, not in the position of authenticity bearers. Moreover, virtual reality must be presented as one of the possibilities, not a certainty or even a final and conclusive one. Rather, it has to be presented as a *physical confirmation* of the given collection, which must be presented as well, so that the visitor could verify this *physical confirmation* himself. Such a presentation can be produced in virtual space and even on the basis of several museological collections, whereby the *physical confirmation* is an indispensable condition. After all, museums aim above all to mediate verifiable and authentic knowledge to build a cognition system, as Jan Dolák points out: *Information about the shards or flowers displayed in a museum is more than own visualization, because such information is unique, no one else has it.*¹²

Conclusion

Museums are established cultural institutions that have a well-defined role and space in society. At the same time, society has to respond to changes and trends. In the positive sense, it is necessary to implement new aspects of life, new forms of communication and other elements of reality in their portfolio, so that their activities correlate with developments in the society. If they did not do so, they would fall behind and eventually cease to be useful to society. On the other hand, this does not mean that museums should accept all novelties without consideration and resign on their primary substance. There exists a certain base that no museum can afford to lose, if it wants to retain the status of a museum. Museums are irreplaceable in

12 DOLÁK, Jan. *Sběratelství a sbírkotvorná činnost muzeí*. Bratislava: Comenius University in Bratislava, 2018, p. 123. ISBN 978-80-223-4553-8.

society. And they may vanish, such as would be the case, if the extracurricular tasks, educational or entertainment activities they adopt supersede their original purpose and substitute other institutions,¹³ whereby they lose their fundamental mission, namely reconstruction of a certain documented reality. This is only possible through musealization, i.e., collecting and preserving documents. In other words, museums do not necessarily have to exhibit, educate, conduct extracurricular activities to justify their existence. However, museums that do not preserve authentic witnesses and constantly physically confirm the authenticity (veracity) of documented phenomena, will eventually vanish. A museum without authentic exhibits (musealia) is a museum without truth. It is like metallurgy without metal, a library without words in books. A museum without collections is not a museum!

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13 GLUZIŃSKI, Wojciech. *U podstaw muzeologii*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980, p. 167. ISBN 83-01-02103-9.

THE MUSEUM AS A MEETING PLACE—INSPIRATION FROM THE GERMAN-SPEAKING AREA

Jiří Šabek

Centre for the Presentation of Cultural Heritage

If we look at the strategic goals of the German Museums Association for 2022, and compare these with the four-year strategy of the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries (AMG) for 2022 to 2024, it is immediately evident that both museum associations are taking a markedly different path.¹ Considering the reality of today's globalised world, European co-operation, information and institutional interconnectedness, this might seem somewhat of a paradox. Nevertheless, developments in recent years have clearly demonstrated a certain diverging trend in the development of museums in the Czech Republic and in Western Europe. In the AMG's vision, growing collections, scientific work and “*increasing the prestige of museology and the perception of the role of museums and galleries as guardians of a large part of our country's cultural heritage,*” remains crucial to museums.² In contrast, the German Museums Association emphasises greater community engagement from museums as cultural heritage institutions in matters of climate protection, a sustainable development programme, transnational crossovers and social inclusion. Thus, in this sense museums do not represent “guardians of cultural heritage”, or “memory guardians”, but rather are places of education and meeting up (*Ort der Bildung und der Begegnung*).

This study aims to provide an in-depth reflection on the term *Ort der Begegnung*, which in recent years has been at the heart of the idea of museums' social role within the German-speaking area, and it also strives to present possible inspirational ideas for Czech museums on their journey to the 21st century, with reference to a number of selected examples.

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- 1 *Nachhaltigkeit, Relevanz und transnationale Zusammenarbeit: Der Deutsche Museumsbund setzt Schwerpunkte für 2022* [online]. Museumbund.de, 16 December 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.museumsbund.de/nachhaltigkeit-relevanz-und-transnationale-zusammenarbeit-der-deutsche-museumsbund-setzt-schwerpunkte-fuer-2022/>; Strategické cíle AMG pro období 2022–2024. *Věstník AMG*, roč. 2021, č. 6, pp. 7–8.
 - 2 Strategické cíle AMG pro období 2022–2024. *Věstník AMG*, roč. 2021, č. 6, p. 7.

From places of artefacts to meeting places

Right from the outset, we need to emphasise that it is difficult to talk of a special cultural focus for a particular region, as was probably the case still at the start of the 20th century, when the cultural hegemony of the Western world was marked by the mutual contact and contests between French, German and Anglo-Saxon influences. In the 21st century, the universal dominance of the English language comes alongside a continental tradition following in the wake of the Anglo-Saxon world in particular. This is also the case for museums, and this is only strengthened through the resolution of challenges and problems on the basis of shared platforms, such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO). It is no less the case in debates on the future of museums, in which greater emphasis is generally placed on democratisation, and finally also inclusion and greater openness to different social groups.³ If, however, we peer under the surface of all debates on the New Museum, the Museum of the 21st century (*musée du XXIe siècle*) or the Museum of the Future (*Museum der Zukunft*), we do nevertheless see a certain particularity, comprising intellectual diversity and also giving space to mutual enrichment. Today's understanding of the accompanying concept which has established itself in recent years in German-language discourse as a core reference framework of not just cultural institutions, but also most public institutions, i.e. "meeting place", also has international roots.

While today Michael Wimmer and Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, for example, speak of the necessity of transforming museums from a "place of artefacts" to a "meeting place",⁴ a few decades ago this term was very rarely encountered in regard to public institutions. When museums were perceived as a sort of special "place", this was mainly in regard to their

3 LEHMANNOVÁ, Martina. *Definice muzea* [online]. ICOM Česká republika. 2020 [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://icom-czech.mini.icom.museum/icom/definice-muzea/>

4 A debate took place in early 2021 on the transformation of museum institutions in Austria's *Der Standard*. Cultural theorist and teacher from Vienna's University of Applied Arts, Michael Wimmer, and Director of Vienna's Museum of Applied Arts (MAK), Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, agreed on the necessity to transform the role of museums in the social agora. Director of Vienna's Belvedere, Stella Rollig, argued against, and she stressed the unique nature of museums as "places of artefacts", providing testimony to their periods and creators, meaning that museums are formative as public social institutions. Her criticism, however, was mainly focused on the question of how new ideas of museums are making museums more accessible and more connected to local communities, and generally to the general public. HILPOLD, Stephan. *Müssen wir unbedingt die Originale zeigen?* [online]. *Derstandard.de*, Interview, 3. 3. 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000124594325/mak-direktor-muessen-wir-unbedingt-die-originale-zeigen>, HITPOLD, Stephan. *Alles neu? Über die Zukunft der Museen* [online]. *Derstandard.de*, Diskussion, 20. 2. 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000124333026/alles-neu-ueber-die-zukunft-der-museen> ROLLIG, Stella. *Zukunft der Museen: Sündenfall Blockbuster-Ausstellung?* [online]. *Derstandard.de*, Diskussion, 24. 2. 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000124420055/zukunft-der-museen-suendenfall-blockbuster-ausstellung>.

collection activities (Ort des Sammelns und Bewahrens). The 1960s was a turning point, with the arrival of a new generation of intellectuals who criticised public institutions in their traditional forms, including museums. During the 1970s and 1980s, the idea of museums in particular as a place for meeting the past and a particular place and art grew in importance. The objective was to criticise the idea of a passive consuming audience within mausoleums of artwork, and instead to open museums to the public and turn them into a places of social experiences.⁵ In 1970, Günther Uebecker spoke of his desire to turn museums into “places of variability” providing free space to people. In the same year, Gerhard Bott’s collective monograph, *Museum der Zukunft*, was published and this also become a constitutive element for today’s critical ideas on the concept and operation of museums not just within the German-speaking community.⁶ We cannot neglect to mention Bezon Brok, who divided museums into “places of reception”, “places of education” and “workplaces”, or “places of play” or “cult”.⁷ To the present day, Joseph Beuys’ definition of the idea of a museum as a “place of permanent conference” is often quoted, which emphasises that they do not just preserve artefacts from the past, but also provide a comprehensive understanding of the present and its relationship to the past, which also ties to the condition of museums as “places of permanent tolerance”.⁸

Places of meeting the past

Coming to terms with Germany’s tragic history in the 20th century and the significance of the critical examination of its legacy undoubtedly played a large role in establishing this concept in Germany. Pierre Nora’s great work, *Realms of Memory* (published in German as “Erinnerungsorten”) also had a crucial influence. The term *Erinnerungsort* has a markedly pessimistic tone in Germany, as it is linked to the trauma of remembering its Nazi past, the Holocaust, the horrors of war, and in recent years also increasingly to places connected to the communist dictatorship of the former German Democratic Republic.⁹ Since the 1990s, the concept of places of memory and meeting the past has become an integral component of the concept of memorials and museums of modern and contemporary history.¹⁰ This culture

5 ADORNO, Theodor. *Valéry Proust Museum*. In: *Prisms*. London: Neville Spearman, 1967, p. 175.

6 ULLRICH, Wilfgan. *Die Idee des offenen MUseums: geschichte und Problematik* [online]. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://ideenfreiheit.files.wordpress.com/2017/07/das-offene-museum.pdf>.

7 BROCK, Bazon. *Ästhetik als Vermittlung*. Köln: DuMont, 1977. ISBN 3-7701-0671-7.

8 BEUYS, Joseph. *Das Museum—ein Ort der permanenten Konferenz*. In: KURNITZKY, Horst. *Notizbuch 3*. Kunst. Gesellschaft. Museum, Berlin 1980. pp. 47–74.

9 SABROW, Martin. *Erinnerungsorten der DDR*. München: Beck, 2009. p. 22. ISBN 9783406590450.

10 In addition to Pierre Nora, this applies to the work of the Assmanns and the earlier work of Maurice Halbwachs. ASSMANN, Aleida. *Prostory vzpomínání: podoby a proměny kulturní paměti*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, nakladatelství Karolinum, 2018. 482 pages. Limes. ISBN 978-80-246-3433-3. NORA, Pierre. *Erinnerungsorte Frankreichs*. München: Beck, 2005. ISBN 978-3-406-52207-9. HALBWACHS, Maurice. *Das kollektive Gedächtnis*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1991. ISBN 3-596-27359-5.

of remembrance (Erinnerungskultur), however, also has an updating element, since it is not just a concept of the culture of memory (Gedächtniskultur) as fixed and final, but rather the process of remembering as a continuous process of interpretation and making present, and thus promotes ideas of the meaning of the past for contemporary society and one's own identity.¹¹ It is no coincidence, then, that this approach went hand in hand with the dynamic development of museum education in the 1980s, with education and interpretation (Bildung und Vermittlung) gradually becoming considered the “*main task of the museum, the driving force for the democratisation of museum institutions which opens them to the general public.*”¹² In the end, the German expression *Vermittlung* (literally meaning “mediation”), which is translated into English in this context as “interpretation”, and most commonly into Czech as “education”, was also a dominant one in the much-debated surveys of the International Council of Museums' German committee in regard to the new definition of a museum.¹³

Not only in Germany, but also in other countries, has the development of museums now definitively turned away from the idea of their bring temples guarding a country's cultural heritage in silence, and in contrast emphasis has begun to be placed on cultural difference, stressing the social work of bringing people, different ethnic groups, together and the idea of emancipation overall.¹⁴ Thus, for many years the concept of museums as meeting places more or less corresponded to the idea which the Director of Museum Bochum of many years and Czech emigrant Petr Spielmann summarised in his monograph—of the museum as a meeting place where it isn't just visitors or visitors and the collection who meet, but also individual fields of art, different cultures and ethnicities, and also experts meet the general public, and finally also visitors meet each other.¹⁵

11 ASSMANN, Aleida. *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*. München: Beck, 2010. ISBN 9783406601569.

12 „Bildungs- und Vermittlungsarbeit ist Kernaufgabe des Museums. Sie ist der treibende Motor, die Institution Museum für ein diverses Publikum zu öffnen und zu demokratisieren.“ Leitfaden: Bildung und Vermittlung im Museum gestalten. Erstausgabe Dezember 2020. Deutscher Museumsbund e.V. und Bundesverband Museumspädagogik e.V., 2020. p. 4. ISBN 9783981986679.

13 These surveys, however, should be considered more of a general subject for further discussion. In their own research, participation of members of ICOM's German committee was fairly low, while the subsequent three-hour debate on 24 March 2021 held via Zoom with over 350 participants, was rather problematic and had disputed results considering the organisational complications. For more, see: *ICOM Germany Museums Definition Report on ICOM Define Consultation 2* [online]. ICOM Germany. 17 April 2021 [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at https://icom-deutschland.de/images/Museumsdefinition/ICOM_Deutschland_-_Defining_the_museum.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0JbK45J6YzJ6sfPVkXeZv6R391AmQOrMYmWKTRiBleYKIXLq8p8HsNmg

14 HENKEL, Matthias. Das Museum als Ort der Langsamkeit. In: *Das Moderne Museum*. München: Müller-Straten, 2001. p. 31. ISBN 3-932704-70-3.

15 SPIELMANN, Petr, SPIELMANN, Marek a KROPP, Peter. *Museum als Ort der Begegnung: am Beispiel des Museum Bochum 1972-1997*. Brno: VUTIUM, 2010. ISBN 978-80-214-4082-1.

Museum as a “third place”

With the start of the new millennium, we can see another major shift, with a gradual movement towards a change in understanding of not just the role of museums and monuments, but also a broad range of public institutions. Naturally a huge number of internal and external influences were involved, including political developments around the world, but the publication of the work of American sociologist Ray Oldenburg entitled *Third Place* was of particular influence. This characterised two core spaces which were “the home” (first place) and “work” (second place), and finally there was a so-called third place, which incorporated a broad spectrum of commercial and non-commercial institutions which help to eliminate stress, loneliness and alienation, while strengthening social bonds. Over time, various cultural institutions were gradually added to the original typical examples of third places such as cafés and bars, these including libraries in particular, and with the turn of the millennium a broad spectrum of public institutions adopted the term, including schools, for example. Within German public debate, the concept began to expand in around 2010.¹⁶ Similarly, museums also began to be perceived as a “third place”, although it should be stressed that this popular term still entails many problems, in particular an insufficient definition of what the term actually means, with it often being used in a very shallow way.¹⁷

In the last decade, the idea of cultural institutions as a meeting place has become an increasing element in the operation of German cultural institutions. In regard to museums, this has led to an increasingly more radical move away from the primacy of thinking about the audience’s relationship to physical collections and exhibited objects, and there has even been discussion on the so-called immaterial turnover of museum work and the understanding of objects in collections:

“The Thing [das Ding] need no longer be perceived as a self-contained object in the Heidegger sense, but rather as an extending “open object”, as an intersection of relationships, opinions and experiences. In this light, the symbolic and discursive qualities of the object come to the fore.”¹⁸

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- 16 SPRUNG, Norbert. *Kultureinrichtungen als „Dritter Ort“: Begriffsklärung und Analyse von Beispielen aus der Praxis* [online]. Excerpt. Munich: GRIN Verlag, 2020. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: <https://www.grin.com/document/540604/540604>
- 17 HOINS, Katharina. Das Museum als Dritter Ort. Schlagwort oder Leitbegriff? In: *Museen der Zukunft*. Bielefeld: transkript, 2022. pp.274–294. ISBN 2703-1470.
- 18 „Das Ding ist nicht mehr im heideggerschen Sinn als in sich geschlossener Gegenstand zu sehen, sondern als ein über sich hinausweisendes ‚offenes Objekt‘, als Kreuzungspunkt von Beziehungen, Meinungen und Erfahrungen. In diesem Licht betrachtet, rücken die symbolischen und diskursiven Qualitäten des Objekts in den Vordergrund.“ GERCHOW, Jan et al. Nicht von gestern! Das historische museum frankfurt wird zum Stadtmuseum für das 21. Jahrhundert. In: GESSER, Susanne et al. (Hg.). *Das Partizipative Museum*. Bielefeld: transkript, 2012. p. 30. ISBN 978-3-8376-1726-9.

Instead, the idea of the idea of a place of mutual communication between different people and social groups in general has become more important. From a theoretical perspective, James Clifford's idea of museums as contact zones had a marked influence.¹⁹ These theoretical ideas have found practical application in the context of the large social challenges of recent years seen in dealing with the so-called migrant crisis in Europe, and in the influence of emancipation movements for human rights and against the discrimination of various population groups (e.g. Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ+). This has led to a strengthening of museums' active role within a social inclusion programme, that is to say in ensuring a sense of belonging for various individuals and social groups, and their equal involvement in the activities of the particular institution, and finally also in the shaping of society as a whole. Museums should stop being elitist meeting places for the educated middle class within the majority community, and instead become a place of diversity dialogue. This has naturally given museum education a difficult challenge in finding a path of mutual understanding. The *Multaka* (from the Arabic word for "meeting place") project received a particularly strong response. This involved Iraqi and Syrian refugees being trained in special educational courses to be museum guides, offering guided tours in the Arabic language through co-operation with the Museum of Islamic Art, the Museum of the Middle East, the Bode Museum and the German Historical Museum. This project won a number of awards for promoting transcultural dialogue, and it continues to operate successfully today, and also includes workshops in English, German and Arabic.²⁰

Postcolonialism²¹ and places of cultural dialogue

Nor can we ignore the great global issue of reconciliation with one's colonial past, something which casts museums in particular in a critical light, which become themselves a kind of "artefact" for society. Just as an exhibited artefact comes with a large number of stories, so buildings and institutions cannot be understood without the complete range of contexts that they comprise. Critical reflection of the postcolonial aspect is a particularly sensitive area,

19 KRULL, Wilhelm. Sammeln, bewahren, erschließen, vermitteln. Museen und Sammlungen als Orte des Erkenntnisgewinns [online]. Vortrag im Rahmen der Ringvorlesung „Wissensort Museum“ am 9. Februar 2016. Volkswagenstiftung.de. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: Grußwort des Generalsekretärs der VolkswagenStiftung, Dr

20 *Multaka. Treffpunkt Museum* [online]. Multaka.de. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://multaka.de/projekt/>

21 Postcolonialism describes the historical period following the collapse of colonial empires in the second half of the 20th century. Since the 1970s, so-called post-colonial studies began to develop under the influence of post-structural philosophy and the works, e.g., of Frantz Fanon and Edward Said, this being a methodological area focused on a critical investigation of modern society and its development in the context of the shaping of Western colonialism and its impacts on culture, economics and society, and not just in the former colonial empires and their colonies, but also overall within the modern world.

with broad debate currently underway within the American and European space. One symbol for this debate within the museum world was the issue of the so-called Benin Bronzes.²²

The vision of a museum as a place of self-reflection on the institution in regard to the colonial context of European museums is one that has found particular resonance in Germany. As well as declarations that all relevant objects will be returned to their countries of origin, a number of projects are also ongoing which aim to reconcile with the legacy of their own past and Europe's past while also finding new ways to educate people on colonial issues. In this regard the German government has set up, for example, the German Contact Point for Collections from Colonial Contexts²³ and also notable is the German Digital Library project entitled *Collections from Colonial Contexts*, in which digitalised artefacts in German collections which are linked in some way to colonialism are digitally presented. Since 2020, the German Federal Cultural Foundation has run the four-year project, *Dekoloniale: Memory Culture in the City*, which aims to implement research, exhibitions and events on the topic of colonialism, the postcolonialism of the present day and to use the example of Berlin—an administrative and economic centre of Wilhelmine imperial politics—to highlight the legacy of colonialism in the urban space.²⁴ Finally, the German Museums Association published specialist guidelines for the care of collections from colonial contexts in 2021.²⁵

A particularly sensitive subject is the controversial opening of the Humboldt Forum—a copy of a Berlin palace, which had been destroyed during the war, built in 2021. While it is designed to house a leading German museum institution—a place of democratic global dialogue—on the other hand it is continuing to make use of collections often with a significantly problematic context, furthermore to a large extent a symbol of the Prussian state, and bearing the name of a privileged Prussian intellectual.²⁶ This is symptomatic of the general trend to eschew narrow national or ethnocentric foci for museums, and to strengthen the global context and international co-operation. This is also a key component of the German Museums Association's strategic focus, which in past years, for example, has been focused on

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- 22 This is a large collection of bronze artefacts from the Royal Palace in the former Kingdom of Benin, which is today located within the territory of today's Nigeria. These objects were the spoils of a British retaliatory military expedition in 1897 which the Kingdom of Benin fell victim to. Over the subsequent century, individual artefacts ended up in a number of museums and private collections. *Navracení afrických artefaktů a projekt Digital Benin* [online]. Emuseum.cz, publikováno 25. 11. 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://emuseum.cz/aktuality/navraceni-africky-arte-faktu-a-projekt-digital-benin>
- 23 *Kontaktstelle für Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen Kontexten in Deutschland* [online]. cp3c.de. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.cp3c.de>
- 24 *Dekoloniale: Erinnerungskultur in der Stadt* [online]. Kulturstiftung des Bundes, Erbe und Vermittlung. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: https://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/de/projekte/erbe_und_vermittlung/detail/dekoloniale.html
- 25 *Care of Collections from Colonial Contexts* [online]. E-reader for guidelines. Berlin: Deutscher Museumsbund, 2021. ISBN 978-3-9822232-0-9. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: <https://www.museumsbund.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/e-reader-care-of-collections-from-colonial-contexts.pdf>
- 26 E.g.: *Ausstellungen im Humboldt Forum öffnen: Take it easy, altes Haus - taz.de*

Polish-German, and in 2022 on French-German, museum dialogue.²⁷ Thus the dispute over the Humboldt Forum is more than exemplary in this case for events within German museums.

Central European colonial context

Within Czech academic debate, the issue of colonialism has remained marginal, mainly because it is considered a problem of the former colonial empires.²⁸ Furthermore, as quoted in the introduction, Czech museums are considered to be guardians of the country's wealth, and not international institutions of mutual cultural dialogue and meeting places. This assumption, however, would mean that colonialism would also remain a topic of little interest in Austria and Switzerland. This is not the case, of course. Back in 2015-2017, a project was run at the Weltmuseum Wien entitled *Sharing stories. Speaking Objects* which aimed to allow visitors to see objects with problematic contexts from a number of perspectives, thus revealing the difficulties of presenting and creating difference and the very method of looking at “the other”.²⁹ Considering its role as a place of meeting and multicultural exchange, the Weltmuseum is a particular topic of discussion in the context of so-called decolonisation, including in regard to the Benin Bronzes, as the museum has a large collection of Berlin Bronze artefacts. Additionally, the Austrian Ministry of Culture, supported by leading Viennese museums, has also undertaken a project entitled “Colonial Objects in Austrian Federal Museums”, and Vienna's Natural History Museum also has its own expert team, known as Colonial Context of Acquisitions (KolText).³⁰ In Switzerland, an ethnographic collections critical reflection project was run, for example, at the Museum der Kulturen Basel, and at the University of

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- 27 A museum co-operation project was launched at the end of 2022 between a number of German and Polish museums, entitled *Deutsch-Polnischer Museumsdialog*. Its main objective was to strengthen the sharing of experience of experts from both countries. The German Museums Association and Poland's National Institute for Museums and Public Collections also wanted to pave the way for future cross-border projects and a generally hitherto lacking platform for permanent sustainable co-operation. The strategy for 2022 includes an expansion of this cross-border co-operation to include French museums. *German-Polish Museum Dialogue* [online]. Museumsbund.de. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: <https://www.museumsbund.de/aktuelles/projekte/deutsch-polnischer-museumsdialog/>, *Nachhaltigkeit, Relevanz und transnationale Zusammenarbeit: Der Deutsche Museumsbund setzt Schwerpunkte für 2022* [online]. Museumsbund.de, 16 December 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.museumsbund.de/nachhaltigkeit-relevanz-und-transnationale-zusammenarbeit-der-deutsche-museumsbund-setzt-schwerpunkte-fuer-2022/>
- 28 An example of one exception is the student project Decolonisation. *Manifest dekolonizace* [online]. Dekolonizace.cz. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://dekolonizace.cz>
- 29 *Sharing Stories. Dinge sprechen* [online]. Weltmuseumwien.at, Wissenschaft & Forschung. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.weltmuseumwien.at/wissenschaft-forschung/sharingstories/>
- 30 *Kolonialer Erwerbskontext im Naturhistorischen Museum Wien* [online]. Nhm-wien.ac.at. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/forschung/projekt_koltext; WEISS, Stefan. *Koloniale Kulturgüter: Österreich richtet Expertengremium ein* [online]. Derstandard.at, Kulturpolitik, 20. ledna 2022. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000132682271/koloniale-kulturgueter-oesterreich-richtet-expertengremium-ein>

Zurich's Ethnographic Museum.³¹ Thus, the use of the word “context” is linked to a broad spectrum of narratives which together form the overall significance of a particular object in a particular period. Besides, in German-speaking countries this issue continues to be linked to critical reflections on artworks and objects stolen during the Second World War—e.g. in regard to the Kunsthau Zürich's controversial Emil Bührli Collection.³²

The topic of colonialism, then, is a natural aspect of museums as places of critical reflection and self-reflection and last year's on-line exhibition, *Staged Otherness* from the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology on shows of otherness, human zoos and ethnographical exhibitions in Central Europe is good evidence of this.³³ This exhibition demonstrates the essence of reflections on colonialism in the countries of Central Europe, and as a result also the need for a general shift in the perception of collections and in the understanding of their value as testimony. Ultimately, this does not just apply to the origins of art and ethnography collections in regard to their colonial past, but also the so-called environmental postcolonial context in the case of natural history collections. Last year also saw the completion of a large interdisciplinary project of the Zoological Garden and Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, entitled *Animals as Objects*, which looked at the question of the past, present and future of animals as a component of the exhibitions of institutions of entertainment, culture and education.³⁴ Finally, the idea of museums without collections, based more on the tradition of kunsthalle, but taking inspiration in the history, for example, of Dresden's Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, is today generally accepted, and in fact for many this concept represents the future of museums as an institution.³⁵

Museum 4.0

This trend of revising the concept of collections has been further boosted in recent years by the huge growth in new digital technologies and the related expansion of the third space into the virtual world. This also relates to the phenomenon of the technical labelling of museums. While the term “virtual museum” was found back in the 1990s, for example, the first decade of the new millennium saw very lively debate on, for example, the today largely forgotten

31 *Umgang mit Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen Kontexten* [online]. Leitfaden. Berlin: Deutscher Museumsbund, 2021. p. 35. [cit. 14. 02. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.museumsbund.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/e-reader-zum-leitfaden-umgang-mit-sammlungsgut-aus-kolonialen-kontexten-de.pdf>

32 *Sbirka Emila Bührli stále vyvolává kontroverze* [online]. Emuzeum.cz, published 25. 1. 2022. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://emuzeum.cz/aktuality/sbirka-emila-buhrli-stale-vyvolava-kontroverze>

33 *Staged Otherness* [online]. Exhibition. Stagedotherness. eu. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://stagedotherness.eu>

34 *Tiere als Objekte* [online]. Museumfuernaturkunde.berlin.de. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.museumfuernaturkunde.berlin.de/wissenschaft/tiere-als-objekte>

35 BAUR, Joachim. Was ist ein Museum? Vier Umkreisungen eines widerspenstigen Gegenstand. In: BAUR, Joachim (Hg.). *Museumsanalyse Methoden und Konturen eines neuen Forschungsfeldes*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2010. p. 18. ISBN 978-3-8394-0814-8.

Museum 2.0.³⁶ This was a response to the development of the new form of websites, so-called Web 2.0, and the related opportunities to share and store, and generally the production of creative content within the virtual space.³⁷ In museums in Western Europe, this came alongside debate on museums as places of participation and social changes. Internet platforms were to become tools for closer connectivity not just of experts, but also of the museum audience.³⁸ Nor should we forget the influence of the concept of so-called Culture 3.0 as presented by cultural economist, Pier Luigi Sacco.³⁹ Nevertheless, the events of the first half of the 1990s then became a great impetus when in 2011 an expert working group presented the German government's plans for their strategic vision of a fourth industrial revolution under the title *Industry 4.0*, which was then presented in 2015 at the World Economic Forum, igniting furious debate.⁴⁰

The characteristic of museums considering the stage of industrial revolutions subsequently also affected the division of museums and other cultural institutions. This applies to, or perhaps rather applied to German academic debate in particular, as the actual concept was accepted only with reservations in other countries, and a number of years following the phenomenon of debate on *Industry 4.0*, the term was no longer as dominant in the public space as it had been a few years beforehand.⁴¹ The term *Museum 4.0* was first used by Mark Walheimer in the context of the so-called semantic museum adapting to the needs of the audience and making use of digital technologies in addition to traditional technologies.⁴² Within the German-language debate, the term *Museum 4.0* came directly out of debates on the Industrial Revolution, and so relates to the strategies which museums use to deal with technological progress and develop their competencies in the use of digital technologies.

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- 36 MILLER, Gavin et al. *The virtual museum: Interactive 3D navigation of a multimedia database*. The Journal of Visualization and Computer Animation, Vol. 3, Is. 3, 1992, pp. 183–197.
- 37 The separation of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 was first made by Darcy DiNucci in 1999 in her article, *Fragmented Future* DINUCCI, Darcy. *Fragmented Future* [online]. Print Magazine, 53 (4), April 1999. pp. 221–222. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: darcyd.com/fragmented_future.pdf
- 38 GESSER, Susanne et al. (Hg.). *Das Partizipative Museum*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2012. ISBN 978-3-8376-1726-9, *Museumskunde. Museen in der Informationsgesellschaft*. Band 73, 2/08, Berlin: Deutscher Museumsbund, 2009.
- 39 SACCO, Pier Luigi. *Culture 3.0: A new perspective for the EU 2014-2020 structural funds programming* [online]. EENC Paper, April 2011. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: www.interarts.net/descargas/interarts2577.pdf
- 40 *Umsetzungsempfehlungen für das Zukunftsprojekt Industrie 4.0: Abschlussbericht des Arbeitskreises Industrie 4.0* [online]. Promotorengruppe Kommunikation der Forschungsunion Wirtschaft—Wissenschaft, April 2013. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: [Umsetzungsempfehlungen für das Zukunftsprojekt Industrie 4.0. Abschlussbericht des Arbeitskreises Industrie 4.0—acatech](http://www.acatech.de/umsetzungsempfehlungen-fur-das-zukunftsprojekt-industrie-4-0)
- 41 CULOT, Giovanna et al. *Behind the Definition of Industry 4.0: Analysis and open questions* [online]. *International Journal of Production Economics*, Volume 226, August 2020. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0925527320300050?via%3Dihub>
- 42 WALHIMER, Mark. *Museum 4.0 as the Future of STEAM in Museums* [online]. The STEAM Journal, Vol. 2, Iss. 2, Article 14, 2016. [cit. 14. 2. 2022] Available at: <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/steam/vol2/iss2/14>

In 2016, the innovative project *Museum 4.0* began under the auspices of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, and today comprises the principal shared innovative platform for German cultural institutions called *museum4punkt0*.⁴³ Within the virtual space and making use of digital technologies, not only can we add a new dimension to museum education and free ourselves from physical collections, but we can also strengthen the role of museums in dealing with current social concerns, and bring their activities to a much wider audience. It should be stressed, however, that the Museum 4.0 discourse remains at the level of technological innovations, and the question of to what extent a digital museum can also be a fully-fledged meeting place remains extremely debatable—the term Museum 4.0 is thus not usually put within the context of the otherwise core leitmotif, “meeting place”.⁴⁴ In contrast, it is important to note the criticism levelled in this case, in that through digitalisation and implementing new technologies, instead of shaping a participative space for dealing with current social issues, museums may find themselves falling in line behind the products and interests of large technology corporations.⁴⁵ It should also be added that during the Covid pandemic, many German museums struggled with the reality of poor funding and a lack of digital compensation, as elsewhere in Europe.⁴⁶

Green museum

There is one agenda which resonates the most within the European cultural sector, and German and especially Austrian museums and galleries want to some degree to be its flagship, and that is the challenge of protecting the climate and ensuring sustainable development. Following on from adoption of the Paris Agreement on climate change (2016) and the conclusions of the United Nations’ Climate Change conferences (2018 and 2019), a special museums sustainability resolution was adopted at a General Meeting of the International Council of Museums in Kyoto, and then in September 2020 there was another meeting in Bremerhaven, Germany, where a declaration of the same name was adopted on museums taking an active role in solving the climate crisis.⁴⁷ Practically all German-language periodicals have focused on this issue, e.g. *Museums.ch*, *Museumskunde* and *Neues Museum*, with the term *Green Museum*

43 *Museum4punkt0* [online]. Museum4punkt0.de. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.museum4punkt0.de>

44 In 2019, the International Council of Museums’ German committee looked into this issue even before the pandemic broke out: *Mitteilungen 2019* [online]. Heft 41, 26. Jahrgang. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: https://icom-deutschland.de/images/Publikationen_Buch/Publikation_1_Mitteilungen_2019_Heft.pdf

45 VOGEL, Jasmin and NEUGEBAUER, Daniel. Raum zwischen Null und Eins. In: *Museen der Zukunft*. Bielefeld: transkript, 2022. pp. 71–98. ISBN 2703-1470.

46 WIMMER, Michael and SCHARF, Ivana. Museen nach der Pandemie. In: *Museen der Zukunft*. Bielefeld: transkript, 2022. pp. 38–39. ISBN 2703-1470.

47 *Bremerhaven Declaration on the Role of Museums in Addressing the Climate Crisis* [online]. Klimahaus Bremerhaven. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Accessible at: https://www.klimahaus-bremerhaven.de/fileadmin/Veranstaltungen/Internationales_Symposium_2020/Bremerhaven_Declaration_201016.pdf

(Grünes Museum) as an engaged place for dealing with environmental problems being particularly well-received in Austria.⁴⁸

A more detailed search finds that the term “green museum” was established earlier in the German-language discourse on museums’ future development, when it was related to experts’ thoughts on the reconstruction and renovation of museums in regard to running them in a greener way, with the term *das grüne Museum* being used.⁴⁹ In 2011, a new Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien depot became a prime example and model for this vision.⁵⁰ Since 2018 so-called eco-labels (österreichische Umweltzeichen) have been awarded to “green museums”, with the first museum to receive the label being Kunst Haus Wien, and by February 2022 12 Austrian museums and gallery had received the award.⁵¹ In the end, people around Vienna’s Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art, Museum of Applied Arts and Technical Museum formed the Museums for Future movement in late 2019, inspired by the global Fridays for Future movement fighting climate change. Their call for the maximum possible involvement of museums in the fight against climate change soon found broad support amongst first Austrian, and then also German, cultural institutions. The movement’s activities are now spreading to other European countries, with the Museums for Future’s declaration also adopted by the Network of European Museum Organisations, of whom the Czech AMG is also a member.⁵² Finally, in Switzerland an extensive project was launched last year on the initiative of the Swiss sustainability network in art and culture, 2N2K, which in collaboration with the International Council of Museums’ Swiss committee and the Mercator Foundation is funding the *Happy Museums* project, which aims to ensure greater involvement of museum institutions and their activities in sustainable development programmes.⁵³ Thus, the idea of a green museum is more than purely a technical solution, but rather a matter of

48 *Museumskunde. Diesoziale Dimension der Nachhaltigkeit*. Band 86/2021, Heft 1, Berlin: Deutscher Museumsbund, 2021.; *Museums.ch. Die schweizer Museumszeitschrift*. 13/2018, Zürich: HIER UND JETZT, 2018.; *Neues Museum. Die österreichische Museumszeitschrift*. 21/4, Oktober 2021, Wien: Museumsbund Österreich.

49 The meetings have been taking place since 2010 under the auspices of Fraunhofer Gesellschaft/ Forschungsallianz Kulturerbe and Deutsche Kongress. *Nachricht - Das grüne Museum 2010* [online]. Deutsche Kongress, Das grüne Museum. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://p200206.mittwaldserver.info/nachbericht2010.html>

50 *Freierliche Eröffnung des neuen KHM-Depots* [online]. Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2 July 2011. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.khm.at/de/blog/detailansicht/?newsID=632&cHash=35af0edd2998005c7a41c082889b7a30>

51 As well as eight museums in Vienna, including the most renowned such as MAK—the Museum of Applied Arts and Austria’s Bevedere Gallery, the label has also been received by Joanneum and Kunsthau Graz, the monument to the Roman city of Carnuntum and the Lower Austria Museum. *Museen mit dem Österreichischen Umweltzeichen* [online]. Österreichisches Umweltzeichen. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.umweltzeichen.at/de/tourismus/museen>

52 *Museums For Future* [online]. Museums For Future. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: museumsforfuture.org

53 *Happy Museums* [online]. Happy Museums.ch. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.happymuseums.ch/was-wir-tun>

overall museum activities. As the mentioned Kunst Haus example shows, green museums are a “*place of lively debate*”, bringing together art and environmentalism, looking at environmental matters and sustainability within art discourse, and finally as public institutions they are active creators and mediators of socio-political values.⁵⁴

As has already been mentioned, the term used in German-language academic debate on the future of museums is *museum of the future*. Gerhardt Bott’s contemporary successors endorse the tradition of his collective monograph of 1970, such as *Das Museum der Zukunft* written a team of authors in Vienna headed by Joachim Baur, and the latest *Museen der Zukunft* by Henning Mohr and Diana Modarressi-Tehrani. However, if there is one shared characteristic aspect of museums’ future direction in general debate, it is undoubtedly the need for sustainable development, which also forms the strategic basis for another focus for German and Austrian museums. As such, the International Council of Museums’ Austrian committee has launched the project *17 MUSEEN x 17 SDGs* in collaboration with the Austrian Federal Ministry for Art, Culture, Civil Service and Sport in order to ensure that Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development goals are met.⁵⁵ The German Museums Association included the issue of sustainability and climate protection top of its list of strategic goals for 2022, with the vision of creating a museum code of sustainability, and the subsequent establishment of its own model of certification for museums and their sponsors. The association then declares:

*“As places of education and meeting, museums bear a large responsibility in the field of sustainability. They look after a large part of our cultural heritage, transfer knowledge, spark social discourse and create creative impulses. They can spread a vision of a better future, they can be a model example and their activities can significantly contribute towards greater sustainability and climate protection.”*⁵⁶

From elite institutions to open public institutions

The final project mentioned here is in regard to the perception of museums as places of democratic co-operation, inclusion and openness to a broad spectrum of social groups. The idea of museums as places open to the general public would appear to be quite an old one, and the opening of Hans Sloane’s collection as establishing the beginnings of the British Museum in 1753 is often mentioned in this regard. Long into the 19th century, however, modern

54 Das grüne Museum [online]. Kunst Haus Wien. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.kunsthawien.com/de/uber-uns/grunes-museum/>

55 17 MUSEEN x 17 SDGs—Ziele für nachhaltige Entwicklung [online]. ICOM Österreich. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <http://icom-oesterreich.at/page/17-museen-x-17-sdgs-ziele-fuer-nachhaltige-entwicklung>

56 *Nachhaltigkeit, Relevanz und transnationale Zusammenarbeit: Der Deutsche Museumsbund setzt Schwerpunkte für 2022* [online]. Museumbund.de, 16 December 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.museumsbund.de/nachhaltigkeit-relevanz-und-transnationale-zusammenarbeit-der-deutsche-museumsbund-setzt-schwerpunkte-fuer-2022/>

museums were still marked by belonging to a narrow group of the elite and male enlightened scholars.⁵⁷ Furthermore, to the present day and despite all attempts at inclusion and opening museums up to those with disabilities, museums are still to a large extent a phenomenon within the cultural life of the educated middle class. Opening museums to the broader public and ensuring global overlap while also linking them to their location and local community represents a challenge which, for example, the research project *Right to the Museum?* led by cultural scientist Luise Reitstätter is currently looking at. Its main objective is the systematic elaboration of the accessibility of museums and museum studies in general, with leading Vienna museums taking part: the Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art, the House of Austrian History, the Austrian Gallery Belvedere, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien and the Museum of Applied Arts.

When discussion took place as part of the project with the civil advisory council on the topic of what remained relevant of the original founding ideas of museums, the conclusions they then drew were that this was an emphasis on the openness and accessibility of museums.⁵⁸ This idea is based on a shift in perception of the role of museums over the course of the 19th century, in Central Europe in particular, when museums no longer aimed to be institutions for the elite, and became instead one of many tools for educating and “civilising” the broad masses. This element is certainly double-edged—it shows signs of emancipation in the form of allowing the broader masses access to education, but also of the discipline of state power. It increased pressure on adapting opening hours to accommodate labourers, and generally adapting museums’ functions to the needs of educating the lower classes.⁵⁹ The Vienna project’s team debate looked at the founding statutes of Vienna’s Museum of Art and Industry (today’s MAK—Museum of Applied Arts), when the motto that the museum should be “as assessable as possible” (möglichst zugänglich zu machen), was considered an enduring one, and one still relevant today.⁶⁰ A similar emphasis on the public nature of the institution can also be found in the regulations of Frederick William II (1797) and Frederick William III

57 BAUR, Joachim. Was ist ein Museum? Vier Umkreisungen eines widerspenstigen Gegenstand. In: BAUR, Joachim (Hg.). *Museumsanalyse Methoden und Konturen eines neuen Forschungsfeldes*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2010. p. 28. ISBN 978-3-8394-0814-8.

58 REITSTÄTTER et al. *Museum und Öffentlichkeit Von historischen Konzepten bis zu heutigen Kommentaren* [online]. VöKK Journal, 3/2021. p. 13 [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: https://jimdo-storage-global.ssl.fastly.net/file/3f8bfb14-312b-4435-a7c2-4f3aaba0662a/2021-10_Museum%20und%20Öffentlichkeit_VöKK_3_2021.pdf

59 BAUR, Joachim. Was ist ein Museum? Vier Umkreisungen eines widerspenstigen Gegenstand. In: BAUR, Joachim (Hg.). *Museumsanalyse Methoden und Konturen eines neuen Forschungsfeldes*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2010. pp. 28–29. ISBN 978-3-8394-0814-8.

60 „C. Benützung. § 9. Die im Museum aufgestellten Gegenstände, welcher Art sie sein mögen, sind der Besichtigung, der Benützung und dem Studium möglichst zugänglich zu machen, soweit es sich mit der Sicherheit und Erhaltung derselben vereinigen lässt.“ *Mittheilungen des k. k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie*. I. Heft. Wien: Carl Gerold’s Sohn, 1864. p. 6.

(1810), which stood behind the establishment of Berlin’s Museum Island (Museumsinsel).⁶¹ It is worth noting here that Moravian enlightened aristocrats, headed by Governor Antonín Bedřich Mitrovský, who stood behind the establishment of the Francis Museum (1817), today’s Moravian Museum, also had a similar idea. Nevertheless, in the oft-mentioned deed of 1818, signed by the Supreme Burgrave, Count František Libstějnský of Kolovraty, which is customarily considered the founding charter of the National Museum, we do not find such an emphasis—the museum is instead designed for “patriotic friends of science” and the deed does not emphasise the maximum possible accessibility and openness, but rather scientific work and preserving the Czechs’ national treasures.⁶²

Plurality of museums and the idea of the deliberative space

This dispute should not be taken dramatically at all. However, in the 17th century, as we can read in John Amos Comenius’s *Orbis pictus*, museums were more like places to study for researchers and art lovers,⁶³ although by around 1800 the term could be used for a broad spectrum of exhibitions, libraries, and even for cafés, dance halls and rooms designed for learned disputation.⁶⁴ If, for example, the Director of the National Gallery in Berlin says that the museum of today is a place for posing questions, lively dialogue, a place of creative potential for a particular period, this does not mean that one can no longer think of a museum as a place of scientific investigation, looking after collections or cultural heritage.⁶⁵ Which is why, like museum discussion in the Czech Republic and elsewhere around the world, we cannot limit ourselves to one particular hegemonic focus, but we should rather perceive museums as

61 Aloys Hirt’s original plan involved the idea of an institution for an educated audience, while in the 1820s the concept of museums, this time as perceived by Karl Friedrich Schinkel and Gustav Friedrich Waagen, influenced by the so-called Berlin Enlightenment, expanded the concept to the inclusive idea of the “universal audience”. For more, see: BUCKERMANN, Paul. *Autonome Kunst und frühe Kunstmuseen in Europa* [online]. In: *Autonomie der Kunst? Zur Aktualität eines gesellschaftlichen Leitbildes*. Leipzig: SpringerVS, 2017. pp. 167–190 [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: (PDF) *Autonome Kunst und frühe Kunstmuseen in Europa* (researchgate.net)

62 KOLOWRAT, Franz. *An die Vaterländischen Freunde der Wissenschaften* [online]. Archiv Národního muzea, inv. č. ANM, RNM A/1/4, Provolání An die vaterländischen Freunde der Wissenschaften, 15. 4. 1818. Available at: <https://www.esbirky.cz/predmet/76571>; BÄUERLE, Adolf. *Was verdankt Oesterreich der beglückenden Regierung Sr. Majestät Kaiser Franz des Ersten?* Wien: A. V. Haykul, 1834. pp. 187–188.

63 KOMENSKÝ, Jan Amos. *Capitulum XCVIII. Museum* [online]. In: *Orbis sensualium pictus*, Noribergae, 1658. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost17/Comenius/com_o098.html

64 BAUR, Joachim. *Was ist ein Museum? Vier Umkreisungen eines widerspenstigen Gegenstand*. In: BAUR, Joachim (hg.). *Museumsanalyse Methoden und Konturen eines neuen Forschungsfeldes*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2010. p. 23. ISBN 978-3-8394-0814-8.

65 *Ein neuer Ort des Austausches über Kunst* [online]. Nationalgalerie20.de. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.nationalgalerie20.de/der-museumsneubau/ort-der-begegnung/>

many-voiced discourses, in which various cultural and intellectual schools in the globalised world are interwoven.

This also applies to the situation for museums within the German-speaking world, where there are museums and cultural institutions with a very diverse range of foci and concepts. We have presented here a kind of ethos of method of discussion on the long-term focus of museums, in the centre of which are the core issues of sustainable development, dealing with our colonial heritage, transnationality and the global aspect, and also social inclusion, participation and finally digital technology and effective education opportunities. On the other hand, we need to once more emphasise the wide range of opinions and ideas, since even the traditional concept of museums as mainly scientific and collection-forming institutions are not completely dead. This is evidenced, for example, in Swiss discussions regarding a new definition for museums from the International Council of Museums, where terms referring to scientific activities and care for collections won out in French-language questionnaires in particular, with a similar emphasis only seen on accessibility to the public.⁶⁶ Similarly, the idea that “without a collection there is no museum” (Ohne Sammlung, kein Museum!) is also a familiar one. It is clear, however, that demands on the ethical dimension of collection activities are increasing, and pressure is being put on reviewing the purpose of collections in the 21st century towards museum artefacts’ various relations to contemporary society, and in regard to their non-material nature (e.g. sounds or smells). Collection activities, however, remain a crucial element of museums.⁶⁷ The fact that they are receding from the main aspects of debate on museums of the future is mainly because in contrast to collections, creating ideas is a vital part of museums’ essence. Since individual objects without context, without a specific discursive relationship to the community and the individual, have no meaning—they do not hold value of themselves.

In conclusion, we can highlight one general core principle, specifically that from the time of the Neo-Kantian philosophers at the latest, it is true that while problems of nature can be dealt with through devising generally applicable laws, this is not the case for issues within humanities and social sciences. These are always created by unique phenomena which

66 „Les trois mots-clés les plus fréquemment cités en français sont : *conserver, ouvert au public, recherche des collections* / en allemand : *vermitteln, öffentlich zugänglich, sammeln*.“ Mots et concepts clés pour une définition du musée [online]. ICOM Suisse, Zurich, 16 avril 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: https://www.museums.ch/assets/files/dossiers_f/Mots_concepts_cles_definition%20du%20musee_Suisse_20210416.pdf

67 In December last year, the City Museum Berlin Foundation hosted an international workshop entitled “Malodours as Cultural Heritage?”, in which the Odeuropa research network, founded in 2020 in order to recognise, protect, present and support olfactory heritage as an integral component of Europe’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage, was also involved. EHRICH, Sofia. Workshop: Malodours as Cultural Heritage? [online]. Odeuropa, 19. listopad 2021. [cit. 14. 2. 2022]. Available at: <https://odeuropa.eu/2021/11/workshop-malodours-as-cultural-heritage/>; The importance of collection activities in the 21st century was also looked at in *Museumskunde. Sammellust und Sammellast. Chancen und Herausforderungen von Museumssammlungen*. Band 78, 2/13, Berlin: Deutscher Museumsbund, 2013.

appear to each of us differently, forming natural worlds for each person as an individual. This is also the case in definitions of museums, which can never be fully generalisable to all museum institutions, and similarly no museum can ever fully correspond to all the demands which present society places on museums. It is here that we can see the greatest inspiration in the perception of museums as “meeting places”. Post-war development of German philosophy gave rise to the characteristic concept of communicative ethics, as formulated by Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas in particular, and which could be seen in practical use, for example, in the so-called *Historikerstreit*.

As a result of the dynamics of technological development, modern society is confronted with increasing fragmentation, alienation and social conflicts. Re-finding social consensus relies on public institutions as necessary conditions for rational social organisation.⁶⁸ Such institutions include museums. Museums are places which create a rational framework for the community to communicate shared topics, spaces of deliberation, a certain debating commonality, unlimited traditions and political powers, and finally they are a platform which sets a theoretical distance as an integral prerequisite for comprehensible dialogue and the resolution of current problems while maintaining respect between individual groups without and within the museum—as a highly distinctive *deliberative public institution*.

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MUSEUMS WITHOUT COLLECTIONS?! MUSEUMS' NEW ROLE AND DISCUSSION OF THEIR DEFINITION

Jakub Jareš, Karolína Bukovská
MUSEum+

The global museum community is discussing a new definition of a museum. This debate is also extremely lively in the Czech Republic, and not just because the wording of the new definition is to be approved in August 2022 in Prague. In our contribution to the discussion, we want to note a certain dichotomy in considerations of the position of museum institutions without collections, and call for a more inclusive approach which instead of defining strict borders rather seeks out opportunities for mutual inspiration and co-operation.

Our thoughts are first based on a questionnaire survey undertaken on the definition of a museum by the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries and the ICOM's Czech committee in February and March 2021.¹ The results of this showed that emphasis on a collection as the core defining hallmark of museums is not a homogeneous position in the Czech Republic. In terms of frequency, the term "heritage" was in top place, a term encompassing collections, but which is more universal and emphasises a relationship to that which is handed down from generation to generation. The Czech terms *vzdělávání* and *edukace*, both referring to education, were in second and third place, while collections were only in fourth place.

From our perspective, these results demonstrate that the survey was open to a broader group of respondents than just museum workers. Within the Czech museum context, we continue to encounter a definite emphasis on collections, with their presence tending to define whether an institution is a museum or not. We shall present here a number of examples of this dichotomous thinking. In the second step, we shall show examples of institutions which are not primarily collections-focused but fulfil other museum functions to a high degree. Finally, we shall provide our own summary and generalisations.

1 JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie—KIRSCH, Otakar. Dotazníkové šetření v ČR k definici muzea podle ICOM. In: *Asociace muzeí a galerií v České republice* [online]. Available at: <https://www.cz-museums.cz/news/amg/titulni/57259-dotaznikove-setreni-v-cr-k-definici-muzea-podle-icom> [cit. 3. 3. 2022].

Dichotomy examples

1. We cannot begin this summary anywhere else than *museum legislation*. Within the Czech context, the relevant law is aptly entitled “Act on the Protection of Collections of Museum Character”, and in line with this title it focuses on the collection, storage, recording, processing and opening up of collections. The degree to which this emphasis is a dominant one in the Czech Republic is seen in a comparison with other countries. Swiss federal museums, for example, according to the law there should look after the physical and intangible memory of the country, develop collection concepts, and research and present to the public themes related to Swiss society, cultures and identity.² Instead of collections of physical objects, the focus here is on society’s memory. This might seem a mere detail, but words really matter here. Memory is not necessarily contained in just physical records of the past alone.
2. A second example. The local Czech Association of Museums and Galleries has strived for a long time to introduce a process of *museum registration and accreditation*. According to the association’s writings, their motivation is an attempt to differentiate “real” museums from institutions which the AMG terms “non-museums”. Here again, their criterion is the existence or lack of a collection.³ In the relevant writings, we do not see any clear justification for this differentiation mechanism except for references to the prestige of registered museums. Instead, we see an almost complete absence of considerations of whether museums without collections might not also fulfil a fundamental social role and might not therefore also deserve public support, including funding.
3. Money plays an important role, of course. Currently, the Czech Ministry of Culture’s *subsidies and grants* are almost exclusively designed for institutions with collections recorded in the Central Registry of Collections, For museums without collections, which are primarily focused on the educational aspect, this may mean facing fairly clear limits. We can also note that the current system is leading—in rare cases, certainly—to the deliberate recording of collections in the CRC. We ourselves have witnessed an unnamed town, as owner of a small natural history collection, asking that this be registered in the CRC so that they could apply for a grant for a purely social science exhibition. We therefore wonder whether rather than attempt to exclude institutions without collections it might be worth diversifying grant programmes. In this matter, it is evident that the operating costs are much higher for institutions

2 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft. *Bundesgesetz über die Museen und Sammlungen des Bundes vom 12. Juni 2009*. Available at: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2009/598/de> [cit. 3. 3. 2022].

3 BENEŠ, Luděk. Podíl Svazu československých muzeí a Asociace muzeí a galerií ČR na přípravách obecné zákonné normy pro oblast muzejnictví. *Museologica Brunensia*, 2020, 9(1), 54–68. See also AMG ČR. *Registrace a akreditace muzeí. Dosavadní výsledky činnosti Pracovní skupiny AMG pro přípravu registrace/akreditace muzeí a muzejní standardy*. Available at: https://www.cz-museums.cz/UserFiles/file/2018/AMG/SNEM%20AMG%202018/REGISTRACE+AKREDITACE_material%20AMG_WEB.pdf [cit. 3. 3. 2022].

with collections than for institutions without them. The grants system currently takes account of this fact, and it should continue to take account of it—increasing funds provided where needed.

4. We believe that the collections-centric nature of Czech museums is also evidenced in the approach of their *exhibitions*. In research into the presentation of contemporary history undertaken by Jakub Jareš at 24 Czech regional museums in 2017–2018, it was clearly shown that exhibitions are highly dependent on the state and nature of collections. Highly relevant issues (such as the expulsion of Germans and the Communist persecution of various groups of citizens) very rarely appear in exhibitions, because there is a lack of specific artefacts in collections. In contrast, images of the communist powers, which there are plenty of in collections thanks to museums' collection work prior to 1989, are reproduced.⁴

This fundamental emphasis on objects is also seen in the newly opened National Museum exhibitions. As many reviewers have noticed, the *History of the 20th century* exhibition, for example, contains thousands of objects, but just a minimum of understandable narratives informing visitors of the story of Czechoslovak and Czech history.⁵ Similarly, other National Museum exhibition projects demonstrate a fixation on physical objects. For the 200th anniversary of its founding, the museum put together the *2x100* exhibition, comprising 200 exhibits from its collections. Since 2021, there has been an exhibition, which is meant to reflect the history of the institution, displayed in its historic building, but again it is above all a presentation of selected objects from its collections. Even its name, *Museum from the Cellar to the Attic*, evokes an evident focus on physical objects.

We think it is extraordinary that this emphasis on collections and artefacts is so strong in a country whose museological tradition warns against over-adherence to the physical nature of objects. Zbyněk Zbyslav Stránský and his successors have clearly formulated that it is not the object itself, but rather its “museality” that museums should actually be interested in.⁶

Paradoxically, within the Czech museum context no significant expert debate is taking place or has taken place on the issue we are only briefly outlining here. The thorough research of museological and specialist journals which Michal Kurz undertook when he investigated articles published from the 1990s to the present day in the AMG bulletin, MUZEUM: Muzejní a vlastivědná práce, the *Museologica Brunensia* journal, the *Silesian Museum* journal and

4 JAREŠ, Jakub. Soudobé dějiny v místních muzeích. In: J. Jareš—Č. Pýcha—V. Sixta: *Jak vystavujeme soudobé dějiny. Muzeum v diskusi*. ÚSTR a NLN, Praha 2020, pp. 39–42.

5 BUKOVSKÁ, Karolína. (Re)construction of Czech History: The National Museum and its New Permanent Exhibition on the Twentieth Century. In: *Cultures of History Forum* [online]. 25.11.2021 [cit. 12. 3. 2022]. Available at: <https://www.cultures-of-history.uni-jena.de/exhibitions/reconstruction-of-the-czech-twentieth-century>.

6 STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Zbyslav. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno 2005, p. 120.

Acta historica et museologica shows that the only serious discussion on the role of collections in defining the role of museums took place in 2002 in the pages of the AMG bulletin. In this micro-debate⁷ between Jiří Žalman, Petr Kozák and Zdeněk Gába, the first two named noted the necessity of contextualising objects and shifting museums' attention to other than purely collection activities, while Zdeněk Gába stressed that, "museums are irreplaceable in regard to the permanent storage of collections", and he equated exhibition activities to the presentation of collections alone ("if I want to exhibit them, I have to have them first").

We now, therefore, want to give examples of museums which deviate from this dichotomous thinking.

Museum examples

The *New Generation Museum* at Žďár nad Sázavou castle was opened in 2015. The museum is run by the SE.S.TA association, which secures cultural activities at the castle, owned by the Kinský family. The institution does not have its own collections, and its exhibits are loaned from Czech museums. It is focused solely on museum presentation, and partially also on education. Its exhibition looks at the Middle Ages and Baroque periods, whose height is represented by the local UNESCO site here, the Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora. The exhibition rooms, which visitors walk through with an audio guide, comprise scenographic features, animations and illustrations (such as a virtual mediaeval chronicle), with only a limited number of artefacts on loan. The immersive and experiential elements used are meant to serve as a "key to understanding" the entire former Cistercian monastery site.⁸ In the words of American museologist, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblatt, this represents a theatrical approach to presenting history. The museum is extremely popular amongst visitors, and it can be said to be fulfilling its role excellently.⁹ As well as this, the New Generation Museum has received a Živa award for the most creative museum in Central Europe, and also the title of Vysočina Building of the Year 2016. Some museum workers are rather critical, however. A review was printed in the AMG bulletin whose main point was that in fact it is not a museum, but rather an "exhibition space in operation", or an "interpretation centre".¹⁰ In our view, this fear of using the word "museum" for an institution which, while not working with a collection, does focus on high quality museum presentation, is at the very least mysterious.

Another similar example is the *National Film Museum* in Prague, abridged as NaFiM. This is a project launched 10 years ago by three film science students. The initial impulse for

7 ŽALMAN, Jiří. Muzea a globalizace. *Věstník AMG*. 2002, 3, 15–17.; KOZÁK, Petr: Muzeum a společnost. *Věstník AMG*. 2002, 3, 17–19; GÁBA, Zdeněk: Muzea jsou především sbírky. *Věstník AMG*. 2002, 4–5, 21–22.; KOZÁK, Petr: Ano, muzea jsou i sbírky. *Věstník AMG*, 2003, 3, 21–22.

8 *Muzeum nové generace Zámek Žďár nad Sázavou*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.zamekzdar.cz/muzeum-nove-generace/> [cit. 12. 3. 2022].

9 JAREŠ, Jakub. Muzeum nové generace. *Dějiny a současnost*, 2016, 6, 30–31.

10 MIKULE, Stanislav. Je Muzeum nové generace muzeem? *Věstník AMG*, 2016, 2, 17.

setting up the museum was the fact that there hadn't been a similar museum in the Czech Republic before.¹¹ Following unsuccessful attempts at receiving support from established institutions, the project was finally implemented through crowdfunding campaigns and grants. Since 2019, NaFilM is based in the centre of the capital city and features a permanent exhibition. Until the pandemic broke out, it was a popular Prague attraction, and was even the highest-rated Czech museum on Tripadvisor.¹² In 2021, this originally student project won the Czech Lion Award for Exceptional Feat in the Area of Audio-Visual Arts.

Yet NaFilM, an officially registered association, does not own or create any museum collection. Its exhibits, such as a replica of the *Laterna magika* (Magician's Lantern), were produced to order according to historical designs. Other exhibits, which in contrast to other museums visitors can try out for themselves, were modified for the needs of museum operations. A 1960s projector, for example, which was originally powered by a motor, was given a handle for educational purposes—so that visitors could try out the role of projection operator. Other interactive features, such as virtual reality, are based on historical conditions, but make use of modern technology. Most of these objects are replaceable and to some degree can be repaired. Thus, NaFilM does not present original artefacts and film archives: “If we used old archival objects, then nobody would allow us to touch them,” says museum co-founder, Adéla Mrázová.¹³ Thus the priority at NaFilM is understanding what film is and the principles by which the medium works. The exhibited objects and interacting with these objects are designed to facilitate this understanding.

The final example of a museum for which the existence and amount of collection artefacts does not play a central role is POLIN—Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. This institution was set up in 2005 on the initiative of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute, and with the support of the Polish Ministry of Culture and the capital city. Its permanent exhibition was opened in 2014. Over its period of operation, the museum has received a lot of positive feedback and awards, including the title European Museum of the Year (2016).¹⁴ Polin's collection, built up since 2006, numbers over 3000 artefacts¹⁵ (for

11 Muzeum NaFilm: Kdo je hravý a rád objevuje nové věci, ten si to u nás užije. In: *Český rozhlas Vltava* [online]. Available at: <https://vltava.rozhlas.cz/muzeum-nafilm-kdo-je-hravý-a-rad-objevuje-nove-veci-ten-si-u-nas-uzije-7757259> [cit. 12. 3. 2022].

12 JAREŠ, Jakub, National Film Museum in Prague: The bottom-up museum. *Curator: The Museum Journal* [online]. 2021, 64(4) [cit. 3. 3. 2022]. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/cura.12402>

13 Muzeum NaFilm: Kdo je hravý a rád objevuje nové věci, ten si to u nás užije. In: *Český rozhlas Vltava* [online]. Available at: <https://vltava.rozhlas.cz/muzeum-nafilm-kdo-je-hravý-a-rad-objevuje-nove-veci-ten-si-u-nas-uzije-7757259> [cit. 12. 3. 2022].

14 European Museum of the Year Award 2016 goes to POLIN Museum! In: *Polin* [online]. Available at: <https://polin.pl/en/news/2015/12/22/european-museum-of-the-year-award-2016-goes-to-polin-museum> [cit. 3. 3. 2022].

15 Collections. In: *Polin* [online]. Available at: <https://www.polin.pl/en/research-collections/collections> [3. 3. 2022].

comparison, the Jewish Museum in Berlin manages over 53 000 artefacts,¹⁶ and the already mentioned Czech National Museum has 20 million artefacts¹⁷).

But it is not primarily through these artefacts that a thousand years of Jewish history within the territory of Poland is told. The exhibition comprises eight galleries containing reconstructions and models, interactive installations and audio and film projections. The story of the Polish Jews is then notionally narrated by their own voices through quotations positioned across the entire exhibition space. Again, we encounter a theatrical form of museum presentation here—in fact the author of the exhibition concept is the above-mentioned Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. Thus, Polin demonstrates that an attractive exhibition need not necessarily be based on presenting physical objects. According to the American museologist, the main artefacts are the actual quotations of the Polish Jews.¹⁸ This fact may provide inspiration for creating exhibitions about other population groups which were marginalised in the past, and whose history is therefore systematically created by museum collections. Within the Czech context, this applies, as has been noted, to the expelled Germans and the victims of the Communist persecutions, while in the global context it applies in particular to the populations of former colonies.

The museum which we work for—the new state-subsidised organisation *MUSEum+*—does not yet have any collection either. While the museum will gradually create one, it is not meant to be one of its primary activities. The principal emphasis will be placed on presentation, education and participation as activities which form the essence of the museum, just as a collection does.

The museum is still far from ready to open to the public. First of all, blast furnaces 4 and 6, part of a national cultural monument, must be purchased, their architectural and monument conversion must be secured, and support must be acquired for the project from the European grant programme, the Just Transformation Fund. Despite this, the museum is already operating not just as a project office, but also in preparing the first exhibition and discussions.

Our first exhibition will be on the 20th anniversary of the declaration of the Hlubina mine and Vítkovice Ironworks cultural monuments. Using this example, we can very briefly suggest what a museum which considers participation just as important, or more important, than its collection can involve.

Besides information about the transforming the Dolní Vítkovice site into a protected site, we also plan for the exhibition to include a section reflecting on people's relationship to the site. We will be showing photographs from family albums and from social networks—i.e. situations in which people express their relationship to the site, while also unintentionally

16 Unsere Sammlungen. In: Jüdisches Museum Berlin [online]. Available at: <https://www.jmberlin.de/sammlung> [cit. 3. 3. 2022].

17 Odborná činnost. In: *Národní muzeum* [online]. Available at: <https://www.nm.cz/o-nas/odborna-cinnost#sbirky> [cit. 3. 3. 2022].

18 POLIN: Jak pokazać 1000 lat historii? / Our way of showing 1000 years of history. In: *YouTUBE* [online]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wlc8ZD1lj9E> [cit. 12. 3. 2022].

documenting it. We also want to show, for example, that one person so appreciates Dolní Vítkovice that they have had the dominating Bold Tower tattooed on their shoulder. Pictures from Instagram, family albums and the image of that tattoo can become parts of our collection. If we assess their museality, then they undoubtedly have great value as documents of people's relationship to this national cultural monument.

At the same time—and this is most important to us—they are of great value in terms of involving people in creating the exhibition. As curators, we are actually directly dependent on their involvement, and this interdependency can result in interesting outcomes. In this case is it the collection, or the participation, which is most important?

Conclusion

We are deliberately leaving this question open. This is because—as we have endeavoured to demonstrate—we do not identify with the effort at defining a museum purely on the basis of a single criterion. Examples of successful museums in the Czech Republic and abroad demonstrate that institutions without collections or with just a small collection can perform presentation, education, participation and research roles.

In contributions at conferences and subsequent discussions, we often hear the idea that we need to define a clear border between “real” museums with a collection and “non-museums” without collections, or even “fake” or “abnormal” museums. Mentions have been made of limits, demarcation and clear dividing lines. Understanding museums merely as institutions owning collections in the Czech context leads to the exclusion or sidelining of those which do not have collections, even though they are excellent in their execution of other museum functions. In this interpretation, museums with collections are like fortresses which for various reasons—practical and ideological—need to separate themselves from their surroundings.

Instead of this, we offer a different picture which is not dichotomous: we perceive the museum environment more like a *city*, which has its historic centre and its suburbs and outskirts. Museums with collections are undoubtedly to be found in its centre, but there is plenty of life in other districts too. The non-collection institutions in the suburbs include innovative museums, galleries and other museum projects which can be partners to museums in the historic centre through collaboration or as sources of inspiration. Thus our question is whether it is possible or reasonable to build a wall around the centre. Or whether we should instead strive to come up with a museum definition which will encompass the richness and diversity of the museum environment? Not just in the Czech Republic, but around the world.

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THE EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION OF MUSEUM CULTURE AND ITS REFLECTION IN THE DEFINITION OF A MUSEUM

Tomáš Drobný, Pavla Vykoupilová

Museum Education Methodology Centre, Moravian Museum

A realistic perspective on the definition of a museum is based on knowledge of current museum culture

The position of museum education in today's museum culture allows us to view the definition of a museum from the perspective of education.¹ Before we look at the bases for museum education and their application in defining the essence of a museum, we should first posit the crucial question of what museum we are thinking about when we formulate a new description. Is it the museum of today, an institution operating in the current globalised world, and in some areas necessarily taking on the global function of culture? Or are we thinking about the museum of the past, the creation of modern institutions influenced by the boom in sciences from the time of the Enlightenment? Are we also acknowledging the fact that the museum phenomenon is much older, and we can encounter it in our culture from the time of Ancient Greece, and we have extensive documentation of it over the entirety of the Middle Ages? The final timescale to look at is the future. Should the definition of a museum also characterise this institution in the future, to postulate our vision and desires as the now tangible reality to which we are obliged to aim? We are convinced that we cannot define the future, and so it is not even possible to create a credible comprehensive definition of the museum of the future, not even if we have the most noble and well-reasoned intentions. Thus, the justified

1 An important trend in today's museology is to take account of visitors' educational needs, and so most innovations in today's museum culture are more or less "museum education" related. ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Petra. Edukační koncepce a strategie muzea v kontextu současné muzejní pedagogiky. In DROBNÝ, Tomáš a Pavla VYKOUPILOVÁ (eds.). *Muzejní edukátor: Studijní materiál*. Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum, 2020. pp. 149–174. ISBN 978-80-7028-553-4, p. 66.

desires of today cannot predict which cultural needs will arise in future times, and how museum culture should appropriately respond to these.² Producing a definition of a museum under these circumstances as a vision of the institute in future would also mean that we are convinced that all museums have, or should have, the same programme. These observations suggest that the tendency towards an activist approach to formulating a new definition of a museum is not appropriate.

We understand the definition of a museum to require a succinct statement which describes museums and expressions of museum culture today. Although today's museums operate within a globalised world as an integral component of it, they were undoubtedly one of the manifestations of globalisation and exist in many different political systems. Advanced countries within the sphere of the Euro-Atlantic civilisation do not share the same values as countries where public life is organised in a totalitarian manner. Thus, finding a new definition will certainly place great demands on the spiritual anchoring of the essence of the museum phenomenon so that it is expressed in an acceptable manner. While we are convinced that we should not abandon our own understanding of museums' link to the spiritual and cultural basis of the European West, we also realise that the need for collecting in history is a phenomenon so generally human that museums already operating outside the territory of the Judeo-Christian world should not be neglected. The definition of a museum should essentially be formulated in an inclusive way exactly because the global trend of setting up museums in the 20th century is considered a cultural import from the West. Our perspective, which is based on a conviction that the definition of a museum should correspond to the current status of museums in the world and their importance for culture in all cultural fields, aims to preserve and open up humanity's cultural heritage to all people regardless, and not just today, but also in future.

The essence of culture is to preserve, transfer and share

We have tried to show that a relevant definition of a museum is one which corresponds to museums of the present day. A museum is a highly structured phenomenon. Here, we mean that a museum is an institution which performs a number of specialist functions in a managed way, and also that a museum's relationships with society are woven thickly and with varied

2 The community role of museums which we see today and take for granted was hardly conceivable during the late and fading Enlightenment period up until the mid-19th century. Although a large number of museums today undertake scientific activities and some of our museums have the status of scientific research institutions, they do not fulfil the role of exclusive scientific associations as they did in the early 19th century, for example in regard to the Association for Plough Improvement, which was involved in establishing the Francis Museum (Moravian Museum).

fibres. A prosperous museum sustains mutually intensive relations.³ The essence of these relations is collection management. We characterise collections as the highest structured material documents of facts by humans, while the natural world surrounding us is arranged according to natural relationships, which we consider laws, but which are disordered for humans.⁴ The preservation of collections representing an image of an ordered world requires an institution marked by its persistence. The musealisation of reality is a cultural phenomenon which in line with the investigation of history is one of the methods promoted in the 20th century which we can call “longue durée”, or long-lasting. In terms of the definition of a museum, this suggests that we cannot consider only the categories of today’s perception of the world, but we should consider its essence, that is to say that in order to fulfil its primary purpose, which is the preservation of a tangible memory thesaurus, the contemporary museum is an institution which persists and has persisted from the past. The definition of a museum needs to incorporate this essence. A criterion for a valid contemporary definition is its due application to past museums, but also to current museums as they appeared in the past. This presents us with a “definition minimum” for museums and museum culture in general which is fundamentally unchanging, because it captures the method by which the human need to collect is grasped, something that has been part of our culture since the period of Greek thinking to the present day. It is marked by opportunities to find out about the world and reveal its meaning through tangible representations as established by the separation of physics and metaphysics in Ancient Greek philosophy.⁵ The definition minimum for a museum also remains valid in future if it is to characterise an institution which will be a museum within the meaning of the term which we have been using for a number of centuries.

It isn’t just preservation which relates to museum collections, but also their mediation and interpretation. The attraction of major worldwide museums and the value of unique collections of cultural heritage are increasingly frequently leading to educational or entertainment projects being set up which use exhibitions or virtual media products to connect with the general public, and which make use of the name “museum” or “gallery” for their presentation. Some of these may have an evident commercial character, and serve to support the sale of certain products. There are increasing numbers of such products, which communicate

3 Museum collections represented both representatives of the society which built and maintained them, and also the complexity of community relationships. In the past, we more commonly encountered physical representatives of society in the role of founders, such as monarchy, while today they are non-personal legal entities, e.g. public bodies such as municipalities, regions or states, and also companies. In ancient times and in the Middle Ages, collections were kept and exhibited by ecclesiastical institutions, which provided a spiritual interpretation of man and society’s relationship to reality. Since the 18th century, this ambition has been taken on by representatives of science and political ideology and nations.

4 STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita v Brně, 2005. ISBN 80-210-3861-6, p. 113.

5 DROBNÝ, Tomáš. Na návštěvě - zprostředkování komunikace v prostoru a čase. *Kultura, umění a výchova*. 3/2, 2015, [cit. 2015-11-02]. ISSN 2336-1824. Available at: http://www.kuv.upol.cz/index.php?seo_url=aktualni-cislo&casopis=9&clanek=122.

various topics and so follow a broad range of aims and objectives. Current technical means and economic opportunities allow for a boom in traditional and new communication tools. If they are not based on the use of museum collections which manage and secure their preservation for the future in order to ensure further knowledge, they cannot meet the essence of the museum phenomenon and correspond to the definition of a museum. The method by which we acquire knowledge is based on tangible evidence, actual objects which allow us to find a true relation to reality. Museums and galleries represent the entire world, the universe which surrounds us in our perception and understanding. Museum collections constitute a tangible representation of the world as it appears to us. The tendency to create “museums” without collections can never lead to the fulfilment of the human need to anchor our knowledge in the real world context and transfer this to future generations. Visitors’ encounters with museums and galleries create a specific relationship which produces knowledge and learning as a result of the process of revealing transferred meanings and creating new meanings, encouraged by creativity. The function of a museum which is based on managing collections of a museum nature is also vital in today’s world, and not just in the field of culture.

Learning is a creative process closely related to culture

Museums and museum culture help us to acquire knowledge and education. The instrument for acquiring knowledge, which in museums comes from collections, is not just the application of mathematics and methods based on other sciences, as it is for academic scientific institutions, but rather culture. In no way do we wish to reject scientific methods in making this claim, but rather we are noting the different method of the process of acquiring knowledge and learning within museum culture. Museums mediate knowledge to us through culture. They show that all of our knowledge is dependent on culture, that it represents a culturally conditional phenomenon. Education in a museum and through a museum nevertheless requires an understanding of the essence of museum culture. As in all other fields of culture, cultural education represents the targeted education of a person in order to acquire a method for understanding cultural expressions and the related understanding of cultural representations such as works of arts. In music and art education, we take this approach for granted, which is why both these fields of education are included as subjects within the curricula for primary and secondary school education. When a visitor enters a museum, they find themselves in an inspiring cultural environment whose method of expression and cultural language they learn to understand. Museum audiences are similar to visitors to opera performances and concerts. If we reduce the opportunity for a sufficient understanding of cultural expression to an emotional response from the listener, audience or reader, it is like considering mere gesture a sufficient tool of human communication, without the need to know languages.

The educational work of museums is today increasingly valued, and this is also expressed in looking for and implementing innovations in museum culture. The prevalent opinion is that all innovations take place within the museum’s educational role. Today,

in the tradition of critical thinking, we also posit existential questions, and culture is an essential component of life, because it mediates the seeking of answers to these. Museum culture is specific, and in the field of human cultural expressions it is irreplaceable for one's own cognitive and evaluating relationship to reality.⁶ Museums' educational work is a subject of scientific investigation within museology. Thus, the definition of a museum cannot ignore the educational and knowledge-acquisition basis of the institution.

From a museum education perspective, we view the museum as an educational institution which aims to fulfil the current needs of contemporary society. It is not primarily a memorial to the past and past generations. While museums in the 19th century represented the broadly shared faith in progress, and also the rise of the ambitions of individual national interests, and the creation of the images of the past which they distributed and popularised adapted to this, museum monuments documenting the history of the 20th century should serve as a visible memento of how far unrestricted human ambition supported by the opportunities of advanced technology can take humanity.⁷ Not all groups in society will ever express an interest in museum culture to the same degree. Over the course of their life, almost everyone living in advanced countries repeatedly encounters products of museum culture. The requirement for openness and accessibility as core characteristics of the modern museum represents a broader concept of museum work based on principles of equality, rather than applying principles derived from the definition of democratisation. These and other demands on a museum can be suggested implicitly in a definition which should be succinct. Another question which remains unanswered here is whether it fulfils its activities, or whether it should fulfil other societal goals, which we would include in the category of supporting social justice or equality, or economic and community development. We can understand the significance of these terms in various cultural and geographical and political contexts in various ways, and this should encourage us to take a measured approach in attempting to use them in the definition of a museum.

Museum culture as a public good

The field of education and schools has been a subject of public interest and a broadly discussed topic for politicians in Europe since the second half of the 19th century. As soon as we hear the word education, we think of the word "reform". We can say that this never ending discussion and all concepts of education look at the involvement of museums in the education process. The current concept of fulfilling one's educational needs is based on the concept of life-long learning, in which informal education is broadly applied. In this field, libraries and

6 STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita v Brně, 2005. ISBN 80-210-3861-6, pp. 111–112.

7 ARNDT, Tereza, Tomáš DROBNÝ, Jakub JAREŠ, Čeněk PÝCHA a Václav SIXTA. *Metodika edukace soudobých dějin v muzeu*. [Brno]: Moravské zemské muzeum, 2021. ISBN 978 80 7028 546-6, pp. 11, 13.

museums can hardly compete with other educational institutions. Education is considered a common-pool resource, which is why many countries do not fully fund higher education from the government budget. The supply of educational products outside public education requires the partial or complete payment of the costs of its providers. Considering their character, museums are open to the public, and nonprofit institutions have a significant competitive advantage in the informal education institution environment. In discussions on the definition of a museum, the issue of the nonprofit character of providing these public cultural services is a sensitive affair, not just due to the establishment of commercial projects, e.g. on the basis of company holdings, but also due to the supply of education. School curricula include museum education, which supplements aesthetic education, while programmes for the leisure time activities of children and young people, e.g. in leisure centres, provide another opportunity.⁸ It is worth noting here that in some countries, museums allow visitors to view permanent exhibitions entirely free of charge, as an aspect of their public service.

Discussions on the definition of museums have attracted the attention of ICOM's Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA). On the one hand, it was suggested that the current definition, adopted in 2007, is outdated and conservative, while on the other hand the proposed definition was criticised as long-winded and confusing. A definition should be clear and understandable for both experts and the general public. A definition should be a "faithful reflection of contemporary museum institutions and their expanded missions", and should be universal, precise and succinct.⁹ Through research of the opinions of committee members from various parts of the world, the author has differentiated four conceptual levels: 1) the property by which we can identify a museum, 2) the mission intended for it, 3) what aims it should follow, and 4) what means it should use to achieve these aims.¹⁰ While the first two points included responses which are similar for most respondents, the aims and means which the definition of a museum should contain differed more frequently in responses. We do not intend to overestimate or underestimate the importance of museums in today's globalised world. The non-adoption of the new definition, which was submitted three years ago at the General Conference in Kyoto, testifies to one thing. Museums are an integral component of our world, and such an important actor within culture, which impacts on other areas of our lives, that it is not easy to find agreement around the world on a new definition. Participants in the research which the CECA president reflected upon agreed that museums

8 Marie-Clarté O'Neil sees how museum structures, managers, etc., have developed with consideration of the public and, "... importance given to education through the strengthening of relations with the national education system and the academic world..." The network of members of the Committee for Education and Cultural Action and the ICOM definition of the museum. *Crossed glances*. O'NEILL, Marie-Clarté. The network of members of the Committee for Education and Cultural Action and the ICOM definition of the museum—*Crossed glances*. In WINTZERITH, Stéphanie (ed.). *ICOM Education 29*. Paris: ICOM—CECA, 2020, pp. 337–349. ISBN 978-3-7526-9113-9. ISSN 0253-9004, p. 338.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 340.

10 *Ibid.*

are places of community dialogue. The need for critical dialogue, which professional museum workers have been calling for, is now being undertaken within ICOM, and the diversity of today's cultural, historical and socio-politically diverse world is being reflected in discussion on the definition of a museum. Finding agreement is not easy with the current disparities. We would like some of our thoughts from the perspective of the educational potential and function of the museum to contribute towards the discussion, helping to produce a new definition of a museum.

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EXPERIENCE OF THE MUSEALISATION OF THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF THE BRNO WOOL INDUSTRY

Petra Mertová

Technical Museum in Brno

The subject of interest for technical museums is science and technology in its many forms. In the past, the wool industry was very important in the Brno region, and it has left behind it a cultural heritage of tangible and intangible form. Today, we are faced with the question of how to musealise our intangible heritage and how to present it to the public. We see that capturing the genius loci of places which are changing (being demolished) or are losing their original use with the demise of industrial manufacturing should be a topic of contemporary museology. This is not a new situation from a European perspective, but it is one little debated within Czech museology. This study presents the experience of the Technical Museum in Brno, which it has gained in endeavouring to capture (musealise) this intangible heritage in working in the field and with witnesses in recent years. This study aims to contribute towards discussion on opportunities for the existence of museums without collections, and the musealisation of intangible heritage.

Current attempts at finding a new definition of what a museum is or should be at the very least in the 21st century represent an opportunity for debate within the international museum community represented by ICOM, which can help us to understand the attitudes and experiences of our colleagues from around the entire world. Those who are endeavouring to summarise all the different perspectives on the nature of museums for the 21st century, with all the nuances of the word “museum”, have a difficult task ahead of them. They have already succeeded in stimulating debate, however, and have sown amongst museographers the question of how they personally perceive the museum of today and for future generations.

Museographers living in different social and economic regions, often face diametrically opposed life challenges and may be witnesses to social events arising from ideological, military, religious or other conflicts. It is thus evident that each of us places different requirements on the definition of a museum, and we each have a different experience of how museums operate and certainly a different idea of what a museum should be. The countries

of the North American continent, Asian countries and countries currently dealing with wars or climate change already underway have different experiences or perspectives of museum development.

Museums in the so-called post-communist regions, where their activities have changed significantly, expanding and innovating following the transition to their country's democratic regime, could provide a great contribution to the debate. In the Czech Republic, museums are no longer mere exhibition cabinets displaying the successes of industrial manufacturing, demonstrating the military forces of the socialist people's democratic army or demonstrating the working class struggle for a "fairer society", etc. Certainly many museums did not use to operate in this way, but these activities continue to leave a bitter taste within society still today.

In the period prior to the so-called Velvet Revolution, museums were part of the official political or economic structure, and their work had to correspond ideologically to the attitudes of the ruling class. Museums were institutions which did not posit troubling questions, did not make statements on current problems and did not have or seek out new ways of interpreting and presenting collections. As a citizen of a post-communist region, I bore witness to the transformation in the form of museums, as a museum employee I have taken part in this transformation, and as a consumer of museum programmes and products I can actively use or reject this museum transformation. Based on this reference point, I would like to add some of my own comments to the debate, which are based on my professional experience of researching the cultural heritage of the Brno wool industry.

Brno is the second largest city in the Czech Republic, and during the 18th and 19th century it became a major wool centre for the Austrian monarchy, and so for the entire Central European region. Over time, mechanical engineering became a second dominant manufacturing sector in addition to the wool industry.

During the 20th century, the wool industry was no longer the region's largest employer, but it was still one of its largest sectors and it was traditionally perceived as the region's typical manufacturing sector. Wool was also linked to the social and cultural activities of major business families (the Stiassni, Löw-Beer, Essler, Schöller families and others), who were involved in setting up and running, e.g., today's Museum of Applied Arts, and they funded buildings which led to the current interest of the worldwide audience in Brno's architectural heritage, e.g. in the form of the Tugendhat family villa in Brno-Černá Pole, which is on UNESCO's cultural heritage list.

Unfortunately, global changes in the textile industry during the 1990s led to the industry gradually leaving its traditional manufacturing locations near today's city centre, moving to the outskirts (Brno-Černovice), changing ownership and becoming an almost invisible sector employing a fraction of the sector's original workforce. A few years ago, we began to focus on researching this sector from a new perspective. It was evident that this was the last opportunity to research witnesses who were active participants in the industrial manufacture of woollen fabrics during the second half of the 20th century, and across the whole of the technology. In Brno, fabrics were designed and produced from scratch to the final step of production, and it was also here that decisions were made on their sale or promotion. This is

no longer the case. However, the history of the wool industry still resonates within Brno, and since the Brno-Moravian Manchester exhibition held in the Moravian Gallery at the turn of 2014/2015, the topic has taken greater form with many researchers and cultural popularisers looking into the sector. The public is thirsty for information, which they receive in erudite and less erudite forms.

From the perspective of the Technical Museum in Brno, it was evident that some historians or guides of factories and the villas of industrialists are not experts on manufacturing, and there is a gradual mythicising of the importance of factories and manufacturing conditions. As such, we began researching this manufacturing sector, and in our research of witnesses, we focused on their attitudes and experience, which are unique and untransferable. Here, we are touching on what the new definition of a museum described in words: (museums) *safeguard diverse memories for future generations*. I must say that this idea resonates with the approach of our research—to record memories and preserve them for the future. We see, however, that not only memories, but also professional experience and knowledge, needs to be preserved, as these essentially become intangible cultural heritage which will disappear if we do not preserve it. That's why I believe that this part of the definition is not fully comprehensive. For me, it evokes a certain limitation and also responsibility which museums take upon themselves. After more than two years doing interviews, I can see that the role of the interviewer here comes into play, in our case the museum worker. Furthermore, the issue of preparing, leading and recording interviews is a precise skill which sociology, anthropology and history have things to say about, and within the Czech Republic, this area is focused on, for example, by the Czech Oral History Association.

The role of the interviewer is extremely important for perceiving or interpreting the experiences, skills and memories of former industry employees to readers, exhibition visitors and even future generations, in the same way as the role of the person who is to interpret, compare or perhaps even evaluate the memories in future is. We have experience of this from the communist period, when only those passages which the ideology needed were taken out of memories in order to justify the current social order, or else only memories of worker demonstrations, the transferral of factories following nationalisation, etc. were recorded. Descriptions of standard manufacturing processes in Brno's textile plants between 1948 and 1990 are largely absent. At the current time, in relation to a new definition of a museum, I am personally interested in the role of the museum which should reflect on its efforts to preserve not just tangible artefacts, but also so-called intangible heritage.

The objective of our research was to focus on professional experiences linked to the industrial manufacture of woollen fabrics and memories of circumstances related to the operation of factories, from the organisation of family life to leisure activities such as children's fancy dress balls, family holidays spent at special company holiday cottages, etc. Experiences and memories are always personal, emotionally charged and subject to circumstances, and unfortunately also subject to factors such as time, quality of memories and the interviewer's approach and knowledge of the topic. In regard to professional experiences, we strive for the broadest possible range of descriptions of the working procedures which

took place in factories in the past. We can see, however, how limited we are. The ideal interviewer would be one who has in-depth knowledge of the particular profession and who can also look at it anew with an awareness of the technical developments which the profession has undergone. As a museum worker, I can only endeavour to approach this ideal. The wool industry goes back quite a long time, and it has always needed specialists. We cannot reflect this in our research, and so the interviewer must have a basic knowledge of the technology and manufacturing process.

One drawback of our research into industrial manufacturing is that I am no longer able to take videos or photos of it. The Brno factories which are the subject of our research (Vlněna, Mosilana) are cleared and empty. Witnesses from the time do not have photographs of the factory interiors or manufacturing processes. As such, we can only make use of official photographs and films which were produced by the businesses' propaganda departments, or by media outlets.

Another drawback of our research into industrial manufacturing is the fact that experience of manufacturing cannot be verified or passed on. Since the 1990s, industrial woollen fabric manufacturing has undergone a radical transformation, and the sole industrial manufacturer in Brno today (Nová Mosilana a. s.) only makes use of more modern technologies. These are the limits which affect the form of our research, and which we must be aware of in interpreting and evaluating our findings in studies or at exhibitions in future. There is an opportunity here to make use of virtual reality and other forms of modelling reality.

From my perspective, I agree that museums are a platform (I don't want to use the word "institution") which should endeavour to capture memories and experiences for future generations. I would suggest for consideration whether the word *experience* should be included in the definition, because I am trying to find a word capturing the fact that in researching professions we should strive to capture and preserve professional or production knowledge in the case of industrial manufacturing too, not just handicrafts. These are often complicated manufacturing procedures dependent on complex technologies, chemical processes, etc., which are no longer around, and are unlikely to be around in future as a result of the continuous transformation of manufacturing in line with the development of science and technology, and economic and personnel changes in industry.

Museums will preserve for future generations only those memories which its workers are able to capture for technical reasons and also for reasons of limits to their knowledge of the period or how society worked. In regard to technologies, limits in understanding technical processes may become degradation factors which may depreciate or significantly distort captured memories.

The study was created on the basis of institutional support of the long-term conceptual development of the research organization Technical Museum in Brno provided by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

NEW MUSEUM DEFINITION 2022. WHAT DO SLOVAK MUSEOLOGISTS THINK

Františka Marcinová

Association of Museums in Slovakia

Voices calling for a new museum definition have been heard in ICOM for several years. In 2019, a definition was submitted in Kyoto for approval, but it did not meet with much response and was not approved. Since 2019, experts from the ranks of museologists have been deliberating the issue, so that the solution could already be known at the General Conference in Prague 2022. Even Slovak museologists do not want to be left behind in the debate about a new museum definition. They presented their view of the current as well as the new definition in the form of a brief questionnaire. The result indicated that Slovak museologists are rather conservative and do not really feel the need for a new definition.

“A museum is a permanent, non-profit institution serving the society and its development. It is open to the public and aims to acquire, preserve, research, communicate, and exhibit the tangible and intangible heritage of mankind and its environment for the purposes of studies, education, and personal pleasure.” Such is the current definition of museums. However, recommendations concerning the protection and support of museums and their collections, their diversity and role in society, published on November 20, 2015¹ on the website of the Slovak Ministry of Culture, are not even mentioned anywhere. Pursuant to the Act on Museums, Galleries and the Protection of Cultural Heritage, and museum is a “specialized legal entity or organizational unit of a legal entity which, on the basis of surveys and scientific research, conducted according to its respective orientation and specialization, acquires objects of cultural value and these collections thereupon professionally manages and subjects to scientific research and makes available to the public for the purposes of study, cognition, education, and aesthetic experience using specific means of communication.” (Act 206/2009 Coll., Sec. 2/5).

1 *Odporúčanie o ochrane a podpore múzeí a zbierok, ich rozmanitosti a úlohy v spoločnosti* [cit. 17. 3. 2022]. Available at: https://www.culture.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/UNESCO_Odporucanie_o_ochrane_a_podpore_muzei_a_zbierok_ich_rozmanitosti_a_ulohy_v_spolocnosti.pdf

At first sight, it can be argued that the definition in the law is based on the ICOM definition, but this similarity is not stated anywhere in writing.

The issue of the new definition of the ICOM museums has been emerging for several years. Recently, the form of the new definition has taken clear contours. The definition proposed in Kyoto in 2019 did not go through the approval process. Thus, the process of preparing and creating a new definition has been resumed. This time, however, the ICOM directorate in Paris took a more democratic path and entrusted the creation of a new definition to the museum realm, so that all national ICOM committees and expert museologists are now individually involved in the process.

What's the Slovak Museum's response?

At the beginning of 2020, immediately after the General Conference in Kyoto, ICOM Slovakia compiled a questionnaire into which the definition of museums presented in 2019 was integrated. This was the first phase of the process of creating a new definition of the ICOM museums. The results of the questionnaire formed the basis for the selection of keywords that should be found in the new definition of ICOM museums, such as collection object, heritage, or open to society /public. Other national committees proceeded similarly, thus forming the basis for the individual negotiations concerning the new definition.

The issue of the new definition of the ICOM Museum has become more acute with the approaching date of the General Conference ICOM Prague 2022, where the new definition should be presented and undergo the approval process. As some time has passed since the last survey in Slovakia, the Association of Museums in Slovakia (ZMS) has decided to conduct a new survey.

The survey was joined by 64 individuals from 49 ZMS member museums (out of a total of 72 member museums), thereof the vast majority are women and individual aged 25–50 years.

The basic question in the survey was: “Is it necessary to change the current definition of the Museum?” Only 21.9% of respondents answered that a change of the definition was necessary. As many as 37.5% did not contemplate this issue at all and as many as 40.6% did not consider a change of the current definition necessary. This result indicated two facts:

1. Slovak museologists are rather conservative. They consider the current definition adequate. It is a question whether their way of thinking stems from the conservative attitude of individuals to the function and activities of museums or whether it is an interpretation of their adaptation of present-day concepts.
2. In common practice, Slovak museologists do not generally come into contact with the Museum's definition. Another fact is that, apart from a single document, the definition is not available in the Slovak language to a regular museum employee. This is probably the reason why there is a high occurrence of lack of interest /consideration over the issue of the current definition of the ICOM Museum. In their practice, Slovak

museologists usually deal with the current Slovak legislation, where the definition of the Museum is slightly different (see above).

The second question was: “If the current definition were to be slightly corrected, what would you change in it?” Most comments were on the part entitled “The museum is a permanent and non-profit institution”, namely, the non-profit part of the definition. Profitability is a long-standing issue not only in the museum sector in Slovakia, but globally. The not-for-profit concept as one of the fundamental characteristics of museology is perceived differently in different part of the world. From an economic perspective, museums earn profit by selling admission tickets to the museum or rent for leasing out their premises. Can museums make a profit? From a logical point of view, they should. However, their net profit should be applied to the “higher welfare of the society”, e.g., to further development of expositions, presentation of their research activities, protection of collection items, etc. Museums should not be primarily established for profit. The main priority should be tangible/intangible cultural/natural heritage. This particular aspect of the matter was addressed as an additional issue, namely: “Does a museum have to be a non-profit institution?” To this part of the issue, as many as 68.8% respondents answered negatively. This clearly indicates how profitability and non-profitability of museums is perceived. First of all, it was necessary to define precisely whether museums are non-profit organizations or organizations functioning not for profit. Although there is no difference from a lexicological point of view, there is a practical difference. All the answers recorded on this issue can be summarized into one answer, as follows: “Every institution deserves a fair amount of profit”.

According to other comments, the definition should be supplemented with information on the scientific and educational significance of museums. An interesting complementation was the protection of tangible and intangible heritage, which is missing in the current definition of museological activities. According to the responses in the questionnaire, protection should be one of the main activities and obligations of museums. The long-standing situation in present-day society testifies to destruction and annihilation of cultural and natural heritage, this indicating that the issue of protection is becoming more and more important.

What should the 21st century museums be like?

In addition to the definition of museums per se, the questionnaire also contained several questions that were to complement the Slovak museologists’ idea of a 21st century museum.

At present, we often encounter controversial arguments as to whether museums should be fully accessible to the public or whether they should retain a conservative, rather reserved character, in order to better preserve and protect the heritage concealed within. As many as 98.4% of the respondents supported the concept of openness as the museums’ inevitable obligation and integral part of the activities. This only suggests that even museologists

themselves prefer keeping their institution open to society and collaborating with the public, rather than turning them into mummy agglomerations.

It was interesting to raise the issue of communication or the presentation of collections in museums. These issues or terms were not (intentionally) accurately explained with the aim to encourage the respondents to present their views and interpretations of these concepts. It is generally understood that the presentation of collection items is but a small part of the great quantity of communication related to the collection items. Non-defining concepts precisely leads to results which as many as 64.1% of respondents believe to help museums to communicate and present their collections. Mere 6.4% of respondents expressed their opinion about collection-related communication and a small percentage of them addressed such issues as accessibility of collections, thematic communication, and presentation of collections by mediating their exposition or conducting research.

With the advent of new exposition possibilities as well as new discoveries and experiments, there emerged such issues as whether and when it is possible or impossible to designate a museum as a museum. This question led to a remarkable split among the respondents addressing the issue of whether an archeological or natural locality is a museum or otherwise. 46.9% believe it is, whereas a nearly equal number of 42.2% do not think so. The remaining 10.9% had no opinion on this issue. The almost equal ratio of positive and negative views indicates that a precise identification of what we consider to be a museum is a conceptual problem. A new definition of the very concept could solve the problem. Slovak museologists see this existential issue—what is and is not a museum—quite clearly. Museums CANNOT exist without collections. It is generally understood that forming collections is the very purpose and foundation of every museum, as 81.3% of respondents have stated. This underlying fact applies even in the digital era of the 21st century. Moreover, it is utmost clear today that digital objects and digital heritage have begun to form a substantial part of society's cultural heritage. It is however necessary to ask ourselves what to do with digital heritage. The basic problem is not only to define what is or what is not a digital heritage in the true sense of the word, but to define what is a genuine object worthy of collecting, preserving, and presenting in a museum. Preservation of digital heritage has proved to be a major dilemma. "Digital heritage needs to be preserved and made accessible as one of the unique sources of human cognition and expression. It is however necessary support the development of certain technical means as well as strategies to be able to reach this goal." At the same time, in the context of digital heritage, it is very important to properly select the objects/materials that should form digital heritage. Qualified selection process will make it possible to develop diverse form of preservation. Let us choose one of the comments: "Many types of the artifacts comprising our collections no longer exist in their physical form today—their form has been digitalized. However, if museums are to document development, they should continue collecting objects, albeit in a different form. However, it is difficult to attach registration numbers to the data in the computer. Perhaps the new form of artifact could become part of auxiliary documentation rather than collection items. Alternatively, a separate status of digital collections or digital collection fund could be created, including provisions on the preservation and professional processing or revision of the digital collection fund."

In conclusion

After the turbulent 20th century followed by the speeding 21st century that set on a new speed, a rapid speed of changes and a chain of behavioral changes. This speed brings new requirements into our everyday activities. Even museologists are not indifferent to the changes that the modern world brings. The endeavor to change is evident in the need for an update of the hitherto valid definition of ICOM museums. The perceptions of change vary. It is difficult to explain what is behind the fact that museologists in Slovakia do not feel the need for a change. Maybe, it is the fear of change, maybe it is a routine to perceive the museum concept traditionally, or maybe it is indifference, indeed, or even a sense of uselessness for practical museological purposes.

The consensus of all museologists in our environment is that a museum without collections is not a museum. We are open to the not-for-profit concept, for we all agree that profit should not be the main reason for establishing and operating museums. Museologists in Slovakia see museums as permanent scientific and educational institutions and organizations which not only acquire, preserve, manage, and present, but above all protect their collections. The main role of these organizations is to protect memorable objects and compose of them an overall image of the society.

Whether or not a new definition of the ICOM museums will be approved remains to be seen at the General Conference in Prague 2022. In any case, even though the definition itself is significant, predominantly important are above all the subsequent commentaries and presentations.

Literature

Odporúčanie o ochrane a podpore múzeí a zbierok, ich rozmanitosti a úlohy v spoločnosti [cit. 17. 3. 2022]. Available at: https://www.culture.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/UNESCO_Odporucanie_o_ochrane_a_podpore_muzei_a_zbierok_ich_rozmanitosti_a_ulohy_v_spolocnosti.pdf

ABSTRACT

The issue of naming, of producing definitions, is one that has engaged philosophers since time immemorial. Museum specialists around the entire world, have got into frequently fierce disputes over whether their particular combination of words and sentences is the most precise definition of the museum concept. Many museum definitions have appeared over the course of the centuries. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has also been endeavouring to find the right definition for the word “museum” for decades. Its International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) began intensive efforts focused on this issue under the presidency of France’s François Mairesse, with the work then continuing under Brazil’s Bruno Brulon Soarez. Some of the hundreds of studies looking at the definition of a museum include large encyclopaedias and collective monographs, writings from the most renowned figures in the field.

The job of the new definition is not to classify museums in some way. They have been a part of the culture or memorial organisations since time immemorial. The job is rather to define the museum in the true meaning of the word, that is to delimit them, to separate them from similar establishments. This publication is a collection of contributions presented at a conference at the Technical Museum in Brno, we hope that it will be useful for the resolution of a new definition of the museums.

Key words: museology, museum, definition, new definition, ICOM, International Council of Museums

