

MuWOP

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Museology
— science or
just practical
museum
work?



MuWoP Museological Working Papers
A debate journal on fundamental museological
problems

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THEME NO 1

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Editorial

A new arrival is announced in the international museum community. Nickname: MuWoP. Size: 67 pages. Weight: 203 g.

From time immemorial, occasions of this kind have been surrounded by an unwritten ritual. The birth is celebrated, the new arrival is displayed to friends, relatives and the community at large, duly admired and privately discussed. Everybody is curious. Questions abound. Questions concerning the procreators of the new arrival and their background, the progress of the pregnancy and confinement, heavenly portents at the moment of birth, the qualities of the new arrival and its future.

Let us in all piety observe the ritual. It is time to feast the new arrival and present it to the big museum family. MuWoP was the name — a name already conferred, without baptism and without previous consultation of the relatives, while the infant was still in *statu nascendi*. A temporary name to begin with, it gradually became more and more self-evident and final.

So what is MuWoP, to whom is it addressed, what are its aims and purposes? Who are its parents? What are its plans for the future?

There has long been a strong and acknowledged need for a vigorous and continuous discussion of the major problems facing museums in our time, a need for useful and stimulating exchange of views between museum people across national and continental boundaries. Contemporary society is shaped and characterized by an incessant and accelerating flow of change. New demands are being made on museums and their staffs. Those demands have to be met by a well-informed, knowledgeable corps which has a sense of purpose and which is established and acknowledged as a legitimate professional group. They must be dealt with rapidly and efficiently if museums are to retain and strengthen their role in society, the role which they are entitled and duty bound to play.

It would be a gross misrepresentation to pretend that nothing has yet been done in this direction. Of course there are national and international journals, and symposia are convened and reports published. Important and wide-ranging projects have been carried out or are in progress, both nationally and internationally. The publication of the *Treatise on Museology* is an extremely vital project of which the museum world expects a great deal.

There is just one snag, and this is where our new arrival, MuWoP, comes in. Symposia cannot be attended by many peoples, their findings do not reach everybody. The spread of information falls short for lack of funds and suitable channels. Projects are not always followed up, and evaluation can fail to materialize owing to shortage of time. Results, knowledge and experience are lost to others and lapse into oblivion. The highly qualified reporting of periodicals moves principally in one direction; there is a lack of discussion. The *Treatise*, if the plans for it are accomplished, can extensively and impressively capture a certain "status quo" by providing a static reflection of the state of knowledge. The dynamics in the *Treatise* are limited to the description of certain trends.

There still remains a need for a continuous interchange of thoughts and experiences, knowledge and research findings — a continuous, high-level international symposium, with keynote speakers and critical voices across the world. First and foremost a discussion is needed of fundamental issues relating to the museum, museum activities and the museum

profession. A discussion complete with follow-up and evaluation. The profession needs to be brought together in a forum which is readily accessible to all its members. This is the gap which MuWoP sets out to fill.

This idea, of course, is far from new. Jan Jelínek, Chairman of the ICOM International Committee for Museology and former ICOM President and Chairman of the ICOM Advisory Committee, describes the background in his introduction. The new element in the picture is that in 1978 the ICOM International Committee for Museology not only revived the issue but also appointed a special working party, the Editorial Board, and ensured, by following up the labours of the working party, that the goal would be attained. The work of the Editorial Board resulted in 1979 in the proposal for the publication of MuWoP, and it is the approval of that proposal which has led to today's happy event. Details concerning the gestation process, are amply recorded in the section headed *Facts and documents*.

So much for the presentation of the new arrival, which is in the first stage of its development and as such a prototype. Before it ventures into the great wide world, the whole of the museum family — ICOM, its agencies and members — must be given the opportunity of stating their views concerning its suitability, appearance and qualities.

As MuWoP's next of kin, the Editorial Board has been guided by a conviction that there is nothing like trying. Another proverb tells us: Nothing ventured nothing gained. The Editorial has ventured the first step but has remained open to suggestions — an essential ingredient of fruitful co-operation. Of course MuWoP can be improved; of course one or two things can be done differently. MuWoP is now in the hands of the people it is intended for — museum people the world over. Its justification and necessity, its aims and arrangement; all these things should be assayed and then approved, revised or rejected.

What of the future? What about a manifesto? This will have to be settled by discussion. The aims deposited by the Editorial Board in the little stranger's cradle are as follows:

- to be an open forum for the permanent discussion of fundamental museological problems,
- to pursue this discussion in the form of thematically self-contained blocks according to a definite programme which can readily be altered in response to the most pressing demands of the community,
- on the basis of contributions received from selected authors, which should if possible cover all continents and if possible represent a variety of viewpoints, to develop a wide interchange of ideas combined with empirical follow-up and comprehensive evaluation,
- to publish at least one volume annually and
- to employ methods of distribution facilitating the lively participation of the greatest possible membership within the museum profession, within kindred institutions, in different branches of science, and at universities and libraries.

Thus we conclude our ceremony, and the discussion of the new arrival and its future can now begin. The spiritual parents have said their piece and await an answer. Is the newcomer to be welcomed into the museum community and wished every happiness and good fortune? The 1980 ICOM General Conference will show.

Vinoš Sofka

Jan Jelínek

MuWoP: We wish you well

As Chairman of the Advisory Committee of ICOM during the years 1964—1970, and President of ICOM from 1971—1977, I often considered the question of how museums should develop their profession and their activity to cover the cultural needs of contemporary society.

At that time it was clear that the principal stages would be the following:

1 To develop the International Council of Museums into a broad democratic international organization, opened to membership as widely as possible, covering all continents. The organization should serve to develop museums into helpful institutions not only covering our natural and cultural heritage, but also serving the contemporary needs of our society.

2 For this it was inevitable to create and establish museology as a specific professional activity. The final goal was to establish it as a scientific discipline having its place in universities. In such a way the study of its history, methods, needs, and future development can be undertaken, all the theoretical background, links with other disciplines postulated, results published, new professionals educated with the corresponding level of knowledge and in this way museology could be established as a scientific discipline.

3 As a consequence of this new situation and in reply to existing needs, new publications should appear in various forms, from handbooks which cover the practical needs of our professional colleagues — to fundamental treatise on museology bearing in mind the building of the theoretical foundations of this discipline. An indispensable part of this literary production is also a periodical journal which would serve as a platform for the exchange of views in theoretical museology and for the dissemination of new ideas.

Museum professionals already have their journal "Museum", published by UNESCO, which brings mainly the documentation of new achievements in practical museum activities, exhibitions, architecture, conservation etc. The past volumes of this important journal provide a record of the historical development of museums mainly in their practical fields of activities. This purpose is fulfilled in the form of a representative and well illustrated journal.

Another, theoretical and speculative professional platform at the university journal level is now clearly indispensable. Certainly the International committee for museology is taking the initiative here, but as the editorial programme should cover all the theoretical fields of museology, close cooperation with specialists in the theory of documentation, in social anthropology applied to cultural activities of modern museums, in the theory of conservation, in the theory of education by means of three dimensional objects and in many other subjects, it is the "conditio sine qua non". Further reasonable development of our profession cannot be assured without such a platform and this is what the creation of "Museological Working Papers" is aimed at.

With the changing social and political structure of the world many traditional cultural aspects call for re-consideration. The transmission of information has always played one of the decisive roles in the evolution of our society. The use of language was and remains to be one of the principal

differences between man and animals. The use of visual — pictorial symbols signalizes the earliest human art activities and, at the same time, testifies to the appearance of Homo sapiens some 30—60 thousands years ago.

Another important step in the development of information methods is certainly the discovery of writing, photography, cinema and, finally, video methods of documentation and of dissemination of information, or misinformation, knowledge or illusion at the same time. The computer age heralds certainly such a fundamental qualitative change that we rightly suppose that we are facing a new different era in human existence.

At the same time, the old social and political order has collapsed and developed countries together with developing or even underdeveloped new ones are looking for their own traditions. The question of multiethnic peaceful co-existence is becoming a fundamental one for our survival.

Here it is a logical consequence that concepts of cultural monuments and even of the whole natural and cultural heritage will be and frequently already are being reconsidered and reevaluated. We face quite a different situation now than at any time before as to what need not be conserved, what is advisable to be conserved and what must be conserved for the future generations.

In the same way as the values of things, the values of ideas are also rapidly changing. Some ideas which were an inevitable part of human social existence in the not too remote past are today only a part of our past history.

The needs and concepts for the conservation of our natural and cultural heritage are changing. The responsibility of specialists and of course of professional museologists is increasing.

The situation is far more complex. Museums conserve some important objects — documents. They form collections which should give us representative samples and therefore information as objective as possible. The formation of these collections of objects, which are original, inexhaustible sources of information, is the core of scientific museology which is not duplicated and cannot be so by any other related branch of science. Recognizing their informative, historic or other value is a touchstone for the selection of a collection. If we are unable to recognize the important values, then many things, features, phenomena, habits, traditions that are part of our natural and cultural environment, our natural and cultural heritage can be irretrievably lost for ever in our contemporary society, now at a crossroads of change.

Museums are considered an important institution for public education and for some scientific branches as their research and documentation centers.

Already existing changes in the educative role of museums and of their educational activities demonstrate the following interesting facts:

1 The educative needs are different in different regions of the world according to local cultural traditions, to the social character of the population and to its economical level, to its technological development, its mode of life. Therefore the educational methods and programmes of museums in different regions of the world can differ in many ways.

2 As the dissemination of information through mass media is now almost universal we can also observe the distinct shift from the concept that museum education is equal to its permanent exhibition, to another concept namely that the "permanent" exhibition does not exist any more and is now only a "long lasting" or "principal" exhibition. It is frequently changing just as our new scientifically based knowledge also changes frequently.

But the permanent flow of new information disseminated by television and other mass media has brought another feature into museum educative activities: short temporary exhibitions. If we call them "actuality" exhibitions then the best explanation is that they should react to contemporary important events and problems of society. Certainly museums can realize such short term exhibitions and they can, in this way, play a very important complementary role in modern education in any kind of our society: rural, industrial, uni- or multiethnic, tropical African, north European or Chinese.

3 At a time when traditional methods of education are in crisis and the importance of visual information is ever increasing, the selection of information is assuming decisive importance. The most important values should be learned by direct personal experience because this is the best and most efficient way of learning.

Some progressive museums have established different kinds of workshops mainly for children and teenagers and principally in artistic activities. But they can be for everybody and for any human activity as they demonstrate the method applicable in most different situations and programmes. Such workshops can be created and are already being created in museums of science and technology, in zoos, in natural history museums or in anthropological museums.

The knowledge of the fundamental values for the life of our contemporary society and for its further development is the goal of modern education. The best application of everyone's potentialities is the complementary part of these values.

In this situation it is no surprise if some museums start to be living cultural centers and not only sanctuaries. We need both but good equilibrium opens new broad fields for museum activities and makes them more and more useful for our contemporary needs.

As for the scientific activities of museums, their role in scientific research and documentation is changing according to the development of science itself. Science of course has developed and is ever developing new sophisticated methods requiring often very complex technical equipment.

To match these tasks, new specialized institutes were developed and are developing. Museums cover only some, often traditional fields, and as any other scientific institu-

tion they can cover only a certain part of a field. Today there is no such scientific research institution covering the whole broad scale of certain principal scientific branches. So museums can only adapt to their proper and most suitable domain, which is the domain linked with the collections and their documentation.

The contemporary situation, often facing the danger of destruction of our natural and cultural environment, opens up important new possibilities for cooperation in scientific documentation of our changing environment, the documentation of the changing frequency of certain plant and animal species, leading sometimes to their extinction and often signalling biological danger (e.g. through pollution) to other economically important species and even to man himself.

In this modern battle for our survival, museums can cooperate in a very important role.

The traditional fields of science in natural history museums, zoological gardens, historical and anthropological museums speak for themselves. The best museums were always those which were doing some part of scientific research. In historical disciplines it is the understanding of our origins and of the origins and process of our physical and cultural evolution, the understanding of cultural change. In biological disciplines this is an understanding of the evolutionary processes, an understanding of the forces of balance in natura and many other phenomena.

But the innovation which we face is ever increasing specialisation and cooperation. This is the challenge for museums. They are often multidisciplinary institutions in character and have the possibility of broad cooperation on a world wide basis through museological (ICOM) and various scientific international organisations.

Having briefly mentioned the background of the dramatically changing contemporary situation and explained the need to adapt museums to newly developed situations and to contribute to covering the scientific, educational and documentary needs of society, is there any doubt that our museological professional branch of activities needs its theoretical journal as the basis for an exchange of views, as a platform of ideas as the means to understand correctly our position, our possibilities and duties in the future development of our services?

The question only remains how to organize the broad cooperation which such a journal needs. I wish that the platform for vivid discussion and comments on every fundamental problem and subject would be its characteristic feature.

To the journal itself I wish long life.

To the Editorial Board fascinating activity, but first of all to museological professionals their proper useful and indispensable tool.

Point for discussion: WHAT IS MUSEOLOGY?

Introduction by the Editor

A question which can be heard more and more often among museum people. A question which is raised in various museum contexts — and which is answered in different ways: with great self-confidence, with faltering verbosity, or just with a shrug of the shoulders.

The term is widely used in the museum world, even though there is no unanimity about its meaning. A survey taken in Europe in 1975 has shown how great the confusion about museology is. Villy Toft Jensen discusses the results of this survey in MUSEOLOGICAL POINTS OF VIEW — EUROPE 1975.

When the ICOM International Committee for Museology discussed its tasks in 1978, it found itself facing the same dilemma. A committee for museology: what are we for? The situation was hardly clearer for the Editorial Board of the Committee when it was given the mission to “work out a skeleton programme for working papers on fundamental museological problems”. What to do? In the summer of

1979 the members of the Editorial Board participating in a meeting in Stockholm decided to bring out the answer. They took the risk and walked on thin ice. Four attempts to define the term “museology” saw the light of day. By no means scientific dissertations. Only short summaries about what each member of the Editorial Board understood by the term. The ulterior motive: to provoke a discussion by having the courage to make a definition. The attempts have become part of the report of the Editorial Board’s activities in 1978—1979, which was presented at the annual meeting of the committee in the fall of 1979, and with this report they received the honour of becoming enclosures to the minutes of the meeting. Alas, a discussion failed to materialize — and these attempts have become part of the history of museology. As MUSEOLOGICAL PROVOCATIONS 1979 they are presented again in today’s MuWoP. Will they succeed this time in getting the discussion going?

WHAT IN HEAVEN’S NAME IS MUSEOLOGY?

Villy Toft Jensen Museological points of view — Europe 1975

On the track of some theoretical directions within museology

1 Background and purpose

These lines are to be viewed as a result of a survey on museology undertaken among some European museum professionals during 1975. One of the reasons for undertaking this

survey was the situation in Denmark, where we still do not have any formal training in museology, but where the debate about the possibility of establishing it in some form has been more intensified lately — and I think that is true of other countries as well.

Further it can be said that the survey was based on the postulate of a close relationship between the kind or level of museological training in the respective countries and, on the other hand, those chief points of view, which are — or will be — adopted on the concept of museology within the country concerned.

Unfortunately the debate has in some ways been rather diffuse as a result of uncertainty as to what museology really is or should be, and accordingly the purpose of this survey can be seen as an attempt to reduce this uncertainty.

In order to achieve that I have tried first to focus on some fundamental theoretical questions and secondly to classify some of the ideas put forward into some distinct categories hoping thereby to supply a better background for discussing the level and contents of museological training.

As for the procedure of obtaining information, questionnaires in English, French, and German were sent out to about 140 European museum professionals, whose names were obtained from some of the participants of the ICOM-conference in Copenhagen 1974. By doing so I had reason to believe that those who had received the questionnaires had already taken a certain interest in museological questions, which I found necessary in order to get detailed information.

From this it also follows that the survey is not representative in a statistical sense, but on the other hand it must be taken into consideration that we are dealing with answers from people who will probably have a great deal of influence on future museological development. About 70 answers (from 10 countries) were received, of which 53 are so detailed that they are included in the survey.

In order to give the best possible impression of the survey, I have chosen to concentrate on a few of the questions in the following sections, which will be elucidated by means of some significant quotations from the answers accompanied by a few short remarks.

2 Reasons for dealing with museology

In view of the above-mentioned criterion for sending out the questionnaires, it is no wonder that the *personal* attitude of those questioned was predominantly positive as far as the theoretical⁽¹⁾ aspects of museology are concerned: thus only 4 stated that they had a directly negative attitude.

For the same reason it is no wonder either that people were more cautious in judging the *general* attitude within the concerned country: thus the general attitude was characterized by the majority as expectant, but still positive.

It is worth noting however that, on the whole, the material indicates that if some people start dealing with the theoretical aspects of museums and museum work — if only the process gets started — then the interest in and the understanding of the importance of the subject will grow accordingly.

Looking now at some of the answers to the following question, we will get some idea of the reasons for considering the subject important:

Question:

"The fact that training in museology has been established at some universities etc. as well as some ICOM-activities shows an enlarged interest in museology. Can you mention a couple of main reasons for this growing interest?"

Selected answers:

"A slowly growing awareness of the common purpose of museums — a realization, by curators, of the need for greater professionalism in their work — an acceptance of the existence of a 'museum profession' (as distinct from the disciplinary professions)."

"Those responsible for museums have realized the com-

plexity of those problems, which the keeping and the presentation of objects bring about. They feel the necessity of going beyond the craftsmanlike level within this domain, and they are urged to do so by a growing interest within the public of cultural property in general and in the museum in particular."

"A slowly growing awareness of the fact that museum work is not a hobby for some privileged people or outsiders, but a most important cultural factor."

"A common tendency to question everything handed down (i.e. the museum which has not an immediately cognizable usefulness), and in connection with that a general tendency to 'make things scientific'."

"The museum practice demands objectively a theoretical pervasion — especially in order to make it possible for others to learn the methods and principles of the museum practice."

"Museology makes it possible to establish general criteria for the administration of museums."

"The need to get support for museums — mainly financial support — necessitates justifying the existence of museums in society — this cannot be achieved by a loose collection of separate independent disciplines like zoology, history, etc. — a museum as a composite institution is necessary if a proper perspective view of 'life' generally is to be portrayed."

Owing to lack of space it is not possible to include very many answers, but even from the above quotations one will see that they are covering a wide spectrum: there seems to be a lot of good reasons for dealing with museology.

To give a complete picture, however, a few comments must be quoted on the word "museology":

"One becomes attracted by a catchword or some fashionable discipline."

"The current trend towards 'thinking about Doing' rather than actually 'Doing': and an increasingly prevalent inability in our civilization to distinguish clearly between ends and means; hence the elevation of many studies of genuine values as means to the realm of ends and 'ologies'."

3 The contents of museology

So far we have only been dealing with the concept of museology without trying to define it. But what is museology? Let us try indirectly to answer this looking at the next question, which is concerned with the contents of museology.

Question:

"What is the core of museology, i.e. which main themes and problems belong to theoretical museology in your opinion?"

As it might be expected a great deal of overlapping answers appeared, and taken as a whole I suppose they contain most of the museum functions. What is remarkable, however, is the enormous difference in the level of abstraction, which can be read from the answers.

In order to illustrate this, 5 answers — which will speak for themselves — are quoted below.

Selected replies to what is the core of museology:

- 1 a) "An outline of the development of museums and museum work."
- b) "A study of the individual types of museums."
- c) "Research into the present role of museums: their functions as public institutions with educational, research and archive functions."
- d) "Research into the relation between the museum and the public, and research on the internal structure of the museum."

- e) "The purpose of museum activities within individual museums."
 - f) "Development of museum didactics through exhibitions related to specific problems."
 - g) "Preparation of recommendations for classification and scientific documentation of museum objects."
 - h) "Probing the possible use of modern technical aids, i.e. computers, in museum work."
 - i) "Preparation of new and economical exhibition techniques."
 - j) "Arrangement of seminars in conservation and restoration."
 - k) "Preparation of experimental exhibitions in order to test the possibilities of the museum as an educational medium, and in order to examine the behaviour of the visitors."
- 2 "Museology is the study of
- a) the basic purpose of museums (irrespective of their disciplinary specialities)
 - b) the role of the museum in the community
 - c) the 'common ground' in the functions of museums of all kinds."
- 3 "Why and for whom are we collecting, and which principles of selection are to be used. The balancing of object — picture — data. Questions of nomenclature. Search systems."
- 4 "a) The decisive question is asserting museology, on the one hand in the system of science, on the other hand in museum practice. This is the best means of objectively proving its function. To assert museology in the system of science means to meta-theoretically solve the question of its object, methodology, terminology, and system.
- b) In solving these meta-theoretical problems, the object of museology is of decisive importance, because it really is the key to the position of museology within the system of sciences. Thanks to this fact it is also the key to solving the relation museology/disciplines traditionally used in museums.
 - c) The solution of meta-theoretical problems must also lead to proper understanding of the tasks of museums as institutions. Besides, it must result in differentiating the museological approach to reality as an approach of scientific knowledge, and a museum practice, which actually applies this approach in life in the museum as institution. In this manner, museology is distinguished from museography. In this manner, too, it has been proved that the museum cannot constitute the object of museology."
- 5 "However important technical aspects may be, it seems appropriate to draw special attention to fundamental problems with which museums are confronted to-day. In general these problems are not properly understood, but they directly influence the policy of museums in national as well as in international contexts as they are of essential importance. They are directly connected with the field of ethics in all domains of museological activities, e.g. observation, selection, preservation, presentation and information. It seems to be the particular task of museological research to devote special attention to the elucidation of those fundamental problems and to come to a better understanding of their basic influence on the development of museum policy. In this way the museums could be better equipped and be better qualified to function as social-cultural centres in the community that defray the expenses for their maintenance and upkeep. Otherwise these institutions are apt to be considered as storehouses of cultural property that has to be kept just because it is the legacy of the past, for which reason they become more of a burden than a privilege."

4 Some theoretical directions within museology

I shall now proceed to the last question, which will be treated in a little more detail than the others. The intention of the question was to elucidate the role of the disciplinary professions in the framing of a museological theory.

In addition it was hoped to get some personal definitions of museology.

Question:

"In museological literature one can find several ways of viewing museology. Using, as a criterion for division, the role of the scientific disciplines engaged in the museum one might distinguish between:

A museology as an independent science with its own specific theory and methods.

(According to this view the disciplines engaged in the museums can contribute a great deal to the framing of a museological theory, but the real basis of such a theory must be sought in the specific characteristics of museums, i.e. in their general purpose and functions. From this basis are deduced some common principles for all kinds of museums concerning the criteria for collecting, keeping, exhibition, etc.)

B museology as an applied science, i.e. the application of the theory and methods of the scientific disciplines on museum matters.

(According to this view collecting, conservation, exhibition, etc. can only be done within the limits of the theory and methods belonging to the discipline concerned. Therefore the disciplines — with some modifications — form the sole basis for the framing of a museological theory. The above view (A) is — at best — considered unrealistic.)

Which of these opinions do you consider mostly in agreement with your own?

How would you characterize museology in your own words?"

When the role of the disciplines and the question about museology as independent or applied science are so strongly stressed here, it is because these questions are most important within the whole problem complex about the framing of a museological theory.

Depending, namely, on the chosen basis — i.e. A or B — highly distinct museological models appear — and accordingly highly distinct ways of realizing museological training.

Therefore it is worth nothing that the first part of the question practically separates those questioned into two equal groups.

Now this might be a coincidence (i.e. people were indifferent with respect to the question), but this is not the case, which can be seen from the fact that the answers to the last part of the question in most cases are made up by a reformulation, modification, or a further development of one of the two alternatives.

These reformulations, modifications, etc. can be arranged into three categories, outlined below:

Category I

Within this first category museology is an applied science, and the disciplinary professions are considered the basis of a museological theory. In order to illustrate this category, which is rather homogeneous, the following answers shall be quoted:

Selected quotations on museology as an applied science: "Any theory must be anchored in the discipline concerned. However, the general purpose and functions of museums are alike. The criteria for collecting, keeping, exhibition, etc. are dependent on the character of the discipline. The

purpose of the ultimate goal — the pedagogical work in the widest sense: to inform the broad public as well as the specialized groups about questions that concern people — defines the character of museology as applied science.”

“Museology has no specific research subject, not even its own methodology. Accordingly you can only speak about a ‘museum-like’ theory, which is interdisciplinary in relation to the general purpose: the scientific and cultural/educational utilization of three-dimensional collections.”

“— — — A simple common museology does not exist. This follows from the fact that owing to differentiated collections, different cultural spheres, different ages, etc. the problems are too different.”

If we go on to try to make a short generalization of the answers and ideas put forward within this category, it can be summarized like this:

- a) A museological theory must be developed through coordination of the interests, theories, etc. of the disciplinary professions.
- b) Through framing of the theory one must arrive at an understanding of the basic museum purposes.
- c) According to these purposes, criteria must be deduced for the application of the theory and methods of the disciplinary professions to the museum work.

This point of view is illustrated in fig. 1.

Category II and III

Within the two remaining categories museology is considered an independent science — the basic museum purpose must be defined independently from the special interests of disciplinary professions, i.e. contrary to the first category, the purpose cannot be deduced through a coordination of disciplinary theories.

In order to give an impression of this point of view the following three answers shall be quoted:

Selected answers on museology as an independent science: “Museology must deal with all phenomena connected with museum matters. It is extremely important that museology gets a theoretical orientation, and it must never be used as a device for the application of disciplinary professions in the museum.”

“Museology is the study of those features which are common to all museums, but unique to museums amongst institutions.”

“Museology is a branch of knowledge in the process of asserting itself as an independent science (that is to say in the prenatal stage) and belongs to the sphere of documentation sciences. It has its own object of scientific recognition, its own methodology, and systems. Museology is a decisive means of general rationalization of museum work and, for this reason, of its integration into the level of contemporary scientific and technological progress. The so-called ‘crises of museums’ can be faced only on the ground of museology and the most ample application of the same.”

These few quotations should be sufficient to demonstrate a clear dissociation from the disciplinary professions as a determining basis for a museological theory.

As museology is looked upon as an independent science, the interest is concentrated upon the specific characteristics of the museum and the museum work — upon those things which justify the existence of the museum in the community — upon what is called “the basic idea of the museum”. Now two different approaches to this “basic idea” can be deduced from the answers, and it is this difference which necessitates the grouping into the categories II and III.

Within the first of these (II) the points of view concentrate on the institutional aspects of the museum. Accord-

ly, within this category, museology becomes some sort of sociological theory about the museum and the museum work. The answers and ideas put forward within this category can be summarized like this:

- a) The basis of a museological theory must be found in the institutional roles and functions of the different types of museums.
- b) Through the framing of the theory one must arrive at a general formulation of those features, which are common to all types of museums, and which at the same time are unique to the museum as an institution among institutions.
- c) From this general formulation common criteria are deduced for the performing of the museum functions — regardless of the type of museum.

This point of view is illustrated in fig. 2.

Looking finally at category III, we do not find a sociological approach to “the basic idea of the museum”, but an approach based on theory of cognition or meta-theory.

The crux of the matter within this category is to reach to an acknowledgement of what is “museum-like” and what is not⁽²⁾, which entails the following steps in the construction of a museological theory:

- a) The establishing of criteria of “museality”, i.e. criteria which makes it possible to decide whether a given object is to be included in the museum or not. These theoretical criteria then form the basis of the practical collecting activities.
- b) In continuation of this one must try — still on a theoretical level — to establish criteria for the preservation and storage of these objects. These criteria then form the basis of the practical work in connection with registration, conservation, etc.
- c) Finally one must try to find those factors or elements, “which give the museum-like values the greatest effect of dissemination”. Again, this forms the basis of the practical work in connection with the exhibition activities.

5 Final remarks

Unfortunately space will not allow me to deal with more questions, but in conclusions I should like to summarize the above-mentioned three categories or theoretical directions.

Thus I have tried below in a schematic form to make a comparison between the categories according to some chosen characteristics. It must be understood, however, that to make such a comparison both the categories and the theoretical characteristics have been extremely simplified.

Notes

(1) In the questionnaire “theoretical” refers, among other things, to some attempts to develop a museological terminology and to elaborate a museological system containing those problems relevant to museums and museum work.

(2) This acknowledgement must not be considered final, as the criteria may evolve.

A schematic survey of the museological categories

Theoretical characteristics	Museology as applied science	Museology as an independent science	
	Category I	Category II	Category III
Basis of the theory	Interests, theory, and methods of the disciplinary professions	The institutional roles and functions of the different kinds of museum	Theoretical considerations: what is "museumlike" and what is not?
Nature of the theory	Interdisciplinary interpretation of museum activities	Sociological interpretation of the museum and museum work	Meta-theoretical interpretation of museum activities
Final goal of the theory	Criteria for the application of the concerned disciplines in the museums	Common criteria for the performing of museum functions — irrespective of the kind of museum	

Fig. 1
Framing of a museological theory according to category I

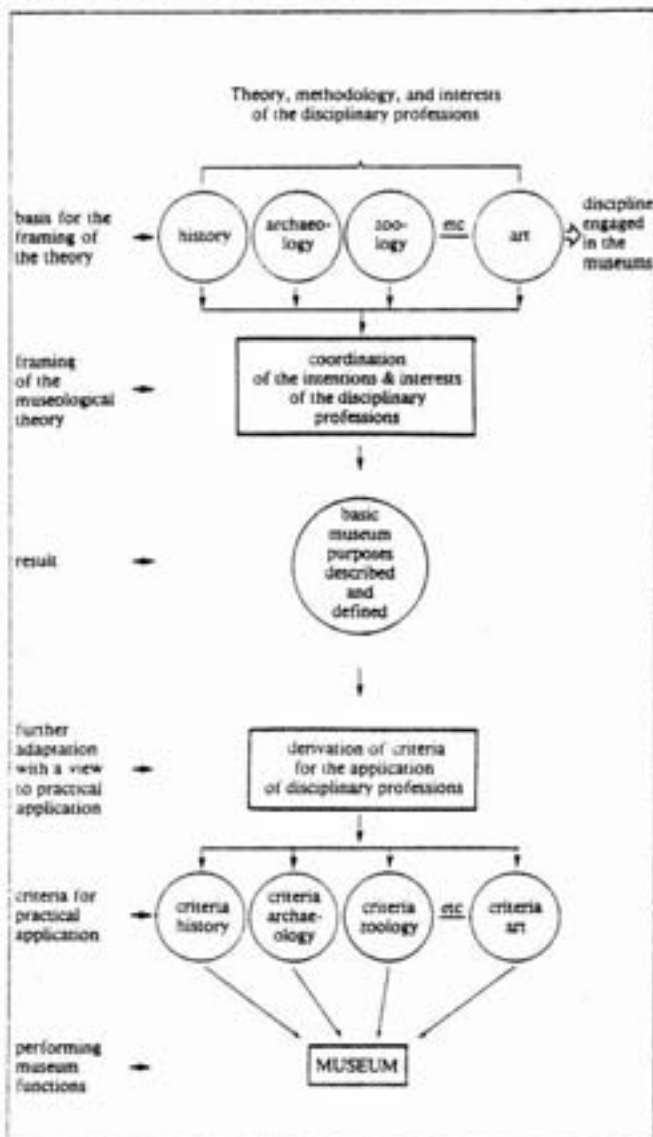
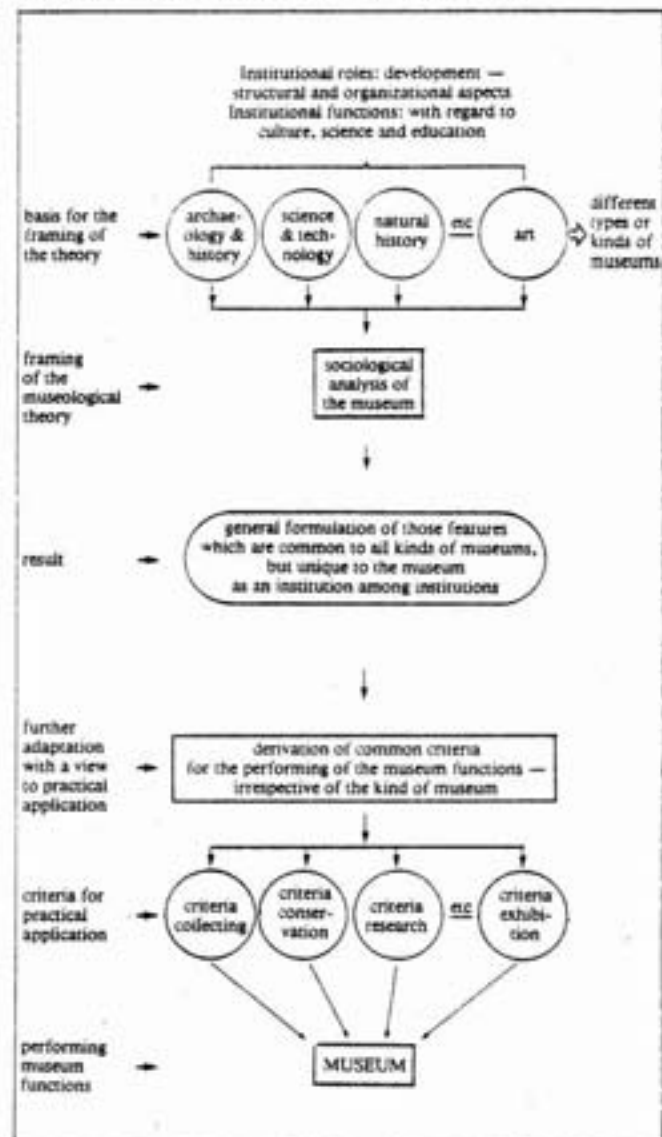


Fig. 2
Framing of a museological theory according to category II



Museological provocations 1979

Four attempts to define the concept of museology by the Editorial Board

Villy Toft Jensen

Museology is a science which has as its research subject the selection, research and dissemination of knowledge of all those "things" (including their interrelationship) which man finds valuable enough to protect and preserve for the future.

As the museum is the only institution which performs *all* of the above socio-cultural functions, museology might also be defined as the science of the museum and its roles and functions in society.

Museology therefore is an independent science with its own specific set of theories and methods which, united in a system, constitute the background for the proper functioning of the museum.

Museology can be divided into:

- 1 General museology, which comprises or constitutes a framework for a set of interdependent theories such as
 - a) theories which deal with the functions of the museum (theory of selection, theory of documentation, etc. etc.)
 - b) theories which — as the museum is defined/characterized not only by its functions — deal with the history of the museum and its institutional roles.

As the name "general" indicates, these theories should be valid for all kinds of museums — irrespective of their specialization.

- 2 Special museology which is to be considered as the theory of the application of general museology to the scientific branches engaged in the museum.

When developing museological theory it will be necessary to incorporate the findings of other sciences. Accordingly the methodology of museology is interdisciplinary in character.

Wolfgang Klausewitz

Museology is a field of investigation of the museum as a socio-cultural phenomenon and as a scientific institution with its specific functions in object documentation, research and education.

Museology is not only an applied science for the different scientific disciplines or for educational tasks, for sociological purposes or even for plain training tasks.

Museology is an independent science with its own specific theory and methods despite the fact that it is combining the features which are common to all museums and that it includes external scientific elements in an interdisciplinary way, i.e. pedagogics, sociology, history etc.

The different parts of the museology are

- 1 general museology, which is more theoretical orientated and includes the history of museums, the theory of museology, the scientific function of museums etc;
- 2 applied museology, which is more practically orientated and includes all questions of collecting tasks, object documentation, publication, museum pedagogic and didactic methods, sociology and psychology of the visitors etc;
- 3 special museology, which includes all museological problems of the different museum types; and
- 4 museography, which is plainly technical orientated and includes technics and methods of security, technics of the collections and especially the different technical systems of the exhibition.

The results of museological investigations include basic research work as well as applied studies in the different fields which are useful for all types of museums.

Museology covers all basic and applied results with a scientific system of its own.

Awraam M Razgon

Museology is a scientific branch studying the theory of the origin and development of museums, social functions of the museums and the realization of these functions in various social systems including research, conservation and educational activities.

1 The object of museology comprises the following components:

- A Museum system and the museum as a historically conditioned social institution, its functions and internal organization.
- B Specific aspects of primary objects gathered and kept in museum collections for scientific and educational use.
- C Special aspects for studying the events, natural and social phenomena corresponding to the profile of the given museum.

As to their contents the above components can be characterized in the following way:

A Museology studies the origin of the museums, their place in the life of various social systems, formation of museum law, classification and typology of museums; their internal organizations and relation between organization and development of the scientific branches and social requirements of the present epoch.

Museology studies the specific functional features of museum activities:

- a) collecting of objects — this activity is connected with the study of primary sources documenting both dead and living systems;
- b) scientific classification, study of primary sources and

creation of a pool of scientific information serving the needs of special scientific disciplines and of popular education;

- c) conservation of primary sources;
- d) scientific education and diffusion of knowledge.

B Museology studies the objects of reality — primary sources, objects of interest also of other branches, however, it has its special view in these objects and this fact demarcates the sphere of museology among other sciences.

The study of primary sources satisfies the demand after information on natural and social phenomena. The sources should be regarded as signals (carriers of information) and the information proper forms a substantial part of the reflected information, which is one of the basic properties of the material. Museology studies in these sources the informative aspects, of the material (and not the objective and energetic aspects). Since these sources communicate us something, museology is studying their "communicative function".

The following aspects of these sources, as well as special aspects of their studying, form a specific museological object:

- a) study of primary sources in order to discover their communicative functions and structures, and to decide whether they are qualified for being admitted into the museum collection at all, or to the collection of a museum with a concrete profile;
- b) study of primary sources in order to determine the regime of their keeping and methods of conservation and restoration;
- c) all-round scientific documentation of primary sources in close connection with the tasks of the scientific conservation of museum objects and for their preparation for optimum scientific and public education use;
- d) to study the communicative properties of museum objects in their use for educational and teaching purposes, and namely for specific museum publicity forms, such as exhibitions. Such a research will give the necessary criteria for the selection of museum objects;
- e) studying the expressive properties of the object (including its aesthetic features), i.e. determining the emotional impulse of the source in the process of exhibiting and other aspects of educational work.

C Museological study of the nature and society is specially focused on defining the events documented by the museum, as well as on objects documenting these processes and accepted therefore to museum collection.

2 Structural components of museology are

- a) theory of museology
- b) history of museology
- c) museological theory on sources
- d) scientific methodics of all special aspects of museums
- e) historiography of the museology.

Characteristics of all components are their close ties and their overlapping. The individual components — really existing — cannot be separated from each other in practical research work.

The objective complexity of the museology causes that it has a variety of forms and that it is connected with other scientific disciplines. The place of museology within the system of scientific branches is far from being unambiguous. Museology is bordering on other sciences and overlaps them (Germans call it a "Grenzwissenschaft"). Its connection with related research disciplines, with the theory of sources and with a number of specific and ancillary disciplines has an integral character. Nevertheless, museology is boasting more and more the features of an independent scientific branch.

This characteristic holds for general museology.

Besides general museology we must also distinguish special museologies. They study the problems of respective museums (museology of historical museums, museology of art museums, museology of technical and technico-economic museums, museology of literature museums, etc.).

Special museologies can study the given problems also according to the individual types of museum activities.

In working out the theory of general museology it is naturally possible to work out the special problems belonging to the individual components of its structure (theory, methodics, historiographies, etc.).

Vinoš Sofka

Museology is the study of the museum and its activities.

1 The object of museological study

The object of museology which is an independent scientific discipline, is to study those human activities which are carried out within the museum institution or within similar institutions. These activities consist of preserving, investigating and illustrating the natural and cultural heritage of the world and/or parts thereof — the country, the region or some other community.

These diversified activities give the museum institution the character of a remarkable combination of original object store and information base, research institution and at the same time a medium for mass education. The museum as a socio-cultural institution — the idea and philosophy behind the museum, its aims, organization, development and role in society — constitutes the chief purpose of museology and museological research and gives to it its name.

2 The aims of museology

The aims of museology are

- to investigate, analyse and study the museum and its activities and thereby procure knowledge and experience that can be generalized and arranged within a system of museum theory having methods and a uniform terminology of its own and
- to draw up objectives, to work out methods and suggest means for the museological activity and to solve its various problems and create a basis for its continued evolution.

These aims may be reached by using the results obtained by other scientific disciplines but also by scientific activities of its own, within the field of museology.

3 The nature and method of museological research

The diverse tasks of the museum

- to preserve by collecting, registering, storing and conserving
 - to explore by investigating, documenting, evaluating
 - to illustrate by exhibiting, teaching, informing and publishing
 - and
 - the diverse spheres that all together comprise the natural and cultural heritage,
- make the method of museological research strictly interdisciplinary in character.

Besides the basic museological research, there is also extensive applied research.

Basic museological research deals with such questions as are common to all museums and which are not embodied in the field of work of any other branch of science.

The *applied museological research* focuses the interest of other branches of science on the museum and its activities, initiates research on questions pertaining to the museum and its activities and applies the results of other branches of research to its own object of study. In this context, museology plays the role of coordinator.

4 The system of museology

According to the character, working field and use of museology it can be divided into

general museology which is a subject applicable to all types of museums and their activities

special museology which, based on general museology, de-

pens and/or modifies it in order to apply it to special facts typical only of various types of museums and museum activities

and

applied museology, also called museography, which — subordinated to general museology and guided by its conclusions — deals with the practical museological techniques used by the museum to fulfil its functions.

5 Conclusions

To sum up, with reference to what has been said above, it can be stated that museology as a general museum subject is an independent scientific discipline with its aims, object of study, theory, working sphere, method and system.

The diverse tasks and various areas of collecting make museology largely interdisciplinary in character. Therefore museology necessarily has to cooperate with other branches of science focusing on their common object of study: the museum and its activities.

Topic for analysis: MUSEOLOGY — SCIENCE OR JUST PRACTICAL MUSEUM WORK?

Introductory summary by the Editor

At last we have come to the main topic of the day. We shall now proceed to delve into MuWoP's theme no. 1, "Museology — science or just practical museum work?"

In the following section, no less than fifteen prominent experts will come forward to answer this question, without any previous discussion between themselves, without any instructions from the Editorial Board, and without any one of them knowing which other people will be venturing forth onto the museological battlefield.

Who are these experts? Who chose them?

At the beginning of 1980, MuWoP's co-ordinator wrote to all national and international ICOM committees, informing them of the project and asking them for their support. First and foremost, however, they were asked to give the Editorial Board the names of museum people and other experts whom they considered particularly suitable for the intellectual exercises contemplated. A variety of opinions

was desired, together with a broad geographical coverage.

Just over a hundred circular letters — 176 to be exact — were distributed. Fifteen committees, namely ten national committees and five international ones, replied to the letter and completed and returned the questionnaire form. This was perhaps not quite the response one might have expected from a go-ahead profession, but it provided an adequate number of potential authors. In fact the number would have been too great if all the nominees had been interesting in contributing to MuWoP.

Direct contacts between the project co-ordinator and the nominees — who were thirty in number — eventually resulted, during the summer, in the appearance of fifteen contributions on his table.

What do the contributors stand for? What views do they express?

Let us begin with a short summary.

André Desvallées: "... it is up to museum people to specify whether they wish to apply the term museology only to the language which they use to communicate with the public, or to the entire field of research and thought which allows them to practise their profession ..."

Anna Gregorová: "I consider museology ... a new scientific discipline, still at the stage of being constituted, whose subject is the study of specific relations of man to reality, in all contexts in which it was — and still is — concretely manifested."

Bengt Hubendick: "Museology ... is a poor science seen as riding on the fringe of the research front. Museum work on the other hand, is both a science and just practical work. Above all, however, it is practical work with the brain switched on, practical work run with a scientific mind."

Louis Lemieux: "Museology, in my opinion, is not a science. ... However, museology is certainly more than just practical work. It is a combination of knowledge, understand-

ing, skill and craftsmanship, to which must be added a good dose of vision, dedication, inspiration and patience. . . . If I were asked to categorize museology, I would term it an art rather than anything else.”

Geoffrey Lewis: “If museology as a term has a respectable history, this cannot be said of the subject itself. . . . We should have no further cause to debate whether museology is a subject in its own right; rather we should urgently lay the theoretical framework on which it, and the museum movement as a whole, can develop.”

Jiří Neustupný: “However much a museum worker may wish to avoid museology, such an attempt cannot be successful. The discipline is needed if we wish to understand the role of museums in contemporary culture as well as their place in the future.”

Jurij P. Piščulin: “Museology is an applied science in the contemporary world, and must guarantee guidelines for all the aspects of museum work in modern society.”

Daniel R. Porter: “Chaos reigns largely for the reasons that there is little agreement among training sponsors on these questions: (1) Is museum work a profession? (2) Is museology a discipline? . . .”

Barrie G. Reynolds: “I would suggest that museology is a specific field of interest but that as yet its parameters are poorly defined. . . . I believe it is indeed a science in embryo.”

Joseph A. Scala: “Museology may be defined as the complete study of each aesthetic, business-oriented, practical, managerial, academic and public relations-oriented function necessary to understand the museum in today’s complex world . . . Is museology a science or a practical experience? It is both, and it is much more in addition.”

Klaus Schreiner: “Museology is a historically grown social-scientific discipline, dealing with laws, principles, structures and methods of the complex process of acquiring, preserving, decoding, researching and exhibiting selected movable original objects of nature and society as primary sources of knowledge, which creates the theoretical base for museum work and museum system with the aid of generalized and systematized experience.”

Zbyněk Z. Stránský: “The term museology or museum theory covers an area of a specific field of study focused on the phenomenon of the museum. . . . It was developing in the past and at present we can also detect certain trends aimed not only at improving this theory, but also at shifting it into the sphere of a specific scientific discipline.”

James L. Swauger: “I believe it most fruitful to consider museology a body of museum techniques for advancing the purposes and organization of museums that has been developed and found practical and productive by museum employees as they performed their daily tasks . . . Museology may some day be a science, although I doubt it, but that day has yet to dawn.”

Soichiro Tsuruta: “I believe museology is a museum science, and efforts should be made in this decade, through international co-ordination and co-operation between museums and museum scientists, to develop the study of museology further.”

Bachir Zouhdi: “Museology is the science of museums. It owes its birth and its maturity to pioneer museologists who seriously contributed towards its spreading to different countries throughout the world.”

So much for the introduction. The details, the arguments for and against, and everything else are here for each reader to study for himself.

Now let's get right into the thick of things by handing over the authors.

André Desvallées

Curator of l'Inspection générale des musées classés et contrôlés, Direction des musées de France, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Paris, France



Museology and museography. Science of the museum, and practical work of the museum. Serious research to establish a discipline, or a simple accumulation of empirical recipes. This is an old debate, rarely impartial according to whether the debater is within or outside of the museum profession, whether he is a man in favour of progress, or whether he turns his back to any question of evolution within the profession. The first step in seriously stating the problem is to ask if there is a specific museum experience; the second, an epistemological approach, is to ask how museum activities fit into the range of human activities.

Is there a specific museum experience? In what way is the activity of a curator different, in assembling collections, from that of an antique dealer or a second hand salesman? In what way is it different, on questions of conservation, from that of a collector? Is the study of collections carried out any differently by a curator than by any other researcher? What is the difference between a curator and a professor teaching in the same field? An educator, or an interpreter, whose talents are directed towards instructing children or any other particular public, are they not more qualified to educate and interpret than would be a curator who turns to education or interpretation? An interior designer, a shop window display specialist, a theater director, don't they know more about display than would any curator?

This is how, by associating competence with different professions, the denigrators of specific museum experience manage to state the problem so that they are right by definition. However, the problem is not based on existing people or professions, but on the multiple functions that a museum must fill, and on its objectives.

An antique dealer, a collector, must find, acquire, collect and assemble objects at random according to criteria of types and their variations, or according to themes that are in style or with which they are deeply involved. Perhaps this was also true of curators in the past. But in a museum which has been thoughtfully planned, acquisitions are made in compliance with a programme, according to the thematic options the museum has taken. They are not made according to the opportunities of the marketplace, or at the whim of the director. Moreover, they are not made for the objects themselves, but for the maximum potential of information that the object can provide: in what environment was the object made, and in which one was it used; the maximum

archaeological information for objects from excavations; knowledge of the cultural background for objects gathered from an ethnographical survey; knowledge of the natural environment for both, as well as for natural witnesses. It is tempting to judge works of art, or scientific instruments, in the absolute, totally apart from any concept of time and space, from research on historical background elucidating their origin, their creation, the survival and their contribution to the general movement of the history of art or the history of sciences. But for museum acquisition, collecting and study are linked together, and the process of study cannot be applied to the process of collecting as an afterthought. In this way, the museum collection is the natural outcome of organized research, and cannot be a simple haphazard collection, or, at best, a simple accumulation of serious forms around a theme.

Here the problem is raised of the use to be made of the objects gathered. The difference with objects collected as treasures, as is often done in secret by collectors and by curators in the past, is that the museum makes double use of its objects. On the one hand, in order to ensure transfer to future generations, collections are maintained in good condition — conservation — and when necessary are put into the best condition possible — restoration. On the other hand they are returned to the community from which they emanated, or may be used as communication tools with persons who wish to learn of this community. This restitution, this communication, are made through various methods, the most spectacular of which is the exhibit.

Here is another characteristic of the museum function: every day the museum is faced with the fundamental contradiction between the necessity of maintaining collections in good enough condition to transfer them intact, and the need to take them out of storage for display to a public who should not, for any reason, be deprived of their message. Contrary to merchants who use objects in their collection only to attract buyers and to display their own merchandise; contrary to designers who only use objects as plastic arts; contrary to educators and interpreters who are tempted to use them in demonstrations and underestimate the risks to wear and tear, the museum person must display objects without losing sight of the fact that each one has its own meaning, independent of any scale of values, avoiding interference with other exhibits, which does not exclude displaying them to their best advantage and with good taste,

using the most neutral means of expression so that the background does not interfere with the display as well.

At the same time, the museum person must keep in mind that interpretation and educational activities must not jeopardize the conservation of the objects used. This is why, without sacrificing any characteristic that gives life to an exhibit, and contrary to what is done in most educational and recreational establishments, an object must not be manipulated, or a machine put into motion, if this object or this machine are unique examples; this is why a curator must be careful that the unique example in archaeological, ethnological and technological collections, in the same way as an historical scientific instrument or a work of art, must never be taken out of storage for display unless it is rigorously protected, safely behind a glass if possible. One should not consider any handling unless a sufficient number of specimens have been preserved, or identical models made for handling purposes.

Once they have been placed in this rigorous context, museums, which sometimes were only places where disparate objects were gathered and piled up, a rich flea market without any particular character or at best a curiosity cabinet, these museums have become meeting places where coherent groups of objects are assembled for the testimony they provide, safely preserved for transfer to future generations, and for a public to whom they belong and for whom they are kept, and to whom these objects can communicate without any language barrier.

These fields of endeavour linked to different types of knowledge and techniques comprise what we have become accustomed to calling museography. The one specific field which is universally recognized as belonging to the museum is conservation, but for a group of activities to be recognized as specific, each component part must also be recognized as essential and a museum worthy of this name must practice each activity we have mentioned. One must also understand that these activities are not significant in the museum if they are not closely interdependent, collecting must condition conservation, display and educational activities, and inversely, research must condition these activities, and be conditioned by them as well. If this is the case, the components of museum work as a whole do have a specific quality which makes it a unique discipline.

Once the speciality of this discipline has been established, the question that immediately comes up is to know in which category it is to be placed among human activities. As long as the question is only at the technical level of excavation techniques, field collecting, purchasing at public or private sales, one can speak of museum practice. The same is true

in speaking of manipulating objects, cleaning them, restoring them, analyzing their composition, using measuring devices, or making material for their display.

On the one hand, when the fundamental orientation of museums is described, when a collecting programme is defined, when taxonomy for the classification of collections is developed, we turn to "human sciences" — the humanities; when techniques must be chosen for restoration, for setting standards for temperatures, humidity and lighting, for foresight and precautions against the different dangers threatening proper conservation, we turn to experimental sciences; on the other hand when the spirit in which restoration should be made is defined, and for those concepts which concern perfecting a museum language for communicating collections to the public, we must turn to the art of expression.

The humanities, experimental sciences, and the art of expression: each is a distinct discipline, a homogenous whole, which when combined give birth to another discipline, museology? Or else, scientific disciplines treated differently, attached to their parent field of study (research programme and taxonomy in anthropology, in cultural technology, in organology, in natural sciences, etc . . . ; sciences for restoration, climatology, lighting, etc . . .), the art of museum language would be in itself museology. In this hypothesis, museology would not be a science, but an art — an art of expression similar to that of dramatic art, of the theatre, of the opera, of printing, etc.

As in each art of expression, the art of the museum has its own laws and characteristics; its own rules which, from the outside, may appear to be contrivances — but it would be an illusion to think that one could cheat with these rules without jeopardizing museum language as a whole. We do not intend to recall here all these rules (distance, spot lighting and neutralized background, the path the visitor will follow which has been set according to the direction in which the exhibition is to be read, which will determine the use of asymmetry, etc . . .); these rules are not of interest in themselves if they are not integrated into a philosophy as a whole.

In conclusion, a museum specificity is incontestable, and if a discipline exists which can be distinctly set apart from simple museographical practice, it is up to museum people to specify either that they wish to apply the term museology only to the language which they use to communicate with the public, or to the entire field of research and thought which allows them to practice their profession, even if the greater part of this research and reflection relate to sciences which would exist without the museum.

Anna Gregorová

Research assistant at the Ústředná správa múzeí a galérií
(Central Office of Museums and Picture Galleries),
Bratislava, Czechoslovakia



During the recent years of my work with the Slovak National Museum in Bratislava I have dealt more profoundly with the problems of museology — these problems always intrigued me as a philosopher. My efforts have resulted in a extensive 400-page manuscript, from which I have taken some basic ideas which I have arrived at and which are connected with theme no. 1 of the programme of the ICOM International Committee of Museology (ICofoM) — “Museology — science or just practical work?”. I have selected these ideas for publication by ICofoM.

In many people's opinion the very formulation of the problem either science or only practical activities — has been long resolved. I consider museology (not only due to its suffix “logy”) a new scientific discipline, still at the stage of being constituted, whose subject is the study of *specific relations of man to reality*, in all contexts in which it was — and still is — concretely manifested.

(The conception of museology, whose subject is the *specific relation of man to reality*, was first used in this country by Z. Z. Stránský; a *philosophical approach* to the theme naturally requires such a solution, facilitating further development of the problem on theoretical basis.)

Within the framework of this concept, i.e. *museum relation to reality three basic groups of problems can be studied*: museum and reality, museum and society, and finally terminological questions in connection with the analysis of the function of the museum. Only by such an analytical-inductive approach can we arrive through deductive methods at a synthesis, on the basis of which we can logically correctly formulate the very definition of the notions of museum and museology.

1 Museum and reality

The museum-minded relation of man to reality is characterized by some specific aspects. Firstly there is the *aspect of chronological three-dimensionality of reality*, manifested by the fact that man realizes the continuity of historic development, he holds the past and traditions in respect and feels the necessity of preserving and protecting them; this aspect of museum relation can also be called the aspect of duration of reality, or simply — “a sense of history”. At the same time this aspect of man's museum relation to reality also comprises its *gnoseological, psychical and ethic* components. The so-called museum relation (or attitude) to reality

did not arise all of a sudden, it forms part of overall human development, i.e. of the cultural-creative and socialisation processes of mankind.

Other specific aspects characterizing the museum relation of man to reality are the aspects of *structurality and differentiatedness*, consisting in the fact that man realizes the totality of reality and at the same time differentiates the essence from phenomenon, the part from the whole, specific and unique features from general ones, etc. This aspect can also be called the aspect of “generic reality”. While the aspect of the “duration of reality” (in historical sense) reflects rather the ethico-psychological side of the museum relation of man to reality, the aspect of “generic reality” is more likely to be connected with the level of science, mass of knowledge and standard of education in a given period. The very psychological or psychical aspect of the museum relation to reality can have different roots, but its basic motivation is always the above-mentioned historical sense, giving the first impulse to *collecting activities*. To wit, man is able to realize and appreciate the value of reality (the cultural or natural one), and to assume a museum attitude, resulting in collecting and preserving these values only on a certain development level. Thus museum relation to reality takes a certain *institutionalized* shape, reflecting already the very notion of museum. Museum attitude to reality is documented historically for the first time by a fact discovered by Leonard Wooley: Princess Bel-Shalti-Nannar, the daughter of Nabonid, the last King of Babylonia, built a collection in the 6th century B.C. The collection also boasted the first known catalogue of museum objects, the earliest-known museum guide-book.

The development of museum attitude of man to reality has been deepening and its definition realized — even in its institutionalized shape — ever since the 6th century B.C. up to the present days. Parallel to this process developed the concept of the functions of the museum and its types.

The problem of museums and of reality — as an object of museum study, however, cannot be fully explained by the museum attitude of man to this reality: what remains to be explained is the particular reality selected, the museum object (in its complete context), namely its *gnoseological value and potential*, comprised by its proper, specific, and first of all material and *documentary value*, which is at the same time *museum value*. It is the task of the specialist or scientific worker of the museum to detect, discover, de-

scribe, evaluate, and generalize this value in the process of studying the object (or whole series of objects). It is a process of advancing from the phenomenon to the essence and consequently to the generalization of knowledge, it is a process of forming knowledge from the sensorial stage ranging to the abstract conceptual-logical stage. In museums too, the process of knowledge is realized in two ways — in the action — of looking for and finding new truths about reality (basic scientific research) and in the action of transferring the knowledge acquired in this way (applied research), realized in the exhibitions and in cultural-educational activities.

2 Museum and society

Part of the subject of museology is also the study of the mutual relations of the museum as an institution to society (as a whole, and also to its members and groups), and vice versa. The relation of museums to material reality (group of problems No. 1 belonging to the subject of museology), similarly the relation of museums to *social reality* (2nd group of problems) create the necessary conditions for museology to become an *interdisciplinary science*. Within the framework of the problem "museum and society" (the relatively most studied part of museology) the *social function* of museums becomes the subject of study, in the broadest sense of the word. Three basic aspects of the museum's social function come to the foreground: cultural, educational and sociological aspects.

The *cultural aspects*, the influence of museums and museum collections presented in museums upon the public, requires research into the given problems from the viewpoint of the theory of documentation and the theory of scientific information. Special emphasis must be put on thegnoseological and informative value and on the capacity of collections (distinguishing e.g. between factographical and notional information, etc.) as well as sensorial and notional-logical study. In this connection we distinguish between "explanation" and "interpretation" of museum objects and collections.

The *educational aspect* of the museum's influence (comprising also ideological influence) requires first of all research into the educational process proper and into its specific expression in museums: the process includes several types of education (aesthetic, polytechnical, etc. education), always in line with the character of the given collection. Attention should be paid at the same time also to ideological, psychological and pedagogico-psychological aspects of this uniform educational process, with special regard to various types of museum visitors; it means to study the visiting public from the viewpoint of the categories of general psychology, including the psychology of personality. In this context the role of museums as general culture-forming factors and of their ideological impact on the formation of social consciousness is of special importance.

The sociological, or more exactly the *socio-psychological aspects* of the influence of museums require a study of the social and cultural influence of museums from the viewpoints of sociology and social psychology. Three types of research into the social impact of museums are used (arising from the interaction between individuals and society, its groups and institutions, etc.), with regard to cultural samples, modal personalities (as a typical product of a certain society) and emphasizing the process of socialisation (aculturation) of the individual, in which museums have a special task. The problems of motivation, interests, attitudes, public relations, influencing of small groups etc. should be studied also from the viewpoint of the categories of social psychology. Of great importance in this respect is also the sociological research realized by museums; the purpose of this research is to deepen and intensify the influence of museums.

3 Museum, museology, museum activities

Questions concerning terminology and categories also form part of the subject of general museology. The main shortcoming of most previous definitions of museology was, in my view, that they did not take into account the strict requirement of the correct definition of the notion of museology as a basic element of logical thinking, i.e. the definition *per genus proximum et differentiam specificam* (deff.pgp.).

The vagueness and inaccuracy of many definitions was also partly due to the fact that the problems concerning museums and museum activities were analysed rather from the practical viewpoint, on the basis of institutional-functional approach, without expressing the very essence of the matter. Similarly as the subject of aesthetics is formed by the *specific aesthetic relation of man to reality*, not by a building or an institution collecting and exhibiting works of art, the museum as such cannot form the subject of museology.

My definition of museology is based (in keeping with the above analysis) on the specific relation of man to reality. Consequently my *definition* of museology is: Museology is a science studying the specific relation of man to reality, consisting in purposeful and systematic collecting and conservation of selected inanimate, material, mobile, and mainly three-dimensional objects documenting the development of nature and society and making a thorough scientific and cultural-educational use of them.

This definition excludes any confusion as regards the object of study with that of any other science, and it also contains the statement of the synthetic and interdisciplinary character of museology with regard to related and descriptive sciences (widely represented in museums). Neither the museum (as a building or an institution), nor its objects, collections or institutes can form the subject of museology, since they can be conceived as architecture or a building. The collections cannot form the subject of the science of museology, since they are subject to study by other scientific disciplines (namely descriptive ones), applied also in other institutions of a non-museum character. Neither can the scientific research activities of the museum be regarded as the subject of museology (since it is science on science, on the methodology and history of science and on individual scientific disciplines). Cultural-educational activities cannot form the subject of museology either — such activities are realized by a number of other institutions and institutes and are also studied by a number of other scientific disciplines (history and theory of culture, sociology, psychology, etc.), either fully or partially, with regard to their proper subject of study.

The above-mentioned definition of museology also defines its subject of study, dividing museology from all other scientific disciplines as an *independent discipline*, with a *specific subject* of study. This subject forms at the same time a certain aspect of the materially existing world, its relations and phenomena; any relation of man to reality is always a *reflection* of this reality, in one way or another. By determining this specific relation to reality through defining its basic properties the very definition of the notion of "museology" indicates that it is a complex of an internally consistent system of knowledge on the given subject of study — this system of knowledge has been analysed in points 1 and 2 (museum and reality; museum and society).

In connection with the definition of museology we have arrived at the following definition of the museum: *A museum is an institute in which the specific relation of man to reality is naturally applied and realized*. This relation to reality consists of purposeful and systematic collecting and conservation of selected inanimate, material, mobile (especially three-dimensional) objects, including their multivarious scientific, cultural and educational use, documenting the development of nature and society, including their

many-sided scientific, cultural and educational use. With the help of this definition we have very nearly exhausted all basic and specific *differences* and characteristics of the museum, distinguishing it from other institutions or institutes of a similar character.

The definition of the notion of museum in this way makes possible a further analysis of the very *functions of the museum*. Function means orientation and focusing the activities, expressing at the same time the mission and field of activities of the museum. There is a very rich literature on the function of the museum. From my definition follow three (respectively four) of its basic functions. Function No. 1 is: purposeful and systematic collecting of museum objects and the creation of museum collections. Function No. 2 is: conservation and protection of museum collections, and finally Function No. 3 of the museum is: all-round use of the museum collections. The latter function can be divided into scientific-research and cultural-educational functions (their combination results in the *all-round* use of museum collections).

With the framework of the individual functions the indi-

vidual activities should be subjected to a detailed analysis by studying the entire scope of the problem, including various activities (and operations) realized in museums. For lack of space we are unable here to deal with the problem in detail.

In conclusion I would like to point out a fact accepted by all countries of cultural traditions: museums as cultural institutions have a unique function and an important social (cultural-creative) mission. This social mission of museums is regarded as their main function in every society, museums, however, serve society with all their functions forming *an indivisible unity*.

As regards museology proper, let me repeat what I have said above: museology does not consist of "practical activities", it is a new social science discipline, with its own subject of study, with its own methods and means of research. With the development of museums, and with their increasing social impact in this period of scientific-technical revolution, the importance also increases of constituting and codifying the position of this new scientific discipline within the framework of other sciences.

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I have been asked to answer the question: Museology — science or just practical museum work? So, for a start, let's find out what science and practical work mean in this context.

Science, to my understanding, is the organized assimilation of experience collected in a controlled way. In this special connection it means assimilating the way to run museums, and basing this assimilation on relevant experience.

Practical museum work may be work in museums without taking into consideration the ultimate aim of the work. Some museum work is run in that way and this is not very practical.

Museology, finally, is the knowledge of museums and museum functions. It can for instance mean just an inventory of existing museums. In this context, however, I take it as the knowledge of museum functioning including the philosophy behind such functioning.

Museum functioning can, as already mentioned, be carried out without a philosophy behind it and is then restricted to just practical work, possibly aimless. Museum functioning can also be regulated consciously by an underlying philosophy. This philosophy must, at least in part, be based on assimilation of experience collected in a controlled way. This is much more than just practical work. Whether museology is science or just practical work is, in other words, a matter of approach. Let me illustrate this by a discussion of a number of museum functions looked at as either just practical work or with a scientific approach.

The basis of a museum is collections. The basic function of a museum is to continuously document the evolution within its field by means of collecting items supported by relevant data. Normally there is much more at hand to collect than the museum can afford. Accession means selection. On what grounds? The grounds make the difference between a scientific approach and just practical work. The scientific approach raises an array of questions. Should the acquisition of objects be guided by their representativity? Representativity of what? Is the single object representative or is a series of objects, permitting statistical treatment, necessary? Or should uniqueness be the guide? To what extent can one anticipate change with time in informative value of objects? What new techniques may develop which add to an object's potential content of information? What will we ask for tomorrow concerning yesterday? How should cost of purchase and cost of conservation and storage be balanced

when selecting objects? To what extent can gifts with attached stipulations, which restrict their handling and use, be accepted?

Collecting is useless without proper conservation and storage. These two functions form the second main responsibility of the museum. Its main objective is to keep collections in such a way that their information content remains intact and available. How is this accomplished? What techniques should be employed? By means of which technique will the material maintain the widest possible range of research possibilities? Cataloguing and registration are also parts of the arrangement that makes information retrieval possible. How far should cataloguing and registration, by means of simple or sophisticated methods, be carried? The cost and effort for this has to be balanced against the benefit, which the understanding that any one particular object may very rarely be looked for but that usefulness of the collection is dependent on the availability of every object. A number of questions turn this part of practical museum work into a science.

Extracting information from an object may consume it in part or totally. This applies for instance to chemical analyses or age determination through the Carbon 14 technique. An extreme example is reconstruction of a fossil by means of grinding sectioning. During the process the fossil disappears completely but information is gained about its internal structure. Decision making in cases like this through balancing gain and loss is an intricate process which has to be based on scientific premises.

With this example we have already touched on the third main responsibility of a museum: to extract information from collections through scientific treatment and research. Scientific treatment or curating on the one hand and research on the other represent two steps or two levels of this function. The first means painstaking work with details without interesting relationships. The latter may mean interesting pioneering scientific work. The first is dull and unrewarding, the latter inspiring, rewarding, sometimes even a little glamorous, and may give fame in the bargain. The first means taking a responsibility for the future by securing the scientific quality and usefulness of the collections. The latter means picking the apples right away. Naturally for the individual curator there is often a temptation to favour research at the expense of curating in a strict sense. Very often the tedious curating — checking data, proper labelling, clas-

sification, cataloguing etc. — needs more working hours than are available and more academic knowledge than it superficially seems to be worth. The question is how to balance research right now against securing the scientific potential of collections for the future. In small museums research is often not carried out at all. Hopefully curating is cared for. In large museums there may be different personnel for curating and research. In medium sized museums the conflict may be strongly felt. It is hardly solved by means of philosophy. The responsible attitude often means that practical work has to be done and the research work sacrificed. The problem of museum procedure — science or just practical work — is certainly materialized in this conflict.

The fourth main responsibility of a museum is of course to communicate information, experience and emotions by means of, in the first place, exhibitions. But how? The possible variations are infinite and we know little about how they really work. Earlier it was normal that exhibitions were designed by scientists alone in such a way that their scientist colleagues could not find any fault or anything missing. A scientific approach was adopted but with a wrong aim or without any aim thought out at all. The result could become unenjoyable and pointless for the general, not especially educated public. In another extreme, which I have seen in a big European museum within a rather new building, the scientists have left the whole composition of the exhibition to the designer alone. The result is magnificent show windows without a message. Just practical work in the one way or the other is obviously not enough. As usual a sort of balancing act is needed and the balance has to be supported by a scientific approach in the sense of thoughtfulness on a firm base of both special knowledge and well defined purpose. The aim is of course neither to convince your colleagues that you know your stuff, nor to create aesthetic emptiness. We have to know what we want to communicate and to whom this communication is directed. Not until then is it time to raise the question how?

This how-question is in fact a complex of questions. How much and what can a visitor assimilate? How much and what can a visitor assimilate standing on his or her two legs? How can interest be stimulated? How can curiosity be pro-

voked? How are different types of symbols perceived? How many words are not too many words in a certain context? What type of letters, what size of letters should be used in any certain case? How should a text be divided up in paragraphs to become as readable as possible? How avoid discouraging some visitors without boring others? What is the optimum balance between solid information and means of provoking emotional engagement? This is not a list of questions, only examples of types of questions. And, of course, these types of questions do not have any simple clearcut answers because the public is enormously heterogenous. What we can do is not to give up, but persistently work for closing the gap which separates us from optimal solutions. Just practical work, trial and error, with an observant mind can help a lot. But a scientific approach may eventually lead more directly to the goal.

Exhibition building could perhaps be a science but so far this science is undeveloped. A necessary prerequisite for developing this science is reliable feed-back methods. How can we learn what a visitor takes with him when he leaves the museum which he did not have when he went into the museum? Scientific studies of measuring visitor response have been made and they have clearly shown how difficult it is to get reliable answers.

Frankly, I do not think that we can ever develop the exhibition-building science to such an extent that we can precisely anticipate the response to what we do. Fortunately I would say. If we reached that point exhibition-building would loose its trace of adventure. The exhibition-builder would loose interest in his job. He would cease to be involved. The personal touch should disappear and I am afraid that could be a great loss.

Museology — science or just practical work? It is time to answer the question. Museology, in the sense of principles, methods and techniques involved in museum functioning, is a poor science seen as riding on the fringe of the research front. Museum work, on the other hand, is both a science and just practical work. Above all, however, it is practical work with the brain switched on, practical work run with a scientific mind. But — blasphemous thought — a scientific mind is not very far from educated common sense.

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Museology, in my opinion, is not a science. The processes and methods of science are quite rigorous and well known. Thus, the results of scientific research can be readily evaluated by those who are familiar with the methodology, and curricula for the teaching of science are relatively easy to draw. But the end product of museology is a good museum: a complex organism performing in a manner difficult to appraise. Also, experience has shown that there exists no absolute model that courses in museology can follow.

However, museology is certainly more than just practical work. It is a combination of knowledge, understanding, skill and craftsmanship, to which must be added a good dose of vision, dedication, inspiration and patience. That is the reason why it is difficult to recruit museologists; the right candidate is not merely one who can show good school marks and diplomas. If I were asked to categorize museology, I would term it an art rather than anything else.

The museum, with all its functions and therefore its departments, is not unlike an orchestra. In order to produce good music, each group of instruments has to perform well and the weaker section will impair the whole. As for the director, he must be able to get the best from his players and make them play in harmony along the tempo he indicates; he also selects the works to be executed, keeping in mind the expertise of his group and the character of his audience. Although this comparison may be over-simplified, it may prove useful to consider in turn each section of the museum and identify the museological requirements for each of them, and to orchestrate them together for a grand finale.

The major functions of the museum are to collect, to research and to disseminate knowledge; the main sections of the orchestra are the strings, the winds and the percussion. Each function or section comprises several instruments. Let's examine the functions of the museum.

The collections are under the care of curators. In a museum of some size, curators are likely to be professionals: historians, art historians, anthropologists, scientists, etc. But the fact that they are professionals does not make them museologists. Yet collections, and the specimens and artefacts that they contain, require attention and care that involve museological skills: documentation, storage, cataloguing, preservation and restoration are among them. These skills can be acquired through training courses in museology, but the trained registrar or conservator is far from being a well rounded museologist, although his performance is an

essential part of the whole. Furthermore, curators must participate in the planning of exhibitions and in their production; they make judgements on loans and on whether or not to allow an item go on display; they must serve the community of professionals interested in studying the collections they care for; they must prepare texts addressed to the general public; etc. Clearly, they must have an understanding and appreciation of what the museum is trying to achieve, contribute to those objectives, and recognize the fact that the requirements of "players" from other areas will have to be weighed carefully and positively when those requirements conflict with standards of their own. Evidently, not all of these attributes of a good curator fall under the concept of science, nor can they all be taught. Much lies with good judgement, dedication, attitude and motivation which, together with knowledge and skill, are elements of art.

The second function of museums, research, consists basically in studying collections so as to bring out their significance as parts or witnesses of the cultural or natural heritage of the society served by the museum. If the collections are the base of the museum, research is what makes it alive — its soul. Research is carried out by scientists (or professionals), but a scientist is not necessarily a good museum scientist. Museums should have a research policy that reflects the objectives of the institution. The aims of research, broadly, could be as follows: to promote an appreciation of heritage values and an interest in preserving them; to promote an awareness of the problems facing society and to present elements of solution; to bring about an increased appreciation of artistic, sociological, scientific and technological achievements and endeavours; etc. The scientist working in a museum must espouse these objectives and apply his research efforts accordingly, rather than along the lines of his personal interests. Perhaps some scientists come to museums because they feel that there, they can pursue their work without being encumbered by the priorities and goals of the organization. Not so. The scientist must be a museologist, a facet which science does not provide but that he can acquire by being attentive and responsive to the aspirations of society and of the institution which he serves.

Dissemination of knowledge, the third function of the museum, is the most intricate because of the variety of skills it calls for. Once the subject matter has been decided upon and the information is available, several treatments or ave-

nues can be used, often jointly, to reach the public: the exhibition (permanent or temporary display, travelling or mobile exhibit), interpreted programs, lectures, publications, use of media. Whatever the choice, public relations must make the clientele aware of what is presented. Let's consider the exhibit. For quite some time, it was sufficient for museums to display row upon row of specimens, artefacts or works of art to satisfy the visitors. This is no longer the case; thematic exhibits, relating a storyline (or telling a story), are now favoured. Those require a concerted effort: the curator contributes objects to illustrate the theme and indicates their maximum and minimum tolerance to humidity and temperature conditions, light intensity, etc; the scientist provides facts and caveats; the thematic researcher rounds out the story; the educator determines the level of communication which the visitor will grasp and recommends communication techniques; the designer drafts a presentation that reflects the quality of the objects and the good taste in which they should be shown, ensures their protection, provides readable text, facilitates traffic flow, respects budget, makes maintenance easy, etc; the interpreter prepares to act as a link between exhibit content and the viewer; the fabricators assemble and construct the exhibition according to the design but with consideration to best building materials, economy, wear and tear, etc; the installers put objects into place with proper care; security personnel give advice on the safety of objects from theft, fire, fire extinguishing systems, etc. A very complicated harmony indeed. All these people are professionals, yet their input is conditioned by the fact that communicating the message is primordial. The curator will take a calculated risk in placing some objects on display; the researcher will provide facts which, for him, are "known or commonplace"; the thematic researcher will look for additional information that can be communicated; the educator will contend with the fact he does not have a captive, but rather a choose-as-you-will, audience; the designer will have to subdue his scheme to the constraints of the other elements involved; the interpreter may find that the exhibit is difficult to put across, but will have to invent ingenious means to do so; the fabricator has to work within budget and usually finds that he has to complete the work in the very short time left to him between completion of the design and the opening of the exhibit to the public; installers would like more time and flexibility to make sure the object is presented so as to show its best qualities; security personnel will have to gear up to deal with what they may consider risky presentations.

These professions, skills and crafts exist in most places in the world, but to simply bring them together to produce an exhibit will not suffice. In the museum context, they must extend themselves beyond what they know best to do and condition themselves to striving towards a common goal which they must understand. That is why it is not satisfactory to hire these skills on contract to do the job; each partici-

part should be a museologist.

The same applies if the avenue chosen to disseminate information is a publication. Most publishers are trained to meet the aim of the industry: profit making. But museums will subsidize publications just as they subsidize exhibitions, lectures and public programs. The museum publisher, much as the museum designer, must understand the objectives of the institution and apply his expertise to reaching them while using parameters that differ from those he is familiar with. His task is to help the museum serve society.

Museum administrators are not exempt from having to be museologists. Their role is not merely to control the working of the house or to tell their colleagues what they can, and cannot, do. They must apply themselves to facilitating the obtention of the objectives; to do so, they have to use a good measure of ingenuity, they will often bend rules and take risks, and they will concentrate their efforts in finding out how the path to goals can be smoothed. The museum is judged by what it produces rather than by how it administers its resources.

Now that we have looked at most sections of the museum, there remains to bring them together for a good performance; for that, we need a director, whose task is essentially the same whether the museum is small or large. The task is not an easy one. The leader of the orchestra is not expert at playing each of the instruments in his group; the players are the experts and what the director shares with each of them is an understanding of music. Similarly, the museum director is not a master of all the skills involved but what he must have in common with his staff is a knowledge of museology. Soloists are judged on their own ability, but musicians in concert support each other and earn praise if the performance is an exciting one. Leading a museum, or an orchestra, is not a science nor just a way of doing practical things. In short, museology is: the art of managing a museum or any of its sections.

We cannot have the grand finale without the board of trustees, a most important element of the group. Trustees are museologists in that they must understand how the museum works and know what performance they can expect from it. As members of the society which the museum serves, they are the link between the two. Their major role is to situate the museum in its societal context, matching the performance of the museum with the needs and expectations of the community. That, they achieve by making decisions on policy and by helping the museum find the resources it needs to reach the objectives they set for it. Trustees are also responsible for hiring a director who will bring out the best contribution from each member of the staff, making sure that due credit is given to all participants in the team effort.

With all players now in place and working in harmony toward a common goal, let's sit back and enjoy the music. It promises to be an artful production of high quality.

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The theme of this first and experimental volume of *Museological Working Papers* is properly concerned with the fundamental basis and nature of museology itself. The form and interrogatory aspect of the theme, however, must lead us to the conclusion that there are doubts about either the nature of museology or whether it has firmly established foundations. Indeed, it immediately poses the question, "What does the term museology mean?"

A sample of dictionary definitions reveal an unanimity in recognizing it as a science. For example, Webster (1961) defines it as "the science or profession of museum organization, equipment and management"; Larousse (1975) sees it as the "science de l'organisation des musées, de la conservation et de la présentation des oeuvres d'art, des collections", while the Oxford English Dictionary (1971) puts it simply as "the science of arranging museums". The attempts to define the concept of museology by the International committee for museology (Report of the third meeting of the Committee, pp 16–22; Brno, 1979) also emphasize the scientific nature of the term although there are divergencies of definition. Most recognized too the division of the subject into general and special museology, divisions discussed thirty years ago, by Neustupný (1950). Some went further to include applied museology which, by current definition, is museography.

Etymologically, there can be no doubt that museology is a science⁽¹⁾ but it is of interest to note that recently the Oxford English Dictionary (1976) has suggested an equivalence between museography and museology. While these words both continue as current terms, and with a recorded usage spanning a century (Oxford English Dictionary, 1971), it is necessary to ask whether these two distinct but so closely interrelated terms should continue to encumber the museum-worker's vocabulary. If archaeology, anthropology, geology and geography, for example, have clearly understood meanings then either museology or museography should suffice (see Stefanescu and Zdercius, 1976, on this subject). There is here the making of a stimulating debate to which the connotations of the two words and the historical precedence of museography and its derivations (e.g. Mendes da Costa, 1776)⁽²⁾ would undoubtedly contribute.

But in the context of the title of this volume the dictionary definitions and a body of museum opinion (which should influence the etymologist's — or etymographer's? — work), recognize museology as a science. The definition of

the word should not therefore be an issue here. A more important aspect is whether those concerned with museums can justify the use of the term in the context of their work. Is museum work well established on a scientific base or is it still largely run on an amateur basis? Is there, therefore, just practical museum work?

There is nothing new in questioning the existence of a scientific base for museum work. Indeed, a decade ago Jelinek, in discussing university attitudes towards museology as a subject, raised the same question: "Is museology a science or simply a working method, a technique?" While arguing cogently for its scientific base, he came to the conclusion that "museology is now generally not considered as a science" (Jelinek, 1970, p 27). More recently Teather has reviewed the matter in a training context for the Canadian Museums Association; she saw it as "an interdisciplinary subject area still emerging after forty years" and added "most museum workers (in Canada) . . . do not know or acknowledge the theory of museum practice (Teather, 1978, p 207)".

This situation is by no means unique to Canada. There is a clear division of thought amongst museum workers in many countries of the world. Duggan (1969) attributed the situation in Britain to the process whereby curatorship has leapt from dedicated amateurism to the highest flights of academic specialisation, with no intervening period. In this way . . . a gulf has been created between two kinds of museum practices'. Other, e.g. Razgon (1979), following Stránský (1968) and Rivère (1970), consider that the crises of museums and museology relate to the failure of museums to respond to the scientific, technical and social changes of our time. This is no doubt in part true, whether or not there has been an existing body of museological theory capable of adaption to these new trends.

But the fundamental problems seem to lie within the museum world: the failure to identify the need for a scientific base to museum work and, further, as Neustupný (1968, p 153) rightly suggests, the development of museology should be more independent of "museum thinking". Museum thinking today is still introspective and much influenced by the philosophies of specialists trained in their subject disciplines and appointed to museum posts solely on the basis of their scholarly ability. As Cuyper (1980) has pointed out many museum staff trained just in their specialist field "consider that they are qualified and ready for museum

work". Does the scientific base of these specialists provide the theoretical foundation for museum work? If it does then the concept of museology is an unsupportable hypothesis and practical museum work no more than an extension of one of the many scientific disciplines represented in museum collections and curators are but subject specialists. There can be no such thing as the museum profession. It follows from this that, museums, at best, are just the repositories for natural and material things and involved in activities solely concerned with the study and research of the subjects represented according to the particular theoretical base and methodology of the subject concerned.

It would be out of place here to examine the museum function in any detail or the theory on which it is based. On the latter, others have already described aspects of this (e.g. Neustupný, 1950, 1971; Stránský, 1966) and our Czech colleagues have even prepared an exhibition on it (Schneider, 1977); on the former we need do no more than quote from the ICOM Statutes: "a permanent institution in the service of society and of its development . . . which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment the material evidence of man and his environment". Does training in some other discipline provide the theoretical base on which these activities depend? The answer, of course, is emphatically, no! Such training provides only the foundations of the subject concerned; moreover with increasing specialization at university level education it might be argued that the foundation provided is not broad enough. Certainly it is most unlikely to have covered the theory involved in the application of that subject in the museum context.

It is necessary however in an area apparently dominated by objects to emphasize the sociological element in museology. Museum workers are not just concerned with things; they are concerned with people even if certain of their activities may be fulfilling a predominantly research orientated role. As Tsuruta (1960) has said: "any museum in reality cannot exist independently of the community". Neither can museology ignore the theoretical considerations of this vital element in its work.

The object of this short paper, provoked by the title of this work, is not to contribute anything new to the subject but rather to urge the need for new contributions to it. If museology as a term has a respectable history, this cannot be said of the subject itself. Sufficient has been said to show that not only does the scientific base of museum work appear to be on shaky foundations but also at least some museum workers have been saying so for a very long time; few have done anything about it. The *Museological Working Papers* can provide an ideal forum for the discussion of these important matters at an international level. We should have no further cause to debate whether museology is a subject in its own right; rather we should urgently lay the theoretical framework on which it, and the museum movement as a whole, can develop.

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Notes

- (1) The term 'science' as used in this paper refers to an organized body of knowledge on which the theoretical base of a subject may be developed.
- (2) To Mendes da Costa is attributed the earliest recorded use of this family word: "Most of the naturalists and museographers have included shells in their works". *OED*.

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Museology as an academic discipline

Prior to considering the character of museology as a discipline, it will be necessary to clarify the meaning and use of a few terms which are often employed as a synonym or substitute for "museology".

For a long time *museography* has appeared in literature about museums in a sense which also includes what we now refer to as museology. In accordance with the etymology of the word the discipline called museography should perhaps indicate only descriptive accounts of museum work. Most of the literature available about museums is museographical in this sense. As museography we can designate, for instance, annual reports on the work of museums, survey articles about museums of a particular area, reports on procedures of acquisition of museum material, conservation or restoration of collections, cataloguing, and planning as well as realization of exhibitions. Administrative as well as technical activities of museums can perhaps also be accommodated under the same term.

In other words, we would like to include in museography all purely descriptive as well as practical aspects of theoretical considerations of museum work. In this concept museography is a sum of all work which is not of a creative character but which projects such creative, exploratory work on to the practical activities of museums.

In some languages there are terms such as MUZEEVEDENIE, MUSEUMSKUNDE, MUZEOZNAWSTWO. They seem to cover both museography as defined above as well as museology. There should be no objections, of course, against such usage, subject to the condition that within this terminology the independent existence of museology will be admitted. The same conclusion is also valid for the more recent term MUSEUMSWISSENSCHAFT which some authors have actually used as a perfect synonym of the term museology.

Museology can best be described as a theory and methodology of museum work. The question, asked by some authors, whether museology is a separate academic discipline or not has little significance within the contemporary system of knowledge and contemporary sociology of science. Even the most classical academic disciplines have undergone considerable changes, extensions and regroupings during the last decades. As a consequence of such changes "theory" and "discipline" appeared as quite synonymous terms. What is important with regard to museology

is that it does exist as a discipline, irrespective of whether, according to a prescriptive judgement, it should be separate or should not. The opinion of some German museologists that "Museumswissenschaft" is a "Querwissenschaft" (interdisciplinary science) is worth noticing. In any case, it is undoubtable that museology is a heterogeneous discipline. In my opinion the character of museology is very close to the contemporary sociology or theory of culture. This is especially true of what we call *general museology*, in other words a theory and methodology of museum work which is commonly shared by all areas of knowledge, such as natural, social or technical sciences, as represented in present-day museums.

While general museology is obliged to respect the principles, needs and trends of the different areas of culture, *special museologies* represent the theory and methodology of the application of various disciplines in museum work. Obviously there are two aspects of each of these special museologies. On one hand there is a component derived from general museology and therefore analogous in all special museologies. Special museologies must fulfil the common trends and aims of general museology because this expresses the needs of the society in which and for which museums exist. On the other hand, each special museology is connected with the needs and problems of a different discipline such as mineralogy or prehistory and contains an additional extensive component which deals with particular needs and problems.

It is the common experience of those connected with the organization of museum work that museum personnel deny in practice the usefulness of museology. Personal experience, sometimes supplemented by the experience of one's predecessors is elevated to the role of a theoretical model. What often remains unnoticed is the fact that mostly such experience rests on past forms of social needs, that it reflects past approaches to social reality, and as such is of doubtful value for the present-day situation. In most cases it lacks completely an adaptability to the problems of a contemporary society, and as such is both static and without predictive power. Social environment changes, and the experience of the previous or present generation, though certainly one of a number of important decision making factors, cannot serve as the only basis for effective behaviour. More is needed, and in museum work this "more" is provided in the discipline of museology. However much a mu-

seum worker may wish to avoid museology, such an attempt cannot be successful. The discipline is needed if we wish to understand the role of museums in contemporary culture as well as their place in the future.

The new generation of museum personnel seems to be less experience oriented and more prone to accept the necessity of a theoretical model in approaching new as well as old problems. Theory and methodology have played an increasingly important part in training in various disciplines, such as the social, natural and technical sciences represented in museums, sociology, education science, theory of administration or economics. New museum personnel educated in one or more of these disciplines will show a more positive attitude to the theory and methodology of museum work.

The collection of sources for the study of various aspects of nature and human society will remain an important aspect of man's social behaviour. The institutional structure of this activity may change in the future, and the collec-

tions, kept at present in the museums, may be transferred to other institutions, such as specialized research institutes. This possibility, however, is unlikely to change the nature of the processes characteristic of such collections. Museums, in one form or another, will stay, and with them will stay museology.

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"The abridged dictionary of museum terminology", compiled by a group of qualified specialists, describes museology as "a scientific discipline which studies the pattern museum creation and development, the social function of museums and the realization of this function in different stages of social development". This definition adds that the components of museology are: theory, history and practical work.⁽¹⁾

The above definition is a generalisation of the concrete experience of museum work in the USSR, of relationships between theory and practice in different stages of Soviet history.

The great tasks of the cultural revolution, the need to initiate millions of workers to political, scientific and artistic creation, led to the development of a scientific approach in the field of museology. In 1920 scientific research had already begun in most large museums.

The fundamental works on the theory of the history of museology, on exhibition methods and on education were already published at this time, and sociological research had been implemented in museums of history, of art, and of natural sciences. The data collected was used in manuals, for the compilation of museum terminology and determination of museum working methods: they were the basis of documents setting standards and of the system of management training. The organic relationships between science and practice provided a certain professional level in museum activity.

At the present time, both theoreticians and practitioners must solve much more complicated problems because they must take into consideration programmes of economic and social development of great scope, the high level of information and education of the population as well as the place the museum occupies in the system of socialist culture.

About 140 million persons visit museums in one year. Each year the network of museums becomes more and more elaborate: without counting new state museums and their branches, tens of thousands of public museums have been created within companies and organizations. Museum collections of the entire country represent inestimable riches. More than 50 million monuments of spiritual and material culture have been assembled. Practical and scientific work carried out in these museums, sociological and socio-psychological research, confirm the tremendous interest all strata of socio-demographic Soviet society have in museums.

Theoreticians and practitioners of museology have a large task in the USSR — they must ensure that museum collections are used rationally "towards the aim of the development of science, the instruction of the people, of culture, and esthetic, patriotic, ideological, moral and international education".⁽²⁾

According to specialists, the solution of this problem can only be made possible by the introduction of scientific standards and criteria in all fields of museology. This requires working out concepts and knowledge in theoretical, historical and methodological aspects.

Among problems on which museological centres have been working one can mention the following:

- 1 The nature and principal characteristics of the museum object, that is to say, the monument of material and spiritual culture which is at the base of museum activity as a social institution.
- 2 The pattern of museum collecting (particularly the new historical periods of modern art, technical sciences, etc).
- 3 The pattern of the representation of the historical process in exhibits.
- 4 The sociological and socio-psychological premises of museum educational activities.
- 5 The public, its socio-demographical composition; its reasons for visiting museums.
- 6 The social role of museums; its evolution, and under what conditions the social function was implemented at different stages of development.

It is obvious that scientific analysis of theoretical problems has a great practical significance. Museology demands not only research and meticulous experiments, but also an extensive use of sociological, psycho-sociological methods; statistics and mathematics. More and more often museologists use electronic computers, establish links with other branches of science — with psychologists, philosophers, historians, sociologists, specialists in cybernetics, architects, to mention only a few. It is necessary to form standing groups for research which are founded on a technical base, adapted to their aims.

The practice of museology convincingly affirms that the power of persuasion and the authenticity of theoretical conclusions must lie on fundamental research into the history of museology.

The development of the network of museums in the USSR, the distribution of museums throughout all of the country's territories, and work on models of museum admi-

nistration, all demand research on the history of the founding of a particular museum or of a characteristic group of museums; or studies carried out in depth on the history of museology in the different republics and regions of the country.

Another example — during the years 1960—1970 sociologists and psychologists showed in their studies that the average length of time during which it was possible to assimilate information in museums was approximately one and one-half hours (which means that the psycho-physiological capacity of visitor perception is almost saturated after active participation during 90 minutes). The result is confirmed by data derived from visitor research made in museums of art and history during the years 1920—1930. These studies also showed an average receptivity of about 90 minutes.

The modern museum is not only a research institute, but at the same time it is an establishment for education and cultural diffusion. Its practical activities cannot be carried out without concrete methods in the fields of collecting, working with museum material, museum education, etc.

It is obvious that all museum workers, whether in history museums, natural history museums, or in study collections, must have in their possession *a method for the choice of museum objects on contemporary history*, enabling them to differentiate the various signs and characteristics which in-

fer a scientific, artistic or political value on all objects — monuments.

However, working out such a method conforming to the demands of modern science is possible only if one takes into consideration the results of theoretical research and experiments on the reaction of visitors to different types of documents; practical studies on broadening the collection of museum objects to include contemporary history in its historical aspect must also be the subject of theoretical research, etc.

A similar question must be solved when practical tasks are to be done, for example, how to organize excursions, the cost of all sorts of services, the structure of the museum and other questions of a more practical order in museums. In our day and age such questions cannot be resolved with competence without scientific studies.

Museology is an applied science in the contemporary world, and must guarantee guidelines for all the aspects of museum work in modern society — starting at the level of methodology, to the level of applied methods within the sphere of concrete museum activities.

Notes

(1) *Kratkij slovar' muzejnyh terminov*. Moskva, 1974, s. 26

(2) *Zakon Sojuza Socialističeskich Respublik. "Ob ochrane i ispolzovanii istoričeskich i kulturnych pamjatnikov."* Moskva, 1976, s. 9

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The Cooperstown Experiment

As this is being written early in the summer of 1980, I am watching outside my office window five fledgling barn swallows preparing to fly. The nest, beneath a porch roof, has given the birds physical security from the sun and drenching late spring rains. Mother's attention is constant. She has stuffed cavernous beaks with hundreds of insects which nourishment has transformed small, fluffy balls into feathered flight machines. Yet how reluctantly the nestlings try to launch themselves into an alien environment, one so much less secure substantial than the firm mud nest. How ill-prepared they appear to enter the aerobic world demanded of an adult member of the species. Yet tomorrow two will have gone, the others soon to follow. Those with weak wings will be dispatched by a cat. But I suspect most will survive more by instinct than from maternal instruction.

The state of museum training in America is a swallow's nest. Each season from the security of academia fledglings prepare to launch into the unfamiliar world of museum work. Mother has fed her charges well but has been unable to communicate the technique of flying. Instinct must suffice in the less formalized world of museums. Each beginner must learn for himself how to escape predators, seek food, and generally to cope. Regrettably, museum fledglings are not instinctively as well provided for as are our feathered friends outside the window. The effort to prepare museum professionals, both academically and pragmatically for adulthood, remains unevolved in colleges and universities.

Dozens of seminars, courses, programs, assistantships, workshops, internships, externships, fellowships, emphases, concentrations, traineeships, and work studies are offered by hundreds of colleges, universities, and museums for degrees, certificates, diplomas, and other credentials in museum studies. From ever so tentative beginnings in the 1950's have come, two decades later, a plethora of attempts to prepare students to make that transition from nest to air successfully. Chaos reigns largely for the reasons that there is little agreement among training sponsors to these questions: 1) Is museum work a profession? 2) Is museology a discipline? 3) Who shall set training standards? 4) Who shall accredit? 5) What form of preparation is best for suc-

cessful entry into the field? 6) Who shall control training content?

The search for answers to these questions that comprises the debate is complicated by the informal nature of museums, while degree-granting institutions are among the most highly structured of organizations. Partnerships between such unlike participants have been difficult to forge. The dilettante emphases of museums and their often proprietary mode of governance have thwarted attempts by the field to regulate and accredit itself. For as long as those who strive for professional status eschew constructive peer criticism, professionalism will remain elusive. There continues as well the nagging belief that museums are operated by historians and scientists rather than by museologists. And failure of museums to understand their basic nature and to classify themselves uniformly, contribute to the lack of objective preparation of practitioners suited to each type or class.

As early as the 1930's, specialized training has been recognized as beneficial for those who administer museums. Slowly, in response to a perceived need, individual courses of study were evolved with established academic departments to assist students to compete successfully for a museum career as an alternative to some more "legitimate" profession such as teaching. Museum training has also been considered egalitarian: a way to enter the field without a socially prominent pedigree or private wealth.

Probably the greatest single impetus to the creation of separate graduate-level museum studies programs in the United States was the need felt by history museums, the most numerous and impoverished of all museum types, to secure better trained personnel. Academic departments of history were simply not preparing persons for a museum career. This situation was in large part caused by the historian's disdain for the artifact.⁽¹⁾ So ignorant of material culture are Clio's minions, that history museums were forced either to retrain historians or employ self-trained experts in decorative arts, technology, craft history, and folk studies. Only the drying-up of the teacher job market has forced history and American studies departments to embrace coyly museology as a sub-discipline, or as a single branch of "public history."

It was during the apex of academic non-concern for the personnel requirements of historical museums early in the 1960's when a daring experiment was attempted in a small, upstate New York museum community, Cooperstown, seat of the New York State Historical Association. A private, non-profit, quasi-proprietary museum and library organization, NYSHA operates both art history and outdoor museums largely for tourist audiences in the hilly, lake-studded western Catskills. Dr. Louis C. Jones, then director, conceived of an adaptation of the earlier Winterthur Museum fellowship training program conducted in conjunction with the University of Delaware. The Jones objectives were direct and persuasively simple. First, he envisioned a master's level graduate program, independent and self-contained, conducted exclusively in a museum environment, rather than on an academic campus. Second, he proposed the preparation of "adaptable generalists" rather than of connoisseurs who would be able to serve more capably the many-faceted aspects required of professionals in historical agencies and museums. Finally, he realized that in any partnership between a museum and a degree-granting institution, one partner must be dominant, the other recessive. The union he forged with the State University of New York's College at Oneonta was accordingly cemented by a contract which committed primary fiscal responsibility to the public budget of the University, and the availability of the working museum's collections, facilities, and professional staff. Academic faculty in appropriate disciplines would be supplied by, and enjoy the professional ranks of, the University. Museum staff, teaching part time, would have adjunct status. All courses, laboratory work and practical training would be conducted within the museums at Cooperstown, while internships no shorter than nine months duration would be undertaken at other host museums which offered alternative experiences. Pedagogical balance between the academic and the pragmatic, with the inclusion of a specialty, would be an objective.

The student body was actively recruited nationally. Careful screening of applicants to determine commitment to the field and an affinity for material culture as well as prior academic excellence was maintained. A small student body was selected of approximately fifteen to twenty students living and studying as a part of the village and museum community, initially for a full calendar year, later for three resident semesters plus an internship elsewhere. A committee of University and NYSHA administrators and faculty was created to formulate and adopt policy and determine curriculum often independently of University policies and procedures, an exceptional situation made possible by the remoteness of

the Program from the main campus.

The experiment has succeeded. Since 1965 fifteen classes have completed the course, an alumni body of 348 persons. Eighty percent of this number entered the history museum or related fields. Some 60 percent of these presently serve in museum administrative capacities, 25 percent as curators and registrars, and the remainder work in museum education, research, and other specialties. Alumni work in all but four states and in two foreign countries. The majority are employed in the AAMs Northeast Region. The alumni are, further, in a position to assist the Program in both recruitment of new students and in placement of graduates. It is believed that the close ties developed among students and the Program in the small community serve to create a more cohesive alumni body which maintains its own association and raises funds for Program needs not met from public sources.

Strangely, the Cooperstown experiment, as successful and as productive as it has been, has not been imitated either in this country or abroad. The reason why the program has remained largely unique was made indirectly evident to me in wide ranging sessions on museum training held at the American Association of Museums' Annual Meeting in Boston in June, 1980. The most pervasive cause of non-emulation appears to be the unwillingness of degree granting institutions of higher learning to surrender a sizeable portion of their academic and environmental sovereignty to less-structured museum organizations. The strict academic disciplinary controls which these university departments wish to exercise over museum studies admission policies, curriculum formulation, classroom instruction, faculty selection, degree-granting, and accreditation has relegated the role of participating museums to that of internship site sponsors and their staffs to adjunct or lectureship capacities. History museums are not allowed to have effective policy or instructional voices in the training of the very personnel whom they will employ and have ultimately to retrain. At the same time, material culture specialists are continued to be denied full academic status within the faculties of history and allied departments. I suspect that the history museum profession, if it is indeed one, must await maturation and legitimization before it can expect to influence the instruction of its own practitioners.

Notes

- (1) The classic statement on this viewpoint is the late Professor William B. Hesseltine's paper titled "The Challenge of the Artifact" delivered at the meeting of the American Association for State and Local History in Columbus, Ohio, October 5, 1957.

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Museology: A Science in Embryo?

Museums have changed considerably since the nineteenth century when so many of our major international museums were first established. Much of this change dates from about 1950 onwards and reflects the influence of a number of factors of which the external ones, those affecting world society generally, have been particularly important. Improved communications, increased international travel, the national awareness of new states, the growth of the tourist industry, heightened public interest in its own heritage: all these, since the Second world war, have stimulated greater communication between museums, the sharing of idea and the realisation that museums form an important, yet hitherto understated part of the cultural fabric of society. In this, UNESCO and ICOM have played a significant role, perhaps more as catalysts rather than directly, bringing people together and providing the opportunities for them to share and to develop their ideas.

It has been during this period that the term museology and the concept of museums as a valid field of study have gained currency though even today there are those within the museum profession to whom the term is unacceptable while, beyond it, museology as a separate discipline still lacks wide academic recognition. Indeed within the profession too, as the theme of the essays in this volume indicates, the validity of museology as a discipline is still in debate. This is reflected at the practical level where relatively few museums require museological qualifications of the staff they appoint. This is a situation that is gradually changing.

Is museology a science? Is it an academic discipline at all? These questions need to be considered. We accept that there is something distinctive about museums, focussed on the permanent collections they hold but we still find difficulty in developing a precise definition for the term. The blanket ICOM definition, intended to meet the needs of its membership, is a valuable one but it is widely and often uncritically accepted. Certainly there are recognised museums that do not meet its criteria.

Are museums in fact sufficiently different from other comparable institutions (hospitals, libraries, schools, prisons) to merit recognition of a distinctly separate field of study? If so what are the criteria involved? Museums, like many other institutions, draw heavily on a wide range of specialised academic disciplines and professional, technical and administrative skills. Museology seeks to fit itself into

the interstices between these and to concern itself with the overall concept of the museum. It is the study of museums, their development, their function and their philosophy.

Museum work is indeed very 'practical', to borrow a word from the theme of this volume. The need for practicality, for an efficient operation is obvious, but this is not museology which, by definition, is the study not the management of museums. That there is a great need for such studies is evident when one looks at the museums of the world, both large and small. Far too many have suffered from the self-imposed burdens of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: massive collections that are illhoused, poorly conserved and documented, and often badly displayed. Regrettably these were often faults of weak management, poor curatorship, unplanned growth and a lack of sound policies. An understanding of basic museological (and general management) principles would have enabled an avoidance of a number of the more obvious problems and the development of such museums and collections to better effect. Such problems still occur today, especially in the area of smaller isolated museums, while our major museums are also encountering new problems that cannot be solved on the basis of practicality alone. Museological studies can make needed valuable contributions to the solution of such problems though, of course, theory and practicality must go hand in hand; they are not mutually exclusive.

If museology is an academic discipline, a science, it clearly falls, by reason of its subject matter, within the social sciences. To do so, however, requires it to meet certain conditions:

- it must have an overall objective and be definable, particularly as against other disciplines involved within museums;
- there must be a body of publications;
- it must have a body of theory and its own methodology;
- its conclusions must be possible of evaluation, its research and experiments of replication;
- it must be recognised by other established disciplines and by the museum profession itself.

The overall objectives are presumably the better understanding of museums and to contribute to the more efficient achievement of their goals, expressed perhaps in terms of the functions of research and communication. But the precise definition of museology, particularly where it overlaps with the other disciplines and skills involved in museums is

not so simple. Where, for example, is the border between museology and conservation; between museology and archaeology, especially in the area of collections management and research; between museology and display design? These relationships and grey areas still remain to be painfully worked out. The practice of arbitrary exclusion, as has so often occurred in relation to curatorial research activities has been both unreasonable and unwise, discouraging as it has so many academic curators from active involvement in museum organisations and active participation in the development of museology. Museology must be more than the study of the mechanics of administration, communication and curatorship within museums.

There is a rapidly growing body of data on different aspects of museums. The literature is in fact already substantial. I suspect, however, that much of it is local or regional in content and essentially anecdotal descriptions rather than analyses or syntheses. This is understandable and I hasten to add that the material is invaluable as data. But if museology is to be a discipline then these data have to be thoroughly analysed and general conclusions drawn. Only then can we expect the development of a solid body of theory. As it is, such theory is to be found but scattered and often relating to separate aspects of museums. It needs to be brought together. This process would in itself stimulate the distillation of new ideas for the benefit of the profession.

Recognition by established academic disciplines is most important though this will only come with the development of a sound body of theory, an accepted methodology and the broad support of the museum profession itself. Most important must be the development of sound research methodologies. There are enough proven methods and techniques available from other disciplines, from history, sociology, anthropology and psychology, to name but a few. It is essential however for museology to decide what it seeks to achieve from its research and what primary research methods it proposes to adopt. If its conclusions are to be respected, it is vital that its research be sound and that this can be tested by replication. For this purpose, anecdotal material that cannot be so tested is of limited value.

In the light of this criteria, I would suggest that museology is a specific field of interest but that as yet its parameters are poorly defined. I question whether it is yet a science or a distinct discipline because of the inadequacy of its bodies of literature and of theory and because it still lacks a sound methodology of its own. At the same time it does focus on a distinctive range of institutions and activities, namely museums, and is obviously working towards the solution of these weaknesses. As such I believe it is indeed a science in embryo.

It would be easy to end on this somewhat pedantic note. I feel, however, that something more positive is required, an indication of areas of particular interest that merit museological research that, in the process, will help towards the development of a science of museology.

While it would be excellent to have firm definitions for 'museums' and 'museology', one must be chary of studies concerned solely with definitions. These resemble too easily the conscientious efforts of past philosophers to determine how many angels can stand on the head of a pin. In anthropology, concerned with the study of cultures, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) some decades ago, were able to identify more than one hundred anthropological definitions of the term 'culture'. I suspect that in museology we should encounter a similar plethora of definitions of museums.

Of much more value would be research into the *raison d'être* for museums: why they come to exist and what is their purpose, these are not necessarily the same; what too should be their realistic goals — one can only have doubts of high-sounding, long-term objectives that speak blithely of 'in the service of man' and that are so unattainable that their degree of success can never be evaluated.

Here in Australia we are carrying out a study of university museums, a very neglected specialised kind of museum, seeking not only to identify their practical problems but more important, to define their role and function within the institutions of which they form part (Reynolds, 1980b). Other specialised museums would merit such studies.

At a different level, little still is known of our visitors and what they seek in a museum. I am aware of the numerous valuable surveys that have been undertaken but still we suffer, as do our film and advertising colleagues, from not really being able to identify what magical element makes an exhibition a success or failure. We tend also, in our professionalism, based as it is on sophisticated major museums concepts, to assume that museums of all levels are intended to fulfil the same needs. But are small amateur museums, object oriented and perhaps very weak in their standards of display and collections management, so out of step? Could it be that they fill a particular need? We know too little of such small museums, of the motivations of those who form them and of the interests of those who visit them. They can well be more popular than many professional museums. Certainly we are all very much aware that museums attract only a proportion of the overall population. Can we afford not to explore far more vigorously this problem of reaching a far wider proportion, of finding out what would encourage them to make better use of their museums?

Within the major museums there is an urgent need to examine the role of the curator and to bring order into an often confused situation. The role of the curator (preserve, study, communicate) is the only one that matches that of the museum as a whole. With the development of other specialist departments, notably education, display and conservation, the role of the curator has significantly changed throughout the century in the areas of conservation and communication. Still, however, the responsibility remains for collections and for study, in other words research. But the argument of whether research is a valid function continues and there is all too often a suspicion among museum colleagues of ivory tower research. A resolution of this dispute is long overdue, to determine just what proportion of curatorship research should occupy.

At a more mundane level, it is ludicrous that we still allocate curatorial responsibilities on a discipline basis without regard to the size of the workload involved. It is possible to quantify the cataloguing and conservation workload involved in a collection but what is the effective ratio of curator to collections: 1:5,000, 1:10,000, 1:50,000 artifacts? Much of the problem of unpublished, ill-managed collections that our museums have inherited, results from the lack of the data on which to develop effective curatorial staffing policies. Much of the problem of inadequate curatorship stems from the same source.

These are but a few major problems that, for me, urgently require study and solution. There are many others to which museum colleagues would give equal importance. But what is obvious in the museum profession today is that museums themselves offer few opportunities for their staff to undertake major long term studies on such matters. This is understandable for the museums themselves must respond to very practical everyday demands related to their direct responsibilities. Few among their staff can devote research time to the solution of major museological problems as well as to their own work and perhaps specialised research. The need is for museological researchers who can stand back from the museum, to concentrate on single projects the results of which can then be of benefit to the profession as a whole. It is here that university departments of museology can play their vital part. To do so, however, requires that they do more than merely train museum personnel. It also requires that museology achieves full acceptance as an university discipline. Until then it will continue as but a science in embryo.

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Museology: Science or Practical Experience?

Museology may be defined as the complete study of each aesthetic, business-oriented, practical, managerial, academic and public relations oriented function necessary to understand the museum in today's complex world. Working in a contemporary art museum or gallery requires practical knowledge and experience in every field of art and business; it requires as well, a strong background in the historical and modern discipline to fully utilize a museum's collection and exhibition inventory.

Museology today is a profession. It has succeeded as such without the one ingredient inherent in all other recognized professions: A common body of knowledge and a common course of study shared by all members of this profession. That it has done so is a tribute of no little worth to museum staff persons today. That it can continue to remain a profession in the future without such common knowledge and study is doubtful.

The study of museology should no longer be considered a random accumulation of knowledge gleaned by competent persons with a potpourri of knowledge in various disciplines and a penchant for learning on the job. Tenets of museological study should, if the field is to continue as the profession which it now is, be standardized to include concise academic preparation for the diverse situations faced daily by museum personnel.

Various professional level positions in museums do, in fact, require different talents and training. All museum personnel, however, should have the same basic museum education at the master's level with the option of continuing their academic education in a multitude of specialized fields. For example, a person preparing for a career in an art museum should have a liberal undergraduate education with a concentration in the history and practice of art. A passion for objects and an "eye" for good art are also essential elements for a successful museum career. Granted, these elements cannot be taught, but they can be developed. For instance, a knowledge of art history as preparation for a career in a fine arts museum is essential, but it is only part of a total picture. That total picture includes management skills, fiscal knowledge and accountability, marketing knowledge, public relations tools and practical "hands on" experience and ability.

This article is advocating, therefore, a standardized graduate level education for all personnel seeking careers in the museum field. This graduate education should first consist of the equivalent of an M.A. in the specific academic discipline of the museum in which ones wishes to work. It will provide the historical perspective and understanding of the type of work the museum exhibits and the research methods required in that field. In addition, a practical knowledge of "hands on" experience is necessary to put this knowledge to work. Courses in museum history, curatorship, connoisseurship, management (both financial and human), law and ethics, education, major and minor problems facing the museum in the final quarter of the 20th century, fundraising, and research are all essential in order to provide a common body of knowledge and experience for a museum professional.

Not only is this body of diverse knowledge necessary to make a museum staff person a professional, it is essential if museology is to continue to hold its recently established position as a true profession. It is no longer sufficient for museum personnel to be connected by the breaking thread of one commonality: The fact that they all work for museums. Museum staff must begin to be educated in common areas so that the time will not come when, in meetings of museum personnel one does not find art historians conversing with management experts regarding how to fill a space with objects. If this happens, museology as a profession will become something akin to a modern day Tower-of-Babel.

More and more today, the museum field is becoming a business, albeit a business where knowledge and love of objects of cultural and natural value is a crucial ingredient. As such, the museum field must be managed as a business. What corporation today would risk its future by hiring a chief executive officer who knew a great deal about the corporation's product, but knew little or nothing about finances, management or marketing? Probably only museums.

Today we are seeing an interesting phenomenon taking place. Major museums are hiring joint directors, one to handle the aesthetic needs of the museum and the other to handle the business aspects. Is this a sign that the museology profession is incapable of producing one individual capable of handling both aspects of museum needs? One would hope that this is not the correct conclusion; on the other hand, it may be.

What is lacking and is, therefore, necessitating this situa-

tion is not a lack of people qualified to fulfil both functions. It is, rather, a lack of a standardized program of study to prepare qualified persons to fill a role the duties of which expand almost daily. It is the lack of that cohesive body of knowledge so necessary to make a profession truly a profession.

Since specific types of museums are becoming increasingly specialized with unique problems, functions and solutions, new associations are forming between similar types of museums and staff members holding the same positions within those museums. University and college museums and galleries are also in the process of forming an international association to promote their mutual welfare. As this splintering in the profession takes place, what cohesive force will hold them together in one professional body? The answer is a common body of museological knowledge taught through a professional graduate school which confers a standardized museology degree in cooperation with a professional museum, which may be part of the same institution.

There is a rapidly growing bibliography for the museum professional which overlaps a number of related fields. These include: management, law, accounting, library science, psychology, sociology, technology, human resources, educational evaluation, marketing, computer science,

architecture and design to name the most obvious. In order for one to gain a working knowledge of these areas, an advanced specialized education which makes this information museologically relevant is necessary and required for a successful museum career. We can no longer afford the luxury of unlimited time for on the job training, nor can we afford the luxury of living in an aesthetic tower. We need highly skilled and educated museum professionals now to cope with the complex issues of contemporary museums.

Is museology a science or a practical experience? It is both, and it is much more in addition. The time has come when persons involved in educating future museum personnel must realize that they are educating people to fill a professional niche, with a specific body of professional needs and requirements. They are no longer educating students to go out and get a job.

Unless this fact is realized and acted upon, museology may become, instead of an exciting professional field, an anachronism. Or worse, a field where no one can share any common knowledge or experiences with anyone else. In other words, nonexistent.

The great professions have all developed out of great professional schools. If we deny our own professional school, which is the study of museology, we will never fulfil the potential of becoming a truly great profession.

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Criteria on the place of museology in the system of sciences

Ever since human society came into existence knowledge has continued to extend with an ever increasing speed. In the course of historical development the steady increase of knowledge brought about a growing differentiation in the fields of knowledge, a division of labour within scientific activity, and an increasing specialisation. Modern science today is an articulated system of knowledge with multiple ramifications, comprising more than one thousand individual specialized disciplines.⁽¹⁾

To analyse the place of museology in the system of sciences and to give the correct answer to the question whether museology possesses the character of a scientific discipline one must not proceed from subjective considerations, expectations or fears, but exclusively from those objective criteria that determine a scientific discipline and its subject.

What is a scientific (or individual) discipline?

It is an independent field of knowledge historically grown and systematized by basically exact cognition of nature and society and their laws, which is fixed by certain conceptions, (especially laws), statements, theories and hypotheses, and which differs from other scientific disciplines by its subject, methods, and specific conceptions.

According to their subjects different scientific disciplines are integrated in the complex scientific system, and there they are once more subdivided.

Astronomy, physics, chemistry, geology, biology etc. which are subdivided into numerous specialized disciplines, for instance, belong to the group of natural sciences; while the science of history, political science, jurisprudence, pedagogy, sociology, political economy etc rank with the group of social sciences. Except those basic disciplines (primary sciences) and their specialized disciplines there are supporting sciences (secondary sciences). Natural and social sciences overlap in such fields as medicine, psychology, agrarian science, technical disciplines etc. Besides there are general structure sciences as mathematics, cybernetics etc.

What is the subject of study of a scientific discipline? By the subject of a scientific discipline one means the complex of attributes, structure and developing laws of certain fields (parts, aspects, appearances, processes) of reality (i.e. objective reality or its reflection in our consciousness), which are explored by the scientific discipline concerned.⁽²⁾

It is the essential task of any scientific discipline to find and formulate the objective laws of its special subject of study. Which is the subject of study of museology?

As it is generally known there were a lot of discussions and different opinions concerning this question and problems directly or indirectly connected with it.⁽³⁾ The discussions on it continue. Ilse Jahn gave a survey on the state of the discussion on the object of museology.⁽⁴⁾ She analysed critically international and national discussions as well as perceptions in this field and she explains the reasons for all the difficulties in defining the object and classifying the complex field of museology and its various parts with the fact that only the 'museum institution' is taken into consideration.

The following publications containing conceptions on the object of museology appeared in other socialist countries:

Kleines Wörterbuch der Museumstermini, Projekt, Kulturforschungsinstitut, Moskva 1974; Taschenwörterbuch musealer Termini (Entwurf), Kulturforschungsinstitut, Moskva 1976; J. Beneš, Museologisches Wörterbuch (Muzeologický slovník), Nationalmuseum, Praha 1978; Z. Z. Stránský, Methodologische Fragen der Dokumentation der Gegenwart, in Museologische Hefte (Muzeologické sešity) V, Brno 1974, pp 13—43; Die Probleme von Inhalt, Didaktik und Ästhetik moderner Museumsausstellungen (Internationales Seminar für Museologie), Hrsg. I. Éri, Zentralinstitut für Museumswesen Ungarns, Budapest 1978; Dictionarium Museologicum, Manuskriptdruck 2. Auflage, Hrsg. I. Éri, Budapest 1979; etc.

In his theses on methodological questions of the documentation of the present time Z. Z. Stránský terms the museum a documentary institution that accumulates, preserves, and communicates the authentic testimonies of objective reality.⁽⁵⁾ To him the object of museology is museality, i.e. a specific documentary value⁽⁶⁾ of concrete and perceivable objects of nature and society, the value of the authentic evidence of reality.⁽⁷⁾

But is it right to equalize the specific subject of museology with the general documentary value of concrete and perceivable objects of nature and society? Other scientific disciplines as well base upon concrete and perceivable objects of nature and society, and gnoseologically these objects do not have a documentary value "from the first", but only in connection with the respective specialized discipline and its objectives.

Objects of nature are "the working base of natural-scientific disciplines with . . . an individual development like botany, geology, mineralogy, palaeontology, zoology, which are articulate in themselves".⁽⁹⁾ In the science of history objects of the social development like "oral, written, graphic, or material sources" form a working base for the historical source study, being one specialized discipline of the science of history.⁽⁹⁾

Efforts which intend to pretend that the primary sources of scientific knowledge of nature and society are self-existent and are eventually discovered to be the specific object of museology do not lead to satisfactory solutions.

Years ago Wolfgang Herbst pointed the danger of such a mistake in his work "Geschichtswissenschaft und Geschichtsmuseum": "Nolens volens the subject of study becomes an independent scientific subject with its own laws".⁽¹⁰⁾ The museum specificity becomes self-existent, the museum subject becomes absolute, "the museum as a subject would operate as a self-existent thing disengaged from historical situations with an individual scientific discipline, being in its importance superior to specialized disciplines, while the latter would be subordinate to museology, becoming its supporting sciences".⁽¹¹⁾ In December 1964 a project of these on museology, published in "Neue Museumskunde" 1964⁽¹²⁾, had to be refused on a central conference of the leaders of the museums of the G D R in Berlin; taking museology for a documentary science this project, no doubt, intended to elucidate theoretical problems of museology; but it had a wrong initial point in making the attempt "to subordinate all specialized disciplines to a presumable subject of study of museology".⁽¹³⁾

The subject of museology can be worked out only on a gnoseological and scientific-theoretical base, by making use of the above mentioned principles and criteria of a subject of study of a scientific discipline. That means that the complex of attributes, structure- and developing laws of certain fields of reality is to be determined and applied to museology.

To my mind the subject of study covering museology is the complex of attributes, structure- and developing laws, determining the complex process of acquiring, preserving, decoding, researching, and exhibiting selected original objects of nature and society as primary sources of knowledge.

Primary sources of knowledge are the necessary working base of many scientific disciplines — not only of museology — and therefore not specific of a museum. Taxonomy and historical source study, for instance, are parts of a specialized scientific discipline, but not specific of a museum.

Hence the primary sources themselves are not originally the specific subject of museology, but the complex process of acquisition, preservation, decoding, research, and exhibition of primary sources of knowledge. Primary sources of knowledge (also termed originals, original subjects, authentic objects⁽¹⁴⁾ or objects of the direct sensorial perceptivity) are not confined to so-called material sources, respectively objects. Ilse Jahn clearly said, "A fossil ammonite, a skeleton of a saurian, or the mark of the archaeopteryx differ — as museum objects — from a recent snail's skeleton of a lizard or a bird's body only by the time they come from, which perhaps might have an influence on their state of preservation. They are parts of one part of the objective reality, represented by a living organism. An archaeological earthen pot and a recent wine bottle or a grain container are in principle not different, either. It is not understandable why, for instance, written laws, bills, and recipes in cuneiform characters on earthen plates . . . should not, in principle, have the same significance as edicts, treaties, bills, and other written documents typed or written in long hand on paper, as written sources of the present process of communication?"⁽¹⁵⁾

Original objects (primary sources of knowledge), which have arrived at a museum and which are taken from nature and society are termed museum objects.⁽¹⁶⁾ In museums these objects are conserved, restored, prepared, decoded, and examined in different ways according to certain principles and according to the character and state of the museum object. As any other science museology as well comes into existence for the practical requirements of a developing society.

Nature and society continue to change and develop on the base of laws, operating objectively. Of infinite variety of objects of the natural and social development certain selected testimonies were and are preserved by people or social institutions of various kinds and for most different reasons. But the question always is to "hold fast" those concrete and perceivable testimonies of the historical past of nature and society for the present and for the future, as they otherwise might be lost by the further development of nature and society, which can neither be cancelled nor stopped. That includes the prospective preservation of selected testimonies of the present for the future. The transitory nature of single objects and phenomena led to the growing social requirement and to the necessity of a long-term, durable preservation of selected testimonies of nature and society, and for the purpose of research and education, as "a measure and indicator of the economic, political, social, and cultural development in a certain time, a certain society, and a certain territory,"⁽¹⁷⁾ or "for a comparison of the stages of development of historical processes of nature in a time to come, either to compare processes of cognition, to find out whether they are reiterative or testable, or to procure knowledge".⁽¹⁸⁾

Thus such testimonies serve as "primary sources of knowledge, and as a material evidence they undoubtedly prove the existence of the object concerned and similar objects as well. Without these material testimonies, which cannot be doubted, the proof of this or that phenomena would be complicated in many cases".⁽¹⁹⁾

The historically originated and steadily growing general social requirement for a long-term, durable preservation of selected testimonies, that is, the primary sources of nature and society, may be suitably confined and determined to a specific field of study for "the subject of any established scientific discipline" is "not simply given, but — regarding the function of a science — a selected one."⁽²⁰⁾

"The formation of a discipline is a social event with a complex character with results from the reciprocal effect of specific requirements of society, qualitative changes in corresponding scientific working fields, and the foundation of self-existent institutions".⁽²¹⁾ The foundation of corresponding institutions begins parallel to the formation of a scientific discipline. The institution itself is neither a scientific discipline nor a part of it, but a necessary institutional base of scientific disciplines. Hence museums, for instance, are institutional bases of a complex of different scientific disciplines, but they themselves are not parts of scientific disciplines, which is proved by the history of museum system.

According to gnoseological and scientific theoretical criteria the subject of museology is suitably limited and profiled by the fact that it is interpreted as the complex of attributes, structure and developing laws determining the complex process of acquisition, preservation, decoding, research and exhibition of selected original objects of nature and society as primary sources of knowledge. It is not the original primary sources themselves, forming the necessary working base of many scientific disciplines, and the unilateral designation of museology as one part of documentary sciences (here comparisons to archivalistics and bibliography are unjustifiably schematic) which are specific to museums, but the complex process of acquisition, preservation, decoding,

research, and exhibition of selected original objects of nature and society as primary sources of knowledge, which in social practice corresponds to the known basic functions of museum work and museums.⁽²²⁾

It is the task of museology and museological research to uncover and formulate those attributes, structures and developing laws of this complex which are specific to museums.

The analysis of museum-basic categories is important, but to fix the basic categories by a material mastering of the many-sided reality and to recognise mutual relations will not be sufficient for scientific work; laws have to be formulated that are incontestably typical of the mutual relationships and connections of museological phenomena and of categories originating from them.

According to the criteria of a definition of science and resulting from these statements museology may be defined as follows: museology is a historically grown social-scientific discipline, dealing with laws, principles, structures, and methods of the complex process of acquisition, preservation, decoding, research, and exhibition of selected movable⁽²³⁾ original objects of nature and society as primary sources of knowledge which creates the theoretical base for museum work and museum system with the help of a generalized and systematized experience.

Compared to those disciplines defined as basic or specialized (primary sciences) used in museums museology has only the character of a supporting (secondary) science. Hence, and because of its close connection to many other

disciplines of science, it will be necessary for museology to cooperate with them and to be integrated in them. Museology comprises museum theory, museum methods, and the history of the museum system.

Notes

- (1) *Grundlagen der marxistisch-leninistischen Philosophie*, p 13, Berlin 1971
- (2) Cp. *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*, 1, pp 449, 492, Leipzig 1975; *Dialektischer und historischer Materialismus*, pp 96—97, Berlin 1974
- (3) See e. g. Hübn, E. *Museologie — Geschichte, Gegenstand, Methoden*, *Neue Museumskunde*, Heft 4, pp 291—294, Berlin 1973
- (4) Jahn, I. *Die Museologie als Lehr- und Forschungsdisziplin mit spezieller Berücksichtigung ihrer Funktion in naturhistorischen Museen — Geschichte, gegenwärtiger Stand und theoretische Grundlagen*, Dissertation (B) Humboldt-Universität, pp 4—26, Berlin 1978, and thesis, p 3
- (5) Stránský, ad loc., p. 28
- (6) *Ib.*, p 38
- (7) *Ib.*, p 31 and pp 34—35
- (8) See *Neue Museumskunde*, Heft 2, p 126, Berlin 1980
- (9) *Ib.*
- (10) *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, Heft 1, p 9, Berlin 1972
- (11) *Ib.*
- (12) *Neue Museumskunde*, Heft 3, Beilage, Berlin 1974
- (13) *Neue Museumskunde*, Heft 1, Beilage, pp 29—31, Berlin 1965; *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, ad loc.; *Kleines Wörterbuch des Museumswesens*, Institut für Museumswesen der DDR, Schriftenreihe Heft 6, p IX, Berlin 1975
- (14) Cp. *Neue Museumskunde*, Heft 2, p 130, Berlin 1980
- (15) *Neue Museumskunde*, Heft 4, p 282, Berlin 1979
- (16) *Neue Museumskunde*, Heft 2, p 126, Berlin 1980
- (17) *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, ad loc., p 12 (W. Herbst)
- (18) *Neue Museumskunde*, Heft 2, p 76 (I. Jahn), Berlin 1980
- (19) *Beiträge zur sowjetischen Museumskunde*, Heft 1, p 20, Halle 1960
- (20) *Rostocker Wissenschaftshistorische Manuskripte*, Heft 1, p 52, Rostock 1978
- (21) *Ib.*, p 23
- (22) See e. g. *Die Hauptaufgaben der Museen der DDR bis 1980*, in *Schriftenreihe*, Heft 9, Institut für Museumswesen der DDR, Teil 2, pp 201—223, Berlin 1977
- (23) See Benet, ad loc., pp 18, 78 and 91

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On the initiative of the representatives of ICOM a very important project is being realized: it is the edition of a Treatise on Museology. It is undoubtedly a desirable work. It will form a dividing line in the development of museological thought up until now, not only through the things it contains, but also through its initiative and its contribution to the overall development of museology.

Such an important task, however, cannot be realized through a mere accumulation of individual standpoints and views. It must comprehend the system of knowledge on museology as a broad professional effort, developed in full harmony with the present methodological standard of the scientific thinking. This is the only way of bringing the resulting work up to the actual needs of museum practice and to convert it into a much needed basis for entering into communication with other parts of the special and scientific systems and institutional networks.

Such a complex task cannot be realized once and for-all. For its realization we must allow the necessary time and creation of a publication base. We must purify the present way of museum theory thinking. The final version of the Treatise on Museology should not contain marginal, superfluous and inorganic matters, but only vital and substantial elements determining the basis of the whole structure we call museology.

For the above reasons we must welcome the idea of publishing the Museological Working Papers (MuWoP) — they form an excellent discussion platform for the preparation of the basic components of the structure of the Treatise on Museology and it deserves therefore our all-round support.

The first question for discussion is fully in line with these intentions.

As regards this specific question, we could refer our readers to a number of works already published — but in my view it would not be correct. There is no use to keep repeating one's own views — it is more important to defend one's viewpoint in confrontation with others — provided that they accept the common rules of discussion and are able to convince others of the accuracy and truth of their own range of ideas.

From this viewpoint I accept the question, I accept the challenge and I am ready for a gallant tournament of ideas.

I

Already the philosophers of antiquity held that one should have his doubts about everything. I hope you will understand me correctly when I start with my dubitations about the very question: Museology — science or just practical work?

How shall we state this question?

Quite schematically: We have to decide whether A has B or C properties.

Variable quantity A is covered by the term of "Museology", containing also some characteristics from B (-logy). This, however, influences our conclusion. At the same time the question deals with A as an objectively existing phenomenon. B (science) has been put into contraposition to C (practical work). We have here also the adverb "just", whose meaning is somewhat ambiguous. It can mean that we want to know whether A is B or C at present, but it can also mean that we are asking whether A is what it has been up to now, i. e. that we presume some changes.

The question formulated in this way — as I have indicated — does not do justice to the reality we are studying. Perhaps it would be more to our purpose to put it in the following way:

a) When we operate with a certain term or terms, we must presume that they have a certain intention, i. e. they cover part or certain aspects of reality. We must be therefore interested mainly in the relation of terms and realities, and also in the fact whether it is a subjective or objective reality.

b) If these terms cover a certain reality — this reality must have certain characteristics separating it from the totality of reality. The characteristics must be substantial for reality, conditioning its proper existence.

c) If this special reality exists at present, we must find out whether it existed also earlier, i. e. whether it is developing. If we can document that it is developing, we must suppose that the present state is only one of its development phases.

d) If the studied phenomenon exists and continues developing, its existence is conditioned both historically and socially, i. e. the phenomenon has a certain mission and purpose. From its purpose and sense we can conclude not only what it is, but also what it used to be and what it will be in the future. Let us give some thought to these subquestions.

2

Besides the term "Museology" used in the above question there are also other terms of identical meaning, or differing only in some marginal aspects. Let us mention e. g. the terms of "Museography" and "Museum Theory". Quite apart is the term "Muzeistic" (in English perhaps Museistics) — analogous with the terms Aesthetics and Informatics — in use in Rumania.

All these terms have a common denominator: they refer to the museum phenomenon. This, however, does not mean that the designate area of these terms should be directly connected with this phenomenon. All the above-mentioned terms contain a characteristic (genus proximum) leading us to reflect on the proper, real museum phenomenon. The accuracy of this conclusion can be confirmed also by the terminology used, having its own words for covering this phenomenon as it exists in practice, such as the term "Museum's practical work".

Our terms refer, as we can see, to a phenomenon, that can be described as theory of museum practice.

This is also fully in keeping with the general relation: theory and practice.

Museum theory objectivizes, namely in museological production. Its scope and orientation can be documented with the help of museological bibliographies. This theory has its impact on the structure of teaching programmes of museology, and also on the work of specialized institutes dealing with the theory of museum work (recently another institute of this kind has been created in West Berlin).

The terms in use cover the objectively existing phenomenon of museum theory.

3

As regards the comprehension of the determining characteristics of the theoretical museum phenomenon, in museological literature what we can find mostly are only the definitions of individual authors and their attempts to sum up the characteristics of museology in order to define it, that is to say museum theory (e. g. RIVIÈRE, ALOI, NEUSTUPNÝ, RAZGON, BURCAW, AVE). The first attempt at a metatheoretical approach to the problem was realized in the mid nineteen-sixties at the Department of museology of the Brno University and this attempt was followed by a number of other authors (e. g. HÜHNS, JAHN, GLUZINSKI).

On analysing theoretical museum literature we shall arrive at the conclusion that from gnoseological and methodological viewpoints it is not up to the present requirements. A large percentage of works remain in the realm of the historiography of museums, many works concentrate on describing individual museum activities, or at the best they reach the level of empirical generalizations and classifications. There are relatively few works penetrating deeper in their intention to discover. Many works complying with the methodological requirements do so in the sphere of engaging scientific disciplines, and not through a proper theoretical museum approach.

The situation is similar also in the case of teaching programmes. There are departments of museum theory, that is, of museology at many universities. The teaching process — as documented by some of the published teaching programmes — rests in most cases on a relatively weak theoretical basis; the teaching concentrates on handling over positive experience, practical instructions, teaching of methodology and techniques. All these things are important, but on this level museum theory and museology cannot become real counterparts of other university disciplines.

In the institutes specialized in museum science — we can learn from published concepts programmes and plans of activities, and also from their museum theory activities and production (science and research activities) that theory is somewhere in the background. The forefront is dominated

by organisation, documentation, information, educational and publicity activities.

From the metatheoretical viewpoint, present museum theory is only partially up to the criteria of theory itself. Theory, however, is not yet science. If we studied this production from the metascientific aspect, we should arrive at the conclusion that only some of the works fulfil the necessary scientific criteria. One of the most striking proofs that this theory has not reached the status of an independent scientific discipline is the fact that the results of museum theory production are not accepted widely as achievements of scientific research. In other words: museology lacks its own place within the present system of sciences.

Museum theory thus appears as a certain specific area of human intellectual activities, having certain characteristics of pure theory, with trends towards separating this theory and constituting it as a scientific discipline.

4

Even many museum workers hold that the enthusiasm for museum theory, or more particularly for museology, is a matter characteristic of the present era and that it is a trend with very subjective motivations.

Some authors tried to fix, at least in broad outlines, the development of these theoretical efforts. Here we could mention by name some students of the history of museums (WITTLIN, BAZIN). From the last decades we have also several special works in this direction (MALINOWSKI, STRÁNSKÝ).

Their writings contain material documenting the fact that the works by QUICCHEBERG, MAJOR, NEICKELIUS, LINNÉ, KLEMM, GRAESSE, MURRAY, SCHLOSSER and COLEMAN are not isolated manifestations, but organic parts of the development of museum theory thinking, having not only its representatives, but also development stages and culmination points.

We lack so far the work documenting the originality of this development and singling out the factors conditioning this theoretical creation. But the work by MALINOWSKI (1970) is a very convincing document, indicating that our ideas are correct.

Museum theory and museology have their own history, differing a great deal from the history of museums.

We are also to blame for the fact that we have not paid sufficient attention to this history, namely that we have not been able to evaluate theoretically the contribution of all those who entered the road of museum theory long before us. What this can mean for the proper development of present museology can be documented, for example, in the work of ENNENBACH.

5

If there was museum theory in the past and if it was developing, it means that it fulfilled certain social needs.

The case is also the same today.

Museum theory, that is museum science, has its right to existence and to further development only as long as it complies with the concrete needs and requirements of the present society.

If we take into account that the museum phenomenon, though in various forms and conceptions, accompanies practically the entire process of forming human culture, it is logical that it has its place and its special mission also in the present human society.

If museums were developing in line with the development of mankind, and museum theory was developing in a similar way, it follows that both museum practice and museum theory can exist and can preserve their right to further development only if they manage to maintain the required relation to the general development of the society.

While in the 19th century, and even in the first half of the

20th century, intuitive or empirical approach sufficed in many spheres of human activities, the second-half of the present century brought about deep and revolutionary changes. The factors of the scientific-technical revolution penetrate the totality of natural and social realities, reaching deep into their structure.

No museum can exist outside this development constellation. The recent manifestation of the crisis in the position of the museum reflected the contradictions between the requirements of the development of society, and the stage museums have reached.

Today the problems of the museum's existence cannot be solved in the realm of practice. For the realization of this task we need a special tool, enabling us to discover the objective sides of reality, to define its laws and to find the optimum ways of both solving daily tasks and working ahead.

This task can be realized only through museum theory, moreover, through museology.

The postulate of revolutionary change holds true for both museum practice and for museum theory. If museum theory is to fulfil its task, it must acquire a standard complying with the latest criteria of theory, that is, of science.

This can be accomplished only if we concentrate on analysing the problems which determine these activities.

Here we must mention first of all the problem of the object of the theory, respectively of science. The hitherto prevailing intuitive approach to the museum as the object of theory sees museum activities together with different organizational and technical problems, with the result that many authors identify museum theory with practice. The problem of identifying the object is of key importance. Its solution will determine further development of museum theory.

Directly connected with it is also the problem of a methodological basis. Its principles have not been established. Certain ideas prevail here on some kind of synthesising of various scientific branches within the framework of museum theory, beginning with general methods and ending with the methods of concrete scientific branches. Many theoreticians do not assimilate the functions of the individual spheres of applied methods with the postulate of detaching specific museological methods.

Of no less importance is the question of the language of museum theory. The problems surrounding this question have been fully uncovered e. g. in the Soviet, German or international attempts to work out and publish museological dictionaries (see *Dictionarium museologicum*). Theoretical vagueness is the main cause of broad differences of meaning. Museum theory has failed to delimit the basic pillars of its structure, it has failed to make explicit its linguistic basis. This shortcoming, of course, cannot be solved by purely terminological or lexicographical attempts.

Finally we also face the question of what is a theoretical system. So far we have seen only very timid attempts. Many students confuse the theoretical system with the functional structure of the museum. The theoretical system, however, is not a mere classification of acquired knowledge. It has a more important role: not only does it model the reality to be studied, retrospectively seen, it becomes a tool for its further and deeper study. However, our museum theory is not yet that far.

Without solving these basic questions we cannot document that museum theory is a mere theory or science, or for that matter that we do not need either of them. Sometimes we come across such views too.

6

On summarizing the conclusions of the individual sub-questions we can assume the following standpoint:

The term museology or museum theory covers an area of a specific field of study focused on the phenomenon of the museum. We face here the relation of theory and practice.

The overall standard that museum theory has reached is not very satisfactory from the metatheoretical viewpoint, i. e. it is not quite up to the present criteria put on scientific theory.

However, it is a historical phenomenon. It was developing in the past and at present we can also detect certain trends aimed not only at improving this theory, but also at shifting it into the sphere of a specific scientific discipline.

On judging the development and present state of museum theory thinking from the viewpoint of laws appearing in general in the history of sciences (BERNAL, DOBROV), we can objectively prove that museum theory thinking is at present at the stage of constituting itself and separating from other sciences. That's why it is still heavily loaded with empiricism and hindered by direct practice.

This theoretical thinking shows at the same time certain development and structural characteristics, documenting that there are objective conditions for detaching this theory and for its constituting as a specific scientific discipline, provided that it will be able to settle its own metatheoretical problems.

The above question can be answered in the following way: A is at the stage of detaching, i. e. becoming B. However, A is in no case identical or identifiable with C. A is in specific relation to C, but due to the fact that it is approaching B, it necessarily recedes from C. But the closer A is to B or the more they become identical, the more it will reapproach C, in other than the original plane, i. e. in the plane of theoretical interpretation.

As our prominent geneticist KRÍŽENECKÝ put it, "good theory is a most practical thing".

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Following the dictum that one should define one's terms before discussion, the definition of science on which the following is based is that *science* is:

systematized knowledge derived from observation, study, and experimentation, carried on in order to determine the nature or principles of what is being studied⁽¹⁾.

As for "museology," Ellis Burcaw's description is clear and all-embracing:

Museology is the branch of knowledge concerned with the study of the purposes and organization of museums⁽²⁾.

For this presentation there must be added the Burcaw definition of "museography" as:

the body of techniques related to museology⁽³⁾.

In the context of the theme of this essay, we can say that whether or not "museology" is a science must be considered in light of the validity of its constituting a body of systematized knowledge from which the nature and principles of museum work have been derived and from which a theory universally applicable to museum work has been developed.

The title of the essay sets the stage for consideration of museology as perhaps not a body of systematized knowledge but rather a body of empirically derived techniques used in museums, essentially Burcaw's "museography."

In reality, we cannot separate museology and museography. Establishment of a reliable science of museology requires that theories be tested, and theories leading to the highest level of fulfillment of the purposes of museums must be tested in the only laboratories that matter: museums. To test those theories we must call on the techniques of museography, and current efforts to build a science of museology are in large part directed not at museology as such but at the effectiveness of various museographical techniques. For all practical purposes, museography and museology are two sides of the same coin, not separate entities.

If the purposes of museums are to collect, to preserve, to study, and to explain their stock-in-trade, the objects, the

physical data, entrusted to their care, or principles of natural or human existence by means of those objects, it is apparent that only one of the four purposes is unique to museums: to collect.

Preservation of objects, for instance, is not the exclusive province of museums and museum employees. In Allegheny County in the state of Pennsylvania, the state is responsible for 1,254 bridges. Of these a large number have had to be closed, replaced, or removed recently because of age and resultant deterioration but many others are being preserved ("conserved" in museum parlance) by rigorous rehabilitation. The engineers performing this conservation are hardly museum employees, but they are preserving objects.

In like manner, study of museum objects is not unique to museum employees. Those who do the studies, artists, art historians, geologists, biologists, anthropologists, are not employees as often as they are museum employees, if not more often. They are persons practicing their professions in museums only because the objects of their interest are in museum collections. Their philosophical foundations and their goals are of their own disciplines and coincide only incidentally with the "museum" goals of museum employees.

It can be argued that when as a museum employee one works with the objects of one's museum as an art historian or a geologist according to the dicta of one's discipline that one is not functioning as a museum employee but as a professional of another field, and it is only when the study and the results are consciously directed toward use in a museum context that one is truly working as a museum employee.

This attitude is true as well of the museum's purpose of explaining its objects or principles based on examples furnished by use of its objects. We think automatically of public galleries when we consider museum explanation: "museum education," as it is often called. Certainly most laymen think of museums as display galleries to which they come for entertainment and education⁽⁴⁾. How much organized education one can achieve by means of public galleries is debatable, but most laymen are convinced that they will learn at least something new from a visit to a museum, from viewing objects and reading or hearing explanations not available to them in any other environment⁽⁵⁾.

But it is only the environment and the objects that are unique to museums. Present experience and practice in the United States is that persons adept at teaching using museum objects are not recruited from among museum em-

ployees but from the educationally trained world at large and are then trained within the museum for use of the museum's objects in the educational process.

Exhibits are exposure of specimens for education without the physical presence and guidance of a teacher. In the United States, there is a general surge in the direction of employment of professional exhibit firms for exhibits that are more than minor. This is not as true of art museums as it is of other sorts, for art museums can achieve one of their educational goals just by displaying their objects in situations where the unique qualities of the objects can be observed by knowledgeable people, but the impetus is there as well.

Other means of explanation, articles, books, television and radio performances, lectures, are not the exclusive province of museum employees. Museum employees are being used more and more only as resource persons upon whose expertise professional writers, film producers, and others, develop what are deemed stimulating and educationally effective presentations within or without the museum environment.

All this leads to the premise that the only phase of museology that is unique to museums is collecting, and that it is only in achieving this purpose that museums can develop a science specific to museology.

There are private collectors and collections, of course, but in our context we consider only socially organized collectors and collections: museums. Even here museology and museography are intertwined.

At first glance one might say that collecting does not require application of museographical techniques. In practice it does. What a museum collects is conditioned not only by its collecting goals but by its collections of the moment, by space available for storage or display, by facilities for repair, restoration, and preservation, even by finances sufficient to purchase or properly handle collections, and all these, even the financing, are very much museographical.

A single museum can have a philosophy of collecting. It can set as its aim the amassing of the most representative, finest, fullest, and educationally useful collection of whatever lies in the field or fields of its interest: production of salt from the Salzberg in Hallein, Austria; local Native

American archeological gold effigies in San Jose, Costa Rica; beer brewing in Brussels, Belgium; or the Salvador Dali Museum in Cleveland, Ohio, the United States. I do not believe it possible to erect a philosophy of collecting for the museum world at large at this time.

Museology can be accepted as a set of universal principles holding that any museum should collect, preserve, study, and explain to the best of its ability, but that is not science. That is philosophy and good philosophy, but it is not science.

As intimated above, most work I've studied that is reputedly scientific and dedicated to providing systematized knowledge on which to erect a structure of universal principles is not concerned with the purposes or organization of museums but with improving museum techniques. If museology and museography are distinct phases of museum work, not much is being done to develop a science of museology per se.

Controls of much work being done in the name of establishing a science of museum work are hardly adequate to provide scientific results. Science's observation, study, and experiment demand rigorous comparative control measures that are absent from nearly all studies that are called scientific studies concerning the purposes and organization of museums.

I believe it most fruitful to consider museology a body of museum techniques for advancing the purposes and organization of museums that has been developed and found practical and productive by museum employees as they performed their daily tasks.

Museology may some day be a science, although I doubt it, but that day has yet to dawn.

Notes

- (1) Guralnik, David B., ed. (1970). *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, p 1275, World Publishing Company, New York and Cleveland
- (2) Burcaw, G. Ellis (1971). *Museum Training Courses in the United States and Canada*, p 8, American Association of Museums, Washington, D. C.
- (3) *Ibid*, p 8
- (4) Wiegman, Paul G. and Wiegman, Pamela M. (1972). *Evaluation in Museums*, unpublished ms. Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh
- (5) *Ibid*

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1 Definition of museology

What was museology, what is museology and what should it be?

Words which actually mean museology already appeared before the Second world war. These words include museology, museography, museum studies, Museumskunde, Museologie, muséologie, muséographie, museografia, muzevedeniye, etc. Nearly half a century has passed since the publication of "Museographie", a two volume work compiled by the International Museums Office, Paris.

In spite of this, no accurate definition of so-called "museology" has been found. In fact, these descriptions were used as a summary of whole aspects of museums such as definitions, functions, collections, architectures, types, staff, administration, museum services, museum networks, etc. These types of descriptions might be better recognized as a kind of descriptive science, and expressed in the word "museo + graphy = museography", even though most recent scientists do not recognize this as a modern science but just as practical museum work.

In 1958, the basic definitions of museology and museography were given for the first time at the UNESCO International regional museum seminar held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. That is to say: "Museology is the branch of knowledge concerned with the study of purposes and organization of museums. Museography is the body of techniques related to museology". The above mentioned definitions were re-stated at the Fifth regional museum seminar in Mexico City in 1962.

Later in 1972, more detailed definitions were given in the ICOM document "Professional training of museum personnel in the world":

— "Museology is museum science. It has to do with the study of the history and background of museums, their role in society, specific systems for research, conservation, education and organization, relationship with the physical environment, and the classification of different kinds of museums".

— "Museography covers methods and practices in the operation of museums, in all their various aspects".

These trial definitions were made at the early stage of revision of ICOM Statutes in 1974, just before the Tenth General Conference of ICOM in Copenhagen by some of the members of the Executive Council and Advisory Com-

mittee who made efforts to include the definitions of museology in the new ICOM Statutes.

Even though their ideas were not accepted, the new ICOM International Committee for Museology was accepted and established in 1977 by the ICOM 12th General Assembly in Moskva.

Above mentioned is a brief review of the development of concepts on museology in the last fifty years as seen through the eyes of a museologist in the Far East.

According to my idea, a framework of a hypothesis on the appearance and development of museology is as follows:

Processes	Stages	Features	Periods
I	Museion and museum stage	Only museums appeared and existed	Museion in Alexandria to Medieval era
II	Museoire (museo + lore) stage	Spread of information on museums	From Renaissance to Industrial revolution
III	Museography stage	Description of museums developed	19th century to early 20th
IV	Museology and museography stage	Start of scientific but qualitative research on museums	Present
V	Museum sciences and Museum technologies stage	Need for quantitative and systematic research on museums	End of 20th century

Above mentioned stages and periods are still hypothetical, but it is obvious that museology has passed through these processes of development in quality. It is interesting to point out that museums actually existed first, and then only afterwards descriptions and theorizations on museums were made continually until present time. In the future more scientific and systematic research is called for. So the theme "Museology — science or just practical museum work" does not mean the discussion on museology alone, but it depends on the conditions and circumstances in the museums in which the museologist finds himself.

In "Outline of Museology" (in Japanese), 1956, I defined museology as follows:

"Museology is a kind of highly developed applied science to study the purposes of museums and the methods for realizing these purposes. These results should aim to develop museums, and contribute to the happiness of mankind and world peace".

I believe my statement summarizes the basic components of museology clearly, that is, museology is a systematic combination of teleology and methodology on museums. Functions, organizations, types, history, administration, etc. are only some items of each of these two classifications: if attempted to make a complete survey, items in the two classifications would be numerous. For this reason I defined museology in the simplest way but at the same time I added that they should contribute to the development of museums and also the happiness of mankind and world peace. The above mentioned "added ideas" may not be accepted by pure scientists, but after reading through publications on museums up to 1979, I still hold to my definition.

2 Basic speciality of museology as an independent science

If museology is an independent science compared to existing sciences including all kinds of applied sciences, it should have a field of speciality and specific scientific methods.

Basic specialities of existing sciences may be classified in the following two fields:

2.1 Study of objects and their functions is the first of the existing specific scientific fields. To use a museum-like-expression, "a science for studying museum materials themselves", concrete or physical sciences belong to this category. This could also be termed "a science studying objects themselves".

2.2 The second specific scientific field is a science studying human beings, and metaphysical sciences cover actually this field as simply expressed "a science for the study of human beings".

2.3 Above mentioned two fields of existing sciences lay weight entirely on objects or humans respectively. But there should be another new field of science for weighing equally on objects and humans. This would be the third specific scientific field, and it would be the basic speciality of museology as an independent science.

I believe this third field should be the original backbone of museology; the systematic combination of values of objects and human beings is the unique method in museology. Of course, before going into this third field, objects and humans should be studied thoroughly in advance. In other words, museology does not eliminate these existing two fields as an important basic field for study. This third field of study is a very definite speciality of museology, and also a highly developed field of applied sciences.

3 Basic points of studies in museology and specialization and systematization of museology

3.1 Basic points of studies in museology will be classified from the following four aspects, namely:

3.1.1 A museum may be recognized as a minimum unit in the same way as an individual human being. In this way there is one aspect for studying museums as a unit. This point is classified more detailed in the following three points:

3.1.1.1 Study of scientific classification of museums.

3.1.1.2 Study of the forms and structures (external and internal).

3.1.1.3 Study of functions of museums.

3.1.2 A museum may be recognized as an individual in a unit, a member of a group, a member of an association, etc. To all these types, there is a second aspect for studying museums as population of units.

3.1.3 A museum cannot exist independently from its circumstances. On the contrary, this third aspect is one of the most important for a museum. That is to say, relations between museums and their social and natural environments should be studied as a basic discipline. From this aspect a study of historical background of museums must be included in this category.

3.1.4 Above mentioned three aspects are the main specializations of studies in museology, but these are similar to an analysis of museums. The results of these studies should be combined in synthetic and systematic ways and used as a basis to manage and administrate museums to meet effectively the needs of society. This is another outcome of studying museums as a whole, that is, studying administration and management of museums including associations of museums, networks of museums, desirable global distribution of museums, etc.

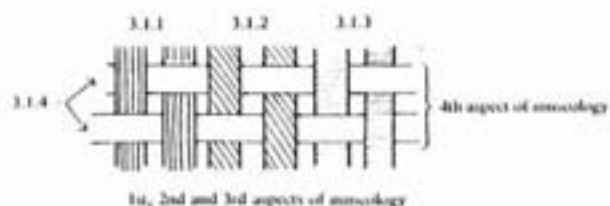
If I liken this to a piece of woven cloth, 3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 might be recognized as longitudinal threads — that is the warp — and 3.1.4 the transverse threads — that is the weft —, the woven cloth being the concept of museology as a whole.

This being the case, systematization and synthesis of each specialized field of museology should be the fourth and final aspect of museology.

Diagram showing relations between three fields of study



Diagram of museology as a whole and its components



3.2 Proposed systems of museology

According to the four basic aspects of museology as mentioned in item 3.1, I propose the following systems of museology about which I already have written in a Japanese paper in 1976 and use as a basis of a museology course at HOSEI University, Tokyo.

3.2.1 Auto-Museology (Individual Museology)

To study museums as a unit. This stands for item 3.1.1, and according to items 3.1.1.1, 3.1.1.2 and 3.1.1.3, Auto-Museology should be classified in the following three respective fields.

3.2.1.1 Museum Taxonomy

Although there are several examples of classification of museums by types, there is no taxonomic and systematic approach. Therefore a systematic classification of museums, something like plant taxonomy, is needed. In 1973 I prepared an article on this theme. I set up a prototype of a museum like a species in biology, and I took five basic criteria to nominate each species of museums by "Penta-nominal Nomenclature". At present I am experimenting to replace this method by using figures to form a method of decimal classification.

3.2.1.2 Morphological Museology

From the standpoint of forms and shapes, components of museums are usually recognized as tangible materials and physical environments, that is to say, lands (extent, precincts, campus, etc.), buildings (architecture, facilities, furniture, equipment, etc.), museum materials (collections, objects, materials, etc.), human beings (museum people, visitors, possible public, etc.), etc.

These items have been studied and discussed at length, but so far there is no definite basic systematic research by common criteria based on forms and shapes. Concepts like morphology, histology, osteology, organology, etc. should be in museology.

3.2.1.3 Functional Museology

The functions of museums are usually recognized as collecting, acquisition, registration, conservation, restoration, investigation, research, presentation, education, interpretation, communication, etc. But it is difficult to find out what are the basic functions, what are the fundamental relations among these functions, and what are ideal functions of museums as a whole. These concepts should be classified as Functional Museology.

3.2.2 Specialized Museology

This is an interim step to develop museology into quantita-

tive and physical sciences. Almost all types of museum studies and efforts for museum development have been concentrated in this field. That is to say, Art Museology, History Museology, Science Museology, Aquaology, etc. if we could call them such. These are quite useful for practical museum management and also for encouraging development of specialized museums, but at the same time, they could be included in the same scientific level of so-called museology, except for their narrower fields of objects.

3.2.3 Syn-Museology (Population Museology)

This stands for item 3.1.2. Studies on museums as "population" actually exist in forms like National Museums Associations, the International Association of Open Air Museums, and even ICOM could be partly included in this category.

Syn-Museology or Population Museology studies the existing relationships among museums and museum groups to systematize them into science. For example, basic relations between museums are expressed in "action, reaction and co-action", and prototypes of structure as museum population could be classified as "disperse structure, open structure and closed structure". This type of studies is a vital aspect of museology.

3.2.4 Socio-Museology

This stands for item 3.1.3. This type of effort has been developed during the last twenty years, but still it is remaining something like an approaching stage to a science. So, this branch of museology should continue to develop into Socio-Museology. At the same time, the historical background of museums in relationship to their natural and human societies should be in this category one of its most important branches.

3.2.5 Museum management

This stands for item 3.1.4. An exact word which sums up the science of administration and management of museums (see 3.1.4) has not yet come to any notice, so temporarily I refer to this as Museum Management.

4 Conclusion

My outline is based on the information available to me. I believe museology is a museum science, and efforts should be made in this decade through international coordination and cooperation between museums and museum scientists for further development of the study of museology.

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I would like to thank the Editorial Board of the ICOM International Committee for Museology which has given me the pleasure and opportunity of preparing this modest study on "Museology — science or just practical museum work?".

This brings up two questions:

What is science?

Is museology a science? What is its history, what are its aims?

Science

It is recognized that science is, in general, exact and reasoned knowledge of certain well defined things. Either it is knowledge based on a particular subject and coordinated around it, or it is an assemblage of human knowledge. It is that which is sure in knowledge. It is against ignorance and the unknown. Scientific discoveries are the result of the work of scientists.

Is museology a science?

This is an annoying question, which has often come up in different ways.

An anonymous author, probably J. G. Rhesser, wrote: "If thirty, or even twenty years ago, someone, either in words or in writing, has considered museology a science, he would have aroused either a compassionate, or a contemptuous smile among many people. It is obvious that today things are quite different" (1883).

Nevertheless, museology is finally recognized as an independent science. It is the science of museums. It has its history, its methods, its activities, its ideas, its research, its workshop, its laboratory, its discoveries, its experiments, its pioneers, its specialists, its open university courses, its preoccupations, its problems, its publications, its international and national organisations, its congresses.

It is really the science of the museum and of museum activities. It was born of scientific activities made by pioneers who contributed to the progress of scientific research, the dissemination of culture, the enrichment of our ideas and the development of our knowledge. Museum research personifies a certain creative activity.

Museology, in fact, was born of a certain scientific know-

ledge, a certain cultural feeling, a certain artistic sense, a certain esthetic sensitivity, and the desire to assemble collections of objects.

Our era opens up new possibilities, not only to prove its right to exist, but also to play an important and decisive role in assigning essential and dynamic new tasks to museums, both in today's society and in the future of humanity.

The oldest "treatise" touching on museology dates from 1727. It was written by a merchant from Hamburg, Gaspar F. Neickel, who gave his advice on the most worthy paintings to acquire and on the best way to classify and to preserve them.

It was towards the end of the 18th century that research with the aim of establishing a rational method of conservation and preservation of works of history and art in museums was made in France. The stimulus behind this work was the Count of Angevillier. The French revolution had realized the famous project of the public display of the royal collections. It even laid the ground for an intense museological activity which grew under the Empire, from where it spread to all the countries of Europe.

During the second half of the 19th century, it was Germany who took the initiative of rational and methodological museological research with the aim of establishing museological principles. It is to be noted here that Wilhelm von Bode was particularly influential in this research which was applied during the construction of the new wing of the Boston Museum in 1903. The progress of museological research is also indebted to anglo-saxon countries.

The coordination of research and museological methods on an international level was carried out by the institution entitled the *International Museums Office*, a branch organization of the *Institute for Intellectual Cooperation*, created by the *League of Nations*. Its interesting specialized periodical was called *Mouseion*. It should be mentioned here that this office was founded following the proposal made by Henri Focillon.

The International Museums Office was replaced in 1947 by the *International Council of Museums (ICOM)*, founded under the auspices of Unesco by Mr. Hamlin, director of the Science Museum in Buffalo, New York, USA.

A course on museology was inaugurated at the Ecole du Louvre by Gaston Briere. In the United States, courses on museology were also given at the Brooklyn Museum, and at the Fogg Museum in Cambridge, Mass. Courses on "the

history of art" were also given in the museums in Toledo and Cleveland. Courses were given on museology as well, generally in universities, but unfortunately not on a steady basis. The interesting subject of museology has been included in the syllabus of the Ecole du Louvre as a permanent course since 1941.

Museology comprises: conservation, display, restoration, and cultural dissemination.

I feel that the museum is a rostrum of civilisations, a cultural centre as well as a centre for scientific research, a sort of popular and free university, a meeting place for tourism. This shows the museum's different mandates: its missions are human, scientific, didactic, social...

All museums in our present era seem to be important regional centres of research and teaching, which can help the work of students and facilitate that of scientists. According to Luc Benoist, some museums seem to be "research centres whose galleries are appendages". In Brussels, the Musée du Cinquantième houses several institutes. The Museo internazionale della ceramica in Faenza, founded in 1920, has a very interesting laboratory.

Other museums organize special courses on the "art of looking at works of art". Departments of education also confirm the museums educational role. Museums' extremely interesting collections were not compiled to be locked behind sullen walls, they should be displayed and presented scientifically, and in good taste.

In my paper presented at the symposium held by the International Committee of ICOM for Museums of Archaeology and History, held in the Soviet Union from 8 to 19 September 1970, I showed the various problems of display of collections, problems of museum architecture, problems of classification and allocation of collections, problems of lighting, models of show cases, problems of explanatory aids, problems of conversion of ancient monuments to museum uses, the problems of display of study collections in store rooms, etc.

Among the tasks of museum curators, an essential mandate is the translation into common languages which appear hermetically closed. Scientific endeavours also contribute to widening the scope of man's knowledge, to helping people to know their cultural heritage, to protect and appreciate it,

as well as their natural heritage, and finally to furthering mutual comprehension between peoples.

The authentic object is an irrefutable witness which continues to draw the public to museums.

Curators sometimes prepare travelling exhibitions which help the public outside of large cities to learn of the importance of their national cultural property, and this activity puts to service the idea of bringing the public to the museum by all possible means. It is obvious that the conditions of contemporary life will force upon museums their renovation into scientific and educational institutions. The contemporary museum is no longer a depository, nor a convent, nor a mausoleum, a cemetery, a curiosity cabinet...

The contemporary museum appears to be a "parlour museum" in Europe, a "club museum" in America, a "school museum" in the Soviet Union, and a "treasure museum" in Egypt and in other Arabic countries. Nevertheless, it is still a source of knowledge. Its museum activities are numerous, and represent the practical aspect of theoretical conception, linked to the development of science and the profile of the culture in the country.

Good professional training for curators will allow them to face energetically and intelligently different museological problems which arise along the road of museological research and progress. Their responsibilities are very heavy, and require taking every means necessary for the protection of collections against theft, fire and destruction. They must think of everyone, and continually keep informed. They are the honourable guardians of the human heritage.

Conclusion

Museology is the science of museums. It owes its birth and its maturity to pioneer museologists who seriously contributed to its spreading to different countries throughout the world. Each country now has its own museums, more or less rich in cultural property. Contemporary life leads man to the future, but men look far into the past of humanity to find their roots. The museum is a sanctuary where man's soul lives on. As Keats said "a thing of beauty is a joy forever". Contemporary man needs this thing of beauty so that it will be, as said Luc Benoist, a joy for all.

What next?

Directions from the Editor

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MuWoP has come out for the first time. You have No. 1 in your hands. Fifteen eminent museologists and museum specialists have come forth and now present their thoughts on the topic "Museology — science or just practical museum work?" A variety of ideas from the whole world. Not at all unanimous or unified. This question to which answers are presented in MuWoP No. 1 is MuWoP's first discussion theme. Every next issue of MuWoP shall present a new topic according to a schedule previously agreed upon. Every time experts appointed by ICOM's national and international committees will air their ideas on MuWoP's pages.

But: the living discussion, what happened to it? It will come, dear friend, and it is in your hands, and in the hands of all members of the museum profession as well, how living, inspiring and fruitful it will be! In the next issue of MuWoP, No. 2 to be exact, in which another group of appointed experts shall present their ideas around the next theme, No. 2, we shall also publish the reactions to the expert contributions on the first theme: "Museology — science or just practical museum work?" which have been

sent to us by you, your colleagues, museum people from the whole wide world.

We hope that MuWoP No. 1 will awaken interest, will put into higher gear museum brains around the world, so that hundreds of both short and long (but not more than 8 pages) contributions to discussion will arrive on the Editor's table. We promise to publish all serious papers, and we are ready to continue in MuWoP No. 3 or 4, or more if necessary. We hope, of course, that the fifteen appointed experts from MuWoP No.1 will not just rest on their laurels but enter the battlefield to defend their own ideas!

When will the discussion end? It depends on how many will write to us. When in the Editorial Board we feel that everybody has had his word to say, we would like to make a summary and an evaluation of each theme. By the Editorial Board itself or by a working group appointed for this purpose. Maybe a small symposium. In this way we will draw a line after each theme and make conclusions of the discussion. Step by step, theme by theme. The problems are numerous, and more and more new ones crop up. There is no risk that MuWoP should be without work!

We hope so — and our expectations are great. Should the discussion not get under way, then MuWoP cannot fulfil its mission. To present a series of articles — that can be done by every journal. To discuss mutual problems without obstacles and limitations, this is our goal. Help us to carry it out! Write to us about your own ideas. This time about museology. Is it a science or not? What is it? Do we need it? Let us hear from you at MuWoP Editorial Office. The deadline for MuWoP No. 2 is March 31st, 1981.

Come and join the fight! Write now!

Facts and documents

With the new periodical launched, topics penetrated and the rules of discussion and future interchange of ideas laid down, is it not time to put away the first issue of MuWoP and allow our thoughts to range freely?

Not yet! Things tend too often to be consigned to oblivion, a fate which MuWoP is anxious to avoid.

MuWoP will document and file itself in *Facts and documents*. Data concerning the present number and its contributors will be presented under the headings *MuWoP No. X* and *Contributors*. Documents with an important bearing on the existence of MuWoP and its existence will be reproduced under the heading *MuWoP Chronicle*.

This is the way things are going to continue, provided the present-day prototype is approved in Mexico and MuWoP is given the all clear.

Teething troubles are part of the natural order of things, and the launching of MuWoP is no exception.

There are certain difficulties connected with the presentation of No. 1, for the very reason that this is a prototype which is being put forward for discussion and assessment by the ICOM Advisory Committee and the ICOM Executive Council at the ICOM General Conference in 1980. Not until then will MuWoP's subsequent fate be decided. Faced with this situation it is hard to maintain that MuWoP is a regular journal and to give the names of those who are responsible for it. Accordingly, the data supplied under the heading *MuWoP No. 1 — baptism certificate* are confined to the prototype publication MuWoP No. 1.

A new and untraditional presentation has been employed, however, in that the inside cover contains correct data concerning the publication; no names and no acknowledgments in the Editorial. All details concerning the various issues, i.e. a comprehensive presentation of particulars concerning participating institutions and contributors etc., will be deferred until Facts and documents.

Personal particulars concerning the writers who have contributed to this publication are more than useful information. The discussion in MuWoP must not be impersonal. MuWoP aims further than this, namely at a lively but undramatic interchange of ideas across the continents, active international co-operation between museum people. It will be easier to communicate more personally when everybody knows which persons have written and discussed, what they do and what their backgrounds are. Hence the idea of publishing curricula vitae under *Contributors*, and hence the pictures of the authors accompanying each essay.

The task of translating the essays into the ICOM languages, and the linguistic review of the texts supplied, has shown how difficult it is to express the writers' thoughts in relevant terms. It is even more difficult to achieve uniformity in the use of different concepts. The editors have found this to be the case when adapting the curricula vitae conscientiously supplied by all the contributors. Degrees, the names of institutions, schools, professional associations, various appointments and assignments etc. were found to require far more time for translation and consistent editing than was available.

This being so, the following procedure has been adopted. Curricula forms are being published in MuWoP No. 1 so

that they can be commented on in discussions concerning the journal's future.

All curricula sent to the journal by the writers are being stored at the Editorial Board Office. They will be processed and published — in the event of MuWoP being approved for further publication — either as an appendix to No. 1 or else in MuWoP No. 2. Until then they are available for inspection by all interested parties at the EB office.

Pending the editing of the curricula, the addresses of all contributors are being published in MuWoP No. 1.

MuWoP Chronicle has caused the least amount of worry. Documents are documents and presented in due order.

And now to Facts and Documents!

MuWoP No. 1 — baptism certificate

MuWoP — Museological Working Papers

A debate journal on fundamental museological problems.

Appearing at last once yearly, provided the publication is approved by ICOM and its agencies.

MuWoP No. 1

is a prototype of the MuWoP journal.

Published in connection with the 1980 ICOM General Conference as documentation for an assessment and decision concerning regular publication of the journal.

Published by

ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICofoM) and Statens historiska museum, (SHM, the Museum of National Antiquities), Stockholm, Sweden.

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Editorial Board of the ICofoM

Andreas Grote — FRG, Rolf Kiau — GDR, Wolfgang Klauswitz — FRG, Awraam M. Razgon — URSS, Vitoš Sofka (project coordinator) — Sweden

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V. Toft Jensen's contribution is published by kind permission of the UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage of 17th August 1979, ref. CC/CH/SP/YRi/Tb. The essay was originally written for the UNESCO journal "Museum".

Translation of contributions

The contributions supplied by the authors in English and French have been checked linguistically by Béatrice de Chauliac and Suzanne Pommellet at the ICOM Secretariat and the UNESCO/ICOM Documentation Center, Paris. The contributors have not given the names of their translators.

Other translations have been made by the following persons:

(a) Translations into English by Suzanne Pommellet, Paris (Introduction by the Editor; Contributions by A. Desvallées, J. P. Pišulín, B. Zouhdi; What next? Directions from the Editor) and Roger Tanner, Stockholm

(Editorial; Introductory summary by the Editor; Facts and Documents — Introduction, MuWoP No. 1 — baptism certificate, Contributors).
 (b) Translations into French by Béatrice de Chauliac, Paris (Museological Points of View — Europe 1975 by V. Toft Jensen; Contributions by J. Neustupný, B. Reynolds, K. Schreiner, S. Tsuruta) and Lydie Rousseau, Stockholm (Editorial; Introduction by the Editor; Introductory summary by the Editor; Contributions by D. R. Porter, J. A. Scala, J. L. Swauger; What next? Directions from the Editor; Facts and documents — Introduction, MuWoP No. 1 — baptism certificate, Contributors, MuWoP Chronicle — document No. 5).

Some of the definitions in Museological provocations 1979 and the whole of various documents in the MuWoP Chronicle were translated in Sweden. The definition by A. M. Razgon was translated from the German via the ICOM Secretariat in Brno, Czechoslovakia, and the French version was checked against the English in Sweden.

B. de Chauliac and S. Pommelet participated by courtesy of the ICOM Secretary General L. Monreal and the Head of the UNESCO/ICOM Documentation Center, P. Olcina.

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Typesetting by Snitz & Sil Reprosätter, Stockholm, and proof reading by Irma Karlén, Lydie Rousseau and Roger Tanner, Stockholm.

Illustrations: These were supplied by the contributors.

Printing and binding: Departementens offsetcentral, Stockholm.

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All the persons mentioned above — and doubtless many others who contributed viewpoints, advice and personal assistance in connection with the project — have been instrumental in making possible the publication of MuWoP No. 1 today. The Editor would like to take this opportunity of expressing his gratitude.

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Data concerning the contributors have been collected by means of the following questionnaire:

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1.1	nom de famille	family name
1.2	prénoms	first names
1.3	nom de jeune fille	maiden name
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3	Date et lieu de naissance	Date and place of birth
4	Domicile permanent	Permanent address (home)
4.1	adresse	address
4.2	téléphone	telephone
4.3	adresse postale (si elle diffère)	mailing address (if different)
5	Nom et adresse de l'employeur	Name and postal address of employer
5.1	musée/institution/université où vous êtes employé ou avec lequel/laquelle vous collaborez	of museum/institution/university in which employed or with which connected
5.2	poste actuel (fonction et titre exact de votre poste, lieu d'activité)	present position (function and exact title of position, place of work)
6	Etudes (formation)	Education
6.1	nom et location des établissements d'enseignement, diplômes, titres, matières principales	names and locations of the educational establishments, academic degrees, main field of study
7	Expérience professionnelle	Professional experience
7.1	les emplois (nom et adresse, fonction et titre de votre postes, matières principales)	employments (name and address, title of post, nature of duties or activities)
7.2	ICOM-comités, fonctions	ICOM-committees, functions
7.3	associations professionnelles dont vous êtes membre	professional societies (membership)
7.4	autres qualifications spéciales	other special qualifications
8	Publications	Publications
9	Connaissance de langues	Knowledge of languages

Joignez une photographie récente en noir et blanc

Attach a recent black/white photo

Data as per the above have been collected at the Editorial Board Office for all authors of contributions on the topic theme of MuWoP No. 1.

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MuWoP Chronicle

Document no 1

Excerpts from REPORT from the second meeting of the ICOM International Committee for Museology September 24—30, 1978, in Poland

Document no 2

REPORT on the activities of the Editorial Board of the ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICofoM) during the period 1978-10-28 - - 1979-10-20

Document no 3

Excerpts from REPORT from the 3rd meeting of the ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICofoM) October 22—26, 1979, in Torgiano, Italy

Document no 4

Letter to the chairmen and secretaries of all national and international ICOM committees January 20, 1980

Document no 5

Museological Working Papers — a publication project of ICOM International Committee for Museology Material for the meeting of ICOM's Executive Council, May 1980

Document no 6

Excerpts from MINUTES of the 47th session of the Executive Council of ICOM (80/Ex. 5) 20—21 May 1980, Paris

Document no 1

Excerpts from

REPORT

from the second meeting of the ICOM International Committee
for Museology
September 24-30, 1978, in Poland

The Committee accepted the following conclusions and recommendations:

1/ The theme "Possibilities and limits in scientific research typical for the museums" was discussed on the basis of the papers worked out by W Klausewitz and A Razgon and reports made by K Dabrowski /Research Work in Archaeological Museums in Poland/, J K Makulski /Culture-forming Functions of a Museum of Ethnography/ and L Przymusiński /Quelques remarques sur les recherches faites dans les musées régionaux/.

According to the role of the museum in the society of today, the Committee claims that research in the field of its collecting activities is an indispensable part of the museum work, one of its fundamental functions. Collecting /including documentation, storing and preservation/, research and dissemination of information, these three main tasks of the museum have equal value and importance. Restrictions of any of them would bring negative consequences to the main function of the museum. Without research - up to date and interdisciplinary, field work as well as laboratory work, basic and comparative studies - the museum cannot fulfil its other functions and will become a mere store of collections and of stocked and unused information.

The three main tasks, mentioned above, are common for all museums - big and small, governmental and municipal, central and regional.

The limits set by financial and personnel resources require a fertile collaboration between the museums and also between the museums and the research organizations - research institutes, academies, universities etc. As there is no substantial difference between research in museums, universities or research institutions, the collaboration must be arranged on the basis of equality. The status of the museums and the museologists should be raised to the same level as other research organizations and their personnel. The scientists working in museums need the same opportunities to use all the sources of information and even all the advanced technology as other scientists. The Committee considers the collaboration between the big museums and the small ones of the museum work.

2/ The Committee is of the opinion that research on the museums - the aim and role, function, organization and methods etc - must be accomplished by the museums. This museological research - basic as well as applied - must be interdisciplinary. Carried out in collaboration between the museums, it must use the results of all the sciences that can contribute to the current development of the museum.

Museological institutes or departments of museology should be established in every country. An international centre for museological studies would facilitate the exchange of ideas and research results in this field.

In order to supply the well known and very pressing demands, ICOM should work out and publish a handbook on museology as soon as possible. Such a publication would become the basis for the continued discussions on museology as well as the aid for museological studies at the universities and other educational institutions, for further training of the museum personnel and its practical needs. The Committee welcomes the activity of the ICOM secretariat to realize this important project.

Finally, courses in museology should be arranged for all who intend to work at museums. Even the existing personnel of the museums should get the opportunity of further training in museology. As the personnel of the museum is limited, especially in small museums, such studies would facilitate the possibility of meeting the daily problems in the museums and even to contribute to current research. The Committee considers that, on the basis of collaborations, the museological studies and training should be given also by an international institute. The constitution of an international centre of museological studies should be considered.

3/

The Committee decided further that an editorial board /G Dieszner, W Klausewitz, A Razgon, V Sofka/ with the office situated in Stockholm should work out a skeleton-programme for working papers on fundamental museological problems, to concentrate such papers and to publish them. The programme will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

7/ The programme for the next meeting was discussed. The skeleton-programme for museological working-papers according to point 3/ above will be discussed.

Warsaw - Nieborów - Toruń
September 24-30, 1978

Jan Jelfnek
Chairman

Document no 2

ICOM International Committee for Museology
Torgiano - Italy, October 1979

REPORT

on the activities of the Editorial Board of the ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICoFoM) during the period 1978-10-28 - 1979-10-20

- 1 At its annual meeting in October 1978 in Poland ICoFoM formed a Working Group with the instruction "to work out a skeleton-programme for working papers on fundamental museological problems, to condense such papers and to publish them". The skeleton-programme should be presented at the next meeting of the ICoFoM.
- As members of the Working Group called Editorial Board (EB), the following persons were nominated: Mr G Diessner, Mr W Klausewitz, Mr A Razgon and Mr V Sofka.
- The Editorial Board office was placed in Stockholm. The function of coordinator of the work was thus entrusted to Mr V Sofka.
- 2 The working plan and timetable concerning the work of the EB were determined at the first meeting with the EB in October 1978 in Poland. To define the term museology and thereby getting the basis for the forming of the skeleton-programme is one task of the EB which has been given high priority.
- This task should be solved primarily through contacts in writing by the members themselves (drafting of definitions of their own as well as getting definitions from other authors, museum officials, museology researchers etc; forwarding the material to the coordinator of the project and via him to all members of the EB; exchanging of comments between the EB-members on the material received; attempting to form a common definition).

Discussions of the problem should, if needed, take place in Stockholm or Frankfurt.

During the first stage, Mr W Klausewitz, Mr A Razgon and Mr V Sofka has drafted descriptions and definitions of their own. These descriptions and definitions have been sent for comment to all members of the EB together with a few other definitions which have been obtained by the coordinator.

On the coordinator's continued contacts with the EB both by letter and telephone it became evident that a meeting was required to fulfil the task of drafting a joint proposal to the annual meeting with the ICOM International Committee for Museology in the autumn of 1979.

The working meeting of the EB took place in Stockholm, October 6--8 1979. The Central Board of National Antiquities and the Museum of National Antiquities defrayed living expenses while the participants had to pay for the travel costs. All members of the EB were called to the meeting. However Mr W Klausewitz and Mr V Sofka were the only two from the EB to attend. Mr A Razgon was prevented from coming. Mr G Diessner who took part only as an observer in the Poland meeting and not being a member of ICOM lacked grounds for his participation according to the statutes and did not come. Under these circumstances and after consulting with Mr W Klausewitz and Mr A Razgon, Mr V Toft-Jensen and Mr R Kieu were invited to the meeting in order to get a broader basis for the discussions. Because of a previous engagement Mr R Kieu could not accept the invitation.

At the meeting the coordinator informed the participants about the measures taken by the office to fulfil the function of the EB, about the development of the work at the EB and about results obtained.

A report was given on the talks the coordinator had in Paris in June 1979 with Mr L Montreal, Secretary General

of ICOM and with Mr J Jelinek, Chairman of ICofOM. The coordination of the work on the Treatise on Museology by the Planning Committee for the Treatise on Museology, and of the work on a skeleton-programme and a plan for the publishing of working-papers on fundamental museological problems by EB, was discussed.

By reason of the Paris talks which had taken place on the coordinator's own initiative, the coordinator drafted a proposal concerning the publishing of the planned working-papers. This proposal has been submitted to the working meeting of the EB and has been accepted by them. The coordinator was instructed to present his proposal at the annual meeting of the ICofOM in Italy. The proposal will be presented in the next section.

The delegates at the meeting devoted a great deal of time to discussing the concept of museology and to planning the skeleton-programme for working papers. They agreed on that everyone present should draft his own definition of museology after his return home and promptly forward this draft to the coordinator. Such a draft has been sent in by Mr V Toft-Jensen, Mr W Klauswitz and Mr V Sofke.

Furthermore, the delegates considered a serious discussion on the purpose of the ICofOM to be most desirable in order to give a profile to the committee. They suggested that such a discussion should be arranged at the annual meeting in 1979. The above mentioned definitions were to be used to initiate the discussions.

3 Proposal

The text of the Proposal (3 Proposal, 3.1 - 3.4) appears in Document no 4 under "Excerpts from Report on the activities of the Editorial Board etc", attached to the letter to the Chairmen and Secretaries of all National and International ICOM Committees of January 20, 1980.

This proposal of mine is in accordance with the discussions of the EB in Stockholm, August 1979, wherein Mr W Klauswitz and Mr V Toft-Jensen took part. Mr A Razgon who was informed of the proposal by telephone, had no objections.

I am convinced that the idea of publishing the WPOM is important and I hope that the arguments for the WPOM here developed will lead to a positive decision on the matter.

Dr VinoM Sofke
Sweden
1979, October 1



Excerpts from

REPORT

from the 3rd meeting of the ICOM International Committee for Museology /ICOFOM/ October 22-26, 1979, in Torgiano, Italy

ICOM International Committee for Museology Editorial Board

The ICOM International Committee for Museology reached following results, conclusions and recommendations:

2/ The Report on the Committee's activities during the period November 1978 - October 1979, given by Mr J Jelfnek, the Report on the activities of the ICOFOM Editorial Board (summary enclosed) and the Report on the meetings with the ICOM Planning Committee for the Treatise on Museology during the same period, both given by Mr V Sofka and also distributed in writing, were approved.

3/ The aims and the programme of the activities of ICOFOM were discussed.

The Editorial Board and the group of Committee representatives in the ICOM Planning Committee for Treatise on Museology shall be considered as working groups of ICOFOM.

5/ It was approved to publish working papers on fundamental museological problems as suggested in item 3 of the Report on the activities of the ICOFOM Editorial Board mentioned above, with the following additions:

The authors of basic papers shall be appointed by the ICOFOM Editorial Board /EB/. It is recommended that National Committees for ICOM shall be asked to assist EB in choosing potential authors in order to get a representative presentation of museological ideas. The coordinator of EB Mr V Sofka shall inform the Executive Board of ICOFOM about the names of the authors appointed.

The EB in cooperation with the Executive Board of ICOFOM shall consider how to cover the editorial and printing expenses of the working papers.

The present EB, W Klausewitz, A Razgon and V Sofka, will stay in function until the next annual meeting of ICOFOM on the occasion of the General Conference of ICOM, when new elections of all organs of ICOFOM shall take place. ICOFOM decided to join Mr R Kiau and Mr A Grote to the EB for the same period.

To the chairmen and secretaries of all national and international ICOM committees

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

During the past two years, the International Committee for Museology (ICofoM) has devoted considerable interest to the question of possible means of activating international co-operation in museological research and development and of deepening the exchange of ideas and experience from the museum sector.

ICofoM fully realizes that advanced museological research and sophisticated museological training exist in a number of countries. Internationally too, not least through the international committees of ICOM, more and more events are being arranged at which discussions are held concerning interesting museological problems.

ICofoM feels, however, that these important contributions to museological activities and their further development often fail to reach all of the people - museum staff all over the world - who could benefit from them. This is mainly due to a deficient flow of information and to the absence of an international exchange of ideas in the field. ICofoM is convinced that a co-ordination of different kinds of national and international efforts in museology focussing on certain jointly selected problems would be capable of speeding up the development of museums and increasing the impact of museology.

It is with high hopes that ICofoM welcomes the venture in which ICOM is engaging with UNESCO for the production, as soon as possible, of an international Treatise on Museology. This work will not only provide museum staff throughout the world with the theoretical basis and the practical guidance they have spent years waiting for. It is also certain to give rise to discussions concerning one problem or another

on which views differ - both during the compilation phase and subsequently. If everything goes according to plan, we hope that this major international Treatise will be in our hands by the New Year 1985.

ICoFoM notes with gratification that after several years in abeyance, work on the Treatise has now been resumed and is proceeding with a vigour that promises good results. It also attaches great value to all museological activities throughout the world, to publications which are issued, symposium materials which are disseminated and so forth. At the same time ICoFoM feels that an international debate on fundamental museological problems is desperately needed. Many of these problems have a vital bearing on museum work in the modern world but still remain unsolved and little discussed. An interchange of ideas concerning these problems should be inaugurated as soon as possible and should proceed continuously, in response to global developments and changes, thus providing an ongoing international correspondence symposium in which ideas are generated and thoughts confronted.

This is the argument underlying the idea of publishing what has been given the working title of Museological Working Papers (MuWoP) - a journal appearing at least once yearly and devoted to a thematically limited debate in which museological viewpoints from all parts of the world are presented and juxtaposed. MuWoP is not intended to compete with the Treatise on Museology, with its comprehensive approach, nor does it set out to rival other publications. Instead it is intended to supplement what is already available and to provide a dynamic instrument of museological research and development.

The draft scheme for the publication of MuWoP, prepared by a working party at ICoFoM called the Editorial Board (EB), was discussed and, with certain additions, approved by the ICoFoM Annual Meeting in October 1979 at Torgiano in Italy. An extract from the EB proposals and from the approved draft of the minutes has been appended to this letter in order to avoid repetitions in the description of the project.

ICoFoM has instructed the EB to take charge of the execution of the assignment, but they both realize that the project has no prospect of success and that MuWoP will never get off the ground unless the idea/project receives the support of museum people and museums throughout the world and, first and foremost, the support of ICOM and its committees. This support - in the form of viewpoints concerning the proposals, together with the dissemination of information about the projects and the contribution of essays for publication in MuWoP, will be immensely important.

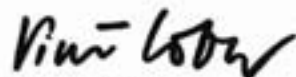
One of the most pressing tasks at the moment is the appointment of writers to contribute essays in the form of basic papers for the first volume of MuWoP, which will be devoted to the subject: "Museology - science or just practical museum work?" The prospective authors should be the leading experts in the field, and EB desires the assistance of the national and international ICOM committees in selecting them. A presentation reflecting views and opinions from all over the world is desirable, and this desideratum must also be taken into account in the selection of authors. The EB contemplates at least about ten basic papers in which efforts are made to define the concept of museology. But of course, if upwards of twenty or thirty or even more writers materialize, the rewards will be all the greater! The intention is for each basic paper to comprise not more than eight A4 pages, typewritten in one of the two ICOM languages, i.e. English or French. Since the translation of texts of a philosophical and speculative character, such as are expected in the present case, often gives rise to problems, the EB would prefer contributors to make their own translation arrangements for both languages. In this way they will be able to check the translations, thus eliminating many problems of editing. To complete this run-down on terms, ICoFoM and the EB have no funds at their disposal and are therefore unable to remunerate contributors of basic papers or reimburse them for translation costs. All we can offer each contributor is two complimentary copies of MuWoP.

Critical viewpoints and other discussions concerning the first essays to be published - the basic papers - will appear in the second volume of MuWoP, which is scheduled for publication in the autumn of 1981, at the same time as theme No. 2, "Multi-disciplinary Science in Museology, Basic Museological Research and Applied Science", will be broached in the form of basic papers. It would be an advantage if information concerning this vital discussion could be supplied to all museum staff at once and if any deliberations within the ICOM committees concerning suitable writers of basic papers on theme No. 2 could already take place now.

Unfortunately the deadline for contributions to the first volume of MuWoP is not very far away; they should reach the EB secretariate as soon as possible and by 15th May 1980 at the latest. ICoFoM therefore kindly requests you to discuss without delay which of your colleagues, assistants, members and other specialists you would like to recommend as a presenter of thoughts and ideas on the first MuWoP theme, and to convey your nominations without delay, and on no account later than 29th February, by completing the enclosed questionnaire. Needless to say, we will appreciate any other viewpoints that are forthcoming on the subject of the new journal.

ICofoM and the EB hope that the idea of publishing MuWoP will be favourably received and supported by the members and committees of ICOM. The aim is for the first volume of MuWoP to be already in your hands in the autumn of 1980. Will you help us to meet this target? We of ICofoM and the EB would like to conclude by thanking you in advance for all the support and assistance you are able to lend us.

For the Editorial Board
at the International ICOM Committee
for Museology



Dr Vito Sofka
Project co-ordinator

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Excerpts from

REPORT

on the activities of the Editorial Board of the ICOM International
Committee for Museology (ICofoM) during the period 1978-10-28 -
1979-10-20

presented at the ICofoM Annual Meeting in Torgiano, Italy,
October 1979

3

Proposal

3.1

Society today is making new demands upon the museum. Its traditional role is changing. An active participation in the life of society, mainly in solving its various problems, is becoming increasingly important. New tasks are being imposed on the museum, new methods must be tried.

Therefore, research and development work within the collection sphere of a museum must be complemented by the use of the results from a variety of other branches of research concerned with the activities at a museum and capable of contributing to its continued progress. Continuous discussions and interchange of experience and ideas between museums across national borders are a necessity.

Reconstruction of the museums is called for. The museum officials who are aware of the new trend within museum work and of the ensuing need for interdisciplinary co-operation with other branches of research and with other institutions must be given broad insight in and continuous information about ways in which these branches of research can assist the museum in its endeavour to respond to all the manifold expectations and demands that society is placing on them and on museum as an institution.

3.2

As things now stand, the Treatise on Museology - at present in its initial phase - is a much needed and welcome instrument in promoting this direction. It will give to museum officials all over the world the synthesis of knowledge covering all fields of museum activities which has been lacking till now.

It is of the utmost importance that this project should be carried through according to plans and thus published in 1984 at the latest. ICofoM must energetically work for it that this task - one of the most important tasks of ICOM - is carried through.

- 3.3 The publication of working papers on fundamental museological problems suggested at the annual meeting of ICofom in 1978 may be regarded - in the light of what has been said above - as a useful complement to the Treatise on Museology. It will play an active role in the further development of the museum in the modern world because of its intended unpretentious form and its character of being a forum for debate and because of its ability to react quickly to all changes in society.

The following objective, character and form are suggested for the museological working papers of ICofom (MuWoP).

- 3.3.1 The MuWoP is a non-periodical publication issued by the ICofom. It should be issued at least once a year. This task and the responsibility for its realization within the fixed limits are entrusted to the Editorial Board (EB), which is elected by ICofom.

The EB consists of 3-5 members elected for a period of 3 years. The members may resign from this commission or be removed by a decision by the annual meeting of ICofom if there are important reasons for such actions.

The office of the EB is to be in Stockholm, at the Museum of National Antiquities. The head of this office has the right to participate in the work of the EB, but he is not entitled to vote unless he is an elected member of the EB.

- 3.3.2 The objective of the MuWoP is to create a platform for international discussions on important and current museological questions and problems and for the international exchange of ideas on matters of interest and benefit to museums and museum officials.

Such continuous discussions - a constant international symposium - may provide important contributions to the museological research and at the same time function as a high-level international extension course.

- 3.3.3 The MuWoP is expected to be published according to a thematic plan which has been drawn up by the EB and decided on by ICofom.

The discussion concerning a certain theme is to be started in an issue of the MuWoP. A number of research scientists/museum officials nominated by the EB and approved by the Board of ICofom will be asked to give their opinion of the theme in a paper of not more than 8 pages (henceforth called basic paper). The manuscript - in English or French - should be handed in to the EB. The EB sees to it that the papers stick to the scope and the given thematic framework. The publishing will be effected in both English and French.

Through comments and views on the basic papers, published as indicated above, and through the issue of papers sent in by other authors, continued discussions are expected to take place in the following issues of the MuWoP. The same principles as for basic papers are applicable regarding scope and thematic framework.

When discussions on the first theme are being held in the second issue of the MuWoP, basic papers on the next theme will be presented; the course of discussion will then be as outlined above.

When discussions on a certain theme are over, the EB or a special working group should, if possible, evaluate the results.

- 3.3.4 The following questions should be included in the first thematic plan:

Theme	Deadline for basic papers
1. Museology - science or just practical museum work?	1980-03-31
2. Multidisciplinary science in museology Basic museological research and applied science	1980-10-31
3. Object and method in museological research	1981-01-31
4. Is it possible or desirable to guide the functions of the museum through museology?	1981-10-31

- 3.3.5 It is suggested that the form of the MuWoP should be the same as that used for the publishing of the ICofom Annual 1978 including contributions put forward at the annual meeting of ICofom 1978 in Poland (Possibilities and Limits in Scientific Research Typical of the Museum - Possibilités et limites de la recherche scientifique typiques pour les musées, Poland/Pologne 1978) and published by the ICofom Secretarial Office in Brno.

The EB believes that the publishing of the ICofom Annual (ICMA) in the form of working papers was an excellent way to disseminate information on the work of the ICofom.

The EB presupposes that the ICofom Secretarial Office will continue to publish reports on the activities of ICofom in this way. This and the suggestion about the MuWoP (see 3.3) mean that at

2

least two similar publications will be issued by the ICofOM each year - namely the ICofOM Annual and Museological Working Papers. The form chosen, being typographically plain and thus inexpensive, facilitates rapid publication and effective distribution.

- 3.3.6 The question of the financing of the MuWoP project is not fully settled. This goes for both the activities of the EB (meetings, office, secretariate - services, translations etc) and for the printing of the MuWoP. ICofOM Secretarial Office has intimated that it would be willing to provide funds to cover all printing and editorial expenses for MuWoP 1980.

An estimate should be made of the costs. The EB thinks that the problem can be solved through discussions on the administration of the MuWoP and through the introduction of a sales fee per copy.

- 3.4 With reference to the above, I propose, as co-ordinator of the EB,
- that the report on the activities of the EB (item 2) should be approved
 - that a decision concerning the publishing of the MuWoP according to the principles mentioned here (items 3.1, 3.3--3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.3.5) should be approved
 - that the thematic plan for the MuWoP for the years 1980-1982 (item 3.3.4) should be approved
 - that the EB for the years 1980-1982 should be elected (item 3.3.1) or if the present EB should stay on, that new members who can participate in the EB-work should be added
 - that 10 possible authors of basic papers for the first and second issues of the MuWoP should be appointed
 - that a group should be constituted with the instruction to forward a proposal to the Executive Board of the ICofOM for the solution of the question of finance of MuWoP (item 3.3.6). This group should, of course, have consultations with the EB.

VS
Sweden
1979, October 1

Excerpts from

REPORT

from the 3rd meeting of the International
ICOM Committee for Museology
October 22-26, 1979, in Torgiano, Italy

5/ The publishing of working papers on fundamental museological problems was approved as suggested in item 3 of the Report on the activities of the EB, given by Mr V Sofka and mentioned above, with the following completions:

The authors of basic papers shall be appointed by the EB. It is recommended that National and International ICOM Committees be asked to assist the EB in choosing potential authors in order to obtain a representative presentation of museological ideas from the whole world. The EB co-ordinator, Mr V Sofka, shall notify the Executive Board of the Committee of the names of the authors appointed.

The EB shall forward a proposal to the Executive Board of the Committee as to the solution of the question of financing the working papers.

The present EB, W Klausewitz, A Razgon and V Sofka (the EB co-ordinator), will remain in office until the next annual meeting of the Committee on the occasion of the General Conference of ICOM, when new elections of all organs of the Committee shall take place. The Committee decided to appoint Mr R Kieu and Mr A Grote to the EB for the same period.

Please complete and return by 29th February 1980 at the latest

To

Dr Vlnož Sofka
Co-ordinator of the Editorial Board
ICOM International Committee for Museology
Statens historiska museum
Box 5405
S-114 84 STOCKHOLM Sweden

The ICOM National Committee of

The ICOM International Committee for/on

has received, through its Chairman/Secretary the letter from the Editorial Board of the ICOM International Committee for Museology concerning the publication of a journal of debate on fundamental museological problems.

The Committee offers the following viewpoints concerning the publication of the journal:

The Committee proposes the following museum officers/researchers/specialists as potential contributors of basic papers on theme 1: "Museology - Science or Just Practical Museum Work?":

Name	Occupation, title	Address & Tel.No	Place of employment
1			
2			
3			

Have the above nominees been contacted already?	Yes	No
And have they undertaken to contribute an article to reach the Editorial Board secretariate not later than 15th May 1980?	Yes	No

The Committee intends to take the following measures in order to encourage discussion of the basic papers published in MuWoP vol. 1.

The Committee has considered which museum officers/researchers/specialists the EB should contact as potential contributors of basic papers on theme 2: "Multidisciplinary Science in Museology - Basic Museological Research and Applied Science".

Name	Occupation, title	Address & Tel.No.	Place of employment
1			
2			
3			

Have the above nominees been contacted already?	Yes	No
And have they undertaken to contribute an article to reach the Editorial Board secretariate not later than 31st October 1980?	Yes	No

If the debate publication is distributed free of charge, the Committee estimates demand in its country at approximately _____ copies.

If the debate publication is only obtainable on payment of a charge equalling the cost of production, national demand is estimated at approximately _____ copies. (This statement is not binding in any way whatsoever.)

The Committee also wishes to tender the following suggestions/wishes.

1980

Document no 5

ICOM International Committee
for Museology
Editorial Board

Museological Working Papers - a publication project of
ICOM International Committee for Museology

Material for the meeting of ICOM's Executive Council, May 1980

- 1 During the past two years, the International Committee for Museology (ICofoM) has devoted considerable interest to the question of possible means of activating international cooperation in museological research and development and of deepening the exchange of ideas and experience from the museum sector.

ICofoM fully realizes that advanced museological research and sophisticated museological training exist in a number of countries. Internationally too, not least through the international committees of ICOM, more and more events are being arranged at which discussions are held concerning interesting museological problems.

ICofoM feels, however, that these important contributions to museological activities and their further development often fail to reach all of the people - museum staff all over the world - who could benefit from them. This is mainly due to a deficient flow of information and to the absence of an international exchange of ideas in the field. ICofoM is convinced that a coordination of different kinds of national and international efforts in museology focussing on certain jointly selected problems would be capable of speeding up the development of museums and increasing the impact of museology.

- 2 ICofoM notes with gratification that after several years in abeyance, work on the Treatise on Museology has been resumed and is proceeding with a vigour that promises good results. It also attaches great value to all museological activities throughout the world, to publications which are issued, symposium material which are disseminated and so forth. At the same time ICofoM feels that an international debate on fundamental museological problems is desperately needed. Many of these problems have a vital bearing on museum work in the modern world but still remain unsolved and little discussed. An interchange of ideas concerning these problems should be inaugurated as soon as possible and should proceed continuously, in response to global developments and changes, thus providing an ongoing international correspondence symposium in which ideas are generated and thoughts confronted.

This is the argument underlying the idea of publishing what has been given the working title of Museological Working Papers (MuWoP) - a journal appearing at least once yearly and devoted to a thematically limited debate in which museological viewpoints from all parts of the world are presented and juxtaposed.

The draft scheme for the publication of MuWoP, prepared by a working party at ICofoM called the Editorial Board (EB), was discussed and, with certain additions, approved by the ICofoM Annual Meeting in October 1979 at Torgiano in Italy. The following objective, character and form has been settled for the museological working papers:

1. The MuWoP is a non-periodical publication issued by the ICofoM at least once a year.

This task and the responsibility for its realization within the fixed limits are entrusted to the Editorial Board (EB).

The EB consists of 3-5 members elected by ICofoM for a period of 3 years. The members may resign from this commission or be removed by a decision by the annual meeting of ICofoM if there are important reasons for such actions.

The office of the EB is to be in Stockholm, at the Museum of National Antiquities. The head of this office has the right to participate in the work of the EB, but he is not entitled to vote unless he is an elected member of the EB.

2. The objective of the MuWoP is to create a platform for international discussions on important and current museological questions and problems and for the international exchange of ideas on matters of interest and benefit to museums and museum officials.

Such continuous discussions - a constant international symposium - may provide important contributions to the museological research and at the same time function as a high-level international extension course.

3. The MuWoP will be published according to a thematic plan which has been drawn up by the EB and decided on by ICofoM. The plan shall be fixed with regard to the editing plan of other ICOM periodica.

The discussion concerning a certain theme is to be started in an issue of the MuWoP. A number of research scientists/museum officials will be asked to give their opinion of the theme in a paper of not more than 8 pages (henceforth called basic paper). The EB sees to it that the papers stick to the scope and the given thematic framework. The publishing will be effected in both English and French.

The authors of basic papers shall be appointed by the EB. It is recommended that National and International ICOM Committees be asked to assist the EB in choosing potential authors in order to obtain a representative presentation of museological ideas from the whole world. The EB co-ordinator shall notify the Executive Board of the Committee of the names of the authors appointed.

Through comments and views on the basic papers, published as indicated above, and through the issue of papers sent in by other authors, continued discussions are expected to take place in the following issues of the MuWoP. The same principles as for basic papers are applicable regarding scope and thematic framework.

When discussions on the first theme are being held in the second issue of the MuWoP, basic papers on the next theme will be presented; the course of discussion will then be as outlined above.

When discussions on a certain theme are over, the EB or a special working group should, if possible, evaluate the results.

4. The form of the MuWoP will be the same as that used for the publishing of the ICoFoM Annual 1978 including contributions put forward at the annual meeting of ICoFoM 1978 in Poland (Possibilities and Limits in Scientific Research Typical of the Museum - Possibilités et limites de la recherche scientifique typiques pour les musées, Poland/Pologne 1978) and published by the ICoFoM Secretarial Office in Brno.

The form chosen, being typographically plain and thus inexpensive, facilitates rapid publication and effective distribution.

5. The question of the financing of the MuWoP project is not fully settled. ICoFoM Secretarial Office has intimated that it would be willing to provide funds to cover all printing and editorial expenses for MuWoP 1980.

The EB has been assigned to forward a proposal to the Executive Board of the Committee as to the solution of the question of financing the working papers.

ICoFoM realizes that the project has no prospect of success and that MuWoP will never get off the ground unless the idea/project receives the support of museum people and museums throughout the world and, first and foremost, the support of ICOM, its committees and members.

ICoFoM hopes that the idea of publishing MuWoP will be favourably received by ICOM's managing organs. It will spare no efforts to be able to present a prototype issue of MuWoP on the occasion of ICOM General Assembly 1980 in Mexico.

The Editorial Board
of the International ICOM Committee
for Museology

Stockholm
April 11, 1980

Excerpts from

MINUTES OF THE 47TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF ICOM
Paris, 20-21 May 1980 (80/EX. 5)

PUBLICATION PROJECTS

..... Other plans for publications were then studied:

- a periodical on museology (MUMOP), currently being prepared by an editorial committee of the International Committee for Museology, under the direction of Mr Sofka. Council will study the first issue of this periodical in Mexico to ensure that there will be no overlapping between it and Museum, or the planned Treatise on Museology;

