



**UNIVERSITY
MUSEUMS
AND COLLECTIONS**
**Challenges of the past,
responsibilities
for today**

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 22ND
UNIVERSEUM ANNUAL CONFERENCE
BELGIUM, 3-8 JULY 2022





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Publication editors

LAURA BROWN, WIDAD GHAILAN NAHABI, NICOLE GESCHÉ-KONING, DÉBORA LAURENT, NINE LEROY, CAROLINE MICHALLE, NATHALIE NYST & PHAEDRA VANTOMME

Scientific Committee

HUGUES DREYSSÉ, NICOLE GESCHÉ-KONING, NATHALIE NYST, SÉBASTIEN SOUBIRAN, MARTIN STRICKER & GEERT VANPAEMEL

Graphic design

ALL IN COMMUNICATION & CREATIVE COMMUNICATION

Layout and printing

AZ PRINT S.A., GRACE-HOLLOGNE

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NATHALIE NYST (ULB, Belgium), NATHALIE POOT (KU Leuven, Belgium), FRÉDÉRIQUE ANDRY-CAZIN (Sorbonne University, France), ESTHER BOELES (University of Amsterdam, NL), MARJAN DOOM (Ghent University, Belgium), MARIA ECONOMOU (The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, UK), NICOLE GESCHÉ-KONING (ULB, Belgium), SÉBASTIEN SOUBIRAN (Jardin des sciences, University of Strasbourg, France), MARTIN STRICKER (Coordination Centre for Scientific University Collections in Germany, Humboldt University Zu Berlin, Germany), KEVIN TROCH (Université de Mons – UMons, Belgium) & GEERT VANPAEMEL (KU Leuven, Belgium)

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TABLE OF CONTENT

FOREWORD	7
I. AN OVERVIEW OF BELGIAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS	11
1. Academic heritage at the University of Antwerp DANIËL ERMENS	12
2. The ULB Museums Network, Université libre de Bruxelles NATHALIE NYST	15
3. Cultural heritage at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel: The city is our museum FRANK SCHEELINGS	18
4. The Ghent University Museum as an activator of critical citizenship MARJAN DOOM	21
5. Scientific collections and heritage – KU Leuven NATHALIE POOT	24
6. The scientific and artistic collections of the University of Liège OCÉANE MEST	27
7. UCLouvain: Rethinking university heritage at Musée L ANNE QUERINJEAN & ANNELIES VAN DE VEN	31
8. The archives and collections of the University of Mons KEVIN TROCH	34
II. CHALLENGES OF THE PAST – RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TODAY	39
1. The museum ambition ANDRÉ GOB	40
2. In the eye of the beholder: Decolonising (the history of) Science (Museum) at Oxford University SILKE ACKERMANN	47
3. What remains of the connection between Antwerp and Congo DANIËL ERMENS & MARC DEMOLDER	53
4. Artistic heritage at the Complutense University of Madrid from a gender perspective – ISABEL M. GARCÍA FERNANDEZ	61



III. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM AND COLLECTION: A WAY OF TEACHING?	67
1. A two-way street? University museums as conduits for democratising the production and sharing of knowledge – SARAH BURRY-HAYES	68
2. Students’ participation in the Complutense University campus: The development of an inclusive digital strategy for its museums and collections RAUL GOMEZ HERNANDEZ	78
3. Students’ curated exhibition. Educational and social significance for participants MACIEJ KLUZA & IWONA MACIEJOWSKA	85
IV. WORKSHOP REPORT: INCIDENCE OF PROVENANCE RESEARCH ON UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS – NICOLE GESCHÉ-KONING & NATHALIE NYST	91
V. POSTERS	103
1. After the fire: Museum and citizenship at work ELENA BONACCORSI, SILVIA SORBI & PIETRO CURIZO	104
2. Conservation of negative glass plates of The Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of The University of Coimbra MARIANA BRUM, CATARINA MATEUS, RICARDO GAFEIRA & PEDRO CASALEIRO	106
3. MUCAES-UPV, the sculpture outdoor university museum: Preserving, disseminating, taking risks SUSANA MARTÍN-REY, M. VICTORIA VIVANCOS-RAMÓN, HAIZEA OLIVEIRA-URQUIRI & ANTONI COLOMINA-SUBIEL	110
4. Communicating and reclaiming academic research in the Science and Technology Museum (STM) of the University of Patras: The School-Museum Network on Ceramics as a case study PENY THEOLOGI-GOUTI, NICKOULA KOUGIA & IOANNIS ILIOPOULOS	116
5. Science center in the university museum. Pros & cons MACIEJ KLUZA & KATARZYNA ZIEBA	118
VI. WRAP-UP TALK: CHALLENGES OF THE PAST, RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TODAY STEPH SCHOLTEN	120
FINAL WORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LAURA BROWN, WIDAD GHAILAN NAHABI, DÉBORA LAURENT, NINE LEROY, CAROLINE MICHALLE & PHAEDRA VANTOMME	126
TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS	130

FOREWORD

NATHALIE NYST

This volume is the culmination of some five years of work by the Free University of Brussels and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven to organise the Pre-Conference Workshop and the 22nd annual Universeum conference.

The length of this organisational process is of course explained by the health crisis, which disrupted the original timetable, since the conference, initially scheduled for June 2020, was finally held in July 2022.

In 2019, the organisation of this event was entrusted to 5 students of the Master in Cultural Management¹ –Noémie ASENSIO, Marina CERDA SALVA, Laura DELACOUR-PETITJEAN, Athénaïs REZETTE and Clara SANCHEZ DE LA FUENTE. Taken on 24 March 2020², the decision to postpone the conference led them to develop an online alternative, a video package entitled ‘Beyond museum visits... Universeum comes to your home’. These videos provided immediate reality-based accounts of how university museums were dealing with the covid-19 crisis.³

-
- 1 As part of their Cultural Management Project, part of their curriculum.
 - 2 Universeum Board took the option to postpone the conference on 2022 because a joint meeting with UMAC in Dresden was already planned in 2021 –we know now that this meeting will take place in 2024.
 - 3 <https://universeum2022.be/back-to-the-online-event-2020/> (accessed on 15 March 2023).

In December 2021, under the guidance of Nicole GESCHÉ-KONING, Hélène MARIAUD⁴ and myself, new Cultural Management students –Widad GHAILAN NAHABI, Débora LAURENT and Caroline MICHALLE– took over the organisation of the 2022 edition of the workshop and conference, this time as an internship and building on the work done in 2019-2020.

Nevertheless, several elements had to be updated in 2022, starting with the theme of the Workshop, devoted to ‘Decolonisation and restitution. The role of university museums regarding provenance research and its impact’⁵, and the conference, titled ‘University museums & collections: Challenges of the past – Responsibilities for today’.⁶

Much more practical aspects were also adapted, such as the auditoriums, catering or the list of hotels suggested to participants.

In addition, the trainees brilliantly met the challenge of putting together a 4-day programme in four universities –ULB, UGhent, KULeuven, UMons–, which involved travelling by bus and well-tried logistics.

-
- 4 PhD student in Cultural Management.
 - 5 In 2020: ‘Functions and uses of cast models within university collections: The question of preservation at all costs’.
 - 6 In 2020: ‘University museums and collections in the vanguard of contemporary societal debates’.



On 3 and 4 July, at the Maison des Arts of the ULB (Solbosch campus), the workshop welcomed 14 participants. It was facilitated by Nicole GESCHÉ-KONING (distance learning) and Neil CURTIS (University of Aberdeen), supported by two representatives of the UNIVERSEUM Board, Esther BOELES and Maria ECONOMOU. The results of the research carried out were presented by the participants during the conference on 5 July and are summarised in this volume (GESCHÉ-KONING & NYST, p.92-100).⁷

Co-organised with the KU Leuven from 5 to 8 July, the conference started in Brussels, continued at the UMons (with a visit to the MUMONS, inaugurated in 2021), then at the KU Leuven and ended at the GUM (UGent), inaugurated in 2020. It was attended by 141 participants.⁸ After a keynote lecture by André GOB (p.40-46), professor of museology at ULiège, 9 sessions were held, bringing together more than 20 papers, a dozen posters and 2 sessions presenting French and Dutch-speaking university museums.⁹ Convivial moments and 4 sessions of guided tours of museums (ULB, MUMONS, KU Leuven, GUM) punctuated the programme.

The following pages contain a selection of papers from the various sessions. The decolonisation of the university heritage is first dealt by Silke ACKERMANN (p.47-52), who addresses the issue of decolonisation within (history of) science museums –with the History of Science Museum at Oxford University as an example. She suggests that they draw inspiration

from decolonial practices implemented in other museums, but above all that they determine what policies to pursue in the future. Then at the University of Antwerp, Daniël ERMENS and Marc DEMOLDER (p.53-60) study how to manage a heritage that is both cumbersome and partial (Koloniale Hogeschool).

Isabel M. GARCÍA FERNANDEZ (p.61-65) then shows how, by taking advantage of the gender equality and opportunity plans adopted by the university, the question of gender can be addressed through the representation of women in the art collections of the Complutense University of Madrid.

Sarah M. BURRY HAYES (p.68-77) examines the nature of the university's third mission: rather than transmitting and popularising knowledge, the university should now work on the co-production of knowledge with society and communities. Raul GOMEZ HERNANDEZ's article (p.78-84) follows the same line. By mobilising the students' participation, he draws the image, both projected and perceived, that they have of the university heritage at the Complutense University of Madrid, and then proposes a digital strategy for promoting this heritage among the student community.

Finally, students' mobilisation and participation in sustainable research and innovation ('IRRESISTIBLE' project) is also the subject of the study conducted at the Jagiellonian University Museum (Krakow) by Maciej KLUZA and Iwona MACIEJOWSKA (p.85-89).

This is followed by 5 posters presented during the conference which also deal with current issues such as raising awareness, inclusion and participation of communities in the conservation and restoration of university heritage (E. BONACCORSI, S. SORBI

7 It should be added that the objects studied on this occasion and the results obtained were also presented during the 'Heritage Days' of the Brussels Region (17-18/09/2022), as part of the mini-exhibition 'Retour aux sources'.

8 108 people in person and 33 people online.

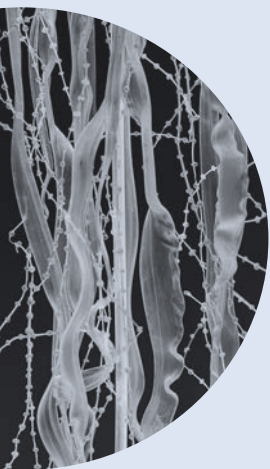
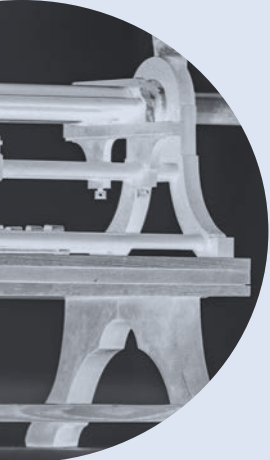
9 See II. *An overview of Belgian University museums* in this volume.

& P. CURZIO in Palermo; M. BRUM, C. MATEUS, R. GAFEIRA & P. CASALEIRO in Coimbra; S. MARTÍN-REY, M.V. VIVANCOS-RAMÓN, H. OLIVEIRA-URQUIRI & A. COLOMINA-SUBIELA in Valencia), the democratization of knowledge and know-how in partnership with communities (P. THEOLOGI-GOUTI, N. KOUZIA & I. ILIOPOULOS in Patras) or the strengths and weaknesses of interactive exhibitions in a university context (K. ZIEBA & M. KLUZA in Cracow) (p.104-119).

The conference proceedings conclude with a wrap-up by Steph SCHOLTEN (p.122-124), Director of the Hunterian (University of Glasgow), which captures

the conviviality of colleagues happy to meet again after three years, the experience of a conference spread over various venues and, above all, the issues at the heart of the debates and the challenges that the managers of academic heritage must face.

Finally, the students whose project was, in 2022-2023, the publication of this volume –Laura BROWN, Widad GHAILAN NAHABI, Débora LAURENT, Nine LEROY, Caroline MICHALLE and Phaedra VANTOMME– take the floor to share a return on their experience of learning to edit scientific texts. Don't forget to read their testimony (p. 128-129)!



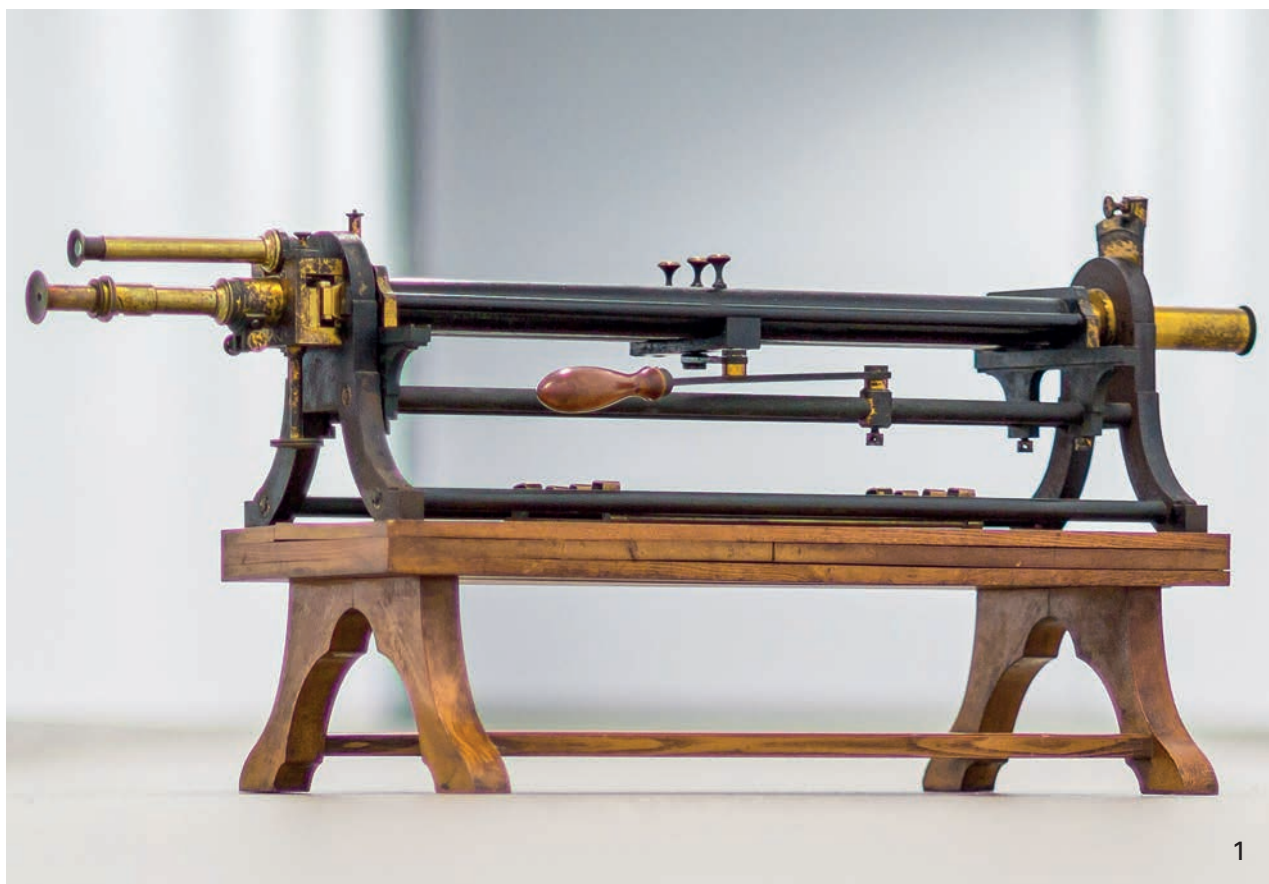
I. AN OVERVIEW OF BELGIAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS	11
1. Academic heritage at the University of Antwerp DANIËL ERMENS	12
2. The ULB Museums Network, Universite libre de Bruxelles NATHALIE NYST	15
3. Cultural heritage at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel: The city is our museum FRANK SCHEELINGS	18
4. The Ghent University Museum as an activator of critical citizenship MARJAN DOOM	21
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6. The scientific and artistic collections of the University of Liège OCÉANE MEST	27
7. UCLouvain: Rethinking university heritage at Musée L ANNE QUERINJEAN & ANNELIES VAN DE VEN	31
8. The archives and collections of the University of Mons KEVIN TROCH	34

I. AN OVERVIEW OF BELGIAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS

1. ACADEMIC HERITAGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ANTWERP

DANIËL ERMENS

Keywords: *Antwerp, University of Antwerp, Academic Heritage*



The University of Antwerp is a young university, founded in 2003, when the three mid-twentieth-century universities in Antwerp, two of them with roots in nineteenth-century mercantile colleges, merged. The focus of its academic heritage, therefore, is 'recent heritage', mainly from the second half of the twentieth century. The collections range from biological models, animals, bones, and stones to scientific, medical, and

pharmaceutical equipment (ETWIE¹⁰, 2020, 7-71). Since the University of Antwerp has always been an important center for electron microscopy sciences, it takes special pride in its small collection of electron


¹⁰ Expertise voor technisch, wetenschappelijk en industrieel erfgoed (Expertise unit for technical, scientific and industrial heritage).

microscopes (Ermens & Demolder, 2021). A real eye-catcher in our collections is a late nineteenth-century three-tubed polarimeter [Fig.1]. This device to measure sugar levels in blood or sugar beet was developed in Antwerp by J. De Puydt and remained in use at a pharmacist's laboratory until the 1970s (Ermens, Demolder & Deneire, 2018). Like this polarimeter, we also welcome relevant scientific research equipment from other research centers in the Antwerp region to our collections. In 2017, for instance, the old research collection from the Gevaert archives (now AGFA Gevaert) was donated to the university. This collection contained some beautiful early twentieth-century microscopes, scales, and other equipment.

Since 2017 Academic Heritage is institutionalised at the University of Antwerp, but the foundations of the present-day collection were laid more than twenty years earlier when heritage expert Marc Demolder (Department of Pharmacy) began collecting items that mattered to him, but which seemed like 'scrap iron' for most. The appointment of Daniël Ermens as a staff member of Special Collections at the University Library by head librarian Trudi Noordermeer with the special task to inventorize the collections, was the starting point for a more professional approach to academic heritage. Between 2017 and 2022 the focus of Academic Heritage was set on organising and furnishing the depots and creating awareness for academic heritage among (former) staff members, researchers, and students of the University of Antwerp and its predecessors. The 2019 'Collective Memory' call to donate memorabilia (from ballpoint pens with the university's logo to the rector's official gown) was a great success. By organising exhibitions on the different campuses and placing permanent showcases, Academic Heritage creates opportunities to run into heritage objects in the hallways of the university.

Academic Heritage, however, is not an independent entity in the university, but part of an integrated heritage collective in which two small departments –both stationed in the buildings of the University Library– work closely together on the conservation, registration, digitisation, and valorisation of all heritage collections. The University Archives on the one hand and Special Collections on the other focus on all movable and immaterial heritage to secure the 'memory of the university'. In the Special Collections three kinds of heritage are being kept: (1) manuscripts, prints, and hand press books, (2) the art collection, and (3) academic heritage, the latter being the youngest discipline in Antwerp.

The next big step to secure the university's memory is the development of an online module for the registration of all heritage collections at the university. Art, archives, and academic heritage will all be registered in the same module. The elaborate data model that will be the core of this module is currently being created by the university library's ICT department, Anet, allowing each collection to get its own specialized module, but with similar basic descriptions for all items from all different collections. And not only the heritage collections kept at the university, but also other scientific and research collections from the university's predecessors, which are no longer kept at the university, can be added to the online module, e.g., the herbarium from the Biology department, now kept in de Botanical Gardens in Meise, or the objects and artifacts from the former Colonial College, now in the Africa Museum in Tervuren (Ermens & Demolder, 2023). In due time this online heritage module will enable researchers (and other interested people) around the world to check objects from the collections at the University of Antwerp and compare them through IIF with objects from other collections.



For centuries Antwerp has been a center of scientific research. Its young university is aware that it is part of this long tradition, and recognizes the importance of safeguarding its heritage, and its memory for future generations.

More information can be found on the university's Archives and Heritage website:

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/archives-heritage-library-university-antwerp/>

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Contact information

*Daniël Ermens (PhD),
Staff member, Assistant Curator*

Dr. Daniël Ermens works at the University of Antwerp as staff member of Special Collections for Academic Heritage at the Antwerp University Library and as assistant curator at the Ruusbroec Institute Library. He completed his PhD dissertation on Middle Dutch multi text codices in 2015.

Address: Prinsstraat 13 - S.A.104,
2000 Antwerpen, Belgium

Email: daniel.ermens@uantwerpen.be

Website: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/nl/projecten/archief-en-erfgoed/>

2. THE ULB MUSEUMS NETWORK UNIVERSITÉ LIBRE DE BRUXELLES

NATHALIE NYST

Keywords: *Brussels, Université libre de Bruxelles, University heritage*

Established in May 2003, the ULB Museum Network (Gesché-Koning & Nyst, 2009; Depraetere, Gesché-Koning & Nyst, 2012) brings together more than 10 university museums and collections¹¹, spread out over 6 campuses in Wallonia and Brussels. To these museums, one must notably add university collections of geographical maps, plaster castings, or numismatics, for instance. This network, which is internal to the ULB and member of networks external to the University¹², has a key asset: its federating role; moreover, its motto following that of Belgium, “L’union fait la force”.

Objectives

Originally, the Network had two main objectives: one ‘public’ –to elaborate a distinct image and increase visibility– the other ‘non-public’ –administrative and scientific aspects related to the collections. The former is now well implemented for more than 15 years (logo, internet site, joining museum associations, collaborative activities and events, etc.), while the latter is still in progress (statutes, regulations, collections policies, etc.).

11 Anatomy, Archaeology, Modern and contemporary art, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Embryology, Ethnology, Herbarium, Computer science, Medicine, Microscopy, Mineralogy, Pharmacy, Physics, Zoology.

12 Brussels Museums asbl, ICOM-Belgique/Wallonie-Bruxelles asbl, UMAC (ICOM Committee for University Museums and Collections), UNIVERSEUM (European Academic Heritage Network).

Activities

The managing authorities of the museums hold monthly meetings to discuss common problems and exchange about best practices, but also and more specially to work on the elaboration of joint projects. These projects are different opportunities for university museums and collections to collaborate closely inside the university as tools of research and development and keepers of our heritage. But as actors on the cultural, scientific, and pedagogical stages, they aim also to share their knowledge and collections and collaborate with the public.

Indeed, together and thanks to a modest budget allocated by the Rectorate, the partners have been organising various activities for more than 15 years and several times a year. Their originality demonstrates the ingenuity of the museums in getting out of the context of their own objects and specimens and in dealing with collections and themes that are very different from their own (Gesché-Koning & Nyst, 2021). Targeted mainly to a non-academic and family audience and accessible free of charge, these events aim at raising awareness of research in a way that is both scientific and fun. Moreover, these events strengthen the Network’s visibility while creating bridges within the university –between faculties, departments, services, units, etc.– and establishing links with other institutions.



Thus, several joint activities have been organised since 2003 [Fig.2], such as the “ULB Museum Sundays” (2004 to 2007) or the exhibition “Unsuspected beauties of research. Drawing in the ULB collections” (2012). In order to benefit from increased promotion, recurrent activities are more often part of (inter) national events, such as the Brussels Museums Nocturnes, the International Museum Day or the European Academic Heritage Day of UNIVERSEUM. Moreover, these are all opportunities to collaborate with students of the Master in Cultural Management and contribute to their training and development (Nyst, 2021, p.41-57; 2022, p.81-88).

Co-working with students

These partnerships take two main forms: internships and projects. During internships, students who participate in the organisation of events (Fascination of Plants’ Day, Museum Night Fever, European Museum Night, etc.) are involved in the whole process, from the definition of the theme to the running of the event, including the design of the poster, the programme, the promotion and its supports, the logistical aspects, etc. In the framework of the cultural management

projects, the students test the skills they have acquired by inserting themselves into existing cultural actors’ projects. They are confronted with the realities of a cultural project and involved in a project chain (design, implementation, evaluation).

As an example, let us recall that the annual international conference of UNIVERSEUM was initially planned in Belgium from 21 to 26 June 2020; its organisation was then led by 5 students¹³, under the supervision of the ULB Museums Network and KU Leuven. However, due to the health crisis, the decision was taken on 20 March 2020 to cancel the conference and postpone it to 2022. The students then proposed an alternative formula to finalise their project: “Beyond museum visits in the era of COVID19: 5 min meeting with university museum workers”.¹⁴ In 2021-2022, the organisation of the postponed conference was taken over by 3 new Master students –Widad Ghailan, Débora Laurent, and Caroline Michalle–, this time in the form of an internship.

The involvement of students from the ULB and elsewhere in the Network is therefore multifaceted, but undeniably contributes to their training, to the application and development of their knowledge and skills.

What about tomorrow?

The role played by the ULB Museums Network in favour of the university heritage is not in doubt, but what is the current heritage policy of the University? What are its plans in terms of managing its collections? Its place in society?

13 Noémie ASENSIO, Marina CERDA-SALVA, Laura DELACOUR-PETITJEAN, Athénaïs REZETTE, Clara SANCHEZ DE LA FUENTE.

14 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-bREdBawwrksCsPHHzPEZA>

A realistic and attractive project would be to set up three centres for the dissemination of science, one on each ULB campus in Brussels: a centre for collections and entities related to the humanities at the Solbosch, a centre for collections and entities related to the sciences at the Plaine and a centre for collections and entities related to health at Erasmus.¹⁵ This solution has the merit of corresponding to the authorities' intention to dedicate each of these three campuses to a disciplinary pole. All that remains is to draft the project, but that's another story...

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Contact information

Nathalie Nyst (PhD)

Coordinator of ULB Museum Network

Nathalie Nyst teaches in the Master of Cultural Management programme at the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences and coordinates the ULB Museums Network. Her research interests are relations between museum public policies and university museums and collections. Her areas of expertise are mainly museology and public cultural institutions.

Address: Université libre de Bruxelles, CP 103, av. F.D.Roosevelt 50, 1050 Ixelles, Belgium

Email: nathalie.nyst@ulb.be

Website: <https://musees.ulb.be>

¹⁵ In addition, the development of a centralised storage area for the movable heritage should also be studied, in close consultation with the Centre de Recherche en Archéologie et Patrimoine (CRéA-Patrimoine).



3. CULTURAL HERITAGE AT THE VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL: THE CITY IS OUR MUSEUM

FRANK SCHEELINGS

Keywords: *Brussels, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Heritage policies, Intangible heritage*

The university and its collections

In 1969 the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) split from the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). The cultural heritage collection of the university is quite diverse and several departments are involved in its management, in accordance with their competences and skills. The university's policy for movable and intangible cultural heritage is primarily carried out by CAVA (the central archives of VUB and of the secular humanist movement in Flanders and Brussels), although most of the twenty scientific heritage collections remain in situ and are cared for by the local research departments.

A museum?

Would it be a good idea to have a museum take control of the scattered collection? The museum option isn't advisable for various reasons. First, VUB already has two museums: an anatomic theatre and a computer museum. They are small, lack staff and get no or very weak central support. The computer museum, for example, consists of no more than a few displays in a classroom. Both museums are aimed at students and are not open to the public. Second, the university itself is rather young and mostly owns scientific objects from the latter quarter of the 20th century. Furthermore, the creation of new collections was hindered by the fact that the

university lacked space in the 1990s. As there was no general heritage policy in place at the time, obsolete scientific instruments and objects were often thrown away.

CAVA's actions to support movable scientific heritage

In 2011-2012, the Interuniversity Platform for Academic Heritage conducted a survey of the scientific and scholarly heritage of the four biggest Flemish universities. It resulted in a published report (Vanpaemel *et al.*, 2013) and a database of heritage objects held by each university, published online.¹⁶ For the project, CAVA launched a campaign to create awareness about scientific and scholarly heritage. It dedicated one of its new climate controlled repositories to heritage objects, so that these can be safely stored (2013). It established a sound collection policy by defining retention criteria (2014). From that moment on, CAVA started actively collecting objects and participating in new initiatives to enhance its expertise.

In 2019, the interuniversity platform became a commission of VLIR, the Flemish Interuniversity Council, in which all Flemish universities collaborate. Together

¹⁶ The database was exported to pdf and made available online: <https://academischerfgoed.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/overzicht-academisch-erfgoedcollecties-in-vlaanderen-zonder-ehb-en-kaska.pdf> (accessed on 26/03/2023).

they draw attention to the underappreciated position of their heritage (De Rynck, 2020). In close collaboration with ETWIE¹⁷, the 2012 list was updated (Cornelis, 2020). Several students were encouraged to conduct research on heritage issues; an interesting master paper outlined ways to improve the valorisation policies for academic heritage at VUB (Chaoui, 2021).

Intangible cultural heritage: The city is our museum

CAVA facilitated and conducted its own research on the intangible heritage of the university's students, like the song festival (Scheelings & Knaepen, 2015) and the baptismal ritual (Willcox, 2021). More extensive research was done on the topic of Saint Verhaegen (St V), a celebration of the opening of the unitary ULB on November 20, 1834. St V consists of an official programme, commemorating students and professors who defended our freedoms during the World Wars, and a critical parade of students through the city centre. The event highlights and sustains moral principles and values. CAVA organised lectures explaining the history and meaning of St V and was the driving force behind getting St V recognised as an intangible cultural heritage of the Brussels Region (2019). We collected stories from participants and created a walking tour (on paper and in an app). We took people on walks through the city, pointing out places of memory and telling little known stories, revealing a new aspect of the city's cultural identity, even to people already familiar with the capital. The city became our museum. This perfectly fits the policy of the university: to be an

active part of the city. Our walks might in the future serve as a gateway for visitors to discover the movable cultural heritage of both the VUB and the ULB.

Conclusion

Currently, there is not enough critical mass to justify a full-scale VUB museum. However, the scientific heritage can and should be used for interesting valorisation projects and programs that are set up by the Brussels universities. We've built expertise in documenting and sharing ICH, and our attempts to valorise it in the city have proven successful. We hope this will help us to attract the attention of a wider public for the heritage collections of both VUB and ULB.

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Contact information

Frank Scheelings (PhD)
former Director CAVA-VUB¹⁸

Frank Scheelings is prof. em., former director of CAVA-Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and was also chair of the interuniversity Master in Archival Science: Heritage and Records Management (located at VUB). He was member of several cultural heritage commissions of the Flemish Ministry of Culture.

Address: CAVA-VUB, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Ixelles,
Belgium

Email: Frank.Scheelings@vub.be;

Ellen.Van.Impe@vub.be

Website: <https://cavavub.be/>

¹⁸ Frank Scheelings is retired, for more information you can also contact his successor, Dr. Ellen Van Impe.

4. THE GHEENT UNIVERSITY MUSEUM AS AN ACTIVATOR OF CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP

MARJAN DOOM

Keywords: *Ghent, UGent, University museum, Inclusivity*

In October 2020, the Ghent University Museum or GUM (Belgium) opened its doors after a team of curators, researchers, educators, and policymakers had defined the mission and vision of this new museum. They positioned GUM on the crossovers between the academic and the cultural scene and determined what audiences it would target.

Ghent University had composed a diverse collection (estimated 400.000 objects) over the 200 years since its foundation. In 2012 the university decided to leave the genesis of one of the first university museum of Flanders into the hands of a young team. Without the restrictions nor the guidelines of blueprints, they were given the time and support to explore the position of a museum within a university and society. A challenge they embraced to push the boundaries of existing formulas and jump into the void of an experiment. They created a Forum that catalyses the dialogue between the collection and the public, between science and society. Not a hall of fame about the achievements of the university nor a hub for scientism, but a transparent and honest conversation about the nature of science, from time to time holding a mirror up to its own scientific community. With this vision, GUM fully embraces the societal role of universities to encourage critical citizenship and the societal role of museums as civic spaces.

Mission statement

Our mission statement is our backbone, the initiator of everything we do, and not non-committal.

1° Science is human

And so are scientists, with emotions and biases. They should always keep questioning and doubting.

2° Science dares to think

Scientific research requires creativity and bravery: thinking outside the existing lines, going against one's intuition, and daring to fail.

3° Science constantly evolves

Science and society are closely intertwined. Society influences our perception of science and how we engage in research.

Forum for Science, Doubt and Art

Our baseline Forum for Science, Doubt and Art encapsulates our vision on outreach and display, and embassies our societal role. The goal is to be welcoming without coming across as dummifying the audience or choosing the "science is fun" card.

The word forum represents to GUM a dynamic atmosphere fostering high levels of activity, while at the same time, the design calls for contemplation. A forum, as a democratic place, implies multi-perspectivism and inclusivity. These aren't empty concepts at GUM. Science is not preached



dogmatically. We do not proclaim but go through the thought processes along the visitor's side. GUM positions science as a human activity. We promote science as the most valuable tool to acquire objective knowledge whilst acknowledging the many other ways knowledge can be created and shared. As an open house, we want to be highly accessible (physically and mentally) and invite everyone to participate in the conversation. We explicitly get rid of the stereotype of the old, white, male scientist. To feel a connection, we believe the visitor needs to experience recognition. We emphasize the human qualities of the scientists, not their genius. And we guard that the representation of scientists at GUM reflects a broad diversity of ages, genders, and ethnicities. We apply the same approach employing our guides and hosts and we offer tours in 10 different languages to broaden our accessibility.

Student Participation and Community Building

GUM has defined its main target audience within the 15-25-year-old age group. We strive to co-create and build a GUM community with them.

Students are part and parcel of GUM. The Museum Student Team (MuST) is composed of students with various educational backgrounds. The students are invited to work behind the scenes, attend workshops led by museum professionals and explore various collections. Likewise, they represent the young board of GUM and are involved in several decision-making processes. They send an elected representative to the advisory board to connect their reality to that of the museum.

In addition, students run internships on a wide variety of museum operations, from collection research and

communication strategy to the design of temporary exhibitions. And lastly, we offer student jobs as guides, hosts, and front office workers. This approach seems fruitful, as in 2022 46% of our individual tickets were sold to -26-year-old.

Display

The displays are curated on the foundation of a distinct vision. GUM brings the story of the scientific process, of how scientists search and are driven by doubt, on a path to new insights. Visitors do not learn about great geniuses or inventions. But discover that science is the result of overcoming obstacles and using one's imagination. That a scientist should think outside the box and never take something for granted. The visitor is guided through seven themes: chaos, doubt, model, measurement, imagination, knowledge, and network, and in doing so, GUM raises questions but never fills in the answers. That is up to the visitor.

GUM wants the visitor to experience beauty and to meet the unexpected, beyond textbook science. We, therefore, display surprising wonderful objects not according to discipline or chronologically but interdisciplinary and with respect to their aesthetic value. Juxtaposing objects that are at first glance completely unrelated, challenges visitors to see the connections. This activation creates a time that visitors do not allocate to bite-size information transfer. A time that is needed to evoke reflection and engagement in the subject.

We explicitly choose to collaborate with artists, allowing a multi-layered perspective on our collection, display, and vision. Juxtaposing the artistic research methods and processes with scientific methods



shows crossovers between the disciplines. But equally delineates the goals and intrinsic values of their outputs. It helps the visitors to gain insight into the how and why of science. [Fig.3].

Contact Information

Marjan Doom (PhD)

Director of Ghent University Museum

Marjan Doom holds a PhD in Veterinary Medicine and is the Director of the Ghent University Museum (GUM). She is also a curator and coordinator for the Museum projects.

Address: Karel Lodewijk Ledeganckstraat 35,
9000 Gent, Belgium

Email: marjan.doom@ugent.be

Website: <https://www.gum.gent/>



5. SCIENTIFIC COLLECTIONS AND HERITAGE KU LEUVEN¹⁹

NATHALIE POOT

Keywords: *Leuven, KU Leuven, Scientific heritage collections, Digitization, Online presentation*

Introduction

Founded in 1425, the University of Leuven has a rich patrimony of movable and immovable heritage. KU Leuven manages a wide range of different types of collections. The management of the movable heritage is divided into two parts: KU Leuven Libraries Special Collections and the Academic and Historical Patrimony Service (AHP). In this text, the focus will be on the richness and management of the movable heritage.

KU Leuven is a heritage manager of different types of collections. The management of the movable heritage is divided into two parts: KU Leuven Libraries Special Collections and the AHP.

KU Leuven Libraries manages a heritage collection of circa 2,500 manuscripts, nearly 1,000 incunabula, more than 250,000 rare books (1501-1840) and 14,000 prints. It contains special collections and masterpieces of global renown, which give KU Leuven (Libraries) its own special character. KU Leuven Libraries invests in a modern and efficient heritage policy, with attention to both the preservation and the presentation of these precious works. KU Leuven

Libraries collects heritage materials based on seven fields of knowledge. University history, Church history, Humanism and the golden age of Leuven, History of Science, Literature, Music and visual arts/graphics, Sociocultural history to 1830, Sociocultural history after 1830 and History of the book.

Aside from the Special Collections in KU Leuven Libraries, there are three units under the Academic and Historical Patrimony Service (AHP) that are responsible for the care of academic heritage: the University Archives, Art Collections and the Scientific Collections and Heritage.

KU Leuven's University Archives collects and preserves the documentary heritage of the university of Leuven and makes those archives and collections available to the public in its reading room. The archives department increasingly supports the contemporary document management of the university's departments and faculties and has a suitable environment to include digital-born archives.

The university's own archives, from the foundation in 1425 until today, are at the core of the collections. In addition to parts of the archives of the Old University, which have been included in UNESCO's list of documentary heritage, the University Archives also keep Rectors' archives such as those of Paulin Ladeuze (1879-1940) and Honoré Van Waeyenbergh (1871-1971), archives of faculties and departments

19 Thanks to Marc Nelissen (University Archives), Katharina Smeyers (KU Leuven Libraries Special Collections), Tjamke Snijders (KU Leuven Libraries Special Collections) and Anne Verbrugge (Art Collections).

of the university up to the present day, and many archival fonds created by professors, students and student clubs, and of the many associations active in or around the university.

KU Leuven's art collection consists of around 10,000 objects of different nature and origin. The collections are related to the history of KU Leuven: portraits of professors, commemorative medals, memorabilia of academic life, and relics of university museums that have disappeared. KU Leuven also invests in contemporary art and gives it a place on its campuses and in the Leuven cityscape.

Finally, the Scientific Collections and Heritage Service manages a wide range of heritage collections: scientific instruments, natural history collections (such as minerals, soil monoliths, paleontological fossils,...), objects from humanities and social sciences, and medical and pharmaceutical instruments. These collections were originally used for research or as study and reference material and form an important part of the University's history. There are about 29 collections presented and stored throughout the campus. [Fig.4].

Collection registration

Since 2020 the Scientific Collections and Heritage Office uses CollectiveAccess as collection management system (CMS) for the registration of each individual object. CollectiveAccess was configured by the technical partner, LIBIS and met all the necessary requirements to register different types of collections. One of the strengths of this system is that it is able to combine different standards: Spectrum for heritage objects, DarwinCore for biology collections and ABCDEFG for the earth sciences. Secondly,



since the system is web-based, it was possible to directly integrate controlled vocabularies such as the AAT-Thesaurus (Art and Architecture Thesaurus) and Catalogue of Life (COL) and to integrate other authorities (such as GeoNames, VIAF...). Although CollectiveAccess is currently in use for collection registration, the CMS is constantly being improved with new standards, new vocabularies...

Online presentation on *Blendeff.be*

In October 2021 the online collection database *blendeff.be* was launched in which the scientific collections and art collections are published.



Blendeff.be is an Omeka S website and brings together data from two different collection management systems: CollectiveAccess (for the scientific heritage collections) and Adlib/Axiell (for the art collections). Via OAI-PMH data is harvested from the two databases and published on Blendeff.be. High-resolution images are shown via the Universal viewer. They are made available via IIF to enhance data interoperability. Currently, the website is only available in Dutch. In the Fall of 2023, the English version will be launched.

Two ongoing projects

There are several ongoing projects in which the scientific collections play a crucial role. Two are presented here. KU Leuven is a partner in the DiSSCo-Flanders project. In DiSSCo-Flanders, ten Flemish institutions, plus a couple of non-funded Belgian partners, join forces in a four-year project (2021-2024) coordinated by Meise Botanic Garden to realize the European initiative of DiSSCo in Flanders. Funded by the Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO IRI) with contributions by the different partners, DiSSCo-Flanders will focus on biological, anthropological and geological collections, comprising preserved, living, tissue and molecular collections. As WP2 lead, KU Leuven is responsible for the inventory and assessment of the collections. KU Leuven participates with several of its collections, including Soil lacquer profiles, Palaeontology, Minerals, and the collection of the Zoology Museum. The total size of these natural science collections is estimated at over 70K specimens.

In the framework of DiSSCo-Flanders KU Leuven launched in 2022 a crowdsourcing project with minerals collection. 291 minerals (of the estimated 5.000) were made available on the crowdsourcing

website Doedat.be, managed by the Meise Botanic Garden. By participating in the crowdsourcing initiative [DoeDat](#) KU Leuven aimed to improve the accessibility of the collection, both for scientists as well as for the general public. Each mineral was photographed with the corresponding label. Via the website, DoeDat volunteers helped with the transcription of this information. This information was used to enrich the mineral data already present in the collection management system and will be published on the website [Blendeff](#) in the near future.

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Contact information

Nathalie Poot, Head of Scientific Collections and Heritage Office

Nathalie Poot studied Art History at KU Leuven. She's responsible for the preservation and management of the scientific collections, collection registration, conservation and collection policy at KU Leuven. Scientific Collections and Heritage is part of the Academic and Historical Heritage Office.

Address: Europahuis, Blijde Inkomststraat 5,
3000 Leuven, Belgium

Email: Nathalie.poot@kuleuven.be

Website Scientific Heritage and Art Collections
KU Leuven: www.blendeff.be (in Dutch, translation in English available end 2023)

6. THE SCIENTIFIC AND ARTISTIC COLLECTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIÈGE²⁰

OCÉANE MEST

Keywords: Liège, University of Liège, Collections

Introduction

“By bringing together the museum spaces, scientific collections and knowledge mediation structures of the University of Liège, the Pôle [museum and cultural] materialises our institution’s commitment to society and future generations.

As result of two centuries of research and teaching, sometimes benefiting from legacies or acquisitions, the university collections are major witnesses of the scientific approach and of the various ways of questioning reality over time. As a historical and emblematic place for the production and animation of knowledge, it is the University’s duty to preserve, in the long term, the traces, sources and works that allow these different forms of knowledge to be built, experienced and shared. The University of Liège’s collections, from all fields and from the four corners of the world, are exceptional. Taking care of them and showcasing them is both an imperative and a privilege.

By using the items in the collections, the Museum and Cultural Centre aims to show and foster an understanding of the complex process of the development of scientific knowledge. Showing how science lives and is constructed is necessary in order to counter the growing mistrust of which it is the object nowadays, with the propagation of opinions, beliefs and fake news that compete with it. It is not a question of opposing science to any other form of knowledge, but of showing its specificities and, de facto, its validity –even if it is temporary or partial. Science, as same as Art, insofar they are both practices of questioning, doubt and invention, contribute their share to our understanding of the world and to the major challenges facing society. In this respect, of course, each collection in isolation does useful work in its own field [...].” (Winand, 2021)

The scientific collections of the University of Liège are the fruit of two centuries of research and teaching. They bear witness to the importance of the scientific approach and how we have questioned reality over the years. Sometimes the result of legacies or acquisitions, these collections are considered to be major witnesses of scientific history.

With the Museum & Cultural Centre, the University is giving concrete expression to its commitment to society and future generations (Devise et valeurs, 2019). The aim is to observe and understand the

20 I would like to express my gratitude for the time and attention that several of my colleagues have devoted to proofreading and criticising my paper. Your contribution has been invaluable in improving the quality of my work and I am grateful for your constructive comments.

Your expertise and commitment to our profession have inspired me and your collaboration has been much appreciated. Thanks to you, I am confident that my paper will be more complete, coherent and impactful.



complex process of building scientific knowledge based on the items in the collections. In most cases, university collections are unknown to the general public as well as to the members of the university that houses them. The Pôle, therefore, wishes to make up for this shortcoming.

The Museum & Cultural Centre: rediscovering and promoting university collections

The motto of the University of Liège reflects its values and its commitment to society and future generations. This motto, *scientia optimum*, is an important element of its identity and missions; it reflects the idea that science is never finished and that it is constantly evolving. It shows the University's commitment to continuous research and lifelong learning, as well as its role towards society. It is through the latter that the Pôle, by bringing together scientific collections, museum spaces and many other actors, materialises the commitment of the University of Liège to society and future generations.

A heterogeneous collection

Originating, in most cases, from the development of research and teaching in its institution, the collections of the University of Liège are as varied as the number of its faculties and departments. Among the scientific collections, we can currently mention the collection of the mineralogy and crystallochemistry laboratory, the collections of the GAR - Architecture Archives, the cyanobacteria collection, the collections of veterinary medicine, the collections of the ULiège Library's heritage collections, the collections of epigraphic prints and rubbings, the collections of the Herbarium, the collections of palaeontology, the papyrus collections, the Haute-Ardenne - Station scientifique des Hautes

Fagnes collections, the Prehistory collections, the human anatomy collections, the dendrochronology collections, the cuneiform tablet collections, the streptomycin collections, the archaeometry collection, the micro-algae collections, the plant histological sections collection (Collections scientifiques, 2018). In addition to these scientific collections, other collections are also present in the university museums. Among others, for example, both The Aquarium-Museum and the Wittert Museum, have remarkable pieces (Musées, 2018).

Nevertheless, it is still possible that some collections are not yet known by us. Indeed, collections that are formed through research are sometimes not considered by researchers as being good enough to be integrated into the scientific collections of the university. It is therefore within our remit to continue our research in order to unearth and enhance all current and future collections.

Classified "treasures" of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation

Each of the collections listed below has its own particularities. Indeed, some of them contain rare objects, sometimes even unique in the world. These are several items that have been classified as "treasures" of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Trésors classés..., 2020). These "treasures" include the skull of the Engis II Neanderthal child with 10 Middle Palaeolithic features, the Averbode gospel dated between 1136 and 1180, the Wittert leaflet dated between 1150 and 1170, the Lambert le Bègue psalter dated between 1255 and the 1280s, the Theodore Schwann muscular balance dated 1835 and a set of 49 glass models of invertebrate animals known as the Blaschka collection dated between 1886 and 1887. [Fig.5].

The University of Liège strives to protect and preserve these treasures for future generations, and to make them accessible to the public for research and study.

Promotion of the university collections

Currently, the Museum & Cultural Centre is carrying out various actions to promote its collections to the university community (and more specifically to students) as well as to the general public. We have noticed that students know little or nothing about the various collections and what they can offer them in terms of teaching and research. As for the general public, they have limited access to university collections. Indeed, they can access part of the collections through exhibitions, guided tours or other events organised by various non-profit organisations using our collections (such as the Maison de la Science, the Aquarium-Museum, etc.). However, they cannot have access to other collections held in various departments.

In order to try to make up for this lack of visibility and interest, the Pôle has therefore decided to implement a better communication and promotion strategy.

First of all, we felt it was important to draw up a list of all the collections we knew about and to make a call for others to be discovered. This allowed us to realise the richness of the various collections of the University of Liège. We then wanted to share and make people discover, or even rediscover, these collections with as wide an audience as possible through the use of video presentations as well as the presentation of certain objects in the form of short stories. Other projects are also underway, in particular the design of exhibitions, colloquia, "Opening of the collections" days, etc., to be able to use most of the collections through a common theme.





We know that these actions have had an impact on the target audiences, but less than we had hoped. A study of the public is therefore underway to understand the expectations and what the Centre could put in place to attract these audiences and better promote our collections.

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Contact information

Océane Mest (MSc), Inventory Manager

Océane Mest has two masters degrees, one in archaeometry and the other in museology, from the University of Liège, where she is currently the inventory manager and where she carries out various missions related to the development of university collections. Since June 2022, she is also a member of the Board of Directors of ICOM Belgium Wallonia-Brussels.

Address: Université de Liège, Place Delcourt 17,
4020 Liège, Belgium

Email: oceane.mest@uliege.be

Website: [MUSEES - Pôle muséal & culturel \(uliege.be\)](https://musees.uliege.be)

7. UCLouvain: RETHINKING UNIVERSITY HERITAGE AT MUSÉE L

ANNE QUERINJEAN & ANNELIES VAN DE VEN

Keywords: *Louvain-la-Neuve, UCLouvain, Collection, University*

The Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain) and its campuses are quite exceptional. It is a university with a deep heritage, one that it shares with the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KULeuven), but when the universities split along linguistic lines in 1968 it was faced with this incredible challenge of creating a new institution, a new city even. This challenge also came with an opportunity to rethink what a university could look like: pedestrian friendly, minimalist and modern. The new town created a framework within which the university's heritage continued to live and grow, enriched with new collections, archives, buildings and traditions.

The university was quite quick to appreciate the need for a space to publicly showcase its heritage. Already in 1979, a first museum opened within the Faculty of Arts dedicated to collections related to art history and archaeology. However, the university's other manifold heritage objects, such as the palaeontology casts, natural history specimens and scientific measurement tools remained spread out across its different departments. It was only in 2017 that the object collections, and a few connected archives, were moved to a central location at Musée L, the university museum (Querinjean, 2021, p.31-40).

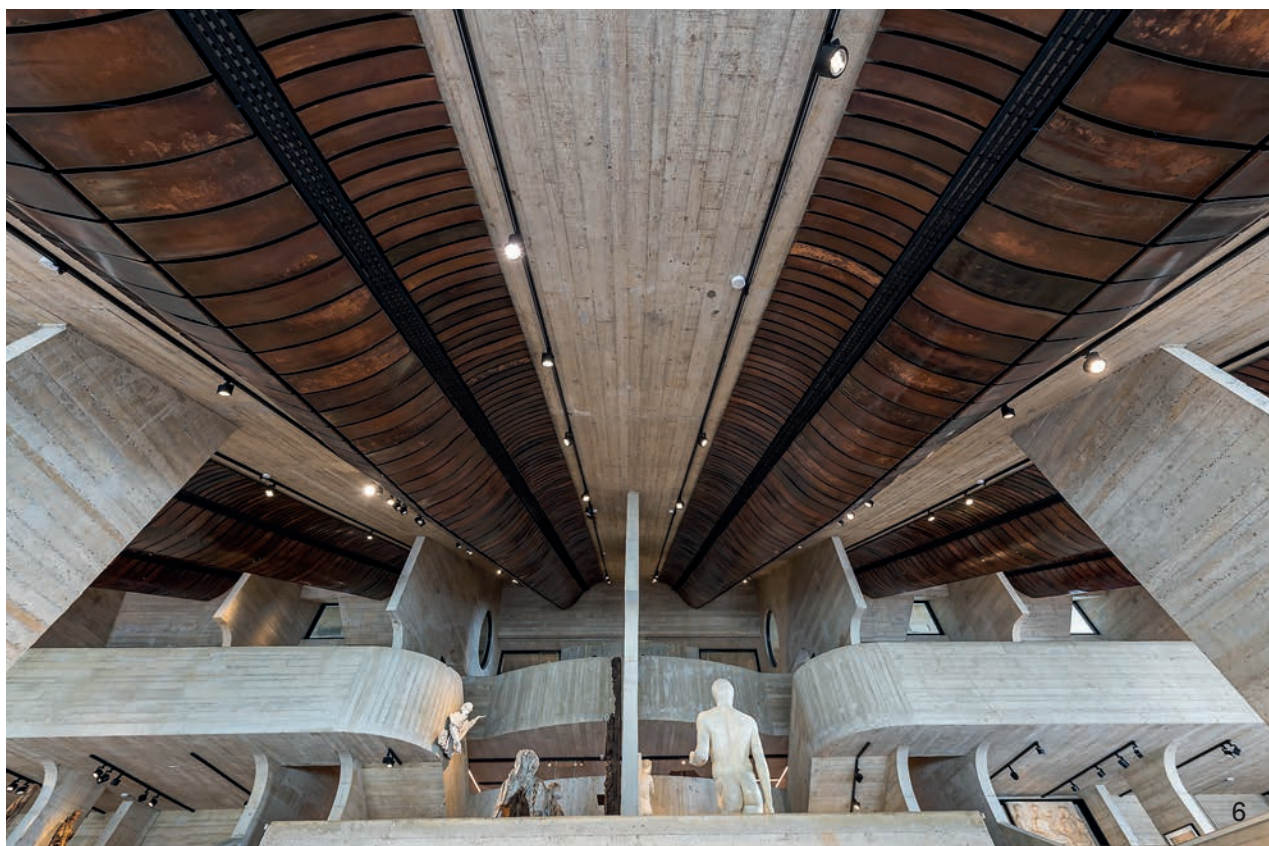
Originally built as the library of science, few traces of the building's origins remain. Going into the museum today, it is hard to imagine that it ever had any other function. Across its 6 floors of galleries and three floors of underground storage including a collection of casts that is accessible to the public (Van den Driessche,

2020), it houses more than 30,000 objects ranging from modern art to zoological models. The richness and diversity of these collections is the museum's key strength. Its ability to explore dialogues between different disciplines, materials, periods, regions, makes it an inspiring place for students, researchers and members of the public alike. It highlights that thinking laterally allows for creativity and makes us better scholars.

The museum is of course first and foremost a place of learning. It includes spaces for lectures and hands-on classes. And museum staff organise internships across its departments and collaborate on research-oriented exhibitions. To encourage all visitors to take an analytical approach to the collections there are also three TechnoLabs located across the museum dedicated to etching, sculpture and colour. These are spaces where you can learn about different materials and techniques in a playful way. This helps to understand how the objects on display are made, and what we can learn about those who made them.

The museum is based around five themes that are at the heart of every creative journey, be it scientific, artistic or antiquarian: wonder, questioning, communicating, emotion and contemplation.

The first theme, wonder, is explored through the cabinet of curiosities, a black box that shows the incredible diversity of human creation through the museum's artistic and scientific collections. It also



embraces the 3 missions of the museum through its integration of teaching and research collections established by former staff members of the university with publicly sourced artistic collections. It is the starting point for helping visitors understand the heritage that Musée L holds.

The second section is about questioning. It is set up as a laboratory, with tables dedicated to different researchers. It combines objects with archival material, text, photographs and videos to explore the full range of research fields from philosophy to astrophysics. The scientific collections of the university were a new addition when the museum re-opened in 2017, so it was essential for the museum staff to create a narrative that embraced these collections and

brought them into contact with the existing material on display. Within the same space the theme of communication is explored, considering how we measure the world, document our observations and disseminate our findings.

The next two and a half floors of the museum engage with emotion, embracing subjectivity and art in all its forms. There is a particular interest in the spiritual realm. UCLouvain has a tradition as a catholic university and as such has received a number of religious artworks from private donors. Throughout the galleries, these religious collections are explored in dialogue with acquisitions made for research purposes, particularly the ancient Mediterranean and the African collections. [Fig.6].

These juxtapositions are made most clear at the centre of the gallery where two pieces from two distinct collections are placed alongside one another. Here you see the Doryphoros and a baroque Virgin Mary, both standing in a similar contrapposto, but created many centuries apart. Seeing them together evokes questions about cultural difference and continuity, about artistic inspiration and evolutions in materials and styles.

The top floor elaborates further on these cultural juxtapositions, providing a space for visitors to link and think without extensive text panels or distractions. The entire collection here belonged to one man Charles Delsemme who was fascinated by how objects from different times and places could speak to one another (Vandevivere, 1990). Though he was a collector, his collection evokes artists, inventors and researchers, embracing the full gamut of how people interact with objects and use them to understand the world around us.

In its very fabric, UCLouvain is a university that is both steeped in history and strikingly contemporary. Its collections are manifold, a rich resource for academics, students and members of the public interested in learning more about the university, its disciplines and the world around them. We warmly invite you all to come and explore our collections and join us in our mission to create dialogues across institutions, disciplines and cultures.

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Contact information

Anne Querinjean, Director Musée L

Anne Querinjean has led Musée L since the beginning of its renovation, conception and realization of the new museography, scientific and cultural program. Prior to this, she worked for 20 years at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels where she spearheaded an important program to reach audiences that have long been marginalised in the cultural sector.

Address: Place des Sciences 3/L6.07.01,
1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
Email: anne.querinjean@uclouvain.be
Website: <https://museel.be/>

Annelies Van de Ven

FNRS Post-doctoral researcher

After receiving her doctorate from the University of Melbourne in 2018, Dr Van de Ven moved to the Université Catholique de Louvain to research the history of archaeology at the institution through an integrated study of Musée L's collections and archives.

Address: Place Cardinal Mercier 53/L3.03.01,
1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
Email: annelies.vandeven@uclouvain.be
Website: <https://archaeoa.wordpress.com/>



8. THE ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MONS

KEVIN TROCH

Keywords: *Mons, University of Mons, Collections*

Introduction

The University of Mons (UMONS) is a young university. However, it has a very rich academic heritage inherited from the different institutions that existed before it and that merged in 2009 to create UMONS.

This academic heritage is still largely unknown, even to the university community. It's been promoted by the MUMONS, the university's museum, and managed by the Archives and Collections department since 2018. This article briefly presents these collections.

The University of Mons (UMONS) is a small and dynamic public university with rich heritage collections. It's a young institution founded in 2009 from the merger of two pre-existing universities: the Faculty of Engineering or *Faculté Polytechnique* which was created in 1837 as a School of Mines, and the University of Mons-Hainaut founded in 1965 from the merger of several institutions too, mainly the Central Library founded in 1797 and the Warocqué Institute of commercial engineers created in 1899 regarding collections.²¹

This historical background explains the great diversity of the collections held by UMONS. These collections are divided into 6 departments: Archives, manuscripts,

arts, iconographic collections, printed works, scientific instruments, and natural sciences. Together they form the academic heritage collection of UMONS with more than 300,000 items dating from the 11th century to the 1990s.²²

The Archives and Collections Department is responsible for managing these collections and the MUMONS, the university museum, for promoting them.

The Archives

This collection was assembled since the foundation of the oldest faculty of UMONS, the Faculty of Engineering in 1837 and of its oldest library, the Central Library in 1797.

The institutional archives reflect the history of the university and its predecessors. They are an important source to study the history of higher education in Hainaut (Daston, 2017).

UMONS also has a large array of private archives such as the archives of professor Jacques Franeau (1922-2007) who was a professor at the Faculty of Engineering before becoming professor and then rector at the University of Mons-Hainaut; or the archives of scholars and scientists who studied and/or worked in

21 The comprehensive history of the University of Mons is available on the website of the university: <https://web.umons.ac.be/en/university/about-us/a-few-dates/> (accessed on 22 February 2023).

22 A brief glimpse of these collections is available on the website of the MUMONS: <https://mumons.be/collections> (accessed on 22 February 2023).

Mons such as Fernand Delhayé's (1880-1946) geological survey of Rwanda in 1921-1923; or the archives of the local writer Robert Delcourt (1902-1967) known as *Franc-Borègne*. These archives cover a wide range of topics but are unfortunately not well-known to researchers.

Manuscripts

The collection of rare and ancient manuscripts of UMONS consists of thousands of medieval and modern manuscripts. 258 of them date from before the 15th century and the oldest is from the 11th. Two of them are classified as Treasures of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.²³

This collection came from the former religious institutions of the county of Hainaut. They were abolished under the French Republic and their collections were brought together in the Central Library founded in 1797 (Isaac, 1997). These manuscripts constitute a precious source for the history of Mons and Hainaut.

The Faculty of Engineering Library holds mainly student laboratory notebooks, faculty lecture notes, and research papers in its manuscripts section dating from the middle of the 19th century to the mid-1960s. Some of them are richly illustrated.²⁴ They represent an interesting source for the history of science teaching in Belgium (Heering & Wittje, 2011).

23 These treasures are the manuscript by RAINERUS. ca. 1035-1075. *Office. Vies de Saint Ghislain et ses miracles et fondation du monastère sous l'abbé Gérard de Brogne*, and the Gutenberg's Bible (B42) printed between 1453-1456, from the Chanoine Puissant Library. They can be consulted on PHENIX, the digital library of UMONS: <https://biblio.umons.ac.be/public/bv/actualite-10/> (accessed on 22 February 2023).

24 Some of them can be viewed on PHENIX: <https://biblio.umons.ac.be/public/bv/index.php> (accessed on 22 February 2023).

Printed works

Complementary to the previous collection, the Printed Works is the UMONS' main heritage collection. It comprises several thousand volumes from the 15th to the 18th century, including 300 incunabula printed before 1501 and a large collection of 19th and 20th-century books. They cover all subjects: local history, sciences, engineering, religion, medicine, law... (Plisnier, 2013, p.176-189).

The Faculty of Engineering Library holds many technical books and journals, especially about mining techniques and Earth sciences. Most of them date from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

UMONS also keeps many old journals and newspapers at the local and national levels dating back to the beginning of the 19th century.

The university holds private libraries donated by scholars too such as the library of the Belgian naturalist Augustin Drapiez (1778-1856).

Arts and Iconographic collections

The Arts and Iconographic collections were neglected for a long time. A dedicated curator was hired in 2020 to manage them.

The iconographic collection has about 5000 items such as old maps and charts, engravings, photographs, and postcards. Most of them are related to Mons and the Hainaut but the collection includes drawings of local artists such as Anto Carte or Léon Dolez.

UMONS also has a small collection of artworks, including two stained-glass windows by Anto Carte dating from the 1920s.

Scientific instruments

Like the previous one, this collection was left unmanaged until 2018. The inventory is in progress and so far, 2500 scientific instruments are listed. The oldest dates back to the 1840s and the most recent is from the 1990s.

These scientific apparatuses reflect the way science was taught in a regional university during the 19th and 20th centuries but also the material basis of scientific research (Hearing & Wittje, 2011).

UMONS holds collections of scientific instruments donated by members of the community or by private collectors. Finally, UMONS promotes the collection of scientific instruments of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. This collection includes 4000 objects from the 18th century to the 1960s from the public secondary schools of Wallonia and Brussels.²⁵ [Fig.7].

Natural sciences

UMONS has large natural sciences collections, mainly in geology, entomology, and marine biology.

The geological collections of the Faculty of Engineering are held by the Fundamental and Applied Geology department. It's the oldest laboratory of the university, dating back to the creation of the Faculty as a School of Mines in 1837. The paleontological collection includes 4000 to 5000 specimens collected by professors and students since the 19th century, and the mineralogical and petrographic collections



7

count around 10,000 to 20,000 items. The Geology department also holds private collections such as the Captain Le Hon's collection dating back to the 1850s and the Alphonse Briart collection dating back to the end of the 19th century. A modern inventory of these collections started in 2023 and will be available online.

The zoology and marine biology departments of the Faculty of Sciences have been collecting specimens since the beginning of the 1970s. They assembled a vast collection of over 100,000 specimens, especially corals and bees. All these collections are critical for fundamental and applied research projects and still growing, particularly because of fieldwork activities.

Conclusion

Thanks to the MUMONS and the Archives and Collections department, the university community as well as the public can discover or rediscover

25 This collection is managed by the non-profit organization ScienceEchos. See: <https://www.scienceechos.be/> (accessed on 22 February 2023).

its heritage. The works of both MUMONS and the curator of collections aim to make the community aware of the need to preserve these precious yet little-known collections.²⁶

This academic heritage bears witness to the past of the various institutions that gave birth to the University of Mons. Without this heritage, it would be difficult to understand the history of the institution but also the history of the city or the province as well as the history of science and education in Belgium. Moreover, some of these collections are still useful for research and all of them are enriched by targeted donation and acquisition campaigns. Ensuring their preservation and accessibility is a necessity for the advancement of research at our university.

UMONS, as a young, dynamic, and growing higher education institution, with the support of the MUMONS and the Archives and Collections department, has the potential to become an important player in the conservation and valorisation of academic heritage in Belgium. There are still many treasures to discover on the university campuses and UMONS has the will and profound desire to make its rich heritage available to as many people as possible.

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Contact information

Kevin Troch (PhD), Curator of collections

Doctor of Philosophy and Letters (History) at the University of Namur and the University of Lille (2018). Kevin Troch is currently the curator of collections at the University of Mons since 2018. He is in charge of the UMONS' collections of scientific instruments and the collections of the Faculty of Engineering Library.

Address: Université de Mons, Service Archives et Collections, rue Marguerite Bervoets 2, 7000 Mons, Belgium

Email: kevin.troch@umons.ac.be

Website: <http://www.mumons.be>

²⁶ To accomplish this objective, we're following the advice given in KIPP, 2016 and SIMON, 2016.



II. CHALLENGES OF THE PAST – RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TODAY	39
1. The museum ambition ANDRÉ GOB	40
2. In the eye of the beholder: Decolonising (the history of) Science (Museum) at Oxford University SILKE ACKERMANN	47
3. What remains of the connection between Antwerp and Congo DANIËL ERMENS & MARC DEMOLDER	53
4. Artistic heritage at the Complutense University of Madrid from a gender perspective – ISABEL M. GARCÍA FERNANDEZ	61

II. CHALLENGES OF THE PAST RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TODAY



1. THE MUSEUM AMBITION

ANDRÉ GOB

Text delivered at the opening conference.

Since the French Revolution and the creation of the Louvre Museum, there has been a current of thinkers in France who do not like museums. Antoine Quatremère de Quincy sees them as nothing but large storerooms, Paul Valéry finds them boring and tomb-like and Bernard Deloche (Deloche & Mairesse, 2008) prefers not to visit them. They all equate the museum with a conservatory for works of art, for it is to art, of course –and exclusively to it– that these authors apply the word “museum”. A conservatory, a simple repository, a fridge to protect works of art from corruption, “a place where time stops running” (Gob, 2014, p.34-44).

In contrast to this simplistic view, I would like to talk about the museum’s ambition. Ambition, turned towards the future, towards the goal to be reached, towards achievements. To tell the truth, the word has a bad press in the French language, if I am to believe the dictionaries that reduce its meaning to its etymology and apply it, in a pejorative way, to the ambitious. “One speaks of collective ambition only by extension”, the dictionary Le Robert abruptly stops, radically ignoring current uses of the word (Rey, 2005, 1, p.255). The English language –and its dictionaries– is more realistic and less negative: “an earnest desire for some type of achievement, or distinction, or wealth, or fame and the willingness to strive for it”. Desire and will. The same word is used for the objective: “the object or state desired or sought after” (WordReference, 2023).

It is in this positive and proactive perspective that I place the museum’s ambition.

Initial impulse

Contrary to what a traditional discourse on the origin of the institution would have us believe, the museum is not born out of a more or less passive transition from (private) collecting to the public institution. A transition that some people certainly regret.

The creators of the first museums assigned a purpose to their project, which was fully in line with the ideology of the Enlightenment: to change society –or at least to contribute to it– and to improve the well-being of Man. Nothing less! And it is understandable that I should speak of ambition when describing this goal. In this perspective, the collection of objects or works of art is a means rather than an end. The museum is seen as an instrument, a tool to act within society, to raise the level of knowledge and culture of the people, as widely as possible, and to make society evolve in a progressive perspective. The Enlightenment of knowledge opposed to the obscurantism of religions; social progress opposed to a rigid societal fixism.

This was explicitly stated when the Ashmolean Museum was created in Oxford in 1683, a forerunner museum that combined a natural history collection with a laboratory for the scientific training of university students. This didactic ambition is found a century later, theorised and systematised, in the writings of the Prussian Wilhelm von Humboldt, who laid the foundations of the new university where teaching is

based on observation and experimentation rather than on commentary on previous texts, particularly ancient texts. This approach applied not only to the natural sciences but also to the humanities and literature. He himself was an acknowledged linguist. On this basis, von Humboldt founded a university in Berlin, which today bears his name, with didactic collections in the various disciplines. This model spread widely in Germany and beyond. In Belgium, the universities of Liège and Ghent were founded in 1817 by King Wilhelm I of Orange based on this model, which has given my alma mater the richest university collections in the country today (Gob, 2021). King Wilhelm I endowed the two new universities with collections from the royal collections of the Netherlands: naturalized specimens, crystals and rock samples, coins and medals, as well as an initial library collection (*ibid.*).

Less expectedly, there is a marked illuminist ambition in the creation of the first (modern) museum in the Vatican, the *Museo Pio-Clementino*, as I was able to show recently (Gob, 2019). The Visconti fathers and sons, Giambattista and Ennio Quirino, were steeped in the new ideas, the latter especially, to the point of becoming minister and then consul of the short-lived Repubblica Romana of 1797-98 that ousted Pope Pius VI. In the preface to volume 2 of the museum's catalogue (which includes 8 volumes), Ennio Quirino Visconti offers a lively critique of Rome and the Italy of his time and sees in the creation of the museum an instrument for the regeneration of society through the example of antiquity.

As we can see, this didactic ambition is expressed directly in university museums and collections, in support of the training of the elites, but it is also present, although less immediately, in all the museums created at the turn of the 18th and 19th

centuries, with the notable exception of the British Museum, which opening, from 1753 onwards, was limited to members of Parliament and their relatives. On the other hand, this desire to develop society through education and culture can be found in the two museums in Dresden created by the Elector of Saxony in 1786, in the first Louvre –the Central Museum of Arts which opened in 1800– and its counterpart, the National Museum of Natural History, to name but a few examples. However, this inspiration of the Enlightenment soon faded, supplanted by patriotic or nationalist perspectives –Napoleon's Louvre, Wellington's British Museum, the museums of Berlin and Munich– where the ambition of national prestige took over and led to the bourgeois museum. This is the kind of museum that Emile Zola depicts so vividly in the famous visit to the Louvre by Gervaise's wedding party (*L'Assommoir*). The emancipatory role of the museum is long gone (Gob, 2014; 2019, ch.1).

Is this initial didactic ambition still legitimate today, as ICOM seeks, not without difficulty, to establish another definition of the museum, more inclusive, less ethnocentric (ICOM, 2022). The idea of progress, inherent to the Enlightenment, has been denounced by postmodern thinkers and the “No Future” (Lyotard, 1979). It is up to you and the museologists, museum professionals and academics of today and tomorrow to redraw the contours and emphases of this ambition, with open, less European-centric perspectives, towards a decolonised museum. But also diversified in its forms, so as to meet the aspirations and expectations of culturally diverse populations.

The universalist claim –I think that to speak of ambition here would be an understatement– of the great museums of the 19th century –there's no need to name them, we all know them– the universalist



claim of which Neil Mc Gregor has been a champion, has itself proved its limits. “We show the world to the world”, exclaimed the director of the British Museum (Gob, 2010), but this world is very limited, so fragmentary, and the view that is taken of it is so European! It is probably not useful to dismember these museums, but it has become impossible to consider them as models. They are more like testimonies, albeit prestigious, of a certain idea, of a certain moment in Western cultural history.

These museums –and their museography– are above all based on their collections, which are rich, powerful, innumerable, and have origins that are as diverse as they are murky. Let the collector have the selfish ambition of acquiring this or that masterpiece or of owning the richest collection, even if it is in defiance of the laws and ethical rules. This enjoyment cannot be the museum’s. For my part, I favour a societal purpose for the museum, relegating the collection of objects to the background, which is a means, admittedly indispensable in general, but not a goal of the institution. Is this not the deepest meaning of the term “society museum”, a new paradigm rather than a category (Drouguet, 2015)?

The museum’s scientific ambition is of a different order. It is one of its basic missions to collect and conserve specimens and objects in order to build up reference collections that are indispensable for establishing systematic taxonomies, particularly in the natural sciences, archaeology and ethnography. For example, the Africa Museum in Tervuren holds the largest reference collection (xylotheca) of tropical woods and the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris has a very rich collection of traditional musical instruments. Both are consulted by researchers from all over the world for comparison.

These sets of objects are often the result of fieldwork carried out by the museum: archaeological, palaeontological or geological excavations, more or less exotic expeditions, systematic collections, etc. The Dakar-Djibouti expedition, which crossed the African continent from west to east in 1931, led by Marcel Griaule, has remained famous, as have the excavations carried out in Egypt or the Near East by the British Museum, the Louvre or the Berlin Museums, fieldwork that once fed the collections of these museums. But alongside these emblematic examples, which have all the hallmarks of archaeology and predatory, colonial ethnography, a great deal of field research, both local and more distant, bears witness to the role that museums still play today in the development of scientific disciplines. This is particularly true of university museums.

Museum objects then become scientific facts, which generates new constraints and puts them, in a way, above contingencies. However, they cannot be considered as purely scientific objects. The methods used to collect them: the context of the expeditions, the quality of the excavations, whether or not the basic ethical rules were respected, etc. are of critical importance, both for the museographic aspects and for the scientific scope and reliability of the results. The museum’s scientific ambition, legitimate though it may be, finds its limits here. Moreover, it should be noted that this scientific qualification of objects is the sole responsibility of the scientific world, which is European in the case of museums in Europe. It cannot be imposed as such on other societal universes, unless it demonstrates an imperialism that is no longer accepted today. Human remains collected in the past in distant, more or less colonised regions and held in various museums in Europe –the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science, for example– may well be considered

by these institutions as scientific specimens. Some of them are of great importance in view of their rarity, but for the current inhabitants of the regions of origin, they are still relics of their ancestors. The following example is revealing: regarding centuries-old human skulls with engravings on their foreheads, originating from Easter Island and exhibited in the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels, the curator Nicolas Cauwe writes “the scientific approach must take precedence over all other considerations”. And he adds: “to think otherwise is to help [the Pashto people] erase part of their history” (Cauwe, 2011, p.73). A fine example, barely ten years ago, of imperialism from another age!

These considerations naturally lead me to raise the question of the inalienability of museum collections. This is indeed an argument that is very often opposed to any request for restitution: “Museum collections are inalienable”. Paradoxically, this is what the Belgian jurist Yves-Bernard Debie, who was recently heard by the (Belgian) Senate Committee on African restitutions, asserts over and over again. Debie is in fact the lawyer who regularly defends French or Belgian collectors who are worried about the origin of certain pieces. But the paradox is only apparent. If Debie and his clients defend the principle of the inalienability of museum collections, it is because they fear a contagion effect towards private collections (Debie, 2019).

It should be recalled from the outset that the “principle of inalienability” is not strictly speaking a principle. Museum legislation, when it exists, only exceptionally defines that their collections cannot be alienated (sold or transferred). Rather, it is a common sense, implicit assumption that the museum, with its obvious heritage mission, cannot sell or transfer the works and objects in its care. Moreover, ICOM (2017) itself admits the transfer of pieces and defines

the modalities (rather restrictive, *cf.* art. 2.12 to 2.17 of the Code of Ethics). Moreover, many museums in the world sell or exchange pieces of their collection.

What is the basis for this idea of inalienability?²⁷

Perhaps, but erroneously, on a vision of the museum as an absolute receptacle of heritage: all elements of movable heritage should ultimately be preserved in a museum. In this perspective, which I would describe as totalitarian, the museum acts like a trap, letting in the prey but preventing them from leaving. Or, to put it another way, the museum only intervenes in the art and antiquities market as a buyer, never as a seller. If all heritage objects are destined to end up in museum collections, it would be more efficient and quicker to simply ban private collections and confiscate them! More fundamentally, it should be remembered that heritage value is not intrinsic, it is conventional: it is agreed –society– that such and such an object or work should be marked with the seal of heritage and preserved as such. The museum is precisely one of the main instances of heritage. The aforementioned reasoning of the totalitarian museum is flawed at its core: not all heritage items can be collected in museums, since it is precisely their entry into museum collections –among other ways– that gives these items a heritage value. In addition, this vision of the museum as an absolute conservatory gives the collection an excessive –because primordial– place within the museum.

Nor is inalienability based on the scientific nature of the museum institution. Its scientific ambition is of a different order. Although objects (tangible or intangible) are important elements in the process, as data, as witnesses or as references, the constitution of a

27 On this concept, see Mairesse, 2009.



collection is by no means the objective of the museum's scientific practice. A reference collection can be a tool, as referential databank, but it is not the purpose of the research.

Let us also discard the anachronistic idea that a "universal" museum should collect and accumulate all the world's heritage.

When we look at the times and circumstances in which the principle of inalienability was asserted, in mid-19th century France, we see that the primary motive was to protect the museum and its collections from the museum officials themselves, political or administrative authorities and curators. It is a question of avoiding the effects of fashion and reminding these people that it is not healthy to discard pieces or works judged (by them or by society as a whole) to be old-fashioned, out of date, of questionable taste, in order to acquire new works that are better appreciated at that time. Tastes change and what is outdated today will be revived a few decades later. The museum's collection is there precisely to trace the history of taste. This is also what marks the break between museums and collectors and, as such, the principle of inalienability must be preserved, provided that it is not given an absolute value but, on the contrary, is handled with discernment, always bearing in mind the ethics of the museum.

Indeed, such a principle –I have said what it is about this word– like any principle of law or morality, cannot cover up turpitude. "Nemo auditur propriam turpitudinem allegans" is a rule of Roman law that is still in force today in most European laws. No one can take advantage of his own wrongdoings. Inalienability must take a back seat to the iniquity –let alone the illegality– of the conditions of acquisition of a museum

piece. This is simple when the legal rules are precise and explicit, as in the case of Nazi appropriations between 1938 and 1945, for example, and the courts have repeatedly ruled in favour of restitution (which has not prevented certain museums, including the Louvre, from appealing a first decision and being ordered to return the work). The situation can be much more complex, as in the case of collections acquired in a colonial context, where, apart from a few exceptions, the law does not say much.

University museums, within the framework of the UMAC (2022), have adopted a guideline on these issues: "Guidance for Restitution and Return of items from university museums and collections". These rules are based on the ICOM Code of Ethics (2017) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (2007). For if respect for museum ethics is essential, so is respect for human rights. University museums are all the more attentive to this as the institution to which they belong or from which they originate has itself professed ethics and objectivity as the basis of its credibility, both in its research and in its teaching.

To conclude, the museum project is and remains a project with ambition. That of being an institution or organisation open to the world today, at the service of society to improve its functioning and contribute to the well-being of its citizens, particularly in intellectual and cultural terms.

The challenge is to take up the diversity of the world's cultures and the indispensable multicultural approach without abandoning what has made the museum what it is for more than two centuries, a difficult challenge –as shown by the difficulty for ICOM to adopt an updated definition. But a definition does not precede

the movement, it does not blow the whistle; rather, it follows, ratifies and enshrines the developments that have been taking place for several decades now. Among these, the formidable diversification of museum forms is undoubtedly the most appropriate way to meet the need to adapt to global cultural diversity and to broaden the institution's audience, in search for inclusiveness, both at the level of societies and cultures and at the level of populations and individuals.

But the break-up of the standard form that governed the museum world for more than a century – approximately from 1830 to 1960– and the emergence of new forms has put the institution in a situation of comparison, or even competition, with various enterprises, which are also part of the world of tourism or entertainment, which welcome the public, but which are essentially driven by a logic of profit, despite their often ambiguous positioning. It is in this situation that the need for clearly defined ambitions and a firm ethical line is most evident.

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2. IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER: DECOLONISING THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE MUSEUM AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY²⁸

SILKE ACKERMANN

Keywords: *Oxford (England), Decolonisation, (History of) science, Islamic World*

Summary

The need (and opportunities) for decolonisation in museums that focus on science and/or the history of science may not be obvious at first sight –but if we give space, and step back, the blind spots are all around us.

Abstract

One of the key drivers of change in the museum sector in recent years has been the deep engagement with decolonisation. But while art galleries, social and natural history museums, and anthropological and ethnographic collections have all responded with initiatives to interrogate their own collections and develop new exhibitions and projects, (history of) science museums have been largely absent from this discussion.

This year's conference topic 'Dealing with a challenging past' provides an ideal opportunity for reflection and critical thinking on past practice and future possibility for our field. What can we learn from colleagues in sectors where decolonisation has long been a topic for research, displays and programming? And most importantly, where do we go next in (history of) science museums?

As a case-study I will use the History of Science Museum at Oxford University where we have launched a very ambitious transformation project to celebrate our centenary in 2024. Decolonisation is one of the main drivers for this project, from investigating how the objects from the Islamic World in our founding collection came to Europe in the late 19th C. and early 20th C., to critically examining the language used on seemingly inconspicuous label texts, to working with communities on categorisation, timelines, maps, and innovative interpretation(s) of a shared heritage that has been largely forgotten.

Introduction

One of the key drivers of change in the museum sector in recent years has been the deep engagement with 'decolonisation'. But while anthropology and natural history museums have all responded with initiatives to interrogate their own collections and

28 My thanks to Dr Alexi Baker of the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History who first made me aware of discussions at the Yale Center for British Art, to Camille Leadbetter for engaging in such depth with our Chardin portrait, and to Anthony Turner in Paris for helpful discussion about the background of the Ashmolean loan in 1951. J.C. Niala made me aware of the lost link to Africa in our Collecting COVID @ Oxford University project, and our Community Connectors Olivia Holder and Rawz Campbell, and my colleague Nicola Bird, opened my eyes to the devastating impact an object can have, and reminded me that museum staff do not have all the answers. And finally, thanks to my colleagues at the History of Science Museum for their openness to engage with decolonisation in every aspect of our work.



develop new exhibitions and projects, (history of) science and technology museums have been largely absent from this debate.

Speakers at the conference during which a brief version of this paper was given, highlighted how much we are all engaged in, and grappling with, a dizzying array of questions of decolonisation in the widest sense: we were reminded of the fiendishly complex issues associated with provenance research and the seemingly simple act of restitution. We were urged to be aware of our own position and that of our institution(s) and that ‘wanting to do the right thing’ isn’t sufficient. We were encouraged to give space, to step back as a curator –and to find the blind spots.

Rather than attempting a wide sweep of science and technology museums around the world, this paper focusses on one particular institution: the History of Science Museum (HSM) at Oxford University where these discussions are time-critical: we are currently engaged in a complete transformation process –physical, intellectual, and as a mind-set– to celebrate our centenary and thus called *Vision 2024*. We asked ourselves what we can learn from colleagues in sectors where decolonisation has long been a topic for research, displays and programming –while (history of) science and technology museums have been largely absent from the debate.

Finding and Founding

The HSM holds a superb collection of astronomical instruments (e.g., astrolabes, quadrants, *qibla* indicators (instruments to determine the direction of Mecca), celestial globes etc.) from what we are inadequately referring to as ‘the Islamic World’. Many of these instruments come from the Museum’s founding collection,

acquired by Lewis Evans from a range of dealers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and donated to the University of Oxford in 1924.²⁹ Now that may sound innocent enough –but under which circumstances did these objects leave their countries of origin? How has their study– almost exclusively conducted from a Western viewpoint thus far –influenced our understanding of knowledge transfer and manifested itself in labels, catalogues, online resources, teaching and public tours over the past almost 100 years, thus influencing generations of students and visitors? We are only just beginning to understand the huge impact this has had, and we are very grateful to the John Fell Fund who are supporting a ten-months initial investigation under the title ‘Finding and Founding: Decolonising Astronomical Instruments from the Islamic World at HSM’³⁰, helping us to shape a much more comprehensive research and community-based project, aiming to provide innovative interpretation(s) of a shared heritage that has been largely forgotten. Our new website ‘Science in the Islamic World’ reflects some very initial re-evaluations of this stunning collection.³¹

Reframing a Portrait

An initial focus on our founding collection is an obvious route to take. But, as is so often the case, the really relevant and pressing questions came from outside. In this case questions about a portrait on our staircase –not just anywhere, but right at the top, in arguably the most prominent space in the Museum, visible to every visitor and right next to the Director’s Office. [Fig.8 and 9].

29 See <https://www.hsm.ox.ac.uk/lewis-evans-biographical-account> (accessed on 22 December 2022).

30 Reference number: 0011793.

31 <https://www.hsm.ox.ac.uk/science-islamic-world> (accessed on 22 December 2022).



This is a portrait of Sir John (Jean) Chardin (1643-1713) painted in 1711 (HSM inv. n°72661)³². Chardin was neither the founder of the Museum, nor was he a significant benefactor. So, who is he and why is his portrait, that doesn't even belong to the HSM, so prominently displayed in our Museum?

Chardin was a French jewel-merchant, who between 1664 and 1677 undertook two extensive trips to the East, especially to Persia. As a Huguenot refugee he settled in England, became jeweller to the English Court, and was knighted in 1681. He was a friend of Elias Ashmole (1617-1692) the founder of the Museum that first occupied the building in which the HSM is now housed.

The portrait in its highly ornate frame has been on loan to us from the Ashmolean Museum since 1951 and by all accounts has been in this prominent place

32 See <https://www.hsm.ox.ac.uk/collections-online#/item/hsm-catalogue-9448> (accessed on 22 December 2022).



ever since. More research into the background of this loan still needs to be done, but Chardin's pioneering ethnographical description of astrolabe-making in the accounts of his travels in Persia that contextualise some of our most stunning astrolabes³³, and the scientific instruments realistically modelled in 3D around the frame that are mirrored by the actual collections at the HSM would be obvious reasons.

Thus, displaying a portrait of such an imminent traveller, contextualising our astrolabe collection and referencing the use of instruments in art, makes total sense –doesn't it?

33 Most notably the so-called 'astrolabe for Shah Abbas II', a court that Chardin knew first-hand (HSM inv. no. 45747 (<https://www.hsm.ox.ac.uk/collections-online#/item/hsm-catalogue-2101>), accessed on 22 December 2022).



What had largely been overlooked, however, is the right-hand side of the portrait. Let us take Chardin out of his ornate frame and look a bit closer [Fig.10].

On the right-hand side is the depiction of a well-dressed black boy, wearing what looks like a collar likely indicating his position as a house slave. Intriguingly, when we look even closer, we find that a tear appears to be running down the boy's right cheek.

While even a few years ago many visitors did not give the portrait a second glance (yet another rich white man in a wig displaying his wealth and knowledge...), in the more recent past, especially with the Black Lives Matter movement, we have all become far more attuned to the less obvious narratives. Who is the boy? Why does he appear to be crying? Was Chardin involved in, or benefitted directly from, slave trading? Is this thus a case for 'Chardin must fall' along the lines of the well-known call for the statue of the infamous Cecil Rhodes at Oriel College in Oxford to be taken down?

Since 2020 we have been exploring this portrait beyond its obvious links to our collections, moving outside of our comfort zone as this is not an area we had in-house expertise in. But teaming up with others who do³⁴, immersing ourselves in 17th and 18th century British portraiture, and working closely with those who feel personally affected by this depiction –incidentally the only one of a black person on display in the whole Museum– our understanding of this portrait and its role for the Museum and our communities completely changed.

34 For initial findings see the blogs by Camille Leadbetter on the HSM website published in 2021 on <https://blogs.mhs.ox.ac.uk/insidemhs/category/decolonising-the-hsm-collection/> (accessed on 22 December 2022).

The portrait (actually a copy of an original now in the National Portrait Gallery³⁵) follows a style commonly found in portraits of the 17th and 18th centuries depicting wealthy male and female white sitters with black servants of both sexes, the latter often not representing an individual, but a common *topos*.³⁶ Nancy Keeney reports that researchers at the Yale Center for British Art, trying to identify an enslaved black child in the 18th century portrait of an early University benefactor, found that “*while slavery was not then legal in Britain, thousands of black children and adults were bought there in ‘slavish servitude’... The silver collar worn by the boy was common for such captives in British society, with similar versions fashioned in steel or brass... Researchers have also identified at least 50 other paintings made in Britain between 1660 and 1760 that portray people of African descent in metal collars, reflecting the nation’s entrenchment in the slave trade.*” (Kenney, 2021).³⁷

One such painting of 1753 is especially intriguing: it depicts Dominique Deurbroucq (1715-1782), a transatlantic merchant from Nantes, in an almost identical

35 National Portrait Gallery London inv. no. 5161: ‘Portrait of Sir John Chardin with an unknown male attendant’. <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw01214/Sir-John-Chardin-with-an-unknown-male-attendant?LinkID=mp00838&role=sit&rNo=0> (accessed on 22 December 2022).

36 For relevant examples see MORGAN, H. 2022. The visible invisibility of Black people in aristocratic portraiture. Art UK 24 Feb 2022, available online at <https://artuk.org/discover/stories/the-visible-invisibility-of-black-people-in-aristocratic-portraiture> (accessed on 22 December 2022).

37 KENNEY, N. 2021. Yale Center for British Art tries to identify enslaved Black child in 18th-century portrait of an early university benefactor. *The Art Newspaper* 6 Oct. 2021. Available online: <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2021/10/06/yale-center-for-british-art-tries-to-identify-enslaved-black-child-in-18th-century-portrait-of-an-early-university-benefactor> (accessed on 22 December 2022). See also <https://britishart.yale.edu/new-light-group-portrait-elihu-yale-his-family-and-enslaved-child> (accessed on 22 December 2022).

pose as Chardin with a curtain draped behind him, shelves full of books, and a black servant.³⁸

One might think that adding a new label to the Chardin portrait might be sufficient –after all, audiences are used to finding revised interpretations. But is this enough? Some might say that ‘creating discomfort’ is what museums are all about. But is that really true in this simplicity?

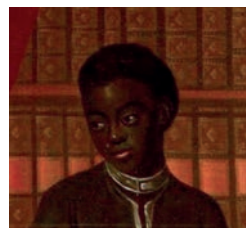
Decolonisation is multi-faceted. It starts with creating space, with listening to what narratives and stories a wider group of people see / understand from the object before they read any interpretation. Once we are aware of all the different narratives, decolonisation is first to unpack and disentangle these. With this wider knowledge, we can then interrogate all the narratives presented that come together to fully understand the deeper meaning behind objects in the Museum. Are we comfortable with the messages being conveyed? What is the purpose of these messages? Are any of the messages harmful?

There is no doubt that in its current position and as the only image of a black person in the Museum the portrait is causing harm.

Could the narrative of Chardin’s role in our understanding of Persia and its astrolabe makers be told differently? Most likely.

Is there a more suitable topic for the most prominent wall in our Museum? Most likely.

Does this mean that Chardin’s portrait that cannot be contextualised appropriately at the HSM will fall? Yes.



10

We will return the portrait to the Ashmolean who are aiming to re-interpret and contextualise it with the help of their extensive art collection. At HSM we will tell the narrative of Chardin’s travels to Persia next to the display cases containing the astrolabes he describes so evocatively –accompanied by a different, much smaller portrait from his own travel accounts.

And the prominent space at the top of the stairs? This is subject to discussion with our communities: what artwork/intervention would best encompass the HSM’s mission to explore the connections between people, science, art and belief? Watch this space, as they say...

And what about the tear rolling down the boy’s cheek in the Chardin portrait? At the time of writing we are still no closer to finding a satisfactory explanation. That Chardin would have asked the painter to depict a servant crying over his own fate seems unlikely.

Collecting COVID @ Oxford University What does that mean?

A secondary mission statement for the HSM is to tell the stories of science in Oxford –and this was quite dramatically put to the test in early 2020 with the outbreak of the coronavirus. We were all suddenly part of ‘history in the making’, with a multitude of objects and ephemera being created, and countless possible narratives emerging –with the acute risk of

38 <https://www.chateaunantes.fr/thematiques/les-portraits-des-deurbroucq/> (accessed on 22 December 2022).



the majority of these getting lost without a clear strategy to preserve at least a snapshot for posterity. This is how our 'Collecting COVID @ Oxford University project started, with the first display opening in October 2022. 'What if YOU were asked to save the world?'³⁹ shares the personal stories of how scientists at Oxford University coped with the pressure of the whole world watching and waiting for an answer, while also dealing with all the pressures, anxieties and losses every one of us experienced.

Pure science, right? A vaccine developed in Oxford shared with the world. Surely nothing to do with decolonisation?

Once again, the really relevant question came from outside. Shortly after opening we were joined by a new staff member who has close links with Kenia where many of the early trials of the Oxford vaccine took place. In Oxford we often talk about the knowledge that is taken to the world –but not enough about what we can learn from the knowledge that the world can transfer to us. The next display in our series aims to address this point. Another space to watch...

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Contact information

Silke Ackermann (PhD), Director of the History of Science Museum, University of Oxford

Silke Ackermann is a cultural historian with a particular interest in knowledge-transfer, and in the connections between people, science, art and belief. At present she is working with her team on *Vision 2024*, an ambitious strategy for complete transformation in celebration of the university Museum's centenary.

Address: History of Science Museum,
Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3AZ, United Kingdom

Email: silke.ackermann@hsm.ox.ac.uk

Website: www.hsm.ox.ac.uk

39 An online version of the display is available at <https://www.hsm.ox.ac.uk/what-if-you-were-asked-to-save-the-world> (accessed on 22 December 2022).

3. WHAT REMAINS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ANTWERP AND CONGO

DANIËL ERMENS & MARC DEMOLDER

Keywords: *Antwerp (Belgium), Colonialism, Contested heritage, Antwerp*



Abstract

Just outside the Antwerp city centre an impressive building draws the attention: it is the main building of the former 'Koloniale Hogeschool' (1920-1965). This mercantile training college for colonial staff is one of the predecessors of the present University of Antwerp, but apart from this building, with a lecture hall in its original state, hardly any heritage connected to the training college remains in the university's heritage

collection. After the closure in 1964 its archives and heritage objects have been dispersed. In our presentation we will explore what objects were once there, what remains and what not, and we will try to explain why so little remnants have survived. Does the present lack of heritage from this important forming part of our university have any effect on the image of the present day University of Antwerp? And should it be considered a relief that the University of Antwerp has no contested objects in its heritage collection?



The vast central African region, rich in natural resources, we nowadays call the Democratic Republic of the Congo was colonized by Belgium from the 1870s until 1960. From 1885 until 1908 the Free State of Congo was considered private property of king Leopold II, and in 1908 the Belgian government officially annexed Congo as a colony. After World War I, the Belgian government decided to found a Koloniale Hogeschool, or Colonial College, to train young Belgian men for a career in Africa, in government, administration or trade. In 1949 the name of the college was changed to Universitair Instituut voor Overzeese Gebieden (UNIVOG), or Institut Universitaire des Territoires d’Outre-Mer (INUTOM) (University Institute of Overseas Territories), which was in fact the first university in Antwerp. Because of the imminent independence of Congo (1960) no new students could enroll from October 1959 onwards. The students that had already started their training could finish it, the last students receiving their degree in 1962. In 1964 the college finally closed. All that remains today are two buildings on the present Middelheim Campus of the University of Antwerp, with a main building still carrying the star from the flag of Belgian Congo above the entrance. [Fig.11]. The second building is the house of the former rector, built in a colonial style. It was an exact copy of his house in Congo.

History of the University of Antwerp

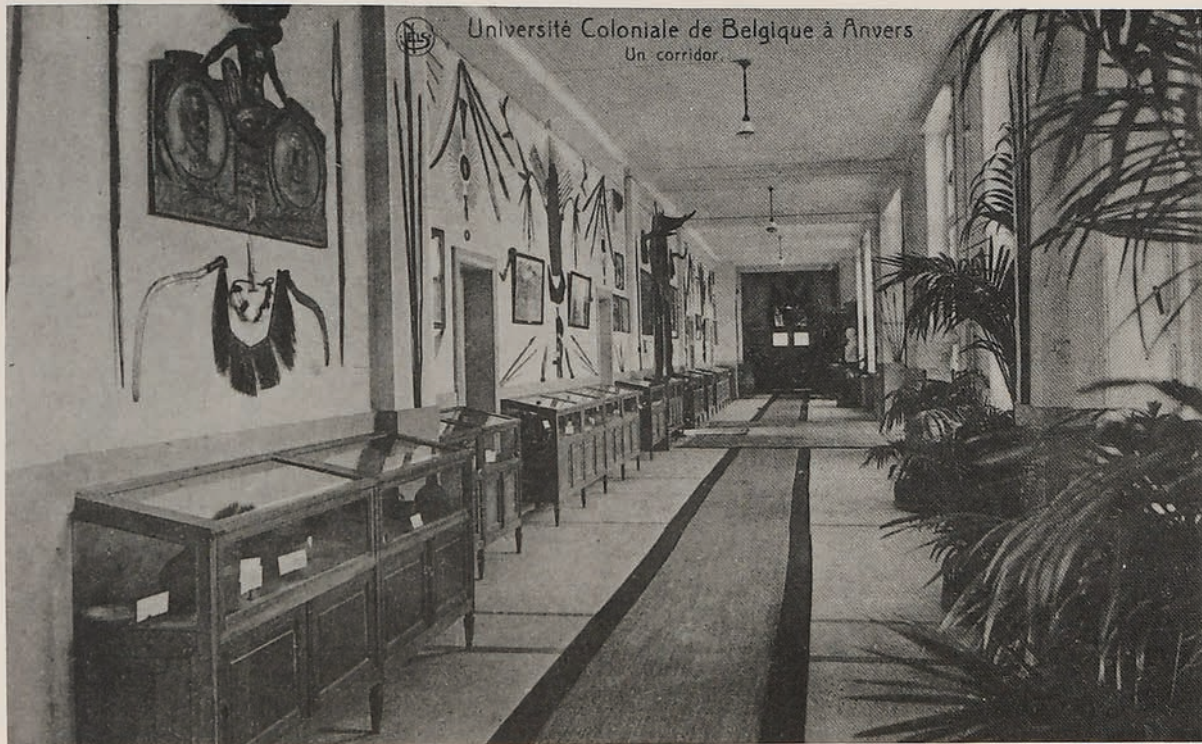
To better understand the connection between the Colonial College and the present day University of Antwerp, having some knowledge about the history of the university in a nutshell is necessary. Antwerp, with its important harbour, got two Mercantile Colleges halfway the 19th century, one state owned, one Jesuit owned. When Belgian Congo became a

proper colony of Belgium in 1908, again Antwerp was chosen for a new college for mercantile and administrative sciences, this one focussing on Congo.⁴⁰ In the 1960’s the educational situation in Antwerp changed rapidly: Congo became an independent state causing the closure of the Colonial College, and a few years later both Mercantile Colleges became universities. The state owned Mercantile College became the Rijksuniversitair Centrum Antwerpen (RUCA), and de Jesuit owned one the Universitaire Faculteiten Sint-Ignatius (UFSIA), named after the founder of the Jesuit order. In the early 1970’s a neutral third university (UIA) was founded and in 2003 all three universities became the present day University of Antwerp. What remained of the Colonial College in 1964 –a College for Developing Countries– became part of the RUCA, and dissolved in the later academic structure.

The heritage collection of the Colonial College

Apart from the buildings on the Middelheim Campus and some books in Special Collections, only few heritage objects once on the grounds of the Colonial College remain. Hidden behind the plants in the garden near the main building two stone objects remind us of the past purposes of the site. The first is a commemorative stone for the students and professors that have died during the Second World War, the second is the foot of a –now contested– statue of Baron Francis D’Hanis, triumphantly raising his rifle above his head, while an Arabian slave trader humbly surrenders, and a freed female slave with child gratefully honours him. This statue once stood in the city centre of Antwerp commemorating

40 A promotional film for the Colonial College from 1939 made by Hélène Schirren (*Sous l’étoile d’or*) is kept at Cinematek: Koninklijk Belgisch Filmarchief (Royal Film Archive of Belgium) in Brussels.



*Université Coloniale, corridor du premier étage
Koloniale Hogeschool, gang op eerste verdiep*

12

the abolishment of slave trade, and only moved to the grounds of the Colonial College in 1954. Nowadays, only the statues of the Baron and the slave trader remain, in the open air depot of the neighbouring Middelheim Museum.

At present the archives of the Colonial College are in a transitional fase. They were kept at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels and are currently transferred to the Rijksarchief, or State Archives, in Brussels. A large part of the library went to the Royal Library (KBR) in depot and a small part went to the Africa Museum in Tervuren, near Brussels. Most of the Master's theses from 1949-1962 moved to the Africa Museum as well. What happened to the other

heritage objects from the Colonial College, however, was unclear until recently. From some old black and white pictures we learn what objects were kept in the classrooms, the library, the gym and the hallways of the buildings.⁴¹ Especially the picture titled *Université Coloniale de Belgique à Anvers – Un corridor* makes one very curious about the African collection of the college. [Fig.12]. Since it was state owned, the college was materially incorporated in the RUCA, but in the University Archives no traces of the objects have been found.

⁴¹ These pictures were published in 1987 in *Middelheim: mémorial de l'Institut universitaire des territoires d'outre-mer*, a commemorative book by the Koninklijk Vriendenfonds van het UNIVOG, or the Royal Friends Club of the Colonial College.



Fortunately, the quest for these objects was brought to a successful end easily. An inquiry at the Africa Museum –the most logical place to start the search– brought to light that the heritage objects from the Colonial College had been transferred to the museum. The archives at the Africa Museum even document the entire process of the handover, and contain lists with all the objects that moved from Antwerp to Brussels. According to its database the museum keeps 596 objects connected to the Colonial College.⁴² However, not all objects are ‘academic heritage’ in a strict sense. Part of the objects was collected during subsequent scientific expeditions by one of its professors, biologist Walter Verheyen, a passionate connoisseur of African ethnology and masks, and was sold to the museum.

From the archival documents we learn that contacts between the RUCA and the Africa Museum started in 1965 with a letter from H. De Backer, head of the rectorate, to museum director Lucien Cahen concerning several colonial collections in the former buildings of the Colonial College, by then property of the RUCA, that could be of interest to the museum. Several inventories were drawn up, but the actual transfer of 97 ethnographic objects –of which it is unknown how they were acquired by the Colonial College– to the museum only took place on 14 March 1973.⁴³ The transfer of 334 objects from the Verheyen collection –mainly ethnographic objects bought in the north of Togo, like masks, musical instruments and ritual objects– was executed faster. After the first contacts in November 1968 the objects moved to

Tervuren early 1969.⁴⁴ When the remaining objects –probably the art objects– were transferred remains unclear for now.

Among the objects from the Colonial College now kept in the museum a great variety of native African objects can be found, which have been distributed over different departments. The ethnographic department in the museum holds masks, pottery, arrows, javelins, knives, sabres and traps. The musicology department musical instruments like drums and harps. The economic collection contains maps of the country, and all kinds of products from Congo, like tea, coffee, rubber and copper.

In the historical department of the museum we find the art objects made by European artists from the Colonial College, e.g. busts and bronze plaques of colonial explorers, paintings of Europeans (important in the colonial history) and some paintings and pictures of native Africans. The large number of busts and bronze plaques finds its origin in the tradition to name a certain period of each academic year after a well-known person. This tradition still exists at the Belgian Royal Military Academy.

Identification of some of the objects in the picture [Fig.13] would be a further confirmation that the objects that are kept in the Africa Museum were once on display in the Colonial College. In the picture we recognize spears and arrows, something that looks like a headdress, and some pottery in the showcases, but none of them can be identified. However, the bronze plaque in the top left corner of the picture that catches the eye is easily recognizable and is present in the collection of the museum. In two circles it shows the

42 The Africa Museum kindly shared a digital copy of all information on the Colonial College with the University of Antwerp. It will take further research to check all the items on the lists, and compare them with the objects now kept in the museum.

43 Africa Museum, Archives, Univog-DA.3.662.

44 *Id.*





faces of two men, in between them sits a human figure, touching both circles. While the contents of the plaque in the old black and white picture can hardly be distinguished, the picture from the museum database we received clearly shows an image of white saviorism, now contested. The text on the plaque reads: «George et Paul Le Marinel, Glorieux pionniers de l'œuvres colonial. Hommage de reconnaissance par souscription nationale.” The brothers Paul (1858-1912) and George Le Marinel (1860-1914) –with a young nude African woman in between them, looking down humbly– were two pioneers exploring late nineteenth-century Congo.⁴⁵

Decolonisation or ‘contextualised recolonisation’?

What does the absence of colonial objects mean for the present University of Antwerp, and how should it deal with this recovered heritage collection? Since the objects are not property of the university, but of a Belgian state museum, judicially the responsibility lies with the museum and the Belgian state. The Africa Museum, dedicated to the past connection between Belgium and Congo, is the best place to keep these objects. However, it would be too easy to say that the university could consider it a relief that it is not

responsible for this heritage. The Colonial College is part of its past, so this connection with Congo should be acknowledged in some way. Although there is hardly any information about the Colonial College on the university’s website, the link between the University and Congo will be expressed in the new name of the old lecture hall in the former building of the Colonial College: on 31 March 2023, 62 years after his assassination (17 January 1961), the Patrice Lumumba lecture hall was inaugurated by rector Herman Van Goethem.⁴⁶

In 2020 representatives of all Belgian universities discussed decolonization at their home universities in a working group on this subject coordinated by the VLIR (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad, or Flemish Interuniversity Council) and CRef (Conceil des Recteurs, or Council of Rectors). As the inventory made at its meetings shows, all universities have implemented initiatives on several levels to start decolonizing their collections, organizations, research and courses. They have created working groups and commissions, they have organized academic events and taken initiatives to reach out to a wider audience outside the universities’ walls. In the academic curricula there is room for special courses and they encourage the dissemination of the research results to primary and secondary schools. The number of funded research positions has risen, as has the number of contacts with universities on the African continent. All these initiatives show a positive trend, but the working group stresses that decolonization is a permanent process. Universities not only need a policy on how to deal with this issue, but it needs to stimulate research as well, to create and open archives, and to encourage

45 The museum website gives us more information about their actions in Congo. George Le Marinel was a lieutenant in the Belgian army and worked as an explorer, district administrator and state inspector. Back in Belgium, he was appointed director at the Ministry of the Colonies in 1908. His older brother Paul had followed a similar career path, but from 1906 onwards he worked for some big colonial companies. At one stage he was also responsible for the Zappo-Zaps, an inland warrior tribe under his command, who used cannibalism and who were slave hunters. These acts instigated an international reaction against the colony managed by Leopold II.
See: <https://archives.africamuseum.be/agents/people/369>;
<https://archives.africamuseum.be/agents/people/7>;
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Le_Marinel
(accessed on 9 February 2023).

46 See: the university website www.uantwerpen.be/en/about-uantwerp/organisation/facts-figures-rankings/history/ and the Aula Lumumba website <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/aula-lumumba/message-rector/> (accessed on 20 January 2023).

participation from people not part of the academic community. The use of heritage objects in physical or digital expositions helps to create awareness among a wider audience and stimulates public debate. All of this will result in more inclusive discourse and stronger connections between the different heritage communities.⁴⁷

The University of Antwerp has already taken some initiatives. Not only did it rename the lecture hall, but it also gave Honorary Degrees to researchers from African descent. Other examples are the annual participation in the Black History Month and the growing number of courses focussing on non-western topics, e.g. in the History and Literature Departments. However, there are no initiatives yet concerning the heritage objects from the Colonial College that are now in the Africa Museum. No longer curating this contested heritage does not automatically mean the university's heritage collections have been correctly decolonised. The link between university and college has petered out over time, but that does not clear the university's collective conscience. What can we do to change this?

The university has no intentions to ask for a restitution of the objects from the Colonial College. Nevertheless, as with other heritage collections that were once housed at the University of Antwerp and its predecessors, it should be visible that the collection from the Colonial College is an important part of the academic heritage from Antwerp. By adding the objects to the (future) digital heritage platform of the university (and linking them to the catalogue of the Africa Museum), the university recognizes its history and this heritage will become more visible.

47 *Belgische universiteiten en de omgang met het koloniale verleden. 'Rapport van de Interuniversitaire Werkgroep Koloniaal Verleden'* (VLIR-CRef, 27 oktober 2021), available online: <https://vlir.be/publicaties/koloniaal-verleden/>

The digital heritage platform will enable the curators of the heritage collections to contextualise the objects. On the one hand each object could get a new, neutral description (i.e. one without a western bias), and through linked data extra context can be created, because links within the platform can take the user to similar or connected objects and to relevant literature. The historical descriptions of the objects, on the other hand, will not get lost, because they can be kept in the database, and will only be accessible for research purposes. Internationally, the platform will create opportunities for researchers in other countries to find these objects. This opens possibilities for more stories about the objects, and maybe even the identification of former owners.

Stimulating students to engage with these heritage objects opens up other ways to valorise the collections of the Colonial College, and bring them under the attention of a wider audience. Master's or doctoral theses on the Colonial College and its heritage will generate more knowledge, theses on their role in the decolonization process at the university, or on Congolese views on them will generate more understanding. Internships to create digital or physical exhibitions on the heritage objects will give more opportunities for students and a wider audience to get to know these objects, while exhibitions that also incorporate Congolese views – or are curated by students/people with Congolese ancestry – will make people aware about the Congolese point of view as well.

When the University of Antwerp reconnects with the heritage objects from Congo that were once kept in the Colonial College in these ways, it will create a 'contextualised recolonisation' of its heritage collections, which will give all voices, present and past, equal opportunities to be heard.



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Contact information

Daniël Emerns (PhD), Special Collections for Academic Heritage, Antwerp University

Dr. Daniël Emerns works at the University of Antwerp as staff member of Special Collections for Academic Heritage at the Antwerp University Library and as assistant curator at the Ruusbroec Institute Library. He completed his PhD dissertation on Middle Dutch multi text codices in 2015.

Address: Prinsstraat 13 – S.A.104,
2000 Antwerpen, Belgium

Email: daniel.ermens@uantwerpen.be

Website: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/nl/projecten/archief-en-erfgoed/>

*Marc Demolder (MSc),
Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Antwerp*

Marc Demolder MSc Eng teaches at the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and is research engineer at the physiopharmacology laboratory at the University of Antwerp. As heritage expert he started collecting the academic heritage of the University of Antwerp in 1995.

Address: Universiteitsplein 1, 2610 Wilrijk, Belgium

Email: marc.demolder@uantwerpen.be

4. ARTISTIC HERITAGE AT THE COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE⁴⁸

ISABEL M. GARCÍA FERNANDEZ

Keywords: *Madrid (Spain), Complutense University, University heritage, Gender perspective, Equality, Gender interpretation*

Abstract

Universities, like other institutions, are obliged to draw up and implement an equality plan, which is a valuable tool for the elimination of gender discrimination. These plans include applicable measures to guarantee equal treatment and equal opportunities.

In our universities, the gender perspective has gradually been mainstreamed in all areas. In the case of historical-artistic heritage, a series of cultural activities has been proposed in an attempt to make women in culture more visible. For this purpose, an accessible itinerary is being designed to highlight the artistic creation by women. After an initial analysis, it has been confirmed that of the 6400 artistic works catalogued at the UCM, 13.2% have been identified as having been created by women compared to 33.7% by men, with 53.1% of unidentified authorship, but we suspect that not many of these may be attributed to women.

In conclusion, this itinerary is a concrete contribution to the interpretation of heritage, an attempt to create a discourse that highlights a past situation and at the

same time tries to contribute to changing an unequal environment and reality into a more gender respectful presentation. We believe that this proposal will help to make visible, encouraging and supporting the presence of new women creators in our collections.

Gender discrimination

Women continue to be the main victims of discrimination in many fields, especially in the context of education and culture, and therefore in the university and its heritage. Gender discrimination is an issue that we have been facing for some time in the world of university museums and collections, but it is necessary to understand it in a broader context. Thus, we highlight the publication by UNESCO of the first issue of the journal *Museum* thirty years ago, entitled *Focus on Women*, and considered “the first-ever broadly international look at a wide spectrum of problems and prospects arising from women’s many interactions with museums” (Gillette, 1991, p.123). Most of the articles stressed the poor women’s presence in museum collections and displays and the absence of women’s history in many museums.

Sixteen years later, in 2007, the issue of *Museum International Gender perspectives on Cultural heritage and Museums* was interpreted as the first attempt to compare two issues that have rarely

48 Thanks to the staff of the Vice-Rectorate for Culture, Sport and University Extension, especially to the Heritage Management Unit.



been juxtaposed previously: women and heritage. Its editorial explained that things have changed, but “the relationships between gender equality and heritage still suffer from a lack of visibility and understanding among new heritage policy makers” (Vinson, 2007, p.5). This continued to be the pattern, despite being one of the two global priorities of UNESCO. It is true that there was a noticeable progress; however, it seemed that there was still a long way to go. Following our reference, we need to mention that thirteen years later, a new monographic issue was published in the *Museum International, Museums & Gender*. In the articles included, we appreciate an update of the situation in terms of gender representation and inclusion, however, the situation was still not positive, “gender bias in museums requires great effort on the part of the museum sector as a whole” (Remer, 2020, p.7). With this in mind, at the university we inquire how we can work to reverse this situation.

Approaches from the University

The university is a reference model in society; however, it has not been able to address the issue with more vehemence. In Spain, the Organic Law 3/2007, of 22 March, for the effective equality of women and men⁴⁹ refers to the social reality and specifically the cultural and artistic reality where inequality can be generated or perpetuated. Article 26, *equality in the field of artistic and intellectual creation and production* raises the need for measures and initiatives to ensure equal representation in order to redress situations of inequality. How is this managed at the University? As part of the

public administration, the University must adopt initiatives aimed at favouring the specific promotion of women in culture and combatting structural and/or diffusing discrimination, which is the purpose of the existence of Equality Units. It is mandatory for all institutions and the deadline for its implementation expired March 2022. At our university, we recently approved the second equality plan, which will be in force until 2026. This plan aims to promote equality in all areas, emphasizing the transversal dimension.

On a more specific level, we will make a brief overview of the actions being implemented regarding academic heritage intended to give visibility to women who played a key role since the beginning of the existence of the Central University, later and still Complutense University.

Two women, two queens, preside over the most emblematic place of the university, the Paraninfo, where the most important academic events of the University are held. Four hundred years separate them, but their reigns have important similarities, to them we owe important scientific and technical advances that coincide with periods of splendour and progress in Spanish education and culture. Isabel II in 1854 inaugurated the modern university and this fact is recalled at the beginning of each academic year [Fig.14].

Another symbol of the institution is an impressive sculpture made of aluminium located at the centre of the University City. The American artist Anna Hyatt (1876-1976) created the big sculpture of the torchbearers in 1954. She was closely related to the university after her marriage to Archer Milton Huntington (1870-1955), founder of the Hispanic Society of America, who in turn, was closely linked

49 Ley Orgánica 3/2007, de 22 de marzo, para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres.



to the financing of our campus. [Fig.15]. She also donated the sculpture Diana the Huntress, created in 1922, which is located in the gardens of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities.

Following the impulse of these women, several initiatives have been launched. In line with the editorial of the above-mentioned issue of *Museum International* we do not seek “a simplistic reification nor oscillate between some studies on women as heritage actors and others on women as heritage contributors” (Vinson, 2007, p.4). We want to go further, trying to understand our history and our present reality through the analysis of the real situation in order to manage our own gendered construction.

After an initial analysis, it has been confirmed that of the 6400 artistic works catalogued at the UCM, 13.2% have been identified as women’s creations compared to 33.7% created by men, and 53.1% of unidentified authorship (pending further investigation).

However, with this data, the Vice-Rectorate for Culture, Sport and University Extension in collaboration with the Equality Unit is working on the creation of an itinerary that highlights the figure and importance of these women and their contribution to art and culture. This itinerary is part of a first initiative that we carried out in 2020 taking advantage of the pandemic and the motto of ICOM, museums for equality, diversity and inclusion. We created an



accessible album with a selection of 40 works of art, 20 of whom were women, either as artists or as portrayed. This project is still available on our website.⁵⁰ The itinerary expands the proposal to include several points of view: representation, represented subject, context, and significance of the work.

These initiatives help us to have a realistic assessment, to value the role that academic heritage plays in understanding gender. Our goal is to achieve gender equality, including tangible and intangible heritage. We understand that hidden heritage must come to life, museums and collections need to continue to be meeting places open to reflection, debate, current interpretations that are fundamental in the university environment and, above all, we must be committed to change.

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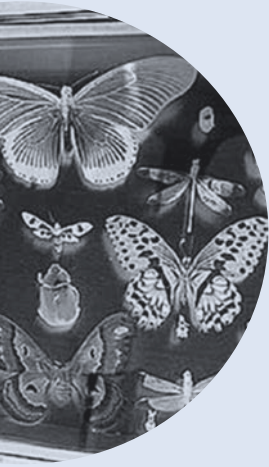
Isabel M. García Fernández (PhD)
Vice-rector of Culture, Sport and University
Extension, Complutense University of Madrid

Isabel M. García Fernández is a Doctor in Geography and History (Archaeology) at the Complutense University of Madrid, M.A. in Museum Studies, San Francisco State University (Fulbright grant). Currently, she is responsible of the museums and collections of the university. Her fields of research include museology and museography, preventive conservation and exhibit design.

Address: Complutense University of Madrid,
Pabellón de Gobierno, 28015 Madrid, Spain
Email: museoig@ucm.es

⁵⁰ See <https://www.ucm.es/cultura/dia-internacional-de-los-museos-2020> (accessed on 29 March 2023).





III. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM AND COLLECTION: A WAY OF TEACHING?	67
1. A two-way street? University museums as conduits for democratising the production and sharing of knowledge SARAH BURRY-HAYES	68
2. Students' participation in the Complutense University campus: The development of an inclusive digital strategy for its museums and collections RAUL GOMEZ HERNANDEZ	78
3. Students' curated exhibition. Educational and social significance for participants MACIEJ KLUZA & IWONA MACIEJOWSKA	85

III. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM AND COLLECTION: A WAY OF TEACHING?



1. A TWO-WAY STREET? UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS AS CONDUITS FOR DEMOCRATISING THE PRODUCTION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE⁵¹

SARAH BURRY-HAYES

Keywords: *Inclusivity, Co-production, Democratisation*

Abstract

How can universities be reflective of, or have impact in society while we acknowledge (and actively try to tackle) the ‘elitism’ of higher education? Is it time for universities to recognise that their ‘third mission’ no longer solely involves a one-way imparting of information TO society, but rather developing information WITH society in order to have relevance and resonance? The culture and heritage sectors, although traditionally viewed as similarly niche, are taking the lead in actively working to increase the diversity of voices they represent through outreach, dialogue, and co-production. This is driven both by a belief that wider society has the right to involvement in institutions that they support and fund, but also to an ethical claim that greater diversity in production will create more truthful –and useful– knowledge.

University museums can contribute to nuancing the future of HEIs as places of democratic, two-way transmission of knowledge. We can highlight that,

through discourse, universities can reflect the societal context of the modern world and the heterogeneity of human populations, and shape learning, teaching and research accordingly, challenging the concept of educational authority.

Using examples from UMIS, the session paper explores how co-production models have created academic understanding and an increased engagement with the communities in which the university museums are based, while also addressing the barriers that traditionally elite institutions face in democratising and diversifying themselves.

Introduction

“There is no knowledge without unity.” - Irish proverb

It may seem glib to start this paper with a traditional proverb, and it could be said that this is an oversimplification of the complexities surrounding ‘shared’ or ‘democratic’ knowledge and culture. However, when searching for an appropriate quote to encapsulate the ethos behind this concept, one issue became apparent –that the majority were from wealthy, white people. This speaks to the need to explore how we can better work with and represent our communities to build an accurate and holistic picture of modern culture and ensure that the knowledge built is applicable today and for the future.

51 I’m extremely grateful to Zandra Yeaman and Steph Scholten of The Hunterian, to Neil Curtis and Lisa Collinson of the University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections, Sarah Bromage and Emma McCombie from the University of Stirling Art Collection, and Jess Burdge and Matthew Sheard of the Museums of the University of St Andrews for all the information, support and input they provided in preparing both my initial presentation and this paper.

There is an increasing understanding that ‘difference’ is merely a social construct based on historic legacies of ‘normality’ (Frank & Meyer, 2002). History is traditionally written from a position of power –the colonisers, the neurotypical, the able bodied, the heterosexual, the law abiding, the rich– but I would argue it is the responsibility of heritage organisations of all types, and of tertiary education institutions, to ensure that these histories are explored and replaced by a more realistic telling. Moreover, that we learn from the lessons of the past in order to ensure a more equitable, inclusive and truthful future. We can only do this with the help, input, and involvement of those with the broadest range of lived experiences and varied knowledge.

Challenges for the university/ community interface

A simple google search shows that much of the literature and research around widening access and participation in higher education goes no further than broadening the demographics of the student and, aspirationally, academic bodies. Indeed, the Widening Access aims of the Scottish Funding Council –the body charged with funding Scotland’s further and higher education institutions by the Scottish Government– focus almost exclusively on diversifying the student demographic of the country’s higher and further education institutions (Scottish Funding Council, 2022).

Likewise, research around knowledge exchange focuses on working with other academic institutions, researchers, or businesses rather than referencing any two-way knowledge transfer between communities and academia. As stated by Bell, Lee, Fitzpatrick and Mahtani (2021): “Existing university structures,

management and drivers encourage engagement with large institutions and participation in the market, but mitigate against sustained, meaningful collaboration with grassroots communities and movements outside formal modern institutions”. Given (as is addressed later) that universities are historically (and one could argue, remain) elitist institutions, this concept of ‘ownership’ over knowledge could both be seen as a barrier to relevance and a maintenance of privilege.

In Scotland and the UK, there has increasingly been an emphasis on the ‘third mission’ of universities (taken to mean a contribution to society) beyond their learning and teaching remits, and on the ‘civic university’ (used to mean locally engaged universities). The Place Principle, adopted by the Scottish Government and COSLA⁵² in 2019, requests that: “...all those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, *and with local communities*, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places” (Scottish Government, 2019). This includes universities. However, the limitations of higher education’s traditional hierarchical structures mean it can be challenging for them to sustain relationships and work effectively with communities.

Museums as conduits to democratisation

The cultural sector has been working in outreach and engagement for years, as well as increasingly being invested in issues of social justice, accessibility, and equity. The vision of A Culture Strategy for Scotland

52 COSLA is the representative body for Local Government in Scotland. See <https://www.cosla.gov.uk/> (accessed on 16 November 2022).



16

is: “Scotland is a place where culture is valued, protected, and nurtured. Culture is woven through everyday life, shapes and is shaped by society, and its transformative potential is experienced by everyone. Scotland’s rich cultural heritage and creativity of today is inspired by people and place, enlivens every community and is celebrated around the world.” (Scottish Government, 2020).

This vision shouldn’t suggest that museums have always been inclusive in their telling of the past, or of their representation of society and culture, but if the future is “[...] to develop our role as socially

purposeful organisations» (Museums Association, 2017) or to «foster diversity and sustainability [...] operate and communicate ethically, professionally and *with the participation of communities*, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.” (ICOM, 2022), it is both within our remit and our power to connect with the full diversity of communities and society to become as inclusive and representative –and therefore as informed– as possible.

It therefore follows that university museums, with their dual role spanning the cultural priorities of

inclusivity and social justice, and the higher education priorities of learning, teaching, and research, are well placed to influence and inform academic understanding, increase universities' meaningful engagement with communities, and ultimately facilitate the diversification of pedagogical authority.

University Museums in Scotland (UMIS) projects

In order to provide a practical illustration of the ways in which university museums can help to bring about this shift in knowledge ownership, I have selected four projects that have recently been undertaken by UMIS members where the communities with which they are working have been integral to their design and outcomes, and that also have the input of academic or research colleagues.

The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Curating Discomfort [Fig.16]

"We are only now recognising that we are not neutral and that we have, without consideration, been complicit in perpetuating the ideologies of previous centuries." (The Hunterian, 2021).

Curating Discomfort aimed to address historic power imbalances within Scotland's oldest museum (which opened its doors in 1807) and across the entirety of The Hunterian's activities. This is not only in establishing new narratives around their collections, but also addressing structural racism in the present day in their organisational practice.

The leadership of the project was pivotal to its success, needing someone who had both personal insight into, and knowledge of, the issues to be tackled. Zandra Yeaman was appointed as the

Curator of Discomfort, (at the time) on secondment from the Coalition of Racial Equality and Rights. Zandra has, as she puts it, "...years of agitating and campaigning for change within museums from the outside..." (Museum Association, 2021) and has her own lived experience of growing up as mixed race in Glasgow. The project not only involved the staff of The Hunterian and other cultural practitioners, but pivotally was driven by a group of 'Community Curators' from different geographical backgrounds, ages, and ethnic backgrounds. They are academics, community activists, social justice campaigners and educators and therefore speak to the work as individuals with different interests and priorities.

The 'intervention' (as The Hunterian are calling it, as it's more than an exhibition) –which now forms their (permanent) museum display– is just the first step towards making the museum a more relevant and meaningful place for everyone. The interpretation centres the issues of colonialism, enslaved people, and oppression rather than concentrating on the traditional historical perspectives of colonists, enslavers, and oppressors –they remove the concept of cultural superiority and highlight the– sometimes uncomfortable –reality around the items.

In close collaboration with communities, they will be continuing this work through the new 'Power in this Place' project, funded by Esmée Fairbairn, which will continue on the journey to ensure that social capital is returned, and that the full diversity of audiences feel that museums, and their telling of history, are relevant and that they have a stake in their purpose.

Further resources from the project can be found on The Hunterian's website.



University of St Andrews: Moving Art, Connecting Voices [Fig. 17]

‘Moving Art, Connecting Voices’ brings together two groups that not only have felt marginalised in both visiting museums and attending university, but that also, historically, may have been unfamiliar with each other –namely young people from Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Syria, and Vietnam who have recently moved to Scotland and pupils of Levenmouth Academy– a school in an area within the bottom 40% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Scottish Government, 2020).

The group create art, poetry, and music to explore their identity and cultures, actively intersected the

two groups and uncovering the stories and experiences of migration and displacement. This highlighted the human stories around people fleeing conflict, in turn tackling damaging media stereotypes and the portrayal of “migrants” as a faceless whole.

The project also called on the work of academic colleagues. By engaging the participants with the research of Dr Emma Bond (scholar of modern and contemporary literature and visual cultures) into migration and empire (University of St Andrews, nd), they have not only illustrated the relevance and application of research to the programme participants, but also built on this knowledge through engagement with and input from migrant and refugee communities. The research, which has direct relevance to

the project, has also increased students' awareness of Scotland's links with colonialism and the issues around migration.

The whole ethos of this project is to foster understanding and break down barriers between the communities and the university. But the project also, in part, informs the museums' Re:collecting Empire programme, aiming to identify and raise awareness of the missing stories within their collections. Much like The Hunterian's Curating Discomfort project, Re:collecting Empire is not something that can happen quickly. It will work with diverse audiences over time, to examine and re-tell the narratives linked with the University's collections, ultimately re-interpreting them from a multi-dimensional perspective.

Further information can be found on the Museums of the University of St Andrews website.

University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections: Open to All

'Open to All: Digital engagement with the University of Aberdeen Museum collections' used participatory input from autistic-led, equalities and sensory disability charities and organisations to shape, design and inform user research for the Museums and Special Collections digital offering, and to advise on implementation and next steps.

Equality organisations were involved from the very beginning of the project, working in partnership to shape the programme design and subsequently the funding application. The organisations continued to liaise to develop ideas, launch a survey and explore the results and intended actions. The museum team had become aware of the importance of the

participatory research movement through developments in autism research, where early stakeholder involvement in all aspects of design is becoming the gold standard. The major appeal of this approach is that it has great potential for ethical robustness, through maximizing benefits and reducing harms.

The University was very supportive of the methodology, as it is consciously and publicly moving to a much more outward-focused approach, in line with its new role as a 'civic university' contributing fully to the local region. In addition, its new strategy Aberdeen 2040 has a specific focus on Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity. By involving the partner charities and organisations early in the project, the team were able to tailor the methodology to be as accessible and engaging as possible to the target audiences, while also enabling them to sensitively and confidently ask questions which would provide deeper information to inform their work. In addition, the team co-designed an online workshop with Autism Understanding Scotland, both delivered by and involving neurodivergent adults. The insights gained through this workshop again allowed further exploration of the University's online collections with this specific community.

Ultimately, the project worked with wider communities to explore their ideas, wishes, preferences and needs to make access to their collections more sustainable, while opening them up to those for whom access is more challenging. Insight offered from the project has developed understanding around ethical robustness on the issue of competence to consent and developed confidence within the museums team to contribute to more general discussions on impacted research within the University of Aberdeen and beyond.



University of Stirling Art Collection: Second Chancers

This project aimed to work with and represent audiences that are not traditionally visible in the academic setting and to identify outreach activities that could complement teaching in partnership with academic colleagues. In this case, this was those with experience of the community justice system –a system where, if it is safe to do so, people who commit certain crimes receive community-based sentences.

The evidence shows community justice can help people stop repeat offending, leading to fewer victims and safer communities. Audit Scotland states: “Community justice sentences have been shown to be more effective at reducing reoffending and less costly than prison. In 2017/18, 49% of prisoners serving a short sentence were reconvicted within a year of their release, compared with 30% of offenders who completed a community sentence.” (Audit Scotland, 2021). Despite this, the Art Collection found that nearly two thirds of Scots don’t know what community justice is.

The centrepiece of the project was an exhibition of 18 individual films telling the stories of individual experience of the Community Justice system in Scotland. In addition, the programming provided a lecture for criminology students –and students from other disciplines such as creative writing and law– in partnership with academic colleagues, which ultimately inserted humanity into considerations of justice. The project also provided Trauma Informed Practice Training for creative practitioners in the area, which has now resulted in funding for those that accessed this training in order to help them to work in community justice settings. In partnership with the Resilience

Learning Partnership who work with people who have lived experience of trauma and support them to access educational routes, the team facilitated a creative workshop for some of those that use their services, which was the first time many had come on to the Campus, despite living in nearby towns.

Working with Community Justice Scotland, Stirling Community Justice Partnership, and Stirling Community Planning Partnership, the Art Collection and the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University provided content for a mixture of public and academic audiences. This served to raise general awareness of community justice generally and, perhaps more crucially, developed a broader and practical understanding of its impact, efficacy, and application for those whose future careers may be within the criminal justice system.

As well as working with those who have lived experience of trauma, the training provided to creative practitioners in the area has left a legacy of skills which can now have real world benefits within the community justice system and the Art Collection are now working with Widening Participation colleagues within the University, exploring ways to support routes into Higher Education for those with criminal records, and to work on systems and processes in order to improve their experiences and opportunities at university.

Further information can be found on the University of Stirling Art Collection website.

The ‘elite’ university?

Within the abstract for –and throughout– this paper, I have claimed an inherent ‘elitism’ to higher education institutions. But, given their work towards

widening participation, increasing routes into tertiary education, and a broadening of degree courses, is this still the case? Taking the case of Scotland:

Looking at the demographic of students in Scotland's universities:

- 3.9% of all pupils in Scotland attend a **private school** (SCIS, 2021) vs. 10.5% of full-time, UK domiciled university admissions in Scotland attended private school (HESA, 2021).
- 57% of UK domiciled students enrolling on full time courses in Scotland are **at least second-generation graduates** (HESA, 2021).
- 16.7% of Scottish domiciled students enrolling on full time courses are from the 20% of **areas of the highest deprivation** (SIMD20/quintile 1) (SFC, 2020-21, p.11) with a c.10% dropout rate (vs. 6.5% overall) (SFC, 2020-21, p.14).
- 10.6% of Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time first-degree courses at university were of **black and minority ethnicity** (SFC, 2020-21, p.17) vs. 4% of the Scottish population (Scotland's Census, 2011) and 13% of the UK population being of black and minority ethnicity (UK Government, 2022).
- 16.3% are recorded as **having a disability** (SFC, 2020-21, p.19) vs. around 20% of the Scottish population considering themselves disabled (One Scotland, 2022).

When considering the profile of staff within Scotland's universities, the data is even more stark. Academic staff:

- While c. 15% of academic staff within Scotland's universities are of **black and minority ethnicity** (with 70% being white and the remaining unknown), 0% of those holding the most senior positions (Managers, Directors, and Senior Officials) were BME (HESA, 2021).

- Likewise, although c. 4.2% of academic staff are recorded as **having a disability**, 0% of these hold a senior position (*ibid.*, 2021).

Non-academic staff:

- Only 5% of non-academic staff within Scotland's universities are of **black and minority ethnicity** (with 87% being white and the remaining unknown), with 2% of senior positions held by BME staff (*ibid.*, 2021).
- 5.7% of non-academic staff are recorded as **having a disability**, however only 0.05% of senior positions are held by those with a disability (*ibid.*, 2021).

What can be seen from these statistics is that although universities in Scotland have been actively trying to diversify their students and staff to better reflect society, and university museums for their part have been increasingly working within the academic context of universities to bring about a change in the perception of knowledge ownership, there is still a way to go before this is truly equitable, or indeed representative of the Scottish or UK population.

Conclusions

As can be seen by the handful of projects outlined in this paper, university museums in Scotland are developing projects which build deeper and more useful knowledge, develop understanding, and in some cases re-define what has, until recently, been accepted as fact. Working with communities and community-led organisations to design, develop, and deliver programming has enabled those working within higher education to see 'knowledge' through a new lens –one which is more inclusive, practical, truthful and above all, democratic.



Moreover, working in partnership with historically underrepresented communities (rather than using their input to create programming in isolation) upholds the ethos of 'nothing about us without us' and allows for continued insight and development of knowledge. It has allowed university museums –and academic colleagues within their host institutions– to not only make research more understandable and accessible, but to develop this research further with the personal input and insights of those with lived experience.

However, these projects are not stand-alone, nor time limited. In order to affect real change, and to ensure continued relevance in a rapidly changing world, co-production and community partnership needs to be embedded within an organisation's purpose.

One could argue that the shift in attitudes and priorities of the Scottish universities have been brought about by today's pressing social justice issues as well as the Scottish Government's renewed focus on place, and inclusion and sustainability within tertiary education. But this is a mammoth task, and change will not happen overnight. However, university museums can incrementally affect this shift with further development of community-based and community-led projects, building on their proven ability to connect more effectively with wider audiences. We must continue to extend our work towards establishing a two-way transmission of knowledge, democratising and diversifying our host institutions, breaking down barriers within and to higher education, and ensuring sustained relevance.

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2. STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN THE COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR ITS MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS⁵³

RAUL GOMEZ HERNANDEZ

Keywords: *Madrid (Spain), Complutense University, Public engagement, Citizen participation, Digital cultural heritage.*

Abstract

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic fostered the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector in Europe, including university museums and it has also highlighted the significant inequalities across the continent among the different cultural heritage institutions in making the digital shift. The Complutense University of Madrid is aware of the role that its museums and collections play in the development of an intercultural, democratic, and inclusive space in the campus where all the members of the university community engage with its cultural heritage. For this reason, as part of its social and educational role, the Complutense Museums undertake a citizen participation process to study the projected and perceived image of the university museums and collections following a successful methodology based on interviews, surveys, focus groups, Big Data analysis and collective mapping. This research reveals the student engagement with the cultural heritage assets and also provides key information regarding the student's use of digital content. It will

help to improve the users' experience of the digital collections and the development of a digital strategy for promoting the cultural heritage assets as a tool for students' research and use in the classroom.

In this presentation, I will introduce and discuss the results of this research. I will also present recommendations for developing a digital strategy for the Complutense university museums and collections.

Introduction

The global pandemic of COVID-19 helped drive the digital transformation within the cultural heritage sector, including museums themselves and the field of heritage education. Reports published by organisations across Europe have demonstrated the interest of policy makers and cultural heritage institutions in joining the digital shift (European Commission, 2020; Europea Foundation, 2020; Europa Nostra, 2020; ICOM, 2020; NEMO 2020, 2021), but have also served to highlight significant inequalities across the continent.

This paper presents the results of the citizen participation process carried out at the Moncloa and

53 I would like to thank all the support received and the willingness of all the students, technicians, teachers and researchers of the Complutense University of Madrid who have participated in this study.

Somosaguas campuses in order to study the perception of the university community about the Complutense University of Madrid's museums and collections.

The Complutense University of Madrid has indeed a rich cultural heritage with its 28 museums and collections of historical, artistic, scientific and technical nature, distributed throughout the different faculties and departments of the university inventoried and protected [Fig.18 and Fig.19].

It forms an ideal corpus for the learning of its students and the training of its researchers through work



in the classroom with the different heritage assets in the collection and the integration in research and teaching innovation projects.

Aims

The main objective of this research was to find out the current situation of the Complutense museums and collections and to study the university students' perception of them in order to design digital content to engage with this audience following the methodology proposed by Gomez-Hernandez (2021).

Some of the specific objectives are to define the profile of young university students and their level of general commitment to cultural heritage; to study the image projected and perceived by the Complutense museums and collections; to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the current situation of university heritage education and to identify the existing relationship between the stakeholders involved in university heritage education and to delve into the underlying conflicts.

Methodology

The methodology of this research is based on a full citizen participation perspective. It included in-person and online surveys to university students⁵⁴, interviews to museum managers, curators and technicians and a Big Data analysis that researched on the activity of the Twitter accounts of the main Complutense

54 The Spanish version of the survey (original) can be viewed on https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdNiWggGOCxJLYL25SCwSURvfv9_L9DJzMoavEJoq4zzenwPQ/viewform; the English version of the survey (translated) can be viewed on <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSedCs5qNQ1SWfDsU9DFbztBM83JMjPloCIBSM-7izamdM6Adw/viewform>.



museums as well as the tweets and comments of the students to find out how they interact with them.

To do this Big Data analysis, Twitter's Application Programming Interface (API) was used through the Python programming language and a sentiment analysis was carried out to analyse the opinions of students and a quantitative analysis was also done to know how the Complutense museums use the words heritage, museum and collection in their Twitter accounts.

All these tools are designed to get a SWOT analysis of the situation of the Complutense museum and collections.

The theoretical framework behind this methodology is developed from a transdisciplinary approach. Firstly, the concept of interface by Scolari (2021) and the new media theory of Manovich (2020) were taken from communication studies. Secondly, from museum studies we relied on the visitor studies in museums from Falk (2009) and the work on museum education from Hooper-Greenhill (2007). Finally, from heritage studies, the authorized heritage discourse debate from Smith (2009) or the theoretical concepts on digital heritage from Cameron & Kenderdine (2007).

Results

Along this study, 716 surveys were carried out with 18 to 30 year-old undergraduates, master's and doctoral students from each of the faculties, 56 interviews with directors, managers, curators and technicians from the different museums and collections of the Complutense University of Madrid and an analysis of 5,666 tweets published between 1st January 2020 and 1st June 2022 on four of the most active accounts of the museums and collections

of the Complutense University of Madrid (Museos Complutenses, MuPAI, Museo/Laboratorio Manuel Bartolomé Cossío and Herbario MACB).

1. Student surveys

As the number of respondents was not pre-selected, the profile of the sample showed that 61% of the participants in the survey were women, compared to 39% men.

The results of the surveys show that more than half of the students (54%) have not visited any of the museums and collections of the Complutense University of Madrid. Furthermore, almost three quarters of the students who have visited a museum or university collection (72%) state that they have shown no interest in it. Thus, they emphasise that they do not feel represented in these spaces, proposing the possibility of finding more personal stories about these assets and their context, more interactive spaces or research results of former students related to them.

Regarding the digital aspect, most of the students indicate that they use their mobile phone on a daily basis, with a preference for apps over browsing websites. In the case of museums webs and apps, most of them indicate that they use them for searching information.

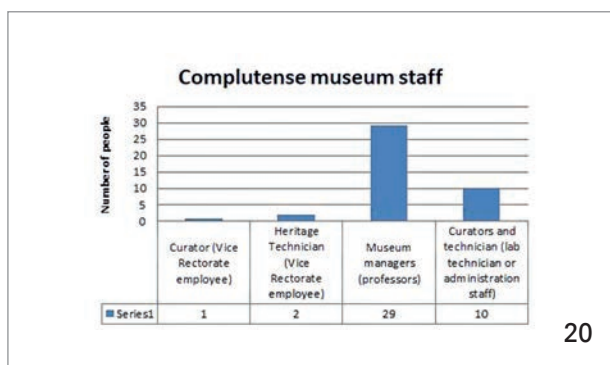
In the academic case, only 31% of students say that they have used elements of the collections or museums of the Complutense University of Madrid in the classroom and that they would like to use digital content preferably video, images and 3D models.

2. Interviews with directors, managers, conservators and technicians

Firstly, as pointed out by the directors, managers, curators and technicians interviewed, the Complutense University collections have a great potential for training students and a great value for society, but they don't receive any direct funding for their preservation.

On the other hand, the historical heritage technicians state that their main tasks are related to the management and conservation, working together with the directors, curators and technicians, leaving little time for tasks such as communication.

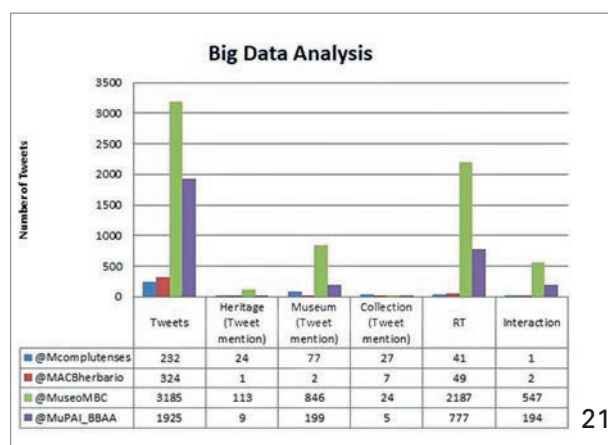
Finally, the number of employees is very small [Fig.20]. Apart from the two historical heritage technicians, there is only one curator in the Complutense University of Madrid. The other professionals involved are lecturers and technicians from different departments.



3. Big Data analysis

The Big Data analysis shows that in the period between January 1st, 2020 and June 1st, 2020,

5,666 tweets were registered on four of the most active Twitter accounts of the museums and collections of the Complutense University of Madrid [Fig.21].



56% of the tweets corresponded to the Museo/Laboratorio Manuel Bartolomé Cossío account, followed by the MuPAL account, and Herbario MACB, and Museos Complutenses respectively.

As for the content of their tweets, the terms heritage, museums and collection are mainly identified in the tweets and/or hashtags of the account Museo/Laboratorio Manuel Bartolomé Cossío and Museos Complutenses, where the term collection has been found the most.

In terms of interaction, the Museo/Laboratorio Manuel Bartolomé Cossío account has the highest number of retweets of content related to its activity and the degree of responses with the users, followed by MuPAL.

Finally, no tweets in text format have been detected from any students giving their opinions on museums



and university collections, although the Museo/Laboratorio Manuel Bartolomé Cossío account has in recent months presented opinions in video format.

4. SWOT analysis of the general situation of UCM museums and collections.

At a general level, the components of the SWOT analysis of the general situation of the museums and collections of the Complutense University of Madrid show a positive result.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The value of the collections for education, research and develop a safe space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only a few students and lecturers know about university museums of their own Faculty
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value of the collections for creating new digital contents - A digital communication strategy for museums where mobile phones play an massive role - New funding from external partners - Participating in local, regional, national and European museum projects and networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of employees - Lack of communication and dissemination of the collections - Lack of an effective administrative process - Lack of funding

Firstly, the *strength* of the museums and collections of the Complutense University of Madrid lies in the value of the collections for education and research as well as for helping the university community to grow in a secure environment.

Secondly, the most important *weakness* identified is that only a few students and lecturers are aware of the university museums in their own faculty.

Thirdly, the *opportunities* are related to the value of the collections for the creation of new digital content,

the development of a digital communication strategy for museums in which mobile phones play a real role, obtaining new funding from external partners and participation in local, regional, national and European museum projects and networks.

Finally, *threats* are based on the lack of staff, funding as well as communication and dissemination of collections and an efficient administrative process.

Discussion

As a result of this research, many questions remain to be answered about the situation of the museums and collections of the Complutense University of Madrid.

The results of the interviews with the different directors, curators and technicians reflect the uncertainty of thinking whether the Complutense University of Madrid over the years has not worked on policies to improve the process of administration, organisation, financing, employees or whether the measures they have taken have not worked and therefore the management model must change in order to be more effective.

Similarly, another key issue is why some lecturers are not interested or involved enough in the use of the collections.

Finally, the results of the student's surveys show that a large proportion of students are unaware of the existence of the university museums and collections. This shows that no dissemination and education work has been carried out to connect with this public. In the case of the UCM Student Observatory studies (Fernández-Maillo & Calvo, 2019; Fernández Maíllo, Vicaro & Dorrego, 2019), there are no questions relating to the university's cultural heritage.

Conclusions

The Complutense University of Madrid has a rich cultural heritage with its 28 museums and university collections, but their management is very complex.

Firstly, the student's surveys show that students are unaware of the museums and collections of the Complutense University of Madrid, as they have not been informed about them nor have they used elements of these in their classes. On the other hand, regarding their digital cultural habits, it is clear that they predominantly use mobile phones, but they only access museum applications when they travel.

Secondly, the interviews carried out with the directors, managers, curators and technicians interviewed agreed on the potential of university collections and museums for the training of students and the great value they have for society. They also pointed out that they do not receive funding, do not have enough staff, are unable to professionalise their work in some cases, and do not have time for communication.

Thirdly, the Big Data analysis shows how the Museo/Laboratorio Manuel Bartolomé Cossío account is the most active on Twitter. Furthermore, the content of their tweets shows a preference for the term museum over heritage or collection, but there is a notable absence of interactions and opinions from students.

To sum up, the value of the collections for education can promote and encourage new investment opportunities for external partners, new possibilities for digital communication and the digitisation of cultural heritage.

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Contact information

Raul Gomez Hernandez, Postgraduate Teaching Assistant in the Faculty of Media.

Una Europa Joint Doctorate in Cultural Heritage candidate from the Complutense University of Madrid and the University of Edinburgh researching on digital cultural heritage, Raul Gomez Hernandez is currently a member of the Europeana Education's Steering Group and a board member of the Madrid's group of the European Students Association for Cultural Heritage (ESACH).

Address: Departamento de Periodismo y Nuevos Medios. Facultad de Ciencias de la Información. Ciudad Universitaria, Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Avenida Complutense s/n., 28040 Madrid, Spain
Email: raulgo04@ucm.es

Website: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Raul_Gomez_Hernandez

3. STUDENTS' CURATED EXHIBITION. EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR PARTICIPANTS

MACIEJ KLUZA & IWONA MACIEJOWSKA

Keywords: *Krakow (Poland), Museum education, Responsible Research and Innovation, Interactive exhibition*

Abstract

In recent years, more and more attention has been paid to the social impact of universities. Jagiellonian University Museum participated in the international FP7 project IRRESISTIBLE (Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development), engaging school students and teachers in the process of responsible research and innovation. During the project, students learned about selected scientific issues, learned the methodology of scientific research, and independently designed and made exhibits for an interactive exhibition. In this paper, we focus on how important participation in the project was for the students. Interviews were conducted with small groups of students. Students from three groups, as well as their professors, filled in a questionnaire asking about any difficulties encountered during the process, their learning achievements and the importance of the project for their life. Members of two groups were also interviewed in small groups that worked on the same exhibit. The participants greatly appreciated the development of social skills including teamwork and communication. Similar conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the online survey completed by students involved in the IRRESISTIBLE project in the 10 partner countries.

Introduction

In many museums, members of the local community are invited to create exhibitions and other elements of the museum's programme. Such participatory activities are mostly aimed at adults, but there are also projects involving children and adolescents. The first examples of this type of activity in Polish museums occurred in the second decade of the 21st century. The exhibition **Anything goes** organised by the National Museum in Warsaw (28.02–8.05.2016) was created by the group of 69 children aged 6 to 14 years divided into six curatorial teams responsible for the exhibition modules. The participants spent six months (4 hours/week) during which time they got to know the Museum and worked on the exhibition (Jagodzińska, 2017). The exhibition **Welcome at Nanoworld** in the Jagiellonian University Museum (18.05–31.07.2016) was the Polish outcome of participation in the international educational project IRRESISTIBLE 2013–2016 (FP7, Grant 612367).

IRRESISTIBLE

The goal of the project was to design activities involving students and the public in the process of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). It engaged partners from 10 European countries, including 12 universities, 6 museums, and 4 science centers [Tab.1].



Tab. 1 Partners of the IRRESISTIBLE project

The Netherlands	University of Groningen (coordinator); Science LinX
Finland	University of Helsinki; University of Jyväskylä; Jyväskylä University Museum
Germany	IPN - Leibniz Institute for Science and Mathematics Education; Deutsches Museum
Greece	University of Crete; Eugenides Foundation
Israel	Weizmann Institute of Science; The Clore Garden of Science
Italy	University of Bologna; University of Palermo; Museum of Bari
Poland	Jagiellonian University; Jagiellonian University Museum
Portugal	Universidade de Lisboa; Pavilhão do Conhecimento and Ciência Viva
Romania	Valahia University Targoviste; Prahova Natural Science Museum; History Museum Targoviste
Türkiye	Bogazici University; Istanbul Technical University Science Center

The result of the project were 17 thematic modules [Tab. 2] which introduced cutting-edge science topics using Inquiry-Based Science Education (IBSE) methods in schools. These scenarios were developed and tested by several groups of students. The modules were designed to include six key issues of RRI:

- **Engagement:** Joint participation of researchers, industry, and civil society in the research and innovation process
- **Gender equality:** unlocking the full potential of society
- **Science education:** creative education to cater for the future needs of society
- **Ethics:** including societal relevance and acceptability of research and innovation outcomes
- **Open access:** free online access to the results of publicly funded research
- **Governance:** the responsibility of policy makers for developing harmonious models for RRI (Irresistible Project, 2022).

Tab. 2. Topics of the educational modules developed in the IRRESISTIBLE Project

Topic	Developed by
Carbohydrates in breast milk	The Netherlands
Nano in health science	Turkey
The RRI of Perovskite-Based Photovoltaic Cells	Israel
The Catalytic Properties of Nanomaterials	Poland
Nanotechnology for Solar Energy	Italy (Bologna)
Nanotechnology for Information	Italy (Bologna)
Energy Sources	Italy (Palermo)
Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Applications	Greece
Geoengineering	Portugal
Evaluate Earth's Health through Polar Regions	Portugal
Plastic - Bane of the Oceans	Germany (Kiel)
Offshore Wind Energy	Germany (Munich)
Ferrofluids technology	Romania
Lotus Effect	Romania
Nanoscience	Romania
Natural Nanomaterials	Romania
Climate Change	Finland

And a final step of each group's work was an interactive exhibition designed and built by participating students. Therefore, the students were its creators and contractors responsible for all phases of the production of exhibits for the exhibition addressed to other students. This approach was used because of the potential benefits it could bring, including:

- Creation, as the highest level of Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives, can be easily achieved via the IBSE strategy,
- The exhibits present current scientific issues and can inspire creators and visitors to ask questions, to provoke inquiry,
- By preparing the exhibits, students learn how to present science in a way that is attractive to the recipient.
- By participating in the project, students get to know the true/real picture of science, where there is room for controversy and uncertainty, for putting forward, confirming, and debunking hypotheses.
- The process of building exhibits allows students to develop skills such as planning, collaboration, and communication that are rarely shaped in formal education.

In Poland, 884 students (7th-12th grade) working in 32 groups participated in the project. They worked together for 8–12 months. In the course of the project, the students were involved in various activities – for example, learning about a scientific topic as well as discovering the principles of scientific work. They met scientists, visited laboratories, and carried out research projects independently. Direct training for the construction of the exhibit was provided by a visit to the Science Centre and workshop conducted at the Museum. After them, it was time to plan and build exhibits, which students executed in small groups [Fig.22]. Most of the exhibits were shown in schools and selected items made it to the final



22

exhibition at the Museum. Altogether, 263 exhibits were presented during these school exhibitions and 47 exhibits were chosen for the final exhibition at the Jagiellonian University Museum [Fig.23]. The exhibition was open to the general public for two months (18.05–31.07.2016). Then it switched to a travelling exhibition and was shown (2017-2019) in 10 museums in Poland. The exhibits dealt with the following topics: RRI (13), Nanotechnology (19), Nanoparticles (5), Health (6), Catalysis (4).



23



Significance of the project for the participants

To verify the significance of the project for different participants, three test groups were chosen:

- 33 students (15 F, 18 M), age 14–15
- 35 students (25 F, 11 M), age 16–17
- 25 students (22 F, 3 M) age 16–18 (only questionnaires)

Individual questionnaires as well as group (students) and individual (teacher) interviews, were used as research methods. The interviewed groups consisted of students who had built an exhibit. The following section presents an analysis of these statements.

The students were asked what was difficult for them during the construction of the exhibit. In most cases, they did not present any problems.

The most frequently mentioned problems involved the concept of the exhibit (20 responses) and a lack of appropriate technical skills (22). During the interview, they said, “We had technical problems, for example, the paints did not cover the plywood panel well.”

Problems were also associated with the need to cooperate in a group (10) and time planning (12): “First of all, constructing the exhibit is time consuming.”

The most common answers to the question *What did you learn during the planning and construction of the exhibition?* are presented below 5 categories, based on the answers for this question were selected [Tab. 3].

Answers to the next question that considered the positive aspects of building the exhibits confirmed the previously obtained results [Tab.4].

Tab.3 Learning outcomes declared by students

Category	Number of answers
Teamwork	75
Technical skills and use of different materials	31
Work under time pressure	25
Scientific knowledge	21
Creativity	19

Tab.4 Positive aspects of exhibit building

Category	Number of answers
Teamwork practice	40
Getting to know each other	25
Science knowledge and its use	27
Learning through play	19
Manual skills development	6

In the opinion of a teacher, the educational goals related to acquiring of new knowledge were also fulfilled: “The students learnt about the subject matter of their exhibits, they were able to present the ideas of their exhibits. So, the goals have been achieved.”. The students tended to appreciate the chance to develop soft skills such as teamwork or communication or practise their technical skills. This was emphasised in statements by teachers and students during the interview. “Working on an exhibition strengthens the bonds between those who prepare it. Thanks to this, we connected with each other and practised group work, which will be useful in the future” (student).

The students were not very eager to mention any negative aspects about working on the construction of the exhibit. The most significant was their underestimation of the time required for construction (17), and technical difficulties (6).

Conclusion

The above-mentioned research indicates that an educational project involving the preparation of a scientific exhibition is a method that may develop soft skills such as teamwork or working to deadlines, as well as manual skills. Similar conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the online survey completed by students involved in the IRRESISTIBLE project in the 10 partner countries. Students pointed out that the curation of an exhibition was particularly useful in strengthening: (a) their knowledge of these issues and how they impact their lives; (b) their relationships with other students and teachers; and (c) their perceptions about the social relevance of science classes, allowing discussion of important current issues (Reis *et al.*, 2020, p.2796).

Analogous observations about the young creators of the exhibition **Anything goes** were published by K. Jagodzińska (2017). For the participants, it was an experience that enabled them “to develop creativity, learn how to discuss, argue, speak up, reach compromises, work in a team, and gain many other skills”.

IRRESISTIBLE was the first participatory project conducted at the Jagiellonian University Museum. We learnt that if we allow young participants to act independently, they will show ingenuity and creativity. Their ideas for exhibits were sometimes surprising and inspiring for us. The concept of exhibits, aimed not only on a simple experiment but also to stimulate interaction between viewers, will be used in future exhibitions organised at our museum. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exhibition created by students was discontinued from 2020. However, the ideas of interactive exhibits proposed by the students enriched the curator’s resources and may be used in the future.

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Contact information

Maciej Kluza (PhD)

Jagiellonian University Museum

Address: Jagiellonska 15, 31-010 Krakow, Poland

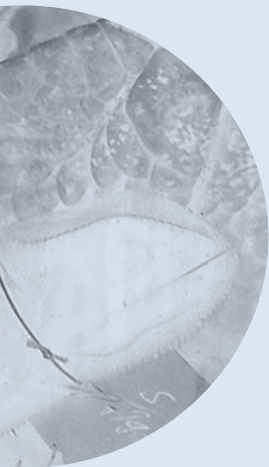
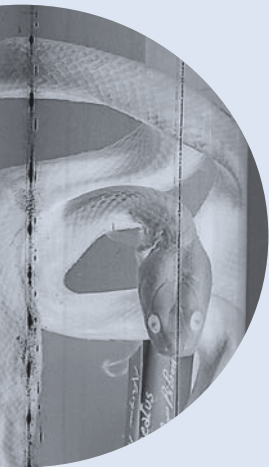
Email: maciej.kluza@uj.edu.pl

Website: <https://maius.uj.edu.pl/>

Iwona Maciejowska (PhD), Department of Chemical Education, Jagiellonian University

Address: Gronostajowa 2, 30-387 Krakow, Poland

Email: iwona.maciejowska@uj.edu.pl



IV. WORKSHOP REPORT: INCIDENCE OF PROVENANCE RESEARCH ON UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS

NICOLE GESCHÉ-KONING & NATHALIE NYST

**IV. WORKSHOP REPORT:
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IV. WORKSHOP REPORT: INCIDENCE OF PROVENANCE RESEARCH ON UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS⁵⁵

REPORT BASED ON FOLLOWING PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP⁵⁶ PARTICIPANTS' ANALYSES AND PRESENTATIONS AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE UNIVERSEUM CONFERENCE ON 5 JULY 2022

NICOLE GESCHÉ-KONING & NATHALIE NYST
ULB Museums Network – Brussels, Belgium

Keywords: *Provenance, Naturalia, Colonial history.*

With the reports of the Workshop participants: Mariana Brum (University of Coimbra, Portugal), Michaela Clark (University of Manchester / UCT Pathology Learning Centre), Laurien de Gelder (University of Amsterdam – Allard Pierson, The Netherlands), Raúl Gómez Hernández (Complutense University, Madrid, Spain), Jennifer Gonissen (ULB, Belgium), Emily Hardick (The Ohio State University, USA/ UGhent, Belgium), Charlotte Hartong (University Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands), Marco Humbel (University College, London, United Kingdom), Daniele Metilli (University College London, United Kingdom), Caroline Michalle (ULB, Belgium), Chiara Parisi (Università degli studi di Ferrara, Italy), Lisa Vanderheyden (Universiteit Utrecht, The Netherlands), Annelies Van de Ven (UC Louvain, Belgium), Frédérique Van Wijck (University of Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, The Netherlands)

Abstract

University museums and provenance research

Following the global discussions around the ethical issues related to the origin of heritage collections, European universities have begun to re-examine the history, provenance, and nature of their academic heritage. They must face the criticism of their own

colonial past and analyse their collections with new eyes. There does not seem to be a real consensus at European level as to the objects of research, documentation and more specifically the works to be returned or repatriated, and above all on how to integrate the communities of origin in this process. This is what led the organizers of the Universeum conference (European Academic Heritage Network) in Brussels, Leuven, Mons, and Ghent (5-8/07/2022) to offer young researchers this workshop dedicated to provenance research with the presentation of some botanical, zoological, and mineralogical specimens from the collections of the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB).

55 Our sincere thanks to Laurence Belalia (Jardin botanique Jean Massart/Muséum de zoologie et d'anthropologie, ULB), Karen Fontijn (Musée de minéralogie, ULB) and Michèle Loneux (Muséum de zoologie et d'anthropologie, ULB).

56 *Decolonisation and restitution – The role of university museums in provenance research and its impact.*

Introduction

Provenance research is among important priorities for museums worldwide including university museums and collections. It appears in the recommendations of various publications both from the International committee for university museums and collections (UMAC, 2022), as the reports published by the informal group of experts of Restitution Belgium (Restitution Belgium, 2021) and by the Belgian universities (Groupe de travail interuniversitaire, 2021). The challenging questions related to decolonization underpin key areas of operation of university museums and the way they manage and engage with collections keeping an open dialogue and critically examining these as a community.

The organisers of the Universeum annual conference in Belgium (05-08/07/2022) on “Decolonisation and restitution”⁵⁷ therefore decided to invite early career professionals and researchers (PhD students and post doc) to participate in a workshop prior to the conference on the theme of provenance research around objects for which an African origin was mentioned from the collections of the ULB and more specifically from members of the ULB Museums Network (03-04/07/2022).

Aim of the workshop

The workshop focused on issues related to the theme and consisted of two sessions coordinated by cultural heritage professionals and academics from the ULB and the University of Aberdeen, as well as by members of Universeum and researchers closely working on this topic. Prior to the workshop

participants had received an information pack on the subject and were asked to reflect on the above-mentioned publications and following questions:

- What does provenance research involve and why is it important?
- How are the origin, role, and interpretation of university collections documented and presented on institutional websites and databases?
- How are ‘sensitive’ topics handled in the collections and their documentation?
- How are objects related to a colonial context managed?
- Who are the owners of this heritage? Should it be restituted or repatriated and according to what modalities (legal and practical)?
- How should the communities of origin and other people directly concerned with this work be involved?
- Which ethical principles can one look at to best guide these processes?
- Should one limit oneself to colonial contexts or enlarge the debate?
- What is the best way to communicate these issues to the public?
- How can one invite others to be part of the conversation?

Launching the workshop

The workshop started with an introduction lecture on provenance research in relation with the theme of decolonization by Neil Curtis (University of Aberdeen), and Nicole Gesché-Koning (ULB). It was then followed by a presentation of different botanical, mineralogical and zoological objects, and specimens from the collections of the ULB mentioned as coming from Africa and more specifically Congo and selected by different persons in charge of the university collections. From the Botanical Garden Jean Massart, four

57 <https://universeum2022.be>



specimens (*Cycas rumfii*, *Sida rhombifolia*, *Elaeis*, *Hyphaene thebaica*) all mentioned in a short registrar specifying their order, family, type, species, part of the plant and origin. An example of an *Orycteropus afer* was selected among the zoological collections together with a series of bugs, two spiders (*Nephila maculata*), a grass-snake (*Boaedon lineatus*) and different reptiles. Last but not the least, samples of cassiterite, reinerite/bornite and hematite were presented for the mineralogical collections.

For various reasons, provenance studies of natural science collections established in the colonising countries need to be deepened and will probably lead to the restitution of specimens⁵⁸ to the former colonised countries. Selecting specimens and objects related to natural sciences was here dictated by the fact that provenance research in this field is rather undeveloped in relation to the restitution of art or ethnographic objects. However, the problem is not new. For example, as early as 1992, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UN, 1992, p.11) stressed the need for information exchange between signatory countries.⁵⁹ This is because the distribution of natural specimens is inequitable, with collections –especially of type specimens– mainly concentrated in Europe and North America. For example, there are more than 3,000 registered herbaria around the world, holding more than 350 billion specimens, but only 2% are found on the African continent (Lang *et al.*, 2019, p.110-111⁶⁰; Boehi, 2019).

58 And not just a virtual restitution of digitised specimens (Boehi, 2019).

59 Which are 168 for 196 parties (<https://www.un.org/fr/observances/biological-diversity-day/convention>; accessed on 10 March 2023).

60 See in particular the map, fig.1b, p.111.

The collection of *naturalia* serves the colonial purpose in that it allows, above all, the study and control of exploitable natural resources or, in the museum context, the illustration of the environment in the colony (dioramas e.g.).⁶¹ With the present climate changes this area of research is called to become increasingly important (McGhie, 2021, 15). Different species from the fauna and the flora from the original countries are disappearing and geological resources are getting in some areas scarce leading to the depletion of several crystals and rocks (Nyst, 2021, 58). Specimens preserved in the West may be then the last representatives of extinct species that can be returned to their native territory; data on collection methods and areas of provenance provide a wealth of information for work on the present or past distribution of species. As Lang *et al.* (2019, 111) state, ‘recent studies have emphasised the scientific value of *herbaria* for a broad range of global change-related topics’.

In addition to the natural heritage, the cultural heritage is also concerned. Indeed, the collection of specimens often involves a process of usurpation or cultural appropriation: this is the case for intangible heritage, such as knowledge of traditional pharmacopoeia or wildlife capture techniques.⁶² The naturalized okapis in many European museums are a good example of this: many of them were captured thanks to the know-how of some anonymous Mbuti hunters and their scientific name, *Okapia johnstoni*, has only retained the European discoverer –the British

61 For example the bull elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*) in the Africa Museum (Tervuren, Belgium) was slaughtered in Kasai in 1956 during a museum mission commissioned by the director of the Museum Frans Olbrechts, to collect wildlife specimens for use in dioramas (<https://www.africamuseum.be/fr/learn/provenance/elephant>; accessed on 15 March 2023).

62 See <https://www.africamuseum.be/fr/learn/provenance/okapis> (accessed on 15 March 2023).



colonial administrator Harry Johnston (1858-1927)–, erasing the local knowledge holders.⁶³ Raw knowledge and local know-how are thus rendered invisible, denied; the specimens are dehistoricized artefacts therefore interchangeable (Süess, 2021).

Then last but not the least, collections may endanger some kinds of intangible cultural heritage such as beliefs and practices of the local cultural communities from the home countries. Let us give as examples the mygale, the divinatory animal par excellence in the northwest and west of Cameroon (Gebauer, 1964), or the leopard, considered the double animal of many African sacred chiefs (de Heusch, 2002).

Selection of specimens and information available

The participants realised from the very beginning –and so had the organisers of the workshop!– that there was very little information available and that completing the inventories and answering the questions

mentioned above would be rather challenging in such a short, allocated time. Divided into 4 groups they then chose a piece among those selected from the ULB botanical and zoological collections, the mineralogy specimens not seeming to inspire them.

The first group⁶⁴ chose the *Cycas rumfii* [Fig.24] with following information: “*Cycas rumfii*/Macrosporophylle/Cycadophyta/Cycadaceae”; indicated numbers: 2120 (black ink) and 77 (red ink). The inventory specifies the region of origin as Congo.

The second group⁶⁵ chose for its research the jar with a grass-snake [Fig.25] with following information: “*F.Colubridae/Boaedon lineatus Dum./Afr.*”. In terms of provenance, the inventory register states that this specimen comes from Congo (Boma) and is a gift from Mr Kerremans. It has been included to the inventory in July 1888 under number 282.

63 *Id.*

64 Mariana Brum, Michaela Clark, Laurien de Gelder, Jennifer Gonissen.

65 Raúl Gómez Hernández, Emily Hardick, Charlotte Hartong, Caroline Michalle.



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The third group⁶⁶ worked on a jar filled with reptiles [Fig.26]; the label indicated "Gift received in 1966", with no further detail. The specimens in the jar have been identified as following: the head of a viper, a chameleon, a grass-snake and a salamander.

Finally, the fourth and last group⁶⁷ worked on a jar containing two spiders [Fig.27] with following label: "F.Argiopidae/Nephila maculata/Afr. Am.". In terms of provenance, the inventory register states that these specimens come from Congo (Matadi). They are a gift from F. De Meuse and have been included in the register in 1895 under number 984.

66 Marco Humbel, Chiara Parisi, Frédérique Van Wijck.

67 Daniele Metilli, Lisa Vanderheyden, Annelies Van de Ven.

Methodology

The participants started by closely examining the type of information and records available, the origin of the objects and specimens, the challenges raised, as well as discussing appropriate steps to manage moving forward after a quick search through the internet.

All four groups came up with rather similar questions regarding the respective chosen specimens. These concern the specimen itself and the documents linked to it in available archives including notes, drawings, register, photographs, its chronology (date of birth, date of arrival in the collections, exhibitions, different locations in the institution), precise origin

(various specimens marked as coming from Congo are more typical from other geographical areas), the person in charge of the collection both in the past and today, his/her place within the university and his/her relation with Congo (purpose of scientific expeditions and samples collected), if there are similar specimens in the collections and the place where they are kept and/or exhibited in the museum, the local vernacular denomination, the state of conservation of the specimen and its local use.

Analysis of the specimen

A closer and careful look at the specimen conducted the participants to following questions: where does the information come from? Why does the observation of the specimen give more information than the label (indications inside the jars containing the specimen like for the *Boaedon lineatus* which mentions “Bibron Duméril/1945/R.Laurent/*Boaedon lineatus*”); on the jar itself: name of manufacture ‘Beauce’ for the jar with reptiles, date ‘1955’ for the jar with grass-snake) or on the box containing the specimen. Is the label accompanying the specimen the original one or has the information been copied (for example when the registration number has changed like in the case of the grass-snake and the spiders)?

All specimens analyzed are kept either in a box (*Cycas rumfii*) or a jar (grass-snake, reptiles, and spiders). Has this always been the case? What impact may the liquid contained in the jars have on the specimens? The *Boaedon lineatus* seems to have lost its original stripes in alcohol. Further research on the reptile database⁶⁸ brought the participants to believe that the scientific name of the snake *Boaedon lineatus*

which is still used (Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854) was (re-)determined in 1945 by the Belgian zoologist Raymond Laurent (Stewart, Halloy, 2002). On the white label on top of the jar containing the two spiders one finds on the front side “F. Argiopidae/*Nephila maculate*, Afr./Am.” and on the back side, “Musée Zoologique/Bruxelles/RG 1145”.

About the origin, the selected specimens are all specified as coming from Congo, some with a more precise location like Boma or Matadi. Nevertheless, they do not seem typical for Congo, and one may wonder why they have then been collected. This is the case both for the *Cycas rumfii* native to New Guinea, Indonesia and the Christmas Island and the spiders, the origin of this species being rather Asia or Oceania (Java, New Guinea) and not Congo (Dahl, 1911). Knowing the local African name of a specimen can give more information on its use. Has any information been collected regarding the local knowledge about this specimen? As to the spiders the participants wondered what had motivated the collector. Understanding local diet? In relation with colonialist health? Commercial related to local silk weaving? Scientific due to the gigantism of the female species? Etc.

A deeper look at the available archives is necessary to find out more information searching possibly existing notebooks, drawings, and photographs of the samples. The specimens analysed are linked either to a collection in the university or a research centre and/or a scientist. Looking for more information about the names mentioned on the labels, like Charles Lemaire, Ferdinand de Meuse, Émile Laurent, or Charles Kerremans enabled the participants to find out more about the different expeditions conducted. As to why they went to Congo and for which institution is not always clear and needs further investigation.

68 <http://reptile-database.reptarium.cz>.



About the location in the museum and history of the collection, where are the specimens exhibited? Are there similar specimens in their neighbourhood? How many different varieties are exhibited next to them? Who chose the display and was it always like it is today? Some specimens (spiders and grass-snake) are mentioned with different register numbers (old and new). Analysing the ancient number of the register 282, the participants discovered that in only five years (from 1888 when the grass-snake is included to 1895 when the spiders are included), the number of specimens in the Zoology collection increased to some 984 species followed in 1909 to 1964 species. There must have been a moment when many individual collections have been integrated in the Museum of Zoology of the ULB for an unknown reason which should be further investigated. Any other reports describing the specimens, their origin and display in the museum should be very useful.

Conclusions

The participants were in a very short period able to complete the documentation available. Their remarks and questions have been passed over to the persons in charge of the collections. Unfortunately, many of them are either volunteers or part time employees of the university lacking time for deeper research which could be tackled by master or PhD students.

Further research actions have been proposed. From the names mentioned in the available information analyse the scientists' publications if any, trace the individuals who took possibly part in the various research expeditions, identify how many expeditions have been organized, when and by who, and find out where the collections were first kept. For example, concerning the entomologist Charles Kerremans, it

would be interesting to search why he was in Congo to begin with and from what expedition the grass-snake came from and if he himself collected it. As to why Kerremans chose to donate this item (along with insects, a mouse, etc.) to the ULB, should be precised. Why did his collection contain so much more than insects? Investigate Kerremans's publications and see if he mentions the specimen.

Look at the history of the Museum of Zoology of the ULB. Why were so many specimens integrated in such a short period of time (1888-1909)?

Look into dating the glass jars: is the number 1955 that appears in one of the jars the inventory number from the collection of the Natural History Institute in Brussels? The date of its manufacture?

Analyse the role of the port city Matadi the arrival place for boats coming from Antwerp and going back, the furthest inland port in the Congo Free State along the Congo River; and known as a trading centre. Was it a marketplace for insect specimens?

Most interesting was the participants' final conclusions: as none was a specialist in the field related to the specimens, they had to analyse it highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in provenance research. As access to resources in libraries and archives is often difficult, the participants suggested to have many documents digitized and made available online. Moreover, as knowledge is not always passed down within an institution, they also insisted on the importance of experts documenting their knowledge and sharing it with the next generation insisting on the necessary collaboration across institutions in provenance research which needs proper funding.

Finally, time has come to find out more information regarding all specimens kept in the university in the country of origin and among its inhabitants.

Thanks to this workshop the participants became aware of the difficulty facing provenance research, the importance of documentation, of interdisciplinarity and above all of communicating not only among scholars but more importantly with the local communities who have so much more to deliver.

“Natural history collections are an underused treasure of temporally and geographically broad samples that we have just begun to dust off” (Lang *et al.*, 2019, p.111).

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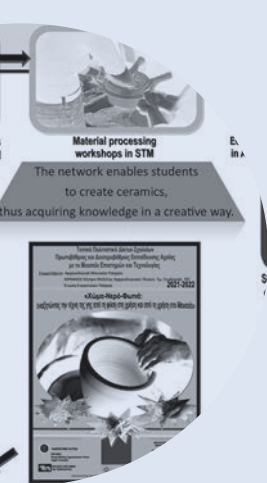
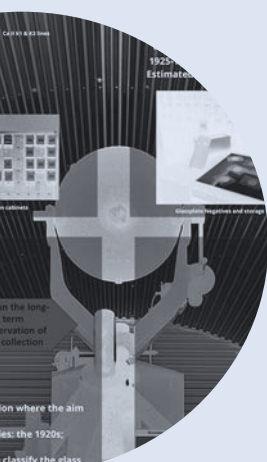
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V. POSTERS

103

1. After the fire: Museum and citizenship at work

104

ELENA BONACCORSI, SILVIA SORBI & PIETRO CURIZO

2. Conservation of negative glass plates of The Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of The University of Coimbra

106

MARIANA BRUM, CATARINA MATEUS, RICARDO GAFFEIRA & PEDRO CASALEIRO

3. MUCAES-UPV, the sculpture outdoor university museum: Preserving, disseminating, taking risks

110

SUSANA MARTÍN-REY, M. VICTORIA VIVANCOS-RAMÓN, HAIZEA OLIVEIRA-URQUIRI & ANTONI COLOMINA-SUBIEL

4. Communicating and reclaiming academic research in the Science and Technology Museum (STM) of the University of Patras: The School-Museum Network on Ceramics as a case study

116

PENY THEOLOGI-GOUTI, NICKOULA KOGUIA & IOANNIS ILIOPOULOS

5. Science center in the university museum. Pros & cons

118

MACIEJ KLUZA & KATARZYNA ZIEBA

V. POSTERS



1. AFTER THE FIRE: MUSEUM AND CITIZENSHIP AT WORK

ELENA BONACCORSI, SILVIA SORBI & PIETRO CURIZO

Keywords: *Pisa (Italy), University of Pisa, Collaborative Project, Valorisation of naturalistic heritage*

Abstract

In 2018, a devastating fire destroyed more than a thousand hectares of forest on Monte Pisano above the Certosa di Calci, a beautiful monastery dating back to 1366, which houses the Museum of Natural History of the University of Pisa. This event inspired the establishment of a collaborative project comprising the citizens' association "Sportello di Agroecologia", the Natural History Museum, and the Earth Science Department of the University of Pisa, with the aim of highlighting the historical and naturalistic heritage of Monte Pisano.

The project

After the fire, the local community strongly felt the need to acknowledge the solidarity and mutual aid experienced during this catastrophic event and to rebuild the social relationships. At the same time, it appeared necessary for the entire community to reflect on the respect due to the environment and the mountains through the careful maintenance of their land. The transformation of a ½ hectare plot of sloping land into an eco-park will serve as a microcosm of the mountain's natural and man-made environment. This involves the restoration and enhancement of its terraced slopes afflicted by the wildfire, respecting the original vegetation and characteristic landscape. Special attention is given to its dry-stone walls (the art of dry-stone walling is UNESCO-recognized intangible cultural heritage since 2018), which are being repaired

with some help and guidance of local artisans, thus transmitting a heritage of traditional know-how to the younger generations. Amongst other roles the park will host thematic tours and training courses on the historical, cultural, and naturalistic aspects of Monte Pisano, as well as serve as a recreational area for nature lovers. The Natural History Museum and the citizen association are presently collaborating on this project.

Contact information

Elena Bonaccorsi (PhD), Director of the Museo di Storia Naturale, Università di Pisa.

Elena Bonaccorsi is a geologist, Associate Professor in the Earth Science Department of the University of Pisa where she teaches mineralogy, crystallography and geoscience education. She is the Director of the Natural History Museum of the University of Pisa.

Address: Museo di Storia Naturale, Università di Pisa, Via Roma 79, I-56011 Calci, PI, Italy

Email: elena.bonaccorsi@unipi.it

Website: www.msn.unipi.it

E. Bonaccorsi^{a,b,c}, S. Sorbi^{a,b}, P. Curzio^b

^aMuseo di Storia Naturale, Università di Pisa, Via Roma 79, Calci, I-56011, Italy

^bSportello di Agroecologia, via della Propositura 3, Calci, I-56011, Italy

^cDipartimento di Scienze della Terra, Università di Pisa, Via Santa Maria 53, Pisa, I-56126, Italy

After the fire: Museum and citizens at work

In 2018, a devastating fire destroyed more than a thousand hectares of forest on Monte Pisano above the Certosa di Calci, a beautiful monastery dating back to 1366. Presently, it houses the Museum of Natural History of the University of Pisa, one of the most ancient naturalistic collections in Italy.

The 2018 catastrophic event inspired the establishment of a collaborative project comprising the citizens' association "Sportello di Agroecologia", the Natural History Museum, and the Earth Science Department of the University of Pisa, with the aim of highlighting the historical and naturalistic heritage of Monte Pisano.



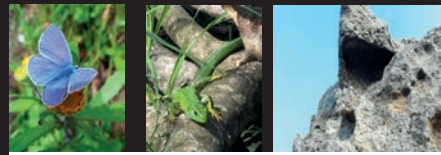
Effects of the fire



Volunteers at work



one year later, wild vegetation has grown back on the abandoned land and prevents access



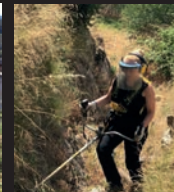
Botanic, zoologic and geologic examples of the Monte Pisano natural environment.

The transformation of a 1/2 hectare plot of sloping land into an eco-park will serve as a microcosm of the mountain's natural and man-made environment. This involves the restoration and enhancement of its terraced slopes afflicted by the wildfire, respecting the original vegetation and characteristic landscape.

Special attention is given to its dry-stone walls (the art of dry-stone walling is UNESCO-recognized intangible cultural heritage since 2018), which are being repaired with some help and guidance of local artisans, thus transmitting a heritage of traditional know-how to the younger generations.



The Park project, as envisioned by Sirio in meetings between the museum and the citizens' association.



The park project involves people of all ages, including the young and very young.



Sirio points to the spot where the Park will be born.

Amongst other roles the park will host thematic tours and training courses on the historical, cultural, and naturalistic aspects of Monte Pisano, as well as serve as a recreational area for nature lovers.



A moment of relaxation after work



Schools were organized to learn the technique of dry-stone wall construction, targeting local people



Museum and citizens' association collaborate also for environmental culture dissemination

The Museum undertakes to:

The association undertakes to:

- 1) provide technical and scientific support for activities related to the Park;
- 2) make available the spaces necessary for the implementation of common activities (exhibition rooms, workshops, garden outside the Museum);
- 3) provide staff for the coordination of activities and scientific support necessary for the project;
- 4) publicize events and activities through its own promotional channels.

- 1) prepare an outline schedule to be submitted to the management of the Museum for the initiatives to be implemented;
- 2) implement the activities as agreed with the Museum;
- 3) publicize, through their own promotional channels, the routes and activities agreed with the Museum;
- 4) produce adequate documentation, in digital form, on the activities carried out.



Position of the information panels (with two examples) and of refreshment places



The Park project was financed by Fondazione Pisa and University of Pisa (PRA)



2. CONSERVATION OF NEGATIVE GLASS PLATES OF THE GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA

MARIANA BRUM, CATARINA MATEUS, RICARDO GAFEIRA & PEDRO CASALEIRO

Keywords: *Coimbra (Portugal), University of Coimbra, Conservation, Glass plates, Archives*

Abstract

The Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra holds a large collection of glass plate negatives resulting from the activity of the Spectro-heliograph, which takes daily images since 1926. Until now, these negatives have been stored in wooden cases and cabinets inside the observation room.

To plan the long-term preservation of this collection, in collaboration with a photography conservator, a survey is being conducted involving environmental monitoring and evaluation of the collection conditions. It was concluded that the three current levels of storage –room, cabinets, and boxes– are not adequate due to the environmental conditions, such as high humidity levels and low temperatures, and due to the poor quality of the wooden storage materials.

Our research survey diagnosed the conservation status of the collection by observation of the content of each box individually, looking for any damage or alterations of the support and photographic emulsions such as the presence of fungus, detachments, or image hue. This allows us to alert to the risks, propose relocating the collection to a storage room with appropriate conditions and propose rehousing the negatives into adequate containers such as acid-free cardboard boxes, made of

acid-free fibre, and regularly used for archival protection to neutralize any acidity from the environment.

Our survey

The Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra holds a large collection of glass plate negatives resulting from the activity of the Spectroheliograph, which has taken daily images of the sun in the Ca II lines (calcium spectral lines K1 and K3) since 1926 and in the H-alpha line core (Hydrogen spectral line) since 1989.

To plan the long-term preservation of this collection, in collaboration with a photography conservator, a survey involving environmental monitoring and evaluation of the collection conditions is conducted. Therefore, the object of study is the gelatine dry plates made from Glass, nitrocellulose solution, and silver nitrate solution between 1925 and 1969. Until now, these negatives have been stored in wooden cases and cabinets inside the observation room.

It was decided first to assess the situation, aiming to analyse 1% of the collection (105 items). To do so, we divided the pieces into three different chronologies: the 1920s; 1940s; 1960s. Six levels of conservation were established that were used to classify the glass plate negatives from 0 to 5. Where 0 was equivalent

to a total loss of the image of the sun, and five would showcase a clear image, preserved with no colour alteration or on the emulsion.

The analysis resulted in a list with the conservation status, information about the piece, and level of conservation. While looking for any damage or alterations of the support and photographic emulsions, such as the presence of fungus, detachments, or image hue, we managed to find at least 21,7% of the plates heavily affected by the detachment of the emulsion (that corresponds to the 0,1 and 2 levels of conservation). This percentage is significant and represents the ones in which the picture is either partially or entirely lost. Although there was no sign of active fungus, the presence of chemical residues was found in printing in most of the images due to chemical reactions resulting from the current storage conditions. Access to this situation allows us to be alert to the risks for the preservation of this collection and to propose relocating it to a storage room with the appropriate relative humidity (between 20% and 50% and preferably below 40%) and temperature conditions (between 15°C and 25°C) and rehousing the negatives in adequate containers such as acid-free cardboard boxes.

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Contact Information

Mariana Brum, Master Student in Cultural Heritage and Museology, University of Coimbra

Graduated in History at the University of Coimbra and have worked with museums since 2016 in Brazil and Portugal, Mariana Brum is currently enrolled in the Master in Cultural Heritage at UC and working as a mediator for the public at the University's Historical Sites.

Address: University of Coimbra,
Rua Larga, 3004-504 Coimbra, Portugal
Email: mbrumfonseca@gmail.com

Catarina Mateus (MSc) National Museum of Natural History and Science, University of Lisbon

Catarina Mateus holds a Master in Preventive Conservation from the University of Northumbria (2008), is a Postgraduate in Photography Studies from IADE (2004). In 2015, she joined the MUHNAC team as a conservator-restorator and curator of photographic collections.

Address: MUHNAC,
Rua da Escola Politécnica, n.56-58, 1250-102,
Lisbon, Portugal
Email: catarina.mateus@museus.ulisboa.pt

Ricardo Gafeira (PhD) Instituto de Astrofísica e Ciências do Espaço, Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra

Ricardo Gafeira holds a PhD in Physics with specialization in solar physics by the Max Planck for Solar System Research and the University of Göttingen. Currently, he is a releaser at the faculty of science and technology of the University of Coimbra and coordinator of the astronomical observations unit of the Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra.

Address: University of Coimbra,
Rua Larga 3004-504 Coimbra, Portugal
Email: gafeira@gmail.com

Pedro Casaleiro (PhD) Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra

Pedra Casaleiro holds a PhD in Museum Studies, UK (1996). He is an Invited professor of Museum Studies since 1996, currently at Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Coimbra University. He is also a researcher at the Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of Coimbra University and Earth and Space Research Centre - CITEUC.

Address: University of Coimbra,
Rua Larga 3004-504 Coimbra, Portugal
Email: uc36639@uc.pt

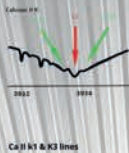
Conservation of negative glass plates of The Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra

Mariana Brum; Catarina Mateus; Ricardo Gafeira; Pedro Casaleiro

Mariana Brum, University of Coimbra - Master in Cultural Heritage and Museology, Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Coimbra, Coimbra, 3000-370, Portugal
 Catarina Mateus, National Museum of Natural History and Science, University of Lisbon, Lisbon, 1250-102, Portugal
 Ricardo Gafeira, Instituto de Astrofísica e Ciências do Espaço, Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra, Coimbra, 3040-004, Portugal
 Pedro Casaleiro, Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra, Centre for Earth and Space Research of the University of Coimbra - CITEUC Coimbra, 3040-004, Portugal
 mbrumfonseca@gmail.com

What?

The Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra holds a large collection of glass plate negatives resulting from the activity of the Spectroheliograph, which takes daily images in the Ca II K1 and K3 lines since 1926 and in the H-alpha line core since 1989. Until now, these negatives have been stored in wooden cases and cabinets inside the observation room.



Specific Information:

- The object of Study: Gelatin Dry Plates
- Material: Glass, nitrocellulose solution, silver nitrate solution
- Period: 1925-1969 (end of glass plate negatives)
Estimated Number of glass plate negatives: 10500



Glassplate negative in it's wooden box



The Spectroheliograph



Storage wooden cabinets



Glassplate negatives and storage wooden boxes

What do we intend?

Conduct a first assessment of the situation

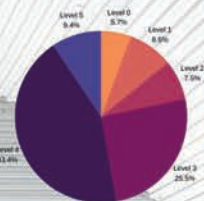
To diagnose the conservation status of the collection by observation of the content of each box individually, looking for any damage.

To plan the long-term preservation of this collection

Methodology:

It was decided to conduct a first assessment of the situation where the aim was to analyze 1% of the collection (105 pieces). To do so, we divided the pieces into 3 different chronologies: the 1920s; 1940s; 1960s. We established 6 levels of conservation that were used to classify the glass plate negatives from 0 to 5. Where 0 is equivalent to a total loss of the image of the sun and 5 represents a clear image, preserved with no color alteration or on the emulsion.

Early Results:



Conservation Levels Found

Number	Column	Signal	Date	Conservation Status	Level
20	3	K1	1910/1910	Color change, without expressive detachment of the emulsion, spot in the lower region that overlaps the solar disk. One clear image.	3
30	3	K1	1910/1910	Upright glass in the lower left corner. No expressive detachment of the emulsion or stains. Many images.	4
40	3	K1	1910/1910	No expressive detachment of the emulsion or stains. Many images.	5
40	3	K1	1910/1910	No expressive detachment of the emulsion or stains. Many images.	5

The analysis resulted in a list with the conservation status, information about the piece, and level of conservation.



Conclusion:

The analysis resulted in a list with the conservation status, information about the piece, and level of conservation. While looking for any damage or alterations of the support and photographic emulsions such as the presence of fungus, detachments, or image hue, we managed to find at least 21.7% of the pieces heavily affected by the detachment of the emulsion (that corresponds to the 0, 1 and 2 levels of conservation). This percentage is significant and also represents the ones in which the picture is either partially or completely lost. Although there was no sign of fungus, was found the presence of chemical residues used in printing in most of the images due to chemical reactions that result from the current storage conditions. To access this situation allows us to alert to the risks for the preservation of this collection and to propose relocating it to a storage room with the appropriate relative humidity and temperature conditions and rehousing the negatives to adequate containers such as acid-free cardboard boxes.

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3. **MUCAES-UPV, THE SCULPTURE OUTDOOR UNIVERSITY MUSEUM: PRESERVING, DISSEMINATING, TAKING RISKS**⁶⁹

SUSANA MARTÍN-REY, M. VICTORIA VIVANCOS-RAMÓN, HAIZEA OLIVEIRA-URQUIRI & ANTONI COLOMINA-SUBIELA

Keywords: *València (Spain), Museu Campus Escultòric, Outdoor sculpture museum*

Abstract

The Sculptural Campus Museum from *Universitat Politècnica de València* (hereinafter, *MUCAES-UPV*), belongs to the Art and Heritage Fund of the UPV, that includes a total of 4 museums, and 7 collections that exceeds three thousand works located on the three campuses of the UPV (Vera, Gandia and Alcoy). It is depending on the Vice-Rectorate for Art, Science, Technology and Society of this university.

As a university museum, it has a significant educational and research intent, without ignoring its commitment to safeguard and disseminate heritage. The continuous revision of the conservation aspects, stimulate us to improve its visibility and facilitate its access to citizens.

As can be expected, some of these objectives entail certain risks that must be assumed to achieve them, like the absence of a building to protect the collection, the location of the works at ground level and their proximity to visitors, or their continuous environmental exposure. Only the identification of risks and their

control, can greatly reduce the dangers associated with the durability of the works housed in this type of university museums.

This paper presents the current status of the work done in this regard, and the problems/solutions encountered so far.

Introduction

The *MUCAES-UPV*⁷⁰, has a total of 78 sculptural pieces by 68 artists of relevant international prestige, from various countries such as Germany, Argentina, Austria, Colombia, USA, and Japan (Universidad Politècnica de Valencia, 2001; Universidad Politècnica de Valencia, 1993). [Fig.28]. It is considered one of the largest and best in collections of Spanish outdoor sculptures (Universidad Politècnica de Valencia, 1995).

The ownership of the works belongs to the UPV, being incorporated into the collection through different forms of acquisition (purchases, donations, temporary assignments...), although the most common has been the purchase of the finished

69 This research is carried out as part of the research project "ANTIMICOTIC" (PRE2020-093139), funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/502200022033.

70 Museo Campus Escultòric UPV (MUCAES-UPV). Available online: <http://www.upv.es/entidades/FPA/info/1018519normalc.html> (accessed on 20 February 2023).



As can be imagined, the conservation of this outdoor collection presents a greater conservation complexity than other collections found inside the buildings (Pedro, 2013). It is exposed to environmental conditions with very heterogeneous temperature and humidity ranges, sunlight, biological agents of deterioration (birds, insects, etc.), in addition to the damage caused by the users of the university campus itself. While the effort to disseminate the collection and raise awareness among campus users, has led to a decrease in antisocial acts on the sculptures, such as mutilations or graffiti. [Fig.29].

work, or commissions depending on the project presented by the artists and selected by the Advisory Committee. It is a museum recognized by the Valencian Government, being included in the consortium of State Museums.

The sculptures are made of various materials, with steel predominating in 24 sculptures, bronze in 21, iron in 11 and stone in 7. Other materials used include clay, ceramic, glass, polyester, wood and fibreglass. The peculiarity and size of the works means that the collection arouses the interest of researchers and is used as a case study in their work, especially by UPV teachers and students who live with this artistic corpus.





It cannot be overlooked that it is located in a 100% urban environment, with daily exposure to environmental pollution, and at the same time very close to a marine environment, being only 1km from the beach (Doménech, Doménech & Redondo, 2016, p.30-39). Therefore, the control of the works is continuous, favouring the development and research of materials and methods that allow their future conservation (Vivancos, Martin & Simon, 2015, p.63-75), such as protective patinas, filling putty (Vivancos, Martin & Simon, 2014, p.214), etc.

Objectives

The main objective of MUCAES, focuses on educational and research intent, without overlooking its commitment to safeguard and disseminate heritage. The continuous revision of the conservation aspects, stimulate us to improve his visibility and facilitate his access to citizens.

Methods

The temporary loan of works to institutions and museum spaces, as well as the organisation of guided tours, and the development of activities linked to the study of heritage, are key points for achieving synergies and bringing the public closer to university heritage (University Museum Group UK), science and culture (Willumson, 2000, p.15).

The following shows how these tools are used at MUCAES.

Guided thematic visits: Through this kind of contact, new cognitive aspects are shared by facilitating direct contact with the work, promoting the viewer's access to multiple parameters of artistic language

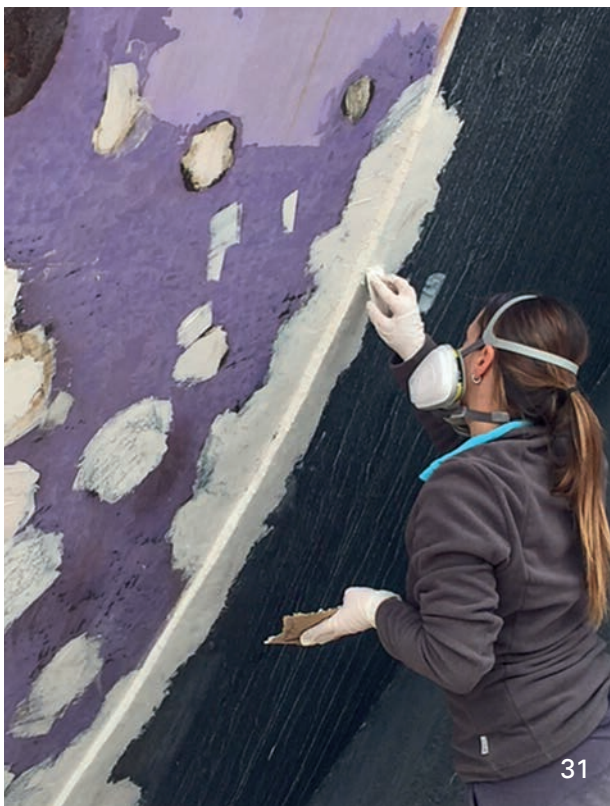
and sensory impressions. With more than a decade of experience in this sense, more than 2000 visitors have been received in the last 3 academic years (students of different levels, seniors, and researchers), statistics that have decreased since 2020 by 10% due to the social and health crisis caused by the SARS-COV pandemic. The visits are carried out according to the speciality of the group and their interests, and can focus on the study of an artist, a sculptural technique or even pathologies or deterioration if they are students of heritage conservation. [Fig.30].



Practical activities for the study and conservation of Artistic Heritage UPV: The training and participation of university students is a very valuable tool, as it encourages students to actively participate in programmes for the dissemination and conservation of the artistic corpus belonging to their university.

These actions allow students to collaborate in practical activities in which they can develop their knowledge and skills in the field.

The students can develop their knowledge and learning in different areas or related subjects, such as preventive conservation of heritage, cataloguing of works, or aspects related to the musealisation of the FAP collections. [Fig.31]. In the same way, the



international days of Museum Day, and the summer school for children at the UPV, allow the collection to become known, at the same time as bringing the museum closer to the university students, making them aware of the need to respect the works and favour their future conservation.

Development of a computer application for multi-platform mobile devices. A personalised tool has been developed so that users can define their own artistic route within the Sculpture Campus, depending on the aspects they are most interested in analysing. TECNOmuseum is an application based on web technology and geolocation, using interactive maps and databases, which can be used on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, without the need for the presence of a guide if the visitor prefers.

Results and discussion

MUCAES, like other self-respecting University museums entail certain risks that must be assumed to achieve them, like the absence of a building to protect the collection, the location of the works at ground level and their proximity to visitors, or their continuous environmental exposure, among others. Only the identification of risks and their control, can greatly reduce the dangers associated with the durability of the works housed in this type of university museums.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, a university museum must move away from the traditional concept of a mere container of objects, responding to the needs of today's society, by providing current tools that facilitate access to its collections.

From this perspective, MUCAES pursues the continuous improvement of the management and conservation of its collection, taking on new challenges in the tasks of conservation and dissemination of heritage.

With three fundamental commitments: Promotion, Conservation and the search for external Funding, MUCAES contributes to disseminate and bring culture closer to the society through its cultural heritage. With all the tasks that this entails, the university fulfils its own functions, such as teaching, research and the transmission of culture.

We keep carrying on to work towards the future in this respect, despite the complicated socio-sanitary situation with the SARS-COV pandemic we have experienced since 2020.



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Contact information

Susana Martin-Rey (PhD)

Susana Martin-Rey is a professor at the Conservation of Cultural Heritage Department - Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain) since 2001. She is specialist in the study of materials and eco-sustainable conservation treatments. Director of the Art and Heritage Fund UPV between 2013 and 2021, she coordinated its conservation with more than 4000 catalogued works and 4 museums.

Address: Universitat Politècnica de València,
Camino de Vera, s/n, 46022 Valencia, Spain
Email: smartin1@crbc.upv.es

MUCAES-UPV, THE SCULPTURE OUTDOOR UNIVERSITY MUSEUM: PRESERVING, DISSEMINATING, TAKING RISKS

S. Martín-Rey^a, M.V. Vivancos-Ramón^a, H. Oliveira-Urquira^a, T. Colomina-Subiela^a

^a Instituto U. Restauración del Patrimonio - Universitat Politècnica de València, Camino de Vera, s/n, Valencia, 46022, Spain
smartin1@crbc.upv.es

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sculptural Campus Museum -*Museu Campus Escultòric*- from *Universitat Politècnica de València* (hereinafter, *MUCAES-UPV*), belongs to the Art and Heritage Fund of the UPV and includes a total of 4 museums and 7 collections that exceeds three thousand works, located on the three campuses of the UPV. (Vera, Gandia and Alcoy), depending on the Vice-Rectorate for Art, Science, Technology and Society of this university.

MUCAES has a total of 78 sculptural pieces, by 68 artists of relevant international prestige, from various countries such as Germany, Argentina, Austria, Colombia, USA, and Japan. It is considered one of the largest and best collections of Spanish outdoor sculptures. The ownership of the works belongs to the UPV, being incorporated into the collection through different forms of acquisition.

2. OBJECTIVES

As a university museum, the main objective of MUCAES, focuses on educational and research intent, without overlooking its commitment to safeguard and disseminate heritage. The continuous revision of the conservation aspects, stimulate us to improve his visibility and facilitate his access to citizens.

3. METHODS

The three main lines of action followed by MUCAES have focused on the management and dissemination of its heritage, the conservation of its collections, and its recognition and financial support through public grants.

Always within the framework of social responsibility, and in pursuit of greater participation and involvement of the community in the university life.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

MUCAES, like other self-respecting University museums entail certain risks that must be assumed to achieve them, like the absence of a building to protect the collection, the location of the works at ground level and their proximity to visitors, or their continuous environmental exposure, among others. Only the identification of risks and their control, can greatly reduce the dangers associated with the durability of the works housed in this type of university museums.

5. CONCLUSION

With these three fundamental commitments: Promotion, Conservation and the search for external Funding, MUCAES contributes to disseminate and bring culture closer to the society through its cultural heritage. With all the tasks that this entails, the university fulfils its own functions, such as teaching, research and the transmission of culture.

We keep to carry on to work towards the future in this respect, despite the complicated socio-sanitary situation with the SARS-COV pandemic we have experienced since 2020.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research is carried out as part of the research project "ANTIMICOTIC" (PRE2020-093139), funded by MCIN/ AEI/10.13039/502200022033.

Museo Campus Escultòric

Siempre abierto,
Siempre a tu alcance



mucaes.upv.es



Figure 1. General view of the UPV university campus with some of the MUCAES sculptures.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

Different MUCAES dissemination actions: Figure 2. Study and analysis of the works. Figure 3. Detail of a guided tour. Figure 4. Drawing competition between school visitors. Figure 5. Lectures by artists and Museum specialists.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

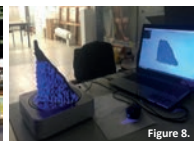


Figure 8.



Figure 9.



Figure 10.

Conservation and research at MUCAES: Figure 6. Problems arising from garden irrigation. Figure 7. Summer school at the MUCAES. Figure 8. 3D analysis and digitization of sculptures. Figure 9. Oxidation and rust damage in aluminium works. Figure 10. Materials testing to be used in the sculptures conservation.



Figure 11.



Figure 12.



Figure 13.

Conservation of works: Figure 11. Detail of a Corten steel work before restoration, with a dirty surface and limescale residues. Figure 12. Cleaning of the surface and application of protective coatings, to protect against excess moisture. Figure 13. Students from the Degree in Heritage Conservation, on learning practices for the works restoration.



4. COMMUNICATING AND RECLAIMING ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM (STM) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS: THE SCHOOL-MUSEUM NETWORK ON CERAMICS AS A CASE STUDY

PENY THEOLOGI-GOUTI, NICKOULA KOGUIA & IOANNIS ILIOPOULOS

Keywords: *Patras (Greece), University of Patras, Science communication, Transdisciplinary, Co-creation*

One of STM's cornerstones is to assist academics address society. Under this perspective our local school - museum network "Earth, water, fire: Looking for the art of the earth from nature to use and from the use in the Museum" (co-organized for the academic year 2021-2022 with the office of Cultural Education, of the Sections of Primary and Secondary Education of Achaia, Regional Directorate of Western Greece, in collaboration with KERAMOS-Centre for the research of archaeomaterials, Department of Geology UP, Patras Archeological Museum, Patras Visual Artists Union and schools of Achaia), aims to disseminate university's research on archaeological ceramics through seminars, workshops and educational activities using a transdisciplinary approach through the interaction with collections of Patras Archeological Museum and contemporary ceramics. The network enables students to create ceramics, thus acquiring knowledge in a creative way. Their ceramic inspirations will be exhibited in an open event, while digital technologies and digital archives will help us design a virtual exhibition which will enable online access and social media engagement. Under this framework, the Museum is building alliances and partnerships acting as facilitator to communicate and reclaim university's research creating a polyphonic space for critical democratic dialogue including as much parts of the society as possible.

Contact Information

Penelope Theologi-Gouti

Penelope Theologi-Gouti is an architect, ethnologist and the head of Science and Technology Museum in the University of Petras. She is also the Vice Chair ICOM Greece and a member of ICOM Resolutions Committee.

Website: http://www.stmuseum.upatras.gr/images/cvpeny/CVTheologi_Goutigr_12_09_2022.pdf

Nickoula Kougia (MSc)

Nickoula Kouhia is an Archeologist, a Phd student in the Department of Geology (UP). Her doctorate thesis encompasses her passion for archaeology and archaeometry regarding ceramics.

Ioannis Iliopoulos (PhD)

Ioannis Iliopoulos is a doctor in Geology, an Associate Professor in the department of geology and the director of the Science and Technology Museum of the University of Patras.

Website: <http://www.geology.upatras.gr/index.php/en/people-en/faculty?layout=edit&id=1164>

COMMUNICATING AND RECLAIMING ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM (STM) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS (UP): THE SCHOOL-MUSEUM NETWORK ON CERAMICS AS A CASE STUDY



P. Theologi-Gouti^a, N. Kougia^b, I. Iliopoulos^{a,b}

^aScience and Technology Museum, University of Patras, Patras, 26504, Greece, www.stmuseum.upatras.gr

^bDepartment of Geology, University of Patras, Patras, 26504, Greece

One of the Science and Technology Museum's cornerstones is to assist academics address society. The local school - museum network "Earth, water, fire: Looking for the art of the earth from nature to use and from the use in the Museum" was co-organized for the academic year 2021-2022 under this perspective.

Co-organisers:

A) Science & Technology Museum UP & B) Office of Cultural Education, Primary and Secondary Education of Achaia, Regional Directorate of Western Greece
In collaboration with:

- * KERAMOS-Centre for the Research of Archaeomaterials, Depart. of Geology UP
- * Patras Archeological Museum
- * Patras Visual Artists Union and schools of Achaia

Aims to:

Disseminate university's research on archaeological ceramics through seminars, workshops and educational activities using a transdisciplinary approach through the interaction with collections of Patras Archeological Museum and contemporary ceramics.



Ceramics workshops for school students in STM



Material processing workshops in STM



Educational programmes in Archeological Museum

The network enables students to create ceramics, thus acquiring knowledge in a creative way.



Workshops for teachers in STM



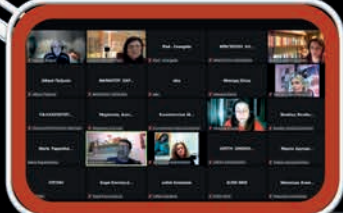
School groups work at school on ceramics



Online seminars for teachers



Presentation of school work in online event



Exploratory meetings for the needs of the educational community



Digital technologies and digital archives help us design a virtual exhibition which will enable online access and social media engagement.



School groups' ceramic inspirations are exhibited in both Museums

Under this framework, the Museum is building alliances and partnerships acting as facilitator to communicate and reclaim university's research creating a polyphonic space for critical democratic dialogue including as much parts of the society as possible.

Acknowledgements to co-organizers, educators and trainers, school groups, teachers and university students for contributing to the success of the network, the promotion of scientific research and to the dialogue with society.



5. SCIENCE CENTER IN THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM PROS & CONS

MACIEJ KLUZA & KATARZYNA ZIEBA

Keywords: *Krakow (Poland), Jagiellonian University, Museum education, Interactive exhibition, Scientific instruments*

Abstract

In 2000, the Jagiellonian University Museum (JUM) opened the first fully interactive exhibition in Poland. It was quite small in terms of the number of exhibits (45) as well as the size of them which was determined by the exhibition space available in the museum, in comparison to science centres which are currently in our country. Since that time several fully or partially interactive exhibitions have been presented in the Museum.

The poster will analyse the benefits and drawbacks of such types of exhibitions on the basis of the SWOT method (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). It will also illustrate how museum collections can be used as resources for creating interactive exhibits and how universities provide potential for related scientific cooperation.

Experience

Interactive exhibitions made in JUM: *Ancient and Modern Science* (2000), *Senses* (2005), *Everything... is the number* (2012), *Welcome to the Nanoworld* (2017).

Exhibitions on the history of science with interactive content: *Polish globes* (2006), *From Galileo's telescope to space observatories* (2009),

The development of geographical ideas in Poland (2014), *Under the guiding star of science* (2017), *Machinae Calculatoriae* (2019).

Analysis results

SWOT results are visible on the poster reproduction. Here we present some conclusions. Implemented ideas are as follows: use of interactive objects on traditional exhibitions, cooperation with scientists on the preparation of the exhibition, employing students as explainers, transforming exhibitions into travelling form to extend coverage, museum participation in science fairs.

Ideas to implement in the future: increase students' participation in the university program, possibility of student internship in the museum; engaging university specialists not only in the creation of exhibitions, but also in the accompanying program.

Contact information

Maciej Kluza, PhD & Katarzyna Zięba

Address: Jagiellonian University Museum,
Jagiellońska 15, 31-010 Kraków, Poland

Email: maciej.kluza@uj.edu.pl

Website: <https://maius.uj.edu.pl/>

SCIENCE CENTER IN THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM. PROS & CONS.

Maciej Kluza, Katarzyna Zięba

Jagiellonian University Museum, Krakow, Poland



Senses

- 60 experiments on human senses
- Physiology, Chemistry, Physics
- Opened in 2005



Wellcome to the Nanoworld

- 45 experiments
- Chemistry, Medicine, Physics
- Result of participatory project
- Opened in 2017

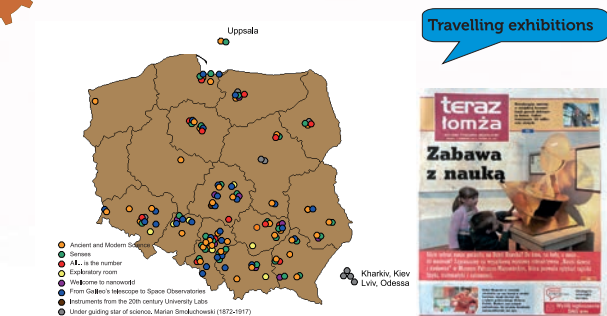
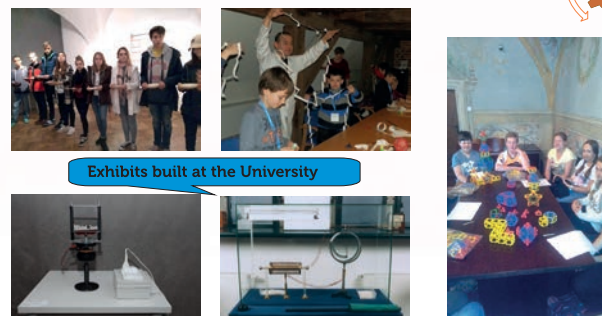
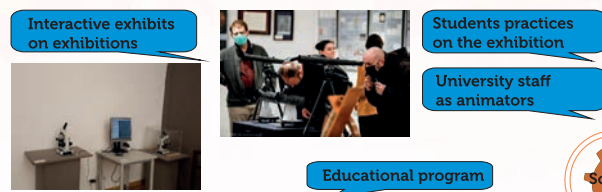
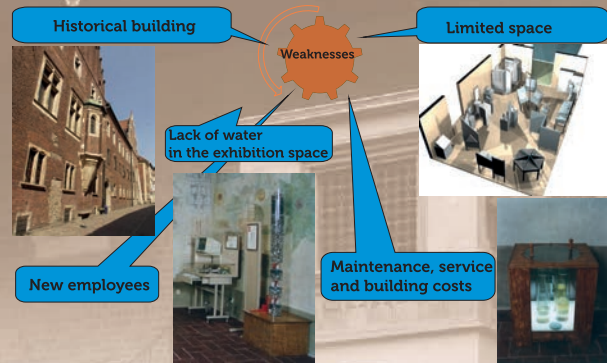
Ancient and Modern Science

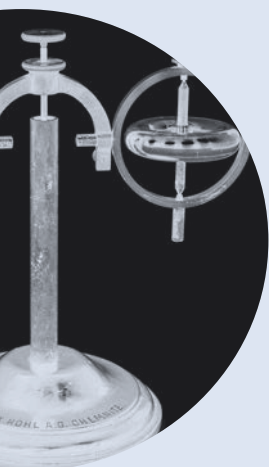
- 45 experiments
- Physics, Mathematics, Astronomy
- Opened in 2000
- Links to collection



All ... is the number

- 50 experiments
- Focus on applied math
- Mathematics, Geography, Physics
- Use of original instruments
- Opened in 2005





VI. WRAP-UP TALK:
CHALLENGES OF THE PAST, RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TODAY
STEPH SCHOLTEN

**VI. WRAP-UP TALK:
“CHALLENGES OF THE PAST,
RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TODAY”**



VI. WRAP-UP TALK: “CHALLENGES OF THE PAST, RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TODAY”

STEPH SCHOLTEN

Text delivered at the closure on Friday 8 July 2022 in Leuven

Dear colleagues, these have been remarkably happy and sad days. Happy because Nathalie Nyst and her team, and all her colleagues from Brussels, Leuven, Mons and Ghent have put this week-long, travelling University Museum circus together, post-COVID.

It is the first proper get-together of our European university museum community since 2019 in Brno, and it has allowed for all kinds of things professional and recreational that you cannot do on ZOOM or Teams. Try sharing a plate of bitterballs or a Dame Blanche with 5 spoons virtually, and that was only yesterday. But on a more serious note, it has been fabulous to be in the same space with colleagues, to talk, discuss, share, compare, laugh and what not.

And at the same time, we shared the great concern of our colleagues from Antwerp that saw their collections threatened by a massive fire. A fire that resonated with earlier fires, like the ones in Leuven and Mons during the World Wars and –if we remember more recently– the Glasgow School of Art or the National Museum at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. And for all of us, but especially for our colleagues in Eastern Europe, the dark shadow of the war in Ukraine is hanging over our meeting. It makes one realise once more how important and vulnerable heritage in general is and the great responsibility we carry to care for the collections in our universities.

Without wanting to sound too gloomy, I feel I need to say that, despite all rhetoric about how the heritage inside and outside universities should contribute to a shared sense of history and identity, we see a still separated Belgium, we see the Russian invasion of the Ukraine or, maybe closer home for me, a disintegrating British democracy, Brexit and a Scottish independence referendum looming. Realistically, our histories and heritages are as often used to unite us as to drive us apart. This was implicitly or explicitly an important theme in quite a few talks in the past days.

But I am an optimist, or at least, I want to be one. And when I look at a place like Leuven, a university that will celebrate its 600 years anniversary in 2025, I see a place that has survived revolutions and world wars and still is one of the most celebrated universities in the world. And I see, going hand-in-hand, the retirement of trusted and long-time colleagues such as Geert van Paemel, with the emergence of an abundance of young, smart and dedicated colleagues. That gives hope for the future of our sector.

Turning to all that was presented in the past few days, I need to say first and foremost that I found almost every single presentation worth listening to. I appreciated the discipline of almost all presenters in keeping to time, as it shows respect to your fellow presenters and to us, as the audience of your peers.

The program was well-balanced and varied in all kinds of ways and allowed for all kinds of informal moments of networking. I will not be able or even try to recap all that was presented, you can find the book off abstracts on the conference website [<https://universeum2022.be/programme/>], but there are a couple of threads and trends that I would like to try to pull out and that we maybe can discuss further on the back of this talk.

I think I saw a couple of novelties for UNIVERSEUM if you consider what we normally do as the default position of university museums, serving our academic communities in research and teaching, the public image of our universities as well as wider audiences outside the university.

My starting point is always that for me the purpose of collections is use, as I've said quite a few times before and I repeat here once again that we shouldn't be keeping stuff without considering what it can be used for, how it can be activated, for whom it is relevant. Use means all the traditional purposes I just described and that we've discussed for many years, but there are some fundamental changes in both the why and the how we work with collections and use our position. The how is relatively straightforward I would say, being the massive shift to "digital/online" forced on us by the pandemic. I use digital/online here as a catch phrase for all the new technologies we've embraced in recent times. I think we all realise that digital/online is here to stay and has great innovative potential, some of which we have already been able to tap into, but there still is very much to learn about what works, what is meaningful, what academic and other our audiences really need, etc. It is inevitable that our organisations will need to change to be able to give the digital/online the prominent position

it should have vis-à-vis the physical collections and program we are so used to deliver.

But we should be very much aware of digital poverty is a real thing for many people and that even the shift to digital once more favours the haves over the have nots. As the Dutch would say: "the devil always shits on the biggest pile".

The other change in how we do things is in that we are trying to take a more structured approach to Object Based Teaching and Learning, or OBTL, as the new acronym goes. Ideally developing new methodologies, but at least to put together a reservoir of best practices that we can use and promote as a valuable addition to other successful strategies for teaching and learning in universities.

A last, but major change in how we do things is the recognition that we need to be accountable, that maybe we should even pursue forms of radical transparency, e.g., about the provenances of objects and collections, but most explicitly in recognising that we work in power structures that are not equitable. I think that there is a general realisation during this conference that we need to change the structures and the practices and processes we work with. We may not yet know how to do that, and it is probably fair to say that most of us not yet fully understand how fundamental a change is necessary, but major change is going to happen. This is not an easy thing. As we have learned in Glasgow: No change without discomfort.

All these changes require us to be aware of the importance of the language we use to talk about the things that we do and the collections we care for. Are human remains things or past people? (And



do we really think it is a good idea to make fridge magnets of anatomical models?) Some of the change is about prioritising audiences or changing recruitment practices. And all of it requires a fresh look at the collections we work with.

All these changes come about because we are reframing the fundamental question of WHY we do the things that we do and that changes a lot, if not everything. So the new element in “my” grid, and I don’t yet know how to represent it, is that we are explicitly formulating that we need to contribute to forms of social justice. We’ve heard colleagues speak about the need to develop critical citizenship, we’ve heard a massive amount about decolonisation, framed in a range of different ways. We’ve spoken about restitution and repatriation, about rehumanising collections, about the need for more diversity and inclusivity to counterbalance the whiteness of our sector, the list goes on.

We have heard how objects can serve as windows into a difficult past and how no society is sustainable without acknowledging its past. And we’ve heard a lot about the emotional labour and the discomfort that comes with it. We are slowly but surely acknowledging how specifically university collections are connected to colonial projects: organising expeditions on the back of colonial power, extracting resources, knowledge and people (through enslavement, forced labour), and excluding local and other knowledge and experience. We realise that we need to bring other people’s stories into our incredibly white rooms, but how do we listen, how do we build trust, how do we negotiate power relations?

How do we publicly recognise that the deep history we often celebrate in our universities also means

that there is a lot there that needs critical deconstruction: the processes of knowledge creation, the lack of multiple perspectives, the university’s complicity in the colonial past, etc.

I personally like the way new university museums such as Forum Wissen and GUM move away from celebrating only the success stories of our alma maters and pay so much attention to the essentially human endeavour that knowledge creation is, biased, flawed, and with many failures, but also that it can be a robust, be it sometime serendipitous, framework to come to important innovations.

Maybe one last strand to pick out, and I realise I am not doing the full richness of these past days justice, is how we balance this radical transparency with the limitations that we have often created. We spoke e.g., about medical ethics and patient data, intellectual property rights and copyright, lack of consent. How can we retribute esteem, and dignity?

If I look back at the last UNIVERSEUM conference in Brno in 2019, where I also had the honour to do a wrap up, we, as a sector, have shifted considerably, but as many of us have said: we are still only at the start of a long process and we have barely started to scratch the surface. To me that is encouragement to move further down this path, that we should aspire to be agents of change, so to speak.

I think I must leave it at that and I am happy to hear your thoughts. Thank you all for being part of this.

Steph Scholten is the director of Hunterian, University of Glasgow, Scotland (UK).



FINAL WORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

LAURA BROWN, WIDAD GHAILAN NAHABI, DÉBORA LAURENT, NINE LEROY,
CAROLINE MICHALLE & PHAEDRA VANTOMME

126

FINAL WORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



FINAL WORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

LAURA BROWN, WIDAD GHAILAN NAHABI, DÉBORA LAURENT, NINE LEROY,
CAROLINE MICHALLE & PHAEDRA VANTOMME

The publication of the conference proceedings is the result of a long process that started a year ago. Indeed, three of us took part in the organisation of the Universeum Conference in 2022. This preparation allowed us to acquire the necessary tools for the planning of inter-university and international conferences.

Thanks to this great experience and the intellectual and cultural enrichment that the contribution of each participant allowed, and moreover, with the support of three new students, we decided to continue this above all human adventure, by materialising it through the publication of a book. Another learning path then began, that of publishing. Our idea was to compose a book containing the texts of the speeches given at the conference, ensuring that the scientific quality was combined with a literary quality. We also wanted to give Belgium, the host country of the conference, a place of honour in this volume, by presenting the various museums and collections of Belgian universities that actively participated, either by hosting a session or by presenting a paper.

We started this project by defining guidelines, which were sent out at the same time as the call for papers to all conference participants. Once the texts were received, we set up and solicited a scientific committee, whose members were responsible, in pairs, for the proofreading of the articles in order to ensure their good quality. These reviews enabled some authors to improve the scientific quality of their text. Problems with referencing, language and relevance were thus avoided as far as possible.

Once the final versions were assembled, we re-read them and had them proofread by Nicole Gesché-Koning and Nathalie Nyst in order to ensure as much as possible their overall coherence and the quality of the language. Finally, we entrusted the layout of these Proceedings to a graphic designer before having them printed. The culmination of our project will be the presentation of this publication at the next Universeum conference in 2023, which will take place in Wrocław, Poland.

The steps we have just described in a few lines have not, however, taken place without various difficulties. First of all, collecting the texts and having to proofread them piecemeal demanded impeccable organisation. Added to this were everyone's busy schedules and sporadic, but very real, communication difficulties. Secondly, the search for funding to carry out our project was a real challenge. Without money, there would be no printed version and no presentation in Poland. So this project was a real challenge, which confronted us with the reality of publishing a printed book.

For their help, kindness and patience, we would like to thank in particular Nathalie Nyst, without whom this project would not have seen the light of day, and Nicole Gesché-Koning who understood the importance of this publication for us. We would also like to thank the members of the scientific committee and reviewers, Hugues Dreyssé, Nicole Gesché-Koning, Nathalie Nyst, Sébastien Soubiran, Martin Stricker and Geert Vanpaemel, who ensured the quality of this work.

We would also like to thank Universeum, the ULB Museums Network and KU Leuven for their financial support, which was essential for the realisation of this project. Finally, we would like to thank all the authors who contributed to the content of the proceedings of the Universeum 2022 conference, and who responded to our first concern: to offer a book that transmits knowledge and reflections.



TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

[Fig. 1] Three-tubed polarimeter, designed by J. De Puydt in Antwerp and made in by Schmidt & Hänsch in Berlin © Jesse Willems, University of Antwerp

[Fig. 2] 15th anniversary of the ULB Museum's Network, Maison des Arts © J.Christophe

[Fig. 3] "Chaos" Exposition, GUM © Martin Corlazzoli

[Fig. 4] Paleontological collections © KUL

[Fig. 5] Aquarium-Museum, ULG © TILT ULG DR

[Fig. 6] Entry of Musée L. © A.Delsoir Photography

[Fig. 7] Wanka's Gyroscope, Max Kohl, Germany, 1905 © Collection UMONS, Faculty of Engineering

[Fig. 8] Portrait of Sir John Chardin © History of Science Museum, University of Oxford, inv. no. 72661

[Fig. 9] The Chardin portrait in its current location at the HSM © History of Science Museum, University of Oxford

[Fig. 10] Detail of the Chardin portrait showing the black boy in the background © History of Science Museum, University of Oxford, inv. no. 72661

[Fig. 11] The main building of the Colonial College in Antwerp. The Congolese star can be found on the border of the balcony above the central entrance © Mieke Demolder 2022

[Fig. 12] Hallway on the 1st floor of the main building of the Colonial College. Along the wall African objects are displayed © Koninklijk Vriendenfonds van het UNIVOG (as printed in Schöller, Middelheim, p.13)

[Fig. 13] Wooden mask with raffia collar from the heritage collection of the Colonial College (provenance: Kuba), EO.1973.16.1, collection KMMA Tervuren – Photo: J.Van de Vyver, CC-BY 4.0

[Fig. 14] Portrait of Queen Isabel II, Paraninfo of the Complutense University of Madrid © University

[Fig. 15] Anna Hyatt Huntington, Sculpture of the Torchbearers, emblem of the Complutense University of Madrid © University

[Fig. 16] The Curating Discomfort intervention in the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow © The Hunterian, University of Glasgow

[Fig. 17] Part of the Re:collecting Empire exhibition at the Wardlaw Museum, University of St Andrews - Image courtesy of the Museums of the University of St Andrews

[Fig. 18] Museo de la Farmacia Hispana © Universidad Complutense de Madrid

[Fig. 19] Entomological collection © Universidad Complutense de Madrid

[Fig. 20] Complutense museum staff - Prepared by the author

[Fig. 21] Big Data analysis summary - Prepared by the author

[Fig. 22] Teacher and students working on the exhibit Nanogold - Photo: G.Zygier

[Fig. 23] Exhibit 'Nanogold' at the exhibition "Welcome at nanoworld"

[Fig. 24] Cycas © N.Nyst

[Fig. 25] Grass Snake © N.Nyst

[Fig. 26] Jar with reptiles © N.Nyst

[Fig. 27] Spiders © N.Nyst

[Fig. 28] General view of the MUCAES plan on the Vera campus © Fons d'art UPV

[Fig. 29] Students next to the MUCAES sculptures © Fons d'art UPV

[Fig. 30] Image of one of the guided tours © Fons d'art UPV

[Fig. 31] Practical activities on conservation © Fons d'art UPV

