

Museum

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Museums of Belgrade

museum

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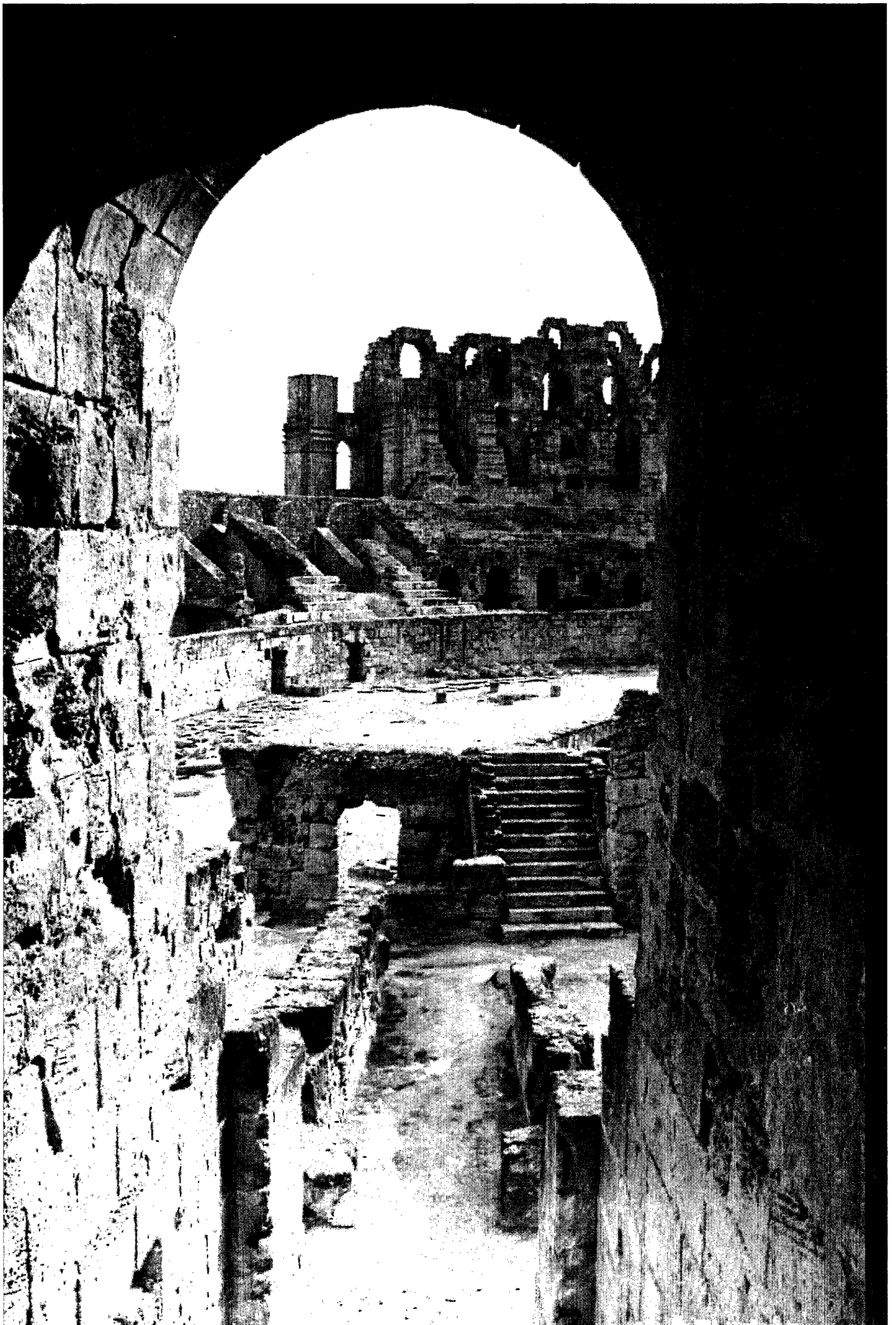
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FORUM OF IDEAS



An international responsibility: safeguarding the heritage. The International Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference of Unesco at its seventeenth session in 1972, provides for the first time a permanent legal, administrative and financial framework for the safeguard of sites which are of outstanding value for all mankind. Whether they be rare or representative examples of our planet's geological and biological history or the unique achievements which different cultures have bequeathed us throughout the ages, these sites, by virtue of their inscription on the World Heritage List, benefit from all the measures of protection provided for by the Convention.

In this issue . . .

Our photograph: The amphitheatre of El Jem in Tunisia, second in size only to the Colosseum in Rome, dates from the third century A.D. It stands thirty-six metres high, rising imposingly out of the flat desert sands. A typically Roman construction consisting of three series of sixty superposed arcades decorated laterally by Corinthian or composite columns, this monument could seat 35,000 people. Legend has it that in the seventh century, when the city of Thysdrus was under siege, the amphitheatre was a stronghold of Berber resistance to Caliph Othman; Kahena, Queen of the Aures, is said to have taken refuge behind its high walls. It survived almost intact till the end of the seventeenth century, when cannon fire directed against rebels sheltered within opened great breaches in the walls. Today, the monument has been entirely consolidated and the surrounding area fully cleared. The amphitheatre has thus regained its original height. A natural and archaeological park (including a small museum) will soon be created around it. [Photo: Unesco]

(Colour slides on the World Heritage List are under preparation. The first series will include forty-eight slides showing the sites on the List. It will be accompanied by a text on the Convention and contain descriptions of the sites. The series will cost approximately 40 F and will be available by June 1981. For further information please contact the Division of Cultural Heritage, Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris.)

This issue opens with three articles on museums and museum activities in Belgrade, as they were seen by delegates from all over the world who attended the twenty-first session of Unesco's General Conference, held in Yugoslavia's capital in September and October 1980. Readers will note that two of the articles focus on the why rather than the how, giving preference to the historical or social contexts of the museum objects concerned at the expense of museological principle or museographical detail.

The same emphasis is found in a long article inspired by last year's much-vaunted exhibition *Tuscany and the Florence of the Medici in Sixteenth-century Europe*. The author is neither a museum professional nor an art historian but a professor of the history of philosophy at the University of Rome. His text is not a description of this extraordinary cultural manifestation but a subtle evocation of the historical moment it brought to life, of the social, cultural and political threads of a brilliant age and the logic—is that not museology at its most fundamental level?—that governed the organization of the nine individual exhibitions.

We hope our readers will follow us in such occasional incursions into the realms of cultural history and the social sciences, disciplines that can clarify the import of the institution they serve. Of course, this issue does not entirely neglect more concrete aspects of museum life, such as those reported on in the articles concerning two young costume museums.

The arguments in the 'Opinion' column, put forward by a cultural historian from Western Samoa, are concerned with the broad outline of contemporary culture in the South Pacific, while the section on the 'Return and Restitution of Cultural Property' presents news and views of a subject that impinges on the professional life of many curators throughout the world. Co-operation between museums in this area is growing, and *Museum* hopes to present recent developments as regularly as possible.

Also new is the 'Forum of Ideas' section, which will be based on letters from readers. A French curator requested in 1980 that all articles dealing with new museums (or new developments in museums) should provide precise data on their costs, which can be compared. At our request he has suggested a breakdown of relevant costs, to be presented in the form of a grid. Whether or not the idea is taken up will depend on your expressions of interest, and your further suggestions. It is *your* response that will also decide the continuation of this section itself.

Museums of Belgrade

Virgin Pelagonitica (from Pelagonia), last quarter fourteenth century, tempera on wood (119.5×90.5×3.6 cm). Detail of a double-sided icon, a truly monumental piece, presenting the Virgin full of heavy forebodings, eyes clouded with grief and fixed on the distance as if seeing the future suffering of the child who plays all unsuspecting in her arms.

In September and October 1980 the museums of Belgrade threw open their doors to over 2,000 delegates, observers, conference personnel and journalists who attended the twenty-first session of Unesco's General Conference. The articles that follow evoke some of the museum life these visitors were able to see and enjoy. We hope to complete the picture with further articles in future issues on the handsome Museum of Modern Art, and on the Military Museum, which traces the history of Yugoslavia's struggle for national independence.



Art in medieval Serbia from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries

Desanka Milošević

Byzantium and the West, Latin rationalism and Greek mysticism, Christianity and Islam, maniera Graeca and maniera Latina merged in medieval Serbia, a synthesis that marked the originality and strength of Serbian art. Original in their expression, frescoes and icons were nevertheless subordinated to the aesthetic ideals of the Byzantine Church. These characteristics of a powerful and poignant style were revealed by this compact but rich exhibition, which presented all the techniques of artistic expression practised during the Middle Ages in Serbia.

This exhibition, which took place at the National Museum in Belgrade last autumn, sought to assemble and display the most valuable works which are normally kept in the treasuries of monasteries, in churches, in numerous museums or in their store-rooms. Frescoes removed from destroyed monasteries, icons, fine sculpture, artistic embroidery, wood-carvings, manuscripts, glass, jewellery, devotional objects and utensils made of silver, gold, precious stones and ceramics, made up the 200 exhibits displayed. Even they, however, could convey only an incomplete picture of the former splendour and wealth of Serbian art, created and accumulated at certain periods, savagely destroyed in others, especially during Turkish rule in the fifteenth century. Old biographies wax eloquent about the icons plated in gold and silver and decorated with pearls and precious stones, and the numerous valuables which Serbian kings and archbishops presented to Serbian monasteries for devotional purposes.¹ The lists of the valuables which the Serbian rulers deposited in the safe vaults of the Dubrovnik Republic in times of political insecurity or external danger also testify to this past splendour. The rich treasury and library of the Serbian monastery of Hilandar on Mount Athos hold many valuable and unusual specimens of old icons, embroidery and manuscript books—the gifts of Serbian kings, emperors and nobles, not to mention the best-known works of Serbian art which today are held abroad: an icon of Christ's napkin (thirteenth century) is in Laon Cathedral in France; a beautiful diptych with images of Christ and the Virgin and portraits of the donor Toma Preljubović and his wife turned up after 1386 at Cuenca Cathedral in Spain; a Virgin with John the Theologian and a vision of Isaiah (on the other side of the icon), from the beginning of the fifteenth century, at Sofia in Bulgaria; a Serbian psalter decorated with exceptionally numerous miniatures from the end of the fourteenth century is at Munich; the Radoslavljevo Gospel, with unusually painted portraits of the Evangelists, of 1429, is in the Public Library at Leningrad.

DESANKA MILOŠEVIĆ has been curator-adviser at the National Museum in Belgrade since 1951. Chief of the Department of Medieval Archaeology and Art from the Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries. Scientific research connected with problems of archaeology and iconography in medieval art includes: *The Last Judgement*, Recklinghausen, 1963; *Die Heiligen Serbiens*, Recklinghausen, 1968; 'Srbi Svetitelji', *Srbijak IV*, Belgrade, 1970; 'Iconographie de Saint Sava au Moyen Age', *Recueil des travaux du colloque international 'Sava Nemanjić-Saint Sava'*, Vol. I, Belgrade, 1979. One of the organizers of the exhibition *Serbian Medieval Art* in Rome, Venice and Berlin. Author of the exhibitions and the catalogues *Moravian Serbia—Men and Their Works*, Kruševac, 1971; *Serbian Painting from the twelfth to seventeenth centuries*, Prague, 1974.

1. In the lavish catalogue prepared for the exhibition the author explained: 'Artistic development depended, above all, on the social environment and on those who took an active part in it. Medieval Serbia did not have a powerful aristocracy; its nearest equivalents were the members of the ruling dynasty and the highest ranks of the clergy. Until 1321 these were the only people entitled to build churches and to commission the painting of frescoes. Their participation was twofold: it manifested itself first in the choice of artists who came from the best ateliers and workshops of Constantinople and Salonika and, secondly, in the creation of a definitely native historical and religious programme of frescoes which fitted well into the general iconography of the Christian Church. Portraits of the founders of monasteries, and of the highest ecclesiastic dignitaries—the archbishops, royal councils and coronations, the genealogical tree of the Njemanjići, along with representations of their deaths and the transference of their relics to other places—these were the new themes of Serbian iconography. Assistants and disciples also ... participated in the realization of that national programme; as artists

Representing the earliest style of Serbian icons, head of an angel, detail (24.5×29 cm) of a thirteenth-century fresco from the Church of the Holy Apostles at Peć. Museum of Kosovo, Priština. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



Dormition of the Virgin, fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, fresco (260×148 cm), detail. From the Church of St Nicholas at Palež. National Museum, Belgrade. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



The early frescoes

At the exhibition, the earliest period of Serbian sacred art (up to the mid-fifteenth century) was meagrely represented in proportion to its former wealth: a fresco of the prophets from Djurdjevi Stupovi of 1175; fragments of a fresco (early thirteenth century) from the Church of the Holy Apostles at Peć showing heads of angels; two unusual compositions: a fragment of *The Marriage at Cana* and *The Healing of the Blind Man* from the Church of the Mother of God, Ljevska (1220-30); the head of a saint from Gradac (1275); a *Dormition of the Virgin* from Palež (late fourteenth century). These and several other pieces could only hint at the monumental painting of that period, although they are sometimes the sole witnesses of its wealth. Icons from Ohrid, a Nativity and *The Descent of the Holy Ghost*, were exhibited merely as analogies with the Serbian icons of the period that have disappeared.²

Mid-fourteenth-century iconography was represented by *The Virgin Hodigitria* from Prizren, which, like others shown, marked a considerable departure from the Byzantine models in both iconographical type and manner of painting. In *The Baptism of Christ* a wealth of ideas, complexity of iconography, experienced, supple drawing and unusually fine, careful and generous modelling were magnificently combined. The *Archangel Gabriel* from the Monastery of Dečani is striking in monumental austerity.

'Fine sculpture'

The exhibition displayed many examples of what is termed 'fine sculpture'. These included recently discovered miniature icons with bronze reliefs which reproduce all the more significant types of the Virgin of Constantinople, Christ Pantocrator and SS. Prokopy, George, Basil and others. There was also a miniature icon of St Nicholas from Slavkovića in onyx, an extraordinarily fine piece of work (dated eleventh to thirteenth centuries) and the Holy Warriors from Markova Varoš (dated twelfth to fourteenth centuries), examples of this art, which has only begun to be properly studied. Remarkable for beauty of workmanship was a Virgin surrounded by prophets and saints from the monastery of Dečani, carved in horn, from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. From the same early period came a masterpiece of wood-carver's art: the sarcophagus of King Stefan Dečanski (c. 1338), whose geometrical and floral ornaments and images of a lioness and a panther are wrought with almost unsurpassable skill and composed with outstanding decorative effect. The best-known and most refined work of our antique art executed in relief is the Andreaški gate from the end of the fourteenth century. Its fine soft lines bring out the Virgin's stately elegance and almost intimate feeling of confusion.

in their own right they must have painted the less important parts of churches and it is there that their natural gifts, unencumbered by the burden of a thousand-year-old tradition and experience, found full expression. Those gifts are clearly discernible, like a fresh penetrating sound, throughout the long history of art. In the delicacy and refinement of warm and noble colour harmonies and rhythms of Byzantine metropolitan art, they were revealed most clearly in that lively, sometimes even strident tone, in the angular drawing, in the hard line, as well as in the general expressiveness of a work taken as a whole. Our prejudiced contemporary taste expects the icon to have the coating of ages, to be suffused with a golden yellow hue which dims the basic tones, the patina of silver, the mellowed gold, the washed-out stones and the faded background of representations originally in high relief. All this was painted in clear colours in the Middle Ages, and was brilliant, dazzling. It is admirers of romantic antiquities rather than art historians, especially conservationists, who stop to think today when confronted with the dilemma of whether to restore a dome to its original red colour, to stress the glittering gold on wood carvings and return the daring blue and red, so characteristic of our folklore, to the background of a relief or whether to leave things more or less in their present garb which shows the passing of time.'

2. Byzantine and Serbian art made the most powerful impression of unity in those media in which they interpenetrated and complemented each other: architecture; church interiors—frescoes, icons, furniture, candelabra and ecclesiastical attire; and liturgy. But this unity can hardly be conjured up today, for all the churches were stripped of their original icons, furniture, manuscripts, etc. Even frescoes were taken away or destroyed. It is only at the Monastery of Dečani that a few pieces were preserved (see below). At Ohrid in Macedonia, however, icons from the Church of St Clement show what contemporaneous Serbian icons must have looked like. They were painted by the same masters, Mihailo and Eutijije, who in 1295 executed the frescoes at the Church of St Mary Peribleptos and decorated many churches (including the painting of icons) for the Serbian King Milutin (1282-1321).

A precious tradition preserved and renewed

The Serbian state collapsed together with the collapse of the feudal social system, and in 1459 Serbia fell under Turkish rule. With the occupation came chaos, insecurity and migration. The Serbian princes and nobles fled to Srem in Hungary, where they raised new monasteries and, according to tradition, endowed them richly. The best-preserved is the monastery of Krušedol, where the iconostasis is dated 1509-12.

During the entire century that followed, the Serbian people rallied round a gathering together of spiritual strength. When the Patriarchy of Peć had won its independence (1557) and the Turkish administrative and economic systems had been consolidated, all the previously fettered energy suddenly broke out in an admirable series of outstanding works of art. The Patriarchy and the monastery of Dečani became veritable schools and nurseries of new talent. The Serbian exponents of that talent returned to the old models of fourteenth-century art, rejecting the new Italo-Cretan ideas but introducing innovations of their own inspiration. From contemporaneous Russian traditions they borrowed only certain decorative elements. Hence their art retained

A Macedonian analogy: *Nativity*, early fourteenth century, tempera on wood (44.5×17.3×2.8 cm) from the Church of St Mary Peribleptos at Ohrid; icon from the iconostasis. National Museum, Belgrade. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



Monumental austerity: *Archangel Gabriel*, c. 1350, tempera on wood (137×50×3.5 cm). Iconostasis from the Monastery of Dečani. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



In the fifteenth century Serbian artistic traditions were kept alive by the monasteries. The Apostles St Bartholomew and St Thomas, 1509-12, tempera on wood (93.2×68.5×3.3 cm), from the iconostasis at the Monastery of Krušedol. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



Sanctuary door with scene of Annunciation, mid-sixteenth century, tempera on wood (114×58×4 cm), from the Monastery of Dečani. Typical of Serbian painting in the sixteenth century: warmth, fine colouring and soft modelling. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]

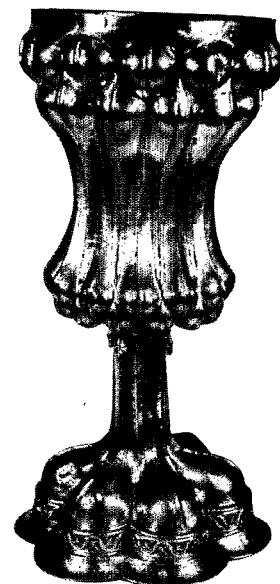
The Entry into Jerusalem, Longin, second half of sixteenth century, tempera on wood (35.5×22.2×2.6 cm). Iconostasis from the Monastery of Lomnica. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



Gospel from Karan, 1608, paper, 313 pages. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



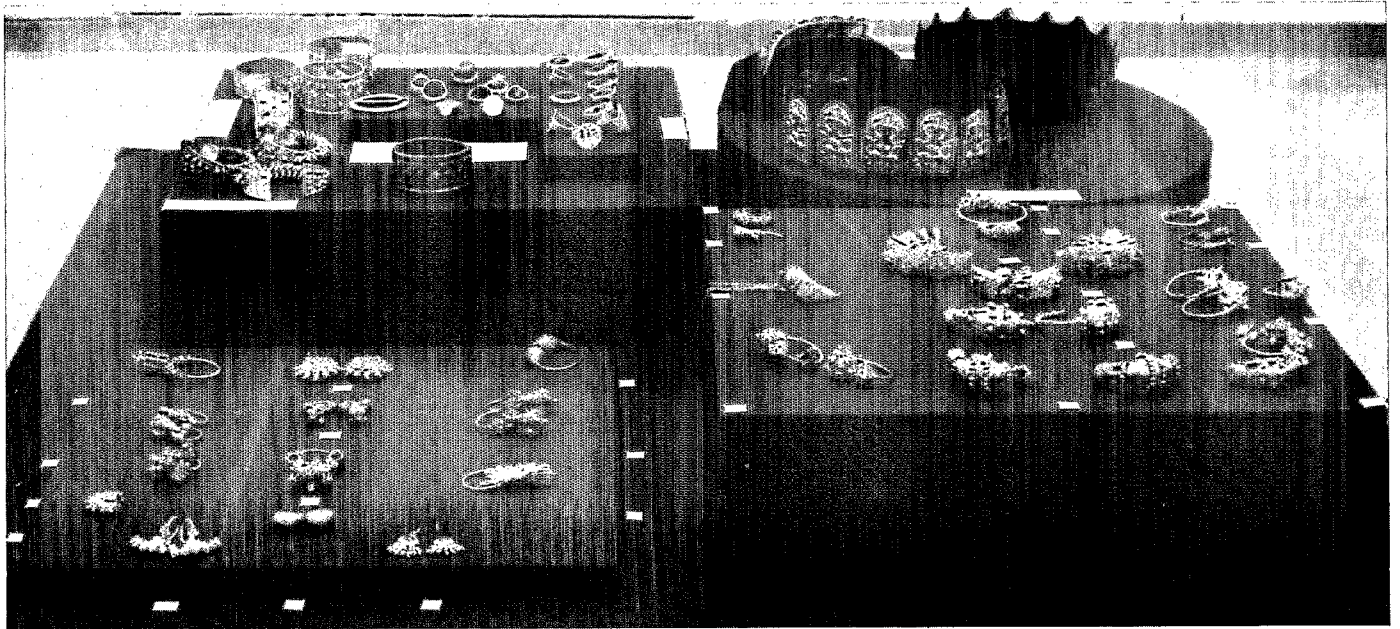
Chalice, late fifteenth century, silver and gold (27.5 cm high, base 13.5 cm). Excavated at Banja Monastery. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



a distinctive Serbian character. The purchasers of works of art during the period were most often craftsmen and peasants who had grown wealthy, monastic orders, the heads of such orders, and bishops; all of them, as a rule, knew enough to pick out the genuine, even the best, masters of their time and to entrust them with highly complex artistic tasks.

In the exhibition we attempted to show that this heroic time of slavery, insurrection and migration was extraordinarily creative. We therefore presented, among others, the master Longin, the most gifted and productive Serbian painter of the sixteenth century (he painted from 1563 to 1597). His icons of monumental size and powerful sculptural quality show great range of style and expression. The four great throne-icons of Christ with the Apostles, the Virgin with the Prophets, the Ascension of Christ and John the Theologian differ markedly from a series of other icons made for the monasteries of Velika Hoća, for Lomnica and for Piva, and from the festal icons for the chandelier at Dečani and the remarkable icon of Stefan Dečanski, showing scenes from his life. Art historians may wonder whether the four throne-icons, built on the contrasts of chiaroscuro, actually preceded the colouristically splendid icons of the second group or whether they did not perhaps originate in the artist's last years. The second group of icons is marked by an exquisite sense of colour which is striking in its strength, fullness and density, in the discovery of complementary tones, and above all in the soft, almost wavering, white lighting which imparts an unbelievable softness and gentleness to the faces. Longin also demonstrated a very refined talent for decorative effects, especially in painting ornaments on textiles and in certain three-dimensional details with which he embellished haloes and clothing.

Jewellery showcase at the exhibition.
[Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



Bracelet, mid-fourteenth century, silver, filigree and granulation.

Ring, fourteenth century, silver and gilt.
[Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]

Art historians wonder whether Longin could have had sufficient strength and inspiration late in his life to paint the most monumental and, indeed, the most brilliant work of the late sixteenth century: the great *Crucifixion of Dečani* with the scene of Christ being taken down from the cross. Painted with a lavish palette, it is a feast of bright and intense colours and of exquisitely and minutely drawn details, exceptional in the force of its artistic expression, and, by virtue of these very qualities, it remains isolated from all other paintings. Who was the unknown artist whom the unknown commissioners, Grujica, Andrejica, the Abbot of Dečani (identified as donors on the painting itself together with the date—1594) and his monks had discovered and asked to undertake such a tremendous task, hoping that he would produce a great work of art? This is a question we still cannot answer. The great anonymous artist of the *Crucifixion* did not paint any other work. Or perhaps no other icon in which we could recognize him has been preserved; we are inclined to believe this to be the case.

Later developments on the same path

In the seventeenth century the painter Georgije Mitrofanović introduced influences of Italo-Cretan art into both painting and iconography. His works were not on show at this exhibition, however, because they were at the exhibition *Painting in Medieval Serbia* then in Prague. Yet Longin's influence was not forgotten. The painter Mitrofan produced in 1635 two icons—a *Virgin with Prophets* and a *Christ with Apostles*—which are closer to Longin's painting than to that of Mitrofanović, while the painter Jovan, in the festal icons of the iconostasis at Piva, almost copied Longin's iconographical schemes. In the icons of St Nicholas and George the Martyr from Celebič (1641), he infused a certain charm and freshness of the naïve, a folkloristic feeling for colour and an almost engaging directness.

Fine handicrafts

Some fine examples of church embroidery of the late fourteenth century and the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and manuscripts of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, testified further to the wealth and beauty of the fine arts and the cultivated tastes of both illuminator and patron.

The specimens of artistic handicraft, devotional objects and utensils—the majority from the sixteenth century—were noteworthy for the synthesis of Gothic influence, traditional forms and Islamic motifs. The sumptuous specimens of jewellery exhibited also revealed Gothic elements. Ear-rings have always had a specific form in Serbia, and even when they were fashioned at Dubrovnik they were made *ad modum slavicum*. The exhibition featured many ceramic articles taken from recent archaeological digs, some begun only in 1980 (Gradac, Djurdjevi Stupovi, Kruševac, Stalać, etc.): cups, plates, bowls and jugs embellished with ornamentation executed in graphite technique, tinted in vivid colours and brilliantly glazed.

Outstanding among the glassware were a bottle and a glass with a sculptured lid (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries) the latter a unique specimen in present-day Europe, recently excavated at Kolovrat near Prijepolje.

Crucifixion, unknown sixteenth-century master, tempera on wood, gold, wood carving. Detail of the *Deposition* in the lower part. This was the greatest, most monumental work of the sixteenth century in Serbia. This detail illustrated the cover of the catalogue for the exhibition and provided a brilliant illustration for its poster. [Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]

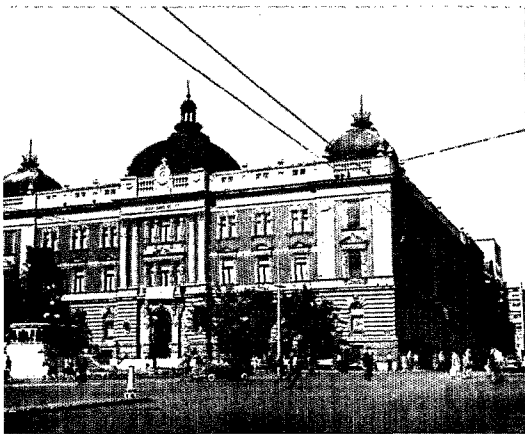
[Translated from Serbo-Croat]



The National Museum in Belgrade: a brief overview

The museographical history and organization of the National Museum at Belgrade were described very fully in Museum twenty-six years ago ('Reorganization of the National Museum, Belgrade', by Djordje Mano-Zissi, Museum, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 1955, pp. 50-63). The details of this custodian of the material culture and art of the Serbian nation have not changed. Nevertheless, we requested Desanka Milošević to complete her preceding article with a brief overview of the museum's collections as they are today, and of the conservation, excavation and popularization activities with which they are interlinked.

Desanka Milošević



NATIONAL MUSEUM, Belgrade, Façade.
[Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]

The National Museum (Narodni Muzej) is the oldest cultural institution, not only in Belgrade, but in the Socialist Republic of Serbia as a whole. It was founded in 1844, although the first data about the collection of antiquities go back to 1820. The museum was designed from the outset to be a comprehensive one. In the course of time, however, the Ethnographic Museum, the Theatre Museum and the Vuk and Dositej Museum were separated from it and became independent institutions. Recently, the Vuk and Dositej Museum was reabsorbed into the National Museum, together with the Gallery of Fresco Copies and Casts, and the so-called Lepenski Vir Museum, named after the well-known early Neolithic site.¹

The National Museum has grown into a vigorous institution which retains its comprehensive character and assiduously strives to restore, through the design of its displays and the presentation of the exhibits, the continuity of the civilizations, traditions and cultures that have succeeded one another since ancient times in this turbulent land of Serbia.

The museum preserves and exhibits material from the earliest Neolithic period and thereafter from Graeco-Roman times, the late classical period, the Middle Ages and the migration of peoples, and the full Middle Ages, to the art of modern times, up to the 1950s. The museum possesses an unusually rich and valuable numismatic collection and a collection of epigraphic monuments and medals which unfortunately cannot be put on display for lack of space. The same applies to sculpture, which has no separate display space of its own; however, the most important exhibits are on show in the rooms housing contemporary paintings.

The foreign-art collection forms a separate entity which at first sight seems remote from the conception of the museum as a whole. However, it is so harmoniously constituted that it does not disrupt the museum's unity but forms, in conjunction with the modern-art collection, a vivid analogy and comparison with those currents and tendencies that have manifested themselves in contemporary Serbian painting.

Since its foundation, the state has given the museum special—indeed exceptional—attention, first and foremost in the selection of its directors, who have always been persons of great prestige and often eminent scholars. They have been able to introduce new ideas and breathe new life into the work of the museum, and to awaken interest in scholarly research. As long ago as 1882 Mihailo Valtrović, an outstandingly important director, was the originator of a draft Act on Historical and Artistic Antiquities in Serbia, which revealed an unusually modern understanding and represented the first attempt to protect the cultural heritage. Mihailo Valtrović also fought for genuinely contempo-

1. Lepenski Vir is a prehistoric village site about 7,000 years old, discovered in 1965 during earthworks for the Djerdap dam and excavated by a team of archaeologists under the direction of Professor Dragoslav Srejović of the University of Belgrade. Eighty-five dwellings were discovered, the first examples in this part of Europe of a clear and definite architectural conception, together with numerous sculptures, which are displayed in the site museum. Threatened with submergence by the rising waters, the village of Lepenski Vir, like Abu Simbel, was transferred to higher ground, where the houses were reconstructed after thorough conservation treatment under the direction of Milka Canak-Medić and Milorad Medić, Head of the National Museum's Conservation Department.—Ed.

rary and modern ideas in museological science; he often said and wrote: 'The museum must cease to be a mere collecting point for antiquities discovered and donated at random, and become instead a living and useful institution.'

Conservation and restoration

As early as the nineteenth century, Valtrović grasped a principle which it has been possible to put into practice at the National Museum only recently: that is, that the museum should comprise, in addition to the collections, up-to-date, scientifically equipped workshops in which the assembled collections are preserved and restored. Only last year, the 136th since its foundation, were the hitherto small workshops in the National Museum equipped as a large, modern, conservation and restoration centre with three main divisions: conservation and restoration of paintings; conservation of metals; physical and chemical examination. A separate small division works on the conservation of ceramics and sculpture. The centre is staffed by experts trained at leading world centres and a team of skilled craftsmen. It has the capacity to deal with all conservation problems, even the most complicated.

Archaeology an outstanding contributor

The museum entered its 136th year of life and work enriched and augmented by gifts and archaeological digs. Archaeological excavations have been numerous and have yielded rich dividends for the museum. We may mention Lepenski Vir and the systematic emergency excavation of the rich Djerdap district made necessary by the erection of new hydro-electric power stations.¹ Excellent specimens of Neolithic art have been found at other sites executed in an almost modern stylization of form, which is a special characteristic of Neolithic civilization, especially in the area of Serbia. An extremely interesting 'work of art' is the Cart of Dupljaj, originating some 1,500 years before our era; it is unusual both in the idea it expresses and in its stylization of form (the god of fertility driving a cart pulled by ducks?).

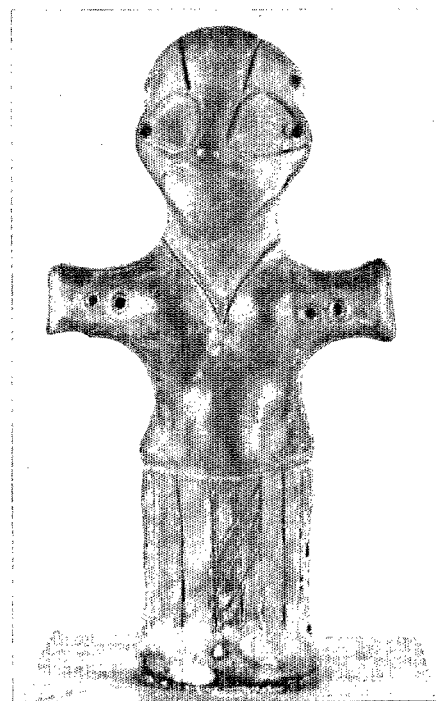
Unfortunately, the archaeological excavation of ancient and medieval towns, and especially of medieval settlements, is not being carried out on the requisite scale because of the vast sums that would be needed to conserve the items excavated.

Ancient Greece is reflected at the museum by relics, heavy gold ornaments, vases and amber figures. Items of note from the Roman period are the third copy known in the world of the *Athena Parthenos* of Phidias, silverware of the Emperor Licinius, newly discovered silver articles and a cameo. The early Christian or late classical period is represented by a portrait of the Emperor Constantine the Great. Notworthy for wealth and beauty of workmanship are Byzantine capitals, portions of altar screens and fragments of frescoes from Stobište (fifth century), where excavation is still in progress.

Slovene archaeology is a new discipline in this country. Digs have recently been carried out at many burial grounds. But we are a long way behind our nearest neighbours; there is, however, very little written information about that period extant.

The collection from the late Middle Ages (twelfth to seventeenth centuries) includes frescoes, icons, manuscript books, artistic embroidery, ceramics, glass and jewellery. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century collections belong to the department of Recent Serbian Art, a school of painting in our country which followed all artistic trends in European painting, some with a greater and some with a lesser time-lag. The art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly that of the inter-war period, features the works of a series of gifted painters who have drawn their knowledge and inspiration from the Paris school. We would single out for special mention the painter Nadežda Petrović, who was the most distinguished representative of the Impressionist style in Serbia, whose work at the same time exhibits a powerful expressionism.

Statuette from Vinča, c. 3000 B.C.
[Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



Statuette, c. 3000 B.C.
[Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]

The foreign art collection is noteworthy for its valuable canvasses and pastels by French Impressionist masters such as Pissarro, Degas, Renoir and Monet.

The museum has its 'popularization' centre, in which there is a specialized section for work with schoolchildren. An exhibition entitled *Springtime in the Plastic Arts* is organized annually, at which prizes are awarded for the best artistic achievements. On the same occasion a competition in knowledge of the museum's history and of a specified period in the history of art is held for young people.

The museum is particularly open to exchanges with other countries and civilizations, both to learn about them and acquaint them in turn with the cultural heritage and art of our own people.

The museum has hosted many exhibitions: from Angola, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, the German Democratic Republic, Iraq (the art of Mesopotamia), Mexico, Peru, and the USSR. It has enjoyed the hospitality of an even larger number of countries for its exhibitions, the best-known among these being *Old Serbian Art* (shown at Rome, Venice, Berlin and Prague); *Neolithic Art* (Prague, Paris, Moscow, Tbilisi and elsewhere) and *Illyrian Treasure* (London, Birmingham, Sheffield and Warsaw).

The museum issues its own regular publication, *Zbornik Narodnog Muzeja* (Annals of the National Museum); it also publishes monographs on specific monuments or subjects, catalogues of the collections, and catalogues of the exhibitions at which they are shown.

[Translated from Serbo-Croat]



Ceramic plate, fourteenth–fifteenth centuries.
[Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]

Show-cases in the neolithic section.
[Photo: National Museum, Belgrade.]



In the heart of Serbia: a show-case of African art

The Museum of African Art

All those who have contributed to the creation and upkeep of this museum must be congratulated. They have brought alive in this Yugoslav soil a part of Africa, of that profound Africa so long unrecognized.¹

Surrounded by the peaceful atmosphere and parks of Topčidersko hill, one of Belgrade's loveliest residential areas, the Museum of African Art brings distant rhythms alive in the heart of Serbia. The museum grew out of the collection of African art donated to the City of Belgrade by Veda Zagorać-Pečar and her husband, Dr Zdravko Pečar. During extensive travels and periods of residence abroad (particularly in West Africa) these two distinguished Yugoslav journalists, writers and later diplomats devoted considerable energy, enthusiasm and knowledge to building up, during their free time, a most impressive collection of authentic works of African art. The museum's collection today contains over 1,200 pieces from the following countries and cultures: Benin, the United Republic of Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo and Upper Volta; Ashanti, Baga, Bamana, Baule, Bobo, Dan, Dogon, Fon, Gere, Kissi, Malinke, Mosi, Senufo and Yoruba.

Other Yugoslav museums, particularly the ethnographic museums of Zagreb and Ljubljana, display works from non-European countries. But the Museum of African Art in Belgrade is the first and only museum in Yugoslavia devoted exclusively to the national cultures and arts of the African continent. In size and value, the collection is considered by many to rank among the most important European and world collections. Cult, ritual, decorative and household objects, pieces with no purpose except artistic expression, bronzes, ceramics, sculptured wood, and stone carvings make up this collection of ancestor figures, garments and hangings, masks, musical instruments, pottery, tools, weapons, etc. Of particular value are 450 Akan bronze miniature weights used for measuring gold dust.

A specially programmed building

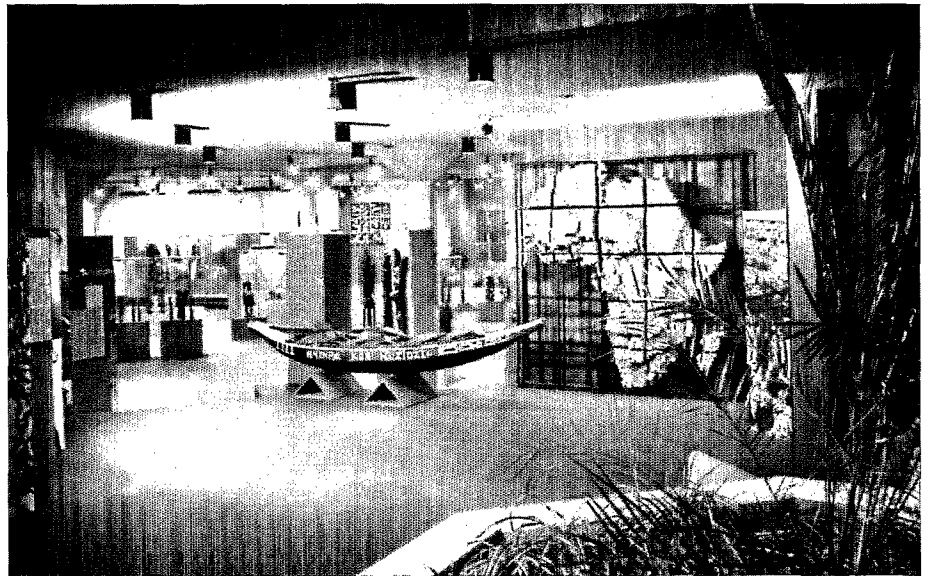
The museum building was designed and built especially to house this collection. It was commissioned by the Belgrade Municipal Assembly and designed by the Yugoslav architect Slobodan Ilić. The design specifications were based on modern museum requirements and the concept and plans envisaged for the museum. In functional and aesthetic terms, the completed structure meets in full the specifications set. The museum building is a welcome and discreet addition to this wooded area of the Yugoslav capital, and its interior and technical facilities are admirably suited to the display and research functions of the museum. The structure itself is of cement and rests somewhat below ground level. Asymmetry and curved surfaces highlight the exterior, with a tended lawn covering the roof, on which raised, round skylights provide daytime illumination for the exhibition areas below. This unassuming building

Jelena Arandjelović-Lazić

JELENA ARANDJELOVIĆ-LAZIĆ was born in 1930 in Sombor, Autonomous Province of Voivodina. Received her degree in Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, 1953. Belgrade Ethnographic Museum, 1954-77, first as curator and later director of the Department for Ethnographic Studies. Carried out research on nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia and later on non-European ethnology. Numerous publications including ten works on non-European, and especially African, art. Catalogues: *The Museum of African Art* (1977), *West African Bronzes* (1979), *Modern Art of Ghana* (1980). Has organized many exhibitions in Yugoslavia and prepared two important exhibitions of Yugoslav folk art in the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom. Appointed first director of the Museum of African Art in Belgrade in May 1977.

1. Comment in the visitors' book by Unesco's Director-General, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, after his first visit to the museum on 9 October 1977.

MUZEJ AFRICKE UMETNOSTI, Belgrade. The Entrance Hall looking towards the Main Exhibition Hall.
[Photo: V. Popović.]

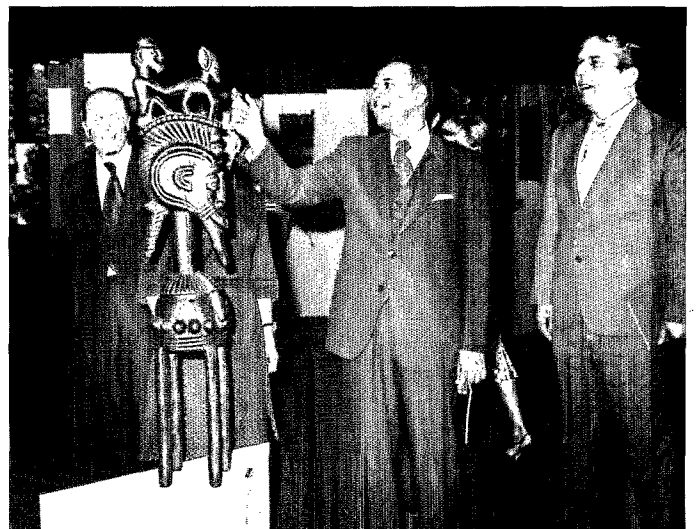


blends with its setting and covers a total area of 1,000 square metres. There are 600 square metres of exhibition space and all the facilities necessary to enable the effective functioning of the museum. Space has been made available for preservation work, storage, study and research, and administrative and maintenance services, and the museum has its own library.

A comfortable and attractive atmosphere, it is generally agreed, distinguishes the exhibit areas of the museum. The entrance hall is on two levels. On entering the building, a second glass wall and indoor plants establish a unity between the museum's outdoor setting and its interior. A large outline map of the African continent greets the visitor on the lower level of the entrance hall. The map is made from different kinds of African wood. Informative panels and photographs guide the visitor towards the main exhibition hall whose entrance is marked by an authentic fishing boat and a notice in brightly coloured large letters in the Akan language which reads: 'No man can survive alone'. The permanent exhibition is in the main hall. Behind the exhibition hall and connecting with it is a smaller room for special exhibits or illustrated lectures. The pieces are displayed uncovered or in cases taking the form of upright triangular prisms, but they are always presented at eye-level. A great deal of work went into identifying and classifying the pieces of the original collection and selecting those for the permanent exhibition. Most of the objects were acquired without thorough investigation of their background; so documentation as to their origin and use was incomplete. These gaps have now been filled. Eight hundred pieces were selected for the permanent exhibition, and they have been grouped by stylistic features and ethnic origin. Each

A view from the museum garden.
[Photo: B. Kosić.]

Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco, visiting the museum during the twenty-first session of the General Conference of Unesco in Belgrade (September-October 1980).
[Photo: Museum of African Art, Belgrade.]



display group is accompanied by detailed information provided in descriptive statements and regional maps. Each individual object is identified separately with a short paragraph to explain its significance and function. All information is given in both Serbo-Croat and English.

From the four grandiose 'Toguna' columns to musical instruments and a selection of weapons, the visitor passes through or by the principal groups of the most valuable artistic cult, ritual and other pieces of this collection, savouring this close contact with cultural values of great significance to the whole of mankind. The design and layout of the permanent exhibition were conceived as a complement to the planning of the building. The architects Saveta Mašić and Slobodan Mašić were responsible for the successful presentation of this permanent exhibition: not only the original layout but also show-case design, the overall interior conception and use of colour are to their credit and in harmony with the aesthetics of African art.

From its very first day, the Museum of African Art has been one of the most heavily visited in Belgrade despite its location relatively far from the centre of the city. This first authentic presentation of the peoples, life and art of Africa directly accessible to Belgraders and others attracts large numbers of people from all walks of life. People from other parts of Yugoslavia, often in Belgrade for only a day, are frequent visitors. The museum receives an important number of group visits, young people being its most frequent guests. Some 45,000 visitors have passed through the museum in its first two and a half years.

Projects

The museum sees its future along three principal lines of activity: collection and display; research and study; public education.

Acquisition

A planned programme to round out the museum collection will make acquisitions through purchases, exchanges and gifts, both within Yugoslavia and in Africa. Veda and Zdravko Pečar intend to donate further works collected by them, and the museum will select pieces of value from among those offered as gifts by other Yugoslav collectors. The museum maintains extensive contacts with African museums and is discussing the acquisition of works of interest to it with those museums that have expressed a readiness to assist through gifts.

Research and documentation

This plan of systematic acquisition will require field research in the various African countries as well as the study of collections of African and European museums. The Museum of African Art intends to build a young staff of its own for these purposes, drawing from students already specializing in the different areas of African history, culture and art.

Particular attention is being given to completing modern museum documentation on the entire collection. Work is actively under way at the museum on compiling inventory data, cataloguing for the main file and supplementary indexes, adding to the photo files, etc.

To complete our documentation and for detailed studies of the objects already contained in our collection, special research studies, literature searches and consultations with African experts will also be necessary. The museum envisages as part of its co-operation with museums in Africa exchanges of information and invitations to African experts to work with us at the museum on specific problems. Ties have been built up with museums, institutes and universities in Africa, foremost among them being the national museums of Ghana and Nigeria and the African Cultural Institute at Dakar.

African art is closely related to the social and religious structures of the African people. Aside from their aesthetic features, African works of art embody complex social values and symbolisms linked to the history and myth-



Exhibits from Mali in the permanent exhibition.

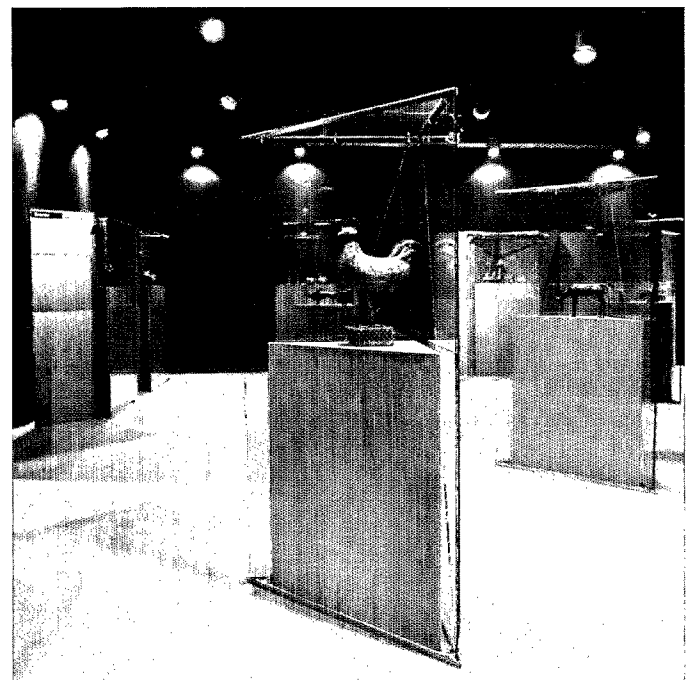
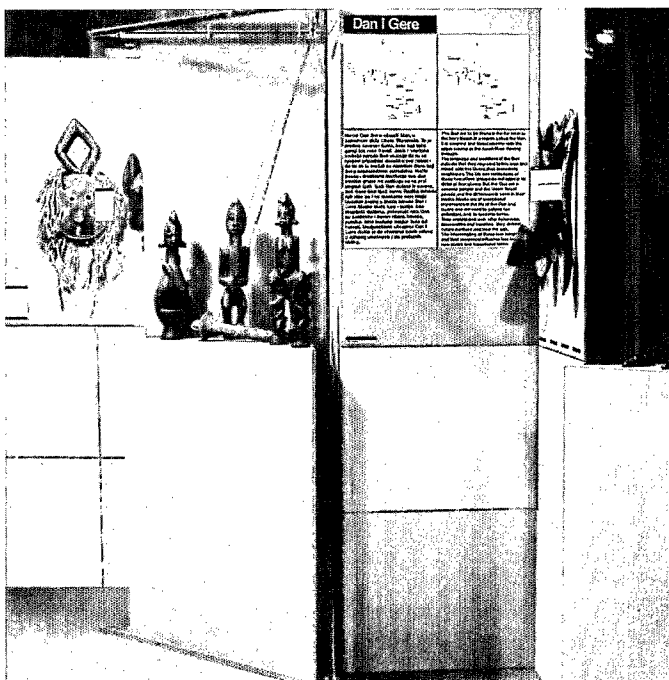
[Photo: V. Popović.]

Descriptive statements and maps accompany each display group of the permanent exhibition.

[Photo: V. Popović.]

Bronze sculptures in the smaller exhibition room with Benin bronze cock, Nigeria, in the foreground.

[Photo: V. Popović.]



A view of the permanent exhibition with the Senufo wood-sculpture bird, Ivory Coast, in the foreground.
[Photo: V. Popović.]



A view of the permanent exhibition with entrance to the smaller exhibition room in the background.
[Photo: V. Popović.]



ology of the African peoples. Understanding and explaining the role and value of individual works requires solid knowledge of the historical and economic conditions under which they came into being. The museum plans to cover all the stages of research and study, from the collection and classification of information to the publication of results and conclusions.

Conservation

Most objects have undergone preventive and protective treatment. There still remain pieces, however, of both wood and bronze that have not received adequate treatment. This is a problem of primary importance, especially with regard to wooden objects. Temperature and humidity at the museum are not always the most suitable, so constant checks must be made, treatment repeated when necessary and, above all, material always handled correctly.

Public education

The museum organizes special exhibits which are also taken on tour throughout Yugoslavia. Drawing from the material in its own collection, the museum prepares special exhibits in depth or on specific topics and also makes changes and additions to the permanent exhibition. The museum receives and organizes visiting exhibitions from other institutions and is especially satisfied when this can be done as part of Yugoslavia's cultural co-operation with the countries of Africa.

The museum works actively with schools of all types and levels. Its programme includes group visits with guided tours of the permanent collection. Illustrated lectures using slides or filmed material are also given for school groups, or arranged for other visiting groups, specialists or broader circles of people whose work is related to the arts or who are interested in art as a basic cultural and social phenomenon.

The museum is to offer special programmes to provide background information and a preliminary knowledge of Africa for those preparing to visit or work there. The museum has also organized a number of literary evenings at which prominent names from the theatre world have recited the poetry of various African nations. The museum library, finally, is gradually becoming Belgrade's centre for literature on Africa and is serving a broadening circle of special-interest readers, including researchers from other institutions.

[Translated from Serbo-Croat]

Museums and the ethnographic heritage of the Yugoslav peoples

Tatjana Zec

A presentation of Yugoslav folk art for the international community

A special exhibition, *Yugoslav Folk Art*, was organized by the Belgrade Ethnographical Museum, in co-operation with museums in other Yugoslav republics, on the occasion of the twenty-first session of the General Conference of Unesco. The exhibition was organized with a view to acquainting the numerous visitors from various parts of the world with certain aspects of the rich cultural heritage of the Yugoslav peoples. The contribution made by the ethnographical museums to this event made it possible to present a selection of folk-art treasures of outstanding technical and artistic interest. This accounts for the considerable enthusiasm shown by the general public in Yugoslavia for the exhibition, which brought together, for the first time in many years, some of the finest specimens and art objects of the traditional culture of all the Yugoslav peoples.

Folk art is a major aspect of our cultural heritage and bears all the characteristics of an authentic art-form. Its components are of various origins, expressing the ethnic and geographical identities of the Balkan ethnic groups. Numerous migrations and local developments throughout history have led to a wealth of forms, the sheer variety of which is rarely found.

Exhibitions of folk art have always been catered for separately in the programmes of ethnological museums. The very diversity of the aspects of this theme has led to a variety of conceptual approaches, ranging from a straightforward presentation of the various art-forms to more elaborate interpretations of the theme.

The approach adopted for our most recent exhibition was to classify objects of outstanding artistic value according to centres of specific cultural and historical interest. The main criterion used for determining the various cultural areas (Alpine, Pannonian, Dinaric, Mediterranean and central Balkan areas) was based on shared ways of life, together with socio-historical similarities between various parts of Yugoslavia. The several currents in the art-forms of certain cultural areas were accordingly assessed, first and foremost, in terms of economic development and the various cultural influences. Differences in the shapes of objects within a specific cultural area (which never corresponds to ethnic or political boundaries) are the result of ethnic and religious differences and this accounts for the preference which certain communities have expressed for a particular conception of objects. The exhibition therefore highlights the influence of economic development on the various features of figurative folk art and the common genetic foundations of the creativity of the Yugoslav

TATJANA ZEC graduated from the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, in 1968. Joined Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade in 1974; curator for education since 1976. Has written short articles on different ethnographic and museological topics which have been both published and used in radio programmes. Also takes part in educational television programmes.

peoples, the specific ethnic characteristics and the various internal or external influences.

The architect and the designer (a painter) who were responsible for organizing the exhibition were faced with the difficult task of setting it up in a trade centre, which hardly meets even the most elementary requirements for an exhibition of museum objects. The spaciousness of the hall (1,600 square metres) and the use of light-weight display equipment, in horizontal and vertical display cases adapted to the nature of the objects, guided the overall approach. The result was a very original layout to the exhibition. In the presentation of the various objects, each of which is a work of art of considerable interest, special attention was paid to the relationships between various forms. The white backdrop to the show-cases highlighted the richness of the colours of the objects on display.

The exhibition was equipped with an audio-visual communications system (television sets, and film and slide shows) and was accompanied by a number of related events (lectures, concerts and folk-dancing). A very complete catalogue was prepared by the organizers. Entitled *Yugoslav Folk Art*, it contains explanatory texts by Yugoslav ethnographers and thirty-nine pages of photographs, including several colour plates.

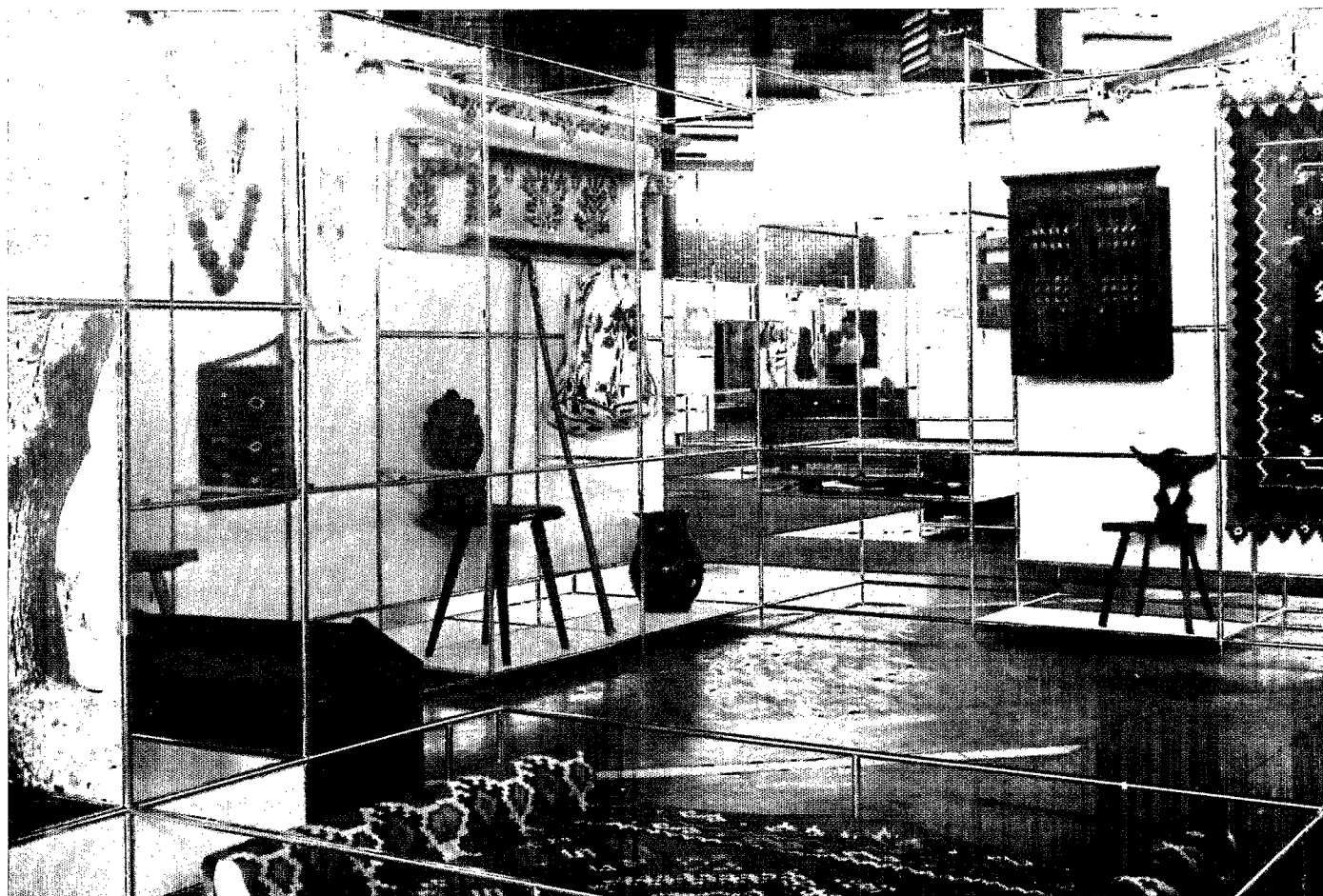
Ethnographical museums in Yugoslavia

The political, cultural and historical destiny of the southern Slavonic countries was shaped by their geographical location at the crossroads between Europe and the Middle East. Over the centuries, these lands have been the home of various peoples, the breeding-ground of major civilizations and the meeting-point of numerous migrations. A rich and varied cultural heritage has thus been handed down.

The lengthy rule of the Ottoman Empire, together with that of the Habsburg monarchy, were both marked by a long period of oppression and im-

Yugoslav Folk Art, exhibition organized for the twenty-first session of Unesco's General Conference, Belgrade, September-October 1980.

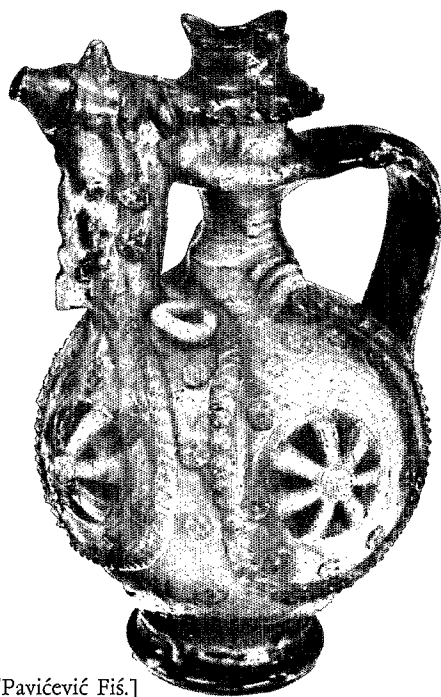
[Photo: Etnografski Muzej/Pavićević Fiš.]





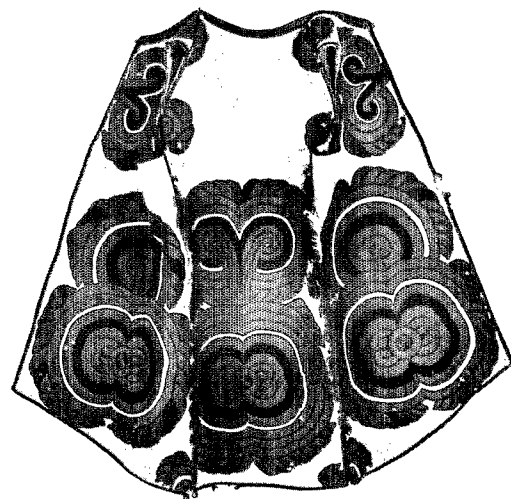
Apron, Bosnia.

[Photo: Etnografski Muzej/Pavićević Fiš.]



Ewer, Serbia.

[Photo: Etnografski Muzej/Pavićević Fiš.]



Short coat, woman's festive attire, Serbia.

[Photo: Etnografski Muzej/Pavićević Fiš.]

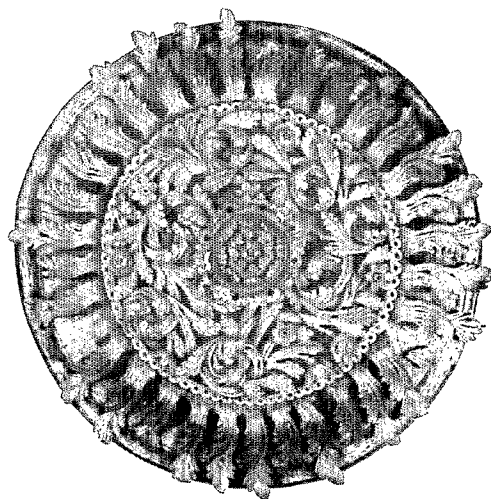
poverishment of cultural centres, such as cities, feudal estates and monasteries. The decline of the feudal states in the Balkans and their subsequent enslavement over several centuries gradually brought about a renaissance in autarkic rural life and renewed the traditional, previously dormant social structures of these peoples (tribal units, family co-operatives). The rural population, in so far as it constituted the only homogeneous social class until more recent social and historical times (the establishment of independent nation states in the nineteenth century), became the standard-bearer of a specific culture which developed unceasingly over the centuries in spite of occupation and slavery.

These historical conditions did much to retard the setting up of museums in the southern Slavonic states as compared with other parts of Europe. While the cultural heritage and the advent of scientific discoveries in the nineteenth century in most European countries reflected steady cultural development in a climate of national freedom, the process of laying the foundations of cultural and scientific activity was only in its infancy in the newly independent southern Slavonic states.

The first museums to have been founded in the nineteenth century brought together collections of objects from a very broad spectrum of fields, such as archaeology, history, art and ethnography. Their purpose was to illustrate national traditions and to foster the development of scientific research on a national basis. In actual fact, the study of local traditions and the valorization of national culture (all too often contested by the foreign occupying authorities) consolidated the struggle for a genuine national identity, which continued throughout the nineteenth century.

Born with the century

With the advent of the twentieth century came the establishment of the first ethnographical museums, often through a redistribution of ethnographical



Section of a wooden carved ceiling, Macedonia.

[Photo: Etnografski Muzej/Pavićević Fiš.]



Woman's hat, Voivodina.

[Photo: Etnografski Muzej/Pavićević Fiš.]



Shepherd's mug, Bosnia.

[Photo: Etnografski Muzej/Pavićević Fiš.]

collections belonging to the national museums or through the donation of larger private collections. These were also to contribute, through their ethnological and museological activities, to the achievement of new national objectives. The role played by the museums at the time corresponded perfectly to the aspirations of the middle classes to a cultural identity of their own and to the prevailing Romantic predilection for culture and history.

In the early decades, the ethnographical museums constituted collections of objects drawn essentially from all the southern Slavonic states, wishing thereby to emphasize the common foundations to the cultures of the southern Slavonic peoples. The concept of a common culture before 1918, when reunification took place, reflected the aspirations of the Yugoslav peoples to national unity. Subsequently, this notion was to become an obstacle to objective scientific research, as it overlooked the specific nature of each national culture, leading not only to scientific error but also to political conflicts.

While in the early years, immediately after the ethnographical museums were set up, the general approach was typified by the presentation of art treasures in the form of collections, experience led subsequently to an approach based on sociological considerations. By presenting certain collections merely as classifications of art treasures, without any reference to socio-economic and cultural development, the ethnographical museums could not provide an accurate picture of either the ethnic development or the cultural and historical traditions of the peoples of Yugoslavia.

After 1945, however, suitable conditions for the development of all the national cultures of Yugoslavia were achieved at last and the museums of each republic and province were to become centres for the study and presentation of Yugoslav ethnic and cultural development.

In each republic, the acquisition of art treasures and related research activities mainly involve objects originating from these specific areas. Research on ethnic groups and ethno-geographical areas is also conducted on a similar, local basis and the museums publish the results of their activities in their own publications (*The Belgrade Ethnographical Museum Review*, *The Sarajevo Geographical Museum Review*, *The Skopje Ethnological Museum Review*, *The Slovenian Ethnographer* of Ljubljana, and so on).

The advent of new social theories, the growth of ethnographical and museological knowledge and changes in visual conceptions have given rise to new approaches to the presentation of traditional cultures. Over the last few decades, several permanent exhibitions have been organized (the Belgrade Ethnographical Museum, 1951; the Zagreb Ethnographical Museum, 1955; the Sarajevo Geographical Museum, 1974) which have each, through their technical and museological conceptions, innovated in the presentation of ethnographical material. By basing their presentation on either the geographical distribution of the ethnographical areas (the Zagreb Ethnological Museum) or on the specific ethnic peculiarities of the ethno-geographical areas (the Belgrade Ethnographical Museum), the museums have striven to highlight all the facets of national culture, stressing their dependence on the working environment. The foundations were accordingly laid for illustrating visually the dialectical relationships existing between the means of production, wealth and social structures.

Handicaps

The space devoted to display in the 1951 permanent exhibition at the Belgrade Ethnographical Museum, through want of adequate facilities, has gradually been reduced in favour of additional storage facilities.¹ Several other ethnographical museums in Yugoslavia have also been faced with a similar situation. There are permanent exhibitions at the Zagreb Ethnographical Museum, the Sarajevo Geographical Museum and the Skopje Ethnographical Museum, installed in buildings that are not altogether adapted to the needs of the museums. These, as in the case of the Belgrade Museum, often have facilities that do not correspond to elementary working requirements, such as

1. The collections and museographical conception of the museum as it used to be were described in an article by Verena Han, 'The new permanent exhibition at the Ethnography Museum of Belgrade', *Museum*, Vol. XV, No. 2, 1962, pp. 134-136.

adequate premises for thematic collections, permanent exhibitions, conservation workshops, research areas, and so on. This accounts for the fact that the ethnographical museums are not yet in a position to take full advantage of the development of modern museology and to satisfy the ever more demanding aspirations of contemporary society. They have accordingly focused their attention on specialized technical work involving the collection and preservation of museological material and on field work. The public is kept informed of their activities mainly through temporary thematic exhibitions. The frequency of these events (as many as ten a year) and the variety of aims and concepts they represent illustrate the firm intent on the part of the ethnographical museums to contribute actively to contemporary trends in the cultural life of the country. By the fundamental nature of their programmes, however, they can still be classified among traditional museums and not among those institutions that have successfully established channels of communication with the environment that is the subject of their activities. People today are more easily drawn towards other cultural activities, such as the theatre, the cinema and libraries, together with the many new and attractive types of media. This is a challenge which our museums still must meet.

[*Translated from Serbo-Croat*]



ETHNOGRAPHICAL MUSEUM, Belgrade,
General view.

[*Photo: Etnografski Muzej, Belgrade.*]

THE IMPORTANCE OF WEARING CLOTHES

Guatemalan textiles and costume—living folk traditions that have only recently come to be appreciated in the same terms as the architectural monuments of the country's past—are preserved and studied by a new museum that works directly with the communities concerned. In Portugal another new museum, created to preserve and display the fashions and fineries of several centuries, is attracting an ever-increasing number of keenly motivated visitors.

Textiles, dress and society at the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City

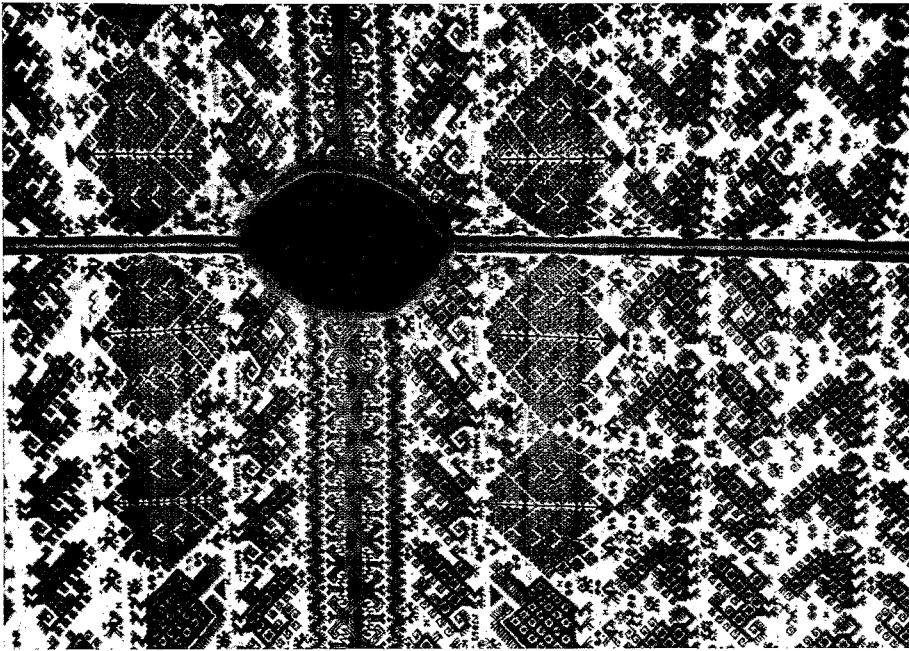
Cherri M. Pancake

CHERRI M. PANCAKE, born and educated in the United States of America, is curator of the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena. As author and lecturer on Guatemalan folk textiles she has focused her research on textile evolution as an indicator of social change, and the use of computers to analyse change in textile traditions. She is a research associate of the Center for Mesoamerican Regional Studies, where she is also on the editorial board of *Mesoamérica*, a scholarly journal devoted to the social and historical evolution of Central America. An active member of several international committees of ICOM, she at present serves as co-ordinator of the International Liaison Working Group on Ethnographic Textiles.

Few countries have as rich and dynamic a costume tradition as Guatemala. In the mountain areas of this small Central American republic, more than 150 communities maintain traditional dress and activities whose roots extend 2,500 years into the past, to the early days of the Mayan civilization. Today's textiles reflect the unique mixture of races and cultures that make up Guatemala's cultural identity.

Each Indian community has its own traditional language, life-style, clothing, handicrafts and sense of aesthetics; and each is isolated from the others, if not in a physical sense, then by equally real cultural barriers. This unusual situation developed in the last century of Spanish colonial rule, when the power of the crown diminished in outlying areas. Many villages attempted to return to the past, but local memories of the days of Indian sovereignty, 200 years before, were imperfect and inconsistent, so that each community evolved a distinctive interpretation of its heritage and culture.

Today, Guatemala presents a unique ethnographic laboratory for the study of cultural change and evolution. As communication and transportation facilities increase, how does the heightened cultural interchange affect community life-styles? Which traditions merge with those of other villages, which disappear, which continue unchanged? Even more intriguing are the possibilities for costume research, in particular the study of dress as an indicator of social attitude and cultural values. Within any one community, there is a spectrum of variation in the local costume in terms of coloration, pattern, style, and the manner in which textiles are worn or used. The changes may be minor in the case of varying economic class, age-group, or marital status. Quite major distinctions generally occur among garments which indicate



The extraordinarily rich and dynamic costume traditions of Guatemala's Mayan Indians are the primary focus of the Museo Ixchel's collections and exhibitions. [Photo: John M. Willemsen.]

membership in formal groups, particular ranks in the local hierarchy, and specific ceremonial roles.

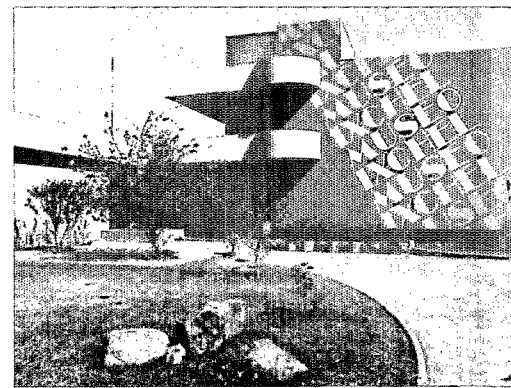
Like any dynamic tradition, Indian dress undergoes a constant process of modification, adaptation and refinement. As tastes and available materials change, new styles are slowly introduced, gain popularity, and eventually supplant the old. The result is a constant flux of dress variation reflecting the progressiveness or conservatism of the wearer. This 'attitude' spectrum coexists simultaneously with the variations due to status or role, and each to a great extent operates independently. Social parameters or codes governing dress are found to some degree in all societies, of course, but rarely are they as clearly defined and accessible for study as among Guatemala's Indians.

The extraordinary richness of these traditions inspired the founding of a museum which would explore in depth the relationship of dress to Indian society, and through this relationship study the change and development of the culture as a whole. The Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena (Ixchel Museum of Indigenous Costume) documents and preserves costume items, not only for their aesthetic and historical importance, but also as expressions of individual and cultural values.

Establishing the museum

The idea of the Museo del Traje Indígena began inconspicuously enough with a handful of Guatemalans who had become fascinated with the costume traditions of the Indian communities. In the mid-1960s, three women decided to collaborate in publishing a book illustrating and describing these traditions: one collected representative textiles, the second gathered legends and local stories, and the third painted watercolours of the different Indian groups in their local dress. The textile collection and proceeds from the sales of the book were to be used to form the nucleus of a textile museum. The tragic death of the collector, Julia Plocharski, brought the project to a temporary halt, until Carmen Pettersen decided not only to complete her series of paintings but also to write an accompanying text. The finished work, *Maya of Guatemala: Life and Dress*, was published in a bilingual English/Spanish edition in 1976.

Meanwhile, the same interest and enthusiasm had inspired a few members of the Tikal Association, a local organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of the archaeological monuments of the pre-Columbian Mayan civilization. This small group formed a textile committee to awaken interest in the lovely and varied textiles which form the major artistic expression of today's Maya Indians.



MUSEO IXCHEL DEL TRAJE INDÍGENA, Guatemala City. General view of the museum. [Photo: John M. Willemsen.]

The exhibits and special events sponsored by this group focused on the inherent beauty of finely worked textiles. Private collectors loaned their exceptional pieces to the committee, and a series of fund-raising activities enabled the beginning of a small permanent collection. These resources were augmented by Julia Plocharski's quite remarkable collection of 630 pieces, which was given in permanent loan by her heirs. The committee's efforts succeeded in arousing some public interest in these textiles as works of art; however, the indispensable work of integrating the artistic product with the culture which gave it birth was yet to begin.

In early 1977, permanent exhibitions were opened in a rented building. At this point, the textile committee separated from the Tikal Association to form Guatemala's first private museum, the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena. Because the primary focuses of the museum's collections were textiles and the textile arts, the institution took the name of Ixchel, Mayan goddess of the moon and domestic arts (including spinning and weaving).

The shift from committee to museum involved much more than a new name and locale. With the collaboration of the professional staff previously



A second collection of paintings, by the Indian primitivist Andrés Curuchich, provides valuable ethnographic information. While Guatemalan textiles incorporate many design influences—European, Moorish and Oriental—their underlying flavour is distinctly Mesoamerican. In Guatemala the significance of traditional dress goes far beyond its aesthetic qualities; the varied regional costumes graphically testify to the extraordinary fragmentation into 'sub-cultures'.

[Photo: John M. Willemsen.]

engaged by the textile committee, the board of directors formulated a general museum policy. The goal of developing an aesthetic appreciation of ethnographic textiles was now expanded to that of creating an awareness of these objects as expressive representations of traditional Indian life. This broader concept could in turn be developed to encompass the universal importance of dress and what it indicates about the wearer, a cross-cultural theme equally applicable to all societies and all times. In response to changing attitudes about the ethnographer's role and responsibility with regard to the people he studies, the new museum also adopted a dynamic programme of extension activities which would reach out to the Indian craftsman.

The objectives defined and established by the Museo Ixchel are twofold: to document change in Indian life and culture through a detailed study of the changing role of dress and the textile arts; and actively to encourage the continuance of traditional handcrafts on the community level.

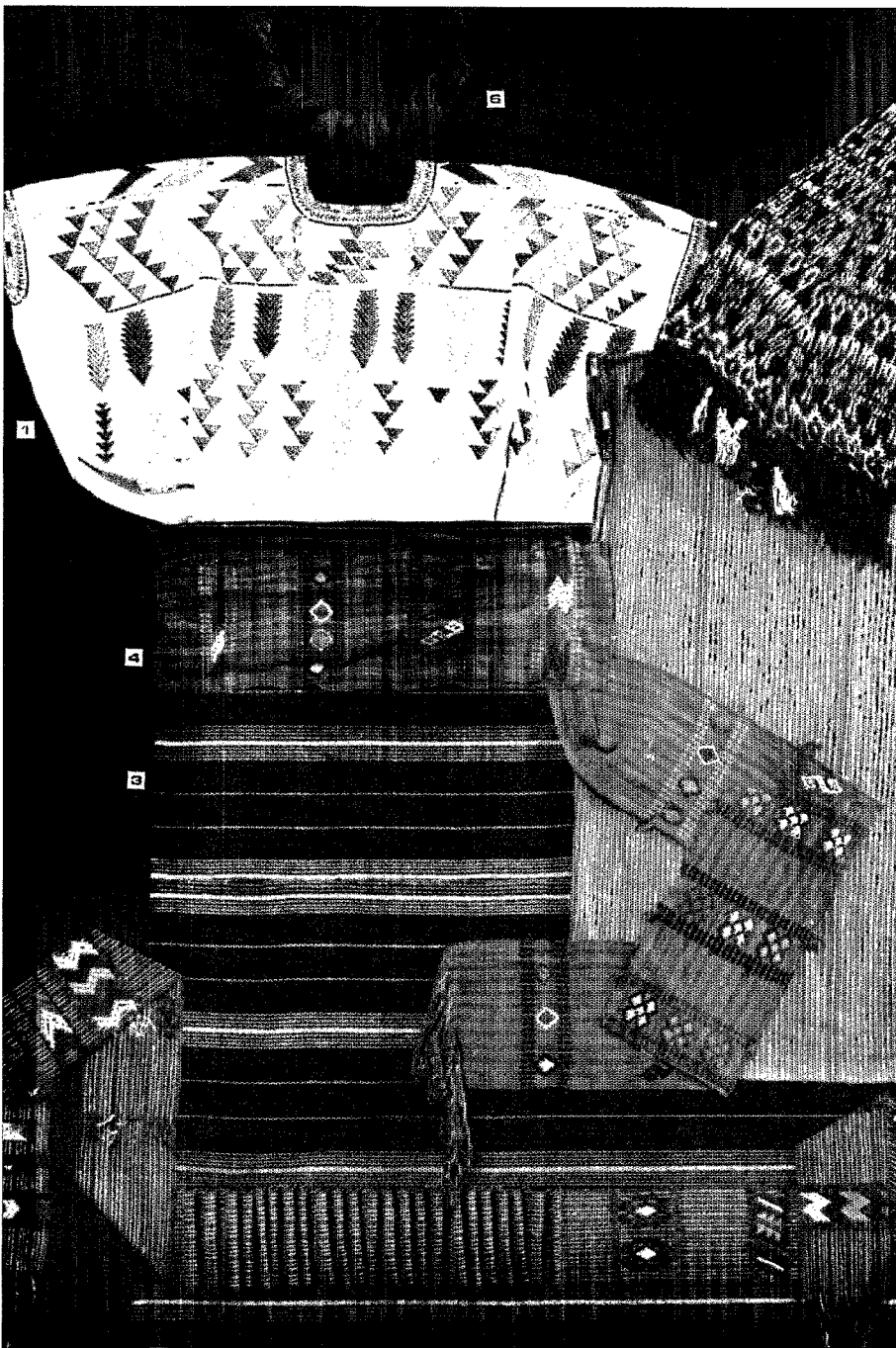
Studying and documenting change

The first objective of the Museo Ixchel, the comprehensive study and documentation of change in traditional Indian culture, presupposes an intensive programme of research and collection. Fortunately, Guatemala's small size and large Indian population have greatly facilitated both field-work and collecting

activities. This easy accessibility to the ethnographic subject makes a high level of detail and accuracy feasible for both documentation and exhibition.

Garments and costume accessories form the major part of the Museo Ixchel's collections. Almost 5,000 textiles represent 145 communities and fifteen linguistic groups. Major variations in village dress—styles worn for special occasions or used to indicate rank, role, or group membership—are represented along with a sampling of the personalized variations adopted by individual community members. The collections also include several categories of items not normally found in museums: specialized textiles and accessories used for ritual ceremonies and the cult of the saints; examples of available raw materials as well as the samplers and drawings prepared by craftsmen for their own guidance; and step-by-step representations of techniques for the production of textiles, hats, mats, bags, toys, etc.

In addition to these costume-related holdings, the museum houses extensive collections of general ethnographic objects, such as furniture, tools and implements, ceramics, musical instruments, toys, and ornaments. Carmen Petersen's paintings of Indian life and costume are a valuable reference. Another



Themes from Indian life are portrayed in display 'scenes'; here, a detail of a house porch reveals a child in his hanging cradle. [Photo: John M. Willemsen.]

To supplement the ethnographic settings, additional textiles are mounted on display panels. These illustrate the size and style of garments from one community to another, a variation which is difficult to visualize once the pieces are draped and wrapped around the human body or a mannequin. [Photo: John M. Willemsen.]

collection of paintings, by the Guatemalan Indian primitivist Andrés Curuchich, is an important resource for ethnographic data because of the artist's attention to detail. The combined collection of paintings is particularly intriguing because of the contrast presented in the portrayal of similar scenes by an outside observer and by a member of the cultural group.

Each collection item is individually evaluated by the curatorial and conservation departments to determine its particular storage needs and its suitability for safe display. Because of a rapid exhibit turnover and a heavy use of the collections by researchers, storage facilities have been designed with a particular attention to easy accessibility. During peak research periods or exhibit changes, as much as 10 per cent of the collection may be transferred in and out of storage in a single week.

The museum's exhibitions are constantly rotated to ensure protection of the fragile textiles and other objects. 'Long-term' exhibits are changed every ten months, while special displays are rotated monthly or bi-monthly. A general museum-wide theme (e.g. social gatherings in the community or important events in the life-cycle) forms the basis for exhibit planning and design. Since the museum building was formerly a private residence, the display space is divided into a series of rooms, each of which is used to depict a particular aspect or sub-theme. Collection items and authentic accessories are displayed in generally life-like settings, which are augmented by photographic and artistic portrayals of similar scenes in the actual villages.

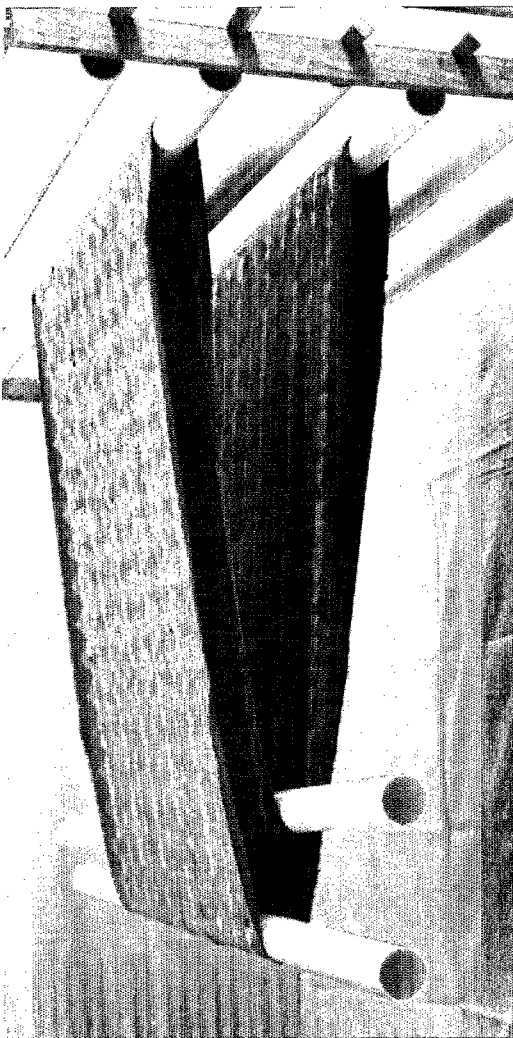
The exhibits are co-ordinated by the curator to ensure a high degree of authenticity. Only well-researched events and themes are presented, in a stringent effort to avoid the dissemination of inaccurate information. Since many visitors are knowledgeable amateurs or specialists, who are already aware of general trends but wish to acquire more specific information, exhibit interpretation is lavish. Simple 'labelling' is strictly limited to the paintings and photographs; all other descriptions are narrative or explanatory in form. Exhibit mounting is supervised by the textile conservator, who has adopted inexpensive but safe mounting procedures to provide maximum protection at minimum cost.

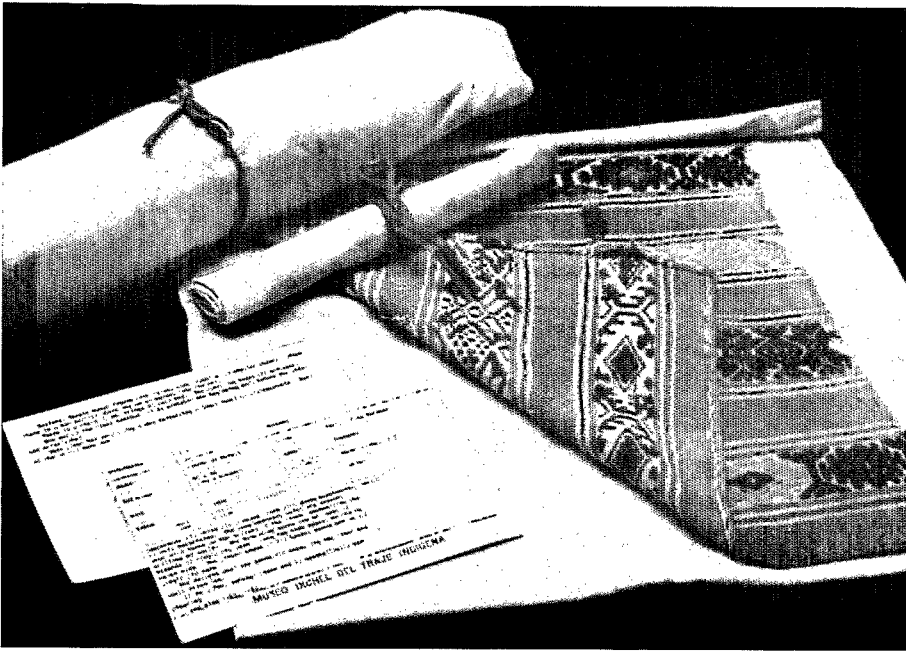
Data provided by both short-term and sustained research programmes are indispensable to the planning and careful interpretation of these exhibitions. Over the past few years, a variety of projects have been carried out in collaboration with educational and research institutions from several countries. Emphasis has been on the study and documentation of traditions and processes which are becoming obsolete, and the long-term analysis of change and evolution within the Indian society. Each year, a small corps of graduate and post-graduate researchers are accepted as research affiliates. They work under the co-ordination of the curator, and carry out both field-work and studies within the museum environment.

Archive and conservation work

The museum's Sue Borgatti Memorial Library and Textile Archive is an important study resource. Comprehensive materials focus on the fields of textiles, ethnology and the conservation of collection materials. In addition, specialized and often unique research data are provided by several archival collections: unpublished manuscripts, survey data and field notes on Guatemalan ethnography; copies of historical photographs portraying Guatemalan Indians, from private and institutional collections world-wide; an extensive collection of recent photographs dealing with Indian life (gathered through national photographic competitions sponsored by the museum); photographic documentation of step-by-step procedures used in agricultural production or cottage industries; botanical mounts and colour samples of natural dyestuffs, pigments, and lacquers; and fibre and yarn samples comparing varieties of wool, cotton and silk. These resources have proved invaluable to museum staff members and research affiliates. For more general use, a special textile collection has been prepared for use in conjunction with the archives. Textiles in

Low-cost solutions to conservation problems include this drying rack, which adjusts easily to accommodate tubular or flat textiles. [Photo: John M. Willemsen.]





Pieces from the Textile Study Collection are individually mounted and may be 'checked out' like library books.

[Photo: John M. Willemsen.]

this study collection are mounted so that they may be 'checked out' like library books; each is accompanied by a detailed analysis, specific information on production methods, and cross-references to archival materials illustrating or describing its use and manufacture. The Museo Ixchel does not at present have a publications budget, so the results of its many research projects have perforce been published elsewhere or have been left in manuscript form. However, a series of monographs and guides will be initiated as soon as funding sources are found.

Two years ago an additional documentation project was begun. The curatorial department is engaged in the preparation of an international register of Guatemalan ethnographic materials in collections world-wide. The register includes detailed information on private and institutional holdings of textiles, ceramics and other objects of material culture, as well as photographs and films of an ethnographic nature. The completed register will be computerized to provide international researchers and exhibit planners with detailed information on resource materials.¹

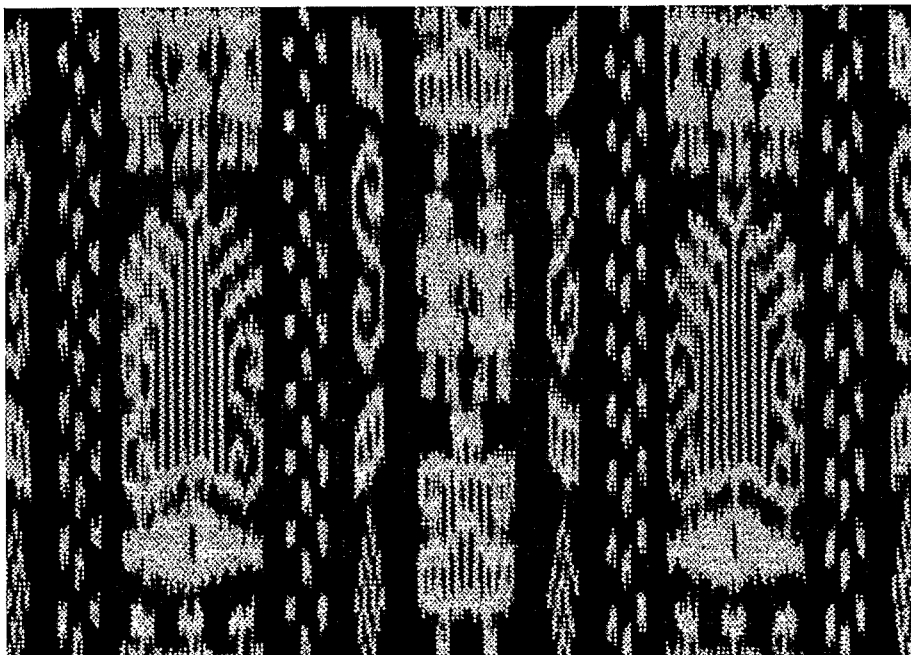
The Museo Ixchel makes a particular effort to keep abreast of the changing needs and desires of its public. In response to the recent upsurge of interest in native theatre, and folkloric dance, the museum has prepared a special collection of especially durable and, from the conservation standpoint, 'safe' textiles. These are grouped to form complete costumes and groupings of costumes, with instructions for re-creating an accurate portrayal of the local style; they are rented or loaned for theatrical productions and small exhibitions. The museum has also produced a series of folkloric ballets and multimedia presentations designed to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of Guatemala's Indian heritage.

Reaching out to the Indian craftsman

The important second goal of the Museo Ixchel is the encouragement of active craft traditions on the village level. The museum staff recognizes that dynamism and constant evolution are essential characteristics of any flourishing folk art, and has made a conscious attempt to disavow the concept that change and innovation are of themselves undesirable or 'bad'. Instead, museum programmes are designed to develop the craftsman's awareness of the local and national cultural heritage; increased respect for past and present traditions is encouraged as a vehicle for maintaining high standards of workmanship.

Two types of 'outreach' programmes have been developed. The first facilitates the continuance of traditional craft-forms by making accessible those

1. Institutions or individuals wishing to collaborate in this project are invited to write to the author at the following address: Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, 4a. Avenida 16-27, Zona 10, Guatemala City.



Traditional textile processes, such as the intricate *ikat* (tie-dyeing) used to produce this skirt, are encouraged through extension programmes.

[Photo: John M. Willemsen.]

materials that are no longer available at the local level, and by providing technical assistance for relearning forgotten processes. Emphasis is on the revitalization of traditional materials and processes rather than the introduction of new techniques.

The level of involvement of museum personnel varies from project to project. Simple consultation services are often sufficient to help locate a hard-to-find dyestuff or a half-remembered design motif. In other cases, it becomes necessary to play a major and long-term role, as in the production of *ixcaco*, a natural (undyed) brown cotton once widely available in Guatemala but now quite rare. In this case, the museum has collaborated in the collection and distribution of seed, and also in the production—with the aid of a local cotton grower—of sizeable quantities of the fibre and its distribution to spinners.

The second type of programme focuses on sharing the results of recent ethnographic research with the communities studied. Lectures and informal sessions, prepared by the curator, discuss change and development in the village's traditions. Although some of these meetings are carried out in the Indian towns themselves, community members are encouraged to visit the Museo Ixchel in order to take advantage of the special atmosphere created by the museum setting. The rather shrine-like character which the museum takes on in the eyes of these visiting groups itself becomes the first factor that develops their awareness that finely crafted garments, tools and other everyday items, apart from a purely utilitarian function, often possess an intrinsic beauty and grace. Audio-visual materials and objects from the museum's collections are shared with the groups to help create a historical perspective. The Indians are encouraged to use the museum's resources in the 'rediscovery' of past traditions, and actively to search out both information and historical objects in their villages.

Although the Museo Ixchel has no financial resources for development assistance, staff members also provide counselling services for communities who wish to establish local museums or cultural centres. Technical consultations include information on the gathering and documentation of collections, conservation and display techniques, and potential sources for donated materials and services. In spite of the lack of funds generally available for cultural development in Latin America, some communities have in fact been able to establish small museums or resource archives.

Looking ahead

For such a young institution the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena has made considerable progress; much, however, remains to be done. The most pressing



Staff members work closely with Indian weavers and craftsmen who wish to broaden their knowledge of traditional materials and processes, not to return to the past but so that innovation comes from the expanded resources of the local communities themselves.

[Photo: John M. Willemsen.]

need is for a permanent museum building that would permit the environmental control and expanded storage facilities not available in the present rented location. More staff members are also urgently needed in order to keep up with the rapidly growing popularity of the outreach programmes.

In addition, museum activities must now be expanded to include projects directed toward the non-Indian Guatemalan public. The folkloric and educational programmes hitherto presented to this group have been very well received, but as yet no strong impact has been made. If the appreciation of Guatemala's Indian heritage is to have a significant effect on public attitudes and policy, a general awareness of its importance must first be developed. The artistic and cultural richness is real; the Museo Ixchel hopes to bring it to the attention of all Guatemalans and, eventually, to other peoples and cultures throughout the world.

The National Museum of Costume, Lisbon

Natalia Correia Guedes

NATALIA CORREIA GUEDES was born in Leiria, Portugal, in 1943. History degree at the Faculty of Arts, Lisbon (1966). Museum curator's course (1969). Specialization in ancient textiles (course at the Museum of the History of Textiles, Lyon). Curator of the National Museum of Ancient Art (1971-75); Director of the National Museum of Costume (1977-79); Director-General of the National Cultural Heritage (1979-80). President of the Portuguese Cultural Heritage Institute. Has published *O Palácio dos Senhores do Infantado em Queluz* (Lisbon, 1974); *Traje Civil em Portugal*, (Lisbon, 1974); catalogues of the exhibitions held in the National Museum of Costume from 1976 to 1979.

Before 1974 Portugal's valuable state costume collections had long been shut away in museum store-rooms, unable to be exhibited for want of space. The major social and political changes that took place in Portugal in the wake of the revolution of 1974 made it possible to remedy the situation by the establishment of the National Museum of Costume.

Portugal, with its centuries-old tradition of textile manufacture, played an important part in the evolution of European fashion during its golden ages, the first half of the sixteenth century and the mid-eighteenth century.

Thanks to the spirit of conservation of the royal household,¹ evidences of the expenditures of the royal family and its retinue, with abundant illustrations depicting those times, have come down to us.

Launching the idea

Thus, to begin with, the nucleus of the new museum was the collection of royal costumes kept in the National Museum of Coaches, to which were added smaller collections from the National Museum of Ancient Art and the Museum of Archaeology. This combined collection enabled us to organize a first exhibition, which opened at the National Museum of Ancient Art in January 1974. In this way the idea of a specialized museum was launched not only in government circles but in particular among the large number of visitors who came to see the exhibition, some of whom owned interesting accumulations of costumes that for generations past had lain forgotten in attics—layer upon layer of clothing and its accompanying ornaments which, having gone out of fashion, had been piled up for possible future use as fancy dress at carnival time.

The first contacts with these owners were established gradually, by means of a psychological campaign demanding hours of patience (particularly when the pretext of the costumes obliged us to listen to whole sagas of the families with which they were connected), but they were eventually crowned with success; note was also taken of these factors as valuable pointers to social history.

The exhibition closed in May 1974, at the beginning of the revolution. We contacted four successive Secretaries of State for Culture in the course of one year with the object of gaining agreement for the ideal solution for the museum: the acquisition of the Ageja Palace, the property of Senhora Isabel de Sousa Holstein Beck Campilho, a descendant of the Duke of Palmela. The disintegration of innumerable houses whose inhabitants opted to leave the country for Brazil or Spain, and the conscious reappraisal of a whole way of life, which suddenly called in question an attachment to objects that had remained unused for decades, sometimes for centuries, but which could be of

1. Its organizational structure included a special office, that of the Reposteiro-Mor, responsible for the restoration of costumes.

use to museums as an expression of everyday life in Portugal, made our task considerably easier.

A palace is transformed

With a technical staff of competent, eager—I might even say impassioned— young people, we set up the museum, installing it in a completely empty palace. The large reception rooms on the ground floor and first floor were turned into exhibition halls; separate and smaller areas having direct access to the main entrance were used for the administrative section and for a specialized library; the former servants' quarters (with a large central hall leading off to small rooms) were changed into a reading gallery connecting directly with the administrative section and the exhibition halls. On the top floor a small restoration workshop was, after the inauguration, turned into the regional costume section. The palace outbuildings, former farm buildings, were restored, while keeping their original design intact, and adapted to the display of tools and machinery used in textile manufacturing; in the coach-house were shown nineteenth-century carriages left to the museum by the former owners of the palace.

The seventeenth-century construction of the building, with broad walls and a large basement, facilitated the installation of the museum, which required only a few minor alterations, such as the setting up of apparatus for humidity control and for heating.

One of the chief difficulties encountered was in mounting exhibitions in halls with period decoration—undeniably interesting eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tiles and mural paintings. On the advice of the artist José Cruz de Carvalho, who for some years has specialized in the mounting of exhibitions in museums, it was decided to use all-glass display cases so that the palace decorations, objects of art in themselves, could be seen.

A series of temporary exhibitions² has been held. These were conditioned by the fragile nature of the objects displayed—textiles—but they also imparted to the museum a constantly renewed cultural vivacity. These exhibitions included paintings, furniture and decorative items that were on temporary loan from a number of museums and private collections, and were intended to re-create the atmosphere peculiar to each period. The *Children's Clothing and Toys* exhibition was particularly successful.

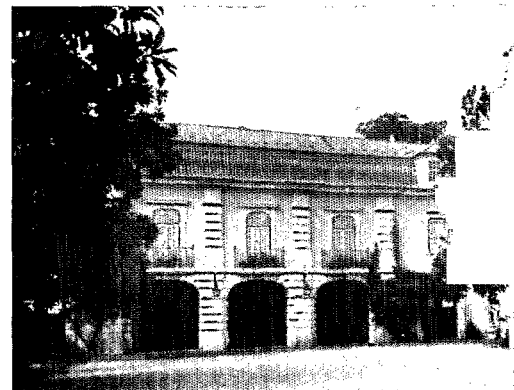
Restoration and education

Following the organization of the first exhibition, other sections, which have now become essential, were set up; these were the restoration section and the educational service.



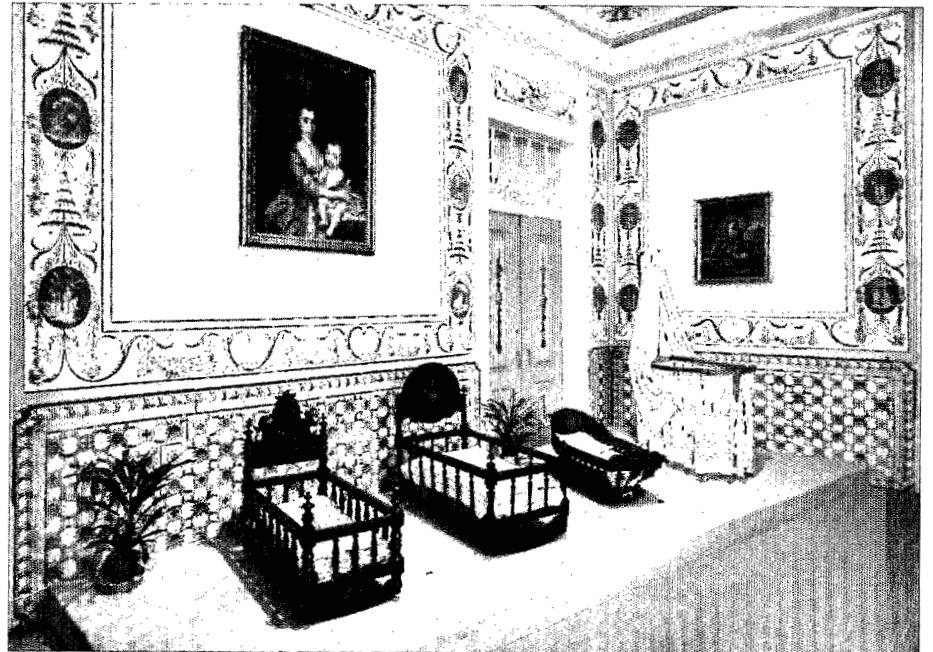
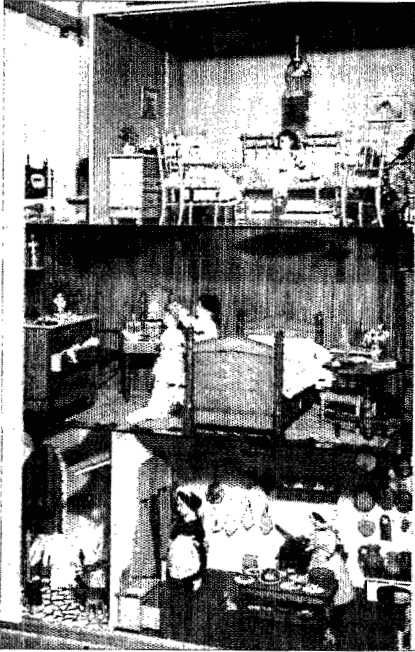
MUSEU NACIONAL DO TRAJE, Lisbon.
Main façade, 1980.

[Photo : Portuguese Cultural Heritage Institute.]



2. Exhibitions held from 1976 to 1980 in the National Museum of Costume : *History of Urban Civilian Costume* (from ancient times to 1925) ; *Spinning, Weaving and Printing Techniques* ; *Popular Costume*, organized by the National Museum of Ethnology ; *Opera Costumes—Tomas Alcaide Collection* ; *Romantic Costume from the Time of Alexandre Herculano* ; *Seventeenth-century Nanban Costume*, organized by Professor Kaoru Tanno with items from Japanese collections on the occasion of the meeting of the ICOM Committee for Museums and Collections of Costumes, 1978 ; the 'Rosas e Brazao' Company (nineteenth- and twentieth-century theatre) ; *Children's Clothing and Toys* ; *Portuguese Armour—Rainer Daenhardt Collection* ; *Parisian Haute Couture 1910-1970*, organized by the Musée de la Mode et du Costume de la Ville de Paris. Exhibitions of items from the museum have been held in various places to make it better known (Madrid : National Library ; Lisbon : Queluz, Ajuda and Pena Palaces ; the Azores, etc.).

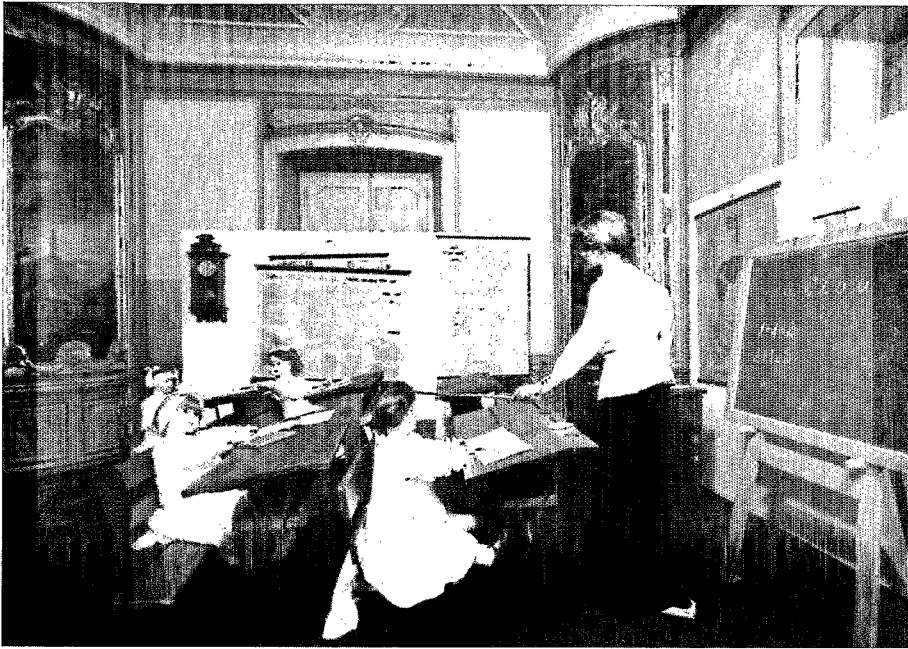
Detail of *Imperial Costume* exhibition, 1978.
[Photo : Portuguese Cultural Heritage Institute.]



The restoration section, established under the guidance of the head of the textile section of the José de Figueiredo Institute, applies the most rigorous standards required by scientific restoration work. The educational service, the first body of its kind to be given official status in the country, was designed particularly for schools, but it also caters for elderly persons and for special groups (such as the physically and mentally handicapped); it has an annex containing a multiple-activity workshop and a children's library.

The park adjoining the museum has become an inseparable complement to it. This green area helps to purify the atmosphere and when the museum was inaugurated it came to be included in the normal visit after four to five





months of 'restoration' work carried out under the direction of the landscape engineer Luis de Sousa Lara. One portion of the park, which was originally designed as a botanical garden (c. 1760) and to which were added important new species in the middle of the nineteenth century, has acquired a romantic character that it is now being sought to preserve by the planting of species of flowers neglected in the decade between 1960 and 1970.

This piece of parkland, extending over some eleven hectares, is one of the few green spaces that have been preserved in Lisbon. It is hoped that, through the museum's educational service (we should like to draw attention here to the originality of the idea), the park will be instrumental in reviving in young people a love of nature and implanting in them a desire for the protection of an ecosystem that enjoys a special micro-climate. For the remaining area, which is at present given over to cereal cultivation, it is proposed to create an adventure park and to build new premises for the Museum of Archaeology.

Visitors have been attracted by the small restaurant that has been opened in one of the palace outhouses. The adaptation of this building was the subject of careful and detailed study, in an attempt to avoid impairing the original structure of an ancient aviary, designed about 1766 to be part of a museum

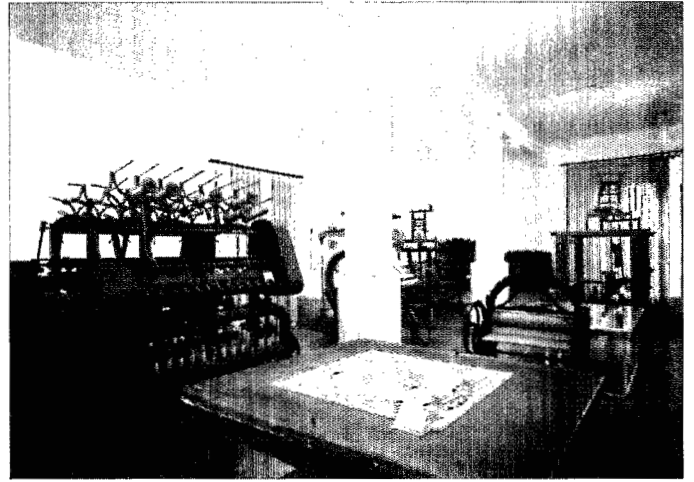
Details of *Children's Clothing and Toys* exhibition, 1979.
[Photo : Portuguese Cultural Heritage Institute.]





Textile restoration workshop, 1980.
[Photo : Portuguese Cultural Heritage
Institute.]

Techniques of weaving and dyeing display.
[Photo : Portuguese Cultural Heritage
Institute.]



of natural science which, owing to the death of the author of the idea, the Marquis of Angeja, never came into being. Once the plan for this aviary, of undoubted interest for the history of museology in Portugal, was discovered (in the archives of the former owner), the aviary building, as the only one which has been preserved, was considered as 'untouchable'. However, the need to respect its original features did give rise to serious problems for the concessionaires of the restaurant.

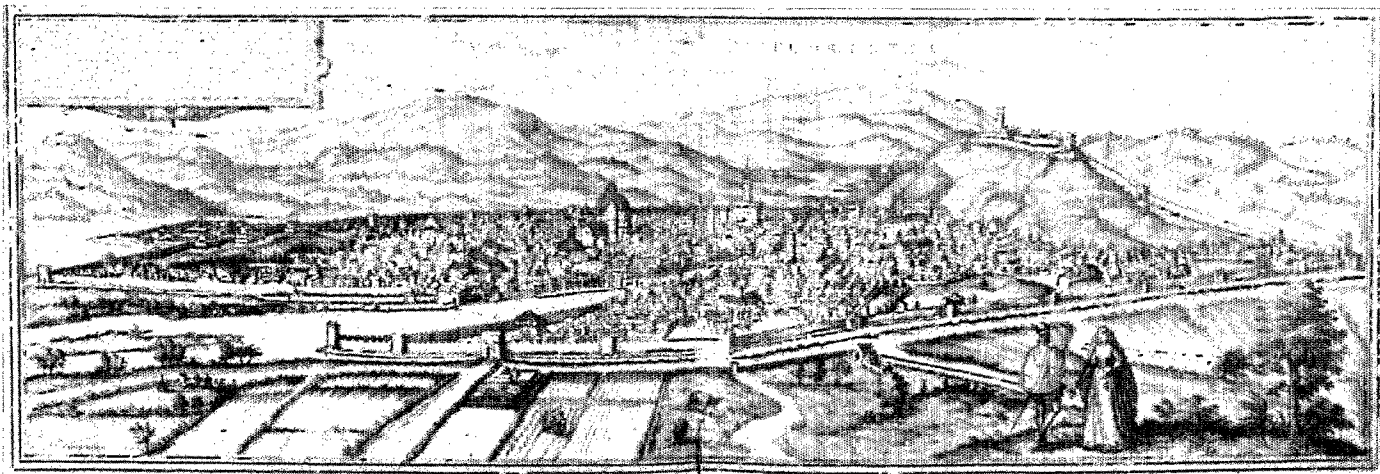
Acquisitions have been few, for the museum's budget is limited, but donations have considerably enriched the collection, which now contains 12,615 inventoried items. The number of visitors has grown exponentially, from 7,600 in 1977 to 95,395 in 1979.

Here, then, is an example of a museum created not only for specialists but also for the public, which has provided it with about 90 per cent of its collection. Admittedly, the task has been an arduous one, in the troubled times through which our country is passing, but we were greatly encouraged by the recognition we received through the award, under the European Museum of the Year Award scheme, of the Council of Europe's Special Prize for 1978.

[Translated from Portuguese]

Monteiro Mor botanical garden, 1980.
[Photo : Portuguese Cultural Heritage
Institute.]





View of sixteenth-century Florence (from *Civitates orbis terrarum*, J. Braun and F. Hohenberg, end of the sixteenth century). [Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]

Florence and the Tuscany of the Medici in sixteenth-century Europe

Sixteenth Council of Europe Exhibition of Art, Science and Culture

Since 1954 the Council of Europe has sponsored the organization of sixteen exhibitions of art, science and culture to shed light either on significant aspects of European cultural unity or on the original contributions which each of the member countries of the Council of Europe has made and continues to make to this unity. The sixteenth such exhibition was presented at Florence, Italy, from 15 March to 28 September 1980: Florence and the Tuscany of the Medici in Sixteenth-century Europe. It was organized by the Italian Government through its Ministry of Cultural Assets and Environment, with the contribution of the Region of Tuscany, the Municipality and the Province of Florence. Museum asked Professor Pietro Prini, chairman of the general organizing committee of the exhibition, to analyse its significance in terms of European cultural history, rather than describe the contents and programme of each of the nine constituent exhibits.¹ The second age of the Italian Renaissance, from the third decade of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the following century, provided models for the development of modern Europe with regard to the figurative arts, architecture, the organization of urban and rural territory, the scientific vision of the world, life-style, manner of dress, theatre and entertainment, some of which attained their highest and most significant levels of growth and expression in the Florence and the Tuscany of the Medici. The authors explore the ways in which the exhibition revealed the political, social and cultural factors that presided over the emergence of a modern European sensibility.

Pietro Prini, with the collaboration of Tommaso de Chiaro.

1. Copies of an explanatory brochure may be requested either from the Council of Europe (Department of Education and Culture), 67006 Strasbourg Cedex, France, or the Unesco-ICOM Documentation Centre, 1 rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France. See also special dossier entitled 'Medicean Florence' in the quarterly magazine published by the Council of Europe: *Forum*, No. 4, 1979.

PIETRO PRINI was born at Belgirate (Novara) in 1915. Commissioner-General and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the exhibition *Florence and the Tuscany of the Medici in Sixteenth-century Europe* (Florence, 15 March to 28 September 1980). Professor of the History of Philosophy at the University of Rome, where he is also director of the school of advanced training in philosophy. Former section Chairman of the Higher Council of Education in Italy and former Chairman of the Italian Philosophical Society. Has published numerous essays on philosophy and the history of philosophy, some of which have been translated into French, English and Spanish. Currently Director of the *Giornale di Metafisica*, Rome.

TOMMASO DE CHIARO was born in Rome in 1933. Degree in the history of modern art. Professor of art history in various institutes of higher education. Worked with the office of the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Florence exhibition. Several publications, among others on Pontormo, decoration and ornamentation and the contemporary artist Claes Oldenburg.

Modern European society had its origin in a profound crisis which seems to have invaded Europe about 1520—the year of Raphael's death (just after Leonardo's) and of Luther's Reformation theses, and at the end of a decade that had witnessed Machiavelli's *Prince* and Thomas More's *Utopia*. In Florence, a new generation of artists, such as Pontormo, Rosso and Bronzino, experienced the anxiety of a certain 'disenchantment' with the beauty and harmony, the tension and serenity of an art that epitomized the meaning of life and the educative ideal contained in the miraculous synthesis of ancient civilization and Christianity.

Beneath that synthesis a profound anxiety was further accentuated by the difficulties of the age, with the empirical and the irrational ever more inexorably imposing themselves in many aspects of public and private life.

Power struggles became fiercer in a snarl of confused projects and craftily improvised schemes. Foreign armies turned Italy upside down. Demographic, economic and financial balances were upset. An extraordinary rise in prices and unbounded inflation provoked the progressive impoverishment of the mass of working people, more than half the active population of Europe.

The Medici principality was not a moving force in sixteenth-century Europe. Greater powers struggled for predominance in politics, economics and civic progress. But Florence and Tuscany under the Medici constituted a paradigm in which it is possible to see at work the articulation of the new relationship between art, culture and society—a configuration of the modern European state. To use Benvenuto Cellini's expression, Florence and Tuscany were no longer able to create a 'school for the world', as they had at the beginning of the century, but made themselves Europe, anticipated it.

Thus it was that mannerism, the anti-Renaissance break with the past, which rapidly set its mark on the work of the new generation of Tuscan painters, grew out of the acute and subtle consciousness of the separation between art and life, between spirit and matter, between man and nature. There was no ambition to form a synthesis, or to opt for one or other of the two alternatives; there was only the conscious assumption of the irreducible conflict between them.

In a thousand bizarre, acrobatic, unpredictable, problematic and paradoxical figurations, the aesthetic intuitions of the contingency of reality, of its non-legality and instability can be discerned. Such intuitions embody and announce a type of experience in which the earth is no longer the centre of the universe, man no longer reigns over the earth, the spirit no longer directs and controls the passions: the three revolutions (cosmological, biological and psychological) from whose fragments modern European culture was to develop. What such intuitions experienced amid the contradictions of life, among the deformations or caricatural and ironic games of art is finally, as Arnold Hauser put it, 'the crisis of a vision of being, conceived as a central unity'. Thus it was that modern culture became an ensemble of 'separate camps', made up of the autonomy of forms, of the specialization of disciplines, of the 'division of labour'. The reconstruction of the synthesis or of the idea of a 'centre' would be its basic problem, certainly unsolved even today.

Spreading throughout Italy and Europe, in the theatre, music, literature and philosophy, mannerism was to become a great impetus towards the recognition of this 'consciousness of separation'. During the sixteenth century it found its highest expression in the painting of Parmigianino, Tintoretto, Bruegel and El Greco, in the theatre of Shakespeare, in the epic of Cervantes and in the thought, albeit very different, of Bruno and Montaigne. But the life of art was suddenly accompanied, in the heart of this new European consciousness, by the scandalous Machiavellian doctrine of the moral autonomy of politics, by the fideistic shredding of the Lutheran doctrine of grace without merit, by the tendency towards institutional and authoritarian regimentation in the relations between the state and its citizens, between the Church and the believers.

Modern Europe was thus born between the 1520s and the first decades of the seventeenth century, in the immense travail of these divisions of an 'un-

happy awareness', which found a most meaningful model in Florence and in Tuscany under the Medici principality.

Art, culture, society—a multidisciplinary vision

Such was the motivating inspiration that guided the organizers of the exhibition to construct it essentially as a 'multidisciplinary' exercise, with the intention of documenting the relationships between the Medici model and Europe on three planes, synchronic rather than diachronic, of art, culture and society. The exhibition was divided into nine exhibits; to art, obviously the most relevant plane, were dedicated the first four: *The Primacy of Drawing* at the Palazzo Strozzi, *Palazzo Vecchio: Medici Purchases and Collections* at the Palazzo Vecchio, *Power and Space* at the Forte di Belvedere, *The Stage of the Prince* at the Palazzo Medici Riccardi. Three exhibits were allocated to culture: *The Rebirth of Science* at the Biblioteca Laurenziana, *Astrology, Magic and Alchemy* at the Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza, *Printing, Publishing and Society* at Orsanmichele. Finally, as regards the political, economic and religious problems of post-Renaissance society, two basically documentary exhibits were organized: *The Court, the Sea, the Merchants* at Orsanmichele and *The Florentine and Tuscan Christian Community Within the Religious Dialectic of the Sixteenth Century* at the Church of Santo Stefano al Ponte.²

There were about 3,500 objects exhibited, of which about 2,700 were from Florentine, Tuscan or Italian collections and about 800 from European countries such as Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Holy See, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and from non-European countries such as the United States and Mexico. According to established practice each member government of the Council of Europe assumed the shipping and insurance costs involved. Without this it would have been impossible to exhibit such a remarkable quantity of items. The placing of the works in such a large number of exhibition sites, and the systematic articulation of themes, certainly constituted an innovation in the series of exhibitions organized to date by the Council of Europe.

Unity of a dispersed system

But with such a vast museographical system was there not a risk of dispersion, either from a cognitive or organizational point of view?

In fact, the first danger was avoided by the construction of a conceptual image for the entire exhibition, held together by a thread which we shall here briefly describe. Passing from one exhibit to another, the visitor, at least the unhurried visitor, was able to realize that he was not just being presented with a mass of typical information and solely episodic emotional stimulants, but rather was discovering a world in which it was possible for him to distinguish the origins of the contemporary epoch, awakening ideas stored deep in his unconscious. Thus for anyone who was not able or who did not wish to take advantage of the splendid five-volume catalogue³ it was possible to use, besides a 'short guide', audio-visual aids in four languages, provided through the technical competence of the laboratory of the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, to illustrate the major themes of each exhibit in its respective site.

A difficult problem, which was solved only in some of the exhibits, was that of the language of the labels and notices in the highly didactic exhibits such as the one at the Forte di Belvedere or those at Orsanmichele, which were especially numerous and important for an understanding of the objects. A similar problem occurred at the Council of Europe's fifteenth exhibition in Berlin, in 1977; there, the exclusive use of German on large panels constituted a real difficulty for the ordinary foreign visitor. In some parts of the Florentine exhibition this inconvenience was noticed and several times pointed out by the public. The same breadth of didactic information took up space which could have been used for a possible translation, at least in English. It

2. The organizers of each of the exhibits mentioned were respectively Luciano Berti, Paola Barocchi, Franco Borsi, Ludovico Zorzi, Paolo Galluzzi, Paola Zambelli, Leandro Perini, Giuseppe Pansini and Arnaldo d'Addario.

3. The five volumes of the catalogue were actually ready for the public from the very first days of the exhibition. The first four volumes were published by Electa Editrice of Milan and the Florentine publishers Centro D, Alinari and Scala: I, *The Primacy of Drawing*; II, *Palazzo Vecchio: Medici Purchases and Collections*; III, *Power and Space* and *The Stage of the Prince*; IV, *The Court, the Sea, the Merchants, The Rebirth of Science, Printing, Publishing and Society, Astrology, Magic and Alchemy*. Volume V, *The Florentine and Tuscan Christian Community Within the Religious Dialectic of the Sixteenth Century* was published by Editore Becocci of Florence.

was a kind of dilemma: either sacrifice the clarity and richness of the explanations or give up the idea of translation. This difficulty certainly merits study in order to provide a better solution for succeeding Council of Europe exhibitions.

As for the second danger, which certainly could be serious for both visitor and curator from a strictly organizational or logistical point of view in large cities such as London, Paris or Rome, it was practically non-existent in Florence. On the contrary, it was a stroke of luck. In a radius of a few hundred metres (excluding only the panoramically splendid climb up to the Forte de Belvedere) the historic centre of Florence itself became an integral part of the exhibition. This unique city became the most meaning-laden 'object'. The location of the various sections of the exhibition in the city's historic *palazzi*, besides certainly lightening the organizational complexity, pointed out the common historical source for both the exhibition space and the objects exhibited.

Ideologies and critiques of power

A characterization of the exhibition as merely a 'mannerist' presentation, as in 1956,⁴ would certainly be hasty and superficial, even though mannerism constituted the most typical and characteristic aspect of its cultural climate. Yet the branding of the exhibition as mannerist at the level of its 'code' has furnished the chance to apply a double articulation to the reading of its overall unity: the 'ideology of power' on the one hand and the 'critique of power' on the other.

In the exhibit dedicated to *The Primacy of Drawing*, the serpentine line, the neo-Gothic lengthening of the figures, the elimination of perspective in favour of a flat, dark background, all presented, in the San Michele Visdomini altarpiece, a Pontormo finally freed from Leonardo-like *sfumato*⁵ and from the vaporous and still monumental atmosphere of Andrea del Sarto. The distancing from Renaissance classicism expressed the moral and religious restlessness which, beginning with Savonarolesque puritanism, moves through the problematical classicism of Michelangelo to Pontormean metaphysics. But with Bronzino the drawing—as in the Martelli portrait—becomes a vehicle of sophisticated elegance, a documentary reflection of the courtly world, and thus furnishes the model for the engravings of Medici portraits exhibited in the archives shown at Orsanmichele.

A reference—mandatory at this stage—to the exhibit at the Palazzo Vecchio on the Medici as collectors definitely confirms, in the Joseph tapestries, 1546-52, together with the output of Florentine and Flemish centres abundantly presented, this confluence of complicated and eccentric movements, of this aristocratic and intellectual taste with courtly ornament and decoration. Even Pontormo, as Rosso Fiorentino had already done at Fontainebleau from 1532 to 1535, seems, in some of the drawings exhibited, to temper with a light, passing touch his harsh critical tension.

The subordination of art to power supplanted in Florence by the express wish of Cosimo I the residue of the anxious and rebellious spirituality that Michelangelo had passed on to his most immediate successors. For example, Ammanati's project for the fountain of Neptune and Giambologna's for the fountain in the Boboli Gardens were documented in the exhibit at the Palazzo Vecchio.

Various contexts of the whole exhibition showed that the concept of the 'artist-genius' had lost out to that of the 'technician of images', the builder of theatrical constructions and ceremonial monuments. The architectural richness of the ephemeral, in Grand Ducal Florence, was also surely the expression of a power which seeks therein the 'signs' of its own prestige rather than in a superstructure of diplomacy and military glory—something that was not possible in the real historical context, where on the contrary it was manifestly impossible for little Tuscany to keep up with the great nation-states in a pan-European context of complex political and economic problems. Likewise

The confluence of complicated movements: tapestry detail from Bronzino's *Story of Joseph*, Palazzo Vecchio.
[Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]



4. The second Council of Europe exhibition in Amsterdam, 1956, *The Time of Mannerism from Michelangelo to El Greco*.

5. *Sfumato*: Leonardo da Vinci and Giorgione were the best-known exponents of this 'perfect' manner of painting that achieved smooth and imperceptible transitions between areas of colour 'like smoke dissolving in the air' (*Oxford Companion to Art*).—Ed.

can be explained the components of the delectable hedonism of Medici Florence, and the substantial change in structure and function that the same traditional typologies of architecture and the plastic arts underwent in a new iconology of urban space: the statues became less ample, less defined, less monumental; volume gave in to the linear rhythms and delicate surfaces of gilt bronzes and polished marbles, as several sections of the Forte di Belvedere exhibit showed.

The decorative value of the period's sculpture can best be understood in its strict complementarity with architecture. Sculpture is to the city what fixtures are to the house, in the forms of a frieze or of an arabesque, with softly undulating or wriggling contours in the wide-ranging vibration of a material more picturesque than plastic. How appropriate, therefore, was the inclusion at the Palazzo Vecchio of this markedly neo-Hellenistic sculpture, ever more detailed with respect to its subject matter, from Verrocchio's *Child with Dolphin* to Tribolo's *Aesop* and many other works in fragile and precious material: terracotta, coloured marble, silver and gilt bronze. The Medici's vast purchasing capacities were harnessed to their collector's appetite, chosen attribute of their prestige. Thus, the precious collection of Etruscan sculpture gathered before those of Greek and Roman sculpture betrayed a clear intention to legitimize the great 'historical profundity' of Tuscany/Etruria. Such an intention seems to have motivated the decision to exhibit Michelangelo's *David/Apollo* in the Sala dei Cinquecento instead of in its original site, chosen by Baccio Valori, enemy of Cosimo I.

The decorative character of mannerist sculpture was again confirmed, for the visitor, in the part of the exhibit *Power and Space* which was entitled *The Ephemeral and the Garden: The Theatre of the City and the Theatre of Nature*. Here were exhibited the typologies of the villa, the garden and the fountain, places set aside for the privacy of the prince and of the court, designated by a sort of whimsical and fanciful disguise, as can be seen from the testimony of various entravings of projects for triumphal parades of sovereigns and princes through the streets of the city.

Art and alchemy

The return to the very origins of Renaissance Florentine sculpture, to Ghiberti and Donatello, made it possible to show, thanks to a happy intuition on the organizer's part, how, in little more than a century, the 'privatization' of power positively underscores changes, of function rather than of value, within sculptural techniques: the irruption of matter in figuration and its convergence in the phenomenon of alchemy.⁶ This breakthrough was explained at the Palazzo Vecchio, with ample and well-chosen documentation of accurate choice. Here the *Studiolo* of Francesco I was the symbolic epicentre and iconological reference, also in relationship to the art of building towns and gardens.

In the *Studiolo*, which is located in the heart of the palace, as if it were the elements' dark abode, an esoteric place of isolation, the precious materials—lapis lazuli, porcelain, enamelled gold, onyx, crystal, gems (one of the richest and most suggestive chapters of the exhibition)—appear in their secret splendour, heralds of an arcane and indecipherable meaning of a life that is the captive of occult forces. But it is the solipsistic and Saturnian dimension which refers to the theme of the relationship between melancholy and alchemy, illustrated by the Dürer engravings in the exhibit *Astrology, Magic and Alchemy* (at the Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza), such as *Melancholy I*, a symbol of the artist's introversion, and *Witch on a Goat*, a backwards ride, a game of chance, a bet with nature to trespass and sublimate in the alchemic process as in art.

In Giambologna's bronze for the Labyrinth Fountain at the Villa della Petraia, Florence is represented in the act of squeezing the water of the Arno and the Folterone from her hair. Water is a symbol of life (as in Botticelli's *Venus*) and is here the celebrated allegory of the city. But the organic animation, through an abundant use of zoomorphic figures (fish, dolphins and sea

6. 'The cabinet maker, the goldsmith, the gemcutter, the sculptor, even the architect when he decorates', observed Battisti, 'almost have the alchemic obsession to transform, to metamorphose.'

The symbolic epicentre of power: Duke Francesco's *Studiolo* in the Palazzo Vecchio.
[Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]

Sala dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio.
[Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]



monsters) is present in many other works, especially in those by Tribolo and Montorsoli.

In opposition to the vitalistic theme of the dynamic rising of water stands the descending underworld theme of grottos and caverns, in the corresponding opposition between the smooth and the rough, the effect of which is participative and direct rather than reasoned.⁷

7. 'In the sixteenth-century rediscovery of the grotto', writes Marcello Fagiolo in the catalogue, 'beyond the festive and playful aspects significant archetypes were rediscovered—those connected with the germinal matrix, the earth mother and the secret heart of matter (the cosmic Venus in the last room of the Great Grotto in the Boboli Gardens) which reveals itself at the end of a long underworld journey of death and resurrection watched over by menacing guards at the entrance. (Polyphemus and the giants of the Orti Oricellari) and wrought with initiative trials (the falling grotto of Pratolino).'

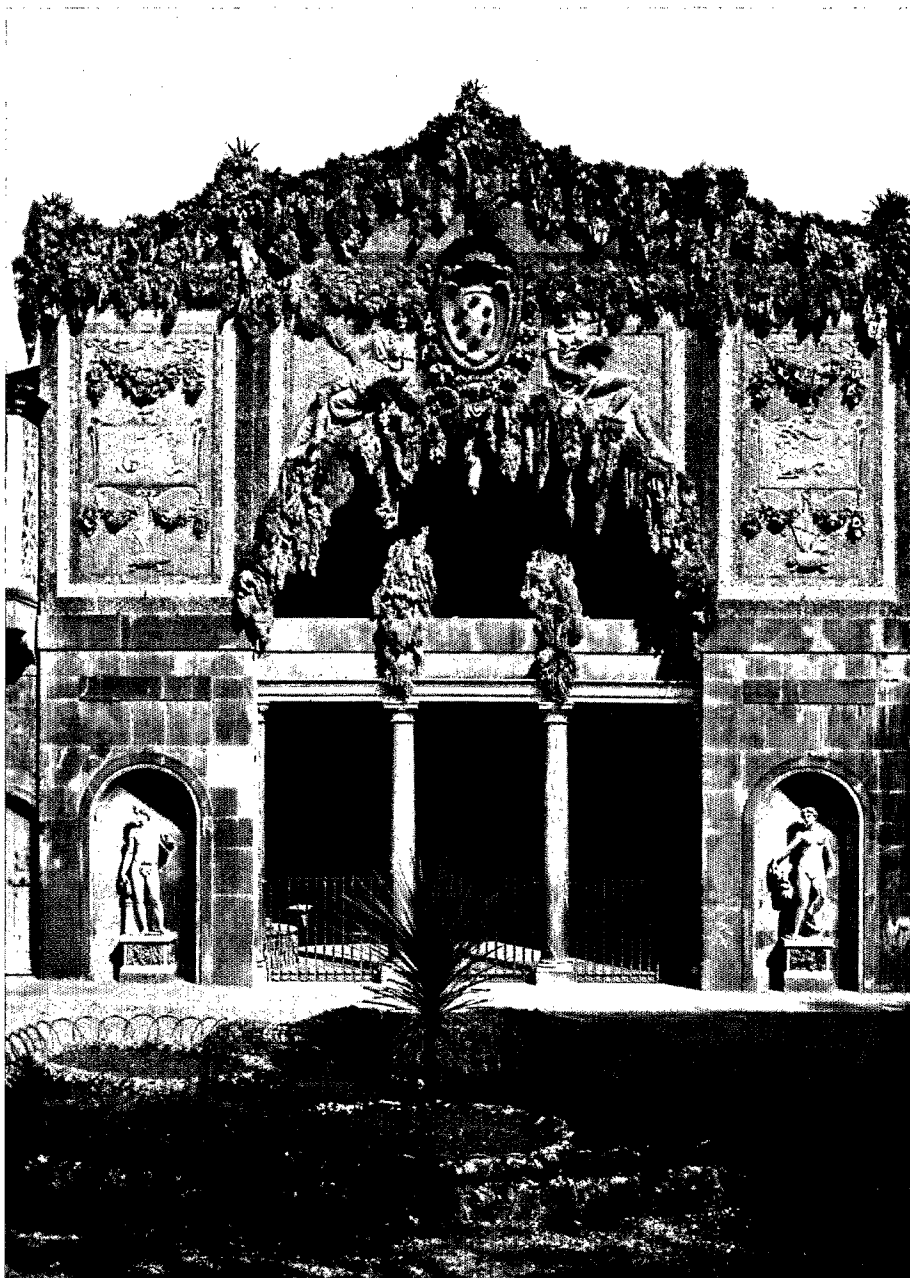
Splendour at court—towards the society of spectacle

The great decorative apparatus of Medici architecture developed the triumphal parade and the theatre, both genres rarely present in the fifteenth century. The gestures of a pompous and narcissistic auto-celebration were brought out in the Palazzo Medici Riccardi (*The Stage of the Prince*) and at the Forte di Belvedere (*Power and Space*).

Unlike the Roman triumphal arch, which was a set symbol of prestige and value on which was inscribed the description of a historical event, the façades



Art and alchemy: the descending underworld theme of grottos and caverns. Façade and interior of the Great Grotto in the Boboli Gardens by Bernardo Buontalenti. [Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]



8. A remarkable work by Sir Roy Strong, now director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, amply documents these festive occasions designed to enhance the grandeur of the reigning dynasties. Entitled *Splendor at Court—Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1973), the book specifies that 'the gradual emergence of the Medici as a ruling dynasty owed much to a deliberate artistic policy that was expressed in vast cycles of frescoes with their palaces and villas glorifying events in the family's history, in erecting public monuments and statues in their own honour, and in the periodic staging of stupendous fêtes in which every event in the life of the Medici family was presented as being of universal import' (p. 170). For Christina of Lorraine's entry the first triumphal arch 'included the founding of Florence by the imperial triumvirate of Augustus, Anthony and Lepidus, its second foundation by Charlemagne, the union of Florence and Fiesole leading to a climax in a canvas by Alessandro Allori depicting Florence and her dependants. The city was significantly attired in a regal habit, similar to that worn by the Grand Dukes and her cloak was embroidered with the Medici arms' (op. cit., p. 175). The second arch elaborated on the grandeur of the Medici.—Ed.

9. The Italian Renaissance transformed the concept of the garden (*hortus*). Artists endowed the surroundings of the fine new houses of rich men with fountains, stone stairways, balustraded terraces set within an enchanting paradise. Much was for public ostentation but within were often small, secluded, private gardens (*hortus conclusus*), which maintained the tradition of the medieval *hortus inclusus*. In this Florentine context the landscape of the garden became 'a theme of the religious asceticism, among mundane and aristocratic superficialities, typical of that chivalrous culture, to a place of delight made delectable by the presence of flowered espaliers, of sweet-smelling plants, of gushing waters' (Elvira Garbero, Catalogue, p. 309).

of the Florentine arches—such as the one erected for the marriage of the Grand Duke Ferdinand and Christina of Lorraine (1589)⁸—were framed with pilasters and trabeated, laden with allegorical and festive allusions. On the occasion of Charles V's visit in 1536, Florence accorded him Italy's most splendid entry. The complex ceremonial and symbolism, expressing total subservience to a supreme power, a *Dominus Mundi*, was organized by a team of artists and sculptors. They did not hesitate to modify the urban landscape, demolishing houses and churches, opening up streets and squares, restoring certain edifices and isolating others so as to make way for the imperial visitor.

As for the villa and the garden as well as for the theatrical stage, the landscape changed radically from the mid-fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth century. The landscape of the *hortus conclusus*,⁹ involves a progressive move towards the stage, first as an ingredient of a festive and convivial space, then as a true theatrical space. With the second transformation of the *hortus* of the Medici *palazzo* on the Via Larga in 1539, done for the marriage of Cosimo I and Eleanor of Toledo, which brought in an amphitheatre with benches and tiers for the spectators, this private family space became ever more specific in its autonomous functionality. No longer reserved, the theatrical space opened up to a larger sphere of enjoyment, for the edification of political prestige or perhaps, more properly speaking, to respond to the desire to escape

into the imaginary and into the spectacle, however much these activities might try to challenge this prestige.

At the bottom of this new vocation of the theatre is a veritable 'scenotechnical' revolution effected by Vasari in the theatre of the Sala dei Cinquecento, phantasmagoric with its lighting effects growing brighter from the back of the theatre to the stage, but especially characterized by a technical innovation of great importance: the *periaktoi*, rotating prisms for rapid scenery changes.

The exhibit devoted to *The Stage of the Prince* amply documented the move from Bastiano da Sangallo's stationary stage to the Vasarian movable one. This was illustrated in several drawings by the representation of a scenic perspective with two vanishing points—two triangles in inverted directions, the whole in relationship to the street junctions of Florence. This relationship in fact plays the role of the new scenographic schema, made necessary by the enlargement of the spectacle's typology, no longer solely literary and musical, but also imitative of competitive games (jousting, hunting, chariot races). Theatre moved from a closed to an open space, to the square, like the Piazza Santa Croce, represented in two tapestries in the Palazzo Vecchio, in which football is being played and a Saracenic joust is being held.

To this extension of theatrical location in the city exactly corresponded the same city as 'theatre' or illusion, as appears in the implied theatricality of the sixteenth-century façades (for example, the Boboli façade of the Palazzo Pitti) and of the horizontal decorations (*sfonfati*) which create a landscape, i.e. a 'spectacle of nature', like the green semicircular zones of Ammanati, derived from the typology of the hippodrome. The intertwining of artifice and nature, of which we have already spoken, either in the zoomorphic themes that invaded sculpture and the applied arts, or in the nature of the materials used, is present in every aspect of art, even in painting, under the common denominator of an alchemic matrix, and thus finds its confirmation in the space of the city-spectacle and of the theatre.

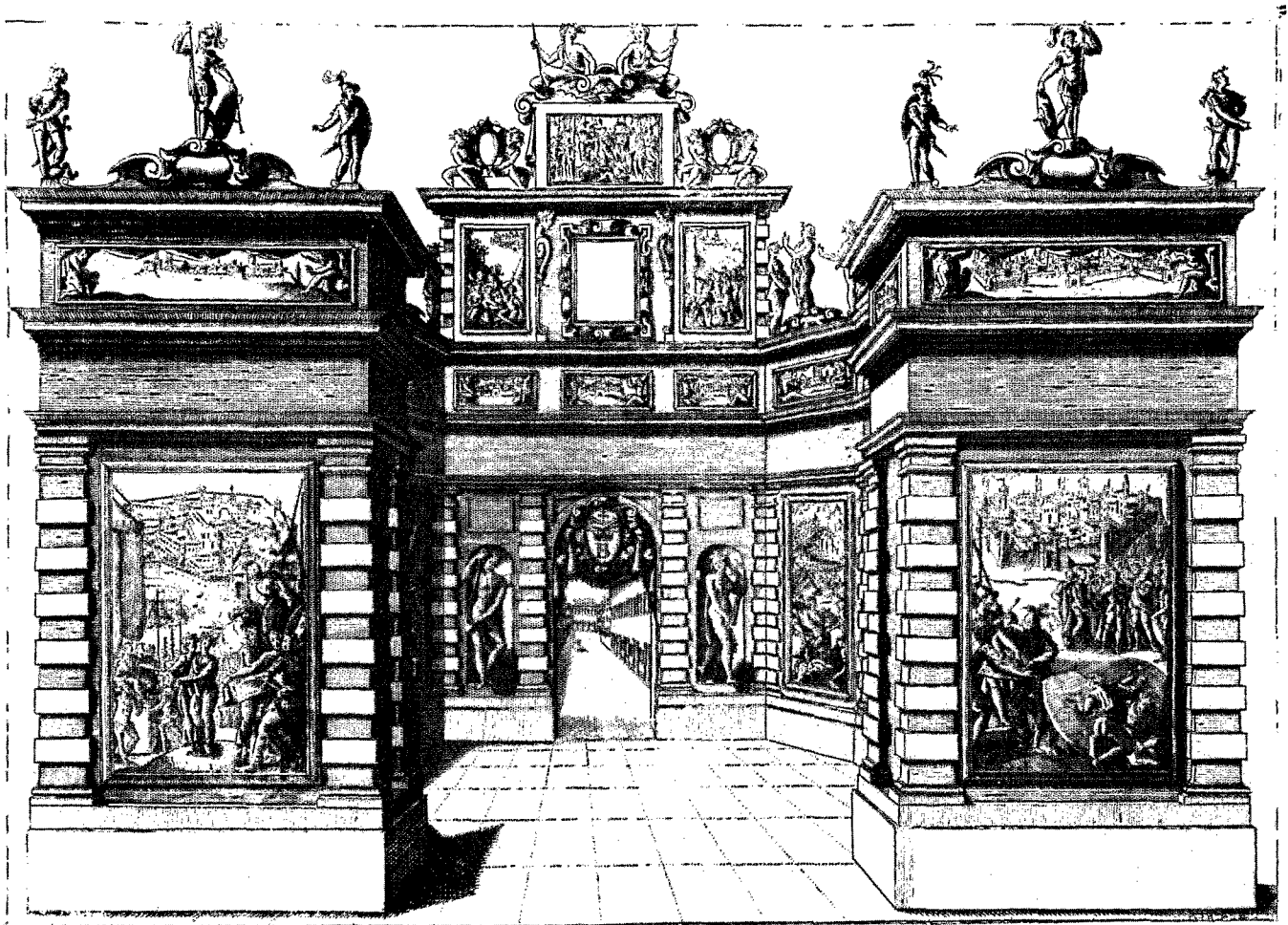
The full significance, especially in the works of Vasari and of Buontalenti, of this fictional or make-believe architecture of the new courtly theatre is the splendid dawning of modern theatre and the exemplary expression of Medici politics in what we could call the 'society of the spectacle'. In Grand Ducal Florence and Tuscany, in which the Medici suppressed the surviving ancient liberties during their first seigniorial domination, they left a great place for entertainments and plays, for festivals, processions and parades through the city's streets, organized with ostentatious and strict ceremony. It is to the Medici's credit at least that there was a close relationship between the spectacle and art, which has certainly not occurred in our century under quite other barbaric forms of tyranny.

Power and the 'two cultures'

The mannerist world of the Medici sixteenth century reflected the opposition or the *concordia discors* of the two at least apparently irreducible cultures: the hermetic culture of the astrologers, the magicians and the alchemists, and the new scientific spirit, which slowly but irresistibly imposed itself as the century progressed. Both were documented in the exhibits of the Biblioteca Laurenziana and of the Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza. The 'concord' between the two cultures is based on the need to discover the 'secrets' of nature, which has become foreign, and of its occult forces, in order to dominate them or defend oneself from them.

The age of mannerism experienced the dialectical opposition of these two cultures: scientific culture, which privileged the mathematical intellect, and hermetic culture, which privileged, on the other hand, participative knowledge, i.e. the world of the initiated, which can only reveal itself and hide itself in the inexhaustible inner nature of words and symbols. Distance and proximity; clarity and obscurity.

The distance is the price of the mathematical intellect, i.e. of modern science; the obscurity of the 'occult sciences' is the price of the proximity, i.e.



Public display of Medici 'cultural policy'—the mythical progression of Florentine history. Arch of the City of Florence for Christina of Lorraine's entry into the city in 1589.

[Photo: Warburg Institute, London.]

of the tree of life. To reconcile or at least somehow to get round this opposition, a transition comes to the fore and eventually takes first place: the passage from a dimension of knowledge and pure speculation, which characterized the fifteenth century, to a technical, operative and experimental dimension, from anatomy to surgery, from *ars gymnastica* to medicine, from geometry and calculus to the building 'techniques' richly documented (among the most stimulating of the whole exhibition), in the treatises from Francesco and Giorgio Martini to Leonardo da Vinci and so many others, in cartography, in optics, where the clearest focus was attained by Galileo's telescope. Corresponding to a pharmacopoeial and therapeutic technology is the abundant cataloguing of plants, herbs and animals (Ligozzi's drawings of plants and animals are splendid), from which botany and modern zoology were born, organized in the sort of encyclopedia exhibited at the Biblioteca Laurenziana.

The social, economic and political framework

It was not by chance that the horizon of the new technology opened up in the social, economic and political context of late-sixteenth-century Florence, Tuscany and Europe. Both art and culture found their support in the need for rationalization of organizational and productive structures in the context of frequent shifts in the political order. The Medici effected a general reorganization of both sea and land transportation systems: they altered the course of the Arno; they re-established, by international communications, the city and the



port of Leghorn; they refurbished the fortifications they wished to preserve, like those of Basso and the Forte di Belvedere, and dismantled the others, like those of Radicofani, Montepulciano and Cortona, as could be seen in the Warren Album, shown in *Power and Space*.¹⁰

The political, diplomatic, economic and social contexts were amply brought out in the exhibit *The Court, the Sea, the Merchants*. This immense collection of valuable manuscripts began with the decree of Ferdinando da Silva of June 1537, solemnly confirmed by that of Charles V the following September, legitimizing Cosimo's succession to Duke Alexander, an act which planted the seeds of a long flowering of Florentine and Tuscan history, marked by a veritable subjection to imperial patronage. The documentary information on the salient episodes of this subjugation was full of precious indications, concerning the vicissitudes of relations with France, as well as the progressive and sure emergence of the kingdom of England to challenge Spanish power and, on the rebound, that of this Medici Florence. But here, too, the iconographic aspect constituted an intrinsic link between the documentary testimony and art, giving also to this exhibit full citizenship rights similar to the other exhibits. Even more convincing proof was to be found in the rich collection of medals, the portraits of a penetrating figurative force, as those of Pius V and Cosimo I, the historical paintings, frequently with a hagiographic aura, as those of Vasari, Possignano, and Allori, the engravings, either highly realistic like Chrieger's *Battle of Lepanto*, or heavy with visionary overtones like Callot's commemorative cycle of Ferdinand I. The same conclusion could be drawn, by

The Genealogy of the Aei, drawing by Giorgio Vasari for a float in an allegorical masquerade, Florence, 1565. Uffizi Gallery Drawing and Engraving Department. [Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]

10. Cosimo I's first military architect, Giovanni Battista Belluzzi, insisted on 'the relationship which should exist between the fortress machine and the artillery machine' with the most rigorous exclusion of any ornamental element. According to him 'a new race of specialized technicians, of military engineers [was born], soldiers nourished by the new needs of modern warfare' (Francesco Gurrieri, 'Fortress architecture from Tuscany to Europe', Catalogue, p. 62).

the presence of other graphic and illustrative material, from the second exhibit at Orsanmichele, dedicated to the theme *Printing, Publishing and Society*, in which an ideal reconstruction of an imaginary sixteenth-century Medici 'prince's library', together with other themes in the history of books, was presented in an exquisitely theatrical framework, as devised by the architect Gio' Pomodoro.

Visitation, Pontormo. Carmignano, Parish of San Michele Visdomini.
[Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]



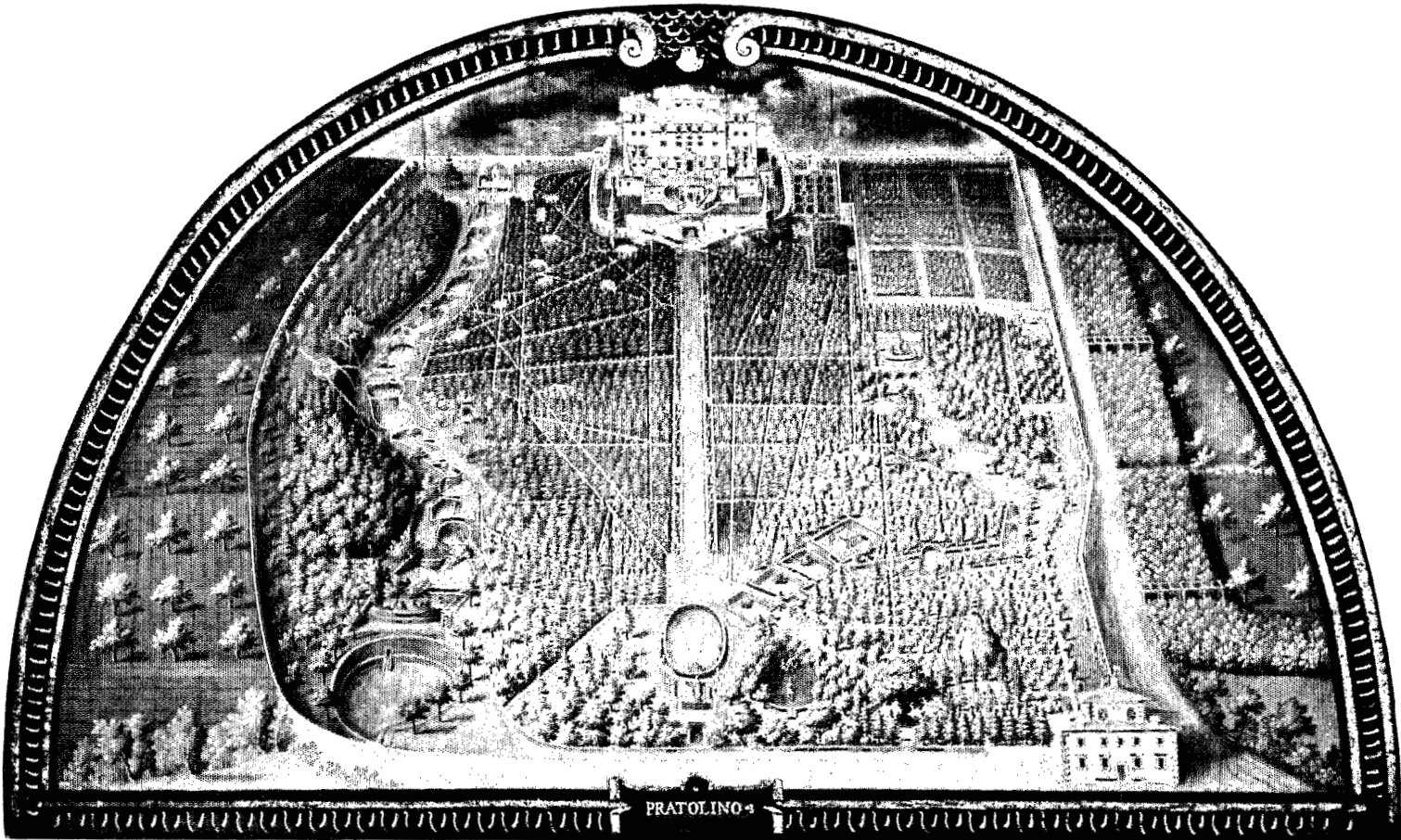
A precursor of modern botany: Jacopo Ligozzi, scientific drawing. Uffizi Gallery Drawing and Engraving Department.
[Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]

Finally, the religious theme—another aspect and not the least important in the social context—was abundantly and pertinently illustrated by archive documents with a luminous choice of artistic expressions—from the Michelangeloesque *Pietà* of Santa Maria del Fiore to Pontormo's *Visitation* and Giamologna's crucifixes—in the exhibit *The Florentine and Tuscan Christian Community within the Religious Dialectic of the Sixteenth Century* in the church of Santo Stefano al Ponte. In the delicate relationship of convergence and divergence between culture and power, this theme is particularly complex in sixteenth-century Florence. It was characterized by striking alternatives: from the remaining 'lamenters' (followers of Savonarola) on the one hand to the artistic confluences on the other, from the Grand Ducal initiative to defend the authoritarian aspects of the Counter-Reformation to the charitable activity of popular solidarity on the part of both old and new religious orders, lay associations and confraternities. There was a criticism of power, a moralistic teaching, such as in Arditì's *Diario* and Brucioli's *Dialoghi*, which were a condemnation of the world of Cosimo I and of the signs of the Medici dynasty's decadent turning in on itself: and there was, on the other hand, an important letter of 26 August 1558, from the self-same Cosimo I to Cardinal Giulio Ascanio Sforza di Santa Fiora on the abandoning of ecclesiastical dress. The *majestas* of the seigniorial court was accustomed, by the pomp and splendour of the arts, to much the same in the ecclesiastical institution through the encouragement, one of the Grand Duke's specific concerns, of solemnity in liturgical celebrations and of the purchase of increasingly precious trappings for the cathedral and for the principal churches of Florence. Thus the Medici encouraged, and this specifically by Cosimo's decree of 28 November 1564, the application of the Trentine decisions concerning either devotional renewal or later catechistic instruction. But here too the ideology of power was manifested, according to Arnaldo d'Addario, 'in the police surveillance assured by a tough regime like that of the Medici, most attentive in the expressions of religious dissent to sift out the feared manifestation of political dissent'. The significant number of Inquisition sentences, documented by this collection from the archives, is a clearly demonstrative example, as is, on the other hand and in a direction otherwise inspired, the documenting of the renewed religious vitality of many classes of the Florentine and Tuscan community.

Florence in Europe

The specific aim of this exhibition would have been missed, if it had not presented the European background against which the sixteenth-century Medici world of art was defined. What were the reciprocal exchanges between Florence and Tuscany on the one hand and Europe on the other? The works of 'Spanish' sculptors like Jacopo Fiorentino and Pietro Torrigiano clearly showed their contamination by local humours, from the popular and slightly theatrical pathos of the former to the intermingling of formal composition and essential realism of the latter. On the other hand, the palace of Charles V in Granada was 'articulated like a variation on Bramantesque themes', as Roberto Pane has put it. It reveals a real dependence on Tuscan treatises and perhaps the opinions expressed by the Florentine Academy of Drawing on problems in its construction, in answer to a request in 1567 from experts of the Spanish court, were not forgotten either. Significant too was the documentation concerning the highlights of Italian influence on the French—of such importance that with it, according to André Chastel, began the history of modern art in France—the calling of numerous Italian artists to the French court and the





The Tuscan garden, extravagant association of rules and caprice: lunette by Giusto Utens of a view of Pratolino. 'Firenze Com'era' Museum, Florence. [Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]

construction and decoration of the Great Gallery of François I at Fontainebleau, 'in the spirit of an inextricable union between the sister arts, painting, sculpture and architecture'. Here Rosso Fiorentino and Primaticcio, especially, laid down the principles of European mannerism by the great decorative originality of their grotesque painting in coloured stucco.

The Italian garden was imitated throughout the empire, as was illustrated in the beautiful photographs of the Grottenhöf in the Munich Residenz, and of Neugebäude, for whose construction the emperor had summoned many Italian artists, among whom were the Tuscans Giovanni Sallustino Peruzzi, Tiburzio Spannocchi and Giovanni Gargioli. The perspective of the *hortus Palatinus* in Heidelberg, by its quadrangular disposition and by the topiary of the hedges bizarrely leaning backwards towards the wooded mountain, brings to mind the extravagant association of rules and caprice which was the very principle of Pratolino, whereas the graffiti and the grotesque paintings of the courtyard of the Ambras palace in Austria indicate the spread of Italian mannerism, as theorized by Vasari.

Methodology

In no other case more than in this exhibition could a methodology based on the reading of a territorial and living fabric in all its aspects appear to be so necessary a choice. Ample space was thus provided, in the different exhibits, for engravings. More than just an artistic technique in itself, this instrument of reproduction and vehicle of social transmission of images brings out the communicative and linguistic meaning of the artistic phenomenon. Emphasis was given to the brilliance of formal urbanistic, architectonic and plastic productions from Florence and Tuscany. The context of Europe was revealed with the intention of visualizing the wide historico-geographical arch of the themes illustrated in the Medici world.

With respect to the living monumental presence of art in Florence, it is hoped that the exhibition will leave a historical trace in one particularly impor-

tant way. The Palazzo Vecchio has been restored to its function of a 'container' of works of art, the same function the Grand Dukes saw for it. This was a great museographic responsibility requiring patient and painstaking combing of the archives. Many precious tapestries, for example, were recovered, entrusted to the care of a 'restoration laboratory' and fittingly 'inaugurated' during the exhibition's preparation period.¹¹

A particular problem arose in the fact that several parts of the Palazzo Vecchio were inaccessible as they were occupied by offices of the city government and other public services. The suggestions that came out of the archival research, generously complied with by the local authorities, brought about the re-establishment of the Sala dei Cinquecento as it was at the end of the sixteenth century.

Other exhibit sites presented particular problem too. In the Palazzo Strozzi, it was necessary to install a brand new fire-prevention system, in line with the technological devices of the best Italian experts in this field. In other *palazzi*, rooms most exposed to light and temperature variations needed regulatory apparatus and constant specialized control.

A task of extreme importance, made necessary by the exceptional number of visitors, was that of constant surveillance. The hiring of a considerable number of museum guards, about 185, in addition to those already normally working in the different sites, in order to guarantee a presence at every angle of the exhibit halls, was the heaviest weight in the organizing committee's balance. But such an enterprise was not fruitless, for no exhibit and none of the 3,500 items exhibited were damaged or tampered with during the exhibition, which ran for more than six months, in spite of an abundance of visitors—many of whom were schoolchildren—which during certain weeks reached the almost paralyzing level of 15,000 a day.

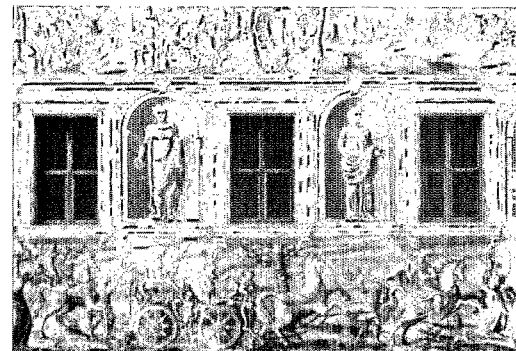
A huge success

The organizing committee had not dared predict or hope for such a high number of visitors, so many as to seem a mob, especially during the first three months and during the last forty days. From the beginning, however, taking a stand against facile vulgarization or, as it is mistakenly called, 'mass promotion', the committee chose the road of strict scientific criteria in the organization of the exhibit. The public, one and a half million visitors, according to minimum calculations, evidently agreed. It was the highest number attracted to a Council of Europe exhibition. After being submitted to so many ways of degrading culture by escapist curiosity or by ideological propaganda, the public, today more than ever, demands respect for its intelligence.

The exhibition aroused great interest in the press, both specialized and popular, and on radio and television in Italy, and indeed throughout the world. Photocopies of several thousand articles have already filled two thick folders (and only for the first period of the exhibition). The opening ceremony in the presence of the President of the Republic of Italy and of the highest authorities of the Council of Europe and the European community was re-transmitted by Eurovision. Italian radio and television (RAI) transmitted on all its networks and channels many programmes of news and comments on our exhibition themes. Private radio and television stations in Italy and the major European national networks also transmitted and sold to many countries in-depth programmes on the exhibition.

But certainly the most solid results, on the scientific plane, were those derived from the wide range of research undertaken during the long phase of preparation by many, frequently young, scholars. The five volumes of the catalogue were the result of this research and of other work it advanced or complemented. It thus constitutes an exceptionally valuable contribution to the progress of study on the Medici and sixteenth-century Europe, and on the birth of modern European culture. Specialists cannot ignore it, and men of culture will find in it a mine of information and many interesting ideas.

Spread of Italian mannerism: graffiti and grotesque paintings in the courtyard of the Castle of Ambras, Austria.
[Photo: Scala Editrice, Florence.]



11. It was possible to reconstruct, as Paola Barocchi notes in the catalogue, 'not only the composition of famous series—such as Bronzino's *Story of Joseph* and Bachiacca's grotesque series, but at the same time their original destination and location. In this way it was possible to draw up an inventory of the tapestries existing in the sixteenth century at the Medici court, and this has made possible the invaluable recovery of pieces which today are to be found in various places (most of them in representational buildings, such as Prefectures and Embassies).'

Numerous cultural institutions in Florence, Italy and abroad seized upon the occasion presented by the exhibition to instigate conference cycles, shows, specialized seminars on the diverse themes and problems tied in with or posed by it. While certain of the exhibits have opened up the flattering perspective of ties with important Italian, European and North American museums, the echo of the International Study Symposium, which was organized by the committee on the same general theme as that of the exhibition, still resounds around the world.¹² No less interest has been provoked among specialists by the scientific seminar organized by the Institute of the History of Architecture and of Restoration of the University of Florence. This group has prepared, especially for Italian and European schools, a book in three small volumes of slides of works chosen from among those exhibited, together with a commentary in Italian and English.

We cannot forget the influence that the exhibition has had in publishing circles. On the bookshop shelves of Florence, and Italy, many re-editions and reprints of important works on the world of the Medici have appeared with intelligent timeliness.

In Italy, with spontaneous intuition, many people speak of 1980 as the Year of the Medici. It was not a question of an anniversary or centenary celebration, according to the calendar of the great recurring festivals of the cultural liturgy and of its more or less repetitive ceremonial. It was the realization of an idea that became the project for this great collaboration. Culture must spread as the civic substance of individuals and nations. It is not presumptuous to think that the Council of Europe and the political, social and religious forces which it succeeded in mobilizing around this idea may find in these results a sure reason for gratitude and for the promotion of their particular historical function.

12. The *Acts* of the Study Symposium will appear this year.

[*Translated from Italian*]

*RETURN
AND RESTITUTION
OF CULTURAL
PROPERTY*



Detail of a fly-whisk handle (Society Islands) from the Hooper Collection.
[Photo: Museum of Tahiti and the Islands.]

The Intergovernmental Committee: mechanisms for a new dialogue

Salah Stétié

SALAH STÉTIÉ is a Lebanese writer, poet and diplomat, born in 1929 at Beirut. Licence ès lettres, University of Paris; also attended École des Hautes Études and École du Louvre. Professor of French and Comparative Literature at secondary school and university level in Lebanon. Editor-in-chief of *L'Orient Littéraire*, a cultural weekly, President of the Lebanese section of the International Association of Art Critics. Cultural Counsellor to Lebanese embassies in Western Europe (1962-66). Since 1966 Deputy Permanent Delegate of Lebanon to Unesco. Numerous studies and articles on contemporary art and poetry. Author of several volumes of essays and poetry. Elected Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin, and its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation, in 1980.

The entire issue of Museum; Vol. XXXI, No. 1, 1979, was devoted to the question of the return and restitution of cultural property. In 1980, from 5 to 9 May, the first session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation was held in Paris. The meeting attracted very considerable interest. Not only did nineteen of the twenty states who are members of the committee send active representatives, but the observers of thirty-seven other Member States of Unesco also attended, together with observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (ICOM in particular). When the report of the committee was submitted to Unesco's General Conference in Belgrade at its twenty-first session last autumn, the Chairman of the committee, Lebanese writer, poet and diplomat Salah Stétié, made a remarkable presentation of this complex and emotionally charged issue to the assembled delegates. The lines that follow are a condensed version of his remarks.

Some lessons from the first meeting

One of the essential points in the eyes of the disinherited countries of the Third World was that they frequently lacked the indispensable information concerning the objects which bear witness to their cultures and which have been dispersed all over the world in public and private collections. Hence one of their main demands concerns the compilation of inventories for the identification and classification of such objects. It should be possible to carry out this work of drawing up inventories with the co-operation of specialists in the country or countries concerned and with the assistance of specialized non-governmental organizations, such as ICOM.

It was also apparent that it was important for an international contribution to be made for the establishment of adequate reception facilities in countries where the lack of such facilities is acutely felt. A special effort should be made to train the necessary specialists in the countries to take complete charge of the invaluable cultural objects which are already in these countries or which may be returned to them.

An objection frequently raised by states holding the cultural property of others is that national legislation does not enable them to bring pressure to bear on private holders of cultural property, such as large museums, the British Museum, for example, which do not come under the national authorities and are consequently not subject to state decisions or policy as such. This objection is obviously an important one and can serve from the outset to block any claim or process for restitution: the Committee has accordingly requested

states in this particular situation to take steps to bring their relevant national legislation and domestic regulations into line with a view to solving this problem.

The Committee also insisted on the importance of strengthening and improving the legislation and regulations aimed at deterring illicit traffic in cultural property which, alas, continues to flourish on a large scale throughout the world. Side-by-side with these measures, a far-reaching campaign should be launched to develop public awareness of the importance of cultural property, since this awareness could contribute to the effective banning of illicit traffic in such property.

I must add here that one Member State on the Committee, supported by other Member States, expressed the opinion that while it recognized the primacy of the principle of the return and restitution of cultural property, there was a case for establishing a sort of subsidiary related principle of *compensation*. In other words, that whenever restitution would seem to be blocked, the requesting state should be able to obtain as compensation from the holding state an object belonging to the cultural property of that state, its cultural rather than its financial value being equivalent to that of the object being held. The majority of Member States on the Committee felt, however, that given the present somewhat preliminary stage of international procedures concerning the restitution of cultural property, importance should be attached, first and foremost, to affirming the principle of restitution, thereby avoiding any action which, with the best intentions in the world, might be liable to undermine it.

Some general conclusions at the end of the debate at Unesco's General Conference

Our deliberations have been extremely useful in that they have demolished the terrible barrier of distrust between two sides. I am not so naïve as to think that, overnight, all the world's large museums will give up treasures patiently accumulated over centuries, for the benefit of their creators and original owners; but I sincerely hope that this initial dialogue will have had the effect of eliminating the strange and unwarranted reticence hitherto displayed. The problem is now clearly stated and a mechanism has been set up to find a solution one way or another. An attitude is perhaps emerging which is linked to respect for cultural identity and the need to preserve the nature of this identity in others. For, as I have said and do not hesitate to repeat, the problem of the restitution and return of cultural property is one of the key problems of the Third World, and a central issue for most of our national consciences. This is a question

which, in the context of international bodies, is liable rapidly to become an acrimonious and dangerous issue unless we make a courageous effort, showing generosity and imagination, to seek adequate solutions to this problem. With your permission, Mr Chairman, I should now like to address to those countries which hold virtually all the cultural property of the Third World—and which consequently possess all the keys to the problem—a most solemn appeal on behalf of the Intergovernmental Committee. I have spoken of generosity and imagination, but there is something else besides; these countries must have a clearer view and a more balanced, just and 'comprehensive' (in the etymological sense of the word) appreciation of the material and moral situation of which they are the principal originators and the sole beneficiaries. On this subject, which touches the heart of cultural identity, we must avoid a stalemate in which we would all stand to lose a great deal. If, for a few minutes, I might set aside the reservations imposed on me as Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee, I should like to reply to three objections frequently raised by the developed countries to justify the status quo:

The first objection to the demands of the Third World countries is a technical one. It is argued that the objects held in developed countries are, by the very conditions in which they are conserved, constantly and diligently cared for, protected from the deterioration to which they might have been subject in their countries of origin, which are frequently less well equipped than a highly developed country to cope with the risks to such objects. There is certainly a great deal of truth in this argument, but it is nevertheless regrettable that the powers whose authority formerly prevailed made no effort to create these same standards of technical preservation in the places where such objects were originally implanted, by establishing the necessary local facilities and training local staff so as to equip them for conservation and maintenance. There are also grounds for questioning the validity of the reasoning which in fact deprives the legitimate owners of their right to their own heritage, the pretext being their temporary incapacity, which could be easily remedied, where it does exist, by bilateral or international assistance, particularly through Unesco. Both human and technical solutions exist: all that is necessary is the will to seek, and apply them whenever necessary, their cost being simply the price paid by some to enable others, so long dispossessed, more fully to become their own true selves.

Another argument advanced is that a valuable object belonging to one of the cultural traditions of the Third World gains in public appreciation and prestige if it is exhibited in one or other of the world's large museums. The defenders of this thesis claim, furthermore, that when an object of this kind is removed to a place far from its place of origin and conserved in the conditions described above, it makes a greater contribution, in uni-

versal terms, to the civilization which engendered it and constitutes a vital means of ensuring world recognition of the cultural identity it exemplifies. I admit that this is indeed a cogent argument, and one which would be even more so if the objects whose return and restitution are sought were not precisely—in the formal and restrictive definition we have given to them—those objects whose recovery is intended to ensure, first and foremost, a greater awareness of cultural identity because of its own true nature and not because it has been previously recognized and acknowledged by others. Moreover, how could I fail to mention the moving appeal made by some delegates, such as the delegate from Papua New Guinea who expressed, you may remember, his bitterness at seeing sacred objects of his cult, for him of considerable religious significance, being used for ethnological purposes or for mere aesthetic pleasure—in any event, as far as he is concerned, for exoteric purposes which fall far short of the spiritual values embodied in such objects?

The third argument, in my view, is one of the most important and one that we should bear in mind: it is the fact that under many national legislative provisions there is no possibility of guaranteeing the return and restitution of cultural property outside the strict limits of the Convention concerning the illicit traffic in such property. As we all know, this Convention cannot be applied retroactively. At the same time, if we are expected to abide by the terms of the Convention alone, I can see no purpose for the existence of the Intergovernmental Committee. Were it exclusively a question of the application of the provisions of the Convention, by the parties which had signed it in good faith, there would be no risk, except in a few cases, of dispute and consequently no need for arbitration. The Intergovernmental Committee, at least as its members understand it, is essentially an arbitration and good offices committee. Its terms of reference are therefore broader than the Convention. The question of the return and restitution of property which is the concern of this Committee refers to objects which are effectively protected by national legislation but which it must nevertheless succeed in removing from such jurisdiction for the sake of principles that transcend the legislation itself. *In other words*—and herein lies the risk of conflict—the issue is one of giving the cultural and moral rights of some precedence over the purely legal rights of others.

This Committee has a great deal of work before it. I must emphasize once more that the Committee's task is only of persuasion; the most it can hope to do is bring moral pressure to bear. Let us not forget, ladies and gentlemen, that neither the Committee, nor the Director-General of Unesco for that matter, has armoured divisions at its disposal. The only armour that gives us strength—all of us who are so rightly concerned about this problem of international equity and cultural magnetization—is that of our intellectual and

moral integrity, our anxiety to do our best for intercultural dialogue, our total commitment to the preservation of our deep-rooted identity, which we consider to be inalienable. There are those who may consider some of these remarks and hopes to be fanciful, particularly those concerning a fairer distribution of cultural property seen as the spiritual tokens for each and every one of us, of our deep-rooted identity, or in other words, in the final analysis, of the basis for our existence, for it is the cultural heritage of the past that shapes our existence in the future. Am I wrong to count on greater awareness of international responsibility in this field? I think not, and if we are speaking of Utopias, I would rather wager on the Utopia of generosity and believe that the restitution and return of cultural property will one day become standard practice in international life in a spirit of respect for all mankind and having regard for the unique character of each individual. Utopia? When all is said and done, what was Unesco itself, fifty years ago, but a Utopia?

[Translated from French]

Museum hopes to inform its readers regularly about developments in this field. The world's museum professionals are after all those principally concerned. Their participation is essential 'to create the climate of mutual understanding and international solidarity' referred to by the Committee in one of its recommendations, the text of which is also given below.

Recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee¹

The following recommendations were endorsed by the General Conference of Unesco at its twenty-first session (September-October 1980, Belgrade), which also invited the Director-General to put into effect the procedures described therein:

- (i) The Committee considers it essential and urgent that each country seeking to build up representative collections of its cultural heritage should prepare a systematic inventory of the cultural property still on its territory and of property in other countries. The preparation of such inventories could be undertaken in collaboration with the competent non-governmental organizations, more particularly ICOM, and with technical co-operation from Unesco, under the Participation Programme or any other programme allowing for such co-operation. These inventories should make it possible to identify any missing property as well as the property referred to in Article 3 of the Statutes, with a view to taking steps to secure its return or restitution. The Committee invites all countries which have the means of preparing such inventories to participate in bilateral or multilateral co-operation with a view to establishing them.
- (ii) The Committee, deeply concerned at the persistent illicit traffic in cultural property, which continues to impoverish the cultural heritage of all nations, considers that each State should take urgent measures to put an end to such illicit trans-

fer. National legislation on the subject should be strengthened and States which have not yet done so should ratify the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970). Customs regulations and control should be reinforced. Special police services should be established. Art dealers should be subject to control. The Committee recommends that the Secretariat continue to co-operate with all international government and non-governmental organizations which may contribute to the fight against illicit traffic.

- (iii) The Committee considers that, in order to create the climate of mutual understanding and international solidarity essential for the achievement of its objectives, public information campaigns should be conducted, firstly in the countries calling for the return or restitution of cultural property, so that the whole population may realize the importance of protecting and preserving its artistic and historical heritage; and secondly in the countries to which requests are addressed, so as to make clear the justification for such requests and to dissipate any misunderstandings still existing on this subject. Educational and cultural institutions should be associated in this action.
- (iv) The Committee considers it necessary to establish a standard form for recording information relating to requests for the

return or restitution of cultural property and for the observations made by the Member States to which such requests are addressed. A draft form should be prepared by the Secretariat, submitted to the members of the Committee for approval and distributed to all Member States and Associate Members of Unesco. The final draft of the form would be adopted by the Committee at its second session, when the Committee will also decide on the procedure for its use.

- (v) The Committee recommends that when an offer or a request concerning the return or restitution of cultural property is the object of bilateral contacts the States concerned should inform, as rapidly as possible and through the Secretariat, the members of the Committee, as well as many other Member State concerned, of the progress made.
- (vi) In view of the relative scarcity of possible funding in the field of museum development, the Committee expresses the wish that all forms of co-operation be co-ordinated by the Member States concerned for strengthening national capacity (expert field trips, training of specialized personnel, supply of equipment, etc.) in order to obtain maximum impact with regard to adequate material, technical and legal facilities for reception.
- (vii) The Committee takes note of the proposals of the Director-General for promoting the return or restitution of cultural property to its countries of origin as set out in draft document 21C/5 and, in the light of Article 4.5 of its terms of reference, endorses these proposals.

1. Unesco-General Conference document 21C/83.

The Museum of Tahiti and the Islands—towards realistic policies and practice

Anne Lavondès

The Museum of Tahiti and the Islands at Papeete was established in 1975 by the elected political authorities in French Polynesia as an important public institution for the implementation of the cultural policy of the territory. The financing and administration of the museum are the responsibility of the territory, while temporary technical assistance, in the person of the curator, is provided by the French Government. The present curator, Anne Lavondès, has been extremely active in attempting to secure the return of Tahitian objects to build up the museum's collection. An agreement with the museums of France to facilitate loans and

deposits of Pacific objects is currently being negotiated. While the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands itself will be described in a future issue, Mrs Lavondès shares with us here some practical lessons gleaned from her own experiences.

The nature of the response to the appeals launched by Unesco since 1976 and work carried out by ICOM on the subject of the return and restitution of cultural property show that if positive results are to be achieved on behalf of small museums, such as the museum in Tahiti, then the situation needs first of all to be analysed in a lucid and prag-

matic way, as it is useless to merely repeat demands which are good in principle, but which always meet with negative answers.

It is striking to learn in those countries where there are numerous museums, and objects are piled up in the storerooms, how much indifference and ignorance there is, whether intentional or not, of the existence of small museums in tropical countries, for example, and of their often total poverty. Concrete information therefore needs to be spread about these unknown and obscure museums, and also about the important rea-

sons for their existence and what their real needs are. Nor should it be forgotten that it was not so long ago—though it is to be hoped that such times are now past—that some of the great museums themselves brought out of these countries ancient and ethnographical objects.

Other factors also play their part in obstructing the return of cultural property: the longer established the museum and the richer it is in its possessions, the stronger is its reluctance, as if the strength of tradition gave greater importance to the task of conservation, rather than to that of displaying the works of art and making them accessible to a wider public. It is, therefore, often more effective to turn to the less famous museums or to those whose collections of 'exotic' ethnographical objects are somewhat marginal.

In some countries, such as France, public collections are inalienable, i.e. the objects cannot be given away, sold or exchanged. They can, however, be temporarily loaned or deposited for a long period.

Some pre-conditions for loans or deposits

It is up to the requesting museums to show themselves to be trustworthy and to provide definite proof of their suitability in every way to receive such precious objects. Experience shows that this is not easy, and that you cannot spread information about a museum, even if it provides good standards of conservation, in the same way as you can make yourself known through publications. I have realized on many occasions that, in spite of everything I had told them beforehand, museum curators or private collectors only began to consider making loans to the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands after they had visited it.

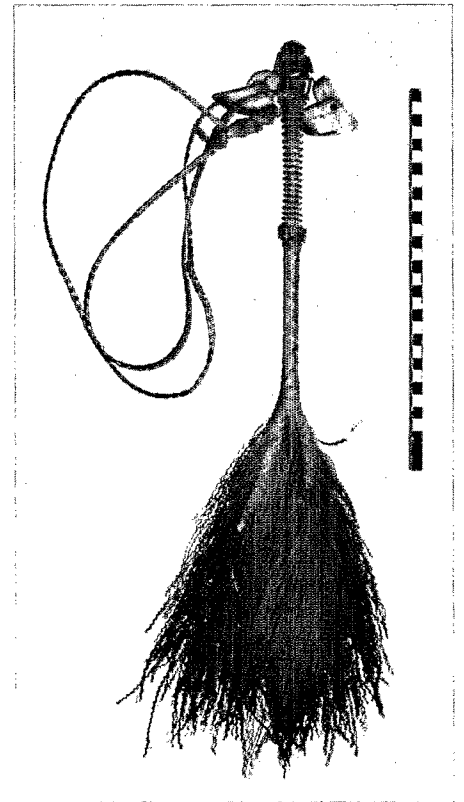
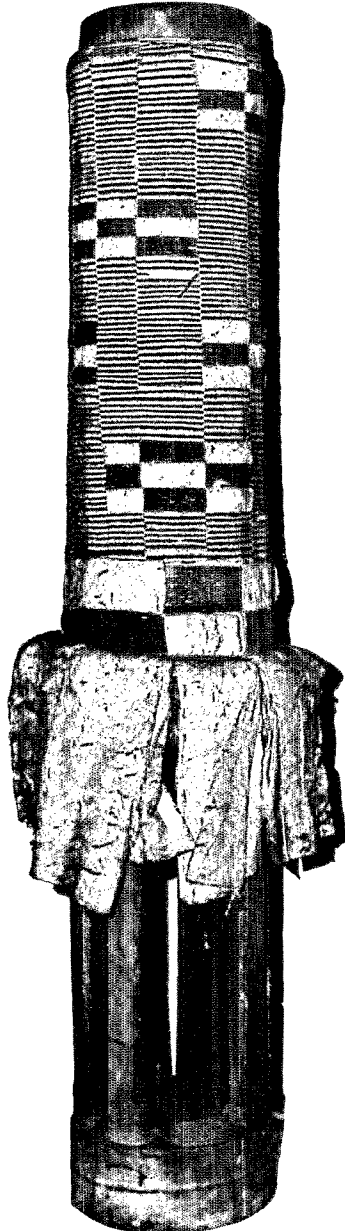
Once the curator of the requesting museum has provided the necessary proof, he must then know exactly what he wants. For the time being, it would seem totally unrealistic and illusory to suppose that the museums are going to provide lists of their possessions and make offers on the basis of these lists, even if there are some remarkable exceptions to this rule. I have myself compiled inventories of Polynesian objects that are to be found in museums, particularly in French museums. As a rule they include, in addition to photographs and drawings, information giving the identification, localization, description and size of the object and, as much as I can discover during a first approach, about the object's history. Additional information may be added at a later date so as to complete the documentation. Several of these inventories have already been published. This preliminary work is very important: mainly because it contributes to the task of making a general inventory of cultural property, but also because we thereby learn where Polynesian collections are to be found.

It seems to me that it is one of the fundamental rights of the curators of newly established or growing museums that they should know where and how objects originating in

their region are conserved. It also seems reasonable that their present owners should be responsible and answerable for the proper conservation of such objects. This side of the question, which is extremely important, has not perhaps been sufficiently emphasized and experience shows that just because an object is in a European or American museum, it is not necessarily well looked after. Many examples to the contrary might be cited, and it can certainly be stated that henceforth *some objects would be very much safer in their country of origin*. It is therefore high time, if it is not yet too late, that those countries well endowed with artistic treasures became aware of this problem, which is their problem too, and showed themselves to be as uncompromising about conservation standards in their own countries as they are about those in the requesting countries. Otherwise, they should let objects which are gravely at risk freely leave the country, if they are not capable of protecting them.

Leaving aside the large ethnographical

museums, which normally provide adequate information, too much reliance should not be placed on the existing documentation for the identification and localization of Polynesian objects. The task of completing this documentation in an efficient manner is a service which the scientific staff of the requesting museums may be able to perform. Thus, the descriptive lists of Polynesian objects which have been compiled by the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands, together with the accompanying photographs, have been sent first and foremost to the museums which own the objects concerned. This is a way, perhaps of some psychological relevance, of not appearing solely in the role of a suppliant before discussions begin. These inventories also provide an opportunity for fruitful exchanges of information with museum curators and staff, who thus attain a better understanding of the difficulties facing small, newly established museums. I should like to thank here all the curators who have been so helpful whenever I have undertaken this task.



MUSEUM OF TAHITI AND THE ISLANDS.
Fly-whisk from the Marquesas, in wood and coconut fibre with mother-of-pearl pendants, on deposit from the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.

[Photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.]

Drum from the Marquesas Islands on deposit from the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille (France). Wood covered with *tapa* and ornamental ligatures in tressed coconut fibre.
[Photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.]

The examination of the collections in the museums themselves, rather than the mere inspection of abstract lists, makes it easier to narrow down choices and make reasonable requests. At the beginning, we avoided asking for very well-known objects, or for pieces which the museum takes particular pride in displaying. Most of the objects which we have requested, though not always with success, have been in the reserve collections and sometimes even their curators do not know what they are. In such cases I have had personally to identify them as Polynesian, and it has happened that some pieces that had been put to one side, as it were, have turned out in fact to be extremely valuable!

The history of European museums and of ethnography, which was for a long time regarded as part of the natural sciences, explains why so-called 'exotic' objects collected during scientific expeditions or by individual travellers, when they are not collected together in the large ethnographical museums, are dispersed all over the place and are often to be found in natural history museums where they do not really belong.

Much greater specialization by museums nowadays has resulted in these exotic objects being relegated to the reserve collections, as they no longer fit in with the collections of European regional ethnography or with painting galleries, in the many museums that are devoted more and more exclusively to the fine arts.

Even if these marginal collections sometimes suddenly become of interest to their curators or to the local communities who own them, as a result of requests having been made, I think that it is among such collections, and also in the well-stocked reserve collections of the large ethnographical museums, that objects to be requested as a priority should be sought, rather than among the finest pieces which have been on display for a long time and are known by all and sundry as belonging to such and such a museum. To locate these marginal collections takes a lot of time and work, as they are often not very well known. Mention should be made here of the excellent work performed by Mrs Laroche, of the Musée de l'Homme (Museum of Mankind) in Paris, to rediscover Polynesian collections existing in France. Her work has served as a starting-point for my own investigations.

Tahitian strategies

In undertaking these investigations on behalf of the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands, my main aim was to get back for the Polynesians objects which they had otherwise had little opportunity of seeing. I also wanted gradually to try to fill in some of the enormous gaps in our own museum's collection. I very much agree with J. Specht 'that more attention should be given to items of more mundane nature, especially those illustrating the economic and technological aspects of each cultural heritage' (*Museum*, Vol. xxxi, No. 1, 1979). But one of the difficulties arises from the fact

that, for Polynesia at least, it is rarely the most common objects which have been collected by sailors or missionaries. It is, for example, almost impossible to find an ancient Tahitian paddle, however mundane such an object might seem. On the other hand, however, the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands has received on indefinite deposit, even without having requested them, some very beautiful so-called 'ceremonial' paddles, which are completely carved, from the Austral Islands. It is the Musée de la Marine in Paris which has been responsible for this particular loan and we would like to extend our thanks again to the former curator, Luc Marie Bayle, as well as to the present curator, Commander F. Bellec.

At the moment, the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands also has on display thirty-seven remarkable ancient Polynesian objects from the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lille (France). They have been deposited with us for two years, under contract, and we are particularly grateful to Hervé Oursel, the curator of the museums in Lille, to the Lille City Council and to Mr Landais, Director of the Museums of France, for their understanding and kindness. We should also like to thank TENETE, the local ecumenical association, which has presented to the museum on indefinite loan several very beautiful objects that it had been given by the Maison Généraliste des Pères de Picpus in Rome and the Société des Missions Évangéliques in Paris.

As has been already stated, it is not possible to obtain objects from public collections in France other than on the basis of loans or deposits, either for a definite or indefinite period. This procedure would appear to be the best policy for us in any case, as it has numerous advantages: it does not suddenly deprive museums of objects which in some cases they have possessed for a very long time; it reassures the depositors, who can check that the objects are conserved under the best of conditions, and they also have the opportunity to study how the objects stand up to different climatic conditions; it also provides greater reassurance for the curators receiving the objects, as it allows them to send some of them back before the end of the contract, if that proves necessary for their protection; and finally it allows small museums without large financial resources to display for the benefit of the local people a large part of their heritage, thanks to these renewable deposits which only entail limited expenditure. It should be stressed that it would be of great help to these small museums if the lending countries were generous enough to bear the transport and insurance costs, or even if this were undertaken by international bodies such as Unesco.

This solution of making loans and deposits could be regarded as a preliminary test for both types of museum: a compromise between 'all or nothing', which should satisfy all the parties, at least during the first stage, while at the same time revealing in technical terms under what climatic conditions it is reasonable to conserve or exhibit particular objects.

Illicit export

'Reassurance' is to some extent the watchword of the policy which we are trying to put into practice and which is also being applied in another field, that of illicit export. While appropriate legislation is an absolute necessity, reliable information is equally important, and for years we have been attempting to persuade local collectors that they have nothing to fear from the museum and that we are not seeking to take away their objects; this argument has often been used to justify the sale of objects to passing visitors. ('It's better to sell them than have them stolen.') One of the approaches we have chosen is to help collectors by providing them with descriptive inventories and photographs of their collections. During the last few years many of them have preferred to deposit their collections with the museum in order to ensure their safety. For any such deposit, however small it may be, a written contract is drawn up and, at the same time, the owner receives an illustrated, descriptive inventory of the collection deposited. Objects deposited in this way may possibly be integrated into the permanent exhibitions, but in any case they are displayed at least once in a temporary exhibition. Other collectors wishing to sell their objects have offered them first of all to the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands, which likewise gives priority to local sellers when their prices are reasonable.

Since the 1920s numerous scientific—many archaeological—expeditions have visited the different Polynesian archipelagos. Archaeological objects and also documents (lists of their genealogies written down by the Polynesians) were exported for the purpose of scientific study by research workers. Not only do the results of the work carried out by these various expeditions not always reach Tahiti, but in addition it is often very difficult, if not impossible, to get back the original documents or the objects which were removed. As an illustration, I should like to quote the 'frank' answer given in 1979 to a letter in which I had asked the American Museum of Natural History in New York to return some objects, at least as a loan, and in particular some pieces of pottery found during excavations in the Marquesas Islands, which are very important for an understanding and for the public display of Polynesian prehistory. The letter stated, 'I am afraid that we will be unable to grant the permission you ask... This department has a standing policy against the lending of previously illustrated materials...'

The acute paradox in this situation is that the objects, which were courteously requested for loan, legitimately and legally belong to the Territory of French Polynesia. Far too often objects are only partially returned after they have been studied and this depends on the unilateral decisions of the foreign research bodies concerned.

Without dwelling further on the struggles ahead to obtain the return of this type of cultural property, let us at any rate hope that the time is past when, even at the scientific level,

the underprivileged countries were regarded as places to be exploited, from which things were taken and nothing was ever given in return; let us hope that we can now look back on the whole period as no more than an unpleasant historical memory.¹

A judicious purchasing policy

Another aspect of the strategy followed by the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands for the return of cultural property is its purchasing policy. It is well known that Polynesian objects of art and ethnography are extremely expensive, and this means, once again, that choices have to be made. First of all, we prefer to acquire, at auctions held outside the territory, ethnographical objects to fill in the gaps in our collection, rather than to obtain a unique and very spectacular item, which would use up all our funds at one go. For us the ideal situation is to be able to deal directly with the owners of collections which are up for sale. Success comes more easily if proper guarantees are provided concerning methods of payment and the safety standards which the museum can offer for the conservation and display of the objects. Mention should be made here of the efforts made by the territory and the clear-sightedness of the elected representatives, who have allowed the museum to borrow the money necessary to buy in succession two parts of the Hooper Collection: the first including items from the Society Islands, and the second of objects which come from the Marquesas and Austral Islands. These acquisitions were possible thanks to the understanding of the owners of the collection, particularly Kenneth Hooper and Steven Phelps, and their representative, Hermione Waterfield.

It may also happen that, when auctions are held, we may be able to gain the confidence of the owners of objects, to the extent that they agree to deposit some items with the museum. Sometimes, it is the owners themselves who suggest this, especially if they already know the museum as a result of having visited it beforehand.

With regard to the very beautiful items which we are unable to acquire and are unlikely to receive on loan, one of the ways of still displaying them to the people of the Territory would be to have good copies made of them. It would seem to me to be only fair if the museums that own such items were themselves to provide copies for the requesting museums. The organization of such programmes could be spread over several years.

A practical solution

I should like finally to put forward a solution that seems to me to be worth while, at least initially, for small museums with very limited financial resources. It is possible to arrange an interesting presentation of the local culture cheaply and with limited risks, by displaying maps, photographs, drawings, explanatory boards, natural-history samples, archaeological objects, copies of ethnographical objects, etc., in an exciting and attractive way. I will take

as an example the small Museum of Easter Island, which offers both the Easter Islanders themselves and passing tourists a panorama of this fascinating island, which is unfortunately all too often forgotten at international conferences. At the same time, these museums should concentrate all their efforts on fitting out special premises for temporary exhibitions, designed according to the international standards for museum and suitable for housing, under excellent conditions of safety, genuine objects from other museums, either on loan or longer-term deposit. Such exhibitions would principally be for the benefit of the local people, who would thus finally recover possession of their heritage.

I would not wish the above remarks to be regarded as a rigid programme or a list of definitive recommendations. Other projects are under way, following different strategies. What I have tried to show here is that with regard to the return and restitution of cultural property, as in many other fields, it is necessary to display not only imagination, but also realism and a great deal of persistence.

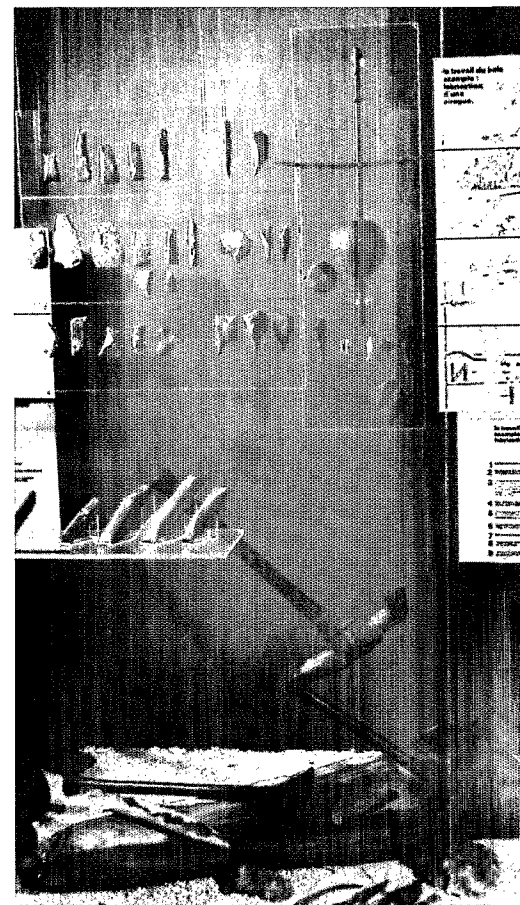
[Translated from French]

1. Cf. *Study of Current Policies concerning Archaeological Excavations; Suggestions for the Housing of Objects in the Countries in which they were Discovered*, carried out by Unesco in 1978, in association with the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS) and the International Council of Museums. Unesco document CC/MD/40, available upon request from the Unesco/ICOM Documentation Centre, 1 rue Miollis, 75015 Paris.

ANNE LAVONDÈS has a degree in classics, post-graduate diploma and doctorate in ethnology. In 1960 and 1961 organized a permanent exhibition on Malagasy traditional art in Antananarivo (Madagascar) and collected items for the University of Madagascar. Technical agent in ethnology at the Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer (ORSTOM), Paris, and its centre at Papeete, since 1963. Technical assistant at the former Museum of Papeete, then curator of the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands when it was established in 1975. Director of this museum since 1976 and responsible for the organization of rooms open to the public, for conservation and administration. She has written articles on the art and material culture of Eastern Polynesia, and also inventories and descriptions of Polynesian objects conserved in museums, particularly in France.

Society Island adzes from the Hooper Collection purchased by the museum—the largest one was probably collected by Captain Cook himself.

[Photo: Museum of Tahiti and the Islands.]



Opinion

Malama Meleisea



'Culture is not something you can eat.' Some thoughts on cultural preservation and development in Oceania¹

MALAMA MELEISEA was born in Western Samoa. He is a graduate of the University of Papua New Guinea. Former Assistant Head of the Western Samoa Department of Youth, Sport and Culture. Consultant to Unesco on oral history (under the project for the study of Oceanic cultures); co-ordinator of the project for writing the oral history of Western Samoa. Working on a Ph.D in history at Macquarie University, Australia. Lecturer in history and politics at the University of the South Pacific.

I grew up in a village on the south coast of the island of Upolu in Western Samoa. The first time I ever saw a town or travelled in a motor vehicle was when I was about 9 years old, when I was taken by bus along the long, bumpy road to Apia. Both the road itself and the bus were novelties introduced to our district when I was a small child.

Two of my earliest memories are of things which I think very few Samoan children today experience and I think they will be the poorer for it.

The first was when I was the foster-child of my grandfather's sister. I was the fourth of sixteen children born to my mother and father, and they sent my younger brother and me to live with our great-aunt. We fetched and carried for her and kept her company, and she, in return, fed us on the mangoes and seafood she collected, and on the good food sent to her by her relatives. She was a very skilled and wise old lady, and every night before we slept, she told us *fagogo*; these were stories of the history and traditions of our village and family, retold for the ears of small children. Now I can tell them to my children. If it was not for her, I would never have heard them.

After she died, my brother and I carried our mats about 200 metres across the village to the house of our parents and lived with them again. Because there were so many of us, and because my mother and father had so many public responsibilities, we had to work very hard, in our food plantation, collecting seafood, cooking and looking after our younger brothers and sisters and our family houses. But one day I was permitted to join a traditional Samoan bonito fishing expedition. My father's eldest brother and other chiefs of our village were master fishermen. They knew how to make pearlshell and turtleshell fish-hooks and lures, how to make fishing canoes, how to navigate the ocean and all the ancient Samoan techniques of fishing.

On this occasion we set out beyond the reef into the ocean until all we could see of the land was the mountain tops. There was a fleet of about eight canoes, each carrying a man and a boy. After we tracked a school of bonito and made our catch we returned at sunset. We stopped outside the reef and shared a fish, while the master fisherman ceremonially divided the catch among the households of the village.

Although my great-aunt's stories and my fishing trip are only two of the many good memories I have of my childhood, I mention them because the stories are seldom told today, and the bonito fleets have been abandoned in favour of mechanized commercial fishing boats. Knowledge and skills acquired over hundreds of years have almost vanished in my lifetime, in my village.

I was sent to school because my parents, like most of their generation, wanted us to have a *papalagi* (Western) education. They were sure it would lead to a better life for us. It certainly led to a different life, but I don't think it is better.

All the work and traditional skills Samoan children were expected to perform or learn had to be fitted in with the school programme. I was fortunate to live in a village governed mainly by customary law, in which all the houses were of traditional materials and design except for our two churches and the houses of their ministers. The school was near by, so I was able to learn most of the traditional manners and skills of my elders, though not to their standards. Learning in Samoa is considered to be a lifelong process and does not allow for the interruptions of going to school or going to work in town. I was taught to respect our customs, traditions and knowledge, to consider them of primary importance. The *papalagi* education I was rather painfully getting at the same time was never considered a substitute but only an addition. My father was one of the few leaders in our

1. The views expressed in this column are a condensed version of a communication presented by the author at a Consultation of Specialists on Ways and Means of Safeguarding the Cultural Heritage of the Pacific Region that was organized by ICOM on behalf of Unesco at Papeete, Tahiti, in December 1980 (see also the article by Anne Lavondès, in the 'Return and restitution of cultural property' section above).

district who had obtained a Western education. It did not seem to create any conflicts for him between old and new ways and so I never expected that they would for me.

Now I have talked about some of my own experience, I will make my first proposition. Most of my generation grew up under a democratic government in a politically independent state. For some other islands this came a little later or is still awaited. But we all expect the governments we elect to give us 'development': imported food, aid for projects, Western or overseas education, foreign experts and 'pie in the sky'. If our governments don't give us our dreams after a decent period in office, we will not re-elect them. Opposition governments will face the same expectations from their electors.

In order to stay in power, governments will give priority to aid and development which attempts to improve people's material conditions. By improved material conditions, people mean those that resemble those of the developed countries. The average person will take the view that culture is not a part of development, that it is something they already have. Some may feel they have too much of it and that it is standing in the way of their getting richer. Culture is not something you can eat. Accordingly, a government that gives this thing called culture high priority in aid requests will be criticized. The exception will be if cultural projects are part of the infrastructure of a national tourist industry.

My second proposition is that culture cannot be preserved only by museums, 'model villages', ethnographic studies and the like. In this sense we are talking about culture as an aspect of history. Since I am a historian, I think history is very important and I am in favour of every measure that can record our past and preserve its material objects. History is a major part of every culture. The loss of oral traditions, artefacts, records of past events, art and music can only result in the spiritual impoverishment of a nation. But culture cannot be preserved by trying to make people re-create and imitate past forms. History is the heritage and the tradition from which living culture grows and develops creatively. Access to, and knowledge of, earlier cultural forms and patterns are important to ensure the continuity and development of a cultural tradition, which gives meaning to people's lives. Therefore museums, archives, collections of recorded oral traditions and literature, and libraries are important. They could be the foundations of maintaining a living, unique culture for each Pacific island nation.

To restate my two propositions: governments give low priority to cultural projects and programmes because they are not perceived as part of economic development, but the lack of cultural centres and museums deprives Pacific islanders of the heritage to insure a creative cultural continuity.

Most of the museums that exist today in the region were established by colonial

governments, and criticisms of them point out that most are located in the capital cities. They do not, therefore, attract 'ordinary' people because these people are unaware of their existence or purposes, are far away from them or just not interested in them. Some critics even suggest that they are merely a kind of compensation by colonialists for what they have had a hand in destroying. I would reply that, whatever criticisms are made, at least these museums exist. They are there; they are building collections of historical material, they are undertaking or encouraging cultural research, and in some cases they are encouraging the work and providing an outlet for local artists, craftsmen and craftswomen.

In my opinion, for our region, the ideal arrangement would be the multi-purpose cultural-centre concept, such as has been proposed by Albert Wendt for Western Samoa. The concept included a museum and archives and a link to the national library, as well as a performing-arts centre, and handicraft and display centre. With the exception of the museum and archive building, traditional building would be incorporated into the centre. The ideal national museum for Pacific-island countries would also have a special relationship with the educational system of the country and function as a learning resource to instruct children in their history and cultural heritage. The museum should house a permanent collection of artefacts which illustrate the whole material culture of the people in pre-contact times. It should contain a display of natural history and cover Oceanic prehistory so as to illustrate the historical relationship between Pacific cultures. Both oral and material culture must be emphasized with programmes to record and preserve oral history and traditions, songs, chants and oratory.

In conclusion I would like to raise one further problem in relation to cultural preservation and development. I will go back again to where I began. Since it has come to be the administrative headquarters of our district, my own village has been chosen for a large number of studies. Geographers, agronomists, economists, anthropologists and so on have all looked at particular aspects of a community of about 300 people from the perspective of their own discipline. The economist and geographer can talk about the incomes and economic resources of the village, the agronomist about the various economic development projects, the anthropologist about social structure. But since their work has been separate, they offer no explanation of why a serious overall economic and social cultural decline, a decline in the quality of our lives, has occurred since I was a child. Perhaps the separate disciplinary academic approach is appropriate for large complex societies. But in the Pacific islands we cannot separate economic, social and environmental things. The causes and effects of change are cultural.

I am opposed to a concept of culture in our region which only focuses on the arts. Our

culture is everything we do and think, and looked at in this way, it is *really* 'something we can eat'! Our culture is the possibility for us to become much more self-reliant and self-respecting than we are at present. It is the foundations and the roots of our lives. Therefore, when we aim at preserving our historical resources and protecting and developing our living culture, we cannot afford narrow specialization. Our cultural centres and museums will have to draw together the social, economic, technological, political, historical and environmental aspects of our cultures and see them as interwoven, like the strands of a mat, to make a whole thing.

Forum of ideas

As the only truly international medium of information and reflection on museums of all kinds, should not *Museum* also be a forum of direct exchange of opinion among museum professionals? Successive editors have on several occasions invited readers to send in their critical comments, suggestions, etc., but it is only now—perhaps as a result of the magazine's increased circulation to museum professionals throughout the world—that we are beginning to receive this type of contribution. We publish below the letters received from one motivated reader, in the hope that many more will follow.

In September 1980 Jean Yves Veillard, curator of the Musée de Bretagne (Museum of Brittany) at Rennes, France, sent us the following letter:

In his editorial Georges Henri Rivière expressed the wish that *Museum* (Vol. XXXII. No. 1/2 'Museums and Interdisciplinarity') would stimulate reactions on the part of readers.

I should like to share with you my reaction to this issue, I mean to say all issues of *Museum* which present new museographical achievements. It would be highly desirable that a technical form—something like the biographies of authors at the end of the issue—made it possible to judge the operational aspect of these creations and compare them (investment, operating budget, size of staff). While a few authors provide some indications in passing (e.g. Gunther Viohl) the rest say nothing about an aspect which—and none of my colleagues will contradict me on this—once the ideological choices have been made, determines whether a museum will be large or small, luxurious or simple. Having visited the Musée International de l'Horlogerie at La Chaux-de-Fonds I would be pleased to know the

breakdown of costs among the different items (the building, its fitting out, graphic design conception, etc.). I know that one might put forward objections of a diplomatic nature to such objective veracity between figures, but in a magazine such as *Museum* diplomacy should be relegated to the cloakroom.

We thanked Mr Veillard for his most pertinent suggestion and asked him if he could suggest a detailed breakdown of costs, a sort of 'grid' for the technical form he advocates. In October 1980 he sent the following proposed 'grid', specifying that it needed to be completed and improved:

TECHNICAL FORM		
	New building	Renovated old building
<i>Total Cost</i>		
<i>Cost of Building</i>		
Masonry and plaster work		
Carpentry		
Paintwork and flooring		
Roofing		
Electric wiring		
Heating		
Security		
<i>Cost of museographic fittings</i>		
Show-cases, pedestals, suspensions		
Lighting		
Graphics (wall-panels, maps, etc.)		
Audio-visuals		
<i>Total surface area</i>		
Surface area—reception and extension activities		
Display		
Storage		
Technical areas		
Offices		
<i>Annual budget</i>		
Investments		
Operating budget		
Purchases		
Other		
<i>Staff</i>		
Administrative		
Scientific		
Security		
Technical		

Reader, what do you think?

[Translated from French]

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