

# *Museum*

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## **Museology in Hungary**

# **museum**

No. 140 (Vol. XXXV, No. 4), 1983

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*Cover photo: Hungarian peasant embroidery on canvas, plaited stitch—detail of a pillow-case from the region of Orosháza in south-central Hungary: eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. In the collection of the Ethnographical Museum of Budapest. [Photo by Tamás Kovacs, published in Edit Fél, Broderies anciennes sur toile, Budapest, Corvina, 1976.]*

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# Museology in Hungary

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## *In this issue...*

This issue is devoted to museology in Hungary. It is not an inventory of museums in that country, for the essentially descriptive approach can no longer be advocated by our magazine.<sup>1</sup> Easy communications, the greatly increased production and exchange of professional information and, of course, expanding tourism have brought each country's cultural assets within the reach of all who are interested enough to seek them out.

But our Hungarian colleagues, like many whose languages are spoken by relatively small numbers of people confined practically to one country, were eager to share with the international community some of the ideas, methods and experiences which stamp a distinct identity on their museums.

Hungarian museum professionals are certainly among the most highly informed as far as activities in the rest of the world are concerned (see article by István Éri, p. 221), for they have overcome their linguistic isolation with extraordinary determination. But the information flows mainly in one direction. The visitor to Hungary is soon surprised by the originality and vigour of the museum life he sees, based on the long-standing traditions of Central European humanism and a keen awareness of the Hungarian nation's specific contribution to universal civilization.

In Hungary's museums today the legacy of past traditions has been put to work in a new socio-economic context which itself is changing rapidly. Many of the resulting developments are responses to problems that are shared by museums throughout the world, but in dealing with these, the authors of the articles below have made every attempt to emphasize the specificity of their solutions. Other developments are more original—documentation services, the network of county museums, or the relationship between museums and private collectors—and are explored below for the new ideas they may provide.<sup>2</sup>

Regardless of the attractions of an issue of this kind, it is not our intention to extend such coverage to each of Unesco's 160 Member States. It would be both impossible and unwarranted to do so. Another thirty years would be needed in order to do justice to all! And in so doing we would in fact belie *Museum's* ambition to bring its readers, in each issue, at least a cross-section if not a microcosm of the world of museums, a world in which reflection, invention and progress know no frontiers.

1. See for example the 1962 special issue 'Hungarian Museums', Vol. XV, No. 4.

2. We should like to express our gratitude to the Hungarian National Commission for Unesco, particularly its Secretary-General, Mrs Mária Salgó, and to the Hungarian National Committee of ICOM, headed by Dr Ferenc Fülep, whose constructive participation at every stage has greatly benefited the preparation of this issue.



HUNGARIAN NATIONAL GALLERY, Budapest.  
Former throne room of the royal palace,  
which now houses fine fourteenth- and  
fifteenth-century altarpieces.  
[Photo: Éva Atjós.]

### *...and the next...*

- 1984 No. 141 (Vol. XXXVI, No. 1): mixed issue  
 No. 142 (Vol. XXXVI, No. 2): mixed issue  
 No. 143 (Vol. XXXVI, No. 3): museums of agriculture  
 No. 144 (Vol. XXXVI, No. 4): the museum as educator
- 1985 No. 145 (Vol. XXXVII, No. 1): show-cases and containers  
 No. 146 (Vol. XXXVII, No. 2): mixed issue  
 No. 147 (Vol. XXXVII, No. 3): science and technology:  
   grappling with world problems  
 No. 148 (Vol. XXXVII, No. 4): museums twenty-five years  
   later...

Readers, for these issues and beyond, your queries, comments and contributions will be more than welcome.

JANUS PANNONIUS MUSEUM, Pécs. Sculpture from the twelfth-century cathedral of Pécs displayed in the Romanesque sculpture gallery. [Photo: Katalin Nadór.]

## *Museums and national identity*

László Selmeczi

Studied folklore, archaeology and history at the Eötvös Lorand University, Budapest, 1965–71. Dissertation on folklore in 1971 and higher degree in 1977. On the staff of and later director of the Damjanich János Museum at Szolnole from 1965 to 1981. Director of the Museums Division of the Ministry of Culture and Education since 1981. Research on the archaeology of the late Middle Ages. Author of several studies on Hun and Iazyge archaeological remains and museological theory.

When Count Ferenc Széchenyi established the Hungarian National Museum on 25 November 1802, the museum in Europe, as an independent institution with its own tasks and functions, had already developed a number of traditions of its own. The comparatively late development of capitalism in Hungary explains the fact that this institution, which embodied the values of a social class, and the development of museology in general, had not kept pace with European trends.

The foundation of the Hungarian National Museum was the culmination of a cultural movement that opposed the Hapsburg monarchy's policy of oppression, advocating restoration of the national language in place of Latin, dissemination of progressive ideas, fostering of national culture, and respect for and development of national traditions.

During the next twenty-five years no other museum came into being, and the history of Hungarian museology was that of the National Museum. Until 1867, the year of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise and the defeat of the revolution and of the struggle for national independence, there were few proposals to establish museums.

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise favoured the development of capitalism in Hungary and had a beneficial effect on museum development. Between 1867 and 1895 fifteen new museums were established. From 1896 to 1905, years marked by the celebrations surrounding the thousandth anniversary of the Hungarian Conquest (A.D. 896), thirteen new museums were founded on Hungarian territory, and thirty-six further museums were subsequently set up on

territory given up under the Treaty of Trianon. The supervision of the museums, the granting of subsidies, and co-ordination of the activities of provincial museums with those of Budapest made it necessary to establish a central professional organization within the government, and the Central Museums board was set up in 1890. This board unified museological activities in Hungary by organizing training courses for experts, and by introducing a single museological filing system, promoting museological education and formulating mandatory standards for museum equipment.

### *Evolving features*

With few exceptions, the network of provincial museums set up during this period still forms the basis of the present-day system of museums and similar institutions in Hungary. These museums house complex historical, archaeological and ethnographical collections, collections of fine arts, applied arts and natural science, and the nucleus of museological science libraries.

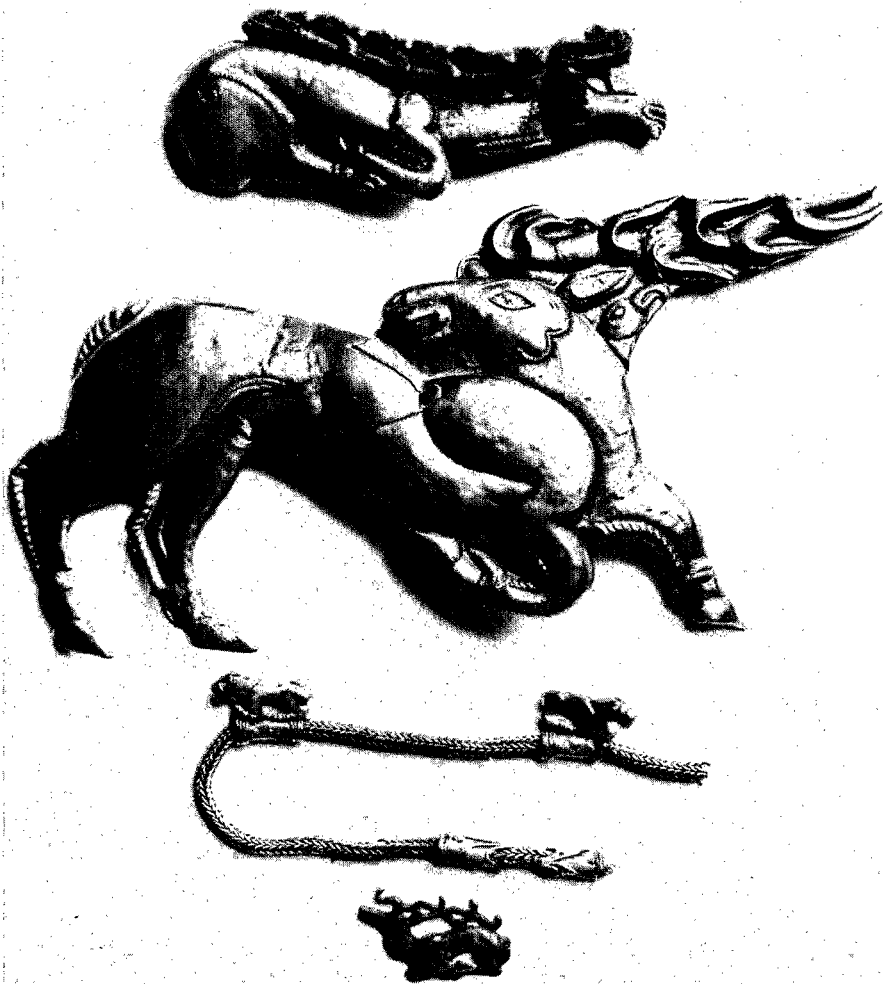
The creation of the Hungarian National Museum was followed, about a century later, by the establishment of 'small national museums' at regional, county and town level. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, people had begun to be discontented with the analytical methods and synthetic nature of the European national museum; the specialized museum came to be considered the ideal. The collections of the Hungarian National Museum were moved from the parent institution and housed in what



subsequently became a series of independent specialized museums. For this reason, the network of 'national museums' is partially based on certain collections of the Hungarian National Museum, which today contains only archaeological, numismatic and historical collections.

The new museums bear witness to the determination to modernize characteristic of the end of the nineteenth century. The buildings of the National Museum, the Museum of Applied Art, the Fine Arts Museum and many others, both county and municipal, are in the style of the times; and the same applies to the scientific work carried out in them, which was fully in line with the scientific requirements of the day. Once the nineteenth-century museums of Hungary had been established, they concerned themselves to a considerable extent with education. The education they provided, which frequently ran counter to the officially accepted ideology, propagated a progressive, democratic concept of life.

Scythian gold reindeer in the collection of the Hungarian National Museum.



The first dictatorship of the proletariat, the 'Hungarian Soviet Republic', came to power in 1919 and brought about a fundamental qualitative change, at least theoretically, in Hungarian museology. The aim of the educational policy pursued by the proletarian republic was to raise the cultural level of the entire population. Cultural institutions, including museums, were reorganized with a view to using them to encourage and satisfy the aesthetic and cultural requirements of the working class and to make that class aware of its historical heritage. Other activities were aimed at transforming the museums into workshops of progressive science. The ambitious projects of the proletarian republic made an impression on the most eminent of museum experts.

After the downfall of the 'Hungarian Soviet Republic', however, the capitalist restoration (1920–45) imposed a very different policy on museological activities in Hungary, which had an effect on all the activities of the national museum network. The museums entered upon a period of stagnation. In 1935, the total number of museums was forty-six, of which twenty-eight had been established in the nineteenth century and eighteen at the beginning of the twentieth.

Fundamentally, the conditions under which they worked remained the same. The state subsidies did not allow for many acquisitions, and the Fascist ideology of the period assigned no special role to museums and also placed restrictions on the forms of scientific popularization the museums traditionally carried out.

Thus the Hungarian National Museum organized only one exhibition during the twenty-five years of the Horthy regime; this was in 1938 to mark the visit of King Victor Emmanuel of Italy to Hungary.

### *A fresh start*

The liberation of the country marked the beginning of a new, qualitatively different epoch in the development of Hungarian museology. Decree No. 13 of 1949 laid the foundations of socialist museology in Hungary and defined the lines along which it should work and the tasks it should perform. The only solution for the outdated Hungarian museums, which had been ruined by the Second World War, was the nationalization of all collections except those belonging to the Church. The decree also defined the various types and categories of institutions and local and regional museums.



Between 1949 and 1958, the number of museums in Budapest increased from fourteen to eighteen; over the same period the number in the provinces rose to thirty-seven. According to a survey made in 1960, there were ten museums in Budapest and forty-nine in the provinces under the authority of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

In 1969, thirty other museums were being financed by local municipalities. At that time, the number of museologists working in Budapest was 267, and in the provinces 89; yet some museums had only one museologist on their staff. Fifteen counties had no art historians, fourteen no natural science experts, and in six counties there was not a single archaeologist, while two were without ethnographers. The statistics make no mention of museological historians or public relations officers.

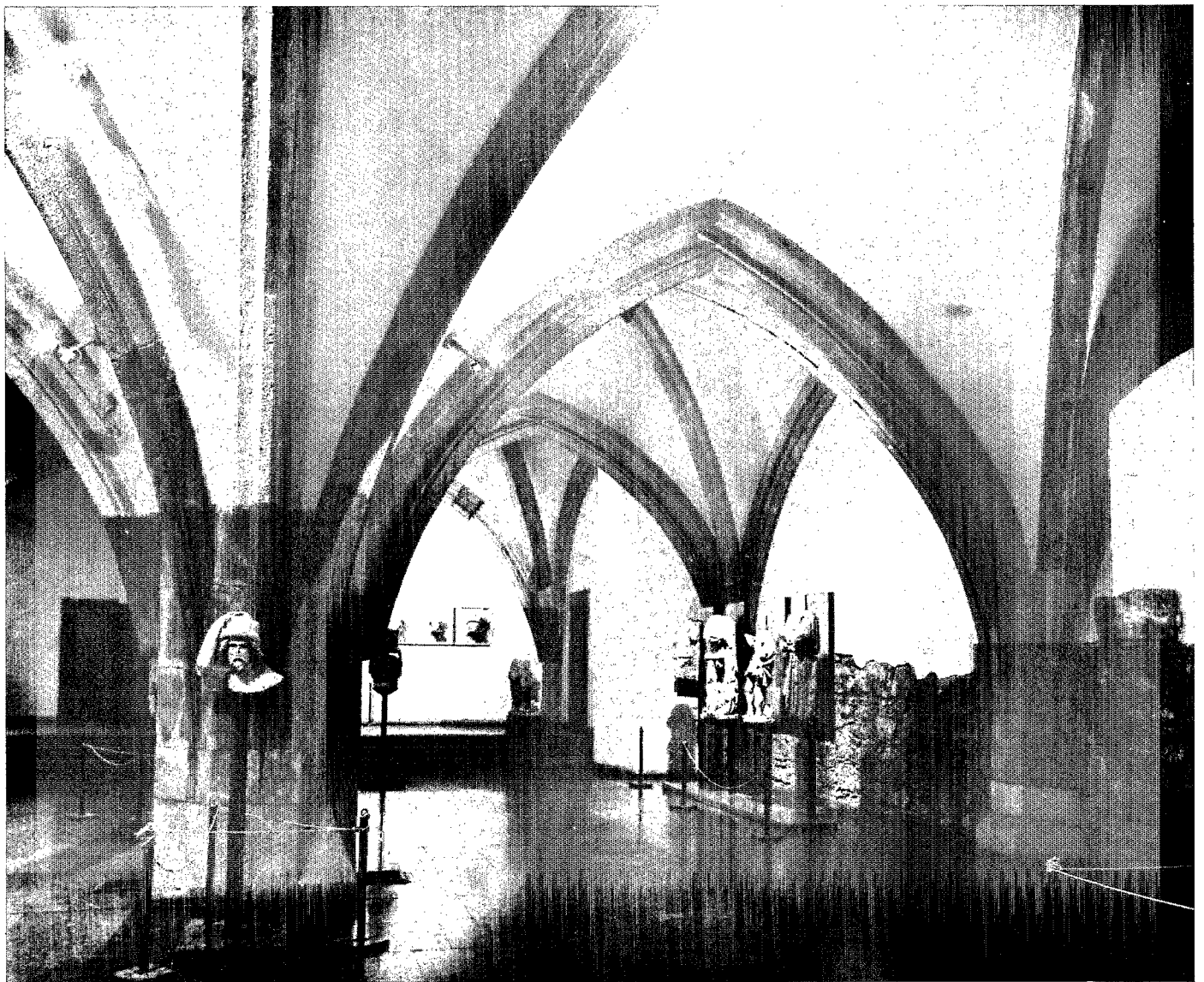
The decentralization movement of 1962, accompanied by a cultural policy aimed at breaking the cultural monopoly

of Budapest by reinforcing provincial scientific and cultural life, led to the creation of museum organizations at county level. Law No. 9 of 1963 on the protection of museum exhibits brought about a fundamental change in the development of Hungarian museums. The provincial museums, formerly under the authority of the Central Museums Board, were henceforth answerable to the nineteen county councils. The museum organizations of the various counties subsequently joined together to form an economically and professionally integrated network.

Very soon, the decentralized county museums began initiating and organizing the collection of local traditions, gathering information on Hungarian life and on the local history of the workers' movement, but still giving due weight to traditional subjects such as archaeology and ethnography (see article by N. Ikvai on page 224).

The changes that occurred during the 1960s had favourable effects, particularly

BUDAPEST HISTORICAL MUSEUM, which presents a thousand years of the city's history: medieval and Gothic sculpture.





MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS, Budapest. Vermeil bowl with engraved battle scene, made by the Augsburg craftsman Philippe Jacob Drentwett in 1654.

in regard to collecting objects from the modern period and to scientific inventories. County museums obtained the services of museological historians and modern and current history sections were formed; the number of independent 'revolutionary' museums increased.

#### *Another qualitative change*

The 1974 decision of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party regarding the programme for developing national education involved another qualitative change, as did the 1976 law on education. On the one hand, this law codified a process that already existed; on the other, for the first time in the history of Hungarian museology, it gave museums the task of using the results of their scientific research and the vast collections at their disposal to educate the masses of people who visited them.

The decision of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the implementation of this law led to changes in the structure of the museum system in Hungary. National and county museums organized education and pedagogical sections and worked with qualified popularizers.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Hungarian museum system consolidated its position on the basis of its heritage from the turn of the century. On 31 December 1982, the number of institutions auth-

orized to function as museums and having the characteristics of museums was 532; 114 of them, or 21 per cent, were considered museums proper. The remaining 79 per cent included commemorative sites, classified buildings, local history collections, factory collections, special collections, outdoor museums and regional dwellings. In 1980, as a result of these developments, the number of museologists in the provinces (455) was roughly equal to the number in Budapest (500).

Positive aspects of these developments are that institutions of the museum type set up in smaller centres of population, with mainly educational functions, usually increase cultural awareness in the neighbourhood, encouraging the local population to take an interest in its history, and thereby helping to widen the geographical scope of national tourism. In this way also, many historical and cultural exhibits that are rarely, if ever, shown to the public at large are becoming accessible. At the same time, this far-reaching development constitutes a heavy burden on the county museums, which are not always equipped to meet the greater requirements resulting from the expansion of the network. Moreover, storage space does not keep up with the development of the collections and the financial resources available for safeguarding and protecting exhibits are not large.

As a result of the co-operation between national and local museums, Hungarian museums are playing an important part

in archaeology, ethnography, local history and the history of art; a part that wins them a certain amount of scientific prestige. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences has bestowed the title of scientific research centre on seven county museums. In addition, the open character of the museums' educational activities has helped to increase the number of regular visitors.

To sum up, the development prospects for Hungarian museology may be defined as follows. Our museums must contribute first of all to the education of young people and satisfy their interest in history; they must also contribute to the education and further education of adults, particularly among the working class, and to their leisure activities; finally, they must participate actively in inculcating a sense of history, national awareness and creative patriotism.

The internal development of these institutions should be aimed at providing an ever greater number of services and supplying a greater amount of scientific information. With this in mind, it is essential to establish documentation services. As regards the numerous country museums that, so far, perform only an educational function, permanent arrangements remain to be established concerning their building and equipment, their maintenance and their information services.

[Translated from Hungarian]

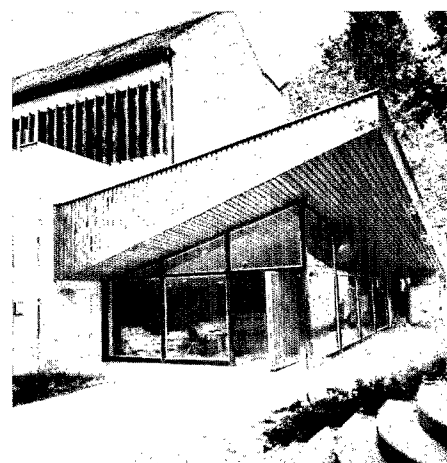
## Archaeological sites

### Ferenc Fülep

Born in 1919. Archaeologist, Ph.D. Specialized in the Roman period in Pannonia. Director of the Székesfehérvár Museum, 1945-49. Attaché at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1949-51. Director-General of the Hungarian National Museum since 1951. Head of the Department of Museums at the Ministry of Culture, 1953-56. President of the Hungarian National Committee of ICOM and member of the Hungarian National Commission for Unesco. Member of the Executive Council of ICOM, 1971-77; President of ICOM's International Committee on Archaeology and History, 1977-83.

Archaeological research in Hungary is a tradition more than two hundred years old, and was already well established in the second half of the eighteenth century. Excavations were carried out in the towns of the ancient Roman province of Pannonia and during the construction of the baroque episcopal palace of Szombathely (Savaria). At Aquincum, the provincial capital which is today the third urban district of Budapest, the remains of the large Roman baths (*thermae maiores*) were found in 1778 and have been preserved *in situ* up to the present day. In 1780, a Roman tomb with frescoes dating from

the fourth century A.D. was discovered in the southern part of the province in the town of Pécs (formerly Sopianae) and has also been preserved. With regard to the latter find, it should be noted that as early as the 1860s an underground passage had been built to make the site accessible to visitors. Thus, even in those days the idea of the conducted tour had already gained currency. Later, in 1913, a professor of archaeology in Budapest drew up plans for conserving this tomb *in situ*, and those plans could well serve as a model for site conservation today. In the 1920s, a block of apartment buildings in the



Pécs, 14 Geisler Eta Street. The courtyard and the pavilion housing the reconstituted remains of a burial chamber.  
[Photo: Zsuzsa Erdőkürthy.]

Budapest, Aquincum. Remains of the aqueduct after excavation.  
[Photo: Dr Tibor Szentpéteri.]



Budapest, Aquincum. Reconstructed section of the aqueduct.  
[Photo: Dr Tibor Szentpéteri.]

third urban district of Budapest, which had attracted attention because of its oval shape, was demolished. Beneath the foundations a Roman amphitheatre measuring 132 by 108 metres was discovered. It was preserved and integrated into the modern fabric of the capital.

During the Second World War the towns of Hungary, including the capital, were almost entirely destroyed. The subsequent clearance of the ruins, the reconstruction and renovation of dwellings and the construction of new housing areas and new town centres led to a marked increase in archaeological research. Fortunately or unfortunately, the sites chosen for the construction of major industrial and urban complexes were invariably those of the ancient Roman towns. This certainly did not happen by chance, since the sites in question had been the most suitable for human habitation from time immemorial.

### *Integrated efforts*

In the light of these conditions, the archaeological and museological bodies

concerned (museums, the National Historic Monuments Authority and the local authority for Budapest) have endeavoured to co-ordinate their work plans and to prepare themselves in advance for possible threats to the sites.

For instance, in the light of building plans in the capital, the second volume in the major series *The Monuments of Budapest*, dealing with archaeological monuments and objects in the part of the capital lying to the west of the Danube, was published in 1963. The volume lists the buildings in topographical order, provides a plan of each monument (ranging from prehistory to the Middle Ages), describes the buildings and states their age. The area now occupied by the town of Pécs, a real 'nugget of history' surrounded by ramparts, has been the subject of a similar archaeological study with a topographical approach, and a book containing plans has been published.

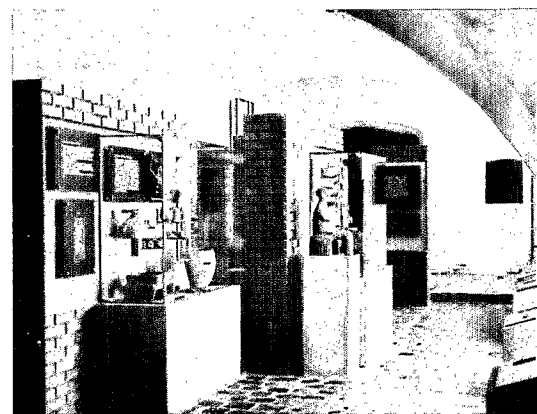
The purpose of that publication was to give town planners a list indicating the position of the various buildings and historic monuments, to be taken into consideration in future construction projects. Obviously, that did not mean that the problem of preserving archaeological remains in the course of construction work had been solved once and for all. It was a constant bone of contention between town planners, archaeologists and specialists in historic monuments. The confrontation was to our benefit as archaeologists in that we were able to save certain buildings, but in other instances we failed and historic monuments were destroyed. Sometimes we succeeded in negotiating a compromise whereby, for example, vestiges of the past were preserved, especially in the new, relatively monotonous housing estates, or were incorporated into new buildings, or were even engulfed by car parks and gardens. In such cases, the monuments must be displayed underground, or else—depending on the economic situation—the remains are left as they stand for the time being, pending the advent of more favourable circumstances for the construction of protective edifices, which are usually fairly costly.

In the 1950s, financial and administrative assistance was very hard to obtain, but a major change occurred in the following fifteen years, when central and local government made substantial sums available to finance archaeological work and the safeguarding of monuments. To an increasing extent, towns are taking pride in their past and are eager to show



Pécs. Ruins of the Turkish baths in the town centre.

Vésztő, Mágori mound. Exhibition in the vault hollowed out of the mound.  
[Photo: Zsuzsa Erdőkürthy.]



off their archaeological remains and monuments.

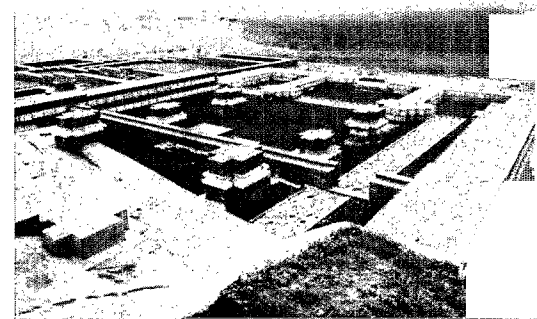
#### *A recent site museum*

There are a number of interesting sites in Hungary which were hitherto unknown even to specialists. But a few words about the most recent site museum, which was inaugurated in August 1982 near the village of Vésztő in eastern Hungary. The layer of civilization 700 cm thick, representing the years between 3660 and 1300 B.C., was discovered on the mound of Mágori, and provides a complete cross-section of the history of the commune. One of the Hungarian chiefs who arrived in the Carpathian basin with his family in the eleventh century had a church built on the mound, which was converted into a basilica with three naves and an adjacent monastery at the end of the twelfth century. Several hundred tombs were discovered in the churchyard.

During excavations on the site from 1970 to 1978, the archaeologist Irén Juhász, of the Museums Authority in the department of Békés, was faced with a

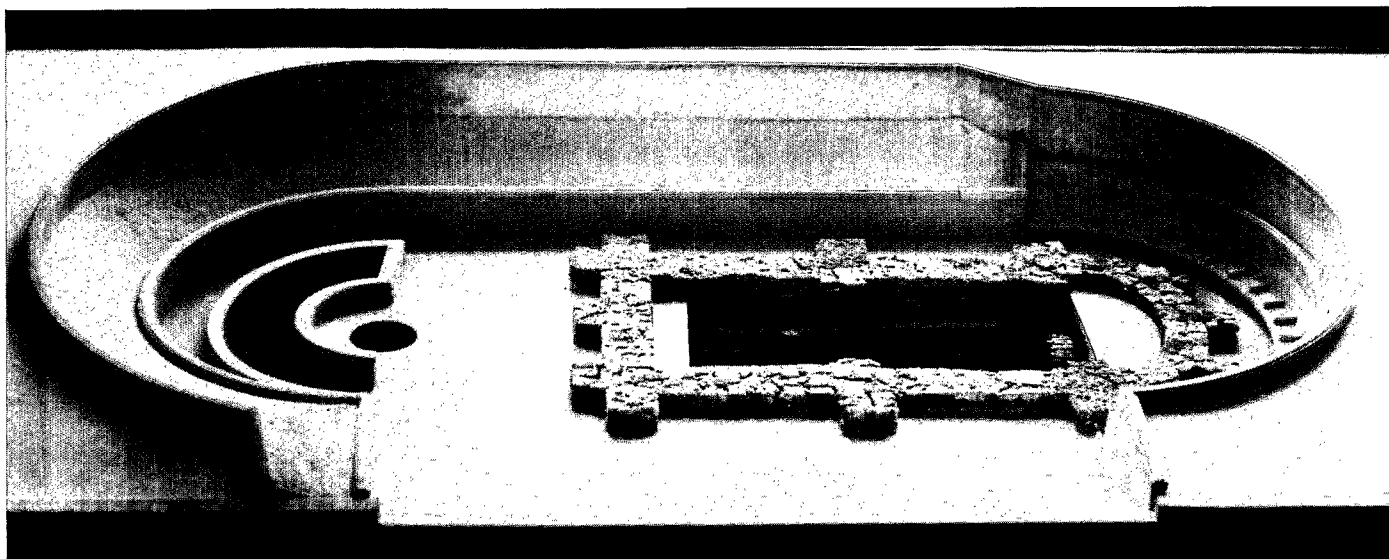
choice between having all the objects transported to a distant museum, which would diminish their local relevance, or keeping them in their original environment and building a museum on the site. Both she and the engineer, Dr Gyula Istvánffy of the National Historic Monuments Authority, were influenced in taking their decision by an item of local history: in 1812 or thereabouts the local landowners had had a 30-metre-long vault hollowed out of the hillside. This vault was eventually used to house the museum, which shows the life and history of the mound and its environs from the Neolithic up through the Copper and Bronze Ages (3600 to 1300 B.C.).

The layout of the museum is unique, with its Neolithic shrine, ritual objects and the statue of a god. The display is divided into two sections, with prehistoric objects in the first and architectural reconstructions of some parts of the monastery (capitals, window-frames, etc.) in the second. The display cases are set against a red-brick background, and low walls covered with a layer of neutral-coloured plaster serve as bases for glass



Vésztő, Mágori mound. Reconstruction of the foundations of the eleventh-twelfth century church.

[Photo: Zsuzsa Erdőkürthy.]



Pécs, Christian mausoleum. Reconstruction of the church on the upper level.

cubes without any metal framework. Direct lighting is used for the whole display, including the remains of the monastery. After visiting the museum, visitors can climb to the top of the mound and visit the reconstituted ruins of the eleventh–twelfth century church and monastery in a setting typical of the great Hungarian plain, which is now a nature reserve.

The medieval church is now one of the curiosities of that part of the country and the on-site museum is one of the most important in its category, especially valuable in a region where historic monuments are relatively sparse.

#### *Integration into a modern environment*

On the site of the southern part of the town of Aquincum, capital of the Roman province of Pannonia, one of the largest housing estates in northern Budapest has been built over the past fifteen years. As the greater part of the district is located on the site of the Roman legionary colony, the builders found themselves unearthing Roman remains every day. The archaeologists of the Budapest Museum worked day and night and in all weathers to save the finds made during the excavations. When the building work was finished, the next problem to arise was the modernization of the major road heading north and its conversion into a six-lane motorway.

The ruins of a Roman aqueduct in the region had been known since the Middle Ages. The first plans drawn up by the engineers did not take this aqueduct into account, and the ruins would have been buried under the motorway. Those plans were rejected by the archaeologists, and

the Budapest authorities accepted their opinion and gave orders for a new project. The western carriageway was moved further west and the aqueduct was preserved between the two carriageways. Archaeological excavations began in 1975 under the supervision of Dr Melinda Kaba, and almost 500 metres of aqueduct with ninety-three pillars were discovered. With the aid of the pillars, the structure of the aqueduct was reconstituted and a 50-metre section completely rebuilt. These ruins may now be admired between the two carriageways of the motorway.

Further south, the same motorway meets traffic crossing one of the main bridges over the Danube. The urban development plans ensure that the two roads do not meet at the same level, since the north–south highway is carried on a flyover. This area was once the centre of a Roman military camp, and it was here that the large public baths were discovered in 1778. Construction of the flyover and of a subway made it possible to continue excavation work on the baths and other large buildings in the military camp.

The Budapest municipal authorities, accepting the proposals of the archaeologists, agreed to reconstruct the Roman buildings situated beneath the flyover in a museum attached to the site, and to set them off to advantage. The excavations revealed large buildings and there are plans to open shops in the very busy subway. Passers-by will thus be able to view perfectly preserved relics of the past over an area of 6,500 square metres. An archaeological site of 4,000 square metres will be in the open air and the rest of the ruins will be housed in a museum, this part of the display being roofed over. The photograph opposite shows the ambitious

project under way. We trust it will serve as an example of how to harmonize ancient ruins and a modern environment.

Most of the ancient Hungarian archaeological sites are in the town of Pécs in the southern part of the country. The Roman burial chamber discovered in 1780, mentioned above, and a funerary chapel with three apses decorated with paintings, discovered in 1922 and preserved *in situ*, are both monuments discovered in the past. But since 1955, as a result of investigations by the author of this article in the town centre, three groups of Roman buildings (crypts, painted burial chambers, etc.) were discovered in the courtyard of the Departmental Library at 8 Geisler Eta Street,

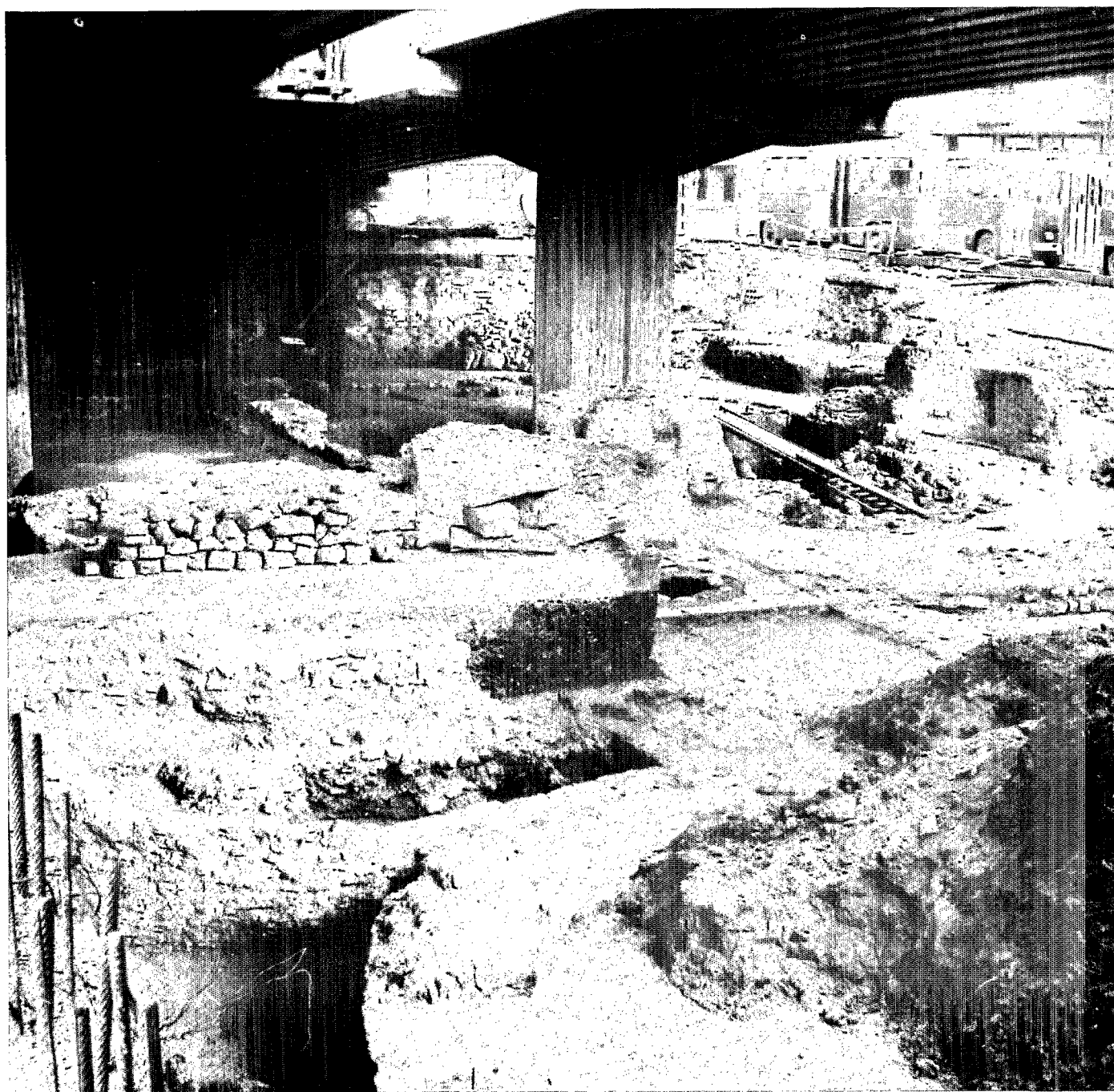
and placed on display. Nearby, at 14 Geisler Eta Street, a fine pavilion, opened in 1974, houses the reconstituted ruins of a Roman funerary chapel dating from the fourth century A.D.

In 1975–76, a Roman funerary building was discovered in front of the cathedral, and also a Christian mausoleum, the upper level of which was probably a church (18 metres long), with crypts underground. The walls are decorated with frescoes, unique in Hungary, depicting the scene of the original sin and Daniel among the lions. The only comparable paintings found so far are those in the catacombs in Rome, dating to the second half of the fourth century.

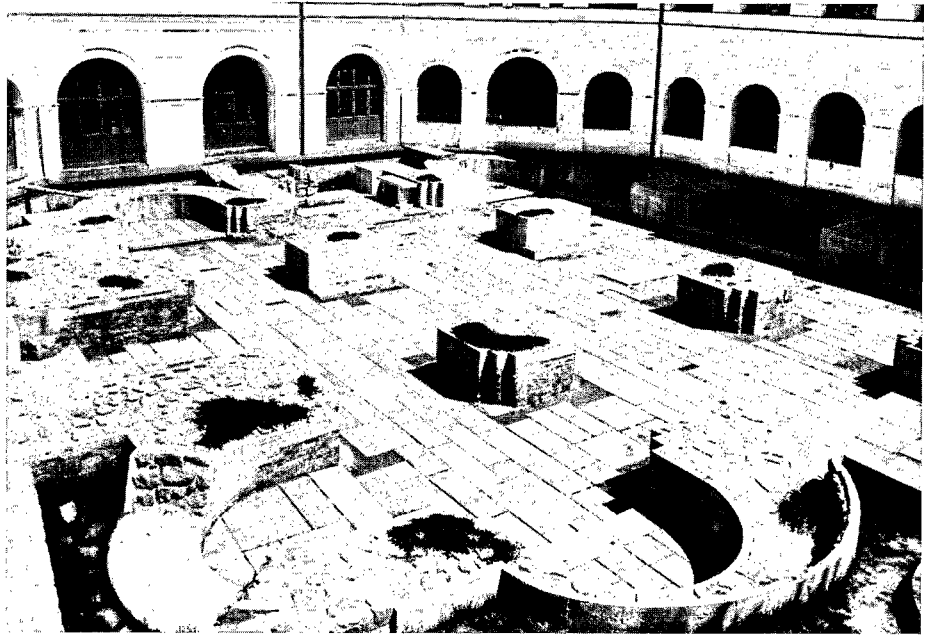
The municipal authorities, in conjunc-

Budapest, Aquincum. Ruins of the Roman baths with the piers supporting the new flyover.

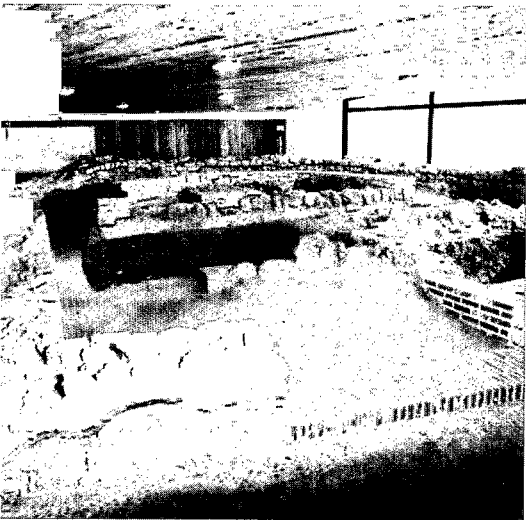
[Photo: Dr Tibor Szentpéteri.]



Szekszárd, town hall. An eleventh-century church reconstituted in the courtyard of the neo-classical building.  
[Photo: Tamás Mihalik.]



Pécs, 14 Geisler Eta Street. The burial chamber seen from inside the pavilion.  
[Photo: Zsuzsa Erdőkürthy.]



tion with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the National Historic Monuments Authority, decided to have a protective edifice built over the site so that it might be displayed in its entirety to the public. However, the municipal authorities made one perfectly reasonable stipulation: the protective edifice was not to appear above ground, so as not to obstruct the view of the cathedral.

Work is currently in progress on the site. The upper structure of the church will be open to the sky, with benches for visitors alongside the foundations. In the underground part, containing the frescoes, reinforced concrete vaults have been built in place of the originals (this part of the construction work has been completed) and as the earth from the outside of the walls is cleared away, a ventilation passage will have to be constructed. Visitors enter the crypt through a circular underground vestibule at the west end of the building. Ahead of them is a window, beyond and through which they can admire the well-lit paintings. The area is a little air-conditioned recess, in which the air pressure is higher than that outside in order to produce a capillary effect through the walls to the outside air. At the same time, the recess protects the paintings from the harmful effects of visitors' breath. The construction work on the Pécs mausoleum is the most ambitious scheme for the maintenance and safeguarding of monuments in the whole country. The problems involved have been extremely varied; even including air-conditioning and insulation. The protective structure, entirely

below ground level, and the adjacent parks are in complete harmony with the general architectural effect of the square, with its eleventh-century cathedral.

In Szekszárd, another town in Transdanubia, a Benedictine church and monastery were discovered between 1968 and 1972 in the courtyard of the neo-classical town hall, which dates from the last century. The eleventh-century church and nineteenth-century building form an aesthetically pleasing architectural group.

Our final example takes us back to Pécs, a historical town with a rich heritage of monuments. From 1541, for a period of 150 years, central Hungary and the town of Pécs itself were under Turkish rule. Many Turkish monuments have been found (two mosques, one with a minaret, turbeh, etc.) and in 1977 the ruins of Turkish baths were discovered in the very centre of the town. The baths were built in the second half of the sixteenth century, for Memisah Pasha. The entrance, tepidarium and caldarium and the base and sculpted outer periphery of the well in the entrance hall have been uncovered. In the centre of the cold bath chamber, the octagonal structure used for massage has also been discovered. According to the reconstruction plans, the above-mentioned three rooms will be exhibited in the open air. The adjoining hot bath chambers will be covered by a vaulted roof made of transparent plastic material. An exhibition on the history of Turkish baths will be housed in this covered chamber.

[Translated from Hungarian]



## *Art collecting, museums and society*

László Mravik

Born at Vecsés in 1943. Completed studies in history and art history at the University of Budapest, 1968. Active in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts and in the Department of Museums of the Ministry of Culture; has worked with the central committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Author of several studies on European painting including monographs on Giorgione and on northern Italian painters of the fifteenth century (translated into English, French, Russian and German).

Museum and private collections are intrinsically linked, so much so that neither can be imagined without the other. From the standpoint of private collections, museums represent the essential scientific and professional base that generally serves as an example of what should be done and, sometimes, of what should be avoided. From the standpoint of museums, private collections are reserves, or in other words the richest sources that can be drawn on to supplement their own collections.

In this study I shall be dealing almost exclusively with matters relating to the collecting by private individuals of works

of plastic and decorative art. It seems necessary to set limits here as the range of historical, natural and artistic objects that can be collected is extremely wide, and there are as many private collections as there are types of object. In earlier times interest was shown mainly in the accumulation of rare or valuable objects. The pattern subsequently set by museum specialization transformed this activity and led to the establishment of various collections relating to natural history, human history, decorative art, archaeology, ethnography, fine art, numismatics, diplomacy, bibliography, manuscripts, etc. And today it is possible for anyone, ac-



Andrea Mantegna: *Portrait of a Man* (allegedly Janus Pannonius). At the start of the century, this painting was in a private collection at Balatonboglár; now in the Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

ording to his field of interest, culture and financial means, to choose among these fields and build up a collection.

In Hungary only archaeological objects cannot be collected privately, these being covered by the law on the protection of objects of museological value, which decrees that archaeological excavations can be conducted only by the state and that the objects excavated are state property. Museums have exclusive responsibility for all collections of such objects. As for collections of ethnographic and, to a lesser extent, historical objects, I have some hesitation about considering them here because, first, it is very difficult to prevent the dispersion of such pieces, which form part of a whole; and, second, it can hardly be hoped that private individuals, who are often novices in this field, will scientifically determine or record the circumstances under which such pieces were collected. Without such documentation the value of ethnographic articles, for instance, is considerably reduced. However, private collecting, even under such condi-

tions, can to some extent ensure that objects are preserved.

Building up a private art collection is, by its very nature, more straightforward. From the outset, a work of art has a dual function: in addition to the role it plays for the community, it holds a particular attraction for private individuals. Works of this type convey a message and at the same time make a spatial impact upon their surroundings. As long as there exists a desire to embellish one's surroundings, one's home setting, works of art, sometimes created at the express request of private individuals, will continue to be collected.

The motives and opportunities for private patronage and the concrete forms it assumes vary a great deal from one country to another. They are determined basically by social conditions, the dominant forms of ownership, and the income of the citizens within each particular country. These factors are of course also relevant to Hungary, even in respect of the changes affecting the history of art collection in Hungary after 1945. The extremely radical transformation of the country's historical and social conditions and the rapid and sometimes hasty changes it brought in its wake created an entirely new situation. To understand this situation better, however, it is useful to take a look at the past.

Hungary is perhaps one of the European countries whose cultural heritage has sustained the greatest damage throughout history. From 1526 until the end of the seventeenth century a large part of the Carpathian Basin was a battleground for the Turkish wars. It was, then, a front-line country where the survival not only of works of art but also of the population was endangered. During the period that followed, which was calmer though not without revolutions and wars, economic backwardness and the flight of assets abroad, especially to Vienna, were also not conducive to any substantial increase in the country's art collections. Despite all these factors, the nobility built up collections—some of which were relatively large—for the sake primarily of outward appearances. The only one of these that really survived was the Estherházy picture gallery, which became state property by purchase in 1870.

The late nineteenth century saw major changes. The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 was followed by an economic revival and, at the same time, the governing circles and property-owners looked less towards Vienna. Part of

Francisco de Goya: *Drinkers*. Formerly in the Herzog Collection, Budapest.





Paris Bordone: *The Adoration of the Magi* (circa 1650). Till 1917 in the collection of Mr Hugo Kilényi. Sold and re-sold till 1946 at which time it left the country. Now in the collection of the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass., United States.

the economic profits were used in such a way as to bring about a very rapid quantitative and qualitative expansion in private collections. The number of works of art in the hands of the old aristocracy continued to increase as more and more of them found their way into castles in the provinces and palaces in Budapest. And, more important, the Hungarian upper middle class with its increasingly refined tastes rapidly grew rich and was thus able at last to think about building up collections for display. Hungarian national art also experienced a period of prosperity, with considerable numbers of outstanding works being produced, and most of these works found their way into the new collections. As a result of the widening of the circle of collectors, the art trade developed, with a number of auction houses and art salons endeavouring to meet the growing demand. The golden age of this trade was the twenty years following the First World War. A look at the documents concerning the art trade during that period reveals the surprising fact that the art treasures of Hungary—several thousand works of plastic and decorative art of great value—were in constant circulation, changing hands from year to year.

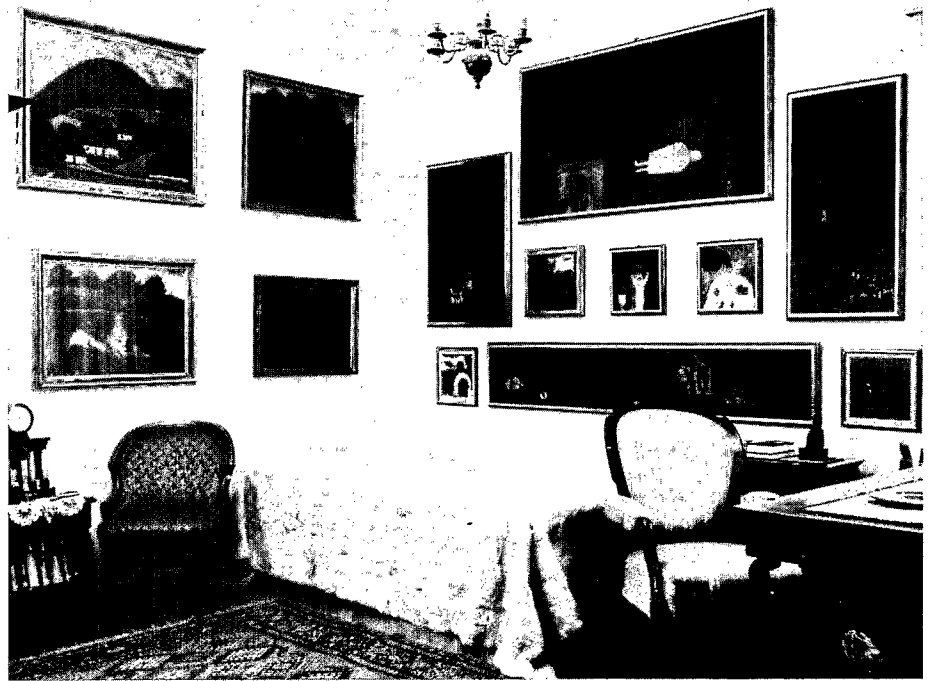
In 1919, following the peace treaties concluded after the First World War, Hungary's borders were redrawn. Regions abounding in historic monuments, for instance Transylvania and the upper re-

gions of Hungary, were annexed to other countries. However, even though many scheduled monuments were no longer in Hungarian territory, art collections were less badly affected, a fact due to the rapid development of Budapest at that time. That city had always been and still remains today an almost unique centre for buying and selling works of art.

From the late 1930s onwards, the international crisis and the subsequent persecution of the Jews started off the process of 'rescuing' property by sending it abroad. Works of art experienced the same fate. Thus a large number of works by Andrea Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini, Rembrandt, Rubens, Manet, Renoir, Cézanne and Courbet were sent outside the country and lost for ever to Hungarian culture. At that time, this process did not yet affect the main bulk of works of art and even less works by Hungarian artists; the number of masterpieces, however, was enormously reduced.

Such was the situation in Hungary at the outbreak of the Second World War. Those who left the country to escape the German occupation tried to rescue a large part of their movable fortune. The requisitions that followed and the transfer of property abroad wrought great havoc. After being free to develop for close on a century, the Hungarian art collections experienced their first serious losses in modern times. But by a strange and happy stroke of fate, the seige, the bomb-

Part of the collection of István Rácz. On the left-hand wall are works by István Nagy (1873–1937), a Hungarian constructivorealist painter. On the right are paintings by Endré Balint (1914– ).



ings and the battles caused less damage than might have been expected.

In 1945 it became possible to lay new foundations for the protection of the national cultural heritage, but the process of defining the approach to be adopted and making the necessary practical arrangements was a slow one. Serious contradictions inherent in this process gave rise to sacrifices that today seem unreasonable. Following the departure of the nation's former masters, the first reaction was, in many cases, an unleashing of blind fury, a desire to destroy all that served as a reminder of the former regime and its representatives. The sense of historical justice of those who had been exploited in earlier periods was transformed into acts of arbitrary 'justice' whose consequences, and even underlying vision, are alien to socialist ideals. The unconcealed, although of course naïve, aim of the process of liquidation was to ensure, by pillaging the homes of the rich, that they no longer had anywhere to come back to. The catastrophic result was the destruction, together with their interior decorations, of a large number of handsome dwellings whose furniture was consigned to the flames or, in fortunate cases, the carrying off and dispersal of property spared by the ravages of war. Articles that escaped the looting sometimes still turn up, in Hungary or abroad.

Between 1945 and 1949 the central authorities did not display a very consistent attitude towards the protection of what war had spared in the country. Legal and illegal exports of works of art increased. A far larger number of such

works left the country during that period than during the Second World War.

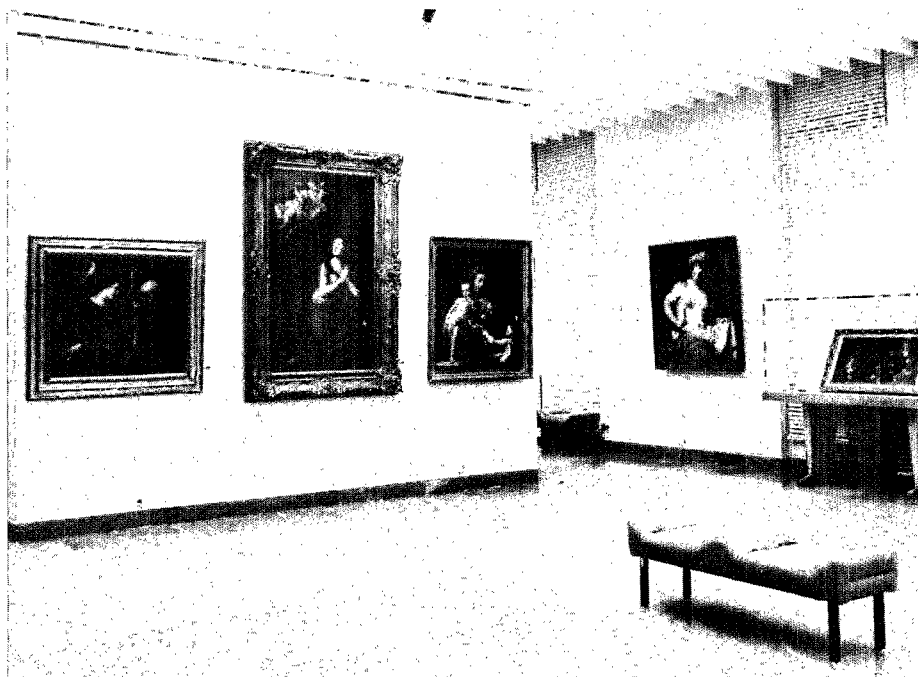
From 1949 onwards works of art stopped leaving the country. Unfortunately at that time the bulk of such items in the hands of private individuals had long been gone. Such was the situation when the first firm measures were taken to protect them. Those that were in private hands were listed in registers, the purpose being to facilitate access to them for scientific research and to prevent their being lost or taken abroad. The art trade had become practically non-existent or insignificant. During the period 1949–52, the Government Department for Abandoned Property, and later the Government Department for Endangered Works of Art, confiscated a considerable number of works from their owners. The express purpose of this operation was to ensure that they were conserved and stored under reliable conditions. Some paintings, sculptures and works of decorative art thus collected were deposited in museums which, after fifteen years, returned most of them to their owners. However, some works changed hands under circumstances beyond anyone's control.

The errors committed during the early 1950s had a further harmful effect on the collecting of works of art. Departing from socialist ideals, the policy pursued simplified the function of works of art in an inadmissible way and led to only their collective aspect being expressly recognized. Very few works were created at the request of private individuals. A further obstacle to the production of art was the

precarious economic situation in the country at that time. The inadequate incomes of most of the population did not encourage patronage, for which, in any case, insufficient publicity channels were available. Consequently, contacts could not be made between sellers and possible purchasers. The insignificance of private patronage was due not only to the taboos to which it was subject as a matter of principle but also to the lack of practical opportunities. The works produced during that period, many of which rank among the masterpieces of national art, remained the property of those who had created them and, on this account, their cultural influence remained limited. On the other hand, at the beginning of the 1960s, at the time when the process of democratization was just getting under way, art collectors recognized the value of such works long before the museums and the representatives of the vigorously re-nascent art trade. It is for this reason that most of these works are still in the hands of private individuals, and it will be a long time yet before they yield their cultural value in the setting of permanent museum collections.

A concern with social and political legitimacy led to measures being taken to update legislation in general and, in particular, that relating to the preservation, conservation and circulation of cultural property. Article 9 of the law on the protection of monuments and museum objects, promulgated in 1963, has up to the present defined the relations between museums and collectors, together with their rights and duties. For the first time

Interior of the exhibition *Selections from Hungarian Private Collections* organized by the Hungarian National Gallery in 1981. Seventeenth-century painters: Guercino, Murillo, Elisabetta Sirani, Antonio Carneio and Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione.



Part of the Győr collection of Ernő Kolozsvári: paintings from the surrealist period of Endré Balint and Lilli Ország (1926–78).

Part of the collection of Pál Kadosa. At left, statue of St Catherine from Barka, circa 1420. Upper right: Siennese painting, circa 1350, St John the Baptist from a fragment of a great crucifix.

in Hungary, irrespective of the question of the right of ownership, this law has made it possible to place works of art, historic pieces and natural treasures conserved in public collections on the same footing as those in private collections and to regard them as together forming part of the national cultural heritage.

This process, which began in the 1960s, led to a revival not only of private collecting but also of the art trade. However, the fifteen years that have elapsed since this new momentum was created have not been marked by purely constructive results. It is at present proving difficult to maintain the position of state enterprises monopolizing the art trade.

So far as the art trade is concerned, it seems advisable to create opportunities for competition, which, while not providing an overall solution, would at least help to relieve current problems and could be expected to give rise to not only a qualitative trade recovery but also an increase in the number of objects put into circulation. A new situation of this kind would better serve the cause and interests of art collections and museums. As for contemporary works of art, their actual price could be brought into line with their true value. In addition, an overhaul of the art trade could help to bring old works of art back on to the market.

Until recently, museum authorities in Hungary have had a condescending attitude towards private collectors. In the light of the above and in view of the practice of other countries, that attitude seems debatable to say the least; it stems from a limited point of view that is not even based on the real interests of museums. It can be said that we are faced here with a typical case of a situation in which the interests of an institutional state system, that is, the museums, are in conflict with the interests, in the broadest sense, of the community itself. For the protection of works of art and the effective safeguarding of all the country's historic monuments can be guaranteed only on the condition that the right of ownership of all works of art is clarified and recognized. Absolute respect for legality is but one of the substantial aspects—the legal aspect—of the stabilization of private collections. Even from the standpoint of the protection of the riches represented by works of art, private collections are very important. For it is now clear that there will be a growing need for such collections. Although Hungary possesses a considerable number of museums,

several of which are wholly devoted to art, soon they will no longer be able to renew their collections. It is not possible to consider establishing new museums, not only for financial reasons but also because the present network seems fully to meet public demand and permits an ideal level of research work. The only possible cause for regret is the absence of a fully modern museum. In the present state of affairs, the works that are sent to museums have hardly any chance of being displayed—most of the time they stay in the reserve collection. The approach advocated by a large number of curators consists in limiting new acquisitions to works of leading importance, to endangered works or those that fill a gap. It is not necessary to amass objects in museums as most works of art in private collections are adequately protected.

Privately owned works cannot be sold unless their owners have a permit; they cannot leave the country, and the museums representing the state have a right of pre-emption. If a work of art changes hands, one of these museums must be notified. The purpose of these stipulations is to make such items permanently accessible for research or for possible periodic exhibition. In return, the state provides assistance to private collectors. Those possessing large collections regularly receive subventions for the upkeep of their apartments, intended to ensure the conservation and protection of the collections they contain.

Owing to unfavourable historical circumstances, a part of our cultural heritage has been lost. We are now endeavouring to protect it as well as possible so as to maintain a balance between public and private interests and ensure that they continue to sustain one another. The exhibition of works from private collections organized by the Hungarian National Gallery in 1982 afforded tangible evidence of this harmonious relationship. The 322 masterpieces exhibited, the work of both foreign and Hungarian artists, spanned six centuries of cultural activity. This event, demonstrating that collectors were more than willing to lend works of art so as to allow them to be viewed by the general public, also provided an opportunity for those works to be scientifically examined. It is becoming increasingly clear that this is the direction in which we should proceed in the future, and with this in view we also hope to receive assistance from art collectors' associations.

[Translated from Hungarian]

## *Hungarian museums today: some facts and figures*

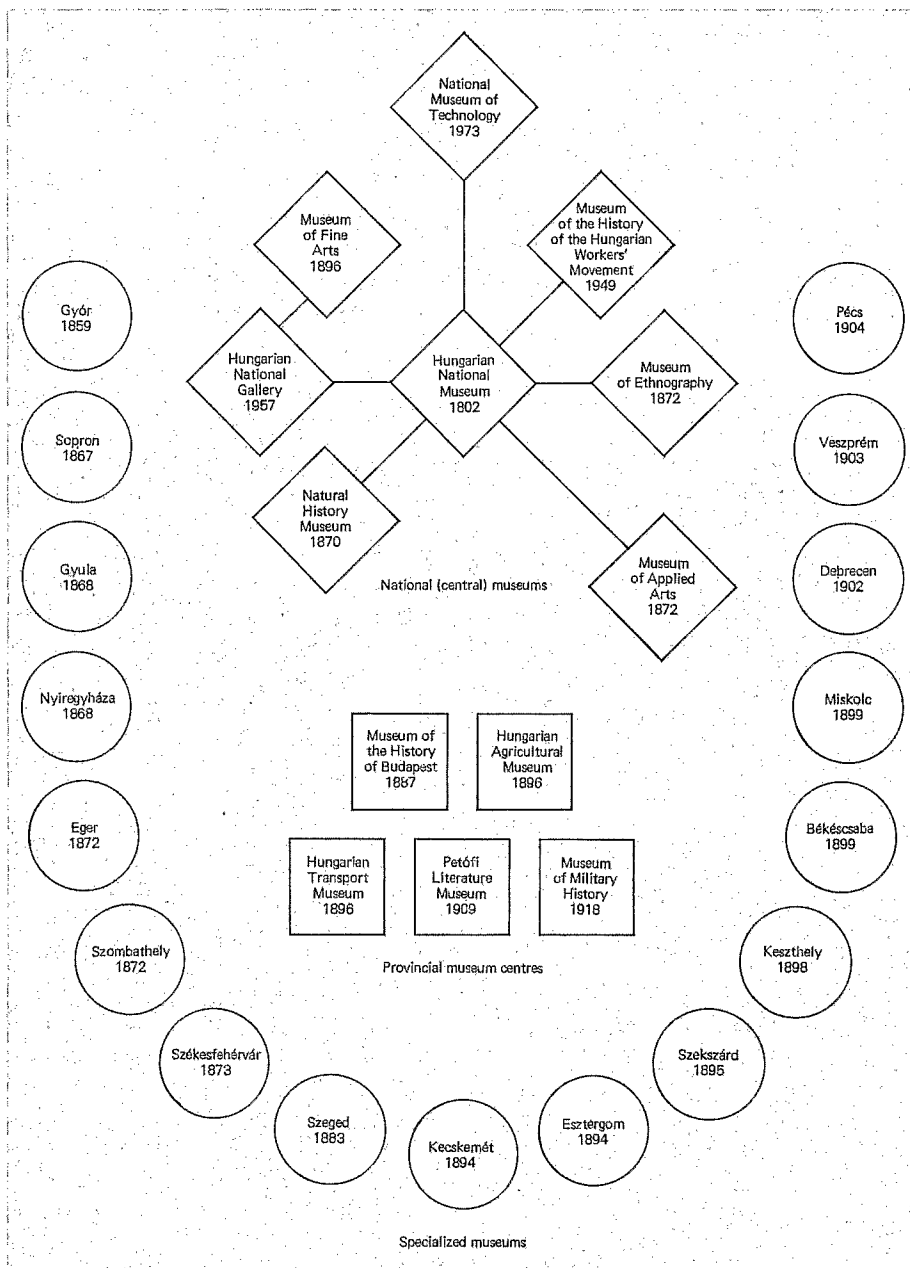
István Éri

Studied Hungarian literature and history at Budapest University. Specialized in medieval archaeology in the Hungarian National Museum from 1952 to 1959. Since 1974, Director of the Institute of Conservation and Museum Methodology in Budapest. Chairman of the ICOM-CIDOC Working Group on Terminology.

A rapid increase in the number of museums has been a universal phenomenon over the last few decades. The recent development of the Hungarian museums system is no exception.

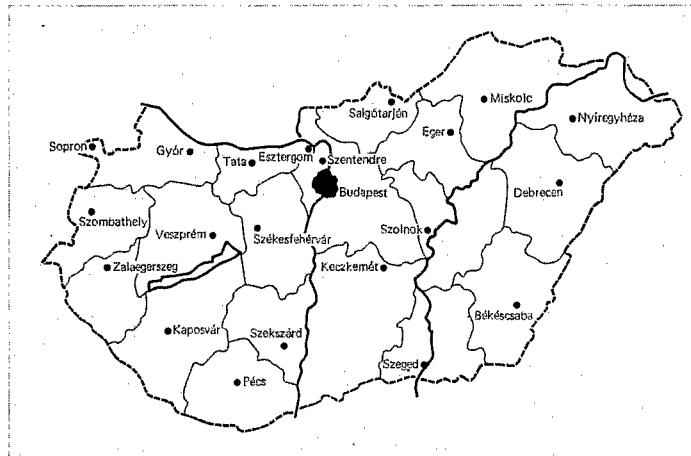
There is an increasingly dense network throughout Hungary of 'conventional' museums (archaeological, ethnographical, natural history and fine arts museums) coming under the authority of administrative regions or counties in a variety of different ways. Nevertheless, museums or similar institutions of a new

type are being created at a much greater rate; these are museums and collections specializing in the conservation and exhibition of articles and objects illustrating the history and evolution of the various forms of industrial and agricultural production. The number of commemorative museums is also increasing rapidly: these constitute quite a different type, generally being museums or collections commemorating eminent personalities, though sites connected with historic events may also be included. Last but not

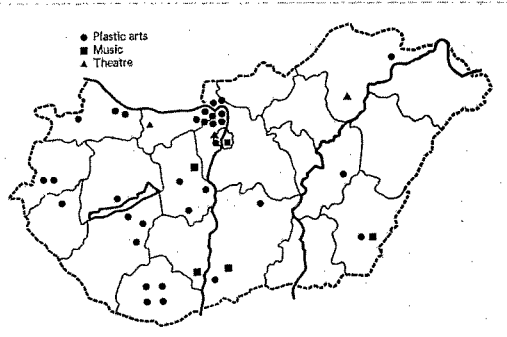
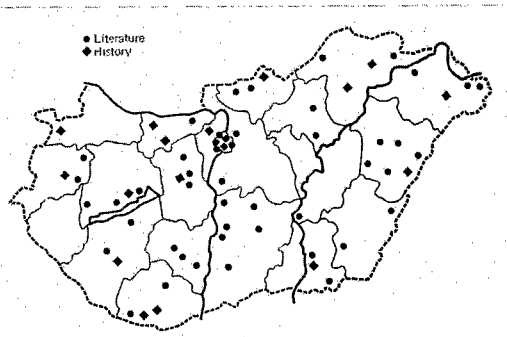


'Genealogical tree' of Hungarian museums.

Territorial distribution of the Hungarian museum system.

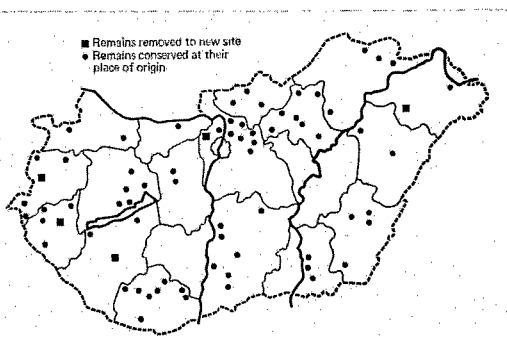


Commemorative museums specializing in literature or history.



Commemorative museums devoted to art.

Open-air ethnographical museums.



least, a number of museums consisting of ancient sites or of archaeological and ethnological remains are now to be found side by side with those of industrial archaeology. And a new development is that nature reserves will increasingly be seen as veritable museums on a vast scale.

The variety of newly established museums reflects the nature of those who founded them. State-sponsored museums are rapidly giving way to those set up by institutions, industrial undertakings and community organizations.

Hungarian legislation stipulates that museology forms a coherent whole in the cultural field, irrespective of the founders, curators and owners of our museums. This specific feature is a consequence of the political, social and economic history of the past century and a half. Yet while museology has undergone qualitative change in socialist Hungary, its existence was historically determined and still harks back to long-standing traditions.

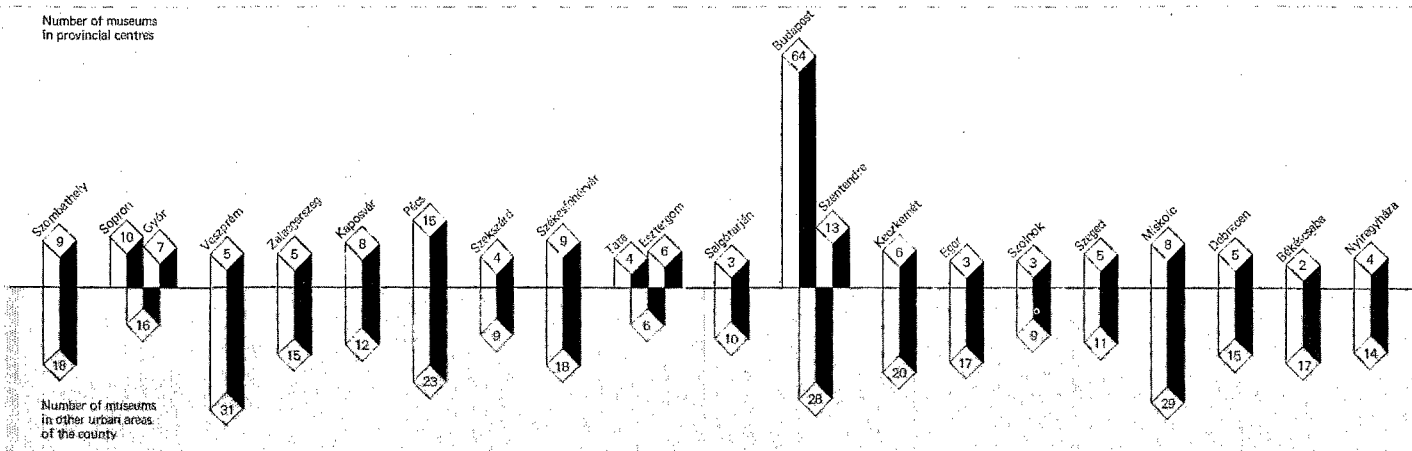
The first museum to be opened in the country—the Hungarian National Museum—was founded in 1802 as a result of the struggle for national independence; it was the depository of the cultural and political future of the country. It was a type quite characteristic of the eastern part of Central Europe. From the 1870s onwards, it began gradually to disperse its specialized collections, which had increased considerably with the passing of time. The new museums established in specific fields (natural history, applied arts, fine arts and ethnography) continued to have links with the 'parent' museum. Since there were no museums established by private foundations (royal or aristocratic) or attached to universities, the primacy of this central museum organization remains undisputed even today.

It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that provincial administrations, county boroughs with a

certain degree of independence (which they had won in the course of their history) and the larger chartered municipalities began to establish their own local history museums and to assemble their own collections. At that time it had already become evident that social and economic ambitions did not go beyond the foundation stage, that local patronage did not exist and that consequently state aid was a necessity. In the 1890s it became necessary to establish a central administrative body attached to the Ministry of Culture, to be responsible for inspecting the regional museums and administering the very modest subsidy provided by the state. This central body was called upon to resolve the antagonisms between the museums of Budapest, which were developing rapidly, and the regional museums which, in spite of the size of their collections, found it difficult to keep pace. In this way, Hungarian museums were unified under the Ministry of Culture, and in 1906 a specialized review covering museology and library science was launched.

Specialized museums (such as the Hungarian Agricultural Museum, Museum of Military History, Hungarian Transport Museum, and others) founded by other ministries or by the Municipality of Budapest towards the end of the nineteenth century began life by adopting very much the same methods as their predecessors. This practice, tried and tested for more than half a century, was continued by the political and cultural authorities after the Second World War. The first decree on museology drafted from a socialist point of view was promulgated in 1949; it proclaimed that all exhibits in all museums and collections were national property irrespective of the legal status of their owners or curators, whether government departments, organizations or private individuals. The text





of the decree, which proclaimed unity of the museum system to be of fundamental importance, was amended in 1963 and again in 1981; it contains rules for unified management and inspection and regulations for putting them into effect.

Professional museum activities are therefore managed with the help of the central museums, subject to the guidance and overall right of oversight of the Ministry of Culture. The documentation system and statistical services are standardized and museum advertising and information work is under centralized control (see p. 255). The permission of the Ministry of Culture must be obtained before a new museum can be founded or an old one abolished (except in the case of the foundation of 'national' museums, where the decision lies with the Council of Ministers).

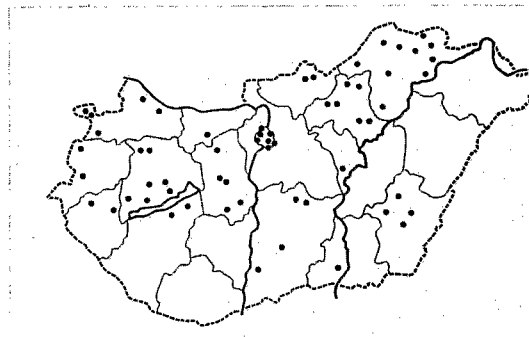
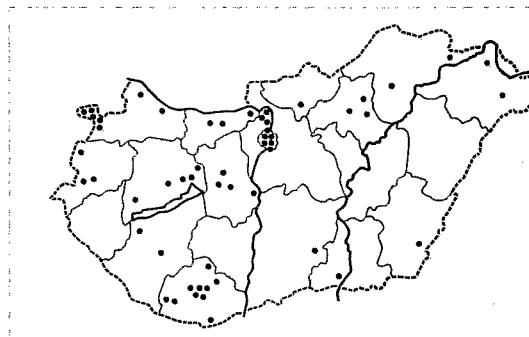
As of 31 December 1981, there were 505 museums in the country, flows: (1) 15 national museums; (2) 19 specialized museums; (3) 19 county museums (see article by Nándor Ikvai, p. 224); (4) 58 district museums, (whose activities cover a district, borough or town); (5) museum collections or establishments that do not meet the criteria for recognition as county or district museums. These criteria are as follows: employment of a specific number of permanent, qualified specialists, and possession of a collection of at least 10,000 objects in an independent building with items on permanent exhibition and an adequate budget. The collections may be of local history, bringing together items from the ruins of a centre of population or a ward of the town concerned (there are 43 of these), or specialized collections (of which there are 47) related to specific aspects of cultural, social and particularly economic life. Or they may take the form of: commemorative sites, where objects connected with prominent historical person-

ages, artists or historic events are exhibited (there are 79 of this type); exhibition halls, that is, branches of a category 1, 2 or 3 museum used exclusively for mounting exhibitions or for other public purposes (of which there are 212); (6) lastly, museums, often merely collections, that are the property of legal entities. Establishments (sometimes subsidized by the state) belonging to the different churches also form part of this last category (there are 13 of these).

The distribution and rapid development of the Hungarian museum system and the features characterizing each category are shown in the diagrams. An important aspect of this distribution is that a considerable proportion of museums—two fifths of the total—particularly those in category 5, are located in rural areas. The establishment and running of museums in buildings of artistic value that have been restored require the co-operation of the national historic building department, the local council and the county museum department. As F. Fülep has shown, the situation is similar when archaeological sites are made into museums. Lastly, account must be taken of initiatives taken by the central authorities, which generally have to do with the establishment of commemorative museums or museums founded with a view to attracting tourists in the framework of overall cultural policy.

[Translated from Hungarian]

Archaeological site museums.



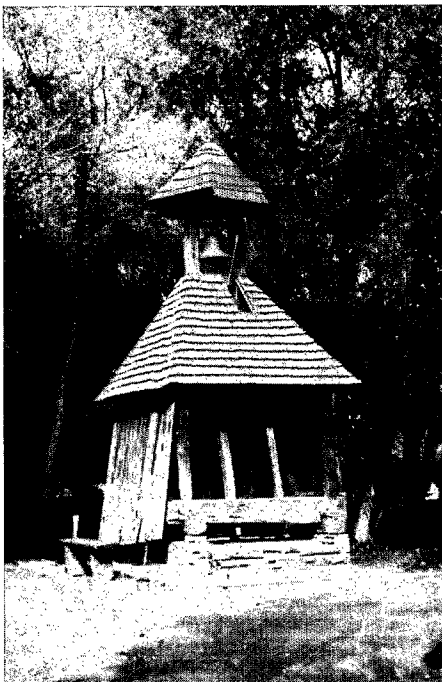
Historical remains connected with industry and agriculture.

## *Decentralized museum organization: the counties*

Nándor Ikvai

Born in Petőháza in 1935. Graduate of the University of Kossuth Lajos in Debrecen in history, geography, ethnography and museology. Awarded a doctor's degree (D. Phil.) in 1964. Museum Director in Cegléd (1961–68), Departmental Director of Museums in the Department of Pest in Szentendre, 1969–81. At present, Head of Section in the Museums Department of the Ministry of Culture. Researches in traditional agriculture and development of technology, and has published several books and articles in these fields.

OPEN AIR ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM, Zala County. Rural belfry (1888).



In this article, I shall focus upon the past two decades in the life of the system of county museums set up in Hungary in 1962. These museums constitute about two-thirds of the total number of museums in the country, and the last twenty years have proved to be a highly successful period, rich in lessons. What is the overall pattern of museum organization in our country in the context of which these museums developed?

Until 1949, provincial museums—excluding those in Budapest—were managed by local government (counties, towns and communes) or by religious institutions. In 1949, all museums were brought under state control and directed and managed by the Department of Historic Monuments and National Museums. Meanwhile, the training of specialists in the universities had started; decrees, laws and ordinances governing museums were being promulgated; and a unified system of administrative records was coming into force. The development in the number of museums, in their quality and in their financial situation was spectacular.

Ten years later, it had become evident that the system, which had doubled in size in the meantime, could no longer be directed by a central unit. The need for change in the system became all the more pressing because the Ministry of Culture could no longer provide the necessary finance for this very considerable expansion. Thus, in the spring of 1962, the decision was taken to decentralize the system of provincial museums and have them managed by the county councils. This brought about a radical change in the Hungarian museum system, one that remains fundamentally important even today. Nineteen autonomous county museum directorates were set up, each of which assumed responsibility for the supervision of the museums in its territory. Only the administrative status of church collections and property and of specialized collections and museums managed by the competent ministries remained unchanged.

Another decree (the 1963 Museum

Act) laid down precisely the location, role and professional tasks of the various museums and museum institutions throughout the country, irrespective of the legal entity managing them.

This succession of decentralizations caused a considerable development among provincial museums such as had never occurred before. A few figures illustrate this development: the number of objects held by museums managed by the counties went up from 1,915,695 in 1962 to 5,603,622 in 1981. The total number of museologists employed in the counties increased from 96 to 434 over the same twenty-year period. A similar expansion occurred with regard to the financial situation, total exhibition and reserve area, the number of restorers, workshop equipment, etc. Mention should also be made of the fact that, out of more than 500 museums on the list, the majority (441 in 1982) are at present being managed by the counties.

### *Organization*

The longest established museum in the chief town of the county is the directing body at county level. Thus it is the curator of this museum who directs the county museum organization, including its finances. The majority of county museum curators are eminent specialists in the fields of archaeology, ethnography, etc, although another category of curator—the 'manager' type—has appeared in the past five to ten years. In large towns in the counties, there are usually other cantonal or municipal museums where one or more museologists work. Other museum-type institutions, which are run by managers rather than museologists, are exhibition halls, open-air ethnographic museums and commemorative museums whose exhibitions are installed and maintained by specialists from the county centre.

On the other hand, the so-called cantonal museums governed by the county directorate are concerned chiefly with conventional museum specializations such as archaeology, ethnography and

history, although some of them pursue activities in the fields of natural science, art history, literary history, etc.

In county museums a number of specialists work together in small research teams. The functions of the staff of a county museum cover the entire territory of the county concerned, whereas the cantonal museum exercises its activities only within the district assigned to it (from ten to fifteen villages or communes).

The county organization works on the basis of a joint plan spread over a number of years. All the local specialists participate in drafting this plan, which is usually a five-year one and is arranged according to museum specialization; it is also subdivided into years so that an annual report can be drawn up. Plans and reports are examined and approved beforehand by museologists from Budapest known as national museum inspectors.

Good results have been accomplished within the context of this system. Plans drawn up at the county level usually take into account movements at the national

one. This is one of the reasons why Hungarian museology can take pride in considerable growth and homogeneous results. It is not only a matter of the number of exhibits collected but also the way they are exhibited and the number of scientific publications. All county museum organizations publish their own records. In view of the ever-increasing extent of exchanges among libraries (200–400 correspondents per county), publications with summaries in foreign languages are distributed throughout the world.

In managing museums, county councils make an effective contribution to the education of the population. The activity of provincial museums in organizing exhibitions, for instance, has reached an unprecedented level. The largest museums usually renew their permanent exhibitions every ten years, in accordance with modern scientific requirements. Eighty-five per cent of the temporary exhibitions (of which there are approximately 600 a year) are put on by provincial museums. Among these, exhibitions of the plastic

DOMOKOS KUNY MUSEUM, Tata, Komárom County. Copies of Graeco-Roman sculpture.



arts top the list, followed by displays in the natural sciences, history, archaeology and ethnography.

Teaching in the county museums is carried out by special teams of four to eight teachers and teaching museologists. It includes exhibition publicity—posters, invitations and catalogues—and events complementary to exhibitions—for example, slide shows, films, lectures and competitions—as well as guided tours and other services available to the public.

### *Financial resources*

One of the reasons for the structural change adopted in 1962 was the problem of financing provincial museums. It is undeniable that the counties, on account of the reinforced bonds of interdependence with the museums that have resulted from this reform, feel themselves more closely concerned and are ready to forge ahead.

SÁNDOR NÓGRÁDI MUSEUM, Nógrád County.  
Interior of farmhand's dwelling.



Everywhere in Hungary, the museums themselves administer the funds made available by the state. In spite of the large attendances, their own income is negligible on account of the low price of admission tickets. Sales of reproductions, postcards and copies are not in proportion to the necessary outlay. The result is that the greater part of the budget for covering operating costs (wages, upkeep, new acquisitions, exhibitions, publications, etc.) is provided by the county council. The county museum directorate manages these funds autonomously and concerns itself directly with the establishments forming part of its network. By and large, budgets are more or less identical throughout the country. Wages and salaries, commensurate with level of education and hours worked, are standardized. Running costs, too (power consumption, repair costs, office supplies, etc.), are more or less uniform. On the other hand, there is a much greater difference in functional expenditure between the various counties; this applies particularly to the cost of excavations, the improvement of collections and the publication of books. This is where patronage plays an important part. Differences also arise on account of local traditions regarding the museums' specializations, which will be given varying degrees of prominence: e.g. Fejér County is at the top of the list for archaeological excavations, Baranya and Pest for collections of the plastic arts, Borsod for ethnographic research and Veszprém for the support provided to research in the natural sciences.

There are several ways of rounding off the county budget. Tourist organizations (such as the Lake Balaton Action Committee and that of the Curve of the Danube, the National Tourist Council and other tourist and travel agencies) provide considerable assistance in the attainment of certain objectives. They take either partial or complete responsibility for exhibitions in which they have an interest, but such support is given only occasionally and for a specific activity. Industrial and agricultural establishments in the vicinity of a museum also help it to organize exhibitions relating to activity, history, speciality, etc. In addition, municipal councils often give the town's museums assistance beyond the budget provided for by the county council.

Under certain conditions, an application can be made for financial assistance from the central funds of the Ministry of Culture and, for participation in an event



of national importance, financial assistance may be sought for the purchase of museum exhibits of exceptional value or for organizing a new permanent exhibition. Such assistance may attain 25 to 30 per cent of the budget estimates.

*All is not perfect, however*

This outline of the way the county museum system works may make it appear to be perfect and to be enjoying balance and assured development. But of course, the situation is more complex than this. One of the direct consequences of financial assistance and patronage is the danger of subjectivism. From time to time it occurs that a county begins implementing a project that does not fit into the national system, occasionally against the advice of the specialists at the local museum. Sometimes, local bodies support moves to found a secondary or not very desirable museum that cannot be justified from a national point of view. There are also many very costly publications that could have awaited the completion of other more urgent and more important tasks.

While the manifest achievements and the extensive developments are recog-

nized, it is becoming increasingly necessary to review the question of the professional guidance exercised by the provincial museums, in order to make it more effective. It is also time that the requirements curators of museums have to fulfil were analysed, particularly their aptitude for the job and their period of office. Lastly, it seems necessary to emphasize the progression taking place in the distribution, execution and material encouragement of professional activities that are of national importance.

To sum up, the creation of the county museum system has marked a turning point in the development of Hungarian museums: the system has bound together scattered establishments, which were weak in isolation, into an organized unit and integrated them into the scientific life of the country; tasks are more fairly distributed between the capital and the provinces as a result of the creation of scientific research centres in provincial capitals; and finally, the desire to visit museums has become a driving force for the masses. This last is one of the greatest achievements of the provincial museums.

[Translated from Hungarian]

ZSOLNAY MUSEUM, Pécs, Baranya County.  
Zsolnay porcelain ware (1880-1900).  
[Photo: Katalin Nádor.]

Jenő Fitz

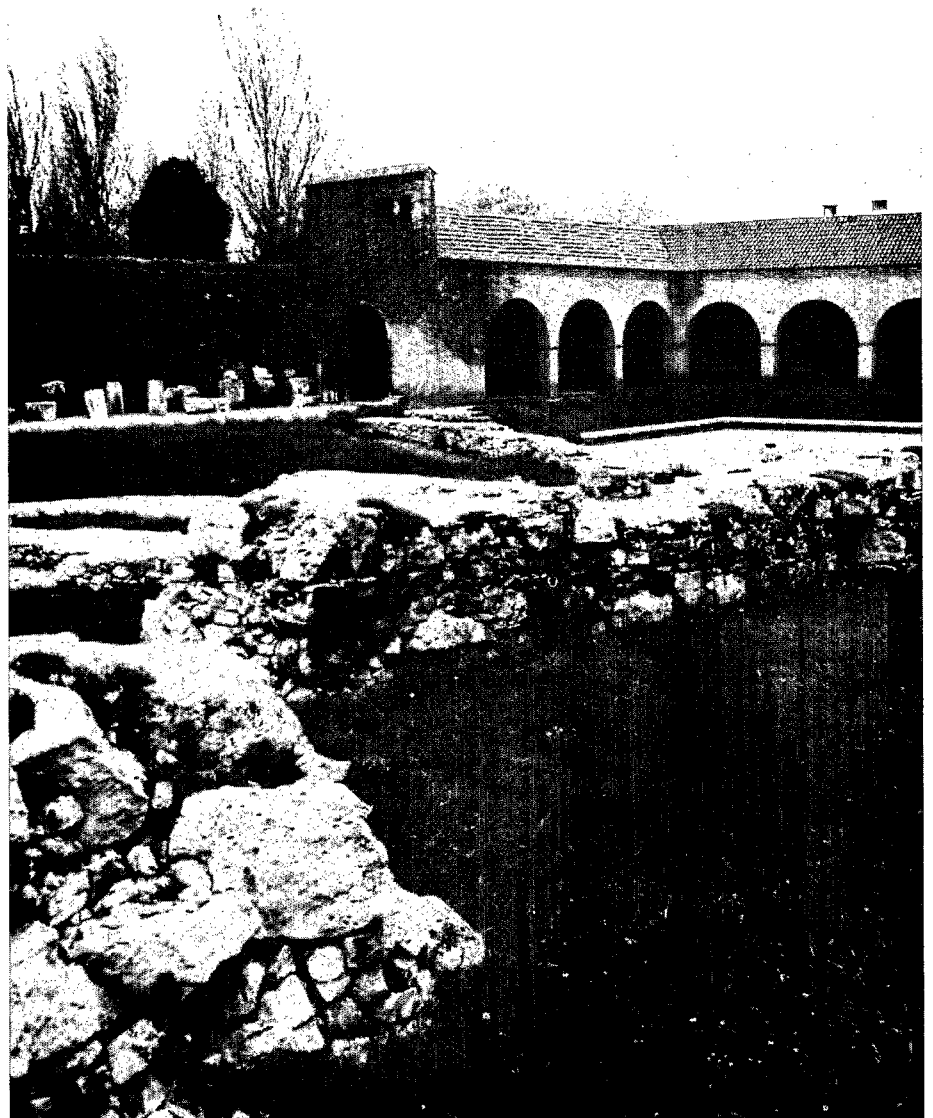
Born in Budapest in 1921. Historian (specializing in classical antiquity) and archaeologist. Studied at the University of Budapest where, from 1946 to 1969, he was a lecturer in the Institute of Classical Archaeology. Director of the István Király Museum at Székesfehérvár since 1949. Director of the museum service of Fejér County since 1962. Since 1958 has been in charge of the excavations at Gorsium and since 1960 has been editor of the journal *Alba Regia*. Member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. Areas of work include Roman epigraphy, numismatics, archaeology and, particularly, prosopography. Published works include: *Les Syriens à Intercisa*, Brussels, 1972; *La Pannonie sous Gallien*, Brussels, 1976.

Medieval ruins within walls in Székesfehérvár.

[Photo: Kálmán Kónya.]

## *Fejér county—the István Király Museum at Székesfehérvár*

*Fejér county lies between Budapest and Lake Balaton; the county's chief town, Székesfehérvár, has played a prominent role in Hungarian history and, since the 1960s, has also been gaining in importance as an industrial centre. Dunaujváros, the county's other principal town, developed in the 1950s in the vicinity of the steel works and was the first example of socialist town-planning in Hungary. In the northern part of the county, where lie the Bakony, Vértes and Velence hills, the villages populated by national minorities retain their special character and mining and vine-growing are practised. In the southern part of the county lies the agricultural plain of Mezőföld, as well as Lake Velencei, which is visited regularly by more than 100,000 holiday-makers at the height of summer; here the extensive highway system bears witness to the importance of this area from the Roman period until the early Middle Ages. Late in the tenth century Székesfehérvár became the royal residence of the Hungarian kings, who were crowned and buried there, and the Diet even met there for a long period. After the Ottoman domination the town's political importance decreased, but up to the mid-nineteenth century Székesfehérvár remained an important centre of Hungarian cultural life.*





Archaeology and urban history have been the István Király museum's two most important areas of research since its creation in 1873, the other research undertaken there being only of local interest. The great earthwork fortifications of the late Bronze Age, the Celtic dwellings, the Roman city of Gorsium, the military fortifications of the Roman *limes* and a considerable number of medieval monuments in the district are of great interest to archaeologists; and the city of Székesfehérvár's eventful past makes it an important focus for historical research.

In the last century, excavations carried out in the royal basilica of Székesfehérvár yielded Hungary's first outstanding archaeological finds, but the most important discoveries date from the contemporary period.

As a result of further excavations in the area of the royal basilica, it has been possible to revise certain dates relating to the first period of the Middle Ages in Hungary; to form a more accurate idea of the period in which the most important edifice of that epoch was built; and to ascertain the location of King István's burial place, as well as the site of the king's throne and of the chapel where the Angevin kings were buried.

Other excavations, begun at Gorsium in 1958, have brought to light one-third of a central Pannonian Roman city, including its surrounding walls and towers, its main highway, forum, temples, baths, an early Christian basilica and the procurator's palace. Outside the walls, dwellings, pottery workshops, centres of activity and an amphitheatre have been dis-

covered. These finds have not only resulted in the creation of Hungary's largest open-air museum but have also added considerably to our knowledge of the history of Pannonia and have made it necessary to revise earlier views concerning the occupation of the province, the founding of the cities, the provincial assemblies and the survival of Roman culture.

The museum has also played an important role in the organization of national and international scientific conferences,<sup>1</sup> and it has published a considerable number of scientific works. The year 1960 saw the first publication of the museum's yearbook, *Alba Regia*, which now comprises eighteen volumes of studies (mostly archaeological but also historical, ranging from antiquity to the Middle Ages) issued in German, French, English and Italian. The yearbook also contains reports on the conferences organized by the museum, confirming the international character of its scientific activities. Through this publication the museum conducts exchanges with 330 foreign and 130 national institutions. In fields other than history and archaeology, however, such facilities do not exist. Ethnographic research is less developed in Fejér than in other regions of Hungary. Székesfehérvár did not play a leading role

The Roman temples at Gorsium.  
[Photo: Ferenc Gelencsér.]

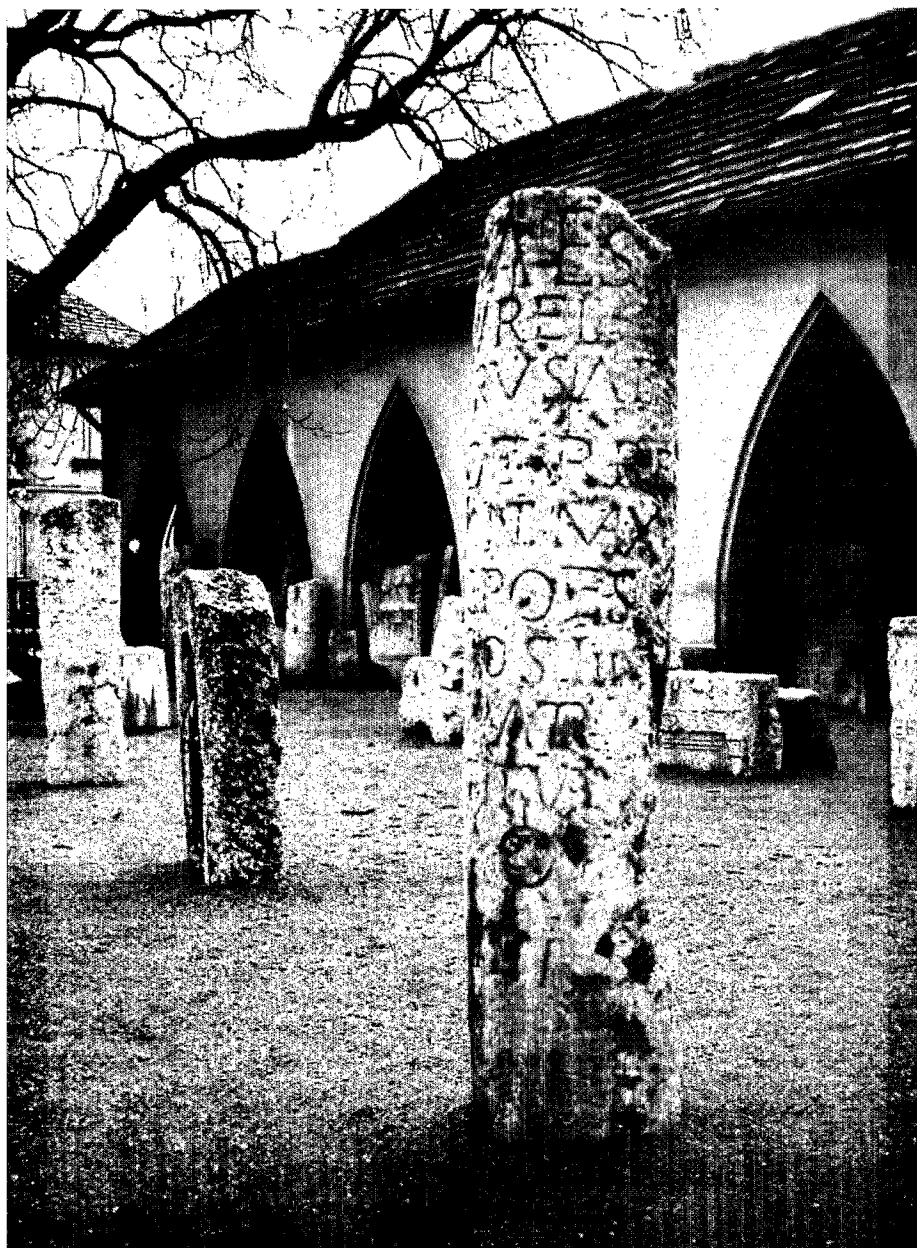
1. These gatherings have included international conferences and symposia on the following: current questions relating to Banderarmik (1970); the history of the Diet (1972); the Celts in Central Europe (1974); the Roman *limes* (1976); research problems concerning the art of stone carving in the Arpad period (1978); Roman bronzes (1982); the Angevin kings in Central Europe (1982).

in the recent history of the workers' movement; and since it boasted neither outstanding artists nor art collectors there was no local base for research into the history of art.

Valuable work has nevertheless been done in these fields, but in each case these have been individual achievements, examples being research on folk dancing and folk music, which is not exclusively local, and the study of modern Hungarian art.

In the museum's educational role scientific research has a lesser impact, as the cultural utilization of scientific findings is not very developed. An exception to this is the work at Gorsium, where the results of the excavation are systematically reported in publications. Since it began twenty-five years ago, work on the excavation has been accompanied by measures to preserve the ruins.

ISTVÁN KIRÁLY MUSEUM, Székesfehérvár.  
Epigraphic evidence in the Roman stone  
gallery.



This led, four years after work at the site began, to the establishment of a local museum which has since then been supplemented by an extensive natural park and is now Hungary's largest open-air archaeological museum. The scientific presentation of the ruins also entailed placing stone remains on display, erecting protective structures, building a lapidarium and organizing a permanent exhibition. As the excavation work proceeds, new items replace or are added to those already on show. Explanatory texts, simple or more detailed catalogues, illustrated maps and copies of exhibits are provided. Guides are available for visitors. New finds and additions to the open-air museum are presented to the public each year during Museum Month.

### *Increasing public awareness and knowledge of the ancient world*

In ancient times Gorsium was the religious centre of the province of Inner Pannonia and many ceremonies and games took place there. This led to the idea being put forward in the 1970s that the cultural impact of the open-air museum, with its Mediterranean atmosphere, would be considerably enhanced if part of the ancient ruins was restored and a floral festival, the Floralia, was held around the beginning of May each year. In ancient Rome it was the custom, on the occasion of the spring festival, to offer flowers, among other gifts; at Gorsium the Floralia festival opens the season and visitors receive gifts of flowers. Another festival held at Gorsium is the Ludi Romani, which has a poetic theme. On that day young people from ten towns of ancient Pannonia gather there, and secondary-school pupils put on classical plays and recite poems. The most important event, however, is the summer games. Since 1971 plays by Greek and Latin authors such as Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes and Plautus have been regularly staged in the Roman temples. By the late 1970s some 70,000 visitors could be expected each year by the open-air museum and some 10,000 admissions to the drama performances.

One result of the museum's activities in the sphere of cultural education is that only 20 to 25 per cent of visitors are from Székesfehérvár or Fejér country, the great majority coming from other regions of Hungary, drawn by the various programmes and exhibitions organized by the museum. The proximity of Budapest and the existence of excellent transport



facilities enable Székesfehérvár to benefit directly from the capital's cultural life, which is a key factor in the museum's cultural education activities.

The museum formerly held between twelve and fourteen exhibitions annually but owing to current economic difficulties this number has been reduced to between six and eight a year. Most of the exhibitions are devoted to the plastic and decorative arts. Lectures or exhibitions concerning archaeology, ethnography or contemporary history are organized there on the occasion of certain anniversaries.

Art history is the one area of specialization in which, though bereft of an outstanding collection, the museum has achieved national importance through the exhibitions it has organized. The success of these exhibitions has been beneficial to scientific research and the growth of the museum's collection, revealing its value outside the local context. Firstly, the long-term planning of regular exhibitions and larger exhibitions centred on particular themes has called for extensive scientific preparation in areas where there was not adequate co-ordination at national level, for example, in relation to the various stages in the development of Hungarian art. Secondly, the attention devoted to the plastic and decorative arts has greatly contributed to the building up of a collection that can be used systematically to present contemporary Hungarian art abroad.

The various art exhibitions organized fall into separate series. The first concerns twentieth-century Hungarian art from the turn of the century to the present day. The exhibition of art of the 1950s, mounted in 1981, was the tenth in that series. These exhibitions have opened up a new path, leading to the preparation of the chapter on the twentieth century in the Art History Manual published by the Hungarian Academy of Science.

The second series of exhibitions is devoted to contemporary art but also presents some outstanding artists who have been forgotten or of whom the public are unaware. The first one was devoted to Csontváry Kosztká Tivadar, on the occasion of the forty-fifth anniversary of this great Hungarian painter's death, and it aroused much public interest in the artist. Further exhibitions in the series have served to reveal such artists as Béla Kondor, Erzsébet Schaár and Lili Ország, who previously had been neither known nor accepted by the general public.

Exhibitions on the subject of Roman art in Pannonia also had a significant im-

pact. These were followed by a series of exhibitions of Hungarian medieval art (stone carvings of the Arpad period, art at the time of the Angevin kings) which was a source of basic documentation for the Art History Manual, while the catalogues themselves presented a fair summary of the basic trends. Exhibitions devoted to various periods of the contemporary era have also been included in the programme. These types of exhibition need to be scientifically prepared and documented as they are in fields that have hitherto been relatively neglected. Research on the contemporary era has been confined to Fejér County.

These art exhibitions have had an influence on the museum's other exhibitions. During the transition period when there were no suitable premises available for the Ethnography Museum, a series of ethnographic exhibitions was organized, on which staff of the István Király Museum collaborated with specialists from the Ethnography Museum, on such subjects as 'Hungarian Folk Art through the Ages'.

These series of exhibitions are a vital part of the museum's efforts to develop cultural awareness. Lectures are given in preparation for them and after they close. The exhibition of art of the early twentieth century, for example, was the occasion for concerts and lectures on the history, literature, architecture and music of that period. The exhibitions draw the general public and specialists alike.

Another aspect of the museum's action to develop cultural awareness takes the form essentially of a public service. Six- or twelve-month programmes of public lectures provide general information concerning the matters dealt with by museum specialists and these programmes may include record recitals, film showings, guided tours or excursions. Through these educational activities the museum co-operates with various social organizations, and primarily the Museum Association which, in accordance with its members' wishes, itself organizes lectures and excursions in order to make the various historical monuments better known, or arranges visits to the most important exhibitions. A youth club also operates as part of the Museum Association. This club has its own programme, which is partly linked with the above-mentioned educational activities and includes guided visits, scientific tours, excavation work and scientific exploration trips. Even children of nursery school age are brought into contact with the museum and

familiarized with it. These young children participate regularly in the museum's activities and hear talks given for them, as do pupils of the primary and secondary schools, which maintain close relations with the museum.

Through the museum's educational activities its scientific work is integrated into everyday life and given practical application. By this means, scientific research and exhibitions based on research are brought to the notice of the public. As a result of its concern to present subjects in all their complexity, the museum not only transmits to the public the findings of museological science proper but also sheds light on historical and literary events, musical life, etc.

The county museum with its many specialists serves as a scientific research institute and a cultural centre for both the county and the city. This dual function enables it to perform its role as a county museum and at the same time distinguishes it from all other such institutions in the country, none of whose activities are so varied.

[Translated from Hungarian]

HUNGARIAN AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM,  
Budapest. Gothic wing.  
[Photo: Hungarian Agricultural Museum.]



## *The Hungarian Agricultural Museum, its national role*

Iván Balassa

Born 1917. Ph.D., D.Sc. Assistant Director-General of the Hungarian Agricultural Museum. Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Denmark, winner of the Herder Prize. Specialist in ethnological research, particularly the ethnology of agriculture and the history of working methods.

Lóránd Szabó

Born 1926. D.Sc. (Econ). Worked at Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Information Centre) 1948–76. Since 1979, Director-General of the Hungarian Agricultural Museum. Specialist in research on the history of science.

The Hungarian Agricultural Museum was founded in 1896, the year in which the thousandth anniversary of the founding of Hungary was commemorated. The equipment assembled for a vast agricultural exhibition served as a basis for the museum, and the museum buildings—a set of historic monuments representing the various architectural periods such as Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque—were specially built for the occasion to the designs of Ignac Alpar.

The Hungarian Agricultural Museum covers all branches of agriculture and is classified as a traditional museum.<sup>1</sup> Most of the collection is concerned with tillage and stock-raising but forestry, fish breeding, fishing and hunting, and also machinery, the processing of agricultural produce, and particularly the food industry, are represented as well. Some theoretical and practical solutions to problems in these fields have already been found as a result of the way the museum was conceived. It is a feature of the museum's educational and scientific activities to treat each subject from a historical viewpoint. Studies of agricultural questions cover the period from ancient times to the present day, and are sometimes able

to provide a glimpse of the future. Archaeologists, agricultural historians, historians of work methods, ethnographers and, of course, agricultural engineers, horticulturalists and those engaged in the food industry all work together at the museum. In so complex a subject, covering such a long time-span and encompassing such a diversity of occupations, the work can only be properly carried out by a team equipped with sound knowledge and skills.

The methods used in setting up collections, and the system of inventorying plants and animals, correspond to those used in the natural sciences. Conservation is carried out in the museum's well-equipped taxidermic and specimen-mounting workshops; special care in this respect is given to the conservation and classification of palaeozoological and palaeobotanical specimens. The same methods are used for the other branches of science. The museum's fine arts collection, which of course consists of works closely connected with agriculture, is also worthy of mention. All this means that

1. Iván Balassa, 'Traditional and Historical Agriculture in Museum', *Museum*, Vol. XXIV, 1972, pp. 145–49.

the museum has to maintain close links with the national museums specializing in other fields.

### *Interdisciplinary co-operation is indispensable*

The fact that representatives of various branches of science work together at the museum is particularly important in regard to research and classification for it facilitates the complex work that these fields require. It is true that proper use is not always made of this advantage, but as a result of the efforts made, better results are being obtained, especially in the case of recent exhibitions. This is very important for the museum since it is planning to hold, in the next five or six years, exhibitions that will cover a floor space of 7,000 to 8,000 square metres. As the museum has managed to obtain more floor space, it must now replace the former exhibitions, which have served out their time, with new ones that will give fuller expression to the results of interdisciplinary co-operation, along the following lines: each exhibition will introduce the latest achievements of natural science and archaeology, and this will be followed by an exhibition of the specific historical context. To take the case of domestic animals and domestication, for example, this way of presenting things makes it possible to exhibit the large estate and the farm, a somewhat ethnographic subject, with emphasis on the tools and machines used. Moreover, whenever the subject permits, the modern period should be also presented and, if possible, a glimpse of future prospects should be given. Experience shows that exhibitions of a complex nature have a considerable impact, resulting in a resurgence of interest in inter-disciplinary research.

Quite apart from this factor and the interest aroused by the exhibitions, general museums such as the Hungarian Agricultural Museum have many advantages. There is, however, one considerable snag: single-subject exhibitions (for example, flora and fauna, or river or lake fishing) are scarcely possible. This disadvantage can be offset in various ways, the most usual being the organization of temporary exhibitions to present the specific features or products of a particular region, such as paprika or Tokay. However, it is hardly possible to organize more than one or two exhibitions of this sort per year; moreover, since they are of limited duration, the number of visitors

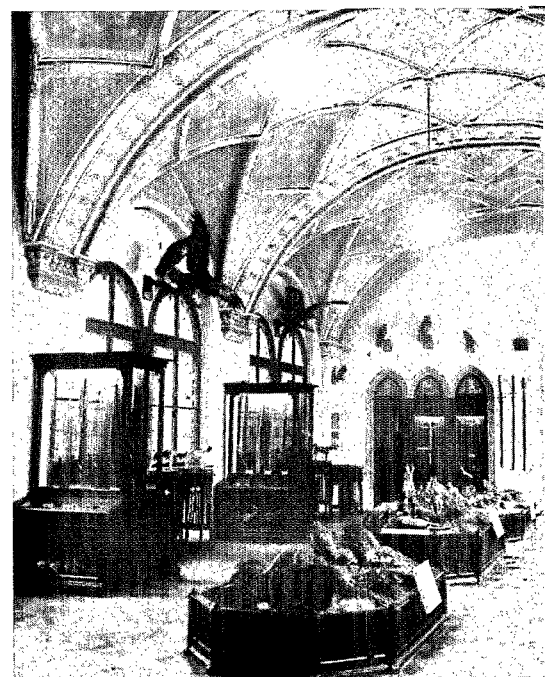
is comparatively small. The second way of mitigating the lack of single-subject displays has been the establishment and development over the past two decades of village and local museums.

### *Spreading out*

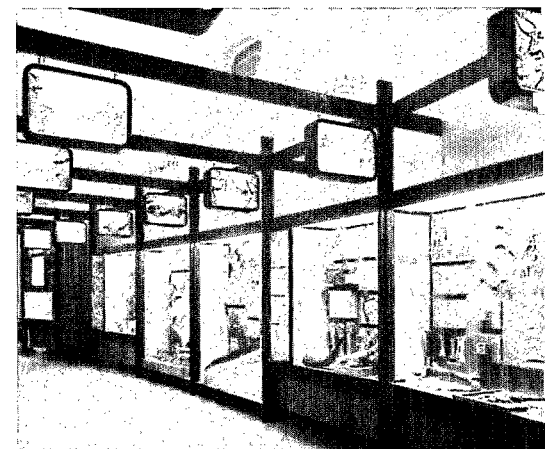
These museums, of which there are twenty-two, have been established in different regions of the country and have the advantage of being in the very region where the features to be demonstrated still exist. The Agricultural Museum has organized exhibitions at Szegeed and Kalocsa, the two centres of paprika-growing. Oenological collections exist in the various wine-growing regions, such as Tolcsva, Kecskemét, Badacsony and Balatonboglár, while at Szilvászvárad there is a collection devoted to the history of the breeding of Lippizaner horses. This short list brings out the most important features of this type of museum. Local capacities are maintained, while at the same time the tourist features of the museums attract an increasing number of visitors in summer.

In Hungary, recent decades have been marked by a major museum-establishment campaign. The immediate result of this has been that the Agricultural Museum can call upon the collections, of various sizes, of the museums dependent on it and hold a far greater number of exhibitions with the same budget and the same staff as in the past.

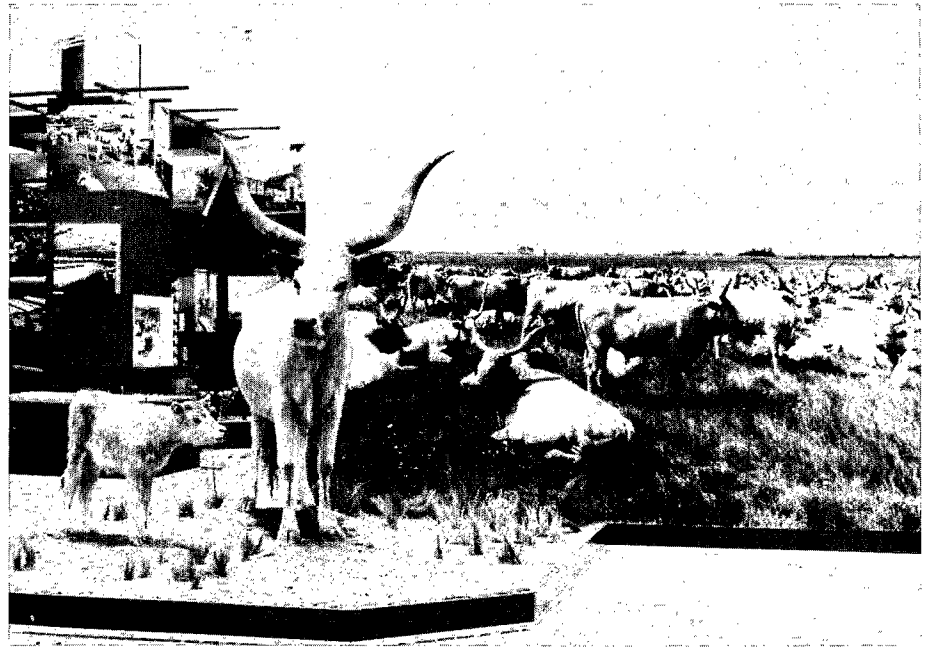
A few years ago, the museum's authorities came to the conclusion that this might call into question the activities of the central museum, and resort was had to the formation of the 'institutional museum': By this is meant that each new collection is sponsored by an institution (an agricultural co-operative or undertaking, a factory, a school, etc.) that pays for an expert to be brought in to set it up, for the objects collected, for staff and equipment and for maintenance of the museum building. The Hungarian Agricultural Museum is responsible for collecting, inventorying and restoring, organizing the exhibitions and carrying out a quarterly inspection. This system is advantageous for various reasons. First, the founders of collections have to consider how they can satisfy the requirements laid down, for if they do not, the material is transferred to the Hungarian Agricultural Museum and becomes part of the central collection. Secondly, since the museum is not responsible for finance, it can pursue its activities with the help of guest ex-



Exhibition on hunting installed in 1906.  
[Photo: Hungarian Agricultural Museum.]



Presentation of the domestication of animals, 1981.  
[Photo: Hungarian Agricultural Museum.]



History of cattle breeding, 1981.  
[Photo: Hungarian Agricultural Museum.]

perts. This method seems to be solving the problem for both parties (at least for the time being).

In general, the professional activities of Hungarian museums do not cover old buildings, but here the Agricultural Museum is the exception that confirms the rule. Recently, it discovered that legislation dealing with the protection of classified old buildings in general did not cover a considerable proportion of classified buildings of an agricultural character. Stables, barns and other buildings not exhibiting the features of a style or historical epoch or not of great age did not benefit from official protection. As a result of this discovery, the ministries responsible for agriculture, building and cultural affairs drafted a Supplementary Order, which became law in 1977 and provided improved protection for classified agricultural buildings. The Hungarian Agricultural Museum was made responsible for this task in collaboration with the National Committee for the Protection of Classified Buildings.

Once the criteria to be applied had been defined, registration forms were distributed and numerous replies were received. On the basis of a field survey the museum put forward a list of historic buildings for classification. At this stage, however, new problems arose; the buildings classified were usually in the grounds of factories, with the result that financial responsibility for their upkeep and restoration lay with the owners. But this implied that other industrial activities would be deprived of the money involved. The unfortunate result was that many owners of classified buildings did

not look after them as they were supposed to do or that they applied to the government for a subsidy. Others succeeded despite everything in carrying out the necessary repair work and are now attempting, where suitable, to put those old buildings to some use (perhaps as a museum, offices, cultural centre, cinema or school). However, since the survey is still proceeding, it must be assumed that not all the problems have yet been solved. What is certain, however, is that numerous agricultural buildings of interest have been saved and that they will be put to judicious use in the years to come.

### *Educating the public*

Any science museum today is in duty bound to educate the public as part of its activities. Thus particular importance is attached to such education. Every member of the museum's professional staff deals with at least one and sometimes several scientific subjects and their work subsequently gives rise to publications, either separately or as part of the museum annals. To provide a basis for this work, the Agricultural Museum started the *Archives of Farm Implements* about twenty-five years ago. These annals contain descriptions and photographs of all farm implements from the various archaeological epochs till the present day in the collections of the country's agricultural museums. At the same time, pictorial material connected with agriculture from the Middle Ages until the present day has also been dealt with. The museum now has one hundred thousand record cards. The information contained

in them is very useful for research work and for the organization of exhibitions. The card index has enabled numerous studies and articles to be published, and has also provided a documentary basis for important publications.

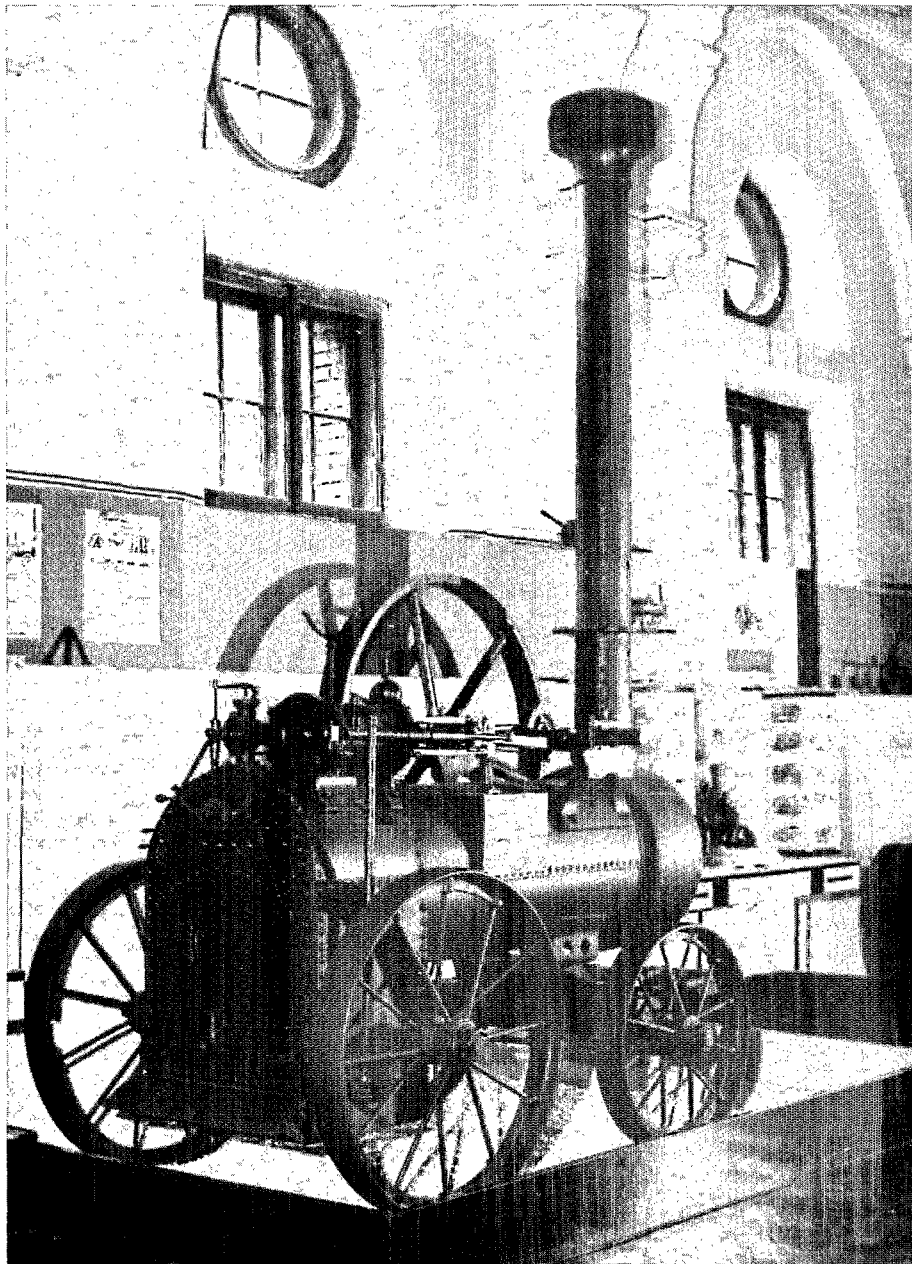
The traditional methods of public education, such as guided tours, talks, film projections, excursions, etc., are very widely used at the museum. However, the means of awakening greater awareness in the national educational system are becoming increasingly important. Participants are no longer passive but are becoming creative. Although all the arrangements are not yet perfect, some elements are already functioning satisfactorily. Excellent relations have been established with schools and with groups of students in the field, who benefit directly from knowledge acquired at the museum.

A competition entitled 'Agriculture as Seen by Students' has been held for over ten years, and thousands have taken part every year. Schoolchildren under fourteen years of age send in drawings, paintings, statues and other works of art, while pupils from secondary schools, aged fifteen to eighteen, write essays illustrated with photographs or drawings, making their own choice among the wide range of subjects offered. The prize-giving is always held in May at the Hungarian Agricultural Museum in Vajdahunyad Castle and prizes are awarded both to pupils and to their teachers. The event is a real festival and the children prepare for it well in advance. The competition also has another purpose—that of preparing young people for and interesting them in agriculture as a career.

The activities of the Friends of the

Hungarian Agricultural Museum also have a useful educational impact. The three thousand or so members make an active and effective contribution to the work of the museum, assist in the collection of objects and advise the experts. The central museum and those in the provinces have received many objects or even entire collections from them. Members are entitled to free admission to exhibitions, receive the museum's publications free of charge and are admitted to those of the museum's conferences that are likely to be useful for their work. But the chief attraction for them still remains the opportunity of travelling at reduced prices in Hungary itself and abroad, to visit other museums and broaden their horizons.

[Translated from Hungarian]



Part of the exhibition of agricultural machinery, 1964.  
[Photo: Hungarian Agricultural Museum.]

## Technical museums and collections

László Kiss

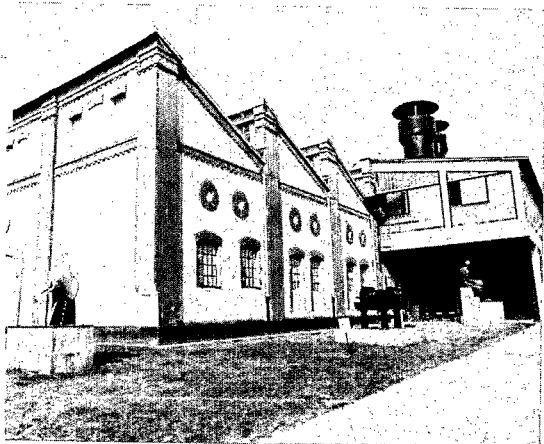
Born in 1930. Studied at the Lóránd Eötvös University in Budapest. Central Administration of Hungarian Museums, 1955–74. Since 1974 has been Deputy Director-General of the National Technical Museum. He specializes in museum methods, in particular the organization of technical and professional collections. He is one of the leading figures in promoting the work-related activities of specialist technical museums. Has written a number of works on the history of museology in Hungary, the traditions underlying technical museum methods, and on current problems in that field.

The first attempts to set up a technical museum in our country, at the beginning of the twentieth century, came to nothing because the political and economic situation at the time was unfavourable for projects of this kind. The only reason that the Hungarian Transport Museum came into being was that the transport hall was left over from the National Millennium Exhibition of 1896. This museum is now internationally renowned, both for its longevity and for its large and varied collection. The 1930s saw the creation in Budapest of the National Technical Museum, which shows the development of Hungarian industry. But its collection

almost entirely disappeared as a result of the serious damage caused by the Second World War, a fate also suffered by the Hungarian Transport Museum collection. In 1945 it had to be reorganized virtually from scratch.

The idea of the long-term protection of 'technical monuments'<sup>1</sup> and the legislation for achieving it took shape at a time when Hungarian industry was being rebuilt and fundamental changes were being made in the production structure. This period of technical renewal also saw

1. The term 'technical monuments' is used by the author to refer to all cultural property, movable and immovable, studied by industrial archaeologists, historians of technology, etc.—Ed.



Central Europe's first foundry using semi-continuous casting methods for the manufacture of wheels and cogs. Built in 1858, the building now houses the Foundry Museum.



A former mine at Oroszlány, now a Museum of Mining.

an emerging concern for the preservation of objects of historical interest. However, the economic situation of the country, then in the throes of reconstruction, did not permit the establishment of a state-subsidized national museum covering industry as a whole. These circumstances resulted in a process opposite to that usually experienced. Collections and museums specializing in individual branches of industry were set up first. Their task was to present the technical details of a given special field and to satisfy the specific requirements of a particular area of employment. These specialist museums can be more competent than the big technical museums which cover all branches of industry in a general way and whose collections and exhibitions are organized on a branch-by-branch system. In the big museums, the main obstacle to development is precisely the need to be selective because of the large quantity of material or because of the major problems of storage and exhibition.

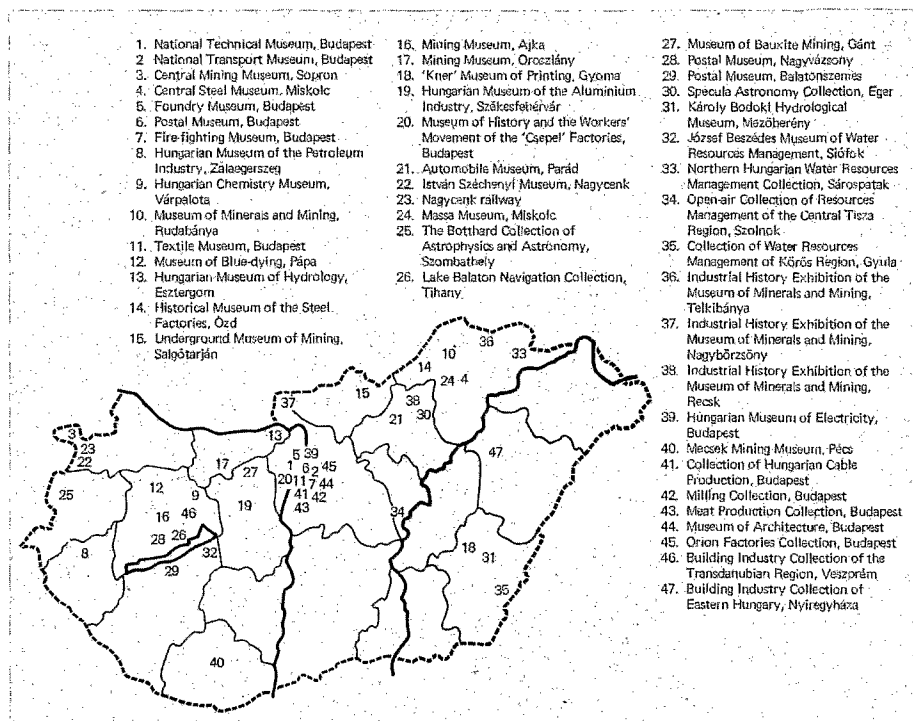
The opening of specialist museums coincided with the early stages of the organization of the National Technical Museum. The particular characteristics and authority of this museum had to be defined in relation to the activities of the specialist museums, and that restricted its role to presenting the general history of technology and the turning-points in development. This was all placed in the context of the interaction between scientific and technical and social development. The central museum and the specialist museums showing the detailed development of individual branches of Hungarian industry thus have activities in common and co-operate closely with each other.

*National measures for the protection of technical monuments*

The organized surveying of technical monuments and the establishment of specialist museums is provided for by state decrees so as to ensure in the first instance measures of general protection. The 1949 law on the protection of property of historical interest regards technical monuments as an integral part of the

archaeological artistic and cultural heritage. In 1954, a special decree was issued on the protection of historic, technical and industrial monuments, requiring excavations to be organized and these monuments to be listed and preserved. In pursuance of that decree, a team was established to compile a systematic list of monuments, organize the specialist museums, and prepare for the establishment of a central technical museum. For financial reasons, support from the various ministries, industrial authorities, factories and institutions was vital for the protection of technical monuments. One of the most effective ways of organizing collections is for individual branches of industry to recognize what is in their own interest as far as conservation is concerned, from the point of view of both industrial policy and of vocational training. By the end of the 1960s many specialist museums had been set up, the majority of them showing the history of the development, in Hungary, of a particular branch of industry (for example, the mining industry, the steel industry, the chemical industry, etc.) or of a particular sector (for example, the transport sector, the postal service, the fire service, etc.) Encouraged by these examples and by the useful experience acquired, an increasing number of industrial firms are planning and setting up their own collections and museums, and these will eventually become an integral part of the chain of technical museums.

The central museum organized in parallel with the branch museums became the



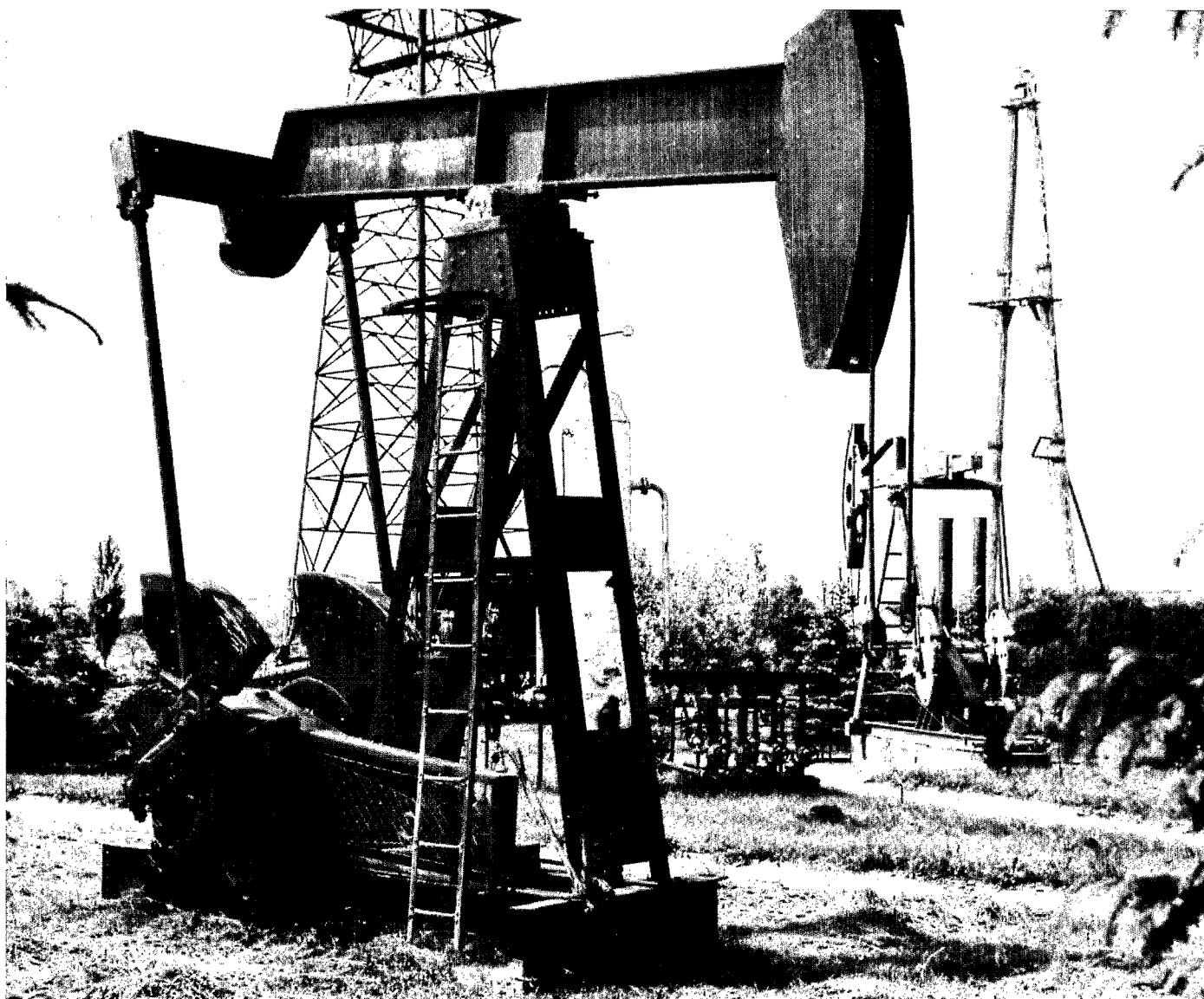
Technical museums and collections in Hungary.

National Technical Museum in 1973. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs subsequently made it responsible for inspecting and co-ordinating the activities of the various technical and specialist museums and collections.

The above-mentioned decrees give firms and other institutions the opportunity to preserve the historical property in their possession. The upkeep of the collections is paid for by regular state subsidies. Similar regulations enable the National Technical Museum to declare a monument belonging to any branch of industry to be a technical monument. The owner is responsible for its preservation. If it does not have a collection of its own, the firm which owns the monument is entitled to make a gift of it to the relevant specialist museum. In addition, firms and institutions have to compile a register of these monuments. Important contemporary technical constructions can be declared protected monuments as well as old ones. The rapid structural changes

that have occurred in industrial and technical production over the past decade are making new demands on the museums. New support was given to excavations and to the preservation of old technical equipment by the government decision of 1979 that makes the respective ministries responsible for taking the necessary steps to list and protect any object, document and monument of value from the point of view of industrial history. At the instigation of the museums, these measures also cover movable and immovable industrial property which is of historical value from the architectural point of view or from the point of view of industrial development. Nine specialist museums representing various branches of industry have already been set up in premises which are in fact themselves industrial monuments (our first industrial monument, the Ujmassa blast furnace, built in 1813, became a 'demonstration' museum in 1952). The study undertaken by the National Technical Museum gives

Open-air exhibition on petroleum extraction at Zalaegerszeg.





the main facts, with photographs, concerning some 300 industrial buildings and plants.

### *The specialist museums and their collections*

There are forty-seven museums in Hungary devoted in one way or another to technology or the history of industry. They resulted from the great movement to reorganize museums and assemble collections which flourished in the 1950s. Fourteen of these museums are authorized to build up collections on a national basis, thirteen can collect over a more limited area, and most of the rest have permanent exhibitions or constitute industrial collections. There are also four other large collections and a certain number of open-air museums. Their upkeep is the responsibility of the various ministries or industrial enterprises, but central museum management is the province of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

The museum collections and the research done relate to all the important areas of Hungarian industry. The museum network can be regarded as virtually complete. It is no longer a matter of establishing new museums but of building up those that exist, adding to their equipment, and compiling documentation with the help of experts. We are also planning to extend and increase the number of collections relating to the history of local factories. One of the most important tasks is to preserve as many authentic objects as possible, and as far as possible in their natural setting and in the industrial complex to which they belong. As examples of what we have in mind, the Ganz foundries, which were built in 1858, are conserved with their authentic interior, and in the underground mining museum at Salgotarján, the accessories and methods of the former mining industry are displayed in a 200-metre mine gallery.

Some 100,000 objects have been catalogued in the collections of our technical museums; a considerable proportion of these are in permanent exhibitions. There are also 200,000 photographs and illustrations, 120,000 items of archive documents, and 150,000 volumes in libraries devoted to the technical and industrial history of Hungary.

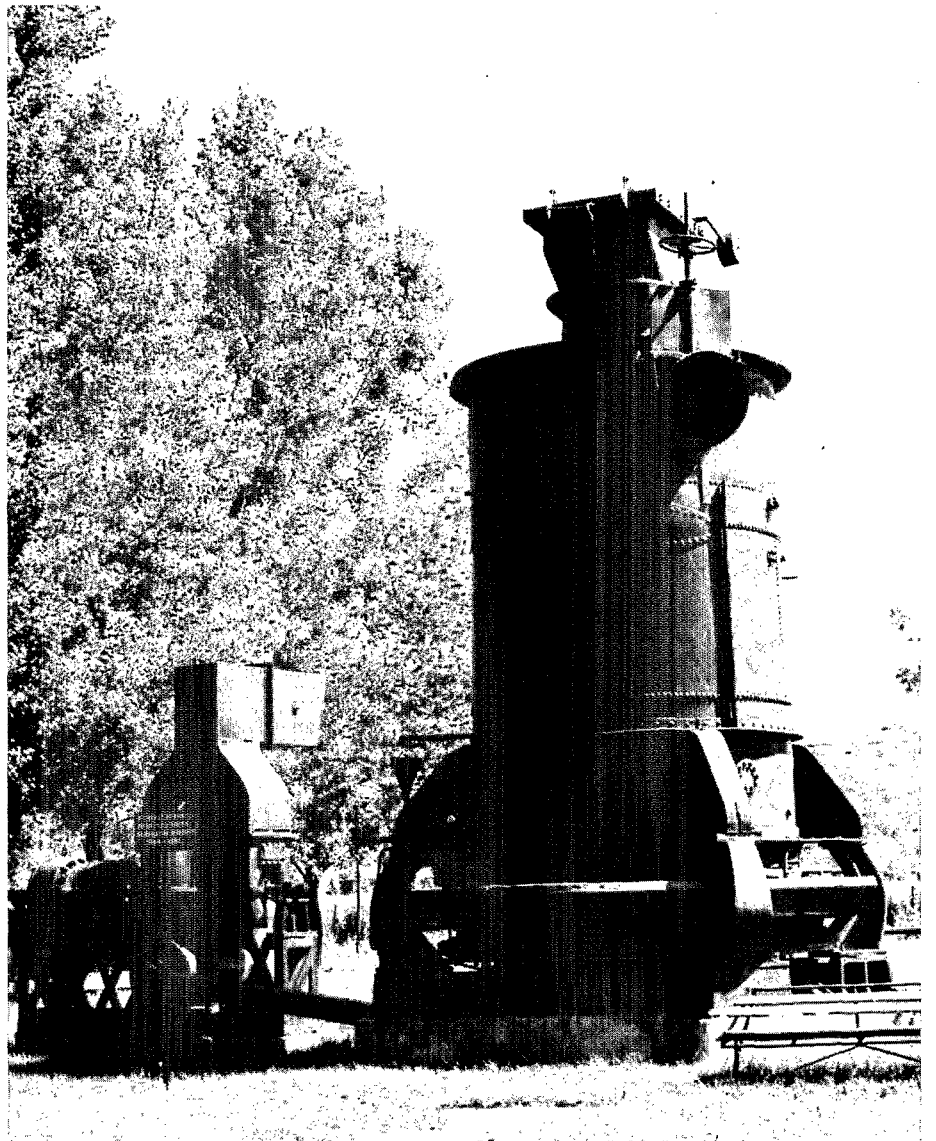
The items selected for these collections range from articles used in the most ancient times to those of the present day, but the main sources for new items are of course the factories. All are accompanied

by as complete documentation as possible. They are chosen not for their age or rarity but on grounds of their value and role in the development of the process of production and in the evolution of technology—the museums devote particular attention to the technologies of production and to equipment illustrating the historical development of those technologies.

In Hungary, the task of presenting the complete history of technical and industrial development is shared among all the specialist museums. But if the collections are to be accessible it is vital to have unified working methods and a single inventory system. There already exists an inventory system for information on technical monuments which is linked to a computerized data bank. Experience proves that the best method of compiling an inventory of equipment in technical museums is one based on the decimal classification system.

The job of the technical museums is to

Open-air presentation on steel-making at Ózd.





The blast furnace constructed in 1813 at Újmassa, the country's oldest industrial monument, now the Massa Museum.

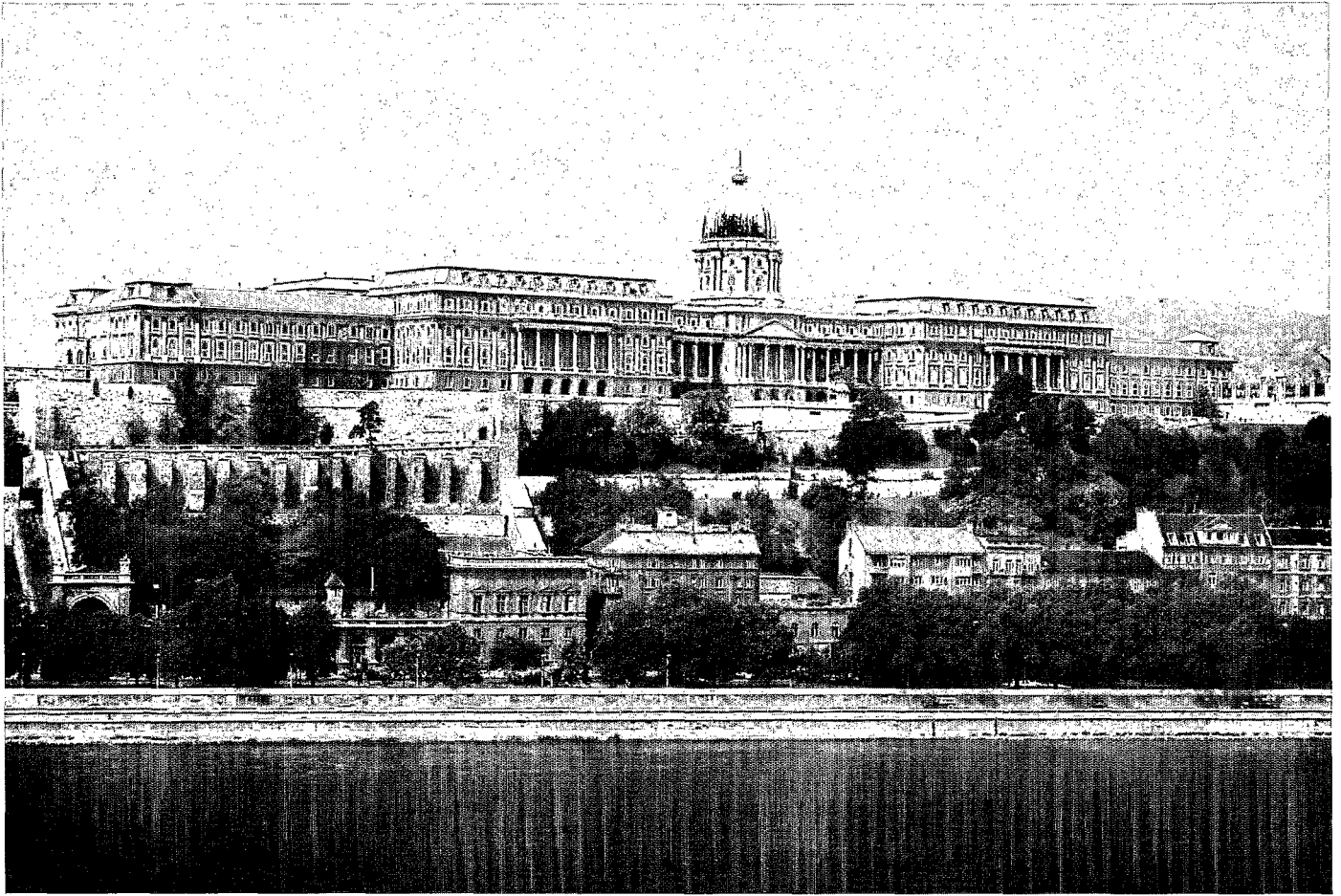
continue with research on the history of science and technology in Hungary. Exhibitions show the role of technology in the history of society, and the characteristic features and achievements of national development in the context of international progress. The exhibitions and collections make a particular contribution to raising the standard of scientific and technical education and broadening the knowledge of young people. They also play an important role in the vocational training of experts, in polytechnic education, and in the development of creativity, giving a knowledge of the past and preserving national traditions.

The technical museums set up over the past thirty years are still developing, but they are already effective in carrying out the tasks set for them. Their activities have resulted in some hundred exhibitions, a million visitors, several hundred lectures and numerous publications. The demand in Hungary for technical museums is growing, and the need is becoming apparent for the National Technical Museum to be open to the general public. Since it exists at present only in the form of an organizational structure and basic collection, the most pressing task now is to put up a building to house permanent exhibitions. In the last few

years, the museum has offered an insight into technical development throughout the world by putting on numerous temporary but large-scale exhibitions such as *The History of Tools, Energy, Man and Work* and *The History of Information*. An exhibition is currently being prepared on *The History of Chronography*. The scientific research being conducted by the museum is closely related to the main trends of research at the national level. The *Review of the History of Technology* has been published since 1964, and the twelve volumes that have already appeared present the results of research into the history of technology at the national level.

The past thirty years in Hungary have seen greater progress and achievements in protecting technical monuments than in the previous 150 years. A network of technical museums and museums of Hungarian industrial history has been established, eliminating many of the dangers that threatened monuments. Now we must unify museum working methods by strengthening the already close co-operation that exists. At a later date, we will have to develop the national network and preserve our material with a view to making better scientific and cultural use of it.

[Translated from Hungarian]



The Royal Palace of Budapest, which now houses the Hungarian National Gallery, the Budapest Historical Museum, the Széchenyi National Library and the Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.

[Photo: Tibor Mester.]

## *Museums and tourism*

István Berta

Born in 1944. Awarded a teaching degree in history and Hungarian by Budapest University in 1967. From 1967 to 1977, historian-museologist specializing in the modern era at the Bakony Museum in Veszprém and the Hungarian National Museum. Assistant Director of the Museum Restoration and Methodology Centre, with responsibility for dealing with problems in cultural instruction and education concerning museums, 1977-80. Since 1978, Chief Superintendent of activities pertaining to museums in the context of cultural education. Since 1981, professional activities at the Historical Museum of Budapest as Head of the City History Department and Director of the Kiscell Museum.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, following the fashion prevailing in Europe at the time, Hungary began to be the scene of a long series of exhibitions on industrial and artistic themes, the decorative arts and various general subjects. Hungarian museum collections were also displayed at shows attended by the general public, who thus had an opportunity to see treasures which had hitherto been exclusively in the hands of specialists. The extent to which exhibitions such as these arouse and stimulate international interest in travel cannot at present be ascertained. However, we have information concerning objects sent by exhibition organizers and agents to Europe's major cities and seaside resorts. For advertising purposes, agents had a large supply of documentary material and posters in various languages; in the case of very large exhibitions, the postal ser-

vices were also used for wider publicity.

Press and poster advertising was supplemented by cheap travel rates for country-dwellers who wished to see exhibitions, such as the Millennium Exhibition in 1896, commemorating the conquest of the territory of Hungary. On that occasion, various treasures of Hungarian art and of the open-air ethnographical museums (organized on the Skansen model) were displayed, and cheap travel and accommodation facilities were provided in order to encourage people to come from the country to admire them. For the first time, an exhibition gave townspeople the opportunity to get to know, if only sketchily, the various regions and inhabitants of Hungary, while at the same time enabling country people to make the trip to Budapest, the capital city, to acquaint themselves with its cultural wealth.



MARGIT KOVÁCS COLLECTION at Szentendre, which is the principal town on the Danube Bend, a popular recreation and tourism area near Budapest. Courtyard of the eighteenth-century commercial house in which the work of Margit Kovács, a ceramic artist, is housed.

[Photo: Jolán Gajzágó.]

That we have led up to the subject we wish to discuss with a review of events in the distant past is quite deliberate, because even today the various aspects of the phenomenon known as tourism have not taken clear shape and cannot be sharply defined. Obviously, a journey or outing cannot be organized solely with a view to visiting a museum, since a number of other factors such as shopping, excursions, shows, etc., have to be taken into account.

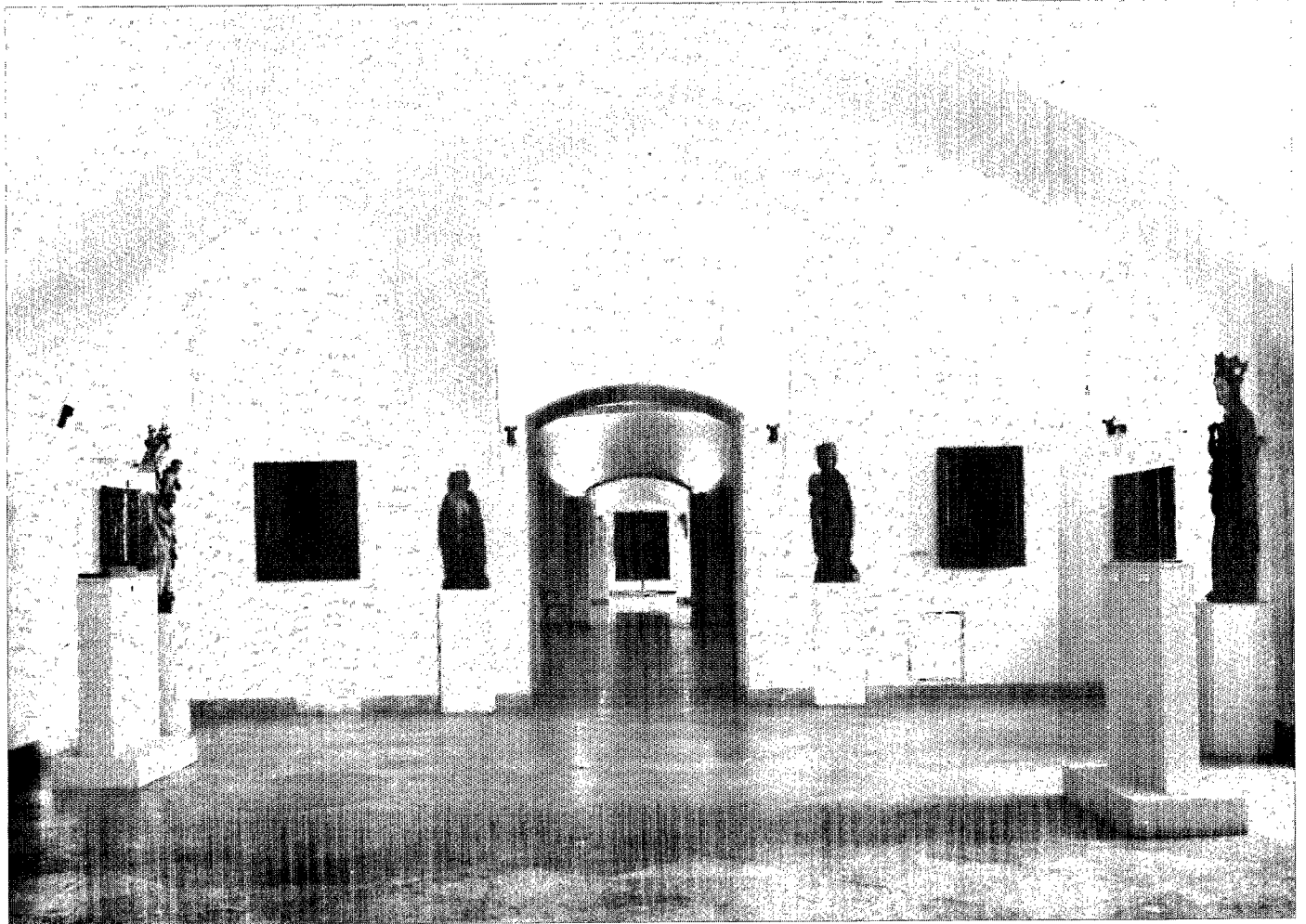
At present, Hungarian museums cannot boast organizational resources in the field of tourism. There is only one museum willing to assume the additional responsibility of finding accommodation for visitors. In the case of the annual summer museum seminars, organized in almost every department, board and lodging are provided for primary and secondary-school children, depending on the duration of the seminar. But this is the exception that proves the rule.

### *Culture and leisure time*

Tourists' interest in museums is not expressed directly. It is partly the urge to get to know a particular region or town which prompts people to include a visit to the local museum.

If we take this as our starting point, the findings of a study of the relationship between museums and tourism will come as no surprise. Hungarian museums have been flourishing since the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to the unprecedented increase in the number of museums and the size of their collections, there has been a remarkable growth of interest among the general public. The number of visitors affords proof of this: 17.7 million in 1982 compared with 7.5 million in 1971.

This spectacular increase may be regarded as closely linked with three trends which developed simultaneously in Hungary: an increase in general public interest



Gothic rooms in the Hungarian National Gallery.

Fig. 1. Number of museum visitors per month.

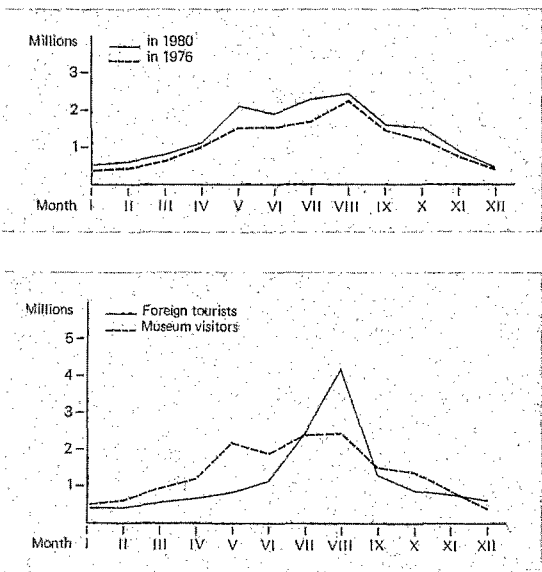


Fig. 2. Number of museum visitors and foreign tourists per month, 1980.

Visitors to the National Museum on World Museum Day are also allowed to visit the restoration laboratories.  
[Photo: I. Berta.]

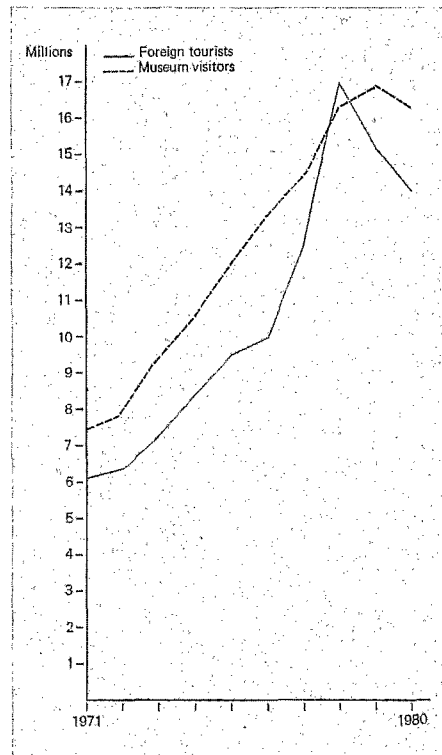


Fig. 3. Number of foreign tourists and museum visitors in Hungary in the period 1971 to 1980.

in cultural, artistic and historical subjects; an official policy in culture and education of seeking ways to display and publicize museum collections; and, finally, the upsurge in tourism as a direct result of the increase in leisure time. This worldwide phenomenon, the sharp growth in international tourism, has had remarkable consequences in Hungary.

It seems relevant at this point to say a few words about the 'leisure time' factor in Hungary. The 'free Saturday' system introduced in 1968 gave workers a day's rest every second Saturday, and was followed in 1982 by the generalized adoption of the five-day week, with every Saturday free. At the same time, the amount of annual holiday was increased. Studies and surveys have shown that, although leisure-time activities are changing radically, the amount of time devoted to culture has remained basically the same, and the percentage of the population taking an interest in culture has not grown substantially.

Compared with the figures for the use of public library facilities and cinema, concert and theatre attendance, which seem to be stagnating or rising only slowly, the figure for the number of museum visitors, which has been skyrocketing, may be regarded as an isolated phenomenon.

Information on cultural activities and their frequency, and surveys carried out in museums, have revealed, however, that the number of regular museum visitors is still somewhat low. Similarly, if we seek

the causes of the phenomenal increase in the number of visitors, the widening of the museum-going public can be gauged only to a limited extent. It is therefore more instructive to focus our attention on leisure-time activities, which may now also include museum visiting. Of these activities, tourism and excursions constitute the pastime which most easily combines with, or even gives rise to, such an extra ingredient.

Two factors should be mentioned in connection with the rise of local tourism: the rapid spread of motorization played a very important role (almost 1.1 million cars in Hungary in 1982, compared with just under 250,000 in 1970). In car-owning families, for instance, the proportional amount of time spent on excursions and tourism has on the whole increased; the number of foreign tourists has also risen sharply (13.9 million foreigners visited Hungary in 1980, compared with 6.3 million in 1970). The close connection between local and international tourism and museum attendance, from the standpoint of the increase in admittance figures, is borne out by the revealing data presented below.

If we compare the figures for international tourism with those for museum attendance in the country, we are surprised by the similarity of the trends apparent in the graph (see Fig. 3). Taking the data for museum visiting distributed horizontally over the sequence of months in a given year, and comparing them with those for international tourism broken



Visitors at the National Museum on World Museums Day. Attendance is free. [Photo: I. Berta.]

down according to season, we cannot fail to be struck by the parallels.

The highest rates in museum attendance coincide with the months at the height of the tourist season, and their rise and fall correspond to the spring and autumn seasons respectively (Fig. 2). Of course, the figures for local tourism must also be taken into account; their curves run parallel to those for international tourism.

The non-accidental nature of this trend is further attested by the fact that, if the data for museum attendance are compared over a period of several years (including periods when both local and international tourism are at their lowest levels), they are found to remain basically unchanged.

If museum attendance data are broken down by geographical region (Fig. 1), the analogies with data for national tourist regions are striking. Museums in these regions boast the most impressive numbers of visitors. Four of the regions concerned are among the most popular tourist centres in both national and international terms.

A further, quite arresting, phenomenon also worth mentioning is the basic difference between student tourism and adult tourism. Relatively detailed national statistics on museum attendance show that student tourism organized by educational establishments tends to be concentrated in the months of May and June. The department of Veszprém is the only exception. There, the month of July is the busiest,

with student and scout holiday camp groups taking the museums by storm, so to speak.

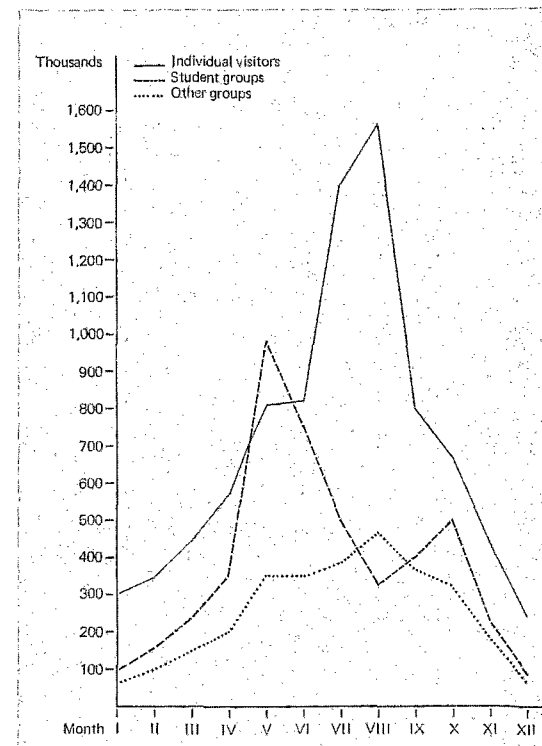
There is no apparent difference, on the other hand, between student tourism and adult tourism when it comes to the most popular itineraries (Fig. 4). Tourists in the two age-groups choose the same destinations, the same tourist sights and hence the same museums.

I hope I have succeeded in conveying a general idea of the situation of Hungarian museums, in showing their close connections with local and international tourism, and hence in bringing out the importance of the museums' efforts to ensure that their relations with tourism continue to be mutually rewarding.

It would be unfair to say that the majority of museums were taken by surprise by the sudden upswing in international and local tourism. It is none the less true that small provincial museums often have difficulty in meeting even the minimum requirements of the influx of national and international visitors. Making arrangements for guided visits and providing adequate information for tourists are a daily problem. Added to this is the very serious problem of ensuring that the exhibits are adequately guarded.

This does not mean, however, that museums should abandon the possibility of accommodating increasingly large numbers of visitors. To cope with these problems, they are concentrating on the gradual improvement of existing conditions: by organizing guided visits, pub-

Fig. 4. Individual visitors and groups per month, 1980.





SZENTENDRE PICTURE GALLERY. In the inner town, five eighteenth-century Serbian commercial houses have been joined together to form the gallery.  
 [Photo: Jolán Gajzágó.]



Recital by an amateur chamber ensemble in the much-visited Budapest Historical Museum.  
 [Photo: I. Berta.]



lishing exhibition guides and catalogues easily accessible to the general public, and by selling reproductions, slides, postcards and posters, they are able to ensure that tourists leave a museum better-informed than they arrived. With the same end in view, some establishments make recorded commentaries for visitors to use.

Increasing care is also being taken to cater for the needs of foreign tourists. In museums in Budapest and in the major tourist centres, leaflets, programmes, commentaries and captions in German, English or Russian, exhibition catalogues in various languages and guided visits are provided for the benefit of foreign tourists. A growing number of museums have begun to sell books on museum science, history, ethnography or art in foreign language editions.

Although the examples we have just given are not yet the general rule, expanding tourism is putting pressure on museums to make them so. Moreover, cultural associations at national and regional levels assist the museums in their

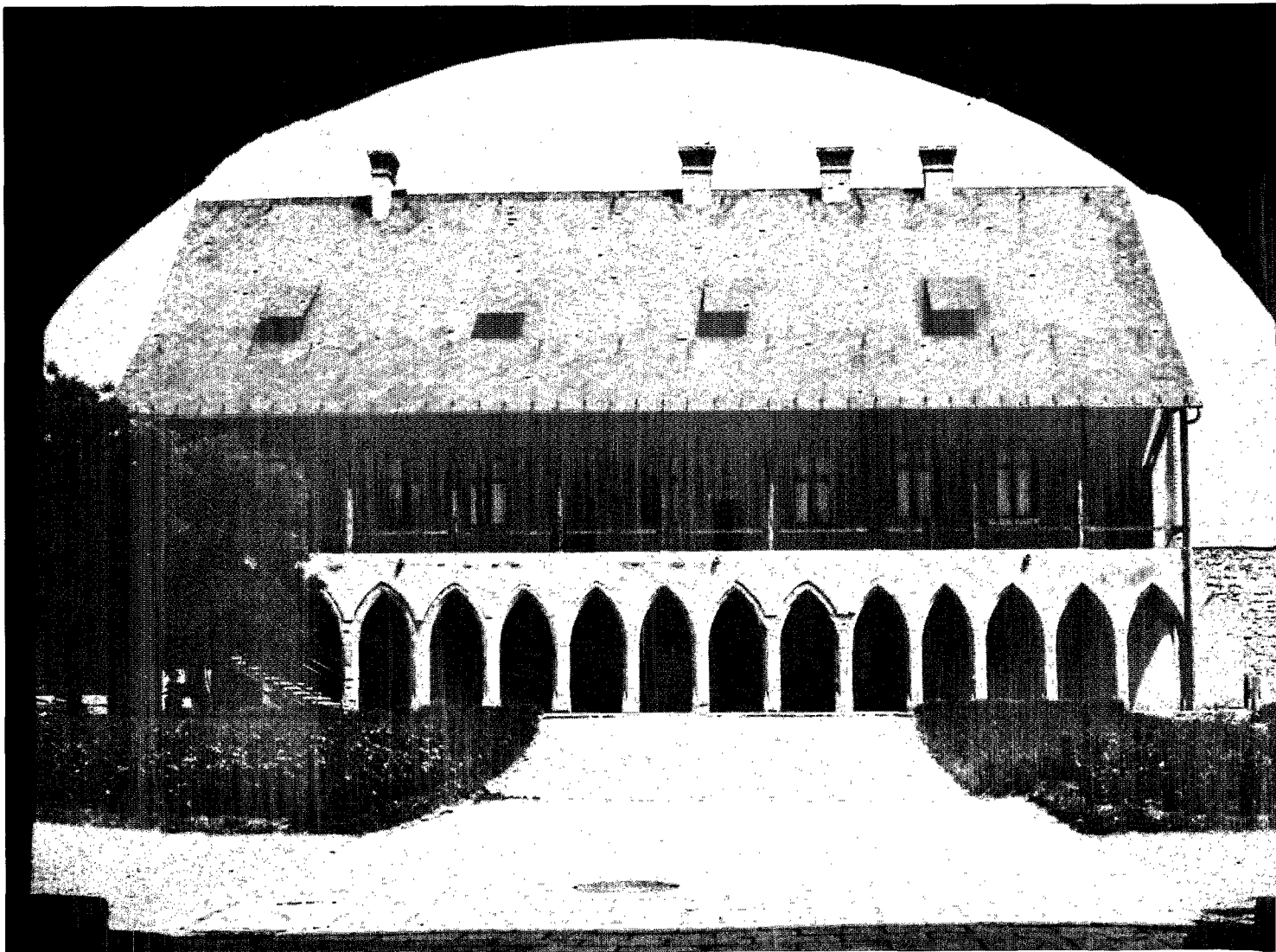
efforts and encourage closer co-operation between tourist organizations, publishers and museums.

### *Decentralizing cultural tourism*

Museums send their advertising material (guides, brochures, etc.) to the tourist organizations, which are glad to use this material but are prepared only in exceptional cases to make financial sacrifices in order to help museums organize some event that they have in mind. It is clear that a cultural event funded by a specific museum can draw great numbers of tourists, as attested by the open-air cultural functions organized by the ethnographic museums, which attract people in their thousands or even tens of thousands. Yet oddly enough, while museums, which have nothing to gain directly from promoting tourism, do their utmost to further it and lend it support, organizations which are dependent on tourism, and which are certainly not indifferent to the programmes that museums can offer

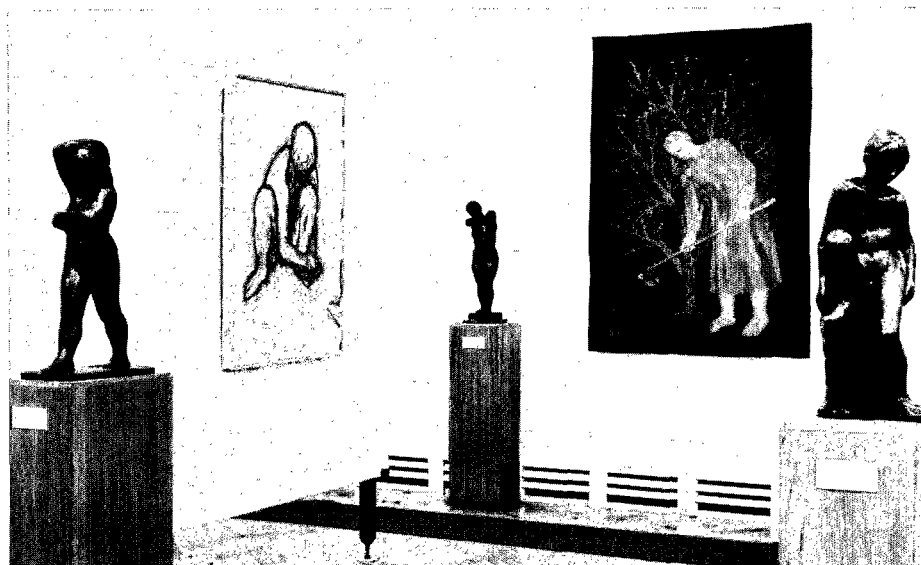
CASTLE MUSEUM, Eger. The fifteenth-century (1470) episcopal palace, part of the castle complex at Eger. This restored edifice houses the historical collection and picture gallery.

[Photo: Éva Szederkényi Kovács.]



FERENCZY MUSEUM, Szentendre. Károly Ferenczy (1862-1917), a Hungarian pioneer of expressionism in painting, spent his youth in the town. His works, as well as those of his children Noémi (tapestries) and Béni (sculptures and medallions), are on display here.

[Photo: Jolán Gajzágó.]



Clay and ivory pipes on show at an 'exhibition of the month' (May-June 1983) at the National Museum, Budapest.

[Photo: I. Berta.]

their customers, are far from willing to make financial sacrifices for the museums' benefit. Outside the capital, there are four or five tourist regions which attract large numbers of local and foreign visitors, so that the museums are sometimes unable to cope with the crowds.

One of the aims of the movement known as 'Regions-Eras-Museums', organized in 1977, was to relieve them of part of this burden and also to draw attention to lesser-known regions, with their natural and cultural heritage, and to historic monuments and museums throughout Hungary. The list of addresses with maps and the brochures are intended to assist and guide the tens of thousands of participants in the movement. Those who wish to do so can take part in competitions and contests, which give them an opportunity to share their personal experience and knowledge, while at the same time acquiring new information and perhaps becoming enthusiastic supporters of museums, the natural heritage and efforts to safeguard historic monuments. Participants may be individuals, families or small communities. The list of sights may be drawn up arbitrarily or according to particular themes or even regions. What counts is that knowledge should be acquired through the medium of games appealing to everyone, irrespec-

tive of age, sex or occupation. The organization of this movement is a good example of what can be achieved through a combination of financial and cultural co-operation involving museums and various social and mass organizations on the one hand and tourist agencies on the other.

As far as self-teaching is concerned, it has been observed that the number of habitual and regular visitors to museums has not risen substantially with the increase in leisure time. However, I hope the facts and figures presented above have convincingly demonstrated the link between museum visiting and tourism, a factor which should certainly be of interest to promoters and friends of museums and culture in general. A person's very first visit to a museum on a simple outing may have a decisive impact on his attitude, and the facilities he encounters as well as the objects displayed may determine and motivate his subsequent behaviour: will he become a regular visitor or will he resolve never to set foot in a museum again? The answer depends on the museums themselves, which must do their utmost to meet the challenge of tourism and prove themselves equal to the demands that arise from it.

[Translated from Hungarian]

# Museography and historiography of the recent past

*Our idea of what a museum should be often hampers us from seeing the museum in relation to history as an original contributor, which can modify our own notions of the past. The new presence of history in museographical approaches is a striking feature of many museums. The article below explores some of the ways in which the historical significance of an object is not simply tolerated but becomes an integral part of museography. Both museum curators and historians must accept the idea that the museum not only displays evidence of historical knowledge acquired elsewhere but also participates fully in the development of that knowledge.<sup>1</sup>*

As compared with the more traditional interests of museums, the collection and interpretation of the heritage of the recent past and the contemporary epoch are still in an embryonic stage. These branches still lack a precise, well-defined and internationally accepted methodology. There are considerable differences in attitude from one country to another; moreover, in some places the very need for it has not yet been felt.

So far as Hungary is concerned, the first attempts date from the 1950s, although serious activity did not really get under way until the 1960s. As a result of various research projects, workers in this field were able to draw on a number of sources and benefit from the experience of the traditional branches of museology, both national and international.

## Keeping up with change

When an archaeologist is given the task of organizing an exhibition to illustrate the history of water containers, he will probably start with a scooped-out gourd and end with a decorated pewter vessel from the sixteenth or seventeenth century, where the evolutionary line in question breaks off. It is at this point that we—museologists-cum-historiographers specializing in the study of the contemporary epoch—take over and extend that same evolutionary line right up to the plastic jerrycan. The ethnographers, having examined the material and cultural evolution of a given rural settlement, note the results and describe in minute detail the process of traditional economic activity and the various resources used. We pursue a similar task with the important difference that our examination will

be concentrated on the dynamic aspect of the development of social organization. We are, in a sense, transported to the core of human communities where the most dynamic changes take place, that is, the cities, and are at the centre of research into the historical evolution of the various social classes.

Certain museums present exhibitions of 'ways of life only' in a vacuum, while the history, development and evolution of society, the historical events and the stages marking political struggles, are shown only incidentally if at all. If by chance we do catch a glimpse of them, the sequence usually finishes at the end of the eighteenth century. Very few capital cities possess historical exhibitions showing a scientifically exact history of the nation or of the country concerned from the beginning to the present day. On the contrary, the conclusion reached after examining the historical exhibitions organized by certain museums is that, in spite of the overall view of historical epochs, the presentation of authentic details relating to the evolution of the way of life of certain social classes is missing, and priority is given to the history of politics.

In view of the close ties between the history of ways of life and the history of politics, which reinforce one another in the context of historical exhibitions, professional efforts in Hungary have been aimed at achieving a synthesis of the two. Whereas at the beginning of the 1960s there were only a few museologists-cum-historiographers on the staff of the coun-

1. This approach has been presented in detail in a research project prepared some time ago by René Berger, Director of the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, and Marc Barblan, historian.—Ed.

Ferenc Szikossy

Born in 1931 at Budapest. Studied Hungarian history and literature at the 'Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, Budapest. Joined the staff of the Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement in 1961; appointed head of department in 1970 and obtained doctorate the same year. Appointed as deputy to the Director-General of the museum in 1975. Besides his historical research, interested primarily in questions of classification. In charge of historical museology since 1975.

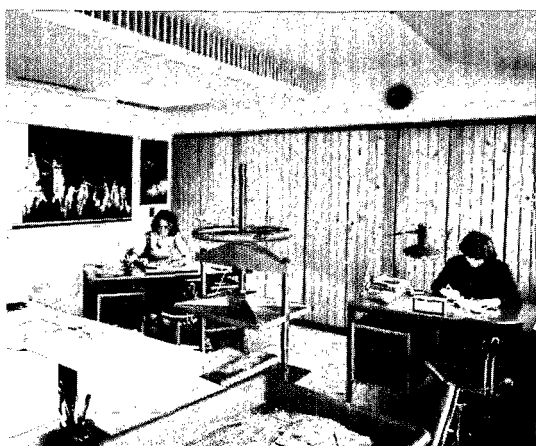
MUSEUM OF THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS' MOVEMENT, Budapest. General view.

[Photo: Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.]



Kitchen of a working-class family in the 1900s.

[Photo: Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.]



Paper restoration workshop of the Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.

[Photo: Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.]

try's museums, they numbered 124 by 1981, by which time contemporary history collections totalled about 2 million exhibits and documents.

The present-day world is extraordinarily rich in objects, for contemporary man changes his personal environment with lightning rapidity. If we look at old family inventories, we note that not only certain pieces of furniture and kitchen utensils but even articles of clothing were used by several generations. But today these same sets of utensils and collections of objects that make up our personal environment disappear and are replaced about every ten years. This is explained by the influence of fashion, the fact that objects are actually designed and made not to last, and the fact that, when a family moves into a new home, lack of space forbids the storage of outworn objects.

The archaeologist deals with objects that have been conserved more or less accidentally in the course of time. Moreover, it is not even certain that the objects concerned were the most representative of their epoch. We, who are surrounded by our objects, have the task both of ensuring their conservation and of keeping for posterity those that are most characteristic of our epoch. This is precisely the responsibility of museologist-historiographers specializing in the

study of recent times and the contemporary epoch. The objects that are characteristic of our epoch (that is, of the recent past) have to be assessed at a time when they are still components of our environment.

The museum pieces of our specialization are mostly related to events, people or organizations. What further differentiates historical museology from other specialized branches is that its aim is not to collect all the prototypes of a given series of objects—a task that is incumbent on specialized museums such as museums of military history (in the case of weapons, for example). Objects related to events are related also to people. Objects representing indices of the history of ways of life are likewise not collected according to different types, since this again is the task of other museums. It is obvious that new pieces of furniture or new clothes bought from a store or direct from the manufacturer will be in good condition and require no 'touching up'. However, such a 'purchased' collection, from which man, who inserts the objects into his personal environment, is still absent, would be at the very most no more than an exhibition of styles.

*Stricter criteria*

In my opinion, an object becomes a museum piece only after having passed the stage of being useful, in other words, after having fulfilled the purpose for which it was designed, and when its owner and the method, place and period of its use are known. Obviously, it would be as well to know its price too. And we are obliged to go even a step further. A given object may be very interesting, and for other specialized branches it may even have a certain museological value. For example, a fine decorative object such as a piece of goldsmith's work may reveal many things to the museologist regarding the goldsmith's craft. Moreover, it may well constitute a precious work of artistic decoration. But the museological historiographer will not be satisfied until he has discovered its historical function. The object in question will not acquire a real value for him unless it arrives at the museum accompanied by documents containing information about the person or the event to which it is related.

One of the chief methodological characteristics of our specialization is that it is

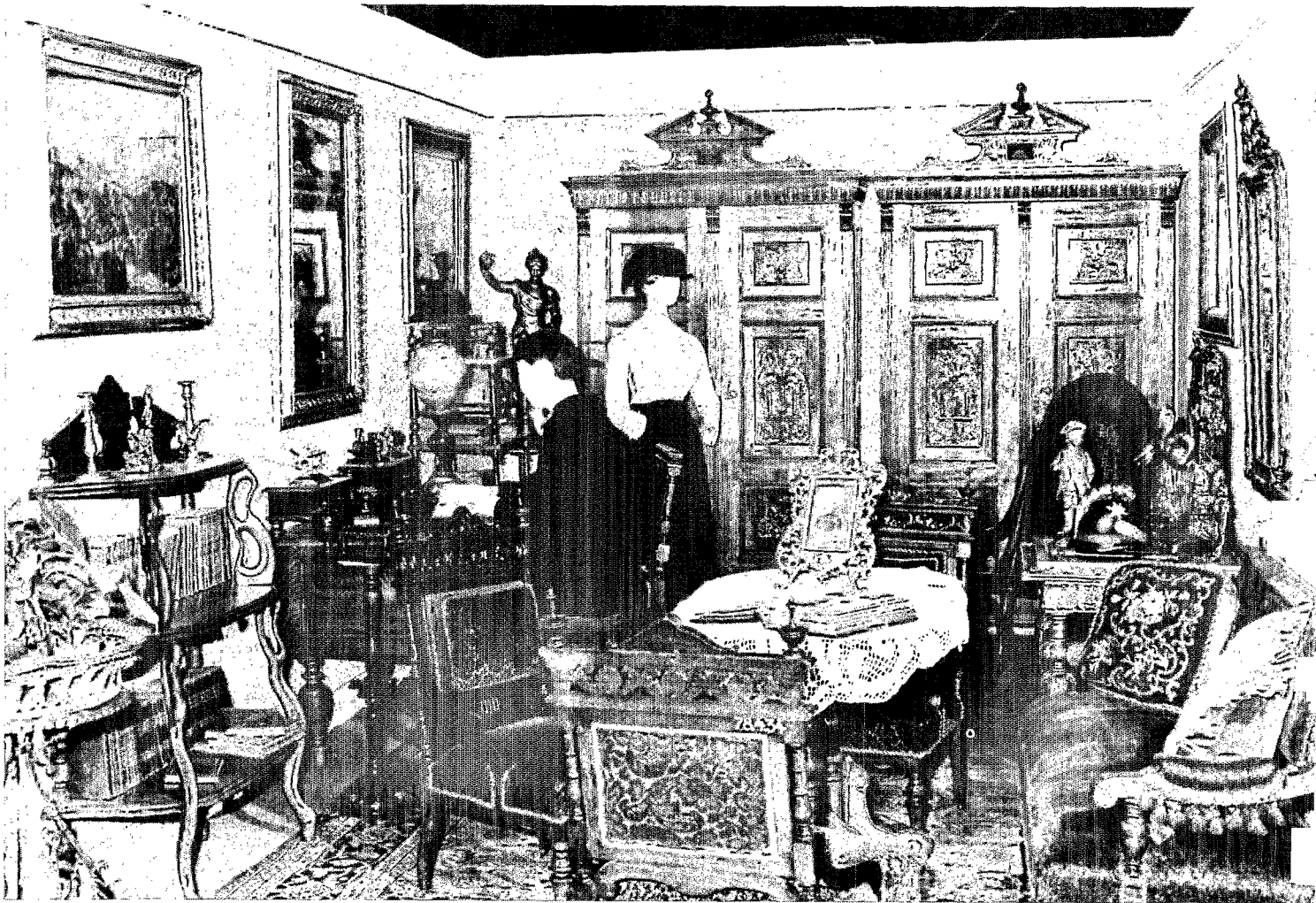
dependent on a broad social base in order to accomplish effective, high-quality work. Indeed, the potential places for finding objects from recent times and the contemporary epoch are dispersed throughout the national territory in homes, factories, organizations, public establishments and among the widest circles of the population. This makes essential very close co-operation with the various social groups if good results in this field are to be obtained.

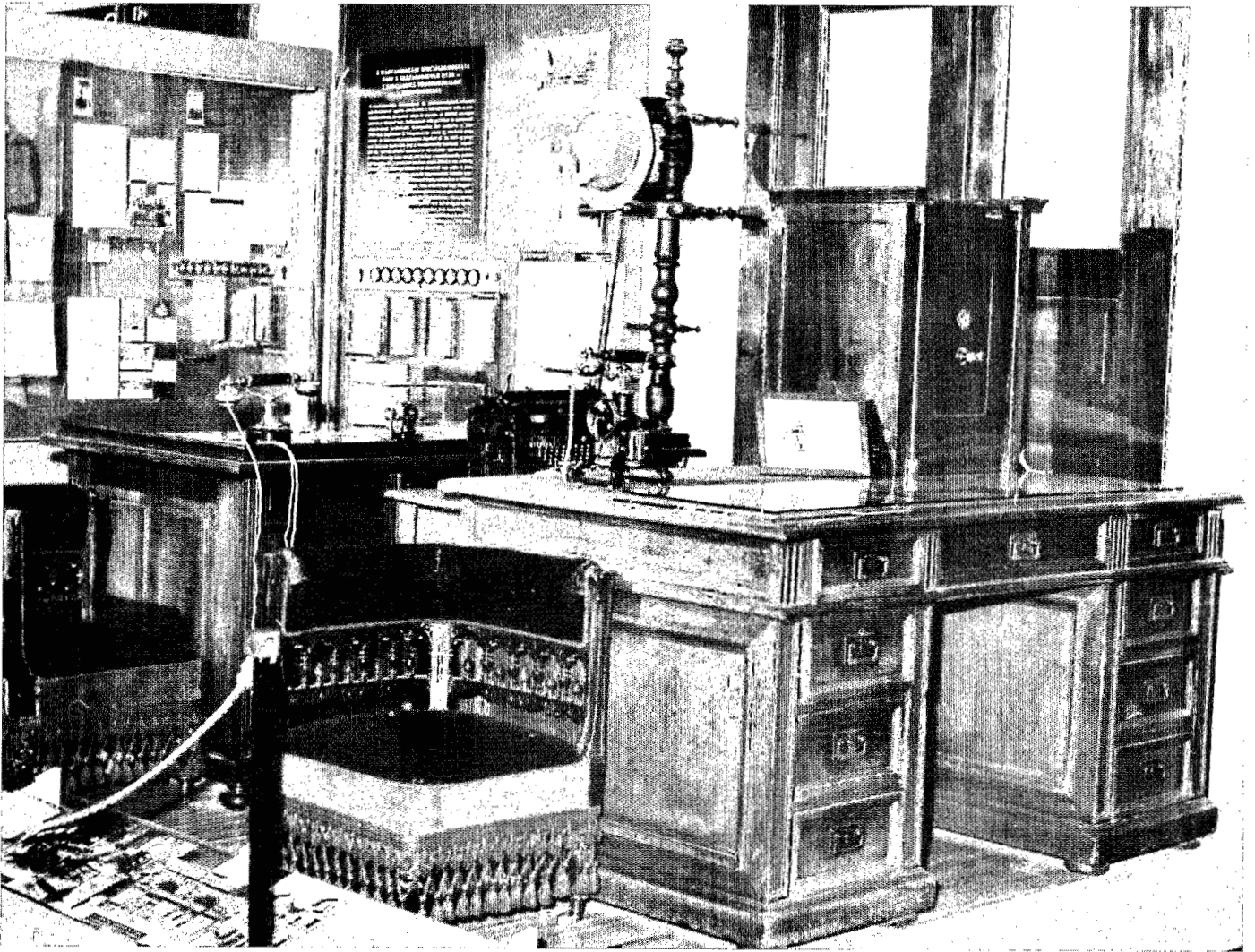
After ten years of effective and deliberate work, we have attained the target we set ourselves: the thematic, chronological and topographical study of three centuries.

And now the national system of historical museology has been established, headed by three national historical museums—the Hungarian National Museum, the Museum of the Hungarian Labour Movement and the Budapest Historical Museum—which jointly take responsibility for professional supervision in this field. At present, no county museum organization in the country is without a museological historiographer. The majority of these institutions also

Interior of the house of a railway foreman as it was in 1911, when he retired. Four thousand objects were preserved intact in his home by his daughter and donated to the museum.

[Photo: Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.]





The Secretariat of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party in the 1900s.  
[Photo: Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.]



The first Hungarian *guldiner*, 1499.  
Hungarian National Museum.

have history departments with a staff of from four to six persons specializing in the study of recent times and the contemporary epoch.

The Five-Year Plan for Hungarian Museums, which attaches considerable importance to the forming of collections, constitutes the basis of our specialized activities. Between 1976 and 1980 eleven subjects relating to recent times and the contemporary epoch were dealt with and co-ordinated at national level as priority subjects for research, some of them receiving special financial assistance. The planned and composite development of our collections and documents has resulted in qualitative changes, and our activity has expanded. In the majority of museums, the system of collections has been specialized, and non-specialized collections, together with those classified only by object or document, have almost disappeared. The creation of a fair number of independent collections of historical photographs is another proof of the above-mentioned trend. Moreover, documentary archives have been formed or have become independent. These are indispensable in view of the very character of our work, since they constitute the centres to which the various items of information accompanying our exhibits are forwarded.

### Our categories

Our systems of classification are as follows, as can be seen from the identification of the following collections:

*Objects:* Work instruments; furniture and furnishings; domestic utensils and objects; glassware, ceramics and porcelain; textiles; flags; precious metals; arms; historical objects; coins; medals and insignia and stamps.

*Fine arts:* paintings, drawings, sculpture and artists' proofs.

*Documents:* files; identity cards, permits and charters; posters; broadsheets; post-cards and historical engravings; printed matter (small format); stamps and seals; books of historical value (library collections) and rare periodicals.

*Photographs:* Portraits; views of cities; photographs; historical events in Hungary; international historical events and negatives.

*Documentation:* historical, museographical (history) and photographic.

The above enumeration will give some idea of the wide variety of objects and documents which we include in our historical museology.

### Problems

The sheer number of new acquisitions in our museums each year gives rise to two

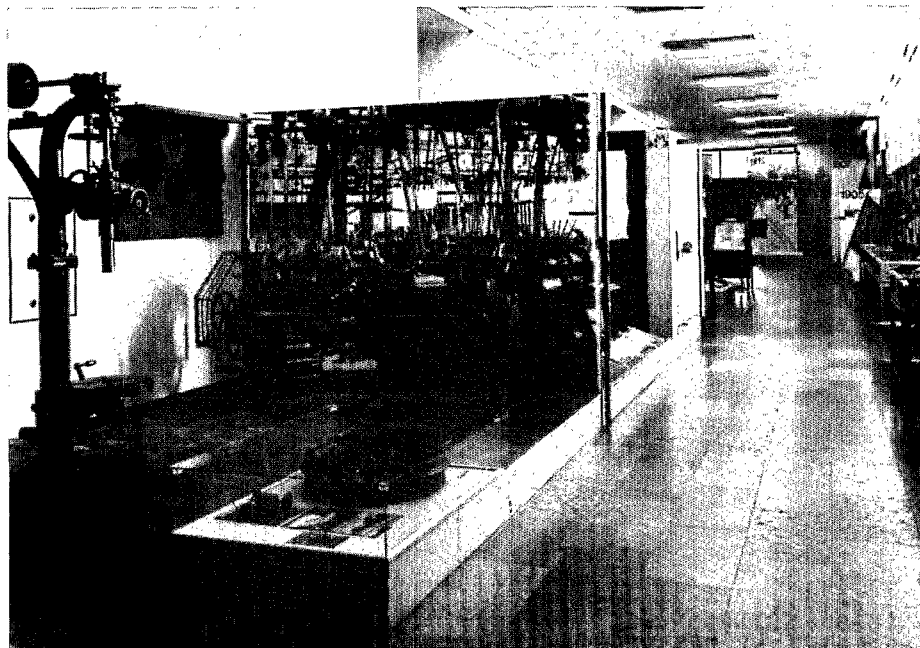
Travelling exhibition on decorations, post-cards and broadsheets.

[Photo: Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.]



Reconstitution of a workshop from the turn of the century.

[Photo: Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.]



MUSEUM OF THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS' MOVEMENT, Budapest. The photo archives, which store over 160,000 photographs dating from 1840 onwards.

[Photo: Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement.]

problems. First, they must be sorted and classified and adequately stored; second, the museums must have a sufficient number of experienced specialists available.

The storage problem is a general one throughout the country. The majority of museums are in buildings classified as ancient monuments, where, although there are rooms that lend themselves very well to exhibitions, facilities for the storage of collections are limited and the premises used for the purpose are not of the best.

The problem of specialists is a more serious one. Experimental courses for training museological historiographers were started at the Budapest Science University at the beginning of the 1960s. For a number of years in succession, the students were able to complete their studies. However, at the very moment when our specialized branch was making a considerable leap forward, the experimental courses were suspended. This is why the majority of museologists working in this field have only a degree in history and are obliged to learn their speciality 'on the job'. However, specialized lectures organized regularly by national historical museums and opportunities for learner museologists to participate in

courses lasting one or two weeks have been of temporary assistance. Since 1980 the task of training specialists has been lightened by the establishment of new training courses for museological historians that have benefited from the previous experiments and from a broader syllabus, and have been integrated into university courses.

This analysis has mainly concentrated on museological aspects, but before concluding I must emphasize the importance of the historical exhibitions shown in the museums. The museum as a scientific institution has the duty of collecting, conserving and making a scientific assessment of the various values that have evolved during the history and the lives of men and have been considered worth preserving. But its work as a cultural institution can succeed to the full only if it holds regular exhibitions, in which the values preserved in the collections are made accessible to the widest possible number of people. In organizing such exhibitions, it is essential not to lose sight of the fact that the aim is also to enable visitors to discover the sum of the historical relations contained in these precious values.

[Translated from Hungarian]





## *Documentation for management and public information*

István Éri The Hungarian museum system has to provide statistics every year on the various categories of visitors (individuals or groups, schoolchildren or adults), on the number of visitors per month, and on the number of guided and organized tours for visitors. The questionnaires answered by the museums also provide information regarding other cultural functions and the effectiveness of the museums—the number of lectures given by museologists in the museums or elsewhere and the number who attend those lectures; data on group activities in the museums as part of school curricula; data on activities organized for clubs and associations; the results of competitions; details of cultural events formerly 'outlawed' but nowadays part and parcel of museum life, such as film shows, concerts, theatrical performances and other artistic productions; and details on popular publications and publicity material (exhibition catalogues and guides, information charts, leaflets and posters).

Certain conclusions can already be formulated on the basis of these various data:

Unlike attendance at other centres of culture (theatres, concerts, libraries and cinemas), museum admissions are still tending to increase sharply (a universal and national phenomenon). According to our information, Hungary is one of the countries at the top of the world 'league' in museum attendance.

The number of foreign tourists does not play a decisive part in the increase in the total number of visitors, since domestic tourists are much more numerous.

The proportion of visits to museums organized for groups of schoolchildren is falling off in relation to the scale of the overall increase. They are being replaced by family groups at weekends (two or three generations). There is no doubt that the annual increase is mainly due to ever-increasing regular

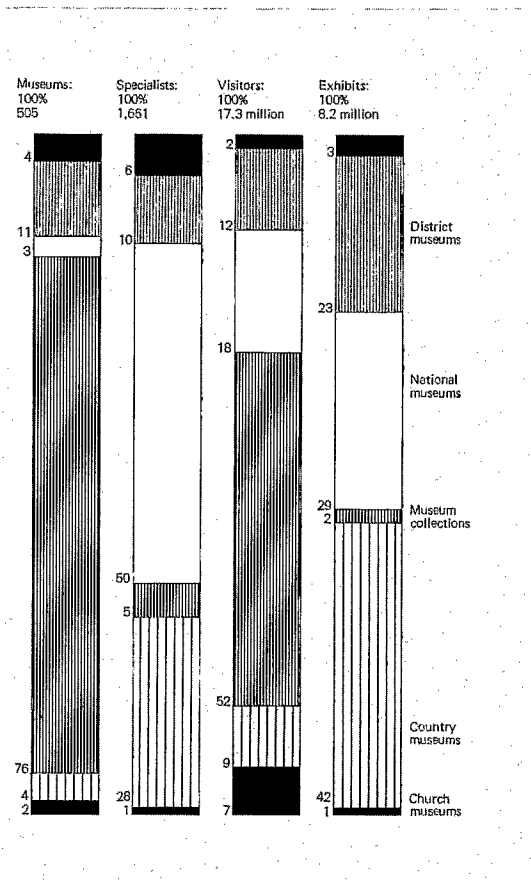
visits by adults, for whom it represents a way of systematically pursuing an available cultural activity.

The admission figures in Budapest are not in line with the dynamic increase on the national scale. It may be wondered here to what extent visits to museums stem from the attraction of their real cultural value, or whether to some degree they have taken on the character of an outing or fashionable activity, bereft of all cultural significance.

The seasonal nature of museum attendance (i.e. the very high figures for the summer months) corresponds to developments in regard to leisure time in Hungary: most holidays are concentrated in two or three months. It is therefore essential when the strategy of exhibition organization is being worked out to take into account the fact that this cultural requirement is of an occasional nature. Furthermore, it is obviously desirable that visits to museums should not become mere holiday pastimes. The solution to this problem is indicated by the very high number of visitors during Museum and Monument Month, which, for over twenty years, has included a series of Hungarian museum events concentrated in the month of October. They already attract numbers of local people into museums in their neighbourhood and may attract more in the future.

The growing popularity of pageants, festivals and the like, either related to exhibitions or, increasingly, independent of them, proves that there is a public demand; and is at the same time resulting in the rapid disappearance of former conservative attitudes in that regard. However, the objection is still frequently raised—and not only by museologists—that the museum is abandoning its principles and its main task when it enters into competition with concert halls, cinemas, and cultural centres.

Breakdown of Hungarian museums into categories subdivided according to number of specialists employed, museum attendance and size of collections, all expressed as percentages, as of 21 December 1981.



One of the most outstanding successes resulting from the centralization of the Hungarian museum system has been the standardization of documentation. After the promulgation of the 1949 decree on museums, the methods of keeping inventories and card indexes, formerly mere recommendations of the central museums but not mandatory, were defined and standardized and these are now obligatory. Since 1950, all Hungarian museums have been obliged to use the same inventory register, the form and headings of which are standardized; record cards, containing more detailed information and references, have also been standardized. In the majority of museums, these regulations were applied retroactively, thus obliging them to make a new inventory. All the 'initial data', including the inventory numbers, have been recorded in the inventory registers or on the record cards in the same way. From now on, once all the conditions have been met, this system of standardized recording will ensure that the administrative services can work together to process museum collection data by computer.

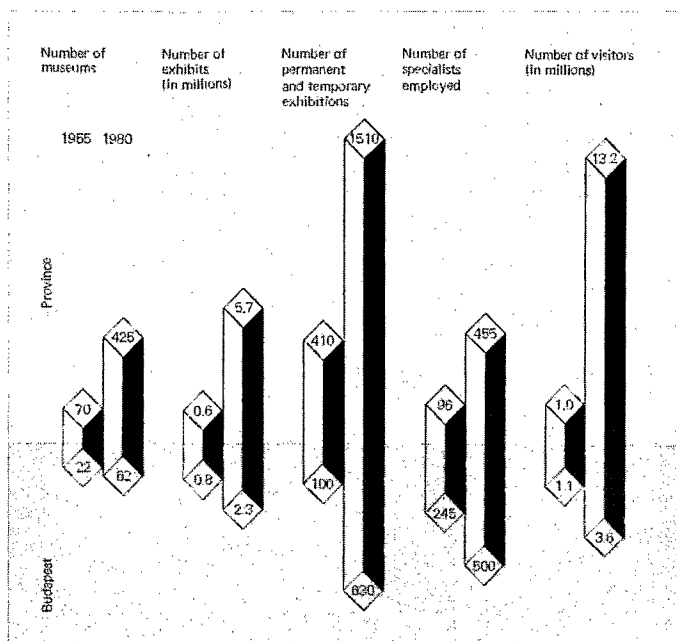
The central regulations cover not only the objects in the collections but also the actual process of assembling a collection. This applies to the documentation, which meets specific requirements on archaeological excavations (submission of the dig records, drawings, photographs, etc.) and to expeditions undertaken with a view to forming an ethnographical or natural science collection. The originals of these documents are naturally deposited in the place where the museologist works, i.e. in his museum. Nevertheless, copies have to be sent to the archives of the national museum responsible for the speciality concerned. This is particularly important in regard to archaeological research: while reinforcing the right of supervision of the Hungarian National Museum, the effectiveness and scientific level of the research—as a result of the system of dig permits granted in agreement with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences—will be improved and the findings will be much more readily accessible and easy to check. The annual statistics required of the museums cover all the stages of assembling and inventorying a collection. They also cover 'subsidiary' collections such as the museum library, archives, the photographic library and other media material. The government cultural administration and the central institutions responsible for professional management receive information that is always up to date be-

cause the data are assembled and processed by computer. The size of museum collections, the role of annual increment, and the standard reached in documentation and record keeping can be checked piecemeal every year. Obviously, these statistics show expenditure on archaeological research and on collecting or purchasing of exhibits. They also contain statistics on the conservation and restoration of works of art.

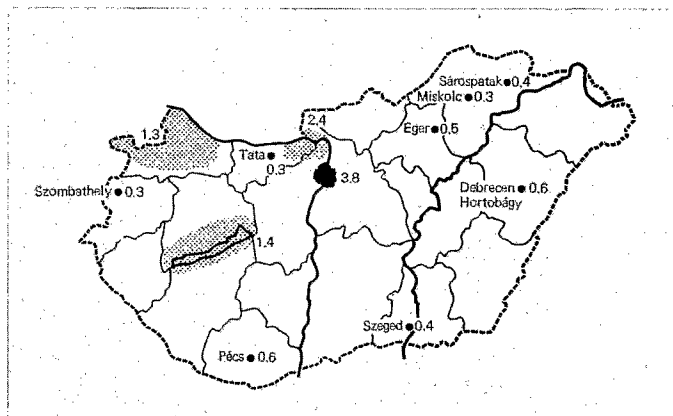
Other data on the functioning of museums are also gathered and analysed: the number employed in the various fields of activity; building maintenance costs; budget allocations for additions to subsidiary collections; the cost of advertising and mounting exhibitions; the number of temporary exhibitions, etc. The adoption of the standardized system of museum documentation in the 1950s led to the gathering of statistics useful for central management; since 1975 these statistics have been processed by computer. Quantitative changes in collections and increases in the number of specialists employed can be observed, category by category, in the diagrams and charts.

The information provided by the museums is doubly significant: on the one hand, central management needs the figures; on the other, the information service also provides a report on projects and on the work done in the museums. These documents are submitted each year to higher levels in the administration not only for their information but also, by virtue of the powers vested in the government's cultural directorate, to enable the Museum Department at the Ministry and the responsible officials in the national museums to analyse the report on the year's work and projects for the following year. This review takes place first in the presence of the directors of the museums concerned and the representatives of higher authority, and subsequently at a Planning Conference. If necessary, projects can be amended as a result of the discussions. The directives of the Central Museums Board are therefore fully applicable in the various sectors—promotion of the development of collections, scientific research and education.

This information is also important in the sphere of service to the public. Over the past few years, the hunt for news regarding museum activities by the mass media has increased to an incredible extent. The press vies with radio and television for news. The advantage of this phenomenon—which is probably worldwide—of ever-increasing publicity, is



Comparative data regarding development of museums between 1955 and 1980 (provinces v. Budapest).



that it no longer deals only with exhibitions and other cultural events, but also presents programmes relating the stages and results of research and archaeological digs, scientific publications and the activity of restorers, and is making them increasingly popular.

This information may come from a museum group or department dealing with public relations and end up in the mass media. This is what happens in from 50 to 60 per cent of cases. However, as far back as the 1960s, the need was felt to set up a central information section. On the one hand, the section gathers and passes on information on museums; on the other, it organizes publicity campaigns, such as that of the Museum Month in October each year. Since 1980, 1,500 copies of a rotype monthly (and sometimes fortnightly) bulletin entitled *Museum Gazette* have been produced in order to supplement the information given by the press, radio and television and also for the benefit of museum specialists.

Apart from this central publication, monthly information bulletins are issued by a number of important museums in Budapest and provincial centres. These are mainly intended for regular visitors to the museum in question and for local schools, factories and offices.

In addition to the methods of providing news used by the mass media, occasionally brought up to date or remodelled in line with the principles applied to their programming, mention should also be made of the radio programme of museum news broadcast three times a week. For fifteen years, the central information sec-

tion of the museums has been preparing three three-minute broadcasts a week, which the radio authorities put on the air without any modification. The public is thus directly informed in the way the Central Museum Board wishes them to be, and 150 times a year at that.

The unification of the Hungarian museum system, upon which so much emphasis has been laid, is not synonymous with monotony. Within a specified functional framework, free rein is given to initiative and the adoption of new forms of work. The structure and form of the Central Museums Board itself are not cut-and-dried but constitute a living pattern, confirmed by long practice which continues to prove its worth.

Nor has the museums' system of documentation, statistics and information remained unchanged over the past few decades. However, it is undeniable that the considerable rise in the number of museums, the size of their collections and the number of their staff would have thrown museum work into confusion and disorder if certain basic principles had not been methodically applied.

Unification in regard to museums has been the result of a very lengthy process. Maintaining it, subject to the inevitable modifications, has not always been without problems. In the face of the requirements of a constantly changing world, the capacity for adaptation must not be lost, but it must be borne in mind that the application of standard methods developed for long-term use does, and will continue to, play a preponderant role.

Data regarding outstanding numbers of visitors per annum (in millions).

# MUSEUM NOTES

Jan Chapman

## *A proposed guide to Chinese art in European museums, libraries and collections*



CHESTER BEATTY COLLECTION, Dublin.  
Frontispiece, Buddha enthroned, from  
Chinese jade book dated 1732.  
[Photo: Pietersee Davison International Ltd.]

Chinese art often suffers from over-exposure of the wrong sort, for example, the newspaper article reporting the discovery of a Ming dynasty vase in a large country house where it was being used as an umbrella stand. When sold at auction, that one piece of porcelain fetched enough money to buy a fleet of Rolls Royce cars. This sort of publicity merely serves to confirm the widely held opinion that Chinese art is beyond the reach of ordinary people in that it is fabulously expensive, exceptionally difficult to understand, and, above all, extremely rare. In fact, with very few exceptions, Chinese art is none of these things.

The glamour surrounding Chinese art objects can often be blamed on the fact that relatively little has been written on the subject. Students of Western art have countless reference books at their disposal, ranging from the weightiest scholarly tome to the lightest popular guide, covering everything from painting to furniture. In contrast, students of Chinese art have very few reference books from which to choose. Moreover, at present there is not a single guidebook available to give students, collectors, and art lovers generally any information whatsoever as to the location of Chinese art treasures in Europe. Commercial publishers must feel that the subject does not have a sufficiently wide appeal. Yet the need is certainly there, and the challenge is about to be taken up by members of the Europe-China Association (ECA), a Brussels-based organization which aims to help Europeans acquire a comprehensive, intelligent and objective picture of the many facets of Chinese life, culture

and history. The association, which in matters of politics, religion and philosophy is strictly neutral and non-partisan, has members in every country in Western Europe.

The proposed guide is designed to appeal to three distinct groups of people. It will provide museum curators with the most up-to-date information concerning the holdings of various museums and the names of their curators of Chinese art, and also tell them whether photography is allowed and what catalogues are published. Collectors of Chinese art will be able to learn the whereabouts of each museum, collection or library in Europe which contains examples of their particular interest. As for tourists with a general interest in oriental art, they will be able to read a short summary in English, French and German describing the main features of each collection and at the same time discover whether or not refreshments are available on the premises.

It should, perhaps, be made clear at this point that the *Guide* does not aim to be comprehensive. In other words, no attempt will be made to include *every* example of Chinese art located in every European collection. The deciding factor in each case will be that of quality. Ten pieces of superb jade may well be included, whereas a huge collection of third-rate ceramics will probably be omitted. The process of selection is one of the major headaches for the organizers, since seventeen European countries are to be included. A national committee composed of sinologists, museum experts and ECA members will be formed in each country, and it will be their task to select

the appropriate institutions. They will also point out important small but high quality collections made by private individuals which are not widely known, such as the Baur Collection in Geneva and the Percival David Foundation in London.

Just as no visitor to Japan should travel without *Roberts' Guide to Japanese Museums* in his luggage, so, we hope, will lovers of Chinese art find the *ECA Guide* just as indispensable: Laurence Roberts published his original guide in 1967, little dreaming that his labour of love would become a best seller. His book is a delight to read, full of quirky observations about the oddities of Japanese museum opening times, and their distressing habit of closing down entirely when the weather conditions become too humid. His guide has all the merits of

being written by a single individual who has visited each collection and describes the items it contains with knowledge and enthusiasm. This is why he can comment on the display, the lighting and the labelling that he found. The *ECA Guide*, although the format will be roughly similar to that of Roberts' book, will not be compiled by one person touring all the collections. Shortage of funds dictates that the *ECA Guide to Chinese Art Treasures in European Museums, Libraries and Collections* will have to be compiled almost entirely from information supplied by the curators of the collections containing Chinese art, whether they be professionals or amateurs.

As a first step, the curators of principal collections will receive a simple questionnaire which they will be asked to fill in by placing a tick against the relevant items

RIETBERG MUSEUM, Zurich. Fifteenth-century (Ming dynasty) stone tomb guardians. Soldier (larger than life) and horse (life-size), both recently acquired by the museum, whose collection of sixth- to tenth-century Chinese sculptures is well known.

[Photo: © Rietberg Museum.]





MUSÉES ROYAUX D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE,  
Brussels. Seated Bodhisattva in dry lacquer,  
130 cm high, Song period (?).  
[Photo: A.C.L. Brussels.]

included in their holdings. Starting with the various types of ceramic wares, the list includes metalwork, lacquer, jade, textiles, carvings, paintings, printing and glass. In addition, the curator will be asked whether the collection contains such items as writing materials, bank-notes, costume accessories, scientific instruments, jewellery and so on. This will be an easy task for the professional curators to undertake, and the amateurs can always call for help from a Chinese art expert on their national committee. All the completed questionnaires, whether or not they are selected for final inclusion in the *Guide*, will be processed on the ECA computer in Brussels. Eventually, the huge amount of invaluable information that is collected concerning the heritage of Chinese art treasures to be found in Europe will be passed to the Unesco-ICOM Documentation Centre in Paris, where it will be added to the growing data bank concerning the holdings of museums all over Europe.

It is intended that the *Guide* will be of manageable size—in other words, not too big to slip into a capacious handbag. There will be two sections: the first and major section will include every collection in alphabetical order, first by country and then by town. The main language used in the *Guide* will be English, but non-English speakers will find short summaries in French and German at the end

of each entry. The second section of the *Guide* lists the various types of Chinese art by subject. The subject headings will range from Ceramics to Paintings and from Costume to Shadow Puppets. Under each of these headings the reader will find a list of numbers, some in heavy type. The list will refer back to the number placed beside each institution in the first section of the book and, by consulting this list, the reader will not only be able to discover which museums, libraries and collections contain particular areas of Chinese art, but will also know where the most important or largest collections of any one kind are located. Collectors in the various fields of Chinese art will find this section invaluable, since nothing of its kind has ever been published before.

Now that the groundwork for this mammoth project has been completed it only remains for the curators of Chinese art treasures in European museums, libraries and collections to respond by filling in the questionnaires when they arrive on their desks.

*Any readers of this article who have personal knowledge of the whereabouts of Chinese art treasures in little known places throughout Europe are asked to kindly contact the Project Director, Guide to Chinese Art Treasures in Europe, Europe-China Association, Square de la Quiétude 7, B-1150 Brussels.*

#### Jan Chapman

Far Eastern Curator of the Chester Beatty Library and Gallery of Oriental Art in Dublin, whose collections of Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan art are still little known to art students. Has travelled extensively in the Far East and visited many Far Eastern collections in Europe and the United States in the course of research into rhinoceros horn carvings. Has published many articles on this subject and has completed the preparation of the first book on this theme. At present engaged in mounting a major travelling exhibition on the subject of Chinese silk.

## *Petit manuel de muséologie*

In just 150 pages (small format), Claude Lapaire, Director of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire at Geneva, has managed to produce an effective synthesis of contemporary museological principles. His book, published in French under the title of *Petit manuel de muséologie*<sup>1</sup> (Short Manual of Museology), is based on the work of several generations of specialists, inspired particularly by the author's own teacher, the late Fritz Gysin, founder of ICOM in Switzerland, instigator of the Rome Centre (ICROM) and, last but not least, founder of the ICOM Foundation. Drawing on the international experience of the museum world and determined to put an end to museological dilettantism, Claude Lapaire addresses interested non-professionals and beginners at the local level, rather than colleagues in great national museums.

His book will thus be essential reading for the retired school-teacher or municipal official who, fascinated by the local history of his town or region and faced with a collection of representative objects, is motivated to open a small museum.

Readers will find no professional rhetoric or lyricism in these pages, rather a set of practical guidelines to help the curatorial beginner in finding his way through the jungle of everyday problems, administrative and otherwise. Basic notions are presented clearly and didactically: how to plan the legal status, organizational set-up, architecture and staffing of a museum; how to apply the rules of good conservation and respect the ethics of curatorship; how to integrate audio-visual aids, etc. But practical hints are not neglected either: how to prepare a loan form, how to ensure good public relations or how to build a show-case—and, incidentally, it is illustrated with drawings reproduced from *Museum*.

The book aims to provide no more than the basic information needed to establish and set up a museum. Little space is devoted to legal and economic aspects since these matters vary greatly from country to country; what discussion there is relates of course to conditions in Switzerland, where the work has been published. On all subjects, however, excellent bibliographical indications are provided; many Unesco publications are referred to, especially this magazine. As essential reading for beginners, some parts of this book might raise a smile among senior curators. But it also contains basic truths for everyone.

1. *Petit manuel de muséologie*, Berne and Stuttgart, Edition Paul Haupt, 1983, 150 pp., illus., 24 Swiss francs.

