

Museum

No 165 (Vol XLII, n° 1, 1990)

Museums, literacy and literacy work

museum

Museum, a quarterly published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, is an international forum of information and reflection on museums of all kinds.

The English, French and Spanish editions are published in Paris, the Arabic edition in Cairo, and the Russian edition in Moscow.

No. 165 (No. 1, 1990)



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Gouache by Julien.

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Subscriptions:
The Unesco Press,
Sales Division,
7 place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris, France

Each issue: 48 F. Subscription rate
(4 issues or corresponding
double issues per year): 156 F

Copies of articles that have appeared in *Museum* can be obtained from:
Institute for Scientific Information,
(Att. of Publication Processing),
3501 Market Street, Philadelphia,
PA 19104, USA.

Quotable quotes

'The book of stone, so solid and so durable, was to make way for the book of paper, still more solid and more durable . . .'

Victor Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*

'A museum devoted to a purely visual exposition is important in a country where the majority of the population cannot read or write.'

Susan Stronge, *Eastern Art Report*,
July 1989

Did you catch the misprint on page 37, right-hand column, of Museum No. 161? No? Well, one reader did, and kindly brought it to our attention. The National Museum of Hungary—to set the record straight—was created in 1802.

Museums, literacy and literacy work

and reports on museum issues in the Pacific

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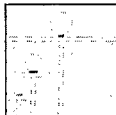
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From the Editor

Worlds apart

About a third of the world's adults are unable to do what you are doing right now: they cannot read.

Either they never learned (100 million children still have no school to attend) or their level of reading, writing and arithmetic is so weak as to make them 'functionally illiterate'.

On the face of it, the world of the illiterates and the museum world might as well be on different planets. Do not the illiterate view museums as part and parcel of a socio-cultural establishment that is alien—when not hostile—to them? And is not reading—signs, labels, brochures, catalogues, even elements of audio-visual presentations—a kind of entry requirement for museum visitors?

Why, then, has *Museum* decided to mark 1990, International Literacy Year (ILY), with this number?

An easy answer: literacy and literacy work are part and parcel of the separate and collective histories of humanity. Thus, movable metal type was introduced in Korea in the twelfth century A.D., and in Europe 300 years later by Gutenberg. Not surprisingly, museums reported on in this number celebrate these giant steps forward for communication.

The spread of mass literacy, basic to the development of democracy over the last century, is recalled by museums, presented below, in France (on the universalization of primary schooling) as well as Cuba, Nicaragua and Kazakhstan (USSR) (covering literacy campaigns among adults and out-of-school young people).

Literacy as part of history is, thus, a legitimate concern of museums. Indeed, strictly speaking, history as the record of humanity's past (a central preoccupation of museums) is almost universally accepted to have begun with the appearance of the written word. And this is precisely the concept roundly contested by Emmanuel Anati in his contribution to *Museum's* regular 'Frankly Speaking' column: pre-literate rock art, he argues, is reliable historical documentation too. So literacy/history is the easy reason for devoting this number to ILY.

A perhaps less-obvious justification is what museums could and should do not only to celebrate and record but also to come to grips with illiteracy and to participate in literacy work.

Coming to grips with illiteracy means recognizing, in settings of high (or even not so high) illiteracy, that many potential visitors are neglected, or even rejected, by museums attuned to a lettered élite. The article in this number on the National Museum of Niger shows that, even where the majority are unable to read or write, a museum can—without lowering its museological and museographical standards—be a truly popular forum of

education and culture. It is encouraging, too, to note that ICOM's standard syllabus for training museum professionals stipulates that special attention must be paid to preparing museum educators to work with illiterates. We must confess, however, that *Museum* was unable to unearth a single example of such training to include in this number.

Participation in literacy work: here, too, actual cases of museums assisting with teaching reading and writing proved elusive, indeed unfindable. Yet logic suggests that museums' educational functions could also be exercised here.

After all, museums contribute to primary and even pre-primary schooling. Why not adult literacy as well? Certain collections could be excellent starting points for reality-based rather than solely bookish learning. As educators, is it not within museums' purview to provide, or help with the provision of, basic instruction to their own illiterate staff? Some museums rent out exhibition halls and other spaces for cocktail parties; could not facilities—meeting rooms, auditoriums, audio-visual equipment—also be loaned for the holding of literacy classes?

These are but a few random examples of museums' possible and legitimate contributions. Our hope is that International Literacy Year will see the museum/literacy connection greatly expanded and enriched, bringing the two worlds into closer and more frequent contact, co-operation and—ultimately—symbiosis.

The second main theme of this number is 'Museum Issues in the Pacific'. 'Why the Pacific?' a friend of *Museum* recently asked; 'it's so far away!' 'Far away from *where?*' we queried in reply.

As with the literacy-and-museums section, we hope the articles presented here will bring distant worlds closer together. They certainly show that distance in time and space is very relative today, and that many Pacific museums are in enviably close, self-critical and thus constantly evolving touch with the often complex realities around them.

The clash between tradition and modernity—with attractive and less attractive elements on both sides of the equation; respect and tolerance emerging in hitherto tense pluri-racial and pluri-ethnic situations; increasingly participatory approaches to management—even, yes, sharing—of collections pertaining to ever-more vigorous pre-European populations—we'll wager that these and other features of the Pacific museum scene analysed below are relevant to, and perhaps enlightening for, museums just about everywhere.

Do the articles on the Pacific in this number of *Museum* seem 'far away' from *your* museum experience and concerns?

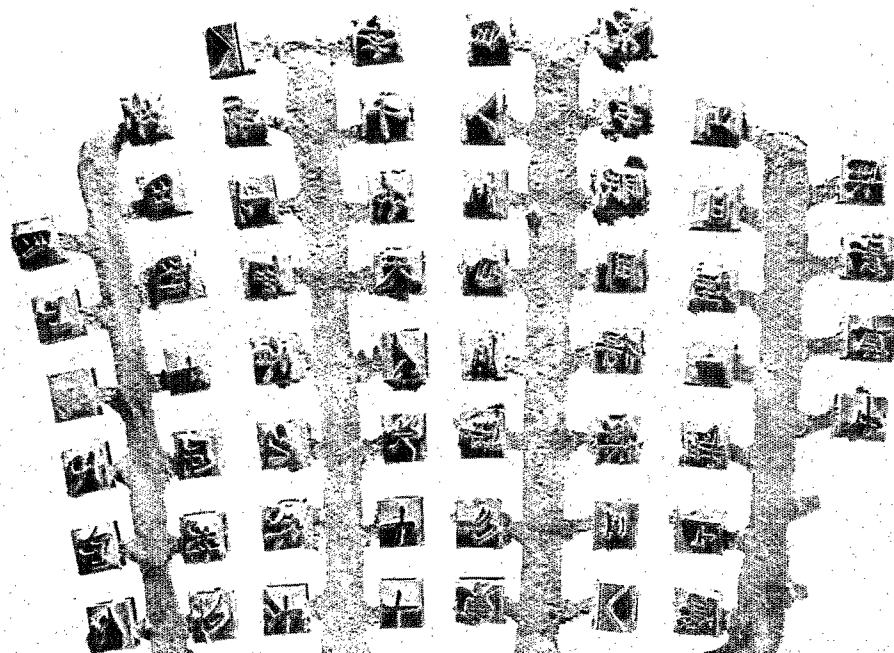
A.G.

P.S. Readers wishing to know more about illiteracy and literacy work can receive documentation from: International Literacy Year Secretariat, Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.

If you would also like to obtain copies of No. 1, 1990, of our sister quarterly *Prospects* on the theme, 'From Literacy to Education for All: The Critical Decade (1990-99)', it may be purchased through the agents listed on the inside back cover of this number of *Museum* or by writing to the Unesco Press Sales Division at the address given above.

MUSEUMS, LITERACY AND LITERACY WORK

Photos courtesy of the author



Celebrating
the written word

Cast brass type on a
'branch'
(reconstitution of
casting techniques
by the author).

Sungam Archives: a unique exhibition in the Republic of Korea

Pokee Sohn

Born in 1922. B.A., M.A. Seoul National University. Ph.D. University of California at Berkeley, United States. Has been assistant professor at the Seoul National University, professor, dean and museum director at Yonsei University and currently the Director of the Korea Institute of Prehistory. He is also an ICOM member. Has written several books including: *A History of Korea* (co-authored), 1970, 3rd printing 1984 (in English), Korean National Commission for Unesco; *Early Korean Typography*, new edition 1982 (in Korean-English-Japanese); *Movable Metal Type and Printing* (in Korean) 1984; *Printing and Publication of the Sejong Era* (in Korean), 1987; *Guide to the Study of Old Stone-Age Period of Korea* (in Korean), 1988.

The Republic of Korea is noted for its high literacy rate. Recent economic development and socio-political awareness in the country owe a great deal to the literacy of its people. How was literacy so pervasively achieved? One reason is that Korean parents are eager to have their children educated to the highest possible level.

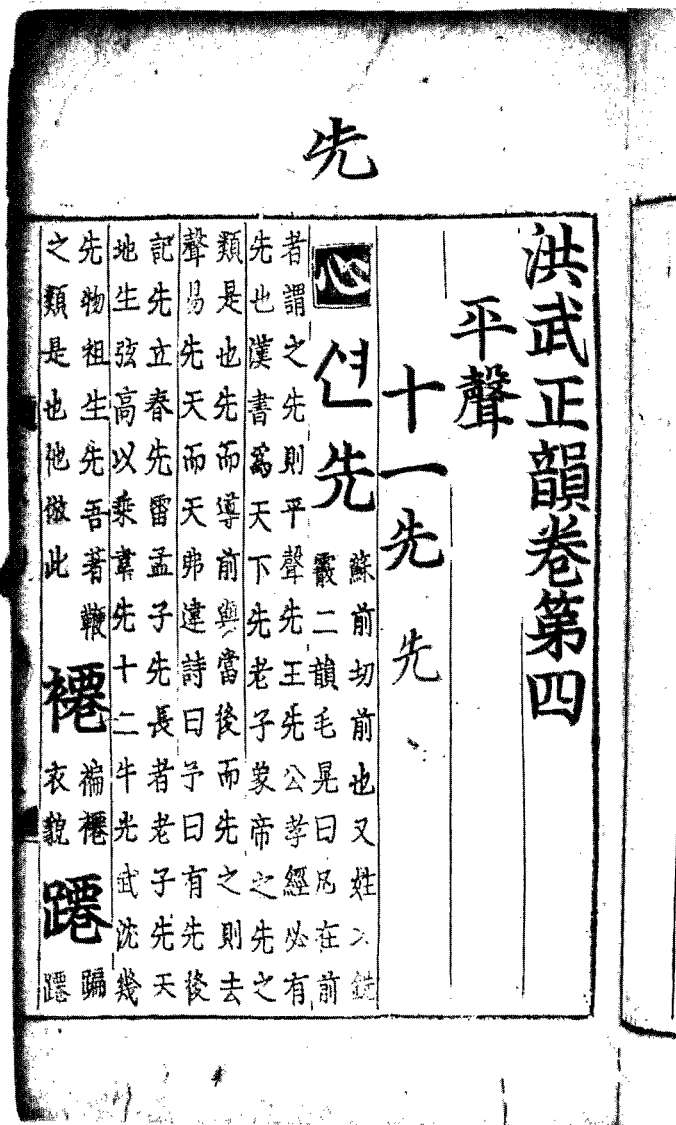
'One who wishes to live better must learn first of all.' 'You can only survive when you learn well.' These words are well remembered by Korean students from their childhood. Secondly, the simple and scientifically arranged Korean alphabet, so easy that it can be learnt within half an hour, plays an immense role as a vehicle of learning. It consists of ten vowels and fourteen consonants, which combine to represent almost every possible sound.

Korean people in general are inclined to learn for the sake of their

status in society. The history of the development of our society has engendered a competitive value system especially within the literati class in traditional society. Below the upper class were the less privileged middle class engaged in such professions as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, interpretation, geomancy, painting and administration, all of which required examinations in their respective fields. Civil officials and military officers were more privileged, but they also had to pass examinations in their areas.

Twelfth century A.D.: movable metal type

Books were necessary for such a competitive merit system, and had to be supplied in order to meet growing demands for examinations as well as



Impression made from 1434 type (small size) and from 1455 wooden type (large size) for the rhyme dictionary *Hongmu chongun*. The Korean alphabet has been added to the original Chinese *Hungwu chengyun* characters.

for some religious purposes. Consequently, duplication of books or texts was imperative. The merit system was in operation from the eighth century A.D. onwards, and book duplication became a general practice not only for commercial but also for educational reasons. Korea thus has a long history of book production, dating from the eighth to the early twentieth century, during which period traditional techniques were used.

Printing with wooden blocks (xylography) continued for a time even after the invention of movable type (typography). Xylography was advantageous for repeated printing from wooden blocks, but proved costly in labour, timber and space. In contrast, typography is convenient for printing different titles, as set type can be disassembled and reset for each new title; it is also economical and space-saving.

The Sungam Archives in Seoul houses a large collection of xylographical editions dating from the twelfth to the nineteenth century. The collection covers history, philosophy, Buddhism, Confucianism, geography of Korea and China, anthologies and personal theses. There are also numerous precious Buddhist scriptures and Confucian classics dating from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.

Among the wooden-block holdings, a thirteenth-century edition of *Samguk Sagi* or *History of Three States* (first century B.C. to seventh century A.D.), compiled originally in A.D. 1145, is unique and thus most precious. Three other editions, respectively from the late fourteenth, fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, of *Koryŏ sa* (*History of the Koryŏ dynasty: tenth to fourteenth century*) are among the collection's rare treasures. Some unique collections of typographical editions dating back to 1395 are also worthy of mention. Mounted in scrolls, they were originally bestowed upon meritorious subjects by the founder king, Yi Sŏng-gye.

Movable wooden type was easy to carve and readily applicable for printing. Printing with movable metal type, which began in the twelfth century during the Yi dynasty, was resumed in 1403, beginning with the Kyemi-cha fount. There different editions printed with this fount are displayed in our collection. All the above-mentioned editions are deservedly designated as national treasures. Of all the Korean book collections, the Sungam Archives has the greatest number of editions of books classified as national treasures by the government.

Anyone who is interested in typographical editions is advised to visit our archives, which contain almost every kind of Korean typographical edition.

Typesetting with chopsticks

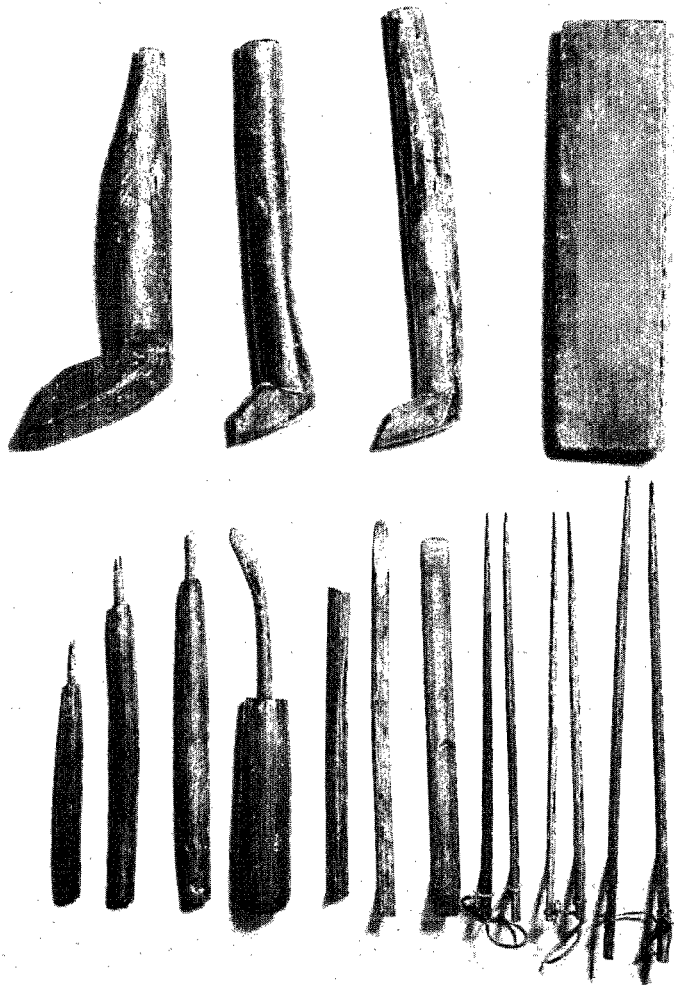
Here can be found seals made of various materials—wood, clay, ceramic, bronze, brass, iron and jade—and the development of carving, cutting and casting techniques that represent milestones in the invention and development of printing can be traced.

Also exhibited are the implements for typesetting and printing, such as chopsticks used for picking up type, knives for wax cutting, interspacing materials, toppers and a wooden hammer for adjusting the evenness of set type. Particularly valuable among the materials displayed are the types that were actually used. These include early fourteenth-century ceramic type, perforated to allow string to pass through them so as to tighten and align the rows. Other invaluable items include seven-

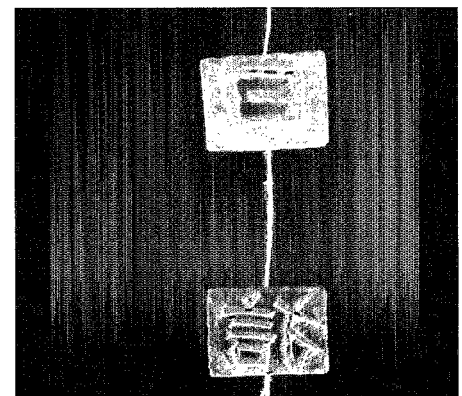
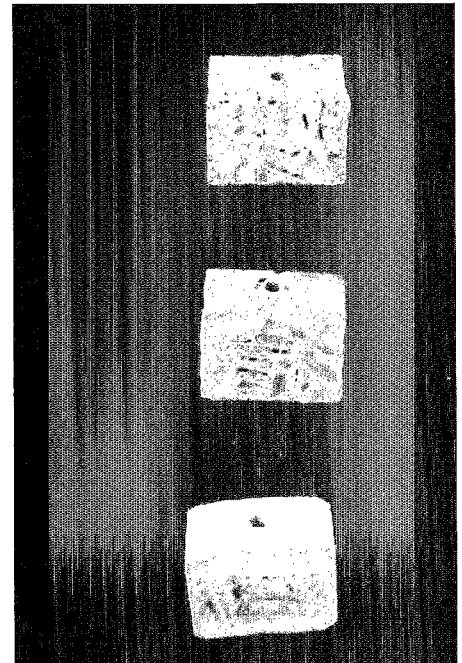
teenth- and eighteenth-century brass type as well as clay type of the seventeenth century. These were all actually employed in printing.

The Book Museum, or the Sungam Archives of Classical Literature, is located in the centre of Seoul near the City Hall and major hotels. Even though the museum is very easy to reach, visitors have been rather few in number considering the importance of the collection; it is one of the rarest cultural monuments in the history of printing ever developed.

From a socio-educational viewpoint, the Republic of Korea is rich in the tradition of learning. Our archival collection is a purely private undertaking, and the need for more space is urgent. A new printing museum is, therefore, in the process of being established under the auspices of the government at Ch'öngju. Even though its samples of editions will be limited in scope as compared with the Sungam Archives, the new museum will give more emphasis to the technology of printing. ■

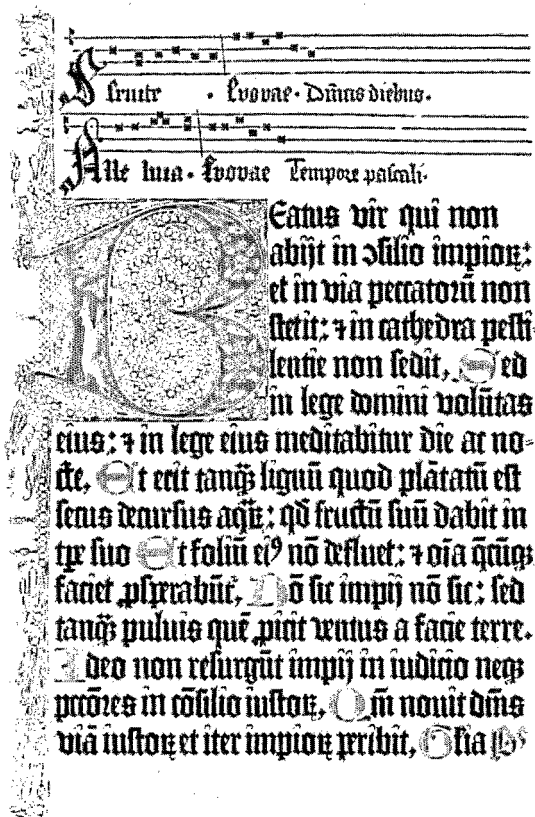


Bronze type from the twelfth century A.D. (c. 1160).



Ceramic type perforated to allow string to pass through for typesetting.

Typesetting implements: a foot-shaped topper, a wooden pouncer, an iron pick, an iron adjusting tool, a bamboo knife, and chopsticks.



Gutenberg Museum

The 1457 Mainz Psalter; Gutenberg's idea, but produced by his patron Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer after Gutenberg lost a lawsuit to Fust.

Cornelia Schneider

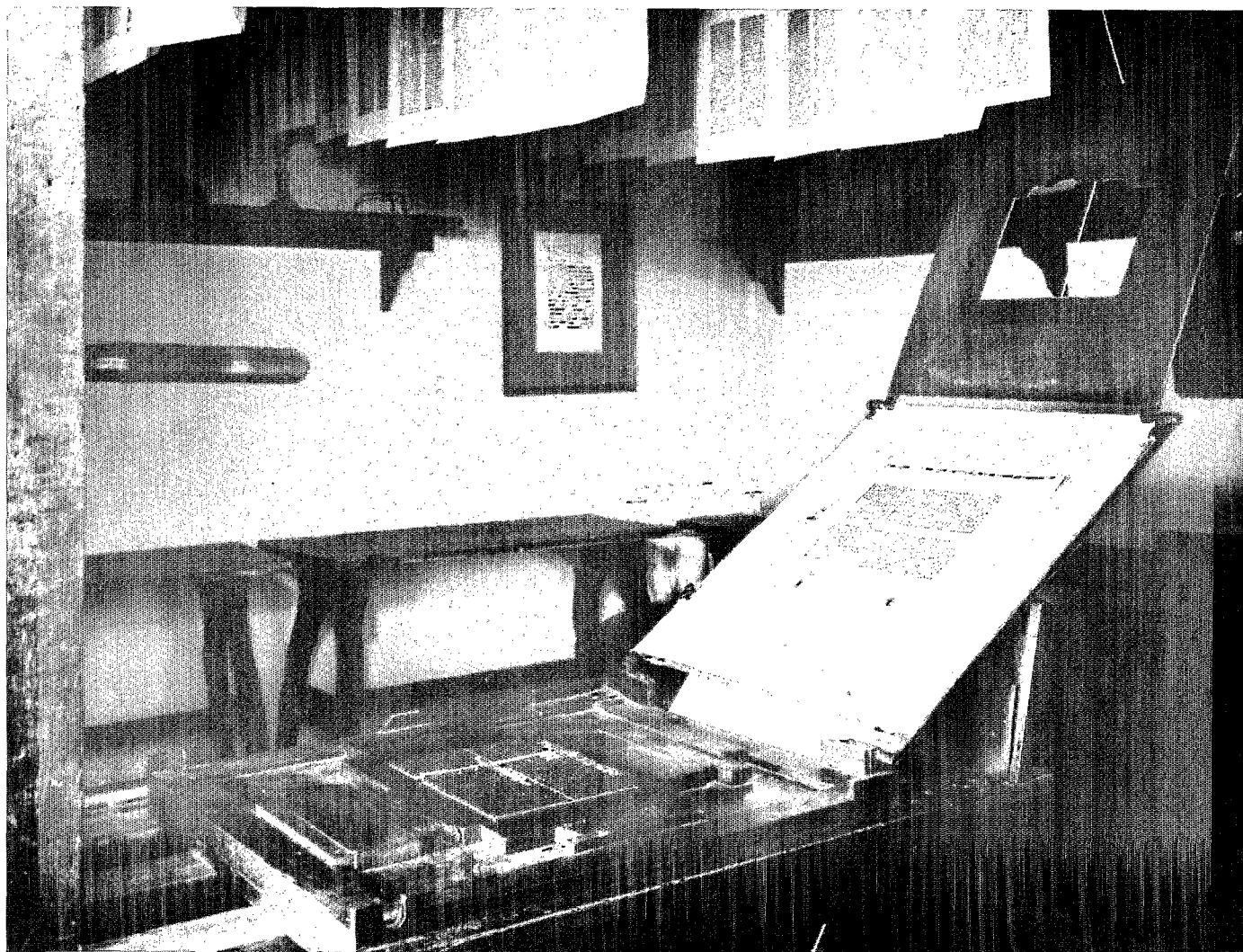
Among her other responsibilities, she is curator of the book and printing art collections from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries at the Gutenberg Museum, Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany.

We know very little about Johannes Gensfleisch, more familiar to us today as Gutenberg. His birth-date, childhood and youth are shrouded in obscurity. Even the few details of his life that are known to us would long since have passed into oblivion if, in the middle of the fifteenth century, this son of a Mainz patrician and a merchant's daughter had not invented something that was to change the world: printing with movable type.

It is true that as early as some time between 1041 and 1049 a Chinese smith called Pi Sheng had probably moulded individual characters out of clay, baked them and then arranged them to form a laterally inverted text from which he obtained impressions, and that since 1234 at the latest, type cast from copper, brass, iron or tin was used in Korea. The reproduction technique, however, was always the same: on top of the inked printing block the artisan laid a sheet of paper, which he then rubbed firmly and as evenly as possible with either his hand or a

A Gutenberg museum in the City of Mainz

suitably shaped instrument—something like a ball or a modern printer's inking pad. This very time-consuming process produced a so-called 'impression' which showed through, thus preventing use of the reverse side. Also, more often than not, the inking of the print was irregular, for the artisan had to print 'blind' and could inspect his work only when it was too late to correct it. It was Gutenberg—probably without any knowledge of the Asian techniques—who was the first to develop a systematic procedure whereby a large quantity of paper could be evenly printed on both sides in a relatively short time. The excellence of his invention speaks for itself by the speed with which it spread throughout the world and superseded the production of manuscript books, together with the fact that the technical process involved continued to be used, more or less unchanged, until the advent of photocomposition in the mid-twentieth century.



Gutenberg Museum / Ludwig Richter

The man, the significance

Gutenberg was not the first to use movable type, but his invention influenced Western scientific and cultural progress in its transition from the medieval to the modern world in a way he himself would certainly never have dared to dream, and it forms part of the foundation that the modern Western world was able to build upon. It was printing by means of movable type that first made it possible to publish scientific discoveries, new political theories, religious ideas and doctrines, literary works, and much more, in relatively large editions at a comparatively low cost. Gutenberg's invention promoted broad popular education, the formation of new branches of trade and the dissemination of new literary genres, and it accelerated technical and scientific progress. When he discovered America Christopher Columbus was using geographical, astronomical and navigational data from printed books, and without printing with movable

type, which made Luther's ideas quickly and cheaply available to a broad public, the Reformation would probably have taken a different course.

While the invention spread triumphantly through the entire world, the inventor himself soon sank into oblivion. It was only in 1741 that Johann David Kohler sought 'Johann Gutenberg's well-earned vindication, authenticated by trustworthy documents', and it was to be another 160 years before the City of Mainz set up a small museum to the memory of its great son. Since then the Gutenberg Museum, which since 1962 has had 2,336 m² of exhibition space at its disposal, has striven not only to show Gutenberg the man in his true light, but also to demonstrate the significance and far-reaching consequences of his invention to the almost 160,000 visitors from all over the world who annually view the collections.

First, a small explanatory exhibition shows how elaborate and time-consuming book manufacture was before

Printing as it was carried out in Gutenberg's day; in the Gutenberg Museum Gutenberg's invention is shown in action as well as having its working principles explained.

Gutenberg's time. The museum's printer demonstrates Gutenberg's technical innovations on a replica of his original printing-press. He also shows how the manual type-casting machine and lead alloy are employed in the production of movable type, and initiates visitors into other mysteries of the 'black art'. In the vault, visitors can then admire the results of this process, which in these days of computer typesetting and photocopying seems fairly lengthy (Gutenberg required some three years to print approximately 200 bibles). Here can be found three volumes of his Forty-two-line Bible, as well as a specimen of the Mainz Psalter which, although it was Gutenber's idea, was produced by this patron Johann Fust together with Peter Schoeffer after Gutenberg lost a lawsuit to Fust. The splendid ornamental initials are no longer painted by hand (as in the bibles) but are produced by using inks of several different colours on a single metal block—an enormous technical achievement. The fragment of a Sibylline Book, on the other hand, makes a rather insignificant

impression. Yet this little piece of paper is extraordinarily valuable, as it is the oldest extant print from Gutenberg's original typesetting, perhaps produced by him between 1440 and 1444 in Strasburg, even before the Forty-two-line Bible.

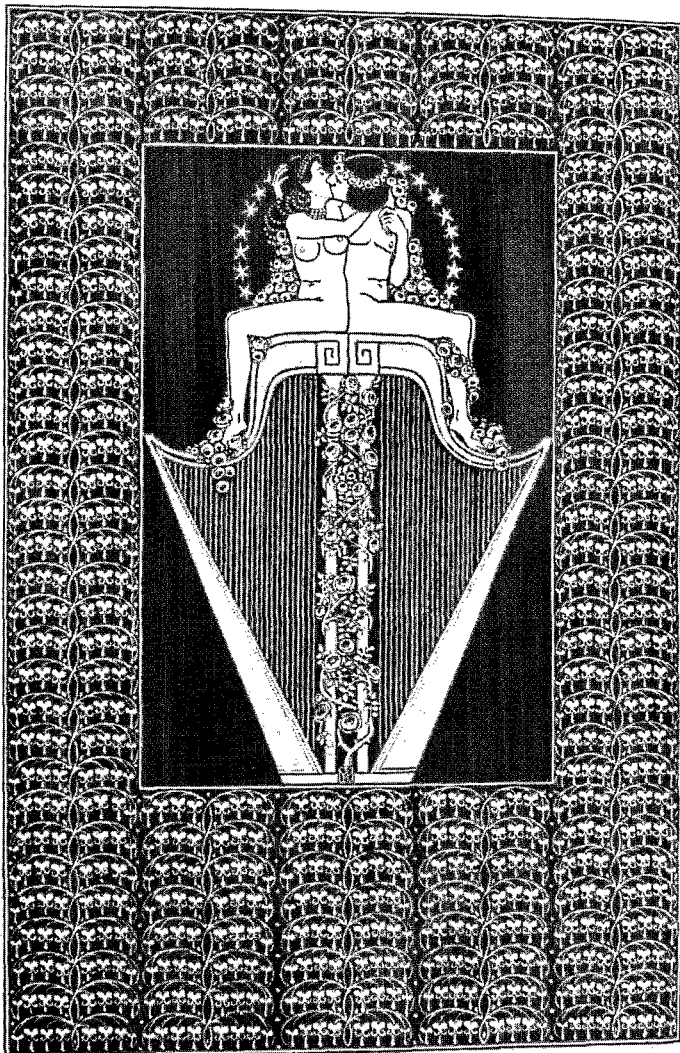
Another section is devoted to the dissemination of Gutenberg's invention. Incunabula from Mainz, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Strasburg, Venice, Florence, Rome, Paris and other European cities—such famous books as Bernhard von Breidenbach's *Journey to the Holy Land*, Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia*, Hartmann Schedel's *World Chronicle*, bibles and books of hours—demonstrate not only the rapid international dissemination of the new craft, but also the aesthetic quality of these early printed products.

Renaissance to Jugendstil

In another part of the exhibition, interested visitors can now further explore the development of Western techniques of book production: humanistic works with their priceless Renaissance woodcuts, elegantly illustrated books of the Baroque and Rococo, the harmonious antique style of Classicism, expensive Jugendstil (art nouveau) prints and modern printed works, supplemented by valuable exhibits from Asia.

The visitor to the Gutenberg Museum need expect neither the *Laocoön* nor the *Mona Lisa*, conveying their message to the artistic and emotional sensibilities with dramatic gestures or an enigmatic smile. While as far as material worth is concerned these books can more than hold their own with the works of art in other museums, they do, despite their undoubted visual appeal, demand a different kind of approach: books are functional things which seek first and foremost to convey their message by literary and scriptorial means. They are intended for a public—later generations as well as contemporaries—and lose their meaning without readers. Furthermore, the very existence of books is proof of the high standard of the cultural community that produced them. It implies not just the development of the appropriate writing materials (papyrus, parchment, paper, ink, brushes, Indian ink, colours, typewriters or printing presses), but also a spiritual treasury which may be meditated on and handed down, a script in

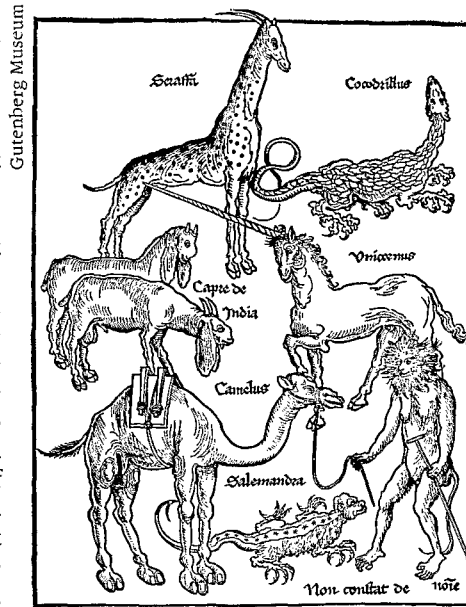
Friedrich Wilhelm Kleukens, an artist using the Jugendstil (art nouveau) style produced this title page for the *Song of Songs* in 1909.



which these contents may be recorded, and recipients who can both decipher the message and understand its substance.

On closer observation, a book offers still further information: its context tells us about literary, cultural, spiritual and scientific currents of thought; its presentation and embellishment inform us of aesthetic trends; its manufacture yields evidence of technical standards; its place of origin and the history of its production tell us of the living conditions of its time. To the monk in his medieval scriptorium, who spent years copying and illustrating a single codex to the greater glory of God, struggling with bad light and cold fingers all the while, a book did not mean quite the same as it did to the prosperous bohemian William Morris, who at his Kelmscott Press sought to revitalize the art of publishing, or to the journeyman operating a newspaper printing press. Likewise, a different ideal value must be attributed to a sumptuously laid-out book of hours, written by hand and presented by a noble bridegroom to his bride so that it might be with her every hour of her life until the last, than to a pocket thriller that is hastily picked up at a railway-station kiosk and abandoned in the carriage at journey's end.

With the help of Gutenberg's invention everything that an author wished to bring to public attention could be produced on either the cheapest or on the finest handmade paper, by woodcut or photography, with a hand press or an offset printing press: from political polemics to love poems, from hot news to ancient history, from music to astronomical tables, from advertisements to Holy Scripture, from high culture to minimal art. This is why the Gutenberg Museum cannot confine itself to offering connoisseurs the pleasure of savouring outstanding productions of the printer's art. Here we are fascinated by the many different aspects and levels of books and of reading and writing, the innumerable forms that printed products can take, the technical progress and cultural achievements of printing. Here the visitor can learn about paper manufacture, the art of book-binding and the development of binding and script, as well as poster-art, book-plates, print graphics, picture books or display-work—from postage stamps to banknotes, from wine labels to picture postcards, from share scrips to playing cards. The procedures used to print graphics are explained, as are die-cutting, type-casting and newspaper print-



Haec animalia sunt veraciter depicta sicut vidimus in terra sancta

ing, and printing and type-setting machines from the early days up to the present are on show.

Coping with a plethora of objects and approaches

Although this variety has its own special charm, the visitor soon realizes the impossibility of coping with such a plethora of objects and approaches. Various information media—guided tours, textboards, films, catalogues—seek to ease the way to understanding the colourful world of books, and there are practical demonstrations of technical processes. Besides the daily printing demonstration, under certain circumstances the visitor may observe paper-making, book-cover-manufacturing, or more specialized printing processes. In addition, special exhibitions of the Gutenberg Museum are devoted to particular points of view or areas of current interest or concern to the publishing and printing industry. Their subjects range from incunabula to press-prints by young avant-garde artists, from picture-sheets to books of hours, from the typewriter to visual poetry. Visitors whose thirst for knowledge has still not been quenched may be recommended to visit the Museum Library, where they can acquire more detailed information or documentation on specific areas. The last resort of the most indefatigable booklover of all is a course of action that would be warmly welcomed by the staff of the Gutenberg Museum: come back. ■

[Original language: German]

The animals, people and towns seen by Mainz Canon Bernhard von Breidenback and described by him in his book *Journey to the Holy Land* published in 1486.

In 1680 Maria Sibylla Merian brought out her *New Book of Flowers*, the copper plates for which she engraved herself, as a pattern book for embroidery and painting.



Gutenberg Museum

*A French museum
of the history of education:
literacy put to good use*

Jean-Claude Lauffenberger

When he co-authored this article, he was director of the Aube Departmental Centre for Educational Documentation and in charge of the Aube Museum of the History of Education. He is a graduate of the School of Advanced Social Science Studies (Paris) and author of *Enseignement en Champagne méridionale, au moyen âge et sous l'ancien régime* (Education in southern Champagne in the Middle Ages and Under the Ancien Régime) and *Autrefois Troyes . . . portes et remparts* (Troyes in the past—Gates and Ramparts).

Claire Pigné

Graduate in information science of the Dijon University Institute of Technology and the School of Advanced Social Science Studies (Paris). She has conducted a special study of primary-school textbooks dating from 1800 to 1914, and is a documentalist at the Aube Museum of the History of Education.

In France the establishment of the Museum of Education in Paris in 1879 following the Universal Exhibition of 1878 was a sign of the contemporary controversy about school provision between the laity and the Church, republicans and conservatives. One side sought to demonstrate that the school, bearing enlightenment through education, must necessarily be of republican origin, and was therefore born with the 1789 Revolution. The other side considered that literacy in France was largely due to the Church, which had established small schools in a large number of communities under the *ancien régime*. The facts of the situation are worth studying.

When Jules Ferry as Minister decided in about 1880 to make schooling secular, free and compulsory, much instruction already existed, though it was without any form of compulsion and very unsystematic. As re-emphasized by F. Furet and J. Ozouf in 1977, what Jules Ferry had to do was to fill gaps in at least three fields: by providing more girls' schools where they were not enough of them, in western and central France; by providing all villages with schools; and by improving school attendance by making it compulsory and free. He had also to make primary schools more efficient through the provision of money, premises and teachers. Since primary teachers were specially necessary, teacher-training colleges for girls were introduced on a wide scale, and it became compulsory for women

teachers to be qualified. The requirements of the political situation added yet another aspect to Ferry's work on education: with the expansion of the content of the elementary school course, schools became secular and republican.

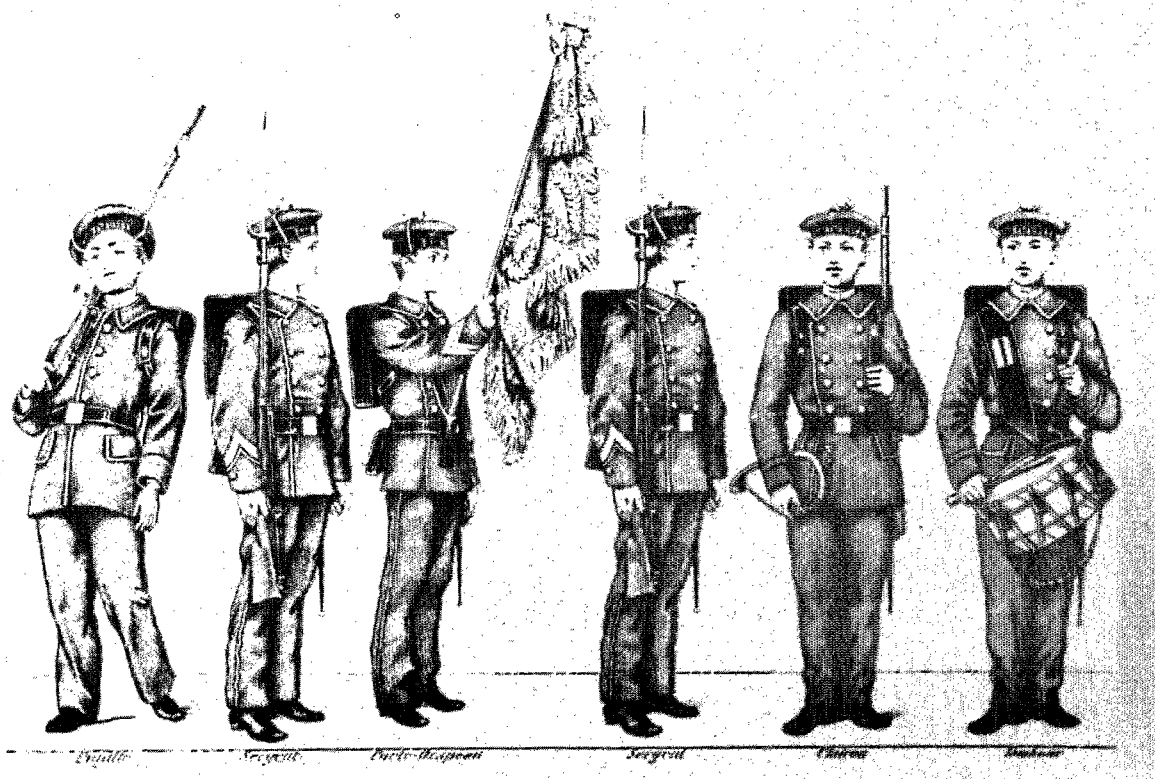
Whatever the truth of the matter may be, this old controversy has left behind for the documentalists, specialists and historians of education an accumulated mass of documentation, giving rise to extensive research, which has provided material for a great many publications describing the development of schools and literacy throughout the history of France.

The Aube Museum of the History of Education (MAHE) owes its existence to the recognition of the sad fact that, during the early 1970s, in the Aube department traces of the old school and education system were rapidly disappearing.

*Located in an old
primary school*

Very often the closure of both rural and urban schools resulted in the scrapping, hence the total disappearance, of school furniture and materials. At best they were salvaged by second-hand furniture or antique dealers who plied a lucrative trade in them, cashing in on public nostalgia for the past. In addition there was the natural decay caused by time, the type of material (biological deterioration of paper and

BATAILLON SCOLAIRE



wood), wear and tear, and also by educational updating which continually makes teaching aids obsolete (school textbooks, films). There was thus a need to arouse awareness, first in the educational world but also among the public, who were happy to spend money on a symbolic desk but remained uninterested in the daily conservation of their family educational heritage. The question was whether France had ceased to be capable of safeguarding the souvenirs of its educational history.

Awareness was brought about primarily by two men, who were interested in the history of education both professionally and as an absorbing hobby. In 1973 Jean Morlot, then director of the Aube mobile library, and Jean-Claude Lauffenburger, a teacher studying at the Centre Départemental de Documentation Pédagogique (CDDP) and co-author of this article, realizing the need to establish a museum of education in order to collect, preserve and use all the different types of documents connected with the school and the educational sector, worked together to bring this project to fruition.

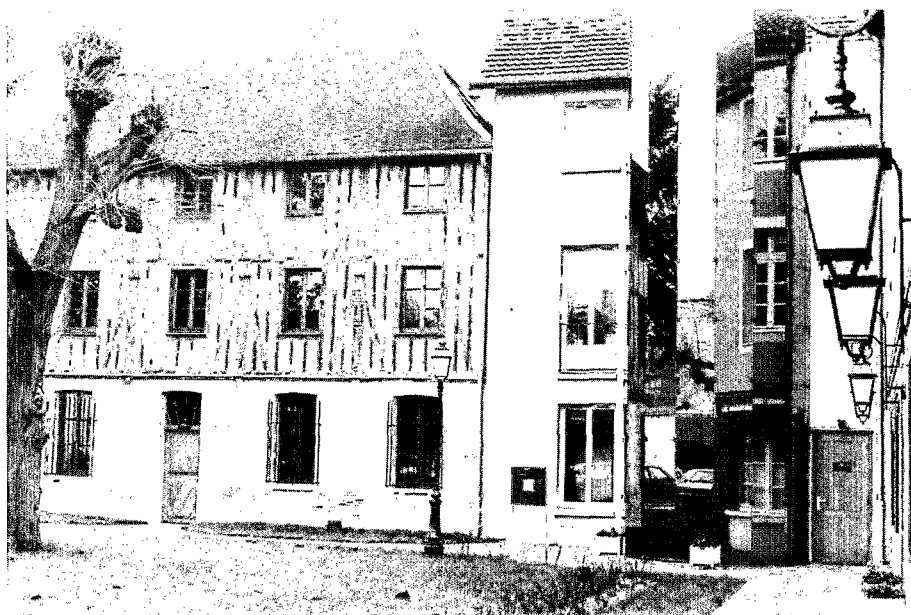
At the same time, in 1974, the National Education Research Institute (INRP) transferred its collections from the Museum of Education to the Rouen Regional Educational Documentation Centre (CRDP). Thus the Paris collections and those from the Rouen Museum of Teaching Materials were amalgamated to form a very important

collection. Following a decisive study visit to this new Museum of Education, J.-C. Lauffenburger realized that it was also possible to plan and carry out similar action in the department of the Aube. The support given to the project by the administrative and university authorities of the French Ministry of Education and by local elected representatives culminated in October 1975 with the official authorization to open a Museum of Education section as an annex to the Aube CDDP 'if the necessary premises are available to set up such a section and if competent people can give it ongoing attention', to quote the words of the Director of the National Educational Documentation Centre (CNDP) at the time.

The Aube Museum of the History of Education actually saw the light of day in 1977, and a rapid diversification of its activities, thanks to the work of its director who, in September 1977, became the Director of the Aube CDDP. By courtesy of the Mayor of Troyes the museum was installed, with the CDDP, in the premises of the old Michelet Primary School (an ideal site for an educational museum!) and began to receive important collections resulting from a survey carried out in the Aube municipalities on the state of the educational heritage. Some mayors spontaneously offered to donate school furniture and equipment no longer in use or out-of-date, thereby confirming the real need for this new cultural body.

The first public event, in September

A bataillon scolaire (Epinal cartoon).



The buildings of the MAHE-Documentation Centre complex recently refurbished with assistance from pupils in the technical education section.

1977, took the form of a symposium on the subject of the *bataillons scolaires* (para-military groups organized by certain French physical-education associations after the defeat of 1870). A number of distinguished academics took part, and the symposium was followed by the publication of its proceedings in an annual journal, the *Cahiers aubois d'histoire de l'éducation*. A series of presentations on the subject of 'patriotic education', introduced by Maurice Agulhon, included studies on local and general history. In December 1977 an association was formed, the Friends of the Aube Museum of the History of Education, to assist the museum in its museographical activities (increasing collections) and events (symposia, exhibitions), and to help in university research on the history of education. The museum was thus rapidly provided with structures and co-operation enabling it to carry out its function of collecting and preserving the educational heritage of the Aube, of setting up museographical projects such as the computerization of a specific documentary collection, and of expanding its cultural activities for the general public.

Yet these achievements could not long conceal a precarious situation due to the problem of recruiting qualified staff and to the antiquated state of the premises made available. The Council of the Aube department decided in 1983 to take over staff costs by creating, under contract, a manager's post at the CDDP. At the same time it voted for the refurbishing of all the premises, over a period of two years, thus giving a new scope to the museum's activities. The

former official accommodation for the teachers of the Michelet School was then entirely restored, largely by students at the vocational training high school and the senior technical education section, so that from November 1986 onwards the collections were housed in the three storeys of a handsome village house in the local Champagne style.

The collections

The museum enlarges its collections in different ways. First, there is the active method, which consists in making the rounds of the auction rooms and antique and second-hand dealers, and consulting the catalogues of booksellers and collectors specializing in old books and documents. This enables the museum to make judicious, albeit modest, investments in types of documents that are inadequately represented in its collections (for example magic lanterns and photographers' glass plates), or to expand a specific area related to the public activities planned for the current school year (e.g. technical education). A second, more open-ended approach consists in accepting all offers of documents, whether from individuals or from official bodies (libraries, town halls, associations, schools, etc.). Such acquisitions may take the form of donations, legacies or deposits, depending on the wishes of the donor.

In recent years, the fact that the museum and the CDDP share the same premises has contributed to the emergence of a more deliberate policy. It was thought important not to discard all

the out-dated documentation at the centre's media library but to transfer it instead to the museum's collection so as to ensure continuity in the work of documentation and cataloguing, while also seeking to solve conservation problems. Transfers from the centre's archives now take place annually before the start of the new school year, increasing in volume when new programmes are launched.

As befits its function, the MAHE has a very varied range of collections acquired over the years, which may be classified according to the following typology:

Furniture: desks, cupboards, blackboards, stoves, ink-bottles, etc.

Educational and scientific equipment: laboratory equipment, projectors, wall charts, museological displays, abstracts, school printing presses, educational tapes, etc.

Personal stationery: exercise books, blotting-paper, pens, pen-holders, compasses, pencil boxes, etc.

Games and toys.

Periodicals: professional/trade-union publications on education, magazines on local history and for children.

Books: school textbooks, reference works, school books, publishers' catalogues, etc.

Documents: blotters, preparatory class notes, diplomas, class rolls, school-library catalogues, student or trade-union pamphlets, press cuttings, etc.

Audio-visual material: filmstrips, glass plates, photographs, postcards, pictorial advertisements, children's records.

Commemorative articles and em-

blems: medals, uniform buttons, busts of Marianne (symbol of the French Republic).

Children's and dolls' clothing.

If the collection is to be really representative of education past and present in the Aube, we cannot afford to disregard documents of any kind, whether mass-produced, handwritten (schoolwork or teachers' notes), odd items or entire series.

In principle, the museum's collections are open to the general public without proof of academic or professional qualifications being required. However, certain restrictions have had to be introduced for reasons of security or convenience. Since the premises were too cramped to house the collections and receive visitors at the same time, there had for long been no permanent exhibition hall or space for temporary exhibitions on specific themes. It was thus impossible to cater satisfactorily to the public, and the occasional tours conducted on request could not cope with the demand. To meet this need one of the old classrooms has been reconstituted to provide a permanent exhibition room.

Documents may be consulted by any member of the public on request, but without direct access to the actual archives. It is therefore necessary to submit detailed requests, whatever the subject (where to find one's old primer,

the origins of the blackboard, the development of physics teaching in the first years of primary school). The documentalist then assembles the relevant documents, which the user may consult on the spot for as long as is required. Reproduction facilities are available to researchers, who may photocopy or photograph documents depending on their condition and size.

***Documentation,
publishing and cultural
events***

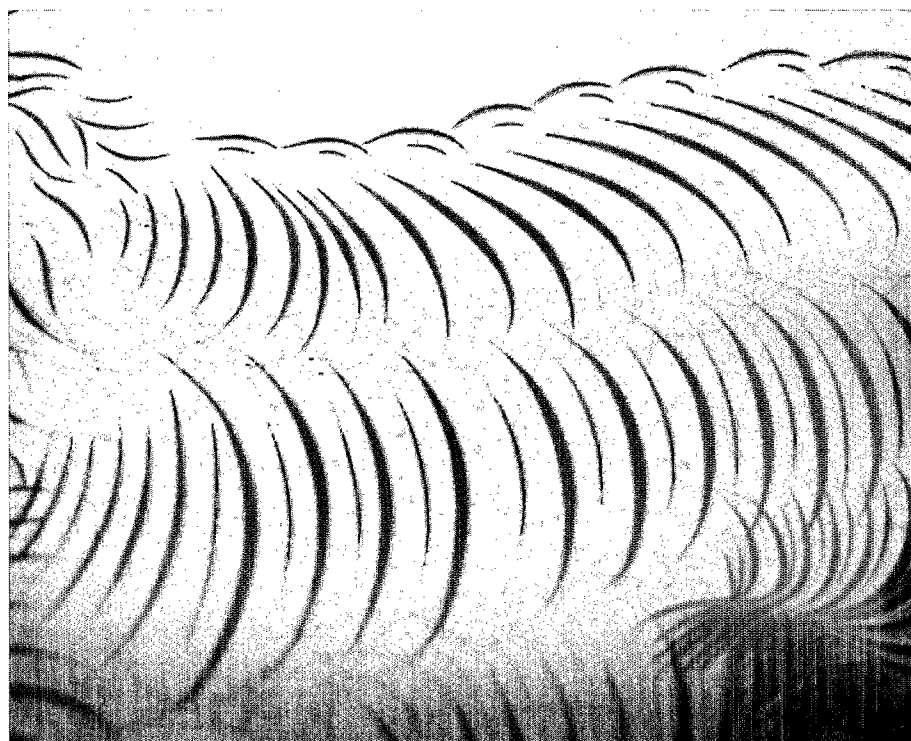
The MAHE's activities cover three areas: documentation, publishing and cultural events.

The main activity is that of documentation, which functions as described above. As the purpose of the museum is to promote the educational heritage of the Aube, much time is devoted to increasing the collections, but the foremost concern is to exploit them, both externally (at the request of the public) and internally (through bibliographies and publications).

Co-operation with teachers, academics and researchers produces successful results in a number of ways, since it constantly brings out the value of the educational materials in the collections, while the diversity of the requests (the writing of a dissertation, a thematic exhibition, a school fête) is a

means of measuring their relevance. A record is kept of all the questions submitted and the replies, not only for future reference, but also in order to assess the collections' shortcomings. With this in view there are plans for long-term investment when possible (difficulties sometimes arise in retrieving certain documents). When a question falls outside the scope of our department, the reader is always referred to other bodies or researchers likely to be better informed.

Publishing activities form a natural complement to the documentary function, as they enable research findings to be recorded and disseminated. The museum's annual review, *Les cahiers aubois d'histoire de l'éducation* publishes individual research papers which constitute valuable additions to the history of education in the department, for example *Adult Courses in the Aube 1870-1914*, *The Beginnings of the Girls' Lycée at Troyes*, or the proceedings of recent symposia on more general subjects such as post-secondary and extra-curricular education, or technical education. A publishing policy of this kind, making use of external contributions, is a way of helping young researchers, who frequently have difficulty in finding a publisher. *Les cahiers aubois* gives them the possibility of progressing both in their research and in their university studies. Each



Penmanship: as primary schooling helped spread literacy throughout the United States towards the end of the nineteenth century, children spent many laborious hours learning, then perfecting, their pen strokes. To relieve the boredom, examples of real artistic value were held up to them, of which this is but a detail; for the full picture, please turn the page.

contribution must however satisfy the criteria of quality and professionalism.

The purpose of brochures is to investigate neglected or little-known topics discovered by the museum. We are currently working on the biography, due to be published in 1990, of a long overlooked illustrator of school textbooks, Ray-Lambert, in close co-operation with his daughter. It should be noted that the illustrations used in all these publications are taken, whenever possible, from the museum's own collections, thereby contributing to the promotion of our heritage.

Another form of publishing activity is the reproduction of old documents, usually designed to appeal to the general public. For example, we recently issued a series of postcards based on the covers of old school textbooks in use during the last century, and also early twentieth-century pictorial advertisements for children's games.

'Au revoir, les enfants'

Long restricted for lack of space, cultural activities are now receiving attention from the museum. From 1977 on, symposia or lectures were the only representative activities that could be conducted under relatively satisfactory conditions, and only once every two years. Since the putting into service in

1986 of a number of renovated functional buildings it has been possible to schedule them more often. The modernized premises (a room with a seating capacity of over 100, fitted with a full range of video equipment) have already been used for a large number of one-day study sessions or lectures conducted by well-known educationists. The subjects of these symposia are chosen in the light of the museum's educational collections and depending on researchers' needs in areas of the history of education which are either little known or specially topical, for instance the centenary of technical education in 1988. Simultaneously a temporary exhibition of items from the museum's collections illustrates the subject addressed by the lecturer.

The MAHE organizes cultural activities not only in the department of the Aube but also elsewhere in France, and abroad. This outward-looking policy is of recent date, but sound judgement is none the less constantly required in such matters, in order to prevent any damage being done to the collections. The nature, scope and location of the event for which the documents are required, and the guarantees offered by the organizers, are always taken into consideration. Security and handling requirements, as well as the use to which the documents may be put, are

also set down in a loan contract stipulating the insurance premium and deposit to be paid, these being calculated in accordance with the total value and duration of the loan. In 1987, the most noteworthy instances of such loans included Louis Malle's film *Au revoir les enfants*, and participation in a television programme; in 1988 documents were lent to the exhibition entitled *L'empreinte DD, 100 ans de communication* at the Museum of Advertising in Paris; and in 1989 the museum co-operated with the University of Duisburg (Federal Republic of Germany) on an exhibition entitled *La Révolution Française dans les tableaux scolaires*.

The museum also has regular contacts, including exchanges of information and publications, with foreign universities providing courses in the history of education, for example the University of Ghent in Belgium, and the University of Hanover, in the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1988, contact was established with the University of Illinois, United States, which is planning to publish the first international directory of museums of education. This type of activity should be developed still further, and we welcome any suggestions, whatever form they may take.¹



Anonymous American, now in a private collection.



An authentic museographic project

The guiding idea directing all these activities may be described as an overall 'museographic project', to be implemented over several years. Having divided up the available space in the museum to house the different types of collections, we must now make the best use of the areas thus defined. The furnishings must satisfy the many and varied criteria of functionality, conservation (neutrality, humidity, etc.), and, naturally, aesthetics. The material chosen is wood, a natural, non-magnetic substance capable of regulating atmospheric humidity, and which is little affected by variations in temperature, but relatively expensive.

As regards a more technical field, the storage and processing of documents, it was decided right from the start that storage and inventorying should go hand in hand, that is, that the storage code and the inventory number should be identical. In fact, in order to make the best use of the space available, each type of object has been assigned a specific code and a specific type of

furniture, accompanied by an inventory number corresponding to its chronological accession number.

An exhaustive typology has thus been established with a view primarily to classifying items which may come within the field of education, rather than the types of documents already assembled. Ten major areas have thus been defined (see Table 1). The structure of collections such as ours should not be determined immediately but should anticipate the possibilities with regard to future acquisitions. The time factor thus no longer poses a problem, and it is possible to increase the storage space and improve on the typology of the storage system without affecting the present situation. As we have seen—and this does not raise any problems so far as we are concerned—this general typology obviously needs to be updated regularly in accordance with developments in communication technologies educational engineering. The same concern for the future also leads us to seek the optimum conservation conditions for all new educational tools.

From the outset of the constitution of

Classroom renovated in the old style, a nostalgic display for museum visitors.

1. Please contact: MAHE, Rue Saint Martin ès Aires, 10000 Troyes, France; tel. (33) 25-80-56-15.



A page from *l'Alphabet pour les enfants, illustré de jolies vignettes*, anonymous, published in 1842 by Langlois and Leclercq, Paris.

the museum's collections it was decided to computerize them, and lengthy preliminary studies were undertaken. Different forms of co-operation were considered in succession. The classification system used by the Museum of the History of Education in Rouen, as well as the educational section of the RECOLTE thesaurus of the Toulouse Regional Centre for Educational Documentation, were examined. Today, the technical problems appear to have been solved and financial solutions are in sight through integration with a Departmental Documentation Plan (PDD) designed for schools in the Aube and jointly managed by the Conseil Général and the CDDP, by agreement of the departmental school inspector.

Over 20,000 images

In concrete terms, it may be said that we have built a historical memory bank and a museographic collection. Adaptations will admittedly be necessary from time to time, but the mass of documents to be processed can now be handled much more economically. The registration of donations, legacies and purchases of old collections will remain an ongoing task. With regard to current educational data, the same techniques are applied in the other documentation centres of the CNDP network (the education memory project), and will be extended in the Aube to the Documentation and Information

Centres of the department's lower secondary schools. (The Departmental Documentation Centre includes not only common techniques but also compatible equipment.) This shows how economically resources can be used, the scope of documentary applications, and the improvements in the quality of the services. Analyses of users' needs will determine the level of access and the nature and scope of the area covered by the catalogues—or even the collections—which will need to be classified hierarchically. Once this project has been brought to a successful conclusion, it will even be possible to extend and transfer these procedures to a national network of education museums.

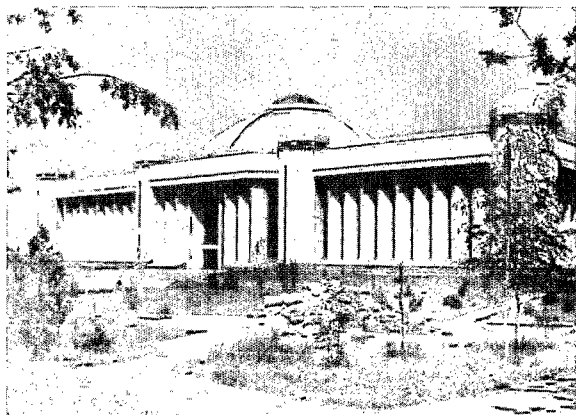
The latest idea under discussion is the use of videodiscs for the museum's collection of images, which is relatively large as it comprises approximately 1,000 plates, 350 two- or three-dimensional images and glass plates, a total of 600 filmstrips (potentially 15,000 images), 1,000 postcards, 500 photographs, 150 wall charts and illustrations, 200 slides and 1,000 printed images, engravings, etc., that is, over 20,000 images. This new medium meets the criteria for the conservation of the documents while at the same time serving the public by disseminating documents and images. Another advantage of the videodisc is the possibility of 'exporting' collections by distributing copies (exchanges with other bodies, presentation at trade fairs, etc.). It also enables the staff to work on premises elsewhere, provided they are equipped with a videodisc player. ■

[Translated From French]

TABLE 1. Typology of the collections

Text	School textbook, book, non-periodical publication, bibliography catalogue, curriculum textbook, printed paper, handwritten document, microfiche, score sheet, list, file.
Periodical	Collection of periodicals, article from periodical, special issue.
Image	Two- or three-dimensional image, glass plate, photograph, slide, map and plan, postcard, painting, plate, engraving, drawing, negative, transparency, hologram, microfilm.
Sound	Wire, long-playing record, compact disc, sound-track, audio cassette.
Audio-visual	Film-strip, film, videotape, multi-media system, package, digital optical disc, videodisc.
Data processing	Punch-card, cassette, floppy disk, tape.
Toy/game	Non-intellectual toy/game, intellectual toy/game, relational toy/game, toy/game for improving identification skills.
Clothing	Civilian clothing, school clothing, ceremonial clothing, military clothing, ecclesiastical clothing, sports clothing.
Equipment	Sports equipment, equipment for administrative use, equipment for use at boarding schools, classroom equipment.
Apparatus/materials	Sound equipment, audio-visual equipment, educational equipment, computer, projector, scientific equipment, teaching machine, technological education equipment.
Object	Commemorative object, object used in worship, emblem, sculpture.

'The Eradication of Illiteracy' – a permanent exhibition in Alma-Ata



Uraz Mukhamedzhanov © TsGM

The Central State Museum (TsGM) of the Kazakh SSR, built in 1984. The permanent exhibition was opened to the public in 1986. The museum, which has up-to-date (including audio-visual) equipment, is visited by more than 300,000 people each year.

Rashid S. Kukashev

Born in 1947 in Alma-Ata. In 1970 graduated from the Historical Faculty of the Kazakh State University. From 1970 to 1977 was a departmental director in the Museum of Applied Arts of Kazakhstan and also studied the history of art as a graduate student at the Moscow Higher Industrial Arts School. Since 1977 has worked in the Central State Museum of the Kazakh SSR, where he is currently Head of the Department of Publicity and Information. He has published a number of works on ethnography and the history of culture.

The Central State Museum of the Kazakh SSR, located in the centre of Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, in a building specially designed to reflect the classical traditions of nomad architecture, is one of the oldest and most important scientific and educational institutions of the Republic. Its origins are generally said to go back to 1831, the year in which the first 'museum' in the Asian part of the Russian Empire was established, in the town of Orenburg, then the military, administrative and cultural centre of the Kazakh steppe region, which had recently been attached to Russia. It is worth while to note that the museum began its life as a part of the Nepliuev Military Academy, which was the first educational establishment in the territory to be opened to children of the local Muslim aristocracy, 'in order to foster close relations between Asians and Russians, instilling in the former both attachment to and faith in the Russian Government, and to provide the region with educated workers'.¹ During the century and a half of its existence the museum has built up very large collections that reflect the ancient, medieval, modern and most recent history of Kazakhstan.

A gloomy picture

The museum, which began its existence within the walls of an educational institution, has quite naturally—right up to the present time—considered education to be one of its main vocations; it has, moreover, devoted special attention when building up its collec-

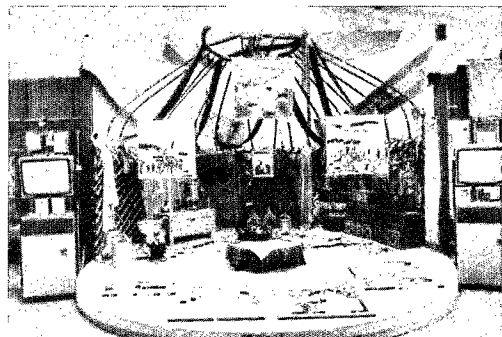
tions and in its research activities to the subject of the development of written culture and education. Pride of place among its acquisitions is accorded to a number of unique examples of ancient Turkic runes dating from the seventh to the ninth century; vestiges of the Kipchak poetic tradition at the time of the Golden Horde; philosophical and didactic treaties of late medieval philosophers; and the first published works of Kazakh educators of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the other hand, the visitor who contemplates the exhibits in the museum dating from the beginning of the present century cannot fail to be struck by the sombre and depressing picture they paint of the almost total illiteracy and ignorance of the Kazakh people.

A statistical report concerning one of the southern districts of Kazakhstan in 1912 states that 'literacy is very poorly established among the Kazakhs. Only 24 per 1,000 people of both sexes have learned to read and write. Almost all the women are illiterate: altogether there are only 25 literate Muslim women in the District'.² In Kazakhstan as a whole, according to official figures, more than 90 per cent of the population were unable to read and write. Education was accessible only to members of the semi-feudal nobility, the *bais*. The pitiful situation of the lower classes was a direct consequence of tsarist policy, based on the well-known dictum of the Empress Catherine II: 'An ignorant and illiterate people is easier to govern.'

After the 1917 Revolution a deter-

1. A. V. Vasilev, *Istortcheskiĭ ocherk russkogo obrazovaniya v Turgaĭskoi oblasti i ego sovremennoe sostoyanie* [The History and Present State of Russian Teaching in the Turgai Oblast], p. 13, Orenburg, 1986.

2. *Materialy po obsledovaniyu tuzemnogo i russkogo starokbil'cheskogo kbozayaĭstva i zemlepol'zovaniya Semirechenskoĭ oblasti* [Materials for the Study of Old Patterns of Indigenous and Russian Husbandry and Land-use in the Semireche Oblast], Vol. 3, 1912, p. 335.



Uraz Mukhamedzhanov © TsGM

The interior of a red yurt dating from the mid-1920s, a key element in educational and cultural activities in the Kazakh steppe. The yurt is known in the Kazakh language as *kiiz-ui*: literally, 'a dwelling made of felt'. The traditional mobile home of the Kazakh herdsmen, is constructed of easily available materials (wood and felt) and is exceptionally easy to erect and to transport (when dismantled it can be carried on a camel, and it can be re-erected by four women in forty to fifty minutes).

mined campaign was launched against illiteracy. A decree adopted by the Council of Peoples' Commissars of the RSFSR on 26 December 1919 concerning 'eradication of illiteracy among the population' proclaimed that every citizen in the Soviet Union aged from 8 to 15 was obliged to learn to read and write in his/her mother tongue or in Russian. One section of the museum's exhibition is given over to a presentation of this theme. Showcases and stands display various documents of the post-revolutionary period, old photographs, and manuals and textbooks published at the time, all of which bear testimony to the scale of the campaign to eradicate illiteracy in Kazakhstan.

The visitor to the museum learns that as long ago as the end of 1920, in the farthest corners of the republic, special commissions were created to make a census of the illiterate population, to set up schools and mobile 'teaching stations', to organize the training of teachers and to explain to the people what they were doing. The exhibits show that an entire system of education for the illiterate and barely literate was set in place, comprising three-month courses in literacy 'stations', six-month to two-year courses in literacy schools, non-mobile schools, classes specially for women, and individual and group study with adults in nomadic areas. By the end of 1921 72,000 illiterates and semi-literates in the republic had been taught, but it had become clear that in order to complete the mission a new approach, taking full account of local conditions, was called for.

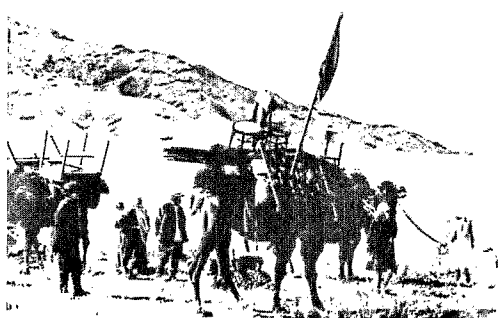
The red yurts

In the centre of the museum's exhibition area, opposite a showcase containing exhibits relating to the campaign against illiteracy, stands a *krasnaya yurta*, or 'red yurt'. The yurt is the typical portable domed dwelling of the Kazakh nomads, and the red yurt, proved itself to be an innovative and effective vehicle for cultural and educational activities among the Kazakh herdsmen, being perfectly suited to the nomadic way of life. A whole network of these original establishments was set up to serve in the fight against illiteracy and the discrimination suffered by Kazakh women as a result of customary laws and the Islamic *sharia*. As a general rule, each red yurt had a staff of three: a leader (who was responsible for teaching); a *feldsher*, or nurse; and a cultural worker. They organized meetings for women, held evening assem-

blies, showed films, gave advice on medical and legal matters and, most importantly, persuaded the population to participate in *likbezys* sessions (from the Russian term *likvidatsiya bezgramotnosti*, meaning 'eradication of illiteracy').

The exhibition set up in the Central State Museum familiarizes visitors with the interior of the red yurt which contains, besides utensils of daily household use among the Kazakh nomads, objects more typical of the new life that was opening up for them. The exhibits include a number of old photographs, one of which shows members of the red yurt team transporting a dismantled tent, its furnishings and contents on camels; another shows a literacy class for a group of nomads assembled around the yurt and; a third photograph depicts a meeting of women inside the tent.

Audio-visual means are employed to give a clearer impression and understanding of what things were like some sixty or seventy years ago. Next to the red yurt stand two video screens that show rare newsreel footage from the 1920s illustrating the work of the red yurts in different regions of Kazakhstan. There is also a video recording of the souvenirs of Tolebike Galievaya, who at the age of 16 was leader of a red yurt team in a remote Kazakh *aul* (encampment), which was under the absolute authority of a powerful feudal chieftain. This despotic figure declared that the young woman and her assistants were servants of the Devil and apostates, and that they had sold themselves to infidels (Kaffirs), as a result of which the people were afraid to associate with them. But chance intervened. On one occasion, having purchased some milk, Tolebike decided to make use of the separator that formed part of the red yurt's equipment. This hitherto unknown appliance, which so easily separated the cream from the milk, amazed and astounded the inhabitants of the *aul*, who, forgetting the dire interdiction on contact with the aliens, turned and made a beeline for the yurt to admire the wonder. Soon there was not a woman left in the *aul* who had not at least once treated her household to cream she had herself extracted with the magical machine. The ice had been broken. Furthermore, when some time later a small camel caravan arrived bearing cinema equipment, a gramophone, and a dozen separators, which, at Tolebike's request, the authorities had made available free of charge to the people of the *aul*, the red yurt was



Photographs displayed in the red yurt.



© TsGM

Photograph displayed in the red yurt.



transformed into a veritable 'temple of culture'. The organization of *likbez* no longer posed any problems; the women were the first to be taught to read and write, and then it proved possible to set up a men's class. Four months later the first literate members of the *aul* proudly 'graduated'.

The red yurts constituted a genuine starting-point for the cultural and educational development of the people at large. Indeed, they may themselves be seen as possessing a number of features characteristic of a museum: their interiors were exhibition areas containing objects that were familiar and some that were unfamiliar to the Kazakh nomads, who could study and handle the unfamiliar ones and thereby become accustomed to their new life.

'No less than 4,600 years?'

This slogan, printed on a simple poster, perhaps characterizes better than anything else the situation at the beginning of the 1930s, when the young republic, which had overcome a period of terrible famine and disease, launched the final, decisive assault against illiteracy. Documents, photographs, newspaper cuttings, newsreel footage and other exhibits preserved in the Central State Museum convincingly show how the proliteracy movement became a genuinely national concern: sons taught their aged mothers to read and write; factory directors held evening *likbez* for their workers; a 20-year-old Komsomol member was murdered by religious fanatics for organizing courses for young illiterate women; and so on.

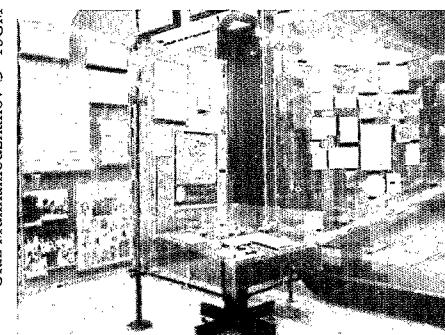
At the beginning of the 1940s the eradication of illiteracy in Kazakhstan was virtually complete. 'Looking for the illiterate' is the title of a commemorative article published by the Ministry of Education of the republic on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of education in Soviet Kazakhstan, which is displayed in the exhibition.

The display devoted to the fight against illiteracy ends with a most fasci-

inating document produced by a pre-revolutionary group of experts who, during the first decade of the present century, inquired into the state of education in Turkestan. Their conclusion was that at the existing rate of educational development the achievement of universal literacy among the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan would require no less than 4,600 years. This pessimistic exhibit invariably provokes a reaction among the visitors to the museum. Some allow themselves an ironic smile; others look thoughtful.

'Rejoice in the good days, but remember the bad days—and your happiness will be all the fuller', says a Kazakh proverb. ■

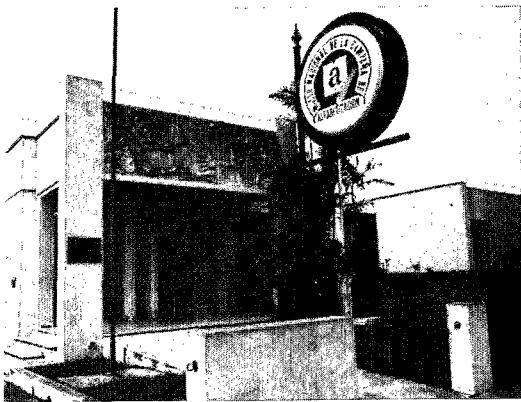
[Original language: Russian]



The section of the museum devoted to the exhibition on the eradication of illiteracy in Kazakhstan. Besides books, manuals and documents dating from the 1920s and 1930s, the showcases and stands display posters and leaflets of the period, calling on the people to join in the fight against illiteracy.

A poster, displayed in the museum, urging people to join in the fight against illiteracy.

In Cuba: living testimony to an extraordinary experience



Unesco/Arthur Gillette

The National Literacy Campaign Museum.

The National Literacy Campaign Museum was founded in 1964, three years after Cuba was declared 'a territory free from illiteracy', is poised at this writing to celebrate the first quarter century of its existence on 29 December 1989, on the threshold of International Literacy Year. The educational epic of the Cuban Literacy Campaign that took place during 1961 is conserved as a precious treasure and publicized in a creative manner there.

Thousands of people come each year to admire and learn about that extraordinary experiment in literacy work. The many tourists who visit Cuba each year, the new generations of young Cuban students and workers and even those who took part in this historic achievement are interested—even eager—to see the detailed graphic record of the Cuban Revolution's achievements in the field of literacy exhibited in the various rooms.

The mass of objects displayed in this outstanding museum reflect the 'common task', as the enormous and almost incredible achievement of making literate in the space of one year more than 700,000 illiterate people—in a country where the population at the time was only 7.5 million—was so aptly called. It contains hundreds of original documents, thousands of photographs, dozens of minutes of the technical commission responsible for the campaign, the 100,000 files of literacy brigade members, 700,000 letters to Fidel Castro, leader of the Revolution, as proof that each illiterate person had in fact become literate, daily newspaper articles published before, during and after the campaign, documentary films, tape and disc recordings, written re-

ords of the work of every municipality in the country, miscellaneous objects, the gallery of young martyrs killed by counter-revolutionaries simply because they were literacy workers, uniforms, hundreds of impressions of those who took part, symbols, lanterns and, in general, all the authentic memorabilia of the campaign.

A miracle? No, only a difficult conquest

Although this museum shows only one of the beautiful and heroic links in the chain of Cuban educational history it is of tremendous significance, since it connects the obscurantist past with a bright future.

Once the oppressive dictatorship, in the service of foreign interests, had been politically and militarily defeated, the Cuban revolutionary process had to face the critical socio-economic situation to be found in any Third World country: poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment, lack of hygiene and a deplorable educational scene characterized by a high wastage rate in state schools. The seeds of endemic illiteracy lay in the fact that only 56 per cent of children attended school, where the teaching was frequently poor and the drop-out and repetition rates were extremely high. No fewer than 23.6 per cent of the adult population were illiterate, and as many again were semi-literate. Administrative corruption was widespread. Pre-school, special, adult, technical and vocational education were virtually non-existent. The enrolment structure was distorted: the limited higher education available was out of step with the economic and

Orestes Martínez Oramas

Graduate and former teacher and at present Director of Adult Education at the Ministry of Education; was awarded the Literacy Medal by the Council of State.

Rooms where the distinctive uniforms, symbols and personal effects of the young literacy workers are exhibited.

National Literacy Campaign Museum



social requirements of the country, churning out many lawyers, for instance, but very few agronomists. From the outset the Revolution made education a priority. The education system was nationalized right across the board, and education was provided free—without any discrimination on grounds of race, religion, age, sex, social origin or place of residence.

The general policy for the eradication of illiteracy was based on three closely related gargantuan tasks: (a) to extend primary education to all children of school age in order to eradicate the source of illiteracy; (b) to wage a national literacy campaign; and (c) to wage a post-literacy campaign to prevent relapse into illiteracy through disuse and to introduce systematic lifelong education.

The first of these tasks was considered to be an act of basic social justice and a guarantee of every human being's right to learn. The practicalities were solved by providing many school-rooms: 10,000 were opened in a single day, and qualified unemployed teachers were assigned to them, together with thousands of well-educated young people who responded to the revolutionary call to serve anywhere as volunteer teachers, particularly in remote mountainous areas to which access was generally difficult.

In addition, parents, neighbours, community organizers and the pupils and teachers themselves had to help improvise premises and rudimentary furniture.

From then on there were to be no more illiterate people in Cuba! And that is how it has been to this day—but now physical conditions are quite different,

and the teaching staff are well qualified. Universal schooling is guaranteed, primary-education classes with few pupils being provided in districts where the population is scattered.

The second great task was to implement the National Literacy Campaign, which Unesco specialists regarded in 1964 'not as a miracle but as a difficult conquest achieved by dint of hard work, skill and organization'.

The campaign's motivation for the illiterate masses was to develop and put into practice the revolutionary laws and measures that were transforming the nation socially and economically, in particular the Land Reform Law, which gave employment to hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers and offered many peasants the chance of further technical training.

A National Literacy Commission was set up, with members from all the appropriate government and non-governmental bodies. This encouraged massive and enthusiastic participation by a whole range of social (political, educational, religious, military, students', women's, labour, professional, youth and peasants') institutions—in short, the whole of society. The commission was divided into four sections: technical (from which a separate statistics section was subsequently formed), finance, information and publications.

Foremost among the earliest activities were research into the peasants' vocabulary, seminars for all the teachers who were to work at grass-roots level, preparation of the reading primer and teacher's manual, the experimental pilot scheme, a detailed census of the illiterate population and teachers, the devising of a simple but

comprehensive visual method based on analysis and synthesis, and the initial training of the literacy work-force. This purely voluntary force was made up of 100,000 young student brigade members, 120,000 popular literacy workers, 13,000 worker brigade members and 34,000 primary- and secondary-school teachers.

The result, which has been rigorously checked, was that by the end of the campaign the illiteracy level had been reduced to 3.9 per cent. Today illiteracy stands at only 1.9 per cent of the teachable population aged between 10 and 49.

Regarding the third task, the post-literacy campaign, follow-up plans were prepared for primary, secondary and tertiary education for peasants and workers and, more recently, the 'Battles for the Sixth and Ninth Grades', which have raised the education level of the adult population considerably—a prerequisite for further training for workers, peasants and housewives at technical and vocational training centres and at university.

A permanent stimulus

The foregoing shows that the National Literacy Campaign Museum is not a

dead relic but a living exponent of the campaign that took place in the past but is still of undeniable relevance to the present generation and also looks to the future, both inside and outside Cuba.

Many educators from every continent, specialists from Unesco, OREALC, CEAAL and CREFAL, ministers, civil servants, ambassadors, artists, intellectuals and political leaders have been able to find answers at the museum situated in the Ciudad Escolar Libertad (Freedom School City) to their queries and concerns concerning the successful outcome of the Literacy Campaign in Cuba. The majority of these foreign visitors from over 100 countries have left their impressions in the visitors' book, where they have expressed their recognition of the historical and functional value of the museum.

The museum is a much-used source of material for historians, researchers and biographers of various participants in the campaign. It has provided basic material for graduate theses in education and for sociologists who have made in-depth studies of the significance for Cuban society and for the development of the Revolution of the integration of young brigade members and popular literacy workers from ur-

ban areas, of working-class origin, members of the petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals with the peasant population and the deprived groups of that time.

There is no doubt that the campaign contributed greatly to national unity. In addition, many foreigners have been awarded a diploma at the museum certifying that they took part in the campaign, in conjunction with the Commemorative Literacy Medal approved by the Council of State to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the feat. For fifteen years the museum management has been organizing extracurricular 'interest groups' for children from the many neighbouring schools, who study and become acquainted with the exhibits and can speak knowledgeably about them to the visitors.

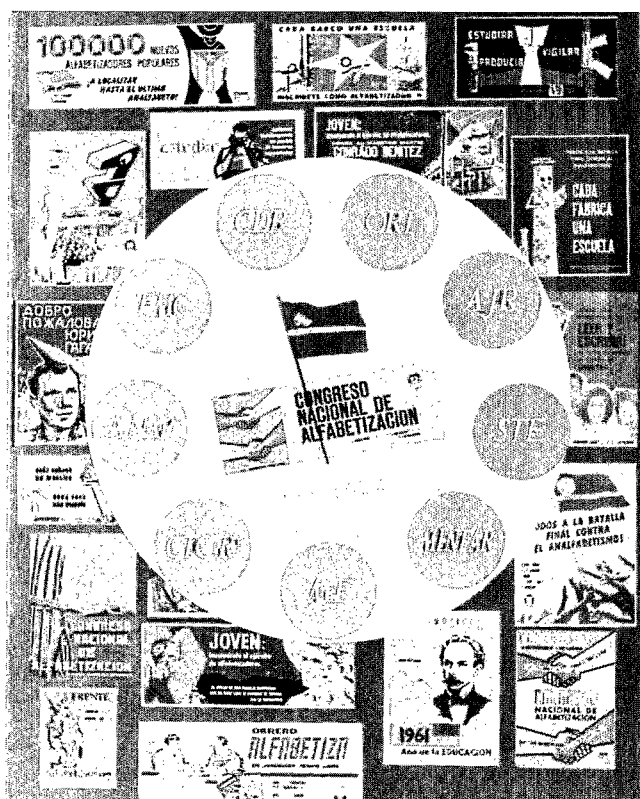
From time to time the museum sponsors lectures by specialists from the Ministry of Education, intellectuals and former campaign leaders, who continue to tell people about the campaign and provide further details about it.

Another important activity carried out there is the celebration of Education Workers' Day on 22 December, which is also the anniversary of the culmination of the campaign, and of International Literacy Day, on 8 September. The closing ceremony on these occasions, which are given full coverage in the national press, and on radio and television, is always presided over by an eminent national or international leader.

With regard to the conservation and modernization of the museum, plans are currently being drawn up to renew the fittings of the six rooms and to restore the documents and recordings, which have deteriorated somewhat owing to constant use over the past twenty-five years.

Although Cuba has a new museum of education in the old quarter of Havana, which Unesco has placed on the World Heritage List, the Literacy Campaign Museum is one of the richest and most specialized museums of its kind in the world. Within the country it is treasured not only because it reflects one of the most original and important achievements of the Revolution but also because it offers a permanent stimulus to future progress and improvement in the field of popular culture and education, holding out ever greater promise for science and technology in Cuba. ■

Sample of posters prepared for the campaign and the initials of the organizations that took part.



National Literacy Campaign Museum

[Original language: Spanish]

Out of darkness into light: The National Literacy Museum in Nicaragua

On 24 March 1980 a multitude of young people climbed the mountains of Nicaragua, spread through the countryside and reached the hills; in urban districts housewives and workers were mobilized. They were going forth to teach literacy, in fulfilment of the command of the National Hero, Carlos Fonseca Amador, Commander-in-Chief of the Popular Sandinista Revolution and founder of the Sandinista National Liberation Front—'and also teach them to read'.¹

Constantino Sanchez

Director of Community Education,
Ministry of Education of Nicaragua

Over a period of 150 days from that historic date a truly heroic feat became recorded in the memory and in the written and audio-visual documents of the nation. Practically everyone took part in the National Literacy Campaign, a mammoth task dedicated to the memory of the 'Heroes and Martyrs of the Liberation of Nicaragua'. Hundreds of thousands of people, including organizations bringing together peasants, workers, women, young people and even children were the protagonists.

Literacy action in Nicaragua did not simply involve the struggle to learn to read and write the codes in which our languages are couched (Spanish and the other, indigenous languages: Miskito, Sumo, Rama and Creole), but was fundamentally an operation which was to lay the foundations of a new social and educational approach; by the end of the Campaign (23 August 1980) it had given 406,056 Nicaraguans the opportunity to gain greater knowledge of their history and the reality of their lives, making education and work a single activity, turning workers into teachers and/or students and teachers into workers, in order to become the architects of their own destiny.

Simultaneously with this education campaign, it became possible to initiate a support plan for the eradication of malaria, the collection of information on the employment situation and marketing systems in the country, the carrying out of a livestock inventory, recovery of the oral history of the war of national liberation, establishment of collections of the flora and fauna of the different regions of the country, the compiling of popular legends and songs, the locating of archaeological remains and dissemination of basic information in regard to health care and preventive medicine.

It was then that the idea of establishing a place in which all this experience might be conserved arose: a place for the display of images, testimonies, written materials, objects and other tangible evidence, set against the background of villages, localities and hamlets in the wild mountain areas and of the maze of dwellings in towns and cities, in order to provide the new generations, visitors from other countries and the general public with information and to satisfy their curiosity.

Historical logic, didactic logic

The methodical survey of the experience of the National Literacy Campaign reveals a new approach to education, a new spirit born of the creative integration and participation of members of Nicaraguan society in the management of their own education. We no longer consider the adult workers in the country and in the town in abstract terms, but within a specific social context determined by their social, economic and cultural circumstances. And that is precisely what constitutes the historic break with the age-old ignorance of the people.

This educational process, in its theoretical, organizational and technical-pedagogical dimensions, continues to exercise its expressive force when we visit the small building in Managua over whose portal we read 'Museo Nacional de Alfabetización' (National Literacy Museum). Looking back we are reminded that a decade has already elapsed since this epic of the people took place and yet it remains fresh and immediate, a permanent source of edification and a constant

1. *National Literacy Campaign*, Ministry of Education, 1989.

stimulus to reflection, a point of reference for the generations who were lucky enough to play an active role in it.

From this standpoint, the value of the National Literacy Museum is unique in so far as it encapsulates the fusion of the political will to liberate the people from illiteracy with the popular will to achieve this aim irrespective of the cost. The events surrounding this political and educational achievement are manifested in each of the museum's thirteen rooms.

Documents, written materials, manuscripts, photographs, certificates, campaign banners, posters, logos, proclamations, statistical information, census forms, personal effects of fallen brigade members, letters to relatives, samples of handicrafts and archaeological finds, prizes received—all go to make up the cultural heritage of the people.

Each room in the museum has its own particular definition according to historical and didactic logic.

The first room reflects the historical background and starting-point summarized in the phrase, 'and also teach them to read', words spoken by the Commander-in-Chief, Carlos Fonseca, to each guerilla fighter during those difficult years of the 1960s when they were living in the mountains organizing the peasants. There were to be twenty years of cruel fighting before the Sandinista Revolution could triumph, bringing with it the achievement of mass literacy and the placing of responsibility for it in the hands of the creative forces of the people.

A second room enables the visitor to appreciate all the organizational aims and aspirations, as shown in the official government decree which declared 1980 Literacy Year, in the organizational chart and in the methodology used to prepare the literacy materials and establish the aims of the campaign.

The logic underlying the order in which exhibits are arranged then leads us to the international solidarity room dedicated to the contribution made by associations, organizations, trade unions, governments, groups and whole nations. Examples of the determination of these fighters for justice to aid the campaign remain for posterity with such slogans as 'A Pencil for Nicaragua', 'Make your Contribution to Literacy', etc., which led to the provision of the material and human resources required to implement the Literacy Campaign.

This attempt at arousing international awareness was complemented

by another similar development at home which is amply documented in the museum by means of posters, postcards and pamphlets, among other materials. The walls are a colourful mosaic of harmonious shapes and a variety of styles, evidence that artists and designers also put their creativity and energy at the service of the greatest educational effort for the people in the history of Nicaragua.

Weavers of hopes and dreams

Considerable space is reserved in the National Literacy Museum for what were at the time the first training experiments using the 'activity learning' method and relying on a multiplier effect. The tremendous impetus and sense of dedication and sacrifice together with the capacity for mature and sensible analysis are plain for all to see. These qualities were used to advantage and incorporated into the development of workshops for the training of 100,000 young people.

Visitors cannot fail to be impressed, when they pause to look at the illustrations displayed in the room of outstanding achievements, by the measures taken to teach the blind to read using the Braille system and by the literacy action directed at the former members of Somoza's National Guard, then imprisoned. This latter campaign is perhaps the most faithful expression of respect for human rights since it gave these people the possibility of claiming something which had been denied to them by the very system which they had served, that is, the right to education as part of a process of constant reflection, involving analysis and interpretation of reality and its transformation.

This process is only possible in situations where, rather than a teacher who teaches and a pupil who learns, both are possessors of knowledge which, in the last analysis, is complementary. This relationship is obvious from the declarations and field diaries of the brigade members and in the literacy materials themselves. There are corners in the museum where these experiences are reproduced. It suffices to look carefully at the model of a typical farm dwelling in the country where both literacy teacher and pupil have joined their efforts in a total learning process, turning the humble abode into a school, a veritable literacy training unit or popular education collective.

Those who made this heroic feat possible—young people, workers and

teachers—are assigned a prominent place in the National Literacy Museum.

In one room a photo montage shows the mobilization and deployment of thousands of young literacy brigade members, the mammoth farewell ceremony which took place in Revolution Square in Managua at the close of the campaign, the tearful embraces of relatives, the convoys of trucks and buses, the boats plying the waters of rivers and lakes.

Literacy training was more than a government decree: it was an achievement that really involved the nation.

In the museum there are reminders of the fact that, besides teaching the peasants to read and write, brigade members also taught them the rudiments of health care. The brigade members themselves learned from the peasants, recording the story of the insurrection from the mouths of the people themselves on 10,000 hours of tape. They carried out a survey of social and economic conditions among the peasant population and contributed some 10 million hours of voluntary work in the fields.

Learning from the experience of the peasants and developing skills in the manual arts turned our literacy brigade members into weavers of hopes and dreams. Examples of these unexpected manual skills abound and at the museum there is a permanent exhibition of artistic creations in wood, clay, cloth, fibre and stone.

The historical journey through the museum takes us next to a room where a series of official documents is displayed. Reading them we discover the criteria and other factors which determined the success of the literacy campaign, as reflected in declarations and proceedings concerning 'territories that have triumphed over illiteracy'. It is in this room that the National Literacy Campaign comes to an end; one can almost feel the presence of nearly half a million Nicaraguans who became literate, and gather together here to pay tribute to the 95,000 brigade members, the new heroes of a new war—this time the war against ignorance.

Opposite this room is the main hall of the National Literacy Museum, majestic and solemn. This is the room dedicated to the Heroes and Martyrs in the Cause of Literacy. Fifty-six young people gave their lives in the endeavour to bring the country out of darkness into light. Their sacrifice was not in vain—such is the message of our literacy museum. ■

[Original language: Spanish]

The National Museum of Niger: a means of popular culture for illiterates too



The craftsmen's 'neighbourhood', with a weaver.

Colette Monique Jourdain

Born in 1934 in Nancy (France). École des Beaux-Arts (1953-57). National Prize for Art History and Engraving (1956). Professor of Fine Art Drawing and Costume History (1957-61). Since 1962, museologist with the Municipality of Bordeaux, attached to the Aquitaine Museum, specialized in conservation/restoration, and thereafter in archaeological drawing, while undertaking ad hoc missions to the Middle East (1973), Congo (1978) and—for Unesco—Niger (1984). Member of ICOM. Author of many publications (particularly catalogues and articles on archaeology and architecture: Argentina, Australia, Middle East) and of various essays on the problems of museums in African countries and means of preserving their objects.

The National Museum of Niger is located in a park of some twenty-four hectares in the very heart of the capital, Niamey. Open year round, it is laid out in a verdant setting of terraces that slope down to the Niger river.

This museum was designed and set up in a very original manner. It is exceptional in that it is a truly multipurpose institution covering at one and the same time archaeology, regional ethnography and traditional habitat, and comprising a natural history section, a zoo, a crafts 'neighbourhood', a pavilion for disabled artists, a youth pavilion, gardens, display-sales stands, administrative offices, an area for folklore performances and temporary exhibits, a 'palaver tree' and the Ténéré Tree Mausoleum.

What does a closer look at some of these aspects reveal?

As if better to underscore the need to come together in a kind of melting pot of national awareness, reconstitutions of the habitat of Niger's different ethnic groups have been juxtaposed in the museum's park. Next to a rural Hausa dwelling there is a Zarma compound, with its huts, surrounded by a fence of *seko* (woven willow mats). Near by, the traditional Songhai habitat, also in a compound, is separated by tall trees from the tents of nomad groups. The Tuaregs' tents are made of sewn skins stretched over stakes; inside they are partitioned by thin mats. The Peuls' tents are mats placed over arched hoops. Inside these different dwellings are to be found collections of furniture, domestic objects and tools. Outside, dugout canoes and fishing nets spread to dry on stakes recall the fishermen who work from the banks of the Niger river.

An ancient 'star'

Scattered throughout the park are pavilions, most of which are built in the Hausa style with painted reliefs where blue and reddish ochre are particularly striking; these house the mineralogy, palaeontology and prehistory collections, as well as copies of the Air rock art frescos, and the fossilized skeleton of a large and very, very ancient dinosaur, *Uranosaurus Nigeriensis Taquet*, unquestionably the 'star' of the prehistory pavilion. He is quite well presented in a sand-filled pit onto which visitors look down. Ethnographic and ornithological collections may also be studied; there is a pavilion devoted to the musical instruments of Niger; and another is given over to national dress, including the sumptuous apparel of the main ethnic groups of the country with their jewels and various other accessories of daily life, such as pouches and wickerwork. This pavilion is always full of visitors.

Thus, the museum's collections, exhibitions and other activities are as numerous as varied. One last example: the Mausoleum in which is perhaps the most famous tree in the world—the Ténéré Tree. It once grew in the 1,300-kilometre-wide Sahara Desert, 238 km. to the east of Agadès on the Bilma road. It was a legend among caravan drivers and, as a major landmark in this area of total desert, it was to be found on all the maps and in the accounts of all the explorers of this part of the world. It was an acacia of the *Raddiana* variety, with green foliage and yellow flowers and was the last survivor of a whole clump of trees that had remained on the site of an ancient wadi, that is, a watercourse that was full or empty depending on the

season. Its roots reached down thirty-five metres into the water table. Its age has been estimated at between 150 and 350 years. It seems that, in 1959, a lorry on its way to Bilma struck it. In November 1973, participants in a motor rally found it dead. The next month, a military lorry brought it to the National Museum where the Mausoleum was built for it in 1977.

How to learn without realizing it (or knowing how to read)

In addition to its exceptionally multi-purpose character, the National Museum of Niger boasts another very special uniqueness: it is a means of broad-based education—lively and open to everyone without exception—in a country where three-quarters of the adults are illiterate. Entry is free of charge and the museum is constantly visited not only by tourists, research workers and schoolchildren, but also by people of all ethnic groups and all social levels in Niger who come along 'to listen', 'to watch' or 'to see how they work', or who quite simply walk through the park either because they have come from the countryside and

All ethnic groups rub shoulders at this open-air museum by the hippopotamus pit. To the left, the Clothing Pavilion, and in the centre, the Ténéré Tree Mausoleum.



have crossed the Kennedy Bridge and are on their way to the market in the centre of Niamey, or because they are taking home laundry just washed at the riverside.

This site functions as a meeting place for all sorts of people who learn there without even realizing that they are learning, and who have come to consider the museum not as a place apart reserved for an élite but as territory that belongs to everyone, where everyone has the right to stroll, to stop a moment to watch the sleeping hippopotami or to admire ancient costumes, where everyone may feel at home, may speak up, laugh or call out to someone else, where children are allowed to play, where one can meet a Tuareg (one of the famous 'blue men') in his magnificent ancestral dress, a seller of finely incised daggers, or a maker of articulated wooden birds, which are in fact traps that he works while dancing and singing an old tune. There are also little girls selling peanuts and young postcard hawkers. Vitality and authenticity—large as life itself—are to be found in this museum. People are engaged in constant discussion beneath the 'palaver tree', just as if they were in a village. Here people may

Reconstitution of traditional habitat.

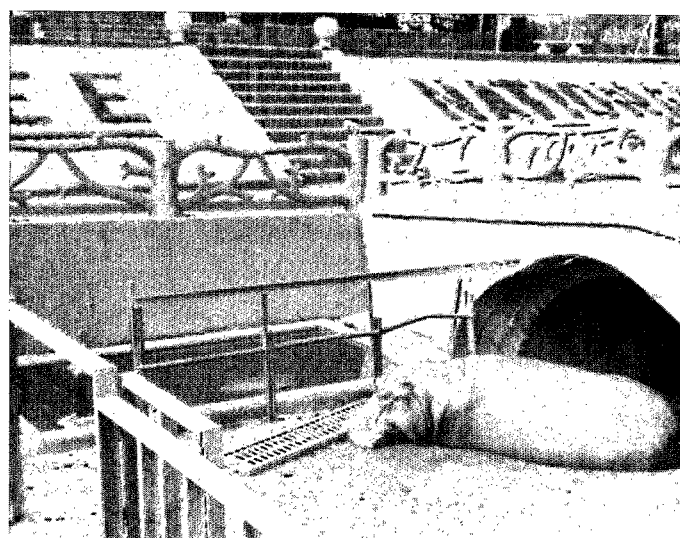
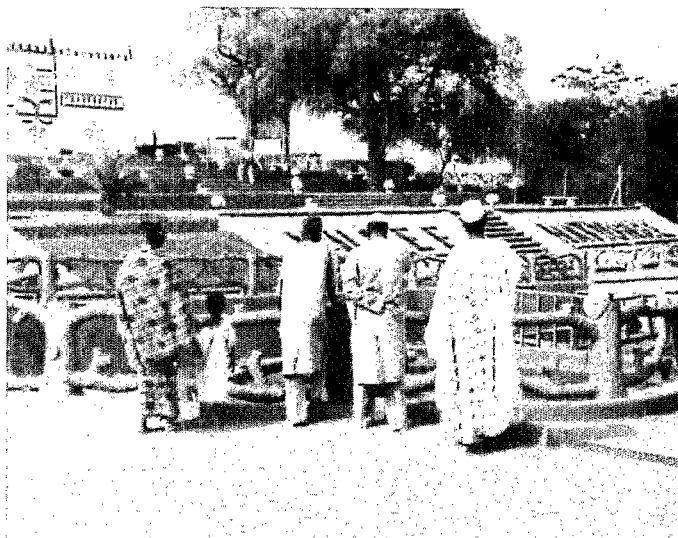
learn and share; and it does not matter if they are illiterate.

Of course, the museum is not without its problems. There are, in the first place, economic difficulties caused by the extreme poverty of Niger, which has been placed by the United Nations in the 'least developed country' category. Then too, the hot and dry local climate is an obstacle to the conservation of some collections.

It may none the less be said, in conclusion, that the National Museum of Niger is an exceptional initiative that provides inspiration both to other African countries and to many countries with a much longer museum tradition and greater financing available. This museum is well and truly a means of popular culture. It enables all the people of Niger, including those who cannot read or write, to become aware of their identity, to get to know about the other ethnic groups and to achieve greater social cohesion. ■

[Translated from French]

Hippo's nap-time.



The role of museums in the Pacific:

change or die

Soroi Eoe

Director of the Papua New Guinea National
Museum, Port Moresby.

Museums, including cultural centres and other learning scientific institutions, were once hailed as forerunners in efforts aimed at cultural conservation and public information. It has, however, been observed that the response of museums and cultural centres to rapid socio-cultural changes taking place all over the Pacific and elsewhere is astoundingly weak. Why is this?

No one will argue that establishing the institutions in the first place was other than a good idea, even if they were established by the former colonial powers controlling Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Cook Islands. But what about today in the post-independence period? Most, if not all Pacific countries (apart from the French Pacific territories) are experiencing difficulties in maintaining the primary functions of these institutions, namely the safe storage of the material culture, let alone the daily running costs associated with the more active role of collection, cataloguing, display and research. Financial burdens to these countries are cited as the primary cause of this situation. But if this is true, where does the problem lie?

That museum collections are little more than odd assortments of exotic curios remains, unfortunately, a common notion today. Many people in the Pacific continue to see museums in this way. To them, artefacts may be pretty to look at, even interesting, but at the end of the day are really no more than odds-and-ends, the unimportant relics of almost forgotten cultures. This view was and still is reinforced by the conviction that museums are only partly the emanations of an indigenous cultural

personality: they do not really meet the needs of the great majority of indigenous Pacific Islanders.

The Indonesian scholar and educator Makaminan Makagiansar (former Assistant Director-General of Unesco for Culture) once described museums as immature transplants from the élitist cultural milieu of nineteenth-century Europe. He went on to note that 'despite the fact that the museums are already staffed by indigenous specialists, the attitude of the latter is largely that of their European mentors of yesteryear, a closed professional group, élitist in the sense that the museum exists mainly for their own scholarly pursuits'.

This regrettable but understandable attitude sums up the feelings of most of our planners and politicians in the Pacific. Why, they ask, should funds be given to museums since they do not function in the mainstream of the development process. The result is that many museums are placed in positions that are both difficult and compromising when confronted with the problems of trying to reconcile these charges with their scholastic/scientific mandate.

Houses of the dead?

To dispel notions that museums are nothing but 'houses of the dead' which exist solely to serve close-knit patronage, museums must change, that is, if they are to survive into the next century.

The most important area where change is necessary is in the approach of museums to science and scholarship. Often museum professionals (scientists and administrators) try to confine their intellectual activities to strictly

professional or scientific pursuits, everything else being considered by implication as unimportant, unprofessional, and certainly contrary to well-established norms and practices. If readers who are museum directors and live in the Pacific fall into that category, they might as well say goodbye to their cherished institutions. Their days are certainly numbered.

While many of my counterparts cling to a make-believe world and live in a vacuum. I am happy to report that some museums have come to terms with how they are perceived by the rest of the world and are making concerted efforts to address the problem of bad press and misplaced energies. The Papua New Guinea National Museum can be counted among them as can a number in New Zealand and Australia. What are we doing?

The holistic approach

Socio-economic forces are exerted on the Pacific communities today, which differ horizontally, as much as vertically, from country to country over a period of time. Museums serving the needs of the last century are as misplaced today as those serving only the needs of the future. Their strength, if strength there will be, will be derived from their being firmly anchored in the living societies that sustain them.

To be totally involved in the communities in which they exist, museums should adopt a holistic approach. To counteract their ivory-tower tendencies, museums must recognize and promote an essential function, that of providing a service. As service institutions, they must acknowledge their obligation to serve the community at large. Two practical roles for museums distinguish themselves in this regard.

A people-oriented role

Museums should go to the people and

take an active interest in their problems. The infrastructure and personnel at the disposal of museums should be utilized to set up two-way communication links.

One example of people-oriented activity is the organization of exhibitions and the issuing of publications which address the youth problems of the country concerned. Affirming that young people are often considered as social outcasts and recalling that their families reject them and that they have no jobs is saying nothing new. Neither is noting that museums have done little or nothing to meet the needs of out-of-school youth. Suggesting that there is a dynamic role for museums to play here is, on the other hand, a definite departure from the traditional image of the museum.

Museums should design programmes and projects aimed at out-of-school youth. They already have many of the material resources to do so. Needed, in addition, is their suitable rearrangement so that they address youth problems by focusing on such issues as population education, ecology, health and nutrition, appropriate technology, and the like.

A catalytic role

Museums should also serve as development catalysts by assisting governments to forge their development projects in ways that better serve the people of both today and tomorrow. Their privileged view of certain misunderstood development issues should be brought to the attention of the people likely to be affected by development projects.

It is not suggested that museums should play the role of adversary to government policy initiatives; quite the contrary. What is advocated is that museums play a vigorous part in promoting careful planning and well-designed projects. Their function should consist in presenting factual

information on the cultural implications and especially possible penalties of development plans, whether they be the erosion of living cultures or the destruction of the material culture of the past. Indeed, everyone will benefit—the museums, government and people—from such a role.

It is argued here that museums should play a catalytic role in all development programmes, with special emphasis being placed on those addressing social problems. Particularly important is their involvement in multi- and bilateral aid programmes, which, through mining, lumbering and drilling projects currently in operation in the few Melanesian states: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, are responsible for the large-scale deforestation of enormous tracts of wilderness and the destruction of villages resulting in the displacement of their inhabitants.

To summarize, museums must change their approach if they are to survive. New functions must be added to complement existing ones. Many museums in the Pacific have reached the point of stagnation, not because they have run out of projects but because funds are not available. They have, in large measure, brought this situation upon themselves through their refusal to become operationally involved in the development process. Such indeed is the precondition for winning the support of the planners and politicians. Sacrifices and compromise are the unavoidable price but these should be accepted. If museums are to move from the present position of beggar at the planners' and politicians' table to that of active participant in the sharing of the national budget, they will definitely have to project an image of concern with the world's basic development problems, those of poverty, illiteracy, disease, malnutrition. When they do, people will be more prepared to support their traditional roles. ■

Social education:

museums and attitude change in the Pacific

Drawing by Julien



Donald McMichael

Born in 1932, B.Sc. in zoology at the University of Sydney (First-class Honours); Ph.D. at Harvard University in 1955; curator then deputy-director of the Australian Museum (specialized in Mollusca). Two decades in nature conservation and environmental management. First director of the National Museum of Australia (since 1984); elected chairman of the Australian National Committee of ICOM in 1988.

The first museums in the modern sense of the word came into being during the eighteenth century in Europe.¹ They grew out of the display of objects—of diverse nature ranging from the beautiful to the bizarre—accumulated by collectors, mainly wealthy persons, whose curiosity about the natural and cultural world knew no bounds. During the nineteenth century, European museums became more systematic in their collecting. Furthermore, they usually became the responsibility of the government and thus began to assume a socially useful role.

Because museums were perceived to be socially beneficial, they spread rapidly to the colonies of the European powers. Thus it is not surprising that countries such as India, Australia and Singapore have for a very long time had museums which in almost every way express their European ancestry. They were usually housed in grand buildings reflecting the best architecture of their day, or in converted palaces or other large structures built for some quite different purpose. During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, these museums played a very important role in collecting and documenting the cultural and natural heritage of the countries concerned, and many of them continue today substantially unaltered.

By the beginning of this century, most museums in the economically advanced countries had broadly similar philosophies. They almost all held their collections in trust for the people, placed great importance on the quality and comprehensiveness of those collections, and saw their mission as the education of the community at large about the natural world or the cultural achievements of human beings.

I regret to say that there are still quite a few museums that have not moved far from this essentially nineteenth-century philosophical base; yet there is an abundance of evidence that such institutions are no longer capable of reaching the vast majority of people, partly because there are now so many other ways for people to be informed and entertained, but also because the museums have failed to recognize that people's needs have changed. In Australia, for example, we have moved from being a society almost entirely of British ancestry with a small remnant Aboriginal population, to a highly multicultural society, in which very large numbers of people have no affinity with the United Kingdom at all, and whose mother tongue is not English. Furthermore; we are all now living in an age where rapid technological change and political instability have made life much more uncertain than it used to be, and many people no longer seem to be particularly interested in learning about the past. They are far more concerned about understanding the present and being informed about possible futures. By and large, museums have not adapted well to these changes.

1. This article has been adapted from a paper presented to the Fourth Regional Assembly of ICOM in Asia and the Pacific, held in Beijing in March 1989.

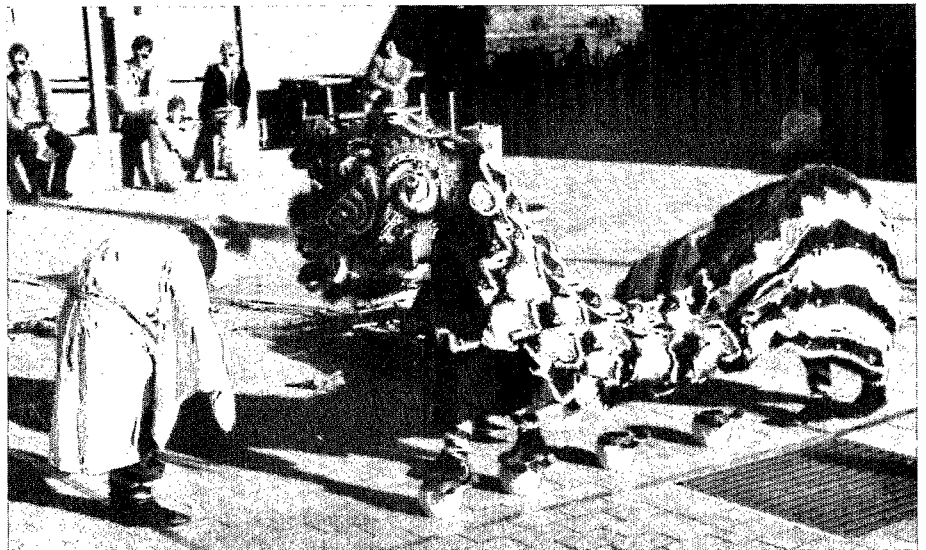
Changing viewers' attitudes

Fortunately, there has been in recent years a recognition of the inadequacies of some of the older museum attitudes, and around the world a vigorous debate has been taking place about the nature and role of museums, and the effectiveness of their traditional educational role. One element in this debate has been the emergence of what I would call 'social education' as a legitimate function of museums—indeed, a necessary function. By social education, I mean education aimed at changing the attitudes of people in relation to particular issues. It does not matter whether it is the people of that country, or visitors from other lands, so long as the educational objective is to develop or change the viewers' attitude on an issue of social importance. I am convinced that museums in our part of the world have a very special responsibility to offer such social education.

In the mission of cultural history museums, there has often been a strong element of social education. In its simplest expression, it has aimed at increasing understanding of cultural differences, and thus playing some part in addressing the problem described in Unesco's Constitution, where it is stated 'that ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war'.

In multicultural societies, there is often a great deal of mistrust, even dislike, among the various cultural elements, based on prejudice and misunderstanding, but mostly on ignorance. This is certainly the case in Australia, where for example there are now a very large number of people from quite diverse cultural backgrounds, and the potential for intercultural conflict is high. The Australian Government accords great importance to pluralism; that is, to the acceptance by all Australians that we are now and forever will be a multicultural society, and that respect for the cultural values of the various elements is important if social cohesion is to be maintained.

Museums can play an important part in helping to establish this mutual respect. A number of Australian museums have attempted in recent years to present Australian Aboriginal culture more positively than they once would have done. In earlier years, when



Peter Fox

Australia consisted mainly of people of British descent, plus the remnant Aboriginal population, Aborigines were perceived as a 'primitive' people, culturally backward and (more or less) as objects for study but certainly not for admiration or respect. I believe that attitude has long since departed from the thinking of intelligent Australians, and is certainly no longer evident in museum displays. On the contrary, there is now a widespread appreciation of the cultural richness of Aboriginal life and especially of Aboriginal art. Aborigines are now recognized as having been very successful ecologically, occupying a very wide range of environments in what is a generally harsh and difficult country to live in, without causing significant damage to the land or its fauna and flora. In that regard, they were much more successful as human inhabitants of Australia than those who came from Europe and elsewhere. The presentation of Aboriginal society by museums in positive terms can, thus, only help to increase understanding and mutual respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. I am sure that very similar situations occur in many other countries in the Pacific, and that their museums have a responsibility not dissimilar to that of their Australian counterparts.

Vanuatu; New Zealand

An interesting social educational role has been adopted by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (which embraces museum, art gallery and library functions). The centre has devoted considerable effort to recording on videotape the cultural life of the many small communities that

make up Vanuatu society. In this nation of about 150,000 people, there are many very distinct groups. Over 100 different languages are spoken, some of them now by no more than a handful of people.

The government's policy is to encourage the maintenance of this cultural and linguistic diversity and, as an important element, it has authorized the Vanuatu Cultural Centre to record the various cultural practices, and especially the languages, so that they at least will be in some retrievable form should there be a loss of cultural continuity as a result of outside influences. In every sense, this is a form of social education that only qualified museum professionals can undertake. It requires very skilful handling of the recording process, and a complete empathy with the philosophy of the programme, if it is to be done successfully.

Of course there are those who would take a contrary view, and argue that there is no future in the 'real world' for cultural practices and languages that are only understood by small groups of people, that the future lies in universal languages and in people accepting the benefits, as well as the costs, of economic development and technological change. That, however, is a matter of opinion. If there is merit in retaining cultural diversity, then museums in the Pacific have a most important part to play in ensuring that it happens.

Art museums have, in general, not been very good at social education, other than that element which involves increased understanding and appreciation of the merit of the artistic endeavours of other cultures. Now, however, we have in the Pacific subregion a proposal to develop a museum in

A performance of Chinese lion dancing by the Choy Lee Fut Martial Arts Federation of Sydney celebrated the opening of the Survival Exhibition at the Yarramundi Visitor Centre of the National Museum of Australia. The exhibition drew attention to the diversity of cultures that make up contemporary Australian society, and showed how cultural practices have survived over many years, despite the domination of Australian life by an essentially British culture.



Museum Studies Unit, CCAE

which art is presented as an integral and socially significant part of society. That is the museum of Maori culture known as Te Whare Taonga Tangata Whenua, which is planned to be built in Wellington, New Zealand.

The thinking behind this project is that the older museum tradition in which Maori art was presented alongside Western art in a classic art gallery was no longer relevant as New Zealand moves towards the twenty-first century. This view tended to present the culture and art of the Maori as fixed in the context of a particular historical technology, rather than as part of a continuing, evolving culture enriching, and interacting with, the contemporary culture of the Pakeha (New Zealanders of European descent).

In recognition of their emerging national self-awareness, the Maori consider that their sense of identity as New Zealanders in the Pacific area would be better served by greater understanding and development of their own national culture, and in particular that a new museum devoted solely to Maori and Pacific art, to be known only by its Maori-language name, would acknowledge the significance and continuing influence of the Pacific/Te Moananui a Kiwa on New Zealand society and culture. The cultural requirements of Te Whare Taonga Tangata Whenua include a fully functioning *marae*, that is, a special place where Maori ceremonies are performed. But the concept is so new that the precise nature of the building to house it cannot yet be defined and will require wide-ranging consultations with the Maori people and those other Pacific Island groups who now constitute a significant element in New Zealand society.

'Guilt . . . anger'

Another group of museums I wish to mention comprises the relatively new institutions known as social history museums, or, in some cases, new social history departments in older museums with a human history orientation. Their focus is not on the cultural treasures of past generations, on the memorabilia of great battles, or on important people, but on the lives of ordinary people and the conditions under which they lived. They attempt to understand the everyday life of the societies of past times, and through this, to help people comprehend the origins of various aspects of present-day society. For these museums, social education is usually the principal objective.

Nevertheless, as A. Hancocks pointed out in 1987, 'social and cultural issues are without doubt difficult to deal with. They arouse feelings of guilt, inadequacy, despair and anger'. She comments further: 'It is not feasible to expect one institution to take upon its shoulders the crusade toward international utopia. But neither is it too much to expect that museums might consider redefining their purpose to cover broader subject areas.'²

A final example is drawn from my own institution, the National Museum of Australia. Although still embryonic and not expected to be built and fully opened before the mid 1990s, the National Museum of Australia has established a small exhibition centre on its beautiful lakeside site in Australia's national capital, Canberra. We have already mounted two exhibitions there, and each of them has dealt, *inter alia*, with the question of Aboriginal land rights, which is one of the very difficult

Aboriginal people from Kalumburu in north-west Australia perform a dance cycle relating to Cyclone Tracey in May 1988 at the Canberra College of Advanced Education. They are wearing regalia they made at the Mitchell repository of the National Museum of Australia. The dance cycle and the objects illustrate the adaptation of traditional Aboriginal cultural practices to contemporary situations and show how the National Museum of Australia is attempting to present Aboriginal culture as a continuing force in the life of Aboriginal people.

2. A. Hancocks, 'Museum Exhibition as a Tool of Social Awareness', *Curator*, Vol. 30, 1987, pp. 181-92.

social issues confronting Australia today. Briefly, the issue is whether Aboriginal people should be granted permanent, inalienable title to land with which they have strong traditional ties. Some Australians regard the land as having been alienated to the state by virtue of European occupation, and would deny Aboriginal people any rights other than those that all other Australians possess to acquire title to land by purchase or lease on the free market. A more enlightened view would, I believe, recognize that Aborigines were the prior occupiers and owners of Australia, and that they were dispossessed of their land by the insidious process of European settlement over the last two centuries. Consequently, their claim to have at least some of their land restored to them, especially those lands with which they have a strong ancestral connection and which are regarded by them as having special significance in connection with their cultural identity, is very strong. The National Museum of Australia considers it has an obligation to present to its visitors the facts about the ways in which Aborigines occupied and used land in Australia, and its importance in their culture, so that the attitudes of non-Aboriginal Australians to land-rights claims will be based not on ignorance or misunderstanding, but on a mutual understanding and respect. In this small way, we are already attempting to make social education a central element of our mission.

In conclusion, we must above all carry out our social-educational role with absolute intellectual honesty. This responsibility has been well stated by the American Commission on Museums for a New Century, in the following words:

The exhibition is such a powerful medium because its message is sponsored by an institution of perceived authority. The potential power of the exhibition requires that the medium be used responsibly, with full recognition of the museum's intellectual independence, its integrity and authority as an institution, and the obligations inherent in its public educational role.

This is as true in the Pacific, I firmly believe, as elsewhere. ■

The National Museum of Fiji—a thumbnail sketch

Despite considerable efforts, it proved impossible to obtain for this number of *Museum* an original article on the National Museum of Fiji, in that country's capital, Suva. We felt, however, that this venerable institution should be presented in at least summary form to our readers and this thumbnail sketch was prepared by *Museum* intern Denise Brennan on the basis of information available in the Unesco-ICOM Documentation Centre.



Like a village meeting house

The museum was created as long ago as 1904 by the Fijian Society, a group who banded together with the express purpose of preserving samples of the archipelago's craftsmanship. The museum's creation at such an early date was quite fortunate since it protected objects that formed the nucleus of today's collection from being sold overseas. This includes much ethnographic material, gathered directly by successive curators over the years as well as artefacts from private collections which had been assembled before the turn of the century and which the museum was able to purchase.

In 1919, a fire destroyed or damaged part of the collection and the museum moved from its then home in the Town Hall to a concrete building that had been a rest house. It later moved to the Suva Public Library and, in 1955, to its present building, which was constructed thanks to a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. Its environment is peaceful, situated as it is in the secluded botanical gardens. There is a single large gallery to which an extension, containing a further display area as well as a library, a classroom a workshop and an office, was added in 1971.

In its early days, the museum had a reputation for catering above all to a small, erudite segment of the population. In the late 1960s and early 1970s efforts were made to make the museum more accessible to the public at large and to interest and involve more of the community in its programmes. Prior to this outreach campaign, a disproportionate percentage of the museum's visitors were tourists from overseas.

At the same period, the museum established a reputation as a research centre. A programme was started in 1975 for collecting samples of the Fijian oral tradition, for example, and the following year the South Pacific Commission transferred to the museum the South Pacific Archive of Music. It should be noted that research activities were not carried out according to an 'ivory tower' approach. Instead, they were integrated into educational programmes; in this way, new findings were translated into temporary exhibitions so that the public could share in the discovery process.

Indeed, education seems to be one of the Fiji museum's important roles. Creation of an education service and increased recourse to press and radio are thought to be the main reasons for a considerable upsurge in the number of local people visiting the museum after 1979. Particularly successful was a temporary exhibition of wood-carving. Its most popular aspect was the demonstrations offered by wood-carvers who, before an attentive public of Fijian families, turned out traditional objects used by early Fijians by means of tools made in the ancient manner.

Equally lively and welcoming was the oral-traditions programme under which monthly story-telling sessions were held. In the evening, people gathered around the bowl of ceremonial *kava* (a root-based drink used on ritual occasions) and listened to a gifted speaker recount a traditional tale. In this way, the museum was transformed into a village meeting house. ■

Once again the light of day?

Museums and Maori culture

in New Zealand

This photograph, taken in 1907, shows the 'cabinet of curiosities' display approach then followed in the main hall of the Dominion (now National) Museum in Wellington.

Arapata Hakiwai

Trainee curator at Te Whare Taonga o Aotearoa/
National Museum of New Zealand.



Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi
Engari takimano no aku tipuna.
Te ihi, te wehi, te mana me te tapu.

(My greatness and prestige come not from one source but from a multitude. The prestige, fear, power and majesty come from my ancestors.)

The exhibition *Te Maori*

showed the world of art and museums that treasures like those exhibited are still a part of our present and living culture. To the unknowing, the pieces by themselves are merely made of wood and stone; but when the elders with the young come together to chant the rituals of yesteryear, and to sing the songs that recount the history, the hopes, the hurts and the aspirations of the people—the exhibition lives. The people are the living culture, and they breathe life into the taonga—and when the two come together the exhibition becomes a living and new experience for the uninitiated.

So said the Hon. K. Wetere, Minister of Maori Affairs of New Zealand in 1986.

Te Maori wbakahirahira, magnificent *Te Maori*, as it was referred to by one of its co-curators, Professor Sid Mead, was an international exhibition of Maori art that continues to challenge and question the New Zealand museum world, its attitudes and its roles and functions. The exhibition consisted of 174 *taonga* (treasures/prized possessions) that travelled to the United States (New York, St Louis, San Francisco, Chicago) in 1984 and which returned to New Zealand in mid-1986. This exhibition was unique and special, because for the first time in New Zealand's history the Maori people were, in large part, in control of their artistic heritage. It was a momentous and historic occasion when our ancestors, as represented by these treasures, were freed from their dark and cold resting-places in the galleries and basements of our museums to experience, once again, the light of day.

As one of my *Kaumatuā* (respected Maori elders), Sid Mead, said:



Another 1907 photo of the Dominion Museum: Maori artefacts jumbled together with animal bones. No wonder that, still today, children visitors think that the Maori are extinct.

This was the first time in history that the Maori people were actively involved in negotiations for an international exhibition of our art. It was the first time, too, that we called the tune and decided what had to be done. . . . We brought Maori art out of the closet. . . . releasing it so it could be seen by the world.¹

The power of this exhibition stretched far and wide, touching the many privileged to view it and causing regret in those unfortunate enough to miss it. In the United States, many people were reduced to tears as the awe of the ceremony and its rituals unfolded, exposing the deep spirituality and essence of the exhibition, or rather, of our culture. The sad fact that our treasures had to leave the country and travel to the United States to gain international recognition as one of the great art traditions of the world is a shocking indictment of the New Zealand public at large, who had pre-

viously never acknowledged or understood—much less appreciated—Maori art, New Zealand's so-called 'national treasures'.

The implications and repercussions of the *Te Maori* exhibition cannot be underestimated for it continues to challenge the assumptions and the practices of our whole museum community.

'A repository of plunder and grief'

The origins of museums in New Zealand, not unlike those overseas, lay with collections belonging to the wealthy and the scholarly and with early literary and scientific societies. The motivations for collecting artefacts were many. In New Zealand's case, 'a principal motivation was to acquire the unique objects from what many Europeans believed was a dying race'.² Many believed that the Maori race

would die out as a result of the 'strong tide of colonization'. Thus they were motivated vigorously to collect and photograph this 'noble' race before it met its inevitable fate.

Others, however, fell into the category of grave-robbers who, with an utter disrespect for the Maori people and their customs and beliefs, often looted and ransacked burial grounds and other sacred places. The Maori people's attitudes to this practice still linger on painfully. Museums as repositories of our treasures are seen, in part, as memorials to this practice, 'a place of death, of bones . . . and pillage . . . a death house, a sad repository of plunder and grief'.³

Within this early context of collecting, the Maori were put beside stuffed animals, birds, insects and fishes. As Professor M. Ames, Director of the museum of the University of British Columbia, rightly points out:

A typical objective of early anthropological displays was, therefore, to present artefacts from primitive societies as if they were specimens akin to those of natural history. Following the tradition of the cabinets of curiosities, primitive peoples were considered to be parts of nature like the flora and fauna, and therefore their arts and crafts were to be classified and presented according to similarity of form, evolutionary stage of development, or geographical origin.⁴

Today, museums have advanced beyond this 'cabinet of curios' scenario, adopting instead other approaches for

their display, interpretation, education and research areas. This now leads us into the role and problems of museums in enhancing and understanding Maori culture and history. This move raises, in turn, a new series of issues.

Questions relating to acquisition, conservation, exhibits, research and education in the service of society are specifically museum-related. But are they not solved on the basis of the inherent underlying assumptions and perceptions of those making decisions? Many museums throughout the world are products of their own national socio-economic establishment and represent the assumptions, philosophies and definitions of that establishment. New Zealand is certainly no exception.

'When did the Maoris die out?'

Maori culture has been distorted, stretched and squeezed to fit the theories and practices of Western-trained scholars. The attitudes of those who work in museums are, in large part, monocultural, Eurocentric. History, for them, is determined by strict Western parameters and cold intellectual definitions. As Sid Mead points out: 'Maori culture today suffers very badly from well-meaning Pakeha [European origin] attempts to explain us to the world. Thus Pakeha museum people . . . have tended to regard themselves as fountains of knowledge about us. . . . Anthropologists too have tended to be



W. Wilson © National Museum of New Zealand

Dawn ceremony of the *Te Maori* exhibition at the National Museum in Wellington. Maori art is the interaction between people and their culture.

1. Sid Mead, *Magnificent Te Maori: Te Maori Whakahirabira*, p. 11, Auckland, Heinemann, 1986.

2. B. McFadgen-Richardson, 'Maori Halls in New Zealand,' *AGMANZ Journal*, vol. 14, No. 4, 1983, p. 2.

3. N. Te Awekotuku, 'He tuhituhi noa iho. . .', *AGMANZ Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1985, p. 8.

4. M. Ames, in L. P. Vidyarthi (ed.), *Museums, the Public and Anthropology: A Study in the Anthropology of Anthropology*, p. 39, Vancouver, University of British Columbia, 1986.



Closing ceremony of the *Te Maori* exhibition. Reflections range from respect and joy to thoughtfulness and sorrow.

the experts on 'our Maoris' . . . and the management of our knowledge.⁵ This, frankly, is cultural arrogance.

One of the roles of a museum is to portray (communicate, educate, exhibit and interpret) the indigenous people of the country. Should not this be done in a way which is acceptable to their culture? Maori culture in the context of a museum means being able to touch, caress and hold and talk to one's ancestors as represented by the *taonga* and by the artists who fashioned them. It means being able to be reassured that our artworks are being looked after and made welcome within the museum. It means acknowledging and accepting the importance and meaning of the Maori language and the part it plays in all aspects of Maori culture. It means having a real Maori presence at all levels of the museum. It means respecting the *mauri* (life-force) that each treasure possesses. Rather than seeing it as something to be denied or suppressed, it should be seen as the future strength and vibrancy of our society contributing to the betterment of museums at large. Not only will this enhance Maori cultural history; it will also give beauty and real credence to museums and the position they hold in today's society.

Take labels, for example. We need bilingual labels that portray the vitality and living qualities of our artworks,

rather than labels which interpret phenomena according to Western academic practice. Very often labels are cold, impersonal, archaeologically orientated, and totally detached from the culture they wish to show. In museum displays our culture is also very often interpreted as an entity static and frozen in time, denying the continuity, development and dynamism with which all cultures are endowed. To have our treasures imprisoned in big glass nineteenth-century-style showcases, with uninspiring and impersonal labels set against drab colourless backgrounds, is not my idea of Maori culture!

Do our museums need to make their approaches as vital as the culture they aim to portray? To my mind, the answer lies in another question, asked recently by a primary-school child after visiting the National Museum's Maori Hall: 'When did the Maoris die out?'

Window dressing or partnership?

What are the future prospects for museums in dealing with these aspects? One must first look at the way in which cultural institutions have reacted to the *Te Maori* exhibition. Various writers have suggested that museums should act more positively as 'facilitators' with the Maori people; others have said that

there should be more liaison and consultation, and more 'advisory officers' to deal with these things. Others have stated that Maori people should be given more 'input'. I believe that this is merely window dressing.

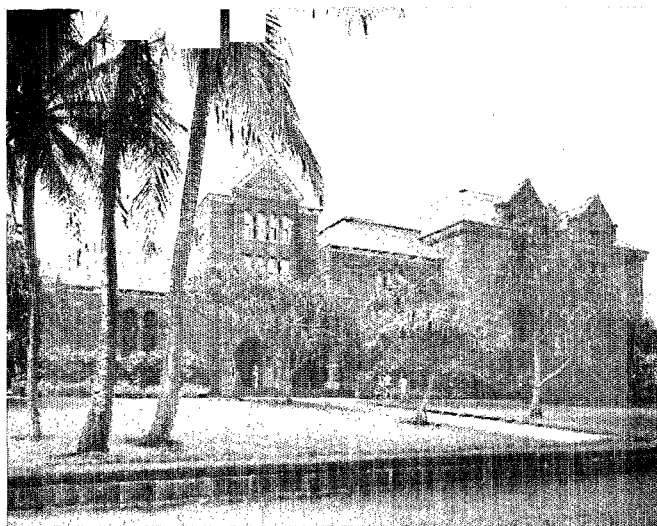
Maori people want control over their heritage and to explain, define and communicate their world-view to themselves and to the world around them. Museums are uniquely placed to give sustenance to these hopes, and thus to further their own credibility within the definition of what a museum is.

The *Te Maori* exhibition called for a reassessment of the traditional views of New Zealand history. Yet serious questions remain, for as Henare Te Ua said: 'Has *Te Maori* been the winged dove of artistic liberation, or has it been an albatross?'⁶ My hope is that together we can move forward in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect. ■

5. Sid Mead, 'Concepts and Models for Maori Museums and Culture Centres,' *AGMANZ Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1985, p. 4.

6. H. Te Ua, 'Comment', *AGMANZ Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1987, p. 9.

The main façade of the Bishop Museum's historic exhibition complex, with the Hawaiian Hall to the right and the Polynesian Hall behind the entrance tower.



Bishop Museum, Ben Patnoi

From 'treasure house' to 'permanent source of instruction': A century of Hawaii's Bishop Museum

Roger G. Rose

B.A. in anthropology from University of Kansas, and after receiving M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University joined the Bishop Museum's anthropology department in 1971. Has researched Pacific Islands material culture in museums around the world and worked in Afghanistan, France, Hawaii, the Marquesas, the Solomon Islands and Wyoming. Museological writings include *A Museum to Instruct and Delight, William T. Brigham and the Founding of Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum*, 1980.

The Bishop Museum is a memorial to Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop (1831-84), last of the Kamehameha family of chiefs of Hawaii. It was founded in 1889 by her husband, Charles Reed Bishop, a self-educated settler from New York who for nearly fifty years played a prominent role in business and public affairs in Hawaii. The museum operates under a deed of trust dating to 1896 which emphasizes 'Polynesian and kindred antiquities, ethnology and natural history'. This bare statement, which introduced Bishop Museum's *Annual Report* for half a century, reveals little of the individuals whose passions created an institution dedicated to serving Hawaii and the Pacific.

Bernice Pauahi was a great-granddaughter of Kamehameha the Great, the warrior chief who by unifying the Islands in 1810 laid the foundations for the Kingdom of Hawaii. Born of rank and provided the finest education Honolulu could offer, Bernice Pauahi Bishop inherited considerable land during her lifetime from her family. Before dying without heirs in 1872, King Kamehameha V entreated her to ascend the throne. Pauahi declined, but arranged that her land, amounting to about one-ninth of the kingdom, be set aside as the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate. Proceeds from the estate were reserved for its sole beneficiary, the Kamehameha Schools, also established by her will. Childless in life, she saw to it that her fortune would be used to educate the native youth of Hawaii.

Charles Bishop inherited her collection of Hawaiian antiquities and established the museum in her memory.

In part, he wanted to fill a void caused by failure of the Hawaiian National Museum (1875-91), a short-lived, government-sponsored antecedent that had fallen victim to political intrigue. Farsighted Charles Bishop perceived the museum's potential educational value, and located it in the grounds of the Kamehameha Schools, opened in 1887 on the outskirts of Honolulu. He was concerned that Hawaiian youth were growing up with little knowledge of their heritage, and expected these 'memorials of the past' to furnish 'suitable instruction and intensify patriotic enthusiasm' in Hawaiian youth of both sexes.¹

Buildings: neo-romanesque to Polynesian

Construction of the Bishop Museum's three interconnected exhibition buildings commenced in the spring of 1888. The first was a neo-romanesque structure reminiscent of American architect Henry Hobson Richardson. It featured a grand entrance tower and was designed more as a memorial than a working museum. Before it opened in February 1892, the first curator, William Tufts Brigham, persuaded Charles Bishop to build a Polynesian Hall to display and store natural history and ethnographic

1. Quoted in R. G. Rose, *A Museum to Instruct and Delight, William T. Brigham and the Founding of Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum*, p. 17, Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, 1980.



The Hawaiian Hall, dedicated in 1903. The grass house (centre) erected the year before, is the last surviving, authentic Hawaiian example. The sperm whale skeleton with papier-mâché body, suspended above, was one of the first exhibits of its kind in the world.

Local family discovering ancient wooden god figures from Hawaii.



Bishop Museum

Bishop Museum, C. Yaco

material from the rest of the Pacific. It was a first tangible reflection of the museum's expanded purpose. The Hawaiian Hall (1898-1903), the final increment, was based on Dr Brigham's plans following a world tour of museums in 1896. This Victorian masterpiece is still the museum's premier gallery. The built-in display cases of prized native *koa* wood (*Acacia koa*) were custom built and installed with special locks and air seals at a cost approaching that of the building itself. Praised by contemporary newspapers as 'one of the noblest buildings of Honolulu',² the exhibition complex (and subsequent buildings) were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

Dr Brigham's scheme to complete the master plan with one more wing went up in flames during the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, but other building arrangements have ensued over the years. Today, the museum's 4.5-hectare campus in suburban Honolulu continues to evolve in response to increasing public needs. A planetarium/science centre was dedicated in 1961 and expanded to incorporate a children's Hall of Discovery in 1979, further enlarged by the Jabulka Pavilion in 1982. The Atherton Halau, built in 1980 as an open-air Polynesian longhouse, serves primarily for lectures, craft and cultural presentations, as well as community events. The Bishop Museum currently occupies 45,700 m² of enclosed space, of which nearly 13,400 m² is accessible to the public. Of that, only 9,000 m²—about one-fifth of the total—is devoted to exhibition galleries.

Thanks to a successful capital campaign in 1982/83, a \$5.42-million building is now under construction to remedy a critical shortage of modern exhibition facilities. Started in April 1988, the H. K. L. Castle Memorial Building (named after its major donor) will add nearly 13,400 m², approximately one-third of which will serve the public as a new main entrance lobby and two changing galleries. The rest is designed for anthropology collections and the Pacific Regional Conservation Centre. The new addition has been conceived to link the historic lava-stone structures into one grand façade. It is scheduled at this writing for completion in time to be the cornerstone of centennial celebrations starting 19 December 1989, the 158th anniversary of Bernice Bishop's birthday.

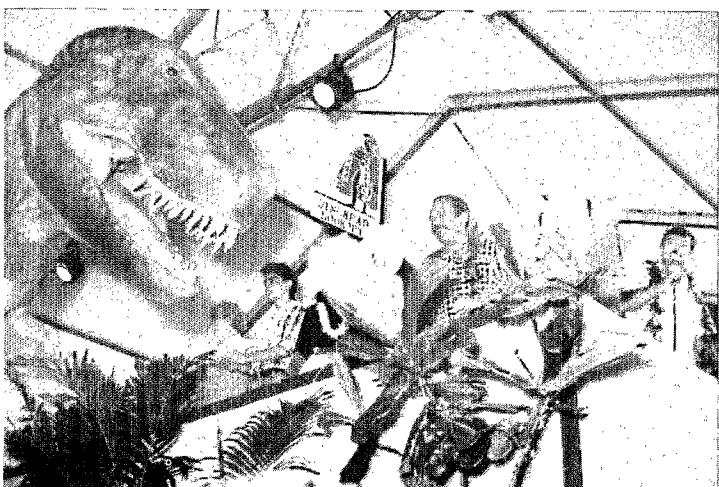
Development of scientific focus

William T. Brigham, the museum's first curator soon directed that *Hal Ho'ike'ike o Kamehameha*—an early Hawaiian name—should be much more than a static 'Treasure House of the Kamehamehas'. That Charles Bishop was able to secure Dr Brigham, an individual with vision, experience, and general knowledge, to lead the institution during its formative years was very fortunate. A native of Boston and educated at Harvard, Brigham visited Hawaii first in 1864/65 to collect botanical and mineralogical specimens at the suggestion of now legendary



Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, in whose memory the Museum was founded.

Bishop Museum



Bishop Museum

Governor of Hawaii John Waihee (centre) and museum director W. Donald Duckworth (right) open *Dinosaurs!*, which drew more than 196,000 visitors during four months in 1988, 96 per cent of whom were local residents.



Bishop Museum, M. Young

Artisans Gallery featuring *lau hala* (pandanus leaf) weaver Esther K. Westmoreland. This portion of the *Legacy of Excellence* exhibition focused on contemporary folk artists during the 'Year of the Hawaiian'.

professors Asa Gray and Louis Agassiz. He settled in Honolulu in 1889 to write a history of the islands, bringing a quarter-century's experience as honorary curator at the Museum of the Boston Society of Natural History. Appointed initially to arrange the collections in the new museum, Brigham was named first Director in 1898, and served until retiring in 1919 as Director Emeritus.

Dr Brigham was responsible for setting the scope and direction of the Bishop Museum. He persuaded Bishop to support a comprehensive scientific plan. 'Surely you have laid out too much money for a mere Dime Museum,' he urged in July 1890, 'you have collected too many priceless things. Will you not go a little further and make it a permanent source of instruction, not only to this people, but to all others interested in Polynesian ethnology, and natural history?' Brigham came to the point, in what became virtually a prospectus for the museum: 'I think that every plant, every shell, every coral, every form of lava, every bird, insect and fish of Hawaii Nei should have a place in addition to . . . implements and fabrications. . . . The connections of the Hawaiians with other groups should be clearly shown in the arrangement of specimens of handicraft.'³

Bishop adopted his curator's vision. 'The idea of making the Museum a mere showplace for Polynesian antiquities has long passed.' Bishop directed his lawyer in working out a mode of governance in 1896, adding that 'to confine the collection to things connected with the Islands of the Pacific would make the Museum unique and give it scientific value'.⁴ The resulting

deed of trust in 1896 set forth the scope of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum:

a scientific institution for collecting, preserving, storing and exhibiting specimens of Polynesian and Kindred Antiquities, Ethnology and Natural History, and books treating of [them], and pictures . . . and for the examination, investigation, treatment and study of said specimens, and the publication of . . . the result of such investigation, treatment and study.

'Polynesian' was accepted in the broadest sense to mean the insular Pacific, not the restricted geographic entity familiar today. 'Kindred antiquities' opened the entire Pacific basin to purview, exclusive of the coastal Americas and Asia. In practice, early trustees stopped short of embracing Australia and 'Papua', and concentrated activities to the eastern Pacific. This same focus was maintained in updated language in the revised Charter of Incorporation when the museum reorganized in 1975.

A 'golden era'

Until 1920, collecting and publishing focused primarily on the Hawaiian Islands. Brigham had, however, already called attention to the fragility of the human presence throughout the Pacific in his first *Annual Report* as director in 1899: 'much has irrevocably passed away, much is passing, but it is not too late to gather material for comparison and study in many of the islands of this great ocean'.⁵ The problem was tackled systematically as an outgrowth of the first Pan-Pacific Scientific Congress held in Honolulu in 1920, which led to the establishment of the Pacific

2. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 18.

3. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 45.

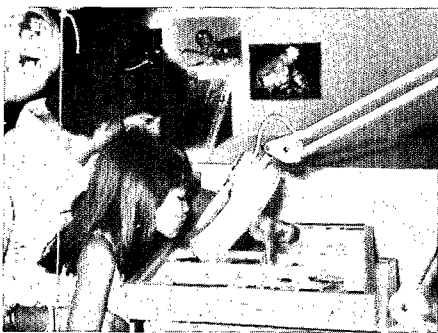
4. Quoted in H. W. Kent, *Charles Reed Bishop, Man of Hawaii*, pp. 196-7, Palo Alto, Calif., Pacific Press, 1965.

5. W. T. Brigham, 'Director's Report for 1899', *Occasional Papers of the B. P. Bishop Museum*, vol. 1, No. 2, p. 6, Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, 1900.



Family Sunday visitors enjoy a Hawaiian *bula* performance on the museum's great lawn.

Bishop Museum



The Hall of Discovery is designed for local schoolchildren—and their parents!

Bishop Museum, C. Takata

A delegation of Maori elders from New Zealand ceremonially enter the museum, venue of cultural exchanges for visitors throughout the Pacific. Their inauguration of *Celebrating the Maori* honoured the fiftieth anniversary of fellow Maori Peter H. Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), named museum director in 1936.



Bishop Museum, Pam Martin

Science Association, headquartered at Bishop Museum since 1950.

Working with the United States National Research Council, the Pan-Pacific Congress's anthropology section produced formal recommendations for Pacific research. In their implementation, it was expected that the museum would assume a leading role. Advice in formulating its research programme came from leading American, European and Japanese anthropologists of the day. This programme provided for detailed surveys of islands throughout the eastern Pacific. This initiative has persisted in one form or another to the present. The decision was made to attack problems in order of urgency, given the rate at which essential evidence was disappearing. With the death of elder men and women immersed in traditional lifestyles, knowledge of material culture, language, music, mythology, social organization and history was disappearing. Much already had been lost, especially in Polynesia, but enough remained to warrant 'salvage' fieldwork. By the Second World War, teams of co-operating scientists had investigated nearly every Polynesian island group except New Zealand, which was the responsibility of the museums and universities of that country. After the war research extended along similar lines of inquiry into Micronesia, essentially in continuation of the programme launched in 1920.

The remarkable achievements accomplished during this 'golden era' are due largely to a co-operative agreement inaugurated in 1920 between the Bishop Museum and Yale University, supported by the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation. For example, through annual fellowships in anthropology, botany, zoology, geology and geography, men and women of recognized standing undertook specific field projects under museum auspices. Several hundred primary reports were published by the Bishop Museum Press, in order to disseminate quickly the results of field work generated by the programme. As part of the agreement, the Bishop Museum's director was affiliated with the Yale faculty, and in return the museum sponsored a visiting lecturer to Yale expert in some facet of Pacific science. Appointed in 1939, the last to hold this position before the Second World War interfered, was the eminent anthropologist Dr Bronislaw Malinowski.

Since the 1960s, fieldwork and research have tended to reflect more

topical concerns. In addition to emphasis on marine biology, and entomological research fostered by a New Guinea Field Station established in 1961 (now the Wau Ecology Institute of Papua New Guinea), Pacific prehistory emerged as a discipline with the advent of radiocarbon dating. A long-term archaeological study of Polynesia, and the co-ordinated investigation of Solomon Islands prehistory, are but two of the numerous projects supported by the United States National Science Foundation, also a major sponsor of biological research. Since 1970, a public archaeology programme has carried out more than 300 projects in Hawaii, Micronesia and other parts of the Pacific.

21.3 million specimens; 1,200 titles

The Bishop Museum's unique geographic position in the Pacific, and long history of area-focused research and collecting, have generated internationally known, systematic collections documenting the natural and cultural diversity of Hawaii and the Pacific. The museum houses some 21.3 million specimens managed currently in four research departments—anthropology, botany, entomology, and zoology—plus important library and visual collections. Anthropology collections document the lives of past and present peoples of Hawaii and the Pacific. Systematic and as comprehensive as possible, they include: 45,000 ethnographic specimens, of which nearly half are Hawaiian; 8,300 items of local history; 104,500 archaeological and 3,300 osteological specimens; and 7,300 sound recordings—all with supporting documentation. Holdings in natural history include 13.5 million insects, 6 million marine and land shells, 250,000 plants, 200,000 marine invertebrates, 100,000 fish, 25,000 amphibians and reptiles, 20,000 birds, 15,000 mammals, and a geology collection. The Bishop Museum Library, also devoted to the Pacific, contains over 90,000 volumes, many considered rare, as well as manuscripts, 20,000 maps and 70,000 aerial photographs, atlases, gazetteers, and supporting files. The visual collections encompass an estimated 750,000 photographic images, and 3,200 paintings and works of art on paper depicting culture and nature in the Pacific.

As former director Alexander Spoehr once commented, no museum can jus-

Bishop Museum, C. Takata



Pacific Regional Conservation Centre interns survey Hawaiian wooden bowls, in preparation for moving ethnology collections in 1990.

tify its existence as a mere warehouse, and unused collections serve no useful purpose. Hand in hand with gathering, identification, and research, collections must be exhibited and published.⁶ Since its very first set of volumes in 1892/93 (a five-part *Preliminary Catalogue of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum of Polynesian Ethnology and Natural History*), the Bishop Museum Press has published 1,200 titles, most dealing in some way with its collections. The Bishop Museum Press is the oldest continuing publisher of books in Hawaii and one of the oldest scientific publishers in the Western Hemisphere.

All ages and backgrounds

From its inception, the Bishop Museum has professed interest in the education of people of all ages and backgrounds. Its resources are available to both sexes without distinction and to all ethnic groups. Historically, service to the public and the international scholarly community has been limited only by constraints of staff and finances.

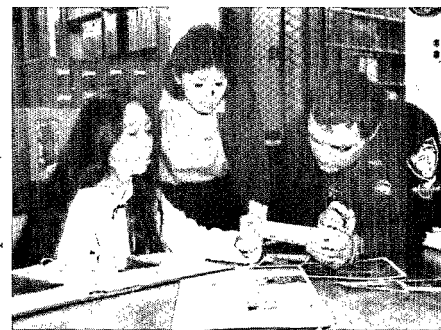
Service to the general public expanded in 1919 with the appointment of a full-time guide to exhibits. The museum opened seven days a week, except holidays, and displays were rearranged and relabelled to increase their educational value. As a result attendance rose sharply: from 19,074 in 1919, of which 1,625 were schoolchildren, to 33,303 in 1922, including 5,156 schoolchildren. Statistics kept until after the First World

War on ethnic backgrounds of visitors attest to a wide and varied audience. Attendance in 1922—Caucasians 53.7 per cent, Japanese 19.3 per cent, Hawaiians 16.7 per cent, Chinese 7.9 per cent, others 2.4 per cent—reflected a fair sampling of the community at large, except for a slight over-representation of Caucasian and marked under-representation of local Japanese visitors.

Because of the policy inaugurated in 1920 to devote the bulk of museum income to research and only a bare necessity to exhibition, the potential for directed education failed to materialize. Twenty-five years later, a new departure was urged by the then director Peter H. Buck, who pleaded, unsuccessfully, for territorial funds to establish a programme of systematic education: 'Should such a system eventuate, not only would general education be furthered, but the Museum be able to devote its entire income to the maintenance of its collections and research work in science.'⁷ Eventually, an agreement was reached with the Department of Public Instruction for public (state) schools to make better use of museum resources. Coinciding with Hawaii's accession to United States statehood in 1959, a liaison teacher was assigned to develop a programme with principal emphasis on Hawaiian history at the elementary level. As one measure of success of this new educational stress, between 1965 and 1971 more than 200,000 pupils visited the museum and its planetarium.

Bishop Museum established its own

Bishop Museum, C. Anderson



Some 4,300 visitors used the visual collections in 1988, many to trace family histories. The Bishop Museum Library serves local residents as well as international scholars.

6. A. Spoehr, *B. P. Bishop Museum Annual Report 1953*, p. 6, Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, 1954.

7. P. H. Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), 'Report of the Director for 1945', *B. P. Bishop Museum Bulletin*, No. 188, p. 30, Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, 1946.



Archaeology projects in Hawaii and the Pacific are but one continuing focus of the museum's research programme, which emphasizes natural and cultural history.

Bishop Museum



Bishop Museum, C. Anderson

education department in July 1975. A children's Hall of Discovery opened in October 1979 to provide hands-on experiences in a setting conducive to stimulating curiosity about the cultural and natural environments of Hawaii. By means of planned tours, the Hall of Discovery was soon drawing 25,000 students and teachers each year to various museum attractions. Updated regularly and fully reconditioned in 1987, it is but one of several programmes including summer science camps and workshops especially for young people.

In a popular resort destination such as Hawaii, it is hardly surprising that the museum's audience has shifted over the century from an overwhelming proportion of local residents to a growing number of tourists. In 1922, about 19 per cent of the museum's 33,303 visitors were tourists. Statehood, combined with affordable air travel, brought approximately 40,000 tourists to the museum in 1959, out of a total conservatively estimated at 110,000 visitors. Following extensive modification of the exhibition halls, and despite institution of admission charges in 1962, a target of 200,000 annual visitors was attained between 1965 and 1971. During the period 1975-79 attendance peaked at 300,000 and has remained nearly the same ever since, with 1988 surveys showing that about 80 per cent are now tourists. The current activities that attract residents and tourists alike are highlighted for *Museum's* readers in the photos accompanying this article.

State affiliation

The Bishop Museum was founded as a private institution when Hawaii was an independent nation. (The first visitor to sign the guest register was Queen Lili'uokalani during a special preview on 22 June 1891.) During its first century, it has persisted through five radically differing forms of government:

kingdom, provisional government, and Republic of Hawaii; then a territory after annexation by the United States in 1898, and finally the fiftieth state of the Union in 1959. Despite these changes, the museum has enjoyed mutually cooperative working relations with local, state, and federal agencies but no official connection other than as a repository, since 1921, for cultural and natural history specimens no longer needed by territorial or state agencies, and virtually no financial support from country, municipal or state government until the past decade. Thanks largely to the efforts of the current board of directors and to the Director, W. Donald Duckworth, the Legislature in 1988 designated the Bishop Museum the 'State of Hawaii Museum of Natural and Cultural History', a new status that brings an annual appropriation from the general revenues of the state of Hawaii. This designation neither impinges on the autonomy of the museum nor implies control over programmes and policies, except for appropriate accountability of expenditures of public funds.

Until a decade ago combined revenues from gifts, the endowment, grants, contracts and earned income offset expenses. As operating costs increased dramatically, especially to maintain ageing facilities and improve woefully inadequate staff benefits, the modest endowment and other income

New compactors in the herbarium, a recent National Science Foundation project to upgrade collection facilities.

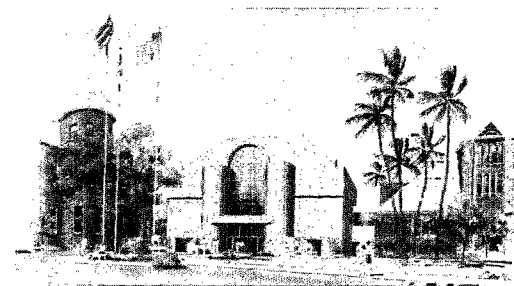
failed to keep abreast. Expenses rose from \$2.2 million in 1976 to \$4.3 million in 1981, \$5.3 million in 1987 and \$6.6 million in 1988.

Designation as the State Museum of Natural and Cultural History promises sustained financial support. According to Dr Duckworth, 'It represents the equivalent of \$10 million in new funds for the museum's endowment. More importantly, it supports and strengthens the museum's commitment to the people of Hawaii'.⁸

The Bishop Museum must indeed continue to seek innovative and responsive ways to exercise stewardship over the natural and cultural heritage peoples of Hawaii and the Pacific have entrusted to it. Approaching the twenty-first century, the museum must strive to balance the differing demands of research, public entertainment, quality education and repository. In all these endeavours, it must continue to seek a viable blend of presenting Hawaii and the Pacific to the world and presenting the world to the people of Hawaii. ■

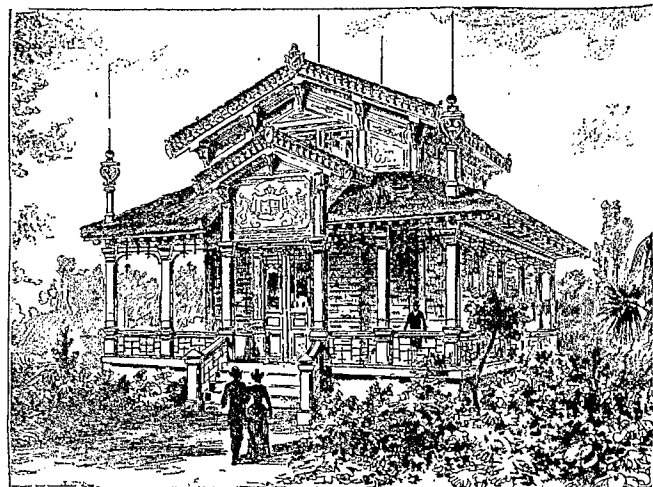
8. Quoted in *Giant Steps Toward a Century. . . and Beyond. The Year in Review, 1987-88*, p. 11, Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, 1989.


Rendering of Castle Hall by Architects Hawaii Ltd—for exhibition, performance, collection, and laboratory space. Completion is scheduled to inaugurate the Bishop Museum's centennial celebration, starting 19 December 1989.

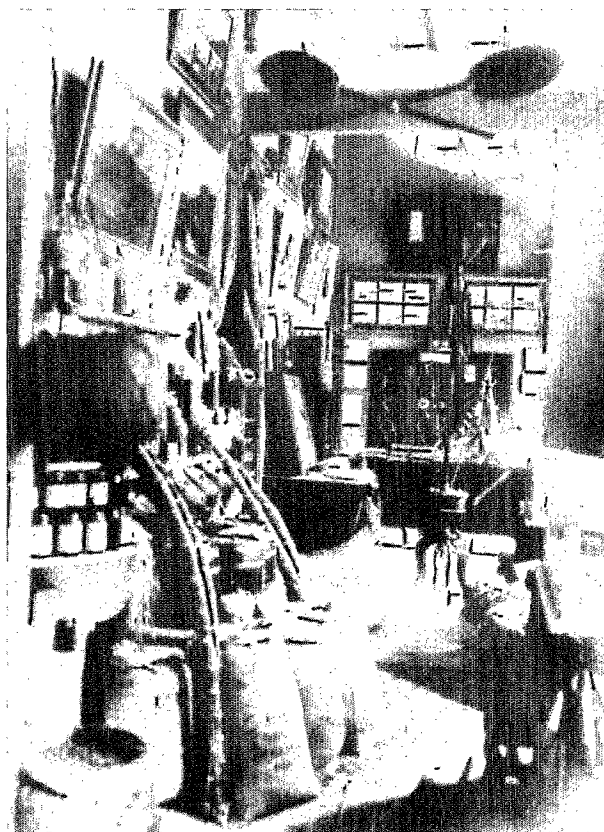


Bishop Museum

The France–Hawaii connection

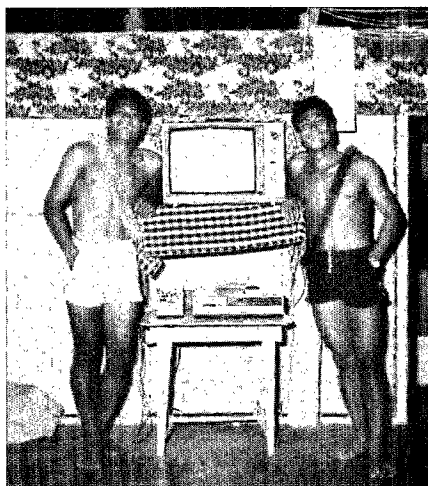
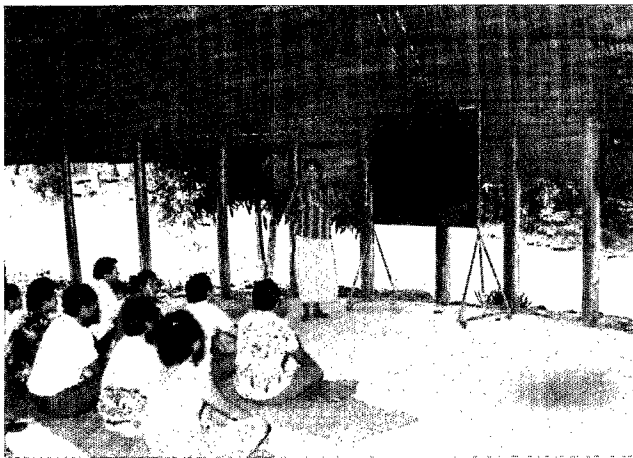


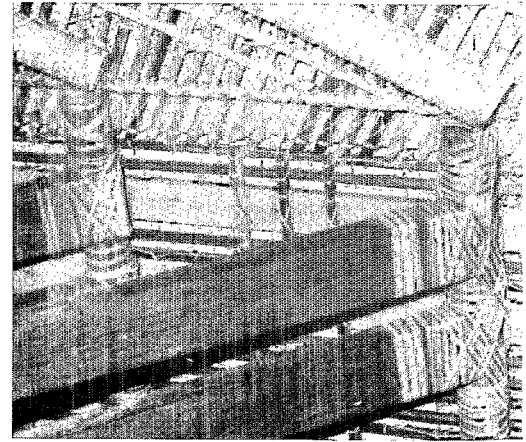
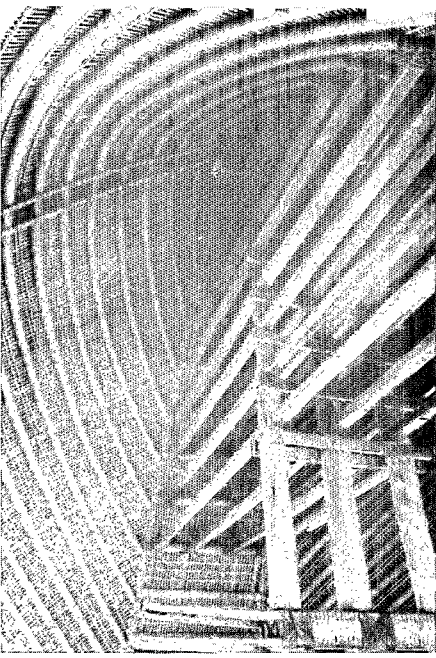
In 1889, first centennial of the French Revolution, Hawaii's King David Kalakaua sent an exhibit to the Universal Exposition in Paris. It was called *Artificial Curiosities from Hawaii* and housed in this special pavilion on the Champ de Mars in the shadow of the recently constructed Eiffel Tower. The contemporary photographs are from the Hawaii State Archive and all illustrations were obtained with the kind help of Sandra Kwock-Silve, who in 1989 was responsible for another Hawaiian show in Paris: *Crossings*. 





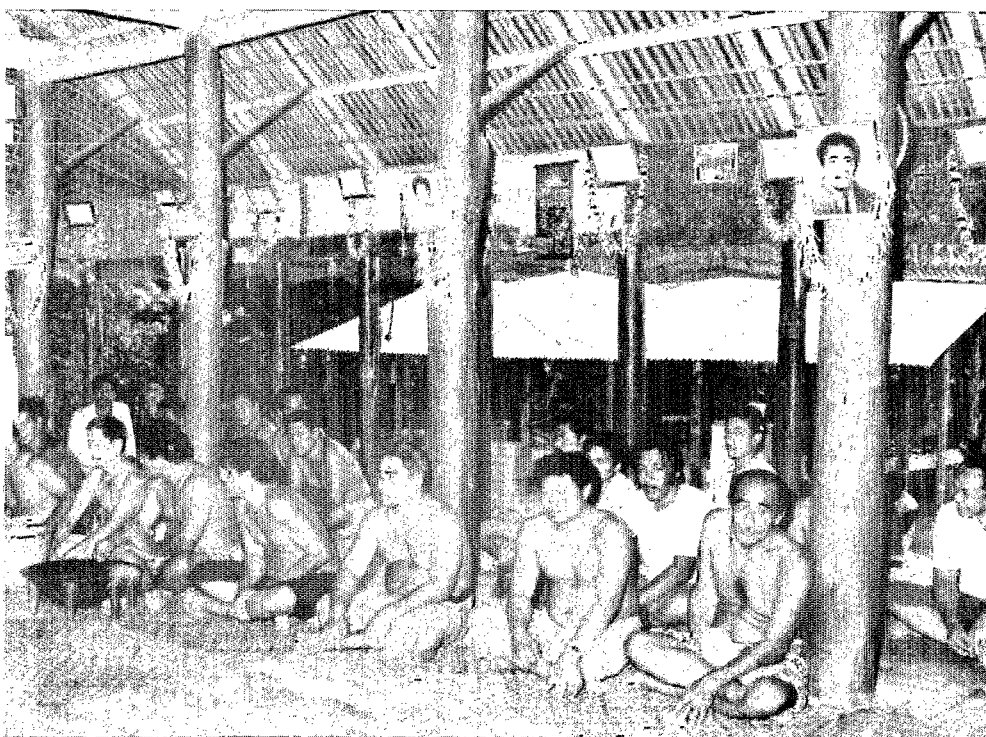
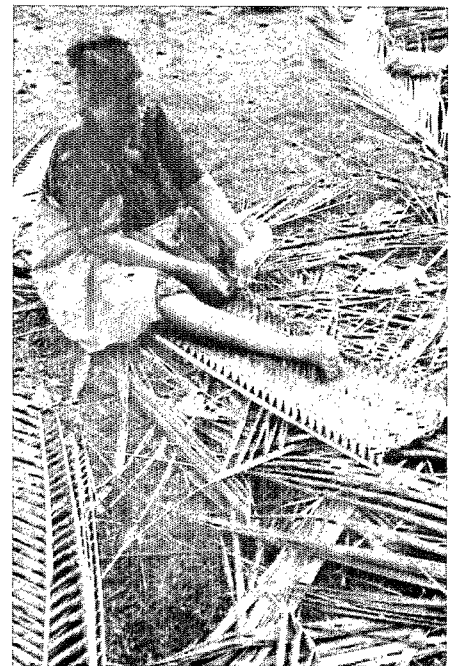
Western Samoa:



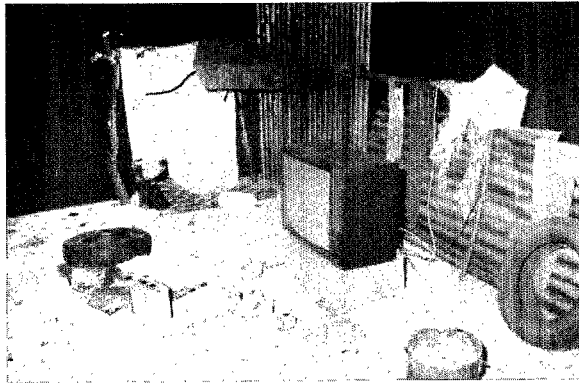


living in a museum

Western Samoa, one of Unesco's Pacific Member States, does not (yet) have a museum, although there is talk about creating one. Some Samoans feel that their country, in the most authentic and lively sense of the word, *is* a museum where past and present commune on a daily basis—through words, gestures, craftsmanship, etc. The photos here were taken by Philippe Lair for a study on traditional habitat in the country soon to be published by Unesco. They focus on the *falé*, a thatched house open-sided to provide natural 'air conditioning', with roll-down mats for the rainy season. They illustrate a novel idea: that living in a museum can be functional as well as aesthetically pleasant.



'Uluru':



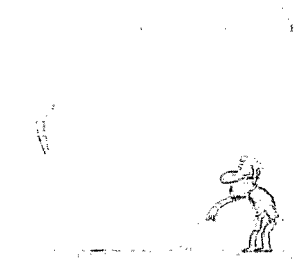
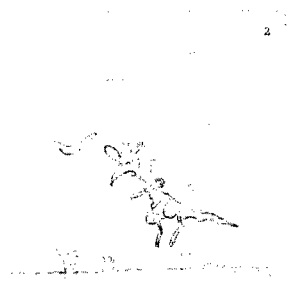
Australian Aborigines



in the heart




of Paris



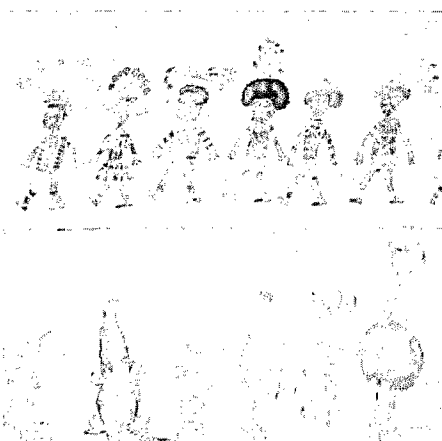


In 1989 an exhibition entitled *Uluru: The Australian Aborigines*¹ opened in the Halle St-Pierre, a recently restored covered market in the shadow of Montmartre, in the heart of Paris. The exhibition was organized by the Musée en Herbe, which was installed in the Halle St-Pierre by Sylvie Girardet, Claire Merleau-Ponty and Anne Tardy in 1986. It was typical of the work of this very original museum, which seeks, briefly: (a) to be a discovery ground for children while also offering adults the more traditional 'walk-around' museum visit; (b) to round off the viewing with 'hands-on' activities; (c) to illustrate the theme of an exhibition with tableaux; (d) to publish documentation on as many exhibitions as possible; and (e) to follow up the museum's exhibitions at the Halle St-Pierre with travelling exhibitions of selected items.

In this interview, Anne Tardy (a graduate of the École du Louvre in art history and archaeology, who, with Claire Merleau-Ponty, spent two months in the Australian outback preparing the exhibition), told *Museum* that the idea was to create an environment that would give maximum freedom with minimum funds. 

Museum: Is it significant that *Uluru* is being shown at the foot of Montmartre, another sacred mountain, which was worshipped by the occupying Romans and consecrated almost 2,000 years ago by the first Gallic Christians?

Anne Tardy: For the people of this neighbourhood, and for Parisians in general, the Australian Aborigines are something new and strange, and the objects exhibited, although manifestly for every-day use, are quite foreign to their experience.



Museum: What kind of objects are we talking about?

A.T.: Domestic utensils, magical devices, weapons (and not only the boomerang) . . . but the objects themselves were only the 'lead-in' to the real subject.

Museum: Which is . . . ?

A.T.: Western-style materialism, or the consumer society, was not and still is not the dominant system in Aboriginal society, where the 'dreaming' or 'dreamtime', which is what they call their system of thought, is more important than the possession of material goods. One must not forget that the Aborigines were nomads who could not carry very much around with them as they moved from place to place and who, in any case, made both their every-day utensils and their sacred objects from raw materials such as wood and creeper, which are not very durable. Paradoxically, it was in art forms that were bound to perish—symbolic images incised on bark or painted on sand or on the human body—that they transcended the fragility of their materials to perpetuate the 'dreaming'—that is, their mythology. It is therefore important to display these art forms in their context.

1. *Uluru* is the name given by the Aborigines to an extraordinary monolithic geological formation (called Ayers Rock by English-speakers) which stands 340 metres high with a base circumference of 9.4 km and is adorned with 10,000-year-old rock paintings. It is, in both the symbolic and the real sense, a high point of Australian Aboriginal culture. The illustrations by Puig Rosado which accompany this article are taken from the booklet published for the exhibition and are reproduced here with the kind permission of the Musée en Herbe. The photographs are by George Ducret.—Ed.

'Local colour'?

Museum: . . . as you have done in your tableau of a stockmen's camp [stockmen are the Australian equivalent of cowboys—Ed.], complete with cans of beer and corrugated iron?

A.T.: Yes, that's right; but you mustn't forget the animals either: for example, this stuffed crocodile beside which we stuck a genuine Australian noticeboard with a warning that one would obviously be unlikely to come across in France, 'No swimming—crocodiles'!

Museum: Local colour, would you say?

A.T.: No, not really; I think it comes more into the category of the unfamiliar, which is not the same thing. 'Local colour' would offer a stereotyped image which would reinforce the preconceptions the visitor brings into the museum. The unfamiliar tends to probe rather than reinforce preconceived ideas—it can even be disturbing. The unusual does not close the mind; it opens it up.

Museum: How did visitors react to *Uluru*?

A.T.: Adults reacted strongly, some times favourably, sometimes unfavourably, to the white ceramic tiles used as mounts in the showcases. (We did not want to display vegetable exhibits against a vegetable background—jute or banana fibre for example.) There was no shortage of such quips as: 'What's this then, the bathroom?' But other visitors felt the attempt to create a fairly neutral setting with a contemporary flavour was a success. The idea of having two marked circuits, one for children and one for the adults accompanying them also seems to have been appreciated. My office opens directly on to be exhibition area and I didn't see anyone going through at a gallop! On the other hand, our museum is off the beaten track and the people who find us are usually people who are looking for us. Many of the adults were also impressed with the paintings by contemporary Aboriginal artists that were on display.

Museum: How did the children react?

A.T.: They took to it immediately. The Aborigines are interested in animals, nature and the like—and so are young Parisians. This is not to say that Aborigines are like children. Quite the opposite! If you ask Parisian children what a desert is they will think of quite serious things such as the lack of water and food.

Museum: In a recent paper you wrote that the Aboriginal culture was in a



period of transition rather than on its way out.

A.T.: That's right, even though a great number of Aborigines are ostracized and uncared for. One example of the transformation taking place is contemporary painting. While it is broadly based on traditional patterns, it strikes Parisians, who are not familiar with the meaning of these patterns as being quite 'modern'. Here, the 'dreaming' is not only perpetuated; it is in a sense, shared. I might add that when I was in Australia I noticed that contemporary Aboriginal artists are not necessarily devoid of business sense. This, of course, is bound to disrupt some ancestral habits, as for example the custom of painting in twos, which is done less and less now.

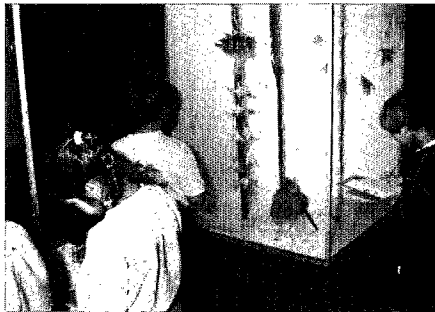
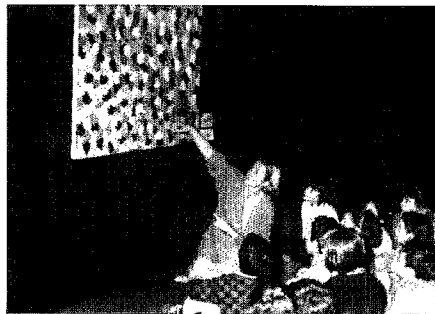
Museum: Any concluding remarks?

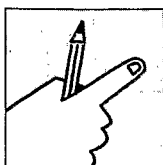
A.T.: I was particularly struck by two visitors to the *Uluru* exhibition. The first was an Aboriginal friend whom I first met in Australia and who discovered here, in our Musée en Herbe, a shield made by his ethnic group—one which belonged to a French museum and of whose existence he had been quite unaware. I was really . . . touched by his reaction. The other visitor was a young white Australian woman who had left home to see the world and who is now working as an au pair in Paris.

Museum: And what did she discover?

A.T.: Australian Aboriginal culture. ■

[Translated from French]





Rock art as pre-literate documentation—an issue for museums

Emmanuel Anati

Born in Florence and studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, the University of Jerusalem and Harvard University. Has undertaken research in Europe, the Middle East, India, Australia and the United Republic of Tanzania. Founded and continues to direct the Camuno Centre for Prehistoric Studies at Valcamonica, Italy, and is President of the ICOMOS International Committee on Rock Art.

Until a century ago, over three-quarters of the world's population was illiterate. Consequently, only a small portion of the world's cultures were considered part of 'world history'. The exclusive selection of written documents as the sole source of 'legitimate' history appears to be rather discriminatory towards those who have only recently developed a system of writing. According to this criterion, many populations of Africa, America, Asia, Oceania and even Europe have only a few centuries of history to look back on as the earliest reaches of their past have been ignored

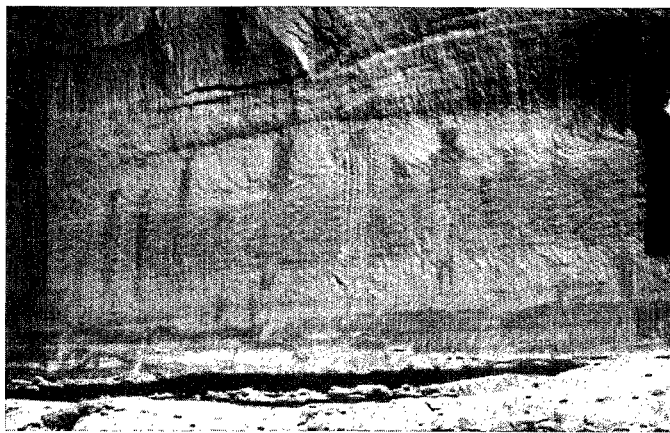
by Western education systems. Yet over 120 countries in the world, many of them only recently literate in the accepted sense, have splendid sites of rock art. Thousands of pictures on rock surfaces convey messages from pre-literate periods. One wonders why these substantial elements enjoy only limited display space and lack emphasis in museums.

Graphic messages activate a process of mental associations, which have immediate impact. Iconography has been used by nearly all cultures since the appearance of *Homo sapiens* around



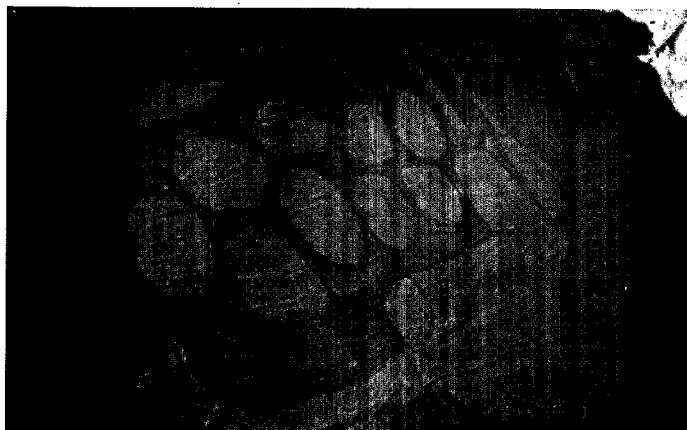
World Archives of Rock Art, Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici © Ligabue, 1988

Chubut, Argentina: ancestors greeting us across the millennia? Or simply recording their presence or passage?



Utah, United States: a gathering?

Australia: what could the message be?



40,000 years ago. Through the analysis of their graphics, it is possible for us to reconstruct numerous details of the history of preliterate cultures. This expansion of our historical knowledge allows us to encompass a broader and more ancient past.

On several occasions I have noted that the earliest expressions of art awaken a broad interest in the public and have a tremendous educational impact because they answer basic questions which many people ask themselves repeatedly: why and how art, communication, beliefs in the supernatural and the need for human beings to explain themselves all started. When the roots are understood the impact of later events is strengthened.

Before the advent of writing, the visual arts contained and transmitted messages. Prehistoric art thus embraces the origins of both writing and art, and provides the earliest chapters of these intellectual expressions of humanity. Yet, all too often, museums ignore this fundamental part of our heritage and tend not to start from the roots conveyed by rock art.

Global history should call upon and cross-reference every possible method of documentation when a written record is not available. Patterns and paradigms emerge locally and universally, allowing us to create a frame of reference for knowledge and understanding of cultural, psychological and behavioural phenomena. Of the available documentation, iconography is one of the most precious, as it provides invaluable insight into these areas. It is not just the quality, quantity and content of prehistoric and tribal art that makes it so valuable, but also the type of historical analysis to which it contributes.

In the United Republic of Tanzania,

as in Italy and in other areas of the world, ages that have previously been considered as prehistory are emerging, through the study of art, as periods of history. In fact, rock pictures constitute the earliest expressions of systematic graphic recording and a growing number of scholars are ready to agree that history started when man produced his first graphic document. A new dimension is thus being acquired.

The rock surface as a history book

It is interesting to see how fast this 'new' history is being assimilated by modern society. I personally have recently experienced, in various parts of the world, a curiosity awakened in people for historical reconstruction based upon the analysis of rock art. This interest is not limited to Europe. While I was studying rock art in the district of Singida, United Republic of Tanzania, an entire school arrived one day to inquire about our project. The students and the teachers were fascinated by the superimposed figures which revealed a sequence of phases in various styles. Gradually, the rock surface became a history book for them, describing a long and involved past, each layer telling about a distinct cultural period. Prior to the whiter paintings of the Bantu-speaking agriculturalists who occupied the area during the last two millennia, were the dark paintings of the cattle breeders, illustrating the life of pastoral nomads. Still earlier phases of the hunter-gatherers appeared. The earliest depictions consisted of huge silhouettes of animals painted with great care by archaic hunting groups which may date back many millennia.

The effort to grasp such a vast dimen-

sion of time generated an animated discussion and eventually the teacher turned to me and asked, 'Do you mean to say that our culture is older than that of the British?' An analytical process had taken place in my visitors' minds: from the document to its age and meaning, and then to an evaluation of its place in a world context. I realized then that in only two hours of looking at a prehistoric rock shelter, these Tanzanian school children had acquired a new awareness of their history.

The walls of the cave were like an album of rock art; representing the creation of artists over ages it revealed millennia of creative activities, customs and beliefs, raising in the young visitors a new sense of consciousness of the complexity and the validity of their roots. They were able to rediscover an identity which had been submerged all too long. This was indeed a reappropriation of their past.

The field research in Valcamonica, Italy, a major European rock-art area which is on Unesco's World Heritage List, has stimulated such a wave of interest among local people that when researchers arrived in some villages to describe current local projects, the event was often attended by the entire population. This sudden explosion of interest became particularly evident when an exhibition on rock art in Milan, presented by the Camuno Centre for Prehistoric Studies at Valcamonica, attracted over 2 million visitors in about four months.

Until recently, serious documentation with world coverage on the origins of art was not available. Major discoveries, such as those at Altamira in Spain, Lascaux in France, the Algerian Tassili or the rock art of Kakadu National Park in Australia, were seen as isolated local

Domboshawa, Zimbabwe: grace . . . and food on the hoof.



Arthur Gillette



Pierre Samin/Comité Départemental du Tourisme

In an abandoned quarry in the Aisne, France, used by American soldiers as a shelter during the First World War, Buffalo Bill.

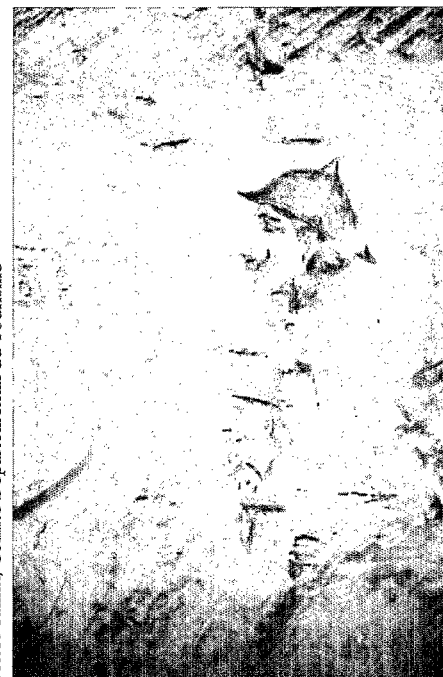
phenomena. The most recent studies seem to propose a drastic change in this view, as art seems to have originated in one place and spread with the diffusion of *Homo sapiens* on his way to conquer all continents.

In this light, rock art documents may become a tremendous source of education and culture. Museums can now add the first chapter of a story which they previously started in the middle. These documents reach their full educational efficiency when they are seen as an expression of humanity rather than of specific human groups, and in this sense, it would be advisable that when displaying documentation on prehistoric art in their own territory, museums emphasize the globality of the phenomenon and its role in a panoramic view of the intellectual evolution of humanity. The quality of the documents is certainly important, but the way in which they are presented to the public determines the achievement of one of the main purposes that each museum should have: the transformation of information into culture. ■

Pierre Samin/Comité Départemental du Tourisme

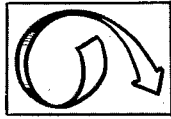


Another American rendering in the Aisne, this time of the archetypical French *poilu* (infantryman).



Pierre Samin/Comité Départemental du Tourisme

In February 1918, when these portraits were left in the Aisne by American 'doughboys', counterparts of the *poilus*, the German *Kronprinz* and Uncle Sam were hardly on speaking terms.



Repatriation of cultural property: a social process

Christopher Anderson

Curator of social anthropology at the South Australian Museum, Adelaide.

The South Australian Museum, in Adelaide, has the world's largest and finest collection of Aboriginal ceremonial objects from central Australia. The museum will, however, never exhibit most of it and, in fact, is transferring part of the collection to its original Aboriginal custodians or their descendants. The processes required to bring about this repatriation are complex and delicate. The return of such objects is not a simple one-way transaction; rather it is, at least in the way that the South Australian Museum has approached it, merely one incident or segment in a long-term interactive social relationship.

Access to much of the ceremonial paraphernalia in central Australia was traditionally restricted to initiated males. Certain objects were said to be too powerful for the unknowledgeable to see or to touch, and to do so was punishable by death. Aboriginal religion and ceremony remain an important part of life in central Australia. Because of this, sacred objects are still considered to be of great significance.

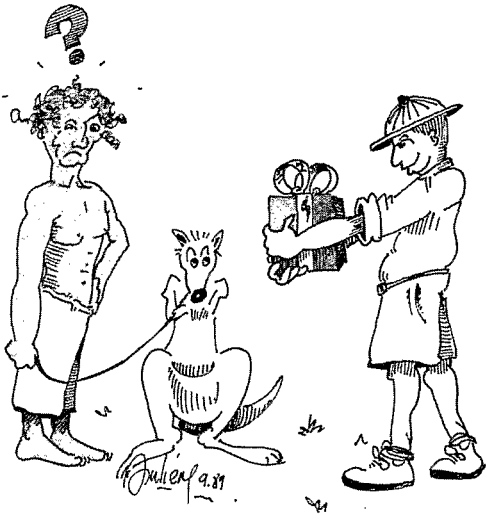
Over the 130 years of its existence, the South Australian Museum obtained several thousand sacred objects collected by explorers, missionaries, police and ethnologists. In 1982 an approach to the South Australian Museum was made by a group of desert elders who requested that the museum's collection of sacred objects be returned to its traditional owners. A special curatorship was set up in 1985 to deal with the museum's restricted collection and to initiate consultations with elders in the bush over the possible return of items. The museum board had already agreed to a policy whereby sacred objects, if requested, would be returned to the traditional owners once these persons had been identified and consulted.

Consultations have proceeded in several major Aboriginal communities in the western desert and with smaller groups living still farther in the bush on out-stations. These consultations involve periods of residence by the curator in an area, getting to know key people as well as the local religious and political scene. In addition, Aborigines insist on taking museum staff into the bush to visit the sites with which the sacred objects are associated. A series of meetings with elders is then held using photographs of objects as a basis of discussion. The results of the project thus far have been the return of a significant number of objects to elders in several communities. In some cases, the returned objects have been taken by individual custodians to their proper sites in the bush; in other cases, they have been put in keeping places in the communities. These have come to be termed 'museums' and exist in several settlements.

Why is the South Australian Museum, along with other Australian museums, concerned with the return of significant religious objects to Aboriginal groups? What does 'return' or 'repatriation' mean to museums and to Aborigines? Most Australian museums with Aboriginal material today state that while fulfilling their normal functions, they also wish to respect Aboriginal tradition. To do this, museums deem that secret/sacred objects should be returned to Aboriginal people. It is possible, however, that these aims are in conflict with each other.

Morality, politics, social currency

Before discussing this possibility let us look more closely at two reasons given by museums for returning secret/sacred material. The first, an ethical argu-



Drawings by Julien

ment, states that we are bound to return these objects because it is our moral duty to do so: we were wrong to take them from the Aborigines in the first place, and to help atone, the least we can do is to give them back. The second argument, a political and pragmatic one, says that we must return these things because to keep them would detract from our image and may make it difficult to maintain funding from governments and other sources at a time of concern for the status of indigenous peoples.

Whether or not one agrees with such views, both seem to me to miss the point, and certainly neither can be seen as being within Aboriginal tradition. Neither takes account of return as seen from an Aboriginal perspective. Both views are misguided from this point of view for the same reason: there can be neither moral nor political content in a relationship between groups that do not know each other, which has therefore no social substance. If we want to do things according to Aboriginal tradition, then it is not simply a moral or political response which is required in cases of repatriation.

An alternative way of looking at such transfers is to consider objects as part of a dynamic social/ceremonial/political and economic system, in which objects circulate, and create sets of rights and obligations between individuals and groups or institutions. In other words the objects act as social currency. This is in my view a crucial, and often missing, aspect of the whole controversy surrounding restricted objects and their ownership in any setting.

It seems highly likely that the same thing is now happening with museum consultation over objects as happened with many of the original situations that led to the objects ending up in museums. The role of restricted objects

as social currency is clear in the pre-contact situation.¹ It is also apparent, though, in many of the cases of Aborigines giving objects to Europeans in the first place, and in the Aboriginal view of current attempts to return objects. In re-constructing object-based European-Aboriginal transactions, the social currency view suggests that a major reason for objects being given to many European individuals was that particular Europeans were either already part of an existing system (that is, they lived and operated in the same social system), or else the Aborigines were attempting to pull them into one.

Return not the only option

The whole business of objects being removed from the local scene is well within traditional precedent. They were often lent out to other groups, sometimes for years. During our negotiations, the Aboriginal men were not particularly surprised that objects were coming back to them. This was viewed as normal, just as it was normal for the objects to have been away. It does not seem to matter at all whether they have been with some neighbouring Aboriginal group in a hidden cache in the bush or in a museum's storeroom.

The implication is that in order for repatriation programmes in Australia to succeed, basic socio-cultural anthropological research is absolutely essential. If museums want to fulfil a moral obligation, then the obligation should be to establish social relationships with groups. Then and only then, within the context of this relationship, can the custodianship of particular objects be discussed. Repatriation of objects cannot be done merely by mailing them to a group in the outback, something that happened in one case some years ago with deleterious results.

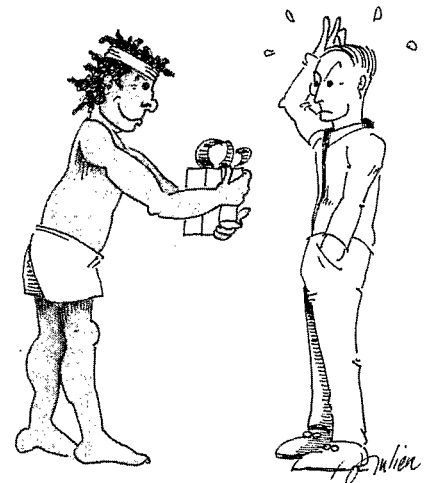
When returning material, museums should also use such research to aid Aboriginal people in identifying objects using all possible documentation and field-work. In our experience, the physical aspects of the objects—the design, the shape, the material—are of only marginal utility as identifiers. Aborigines are loath to say anything about objects until there is some known degree of probability as to where they came from. It is too risky to do otherwise. In other words, what has to be determined is where the objects fit into the existing (and pre-existing) social and cultural system.

Returning objects is first and foremost a social act, and it is seen as such

by Aborigines. The fact that there have been very few successful cases of the return of objects in Australia stems from the failure on the part of museums to recognize this. The return of objects has to be viewed as the establishment of a long-term relationship between museum staff and particular groups of Aboriginal people. When such a relationship exists, return may not be the only or even a desired option.

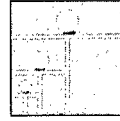
In the South Australian Museum's collection, the documentation of objects (whether or not ultimately returned) has dramatically increased: the process has produced valuable new information on the role of sacred objects in contemporary Aboriginal life. In addition, as a result of their new relationship with the museum, Aborigines have actually asked us to take and look after particular objects. Thus, the end result of our repatriation programme may well be an overall increase in the size of our restricted collection! Nevertheless, our view and policy are that we are custodians of these objects and that we hold them not because of a notion of legal ownership but rather as a function of our social relationship with Aboriginal individuals and groups. ■

1. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Arunta*, p. 135, London, Macmillan, 1927; T. G. H. Strehlow, *Aranda Traditions*, p. 160, Melbourne University Press, 1947.



WFFM CHRONICLE

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The Australian Federation of Friends of Galleries and Museums

Caroline Serventy

President of the Australian Federation of Friends of Galleries and Museums (AFFGM); Vice-President of the World Federation of Friends of Museums.

In 1988, our bicentenary year, as great a proportion of the Australian population was attracted to art galleries and museums as to a Rugby Union final. Visitor numbers to museums in this continent are enormous—over 10 million visits annually. For several decades Australia has been a part of the worldwide wave of gallery and museum construction and expansion, culminating in the bicentenary year of 1988 with hundreds of new and projected museums and galleries. Their continued funding is a challenge that must be taken up by both government and the Friends of Museums.

Australians are joining museum support groups, taking part in a wide variety of museum activities, attending lectures, field-trips, and workshops as well as working as volunteers within their institutions in every conceivable way in ever-increasing thousands. The Australian Federation of Friends of Galleries and Museums links many of these support groups in a national organization. The Friends of art, natural history, maritime, and folk museums, libraries, zoos and botanical gardens—support groups for any institution that fits the broadly based ICOM definition of a museum—are eligible to join the AFFGM.

More than seventy groups nationwide, representing at least 100,000 committed museum supporters belong to the Federation. In each state, and in the Australian Capital Territory, a vice-president of AFFGM chairs regional meetings. *Friends Review*, a newsletter published twice a year, carries informa-

tion and articles of interest to Australian members as well as news from the World Federation of Friends of Museums.

A successful seminar held in Sydney in April 1989 on Volunteers in Galleries and Museums attracted new members to the Federation and made our work known to groups such as the Royal Australian Historical Society with similar cultural and heritage interests. Another result of the seminar was the perceived need for a national volunteer survey. How many volunteers work in Australian museums and galleries? What do they do? How many hours do they work? What is their financial value to their institutions? How does their value affect economic statistics? What is the worth to the individual volunteers of the work they do in terms of their personal education and enjoyment? Museum governing bodies, government and volunteers themselves need answers to these questions.

The September 1989 Annual General meeting held in Canberra, the national capital, has as its timely theme, 'National Institutions for the Australian People'.

The National Library, National Gallery of Art, National Science and Technology Centre, National Museum and the Australian War Memorial, are all housed in Canberra and are somewhat remote from the main centres of population. How can they best reach out across the nation? All have either just formed a Friends' group, are about to form one or are planning for one. The Minister for the Arts, Tourism and Terri-

tories the Hon. Clyde Holding, is addressing the meeting, a very pleasing mark of growing government awareness of the work of Friends across the country.

Interaction with the government

The Australian Government recently reviewed its role in the development of museums 'having regard to the government's heritage and budgetary policies' and 'the potential for economies'. Predictably, arts bureaucrats pointed to an ever-increasing interest in our museums' collections and exhibitions and to the responsibility of government in nurturing Australia's developing sense of heritage. Finance bureaucrats concentrated on the cost-effectiveness of such institutions. The government finally deferred the decision to construct the long-planned National Museum for five years, and decided not to proceed with any other federal museums in the foreseeable future.

The reaction of Australians conscious of the need to protect and exhibit the country's cultural and historical heritage was to band together as a more effective lobby group that would be heard by the government. The Friends of the National Museum spontaneously mushroomed and volunteers wrote letters all over the continent. Support was instant and widespread and this new Friends' group hopes it will be able to influence a change in the decision to defer construction.

The Federation works with museum



professionals in a council consisting of art and museum educators, conservators, professional staff, and members of ICOM, combining with those groups in conferences, in the encouragement and financing of training schemes, and in the approaches to both state and federal government on the need for increased and continuing funding, so threatened by the financial constraints of these times.

The AFFGM was founded in 1972 as a result of Paton Forster's attending the Barcelona meeting which was the forerunner of the World Federation of Friends of Museums. One of the first countries to form a national federation, Australia was a founder member of the WFFM. The AFFGM pioneered the World Federation's limited reciprocal benefits scheme—the International Friends Exchange Programme.

Through our WFFM membership we have maintained strong links with international colleagues and taken an active role at every triennial congress. We look forward to a large delegation attending the Córdoba Congress in April 1990.

The Australian Federation members range from very small regional groups to societies with upwards of 20,000 members, and we have some members in New Zealand. The Federation supports new Friends' groups with advice and information, particularly in the practical aspects of managing membership by computer. State branches are becoming active and attracting new members.

There is no paid staff—everyone is a volunteer. Subscriptions for membership are kept low as Friends' fundraising priorities are generally for their own institutions. The larger societies in the AFFGM generously support the smaller, helping the museum cause in small towns and in the country by giving the AFFGM some printing, post, telephone and organizational time, as well as hosting the seminars and workshops so useful to those new to the Friends' scene.

In summary, the Australian Federation is increasingly reaching out into the cultural community and seeking to facilitate communication, exchange of information and support between large and small museums and galleries. ■

Beijing

China has the largest population of any country in the world and boasts an ancient and uninterrupted history. It is no surprise, then, to find in its capital a burgeoning museum life which has been simultaneously stretching outwards to make itself better known and looking inwards to reassess its aims and approaches.

Stretching outwards: in 1987, Beijing's museums organized a mass information campaign and contest designed to stimulate citizens' interest in and knowledge about their museums. The result was a truly massive upsurge of museum visiting. The article below, by Qi Jixiang and Qin Beiye, reports on this inventive—and successful—effort.

On a more intimate note, *Museum* was struck, when visiting Beijing, in March 1989, by certain details of the city's day-to-day museum life, including physical features of museum infrastructure and the interactions between museums and people, both staff and visitors. We hope that our photo report on this issue's back cover, 'A Day in the Life of Beijing's Museums', will enable readers to gain a sense of Beijing's everyday museum life.



'Get to Know Your Museums and Sites'— a citywide competition

Qi Jixiang and Qin Beiye

Qi Jixiang is a member of the Standing Council of the Beijing Museum Association and head of the department of public service of the city's Museum of Chinese History. Qin Beiye is an Editor of the *Chinese Museum Bulletin*. Both took part in organizing the competition reported on here.

In Beijing, there are some seventy museums (history, art, science, etc.), historical sites and memorials to eminent persons. Not only do they organize a large number of exhibitions, but they also hold collections comprising many valuable objects and materials. Museums in the capital area have, therefore, a strong appeal for both foreign and domestic visitors; the aggregate number of museum visitors each year has risen to several million. To dynamize further Beijing's museums and to encourage museum visiting, it was decided to hold a mass-oriented competition under the title 'Get to Know Your Museums and Sites'.

From January to September 1987, in co-operation with museum and education circles as well as with the media and the Communist Youth League, the Beijing Museum Association implemented this activity according to the following steps.

Carrying the message to the people

A first major aspect of the competition was to conduct wide and thorough information activities about museums among the mass of the city's inhabitants. Two local newspapers, *Beijing Youth* and *Beijing Life Adviser*, gave weekly full-page coverage to articles introducing museums, with a total of fifty such pages being published. Directors and technical staff of each and every museum in the city warmly welcomed this initiative and wrote a succession of articles whose shared characteristic was that they were brief and easy to understand, mixing factual

information and interest-provoking topics. What is more, each museum set up a temporary newspaper sales point managed by specialized staff.

In addition to introducing museums through the newspapers, those responsible for museums invited people from all walks of life to visit their institutions and provided a special incentive by giving preferential ticket-distribution treatment to them. Pupils of primary and middle schools were even enabled to enter most museums free of charge. Some visitors who intended to participate in the upcoming competition, which was already known to the public, went to museums in order carefully and systematically to glean any and all facts that might later be of use during the competition itself. We were particularly impressed by one young couple who took their only child, a five-year-old, to visit all thirty museums involved in the competition one by one, during their holidays and other free time. They were even to be found during their lunch hour attentively scrutinizing the contents of exhibition halls.

Throughout this first period, an upsurge of museum visiting spread throughout Beijing.

Announcing the test questions

The actual competition itself was divided into three periods: primary, intermediary, and final. First of all, people were asked to answer on their own, and within fifty-five days, the test questions that had been published in the newspapers. Secondly, in light of the nearly 10,000 answer sheets



A question-and-answer table besieged.



'Hmm, let's see now. What *is* the largest plant-eating dinosaur?'

received, we selected the top sixty entrants and gave them an oral test in order to select six persons who would take part in the final part of the competition.

There was a total of 100 questions in the first part of the competition, divided into two categories. First came questions on museology and museums; for example: What is the objective of museums according to the Statutes of ICOM adopted by its Eleventh General Conference? How many museums were there in China at the end of 1986? How many of them were located in Beijing? The second set of questions dealt mainly with the contents of collections exhibited in the museums that took part in the competition. Here, questions such as the following were asked: What is the oldest set of postage stamps issued in China now preserved in the National Stamp Museum? What is the largest plant-eating dinosaur on show at the Beijing Natural History Museum?

To answer a few of the questions it was necessary to consult reference books. Most answers, however, could be found in the articles already published by the newspapers. Since our purpose was to spread knowledge about museums among the people, we designed the test questions so that they would not be terribly difficult to answer. Once the questions were published, the museums involved got down to work.

Obviously, the number of visitors increased sharply. Some came looking for the right answers to the questions, and they could be seen flocking through the exhibition halls with the question sheets in their hands, consult-

ing staff on duty there in some cases. Some people repeatedly telephoned to museums. Some exhibitions, located in out-of-the-way places and generally receiving only a relatively small number of visitors, were suddenly swamped with people.

Museums tried their best to cope with this onslaught. Some increased staff on duty in exhibition rooms, to provide more and clearer explanations of the exhibited objects about which questions had been asked. Some also posted the answers to the questions concerning them near their office telephones so that staff could reply efficiently to competitors calling in.

Launching an Advice Day

To extend still further the coverage of the 'Get to Know Your Museums and Sites' competition, an Advice Day was held on 18 July 1987, a few days after the midway point of the competition. Taking part were the Museum of Chinese History, the Chinese Art Gallery, the Minorities Cultural Palace, the Ancient Bell Museum (at the Great Bell Temple) and the museum devoted to Xu Beihong, a remarkable Paris-trained painter, who bridged the gap between the east and the west where he is known as 'Jupéon'.

A large quantity of information materials was made available to the 20,000 visitors who turned up, including pupils from primary and middle schools, workers, white-collar employees, soldiers and people who had travelled to Beijing from the provinces. Every museum selected four or five professionals to handle questions

All photos by Zhang Jinwei

'How many museums *are* there in China?'



raised by visitors. The competition advisory committee took part in the Advice Day with visible pleasure. An added enticement for visitors was that most museums charged no entry fee during the Day and dense crowds gathered at the numerous question-and-answer tables, with many people clutching their quiz sheets. Several media teams covered the Day's activities and publicized them on Beijing radio and television.

More than a mere 'event', the Advice Day turned out to be what might be called a 'movement'. It enabled competitors to find the right answers to the questions that had been put, and some who had already sent in their answer sheets asked for them back in order to correct mistakes they discovered thanks to the Day. We also noticed that entire families took part in the Day's activities, each member later mailing in his or her individual answers. Still more important, the Day provided an opportunity for visitors to exchange ideas between themselves and with museum staff members.

The grand finale televised live

Between 9 July, when the test questions were made public, and the competition's closing date, 5 September, we received nearly 10,000 answer sheets. As mentioned above, step-by-step eliminations enabled us to select six contestants to take part in the grand finale, which took place in a large hall of the Museum of Chinese History and was

televised live, at prime time, on the evening of 21 September. The finalists included one worker, two teachers and three middle-school students. In addition to the general public, many museum experts and scholars attended, and it was quite a festive occasion.

The final competition was brisk and correct answers brought warm applause from the audience. Viewers seated in front of television sets at home also cross-checked their own knowledge with the questions asked by the master of ceremonies. An intense hour of quizzing finally yielded the first-prize winner as well as two second-prize winners, three third prizes, sixty runner-up 'encouragement' prizes, and five team prizes.

Who won the first prize? Perhaps you have guessed, as we might have: it was that young woman who took her husband and five-year-old child to visit every one of Beijing's thirty museums. Her name is Rong Xiuxia and she is a statistician at the Beijing Transport Company's No. 9 Factory. It is said that before entering the competition she was confident of winning, and her prediction turned out to be correct.

Winners received a variety of prizes and souvenirs, such as copper coins made during the Qing Dynasty, a picture album history of Beijing, tape-recorders, electronic musical instruments and hi-fi sets. Some were purchased by the government while others were donated by different enterprises.

Thanks to this competition, many inhabitants of and visitors to Beijing did indeed 'get to know their museums and

sites'. People from all walks of life, particularly young people, came to know and appreciate museums, monuments and history better. A number of observers told us that the competition had been a kind of giant classroom—an excellent way to disseminate knowledge actively and vividly. Furthermore, museum staff-members said that they deepened their own understanding of the significance of their work. By opening up to the general public, by immersing themselves in the masses, museums were able, thanks to this competition, to enhance their image and role. At the same time, they were moved to reassess and reformulate their approaches. ■



The six finalists. First on the right, statistician Rong Xiuxia predicted correctly that she would win the first prize.

AND WHAT'S MORE . . .

An exclusive *Museum* interview with

Alpha Oumar Konaré, the new President of ICOM

On 5 September 1989, in The Hague, Alpha Oumar Konaré was elected President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) by that organization's sixteenth General Assembly. His term is for three years. Ex-Minister of Culture of his country, Mali, he also created its National Museum at Bamako. Alpha Oumar Konaré is the first President of ICOM to come from a developing country. *Museum's* pleasant obligation was to interview him.



Museum: As the world expression of a quite effervescent institution—the museum—ICOM is not without problems. What do you see as being the main ones?

Alpha Oumar Konaré: There is a real need for ICOM better to interpret differences, and to move toward a greater universality, in conformity with the wishes of its founders, through more openness to non-European communities.

ICOM is also facing a problem in retaining members. This may be due to a need for more democracy in all its organs, and for greater and more constant professionalism.

Certain of our programmes are not carried out due to lack of financial resources, and also because of a lack of clear orientations and more methodical follow-up.

Museum: What do you intend to do, in terms of both general policy and concrete measures, to solve these problems?

A.O.K.: The new programme of work for 1989-92 adopted by our fifteenth General Conference in The Hague has set us moving down the right road.

The programme will be planned-out annually, budgeted and executed according to our code of ethics and in a



All photos © Fotobureau Meijer Den Haag.

spirit of collegiality and rigour. We shall make sure that information will circulate at all levels, that the differences between us will be accepted, that our organization will be a permanent forum of professional exchanges of high quality, and of more open, tolerant and democratic discussions in all its organs.

Our organization needs a forward-looking and dynamic financial and economic policy, based not only on membership dues and subventions.

Our new programme contains ways to move ahead: a policy on projects that follows our professional goals and our code of ethics; more regular publications stemming from the work of our international committees, which need

At ICOM '89 in The Hague: President-elect of ICOM, Alpha Oumar Konaré, with Unesco's Director-General Federico Mayor.

support and strengthening; a better organized documentation centre, of a high level and always ready to serve;¹ professional workshops and exchange networks very close to day-to-day reality; a regionalization policy covering all parts of the world; and a real communication policy with, first of all, a proper and equal use of our two working languages, English and French, and a

1. See next article—Ed.

role for Spanish. We shall then undertake a dialogue with the national professional associations and seek to provide answers to the concerns of the major museums of the world.

All our activities will be rooted in a deep sense of solidarity, above all with those who most need it.

A self-portrait

Museum: Alpha Oumar Konaré, who are you? How did you come to be interested in museums? A self-portrait, if you will, please.

A.O.K.: A passion for different cultures and different peoples, a passion for humanity, a physical love for Africa, for Mali. A thirst to be myself, to shoulder my responsibilities, to live my life well, with others. A self-portrait? I am a 'master's son', a schoolteacher's son, who lived in a large African family, peacefully and simply.

Museum: You are the first African to take on the presidency of ICOM. How does that make you feel? What does it mean for you?

A.O.K.: A heavy responsibility, a responsibility freely accepted and which I intend to assume fully, with my faith in humankind.

Museum: What about co-operation

with Unesco? What priority will it have, and what orientations?

A.O.K.: Our co-operation with Unesco is indispensable for us. We want it to be exemplary. We shall establish it with confidence and rigour. We intend to play our role of adviser, the role incumbent upon the International Council of Museums since 1946. We shall always represent a market-place of ideas and a veritable mine of professionals. ICOM will support Unesco through its programmes, and particularly the World Decade for Cultural Development. We shall also strengthen our relations with other organizations that work in parallel with Unesco, and which are concerned by the heritage, particularly ICOMOS and ICCROM.

Museum: And our review, *Museum*?

A.O.K.: Aha! *Museum* is the apple of my eye. I shall woo *Museum* and help it in any way possible.

Museum: Mr President, what museums shall we have at the end of the century? And what ICOM shall we have in the year 2000?

ICOM—a vector of solidarity

A.O.K.: All our efforts should go to taking up the challenge raised by the

destruction of our cultural and national heritage. Our museums will endeavour always to meet current needs concerning the preservation of this heritage, and better to prepare its inheritors, and *their* inheritors in turn. We must expect museums to be called into question, and demands that the very notion of museum be broadened through the development of audio-visual means, other new means of communication and new technologies more generally. There will doubtless be a much stronger call to 'humanize' museums and to involve them in social development as a kind of 'social weapon'. And we shall witness the emergence of a whole host of new museum partners demanding greater sharing, greater solidarity and more exchanges. As for ICOM in the year 2000, I hope it will be one and multi-faceted at the same time, always professional and exigent, more and more a vector of solidarity. ■

[Translated from French]

The moment of decision! ICOM Past-President, Sir Geoffrey Lewis, and Unesco's Director-General Federico Mayor at *Museum's* stand during ICOM '89. Will they or won't they subscribe?



Everything you've always wanted to know about museums, monuments and sites . . . but didn't know whom to ask

*The information services provided by the Unesco-ICOM
and Unesco-ICOMOS Documentation Centres*

Susanne Peters and Chantal Fouquet¹

The names ICOM and ICOMOS are cited frequently enough in *Museum*. Indeed, many readers have already used the information services provided by the two organizations. But how do these centres aim to assist the international museum community? What resources can they call upon? What lies behind the acronyms? The two documentation centres—Unesco-ICOM and Unesco-ICOMOS—profess to collect, collate, and disseminate information concerning 'movable and immovable cultural heritage' all over the world; this describes their role but says very little about how they function. The objective of this article is to give some sense of what they offer to museum professionals, including of course readers of *Museum*.

Inevitably there is a small degree of overlap between the two centres, but in practice they complement each other. Some complex inquiries may require the resources of both establishments, but in general queries fall into readily identifiable categories. The Unesco-ICOM Documentation Centre should be approached with questions and research concerning *museums*, and the Unesco-ICOMOS Documentation Centre with those concerning *monuments and sites*, while the treatment of the topics 'museums in historic buildings' or 'site museums' may necessitate letters or visits to both establishments. On-going co-operative efforts between the two libraries—and especially a joint bibliographic data base—have alleviated, but not eliminated, this requirement essentially arising from the fact that collections are housed in different locations.

Catalogues, periodicals, slides . . .

The ICOM collections are designed to meet the documentation and information requirements on all aspects of museum-related subjects and museology on a worldwide basis. They consist of around 3,500 monographs (including more than 300 directories to museums), and well over 500 periodical titles received on a regular basis. Additionally, the Centre possesses some 35,000 exhibition catalogues, and a large number of significant technical and 'current awareness' files. Most of the material is written in English, French, German or Spanish, but users' needs are catered for in nineteen other languages, including Russian, Japanese and Chinese.

The holdings of ICOMOS comprise some 10,000 bibliographic units (monographs, published and unpublished reports, technical treatises and theses for example). Some 330 periodical titles and around 8,000 slides and the files of all the cultural properties included on the Unesco World Heritage List. Again, a multilingual approach is essential to serve an international clientele engaged in the conservation, protection, use and rehabilitation of the architectural heritage.

The primary tool for information provision by both centres is without doubt the joint computer-based bibliographic storage-and-retrieval system referring to the document holdings of the two libraries.² This database is maintained in Unesco's mainframe computer and, using CDS/ISIS software, can be consulted within each centre as a single

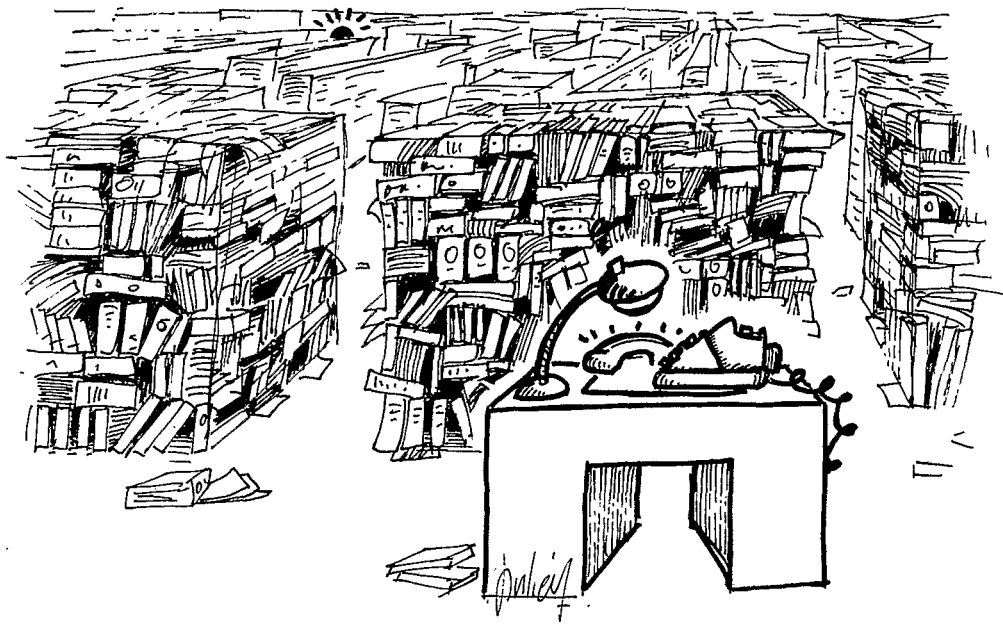
entity, or separately, that is, the ICOM and ICOMOS portions individually. Containing 22,404 bibliographic references³—12,224 entered by ICOM and 10,180 by the ICOMOS side (1,410 of which are located in the ICOMOS sub-base concerning Unesco's World Heritage Convention)—it provides the best available guide to the literature of cultural heritage on an international scale.

The ICOM/ICOMOS database fulfils two major functions. On the one hand it serves as a library catalogue giving access to both collections in a classical fashion by author, title and subject. On the other hand, it allows for great ease in the compilation of extensive bibliographies on a great number of different topics. The tailoring of searches to suit the needs of each individual requester—as opposed to the labour-intensive and more general lists made available in pre-computer times—is greatly facilitated by the flexible system used. Consequently the supply of original bibliographies upon request forms one of the most important, and most frequently rendered, services performed by the centres. They are supplied on paper copy and, until further

1. Respectively responsible for the Unesco-ICOM and Unesco-ICOMOS Documentation Centres.

2. Currently the database contains references to the collections of both centres published after 1981. A project assisted by the J. Paul Getty Trust to convert retrospectively the data on all items kept in the Unesco-ICOM Documentation Centre into machine-readable format is well on the way and was due to be completed by the end of 1989, adding some 30,000 bibliographic references.

3. Data of 15 January 1989.



Drawing by Julien

notice, free of charge not only to members of ICOM, ICOMOS and Unesco staff, but also to the general public. However, fees are payable for photocopies and their dispatch.

The journals of the two organizations provide another essential bibliographic service. Each number of *ICOM News* carries a brief summary of the most significant new publications; the quarterly review, *ICOMOS Information*, comprises an analytical index with substantial critical abstracts of important new books and periodical articles, in addition to a 'books received' column.

The Unesco-ICOM Documentation Centre contains the world's most comprehensive collection of museological literature, and this extensive holding allows it to compile an annual *International Museological Bibliography*, together with a short *Basic Museum Bibliography* which is updated at irregular intervals. On the basis of its unique holdings, the Unesco-ICOMOS Documentation Centre produces comprehensive bibliographies on ICOMOS's fourteen areas of research.⁴

Whenever possible, document back-up is made in the form of photocopies when this can be within the framework of international copyright legislation. Where this is not permitted, detailed information on how the publications or documents can be purchased or otherwise acquired is furnished as a matter of course.

Unrestricted access

The provision of information such as addresses, telephone numbers, names

of heads of administrative units for instance, forms another essential service provided by both centres. These data are collated from a great variety of source documents, or gleaned from the informal channels open to each organization, such as their national and international committees.

Information that is not covered by reference works available in the market place is systematically sought, collated, and disseminated by the centres. The computerized World Heritage List maintained by ICOMOS, and guides like the African and Asian Museum Directories compiled and updated by the Unesco-ICOM Documentation Centre, are notable examples here.

Both organizations serve a worldwide community: consequently the bulk of the information is disseminated by mail, telephone, telex or fax. None the less, the resources of both centres are fully used through regular visits of members (and aspiring members) of the Councils, Unesco staff, students attending tertiary institutions, and other interested people. Currently no restrictions apply to access the centres, though appointment by telephone or letter is required to monitor the number of visitors within the limited amount of space available for the consultation of publications and documents.

The work of both centres faces strict limitations imposed by budgetary constraints. In a way, our problems emanate from our success and we hope to overcome them in the not too distant future. It must be stressed that the basis of our service has always been that all queries we receive are handled with

great care and personal interest, though the answer to them may take some time; sometimes we need further details from the requester. Above all, we welcome all comments and suggestions users may have concerning the work carried out by the two centres. We look upon all those we serve as our customers; pinned up in the Unesco-ICOM Documentation Centre is a notice that says: 'If you are pleased with our work, tell your colleagues; if not—let us know!' The service depends on us, but also upon those who use our resources. The more effective and precise a request, the better we can fulfil it.

Please direct your inquiries to:

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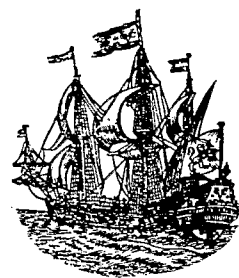
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What next? *fm*

No. 166 of *Museum* will be a kind of round-the-globe cruise on the theme 'Port Museums of the World' with stopovers along the way to visit—among others—collections and exhibitions at Bath, Maine (United States), Bergen (Norway), Changdao (China), Rostock (German Democratic Republic),

Salvador-Bahía (Brazil) and Valparaiso (Chile). Freshwater sailing life is not forgotten thanks to calls at the river museum at Châteauneuf-sur-Loire (France) and the Lake Léman Museum at Nyon (Switzerland). Our tour will also include a brief side trip through the activities of the International Congress of Maritime Museums.



Port museums . . . of interest to sailors of both the deckside and armchair varieties, as well as museum professionals, of course. Variations on an evocative theme, as a few of their logos suggest:

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