

CREATION OF A BOOK-MUSEUM IN A LIBRARY: PRINCIPLES, PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

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With various problems, which have arisen by preparing the project of creating the book-museum at the Estonian Academic Library I have dealt merely for one year. The following report is based on my last year's experiences, the topics discussed in my paper, are:

- The museum policy in modern Estonia,
- Book as an exhibit. Functions of book-museum,
- The establishment of book-museum at the Estonian Academic Library.

The word "museum" (*museion* in Greek) comes from the Greek language. In the Greek mythology it denotes the temple of the guardian gods of arts and sciences; in the other words "the temple of muses". It sounds beautiful!

Museum is a poly-functional institution in which the heritage of culture and nature is collected, preserved, researched and exhibited. Museology includes scientific description, conservation and restoration of museum items, composition of expositions, publication and popularisation of the result of the work, museum pedagogy etc.

Museums preserve mainly objects, libraries and archives have similar functions depositing publications and documents. At the same time various publications and archive documents can be seen as a part of almost every museum exposition; archives preserve the objects, which have come over together with archive documents; libraries have archive documents together with book collections etc. Strict borders between these three abovementioned institutions are disappearing in Estonia as well as in the whole world [8, 250–251]. Such situation makes it necessary for a researcher to turn to all three institutions and demands intense cooperation between them.

In Estonia museology as a field of science was initiated at the beginning of the 20th century due to the establishment of the Estonian National Museum in Tartu. This museum included also an archival library, a centre of bibliography, archives of

folklore and cultural history, which later became a starting point for the Estonian Literature Museum.

Estonian present day museum system has developed mainly between the 1960s and the 1970s. The fight for independence and the growth of national identity brought about the establishment of several local and private museums. At the same time the rate of museum visitors declined in the 1990s. The same phenomenon was observed in theatres, people started also to buy much less books and periodicals than before. Due to the rise of book prices, the number of readers in the libraries increased sharply.

In 2000 Estonia had 183 functioning museums or branch offices (this number does not include school museums and museum rooms of grammar-schools) [4, 58]. The most noteworthy museum project of the last years is the new art museum, construction work of which began in 2002. A rather topical subject is the initiation of the Occupation Museum, the financing of which is managed by Kristler-Ritso Foundation established in 1998 in the United States of America. In media there have been also discussions about the establishment of the Baltic-German museum [3] and the centre of Foreign-Estonian culture in Tartu [11].

The museological education can be obtained in Estonia in the Department of History at the Tartu University. Subjects belonging to the field of restoration are read in the framework of art programmes at the Tartu Art School, at the Restoration School of Estonian Art Academy and at the Open University of Tartu University. At the present one can not study restoration at the bachelor's level, Master's degree studies are available in Estonian Art Academy. Certification of restorers are organized by the Estonian National Library and the Conservation Centre "Kanut".

The Museum Law was passed in the 1990s in order to coordinate and modernize museum activities on the state level. The Museum Council and the Estonian Council of Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Libraries, Archives and Museums have been established by the Ministry of Culture; the task of the first is to discuss questions related to museology and to propose the elaboration of required legal acts; the Council of preservation is an advisory body, which deals with problems of preservation of collections, education and qualification of staff and prepares integral professional requirements of preservation policy in Estonia.

Two professional associations – Estonian Museum Society and Association of Estonian Librarians – have been active in Estonia for more than ten years already, the latter providing framework for the Old Book Committee since 1994. The special journals "Muuseum", "Raamatukogu" and the magazine of history and culture "Tuna" of National Archives, Tallinn City Archives and Estonian Archivists Society are published.

In 1999 the need for museum reform was brought up due to several problems: the Museum Law, which passed three years earlier, was out of date, museums were and still are under-financed and museum-staff underpaid, museological principles were not taken into account while establishing new museums. The exhibits partly duplicate each other and are in some cases out of date, during the years of regained independence not a single special museum building has been constructed. Therefore, the Ministry of Culture is of the opinion that as long as the existing museums vegetate and they can not be considered as contemporarily functioning centres, new state museums will not be established [7; 10].

According to Karin Hallas-Murula, the director of the Estonian Museum of Architecture and the chairwoman of the Estonian National Committee of ICOM (the International Council of Museums), the museum system was most radically reformed in the 1990s in the Netherlands, where the so called "moving cultural heritage" was treated complexly – 150 million Euros was provided for the inventory, retaining and preservation of the items in museums, libraries and archives and 89 million Euros for the renovation and preservation of cultural memorials [1].

The Ministry of Culture introduced new development programmes for museums and libraries to their specialists in 2000. Both were severely criticized because the programmes were drawn up in a very narrow circle, the adequate analyses were missing and such institutions as the Tartu Art Museum, The Museum of Theatre and Music, the Estonian Academic Library and the Medical Library were planned to be quickly liquidated by joining their collections with other institutions.

Two years later, it has to be said that the reform of museums in Estonia has come to a standstill. As to the development of libraries, the fuss has subsided and it has been followed by the normal and democratic dispute. Due to the reorganization of the higher education system some changes are also expected in libraries. As to the Estonian Academic Library, the most important fact is, that in May 2002 the Tallinn Pedagogical University, the Estonian Art Academy, the Estonian Humanitarian Institute, the Institute of History and the Estonian Academic Library signed a joint agreement to establish the Tallinn University, in future structure of which the library will be rearranged into a central scientific library to support all united education and science institutions. As the Tallinn University is still under completion, it is rather difficult to define all the library's future tasks, but definitely the work with culturally valuable collections will be continued. This obligation is derived from the regulation no. 593 issued in 2002 by the Ministry of Education determining the Estonian Academic Library to fulfil the tasks of a research and archival library.

Book collections of cultural value are in Estonia still registered in the separate databases of archives, museums and libraries according to the institutions, to which they belong.

The electronic catalogue “Ester”, compiled by the biggest Estonian libraries, is available to the public since 1999. The integrated library network INNOPAC framed by the US company Innovative Interfaces, is managed by the Consortium of Estonian Libraries Network. The database of Estonian national bibliography, based on INNOPAC, is under completion.

The establishment of the Information System of Cultural Values (KVIS) – a joint database for Estonian museums – was initiated in 1997. Testing this system as a local database started in some museums already in 1993. The programme has been drawn by joint-stock company Gennet Lab. One of the aims of KVIS project is to standardize the documentation and description of different kinds of cultural values preserved in museums [5]. In this database prints are described as objects.

In archives books and periodicals are registered in the electronic catalogues of the archive libraries. A united system is used by the Estonian History Archive and the State Archive.

Old book is an extremely many-sided object of scientific research: book as an artifact holds diverse examples of material culture, its content helps to understand people’s thoughts, gives knowledge about everyday life and the development of science. An old, beautifully illustrated and bound book is a remarkable museum exhibit especially at the time when attractiveness is required from museums. Centuries old book, printed on hand-press, affects visitors by its intimacy, because master’s hands have moulded it. The “biography” of an old binding can be restored on the basis of manuscript inscriptions and stamps preserved in the books. Professional skills of an exposition compiler can be expressed in the way how interestingly this “story of the book” is expounded. One can get a great aesthetic experience while listening to the professional guide, who is able to sense the audience.

In the development of museologic thought theoretical-synthesizing museology began to develop in the 1970–1980s side by side with empirical-descriptive museography. Not only the object or event is analysed with the help of museum items and other materials, but also cultural processes are observed in the same way. In such analysis an event or object takes interdisciplinary measures [6, 8]. Book as a museum exhibit is handled as a culture-sign with its structural elements and semiotic connections.

During the last twenty-five years museums have started to pay more attention to their audience – visitors and the whole society – by diversifying their scientific activities and the structure of exposition. Visitor’s comprehension of exposition depends on how the creators manage to overcome the probable gap between historical and modern text and cultural context. Due to that the communication theories are in the centre of attention at the present day [6, 9] and museum pedagogy becomes more and more important.

Here we can draw a parallel with a work of art, in case of which the method of “stepping into the picture” is used. It means that the inducements and background of the work are explained. For example, as a visitor of an art exhibition, I always wish to take a look into the artist’s inner world, to get to know his or her motifs and emotions. Usually, however, this wish does not come true as I have to satisfied with my own presumptions, title of the work and a short note from the exhibition catalogue. Putting myself into the visitor’s position I prefer the principle – less exhibits but more varied and humane explanation of these.

Book-museum – its essence and functions have been under discussion in the whole world for decades already. In 1987 a reference book about the world’s book-museums was published in Moscow in cooperation of the present day Russian State Library and the Section of Rare Books of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) [12]. The compilers came to the conclusion that the majority of book researchers share the principle, that the exhibits of the book-museum must characterize the mental and material essence of the book through history by exploiting museological methods.

There is a rather limited number of classical or the so called “pure” book-museums in the world, the oldest of them being Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum in Leipzig. The majority of museums demonstrate various processes of book production – printing presses, polygraphy, paper, etc. The abovementioned reference book also provides an overview of the institutions – mainly libraries, which hold permanent and temporary book exhibitions. The compilers also point out that the profile of the exposition may change with time – a temporary thematic exhibition can develop into a permanent one or the exhibits of the permanent exposition may form the basis of the future book-museum [12, 15–18]. Unfortunately I do not have any analogical data about the current situation in the world, but I am quite convinced that changes have occurred.

Nowadays, an emphasis to individuality is preferred while compiling permanent expositions – both comparisons and oppositions are brought out, moving from the currently known to the unknown of the past. As the permanent exposition exploits comparative material from the present, the duration of one exposition can not be the more than about 5 to 7 years. Permanent expositions may give rise to different thematic exhibitions, intrigues, interpretations. An interesting thematic exhibition is evaluated for both its emotional and scientific level, as well as the present day research experience [6, 8].

At the modern museum the exposition is completed in the cooperation of museologist, producer, architect, artist, light- and sound-technician – in one word a whole team – in order to provide the spectator as versatile experience as possible.

The mediation of extra information by means of electronic databases and updated multimedia equipment definitely enriches the exhibition.

Modern museum is unable to operate successfully while being self-absorbed. Potential cooperative partners of book-museums can be archives, museums – among the latter definitely literature museums* – universities, publishing houses, different channels of media. While introducing book culture (common exhibitions, training programmes, etc.), the application of subsidies for professionally prepared projects from funds and sponsors should be natural. The application of money from international foundations requires from the applicant, of course, fresh ideas and enough cooperative partners. While searching for sponsors one should also consider what to offer them in return.

The first project of the book-museum in Estonia dates back to 1940, according to which the museum should have included both the history of Estonian printing as well as the book history [9], but the plan was never completed. The Tartu University Library has the biggest experience of a permanent exposition of book history. In 1982, together with the opening of the new building of the library, a permanent exhibition introducing the achievements of printing since its very first years, was opened. In 1997 the idea of permanent exposition was abandoned and in the following years the room has been used for thematic exhibitions. Long-term exhibitions (1–1,5 years) have also been organized in the exhibition hall of the collection of rare books in the Estonian National Library since the opening of the building in 1992. The Estonian Literature Museum, lacking for a long time a separate exhibition hall, has compiled interesting short-term thematic exhibitions. The Estonian Academic Library has so far followed the similar path.

One of the most important reason for this is that an old book as a sensitive and valuable exhibit is rather particular about its exhibition conditions and higher security requirements. Decades ago the maintenance requirements were not so strictly followed and this ignorance has very often proved to be harmful to the books. While compiling the exhibition of old books one should, besides an attractive content, also keep in mind technical conditions: temperature in the exhibition hall (recommendable 16–18 degrees), relative humidity (recommendable 30–50%), content of dust in

*Compiler of the exposition on book history should be well informed about the action of the Section of Literature Museums of ICOM (The International Council of Museums). The 22nd annual conference "The exhibition as a work of art" of the Section of Literature Museums was held at Estonian Literature Museum in 1999 in Tartu. The papers contain practical examples on constant survey expositions renewed during the last years at Czech Literature Museum, Rainis' Museum of Literature and Art History in Latvia, Literature Museum of Netherlands. At the latter, the Book Museum for Children was even opened; see: Paar sammukest: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Aastaraamat, XVI. Tartu, 1999.

air (0,5 micrometers), ultraviolet radiation and infrared radiation, intensity of light on exhibits (50–150 luxes; for one exhibition 50 000 lux hours, i.e., for example 100 luxes, 10 hours a day during 50 days) [2, 27–33], security of display, etc.

In the Estonian Academic Library one air-conditioned 40 m² exhibition hall has been renovated, however, the display cases with required lighting for permanent exposition, are missing.

Any exposition is based on collections. The main interest for the book museum in the Estonian Academic Library would be, above all, the collections of *Baltica* and Foreign-Estonian literature, which enable to organize both permanent expositions (e.g. “The History and Composition of Older Libraries in Tallinn”, “The History of Estonian Book”) as well as long-term thematic exhibitions (e.g. “The History of Baltic-German Book”, “Private Book Collections in the Estonian Academic Library”, “The History of Estonian Press”, “Estonian Books Outside Estonia”, “International Estonian Days Through Decades”, etc). Various thematic exhibitions have been held in the library since its establishment; in the last years cooperative opportunities have been skilfully used in compiling and displaying exhibitions. The best examples are the exhibition of Estonian Book Year “The Oldest Books in Tallinn”, which was put together by Estonian National Library and Tallinn City Archives in 2000 and an exhibition “Bibliotheca Revaliensis ad D. Olai = Tallinn Library by St. Olaf’s Church 450”, which was compiled in cooperation with Tallinn City Archives in 2002. Both exhibitions were displayed in Tallinn Town Hall which highlighted the beauty of books with its medieval arches.

While framing the project of the book- and library-museum, the questions – why and to whom this exposition will be created – should be answered. Since the Tallinn University and the library’s tasks in this structure are still in the process of development, it is impossible to find exact solutions. Supported by the experience of organizing thematic exhibitions we can affirm, that the target group for book expositions – book historians, bibliophiles, scientists, historians, students and lecturers of culture and civilization, students of art, leather artists and other people interested in culture – exists.

From the point of view of the exposition structure, the important questions are – whether to concentrate on permanent or thematic exhibition? Whether to prefer academic-traditional to attractive and interactive exposition? If and how to display original items or models? It is a well-known fact that the visitor is fascinated by the original. What is more, the visitor would like to hold it in his / her hands!

Close to the book-museum, there should also be a *lecture hall* or *study room* with possibilities to use audio-visual equipment and an *Internet café* with newspapers. A person, who is interested, should have an access to the museum without the reader’s

identification card. The aim should be the creation of an intellectual and humane atmosphere, where visitors enter with interest and positive approach.

According to the present day situation in the Estonian Academic Library, it is probably more advisable to use the exhibition hall for long-term thematic displays, which is the actual plan for the next year. There is also a possibility of exchanging thematic exhibitions with other libraries (e.g. Estonian National Library, Tartu University Library).

Preserving cultural heritage is the precondition for the many-sided development of society, as well as the basis of cultural policy. Printed cultural heritage requires state preserve politics, which defines the responsibilities of different institutions in that field and establishes preconditions for completing these duties. The tasks are set, but to fulfil these obligations, up to now, money has not been provided. That is also the reason, why the creation of a real book-museum is still on the level of an idea. Nether the less, interesting collections should be exhibited by all means, using the existing actual and virtual possibilities.

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Abstract

Museum is an institution in which the heritage of culture and nature is collected, preserved, researched and exhibited. While museum preserves mainly objects, libraries and archives have similar functions depositing publications and documents.

In Estonia museum-work as a science field was initiated at the beginning of the 19th century due to the establishment of the Estonian National Museum in Tartu.

Collections with the cultural significance for Estonia are registered in separate databases – archives, museums and libraries do not have the common database.

In order to coordinate and modernize museum-work at the level of state the Museum Law was passed in the 1990s and the Museum Council as well as the Estonian Council of Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Libraries, Archives and Museums have been formed by the Ministry of Culture.

In 1999 the question of museum reform was brought up due to several problems. In 2000 two development programmes – one for museums and the other for libraries – were introduced by the Ministry of Culture to the specialists. Consequently, the Estonian Academic Library will be united with Tallinn University, the creation of which has not yet been completed.

The debate about the meaning of the term “book-museum” has lasted for decades in the whole world by now. The majority of book-researchers in the world share the principle that book-museum must characterize the mental and material essence of the book through time. The first plan of book-museum in Estonia dates back to 1940.

In the development of museologic thought theoretical-synthesizing museology began to develop in the 1970–1980s side by side with empirical-descriptive museography. Book as a museum exhibit is handled as a culture-sign with its structural elements and semiotic connections.

While framing the project of the book- and library-museum of the Estonian Academic Library, the following questions should be answered: why and to whom we create the exposition and how to do it professionally? Since Tallinn University is still in the process of development, it is quite difficult for the library to define the exact essence of book-museum as the ideology of exhibition depends, besides collections, also on the target group, the size of exhibition area and technical possibilities.

Any exposition is based on collections. The Estonian Academic Library has the collections of *Baltica* and Foreign-Estonian literature which enable to organize both permanent expositions as well as long-term thematic exhibitions.

The exposition in modern museum is completed in the cooperation of museologist, producer, architect, artist, light- and sound-technician in order to provide the spectator with as versatile experience as possible. The mediation of extra information by means of updated multimedia equipment definitely enriches the exhibition.

Modern museum is unable to operate successfully while being self-absorbed. In order to introduce book culture in a variety of forms, cooperation with various institutions are needed. Cultural heritage requires state preserve politics which defines the responsibilities of institutions in different spheres and establishes preconditions for completing them.

KNYGOS MUZIEJAUS KŪRIMAS BIBLIOTEKOJE: PRINCIPAI, PROBLEMOS IR GALIMYBĖS

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Santrauka

Siekiant modernizuoti ir koordinuoti Estijos muziejų veiklą, 1990 m. buvo priimtas Muziejų įstatymas, kultūros ministro įsakymu suformuota Estijos kultūros paveldo bibliotekose, archyvuose ir muziejuose išsaugojimo taryba. 2000 m. pradėtos įgyvendinti dvi specialios veiksmų programos, skirtos muziejams bei bibliotekoms. Ypatingos kultūrinės reikšmės Estijos kolekcijos yra registruojamos atskirose duomenų bazėse, todėl archyvai, muziejai bei bibliotekos neturi bendros duomenų bazės.

Visame pasaulyje jau keli dešimtmečiai tęsiasi diskusijos dėl termino „knygos muziejus“ sampratos. Dauguma knygotyrininkų linkę manyti, kad pagrindinis knygos muziejaus tikslas yra knygos mentalinio ir materialaus būvio amžių bėgyje atskleidimas. Pirmasis sumanymas Estijoje įkurti knygos muziejų kilo 1940 m.

Talino universitetas – besiformuojanti struktūra, todėl ir bibliotekai iškyla daug sunkumų tiksliai apsibrėžti, kodėl ir kam bus kuriama nuolatinė ekspozicija, numatyti būsimo knygos muziejaus ideologiją, įrangos ir ekspozicijų erdvę. Estijos akademinė biblioteka, sukaupusi *Baltica* bei Estijos egzodo kolekcijas, turi visas galimybes organizuoti tiek nuolatinės, tiek ribotos ekspozicijos parodas.

Modernaus muziejaus ekspozicija kuriama bendromis muziejininkų, vadybininkų, architektų, menininkų, švietimo bei garso technikos specialistų pastangomis, siekiant kuo visapusiškesnio žiūrovo patyrimo. Naujausių masinės informacijos priemonių bei įrangos panaudojimas tikrai praturtina parodas.

Bandant atspindėti knygos kultūros įvairovę, būtinas bendradarbiavimas su įvairiomis institucijomis. Kultūros paveldas reikalauja valstybinės apsaugos politikos, kuri apibrėžtų įvairių veiklos sferų institucijų atsakomybę ir sudarytų būtinas prielaidas bendrai veiklai.