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# WORLD HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM: KRZYSZTOF POMIAN'S STORY OF THE WORLD OF PEOPLE AND OBJECTS (1)

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**Abstract:** In spring 2023, the Gdansk publishers: słowo/obraz terytoria released the first volume of Krzysztof Pomian's study *Muzeum. Historia światowa* [World History of the Museum]. It launches the Polish edition of the monumental three-volume work published by Éditions Gallimard in Paris which is the first study of the universal history of the museum. *This is more than a book, it's a monument!* (*Plus qu'un livre, un monument!*) is what Fabien Simode wrote in the *l'Œil* monthly (March 2021). At present rarely are such historically broad studies released, possibly because of authors' fear of being potentially accused of postmodernist meta-narrative. In this case, the work is a comprehensive synthesis in view of the entailed chronology, geography, and thematic range. The discussed volume *Od skarbca do muzeum* [From a Treasure Chamber to the Museum] recently published for Polish readers tackles the process of European collectorship crystalizing and first museums being its consequence, mainly Italian and several northern ones, from the Capitoline Museum in Rome (1471) up to London's British Museum (1753). Subsequent volumes

are already being prepared. Titled *L'ancrage européen, 1789–1850*, the second one is dedicated to the history of the museum consolidating into a permanent and significant element of European culture, close to the institution we know today: started by the revolutionary Louvre (1793), this history is created by the vast part of the major museums of today's Western Europe. Finally, volume three *A la conquête du monde, 1850–2020* is the most extensive of them all both chronologically and territorially, as well as in view of the number of museums and their activity discussed. Author's considerations encompass museums' expansion to Eastern Europe including Russia, and then eventually to the rest of the world: Asia, Africa, both Americas, mainly the territories connected with the West through colonial bonds; the United States, being the area where today's dominating world centres have been formed, is analysed separately. At that point the book's title: *world history*, gains its full relevance, and relates both to the interwar period in the democratic and totalitarian world, WW II, and to the long contemporary era.

**Keywords:** museums, museology, treasure chamber, collection, art, antiquity, natural history.

Krzysztof Pomian, *Muzeum. Historia światowa*, vol. 1: *Od skarbca do muzeum*, transl. by Tomasz Stróżyński, (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2023), pp. 644

In spring 2023, the Gdansk publishers: słowo/obraz terytoria released the first volume of Krzysztof Pomian's study *Muzeum. Historia światowa* [World History of the Museum].

It launches the publication of the Polish edition of the monumental three-volume work published by Éditions Gallimard in Paris, crowning about 30 years' work of its

Author.<sup>1</sup> *This is more than a book, it's a monument! (Plus qu'un livre, un monument!)*, is what Fabien Simode wrote about this first study of the universal history of the museum in the *l'Œil* monthly (March 2021). At present, rarely are such historically broad studies released, possibly because of authors' fear of being potentially accused of the so-called grand meta-narrative. In this case, the work is a comprehensive synthesis in view of the entailed chronology, geography, and thematic range. The discussed volume *Od skarbca do muzeum* [From a Treasure Chamber to the Museum] recently published for Polish readers tackles the process of European collectorship crystalizing and initial museums being its consequence, first Italian and later Northern ones, from the Capitoline Museum in Rome (1471) up to London's British Museum (1753). Subsequent volumes are already being prepared. Titled *L'ancrage européen, 1789–1850*, the second one is dedicated to the history of the museum consolidating into a permanent and significant element of European culture, close to the institution we know today: started by the revolutionary Louvre (1793), this history is created by the vast part of the major museums of today's Western Europe. Finally, volume three *A la conquête du monde, 1850–2020* is the most extensive of them all, both chronologically and territorially, as well as in view of the number of museums and their activity discussed. Author's considerations encompass museums' expansion to Eastern Europe including Russia, and then eventually to the rest of the world: Asia, Africa, both Americas, mainly the territories connected with the West through colonial bonds; the United States, being the area where today's dominating world museum centre has been formed, is analysed separately. At that point the book's title: *world history*, gains its full relevance, and relates both to the interwar period in the democratic and totalitarian world, WW II, and to the long contemporary era.

According to Pomian, the museum is a peculiar institution: both unnecessary and essential, since it does not produce anything, contrariwise, devouring much energy and numerous resources, yet no civilized society can do without it, as the museum marks the level of its culture. This is for the Author a very special case of the phenomenon of a collection: *a public collection placed within secularized space, and even lay, which is to be preserved for the most remote posterity* (p. 194). Therefore, its history has been shown here as the history of the relation between people and meaningful objects. It begins together with the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Humanism, yet on the grounds of much older traditions, reaching antiquity. It is thus a centuries-old entity, yet initially developing quite slowly, only with time substantially accelerating. Within five and a half centuries the number of museums worldwide has reached almost 85,000, with the majority of them created after 1960. Founded by the state, the Church, cities, universities, associations, and private individuals, over the time they have undergone many transformations with respect to their message, goal, and activity range, public accessibility, management ways, and work implementation. An exclusively Italian phenomenon over the first two centuries, it later spread throughout Europe, and subsequently worldwide. The museum collection has also changed, initially covering merely ancient sculpture, with time also painting and specimens of natural history, as well as curiosities, rare objects, wonders, and finally testimonies to history, medicine, technology, ethnography,

and documents representing science, culture, everyday life, work, and entertainment.

Bonding tightly the museum with the collection, Pomian sees the tradition of both stemming from the institution of a ruler's treasure chamber and his tomb, as well as from the temple treasury being property of a deity. They existed under varied forms in all the communities of the old times: in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, Greece, Rome, as well as in Scythian, Celtic, and Germanic civilizations. The genuine function of the treasure chamber was to store objects forming the ruler's material environment, weapons, jewellery, splendid everyday and ritual objects meant to dazzle both the locals and strangers, while testifying to his very special status towards the supernatural world; from the moment when money was invented, the treasure chamber was divided into two parts: a symbolic and economic one. Hellenistic kings' treasuries were characterized by exceptional wealth as well as imperial splendour and luxury; inherited or coming from conquests or plundered, the objects could also be commissioned or purchased. In the already Christian Europe of the Middle Ages there was hardly any court or church without a treasury. The greatest importance, the rank of the wealthiest and most sumptuous, was given to the treasury of Constantinople, radiating with the fame of unmeasurable wealth of the *basileus* and the most sublime relics, including those of the Passion (fragments of the Holy Cross, nails, lance, sponge, crown of thorns, shroud, and sandals). The treasury of the Western Roman Empire in Aix-la-Chapelle could not rival it; neither could the treasury of the Kings of France or of St Mark's Basilica in Venice; certainly, the more varied depending on the owner and location smaller treasuries of kings and dukes of whole Europe, church, and finally town treasuries, could not even dare to match it. The structure, however, was entirely destroyed in 1204 in the course of the plunder of Constantinople by the participants of the Fourth Crusade. Owing to the fact that the most splendid one had been eliminated, a new topography of European treasure chambers was then created, while a vast majority of its treasures as well as relics were transferred to the West (to the treasury of the Vatican, that of the Kings of France at the Saint-Denis and Sainte-Chapelle Basilicas, and to those of the imperial Houses of Luxembourg and Habsburg, as well as the Venetian Treasury).

The treasure chamber was as if a collection without a collector, since it enriched somewhat automatically, while remaining under a custody of functionaries, and not amateurs of beautiful objects, although these were often called to serve as experts in luxurious items. All because, as the Author observes, a collector is characterized by a personal attitude towards the amassed objects. Otherwise, neither is a cultural phenomenon created by single cases of monarchs collecting; in order to achieve this it is necessary to popularize a collection among individual elite representatives. It was for the first time that the collection appeared at two extremes of the ancient world: China and Rome. In view of the history of museums what mattered here was Rome: influenced by contacts with the Hellenistic world in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C., aristocrats began to notice the value of, and amass specimens of sculpture, painting, and valuable objects, while after Carthage had fallen, what could be observed was nearly a predilection for luxury and craving for material

beauty. Sources speak of a substantial development of Roman collecting, yet it disappeared almost entirely in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. The reasons for that development can be various, including the fact that contrary to the rich countries of the Mediterranean, the conquest in the North did not yield such luxurious spoils, while Rome itself was soon forced to defend against the barbarian invasions. Therefore, in the following centuries, the only collecting format in Europe was again taken by treasure chambers (imperial, papal, royal, belonging to churches and magnates).

In European culture private collections appeared only in 14<sup>th</sup>-century France and Italy, after almost of a millennium of their absence. The first to have created them were, according to Pomian, King Charles V the Wise and Francesco Petrarca. Charles V formed his collection in a way within his personal treasure chamber which he had inherited and extended. Apart from ceremonial, liturgical, and decorative objects, relevant to his social status and the performed function, he also included exotic products, measuring devices, compasses, astrolabes, clocks, ivory, ancient cameos, paintings. All these were testimony to his personal interests and predilections: astrology, history, antiquity, nature. Petrarch's collection, in turn, had other sources and a different composition, this determined mainly by the social status of its owner: it was not treasures which formed its ideological grounds, but a kind of a set of professional tools of an erudite person (the library, material sources). Ancient heritage pieces and art works reflected, first of all, Rome's cult of antiquity, but also the modern cult of great individuals. Pomian emphasizes that under Petrarch's influence collecting art or antiquities became as important to a humanist as amassing a library. He also points to the transformation of the treasure chamber or an analogical set, serving as a peculiar trademark of the profession (scholar's library, artist's set of drawings) into a personal collection which no longer depended on the owner's profession or social function. Charles V was imitated in this activity and rivalled by his family members, e.g., his brothers, John of Berry, Louis I, Philip the Bold, and European dukes (mainly Italian: of the Houses of Medici, Gonzaga, Este); Florentine and Venetian humanists in turn: Niccolò Niccoli, Gianfrancesco Poggio Bracciolini, Carlo Marsuppi, and Matteo di Simone Strozzi, followed in the footsteps of Petrarch. As a result, in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century private collections had become a cultural fact, its owners next to rulers encompassing both secular and clerical aristocracy, as well as intellectual circles in Italy, and gradually also Europe beyond the Alps. All this created the conditions essential to create the public institution of the museum.

In 1471, a group of ancient sculptures was placed at the Conservators' Palace, the municipality building on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. It was for the first time that a collection located at a secular venue and amassed there to be preserved for posterity was given the status of being public, the development of no analogy either in China, the Greek or Roman antiquity, or in the Byzantine or Western Middle Ages. The sculptures were transferred there as wished by Pope Sixtus IV from the Lateran Garden, and initially displayed in the square in front of the building, they soon gained a symbolic meaning, and testifying to the city's splendour, they turned into historic heritage pieces, this blurring their pagan character. The second museum was created

not fully 40 years later. In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Julius II commissioned Donato Bramante to connect the Vatican Palace with the nearby Villa Belvedere. The project created an internal courtyard with niches ready to welcome ancient sculptures, those including e.g., *The Laocoon Group*, *Apollo Belvedere*, *Venus Felix*, *Torso* (amassed gradually possibly as of 1509). They defined the beauty canon for later eras, however, pagan nude idols did not befit to the holy place. Therefore, subsequent popes, particularly conservative Adrian I, limited access to them, while following the Council of Trent the niches with the statues were hidden behind wooden screens for 200 years. Pomian, however, stresses that although both constitute a departure point for the history of museology, neither is a museum in the sense given to the institution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; they were not even called 'museums'.

The meaning of the word 'museum' with reference to a public collection was introduced into 16<sup>th</sup>-century Latin and Italian, and, as a consequence, into other European languages by Paolo Giovio, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century clergyman, bishop, physician, and historian. He used the term several times to describe his collection of about 400 effigies of celebrities, forming grounds for the set of biographies published in 1546, and a kind of a hall of fame in the villa on Lake Como raised supposedly on the remains of the residence of Pliny the Younger. At the same time, he collected antiquities, particularly medals, and exotic items, in his will leaving his work to be accessible to the public and durable, which distinguished it from a private *studiolo* (regrettably, his heirs were unable to comply with his wish). Under the impact of this humanist the term 'museum' (*musaeum/museo*), to the ancient meaning a kind of an academy or scholars' college, was applied from then onwards to collections: gradually more public than private. The idea in question had a direct impact on three major institutions of the time: the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, the *Statuario pubblico* in the Library of St Mark in Venice, and the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana in Milan: all the three to a different degree and at different time made accessible as public property and meant to serve future generations.

The first series of Italian museums was concluded in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century with a number of institutions dedicated to natural history, at the time when antiquity was temporarily of less interest. In this respect, the Author underlines the role played by botanical gardens open to the public, the first of which was founded at the University of Pisa; serving as an important centre of nature research, it was revitalized in 1543 by Cosimo I de' Medici. A Renaissance garden: a peculiar museum of living plants, has been presented in the study as an important element in the history of museology; being at the root of a public cabinet of natural history, it served as an important instrument for research into nature. This applied to actually not very frequent public institutions, generally under the auspices of universities, as well as private collections. A new type of an intellectual profession was created there: a naturalist in whose cabinet the place of antiquities had been taken by plants and nature specimens, this differing it from the *studiolo* created by a duke and a humanist. An exceptionally rich cabinet of Ulisse Aldrovandi was donated in 1603 to Bologna's authorities so that it could be open to the public at the Palazzo Pubblico, where some dozen years later it was enriched with the collection of Marquis Ferdinand Cospi. However, the only Italian museum created in the latter

half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was the Musaeum Kircherianum at the Roman Jesuit College organized in 1652 by Athanasius Kircher. It differed from many other strictly lay collections in its religious character and message focused on the apology of Christianity and glorification of papacy.

Meanwhile, Italian museums entered the 18<sup>th</sup> century under the sign of modern science. After the long break, the first one was founded at the Luigi Marsili Institute of Sciences in Bologna. It formed one of the elements of an extensive didactic and research structure, containing a library, rooms for experimental physics, military architecture, natural history, and finally a room with antiquities and fine arts, as well as a publishing house. However, that trend delineated then new intellectual tendencies: archaeology having returned to being in fashion, reached its peak popularity within the next half a century. In Verona, a museum of antiquities was founded in 1719 on the initiative of the well-known erudite Marquis Scipione Maffei. Its basis was formed by a collection of ancient inscriptions in stone owned by the Philharmonic Academy which, substantially enriched, Marguis placed in the portico wall in front of the façade of the Philharmonic Theatre. However, the museum of epigraphs was relatively modest in comparison to the collection of art displaying ancient sculptures, sarcophagi, vases with painterly decoration, mosaics, gems; at the time, antiquity additionally extended to include Etruscan civilization discovered partially by accident. As of the 1720s, the number of museums containing ancient pieces grew systematically. Such museums were created in Cortona (1726–1728), Volterra (1728), Ravenna (1734), Ferrara (1735), Pesaro (1736), Siena (1750), Urbino (1756), and Catania (1758).

Soon, the most important museums of the Europe of the time were created; founded anew or on the bases of the earlier existing ones, they turned into true art shrines. The Capitoline Museum was altered as commissioned by Pope Clement XII, the project subsequently continued by Pope Benedict XIV; the collection substantially grew, including e.g., a number of works from the dispersed collection of Cardinal Alessandro Albani, which allowed to elevate the Museum to the rank of the largest. The Italian museum landscape was enriched by the discovery of Herculaneum (1738), and later Pompeii (1748), which intensified the interest in antiquity, and corrected many myths and imprecisions in the up-to-then knowledge of the two. The antiquities from Herculaneum placed in Naples at the Palazzo degli Studi (currently the National Archaeological Museum) together with the Pinacoteca di Capodimonte, which in the 1730s became home to the Farnesi Collection from Parma, formed a strong museum centre. However, it was Rome which remained at the head, and where unquestionably the most significant museum in Europe until the times of the Treaty of Tolentino and the French confiscation (1796) was founded. Inaugurated in 1773 at the Vatican, the Museo Pio-Clementino owes its existence to two Popes: Clement XIX and Pius VI. In the Museum's concept there was no more need to oppose Christianity to paganism, it was mainly the artistic dimension of the displayed art in its most exquisite symptoms that was emphasized there within the most modern conditions for the times (actually under the impact of Johann Joachim Winckelmann's writings). The development of the institution put an end to the uncontrolled export of antiquities, and turned the Vatican into the main place of their cult. Of significance was

also the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, earlier a ducal gallery with curiosities of nature and art, accessible only to visitors of high status, mainly foreigners, and once a year to the Florentines. With the end of the House of Medici in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the ducal throne was ascended by the Habsburgs. Owned by the city at the time, the Gallery was rearranged, with nature specimens and curiosities withdrawn as exhibits, which left the display of ancient sculptures and vases, as well as paintings. In 1769, the Gallery was opened to the public.

Until the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the museum was exclusively an Italian institution. The study contains a brief analysis of the factors which had an impact on that situation: historical, civilizational, economic, social, and cultural. It was in Italy that the cultural traditions of antiquity were vivid, life was more affluent, courts and cities wealthier (thanks to the Mediterranean trade), devastating wars less frequent and fewer (at least until the conflicts in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century). Meanwhile, there was much more unrest in the North witnessing continuous conflicts, and being much less affluent (except for Flanders and the Rhineland); a different living ideal dominated there, with a knight taking the place of a nobleman (and not a courtier as shown by Baldassar Castiglione), while the position of a humanist was taken by a clergyman, mistrustful of ancient pagan sculptures, with a preference for a text than an image. Therefore, private collections adapted slowly; exceptional among dukes in the earlier period, they became a universal phenomenon only in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries when the above differences were slightly blurred. However, soon the ideological ferment of the Reformation yielded iconoclasm on the one hand, and bloody religious wars on the other, ravaging Central Europe, to be finally concluded with the Peace of Utrecht in 1713. Only then was it possible to introduce major cultural innovations. The prestige Italy enjoyed at Northern courts, bonds with it, Italy's culture's impact on intellectual formation, artistic interests, collecting, travels, and the knowledge of the public museums operating there caused that the North felt the need to have a similar institution. As a result, some tens of them appeared throughout the continent concentrating on presenting art or natural history, and almost all of them originally stemmed from ducal collections held in palace galleries.

Bearing in mind such an impact of the development of private collections on forming the museum, Pomian dedicates a sizeable chapter to the collections of modern kings and dukes. Once again he returns to the critical moment of the transition between a treasure chamber and a collection. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the treasure chamber almost exclusively became a storage for means of payment, precious items, and materials which, if a need arose, could be easily sold or melted. When isolating works of art, paintings, antiquities, medals, and nature curiosities from a treasure chamber, a duke followed his personal interests, personal choices and arrangement, showing definite competences, through which he formed a collection, a whole which was meant mainly for being watched, seen as an expression of his interests and aesthetical attitudes. Once again the Author quotes in this respect the exceptional 14<sup>th</sup>-century example of Charles V the Wise and his siblings, in particular Duke Philip II the Bold of Burgundy and the latter's descendants. Pomian points to art collections amassed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century: of Netherlandish painting and ancient sculpture of



Margaret of Austria, Governor of the Netherlands, daughter of Maximilian of Austria; of Francis I, creator of the French royal collection at Fontainebleau; galleries of paintings of the King of Spain Philip II at the Royal Palace of El Pardo and at Madrid's Alcázar, as well as at the El Escorial Monastery; the Mannerist collection in Prague of Emperor Rudolph II; and finally, Munich's *Antiquarium* of Albert V of Bavaria. What evolved from a treasure chamber was a peculiar collection type, popular particularly in the German-speaking zone: the *Kunstkammer*, art chamber, becoming the symptom of the duke's or magnate's status. Its content was made up of art works, gems, nature curiosities, works of human dexterity, relics, reliquaries, old arms, etc., described at one time and analysed by Julius von Schlosser.<sup>2</sup> Art chambers were also created at Catholic courts (of Archduke Ferdinand II Habsburg at Ambras near Innsbruck in Tirol; of Albert V Wittelsbach in Munich; of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague), as well as Protestant ones (of the Hessen landgraves in Kassel; of the House of Wettin in Dresden; of the Hohenzollerns in Berlin; of the House of Oldenburg in Copenhagen). All that world was devastated by the Thirty Years' War, contributing to the greatest redistribution of works of art in modern Europe.

However, what is regarded to have been the first museums created outside Italy are those of natural history: the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (1683) and the British Museum in London (1753). The Ashmolean was made up of a cabinet created by the Tradescants: father and son, naturalists and gardeners. It later passed into the hands of the lawyer, antiquary, and politician Elias Ashmole who donated it to the University under the condition that it would be open to the public in a separate building. The British Museum, in turn, was based on the collection of Sir Hans Sloane, a naturalist and traveller, purchased by the British Parliament (with time it ceased being a museum of natural history, turning into one of the major collections of ancient sculpture worldwide). At this point, Pomian points to a wider cultural context. Studies of naturalists, doctors, and pharmacists, created a new collection type covering first of all or exclusively nature specimens, this particularly popular in the Netherlands. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century almost everywhere across Europe people collected cabinets, listened to lectures, watched protests, published and read books (within German culture natural history cabinets were the most popular form of collecting). These interests were more often than not supported by utilitarian motivations connected with the development of economy, agriculture, or medicine, therefore also state institutions amassed collections, these, however, more dedicated to scientists and their research, rarely opened to the public. In this respect it was the *Jardin royal des plantes médicinales* founded in Paris in 1635 that was of major importance; botanists supplied it with medical plants from all over the world (America, China, Asia, Africa). However, still before the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century the Royal cabinet of natural history, thus essentially the first museum in France, was opened there to the public; enjoying high turnout, it also inspired foreign visitors' admiration.

The last sections of the study are dedicated to reflections on the museum and public art collections. In the first decades, they existed as if in a double format: it was either a collection of ancient sculptures (e.g., *Statuario pubblico* in Venice or the Verona Museum), or a collection of antiquities combined since the times of the 'renaissance of arts' with

an art collection, including painting (e.g., the Uffizi Gallery in Florence). Meanwhile, in the North of Europe the third type appeared: painting galleries where there were no antiquities at all, or they performed merely a decorative function. In France, following a long period of the lack of artistic interests either of the court or nobility, collecting emerged thanks to the activity of Cardinals Armand Jean du Plessis de Richelieu and Jules Mazarin, while King Louis XIV perceived art as a tool of state policy; in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the gallery of the House of Orléans was opened to the public at the Palais Royal near the Louvre. Also some demands were formulated to open the monarchy's collection to the public (La Font de Saint-Yenne); these were fulfilled in 1750–1779 at the former Palace of Marie de' Medici, called the Luxembourg Palace. At the time, almost every European court conducted a form of cultural policy, this including collection building. They were often opened to the public, since the interest in art extended, next to aristocracy including the circles of lower ranking nobility and burghers. In German countries, rising from the devastation of the Thirty Years' War, galleries of the Emperor, Prussian King, and other rulers were rebuilt, often opened to the public, with time giving a start to museums. They were described in catalogues, popularizing print collections, displaying them in a chronological order, divided into artistic schools, placed in separate buildings, like at Vienna's Belvedere, Dresden's Zwinger and Japanese Palace, in the Salzdahlum Palace Gallery of the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, at the Sanssouci Palace in Berlin, in Charlottenburg and Potsdam, or in Düsseldorf. In Kassel, following the design of the architect Simon Louis du Ry Frederick II, Landgrave of Hesse, raised the building of the Museum Fridericianum, the first museum building worldwide meant to house a collection of antiquities, painting gallery, natural history collection, and a library (1779).

Pomian assesses the number of museums before the opening of the Louvre to be standing at almost a hundred, of which the majority had been founded in the fifty years before that fact. This does not sound a lot in comparison to their later growth, but also in view of the numerous private collections whose development determined the foundation of museums. The first volume of Pomian's study constitutes to a great degree an extensive outline of the history of European collecting from its ancient beginning, with the emphasis on the moments of the transition between the mediaeval treasure chamber to a modern private collection, particularly in Europe beyond the Alps. According to the Author, the museum as a peculiar collection type can come to existence, only in the society which is familiar with private collections, and it is almost unthinkable without it; this delineates the research perspective of the study. Therefore, when emphasizing the ancient tradition of today's museum, Pomian, contrary to the opinions of researchers, points to a monarch's treasure chamber, and not the Alexandrian *museion* where collections were not amassed, and which was more a temple of the muses with a peculiar college of scholars and a library. It was the *museion* which etymologically served as the predecessor of today's museum, however, it has to be remembered that the term (in various linguistic versions), both in antiquity, as well as in the Middle Ages, and in modern times was used to define entirely different venues and institutions: those dedicated to the muses of hills and groves,

poetry festivals, centres for study and education, a venue for encounters and intellectual reflection in libraries, as well as different texts (collections of stories, lexicons, encyclopaedia). The Author analyses and presents the process launched in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, undeniably under the influence of Giovio's

authority, which gradually led in European languages to associating the word 'museum' with a collection and its display, which since the founding of the Louvre has become the word's dominant semantic content, reaching exclusivity throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> K. Pomian, *Le musée, une histoire mondiale*, vol. 1: *Du trésor au musée*, vol. 2: *L'ancrage européen, 1789–1850*, vol. 3: *A la conquête du monde, 1850–2020*, Paris 2020–2022.

<sup>2</sup> J. von Schlosser, *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelwesens*, Leipzig 1908.

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