

SCHOOL MUSEOGRAPHY, SCHOLASTIC MEMORY AND EDUCATIONAL IDENTITIES IN THE IBERIAN CONTEXT

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SUMMARY

The current world-wide panorama of school museums is an exuberant and diversified multicolour mosaic of institutions with varying intra-continental presence. There are vast differences in territorial coverage and ownership, in administrative, organic and functional dependence, in museological, museographical and display projects, in permanent collections, activities, programmes and specific content. This diversity is reflected in continental and insular Europe, and on a smaller scale in the Iberian Peninsula, which is the focus of our work.

In spite of institutional diversity, museums do have a common, recognisable thread of identity. Their fundamental functions tend to be defined in a conceptually rich but imprecise and broad way by such entities as the International Council of Museums: to safeguard, display, study and disseminate aspects of heritage, in this case relating to the educational sphere, and the agents involved, once value has been assigned to it.

The last several decades in the Iberian context have been marked by a growing resurgence of museums specialising in educational themes. This has predominately been expressed in multiple projects to recover scholastic memory and in a few cases has led to the institutionalization of these projects.

In contrast with predominantly national and state initiatives during the first phase of school museums, beginning in the 1880's, current museographical expressions tend toward regional and local centres and projects. For most of contemporary history, the political and administrative structure of both Spain and Portugal has been characterised by centralized organs of power where cultural homogenization was imposed upon the various geographical

and jurisdictional areas. Today, proposals for establishing centralized projects have mostly disappeared; they are poorly received and lack the necessary continuity for carrying them out.

This territorial quality is in good measure the result of having established the unique identities of the various peoples that compose the national realities, and is in fact a defining feature of present-day museological projects and school museums in the Iberian Peninsula. They attempt to objectively reflect the variety of scholastic cultures, even where pedagogical discourse and educational policies were uniform.

Empowering the local and regional spheres has given rise to a swift and energetic propagation of a museographical variant of the abundant ethnographical museums currently found in the Iberian Peninsula; in which school has gradually become integrated within the global corpus of popular culture. However, this is not the only recent variant of educational museography. There are also regional museums specialising in educational matters, museums linked to universities and centres at every level of the educational system, museums linked to municipalities or other public organisms in the local sphere and museums sponsored by private entities.

Happily, many deposits, laboratories and showcases of scholastic memory - scattered and dormant if not abandoned, demolished or annihilated over time – are being recovered. This is closely linked to the current model of territorial organization in the Iberian Peninsula and the multiple grass-roots cultural identity movements interested in rescuing expressions of autochthonous culture.

The complete text provides an overview of the current museums specialising in educational matters in Spain and Portugal, as well as the higher-order integrative structures that seek to link them. In an effort to more carefully identify the distinguishing characteristics of what is currently gathered under the heading of school museography, we use the content of the Museo Pedagógico de Galicia (MUPEGA) as a point of reference. The dynamic educational identities that compose this museum have been carefully developed, giving the museum a well-defined character. Here, unique elements of the vernacular culture are found alongside elements of exogenous origin, which have required specific strategies and adaptive formulas in the design of the museum.