

Migration Museums: A Proposed Typology

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The aim of this article is to propose the perception of migration museums as a coherent group. Migration museums are perceived by some professionals as specialised, thematic historical or ethnographic museums, whereas this paper organises the diversity of historical and contemporary migratory movements in connection with the current dynamic development of museums. Among the migration museums, the following types were grouped and distinguished: migration museums which comprehensively address the subject of various migrations, migration museums in the historical migration infrastructure, open-air migration museums, migration museums dedicated to specific events, migration museums established by immigrant communities and virtual migration museums. The importance of addressing the topic of migration in other types of museums, such as maritime, ethnographic, historical and art museums, is also highlighted. Covering the global network of migration museums allows us to search for answers to the question of the role of museums at a time when refugees and climate migrations will be among the greatest challenges for humanity.

Keywords: migration, typology of museums, migration infrastructure, migration museums

Introduction: Typologies of museums

Museums can be systematised in many different ways, depending on the criteria adopted. The ways in which museums are organised vary from country to country as a result of national legislation. Hence, the division into public museums (state, federal, provincial, local government) and private museums (run by foundations, religious associations, individuals) differs in different parts of the world.

In the pre-pandemic reality, the mutual relationship between the virtual museum and the museum operating in a stationary location was already being discussed. The pandemic and the resulting lockdowns (and the resultant phenomena of remote work and learning) have given new meaning to the interpenetration of these two seemingly separate manifestations of the museum. The case of the virtual museum, which was initially refused the status of a ‘museum’ but which has since come to be seen as a desirable development of stationary activities, shows that the use of “divisions” among museums is verified by social and civilisational changes. The typological classification of museums based on thematic criteria has also been subject to similar transformations.

The organisational and thematic method of systematising museums is the most popular approach – and also the one that is intuitively recognised by a wide group of museum visitors.

Non-museum professionals are familiar with divisions such as artistic, historical, archaeological, ethnographic, technical–scientific and natural museums. The grouping museums according to the scope of their activities is reflected in the structure of ICOM (International Council of Museums). ICOM has a two-tier structure of national committees and thematic committees. However, this way of perceiving museums comes from the period preceding the so-called “new museology”. In subsequent decades, the role of education in museums increased, especially in terms of inclusive education and lifelong learning, as well as the role of intangible heritage. Also, decolonisation and the inclusion of the curatorial voice of representatives of indigenous nations has brought about changes in the way museum narratives are created.

In recent years, many museums have been created which break away from the traditional division of the matter and organisation. Such institutions include what could be described as “museums of ideas”, such as human rights museums. Migration museums, which have thus far not been included in museum typologies as a separate coherent group, have also undergone a large-scale development in activity in recent decades. Given the current dynamics of migration and the growing number of migration museums, there has not yet been enough research published on this topic.¹ As two articles on the typology of museums were published in the journal *Museology and Cultural Heritage* only in 2021,² I would hereby like to propose a typology of migration museums.

Migration museums

In using the term “migration museums”, I refer primarily to museums that deal with the subject of migration in a comprehensive manner. In their permanent and temporary exhibitions and in their programme and educational activities, they address issues of historical and contemporary migration – both emigration and immigration – and explain who economic migrants and refugees are. Their various activities are addressed to a very wide audience: the local community, tourists, the diaspora and newcomers. In institutional terms, these museums can be described as complex institutions. One of the most characteristic features of migration museums is their involvement in the public debate currently taking place around the issue of migration. Examples include the Muzeum Emigracji w Gdyni (Emigration Museum in Gdynia, Poland) and the Deutsches Auswandererhaus (German Emigration Centre, Bremerhaven, Germany). It can also be shown, based on the example of these two institutions, that often the name of a museum suggests a narrower scope of activity than it actually engages with in reality (as designated by the word “emigration” or “immigration” in the name). At the

¹ An important precursor is the book by SCHLUTOW, Martin. *Das Migrationsmuseum*. Berlin: LIT Verlag 2012, although it focuses only on the museums in Hamburg and Bremerhaven. However, there are many texts on working with migrants in different types of museums (art, regional, national and other), on inclusive education, on different types of museums as a space for contact between host societies and migrants, etc. See inter alia: BODO, Simona, GIBBS Kirsten, SANI Margherita (eds). *Museums as places for intercultural dialogue: selected practices from Europe*. MAP for ID Group, 2009; LABADI, Sophia. *Museums, immigrants and social justice*. London: Routledge, 2018; LEVIN, Amy K. (ed.). *Global Mobilities. Refugees, Exiles, and Immigrants in Museums and Archives*. London: Routledge, 2019; SERGI, Domenico. *Museums, Refugees and Communities*. London: Routledge, 2021. Among the older publications, it is worth mentioning the series *Museums and Diversity* (publisher: Berghahn) comprising six volumes published between 2006 and 2011.

² GARTNEROVÁ Eva. Typology and Audience Engagement of University Galleries. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo – Museology and Cultural Heritage* 2021, 9(1), pp. 119–134; SATUBALDIN, Abay, SAKHIYEVA, Kunikey. The Museum System of Modern Kazakhstan: Classification and Typology of Museums. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo – Museology and Cultural Heritage* 2021, 9(2), pp. 79–89.

Emigration Museum in Gdynia, the permanent exhibition presents the history of emigration from Polish lands in the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries, but educational, programmatic and scientific activities shift the weight of the narrative to contemporary migration. In the German Emigration Centre's 2017 catalogue, the scope of activities is characterised as follows:

This third edition includes the section from the 2012 exhibition, which covers the history of 300 years of migration to Germany. The museum now shows both perspectives, as seen by the German emigrants, and by the Europeans who have found a new home in Germany. But it also reveals the migrant stories whose outcome remain unclear, for example the stories of the Syrian war refugees who came to the Federal Republic of Germany in 2014 and 2015.³

At the same time, among the significant and active museums of migration are also those that focus on one particular aspect of migration: immigration to specific countries. Examples include Immigrantmuseet (the Danish Immigration Museum in Farum, Denmark)⁴, the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration (Paris, France)⁵ and New Americans Museum and Immigration Learning Center (San Diego, California, USA).⁶

Migration museums in historical migration infrastructure

Among museums of migration, it is worth pointing to a certain narrower group consisting of migration museums located in the historical migration infrastructure. Two aspects determine their special role: authenticity of experience and protection of architectural monuments. Presenting exhibitions and conducting educational activities in buildings (warehouses, detention barracks, customs houses, immigrant inns, etc.) through which thousands or millions of migrants have passed evokes vivid reactions from visitors.⁷ In many cities, the establishment of cultural institutions in facilities that used to serve passenger traffic is associated with the revitalisation of former port or shipyard areas. The new museum becomes part of a wider project to provide the waterfront with new urban and social functions. The buildings themselves also undergo renovation in order to convert them to museums. Examples of this type of museum include:

- Muzeum Emigracji w Gdyni (Emigration Museum in Gdynia, Poland),⁸ in the Marine

³ *Deutsches Auswandererhaus. Das buch zum museum der aus- und einwanderung* [German Emigration Center. The museum for emigration and immigration book]. Bremerhaven: Edition DAH, 2017, editorial page.

⁴ Immigrantmuseet, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://immigrantmuseet.dk/>. Next to each of the listed migration museums, the web address is given in a footnote. At the same time, it should be noted that a considerable number of statements in this text are based on the author's own research, i.e., personal visits to a number of migration museums.

⁵ Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, accessed November 8, 2021, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/>.

⁶ New Americans Museum & Immigration Learning Center, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.nalac.org/members/new-americans-museum-immigration-learning-center/>.

⁷ As examples, see the reviews published shortly after the opening of the exhibitions at the two former immigration stations on the East and West Coasts of the USA. "My shipmates on the boat to Ellis Island chatted excitedly in a dozen different languages as we pulled up to the dock and stepped ashore. Awed by the colossal structure confronting us, its giant doorway decked with stone eagles, we entered timidly [...] We had arrived, it was clear, at a museum that would use the immigrant processing station's original spaces to re-create, viscerally as well as intellectually, the experience of those who passed this way nearly a century ago." (WALLACE, Mike. The Ellis Island Immigration Museum. In: *The Journal of American History* 78(3), 1991, pp. 1023–1024). On Angel Island, visitors are impressed by the inscriptions carved on the walls of the barracks by the immigrants held there: "it is on the walls of the Detention Barracks Museum that we have something usually far more elusive – the voices of people speaking back to power [...] These walls do speak." (ETTINGER, Patrick. Review of Angel Island. United States Immigration Station, Angel Island Detention Barracks. In: *The Journal of American History*, 97(1), 2010, p. 140).

⁸ Muzeum Emigracji w Gdyni, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://polska1.pl/>.

Station (the Transit Warehouse and the Passenger Hall) at the French quay in the port of Gdynia.⁹

- Red Star Line Museum (Antwerp, Belgium),¹⁰ on Rijnkaai quay. The warehouse which now houses the museum was where medical and administrative checks were once carried out; there was also a bathhouse and an installation for decontaminating luggage. The name of the museum commemorates the Red Star Line, which belonged to Société Anonyme de Navigation Belge-Americaine.¹¹

- Emigranternas Hus¹² (House of Emigrants, Göteborg, Sweden),¹³ housed in the Tullhuset (Customs House) on Packhuskajen wharf.¹⁴

- Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration (New York, USA), located in the main building of the former immigration station.¹⁵

- Detention Barracks Museum and Angel Island Immigration Museum (the latter in a former hospital) on Angel Island (San Francisco, USA). One foundation runs both museums.¹⁶

- Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 (Halifax, Canada).¹⁷ The museum's official name includes the number of the quay where transatlantic ships moored and at which there was a building for passenger traffic, in which – next to administrative control rooms – there were, among others, waiting rooms and a nursery for the youngest children of immigrants. The name Pier 21 is used by the Canadians themselves not so much to designate the waterfront as the entire complex.¹⁸

- Museu da Imigração do Estado de São Paulo (Immigration Museum of the State of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil), located in a former immigration hotel (Bras Immigrant Hostelry / Hospedaria de Imigrantes do Brás).¹⁹

- Museo Nacional de la Inmigración (National Immigration Museum, Buenos Aires, Argentina), also housed in a former immigrant hotel (Immigrants' Hotel / Hotel de los Inmigrantes).²⁰

- Immigration Museum (Melbourne, Australia), in the former Customs Office, which

⁹ JOCEK, Szymon. Architektura Dworca Morskiego w Gdyni [The architecture of the Marine Station in Gdynia]. In: *Przestrzenie emigracji: Dworzec Morski i infrastruktura emigracyjna w Gdyni* [Dimensions of emigration: the Marine Station and emigration infrastructure in Gdynia]. Gdynia: Muzeum Emigracji, 2018.

¹⁰ Red Star Line Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.redstarline.be/en>.

¹¹ *Red Star Line Museum. In the Footsteps of Migrants*. The Red Star Line Museum, 2013.

¹² Research in the museums of Sweden and Norway mentioned in the text was carried out as part of the project Miniatura 2 National Science Centre Poland “Imigracja z ziem polskich XIX– XXI wieku w działalności wystawieniowej, edukacyjnej i wydawniczej muzeów Norwegii i Szwecji” [Immigration from the Polish lands of the nineteenth–twenty-first century in the exhibition, educational and publishing activities of the museums of Norway and Sweden], no. 2018/02/X/HS3/02776.

¹³ Emigranternas Hus, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://emigranternashus.se/>.

¹⁴ HANSSON, Lars, RUUD, Jonas. *Emigration guide Gothenburg*. Emigranternas Hus, Riksarkivet – Landsarkivet i Göteborg.

¹⁵ The Statue of Liberty—Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.statueoffliberty.org/ellis-island/national-immigration-museum/>.

¹⁶ Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.aiisf.org/planyourvisit/>.

¹⁷ Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://pier21.ca/home>.

¹⁸ DUIVENVOORDEN MITIC, Trudy and LEBLANC, J. P. *Pier 21. The Gateway that changed Canada*. Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2011.

¹⁹ “The Museum”, Immigration Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <http://museudaimigracao.org.br/en/about-im/the-museum>.

²⁰ “About the Immigration Museum”, MUNTREF (Museos de la Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero), accessed November 8, 2021, <http://untref.edu.ar/muntref/en/museum-of-immigration/about-mi/>.

was once a centre of trade and migration.²¹

German ports were an important element of nineteenth-century migration routes in Europe. For example, there is the BallinStadt Emigration Museum in Hamburg, Germany (Das Auswanderermuseum BallinStadt Hamburg).²² The buildings known as Auswandererhallen (emigrants' halls) which house the museum are not original.²³ At the same time, however, this institution deserves to be mentioned here because the very decision to faithfully reconstruct the former coastal emigration halls and locate a migration museum here is an example of the presented strategy of creating museums in former migration infrastructure.

Hamburg is an inland port located on the Elbe River, which flows into the North Sea. At the mouth of the Elbe is the city of Cuxhaven, which, at the turn of the twentieth century, was administratively part of Hamburg. This is where the largest seagoing ships were serviced, for which the Cuxhaven HAPAG Hall was used. At present there is no migration museum of the kind mentioned above, but the space is used for migration exhibitions and guided tours thanks to the efforts of a local association.²⁴

The third important point on the German map of migration routes was Bremerhaven, where the German Emigration Centre (Deutsches Auswandererhaus) operates.²⁵ The building that houses the museum is completely modern. The reason for mentioning it in this part of the text is that the headquarters of the museum were built in the harbour, right on the waterfront. The museum's research department and library are housed in the adjacent historic building of the former Marine Board of Inquiry.²⁶ Moreover, the analysis of the narrative and applied scenographic solutions of the permanent exhibition of this museum underpin its kinship with the abovementioned museums, as it tells the story of the transatlantic emigrations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In the transatlantic era, there was a huge complex serving passenger traffic in Cherbourg–Octeville, France. It has not survived in its entirety to this day, but the Transatlantic Terminal Concourse, which has been preserved, now houses a multi-departmental museum, La Cité de la Mer. It is difficult to call this a museum of migration as a whole – among the most valuable exhibits there is a submarine in dry dock and part of the exhibition is devoted to the RMS Titanic. At the same time, however, the preserved former Baggage Hall houses a permanent exhibition on emigration.²⁷

Sydney Living Museums' Hyde Park Barracks (Sydney, Australia) is somewhat similar to the French museum in Cherbourg. Here, too, we are dealing with a multi-threaded museum only part of which is about migration. At the same time, this polyphonic narrative has its origins in the history of the site and the building. Hyde Park Barracks originally served convicts and this part of the narrative is called the Convicts' Colony. So in this case, when we talk about migration, it refers to a specific kind of forced migration, namely, the British policy of sending

²¹ "Customs House. Home of the Immigration Museum", Immigration Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://museumsvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/resources/customs-house/>.

²² Auswanderermuseum BallinStadt Hamburg, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.ballinstadt.de/>.

²³ WÖST, Ursula. *Port of Dreams: BallinStadt – Emigrants' World in Hamburg*. In: GROPE, Hans-Herman, WÖST, Ursula. *Via Hamburg to the World*. Hamburg: Ellert & Richter Verlag, 2007.

²⁴ Förderverein Hapag-Halle Cuxhaven e.V., accessed November 8, 2021, <https://hapaghalle-cuxhaven.de/de/>.

²⁵ Deutsches Auswandererhaus, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://dah-bremerhaven.de/>.

²⁶ FIITKAU, Tanja. *Das Seeamt und die Bibliothek / The Maritime Board of Inquiry and the Library*. In: *Deutsches Auswandererhaus. Das buch zum museum der aus- und einwanderung* [German Emigration Center. The museum for emigration and immigration book]. Bremerhaven: Edition DAH, 2017, 98.

²⁷ La Cité de la Mer, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.citedelamer.com/>.

convicts to Australia. Later, Hyde Park Barracks served as an immigration depot, and this is also among the subjects covered in this museum.²⁸

With some reservations, the Irish Emigration Museum (EPIC) in Dublin, Ireland, can also be added to this list. The museum is located in the so-called CHQ (Custom House Quay) Building, which – despite its traditional name – was not used for customs clearance or passenger traffic but was actually a goods warehouse.²⁹ However, placing the migration museum in the port district in a building related to sea transport is in line with the presented strategy.

Most of the museums mentioned in this section are in port cities. Against this background, São Paulo, located inland, stands out, with its museum in the so-called immigrants' hotel. It should be known that the term “emigration industry” is used to describe the organisation of the great labour and settlement migrations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from Europe to North and South America. Port infrastructure and transatlantic ships are just one part of this. The organisation of mass departures began with assembly points in the interior of countries; the rail network played an important role here. After crossing the ocean, settlers headed for the interior of the continents, which is where places like the immigrants' hotel in São Paulo come in. The immigrants had to organise their future life in the country of settlement on their own. At this point, it is worth mentioning another museum that shows precisely how immigrants organised their new life: the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (New York, USA). From the 1860s to the 1930s, immigrants from all over the world rented apartments in this tenement house. The tenement house was a place for incomers to live and run their various businesses.³⁰ The history of this immigrant site (original and reconstructed interiors) is just the starting point for the museum, which also offers Neighbourhood Walking Tours showcasing New York's multi-ethnic neighbourhoods.³¹

Placing a migration museum in former migration infrastructure strengthens the power of the exhibition's message and educational activities. Decisions on the location of new migration museums are sometimes accompanied by heated debates; such was the case of the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris, which was eventually placed in a city and a building unrelated to migration. This location was met with criticism; it was also pointed out that it was detached from the places where immigrants currently live and work in France. It is worth quoting one of the emphatic voices summarising this discussion:

In the end, Paris won out (as usual), with the idea that such a museum should be centrally located. ... [T]he Palais de la Porte Doree was ultimately chosen because of its striking character as a historic monument. But as a result the museum has had to construct itself against the building in which it is housed, rather than thanks to it, as at Ellis Island. And the CNHI project has faced repeated criticisms about that choice.³²

Examples of institutions whose existence is connected with global migration routes have been indicated above. However, museums in places (monuments) organically connected

²⁸ Sydney Living Museums Hyde Park Barracks, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://hydeparkbarracks.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/>.

²⁹ EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://epicchq.com/>.

³⁰ KAZAL, Russell. Migration History in Five Stories (and a Basement): The Lower East Side Tenement Museum. In: *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34(4), 2015.

³¹ The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.tenement.org/>.

³² GREEN, Nancy. A French Ellis Island? Museums, Memory and History in France and the United States. In: *History Workshop Journal* No. 63, 2007, p. 244.

with migration can also be national, regional or local.³³ There are also places connected with migration whose structure is under special protection (for example, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site), but museums do not operate there.³⁴ A larger number of migration museums could also be included in the list of historical migration infrastructure if the category included museums commemorating slavery and human trafficking, operating at sites once associated with this criminal practice.³⁵

Open-air migration museums

The group labelled “open-air museums” is extensive and internally diverse. Its origins are associated with Scandinavia (skansen); in Europe it gained popularity in the form referred to as the “open-air museum” or “folk museum”. In the USA a specific form of “living history museum” has evolved.³⁶

There are many open-air museums around the world that are also museums of migration. They often have an ethnic character, emphasising the ethnic origin of immigrants in the new country of settlement. In Canada alone we can mention as examples the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (Alberta),³⁷ the Polish Kashub Heritage Museum and Skansen (Wilno, Ontario)³⁸ and the Mennonite Heritage Village (Steinbach, Manitoba).³⁹ For the researcher of migration processes, museums that can be described as transnational are of greater interest. An example of this kind of open-air museum (unusual from the perspective of local European conflicts) is the Cook’s Creek Heritage Museum (Cook’s Creek, Manitoba, Canada).⁴⁰ This museum, which was founded by a Czech Roman Catholic priest, celebrates the traditions of Polish and Ukrainian settlers and also mentions Jewish immigrants in its narrative.

Open-air museums focused on English- or French-speaking settlers, such as the Village Historique Acadien Provincial Park (Bertrand, New Brunswick) are associated with the earlier period of immigration to Canada.⁴¹

An interesting concept for a museum is to show the living conditions of settlers using original buildings transported to the emigrants’ country of origin. In Norway, a small open-air museum was created by transporting eight buildings from the American Upper Midwest from the years 1870 to 1920 across the ocean and rebuilding them as the Friluftsmuseet, Norsk

³³ Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum may be an example (Lwandle, Republic of South Africa). Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://lwandle.com/>.

³⁴ An example of this is Aapravasi Ghat (Port Louis, Mauritius), listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Aapravasi Ghat, UNESCO World Heritage List, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1227>.

³⁵ For example, the Cape Coast Castle Museum (Cape Coast, Ghana) – Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.ghanamuseums.org/cape-coast-museum.php>; Maison des Esclaves (The House of Slaves; on Gorée Island, Senegal) – Island of Gorée, UNESCO World Heritage List, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/26>.

³⁶ For interesting comments on how American museologists adopted and then transformed Scandinavian and British models, see WIGHT MARSHALL, Howard. Folklife and the Rise of American Folk Museums. In: *The Journal of American Folklore*, 90/9358, 1977.

³⁷ Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://ukrainianvillage.ca/>.

³⁸ Polish Kashub Heritage Museum and Skansen, accessed November 8, 2021, <http://www.wilno.org/museum.html>.

³⁹ Mennonite Heritage Village, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://mennoniteheritagevillage.com/>.

⁴⁰ Cooks Creek Heritage Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <http://www.cchm.ca/>.

⁴¹ Village Historique Acadien Provincial Park, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.villagehistoriqueacadien.com/>.

Utvandrermuseet (Open-air Museum, Norwegian Emigrant Museum in Ottestad, Norway).⁴²

Based on another concept, an extensive open-air museum was created in Northern Ireland: the Ulster American Folk Park (Omagh, Northern Ireland).⁴³ In this museum, visitors are given the holistic story of emigration from Ulster to America between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Some of the original buildings show life in Ireland; visitors can then visit a replica ship and see buildings, interiors and furnishings depicting life in America, some of which are original, having been moved across the ocean and rebuilt in the museum.

Migrations museums dedicated to specific events

A significant aspect of migration museums based in historical migration infrastructure is that together they create a kind of organic global network that tells the story of similar processes of great migrations throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The examples of open-air migration museums mentioned above also tell part of this story. At this point, it is necessary to mention a different type of migration museum: those which commemorate mass migrations triggered by specific historical events. They function in various parts of the world, in very different historical and cultural contexts. Examples include museums dedicated to events in India / Pakistan, Turkey / Greece and several European countries.

The Partition Museum is located in Amritsar, India. In 1947, British India was divided into two independent states: Pakistan and India. A result of this division was the mass forced migration of Hindus and Muslims, triggering conflicts that have lasted to this day. Estimates of fatalities and migrant numbers vary widely. The museum maintains on its website that “it was the largest migration in human history and up to 20 million people were affected.”⁴⁴

In 1923, an agreement was reached on the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey; the population exchange did not so much concern Greeks and Turks as Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Contemporary estimates suggest that fewer than 2 million people were forced to migrate. In Turkey alone, there are seven museums commemorating the exchange of populations, often called Population Exchange Museums or Population Exchange Houses (number as of 2017).⁴⁵

The presented examples from India, Turkey and Greece concern migrations following specific decisions in 1923 and 1947. In European countries, there are museums commemorating the forced migrations of the Second World War (deportations, resettlements), which are sometimes also placed in a wider historical context. An example of such a museum is Das Dokumentationszentrum Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung (Documentation Center for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, Berlin, Germany). The creators of the museum describe its main exhibition as follows:

⁴² Friluftsmuseet, Norsk Utvandrermuseet, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://utvandrermuseet.no/friluftsmuseet>.

⁴³ The Ulster American Folk Park, National Museums NI, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.nmni.com/our-museums/ulster-american-folk-park/Ulster-American-Folk-Park-Were-Ready-For-You/Ulster-American-Folk-Park-Were-Ready-For-You.aspx>.

⁴⁴ About Us, the Partition Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.partitionmuseum.org/>
The Indian Partition Museum was highly sought after and debated – see the text written prior to the establishment of the Partition Museum: RAYCHAUDHURI, Anindya. Demanding the impossible: Exploring the possibilities of a national partition museum in India. In: *Social Semiotics*, 22(2), 2012.

⁴⁵ YASDAG, Meltem. The reconstruction of a cultural landscape by emigrant’s identity: population exchange museums in Turkey. In: FOLGA-JANUSZEWSKA, Dorota (ed.). *Museums and identities: planning an extended museum*. Warszawa: Museum of King Jan III’s Palace at Wilanów, 2019.

The exhibition illuminates politically, ethnically and religiously motivated forced migrations, primarily in twentieth-century Europe, but also beyond. The displacement and expulsion of Germans during and after the Second World War, which was initiated by Germany, constitute the focus of the exhibition's narrative.⁴⁶

The activities of the Polish Muzeum Pamięci Sybiru (Sibir Memorial Museum, Białystok, Poland) cover an even wider chronological range:

The Sibir Memorial Museum is the only institution in Poland, and perhaps in the world, entirely devoted to people who, from the end of the 18th century until the middle of the 20th century, were deported deep into Russia and deported to the Soviet Union.⁴⁷

It is worth adding that there are other museums in Poland commemorating the displacements and deportations of Poles by the German and Russian (Soviet) occupiers.⁴⁸

Migrations museums founded by immigrant communities

Museums founded by immigrant communities form an extremely large group of museums. It is important to indicate the existence, number and role of these museums. At the same time, this group itself could become the subject of a separate study, and within it a number of further typology divisions could be made, depending on the criteria adopted (i.e., the research objective).

One of the most organic ways to organise these museums may appear to be the criterion of ethnicity. For example, there are dozens of museums established by immigrants from Poland in Europe, South and North America, Australia and New Zealand. At the same time, a researcher interested in specific migration processes might distinguish this collection of Polish museums from around the world according to the time and reason for migration, starting with the Polish Museum established in Rapperswil (Switzerland) in 1870.⁴⁹ Under the conditions of Poland's lack of independence in the nineteenth century, it was founded by Poles who emigrated after losing national uprisings. In turn, the World War II period is associated with, among others, the establishment of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (London, UK) in 1945.⁵⁰ Mentioned in the section on open-air migration museums above, the Polish Kashub Heritage Museum and Skansen in Canada was founded by the descendants of a specific group of economic emigrants (settlers) in the nineteenth century. Other museums gather Poles and people of Polish origin who represent various migration waves and come from different generations – this is the case, for example, in Australia and New Zealand, which are the farthest from Poland.⁵¹

However, instead of grouping museums established by emigrants from one country around the world, it is possible to indicate countries whose modern societies were created as a result of

⁴⁶ The Exhibition, Documentation Center for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung.de/visitor-info-en>.

⁴⁷ The Museum, Muzeum Pamięci Sybiru, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://sybir.bialystok.pl/en/the-museum/>.

⁴⁸ For example, the Museum of Deportations, Expulsions and Resettlements of Poles as part of the Documentation Centre of Deportations, Expulsions and Resettlements in Krakow, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://zsyliki-wypedzenia.up.krakow.pl/>.

⁴⁹ Polish Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://polenmuseum.ch/>.

⁵⁰ The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://pism.org.uk/>.

⁵¹ For example, Polish Museum and Archives in Australia, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.polishmuseumarchives.org.au/>. Such museums were also established by emigrants of other Central European nations, e.g. the National Czech and Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA. The National Czech and Slovak Museum & Library, accessed September 2, 2022, <https://ncsml.org>.

immigration. In the USA, there are museums founded by immigrants of very different origins.⁵² In Chicago alone, we find the Swedish American Museum,⁵³ Casa Italia,⁵⁴ the Polish Museum of America,⁵⁵ the Chinese American Museum of Chicago,⁵⁶ the Ukrainian National Museum⁵⁷ and the National Hellenic Museum.⁵⁸ A particularly interesting example is a specialised art museum connected with migration: the National Museum of Mexican Art.⁵⁹ These are examples from just one city; there are many more museums of this type right across the USA.⁶⁰

However, the most important thing in this author's opinion seems to be to emphasise another dimension of the phenomenon museums established by immigrants or their descendants. Among such institutions, two groups can be distinguished which can be conventionally defined as "large" and "small" museums. Both are very interesting, albeit for different reasons. Organisational momentum, modernised exhibitions, research projects, magnificent museum buildings, and cooperation with state and local authorities in creating institutions can all be read as specific indicators of the importance of a given group, its size and its organisational capabilities. The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA, New York, USA) is not only important to Chinese Americans, it is a well-recognised cultural institution in the wider context of cultural life and tourism.

For other reasons, "small" museums are interesting for researchers of migration: they are run by volunteers and may operate on the basis of religious communities or schools teaching the language of a given ethnic group. Frequently, such museums tell the story of the local immigrant community without aspiring to inform visitors about global migration processes. They come from local or family collections related to a given place. Such museums show the strength and durability of local communities. Their archives still contain many sources that require study and await introduction into the scientific circulation.⁶¹

Virtual migration museums

Virtual museums have for many years been a dynamically developing form for presenting history and collections, as well as a means of contact with cultural participants. As mentioned at the beginning of the article, the pandemic has given virtual museums a new and greater

⁵² For interesting comments on museums in the USA and their comparison to solutions in France, see CASTELLANO, Cristina. African, Chinese and Mexican National Museums in the United States. In: *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 9(4), 2011.

⁵³ Swedish American Museum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://swedishamericanmuseum.org/>.

⁵⁴ Casa Italia, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://casaitaliachicago.org/>.

⁵⁵ Polish Museum of America, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.polishmuseumofamerica.org/>.

⁵⁶ Chinese American Museum of Chicago, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://ccamuseum.org/>.

⁵⁷ Ukrainian National Museum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://ukrainiannationalmuseum.org/>.

⁵⁸ National Hellenic Museum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/>.

⁵⁹ National Museum of Mexican Art, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org/>.

⁶⁰ There are also museums in the US that tell the stories of African Americans; part of their story is the history of slavery and the forced importation of people from Africa to the USA. At the same time, however, the entire narrative of these museums is significantly broader. If museums of this type are considered a kind of migration museum, the examples would include, first of all, an institution established in 2003 and opened to the public in 2016: The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC, Washington, DC, USA), accessed November 16, 2021, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/>.

⁶¹ For an analysis of the activities of such museums on the example of the Ogniwio Polish Museum (Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada) see: PETELSKA, Michalina and BLACKMORE, Magdalena. *Museums of migration: migrants' identity and implementing the museum's mission statement – case studies from Poland and Canada*. In: FOLGA-JANUSZEWSKA, Dorota (ed.) *Museums and identities...*

meaning. Migrations are also the leitmotif of many virtual museums.

Virtual museums are either an extension of an institution (a museum with premises, collections and legal presence) or internet projects that can even be created by individuals. This is also the case with virtual migration museums. An example of a virtual museum run by an institution is Das Virtuelle Migrationsmuseum (The Virtual Migration Museum)⁶² run by DOMiD e.V. (Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland, Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany, in Cologne⁶³ – more on this institution later in the text).

The Virtual Museum of Greek Immigration to Canada can be mentioned as a project which exists only on the internet.⁶⁴ It is a very interesting example because it uses modern possibilities for creating multimedia portals (via recordings, documents) while the graphics reflect the experience of walking through the rooms of a museum. The content available on the internet is the result of the Immigrec Project, carried out by four universities in Canada and Greece.⁶⁵

Migrations in other museums

Although this is the last section listing museums dealing with the topic of migration, it should be emphasised that these examples are equally important – and perhaps even more important, in the sense that they often operate where there are no migration museums.

The phenomenon of establishing migration museums in former migration infrastructure in cities historically associated with migrations has been described above. In many port cities, however, there are no migration museums, but maritime museums operate successfully. A great example is Liverpool in Great Britain, which was one of the most important ports in Europe. Liverpool has the Maritime Museum which comprehensively presents various aspects of the maritime economy and people's relationship with the sea. The Emigrants to a New World gallery is among the permanent exhibitions. Even the set design solutions in this gallery are analogous to those present in most migration museums – for example, the living conditions of emigrants under the deck of an ocean liner are reproduced.⁶⁶ Many maritime museums have similar galleries devoted to emigration or immigration.

Ethnographic museums deal with the subject of migration in a different way. Ethnographic museums have varied origins, partly depending on the country in which they are located. Part of the collection stems from the nineteenth-century interest in folk culture and the national past. In turn, in colonial empires, collections of objects brought from the colonies were created. As a result of the process of decolonisation and changes taking place in museology, some ethnographic museums have completely changed their way of operating, the most famous European example probably being the transformation of the Göteborgs etnografiska museum

⁶² Virtuelle Migrationsmuseum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://virtuelles-migrationsmuseum.org/>.

⁶³ DOMiD, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://domid.org/>.

⁶⁴ The Virtual Museum of Greek Immigration to Canada, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://virtual.immigrec.com/en#/start/immigration-and-language-in-canada>.

⁶⁵ The Immigrec Project, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://immigrec.com/>.

⁶⁶ Emigrants to a New World gallery, Maritime Museum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime-museum/maritime-museum-floor-plan/emigrants-new-world-gallery>. In 2015, the creation of a migration museum in Liverpool was discussed, see e.g. SULLIVAN, Nicola, Plans for National Migration Museum in Liverpool, *Museums Journal*, 2015, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2015/11/25112015-plans-for-national-migration-museum-in-liverpool/>.

into Världskulturmuseet (National Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, Sweden).⁶⁷ Currently, many ethnographic museums not only provide information about their collections of objects related to cultures from different parts of the world, but also engage in education about contemporary migrations and organise direct activities aimed at newcomers and local host societies.⁶⁸

Another extremely important area is art that deals with the topic of migration – and thus also the presence of the issue of migration in art museums.⁶⁹ As an example, it is worth mentioning the newly opened art museum in Gdańsk, NOMUS Nowe Muzeum Sztuki (New Art Museum), a branch of the Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku (National Museum in Gdańsk, Poland).⁷⁰ The museum was opened in October 2021. At the time of its opening, both journalists and museum curators emphasised that the collection includes works related to the topic of migration, and the entire institution, although local to Gdańsk, would be open to the world and based on the concept of solidarity.⁷¹ One of the first events organised by the new museum was a conference on how art museums can engage in combating discrimination, xenophobia and climate change.⁷²

Migration is also a topic taken up by national museums and various types of regional and city museum.⁷³ As already mentioned (see footnote 1), apart from their exhibitions, various museums successfully organise diverse workshops and educational activities providing space for expression for migrants, helping them learn about the history, language and culture of a new country, and creating a meeting space for all visitors.

Migration museums: type or specialisation?

As noted above, the topic of migration is tackled in many different museums. Thus, migration in museums can be understood as the subject of many museums (historical, ethnographic and

⁶⁷ On the course and context of changes in Swedish ethnographic museums, see FISKESJÖ Magnus. The Trouble with World Culture: Recent Museum Developments in Sweden. In: *Anthropology Today*, 23(5), 2007.

⁶⁸ An example of this kind of extensive project, which has been implemented in several countries, is the 2014–2018 project, SWITCH – Sharing a World of Inclusion, Creativity and Heritage. Ethnography, Museums of World Culture and New Citizenship in Europe, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.swich-project.eu/about/>. A book published by ICOM ICME analyses ways of working with diverse communities in ethnographic museums: GOLDING, Viv, WALKLATE, Jen (eds). *Museums and Communities. Diversity, Dialogue and Collaboration in an Age of Migrations*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019.

⁶⁹ It is worth adding that there are museums of migration whose program activities refer mainly to art. An example of such an institution is the Interkulturelt Museum (Intercultural Museum, Oslo, Norway), located in the Grønland district of Oslo, which is inhabited by highly diverse ethnic communities. This museum, unlike most of the migration museums mentioned in this article, does not have a permanent narrative exhibition presenting the history of migration. The exhibition space is used to inform visitors about immigration to Norway and intercultural relations through artistic means of expression. The museum is also active in organizing projects involving the diverse local communities. Interkulturelt Museum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.oslomuseum.no/interkulturelt-museum/>.

⁷⁰ NOMUS New Art Museum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://nomus.gda.pl/pl>.

⁷¹ Examples of such works can be found by browsing the museum's collection via the internet, e.g. Agnieszka Kalinowska, Welcome, NOMUS, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://nomus.gda.pl/en/collection/k/agnieszka-kalinowska/welcome-en>; Joanna Rajkowska, Chariot, NOMUS, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://nomus.gda.pl/en/collection/r/joanna-rajkowska/chariot>.

⁷² CIMAM 2021 Annual Conference: Under Pressure. Museums in Times of Xenophobia and Climate Emergency, NOMUS, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://nomus.gda.pl/en/news/event/cimam-2021-annual-conference>.

⁷³ In the above text, the role of maritime, ethnographic, national and regional museums in addressing the issue of migration has been highlighted. Migrations are also an integral part of Jewish museum exhibitions. This is a very important and extensive issue that will be explored in a separate article.

others), and not a separate type of museum. This view is also represented in the literature; for example, in one text we read that “Migration should not be considered as the prerogative of a ‘type of museum’ but rather as a ‘topic for museums’”⁷⁴. Does this view contradict the main message of this article, which is that we may identify a growing group of migration museums? The author of this paper fully agrees that migration and related topics (sense of belonging, creating a modern identity in the era of mobility) are, and should continue to be, addressed by a variety of museums, including city and regional ones. As mentioned in the previous section, this is especially important where there is no specialised migration museum. Taking into account the typology of museums, migrations museums dedicated to specific events are simply historical museums; open-air migration museums can be understood as part of a wider group of open air museums, which are themselves a kind of ethnographic museum; and so on. However, the purpose of this article is to ask if we are witnessing the creation of a new type of museum. Some large and active migration museums, often those operating within former migration infrastructure, develop their activities year by year. They combine exhibitions about historical migrations with artistic projects and real involvement in helping contemporary refugees. These migration museums function as contact zones for local communities and newcomers.⁷⁵ Regardless of whether we consider a migration museum a new type of museum or just a specialised historical / ethnographical (or other) museum, these are museums whose social importance will increase, because they are museums in dialogue with the present.

Summary: migration museums – museums in dialogue with the present

In each of the above paragraphs, numerous examples are given to justify the postulated typology of migration museums and to show the scale of activity and diversity of these institutions. It should be emphasised that the author’s goal was not to create a complete catalogue of migration museums – a task which seems to be impossible. The creation of such a global list is limited not only by the cognitive abilities of one researcher, but also by the constant emergence of new institutions. In Rotterdam (the Netherlands), a migration museum is planned to be built in the former port infrastructure. In 2020, the Droom en Daad Foundation started renovating the Fenix warehouse, which was at the time the largest port warehouse in the world. Upon completion of the renovation, the building will become the home of the FENIX Landverhuizersmuseum (FENIX Museum of Migration).⁷⁶ A migration museum centred around a specific event will be set up in Berlin, called the Exilmuseum (Berlin, Germany). The main topic of the emerging museum will be the emigration from Germany after 1933, but it has also been announced that the narrative will be expanded to include issues related to contemporary refugees. The foundation preparing the museum has been operating since 2018; in 2020, there was a competition to design the museum’s new building, which will be constructed next to the symbolic remains of the Anhalter Bahnhof.⁷⁷ There are other institutions already operating in terms of implementing educational, publishing and scientific projects, but are still

⁷⁴ BASSO Luca, MONTANARI Elena, *European museums in an age of migrations. Twelve propositions for twenty-first-century museums*. In: LEVIN, Amy K. (ed.) *Global Mobilities. Refugees, Exiles, and Immigrants in Museums and Archives*. London: Routledge, 2019, p. 57.

⁷⁵ The term “museum as contact zone” was popularised in James Clifford’s 1997 essay, but is now used more widely – see: BODO, Simona, GIBBS Kirsten and SANI Margherita (eds) *Museums as places for intercultural dialogue: selected practices from Europe*. MAP for ID Group, 2009.

⁷⁶ FENIX, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://fenix.nl/en/fenix-english/>.

⁷⁷ The Stiftung Exilmuseum Berlin, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://stiftung-exilmuseum.berlin/en>.

working on preparing their permanent home and exhibitions. This includes, for example, the Migration Museum (London, UK)⁷⁸ and the German DOMiD e.V., already mentioned above. Several other migration museums which have been operating successfully for many years are modernising their buildings and exhibitions. An example of such an institution is the Italian American Museum (New York, USA), which plans to invite visitors to its new headquarters in 2022.⁷⁹ The reopening of the Museo Nazionale dell'Emigrazione Italiana, MEI (National Museum of Italian Emigration, Genoa, Italy)⁸⁰ has also been announced for the same year. The restoration of the existing museums of migration and the ongoing creation of new ones shows that they are a characteristic sign of the times.

Migration museums form a global network – both literally and figuratively. International cooperation for institutions dealing with the subject of migration is natural; it helps, for example, a museum from one country to create projects that inform the public about its diaspora scattered around the world. In addition to informal contacts, there are also temporary groups implementing specific projects and permanent networks of international cooperation.⁸¹ It should be noted, however, that neither of these networks is a complete list of all migration museums. At this point in the summary, one can reflect on the idea of creating such a list – it would certainly be a very useful tool for researchers of migration. Migration museums can be a site for studying migration on two different levels. The first one is the analysis of the source materials collected at the museum (both physical objects and oral history archives). The second research option is even more interesting: by looking at museums of migration, one can analyse the way in which the narrative of migration is constructed in the broader context of historical policy. The subject of the analysis may be the educational activities of the museum, the narration of exhibitions, but also the context of who (local government, the state, a private foundation) created the museum, or what kind of migration (emigration, diaspora, immigration, refugee) is described therein.

The global network of migration museums is also of secondary importance. Migration museums seem to be the most suitable partners of any type of museum for geopolitical researchers. This applies both to the historical aspect of shaping social and political relations, and to studies on the contemporary geopolitical situation. In the narrative of migration museums, a lot of space is occupied by the political and economic causes of historical and contemporary migrations, as well as historical and contemporary migration routes.

Museums – including migration museums – are also part of the public history. Contemporary museums have successfully attracted a wide range of visitors with different needs and ages with their offer, and have become institutions that enable lifelong learning. At a time when scientists forecast that various types of migration (climate, refugees) will be one of the greatest and permanently present challenges facing humanity, it is worth emphasising that migration museums can be a place where wide social circles can acquire reliable knowledge about

⁷⁸ Migration Museum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.migrationmuseum.org/>.

⁷⁹ A new home in the heart of Little Italy, Italian American Museum, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.italianamericanmuseum.org/>.

⁸⁰ Museo Nazionale dell'Emigrazione Italiana, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.musecidigenova.it/it/mei-museo-dellemigrazione-italiana>.

⁸¹ Some European migration museums belong to AEMI: the Association of European Migration Institutions (accessed November 16, 2021, <http://aemi.eu/>). Some of the migration museums from around the world cooperate within the Migration Museums Network (accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/migration-museums-network/>).

migration.

It is also worth drawing the attention of researchers and professionals involved in the discussion of changes in museology to migration museums. In recent years, an intense discussion on this topic has been taking place between the members of ICOM. During long preparations and then at the ICOM general conference in Kyoto (Japan) in 2019, a change in the definition of a museum was discussed. The new definition, discussed (though ultimately not adopted) in Kyoto, begins with the statement: “Museums are democratising inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures”. Migration museums follow the directions of development mentioned in the ideological manifesto of the Kyoto proposal – although in fact, due to the chronology of events, this statement should be reversed. Museums of migration – highly active institutions which combine collections related to historical migrations and education on contemporary migration – are institutions whose observation is an important contribution to the discussion on the museology of the present and the future.

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