

MUSEOLOGIST VERSUS COMMUNITY OF MEMORY. ATTEMPT AT DEFINING TERMS FOR THE SAKE OF LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

Michał Niezabitowski

Historical Museum of the City of Cracow

Abstract: The contemporary role of museum reaches far beyond the traditional understanding of the institution's role to be played in the preservation of tangible culture monuments. It is currently a creative institution on various levels of man's activity, a centre for continuous learning, community and creative hub of healthy social relations. Museums continue to cover with their interests newer and newer domains of human activity, among which art and history remain essentially important, though not the only ones. Traditional factual competences that we used to find in museums: a historian of art, a historian, an archaeologist, an ethnologist, continue to be needed, however far insufficient. Today museums have a need of staff who represent a wide range of competences, both to work on the 'collections', and on the intangible heritage as well as contacts with the public. Today's museums expect from the

staff the competence in so-called 2nd grade history, namely these who do not only identify and document the past, but also explain what and why we remember from the past.

Looking from such a perspective at museums, whose activity seems to be described in the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996 (with later amendments), and in the implementation regulations to the Act, the employee relations require a prompt legislative intervention. The distinction of the staff of museums and around them into 'museologists' and 'non-museologists' is today unquestionably anachronistic and inefficient, impeding the implementation of the tasks facing these institutions. Furthermore, the source of the name 'museologist' is sought, and the analysis of the legislative contradiction in this respect is conducted, while new solutions adjusted to the social needs are provided.

Keywords: museologist, curator, museum staff, functions, positions, collections, tangible and intangible heritage, legislation.

A **museologist** (*muzealnik*) is a concept in Polish whose actual birth is difficult to pinpoint. This word is one of the thousand of proofs of the fact that the language is an element. New words are created from the need to name some phenomena, following which they are 'regulated', while their fluid meaning specified. The word 'museologist' had been first used before it was defined, while the coining of such a word, and not other understanding of the word, resulted from the fact that in 1947 the collective work edited by Stefan Komornicki

and Tadeusz Dobrowolski titled *Muzealnictwo* [Museology] was published.¹ This was the first Polish compendium of knowledge of museums, a kind of a textbook defining and describing the principles of museum functioning, and also modes of work of their staff. What staff? As we are talking about 'museology', then the natural anthropomorphisation of the concept will yield 'museologists'. And thus consistently, however slowly, the term was popularized through literature, e.g. in the papers by Stanisław Lorentz, whose authority within

the museum-related circles was at the time unquestionable.² Nevertheless, many years passed before 'museologist' was formally and legally confirmed. The date for that moment can be easily ascertained: 21 November 1996, when Poland's Parliament, the Sejm, adopted the Act on Museums. The name 'museologist' had not been used in any of the earlier legal regulations, which I had meticulously tried to verify. The word does not appear in standards defining the systemic position of museums and their staff which had been in force before the Act on Museums³ in question (Act of 15 February 1962 on Preserving Cultural Goods and on Museums,⁴ or any implementing regulations to this Act⁵).

What were museologists first called? They were called by different names. When on 3–4 April 1914, the first congress of Polish museums was held in Cracow, a Delegation of Polish **Museologists**⁶ was then organized. However, in the article *On Museum Unions...* of 1930, Kazimierz Buczkowski wrote: *Statues of unions effectively represent museum officials both in defending their material rights and in controlling their responsibility fulfilment*⁷ [all emphases in quotes by M.N.]. Meanwhile, the minutes of the 1922 Congress in Poznań feature the following: *with reference to education, the issue discussed was the remuneration of museum clerks and services*.⁸ Generally, however, the word museologist dominated in the inter-war period, and it became popular particularly after 1934, following the conference held in Madrid by the Office International des Musées.⁹ The awareness of the professional identity of that group of individuals was in the Poland of the time quite limited. It is enough to realize that the pre-WW II Association of Polish Museums was of clearly institutional character, though there did occur attempts to make it more an association of individuals. However, the very attempts undertaken on the grounds of terminology show how vague the awareness of the professional distinction of the group was.

The demand for the union to transform into an association of museologists, and not museums, was voiced in 1922,¹⁰ during the Congress in Cracow. Nonetheless, it yielded no results. It would only be in 1935 that in the statute there appeared an extremely enigmatic provision claiming that members of the Association of Polish Museums can be also natural persons known from the activity in the field of museology.¹¹ A strange character of this provision corresponds with the actual implementation, since by 1939 only four people had expressed the desire to be individual members in the Association. A simple conclusion can be reached: museologists as a professional group did not have adequate awareness to emerge out of the institutional representation. At the time, obviously, there existed yet another name that enjoyed high prestige, namely **curator**. However, it was unanimously applied not only to individuals performing museum-related functions, but also managerial museum functions. In a sense, a curator was an *alter ego* of the museum director or someone on a managerial position responsible for the collections.

Following WW II, the word *muzealnik*, as said above, did not appear in official documents. In the Ordinance of the 19 September 1958 on the Remuneration of Museum Services¹² the pre-war terminology reappeared. Interestingly, the concept of Museum Services included all: curators, conservators, interior designers, as well as functions of the museum director,

museum dispatcher, museum technician, museum assistant, namely all those whom the 1996 Act put outside the brackets of the group legally defined as museologists. In other words, 'museum services' were the entire group of the museum staff.

In the Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 27 November 1996 on the Remuneration of Staff Employed at State Museums,¹³ the professional group in question was consistently called 'museum services' or alternately 'museum staff'. The term *muzealnik* (museologist) was not used when the new principles of museum operating were introduced with the Act of 26 April 1984 on Promoting Culture and on the Rights and Responsibilities of Culture Dissemination Employees.¹⁴ The logic of the used terminology was later repeated in the implementing acts. In the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art of 14 November 1985 on the Qualification Requirements, Principles and Modes of Verifying Qualifications, and Qualification Assessment Allowing to be Assigned to Specific Positions in Culture-Disseminating Institutions and Units, the only term used to denote the discussed professional group is 'museum staff'.

Meanwhile, the word *muzealnik* was gradually more colloquially and more widely used. The Author of the present paper can resort to his recollections for the proof. In September 1985, I began working for the Historical Museum of the City of Cracow, and from elder colleagues from whom I was learning the profession I had only just started gaining practical knowledge of, I frequently heard that we were 'museologists' (*muzealnicy*). Regardless of that, in Cracow the doyen of Polish museology Zdzisław Żygulski Jr would often use the word 'museologist' in a slightly different Polish version, namely *muzeolog* pronounced with his peculiar Lvov accent. Prof. Zdzisław Żygulski, whose lectures I had the privilege of attending at the post-graduate museological studies at the Jagiellonian University at the threshold of the 21st century, claimed that the word *muzealnik* was linguistically incorrect. Passionate about Greek Antiquity, he, as it turned out in vain, preferred the word *muzeolog*. It did not, however, stick to define the professional group of the museum staff. It happened so, since it corresponded to a young, but gradually marking its presence more vividly scientific discipline: museology, understood as the science of museums. We owe the precise and thorough analysis of the meanings of this name to Dorota Folga-Januszewska in the paper that I sincerely recommend.¹⁵ My remarks on the senses contained in the word museologist – *muzealnik* are, in a way, a continuation of her analysis.

The word museologist was introduced into legal circulation by the legislator together with the adoption by the Sejm of the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996. From the people participating in the legislative process which led to the adoption of this Act we can learn that it was Bożena Steinborn PhD who suggested to use this name. Soon afterwards, as already in 1997–98, in reaction to this new legislative order in Cracow the Association of Polish Museologists (SMP) was established; its members defined the essence of their organization as an association of natural persons, in which institutional membership could only be of supportive character. An important step in the process of consolidating the circle's awareness can undoubtedly be seen in the First Congress of Polish

Museologists held in Łódź on 25–27 April 2015.¹⁶ It was not by accident that the Congress initiated the debate trying to respond to: what is today's museologist? Who falls within the professional group of museologists? As can be seen over almost twenty years that have passed since the adoption of the Act on Museums, these questions are not so easily answered in the face of law. More importantly, however, it could be observed at the same time that the very posing of those questions yielded a conflict centred around the values grouping their respective supporters. We thus have to do, if the Readers pardon my generalization, with those who are the supporters of the idea of the elitist corporation of defenders of collections of timeless value. On the other hand, there are those who perceive the need to delineate the limits of our group reaching far due to the perception of museum as a shared good of all the staff as well as the museum public. The first will consider their banner to be the T-shirt featuring St George and the caption reading: *St George of Collections*, the latter will be satisfied with an elitist pin reading: *Museum – I Am Coming in!* Between the elitist and missionary defensiveness of the first (as it is known, St George fights with a dragon) and the egalitarian and communal-creative idea of the latter the differences are razor-sharp. For the sake of being honest let me add that I am not neutral in this dispute, resolutely claiming that from the perspective of museum staff teams, *We are all museologists!*

I am perfectly aware that raising the question of ontology, semiotics, and semantics of 'museologists' at the Congress caused a greatly emotional reaction. The atmosphere did not favour further solutions. Allow me, however, to point to a publication released in the wake of the Congress, which is a set of interviews of middle-generation museologists with those of a strong position and extensive accomplishments.¹⁷ In the talks conducted in the format: 'master – disciple', I had the pleasure of listening to the experience of Zofia Gołubiew and Jan Ostrowski, and asking both about that antagonism. Without any undue commentary, I shall only quote the words spoken on the question by Jan Ostrowski: (...). *Meanwhile, talking about the issue in most simple terms, who works at a museum and wants to consider him- or herself a museologist, is one. (...) Dividing employees of one institution into those are and those who are not members of the professional group of museologists seems to me harmful. Such an activity introduces divisions among the staff team, dividing them into groups between which controversies can arise. Some become better, other worse. Some regard themselves to be privileged, others treated unjustly. (...) Conducting the debate 'who is a museologist, and who is not' in museum, in my opinion is pointless and harmful. Harmful in the sense that the group deprived of the museologist status could feel detached from the work they do. Such an individual could suddenly feel like hired labour, working from 8 am to 4 pm, not feeling any closer bond with their institution.*¹⁸

In relation to Jan Ostrowski's last quoted words, particularly those observing how damaging it is to discuss obvious things, I can only remark that this discussion is spontaneously being continued. It keeps smouldering, and comes up with living fire anew, which implies that the definition of our job requires new reflection over it.

Why is defining the museologist's job important?

The answer to this question can be formulated in several points:

- This owing to the fact that the job was introduced into legal circulation in a faulty manner (which I will try to demonstrate below), and the range of qualities defining its character is difficult to describe on the grounds of legal regulations.
- This owing to the fact that museums develop at an unusually rapid pace, and museologizing keeps covering new spheres of life. This requires a growing number of interdisciplinary activities and engaging in museum work specialists who do not directly work on 'museum objects', but who are indispensable for contemporary museum. We must not allow for the situation in which a museum employs individuals who are essential for its operation in contemporary shape, of whom a part are 'museologists' and the other part are 'non-museologists' (in the worst conceptual version: 'factual' versus 'non-factual').
- This owing to the fact that contemporary organizations, particularly cultural institutions, boast creative potential, which less and less frequently stems from individual work, while more from team work. True works, such as museum exhibitions, require creative and dynamic teams. In my understanding, today the basic task of museum directors is to create conditions for implementing team visions. Structural divisions within working teams do not benefit this.
- Finally owing to the fact, of which I am deeply convinced, that contemporary museums are institutions of peculiar character, institutions of knowledge and development, whose specificity is no longer collections only. Museums amass collections so that the public can group around them. An obvious conclusion from this is that a 'museologist' cannot only be an individual who contributes to amassing and elaborating the collections, but should also be the one who contributes to bringing together the public around the collections.

Therefore, I am perfectly confident that before a new museum-related law enters the legislative procedure, it is essential to define the scope of the 'museologist's' job, which was successfully achieved at the Congress, though in the form of a compromise and through majority voting, but not by a consensual process, the latter much closer to my heart. In order to conduct the process, a semantic and logical analyses of legal acts need to be conducted, which, as much as ignorant I am on legal matters, I decided to conduct, since this is voicing an opinion on absolutely essential issues. Let me emphasize, furthermore, that all those legal acts extremely rich in content, have been analysed by me only for the purpose of one essential question: **What is a museologist?** I pose this basic question, since in my view all the available legal acts do not define this concept sufficiently, which continues one of the reasons for misunderstandings within the museum circles. Therefore, essentially, I have skipped all the other elements related to the regulations of employment rights at museums to focus on this most important question.

The most important concepts on the legal level

The most becoming start for our considerations would be the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996 mentioned at

the beginning of the present paper (Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 5, Item 24) which reads:

Section 5, Art. 32:

1. *Employees holding the positions related to the museum's **basic activity** constitute a professional group of **museologists**, this including assistants, adjuncts, curators, and certified curators.*
2. *The employees enumerated in 1 should have **museological qualifications**.*
3. *Museums can employ experts in other professions related to the museum's activity.*

Since the above fragment should be regarded as the origin of the formal existence of the professional group of museologists, when reading through it, one formulates the following question: what is museum's **basic activity**? Its range is not precisely defined in the Act, therefore in practice it was most frequently derived from Chapter 1, Arts. 1 and 2 of the Act on Museums. Regrettably, the spheres of museums' activity are described there in an extremely broad as well as general sense.

It is essential to quote both articles of the discussed Act here in extenso:

Art. 1 Museum is a non-profit organizational unit whose goal is to preserve cultural heritage objects, inform on the values and content of the amassed collections, disseminate basic values of Polish and world history, science, and culture, shape cognitive and aesthetical sensitivity, and enable contact with the collections through the activities as defined in Art. 2.2. Museum objects are movable and immovable goods entered in the museum-object inventories. Museum objects are assets belonging to all society.

Art. 2 Museum achieves goals as defined in Art. 1, particularly through:

1. *collecting museum objects within the scope as defined by the statute;*
2. *cataloguing and scientifically elaborating the collected museum objects;*
3. *keeping the collected cultural heritage objects under conditions safeguarding their proper preservation and security, and storing them so that they are available for scientific investigation;*
4. *preserving and conserving museum objects, and wherever possible, preserving non-movable archaeological heritage objects, as well as other immovable objects of tangible culture and nature;*
5. *organizing exhibitions;*
6. *organizing scientific research and expeditions, also archaeological ones;*
7. *running educational activities;*
8. *making museums available for learning;*
9. *securing proper conditions for visiting and benefitting the collections;*
10. *running publication activity.*

Furthermore, the second question arises: what are the **museological qualifications** that are not mentioned at any other point of the discussed Act?

Logically thinking, one could state that museological qualifications are represented by those who can professionally perform work within the basic activity of museum. Meanwhile, as the qualifications as such were not described, while the basic activity was not convincingly defined, from the very first days of the Act on Museums in force, great discrepancies in museum

employment structures could be observed. In order to illustrate this claim without, however, referring to any definite institutions (interestingly, it would make sense to collect personnel data from numerous museums to provide a comparable material), let us point to the size of this inconsistency.

Individuals employed in editing departments, in many museums hold museologist positions (Assistant Curators), while in others they are employed as 'non-museologists' (Experts, Clerks, etc.). The same applies to educators, guides, artists, museum library and archive employees, photographers, promotion department employees, and many other specialists. In Cracow alone I am acquainted with cases when in two museums across the street from each other, in one the library employee is holding the position of a Curator (thus being a museologist), while in the other such employee is a Documentalist (therefore a non-museologist). It is hard to judge this situation as perfectly normal, and I perceive the reason for this abnormality in the lack of precision in the legislation. As much as it was not controversial that when creating the personnel structure the individuals performing jobs related to collecting and investigating the collections were unquestionably museologists (this being a view obviously connected with the traditional 19th-century and even 18th-century understanding of work at a museum), any other activity was already related to the interpretation and customary ways at a given institution. This eventually led to creating the system that nationwide has to be regarded as the least possibly coherent.

In principle, legal imprecision should have been dispelled through implementation legislation issued by the Ministry of Culture and Art. Such regulation was foreseen in the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996 in Section 5, Art. 32.4, which reads as follows: *Minister of Culture and Art shall define the required qualifications allowing to take on museum positions and the mode of their verification by way of regulation.*

The relevant Ordinance was issued on 26 June 1998, and dealt with the required qualifications allowing to take on museum positions and the mode of their verification.¹⁹ Regrettably, it did not dissipate the arisen doubts. Although in Art. 1.1 of the Ordinance it is stated that: *Qualification requirements entitling to hold positions related to museum's basic activity are defined in the Annex to the Ordinance*, while in Art. 1.2 employees who can be employed at museums on positions unrelated to museum's basic activity are mentioned, nowhere in the Ordinance the concept of museum's basic activity is either more extensively described or specified in more detail. Neither are the doubts dispelled in the Annex referred to in Art. 1.1, as it actually merely defines new lowered placement periods, and education required for a given position, specifying the problem by adding one enigmatic claim that candidate's education should be related (...) *to one of the disciplines presented in the museum's collections (...)*. Given that an enormous number of Polish museums: district, regional, municipal, or national, are extremely interdisciplinary, the reference to one of the disciplines may just as well be a reference to anything.

The discussed Ordinance actually caused essential chaos in the museology legal order for two reasons. Firstly, out of the professional group of museologists, it excluded museum conservators, which has to be regarded as incomprehensible to a great extent, and in further consequences, actually ruining

the institution's essence. Since, if in compliance with the intention of the legislator the professional group of museologists is made up of individuals implementing tasks related to museum's basic activity, and if its range is understood as defined in Art. 2, in 2.4 the following can be read: *museum implements its goals defined in Art. 1 through (...)*

4. *preserving and conserving museum objects, and wherever possible, preserving non-movable archaeological heritage objects, as well as other immovable objects of tangible culture and of nature.*

Therefore, assuming a rational activity of the legislator, it is incomprehensible why a conservator, actually performing basic tasks is not a museologist? I obviously skip questions that arise on the grounds of logic and common sense: how is it possible not to regard conservators as museologists?! Is this merely a theoretical analysis, or does it really affect museum employees? Allow me only to quote at the point an e-mail I received as President of SMP, without pointing to its real source. *Dear President of the Association of Polish Museologists, I have the following question: have I stopped being SMP member because of having been transferred from the Education Department at the Museum (...), where I was employed as a Curator, to the Department of Textile Conservation to hold the Conservator position there? Is not the conservator taking care of museum collections a museologist? Is it that with such a change of my position within the same museum I cease being a museologist? In the opinion of our attorney, a Curator is a position not a professional title (to which I am entitled in view of my education and work experience). Regards, (...)*

And since in our debate I have quoted an anonymous female colleague, let me refer to her remark in reaction to the consequences of introducing the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art of 26 June 1998. Actually, in the period spanning the adoption of the Act on Museums and the issuing of the Ordinance, something really bad happened. The legislator, introducing the term of 'museologist' into the legal circulation, claimed, as can be remembered, in Art. 32.1: Employees holding the positions related to the museum's basic activity constitute a professional group of museologists, this including Assistants, Adjuncts, Curators, and Certified Curators.

Please, remark, that museologists, specified as such, 'enter' the professional group of museologists. But what do they enter as? On the Minister's Ordinance level, assistant, adjunct, curator, and certified curator are defined as 'positions'. In the linguistic logic there is a 'dissonance' here. Positions, for being what they are, are occupied for a definite period of time. Thus the person occupying the position of a curator enters the professional group of museologists, however does he or she stop being a museologist after they have lost the position? A physician is a member of the professional group of doctors, holding, for example, the position of a senior registrar. Losing the position, does he or she cease being a doctor? A teacher holds the position of a class tutor, but despite that does not stop being a teacher. Does a major, losing the position of the battalion commander, lose the rank, and stop being a soldier? Similar examples could be multiplied.

Therefore, when referring to the quoted legal acts, one would have to embarrassingly observe that a curator, and adjunct, an assistant are positions, not degrees. Simultaneously, the legislator introduces the concept of 'function'. Thus the

Director executes his/her function holding the Curator position. It is the position that actually has a greater impact on the degree, title, than on the function more related to the full-time employment contract. Is it thus so that when losing the position, I also lose the title, therefore the right to rank among the professional circle of museologists? Further on, if Curator is a position, and the Ordinance does not mention function, what is the manager? Director? Storage clerk? Main cataloguer? As I have checked, in the majority of museums, in a logical impulse and not contradicting common sense, however not in compliance with the Act, positions like the following have been created: 'Main Cataloguer – Senior Curator', or 'Head of the Graphics Department – Curator'. Since in the case of employing the director, although it is the museum that is director's employer, the entity that employs him/her is the organizer; and thus depending on the meticulousness and scrupulousness of the latter, some directors have stayed 'Directors – Curators', others have been deprived of the 'title'. The issue of the relation between the museologist and position which he/she occupies will be retackled further on in the paper.

Continuing the discussion of the legal issue of locating museologists as a professional group, it has to be added that the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art of 26 June 1998 dealing with their status was repealed by the next one, namely the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art of 9 March 1999 on the Qualification Requirements of the Employees Forming the Professional Group of Museologists Entitling Them to Hold Positions Related to Museum's Basic Activity and the Mode of Their Verification.²⁰ (Journal of Laws of 1999, No. 26, Item 233).

It is thus the Ordinance of the *lex specialis* type, dedicated directly to the professional group of museologists and positions related to their basic activity. As far as the legal act itself did not introduce any definite solutions, the Annex to the Ordinance in question (Qualification Requirements Entitling to Occupy Positions Related to Museums' Basic Activity for Employees Forming the Professional Group of Museologists, Item 233), twice witnessed provisions which can be regarded an important guideline for legislative interpretation. Thus when defining qualification requirements for the positions of Certified Curator and Curator, it is said that one of the elements is (...) *professional accomplishments within the range pointed to by Art. 2 of the Act on Museums.* (...) This should be understood as a clear guidance that the catalogue of the basic activity components (thus museological qualifications) is listed in this Article. Although there seems to be lack of logic in another element specifying qualification requirements, listed in the very same Annex, stating that in order to occupy the same positions a doctoral degree (Certified Curator, Senior Curator) (...) *in the discipline related to the museum's basic activity* constitutes a prerequisite.

On the grounds of logic and alleged rationality of the legislator, this confuses the understanding of the whole structure of requirements, since it could imply that if the doctoral degree should be related to museum's basic activity, while the accomplishments to the list in Art. 2 of the Act on Museums, the two seem different and not necessarily overlapping. All the more so, since in the case of the remaining positions to occupy which the requirement of higher specialist or professional education is required, Notes in the Annex emphasize that: (...)

1. *Higher professional education means studies at a Bachelor's Degree tertiary-education institution completed with the Bachelor's Degree in one of the areas related to museum's basic activity.*
2. *Higher specialist education is completion of Master's Degree studies and Master's Degree in one of the areas related to museum's basic activity.*

Tautologically weary one could conclude that the museum's basic activity that decides upon 'being' a museologist is the activity that is... basic.

I have purposefully omitted one important element in both MKiS's Ordinances (of 26 June 1998 and of 9 March 1999), however secondary in view of my analysis, namely the questions of qualification commissions established in order to verify adequate qualifications or formulate opinions on the accomplishments for the purpose of occupying the position of a Curator. Let us be clear, however, that in view of the unclear scopes of both: *basic activity* and *museological qualifications* (this concept included in the Act on Museums is not resumed in MKiS's Ordinance), one should really pose the questions what criteria such commission members are supposed to apply? Regardless of them undoubtedly working to the best of their will and knowledge, they must have been discretionary.

There is no doubt that the quoted Ordinance contributed more to the 'professional' confusion. I would be tempted to believe that in the majority of museums the traditional understanding of the word museologist was retained: as of an employee connected with cataloguing and scientific elaboration of the collections (Art. 2.1 and 2.2 of the Act on Museums), and that connected with holding exhibitions (Art. 2.5 of the Act). In certain museums guides and educators remained museologists, too; in others, also editors or individuals related to the organizational or promotional activity when mounting exhibitions or implementing other projects did. (Arts. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10 of the Act). As a consequence, in some museums, this professional group of museologists was also joined by individuals dealing with a broadly understood keeping (storing) of the collections (Art. 2.3 of the Act).

When closing up this fragment of the analysis, let us recapitulate. The period 1996–99 has to be considered as extremely important for museological legislation. For the first time ever Polish museums were given their *lex specialis* (Act on Museums of 21 November 1996), which on the whole, as a legal act, should be judged positively. It strengthened the role of museum; additionally, many legal tools the Act introduced should be regarded as effective. However, as far as the regulations for the terminology meant to call museum personnel with I am of the opinion that the Act caused negative effects, these particularly visible from the perspective of the past 20 years. Imprecise definitions of the professional group led to a far-reaching disarray in the employment structures in Polish museums. The actual division of the circle into the 'noble' and 'hard-working' ones seems to constitute the most serious problem, while the vague line marking the division evokes worrisome tendencies. Essentially, we do not know who a museologist is, thus loud voices spoke of educators and cataloguers who should establish their own separate professional groups. And that is what actually happened,²¹ which testifies to the need expressed by those separate professional groups. Thus

the Act in reality fragmented the museological potential. In my opinion, in view of the overall chaos and confusion, respective museum specialists are doomed to seek their own stability and their own goals. In consequence, each group will be defending their own respective professional interests, thus weakening the phenomenon of a museum as shared good. This will consolidate harmful tendencies. Since it is always necessary to distinguish between the need to decentralize and harmful fragmentation. However, fortunately, as it seems to me, before our very eyes, the concentration of capital is taking place.²²

Continuation of legislative events

For the sake of chronological order let us emphasize that the above-described Ordinance of MKiS was annexed and slightly modified through the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture of 13 December 2004 amending the Ordinance on the Qualification Requirements of the Employees Forming the Professional Group of Museologists Entitling Them to Hold Positions Related to Museum's Basic Activity and the Mode of Their Verification.²³ Since this piece of legislation did not introduce anything important as for our terminology considerations, it can be omitted.

On 29 June 2007, the *Sejm* adopted the Act on the Amendment to the Act on Museums.²⁴ The Amendment that introduced essential alterations to the current legislation (status of museum object, prerogatives of museum council, etc.), as for the issue that is of our interest, namely the content that refers to the definition of the profession of a museologist, introduces minor, however, meaningful changes. Firstly, Art. 1 of the Act on Museums was amended essentially; secondly, also was its Art. 2, although seemingly the amendments were cosmetic only. The Table below juxtaposes these changes, since if we continue assuming that Arts. 1 and 2 define basic activity (constituting a museologist), these changes have to be regarded as important.

When analyzing the above juxtaposition, it is worth remarking that the 2007 Amendments introduced the following:

- In Art. 1: introduction of an extremely important element of museums' responsibility for non-tangible heritage consisting in distinguishing the goods cared for by museums into cultural and natural, which quite unequivocally points to the need for museum staff to boast both humanistic and natural competences.
- In Art. 2.5: distinction between permanent and temporary exhibitions is introduced.
- In Art. 2.7a: attention is drawn to museum's responsibility with respect to *supporting and running artistic activity disseminating culture*. This issue is important, since for the first time it points to museum, thus a museologist, not only as to an art protector, but directly as an artist.
- In Art. 2.8: the added element of 'investigation', since in the provision: *making museums available for education and investigation*, it also emphasizes the creative role of museum;
- In Art. 2.9 an addition: *securing proper conditions for visiting and benefitting the collections and collected information*. This element, too, is important, since it perceives museum not merely as a repository of things, but also a capital of knowledge. Thus pointing to a museologist as an administrator of data collected at the museum.

Act on Museums of 21 Nov. 1996

Art. 1. Museum is a non-profit organizational unit whose goal is to preserve cultural heritage objects, inform on the values and content of the amassed collections, disseminate basic values of Polish and world history, science, and culture, shape cognitive and aesthetical sensitivity, and enable contact with the collections through the activities as defined in Art. 2.

2. Museum objects are movable and immovable goods entered in the museum-object inventories. Museum objects are assets belonging to all society.

Art. 2. Museum achieves goals as defined in Art. 1, particularly through:

- 1) collecting museum objects within the scope as defined by the statute;*
- 2) cataloguing and scientifically elaborating the collected museum objects;*
- 3) keeping the collected cultural heritage objects under conditions safeguarding their proper preservation and security, and storing them so that they are available for scientific investigation;*
- 4) preserving and conserving museum objects, and wherever possible, preserving non-movable archaeological heritage objects, as well as other immovable objects of tangible culture and nature;*
- 5) organizing exhibitions;*
- 6) organizing scientific research and expeditions, also archaeological;*
- 7) running educational activities;*

- 8) making museums available for education;*

- 9) securing proper conditions for visiting and benefitting the collections;*

- 10) running publication activity.*

Act on Museums of 21 Nov. 1996 with amendments of 26 Sept. 2007

Art. 1. Museum is a non-profit organizational unit whose goal is to collect and permanently preserve mankind's natural and cultural heritage of tangible and non-tangible character, inform on the values and content of the amassed collections, disseminate basic values of Polish and world history, science, and culture, shape cognitive and aesthetical sensitivity, and enable contact with the amassed collections.

Art. 2. Museum achieves goals as defined in Art. 1, particularly through:

- 1) collecting museum objects within the scope as defined by the statute;*
- 2) cataloguing and scientifically elaborating the collected museum objects;*
- 3) keeping the collected cultural heritage objects under conditions safeguarding their proper preservation and security, and storing them so that they are available for scientific investigation;*
- 4) preserving and conserving museum objects, and wherever possible, preserving non-movable archaeological heritage objects, as well as other immovable objects of tangible culture and nature;*
- 5) organizing permanent and temporary exhibitions;*
- 6) organizing scientific research and expeditions, also archaeological;*
- 7) conducting educational activities;*
- 7a) supporting and running artistic activity disseminating culture;*
- 8) making museums available for education and investigation;*
- 9) securing proper conditions for visiting and benefitting the collections and collected information;*

- 10) running publication activity.*

Within the remaining amended Act practically speaking only one new provision was added, amending Art. 32.4 to the following phrasing:

The minister responsible for culture and preservation of national cultural heritage defines by way of regulation the required qualifications entitling to occupy the positions as specified in 1 as well as their verification securing a professional task fulfilment.

This provision in a slightly amended version forecast a new regulation issued by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage on qualification requirements for the professional group of museologists. It was implemented not fully a year later when the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 13 May 2008 on the Qualification Requirements Entitling Employees Forming the Professional Group of Museologists to Occupy Positions Connected to Museums' Basic Activity and Their Verification Mode entered into force.²⁵

Regrettably, this regulation copied all the errors of the vague descriptions and references to the basic activity and list

of activities from Art. 2 of the Act on Museums. The novelty was the shortening of museologist's career by eliminating the positions of Senior Curator and Senior Assistant. From the very beginning strongly criticized by museum-related circles, the decision has neither a comprehensible nor beneficial impact. The decision to shorten the training period in museums which are institutions of experience and long, meticulous, and often multi-generational procedures, is not justifiable. Let us add at this point with much bitterness that numerous, serious, and consistent negative opinions of the museum circles on the introduced change did not, speaking briefly, have any impact on the legislator. Even when the opinion was voiced by 1.200 delegates of the First Congress of Polish Museologists in Lodz in April 2015.²⁶

The next ministerial regulation took place four years later with the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Cultural Heritage of 7 August 2012 on the Qualifications Required to Occupy Certain Positions in Museums and the Mode of their Verification.²⁷

As can be read from the Act's title, its task was to generally normalize the whole range of museum personnel issues, this pointed to by Art.1 of the Ordinance reading:

Art.1. The Ordinance defines:

1. *qualification requirements entitling to occupy the following positions at museums:*
 - a) *of museologists*
 - b) *other positions related to museum activity;*
2. *mode of verifying the qualifications required for respective positions at museums.*

When it comes to the principal question: What is a museologist? The Ordinance in question constitutes, in my opinion, a step backward. In the table juxtaposing the required qualifications and the assessment of professional accomplishments, there persistently returns the academic degree connected with the enigmatic 'museum's basic activity' and the achievements connected with the statutory museum activity. Such a distinction edited in two subsequent lines seems to suggest again that there is a certain essential difference between the basic activity and statutory activity of museums, however difficult to comprehend and describe.

And again this persistent note implying the following questions: since museologists perform the basic activity, while the Ordinance also refers to *other employees connected with museum activity*, what is the difference in the performed work: which is *basic* or related to *museum activity*? Based on the knowledge of the work in a museum, can one remain indifferent to the separation of the positions of a Curator and Conservator, so strongly bonded through the museum essence? Is it comprehensible that based on the regulations one of them is a museologist, and the other is not? Further still, how can the concept of museologist be thus defined in such a perspective? This does not exhaust all the questions. A question can be, for example, asked why in the discussed Ordinance making reference to museum's statutory activity (see Art. 2 quoted on several occasions), either in the basic range or in that related to museum activity, there is no mention of editor? Educator? Layout designer?

Almost parallel to the time of the introduction of the quoted Ordinance Poland was amidst a heated debate on the so-called profession deregulation. Obviously, the present paper does not provide enough space for the analysis of the issue. It is, however, worthwhile to emphasize that in the Bill containing so-called 3rd tranche of deregulated professions it contained the profession of a museologist. Interestingly, this fact, besides many others, yielded the circle's initiative to hold the First Congress of Polish Museologists. It was not by accident that the Association of Polish Museologists served as the event's instigator. The question of the definition of the profession of a museologist and of delineating its scope became one of the axes of the pre-Congress debates. Within SMP it was debated widely and emotionally. Evidently, it can be seen that the debate introduced deep divisions in our organisation into the supporters (excuse the simplification) of a narrow understanding of the essence of the profession (a museologist is a museum employee working 'on the collections'), and adherents of a substantial extending of the scope. The limits of the acceptable extension were understood variedly in the debate. From the provision that a museologist is someone connected with the basic activity, the latter being extensively derived from Art. 2 of the Act

on Museums, up to those arguing that all museum staff, as museum professionals, are museologists.

In February 2015, a two-day meeting of the SMP Main Board in Cracow allowed for a broad and exhaustive debate focused on the definition of the profession of a museologist, since by then the Bill on Deregulation (3rd tranche) had been tabled to the Speaker of the Sejm. In consequence, a domination of the desire to extend the range of the professional group to include the specialists listed in the discussed Bill (on which below) was observed. Grounded in the elaborated formula, supported considerably by ICOM Poland and the Association of Open Air Museums in Poland, the Programme Committee together with the Resolution Committee of the First Congress of Polish Museologists, adopted the draft of the Congress Resolution No. 1, which in the part dedicated to the essence of the museologist's profession claims the following:

Resolution No. 1 of the First Congress of Polish Museologists, Łódź 25–27 April 2015

*(...) Museologists are a professional group of public trust related directly to the implementation of museum's mission, learning throughout the whole period of working at a museum, not subject to political and commercial pressures, acting in compliance with the principles of knowledge, ethics, and with due diligence while taking care of museum objects and fulfilling the assigned tasks. The essence of the profession is marked out by relevant education, experience, and high competences. Central and local authorities, as well as museum organizers have the responsibility to support museologists in their work, by providing education and promotion opportunities adjusted to the requirements of varied specialty museums, and by providing them with decent remuneration not lower than the National Average Wage. Museum directors recruited from among professionals boasting sufficient experience in work at a museum or other institutions centred around cultural heritage, are expected to represent the highest museological qualifications (...).*²⁸

However, the social voice expressed at the Congress, particularly with respect to Resolution No. 3, was not taken into account. On 5 August 2015, the *Sejm* adopted the unaltered wording of the Act on the Amendments to the Act on Regulating Access to Certain Professions,²⁹ as a matter of fact amending once again the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996. The amendments of interest to us, namely those related to museum professional groups, are contained in Art. 5 of the discussed Act, essentially amending its Arts. 32 and 33. What strikes is the introduction of the range of regulations that had previously (from the end of WW II) been implemented by way of regulation into the content of the Act on Museums.

The detailed and complex content referring to the qualifications for positions, career accomplishments, qualification commissions, specifying of positions and training periods, had been transferred into the Act provisions, gaining higher importance, and thus significantly impeding any potential amendments to the content in question. The Act on Museums as such was substantially extended, however the detailed content related to civil service did not really require the interest of such an important institution as the Polish Parliament. As much as the act is called 'deregulation', the overwhelming impression is that

with reference to museum staff, the Act as such introduces regulations. Even though qualification requirements had been reduced, training periods shortened, requirements related to career accomplishments diminished (through these the legislator intending to increase access to the profession), the museologist essentially remained a regulated profession. Moreover, with utmost concern and regret it has to be concluded that the job of a museum conservator remained excluded from the museologist profession. The most essential and extremely important amendment can be found in Arts. 31.1, 32.2, and 32.3 (subsection added). Due to the impact of the amendments, let us quote this fragment in extenso.

Art. 32.

1. *Museum employees on positions which perform tasks related to:*

- 1) *collecting and scientifically elaborating collections,*
- 2) *mounting exhibitions and making collections available for teaching and scientific purposes,*
- 3) *organizing research and scientific expeditions, including archaeological ones,*
- 4) *conducting educational, artistic, culture-disseminating, or publishing activities, constitute the professional group of museologists.*

2. *Employees forming the professional group of museologists, are employed on the positions of Certified Curator, Curator, Adjunct Curator, and Assistant.*

3. *Employee who ranks among the professional group of museologists, assigned with the task of mounting an exhibition consisting in authoring and organizing the exhibition together with the factual supervision of it, serves as the exhibition's curator.*

What has to be considered the most essential and positive amendment is the rejection of the vague and undefined 'basic activity' concept in return for elaborating on the range of this activity in four subsections; the activities whose performing is decisive for being included in the professional group of museologists. Regardless of whether we agree with its content, such a wording should be regarded as optimizing the understanding of the profession's essence. Below, the analysis what museum positions the quoted four points refer to will be presented. At this very stage the conclusion has to be reached that the legislator had extended the range of museologist's job. Such wording undeniably reveals that since the Act's entry into force (30 November 2015) there has been no reason for inferring the range of these activities constituting the essence of a museologist's profession from Arts. 1 and 2 of the Act on Museums through interpretation (at times truly reckless).

However, unanswered questions have remained. Wherever as of 1996 we used to pose them in relation to the 'basic activity' and 'museum qualifications', they now need to be formulated with respect to Art. 32.2 where the legislator claims that museologists, are employed on the positions of Assistant, Adjunct Curator, Curator, and Certified Curator. Since, in as much as the traditional understanding of the word curator (collections' keeper, this Polish meaning of the word to be found in *the Polish Language Online Dictionary of the Polish Academy of Sciences*) unquestionably covers the scope of point 1 in Art. 32.1 (*collecting and scientifically investigating collections*), it does not logically fully cover the scope of points 2 and 3 of

Art. 32.1. (*2) mounting exhibitions and making collections available for teaching and scientific purposes, 3) organizing research and scientific expeditions, including archaeological ones*), and certainly does not lead to 32.1.4 (*4) conducting educational, artistic, culture-disseminating, or publishing activities*). One finds it hard to refrain from asking several exemplary questions, perfectly aware that dozens of similar ones could be posed.

Are editors, copy editors museologists? In compliance with Art. 2.1, they undoubtedly are. Should thus an editor be employed on the position of a Curator? And how about an artist? Designer? Educator? Webmaster of the museum website who undoubtedly disseminate culture? A guide? Moving further on, however at the same time returning to 31.1.2: is the museum employee mounting an exhibition and its author a museologist? Certainly so. Thus a Curator. However, mounting does not mean creating. Is thus the assembly worker putting it up a museologist? Based on Polish language, he or she is. Are they thus Curators? How about the ones who promote it? Produce it from the organizational point of view? Physically put it up? As naïve as these questions might be, they could be multiplied here, and there is no doubt that the Act should be helpful in providing answers to them. Unfortunately, it is not. Since as we move on towards Art. 32.b.1, the Act begins to resemble Swiss cheese full of holes. Let us therefore quote here the further part of the Act:

Art. 32b.

1. *Museums can employ specialists in the jobs related to museum activity, performing tasks related to:*

- 1) *keeping and cataloguing the amassed collections;*
- 2) *preserving and conserving the collections, including non-movable objects of tangible culture and of nature;*
- 3) *safeguarding proper conditions for visiting museum and benefitting the collections.*

2. *The specialists are employed on the positions:*

- 1) *Senior Conservator;*
- 2) *Conservator;*
- 3) *Adjunct Conservator;*
- 4) *Senior Assistant Conservator;*
- 5) *Assistant Conservator;*
- 6) *Senior Documentalist;*
- 8) *Junior Documentalist;*
- 9) *Senior Restorer;*
- 10) *Restorer;*
- 11) *Apprenticed Restorer;*
- 12) *Junior Restorer;*
- 13) *Museum Guide.*

It seems extremely challenging to translate this regulation into the language of experience and logic in museum activity. Firstly, what results from the above is that no storage services in museums belong to the museologist line (their employees are not museologists), which is absurd, as it is precisely in storage spaces that the most important activities related to collections are conducted. Separating collecting from storing (keeping) is a misunderstanding to say the least. However, if one was to even swallow this pill, there emerges a subsequent question. What position should I employ the staff member (manager) of collection storage on? For example of the Coin Cabinet? As a Senior Documentalist? The semantics of museum specialists shows

great inconsistencies at this point.

Let us move one. Out of respect for the legislator, no non-gradable adjectives should be used. However, how else than with the term of casualness can you call the fact that the legislator considers *elaborating collections* an activity that can make an employee be regarded as a museologist, while cataloguing collections should be an activity defining a specialist whose profession does not relate to a museological activity? One can hardly hide embarrassment that the legislator shows no understanding of the fact that cataloguing is one of the most essential parts of the very process of scientific elaboration.

One has to suspect that the phrase used in 32b.1.3: *safeguarding proper conditions for visiting museum and benefitting the collections* refers to museum services, namely display's carers. Obviously, it could be appropriate to ask whether this professional group does not perform tasks as defined in Art. 32.1 (*making collections available*), yet, however, bypassing this otherwise important issue, let us pose the following question: what position should the display's carer be employed on? As a renovator?

While continuing, somewhat to our surprise, among specialists, museum guides are found. What is the key allowing to distinguish between individuals *running educational or culture-disseminating activity*, who rank among museologists according to the Act, and guides who are specialists? Not to mention, obviously, that brain's logics objects to having guides excluded from the educational-disseminating processes.

The subsequent amendment adopted in 2019, to-date the last one, does not introduce any new regulations to the discussed matters.³⁰

The above are merely several of many questions that are yielded after the reading of the Act on Museums, and more precisely of those of its fragments which apply to the professional group of museologists. Undoubtedly, since 1996, when the legislator decided to introduce that professional category into the legal circulation, the way of defining it has been far from perfect to say the least. What requires some reflection is the answer to the question why in the later legislation the concept of 'museum services', as museum staff used to be called in the Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 19 September 1958, was rejected. In the following decades the term of 'museum staff' was applied, this corresponding to the term 'museum professionals' in general use in Europe at the time. Finding a new accurate term in Polish (previously in use), namely *muzealnik* (museologist) yielded in effect the division of museum staff into two groups. Currently it is quite clear that this division which is trying to artificially delineate borderlines across museum structures, does not withstand confrontation with the reality. Since there is no logical principle that allows to appropriate museum collections by only one professional group, similarly as there is no moral justification for one professional group only to consider themselves 'priests' while the others should be treated merely as 'altar servers'. The conciliatory responsibility is to be aware of the equal-term 'priesthood' of all the museum

services, which does not go to say that they are all the same. While an increasing number of museums are extending the range of their specialists, loud voices sounding in unison should be heard: *we are all museologists!*, though we do not all do the same work. With all the errors of the 2015 amendment, I guess one can attempt to define the profession of a museologist on the grounds of Art. 32.1, and while resorting to a broad margin covering all the museum staff, to introduce the concept of different specialists. In my wording it would read as follows:

Art. 32.1. Staff employed at museums form the professional group of museologists. In view of the character of the mission museologists are entrusted with, they form a group of public trust. The essence of the museologist's job is the utmost care for the museum objects he/she is entrusted with, and the skill to share the capital of knowledge and experience gathered in the museum with the public. Depending on the function performed at the museum and competences, museologists are specialists in the following areas:

1.a. Specialists in curatorship. The Curatorship Department at a museum is made up of employees dealing with collecting, elaborating, cataloguing, and keeping museum objects.

1.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Curatorship Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Curator, Senior Curator, Curator, Adjunct Curator, Senior Assistant, Assistant.

2.a. Specialists in conservation. The Conservation Department in a museum is composed of employees dealing with preventive, preservative, and full conservation of museum objects.

2.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Conservation Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Conservator, Senior Conservator, Conservator, Adjunct Conservator, Senior Assistant Conservator, Assistant Conservator.

3.a. Specialists in education. The Educational Department is composed of employees dealing with education and dissemination among the public.

3.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Educational Department can have the following museum degrees: a Certified Curator, Senior Curator, Curator, Adjunct Curator, Senior Assistant, Assistant.

4.a. Specialists in publishing. The Publishing Department is composed of employees dealing with museum's publishing activity.

4.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Publishing Department can have the following museum degrees: a Certified Curator, Senior Curator, Curator, Adjunct Curator, Senior Assistant, Assistant.

5.a. Specialists in artistic designing. The Art Department is composed of employees dealing with designing and any other artistic activity.

5.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Art Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Museum Designer, Senior Museum Designer, Museum Designer, Adjunct Museum Designer, Senior

Assistant Museum Designer, Assistant Museum Designer.

6.a. Specialists in organisation and production. The Organizational and Production Department is composed of employees dealing with organization of scientific research, including archaeological research, production of exhibitions and of other museum events.

6.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Organizational and Production Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Inspector, Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Clerk, Museum Clerk, Junior Museum Clerk.

7.a. Specialists in management and organizations. The Management and Organization Department is composed of employees responsible for creating and implementing strategic plans, supporting management processes, particularly project ones (project implementation) and within the institution's management control.

7.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Management and Organizational Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Inspector, Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Clerk, Museum Clerk, Junior Museum Clerk.

8.a. Specialists in promotion and marketing. The Promotion and Marketing Department is composed of employees who deal with the promotion of museum's product and brand, sales, and with acquiring financing.

8.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Promotion and Marketing Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Inspector, Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Clerk, Museum Clerk, Junior Museum Clerk.

9.a. Specialists in finance and business. The Finance and Business Department is composed of employees who deal with financial planning, financial reporting, internal financial auditing, accountancy, budget plan monitoring, public tendering.

9.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Finance and Business Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Museum Accountant, Senior Museum Accountant, Museum Accountant, Senior Museum Financial Clerk, Museum Financial Clerk, Junior Museum Financial Clerk.

10.a. Specialists in law. The Legal Department is composed of employees who deal with a comprehensive legal service provided to the museum, with the exclusion of the activity conducted by legal advisors in compliance with separate regulations.

10.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Legal Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Inspector, Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Clerk, Museum Clerk, Junior Museum Clerk.

11.a. Specialists in administrative and technical services. The Administration and Technical Service Department is composed of employees who deal with the administration of the museum estate, providing efficient operation of the technical infrastructure of the museum, and run investment projects.

11.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Administration and Technical Service Department can have the following museum degrees: Certified Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Inspector, Museum Inspector, Senior Museum Clerk, Museum Clerk, Junior Museum Clerk.

12.a. Specialists in services. The Service Department is composed of employees who provide necessary service to exhibitions and other museum events.

12.b. Depending on the current and acquired qualifications and professional accomplishments, employees of the Service Department can have museum degrees of: Certified Museum Carer/ Opiekun?, Qualified Museum Carer, Senior Museum Carer, Museum Carer.

13. Museologist who is entrusted with the task of organizing an exhibition consisting in autorski copyrighted/author's preparation, organizing, and factual supervision over the exhibition, exerts the function of the Exhibition Curator.

14. The fact that a museologist is listed among one of the groups of museum specialists does not free him/her from boasting basic competences required for other museologist specialist groups. Within the scope of acquired and documented qualifications as well as the scope of responsibilities, museum director can entrust a museologist with a task that does not coincide with the specialist group he/she has been qualified for.

Art. 32. 2.

1. Museologists are employed at museums on positions defined by the institution's statute and structure.

2. Within internal regulations museum directors shall define career opportunities and promotion rules within each of the museum departments as listed in Art. 32.2.1.–11.

3. Minister of Culture and National Heritage shall define threshold qualifications, professional accomplishments, and mode entitling museologists to museum degrees by way of regulation. In the same regulation the Minister of Culture and National Heritage shall define the museologists' rights resulting from the respective museum degrees.

4. Polish Museology Forum shall be the social organization entitled to provide opinion on the regulation in question.

As can be clearly seen, I consistently and with much conviction introduce the concept of the 'degree' in my proposal. It has not been used so far, though I consider it highly accurate. What I find essential is the separation of the function: namely the currently done work, from competences and qualifications. It would be surprising if I, serving as the President of the Association of Polish Museologists, were not claiming such a change, since in compliance with the provisions that the occupied position testifies to being a museologist, only those who have one of the four positions entitling them to be called 'museologists' can legally become members of our Association. However, what if they lose their position? Will they also lose their professional identity, skills, and 'name', which actually is a title? My position is confirmed by the article *Adjunct and Curator are Museologists' Professional Titles, not Positions. The Name Depends on Qualifications* by Łukasz Chruściel published in 'Rzeczpospolita' on 4 Sept. 2014. The author analyses the actual status quo, basing himself not only on his high legal qualifications, but

firstly on the Supreme Court ruling of 3 September 2013 (I PK 37/13). Anyone going through this reading will find it a decisive argument in favour of a new and coherent definition of the professional group of museologists.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Muzealnictwo* [Museology], S. Komornicki, T. Dobrowolski (ed.), Kraków 1947.
- ² S. Lorentz, *Pierwsza Konferencja Międzynarodowej Rady Muzeów* [First International Conference of the Council of Museums] 'Ochrona Zabytków' 1947, No. 2; S. Lorentz, *Dorobek naukowy muzealnictwa polskiego w latach 1945-1954* [Scientific Accomplishments of Polish Museology in 1945-54], 'Materiały do Studiów i Dyskusji z Zakresu Teorii i Historii Sztuki, Krytyki Artystycznej oraz Metodologii Badań nad Sztuką' 1955, Nos. 3-4, pp. 457-91.
- ³ Ordinance of 21 Nov. 1996 on Museums, Journal of Laws of 1997. No. 5. Item 24.
- ⁴ Ordinance of 15 Feb. 1962 on Preserving Cultural Goods, Journal of Laws of 1962, No. 10. Item 48.
- ⁵ Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 27 August 1966 on the Remuneration of Staff Employed at State Museums; Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art of 14 Nov. 1985 on the Qualification Requirements, Principles and Modes of Verifying Qualifications, and Qualification Assessment Allowing to be Assigned to Specific Positions in Culture-Disseminating Institutions and Units.
- ⁶ A. Murawska, *Związek Muzeów Polskich w Polsce w latach 1914-1939* [Association of Polish Museums in Poland in 1914-39], 'Muzealnictwo' 2014, No. 56, p. 116.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 121.
- ⁹ D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzeologia, muzeografia, muzealnictwo* ['Museology' in Polish: *Muzeologia, Muzeografia, Muzealnictwo*], 'Muzealnictwo' 2006, No. 47, pp. 9-14.
- ¹⁰ A. Murawska, *Związek Muzeów Polskich...*, p. 120.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 19 Sept. 1958 on the Remuneration of Staff Employed at State Museums, Journal of Laws of 1958, No. 60, Item 300.
- ¹³ Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 27 Aug. 1966 on the Remuneration of Staff Employed at State Museums, Journal of Laws of 1966, No. 37, Item 226.
- ¹⁴ Ordinance of 26 April 1984 on Promoting Culture and on the Rights and Responsibilities of Culture Dissemination Employees, Journal of Laws of 1984, No. 26, Item 129.
- ¹⁵ D. Folga-Januszewska, *Muzeologia, muzeografia...*, pp. 9-14.
- ¹⁶ *I Kongres Muzealników Polskich* [The First Congress of Polish Museologists], M. Niezabitowski, M. Wysocki (ed.), Warszawa 2015.
- ¹⁷ *Muzeum, muzealia, muzealnicy. Ważne rozmowy* [Museum, Museum Objects, Museologists. Important Conversations], Paweł Jaskanis (ed.), Universitas, Kraków 2016.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 83.
- ¹⁹ Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art of 26 June 1998 on the Required Qualifications Allowing to Take on Museum Positions and the Mode of Their Verification, Journal of Laws of 1998, No. 122, Item 804.
- ²⁰ Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art of 9 March 1999 on the Qualification Requirements of the Employees Forming the Professional Group of Museologists Entitling Them to Hold Positions Related to Museum's Basic Activity and the Mode of Their Verification, Journal of Laws of 1999. No. 26, Item 233.
- ²¹ On 4-5 Nov. 2015, the Polish Association of Museum Cataloguers was established; on 18 June 2018, the Forum of Museum Educators Association was created.
- ²² On 4 October 2018, the Column Hall of the History Faculty at the University of Warsaw, witnessed the event of signing a cooperation agreement of the Forum of Polish Museology. The event was participated by representatives of 8 Polish museum organizations. The following entities confirmed their membership in the social organization associating museologists and individuals contributing to Polish museology, declaring the the readiness to achieve shared implementation of its goals:
 - Association of Polish Museologists
 - ICOM Poland
 - Association of Open-Air Museums
 - Association of University Museums
 - Foundation of Greater Poland Museums
 - Association of Museums of Engineering
 - Association of Ars Sacra Museums and Church Treasuries
 - Forum of Museum Educators Association.
- ²³ Ordinance of the Minister of Culture of 13 Dec. 2004 amending the Ordinance on the Qualification Requirements of the Employees Forming the Professional Group of Museologists Entitling Them to Hold Positions Related to Museum's Basic Activity and the Mode of Their Verification, Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 272, Item 2695.
- ²⁴ Ordinance of 29 June 2007 on the Amendment to the Act on Museums, Journal of Laws of 2007, No. 136, Item 956.
- ²⁵ Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 13 May 2008 on Qualification Requirements of the Employees Forming the Professional Group of Museologists Entitling Them to Hold Positions Related to Museum's Basic Activity and the Mode of Their Verification, Journal of Laws of 2008 r. No. 91. Item 568.
- ²⁶ A relevant subsection of Resolution No. 3 of the First Congress of Polish Museologists claims that *career path of Polish museologists should be optimized by restoring the positions of Senior Assistant and Senior Curator, as well as by restoring training periods required at every museologist position in compliance with the rules in force prior to 2008, in the face of which an application should be filed to the Sejm to introduce necessary changes in the Bill on so-called Deregulation of the Profession of Museologist.*
- ²⁷ Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 7 Aug. 2012 on the Qualifications Required to Occupy Certain Positions in Museums and the Mode of their Verification, Journal of Laws of 2012, Item 93.

²⁸Let me add that this wording could be adopted only thanks to a wise intervention of Prof. Stanisław Waltoś who, having proposed the combining of the Resolution's content with museum's mission, harmonized the discrepancies on a certain level of generalizing.

²⁹Ordinance of 5 Aug. 2015 on the Amendments to the Act on Regulating Access to Certain Professions, Journal of Laws of 2015, Item 1505.

³⁰Announcement of the Speaker of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland of 12 April 2019 on the release of the consolidated text of the Act on Museums, Journal of Laws of 2019, Item 917.

Michał Niezabitowski

Historian, museologist; (since 1985) employed at the Historical Museum of the City of Cracow, (since 2004) its Director; he specializes in history of cities and their spatial development, as well as museology and interpretation of cultural heritage in museums; author of numerous publications and exhibition scenarios; (since 1994) Curator of the Cracow collection of the Kościuszko Mound Committee, (since 2012) President of the Association of Polish Museologists, (since 2015) Deputy President of the Cracow's History and Monuments Lovers' Society; Junior Lecturer at the Chair of 19th Century History at the Institute of History and Archival Studies at the Pedagogical University in Cracow; lecturer at Cracow universities; member of numerous Polish Museum Councils; member of: 'Mzealnictwo' Academic Council, Council for Museums at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, CAMOC Board; e-mail: m.niezabitowski@muzeumkrakowa.pl

Word count: 11 234;; **Tables:** 1; **Figures:** –; **References:** 30

Received: 06.2019; **Reviewed:** 06.2019; **Accepted:** 07.2019; **Published:** 09.2019

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0013.4642

Copyright©: 2019 National Institute for Museums and Public Collections. Published by Index Copernicus Sp. z o.o. All rights reserved.

Competing interests: Authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Cite this article as: Niezabitowski M.; MUSEOLOGIST VERSUS COMMUNITY OF MEMORY. ATTEMPT AT DEFINING TERMS FOR THE SAKE OF LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS. *Muz.*, 2019(60): 233–245

Table of contents 2019: <https://muzealnictworocznik.com/issue/11897>