

A Survey of Jewish Museums in Europe



The Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe
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I. Executive Summary

The goals of the Foundation in conducting this survey were manifold: we aimed to generate a comprehensive picture of the Jewish museum landscape across Europe, and to identify the most pressing issues, challenges and needs faced by these institutions. We wanted to learn about the mission, philosophy and methodology of Jewish museums, and better understand their role and position in the cultural and educational realm at large. We were also interested in the level of professionalization of Jewish museums, both in staff training, collection preservation and cataloguing, management, and the ways in which Jewish museums communicate and arrange partnerships with one another. With a better understanding of these issues, we want now to assess the resources needed and the funding priorities for the next five to ten years.

The questionnaire was sent to 120 institutions in 34 countries and we received 64 completed forms from 30 countries. The questions addressed eleven broad topics: organisation, collections, permanent and temporary exhibitions, facility, visitor services, public programmes, visitor demographics, marketing and PR, finances, future plans and needs.

This diverse sample enabled us to get, for the first time, a quasi-comprehensive picture of the Jewish museum landscape in Europe, from small community museums to landmarks of “starchitecture;” from institutions boasting thousands of rare objects to others mostly text panels- or technology-based; from museums employing scores of professional staff and interns to synagogues-turned-exhibition halls run by volunteers for a few hours a month. That was precisely the challenge: the large and numerous discrepancies between institutions, depending on their location, their financial and human resources, their political and economic context, the type of visitors they receive, and other contextual considerations. The results point to four major findings:

1. Transition from museums to multi-purpose hubs;
2. Lack of collaboration and partnerships;
3. Tension between particularistic and universalistic missions;
4. Increasing need to serve a diverse audience.

Museums as multi-purpose hubs

Cultural observers witness that museums are changing from repositories of historical artefacts to a new role as public services and social agents. The same shift is reflected within Jewish museums: a vast majority of them are not only collection spaces but offer an array of public programmes, from lectures to pedagogical tours for schools, academic conferences, concerts and other artistic performances, family activities, social programmes, and food services, and include libraries and archives and courtyards.

Some newer museums have included such public programmes as part of their original mission. Others have caught up with the public's needs and changed their mission, space use and programming. While the change may be driven by a search for relevance, it may also be financially motivated: by attracting a larger and more diverse crop of visitors, a museum can increase its revenue from ticket sales, guided tours, cultural and educational activities and from café and shop sales. Of course, not every museum has the capacity or the will to undertake such major changes, nor is it worthwhile for every institution.

For small museums, the question is precisely this: Would programming changes give more exposure and recognition to the collection, or would they somehow overshadow the collection? Can museums afford to change? How would the impact of such considerable change be measured and appraised?

Is the transformation into dynamic multi-purpose hubs a way for Jewish museums to avoid being “glass cases for dead Jews” that display ritual objects divorced from their actual use, or describe the Jewish experience as stuck in the past? This is the other major question raised by the survey regarding the purpose of museums.

Collaboration and partnerships

Among the 30 museums that answered the questions “What do you hope the survey will achieve in the field of Jewish museums?” and “How do you hope the survey will benefit your museum?” almost all wished for more collaboration and exchanges among institutions across Europe. However, the results of the survey reveal that collaboration in practice remains low. When asked, “Does the museum initiate collaborative exhibitions with other Jewish museums?” about half of the respondents say

they do not; however, they do collaborate with non-Jewish institutions. The other half collaborates with both. Many of those who collaborate with another Jewish institution do so within their country or in the same language realm. Nor is there much collaboration for marketing or public relations purposes. Actual geographic collaboration between east and west, north and south, or between small and large museums, remains in the realm of wishful thinking.

This lack of collaborative efforts is also visible around travelling exhibitions. About half of the respondents have had in-house exhibitions that have travelled elsewhere. When asked about the barriers preventing more temporary exhibitions from travelling, the vast majority does not cite funding as a major concern, but rather space and other logistical issues: insufficient space or lack of adequate space; security, climate and time constraints imposed by the lending institution. Cost of transportation, insurance and storage were only mentioned sporadically, in the case of object-based exhibitions.

Tensions between particularistic and universalistic missions

The Jewish experience, particularly its Diasporic dimension and the Holocaust, has become a paradigm to study other minorities across the globe, especially in the current migrant crisis. A number of Holocaust museums have begun to include exhibitions about other victims of Nazism (Gypsies, homosexuals, etc.) and victims of more recent genocides (in Cambodia, Rwanda, etc.).

A comparable trend can be now observed in Jewish museums. In a post-national and trans-cultural world, and Jews being the transnational people *par excellence*, Jewish museums are beginning to reflect on their mission from a more universalistic perspective leading to updating their galleries and offering programmes that reflect a reinterpretation of the Jewish experience through the lens of migration and cultural diversity.

Jewish museums are serving wider audiences that they need to attract and engage. A more universalistic message could also be an opportunity to fundraise outside the Jewish community.

Serving a diverse audience

The tension between particularistic and universalistic missions is reflected more acutely among visitors of Jewish museums, and raises the question: Who are Jewish museums for?

Among our respondents, seven museums welcome over 100,000 visitors a year. About half the respondents welcomed less than 10,000 visitors in 2015. In six cases, there were less than 1,000 visitors. In capital cities, Jewish museums are often part of a tourism circuit, included in weekly passes, and they interest a wide array of visitors. Some museums charge a significant entrance fee, while others are free. In 22 museums, school groups represented less than 25% of visitors. However, in a small but significant number of museums, school groups represent 60% or more of all visitors. If we looked only at absolute numbers, a small museum in a medium-size town that receives 10,000 visitors a year would not survive. However, if 8,000 of the 10,000 visitors are school groups, we see that the museum fulfils a very important and unique educational mission in its regional landscape.

Large urban museums earn significant income from international tourists, whereas provincial museums receive fewer foreign visitors. Understanding the profile and diversity of visitors is essential to a museum's survival. Unfortunately, most of the methods used by our respondents to measure visitors' attendance and expectations were rudimentary and irregular.

Conclusion

This survey reflects some of the main issues faced by Jewish museums in Europe today. Hopefully this picture will be of assistance to determine the adequate philanthropic responses that should be devised to support these institutions in their transformation into relevant, dynamic, multi-purpose cultural institutions that preserve, teach and disseminate Jewish cultural heritage beyond their local context.



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II. Introduction

Since 2001, The Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe has allocated funds to preserve, strengthen and make European Jewish cultural heritage more accessible. Jewish cultural heritage is culture in the broadest sense—art, history, literature, religious practices—whether it is tangible such as books, objects and documents or intangible, including music, teachings and rituals. Museums, along with archives, libraries, synagogues and schools, are among the key institutions that fulfil this mission. In the first few years of the Foundation, its museum programme only gave out small grants up to £7,000, however, since 2011, this cap was lifted and more substantial amounts have been awarded. Grants support collection preservation and cataloguing, permanent and travelling exhibitions, technology upgrades, professional training and collaborative projects. As of 2016, we have supported 155 museum-related projects across Europe.

We want to raise awareness to the importance of Jewish museums, and offer this overview of what is happening in Europe at this time.

In recent years, we have witnessed a number of changes in the Jewish museums landscape: the establishment of new and large museums, usually initiated by the government; the adoption of cutting-edge technology in collections, exhibitions and education; the need for additional professional training for curators, directors, educators and other museum staff; and new priorities for museums besides the ongoing funding issues, such as technology and security. These are some of the reasons that led us to conduct a survey of Jewish museums in Europe.

Our goals were manifold: we tried to generate a comprehensive picture of the Jewish museums landscape across Europe, and to identify the most pressing issues, challenges and needs faced by these institutions. We wanted to learn about the mission, philosophy and methodology of Jewish museums, and better understand their role and position in the cultural and educational realm at large. We were also interested in the level of professionalization of Jewish museums, both in staff training, collection preservation and cataloguing, management, and the ways in which Jewish museums communicate and arrange partnerships with one another. With a

better understanding of these issues, we now want to assess the resources needed and the funding priorities for the next five to ten years.

This report hopes to reach a broad audience: first, museum professionals, who may find facts that they already instinctively knew, conceptualized and contextualized on a European scale. We hope to bring visibility to their field and reflect the fact that they are not facing these challenges alone. The report is also meant for funders from around the world who already support Jewish cultural heritage or would like to, but are faced with numerous questions regarding purpose, impact, and relevance. Finally, we believe that academics, cultural critics, journalists and anyone interested in the field of museums and cultural heritage will find some interest in this study. We want to raise awareness to the importance of Jewish museums, and offer this overview of what is happening in Europe at this time.

We would like to thank the Association of European Jewish Museums for giving us the opportunity to launch this survey at their 2015 annual conference in Jerusalem and for helping us contact various institutions. We would especially like to thank the staff of all the museums that have taken the time to complete this long survey and shared detailed information about their operations, missions and prospects.

Brigitte Sion

Respondents to the survey

organized alphabetically by country

Jewish Museum Vienna, Austria
Jewish Museum Hohenems, Austria
Musée Juif de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium
Jewish Museum, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Jewish Museum in Prague, Czech Republic
Basevi Regional Museum, Jicin, Czech Republic
The Danish Jewish Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark
Estonian Jewish Museum, Estonia
Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme, Paris, France
Museum of Jewish Alsatian Heritage, Marmoutier, France
David Baazov Museum, Tbilisi, Georgia
Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi, Georgia
Jewish Museum Augsburg-Schwaben, Germany
Jewish Museum Berlin, Germany
Jewish Museum Frankfurt, Germany
Jewish Museum Munich, Germany
Jewish Museum Gailingen, Germany
Jewish Museum Rotenburg on the Fulda, Germany
Jewish Museum Veitshöchheim, Germany
Jewish Museums in Fürth, Schnaittach, Schwabach, Germany
Jewish Museum of Greece, Athens, Greece
Jewish Museum of Rhodes, Greece
Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, Greece
Hungarian Jewish Archive and Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Jewish Museum of Ipoly Region, Hungary
Soproni Museum and Synagogue, Hungary
Irish Jewish Museum, Dublin, Ireland
Fausto Levi Museum, Soragna/Parma, Italy
Jewish Museum of Rome, Italy
Jewish Museum of Venice, Italy
Jewish Museum of Padua, Italy
Jewish Museum of Bologna, Italy
Jewish Museum Casale Monferrato, Italy
Piccolo Gerusalemme, Pitigliano, Italy
Jewish Museum Padova, Italy
Synagogue and Museum, Merano, Italy
Carlo e Vera Wagner Museum, Trieste, Italy
Jews in Latvia, Riga, Latvia
Vilna Gaon Museum, Vilnius, Lithuania
Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews in Macedonia, Skopje, Macedonia
Museum of Jewish Heritage in Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova
Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Elburg Synagogue Museum, Netherlands
Jewish Museum Oslo, Norway
Jewish Museum Trondheim, Norway
Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw, Poland
Galicia Jewish Museum, Krakow, Poland
Museum of Mazovian Jews, Plock, Poland
History Museum of the Romanian Jews, Bucharest, Romania
Museum of Jewish History in Russia, Moscow, Russia
Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade, Serbia
Jewish Community Museum, Bratislava, Slovakia
Synagogue Museum of Maribor, Slovenia
Sephardic Center, Granada, Spain
Centro Interpretación Judería de Sevilla, Spain
Museum of Jewish History, Gerona, Spain
Jewish Museum Stockholm, Sweden
Jewish Museum of Switzerland, Basel, Switzerland
Jewish Museum London, UK
Ben Uri Gallery & Museum, London, UK
Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust, UK
Manchester Jewish Museum, UK
Hesed Besht Museum, Khmelnytsky, Ukraine
Regional Museum of Jewish History, Korsun-Shevchenko, Ukraine
Museum of the History and Culture of Bukovinian Jews, Chernivitsi, Ukraine

III. The Questionnaire

The survey addressed eleven broad topics: organisation, collections, permanent and temporary exhibitions, facility, visitor services, public programmes, visitor demographics, marketing and PR, finances, future plans and needs. The questionnaire was long (see appendix) and included about 200 questions. The original language was English, but the survey was also offered in Russian and in Italian, and answers could be given in Spanish, French and German as well. None of the questions were mandatory; respondents could choose to skip some questions or sections. Mindful that completing the survey required a time commitment, we built it exclusively online, which gave respondents some flexibility: they could answer some questions and save them for later and let multiple people from the same institution complete different sections.

We made a very clear confidentiality pledge: the completed questionnaires would not be shared or disclosed, and the museums that are quoted or mentioned have given us permission to do so. We hope that our commitment to discretion convinced museums to answer honestly and precisely. We did not fact-check their responses, nor did we conduct site visits; we relied entirely on their truthfulness to produce this report. As a follow-up to this study, we hope to conduct in-depth interviews and site visits.



IV. The sample

How did we define our sample? We first turned to one of our partners, the Association of European Jewish Museums (AEJM), whose membership offered an initial pool of institutions to be surveyed: To become a full member of the AEJM, a museum or museum service must be “a permanent institution for the benefit of the community and its development, accessible to the public, not aimed at making a profit, which acquires, maintains, scientifically studies and presents the material evidences of man and his surroundings and provides information about them for the purposes of study, education and pleasure. ... Only legal entities registered in Europe operating a museum or museum service focused on the Jewish culture and/or history and employ at least one paid full-time professional whose primary responsibility includes: the acquisition, the maintenance or the exhibition to the public of objects which are the property of or used by the museum or the museum service, may be full members.”¹

A significant number of Jewish museums do not belong to the AEJM, either by choice or because they do not/cannot meet the membership criteria. In our eyes, however, they should still be considered in our study, and the definition of “Jewish museums” thus had to be more inclusive. The definition also had to take into account the fact that “the boundaries of museums are expanding and that expansion can be seen as a positive development.”²

According to Ruth Ellen Gruber, who has visited and written about countless Jewish European heritage sites, “There are dozens of Jewish museums in Europe, most of them opened since 1988. They range from small, private displays of Jewish community exhibits to large-scale national institutions. A number of them are located in former synagogue buildings; others are in new purpose-built structures whose architecture in itself makes a statement.”³

We thus included in the survey permanent institutions that are dedicated to presenting aspects of Jewish history and culture to the public, whether by means of permanent or temporary exhibits of artefacts, curated interpretation of a historical building (synagogue, *mikveh*, etc.) or the exhibition of archival material.⁴ However, excluded from this survey are

¹ <http://www.aejm.org/about-us/bylaws-and-regulations/>

² Elaine Heumann Gurian (2006), p. 48.

³ <http://www.jewish-heritage-europe.eu/focus/museums>

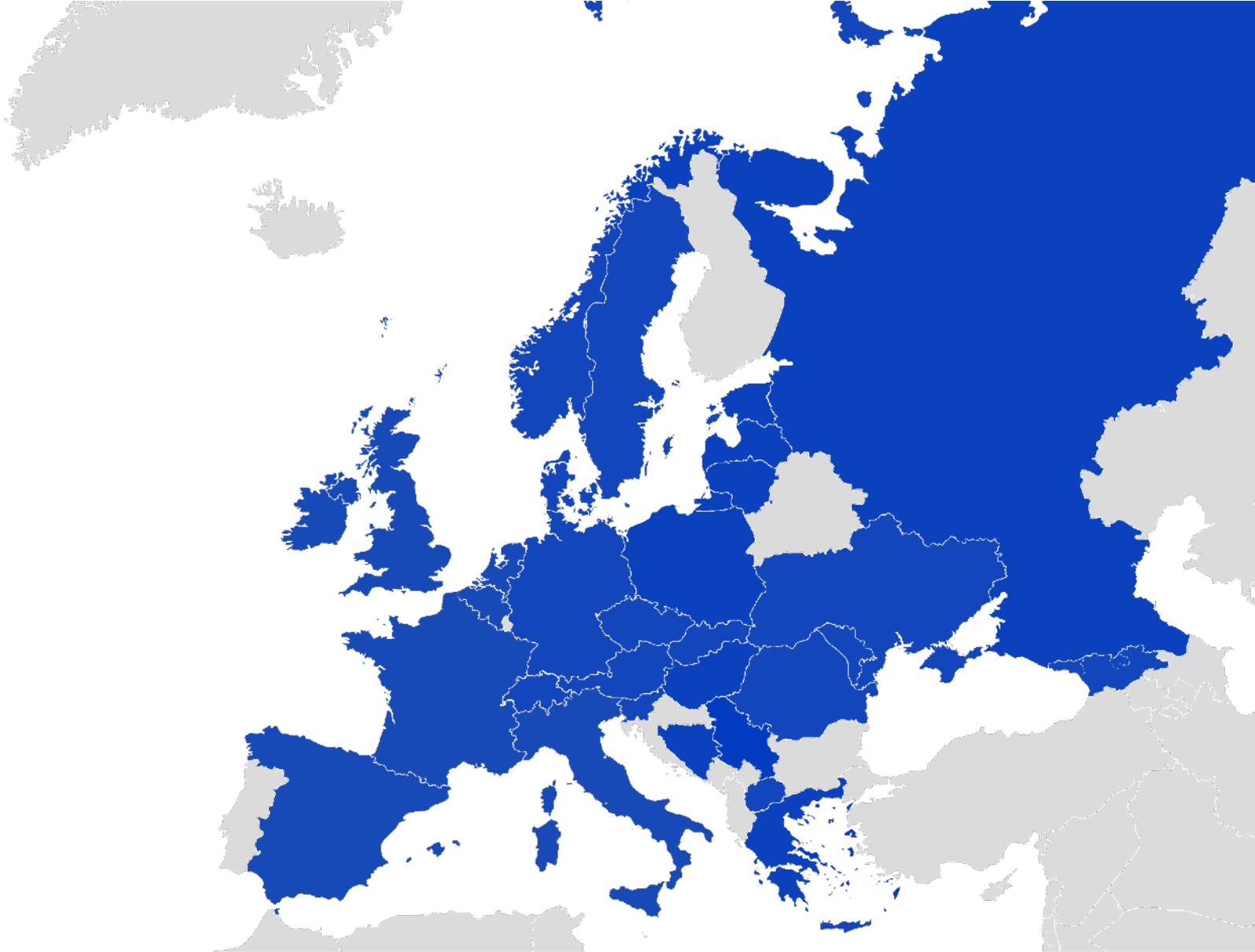
⁴ We included one museum that is not a dedicated Jewish museum, the Georgian National Museum, because it holds a major collection of Jewish artefacts that will become part of the core exhibition in the next few years.

cemeteries, monuments, Jewish historical buildings (such as synagogues) that do not include a curated interpretation of the actual site, and Nazi concentration camps and dedicated Holocaust museums.⁵ The main reason for excluding Holocaust museums is that their concerns are significantly different from those of Jewish museums. There are also numerous Holocaust-related sites across Europe that have become memorial museums; taking them into account would have skewed the results and shifted the conversation about the mission, operation and future of Jewish museums. We believe that the hundreds of Holocaust memorial museums deserve a survey in their own right, separate from research about Jewish museums in general. We have also excluded a dozen museums that are focussed exclusively on a Jewish personality (Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Shalom Aleichem, Marc Chagall, etc.) because in our view, they do not belong to the same category as Jewish museums. Finally, our geographical limits are the natural frontiers of Europe, from Portugal to Russia and from Norway to Greece. We have not included Jewish museums in Israel, the Americas or Australia, even if they address European Jewish history and culture.

With these criteria in mind, we created a database based on AEJM membership (42 full members according to our criteria), Internet searches and conversations with local contacts. Our original database included 120 institutions in 34 countries. We first contacted them via email in November 2015. Some addresses bounced, some institutions started the survey but their answers were incomplete and therefore their responses could not be used.

By late March 2016, we had received 64 completed surveys, including 4 incomplete ones that could be used partially, from 30 countries, a 53-percent response rate.

⁵ The only exception is the Holocaust Memorial Centre for the Jews of Macedonia, which is the only exhibition space in this country and that includes galleries about the history of Jews in Macedonia.



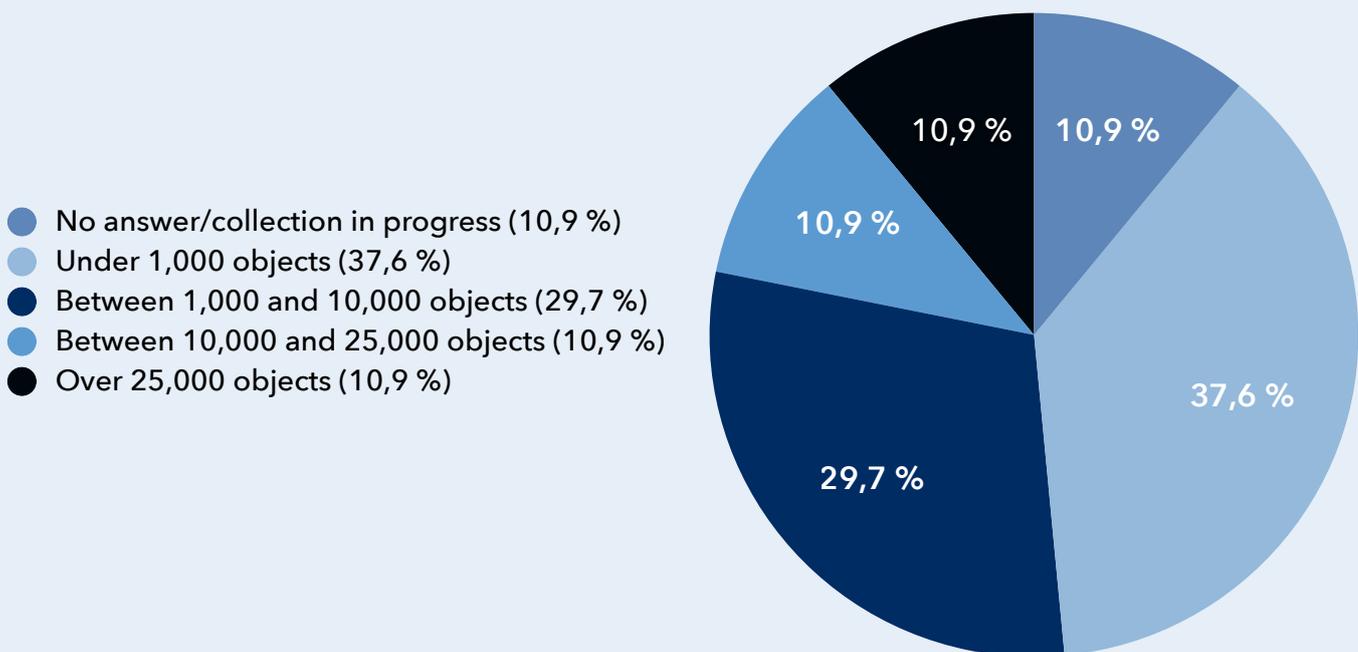
The 64 respondents represent 30 European countries

Of these 64 museums, six were established before World War II (Prague, Budapest, Ben Uri [London], Amsterdam, London, David Baazov [Tbilisi]). Twenty museums opened between 1945 and 1989, both in Western and Eastern Europe. Fourteen were founded between 1990 and 2001, mostly in the West. A record number of 23 museums opened in the 21st century, all over Europe (from Spain to Moldova) and of all sizes (from the small former synagogue in Schwabach, Germany to the huge Polin museum in Warsaw, Poland).

When looking at collections, we observe extreme variations: 7 of the respondents (10.9%) have either not answered this question, are in the process of organizing their collection (Granada, Plock), or consider their building as the main and sole artefact (Maribor, Jicin). A majority of museums (37.5 %) holds less than 1,000 objects, 29.6% have between 1,000 and 10,000 artefacts in their collection. Finally, 10.9 % of the respondents boast 10,000 to 25,000 objects, while another 10.9% claim a collection of

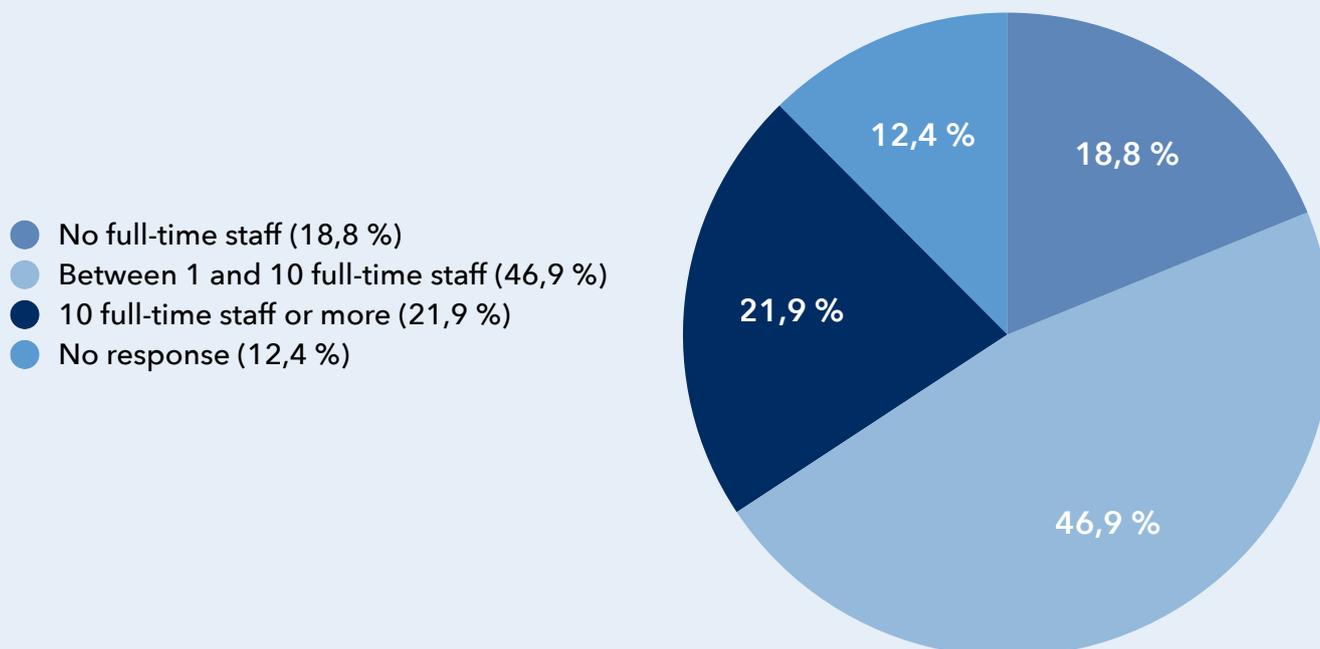
over 25,000 objects (Berlin, Prague, Amsterdam, Vilna Gaon (Vilnius), Manchester, London, Vienna). Most collections have a local interest, in documenting Jewish life from a city, region, or country. Most core exhibitions are object-based, but some museums rely more heavily on panels with text and photographs (e.g. Merano).

Size of collection



The same extraordinary discrepancies could be observed when looking at staff and governance. The vast majority of the respondents (46.9%) have between one and ten full-time staff members, while 18.8% do not even have one full-time staff, but rely on part-time employees (Rhodes, Veitshöchheim) or solely on volunteers (Rotenburg, Dublin). Finally 21.9% have 10 full-time staff or more, with Warsaw and Berlin passing the 100-mark.

Museum Staff



An overwhelming majority of respondents (63%) rely on volunteers, from docents to administrators, educators and curators. These differences might reveal various levels of professional training and expertise as well, although we did not ask questions about the professional profile of the staff. Given the personnel numbers, it is not surprising to observe that only a minority of museums has a board of directors, and even fewer have an academic advisory board and/or a committee that discusses acquisitions.

In other words, basic data about museums revealed extreme differences between small and large, urban and provincial, professionally run and volunteer-led museums.

This diverse sample offered both an opportunity and a challenge: the opportunity, probably for the first time, to get a quasi-comprehensive picture of the Jewish museums landscape in Europe, from small community museums to landmarks of “starchitecture;” from institutions boasting thousands of rare objects to others mostly text- or technology-based; from museums employing scores of professional staff and interns to synagogues-turned-exhibition halls run by volunteers a few hours a month. That was precisely the challenge we faced in analysing the responses: the large and numerous discrepancies between institutions, depending on their location, their financial and human resources, the political and economic environment, the type of visitors they receive, and other contextual considerations. The survey responses were first treated as individual case

studies, and then as an impressionistic portrait of some issues that are faced by Jewish museums today—regardless of size or location—but that may be addressed differently given local specificities.

This survey report is atypical, in that it puts its findings in the broader context of museum studies and current issues facing museums at large. Furthermore, this study is mostly qualitative, with some specific numbers mentioned when relevant (number of items in collections, visitors, etc.). Rather than statistics or percentages, the data that was collected involves a lot of descriptions, context, and other qualitative details. We had to process this information differently than we would do with hard data. Given the discrepancies in our sample, we preferred to look at the differences and commonalities between museums of the same size, the relationship between museums and other institutions, and the ways in which museums address issues that run across most institutions. We have thus grouped our results and analyses in four major findings:

- 1) Transition from museums to multi-purpose hubs
- 2) Lack of collaboration and partnerships
- 3) Tension between particularistic and universalistic missions
- 4) Increased need to serve a diverse audience



V. Major findings

a. Museums as multi-purpose hubs

In her typology of museums, Elaine Heumann Gurian proposed five categories: “the object-centred museum, the narrative museum, the client-centred museum, the community-focused museum, and the national museum.” This report suggests that—while some museums really do wish and succeed in being all five types at the same time—most do not. Further, while some combinations are natural fits, some may not be.”⁶ We can observe the same shift within Jewish museums: a vast majority of them are not collection spaces anymore but offer an array of public programmes, from lectures to pedagogical tours for schools, academic conferences, concerts and other artistic performances, family activities, social programmes, and food services, and include libraries and archives and open courtyards. As Francesca Lanz observed, “The interpretation of museums as static repositories of historical and artistic treasures and sites of worship, is being gradually overtaken by a new comprehension of museums as public services and social agents, which do not only have a preeminent conservation role, but also – and primarily – an important educational, political and social role within contemporary society.”⁷ What this means practically is that museums that wish to remain relevant for the general public cannot afford to limit themselves to a repository role; they must engage with a diverse audience—local individuals, foreign tourists, school groups, researchers, etc.—with diverse knowledge and diverse expectations.

In a recent interview to the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, the newly appointed director of the Jewish Museum Frankfurt, Mirjam Wenzel says she prefers to call her institution a “centre for Jewish culture in history and in the present” rather than “museum.” Doing so, she, “emphasizes the interplay of the two fundamentally redesigned buildings, the museum on the Judengasse and the expanded Jewish Museum with a new wing, as well as future online activities. I would like to free the future Jewish museum from negative representations tied to the concept of ‘museum.’ I understand the museum as a social place, from which one can be inspired, a place that can foster conversation and invites further thinking.”⁸

⁶ Heumann Gurian (2006), p. 78.

⁷ Francesca Lanz (2016), p. 179.

⁸ “Es gibt eine Unwohlsein,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 28 January 2016. <http://www.fr-online.de/kultur/juedisches-museum--es-gibt-ein-unwohlsein-,1472786,33632600.html>. Our translation

Some recent museums have included such programmes as part of their original mission. Others have caught up with the public's needs and changed their mission, space use and programming. The issue is about relevance, but can also be financial: by attracting a larger and more diverse crop of visitors than the usual audience, a museum can increase its revenue from ticket sales, guided tours, cultural and educational activities and from café and shop sales. Of course, not every museum has the capacity or the will to undertake such major changes, nor is it worthwhile for every institution. For example, the Jewish museum in Gailingen, Germany, fulfils its mission by showcasing past Jewish life of the High Rhine region. As Heumann Gurian considers, "some of these 'object-focused' museums might proudly remain what they wish to be: displayers of objects for their own sake, unabashedly and without apology. Without meaning to offer a 'hidey-hole' to museums too lazy to invigorate their displays, it may be time to allow stunning objects to take their place as just that. And if that is the intention of the museum, then the institution should say so and we will all understand."⁹

Would changes of programming give more exposure and recognition to the collection, or would they somehow underplay the collection in favour of programmes?

For small museums, the question is precisely this: Would changes of programming give more exposure and recognition to the collection, or would they somehow underplay the collection in favour of programmes? Can museums afford to change? How would the impact of such considerable change be measured and appraised? These questions naturally lead to more radical questioning about the purpose and survival of some museums.

Is the transformation into dynamic multi-purpose hubs a way for Jewish museums to avoid being a "glass case for dead Jews" that display ritual objects divorced from their actual use, or describe the Jewish experience as stuck in the past? Our survey shows that 73% of museums have a collection that includes 21st-century objects. Even Jewish museums without a local Jewish community can show a dynamic, evolving image of Jewish history and culture well into the present.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Programmes and Activities

Education: Most museums (85%) have educational programmes designed for young visitors—some as young as age 5, others for teenagers. These educational programmes may include docent-led tours customized for school groups, educational material for children and/or for their teachers, special events, etc.

Culture: A majority (52%) of respondents have cultural offerings for adults, such as lectures, concerts, artistic performances, etc. Some offer this regularly, some infrequently or just twice a year.

Events: Over half of the respondents (53%) participate in the European Day of Jewish Culture by hosting an event, designing a special programme, etc. Some museums mention their contribution to local, regional or national cultural festivals (Night of museums, etc.).

Targeted Programmes: A significant minority host tailored activities for specific constituencies, whether family programmes (20%), academic conferences (25%) or other groups.

Shop: About 44% of museums sell souvenirs, books or other material pertaining to Jewish culture and history.

Food: A minority of museums have a café/snack bar/vending machine, and/or a public courtyard.

The Synagogue of Maribor, Slovenia, a museum that does not yet have a core exhibition, summarizes its multiple identities in the following terms: “The Centre is neither a museum or a gallery in the traditional sense, as we do not possess a permanent collection of Judaica yet. On the other hand, the Centre is housed in one of the oldest preserved synagogues in Central Europe – thus in a way, our core exhibition is in fact the building of the former synagogue. The CJCH Synagogue Maribor encompasses the organization of cultural events, exhibitions, meetings, colloquia, symposia and other endeavours as well. Among our primary activities are also the study of Holocaust history, and research into anti-Semitism, Jewish identity and related issues.”

This statement echoes what the recent and small museum of Chisinau, Moldova says about itself: “The Jewish museum is the unique place where one can get not only information about Jewish history but even dive in it, feel a part of it. The Jewish museum serves other purposes.”



The Centre is housed in one of the oldest preserved synagogues in Central Europe (Maribor, Slovenia) – thus in a way, the core exhibition is in fact the building of the former synagogue.

b. Collaboration and partnerships

The main purpose of the Association of European Jewish Museums, as stated in its bylaws, is to “promote the cooperation and communication between the various museums and museum services in Europe, focused on Jewish culture and/or history.” This echoes numerous responses in our final questions relating to wishes: Among the 32 museums (50%) that answered the questions “What do you hope the survey will achieve in the field of Jewish museums?” and “How do you hope the survey will benefit your museum?,” all wished for more collaboration and exchanges among institutions across Europe. This same sentiment was expressed with different wording: “share best practices,” “professional networking,” “learn new methods from others,” “exchange of expertise,” etc. Small museums added the need for increased “visibility,” “publicity,” “awareness about small museums” so that they do not feel “isolated.” They ask for better “outreach to small museums” and for ways to “bringing wider audiences.” However, the results of the survey show that actual collaboration remains low: when asked, “Does the museum initiate collaborative exhibitions with other Jewish museums?” about 50% of the respondents say they do not work with Jewish institutions, but do collaborate with non-Jewish partners. The other half collaborates with both. However, when pressed to list collaborative projects within the past three years, only 20% manage to do so. Additionally, many of those who collaborate with another Jewish institution do so within their country or in the same language realm: Italians in Italy, Germans and Austrians, Ukrainians in Ukraine, etc. Nor is there much collaboration for marketing or public relations purposes. Actual geographic collaboration between east and west, north and south, and that between small and large museums remains wishful thinking.

Travelling exhibitions

This lack of collaborative effort is also visible around traveling exhibitions, which could be an efficient vehicle for partnership. Again, about half of the respondents have had in-house exhibitions that have travelled elsewhere. When asked about the barriers preventing more temporary exhibitions to travel, the vast majority does not cite funding as a concern, but rather issues of space: lack of exhibition space (Merano, Bratislava, Sarajevo, Moscow, among others), inadequate exhibition space (Pitigliano, Munich), or challenges and costs associated with the redesign of an exhibition for a new space. They also mention other logistical issues: some museums can *only* accept panel-based travelling exhibitions, while others do not show this type of display (Warsaw). As the Jewish Museum Hohenems explains: “Most traveling exhibitions are panel exhibitions that we do not

show regularly. For us to send our exhibitions often includes exhibition design that has to be adapted to other spaces and requires professional handling that is not always possible on the other side.”

Additionally, some smaller museums have difficulty in meeting the security, climate and time constraints imposed by the lending institution: their building might be too humid or too hot, the space not secured enough against theft or vandalism, and the loan period might be too restricted.

From a financial perspective, two aspects prevent travelling exhibitions to circulate more: the fact that funders prefer to support a new exhibition (rather than something already done and seen elsewhere), and the fact that bringing an exhibition from abroad can be very costly in terms of insurance, transportation and storage, to which translation costs should be added.

In terms of contents, we can observe that many of the travelling exhibitions created in Jewish museums have a very local topic, roughly summarized as “The Jews of [fill in the city/region/country] in the [fill in the time period],” and its variations. Aside from its curiosity dimension, this hyper-local perspective may be another obstacle to travel beyond their originating museum, even though museums don’t mention this fact as an issue. An exhibition about a Jewish topic that is not anchored in geography may have more potential to be exported. We have observed that a number of recent exhibitions have successfully travelled to other institutions, such *Amy Winehouse: A Family Portrait*, curated by the Jewish Museum London (shown in Vienna, San Francisco, Amsterdam); *Jukebox. Jewkbox! A Jewish Century in Shellac and Vinyl*, curated by the Jewish Museum Hohenems (travelling to Munich, Frankfurt, London, Warsaw); *Blood. Uniting. Dividing.*, curated by the Jewish Museum London, scheduled to travel to Krakow and Warsaw.

In various ways, our survey responses reveal the lack of collaboration between Jewish museums and the dissonance between this fact and the wish for more partnerships.

Should museum associations foster more opportunities for partnership among their members? Should funders encourage increased cooperation by offering grants specifically for that purpose? Or is more collaboration between museums prevented by strong interest in local history, the nature and expectations of the visitors, and logistical challenges?

c. Tension between particularistic and universalistic missions

The Jewish experience, particularly its Diasporic dimension and the Holocaust, has become a paradigm to study other minorities across the globe, especially at a time when migrants and refugees flee war zones and countries where they suffer from discrimination. As Francesca Lanz notes, “Today, museums are more and more asked to ‘keep up with’ the wider society in which they find themselves, to deal with contemporary issues and engage in dialogue with local communities. As they give up their presumed super partes objectivity and universalism, they are expected to take and declare a political stance, not only by reacting to contemporary matters, but also by contributing to the shaping of society and becoming forums able to accept and build on dissent.”¹⁰

This tension has been observed in a number of Holocaust museums or Holocaust-related sites¹¹ that have begun to include other victims of Nazism (Gypsies, homosexuals, etc.) and victims of more recent genocides (in Cambodia, Rwanda and other places). The idea is that the horrific Jewish experience during the Holocaust shares unfortunate commonalities with the experience of other groups; particularistic history gives way to a universalistic message of warning against stigmatization, discrimination and persecution, and to a hopeful message of tolerance, democracy, equality and peace. This is especially visible in Anne Frank’s House in Amsterdam, where, at the end of the exhibition, the visitor leaves the secret annex and is presented with interactive panels about xenophobia, cultural differences and coexistence. Many other recent memorial museums have made similar choices.

A comparable trend can be observed in Jewish museums. In a post-national and trans-cultural world, and Jews being the transnational people *par excellence*, Jewish museums are beginning to reflect on their mission from a more universalistic perspective leading to updating their galleries and offering programmes that reflect a reinterpretation of the Jewish experience through the lens of migration and cultural diversity. The Jewish Museum of Greece, in Athens, exemplifies this attitude in its mission statement: “To foster cross-cultural understanding among people, to promote public dialogue about tolerance and respect for people of all

¹⁰ Lanz (2016), p. 179. In recent years, a number of historical or ethnographical museums have redone their exhibitions in relation to current issues such as emigration, immigration, cultural diversity, tolerance and racism. Simultaneously, several “migration museums” have opened across Europe, and tell the story of waves of people who juggle the culture of their homeland and the need to integrate in a new country: German Emigration Centre in Bremerhaven, Ballinstadt Emigration Museum in Hamburg, Museum of the History of Immigration in Catalonia in Barcelona, Galata Museo del Mare e delle Migrazioni in Genoa, Italy, Musée de l’Histoire de l’Immigration in Paris, Immigrantmuseet in Farum (Denmark).

¹¹ See Brigitte Sion: “Anne Frank, Icon of Redemption,” in: *Anne Frank Unbound*, ed. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jeffrey Shandler. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.

religions, races, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds, using lessons from the Holocaust.”

While all respondents that have a mission statement aim at collecting, presenting and transmitting Jewish history and culture and their contribution to the local, regional and national environment (or variations thereof), and serve as a resource for schools, researchers and the general public), a majority of the respondents strive to promote understanding and tolerance between Jews and non-Jews and to fight anti-Semitism: “With its exhibitions the [Frankfurt] Museum shall promote the possibility of a dialogue for its predominantly non-Jewish visitors, elucidating the relationship between Jews and their environment against the background of the historical development in Frankfurt and highlighting the key elements of culture and religion, discrimination and animosity.” The Manchester Museum extends its mission beyond the Jewish community: “To advance education for the public benefit in the subject of Judaism and Jewish heritage by the maintenance of a museum to preserve, collect and display material relating to Jewish heritage with a view to countering racism and prejudice and promoting tolerance.” Or, as the Belgian Jewish Museum says in fewer words: “Combat all forms of intolerance, particularly racism and anti-Semitism, by promoting democratic and humanistic values.”

The Hungarian Jewish Museum in Budapest sees itself as a bridge: “As a dynamically improving, well-known Hungarian Jewish institution, moving toward an open, visitor-friendly service venue and a meeting place, we help to create a dialogue between the Jewish and non-Jewish population.” And so does the Jewish Museum Vienna: “The Jewish Museum Vienna is a place of encounter with Jewish history, religion and culture, with memory and remembrance, with Vienna and the world from the Middle Ages to now. It preserves and interprets one of the largest European collections of Judaica - the legacy of the third-largest Jewish community in Europe before the Holocaust. By collecting, exhibiting and communicating this heritage, it bears testimony to the past and the present of the city of Vienna - both of which have been greatly influenced by many and varied forms of migration. The Jewish Museum Vienna surprises with new perspectives on Judaism, it invites people of all cultures and generations for dialogue, and encourages them to ask questions and participate in the creative process.”

Two museums have the most universalistic approach. The Jewish Museum in Munich sees its mission as “fostering an awareness for social equality, opportunity and tolerance in the face of vast differences in religious, intellectual and everyday areas of life,” while the Elburg Synagogue Museum “wants to offer a historic background for present-day themes viz. integration, respect and tolerance.” As Jillian Weyman observed in her master’s thesis about Jewish museums and Jewish-themed exhibitions in the Los Angeles area, which resonates in the European context, “While there exists overlap in how Jewish museums define their Jewishness in terms of their institutions’ founding, values, mission, leadership, and funding sources, there is no one Jewish or museum-related thread that unifies them. In that

way, Jewish museums join in the struggle and ambiguity around what it means to be a Jewish institution.”¹²

Jewish museums join in the struggle and ambiguity around what it means to be a Jewish institution

Finally, one of the oldest Jewish museums in Europe, the Ben Uri Museum and Gallery in London, has fully embraced the universalistic mission based on the particularistic Jewish experience: “Museums and Ben Uri in particular have a major opportunity to play a pivotal role within society expanding its audience engagement outside its traditional constituencies and into the growing numbers of immigrant communities as economic migration and refugees from war seek a new life and opportunities in this country. Ben Uri is in a unique position to demonstrate a successful model based on the Jewish artistic and social experience and by sharing space, artistic and governance leadership effectively, does and will continue to be instrumental to other communities in illustrating the benefits of social integration within British society.”

Cultural observer Edward Rothstein is very critical of this shift to universalism and argues, “Becoming a celebration of ersatz tolerance and fake universalism, the museum, like too many of its American counterparts, suggests that Jewish identity is best realized through its shrinkage.”¹³

Is this universalistic bent a trend aligned with historical and ethnographic museums that universalize their mission, or is it a conscious decision from curators, directors and staff members of Jewish institutions? Or is it because Jewish museums serve a wider audience that they need to attract and engage the general public? Finally, a more universalistic message may be an opportunity to fundraise outside the Jewish community. These are just possible explanations that would need to be addressed more substantially with interviews and site visits.

¹² Jillian Weyman (2016).

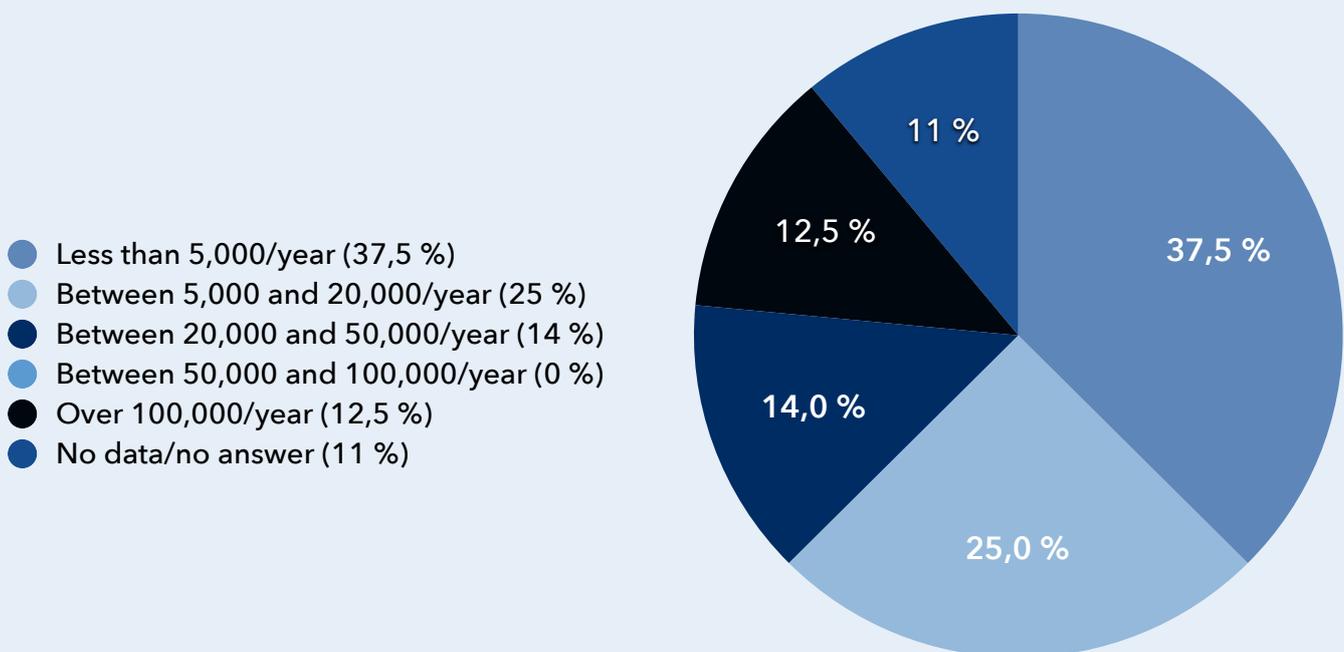
¹³ Edward Rothstein (2016).

d. Catering to a diverse audience

The tension between particularistic and universalistic missions is reflected more acutely among visitors of Jewish museums, and raises the radical question: Who are Jewish museums for? This question naturally ties into the previous issue of museums transforming into multi-purpose hubs and the tension between universalistic and particularistic missions. The question of visitors is one of the most difficult topics to analyse; first because of the gigantic discrepancies between museums, and second because of the absence of strong and reliable data.

Among our respondents, 37.5% welcome fewer than 5,000 visitors a year. In some cases, the relatively low number can be explained by limited opening hours (a day a month, a day a week, only in the summer or only from April to October, etc.), or by the absence of monitoring tools. 25% welcome between 5,000 and 20,000 visitors yearly, while 14% see between 20,000 and 50,000 visitors a year. There is an interesting hole in the 50,000-100,000-range, since none of respondent fitted in this category. This result would deserve some further research and analysis. Finally, 12.5% welcome more than 100,000 visitors a year (Gerona, Amsterdam, Paris, Vienna, Budapest, Berlin, Prague, Warsaw, the last three boasting more than 500,000 visitors a year).

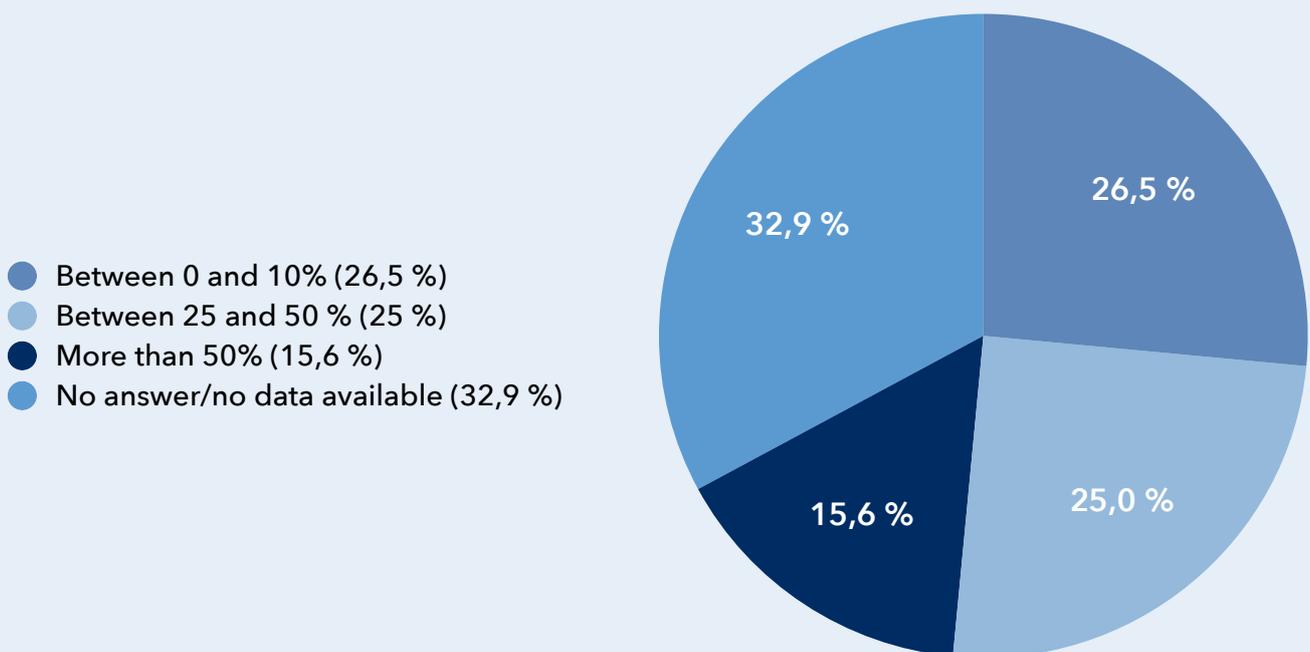
Attendance records



However, these absolute attendance numbers are skewed: large urban museums tend to attract many more people than small renovated synagogues in the countryside. In capital cities, Jewish museums are often part of a tourism circuit, included in weekly passes, and they interest a wide array of visitors, including architecture fans that do not care about the content of the exhibition. In some museums, there is no entrance fee, while in others it can be symbolic (low) or as expensive as an art museum.

We asked for a breakdown of visitors by type, and in the few cases where relatively precise numbers were shared, we noted that for 26.5% of respondents, school groups represented between 0 and 10% of the total number of visitors, and for 25%, schools represented 25 to 50% of their annual visits. In 15.6 % of the cases, school groups represent more than 50% of the annual number of visitors, with some extraordinary peaks at 70% (Manchester, Merano) and 80% (Trondheim).

Attendance of school groups

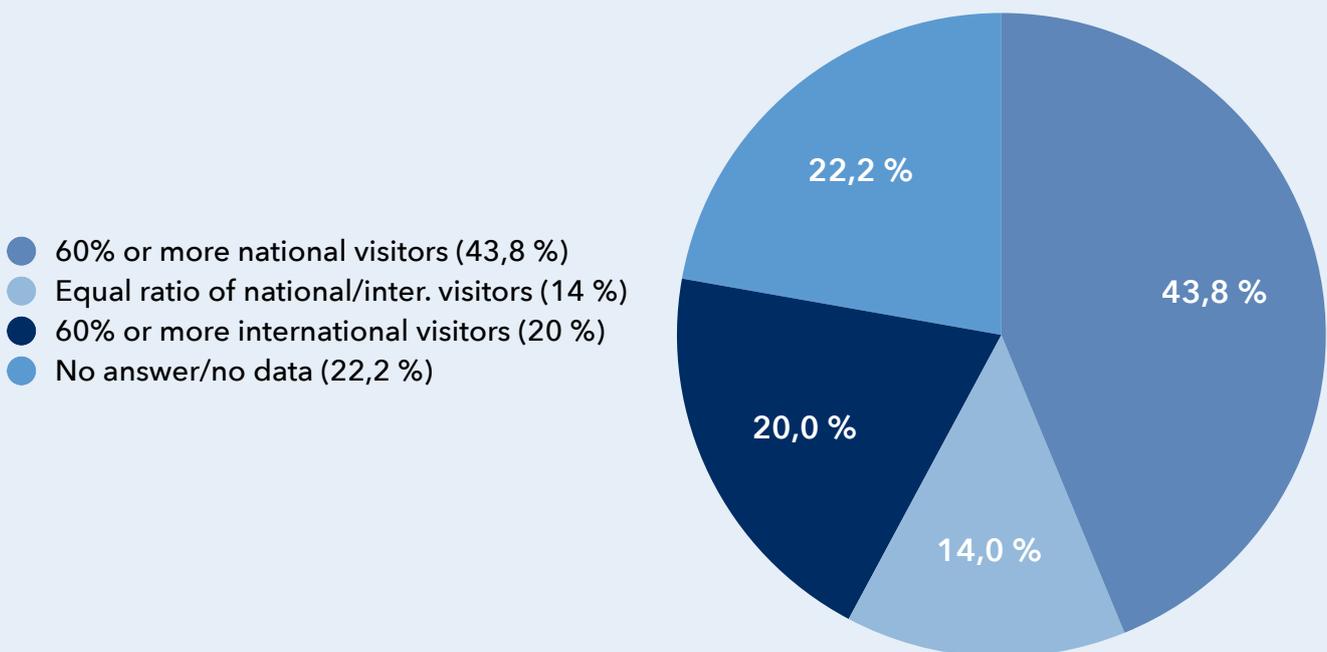


One large urban museum welcomes 37,000 students a year, while a modest museum in a small town claims about 30,000 students a year. This is a good example of skewed numbers. If we looked only at absolute statistics of visitors, a small museum in a medium-size town that receives

10,000 visitors a year wouldn't survive. However, if 8,000 of the 10,000 visitors are school groups, we see that the museum fulfils a very important and unique pedagogical mission, that the school groups make it sustainable as a museum, and that it should remain active in the regional landscape.

Our survey also shows a deep discrepancy of the ratio of local/national visitors to international/foreign visitors: 43.8% of the respondents welcome a majority of national visitors (60 percent or more) over international visitors. For some museums (Franconia, Parma, Frankfurt, Korsun, Ben Uri), the ratio climbs to 90% nationals vs. 10% foreigners. About 14% of museums have an equal ratio between the two groups (50/50), while 20% have an overwhelming majority of foreign visitors, with record numbers reached in Rhodes, Budapest (90%), Sarajevo (85%), Granada (80%), and Seville (75%).

Ratio of national vs. international visitors



The large or small number of international visitors and non-school groups has a direct impact on the type of guided tours offered in the museums. Half of all respondents have audio guides, and about two thirds have printed material. Almost all museums have a website, half of the respondents have a Facebook page, but very few museums are present and

active on other social media platforms (Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc.). Only a handful is developing a smartphone application.

In most cases, the core exhibition is in two or three languages, the first one being the local language, the second English, and a third language spoken in the region or Hebrew. A few museums do not include panels in English in their exhibition, but they have printed guides or audio guides in English (and other languages).

Our survey shows that most museums lack the tools, staff and resources to understand and monitor their visitors. When asked if and how they evaluate the visitors' satisfaction, most describe rudimentary and irregular methods: guest book inscriptions; quick written or oral satisfaction questionnaire at the reception desk; request for a zip code when buying a ticket, informal conversation with a guide, etc. As for online monitoring or follow-up, we observed that museums rely on website views, social media followers (especially Facebook "likes"), and monitor visitors' comments, critiques and compliments online (on Tripadvisor and other satisfaction-rating websites). This is neither scientific nor helpful; it is crucial for museums to understand better the main consumers of their exhibitions and programmes, and to meet their expectations. It is especially surprising to see this lack of evaluation method in light of another question in the survey: when asked about the two most pressing issues faced by their institution, over 35% mention visitors' attendance as a concern, immediately after funding.



VI. Other findings

There was not enough data to address three other topics that are nevertheless relevant to the area of collection management and worth discussing briefly: technology; provenance research and restitution policies; acquisition and disposal policies.

a. Technology

The discrepancy between museums is particularly acute in the field of technology. While all respondents have catalogued most of their collection, the medium differs quite significantly: some still use index cards, others spreadsheets or simple word documents, while an important number chooses databases or specific software (e.g., Filemaker Pro).

The same vast differences can be observed when looking at the amount of digitized material from the collection: responses vary tremendously, from 5 to 100 percent of digitization, in various formats and using different software, and a minority of museums have their collection accessible online.

Respondents mention technology as one of the most pressing issues they face, in direct relation to funding

At the same time, respondents mention technology as one of the most pressing issues they face, in direct relation to funding. Indeed, some museums explain that they need to upgrade their technology for cataloguing and digitizing their collection, but lack the financial means, as well as the professional staff and up-to-date knowledge about formats, obsolescence, security, and other issues.

It is therefore not surprising that only a few large museums that have the expertise and the budget do include technology in their permanent exhibition (multi-media displays, interactive visits, mobile applications, etc.).

b. Provenance research and restitution policies

Jewish museums have built their collections through various inputs: communal heritage (ritual objects, synagogue remnants, photographs, books, etc.), private donations, transfer or restitution of objects by the government or other official agencies, and many other sources. Sometimes, however, the provenance of an object is unclear—it could have been looted from an individual, a family or a community; it could have been sold under duress, confiscated by the police, the government or another force during times of anti-Semitic persecution. Some Jewish museums have adopted the Washington Principles on Holocaust-era assets (1998) as a guideline, should the provenance of an object be questioned. In November 2006, the AEJM recommended that its full and associate members “follow the principles of the Washington Conference.”¹⁴ However, a small majority of our respondents, including full members of the AEJM, do not have a provenance research policy.

A majority of our respondents
do not have a provenance research policy

In our survey, a minority of respondents has conducted reactive research (i.e. when asked about the origin of an object), and an even smaller proportion has conducted proactive provenance research. There are two declared cases of restitution of an object of communal property, and five cases of restitution of an object of private property, while about half the respondents declare they do not have a restitution policy.

¹⁴ The AEJM resolution recommends that it (1) identify all objects in their collections that were issued/created before 1946

(2) Reasonably consider gaps or ambiguities in provenance in the light of the passage of time and the circumstances of the Holocaust era

(3) Make available object and provenance (history of ownership) information on those objects and make this information accessible to potential rightful owners or their heirs

(4) Publicize works of art, applied art, Judaica, Books, Manuscripts, ephemera, and household articles that are found to have been confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted in order to locate their pre-War owners or their heirs

(5) Take steps to achieve a just and fair solution in cases where the pre-War owners of works of art, applied art, Judaica, Books, Manuscripts, ephemera, and household articles that are found to have been confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted, or their heirs, can be identified, recognizing this may vary according to the facts and circumstances surrounding a specific case

(6) Take steps to achieve an appropriate solution in cases where the pre-War owners of works of art, applied art, Judaica, Books, Manuscripts, ephemera, and household articles that are found to have been confiscated by the Nazis, or the heirs of the owners, can not be identified

(7) Give priority to continuing provenance research as resources allow.

c. Acquisition and disposal policy

Almost all museums (with two understandable exceptions constituted of private collections) accept donations and most of them fundraise in order to acquire objects. However, very few have disposal or de-accession policies, with only a handful of notable exceptions. This reinforces the idea of a museum as repository, with a tendency to increase the museum's archive and non-visible collection, and to blur the line with an actual archive. Two museums boast a *geniza*, a repository for sacred texts, prayer books and community papers.

Additionally, museums that do not have an acquisition and disposal policy may be forced to accept all kinds of in-kind donations without the ability to refuse them or to de-access them later on. This situation can have significant financial implications (staff time and actual cost of storage space, conservation, cataloguing, digitizing, etc.) There are times when a museum can simply not afford to accept donations under certain conditions, or may have to reconsider its collection as time goes by, mission statements and core exhibitions are revisited, and curators and directors make decisions that require some objects to leave the collection.



VII. Conclusion

The survey may not give hard data about the field of Jewish museums, but it clearly indicates some recurring issues and growing trends that can be of interest to museum professionals who already experience these questions at their local level, as well as to a wider audience of academics, cultural critics, journalists, funders and any one interested in the field of museums and cultural heritage.

Site visits and in-depth conversations with museum directors, curators and other professionals would certainly help the Foundation outline sharper conclusions. For now, we phrase them in the form of four questions:

a. **For whom are Jewish museums meant?**

Jewish museums cater to a very diverse audience: Jewish and not Jewish, local and international, students and tourists, scholars and random visitors. This conundrum has an impact on all museum activity: the mission statement, the core exhibition, the temporary exhibitions, the educational and cultural programmes, as well as marketing and fundraising. According to one respondent, the local Jewish population, if there is one remaining, “is not interested in Jewish heritage” either because of complete assimilation or because of a ‘know-it-all’ feeling. If they visit, they only visit once. Jewish museums do welcome Jewish tourists from abroad, but their core audience is not Jewish. Museums must entice local and international visitors to make repeated visits; they must find ways to renew themselves on a regular basis and offer temporary exhibitions, cultural events, and other diversified programmes that will bring people more than once, thus expanding their visibility and winning the public’s loyalty.

Jewish museums cater to Jewish
and not Jewish audiences,
local and international, students and tourists,
scholars and random visitors

b. What is the purpose of Jewish museums today?

For museums to be relevant, visible and economically sustainable today, they must be dynamic and not only anchored in the past. They cannot afford to be exclusively repositories of the past or learning centres visited only by scholars. They also carry a crucial educational mission of teaching about Jewish culture, history and religious practices.

Jewish museums must be dynamic
and not only anchored in the past

This is easier said than done for small museums that have a unique collection, but no funds, no staff and no resources to upgrade to become an institution that has an impact on its visitors. Are they relevant as museums? Should they consider an exit strategy and find another repository for their collection and archive? The burden also falls on large museums when it comes to measuring impact in the area of education, for example.

c. How can technology serve Jewish museums best?

Technology is an essential tool for the development and relevance of Jewish museums, because it touches upon all aspects of their activity, from cataloguing to exhibitions, from marketing to education and from conservation to administration. Technology is also present outside the museum, through websites, social media, applications, etc. It thus requires urgent and significant attention.

Technology requires urgent and significant attention

However, technology is a complex tool that is constantly upgraded, modified and not always standardised. This lies in the nature of technology itself. Moreover, there are few archivists that can assess what is worth digitizing and cataloguing, and even fewer who can use the technology properly. Some institutions or organisations have been dealing with these issues (National Library of Israel, Yerusha, etc.), and there is a need for better collaboration and exchange of best practices and expertise.

d. What does the future of Jewish museums look like?

We consider Jewish museums as living, organic spaces that tell the story of the Jewish experience not only in the (often tragic) past, but in an active, engaged and forward-looking present.

We consider Jewish museums as living,
organic spaces that tell the story
of the Jewish experience

There are still a few museums whose core exhibition ends with the Holocaust, even if Jewish life resumed in that city or country after 1945. Most surveyed museums said they have educational programmes, but what is the narrative or message transmitted to the younger generations? Is it up-to-date? Who are the museum educators? What is their own education and specialist training? A number of our respondents said they have a strategic plan for the next five years, or are considering developing one. It would be interesting to put these visions together and create an outline about the future of Jewish museums as envisioned by the professionals in the field.

At a time when new Jewish museums are opening (or trying to open) across Europe (Lecce, Zagreb, Cologne, etc.), others are building additional wings and buildings (Manchester, Ferrara), and others are struggling to survive, these core questions must be taken into account, as difficult as they may be. What this survey points at is the need for a more professionalized field with better skills to address conservation and curatorial practices, educational and cultural programmes, fundraising, marketing and governance issues, and deeper knowledge of Jewish culture and tradition.

This report shows that the field of Jewish museums is changing; the Foundation will take this information seriously and may reconsider certain aspects of its programme, as may other funders active in this same area.



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IX. Appendix: The Questionnaire

Name of the institution:
Address:
Postal code and city:
Country:
Phone (with country code): +
Fax:
Email:
Skype:
Website:
Date of establishment:
Name of museum director:

1) Organization

- a. Is the museum
 1. A public institution (state, regional, municipal)
 2. A private institution
 3. A combination
 4. Other (please specify):
- b. What is the museum's mission statement (if it has one)?
- c. What is the governance structure of the museum?
- d. Does the museum have a board of trustees?
- e. Does the museum have a board of directors?
- f. Does the museum have a supervisory board?
- g. How many staff members does the museum have?
 1. Of these, how many are full-time?
 2. How many are part-time?
 3. How many are freelancers?
 4. How many are volunteers?
5. Does the museum run an internship scheme?
- h. Does the museum have an academic advisory board?
 1. Does the museum have advisory boards or committees for temporary exhibitions?
 2. Does the museum have an advisory board or committee for museum acquisitions?

2) Collections

- a. What is the geographic span of the museum's collection?
- b. What is the time-span of the collection?

- c. How many objects comprise the collection?
- d. What do you consider to be unique about the collection and why?
- e. Has the museum published a catalogue of its collection?
- f. Does the collection include original intangible heritage in
 - 1. Audio files
 - 2. Video files
 - 3. Other digital content (Please specify)
 - 4. Other (please specify)
- g. What percentage of the collection has been catalogued and in what format(s)?
- h. What percentage of the collection has been digitized and in what format(s) is it held?
- i. Is the collection accessible online?
 - 1. If yes, what percentage?
- j. Does the collection have any immediate needs concerning preservation?
 - 1. If yes, what percentage and what are the most urgent issues?
- k. Does the museum have storage facilities in the building?
 - 1. Does the museum have storage facilities outside the building?
- m. How did the museum initially acquire the collection?
- n. What is the museum's acquisitions and disposal policy:
 - 1. Does the museum currently purchase items or has done so recently?
 - 2. Does the museum accept items as gifts/donations?
 - 3. Does the museum fundraise for a specific purchase?
- o. Does the collection currently include post-World War II material?
 - 1. If yes, please describe the nature of the objects (e. g. Judaica/photographs etc.)
- p. Does the collection currently include 21st-century material?
 - 1. If yes, please describe the nature of the objects (e. g. Judaica/photographs etc.)
- q. Has the museum conducted proactive provenance research into the collection?
 - 1. If so, was it about communal property?
 - 2. If so, was it about private property?
- r. Has the museum conducted reactive/passive provenance research into the collection?
 - 1. If so, was it about communal property?
 - 2. If so, was it about private property?
- s. Does the museum have a provenance research policy?
 - 1. If so, please provide details:
- t. Does the museum have a restitution policy?
 - 1. If so, please provide details:
- u. In case of restitution, who has been the decision maker?
 - 1. Has the museum ever had to return an object of communal property?
 - 2. Has the museum ever had to return an object of private property?
- v. Was there ever a conflict over the restitution of an object?
 - 1. If so, please explain:
- w. Does the museum have a library/resource centre?
 - 1. If yes, how many books make up the library?
 - 2. What is the nature of the collection?
 - 3. Has the library been catalogued?
 - 4. If so, in what format?
 - 5. Is it accessible online?
- x. Does the museum have an archive?

1. If yes, how many items does it hold?
2. What is the nature of the majority of the objects?
3. If yes, is the archive digitized?
4. Is it organized in databases?
5. Is it accessible online to the public?
6. Is it integrated with other institutions' databases?
- y. What are the two most urgent issues related to the collection that the museum faces?

3) Exhibitions

a. Permanent exhibition

1. When did it first open?
2. When was it last updated?
3. Does the museum plan to update it, and if so, when?
4. What are the focus or key themes of the permanent exhibition?
5. Is the permanent exhibition mostly
 - a. Object-based?
 - b. Text-based?
 - c. Technology-based
 - d. Other (specify):
6. Does the museum's permanent exhibition contain post-World War II material?
 - a. If yes, please describe the nature of the objects (e. g. Judaica, photographs, etc.):
7. Does the permanent exhibition contain 21st-century material?
8. If yes, please describe the nature of the objects (e. g. Judaica, photographs, etc.):
9. Has the museum published exhibition catalogues in the last 3 years?
 - a. If so, please list their titles:

b. Temporary exhibitions

1. How many temporary exhibitions does the museum hold a year?
2. Please list the temporary exhibitions from the last 3 years:
3. How many are generated by the museum?
4. How many were primarily constituted of original objects (as opposed to reproductions or text panels)?
5. How many were primarily panel-based?
6. Does the museum initiate collaborative exhibitions with other Jewish museums?
 - a. If so, please mention an example of a project within the last 3 years:
7. Does the museum initiate collaborative exhibitions with non-Jewish institutions?
 - a. If so, please mention an example of a project within the last 3 years:
8. Have the exhibitions generated by the museum in the last 3 years travelled to other institutions?
 - a. If yes, how many have travelled?
 - b. Which institutions have the exhibitions travelled to?

9. How many of the exhibitions the museum hosts are traveling exhibitions from other museums?
 - a. How many were primarily object-based?
 - b. How many were primarily panel-based?
10. Are there barriers to hosting or curating traveling exhibitions?
 - a. If so, what are they?
 11. What are the planned temporary exhibitions
 - a. For 2016
 - b. For 2017
 - c. For 2018
 - d. Please indicate if the museum is curating them or if they are traveling exhibitions.

4) Facility

- a. Is the building
 1. A historical building related to Jewish life?
 2. An adapted pre-existing building unrelated to Jewish life?
 3. A purpose-built building?
- b. Does the facility face challenges related to climate control or building conditions?
 1. If so, please explain:

5) Visitor services

- a. Does the museum have:
 1. Audio guides
 2. Printed guides
 3. Guides or docents
 4. A mobile application
- b. Is the museum present on the following social media platforms:
 1. Facebook
 2. Twitter
 3. Instagram
 4. YouTube
 5. Vimeo
 6. Other:
- c. Which language(s) does the museum use:
 1. In the exhibition
 2. In printed materials
 3. In guided tours
 4. On the website

6) Public Programmes

- a. Does the museum have educational programmes for schools?
 1. What age range is the target audience?
 2. Are they designed in relation to the mandated school curriculum?
 3. What is the attendance per year (in number of individuals)?
- b. Does the museum have educational programmes for families and children?
 1. What is the attendance per year (in number of individuals)?
- c. Does the museum have educational programmes for adults?
 1. What is the attendance per year (in number of individuals)?
- d. Does the museum publish educational material (online or in print)?
 1. If so, for what age range?
- e. Does the museum organize cultural events?
- f. What is the annual budget allocation for educational and cultural programmes?
- g. Does the museum hold academic conferences, seminars, or workshops?
 1. Does it partner with academic and research institutions?
- h. Did the museum host a programme during the European Day of Jewish Culture
 1. In 2013
 2. In 2014
 3. In 2015

7) Visitor demographics and evaluation

- a. How many visitors did the museum receive
 1. In 2013:
 2. In 2014:
 3. In 2015:
 4. What is the percentage of school groups?
 5. What is the percentage of local/national visitors vs. international visitors?
- b. Does the museum survey the visitors or evaluate visitor experience?
 1. If so, how often?
 2. If so, with what methods?
- c. Does the museum engage with visitors after their visit?
 1. If so, how?
- d. Does the museum monitor its online presence?
 1. If so, does it monitor online reviews (e. g. Tripadvisor)?
 2. Blogs?
 3. Social media referencing?
 4. Other?

8) Marketing, PR and outreach

- a. What type of marketing does the museum engage in?
- b. Does the museum publish newsletters or bulletins?

1. If so, how frequently are they published?
- c. Does the museum engage in online marketing?
- d. What is the museum's budget allocation for marketing?
- e. Does the museum partner with a local, regional and/or national tourism office for marketing?
 1. If yes, please detail:
- f. Does the museum partner with the Jewish community for marketing purposes?
- g. Does the museum partner with other institutions for marketing purposes?
 1. If so, please list them here:
 2. Please also describe the nature of this partnership:
- h. Does the museum have a membership programme?
 1. If so, how many members does the museum currently have?

9) Finances

- a. What were the museum's total expenditures for the last fiscal year?
- b. What was the museum's total income for the last fiscal year?
 1. What were the sources of income by percentage?
 2. Public (national)
 3. Public (regional)
 4. Public (municipal)
 5. Private donations
 6. Ticket sales
 7. Other commercial activity (shop, café, etc.)
 8. Prefer not to answer
- c. Does the museum have a "Friends' Circle" (Patrons' circle)?
 1. If yes, how many "friends" does it comprise?

10) Plans

- a. Does the museum have a strategic plan covering the next 5 years?
 1. If not, is it planning to develop one?
- b. Is the museum planning to move to a different site, or create a new building?
 1. If so, what is the timeframe for such a move?
- c. Does the museum envision any other significant change in the near future?

11) Needs/Wishlist

- a. What are the two most pressing issues that the museum faces?
 1. Funding
 2. Technology
 3. Visitor attendance
 4. Security

5. Preservation
6. Other (please specify):
- b. If the museum is interested in professional training and networking opportunities with other Jewish museums and collections, please indicate the fields of interest.
 1. Curatorial practice: collections
 2. Curatorial practice: exhibitions
 3. Conservation & Preservation
 4. Academic collaboration
 5. Museum education
 6. Cultural programming
 7. Marketing & Communication
 8. Public Outreach
 9. Other:

12) Are you familiar with the following organizations?

- a. Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe?
- b. Association of European Jewish Museums?
- c. Is the museum a member of other museum associations?
 1. If so, please list them:
- d. What do you hope the survey will achieve in the field of Jewish museums?
- e. How do you hope the survey will benefit the museum?

Credits

- Cover image:** Wedding contract (Kettubah) of Yedidiah Yosef Israel and his wife Reina, 1852. Jewish Museum of Rhodes, Greece.
- Page 7:** Jewish Children's Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Photo Chris van Houts
- Page 11:** Logo "a survey of Jewish museums in Europe," 2015 © by the creative agency this is it®
- Page 17:** Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Photo Ruud van Zwet.
- Page 21:** Synagogue Museum of Maribor, Slovenia. Photo Bojan Nedok.
- Page 30:** Jewish Museum of Rhodes, Greece.
- Page 33:** Hanukkah lamp handcrafted by the silversmith Pietro Zappati, ca. 1763. Jewish Museum of Rome, Italy. Photo Araldo De Luca.
- Page 37:** Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Photo Ruud van Zwet.

A Survey of Jewish Museums in Europe

By Brigitte Sion

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Brigitte Sion

Brigitte Sion holds a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University, where she specialized in contemporary memorial sites as conflicted spaces of politics, architecture, education, tourism and memory. She has written extensively on commemorative practices and museum exhibitions (see www.brigittesion.com). Since completing this study on Jewish museums in Europe, she has joined the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe as the Programme Director for its Museums Programme.