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Between Ljubljana and Crete – International Symposium on School Life and School History Museums & Collections from Slovenia 2013 (15th Symposium) to Greece 2021 (19th Symposium)

Med Ljubljano in Kreto - Simpoziji šolskih muzejev in šolsko-zgodovinskih zbirk od Slovenije 2013 (15. simpozij) do Grčije 2021 (19. simpozij)

Izvleček

Tradicionalni simpoziji šolskih muzejev in šolsko zgodovinskih zbirk potekajo kot biennialna srečanja od leta 1984 z namenom mednarodnega sodelovanja in izmenjave znanja in muzejskih izkušenj. Simpoziji povezujejo muzeje in zbirke pa tudi raziskovalce z univerz in inštitutov na temo zgodovine šolstva. Prispevek kratko predstavlja poti do 15. simpozija v Ljubljani in razvoj mednarodnih simpozijev šolskih muzejev od leta 2013 naprej in opozarja na osrednje vsebinske teme in značilnosti simpozijev v Sloveniji (15, Ljubljana 2013), Avstraliji (16, Ballarat, Victoria 2015), na Nizozemskem (17, Dordrecht 2017) in na Danskem (18, Copenhagen 2019). Ta pregled sklene Call for papers/povabilo v Grčijo na naslednji simpozij (19, Retymno 2021).

Abstract

The traditional symposia on School Life and School History Museums & Collections have been held as biennial meetings since 1984 with the aim of international cooperation and exchange of knowledge and museum experience. The symposia connect museums and collections as well as researchers from universities and institutes on the history of education. The paper briefly presents the paths to the 15th Symposium in Ljubljana and the development of international school museum symposia from 2013 onwards and highlights the main topics and characteristics of the symposia in Slovenia (15th, Ljubljana 2013), Australia (16th, Ballarat, Victoria 2015), the Netherlands (17th, Dordrecht 2017) and Denmark (18th, Copenhagen 2019). It concludes with the Call for Papers for the next symposium in Greece (19th Retymno 2021).

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Ključne besede: šolski muzeji, muzeji izobraževanja, simpoziji, povezovanje, Ljubljana, Ballarat, Dordrecht, Copenhagen, Retymno

Key words: School museums, museums of education, symposia, connecting, Ljubljana, Ballarat, Dordrecht, Copenhagen, Retymno

Introduction - Paths to the symposium in Ljubljana in 2013

The symposia on School Life and School History Museums & Collections are international meetings that have been held since 1984 and the Slovenian School Museum has been involved in this form of international museum cooperation since the 1980s: first with one, since 1995 with two associates, since 1999 for the first time with three. The symposium in Ljubljana was actually announced already before the year 2000, as international expectations also reinforced the long-standing active participation of the Slovenian School Museum at these international meetings of school museums.¹ This was mentioned very directly again by the participants of the symposium in Norway 2007 as they expected more participation in Ljubljana from the Austrian and Italian territories, as well as from Eastern European countries.² Many school museums operate as associations or foundations, and far fewer are public museums with professional staff funded by the state, a region or city. The Slovenian School Museum, as one of the still active traditional museums of education (est. 1898 & 1938), is a national museum for the history of education and has international connections, also due to the journal *School Chronicle*. After the renovation of the museum in 2004-2006, there was no longer any reason to avoid the organizational work that I undertook with the cooperation and experience of the HAS-Historical Association of Slovenia (which organized the Conference of History of Childhood in 2012),³ ICOM Slovenia and the Slovenian School Museum, and in particular with the members of the International Program and Scientific Committee⁴ and the Organizing Committee.⁵

1 International symposiums of school museums have been covered by the journal of the Slovenian School Museum since 1989 (J. Ciperle, Mednarodni simpozij šolski muzej / International Symposium of School Museums, Zbornik za zgodovino šolstva in prosvete, vol. 22, 1989, pp. 76-77; see later reports in : Šolska kronika/School Chronicle).

2 School history - school museums and identity, 12th International Symposium on School Life and School History Museums & Collections in Bergen, Norway. Šolska kronika /School Chronicle, Vol. 17(41), No. 1 (2008), pp. 168-174, especially p. 174.

3 Zgodovina otroštva / History of Childhood, Ljubljana: ZZDS, 2012, pp. 746;
<http://hdl.handle.net/11686/31016>

4 Programme & Scientific Committee. In: Book of Abstracts Symposium 2013, p. 12;
<http://www.ssolski-muzej.si/files/Symposium/symposiumbook2013>

5 I am especially grateful to the historian and museum professional Mrs. Maja Hakl Saje, the secretary of the Committee of Symposium 2013, for all the organizational and substantive cooperation. (B. Šuštar as coordinator of Symposium 2013).



15th International Symposium in Ljubljana (Excursion)

The school museum symposia were initially mostly German-speaking, but open to international cooperation at all times. Following the first predominantly English speaking symposium at the School Museum in Bergen, Norway (12th - 2007, Bergen; *Identities of school museums*)⁶ with about 60 participants, the next symposium was organized by the French National Museum of Education (13th - 2009, Rouen, France; *Pictures and teaching: international perspectives*)⁷ *Pictures and teaching: international perspectives* and subsequently by the The Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and its Faculty of Education in Brixen, with the Research and Documentation Center South Tyrol's educational history in the Multilingual Northern Italy (14th - 2011 Brixen / Bressanone, South Tyrol, Italy; *Exploration into childhood. Time witnesses as cultural memory and their meaning to the history and museum of education*).⁸

In 2013, it was Ljubljana's turn. The Symposium on Teachers' Associations and Museums (15th - 2013, Ljubljana, *Creating links in education*) took place on the last days of June. 2013 was also a special year due to two anniversary celebrations: the 115th anniversary of the (first) founding of the Slovenian School

6 Symposium 2007, Bergen, <http://www.old.bymuseet.no/index.php?vis=247&spr=en> (accessed 15. 10. 2019)

7 Symposium 2009, Rouen, *Pictures and teaching: international perspectives*, <http://www.inrp.fr/images/musee/pdf/symposium-program-en.pdf> (accessed 15. 10. 2019)

8 *Expedition in die Kindheit / Exploration into childhood. Time witnesses as cultural memory and their meaning to the history and museum of education*. In: *H-Soz-Kult*, 13.05.2011, www.hsozkult.de/event/id/termine-16409



15th International Symposium in Ljubljana (Photo: SŠM)

Museum and the 30th anniversary of the biennial symposia of school museums (1st - 1984, Michelstetten, Austria).

The first symposia were mainly held in German-speaking countries at the initiative of R. Lukschanderl (Rudolf Lukschanderl,⁹ Lower Austrian School Museum / Niederösterreichisches Schulmuseum) and his generation of museum professionals from different school museums and researchers of educational history from universities and institutes. The bulletin of the Slovenian School Museum "School Chronicle" regularly reported on international symposia of school museums, so we were aware of the importance of the tradition of international museum networking. At the beginning of the 2013 Ljubljana Symposium, we were also able to draw attention to the founder of our symposia and to the 30-year development of international school museum symposia.¹⁰

About the **15th Symposium 2013** as the most important international event in the field of the history of education in Slovenia so far, School Views/Šolski

9 Šuštar, B., Rudolf Lukschanderl (1927-1990) ustanovitelj šolskega muzeja v Michelstettenu (Avstrija) in začetnik mednarodnih simpozijev šolskih muzejev / Rudolf Lukschanderl (1927-1990), the founder of the school museum in Michelstetten (Austria) and the initiator of symposia for school museums), Šolska kronika/School Chronicle, 2011, No. 1-2, pp. 164-169.

10 Šuštar, B., Welcome to the 15th Symposium: How do school/education museums and our Symposiums forge links among us? In: Book of Abstracts Symposium 2013, p. 5; 15 Symposiums in 30 years 1984-2013, p. 8; <http://www.ssolski-muzej.si/files/Symposium/symposiumbook2013.pdf> (accessed 15. 10. 2019)

razgledi¹¹ (a biweekly Slovenian periodical for teachers and other education professionals), as well as the School Chronicle/Šolska kronika,¹² Bulletin of the Slovenian Ethnological Society/Glasnik Slovenskega etnološkega društva¹³ and the central journal in the field of museology *Argo*¹⁴ reported; much information is still available today at the symposium's website. Around 115 participants from 25 countries across Europe (from Norway and Finland to the Netherlands, Portugal and Greece and more) and some other continents (from Australia, Turkey, Brazil, Nigeria and Japan) delivered 68 lectures.¹⁵ The symposium featured more than 60 lectures (most of them available online),¹⁶ in the thematic issue of the School Chronicle 2019, No. 3 however, 17 selected papers have been published, covering both main topics of the symposium: teachers and their associations and pedagogical museums / museums of education / school museums, as well as their links with teachers' associations and with the tradition and the modernity of education. The published contributions are also diverse in geographical terms, touching on the pedagogical pasts of Finland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Serbia, Greece and Spain as well as Nigeria and Indonesia.

The 16th **Symposium** moved to Australia (2015 Ballarat, Victoria). It was organized in Ballarat, South Australia (Victoria) by the Sovereign Hill Museums Association and specifically by the Sovereign Hill Costumed School and its principal, Michael Ward. The decision to hold the symposium in Australia was made at the 2011 Brixen Symposium. This was motivated by Michael Ward's (Principal, The Sovereign Hill Schools) longstanding participation in school museum symposia, interesting museum content and attractive presentations, and the international (not just European) museum networking of school mu-

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- 11 Učiteljska društva in šolski muzeji. Povezovanje v izobraževanju / Teachers associations and school museums. Creating links in education) Šolski razgledi/School Views, 28. 10. 2013, No. 16, p. 14; <http://www.ssolski-muzej.si/files/datoteke/solskirazgledi8.10.2013.pdf> (accessed 15. 10. 2019)
 - 12 Hakl Saje, M., Šuštar, B.: 15th International Symposium on School Life and School History Museums & Collections, Ljubljana 2013 / Creating links in education. Teachers and their associations as promoters of pedagogic development (historical and museum aspects) (report). Šolska kronika / School Chronicle, vol. 22 = 46, No. 3 (2013), pp. 668-681; (accessed 15. 10. 2019) <https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-4UW1A4ZU?&language=eng>
 - 13 Balkovec Debevec, M., Dediščina šolstva na 15. mednarodnem simpoziju šolskih muzejev: Ljubljana, 26.-29. junij 2013 / The Heritage of Educational System at the 15th International Symposium of School Museums, Bulletin of the Slovene Ethnological Society, 2013, vol. 53, No. 3/4, pp. 83-84; <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-97EOIHJM/837bd24d-bdb5-4e8b-874a-13d681101788/PDF> (accessed 15. 10. 2019)
 - 14 Ribarič, M, Povezovanje v izobraževanju / Connection in education. *Argo*, journal of the Slovene museums 57, No. 1 (2014), pp. 94-97.
 - 15 Symposium 2013, Programme, <http://sistory.si/publikacije/prenos/?target=pdf&urn=SISTORY:ID:20272>
 - 16 Video of each presentation at the 2013 Symposium is available at the History of Slovenia portal – Sistory: <https://www.sistory.si/11686/20243>



16th International Symposium in Ballarat (Photo: web)

seums. The experience of operating a costumed school as part of the Sovereign Hill Museums offer is interesting and noted by both the museum and pedagogical public.¹⁷ Also at the Ljubljana Symposium, Michael Ward, Ann Campbell and Linda Borner, dressed as former teachers attractively invited participants to the 16th symposium in Ballarat in March 2015.¹⁸ The museum colleagues at Sovereign Hill in Ballarat were proud to be able to make the symposium a memorable experience as the first museum outside Europe. Although the attendance was not as numerous as it was before due to high travel costs, the 50-60 participants nevertheless adequately represented the international museum audience. In addition to several German-speaking participants, there were also participants from Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Slovakia and Italy, and among the locals was a representative from the Australian National Museum of Education which is a Centre at the University of Canberra. The Australian Museum Program offers a unique historical learning environment, as highlighted in the invitation.¹⁹ They also designed the content of the symposium according to their experience and sorted around 15 lectures into five topics: The Effectiveness of Role Play, The Teaching of History, Museums - How do you present, Lobbying and The History of Education from a University Perspective. As reported by the Courier

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- 17 Margaret Zeegers, Associate Professor, School of Education, University of Ballarat: An Affective Pedagogy Success Story: Sovereign Hill Museum School. Research Report Ballarat 2011, https://www.sovereignhill.com.au/media/uploads/Pedagogical_success_story.pdf (accessed 15. 10. 2019); M. Zeegers, D. Barron: Communities of Interest: Three Unique Case Studies in Wider University and School Partnerships in Australia. *International Scholarly and Scientific Research & Innovation* 6(6) 2012, pp. 1492- 1496, <https://publications.waset.org/9038/communities-of-interest-three-unique-case-studies-in-wider-university-and-school-partnerships-in-australia> (accessed 15. 10. 2019)
- 18 Ward, M., Campbell, A., Borner, L.: Presentation of the following symposium in Australia, Ballarat 2015. 15th Symposium on school life, part 40. Visit us / obiščite nas – Sistory: <http://hdl.handle.net/11686/37691>
- 19 Invitation, IASMC 2015, https://www.ische.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/IASMC2015_16th_IS_Invite.pdf (accessed 15. 10. 2019)



17th International Symposium in Dordrecht, 2017. (Photo 2017, 2019: bš)

newspaper on March 25, 2015, the symposium was opened by Ballarat-affiliated historian Professor Geoffrey Blainey.²⁰

Following the Australian Symposium, the 17th **Symposium 2017** was hosted by the Dutch National Museum of Education (Nationaal Onderwijsmuseum), which introduced itself after moving from a traditional location in Rotterdam to a new easily accessible location in the ancient city of Dordrecht. The 1939 building, nicknamed Holland, is also architecturally interesting and its open space is designed for exhibitions. Tijs van Ruiten, the director of the museum who also spoke about the plans of the new museum at the Ljubljana Symposium,²¹ created the new image of the Dutch museum during its relocation. In July 2017 he also organized the 17th symposium with his colleague Linda Terpstra and the team of museum. The topic of the symposium was “Looking Back to the Future, Presenting School History for a New Era”. The interesting and diverse symposium program, as well as most of the sixteen lectures are presented at the conference’s website in the form of power point presentations.²² The symposium gathered

20 Historian opens 16th International Symposium on School Life at Sovereign Hill, <https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/2973143/historian-opens-16th-international-symposium-on-school-life-at-sovereign-hill/>

21 Tijs van Ruiten, The Netherlands, The past, the future, now! A schoolmuseum for the 21 century, 15th Symposium on School Life, 2013, part 20: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8IMoJIH9k>; (accessed 14. 10. 2019)

22 The 17th International Symposium for School History Museums & Collections in Dordrecht in July 2017, <https://www.onderwijsmuseum.nl/symposium-2017/>; (accessed 15. 10. 2019)



17th International Symposium in Dordrecht, 2017.

about 30 participants from eleven countries, and three contributions were presented by colleagues from Slovenia. A brief report on the symposium is available in the School Chronicle/Šolska kronika (No. 3, 2017).²³

The **18th Symposium** was also focused on the modern present and the future. It took place this year (2019) in Copenhagen, Denmark (University Campus Emdrup).²⁴ The symposium on the theme of digitalization was organised by Aarhus University – Danish School of Education (DPU), its pedagogical library as part of the Aarhus University Library, and the Royal Danish Library, and included in the project Skolehistorie, which is where the website of the conference can be found at <http://skolehistorie.au.dk/en/>.

Under the title “Challenges for school museums and history of education in a time of globalization and digitization” the symposium, attended by 50 to 60 people from museums and other institutions from 12 European countries, was led by Ning de Coninck-Smith, Professor DPU, and member of the project Skole-

23 Ribarič, M., 17. mednarodni simpozij šolskih muzejev na Nizozemskem / 17th International Symposium on School Museums in the Netherlands, Onderwijsmuseum, Dordrecht, Holland, 5. 7.-8. 7. 2017, Šolska kronika / School Chronicle, 26, No. 3 (2017), pp. 429-430.

24 Šuštar, B., Šolski muzeji in digitalizacija. Izzivi šolskih muzejev in zgodovine izobraževanja v času globalizacije in digitalizacije, 18. simpozij šolskih muzejev in zbirke zgodovine izobraževanja, København 2019 / School museums and digitalization. Challenges for the school museums and history of education in a time of globalization and digitization, The 18th symposium for school museums and history of education collections, Copenhagen 2019, Šolska kronika/School Chronicle 28, No. 1-2 (2019), pp. 256-273.



17th International Symposium in Dordrecht, 2017.

historie. The three-day event dealt with the theme of digitalization with four key speakers from outside museum circles: three from the host-country who, adapting the subject to a conference for school museums, presented the rich content from the viewpoint of a digitalization expert, conservation-librarianship and museum science. The contribution by the German historian presented illustrated children's literature. The two introductory addresses (also mentioning the development of our symposia from 1984) and the talks by the three key Danish speakers, which enabled the participants from various, usually small school museums, to meet with the wider issue of digitalization from the viewpoint of the extensive experiences from larger cultural institutions, are fully accessible on the conference's website (and on You-Tube).

This is also where a documentary film can be found, made after the closure of the Danish School Museum in 2008, featuring the last director of the museum, Dr Keld Grønder-Hansen (1959-2019), who died just over a month before the symposium. The film presents the care taken of the extensive collections on education from the closed museum, especially wall charts. In a way, the web portal Skolehistorie also continues the museum's work on the history of Danish education. Speakers from individual school museums and other institutions connected with the history of education presented the beginnings and their subsequent experiences of including digital presentations in their museum work. Twelve abstracts are availa-



18th International Symposium in Copenhagen, 2019.

ble on the symposium's website²⁵ and some other information on the conference in the report in the first issue of the 2019 journal *School Chronicle*/Šolska kronika.²⁶

Conclusion

The international symposia of school museums, promoted in the mid-1980s primarily through contacts with museums and universities in German-speaking countries, remain an important international museum and research hub in the cultural heritage of education. Meeting representatives of many different museums of education and researchers of the pedagogical past is in favor of broadening the museum and scientific horizons of all participants. The 2013 Symposium in Ljubljana continued with the traditionally wide, more mass meeting of experts from museums and universities. Also, by publishing the results of the symposium in this publication, we follow the successful examples of some previous symposia, such as the 3rd in 1988 in Nürnberg (in the journal *Mitteilungen &*

25 The 18th symposium for school museums and history of education collections 2019, <https://skolehistorie.au.dk/en/netvaerk/18th-symposium-for-school-museums-and-history-of-education-collections/>

26 Šuštar, B. School museums and digitalization. Challenges for the school museums and history of education in a time of globalization and digitization. The 18th symposium for school museums and history of education collections, Copenhagen 2019 - Summary, *Šolska kronika/School Chronicle* 28, No. 1-2 (2019), pp. 272-273.

Materialien, 28, No. 5, 1989) or thereafter the 6th in 1995 in Rostock²⁷ and the 7th in 1997 in Leeds,²⁸ the 10th symposium in Bremen in 2003 (Show what you've got! Presentation of School History in the Museum).²⁹ A publication was also published after the 11th symposium, organized by the Foundation School Museum Mühlebach in Amriswill in 2005 in Ittingen, Switzerland, on The Role of School Museum and the 21st Century.³⁰ With special thanks, the Ljubljana Symposium also brought attention to some committed (enthusiastic) colleagues from previous symposia who accepted notable organizational and editorial work.³¹

The Ljubljana Symposium, on one hand, also emphasized the importance of education in the native language (such is the cover of the first Slovene grammar of 1584 with the biblical thought »*Omnis lingua confitebitur Deo* / Every tongue shall confess to God«³²). In preparing the symposium, this was symbolically taken into account by abstracts in English and in the author's native language. In spite of international English being the working language of the symposium, the so-called Babylonian sections (with the possibility of presenting papers in Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages) enabled wider participation. Above all, in cooperation with the Institute for Contemporary History in Ljubljana we made the lectures widely available after the symposium. Video of each presentation at the 2013 Symposium is available at the History of Slovenia portal – Sistory: <http://hdl.handle.net/11686/20243>

For some, the symposium is primarily about confronting the internationally comparable work of related museum institutions, for others the comparative treatment of scientific issues in the history of education, but all are encouraged to seek the answers to the challenges of modern times, including those brought about us by digitization and greater accessibility of material and results of museum work.

In the content and organization of the symposia of school museums, the role of both museums or documentation centers for the history of education at universities is important, as well as the role of individual active school museums, which represent their work and link museum and research practices with a choice

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- 27 Mitteilungen & Materialien, Berlin: Arbeitsgruppe Pädagogisches Museum e.V., 1996, No. 45.
28 Documentation Leeds 1997, 7th International Symposium for School Museums and School History Collections; Leeds, England, Leeds, Bremen, 1999.
29 Zeigt her, was ihr habt! /Show what: Präsentieren von Schulgeschichte im Museum ; Dokumentation des "10. Internationalen Symposiums für Schulumuseen und Schulgeschichtliche Sammlungen", 24. bis 27. Juli 2003 Bremen, Münster: Lit, 2004.
30 Zur Rolle von Schul- und Kindermuseen im 21. Jahrhundert. Internationales Symposium für Schulumuseen und Schulgeschichtliche Sammlungen (11; 2005; Kartause Ittingen); Zeitschrift für Museum und Bildung 67/2007, Berlin; Münster: Lit, 2008. Inhalt, http://bvbr.bib-bvb.de:8991/exlibris/aleph/a22_1/apache_media/8X249QCDSUHC3B588YDK33KIKDE9MU.pdf
31 Book of Abstracts, 2013, p. 11; <http://www.ssolski-muzej.si/files/Symposium/symposiumbook2013.pdf>
32 Book of Abstracts, 2013, p. 26. <http://www.ssolski-muzej.si/files/Symposium/symposiumbook2013.pdf>

of topics. This was also showed with the symposium in Australia (2015 Ballarat), where an active museum with an exceptional experience of the school's past was presented, and also related the topic of research with university researchers. Also interesting was the case of a symposium based on history, but forward-looking, as experienced in the organization of the newly erected and remodeled National Museum of Education in the Netherlands (2017 Dordrecht). In terms of content, the symposium covered topics ranging from digitization to the presentation of the exhibition work of individual school museums and their international exhibition cooperation.³³

The 2019 Symposium in Copenhagen was also accompanied by difference. The symposium was not organized by a museum since the Danish School Museum was closed in late 2008, but by the heirs of its remarkable cultural heritage linked to the Aarhus University Library and the Danish Educational History Project on the Skolehistorie online platform,³⁴ which enables digital access to museum and others content related to educational history. The website features key speakers and some lecture summaries.³⁵

Like in 2019, the 2021 symposium will be in university hands as well! The organization of the next **19th Symposium** will be organized by the Greek School Museum Xeniseum, which is part of the University of Crete and its broad pedagogical and cultural activities. The preparations started very early with the invitation of Prof. Dr Antonis Hourdakis (Head of University Museum of Education - Xeniseum & Director of Lifelong Learning Center of Crete University, Greece). The content is set very broadly, directing us with museum and school-historical topics to networking and learning environments towards an open and sustainable society. The symposium of school museums also awaits new opportunities in the future to link the museum and pedagogical aspects of the operation of museums of education, universities and institutes.

33 Symposium 2017, 17th International Symposium for School History Museums & Collections in Dordrecht in July 2017, <https://www.onderwijsmuseum.nl/symposium-2017> (accessed 15. 10. 2019)

34 Skolehistorie, The Danish educational History, <https://skolehistorie.au.dk/en/> (accessed 15. 10. 2019)

35 Challenges for the school museums and history of education in a time of globalization and digitization. The 18th symposium for school museums and history of education collections, <https://skolehistorie.au.dk/en/netvaerk/18th-symposium-for-school-museums-and-history-of-education-collections/> (accessed, 16. 10. 2019)