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**NEW OLD KUNSTKAMERA:
TOWARDS RECONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION***

ABSTRACT. Three motives intersect in the article: the museum universals from ancient times to the present, recent establishment of the Alliance of Early Universal Museums and the scheduled redisplay of the oldest Russian museum, the Kunstkamera (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences). The sections of the article are titled accordingly: “Universality of Museality”, “Experience of the Kunstkamera”, and “Outline of the Redisplay”. The phenomenon of museality is found in the very origins of human culture and in various ethnic traditions. The idea of the universal museum as *theatrum mundi* was reproduced in the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera, which has become the cradle of science and the mother of Russian museums. It repeated the main ideas of the ancient *mouseion* and Renaissance *museum*, being combined into a composite of museum, library, university, and academy. Today, both the reconstruction of the main features of the universal museum, expressed in terms of the redisplay of the Kunstkamera for the anniversary of Peter the Great in 2022, and the revival of its values have been articulated in the recent agreement on the creation of the Alliance of Early Universal Museums between the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera (MAE RAS), Wunderkammer, Franckesche Stiftungen (Halle, Germany), and Teyler’s Museum (Haarlem, the Netherlands). The Alliance aims to appeal to the ideas of the museum as *theatrum mundi* (‘theater of the world’) with its universality, encyclopedism and enlightenment. The concept of the universal museum is also incorporated in the three sections of the Kunstkamera redisplay: “The Origin of Man”, “A Journey around the World” and “The Birth of Science” (“Peter’s Kunstkamera, or the Tower of Knowledge”).

KEY WORDS: Kunstkamera, universal museum, museality, redisplay, *theatrum mundi*, Alliance of Early Universal Museums

УДК 061.1+069

DOI 10.31250/2618-8619-2020-4(10)-20-31

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* The study has been supported by a grant from the Russian Science Foundation, project No 19-18-00116 “Visualizing Ethnicity: Russian Projections of Science, Museum, and Cinema”.

The museum has an ability not to grow old, or rather not to become obsolete: antiquities and rarities just increase their value over time. Moreover, museum objects are endowed with a kind of magic of originality, forming a referential basis for cultural heritage and identity. Old museums, including the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera, retain their importance as a matrix of encyclopedic knowledge and humanistic values. They cherish the spirit of universality, which modern profiled museums often lack, and the cult of originals, which has now been replaced by the fashion for digital clones.

UNIVERSALITY OF MUSEALITY

‘Museum instinct’ as a desire to collect, store and venerate relics (objects of memory) is common for humans, regardless of age, gender, religion, and nationality. To characterize this side of mentality, Zbyněk Stránský proposed the concept of *museality* (Czech *muzealita*) as “one of the historically established forms of realizing a special museal link of a person to reality” (Stránský 2005: 154). The museality of an artifact is determined not so much by its material as by its social and semantic context.

Signs of museality can be traced back to the earliest days of culture. Franco-Cantabrian Paleolithic caves witnessed the prehistoric artists paint the walls with series of pictures which converted a cave into a primordial art gallery, temple, or theater. Most of the engraved species—mammoths, buffalos, horses, deer—are not inhabitants of the subterranean world and their images have been put into the galleries by will and vision of the ancient painter, who thus implemented an idea of the ‘mirror of the world’ and played a role of the ‘curator’ of the Paleolithic exhibition.

Ethnographically known shrines and caches served as depositories of relics, idols and offerings, as well as curiosities and memorabilia. At the tundra Nenets sanctuaries (*hebidya ya*), in addition to figures of spirits (*hehe*, *siadai*) and remains of sacrifices, one can find out-of-date sacred tent poles (*simsy*), sledges (*hehehan*), old shaman tambourines (*penzyar*) and other relics. The taiga Ugrian sacred barns (*emyn labas*) store a lot of remarkable objects including offerings and ornaments, bows and arrows, spears and sabers, bizarre stones (such as ‘damn’ arrows and fingers) and fossil finds. The Chukchi sacred sledge (*taynykvyiochgynsh*) resembles a nomadic ‘cabinet of curiosities’, containing a collection of fire-making boards (*milkhet*), bundles of domestic guardian spirits (*tainykvyt*), strange things such as a dried reindeer muzzle with a double lip or a five-toed hoof, etc. The costume of Evenki or Nganasan shaman with its many pendants and amulets is also a display of relics and amulets in its own way. Every sacred ritual is a rite of revitalization of relics, and the sanctuaries combine museum functions of custody and demonstration, while some of them are inherent in, so to say, closed storage, and others in the open one (Golovnev 2019).

In Hellas, the word *mouseion* (μοῦσεῖον) meant the assembly / temple of the Muses. The Mouseion in the Valley of the Muses near Mount Helikon in Boeotia was an arena for rituals and competitions of poets, rhetoricians and musicians in honor of the Muses, as well as a repository of abundant offerings and gifts that accompanied these feasts (Robinson 2012). Ancient sanctuaries often contained impressive collections of artifacts. For instance, in the underground storage at the Heraion (temple to the goddess Hera Argiva in southern Italy) founded by the Greek colonists of Paestum, archaeologists have discovered more than 30 000 items. From the Delphi sanctuary, the Emperor Nero took 500 bronze statues of gods to his residence in Rome. *Mouseions* kept not only votive gifts, but also detailed lists of objects indicating the names and origins of the donors, dates of arrival, materials of manufacture and the degree of preservation. The council of the temple made decisions about the possibility of melting the objects or sending them to the storage. These curatorial practices of *mouseions* evolve the sources of museum technologies that developed thereafter. Adolf Furtwängler, an antique art expert and participant in Schliemann’s excavations in Olympia, noticed that the temples of ancient Greece, accumulating gifts, became ‘some kind of museums’ (Ananiev 2018: 65).

Growing larger, *mouseions* acquired form and structure that became ‘classic’ for centuries ahead. The famous Mouseion of Alexandria founded by Ptolemy I Savior in the third century BC incorporated

an academy (in Plato's sense), a library, a repository of rarities, an anatomical cabinet, and an astronomical observatory. Being an assembly of scholars led by a priest ruler appointed by the king, it had the status of a state institution merging the functions of the priesthood and education, sciences and arts (Porshnev 2012). Later on, *mouseions* underwent a cascade of transformations that resemble discrete trajectories rather than harmonious evolutionary sequences. In Rome, the *mouseion* acquired the features not so much of a temple or academy as of a prestigious private collection conveying the status and taste of its owner. Roman museality had a pronounced imperial tilt, manifested in collections of trophies. For example, after the capture of Syracuse in 212 BC, Consul Mark Claudius Marcellus brought so many treasures to Rome that the city was transformed. "Until that time, Rome did not have and did not know anything beautiful, there was nothing attractive, sophisticated, pleasing to the eye: overflowing with barbaric weapons and bloody armor plucked from slain enemies, crowned with monuments of victories and triumphs, it was a gloomy sight." Having filled the Capitoline and other temples with Syracuse trophies, Marcellus "taught the ignorant Romans to appreciate and admire the wonderful beauty of Hellas" (Plutarch 1994: 21). The juristic flavor typical of everything Roman was expressed in the formalization of the legal status of private museums, and later in the initiatives (e.g. by Agrippa) of opening private art collections to the public.

The Alexandrian Mouseion, which existed for eight centuries, survived under the Roman emperors but fell under the pressure of Christianity: in 391, by the decree of Theodosius I, it ceased to exist for its adherence to paganism and was burned by Christians. However, competitions of poets and rhetoricians continued in its place in Alexandria for another half a century. A similar fate befell the Academy created by Plato, which existed for nearly a millennium (385 BC–529 AD) and was closed by Emperor Justinian I as a stronghold of paganism: academicians were expelled, and school property was confiscated. At the same time, the Church adopted some approaches of the Academy and Mouseion in its theoretical scholasticism and the practice of creating and venerating arks and reliquaries. Along with relics and things associated with miracles and shrines, Church repositories contained such rarities and curiosities as antique cameos, mammoth tusks and ostrich eggs, as well as robes and insignia of kings and princes (similar storages are also known in other confessions and found in Buddhist, Hindu and Shinto temples, residences of the caliphs). Collecting valuables became predominantly a function of monasteries and cathedrals, and the first public museums were opened at the initiative of the popes in Rome on the Capitoline Hill (1471) and in the Vatican (1506).

After almost a thousand years of lethargy (counting from the destruction of the Mouseion by Christians in the late fourth century and the closure of the Academy in the early sixth century) the museum and academy were resurrected in the Italian Renaissance. Since the fifteenth century, when Italian humanists turned to venerate the ancient heritage, collecting antiquities has become a fashionable and prestigious aristocratic hobby. The name *museum* was given to the collection of Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence, which included antique vessels, cameos, cups, coins, medals, and bizarre sculpture. The museum was integrated with the Platonic Academy in Careggi, Laurentian Library (*Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana*) and Lorenzo della Volpaia Planetarium, as well as with medical and anatomical laboratories and experiments (including those by Leonardo da Vinci) (Shastel 2001; Kudryavtsev 2018). Lorenzo's *museum* reproduced the basic features of the classic Mouseion with its entanglements of arts, sciences and education. Since that time, museums in the form of cabinets of curiosities and art galleries have become an indispensable part of the cultural environment of Europe.

Since the Renaissance, the museum has been compared to a theater or, more dramatically, the *theatrum mundi* ('theater of the world'): Giulio Camillo presented it as a 'theater of memory', and Samuel von Quickheberg as a 'theater of wisdom. Gottfried von Leibniz put the same idea into his project of the 'theater of all imaginable things' (with performances, music and songs), which he generously shared with the Russian Tsar Peter I (Ananiev 2018: 27, 28, 45, 152). In the early eighteenth century, not without the participation of Leibniz, the idea of the *mouseion* was once again revived in the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* with its astronomical observatory and anatomical theater, *naturalia* and *artifisialia*, as well as the library, academy and university.

The Age of Enlightenment has endowed the museums with a scent of imperial ambitions, colonial conquests and nation building. As Wendy Shaw has observed, in the late nineteenth century museums became inseparable from the nationalism, patriotism and imperialism that permeated European politics and culture (Shaw 2003: 150). Benedict Anderson notices that “museums and the museum imagination are both profoundly political”, and that post-independence states “exhibited marked continuities with their colonial predecessors, inherited this form of political museumizing” (Anderson 1983: 178, 183). Drawing on the experience of Latin American museums, Oscar Navarro argues that museums are “a product not only of the colonial past, but also of the colonial way of thinking”, and “already at the time of their creation, they were more political rather than cultural institutions” (Navarro 2010: 5, 6).

Imperial museality, inherited from the ancient *mouseions* and Renaissance *museums*, was revived in the capitals of modern Europe. For example, the fate of the Louvre has been inseparable from politics ever since the collections of iconic things were deposited at the Capetian royal residence. After Louis XIV had moved to Versailles, the idea of converting the Louvre into a museum was implemented by the Jacobins: on 10 August 1793, the Louvre was turned into the “Central Museum of Art”, and then became the Museum of Napoleon. The Directory issued a convention assigning Napoleon the mission of collecting trophies and treasures in the conquered countries. The revolutionary ideology of exclusivity assumed that France had the right to appropriate the treasures of world culture from other countries in order to grace the ‘kingdom of freedom’. The Louvre’s collection was replenished especially abundantly after the sacking of the Vatican, Florence and Venice by the Napoleonic army in 1796–1798. Under Napoleon, the Louvre became a symbol of imperial magnificence and power.

Another version of exclusivity is realized in British museums dedicated to the ideas of evolution and technological progress. The exposition of the British Museum, representing the entire planet, demonstrated the vastness of the empire on which the sun never sets. Britain’s role as an engine of industry and scientific and technological advancement is presented at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Science Museum in London, South Kensington, their collections being based on the exhibits of the first international fair, i.e. the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford steadfastly retains its devotion to the evolutionist ideology based on the idea of the universal pyramid of mankind developing from ‘savagery’ to ‘civilization’, the highest stage of which is embodied in the metropolis of Britain.

A variation of imperial museality, with its own motivational drama, is presented by the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden. It was created in 1816 at the behest of King William, who wished his people to get to know Japan better, and the museum advised the government on its colonial policy. Why Japan? Because at that time the Netherlands had lost almost all of its colonial possessions, and the colony in Japan remained “the only place on earth where the Dutch flag fluttered” (Engelsman 2007: 118).

In the early nineteenth century, following revolutionary France, the European states took up nation building. The first sensitive cracks in the bodies of empires appeared in the creation of national and regional museums. In Austria-Hungary, one after another, new museums were built: the National Assembly of Hungary founded a national museum in Pest in 1807; the Moravian Museum in Brno was opened in 1817, and the Czech Museum in Prague in 1823. In the first third of the nineteenth century, museums bearing an idea of identity emerged in the cities and lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, among them Zagreb, Ljubljana, Graz, Innsbruck and Salzburg.

The twentieth-century decolonization was also accompanied with national museums building. In Latin America, museums “were designed to create an idea of the identity and history of the states” (Navarro 2010: 6). After the Second World War, a museum boom began in the former colonies, with museums playing the role of generators of national identity and overcoming heterogeneity (tribalism). For example, in the Museum of Nigeria, which was opened in Lagos in 1957, the labels on objects were designated by names of areas instead of tribal names, and artifacts related to the kingdom of Benin and other old sub-Saharan civilizations (Nok, Ife, Igbo-Ukwu) were presented as a common cultural property (Willett 1990: 172-177; Shnirelman 2010: 15).

The political history of the late twentieth century changed museums in its own way, reorienting them from national priorities to pan-European ones. In the countries of the European Union, for political reasons, ethnographic museums have acquired new images, painstakingly cleared of the trail of colonialism and ethnic identity. “Since 2000, all over Europe—from the Brittany Museum in Rennes to the Geneva Ethnographic Museum—ethnographic museums have been transformed into museums of society” (Comte 2007: 41, 42).

In contrast to the European museum de-ethnicization, post-Soviet Russia experienced a boom of ethno-museums, which was associated with the crisis of the political system and revival of ethnicity in the 1980s and 1990s. Ethno-museums were created or expanded in all national republics, regions and districts. Among many were the Torum-Maa Open Air Ethnographic Museum in Yugra (1987), Dondi Yurt Museum in Chechnya (1991), Ethnographic museum “Ludorvai” in Udmurtia (1997), Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of Bashkortostan (1999), Museum of Applied Arts in Mari El (1999), and Ethnographic camp “Gornokniazevsk” in Yamal (2001). This process was accompanied by region building which was ideologically based on the local ethnocultural heritage and movements.

EXPERIENCE OF THE KUNSTKAMERA

The idea of the universal museum was reproduced in the Petersburg Kunstkamera, which has become the cradle of science and the mother of Russian museums. It repeated the main features of the ancient *mouseion* and Renaissance *museum*, being combined into a composite of museum, library, university, and academy. This Russian version of the universal museum bore the imprint of the personal preferences of its creator Peter I, who was guided not only by the advices of Gottfried Leibniz and Christian Wolff, but also by his own inclinations, royal whims and trends of European fashion. Hence, for example, his passion for collecting tools (from medical to turning ones) and acquisition and ‘breeding’ of giants and dwarfs (in the taste of the Prussian king Friedrich-Wilhelm I, who collected giants from different countries). In general, the idea of the Russian Kunstkamera was focused on the same encyclopedic nature and desire for universal coverage of all human knowledge in the range “from A to A”, i.e. from anatomy (as deeply internal) to astronomy (as extremely external).

Being a universal museum, the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera simultaneously played the roles of an imperial museum and a laboratory for the empire’s self-knowledge. The rarities and curiosities, *naturalia* and *artificialia* collected from many regions of Russia formed a database of natural and cultural resources of the empire. The Kunstkamera’s collections of ‘folk costumes’ brought from academic expeditions gave rise to a kind of fashion for the multi-nationality of Russia, expressed, for example, in the ‘parade of peoples’ organized in February 1740 by Empress Anna Ioannovna, and later in the publication of the magazine *Discovering Russia* and Johann Georgi’s four-volume *Description of all the peoples living in the Russian State* (Golovnev 2018: 11–12).

Initially, the Kunstkamera, along with the Library, served as a repository of scientific collections and data for the Academy of Sciences. This is evident from the one-man management by Johann Schumacher, who combined the positions of the ‘chief librarian’ ‘supervisor’ of the Kunstkamera and secretary of the Academy of Sciences for a long time between 1724 and 1761. Thus, the Kunstkamera functioned not only as a depository, but also as a research laboratory of the Academy. The Kunstkamera’s departments were usually headed by academicians: Samuel Gmelin, Michael Lomonosov, Peter Pallas, Semen Kotel’nikov, Nikolai Ozeretskovsky, Vasily Severgin, Petr Zagorsky, Johann Brandt, Leopold Schrenck, Friedrich Radloff, Vasily Bartol’d, Vasily Struve, Efim Karsky, and Ivan Meshchaninov. Academicians Lomonosov and Gmelin studied mineralogy, Georg Kraft physics, Johann Duvernois and Johann Weitbrecht anatomy and physiology, Jacob Stehlin art history, Gerhard Müller history, Pallas and Georgi natural science and ethnography.

The eighteenth-century long-term academic expeditions aimed to explore the resources of the Russian Empire (both natural and social) were especially effective in the interaction between the Academy

and the museum since they conveyed various specimens and data to the Kunstkamera. The famous ‘physical’ expedition of 1768–1774 consisted of several detachments led by Pallas, Lepekhin, Gmelin, Gldenstdt, and Falk (later Georgi). Patronized personally by Empress Catherine II and supervised by academician Mller, it encompassed a wide range of areas and issues from astronomy (observations of the passage of Venus across the solar disk in 1769) to geography and ethnography. The Empress’s decree instructed the naturalists to convey data “in uncultivated lands and uninhabited places that presumably and preferably can be assigned to the cultivation of all kinds of bread, grapes, hops, flax or tobacco, or something else... also on beekeeping”, on “the economy of populated areas, their insufficiency, benefits in special circumstances, and everyone is allowed to declare one’s opinion on how to correct something for a greater benefit”; information also was required “about the methods and tools used for fishing, hunting, trapping”, “about useful inventions”, etc. The detachment led by Pallas was instructed “to investigate the properties of waters, soils, methods of cultivating the land, the state of agriculture, common diseases of people and animals, and to find means for their treatment and prevention, to research beekeeping, sericulture and cattle (especially sheep) breeding. Then pay attention to the mineral wealth and mineral waters, to the arts, crafts, trades of each province, to plants, animals, to the shape and interior of mountains and, finally, to all the branches of natural history... To collect everything related to folk manners, customs, beliefs, legends, monuments and various antiquities” (Golovnev, Kisser 2015: 63).

These expeditions, according to academician Franz Ruprecht, “forever remained brilliant marks of the Academy’s activities”, and according to academician Lev Berg, their “ambitious research plan, breadth of scope and successful leadership still amaze us”. The researchers’ routes covered the vast expanses of the empire from Belarus, Moldavia and Bessarabia in the west to Baikal in the east, and from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Caspian Sea and Persia in the south. At a conference of the Academy in 1779, participant of the expeditions Nikolai Ozeretskovsky—at that time a young student, later academician and director of the Kunstkamera— summarized the ethnographic results of his and his colleagues’ research: now “we know all the remotest parts of the Russian Empire such as Kamchatka; ... Now we know how the Bashkir, Ostyak, Samoyed, Lapps live; ... we have true evidence of their customs, their faiths, their rituals” (Staniukovich 1953: 148).

In the early nineteenth century, the Kunstkamera could barely accommodate its rapidly growing collections. In addition, sciences tended to shift from universalism and encyclopedism to specialization. By the 1830s, specialized academic museums (cabinets) had emerged from the ‘mother of museums’, among them the Asian, Anatomical, Zoological, Botanical, Mineralogical, Egyptian, Ethnographic, Physical and Numismatic Cabinets, as well as the Cabinet of Peter I. It is noteworthy that in the middle of the century (1848), when the Academy of Sciences had three departments (physical and mathematical sciences, historical and philological sciences, and Russian language and literature), only two museums (the Numismatic and Egyptian ones) were assigned to the Department of Historical and Philological Sciences, while the rest, including the Ethnographic Cabinet, were assigned to the Department of Physical and Mathematical Sciences and considered related to natural science. This classification can be considered a legacy of the ‘physical’ expeditions, which understood natural history to be everything belonging to nature, including peoples. On the whole, the devolution of the Kunstkamera into a network of museums is evidence not only of the overflow of the display and storage facilities, but also of the specialization of sciences, in which museums played their proper roles.

OUTLINE OF THE REDISPLAY

The Kunstkamera was conceived by Peter I not only as a repository of relics and a data base for science, but also as a public institution for enlightening, “so that people can watch and learn”. His plan was destined to come true: in the Kunstkamera, as noted in 1744, was ‘always a great crowd’ (*всегда великое людство*) (Staniukovich 1953: 24, 58). Since then, the ‘great crowds’ have become a daily routine for the Kunstkamera: the annual number of its visitors exceeds 600 000 and the queue to the

museum usually stretches over hundred meters from the entrance on the Tamozhennyi Lane to the embankment of the Neva River. If we take into account that the museum's exhibition is a form of publication (in the original meaning of 'making accessible to the public') and its coverage obviously surpasses many other channels of scientific information, then the quality of the museum display acquires a critical importance.

According to the reviews of experts and visitors, today's MAE RAS exposition, although still making an indelible impression, leaves much to be desired, first of all updates. This is dictated both by the modern canons of museum design and technical equipment, and by the need for a new conceptualization of what and how to display. At the same time, the redisplay aims not at a mechanical modernization of the old Kunstkamera, but, on the contrary, purports a reactivation of the best of its heritage, above all, the reconstruction of the original Kunstkamera of the Petrine era. An additional incentive for such redisplay is the upcoming anniversaries of Peter I (2022) and the Academy of Sciences (2024). The planned opening of a new exhibition, "Peter's Kunstkamera", in the tower of the historic building (floors 1–5) is worthy of the status of a 'flagship event' in the series of celebrations dedicated to the 350th anniversary of Peter I. Today, the lower floors of the famous tower are used mainly for temporary exhibitions, and the scheduled redisplay marks the beginning of a systematic upgrade of the oldest Russian museum, the symbol of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The redisplay does not mean the destruction of the museum's image that has been formed over three centuries, but its renewal and revitalization, which implies retro expositing i.e. restoration of old approaches, exhibits and compositions. The Kunstkamera possesses an independent value of a 'thing in itself', a 'museum within a museum', and the renewal of the exposition is intended to highlight its peculiarities. At the same time, the Kunstkamera, which appears today as the keeper of old relics, will have to regain the original innovative spirit of the Petrine era—as a research laboratory of anthropology, ethnography and museology.

The new display is based on the concept of movement, combination of scenarios and rhythms of alternation of dynamics and statics. Some elements of the scenario approach are contained in the previous exhibitions, for example, the 'living mannequins', which have always distinguished the Kunstkamera in comparison with static podiums of many other museums. The dynamism of key compositions can be achieved by the depth of the mise-en-scène, highlighting the protagonist (or key object) and creating an atmosphere of vivid action around him / her / it.

A close-up (in the language of cinema) is the best way to involve the visitor in empathy with the presented eras and cultures. In this respect, the roles of guides in the exhibitions should be played by figures and narratives of travelers and researchers who have shaped the Kunstkamera's collections. Their voices (close-ups) unfold an impressive range of stories and tracks in the footsteps of Daniel Messerschmidt, Gerhard Müller, Stepan Krashennikov, Peter Pallas, Johann Georgi, Johann von Krusenstern, Thaddeus von Bellingshausen, Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay and others. Russian monarchs, from Peter I to Nicholas II, who generously replenished the museum storage, were also among the collectors.

The Kunstkamera began with a collection of curiosities, 'newborn freaks' and everything that was 'extremely old and extraordinary'. Until now, 'freaks in jars' serve as the first association with the word 'Kunstkamera', often overshadowing its other hypostases and causing justified irritation of ethnographers, anthropologists and archaeologists. Since it is impossible 'to prohibit the monsters', we need to overshadow them, returning them the aura of the 'anatomical theater', from where they were carelessly removed by the former exhibitors. To some extent, the history of the evolution of the Kunstkamera looks like a trajectory 'from freaks to folks'. At the same time, the 'challenge of monsters' is useful for the museum in terms of searching methods and means of redisplay, which should not be inferior to the anatomical curiosities in their impressiveness and flashiness. The redisplay of the Kunstkamera is meant to be a revenge of science in its classical mission of guidance to discoveries and can be accompanied by modern quests captivating visitors with oddities and puzzles of historical and contemporary ways to knowledge.

Composition. Today, the MAE exhibition does not have a common end-to-end idea and navigation, since it developed situationally as new collections arrived and the exhibition space increased or decreased, also depending on the tastes and creativity of different exhibitors. Not excluding postmodern algorithms—randomity, flexibility, free choice within interactive options, etc.—the Kunstkamera is able to offer a holistic composition of ‘travel in space and time’, taking into consideration that the display should be navigated and viewed through the eyes of a visitor, rather than those of a scientist or museum fellow. This design should be simple and easily fit into any mental map regardless of age, confession, profession, or mood. From the variety of thematic options, a triad could be profiled as: (1) “The Origin of Man”, (2) “A Journey around the World”, and (3) “The Birth of Science” (the latter could be also called “The Tower of Knowledge, or the Peter’s Kunstkamera”).

Part 1. The Origin of Man. At the beginning of the display, we plan to reconstruct a ‘primordial’ composition depicting Pleistocene nature, confrontations and alliances of primitive bands with other representatives of the natural world, other ancestral species, scenes of conflicts and symbioses, as well as mime adaptations. Other issues also deserve a special focus and presentation, among them the ‘mystery’ of the duel / dialogue between *Homo neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens* with a projection onto the Upper Paleolithic ‘revolution’, which led to the emergence of human culture, migrations around the planet and formation of the ecumene. Before approaching the scenario of the origin, the visitor will have to plunge into the atmosphere of pre-culture and pre-consciousness, realizing that the ‘feat of becoming’ was accomplished not by us (we are just its users), but by our distant Paleolithic ancestors. The drama of immersion in pre-humanity will be played out so that the visitor will be able to perceive subsequent discoveries and achievements as her / his own insights, though through the prompts of the popular methodology of the ‘ontological turn’.

In line with the MAE tradition, the exhibition combines objects from physical anthropology and archaeology with unique originals that have retained their significance regardless of variations in their scientific interpretations. These include both actual fossil finds (stone tools, samples of ancient art, burial monoliths, fragments of skulls and bones) and reconstructions (for example, the famous busts by Michael Gerasimov and a copy of a panel with a group of mammoths and rhinos from the Kapova Cave). It is the combination of human remains (anthropology) and culture (archaeology) that is essential for creating an adequate ‘image of prehistory’. The ‘Paleolithic Venuses’ and other masterpieces of ancient small-scale sculpture deserve a pedestal in the center of this Paleolithic composition.

Special attention should be also given to the panorama of early technologies: stone industry, bone processing, fire-making techniques, ceramics, metallurgy, animal domestication, and series of epoch-making inventions (bows, bridles, wheels, saddles, etc.). Audiovisual accompaniment of ancient technologies presentation (bumping strikes, chipping plates, creak of a bow drill, etc.) will complement the atmosphere of the ‘dawn of crafts and industries’. The complexes from world-famous archaeological sites (Kudaro, Teshik-Tash, Kiik-Koba, Kostenki, Mezin, Elisevichi, Malta, Afontova Gora, Oleny Island, Narva site, Ananinskii burial ground, etc.) also deserve a space in the display.

The final composition, as a scientific summary or ‘archaeological meta-exhibition’, may consist of a visualized set of human origin theories. In the same context, it is tempting, although in its own way problematic, to use elements of the ‘old Kunstkamera’ in the new exhibition, among them scenes from the life of ancient people in diorama cabinets, the sculptural group “Sinanthropa”, and Gerasimov’s collection of busts. To show the current concepts of paleoanthropology and especially paleogenetics, which have not been presented in the previous exhibitions and collections of the Kunstkamera, new schemes, photographs, and animation plots made on the basis of modern technologies are needed.

Part 2. A Journey around the World. MAE RAS is the only Russian ethnographic museum of the global embrace, and the new exposition should keep this worldwide range. The starting point of departure for the museum’s world round tour is the African cradle of mankind, from where the earliest people scattered around the globe, and a visitor to the museum will be able to follow their paths and get to know the diversity of cultures. The Kunstkamera has the potential of a world center for the study of ethnocultural

heritage and diversity, and this feature of the MAE RAS research strategy should be captured in this (most voluminous) part of the display.

In the new display, the continents and cultures should be presented in a conventional geographical sequence (as it is impossible to accurately map the globe onto the floors of the Kunstkamera), starting from Africa. This allows the visitors to navigate along the routes of ancient people's settling in a particular part of the world, as well as along the ancient paths of communication, migration and modern interethnic contacts. This also actualizes in the exposition of the figures of 'guides', i.e. navigators and explorers, travelers and researchers who provided the collections for the Kunstkamera. This parallelism of the paths and faces emphasizes the MAE style, in which not only the exhibits are primary and genuine, but also the research that led to the emergence of ethnography as a science dealing with peoples. Therefore in the display, the famous travelers and researchers will act as guides to the presented countries and peoples.

Presenting peoples and cultures "through the eyes of a traveler" presupposes accents on their distinctive features, in the classical style of describing Marco Polo's 'wonders' (this also corresponds to the general tone of the exhibition). Each culture 'meets' the visitor in its own way, offering an intriguing mystery of its symbols, etiquette, and aesthetics. A 'front personage' (Japanese samurai, Tlingit shaman, or Benin king) or a scene (for example, depicting 'the dance of the divine monkey', initiation, or healing) should immediately draw attention and 'lure' the visitor by the culture's peculiarity and beauty. The display of each culture should create the illusion of entering it (so far, this is visible and perceptible only in the Indian Hall), which can be supplemented and set off by the corresponding sounds and smells. The color scheme of the exhibition design should correlate to the represented ethnic tradition. The displays are supposed to be both reliably informative (scientific) and impressively figurative (artistic), revealing the aesthetics of cultures by various means and creating an individual image of each of them.

In each ethnocultural composition, one will be able to feel the dialogue between an insider and an outsider, the native culture and the foreign traveler (and the museum visitor). On the one hand, cultures 'speak' by themselves; on the other, they inevitably experience outside impact and interpretation by travelers, who format the meanings and values by their 'common notions'. However, each culture has the right to remain a mystery to some extent, and can be accompanied by a special quest for recognizing its ethnic symbols (codes) in mythology, religion, rituals, and ethics. These displays reflect the richness and global scope of the museum collections, as well as the research conducted by the scholars of the MAE RAS. They should be designed to encourage the visitors to wonder, ask questions and make their own discoveries by following the researchers, whose fates are captured in the history of the Kunstkamera.

Part 3. The Birth of Science: Peter's Kunstkamera, or the Tower of Knowledge. Founded by Peter I, the Kunstkamera has become the cradle of Russian science, and the history of the Academy of Sciences is visible in the chronicle, exhibits and the building of the Kunstkamera itself (one of the sections of the MAE RAS website is aptly named "Kunstkamera: all the knowledge about the world in one building"). Meanwhile, today fragments of the history of science and the Kunstkamera are scattered in different corners of the exhibition floors, and it would make sense to collect them into a single block.

The protagonists of this part of the display (the first floor of the tower) will be the outstanding figures of the emerging Russian science, starting with Peter I, whose will created the Kunstkamera (1714) and later the Academy of Sciences (1724). Peter I, with his hobbies and oddities, deserves the greatest possible close-up in this part of the display, so that the visitor would have no doubt: s/he is a witness to the anatomical and medical experiments of Tsar Peter, the earliest collection of books in Imperial Russia, and the originals of curiosities and rarities. Here, among the first steps of Russian science in anatomy and astronomy (knowledge about man and the universe), one will be able to find the Anatomical Theater of Frederic Ruysch containing the autopsy preparations and embryological specimen and having become the basis for Russian physical anthropology. The displayed dialogue between Peter and Ruysch should be complemented with 'images & voices' of the first leaders of the Academy: Robert Erskine (Areskin)

and Laurentius Blumentrost, the Kunstkamera's curator Johann Schumacher and some others. This initial stage of the St Petersburg museum embraced all branches of the emerging sciences and thus recalled the idea of the *theatrum mundi* ('theater of the world').

The next section of the display (second floor of the tower, Rotunda) will be dedicated to the explorers and travelers who laid the foundations of natural history and ethnography in Russia. The two spheres of the display circle will represent, respectively, their routes by sea and by land: the journeys of Dr. Messerschmidt and Captain Bering, the First and Second Kamchatka, 'physical' academic and other expeditions. Unique in terms of holistic coverage of spaces and knowledge, the travels of Gerhard Müller, Peter Pallas and Johann Georgi led to the birth of Russian ethnography and the first systematic description of the peoples of the Russian Empire (Vermeulen 2015; Golovnev 2018). For Russia, the 'description of peoples' was not only practical and scientific priority, but also a deep 'grassroot' tradition that steadily persists in the worldview and ideology of Russia with its ethnocultural diversity and specific 'national policy'.

The "Museum of Lomonosov", which now occupies the third floor of the tower, will be complemented in the new exhibition by the drama of the search for the national identity and nation building. It is here that the famous academic 'conference table' is located, at which many bright ideas were born, including the concept of multinational Russia. The intellectual duel between Lomonosov and Müller, which became the culmination of Russia's self-determination and nation-building, was significant for the formation of Russian humanities. In this regard, the Lomonosov Museum and its central exhibit, the 'conference table', should bring back the aura of the academic debates about the "origin of the name and people of Russia"—the author of a thesis of the same name, professor Müller, withstood 29 meetings of the Extraordinary Academic Commission in 1749–1750, during which, according to his opponent academician Lomonosov, he "brandished a stick at the meeting and beat the conference table with it".

As the Kunstkamera tower housed the first astronomic observatory in St Petersburg, the predecessor of the Pulkovo Observatory, the collection of eighteenth-century instruments displayed on the fourth floor presents the history of astronomy. The redisplay of this hall aims to reconstruct the design and aura of the hall closer to what it was in the time of academician Joseph-Nicolas Delisle, the founder of the observatory. The top of tower (fifth floor) is crowned with the famous Great Gottorf Globe, which, in addition to regular maintenance, needs to be virtually cloned, which would allow to reconstruct its initial function of imitating space travel (originally, in the seventeenth century, the Gottorf Globe was designed not so much for observation, but mainly for aristocratic 'cosmic play').

The Peter's Kunstkamera is an encyclopedia museum that combines the sources of all sciences, from anatomy (Anatomical Theater) and astronomy (Observatory and the Gottorf Globe) to the history of Russian self-knowledge. The pantheon of famous 'ghosts of the Kunstkamera', including the emperors of Russia, from the first to the last, as well as legendary travelers and researchers, creates a grandiose canvas of discoveries and achievements worthy of an anniversary display in the new exhibition.

The history of the Kunstkamera also includes windows to museology, which can be illustrated by cabinets and other exhibition paraphernalia from different times. It is important to achieve the visitor's involvement in the architecture of the Kunstkamera and an understanding that s/he is in the first Russian temple of science and art. The historical building of the Kunstkamera is of great value as a phenomenon of Russian cultural heritage, and the very being in it should be perceived by the visitor as a kind of initiation.

MAE RAS tries to provide its visioning of an answer to the urgent question of how the cultural heritage stored in the Kunstkamera's depositories (amounting to ca 1.2 million objects) can be accessible, if now it has only half a percent on display. There are at least three directions to follow: (1) A redisplay with further regular rotation and renewal of parts of the permanent exhibition; (2) Constructing a new storage complex with partial open storage of collections; (3) Digitalizing the stored collections and creating cyber displays via the large-scale multimedia project "Digital Kunstkamera".

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In some respect, the idea of the redisplay intersects the whole subject area of the museum mission and echoes in the credo of the Alliance of Early Universal Museums (AEUM) initiated by the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera (MAE RAS) and its sister museums in Halle, Germany (Wunderkammer, Franckesche Stiftungen) and Haarlem, the Netherlands (Teyler's Museum). It aims to reboot the original museum values, i.e. universality, encyclopedism, and enlightenment. Talking about the early universal museum, we envision first of all the *theatrum mundi*—the ‘theater of the world’, the universe in one room, the macrocosm in the microcosm—which is (and has always been) not a simplification of the world, but its humanization. Cooperation between the heirs of the early universal museums opens up old / new research horizons and provides a key to studying the museums histories and concepts, and the destinies and trajectories of their collections and particular objects. Old museums are still able both to preserve antiquities and to invent novelties.

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СТАРАЯ НОВАЯ КУНСТКАМЕРА: ПУТИ К РЕКОНСТРУКЦИИ И РЕНОВАЦИИ

АННОТАЦИЯ. В статье пересекаются три мотива: универсалии музея с древнейших времен до современности, создание Альянса ранних универсальных музеев и реэкспозиция старейшего в России музея — Кунсткамеры (Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого РАН). Соответственно называются разделы статьи: «Универсальность музеальности», «Опыт Кунсткамеры» и «План реэкспозиции». Музейность как феномен обнаруживается в самых истоках человеческой культуры и в разных этнических традициях. Идея универсального музея как *theatrum mundi* была воспроизведена в Петербургской Кунсткамере, ставшей колыбелью науки и матерью музеев России. Она повторила основные идеи античного мусейона и ренессансного музеума, будучи объединена в комплекс: музей, библиотека, университет, академия. Сегодня актуальны как реконструкция основных черт универсального музея, выраженная в плане реэкспозиции Кунсткамеры к юбилею Петра Великого в 2022 г., так и возрождение его ценностей, реализовавшееся в недавнем соглашении о создании Альянса ранних универсальных музеев между петербургской Кунсткамерой (МАЭ РАН), Wunderkammer, Franckesche Stiftungen (Галле, Германия) и Teylers Museum (Харлем, Нидерланды). Альянс нацелен на обращение к идеям музея как *theatrum mundi* — «театр мира» с его универсальностью, энциклопедичностью и просвещением. Концепт универсального музея заложен и в трех разделах реэкспозиции Кунсткамеры: «Происхождение человека», «Кругосветное путешествие» и «Рождение науки» («Петровская Кунсткамера, или Башня знаний»).

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: Кунсткамера, универсальный музей, музеальность, реэкспозиция, *theatrum mundi*, Альянс ранних универсальных музеев

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