
MUSEUM TYPES AND CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION: AN IN-DEPTH BOOK REVIEW



MOHAMED GAMAL RASHED*

Abstract

The diversity of museum types worldwide highlights the richness and varied roles of museums, but establishing comprehensive criteria for their classification remains challenging. The study entitled "Museums between Classification Standards and Methods of Application" presents a detailed framework to systematically categorize museums using six standard criteria. The framework aims to assist scholars, museum professionals, and readers in understanding and applying museum classifications more effectively. The study which is reviewed in this article aims to formulate methodological guidelines for classifying museums, providing scientific justification for excluding non-standard classifications, offering precise definitions for each museum type, resolving overlaps between types classified by multiple criteria, and developing a flexible methodology for future classifications.

The author proposes six standard criteria for museum classification: (1) Scope of Collection, (2) Type of Collection, (3) Museum Space, (4) Museum Mission, (5) Targeted Visitor Segments, and (6) Museum Ownership. These criteria are designed to address overlaps and provide clear distinctions between different museum types, thereby facilitating accurate classification.

Keywords: Museum Types; Collection Scope; Ecomuseum; Community Museum; Museum Classification.

مُلخَص البَحْث

يعكس تنوع أنواع المتاحف في جميع أنحاء العالم غنى وأدواراً متنوعة، لكن إنشاء معايير شاملة لتصنيفها يظل تحدياً. تقدم الدراسة المعنونة «المتاحف بين معايير التصنيف وطرق التطبيق» إطاراً مفصلاً لتصنيف المتاحف باستخدام ستة معايير قياسية. يهدف الإطار إلى مساعدة المتخصصين في المتاحف والقراء على فهم وتطبيق تصنيفات المتاحف بشكل أكثر فعالية. الدراسة التي يتم استعراضها في هذا المقال تهدف إلى وضع إرشادات منهجية لتصنيف المتاحف، وتقديم مبررات علمية لاستبعاد التصنيفات غير القياسية، وتقديم

* Associate Professor of Egyptology and Museum Studies, Damietta University.

تعريفات دقيقة لكل نوع من أنواع المتاحف، وحل التداخلات بين الأنواع المصنفة بواسطة معايير متعددة، وتطوير منهجية مرنة للتصنيفات المستقبلية.

يقترح المؤلف في إطار هذه الدراسة ستة معايير قياسية لتصنيف المتاحف، وهي: (١) نطاق المجموعة، (٢) طبيعة المجموعة المتحفية، (٣) حيز/فضاء المتحف، (٤) مهمة المتحف، (٥) شرائح الزوار المستهدفة، و(٦) ملكية المتحف. وقد تم تصميم هذه المعايير لمعالجة التداخلات وتوفير تمييزات واضحة بين أنواع المتاحف المختلفة، مما يسهل التصنيف الدقيق لها.

الكلمات الدالة: أنواع المتاحف؛ نطاق المجموعة المتحفية؛ المتحف البيئي؛ متحف المجتمع؛ تصنيف المتحف.

Introduction

In this article, a review of a book discusses museum types and the classification criteria, entitled: "Museums between Classification Standards and methods of application, Doha: QU Press, 2024". This article provides a brief overview of the museum classification criteria extensively discussed in this study. The book aimed to establish standard criteria and clear methodologies for classifying museums, making it easier for scholars, museum professionals, and readers to understand the rules for museum classification and the characteristics of each museum type.¹

Book Structure and Content Summary

The book consists of ten chapters divided into two parts. Part one draws on "the Classification Methodology for museums," and focuses on establishing the basic principles and methodology for classifying museums. The second part "Classification Criteria," made up of six chapters, presents detailed information on each of the standard classification criteria, their application, and examples of museums classified according to these criteria.

Chapter one, titled "Milestones for Museums Classification," explores common and differing aspects between museums and explains how the museum definition allows for flexibility in formulating a museum's mission and scope of collection that leads to the emergence of new types of museums in response to an evolving global society. Chapter two, "Non-Standard Museum Classifications," addresses the issue of classification and common errors in museum classification, as well as unstandardized but familiar classifications that lack verifiable methodologies. In Chapter three, titled

¹ This article is dedicated to Professor Dr. Randa Balygh, Professor of Archaeology at Mansoura University, on the occasion of her retirement. In her work, Professor Randa has always been a model of dedication, consistently supporting her colleagues and students. She is also known for her continuous commitment to communication, and participation in various scientific events and humanitarian occasions. I recall her frequent emphasis on Egypt's historical role in museum education. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to dedicate an article related to museum studies to her.



“Standard Criteria for Museum Classification,” the author briefly introduces the six proposed standard criteria to understand the interrelationships and differences. Chapter four, “Integration of the Scope and Types of Collections in Classification,” discusses the museum’s scope of collection and the classification of collections. It examines cases where a museum is classified according to more than one criterion, and those classified into more than one type under the same criterion.

The second part of the book tackles six criteria for classifying museums in detail, with each criterion assigned a chapter. These criteria include the scope of collection, types of collections, spatial dimensions, museum mission, visitor segments, and ownership. Each chapter provides detailed explanations and examples to illustrate the classifications. To enhance readability, the author included numerous charts, illustrations, and demographic diagrams to provide a clear understanding of each primary and sub-classification, as well as the interrelationships between the different classification criteria.²

Aims of The Study

The author through this book investigates five objectives which are:

- (1) Establishing Methodological Rules for Museum Classification based on standardized criteria that enables to classify museums according to standardized criteria.
- (2) Provide sufficient justification for excluding non-standard classifications used frequently in the literature.
- (3) Representing an accurate definition for each museum type; differentiating between overlapping types by offering regulatory rules for distinction; explaining the reasons for overlap, and establishing simplified rules for decisive distinction applicable to any museum case of interest.
- (4) Resolving overlaps between museum types classified by dual criteria. (5) Creating a flexible methodology for classifying future museums types that allow matching them with the classification methodology.³

Museum Types, and The Classification Standards and Criteria

Museums are at the forefront of institutions dedicated to serving and developing society, distinguished by their educational and cultural roles, as well as their direct contributions to economic and social development.⁴ While museums always share a general mission, evident through the widely accepted definition and the local concept

² Rashed M.G. (2024) 3-6.

³ Rashed M.G. (2024) 3-6.

⁴ Brown, K. & Mairesse, F. (2018), 1-15; Impey, O. & Macgregor, A. (2017); Abt, J. (2006), 6ff, 15f, 120; Basin, G. (1967), 7.

of a museum within society, each museum can have a dedicated mission,⁵ specific scope,⁶ specialties, and advantages that align with the general concept. Museums types have diversified significantly, with many new types emerging in recent decades.⁷ Despite the general knowledge about museums types, a comprehensive scientific study on museum classification was lacking until recently.

Historically, most museum types have been characterized by their scope and traditional image.⁸ Despite definitions for most types, some remain contentious not only in definition but also in distinguishing between them. Some museums have garnered attention from museum experts in ICOM and UNESCO, leading to discussions, including regional museums,⁹ open-air museums,¹⁰ site museums,¹¹ archaeological museums, ecomuseum,¹² and mobile museums.¹³ However, some museums types still require further research and discussion. Notably, a dedicated study addressing the criteria for museum classification and the relationship between different types of museums based on these criteria has been lacking.¹⁴

Therefore, I sought to present a methodology for classifying museums and differentiating between them based on clear and measurable criteria. The suggested classification methodology relies on a set of measures that can be applied using the proposed standard criteria for classification. These criteria include rules for distinguishing between different types that may share characteristics but differ in classification criteria, such as local museums (scope of collection), community museums (museum mission), or that fall under the same standard criteria, such as history museums and archaeological museums, which share the type of collections but differ in their dedicated mission statement. The proposed classification methodology involves up to six criteria to determine the type of the museum. These criteria and rules include: scope of collection; type of collection; museum space; targeted visitor segments; museum mission; and museum ownership (Figs. 1, 2).

⁵ Lord & Lord (2009), 2f; Anderson G. (2004), 1-9; Faherty A. (2019), 1-4.

⁶ Lord & Lord (2009), 85-6; Collections Management Policy. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, (2010), 1.

⁷ E.g. "Virtual Museum" and "Museum of Idea".

⁸ Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 24ff; 71ff, 113ff; Taylor, F. H. (1948), 50-51; Bazin, G. (1967), 37-39; Bazin, G. (1958), 12; Wittlin, A. S. (1970), 8, 18; Burcarv, G. E. (1997), 63.

⁹ Hanna S. (2012), 1-128; Unesco Regional Seminar on the role of the Regional Museums (1960), 53ff; Frankenberg, S. R. (2014), 6261-64.

¹⁰ Shafernich, S. M. (1993), 43-61; Moolman H.J. (1996), 387-400; Swanson, D. K. (2009).

¹¹ Frankenberg, S. R. (2014), 6261-64; Shafernich, S. M. (1993), 43-61; Moolman H.J. (1996), 387-400.

¹² Riviere G. H. (1985), 182-184; Heritage Saskatchewan (2015), 8-11. Cf. also, Mille, R. D. R. (2011).

¹³ Supplee C. (1974), 27; Rocha J. N. & Marandino M. (2017), 3; Auerbach, J. A. (1999), 11; Lorentz, S. (2009), 283-85.

¹⁴ Even though several studies have been conducted on certain types of museums, no recent research has addressed classification criteria. This subject was first discussed in the author's book and his previous dedicated articles.



According to the proposed methodology and criteria, a museum can fall under more than one classification standards based on the criteria; hence, it can belong to more than one museum type without overlapping. This is because the measurable criteria that used for comparison differ, and consequently, the expected result varies accordingly. For example, the British Museum is classified as a global museum based on the scope of its collection, and as an archaeology museum based on the type of its collection, without overlapping between both classifications criteria.. (Fig. 3).

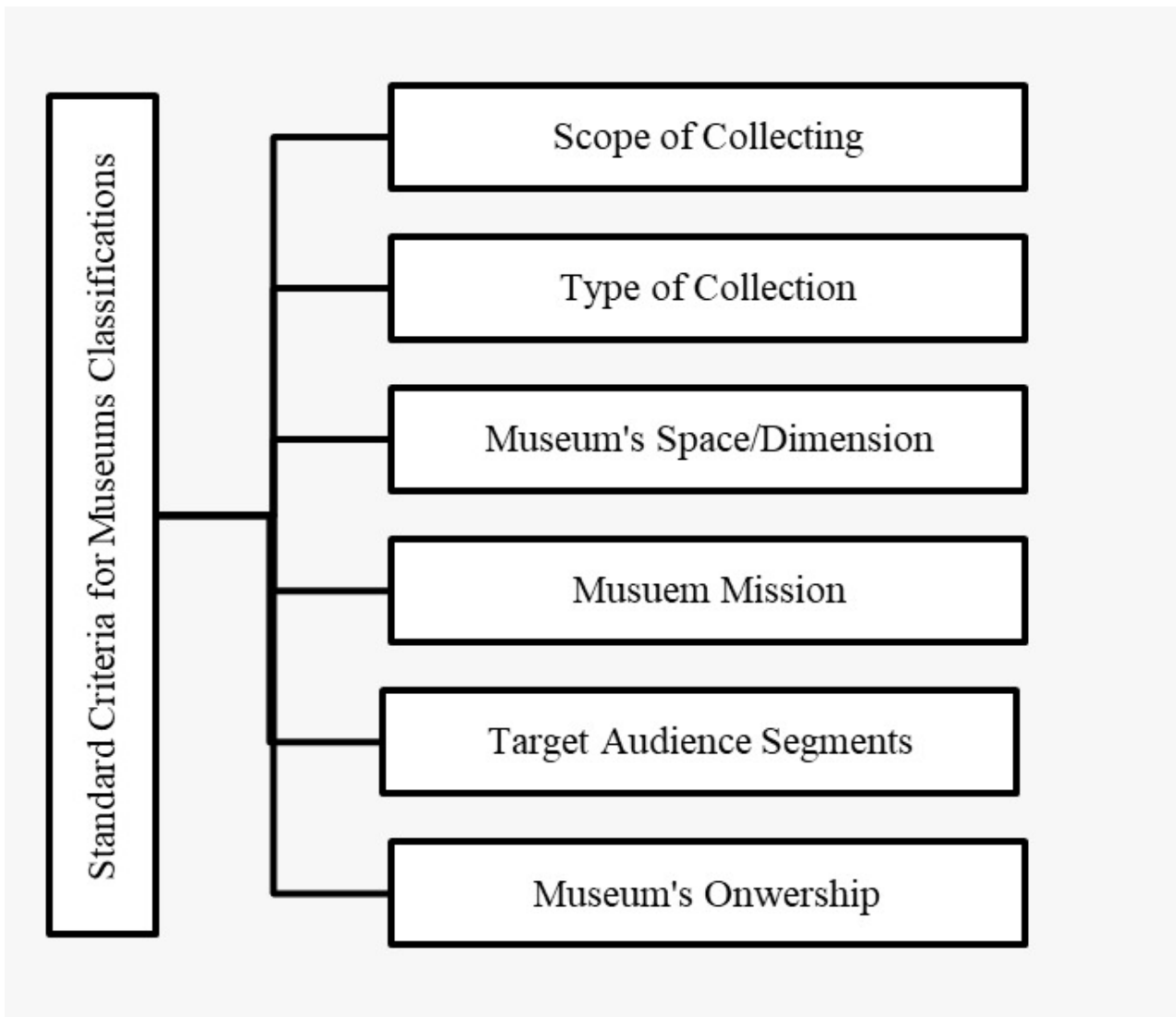


Fig.1 Classification Standard Criteria for museums. (Courtesy of the author)¹⁵

¹⁵ Rashed M.G. (2024), 50. fig.4.

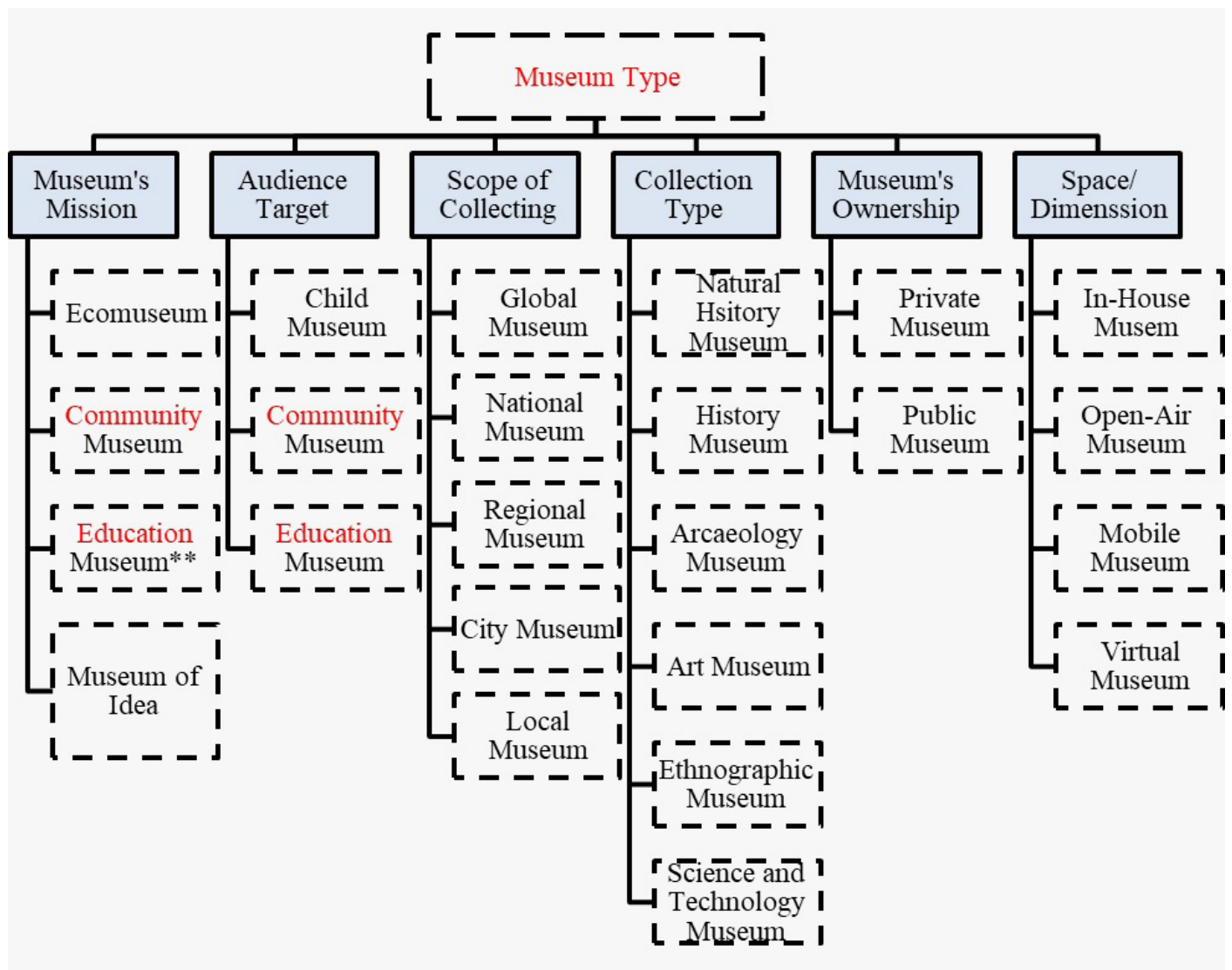


Fig. 2 Museum types classification according to the author’s proposed criteria.¹⁶

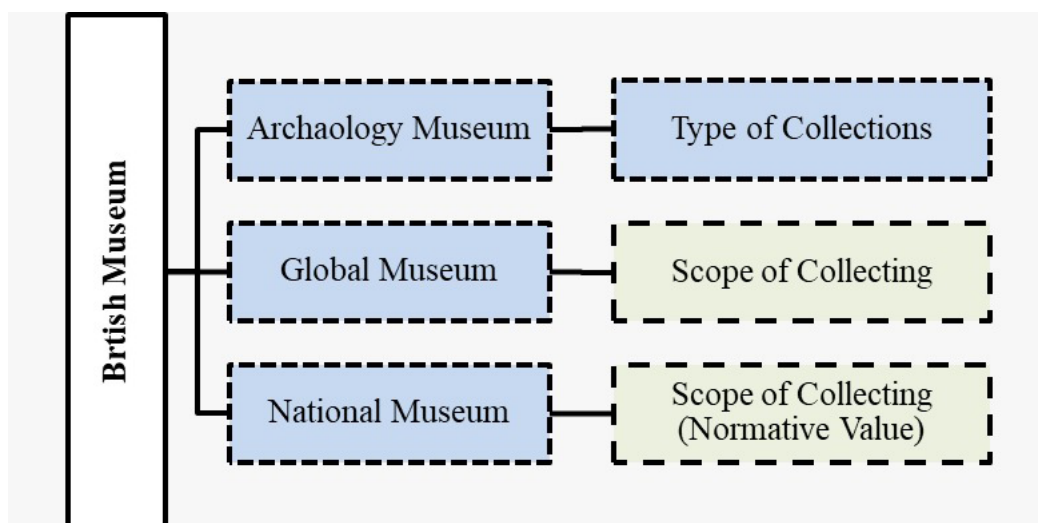


Fig. 3 A suggested classification for the British Museum.

¹⁶ Rashed M.G. (2024), 51, fig.5.

In the following pages, an overview of the general framework for determining museum classification based on the six standard criteria will be shown.

Museums Classification according to The Scope of Collection

A long established standard for classification criteria based on the museum's scope of collection. Museum collection scope is a methodologically complex and overlapping criterion due to the historical growth of collections and the frequent overlap between collections. However, it continues to be a fundamental aspect of museum classification. This classification involves determining the general frameworks of the collection's scope, which include temporal extent (scope), geographical extent, thematic extent, and material of manufacture (fig. 4).

Museums may establish additional, more specific criteria for determining their collection's scope, provided these are stated in the museum's mission statement. ICOM Code of Ethics article 2.1 emphasizes the necessity for every museum to establish a collection policy and adapt a collecting scope. It reads: "The governing body for each museum should adopt and publish a written collections policy that addresses the acquisition, care and use of collections. The policy should clarify the position of any material that will not be catalogued, conserved, or exhibited (see 2.7; 2.8)."¹⁷ The "Scope of Collecting" is a standalone museum planning document that aims to determine the scope of collecting relevant to the museum in the present and future. It is part of the regulations governing the museum's collection management policy. This document necessarily outlines what the museum can or should collect why the museum collects, how it is done, and how the museum can dispose of any of its collections, if applicable.¹⁸ Accordingly, each museum has the right to determine its collection scope within the context of its mission statement.

Museums are classified according to the scope of collection into five types. (fig.5) We should also indicate that the possibility of classifying a museum into two different types according to the same standardized criteria in exceptional cases. This often occurs in classifications based on the scope of collecting and the type of collection. Accordingly, in rare cases, a museum might receive two classifications based on the scope of collecting. The British Museum is a clear example of this. Besides being classified as an archaeological museum based on the type of its collection, it is also classified as a global museum according to its actual scope of collecting. Additionally, it is classified as a national museum due to its normative value to British society

¹⁷ ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (2017), 9 [article 2.1].

¹⁸ Lord & Lord (2009), 85f.



and government as stated in the British Museum act (fig. 5).¹⁹ This normative value for classification as a national museum, in particular, is evident in many museums, such as the National Museum of American History, the Alexandria National Museum, and other museums that have gained exceptional national value for their respective countries and societies.²⁰

From this, a national museum can be defined as:

“A museum that collects and presents items representing the identity and national history of a state/country, providing a comprehensive picture of the state’s history, heritage, and identity with its cultural and ethnic diversity. It serves as a window to foster a sense of belonging, loyalty, and pride among future generations. It is concerned with all types of collections, giving special attention to historical and archaeological collections alongside intangible heritage and cultural traditions. Its scope of collection typically extends geographically to cover the political boundaries of the state and temporally to cover its entire history. It may sometimes be limited to a particular type of collection (such as art) or focus on a specific historically significant period. Exceptions include certain museums that hold a national value as determined and protected by state law.”

National museums are institutions that typically represent national values, including myths and historical facts. While it is common for these museums to represent the state’s history, some may be dedicated to collections that do not represent a part of the state’s history, particularly those that include collections of antiquities and art representing ancient civilizations and those related to the history of the museums themselves.²¹

[19] The British Museum Act (1963), chapter 24; Miller, E. (1974), *That Noble Cabinet: A History of the British Museum*, Athens, 24-63.

[20] Sometimes, the classification - or more precisely, the designation of a museum as a national museum - is based on the state’s decision and perspective on the value represented by the museum or its subject matter. This means that the classification as a national museum does not always require a specific scope of collection. Instead, a museum can be designated as national based on its exceptional value to the people or state. Governments may issue decrees or laws that label an archaeological, natural history, or art museum as a national museum. Consequently, it is not surprising to consider both the Louvre and the British Museum as national museums in France and Britain, respectively, since both hold exceptional importance and value to their respective states and people. Mason R. (2013), 40-64; Miller, E. (1974), 24-63.

[21] Moreover, not all national museums are necessarily state-owned. Some private museums may also be designated as national, especially if they hold particular national significance or importance. Although national museums often provide a comprehensive picture of the state’s history, this is not a requirement. Rather, they present subjects of significant national value and importance. For instance, a museum could focus on archaeology or natural history, such as the National Museum of Natural History in New York. It could also be dedicated to a specific subject, like the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., or the National WWII Museum. Mason R. (2013), 40-64; Aronsson, P. (2011), 3-28ff.

A Global Museum can be defined as:

“A museum with a collecting scope that geographically extends to cover the entire world or represents many countries within the museum’s main theme. Its temporal scope may be limited to a specific era or remain open; it may specialize in a particular type of collection, such as art or antiquities, or encompass all of humanity’s output.”²²

The classification as a global museum includes some of the world’s major museums, including the Louvre, Ashmolean Museum, British Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Each of these museums has a collecting scope that aligns with the global scope. For example, the British Museum focuses on antiquities, while the Louvre focuses on art with a global scope.

On the other side, Local Museums²³ are small museums that serve the local community in a district, town, village; they are often known as “Local Community Museums.” These museums have increased in importance and necessity in recent decades. The Local Museum can be simply defined as:

“small-sized museum that directly serves the surrounding local community in a small town, village, suburb, or city. It can be a historical or archaeological museum that presents the local history of the town, village, or area it represents. The museum is primarily based on close contact with the local community, connecting it with the exhibitions, activities, and services that address the community’s needs, interests and daily issues. It is often a model of a community museum or an ecomuseum.”²⁴

Local museums typically occupy traditional, old buildings that are part of the area’s heritage. They rely on three-dimensional material artifacts that document the cultural history of the town or region’s inhabitants. Experts consider it the ideal model of a museum fulfilling its real role in serving the local community. Local museums are exemplary for their ability to effectively fulfill their role towards the local community. Their importance lies in presenting the local environment and community deeply and smoothly, unlike major museums that focus their efforts on attracting tourism and large visitor numbers.²⁵

²² Proposed by the author.

²³ Tohmo, T. (2004), 229–240; Patrick, C. (1996), 49-50; Latham K. F. & Simmons, J. E. (2014).

²⁴ The author.

²⁵ Tohmo, T. (2004), 229–240; Rappard, Ch. Van (1989), 71-76; Hudales, J. (2007), 421-439.

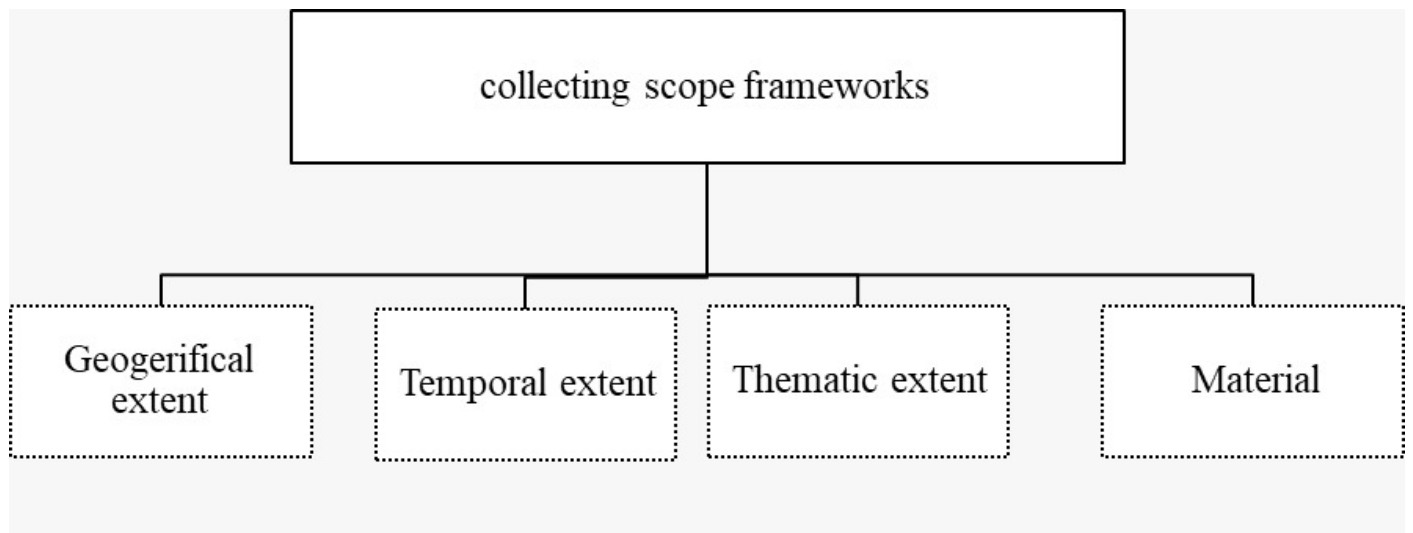


Fig.4 Scope of Collecting for Museums.²⁶

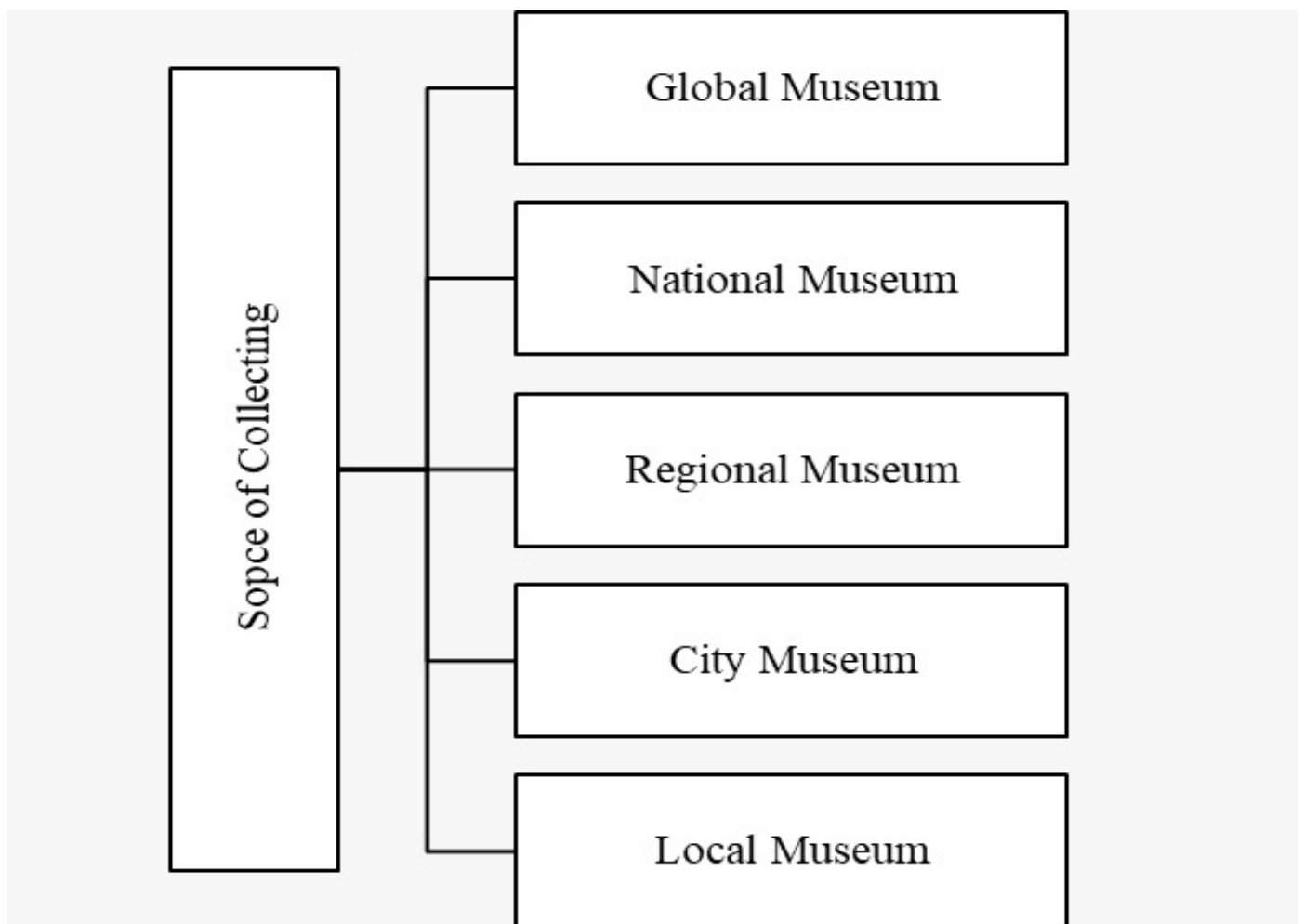


Fig.5 Museums classification according to collecting scope.²⁷

²⁶ Rashed M.G. (2024), 72, fig.8.

²⁷ Rashed M.G. (2024), 93, fig.16.

Museums Classification according to Collection Type

This classification is based on the museum collection type whether it collects natural or cultural collections. These types of museums are among the most widespread and oldest, having been associated with the emergence of museums.²⁸ These include archaeology museums, art museums,²⁹ history museums,³⁰ science (and technology) museums,³¹ and ethnographic museums.³²

Despite references to these museums types in literary sources, no standard criteria for classification have been established, often leading to confusion and overlap, whether by mixing types, omitting some, or combining main and sub-classifications without distinction.³³ For example, natural history museums, geological museums, aquatic museums, and historic botanical gardens and zoos are often mentioned without distinguishing between the main classification of natural history museums and the sub-classifications, which include all the aforementioned. The classification by the collection types includes main and sub-classifications. Each main classification has several sub-classifications determined by the scope of collection. For art museums, sub-classifications include modern and contemporary art museums, art history museums, and digital art museums; for history museums, sub-classifications include modern and contemporary history museums, art history museums, and others.

The classification of museums is often based on collection type and scope. This involves defining the main types of museums and then using the scope of collecting as a primary factor in determining their sub-classifications. For example, in art, history, and natural history museums, the scope of collecting is crucial in determining the museum's type, integrated with the type of collection based on temporal, thematic, qualitative, and geographical scope. The scope of collecting also plays an important role in defining the museum's specialties by considering its temporal, geographical, and thematic scope, as well as the materials. For instance, archaeology museums contain more specialized museums that have a specific scope of collecting. These could include museums with a geographical scope limited to a particular area, a temporal scope associated with a specific period, or a collection of material limited to a particular type of material. A history museum may present the history of a country or

²⁸ Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 23, 53, 85f.

²⁹ Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 23ff.

³⁰ Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 113ff; Burcarv G. E. (1997), 63.

³¹ Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 85ff.

³² Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 53ff.

³³ Example for common classification that mixed museum types together with sub-types, the classification listed by Ambrose and Paine. Ambrose, T. & Paine C. (2006), 7.

be limited to a specific historical period or event, such as World War II, or the history of a particular craft, like the Soap Museum in Beirut. It may also be associated with a historical figure, such as the Mohamed Ali Palace Museum in Cairo.³⁴

Certain museums types share the type of collection and are differentiated by the museum's mission, such as history, archaeological, and art museums, which may sometimes rely on the same collections.³⁵ For example, the Egyptian Museum of Cairo, Luxor Museum, and National Museum of Egyptian Civilizations (NEMC) rely on archaeological collections, however each of them has a distinct mission. The Luxor Museum is dedicated to ancient Egyptian art; the Egyptian Museum in Cairo is dedicated to collect the archaeological collection of ancient Egyptian; while NEMC tells the story of frequent civilizations in Egypt through the archaeological collections.

^[34] Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 113ff. E.g. "Historic House Museums" are among the most common types of historical museums. These houses are converted into museums due to their historical significance or associations with notable people or events. They typically retain their original furnishings, arranged as they were historically used, making them ideal memory museums. They focus on authenticity, presenting items in their original context. They often tell the stories of the people who lived there, the house's social and cultural role, and sometimes the history of a particular region, social class, or period. Burcarv G. E. (1997), 63.

^[35] The author has analyzed various missions and scopes of collecting for museums of the arts, history, and archeology.

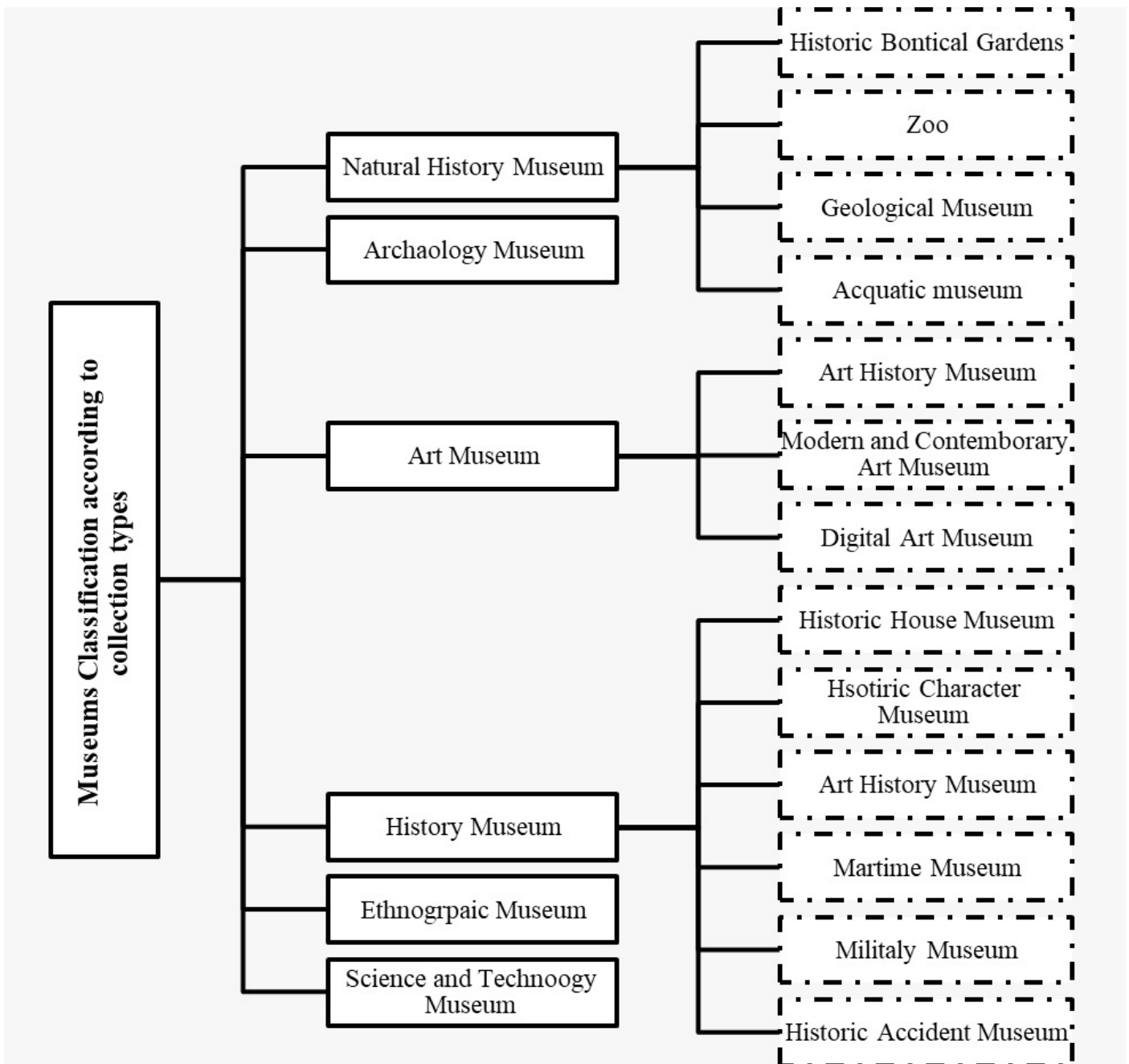


Fig. 6 Museums Classification according to collection types.³⁶

Museums Classification according to Space/Dimension

The type of space or the area that the museum occupies has evolved from the simple form of a physical building to a variety of forms of space, including historic buildings, open-air and mobile museums. Furthermore, it has expanded to include virtual museum spaces, which have become a characteristic of 21st-century museums. As a consequence, the familiar museum space has evolved to include open-air spaces that are not bound by

³⁶ Rashed M.G. (2024), 125, fig.21.

a particular building and other spaces that are meant to preserve traditional or natural cultures. The types of spaces have also evolved beyond the physical space to include virtual spaces, allowing museums to benefit from technological advancements made possible by virtual museums.

Thus, museum classification according to dimension or the space it occupies includes several types that can be grouped into two main categories: physical and virtual types. The physical category encompasses sub-types combining “open-type” and “mobile-type”. Each type includes certain sub-types of museums with highly similar characteristics. Accordingly, museums are classified by space into three main types:

1. Open-Type: Museums that occupy an open-air space rather than a specific building. This type includes two main sub-types: “open-air museums”³⁷ and “site museums”.³⁸ These museums share significant characteristics and often overlapping, causing occasionally confusion.³⁹ Site museums can be further classified into four sub-types: archaeological site museums,⁴⁰ historical site museums,⁴¹ historical botanical gardens,⁴² and zoos.⁴³
2. Mobile-Type: The mobile museums, which are often standalone museums or arms to museums, though their concept originally developed from traveling exhibitions since the late 19th century. Initially, these museums/exhibitions are prepared to be transported and re-established from one destination to another to serve local communities. Mobile museums have several sub-types based on the type of space and design, including: a fixed museum in a mobile vehicle, a reconfigurable museum, a pop-up museum, and a traveling suitcase museum.⁴⁴ According to Supplee, a mobile museum is defined as: “a unit equipped for transport and periodic use, intended to bring museum collections/activities to new multiple destinations outside the museum, by presenting various authorized exhibitions and activities within or around this unit.”⁴⁵

³⁷ Shafernich, S. M. (1993), 43-61; Zuraini Md Ali, Z. M. & Rodiah Zawawi, R. (2010), 2; Stratton, M. (1979), 156-176.

³⁸ Moolman H.J. (1996), 387-400; Swanson, D. K. (2009), 387-400.

³⁹ Moolman H.J. (1996), 387-400; Swanson, D. K. (2009), 387-400.

⁴⁰ Frankenberg, S. R. (2014), 6262.

⁴¹ Danilov, V. J. (2002), 11ff.

⁴² Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 140ff. Cf. also Fitzgerald M.H. (1973), 8; Edward S. Hyams, E.S. & MacQuitty W. (1969), 12-13; Lawrence, G.H.M. (1969), 43-44.

⁴³ Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 141; Mary Soderstrom M. (2001), 65.

⁴⁴ Huang Ch.-H. & Lin, F-S. (2016), 387-410.

⁴⁵ Supplee C.(1974), 27.

3. Virtual, Remote-Type: This type includes sub-types of a virtual museum associated with an existing museum and a museum entirely based on virtual space. The latter can take⁴⁶ several forms based on the technology. The sub-types of virtual museums can be viewed as different applications rather than a museum type.⁴⁷

The following chart shows the museum types, and sub-types according to the museum space (fig. 7). Although these types are well formed, the sub-types still have overlapping.

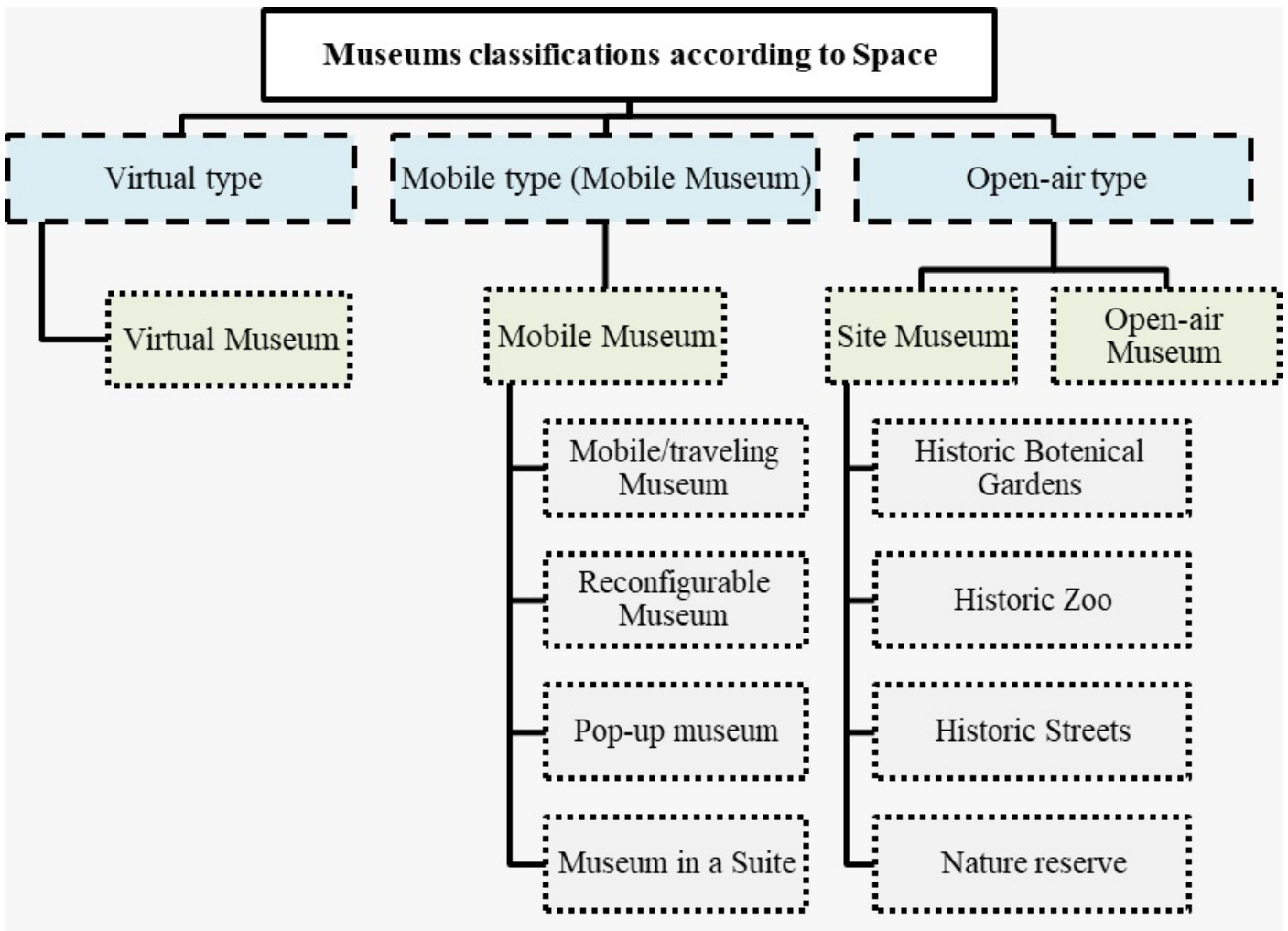


Fig. (7) Museums classifications according to Space/Dimension.⁴⁸

Open-air museums and site museums have been the subject of a wide debate. The term “open-air museum” refers to museums located outdoors, not in a physical structure, although they may include historical houses and buildings. They are commonly referred

⁴⁶ VIMM, “Definition of a VM”; Sylaiou, S., Kasapakis, V., Gavalas, D. et al. (2020).

⁴⁷ Mandy Ding M. (2017), Augmented Reality in Museums, Arts Management and Technology Laboratory, 1ff; VIMM (Virtual Multimodal Museums) “Definition of a VM,” <https://www.vi-mm.eu/2018/01/10/the-vimm-definition-of-a-virtual-museum/>; Sylaiou, S., Kasapakis, V., Gavalas, D. et al. (2020).

⁴⁸ Rashed M.G. (2024), 177, fig.35.

to as open-air museums or site museums, although the two terms are often confused and overlap. Open-air museums are broader than site museums and, therefore, may be used more generally.⁴⁹

Several definitions have been given to both types that are consistent in content but differ in some aspects. ICOM defines the archaeological site museum as:

*“A museum established to preserve natural and cultural properties, both movable and immovable, in their original location, ensuring they are preserved in the place where they were made or discovered.”*⁵⁰ Meanwhile, Küsel provided a comprehensive definition to the site museum, stating: *“A site museum preserves and interprets the remains of cultural history or natural history phenomena in the place where they were found or rebuilt. A site museum performs the same functions as other museums, particularly preservation, documentation, and interpretation.”*⁵¹ In his dedicated study to the archeological site museums, Silverman defined it as: *“An archaeological site museum is a building on an archaeological site that displays materials or artifacts discovered at that site, and possibly related sites, providing explanatory and interpretative means about the site and its cultural value to the community and the public.”*⁵²

Silverman’s definition is relatively precise and direct in discussing the site museum specifically, not the open-air museum more broadly. In his definition, he connects the site museum to original heritage, archaeological, and historical sites, not to sites where collections can be entirely relocated. The latter is consistent with the scope of open-air museums.

According to EXARC, the International Committee for Open-Air Museums, the archaeological open-air museum is defined as follows:

*“An archaeological open-air museum is a non-profit, permanent institution established outdoors with full-scale architectural reconstructions based on archaeological sources. It includes collections of material heritage and provides interpretations of how people lived and interacted in the past. This is complemented by scientific research methods for educational, study, and visitor enjoyment purposes.”*⁵³

⁴⁹ Frankenberg, S. R. (2014), 6261-64. Cf. Shafernich, S. M. (1993), 43-61; Moolman H.J. (1996), 387-400.

⁵⁰ Moolman H.J. (1996), 387.

⁵¹ Moolman H.J. (1996), 387.

⁵² Silverman, H. (ed) (2004), 4.

⁵³ Paardekooper, R. (2012), 30f; EXARC: <https://exarc.net/>.



In this respect, an open-air museum may take the form of an archaeological museum that houses collections and buildings in situ in a site museum, or in an open-air museum to which they have been relocated. Aside from the open-air museum and the site museum, three other sub-classifications could also be considered: “historic zoos,” “historic botanical gardens,” and “historic street museums”.

The second type of museum is the mobile museum. These museums bring exhibitions to various communities, providing access to cultural and educational content in areas that may not have permanent museum facilities. As defined by Supplee, a mobile museum is: “A unit equipped for transportation and periodic use, intended to bring museum activities to new and multiple destinations outside the museum. It fulfills its role by providing access to the museum through various exhibitions and activities conducted within or around this unit.” The term⁵⁴ “mobile museum” can come under various names, all of which essentially convey the same meaning. Examples include: “mobile museum,” “travelling museum,” “museum bus,” “museum on wheels,” and “mobile science laboratories.” The Mobile Museum includes four sub-types⁵⁵ which are: 1. Mobile Museum (Traveling Museum): A museum that is housed in a vehicle, such as a bus or truck, designed to travel to different destinations. 2. Reconfigurable Museum: A museum that can be dismantled, transported, and reassembled at different destinations. 3. Pop-up Museum; 4. Museum in a Suitcase: A portable museum contained within a suitcase or similar container, designed to be easily transported and set up in different venues, such as schools, community centers, and other public spaces.

The Saint Louis Missouri Educational Museum is recognized as the first to introduce a mobile museum. In 1904,⁵⁶ the first mobile museum exhibition took place in Forest Park, a suburb of the city.⁵⁷ The idea gradually spread in the mid-20th Century; before then, carts and trucks were primarily used for transporting objects to targeted destinations rather than serving as exhibition spaces themselves.⁵⁸ The Trailside Museum (a mobile museum) is considered the first mobile museum housed in a truck.⁵⁹ Mobile museums are characterized by their ability to move frequently, showcasing

⁵⁴ Supplee C.(1974), 27; Bose, 17.

⁵⁵ Auerbach, (1999), 222.

⁵⁶ Rocha J. N. & Marandino M. (2017), 4.

⁵⁷ The museum traveled via a horse-drawn cart used for transporting scientific modules and banners to schools. These items were loaned to teachers and students to support education. Settler, P. (1968), 15-21; Zucker, B.F. (1989), 199–211.

⁵⁸ Christion, M.B. (1955), 2 ; Rocha J. N. & Marandino M. (2017), 4.

⁵⁹ “Traveling Trailside Museum of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History” is a mobile extension of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The museum in a mobile truck opened in 1947, with the truck’s interior modified to serve as an exhibition hall. Disher, K.B. (1947), 1-4; Rocha J. N. & Marandino M. (2017), 5.

collections on trucks, buses, and trains. Many mobile museums are centered on the idea of traveling exhibitions, whether stationary within mobile vehicles or set up in open spaces at targeted destinations. A mobile museum may be affiliated with an existing museum or operated independently.⁶⁰ These museums use various types of trucks and vehicles to transport and display artifacts. The exhibits can include natural, technological, historical, and artistic displays among others.

Museums Classification according to The Museum's Mission

In some occasions, museums are established to embody a specific idea or mission, regardless of the collection type or scope. In this case, the museum may not necessarily be based on collections but revolves around an idea. These types are new museums centered on a particular idea or specific mission, such as ecomuseum,⁶¹ community museums,⁶² and education museums. There is also another type I would suggest to consider, "a museum of idea", which discuss specific ideas or matter of such as human rights, war and peace, migration, and the future. An example of this is the Canadian Museum of Human Rights.

Among these types, stands the ecomuseum⁶³ for its distinguishing mission and characteristics. Ecomuseum is established and managed by the local community. It emphasizes both natural and cultural components, distinguishing them from nature reserves, which focus solely on the natural environment, or heritage sites, which focus on cultural and heritage structures. It focuses on local development to achieve sustainable development. It also includes intangible heritage alongside the physical artifacts and natural and constructed environments, incorporating a diversity of intangible heritage components. The ecomuseum is a product of the social fabric and continuously adds to it through its actions and participants. It is a museum focused on the identity of the place, relying on community participation while striving to improve the status of the concerned community and its heritage based on consensus and partnership. Therefore, it aims to support the community in managing its heritage - protecting and developing it sustainably - and in preserving its resources and traditions.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Rocha J. N. & Marandino M. (2017), 6ff.

⁶¹ Davis, P. (1999), 3-44, 83-91; Maggi, M. (2002), 30ff.

⁶² Crooke, E. (2006), 170-185. Golding explores the collaborative efforts between museums and communities, emphasizing the importance of community involvement in museum practices. While Flinn investigates the role of independent community archives, often associated with community museums, in preserving local histories and identities. . Golding, V., & Modest, W. (Eds.). (2013); Flinn, A., Stevens, M., & Shepherd, E. (2009), 71-86. Cf. Also, Srinivasan, R., et al. (2009), 161-181.

⁶³ Riviere, G. H. (1985), 182-183. Cf. also Mairot, P., & Ballester, J. F. (2010).

⁶⁴ Galla, A. (2002), 7-13; Heritage Saskatchewan (2015), online resources.

It is often difficult to differentiate between an ecomuseum and a community museum due to their strong similarities. Both are classified according to the mission of the museum. The ecomuseum can be defined as follows:

“An eco-museum is a community museum that provides a unique mechanism for community participation, where community members work to preserve tangible and intangible heritage and learn from it in its living form. Through community consultations, partners agree on identifying and defining valued natural and cultural assets, and they develop plans to ensure their preservation and use to promote a culture of sustainability. Unlike traditional forms of museums, eco-museums do not necessarily collect and preserve artifacts in a house. Instead, they enable communities to preserve their artifacts, heritage sites, and valuable cultural practices where they exist—in their true environment—thus enhancing the visibility and contributions of these assets to community development activities.” On the other hand, the community museum, focus on the local history and culture and often run by the community with a focus on local identity and heritage, is defined as follows: “A community museum is a type of local museum that aims to serve a local community in a small town, district, village, or perhaps a specific segment of society. It is characterized by close interaction with the local community and its small size, which makes it a familiar place for the local communities. Unlike the eco-museum, which often occupies an open space, the community museum typically retains the traditional form of a museum and its building.”

Museums Classification according to Targeted Visitor Segments

The fifth classification methodology determines the type of museum based on the targeted visitor segments. This classification does not contradict the fact that museums serve the community in its diverse age, cultural segments, achieving the principle of equal access as a fundamental tenet of the museum. However, these museums specifically serve a particular visitor segment, such as “education museums,”⁶⁵ “children’s museums,”⁶⁶ or “community museums”. Education museums affiliated with schools and universities serve educational purposes, catering to students and scholars. They are designed for educational purposes, providing interactive and immersive experiences to promote learning. Here, the classification is based on the

⁶⁵ Paris, S. G., & Ash, D. (2000), 171-189; Griffin, J. (2004), 59-70. Cf. also, Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1994); Falk, J. H., & Dierking, L. D. (2016).

⁶⁶ Alexander E. P. & Alexander M. (2008), 167f.

targeted audience rather than the collection type, compare for instance the Museum of Science and Industry (Chicago), and the Ontario Science Centre (Toronto).

Therefore, the classification of a museum according to targeted visitor segments refers to distinguishing a few specific types of museums whose primary reason d'être to target and serve certain segments of visitors specifically and primarily. This particularity arises in response to the museum's mission statement and aims to serve the entire community by focusing on serving this targeted segment. In this case, the museum gives special priority to specific segments to achieve its mission. These museums carry a mission directed at a particular segment of society, such as an age group like children, a social group like women, a village or small-town community like community museums, or an educational stage such as museums affiliated with schools or universities.

Museums Classification according to Ownership

The classification based on museum ownership distinguishes between two main types of museums: "Public Museums" and "Private Museums". This classification is used particularly to refer to private museums (i.e., privately owned), which are owned by individuals or private institutions operating them. Private museums are contrasted with public museums, which are owned by public bodies or institutions such as the state. Museums are classified by ownership into two main types often referred to in various sources: public museums versus private museums.

Conclusion

This article provides a comprehensive methodology for classifying museums based on six standard criteria. These criteria include the scope of collection, collection type, space, mission, visitor segments, and ownership. By establishing clear classification standards, the author aims to enhance the understanding and application of museum classification methodologies among scholars and professionals. In conclusion, "Museums between Classification Standards and Methods of Application" offers a valuable framework for understanding and applying museum classification criteria. Its comprehensive approach and clear methodologies contribute significantly to the field of museology, providing a robust tool for scholars, museum professionals, and readers interested in museum studies.

A museum does not have to meet all the six standards to be classified. It can be classified according to two or more. For example, a museum may be classified as a natural history museum and an open-air museum. It may also be an archaeological or art museum, in addition to being an open-air museum, as well as an educational museum.

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