[M. C. Lourenço, 2005. *Between two worlds: the distinct nature and contemporary significance of university museums and collections in Europe.* PhD dissertation, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, Paris]

Appendix A3: Guidelines for study visits and interviews

In September 2002, a Field Research Brief was compiled containing guidelines for study visits and topics to be raised in interviews. These guidelines were based on the results of the pilot study and the identification of key issues in bibliographic sources. The Field Research Brief is transcribed below.

1. Operational definitions
2. Key issues and research questions
3. General selection criteria
4. General interview topics
5. Documentation to collect

1. Operational definitions

'Museum' is used in the ICOM sense and 'collection' in the sense of a logically coherent system of documented material evidence of human activity or the natural environment, permanently or temporarily gathered within the framework of a clear and previously established purpose.

These are operational definitions. The aim of the study visits is to collect information. No collection or museum should be excluded merely because it does not conform to previously established definitions. Interpretations and analyses are to be performed at a later stage.

If there is one general conclusion arising from the literature, it is that there does not exist a particular pattern or unique model in university collections and museums – there are many different types. First of all, they differ in the disciplines represented and the typology of objects. They also differ in the origin, the use of objects, and in their organisation. From an administrative and financial point of view, the dissimilarities are equally substantial, with some museums and collections belonging to a department, others to a faculty or college, while some resort directly under a rector or vice-chancellor. Some are open to the public at regular hours, while others are closed to the public. Whereas some museums with teaching and research collections are widely known and have national or international prestige, others may only be of interest to a particular sector of a given discipline and are merely part of a university department. Therefore, it is not feasible to *a priori* define higher education

collections or museums beyond the trivial characteristic of 'belonging' to a higher education or research institution (not necessarily a university), which provides, although often not exclusively, for their administration, building, staff and finance.

2. Key issues and research questions

Five key issues form the basis of observations and study visits:
  a) role of the objects;
  b) origin of the collection;
  c) purpose of the collection;
  d) organisation of the collection;
  e) use of collections and objects.

These five points form the basis for the following questions that will frame both the observations and the interviews:
  a) **Origin and purpose of the collection**: What is the historical background of the collection? Why was it assembled? With what purpose and when?
  b) **Organisation of the collection**: How is the collection organised? What are the main criteria (e.g. chronological, typological, taxonomical)? Why is this so? What is the link between its organisation and its use?
  c) **Role of the objects**: What makes an object become a 'research object' or a 'teaching object'? How are objects selected and de-accessioned? Are they catalogued?
  d) **Identification of users**: Is the collection used by local staff only? Is it used by visiting scholars?
  e) **Identification of disciplines using objects**: In which academic disciplines are objects used? What for and how? Which disciplines are represented in the collection?
  f) **Frequency of use**: How frequently are objects used for teaching and research? How many papers based on the collection were published in the past 10 years? How many requests for research visits were received during that period? How many class visits?
  g) **Evolution of use**: Has there been a decline or an increase in use? What is the reason for this? Can present use be considered stable?

3. General selection criteria

Twenty universities in Europe will be selected for study visits for the purposes of this research according to the following criteria:

1) A fair degree of geographical representation should be sought and universities from the three higher education models (i.e. British, French, German) must be included.

2) Preference will be given to universities with existing personal contacts.

3) To maximise efficiency, each of the 20 universities should have the largest diversity of collections and museums possible.

4) Further insight into the concept of the collection:

   a) at least 60% of the collection is kept together in a dedicated space;

   b) there should be a supporting documentation system (a list at the very least).

5) Disciplines represented should include *at least*:

   a) one collection of geology and mineralogy;

   b) one collection of zoology;

   c) one collection of palaeontology;

   d) one botanical garden;

   e) one herbarium;

   f) one collection of anthropology;

   g) one collection of ethnology;

   h) one collection of archaeology;

   i) one collection of medical instruments and *material medica*;

   j) one collection of pharmaceutical instruments and pharmaceuticals;

   k) one osteological collection (including human osteology);

   l) one collection of marine biology or aquarium;

   m) one collection of microbiology;

   n) one collection of architecture and design;

   o) one collection of applied sciences or industry;

   p) one collection of scientific instruments (astronomy, physics and chemistry);

   q) one collection of mathematics;

   r) one 'faculty art' collection;

   s) one collection of casts.

6) Collections to be visited may be organised in museums although this is not a *sine qua non* condition.

4. General interview topics

Interviews will consist of open-ended questions based on the research issues listed above. The topic is established for the respondent, who is left free to structure a reply as he or she sees fit. Interviews will be taped for later analysis and reflection[191]. At the start of the

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[191] Taping interviews was later abandoned as it was found to inhibit respondents.

interview, respondents are informed that they can remain anonymous if they feel this to be appropriate.

Topics:

1. Clarify the origins of the collection: how did it begin?

2. Briefly outline the institutional history of the collection (ownership, major incorporations, relevant researchers, vulnerabilities, disasters that may have occurred).

3. Clarify the purpose and scope of the collection: what are its objectives? Why does it exist and for whom?

4. Explain the organisation of the collection: are there any sub-collections (reference, reserved, etc.)? What are the organisational criteria?

5. Clarify the use of the collection: who actually uses it? With what purposes? Which disciplines? How is it used?

6. Outline frequency of use and evolution of frequency of use. Has it always been like this? Did the use increase, decrease or remain the same?

7. Give opinion on specificity: because this collection is in a university, do you think it is different from a non-university one? In what respect? Would this collection make sense outside the university? Why or why not?

8. Clarify collections management standards: conservation, existence of reserves, security (fire and robbery), academic qualification of staff (also museological or not), de-accession, inventories, and collection accessibility procedures.

   Note: if written policies do not exist, ask for a recorded statement concerning incorporation and de-accessioning.

9. Give opinion on the value of collections: is the collection of local (university), national or international relevance? Why? Which are the most important objects (at least two examples, to be photographed)?

10. Elaborate on the collection facilities: who owns the building in which the collection is located? Are the facilities temporary or permanent?

11. Give opinion on recognition by the parent-institution: does the department/institute/university acknowledge the value of the collection? Who do you (as director) have to respond to? Do you have easy/direct access to this person?

If the respondent is a 'user' of the collection (researcher, professor, PhD student, etc.), the core topics can be further developed:

Research collection (or use)	Teaching collection (or use)
Subject of research project Essay? PhD? Paper?	Name of course/discipline Graduate or post-graduate?
Questions of value and relevance; personal interest. Reference/archive value, proof value, other.	Questions of value and relevance; personal interest Is the object illustrative? Explanatory? Demonstrative? Is it a model? A replica? A reconstruction? To what concrete curricular topics is the object linked? Is the object functional and put into work (science and technology)?
Reconstruct the object's path: a) Did the collection already exist (collection as a source)? b) Did the collection result from the actual research (collection as a product)? Other possible procedures.	Reconstruct the object's path: Take students to location? Select a few objects and instead take to the classroom?
How will the research results be disclosed? Written form?	Not applicable
General opinion on relevance for research.	General opinion on relevance for teaching.

It should be noted that the information gathered will not only cover the topics addressed in the thesis, but will also provide general and extensive information on a large number of collections of higher education and research institutions.

If possible on logistical grounds, national (and local) museums owning collections originating in universities are also targeted. In that case, the aim is to understand if the original organisation and nature of the collections were maintained upon incorporation.

5. Documentation to collect (or observe)

Documents to be collected (some may not apply in each and every case):

a) publications on the history of the collection;

b) catalogues;

c) policies (if existent in written form): incorporation policies and collections management policies;

d) empty inventory file record plus inventory instructions;

e) creation decree (plus eventual changes);

f) statutes (plus eventual changes);

g) organisational flow chart;

h) staff flow chart;

i) job description of the collections staff;

j) last budget;

k) floor plan of the collections facilities;

l) public documentation (brochures, leaflets, postcards, etc.);

m) one or two reprints of scientific papers on the collection;

n) field notebooks;

o) curricula, syllabuses and class plans.

This list should be sent in advance in order to provide respondents with enough time for preparation.

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