

**A Few Considerations on Romanian Museology
in the second half of the XIXth Century: Conceptions, Representations, Polemics**
(Abstract)

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Keywords: museology, cultural policies, historicity, collector, authenticity, identity.

The present paper starts from the premise that the history of the National Museum of Antiquities had already been written, but the author has now totally different interests: the way in which this museum started to stage the past, suggesting, at a visual level, one conception about history or the other. Could a given sample say something by itself, or did it need the complementariness of the others, discovered later? The author wonders: did the objects brought in the museum have to *illustrate* only a narrative scenario that had already been established, or maybe their affluence used to *legitimate* new approaches of our history? He believes that the important thing is for us to see whether the rarity of the exhibits used to determine a given interpretation, changed, or at least competed, afterwards, by subsequent acquisitions and discoveries. Each chapter in the museum activity (inventorying, classification, restoration, acquisition) gives us indices on the dominant historical discourses at a given moment. These can be found, with certain efforts, in the bureaucratic or explicative texts that accompanied the artefacts in question. However laconic or repetitive they might have been, the archive documents show us how the idea of *value* changes: which objects prevailed: the objects made of precious metals, with a high quota on the market; the rare objects, which thwarted established opinions; the very old objects, the simply respectable ones; the objects with a big informational potential, open to correlations, contextualisation, typification of scientific nature? Which ones of them prevailed today and which gained the primacy later? We usually associate ‘museification’ with the idea of *conservation*, in a pejorative meaning: depositing, fetishisation, abandonment of the social circulation of the academic debates. We believe, however, that the *representations on history have their own historicity, which the life of museum underlines with fidelity*. Objects do not join the museum in order to die; the interest or lack of interest that surround them speak to us about what epoch was in fashion and which past was obsolete at a given time.