

ISSN: 2958-5376
ISSN-L: 2958-5376

MUSEUM.KZ



ҒЫЛЫМИ-ПРАКТИКАЛЫҚ ЖУРНАЛ • НАУЧНО-ПРАКТИЧЕСКИЙ ЖУРНАЛ • SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL JOURNAL



UDC 069

MUSEUMS OF ISRAEL: FROM PROVIDING ACCESS TO PRIVATE COLLECTIONS TO CRAFTING THE NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract. At first glance, it seems the history of the museums in Israel is just around 75 years old, if to count from the date of the state establishment in 1948, but in fact, it is almost 150 years old, if we consider the date of the first museums appearance and the start the Zionist project, proclaimed by Theodor Herzl in 1897.

After the First World War from 1918-1948 Palestine got under British rule. Together with the British Mandate, its colonial past and attitude, the modern British concepts and technologies were launched in urbanism and master-plans of new cities, approach in education and culture. Also they greatly influenced the legislation and institutional development of the heritage sector of the future state.

The history of these 30 years has been described and analyzed in the works of many international and Israeli researchers, but the articles and books, written by Raz Kletter, Shimon Gibson and Galia Bar Or, are stand out.

However, in the context of presenting extensive material on the history of museums, there is still room for adjustments and additions from the point of view of current cultural policies and international trends, including recent political and ethical issues. In the article, the author examines three key stages in the development of museums in Israel.

Research and publications, documents from archives of the Israel Antiquities Authority, the archives of the Institute of Archeology of the Hebrew University, the archives of the National Library of Israel. Here we use the classic methods of historical and critical analysis, as well as content analysis of archival documents. A retrospective approach, from the point of view of Israel's current cultural policy and world museum trends, allows us to draw conclusions regarding several existing strategies.

Keywords: museum, history, British Mandate, Israel, Palestine, Erez Israel, national identity, cultural policy, collections, exhibitions.

For citation: *Natalia Kopelyanskaya*. Museums of israel: from providing access to private collections to crafting the national identity//MUSEUM.KZ. 2023. No 3 (3). p.p. 27-36. DOI 10.59103/muzkz.2023.03.03

ИЗРАИЛЬ МУЗЕЙЛЕРІ: ЖЕКЕ КОЛЛЕКЦИЯЛАРҒА ҚОЛ ЖЕТКІЗУДІ ҚАМТАМАСЫЗ ЕТУДЕН ҰЛТТЫҚ ЖАД ПЕН БІРЕГЕЙЛІК ИНСТИТУТТАРЫН ҚҰРУҒА ДЕЙІН

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Аңдатпа. Израильдегі Музей ісі мемлекет құрылған 1948 жылдан бастап есептейтін болсақ бар-жоғы 75 жыл, бірақ іс жүзінде Теодор Герцль жариялаған алғашқы сионистік жобаның басталған 1897 жылдан есептесек, онда оның тарихы 120 жылдан асады.

Бірінші дүниежүзілік соғыстан кейін 1918-1948 жылдар аралығындағы Палестина Ұлыбританияның қол астында болды. Британдық мандатпен бірге урбанизм, білім мен мәдениет салаларындағы заманауи британдық тұжырымдамалар мен технологиялар келді. Олар болашақ Израильдің мемлекеттік мұра саласының заңнамасына және институционалдық дамуына үлкен әсер етті.

Осы 30 жылдың тарихы көптеген америкалық және израильдік зерттеушілердің еңбектерінде талданып, сипатталған, олардың арасында Раз Клеттер, Шимон Гибсон және Галия Бар Ор жазған мақалалар ерекше көзге түседі. Дегенмен, музейлер тарихына қатысты

көлемді материалды баяндау тұрғысынан қазіргі мәдени саясат пен халықаралық тенденциялар, оның ішінде соңғы кездегі саяси және этикалық мәселелер тұрғысынан түзетулер мен толықтырулар енгізуге әлі де мүмкіншілік бар. Мақалада автор Израильдегі музей ісінің дамуының үш негізгі кезеңін қарастырады.

Зерттеуге ғылыми басылымдар, Израиль ежелгі мұралар басқармасының, Еврей университетінің Археология институтының мұрағатындағы, Израиль Ұлттық кітапханасының мұрағатындағы құжаттар арқау болды. Жұмыста тарихи және сыни талдаудың классикалық әдістері, сонымен қатар мұрағаттық құжаттарға мазмұндық талдау әдісі пайдаланылды. Израильдің қазіргі өзекті мәдени саясаты мен әлемдік музей үрдістері тұрғысынан ретроспективті көзқарас қолданыстағы бірнеше стратегияларға қатысты қорытындылар жасауға мүмкіндік береді.

Тірек сөздер: музей ісі, тарих, Британ мандаты, Израиль, Палестина, Эрез Израиль, ұлттық бірегейлік, мәдени саясат, музей қоры, коллекциялар, көрмелер.

Сілтеме жасау үшін: *Н.Г. Копелянская*. Израиль музейлері: жеке коллекцияларға қол жеткізуді қамтамасыз етуден ұлттық жад пен бірегейлік институттарын құруға дейін//MUSEUM.KZ. 2023. No 3 (3). ББ. 27-36. DOI 10.59103/muzkz.2023.03.03

МУЗЕЙ ИЗРАИЛЯ: ОТ ПРЕДОСТАВЛЕНИЯ ДОСТУПА К ЧАСТНЫМ КОЛЛЕКЦИЯМ К ПОСТРОЕНИЮ ИНСТИТУТОВ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ ПАМЯТИ И ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ

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Аннотация. Истории музейного дела Израиля всего 75 лет, если считать от момента основания государства в 1948 году, но фактически, ей чуть более 120 лет, если считать началом первый сионистский конгресс и выступление Теодора Герцля в 1897 г.

После Первой мировой войны в 1918-1948 Палестина находилась под управлением Великобритании. Вместе с Британским мандатом пришли и британские концепции, и технологии в сфере урбанизма, образования и культуры, они сильно повлияли на законодательство и институциональное развитие сферы наследия будущего Израиля. История этих 30-лет описана и проанализирована в трудах многих израильских и американских исследователей, среди которых выделяются статьи Раза Клеттера, Шимона Гибсона и Галии Бар Ор. Однако в контексте изложения обширного материала по истории музейного дела все еще остается пространство для корректировки и дополнений с точки зрения нынешней культурной политики и международных трендов, включая последние политические и этические вопросы. В статье автор рассматривает три ключевых этапа развития музейного дела в Израиле, по хронологии и темам.

Материалами для исследования послужили научные публикации, документы архива Управления древностей Израиля, архива Института археологии Еврейского университета, архива Национальной библиотеки Израиля. В работе применены классические методы исторического и критического анализа, а также контент-анализ относительно архивных документов. Ретроспективный подход, взгляд с точки зрения актуальной культурной политики Израиля и мировых музейных трендов, позволяет сделать выводы относительно нескольких существующих стратегий.

Ключевые слова: музейное дело, история, Британский мандат, Израиль, Палестина, национальная идентичность, культурная политика, музейный фонд, коллекции, экспозиция.

Для цитирования: *Наталья Копелянская*. Музеи израиля: от предоставления доступа к частным коллекциям к построению институтов национальной памяти и идентичности//MUSEUM.KZ. 2023. No 3 (3). С. 27-36. DOI 10.59103/muzkz.2023.03.03

Museum in Eretz Israel before 1948.

The first museums of antiquities in Palestine (Eretz Israel) appeared in the middle of the 19th century along with the international trend. The most important archaeological finds were sent to the Imperial Museum in Istanbul, in 1846 its archaeological collection was just established. The remaining findings were kept in the Imperial Museum in Jerusalem, which was opened in 1901 based on excavations by Frederick Bliss (1859-1937). The collection was kept in one of the rooms at Mamunie School, and later moved to the Citadel. The opinions of the researchers regarding this museum were, to put it mildly, far from enthusiastic.

And the honor of being the very first museum probably belongs to the Museum of the Jerusalem Literary Society, which was headed by James Finn [Abrahams, 1978: 40-50]. Her Majesty's Consul in Jerusalem; he was inaugurated in 1849. The British Consul loved his work in Palestine, he was delighted with the potential of Jerusalem, and his notes on the work are permeated with the most amazing emotions. At the same time, the Palestine Exploration Fund also opened several museums; in 1902-1915, a kind of a museum existed in one room at St. George, in East Jerusalem.

Following the steps of the British diplomat, the German consul also opened his own museum in Jerusalem in 1876; it was later remodeled by the famous antiquarian Gustav Dalman, who was one of the few Western collectors working in the Middle East. Among these people, the most famous was Baron P. Ustinov in Jaffa [Kark, Lundgren, Bercezelly, 2021], his collection was removed from Palestine after the First World War and sold abroad, but large exhibits from the baron's garden remained. The names of other collectors are no less well known – Conrad Schick, Herbert Clark – but they collected archeology and Arab heritage. Jewish antiquities were represented by Samuel Rafaeli (Rafalovich)¹, his collection is still in the collections of the Rockefeller Museum.

In 1896, the first Zionist congress was held in Europe. The main ideologist of the movement, Theodor Herzl, presented his book “The Jewish State,” which is considered to be one of the most important manifesto and philosophical foundations of nation building. The project was carried out, and the State of Israel declared its independence in 1948. Between these two dates, many important historical events and processes took place. They determined not only the fate of Israel, but also the whole world; the First World War was one of the most important lines

After the peace treaty was signed, the Great Britain received a Mandate² from the League of Nations to administer the territories in the Middle East of the defunct Ottoman Empire. So General Allenby provided military operations in Palestine (Eretz Israel), southern Lebanon and Syria, the General Sir Ronald Storrs was appointed Governor-General of Jerusalem. The rest was subject to the French mandate, excluding Transjordan.

The fathers-founders of Israel – Chaim Weizmann, and David Ben Gurion – had great hopes for the British presence after signing the Balfour declaration. In some ways they were justified, but the disappointment, especially by the end of Mandate, when it was issue of with the White books, was great. However, in the field of systemic work with heritage and the organization of education – schools and museums – the British, like the French, had a very developed technologie in establishing a relevant way of life for British citizens in Egypt and India, as well as in Tanzania. Archaeological findings filled the repositories of the British Museum and the Louvre, and European archaeologists created new museums – in Athens, Cairo and Jerusalem.

¹ While working as a money changer at the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem, Samuil Raffalovich (1867-1923) periodically came across ancient coins that Bedouins and local peasants showed him. But after Eliezer Ben-Yehuda identified Hebrew letters on one of the coins, Raffalovich's passion for ancient coins was born. Source: [More Than Money: Modern Studies \(imj.org.il\)](http://More Than Money: Modern Studies (imj.org.il))

² Mandates are an integral part of the system created by the League of Nations, according to which peoples “not yet capable of existing independently” should be governed by “advanced states”. Over time, such a mandate state, which included mainly the Entente powers, Great Britain and France, would transfer its powers to the local population.

Today, within the framework of the discourse of decolonization and the new ICOM Code of Ethics, this heritage is subject to revision, and part of the collections will be returned to their place of origin.

Due to the actions of the British archaeologists, the first museum legislation appeared in 1924, and earlier the Department of Antiquities (the future Antiquities Authority) in 1920. It was led by the Chief Keeper of Museums, William Fithiyan-Adams. The Brits established a complete working system of excavations, logistics and storage of antiquities; the archive of this period is posted on the website of the Israel Antiquities Authority ¹ and represents an invaluable example in the field of management. With the help of very little effort, an effective system of accounting, storage and publication was created. The first proto-museum of archeology, together with the first museum library for researchers, was opened based on the collections of antiquities left over from Ottoman rule.

They became the core collection of the first museum – the Palestine Archaeological Museum – which was opened in 1938 [Kettler, 2015: 155-178]. Today this museum is called the Rockefeller Museum (donor's name), a branch of the National Museum of Israel in East Jerusalem, it is a status quo object and a living symbol of British cultural policy and a perfect example of the Mandate architecture. It is housed in a magnificent citadel-shaped building designed by the chief architect of Austen Harrison, Chief Architect to the Department of Public Works in the civil administration of British Palestine. The architect approached the task carefully, studied the basic elements of Jerusalem architecture, looked at the best European museums, and tried to combine elements of the East and West in the new building. From the Western tradition, Harrison took the concept of combining departments into a single structure (although the difference in ceiling heights between them was taken from the architecture of buildings in the Old City). The exhibition spaces were designed like Christian cathedrals, with tall windows letting in natural light. From eastern construction traditions, Harrison adopted the use of stone carvings, the shape of entrance openings, domed and vaulted ceilings, Armenian tiles, and wood trim. The Rockefeller Archaeological Museum contains thousands of artifacts ranging from Prehistoric times to the Ottoman Empire, including a 9,000-year-old Jericho statue, Bronze Age gold jewelry, and more. This is an outstanding collection of antiquities, the findings from excavations carried out throughout the country, mainly during the British Mandate (1919-1948), and if the city is ever divided again, the collection will remain in East Jerusalem under the status quo laws. This is a kind of monument of museum work, like the National Museum in Cairo, which has not changed since its opening.

Besides, in Jerusalem there were several more religious and scientific institutions with their own collections – the Notre Dame Monastery, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, etc. the Museum of Islamic Antiquities on the Temple Mount in 1923, the American Albright Institute of Archeology. At the same time, several local museums appeared, created right at the excavation site – in Caesarea, Megiddo and Ashkelon.

It is clear that in the pre-state Jewish Yishuv the question of a new identity and the search for roots was acute. In those years, these were the first modest attempts to create museums by enthusiasts / Zionists / local historians according to the European model known to them, kibbutz construction was intensive, and home-made historical corners appeared everywhere. The large aliyah from Europe, especially from Germany, on the eve of World War II intensified these processes.

In the 1930s, in addition to the museum/cabinet of curiosities at the Bezalel Academy of Art, which later became part of the collection of the Israel Museum, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art appeared in the house of Mayor Meir Dizengoff, at 16, Rothschild Boulevard (1932), and strong kibbutz organizations arose collections, including Beit Shturman in Kibbutz Tel Yosef (1938) and the first Museum of Art in Kibbutz Ein Harod (1938), the collection/museum of

¹ Archive of the Department of Antiquities of Mandatory Palestine (1919 – 1948) <http://www.iaa-archives.org.il/default.aspx>

Alexander Rocha received registration in Haifa, the Museum of Jewish Antiquities at the Hebrew University appeared (1936), Beit Sevivateinu (museum of the natural world) in Tel Aviv [Reich, 2001: 219-26].

In 1934, Dr. Weizmann set up the research institution named after Daniel Sieff in Rehovot, but in 1949, its name was changed to the Weizmann Institute of Science. Chaim Weizmann was its first President. Weizman was the statesman and a true Zionist, he lived there in his [own house](#) since 1936. But the image of the places originated from the place where he was brought up as a scientist – the universities of Berlin, Geneva and Manchester. It became an essential campus project, constructed after the Anglo-American model and technology in the field of education and science as well as the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Thus, even before the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, we can say that the most advanced professional museum foundations at that time in the field of heritage conservation, urban planning, and the creation of new museums and educational institutions were laid here. The author is confident that during the next 75 years the basic British concepts, including master plans, culture and educational technologies were not altered. Certainly, some of ideas and practices were adapted or redone according to the new visions, but the essence and functions of the core things have not been changed.

However, the building of Israel's national identity, its own memory institutions and the foundations of cultural policy was still ahead.

Declaration of Independence 1948. New Politics, Museum Network Growth.

The Tel Aviv Museum of Art is one of the symbols of the new state of Israel, it was here that David Ben Gurion read the Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948. When you look at the photographs of this historical moment, you can see that the museum hall was urgently converted into a ceremonial hall, the paintings were removed from the walls, and a portrait of Herzl was hung. Today the Tel Aviv Museum is located in completely different buildings, but the memory of this significant event is clearly preserved. Meir Dizengoff believed that a city, which is the concentration of the Jewish mentality, should be a pioneer in the field of aesthetics. The Tel Aviv Museum collected its collection in two directions at once – directly from Israeli artists, designers, photographers and other creators and European art, mainly from private collections, mainly American¹. The day after the Declaration was proclaimed, the battles continued in one of the bloodiest wars – the War of Independence (1947-1949). At the same time, Jews continued to repatriate to Israel from a variety of countries: from Eastern Europe, from Ethiopia, Yemen, Morocco, as well as from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, etc., as well as from South America.

The new state offered Jews the main thing – the right and pride of their identity, including family history, memory, religion, language and traditions. Looking ahead, the concept of a “melting pot” as in the United States or a “cultural mosaic” as in Canada has not been very successful in the Middle East. The integration (absorption) process is still the most difficult reality test for any new repatriate. Israeli society is usually characterized by the term “multiculturalism” [Kark, Perry, 2012: 79-80], which does not mean a dialogue of cultures, but rather the opportunity for different communities to exist side by side, but not mix. Many remain within their community / court / community all their lives, mixing is not so frequent, but that is why many speak two to four languages, in addition to Hebrew or Arabic.

After 1948, archeology and museumification of heritage remained a matter of national importance. For example, the first permits for excavations were approved and distributed at Knesset meetings, because they should be in trusted hands and without any misinterpretation. The new state need strong long legs, going from the glorious biblical past.

The state “Department of Antiquities” was quickly created, the successor to the British Department [Kettler, 2015: 155-178]. It employed 13 people under the leadership of Shmuel Yevin, who reported to the Public Works Administration. The new department stored a certain

¹ Collection of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art <https://www.tamuseum.org.il/en/collection/european-art-16th-19th-centuries/>

amount of antiquities, but did not have its own museum or storage facility, from 1948 to 1967. The Palestinian Archaeological Museum and all religious institutions of the Old City were under Jordanian rule while Jerusalem was divided. Following the principle of continuity in public administration and being a former employee of the mandated Department of Antiquities, Pinhas Penuel Kahane was nominated for the post of Inspector of Regional Museums.

Kahane began visiting new museums and writing reports. Yevin mentions a “museum department” together with an “archaeological department”, where de Kahane was supposed to work as the “keeper of the valuables” of new archaeological finds. The latter began to arrive at the department in large numbers from new excavations, from new places. Almost every kibbutz or settlement organized its own corner of local history.

The number of regional museums has grown rapidly, as we can see from IDAM reports. In January 1949 there were 18 museums with archeology, and three more were planned. A month later, in February 1949, there was already a list of 20 items, and in May 1954 – 29. In 1955, Yevin noted seven municipal museums created after 1948: Haifa, Tel Aviv, Tiberias, Akko, Be'er Sheva, Beit She'an and Ashkelon. It also notes 30 local collections, not just archaeological ones.

In 1958 there were already 68 museums, 13 in Jerusalem, 6 in Tel Aviv and 6 in Haifa. 11 are urban and regional, in cities, and 32 are local museums, mainly in kibbutzim. Obviously, not everything fell under the all-seeing eye of the Department of Antiquities; perhaps there was more. The three main cities of Israel – Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem – are in a state of competition, inviting prominent Jewish figures from Europe who would represent modern Jewish culture and the identity of the new country. So, for example, in Haifa, several museums appeared, which today are an important part of the city's museum network. Budgets and policy for culture have always been and are under the jurisdiction of municipalities. Unfortunately this dependance does not help museums, today more than ever before, they are fighting for curatorial freedom.

Israel museum - Representing the Nation. The core thing in this period was the large museum construction in Jerusalem, where the legendary politician and mayor of the city Teddy Kollek is building a new modern city, demolishing old buildings and entire areas without any regret. According to the new plan, Jerusalem should have become a modern city like the American and European partners.

The religious center was obvious and the cluster of national institutions and government, education and culture should occupy the place of no less importance. Since the late 1950s, a large area has been under construction, where today the Knesset, the university campus of Givat Ram, the National Library of Israel and the main national museum, the Israel Museum, connect ¹. Teddy Kollek was the Israel museum's first director. Today, when you can read the documents of the meetings dedicated to the creation of this institute, it becomes obvious that he prepared a place for himself, created a funding system that is different from all others, where the state pays only a small part, and the rest is collected through the Board of Directors. He personally dealt with issues of location, architecture, invitation of UNESCO experts, and collections accumulation. Regarding the latter, he made quite a big effort, since it quickly became clear that if one relied only on one's own strength, there would be nothing to show in the new building of the national museum.

It was decided that the museum would be of an encyclopedic type, like the Metropolitan Museum, with three main sections that remain today – Archaeology, Judaic studies and Fine Arts (European and Israeli). Thus, any visitor has a fairly complete understanding of what Israel is, what its core values are, and to what extent Judaism is part of state policy.

Today, if you look at the names on the main sections of the museum, it is clear who gave the collections and funds – the Bronfman family saved the archeology exhibition, a little was added by Eliahu Dobkin, a statesman and a famous collector of ancient glass. D.D. Foundation and M. Mandel

¹ Israel Museum [ירושלים, ישראל \(imj.org.il\)](http://www.imj.org.il)

(JJ & M. Mandel) funded for the creation of the Jewish Art & Life wing, the museum received the Western European collection from the widow Charlotte Bergman, the Sculpture Garden collection was received by the American entrepreneur and businessman Billy Rose, and he also financed the project of Isama Noguchi .

The individual complex of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Shrine of the Book) ¹, the result of incredible diplomatic efforts by archaeologists and founders, provides important insight into what the “People of the Book” are.

In addition to being an important part of the complex of national institutions today, today the Israel Museum is a key destination on Museum Boulevard, Jerusalem's version at a museum quarter. It is adjacent to the Bloomfield Children's Science Museum, the Bible Lands Museum and Antiquity Authorities new buildings.

Although the Israel Museum still impresses everyone with its collection and architecture, accessibility and variety of programs, from the point of view of modern museum trends, it is difficult to resist critical questions. A too straightforward state narrative in which there is no place for any other cultures and arts other than the Jewish heritage. For a museum exhibition in the form of a “globe of a nation state,” today, of course, a revision on issues of ethical and political narrative would be important. But two reasons – Israel's too short history and a very complex management system – lead to the fact that the large museum is stagnating. It responds to all the challenges of our time through the educational programs department. The activities of the Department for Children and Adolescents of the Israel Museum deserve a separate article and detailed analysis. In many ways, it sets the bar high and is an example of organizing programs for historically divided cities and countries.

In 1962, the Ministry of Education conducted a study of museums and questionnaires were sent to 125 addresses. in 1966 Rahmani compiled a list of 114 archaeological museums or with an archaeological collection [Kettler, 2015: 155-178]. These include:

- National Museum of Israel – 1
- Municipal museums – 7 (Haifa, Tel Aviv, Tiberias, Acre, Jaffa, Bat Yam, Petah Tikva)
- Regional museums – 10 (Beit Sheana Valley, Gilboa, Gerar region, Hula Valley, Jezreel Valley, Mount Carmel, Negev Desert, Ein Gedi, Emek Hefer, Shfila, Revivim), 5 of them belonged to municipalities, 5 kibbutzim, one company.
- Local museums – 77, kibbutz museums – 64, in Christian religious institutions – 5, at archaeological sites – 4, schools – 2, one in the village, one in the local council. Another 19 museums were conditionally narrowly professional; they related, for example, to underwater archeology or only to the Stone Age.

In 1967, it was believed that out of 140 museums in Israel, 67 were archaeological. The number of museums grew by leaps and bounds, especially on the kibbutzim, where about 60 museums were founded between 1935 and the 1960s.

From a wider museum perspective, Israeli museums have made a major contribution by showing how to talk about a great catastrophe, about trauma in the twentieth century. Israel was one of the first countries to show the ability to talk about the “negative history” in a museum, to work with witnesses, to recognize one’s past in order to build a future.

National Institute of Memory. Yad Vashem – The World Holocaust Remembrance Centre.

In fact, there are three major Holocaust museums in the world, set the major metanarratives for the study of this history in the 20th century. The Yad Vashem Museum² in Jerusalem represents history through the contrast between the Holocaust and the Re-birth in Eretz Israel, this is the main message of the exhibition and the architecture of the complex. The Jewish Museum in Berlin ³

¹ Shrine of the Book [Shrine of the Book | The Israel Museum, Jerusalem \(imj.org.il\)](http://Shrine of the Book | The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (imj.org.il))

² **Yad Vashem – The World Holocaust Remembrance Center** / <https://www.yadvashem.org>

³ Jewish Museum, Berlin [Jüdisches Museum Berlin \(jmberlin.de\)](http://Jüdisches Museum Berlin (jmberlin.de))

mainly talks about the history of the German community and the reasons for the extermination of Jews in Germany, and the National Holocaust Museum in Washington¹ DC talks about history from the point of view of the victory of basic American freedoms and values. All other Holocaust museums/Jewish museums, one way or another, are created according to one of these patterns or through compilation.

In Israel, among all the museums dedicated to the Holocaust, only the Yad Vashem memorial complex and museum combines the historical events of the Holocaust with the creation of the State of Israel, it created the great metanarrative “from ashes to life” (reborn from the ashes)². Since its creation, Yad [Rotem, 2021] Vashem became the main Israeli institution for Holocaust remembrance: all public holidays dedicated to Holocaust Remembrance Day are observed in Israel and in the world. Up until the 1980s, the significance of the Holocaust for the creation of the State of Israel and the authority of Yad Vashem, which represented it, were not challenged doubt. For the young state, metanarratives and collective memories were necessary to unify a culturally and socially diverse society. Moreover, surrounded by enemies, the young state and the Israelis, many of whom were only the second generation of Holocaust survivors, believed that only a strong nation and army will be able to prevent a second catastrophe. Thus, this history was inscribed in the most basic values of the state and the memorial itself became the absolute center of pilgrimage.

It is officially believed that Yad Vashem was created thanks to the vision of political activist Mordechai Shenhawi. According to his version, Shenhawi first heard about what was happening to the Jews in Europe in the summer of 1942 and at that same moment he had a vision in which “millions of Jews marched to Zion, carrying tombstones on their backs... each of them he removed the stone and put it in order or not, and thus created a monument to his life.”

Yad Vashem formally dates back to 1953, from the moment the Knesset signed the law on its creation, but in the form and space as we and the whole world know it today, it has existed and been operating since 2005. This is a big project to create national harmony, which was preceded by the process of recognition of the disaster and the trial of Eichmann. It is believed that final agreement in Israeli society came only after this historical trial, in 1961, when everyone heard living testimony and evidence.

Today its structure includes a gallery of children's drawings, a Hall of Names, an Alley of the Righteous, an archive, a Hall of Memory with the names of death camps carved on its floor, a Children's Memorial and the Valley of Destroyed Jewish Communities.

An important part is digital collections of names are located, testimonies of Holocaust survivors and online exhibitions are partially posted. In addition to the museum's large collection of documents and photographs, Yad Vashem has a large art collection, and, of course, a huge archive and a School of Holocaust.

Studies that annually trains dozens of teachers in Israel and abroad in a multidisciplinary approach to working with children and adolescents on the Holocaust. This is a large museum corporation, which today is on a well-known path to improve corporate culture and its effectiveness in work around the world.

In addition to Yad Vashem, there are several other important places in Israel associated with this story and the name of Abba Kovner. The great Jewish partisan and leader of the ghetto uprising immediately began building museums. But neither the Museum of Ghetto Fighters, nor the first version of the Museum of the Diaspora (today ANU – Museum of the Jewish People), unfortunately, could not connect with the larger state narrative; they did not have the important moment of “defamiliarization” in the exhibition; the statements are absolutely personal. Today they are visible on the museum map of Israel, but at the level of state policy they cannot yet compete with the large corporate machine of the Yad Vashem memorial.

Conclusion. The history of museums in Israel is still in the process of being written; most of the works have so far been written in Hebrew and by specialists on a separate collection. However,

¹ US Holocaust Memorial Museum [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum \(ushmm.org\)](http://United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (ushmm.org))

² From ashes to life : my memories of the Holocaust : Eichengreen, Lucille, 1925, Internet Archive

the idea of museums as institutions that can strengthen social cohesion has always been in Eretz Israel since the arrival of European cultural technologies. The museum as a place that inspires trust, where the symbolic result of agreement on various issues of history was in great demand from the very beginning .

On one hand, there was a state request on the part of the Zionist leaders for the rapid construction of identity – building a strong “ancient foundation” for the new national state. Hence the powerful development of archeology and a large number of archaeological collections.

In addition, important diplomatic work was underway to present Jewish art as part of world culture, integrating new artists into the larger history of art not by nationality, but by modernity and ideology. This could only be done through the creation of artistic and ethnographic collections. The emergence of large museums in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa confirms that point.

Another important factor is that the country was created during the difficult post-war period. Building your own narrative of the revival of the state after the enormous catastrophe of the Holocaust in Europe, when a third of all Jews were exterminated, was also only possible through the museumification of heritage, collecting a collection, including evidence, giving this heritage an important state narrative.

The last thing that has been in the background from the very beginning is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which has not yet made it possible to create a full-fledged historical statement in any of the museums. But we hope that history is on our side of museum doers, visionaries and practitioners, and we will see more good publications about the recent museum history of the Middle East, which is currently experiencing a boom.

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