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**THE ROLE AND OPERATION OF MUSEUMS IN ESZTERGOM,
HUNGARY**

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management.

Central European University

Vienna

May 2022

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by

Tekla Balogh-Bodor

(Hungary)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Vienna, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Studies, Academic Research, Policy,
Management.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

Chair, Examination Committee

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I, the undersigned, **Tekla Balogh-Bodor**, candidate for the MA degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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ABSTRACT

Esztergom is one of the most important towns in Hungary, both historically and in terms of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. From the tenth century, it was one of centers of the Kingdom of Hungary, and after the administrative changes in the fourteenth century, Esztergom remained an important cultural hub and seat of church governance. After the Ottoman war, Esztergom slowly began to develop again in the eighteenth century as a regional commercial and religious center, which ended in the communist era. As a result of the historical past, there are eight museums in Esztergom today, five of which is in the focus of this research. The aim of this study is to discover what relevance museums can have in the local community, how people engage with the museums and what are the potentials of the museums in the development of the community.

The research is based on qualitative and quantitative data collected through the analysis of international, national, municipal, organizational policies related to the operation and social role of museums. I compared the policies to practices through participant observation in the museums. In order to gain an insight into the visitors' perceptions, I created questionnaires. To understand the perspective of the museums, in Esztergom, I conducted interviews with their employees. For the municipal level, I interviewed private individuals who take an active role in the cultural and community life of the town, as well as a representative of the municipality.

The study found that concepts from the international museum discourse such as New Museology, or the social role of the museums in communities are known to the Hungarian museum professionals. However, even if the museums proved to have their relevance in the local community of Esztergom, they still have space to develop in fulfilling their social role. The thesis concludes that Esztergom not only has cultural resources (tangible and intangible

heritage) that could be used for the creation of identity and community well-being, but also a relatively large group of people, who are committed to work for the community and the town.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	4
LIST OF FIGURES	6
LIST OF TABLES.....	8
INTRODUCTION	9
Research Aims and Questions	10
The structure of the thesis	11
CHAPTER 1 – THE TOWN OF ESZTERGOM	13
1.1 Demographic context.....	14
1.2 Economic Background.....	16
1.3 Cultural and hospitality infrastructure	18
1.4 Historical Overview	20
1.4.1 From the eighteenth century	25
1.5 The development of the Hungarian museum system and the museums in Esztergom.....	27
1.5.1 On the way to a unified museum system	32
1.5.2 Esztergom and the museums today	38
CHAPTER 2 – MUSEUMS AND COMMUNITIES: THE RECENT DISCOURSE.....	40
2.1 Theorizing the role of museums	40
2.2 Museums in the twenty-first century: international definitions.....	42
2.3 Community development through museums and the Hungarian practice	45
2.4 What is community?	48
2.5 Communities and museums in the Hungarian museum discourse.....	50
CHAPTER 3 – MUSEUMS IN ESZTERGOM AS PERCEIVED BY VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS	52
3.1 Methods of Data Collection	52
3.2 Questionnaire – Visitors’ perspective	54
3.2.1 Survey population	56
3.2.2 Visits	59
3.2.2 Target audience.....	61
3.2.3 Reasons for visiting.....	62
3.2.4 Connection to heritage	63
3.2.5 Ideas about the museums’ participation in community development.....	65
3.2.6 Perceptions about Esztergom.....	66

3.3 Local stakeholders' perspective	67
3.3.1 Museums and the visitors	68
3.3.2 Museums in the urban fabric.....	71
3.3.3 Museums and the community	74
3.3.4 Perceptions of Esztergom	76
CHAPTER 4 – SUGGESTIONS	78
4.1 Good Practices – Museums and community development	81
CONCLUSION.....	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	87
APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE.....	94
APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEWEES	96
APPENDIX 3 – VISITOR NUMBERS.....	97

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of Hungary with the location of Esztergom. Source: Made by the author.....	13
Figure 2: Map of Esztergom with the different parts. Source: Meggyes, Miklósné, ed. Szent István városa, Esztergom története. Esztergom: Esztergom Város Önkormányzat, 2007.....	14
Figure 3: Population change in Esztergom	15
4. Figure View of the Danube, the Castle, and the Basilica.	17
Figure 5: The Kingdom of Hungary in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.. Source: “Magyarország az Anjouk és Zsigmond korában,” [Hungary in the age of Angevins and Sigismund], Sulinet, accessed May 20, 2022, https://tudasbazis.sulinet.hu/hu/tarsadalomtudomanyok/tortenelem/magyar-tortenelmi-terkeptar/magyarorszag-az-anjouk-es-zsigmond-koraban/magyarorszag-az-anjouk-es-zsigmond-koraban-kronologia-	21
Figure 6: Timeline about the important events in the thesis. Source: Made by the author	23
Figure 7: Esztergom on a nineteenth-century map, with the four parts: Szenttamás, Szentgyörgymező, Víziváros and Királyi városrész.....	25
Figure 8: Esztergom and the location of the museums mentioned in the thesis and the Basilica. Source: Made by the author	29
Figure 9: From the permanent exhibition of the Danube Museum. Photo by the author	31
Figure 10: Age distribution of the survey respondents.....	56
Figure 11: Survey analysis about the frequency of visits and place of residence.....	59
Figure 12: Place of residence and number of visits	60
Figure 13: Counties of Hungary with the administrative centers and the location of Esztergom. Source: Made by the author	60

Figure 14: Survey analysis about the frequency of the returning visitors, age and place of residence	61
Figure 15: Survey response analysis about how the visitors define the target audiences of the museum/exhibition?.....	62
Figure 16: Survey response analysis about the reasons for visiting the museums	63
Figure 17: Word cloud about the emotions generated by the museum in the respondents	64
Figure 18: Survey response analysis about how the visitors' ideas or thoughts on how could be the museum involved in the development of the local community.	66
Figure 19: Word Cloud about the three locations that describe Esztergom according to the respondents	67
Figure 20: Word Cloud about the three locations that describe Esztergom according to the interviewees	76

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The type, ownership status, maintainer and scope of the museums mentioned in the thesis	38
Table 2: Respondents to the questionnaires	56
Table 3: Visitor numbers. Source: Kulturális Statisztika. Adatgyűjtések a 2019. évről [Cultural Statistic. Data from 2019], KSH, accessed May 20, 2022, https://kultstat.oszk.hu/#/home/public	57
Table 4: Visitor numbers. Source: Kulturális Statisztika. Adatgyűjtések a 2020. évről [Cultural Statistic. Data from 2020], KSH, accessed May 20, 2022, https://kultstat.oszk.hu/#/home/public	58
Table 5: Visitor Numbers.....	97

INTRODUCTION

The thesis aims to explore the relevance museums can have in the local community of Esztergom, Hungary. In my research I focused on five museums: the Castle Museum, the Balassa Bálint Museum, the Danube Museum, the Christian Museum and the Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim Djami. The thesis will examine the international, national, municipal, and organizational policies related to the operation and social role of museums combined with observations in the museums, interviews and questionnaires. In the last part, I formulated my suggestions based on the analysis and the research.

Esztergom in northern Hungary has an important significance in the Hungarian national identity. As a place of residence for the King of Hungary, it was one of the first centers of the Kingdom of Hungary, the seat of the archbishop, and the site of many important historical events. Thus, Esztergom is inseparable of national history and Catholic religion, the latter numbering the largest body of believers in the country. In general, Esztergom's cultural heritage is recognized as valuable at various, local, regional, national levels.

Although Esztergom was one of the centers of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, after the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it gradually lost from its significance, and much of its identity and character. Due to administrative changes in the twentieth century, Esztergom was dispossessed of its administrative center status in Komárom-Esztergom County and its seat position in the district. It is a widely held view that the administrative changes are the result of the fact that Esztergom has been the center of the Archdiocese: due to its role in the Catholic Church, Esztergom was not favored by the communist leaders.

Most of the museums in the town are carriers of the thousand-year history of Esztergom, and more than thousand-year of Hungarian history. They were established from the second half of nineteenth century to 2007, initiated by local cultural associations, representatives of the middle class and the Catholic Church, in order to safeguard the cultural heritage of

Esztergom and the Hungarian nation and to educate the visitors. The museums were visited by generations in the framework of school education, religious pilgrimages and recreational activities.

In the recent decades, however, the function of museums has been questioned and reconceptualized in the international scene. Museums are increasingly recognized as agents of social and economic change, with the expectation that they offer more than aesthetic pleasure or education. Museums should actively enhance the discussion on different issues, such as memory, identity, sustainable development, life and death. They have the potential to strengthen identities, nourish cultural diversity, regenerate the local economy, contribute to civic engagement. Museums also have a responsibility because of their potential impact. They can be an active and attractive part of their community, by creating safe places for social discourse. In my thesis I will explore how these changes appear in Esztergom, what is the role of the museums in the town as seen by a range of actors and how they fulfil these newly recognized potentials.

My main reason for choosing this topic is personal interest. When I was finishing my previous degree, I had my internship at one of the Esztergom museums, at the Balassa Bálint Museum, one of my case studies here. Later on, I worked and lived in the town for almost a year. Thus, I had a prior insight into this topic, and was able to use my own personal network during my research.

Research Aims and Questions

My aim is to explore how the museums are positioned in the fabric of Esztergom and to what extent does the municipality rely on the local museums as potential partners for creating community cohesion and increasing community well-being. I also want to examine the visitors' perception of the museums: how they are affected emotionally and intellectually,

and how the visit impacts their identity work. Therefore, the thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

What is the relevance of the museums within the community in Esztergom?

How do people engage with the museums during their visits?

What is the museum policy in terms of connecting to the town and the residents, and how is it implemented in practice?

How can the museums contribute to the development of an urban community in Esztergom?

The structure of the thesis

In the first chapter, I will present the contextual background of Esztergom, more specifically the demographic, economic background and the cultural and hospitality infrastructure of the town. In the second part of the chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the history of Esztergom focusing on the specific significance of the town in the broader Hungarian context. Finally, the chapter will explain the development of the Hungarian museum sector and the museums in Esztergom, with regard to the influential factors (laws, decrees) that shape the operation of today's museums in Hungary and the town.

The second chapter will discuss the changing conceptualization in the field of museum discourse of how museums and communities are related, through the concepts of New Museology and Critical Heritage Studies. In order to understand the perception of museums in the twenty-first century, the second part of the chapter summarizes the debate surrounding the ICOM museum definition. The remaining part of the chapter will illustrate how the social role of museums is conceptualized in the Hungarian policy and how these policies are implemented in practice.

The third chapter contains the case study analysis based on the questionnaires and interviews I conducted as well as participant observation and desktop research. I will explore how the

visitors of the museums relate to the local heritage of Esztergom and the town and how they experience their interaction with the museums. I also analyze how the organizational policy and practice in the museums address their relationship to the local community and how the municipality cooperates with the museums in Esztergom when working towards their vision of the town.

Finally, in the fourth chapter I summarize my conclusions and observations and formulate my suggestions to various stakeholders on how they could build more on the potential of the museums when thinking about the future of the local community.

CHAPTER 1 – THE TOWN OF ESZTERGOM



Figure 1: Map of Hungary with the location of Esztergom. Source: Made by the author

This chapter describes the socio-economic context of the research in the city of Esztergom, and the cultural and hospitality infrastructure in the town. Second, I will present a brief overview on the history of the town that is the background for the rest of the chapter, the development of the local museum offers with the twentieth-century processes in the focus, and the formation of the museum sector in Hungary.

Esztergom is located in the northwestern part of Hungary, on the right bank of the Danube river. Hungary has a regional governance system of nineteen counties, and Esztergom is in Komárom-Esztergom County, the smallest in terms of its territory, but the one that is the most densely populated. With an area of about 100 km³, Esztergom is the second largest town in the county after the administrative center, Tatabánya.¹

The counties are subdivided into districts (*járások*), in total, there are 174 districts in Hungary. Esztergom is the center of one of the six districts in Komárom-Esztergom County, the Esztergom District. The town has the role of a cultural and social center, and allure in the geographical region. Historically, Esztergom consisted of different smaller settlements. Until

¹ József Gerse and Dániel Szilágyi, *Városok-falvak*, [Cities-villages] Magyarország Településhálózata 2 (Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2015), 80.

the nineteenth century, only four of these remained: the Regia Civitas (Királyi Városrész), Víziváros, Szenttamás and Szentgyörgymező.²

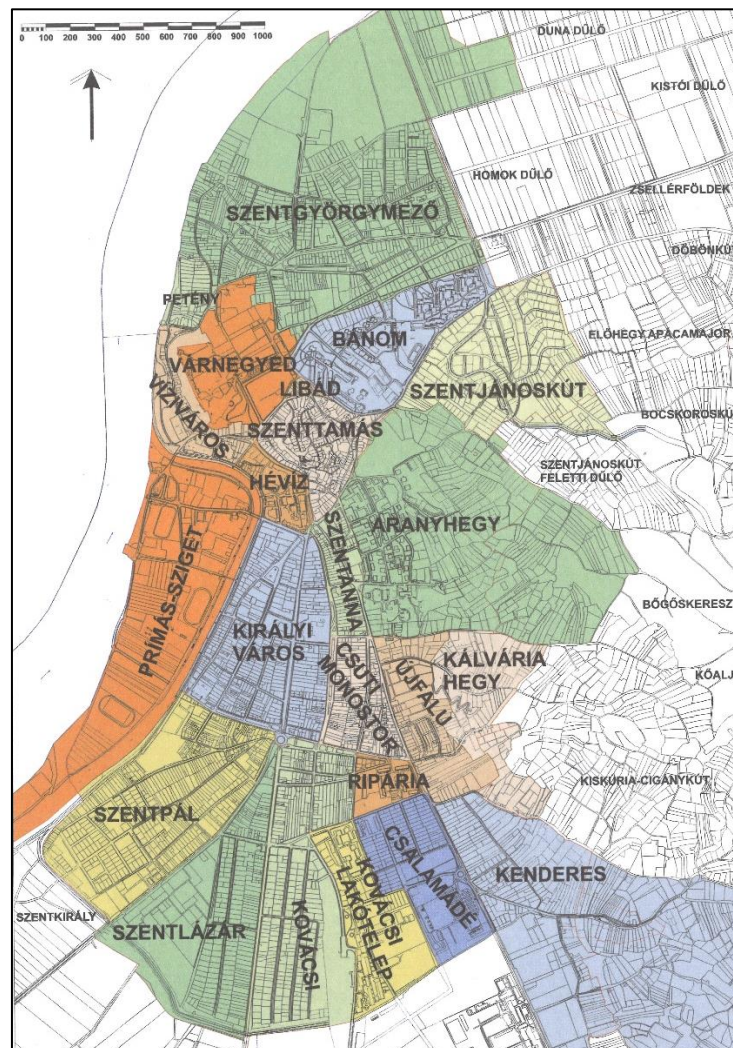


Figure 2: Map of Esztergom with the different parts. Source: Meggyes, Miklósné, ed. *Szent István városa, Esztergom története. Esztergom: Esztergom Város Önkormányzat, 2007.*

1.1 Demographic context

The population of Esztergom numbered 28,026 inhabitants in 2021, making it the thirty-ninth largest city among the 348 cities of Hungary. Its population has been declining over the past fifteen years, although there is a small increase compared to the data in 2018. According to

² Dezső Dercsényi and László Zolnay, *Esztergom*, Magyar Műemlékek (Budapest: Képzőművészeti Alap, 1956), 38.

the census in 2011, the ethnic composition was 83,5% Hungarians, 2,5% Romani, 1,8% Germans, 16,3% undeclared, and other nationalities.³

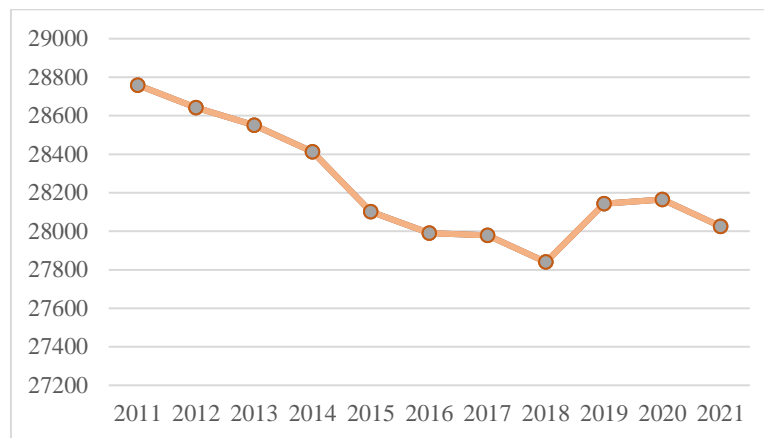


Figure 3: Population change in Esztergom

Some less than one third of the residents in the town have at least a high school degree (29%), 17% have tertiary education and 18% attended a vocational school.⁴ Compared to the national average, the number of intellectual workers (owning a high school degree or tertiary education) living in Esztergom is high. However, since there are not too many job opportunities of this kind in the town, the majority of white-collars commute to Budapest, the capital.⁵

44,5% of the population of Esztergom was economically active in 2011, compared to the national average of 45%. Five percent of the population or less was officially unemployed.⁶ It has commonly been assumed, that the region is rather struggling with the shortage of workforce and with attracting the existing workforce to remain in the region.⁷

³ "Helységnevtár, Esztergom," [Detailed Gazetteer, Esztergom], accessed May 22, 2022, https://www.ksh.hu/apps/hntr.telepules?p_lang=HU&p_id=25131

⁴ "Területi adatok – Komárom- Esztergom megye, 3. Településtípusonkénti adatok," [Regional data – Komárom-Esztergom County, 3. Data by type of locality], accessed May 22, 2022, https://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/docs/tablak/teruleti/11/11_4_1_4_1.xl

⁵ *Esztergom város önkormányzatának gazdasági programja, 2020–2025* [Economic program of Esztergom municipality] 2020, 17, 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

1.2 Economic Background

Esztergom is a regional center. According to the Economic Program of the municipality, the size of its territory and the number of the population is similar to the Hungarian county centers.⁸ In addition, it is an economic center in the region: most of the medium-sized and large-scale enterprises in the area are in Esztergom. Almost ten thousand people work at these enterprises. Among the different sectors, manufacturing industries are leading with five industries: the Suzuki Factory and other vehicle productions have the largest shares, but computers, other electronic, and optical products, as well as chemical products are also significant.⁹

Due to the cultural and natural conditions in and around the town, tourism should be a significant employer and economic factor. However, in 2018, only 800,000 people visited Esztergom, and spent an average of no more than two nights in the town. Tourism is characterized by short stays and low expenditure.¹⁰ In comparison, the capital, Budapest broke the record in the same year with 4,499,829 visitors, of which 676,859 were Hungarians. In total, the tourists spent 10,370,479 nights in the city.¹¹

Most visitors travel to Esztergom from inland.¹² The town belongs to the important touristic region called the Danube Bend (Dunakanyar), which is a high priority tourism development area in Hungary. On the one hand, due to its proximity to Budapest, Esztergom can potentially target foreign tourists from the capital. On the other hand, Esztergom is a popular

⁸ Ibid., 17–18.

⁹ Ibid., 17.

¹⁰ Ibid., 18.

¹¹ “Rekordév Budapest vendégforgalmában,” [Record in the tourism in Budapest], accessed May 22, 2022, <https://www.budapestinfo.hu/hu/rekordev-budapest-vendegforgalmaban>

¹² *Esztergom város önkormányzatának gazdasági programja, 2020–2025* [Economic program of Esztergom municipality], 2020, 18.

domestic destination. For the two groups, Esztergom can offer different programs, for example, in terms of length and experience.¹³



4. Figure View of the Danube, the Castle, and the Basilica.

Source: "Galéria," *Irány Esztergom*, accessed 20 May, 2022, <https://iranyesztergom.hu/galeria/>

The town has a wide range of tourist capacities: it is a sacral and cultural center. The former is the result of Esztergom being a center of the archdiocese and in the nineteenth century, a basilica was built on the Castle Hill, on the remains of the medieval cathedral. The Basilica – officially named as the Primatial Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Adalbert – is the largest church in Hungary.¹⁴ With its huge dimensions, the building dominates the landscape, today Esztergom's cityscape is associated with the Basilica. Due to the importance of Esztergom in the Catholic Church, the neoclassicist Basilica quickly

¹³ Ibid., 18.

¹⁴ Pál Cséfalvay, *Az Esztergomi Bazilika, Kincstár és Vármúzeum*, [The basilica, treasury, and the Castle Museum in Esztergom] Múzeumi Kalauz (Budapest: Helikon, 1992), 10.

became a place of pilgrimage. The site on the so-called Castle Hill is geographically separated from other parts of the town and is usually the most visited site in Esztergom.¹⁵

Its geographical location in the Danube Bend, with a spectacular view from the Castle Hill on the river as well as the North Hungarian Mountains with the Visegrádi Mountains, makes Esztergom an attractive site for visitors with a potential in active tourism: hiking, biking and water sports.¹⁶ There are numerous warm thermal water sources at the foot of the Castle Hill, and St. Thomas Hill, which make the town an excellent destination for bath tourism.¹⁷

1.3 Cultural and hospitality infrastructure

218 national monuments were registered in Esztergom in 2017 under various monument protection laws: protected monuments (*műemlék*), monument parts (*műemlék tartozék*), values under general monument protection (*általános műemléki védelem alatt álló érték*), monument sites and buffer zones (*műemléki helyszín és védőövezete*), sites with monumental significance (*műemléki jelentőségű terület*), monumental environment (*műemléki környezet*). In addition, there are 211 monuments in Esztergom that are protected by the local municipal decree (*helyi egyedi építészeti érték*).¹⁸

The number of archaeological sites in Esztergom was 416, six of which are under a high-level of protection (*fokozattan védett*), 102 are under special protection (*kiemelten védett*), one registered (*nyilvántartott*), 303 professional sites (*szakmai*) and four are in a buffer zone (*védőövezet*).¹⁹ This implies that heritage in the town has a great potential as a resource for the economy as well as for local urban identity formation.

¹⁵ See Appendix–3, Visitor Numbers.

¹⁶ István Horváth, Márta H. Kelemen, and István Torma, *Komárom megye régészeti topográfiája: Esztergom és a dorogi járás*, [Archaeological topography of Komárom-Esztergom County. Esztergom and Dorogi District] Magyarország régészeti topográfiája 5 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979), 80.

¹⁷ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸ *Esztergom város Településképi Arculati Kézikönyve*, [Public Appearance of Esztergom] 2017, 21–23, last modified April 22, 2020, <https://www.esztergom.hu/esztergomi/ugyintezes/telepulesrendezes/hir/58-telepuleskepi-arculati-kezikonyv>

¹⁹ Ibid., 21.

In terms of the hospitality infrastructure of Esztergom, 44 visitor accommodations are available on booking.com in 2022, five of which are four-stars hotels and the less are hotels, bed and breakfast accommodations or motels. As of May 2022, Airbnb offers 83 places to stay. This, compared to the thousands of accommodations available in Budapest through these two applications suggests that tourists do not spend many nights in Esztergom.

Currently, Esztergom does not have a tourism development strategy. The Economic Program of Esztergom Municipality briefly mentions the tourism development plans, which aim to improve the attractions and cityscape, but also the infrastructure, especially the level of various services and public transportation. The latter includes, for example, the development of the harbor, through which foreign tourists usually arrive to the town. In addition, the strategy aims to create a coherent tourism management that connects tourist attractions and improves communication and marketing.²⁰

The Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Esztergom includes a SWOT analysis about tourism and culture.²¹ The analysis mentions the museums, the medieval castle (as it is on the tentative list of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites), the unique view of the Danube, historical, religious, cultural reputation at national level, the harbors on the Danube and the numerous monuments with protected street view as strengths of the town. Regarding the weaknesses, the municipality has realized that tourism is mainly concentrated around the Basilica and from a touristic point of view, there is no connection between the Castle Hill and the town center. The cultural heritage of the town is not utilized, according to its potentials, and neither the tourist accommodations. Another weakness, according to the strategy, is the lack of cultural programs of national importance and the lack of town marketing.

²⁰ *Esztergom város önkormányzatának gazdasági programja, 2020–2025* [Economic program of Esztergom municipality] 2020, 19.

²¹ *Esztergom város Integrált Településfejlesztési Stratégiája*, [Esztergom municipality Integrated Urban Development Strategy], last modified August 3, 2020, <https://www.esztergom.hu/esztergomi/ugyintezes/telepulesrendezes/hir/230-integralt-telepulesfejlesztesi-strategia>

In terms of opportunities, the strategy emphasized river tourism, the utilization of tourist resources, closer ties with foreign Twin Towns²², broadening the offer with new attractive elements (recreational tourism) and directing tourists from the Castle Hill to the town center.

In order to improve tourism in Esztergom, the municipality established a non-profit limited liability company in March 2021 called Esztergom Tourist Nonprofit LLC, whose task is to harmonize and communicate the various program offerings in the town.²³ The organization is just about to open a Tourinform office at two locations in the town with free leaflets, maps, program offerings and multilingual guided tours.

The main cultural infrastructure includes (in 2022): three culture centers, one library, eight museums, one local television channel, one newspaper, and two online local newspapers. There are three cultural organizations which are maintained by the municipality: the Helischer József City Library, the Reading Circle of Szentgyörgymező and the Féja Géza Community Center.²⁴

1.4 Historical Overview

According to the archaeological findings, Esztergom has been inhabited since the prehistoric times. Due to its favorable geographic location, the town was an important center in the province of Pannonia during the Late Roman Period.²⁵

²² Párkány, Bamberg, Mariazell, Maintal, Gniezno, Espoo, Ehingen, Canterbury, Cambrai, Bamberg “Testvérvárosok,” [Twin towns] last modified 21 April 2021, <https://www.esztergom.hu/esztergomi/onkormanyzat/testvervarosok/1>

²³ <https://iranyesztergom.hu/>

²⁴ Ibid., 53.

²⁵ Horváth, Kelemen, and Torma, *Komárom megye régészeti topográfiája*, [Archaeological topography of Komárom-Esztergom County] 80.

Esztergom plays a key role in the course of Hungarian history, since Prince Géza, the first leader of the Hungarian tribes who established a stable residence in the late tenth century, chose the Castle Hill to settle. This was due to the favorable location of the site along the bend of the Danube, the reason why the ancient Romans opted for this place too. As a result, Esztergom became the first capital²⁶ of the Hungarian Kingdom, leading to the development of the town and its agglomeration.²⁷ Esztergom was not only a royal but also an ecclesiastical



Figure 5: The Kingdom of Hungary in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.. Source: "Magyarország az Anjouk és Zsigmond korában," [Hungary in the age of Angevins and Sigismund], Sulinet, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://tudasbazis.sulinet.hu/hu/tarsadalomtudomanyok/tortenelem/magyar-tortelenmi-terkeptar/magyarorszag-az-anjouk-es-zsigmond-koraban/magyarorszag-az-anjouk-es-zsigmond-koraban-kronologia->

center from the beginning of the eleventh century. After the princely stronghold was founded, Prince Géza asked Emperor Otto (East Frankish King and Holy Roman Emperor) for missionaries in 973. He and his son, Vajk, who was given the Christian name Stephen, were

²⁶ Itinerant kingship was typical all over Europe in the Middle Ages, the kings and princes either stayed in one of the royal mansions or being hosted by an ecclesiastical person. Esztergom was of outstanding importance among other centers such as Székesfehérvár or Buda. András Kubinyi, "Preface," in *Medium Regni: Medieval Hungarian Royal Seats*, ed. Julianna Altmann, Piroska Biczó, and Gergely Búzás (Budapest: Nap, 1999), 6.

²⁷ István Horváth, "The Medieval Esztergom," in *Medium Regni Medieval Hungarian Royal Seats*, ed. Julianna Altmann, Piroska Biczó, and Gergely Búzás (Budapest: Nap, 1999), 11.

baptized in Esztergom.²⁸ As the first king of the country, Stephen (997–1038) played an important role in the establishment of the Hungarian Kingdom. Traditionally, Hungarians tend to believe that he was also born in the castle of Esztergom. However, this assumption is not supported by archaeological or written sources.

Stephen was crowned in Esztergom at the beginning of the eleventh century, and he founded the Esztergom Archdiocese, which (soon to be accompanied by another archbishopric at Kalocsa) controlled the ten Hungarian bishoprics. Among other privileges, the Archbishop of Esztergom (later titled Primate) had the right to crown the Hungarian kings.²⁹ Stephen began to build the cathedral in honor of Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Adalbert on the Castle Hill, which was rebuilt in the Middle Ages first in the late twelfth/thirteenth and then in the fourteenth century.³⁰ The present-day Basilica was built in the nineteenth century on the place of the medieval cathedral, the remains of which were completely erased by the foundations of the new building.

In the Middle Ages, Esztergom consisted of several settlements scattered over the area of the present-day town and even beyond. The settlements were under different authorities: the Víziváros, at the foot of the hill, belonged to the cathedral chapter of the Catholic Church, as well as significant part of the suburbs. The Regia Civitas (Királyi városrész) was near the Víziváros, it belonged to the king and was mostly inhabited by merchants.³¹

In the medieval times, particularly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the kings and archbishops secured Esztergom's title, rank, and significance. The royal building complex was constantly expanded by the Hungarian kings.

²⁸ Ibid., 11.

²⁹ Attila Zsoldos, "Hungary under the Árpáds and Angevins (950-1382)," in *A Concise History of Hungary: The History of Hungary from the Early Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. István György Tóth (Budapest: Corvina, 2005), 55.

³⁰ István Horváth, "The Medieval Esztergom," 23.

³¹ Ibid., 12.

In 1198 the king donated the royal palace to the Archbishop of Esztergom. The Mongol invasion in 1241–1242, however, interrupted the development of Esztergom, and the royal seat was moved to Buda by King Béla IV. (1235–1270).³²

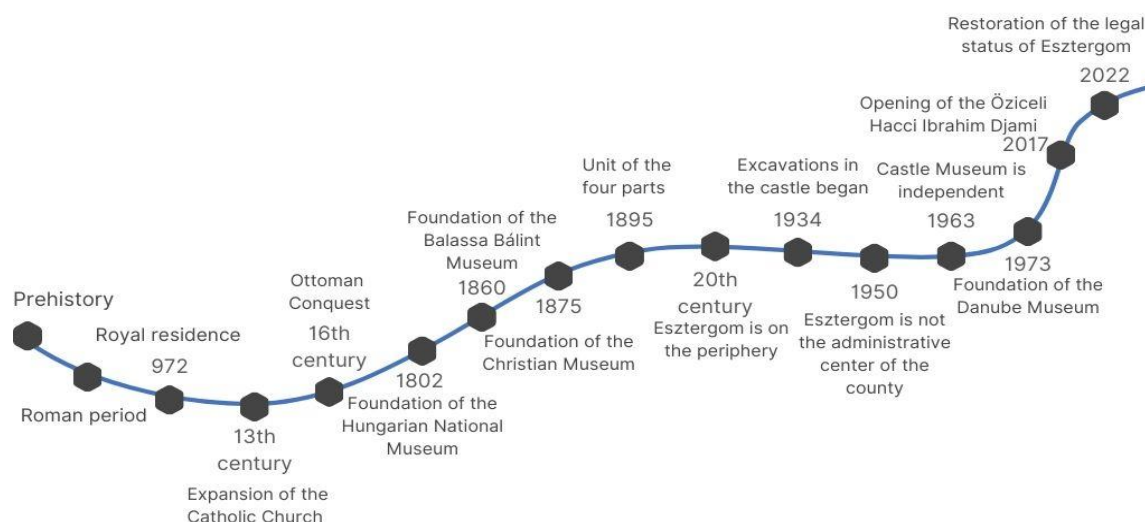


Figure 6: Timeline about the important events in the thesis. Source: Made by the author

By the end of the thirteenth century, the Church became the sole lord of the Castle Hill.³³ Although the new royal dynasty in Hungary, the Angevines moved their residence to Visegrád, another location in the Danube Bend in the early fourteenth century, Esztergom still retained its significance as ecclesiastic and commercial center. The archbishop's residence of Esztergom remained an important intellectual hub and seat of church governance, complementing the royal court of Buda or Visegrád. Esztergom was still among the notable cities in the kingdom. It owed its importance also to the ecclesiastical jurisdictional right in suits of the Holy See.³⁴

The Kingdom of Hungary ceased to exist in its medieval form in the mid-sixteenth century, when the Ottoman Empire's expansion reached this region. Buda, the primary capital by that

³² Ibid., 13.

³³ Gergely Tolnai, "A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Vármúzeuma és gyűjteménye," [Hungarian National Museum Castle Museum and its collection] in *A 200 Éves Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Gyűjteményei*, ed. János Pintér (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, 2002), 675.

³⁴ András Kubinyi, "Preface," 7.

time, was occupied by the Ottoman forces in 1541 and Esztergom in 1543. During the Ottoman period, Esztergom was an important administrative center (Sanjak center) and the buffer zone towards Vienna, and Upper Hungary.³⁵

Finally, the alliance of the European nations, the Holy League recaptured Esztergom in 1683 and Buda in 1686. After the siege, the Hungarian diet reconfirmed the Habsburgs as hereditary rulers of the country.³⁶ At the end of the seventeenth century, the town was resettled but the royal and ecclesiastical center of the Castle Hill still laid in ruins.³⁷ The archbishopric that fled in the Ottoman times to Trnava (Nagyszombat) returned to Esztergom as late as 1820.

³⁵ István Horváth, “The Medieval Esztergom,” 14.

³⁶ István György Tóth, “Between the Sultan and the Emperor (1604-1711),” in *A Concise History of Hungary: The History of Hungary from the Early Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. István György Tóth (Budapest: Corvina, 2005), 228.

³⁷ Tolnai, “A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Vármúzeuma és gyűjteménye,” [Hungarian National Museum Castle Museum and its collection] 676.

1.4.1 From the eighteenth century

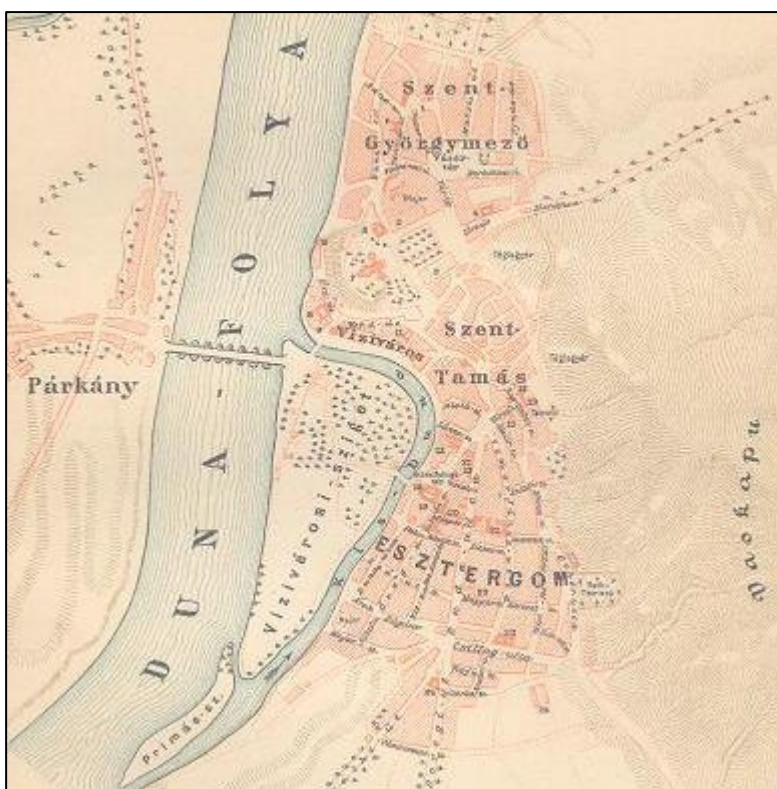


Figure 7: Esztergom on a nineteenth-century map, with the four parts: Szenttamás, Szentgyörgymező, Víziváros and Királyi városrész

Source: Pallas nagy lexikona [Pallas's Great Encyclopedia], MEK, accessed May 20, 2022, https://mek.oszk.hu/00000/00060/html/kepek/esztergomv-terkep_dka.jpg

Esztergom slowly began to redevelop in the eighteenth century, but only four separate settlements emerged on the ruins: the Regia Civitas (that is the Királyi városrész), Víziváros, Szenttamás and Szentgyörgymező. Esztergom was granted the rank of free royal town in 1708 to ensure its loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty. Still, the town slowly lost of its significance and wealth, the number of residents decreased, and it even lost its legal rights as a free royal town³⁸ by the end of the nineteenth century.³⁹

After the suppression of the 1848–1849 freedom fight and the hard years of the Habsburg rule, the Hungarian Parliament compromised with the Habsburg Emperor and King of

³⁸ Free royal town: libera regia civitas. Official term, which granted privileges. András Kubinyi, „„Szabad királyi város” - „Királyi szabad város”?,” [„Libera regia civitas” – „Regia libera civitas?”] in *Urbs Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv*, ed. László Á. Varga, I (Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2006), 51–62.

³⁹ Pál Bánlaky, *Esztergom, a szent és gyámoltalan város: Töredékek Esztergom újabb kori társadalomtörténetéből: Tanulmány és vallomás*, [Esztergom, the saint and helpless town. Fragments of the newest social history of Esztergom: Study and Confession] *Várostaadalmak* (Budapest: MTA Politikai Tudományok Intézete, 1992), 25.

Hungary, Franz Joseph I in 1867, and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was established, which brought the dual monarchy, the personal union between Austria and Hungary. The dualism meant sovereignty in domestic politics, but foreign and military affairs were common financially and in decision-making.⁴⁰ During this period, Esztergom was a small town, its residents were involved in agriculture and handicrafts.⁴¹

The Basilica in its present form was built on the place of the medieval cathedral. The archbishop, after his return in 1820, wanted to restore Esztergom to its glory, as the Catholic center of the country, since the medieval cathedral was still in ruins due to the Ottoman wars and a subsequent earthquake in 1763. The remains of the medieval cathedral were removed before the construction, it is known only through fragments, engravings, and descriptions.⁴² The new church was built in Neoclassicist and Egyptian Revival style, according to the plans of the architects Pál Kühnel, János Packh, and József Hild. Completed in 1869, it is now the largest church in Hungary.⁴³ It quickly became a place of pilgrimage for the Hungarians and Catholics; it is often referred to as the Hungarian Vatican.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the four parts of Esztergom were united into a single town. However, the society of the different parts retained their separateness and remained isolated from each other. The royal town was the base of the middle class, the Víziváros was the territory of the archbishop, while Szenttamás was characteristically inhabited by merchants. The rural population lived in Szentgyörgymező.⁴⁴

The twentieth century brought hard years to Esztergom. Due to the treaties at the end of the First World War, the areas north of Esztergom were attached to Czechoslovakia. Today Esztergom is on the border of Hungary, thus, the town lost its former geographical centrality.

⁴⁰ Zoltán Fónagy and István György Tóth, "The Age of Dualism," in *A Concise History of Hungary: The History of Hungary from the Early Middle Ages to the Present* (Budapest: Corvina, 2005), 424.

⁴¹ *Esztergom város Településképi Arculati Kézikönyve*, [Public appearance of Esztergom] 2017, 10.

⁴² István Horváth, "The Medieval Esztergom," 23.

⁴³ Dezső Dercsényi and László Zolnay, *Esztergom*, 75.

⁴⁴ Bánlaky, *Esztergom, a szent és gyámoltalan város*, [Esztergom, the saint and helpless town] 41.

The most important event that fundamentally changed the situation of Esztergom happened in 1950, when the town was deprived of the status of the administrative center of Komárom-Esztergom County. Furthermore, Dorog as the center for industry and mining became the new seat of the district instead of Esztergom. It is likely that the administrative changes were the result of the clerical character of Esztergom: the role of Esztergom in the Catholic Church was not supported by the communist leaders.⁴⁵ In the 2010s, due to stronger state support to the Church, Esztergom's role has increased: the most recent resolution is that from May 2022 it was given the title of "town with county jurisdiction".⁴⁶

1.5 The development of the Hungarian museum system and the museums in Esztergom

So far, this chapter has focused on Esztergom and its historical development as the context for the research. The following section will discuss the development of the Hungarian museum system and the museums in Esztergom.

The emergence of today's museums network in Hungary was a long historical process. While in Europe, the earliest public collection was opened still in the eighteenth century (The British Museum in 1759), the Hungarian National Museum was established in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁷

Scholarship dates the systematic collection of artifacts and other valuable or interesting items in Hungary from the period of Renaissance and Humanism, in the Court of King Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490).⁴⁸ In the following centuries, collections concentrated in the courts of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 68.

⁴⁶ "Orbán: Restoring Status of Esztergom Long Overdue," MTI Hungary Today, last modified May 2, 2022, <https://hungarytoday.hu/pm-orban-esztergom-basilica-mass/>

⁴⁷ Ferenc Tóth, *Mű-kincs-tár: művészeti közgyűjtemények Magyarországon, 1802-1906* [Art-Treasure-Gallery: public collections of art in Hungary], 1802-1906, MúzeumCafé könyvek 3 (Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum, 2017), 14.

⁴⁸ József Dr. Korek, *Gyűjtemények, múzeumok, muzeológia* [Collections, Museums, Museology] (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1976), 31.

the aristocracy, which were the centers of culture and art that time.⁴⁹ The idea that the nation should care about its own culture and the relics from the past emerged in Hungary due to the influence of the Enlightenment, among those members of the nobility who were attracted by this movement. Since Hungary was a part of the Habsburg Empire that time, these ideas were closely interwoven with those about the nation state and national independence.

The demand for the creation of a central institution to guard the Hungarian cultural heritage, science, literature, and art was constantly growing. The foundation of the Hungarian National Museum (hereinafter: HNM) has been attributed to Count Ferenc Széchenyi, an aristocrat, who offered his collection to the nation in 1802. The collection corresponded to the ideas of the nineteenth century: it had an encyclopedic perspective, and the objects had strong connections to the concept of the nation.⁵⁰ The collection was moved to its present building in 1846, and soon the museum opened its first exhibition.⁵¹

After the Compromise between Austria and Hungary signed in 1867, which established the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Hungarian museum network began to grow. Due to some fundamental changes in the museum system and the related ideas across Europe, the comprehensive and general collection of the HNM became outdated.⁵² A new trend emerged based on the distinct development of various disciplines and the differentiation of the areas of museum collections.⁵³

As a result, some collections were separated from the HNM and new museums were established from these, and some collections became independent museums; for example, the Museum of Applied Arts in 1872. A range of various other types of museums were also

⁴⁹ Paula Zsidi, "Régészeti gyűjtemények és múzeumok," [Archaeological collections and museums] in *Magyar Régészet Az Ezredfordulón*, ed. Katalin Wollák (Budapest: Nemzeti Kulturális Örökség Minisztériuma Teleki László Alapítvány, 2003), 415.

⁵⁰ Tibor Kovács, "Fejezetek két évszázad múzeumtörténetéből," [Chapters from art history of two centuries], in *A 200 Éves Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Gyűjteményei*, ed. János Pintér (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, 2002), 10.

⁵¹ Dr. Korek, *Gyűjtemények, múzeumok, muzeológia*, [Collections, Museums, Museology], 52.

⁵² Tóth, *Mű-kincs-tár*, [Art-treasure-collection], 22.

⁵³ Kovács, "Fejezetek két évszázad múzeumtörténetéből," [Chapters from art history of two centuries], 11.

established in the following decades: memorial museums, open-air museums, archaeological, historical museums and art galleries⁵⁴ and, by the turn of the twentieth century, a museum network started to shape.⁵⁵



Figure 8: Esztergom and the location of the museums mentioned in the thesis and the Basilica. Source: Made by the author

The middle-class was attracted primarily by archaeology and numismatic collections. Local cultural associations were created which later formed the basis for the museums outside the capital, all over the country.⁵⁶ Members of these local cultural associations aimed to collect, preserve, and study the historical artifacts, natural and artistic values of their surroundings. In terms of regulation, the National Council of Museums and Libraries controlled their activity and offered books and courses for the members.⁵⁷

Turning now to Esztergom, two museums were established during this period: first, the Balassa Bálint Múzeum (hereafter: Balassa Museum) in 1860, and then the Keresztény

⁵⁴ Dr. Korek, *Gyűjtemények, múzeumok, muzeológia*, [Collections, museums, museology], 54.

⁵⁵ Tóth, *Mű-kincs-tár*, [Art-treasure-collection], 22.

⁵⁶ One of the outstanding proponents of founding local cultural associations in Hungary was Flóris Rómer, who popularized the science of archaeology and educated the masses.

⁵⁷ Dr. Korek, *Gyűjtemények, múzeumok, muzeológia*, [Collections, museums, museology] 61.

Múzeum (Christian Museum) in 1875. The collection of the Balassa Museum was offered by local collectors, primarily antiquities and coins. These collectors formed the Museum Association (Múzeum Egylet) in 1875, and the Esztergom Country Archaeological and Historical Society (Esztergom-vidéki Régészeti és Történelmi Társulat) in 1894.

After the Second World War, the collection was nationalized, and the Balassa Museum as known today was established. It had a central leading role in the region, and a professional control over the Christian Museum and Cathedral Treasury (the latter is located in the Basilica). The Castle also belonged to the Balassa Museum between 1961–1963. The Balassa Bálint Museum is a characteristic town museum, with a vast collection of archaeological finds, ethnographic relics, numismatic materials and pieces of fine and applied art. It has the legal right to excavate and collect in the eastern third part of the Komárom-Esztergom County (Esztergom District with 24 settlements).

The Christian Museum, the other institution founded in the same period was based on the private collection of the Archbishop of Esztergom, János Simor, who opened his own gallery to the public in 1875.⁵⁸ By the end of the nineteenth century, the collection contained paintings, as well as objects of the applied arts, sculptures and textiles.⁵⁹ In the early 1930s, the Christian Museum had five distinct departments: the gallery (the current museum), the bibliotheca, the treasury, the lapidary, and the collection of antiquities. In addition, the important archaeological findings of the museum were exhibited in the Castle from 1938.⁶⁰ This archaeological collection was later melted into the Balassa Museum, and the Christian Museum turned into a separate organization in 1972.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Pál Cséfalvy, *Keresztény Múzeum Esztergom* [The Christian Museum Esztergom] (Budapest: Corvina, 1993), 9.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁶¹ Ibid., 12.

As for the founding of the Castle Museum (Vármúzeum), it was intertwined with the history of the Balassa Museum and the Christian Museum. The archaeological excavations of the castle began in 1934 under the direction of the Canon, Antal Leopold and the archaeologists, Tibor Gerevich and Dezső Várnai. The restoration was led by Géza Lux, from the National Committee of Monuments.⁶² To honor the 900th anniversary of King Saint Stephen's death, the archaeological and restoration works were scheduled to end in 1938.⁶³ An exhibition was opened in the Castle, which was maintained by the Catholic Church until 1961. Between 1961 and 1963, the Castle belonged to the Balassa Museum, after which it became independent, but still supervised by the director of the latter.

The archaeological and restoration works continued in 1964 and the castle received a license



Figure 9: From the permanent exhibition of the Danube Museum. Photo by the author

for independent operation, with the legal right to excavate and collect archaeological finds on the territory of the Castle Hill.⁶⁴ In 1985, the Castle Museum became the part of the Hungarian National Museum.

⁶² Esztergomi Vármúzeum, A vár története [Esztergom, Castle Museum, History of the castle] accessed May 22, 2022, <https://www.varmegom.hu/a-var-tortenete>

⁶³ Tolnai, "A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Vármúzeuma és gyűjteménye," [Hungarian National Museum Castle Museum and its collection] 678.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 680.

The Danube Museum (Duna Múzeum) – its full name is Museum of Environmental protection and Hidrography (Magyar Környezetvédelmi és Vízügyi Múzeum) – in its present form was established much later than the three former organizations, only in 1973, although some parts of the collection date back to 1896. Water management has a long history in Hungary, and the aim of the museum was to preserve, maintain and present the documentation of and objects related to river regulations. The collection had partially been preserved by the National Water Office (Országos Vízügyi Hivatal) and the Documentation and Guidance of Water Management (Országos Vízügyi Hivatal Vízügyi Dokumentációs és Továbbképző Iroda). The two organization jointly founded the Hungarian Water Management Museum (Magyar Vízügyi Múzeum) in 1973. Initially, the museum did not have its own building, the first exhibition was opened in 1974 in the Citadel on Gellért Hill in Budapest entitled Danube and Water Management (Duna és a magyar Vízgazdálkodás története) in Hungary.⁶⁵ The museum moved to the current building in Esztergom six years later, in 1980. Today the museum is maintained by the General Directorate of Water Management (Országos Vízügyi Főigazgatóság), as a specialized museum with a national collecting scope.

1.5.1 On the way to a unified museum system

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, the foundation of the museums, was initiated by the nobility around the turn of the ninetieth century. In the rural areas, local cultural associations formed the basis of the museums that emerged later. The formation of the National Council of Museums and Libraries (Múzeumok és Könyvtárak Országos

⁶⁵ László Fejér, “A Magyar Környezetvédelmi és Vízügyi Múzeum (Duna Múzeum) története,” [The history of the Museum of Environmental protection and Hidrography] 2016, 2, accessed May 27, 2022, http://www.dunamuzeum.hu/images/Duna_Muzeum/Vizeum/Tortenet/Muzeumtortenet_FL_2016.pdf.

Főfelügyelősége) in 1897 contributed to creating the modern system of museology. There are three important landmarks in this respect from the twentieth century that must be mentioned.

Although the two world wars interrupted the development of the museum system, by 1944 there were 34 public collections in Hungary.⁶⁶ The first measure to unify the museum regulations was initiated in 1949: the 1949/13 Decree-law on Museums and Heritage.⁶⁷

The decree covered the public collections, private collections of national value, and monuments and heritage sites, and it was aimed to protect the “eternal values of our culture” that must be accessible to all people.⁶⁸ In addition, based on their collections, two main types of museums were introduced: national museums and public museums⁶⁹. National museums were of national importance and their collection had outstanding, historical or scientific value (6. §). Public museums were systematized according to the scope of their collections: local museums, regional museums, memorial museums, and specialized museums (7. §). Public museums were maintained by the state, county, city, or town.⁷⁰ In the following years, the museum network was expanding, especially in the rural areas. The differentiation of the museum sector resulted in new types of museums, but the existing types were also specialized (for example, the Hungarian National Gallery was divided from the Hungarian National Museum in 1957).⁷¹ One of the most important results of this legislation was that the

⁶⁶ Beatrix Basics, “Egységben volt az erő a megyei múzeumi rendszer megszületése és sajátosságai,” [The power was in unity. The particularity of the county museum system] *MúzeumCafé* 10. évfolyam, no. 54. (September 2016), accessed April 6, 2022, <http://muzeumcafe.hu/hu/egysegben-volt-az-ero/>.

⁶⁷ Márton Kálnoki-Gyöngyössi, *Nation and Museum. Hungarian Museums and Legislation (1777-2010)*, trans. Beatrix Basics (Budapest: MIRIO, 2021), 144.

⁶⁸ “1949. Évi XIII. Törvényerejű rendelet a múzeumokról és műemlékekről,” [Decree Law on the protection of museum values] Pub. L. No. 13 (1949), accessed April 10, 2022, <http://www.jogiportal.hu/index.php?id=9z3lryh41d5xwfhb6&state=19600501&menu=view>

⁶⁹ Közületi múzeumok

⁷⁰ Basics, “Egységben volt az erő a megyei múzeumi rendszer megszületése és sajátosságai.” [The power was in unity. The particularity of the county museum system]

⁷¹ Korek József, *A muzeológia alapjai (egyetemi segédkönyv)* [The basics of museology], (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1988), 122.

museums received a centralized control through the National Centre of Museums and Monuments (Múzeumok és Műemlékek Országos Központja).⁷²

The next milestone in the development of the museum network in Hungary was 1963, when the Decree Law 1963/9 on the Protection of Museum Values was issued.⁷³ As a result of this law, 52 museums outside the capital were subordinated to the nineteen County Councils.⁷⁴ The law still distinguished national and county museums. County museums included all the museums located on the territory of the county, and their activity was controlled by the museum in the county center.

The law attempted to decentralize the system, as well as to design an economically and professionally integrated network.⁷⁵ The aim was to strengthen the cultural life in rural Hungary by creating local cultural centers. However, it is generally agreed that this change in the museum system has created many difficulties and inequalities. The main source of inequality was the different financial situation of the County Councils, due to which some of the museums were able to function properly, but in some cases even the basic conditions for a proper museum were missing.⁷⁶

Although the county museum system was established in 1962, the change occurred at different times in each county. In Komárom-Esztergom County this happened only in 1966.⁷⁷

On the one hand, this delay led to the fact that the Balassa Museum has more the character of

⁷² Kálnoki-Gyöngyössy, *Nation and Museum. Hungarian Museums and Legislation (1777-2010)*, 145.

⁷³ “1963. Évi IX. Törvényerejű rendelet a muzeális emlékek védelméről,” [Decree Law on the protection of museum values], Pub. L. No. 9 (1963), accessed April 10, 2022, <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=96300009.TVR&txtreferer=99200003.NM>

⁷⁴ Basics, “Egységben volt az erő a megyei múzeumi rendszer megszületése és sajátosságai,” [The power was in unity. The particularity of the county museum system]

⁷⁵ Beatrix Basics, “A szervezeti átalakítás ideje alatt a múzeum... Vidéki intézményi körkép a megyei múzeumi rendszer megszüntetése után,” [During the organization transformation, the museum... Rural institutional overview, after the abolition of the county museum system] *MúzeumCafé* 7. évfolyam, no. 37. (May 2013), accessed May 22, 2022, <http://muzeumcafe.hu/hu/szervezeti-atalakitas-ideje-alatt-muzeum/>

⁷⁶ Basics, “Egységben volt az erő a megyei múzeumi rendszer megszületése és sajátosságai,” [The power was in unity. The particularity of the county museum system]

⁷⁷ Ibid.,

a city museum (different collection types, county scope), on the other hand, the fact that Esztergom was the administrative center of the Komárom-Esztergom County until 1950.

The law that still defines the museum network in Hungary, is the Act No. CXL of 1997, on the Protection of Cultural Goods and Museums, Libraries and Popular Education.⁷⁸ It is usually referred to as the “the Cultural Law”. Four sectors are covered in the law: cultural goods and archaeological heritage, museums, libraries, and popular culture.⁷⁹ The proclaimed aim of the act was to react to the social, economic and political changes of the time and to harmonize the legislation with the international trends.⁸⁰ In terms of the museums, the act distinguished five different types of museums based on their collections: national museums, specialized museums (“museums of different disciplines with a national sphere and scope”), city museums (different collection types, county scope), territorial museums (different collection types, specified territorial scope) and thematic museums (one theme, different collection types) (43–47. §). In addition, the law established the specific legal categories of public collections and public exhibition sites, which are relatively small institutions with different collection types or, in the latter case, without any collection (48. §).⁸¹

The beginning of the 2000s was crucial from the point of view of the local museums in Esztergom. The Balassa Museum left the county museum system in 2006 and the Esztergom municipality took over the maintenance of the museum. However, since Esztergom was in a bad financial situation, the town could not finance the upkeep of the museum.⁸² In 2012, the museum was incorporated into the Institution Maintenance Centre of Komárom-Esztergom

⁷⁸ “1997. Évi CXL. Törvény a muzeális intézményekről, a nyilvános könyvtári ellátásról és a közművelődésről,” [On the protection of cultural goods and museums, libraries and popular education] Pub. L. No. CXL (1997), accessed April 10, 2022, <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=99700140.TV&searchUrl=/gyorskereso%3Fkeyword%3D1997%2520CXL>.

⁷⁹ Kálnoki-Gyöngyössi, *Nation and Museum. Hungarian Museums and Legislation (1777-2010)*, 208.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 211.

⁸¹ Ibid., 224-227., “Hungarian Museum Categories,” last accessed May 22, 2022, <https://ommik.hu/index.php/en/>

⁸² “Balassa Bálint Múzeum, Múzeumunk története,” [Balassa Bálint Museum, The history of our museum], accessed May 22, 2022, <http://balassamuzeum.hu/muzeumunk/tortenete/>

County (Komárom-Esztergom megyei Intézményfenntartó Központ), whose headquarters is located in Tatabánya, in the county center. Thus, the town museum of Esztergom legally detached from the local community.

The county museum system remained in force until the end of 2012, when the amendment of Act No. CXL of 1997 was issued: Act No. CLII of 2012, about the Protection of Cultural Goods, Museums and Other Institutions with Similar Roles, Public Library System and General Education. The new regulation is often referred to as a change-over in the Hungarian museum sector, as it ended the system that had been in place for half a century.⁸³ The maintenance of the former central county museums became the responsibility of the municipality of the county center, while the museums on the territory of the county were put under the maintenance of the relevant local municipalities according to their operating license.⁸⁴ It usually meant the municipality of the town, city or village where the museum was located. Thus, the museums were given back to the local communities who, however, represented a great variety in terms of resources to maintain these museums.

The 2012 legislation did not affect the museums in Esztergom, as the museums had their own maintaining organizations: the Castle Museum belonged to the Hungarian National Museum, the Danube Museum to the National Institute for Environment (Nemzeti Környezetügyi Intézet), while the Christian Museum belonged to the Catholic Church. At this time, the Balassa Museum was maintained by the Tatabánya municipality, while the Djami was in private hands.

⁸³ Beatrix Basics, “A Múzeumi rendszer megváltozása nyomán átalakuló feladatok,” [The tasks after the transformation of the museum system] *MúzeumCafé* 8. évfolyam, no. 41 (March 2014), accessed May 22, 2022, <http://muzeumcafe.hu/hu/muzeumi-rendszer-megvaltozasa-nyoman-atalakulo-feladatok/>

⁸⁴ “2012. Évi CLII. Törvény a muzeális intézményekről, a nyilvános könyvtári ellátásról és a közművelődésről szóló 1997. Évi CXL. törvény módosításáról,” [The amendment of Act No. CXL of 1997. On the protection of cultural goods and museums, libraries and popular education], Pub. L. No. CLII (2012), accessed April 10, 2022, <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1200152.tv>

However, a government decision fundamentally changed the situation of the Balassa Museum. It was merged with the Castle Museum in 2013, thus it became part of the Hungarian National Museum.⁸⁵ Designated museums and memorial places from all over Hungary have been part of the HNM since the twentieth century as historical memorial places of national interest. The Castle Museum in Esztergom had been part of this network since 1985.⁸⁶ It cannot be excluded, however, that in the case of the Balassa Museum, the merger with the Castle Museum was rather due to financial considerations.

Two further institutions belong to the Balassa Museum: the Mihály Babits Memorial House of the Hungarian National Museum and the Slovakian Country House of Pilisszentlélek⁸⁷, both representing the category of public exhibition sites. Although the latter is located in Pilisszentlélek and not in Esztergom, the municipality of the two settlements is common within the public administration system. The two institutions are managed by the team of the Balassa Museum but are part of the Hungarian National Museum network.

The youngest member of the museum network in Esztergom is the Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim Djami (hereafter: the Djami), a relic from the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The Djami and the surrounding buildings were bought in 1998 by a foreign entrepreneur, who sponsored the excavation and renovation of the complex.⁸⁸ Besides the Djami, the complex includes an exhibition area with temporary exhibitions, a medieval bastion, some parts of the medieval

⁸⁵ 1311/2012. (VIII. 23.) Kormány határozat a megyei múzeumok, könyvtárak, közművelődési intézetek fenntartásáról [Government decision on the maintenance of county museums, libraries and public cultural institutes], accessed April 14, 2022,

http://archiv.magyar-muzeumok.hu/tema/795_kormanyhatározat_a_muzeumok_fenntartasrol/print

⁸⁶ Kovács, “Fejezetek két évszázad múzeumtörténetéből,” [Chapters from two centuries of museum history]13.

⁸⁷ Szlovák tájház – Pilisszentlélek [Slovakian Country House of Pilisszentlélek], accessed May 22, 2022, <http://balassamuzeum.hu/szlovak-tajhaz-pilisszentlelek/> and Babits Mihály Emlékház [Mihály Babits Memorial House], accessed May 22, 2022, <http://balassamuzeum.hu/babits-haz-mihaly-emlekhaz/>

⁸⁸ Horváth István and Zsembery Ákos, “Az esztergomi Özicseli Hadzsi Ibrahim-dzsámi kutatása és műemléki bemutatása,” [The research and presentation of the Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim Djami in Esztergom], *Építés - Építészettudomány* 36, no. 1–2 (June 2008): 3–41, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1556/EpTud.36.2008.1-2.1>.

wall, a rose garden, and a medieval water lifting device. The owner opened the museum, a coffee house and a restaurant in 2007 which have been working successfully ever since.

	Type	Ownership status	Maintainer	Scope
Balassa Bálint Museum	Territorial museum	State	Hungarian National Museum	Territorial
Castle Museum	Territorial museum	State	Hungarian National Museum	Territorial
Christian Museum	Thematic museum	Catholic Church	Catholic Church	Thematic
Danube Museum	Specialized museum	State	General Directorate of Water Management	National
Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim-Djami	Public exhibition	Private	Private	—

Table 1: The type, ownership status, maintainer and scope of the museums mentioned in the thesis

1.5.2 Esztergom and the museums today

Today the classification of the museums is the same as in 1997. None of the museums in Esztergom are maintained by the town. In general, the museums work with a small professional group (10–14 people) each. The Djami is an exception, where the museum employs only one person. The director of the Balassa Museum and the Castle Museum works for the HNM in Budapest, while the two institutions have separate managers at the local level, who mainly decide in professional questions.

All the five museums offer workshops facilitated by museum educators (called museum pedagogy in Hungary) for children from kindergarten to high school and guided tours mainly in Hungarian, in some cases in English.

The Balassa Bálint Museum has one permanent exhibition entitled Visual Storage that opened in 2015.⁸⁹ The exhibition presents the finest pieces from the vast collection of the museum, as well as temporary exhibitions. The museum has recently received a joint fund from the European Union, Hungary, Slovakia, and the municipality of Želiezovce (Zseliz), in order to renovate one of their buildings, which serves as a storage and restoration workshop.⁹⁰ The building would be suitable for exhibitions.

As far as the Castle Museum is concerned, it focuses on the royal chapel and the medieval castle, and the exhibition presents the history of Esztergom from the prehistory until the end of the seventeenth century. Due to the restoration and reconstruction works in the recent years, many parts of the medieval castle can be visited. The restorations mainly present the conditions of the end of the twelfth century.

The world-famous Christian Museum has the largest ecclesiastical collection in Hungary. A rich collection of fine and applied arts, as well as graphical collections are present from the medieval time. The museum also organizes temporary exhibitions.

In 2019, a new exhibition of the Danube Museum was opened, entitled Vízeum. The interactive exhibition presents the past and the present of water management, the innovations and river regulations, as well as shipping, bathing culture, the history of carbonated water and the consequences of the climate change. The Vízeum won the prize of The Exhibition of the Year in 2020 and in 2021, the prize of the European Museum Forum, “Museum of the Year Award - Special Commendation”.⁹¹ The museum also organizes temporary exhibitions.

⁸⁹ Balassa Bálint Múzeum, Múzeumunk története [Balassa Bálint Museum, The history of our museum], accessed May 22, 2022, <http://balassamuseum.hu/muzeumunk/tortenete/>

⁹⁰ “Együttműködés az esztergomi Balassa Bálint Múzeum és a zselízi Esterházy kastély újboli megnyitásáért,” [Cooperation for the reopening of the Balassa Bálint Museum in Esztergom and the Esterházy Castle in Zseliz], accessed May 28, 2022, <http://balassamuseum.hu/come-in/>

⁹¹ “Múzeumtörténet,” [History of the museum], accessed May 28, 2022, <http://www.dunamuseum.hu/index.php/hu/muzeumtortenet>

CHAPTER 2 – MUSEUMS AND COMMUNITIES: THE RECENT DISCOURSE

2.1 Theorizing the role of museums

My thesis is based on the changing roles of museums and the possible contributions of museums to the development of the local community and the communities' well-being. Therefore, a brief overview of the New Museology concept and the reinterpretation of the museums-community relation is offered in this chapter. In addition, I will explain how Critical Heritage Studies and the concept of Authorized Heritage Discourse is relevant in this research and how these ideas help to understand the processes related to the museums in Esztergom.

The traditional and most widely accepted concept of the museum, and its application in the museum practice focuses more on the methodology of work. In general, the institutions direct their attention inwards, and the work is controlled by museum experts, professionals.⁹² Preserving, maintaining, interpreting, and exhibiting the collections were the dominant museum activities for decades, although the social role of the museum and its educational tasks had already been formulated.⁹³

The ideas behind the so-called New Museology emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. The Declaration of Quebec was an important milestone in 1984, which proclaimed the basic principles.⁹⁴ In contrast to the classical concept of museums, new museology aims to make museums an active and meaningful place within the local community. Regarding the

⁹² Peter Vergo, ed., *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 3.

⁹³ "Museum Definition," ICOM, accessed May 2022, 2022, <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>

⁹⁴ MINOM, MINOM. "Declaration of Quebec – Basic Principles of a New Museology 1984." *Cadernos De Sociomuseologia* 38 (2010).

professional, museological work, new topics emerged through the idea of inclusivity, as well as new practices.⁹⁵

According to the New Museology principles, museums not only work *for* the community but they work closely *with* them. Since museums are for the community, it is important that museums relate to and engage with the community. New Museology emphasizes the importance of the audience and encourages them to find their own answers during the museum visit, rather than adopt the beliefs offered by museum professionals. Though, the educational role of museums is being emphasized more than ever, New Museology also encourages the visitors to think critically. Museums became places of dialogue and free interpretation, where the objects on display generate critical thinking.

The emergence of New Museology contributed to the establishment of a self-critical practice that has criticized primarily the curatorial activities and the purpose of the museums. For decades, as noted by Peter Vergo, museums had been places for experts, targeting only a small number of people who had the background education and knowledge to understand the exhibitions.⁹⁶ New Museology led to a revision of cultural heritage practices in museums, the introduction of new solutions in exhibition methods and participatory approaches.⁹⁷

The field of Critical Heritage Studies representing and theorizing similarly inclusive and participatory approaches as those behind the practices of New Museology, developed around the turn of the millennium. Much like museums, heritage had been a field of experts and an elite class, something compact, transmitted mainly by heritage professionals (named by Laurajane Smith the authorized heritage discourse).⁹⁸ In recent years, scholars have been

⁹⁵ Zsófia Frazon, "New Museology," A kurátori gyakorlat és diszkurzus szótára [Curatorial Dictionary], accessed May 22, 2022, <http://tranzit.org/curatorialdictionary/index.php/dictionary/new-museology/>

⁹⁶ Vergo, *The New Museology*.

⁹⁷ Marta Wróblewska, "Museum Practices as Tools to (Re)Define Memory and Identity Issues Through Direct Experience of Tangible and Intangible Heritage," *Heritage* 2, no. 3 (August 12, 2019): 2409., accessed May 22, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage2030148>.

⁹⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 30–31.

redefining heritage and reconsidering its focus. This new approach identifies heritage as a “cultural process”, rather than a thing or a concept. As noted by Smith (2006), “heritage is an experience.”⁹⁹ It can be created and interpreted by various social groups, communities. Thus, heritage is not solid, but a matter of discourse, based on the purposes and stakeholders.

In summary, the emergence of New Museology has created the opportunity for museums to influence and play an active role in the local community. Critical Heritage Studies similarly shifts the emphasis from the exclusive role of professionals and gives space to the visitors and civic communities. Museums and communities can work together to identify and safeguard local cultural heritage, involving people through various activities, such as public archaeology.

On the other hand, museums can also be perceived as safe and open spaces, where different groups of the community can meet and engage. These safe places are well-suited for discussing important issues (life, death, ageing) and reflecting on issues affecting the community and daily life.¹⁰⁰

2.2 Museums in the twenty-first century: international definitions

Having discussed the concept of New Museology and Critical Heritage Studies, the following chapter addresses how these approaches are manifest in the international museum discourse, particularly the museums’ relation to the communities and the community development role of museums. Since the foundation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 1946, museum professionals have tried to keep up with the dominant trends and to formulate a definition of museum that best reflects the actualities of the era.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 44–48.

¹⁰⁰ Betty Farrell, “Understanding the Value of Arts & Culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project,” *Cultural Trends* 25, no. 4 (October 1, 2016): 273–76, accessed May 22, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1241382>.

In the year of the foundation of ICOM, museums were defined as collections, then the first modification of the definition in 1951 introduced the terms “stability, public interest, and educational role”.¹⁰¹ The definition, which is still in use with minor adjustments, was born in 1974, while the actual version was formulated in 2007, at the 22nd General Assembly of ICOM. It states that

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.”¹⁰²

Although museums have been defined as places “in the service of society and its development” since 1974, some have felt that the museums are still bind with the traditional museum work, and much less with their social role. According to prominent museologists Karen Brown and François Mairesse, the processes that lead to the shift towards communities can be traced back to the early twenty-first century.¹⁰³ At the beginning of the 2000s, the emergence of such huge institutions as the Guggenheim Bilbao acted as catalysts for mass tourism, emphasizing more than ever the importance of attraction in the museum sphere over social service. The financial crisis in 2007–2008 fundamentally changed the situation of the museums in the communities, in the present and especially regarding their future.¹⁰⁴

The emergence of the Critical Heritage Studies, New Museology and the adoption of the Faro Convention in 2005 (The Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society) were crucial stages in the processes that highlighted the role of museums and cultural heritage in communities.¹⁰⁵ This is exemplified in the research undertaken by the Museums

¹⁰¹ Martina Lehmannová, “224 Years of Defining the Museum,” accessed May 22, 2022, https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020_ICOM-Czech-Republic_224-years-of-defining-the-museum.pdf

¹⁰² ICOM, “Museum Definition.”

¹⁰³ Karen Brown and François Mairesse, “The Definition of the Museum through Its Social Role,” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 61, no. 4 (October 2018): 525–39, accessed May 22, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12276>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 531.

¹⁰⁵ “Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005),” COE, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>

Associations in the UK in 2012, which resulted in the essay entitled “Museums Change Lives”.¹⁰⁶ In summary, the core idea of this paper is that by the contribution that museums can make to people’s wellbeing, physical and mental health, museums create better places.

The ICOM General Conference in 2016 in Milan raised the idea that the definition of museums should reflect the changes and challenges of the twenty-first century in this domain. Therefore, the Council invited its members to propose a new museum definition.¹⁰⁷ Among the 269 proposals, eleven terms turned up regularly: dialogue, discussion, plurality of voices, exchange of ideas, socialization, education, equality, process, and the past that is here for the present and the future.¹⁰⁸

Based on the submissions, a working group formulated the new museum definition, and presented just before the ICOM Kyoto 2019 General Conference. The Executive Board accepted the following definition:

“Museums are democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust, for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality, and planetary wellbeing.”¹⁰⁹

However, the members of the general meeting did not find the new definition convincing when the board announced the draft. Several criticisms were formulated by the members, from the procedure (lack of time for discussion) to the overly utopian ideas and foggy concepts (polyphonic spaces). In the end, the majority of members voted to postpone the

¹⁰⁶ Museums Associations, “Museums Change Lives,” accessed May 22, 2022, <https://archive-media.museumsassociation.org/26062013-museums-change-lives.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ “Creating the New Museum Definition: Over 250 Proposal to Check Out!,” last modified April 1, 2019, <https://icom.museum/en/news/the-museum-definition-the-backbone-of-icom/>

¹⁰⁸ Martina Lehmannová, “224 Years of Defining the Museum.”

¹⁰⁹ ICOM, “Museum Definition.”

approval.¹¹⁰ A possible explanation is that the key problem was the strong shift from the classical concept of museums to their social role. Since then, the ICOM has seen internal problems, and numerous members have resigned.¹¹¹

On May 20, the ICOM Advisory Council published the new selected proposal, which will be presented for voting at the Extraordinary General Assembly on August 24th ICOM Prague 2022. The new proposal says that:

“A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.”¹¹²

2.3 Community development through museums and the Hungarian practice

In the Hungarian legislation, the Act CXL of 1997. states that: “museums serve society, are open to the public, hold intercourse with communities and settlements, are not funded for profit, and ensure access to cultural goods.”¹¹³ Moreover, it also determines that the “tasks of museum institutions in ensuring access to cultural goods: academic processing, documentation, preservation, exhibiting, making scientific research possible, contributing to life-long learning by distributing culture, organizing cultural events and other programs,

¹¹⁰ Henriett Galambos, “A meg nem szavazott múzeumi definíció: beszámoló a kiotói ICOM-közgyűlésről” [The unaccepted museum definition: report from the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto], last modified October 9, 2019, <https://magyarmuzeumok.hu/cikk/a-meg-nem-szavazott-muzeum-definicio-beszamolo-a-kiotoi-icom-kozgyulesrol>

¹¹¹ Kate Brown, “What Defines a Museum? The Question Has Thrown the Art World’s Leading Professional Organization Into Turmoil,” last modified August 10, 2020, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/icom-museums-definition-resignation-1900194>

¹¹² “The ICOM Advisory Council selects the museum definition proposal to be voted in Prague,” last modified May 20, 2022, <https://icom.museum/en/news/the-icom-advisory-council-selects-the-museum-definition-proposal-to-be-voted-in-prague/>

¹¹³ “Hungarian Museum Regulations,” OMMIK, accessed May 20, 2022, <http://old.ommik.hu/index.php/en/hungarian-museum-regulations>

cooperating with education institutions and helping out-of-school education by museum education programs, and fostering economy by using their touristic allure.”¹¹⁴

It is clear that besides the classical museum tasks, the community role of museums also appears in the legislation. The Hungarian legislation paragraphs and the ICOM museum definition share a number of key elements. However, there is one significant difference, the lack of the idea in the Hungarian legislation that museums should have an impact on community. This concept did not emerge later either, neither in amendments nor in decrees.

Besides New Museology, there is another important source that promotes the connection between cultural heritage and communities in Europe, the above mentioned Faro Convention. It defines the mediating role of heritage in the dialogue between different members of the community, and encourages professional actors to reach out to all social stakeholders, in order to create a sense of belonging to a diverse and rich community. The Faro Convention was ratified in Hungary in 2012, but its aims have never appeared in the official Hungarian museum definition or practice in a broader sense.

Probably the best way to understand the Hungarian attitude towards the new waves of museology is to read the Hungarian definition proposal formulated for ICOM, from 2019:

“The „Museum” is an open-to-public, possibly institutionalized entity, established by value preserver communities or individuals, with the task of acquiring, collecting, protecting, preserving, documenting, and publishing objectively, and in a neutral way – separating from ever-current ideologies, political agenda and propaganda – the tangible and intangible artifacts and heritage of humanity and nature. Its mission is, to exhibit these entrusted values in their original, authentic realities under appropriate and worthy conditions for the human community and leaving the conclusions to be drawn to society.”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ 1997. évi CXL. törvény a muzeális intézményekről, a nyilvános könyvtári ellátásról és a közművelődésről. [1997. CXL. Act about museum institutions, public library services and community culture] English translation: <http://old.ommik.hu/index.php/en/hungarian-museum-regulations>

¹¹⁵ ICOM, “Museum Definition.”

The definition suggests that Hungarian professionals put more emphasis on the traditional museum tasks than on the social roles of museums.¹¹⁶ Besides the tasks, the importance of authenticity is emphasized, which highlights the sacredness and unquestionable character of museums. The desire for an independent museum “from ever-current ideologies, political agenda” in the Hungarian proposal is almost certainly reflects on the often problematic issue of the state-funded museums.

According to a prominent Hungarian museologists, Zsófia Frazon, “the museum institutional framework in Hungary is in need of reflexive research and curatorial knowledge that is flexible and up-to-date, alternative critical interpretations beyond grand-narratives, but most of all, new and contemporary (museological) knowledge, created through exhibitions.”¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the new concepts of museology are slowly emerging in the Hungarian museum practice, even if some ideas are still too early for the professional audience.¹¹⁸

Still, there are initiatives in the Hungarian museum practice that reflect the spirit of the Faro Convention. For example, the community development aspect of cultural institutions (museums, libraries) was the key idea of the European Union project in 2016–2019 entitled “Acting Communities – Active Community Involvement.” The project was led by the Hungarian Open-Air Museum – Museum Education and Methodology Centre, the NMI Institute for Culture Nonprofit Ltd. and the National Széchényi Library.¹¹⁹

The project aimed “to foster the social cohesion and community development” through cultural institutions.¹²⁰ During the three years, members conducted research and surveys on the topic of cultural community development and participatory governance in cultural

¹¹⁶ “Múzeum?” – Beszélgetés az ICOM definíciós vitájáról,” [Museum?! –Conversation about the ICOM museum definition debate], last accessed May 22, 2022, <https://ommik.hu/index.php/hu/component/content/article/14-hirek/513-muzeum-beszelgetes-az-icom-definicios-vitajarol>

¹¹⁷ Zsófia Frazon, “New Museology.”

¹¹⁸ “Kulturális szakembereknek szóló képzések,” Mók Skanzen, [Training courses for the museum of the future], accessed May 22, 2022, <https://mokk.skanzen.hu/kepzesek>

¹¹⁹ “About Us,” Acting Communities, accessed May 22, 2022, <https://cselekvokozossegek.hu/about-us-2/>

¹²⁰ Ibid.

institutions, created methodological guidebooks, training programs for professionals and members of the municipalities. In addition, a mentor network was also established, in order to ensure long-term operations in the settlements.

Another important cultural heritage initiative in Hungary is community archaeology. The Community Archaeology Association was established in 2019 by the Ferenczy Museum Center in Pest County, but they have regularly organized excavations or archaeological topographical research with volunteers and metal-detector hobbyists already since 2010.¹²¹ The cooperation does not only mean the common work but is also an educational program with different phases. The Association organizes mandatory training courses on the technicalities: classification of the archaeological artifacts and documentation.¹²² Members regularly participate in county-wide excavations and site surveying, which is a significant help to the professionals in the city museum. In addition, the members formed a community that is committed to protect the local and national cultural values.

2.4 What is community?

One of the key terms in this thesis is community. Although there is no single definition of community, and a comprehensive explanation of this term lies beyond the scope of this study, I try to briefly explain in the following pages, how community can be understood, focusing on the context of museums.

In broad terms, communities involve people; community means a “group of people who share something in common.”¹²³ According to community theorists, there are three main approaches to defining community: location, interest, and communion (intellectual, spiritual community). Location refers to the geographic setting, while interest indicates a rather

¹²¹ Tibor Ákos Rác, “Metal-Detector Users Affiliated to Museums: Building a Model of Community Archaeology in Pest County,” *Hungarian Archaeology E-Journal* Autumn (2017), accessed May 29, 2022, http://files.archaeolingua.hu/2017O/Upload/RACZ_2017O_EN.pdf.

¹²² Tibor Ákos Rác, “Metal-Detector Users,” 6.

¹²³ Nina Simon, *The Art of Relevance* (Santa Cruz, California: Museum 2.0, 2016), 88.

elective community. In the latter case, the basis of the community is identity, religion, ethnicity, profession, etc., the categories are generated by the selfhood. The third category, communion implies a spiritual, psychical community. These categories can overlap, but sometimes communities also present differences, and belonging to one community may be excluded from another.¹²⁴

In a strong community, more fellowships emerge, while in a weaker community, the network is looser, and it is more difficult to connect with one another.¹²⁵ As I see it, in my thesis the first two criteria must be taken into consideration: location and interest.

However, commonalities in communities alone are not enough to create cohesion. There must be motivations to create unity, and situations, where the “sense of belonging” can be experienced by the members. Thus, community is an “active tool”.¹²⁶ According to Elizabeth Crooke, an expert in museum and cultural heritage studies, the way community is perceived and used includes its connection to culture and museums.¹²⁷ In a broader sense, culture and art meet community in different areas: “identity, economic development, education, cultural literacy, and social needs.”¹²⁸

Cultural institutions can play an important role in contributing to the identity and sense of belonging of people. They can also improve social inclusion by bringing minorities into the spotlight or marginalized groups within the community.¹²⁹ Through identity building, cultural institutions can add to people’s self-esteem and increase their well-being. Museums are places of life-long learning, but museums transmit knowledge instead of possessing the

¹²⁴ Ilona Vercseg, “Mi a közösség?,” [What is community?] *Múzeumi Iránytű* Múzeumi közösségek-közösségi múzeumok, no. 13. (2017): 14–15.

¹²⁵ Simon, *The Art of Relevance*, 88.

¹²⁶ Elizabeth M. Crooke, *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues and Challenges*, Museum Meanings (London: Routledge, 2007), 31–32.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 39.

¹²⁸ Elizabeth A Strom, *Strengthening Communities through Culture*, Art, Culture & the National Agenda Issue Paper (Washington, D. C.: Center for Arts and Culture, 2001), 9–10.

¹²⁹ John Stephens and Reena Tiwari, “Symbolic Estates: Community Identity and Empowerment through Heritage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 99., accessed April 14, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2014.914964>

universal truth.¹³⁰ This attitude ensures community engagement and shared authority over cultural heritage more than the traditional top-down museum approach.

As Elizabeth Crooke expressed why museums need to engage with communities:

“To be of value, museums need to find significance within these communities – without those connections the museum and its collections will be of little importance. It is people who bring the value and consequence to objects and collections; as a result, if a museum cannot forge associations with people, it will have no meaning.”¹³¹

2.5 Communities and museums in the Hungarian museum discourse

Communities related to museums are all communities that are in any way connected to or involved in the museum activities. As explained earlier, since the emergence of New Museology, museums have been seen as playing a more prominent role in communities; in fact they can improve and activate them. As Arapovics suggests, there are three different forms of collaboration between museums and communities at three different levels: building museum communities, involving museums in community development programs, and creating participatory governance in museums.¹³² Of these three, my thesis focuses primarily on the role of museums in community development in the town of Esztergom.

Museums do not only participate in community development projects of the municipality, but they can also initiate such projects around culture and heritage. Collaboration between museums and communities is a mutually beneficial interaction. From the museum point of view, the partnership can ensure a long-term existence of the institution, because it creates higher visitor numbers, increases popularity and can influence the museum's rating.

¹³⁰ Corinne Perkin, “Beyond the Rhetoric: Negotiating the Politics and Realising the Potential of Community-driven Heritage Engagement,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (January 2010): 107–22, accessed May 29, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250903441812>

¹³¹ Crooke, *Museums and Community*, 131.

¹³² Mária Arapovics, “Közösségi múzeum - a múzeumok szerepe a települési közösségfejlesztésben és a múzeumok társadalmiasítása,” [Community museums – The museums' role in settlement community development and the participatory governance of museums], ed. Mária Arapovics, Ibolya Bereczki, and Magdolna Nagy, *Múzeumi Iránytű Kulturális örökség-múzeumi közösségek*, no. 15. (n.d.): 14–27.

Involving the community in museum work can reduce the workload in an institution, where the number of the professionals is small (volunteer program).¹³³

Based on a research from 2015 in Hungary,¹³⁴ it appears that the main motivation of the communities is that they love the museum and they want to do something for their environment, for the museum. Some people try to connect with people with similar interests through the museum, while others want to spend their free time in a meaningful way.¹³⁵

The research demonstrated that on average, museums connect with three or five communities that mostly participate in cultural or reenactment activities, leisure time and education. The oldest community around the museums are the museum friends' groups, which mainly aim to focus on the settlement and regional history, to collect, preserve and to recognize the values found in the area. In return, the members of the groups usually can take part in exclusive programs, such as guided tours and educational lectures.¹³⁶

In the following chapter, I examine how the abovementioned changes appear in the museums of Esztergom, and how the museums utilize these newly recognized possibilities. I aim to reveal what is role of museums in the town as seen by various stakeholders from the community and visitors. I also explore the visitors' perception of the museums: how the visit affects them emotionally and impact their identity.

¹³³ Éva Dóri, *Közösségfejlesztés folyamatok mérése-értékelése EFOP-1.3-15-2016-00001*, [Assessment – evaluation of community development processes] 2019th ed. (Budapest: Szabadtéri Néprajzi Múzeum Múzeumi Oktatási és Módszertani Központ NMI Művelődési Intézet Nonprofit Közhasznú Kft., 2019), 101, 107.

¹³⁴ Magdolna Nagy and Éva Módli, “Múzeumok és közösségek - Kutatási eredmények,” [Museums and communities – Research results], 2015, <https://mokk.skanzen.hu/admin/data/file/20160614/muzeumok-es-kozossegek.pdf>.

¹³⁵ Nagy Magdolna, “Múzeumok és közösségek - Egy kutatás margójára,” [Museums and communities – to the margins of a research] ed. Mária Arapovics, Ibolya Bereczki, and Magdolna Nagy, *Múzeumi Iránytű* Múzeumi közösségek-közösségi múzeumok, no. 13. (2017): 58.

¹³⁶ Dóri, *Közösségfejlesztés folyamatok mérése-értékelése* [Assessment – evaluation of community development processes], 111–12.

CHAPTER 3 – MUSEUMS IN ESZTERGOM AS PERCEIVED BY VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

This chapter aims to identify the potential relevance of the museums within the community in Esztergom. I will explore how people engage with the museums during their visits. I will analyze museum policies to understand how they contribute (or do not) to connect to the town and the residents and look at the implementation of these policies in practice. Finally, I will map up how museums can be used for the development of the community in Esztergom.

3.1 Methods of Data Collection

The data for this thesis were gathered through various sources. First, national, municipal, museum and international policies were examined to understand the museums' operation on local and international level. During my research, I compared the various policy levels with the practice in the museum sector.

I involved five museums in my research that belong to different legal entities, have different topics and different significance. I have discussed these in Chapter 2 through an overview of their historical development. The examined museums are the Balassa Bálint Museum, the Danube Museum, the Castle Museum, the Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim Djami and the Christian Museum. For each museum, I created a questionnaire that was intended to collect not only general visitor information but also town-specific questions and those regarding the visitor experience. In addition, to deepen my knowledge about the visitors' behavior, I conducted participant observation during my visits.

Quantitative data complemented my research through the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, an independent governmental organization, in order to gain insights into the socio-economic context of Esztergom. The publicly accessible database of Cultural Statistics also offers quantitative data on various aspects of museum visiting, such as the number of visitors

per exhibitions or the number of participants in student camps, virtual exhibitions, guided tours, family events of the museums or events organized by civil communities in the museum.

Finally, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with some of the employees of the selected museums, in order to get detailed information about the museum's work, programs and the museums' relationship with the local community. I also interviewed private individuals, who play an active role in the cultural life of Esztergom in order to understand how responsive the local community is for various initiatives and their general willingness for engagement.

In the analysis of the data collected with the above methods, a mixed method approach was employed due to the nature of my sources and research questions. This complex method includes working with both qualitative, open-ended and quantitative, closed-ended data.¹³⁷

While qualitative research is descriptive and more useful for identifying and characterizing the main concepts and views of the participants about various aspects of a topic,¹³⁸ quantitative methods require numerical data and quantitative analysis with statistical interpretation.¹³⁹ Thus, the mixed- method approach ensures a comprehensive insight into the field.

The survey results, the interviews, and the policy documents were analyzed with qualitative thematic and content analysis methods.¹⁴⁰ My aim was to reveal the main concepts and themes in the contextual data obtained through open-ended questions about what the relevance of museums is in the community and how the people engage with the museums.

¹³⁷ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2014), 14.

¹³⁸ Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Text Analysis: a Guide to Methods, Practice and Using Software* (London: SAGE, 2014), 5, accessed December 15, 2021, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446288719>

¹³⁹ Creswell, *Research Design*, 17.

¹⁴⁰ Heidi Julien, "Content Analysis," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011).

Thematic analysis method was used, to identify the main themes and categories based on the participants' answers.¹⁴¹

3.2 Questionnaire – Visitors' perspective

The questionnaires addressed non-professionals, local people from Esztergom and museum visitors from Hungary. The major advantages of questionnaires are that data can be collected systematically in a flexible way, from various, relatively large number of people.¹⁴² Questionnaires are not as time-consuming as interviews, but they can provide similarly rich information.¹⁴³

The questionnaires were in Hungarian and contained the same questions for the five museums.¹⁴⁴ I collected the answers in the museums mainly in a printed form,¹⁴⁵ in October and November 2021, and also created QR-codes that led to the online questionnaires in Google Forms. To reach a broader range of the inhabitants in Esztergom, I shared the Google Form links in a local group on Facebook.¹⁴⁶ The social media managers of the five museums also helped in distributing the online questionnaires on the Facebook page of the museums. The online circulation helped to get the questionnaires to the local people, who had formerly visited the museums.

In some cases, the facilities of the museums determined whether the printed form or the online version was filled out. For example, there is no proper area in the Castle Museum, where visitors could have filled in the questionnaires, while the Danube Museum and the Balassa Bálint Museum could provide a comfortable space for writing the responses.

¹⁴¹ Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Text Analysis: a Guide to Methods, Practice and Using Software* (London: SAGE, 2014), 71, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446288719>

¹⁴² Heidi Julien, "Survey Research," in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011), 846–849.

¹⁴³ Stefan Debois, "10 Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaires (Updated 2019)," last modified March 8, 2019, <https://surveyanyplace.com/blog/questionnaire-pros-and-cons/>

¹⁴⁴ Appendix – 1

¹⁴⁵ I used recycled paper for the printed versions.

¹⁴⁶ Esztergom, Facebook group, November 7. 2021.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/esztergomunk/permalink/10165621316865273/>

Therefore, when I had the possibility, I collected the answers personally, mostly in the Castle Museum, less in the Danube Museum. Museum staff also assisted by drawing the attention of the visitors to the printed questionnaires or the QR codes.

The aim of the questionnaires was to understand how visitors of the museums relate to the local heritage of Esztergom and to the city. I intended to explore how the museum affects the visitors regarding the identity and the emotions that visiting might be evoked in them. When I formulated the questions, I relied on Laurajane Smith's research on emotional heritage.¹⁴⁷ She investigated 45 museums and heritage sites in Australia, The United States and England. The aim of her research was to understand the reasons for museum and heritage site visits beyond those that are traditionally mentioned: learning and leisure.¹⁴⁸ She conducted 4502 interviews with mostly open-ended questions. Smith assumed that the visitors are not only passive recipients during their museum visits, but that they engage with and respond to what they experience during the visit.¹⁴⁹ Her main research question was how successful museums convey their goals and messages to visitors.

My questionnaires contained twenty questions divided into four groups. The first group of questions measured general visitor information (age, gender, place of residence, education). The second group contained questions regarding how the visitors engaged with Esztergom and how they perceived the town. The third group concerned the visitor experience, identity work and emotions during the visit. The last group of questions aimed to reveal how the visitors engaged with the museums during the Covid pandemic.

The questions were the same in all questionnaires and in all museums. However, the Christian Museum did not want to participate in the research, therefore, there are no replies from the museum, neither from visitors, nor from the museum employees. In spite of the fact

¹⁴⁷ Laurajane Smith, *Emotional Heritage: Visitor Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 2–3.

that the museum did not contribute to my research, they provided me with a visitor study from 2021.¹⁵⁰ Where it was possible, I have included the results of this study in my analysis.

	Online respondents	Respondents to printed version
Balassa Bálint Museum	8	61
Castle Museum	23	13
Christian Museum	–	–
Danube Museum	9	44
Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim-Djami	1	8
		<i>Total: 168</i>

Table 2: Respondents to the questionnaires

3.2.1 Survey population

In total, 168 people responded to the questionnaires. However, the number of respondents to specific questions might differ.

About two thirds of the respondents were female 63% (106 answers), males represented 36.9% (62 answers). The age of the respondents ranged from under 20 to over 70.

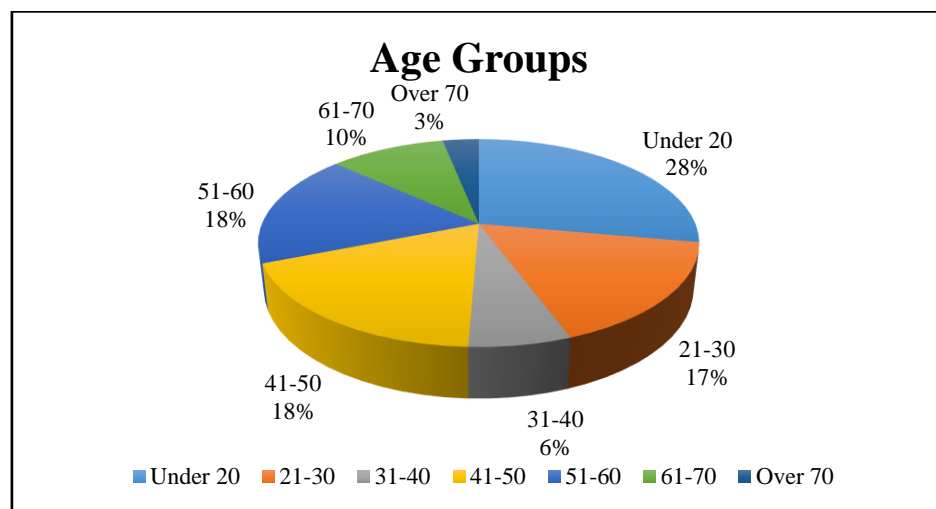


Figure 10: Age distribution of the survey respondents

Almost a quarter of respondents were under the age of 20 (32 of the 69 questionnaires in the Balassa Museum were completed by a class of local high school students). The largest group of visitors were adults (41–60), while 23% of the visitors were young adults (21–40). Nearly

¹⁵⁰ Ágnes Mácsai, “Látogatókutatás a Keresztény Múzeumban,” [Visitor research in the Christian Museum] *Magyar Sion Új Folyam* 15, no. 57 (January 2021): 127–49.

half of the respondents, 45% had attended university and 21% have a high school degree. Only 2% attended vocational secondary education. These data indicate that those who completed the questionnaires are mainly belong to the younger generations (51% under 40) and the educated layer of society.

However, if we disregard the responses from the abovementioned high school class in the Balassa Museum, the proportion of the younger generation drops to 35.39%. At the same time, the percentage of respondents with a university degree increases to 55.8%, and those with a high school degree to 25.7%. On the whole, the data suggests that there are two main groups of respondents, school-age children and those over 40.

In Hungary, age groups of visitors are monitored through distinguishing between the three types of tickets: full-price, reduced-price, and free tickets. The discount applies to elderly adults, over 62, youth between 6 and 26. In some cases, family tickets are of reduced price, if one or two adults or close relatives visit the museum with two other people under the age of 18. Children under the age of 6 and adults over the age of 70 have free entry to the museums, but the entrance is free on public holidays for everyone or with certain type of professional passes.

	2019				
	All	Full	Students	Reduced	Free
Castle Museum	88057	14987	20000	24425	28645
Balassa Bálint Museum	2120	614	464	142	900
Christian Museum	–	–	–	–	–
Danube Museum	8195	413	4244	30	3538
Öziceli Djami	–	–	–	–	–

Table 3: Visitor numbers. Source: Kulturális Statisztika. Adatgyűjtések a 2019. évről [Cultural Statistic. Data from 2019], KSH, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://kultstat.oszk.hu/#/home/public>

	2020				
	All	Full	Students	Reduced	Free
Castle Museum	24246	7500	3779	3841	9126
Balassa Bálint Museum	962	216	202	81	463
Christian Museum	2414	472	908	690	344
Danube Museum	8221	530	2305	1639	3747
Öziceli Djami	–	–	–	–	–

Table 4: Visitor numbers. Source: *Kulturális Statisztika. Adatgyűjtések a 2020. évről* [Cultural Statistic. Data from 2020], KSH, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://kultstat.oszk.hu/#/home/public>

With regard to the Christian Museum, a total of 193 people responded to their questionnaire in 2021.¹⁵¹ The majority of the respondents were female, 68% and the minority were man, 32%, similarly to my research. However, the age distribution of the respondents is quite different. About 10% of the respondents were under 35 years old, and 90% over 36 years old. Regarding the place of residence, 36% of the respondents were from Esztergom, 25% from Budapest and 35 people were from other settlements. Despite the Hungarian language of the questionnaires, nine were filled in by foreigners.

¹⁵¹ Ágnes Mácsai, “Látogatókutatás a Keresztény Múzeumban,” [Visitor research in the Christian Museum], 132.

According to the respondents' place of residence in my research, the answers indicate that people from almost all counties in Hungary visit the museums in Esztergom. Only 30% of those surveyed are from Esztergom, and in addition, 7.7% are from Komárom-Esztergom

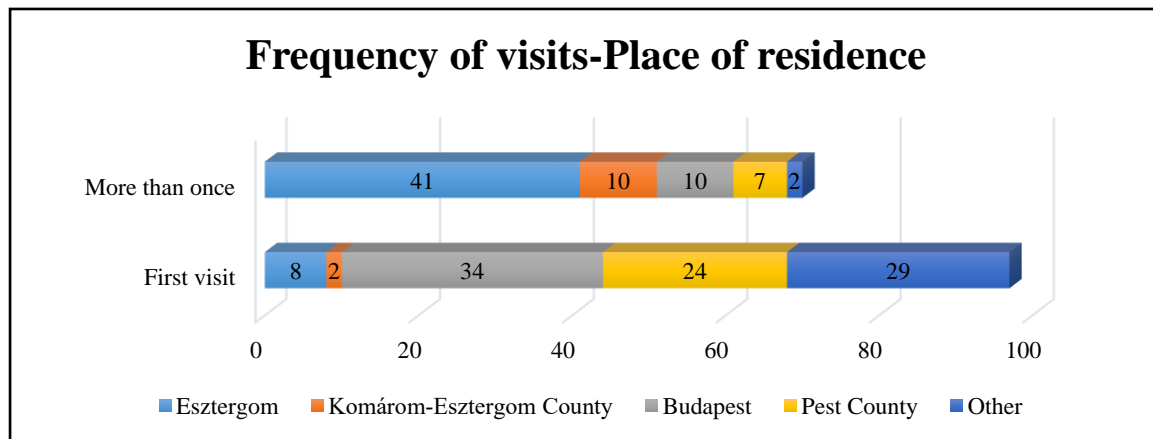


Figure 11: Survey analysis about the frequency of visits and place of residence

County. A significant body of respondents came from Budapest (26%) and from Pest County (18.4%). Only four counties are not represented in the surveys.

3.2.2 Visits

The majority of the respondents were first-time visitors (58%) and only 41.9% said that they had visited more than once the museums in Esztergom. However, only 1% said that they regularly visit the museums. Among the five museums, the Balassa Museum and the Danube Museum had the most returning visitors based on the number of visits. In both cases, high school students regularly visit the museum as part of school field trips, this was also confirmed by the analysis.

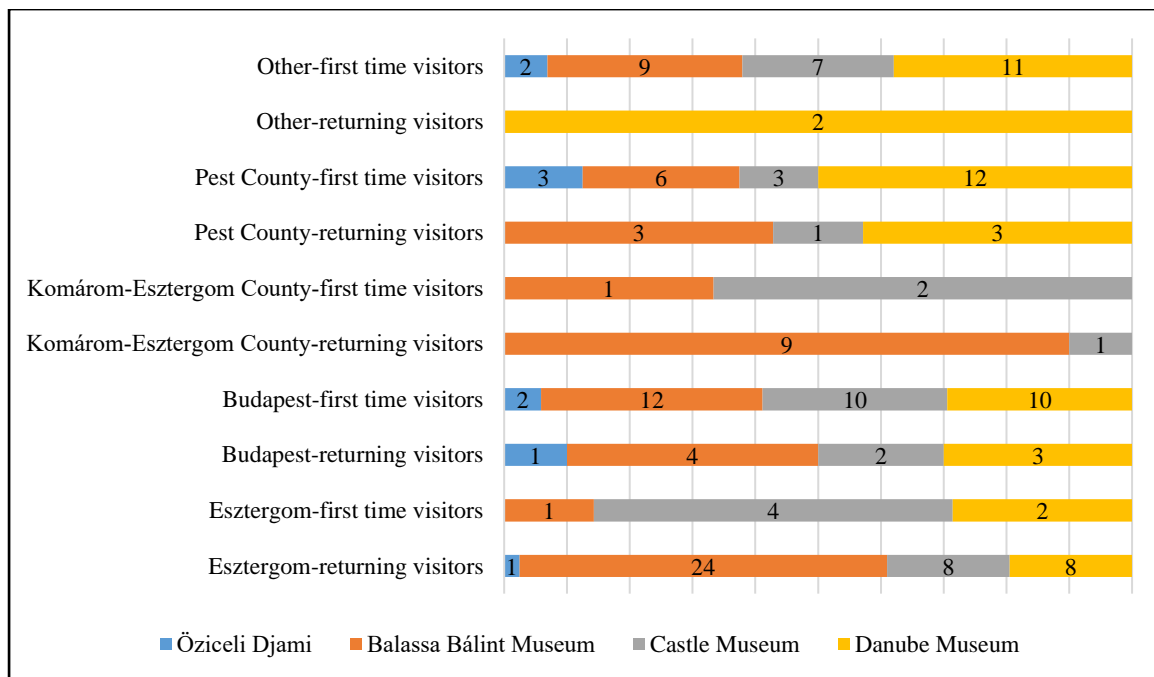


Figure 12: Place of residence and number of visits

Most of the returning visitors came from Esztergom or Komárom-Esztergom County, but some also from Budapest and Pest County, while there is only one returning visitor from each of the other counties. The only exception is Csongrád County, from where two people visited the Duna Museum more than once. Most first-time visitors came from Budapest and Pest County, both are relatively close to Esztergom.

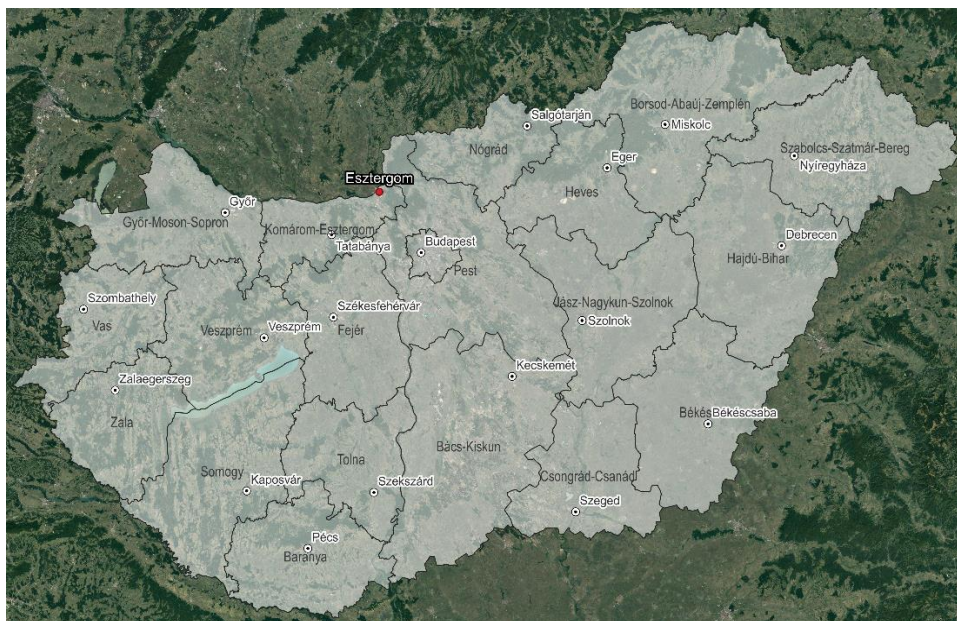


Figure 13: Counties of Hungary with the administrative centers and the location of Esztergom. Source: Made by the author

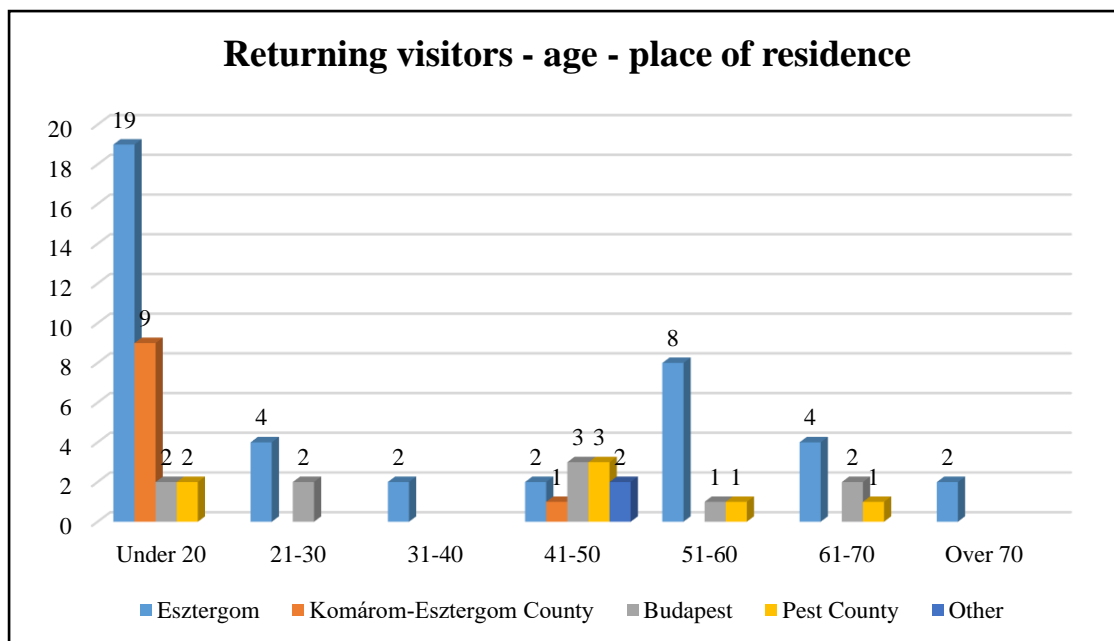


Figure 14: Survey analysis about the frequency of the returning visitors, age and place of residence

Concerning the age of the returning visitors, most of them are less than 20 years old. Their age group is followed by the adults: 41–60 years old. In the young adult category, there were only ten people.

In the case of the Christian Museum, two thirds of the respondents (75%) were returning visitors, with one in two returning to the museum in a year's time.¹⁵²

3.2.2 Target audience

The survey addressed how the visitors perceived the target audiences of the museums. More than half of the respondents think that the museums target everyone, every age group, tourists and local people. However, some of the respondents felt that the museums require a special interest in the past, history or in the case of the Duna Museum, nature and water. Some of the respondents believe from the Balassa Museum that museums are for tourists. Only two people wrote that the museums target locals, one visitor from the Castle Museum and one from the Balassa Bálint Museum. Five survey respondents wrote that according to their

¹⁵² Ágnes Mácsai, "Látogatókutatás a Keresztény Múzeumban," [Visitor research in the Christian Museum], 137.

understanding, the main target group of the museums are the younger generations, and only three that the older generations.

There are other groups in a society, based on gender, ethnicity, or social status that could have been identified through the analysis. Although the collected dataset is relatively small, none of the marginalized groups of the society appeared in either the questionnaires or the interviews. Based on the museums' mission statement, the museums in Esztergom are not particularly committed to inclusion and I did not encounter any information suggesting that they specifically target any minority or marginalized groups.

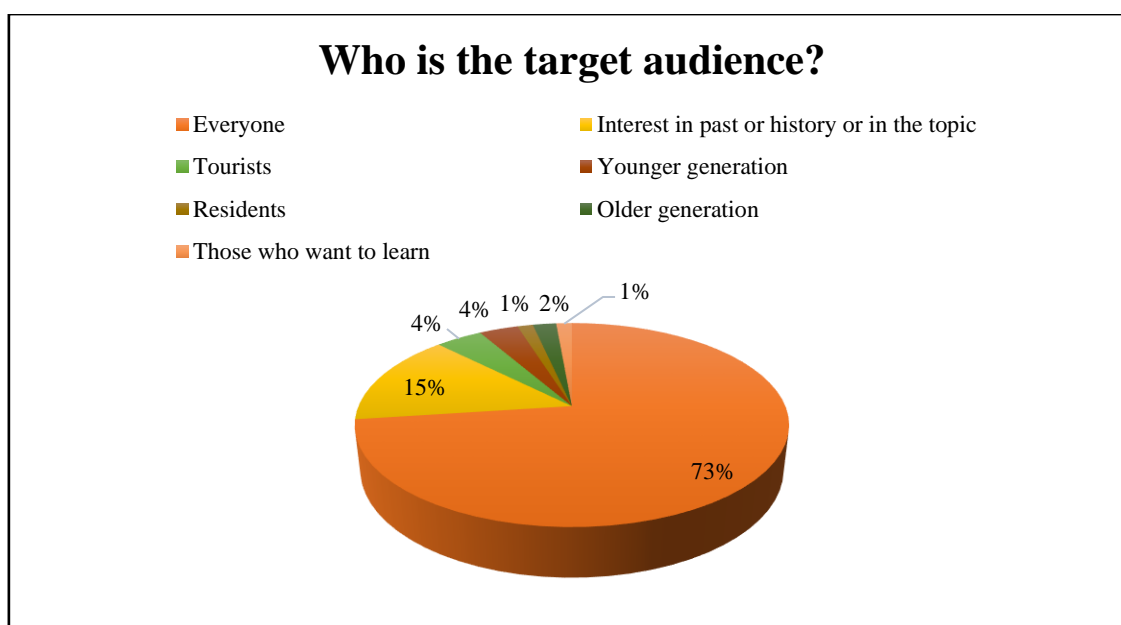


Figure 15: Survey response analysis about how the visitors define the target audiences of the museum/exhibition?

3.2.3 Reasons for visiting

Overall, 153 people responded to this question. Most respondents visited the museums during a school program or were interested, curious to the topic. The number of accidental visitors is also relatively high, as is the number of those people who visited the museums due to their interest in history, the past, and related to their profession.

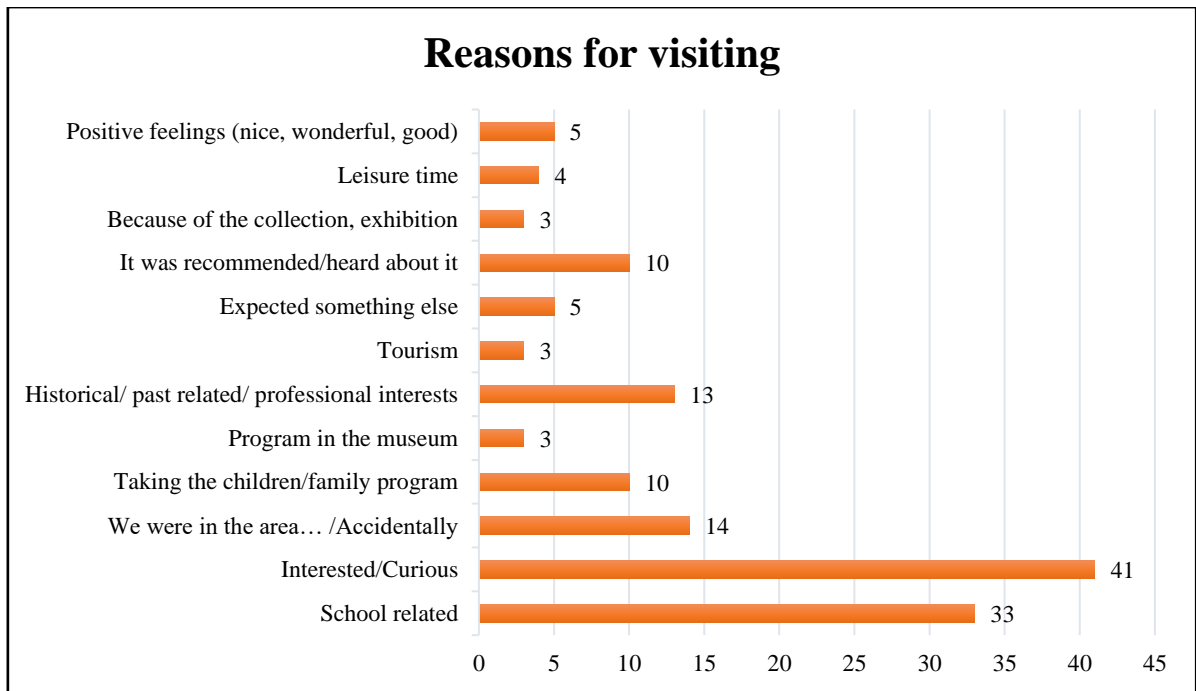


Figure 16: Survey response analysis about the reasons for visiting the museums

3.2.4 Connection to heritage

Two questions (Do you think you are part of the history represented here? Why? and What kind of emotions did the museum evoke in you?) aimed to reveal the visitors' connection to what they experienced and generally describe their heritage experience in the museum.

The total number of responses to the first question was 123. The majority of those who responded felt that they were part of the history-story presented in the museum or exhibition. Less than half of these people is from Esztergom (54 out of 123). Eight people from Esztergom answered that they do not feel that they are part of the presented history and eleven people did not respond.

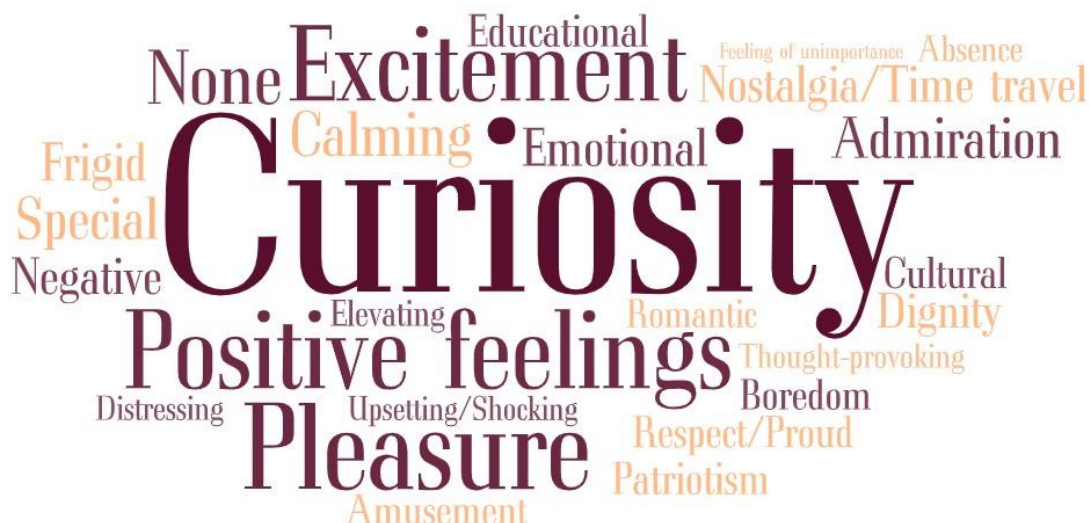


Figure 17: Word cloud about the emotions generated by the museum in the respondents

The majority of the respondents who answered that they can connect with the history-story presented in the museum visited the Danube Museum, while those who could not connect with the museum answered mainly in the Balassa Museum (three out of fifteen are from Esztergom). The different museum categories cover different scopes: while the Danube Museum is a specialized museum, with national scope, the Balassa Museum is a territorial museum with territorial scope. However, respondents in the Balassa Museum were equally present from Esztergom and Komárom-Esztergom County, as well as visitors from Budapest, Pest County and other counties.

Few people explained their answer in detail, and among these, the connection to local heritage, Hungary, the nation, the ancestors, or traditions were the most popular reasons. Many respondents highlighted their personal interest in history, old objects, or their professional interest in the subject. In the case of the Danube Museum, the importance of water, environmental protection and the attachment to the Hungarian rivers (Danube, Tisza) and to Lake Balaton were emphasized. For a small number of respondents, family connections or personal stories were the reason they felt part of the story being presented. For example, a female respondent, below 20 from Budapest wrote that the picture of her great-

great grandfather is exhibited in the Danube Museum. In the Balassa Museum, a man, 21–30, from Komárom-Esztergom County commented that

“I discovered an object that our family also owns, so it recalled my childhood, conversations with my great-grandmother, and so on.”

However, 30.8% responded that they did not feel part of the history presented in the museum or exhibition. Some of them argued that they cannot connect since they are too young, while one respondent wrote that it is not her history (Balassa Museum). One participant commented that she was not interested to such an extent to connect, and someone wrote there were not enough stories to connect (Castle Museum).

3.2.5 Ideas about the museums’ participation in community development

Respondents were asked to suggest ideas or thoughts on how museums could be involved in the development of the Esztergom community. A total of 95 people answered to this question. A common view was that the museum could organize different programs: workshops, concerts, lectures. Some respondents argued that entrance should be free for the residents of Esztergom and even for residents of the neighboring settlements. This idea also emerged during a personal participant observation in the Castle Museum, when a visitor assumed that the local residents could visit the museum for free.

A 31–40 years old male respondent, from Budapest suggested that the museum could install the NFT system.¹⁵³ This would mean that artifacts in the collection could be adopted, only in the online space. Adopting or purchasing the artifact would cost a symbolic amount of money or it could be a monthly, or occasional contribution. It could be the basis of a museum

¹⁵³ “An NFT is a digital asset that represents real-world objects like art, music, in-game items and videos. They are bought and sold online, frequently with cryptocurrency, and they are generally encoded with the same underlying software as many cryptos.” See more: <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/investing/cryptocurrency/nft-non-fungible-token/>

friends' community around the museum, with private programs, and gatherings for the 'owners'.

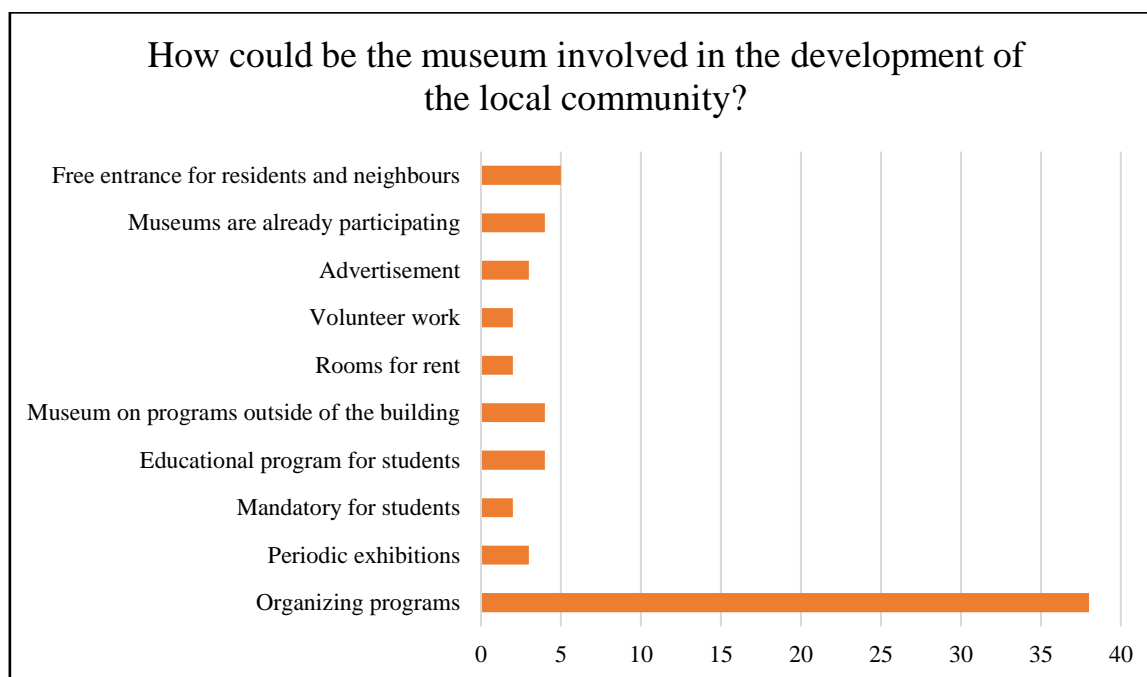


Figure 18: Survey response analysis about how the visitors' ideas or thoughts on how could be the museum involved in the development of the local community.

3.2.6 Perceptions about Esztergom

Among the last questions, I asked the respondents to name three places that symbolize Esztergom the most. Based on the results, I created a Word Cloud. The most popular places were the Basilica (124 answers), the Castle (40 answers), the Danube Bank (32 answers), the Danube (30), the Mária Valéria Bridge (24 answers), the St. Thomas Hill (18 answers) and the Széchenyi Square (16 answers).

answers at any time.¹⁵⁵ The consent was given either in writing by e-mail or orally prior to the interviews.

The first group of the interviewees were selected based on their job and role in the local museums. The aim of the interviews was to get an insight into the activity of the museum and its relationship to the local community of Esztergom. In addition to the museum employees, I interviewed some representatives of local NGOs, who play an active role in program organizing, and community building in Esztergom. The purpose of these interviews was to uncover non-professionals motivation, activity and connection with the locals.

Finally, I interviewed representatives of the municipality, a person from the Esztergom Tourist Nonprofit LLC, tourist office maintained by the municipality and an employee of the municipality, whose role is the program organization and coordination. My aim to reveal municipality's standpoint in questions of cultural strategy, community development, local cultural organizations and NGOs.

3.3.1 Museums and the visitors

All my interviewees agreed that mainly tourists visit the museums, while locals rarely appear. Domestic tourism is the most characteristic, but in some cases, some foreign tourists also pay a visit (Djami, Castle Museum). The Danube Museum highlighted the organized groups as the main visitors of the museum, more precisely school classes from all over the country. This statement was confirmed by one of my interviewees, who said that her son visits the museum twice in every year with the elementary class from a school in Esztergom. The museum offers workshops facilitated by museum educators (called museum pedagogy in Hungary) for children from kindergarten to high school. The educational workshops are

¹⁵⁵ John A. Neuenschwander, "The Legal Ramifications of Oral History". In *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010) 367–368, accessed December 15, 2021, <http://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195339550.013.0025>

about the water (water transport, life in the water world, water management) or environmental protection, environmental pollution.¹⁵⁶

In addition, the museum is also attractive for water management professionals. The museum also wishes to target the students, who are involved in professional training, in order to introduce them to the profession of water management.

Interestingly, it was a recurrent opinion among the interviewees that it is difficult to involve local people, especially on a regular basis. It is often the same group of people who visit the cultural programs in the town: 10–20, maximum 50 individuals take part in cultural events in Esztergom, and this group is well known to museum professionals.

Opinions differed as to what could be the reason for this situation. On the one hand, they see it as a local problem that is very typical for Esztergom. On the other hand, due to the changing needs of younger generations and the pervasiveness of digital technologies, it is seen as a common, worldwide problem. People are not interested in museums, culture, or history, so they do not visit the museums. In addition, according to the interviewees, museums cannot meet the needs of visitors, who would be more attracted to interactive offerings. According to the head of the Balassa Museum,

“... So where is our place? We are looking for that too. People’s needs have always changed, and the museum could offer something different that was needed then, but now people need something completely different, but the museum offers something different again, and it would be good to combine these.”¹⁵⁷

However, it is not only the museums who feel that they cannot appeal to people: the owner of a local business called Kaleidoscope House, which is a hostel, bar and a cultural center in Esztergom, thinks that the biggest challenge is the apathy in Esztergom. People are becoming increasingly isolated; they do not like to socialize. She sees this more as a general social problem than a local one. The House offers various programs including exhibitions, theatre

¹⁵⁶ “Múzeumpedagógia,” [Museum pedagogy], accessed May 28, 2022.
<http://www.dunamuzeum.hu/index.php/hu/muzeumpedagogia>

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Anita Kocsis, December 1, 2022.

plays, film and book clubs, concerts and other cultural and art programs. All of their programs are free, so finances cannot be an obstacle to participate in the programs organized in the House. My interviewee said that it is basically unpredictable, whether a program will be visited by a lot of people or not.

All museums aim to target the younger generation. In some cases, the museum focuses on the group of young adults (Balassa Museum, Danube Museum), but the importance of families with children has also been mentioned (Castle Museum). Local visitors generally do not receive any special treatment, such as reduced entrance fees, but there are examples for collaboration with local schools as in the case of the Djami, which can be visited by the local students for a symbolic price.

As far as foreign visitors are concerned, their number is insignificant. A common view amongst interviewees was that the museum is prepared to receive foreign tourists, although they do not organize programs specifically for them. The exhibitions are bilingual, sometimes there are additional informative texts in the most common foreign languages. The Danube Museum and the Castle Museum also offer guided tours in English, and if it is necessary, the Danube Museum also offers workshops conducted by a museum educator in English.

The tourist office (Esztergom Tourist Nonprofit LLC) organizes the services of tourist guides in foreign languages in the town and plans to do tours in the future in German, Spanish and English languages. According to Petra Simon from the tourist office:

“The international tourism of Esztergom means that boat hotels come here, the train or bus picks up the visitors and takes them to the Castle Hill. They walk around and are brought back to the boat. And this is also typical for the domestic visitors, to come here for a day, to go up to the Basilica, to the Castle Hill, maybe eat something in the town and leave.”¹⁵⁸

She argued that this situation was due to the lack of proper accommodations and programs in Esztergom. Hopefully, this situation will change as the new four-star hotels and other, larger

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Petra Simon, May 23, 2022.

hotels have opened. This situation with the Basilica and the Castle Hill was a common view amongst the interviewees. Barbara Barabás, representing the municipality, argued that the reason for this situation was that fifteen years ago there was no place in the town for people to sit down or have a coffee other than at the Basilica and the surrounding area. Many of the buildings were in ruins and neglected with no attractive cityscape. In the recent years, the municipality has started to renovate the building stock and build a livable city.

Currently, the tourist office does not monitor the number of the foreign visitors or from which county they traveled to Esztergom. When I asked about this issue, Petra Simon said that they could not open their two offices in the town yet, so they are only doing the background work for the time being. Originally, the tourist office wanted to open one front office on the Castle Hill (close to the Basilica and the Castle) and one in the center, at the two busiest places in Esztergom. However, the Castle Hill has different owners: the state, the municipality and the Catholic Church, the latter one ultimately did not allow the front office to be built close to the Basilica and the Castle.

3.3.2 Museums in the urban fabric

In all cases, the informants reported that the museums are rarely present at town events, outside their own building. An exception is the Night of Museums, when museums and other cultural institutions join forces and organize programs together. All my interviewees agreed that this event is usually very successful on a professional level as well as among the visitors. Regarding the collaboration between the cultural institutions, the only occasion when the museums work together on programs is the same Night of Museums. Over the recent years, the cultural institutions and other institutes have organized the program together, but starting from this year, the tourist office (Esztergom Tourist Nonprofit LLC) will do the coordination and the management with leaflets and graphics. According to my interviewee from the office, the organization is a very difficult process, since the museums have different maintainers.

The managers and employees of the museums, although can decide on professional questions, have no decision-making authority on, for example, financial issues.

There were some negative comments about how the municipality manages programs in Esztergom. Some interviewees argued that bad organization is typical in Esztergom, “either there is nothing or everything is at the same time”, making it difficult for the different stakeholders to run successful programs. As one interviewee said:

“I had an example about the Night of Museums. The municipality organized a huge event, a Health Day on the Széchenyi Square, a family day with concerts. They put a lot of money into it, the programs ended at four, and the Night of the Museums started at five. Well, obviously, those who attended the Health Day did not come to the museum.”¹⁵⁹

Another interviewee, when asked about the museum’s presence at the town events, said that they are very careful with the town and try to maintain their institutional integrity. Talking about this issue, Petra Simon from the tourist office argued that the main difficulty in programming is that everyone focuses on their own interests. As she said, it is very hard to explain to the various stakeholders that an event on the long run can be more successful, if they work together.

Although all respondents stressed their positive relationship with the municipality, some said that when there is an event organized by the municipality, the latter finances most of the costs and dictates the terms. Concerns regarding the cooperation were widespread. This view was echoed by other informants who own an NGO in Esztergom:

“If we have a set of values in the operation, then we also want to follow these during the cooperation, in which we are involved. If it is the local government, we will tell the same thing that how we operate and what we think is important. Of course, we are flexible, but if the other people are completely against our vision [...] then this system will not work.”¹⁶⁰

Talking about this issue an interviewee said that setting up a forum would be very useful to involve all people from Esztergom who are engaged with culture. Despite the fact that

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Györgyi Fehér, February 10, 2022.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Zsuzsanna Lőrincz and Zoltán Horváth, Kiskosár Bevásárló Közösség, February 9, 2022

Esztergom is a small city, people do not really know each other, even those working in the same field. Such meetings would be useful for these people to get to know personally each other. They would also be able to see what are the strengths of which actor, which would result in the creation of a good community.

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, museums in Esztergom do not belong to the municipality. The result of this is, for example that museums in the town do not appear in the cultural strategy of the municipality or even touristic leaflets. As one interviewee put it, when the municipality organizes an event in the town, those institutions that are maintained by them receive the invitations first.

Commenting on this subject, Barbara Barabás from the municipality said that the municipality is not in connection with the museums on a daily basis. The character of the organized programs determines whether they approach the museums or not. She emphasized that they have never received a negative response from any of the museums and that the museum employees were always helpful and cooperative. The municipality works with local entrepreneurs in 99 percent of the time a program is organized. Usually, the municipality does not work with NGOs. My interviewee stated that “for example the NGOs organize their own events and ask for financial support from the municipality [...] so we work together that much, not better.”

Referring to the cultural forum, she expressed that the three cultural institutions maintained by the municipality (Helischer József City Library, the Reading Circle of Szentgyörgymező and the Féja Géza Community Center) have regular cultural meetings, which are usually attended by a representative of the municipality.

The financial difficulties of the museums were another problem reported by the interviewees. The institutions are small, and they deal with a serious lack of capacity. The employees are usually overwhelmed, and they have more tasks in reality than in their job description.

In the case of the Djami, the institution receives no government funding since the museum is in private ownership. The museum functions only on a market basis, which often puts the owner in a difficult position. Currently, the chef of the Rózsakert Restaurant, which is located beside the Djami operates the museum as well. According to my interviewee,

“Unfortunately, the museum is currently closed, as tourism is so low that it cannot be economically sustained. [...] I’m currently running it, and now we have had a pretty bad time in the hospitality industry too. The company could not bear the burden of having an extra employee in the museum, and the museum is open. Unfortunately, it was a difficult decision, but financially it was the most sensible thing to do.”¹⁶¹

One of my interviewees commented on the issue of the museums’ maintenance that they do not mind that the museum does not belong to the municipality, only for financial reasons. She argued that

“We see here in the museum world that small museums have huge problems when they are maintained by municipalities. Because the municipalities are not in a good position [financially] and the museum is the first place from where money is cut off.”¹⁶²

3.3.3 Museums and the community

Although the museums’ maintenance does not connect them to the town of Esztergom, in general the collections of the museum do. There is only one exception, the Danube Museum, the collection of which is not specific to Esztergom (although according to the visitor analysis, lot of respondents identified Esztergom with the Danube. See: Figure 19).

However, the museum has successfully built a group of museum friends, whose members volunteer at the museum and organize various programs in the building. According to my interviewee, the museum is well embedded in the community, due to the team and the work of the team in the museum. Most people think that the museum belongs to the municipality/town and about three years ago, the museum also received an award from the Esztergom municipality for the work they do for the cultural life in the town.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Péter Vidra, February 11, 2022.

¹⁶² Interview with Györgyi Fehér, February 10, 2022.

The other museums in the town try to find links with the local community. However, one interviewee argued that “the museums in Esztergom fight for ten thousand tourists”, rather than clearly targeting the local community of the town. Therefore, the Balassa Museum, for example, has started to target specifically the residents of Esztergom. Nowadays they mainly focus on local history stories and objects, which they share online. In addition, they had recently started to organize workshops for young adults, where various DIY techniques are in focus: embroidery, knitting, blue dyeing.

As explained by the head of the museum, the museum staff is now relatively young; they try to organize events that they also would like to visit in a small town. The aforementioned programs do not necessarily have to be related to history or the museum, but they aim to create an occasion, when people can feel the atmosphere of the museum first. Then, they hope that a good memory will later draw people back to the museum.

The Balassa Museum also has a museum friends’ group, with a strong unit of community archaeology. The museum, however, feels responsible for the people outside Esztergom too, because their collection area covers the whole Esztergom District (járás) with 24 settlements, so the museum considers the residents too as their community. Therefore, the museum would like to reach out to and involve also the residents in this area.

The Castle Museum, according to my interviewee, does not have currently any significant role in the local community. She expressed however, that due to its historical importance, the Castle itself must be an emblematic place for the residents, consequently, the entire institution should have this role. Overall, she suggested that

“First of all, the museum [the Castle Museum] could be even more involved in community building by organizing community programs and opening up the usable museum spaces to the programs of non-governmental organizations and associations. Through the cooperation, which offers space and opportunities for meetings, a very good community could develop in the museum. In addition,

close cooperation with the municipality would be required, and town programs could be organized in cooperation with the museum.”¹⁶³

The Cristian Museum also has a museums friend’s group. The organization supports the work of the museum by paying membership fees, which the museum uses for conservation, restauration, purchasing art works, creating publication or organizing periodic exhibitions. In return, the members receive invitations to programs, presentations and are kept informed of the museum’s operation.¹⁶⁴

3.3.4 Perceptions of Esztergom

Among the last questions, I asked the interviewees to name three places that most symbolize Esztergom. Based on the results, I created a World Cloud. The most popular answers were: the Danube Promenade (6 answers), the Castle Hill (5 answers), the St. Thomas Hill (2 answers) and the Basilica (2 answers).



Figure 20: Word Cloud about the three locations that describe Esztergom according to the interviewees

¹⁶³ Interview with Kitti Ribár, March 6, 2022.

¹⁶⁴ “Támogatóink,” [Our sponsors] accessed May 27, 2022. <https://keresztenymuzeum.hu/page.php?id=40>

A common opinion of the interviewees was that they did not want to mention the Basilica, with one respondent arguing that instead of the Basilica she would mention the medieval St. Adalbert cathedral.

CHAPTER 4 – SUGGESTIONS

In this fourth chapter, I will describe suggestions, for the policymakers, the municipality, the museum professionals and the community, based on my observations and the results of the previous analysis. Before the suggestions, I would like to refer back to the concepts in the second chapter: the principles of New Museology (critical thinking, museums are places of dialogue and free interpretation, participatory approach and new solutions in exhibition) and to Smith's idea about heritage that it is not a solid thing or a concept, but a matter of discourse. Similarly to heritage, museums can also be understood as a fluid concept, where the available resources can serve the aim of the stakeholders.¹⁶⁵

I identified my suggestions along these lines on four level: national, municipal, professional and community level.

National level – The general museum legislation in Hungary should be revised

Examining the development of the Hungarian museum sector and the legislations in the first chapter has shown that decisions in the legislation may work at a general level, but there are unique situations, where these general directives cannot work properly.

Esztergom is such a case, where, due to financial problems and the development of the museum network, none of the museums in the town is maintained by the municipality. Based on my research on the visitors' perception, this issue mainly affects the decision-makers in the municipality and not the community, since the majority of the respondents felt that they were part of the history-story presented in the museum or exhibition. However, the detachment between the local governance and the museums as determined by the law prevents the successful integration of the latter into the cultural strategy and programming of

¹⁶⁵ Crooke, *Museums and Community*, 40.

the town, and leaves the potential represented by several institutions with long tradition and local roots simply unutilized.

Due to the cultural conditions in the town, museums could be one of the most evident resources for identity building and increasing community well-being, which notions coincide with the goals of the municipality. However, museums are out of the municipality's horizon, and they are partly outside the community where the museums are located. The museums in this vacuum could hardly find their relevance for the community.

Municipal level – Involvement of the community and museums, participatory and inclusive approach

As I see it, one of the main problems on municipal level is that the municipality does not have a detailed cultural-touristic strategy, or a management plan. There is no clear understanding of how to exploit or support the existing cultural resources of Esztergom. The municipality should invite all the stakeholders in the local community at a professional level: museum employees, members of the relevant NGOs and community representatives or leading figures. Community forums about the revitalization of Esztergom would be very useful for each party. In addition, local stakeholders' knowledge in certain themes could be very beneficial and considerably relieve the municipality.

According to the Settlement Development Concept, the municipality would like to support NGOs, because they not only generate self-organization, but foster community building.¹⁶⁶ The document states that there are different areas where the municipality can rely on NGOs: education, sport, culture, churches, recreation, agriculture, in which NGOs are welcome as they can play a role in needs assessment and advocacy. In the process of forming attachment

¹⁶⁶ *Esztergom város településfejlesztési koncepciója* [Settlement Development Concept of Esztergom Municipality] 2019, 23, last modified August 3, 2020, https://www.esztergom.hu/items/telepules/TFK/ESZTERGOM_TELEPULESFEJLESZTESI_KONCEPCIO.pdf

to the town, history is recognized as one of the most important tools. Despite the fact that the policy clearly defines the role of NGOs, the analysis demonstrated the opposite.

As this research identified, the municipality should work on to rebuild the trust between the different stakeholders and work on to rebuild the trust between its own institution and NGOs and museums.

Professional level – International museum practices

Although international concepts such as New Museology, the ICOM museum definition, the social role of museums in communities or the Faro Convention are not unknown in the Hungarian museum practice, Hungarian professionals still place higher value on the traditional museum tasks: museums are places of education, where the visitor can adopt the beliefs offered by museum professionals. Museums should implement the self-critical and interpretive museological methods, in order to move beyond the classical narratives and engage with the communities and visitors.

In addition, the museums need to start building partnerships in Esztergom. Through new partnerships with public and private organizations, the museums could reach new groups within the community. The aim of museums to involve people and reach out to the different members of the community often can relate to the concept of other groups and initiatives among the community members.¹⁶⁷ However, the partnership could also lead to new activities being created in the museums and previously unknown groups can be involved.

Community level – Co-creation

One of the most important results of this study is that there is an active and committed group of people in Esztergom, who are ready to work for the town and the community. However, these groups do not form a cohesive community, even if they are aware of each other, collaborations are rare. Forming partnerships at the community level would be just as

¹⁶⁷ Crooke, 15.

important as at the museum level. As I mentioned in the second chapter, an existing community does not automatically mean cohesion and unity. Stakeholders should initiate dialogue and work together, both in program organization and on other occasions.

Referring back to the second chapter, as Nina Simon, author of *The Participatory Museum* and *The Art of Relevance* stated: “Strong community engenders fellowship among members, advances specific social norms, and has identifiable leaders. Weak communities are more diffuse, with members who may not even be aware of each other.”¹⁶⁸

4.1 Good Practices – Museums and community development

On the following pages, I describe some good practices for museums participating in community development programs, which could be applicable to the museums in Esztergom.

Community exhibitions, Investigating Where We Live¹⁶⁹

The Investigating Where We Live is a community exhibition in the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. During the five-day long program, participants collect pictures, writings, interviews, own interpretations about the built environment in the city.

In Esztergom, the museums could invite a community exhibition around one question: What does it mean to live in Esztergom? The inhabitants of Esztergom could submit photographs, collages, drawings, or short videos that describe what makes someone an Esztergom resident. The submitted items could be exhibited on site in the museums and also shared online, which would generate activity, dialogue and publicity.

Consultative projects

Establishing consultative projects in the museums, with the help of the museum friends’ groups or interested stakeholders from the community.¹⁷⁰ Their involvement would

¹⁶⁸ Simon, “The Art of Relevance.”

¹⁶⁹ “Investigating Where We Live,” NBM, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.nbm.org/exhibition/investigating-where-we-live/>

improve the institutions' communication with non-professionals and help to tell the traditional narratives in a visitor-friendly way.

Social objects¹⁷¹

Based on my research of the visitors' perception, many of the respondents were able to connect to the objects on display at the Balassa Museum through personal stories. The museum could invite the visitors to either tell these stories on site in written form or share them online via social media.

Installing the NFT system

As I mentioned in the third chapter, a respondent to the questionnaire in the Balassa Museum wrote that the museum should install the NFT system. Through the system, members of the community could adopt the artifacts and objects from the museum. The adoption would cost a symbolic amount of money, for exchange, 'the owners' would receive extra programs.¹⁷² Private guided tours in the museum, meetings with the restorers of the objects could be included in the special gatherings for the owners.

Fill the Gap

The Smithsonian American Art Museum's Luce Foundation Center for American Art announced the Fill the Gap program in its art storage in 2006.¹⁷³ The institution regularly lends artworks to other museums which must be replaced with another artwork if the work is loaned for longer period than twelve months. Therefore, the museum asked the visitors to recommend a replacement from the collection, based on the information provided about

¹⁷⁰ Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010, accessed 26 May, 2022, <https://www.participatorymuseum.org/>

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 130.

¹⁷² This program works very successfully in the Budapest Zoo, where animals can be 'adopted'. <http://www.allatkertialapitvany.hu/>

¹⁷³ "Fill the Gap," American art, last modified March 11, 2009, <https://americanart.si.edu/blog/eye-level/2009/11/1033/case-fill-gap>

the surrounding artworks and the artwork on loan. The program was announced both online and onsite, and the museum asked for suggestions and explanations.

This idea could work, for example, in the case of the Balassa Museum, where the spaces available for exhibitions are small, but the collection is huge. The museum has been working on digitizing its collection for years now, the digitized materials could be used to engage the visitors in an activity like the Fill the Gap.

Race Through Time

Museums should organize more events outside their building in order to reach a wider audience and to become more integrated into the fabric of the town. To bring an inspirational case in this regard, I would like to mention the Museum of Art and History in Santa Cruz, where the Race Through Time program is regularly organized.¹⁷⁴ The urban game is available by walking or biking, and the theme of the game changes regularly, based on important anniversaries or events.

In Esztergom, an urban game could aim to discover and rediscover the town and the local history. There are places and buildings that everyone considers tourist destinations, spectacles, for example, the medieval castle or the Basilica. However, there are other architectural, artistic creations or works of art in Esztergom in public places that rarely get in the spotlight.

The urban game would go through these places and historical times. Participants should answer to historical questions related to Esztergom that would lead them to the next station.

¹⁷⁴ “Race Through Time,” MAH, last modified July 24, 2021, <https://www.santacruzmah.org/events/race-through-time-1>

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to reveal what relevance museums can have in the local community of Esztergom, Hungary as seen by various stakeholders from the community and visitors. In my research I focused on five museums in the town: Balassa Museum, the Castle Museum, the Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim Djami, the Christian Museum and the Danube Museum. I aimed to discover how people engage with the museums and what are the potentials of the museums in the development of the community in Esztergom. The basis of my thesis was the questioned and reconceptualized function of museums in the international scene, discussed in Chapter 2. I aimed to find out how the museums in Esztergom utilize these newly recognized possibilities in terms of their social role and their effect in the community development.

Esztergom has a prominent role from the point of view of Hungarian national identity, due its historic importance. In the first chapter I explained the history of the town in the Hungarian context, and I summarized the demographic, economic background and the cultural and hospitality infrastructure of Esztergom. In the last part of the first chapter, I described the formation of the Hungarian museum sector, especially in the town.

By exploring the museums in Esztergom, the first chapter described that none of the museums are maintained by the town, which force them into a transitional situation, between the local community and their maintainer. Consequently, this study has found that even if the museums have their relevance in the local community of Esztergom, they cannot entirely fulfil their social potential. The museums mainly work independently and separated, although building partnerships could help with their difficulties, for example in case of the shortage of workforce, financial difficulties, workload. There are examples of collaboration, either with each other or with the municipality, but they often encounter the same problems in the common work.

In terms of age, the investigation of the visitors showed that those who completed the questionnaires are mainly school age children and people over 40. Since the yearly visitor numbers are only monitored by distinguishing between the three types of tickets, we cannot comprehensively link the results of the analysis with the yearly numbers. However, the number of student visitors (under 26) also stand out from the yearly visitor numbers.

Regarding the place of residence among the respondents, those who visited the museums more than once came mainly from Esztergom and in case of the first visit, most of the visitors came from Budapest. Overall, most of the respondents were from other cities. The visits generated positive feelings in the respondents, even if some of respondents accidentally visited the museums (they were in the area, walking by) or expected something else. The majority of the respondents felt that they were part of the history-story presented in the aforementioned museums or exhibition. The subject of the connection was mainly the local heritage, Hungary, the nation, the ancestors, or traditions. Among the respondents, Esztergom is strongly associated with the Hungarian identity.

Based on the research findings, in the fourth chapter I summarized my suggestions at four levels: national, municipal, professional and community level. The thesis demonstrated that the museum legislations should be revised in terms of museum maintenance, whereby regional decisions should be made instead of general legislations. The municipality must create a definitive management plan on how to build better and in an integrated manner on tourism and cultural resources. At the same time, the different stakeholders in the community of Esztergom need to start working together and engage in dialogue, in order to build partnership and achieve their goals in the community and the town.

Several questions remain unanswered now, since Esztergom is constantly changing. The last major and probably decisive change happened on May 1st, 2022, when Esztergom regained its title as a town with county jurisdiction. It is clear that the following years will bring a

significant transformation due to this administrative change. Future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended.

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APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Place of residence
4. Educational attainment
5. What is the most attractive in Esztergom?
 - Nature
 - Culture
 - Religion
 - Art
 - Other:
6. If you are from Esztergom, what places do you regularly visit in your free time?
7. If you are a visitor, what places did you or intend to visit in Esztergom?
 - Basilica
 - Balassa Bálint Múzeum
 - Castle Museum
 - Christian Museum
 - Özicel Hacci Ibrahim Djami
 - Danube Museum
 - Other:
8. Is this your first visit?
9. Why did you visit the museum?
10. What kind of emotions did the museum evoke in you?
11. Who do you think the exhibition/museum is for?
12. Do you think you are part of the history represented here? Why?
13. Is there anything that is missing from the museum or the exhibition?
14. What do you think how could be the museum involved in the development of the local community?
15. Did you follow the online platforms of the museum during the Covid-19 pandemic?
I didn't follow 1–5 I followed regularly.

16. Did you follow the online platforms of other museums during the Covid-19 pandemic?

I didn't follow 1–5 I followed regularly.

17. Is there any museum or exhibition anywhere in the world that you saw and liked? Why?

18. Please write five adjectives that describe Esztergom!

19. Which three locations describe Esztergom?

20. What significance does the Danube have in the life of Esztergom and the locals?

It does not have a significance 1–5 Inseparable

APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEWEES

Anita Kocsis, Balassa Bálint Museum, December 1, 2021

Barbara Barabás, Esztergom Municipality, May 24, 2022

Edit Tari, Balassa Bálint Museum, November 25, 2021

Franciska Gerstmayer Tóth, Mihály Babits Memorial House, Balassa Bálint Museum
December 4, 2021

Györgyi Fehér, Danube Museum, February 10, 2022

Katalin Gép, Kaleidoscope House, November 24, 2021

Kitti Ribár, Castle Museum, March 6, 2022

Péter Vidra, Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim Djami, February 11, 2022

Petra Simon, Irány Esztergom (Esztergom Tourist Nonprofit LLC), May 23, 2022

Zoltán Horváth, Kiskosár Bevásárló Közösség, February 9, 2022

Zsuzsanna Lőrincz, Kiskosár Bevásárló Közösség, February 9, 2022

APPENDIX 3 – VISITOR NUMBERS

	2017		2018		2019	
	Internal Visitors	Tourists	Internal Visitors	Tourists	Internal Visitors	Tourists
Castle Museum	55584	8338	80740	12000	88057	8800
Balassa Bálint Museum	3097	456	2263	400	2120	390
Christian Museum	6729	909	7401	873	-	-
Danube Museum	17126	149	9188	42	8195	70
Öziceli Hacci Ibrahim-Djami	-	-	-	-	-	-
Basilica (Cathedral Treasury on the first floor of the Basilica)	94889	29000	81066	30000	1500	-

Table 5: Visitor Numbers¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ KSH. Kulturális Statisztika. Adatgyűjtések a 2018. évről [Cultural Statistic. Data from 2018] accessed May 20, 2022. <https://kultstat.oszk.hu/#/home/public>; KSH. Kulturális Statisztika. Adatgyűjtések a 2019. évről [Cultural Statistic. Data from 2019] last accessed May 20, 2021. <https://kultstat.oszk.hu/#/home/public>