Currently, in different countries there exist a variety of diverging views on museology, starting from its official recognition as a science at the national and professional levels and ending with the use of this term rather as a definition of the theory and methodology of museum work. The creation of International Committee for Museology (ICOM) in 1977 is considered to be a milestone in the recognition of museology as a scientific and academic discipline by the global community, developing an international platform for theoretical investigations in this field. Nowadays in the XXI century the common official position of ICOM is the non-acceptance of museology as an independent scientific discipline with its definition as a “field of activity”. Researchers of ICOM state that “the similarities of museology with a science – even with a developing one – are slowly fading, as neither its object nor its methods really correspond epistemological criteria of a specific scientific approach.”

In the 1960s–1980s Czechoslovak played an important role in the international activity of ICOM, but with time its participation has significantly decreased. The position of Russia, Eastern European countries, and probably some other countries, concerning the definition of museology hasn’t significantly changed since the first theoretical investigations in the field of museology scientific development. Conversely, such theoretical developments in these countries continue and they are reflected in numerous research works of museologists. It is important to point out that in 1960s the acceleration of museological theory development was provoked by the fact that this discipline was for the first time being taught at the universities. An outstanding museologist Z. Stránský (1926–2016) noted that the necessity of the educational programs’ development has deepened the theoretical background of museology.

In St. Petersburg the department of museology was founded in 1988 at the initiative of N. I. Sergeeva (1920–2011). V. P. Gritskevitch (1922–2013) and L. M. Shlyahtina were also the initiators of the creation of the museology department. L. M. Shlyahtina notes that the understanding of museology, introduced by Z. Stránský, lays at the foundation of educational strategies and museum workers’ preparation concepts and moreover it was an impetus to further development of thought and research in the field of theoretical museology. L. M. Shlyahtina has created a course “Theoretical problems of museology”, which has been taught at the department of museology since its creation.

The Department of Museology and Cultural Heritage of Saint Petersburg State Institute of Culture continues to develop and to refer to some statements of Czech museologists, probably the most significant of which is the “father of museology” Z. Stránský, also J. Neustupný, J. Beneš. This fact is reflected in scientific works of professors, graduate and undergraduate students of the department.

Among them we can name the scientific investigations of

2 Idem, p. 56.
L. M. Shlyahtina and E. N. Mastenitsa define the subject of museology as a “cognition of museum nature” of the object’s cultural value after its transformation in the process of musealisation. “Museum is one of the historically developed forms for the embodiment of the specific, museal attitude of man to reality, which is not a constant thing, but a changing one, moreover, it should change in historical and social constellations.”

This theory was accepted by many museologists in Russia. However, it is crucial to point out that the understanding and interpretation of the term “musealisation” and its derivatives, has undergone significant changes in Russian literature and it could be said that this term wasn’t clearly understood and interpreted — it became “russionized”. Stránský highlighted the difference between the following specific terms: “museal” and “museum”, “museumalia”, “museality” and “musealisation”, “thesaurus”, that are accepted and used in Czech professional community of museologists, not only in theory but also in practice. Stránský himself noted that although many specialists and scientists have inherited these new terms, which Stránský was forced to introduce in order to formulate the system of museology, they were not used in properly understood content meaning. In many modern Russian dictionaries and museology textbooks many of the mentioned museological terms are not thoroughly disclosed and sometimes they are even absent.

The understanding of museology, its subject, object, structure, terminology and methodology by Stránský has been changing during the process of his scientific researches. This article covers the content and essence of museology, presented in his last monograph “Archeology and Museology” (2005). On the ground of continuous museum work and the studies of philosophy, noetics, methodology of science, Stránský formulated a system of museology as a scientific discipline, related to the term of “museality”, created by Stránský and accepted on the international level.

Stránský formulated that “museology is a scientific discipline that studies the musealisation of reality.” Musealisation is the endowment of reality with specific characteristics with respect to cultural and memorial value of their authentic representatives, i. e. museal mastering of reality. What is more, Stránský introduced the concept of “cultural metareality”, which meant a form of reality appearing after the process of musealisation. In addition to that, Stránský introduced a new professional museological term “musealita” (cultural-memorial value) for the indentionation of this matter. It is crucial to point out that Russian authors use a limited amount of sources of Czech museologists, basically they include the works of Z. Stránský (in German and also translated into Russian). It is related to the fact that the number of Czech museologists’ publications in Russia is considerably low. There are some articles, but yet there aren’t any monographs translated into Russian.

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Diachronic¹⁹ (the levels of museological study)/Historical museology Synchronous/Modern museology Theoretical/Theoretical museology Applied/Museography Metamuseology.

The structure of museology according to L. M. Shlyahtina consists of history, theory, museum chronology, applied museology. In its turn O. S. Sapanzha highlights 3 levels of research which are:

Conceptual level (museology), Synthetic level (museum and museography), Technological level (museum activity).²⁰

Theoretical museology, according to Stránský, is the centre of this system, explaining the museal process by theoretical “subsystems”:²¹ sub theory of selection, thesaurus compilation, presentation. These three sub theories, based on Stránský’s structure, are described in the work of L. M. Shlyahtina as a theoretical basis of museum activity.

S. V. Pshenichnaya in her researches creates her own conceptual model of a museum as a specific information and communication system. From the point of view of S. V. Pshenichnaya the use of systemic and informative-semiotic approaches in the museum investigation allows to shape a holistic view of the museum as a “complex dynamic socio-cultural information and communication system.”²²

Stránský highlights the necessity to combine “museological thinking” with the modern philosophical and scientific thinking. Museology is merging with ontology, noethics and axiology.²³ E. H. Mastenitsa also addresses this issue, pointing out that at the turn of XX–XXI centuries museology was facing an introduction of “philosophical paradigm, oriented on human study in the diversity of all its interconnections with civilization, society, family... The past century was marked by the graduate retreat from the positivistic fragmentation of humanities to the affirmation of a more scientifically universal cultural and historical picture of human and social development...”²⁴

The works of E. H. Mastenitsa²⁵ and L. M. Shlyahtina²⁶ examine the interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity of museology, described by Stránský. Investigations in the field of museology methodology were held by O. S. Sapanzha and have many parallels and similarities with theoretical thinking of Stránský on this issue.²⁷

In can be concluded that the continuity Z. Z. Stránský’s concepts and ideas can be found in theoretical works of professors and students of The Department of Museology and Cultural Heritage of Saint Petersburg State Institute of Culture with their significant influence on scientific development.

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