

The Rhineland Museum of 1925. The Short Life of a Grand Plan

Katrin Hieke

Abstract

In 1925, the mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer, announced the creation of a brand new museum. It was to present the Rhineland, a loosely-defined region in the western part of Germany. In the following years, an appointed commission developed a concept for the museum. Since there was no collection to consider, nor a building or anything else apart from the preferably glamorous presentation of the history of the Rhineland, a subjective yet ideal plan of what was to be presented and how was soon created. Nevertheless, over the following years, it was slowly shaped by the pressures of reality: financial constraints, interests of institutions and individuals involved, the tactics of politicians and museum directors – or the realisation that certain topics could not be presented in an appropriate way and were therefore to be left out. The museum that finally opened in 1936 was – also due to the political changes since 1933 – something quite different from the initial ideal. However, what did derive was widely referred to as a model museum, honoured the following year with a gold medal at the World Exhibition in Paris for its cutting-edge approach. Despite this, after the destruction of the building complex in World War II it was decided that this museum, unlike all the other museums in Cologne, would not be founded anew.

This paper traces the story of the Rhineland Museum from its beginnings in 1925 through the famous, gold-winning reality of 1937 down to the early 1940s, when it disappeared, not only physically, but also from people's memories and from professional discourse, with the exception of only a few, faint traces.

Keywords: Museum history, ideal museum, Germany 1920s-1940s, regional identity

An idea is born

Behind all the innovations and cultural movements, the 1920s, which, looking back, are often described as the 'Golden Twenties', were nevertheless an extremely turbulent era. This applied for the whole of Europe, and in particular in the case of the Rhine Province, a region on the western edge of Germanyⁱ, marked by the Treaty of Versailles with the occupation of the region, pro-French 'cultural propaganda', separatist unrest and, finally, the Ruhr crisis, inflation and the global economic crisis.ⁱⁱ

In the Rhine Province, the politically and economically tense situation resulted in the formation of a new and stronger sense of community. The historical importance of the Province and its place in national as well as international history – whether fact or myth – attained during these years an emphasis and attention never previously seen. The continuing occupation by allied troops and the separatist movements accompanying it were central to the increased controversy surrounding the concepts of nation, identity and the political allegiance

of the Rhine Province.ⁱⁱⁱ

Among other factors, this manifested itself in the ‘Millennial Celebrations of the Rhineland’ (*Jahrtausendfeiern der Rheinlande*) celebrated in 1925 throughout the entire region and even beyond (Cepl-Kaufmann, 2009). With hundreds of events and exhibitions, an assertive and proud Rhine Province demonstrated its adherence to the German Reich, though not without drawing attention to its large and varied contribution to the prosperity of the nation. The great success of these celebrations, measured by the number of visitors and the wide public attention, both national and international, culminated in the political declaration of an intent to establish a permanent museum under the title *Rheinisches Museum*. This was to be devoted to the ‘museal presentation of the entire cultural development of the Rhineland’ (Ewald, 1926: 1).

In addition, Cologne had a highly active mayor at that time, in the person of Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967), for whom the development of culture, education and science was closely linked to his objectives with regard to local development and economic policies (Düwell, 2004: 120). The city was hence to become an intellectual and economic link in the chain joining Germany with the western democracies, as well as a genuinely Rhenish metropolis. It is thus not surprising that such publicity magnets and economically and (at least superficially) educationally effective tools as the ‘Millennial Celebrations of the Rhineland’ and especially the ‘Millennial Exhibition’ held in Cologne, were seized upon and eventually culminated in the plan to found a museum. A museum seemed to be the suitable medium to carry out such an obviously politically motivated project. More detailed plans or concepts concerning the precise content, design or location, were non-existent; this was left in the hands of a few specialists – who were therefore able, in a relatively free way, to develop their concept for the museum.

In the 1920s, Cologne had an already established and renowned museum scene; the oldest museum – the *Wallraf Richartz Museum* – dated back to 1824. However, almost all of them were running low on both financial and human resources as well as facilities to host the collections, among them the *Historisches Museum der Stadt Köln* (Historical Museum of the City of Cologne), founded 1888. Thus, the plans to create yet another museum were received far less enthusiastically by the public and the opposition Socialist party, who in vain pointed to more pressing duties of the municipality (Düwell, 2004: 146).

Many museums in Germany at this time – especially the local folk museums, which were increasingly founded in the challenging interwar period, as well as established institutions like the *Germanisches Nationalmuseum* in Nuremberg – portrayed to varying

degrees the underlying concepts of regional or national identity (Arand, 2002; Bott, 1992). Furthermore, the 1920s witnessed the founding of the *Deutsche Museum* in Munich and the *Hygiene Museum* in Dresden, both representing modern museum types and implementing new approaches especially in terms of didactic innovations (Füßl and Trischler, 2003; Vogel, 2003). In the Rhine Province, major populist exhibitions were organised that attracted both international attention and a huge number of visitors: the *Millennial Exhibition* in 1925, already mentioned above, the *Pressa* (International Press Exhibition) in 1928 and the *GESOLEI* (*Gesundheit, Soziale Fürsorge, Leibesübungen*) (Health, Social Care and Sports) two years earlier (Internationale Presse-Ausstellung Köln, 1928; Körner and Stercken, 2002). The latter, especially, was significant for the development of the Rhineland Museum in terms of exhibition technology and didactics, as heavy use was made of the Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics (now often referred to as Isotype), which in turn had just been developed at the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum Wien* (Social and Economic Museum of Vienna) by its director Otto Neurath (1882-1945) (Kräutler, 2008).

The museum ideal^{iv}

During the very same year in which the 'Millennial Celebrations of the Rhineland' were held, Konrad Adenauer commissioned a *Denkschrift* (memorandum) describing content and objectives of the new museum. It became available in 1926 (Ewald, 1926) and was written by Wilhelm Ewald (1878-1955), the already appointed director of the new museum, who had been responsible for the *Millennial Exhibition* and had, only a year previously, become director of the Historical Museum of the City of Cologne (Brill, 1965: 13). Over the following years, other Cologne museum directors and university professors became involved both in conceptual work and in practical application. A second memorandum which was more detailed – and feasible – dates from this phase (Witte, Ewald, With and Buchner, 1931).

It is not surprising that the initial plans were conceived on a grand scale: as regards content alone, they demanded no more and no less than a presentation of all developments from prehistory up to the immediate present, whereby the Rhineland was to be considered, at least in the departments of geography and geology, flora and fauna, in the widest geographical sense. Political, ecclesiastic, social and economic developments were to be further themes (Ewald, 1926: 3-4). All together, a historical completeness was aimed at which had never been realised before in such a comprehensive panorama. Although most museums at that time were, in broad terms, either institutions of public education or 'scholarly rooms' for scientific work and study, the Rhineland Museum, quite in harmony

with the ideals of Konrad Adenauer (Düwell, 2004: 153), was to be one of the first to be both simultaneously (Ewald, 1926: 1-2).

The didactic considerations with which this was to be achieved were weighted accordingly. The makers of the museum were particularly devoted to an uninterrupted assessment reflecting a linear progress of the development of the Rhine Province in the best possible way, supporting the prevailing concepts of regional identity at that time (Ewald, 1926: 1). While the museum and its permanent collection were to be linked up to a number of institute-like study collections under the same roof, the museum itself was to become a complementary scientific institute for all universities in the Rhine Province. It saw itself as a central research establishment devoted to the history of the Rhineland (Ewald, 1926: 2); nothing less than the future 'Central Rhenish Museum' (Brill, 1965: 16).

There are two main reasons why those writing out the concepts could get so close to what was presumed to be the museum ideal: (a) in contrast to so many other museums in the foundation stage, there was no pre-existing collection – though many objects in the *Millennial Exhibition* could have been used for the Rhineland Museum – and (b) there was not yet a building – and thus spatial restrictions - to accommodate the museum.

The museum formation

The years following the initial memorandum were marked by the concept being continuously modified and adapted to accommodate the reality of financial constraints, the interests of various institutions or persons involved, or simply for practical or professional reasons. As with many projects in the cultural sector, the Rhineland Museum was also affected by the difficult economic situation of the post-war years and the subsequent global economic crisis. The tight financial situation of the City of Cologne, the Rhine Province and other potential contributors resulted in changes to and restrictions of the original museum concept, despite the Rhineland Museum being given priority by the mayor in the fields of culture and education (Düwell, 2004: 146-147). The number of personnel involved was low, travel was – at least temporarily – restricted to a minimum, purchases and acquisitions from the museum budget were subject to approval by the city's authorities, and the items for display in the exhibitions had to be produced as cheaply as possible (Meerfeld, 1927).

Due to the demand for completeness and absolute continuity in the lines of development to be exhibited, the demand for originals was relegated to secondary importance, meaning that copies and plaster casts as well as instructive models were preferred (Ewald, 1926: 1) (figures 1-3 show examples of correspondingly designed

exhibition spaces at the museum). This kind of exhibition presentation was in line with a movement of that time, which considered the public education goals to be more important than the authenticity of the exhibits.^v



Figure 1. Permanent exhibition at the agricultural department, *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, about 1937
© Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln/ M. Wiedmann



Figure 2. Exhibition hall of the Rhine bridges, *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, about 1937
© Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln



Figure 3. Exhibition hall with town models, *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, about 1937
© Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln

As such, it was possible to circumvent the constantly arising competitive situation with the cultural historical museums already established in the Rhine area, especially the two great provincial museums of Bonn and Trier, which could thus maintain their regional rights of acquisition, especially in the context of archaeological finds. Financial restrictions, competitors and ever-increasing delays were probably also reasons why the memorandum of 1931 suggested integrating some already existing collections from elsewhere in Cologne into the Rhineland Museum's exhibitions (material was not only borrowed from other museums but also from various municipal departments, such as models created by the building authority or plans by the parks & gardens department). At the same time this all contributed to attempts to restructure the crisis-ridden museum landscape of Cologne (Witte et al, 1931: 8-9).

As Wilhelm Ewald was also director of the overfilled Historical Museum of the City of Cologne, the two museums and their collections gradually merged into each other, using part of the older collection to represent the city prominently in several departments of the Rhineland Museum, but subsequently leading to a substantial limitation in content presented at the Historical Museum itself. For a short time, the museum project was therefore running under the title 'Rhenish and Historical Museum' (Brill, 1965: 14-16).

The fields of interest and the working range of the Rhineland Museum in general experienced significant changes during its development, most of them due to pragmatic reasons. Although the original concept intended to throw light on the entire course of the Rhine, from its source down to the North Sea regardless of political boundaries, and to cover all the other politically, culturally or economically related regions, the plans involved in the

conception and presentation of exhibits became increasingly restricted to the political Rhine Province (plus in some respect parts of the Province of Hesse-Nassau in the East) (Witte et al, 1931; Brill, 1965: 21).

As can be noted through a comparison of the concepts laid out in both memorandums of 1926 and 1931 and the description of the museum at its opening (*Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, 1936), a number of the study collections and their affiliated research institutes were never realised. As, however, all these changes were practically invisible from the outside, they did not restrict the principally political objectives regarding the presentation of the history of the Rhineland in any way, neither before nor after the National Socialists seized power.

The deviations from the original concept and ideal also arose both from the commission and the museum developers themselves, who, knowingly or unknowingly, manoeuvred their own research interests into the foreground, thus attracting greater attention and finding a wider scope for their ideas. For instance, the original plans were, mainly for didactic reasons, to trace a chronological route through the museum starting with items from the Geology, Geography and the Prehistory departments (Ewald, 1926: 4; Witte et al, 1931: 2-3). However, none of the directors and professors participating had any research specialisations in these fields. Furthermore, doubts arose as to whether these departments, whose objects appeared to be far less ‘spectacular’ than those of other departments, would be able to provide the intended dramatic take-off to the itinerary (Clemen, 1932). The official rationale provided for why these departments were not represented in the long run, was that those collections were already existing and accessible to the public elsewhere and therefore should remain in their original museums (Witte et al, 1931: 8). When the museum finally opened in 1936, visitors started their tour in the historical political department where, beginning in 800 AD, the history of the German kings and rulers of the Rhineland was presented (*Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, 1936: 4).

The question of location was decided at the latest two years after the publication of the first memorandum in 1926. The Rhineland museum was to be accommodated in converted former cuirassier barracks located at a site of high symbolic importance: in the heart of Cologne’s city centre, on the banks of the Rhine and just opposite the famous Cathedral (Bender, 1936) (see figure 4).

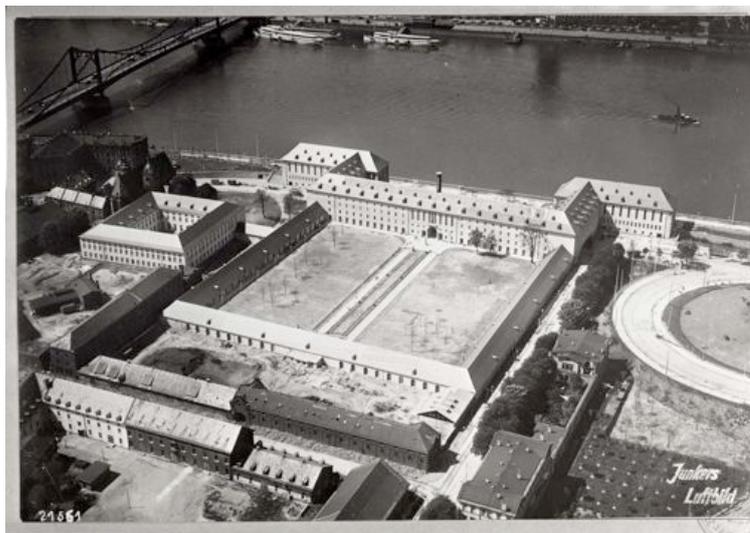


Figure 4. Aerial view of the future Rhineland Museum, 1928
 © Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln/ Junkers Luftbild

The classicist building with two wings featured an impressive 200 meter long riverfront, 10,000 square meters of floor space and an additional 4,000 square meters to be used as depot (Brill, 1965: 16, 24). The memorandum of 1931 took the then set premises into consideration and in general presented a more realistic concept in terms of feasibility, also because time was pressing, as was the need to finally present results.

The first museum concept did not have to be developed in terms of spatial constraints, visitor management, or lighting conditions. However, since the construction of a new museum was never seriously considered, those adaptations of the concept had to be expected. It would have been very interesting to see how the initial idealistic museum concept could have found its expression in an ideal museum architecture. But such plans were apparently never followed up; at least no corresponding sources have been found. We are thus only able to speculate whether, in line with the spirit of the time and with public education being the openly expressed objective, preference would have been given to maybe a simple building or instead a more spectacular one, which would have acted as a temple to the Rhine Province.

The award-winning museum

The museum which finally opened in 1936 was – also on the basis of the changed political situation since 1933 – something fundamentally different to the original ideal as laid out in writing. The National Socialists recognised the advantages of instrumentalising this institution for propaganda purposes and continued to develop the museum with further changes. A comprehensive historical and political department was included, which presented development up to the present day – though a part of this and some of the socio-economic

topics were not yet finished at the time of opening (Brill, 1965: 22). Being one of the first museums in the field of cultural history to apply an interdisciplinary approach, the Rhineland Museum integrated another four adjoining themes, namely 'The Church and the Ecclesiastical Orders', 'The Rhenish Cities and their Citizens', 'The Rhenish Peasantry' and 'The Rhenish Economy and its Workers' (Haus der Rheinischen Heimat, 1936: 13-14). When it opened, the museum consisted of exhibition rooms and administrative offices, some institute facilities (the graphic and numismatic collection, the pictorial archive with a photo studio as well as the library), workshop spaces for restoration and modelling and halls for temporary exhibitions and teaching (Brill, 1965: 24).

Education gained an ever-increasing importance over other museum functions such as research and collecting. Franz Brill (1901-1970), one of the museum employees at the time and successor of Wilhelm Ewald as director of the Historical Museum of the City of Cologne after World War II, later described the museum programme as being well in line with the National Socialist movement, which saw this new museum type as a great opportunity to present itself as being able to take care of its 'people and homeland' (Brill, 1965: 21). The new name *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, which can be roughly translated as House of the Rhenish Homeland, reflected the shift in emphasis: the title 'museum' was considered to be out of date and therefore any notion of the conventional historical museum was replaced by 'house'. This term depicted an active centre alive to the needs of the community and general public, coupled with a greater emphasis on the increasingly important National Socialist concept of 'homeland' (*Heimat*) (Rheinland in Wort und Bild, 1940: 10).

Nevertheless, this museum concept was able to provide, not only on a national but also an international basis, an exemplary museum model which was crowned with success by being awarded a Gold Medal at the Paris World Exhibition in 1937 (Brill, 1965: 20; Alexander, 1992). At the international exhibition of modern museum types, three German museums were represented: in addition to the *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, the *Pergamon Museum* and the *Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum* (today the *Bode Museum*, both in Berlin) also participated. From our museum, a partial model of the room in which the development of the Rhenish cities was illustrated using city models was shown in a diorama as well as a model of the Constitution and Administration hall (Alexander, 1992: 91-92) (see figures 3 and 5).



Figure 5. Model of the exhibition hall Constitution and Administration at the *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, about 1937 © Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln

The modern exhibition architecture and the wide use of didactic presentation media such as models, casts and illustrative placards based on the Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics were particularly responsible for the international recognition received (Brill, 1965: 17). The latter was used widely throughout the museum to explain – in a clear, effective and easy way – substantial correlations, relationships and developments in a huge range of subjects (Brill, 1965: 20), for example: the Evolution of the table or the Distribution of fertilisers in the Rhine Province, to name only two. Original objects displayed were mainly ‘typical specimens’ of bourgeois and peasant lifestyles and often included whole ensembles such as living rooms and a hall (see figure 6), operable paper mills and various workshops. In addition, there were hundreds of models of houses, churches, castles, rural settlements and farms; plastic models of Rhenish livestock; ship models showing the development of navigation on the Rhine and Rhine bridges (see figure 2); metal replicas of historic silver objects; paintings and copies of paintings.



Figure 6. Exhibit of an original baroque entrance hall, *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, 1937
© Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln

Due to the limitations of content and time periods to be considered at the Rhineland Museum, surplus items and archaeological Roman and Frankish objects became available for barter (Brill, 1965: 17-18, 20). In fact, the museum described itself as a ‘methodically entirely new type of museum’, because all modern technical means available at that time were deployed (Haus der Rheinischen Heimat, 1936: 12).

The lost museum

In spite of this (questionable) success, it was decided not to restore the museum after the end of the Second World War, in contrast to all other Cologne museums (Borger, 1990: 49). Large parts of the former barracks had been destroyed, though the majority of the collections had in anticipation been brought into safe storage (Brill, 1965: 26). Starting at the outbreak of war in 1939, objects were increasingly replaced by photographs of the objects, copies or other, less valuable objects (Brill, 1965: 26). Also, during this time, the museum hosted various propagandistic exhibitions (Alexander, 1992: 98).

The museum concepts – the original of 1925, its revision of 1931 and that adapted by the National Socialists – appeared to be out of date in every aspect. We are not far off in assuming that, on the one hand, the older Cologne museums, all of which were founded by bourgeois initiatives, were anchored more deeply in the community and hence had a more powerful lobby. There was also surely a great need to take distance from an institution that had been instrumentalised to such an extent over the preceding decade. In addition, Franz Brill (1965: 28-29) reports that the prevailing wish was to concentrate again more on the history of the city itself rather than on the region. After they were returned from depots in

Southern Germany by 1950, the majority of the objects were handed over to the Historical Museum of the City of Cologne, which had been most closely associated with the Rhineland Museum, latterly *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*. It was, as Franz Brill put it, the only option given the nature of the objects and the space and funding available (Brill, 1965: 28-29). It became a museum project among many in the city. The Rhine Province itself merged into the new federal state of North Rhine – Westphalia.

The first exhibition after the war took place in 1953 and presented some significant milestones of the history of the city of Cologne (Brill, 1965: 18). Judging by the small museum catalogue (Rheinisches und Historisches Museum der Stadt Köln, 1953) and, more importantly, some photographs of the exhibition, hardly any display boards, illustrative placards or copies were used and only some models. The focus had shifted, once again, to the display of original, ‘real’ items. Presumably, they were considered to be more reliable than didactic means, as these had been used more openly to support certain political objectives and interpretations.

Conclusion

What remains, in a physical sense and in museological discourse, of a museum ideal, (an ideal museum originating in the innovative 1920s and the model of a museum), which was even capable of obtaining considerable success at the World Exhibition? Surprisingly, very little. Contrary to the professional attention devoted to the museum while it lasted (judging by the voluminous folders of correspondence as seen at the Archive), there was nearly no form of critical discussion about the concept and how it was put into practice in the relevant literature after the Second World War. Furthermore, the history of this museum was never comprehensively documented.^{vi}

Due to the collapse of the archive, it is not currently possible – and will not be so at least for the next few years – to investigate any professional correspondence on the subject. So far only a very few traces are known. For instance, the French museologist Georges-Henri Rivière (1897–1985) refers to the *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat* as one of the museums that inspired him in the creation of a concept for a visitor-oriented, up-to-date museum (Roth, 1990: 144). Still today museums seem to be the means of choice when it comes to strengthening a collective identity of a specific area or nation. Recently, for example, both the Netherlands and France pursued the idea of creating National History Museums. However, both projects have meanwhile been cancelled for different reasons (Nationaal Historisch Museum, 2012; Evin, 2012).

These sources and other possible impacts on museums and their concepts, and thus the significance of the Rhineland Museum and especially the *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat* within the museological discourse, are the subjects of further studies as part of the thesis project.

Studying the history of museums, not only at a particular time in their history but over the whole period of their formation and development, provides valuable insights into the diverse contexts and processes affecting the planning and construction of the institutions. Museum projects are highly dependent on their respective historical, social, political and professional contexts. They are – at times very short-lived – manifestations of prevailing ideas of a specific time. Historical sources, especially all the internal working papers, notes, and correspondence, help to shed light on these processes of developing and discarding ideas, on interdependencies and interactions with the outside world and within the institutions, and most notably on the differences between written concepts and actual implementation. Ultimately, they help to understand not only how museums became what they were, but also what they are today.

References

- Alexander, B. (1992). 'Das „Haus der Rheinischen Heimat“ auf der Pariser Weltausstellung 1937.' *Geschichte in Köln*, 31, pp 91-108.
- Alexander, B. (2001). *Im eigenen Interesse. Nachforschungen über den Erwerb und Verbleib von Kunstgut in den Jahren 1938 - 1945*, Köln: Kölnisches Stadtmuseum.
- Arand, T. (2002). 'Museumsgründungen im Umfeld der Jahrtausendfeier der deutschen Rheinlande 1925 - Ein Beitrag zur Identitätsstiftung im rheinisch-bergischen Raum?' *Geschichte im Westen*, 17, pp 182-201.
- Bender, E. (1936). 'Das Bauwerk und seine Geschichte.' *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, 21st May.
- Borger, H. (1990). *Die Kölner Museen*. Köln: Vista Point Verlag.
- Bott, G. (1992). 'Das Germanische Nationalmuseum in Nürnberg - ein nationales Museum?', in M. L. von Plessen (ed.). *Die Nation und ihre Museen*. Frankfurt/ Main: Campus, pp. 169-181.
- Bouresh, B. et al (1997). *Auf der Suche nach regionaler Identität. Geschichtskultur im Rheinland zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus*. Bergisch Gladbach: Thomas-Morus-Akademie Bensberg.
- Brill, F. (1965). *Das Kölnische Stadtmuseum*. Hamburg: Verlag Cram, de Gruyter & Co.
- Cepl-Kaufmann, G. (ed.) (2009). *Jahrtausendfeiern und Befreiungsfeiern im Rheinland. Zur politischen Festkultur 1925 und 1930*. Essen: Klartext-Verlag.
- Clemen, P. (29 July 1932). Letter to Konrad Adenauer [typescript]. Best. 11327, Brauweiler, Archiv des Landschaftsverbandes Rheinland (Archive of the Rhineland Regional Council).
- 'Das Haus der Rheinischen Heimat. Spiegel des Rheinlandes' (1940). *Rheinland in Wort und Bild*, 2, 7., pp 10-12.
- Düwell, K. (2004). 'Universitäten, Schulen und Museen. Adenauers wissenschafts- und

- bildungspolitische Bestrebungen für Köln und das Rheinland (1917-1932).', in K. Düwell et al (eds.). *Landes- und Zeitgeschichte im Westen Deutschlands. Ausgewählte Beiträge von Kurt Düwell*. Essen: Klartext, pp. 117-154.
- Engelbrecht, J. (1994). *Landesgeschichte Nordrhein-Westfalen*. Stuttgart: Ulmer.
- Evin, F. (2012). 'La Maison de l'histoire de France est enterrée.' *Le Monde*, 27 August 2012, accessed 30 november 2012, <http://www.lemonde.fr/a-la-une/article/2012/08/27/la-maison-de-l-histoire-de-france-est-enteree_1751323_3208.html>
- Ewald, W. (1926). Denkschrift für den Ausbau des Rheinischen Museums [typescript] Best. 611. Köln, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln (Historical Archive of the City of Cologne).
- Flacke-Knoch, M. (1985). *Museumskonzeptionen in der Weimarer Republik. Die Tätigkeit Alexander Dorners im Provinzialmuseum Hannover*. Marburg: Jonas.
- Füßl, W., Trischler, H. (eds.) (2003). *Geschichte des Deutschen Museums. Akteure, Artefakte, Ausstellungen*. München: Prestel.
- Haus der Rheinischen Heimat (1936). *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat in Köln. Museum für Volkstum, Geschichte und Kultur des Rheinlandes. Übersichtsplan und Rundgang*. Köln: Haus der Rheinischen Heimat.
- Internationale Presse-Ausstellung Köln 1928 (ed.) (1928). *Pressa. Kulturschau am Rhein*. Berlin: Max Schröder.
- Kastner, D. and Torunsky, V. (1987). *Kleine Rheinische Geschichte 1815-1986*. Köln: Rheinland.
- Körner, H. and Stercken, A. (eds.) (2002). *Kunst, Sport und Körper. GeSoLei 1926-2002*. Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz.
- Kräutler, H. (2008). *Otto Neurath: Museum and Exhibition Work. Spaces (Designed) for Communication*. Frankfurt: Lang.
- Meerfeld, J. (17 Dec 1927). Letter to the Museum Directors of Cologne [typescript] Best. 611. Köln, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln (Historical Archive of the City of Cologne).
- Nationaal Historisch Museum (ed.) (2012). *Blueprint. Plans, sketches and story of the Dutch Museum of National History (2008 - 2011)*. Amsterdam: Sun.
- Roth, M. (1990). *Heimatmuseum. Zur Geschichte einer deutschen Institution*. Berlin: Gebr. Mann.
- Rheinisches und Historisches Museum der Stadt Köln (1953). *Kleiner Führer 1953*. Köln.
- Vogel, K. (ed.) (2003). *Das Deutsche Hygiene-Museum Dresden, 1911-1990*. Dresden: Sandstein.
- 'Haus der Rheinischen Heimat' (1936). *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, 21 May.
- Witte, F., Ewald, W., With, K., Buchner, E. (24/25 Feb 1931). Denkschrift für den Ausbau des Rheinischen Museums [typescript] Best. 611. Köln, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln (Historical Archive of the City of Cologne).

Author:

Katrin Hieke

PhD Student, Institute of Empirical Cultural Science, University of Tübingen (Germany);
Arts manager and cultural anthropologist for projekt2508 Group, Germany, and independent
museum professional.

kontakt@katrinhiecke.de

ⁱ This study will discuss the 'Rhineland' as well as the 'Rhine Province'. Here, the term *Rheinland* (Rhineland) refers to a non-specific geographic and/or cultural area situated on the right and left banks of the Rhine, which can be understood (in its most comprehensive form) as reaching from the Rhine source down to the North Sea. Often, the term *Rheinland* serves as synonym for the former political region, i.e. the Rhine Province, a specific geopolitical area along the Lower Rhine, of which the major part is nowadays incorporated in the Federal German State (Land) of North Rhine – Westphalia (*Nordrhein-Westfalen*). The earlier term *Rheinlande* (the Lands of the Rhine) was an emotionally charged political concept and is now only used, if at all, poetically. Finally, the term *Rhenish* applies in the widest sense to the river Rhine (as: Rhenish confederation, Rhenish wine etc.). Although the literal translation of the museum name *Rheinisches Museum* would be Rhenish Museum, its idea is better expressed in the term Rhineland Museum, which is therefore used here.

ⁱⁱ Many publications exist on the history of the Rhineland/ Rhine Province. For a comprehensive overview, see Engelbrecht (1994) and Kastner and Torunsky (1987).

ⁱⁱⁱ Especially in recent decades, extensive studies on regional identity in the Rhineland in the interwar period have been published. See inter alia Bouresh et al, 1997.

^{iv} The history of the Rhineland Museum and its possible role as a model museum in the 1930s and early 1940s is the subject of the author's doctoral thesis at the *Ludwig Uhland Institute of Empirical Cultural Science at the University of Tübingen*. Apart from the secondary sources on the history of the Rhine Province and the contemporary museum landscape, the thesis, like this study, is based on some several hundred, though mainly unlabelled, photographic copies from the Pictorial Archive of the Rhineland (*Rheinisches Bildarchiv*) depicting the museum's interior and exterior at different times. It is also based in particular on the comprehensive and original administrative documents related to the museum which belong to the Historical Archive of the City of Cologne (*Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln*). Unfortunately, these had not yet been completely studied by the author when the archive collapsed in 2009.

Those documents represented just a partial selection made by different actors; the museum staff, administration bodies as well as the archivists of several decades decided what was worth keeping - and what was not. Nevertheless, this is one of the rare cases where comprehensive documents exist not only about the museum at a given time (usually the opening or anniversaries), but also on the planning and construction phase - quite remarkable given the chaos of the war and post-war years.

It is hoped that the records have survived the collapse and will after their restoration be accessible again. A number of investigations will therefore remain fragmentary – though hopefully, however, on a temporary basis only.

^v One of the most significant debates about the dichotomy of the original and its reproduction in Germany at that time revolved around Alexander Dorner (1893-1957) at the *Provinzialmuseum Hannover* (Provincial Museum of Hannover), and especially the 1929 exhibition *Original and Facsimile* (Flacke-Knoch, 1985).

^{vi} Up to now, mainly only Beatrix Alexander (*Kölnisches Stadtmuseum/ City Museum of Cologne*) has dealt with the history of the Rhineland Museum, latterly *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, including the presentation at the Paris World Exhibition (Alexander, 1992) as well as the important subject of origin and whereabouts of art objects from the *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat* between 1938 and 1945 (Alexander, 2001). A history of the *Kölnisches Stadtmuseum*, which is partly also a history of the Rhineland Museum and the *Haus der Rheinischen Heimat*, is in preparation.