

## Chapter VII

### Access to Other Museums and Libraries

M.P.s and members of the public criticized the British Museum's access policies and referred to what was seemingly better access to other national institutions. Critics noted that one did not need a ticket to visit the Louvre, and 'A Citizen' wrote in The Times that access to the French national library was far easier than at the British Museum. According to Planta, however, the British Museum's access policies were liberal compared to other institutions. Later, in 1830 Ellis submitted to the trustees a list of days and hours that European libraries were open to show that they were open fewer days and fewer hours each day than the British Museum. Based on this information the British Museum ranked among the leaders for ease of access, and its policies made Britain look good among its rivals on the Continent. To vindicate the Museum the officers and other witnesses testified at the Committee hearings that access to the British Museum was better than at any other European national institution. While Baber was discussing the Museum's hours of service, he stated, "The reading-room is open more than any other reading-room in the world."<sup>1</sup>

The witnesses assumed that there were no other institutions that could surpass the British Museum's access services. Were they correct? How difficult would it have been to use another museum or library? Critics pointed to one aspect of a foreign institution's access policies, such as no tickets at the Louvre or no recommendations at the French national library, and by comparing it with the British Museum's practices, made the British Museum look less favorable. Such a myopic view failed to consider all of the foreign institution's policies and the changes in access over a broad time period. The British Museum trustees and officers dealt with many

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<sup>1</sup>"Report from the Select Committee appointed in the following Season to consider the same subject," par. 2082, 4728.

issues pertaining to access, and they concerned whether to charge a fee, the hours and days of service, the number of books and manuscripts a reader could have, lending material, and Reading Room recommendations. It is the purpose in this section to analyze the statutes of other national museums and libraries to demonstrate that the British Museum was among the vanguard for access. When critics and M.P.s made references to access in other countries, they usually cited conditions in Paris; therefore, greater emphasis will be on access in Paris.

The history of the Louvre Museum had its origins as a private collection to the French kings. One could visit Versailles during the reign of Louis XIV and see the paintings in the palace and the gardens provided one was carrying a sword and wearing a plumed hat.<sup>2</sup> Under Louis XV life at court became more private, and many paintings were housed in other quarters or lent to individuals, so it was not nearly so easy for artists or visitors to see the king's collection. This lack of access provoked criticism, and in 1744 an anonymous petition to the Director des Bâtiments deplored the dispersal and demanded that the paintings be exhibited in the Galerie des Ambassadeurs in the Tuileries. Three years later Lafont de Saint Yendre printed a pamphlet entitled Réflexions sur quelques causes de l'état de la peinture en France, and in 1749 he published L'Ombre du Grand Colbert, le Louvre et la Villes de Paris. In these works the author stated that masterpieces had great value and that artists could benefit by studying them; however, "although no expense was spared in the forming of his Majesty's cabinet, today the paintings are hidden away in badly lighted rooms at Versailles, unknown or unexciting to strangers, owing to the impossibility of seeing them."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Bazin, The Museum Age, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 151; Germain Bazin, The Louvre, trans. from the French by M.I. Martin, new revised edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. 45-46.

In order to escape further criticism, and under the influence of Madame de Pompadour,<sup>4</sup> Louis XV had 110 paintings and drawings put on exhibition at the Palais du Luxembourg beginning October 1750. The exhibition could be visited Wednesday and Saturday except for public holidays every week for three hours in the morning from October to April and in the afternoon in August and September.<sup>5</sup> It was the first free public picture gallery in France. In spite of the fact that there were catalogs, the exhibition was intended for the connoisseur. According to Bailly, keeper of the king's paintings, there were a few drawings which "were left unnumbered and unlabeled in order to give enlightened amateurs the privilege of deciding on authorship."<sup>6</sup> In 1788 the Luxembourg Palace was given to the Comte de Provence, and the exhibition was closed in the following year.

Madame de Pompadour wanted to transform the grande gallerie of the Louvre into a museum of the principal paintings of the royal collection, but her enemies at court thwarted the plans. Louis XVI revised the idea in the 1770s and 1780s and had Count d'Angeviller draw up plans for acquisition of paintings and renovation of the building. Before the work was completed the Revolution broke out. To this point the French had an inconsistent and very limited access to the royal collection. Visitors to the British Museum had to apply for a ticket; otherwise, access to the British Museum was on more liberal terms, because it was open five days a week for ten months a year. Although the Luxembourg opened nine years before the British Museum, there were no more exhibitions after 1779.

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<sup>4</sup>Taylor, *The Taste of Angels*, p. 371; Wittlin, *Museums*, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup>Bazin, *The Museum Age*, p. 151; Cecil Gould, *Trophy of Conquest; the Musée Napoléon and the Creation of the Louvre* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), p. 19-20.

<sup>6</sup>Bazin, *The Museum Age*, p. 151.

Under the Revolution various directorships and commissions carried out the plan to open a museum in the Louvre. The collection consisted of the royal collection, confiscated church property, and property of the émigrés. The museum opened to the public on 10 August 1793, and the crowds on the public days were so large, that they attracted prostitutes. Less than three years after the Louvre opened, in the spring of 1796 the Grande Galerie was shut for structural repairs and did not completely reopen until 1801. The Salon was used for display purposes. The Grande Galerie was again closed in sections from 1804 to 1810 when skylights and pillars were installed. Alterations reached a climax when the entire picture gallery was closed for eighteen months from 1808 to 1810.<sup>7</sup>

During the brief Peace of Amiens numerous British tourists went to the Louvre, and the accounts of access reached England. Visitors and students had to submit their passports to the porter, but unlike procedures at the British Museum, visitors did not need to apply for a ticket.<sup>8</sup> As a result, on some days there were as many as five thousand visitors.<sup>9</sup> Joseph Farington, who was a member of the Royal Academy, wrote in his diary about visits to the Louvre that he, Benjamin West, Arthur Martin Shee, Robert Smirke, Sir Francis Baring, Sir Abraham Hume, and many others made. On one occasion Farington visited the museum, and it was so crowded "that it appeared to smoke with dust, which caused us to go to the interior part of the Gallery which is not yet open to the general view."<sup>10</sup> Maria Edgeworth noted that part of the crowds included

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<sup>7</sup>Gould, Trophy of Conquest, p. 80, 103.

<sup>8</sup>Henry Redhead Yorke, France in Eighteen Hundred and Two; Described in a Series of Contemporary Letters, ed. and revised with a biographical appendix by J.A.C. Sykes and an introduction by Richard Davey (London: William and Heinemann, 1906), p. 157; Sir John Carr, The Stranger in France; or, a Tour From Devonshire to Paris, 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1807), p. 155-56.

<sup>9</sup>Edward P. Alexander, Museum Masters, Their Museums and Their Influence (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1983), p. 94.

<sup>10</sup>Joseph Farington, The Diary of Joseph Farington, ed. Kenneth Garlick and Angus MacIntyre, vol. V, August 1801-March 1803 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 1863.

"common market women and persons certainly not above the rank of cobblers," and Sir John Carr wrote about the "sun-browned rugged plebeian" who contemplated the paintings in front of him.<sup>11</sup>

Certainly, more people could visit the Louvre than could visit the British Museum, which boasted a maximum of 480 visitors a week. People in Britain noted the differences between museums in Paris and wanted to know why the British Museum could not be as accessible. The trustees and officers regarded the Museum as a research institution and designed the statutes to accommodate scholars and students, while the Louvre appeared to be a museum for all the people based on the large number of visitors. In spite of the French spirit of liberty, equality, and fraternity, though, the commissioners of the Louvre were just as guilty as the British Museum trustees for designing statutes that suited a specific clientele.

Under the new French calendar artists, special entrants, and foreigners were admitted to the Louvre the first five days of the decade, the next two days were for cleaning, and the public had the last three.<sup>12</sup> The museum issued permits to the artists for six months, and the number of artists was limited to one hundred. Farington's escape to the interior part of the gallery indicated that, in addition to private days, artists and people of influence got to see collections hidden from view while the museum was renovated. Like the Luxembourg Palace exhibitions, the paintings in the Louvre did not have labels. Evidently, the commissioners intended the Louvre to serve the interests of the artists, for those visitors who were unfamiliar with paintings and sculpture would not have known the artist, the title of the work, the history, or the subject without purchasing a catalog.

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<sup>11</sup>Maria Edgeworth, Maria Edgeworth in France and Switzerland; Selections from the Edgeworth Family Letters, ed. Christina Colvin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 51; Carr, The Stranger in France, p. 156.

<sup>12</sup>Bazin, The Museum Age, p. 171; Bazin, The Louvre, p. 55-56; Gould, Trophy of Conquest, p. 26; Rev. John Chetwode Eustace, A Letter From Paris, to George Petre, Esq. (London: J. Mawman, 1814), p. 47.

The Louvre's collection had grown immensely from Napoleon's conquests and the requisition of art from defeated nations. The paintings and sculptures were put on display as military trophies. Like the British Museum, the Louvre did not have adequate space to display properly everything, so the gallery walls were crowded with canvases. Mary Berry wrote that the more she visited the museum, the more it astonished her. As a result, she learned to concentrate on one picture instead of looking at several.<sup>13</sup> Martin Archer Shee, future president of the Royal Academy, wrote that the arrangement of the works of art was "quite embarrassing. All is confusion and astonishment: the eye is dazzled and bewildered, wandering from side to side--from picture to picture. . . ." <sup>14</sup> As Arthur Melton stated in an article on environmental design, that with so many visitors crowding the galleries and with so many works demanding attention, it would have indeed been very difficult for the untutored visitor to be educated easily.<sup>15</sup>

After the Napoleonic era and the reform of the calendar to a seven day week, access to the Louvre was modified, and the public had very little opportunity to visit. The museum was open 10:00 to 4:00. Artists and foreigners had access on the four private days, which were Tuesday to Friday. The public had access on Sundays only,<sup>16</sup> so that in spite of the advances that the Louvre had made at the end of the previous century, the museum had actually stepped backward by the 1830s. The British Museum, which had lagged behind the Louvre with a ticket service, could boast of almost uninterrupted service since 1759 and was now available to the general public more frequently (3 days a week) than the Louvre.

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<sup>13</sup>Gould, Trophy of Conquest, p. 84.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>See Arthur Melton, "Visitor Behavior in Museums: Some Early Research in Environmental Design," Human Factors 14 (1972): 393-403.

<sup>16</sup>"Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum," par. 251, 1332.

Louis XIII founded the Jardin des Plantes in Paris in 1626. For a long time the Jardin was a large park for the cultivation of medicinal plants, but after the Revolution and the fall of the king, the Jardin grew to include a menagerie and a cabinet of natural history. The collection had 7,000 labeled specimens, and there were some complaints that there were too many zoological and mineralogical specimens on display.<sup>17</sup> The hours that the natural history galleries were open fluctuated over the years, but the open days, Tuesday and Friday, remained the same. By 1830 the galleries were open from 3:00 to 6:00 in the summer, and from 3:00 to dark in the winter. Students and special visitors applied for a card and could enter on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday from 11:00 to 2:00. The menagerie and garden, but not the botanic galleries, were open to the public every day from 11:00 to 6:00 in the summer and until 3:00 in the winter.<sup>18</sup> Except for collections which were not on view, the visitor to the British Museum had access to all the natural history galleries in the Museum.

The Bibliothèque du Roi had its beginnings as a library for the French kings. Through the years many of the more notable collections of books and manuscripts were procured through various means. With the Ordonnance de Montpellier (1537) the library became the first in the world to receive the 'right of deposit' of one copy of each book printed in France. Housed at Blois, then at Fontainebleau, the library moved to Paris in the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1692 the Abbé de Louvois, the royal librarian, opened the collection to scholars on two days a week, although the policy lapsed a few years later.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Edward Planta, A New Picture of Paris; or, the Stranger's Guide to the French Metropolis, 16th ed. (London: Samuel Leigh, 1831), p. 344, 348.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Lemoine, "National Museum of Natural History (Le Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle) Paris," Natural History Magazine, trans. from the original French, 5 (1935): 4; "Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Condition, Management, and Affairs of the British Museum," Appendix, p. 525; "Report from the Select Committee appointed in the following Season to consider the same subject," par. 3139; Planta, A New Picture of Paris, p. 352.

<sup>19</sup> Anthony Hobson, Great Libraries (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), p. 126-130; Arundell Esdaile, National Libraries of the World: Their History, Administration and Public Services, 2nd ed., revised by F.J. Hill (London: The Library Association, 1957), p. 50-52.

In 1720 the Abbé Bignon, the king's librarian, received the king's permission to move the library to the Mazarin Palace on the rue de Richelieu. At the same time Bignon obtained permission to open the library "to all scholars of all nations on the days and hours which will be regulated by His Majesty's librarian, and to the public once a week."<sup>20</sup> Remodeling began in 1726 and after work was finished in 1735, the decree took affect. The library was open on Tuesday and Saturday from 11:00 to 1:00, and by 1784 the hours had been extended to three hours a day.<sup>21</sup> A month before the revolution Arthur Young of the Royal Society visited the library and estimated that there were sixty or seventy people present.<sup>22</sup> The British Museum was open five days a week for six hours a day, but the library had far fewer readers.

During the revolutionary and Napoleonic period, the library became more accessible to the reader. Joseph Basile Bernard Van Praet, a Belgian bibliographer, who had begun work at the library in 1784, became the keeper in 1794. He opened the library to students for nine days in every decade for four hours daily, and to visitors for three days in every like period for the same number of hours. A recommendation was not necessary, and the library lent books and manuscripts to foreigners if they applied to the minister of the interior and were recommended by their ambassadors. Years later at the Committee hearings (1836) Mr. Hannay, a reader at the British Museum and the Bibliothèque du Roi and the spokesman for the ninety-two petitioners (1830), testified that because of the large number of thefts, the library was having to reconsider

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<sup>20</sup>Roger Chartier, The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 207.

<sup>21</sup>Chartier, The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France, p. 205; Theodore W. Koch, "The Bibliothèque Nationale. Second Paper: Administration," Library Journal 39 (1914): 426; Thomas Pennington, Continental Excursions; or, Tours into France, Switzerland and Germany, in 1782, 1787, and 1789, 2 vols. (London: F.C. & J. Rivington, 1809) 1: 158.

<sup>22</sup>Arthur Young, Travels, During the Years 1787, 1788, and 1789 (Bury St Edmunds: J. Rackman, 1792), p. 107.



its policy.<sup>23</sup> Although anyone could use the library, to discourage the poor from lounging the library was not heated in the winter.<sup>24</sup> The library was closed for one month every year for inventory and cleaning.<sup>25</sup>

By the 1830s the Bibliothèque du Roi was open every day from 10:00 to 3:00, except on Sundays and festivities, for 15 days at Easter and from 1 September to 15 October. Readers could have one book at a time, and the librarians had the right to censor material. Readers could not have romances, plays, light and frivolous literature, and political pamphlets without stating to the librarian the purpose for such articles, which usually had to be for historical or other scholarly purposes.<sup>26</sup> With the exception of needing a recommendation, readers at the British Museum had far greater access. The library was open more days and for more hours in the day, there was no limit to the number of books a person could have, and the librarians did not censor material.

For the rest of Europe museums and libraries followed similar historical patterns of gradually increasing access, but with few exceptions, they did not surpass the British Museum. The art museum at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna had its origins in the royal art collections of the Austrian emperors. During the eighteenth century groups of travelers paid twelve guilders to the custodian of the collection for a guided tour at the Stallburg.<sup>27</sup> Joseph II had the collection

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<sup>23</sup>Louis Tronchet, Picture of Paris; Being a Complete Guide to all the Public Buildings and Curiosities in that Metropolis, 6th ed. (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, [1820?]), p. 144; "Report from the Select Committee appointed in the following Season to consider the same subject," par. 5127-28.

<sup>24</sup>J. Pinkerton, Recollections of Paris, in the Years 1802-3-4-5, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, & Orme, 1806) 1: 54-55.

<sup>25</sup>Edwards, Memoirs of Libraries, 2: 275.

<sup>26</sup>"Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum," par. 247, 249, 250, Appendix, p. 526; Planta, A New Picture of Paris, p. 378-79.

<sup>27</sup>Neils von Holst, Creators Collectors and Connoisseurs, trans. Brian Battershaw, with an introduction by Herbert Read (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), p. 204.

moved to the Belvedere and in 1792 opened it to anyone ‘with clean shoes’ for free on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.<sup>28</sup> The action brought protests from the custodians who lost a source of revenue. People who worked outdoors and others who could not afford ‘clean shoes’ would have had difficulty gaining access, and among those who visited the collection artists claimed that "waiters’ helpers and the lowest types of women . . . disturbed the silent contemplation of the works of art."<sup>29</sup> In spite of the complaints, the emperor’s policy remained intact.

Simply because the museum was open to people other than artists did not deter the administrators from advocating an idealistic purpose for the collection. In 1778 Chancellor Kaunitz commissioned Chrétien de Mechel for the arrangement of the paintings and the catalogue. Mechel made clear the intentions of the museum in the preface of the catalog when he compared the collection to a rich library that was intended for instruction more than for fleeting pleasure. The catalogs had asterisks to indicate important paintings and instructions on how to look at them.<sup>30</sup>

The Imperial Library of Vienna was founded during the reign of Frederick III in 1440. Through the generosity of the emperors and the care of the librarians, the collection grew. In 1575 Maximilian II appointed Hugo Blotius as the librarian, and during his tenure, the library secured the right of legal deposit. Scholars had access to the collection, and because there was no space to consult books on the premises, the emperor allowed Blotius to lend material. In 1726 Charles VI made the library more accessible when he made it open to everyone with a recommendation except "idiots, servants, idlers, chatterboxes and casual strollers."<sup>31</sup> With

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<sup>28</sup>Bazin, *The Museum Age*, p. 159; Selig, "The Genesis of the Museum," p. 105.

<sup>29</sup>Holst, *Creators Collectors and Connoisseurs*, p. 204-205.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>31</sup>Hobson, *Great Libraries*, p. 148.

service from 9:00 to 12:00, the library was hardly open. Johann Kaspar Riesbeck, who visited in 1785, said that he usually saw about twenty-four readers, and the Rev. Thomas Dibden, who visited in 1818, said the library would hold thirty comfortably but saw forty readers, some of whom had to stand.<sup>32</sup>

By the 1830s the Imperial Library was open during the summer from 9:00 to 12:00 and 3:00 to 6:00, and during the winter from 9:00 to 12:00 and 2:00 to 4:00, except for Sundays, other festivals, and the month of August. The librarians censored books requested by readers to prevent the Reading Room from being used for elementary education or amusement purposes. Finally, books could be lent to Chancellors of State, other official persons, or anyone 'of known position' on the personal responsibility of the chief librarian.<sup>33</sup> The policy was far different from procedures at the British Museum. Ellis resented the novel readers who used the library, but there was nothing he could do about it. As long as a prospective reader produced a valid recommendation, a person could gain access to the British Museum library in spite of his profession or intentions.

The Vatican Museums were the result of the accumulation of collections and the patronage of artists for many centuries. Clement XI (1700-1721) was particularly interested in archaeology and an avid collector of coins, inscriptions, and antiquities, and Clement XII (1730-1740) bought Cardinal Albani's collection of portrait busts in 1734. Hadrian VI (1522-1523), who was uninterested in Renaissance art, closed the Belvedere to the public, and it remained so for two hundred years, and the museum of Julius II had a sign by the entrance warning the

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<sup>32</sup>Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries*, 2: 393; Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *A Bibliographical Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in France and Germany*, 3 vols. (London: Shakspeare Press, 1821) 3: 450.

<sup>33</sup>Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries*, 2: 399; "Report from the Select Committee appointed in the following Season to consider the same subject," Appendix, p. 578; *Officers' Reports* 13 (13 March 1830): fol. 2613.

"profane" to keep away.<sup>34</sup> It is evident from reports and descriptions, however, that with an appropriate introduction a person could get in.<sup>35</sup> By the first half of the eighteenth century the popes took a different view towards access and allowed people to see the papal paintings in the Quirinal Palace on prescribed days. In 1734 Clement XII opened the Capitoline Museum of antiquities, and in 1773 Pius VI opened the Museo Pio-Clementine. The statues, busts, and fragments were unlabelled, and access was haphazard. The Pio-Clementine was under the supervision of a guardian, and according to Johann Jacob Volkmann, the German traveller, once the tour had started, the door was shut, and one could either wait for hours for the guardian to return or give up and leave.<sup>36</sup> By the 1830s access had become formalized. The Museum was open to the public on Monday and Thursday the fifth hour before sunset, and remained open for four hours. For a fee admittance could be gained on other days by application to the custodian.<sup>37</sup>

The Vatican Library dates to the Middle Ages, and the institution's significance lies in its priceless collection of manuscripts. For years the library had been open to scholars who needed to consult it. The volumes were chained to the desks on which they rested, but occasionally manuscripts were lent to prominent individuals, bishops, and prelates. Because many items were not returned, the Vatican introduced a rule in 1480 that required a pledge for borrowed material. Subsequent popes introduced more restrictions. Sixtus V (1585-90) banned loans altogether, and

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<sup>34</sup>Wittlin, *The Museum*, p. 122-23; *Vatican Museums, Rome*, with a preface by Deoclécio Redig de Campos (New York: Newsweek, 1968), p. 9.

<sup>35</sup>Evelyn visited in 1645.

<sup>36</sup>Wittlin, *Museums*, p. 98; Bazin, *The Museum Age*, p. 167.

<sup>37</sup>Mariana Starke, *Travels in Europe, For the Use of Travellers on the Continent, and Likewise in the Island of Sicily*, 9th ed. (Paris: A. and W. Galignani and Co., 1839), p. 200.

Paul V had the desks removed in 1613. During the Reformation the collections were normally closed to Protestants.<sup>38</sup>

By the nineteenth century access to the Vatican Library "reached extreme limits. Readers were not allowed to consult indexes or catalogues and had only a small ill-lit room to work in."<sup>39</sup> Because of the contents some manuscripts were marked on the back with a small black cross, because the works were "not deemed advisable to place at the disposal of all scholars indiscriminately." If a reader requested such a manuscript, the attendant had to consult with the Prefect who made the decision whether the manuscript could be given to the reader.<sup>40</sup>

The number of days the library was closed was another indication of how limited access was. The library was closed from Christmas Eve to mid-January, a week or two at Carnival, Holy Week, and Easter week, from a few days to a week at Whitsuntide, from mid-September to Martinmas, festival days, anniversaries of the pope's election and coronation, and Sundays. On the open days the hours were from 9:00 to noon.<sup>41</sup> The access conditions must have been very harsh for the scholar who had to consult a large quantity of material at the Vatican Library.

The Prussian royal collection did not become part of a national museum until the nineteenth century. The collection, though, was available for viewing much earlier. Towards the end of the reign of Frederick the Great (1740-1786) pupils of the Academy of Art were occasionally allowed to study paintings in the royal palace in Berlin. In 1790 Frederick William II officially decreed that native and foreign artists could have free access to the paintings and art

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<sup>38</sup>Theodore Wesley Koch, "The Vatican Library, An Historical Sketch" in The Vatican Library (Jersey City, New Jersey: Snead and Company, 1929), p. 28; Hobson, Great Libraries, p. 79-80.

<sup>39</sup>Hobson, Great Libraries, p. 81.

<sup>40</sup>Paul Maria Baumgarten, "The Vatican Library," in The Vatican, Its History--Its Treasures, ed. Ernesto Begni (New York: Letters and Arts Publishing Co., 1914), p. 455.

<sup>41</sup>Officers' Reports 13 (13 March 1830): fol. 2612.

objects. The gallery was to be for artists "what the public libraries are for scholars, namely treasures for public use."<sup>42</sup>

In 1797 Frederick William III had plans drawn up to create a public museum, but nothing concrete was done for many years because of the Napoleonic Wars and finances. For many years the collection was shown publicly in the Academy of Arts daily.<sup>43</sup> In 1823 the king commissioned Friedrich Schinkel, Professor of Architecture in Berlin, to build an art museum, and the Altes Museum was ready to open to the public in 1830. According to Schinkel and G.F. Waagen, the museum director, the purpose of the museum was "to awaken in the public the sense of fine art as one of the most important branches of human civilization. . . ." After this purpose came the interests of artists and scholars to study and the acquisition of information on the history of art.<sup>44</sup> It was open from 10:00 to 4:00 in the summer and 10:00 to 3:00 in the winter. Although the hours were slightly shorter in the winter, the public was compensated, because the museum was open on Sunday and did not exclude the public for student days.<sup>45</sup> Berlin, which had been decades behind London and other European capitals in creating an art museum for the general public, had surpassed its rivals by making the Altes Museum one of the most accessible institutions.

The King's Library at Berlin became a public library in 1661 when Frederick William (1640-1688) of Prussia opened his private collection to the public. In 1699 the legal deposit system was adopted for copies of each book published in Prussia. Under Frederick William I

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<sup>42</sup>Rüdiger Klessmann, The Berlin Gallery, trans. from the German by D.J.S. Thomson (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), p. 21.

<sup>43</sup>Seling, "The Genesis of the Museum," p. 113.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1835, vol. 5, "Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures," par. 87-92.

(1713-1740) regulations were made that allowed privy councillors, members of learned societies, such as the Societät der Wissenschaften, and other privileged persons to borrow material, but Frederick the Great revoked the privilege. Throughout the eighteenth century the Prussian monarchs played a direct role in the management of the library. They provided the income and made all the purchases. By the end of the Napoleonic Wars direct participation of the king ceased, and the Dept. of Culture and the chief librarian assumed responsibility over financial and purchasing matters.

The library was housed in the top room of the palace where it remained until 1780 when Frederick the Great built a new royal library. In 1819 a periodical room was added with admission to professors and teachers, but students were excluded. At this time the library was open from 9:00 to 12:00 and 2:00 to 4:00 on Monday, Thursday, and Friday. By the 1830s the hours had been severely reduced. From 1 April through the end of September the library was open from 2 to 5 o'clock, and from 1 October to 31 March the hours were from 2 to 4 o'clock.<sup>46</sup>

The Imperial Public Library of St. Petersburg was a much more recent institution compared to other European national libraries. Throughout much of the eighteenth century the capital of Russia had too few government bureaucrats and too few educational institutions in the city to warrant such a library, and members of the nobility had their own libraries and would not have entered a public library.<sup>47</sup> Plans for a national library were submitted to Catherine the Great in 1766, but nothing occurred until 1794 when Russian armies captured Warsaw and confiscated the Polish national library as the property of the Russian government. Numerous volumes were destroyed, lost, or stolen in the transport and shortly after the arrival of the library

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<sup>46</sup>Officers' Reports 13 (March 1830), fol. 2613; Esdaille, National Libraries of the World, p. 98-102; Guide de Berlin, de Potsdam et des Environs ou Description Abrégée des Choses Remarquables qui s'y Trouvent, troisième ed. (Berlin: Chez Frédéric Nicolai, 1813), p. 223.

<sup>47</sup>Theodore W. Koch, "The Imperial Public Library, St. Petersburg. First Paper: The Foundation," Library Journal 40 (1915): 5.

in St. Petersburg, but there remained 262,640 volumes and 24,574 prints.<sup>48</sup> From the beginning Russia's national library was larger than the British Museum.

Catherine the Great approved money to construct a new library building. Progress with the building and cataloging and arranging were slow, and with Napoleon's invasion, the official opening was not until 2 January 1814. The library was open to readers who gave "their title or calling [card]" on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday (except for holidays) from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the summer and until 8:00 p.m. in the winter. Material was occasionally lent, and special permission was necessary to examine manuscripts.<sup>49</sup>

Under the direction of Aleksei Olenin (1811-43) the library served scholarly purposes. To this end, the statutes were published in Russian, French, German, and Latin. In 1814 Olenin prohibited the reading of newspapers in the library, and at the same time he instructed the staff to restrict material with "morally harmful" content, especially fiction, to readers. Light literature, he thought, could be found in clubs and elsewhere. Eventually such material could not be given out without special permission. Finally, political works that the government censored were kept in a special room in the library and could be examined "only with good cause stated in a written application."<sup>50</sup>

The Brussels Museum of Natural History had access that was very similar to that of the British Museum. It was open three days a week (Sunday, Monday, Thursday) from 10:00 to 4:00, and foreigners could be admitted on other days by paying a gratuity to the porter. The British Museum was closed in September, but the Brussels Museum was closed during the

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<sup>48</sup>Mary Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar; Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin and the Imperial Public Library, East European Monographs, no. CCXI (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1986), p. 33.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 135; Koch, "The Imperial Public Library, St. Petersburg," p. 23.

<sup>50</sup>Theodore W. Koch, "The Imperial Public Library, St. Petersburg. Second Paper: The Story of a Hundred Years," Library Journal 40 (1915): 93; Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, p. 136-37.



months of August and September.<sup>51</sup> The natural history museums in other European cities (Leyden, Dresden, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Copenhagen, Vienna, Turin, and St. Petersburg) were generally open fewer days and for fewer hours than either the British Museum or the Brussels Museum, and some of the museums required an entrance fee.<sup>52</sup>

Other national libraries, such as the Frankfurt Stadt Bibliothek, the Danish King's Library in Copenhagen, and the Swedish Royal Library, had access practices that were similar to the other European national libraries. All three were open to the public, but the royal library in Copenhagen was restricted to respectable householders or strangers introduced by such. Under certain provisions the libraries lent material. Finally, the national libraries in Denmark and Sweden were open three hours a day, five days a week, while the Frankfurt library was open for two hours on two days and one hour on two days a week.<sup>53</sup>

As the evidence has indicated, there were several aspects to access policies in the national museums and libraries in Europe. Compared to the institutions in Europe the British Museum was among the vanguard for providing access to the public. Institutions in Paris may have appeared to be for everyone after the revolution, but like the British Museum, access reflected a preference towards the educated and artists. Although very poor, common people could enter the Louvre without a ticket, the museum was open for them at first, 3 days in 10, and by the 1830s it was 1 day a week. The other days were reserved for artists. By 1810 at the British Museum the uneducated could enter without a ticket 3 days a week. The Bibliothèque du Roi did not require a recommendation, but by not providing heat in the winter, and by censoring light literature, the

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<sup>51</sup>"Report from the Select Committee appointed in the following Season to consider the same subject," par. 3140.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>"Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum," appendix, p. 483, 493, 500.

library discouraged all but serious scholars and students from attending. By the 1830s the library in Paris was open 5 hours a day and closed for 6 weeks in the summer and 2 weeks at Easter, so that access at the British Museum was far better for the reader.

The other national libraries and museums of Europe had access policies that were far less favorable to the public and to the student compared to the British Museum. Some of the art collections were reserved for artists, required tips on closed days, or had prescribed clothing in order to gain access. Many of the libraries had strict censorship policies, and access was based on one's position or rank in society. With the exception of the Altes Museum the British Museum surpassed the other European institutions in the hours of service, and it was equal or surpassed all other institutions in permitting people to enter and use the library.