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The new “Paolo & Ornella Ricca” Museum of School History: an infrastructure for teaching, Research and Third Mission

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The aim of this contribution is to analyse the functions that a university museum of historical-educational heritage can perform today in relation to the three missions of the university.

After introducing a general framework, attention will be focused on the three directions along which the activity of a historical-educational university museum unfolds: research, didactics and the so-called third mission, meant as the valorisation of research products not only in an economic sense but also in a socio-cultural and educational sense.

Since its foundation, the 'Paolo e Ornella Ricca' School Museum in Macerata has aimed to pursue these objectives, implementing multiple activities for different audiences.

At the end of 2022, thanks to ministerial funding, the Macerata Museum will reopen after doubling its exhibition space and consequently renovating the exhibits. This refurbishment coincided with a profound reflection on the Museum's purpose, accessibility and the need to open up to new technologies. In particular, the renovated Museum intends to increasingly combine research, teaching and the third mission. A first example is represented by the pilot project, in which university students have been involved not only as visitors, but as co-creators of displays, contents and tools for internal communication (e.g.: QR codes, virtual reality tools, accessible texts).

This contribution aims to give an account of these initiatives and the profound changes they have brought about, on both organizational and educational levels.