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**ECOMUSEUMS IN EUROPE**  
What they are and what they can be

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# **Contents**

## ***Part one (M. Maggi)***

1. Premiss
2. The context
3. The evolution of the cultural heritage
4. Community museums in Italy
5. The distinctive features of ecomuseums
6. Replies
7. The future of ecomuseums

## ***Part two (V. Faletti)***

8. Italy
9. France
10. Northern Europe (F. Zatti)
11. Portugal (C. Avogadro)

## ***Part three (M. Maggi)***

12. The methodology of the survey
13. The Piedmont Regional Authority Law
14. Bibliography

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## FOREWORD

*If the classic Italian museums, the great historical museums for example, the famous art galleries, the archaeological museums filled to overflowing and the dreary ethnographical museums, have yet to identify the way in which these institutions will manage, in the future, to alter their relationship with society and diffuse a less academic type of culture than in the past, across the entire national territory, a lesser museology, that has nothing whatsoever to do with great cultural events, is developing. This kind of museology is composed of museums destined to the collection of evidence of material culture and objects once used every day, the importance and utility of which are gradually lessening. These are museums linked to a limited area, which aim to tell small, local stories, reminding people in communities often no bigger than parishes, of their roots.*

*Whether they are called ecomuseums, borrowing a name that was invented for museums with a strong historical connotation, which probably really isn't that well suited to the type of organisation and activity that characterises them, or, more suitably, identity museums, which reminds one of their purpose of providing evidence, conserving and remembering, these little museums play a very important social role and have a level of importance which should do something to shake up the sleepy ministerial cultural policy.*

*They were opened, and continue to open, thanks to local communities and are not intended to attract large crowds and mass tourism, or to create cultural business, but originate from the need of every community to search for its roots and establish its own identity.*

*The "ecomuseum" phenomenon, in other words this spontaneous birth of numerous museums in local communities, this desire to retrace one's history and fix it in one's mind, has only one precedent in Italy. At the time (the dawn of the country's unification), it had a very similar meaning. This precedent involved the opening of numerous museums dedicated to the "Risorgimento" and "Patriotic History", which, in the closing decades of the 19th century, were founded on political input all over the country, in big towns and little villages alike. They commemorated national heroes, as well as the involvement of local communities in the battles for independence, remembering the dead and lesser heroes and, most importantly, searching amidst the exhibits for the memory of a national identity.*

*This parallelism should make us think because it has a marked political significance. Just as the "Risorgimento" museums pursued a basically political aim which involved the creation of a national identity, the "identity museums" have a precise political significance: they are proof that local communities are filled with an unstoppable need to know about their roots and to reassess their own identities, however small and restricted they might be.*

*All this could be either positive or negative. It becomes negative when the local communities replace a failing national identity with the search for an individual identity and valorisation of local views. On the other hand it becomes positive when the recognition of local identity adds to the awareness of belonging to a national community.*

*If this is the case, it points towards the fact that an extraordinary process is taking place in Italy: the reinforcement of national unity, through awareness of diversity. This is a process which would be a slap in the face for all those governments that have run the country over the past 40 years, for which the cultural policy consisted in the denial*

*of diversity, actuated by centralising the management of the heritage of individual communities, justifying their actions as “a need for protection”.*

*Giovanni Pinna  
Chairman of ICOM Italia*



## 1. PREMISS

A number of signs exist to suggest that, 130 years from its birth, the ecomuseum phenomenon is now experiencing a moment of great ferment.

First of all, the institutions which, by name or by fact, are part of the ecomuseum experience are multiplying in countries, such as Italy, to date substantially extraneous to the tradition.

Scientific interest for the subject is growing too. Following the first international meeting of ecomuseums held in Rio in 1992, eight years went by before the second meeting, held in Matadouro in Brazil in 2000, while the third is already scheduled to be staged in Spain in 2002.

In Europe, finally, national and supranational bodies are increasingly launching initiatives to support place conservation activities, and the characteristics of such projects are extremely close to those inherent in the ecomuseum 'manifesto'.

Italy has no national law on the subject, but in 1995 the Piedmontese Regional Council passed a law to promote ecomuseums. The passing of the law was followed in 1995 by an initial allocation of 500,000 euros to fund initiatives that followed the guidelines set by the provision.

In the five years since then, the annual allocations has risen to a total of 3 million euros. The problem is now to pinpoint selection criteria to channel funds towards the most interesting user opportunities, the ones that best respond to the spirit of the law. It was within this framework that IRES Piemonte<sup>1</sup> was commissioned to carry out a survey on ecomuseums.

The specific aim of its brief was to use comparative analysis of experiences in the Italian and European regions to identify criteria for the functional distribution of the resources available for socio-economic development.

The questions that need to be answered. The principal, most immediate question was how to define a financing system. This is not a merely matter of identifying a set of criteria for screening applicants. It is also necessary to ask a corollary question: namely, how is it possible to improve the performance of applicants? In other words, there are two distinct points on the agenda:

- selection criteria for the distribution of resources. How is it possible to allocate funds according to the spirit of the law? Is it possible to find a non-rigid, stimulating system of direct funding?
- support and guidance for participants. How is it possible to help ecomuseums to adapt to the provisions of the law?

Other questions have to be asked. They are less pressing because they are not subordinate to specific spending provisions, but they are nonetheless relevant for the future of the ecomuseum phenomenon.

- How does the ecomuseum initiative fit into the more general framework of policies in the cultural field and the attempt to make culture a strategic element for development at regional level?
- How can the economic-cultural-environmental development of place be promoted? Can ecomuseums help, and if so in what way? Is there a latent conflict between the

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<sup>1</sup> Ires is the Institute for economic and social research activities of the Regional government of Piedmont.



need for tourist development and the need to conserve place and enhance the memory of it?

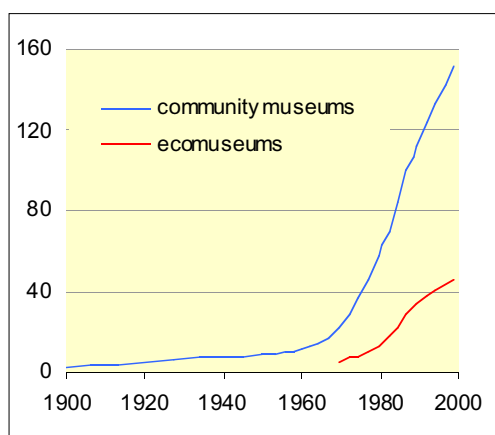
- What is the state of the ecomuseum movement today? Has it been a success or a failure? Do models exist to offer prompts and what are the mistakes to be avoided? Does the transformation in progress in the museum world extend to ecomuseums? If so, what are its specific characteristics?
- Is there a risk that the reinforcement of local identity will trigger diffidence towards other communities, that local governments' efforts to enhance the heritage will foster the birth of so many 'small homelands', that proper protection of one's own cultural distinctiveness will translate into hostility or indifference towards cultures different from one's own?

## 2 THE CONTEXT

**A phenomenon that continues to grow.** Interest in ecomuseums and, more generally, museums' enhancement of the ethnographic, local or material cultural heritage is growing all the time. Museums of this type are now springing up all over Europe. Over 80% of such initiatives<sup>2</sup> saw the light in the last 30 years, and the phenomenon multiplied notably in the 1980s.

The European ecomuseum situation currently breaks down into four main areas: Scandinavia, German-speaking countries, French-speaking countries and, more recently, Portugal. This latter experience, along with those of Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela and, in the last few years, India is regarded as particularly promising by some museologists (H. De Varine, personal comment, 1999) and very close to the 'integrated museum' concept defined by the 1972 Santiago Conference.

The growth of ecomuseums and community museums in Europe



Sources: IRES survey, 1999

**An unstudied phenomenon.** Despite the great practical interest that has occasioned the birth of many institutions of this type, hardly any systematic studies exist to provide an overview of the phenomenon<sup>3</sup>.

What we do possess in abundance are monographic studies on single ecomuseums and articles.

**A difficult definition.** It is also worth remarking upon the great uncertainty that surrounds the definition of the ecomuseum concept itself. It was Hugues de Varine who coined the term in 1971, defining the ecomuseum as a continuously evolving concept. The recent introduction of the term *musée de société* to differentiate ecomuseums most similar to the original early Seventies models from institutions generically dedicated to conserving and enhancing a place, trade or population (E. Vaillant, 1996) has failed to quell terminological disputes, which are still continuing today (K. Hudson, 1996; H. de Varine, 1996; Argenta conference, 1998; P. Davis, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> The figure is taken from the IRES Piemonte survey and is based on a study of over 200 European museums.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Davis's recent book is an exception.

**Ecomuseums and Nouvelle Muséologie.** For some decades now, museums have been undergoing a major transformation, designed largely to strengthen the link between institution and community and place a greater interpretative emphasis on the social aspects of culture. This phenomenon is closely bound up with ecomuseums, which, more than all others, have attempted to interpret the innovative concepts of the Nouvelle Muséologie.

Whereas it was relatively easy to define the traditional museum on the basis of the nature of its exhibits, an institution inspired by the principles of Rivière and de Varine probably requires more elastic categories, different, in part, from the ones we were previously accustomed to.

In view of these transformations, the present terminological uncertainty is anything but paradoxical. In the move from a museum of objects to a museum of ideas, it is harder to establish rigorous definitions. Furthermore, the relative diffusion of the ideas of the Nouvelle Muséologie only makes the situation more muddled, since many of the characteristics believed to be peculiar to ecomuseums, such as in situ interpretation or the involvement of the local community, may actually be typical of and effectively implemented by many of the innovative museums that belong to traditional theme typologies.

#### **A definition of the ecomuseum**

The ecomuseum has always been hard to describe. One of the most effective definitions remains that originally put forward de Varine based on the differences between traditional museums and ecomuseums.

MUSEUM	ECOMUSEUM
Collection	heritage
Building	place
Audience	population

Boylan (Boylan, 1992) instead has proposed a simple checklist to show the differences between eco-, environment-oriented and outward-looking and, finally, traditional museums.

CRITERIA	MUSEUM	ECOMUSEUM
Reference scope	building	place
Focus of interpretation	collection	heritage in a holistic sense
Organisational priorities	disciplinary	interdisciplinary
Benchmark audience	visitors	community
Political control	museum and its bodies	community and its bodies

For each criterion Boylan assigns a mark of 1 a 5 according to proximity to the characteristics of the second column and considers an institution an ecomuseum only if its total marks exceed 20.

Davis (P. Davis, 1999) proposes the use of five criteria:

- Area extending beyond the confines of the museum
- Fragmented site and in situ interpretation
- Cooperation and partnership as opposed to ownership of exhibits
- Involvement of the local community and inhabitants in the museum's activity
- Holistic- and interdisciplinary-type interpretation

Other institutions exist which are concerned with the environment without being ecomuseums proper. Jorgensen (A. Jorgensen, personal comment) states five conditions which differentiate the ecomuseum from open-air museums, local history museums and heritage centres.

- Existence of a documentation centre
- Plurality of visit centres with exhibition
- Existence of workshop for the active participation of visitors

- Links with the local environment (biotope, traces of civilisations, a building)
- Theme paths and trails

The problem of defining the ecomuseum concept, still much discussed by museologists, would appear to have many origins.

The principles put forward by the Nouvelle Muséologie have been widely espoused by the original ecomuseums. They are principles – interdisciplinary character, attention to the community, holistic interpretation, in situ conservation and democratic management – which might be adapted to traditional-type museums, and, in some cases, have been.

Attempts are often made to measure new types of museums according to old parameters, but the concept of what a museum actually is has changed (from object museum to ideas museum).

Moreover, since the Sixties the concept of place or territory has also changed. Its used to be a largely spatial and ecological reference, but today it is more associated with the social processes under way in loco, or which developed there in the past. As a consequence the ecomuseum is still a place museum, but the concept of place is no longer the same. Hence the distance between ecomuseums born of parks, for example, and experiences such as that of Le Creusot is no longer confined to the period in which they were set up and is now macroscopic.

The ecomuseum is thus, or ought to be, a museum of place in the new sense (because the concepts of museum and place are both new).

**Economy and culture.** A creeping conflict is under way between different conceptions of the ecomuseum's mission. More specifically, in both the literature and the IRES survey, economic development goals, invariably tied up with tourist development, are counterpoised by the desire to strengthen identity by recovering the historical roots of the community and memory. Interesting traces of this conflict are to be found in de Varine's 'objection' to the term ecomuseum (H. de Varine, 1996), in Hudson's appeal for realistic economic and cultural objectives (K. Hudson, 1996) and in the responses of many curators to the IRES questionnaire.

Nonetheless, the conservation and enhancement of the heritage and its links with cultural tourism are aspects of great, even vital importance for a region such as Piedmont, which has never exploited its heritage and cultural tourism, but which now intends to do so, though it has no great landmarks to count upon (at least compared to bordering regions, especially in Italy).

**Culture and development.** The conflict between economic and cultural goals can be solved, when spaces exist for the development of 'exploratory' cultural tourism, by placing the priority, effectively and chronologically, on the first objective (Anders Jorgensen, personal comment, 1999).

If we consider the role that culture can play as a strategic development factor, and if we observe the global aspect of the situation (the need to reinforce local identity as a long-term competitive factor), the conflict is actually less of a cause for concern than might appear from the comments of many curators.

### **Culture and development**

Actions in favour of the cultural heritage are going through a phase of intense transformation.

An initial reflection is being made on the very concept of the cultural heritage. Before any judgement of merit can be made, and partly as a consequence of the high number of players involved, obviously with aims that do not entirely coincide, it is necessary to establish a common definition of exactly what we mean by culture as well as a common perspective.

In Italy a lively debate has developed recently on the definition of cultural good, growing particularly fierce when the name of the competent ministry was changed and the ministry reorganised. A process of modification of the very notion of culture is currently under way which extends beyond the artistic heritage to include both goods that are expressions of local cultural identities and services activated to

promote their knowledge and fruition, functions traditionally considered as competences of the 'leisure' or 'entertainment' sectors. This transformation is wholly compatible with the broader international integration of cultural initiatives abroad.

In the English-speaking tradition, reflected in the action of international bodies (UNESCO, the European Union), the cultural heritage has always comprised the 'performing arts'.

In reality, the concept of the cultural heritage that has emerged over the last few years in the specialised literature and in the practice of the international bodies that intervene in this field (UNESCO, the World Tourist Organisation, UNDP, UNEP and the European Union, among others) makes a further step forward. It now transcends the definition of the heritage as a set of 'historical, artistic, monumental, demo-ethno-anthropological goods, archives, books and so on, which constitute a testimony with the value of civilisation' to include a broader scenario, which embraces the development and improved fruition of single cultural goods as a key element for a more effective re-launch of the territorial resources of a country or area. The promotion of the cultural heritage is thus seen as an element in a project for the construction and revitalisation of the network of activities and services which connote a territorial context. Cultural goods are considered as a resource capable of generating miscellaneous benefits and externalities, economic ones included.

Other important contextual elements may change the framework inside which organisations concerned with culture in the international field operate. Special significance is now being assumed by globalisation and European integration, ethnic mixing and the interchange of people as a result of the growth in tourism and migratory phenomena and the assertion of a principle of sustainable development interlinking environmental, cultural and economic-territorial aspects.

A multiplicity of new developments help to make the role of culture more complex and strategic.

Cultural activities constitute an important source of employment which needs to be adequately exploited.

In turn, by disseminating a sense of precariousness and insecurity, unemployment may, in turn, contribute to undermine social cohesion, and this often translates into alienation. Cultural activities are a factor which limits the phenomenon, especially in the urban context.

Migratory flows are also augmenting the multicultural character of European cities. This type of society will either offer the opportunity for harmonious social integration based on tolerance or will become a sterile overlaying of cultures and a source of friction and conflict. The role of cultural action is of fundamental importance here in ensuring the bases of serene coexistence, hence of development based on fundamental values (human rights, freedom, tolerance).

The overlaying of these different values of cultural resources is the point of departure for analysis of another important aspect; namely the link between cultural heritage and sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development has also evolved beyond its original definition, confined to the management of biophysical exchanges between society and the natural environment. The emerging approach is marked by a strong cultural connotation and recognises the potential importance of the protection and improvement of the cultural heritage for social and economic development.

The protection of the identity of small towns and villages in rural areas contributes just as much as infrastructure and services to reducing the exodus towards metropolises and valley-bottom areas in industrialised and other countries. In this way, it is possible to help preserve the human resources necessary for local development, which is also based, incidentally, on craft-based or agricultural activities, traditionally considered as an obstacle to the modernisation of the economy and now re-evaluated as factors necessary for sustainable development. But in large towns and cities, culture can play a fundamental role in supporting development, fostering integration and reducing the possibility of interethnic conflict.

In the least developed areas, finally, the development of the cultural heritage may have important fallouts for tourism. With over 600 million arrivals – a figure which, according to World Tourist Organisation estimates, will increase to almost a billion by the year 2010 – tourism is one of the greatest generators of the movement of human beings across the planet.

The cultural implications are immense, as is the reverse phenomenon – the economic fallouts of cultural tourism.

The migratory phenomena triggered or accelerated by the globalisation of the economy are, after international tourism, the second great source of the ethnic mixing which underpins another fundamental aspect of extra-national actions in favour of culture – the concept of diversity-uniformity. Globalisation has in fact led to a contradictory process of growth and cultural erosion on the one hand and a demand for 'authentic', non-mediated culture on the other. The exchange developed through tourism offers opportunities for economic and cultural enrichment, but also risks jeopardising the identity of the host countries through the exportation of extraneous cultural models. These have always been normal aspects of cultural exchanges, and culture is a continuously developing phenomenon. Precisely for this reason, the protection and reinforcement of a living cultural identity based on dynamic logics is the best defence against such risks. At the same time, the consolidation of the cultural identity of poor countries serves as an aid to cultural tourism, which is increasingly based on the discovery and exploration of a complex heritage and which extends beyond the physical endowment of goods and monuments.



### 3. THE EVOLUTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

For some time now the concept of cultural heritage has been changing. The phenomenon began at the end of the nineteenth century and is developing extremely rapidly today. It may be summed up as a progressive liberation of the notion of heritage from aesthetic concepts and its no less progressive expansion towards social ones: first the inclusion of 'popular' objects among the exhibits of 'high' museography, then consideration of a place and its linguistic traditions and, finally, the embracing of the intangible as fundamental contextual elements of the traditional museum heritage. In more recent times, the overlaying of environmental, cultural and economic paradigms has enhanced and transformed our concept of the cultural heritage, conferring to it characteristics which, today more than in the past, tie it to two concepts - local area and identity - of major importance for the ecomuseum concept.

**Proto-ecomuseums: the open-air museum.** The first steps to improve the 'popular' heritage in Europe were made in the late nineteenth century. Albeit provoked by the fear that industrialisation would lead to the destruction of the cultural memory and variety of rural society, these initiatives also had racial and patriotic motivations and their main aim was to reinforce national identity<sup>4</sup>. They largely took the form of national or universal exhibitions, which sought to highlight national variety and diversity as an element of the wealth of a country's heritage. It is significant that the International Exhibition in Paris in 1878 saw the presentation of Artur Hazelius's 'Lap Encampment', which was to become the first constituent element of Skansen. Similar initiatives were also organised in Italy: in 1894-95, the folklorist Giuseppe Pitrè promoted a National Exhibition in Palermo, and in 1911 the Regional Ethnographic Exhibition was organised in Rome. These, however, were only temporary events and only later gave rise to permanent institutions (the Museo Pitrè opened in Palermo in 1909).

The most innovative development in that period was the one in Skansen in Sweden, where in 1891 Artur Hazelius had a large site adapted to house a reconstruction of complex scenes of Scandinavia rural life and labour, complete with guides in costume and ethnographic material, authentic vernacular buildings disassembled, then reassembled (a pattern that was to become a tradition for open-air museums and Freilichtmuseums), others completely rebuilt according to the model of the originals, houses of different eras and from different parts of Sweden, together with characteristic vegetation and animals. This initiative produced a fully-fledged permanent open-air museum (still open) which was to have a profound influence on ethnographic museography all over Scandinavia for decades to come.

**From open-air museum to open museum.** Important museological innovations were spawned by heimatmuseums (small homeland museums), small institutions set up to glorify the history, a traditional working activity, an industry or the genius of a single figure of an extremely limited local ambit. Though its origins go further back in time, the heimatmuseum enjoyed considerable diffusion in the period between the two world wars. Indeed, the need for social cohesion which Germany experienced at the

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<sup>4</sup> The exportation of the museographical model of Skansen in Norway was to lead, in 1895, to the creation of the Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo, which its founders conceived from the outset as a contribution to the demand for independence from Sweden (eventually obtained in 1905).



end of the 1914-18 war appears to have been one of the main reasons for the birth of this particular institution (Lehmann, O., 1935).

Nonetheless, the heimatmuseum marked a real innovation in museological history in that it focused on the local community. 'The crucial task of the Heimatmuseum is to serve the people and the present' (Klersch, J., 1936). Other innovations were its holistic interpretation of the local heritage and history, the importance attributed to educational activity and the dynamic and evolutionary character it assumed in open contrast with the static display of exhibits in traditional museums.

These were the characteristics instrumentalised by the Nazi regime, which interpreted: the focus on the local community nationalistically, reappraised the sense of belonging and temporal identity chauvinistically, transformed the importance of education into racial indoctrination and propaganda and counterpoised museographical dynamism to the immobility of 'degenerate art' vitalistically. Nonetheless, the extraordinary growth of this movement (about 2,000 museums were created in the brief life of the regime) were a symptom of a much broader transformation of the international museum panorama. The apogee of the Heimatmuseum, in fact, virtually coincided with the creation (1935) of Musée d'Arts et Traditions populaires in Paris, in a completely different political context<sup>5</sup>.

**Towards the New Museology.** After World War II, new ideas developed:

- museums' interpretation of popular culture was no longer confined to the development of the curious and unusual, but also extended to the ordinary and to daily life;
- ethnographic museums focused their interest on the industrial and urban environment, no longer viewing popular culture as an idyllic representation of the rural world, a limitation that had sometimes hampered the earliest museographic experiences;
- the need for greater contextualisation ultimately led to forms of direct audience involvement;
- the disassembly and reconstruction of authentic buildings or other large exhibits was progressively replaced by in situ conservation.

In the Fifties, the number of folklife museums, originally introduced by Scandinavian immigrants who were followers of the Hazelius school, multiplied in the United States<sup>6</sup>. They were generally small museums strongly oriented towards the conservation of local history and the democratic involvement of the community. In the early Sixties, the concept of the atelier museum (whereby the audience not only saw a reconstructed living scenes of life, as in the *musée en pleine air*, but was also expected to take part, not merely observing objects but also using them) sprang up in Denmark and spread elsewhere. This experience still continues today in the form of exhibition-activity centres.

### **The word 'ecomuseum'**

The term 'ecomuseum' was invented in France by Hugues de Varine in 1971. The first museums to be defined as 'ecomuseums' were set up at Le Creusot in 1974 and in the Grande Lande in 1975 (where the

<sup>5</sup> After all, the experience of the Heimatmuseum had a follow-up in both the Federal and Democratic Republics, and such museums are still numerous in united Germany, where they display evolutionary characteristics and tendencies analogous to those of community museums in general.

<sup>6</sup> The Norwegian-American Folklife Museum, instituted in 1877, may be regarded as the forerunner of this typology in America, but had no real follow-up until the Fifties.

institution had already existed de facto for some years). Substantially similar initiatives had already been developed in the United States (at Anacostia in the suburbs of Washington in 1967), in Mexico (the Casa del Museo, a suburban extension of the National Museum of Anthropology in 1973) and in France (at Ouessant in 1968), albeit with a different denomination.

Here de Varine (de Varine H, L'ecomusée (1978), in Wasserman F. (ed.) Vagues, MNES, 1992, p. 448) recalls how the term was born.

In spring 1971, Georges Henri Rivière, the former director and permanent adviser at ICOM, Serge Antoine, adviser to the Minister of the Environment and myself, at the time director of ICOM, met for a business lunch at the "La Flambée" restaurant on Avenue de Ségur in Paris. Our intention was to discuss aspects of the ninth general conference of the International Council of Museums, which was to be held in August of that year in Paris, Dijon and Grenoble.

'We spoke of the day in Dijon and the fact that we were to be received by Robert Poujade, mayor of the city and France's first ever Minister of the Environment. One of the subjects we spoke about was the tone of the speech the minister-mayor was going to make. Georges Henri Rivière and I were keen that, for the first time in an international conference of that importance, a leading politician should publicly link museums to the environment. It was a question of opening up a new way of museological research in a field whose importance had only just been acknowledged, but was to be solemnly confirmed at the UNO conference in Stockholm the following year.

Serge Antoine was reticent: no way could museums be the subject of any truly innovative statement, he argued. Considering how much they are tied to the past, to speak of the utility of museums at the service of the environment would only make people laugh. No, to convey such a message we had to abandon the word "museum" altogether. Poujade would certainly be sensitive to the educational role of museums as a supplementary means for his crusade for the divulgation and protection of nature, but it would be wrong to pronounce the word "museum" in anything other than a purely formal speech.

'We, Georges Henri Rivière and I, struggled in vain to convince our fellow diners of the vitality of museums and their utility. Finally, almost jokingly, I said, "It would be absurd to abandon the word; it would be far better to change its commercial brand image ... but we could also try to create a new word based round 'museum'..." . I tried different combinations of syllables round the two words "ecology" and "museum". At the second or third attempt, I came up with "ecomuseum". (...)

'Minister Poujade first used the term "ecomuseum" a few months later, in Dijon, on September 3 1971, in a speech to 500 museologists and museographers from all over the world. "We are moving towards what some already define as the ecomuseum, a living approach through which the public – youngsters, first and foremost – can re-appropriate the evolution of the basic grammar of man, of his possessions and of his environment.'

In the Seventies, the risk of industrial decline in given areas of developed countries helped to create interest for the industrial heritage. In Great Britain and the USA, small museums of industrial and rural history were created, fuelled by a strong local commitment to preserve the recent heritage, not only that of the distant past. Such museums were keen to save not only tangible exhibits, but also popular technologies and *savoir faire*, and were conscious of the importance of social history as a key to interpreting popular culture.

Towards the end of the decade, the need to democratise museums and involve more closely the entire community and not only of the audience became more urgently felt. In 1967, the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum opened in the suburbs of Washington. There was no permanent collection, but the institution organised exhibitions on the social life of a small urban community peopled prevalently by Afro-Americans. This period of reflection of more than 20 years fostered many innovations. It originated directly from the world of museums and sought to modify their role and adjust them to changes in contemporary society.

In its 1972 Santiago declaration, UNESCO gave an institutional and formal *imprimatur* to the processes of renewal in progress, as well as the emerging concept of the 'integrated museum', an institution at the service of the community and the environment.

In the early Seventies, the majority of these innovations were consolidated and widespread, providing the theoretical bases for what, a decade later, was formally to become the New Museology<sup>7</sup>.

**The integrated museum.** In the course of over 20 years of experiences and international debate, the evolution of the concept of cultural heritage and the contribution of museum – officially recognised at the Santiago Round Table – materialised in theorisation upon and the subsequent setting up of the first ecomuseums.

The ecomuseum was part and parcel of a new wave in the museum world, and developed the idea of global heritage more than before. It consequently placed a strong emphasis on the need to use an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to enhancement activity.

More specifically, compared with other innovations at the same time, the ecomuseum set out to focus a) on the bond between community and place and the development thereof and b) on the environment in an attempt to preserve it through direct action.

In the early years, two models came into being: the environmental one and the community one, concerned respectively with the enhancement of the natural environment and of local social development<sup>8</sup>.

The first model drew on the Ecomuseum of the Grande Lande, created in 1975 by the Regional Park of the Landes de Gascogne, which was officially recognised in 1970. The project was a fusion of the Scandinavian open-space model and American park house, though it differed from both for its great concern with the local community and the global perspective with which it used the natural environment and the traditional habitat. Ecomuseums were almost always situated inside or near a nature park and, in any case, in a rural area.

The second model was based on the 1973 experience at Le Creusot and was evolutionary and experimental right from the outset. Though the museographical principles and approaches were very similar to those of the environmental-type ecomuseum, a marked difference emerged in terms of the involvement of the local community. Ecomuseums inspired by the Le Creusot experience were a direct offshoot of the local community, whose problems and development provided the basis for the projects of the ecomuseum itself. Such ecomuseums were invariably urban, since the bottom-up action of organised citizens is easier in the urban context.

**Contemporaneous ecomuseums.** The environmental museum and the community museum were also interpreted<sup>9</sup> according to an evolutionary logic whereby a first phase centred on the concept of space and a second introduced the time, place and community elements.

These two phases were followed in the early Eighties by a third, characterised by a sizeable growth in the number of institutions which – sometimes legitimately, others less so – resorted to the term ‘ecomuseum’ and by roots that were part museological and part economic.

The pillars of experience in this period were the involvement of the community and its socio-economic problems. These two objectives did not always work well together, and sometimes led to an abuse of the term ‘ecomuseum’, not to mention degenerative

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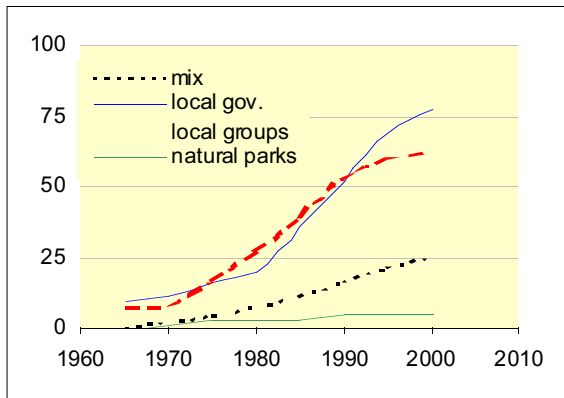
<sup>7</sup> The Nouvelle Muséologie was officially founded in Marseilles in 1982; in Great Britain the term New Museology was introduced in 1989 from the book of the same title by Peter Vergo.

<sup>8</sup> For a synthetic description of two models, H. de Varine, *L'ecomusée* (1978), in Vagues (F. Wasserman ed.), MNES, 1992, pp. 455.

<sup>9</sup> Hubert F., *Les Ecomusées après vingt ans*, in *Ecomusées en France*, 1987.

phenomena, which ranged from low-profile initiatives to exploit tourism to cases of commercial use by private entrepreneurs.

### The birth of community museums by promoters



Source: IRES survey, 1999

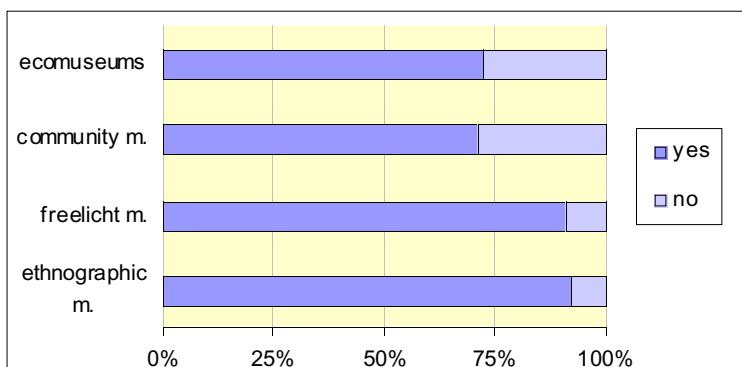
However, new ecomuseums were also created to meet the real needs of society. This phase saw local groups in the front line among the promoters of initiatives for the creation of ecomuseums; they were followed by local government authorities, especially municipalities, whereas the initial role of parks was soon supplanted. Local development and tourist growth began to appear for the first time among the objectives of ecomuseums set up in this period (the Eighties). In 1988, the creation of the Fédération des Ecomusées et des musées de société in France put a seal on the segment's importance within the traditional museum world.

Among the most successful cases, it is possible to single out specific typologies.

**The microhistory ecomuseum.** Usually situated on a single site, this type of museum may be made up of a number of buildings already used for traditional local activities; it is sharply diachronic, with special interest for recounting history through individual stories according to the historiographical methodologies of the French school of microhistory. It often encompasses a great deal of research and documentation activities, especially of a historical nature.

Representative examples of the category are the Ecomusée du Pays de Rennes in Frésnes, the Rural Museum of Usson en Forez in France or the Museum of Peasant History in San Martino di Bentivoglio in Italy.

### Curator's residence in the area of the museum



Source: IRES survey, 1999

The ecomuseum umbrella. An ecomuseum developed over a geographic area with a number of heritage items interlinked by a common history or a common material activity. It occupies an area embracing different municipalities and generally has more than one museum site proper. The profiles for interpreting heritage are both diachronic and spatial. The link between the different items is established not only on the basis of set itineraries, but also by a joint local government-community territorial development project. Community involvement thus constitutes a key aspect of this typology and makes it more than a mere culture-based territorial marketing initiative. Examples are the Bergslagen Ecomuseum in Sweden and the Musées des Techniques et Cultures Comptoises in France.

The village-museum. Situated at a formally intermediate stage between the ecomuseum proper and the ecomuseum umbrella, the village-museum presents a set of sites grouped together to form a highly contextualised environment. By its very nature, it is suitable for staging live activities (museum atelier). The percentage of local visitors is generally not very high and the majority are tourists. This typology also lends itself to the use of reconstructed buildings and extras in a form of representation sometimes closer to that of open-air museums, interpretation centres or theme parks than to that of ecomuseums. Experiences of this type, which are not defined as ecomuseums but develop the integrated conservation of the heritage (of traditional local *savoir faire*, for example), have been carried forward in Great Britain at Beamish, Ironbridge Gorge and Glastonbury<sup>10</sup>. An example closer to the ecomuseum model, with, among other things, the formal involvement of the local population in the management, is the Ecomusée d'Alsace in France (original buildings re-erected ex situ). A hybrid experience is that of the Zuiderzee Museum in Holland (a village rebuilt ex novo after the war).

The ecomuseum antenna. This offshoot of the original model shares many characteristics with the traditional museum. It constitutes a part of the museum system or of a more complex, existing system to conserve a place or area.

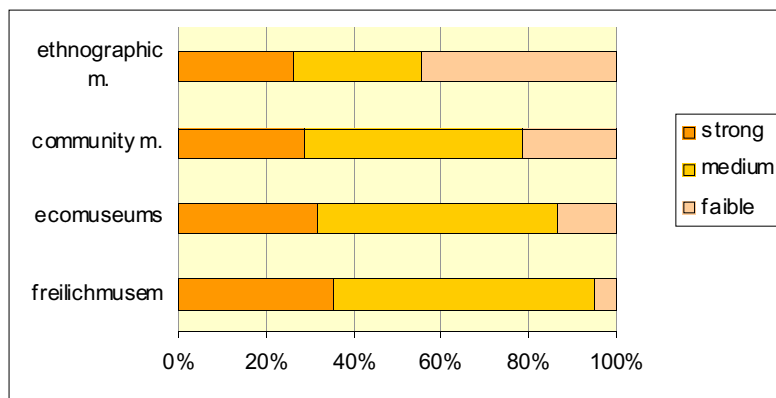
It normally has a single museum site and depends for its management on another subject. This low level of autonomy obviously compromises its plausibility as a 'mirror' of the local community. When it is fitted into a broader circuit, it may prove an advantage from the strictly tourist point of view (visibility, dimension of audience), though the trend of visits often depends on variables outside the control of the ecomuseum and audience composition generally reveals a higher percentage of non-local visitors.

An ecomuseum of this type is the Ecomusée Départemental de Vendée.

Incidence of local public

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<sup>10</sup> Avalon 2000, near Glastonbury, defines itself as the first British ecomuseum but is more similar to a theme park. Paradoxically, Ironbridge, which won the admiration of George Henry Rivière, refuses to be defined as an ecomuseum.



Sources: IRES Piemonte survey, 1999

**Ecomuseums in the era of globalisation.** A fourth phase may have been opened in the last decade of the century.

Economic motivations stayed alive and a new thrust for the setting up of ecomuseums came from concern about globalisation and, more specifically, the standardisation of local identities. In this phase, the role of local government bodies was growing to the detriment of private cultural groups. Among the primary objectives were the conservation of identity and the sense of local belonging and territorial development, increasingly seen as interconnected, economically lucrative elements. In parallel, interest is growing for inter-museum cooperation and educational activities; this is a symptom of the growing 'professionalisation' of ecomuseums, as is the growing number of museums which adhere to the French Federation (Philippe Ifri, personal comment, 1998) and the birth, in 1997, of a Scandinavian network (Ewa Bergdhal, personal comment, 1999).

In this latter period, it was possible to note a sort of convergence among the different experiences both in terms of objectives (development of the territory in the contemporary sense of the term) and of the museographic means deployed.

The institutions defined here as 'microhistory' ecomuseums showed a tendency to expand their activities in a place outside their traditional venue<sup>11</sup>; for example, by recovering property or environmental treasures linked to the local tradition to conserve them in situ, recreating contextualised environments similar to those of open-air museums<sup>12</sup> and developing off-venue activities with the active contribution of the local population<sup>13</sup>.

Simultaneously, open-air museums were increasingly attaching importance to research and the exploration of the historical roots of the heritage according to logics sometimes very close to those of the French tradition of microhistory<sup>14</sup>. This process was also fostered by the transformation in progress in the ethnographic sciences, increasingly concerned with human aspects bound to the objects and exhibits studied (De Jong, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> For example, the Museo della civiltà contadina in San Martino di Bentivoglio, to all intents and purposes Italy's first ecomuseum.

<sup>12</sup> For example, the Ferme Bentinais in France.

<sup>13</sup> For example, the Heimatmuseum di Neukolln in Germany.

<sup>14</sup> For example, the Zuiderzee Museum intends to broaden its research activity to the stories of the people who actually lived in the area now occupied by the reconstructed fishing village.

In situ conservation also extends to museums – such as the Freilichtmuseum of the Germanic tradition – traditionally more oriented towards the reconstruction of original buildings<sup>15</sup>.

In short, the phenomenon of ecomuseums may be interpreted as one of the outcomes – though not the only one and still evolving – of the long process of transformation of the concept of cultural heritage, which began at the end of the nineteenth century and has yet to come to an end and, with the Nouvelle Muséologie, has accelerated faster and more deliberately.

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<sup>15</sup> For example, the Freilichtmuseum in Kiekeberg in Germany.

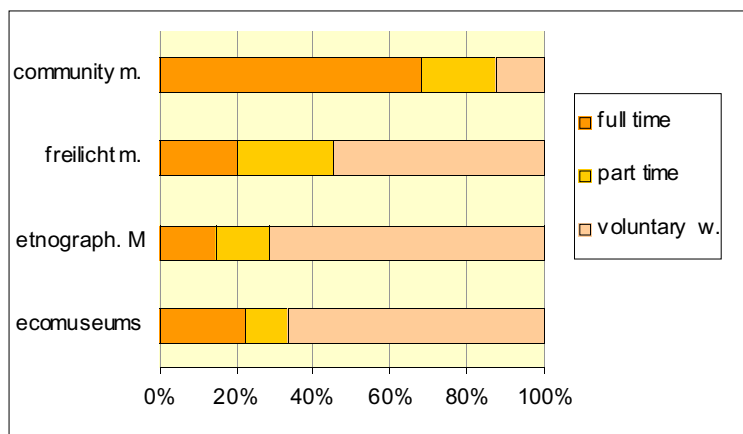
## 4. TERRITORY MUSEUMS IN ITALY

Today many models of museums concerned with the conservation of place or territory display similar characteristics, even when they are not called ecomuseums. In Italy, a country by tradition relatively impermeable to the innovative currents of international museology, the conservation of the local heritage and communities has moved in different directions from other areas of Europe: this is why it would be pointless, in this geographical area, to limit the survey to official ecomuseums alone.

381 museums are defined as demo-ethno-anthropological (according to the Erit and Adn Kronos databanks), and about 600 are defined as ethnographic (according to the Togni-Forni-Pisani guide).

The weight of voluntary work in museum management

Sources: IRES survey, 1999



These are mostly institutions dedicated to the conservation of the human activities (agricultural, first and foremost) or particular places or populations, and they invariably have an organisational structure based on the labour of local volunteers. Though hardly any of the museums in this vast category fits into the classic definition of the ecomuseum, it is undeniable that, at least where local resources allow, the trend is to broaden the activity and interest of the museum beyond its traditional area of thematic influence in a direction that displays many analogies with the ecomuseum phenomenon.

Observing this transformation in terms of relationship with place, it is possible to identify the principal directions, all with relatively deep roots in the context of this vast heritage area, which Italian ecomuseums are following at the moment. Below is a list of some of the nodes around initiatives and projects to conserve heritages not yet on display in museums and actions to transform and redefine existing museums in search of a new role are gathered and organised.

More specifically, it is possible to define four main typological elements:

- the collection
- human activity (in the sense of material culture and trades)
- the environment (in a geographical and ecological sense)
- the community (in an ethnographic sense)



**The spontaneous encyclopaedia.** A first thrust to the formation of ecomuseums came from the collections of objects once in common use. The fact that they came from a time past made them fit for display in museum, a quality which in Italy is only attributed to objects that no longer have links with the present, whereas their past as everyday objects makes them fit into the general context of the popular heritage. This way of setting up ecomuseums might be defined as a 'spontaneous encyclopaedia', because it is very often the result of the action of local groups and individuals who have collected objects painstakingly without following a true museum logic, but ultimately accumulating collections of such great significance as to prompt the intervention of organised bodies, generally local government authorities.

A suggestive case of this method of 'poetic accumulation' of memory is the Guatelli collection in Ozzano Taro.

In many other cases, small local museums represent little more than unmanaged collections that are occasionally opened to the public.

The drawback of such experiences is that place or territory is represented only *in fieri* (in general, the objects come from a small territory, hence have a homogeneous identity). The spontaneous encyclopaedia is, nevertheless, symptomatic of the existence of local energies and desires which ought, ideally, to be taken into consideration in the local government's projects for the conservation of the popular heritage.

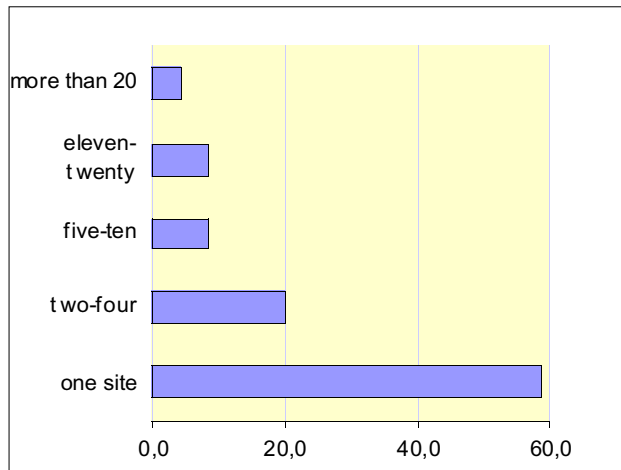
**The material culture museum.** The conservation of working activities from the pre-industrial era (agriculture, sheep farming) or linked to a given area (the mining and processing of certain materials) is achieved through specialised museums devoted to well-defined manual crafts. Such museums are very often created *ex novo*, with one or a few sites developed from the recovery of productive buildings (mills, small factories). The bond with the present-day activity is generally left out or vague and the task of representing its consequences in the present is often delegated to company museums.

Material culture museums are capable of representing place because the trades they are dedicated to used to have an often sharply marked environmental characterisation. They are thus endowed with itineraries and trails only in proportion to the spatial dimension of the manual activity they refer to. Their capacity to represent the local community is, instead, bound up in the fact that working activities in the pre- and proto-industrial age frequently involved significant shares of the population resident in the given area.

One occasional drawback of territorial representation is that its interpretation is often biased and limits itself to the place in which the work was carried out, failing to embrace that social life in general.

An excellent example of a material culture museum (especially for the process activated) is the Museum of Mining in Prali in Val Germanasca, while the Museum of Wine in Todi and the Museum of the Olive in Imperia are excellent examples of initiatives for the conservation of material culture fostered by companies (and which hence establish a strong link between the memory of past activity and the economy of the present).

Percentage of Italian museums by number of sites



Sources: data from IRES survey, 1999

**The environment museum.** Right from the outset, the ecomuseum movement lent great consideration to environmental aspects. The creation of the first ecomuseums in the Sixties and Seventies was inspired by George Henri Rivi re and the nature parks of Armorique and Grande Lande, while regional parks officially came into being in the same years (1969). The very definition of ecomuseum has undergone significant changes in the course of time and, from that of 1973 to that of 1978, it is possible to note a lower emphasis on the conservation of space (in a geographical and ecological sense) and a higher one on temporal, community and territorial factors (in a social sense).

Within the ambit of this type of conservation activity, the point of departure was generally the recovery of pre- or proto-industrial archaeological buildings under the jurisdiction of the park.

Sometimes the limitation of these initiatives is an over-spatial conception of place (landscape, geography, ecology), to the detriment of the most 'social' aspects, hence of the evolutionary dynamics (cultivating techniques, housing models, productive processes, historical events) which in the course of time have characterised a certain region.

An example of this typology is the Ecomuseo della Maiella occidentale.

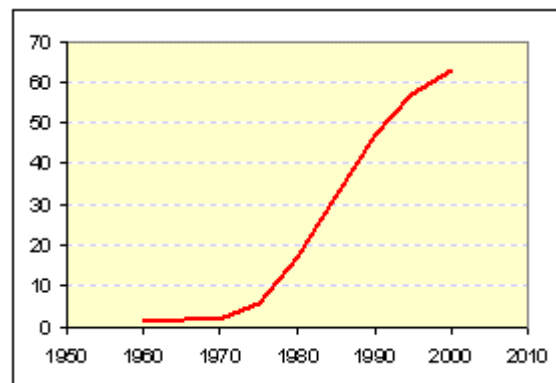
**The people's museum.** As in the rest of Europe, the conservation of popular traditions has remote origins. However, it was in the Seventies and even more so in the Eighties (with a less nostalgic characterisation in the second decade) that this type of museum proliferated.

Such institutions are dedicated to the representation of rural life in a broad sense, and are thus concerned with aspects of domestic reality, of behaviour and lifestyles. They thus frequently reconstruct environments. However, the link with place – a consequence only to of the fact that a certain population settled in a certain territory – fails to be expressed. The people's museum is thus generally developed on single site – industrial or, more often, agricultural. Though it broadens the concept of heritage with respect to previous typologies, it tends to 'museumise' it traditionally. In situ conservation is rare and mostly occasioned by symbolic motives, while trails are almost entirely absent. With respect to other types of museum concerned with place,

popular tradition museums are, in a sense, more traditional in derivation, and this allows them to address research aspects more incisively.

An excellent example of this typology is the Museo delle Genti trentine in San Michele all'Adige. The Museo delle Genti d'Abruzzo is, instead, an example of a museum of popular traditions which has given life to a nature park and an ecomuseum.

#### The birth of demo-ethno-anthropological museums in Italy



Sources: IRES survey data, 1999

**Emerging ecomuseums.** The Italian museums which deal with themes connected with the conservation of place and identity have, as we have seen, a great variety of origins. This multiplicity of sources is one of the roots of the typological indeterminateness in which the ecomuseum movement operates. In fact, alongside local groups keen to create totally new ecomuseums, no less important processes of spontaneous transformation of the existing museum heritage are in progress. This process of change is obviously influenced by the past history of single institutions, by the type of conservation they are based on and by competences accumulated in the course of time. It is thus reasonable to expect only some of the institutions emerging in the near future to adhere, each on its 'own' behalf, to the original ecomuseum model.

Within the ambit of the transformation in progress, no museum typologies come closer to the ecomuseum concept more than others.

It is advisable to encourage the birth of new ecomuseums, but also, wherever possible, to support the transformation of existing museums. It is, however, necessary to note an emerging problem; namely that there are different ways of responding to the incentives of the law, not always, alas, in the direction hoped for. Existing cases may be examined in the light of two different profiles of analysis - museological and economic.

#### **The adaptive and evolutionary ecomuseum model**

Globalisation and the risk of cultural standardisation prompt the need to conserve, reinforce, bring out and sometimes 'create' culturally defined and identifiable places.

However, the thrust to promote places may take on characteristics which fit into a spectrum of possibilities defined by two extreme typologies - the adaptive and the evolutionary.

The adaptive ecomuseum is, in substance, an *ex post* ecomuseum umbrella (the ecomuseum as a system of more than one existing site) which does not introduce significant changes to the organisation of local resources, especially the human resources represented by citizens, owners, entrepreneurs and organised groups. The focus is more on the concept of recognisability or visibility of an area or a centre than on that of territorial identity. The first is an aspect of territorial marketing, certainly useful but not

decisive if isolated by an identity growth process, whereas the second is a cultural and socio-economic notion.

Adaptive model	Planning design model
Aim to create the ecomuseum	Aim to conserve place
Ecomuseum modelled on place	Ecomuseum which models place
Ecomuseum as place	Ecomuseum as process
Ecomuseum as heritage stock	Ecomuseum as flow
Metaphor of circuit	Metaphor of project
Static ecomuseum	Dynamic ecomuseum
Local community receives benefits	Local community invents benefits
Ecomuseum as collection of objects	Ecomuseum as working plan
Place which implodes in ecomuseum	Ecomuseum which explodes towards place
Ecomuseum nurtured by place heritage	Ecomuseum which transforms and conserves place
Ecomuseum of what there is	Ecomuseum of what there is not yet
Ecomuseum as an end	Ecomuseum as a means
Short-term tourist development	Long-term identity reinforcement for competition
Passive conservation	Active conservation
Traditional Museumisation' of place	New Territorialisation' of local museums

From the museological point of view (in terms, that is, of the relationship between museum and society) and of the directions followed, it is possible to identify two extreme models of reference: the adaptive museum and the evolutionary or project-oriented museum. The first, not necessarily born of museums that are already operating, is designed, above all, to promote the existing heritage, if necessary reorganised more compatibly with the ecomuseum model. Often such projects boil down to territorial marketing operations. The second, which may also come into being from museums already in activity, is oriented, instead, to set in motion a process of conservation based on changes in and the revitalisation of the existing heritage.

From the point of view of economics and the different objective priorities, it is possible to identify options which range from placing the onus on short-term tourist growth to the reinforcement of local identity and the competitiveness of the place within a less immediate time-scale. Possible ends and means options may be combined to give life to different benchmark theoretical models.

Real initiatives are obviously situated on either side of these borderlines with prevalence being given to one side or the other of the theoretical quadrant.

The most interesting opportunities are probably situated in the top part of the diagram, hence in the ambit of territorial promotion processes, through the transformation and effective *mise en valeur* of the heritage, with a short- or long-term time-scale, depending on the needs of each single community.

#### Economic and museological options for the creation of ecomuseums

	visibility	identity
evolutionary	local development project	living ecomuseum
adaptive	territorial marketing	rhetorical ecomuseum

Albeit endowed with autonomous rationality and *raison d'être*, projects based on promotion alone – that is, centred on the commercial diffusion of an area's visibility – lie outside the ecomuseum logic and ought to be financed with other instruments and in different contexts.

Local identity reinforcement initiatives incapable of activating authentic processes of transformation of a local reality are entirely abstract in character and respond only formally to the spirit of ecomuseums. They thus ought to be deterred.

### **Ecomuseums and economic development**

Depending on the time-scale adopted (short-term or long-term), there are two ways of seeing the ecomuseum as an aid to economic development.

The ecomuseum as a tourist attraction

An extra heritage attraction to supplement the value of the existing capital; no new projects are drawn up, but existing ones are enhanced (minimum hypothesis).

An element which multiplies the value of the existing heritage; new previously impracticable opportunities are taken into consideration (maximum hypothesis).

In both cases, the aim is to have a richer tourist supply and thus to increase the demand. The results are mostly economic (profit) and are expected to be achieved in the short term. Here, the role of place does not substantially change and remains, as in the Fordist model, as a support for productive activities.

The ecomuseum as a reinforcement of local identity

The aim is to render the local community more cohesive, aware and vital, increasing the competitive capacity of place. The results are social as well as economic (identity), and are tangible, especially in the long term, while in the short term they do not differ from case A. Here, as a general rule, new roles are now being sought for place as a potential producer of wealth, thus overriding the traditional Fordist concept.

Tourist colonisation. Tourism offers many self-evident economic opportunities, but also risks, which result mainly from the standardisation of cultural identity. These risks are obviously great for traditional tourism, but are lower for non-traditional tourism. The protection of territorial identity (or even its reconstruction) is not incompatible with the development of tourism. In reality, the two have different time-scales. Tourist potential can be exploited in the short term, sometimes to the detriment of identity, the environment or other important elements of the territorial heritage. In the medium-long term, it is precisely the reinforcement of identity which lays the premiss for the growth of territorial competitiveness. The secret here is to capitalise on the phenomenon of tourist growth in a non-subordinate way, managing tourism instead of accepting it passively.



## 5. THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE ECOMUSEUM

In so far as it is an evolutionary concept, it is impossible to pin the ecomuseum to an exhaustive formula that takes in all completed or emerging experiences. Nonetheless, a synthesis of the various definitions allows us to highlight the basic elements of French museology's original idea, but also of all the experiences that have been part of a vaster movement of conservation of the popular heritage, of place and of the products of what Benjamin has defined 'the anonymous *corvée* of contemporaries'<sup>16</sup>. Of the various elements identified, it is possible to trace six, some relative to museographical aspects, others to museological characteristics, only one of which is, in my opinion, peculiar to ecomuseums.

CHARACTERISTIC	TYPE	PECULIAR AMBIT
In situ interpretation	museography (archaeological, maritime)	also for other innovative museums
Fragmented museum	museography	also for other innovative museums (archaeological, maritime)
Interdisciplinary character-holism	museography (social, maritime history)	also for other innovative museums
Relationship with local community	museology	for all innovative museums
Attention to non-audience	museology	for all innovative museums
Place as object	museology	ecomuseums

The first three points are museographical characteristics, but with strong consequences on the museological plane. In fact, in situ interpretation and fragmentation are often only possible by accepting the non-ownership of exhibits and the reticular structuring of the supply.

These non-peculiar characteristics of ecomuseums may be traced to other types of institutions; for example, many archaeological and maritime museums. The legislation of virtually every country in the world prevents the exportation of archaeological remains. The non-availability of suitable exhibition structures or the fragility of exhibits sometimes entails the need for in situ conservation or the creation of peripheral antennae external to the museum's main venue. In these cases, unlike for ecomuseums, choices are dictated more by need than by established museographical policies.

The interdisciplinary approach is a step in the direction of the 'social' museum, and thus has consequences for the traditional formulation of the museum mission. Many innovative social history museums which choose to contextualise their exhibitions use multidisciplinary and holistic interpretative approaches, overlaying various planes of interpretation. In this case, the choice is deliberate and not dictated by contingent needs.

The relationship with the local community and attention to potential audience may be (and very often are<sup>17</sup>) characteristics of very innovative museums (art museums included).

Last but not least, moving on to interest towards place as a strongly characterising element, especially in Northern European experiences, it has been interpreted also but

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin W., *Ecrits français*, Gallimard, 1991.

<sup>17</sup> See Santagata W., Falletti V., Maggi M., *I non-utenti dei musei*, 2000, a survey promoted by the Piedmont Regional Authority and the City of Turin.

not exclusively within the framework of general attention towards the development of sustainable tourism.

The ecomuseum might thus be interpreted as a territory or territorial heritage museum. This characteristic has hardly changed with the evolution of museology over the last few decades, whereas the concepts of museum and place or territory have changed, both enhanced by 'social' that were previously conspicuous by their absence.

Today the image of place is defined by aspects which transcend the geographic landscape and environment as such and embody other material and immaterial heritage features such as architecture, life and working practices, local products, language and oenological and gastronomic traditions. But a place is also defined on the basis of its own identity, which is built round a development project, hence a project of territorial transformation.

The ecomuseum, an institution which is, by its very nature, evolutionary and bound to the transformations of society, has thus become a key to interpreting place, hence a tool and project to give significance to the heritage features which combine to define the identity of places.

### **Identity and place**

The concepts of environment, landscape and place have been the subject of a great deal of reflection and theoretical revisitation in recent years. The traditional Fordist-inspired concept of place as a mere support for economic activities has been supplanted by place's role as a potential producer of wealth. Hence the need, among other things, to use new interdisciplinary and holistic paradigms of place analysis for an identity-oriented as opposed to functionalist interpretation.

This activity of interpretation and analysis of territorial values may make it possible to delineate new models of interpretation of place, more bound to the concept of political and socio-economic geography than to physical geography (A. Magnaghi, 1999).

Extended to extraurban areas, territorial degradation and standardisation have offered a vital thrust to the extension of the principle of conservation to the entire territory.

As we have seen, this attention to conservation has developed on the European and English-speaking museological tradition since the Fifties in an attempt to stop or reverse this process of degradation by recovering the settlements of the historical tradition (typical buildings, trails paths) or elements of the environmental heritage (landscape, biotopes).

'But a historical territory is not an inert storehouse' of elements that have to be overridden; 'it is the continuously evolving product of complex processes' (Gambino R, 1997) and at the centre of its attention has to be the process of significance. Hence the need to understand the diversities which make the identity of places emerge and make that identity visible.

Yet if 'the recovery of the historical territory cannot boil down to an action of conservation of signs, objects, resources or landscapes out of the context' (Gambino R., 1997) and 'the historical territory must be recovered only if it becomes a place to live in again' (Magnaghi A., 1990), it is necessary to have a tool of conservation that is, at once, a development project for the future of a place or territory.

This is the 're-territorialisation' that has to be pursued and which has been referred to more or less explicitly by the ecomuseum movement. It is a process capable of setting into motion an active, productive relationship between social, ecological and biological factors, hence tied to a project of life and not mere tourist exploitation (Raffestin C., 1986). In this way, the search for the identity of places transcends traditional archaeological and museum significances and becomes 'research on the possible future of the human settlement' (Magnaghi, 1999).



## 6. RESPONSES

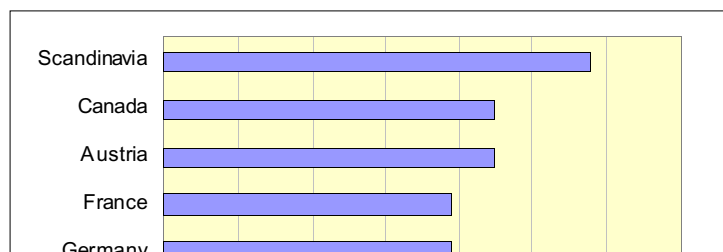
Analysis of the different experiences of conservation of the territorial heritage suggests different replies to the first questions in the survey. Most of them also assume great relevance for extra-European countries and, in general, for all those rural or marginal areas which wish to activate projects of sustainable development centred on local cultural resources.

**What can a law for ecomuseums do?** The legal initiatives to conserve the local heritage and local communities (such as the Piedmont Regional Law 95/31) may express important principles such as the need to have an additional instrument, beside traditional ones, to aid local development - in this case, the ecomuseum. The definition of what an ecomuseum actually is - a problem which is still using up a large chunk of the resources of the community of scholars and museum professionals concerned - cannot obviously be decided by law. Provisions of this kind thus have to help bring out differences between the various initiatives transparently, distinguishing between ecomuseums or other legitimate forms of territorial conservation worthy of being financed but not necessarily from the same funds (theme park, open air museum, straightforward territorial marketing projects and so on).

Also helpful are provisions to provide incentives for cooperation among a number of players. The territorial extension of the different initiatives is, instead, an element which cannot be easily defined *a priori* by a legal provision. Something can be done, nonetheless, to limit the inconveniences resulting from excessive fragmentation (lots of tiny museums) or from heterogeneity (large museums spread over an area greater than that which is 'culturally' typical). Initiatives such as *Passport musée*, tried and tested successfully in a number of French ecomuseums, might prove useful for the purpose, if applied to relatively broad areas, though not to the whole region in question.

Initiatives to increase comparison and reciprocal knowledge with other similar organisations are also important. More specifically, as recent studies confirm, the degree of internationalisation of Italian museums is still very limited (Maggi M., 1999).

Degree of internationalisation of ecomuseums



Sources: IRES survey, 1999

**How can ecomuseums be assessed?** For some years now, the national and local governments of many countries have assessed museums according to standardised procedures. The aim is to evaluate their correspondence to the prerequisites envisaged by all the various public policies<sup>18</sup>.

The great lack of homogeneity of ecomuseums and of interpretation of place in general warns against the use of rigid instruments such as desk-based models of evaluation of merit. Much more suitable is the use of ad hoc commissions with in-depth knowledge of the place in question, which judge on the basis of visits in situ. This allows not only periodic checks on the advancement of work – hence on the advisability or otherwise of proceeding with funding – but also the implementation of channels of communication between the enquiring government agency and local bodies. This type of commission might also be useful as a horizontal link and form of communication between the ecomuseums of the jurisdiction, disseminating models of excellence and recording local needs and difficulties.

**How can ecomuseums be helped?** The main factor of any system of incentive funding is the filter which allows players with given characteristics to have access to resources. A second aspect, closely linked to the first, is the supply of technical support to allow the highest possible number of players to reach the desired characteristics.

A system of funding envisaging selective filters but not the supports needed to raise the value of the supply would be, *ceteris paribus*, relatively less effective. Quality recognition systems, with or without a financial reward, generally envisage both aspects. In such cases, the assessment system, based on quantitative and qualitative indicators and completed by direct ad hoc surveys, is accompanied by technical assistance manuals and procedures for applicants.

Different factors may help ecomuseums technically. In France and elsewhere, the role of existing museums, universities and relatively diffuse museological culture has been decisive for the success of initiatives.

In Italy it might be useful to make a collection of detailed descriptions of best practices, national or foreign. Other suitable measures might be the organisation of periodic meetings to discuss or present cases, the provision of instruments of comparison and permanent information such as a national ecomuseum newsletter and the funding of training stages in ecomuseums in other Italian or European regions.

**Tourism and culture: a latent conflict?** The promotion of an area and a population may yield economic advantages thanks to the short-term tourism and increased long-term social and economic competitiveness resulting from the reinforcement of territorial identity. These two objectives can be compatible, provided choices avoid direct tourist exploitation of ecomuseums. It would be a short-sighted project, however, a point of view which may be better understood if we observe the analogy with nature parks.

Parks work if they manage to improve the environment even beyond their own boundaries. It is thus that environmental quality becomes, among other things, a competitive factor of place: development is more than just a question of attracting a few extra tourists into the park. Likewise, the ecomuseum has to disseminate, defend, conserve and maybe even create a cultural identity, which may, in turn, become both a stabilising factor (*vis-à-vis* the rural exodus, for example) and also a competitive one.

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<sup>18</sup> Accreditation procedures have been promoted by, among others, ICOM (at international level) and the American Association of Museums and the Museum and Galleries Commission (at national level).

Development is thus more than a matter of attracting a few extra tourists to the ecomuseum. A change in the image (in a cultural sense) of place would have a different cultural impact. Which is why it is not only vital to conserve, but also to produce culture.

**Development and tourism.** *The sustainable development of a mountain or rural area is often identified with the concept of sustainable tourism.*

In actual fact, tourism is not the only important factor to ensure the development of a rural area, even if its importance is widely accepted by scholars, administrators and the populations of municipalities.

The importance attributed to tourism as a development factor has relatively recent origins and is born of awareness that the physical and anthropological damage provoked by man's abandonment of the land may be just as serious as that caused by over-exploitation.

To avoid the abandonment of mountain and rural areas, it is necessary to ensure a variety of conditions. The most important, all closely interconnected, are:

- profit
- accessibility
- cultural identity

The first of these conditions is not sufficient in itself. Not even by subsidising the inhabitants of areas in danger of depopulation would it be possible to prevent them leaving, if cultural opportunities for entertainment and personal services were not provided simultaneously.

Especially in mountain areas, road improvements make larger towns and villages more accessible and thus increase the supply of services to citizens who reside in small centres or scattered houses.

From this point of view, tourism represents an important resource, not only as a support to income alternative to that from the traditional occupations of mountain areas. The demand generated by tourist arrivals in small towns and villages is often the decisive factor for the survival of many services such as commercial retail businesses, otherwise bound to disappear.

To trigger and maintain tourist flows, however, areas have to be easily accessible and possess an identifiable cultural characterisation.

Accessibility, however, may be a double-edged weapon. Even if the impact of work sites and the visual impact of projects themselves are kept to a bare minimum, the development of effective infrastructure may produce negative effects and congest some areas.

An even greater problem caused by tourist flows may arise on the cultural plane, especially if local populations perceive the phenomenon as extraneous and removed from their own interests. In this case, it would be impossible to ensure the area an authentic, recognisable cultural identity and its capacity to attract so-called 'exploration tourism' would thus wane. Deprived of its principal anthropological components, the area would only attract 'occupation tourism' - with devastating effects for the natural environment.

Ultimately, sustainable development goes beyond tourism, albeit acknowledging it as an element of fundamental importance. In turn, the concept of sustainable tourism depends on three factors: demand for visitors, environment in a broad sense and local community. If no virtuous equilibrium is established among these elements, the spaces for a sustainable tourism in mountain areas whittle away.

**Success or failure?** Leaving aside the confusion about how to define it, the ecomuseum movement is enjoying a period of great vitality because the need to promote places and make their identities emerge is more strongly felt now than in the past. The success of the New Museology – admittedly still partial – is one of the many causes for confusion since many aspects once attributed to ecomuseums and capable of identifying them are now part of the practice of many other innovative museums.

**Closed or open model?** In given conditions, the reinforcement of local identity risks producing results a long way away from the intentions of the champions of ecomuseums. Local identity is the awareness of having a lot in common with one's own neighbours but also, as a consequence, of being different from those less close. According to the conditions in which it is formed, awareness of diversity always provokes contrasting reactions: either hostility and a tendency towards isolation or else curiosity and an urge to converse. Factors which may favour the first hypothesis are an insufficient identity, which turns into fear of being broken away from contact with other communities (immigrant communities, for example), but also the adoption of rhetorical museum practices to convey the idea of a bucolic, idyllic past (which may never have existed at all) and hold off possible external 'contaminations'. To date, this closed, 'tribal', defensive approach to place has been extraneous to the experiences of ecomuseums. Nonetheless, initiatives designed to favour the evolutionary ecomuseum model, incentives and forms of cooperation among different ecomuseums (including crossborder projects), exchanges of experience and circulation of staff are all elements that can combine to increase the capacity for dialogue with other cultures.

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#### POSSIBLE POLICY INITIATIVES

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- Priority financing of initiatives close to the evolutionary model
  - Incentives to networked cooperation and the exploitation of the whole territory
  - Assessment and technical support units working in situ
  - Meetings to favour the circulation of knowledge (including crossborder exchanges)
  - Ecomuseums newsletter open to all national and crossborder initiatives
  - Periods of apprenticeship at ecomuseums in other Italian and foreign regions
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## 7. THE FUTURE OF ECOMUSEUMS

The specificity of ecomuseums. The transformation of the heritage is less and less bound to aesthetic values or the values of 'high' culture' and more and more to 'social' elements. It is a long-term phenomenon and has been in progress since the end of the nineteenth century. Ecomuseums are one step in this long evolution.

Defining ecomuseums in the context of this process is difficult because

- the trend from museums of objects to museums of ideas blurs the borderlines between thematic jurisdictions
- the concept of place or territory has changed and has been enhanced by new social aspects
- the concept of museum has changed and many of its original characteristics are now being disseminated (New Museology): hence only some (such as the conservation of place) remain as distinctive of the ecomuseum as such
- ecomuseums have many roots (parks, pre-existing local museums, cultural groups) and every institution which comes into being is influenced by the history of its promoters.

Whether adhesion to an abstract model is faithful or not is thus not a crucial issue. The correspondence of single initiatives to projects of wider-ranging cultural and territorial development – if necessary in the field – is much more important.

**Ecomuseums and development: a crucial node.** By their very nature and history, ecomuseums are institutions closely bound to the demands of the community. At the moment the basic demands are to ensure economic development in non-traditional sectors and conserve an identity in the era of globalisation. These concerns are common to many rural areas in industrialised and non-industrialised countries alike. It is necessary, however, to take the following premisses into account:

- Development consists not only of tourism but results from a balance between different components (income does not guarantee development)
- The tourist phenomenon has to be managed (sustainable tourism) and not passively accepted (tourist colonisation)
- Identity is a decisive element factor for increasing a place's competitiveness in a non-immediate time-scale, hence short-term development objectives (tourism) and long-term ones (social and territorial competitiveness) differ (though are not necessarily incompatible).

**The cultural district: a possible solution?** The course that appears most promising for the future of ecomuseums is that of territorial development in the overall sense of the term (economy and identity through the cultural district), avoiding the danger of the adaptive model, which does not induce changes in the use of territorial and patrimonial resources, and the hetero-direct exploitation of tourism, which is only remunerative in the short term.

The creation-reinforcement of identity is the key to the problem. The cultural heritage in the contemporary sense of the term thus goes beyond aesthetics alone to embrace intangible aspects. It plays its role to the full when it is accompanied by a strong social identity and the ecomuseum can play an important role in creating this.

Industrial districts – founded on the dynamic growth of small and medium enterprises firmly integrated in the local area and community – are an original Italian contribution to the question of local development.

Industrial districts are identified as areas characterised by a high density of small and very small enterprises, which work within a limited area and specialise in different phases or methods for the making of the same product, with a human involvement that extends outside the productive plant proper.

In Italy, the industrial district concept, backed by special legal instruments, has been an important stepping stone towards initiatives designed to create and reinforce new roads to economic development alternative to traditional policies of support to big business.

Likewise, with regard to the relationship between culture and development, it may be helpful to consider the cultural district concept.

Both in economic terms (optimal dimension, positive externalities and structure of the production chain) and institutional terms (protection of knowledge and reputation), cultural districts are at the forefront of three modern revolutions in which the intellectual component is dominant: the technological knowledge revolution, the computer knowledge revolution, characterised by the explosion of a global distribution system (the Internet where knowledge workers distribute ideas, culture, goods and services) and the cultural knowledge production revolution, whose expansion transforms lifestyles and life plans, modifies the consumer's time constraints and challenges economic orthodoxy with symbolic goods. These, as in the case of industrial design, subvert the logic of production costs in favour of international competition, which expresses itself increasingly in terms of product quality' (Walter Santagata, Pro-memoria for the World Bank, January 2000).

A recent definition (W. Santagata, 1999) identifies three typologies of cultural district: an area with a high density of enterprises whose products are significantly based on local cultural elements; an area whose emergence is facilitated by recognition of property rights over cultural elements (areas with products of with controlled denomination of origin, for example); areas with a high density not so much of enterprises as of heritage or, more precisely, different levels of interpretation and conservation of the natural, historical, artistic, architectural and oeno-gastronomic heritage.

In reality, there is a good deal of mutual overlaying between these three models. What is significant for my purposes here is that studies conducted on different territorial aspects (marginality, evolution of agricultural practices and relationship with place, environment and economic development, culture and economic development, geography of identities) would appear to show that development opportunities (in a broad, not strictly economic sense) are created, when the overlaying of different 'heritage levels' exceeds a certain threshold level.

Hence the almost certain need for a multidisciplinary, holistic approach to the study of place or territory.

It might be interesting, first of all, to develop new paradigms of interpretation of place that go beyond the traditional concept of marginality/development, supplementing it with indicators of cultural development. This would allow us to single out areas homogeneous from the cultural point of view (in terms of environment and landscape, history, language, eating and drinking habits, economy and so on), a first step towards analysis of proposals aimed at multiplying the opportunities for conservation (and capitalisation) or bringing to the fore or backing local entrepreneurial players.

## **Part two**





## 8 ITALY

### **The Ecomuseum of Prali (Lo Scopriminiera, or Mine Explorer)**

Prali is situated in the province of Turin in the Val Germanasca, a valley in which talc mining was the main source of revenue for over a century. The mining of the 'Bianco delle Alpi', the White Stuff of the Alps, which still continues with sophisticated techniques and equipment, began in the Chisone and Germanasca valleys in the eighteenth century. .

The 'Scopriminiera' came into being to conserve and raise the profile of the cultural heritage of the mine and the local mining community.

The ecomuseum is the result of a project of the mountain communities of the Chisone and Germanasca valleys to create an itinerary through different mining areas. Hence three French mining sites – the silver mines of l'Argentière, the coal mines of Biancon and the copper mines of Queyras – were also involved in the initiative.

The ecomuseum of Prali offers the public the chance to make a multifaceted tour. The aim is to provide an overview of the mines in the valley. Possibilities include walking excursions into the mountains to discover ancient mining sites, excursions to the mines of Beth in Val Troncea and the talc mines of Envie, Sapatlè, Malzas and Maniglia in Val Germanasca. The main attraction, however, is the visit to the Paola talc mine in Prali, which has all the atmosphere of an exciting adventure, especially for the youngest visitors. Accompanied by a guide and supplied with helmets, lanterns and capes, visitors are taken underground on train which can carry up to 50 people. The thrilling yet educational trip is almost two kilometres long and features mining-related ex-museum exhibits, each accompanied by a caption. Visitors can find out about the all the various underground workplaces: the well, the lake, the explosives store and the canteen area. After a journey of one and a half kilometres, the train reaches the quarrying sites, at which point visitors have to get off and walk a loop of 500 metres. In the underground tunnels, they can see the various talc mining techniques and the equipment used.

The visit is designed as a sort of simulation of the real journey to the miners' workplace. Every visitor is liable for the helmets and lanterns provided and has to return them at the end of the visit. If any item is recorded missing, it means that a 'miner' has failed to leave the mine, and emergency procedures are activated, as would have happened when the mine was still in use.

The tour and the various environments have been designed to cater largely for a young and very young public, whose thirst for knowledge is stimulated by 'special effects', such as the 'sets' with miner dummies, light and sound (running water, voices, drills). In this way, children, but also adults, manage to have a good time, but also to learn and acquire awareness of the tough conditions in which the miners of the past used to live and work.

The train departs twice a day and the trips last for two to three hours.

The Paola site also comprises an exhibition outside the mine. Housed in the buildings and areas adjacent to the mouth of the tunnel, the exhibition is dedicated to the local community, mining activity and the life of miners and features historical exhibits, objects made of talc and a wealth of illustrations. The traditional museum is made up of three sections, the first of which presents the themes which the Comunità Montana has judged most worthy of priority: economic, social and symbolic relations in an Alpine community; the villages which make up the Comunità Montana both as clusters of typologically characteristic buildings and productive and relational structures in a

broad sense; and human, economic and historical contacts between France and the valley.

Admission is reduced for children and school parties. The second section describes the history of talc mining , technological progress and the consequent improvement in working conditions; the economic evolution of the product and its potential, and the history of the mine; and the geology of the soil. The leading players of the third section are the inhabitants of the valley. The exhibition can be interpreted on two levels: linear history (episodes, heroes, bandits, bosses, miners) and circular history (seasons, festivals, celebrations, worship).

Near the museum and the mine are a restaurant, a cafeteria and a bookshop are to be built for tourists.

In the first year of activity, 27,000 visits were made, and a survey showed that the audience has a different composition from traditional museums, with a lower share of visits from the medium-high professional segments.

School visits, which account for about 50% of visits to traditional Italian museums, here account for only one third of the total – an indicator, this, of a specific audience.

In the first year of its activity, the museum encashed about 125,000 lire and a survey carried out by the Comunità Montana estimated that fallouts on other sectors – catering, the sale of products, hotel accommodation, amusements, transport, communication and marketing – amounted to about 750, 000 lire.

Two training courses have been organised for escorts and one for tour operators in the valley.

## **Museo degli Usi e dei Costumi della Gente Trentina**

Standing on a rise in the commune di San Michele all'Adige in a wine-producing area about ten kilometres from Trento, the Museo Provinciale degli Usi e dei Costumi della Gente Trentina, the Provincial Museum of the Habits and Customs of the People of Trentino, is housed in a former Augustine monastery of the twelfth century of great architectural interest.

The museum was founded in 1968 by a Trentino scholar, the ethnographer Giuseppe Sebesta, who transferred to it his collections, the fruit of many years of hard work. Legally speaking, the museum, which is publicly owned, was instituted in 1972 by a special provincial law transforming it into a functional Agency of the Autonomous Provincial Authority of Trento.

The Museo degli Usi e dei Costumi della Gente Trentina defines itself as an ethnographic museum, more precisely as a 'a demo-ethno-anthropological' museum. Its distinctive feature is the great attention it devotes 'to the culture of peasant labour which, in all its various manifestations, accompanies the process of adaptation of the environment of the mountain populations'. The museum is thus an important centre of ethnographic collecting and documentation. The main subject of the exhibition is 'rural mountain technology in the specific historical-ethnographic context of the Trentino'. The exhibition surface measures about 2,500 square metres. The collections, housed in 40 rooms, stand out for the quality and quantity of their over 10,000 exhibits.

In the design of the layout of the museum, efforts have been made to put the objects and the non-material aspects of local peasant culture into context as far as possible. The museum is organised according to a set itinerary.

The point of departure is agriculture, with special reference to haymaking. The collection comprises various tools of the trade (sickles, rakes, hay irons etc) and cereal cultivation equipment (a vast range of ploughs). The next section features an early nineteenth-century water mill, brought to the museum from its original site in the Val di Cembra.

The next subject to be addressed is Vine Growing, Wine Making and Distillation, traditional businesses of San Michele all'Adige, where a prestigious agrarian institute still sells typical local wines. The collection comprises fine native and imported grape varieties, vine growing utensils, a monumental early eighteenth-century beam press, tools and materials from a barrel maker's workshop and other miscellaneous wine making and distilling equipment (including a large early twentieth-century locomobile alembic). The job of the blacksmith is described with a forge equipped with a heavy sledgehammer, which the visitor can set into motion at the press of a button, a smithy and a water grindstone. The section dedicated to zootechnics houses a late nineteenth-century barn, equipment for tending to livestock and a horseshoer's tools. The next stage in the itinerary displays the craft processing of copper and iron, spinning, weaving and mountain farming, with reconstructions of workplaces, equipment and a host of exhibits. The subsequent rooms display instruments for woodland labour and a set of sledges, carts and yokes.

The room of the Venetian sawmill, 'La sala della segheria alla veneziana', houses a gigantic sawmill from the Val di Non to cut logs into building timber and a mechanical diorama donated to the museum by a local craftsman, which faithfully reproduces - on a reduced scale - a traditional sawmill, which visitors can set into motion at the press of a button. The last rooms again use reconstructions of ambiances to address themes such as marriage, popular customs, folklore, popular worship, religion and hunting.

Exhibits include engagement presents, period clothes and accessories and carnival masks, musical instruments, holy icons, traps and snares.

Also available to the public are a specialised library (covering general anthropology, Alpine ethnology; material culture, ethnography and local history) and an archive of audiovisuals on the traditional culture of the people of the Trentino, a sophisticated system of computerised inventorying/cataloguing of exhibits and two hypertexts on mountain farming and popular weaving. The museum also boasts a small shop where it is possible to buy informational material, books of historical-ethnographical culture and also typical produce (wine and honey).

The museum has a very active educational section, which organises workshops and tours for elementary schools covering subjects such as 'Where do cattle go in the summer?', 'The mountain pasture tradition', 'Textile fibres and their processing in the Trentino tradition', 'The art and technique of milling in rural Trentino' and 'From the woods to the sawmill. The traditional activities of cutting down and sawing trees'. The museum prepares teaching materials for schools and organises guided visits.

It also runs a publishing house, printing monographs on ethnography and an annual journal with contributions by experts in the sector.

The Permanent Seminar on Alpine Ethnography, made up of scholars from all over the Alps, meets periodically at the museum.

The museum staff is made up of 14/15 people and comprises two curators. Besides the director, the advisory committee is composed of academics and Italian and foreign museum professionals.

The Museo degli Usi e dei Costumi delle Genti Trentine records an average of 24,000 visits a year. Visitors consist mainly of school parties (especially elementary and lower middle schools) and senior citizens.

## **Ecomuseum della Montagna Pistoiese**

The Ecomuseum della Montagna Pistoiese covers a broad area (420 square kilometres with a local population of almost 15,000 inhabitants) and recounts the close relationship, based on water and woodland, which binds the mountainous area between Tuscany and Emilia to the local community. The two natural resources mentioned have prompted special forms of culture and social life – from records of working life (icehouses and iron mills) to the exploitation of the woods (timber production), to popular art and culture – to take root in the area, thus reflecting man's relationship with his environment. Inaugurated in 1989 with only one visitable site, the ecomuseum today breaks down into six homogeneous theme trails (the itineraries of ice, iron, sacred art, daily life, nature and stone), which include small museums scattered throughout the mountain area. The ecomuseum, set up by the Provincial Authority of Pistoia, seeks to safeguard local culture and represents an alternative to traditional tourism (a cool, relaxing environment in summer and winter sports) to create new employment. Promoters of the museum, besides the Provincial Authority of Pistoia, are the European Union, the Tuscan Regional Authority, the Comunità Montana Appennino Pistoiese and the communes of Cutigliano, Pistoia, Piteglio, Sambuca Pistoiese and San Marcello Pistoiese.

12 sites are visitable as part of the itineraries.

The Ice Trail bears witness to a past, from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth, in which the ice industry flourished along the River Reno in the mountains round Pistoia. Travelling along the trail, from Le Piastre to Pracchia, it is possible to see the remains of the ice-houses, buildings for the conservation of the ice, and the structures used to deviate the river water for the production of ice. At Le Piastre, it is possible to visit the Ghiacciaia della Madonna, a completely restored ice-house. The teaching centre at Pracchia, which can be visited by appointment, houses paper and photographic documentation on the ice industry.

The Iron Trail testifies to an activity, that of the production and processing of iron, which was present in the area as many as 1,500 years ago. Thanks to a number of blast furnaces, in which pyrite from the island of Elba was processed, and ironworks, the mountains round Pistoia were an important centre of iron processing until the middle of the last century. Along the itinerary, it is possible to see many buildings once used for production activities. The itinerary begins with the Ferreria Sabatini of Pracchia, an ironworks active until the Fifties and today granted in commodatum, and ends with the Iron Area Information Point, situated in the municipality of S. Marcello Pistoiese, and equipped with documentation material and teaching aids.

The Sacred Art and Popular Worship Trail takes in various churches, in one of which a section of the Diocesan Museum of Holy Art and a teaching centre have been installed. The Daily Life Trail in the commune of Cutigliano has as its point of reference the lovely Museo della Gente dell'Appennino Pistoiese di Rivoletta, which takes visitors on a journey into the past, encouraging them to 'use their hands' and offering a variety of sensations and emotions not only through tangible exhibits but also sounds and suggestions. The use of Walk-Assistant technology also makes the trail accessible to the blind. Working in close conjunction with the local community, at the end of July each year the museum stages a 'Living Museum Day' during which the working techniques and customs of the mountains are presented.

The Nature Trail is centred round the Forestal Botanical Garden of the Abetone in the Val Sestaione. The fruit of collaboration between the Comunità Montana dell'Appennino Pistoiese, the local university, the Tuscan Regional Authority and the State Forestry Corps, the garden allows the visitor to find out more about the

vegetation of the Apennines. It consists mainly of woods, a lake and a rock garden, which houses a variety of typical local plants.

The Stone Trail comprises three routes which allow the visitor to admire the remains of the work of local stone cutters - whose art descends from that of the celebrated Maestri comancini - including paved roads, watch towers and stone quarries.

This mountain ecomuseum records about 17,000 visitors a year, half of whom of local provenance. It works in close collaboration with tourist agencies and schools.

The staff comprises two employees of the Pistoia Provincial Authority, who work part-time, a manager for each museum and seven voluntary workers from local associations. The museum has no director, and is run by an advisory committee which also has administrative powers. An administrative committee set up by the Provincial Authority also takes part in the management. It comprises representatives of the Pro-loco (the local tourist office) and local associations, as well as representatives of the Comune and the Provincial Authority. Visits to the ecomuseum are managed by an association. Annual spending amounts to 50 million lire and direct revenue to 14 million lire (10 from the sale of tickets, others from the sale of publications).

As far as educational activities are concerned, the ecomuseum publishes brochures and fact sheets, stages games and produces audiovisual material.

It has no liaisons with other ecomuseums, but it does boast a close relationship with the local community, which responds beyond all expectation, intervening with proposals for the recovery of traditional buildings and collecting stories about them. The population also uses the ecomuseum to make political and cultural demands to the local institutions.

The ecomuseum has grown considerably in the course of time, hence the need for an adequate structure capable also of drawing on private funding. Medium-long term projects envisage the organisation of conferences on the oral tradition and traditional music, the opening of new hostels for school parties and visitors outside the conventional tourist routes, the opening of new sites and the use of new advanced exhibition technologies.

## **Museo della Civiltà Contadina di San Marino di Bentivoglio**

The Museo della Civiltà Contadina is situated in the commune of Bentivoglio about 15 kilometres from Bologna and is housed in the Villa Smeraldi building complex.

The museum, which defines itself as 'ethno-historical and documentary', came into being in 1973 thanks to the collaboration, dating from 1969, between the Gruppo della Stadura, an association of peasants and former peasants, and the Centro economie società tecnologie, a centre of research into peasant civilisation. The aim is to 'promote knowledge of Emilian history and culture and understand the contemporary developments of science, technology and industry'. The museum, which offers visitors many records of peasant life and labour in the countryside round Bologna in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is split up into three permanent exhibitions and also lays on educational and documentation services and organises a variety of cultural activities and events.

The building complex in which the museum is housed provides a reminder of some of the salient aspects of the country life of aristocratic and bourgeois families, but also of typical nineteenth- and twentieth-century agricultural production activities. The Villa Smeraldi complex, in fact, comprises not only the patronal villa, but also a large English-style park, farming land, stables, an ice-house, a farm house, a tower cum granary and a dovecote. It covers an area of 13 hectares (five of which occupied by the park and eight by the farming land, which also includes a number of museum sites). The permanent exhibitions, dedicated to cereals, wheat, hemp and the farmhouse are situated inside a former stable. Temporary exhibitions and cultural events are held inside the villa.

The permanent exhibition dedicated to wheat – historically speaking, the staple crop of the countryside round Bologna – illustrates the various stages of its cultivation (ploughing, sowing, harvesting, threshing) and the technological transformations that have accompanied the passage from manual to mechanical processing. The history spans from the steam plough to the combustion engine; from the sickle to the mechanical combined harvester; from the technique of flailing to the great nineteenth-century steam harvester. 60 or so exhibits dating from the middle of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth are on show: they include two ploughs, yokes, a tractor, a grubber, a harrow, a mallet, a sower, anchors and pulleys for funicular harvesting, various sickles, a couple of scythes, a mower and a mechanical combined harvester, flails, forks, rakes, a sieve, an awner, a cart, a steam locomobile, a thresher, a 'press' and measuring units.

The second permanent exhibition is devoted to hemp, the production of which in the middle of the last century was so great that it was exported to other Italian provinces and abroad and provide employment for thousands of craftsmen, cottage workers and workers. It documents the various stages in the cultivation and processing of hemp with a display which includes a trench-plough, spades of various shapes and sizes, a bladed harrow, a sower, various hemp sickles and specimens of the various utensils once used for retting, separation and the rural or domestic combing, spinning and weaving of hemp.

The permanent exhibitions are completed by the farmer's house. Lived in by sharecropping families of 15-20 people, it used to be the central working unit of the estate, which was run by a manager and a manageress. The section documents the demography of sharecropping families and the process of formation of the estate, as well as residential and work places – the hayloft, the byre, the pigsty, the well, the oven, the manure-pit and so on.



In one part of the exhibition, visitors can observe the reconstruction of a farmhouse in which 53 exhibits are on show to exhaustively document the salient elements of the domestic life of Bolognese peasants from the nineteenth century to the twentieth.

The Museo della Civiltà Contadina of Bentivoglio organises guided school tours of both the permanent and temporary exhibitions at very low rates. The guided tour of the 'wheat' and 'hemp' sections lasts about an hour and a half per section. Slides, films and fact sheets are supplied to teachers and students and readings of documents on material culture are staged. Students are also given the opportunity to find out about the recent developments in the field of agrarian sciences.

The museum library contains about 3,500 volumes from the region's old mobile teaching units (later converted into provincial inspectorates) and collections of old magazines and journals to do with the world of agriculture. The Museo della Civiltà Contadina owns a collection of 4,000 pictures, most of which catalogued.

In the spring and summer, the museum boasts an intense calendar of cultural activities and events, including conferences, meetings and popular dance and folk song productions. In collaboration with the Bologna University Faculty of Agriculture, it also stages refresher courses for teachers on biotechnologies in the agroindustrial sector.

The Museum is owned by the Provincial Authority of Bologna. Since 1999 it has been by the Istituzione Villa Smeraldi, constituted by the Provincial Authority itself and the municipalities of Bologna, Bentivoglio and Castel Maggiore, which also support the museum financially.

Admission is free and no recent data is available on total attendances. On the basis of sales on the occasion of temporary exhibitions, it is estimated that over 20,000 people visit the museum every year. The public comes largely from the provincial area with a prevalence of children and old people.

The curator is an employee of the Bologna Provincial Authority. The museum currently employs six people, including a young man on civilian in alternative to military service. Some voluntary workers, members of local associations connected with the trade unions, collaborate on restoration work and assistance to the public during temporary exhibitions.

Annual expenditure, personnel expenses excluded, amounts to about 230 million lire.

The Museo della Civiltà Contadina carries on relations with the museums of S. Michele all'Adige and S. Arcangelo di Romagna. Medium-long term projects envisage the development of the history-society theme.

## **Museo delle Genti d'Abruzzo - Ecomuseum of the Maiella Occidentale**

The Museo delle Genti di Abruzzo is based in Pescara. Set up at the Commune's expense, it formally came into being in 1973 thanks to the collaboration of two voluntary cultural associations: ASTRA (association for the study of Abruzzo traditions) and Archeoclub di Pescara, which donated almost all the exhibits presently on display to the city of Pescara. The museum is housed in the basement of a sixteenth-century fortress, once a dungeon, in which a number of Abruzzo-born patriots died of privation during the Risorgimento.

The museum defines itself as an "unconventional" demo-ethno-anthropologic museum in which the exhibits provide an opportunity for a more comprehensive study of Abruzzo man, whose cultural identity has been shaped by the mountains (which occupy 65% of the regional territory), hence largely by a transhumant sheep farming economy over thousands of years ... a "museum cum discourse" which unfolds, room by room, with conceptual panels in which brief captions are followed by more in-depth descriptions'.

The 'speech' follows an itinerary which sets out from pre-history to reconstruct the ethnic formation of the area, especially in the Bronze Age, and its cultural continuity, concluding in the postwar years, which marked the end of a millenary economy based on self-production, now definitively overtaken by time and technology.

The first seven rooms of the Museo delle Genti di Abruzzo were inaugurated in 1991. Other rooms were subsequently added to reach the present total of 15. Besides dioramas and reconstructions (for example, the stone shepherd's shelter), they house many archaeological finds from various periods: those from antiquity include the remains of a Roman wall and many sealed African ceramics of the fourth-sixth centuries; those from the Byzantine-Longobard period include ceramics, remains of buildings and huts from the seventh and eight centuries; those from the medieval period include a large variety of ninth-century plain ceramics and walls; those from the period of the sixteenth-century Fortress, finally, include ceramics and painted majolica tankards.

The exhibition rooms, some of which are still in the process of being completed, are organised on a theme basis with careful attention to layout. The subjects dealt with in the different rooms comprise ethnic formation, the continuity of places of worship, the continuity of worship and religious objects, the shepherd's art and equipment, pastoral settlements and produce, transhumance, sheep folds and cheesemaking, wheat growing, harvesting and flour production, olive trees and hay, the vine and wine, the house (structure, furnishing and domestic life), linen and wool, everyday and ceremonial clothes and ornaments, traditional artistic crafts, the urban classes and the Risorgimento.

The museum includes an experimental educational centre, an audiovisual room, a multimedia gallery with interactive stations for in-depth analysis in the first rooms and an information-packed internet site. A centre is to be set up for documentation, research and study on ceramics in the Abruzzo. Along the exhibition itinerary, audio stations are being set up to transmit in automatic sequence songs from the Abruzzo agro-pastoral musical tradition.

The museum offers visitors the possibility of buying all-inclusive tickets which allow visits to the other two sites, the Castelli Majolica Collection of the Fondazione Paparella Treccia-Devlet in Pescara and the Museo delle Tradizioni e Arti Popolari in Picciano.

The museum is run by a committee, in which Archeoclub and Astra are both represented.

The museum venue is also the central venue of the 'Millenni nella natura', or Millennia in Nature Ecomuseum (also known as the Ecomuseo della Maiella Occidentals ), a recent 'filiation' of the Museo delle Genti d'Abruzzo.

The ecomuseum is situated in the high valley of the River Pescara on the north-western ridge of the Maiella mountain ridge, which was declared a national park in 1996. It is an open-air museum and is situated in an area of woodland, valleys, rivers, villages and churches. Created to reinforce the local identity and conserve local historical and environmental resources, it comprises three major tourist itineraries: one through the natural landscape, one of historical and archaeological interest and the third dedicated to trades and products.

The nature itinerary comprises six different trails on which visitors can admire not only the landscape but also the flora and fauna (including bears, wolves, otters and golden eagles).

The local trade and produce itinerary breaks down into five trails: wine cellars and oil presses, typical liqueurs, rope making, dry stone-walling (Tholos) and cheese. The visitor can visit craft workshops and see white stone being processed.

The historical-archaeological itinerary comprises 15 or so trails (Romanticism, prehistory and the Roman-medieval period) with the remains of cave paintings, bridges, abbeys, convents, castles and historical residences. The trail of Tocco da Casauria houses the remains of a Bronze Age village and the Madonna degli Angeli farm.

## **Museo Guatelli di Ozzano Taro**

Ozzano Taro is situated in the municipality of Collecchio, about 15 kilometres from Parma.

The Museo Guatelli is located inside a farmhouse with outhouses which once constituted the patronal estate of Bella Foglia and is now the private residence of the Guatelli brothers.

With its 40,000 exhibits, the museum probably constitutes the largest private collection in Italy. All common, humble objects, they are a record largely of the local rural civilisation. It is not so much the huge quantity and variety of the exhibits as the history, museographical characteristics and atmosphere of the Museo Guatelli that make it such a special 'place' – so special that it is hard to define exactly what it is. In fact, it is neither a traditional museum nor a museum-house nor a simple, straightforward collection. In short, its specific features make it truly unique and it would be wrong to pigeonhole it in one typological area rather than another.

The brains behind the 'museum' is Maestro Ettore Guatelli. Of humble origin, Guatelli bought his first object – a pair of pincers – at the age of 16. Since then the desire to gather, collect and conserve has never abandoned him. He was not interested so much in objects in themselves or in their utility as the things it can 'recount' in view of the history of life it has accumulated. Sensitivity, passion, tenacity and enthusiasm have made it possible to develop a project which, at first, risked appearing like the dream of a visionary. With the passing of the years, the objects increased in number and progressively occupied rooms and outhouses (the interior rooms and stairs and the external granary, portico and courtyard. In the course of time, Guatelli worked out what the mission of his collection actually was: '... to build a monument to my people, to allow them to get together and feel worthy of being recorded tangibly'. A sort of postman Cheval<sup>19</sup> and poet of the community memory all rolled up into one, Guatelli has arranged the spaces without following the criterion of a academic museography. He was guided purely by his sensitivity and instinct, and the end-result has nothing in common with so-called spontaneous museography. The layouts of the Museo Guatelli are inspired by a very precise philosophy, which might be summed up as follows: the protagonist is the object, which is not important for its aesthetic features or artistic worth but for its relationship with man. As a result, no object, even the humblest, is less important than the rest. All the exhibits 'speak' and are rendered human by long years of use. They thus all have the same value and none has to have a privileged place in the displays. The key to the museographical display is simplicity. To make his objects speak, Guatelli spent years, collecting testimonies and interviewing elderly peasants, the grandparents of his pupils.

A forerunner of the new conceptions of history which caught on in the Sixties who attributes a dignity and a role to subjects and testimonies traditionally considered insignificant, Guatelli feels like 'an indigenous native' who has gathered the memories of his people, rearranging them from the inside, not from "above" as a white man would do'. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the way in which hundreds of utensils are arranged on some of the walls of the museum conjures up an overall effect reminiscent, to some extent, of aboriginal painting.

It is thus difficult to fit the Guatelli into a precise museum typology: as a museum of time and peasant civilisation; as an ethnographic collection or as a museum of

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<sup>19</sup> Ferdinand Cheval (1836-1924), a country postman. In 1879 he began to build an 'ideal palace' with thousands of stones, which he collected in the course of his work on the pathways between Lyon e Valence. Over 33 years, he built a 'temple of nature' of over 1,000 cubic metres, a surrealist dream which, in André Breton's words, reflected 'irremediable human restlessness'.

peasant, craft and paleo-industrial labour. These, in any case, would be reductive definitions for such a special 'place' (Guatelli himself suggests the definition of 'Museo del Quotidiano' or Museum of Daily Life).

This is all the truer if we consider other distinctive features. For example, the museum is housed in a building which (on the ground floor) is also a private dwelling, it too partly converted into a museum. Visits are possible by appointment only and are guided personally by Guatelli himself. They are allowed to touch all the objects, of which there is no catalogue or inventory. The exhibits are so numerous that many are piled on the threshing floor, in the hayloft and other outhouses.

The rooms of the museum have evocative names. On display on the walls of the 'glass chamber' are over 100 vases, over 40 accordions, dozens of typewriters and irons, as well as hats, workshop tools, an Indian musical instrument, cardboard dummies, conjurers' tricks, fossils, children's shoes and so on; the 'chamber of monkeys or of iconography' contains mainly photographs of local people from the past and historical figures, of peasants at work, of peasant fetes, votive pictures and holy images. The room also features 16 trained monkeys' outfits and 'jokes of nature' such as pieces of bizarrely shaped wood, twisted goats' horns and so on. The 'toy room' contains various types of toys made by children with poor or waste material (wood, wire, tin): models of ships and galleons, toy cars, puppets, bows, skittles, balls and so on. The 'cooking chamber' contains stoves, ovens, cutting boards, frying pans, forks, coffee grinders and so on. The 'clock room' contains over 200 clocks, 20 industrial chocolate moulds, a pistol, flutes, souvenirs and blown glass. The 'box room' contains over 1,000 tins, boxes and coloured tin trays and 100 pieces of wood crates with coloured images and lettering. The 'case room' contains about 200 suitcases, swords, maps, umbrellas and 20 wardrobes. The 'pottery gallery' contains hundreds of objects: soup tureens, salad bowls, teapots, coffee pots, saucers and so on.

In the other ambiances (the great hall and the granary), thousands of work tools and utensils - cobblers', butchers', barrel makers', carpenters' tools, cutting instruments, blacksmiths' utensils, joiners' tools, axes and hatchets - are on display, most of them nailed to the walls.

The museum is still the private property of the Guatelli family, though public purchase procedures have long been underway.

## 9. FRANCE

### **Ecomusée Départemental de Vendée, Château du Puy-du-Fou, Les Epesses**

An eponym of a village but also of an ancient household, Puy-du-Fou (from *Podium Fagi*) means 'the hill of beech trees'.

The Renaissance castle of Puy-de-Fou is situated very near to the Grand Parcours, Europe's largest history and ecology park, which covers an area of over 30 hectares and features historical and ecological attractions.

The activities of the Grand Parcours comprise equestrian circuses and demonstrations with trained falcons. The park also houses a medieval town and a thirteenth-century village with costumed figures, a large animated carillon and, above all, the colossal Cinéscénie (performed 25 evenings a year with an average attendance of 15,000 spectators a time, meaning over 5 million spectators over the last 20 years), involving the inhabitants of 15 municipalities, with 800 actors and 50 knights in medieval costumes, 1,500 floodlights, fantastic plays of light on the water in front of the castle and fireworks displays.

The castle of Puy-du-Fou was purchased in 1977 by the Département de la Vendée, which ordered major restoration work, with financial support from the French government and the Région des Pays de Loire. In the same year, collaboration between Georges-Henri Rivière and Francis Ribemont, then Conservateur Départemental des Musées, led to the setting up of the Ecomusée de la Vendée, inaugurated in 1986 and centred round the castle of Puy-du-Fou.

The centrepiece of the ecomuseum, the castle of Puy-du-Fou, was intended as a 'museum of synthesis presented in the form of a permanent but evolving exhibition, capable of supplementing research and discoveries on the Vendée with new accessions over the years'.

The permanent exhibition space inside the castle covers an area of more than 2,000 square metres and currently houses a historical-ethnographic museum, the 'Galerie d'histoire de la Vendée', whose exhibits range from the geological formation of the Vendée to prehistory, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The collection comprises fossils, archaeological and artistic finds, paintings and sculptures. Audiovisuals and dioramas are also used to recount the history of the region. Thanks to an active accession policy, donations and loans, the collection has grown sizeably over the last few years.

The museum includes a centre of documentation on the history of the Vendée region, complete with book, sound and photo libraries.

The members of the advisory committee, made up of researchers and academics, contributed actively to the definition of the layout of the museum.

The ecomuseum of Puy du Fou is the pivot of the Ecomusée Départemental, which comprises a number of other museums throughout the Vendée.

- The Centre de Découverte du Marais Breton Vendéen (Le Daviaud, La Barre-de-Monts), a museum *en plein air* of 12 hectares with permanent exhibitions dedicated to traditional architecture, the exploitation of salt and animals. It seeks to reconcile scientific rigour with entertainment (music and theatrical productions).

- The Musée Micendeau-Jean Yole (Le Bois Durand, Soullans), a house-museum, the former residence of Charles Micendeau (1872-1919), considered, with Paul Baudry, the greatest painter of the Vendée.

- The Maison de la Mine et des Mineurs (Faymoreau-les-Mines), a residence situated among a cluster of working-class cottages, which recounts the history of the mine.

- The Musée de l'Histoire du Chemin de Fer en Vendée (Gare de Epesses), a small abandoned railway station. A special tourist train runs through it and it contains a waiting room and ticket office restored to their original appearance on the day of inauguration in 1914. On the first floor of the building is a display of photographs, posters, documents and mementoes telling the story of railways in the Vendée.
- The Unité Agro-Pastorale (Bourine du Bois-Juquaud, Saint-Hilaire-de-Riez), which comprises a number of 'bourines', a dialect word for typical old peasant cottages made of soil and reeds according to an ancestral technique, a testimony of how precarious living conditions were at the start of the twentieth century.

Puy du Fou is included in one of the 17 sites covered by the Pass Touristique of the Haut Bocage Vendéen, a tourist formula which allows cut-rate access to more than one site.

Puy du Fou suffers the 'competition' of the Grand Parcours - not only its spectacular productions but also the park as such, which is heavily publicised and attracts masses of visitors (over 600,000 a year). No positive synergies are recorded between park and museum. On the contrary, in the last few years the number of visitors to Puy du Fou has dropped alarmingly, from 50,000 to about 12,000 a year.

As a consequence of this negative trend, the activities of Puy du Fou and its 'social dimension' have now been very much reduced. In the past, many temporary exhibitions were held, some in the open air with the involvement of the local communities. Brochures were printed and sold at 'popular' prices. An old card game, 'Alouette' (almost forgotten since only the local elders remembered how to play it), was reprinted. In it, besides playing their cards, players make gestures (opening their mouths, raising their thumbs etc) to communicate information to their partners. The game sold like hot cakes, and during a hugely successful temporary exhibition, the elders taught children how to play.

The staff of Puy du Fou consists of only four people, who are joined by four seasonal collaborators in the summer.

The ecomuseum is *départemental* and has no specific budget. Decisions are taken by the conseil départemental.

The project of the Conservation Départementale des Musées de la Vendée for a new museum on the history of the Vendée using a different approach is at an advanced state of development. The project will be based on 'histoire e société' along the lines of the Museum of Civilisation in Quebec. More specifically, the new museum will focus on archaeology, and in recent years work on the motorway has unearthed many new discoveries. A large stockroom is planned to house them all. The key themes of the new museum will be death and funeral rites, and attention will also be devoted to the ancient activity of salt mining.

## **Ecomusée du Pays de Rennes**

A project already existed in the Seventies, but political problems (and the wavering sensitivity of administrators) delayed its development.

The Ecomusée du Pays de Rennes eventually opened as a public ecomuseum in 1987 (most of the 25 ecomuseums existing at the time were private Musées de Société).

The urbanisation of Rennes is a recent phenomenon but also a massive, rapid one. As early as the Sixties, traces of the agricultural world that had previously dominated the area were few and far between.

Hence the idea of preserving and exploiting a cultural heritage tied to a rural society in the process of extinction. A tenacious supporter of the project was Jean-Yves Viellard, curator of the Musée de Bretagne and today curator of the ecomuseum. A possible location – La Bintinais, an abandoned farmhouse in a poor state of conservation – was identified.

The ecomuseum came into being with very solid scientific bases thanks to the involvement and contribution of experts and scholars, academics included.

Ecomuseum theory envisages three ‘canonical’ committees: an advisory committee, a management committee and a users’ committee. In Rennes the management committee was represented by the municipality, but there was no users’ committee (unlike at Le Creusot, the population was not ‘in crisis’). Contacts and networks were established with universities, voluntary workers and an association dedicated to collecting the oral heritage, music and songs of the rural world. Members of the association help to involve country people, who now collaborate actively with the museum, one of whose aims – the fostering of contacts between different social milieus – is typical of all ecomuseums.

The Ecomusée du Pays de Rennes was founded on a precise option was suggested by the researchers themselves. To tell the history of the Bintinais and the people who once lived in it, inhabited it, it was decided to adopt the microhistory approach as opposed to the generalist formulation (which characterises many ecomuseums). The preparatory work was extremely demanding. It involved study of the history of agriculture and the sourcing of all possible documentation from the fifteenth century onwards. Brainstorming sessions and meetings with the oldest families were also organised to record memory of the place.

The ecomuseum comprises the La Bintinais farm and about 20 hectares of meadows, fields cultivated using ancient and modern-day methods, orchards, livestock (sheep, cattle, hens etc) and a pond with a picnic area.

The mission of the Ecomusée du Pays de Rennes is not to ‘fix’ a certain era and celebrate it *ad infinitum* (using actors and costumed extras) but to ‘tell a story’ with the utmost scientific rigour (a guarantee of authenticity) and connect past and present.

The exhibition surface inside the Bintinais farm, perfectly restored, measures 2,500 square metres of which 1,000 are occupied by the permanent exhibition and 400 by temporary ones.

Using audiovisuals and interactive aids, the museum documents and represents rigorously but attractively the history of the farm and the people who lived in it, their habits and customs, language, cuisine, cultivation methods, games and pastimes. The layout is very well designed and many rooms have been perfectly reconstructed with all their furniture, as well as nineteenth-century clothes, equipment, tools and agricultural machinery.

Five themes are dealt with and presented in as many sections. They are: the development of the city and its impact on farming land; the history of the farming



families who lived in the Bintiniais; daily life, architecture and the environment; agricultural production.

A trail *en plein air* describes the evolution of agriculture and livestock breeding in Brittany. Of special relevance is the activity of conservation, scientific promulgation and promotion of Breton animal and vegetable species in danger of extinction, all living testimonies of the past. The ecomuseum is thus also a fully fledged 'conservatoire génétique', with 75 varieties of cider apple and breeds of farm animals, including the rare Breton pony, the Bayeux pig, Armoricaïne cattle, Landes de Bretagne sheep and other farmyard animals.

Live animals (14 species were initially in danger of extinction) were introduced in 1994, triggering a considerable increase in annual visits, which rose from 35,000 to 50,000.

The ecomuseum has a noteworthy social dimension. The 'Les Quatre Saisons de l'Ecomusée' events programme, organised in conjunction with various agricultural and cultural associations, comprises folk concerts and demonstrations (sheep shearing and apple picking), popular festivals (the apple feast). Initiatives are staged not only to celebrate the traditional 'rites' of the peasant world. For example, events such as the photography exhibition 'Regards sur la communauté laotienne du pays de Rennes' (April-August 2000), dedicated to the Laotian minority, organised with the France-Laos Friends and the Association Laos-Hmong en France, are underpinned by awareness of the fact that the local community is a continually changing reality and that the ecomuseum's mission is to connect past and present.

The number of ecomuseum staff was recently raised to 10, with two curators, two receptionists, two animal keepers, two wardens and two administrative clerks. Three collaborators are also shared with the municipality of Rennes and are paid by the tree department. The ecomuseum sometimes calls in university students to collaborate. It has a head curator.

The property belongs to the municipality which, as we have said, depends on the management committee. The budget amounts to about Ff 4 million a year. The ecomuseum enjoys relative budget autonomy and in the event of a surplus, 50% stays with it. Activities are both permanent and temporary. The ecomuseum spends about Ff 250,000 francs on communication. In 1995, with the scientific support of the Observatoire Permanent des Publics de la Direction des Musées de France, it produced a very accurate survey of visitors. 25% of the total was made up of students (who pay no admission fee), and about 76% of visitors are in the 25-49 age group. Three quarters of visitors come from Rennes and bordering municipalities, while foreigners account for just 1% of all visitors.



## 10. NORTHERN EUROPE

### GERMANY

#### **Museumdorf Duppel**

The Museumdorf Duppel is an open-air museum located on a site of medieval origin in Berlin.

It came into being in 1940 with the discovery of the remains of settlements of populations from bordering territories to the east and west dating from about 1200. It was then that research work and the recovery of the archaeological site began. The museum, which covers a surface area of over 7 hectares, came into being in 1975 at the private initiative of the 'Circle for the promotion of the Museum of Duppel'. In 1995, it became the property of the City of Berlin, and was taken over by 'Stadtmuseum Berlin', a foundation dedicated to public municipal museums.

The museum is a perfect reconstruction of a mediaeval village. Its mission is to disseminate knowledge of local history and allow visitors to 'learn directly'.

The buildings (houses, haylofts, barns and ovens) are reconstructed with painstaking philological attention. Visitors can check out agricultural and breeding theories and test and make old utensils. The Museumdorf Duppel also houses livestock, cultivations (including rare plants) and craft workshops.

The results of research conducted in the centre of experimental archaeology are systematically published to give international visibility to the museum.

The Museumdorf Duppel, whose curator is specialised in archaeology, is open six months a year in the period from April to October, and comprises 21 sites, of which 10 tied to historical reconstruction. The others are dedicated to breeding and agriculture. During the summer months, visitors can enjoy veritable work experiences and theme festivals are organised.

About 30,000 people visit the museum every year. School parties included, 2/3 of visits are of local provenance (Berlin and the Brandenburg Region).

7 people work permanently in the museum, aided and abetted by 60/70 voluntary workers. The latter are a strong point of the Museumdorf Duppel and, thanks to them, it is possible to carry on a number of activities. Thanks to the contribution of voluntary workers, moreover, the museum organises 'work and experience days', in which the techniques of medieval production are taught. It is also possible to follow the rotation of crops and experiments of genetic selection with the livestock.

As part of the municipal circuit, the museum is well known locally and is the only one of its type in the region. During weekends, many families spend afternoons there. On weekdays, the public is made up prevalently of school parties, which contact the museum directly and organise visits to fit in with their educational syllabuses.

When it organises fetes, the museum informs the local media, the press, radios and television. One day a week is dedicated to 'special' activities: namely, the observation and construction of huts, the tasting of medieval recipes, honey making etc.

Courses are also organised in loco: agricultural, food and tool production. Teachers and voluntary workers combine to organise and run these activities inside the museum, which, in turn, supplies them with the material they need.

Revenue amounts to about DM 100,000, of which 60/70,000 from admission fees, with the rest being collected in the course of fetes. This income is entered in the balance sheet of the 'Stadtmuseum Berlin' consortium. Every year the consortium transfers DM 500,000 to the museum, which spends them all.

The museum is managed by the City of Berlin on a pyramidal basis. The director general of the Municipal Museums superintends the curator of the Art sector, who, in turn, superintends the curator of the Archaeology section, who directs the Museum of Duppel. Administrative issues are, instead, attended to by a coordinator, whose office is situated inside the museum.

The museum has an internet site in German, English and ... Latin!

## DENMARK

### **Øcomuseum Samsø**

The island of Samsø is situated in the Kakkegat, the stretch of sea which divides Sweden from Denmark. On its surface area of just 116 square kilometres live about 5,000 inhabitants.

The first traces of human settlement date from 6,000 years ago. In around 800 AD, the island was discovered by the Vikings who settled there and built a canal about ten metres wide, as well as, more importantly, a number of villages. Of these Nordby (*by* in Viking meant 'town') resisted the attacks of raiders and, in the course of time, became the island's main settlement. In the eighteenth century, it was the largest farming village in the whole of Denmark. The village has been perfectly preserved, hence the architectural structure is still identical to the one outlined in early nineteenth-century maps.

A museum of local archaeology and history – built in 1917 inside a farmhouse – already existed on the island. Towards the end of the Eighties, the opening of the Ekomuseum Begslagen in Sweden prompted the idea of raising the profile of the island heritage in similar fashion. The idea received a great deal of consensus and, following a rapid design phase and thanks to the financial support of regional and national institutions, in 1992 the øcomuseum Samsø was born. Besides the old museum, it also comprises 15 or so official and informal sites (farms, reception centres, a forge, windmills, cultivated areas, teaching and documentation centres and so on).

Given the notable homogeneity and excellent state of conservation of the structure of the villages and rural buildings, the principal theme of the ecomuseum is traditional peasant life (breeding and crop growing) and connected local traditions. Today the whole island of Samsø is an ecomuseum. Its mission is to have the island recognised as a cultural and natural ecosystem (for many years a protected area has existed for the observation of migratory birds), to reinforce the local identity (the island boasts over 100 culture and leisure associations) and to promote sustainable tourism.

A significant part of the activity of the ecomuseum is dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of the oral heritage.

The principal educational activity consists of guided visits on set days.

The natural history school performs a great deal of teaching activity and welcomes classes of children from all over Denmark for a week.

The audience is made up prevalently of Danes on whom the island of Samsø has always exerted a strong attraction. The ecomuseum has not yet carried out studies on visitors. Information is collected in a 'book of comments'.

The ecomuseum is an autonomous institution set up by the regional authority and local municipalities (one of the members of the board of the museum is a municipal councillor). Annual expenditure totals about Dkr 1 million. Direct revenue totals about Dkr 100,000. The ecomuseum receives public funding (government and regional) and contributions from private foundations. Total economic resources are, however, somewhat modest and the ecomuseum depends a great deal on voluntary contributions.

The staff consists of only two full-time workers, seven part-time workers and 40 or so voluntary workers, who run guided visits, collaborate with the museum library and the documentation centre, provide musical entertainment and stage demonstrations of craft activities (pottery, forge work).

The ecomuseum, which is directed by an archaeologist, organises various events in collaboration with the local tourist office and with the involvement of the resident population and also of tourists. Relations with other ecomuseums are sporadic at national level, but more intense at international level (especially with the Swedish ecomuseum of Bergslagen).

Efforts are currently being made to encourage the local population to take an interest in its own local history and thus build a cultural alternative to traditional tourism. Short-term projects include the restoration of a recently purchased farm, which will serve as a new site, and the development of a project to experiment with wind energy.

### **Sohoilandets Okomuseum (Lake District Ecomuseum)**

Situated in central Jutland, the Lake District Ecomuseum is a museum 'without any walls' which occupies the area of the ancient county of Skanderborg, abolished for administrative purposes in 1970.

The ecomuseum formally came into being in 1994, but it was inaugurated only more recently and some work still remains to be completed. The creation of the museum is the fruit of collaboration among four pre-existing museums (Skanderborg, Om Kloster, Gl.Rye Windmill and Freshwater) and a nature centre (Klostermolle).

The ecomuseum's 'vision' is focused on themes linked to the use of natural resources in the area of the Lake District, with special attention to the relations established in the course of the centuries among the prevalent economic activities: fishing, cultivation and forestry. The Lake District ecomuseum seeks to tell the history and stratification of settlements in the area, which is dominated by a lagoon environment. It comprises a nature park, the lake district, and combines nature observation sites and human settlements: farms, fishing areas, the woodland and old buildings testify to the history of the area.

The ecomuseum's mission is to reinforce local identity and history, the conservation of exhibits in situ and the exploitation of the area for tourist purposes.

The Skanderborg Museum is situated in a partially reconstructed thirteenth-century building in the old part of Skanderborg (near Lake Lille So) and is dedicated to local history and social life. The museum's collections are rich in exhibits and old-fashioned games are reconstructed in its garden. It is temporarily closed and will reopen in spring 2001.

The Om Kloster Museum was built round an archaeological excavation and houses the remains of the twelfth-century Cistercian monastery of Cara Insula. An important religious and cultural centre during the Middle Ages, the monastery was demolished after the Reformation by Frederick II. On show in the museum, open to visitors from April to October, are permanent collections of finds made during excavations. In the garden, it is possible to admire many plant varieties cultivated by the monks in the Middle Ages.

The Gl Rye Windmill dates from the late nineteenth century. Active until the mid-Eighties, in 1988 it was bought by the guild of the same name and converted into a museum. As a result of restoration work, it is now perfectly functional and the visitors can thus watch grain being ground. Gl Rye also houses a museum of dogs, a typical local craft product, which includes the reconstruction of a craft workshop.

The Ferksvandmuseet (Freshwater Museum) near the port of Ry addresses the theme of the relationship between nature and culture. Housed in a characteristic wood building, the museum recounts the cultural and natural history of the area and their interrelations. It comprises a number of aquariums and allows visitors to find out about the flora and fauna (especially fish and birds) which make up the ecosystem of the area, characterised by freshwater lakes and rivers, but also fishing methods and various types of traditional fishing and transport boats.

The nature centre of Klostermollen on the estuary of the River Gudena, addresses the theme of the important role played by water as a source of energy. Built on the ruins of a twelfth-century Benedictine monastery destroyed after the Reformation, Klostermolle includes an old water mill for the grinding of corn and a nineteenth-century paper factory, which was active until 1974: the large wood building that housed the paper drying room is now the symbol of Klostermolle. All the buildings were purchased in 1975 by the Ministry of the Environment, which installed the nature centre (where teaching activities are also organised).

Besides the four museums and the nature centre, the Lake District Ecomuseum boasts various nature sites (about 40 in all). 95% of the management is entrusted to the city of Skanderborg, which promoted the opening of the ecomuseum.

No significant information and data are available as yet about the museum's audience (visitors' comments are recorded by the tourist office). Direct observation by the staff evidences a prevalence of nuclear families and - to a lesser degree - of couples, while single visitors are rare. The ecomuseum collaborates with local tourist organisations, but also promotes visits through its internet site ([www.ecomuseum.dk](http://www.ecomuseum.dk)). Schools are provided with study material and also allowed to camp in the ecomuseum grounds. Teachers are supplied with informational matter, and classes can perform a wide variety of activities (sport, nature observation, guided visits with museum voluntary workers) during their week's stay.

The ecomuseum's curator is an archaeologist who also works as the curator of the Skanderborg museum. The institution carries on initiatives - a medieval festival and the vespers of Maria (a sort of brief pilgrimage), for example - in collaboration with the resident population.

The Lake District Ecomuseum has 18-20 employees, aided and abetted by over 200 voluntary workers. The administrative expenses alone amount to Dkr 400,000. The park receives a total of Dkr 2.4 million from the regional administration (county council) of Åhus, in the form of the funding of cooperative activities between the various museums, from three provincial councils (district councils) and a lottery. The ecomuseum has no direct revenue.

Collaboration with other ecomuseums is above all international, the Swedish ecomuseum of Bergslagen being a favoured partner. Attempts at collaboration with Danish ecomuseums have produced relatively discouraging results.

The ecomuseum encounters some difficulties in coordinating single activities due to the lack of a true central organisation. Efforts are being intensified to source collaborations and funds for the building of a 'water and spring' trail.

The long-term objective in a tourist area such as the one occupied by the museum is to teach respect for nature and to tell the story of the local community, thus reinforcing a sense of belonging.



## **Ribe Vikingecenter Lustrupholm**

Situated in southern Jutland, Ribe (about 9,000 inhabitants) is the oldest, best conserved town in Denmark. Thousands of archaeological finds reveal the presence of Viking settlements from the eighth century onwards. An important commercial centre and bishopric during the Middle Ages, Ribe still conserves a magnificent old town from the time, with the original cobbled streets and buildings made partly of wood.

Ribe Vikingecenter Lustrupholm is situated a couple of kilometres from the town and can be reached easily on foot and, on holidays, by a bus from the railway station in Ribe.

The Centre is neither an ecomuseum nor an open-air museum, and it defines itself as an 'exhibition-activity centre'. It is, in short, a sort of 'archaeo-didactic' centre in which working activities are carried out all year round using the original Viking techniques. In the centre, open to the public from May 1 to October 1, visitors have the chance to live 'like Vikings', wearing their clothes, ploughing the land as they did, cooking the same meals, shooting with bows and arrows and also building new houses according to the Viking tradition. A number of archaeological theories are also tried and tested, offering students the opportunity to find out more about them, and special events are organised to add even more life to the bustling Vikingecenter.

The centre was created by the city of Ribe with two main objectives: to keep alive the history of the town's Viking origin and to offer new opportunities to jobless youngsters. In 1992, the first house was built and the centre was opened to the public in 1994.

Ribe Vikingecenter occupies a surface area of about two square kilometres and has a car park, a cafeteria and shop. It comprises several sites.

The Viking Manor is the reconstruction of a tenth-century Viking building made with 160 oak logs and about 5,000 craftmade tiles to cover a roof which measures about 500 square metres. The complex also includes a barn, a granary, a forge and a workshop. The Viking Manor features costumed extras and live cattle. Here it is possible to see the blacksmith at work with his assistant and the 'pater familias' with his family, as well as Viking methods of crop cultivation and livestock breeding. The visitor can thus experience what it felt like to live in a Viking house.

The Market Place is a reconstruction of a large eighth-century market. Visitors can watch the blacksmith as he makes the tips, the bow maker as he reveals the secrets of a good bow, weavers who use urine and mushrooms to dye fabrics a golden colour, Viking cooks who offer fresh bread and cheese and falconers as they feed falcons and owls.

Ribe Town - in the process of being built - will be a reconstruction of nineteenth-century Ribe buildings.

From Monday to Friday, daily demonstrations of falconry are staged in a special space.

At Ribe Vikingecenter, visitors can learn to make bread, to use a bow and arrow, to build Viking buildings and to hold falcons on their arms.

Special events include a Viking feast, held on a late summer weekend with the participation of 300 extras on horseback.

In the five months in which it is open to the public, the centre, which collects daily information about visitors (number; provenance - regional, national, foreign; category - adults, children), records about 30,000 presences. About 40% of visitors come from the Ribe area. Until June, 90% of presences are made up of Danish school parties, while in July and August 70% are made up of tourists.

The centre, which is a foundation, is run by a 'management group', which includes, among others, two representatives of the municipality and representatives of the tourist office and the local youth hostel.

The schools which book a visit to the centre are treated to a 30-minute introductory lecture and discounts at the youth hostel. Recently, a 'one whole day in the Viking era' package was devised.

The Ribe Vikingcenter enjoys the collaboration of the local media: a weekly magazine describing special activities and a daily newspaper with a day-to-day events calendar.

The centre pays the Eastern Denmark Tourist Office and the Danish tourist offices in London and Amsterdam for its advertising in Europe,

The centre employs 55/60 people. Of these, 15 work full-time in the museum Foundation, 30 are students at vocational training schools or on European exchanges, 10 come from social welfare work and 4/6 are seasonal (in the summer).

The Ribe Vikingcenter, whose curator is an elementary school teacher and a crafts expert, receives funds from vocational training schools (Dkr 4.5 million) from the municipality of Ribe for the Vikingcenter (DKr 2 million) and millions of DKr from the European Community for the development of long-term projects. The centre's direct revenues total about Dkr one million.

The educational programme includes lessons about the history and living habits of the Vikings and on how to behave like Vikings inside the centre and take part in activities and learn traditional manufacturing techniques.

The centre liaises with eight national museums and ecomuseums and with international partners that participate in the same European Community projects.

According to its managers, the strengths of the Ribe Vikingcenter are: its hands-on relationship and contact with visitors and the experience which visitors are offered at different levels, from amusement to in-depth analysis; the fact new buildings are always being erected at the centre, which encourages visitors to return years later to see the changes; the presence throughout the year of students actively learning techniques and 'growing up' inside the community; the relationship with the town of Ribe, in the centre of which it is possible to see how the streets used to be centuries ago, while at the Vikingcenter it is possible to see the same buildings restored to daily life.

However, in view of the high number of people who work inside the centre, new financial resources are increasingly necessary.

Short-term projects include the building of new houses and the restoration of period clothes to wear.

## SWEDEN

### **Ecomuseum Bergslagen**

Situated in central Sweden, the socio-economic and cultural region of Bergslagen (not recognised at administrative level) was for many centuries the main area of iron mining and represented a great source of wealth and economic development for the entire country.

In the last century, the region underwent an involution. In around the middle of the century, mining activity slumped sharply. In the Seventies it had been almost entirely exhausted, with heavy repercussions for the local economy.

The context appeared strikingly similar to the one that characterised Le Creusot. The influence of the New Museology and the positive experience of the Ecomusée Le Creusot inspired the project to build an ecomuseum at Bergslagen based on the French model. The mission of the museum is to reinforce the sense of identity of the inhabitants, to exalt the characteristic aspects of the region and to foster its tourist development.

In the mid-Eighties, the project materialised thanks to an agreement among the seven municipalities of the Bergslagen region: Ludvika, Smedjebacken, Fagerta, Norberg, Sinnskatteberg, Surahammar and Hallsthammar.

Bergslagen tells the story of iron and steel mining and processing (from prehistory onwards), of human settlement, of the social life of the workers and the population, of the architecture of the factories and kilns and of the transport of the mineral.

Instituted in 1990 as a foundation, it consisted of a selection of buildings and places of interest, some of which exploited within a museum context and, in any case, preserved from decay. Especially significant are the open-air mining museum of Ludvika, the first of its type in the world, which opened in far-off 1938 and whose enormous water-wheel has become the symbol of the Ecomuseum Bergslagen; the mines of Flogberget (in the municipality of ...), which comprise 15 quarries from different eras, from the sixteenth century to 1918; the foundry of Flatenberg (in the municipality of Smedjebacken), which conserves large most of the original machinery and equipment; the original *bruk* (the *bruk* were independent industrial and residential settlements for the processing of iron) of Aengelsberg, excellently preserved and declared 'a treasure of humanity' by UNESCO in the early Nineties; the Stroemsholms kanal, a canal which links four of the seven municipalities which combine to form the ecomuseum, and which played an essential role in the economic development of Bergslagen in the nineteenth century.

Bergslagen is made up of about 50 visitable sites (none of them natural). They comprise various mines and miners' villages, furnaces and forges, Finnish villages, a museum which tells the story of the trade union movement, a railway museum and one of the world's oldest surviving oil refineries.

The ecomuseum, directed by an archaeologist, occupies a whole area (75,000 square metres), as opposed to a set of buildings open to the public. No site or object has been removed from its original location: the ecomuseum has thus sought to build an environmental infrastructure among its different sites. It is not so much the single sites that are interesting in themselves as the infrastructural connections which link each to its environment.

Bergslagen has preserved intact the spirit which fuelled the new ecomuseum philosophy in the Seventies. The ecomuseum owns none of the sites and no permanent collection. It conserves exhibits rigorously in situ and closely involves the local

communities, whose job it is to run and develop it. Another strength of the ecomuseum is the collaboration of 1,000-1,200 voluntary workers, which enables the small staff (three people full-time and five/ten part-time depending on the period of the year) to welcome about half a million visitors a year. Voluntary work, which boasts a great tradition in Sweden, is at its peak at Bergslagen. The large number of voluntary workers (among whom events organisers, guides, extras in period costume and craftsmen who lay on demonstrations of iron casting and processing) facilitate the economic management of the ecomuseum and make its diffuse presence possible. The entire local community is thus responsible for its own ecomuseum: many of the activities performed (seminars, dinners, excursions) are also designed to keep the community united.

The sites and exhibits which combine to form the ecomuseum are the property of citizens, private societies and associations.

The administration is local with the involvement of representatives of the local communities at different levels, including, at a political level, municipal representatives and the representatives of cultural and voluntary associations.

Visitors consist mainly of families with children, people with historical-affective ties with the place and people who visit the ecomuseum with their own cars. About 40% of visitors are of local origin.

The ecomuseum organises conferences, lectures, seminars and training courses for guides. It also develops various initiatives with schools, supplies informational matter to teachers and organises 'packages' for school parties. Recently a web site was set up on which teachers can find all the educational information they need about Bergslagen (in various languages).

Annual expenditure totals SwKr 1.2 million. The museum has no direct revenue since admission to all sites is free. Funding is provided by the local municipalities (SwKr 1 million) and by the state. Since it is not connoted as a traditional museum, the ecomuseum encounters a certain difficulty in being recognised at institutional level. The sourcing of financial resources outside local administrations is thus something of a problem.

The ecomuseum of Bergslagen, which participates in the European Kaleidoscopis project, has informal relations with other Swedish ecomuseums and stronger ones with international ecomuseums. In this way, it can make itself known abroad and this, in turn, helps it to reinforce its image at national level.

Short-term projects include the sourcing of new financial resources, an experimental project to make access to the museum possible for the mentally handicapped, a project to encourage women to speak about themselves (this is a traditionally male-dominated region on account of the toughness of the work in the mining industry) and the organisation of activities for children.

## **Skansen**

Skansen in Stockholm is the oldest open-air museum in the world. Founded in 1891, it is situated in the northernmost part of the island of Djurgården (literally Deer Park), from which it is possible to admire a panoramic view of the capital.

Skansen occupies a surface area of about 300,000 square metres on which a 'Sweden in miniature' has been built, a model with reproductions of architecture, landscapes and nature and places and conditions of life and work of Swedes in different historical eras in different parts of Sweden, as well as typical vegetation and animals.

Skansen was devised and founded by Artur Hazelius (1833-1901), a Swedish scholar and teacher of Nordic languages, who travelled widely throughout the country and saw how the ongoing process of industrialisation and urbanisation was provoking significant and rapid environmental and cultural transformation. With great insight, he perceived the progressive dissolution of the traditional values and agrarian culture and the insurgence of the phenomena of mass standardisation and consumerism. He thus set out to preserve a heritage in danger of extinction.

In 1872 he began to collect objects and finds linked to the material culture of the different areas of the country and to gather all possible information about traditional habits, customs, oral history, dancing and music.

The following year the collection was put on public display in the form of an ethnological exhibition. The staging was made effective by the use of wax dummies in traditional Nordic costumes and the initiative's success with the public – together with the national romanticism that characterised the cultural climate in Sweden at the end of the nineteenth century – led to the decision to set up a museum proper. Hence the birth in 1888 of the Nordiska Museet, which nonetheless failed to satisfy the untiringly ambitious Hazelius, whose dream was not only to recreate internal ambiances, but also to rebuild entire quarters and natural landscapes and recount the salient aspects of Lap and peasant culture. Houses and farms in various parts of Sweden were disassembled and then rebuilt in Skansen. A Lap encampment, churches and mills were rebuilt. Livestock was introduced and a natural habitat created in which to settle wild animals. Extras in period costume added life to the settings and guided visitors through demonstrations of craft labour, music, singing, dancing and general merrymaking.

After ten or years or so of frantic work, Hazelius's 'humanistic project' thus became reality. The first open-air museum was a fantastic, lively place capable of telling a myriad of stories but also of amazing and amusing without foregoing the utmost scientific rigour in its documentation and reconstruction of material and other forms of culture. Capable of combining culture and entertainment, it achieved the objective aim that today we would define as 'edutainment'.

From that moment on, activities at Skansen concentrated on the reconstruction of Lap cultural traditions and the peasant world, but also on teaching and the lifestyle of the upper classes and recent popular uprisings in the farming world.

The influence of the route undertaken by Hazelius on the international museum world was so strong that in many eastern European countries the word Skansen became an eponym of 'open-air museum'.

In 1963, Skansen detached from the Nordiska Museet and assumed the legal status of a foundation.

The work commenced by Hazelius proceeded apace during the last century.

About 150 buildings, many of which erected in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and originating from other areas of Sweden, were installed at Skansen.

Buildings and layouts show period living and working conditions. Settings are coherent with the different settings, but also with the relevant historical periods.

Hence, for example, a nineteenth-century factory from a particular area of Sweden houses animals and is surrounded by trees, plants and flowers that existed in the same area in the years in question. In this way the visitor is offered an overview of a benchmark context.

Guides are dressed in period costume and tell the story of these places and these people.

The museum stages demonstrations of folk dancing, artistic and craft skills (engraving and shoemaking) and domestic activities such as spinning and weaving. Lessons are also held for elementary school children.

The buildings and sites include a pharmacy, a post office, a bread shop, a printing works, a tobacco factory, a potter's workshop, a glazier's workshop, various farms and mountain meadows, a Lap field, a mill and an elementary school dating from 1910.

On display in the park are cultivated flowers and plants from different areas of the country. An information centre also describes the important role forests have played in the economic and cultural history of Sweden.

The zoological gardens of Skansen are home to various species of birds, bears, reindeer, wolves, lynx, otters, ducks and geese and so on. They also include an aquarium, a stable with riding ponies and horse-drawn carriages that can be rented for weddings and special occasions. The shop at the entrance is open every day. The various restaurants and bars are run by private individuals.

The annual programme comprises festivals (the night of Santa Valpurga, the feast of St John, New Year and the national holiday of June 6) and, in the summer period, ballet and popular dance productions and classical, pop, jazz and blues concerts.

In 1991, to celebrate the centenary of the foundation, the museum 'opened' to the industrial world with the building of a small furniture factory and a mechanical engineering workshop.

At Skansen, activities are managed by different 'services'. They are: social history; biology; programmes; constructions; public relations and marketing; personnel; administration and finance.

Skansen is a foundation, created by the state through the Ministry of Culture and run by a committee made up of a curator and another seven members, four of whom appointed by the government.

The staff is made up of 160 full-time workers with the addition of about 700 part-timers during the summer season. There are no voluntary workers. Annual spending amounts to about SwKr 105 million and direct revenue to SWKr 108 million.

Skansen, whose curator is a former minister of justice, is one of Stockholm's principal attractions both for tourists and for citizens, many of whom visit the museum and participate in its initiatives more than once a year. Thanks to collaborations with tour operators, the packed educational programme for schools and the resonance the museum receives systematically in the local media, visitors easily exceed a million a year (1.3 million in 1998). The audience is interviewed about their enjoyment rating of the single activities. Comments are in special mail boxes inside the museum and received by fax, e-mail, mail and telephone.

The Skansen liaises with regional, national and international ecomuseums.

The budget shows a surplus, hence allows ordinary management, but the scarcity of funds prevents the activation of significant new projects. One short-term project, however, is the building of a new department in the zoo dedicated to birds and the opening of a press office.

## **Ekomuseum Kristianstads Vattenrike**

The Kristianstads Vattenrike ecomuseum stretches for about 35 kilometres in the area of the same name, crossed by the River Helgeån, in the south of Sweden. It comprises the coastal strip and the territory of Kristianstads, and conserves an extraordinary historical and, above all, naturalistic heritage, with many rare species of plants and wild animals.

The ecomuseum was founded in 1989 by the municipal administration of Kristianstads and its mission is to conserve and exploit the ecosystem and the cultural heritage of the area and foster tourist development.

The area in which the ecomuseum is situated – over 6,000 hectares of swamps, lakes, ponds, rivers, woods and plainland – shows affinities with the French region of the Camargue. The area is included in the list of the 1,000 or so most important international sites drawn up on the basis of the Convention of Ramsar for the conservation and exploitation of the Wetlands.

The waters of Kristianstads Vattenrike are home to over 35 varieties of fish (including some of the rarest species in Sweden), as well as shellfish and rare species of amphibia. 225 bird species have been observed in the ecomuseum, of which 100 included in the list of those in danger of extinction. In some years, almost half the population of sea swallows in Sweden come to reproduce in this area. During spring and autumn migrations, thousands of wild ducks, 15- 20,000 wild geese and hundreds of swans find refuge here. In the same periods, white-tailed eagles are frequently sighted.

Studied by the great Swedish naturalist Carl von Linnæus in the eighteenth century, the rich flora present at Kristianstads Vattenrike comprises very rare species.

The ecomuseum boasts 25 sites, 14 of which equipped with information points describing the landscape and naturalistic heritage of the area and documenting significant aspects of its economic and social history. The sites comprise various nature reserves and equipped positions for birdwatching (Torsebro, Aby angår, Herculesreservatet and others), open-air museums (Utemuseum Kanallhuset och Linnérundan, Utemuseum Åsums angår, Utemuseum Pulken och kanalen Graften), the remains of medieval fortifications (Lillo borgruin, Åose hus i Åhus borgruin), the 'lowest point in Sweden' (Lagsta punkten) and industrial sites, such as a gunpowder factory (Torsebro).

Visitors can also make river excursions and obtain fishing licences.

The ecomuseum is managed not only by the local administration but also by environmentalist associations, farmers and a private citizen who organises boat trips down the river.

Visitors' impressions are collected in a book of comments.

For tourist promotion, the ecomuseum is aided and abetted by local bodies (especially for the production of maps, brochures, the organisation of excursions on the river, fishing etc), and collaborates mainly with theatre companies. It organises educational programmes on naturalistic themes in its own schoolhouse.

The ecomuseum enjoys good relations with the media. Almost every week, an article on its activities appears in the local papers. The national and regional media also speak about it on various occasions in the course of the year.

The ecomuseum possesses an internet site in which it is possible, among other things, to see pictures of the city of Kristianstad taken by two webcams.

The number of visitors has increased in recent years and now easily exceeds 150,000 a year. Of these, over 50% come from the Kristianstads Vattenrike area. Recently a cut-rate London-Kristianstad air link was activated.

The ecomuseum has only three full-time employees who, on occasion, are assisted by 11 part-time and full-time employees from other local administrations and ten or so voluntary workers. The curator is a nature historian.

The ecomuseum can count on the financial and technical-scientific support of various international, national and local organisations, such as the WWF, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Swedish Agency of Protection of the Environment, the Museum of Kristianstad, university institutes, associations and private organisations.

Annual expenditure amounts to SwKr 1.5-1.9 million a year, and the ecomuseum has no direct income. The city of Kristianstad, the nature park and the regional authority are responsible for the management.

From an educational point of view, the main activities of the Ekomuseum Kristianstads consist of courses in the natural sciences and environmental education at the ecomuseum school (Naturskola), training courses for teachers and the preparation of informational material for schools.

The Ekomuseum Kristianstads is part of a network of Swedish ecomuseums which envisages exchanges of visits and information and, on a more complex note, the organisation of common events.

A strength of the ecomuseum is the way in which it presents natural and cultural sites of notable importance. Information-packed direction boards make it easy to follow itineraries of special interest. Other pluses are the possibility of visiting very well preserved natural areas and the network of birdwatching points.

The scarcity of available funding – a constant in the international ecomuseum panorama – limits the possibility of developing new initiatives.

Building work is currently under way on new open-air information points, bridges over rivers and a restaurant. An exhibition is also being planned in the castle of Lillo. The intention is to build a study centre on the water, a place which will recount the continuous ecological and cultural implications of an element of such great importance for this wetland area.





## THE NETHERLANDS

### **Zuiderzeemuseum**

The great artificial lake of IJssel in the Netherlands was created in 1932 by blocking the rough Zuiderzee (south sea) from the North Sea with a 30-kilometre dam, the Afsluitdijk.

The transformation, decided upon to end the centuries-old problem of flooding, produced important effects in the area both at an ecological and at a socio-economic level.

Over the years, the salt sea turned into a freshwater lake. The local typically port economy was dealt a harsh blow and fell into rapid decline. With the end of sea fishing and ancillary activities, the resident population had to face up to the prospect of grim years ahead without a great deal of hope.

The involution was so rapid and so wide-ranging that, in the space of a few decades, the memory of a thousand-year-old material and immaterial culture risked being lost forever.

The project which led to the birth of the Zuiderzeemuseum was developed to belie this danger. Milestones in the operation were the reconstruction, in the early Fifties, of a fishing village, which became an open-air museum in 1983, and, more recently, a second indoor museum.

The open-air museum consists of a fishing village made up of different conglomerates which reproduce, more or less faithfully, the original quarters of various villages of the Zuiderzee (Hindeloopen, Zwaag, Kollum, Akersloot and so on). Original objects and materials were used to reconstruct some of the buildings. The open-air museum is formed of 20 or so main sites peopled by extras.

Some sites reproduce shops and commercial enterprises complete with furniture. Examples are: the Hindeloopen Restaurant, a late-nineteenth century pub which serves refreshments to tourists in summer; the Zwaag barber's shop, a reconstruction of a barber's shop where it is possible to have a shave with a safety razor; the old Pumerend butcher's shop; and the historical Hoom pharmacy, which houses a collection (granted in commodatum by a pharmaceutical firm) of 40 or so 'yawning heads', coloured, head-shaped sculptures whose open mouths advertised the medications on sale in the shop.

Other sites include centres of industrial and craft production. The Akersloot lime kilns, made up of three furnaces for production from the combustion of large quantities of shells collected by the fishermen; the Bronze Age Fam, a reconstruction of what is, supposedly, a typical house of the first inhabitants of the Zuiderzee; the Baradeel fish smokery, where visitors can taste salmon freshly smoked according to the traditional method, with an expert on hand to reveal all the secrets involved; the forge, in which it is possible to see a blacksmith at work.

There is no shortage of sites dedicated to education and worship: the Kollum schoolhouse, a reproduction of two schoolrooms (one of which illuminated by oil lamps to recreate the atmosphere of 1905), in which it is possible to follow lessons on handwriting; the Den Oever chapel, a reconstruction of a early twentieth-century church in which the best-off worshippers had their own personal pews, while the less well-off sat on benches and the poor had to stand.

Other landmarks are the reconstructed Marker harbour and sites in which extras re-enact moments of the everyday life of the past, acting like people of the time and talking to visitors. In the Zoutkamp quarter, for example, one woman looks after a

house as she would have done in 1930 and answers visitors' questions. On the hill of Urk, the 'Living history presentation of Urk 1905' features extras who play characters from the past, from the fisherman to the scribe, improvising unlikely and amusing conversations with visitors 'from the future' to whom they speak about their living conditions and the problems of the turn of the century. There is no point in speaking to them about 'computers' or 'motorways'; these are terms they do not understand!

Besides the open-air museum, the Zuiderzeemuseum also comprises an indoor museum which stages permanent and temporary exhibitions. The internal exhibition area measures about 900 square metres.

This recently opened second museum has been designed largely as a training centre and places the onus - with the utmost museographical rigour and avoiding the temptation to 'idealise' - on learning and in-depth analysis of the social history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This approach is significantly different from the romantic one that inspired the setting up of the open-air museum, intended as a place of historical reconstruction and folk celebration of a tradition not always rigorously documented and appropriately placed in its historical context.

The covered museum is situated inside typical houses and adopts a thematic approach. The themes it addresses tell a fascinating story of whale hunting, traditional art and culture, the 'battle against water', with documentation about the initiatives undertaken in the course of the centuries to fight flooding, which culminated in 1932 with the building of the great dam, fishing boats, fishing in the North Sea and the Zuiderzee and the transport of people, animals and goods by water. To facilitate and make the teaching and in-depth analysis of the social history of the Zuiderzee interesting, special settings have been designed with interactive features and audiovisuals.

The museum also houses the 'Pepper Loff', an animated exhibition in which the visitor is immersed in scents, sounds and images typical of an eighteenth-century East Indian Company spice warehouse, and a well-stocked library with a rich collection of books, postcards, photographs and other period objects. Also noteworthy is the collection of boats for fishing, transport and pleasure owned by the Zuiderzeemuseum, the most important of its type in the Netherlands.

In the museum shop, it is possible to buy books, postcards, objects and souvenirs.

The Zuiderzeemuseum, whose curator is an economist, is a foundation. The state holds an 80% interest and a group of 'Friends of the Museum' hold the remaining 20%.

The local community plays no part in the administration, which is state-controlled. Partly thanks to publicity from the media in Amsterdam, the museum attracts over 300,000 visitors a year, a number which is growing thanks to a new training programme for schools. Only 10-15% of the museum's audience is local; the rest, foreign tourists included, come mainly from surrounding areas within a radius of 100 kilometres. Collaboration with tourist agencies and local organisations is modest, but at international level the museum is well known because information about it is available not only in tourist offices in Amsterdam, but also in Germany, France and Britain.

From the railway station and car park of Enkhuizen, the Zuiderzeemuseum can be reached on foot or by special ferry.

When he or she buys the ticket, the visitor's particulars are registered. Further information about the audience comes from questionnaires and books of comments. The majority of visitors are nuclear families whereas, as far as individual visitors are concerned, a slight predominance of women is recorded. About 1/3 of visitors come from Germany and France.

The Zuiderzeemuseum organises various initiatives with local schools. A visit to the museum is part of the activity schools and, thanks to the attention devoted to the

training aspect, it is possible to carry out part of the school syllabus inside the museum itself.

The museum staff consists of 78 full-time employees, 82 seasonal full-time employees and 62 part-time employees who work on single projects. Annual expenses equal direct revenue and total about 15 million Dutch florins.

The Zuiderzeemuseum, which has a web site of its own, carries on collaborations with other museums, especially in Europe.

Short-term projects include the opening of a new, more sophisticated restaurant and the building of a new entrance to channel visitors to the various possible levels of 'depth'.



## 11. PORTUGAL

### **Ecomuseu Municipal do Seixal**

Originally named the Museu Municipal de Seixal, the museum was set up by the Camara Municipal do Seixal in 1982, and converted into an ecomuseum in 1983. It is the only museum in Portugal to receive the official denomination of Ecomuseu.

Its programme and projects are designed to study, protect and conserve the cultural heritage and disseminate traditional local knowhow in the municipality of Seixal, placing the onus on in situ conservation according to the principle of the functional rehabilitation of museological assets and divulgement of the museum's work among the local community.

The structure depends directly on the Camara Municipal do Seixal (Departamento de Cultura Educacao e Desporto. Divisao de Patrimonio Historico e Natural).

It is a multi-nucleus museum with seven principal sites: the main venue, the Maré de Corroios mill, the Roman oil press, the Arentela naval nucleus, the traditional boats on the Tagus, Quinta de Trindade and the Antica Fabbrica Mundet.

The main venue came into being as the provisional base of the museum in 1982 and now serves as its central office. It hosts the permanent exhibition 'Place, Man and History' which describes and interprets modes and aspects of man's occupation of the geographical area which corresponds to the municipality of Seixal. It comprises an administrative office, a management office, a museographical section, a documentation centre, an archive, an information centre and an education service.

The Maré de Corroios mill of was converted into a museum and opened to the public in 1986. This old place of labour and production (the property is listed as being of 'of public interest') still contains work equipment and machinery, all in working order, with which grain and corn are ground by hand using traditional craft methods.

The Roman oil press of Quinta do Rouxinol is an archaeological site classified as a 'national monument'. Its activity dates to the 2nd-4th centuries BC. A conservation project is currently being developed for the building and its rich collection of exhibits (the result of archaeological campaigns; others are on display at the central nucleus).

The Naval Nucleus of Arentela was opened to the public in 1984. It is the result of the conversion of a ship yard into a museum and houses an exhibition space and a workshop in which scale models of the typical boats of the estuary of the River Tagus are built.

The traditional boats of the Tagus, used for trips on the river, were purchased and restored by the Camara Municipal do Sixel. They include two 'botes de fragata' and a 'varino' (a boat with a semi-flat keel).

Quinta de Trindade (a property listed as being of 'public interest') houses the ecomuseum's conservation and restoration workshop, storehouses for a great many exhibits and the museography service. This nucleus is not open to the public, but its spaces and garden are sometimes used for educational service initiatives.

The Antica Fabbrica Mundet (cladaie Babcock) was opened to the public in 1998. Located in the area of an old cork factory, the building was restored and adapted as a space for temporary exhibitions.

Over 40,000 people visit the museum every year, some of them attracted by the initiatives of the educational service. About half the public is local.

The ecomuseum collects information on visitors to each nucleus every day. It records data in special registers and processes them to produce monthly statistics, partly on the basis of psychographic data. Over the years, the most visited nucleus has proved to

be that of the Maré de Corrois mill. This is probably due to the fact that admission is free and to the variety of services offered.

The local administration represents the local community in the running of the institution. The ecomuseum collaborates with the local tourist sector and organises initiatives in conjunction with local schools. Educational and exhibitions services and a documentation and information centre are all active inside the museum. Educational and entertainment activities are developed on the basis of principles of interdisciplinarity and overall use of the various resources of the local area. Directed by a museologist, the ecomuseum seeks to cater for a public of the most various ages, interests and origins.

The ecomuseum's liaises with the local media and its activities are promoted through a quarterly publication, which is distributed to visitors, friends of the museum and teachers in local schools.

The total exhibition area measures 1,144 square metres. The museum employs 43 people of whom 38 on a permanent basis and five part-time.

The museum has no direct revenue. The Camara Municipal is directly responsible for funding it, while the management is 'municipal'.

The ecomuseum's main educational activities are guided visits, summer courses, workshops, the production of teaching and audiovisual material for teachers and group games. It also assists visitors who wish to consult archives and visit the documentation centre.

The Ecomuseu Municipal do Seixal, which carries on sporadic relations with other ecomuseums, attaches a great deal of attention to the involvement of the local community.

Short-term projects include lectures, temporary exhibitions and the computerisation of data.. The long-term aim is to consolidate a scientific team at the service of the ecomuseum.

## **Museu Municipal de Alcochete**

Set up in 1988 by the Camara Municipal, the Museu Municipal de Alcochete is made up of four nuclei, three of which with permanent exhibitions: the Main Nucleus, the Nucleus of Sacred Art, and the Salt Nucleus. The fourth, which constitutes the Naval Nucleus, is a traditional boat with a semi-flat keel, used for excursions down the River Tagus, on which the town of Alcochete is situated.

The chief nucleus, which was opened in 1988, comprises various collections donated by private citizens, and brings together archaeological exhibits, many of which of great ethnographic value, agricultural and river tools, domestic utensils and everyday objects. As it unwinds, the museum itinerary touches upon themes connected with the natural heritage and history, placing considerable emphasis on the presence of the Romans in the area. Great importance is attached to tools such as the helm and the plough. The nucleus also describes the important role played by salt pits in the area of Alcochete, once known as the Land of Salt. It also includes a space for temporary exhibitions and a garden, used for education and entertainment activities.

Opened to the public in 1990, the Salt Nucleus of salt came into being to conserve the memory of one of the oldest and most important activities in Alcochete. It was made possible by an agreement between the Camara Municipal and the Fundacao Joao Goncalves Junior, owner of the salt pits which make up the nucleus itself - 'Gema Cova' and 'A Gorda' and 'Casa de Malta' - inside which a permanent exhibition describes the topography of the place and the characteristics that have made it suitable for salt mining. The display also explains salt mining techniques and shows the instruments with which the activity was performed and everyday objects connected with it.

The Nucleus of Sacred Art is housed in the Igreja de la Misericordia and was made possible by an agreement between the Museum and the Santa Casa da Misericordia for the conservation of paintings, images and vestments and paper documents of great historical worth for the local community. Concerts and temporary exhibitions are staged inside the nucleus.

The Nucleo Navale houses the Alcatejo, a boat purchased from the Camara Municipal de Alcochete, which it has since restored as part of a restoration course promoted by the local administration with the support of a vocational training school. Since 1989, the boat has been used for excursions down the river during which the ancient sailing techniques and the technical specifications of the craft are described.

The museum boasts a total exhibition space of 1,026 square metres. It boasts a documentation centre and an educational service whose principal activities are guided visits of the nuclei organised differently to cater for the needs of the visitor.

The Museu Municipal de Alcochete records 10,000 visits a year, mostly from the local area (visitor information is registered systematically).

The museum performs promotion activity in conjunction with tourist agencies and the Alcochete tourist office. Systematic relations have yet to be activated with the local media, but initiatives are developed for schools, including guided visits to the museum nuclei and their workshop-ateliers.

In conjunction with the local administration, the museum organises celebrations and commemorations to reinforce its image in the local community.

The museum is directed by a history graduate and is run by the Camara Municipal of Alcochete.

The annual expenses of the museum, in which seven employees work full-time, total about 13 million escudos (67,000 euros).



Future projects include a plan to increase the exhibition spaces and related support and service areas and to reinforce the museum's role as a cultural reference for Alcochete and its surrounding region.

## **Museu Municipal de Peniche**

The Museu Municipal de Peniche came into being in 1984, the fruit of the initiative of a group of citizens. The museum venue is the historically and architecturally important fortress of Sao Tiago, building on which was commenced in the sixteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, a series of interventions had turned it into one of the mightiest castles in Portugal. The fortress, which now houses the Museu, was also used as a political prison from 1934 to 1974, and many of the heroes of the 'Revolution of the Carnations' (April 1974) were imprisoned there. It was thus not only the artistic value of the building but also its great historical importance that prompted a group of citizens - supported by the local administration - to preserve the memory of national history and conserve the local heritage and tradition.

The museum boasts various exhibition nuclei inside the seventeenth-century fortress, which is made up of various bodies: the walls, the dungeons, the Chapel of Santa Barbara and the Governor's Cistem. The most visited nucleus is that of the Resistance, where some of the prisoners' cells have been conserved with reconstructions of daily life in the prison in the period prior to the 'Revolution of the Carnations'.

Another nucleus houses a display of collections of local ethnography with records of the principal economic and cultural activities of Peniche, especially those tied to fishing and wooden boat building.

Also on permanent display are archaeological finds largely connected with naval activity in the Roman era, while a rich exhibition of more recent objects related to shipping and fishing creates an interesting guiding thread between two eras so distant yet at once closely linked by a common interest for the sea, shipping and fishing. The bond is consolidated by the fact that the town is still dedicated to fishing, so much so that the port area (not to mention the collective imagination) is still packed with fishing boats and ships, fishing nets and fishermen.

This nucleus also houses malacological collections, a very rich collection of antique lace and loom embroidery and the archive of the architect Paulino Montez (a donation to the museum), who lived and worked in Peniche.

In the last year, the number of visitors to the museum has risen to over 40,000, many of whom not local, attracted mainly by the 'Nucleus of the Resistance'. The museum systematically collects data about its public (number of visitors per month and psychographic data such as gender, age group, geographical origin) and visitors' record their impressions in a comments book.

The local community is represented by the curator, who is also the town councillor for culture. The historical association between the two roles provokes some difficulties, given that each political change determines the installation of a new curator and a change in management philosophy and strategies. These changes are also favoured by the fact that, at the moment of the museum's birth, the 'vocation' of the Museu Municipal de Peniche had not yet been clearly defined. Relations with the local community are also fostered by guided tours for parties, schools or institutions, which are organised on request. The Museu Municipal de Peniche has no systematic contacts with the local media and receives little coverage in the local and national press, though it does have contacts with some other museums.

12 people work full time in the museum. Annual expenses amount to just over 20 million Portuguese escudos (100,000 euros) a year and are lower than revenue. The ecomuseum thus shows a surplus of million Portuguese escudos.

The covered exhibition area measures 1,700 square metres, all concentrated in the four nuclei of the fortress.

Medium- and long-term projects include a scheme to totally rearrange the exhibition spaces and collections according to a more logical criterion than the present one, as well as a plan to increase the publication of museum-related brochures, books, catalogues and guides.

## **Museu Municipal Dr. Antonio Gabriel Ferreira Lourenco**

The Museu Municipal Dr. Antonio Gabriel Ferreira Lourenco in Benavente was built in 1976 and opened in 1981 by the Camara Municipal de Benavente. It is housed in an eighteenth-century residence which was donated to the Camara Municipal by the owner, whose name it now bears.

Today the museum possesses about 15,000 exhibits (divided into two sections: ethnography and archaeology), besides a vast archive of photographs, most of which are the result of the collecting work of a single individual, who subsequently donated his collection. Its awareness enhanced by the birth of the museum, in the course of the last 25 years the local community has constantly collaborated on the formation of the collection, donating everyday objects from a relatively recent past. In this way, the local community of Benevente has contributed actively and decisively to the formation of a vast stock-archive-museum with objects such as agricultural machinery, utensils for work in the fields, electrical machinery, objects of domestic use, games, toys and so on. The collection of material of all kinds has permitted the homogeneous conservation of the material culture heritage, avoiding its physical disappearance and the oblivion of the collective memory.

The Museu Municipal Dr. Antonio Gabriel Ferreira Lourenco consists of a permanent collection of tools and utensils, set up by the museum staff, and by exhibitions which are staged periodically by a specialised team. One of these was the recent 'Verdes Anos' (1999), a rational study of the condition of children in this area of Portugal in the first half of the twentieth century based on the collection and cataloguing of objects (games, clothes, cradles and so on) and the reconstruction of period ambiances (for example, an elementary schoolroom with desks and old-fashioned teaching aids, including a map of Portugal before the revolution, hence featuring the country's colonies in Africa and Asia). The exhibition also presented records about abortions, birth rites, superstitions, nursery rhymes and outdoor games. It also included annotated information about legislation with regard to the protection of children and common practices such as that of the 'Roda'<sup>20</sup>. In 1998, an exhibition was staged on rice growing, describing legislation on the subject, processing methods and life in the fields (touching on subjects such as flooding, songs, sowing, weeding and diseases such as malaria) with panels and, above all, displays of equipment, machinery and photographs.

The exhibitions were accompanied by catalogues, produced almost entirely by the museum staff.

Benevente is situated off the beaten track, outside the major tourist circuits. In view of its location, its audience (5,000/6,000 annual visits) is essentially local, made up of the local community, schools and residents of outlying areas who visit the museum simply for curiosity's sake. Information about the audience - gathered on guided visits and through comments in the visitors' book - is processed periodically.

The museum has no relations with local tourist sectors, but does have close ties with the schools and the young people of the local community, who have undertaken to search for and collect material, including oral records, about local culture.

Relations with the local news media are systematic. The museum takes an active part in initiatives organised by the local administration, such as celebrations and commemorations (a publication documenting the cult of the Madonna of Peace and its curious rituals has been published by the museum). Managed by the municipality, the museum has six full-time employees, among whom the director, a historian.

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<sup>20</sup> In the Middle Ages, La Roda, a wooden wheel, was hung at the entrance of convents at which newborn babies could be abandoned to be taken into care by the nuns.

The main activities of the museum are guided tours, group games, theoretical lessons, laboratory tests and the involvement of young people in the gathering and cataloguing of material. For the moment, the museum has no permanent contacts with other museums.

A second nucleus, dedicated to agriculture, is to be opened in the former municipal abattoir. In this way, it will be possible to expand the exhibition space, which currently totals just 150 square metres.

## **Museu Municipal de Vila Franca de Xira**

The Museu Municipal de Vila Franca de Xira came into being in 1951 thanks to the initiative of a private citizen, Dr. Vidal Baptista. Today (following a reformulation of its programmes in 1985), activities are designed to develop knowledge of local history, culture and heritage.

The museum is made up of various nuclei in the area of Vila Franca de Xira.

The main venue is the Palácio de Sobralinho, which includes the documentation centre and the plastic arts educational centre and organises on guided tours of the palace itself and the garden.

The museological Nucleus of Alverca houses the permanent exhibition 'Do quotidiano ao museu-Alverca séculos XVII-XX' (From the everyday to the museum: Alverca in the seventeenth-twentieth centuries) and an active educational service which organises guided tours, some of which addressed at specific subjects linked to the local area: an introduction to archaeology, cooking and nutrition in the seventeenth century, local trades and activities, merrymaking and so on. The nucleus also organises games, drawing courses, lessons and musical research.

The Nucleo Museu de Alhandra, Casa Dr. Sousa Martins is a house-museum with a permanent exhibition of objects which touch upon the most important aspects of the life of the village community of Alhandra throughout the last century: craft activities, industrial labour, the first workers' associations and so on. The house contains a library and a gallery for temporary exhibitions.

The Naval Nucleus consists of the 'Liberdade', a boat used for trips down the River Tagus. Such trips allow the visitor to come into contact with a forgotten and - in the case of the younger generations - unknown landscape and find out more about the ancient means of goods transport that connected the south of the country to Lisbon.

The Nucleo Museu do Neo-Realismo came into being in 1990 with the aim of becoming a permanent cultural reference and providing instruments to explore this school of painting. It houses a permanent collection, a space allocated for temporary exhibitions and a documentation centre.

The museum is located in the Parco do Sobralinho and run by the Camara Municipal de Vila Franca de Xira. Its curator is a museology specialist.

The museum collaborates with local tour operators, through which - as well as the local media - its exhibitions are promoted, and it has collaborated with schools for a long time. The goals of the museum's educational programme are: to carry out research, conserve, document, communicate, educate and contribute to the development of local culture. Each nucleus organises guided theme visits and amusement activities (for children, youngsters and adults alike), including games and drawing, painting, pottery and traditional music workshops.

Materials are also made available to teachers for lessons at school. The subjects addressed are history, the architectural heritage, labour, the structure of the Quintas (a term used in Portuguese to describe farms with annexed agricultural activities, hence treasure troves of culture).

The museum's specialised personnel hold lessons in schools on the history, heritage and traditions of the area. Courses of lessons on the same subjects are organised for teachers too. The museum has developed travelling exhibitions which it lends out to interested bodies on request. Its various nuclei all have documentation centres, and since 1985 the museum has published a two-yearly cultural bulletin, as well as catalogues of its exhibitions (six since 1992) and a series of studies and documents on the local heritage.

About 20,000 people visit the museum every year, and about half of them are of local provenance. The museum possesses information about monthly attendances and the age of visitors. Other information is gathered through questionnaires and visitors' books. Every month reports are drawn up on the activities in progress and participants. University students have also intervened to produce documentation on the behaviour of the public in given initiatives. The museum has 14 employees, all full-time. Annual spending totals somewhere in the region of 75 million Portuguese escudos (380,000 euros). The covered exhibition area occupies close on 800 square metres. The museum liaises with other regional museums and boasts good relations with the groups of the local community.

Two new nuclei - the Igreja do Martir Santo, dedicated to sacred art, and the Museu Agricola, dedicated to agricultural society - will soon be opened to further strengthen contacts and involve the local community.

# **Part three**





## 12. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was based on a postal survey and interviews and talks with the curators and managers of over 200 Italian and European ecomuseums. Direct meetings were also held with representatives of international bodies or bodies operating in the ecomuseum ambit (UNESCO, International Council of Museums, Fédération des ecomusées et des musées de société, Federation of Swedish Ecomuseums, Réunion Musées Nationaux).

The aim of the postal survey was to gather a vast body of up-to-date and, as far as possible, homogeneous documentation on a large number of museums and to make comparisons between them. We were particularly interested in the aspects, such as the ecomuseum's relationship with the community or with local development and its vision of the future, that are attracting most interest today.

The research team was made up of Maurizio Maggi (coordinator), Cecilia Avogadro, Giulia Carbone, Paola Ciocca, Vittorio Falletti and Federico Zatti.

The postal survey. A questionnaire in various languages (English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish or Italian) was mailed to about 670 museums, mostly in Europe, Brazil and Canada.

The survey embraced museums of various typologies and took into account past community and place conservation initiatives in the countries concerned.

The questionnaire, subdivided into 6 different sections, contained 27 questions, 18 close-ended, 4 open-ended and 5 semi-close.

Since the collection of questionnaires was not random, it would be wrong to speak in terms of a statistically significant sample. Nonetheless, the collection of questionnaires from about 200 institutions (60 of which define themselves as ecomuseums) provided a wealth of information whose representativeness deserves to be explored.

The questionnaires received correspond to over 28.5% of those mailed, which is a positive result.

Excellent results (apart from those in countries with a limited total number of responses) were obtained in Scandinavia (53%), the French-speaking area (45%), and the German-speaking area (28%).

### Results of the postal survey

	mailed	returned	%
Italy	357	69	19.3
Portugal-Brazil	11	9	81.8
Scandinavian area	30	12	40.0
French-speaking area 150	73	48.7	
Germany-Austria	97	28	28.7
Others	25	5	20.0
Total	670	196	29.3

The survey took into consideration ecomuseums, demo-ethno-anthropological museums, freilichtmuseums, open-air museums, heimetmuseums and the like.

### Museums in the sample, by size and geographical area

	a.v.	%
Ecomuseums	61	31.1
Musées de société	68	34.7
Freilichtmuseums	22	11.2
Community museums	40	20.4
Others	5	2.6
Total	196	100.0

The Italian museums which replied to the survey account for fewer than 2% of total national museum visits. They attract an average of about 9,000 visitors a year, have an exhibition surface area of about 700 square metres and count upon an annual budget of about 29,000 euros and 8 employees (of whom 5 full-time).

The average data of other respondent institutions are much higher with an average audience of close on 45,000 visitors, a covered surface area of 750 square metres, a budget of 520,000 euros and a staff of 26 (of whom about half full time).

These data are coherent with the ones that have emerged from other similar surveys, which show that the average dimension of all typologies of museums in Italy is lower than in the rest of Europe.

List of the museums which replied to the questionnaire:

*Freilichtmuseum Keltendorf (Austria), Heimatmuseum Bramberg (Austria), Kaerntner Freilichtmuseum (Austria), Landwirtschaftsmuseum Schloss Ehrental (Austria), Salzburger Freilichtmuseum (Austria), Stiftung Oesterreichisches Freilichtmuseum (Austria), Ecomusée de treignes (Belgium), Ecomusée regional du centre minier du Bois du Luc (Belgium), Ecomuseu de Itaipu (Brazil), Ecomuseu do Riberao Dailha (Brazil), ecomuseu matadouro (Brazil), Museu i Reinado (Brazil), Ecomusée des Deux Rives (Canada), Ecomusée de Hull (Canada), Ecomusée du Fier Monde (Canada), Ecomusée Saint Constant (Canada), Moulin Legare (Canada), Village quebécois (Canada), Winterland Ecomuseum (Canada), Ekomuseum Samso (Denmark), Laeso Museum (Denmark), Lake District (Denmark), Skjern-Egvad Museum (Denmark), Viking Center (Denmark), Conservatoire de l'agriculture (France), Ecomusée des mond du Forez (France), Ecomusée d'Alsace (France), Ecomusée de Bruneau (France), Ecomusée de Chirols (France), Ecomusée de la Brenne (France), Ecomusée de la Bresse Bourguignonne (France), Ecomusée de la grande lande (France), Ecomusée de la montagne noire (France), Ecomusée de l'Armagnac, (France), Ecomusée de la Rodoule (France), Ecomusée de la Sainte Baume (France), Ecomusée de moulin de Kerouat (France), Ecomusée de S.Nazaire (France), Ecomusée de Margéride (France), Ecomusée des mines de fer (France), Ecomusée du costume savoyard (France), Ecomusée du pays de Monfort (France), Ecomusée Fourmier Trelon (France), Ecomusée Fresnes (France), Ecomusée La Courneuve (France), Ecomusée le Creusot (France), Ecomusée S.Quentin (France), Ferme Bintinaise (France), Musée Ampère (France), Musée Basque (France), Musée Basque de Bayonne (France), Musée Bocage Normand (France), Musée d'Auch (France), Musée de Bateau (France), Musée de Cerdagne (France), Musée de Cristalle (France), Musée de la Bresse (France), Musée de la Coutellerie (France), Musée de la coutellerie (France), Musée de la dentelle (France), Musée de la Forêt (France), Musée de la Histoire du Fer (France), Musée de la Houille blanche (France), Musée de la Mine (France), Musée de la Musique mecanique (France), Musée de la soie (France), Musée de la truffe (France), Musée de Laire (France), Musée de l'Assistance publique (France), Musée de Normandie (France), Musée de Textile (France), Musée de Traditions Chatillon (France), Musée des Arts et Traditions*

*populares (France), Musée des techniques comtoises (France), Musée d'ethnologie regionale (France), Musée du Chapeau (France), musée du pays du Der (France), Musée du Rouergue (France), Musée du Sel (France), Musée du theatre forain (France), Musée du vignoble (France), Musée Industriel de la Corderie Vallois (France), Musée Pirénéen (France), Musée regional de Fouras (France), Musée textile de Feutre (France), Musées historique du Havre (France), Bergisches Freilichtmuseum fuer Oekologie u baeuerlich-handwerkliche Kultur (Germany), Freilicht Museum Finsterau (Germany), Freilicht Museum Massing (Germany), Freilichtmuseum Bad Sobernheim (Germany), Freilichtmuseum Beuren (Germany), Freilichtmuseum Diesdorf Altmark (Germany), Freilichtmuseum Glentleiten (Germany), Freilichtmuseum Klockenhagen (Germany), Freilichtmuseum Neuhausen ob Eck (Germany), Hohenloher Freilandmuseum (Germany), Kreisfreilichtmuseum Kuernbach Landratsamt Biberach (Germany), Museum deutsches Eisenbahn (Germany), Museumsdorf Bayerischer Wald (Germany), Museumsdorf Cloppenburg Niedersaecheisches Freilichtmuseum (Germany), Museumsdorf Dueppel (Germany), Museumsdorf Hoesseringer (Germany), Oberpfaelzer Freilandmuseum (Germany), Schwaebisches Bauernhofmuseum Illerbeuren (Germany), Selkantbahn Kleinbahnmuseum (Germany), Unewatt-Landschaftsmuseum Angeln (Germany), Westfaelisches Freilichtmuseum Detmold (Germany), Antico Frantoio (Italy), Casa Contadina (Italy), Casa Museo dell'Alta Valle del Cervo (Italy), Centro etnografico della civiltà palustre (Italy), Civiltà Salinara (Italy), Collezioni d'arte cinese ed extraeuropee Museo Missionario del Convento "Osservanza" (Italy), Ecomuseum "La via dell'ardesia" (Italy), Ecomuseum della Montagna Pistoiese (Italy), Ecomuseum di Argenta (Italy), Enoagromuseum (Italy), Mostra permanente di Cultura materiale di Levanto (Italy), Museo di cultura popolare (Italy), Museo Arti e Mestieri di un Tempo (Italy), Museo Casa Clautana (Italy), Museo civico (Italy), Museo Civico "A.E. Baruffaldi" (Italy), Museo civico di Bisacquino (Italy), Museo Civiltà Contadina (Italy), Museo civiltà contadina Caminati (Italy), Museo Comunale di Champdepraz (Italy), Museo Comunale Eggenal Val d'Ega (Italy), Museo Contadino (Italy), Museo degli usi e dei costumi della Prov. Bolzano/Suedtiroler Landesmuseum fuer Volkskunde (Italy), Museo del bracciante artigiano (Italy), Museo del paesaggio (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina (Italy), Museo della civiltà contadina (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina "Angelo Marsiano" (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina "Giuseppe Riccardi" (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina del Friuli Imperiale (Italy), Museo della civiltà contadina del Salento (Italy), Museo della civiltà contadina di Bodoglie di Todi (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina e Artigiana della Val d'Enza "La Barchessa" (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina in Val Vibrata (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Contadina, pastorale, della miniera, dell'emigrante e artigianale (Italy), Museo della Civiltà del Lavoro (Italy), Museo della Civiltà Solandra (Italy), Museo della Cultura Arbereshe (Italy), Museo della Vita Contadina "G.Penzi" (Italy), museo della vita contadina in Romagna (Italy), Museo della Vita di Quassù (Italy), Museo della vita e del lavoro delle genti di montagna (Italy), Museo dell'Antica Civiltà locale "Masseria Lombardo" (Italy), Museo demologico, dell'economia, del lavoro e della storia sociale silana (Italy), Museo di Arte e Tradizione Contadina (Italy), Museo di documentazione della civiltà contadina friulana (Italy), Museo di Storia della Mezzadria (Italy), Museo di vita montana in Val Cenischia (Italy), Museo etnico Arberesh (Italy), Museo etnografico "La Steiva" (Italy), Museo Etnografico Cerignolano (Italy), Museo etnografico Coumboscuro della Civiltà Provenzale (Italy), Museo etnografico del pinerolese (Italy), Museo etnografico della Valle Carnobina (Italy), Museo Etnografico dell'Alta Valle Seriana*

*(Italy), Museo Etnografico Ossimo Ieri (Italy), Museo Etnografico Siciliano "G. Pitrè" (Italy), Museo Galleria Comunale "Trappeto Maratea" (Italy), Museo Ladino di Fassa (Italy), Museo Lombardo di Storia dell'Agricoltura (Italy), Museo Storico Etnografico della Bassa Valsesia (Italy), Museo Tradizioni e Arti Contadine (Italy), Museo Vallivo (Italy), Raccolta etnografica "Casa dei Guidi" (Italy), Wassermuseum (Italy), Ekomuseum Grenseland (Norway), Sor-Senja Museum (Norway), Toten Ecomuseum (Norway), Zuiderzee (Holland), Ecomuseu Municipal Do Seixal (Portugal), Museu municipal de Alcochete (Portugal), Museu Municipal de Periche (Portugal), Museu Municipal de Vila Franca de Xira (Portugal), Museu Municipal Dr. Antonio Gabriel Ferreira Lourenco, Benavente (Portugal), Ecomuseu de cap cavalleria (Spain), Museo de la ciencia catalunya (Spain), Museu d'Història de Catalunya (Spain), Vallonbruk Uppland (Spain), Ekomuseum Bergslagen (Sweden), Ekomuseum Kristianstads Vattenrike (Sweden), Skansen Museet (Sweden), Ecomusée St. Sulpice (Switzerland), Ecomuseum Simplon (Switzerland), Freilichtmuseum Ballenberg (Switzerland), Musée du Fer (Switzerland).*

Geographical area covered



Direct interviews. In parallel with the postal survey, another was based on direct meetings with the people in charge of museums (mostly museum curators).

The aim of this survey, complementary and not alternative to the postal one, was to use the in-depth analysis possible in direct conversation (though necessarily confined to a limited number of cases) to record details that were not forthcoming in the questionnaire survey. Interviews also allowed us to clarify any ambiguities or unclear responses in the postal survey.

A brief cycle of meetings also serves to define more specifically the questions to include in the survey. Visiting museums with professionals also offers the chance to explore behind the scenes, hence to exploit a point of view that would be impossible through normal surveys or experiences as a normal visitor.

The interviews were organised in Europe, not only in the institutions already mentioned, but also with the curators or managers of three museums in France, five in Portugal, five in Italy, one in Germany, one in Holland and three in the Scandinavian area.

Meetings held by the IRES team

Museums	Country
Viking Center	Denmark
Ekomuseum Samso	Denmark

Lake District		Denmark
Vestjylland Økomuseum		Denmark
Écomusée de Vendée		France
Écomusée du Pays de Rennes		France
Musée ethnographique Sarthois		France
Museumsdorf Düppel		Germany
M. degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina		Italy
Ecomuseum della Montagna Pistoiese		Italy
M. delle Arti e Tradizioni Popolari di Bentivoglio		Italy
Museo della miniera di Prali		Italy
Museo Guatelli di Ozzano Taro		Italy
Ekomuseum Gransland- Blomsholm		Norway
Zuiderzee	Holland	
Museu Municipal d'Alcochete		Portugal
Museu Municipal de Benavente		Portugal
Museu Municipal de Peniche		Portugal
Ecomuseu Municipal do Seixal		Portugal
M. Municipal de Vila Franca de Xira		Portugal
Ekomuseum Kristianstads Vattenrike		Sweden
Ekomuseum Bergsladen		Sweden
Skansen		Sweden
<hr/>		
Representatives of organisations		
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Giovanni Pinna		Icom Italy
Francoise Wasserman		R.M.N.
Philippe Ifri		Fed. French-speaking Ecomuseums
Ewa Bergdhal		Fed. Swedish Ecomuseums
Fernando Crespo Toral		Unesco



### 13. THE REGIONAL LAW FOR ECOMUSEUMS

The Piedmont Regional Authority Law no. 1995/31 contains necessarily synthetic indications about the characteristics which applicant bodies must submit to be entitled to funding.

They include:

- the conservation and restoration of traditional living environments and materials used in productive activities;
- the conservation of characteristic dwellings and buildings, furniture and equipment, working tools and other objects;
- the reconstruction of living environments which may produce saleable goods or services;
- the preparation of trails through the landscape and the environment;
- the active involvement of communities;
- the promotion and support of scientific research and teaching-educational activities.

Some characteristics (educational and scientific activities, involvement of the community) are evidently applicable to all, but in other cases (saleable services, conservation and exploitation of typical environments or typical objects) are applicable to traditional ethnographic museums and, in others still (preparation of trails) are not always present in existing museums.

The aim of reconstructing, recording and conserving the historical memory (art. 1 par. 3 Regional Law 95/31) is shared by most traditional demo-ethno-anthropological museums, and is thus of no help in identifying ecomuseums.

This problem of definition has accompanied the phenomenon of ecomuseums ever since they came into being and has fuelled a debate which still rages.

To make an effective selection of proposals, the Piedmont Regional Authority has created an assessment group consisting of:

- an autonomous advisory committee made up of three representatives of the University of Turin, three representatives of Turin Polytechnic and the Regional Spokesman for Parks;
- a work group coordinated directly by the Parks Service and made up of four newly graduated scholarship holders.

The assessment staff can also count upon the activity of IRES Piedmont which, in 1998 and 1999, conducted a comparative analysis of the various ecomuseum experiences in Italy and Europe.

In the course of 1998 and 1999 the assessment group made a number of on-the-spot surveys of the sites in question, held meetings and organised seminars and public debates. This activity led to the setting up of 11 ecomuseums<sup>21</sup>.

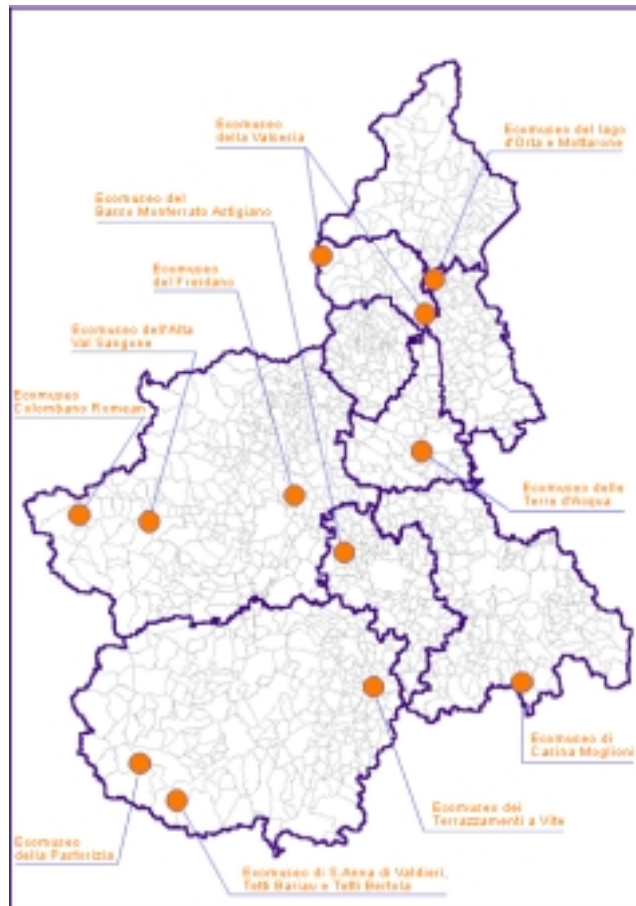
In late 2000, the Piedmont Regional Authority, with the assistance of IRES, opened a back office for ecomuseums, made up of four junior part-time researchers (two architects, a museologist and an economist) and a senior coordinator. The work group has the job, among other things, of verifying the advancement of the activities of single ecomuseums, of supplying technical and museological assistance, of facilitating

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<sup>21</sup> Two more ecomuseums were set up at the beginning of 2001.



communication among ecomuseums and disseminating best practices also among other Italian and European regions.



## **The text of Law n. 31 of March 14 1995**

The Setting up of Ecomuseums in Piedmont.  
(B. U. n. 12 of March 22 1995 (Arts 1, 2, 3 and 4))

### *Art. 1. (Aims)*

1. The Regional Authority promotes the setting up of Ecomuseums on its territory with the aim of reconstructing, recording and conserving the historical memory, life, material culture, relations between natural and anthropic environment, traditions and the way in which traditional settlement has characterised the formation and evolution of the landscape.
2. In order to achieve the aim expressed in paragraph 1, the Regional Authority organises areas of adequate size and characteristics and undertakes to equip and restore them, recovering buildings and equipment and gathering documentation adequate to the aims set out under paragraph 3.
3. The priority aims of Ecomuseums are:
  - a) the conservation and restoration of traditional living environments in the chosen areas by handing down of records of material culture and reconstructing the living and working habits of the local populations, relations with the surrounding environment, religious, cultural and recreational traditions and the use of natural resources, sources of energy and materials deployed in production activities;
  - b) the conservation in the chosen area of characteristic dwellings or buildings, furnishings and equipment, working tools and any other objects useful for the faithful reconstruction of traditional living environments, thus allowing for their protection and proper maintenance;
  - c) the reconstruction of traditional living and working ambits which may produce goods and services saleable to visitors, thus creating job opportunities and the possibility of selling local products;
  - d) the preparation of trails through the landscape and environment to relate visitors with the traditional surroundings;
  - e) the active involvement of the community, cultural and scholastic institutions and local associations;
  - f) the promotion and support of scientific research and teaching-educational activities relative to local history and traditions.

### *Art. 2. (Setting up and management of Ecomuseums)*

1. Every year the Regional Council submits to the Regional Committee a programme for the setting up of Ecomuseums, drawn up on the basis of the indications of local bodies, cultural and environmentalist associations, universities and specialised institutes: to the programme is annexed a list of regional Ecomuseums, which is updated every year.
2. The setting up of Ecomuseums is resolved upon by the Regional Committee, which appoints the managers thereof on the basis of a project drawn up by the Advisory Committee, as under article 3. The management is entrusted for the aims set out at article 1, paragraph 3, with a subsequent deed of resolution by the Regional Council within 60 days of the setting up, to one of the below on the basis of an appropriate management project:

- a) the management bodies of territorially concerned or bordering regional protected areas;
  - b) Provincial Authorities territorially concerned with Ecomuseums at a provincial or sub-provincial level;
  - c) specially constituted associations.
3. Each Ecomuseum is entitled to an exclusive and original denomination and an exclusive brand of its own.
  4. The management of Ecomuseums may be regulated in compliance with existing laws and with agreements between the public and private players involved; these agreements define the tasks of each participant and the material and financial resources required.

*Art. 3. (Advisory committee)*

1. The Regional Council appoints an Advisory Committee to identify and promote Ecomuseums.
2. The Advisory Committee is made up of three members indicated by the University of Turin and three members indicated by the Polytechnic of Turin and is chaired by the Spokesperson competent for the regional territory: the functions of secretary are entrusted to a director of the competent department.
3. The composition of the Advisory Committee is formalised by a decree by the President of the Regional Council.
- 3 bis. For each meeting, members of the advisory committee are entitled to attendance fees and any refund indemnities envisaged by Regional Law n. 33 of July 2 1976 (Fees to members of commissions, councils, committees and boards operating under the Regional Administration).

*Art. 4. (Funding)*

1. For the management of Ecomuseums, the budget item 'interventions and works for the management of Ecomuseums' is introduced, with an allocation of one billion lire for the year 1995: this financial burden is covered by the reduction of item 27170 in the draft budget for the year 1995.
2. The burdens necessary for the years 1996 and subsequent are covered by the budget laws of the Region for the corresponding years.

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## NOTE

- α The Nouvelle Muséologie was officially founded in Marseilles in 1982; in Great Britain the term New Museology was introduced in 1989 from the book of the same title by Peter Vergo.
- α For a synthetic description of two models, H. de Varine, *L'ecomusée* (1978), in *Vagues* (F. Wasserman ed.), MINES, 1992, pp. 455.
- α Hubert F., *Les Ecomusées après vingt ans*, in *Ecomusées en France*, 1987.
- α Avalon 2000, near Glastonbury, defines itself as the first British ecomuseum but is more similar to a theme park. Paradoxically, Ironbridge, which won the admiration of George Henry Rivière, refuses to be defined as an ecomuseum.
- α For example, the Museo della civiltà contadina in San Martino di Bentivoglio, to all intents and purposes Italy's first ecomuseum.
- α For example, the Ferme Bintinais in France.
- α For example, the Himatmuseumdi Neukolln in Germany.
- α For example, the Zuiderzee Museum intends to broaden its research activity to the stories of the people who actually lived in the area now occupied by the reconstructed fishing village.
- α For example, the Freilichtmuseum in Kiekeberg in Germany.
- α Benjamin W., *Ecrits français*, Gallimard, 1991.
- α See Santagata W., Falletti V., Maggi M., *I non-utenti dei musei*, 2000, a survey promoted by the Piedmont Regional Authority and the City of Turin.
- α Accreditation procedures have been promoted by, among others, ICOM (at international level) and the American Association of Museums and the Museum and Galleries Commission (at national level).