

# Babel Tower

## Museum People in Dialogue

**Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido  
Giusy Pappalardo**



*Babel Tower. Museum People in Dialogue*

**Editors**

Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido,

University of Liège, Service of Museology

Giusy Pappalardo,

University of Catania, Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture

Publication developed in the framework of the PON AIM project *Open Technologies for Local Development. Democratic practices for enhancing and preserving cultural heritage. Urban and Regional Planning (ICAR/20)* – University of Catania, Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture – E66C18001390007 – AIM1882491, Cultural Heritage

in collaboration with:

University of Liège

Interfaculty Research Unit Art, Archaeology and Heritage, Service of Museology

Lusófona University

Department of Museology

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ISBN 978-2-491997-68-7

Published by ICOFOM, Paris, in 2022.

# BABEL TOWER

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*Giusy Pappalardo*  
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 **ICOFOM** ICOM  
international  
committee  
for museology

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# Foreword

*Bruno Brulon*

## **Time for dialogue, time for finding common ground**

A Babelian tale of museology has already been analysed by theorists and historians of this cross-cultural discipline<sup>1</sup>. Nonetheless, few agreements have been made on specific terms, methods and basic scientific parameters for the field of museum theory and practice up until the present. This book and the round of debates entitled *Babel Tower: Museum people in dialogue*, organised by the Université de Liège (Belgium) in collaboration with the University of Catania, with participation from the Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias (Portugal), has brought together different voices and approaches to the museum, exposing such a museological Babel.

Dialogue has proven to be an important element for the development of a desirable common ground between thinkers aiming to communicate their own perceptions on the diversity of the museum experience. Lately, we have witnessed some advancement in the museum sector towards a few agreements via interchangeable communication and participatory processes. In August this year, a new museum definition was approved by ICOM representatives as a step forward towards a consensus within this global organisation. A revision of its Code of Ethics for museums is also on the way, already presenting a renewed baseline for museum work. The museum, in its diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is still an element of dispute and negotiation among different communities, activists, Indigenous groups and various professionals. Even in the recent vocabulary of museum workers in the past few years, new terms and conceptions have appeared as a sign of a more intense circulation of knowledge between different contexts. The need for cultural and linguistic translation has become an imperative for museum professionals seeking to be updated with the arising trends and new challenges. Diversity, sustainability, inclusion, accessibility and critical reflection have become core values and imperative goals for museums in the 21st century.

These goals, originating from community claims for social justice and broader representation in the museum forum, have been appropriated by theorists in the enunciation of new

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Aquilina, J. D. (2011). The Babelian Tale of Museology and Museography: a history in words. *Museology: International Scientific Eletronic Journal*, 6, 1-20.

museological currents: social museology, reflexive museology, critical and post-critical museology, postcolonial and decolonial approaches to museums and heritage all present alternative readings of the discipline's traditions and propose radical revisions of the museum. In fact, the work of translation is one that requires knowledge exchange and acute interpretation of terms that, far from being universal, need to be adapted – or appropriated – to the new reality where they are going to be used. The result is an expansion of knowledge through the discovery of new meanings and uses of such terms and concepts, as well as the revision of paradigms.

The present publication brings together multiple voices representing different points of view on museums and museology. It doesn't seek to find consensus among the diversity of the museological field but instead to contribute to the basis of a discipline that finds ways to build a common ground. As previously described<sup>2</sup>, museology, as a field of knowledge with specific approaches to museum theory, was born from one fundamental problem: the challenge of configuring a unified 'science' whose methods and theories may serve the study of a vast diversity of museum experiences. This problem was systematically raised within the International Committee for Museology, ICOFOM, throughout the early 1980s. When ICOFOM was created in 1977<sup>3</sup>, on an initiative of the Advisory Committee of ICOM in 1976<sup>4</sup>, it was the result of a long-standing need to develop specific concepts and normalise knowledge in the museum field gathered so far by ICOM, as was apparent since the first years of this international organisation.

Over the years, the need for defining specific concepts for museology and museum work remained as a constant concern of ICOFOM members, leading to a set of theories and several special projects. In the 1990s, ICOFOM pursued the development of a specific lexicon for museology, looking at different theoretical traditions. The interpretation of terms and concepts within the committee had two major competing projects: the one led by Czech authors mainly influenced by the conceptions of Zbyněk Z. Stránský, that involved the proposal of a new vocabulary for museology with a philosophical inspiration; the other based on the work of francophone authors that were mainly practical and rooted in French museum

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<sup>2</sup> For a broad reflection on museology's history, see Brulon Soares, B. (2019). *A History of Museology : Key Authors of Museum Theory*. Paris : ICOM/ICOFOM.

<sup>3</sup> ICOFOM held its first constitutive meeting at the 12<sup>th</sup> General Conference of ICOM in Moscow, 1977.

<sup>4</sup> Sofka, V. (1995). *My adventurous life with ICOFOM, museology, museologists and anti-museologists*, giving special reference to ICOFOM Study Series. ICOFOM Study Series, Reprint of Volumes 1–20 in 7 books. Hyderabad, ICOFOM, Book 1, p. 12.

tradition. Since the initial project of a *Dictionarium Museologicum*, Stránský and other Eastern European members who shared his theoretical views were engaged in creating a terminology for the museum field. Later, during the ICOFOM annual symposium of 1993 in Athens, Greece, a permanent research project entitled Terminology of Museology was created, aiming to develop basic terms and concepts. The project evolved into the idea of creating a *Thesaurus Museologicus*, coordinated by André Desvallées. In 1997, the first results of this project were presented to ICOFOM members in two separate sections: the first, a selection of terms organised by Desvallées prioritising the history of fundamental terms and concepts for museology; the second, coordinated by Stránský, was presented in the form of an encyclopaedic dictionary, which the author called 'a preliminary version of a *Museological Encyclopedia*'. The document proposed by Desvallées was widely accepted, while Stránský's version of a possible dictionary had less support. Nonetheless, the need for an integrated theory of museology, in great part influenced by Stránský's thinking, remained at the centre of the committee's debates over the next years.

This Babelian battle for a common vocabulary and shared concepts that has marked ICOFOM history since its creation has led multiple generations of museologists to engage in international dialogue seeking commonalities while facing their differences in terms of museum practice and conceptions. The *Key Concepts of Museology*, published in 2010, and the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de Muséologie*, published in 2011, both directed by André Desvallées and François Mairesse, present some of the results from these ongoing debates. In the past decade, ICOFOM publications have critically approached such bases of museological knowledge and evolved into recognising our differences as part of our strength. Recently, a new international dictionary of museology has been published, edited by Mairesse and involving a diverse and multicultural group of authors. Other ICOFOM books and its international journal – *ICOFOM Study Series* – have put inclusivity into practice by diversifying its authors and readers.

This publication, courageously organised by Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido and Giusy Pappalardo, is part of a broader Babelian tale of museology, one that can be acknowledged as an important part of our recent history and as a promising path into the future.

Bruno Brulon Soares  
ICOFOM Chair (2019-2022)  
University of St Andrews, Scotland



# Introduction

*Giusy Pappalardo, Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido*

It is with great pleasure that we present this book, consisting of texts from some invited speakers to the series<sup>5</sup> of webinars **Babel Towel: museum people in dialogue**. The series has been conducted within a joint research project between the Service of Museology – Research Unit of Art, Archaeology, and Heritage (University of Liège), and the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture (University of Catania), developed in the framework of an EU-funded program (European Social Fund, Italian PON AIM - Attraction and International Mobility of Researchers).

This book has been elaborated by a part of the network that formed thanks to the webinar series. However, it is not equivalent to the webinar's proceedings. Not all the series' contributions have been collected here. Rather, some of the speakers agreed to deepen the main topics explored within the trans-national and trans-disciplinary dialogues conducted during the series. Their manuscripts have been collected in the format of a scientific publication aimed at contributing to the debate concerned with the intersection between museology, heritage studies, planning, and other disciplines that focus on spaces, places,

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<sup>5</sup> The recordings of the series are available at the Youtube Channel of the Museology Service of the University of Liège: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKpUaZCM9hRuRAX6XCofFUg> (last access: February, 11th, 2022). Some preliminary reflections have been published in Pappalardo (2021), and Duret & Paquay (2021).

territories, and landscapes, as an emerging field of experimentation. The editors think that there is an interesting overlap amongst such spheres of knowledge and practices that are here explored in relation to the concept of insurgencies.

The underlying question is how to bridge community-based forms of territorial planning, governance and museology, aimed at opening new trajectories of emancipation for the most distressed groups (Freire, 1970), grounded on a multifaceted awareness of the past, an ethos of socio-ecological justice for the present, and an effort at intergenerational care for the future. However, this book is not concerned with defining “insurgencies” from a conceptual and a general standpoint. Rather, it offers a variety of contributions expressing specific and context-based nuances of such a broad lens of observation. These contributions are rooted in practices that offer the opportunity for reflecting upon them (Schön, 1983), thus advancing the theoretical debate.

While we were discussing and reflecting upon trans-disciplinary intersections, the evolving definition of museums was in the process of being updated, and it was finally approved during the 26<sup>th</sup> ICOM General Conference in Prague. The 2022 definition puts more emphasis on communities, participation, and inclusion:

“A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, *accessible and inclusive*, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and *with the participation of communities*, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.”

(ICOM, 2022; emphasis, in italics, of the authors).

In this framework, we believe that exploring the intersections between territorial planning and museology is timely and needed, if one looks at both disciplines from the perspective of scholars who fully engage themselves in the praxis of rebuilding communities through a pedagogy of hope (hooks, 2013).

Specifically, community-based planning focuses on the way territories evolve, considering institutions – including museums, in their various experimental forms – and diverse actors of local communities as drivers for change.

Positioning people, especially the most unprivileged ones – with their perspectives, needs, inputs, expectations – at the core of the debate is the starting point that has moved the effort behind the webinar series and this book.

Notwithstanding, the editors are aware that there is still a long way to go for deepening the framework of insurgencies within the museology-planning nexus. We are also aware that this book mainly encompasses practices that are framed within the museology domain. However, we think that the reflections upon them could teach a lesson for the territorial planning debate, too, that is already concerned with ecomuseums as experimental devices that connect the territorial self-representation to the reimagination of alternative futures, through the practice of community mapping (Magnaghi, 2010).

Here, we argue that the joining link between insurgent museologies and planning is given by the agency of experimental forms of museums within territories, including their relationship with people, heritage, and landscapes, as an opportunity for giving voice to the unheard ones, in their various geographical and social characterizations, through a variety of practical devices. Such variety emerges in the next pages of this book, covering a wide range of contexts and approaches.

The framework of insurgency has already been explored in fields of both museology and planning (e.g., in Castriota and Tornatore, forthcoming; Duarte Cândido, 2020; Miraftab, 2009; Sandercock, 1998), but there is still a gap in the literature regarding their intersections. Nevertheless, working at the frontier of such intersections has the potential to open new trajectories, offering innovative practical tools and theoretical understandings in the search for the broad goal of sustainability and social-ecological justice, considering the active role of museological practices and institutions to territorial transformations.

The Babel Tower tries to open a new window on this ambitious attempt, but it does so in continuity with a stream of practices and reflections that the editors want to acknowledge in this introductory piece.

The Babel Tower comes after years of debate in the stream of the *Nouvelle Muséologie* that has widely acted and reflected upon the changing role and forms of museums to the evolution of the most pressing needs of societies (Desvallées, 1992).

The year of publication of this book, 2022, is a very paradigmatic one for those interested in the debate around such a stream of practices and reflections. In 2022, we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Roundtable of Santiago de Chile, known for having raised the discussion of the social function of museums. This event, held in Latin America in May 1972<sup>6</sup> for enhancing various efforts to bind museums to their territories, to their people, and to a more integrated notion of heritage (Gouveia et al., 2022; Dubé, 2018; Duarte Cândido, 2003; de Varine, 2002; Desvallées, 1992; Kinard, 1971; de Varine, 1969, among others). In that seminal occasion, scholars and practitioners from a variety of disciplinary fields – including territorial planning – worked together, envisioning new possible alliances for the broad scope of societal change toward the horizon of justice. In 2022, we are also closing a cycle of important celebrations held in 2021, which has been the year of conception and unfolding of the Babel Tower series. During that time, two important events occurred.

- The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the appearance of the term *ecomuseum*, at the General Conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) held in 1971 as an itinerant event between Paris, Dijon, and Grenoble (France). This word – that has been both incensed and problematized – remains desired as an identifier of complex and powerful *musealization* processes, as the readers will find in some of the manuscripts of this book. The ecomuseum practices have provoked museology to rethink the potentialities and limits of the museum universe – we dare say there has been a movement in expansion – and some, amongst the so-called traditional museums, have undergone positive assimilations of social experimentations, opening up their mission outside their walls.
- The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who – without ever having written directly about museums – has influenced generations of museum workers, especially (but not exclusively) in Latin America. In this part of the globe, the museum institution as a whole is understood as an educational device. For this reason, a way of thought that favours the humanizing, transforming, and political potential of education, as well as the break with the asymmetries between knowledge and the adoption of dialogical educating practices, has spread widely. While there is still much talk in other geographies of knowledge transmission, or even of “guided” visits, museums with a Freirian orientation work from the perspective of the

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<sup>6</sup>Together with other events and declarations, such as the ones of Québec, Canada in 1984, and Guwahati, India in 1988, as recalled in the afterword.

encounter of knowledge and the collective construction of something new, which does not pre-exist the educational practice.

In this year, when the theme of the ICOM General Conference and the International Museum Day is The Power of Museums, we can add to this **the power of dialogue**. This Tower of Babel sought exactly to facilitate the circulation of ideas by putting people from different backgrounds, disciplines, generations, etc., into a very needed dialogue, especially in the hard times of another cruel and unnecessary war, the current Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The structure of the book mirrors such an attempt. The first part explores various nuances of experimental forms of contemporary museologies. In Chapter 1, Judite Primo and Mário Moutinho highlight the relationship between *Sociomuseology* – as a school of thought today mostly developed at Lusófona University (ULHT) in Portugal – and education, by referring not only to Paulo Freire but also other thinkers and pedagogues such as John Dewey, Alma Wittlin, and António Novoa. Chapter 2, by Andréa Delaplace, offers a reflection on the response of migration museums to the challenges opened by a non-static phenomenon such as displacement. Gabriela Aidar in Chapter 3 problematizes relations between traditional museums and more socially committed museum practices, reflecting upon her experience engaging with the education department at Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Brazil. Chapter 4 is the contribution of Olga Van Oost, questioning the social responsibility of museums in the oscillations between activism and agonism, with a focus on Belgium. Dominique Schoeni discusses expographic rupture, territorial invention, and citizen experiments in museology – moving from examples in Switzerland and Brazil – in Chapter 5, which offers a transition to the second part of the book. The reader will move from reflections mostly developed inside museums as institutions to those developed outside museums and concerned with territorial heritage and landscapes. Cláudio Torres, Lígia Rafael, and Susana Gómez Martínez recall and reflect upon the experience of Mértola Museum Town as an archaeological project of integrated development in Chapter 6. Óscar Navajas Corral discusses the decline and legacy of the *Nouvelle Muséologie* in Spain, stressing its character of “utopia as an engine for the creation of community action projects” (see Chapter 7), concerning the recent Iberian history. In Chapter 8, Giuseppe Reina discusses specifically the role of ecomuseums in territorial co-design strategies, moving from his experience in Italy. In the same context, Raul Dal Santo, Silvia Dossena, and Lucia Vignati discuss the evolution of ecomuseology, the role of the Italian network, and its current “commitment in helping the museums of the future to cooperate in the integral development of their communities and the planet” in Chapter 9. The last contribution is a collective manuscript reflecting upon challenges and

opportunities of ecomuseums as insurgent practices in contexts that suffer from territorial imbalances and various social-ecological distresses, such as the Simeto River Valley in Eastern Sicily, South Italy. Part 3 of the book then broadens the reflection, moving from a collective discussion around the presentation of Hugues de Varine's last book, *L'écomusée singulier et pluriel* (Italian version), co-organized with the Italian Ecomuseum Network (EMI). In the concluding chapter, Alberto Garlandini, as the Past President of ICOM international, wraps the reflections up. With his words

it is high time to bridge conceptual and disciplinary chasms. [...] A sound spirit of cooperation, interaction, cross-fertilization is indispensable to improve the role of museums in society.

Such a spirit is mirrored in the foreword of Bruno Brulon – the past Chair of the ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) and co-chair of the Standing Committee for the Museum Definition (ICOM Define) – and in the afterword of Hugues de Varine.

We the editors feel both humble and grateful for having received such generous and committed contributions to our effort.

As in the series – and in most of the ICOFOM publications – we offered the opportunity of using English or French without imposing one of the languages. During the series, Italian was spoken, as well.

The cooperation between the editors of this book goes beyond it, and will continue in several activities<sup>7</sup>. Such cooperation has been somehow inspired by a larger framework of cooperation between Brazil and Italy in the field of new museologies, ecomuseology and community museology, which generated the initiative "Distant but United"<sup>8</sup>. In 2021, a Cooperation Charter was signed between the Brazilian Association of Ecomuseums and Community Museums (ABREMC), the Italian Network of Ecomuseums (EMI), and the DROPS International Platform for Ecomuseums and Community Museums. This agreement has already promoted three online international meetings and proposes to create and expand

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<sup>7</sup> Beyond future activities, we wish to achieve the organization of a conference of the International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM) in Catania, South Italy, in 2023.

<sup>8</sup> See: <https://sites.google.com/view/drops-platform/cooperation/italy-brasil-cooperation>, <https://abremc.blogspot.com/2022/10/3-encontro-distantes-mas-unidos.html?spref=fb&fbclid=IwARosFJU5rHMk7Hx6qlcIdIRqWtwJiGbrP8VX5Jf5C813CL9QsomKaZqvMms> (last access: November, 07<sup>th</sup>, 2022).

spaces for dialogue and collective construction at the international level, and for social transformation in the territories and communities of museum initiatives. Its focuses include theoretical and methodological production, training programs, monitoring and evaluation for the field of community museology (Dal Santo et al., 2021).

We wish to close our brief introduction with the words of Danilo Dolci<sup>9</sup>, who has operated in the poorest contexts of Southern Italy with a similar approach to the one proposed by Paulo Freire in Brazil. We report here his words (in Italian, and also translated for a broader international audience), as a message for further explorations and actions of insurgent practices at the intersection between museology and planning, intending the latter “as the organization of hope” (Forester, 2017, p. 288).

Fra memoria ed esperienze ogni crescita è un perfezionarsi-irrobustirsi di organizzazione. A livello individuale e sociale. La struttura maieutica reciproca è organismo precipuo alla crescita di ognuno e dell'insieme. (Dolci, 1996, p. 265).

Between memory and experience, evolution means to improve-empower as an act of organizing, both at the individual and at the social level. The reciprocal maieutic structure is the organization for the evolution of the person and the collective (translated by the editors).

In the same line, as a final statement, it urges us to continue advocating for the necessary shift from museum-temples to museum-forums (Cameron, 1971), and to assert the power of museums through dialogue.

## **Acknowledgements**

We feel obliged to acknowledge all the museum people who have generously contributed to the webinar series, to this publication, and – more generally – to a fruitful dialogue around the concept of insurgencies. Albeit the list would be extremely long, we the editors feel particularly grateful to Hugues de Varine for having connected us and thus having opened a fertile ground of trans-national and trans-disciplinary research.

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<sup>9</sup> A recent (2020) book dedicated to the life and work of Danilo has been written by Abele Longo and edited by Springer: *Danilo Dolci. Environmental Education and Empowerment*.

We thank the other member of the scientific committee of the webinar series, Martina Barcelloni Corte.

We are extremely grateful to all the members of the organizing committee who have generously and passionately contributed to the development of the series and the online archive containing the video recordings: Obay Al Bitar, Pauline Duret, Giulia Gulli, Mégane Fassin, Alix Nyssen, Édouard Nzoyihera, Océane Mest, Floriane Paquay, Camille Hoffsummer, Lea Di Francesco.

We also thank the ICOFOM Board for all their support for the publication of this book, and the revisions made by Elizabeth Weiser (English texts) and Camille Ledoux (French texts).

To the students of today and tomorrow, our message is: stay together and in dialogue, believe in utopias and act to build them. The future is yours!

Finally, we thank all the people out there who are insurgently contributing to new ways of relating with the past and planning a more just future.

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## **Part 1 - Experimental forms of contemporary museologies**

# Chapter 1

## **Sociomuseology: A school of thought as an ongoing process**

*Judite Primo, Mário Moutinho*

### **Abstract**

The text seeks to highlight the relationship between sociomuseology as a school of thought and education by referring to some thinkers and pedagogues (John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Alma Wittlin and António Novoa). It also seeks to highlight the main characteristics of sociomuseology and its relationship to museum practices and museological processes that are based on the challenges of contemporary society: social museology, community museology, ecomuseology, Indigenous museology, LGBTQI+ museology, local museology, intersectional museology, quilombola museology, and dialogical museology, among others.

**Keywords:** Sociomuseology, Museology, Education

### **Résumé**

Le texte cherche à mettre en évidence la relation entre la sociomuséologie en tant qu'école de pensée et l'éducation en se référant à certains penseurs et pédagogues (John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Alma Wittlin et António Novoa). Il cherche également à mettre en évidence les principales caractéristiques de la sociomuséologie et sa relation avec les pratiques muséales et les processus muséologiques qui se fondent sur les défis de la société contemporaine : muséologie sociale, muséologie communautaire, écomuséologie, muséologie autochtone, muséologie LGBTQI+, muséologie locale, muséologie intersectionnelle, muséologie quilombola, et muséologie dialogique, entre autres.

**Mots-clés :** Sociomuséologie, Muséologie, Éducation

## **Introduction**

This article does not intend to answer conclusively the question what is sociomuseology or what is the school of thought of sociomuseology, since it is an ongoing process, nurturing, interacting and inspiring different museological practices and, therefore, being subject to the social contexts in which these practices and reflections are made.

In fact, we speak of sociomuseology as a school of thought in the field of museology, insofar as we recognize the existence of a theoretical corpus of practices, processes and methodologies supported by a growing group of researchers, museologists and activists working in museological practices with a social root. In addition to this, in recent years we have witnessed the growing publication of books, papers, and presentations at scientific and academic events. We have also seen that several universities offer specific programs oriented towards sociomuseology or, at least, include disciplines in their programs focused on the different issues of museology committed to the social. Finally, we have identified the existence of scientific research focused on the issues that can be raised by contemporary social museology, linked to the great themes and questions assumed by social movements around the world.

When we talk about sociomuseology, we include here the different forms of museology that have manifested themselves in the renewal of the museological field, particularly in the last 50 years. We think of ecomuseology as one of the oldest expressions of a renewal of museology, but we think also of Indigenous museology, associative museology, LGBTQI+ museology, local museology, and community museology.

Studying the relationship that exists between museology and education is, in essence, going in search of the roots of this social museology. We cannot effectively talk about sociomuseology without understanding that its main purpose is popular and citizen education, focused on the commitment to building a critical vision of the world.

Indeed, many of the pioneering concepts and visions of education are equally central to museology's attention to social responsibility, and in a way must be considered as the roots of sociomuseology.

## Roots of Sociomuseology

We think of educator John Dewey<sup>10</sup>, who at the beginning of the 20th century recognized the importance of deepening the school's relationship with museums. He considered that experimentation was the basis of education, which meant an intrusion into the real world and knowledge built on observation.

The best museum of natural history and social materials for pedagogical purposes I have ever seen is in a country district outside of Leningrad, constructed on the basis of a complete exhibit of local fauna, flora, mineralogy, etc., and local antiquities and history, made by pupils' excursions under the direction of their teachers.

(Dewey, 1928, p. 95)<sup>11</sup>.

He believed that in the planning of a school, the museum should always have a central place, as this would be the gateway to the real world. But for Dewey, confrontation with experience alone would not be sufficient to produce knowledge. Learning would only result from reflection on the experience or observation. That is, learning needed to be based on its social environment.

We are thus not far from Paulo Freire's thought<sup>12</sup>, who also sought in education a critical understanding of the world and an inducer of freedom. Freire's proposals are based on the principle of *dialogicity* by reference to the local reality that effectively shapes the educational processes.

In the works of both Freire and Dewey we find some keywords that allow us to articulate and approach their thoughts. In Freire, we find the ideas of «dialogical processes, critical pedagogy, education for social justice, multicultural education and community education». In Dewey, we find the ideas of «education for democracy, transformation based on

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<sup>10</sup> John Dewey (1859-1952), philosopher and pedagogue, is a requisite reference in the field of education (see for example: Dewey, 1923, 1938, amongst the others). He has paid particular attention to the place that museums should occupy in education.

<sup>11</sup> Quote found in Dewey, J. (1928). Impressions of Soviet Russia and the revolutionary world. Mexico – China – Turkey. New Republic Inc.: "new schools for a new era". See: Hickman L. (1996). *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882-1953: Later Works 3(237)*, Electronic Edition, Intellex Corporation. See also: George, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Paulo Freire (1921-1997), philosopher and pedagogue, has a vast body of work in the field of critical pedagogy and popular and community education. His methodological proposals, centered on *dialogicity*, are a reference for social museology. Amongst his publications, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (Freire, 1970).

experience, education as a life process, education as social learning» and also that «the search for freedom is also a demand for power».

Another educator/curator who thought about the educational role of museums was Alma Wittlin<sup>13</sup>, who, in the post-World War II period, rethought the place that museums could and should play. At that time, the main concern regarding museums was the safeguarding and consequent curatorial treatment of the material heritage that had been affected by various forms of destruction, looting and theft.

However, for Wittlin, museums were to be considered beyond these dimensions and instead understood as institutions created by people, whose purpose would be to serve people, as she thought that museums were by no means an end in themselves.

Wittlin asked precisely what museums could do in the face of the “unmet needs” of populations, especially considering that museums are not islands in space and should instead be considered in the context of life outside their own walls. She pondered the educational limits of expography, considering that exposure by itself might not be enough to stimulate learning or produce any stimulus (Wittlin, 1949).

In the works of this educator/curator we find the ideas that associate education in museums with its own audiences, but she also imagined exhibitions and museological work at the service of the “unmet needs” of people in general. Her work thus broadens the function of museums, essentially normative at the time, to identify people's dreams, utopias and needs and, consequently, to provide answers through their services and exhibitions. But if the relationship between school and museum seems to be considered a prerequisite, António Nóvoa<sup>14</sup> opens a new perspective in this assessment, advocating that it is not just the school that has an educational role in contemporary society.

For Nóvoa, issues of environmental protection, preservation of cultural heritage, education for citizenship, education for health and sex education, the fight against drugs and domestic

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<sup>13</sup> Alma Stephanie Wittlin (1899-1992) was a historian, pedagogue and museologist. After WWII, she contributed to a renewed vision of the place of museums in society and their relationship with education.

<sup>14</sup> António Nóvoa, (1954- ) is a pedagogue and historian with a vast work in the field of the renewal of education models. See for example Nóvoa (2019). He was appointed UNESCO rapporteur of “Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education” (2021), which highlighted a new social contract for education.

abuse are effectively the school's responsibilities, but he emphasizes that it is important to consider that cultural associations, labor organizations, religious organizations, scientific organizations and museums are also responsible for these commitments. In other words, Nóvoa effectively removes the idea of the ghettoized school as being the main entity responsible for education in general and raises the question of the articulation between the various social organizations, where schools, but also museums, are located. In this same vein of responsibility, he reinforces the place not only of the school, but also, indirectly, of the museums themselves in educational processes.

We refer to these authors because we consider the importance of their contributions to understanding a considerable part of museology with a social background, which, in multiple ways, assumes many of the same challenges, concepts and methodologies mentioned above with an education that is centered on reality, favoring knowledge and critical thinking.

Differently from a museology of a normative nature, museology of a social nature tends to assume, in a dialogical way, the awareness of its audiences and its users, becoming at the same time a privileged place of observation for the school of thought of sociomuseology.

As we have already pointed out, it would be a contradiction to separate thought from practice:

To imagine a Sociomuseology distinct from the different forms of Museology with social responsibility, or to imagine hasty distinctions, seems to be a hoax that creates separation where it really does not exist. In a world marked by new, wide-open and subtle forms of coloniality, the separation between theory and practice, in which Sociomuseology would have the statute [*sic*] of thought and social museology practices the statute [*sic*] of "manual work", also has no support, as theory and practice are in this situation the two sides of the same sheet of paper. What organically or dialectically unites the "doing and thinking" of Social Museology is the ability to critically think about Museology and the place that each one occupies in the reinterpretation of the world, in the understanding of local and global challenges and their overcoming (Pasqualucci et al., in press).

Sociomuseology focuses on the theoretical corpus, practices and methodologies resulting from the commitment of professionals, teachers, students, and theorists to a critical reading



of the world, assuming and promoting that this praxis is fully committed to the sociocultural change of museums and of contemporary museological processes.

Hugues de Varine characterized sociomuseology as

an academic discipline, of Portuguese-Brazilian origin, which attempts to scientifically define the phenomena and concepts of new museology and ecomuseology. It analyzes experiences in order to observe common characteristics (Santos Júnior, 2017, p. 57).

This proposed definition, however, needs some further explanation. Sociomuseology is certainly an academic discipline, insofar as it is within the universities that it has been taking shape from the observation and interaction with the work developed in museums and museological processes with dialogic and community roots, particularly in Ibero-America. We will, however, find it more difficult to accept that it is a matter of finding the scientific definition of phenomena and concepts centered on the new museology and ecomuseology as the field of observation is much broader than that which can be framed in the idea of a new museology or in the idea of ecomuseology.

Indeed, sociomuseology focuses on a much broader museological reality, identified under different names, depending on the contexts in which it takes shape. We think of museums and museological processes that are recognized as agents of a museology with a social matrix, located in many countries, under different forms and denominations: social museology, community museology, ecomuseology, Indigenous museology, LGBTQI+ museology, local museology, intersectional museology, quilombola museology, and dialogical museology, among others.<sup>15</sup>

These are projects based on the real world, articulated with the observation of everyday life, oriented towards the construction of a critical awareness of contexts, attentive to the unmet needs of populations, open to the outside world, discovering new forms of communication on a communal and dialogic basis. They are museums and museological processes that seek to

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<sup>15</sup> In these fields, the school of thought of sociomuseology dialogues with and is inspired by foundational authors for the understanding of these processes, among which we can mention: Lélia Gonzales, bell hooks, Catherine Wash, Angela Davis, Henrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano.

affirm and promote human rights, that recognize the diversity of peoples, cultures and expressions, that demand freedom as well as democracy and the exercise of power.

It is the observation, reflection, and interaction with these practices, which are manifested in multiple ways in the activities carried out in these museums and museological processes, that make it possible to extract their common characteristics. However, it is impossible to differentiate the place of the university and the place of these practices, so far as the school of thought of sociomuseology has been the result of a deep connection between theory and practice.

It is not just about elaborating a theory that gives rise to a certain practice, but assuming that through observation, reflection and experimentation it is possible to build an understanding that induces better social performance by museums and museological processes. From this connection, the possibility arises of overcoming the challenges on which these museums and museological processes develop their activity. We can claim that, if in a museology of a normative nature its collections are composed of material objects that make up its collections, in a museology of a social matrix, the collections are constituted by the issues that each museum and museological process seeks to overcome in its day-to-day functions. And we can claim that dealing with objects or people requires different concepts, approaches, training and ethics. In this sense:

Sociomuseology expresses a considerable amount of the effort made to suit museological resources to the conditions of contemporary society. (...). Sociomuseology is thus a scientific field of teaching, research and performance which emphasizes the articulation of museology, in particular, with the areas of knowledge covered by Human Sciences, Development Studies, Services Science, and Urban and Rural Planning. (...) The multidisciplinary approach of Sociomuseology aims to strengthen the recognition of museology as a resource for the sustainable development of Humanity, based on equal opportunities as well as social and economic inclusion. Sociomuseology bases its social intervention on mankind's cultural and natural heritage, both tangible and intangible. What characterizes Sociomuseology is not so much the nature of its premises and its goals, as is the case with other areas of knowledge, but the interdisciplinary focus, which makes it draw on perfectly consolidated areas of knowledge and relate them with Museology itself (Moutinho, 2007, p. 27).

As such, sociomuseology as an area of teaching, research and social practice has been, in recent years, consolidating itself as an area of knowledge within the social sciences (Moutinho, 2007).

Museology, which previously consisted essentially of a set of techniques for conservation, documentation, and exhibition at the service of tangible heritage – particularly in the fields of art, anthropology and archeology – has given way to a complex theoretical/methodological edifice whose field of observation is the multifaceted approaches and experiments that have shaped the new contemporary museological manifestations. This complex theoretical/methodological edifice, as it deals with the study of manifestations of a social nature, has found its true epistemological matrix in the social sciences. What is new in museology is undoubtedly the understanding that the museological phenomenon, which continues to encompass a set of techniques and knowledge associated with various scientific domains, is also and above all a complex social phenomenon, which can only be accounted for to the extent that museology can be integrated into the field of social sciences.

## **Conclusions**

Sociomuseology as it is currently identified is, in short, this process of treating museology in its technical but also social dimension. In the same way that the social sciences currently study the fact of the museum, museology also needs to recognize itself as social science.

The reality on which sociomuseology focuses has a particularly relevant dimension in contemporary society, insofar as, in addition to its more visible cultural dimension associated with the traditional role of museums, it has a growing economic dimension in the field of services, territorial development, information and communication technologies.

Furthermore, the expansion of the notion of heritage, associated with a growing set of new functions that museological institutions have been assuming (particularly in the fields of social, cultural and economic inclusion, cultural hybridism, multiculturalism and colonial thinking), has given rise to new museum structures that assume new ways of functioning and different impacts at local, regional, national and international levels.

We can thus seek to distinguish some periods in the construction of contemporary museological thinking.

After the post-war period of construction and/or reconstruction of an economic, political and social model that would be dismantled with the progressive consolidation of neoliberalism from the 1970s onwards, museology was not oblivious to the new challenges that arose. The deepening of democratic processes, with the consequent sharing of wealth produced in the previous framework of the capitalist model, as well as the construction of a world conditioned by the neoliberal reality, proposed the *end of history* and of *multiple inevitabilities*, or in other rude words, of the domination of finance capital over productive capital.

In this period, which runs from the late 1970s until now, museum thinking has become part of contemporary thinking (development, sustainability, global warming, human rights, etc.), occupying a space that it did not have until that time.

These new paradigms are manifested in the realization of world conferences on the meaning of the maturation of ideas, synthesis of central issues, dissemination of guidelines and warnings, all of which refocused society's attention on these issues. We can see this in the case of the publication "The Limits to Growth" by the Club of Rome in 1971 or the "World Conference on the Human Environment" in Stockholm in 1972. In the world of museums, we see the the Ninth ICOM General Conference held under the theme "The Museum in the Service of Man, Today and Tomorrow", the Roundtable of Santiago de Chile organized by ICOM /UNESCO in 1972, and the word "development" introduced into the ICOM statutes in 1974. At the institutional level, both ICOFOM (ICOM International Committee for Museology) and the MNES (Muséologie Nouvelle et Experimentation Sociale) were created in the 1980s, along with the creation of MINOM (Mouvement International pour une Nouvelle Muséologie) based on the principles and values of the Quebec Declaration.

In the 1990s, education and research at Leicester or Brno and publications by commercial publishers such as Routledge in the UK and Trea in Spain assumed an unavoidable role which consolidated the entry of museology and heritage into the contemporary academic world and into its scientific research agendas. The museological object, with all the characteristics that had been attributed to it until then, was no longer at the center of museology but was considered only as a part of the new processes of communication and representation in museums.

In this context, UNESCO's recent recommendations regarding museums gain an inevitable relevance:

Member States are encouraged to support the social role of museums that was highlighted by the 1972 Declaration of Santiago de Chile. Museums are increasingly viewed in all countries as playing a key role in society and as a factor in social integration and cohesion. In this sense, they can help communities to face profound changes in society, including those leading to a rise in inequality and the breakdown of social ties.

Museums are vital public spaces that should address all of society and can therefore play an important role in the development of social ties and cohesion, building citizenship, and reflecting on collective identities. Museums should be places that are open to all and committed to physical and cultural access to all, including disadvantaged groups. They can constitute spaces for reflection and debate on historical, social, cultural and scientific issues. Museums should also foster respect for human rights and gender equality. Member States should encourage museums to fulfil all of these roles. (UNESCO, 2015)

It is on these multifaceted practices that an effort of reflection, teaching and research has been focused, and that a new theoretical field has been constituted, with its own roots and perspectives, which allows for a better understanding of reality, clarifying its basic concepts, and consequently building the paths that allow it to overcome the challenges that constitute the collections of social museology, within a reality centered on human rights.

The school of thought in sociomuseology is certainly not the only place of reference in this complex process, but it is necessary to emphasize its role in breaking open the ghetto of normative museology and official cultures.

It is, therefore, a school of thought that focuses on all forms of insurgent, disobedient, decolonial and rebel museology. It is a school of thought that recognizes that we live in neoliberal times that impoverish human dignity, democracy and human rights. It is a school of thought that recognizes that we live in a time of declared and clandestine true wars and of hate speeches in parliaments and congresses.

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## Chapter 2

# Migration in museums: Plural narratives and memories

*Andréa Delaplace*

### **Abstract:**

Migration museums are confronted with the challenge of how to put on display a non-static phenomenon by nature: the continual displacement, the non-place. How to create a museography that shows the inconstancy of migration?

**Keywords:** Museum, Migration, Narratives, Memories

### **Résumé :**

Les musées dédiés à l'immigration sont confrontés au défi de mettre en scène un phénomène non statique par nature : le déplacement continu, le non-lieu. Comment créer une muséographie qui montre l'inconstance de la migration ?

**Mots-clés :** Musée, Immigration, Récits, Mémoires

### **Introduction**

If the reference to a national narrative is not always as explicit in migration museums, those responsible for the museography were always conscious of the importance of the overall story these institutions were seeking to tell. Narrative and display in migration museums are essential to create a more understanding society regarding migration.

“Refugees and forced displacements are likely to become a defining issue of the 21st century,” says Alexander Betts, director of the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford (from



2014 to 2017). Mass migration, driven by conflict, oppression, political upheaval, economic distress and environmental disasters, has been described as a defining issue of this century along with climate change and the need to think of sustainable solutions in our cities and communities. These traumatic relocations reshape the lives of the people who are displaced and of their new host communities, and they ignite both the best and the worst of human behavior. Museums can use their influence to build bridges between established residents and newcomers: easing fears, building trust, and finding common ground to create a more united society. And new migrants can help museums reexamine their relationships to belonging, to heritage, and to social and ecological transformations. As members of museums' communities, migrants and refugees bring their own particular needs, notably to remember and preserve their history and culture even as they settle into their new country.

Recent work in critical museum studies has shown that migration museums can use objects and strategies of display to transmit positive representations of migration, promoting diversity and a more inclusive national identity to propagate a better knowledge of the subject. The idea is to see the museum as a space for transmission of images and representations: What is the representation of migration that is given to see in these museums? In this paper, I will present different topics that are recurrent when analyzing the permanent exhibitions of different migration museums to try to identify their common structural points and to show how migration is represented. The idea is also to see the museum as a space for perception of images and representations: What is the representation of immigration that is given to see in these museums?

Staging and displays are essential to understanding the production of museum discourse. It is the whole spatial arrangement, the layout and presentation of the objects and documents as well as all the texts (and the catalog) that produce a message, a speech to be interpreted by the visitor. In the exhibition, meaning is therefore intrinsically dependent on staging and space as the arrangement of things in order to allow access. Therefore, one can assume that, in examining the exhibition design, it is possible to identify some recurring elements that structure and characterize their display and narrative.

## Recurring themes structuring the museum itinerary

The exhibitions analyzed here<sup>16</sup> include different scenographies, but the topics discussed remain the same when we talk about migration:

- The Departure
- The Journey (and border crossing)
- Arrival and sorting process with local authorities (medical visits, refusal or acceptance of entry into the host country)
- Adaptation (or not - 'rooting or not') in the host country
- Contemporary migrations

These themes basically function as threads for the museum's narration, recounting the experience of migrating. Maps and chronological context (such as timelines) are also presented to the visitor as historical support. Oral history is a strong feature in these museums, as allied with testimonial objects it can bring plural narratives and memories to life. By adding these multivocal narratives the museum brings a more immersive and empathic approach, as we will see further in this article.

The permanent exhibition (*Repères*) of the *Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration* - MNHI - focuses precisely on "small objects slipped into the pocket" before departure. A strong emphasis is placed on individual memories and personal narratives of departure and travel: the migration experience is presented at an individual level (especially when we look at the Galerie des Dons).

Different from the permanent exhibitions of the Ellis Island Museum in New York and the Museu da Imigração de São Paulo, which support their museum narrative on their buildings' histories and the paths of immigrants upon their arrival in these governmental institutions that "sort" immigrants, the *Repères* exhibition is organized around concepts, key words which guide the migratory experience. Thus, it is logical that the exhibition has as a starting point the very idea of *Departure*.

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<sup>16</sup> This article is based on my PhD research. Patrimoine et immigration : Ellis Island Immigration Museum, Museu da Imigração et Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration : le rôle du musée comme médiateur dans la construction de l'identité (1980-2020); thèse soutenue en décembre 2020 par Andréa Delaplace. The thesis focused on three migration museums: the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York, the Museu da Imigração in Sao Paulo and the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris. During my research I also had the occasion to visit and analyze other museums that have exhibitions dedicated to migration (e.g., Red Star Line Museum in Antwerp, and the Galata Museo del Mare in Genoa).

## *The Journey*

Another master theme central to the migrant experience<sup>17</sup> is the grand narrative of the journey. The voyage is the 'rite of passage' that transforms and conditions the very status of the individual who migrates. To migrate is to cross a sea, an ocean, a desert, a mountain: the journey, sometimes dangerous, to reach a new unknown land (which will become his/her new home). Like the myths in which heroes make an initiatory journey, even if they return to the point of departure (the native country), they are profoundly transformed by their experience.

For example, in the Ellis Island Museum there is a 'grand' narrative focused on the voyage. But it is not a chronologically consistent one, as visitors travel through different times before and after through the different permanent exhibitions that the museum presents.

Still, the narrative the museum conveys most powerfully is the drama of passing the inspection process and making it through Ellis Island's gate. The inspection drama begins as visitors climb the restored stairs to the Great Hall, which immigrants climbed on their way in to be processed, observed as they climbed by doctors looking for possible weakness of heart, limb, or mind.

Another museum that structures its exhibition around the path of a migrant from the departure to the arrival in the new country is the Galata Museo del Mare. There we can find scale reproductions of the housing where migrants used to live in Genoa as we pass through reproductions of the ships' accommodation during their voyage and the houses they lived in before and after the "crossing".

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<sup>17</sup> Here we use the expression "migrant experience" as these museums try to create an immersive experience for the visitors, thus inviting visitors to experience their visits through the point of view of an immigrant. That is what we can experience at the Ellis Island Museum in New York, the Deutsches Auswandererhaus in Bremerhaven, the Epic Museum in Dublin or the Red Star Line Museum in Antwerp, for example.

## **Human diaspora or immigration as a human phenomenon**

The perspective of migration as part of human nature is often presented to the public to highlight the “natural” origin of the phenomenon. By doing so, the museums are looking to find common ground between visitors who never had the experience of migrating and those who have.

It shows that moving and changing cities, countries or continents is part of human history and should be perceived as a common phenomenon that is part of humanity’s behavior.

The Museu da Imigração de São Paulo starts its permanent exhibition with this theme under the name of ‘Diaspora Humana’ (‘Human Diaspora’). They present a video where the visitor can see the different migration routes that humanity has used since prehistoric times to populate the earth. The Red Star Line Museum in Antwerp also presents a chronology from antiquity to today to show how human migrations have always existed and how cultural exchanges are essential for humankind.

### *Workforce – Labor*

The theme of *labor* is also central in migration museums, since the vast majority of immigrants desire a paid position of regular employment. Workplaces, formal or informal, remain the most important places of integration for migrants and refugees in their new country. Therefore, it is an important theme when displaying migration history.

In their permanent exhibitions, the Musée national de l’Histoire de l’immigration in Paris and the Museu da Imigração de São Paulo show the importance of work in creating a new network for the newly arriving migrants. By presenting working tools among other artifacts, these museums point to the relevance of migrants as a working force helping to build economic prosperity in their new home country.

### **Iconic objects: the importance of the object as a memorial support**

The themes presented above are often linked visually to the staging of a series of iconic objects, usually personal items such as luggage, travel documents (e.g., passports), migrants' letters, clothes or toys for babies and children. These objects are frequently used for their effective visual impact and their immediate connection with the themes of the exhibition. They are rarely of historical or artistic value in themselves; still, they embody the memory of migration and have a strong visual impact.

In exhibitions dealing with the theme of migration, whether temporary or *mise-en-scène* that evokes the "migrant experience", this presentation of objects is characterized by a desire to immerse the visitor in the museum narrative and thus create a sensory link between the displays and the visitor.

The suitcase remains the iconic object of immigration *par excellence*: whether presented alone or in support of interactive devices, it represents the 'magic box' that contains the objects chosen by the immigrants during the departure and what will accompany them on the journey to always remind them of their origins.

The moment of departure is crucial for those who decide to leave their country and to embark on the unknown that is the 'journey', dangerous in many cases, to access a new life. Once the sorting of memories and objects to bring with oneself has occurred, the suitcase presents itself as the "sacred" receptacle of these precious memories of a world which will remain in the past of those who leave. Thus, the suitcase would be this container that contains "memory objects" chosen for their personal symbolic importance, real relics that are supposed to recall and, to a certain extent, put in contact the one who possesses them with his past and his family. The crossing to the unknown is done with his suitcase and the relics it contains: symbol of the traveler and also that of the immigrant, the exile.

Museums can ask visitors: What would be the object they would choose to bring with them if they were to leave their home and country forever?<sup>18</sup> This choice is very personal and intimate, but some objects are quite common, such as family photographic albums.

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<sup>18</sup> This is the main question asked to the visitors at the 19<sup>th</sup> Princelet Street project in Spitalfields, London. I had the occasion to visit and interview the creators of this very unique project at the heart of a multicultural neighborhood in London and close to the famous Brick Lane from Monica Ali's book.

The architectural context of migration museums often complements the visual communication of displays. These museums are usually located in places that have a history related to migration, such as docklands, border or departure, and museums are located at historical buildings connected with stories of migration and bearing themselves a memory of migration, making them very emblematic buildings.

It is necessary to historicize these *lieux de mémoire* (memorial spaces) and *lieux de passage* (transit spaces such as ports, train stations, airports, but also temporary constructions created to hold and control migrants) while releasing their deep socio-anthropological sense. These places where migrants were processed and had their destinies changed forever are now 'monuments' to the memory of migration. It is very paradoxical to have those impressive buildings, once abandoned facilities, turned now into museums dedicated to the history of migration (a *non-lieux* phenomenon).

I will now present a case study that highlights this use of historical buildings to create a museum that tells the history of migrants that crossed its halls. It's also a good example of how the museum discourse and museography can intertwine with the history of the building hosting it and the importance of the different migrant communities in supporting it.

### **Museums and migrant communities: The Migration Museum in São Paulo**

The Museu da imigração do Estado de São Paulo is located in the old building intended for the official reception of migrants (mainly coming from Europe or Japan) who arrived in São Paulo at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to work in the coffee plantations. The museum presents a permanent exhibition that focuses on building regional identity through the cultural contributions of migrants. Opened in 1887, this building was intended for the official reception of immigrants newly arrived in Brazil. More than 2.5 million people were received at the *Hospedaria do imigrante* between 1887 and 1978. Immigrants arriving at the Port of Santos on the coast took a train trip to the *Hospedaria* in São Paulo, capital of the state of São Paulo. There, they were received by state officials and had access to several services: official documentation, medical examination, etc. Then, they were sent back directly to their workplaces (coffee plantation or industry) or to the fast-growing city of São Paulo where they could work as merchants or as factory workers.

In the 1930s, the *Hospedaria* also hosted migrant workers from other Brazilian states. In the 1970s, it lost its original function (becoming more of an archive) and in 1978 it received, for the last time, a group of Korean migrants, just before closing its doors. In 1982, to ensure the preservation of this history, the building of the old inn was classified by the Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Defense Council (Condephaat).

The Museu da Imigração officially opened in the early 90's after a long period of discussions and a strong input from migrant communities that saw in the historical building a "*lieu de mémoire*" for telling their history. In 1998, the Memorial do Imigrante<sup>19</sup> opened its doors, bringing a memorial approach that would highlight oral history and the history of migrants in establishing themselves in São Paulo in the early 20th century. In 2010, the Memorial was entirely closed for renovations and a new director and staff assumed the creation of a new migration museum that would also integrate contemporary migrations into their discussions.

In addition to the new permanent exhibition, the new museum staff team has prepared temporary exhibitions that circulate in various train stations in the city of São Paulo as prefiguration for the new permanent exhibition. For instance, the temporary exhibition "Viagem, sonho e destino" was presented from December 10, 2013 to January 27, 2014 at the Espaço Cultural da estação Brás (CPTM).

Staging the theme of migration in train stations serves to attract the attention of an audience that could identify directly with the theme, and again, to make the visitor feel closer to the testimonies (highlighting again the importance of oral history) presented because of this 'place of transit'. One of the train stations that was chosen is that of Brás, popular and central district of the city, where the museum is located. This district, which historically hosted a very large working population of Italian immigrants during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, still retains its character as a 'place of arrival' with its important station (now a train and metro station). The old railways can still be found running along the Museum building - the former official *Hospedaria do Imigrante*.

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<sup>19</sup> In my thesis I analyze the institutional transformation of the museum in detail. I also recommend reading my article "The heritage of immigration: rethinking the museum's role as a mediator in identity building" (Delaplace, 2017).

This exhibition presents the former *Hospedaria* of the State of São Paulo, which officially welcomed immigrants arriving at the port of Santos, and features the ‘memorial side’ of the museum with many extracts from interviews with former immigrants or sons of immigrants who have passed through the Memorial. Each of the stages in the arrival of immigrants is explained: arrival at the port, the train journey between Santos and São Paulo, arrival at the hostel, the official register, the medical examination, etc. It therefore highlights the ‘memorial site’, a bit like Ellis Island in New York. There are also many photos from the São Paulo State Archive as well as videos with excerpts from interviews with ‘former guests’ of the *Hospedaria*. Until the museum opening in May 2014, temporary exhibitions created expectations among the public interested in the theme of migration and to reveal a little of what could be discovered in the new museum.

This new museum is aware of the importance of the exchange between the museum community and the inhabitants of the district where the museum is located (Brás and Mooca) and of the city of São Paulo. The relationship between the environment and its surroundings is part of the central objective of the activities outside the walls of the Museu da Imigração, which develops a series of visits and workshops to create a network of inclusion around the historic building of the *Hospedaria*.

### **Final remarks**

A series of questions and points that emerge when talking about migration museums (or other museums that present other cultures) include: What are the spaces of representation inside museums and what is the relationship with the representation of minority communities? The question of ‘editing’, or editing history, is also present since the exhibitions always present a discourse constructed from a unique perspective. There is also the question of the mobility of exhibitions (mobile museum?) and permanent exhibitions which are renewed more frequently to ‘refresh the discourse’ on the migratory phenomenon, which is constantly changing. It is for this reason that many museums recently opened (as, for example, the Migration Museum in London and the new Immigration Museum in Brussels) offer temporary exhibitions that are renewed more quickly than creating a permanent museography route.



The question of the representation of other cultures is central to creating a more inclusive exhibition that can raise and encourage a real dialogue between cultures. Memory and contemporary art are also central in the construction of exhibitions on immigration.

Artworks, personal items, audio-video testimonials, real scale reconstructions, common iconic objects such as suitcases and passports, and highly scenographic and interactive displays are often used in the new museography presented by immigration or emigration museums. Their visual impact makes it easier to understand and remember what's on display. All these exhibit solutions are largely characterized by the intention to stimulate empathy in the visitor toward the story told and aim at achieving greater visitor involvement. Also, the visual language adopted is different when the exhibition deals with contemporary migrations rather than with historical migrations. Museums dealing with contemporary migration frequently resort to more temporary displays where artworks, videos, and graphic design play an important role. On the other hand, museums presenting historical migrations, the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, would involve more permanent galleries and full scale. Both undoubtedly work in creating a strong synergy with the museum narrative and the collection, by repeating the same thematic approaches and using the same iconic topic of migration desires. Hence, migration museums should encourage more multivocal projects and exhibitions, engaging different migrant communities to collaborate with them.

Finally, museums dedicated to the history of immigration remain recent initiatives in the international museum landscape, but as the theme is gaining in importance in the international political scenario, due to the current migration crisis, they are gaining space in contemporary discussions of heritage and social inclusion. Even though some museum professionals argue that the ideal scenario would be to include the history of immigration in national history museums instead of having a museum dedicated to immigration itself, at the moment it is essential to have a platform to discuss and reflect on immigration as well as on the migratory phenomenon in our contemporary societies. With the growing role of museums as social actors, immigration museums could turn into a platform for discussion on the socio-economic inclusion of immigrants and refugees.

When talking of the museology of reconciliation, we have to think of how migration museums are trying to create a link between the different communities (sometimes around the area of the museum, e.g., the Museu da imigração do Estado de São Paulo) and the museum space.

Thus, they are opening up to become a space that fosters social justice and dialogue between different cultures and social backgrounds.

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## Chapter 3

# Developing socially committed practices in traditional museums: The experience of the Pinacoteca de São Paulo in Brazil

*Gabriela Aidar*

### **Abstract**

This article problematizes relations between traditional museums and more socially committed museum practices while noting their potential and limitations. To this end, I take as example those social-educational practices that, in recent years, the education department at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, a public art museum, has offered to persons experiencing homelessness and those deprived of liberty.

**Keywords:** museum education; cultural rights; people experiencing homelessness; persons deprived of liberty.

### **Résumé**

Cet article problématise les relations entre les musées traditionnels et les pratiques muséales socialement plus engagées en notant leurs potentiels et leurs limites. À cette fin, je prends pour exemple les pratiques socio-éducatives, de ces dernières années, que le département d'éducation de la Pinacoteca de São Paulo, un musée d'art public, a proposées aux personnes sans domicile fixe et aux personnes privées de liberté.

**Mots-clés :** éducation muséale ; droits culturels ; personnes sans domicile fixe ; personnes privées de liberté.

## Introduction

Socially oriented museological experiences usually integrate the programs of community museums, territorial museums, or ecomuseums, and are therefore distanced from initiatives undertaken by more traditional institutions. However, in the context of the webinar series *Babel Tower – Museum People in Dialogue*, I thought it would be helpful to address the role of traditional museums in the processes of social or critical museum studies. Could we envisage social-museological practices in these institutions? Or should we give up on more socially committed initiatives for traditional museums and accept their role as legitimizers of hegemonic discourses that favor the ruling classes?

When traditional museums design social programs for disadvantaged groups, they are often asked what exactly they are offering. This argument relates to the idea of democratizing culture, as if uncritically developing social projects were some cultural indoctrinations in which we encourage those who do not visit museums to start calling on them and thus disseminate the dominant erudite culture of museological institutions, viewed as necessary for the entire population. According to Maria Vlachou, a Greek researcher based in Portugal,

(...) there are also many of us who advocate “access,” but access to what we define as valid culture. Still, what if we tried to get to know better the communities in which we are inserted? What if we opened up our spaces (which are also theirs), involving them, creating comfort (physical, psychological and intellectual) and a feeling of belonging? What if we programmed together with them? What if the artists were them? (Vlachou, 2013, p. 92).

The issue at hand here is one of cultural democracy, in the sense of not hierarchizing cultural expressions while offering more access to the production than to the consumption of culture, thus enabling visitors to engage not only as spectators but also as active agents (Coelho, 2012, p. 162-163; Lopes, 2009). To quote Vlachou once again,

Working with people does not mean “giving people what they want” [...] It does mean being sensitive to our local community’s interests, worries, concerns, happiness, and piecing together a program that enables us to think about all this together. (Vlachou, 2017, p. 53)

Notwithstanding the evident dichotomy between these two points of view and their proposals, it is possible – and even wise – to see trends and initiatives in the everyday life of museums that combine both possibilities simultaneously, especially for institutions of a more

traditional character. The same museum may be backing both initiatives: popularizing its official culture and at the same time developing projects based on demands raised by particular groups and holding dialogue with them (Aidar, 2019b).

In this respect, the traditional museums' education teams have the most actively developed social initiatives. Historically, their role has been to conduct initiatives involving the engagement of museum visitors, which is not consensually seen as a responsibility of the institution as a whole. As de Varine states in a 2008 article,

(...) many classical museums, based on impulses initially from scientific, technical or industry museums, have gradually moved to broaden their strategies and programs to adopt "mediating" perspectives and adapt their methods of communication, educating different segments, with clear social objectives: cultural integrating immigrants, civic mobilization, information or even consultation for public policies, being welcoming for persons with disabilities, etc. (de Varine, 2008, p. 13).

Since 2002 I have worked in the education department at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, a state-owned art museum.

Based on this experience, I believe that traditional museums have things to offer that may well be relevant for everyone despite their institutional and historical limitations.

However, this relevance will depend on museums' approach and quality of contact with heritage, which may be more (or less) conscious and critical, and the possibilities of building closer contacts with the institution, its teams, and the resulting relationships. Furthermore, contradiction may be posed from within by challenging official discourses.

In this respect, community museums enjoy more freedom and better conditions to experiment with joint managing-working processes. Still, there is a range of opportunities for audience participation and dialogue with museums, and more traditional institutions can and should seize these. Renewing certain museological practices within traditional institutions is a challenge to be tackled, and social-educational processes are part of it (Aidar, 2019a). Should we take into account some of these social-museology commitments, we will see that any museum can potentially adopt them.

These commitments include diminishing social injustices and inequalities, combating prejudice, enhancing the collective quality of life, boosting dignity and social cohesion, and

leveraging the power of memory, heritage, and museums in favor of low-income communities (Chagas & Gouveia, 2014, in Chagas, 2019, p. 118).

### **Pinacoteca de São Paulo and its social-educational practices**

To illustrate this point of view, I shall briefly present the Pinacoteca de São Paulo and its context. Founded in 1905, Pinacoteca is São Paulo's oldest art museum. It is a privately-managed public institution that belongs to the State of São Paulo. It holds a collection of around 11,000 pieces, mainly Brazilian art from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.<sup>20</sup> Pinacoteca's facilities in the downtown district enjoy the local infrastructure and access to several public and private services in the vicinity. The museum adjoins a public park in an area that combines low-income communities subsisting precariously and a major commercial district. In addition, Pinacoteca integrates a cultural hub consisting of five museums and a concert hall.

I shall proceed to describe the structure of Pinacoteca's Education Department. We have two actions in art education that target specific audiences: Programs for Schools and the General Public and Inclusive Educational Programs. The former was designed for independent visitors; it offers programs for schools, teachers, students, family groups, and spontaneous visitors. The latter, Inclusive Educational Programs, was designed for non-traditional museum visiting audiences. It offers ongoing programs for groups of persons in socially vulnerable situations – many of them in the vicinity of the museum – persons with disabilities, persons in a state of psychological distress, seniors over 60, and museum employees themselves, particularly those staffing our reception, cleaning and security services. In the context of this article, I believe it is particularly relevant to share the social-educational experience we have been gaining with people experiencing homelessness and persons deprived of liberty.

My first example is an outreach educational initiative that is one of our oldest projects (from 2008) with two groups of adults experiencing homelessness who frequently visit social assistance institutions near the museum. It consists of weekly workshops on artistic production with an emphasis on graphic techniques and woodcutting. The initiative is structured through workshops held in two participating organizations and regular visits to the museum's exhibitions. Our decision to work with this target segment reflects a direct

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<sup>20</sup> For more details of Pinacoteca de São Paulo, see: <http://pinacoteca.org.br/en/>  
Retrieved: September 2021.

dialogue with Pinacoteca's surroundings, since groups of people experiencing homelessness usually roam through the São Paulo downtown area. Our interest is in establishing closer and more productive relationships with these groups, given that we are geographically close although socially distant. We decided to hold art workshops upon realizing that there was almost no activity of this type on offer for this population. Finally, we chose graphic techniques due to our previous experience with these groups and our knowledge of some of their cultural repertoires involving the popular traditions of woodcut printing from Brazil's northeastern states, from where many of São Paulo's migrants come. Woodcutting also involves materials and procedures closely related to the everyday lives of those who have worked in construction or carpentry, for example.



Figure 1 - Woodcut workshop.  
Photo: Education Department Pinacoteca de São Paulo

This long-term project has already given rise to a whole series of developments, such as exhibitions held at Pinacoteca and elsewhere that enabled visitors to learn about the project

while affording recognition and positive social visibility for persons experiencing homelessness, who are subjected to a series of social stigmas on a daily basis.



Figure 2 - Woodcut exhibition in Pinacoteca's windows.  
Photo: Education Department, Pinacoteca de São Paulo

Finally, the project also produced a series of publications, ranging from documentaries and opinion pieces to other publications produced by participants themselves, which are distributed to their authors' partner institutions, researchers, and professionals in related fields. Unfortunately, since this project mainly involved participant in-person attendance, it had to be discontinued in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, we expect to resume it soon, Brazil's public-health situation permitting.

The second example mentioned here is the social-educational experience initiated in 2005 with youths and adults deprived of liberty. We worked in collaborative partnerships with



Fundação Casa<sup>21</sup>, which works with juveniles in detention, and (since 2017) with São Paulo State's Penitentiary department<sup>22</sup>.

Work with socially vulnerable groups has shown that people deprived of their freedom turn into invisible, socially undesirable groups deprived of their most basic human rights. For this very reason, they should not be ignored by those cultural institutions that regard their cultural work as a social mission.

Hence specific questions arise: In which communities or identities do these people participate? How can museums approach them, be relevant to them and engage them? How can cultural practice help to have their humanity recognized, validated, and rendered visible?

The collaborative partnership we have entered with Fundação Casa operates on two fronts: training cultural agents and security staff on the social-educational potential of museums and culture in general, and including convicted juveniles in educational activities such as in-person museum visits or digital activities online. Our collaborative work with Fundação Casa's team has been in place since 2005. Over the years, we have offered a program of educational visits to Pinacoteca for groups of youths deprived of liberty that the institution and its detention facilities organize.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been unable to host young people for educational visits to the museum. So, in 2021 we expanded our collaborative partnership to hold simultaneous educational meetings on digital media with juvenile inmates from different units and remote regions of the state of São Paulo. This initiative has enabled us to reach young people who would hardly ever visit Pinacoteca, given their distance from the city of São Paulo.

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<sup>21</sup> This institution - the Adolescent Social-Educational Service Center Foundation (local acronym CASA) - is attached to the State's Justice and Citizenship Defense department, which runs social-educational programs for young people aged 12 to 21 across the state of São Paulo. Social-educational measures include deprivation of freedom (internment) and semi-freedom. Measures determined by the Judiciary are applied depending on the offense and the adolescents' ages. There are currently 119 juvenile detention centers across the state of São Paulo. <https://fundacaocasa.sp.gov.br/index.php/a-fundacao-casa/>. Retrieved: September 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Note that Brazil has the third largest number of imprisoned people after only the United States and China. Its prison population was more than 725,000 in 2017. Almost 230,000 people, about 32% of Brazil's total number of incarcerated people, were in the state of São Paulo (cfr. Levantamento nacional de informações penitenciárias 2019, pp. 7-8. <http://antigo.depen.gov.br/DEPEN/depen/sisdepen/infopen>. Retrieved: September 2021.

The state's Penitentiary Department and its adult prison population came together into a collaborative partnership to undertake three different initiatives. First, in 2017, meetings held at the Department's headquarters with incarcerated men and women in semi-open prisons led to an exhibition of reproductions of works from the museum collection that this group reinterpreted based on their personal experiences in prison and outside. Then, in 2019, the Pinacoteca team held five workshops in a women's prison to encourage artistic experimentation and debate on identity issues and get court authorization for a group of 15 women to participate in an educational visit to Pinacoteca. For most of those prisoners, this would be their first visit to a museum ever.



Figure 3 - Group's visit to the Pinacoteca.  
Photo: Education Department Pinacoteca de São Paulo

Finally, in 2020, we started 18 silkscreen printing workshops and discussions on the prisoners' personal and collective identities. Based on this initiative, we have scheduled presentations of a collaboratively curated traveling exhibition of the pieces produced in these workshops at three prisons in the city of São Paulo.

The program also includes the mediation of the respective authors' works and a documentary and reflective publication. The objective is to have a Pinacoteca exhibition of works made by

people deprived of liberty visit different prisons, the idea being that if these people cannot come to the museum, the show will go to them.

The art workshops and discussions on issues related to identity began in February 2020, and meetings held at the headquarters of the State Penitentiary Secretariat were attended by an average of 20 convicts detained in 'semi-open regime' prisons. We had held seven workshops by mid-March when the pandemic cut across the project's entire scheduling. Nevertheless, we hope to wrap up the workshops, hold exhibitions, and publish in 2022, public health conditions permitting. For 2021, to continue initiatives for prison inmates during the pandemic, we plan to record videos of educational museum visits around themes related to memory, identity, and freedom to show videos in prisons.

### *Final remarks*

The constant growth of the population deprived of liberty in Brazil does not necessarily imply the development and offer of services and opportunities to enable these groups to exercise their cultural rights. The 2007 Freiburg Declaration on Cultural Rights reiterated the universal, indivisible and interdependent nature of human rights. Cultural rights are like other human rights in that they express human dignity and are a requirement of it. It is also important to note that cultural rights have been claimed mainly in the context of the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. It is essential to guarantee them universally, particularly for the most disadvantaged, especially those deprived of liberty (Freiburg Declaration, 2007, p. 3). Therefore, to propose social-educational and cultural initiatives inside the prison system is to reach beyond any benefits that these initiatives may instigate, such as knowledge acquisition, skill development, sociability, personal strengthening, opportunities for dialogue, and self-expression. The objective is to promote cultural rights and, consequently, human rights too.

I conclude this reflection on the socially committed initiatives of traditional museums by pointing out the major challenge of deepening and broadening the ways these actions should impact their rigid organizational structures and their logic of functioning and power relations, transforming them. However, in general, the more visible outcome is the positive impact for persons joining these programs rather than for the museums themselves: the latter may often allow and even encourage these social-educational processes, the value of which they fail to appreciate, however, to the point of rethinking their institutional practices.

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## Chapter 4

# Museums and social responsibility: From activism to agonism?

*Olga Van Oost*

### **Abstract**

Based on a shared belief in museums as dynamic and socially relevant institutions, a group of museums in Belgium (Flanders) has been struggling with questioning the purpose of the museum in society. Should the museum take social responsibility? Does this imply the museum becomes part of an activist practice? We will show that these museums are not aiming to become 'activist institutions' but rather see opportunities to develop agonist museum practices. We will also draw on the findings of a survey on the ICOM museum definition set up in Belgium in the autumn of 2021 to make a case in point.

**Keywords:** agonism, museum activism, Flanders (Belgium)

### **Résumé**

Sur la base d'une croyance partagée dans les musées en tant qu'institutions dynamiques et socialement pertinentes, un groupe de musées en Belgique (Flandre) a du mal à se demander quel est le but du musée dans la société ? Le musée doit-il assurer une responsabilité sociale ? Cela implique-t-il que le musée s'inscrive dans une pratique militante ? Nous montrerons que ces musées ne visent pas à devenir des « institutions militantes » mais voient plutôt des opportunités de développer des pratiques muséales agonistes. Nous nous appuyerons également sur les résultats d'une enquête sur la définition du musée ICOM mise en place en Belgique à l'automne 2021 pour en faire une étude de cas.

**Mots-clés :** agonisme, activisme muséale, Flandre (Belgique)

## **Introduction**

Climate crisis, COVID-19, (online) hate speech against people of LGBTQI+ or Black Lives Matter movements, increasing racism and discrimination, the dissemination of fake news, the worldwide violation of human rights, not to mention ongoing conflicts, war and starvation: the list of problems that we are up against seems endless. What is more, in an over-mediatised world, increasing polarisation is a major issue. It seems difficult and often quite impossible for individuals and communities to find a middle ground in debates. Obviously, many citizens and communities struggle with this situation and search for ways of coping with it. It is encouraging to notice growing levels of awareness and sensitivity. Public institutions, museums in particular, are also questioning whether or not they should get involved in these debates and commit themselves to a position (Janes & Sandell, 2019).

Ironically, this line of enquiry also feeds polarisation in the museum world, as we clearly noticed during the General Conference of ICOM in Kyoto in September 2019. The voting of a proposal of a new international museum definition that expressly focused on a wide range of aspects regarding social responsibility was postponed because the international museum community was unable to agree on the methodology that was used by the Museum Definition Prospects and Potentials (MDPP) committee or on the contents of the proposal. The ICOM Define Committee replaced the MDPP Committee and was assigned to develop a new proposal by the General Conference of 2022 in Prague (Van Oost, 2021a).

In response to the wave of debates on a new international ICOM museum definition, museum and heritage communities in Belgium delved into this discussion as well. A survey showed that museums in Belgium had responded quite cautiously and mainly adhered to the words of the present museum definition. This being said, a group of museums in Flanders is taking tentative steps towards a more 'social' perspective on museum-making. We will show that they are not aiming to become 'activist institutions' but rather to see more opportunities to develop agonist museum practices.

## **A call for museum activism**

In their recent book 'Museum Activism', Robert Janes and Richard Sandell make a very critical appraisal of what they call 'the global museum community'. They acknowledge the power of this community but reproach it for not using its power to encourage and support social change. They particularly react against the 'museum as mall' and its 'relentless focus on money, consumption, and marketplace' (Janes & Sandell, 2019, p. 2). They argue that museums, first and foremost, have a civic role and responsibility, but, unfortunately, they often fail to genuinely include this in their praxis because of their eagerness to be a part of consumer society. To that end, Janes and Sandell call for

museum activism, in the sense of museum practice, shaped out of ethically-informed values, that is intended to bring about political, social and environmental change. The mindful museum (Janes, 2010) is complementary, if not one and the same. The mindful museum cannot help but be activist, and the activist museum is grounded in mindfulness (p. 1).

These are not mainstream ideas in the global museum world, but they cannot be discounted as on the fringes. The contrary is true, as is demonstrated by the increasing interest in this topic among renowned researchers and cultural fieldworkers. According to Greg Jobin-Leeds, the era 2000-2015 was a '*fertile era of activism*', which he demonstrates convincingly in the work he has done with Agit Arte on cultural activism, and particularly the many conversations they had over the years with Antonia Darder, José Jorge Diaz, David Goodman, Deymirie Hernández, and Rinku Sen (Jobin-Leeds, 2016).

## **The intertwined dynamics of activism and identity politics**

Generally, there are close links between 'activism' and 'identity' and 'identity politics', particularly since the latter is interpreted from both ends of the political spectrum. The left, on the one hand, focusses on

the interests of a wide variety of groups perceived as being marginalized – blacks, immigrants, women, Hispanics, the LGBT community, refugees, and the like. The right, on the other hand, is redefining itself as patriots who seek to protect traditional

national identity, an identity that is often explicitly connected to race, ethnicity, or religion. (Fukuyama, 2019, p. 6-7)

In order to understand the growing importance of (museum) activism, we need to acknowledge the complex context of identity struggles that originated in the first wave of identity wars in the 1960s and 1970s and appear to have become the current dominant social framework (Appiah, 2018; Heinrich, 2018). What is characteristic of these grassroots communities, civil rights movements and other social movements is their strong bottom-up approach, the recognition of the pivotal role that individuals and communities play in bringing about change and democratisation.

Participative and citizen movements have seen a boom because of the rise and expansion of our platform society (Van Dijck et al., 2016) and the ubiquitous use of social media. Thanks to social media, people are able to express themselves more easily and feel empowered. Nevertheless, a study we conducted within the scope of the ICOM Define research on the museum definition suggested that these 'new' social and activist perspectives on museum-making have not (yet?) become part of daily museum practices in Flanders.

### **Cautious museums in Belgium?**

In the autumn of 2021, ICOM Belgium participated in one of the consecutive surveys sent out by ICOM Define. Belgium has a complex political system with a federal government as well as different regional governments. Furthermore, Belgium has three official languages: Dutch, French and a smaller German-speaking community. Therefore, filling out a 'national' survey is not that easy. Luckily, in the past decade, museum and heritage organisations in Belgium have managed to collaborate closely and to bridge these linguistic and regional differences. All regions sent out the ICOM Define survey in the summer of 2021. In addition to this quantitative survey, ICOM Belgium and FARO, the Flemish Institution for Cultural Heritage, organised a qualitative workshop in Dutch and in French to discuss the outcomes of the survey in depth (Van Oost, 2021b).

Seventy-five organisations filled out the survey. The sample of museum and heritage professionals in Belgium was representative with respect to the diversity of scale, governance structures, funding, and professional and voluntary staff in the institutions. Ultimately, the



majority of the respondents prioritised the museum roles of the current museum definition: acquiring, conserving, researching, communicating and exhibiting tangible and intangible heritage (ICOM, 2021). The roles that have a societal approach such as ‘democracy’ and ‘planet wellbeing’, were hardly mentioned. This is remarkable, because in international museum practice and literature there is a clear tendency towards museological approaches that encompass aspects of social responsibility, inclusion and activist ideas. Seen in this light, the majority of the respondents answered quite conservatively and did not use this museum definition process as a lever to induce change in this direction.

The participative research process of ICOM Define is ongoing and we will learn more about the outcomes in the upcoming months. Will this process result in a new museum definition that is radically different from the current one or will it not come to that and result in a more general global status quo? Either way, a group of museums in Flanders is actually having conversations on their role in society, their social responsibilities, activism, public engagement and so on, which we will now consider.

### **Why does your museum exist?**

Several years ago, the directors and staff members of In Flanders Fields Museum Ypres, Kazerne Dossin Mechelen, Museum Dr Guislain Gent, Red Star Line Museum Antwerp, FARO (the Flemish Institution for Cultural Heritage), and the Africa Museum discovered a common area of interest, namely that they all possessed a collection and/or museum with contested histories or were at least highly interested in this topic (FARO). Furthermore, they were all struggling with questioning what purpose do museums have in society. Should the museum take social responsibility? Should it address major global problems as described above? Does this imply the museum becomes part of an activist practice? Is that feasible or desirable? Shouldn't museums rather be neutral or aim to be neutral (Allegaert et al., 2020)?

Based on a shared belief in museums as dynamic and socially relevant institutions, they joined forces and formed a working group to discuss these questions. They proposed that the idea that museums should mainly focus on collecting and storing objects as their main task is outdated. Collections are a necessity because objects and intangible aspects of heritage are witnesses of the past, the present and the future. However, they should rather be perceived as raw material that needs processing and cultivation to become meaningful. Furthermore, research and continuous debate on the meaning of collections are the museums' tools to

reflect on their roles and to make a difference in society. They share the conviction that – if addressed appropriately – museums can use their resources, critical methodologies, knowledge and expertise to provide multiple perspectives on topics such as fake news, racism, discrimination, colonial pasts, and gender and LGBTQI+, to name a few.



Figure 1 - In Flanders Fields Museum Ieper, exposition 2022 'Voor de Beschaving', de Eerste Wereldoorlog in het Midden-Oosten, 1914-1923 ['Before Civilisation': World War I in the Middle East, 1914-1923]



Figure 2 - Kazerne Dossin Mechelen. Photo of Stany Dederen



Figure 3 - Museum Dr. Guislain Gent, exposition 'Op losse schroeven' [On the Loose]



Figure 4 - Red Star Line Museum Antwerpen. Photo of Sigrid Spinnox

## **An agonist museum space**

At the heart of these debates is the question of whether museums should adopt a stance or keep themselves at a distance. Contrary to international viewpoints on museum activism, as discussed before, museums should not join in these debates directly according to this Flemish working group. As a result of a strong belief in democracy, they are in favour of a democratic representation of viewpoints without making an argument for or against, on condition that viewpoints are not negationist, racist or discriminatory in any way.

Drawing on the work of Belgian political philosopher Chantal Mouffe on 'agonism', they call for museums to act as agonist spaces. The word 'agonist' comes from Ancient Greek and refers to the ideal of having a public space to openly discuss topics, based on arguments and doing so in a respectful manner (Van Alstein, 2020). Instead of what is often assumed, the ultimate goal of a debate in an agonist space, or in a democracy for that matter, is not to reach a consensus or to come to an agreement. The strength of a genuine democratic debate is the fact that space is being created to actually have the debate, with respect of the principles of freedom of speech.

The working group notices that, in spite of increasing participative, citizen and community movements, democratic public space is declining. Public institutions such as museums, and this working group in particular, believe they should take on their public role and create these public spaces for debate.

We could define an agonist museum space as a public space in a museum for safe, brave, respectful, and civil debate based on research and experience, as well as for the exchange of multiple viewpoints on societal issues. This specific museum model challenges museums and heritage organisations because it demands a shift in thinking and actions. In other words, becoming a genuine agonist museum space would also mean that museum boards and teams should reflect on their museum ethics and moral paradigm, and even reconsider their own mission, organisational structure and working approach. Furthermore, it would also demand staff and job profiles capable of taking on the facilitating and intermediary roles characteristic of an agonist museum space. Clearly, we are not necessarily suggesting that museums should replace job profiles with new profiles. Ideally, the current team is encouraged to learn these new skills and receives the opportunity to do so. Nevertheless, it may be interesting to hire an additional staff member with these competences to lead by example. Having said this, we immediately stress the importance of supporting the

'traditional' museum tasks as well. Research, in particular, is a typical museum role that is often pushed into the background by other (short-term) tasks and assignments; consequently, it often slips through the net and very little research is actually done (Pringle, 2020). An agonist museum space, however, needs research and the continuous development of knowledge and expertise to succeed in its mission, i.e., creating a democratic dialogue. In that sense, this call for an agonist museum space may also be interpreted for a call for more (profound) research in the museum.

### **Final remarks**

Obviously, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and this is true for the Flemish working group of museums. In particular, it confirms the idea that museums should take a social responsibility, but for now, becoming an agonist space is still a distant goal. These museums are well aware of the fact that a lot of work still needs to be done. Currently, the focus is mainly on rethinking museums' missions, outreach projects and other projects involving communities. Although some museums are also having a closer look at the composition of their teams, embedding this transition into an organisation is tough. In some cases, we are dealing with an organisational change of 360 degrees, for example when staff members who have been working for decades on collections should leave their 'comfort zones of dead objects' to acquaint themselves with roles as facilitators or moderators, as required in an agonist museum space. Furthermore, these museums acknowledge the importance of research as a core museum activity, but, as in many other heritage organisations, it is a challenge to value this line of work and to open up resources to support it. The idea of developing an 'activist museum practice' as explained by Janes and Sandell, is not really on the table in Flanders-Belgium. According to the Flemish working group, 'activism' is not a role of a museum. The survey and discussions we organised in Belgium on the international ICOM museum definition illustrate this point clearly.

In conclusion, we could also raise the question as to whether an activist museum space or even an agonist museum space would genuinely be possible in Belgium. After all, publicly funded museums are still deeply encapsulated in governmental structures, which makes it difficult for them to work autonomously. Encouraging dialogue and debate on social and societal issues could indeed mean that the role of government is questioned from time to time and that a museum's viewpoint might differ from the viewpoints of the museum board

or the government. In other words, if a museum is serious about taking up a social or societal role, whether as activist or agonist, it will always demand courage.

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## Chapter 5

# De la rupture expographique à l'invention territoriale, des expérimentations citoyennes en muséologie : Réflexion à partir d'exemples en Suisse et au Brésil

*Dominique Schoeni*

### Résumé

Les comparaisons entre les musées et approches muséologiques convoquent généralement des exemples présentant un certain degré de proximité. Cet article fait le pari d'une comparaison *déraisonnable*, pour tenter d'éclairer certaines dimensions communes entre des approches aussi éloignées a priori que la "muséologie de la rupture", développée au Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel (MEN), en Suisse, et la "manière MUF de penser les musées" revendiquée au *Museu de Favela* de Cantagola Pavão-Pavãozinho à Rio de Janeiro, au Brésil. À partir d'une telle perspective, ce seront au final moins les différences patentes entre les exemples traités que les décalages réalisés en chacun de ces musées dans leur contexte spécifique qui retiendront notre attention, pour réfléchir à ce que ces musées, chacun à leur façon, sont susceptibles de nous apprendre.

**Mots-clés :** Muséologie de la rupture, Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel, Museu de favela

### Abstract

Comparisons between museums and museological approaches generally call for examples with a certain degree of proximity. This article proposes an *inconceivable* comparison to enlighten some common dimensions between approaches such as the "museology of rupture" developed at the Ethnographic Museum of Neuchâtel (MEN), Switzerland, and the "MUF way of musealizing" (*o jeito MUF de musealizar*) advocated in the *Museu de Favela* of Cantagalo Pavão-Pavãozinho in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. From such a perspective, it will be less the obvious differences between these examples than the shift both achieved in their specific context that will draw our attention, to reflect on what they are likely to teach us, each of them in its own way.

**Keywords:** Museology of rupture, Neuchâtel Ethnographic Museum, Museu de favela



## Introduction

À l'occasion du webinaire *Tour de Babel, les gens de musée en dialogue*, j'ai été amené à traiter simultanément de deux musées complètement différents<sup>23</sup>. Le Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel (MEN) d'une part, un musée suisse de facture classique, aux collections relativement modestes, mais qui a bénéficié d'une reconnaissance internationale à la faveur de la mise en œuvre en son sein d'une "muséologie de la rupture" à laquelle il est encore souvent identifié.

Le *Museu da Favela* (MUF) de l'autre, un musée territorial à ciel ouvert créé en 2008 au cœur de la zone sud de Rio de Janeiro, qui a inspiré d'autres initiatives du même type au Brésil, a fait l'objet de multiples travaux de recherche universitaire et qui, visité par un public nombreux et diversifié notamment à l'occasion des congrès de muséologie organisés dans cette même ville, a acquis une importante visibilité nationale et internationale.

L'association de ces deux musées dans ma présentation était à vrai dire fortuite : la seule chose qui pouvait les rapprocher était ma relative familiarité avec chacun d'entre eux. En les présentant conjointement cependant, j'étais de fait incité à les comparer. Et cette comparaison, qui à première vue pouvait sembler peu pertinente, a progressivement gagné une certaine consistance lorsque je me suis résolu à la prendre au sérieux.

L'exercice n'était pas sans risque. Si la discipline muséologique traite de réalités extrêmement diverses, elle procède le plus souvent à des comparaisons entre des musées présentant un certain degré de proximité. Sur fond de points communs, sont ainsi distinguées et qualifiées leurs caractéristiques respectives. Comparer deux cas a priori aussi éloignés l'un de l'autre apparaît pour le moins hasardeux. La tentation de les inclure dans une même catégorie, telle que celle (aujourd'hui discutée) de "nouvelles muséologies" ne nous avancerait pas plus à cet égard : en considérant les exemples présentés dans l'ouvrage qui a imposé cette notion dans le domaine francophone (Desvallées, De Barry & Wasserman, 1992) on les trouverait placés aux deux extrémités d'un spectre d'expériences muséales qui ont essaimé durant les dernières décennies en une diversité d'orientations difficilement conciliables.

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<sup>23</sup> Je tiens ici à remercier chaleureusement Giusy Pappalardo et Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido pour leur invitation à ce séminaire, et l'opportunité qu'elles m'ont donnée de développer la présente réflexion.

On pourrait suggérer qu'en de telles circonstances, le principe de la comparaison doit alors s'inverser : au lieu de souligner les différences à partir d'une condition commune, il s'agit de dégager, au delà de toutes les différences manifestes, des points communs potentiels, des aspects transversaux aux cas considérés. Pour affiner notre comparaison, posons en première approximation trois dimensions, que l'on retrouve à divers titres dans tous les musées mais sous un jour particulier dans les exemples qui nous intéressent : une *dimension collective*, une *dimension expérimentale*, et une *dimension temporelle*.

Les démarches muséologiques s'inscrivent toujours dans des pratiques collectives, quand bien même s'affirme la qualité d'auteur d'un directeur, d'un curateur ou d'un conservateur, ou encore lorsqu'elles sont associées à des figures importantes de la discipline, à l'instar de la muséologie de la rupture au Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel.

À l'inverse toutefois, une muséologie communautaire telle que celle mise en œuvre au *Museu de Favela* n'exclut pas l'existence de dimensions délibérément singulières, la présence de "minorités actives" déterminées à insuffler de nouvelles dynamiques dans leur contexte d'existence en relation à leurs communautés.

Les dimensions "expérimentales", dans ces différents exemples, doivent être comprises moins au sens que la science accorde à ce terme qu'en rapport à ce qui est entrepris à titre d'essai : des formes d'improvisation et d'adaptations locales dans les pratiques muséologiques ; une disposition, à des degrés divers, à accepter une part d'indétermination quant aux résultats, à la survenue de nouveaux objets, d'interprétations et d'acteurs inattendus, au long de la création de musée ou de la réalisation d'expositions.

La dimension temporelle prend alors un relief particulier : les musées sont le produit de leur époque, et évoluent en fonction des changements dans leurs contextes respectifs et des nouveaux apports à leur démarche. Leurs évolutions sont fortement marquées par les déterminations antérieures, ce qui prêter aux revendications de "rupture" ou de "nouveau" un caractère singulier. La formalisation et la reconnaissance de pratiques expérimentales susceptibles de redéfinir les options muséologiques peuvent prendre du temps, et impliquer divers aspects et acteurs (les pairs, les visiteurs, chercheurs universitaires, médias, autorités de tutelle, communautés muséales, politiques publiques, etc.). À cet égard, si les deux exemples traités lors de mon exposé présentent des approches et des pratiques muséologiques a priori incommensurables, en référence à des collectifs, des collections et des

contextes à tous égards dissemblables, on pourrait les rapprocher, et ce sera là mon hypothèse, par la façon dont ils se positionnent “en dissidence” vis-à-vis d’un certain nombre de conventions et de déterminations propres à leur contexte et appliquées à un moment donné de leur histoire, et par l’affirmation résolue de la singularité de leur démarche.

### **Un musée fait de rupture et de continuités : l’odyssée muséographique du MEN**

(...) en 1985, une sorte de révélation. On s’est dit : “Mais qu’est-ce qu’on fait ? On hiérarchise, on a des avis bizarres...” Et on a décrété que tous les objets de notre société qui participaient à une exposition seraient traités de la même façon que les autres. Alors vous voyez mes collègues, ils ont eu des soubresauts, parce qu’après le beau masque arrive la boîte de sardines, et il faut faire le même discours, le même traitement, les mêmes photos, la même informatisation (...). Ça nous a appris énormément sur la manière dont nous regardons, dont nous hiérarchisons, dont nous comprenons la société. Et ça, c’est peut-être unique à Neuchâtel, c’est d’avoir osé cette muséographie avec les objets venant de tout... pourvu qu’il y ait un sens, pourvu qu’il y ait un discours, pourvu qu’il y ait une interprétation et une interrogation. (Hainard<sup>24</sup>, 1997)

L’exemple du Musée ethnographique de Neuchâtel nous rappelle opportunément l’inscription historique et institutionnelle des musées, les aspects qui tout à la fois conditionnent, sur le long terme, leurs activités et leurs orientations, leurs limites et leurs potentialités. Si la “muséologie de la rupture”, telle qu’énoncée au milieu des années 80 par son directeur Jacques Hainard sur un ton de manifeste, traduisait explicitement une volonté de s’affranchir de conceptions et de pratiques alors en vigueur, elle tirait directement parti des innovations apportées par Jean Gabus, le prédécesseur de ce dernier à la tête du musée entre 1945 et 1978 (Knodel, 2020, p.72). En témoigne l’extension architecturale inaugurée par celui-ci en 1955 pour accueillir un “musée dynamique”, venant compléter le “musée statique” installé dans la maison de maître depuis 1904 (Gabus, 1965). Ce nouveau bâtiment, dont la structure interne présente des qualités remarquables en termes de polyvalence, jouera un rôle-clé dans la mise en œuvre, 25 ans plus tard et sous une nouvelle direction, des expositions temporaires comme “atelier expographique” (Gonseth, 2005), véritable laboratoire d’une “muséologie de la rupture”.

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<sup>24</sup> Jacques Hainard, directeur du MEN entre 1980 et 2006.



Figure 1- Le Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel. À gauche, la Villa de Pury, siège du musée depuis 1904 ; à droite l'extension du "musée dynamique" (aujourd'hui appelée "blackbox") inaugurée en 1955. Au centre, le bâtiment de l'Institut universitaire d'ethnologie, construit en 1986 et comportant également une salle d'exposition temporaire.  
Alain Germond © Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel, Suisse.

De quoi donc est faite cette "rupture" ? L'intégration dans les collections des objets de notre quotidien, au sein d'un musée ordinairement consacré aux objets des "autres", n'en est qu'un aspect, et résumer en quelques paragraphes les multiples dimensions et implications de cette approche est une gageure. On se contentera ici de relever quelques aspects explicitement élaborés par Jacques Hainard au milieu des années 80, et revendiqués à divers titres au long des décennies suivantes.

La muséologie de la rupture est en premier lieu présentée comme une muséologie traditionnelle repensée. Dans un article programmatique (Hainard, 1986), Jacques Hainard posait d'emblée que l'option dans laquelle il s'était engagé ne visait pas la transformation de la structure institutionnelle du musée dont il avait la charge, et qui obéissait à

une pratique classique de gestion, d'acquisition, de conservation, de recherches, d'expositions et de publications." Ajoutant, en référence aux revendications qui se faisaient entendre à l'époque dans le milieu de la muséologie, qu'il ne pouvait pas prétendre à une muséologie nouvelle, "étant donné que le public ne participe pas à la conduite de l'institution et aux définitions de sa politique culturelle. (Hainard, 1986, p. 274).

## Un lieu d'expérimentations expographiques

Le cadre est posé : il n'est pas question de rebattre les cartes au sein de l'institution muséale, à l'instar des options écomuséales et communautaires. La rupture s'affirme plus spécifiquement dans le domaine de l'*expographie*, quand bien même on pourrait suggérer qu'elle trouve des prolongements dans toutes les fonctions du musées (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2005, p.148). De fait, elle vient largement questionner le contexte dans lequel elle prend place, le musée lui-même, ses conditions de légitimation et son rôle dans notre société. À travers les objets des autres dans le musée d'ethnographie – “le plus pervers des musées”, selon Jacques Hainard –, c'est notre propre regard qui se donne à percevoir. Et éventuellement à comprendre, dès lors que l'on s'autorise à rompre avec les modes d'exposition traditionnellement associés aux collections ethnographiques :

Présenter des sociétés humaines vivantes, sujet d'études de l'ethnographie, est un leurre : la saisie du présent est une impossibilité et dans cette perspective le musée ne peut être voué qu'à un travail de deuil. Face aux musées-cimetières, comment réinvestir l'espace-musée, le dynamiser et le questionner ? En pratiquant une muséologie de la rupture (Hainard, 1986, p. 275).

Rassembler dans des salles et des vitrines des éléments de la culture matérielle de sociétés vivantes, en prétendant représenter et appréhender celles-ci, est une supercherie dont il faudrait informer le visiteur. Mais on y reconnaît aussi un mode d'exposition qui a profondément modelé notre perception de l'“autre” exotisé, et qui n'a pas manqué de susciter de nombreuses polémiques dans la seconde moitié du XXe siècle. En ce sens, la nouvelle approche inaugurée au MEN ne représenterait pas un cas isolé. Rétrospectivement, selon Bernard Knodel, elle apparaît comme le reflet d’*“un changement d'orientation épistémologique fondamental qui implique la vision muséale dans son ensemble”*, d’*“une crise muséale plus large et le symptôme d'une fracture entre la recherche ethnologique et les musées d'ethnographie.”* (Knodel, 2020, p. 74).

Reste que parmi les diverses solutions envisagées à cette “crise muséale”, la muséologie de la rupture a marqué une étape importante par sa radicalité. L'affirmation “désacralisante” d'une “polysémie de l'objet” a ouvert la voie à une aventure (de pensée et de création) riche en potentialités. Les formes d'expérimentation auxquelles elle donnera lieu seront parfois jugées intellectualistes, quand bien même, et cela n'est peut-être pas étranger à sa reconnaissance,

la muséologie de la rupture s'est affichée publiquement – notamment à travers la personnalité médiatique de Jacques Hainard –, et s'est pensée comme une forme d'adresse au public, une interpellation :

Raconter une histoire avec un début et une fin, troubler l'harmonie, susciter l'esprit critique, provoquer l'émotion dans la compréhension et la découverte de sens nouveaux [...] rompre avec les poncifs de notre culture afin de faire surgir la banalité et la quotidienneté, si riches d'enseignement. Une muséologie de la rupture offre à tous ceux qui regardent des objets la possibilité d'investir leur savoir et d'être incités par irradiation à la relativisation (Hainard, 1986, p. 375).

Disposer librement de la scénographie et des objets pour construire, sous forme d'exposition et selon un abordage thématique et transversal, une réflexion théorique ou une histoire ; inclure dans celles-ci non plus seulement des objets “remarquables” issus des collections mais également ceux de notre vie quotidienne ; rassembler ces objets en des ensembles scénographiques dans le but d'éveiller chez le visiteur de nouvelles interrogations : autant d'écarts réalisés dans les expographies du MEN qui inspireront les formulations adoptées par Jacques Hainard et qui se poursuivront dans les expérimentations menées ultérieurement<sup>25</sup>.

Il s'agit de privilégier la compréhension plutôt que la délectation, interroger les évidences de sens commun pour encourager le visiteur à mettre ses propres points de vue en perspective. Cette manière de procéder n'est pas étrangère à l'idée d'une compréhension renouvelée de notre propre société à partir d'un “détour anthropologique”, une façon de *rendre étrange* ce qui d'ordinaire va de soi, pour faire du musée d'ethnographie “un lieu de déstabilisation culturelle”, d'où le visiteur sorte “moins sûr qu'en y entrant de ses savoirs, de ses croyances, de ses jugements.” (Hainard, 2007).

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<sup>25</sup> Les titres des expositions temporaires donnent une certaine idée de ces orientations et de leur diversité thématique au long des années : *Collections passion*, 1982 ; *Le corps enjeu*, 1983 ; *Objets prétextes, objets manipulés*, 1984 ; *Temps perdu, temps retrouvé*, 1985 ; *Le mal et la douleur*, 1986 ; *Des animaux et des hommes*, 1987 ; *Les ancêtres sont parmi nous*, 1988 ; *Le salon de l'ethnographie*, 1989 ; *Le trou*, 1990 ; *À chacun sa croix*, 1991 ; *Les femmes*, 1992 ; *Si ...*, 1993 ; *Marx 2000*, 1994 ; *La différence*, 1995 ; *Natures en tête*, 1996...



Figure 2- Un cercueil, un morbier et une cuve de sarcophage égyptien dans l'exposition "C'est pas la mort !", réalisée en 2015 par des étudiants en ethnologie et en muséologie de l'Université de Neuchâtel, en collaboration avec l'équipe du MEN.

Pour les premiers, ces travaux appliqués constituent une initiation par la pratique aux approches expographiques développées dans ce musée.  
Alain Germond © Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel, Suisse.

Le temps n'a pas érodé la dimension expérimentale des expositions réalisées par le musée durant les décennies qui ont suivi. Marc-Olivier Gonseth, succédant à Jacques Hainard à la tête du MEN en 2006, formulera certes la question de la rupture d'une manière sensiblement différente : plutôt que de revendiquer celle-ci en tant que telle, il insistera sur la continuité des orientations qui ont profondément imprégné les manières de faire, les options théoriques et les projets entrepris dans le musée (Gonseth, 2014). La "nouvelle équipe" (qui est à vrai dire la même) assume un héritage de la rupture qu'elle a contribué à constituer, et poursuit aujourd'hui encore, désormais sous la houlette de Grégoire Mayor et Yann Laville, un travail expographique marqué par ce même esprit et par une même liberté de ton. La rupture s'est muée en une "boîte à outils évolutive", renouvelée au fil du temps en fonction des nouveaux projets (Grégoire Mayor, communication personnelle). Le paradoxe de l'institutionnalisation de la rupture n'est peut-être qu'apparent : il dépendra de la vigueur avec laquelle sera entretenue cette "manière" propre au MEN et à son équipe de penser le musée, les expositions, et les rapports que celles-ci entretiennent avec la société.

## **“Vu de loin, tout semble pareil” : le Museu de Favela de Cantagalo Pavão-Pavãozinho**

Le *Museu de Favela* (MUF) de Cantagalo Pavão-Pavãozinho est un musée de territoire incluant un ensemble de favelas entre les quartiers d'Ipanema et de Copacabana, au cœur de la Zone Sud de Rio de Janeiro. Ces favelas<sup>26</sup>, dont la population est estimée à 20'000 personnes, se distinguent clairement des quartiers environnants par leur morphologie et leur composition sociale. L'appellation de *morro* (la colline), utilisée par leurs habitants, fait référence à leur situation à flanc de coteau, sur des terrains conçus à l'origine comme inconstructibles. Dans les images des cartes postales, ce sont ces ensembles de petites maisons, parfois surplombés de reliefs granitiques, que l'on aperçoit en arrière-plan des plages et des immeubles des quartiers réputés “nobles” de la mégapole brésilienne.

Ces différences manifestes ne doivent pas faire oublier que le développement des favelas a accompagné celui des quartiers environnants, auxquels elles sont fortement liées, que ce soit pour l'emploi, le loisir, l'accès aux plages, aux écoles ou aux transport publics. À cette profondeur historique commune et cette très grande proximité répond toutefois une “perméabilité” très inégale entre les différents espaces : si nombre d'habitants des favelas fréquentent quotidiennement les quartiers, les habitants de ces derniers, à de rares exceptions près, ne fréquentent pas les espaces de la favela.

Il faut également souligner la très grande diversité interne de cet ensemble, notamment en termes de provenance et de condition sociale de ses habitants, d'ancienneté et d'organisation communautaire : sous l'appellation de Cantagalo Pavão-Pavãozinho sont en réalité dénombrées douze favelas, dont chacune présente des caractéristiques propres. De manière générale, on pourrait considérer que leur histoire présente le caractère d'une intégration progressive, mais contrariée, à la ville. Les dernières décennies y ont apporté des améliorations notoires, le plus souvent à l'initiative de leurs habitants, parfois à la faveur de projets menés par les pouvoirs publics. Des programmes d'intégration urbaine (assainissement, accès à l'eau potable, électricité, amélioration des voies d'accès) et de régularisation, entrepris depuis les années 1980, ont marqué une rupture d'avec les politiques d'expulsion qui avaient prévalu jusqu'alors, mais ont manqué de continuité. C'est aussi à cette époque que les favelas de Rio de Janeiro ont commencé à être désignées comme

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<sup>26</sup> J'utilise ici le terme de *favela*, couramment utilisé au Brésil, en lieu et place du terme français péjoratif de “bidonville”.



des lieux dominés par le commerce de stupéfiants de groupes armés, et par voie de conséquence perçus comme un problème majeur de “sécurité publique” (Velloso et al, 2012, p. 25). Paradoxalement, la régularisation des habitations en ces espaces limitrophes des régions les plus valorisées de la ville, en amorçant leur gentrification, a également pu constituer un facteur de déstabilisation pour les associations locales.

C'est dans un tel contexte, marqué par la précarité d'une grande partie de sa population, qu'un groupe de leaders communautaires a commencé en 2007 à réfléchir à la façon dont les activités liées au tourisme pourraient y être développées.<sup>27</sup> Il s'agissait en l'espèce de penser une structure fonctionnant comme un trait d'union entre les communautés, assurant une continuité dans les projets, et qui viendrait compléter plutôt que concurrencer les nombreuses initiatives déjà existantes, conduites par les associations culturelles, éducatives et sportives, les associations d'habitants, les églises.

Après avoir entendu parler de l'existence des musées de territoire, ils ont fondé le *Museu de Favela* en 2008, dans le cadre d'un *programa de aceleração do crescimento* (PAC), un programme national de financement de projets d'infrastructure et de développement économique incluant un volet “social” et qui, à Rio de Janeiro, s'est concentré plus particulièrement sur les favelas (Moraes, 2018, p. 268). Ultérieurement, en 2009, le musée a été sélectionné par le programme national des “Pontos de memória”, qui visait à stimuler la participation populaire dans les projets liées à la mémoire sociale et aux musées.<sup>28</sup>

Bien que le MUF n'existe que depuis une dizaine d'années, il serait tout autant audacieux de prétendre en faire ici un compte rendu approfondi. Je m'en tiendrai essentiellement à la présentation d'un projet qui a joué – et joue encore – un rôle déterminant dans la mise en œuvre et la perception de ce musée, le *Circuito das Casas-tela* (“le circuit des maisons-toiles”). Dans un second temps, et sur la base des premiers éléments présentés, sera considérée la posture de ses initiateurs à travers leur revendication d'une façon spécifique de faire et de penser les musées.

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<sup>27</sup> Il faut noter à ce sujet que cette initiative ne constitue pas une première en matière de tourisme dans les favelas de Rio de Janeiro, mais qu'à l'inverse de certaines entreprises commerciales, la démarche entreprise par les acteurs du MUF s'appuie sur une volonté d'impliquer les habitants et de développer des activités qui contribuent à l'amélioration des conditions de vie de ces derniers sur le long terme.

<sup>28</sup> Le programme *Pontos de Memória* a été mis en place par l'Institut brésilien des musées (Ibram), en partenariat avec le Ministère de la culture et l'Organisation des États ibéro-américains (OEI). Cette initiative s'adressait aux divers groupes sociaux au Brésil qui n'ont pas la possibilité de raconter et d'exposer leur propre histoire, leur mémoire et leur patrimoine dans les musées.

## **Le circuit des casas-telas**

Ils le disent clairement : le patrimoine n'est pas ce qui est peint. Le patrimoine est ce qui se passe. [...] Regardez [la maison peinte], avec sa fenêtre ouverte, et sa fenêtre fermée, l'œuvre est en mouvement. Et tout cela fait partie du musée. Le jeu de ballon en fait partie, et les cerfs-volants sont comme des étendards, les cerfs-volants comme un vol poétique, les cerfs-volants comme une résistance politique, la célébration de la vie dans les ruelles d'une des favelas du MUF. (Chagas, 2019)

Un des premiers projets entrepris par le MUF (et sans doute l'un des plus emblématiques) a été la création d'un parcours au long du morro, jalonné de maisons peintes racontant l'histoire de ses habitants et de la construction de la favela. Incluant à présent près de 30 maisons, ce circuit n'est pas une simple exposition d'art, même si ses créateurs s'y réfèrent parfois en ces termes. Il s'agit d'une création collective basée sur un long travail de recherche, de collecte de témoignages, une construction partagée de la mémoire des lieux.

La réalisation d'un tel parcours introduit la possibilité d'un objectif de visite dans des espaces urbains qui jusqu'alors s'y prêtaient peu. À son échelle, il constitue un facteur de fréquentation et de valorisation que l'on trouve déjà appliqué dans de nombreuses villes, distinguant pour les touristes les "sites d'intérêt" des espaces strictement résidentiels. En retour, l'intérêt des visiteurs peut susciter une perception renouvelée de la part des habitants sur leur propre contexte d'existence.

Outre les activités commerciales qui y trouvent pertinemment leur place – tel bar, tel magasin d'artisanat intégré dans le circuit –, l'opportunité de conduire une visite guidée, de converser avec des nouveaux venus, ou simplement d'observer la présence de ces derniers n'est pas sans importance en termes de perception de soi, plus particulièrement pour qui réside en des espaces d'ordinaire stigmatisés.



Figure 3 - Carte du circuit des “maisons-toiles” (Pinto, Silva & Loureiro, 2012, p. 66-67)

Mais le circuit de maisons peintes renvoie plus largement à la revendication d'une manière singulière de faire des musées : conjointement aux autres activités proposées aux habitants ou visiteurs dans les différentes bases du MUF (expositions, formations et recherches, projections de films, ludothèque, ateliers et cours de langues, boutique d'artisanat, médiation culturelle dans les communautés), il consolide le principe d'un “musée de territoire vivant”, intégrant dans ses collections tout ce qui se trouve et se transforme dans les limites de son territoire. *“À partir du moment où nous sommes un musée vivant, tout ce qui est à l'intérieur du musée fait partie de sa collection. Je fais partie de sa collection, non ? Je vis à l'intérieur du Museu da Favela !”* (propos d'Antônia Ferreira Soares, membre fondatrice du MUF, reproduits in Rodrigues, 2015, p. 87).

Cette idée peut paraître étrange. Elle est souvent rappelée avec humour, mais tout à la fois avec fermeté. Avec humour, parce qu'elle procède d'un décalage par rapport à ce que l'on conçoit ordinairement comme musée, et qu'en cela elle ne manque pas de susciter un certain étonnement chez les nouveaux venus.

Avec fermeté, parce que cette posture et les objectifs qu'elle vise rencontrent des contraintes dont les conséquences peuvent être très concrètes et déterminantes.

Ainsi par exemple le financement des ouvrages des maisons peintes s'est trouvé confronté, dans le contexte d'un appel d'offre public, à la question des critères d'acquisition des œuvres par les musées. En ce musée où les maisons se transforment en toile et leurs habitants en

gardiens, l'acquisition des œuvres ne pouvait prendre qu'une seule forme : leur réalisation *in situ*, par une équipe d'artistes et d'artisans locaux, en collaboration avec les résidents et en fonction des histoires racontées par ces derniers (Pinto, Silva & Loureiro, 2012, p.50). Faire valoir ce point de vue exigeait de contester les critères implicitement adoptés dans l'appel d'offre, pour faire admettre comme musée ce qui n'était pas assuré d'être reconnu comme tel. Un tel pari ne manque pas de nous interroger sur nos propres catégories de sens commun.

Le MUF change avec le temps, évolue en permanence. Ses principaux objets de collection sont les personnes elles-mêmes. *“Faut-il effacer les dessins, ajoutés aux peintures par les enfants qui se sont approprié le musée, et en sont désormais des jeunes initiateurs ?”* s'interroge Acme, coordinateur du parcours et réalisateur d'une partie des “toiles”. Ce caractère de musée vivant est clairement perceptible dans la dynamique introduite autour de *Casa-telas* : après des demandes répétées de restauration de certaines peintures par leurs “gardiens”, des financements ont été obtenus et, en collaboration avec les habitants, les fresques ont non seulement été restaurées par une nouvelle équipe, mais aussi étendues, améliorées, et de nouvelles histoires s'y sont ajoutées.



Figure 4 - 29 septembre 2021 : Sidney Tartaruga Silva replace une plaque de signalisation sur une peinture restaurée grâce aux fonds obtenus via la loi Aldir Blanc Fundo Emergencial de Cultura. Restauration et conservation du Circuit des maisons-toiles du Museu de Favela – Artiste : Acme - Collection du MUF.

## “O jeito MUF”, la revendication d'une autonomie

L'idée souvent invoquée de “resgatar a memória” (“sauvegarder la mémoire”) acquiert ici le sens de rendre visible, public, d'activer dans le présent ce qui était resté dissimulé jusqu'alors. Le caractère patrimonial du MUF ne se limite pas à la seule préservation des restes du passé : sa matière première est la culture de la favela. Et ce que la ville lui doit. Car il est une chose que l'on oublie parfois de rappeler : pour de nombreux habitants de Rio de Janeiro, les favelas du centre-ville seraient vouées à disparaître. Selon cette perception encore couramment partagée, l'idée d'y créer un musée ne peut que sembler incongrue. Il est dès lors plus facile de comprendre les enjeux de sa création à partir du point de vue inverse, à travers la volonté de valoriser des modes de vie, des dimensions culturelles et historiques négligées en raison de la ségrégation territoriale urbaine ; de renforcer l'estime de soi des habitants, et en favorisant une cohésion en leur sein, les capacités de ces acteurs locaux lorsqu'ils se trouvent aux prises avec des menaces d'expulsion, ou engagés dans des négociations sur le développement de leur territoire.



Figure 5 - Un lieu important, le siège de l'association des habitants de Cantagalo. Novembre 2021, photographie de Leonor Hernández.

D'un point de vue muséologique, cela se traduit par une affirmation de l'autonomie créative des musées de favelas par rapport aux conventions muséologiques habituelles. Le MUF n'a pas vocation à prendre pour modèle les musées que l'on rencontre au centre de nos villes, et qui forgent généralement notre idée du musée. Et cela non pas en raison de ses ressources plus limitées ou de ses manques supposés, mais parce les critères et les enjeux qui sont les siens sont complètement différents. La revendication par ses créateurs d'"une façon MUF de muséaliser" va résolument dans ce sens, d'autant qu'elle ne trouve aucune définition conclusive : le jeito MUF peut être beaucoup de choses à la fois, comme en témoignent les propos de ses initiateurs (Pinto, Silva & Loureiro 2012, pp.24-27). Cette affirmation de singularité a suscité beaucoup d'intérêt, notamment dans les milieux de la muséologie où se sont intégrés certains acteurs du MUF suite à la création de leur musée, et plus particulièrement dans le courant de la muséologie sociale, très actif au Brésil.

La "façon MUF de penser le musée", c'est aussi la façon dont ont choisi d'en parler ses créateurs qui n'étaient pas, du moins à l'origine, des muséologues. Non sans habileté, ils réalisaient par là un écart vis-à-vis des injonctions qui d'ordinaire subordonnent la reconnaissance des musées, qui trouvera une formulation collective reconnue dans la *Déclaration du MINOM de Rio de Janeiro*, en 2013, à l'occasion de la quinzième conférence internationale du Mouvement pour une nouvelle muséologie<sup>29</sup>. Faire des musées "à sa façon" et "sans demander la permission aux autorités en place" est désormais une option ratifiée dans au moins une des ramifications des institutions muséologiques, mise en œuvre au MUF et promue dans les réseaux de muséologie sociale.

### **En guise de conclusion : une échappée muséologique**

Odyssée expographique au MEN, cheminement au long des maisons peintes et de leurs habitants-personnages au MUF. Les deux exemples traités ici diffèrent en tous points. Au fond, la muséologie de la rupture "fonctionne" dans le contexte d'un musée de facture classique : c'est en rapport à un tel contexte que ses expérimentations expographiques peuvent subvertir les significations de l'exposition. Or le MUF s'en émancipe complètement par son caractère hors murs, par la redistribution des rôles qu'il opère, jusque dans ce qu'il retient comme "collections". Ces musées présentent aussi des destins très inégaux : si l'existence de l'un est assurément garantie sur le long terme, l'autre apparaît fortement

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.minom-icom.net/2013-15th-internacional-conference-minom-icom-rio-janeiro-brasil>

soumis aux aléas de son environnement. Plutôt que des autorités de tutelle, le MUF trouve ses financements d'un projet à l'autre, notamment en fonction des appels à projets. Et plutôt que la caution qu'apporte des liens proximaux avec une discipline universitaire, c'est sa lutte aux côtés des autres musées de favelas, des périphéries des villes, réunis dans les réseaux de la *muséologie sociale*, qui lui assure une audience et une diffusion de ses orientations muséologiques.

Mais ce qui rapproche ces musées est peut-être ce qui les distingue à l'intérieur de leurs catégories respectives : leur manière d'investir les relations plutôt que les choses ; de se penser au delà de la pratique de la collection, dans un rapport singulier au patrimoine et "en rupture" vis-à-vis des évidences du sens commun ; la revendication assumée d'une autonomie créatrice. Ce dont témoignent à la fois la "manière MEN" et la "manière MUF", en des contextes tant singuliers et différents, c'est de leur caractère de "musée vivant", activement vivant contre la tendance (qui peut souvent paraître inéluctable dans les musées) à figer les réalités dans leur état à un moment donné de leur histoire, à produire des différences, des définitions, des identités.

J'ai parfois utilisé au long de ma comparaison le terme d'"écart", que m'avaient inspiré les travaux du philosophe François Jullien. Pour ce dernier, l'écart (ou encore la dé-coïncidence), à l'inverse de la différence, n'est pas un concept classificatoire, une figure de rangement, mais un concept à fonction heuristique, qui ouvre un espace de réflexivité, une figure de dérangement à vocation exploratoire (Jullien, 2012, pp. 7-8). À mon sens, ce que les deux musées dont j'ai traité produisent, chacun à leur façon et en subvertissant leurs définitions respectives, c'est la possibilité d'expérimenter dans nos modes de pensée et les lieux dans lesquels nous vivons. Par l'"écart" qu'ils produisent, ils créent une distance, une tension qui procure du désir, de l'aventure, un potentiel de transformation. Ils nous enseignent des choses parce qu'ils nous permettent, que ce soit par la pensée ou très concrètement dans nos espaces vécus, d'intervenir sur notre réalité.

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## **Part 2 - Beyond the Museum: Emerging territorial practices**

## Chapter 6

# Mértola Museum Town: An archaeological project of integrated development

*Cláudio Torres, Lígia Rafael, Susana Gómez Martínez<sup>30</sup>*

### **Abstract**

Mértola Museum Town is a heritage management strategy dedicated to the study, safeguarding, enhancement and dissemination of this small village in southern Portugal. Here historical and archaeological research is the basis of a development project based on a museographic program, currently with 11 nuclei to be visited, spread throughout the historic centre. The museum is the village itself, as the heritage circuit favours wandering through streets and alleys, showing the organizational structure and its surrounding landscape. From its origin in the late seventies of the last century, the project was developed through a complex process of interaction between public and private institutions guided to follow a common objective: to use heritage to promote local development, to involve the population and to transform it into an instrument to consolidate local identity.

**Keywords:** Heritage, archaeology, development, citizenship, identity

### **Résumé**

Mértola Village Musée correspond à une stratégie de gestion du patrimoine dédiée à l'étude, la sauvegarde, la mise en valeur et la diffusion de ce petit village du sud du Portugal. Ici, la recherche historique et archéologique est à la base d'un projet de développement basé sur un

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<sup>30</sup> Adaptation to English by Maria João Rafael Martins e Fernando Martins, from Mértola Vila Museu. «Um projecto arqueológico de desenvolvimento integrado», *Revista Arqueologia Pública*, [on line], Vol.10, n°3 (2016) p. 55-80, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20396/rap.v10i3.8645842>. The translation was financed by national funds through FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., within the scope of the CEAACP Project (Reference No. UIDB/00281/2020).

programme muséographique, actuellement avec 11 noyaux à visiter dans le centre historique. Le Musée est le village lui-même. Dès 1978, le projet développe un processus complexe d'interaction entre des institutions publiques et privées guidées par un objectif commun : utiliser le patrimoine pour promouvoir le développement local, impliquer la population et la transformer en un instrument de consolidation de l'identité locale.

**Mots-clés :** Patrimoine, développement, identité

### **Mértola Museum Town: Project, strategy and philosophy**

Mértola Museum Town is one of the designations used to identify a pioneering experience in the field of archaeological heritage that has been growing in a small countryside village in southern Portugal since the late 1970s.

At that time, its goals were not very different from what is now becoming the widespread philosophy in broad sectors of archaeology: to involve the local population with the aim of consolidating its identity and contributing to local development. However, what may seem an unquestionable programmatic postulate emerged in a concrete context and only took hold thanks to the persistence of a group of individual and collective agents who see themselves as part of the local population.



Figure 1 - The Location of Mértola. Source: CAM.

Mértola is located in a transition region between the plain of Alentejo and the Serra do Algarve, a territory with a strong rural character, far from the country's major economic development centres. Currently, this small village has just over 1.000 inhabitants, and it is home to a vast territory, with about 2,279 km<sup>2</sup> sprinkled with small villages. However, for centuries, this village had a great importance as a commercial trading post, due to its location at the end of the navigation of the Guadiana River (fig. 1 & 2). It is located on a steep peninsula formed by the confluence of the Guadiana River and the Oeiras stream, with exceptional defensive conditions, which have made it an important urban nucleus since at least the Iron Age.



Figure 2 - Mértola and the Guadiana River. Photo of Virgílio Lopes

Due to the abandonment of river navigation as a means of transport and the importance of Mértola as a trading post, together with the decay and stagnation of its main economic activities (agriculture and mining extraction), Mértola did not follow the economic and urban development of other locations.

On the other hand, its historic centre, practically intact, has preserved a rich and important heritage and extraordinarily fertile subsoil in archaeological remains.

It was the socio-political context of the Revolution of 25th of April 1974 which allowed the development of a project based on the study and esteem of cultural heritage. In fact, it was

the first democratically elected mayor, Serrão Martins, who saw that one of Mértola's greatest potentials was its cultural and natural heritage and who, courageously, assumed a balanced management of heritage resources. At that time, it would have been easier to bet exclusively on the modernization of urban infrastructure and on industrial development, a model unquestionably acclaimed in the 1970s. Contrary to this trend, Serrão Martins knew how to ally himself with his professors at the University of Lisbon, to build a project of a scientific and political nature. One of these professors, Cláudio Torres, took over the project's leadership, mainly after the premature death of Serrão Martins in 1982, having resigned in 1986 from his university career to lead a multidisciplinary team of researchers and technicians who would develop their professional careers in Mértola, imbued with a strong sense of team, responsibility and citizenship.

This team was initially organized within the "Associação de Defesa do Património de Mértola" (ADPM), which later was divided into two distinct entities: the "Campo Arqueológico de Mértola" (CAM), centred on subjects around history and archaeology, and the ADPM, focused on issues related to natural resources, rural and ethnographic heritage and sustainable development. In 1986, together with the Municipality of Mértola, they promoted the creation of the "Parque Natural do Vale do Guadiana (Guadiana Valley Natural Park), with the aim of defining and consolidating a balanced management strategy for both natural and cultural heritage.

The central pillar that supports this work resides in solid bases of scientific investigation and technical preparation, with the particularity of being developed exclusively at local level. The difference from other teams lies in the fact that the overwhelming majority of project collaborators live in the municipality. They are from Mértola and have supplemented their training, received locally, with specialized studies carried out in teaching units in Portugal or abroad or, on the other hand, there are researchers from other sources allured by the strength of the project.

From the beginning, the project sought to develop a balanced asset management strategy based on the balance of four fundamental pillars: study, safeguarding, enhancement and disclosure. Pure scientific investigation was not enough; research would be useless if it were not accompanied by the preservation of heritage values and the presentation of its results to the community. In fact, the core of the project lies in dissemination, which cannot be limited to scientific divulgation in specialized journals and meetings, only accessible to a restricted

audience. It is essential to return the investment made in research to the community and justify the inconveniences caused by archaeological activity, especially the ones that occur in an urban context. In this case, to make scientific research accessible to the mainstream audience, it is necessary to translate its contents into a language understandable to everyone. Museography is the most accessible format, which does not invalidate the publishing of results for specialized audiences which could assume the form of museum catalogues.

In addition to scientific dissemination, codified in its own language and directed to a specialized audience, clear and accessible language is the only way to justify locally the ongoing work, capable of identifying the strongest cultural references and, therefore, consolidating endogenous potentialities. In the museographic dynamics, the results are not only disseminated in a more efficient and intuitive way to the general public, especially the local public, but it is also possible to attract other types of visitors, as long as this offer is properly publicized. This strategy has proven to be effective, since Mértola is currently a well-known cultural tourism destination. These visitors do not seek exotism or monumental spaces, they seek to know about a dynamic and ambitious project that, in an isolated area far from big cities, managed to include the local population and develop high quality scientific and museological proposals.

At CAM we argue that any research project or preservation excavation should aim, first, to understand and preserve, even if only through the archaeological registration as proposed by current legislation, but whenever possible it should also conserve and musealize. It is the conciliation between conservation of archaeological remains, as well as the development of projects and economic activities, which will allow us to take advantage of the one and the other. However, it is not always easy and, at times, conflicts of interest require concessions from both sides. Moreover, the management of available resources in an imaginative and flexible way will enable us to avoid consequences in the delicate balance of forces between heritage resources and the fragile local economy.

In Mértola, the heritage values to be disclosed are not just the remains found in archaeological excavations. Early on in the project, there was a clear awareness that the greater good is the historic centre as a whole: the urban structure, the layout of the streets, the traditional forms and techniques of construction, the traditional knowledge and the experiences of its people. Following this line, urban regulation mechanisms were created to prevent the “old town” from being distorted and the new urban areas from developing

architectural programs that violently collided with the landscape surroundings and that contrasted sharply with the old part of the village.

On the other hand, it would be useless to keep an historic centre empty of life unscathed, a theatrical setting of more or less cultural tourism. Undoubtedly, these objectives became more complex with the need to keep the “old town” alive, an area that, due to its own characteristics, is not very attractive for any type of economic activity, and even for residential purposes. Even more complicated is keeping alive some of the traditional activities (currently understood as intangible heritage) of difficult economic viability. Taking into account the conditions and aims of the project, we understand that combining traditional activities and dynamic museography is one of the possible ways of preserving and enhancing this secular knowledge.

The Museum of Mértola is under municipal supervision, open to partnership and collaboration with other local, national and international institutions. This is another aspect of the Mértola Museum Town project. In the construction of the various nuclei that currently comprise the Museum, various public and private institutions participated generously and, in many cases, spontaneously and tacitly, without resorting to formal agreements. The Municipality of Mértola is the public institution that legally supports the museum, with CAM, a non-profit cultural and scientific association that assumes the scientific and technical responsibility. In the development of actions and projects, this museological unit has partnered with other local institutions such as ADPM, the Cooperativa Oficina de Tecelagem (The Weaving Workshop), the Professional School ALSUD, the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Mértola and the Parish of Mértola. On the other hand, institutional collaboration is also strong with the relevant authorities, both regional and national. Some of the monuments where the museums are located are dependent on these authorities, and the museum is also part of the “Rede Portuguesa de Museus” (Portuguese Network of Museums), supervised by the Ministry of Culture.

### **The Museum of Mértola**

As already mentioned, the urban structure of the historic centre of Mértola presents itself as a place of high value in heritage, historical, plastic and experiential terms. From the beginning it was understood that the intervention philosophy would always mean a social and



patrimonial recovery of the “old town”. Although the most important vectors of expansion of the village are today outside the walls, the primitive nuclei remained the hallmark of past records and, in a way, continues to be the symbol and engine of its own touristic development. This idea helps to understand how the village is the museum itself.

In fact, historically as important as the archaeological finds that fill the exhibits are the streets, the organization of public spaces, the structuring and use of façades, the architectural volumes, the construction materials and techniques, as well as a sustained housing upgrade. In this context, the local museology project is part of a philosophy which aims, above all, to project the social and heritage recovery of the historic centre, known as the “old village”. Here museology could not distance itself from urban rehabilitation. Thus, it is easy to perceive the principle that has presided over the Mértola Museum Town project: polynuclearization, which means to organize or to install museographic nuclei in different points of the historic centre and, whenever possible, in the place of the archaeological finds.

Another fundamental principle is to understand the museum not as a finite project but as a dynamic process that interacts with the population and their cultural needs, taking advantage of specific circumstances to expand and better serve the community, which is why it's a continuously growing project of cultural tourism. Therefore, the configuration of the museum (the nuclei and its contents) changes frequently, undergoing expansions and updating at the pace of advances in scientific research. However, it is also necessary to build tools which enable us to unite the pieces of the puzzle that represent the Mértola Museum Town. For this purpose, guides, itineraries and brochures were edited (Torres et al. 2008a and 2008b) and a General Catalogue was published (Gómez, 2014a and 2014b).

Currently these are the nuclei of the Museum of Mértola:

- *Castle* – Occupying the site of ancient Roman buildings and a small, fortified neighbourhood from the Islamic Period, the Castle of Mértola dominates the entire village and serves as a reference to the noise of ancient battles and to the memory of other feats. The keep, still imposing in its formidable volume, marks the time when Mértola was, for a century, the national headquarters of the Order of Saint James. In the main room, covered by a vault with a cross with warheads, the evolution of the castle is narrated and, in the exhibition, there are objects found there; the room of the

upper floor is dedicated to the Saint James Order and its relation with the fortress itself (Boiça & Barros, 2013).

- *Alcáçova* – Interrupting the northern slope of the castle, the possible forum of the Roman city creates an artificial platform, supporting the most imposing monumental ensemble of old Myrtilis. All this artificially flattened space was supported by an underground gallery – the cryptoporticus – about 30 meters long and 6 meters high, which served as a cistern. In the Islamic period during the 12<sup>th</sup> century and part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD, this entire area was occupied by a neighbourhood that, after the Christian conquest of 1238, was completely razed to be adapted as a cemetery. This site can be visited by walking along a metallic walkway which takes the visitor to the places of greatest interest. Among these are the ruins of a 6<sup>th</sup> century AD baptistry, at the time surrounded by a beautiful set of polychrome mosaics of which some significant fragments remain (Gómez, 2008).



Figure 3 - Alcáçova and Parish Church/old Mosque seen from the Castle.  
Photo of Susana Gómez Martínez

- *Parish Church/Old Mosque* – Directly inserted into the acropolis's enclosure and integrating itself into its monumental circuit stands the parish church, a former

mosque. In the place where a Roman and later an early Christian temple once stood and where, at the end of the 12th century AD, a mosque was rebuilt from scratch, stands today the Parish Church of Mértola. From the old Almohad Mosque remain four arched doors and the mihrab, the niche where Muslims head for prayers. Soon after the conquest the mosque was Christianized and the Order of Saint James imposed its symbol on the façade. In the middle of the 16th century AD the church's roof was completely rebuilt, with its 5 naves, initially covered by polychrome woodwork, replaced by a beautiful set of vaults with an emphasis on the polynervated section of the main altar. Unlike the vaulting and the exterior spires in the Mudejar style of the late Gothic, the church's main door follows the models of the Italian Renaissance. In an adjacent space, currently musealized, archaeology has discovered the foundations of the ancient early Christian temple on which the current building stands (Macias et al. 2011).

- *Blacksmith's Forge* – This workshop, now deactivated, intends to keep the memory of one of the many professions from our past that could not resist the new technologies. In addition to the anvil and the forge with its bellows, all the tools necessary for working iron are exposed and an explanatory panel describes the location and the main operations developed by the artisan.
- *Centre for Islamic and Mediterranean Studies* – Opposite the Islamic Art Museum, in a beautiful building partially recovered, is the headquarters of CAM. This Centre has a specialized library in Islamic civilization, and a double space for temporary exhibitions; it is an important Centre for Higher Education dedicated to teaching masters and Ph.D. students studying the Islamic culture and civilization of the Mediterranean. In the part of the building that has not yet been restored, another nucleus of the Museum of Mértola is projected, that is the Memory of the Flavours of the Mediterranean.
- *Jewelry workshop* – Renewing old traditions and taking advantage of old artistic motifs, the jewelry workshop produces replicas of some archaeological materials from excavations. Archaeological memories are also the starting point for the creation of pieces where the creative imagination opens up new horizons for contemporary aesthetics. The same craft techniques and gestures shape silver and gold in a profusion of shapes and motifs inscribed in the Islamic and Mediterranean tradition.

- *Islamic Art* – Taking advantage of the spaces and volumes of the former granaries, the Casa de Bragança, a modern architectural and museographic project houses, in two floors, the most important collection of Islamic art in Portugal. Noteworthy is the ceramic collection that includes an exceptional set of artefacts decorated with “cuerda seca” glaze. The animal and plant decorative motifs became geometric or epigraphic, achieving a strong ornamental baroque style. The art of metals specializes in the casting of bronzes and perfects its technology in the manufacture of weapons. The monetary system is mainly in silver, although for reasons of prestige some small local kings mint gold coins. Gold, silver or bronze jewelry, in its drawing, cast and chiseled techniques, seem to have also come from local workshops which used metals extracted in the surroundings. All these techniques and decorative forms are represented in the museum’s exhibits. In addition to the catalogue (Torres & Macias, 2001) there is a small guide translated into English and German (Torres & Macias, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c).



Figura 4 - Museum of Mértola – Islamic Art. Photo of Susana Gómez Martínez

- *Sacred Art* – Porta da Ribeira – Built in the 16th century AD over the access door to the old port, the Misericórdia Church, today partially unaffected by worship, houses an interesting collection of Christian sacred art. The church, the sacristy and other

annexes currently serve as an exhibition space. The collection of statuary, painting and religious objects was, for the last forty years, collected from some churches in the Municipality of Mértola, given the lack of security and abandonment to which they had been subjected. Among a set of three dozen pieces carved in polychrome wood, some belong to the European schools of the 16th century and the vast majority were worked in regional workshops. The first part of the exhibition allows a virtual visit to all the parish churches, as well as a vision of the annual procession of “Senhor dos Passos”. Also on display are some pieces from old “Misericórdia” and three monumental tablets that belonged to the 16th century altars of the parish church. Among the liturgical implements on display, three important pieces in chiselled silver from the 16th century stand out: an arche/hostiary, a processional cross and a “custódia”. From the 18th century, a set of chalices and other small liturgical implements stand out (Boiça, 2001).

- *River Tower* – Leaving through the “Porta da Ribeira” towards the river and starting from the old Roman walls, there are still imposing pegs of a pier which gave access to the River Tower in late Roman times. In addition to allowing access to water without leaving the walls, this construction was an important support point in the defense of the port, not only because it could house a military garrison, but also because it controlled an iron chain that, from one bank to the other, prevented enemy boats from going upriver. Powerful skimmers resisted the violence of the winter waters. Due to its construction technique and functions, it is a unique monument in our country. A cobbled path takes the visitor to a system of tunnels and wells that in ancient times took the water from the river inside the walls of the town.
  
- *Roman House* – Under the Town Hall building is located the museum dedicated to the Roman period. Preceding underground works, an archaeological intervention uncovered the ruins of a Roman domus. The musealization of the site allowed the installation of a set of architectural fragments suggesting forms and functions from the time when the house was inhabited. Objects found on site are also exhibited and some others associated with the same cultural context (Lopes, 2012).
  
- *Weaving Workshop* – One of the oldest traditional arts in the region is certainly the weaving of wool blankets. In this workshop, where ongoing training is provided, a cooperative of weavers is responsible for keeping this tradition alive. The decorative

motifs of these blankets resemble an ornamental grammar affiliated with ancient Berber traditions, which we also find printed on archaeological materials. In the space of the workshop itself, an exhibition of old instruments related to the activity of wool and linen is organized, as well as an exhibition of fabrics made in the workshop and in the mountain villages of the county (Luzia, Magalhães e Torres, 1984).

- *House of Mértola* – Located next to the Tourism Office of Mértola, this small house is part of the most popular urban tangle which survives to this day. Two small compartments were, until a little over thirty years ago, the place where a family with five children lived. In the kitchen everyone gathered to eat and in the bedroom on the two beds everyone huddled together to sleep. Not counting some older palaces and the house of rich merchants, that was life for the approximately two thousand inhabitants squeezed in by the walls of the medieval city.
  
- *Paleo-Christian Basilica* – Under a bare shell of a modern building are hidden the ruins of a great paleo-Christian basilica, open to worship from the 5th to the 8th century AD. With three naves and opposing apses, what remains of this funerary temple is today enhanced by a museography that only suggests the main architectural lines. Most important in this museum is the paleo-Christian lapidary collection, consisting of six dozen inscribed tombstones, thirty of which are on display at the site. Antonia, Festelus and Amanda were inhabitants of the town of Myrtilis and contemporaries of Andreas, conductor of the church choir. This funerary basilica was built over a Roman necropolis, where there had already been burials from the Iron Age (6th century BC) and, in later period, it was also used as a settlement for a vast Muslim cemetery (Torres, 1993).



Figure 5 - Riverside Suburb. Photo of Câmara Municipal de Mértola

- *Riverside Suburb* – During the construction of a modern hotel, the discovery of several houses on the outskirts of the river led to the integration, inside the hotel, of one of the 12th century AD houses marked by signs of Christianization in a clearly Islamic context of Almoravid and Almohad times. A wide range of objects found during the excavations are displayed alongside the archaeological structures. In a first stage the owners looked with reluctance at the inconveniences of the integrations of the archaeological remains; however, they quickly realized the advantages of this project and adopted the name Hotel Museu (Museum Hotel) (Lopes et al., 2012).
- *Hermitage and Necropolis of Saint Sebastian* – In the courtyard of EB 2,3 ES School of Mértola, where a small hermitage dedicated to Saint Sebastian was built in the 16th century, the most significant part of a large Roman and late-Roman necropolis was excavated and turned into a museum. The cemetery carved into the rock can be visited through a metal walkway; the hermitage, completely rebuilt in a pedagogical operation with students from the Professional School Bento de Jesus Caraça, is a small museum where, among other artefacts, a gold crismon medal from the 5th century AD, found in a child's grave, can be admired (Boiça & Lopes, 1999).

- *Watermills of Guadiana* – In the vicinity of the school complex the Guadiana River is crossed by a weir where five water mills are located. Two of them, solidly vaulted to withstand the river's great floods, were adapted to the frequency of the tides. Without any musealization and far from the village, the seasonal rhythms and the floods of the Guadiana mark the rhythms of the visit.

### **The projection on the territory**

Although the greatest efforts made have focused mainly on the urban centre of Mértola, the extraordinarily large municipality has other places and archaeological sites that are worthy of attention. From the research point of view, a first survey, necessarily incomplete, was published in the form of an Archaeological Chart (Palma, 2012) and is an important instrument for the scientific management and preservation of the municipality's archaeological heritage.

Some areas of intervention were identified as priorities, both from a scientific point of view and because of the importance of preservation and enhancement. Two places are of particular interest: the São Domingos Mine and the surrounding area of Pulo do Lobo.

The São Domingos Mine was an important mining project in the Roman period. Its use was discontinued in the medieval and modern periods and, finally, it was intensively explored by English companies between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1960s the company ceased activity, leaving a desolate landscape with the open-air "corta" and a group of industrial facilities in ruins.

Despite the feeling of desolation it produces, the set is extremely attractive and masterfully exemplifies the aggressiveness of the exploitation mechanisms of the Industrial Revolution. In addition to the exceptional conditions for an industrial archaeology research project, initiated by specialists in the area, the City Council is investing in the creation of cultural infrastructures that include a small museum – the Miner House – the recovering of the mining archives and other buildings like the cine-theater, transformed into a gallery for temporary exhibitions. All this, in addition to the attractiveness of a fluvial beach and quality hotel facilities, turn São Domingos into an emerging tourist destination.



On the other hand, Pulo do Lobo is a unique geological accident, a 15 metre high waterfall from the Guadiana River, with remarkable scenic value. Around this area is organized a circuit that combines environmental and cultural heritage with the visit to two small megalithic monuments, a farm dedicated to biological agriculture and environmental education owned by ADPM, a Nature Interpretation Centre in the village of Amendoeira da Serra, and a recovered and musealized small chapel from the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD in the village of Mosteiro. The small chapel, designated as Mosteiro, has a singular archaeological importance due to the fact of being a place occupied in the Roman period by a villa, which gave rise to a small monastery from the Visigothic period, transformed into a hermitage in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and occupied until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, first as a house for a family and then as support for agricultural activities.

Acquired by the City Council, excavated by the team of Campo Arqueológico de Mértola and recovered by the students of the professional school, it exhibits marble objects for architectural decoration collected in various villages in the municipality (Lopes, 2011).

These two places were considered priorities, but there are other areas of interest that are also being worked on. In addition, the religious architecture and spirituality of the municipality was the object of an in-depth investigation (Boiça, 1998) and is awaiting evaluation processes, especially those centred on a group of chapels (Nossa Senhora da Aracelis, São Barão, Nossa Senhora das Neves e Nossa Senhora do Amparo) which represent both great heritage value and importance in the landscape.

The traditional rural architecture is also being evaluated by multidisciplinary studies (Costa, 2014) and thematic exhibitions.

The recovery of two mills, one for water and other for wind, respectively Moinho do Alferes and Moinho de S. Miguel, deserve a special mention. In the context of ethnography, a small museum was set up in the rural village of Alcaria dos Javazes as a result of the collaboration between the municipality and a private collector (Macias, 2012).

## **Other activities**

Actions to enhance heritage and create exhibition spaces must be complemented with ongoing conservation and restoration activities and monitoring of collections, heritage education and knowledge transfer activities to the community.

CAM also develops an annual program of heritage education activities which find exceptional conditions for development in the museum. That activity resulted in the creation of two teaching cases, one dedicated to Islam and other to the medieval world, and a collection of educational resources for children. Primary schools are the main partners in these actions; the secondary schools are less receptive to any activities outside the classroom due to the need to achieve the curricular goals defined by the Ministry of Education.

One of the current trends in museography is the use of sophisticated and expensive IT and technological resources that become the main attraction of museums. In our case, the scarcity of financial resources means these actions have to be taken with great caution since, normally, these technologies become obsolete rather quickly and we lack the resources for the necessary renewal and even maintenance.

However, we have developed a visit service using audio guides, a new website for the Museum<sup>31</sup> and an app that helps us define visitation circuits.

However, we conclude that existing resources of this type are less in demand than we expected. We sense a change in trend as the younger generations have always lived with the new information technologies, which hardly manage to impress them. The real experience, the contact with the original, is a more attractive experience than the virtual world. However, new information technologies do allow for more efficient management options, especially for the formulation of reconstructions of the past and for the transfer of information between the public and the museum, aspects on which we want to focus in the future.

In fact, the main wealth of the museums is, without a doubt, the collections they have, in both their quantity and quality. Except for the objects from ethnographic collections, the ones that result from archaeological activity are very fragmented in their origin. To be understood, musealization is more effective, requiring a complex and long restoration process. This task is carried out by the institution's team of conservation and restoration which, in addition to

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<sup>31</sup> [www.museudemertola.pt](http://www.museudemertola.pt)

intervening in the collection and making the objects understandable to the public, monitors their conservation and recovers objects to integrate new permanent or temporary exhibitions organized by national or international institutions.

In this context, CAM regularly promotes temporary and itinerant exhibitions, which are always accompanied by their respective catalogues. The first exhibition of Islamic artefacts in Portugal, *Cerâmica Islâmica Portuguesa*, was exhibited in 1985 at Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon (Torres, 1987), and the broad overview on this theme was shown in 1998 in the exhibition *Portugal Islâmico. Os últimos sinais do Mediterrâneo* (Torres & Macias, 1998a) at Museu Nacional de Arqueologia in Lisbon. Among the travelling exhibitions, it is worth mentioning *O Islão entre Tejo e Odiana* (Torres & Macias, 1998b), which visited more than thirty locations, *Mértola e Niebla. Na confluência de dois territórios* (Gómez & Palma, 2006), *Mértola. O último Porto do Mediterrâneo* (Macias, 2005), *Os Signos do Quotidiano: Gestos, Marcas e Símbolos no al-Ándalus* (Gómez, 2011), *Arquitetura de Mértola entre Roma e o Islão* (Gómez, Lopes & Macias, 2014) and *No Extremo do al-Ándalus. Mértola e o Guadiana* (Gómez, 2014c).

Internationally we highlight the production of *Mértola Almoravide et Almohade* exhibited in *Galerie des Oudaias* in Rabat (Marrocos; Torres, 1988), the coordination of the exhibition *Portugal / Marrocos - portas do Mediterrâneo* produced in Tânger and Rabat in 1999, by the Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses (Torres, Zouak & Macias, 1999), the collaboration in the exhibition *Lusa: a matriz portuguesa*, which took place in Brazil (Dantas, 2007), and the collaboration in the exhibition *Le Maroc Médiéval*, organized by the Louvre Museum in Paris in 2014.

### **Heritage and profitability**

When discussing the profitability of heritage, the emphasis is placed only on its touristic use, often ignoring other benefits, most of the times more structuring for the community. First of all, we must not forget that archaeological heritage is a value in itself and does not depend on other added elements such as antiquity or aesthetics. It will not be useless to remind the community that these elements, movable and immovable, are theirs, that they are often the object of theft and illegal trafficking, and that the antique business, in many cases lacking

transparency, involves considerable amounts of money. It is important we make citizens more aware that when an archaeological site is destroyed or archaeological artefacts are sold in the black market, they all have been deprived of their heritage, something that belongs to all. The dubious morality of some art and antiques dealers is now more blatant than ever in light of the sad and appalling cases of Syria and Iraq.

This is not a new situation that only feeds the final buyers, it's a global problem that urges us to isolate, discredit and penalize them.

Locally, it is heritage education and the contact with the population that can contribute the most to safeguarding the elements of the past. However, we can hardly convince the citizens to appropriate this heritage if it remains hidden by complex and encrypted scientific language. It is essential to disseminate it without delay and in clear, accessible and attractive language. The appreciation of local historical heritage is vital to dignify the values of the community, especially in rural areas, which are greatly discredited by the absolute domination of urban culture and the values of consumer individualism. When the community is aware of the value of its cultural legacy, it also becomes an identifying element of the community, increasing its self-esteem and social cohesion.

The inscription of Cante Alentejano in the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List is an excellent example of such a process. The dignifying of rural knowledge and values against the models of the big city, imposed by the media, has a powerful effect on the population's self-esteem, contributing to root individuals in a small village with little expectation of economic and cultural development, according to the points of view of urban models. This process can be part of a desired change in the trend in migratory processes which has led to the desertification of the interior of Portugal.

The different areas of work related to heritage constitute a new employment opportunity for young people, who can stay on their land working in activities other than the traditional ones (agriculture, construction and commerce). Employment in the areas of conservation and restoration, historical, artistic, ethnographic and archaeological research, tourist entertainment, hotels and restaurants or artistic activities – areas that did not exist just 30 years ago or were in imminent threat of extinction, as in the case of craft activities – is currently a perspective for the future.

Heritage also generates directly a considerable and quantifiable economic return. The development of scientific, technological and training activities in Mértola already means a considerable contribution for the local economy. A considerable group of people residing in the municipality carry out scientific and technical activities which, traditionally, were centralized in large cities, meaning the resources that would usually go to the urban areas now can be used in a rural environment. New communication technologies have made it possible to a great extent to decentralize science and technology, reducing the costs of research institutions far from the centres of power. Thus, funding from institutions such as the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT) and other central government entities are invested in the local institutions.

We also find cases, increasingly frequent, of public and private entities which come to Mértola seeking the services of specialized technicians from the local team. It is still a small contribution, but it is important from a symbolic point of view in the relations between traditional technical-scientific knowledge centres: instead of going to museums and university centres in big cities to carry out studies, conservation and restoration treatment of pieces or, simply, to carry out formative internships, private and public entities from all over the country request the services of the CAM.

In addition to direct economic profitability, the presence of highly specialized professionals contributes to another type of benefit to the community, mainly by reducing the deficit of qualified human resources, which are so scarce in the rural world. These professionals benefit from a deep knowledge of the local reality, not only from a heritage point of view, but also from a social perspective, which allows them to assess the real possibilities of cultural exploitation and the impact on the community. Even the different processes related to the Mértola Museum Town strategy provide benefits in the acquisition of services in local and regional companies, although some financing is subject to a regulation that favours large companies instead of local suppliers. This also means a significant part of the financing of these projects comes from the central government or from European financing, thus increasing extra-regional investment in the interior territory.

Training and education is another contribution to the local economy, and in Mértola there are courses in various stages. For more than 20 years the Mértola Professional School has been training specialized technicians in different areas related to heritage (archaeology, conservation and preservation, rural tourism, etc.). The CAM offers open and postgraduate

courses in several areas, in partnership with several universities (Algarve, Évora, Coimbra and Lisbon), which attract students from other regions and even from other countries. There are many young people who choose Mértola to do their internships and research work or simply to consult the bibliography available in the CAM Library.

However, we cannot fall into over-optimism. The funding of museographic structure, both in terms of initial investment and maintenance, is large and requires acrobatic exercises of imagination. Even with considerable funds from tourism, museums cannot be directly self-sustainable and assume the costs of scientific and technical activities. The economic benefits from tourism revert much more to the community than to the agents directly related to the heritage and the museums. We can consider the indices and statistics relating to the tourist activity quite satisfactory. The number of visitors registered in the museum nuclei reached in the last years 50,000; data we should consider slightly lower than the real number, which reaches its maximum peaks at Easter and in the months of July, August and September. These numbers increase in the years of the Islamic Festival of Mértola when, for four days, more than 50,000 people visit the historic centre, which is decorated as an Islamic souk.

The characterization of the public who visits Mértola is not yet systematised; however, we can identify some characteristics. On one hand, groups brought by national and international tour operators with a large number of participants do not, in most cases, take advantage of heritage resources at their disposal due to the orientations of the guides who accompany them. Another identified group is formed by families that stop over in Mértola on the way to the beaches of the Algarve. During the academic year, the number of visits guided by the staff of the museum increases; guided tours are organized in thematic circuits that are related to the contents studied at different levels. On weekends, holidays and short vacation periods, Mértola is sought by groups of families and friends who want to enjoy what there is to offer, not only in terms of heritage and museums but also other touristic and cultural activities.

In general, the individuals who visit Mértola are informed; they prepare their visit in advance, either through contacts with the Tourist Information Office or with other services which provide information, and they also make extensive use of the information available on the internet. In terms of country of origin, the Portuguese represent the majority, but we can also identify visitors from Spain, England, Germany, Holland, France, USA, Canada, Brazil and many others. In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in visitors from eastern Europe and Latin America.

An extraordinarily significant indicator of the evolution of the tourism trend is the number of beds available in Mértola. Twenty years ago there were only 3 rooms with private bathrooms for rent in the entire municipality. Nowadays, there are more than 100 in the village and many more in the small villages of the municipality, and at many times of the year there are no beds available. Even so, most visitors should be considered excursionists or short-day trippers more than those who stay overnight, which decreases the economic income.

However, the benefits for local hotels and restaurants are visible, along with an increasing number of touristic companies specialized in outdoor activities such as canoeing, boat trips, birdwatching, nature trails and hunting. In fact, the private sector has not yet fully realized the potential of this project or the business opportunities it provides.

An activity which should be analysed is the biannual Islamic Festival that attracts, in four days, around 50,000 visitors. The phenomenon of thematic festivals has grown exponentially in Portugal, giving rise to a great trivialization of these events. In the case of Mértola, some originality is maintained, privileging authenticity (bringing, for example, traders from North Africa to the souk, and ethnographic groups instead of professional companies), and cultural and scientific activities of an international level.

Regarding this festival, it is urgent to evaluate issues related to the carrying capacity of Mértola and the strategy regarding its attractiveness, since it appears that due to the high number of visitors the quality of the services offered is undervalued, with repercussions on the image of the Mértola Museum Town.



Figure 6 - 8<sup>th</sup> Islamic Festival of Mértola. Photo by Susana Gómez Martínez.

### **Final remarks**

We can conclude that all of society and any community seeks to guard and protect its most precious goods, proofs and identity documents, objects and artefacts bearing a mark or sign of collective memory. This place of shelter can and should be the museum, a sacred space capable of concentrating and synthesizing the soul of a site or territory, capable of dignifying the deepest character of the community. The gesture which transforms the insignificant piece of clay or the small buckle into an object of culture, into a sacred piece, is a demiurgic gesture, an act of collective affirmation that reinforces self-esteem and local pride. The local museum becomes more significant when it breaks down into several thematic nuclei and when these gradually include protection areas, access roads, doors and gates, walls, vegetable gardens and orchards. Especially when inside, living their life and benefiting from that past, there is an interested, collaborative and solidary population.



The final question that arises is whether this model will be able to face the challenges of the future and survive possible changes in the tastes of the tourist market or of national European Union development strategies or even of the community who owns this heritage. In any case, for now, it seems possible to build Mértola's future from its past.

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## Chapter 7

# Museology *dessous dessus* in Spain: Utopias to get out of sedation

*Óscar Navajas Corral*

### **Abstract**

The museum is a complex, polyphonic entity with an undeniable social and cultural impact. However, in the 21st century it is also a consumer product. This duality makes its raison d'être the debate between generating products for a society sedated by consumption or becoming a space to build democratic citizenship. In these pages, the evolution of social museology in Spain is presented with the aim of providing reflections that contribute to the latter.

**Keywords:** New Museology, Spain, sedation.

### **Résumé**

Le musée est une entité polyphonique complexe dont l'impact social et culturel est indéniable. Cependant, au 21<sup>e</sup> siècle, c'est aussi un produit de consommation. Cette dualité fait sa raison d'être du débat entre générer des produits pour une société assoupie par la consommation ou devenir un espace pour construire une citoyenneté démocratique. Dans ces pages, l'évolution de la muséologie sociale en Espagne est présentée dans le but de fournir des réflexions qui contribuent à cette dernière.

**Mots-clés :** Nouvelle Muséologie, Espagne, sédation

## Introduction: The museology of sedation

According to the dictionary of the Spanish language, sedation is the "action and effect of sedating", that is, from the word 'sedar', from the Latin 'sedāre', which means "to pacify, calm or soothe something or someone"<sup>32</sup>. Although the concept is usually circumscribed to the bio-health environment, in reality, it can be applied to our own dynamics into which each individual is inserted in their daily lives, and also to the current social systems themselves.

What are sedations? We live in a society of control. We have been led to believe that a bracelet (like a sports watch) will help us to take care of our health, when in reality it is a quantitative control of the population. This is what Han translates as our society having become a "performance society", an active society that has been transformed into a "doping society (...)", "brain doping" (Han, 2018, p. 67). New technologies, an accelerated, frugal, liquid life (Bauman, 2006), turns our social relations into transit highways where everything we do, and everything we are become commodities. We consume and are consumed. That, which cannot become a product, ceases to have value and visibility. Consuming and being consumed is the social sedation of the 21st century, which undermines a pedagogy for reflection and democracy and becomes a pedagogy for the market (Nussbaum, 2012).

Sedation has also reached culture, heritage and museums. Museums are part of the sedation system. They are spaces created to store and safeguard a heritage over time through uchronic (Deloche, 2010) and, in many cases, immovable narratives. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Enlightenment project of *temples of knowledge* has passed away, and the question arises as to why and for what purpose museological institutions exist and are created. Since the last decades of the 20th century, museums have become veritable cathedrals of tourist pilgrimage. Some have even been designed as key pieces for the urban (and touristic) development of large cities.

On the other hand, it is not forgotten that "cultural heritage is a space of political, social and symbolic dispute" (Hernández, 2003, p. 44), the purpose of which is to generate spaces for reflection, dialogue and the construction of thoughts. In other words, places for the construction of community and citizenship.

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<sup>32</sup> See: <https://dle.rae.es/sedar>. Accessed 20/01/2022.

## **The creation of difference**

Although we have spoken of the 21st century, the reality of museology and museums as passive places and/or immersed in the age of emptiness (Lipovestky, 2014) is not new. The vicissitudes of the twentieth century led to passive and nineteenth-century museological institutions beyond the second half of the last millennium.

The New Museology was the alternative way of conceiving the museum and traditional museology. Professionals in this discipline advocated that museums should prioritise their social function, becoming awareness-raising tools for territorial development, by delegating to the community the democratic capacity to participate in decision-making on the future of their heritage assets and their museums, i.e. a process of global pedagogy, participation and community awareness.

The New Museology was called "a whole conglomerate of initiatives aimed at overcoming the stagnation and authoritarianism of traditional museology" (Díaz Balerdi, 2009: 369). Its approaches were structured around two pillars. On the one hand, it was an organised, anti-institutional movement, with a doctrinal corpus elaborated mainly through practice. On the other hand, it was a sentiment, a vindictory, protesting, revolutionary, combative and utopian movement (Mayrand, 2009). The New Museology was more than a discipline or a museological trend, it was a movement, a spirit (Mayrand, 2009). It was, in essence, the living definition in the museum and heritage field of what counter-power means.

The truth is that if the New Museology had its high point with the creation of the International Movement for New Museology (MINOM)<sup>33</sup> in 1985 and its seed spread rapidly throughout different countries of the world, in the early 1990s its momentum began to wane. The reasons? On the one hand, the "new" approaches were already "old". Reality and utopia no longer made sense in an increasingly globalised<sup>34</sup> world. On the other hand, (traditional) museology, in general, was renewing itself, assimilating some of these "new" postulates and inserting itself as another industry of the consumer and welfare society.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.minom-icom.net/>, Accessed 14/01/2022.

<sup>34</sup> Traditional museology appropriated the concepts, even the philosophy, of New Museology, museums opened up to the public. ICOM itself adopted the adjective "social" in its official definition of museums, and new currents such as Critical Museology were born. The "adaptation" of traditional museology had a positive aspect for the New Museology: it was realised that it should continue to be that movement that should continue to renew itself and adapt to the needs of communities.

The trajectory of the approaches and philosophy of the New Museology was in clear decline. The very diverse essence of MINOM invited the coining of new monikers: community museology, sociomuseology, alter-museology, ecomuseology, etc., in what ended up being the unofficial denomination of "new museology" (Díaz Balerdi, 2010).

Today, the New Museology is still alive. In Portugal, the Lusófona University of Lisbon has a department specialising in training in sociomuseology<sup>35</sup>. The Italian territories have promoted the anthropic idea of landscape (human and/or cultural), but also the legislative aspects, creating specific regulations to regulate and promote ecomuseums<sup>36</sup>. On the Asian continent, especially in Mongolia, Korea, China and Japan, this type of approach has been promoted due to its characteristics to recover local identities and their link to the territory<sup>37</sup>. In Latin American countries, the development of community museology has been consolidated with the creation of networks, such as the *Associação Brasileira de Ecomuseus e Museus Comunitários* (ABREMC)<sup>38</sup>, the *Unión Nacional de Museos Comunitarios y Ecomuseos de México*<sup>39</sup> or the *Red Museos Comunitarios de América Latina y El Caribe*<sup>40</sup>. And at the international level, apart from MINOM, the network that acts as an "observatory" of community experiences is the *International Network of Ecomuseums and Community Museums DROPS*<sup>41</sup>, which was born in 2016 on the occasion of the Forum of Ecomuseums and Community Museums held during the ICOM General Conference in Milan.

## The New Museology in Spain

How was this New Museology implemented in Spain? Has there been a New Museology in Spain? Or more specifically, has there been a Social Museology or a social tendency of museums in the history of the institution in Spain? When we look at the construction of the approaches of the New Museology at a general level, the antecedents — its proto-history — are usually established in experiences such as the French cantonal museums of the 19th

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<sup>35</sup> See: <https://www.ulusofona.pt/doutoramento/museologia>. Accessed 14/01/2022.

<sup>36</sup> It is recommended to consult the *Mondi Locali - Local Worlds* network: <http://www.ecomusei.eu/mondilocali/>. Accessed 14/01/2022.

<sup>37</sup> An example can be found at the *Japan Ecomuseological Society (JECOMS)*: <http://www.jecomps.jp/>. Accessed 14/01/2022.

<sup>38</sup> See: <http://www.abremc.com.br/>. Accessed 14/01/2022.

<sup>39</sup> See: <https://www.gob.mx/cultura>. Accessed 14/01/2022.

<sup>40</sup> See: <https://www.museoscomunitarios.org/>. Accessed 14/01/2022.

<sup>41</sup> See: <https://sites.google.com/view/drops-platform/home>. Accessed 14/01/2022.

century, the Scandinavian open-air museums or the American natural parks of the late 19th century, the German Heimatmuseums or museums of the homeland of the early 20th century, the neighbourhood and community museums of the 1960s, etc. However, Spain, with a museological history parallel to that of the previous countries, does not appear in the specialised literature.

However, the reality is different. There were moments in our history that showed social and counter-power concerns. The disentailments of the 1830s and the subsequent creation of the *Comisiones de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos* (1844), reflected the rich and dispersed heritage that existed in every corner of the country, which benefited provincial and local museums, as well as ethnographic, identity and territorial aspects. In addition, natural and cultural history "cabinets" were set up in educational institutes through collaborative processes between teachers and students.

Without leaving this local environment, an interest in the territory and the regional began to appear. In 1871, the first anthropological society in Spain was created with the aim of promoting expressions of popular culture, which was the key to initiating regionalist studies in our country and, with it, the creation of museums that were truly territorial. All this translated into an incipient local museology that began to concern itself with a living heritage (proto-industrial) and still in use in an agrarian and rural Spain. As Xosé Carlos Sierra (1994) pointed out, art museums and archaeological museums were essentially historical, but the ethnographic museum would deal with contemporary, living cultures and their representative elements.

However, we will have to wait until the first decades of the twentieth century to see museological experiences that could be in line, both in practice and in theory, with what would become the New Museology. On the one hand, there were the open-air museum proposals of Luis de Hoyos Sainz and Julio Caro Baroja, which showed a symbiosis with international trends. On the other hand, there was the figure of Bartolomé Cossío, who imbued the *Museo Pedagógico Nacional* and the *Museo Circulante de las Misiones Pedagógicas* with a social and fraternal vision of community and territorial realities.

However, it is possible that the lack of visibility of our (museological) history is due to the war and political events that the country suffered from 1936 to 1975, and which kept it submerged for forty years in a parenthesis of international intellectual currents.



The peaceful and smooth transition to democracy meant a decentralisation of the country and the creation of a state of autonomous regions; insertion into the processes of cultural and economic globalisation; entry into the consumer, leisure and welfare society; and full membership in international political bodies and organisations.

From those years of transition to the present day, research and publications on museology and heritage have been multiplying.

The pioneering works of Aurora León (1978) and Fernando de Salas (1980) are worth mentioning, those that delve deeper into this subject such as Montserrat Iniesta (1994), Llorenç Prats (2004), Luis Alonso Fernández (1999), Iñaki Díaz Balerdi (2002), Xosé Carlos Sierra (2003), or Francisca Hernández (2006), as well as currents such as Critical Museology (Lorente, 2006), Didactic and Interactive Museography (Mestre Santacana & Ántoli, 2007), Heritage Interpretation (Morales, 2001), or Communicative Museology (García Blanco, 1999), among others — a long list that accelerates with each decade and that, in many cases, is nourished by common thoughts (Navajas Corral, 2020a).

### **From Theory to Practice: Experiences of the New Museology in Spain**

However, we cannot fail to mention those who were forerunners in the introduction of these postulates in our country, including some of them in the creation of MINON, such as Eulalia Janer, Domènec Miguel Serra, Mateo Andrés, Xosé Carlos Sierra, and shortly afterwards Jorenç Prats, Jordi Abella and Ignacio Muñoz, among others. Some of them gave rise to the first experiences that were directly linked to the postulates of the New Museology, such as the experience of Allariz (Galicia), the *Ecomuseum de les Valls d'Àneu* (Catalonia)<sup>42</sup>, *Parque Miraflores* (Andalusia) or the experience of Molinos in the current *Parque Cultural del Maestrazo* (Aragon).<sup>43</sup>

With these beginnings, and if we take a brief tour of the Spanish geography, we find truly enriching experiences that have provided a community and democratic practice in the management and socialisation of heritage and museums. In the Basque Country we can go to

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<sup>42</sup> See: <https://www.ecomuseu.com/>. Accessed 11/01/2022.

<sup>43</sup> See: <http://www.maestrazgo.org/pcm.htm> Accessed 11/01/2022.

Artziniega, the *Zerain*<sup>44</sup> *Cultural Park* or the *Gallarta Mining Museum* (Díaz Balerdi, 2010). In Galicia, we find the experiences of Vilar de Santos or Oleiros de Niñodaguaia (Sierra, 1999). In Catalonia, there are the emblematic *Museu del Ter*<sup>45</sup> and *Museu Terres de l'Ebre*<sup>46</sup>. In Andalusia, civil society promoted experiences such as the Historical Museum of Doña Mencía (Córdoba), the experiences of Loja (Granada), Carmona (Seville) and the *Riotinto Mining Park* (Huelva) (Sánchez Martínez, 2008). In the Canary Islands, the initiative undertaken by teachers at a public school in Aldea de San Nicolás de Tolentino<sup>47</sup> with the aim of creating a didactic and ethnographic experience through the pedagogical work of both schoolchildren and the adult population is noteworthy (Navajas Corral, 2020a).

As in other countries, one of the problems of understanding the reality of the New Museology and Social Museology is the complexity of recording experiences that are positioned on the frontiers of traditional museology, from a counter-power perspective. In Spain, the different types of museums of the New Museology, such as neighbourhood museums, community museums, ecomuseums, etc., do not officially exist. However, one of the few existing records concerns the emergence of ecomuseums, with around 100 experiences (Navajas Corral, 2019, 2020a). However, the fact that there are entities with the name 'ecomuseum' does not mean that the principles of the New Museology<sup>48</sup> have been adopted in all of them.

The main characteristics of most of these ecomuseums are that they have emerged with the clear intention of recovering the identity and heritage of a specific geographical environment. The gestation processes are usually vertical, by means of a political and/or administrative decision. The content of their collections and heritage assets covers a wide spectrum of heritage and cultural resources (biodiversity, archaeology, ethnography, art, intangible heritage, geology, etc.). Finally, the management and administration depend on local administrations (councils, town halls, provincial councils, etc.), or on foundations and/or associations with sufficient autonomy.

The growth of entities that have developed under the etymological umbrella of the ecomuseum in our borders can be partly explained by variables directly triggered by the

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<sup>44</sup> See: <http://www.zerain.com/> Accessed 11/01/2022.

<sup>45</sup> See: <https://www.museudelter.cat/> Accessed 11/01/2022.

<sup>46</sup> See: <https://museuterresebre.cat/> Accessed 11/01/2022.

<sup>47</sup> See: <http://www.provectolaaldea.com/>. Accessed 11/01/2022.

<sup>48</sup> Data being extrapolated from the European ECOHERITAGE project (<https://ecoheritage.eu/>) show that 119 ecomuseums have been created in Spain, of which 21 are still being planned, 6 have closed and 92 are active.

aforementioned process of transition to democracy. The political decentralisation of the country produced a diversity of regulations which adapted to the cultural and territorial diversity of the autonomous regions, and which to a large extent affected museological development and the establishment of ecomuseums in the national territory. Thus, the legislations have been nourished by figures such as sites of ethnological interest, sites of ethnographic interest, sites of industrial interest, heritage areas, cultural landscapes, cultural sites, cultural space, cultural parks, etc.

An analysis of these protection categories shows how they have sought to find formulas that make it possible to plan and manage the cultural and natural resources of a territory in a global and holistic manner, and, in most cases, with reference to the guidelines established by supra-state bodies such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe. What is certain is that these figures are closely connected with the new sensitivities and approaches that affect the protection and recovery of heritage. In all of them there is a close relationship between heritage, landscape and territory. This has meant an assimilation of concepts and methodologies linked to the New Museology.

Another variable was rural development, under the conceptual and normative framework of the European rural economic development programmes, the ERDF programmes (Navajas Corral, 2019, 2020a). The situation of local and rural Spain, with regions with low population density and a tendency towards emigration of the young population, high unemployment rates and an active population mainly employed in the agricultural sector, meant that we were creditors of a large part of the funds from these European programmes.

The implementation of this Local Development in our country led to the introduction of participatory intervention models in the territory, although in most cases they remained under governmental decisions and bureaucratic processes that resulted in the activation of heritage resources, macro-heritage, the commercialisation of products, or investment in the construction of cultural infrastructures. That is to say, more within a patrimonialisation for rent than for citizenship.

This scenario has left a variety of ecomuseum models in Spain, most of them within the institutionalisation.

We can find: (1) territorial ecomuseums, where the conception of space and time try to be intimately linked to the relationship of the community with its environment and its history; (2) ecomuseums as interpretation centres, the most abundant in Spain, such as the *Ecomuseum Molino el Pintao* (Huelva) <sup>49</sup> or the *Ecomuseo Fluviarium* (Cantabria) <sup>50</sup>; (3) ecomuseums as open-air museums, such as the *Ecomuseo de la Pizarra* (Madrid)<sup>51</sup>; (4) ecomuseums as companies, which would be close to the idea of ecomuseums<sup>52</sup>, such as the *Ecomuseo Huerta de Valoria*<sup>53</sup>.

## Social and community experiences

However, there have been experiences that were pioneers in community participation, in social awareness and cohesion, in global pedagogy, in identity and territorial construction and in social, cultural and economic development. Some have already been mentioned, such as the *Maestrazgo Cultural Park*, *Miraflores Park* or the *Ecomuseum of the Valls d'Àneu*; and others have been emerging in recent decades, such as the Ecomuseum of the *Caicena*<sup>54</sup> River (Andalusia), *La Ponte-Ecomuséu* (Asturias)<sup>55</sup>, *BIComún* (Galicia)<sup>56</sup>, or the actions of the *Casa Rey Heredia Social Centre* (Andalusia)<sup>57</sup>. To complete this, and perhaps as a sign of the "good health" of Social Museology in Spain, mention should be made of the holding of the 20th MINOM Workshop (Lugo, 2020), whose motto was based on the Santiago de Chile Declaration and Bureau, and which has given rise to the birth of MINOM-Spain<sup>58</sup>.

I will only focus on one of the current experiences that proposes processes of social innovation on heritage and territorial management, as well as recovering spaces for dialogue between agents: administrations, institutions, companies and citizens, with the aim of

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<sup>49</sup> See: <https://www.avamonte.info/guiapractica/ecomuseo-molino-del-pintado/>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>50</sup> See: <https://fnvh.org/centros-de-interpretacion/fluviarium/>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>51</sup> See: <https://www.patones.net>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>52</sup> Ecomuseums were born in Canada as an offshoot of ecomuseums, but linked to the creation of quality products for the cultural and creative industries. See: Simard, C. (1991): Economuseology, a profitable neologism. In *Museum*, no. 172 (vol. XLIII, no. 4), pp. 230-233.

<sup>53</sup> See: <http://www.lahuertadevaloria.com/>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>54</sup> See: <http://www.ecomuseoriocaicena.es/>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>55</sup> See: <https://laponte.org/>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>56</sup> See: <https://bicomun.org/>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>57</sup> See: <http://www.acampadadignidadcordoba.org/>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>58</sup> See: <http://www.minom-icom.net/noticias/declaracion-lugo-lisboa-galego-castellano-portugues>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

generating a critical and shared culture in decision-making on the future of communities and territories. I am referring to *La Ponte-Ecomuséu*.

La Ponte is a social initiative that arose from the concerns of a group of people from Los Valles del Oso (Asturias). It is a self-managed project that receives no official aid or subsidies, and its premise is community cooperation. The Ponte-Ecomuséu is conceived as an element of interpretation of this territory and an engine to promote research, dissemination and conservation of cultural heritage. Its vocation is to serve the community and contribute to endogenous and sustainable development.

Among the actions they have carried out in their initiative, the enhancement of a shelter with cave paintings declared an Asset of Cultural Interest (BIC), which was closed, was the one that started this "action-pretex". The project and the application for its public use caused some uncertainty in the administration itself, as there was no precedent for transferring the management of the use of a BIC to a cultural association. Now another initiative, from another association, has requested something similar to what was done by La Ponte, and the administration has used its case to resolve the situation positively. The important thing is to be aware, especially in the times we live in, that there is a link between the administration and society, that they are not two isolated worlds; and that we must also be aware of the responsibility we have with this relationship — lost — and with heritage<sup>59</sup>.

La Ponte is a permanent laboratory of ideas and actions, a "social enterprise of knowledge" that uses parameters of the business environment within an economic rationale, that works with a model of community participation and communal profit-making purpose, and that aims, through knowledge, to apply traditional and academic knowledge to a concrete reality (Alonso, Fernández & Navajas: 2015).

### **Contributions of the New Museology in Spain against sedation**

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<sup>59</sup> At present they have managed to recover a country house and granary (ethnography), the church of San Romano (Romanesque art), the church of Santo Adriano de Tuñón (Asturian pre-Romanesque art), the Palaeolithic shelter of Santo Adriano (cave art), the cave of El Conde (cave art), water mills, a medieval bridge, a washhouse, lime kilns, traditional architecture, livestock buildings in the middle and high mountains, the Natural Monument of Desfiladero de Las Xanas, archaeological sites and sites of iron mining.

Lipovetsky noted that "it is jokingly said that in Europe a museum is inaugurated every day and that the anniversaries of the great and small historical events that are celebrated are already countless" (2014, p. 90). We find ourselves in an era of patrimonial and museological furor, so much so that it is difficult to assimilate what their objective and *raison d'être* is. They are more like ephemeral sedations to calm the hullabaloo of national identities and commemorative claims than projects for social transformation.

It is precisely at this juncture that a New Museology that reclaims the spaces of counter-power to confront the instituted processes of social sedation is most necessary. The Spanish museological panorama from the perspective we have developed in these pages can contribute with the following variables (Navajas Corral, 2020b):

1. *Militancy*. Involvement in the project is an act of militancy; it becomes part of the life of those who become involved.
2. *Community*: It is the sum of active and passive communities. Without them the project is meaningless, even dissonant voices are important.
3. *Participation*. It should be understood as shared management between society, administrations and/or entities. It is about recovering a dialogue lost through years of indirect democracy.
4. *Heritage*. Cultural and natural heritage is a social and political construction. It must be understood as a collective, common good, where responsibility lies with both administrative agents and the community, promoting collaborative formulas.
5. *Innovation*. Innovation is a way of recovering a fundamental aspect of the human sciences. It is the way to take advantage of the interrelationships of the community, its ideas, approaches, concerns and views on its environment.
6. *Organisation*. Participation implies a decentralisation of the organisation of a community experience: assembly groups with autonomous capacity for action within a global project: research, didactics, socialisation, conservation, etc.
7. *Development*. This variable is exemplified by *La Ponte-Ecomuséu*, which defines itself as a "social enterprise of knowledge", i.e. an experience that "uses parameters of the business environment within an economic rationality". Social, because the model with which it operates is based on community participation and its aims are not for profit but communal. And knowledge because science and technology are central, as it seeks to apply knowledge from the fields of history, archaeology, heritage sciences, ethnography, or popular knowledge, as well as to promote new research (Alonso,

Fernández and Navajas Corral, 2015). It is an integral management of heritage, seeking to generate economic activity, transfer and innovation, where the results are not measured by data on income and visits, but in the creation of an active and inclusive community (ibid.).

## **Conclusions**

The New Museology was, and Social Museology is, above all, a movement, ever-changing, as well as a revolutionary and rebellious sentiment. It possesses within itself a variety of solutions for different social realities that make it an essential tool for social transformation.

It is constructed as a cyclical utopia. A utopia as an engine for the creation of community action projects, whether they are called ecomuseums, community museums, territorial museums, etc., or let's just call them museums. This cyclical process is similar to the stone that Sisyphus had to push again and again to the top of a hill. Social Museology tries to ensure that the stone (the utopia) of Sisyphus does not remain at the top of the hill but seeks new ways to climb so that it is always a space of innovation for society, its needs and its problems.

As Marc Augé (2012, p. 20) pointed out, the individual is, from childhood onwards, continually crossing and constructing borders. Being aware of this is the essence of this museology of difference. This is what constitutes social and community experiences, tools of counter-power, to confront the sedations of our societies.

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## Chapter 8

# The ecomuseum in territorial co-design strategies

*Giuseppe Reina*

### **Abstract**

Several experiences in progress in various countries have shown that it is possible to promote from below innovative cultural projects such as ecomuseums, tools of community interaction that aim to re-signify the territory as a privileged area of human-nature relations, as a place of knowledge of local communities, as a space to start self-sustainable local development processes. In Italy they have been promoted since the second half of the 1990s on the initiative of territorial committees and have become, in the context of the crisis of the regulation of local politics, the reference model for a new form of horizontal *governance* for the elaboration of shared action strategies.

**Keywords:** ecomuseums, co-design, commons

### **Résumé**

Plusieurs expériences en cours dans divers pays ont montré qu'il est possible de promouvoir par le bas des projets culturels innovants tels que les écomusées, outils d'interaction communautaire qui visent à re-signifier le territoire comme espace privilégié des relations homme-nature, comme lieu de connaissances des communautés locales, en tant qu'espace pour lancer des processus de développement local autonomes. En Italie, elles sont promues depuis la seconde moitié des années 90 à l'initiative des comités territoriaux et deviennent, dans le contexte de crise de la régulation des politiques locales, le modèle de référence d'une nouvelle forme de gouvernance horizontale pour l'élaboration de politiques partagées. stratégies d'actions.

**Mots-clés:** écomusées, co-conception, commons

## The sense of places

Why do communities feel the need to reconstruct the territorial events that led to the current configuration of place? Possibly we feel the need not to end up in the indistinct sea of anonymous places, in the subjection to the media power that homogenizes and flattens everything, and instead to recognize that our origins have historical references to which to refer to claim our identity (Turri, 2008). The collective sense of place is still traceable in the symbolic meaning of spatial organization, offering the opportunity—starting from their intrinsic comprehensibility—to define new ecosystem interrelations of territorial phenomena (Rombai, 1990). An important aspect to understand why the immaterial components are studied in the mechanisms of formation of the territory is the rediscovery after many years of Dardel's work *L'Homme et la Terre: Nature de la Réalité Géographique (Man and the Earth, nature of geographical reality, first published in 1952)*, where he reveals the hermeneutic value of geographical research. He emphasizes that “the earth is not a brute datum to be taken as it is given” but “it is a structure to be deciphered”, a role recognized as the human dimension through which a specific existential conception detects the relationships between man and the earth (Dardel, 1952).

Research through temporal deconstruction will eventually lead us to come across what are the material testimonies of imprinting, the first actions of adaptation of man to a natural context (Turri, 2002). While recognizing in this gesture a sort of determinism, in reality we can highlight a relationship of “mediation” of man who interprets environmental messages according to his own culture (Berqhe, 2009). From the initial moment on, in the multiformity of the ways of acting of *homo geographicus*, a process of territorial complexification is carried out according to three orders of control: a constitutive moment that develops according to some consequential acts (denomination, the symbolic plan; reification, the material plan; structuring, the organizational plan); a configurative moment, where the understanding of the territory in attributing new values passes through a conceptualization able to recognize a theoretical meaning (of landscape, place, environment); finally, the ontological moment, in which territorial action is one of the forms of “a priori” understanding of the world (Turco, 2016). Territorial semiosis is an implicit process of construction of “sense”, recursively elaborated in its material arrangements (ecosphere) and in its symbolic implications (semiosphere) by the community, thus difficult to interpret by external (heteroscopic) visions (Dematteis, 1995).

Faced with the speed with which the territorial alterations of the constitutive characters follow one another, historical heritage risks becoming in a hyperfunctionalized space the only resilient element to regenerate the territorial interrelations of the local *milieu* (Besse, 2008). It is clear that the critical issues represented cannot be overcome by the adoption of more restrictive constraints, but by proactive actions to take charge of the community of territorial commons (understood both as individual or area elements, and as a system of spatial and cultural relations), implementing regeneration processes that guarantee a constant and interactive verification of ecological sustainability, both social and cultural.

In this sense, the territory, the result of long-lasting coevolutionary processes between anthropic civilizations and the environment, is a stratified deposit of material and cognitive sediments that are configured as a collective heritage; therefore, they are "common goods" par excellence, which can be placed at the center of the experimentation of alternative models of valorization (Magnaghi, 2012).

A twist to the contemporary debate on the social value of heritage is certainly attributed to the "Faro Convention" on the value of cultural heritage for society, signed in 2005 by the members of the Council of Europe, which gives communities a proactive role in taking care of cultural heritage. Ratified by Italy in 2020, it states that for the enhancement of heritage, regardless of who owns it as a 'common good', there must be the full involvement of the communities through a governance participated in by all public and private actors defined in article 2, "heritage community", consisting of "a group of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage, who wish, in the context of public action, to support and transmit [it] to future generations" (Donadieu, 2014).

In this regard, in "heritage studies" we analyze the social phenomenon of building the patrimonial value of a community, in the search for cultural elements to which to attribute a meaning to recognize oneself in the past, evaluate the present and share future objectives (Harvey, 2001). It may be of considerable importance to ask how the interpretation of the past influences our understanding of the present, and what consequences knowing the present can cause in planning for the future.

One of the scenarios debated by the humanities is that museums should not be aimed exclusively at the reconstruction of memories, but should be places where visitors define new "cultural meanings": the history of civilizations does not act passively on the consciences of

individuals but influences choices according to present circumstances (Middleton & Edwards, 1990). Integrating protection, enhancement, cultural identity, stimulating participation and creating a relationship between territorial heritage and development represent the new frontier of the museum that has implications in the territory.

### **The idea of "museum"**

The word museum comes from the Greek "*museion*", the sacred place to the Muses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosine, goddess of memory. The first testimony of the *Museum*—the building wanted by Ptolemy I Sotere in the third century BCE in Alexandria, Egypt, considered the greatest cultural institution of the Hellenic world—we owe to the description of the geographer Strabo (who lived at the turn of the first century BCE/first century CE). With over 500,000 texts preserved in his library it was not a place of worship but of study, research, conservation and re-elaboration of the cultural heritage of ancient peoples (Durant, 1998). This term in the humanities, with the *Museum of Paolo Giovio* in Como in 1543, renews its ancient value as a place where a process of knowledge is elaborated.

A misinterpretation of the word "museum" recalls the concept of a specialized institution, linked to an idea of a dedicated, closed place, in which communities are visitors before actors and creators of culture, referring to an idea of custody of collections before that of active and participatory fruition of cultural heritage (Jalla, 2011). The political upheavals and protests of the late 1960s and 1970s also profoundly influenced the field of museology; contemporary critics defined the museum as "a symbolic operator belonging to power groups" (Drugman, 1982). The result was the theory that aimed at a museum "open to the outside" (*eclate*, exploded), outside the walls of a building, which broke what had been the classic schemes of organization and in which the community now finds itself having a fundamental role, constituting it and also representing its ultimate goal. The museologists Peter Davis and Kazuoichi Ohara managed in 2004 to define in a complete way that innovative movement of the late 1960s that takes the name of "New Museology" – a process of the application of democracy to the world of museums, in fact bringing them back to their original dimension (Maggi, 2005). With this brief statement, the two experts wanted to enhance the contribution of the social sciences, highlighting what was called "the fourth dimension of the museum", referring to the creation of citizenship. Inserting himself in this debate, the geographer Lucio Gambi (1981) suggested to the Italian regional administrations that they should establish

museums of rural society, enhancing the structures of peasant life as a school of historical consciousness. This role attributes to "museums" what is now called "heritage interpretation", decisive for the institutions involved in increasing cooperation with institutions belonging to different types, experimenting with new cultural tools and the expression of community cooperation (Clifford, 1999).

### **The ecomuseum between territory and community**

It is in this dynamic of renewal and reflection on the idea of museum that the term "ecomuseum" was coined in the 1970s, which since its birth in France has now become an institution present in many European countries (especially France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Eastern Europe), and non-European (especially Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Japan and recently China), with the growing interest of local communities. As agreed by the national coordination of ecomuseums in the Strategic Manifesto of 2016 (EMI, 2016), - Ecomuseums are configured as participatory processes of recognition, management and protection of local heritage for the purposes of sustainable social, environmental and economic development; design identities through which to reconnect techniques, cultures, productions, aspirations of a homogeneous territory to its cultural heritage and its specificities; creative and inclusive paths based on the active participation of the inhabitants and the collaboration of organizations and associations.

Since the 1990s in Italy, in the context of the crisis of the regulation of local politics, the ecomuseum has been the subject of increasing attention by those who had been entrusted with the elaboration of the new cohesion policies (EU) and it has seen the involvement of different decentralized institutional levels ranging from the regional or interprovincial up to the municipal scale. After the experiment of the Piedmontese law (1995), a growing number of regions adopted to recognize the multiplicity of territorial processes in place, a specific legislation for ecomuseums: Trento (2000), Friuli Venezia Giulia (2006), Sardinia (2006), Lombardy (2007), Umbria (2007), Molise (2008), Tuscany (2010), Puglia (2011) Veneto (2012), Calabria (2012) and Sicily (2014), Lazio (2017), Basilicata (2018). On the basis of these laws, minimum regional requirements have been defined, selection tools that support the most dynamic and participatory ecomuseums, which have distinguished themselves for their high quality demonstrated in influencing the territorial processes in place. Other regions (Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Marche) have chosen different methods for the

identification and financing of ecomuseum realities, using sector laws on cultural heritage. In October 2007, with the approval of the "Charter of Catania" by the members of the "National Coordination of Ecomuseums", a fundamental concept was reaffirmed, present in all the regulations on ecomuseums approved subsequently, in emphasizing that the regions play a role in *recognizing* existing practices and do not *establish* them: "Ecomuseums must be recognized by the regions on the basis of participatory practices promoted by local communities and not established by autonomous choice of government bodies" (Reina 2014).

If the regional recognition has allowed ecomuseums to be privileged tools for planning territorial cohesion policies, whose transversality was highlighted in the update of the Piedmontese law (2018), they have also revealed operational limits for the difficult interdepartmental dialogue (economic development, agriculture, tourism, environment), being laws hinged in the departments of cultural heritage. It is therefore necessary to reflect more deeply on the factors that have determined the implementation of over 100 ecomuseums throughout the national territory, and how the latter, if duly interpreted, can acquire a strategic role in the dynamics of future governance of local development.

A museum, therefore, is strongly integrated into the territory and expression above all of a community, a syntactic tool for the self-representation of a discourse that narrates the *genius loci* of connection of the material and immaterial components, which the ecomuseum catalogs and protects, proposing them as a recognized archive for the ecosystem planning of the territories (de Varine, 2005).

In particular, the ecomuseum adopts for the territory a new reticular and dynamic interpretative model made up of different cataloguing subsystems, with the aim of decomposing and analyzing the different elements that characterize them and re-proposing them in a unitary and organic vision arising from a continuous collective reflection that pushes them to think of new solutions made by a network of interactions, of reciprocity and exchange of interests between contextual knowledge and expert knowledge (Reina, 2014).

To this end, the organization of the ecomuseum is divided into a relationship of interdependence with human activities, whose space for interpretation is an organic system of fixed stations and paths, which has as its flywheel a physical structure of reference, from which come the itineraries for the areas of relevance, identified by previous focus groups with the various territorial actors. In this sense, the territorialist approach proposed by



ecomuseum design places at the center of museum functions the recomposition of sectoral knowledge based on the interconnection of knowledge and on the value of the territorial heritage by the subjects who reinterpret it as a collective resource. As de Varine (2005) writes, the ecomuseum is characterized by the territory, the heritage and the population, which are opposed to the classical museum components identified in the collection, property and public (Table 1).

	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>MATERIALS</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>
<b>MUSEUM</b>	building	collections and documents	experts and visitors
<b>ECOMUSEUM</b>	territory	tangible and intangible heritage	inhabitants

Table 1 - difference between the museum and the ecomuseum (de Varine 2005)

An ecomuseum strategy, to reflect the identity of the place, must aim to synthesize it in a symbolic representation in which the local community can recognize itself, adopting it in individual and collective use, as an expressive synthesis of the specificity of its territory. The ecomuseum must, in fact, represent a shared territorial project, building a vision that orients individual and collective action, channeling territorial planning towards a self-sustainable competitiveness, firmly anchored to the identity dimension of the place. It is these considerations that lead us to argue that the ecomuseum is an activity aimed at increasing and orienting the production of "sense" (conscious, planned, meaning and representation practice), linking itself to the ability of communities to identify the "invariants" and structural rules that keep alive the identity of the territories, adapting them to current contexts to create a line of interaction between generations and contribute to triggering dynamics of "change".

Alongside significant experiences undertaken, there is, in terms of territorial repercussions, the failure of others, attributable to a reductive use of ecomuseum policies, in which a misinterpretation has been given with a trivialization of the term "ecomuseum". This last definition has been improperly attributed—to thematic visitor centers of protected natural areas, to environmental and historical-cultural itineraries, to ethnographic museums—which by structure have a very different approach from the original and correct definition of ecomuseum, especially for the absence of an articulated strategic framework or a marginal involvement of local communities. The mistake is to consider the ecomuseum not as a policy, but as a marketing operation aimed at creating a brand representative of the territorial qualities and supporting the competitiveness of the local offer. The risk is not to be able to grasp the phenomenon in its entirety and not to attribute relevance to the link with the territorial identity or, more correctly, with the identity projection of the place. On the contrary, it is precisely the link between ecomuseums and territorial identity – the central moment of the geographical reflection – that constitutes the interpretative key to evaluate previous experiences and identify the ways in which ecomuseums can take on a propulsive role in the processes of development of the territory. In the construction of the ecomuseum, therefore, the need emerges to follow a path that is guided, but at the same time includes the participation of the local community as a subjective component of the milieu, so that the essence of the identity of the place is duly represented in its symbolic, functional and design values – "dynamic projection of the territorial self" – and a social construct conceived and shared by the community is created (Turco, 2018).

### **Ecomuseums and local actors**

The ecomuseum is called to play, far from a separate and self-referential body, the role of collector of planning, incubator and promoter of new participatory practices, control room for concrete initiatives of territorial regeneration. It acts as a hinge between administrators, civil society and economic operators. Aimed at structuring a process of individual and collective empowerment on the commons, the ecomuseum commits local administrators and communities to build a more responsible socio-institutional interaction in taking care of the living territorial heritage (de Varine, 2017). The interactive approach promoted by ecomuseum planning defines a critical knowledge of the territory that subtracts decisions from bureaucratic discretion, returning them to the sharing of scientific knowledge, the participation of the population and the opportunities for co-planning of social actors acting

on the stage of local development for the collective elaboration of the statutory practices of future living.

In this way ecomuseums have demonstrated how the intelligibility of the territory can condition the life of individuals and the development of societies towards advanced conditions of well-being in socializing the use values of the local heritage (Settis, 2012).

Ecomuseums have contributed to structuring "community partnerships", assuming a political function of active citizenship in participating in the discussion and influencing public decision-making, just as they have fulfilled the function of raising awareness and mobilizing the territory and its excellences.

In general, it is possible to recognize the specific capabilities of ecomuseums, ranging from fostering relations between different actors in the territories to accompanying these relational processes, up to the ability to mediate and give continuity over time to partnerships, thanks to the rootedness and continuity of their presence in the territory.

Intended to be structured as a coordination of a network of decentralized bodies in the area, the ecomuseum is proposed as a tool for actions oriented towards self-sustainability, innovation and sharing for:

- empowering the community in a network logic of the shared management of common goods (function of increasing the quality of knowledge);
- knowing how to involve transversally both entities and subjects in participatory practices for ecosystem actions oriented to the circular economy (function of complexification of the design process);
- the active involvement of weak subjects who are less able than others to access the system of political representation (empowerment function);
- intercepting social capital by increasing the ownership of policies and activities promoted in defense of the common goods (effectiveness function);
- the promotion of integrated processes to achieve the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Justice (sustainability function).

All this with the awareness that the ecomuseum conquers on the ground the legitimacy of both social actors and local authorities, satisfying the expectations of the community. This

means for the ecomuseums themselves to face the challenge of supporting the activated paths over time; to capitalize on these relationships, experiences, and capabilities; to bring out and enhance local resources and skills; to get involved positively with other actors by giving more space to analysis, self-evaluation, reflection, and debate; and to be at their service, open to internal and external comparison.

### **Ecomuseum co-design. Final remarks**

The ecomuseum requires expert figures, coordinators, connoisseurs of the territorial relational fabric, who alongside facilitators are not limited to mediation for the identification of the local *milieu* but know how to seek good practices of community planning that produce creative solutions identified by the "talent of the places". In line with the community strategic planning (EU) based on place-based policies of multi-level local co-design, the experimentation of the ecomuseum methodology promoted in the Italian regions aims at the implementation of a network governance to system at, in a continuous multi-actor comparison, the endogenous heritage most responsive to the needs and objectives of the inhabitants. In this way, new self-regulatory forms are experimented on a performative territory that recognizes itself in a shared *governance* process for the activation of *subversive* actions of change aimed at reconnecting all its material and immaterial components towards an ecosystem rebalancing.

In particular, in the ecomuseum process the community becomes aware that environmental facts do not have a predefined relevance in and of themselves, but acquire a positional value within the system of stratified relationships in which they are placed, bringing local complexity and specificity back into a single strategic design (Dematteis, 1995). Reconnecting to de Varine's scheme, focusing more on actions than on the endowments to ecomuseums, three areas of priority interest are recognized: attention to places and territorial heritage, participation, and strategic planning.

Ecomuseum design is structured through a participatory path on several phases, which should lead not only to the acquisition of cognitive elements with the identification (cognitive framework), but also to the definition of strategic criteria with the recognition (statute of the places), through a plan with a recognized institutional framework of statutory rules with the transmission (design strategy), establishing a pact between the administrations, the

landscape producers and the *stakeholders*, as a precondition of a process of enhancement of the territory from below.

### *Discovery*

For the identification of the territorial heritage in ecomuseum design, "community maps" have been considered by the majority of Italian ecomuseums, the privileged tools for participatory inventory, collection, and self-representation from the point of view of the communities, to be flanked / superimposed on classical tools (considered more objective) of territorial analysis (Clifford et al., 2006).

### *Knowledge*

The treatment of the "territorial heritage" requires, in order to use as resources the values identified by collective work practices, the construction of cognitive frameworks able to interpret and analyze them in an integrated form. The research to represent the identity of the ecomuseum areas has materialized in the experimental construction of the "atlases of territorial heritage", specific tools for interpretation and representation of synthesis of the cognitive frameworks that highlight the interrelationships of the "structural invariants", constitutive elements of the territorial specificities (Morrazzoni, 2013).

### *Transmission*

A next step after the recognition, description and representation of the identity of the place through the selection of its invariants is the shared construction of the "statute of places", a corpus of rules, constraints and prescriptions with which the plans and projects of transformation of the territory are measured. The construction of the statutes necessarily requires a long participatory process, which leads to a shared self-recognition of the rules of use and transformation of the territory in the collective interest through the "local action plans". The construction of strategic scenarios, thus articulated in objectives, strategies and actions, has in social production the guarantee of their feasibility (Magnaghi, 2012).

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## Chapter 9

# The 50 years of ecomuseology celebration in Italy

*Raul Dal Santo, Silvia Dossena, Lucia Vignati*

### **Abstract**

Italian ecomuseums are sons of a dream, of the Italian Republic Constitution, and of intuitions about the museums of the future. Italian ecomuseums empower communities to an effective conservation and sustainable use of the local heritage and in particular the cultural landscape. In 2021 through the celebration of the 50th anniversary of ecomuseology, the network of Italian ecomuseums confirmed its commitment to helping "museums of the future" to work together for the integral development of their communities and the planet.

**Keywords:** landscape, ecomuseum, social impacts, participation, celebration

### **Résumé**

Résumé : Les écomusées italiens sont les fils d'un rêve, la Constitution de la République Italienne et des intuitions sur les musées du futur. Les écomusées italiens donnent du pouvoir aux communautés en les sensibilisant à une conservation effective et des usages durables du patrimoine local et en le paysage culturel.

En 2021, à travers la célébration du 50e anniversaire de l'écomuséologie, le réseau des écomusées italiens a confirmé son engagement à aider les "musées du futur" à travailler ensemble pour le développement intégral de leurs communautés et de la planète.

**Mots-clés :** paysage, écomusées, impacts sociaux, participation, diversité, célébration.



## **Introduction**

Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? Answering these questions has never been more important than today!

The Italian ecomuseums came from a national dream: the Italian Republic Constitution. We can explain cultural institutions such as the ecomuseums through the Italian Constitution: The practice of active citizenship which, according to the principle of subsidiarity (art. 118 of the Italian Constitution), is aimed at the care of landscape, heritage, environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, also in the interest of future generations (art. 9); it contributes to the material and spiritual progress of society (art. 4), and to the full development of the human person (art. 3.2) (Dal Santo, 2019).

Italian ecomuseums also come from an intuition of 1971 about the museums of the future: the museum as a tool to manage living heritage not only for, but also with the community. This is also the same dream of the “integral museum” of the Mesa Redonda of Santiago de Chile in 1972 (de Varine, 2017).

After so many years since the beginning of these dreams, the Italian ecomuseums have put these dreams into practice, assumed the role of the museums of the future and responded to the communities' needs as determined by today's crises.

This is the reason that, since 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the “museums of the future” are facing new challenges and seizing these crises as an opportunity to respond to the local communities' need for change with a global vision.

In fact, the insights of the past and the “creativity of the Muses” can help to recover the collective memory of the community to create a public vision and consensus regarding the challenges of the 21st century (Worts 2016).

Creativity, memory and public vision are able to make changes if they produce actions in the presence of a breeding ground. According to Hugues de Varine, living heritage is the humus, the breeding ground, and the root of the future. Everybody should take charge of it, through a voluntary process of governance of cultural, social and economic change, rooted in living heritage, with the prospect of sustainable local development (de Varine, 2005). Therefore,

both a breeding ground, the cultural heritage, and permanent changes of the present are necessary to make dreams real.

The young generations who strike in the street are calling for radical and timely changes for the survival of humankind on the planet. Especially today more than ever, our communities and our planet need the museums of the future.

### **Italian Ecomuseums Network**

Since the 1990s, Italian ecomuseums have been working to answer the needs of society. In the 30 years of their existence, laws on ecomuseums have been developed in 13 regions and in an autonomous province, various opportunities for interaction and debate have been organized nationally and internationally by the global-local network since 2007 and since 2014 by the network of Italian ecomuseums (EMI). EMI is a community of practice that in 2016 designed and adopted the Strategic Manifesto of Italian ecomuseums (Dal Santo & Vignati, 2017).

The Strategic Manifesto summarizes the experience gained within the network of Italian ecomuseums. It is an evolutionary document, aimed at developing the ecomuseum movement in Italy and at explaining the relationship between ecomuseums and the cultural landscape.

With the Italian Manifesto, ecomuseums chose to define themselves as: participatory processes that recognize, manage and protect local heritage in order to promote sustainable social, environmental and economic development. Ecomuseums develop creative and inclusive practices aimed at the cultural growth of local communities, based on the active participation of people and the collaboration of stakeholders such as institutions and associations.

As such, their primary objective is to re-establish correspondence between techniques, cultures, productions and resources of a homogeneous landscape and the local cultural heritage. This allows everyone to better understand the relationship between the landscape and local identity. Furthermore, the ecomuseums collaborate with museums, associations, cultural institutions, as well as with other actors of heritage protection at the regional and

national level. They bring their specific experience and expertise in heritage and landscape management to the public. (Dal Santo, et al., 2018)

The Italian ecomuseums acquired common instruments and methodologies that are described in the Manifesto: participatory inventory of cultural heritage and landscape but also the community and landscape maps, the river contract, the statutes of places, the short and local supply chains, training, participatory paths, landscape days, the facilitation process, the empowerment process, interpretation and narration and cooperation agreements<sup>60</sup>.

## **Ecomuseums 2.0**

The Lombardy Region and the Piedmont Region in recent years approved the second generation of laws<sup>61</sup> on ecomuseums in two different ways: the Lombardy Region in the form of a framework law that covers all the cultural institutes including ecomuseums; the Piedmont Region with a law dedicated exclusively to ecomuseums. The common themes emerging from the new laws are:

- the role of ecomuseums in the care, management, enhancement and conservation of the living cultural and landscape heritage.
  
- the need for a system to monitor achieved results and for maintaining the minimum requirements for regional accreditation.

### *Cooperation for sustainable development*

Italian ecomuseums organized the first forum of ecomuseums and community museums inside the ICOM general conference, held in Milan in 2016<sup>62</sup>. They also contributed to the design of the draft resolution on community museums, approved at the ICOM general

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<sup>60</sup> Details are available in English at <https://sites.google.com/view/drops-platform/tools/italian-toolkit>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>61</sup> Details are available in English at <https://sites.google.com/view/drops-platform/tools/italian-toolkit/lombardy-ecomuseums>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>62</sup> Details and proceedings are available in English at <https://sites.google.com/view/drops-platform/forums/forum-2016>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

conference held in Kyoto in 2019. This resolution highlights the role of ecomuseums and community museums in achieving the United Nations 2030 development goals and in particular climate justice. In the same year, the Italian network approved an amendment to the Strategic Manifesto with which the Italian ecomuseums undertake to further promote the objectives of safeguarding, caring for, enhancing and accessing the landscape and the natural and cultural heritage, both material and intangible, and their role for the environmental, social and economic development of communities, the achievement of the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and climate justice.

### *Italian Ecomuseums today*

Ecomuseology arrived in Italy in 1990, when the Ecomuseo della Montagna Pistoiese was created. After 30 years of Italian ecomuseology in 2021, the network of Italian ecomuseums in collaboration with the Damia team of the Politecnico di Milano updated the previous census and identified 244 institutions that define themselves as ecomuseums. 141 of them are officially recognised by the competent regional administration with the common trait of a strong community involvement towards an effective preservation of local heritage<sup>63</sup>.

According to this census the ecomuseums are distributed as follows in all the Italian regions:

- 151 ecomuseums in Northern Italian Regions (61.9 %) Valle d'Aosta, Piemonte, Liguria, Lombardia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia-Romagna;
- 47 of them in Central Italian Regions (19.3%) Toscana, Umbria, Marche, Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise;
- 46 in Southern Italian Regions (18.8%) Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia.

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<sup>63</sup> Details are available in Italian at <https://sites.google.com/view/ecomuseiitaliani/chi-siamo>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.



Figure 1 - Number of ecomuseums in each Italian Region in 2021

## **Italian ecomuseums and Covid-19 Pandemic**

In 2020, due to the pandemic, the difficulties of the ecomuseums increased, but through networking at the national and international level, the Italian ecomuseum network discussed and accepted contemporary challenges and confirmed the goals to achieve.

During the pandemic, Italian ecomuseums mourned many friends and collaborators, especially the elderly, precious custodians of intangible heritage. Many others died and communities are now poorer. Ecomuseums had to suspend festivals and meetings that for many years contributed to bringing the community heritage to life. Furthermore, ecomuseums were not able to continue their usual contribution to the education of younger generations.

Italian ecomuseums have not been spectators and have not closed their work (Rossi, 2020); they experimented with new methods to stay close to the reference communities and strengthened regional, national and international networks, for example by collaborating with other ecomuseums around the world through the Drops international platform for ecomuseums and community museums, managed by Italian ecomuseums starting in 2017.

The Cooperation Charter “Distant but united drawn up by the ecomuseums and community museums of Italy and Brazil” is one of the most extraordinary results of the international commitment of Italian ecomuseums. The Cooperation Charter is a step forward, from a programmatic phase to a pragmatic one, in order to direct the actions of each ecomuseum towards shared objectives and to foster cooperation between the world of ecomuseums and the museums of the Italian and Brazilian communities. The ten-year commitments of the signatories have been identified for the implementation of a joint cooperation program, which shows agreed-upon themes and strategic lines and actions to be implemented with the involvement of actors from both sides.



Figure 2 - Map of the Italian ecomuseums surveyed in 2021. In yellow the 141 ecomuseums that are recognized on the basis of regional laws, in red the 103 unrecognized ecomuseums.

The Italian ecomuseums networks planned many events in 2021 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ecomuseology<sup>64</sup>. This programme, called "Ecomuseums are landscape" was broken down into relevant themes:

- landscape is wellness;
- landscape is resilience;
- landscape is participation;
- landscape is diversity;
- landscape is short supply chain and circular economy;
- landscape is transmission.

This programme once again underlines that landscape is the main theme for Italian ecomuseums. Furthermore, the programme defines and updates the relevant issues that will guide the future work of ecomuseums and addresses new amendments to the Strategic Manifesto.

#### *Landscape is wellness<sup>65</sup>*

Well-being presupposes being alive, being physically part of a place, well-being for humanity concerns the bio-psycho-social sphere and it is determined by the achievement of a balance with the external world, with the environment, with other living beings—in a word: with the landscape.

Wellness, for the biological aspect, concerns all forms of life that are part of a landscape and it is based on the harmony not only between living species but also between the territory, understood as flora, fauna, environment; and the agriculture, social settlements and people.

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<sup>64</sup> The proceedings are available (in Italian) at <https://sites.google.com/view/ecomuseiitaliani/agenda/gruppi-di-lavoro/paesaggio/ecomusei-sono-paesaggio>. Accessed: 11/01/2022.

<sup>65</sup> Working group: Donatella Murtas coordinatrice (Ecomuseo dei terrazzamenti e della vite di Cortemilia - Cn); Antonello Andreani (Ecomuseo dei vissuti e dei saperi - Mc); Andrea Del Duca (Ecomuseo Lago d'Orta - No); Ernesto Mola (Ecomuseo delle bonifiche di Frigole - Le).



Psychological well-being concerns interactions with other individuals and species. Landscape that is the result of the complexity of history and culture, is closely linked to this kind of interaction that specifies it.

Landscape is therefore well-being, understood both as a source of well-being and at the same time as a result of the well-being of the living world. Well-being is the consequence of a continuous process of adaptation and interaction with the surrounding reality. The ability to foresee new needs and the far-sighted management of changes are manifested in the quality of the landscape that is like an identity card with which communities that inhabit it represent it to others.

The ecomuseums not only interpret a history, a landscape, a material and immaterial heritage as a static result of the interaction between living beings and the environment, they also regenerate and change it to increase well-being that involves both the individual and the community and the landscape as a whole.

#### *Landscape is diversity*<sup>66</sup>

Ecosystems need to ensure functionality through diversity. In fact, the systems are generally more resilient when characterized by greater diversity. This applies both to human communities and to the landscape which, thanks to its heterogeneity, expresses its natural tendency to welcome. Landscape as a territory perceived and built by its inhabitants is the environmental and social space that welcomes human diversity in all its historical and cultural breadth. Landscape is a synthesis between physical and perceptive facts, that is, between the external state and its internal elaboration. In the material and immaterial spheres diversity can be recognized. The physical environment can be articulated in a natural space, in monumental pre-existence, in different forms of housing, etc., which can exist distinct or coordinated, creating almost infinite articulations. The diversity of cultural heritage can only indefinitely amplify the possibility of experiencing and interpreting landscape. A territory, a sound, a taste, a perfume, a touch and a panorama are but an infinitesimal part of a landscape, but they have the intrinsic strength to define it, to give it a

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<sup>66</sup> Working group: Claudio Gnessi coordinatore (Ecomuseo Casilino ad Duas Lauros - Rm); Massimo Luciani (Ecomuseo dell'Orvieto - Tn); Alessandra Micoli (EUMM - Ecomuseo Urbano Metropolitan Milano Nord - Mi); Valentina Mastronardi (Ecomuseo della Valle d'Itria - Ba/Br/Ta).

precise meaning that transcends both space and time. The landscape is a "plastic" space: not a passive scenario but an active protagonist that determines infinite possibilities of actions, experiments, and practices.

*The landscape is short supply chains and circular economy*<sup>67</sup>

The landscape is the bearer of collective history, experiences and narratives. It is a unique heritage of biodiversity, history and millenary knowledge, which is perpetuated and preserved thanks to the communities that inhabit and live in it. For millennia agriculture and pastoralism have created, maintained, improved, and shaped landscapes, favouring both plant and animal biodiversity.

The concept of a short supply chain regards the rediscovery, protection, care and enhancement of landscape in which small local productions are made. These productions allow the maintenance of social and cultural traditions linked to the rural world and to exploit otherwise unused territories. They guarantee the conservation of ecosystems and ensure the maintenance of landscape connotations which, in the event of abandonment and degradation, would disappear.

The short supply chain and the sharing of knowledge and practices in an intergenerational exchange can help the re-inhabiting of abandoned and marginal territories. Such forms of local economy characterize many sustainable, long-lasting and social projects, promoted by ecomuseums and bringing with them various aspects: agricultural, environmental, touristic and cultural.

The inadequacy of the linearity of economic development is becoming increasingly evident, both globally and locally: the social, health and environmental situation that ecomuseums are experiencing leads them to consider the return to the circularity of the economy, similar to what happens in nature, a method that is best suited to the socio-ecological context of the rural and mountain landscape.

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<sup>67</sup> Working group: Miriam Rubeis coordinatrice (Ecomuseo della pastorizia - Cn); Barbara Barberis (Ecomuseo Terra del Castemagno - Cn); Mauro Bernardi (Ecomuseo della Pastorale - Cn); Raul Dal Santo (Ecomuseo di Parabiago - Mi); Massimo Luciani (Ecomuseo dell'Orvieto - Tn); Andrea Rossi (Ecomuseo del Casentino - Ar).

The theme of the circular economy allows and requires, more than others, the definition of local networks, agreements and programs that the ecomuseum often helps to promote and facilitate. The strong rural characterization of many Italian territories, marginal areas, or so-called internal areas brings to experimenting and building short supply chains and forms of circular economy, where typical agri-food and artisanal products are strongly rooted and constitute the concrete expression of the local culture, made up of knowledge, experience, skills and relationships.

In order to build a sustainable future, it is necessary to focus on beauty, human relationships, respect for the earth, and the quality of life, and to undermine the model of fragmentation of knowledge, intermediation of relations between producer and consumer, commodification and trivialization of products.

This type of economy can also solve the problems that afflict our cultural landscape, such as environmental impoverishment, loss of soil, degradation, and up to the loss and erosion of social and civil rights.

#### *Landscape is participation*<sup>68</sup>

The landscape is participation means that landscape is the expression, perception and conscious initiative of a community. The ecomuseums have always defined landscape complexity and its cognitive dimension, mobilizing choral processes, arousing motivations and operational intentions. They have also promoted a participatory culture, essential for the realization of development projects.

Participation thus becomes an educational process and civic capacity. It empowers people to make choices and design shared projects. During the Covid-19 pandemic, ecomuseums used remote communication tools and they still are using them. The question arises as to which

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<sup>68</sup> Working group: Nerina Baldi (Ecomuseo delle Valli di Argenta - Fe) e Andrea Rossi (Ecomuseo del Casentino - Ar) coordinatori; Maria Rosa Bagnari (Ecomuseo delle erbe secche - Ra); Edo Bricchetti (Ecomuseo Martesana - Mi); Emanuela Chilla ed Elisa Monsellato (Ecomuseo della pietra leccese di Cursi - Le); Guido Lazzarini, Valentina Azer (Università di Torino); Massimo Luciani (Ecomuseo dell'Orvieto - Tn); Giuseppe Reina; Antonella Nonnis ed Elena Tartari (Ecomuseo della Valle dell'Aso - Fm), Alice Cerutti (Cascina Oschiena).

benefits they will bring; if they will produce social diversity and knowledge between generations, and how the ecomuseum will be able to act in this regard.

The concept of landscape, which, as reported in the European Convention itself, includes the perception of populations, gives importance to the involvement of the inhabitants of a territory, in relation to the transformations caused by the invasive use of technologies, with cultural fragmentation and hyper-specialization. These aspects do not allow easy access to information and adequate participatory processes. Ecomuseums, as community facilitators, have developed skills in bringing out the "talent of the places" and organizational attitudes to forge new territorial planning and design tools that produce creative solutions aimed at the conservation and enhancement of landscape.

Many concrete tools have been developed and tested by ecomuseums: community maps, river contracts, local statutes and participation processes to design territorial governance plans, observatories and sites recovery. Such activities and working methods are also shared with other actors active in landscape management. Alliances with them are needed to answer the questions and challenges of the present.

### *Landscape is resilience*<sup>69</sup>

Ecomuseums have always promoted active resilience practices for the enhancement of landscape. This empowers people to reinterpret places through participation and listening processes and with the transmission of memory and understanding of landscape.

For more than ten years, the term resilience has become part of our common language. It comes from the technical-scientific field of ecology, sociology, economics and psychology. Its main meaning is "the art of adapting".

Ecomuseum means resilience as the set of practices implemented by communities in different territorial contexts to adapt to transformations, not only from an isomorphic

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<sup>69</sup> Working group: Raffaella Riva coordinatrice (Politecnico di Milano); Michela Bresciani (EUMM Ecomuseo Urbano Metropolitan Milano Nord - Mi); Antonello Andreani (Ecomuseo delle esperienze e dei saperi dei Monti Sibillini - Mc); Anna Paola Conti (Ecomuseo dei casali di Villa Ficana - Mc).

perspective but also enhancing the ability to propose new requests in order to avoid the risk of lowering expectations and increasing social stresses.

Resilience is also a human practice of response to the need to build a shared and sustainable future. The ecomuseums identified some themes in which these practices are expressed: actions to deal with environmental emergencies; new perception and new uses of and in the territory; regeneration and new uses of manufactured assets; productive exploitation of local resources for the birth of new economies.

### *Landscape is an intergenerational transmission*<sup>70</sup>

Ecomuseums re-evaluate the tangible and intangible heritage of a territory and reactivate the basic knowledge to protect, manage and transmit it, thus restoring the awareness of the landscape as the main common asset to take care of.

In Italy the fruitful contamination between ecomuseums and landscape generated innovative learning paths and active citizenship, inspired by the public decision-making process indicated by Article 6 of the European Landscape Convention (identification > characterization > landscape quality goals > application). People's perception legitimizes the recognition of landscape.

Everyone perceives the landscape based on their own experiences and will transmit these to future generations. The narrative process of landscape makes possible the passage from the personal perception to a more dynamic and choral vision. In this context, ecomuseums proposed a transversal reflection, to highlight the richness and peculiarities of the experiences and educational tools: landscape explorations, participatory inventories, community maps applied to territorial planning, river contracts, other activities that raise awareness of the importance of the "daily landscape" for personal and community well-being.

The transmission, as well as the English term "heritage", expresses the idea of a dynamic, active and multi-directional knowledge, aimed at the comparison and passage of skills. The

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<sup>70</sup> Working group: Adriana Stefani coordinatrice (Rete Ecomusei Trentino); Rosario Acquaviva (Ecomuseo di Buscemi - Sr); Elisa Arecco (Ecomuseo di Cascina Moglioni - Al); Edo Bricchetti (Ecomuseo Valle Spluga - So); Giuseppe Pidello (Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra - Bi); Antonella Nonnis ed Elena Tartari (Ecomuseo della Valle dell'Aso - Fm).

dialogue on the landscape, constantly nurtured among the members of the community, and above all among young people, it prefigures a school “without walls”. All the skills contribute to continuous training aimed at the sustainable use of heritage and of planet.

### **Final remarks - The celebration programmes**

In 2021 the Italian ecomuseums network discussed the above topics related to Italian ecomuseology and also the issues that emerged from a critical reading of the Hugues de Varine book “Ecomusée singulier et pluriel” (2017), such as: regional and national laws and political conditioning, holistic approach, landscape, networking, tourism, evaluation and impacts, local development.

On 29 March 2021 the Italian ecomuseums network launched the Italian programme for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of ecomuseology through the webinar “Babel tower: museum people in dialogue”. During the event, the Italian version of the book “Écomusée singulier et pluriel” was presented and Hugues de Varine answered questions on the above issues. The celebration continued with the webinars of the “Landscape Week” from 21 to 25 June 2021, which produced reflections about the relevant issues with the participation of many ecomuseums and guests from other institutions.

On 30 September 2021 the Italian network, with the collaboration of many partners organized the international conference ‘Ecomuseums and climate action’ on the role of ecomuseums and community museums in achieving the 2030 SDGs and climate action. It was part of the satellite events of the Pre-COP26 scheduled in Milan (Italy) inside the pre-conference of the parties on climate change. It was also part of the satellite events of the World Forum on Democracy promoted by the European Council on the issue: “Can democracy save the environment?” Speakers from America and Europe illustrated methods, tools and community projects against the climate crisis and for the sustainable use of common heritage for integral development both on a local and global scale<sup>71</sup>.

On 28 October 2021, the network carried out a reflection on the theme of national recognition of ecomuseums as part of the “1st forum of the Regional Council of Ecomuseums

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<sup>71</sup> The conference proceedings are available in english at <https://sites.google.com/view/drops-platform/forums/climate-action-2021>

of Puglia. The ten-year experience of L.R. 15/2011. New perspectives”, organized by the Puglia Region.

On 1 December 2021, the Italian network brought its vision on the impacts of the European Landscape Convention and the Faro Convention, as part of the conference "50 years of Ecomuseology: Lombardy ecomuseums compared with national and international experiences" organized by the Lombardy Region and the Lombardy Ecomuseum Network. In 2021 through the celebration of the 50th anniversary of ecomuseology, the Italian ecomuseums network thanked mentors, colleagues and people for inspiring their work and sharing the dreams of ecomuseology. The Italian network confirms its commitment to helping “museums of the future” to cooperate in the integral development of their communities and the planet.

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## Chapter 10

# **Beyond heritage: A collective reflection about the Simeto Ecomuseum process in Sicily**

*Vincenza Piera Bonanno, Carmelo Caruso, Valentina Del Campo, Medea Ferrigno, Agata Lipari Galvagno, Marianna Nicolosi, Domenico Pappalardo*

### **Abstract**

The paper proposes a reflection elaborated in the context of a partnership between the local community and the University of Catania in a long-term perspective. Starting from an in-depth study about the debate on *commons* and considering the research-action experience gained, a collective reflection about what task the Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto should take on in attempting to revitalize the Simeto valley and its community has been done. Furthermore, it tells the main traits of the on-going Simeto Ecomuseum process deployed as a specific organizational device on the natural-cultural heritage issue, facing up to some serious events that have affected Sicily, and beyond, during summer 2021, when part of the natural-cultural heritage that Simeto Ecomuseum is struggling to regenerate, was destroyed by devastating fires.

**Keywords:** *commons, heritage community, new value chains*

### **Résumé**

Le document propose une réflexion élaborée grâce à la collaboration de perspective durable entre la communauté locale et l'Université de Catania. En premier lieu, on présente un étude détaillé sur le débat des municipalités en considérant l'expérience acquise avec la recherche-action, une réflexion collective sur l'activité entreprise par le « Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto » afin de revitaliser la vallée du fleuve précité et sa communauté. Ensuite, on va tracer les caractéristiques principales du processus commencé par l'Ecomusée du Simeto, un instrument spécifique qui s'occupe des problèmes de l'héritage naturel et culturel, en affrontant des événements dramatique que la Sicile a vécu en particulier pendant l'été 2021, lorsqu'une partie de l'héritage naturel et culturel a été perdu dans des incendies.

**Mots-clés :** municipalités, héritage, communauté, chaînes de valeurs nouveaux



## Introduction

The outcome of the 2005 Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society invites us to think about the possibility of existence and leeway for those collective subjects defined by the Council as *heritage communities*: groups which lend “value to specific aspects of the cultural heritage” and wish to “support them and pass them down to future generations, within the framework of public action”. Although the statements contained in the Faro Convention are fully acceptable, its practical implications in terms of policies still remain issues which have to be explored.

There are several questions raised by the Convention: how does a community of heritage shape itself in practice? What challenges must it face today? Towards what horizon can it operate to ensure that declarations of principle can translate into effective actions in territories, in particular in marginal and fragile places such as the most disadvantaged contexts in Southern Italy?

This paper tries to address these questions through a consideration developed in the context of a mutual partnership devised with a long-term perspective between the University and the local community (Reardon, 2006).

In particular, it is a research-action partnership promoted by the Laboratory for the Ecological and Environmental Regional Planning (LabPEAT) of the University of Catania and a collective entity called “Participatory Presidium of the Simeto River”, an organization born in the framework of a voluntary shared territorial governance agreement - the Simeto River Agreement - to which a dozen local authorities and institutions along the middle course of the Simeto River joined in 2015, along with about 60 associations in addition to the University itself (Gravagno et al., 2011; Saija, 2016; Pappalardo et al., 2020).

There are several writings that critically address the various evolutionary phases of a process that has been underway for over a decade and is in constant change. This text, in particular, gives some considerations matured by a group of young co-researchers which are adhering to the partnership, in a dialogic and self-analytical way, as the outcome of a debate on both specific practical aspects and general implications about the *commons*.

Starting from an in-depth study on the theme of the *commons*, we have collectively reflected on the role that an organization such as the Presidium can take on today in order to give new life to a common territorial heritage that is increasingly being disintegrated with the risk of dissolving in contradictions and distortions of the current time.

Specifically, the writing returns some traits of an ongoing ecomuseum process (de Varine, 2017), deployed as a specific organizational device on the theme of natural-cultural heritage (Latour, 2000), in its many aspects (Pappalardo, 2020), today facing up to some serious events that have affected Sicily, and beyond, during the summer 2021. We are talking about the devastating fires that destroyed several hectares of agricultural land, pastures, woods, wetlands, etc. (Pappalardo & Saija, in press), part of that *natural-cultural* heritage that the Simeto Ecomuseum was struggling to regenerate.

The first part of the paper is focused on the issues of the debate on *commons* previously mentioned, by considering what we have experienced in the context of the research-action partnership. The second part is dedicated to some of the peculiar aspects of the most recent phase of the partnership's field experience and returns some issues that emerged in the attempt to build a heritage community through the ecomuseum route.

### **What common heritage are we referring to?**

Regarding the debate about the *commons*, we mainly refer to what emerged in the English-speaking context and was disseminated on an international scale starting in 1968, following the famous article by Garrett Hardin ("The tragedy of the commons"), up to its peak in 2009 with the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Economics to Elinor Ostrom, author of the seminal *Governing the Commons* (1990). The questions on which this debate is based are several. The basic question concerns, in particular, the possibility of following a third way for the management of certain categories of assets (mainly natural resources such as water resources, woods, pastures, etc., but also anthropic artifacts, etc.), beyond the traditional binary logic of "public good" and "private good", conceiving a system of use of resources (natural and otherwise) that could be at the same time ecologically sustainable, inclusive, and democratic. These are also central issues for rethinking the current models of development and democratic participation: an afterthought that today arises again with ever greater urgency in the current global political debate.

The debate about the *commons* has put in crisis the traditional dichotomous sense of "private property versus public property" (Hardt & Negri, 2010). The concept of the *commons* introduces the issue of widespread ownership: *commons* belong to everyone and to no-one, in the sense that everyone must have access to them and no one can claim exclusive pre-emption of them; for these reasons they must be administered by means of the solidarity principle. In this perspective, the concept of *commons* goes beyond the single asset manager: since all interested parties can use it and access it directly, it should be sufficient that the conditions of use are defined. As Rodotà (2012) argues, it is the way in which the asset is built that makes it accessible to all interested parties.

However, the direct access to the commons enlightens several issues. Firstly, everyone should be able to utilise and defend these assets, including by taking legal action. This imperative clashes with the real dynamics of power exercised in collective contexts and perhaps by discriminating the access that can lead to a partial and privileged use of commons.

Secondly, the debate on the commons – especially in Italy, as a result of Rodotà's arguments (2012) – is connected to the questions of exercising the fundamental rights that aim at enriching the power of people as a precondition for the effective participation in the democratic process. In this sense, Rodotà extends the concept of the commons, shifting the attention from a material aspect to a broader meaning, which includes all those assets (tangible and intangible) functional to the exercise of rights, which includes the access to knowledge such as democracy matters.

Throughout the years, in Italy the concept of the commons has acquired the urban planning law going beyond the scope of rights (Magnaghi, 2012) and protection and care of the landscape (Settis, 2013). We believe that the natural-cultural heritage that became embedded in the territories and clear in the landscapes – consisting of tangible and intangible assets - can itself be considered and treated as commons.

The different aspects of the debate have as a common denominator the fact that some categories of assets cannot be subjected to closure or privatization; in other words, they cannot be subjected to the logic of the market; on the contrary, it is desirable that they are open and characterised by dynamics of sharing, creation and strengthening of social ties, of collective initiatives seen as the expression of shared values, not only in the interest of a

community inhabiting a specific context but especially in the interest of the entire living community. Commons represent the "shared advantage" to safeguard the ecosystem elements of the Earth. Consequently, the commons suggest the question of the joint responsibilities necessary to guarantee fundamental rights that are not just of today's citizens living in a specific place, but also of citizens belonging to other places and times; in other words, the citizens of the future. The commons incorporate the dimension of the future in which intergenerational solidarity is reflected.

Since they contrast with their own self-interests, the commons take on the need to recognize and feed a wide-spreading power able to facilitate forms of effective participation and agency on behalf of all stakeholders in order to protect, preserve and effectively guarantee a shared advantage and not a privilege.

Moving from the dualistic logic of property to the *commons*' more broad ambition is undoubtedly a tiring and problematic process that takes place on several levels, in which it is necessary — by the very nature of the commons — that a multiplicity of actors participate, taking advantage of the extraordinary power of networking (Benkler, 2007).

The commons assume a democratic innovation: experimenting and defining new forms of organization (governance) to give life to other forms of citizenship resulting from social interaction. Ultimately, the commons can create stronger social bonds, a more intense democratic participation (Costa, 2012) and new forms of solidarity intended as rediscovered functions of the constitutive principle of coexistence, provided that these dynamics do not degenerate into polarizations of power but could be harbingers of a horizontal and widespread strengthening.

How to translate all this into practice? How to benefit from the natural-cultural heritage in terms of commons? For years, the Simeto valley has been undergoing a process that has been aroused by these purposes. The second part of this paper offers a brief reconstruction of the premises and some thoughts on the challenges we are currently facing.

### **The Simeto Ecomuseum process**

The idea of an ecomuseum in the Simeto Valley in Sicily is part of a long process that began with a first environmental conflict between a coalition of local subjects and the Regional

Government in 2002 about the Regional Waste Plan, which provided for the construction of a mega-incinerator in a protected environmental area close to the Simeto riverbed. Since that social mobilization, civil society has started a long-term partnership with the University of Catania through a first phase of community mapping conducted in an experimental form between 2009 and 2010 (Saija & Pappalardo, 2018), until the signing of a territorial governance voluntary instrument called the *Simeto River Agreement* (SRA) (Gravagno et al., 2011; Saija, 2016; Pappalardo et al., 2020, among the others), involving ten municipalities of the valley. In 2015, the associations already involved in the partnership were joined in the *Participatory Presidium of the Simeto River Agreement*, continuing a complex route of community organization, proactive protection and local development, in synergy with the university as well as with the local authorities involved.

The SRA's route has generated, among other things, the idea of setting up an ecomuseum, conceived as a community device for local development through a path of deepening, recognition and care of the common natural, cultural, material and immaterial heritage in the Simeto Valley – trying to generate new *value chains*.

The decision to re-read some aspects of what had already been done (such as community mapping) and to continue the process in an ecomuseum emerged during the Participatory Presidium Assembly in 2019, following the work carried out during the co-design phase for the National Strategy for Internal Areas of which the Simeto Valley is an Experimental Area of National Relevance (Pappalardo & Saija, 2020).

The Ecomuseum Group of the Participatory Presidium thus began to gradually involve various subjects interested in contributing to the ecomuseum process, with regard to the L.R. 16/2014, *Establishment of the Ecomuseums of Sicily*. In just over a year, about 100 people and several associations interested in contributing joined, including numerous experts and enthusiasts of local history, archeology, anthropology, ecology, etc. The intense activity of the Ecomuseum Group can be divided into two phases, marked by the application for the formal ecomuseum recognition to the Sicilian Region (pursuant to L.R. 16/2014) submitted in February 2021. During the first phase, the Ecomuseum Group developed a series of reflections together with a class of students from the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture of the University of Catania as one of the concrete actions of the mutual process of learning between researchers and communities, in the context of a long-term partnership. The students presented a series of interesting ecomuseum experiences and systematized the

collection of data emerging from the first experimental community mapping onwards to identify community assets: assets recognized as such regardless of their ownership regime, for which a reasoning of conditions of use and actual possibility of access was proposed.

Despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the activities of the ecomuseum have continued, experimenting in new engaging and participating ways. A new online community mapping is taking shape, expanding the boundaries of landscapes and places of interest that the community recognizes as part of a common heritage.

After months of brainstorming during the online working groups and data collection, a plan of activities was formulated through community pilot projects to be launched in the trial stage of the ecomuseum:

- *The River exists* - Dedicated to the memory of Luigi Carlo Puglisi
- *Inclusive landscapes*
- *The Museum goes to the Countryside*
- *New value chains* - Dedicated to the memory of Andrea Distefano

The activities emerged in the context of each of these pilot projects and their shared values were together formally defined in the Ecomuseum Manifesto.

During the post-application phase, the community proposals were reorganized into actions transversal to the four pilot projects. Among these, we mention the *participatory inventory*, meant as a form of permanent mapping of ecological and cultural corridors, Figure 1 (the itineraries that cross-stitch the pilot projects) as a census of talents and places of culture, but also as an inventory of stories of the most fragile and marginal subjects, stories of women and rivers, stories of fabrics and ancient crafts, etc.

As stated in the manifesto, drawn up collectively by the approximately one hundred subjects involved and in agreement with the municipal administrations:

The Simeto ecomuseum process - based on a loyal collaboration between organized civil society and public institutions - intends to promote and enable the concept of "commons", repositioning the natural and cultural heritage in a different perspective from that of exclusive belonging. The

aim is to stimulate a sense of shared responsibility in opposition to the commodification of local heritage and ecosystems, towards the activation of new economies capable of guaranteeing the quality of life for all and everyone, while respecting the Biosphere.



Figure 1: Mapping walk of Simeto's cultural heritage, Simeto Ecomuseum, Troina 2020. Photographic archives of the Participatory Presidium of the Simeto River Agreement, 2020.

In this sense, the Simeto Ecomuseum is part of the broad debate on commons, as presented in the first part of this paper. However, the route continues not without pitfalls, as discussed below in the next paragraphs.

### **Acting despite the pitfalls**

The Simeto Valley commons- with its natural and cultural heritage - has been threatened over time on several occasions. Recently, in the scorching summer of 2021, it was harassed by numerous fires destroying years of sweat and tears of farmers, breeders and inhabitants of this community. The fires devastated thousands of hectares of crops, pastures and natural

areas, including the Oasis of Ponte Barca, in Paternò, the same place where, on the 11th of August, a young farmer died in an attempt to put out the fire that flared up in that area. The fire services were often not able to act promptly; therefore, the criminals prevailed.

Most of the itineraries — ecological and cultural corridors — designed as part of the ecomuseum were destroyed. However, the Ecomuseum Group did not stop working, and together with Presidium they have expressed solidarity with those who have seen their work and dreams destroyed by fires by means of various initiatives, including two notices to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Catania and Enna, public meetings with farmers and breeders, social and community networks, mutualism on a local and regional scale and various support and reorganization initiatives (see Figure 2)



Figure 2: Public meeting with farmers and breeders of the Valley following the July fires, Simeto River Ecomuseum, Oasi Ponte Barca 2021. Photographic archives of the Participatory Presidium of the Simeto River Agreement, 2021.



A community of inheritance has come to light, which is also a community of action that is able to reach out for structural and ordinary interventions to implement prevention and awareness campaigns but also to activate with tangible actions. In particular, the work undertaken as part of the ecomuseum pilot projects was carried out, integrating them with the issues arising from the fire emergency, using civic mapping as a tool of knowledge and awareness that made it possible to collect information from below in addition to institutional knowledge, also linked to the perceptual sphere of the phenomenon.

Each intervention tried to go beyond in terms of gaze, approach, and operation, looking at different issues simultaneously and in an integrated manner, being aware that political and institutional will is one of the key nodes to support community networks so that bottom-up actions continue to develop and become a consolidated reality.

The fires are unfortunately recurring in the Simeto Valley. Here, summers often mean environmental disaster for the particular way in which they occur, although this definition is mainly used for other types of events. They have a social rather than natural peculiarity, deriving from previous and constantly growing conditions of territorial fragility (Benadusi, 2015), and that creates conditions of suffering and trauma often overlooked by institutions. Like other ecological disasters, fires generate what for emergency psychology are considered first-level victims, as well as involving the entire community as a fourth-level victim. Inasmuch as we are not able to ignore these aspects of environmental crisis, and wanting to identify integrated solutions, we engage ourselves in a reflection on how the community sees the disasters and how to implement the natural-cultural heritage, revealing latent frictions within the community, which after the crisis is shown to be more complex and more susceptible to new semanticization.

The inhabitants of the Simeto Valley, seeing the fumes of the fires, began to form an "eye-community" (Alliegro, 2017), increasingly afflicted by the fires, engaged in noticing and indignant about the causes; the various members of this community have lived with growing anguish a phenomenon never seen with such intensity and continuity. However, the ability to look elsewhere means a tension has developed that is able to increase awareness of the natural-cultural heritage, extending that new perception to areas that were previously marginal or relegated to mere productive functions. Therefore, there is an increased awareness that the valley can be considered a commons that has to be safeguarded and valued as one through its multiplicity.

The farmers and breeders of the valley, on the other hand, experienced the environmental disaster from a different perspective. For them there was not only distant smoke but a nearby fire. Fires have a profound existential impact on them, uncontrollably modifying and mortifying the landscape, destroying the sources of production and the overall image that emerges from their cultivations (Lai, 2000). What is mortified, however, is not only the landscape — the result of the relationship between the community that inhabits it and its living environment — but the possibility of "acting on it". The environmental disaster, substantiated in the burnt landscapes, represents a critical moment of the farmer's existence: due to the "conflictual disavowal" of the landscape itself, a form of bewilderment (the feeling of no longer belonging to a place) has come out.

In Simeto, as in many cases, a de-historicization process of the environmental disaster occurred: the fire from a singular and placeable event in time becomes plural and cyclical, so it assumes characteristics of predictability and universality. In this way it presents itself as a community crisis, against which it is possible to prepare oneself, instead of an individual trauma that bursts into existence as a "crisis of presence" (De Martino, 1948).

Environmental crises provide the opportunity to re-think the forms of the relationship with the landscape and with the legacy of the past, redefining perspectives of the present. The Simeto Ecomuseum directed a deep gaze at the places of agricultural production and, more generally, to the natural-cultural heritage widespread in the valley, even where signs of the third landscape can be found due to abandonment or the absence of humans (Clément, 2005).

A proactive safeguard route of the territory has looked at these spaces abandoned by production or which can no longer support themselves only by production. The aspiration towards elsewhere experienced in recent days by many activists will mediate with forms of farmers' "territorialisation" (or domestication, a sense of belonging) and new forms of territorial governance.

The frictions that emerged from the crisis can lead to making the community able to manage and enhance the common natural-cultural heritage with new synergies.

### **Concluding remarks: A shared governance**

In light of the experience gained, it emerges that the current institutional management systems present flaws or, at least, elements of ineffectiveness. In response, we have been trying for years to put in place an attempt to build a shared governance through the SRA and, in this context, by means of the Simeto Ecomuseum as a device for the enhancement and care of the Simeto Valley commons. Although in an incomplete and faulty manner, the SRA and the ecomuseum have already marked a trajectory of change (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Mapping walk of the cultural heritage of Simeto. The bridge, symbol of the trajectory of change, Simeto Ecomuseum, Ponte Failla, Troina 2020. Photographic archive of the Participatory Presidium of the Simeto River Agreement, 2020.

First, the SRA and ecomuseum's route triggers a process in which more and more people are becoming aware of being part of a community of heritage (and action) — in terms of the Faro Convention — by learning to think and act collectively, in an organized way, to critically and analytically read that community, its own needs, its own limits and its own resources, while trying to elaborate a clear vision of what it wants and can become in order to improve the conditions of its own quality of life. This was possible also thanks to a collective learning and

an empowerment process put in place by the University of Catania's researchers-in-action. It would be useful now to reach the same level of awareness on the institutional level and to rebuild the relationships of trust and collaboration.

A second important issue is providing the tools to make this new form of governance work: to enhance the relations between the parties, balancing the decision-making mechanisms through the distribution of checks and balances.

These governance systems cannot be absolute and immutable, since they need to be tested, modelled and adapted to situations, which may change over time and in different territorial contexts. Otherwise, it is possible to risk the trap of exclusivity and privilege as it emerges from the critical debate on common goods.

A third key issue is the territorial dimension, which has to be vast to face the challenges of an increasingly globalized world. The most important bets the territory won, in recent years, are due to the fact that a portion of Simeto Valley citizens have stopped thinking of themselves as citizens of a particular municipality and have begun to conceive of themselves as a part of the entire Simeto Valley community.

In conclusion, this paper has tried to convey the features of an inheritance/action community in progress that increasingly identifies its territories and landscapes as commons (Magnaghi, 2012; Settis, 2013) and that, despite disasters and traumas, continues to work on the governance aimed at guaranteeing an effective possibility of access to the commons as goods (tangible and intangible) functioning to exercise rights and assure the health of democracy (Rodotà, 2012).

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**Part 3 - L'écomusée singulier et pluriel -  
A polyphonic dialogue**

***L'écomusée singulier et pluriel - A polyphonic dialogue.***  
**A revised and edited transcription in French of the presentation of Hugues de Varine's book (Italian version)<sup>72</sup>**

*Edited by Hugues de Varine*

**Introduction - Manuelina Duarte**

L'un des sujets qui nous a réuni est celui des écomusées et, dans un sens plus large, la relation entre les musées et les gens, ou comment les musées et le patrimoine peuvent être construits avec les gens, avec la communauté et non pour les gens. Il s'agit également de savoir comment les musées peuvent être utilisés comme outil de développement humain, de développement durable et de justice sociale dans des processus qui impliquent la mémoire et la préservation, mais avec des initiatives participatives.

Avec cette série de webinaires, nous cherchons à créer des alliances transnationales pour renforcer cette manière de penser le patrimoine, les musées et la muséologie. L'Italie et le Brésil cheminent ensemble dans cette direction depuis un certain temps déjà. Le forum de

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<sup>72</sup> An English version of the original recorded (un-edited) text is available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iODujMapDxA&t=191s>



écomusées et des musées communautaires, durant la Conférence Générale de l'ICOM Milan 2016, a constitué en cela une étape importante. Préalablement, plusieurs visites d'écomusées en Italie avaient été organisées et suivies par des membres de l'ABREMC – l'Association brésilienne des écomusées et des musées communautaires –, auxquelles j'ai eu moi-même l'occasion de participer.

Depuis, les réseaux brésilien et italien d'écomusées et de musées communautaires renforcent leurs relations et la Charte de coopération "Distants, mais unis" a été préparée pendant les crises pandémiques. Malgré les moments difficiles que nous traversons, nous avons ce réseau spécial de solidarité et de collaboration pour nous soutenir et nous encourager. Les réseaux de musées, de travailleurs de musées, d'étudiants et de professeurs de muséologie, etc. sont une caractéristique forte du secteur muséal brésilien. Ainsi, les Brésiliens ont résisté à des décennies de sous-investissement dans la culture et luttent et résistent aujourd'hui au projet de détruire toute trace de diversité culturelle et d'identité des groupes sociaux brésiliens, culminant dans des actes clairement associés à la nécropolisation.

Ensemble, nous sommes plus forts, et c'est une leçon que les écomusées, les musées communautaires, la muséologie sociale, la muséologie populaire et les diverses muséologies insurgées peuvent nous enseigner.

Je suis vraiment reconnaissante d'avoir ici aujourd'hui tant d'amis italiens et de références importantes pour le mouvement des écomusées en Italie : Alberto Garlandini, Donatella Murtas, Maurizio Tondolo, Raul dal Santo et Giuseppe Reina.

C'est pourquoi nous avons voulu intégrer dans notre série de webinaires "Tour de Babel" la présentation de la publication italienne du livre de Hugues de Varine, pour en faire une occasion d'échanges longtemps attendue qui se poursuivra très bientôt.

### **Giusy Pappalardo**

Je suis maître de conférences et chercheur en planification urbaine et régionale à l'Université de Catane en Sicile, dans le sud de l'Italie. J'ai entamé une collaboration avec l'Université de Liège dans le cadre d'un projet de recherche financé par l'UE sur le rôle des écomusées en tant que catalyseurs des processus démocratiques de développement local.

En tant que chercheuse engagée menant une recherche-action - avec le laboratoire dont je fais partie en Italie (qui s'appelle le Laboratoire pour la planification et la conception

écologiques) - et avec Giuseppe Reina, nous travaillons sur le terrain en coordonnant un processus écomuséal dans une zone en détresse de Sicile, le long de la rivière Simeto. Dans notre travail de terrain, les paroles d'Hugues de Varine sont l'occasion d'une réflexion critique sur ce que nous faisons, en apportant l'exemple d'autres expériences, avec leurs succès et leurs écueils, comme moyen de recadrer constamment notre action.

Je pense que c'est là le pouvoir des mots de Varine : nous inviter à réfléchir en profondeur à notre travail sur le terrain, sans nous contenter de le raconter, mais en nous demandant comment améliorer notre action et donner à nos communautés les moyens d'un changement social et écologique réel et nécessaire, surtout en ces temps difficiles de crise pandémique. Les écomusées ont le pouvoir de déclencher des débats publics sur le continuum passé-présent-futur, et le livre de Varine nous explique comment ce dispositif - expérimenté depuis près de 50 ans aujourd'hui - change en fonction des contextes, et quels sont les défis auxquels les écomusées ont été confrontés ces dernières années, toujours en fonction des contextes. Mais je ne veux pas en rajouter, car nous avons un grand nombre d'intervenants aujourd'hui: chacun d'entre eux ajoutera un élément à la conversation que nous voulons ouvrir et laisser ouverte à d'autres conversations et débats publics sur le rôle des écomusées pour des sociétés plus justes et inclusives.

Avant de présenter les orateurs, permettez-moi de lancer un appel aux personnes du milieu universitaire, comme moi, Manuelina Duarte et beaucoup d'autres qui sont ici aujourd'hui. Je pense que notre responsabilité ne se limite pas à étudier les écomusées ou à écrire sur ceux-ci. Je pense plutôt qu'il est crucial pour nous de coopérer avec les écomusées, dans le cadre d'un apprentissage mutuel et d'un échange réciproque, en coproduisant des connaissances exploitables. C'est encore plus réalisable qu'il y a quelques années, maintenant que la troisième mission des universités (qui est leur engagement pour le territoire) a été pleinement intégrée dans le cadre institutionnel, du moins en Italie, qui est le pays d'où viennent beaucoup d'entre nous, aujourd'hui. De manière générale, j'espère que le livre de Varine pourra déclencher une nouvelle génération de chercheurs engagés, non seulement en Italie bien sûr, mais aussi dans le monde entier.

Comme vous le savez, *l'Ecomusée singulier et pluriel* est paru à l'Harmattan en 2017, puis il a été traduit en espagnol et *El ecomuseo singular y plural* est paru à ICOM Chili en 2020. Maintenant, va paraître l'édition italienne grâce à la Cooperativa Utopie Concrete. Maurizio Tondolo nous dira tout à l'heure pourquoi il a voulu rendre ce livre accessible en langue

italienne et quel fut le processus éditorial du livre, qui a été traduit par Paola Boccalatte et dont la mise au point a impliqué de nombreuses personnes, et plus particulièrement Etelega Ridolfo et Daniele Jalla.

Pour commander le livre:

*L'écomusée singulier et pluriel* - L'Harmattan Edition-Diffusion - 7, rue de l'École Polytechnique - 75005 Paris - 31 euros (port 3.5€) - également sur <http://editions-harmattan.fr>

*El ecomuseo singular y plural* - Comité Chilien de l'ICOM, 2019 - téléchargeable gratuitement sur <https://icomchile.org/que-hacemos/publicaciones/>

*L'ecomuseo singolare e plurale* - richiesta direttamente all'Ecomuseo delle Acque del Gemonese: mail [info@ecomuseodelleacque.it](mailto:info@ecomuseodelleacque.it), tel. 338 7187227. Il prezzo di copertina è di 30 euro (27 euro per i soci ICOM), costi di spedizione a carico del destinatario (1,28 euro via posta, 13 euro con corriere). Per ora è disponibile esclusivamente la versione cartacea

### **Alberto Garlandini**

Cher Hugues, chers amis. C'est un honneur et un grand plaisir de vous présenter le dernier livre d'Hugues de Varine, un ami de longue date et un camarade dans de nombreux défis et le Maestro di Vita, un Mentor de vie. Dans sa longue vie professionnelle, Hugues a produit un nombre important de contributions théoriques et pratiques sur les musées : écomusées, musées communautaires, patrimoine culturel et naturel, développement local, diversité du tourisme durable.

Trois des ouvrages récents d'Hugues occupent une place privilégiée dans ma bibliothèque, toujours à portée de main et auxquels je me réfère souvent. "Les racines du futur" publié en 2002<sup>73</sup>, "Mon passage à l'ICOM" publié en 2017, et bien sûr "L'écomusée singulier et pluriel" publié la même année. Je suis fier des dédicaces personnelles qu'Hugues a écrites pour moi, faisant référence à nos fréquentes rencontres au cours des 20 dernières années. "Pour

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<sup>73</sup>Téléchargeables sur <http://www.hugues-devarine.eu>

Alberto, en souvenir de nos rencontres communes, avec gratitude". "Pour Alberto, en souvenir de tant de choses et des idées." Je suis bien conscient qu'Hugues préférerait être qualifié d'agent de développement local ou de promoteur du développement durable au service des communautés plutôt que d'être considéré comme un muséologue ou même comme un écomuséologue. Cependant, je pense que chaque professionnel, chaque bénévole des musées doit avoir ces trois livres sur son bureau pour une consultation fréquente.

Hugues n'est pas un universitaire, un professeur d'université qui, de sa tour d'ivoire, pontifie sur la vie des musées et des écomusées. Depuis son expérience en tant que directeur de l'ICOM et sa profonde implication dans l'expérience de l'écomusée du Creusot dans les années 1960 et 1970, Hugues s'est mis en première ligne en participant à la vie des musées communautaires, en voyageant partout dans le monde, en s'engageant dans la vie quotidienne des communautés. Hugues a travaillé sur le terrain. Il a appris de la vie réelle des musées et des communautés, et a enseigné à des générations de professionnels du patrimoine, et de volontaires du patrimoine, sur la base de son expérience unique.

C'est la raison pour laquelle Hugues a joué un rôle si important dans l'histoire de la muséologie, notamment depuis la naissance de la "nouvelle muséologie" à la table ronde de Santiago du Chili en 1972 et dans le développement de l'expérience des écomusées et des musées communautaires dans le monde entier. J'ai mentionné son rôle muséologique dans l'article sur la muséologie et la muséographie que j'ai récemment écrit pour "*l'enciclopedia treccani*" italienne.

Permettez-moi de dire quelques mots sur les publications d'Hugues. "Les racines du futur" est un recueil de ses nombreuses expériences faites en France, au Portugal et au Brésil dans le dernier quart du 20e siècle. Hugues présente le rôle crucial du patrimoine dans la valorisation de l'identité et de la diversité des communautés et dans la promotion d'un développement local durable. Lorsqu'il parle de patrimoine, il fait davantage référence au patrimoine immatériel et vivant des communautés qu'à leur patrimoine matériel. Les idées d'Hugues ont été acceptées même par les économistes de l'organisation pour la coopération et le développement économique (OCDE). Si vous lisez le guide pour les administrateurs locaux sur la maximisation de l'impact de la culture sur le développement que l'OCDE et l'ICOM ont produit en 2018, vous avez la meilleure preuve de la façon dont les théories et les actions clairvoyantes d'Hugues sont devenues des opinions reconnues non seulement dans la

communauté écomuséale et hérétique, mais aussi dans une organisation économique intergouvernementale comme l'OCDE.

"Mon passage à l'ICOM" d'Hugues est une grande contribution à l'histoire de l'ICOM. J'ai lu ce livre avec beaucoup d'émotion. Il m'a donné un aperçu de la vie de l'ICOM qu'aucune autre publication ne m'offre. Pour lui, l'histoire de l'ICOM est l'histoire des collègues qui ont travaillé dans et pour l'ICOM et qui ont fait de l'ICOM l'association mondiale qu'elle est aujourd'hui. De ses paroles, j'ai reçu une image vivante des grandes personnalités de l'ICOM, de George Henri Rivière à Yvonne Oddon. Malheureusement, nous vivons une époque d'oubli. La mémoire du passé semble peu pertinente à notre époque d'attention limitée et de surcharge d'informations, mais le présent est inintelligible si vous ne connaissez pas le passé. Et nous ne pouvons actualiser et améliorer les musées et la muséologie que si nous voyons leur continuité au fil des ans. Comment pouvons-nous décoloniser les musées sans nous souvenir de la nouvelle muséologie ou du travail de trois présidents de l'ICOM au cours des 30 dernières années : Alpha Oumar Konaré du Mali, Saroj Ghose d'Inde et Alissandra Cummings de La Barbade.

"L'écomusée singulier et pluriel" est le résumé de 50 ans de travail d'Hugues dans le domaine de l'écomuséologie. La participation communautaire et la diversité sont les mots clés, le fil rouge de cet extraordinaire voyage personnel et professionnel dans le monde des musées et du patrimoine. Pour Hugues, la participation signifie le respect de la diversité et l'accès à la culture sans discrimination. Cela signifie une participation active des citoyens : les communautés ne doivent pas seulement être consultées ou écoutées. Les communautés exigent d'être impliquées dans la prise de décision, le développement du contenu et la définition des priorités.

### **Donatella Murtas**

J'ai eu le privilège de faire partie du premier laboratoire d'écomusée de la région du Piémont et de travailler sur le terrain avec l'écomusée des Terrasses, mais aussi de collaborer avec d'autres écomusées et j'ai fait partie des personnes qui ont soutenu le mouvement "Mondi locali", les mondes locaux.

Je participe maintenant à ce nouveau mouvement qui s'appelle "Ecomusei italiani". Là, nous suivons une sorte de séquence logique, avec des moments marquants que je raconterai, en remontant à Alberto Garlandini et à l'histoire de ce long parcours. Car il faut comprendre comment nous sommes arrivés là où nous en sommes. Bien sûr, comme vous pouvez l'imaginer, ce n'a pas été une promenade personnelle, mais une histoire collective.

Depuis les années 1990, le concept d'écomusée a fait son chemin en Italie. D'abord, quelques projets de développement local sont nés sous la forme d'écomusées. Parmi les plus connus il y a Argenta. C'était il y a 30 ans. En 1995 et depuis lors, les écomusées ont été formellement établis dans la région du Piémont par une loi. C'était une loi et une approche tellement visionnaires ! A partir de là, un âge d'or a commencé pour moi, avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme et d'énergie positive. Et cette loi qui prévoyait un financement économique transdisciplinaire pour les activités et les professionnels a eu en outre deux points forts.

Le premier a été la création d'un groupe de travail dédié, le Laboratoire écomusées, "Laboratorio ecomusei". Ce groupe devait soutenir le travail des premiers écomusées du Piémont et il intervenait sur les méthodes de travail innovantes et expérimentales, y compris les cartes communautaires, la diffusion des bonnes pratiques sur le patrimoine local, la participation de la communauté et les projets d'avenir, etc.

Le deuxième point fort était l'approche ascendante. Les projets de musée étaient définis et soumis à la région par les acteurs locaux eux-mêmes. Sur ce terrain fertile sont nées beaucoup d'initiatives de niveau régional et national et ont été produits nombre de réunions, de conférences scientifiques, ainsi que des livres et des articles.

Il faut aussi rappeler la coordination scientifique faite par l'IRES (Istituto di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali per il Piemonte) et en particulier par Maurizio Maggi. En 2003, la première réunion nationale des écomusées a eu lieu à Biella, dans le but de lancer l'écomusée de cette ville. Ce fut aussi un moyen de faire se rencontrer différentes disciplines, différents domaines. Immédiatement après, "Mondi Locali" (mondes locaux) est né comme *communauté de pratiques*. Les échanges, les moments de partage et les connexions avec d'autres écomusées européens étaient au cœur de «Mondi Locali», qui n'a jamais eu l'intention d'être une bulle isolée et fermée. Il a toujours voulu et souhaité être en relation avec son environnement, en construisant de nouvelles alliances et de nouveaux projets. C'était un pôle où les informations et les idées arrivaient et étaient largement diffusées.

C'était un carrefour où se rencontraient des groupes de travail informels et des professionnels des écomusées.

En 2007, le nom "Mondi Locali" a été officiellement enregistré. Il a rendu compte des énormes investissements en ressources humaines et économiques liés aux projets d'écomusées - un processus sans fin, des investissements qui ne cessent jamais.

De 2006 à 2014, d'autres lois régionales sont nées et le flux de l'écomusée s'est déplacé doucement du nord de l'Italie, vers le centre, le sud et les îles de l'Italie.

En 2015, le Manifeste des écomusées a été lancé en Toscane, dans le splendide château de Poppi. Nous y décrivions le rôle spécifique, les défis et la contribution des écomusées au patrimoine, au développement local et à l'espace de vie. Nous cherchions également à obtenir une reconnaissance nationale et formelle non seulement de leur rôle, mais également du professionnalisme de ceux qui travaillent dans ce secteur spécifique.

En 2016, la Conférence internationale de l'ICOM sur les musées et le paysage culturel a été organisée par l'ICOM Italie à Milan. Les écomusées ont offert leurs points de vue et ce fut une occasion spécifique de dire fermement et d'une seule voix que les écomusées travaillent sur les questions de paysage depuis leur naissance. Mais qu'en est-il aujourd'hui ? En Italie, il existe une centaine d'écomusées pleinement opérationnels dans presque toutes les régions. Nous avons 12 lois régionales.

Et récemment, un nouveau groupe informel nommé "Ecomusei Italiani" a été créé par un grand nombre d'écomusées italiens. C'est donc un nouvel âge d'or vivant. En ce qui concerne l'urgence pandémique et le changement climatique, nous savons que les écomusées peuvent répondre aux besoins. C'est donc un nouveau mouvement porteur d'énergie grâce à l'unité, la solidarité, la confiance en soi qui existent maintenant parmi les écomusées en Italie. Il a été facilité par les réunions en ligne qui ont montré une fois de plus comment un travail collectif peut réaliser de grandes choses. C'est ainsi que nous avons rendu hommage aux 50 ans de l'écomusée et aux 20 ans de la convention européenne du paysage.

**Maurizio Tondolo** (intervention traduite de l'italien)

J'ai un double rôle d'éditeur et de coordinateur d'un écomusée. Il explique le long temps qu'il a fallu pour traduire et publier le livre, par une révision minutieuse nécessaire pour rapporter fidèlement les concepts et le vocabulaire utilisés par Hugues de Varine.

J'ai déjà remercié Daniele Jalla et Etelca Ridolfo, il faut aussi remercier Hugues de Varine pour le livre et l'éditeur l'Harmattan qui a donné le droit de publier le livre en italien. La traductrice Paola Boccalatte a également eu un rôle important.

La première chose à dire est pourquoi la coopérative "Utopie Concrete" a voulu saisir l'opportunité de publier ce livre. Il s'agit d'une très petite coopérative, une coopérative culturelle, créée pour les mêmes causes qui ont suscité la naissance de l'écomusée dans la région de Val Resia. En 1999, la coopérative a eu l'occasion de se former et d'élaborer un plan pour les touristes [...]. C'est à ce moment qu'on a commencé à parler d'écomusée dans la région avec le projet d'écomusée de Val Resia.

L'année suivante, en 2000, la Coopérative a pris part au projet dans le cadre d'un Groupe d'action locale [*GAL, structure locale d'un programme européen Leader*] qui a permis les premiers pas de l'Ecomuseo delle Acque del Gemonese. Nous avons une amitié de longue date avec Hugues de Varine qui a visité plusieurs fois Gemona. Lors de ces visites, nous avons eu l'occasion de discuter et de réfléchir sur la façon dont le projet évoluait. Ces rencontres ont eu un impact profond sur l'activité de l'écomusée.

Vingt ans ont passé dans l'activité de l'écomusée qui sont 20 ans d'engagement militant. A la lecture d'Hugues de Varine, deux concepts-clés émergent qui sont la territorialité, l'importance et la centralité du territoire, et la participation. Et les trois piliers qui sont mentionnés plusieurs fois par Hugues de Varine dans le livre: le territoire, la population et le patrimoine, le patrimoine au sens de patrimoine vivant, patrimoine populaire et patrimoine communautaire. Plusieurs concepts sont soulignés dans son livre.

Le premier de ces concepts est l'homogénéité territoriale: l'activité de l'écomusée va bien au-delà des limites administratives, elle est liée aux frontières géographiques. Dans le cas de Gemona, les frontières sont données par un bassin fluvial et les projets qui ont été développés sont liés à ces frontières et promeuvent la planification de la connaissance et de la gestion de cette unité territoriale, qui est le bassin de la rivière.



Le deuxième concept-clé est le réseau. Le projet de l'écomusée a évolué grâce à la coopération et à la collaboration qui peuvent être générées en Italie ou même à l'étranger avec d'autres écomusées ou d'autres musées communautaires. Mais il est important qu'à la base de ces activités de mise en réseau, il y ait une recherche des acteurs et des personnes avec lesquels il est utile d'établir cette coopération.

Un troisième concept-clé est l'évolution. Les écomusées ne sont pas des réalités statiques, ce sont des réalités évolutives. Au départ, on n'avait même pas conscience des potentialités des écomusées. Grâce aux mises en réseau et aux alliances avec les administrations locales et les partenaires locaux, ils ont pu évoluer et se développer en tant que réalité écomuséale.

Le quatrième concept est la transversalité et l'articulation des actions : les projets des écomusées se croisent et se chevauchent en abordant divers sujets et en comparant différentes disciplines.

Mais pour accompagner l'action on doit disposer d'un comité scientifique de haut niveau. Ainsi l'improvisation est exclue et un chemin efficace peut être construit.

Un autre concept est la participation dont l'outil-clé est la cartographie communautaire qui a été largement utilisée. Mais ce qui est important n'est pas de s'arrêter à la carte [*mappa di comunità*] considérée comme résultat, mais de donner une continuité au processus qui a produit la carte et de donner et de traduire ce qu'elle contient sous la forme d'actions qui sont imaginées par les personnes mêmes impliquées dans le processus.

Donc, après 20 ans de fonctionnement, nous pouvons finalement dire que l'écomusée de Gemona est devenu un laboratoire pour le développement durable. Enfin, nous avons trouvé dans les pages du livre d'Hugues de Varine une sorte de slogan, qui est l'hérésie de l'écomusée par rapport à l'orthodoxie des musées traditionnels.

Pour conclure comme de Varine, je crois que les écomusées ne peuvent pas être réglementés par des normes générales, ou dépendre de l'initiative individuelle de personnes agissant seules: les gens ordinaires ont une place et un rôle dans la politique de l'écomusée. C'est pour cela que la Coopérative a décidé de traduire le livre et de le rendre disponible pour le débat italien parce que nous croyons fermement que c'est un livre qui va faire réfléchir et qu'il vaut la peine de le partager avec la communauté des écomusées.

## **Raul dal Santo**

Qui sommes-nous ? D'où venons-nous ? Où allons-nous ? Répondre à ces questions n'a jamais été aussi important qu'aujourd'hui. La cuisine italienne est née d'un rêve national : la constitution de la République italienne. Nous sommes également issus d'un rêve de 1971. Le nouveau musée comme outil de gestion du patrimoine vivant, non seulement formel, mais aussi avec la communauté. C'est aussi le rêve du "Museo integrale" de la Mesa de Santiago du Chili en 1972.

Après tant d'années depuis le début de ce rêve, l'écomusée italien continue de souhaiter être le musée du futur. En raison de la pandémie, les musées du futur sont maintenant confrontés à de nouvelles opportunités pour répondre aux besoins de changement des gens. À l'intérieur du passé comme de la créativité, les musées peuvent aider à forger une vision publique et un consensus pour les défis du 21<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les jeunes générations qui ont fait grève sur les places nous le demandent, surtout aujourd'hui plus que jamais, notre planète a besoin de musées du futur. Tous les écomusées italiens travaillent dur pour atteindre ces engagements.

Je voudrais rappeler le développement du travail sur l'écomusée, pour une communauté de musées lors de la Conférence générale de l'ICOM à Milan en 2016. Je voudrais également rappeler la contribution des écomusées italiens à la conception du projet de résolution sur les musées communautaires approuvé lors de la Conférence générale de l'ICOM à Kyoto en 2019. Cette résolution met en évidence le rôle des musées communautaires dans la réalisation des objectifs de développement des Nations Unies et en particulier l'action climatique. Malgré ces grands objectifs, nous ne cachons pas que nous sommes en difficulté. Pendant la pandémie, nous avons pleuré beaucoup d'amis et de collaborateurs des écomusées, en particulier les plus anciens, précieux gardiens du patrimoine immatériel. Nous avons dû suspendre les fêtes et les réunions qui faisaient vivre notre communauté et notre patrimoine. Nous regrettons aussi de ne pas avoir pu apporter notre contribution habituelle à l'éducation de la jeune génération pendant la pandémie; nous avons expérimenté de nouvelles méthodes pour rester proches de nos communautés. Nos difficultés ont augmenté à cause de la pandémie.

Mais nous avons confirmé les rêves que nous voulions réaliser. Nous avons coopéré avec d'autres écomusées à travers DROPS, la plate-forme internationale pour les écomusées et les

musées communautaires<sup>74</sup>. L'un des objectifs les plus extraordinaires de notre engagement international est le programme de coopération entre les écomusées d'Italie et du Brésil.

En cette année 2021, le réseau des écomusées italiens vous invite à la célébration des 50 ans de l'écomuséologie [<https://sites.google.com/view/ecomuseiitaliani/agenda/gruppi-di-lavoro/paesaggio/ecomusei-sono-paesaggio>] qui commence par la semaine du paysage en juin et se poursuit avec différentes manifestations, pour se terminer en décembre par une table ronde sur la reconnaissance nationale de l'écomusée. Voilà, cher Alberto, chers amis italiens des musées, merci d'inspirer notre travail et de partager ces rêves. Continuons à nous entraider non pas pour revenir comme avant la pandémie, mais pour devenir le Musée du futur et pour coopérer au développement intégral de nos communautés et de la planète. Une page se tourne.

### **Giuseppe Reina**

Au cours de cette année de pandémie, le débat au sein du réseau national des écomusées a beaucoup progressé grâce à plusieurs occasions de discussion animées par le travail extraordinaire de Raul del Santo, Francesco Baratti, Nerina Baldi, Andrea Rossi, Adriana Stefani, Andrea Del Duca, Raffaella Riva, Eliana Salvatore, Claudio Gnessi, Edo Bricchetti, Giuseppe Pidello, et beaucoup d'autres, que je ne peux pas tous nommer, mais qui font partie de l'extraordinaire communauté de pratiques qu'est notre réseau. Nous faisons tous l'expérience quotidienne de la complexité des politiques d'écomusée sur le terrain.

La présentation de l'édition italienne de votre livre était très attendue en raison de la pertinence des sujets que vous abordez et, surtout, parce que nous sommes conscients que le réseau national des écomusées doit prendre diverses décisions stratégiques ; parmi celles-ci, la question ouverte est de savoir s'il faut poursuivre ou non l'objectif d'une législation nationale sur les écomusées qui soit indépendante de celle qui concerne les autres musées ou, comme alternative, soutenir la mise en œuvre de lois régionales.

Le réseau espère que les écomusées pourront acquérir un rôle de médiateur entre le gouvernement central et les différentes "communautés du patrimoine", dans le domaine de la planification territoriale, surtout maintenant que le Parlement italien a ratifié la Convention

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<sup>74</sup> <https://sites.google.com/view/drops-platform/home/home-francais>.

de Faro en décembre 2020. Nous partons du principe que les écomusées sont, avant tout, des pratiques visant à la re-territorialisation et à la redécouverte de la mémoire historique dans un objectif d'autosuffisance locale, dans un processus de "production critique de connaissances locales". Les écomusées, quant à eux, s'efforcent de favoriser un dialogue démocratique qui inverse le processus de prise de décision, passant d'une discrétion bureaucratique à un débat ouvert entre les différents acteurs territoriaux, mêlant connaissances scientifiques et connaissances contextuelles, large participation des personnes et possibilités de coproduction du développement local grâce à des synergies entre les secteurs public et privé. Cela signifie avoir une variété de membres de la communauté agissant sur la même étape du développement local, élaborant collectivement une vision partagée et des normes communes pour vivre ensemble, dans le présent et dans le futur.

À l'occasion de la présentation de votre livre, traduit pour la communauté italienne, je vais ouvrir quelques sujets de discussion sur l'écomuséologie italienne qui sont nés d'une lecture critique du livre. Ces sujets ont été mis en évidence au cours d'un débat collectif au sein du réseau national des écomusées, qui a abouti à une réunion que nous avons récemment tenue en mars pour définir ce que je vais partager avec vous.

[Les questions posées par Giuseppe Reina sont écrites en caractères droits, les réponses d'Hugues de Varine en italiques.]

**1.** Une des principales particularités des écomusées italiens est leur reconnaissance institutionnelle sous la forme de lois régionales spécifiques. Comme vous le dites, le processus d'accréditation des écomusées n'est pas très clair. En réalité, selon les lois régionales, ils devraient être reconnus sur la base de critères minimum. Cependant, ces critères sont souvent laissés de côté parce que l'accréditation est liée à la question du financement, ce qui entraîne une confusion avec des intérêts politiques. Dans la seconde génération des lois régionales, comme celle du Piémont de 2018, la question est d'une certaine manière résolue car la reconnaissance est basée sur des critères spécifiques associés à un système de contrôle. Pensez-vous que la question du financement devrait être traitée de façon plus transparente pour éviter des contraintes politiques dans l'avenir.

*C'est toute la question de l'indépendance de l'écomusée: l'écomusée peut-il être indépendant ? Un écomusée peut-il être lui-même et ne pas obéir ou satisfaire aux besoins, aux préférences et aux choix des forces (force politique, force administrative, force économique)*

*qui essaieraient d'orienter le travail de l'écomusée. Je crois qu'il y a en réalité deux niveaux. Le premier est le fait que l'Italie est le seul pays au monde où il y a des lois spécifiques aux écomusées. C'est en soi extraordinairement unique et vous avez de la chance d'avoir réussi dans 12 régions d'Italie à établir des lois spécifiques pour les écomusées. A ce niveau régional, je me souviens, quand nous discutons du pré-projet de la loi de Lombardie, d'avoir personnellement pensé qu'il serait préférable que le financement comme l'influence de la région sur l'écomusée soient restreints à des champs limités, comme l'entraînement des professionnels et des volontaires de l'équipe de l'écomusée. Cela aiderait à atteindre une meilleure professionnalisation. Il pourrait aussi être utile à l'évaluation. Évaluer l'écomusée pour que la région puisse prendre des décisions mieux motivées sur la reconnaissance de l'écomusée. Je pensais que l'idée de donner des fonds pour le fonctionnement général de l'écomusée risquait d'obliger l'écomusée à respecter des règles qui pourraient être surtout politiques ou idéologiques.*

*Ensuite, il y a le second niveau, qui est le niveau local. Et là, que l'écomusée soit associatif ou municipal, il est absolument normal d'avoir une relation entre l'autorité locale et l'équipe professionnelle ou volontaire de l'écomusée. Il faut établir une sur la relation de collaboration entre les personnes qui travaillent sur la gestion du patrimoine - du patrimoine vivant - et les personnes qui sont politiquement responsables du territoire et de la communauté.*

**2.** La transversalité des écomusées comme acteurs du "développement intégral" n'est pas totalement acceptée dans les régions italiennes. En fait, la loi régionale des écomusées est habituellement sous la responsabilité du service du patrimoine culturel. La collaboration avec les services de l'éducation, de l'agriculture, de l'aménagement et des activités productives est souvent difficile. Si elle était mise en œuvre, cette collaboration inter-services donnerait à l'écomusée de l'importance comme acteur territorial impliqué dans les stratégies de développement local intégré. D'une part nous sommes conscients du progrès important que représenterait la nature interdisciplinaire de l'écomusée comme acteur d'un développement soutenable, comme c'est le cas dans la dernière loi du Piémont de 2018. D'autre part, nous devons souligner les limites opérationnelles qui sont apparues pendant ces vingt dernières années de médiation difficile entre les décisions prises par les autorités publiques et les revendications des communautés locales qui apparaissent au cours du processus de fondation de l'écomusée. Pensez-vous que la demande des écomusées d'être reconnus comme des acteurs centraux du développement local peut seulement s'exprimer par des révisions

futures des législations régionales ? La capacité des écomusées italiens est-elle assez reconnue par les communautés comme une opportunité pour poursuivre une voie soutenable de développement.

*Les écomusées sont fondamentalement transversaux mais nous savons tous que les administrations sont fortement en opposition avec la transversalité. Cela n'est pas propre à l'Italie, c'est général. Une administration est systématiquement verticale, et non horizontale. On peut concevoir des théories et des lois, mais ce sera toujours une sorte de "wishful thinking" de dire que nous devons avoir un système transversal. Ma seule expérience est que l'organisation horizontale d'un territoire, non pas au niveau national mais au moins au niveau régional et local, est faite par les gens et pas par des décisions administratives. Si on dit que la délégation agricole, la délégation éducative, la délégation culturelle, etc. doivent travailler ensemble, cela ne marchera pas. Si Monsieur X du département agricole et Monsieur Y du département éducatif se connaissent et travaillent ensemble avec les gens de l'écomusée, cela marchera. Je pense que c'est une équation de personnes car l'écomusée est bâti sur et par les gens. C'est pourquoi la question de la transversalité fonctionne mieux dans la vie quotidienne que dans l'administration.*

La capacité de structurer des projets partagés en mobilisant les réseaux territoriaux est certainement une des caractéristiques des écomusées italiens. Pensez-vous qu'il y a un risque qu'un rôle mal codifié ou un leadership peu clair des écomusées puisse dégénérer en conflits avec d'autres acteurs territoriaux qui seraient plus proches d'intérêts politiques particuliers ?

*Bien sûr l'écomusée va toujours générer des conflits, sauf lorsqu'il est le seul outil de développement dans le territoire. Il y a aussi la question de la capacité des leaders de l'écomusée à trouver leur place correcte dans le tissu institutionnel (public et privé).*

**3.** Nous devons nous poser la question de l'avenir des écomusées italiens. S'adapteront-ils aux règles nationales des musées, par une muséalisation progressive du patrimoine, des monuments et des sites qu'ils retireront progressivement de la vie culturelle et sociale ? Ou bien poursuivront-ils sur la voie de l'innovation pour accompagner les changements de la société, élargissant la notion de "patrimoine vivant" sous la responsabilité de la communauté ? Ces réflexions de votre part soulignent un débat qui est encore ouvert dans notre réseau national, après plusieurs tentatives d'obtenir une loi nationale ; nous ressentons une forte

fatigue et nous pensons que de nombreuses marges opérationnelles doivent être examinées. Après un rapide parcours de la documentation rassemblée par les écomusées, le problème de la relation entre les écomusées et le Système National des Musées se résume à une question fondamentale : alors que de nombreuses lois régionales des écomusées existent, il n'existe au plan national aucun concept réglementaire d'écomusée. Dans le passé, diverses tentatives ont été faites dans ce sens, mais elles n'ont eu aucun résultat. Les différents projets de loi qui ont été présentés au Parlement italien lors des législatures précédentes n'étaient que des initiatives isolées présentées par des parlementaires en dehors du contexte politique qui est nécessaire à la poursuite du processus législatif. Cela signifie que les écomusées qui sont portés par les lois régionales n'ont pas de relations avec le Système National des Musées. Mais il y a les autres écomusées qui ne sont pas placés sous une législation régionale propre et sont donc obligés de choisir entre être à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur du Système National des Musées avec ses normes et ses exigences. En particulier, l'adaptation des "niveaux uniformes de qualité" LUQ (DM 113/2018) du Système National des Musées conditionne inévitablement les écomusées des autres régions, qui sont forcés de les respecter, comme en Emilie-Romagne ou en Toscane. Dans le débat international, il y a une apparente imperméabilité du monde des musées aux compétences acquises par les écomusées. En dépit du fait que le terme "écomusée" atteint son cinquantième anniversaire cette année et que, depuis les années 1990, les différences entre musées et écomusées ont été bien définies au niveau international (Boylan et autres), malgré le fait que, en Italie, le phénomène écomusée a maintenant connu plusieurs décennies et malgré la conférence de 2016, le débat dans les musées n'a pas encore inclus la forme écomuséale dans son approche. Au mieux, les normes muséales parlent de "relation au territoire", quelque soit le sens de cette expression. En fin de compte, l'attitude politique vis-à-vis du musée semble être principalement centrée sur la demande pour une monétisation rapide grâce à la billetterie, à la marchandisation et à divers services, ce qui ne correspond pas au rôle que l'écomusée veut jouer sur le territoire.

*C'est la question de la problématique des relations entre les lois régionales et les lois nationales, et de l'avenir des écomusées dans un pays comme l'Italie, mais cela pourrait être le cas d'autres pays. En Italie c'est plus important, car il y a ces lois régionales et je dois dire que c'est difficile de le dire en face d'Alberto Garlandini, Président de l'ICOM, mais un écomusée n'est pas un musée, car un écomusée n'est pas basé sur des collections. L'écomusée n'est pas fait pour acquérir et posséder le patrimoine du territoire. Il gère la vie, la vie quotidienne du patrimoine sur le territoire, ce qui est complètement différent. Cela sera toujours, je pense, sinon impossible, du moins très difficile, d'obtenir la reconnaissance de*

*l'écomusée en tant que musée. Il y a deux catégories de patrimoine. Une qui est morte, qui doit être stérilisée et gardée comme un trésor, ce sont les monuments et les sites enregistrés et protégés par la loi, et les collections des musées. Il y a ensuite un monde entier de patrimoine vivant qui doit être aidé à vivre. Il ne s'agit pas de l'aider à être conservé, mais il doit être reconnu et géré par l'écomusée. En France, il n'y a que peu d'écomusées véritables car nous sommes sous une loi nationale unique qui oblige les musées, et même les écomusées, à avoir une collection, à conserver et administrer cette collection. La loi ne s'intéresse pas au reste, qui est le patrimoine vivant. Il faut donc s'organiser pour être capable, dans un futur soutenable, de ne pas seulement conserver des trésors locaux et nationaux, mais aussi d'aider les gens à gérer leur propre patrimoine vivant. Je n'ai jamais trouvé de solutions ou de réponses à cette question de vocabulaire. Dans les écomusées, il y a le mot musée. Et dans l'esprit des politiques et des administrateurs culturels, comme dans la population en général, un musée a une définition, une image et un contenu qui sont les objets, les monuments, les choses qui doivent être conservés.*

*Pour comprendre cela, il faut retourner à l'origine du mot écomusée, en 1971, avant de voir ce qui a été accompli en 50 ans d'écomuséologie. En fait, initialement, notre idée à l'ICOM pour la création du terme d'écomusée c'était d'obliger les musées d'histoire naturelle de changer le mode d'emploi de leurs collections, pour tenir compte des nouvelles préoccupations environnementales (Conférence des Nations Unies à Stockholm, 1972). Il n'était pas, à ce moment-là, question du patrimoine vivant. Depuis, cela a évolué vers quelque chose de très vivant, de dynamique.*

**4.** Comme vous le dites dans le livre, il est clair pour tout le monde que l'écomusée joue un rôle dans l'aménagement du territoire et le paysage, en apportant aux pouvoirs des éléments de décision et en mobilisant la population sur la base de propositions constructives. La région des Pouilles a largement utilisé les écomusées pour l'approbation du Plan régional du Paysage et il y a quelques années la région Lombardie a publié un plan de paysage qui, bien qu'il ne soit pas encore approuvé, reconnaît le rôle des écomusées dans la planification. Par conséquent, pensez-vous qu'il soit finalement temps pour les régions de reconnaître les écomusées comme des "institutions médiatrices" au sein des Observatoires régionaux du paysage, comme il est prévu dans le Code du Patrimoine et du Paysage Culturels et aussi en accord avec la ratification récente de la Convention de Faro ?



*Sur l'aménagement du paysage, je serais bref parce que les Italiens ont créé la convention de Florence. Vous avez une politique d'observation sur le patrimoine du territoire. C'est quelque chose d'important que vous avez là. Je n'ai pas vu cela dans d'autres pays. C'est un problème que j'ai personnellement vu très clairement dans le Piémont, à l'écomusée AMI [Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea]. C'était compliqué parce que l'écomusée devait travailler avec l'observatoire à la fois au niveau régional et au niveau local. Le fait est que l'écomusée n'a habituellement pas le même périmètre que l'observatoire. Je n'ai personnellement pas trouvé de territoire qui soit à la fois un écomusée et un observatoire. S'il y a un périmètre plus restreint ou lorsque, comme dans le cas de l'AMI, l'écomusée a défini un territoire qui n'est pas officiellement reconnu comme un territoire administratif ou historique parce que c'est un territoire essentiellement géographique, c'est plus difficile pour l'écomusée de trouver sa place dans le système d'observation. Nous avons un autre cas en Espagne avec le Maestrazgo qui n'est pas officiellement un écomusée, mais qui joue le même rôle, en Aragon. L'écomusée a créé un territoire appelé Maestrazgo qui a dû se battre pendant 10 ou 12 ans pour obtenir une reconnaissance comme territoire administratif (comarca). C'est le résultat d'un travail sur le patrimoine, sur l'histoire, sur la géographie, etc., mais ce n'était pas formellement reconnu par l'administration comme circonscription nouvelle. C'est important pour l'écomusée de participer au territoire, aux politiques du paysage et à la stratégie du paysage.*

**5.** Les écomusées italiens se sont depuis longtemps organisés en réseaux, au moins dans les régions où des lois spécifiques les reconnaissent. Le premier réseau d'écomusées régionaux a été créé au Piémont, avec le soutien du Laboratorio Ecomusei, pour suivre l'application de la loi de 1995. La région des Pouilles en 2011 et celle de Lombardie en 2016 ont toutes deux créé une structure permanente pour les écomusées, appelée Conseil Régional des écomusées, qui est de fait un conseil consultatif pour les deux régions. Les réseaux sont les interlocuteurs des autorités régionales; ils sont aussi des lieux de formation mutuelle et d'échanges de bonnes pratiques et de méthodes. Le rôle des réseaux régionaux devrait-il être défini plus avant dans un guide émanant du réseau national des écomusées ?

*Les réseaux sont une autre caractéristique italienne. C'est aussi une formule intéressante et très développée. J'ai suivi l'expérience de "Mondi Locali" lors d'une rencontre il y a quelques années à Gemona. La seule réaction que j'ai eue sur cette question est "prenez garde à trop de formalisme", trop de bureaucratie. Les réseaux que j'ai vus en Italie fonctionnent bien et il y a dans chacun un seul coordinateur avec peu de moyens, mais c'est une personne active,*

*dynamique et qui peut parler à tous. Si ça devenait une obligation avec un fonctionnement administratif, ce serait trop formel. Mieux organisé peut-être, mais moins libre. Je me souviens de plusieurs visites à l'écomusée d'Argenta, pendant la Foire commerciale annuelle. C'était quelque chose de relativement libre, les gens venaient quand ils voulaient. Tous les jours étaient un peu différents. Ce n'était pas organisé de manière administrative et bureaucratique et cela fonctionnait avec toute la fièvre du réseau, mais pas nécessairement un réseau formel.*

*Un guide national serait sans doute une bonne chose, mais là encore éviter trop de bureaucratie. Chaque écomusée est différent et devrait rester différent. Les réseaux ou conseils régionaux sont également différents, à cause des contextes locaux et de la personnalité, habituellement forte, de leur coordinateur.*

**6.** Il n'y a jamais eu en Italie de débat structuré sur les stratégies des écomusées en matière de tourisme. Cependant, nous partageons une nouvelle façon de comprendre le tourisme, sans aller chercher de modèles extérieurs ou globaux. Nous cherchons des voies alternatives, développées par, et dans le territoire. Une telle approche vise à systématiser et à partager l'énorme patrimoine territorial répandu dans nos régions, composé de ressources diverses et d'expériences locales, en vue de repérer les expériences et de respecter les identités locales, sociales, culturelles et productives. Vous soulignez le risque que le tourisme, dans les écomusées italiens, ait un impact à la fois sur les communautés locales - qui se sentiraient privées de leur espace de vie - et sur le patrimoine qui pourrait graduellement être érodé, exploité ou simplement être muséifié. Ce serait une situation surtout pour la phase post-pandémique critique. Dans ce domaine, les réseaux régionaux d'écomusées pourraient être des observatoires privilégiés pour comprendre comment nous pouvons contribuer à éviter une approche de tourisme trop "consumentiste" et comment au contraire on générerait un tourisme innovant qui ciblerait les traditions et l'authenticité des lieux. Il sera aussi important pour les écomusées de s'unir avec d'autres organismes opérant dans le même domaine (parcs naturels, zones protégées, parcs agricoles, contrats de rivière, groupes d'achats éthiques, etc.) pour générer un tourisme social et vert.

*Le tourisme est une grosse question dont on pourrait parler un jour ou deux. J'ai un peu d'expérience dans quelques pays et aussi en Italie. Je ne suis pas effrayé par la consommation du tourisme et le tourisme de masse dans l'écomusée. L'écomusée ne gère pas un patrimoine important, il gère le petit patrimoine ou la gastronomie, etc. Ce ne sont pas de grand monuments, des bâtiments, etc., donc je ne suis pas effrayé. Mais je pense qu'il*

*y a une expérience spécifique sur le tourisme. Il y a beaucoup de choses qui ont déjà été faites en Italie et ailleurs pour le tourisme local. Je me souviens d'avoir travaillé dans un écomusée en Lombardie où il était évident qu'il était impossible d'accueillir beaucoup de touristes dans un petit territoire avec peu d'habitants et avec peu de facilités pour se loger, pour rendre des services aux touristes. Mais il était possible d'accueillir la population du voisinage, et de la petite région parce qu'il y avait des jeunes et des personnes âgées qui voulaient par petits groupes être accueillis et aidés dans ce petit territoire où vit un patrimoine. Mais c'est une autre conception du tourisme dont j'ai trouvé l'idée et la pratique au Brésil avec l'écotourisme "de base communautaire". L'idée est que ce soit la communauté elle-même qui prenne des initiatives pour créer ses propres produits touristiques. Cela contribue au revenu individuel ou familial, mais aussi à un retour économique pour la communauté, pas seulement ses membres actifs, mais aussi toute la communauté. J'aimerais entendre votre avis, celui des écomusées italiens, sur le tourisme, sur vos propres stratégies et sur vos expériences, parce que ça devrait intéresser le reste du monde.*

7. Comment évaluer un écomusée ? Comment déterminer sa véritable utilité sociale ?

L'évaluation signifie porter un regard sur notre action, sur nos objectifs, nos méthodes et nos résultats. Ce n'est pas un jugement mais elle exige une certaine rigueur et, autant que possible, la participation d'un certain nombre d'acteurs et d'utilisateurs qui apportent leur propre subjectivité en vue de se confronter les uns avec les autres et, à partir de là, déduire des recommandations et des propositions de changement. Quel genre d'auto-évaluation imaginez-vous pour les écomusées italiens qui ont été reconnus dans leurs régions respectives ? La région du Piémont, avec sa nouvelle loi, a prévu une évaluation mais elle n'a pas encore été définie. Le projet Erasmus Ecoheritage promu par l'écomusée de Parabiago va essayer de donner une réponse à cette question.

*L'évaluation est un autre grand sujet dont j'aimerais discuter avec certains d'entre vous, mais plus en profondeur, parce que l'évaluation pour moi est une démarche fondamentale pour une institution comme l'écomusée. L'évaluation est quelque chose de vital, d'essentiel, mais elle doit être faite au sein de la communauté elle-même, et par les différents acteurs de l'écomusée. Pourquoi ne pas utiliser la dynamique et la méthode de la "Mappa di comunità" pour l'évaluation ? Je veux dire utiliser des volontaires de la communauté pour y travailler. Non seulement sur l'identification, l'inventaire du patrimoine, mais aussi sur l'action, sur la qualité des actions. Ainsi, ils seraient responsables non seulement de dire ce qu'ils considèrent comme leur patrimoine, mais aussi de dire comment ils considèrent ce qui a été*

*fait récemment sur leur patrimoine, comment c'est fait, que faudrait-il faire d'autre ou de mieux... Je pense que vous devriez inventer, vous les Italiens, votre propre méthode d'évaluation pour l'écomusée, une méthode qui, à mon avis, doit être faite par les personnes impliquées, les personnes intéressées. Ainsi, chaque écomusée pourrait concevoir sa propre méthode, comme pour la « Mappa di comunità ». Il s'agirait par exemple de formuler une simple liste de questions à administrer par des volontaires de l'équipe de l'écomusée et de la population, avec l'aide d'au moins un observateur extérieur. Idéalement, l'évaluation devrait être continue, depuis la fondation de l'écomusée et ses conclusions et recommandations devraient être régulièrement restituées à la population, pour écouter les propositions ou les contradictions de la part de la base de la communauté. Cela pourrait aussi être utilisé pour mettre à jour la base de la mappa di comunità.*

**8.** La participation des écomusées au développement économique local est un processus largement intégré, même s'il reste le plus souvent dans le domaine de la micro-économie. Cette approche large inclut un inventaire des ressources patrimoniales utilisables, le diagnostic des conditions qui doivent être respectées en termes d'environnement, de formation, de connaissances juridiques et techniques, etc. Ce n'est plus une question de valoriser le patrimoine pour lui donner seulement une valeur économique, mais il s'agit de diversifier et de développer l'économie locale basée sur le patrimoine. Cette approche soulève une question éthique qui a été débattue en 2013 pendant un colloque tenu à l'écomusée de Gemona: comment équilibrer la mise en valeur du patrimoine au sens culturel et social et sa mise en valeur au sens économique et financier ? Il n'est pas question de transformer l'écomusée en un économusée, au sens canadien; mais plutôt de lui donner une dimension économique, en même temps que les autres dimensions (culturelle, éducative, environnementale, paysagère, sociale). Le programme Eco-Slow-Road proposé il y a quelques années devrait rendre possible le lancement d'un processus de rationalisation des aspects économiques de l'action de promotion des productions traditionnelles, telle qu'entreprise par les écomusées italiens. L'auto-soutenabilité des territoires est recherchée dans la programmation expérimentale de nombreux écomusées. Les pratiques exemplaires de valorisation des spécialités locales devraient être partagées, comme cela se fait déjà dans le programme 2021 des Journées du paysage... L'école italienne de territorialistes Managhi a largement développé ces aspects. Ce n'est pas par hasard que les écomusées sont mentionnés plusieurs fois comme des acteurs du changement du système socio-économique local. Il leur est demandé d'explorer les relations possibles entre l'innovation technologique et la tradition. Le concept de "bio-région" (économies locales auto-soutenables, systèmes

d'énergies locales mixtes, zones d'agroforesterie multifonctionnelles, etc.) devrait devenir un modèle de développement pour les écomusées italiens.

*Je n'aime pas parler de développement local uniquement sous l'angle économique. Je préfère parler du développement local global qui implique en partie l'économie, mais avec les autres aspects sociaux, culturels, environnementaux, etc. Il faut penser en termes de communautés. Les communautés sont propriétaires de leur patrimoine vivant, et utilisent ce patrimoine vivant, le transforment, l'enrichissent, en jouissent, etc. ; de même l'habitant d'un territoire où il y a un écomusée est reconnu à la fois comme propriétaire et utilisateur du patrimoine de la communauté. Mais, pour que l'habitant, individuellement et au sein de sa communauté, puisse participer en acteur du développement, il faut qu'il en soit capable, qu'il ait un savoir-faire. L'avantage des administrateurs, des fonctionnaires, des élus, est qu'ils sont des professionnels du développement. Ils savent comment le faire. Ils sont légitimes de par leur mandat, leur statut ou leur formation. Ils connaissent les règles économiques. Ils sont censés être capables de décider, de savoir comment gérer les équipements, comment gérer l'organisation du territoire et ainsi de suite. Par contre, les habitants, les citoyens, eux ne savent pas, ou se croient incapables de jouer un rôle, autrement que comme électeurs. On ne leur a jamais appris à l'école comment faire pour gérer leur territoire, pour savoir comment préserver ou réorganiser les équipements, etc. Donc le rôle de l'écomusée, à mon avis, devrait être d'éduquer. Pas seulement d'éduquer à l'école, pas simplement d'amener les écoliers à visiter le site ou à l'utiliser. Mais pour former systématiquement la population, les membres de la communauté à la compréhension et aux méthodes de transformation (aménagement) du territoire, en respectant son patrimoine et en l'utilisant, parce que son patrimoine vivant est quelque chose qui est utile et qui se transforme constamment. Pour moi, l'écomusée aide surtout à amener les gens à être capables de participer au développement ; les Brésiliens ont créé un mot que j'utilise en portugais parce qu'il n'existe pas en français, c'est la **capacitation**. C'est donner, amener les gens à la capacité de gérer leurs propres affaires. C'est de la démocratie, en fait. Mais je pense que l'écomusée pourrait aider sa communauté et les membres de cette communauté, chaque membre et le collectif de la communauté, à s'adapter au changement, à s'adapter à la manière d'améliorer leur avenir, d'être durable... C'est la règle de la subsidiarité.*

*Économiquement, il y a quelque chose qui pourrait être suggérée à un écomusée, que j'ai proposé dans les "Radici del futuro"<sup>75</sup>, une méthode pour calculer l'équilibre économique du*

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<sup>75</sup> Le Radici del futuro, Bologna, Clueb, 2005. Pages 106-113.

*patrimoine vivant dont nous parlons. Ce que j'ai essayé de faire était complètement informel et complètement primitif, ce ne devrait pas être utilisé comme tel, mais ce pourrait être une base pour développer votre propre système d'analyse, de diagnostic de l'économie, la signification économique, l'avenir économique de votre patrimoine vivant.*

*Je ne veux pas parler de l'avenir de l'écomusée parce qu'un écomusée est quelque chose qui bouge constamment, qui évolue, et qui n'a pas d'avenir, c'est quelque chose qui change sans cesse. Peut-être qu'il deviendra quelque chose d'autre. Peut-être que, comme cela a déjà été fait dans de nombreux écomusées, il deviendra un musée ou quelque chose qui portera un autre nom, mais qui répondra aux nouveaux besoins de la population locale, de la communauté.*

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## Questions et réponses

### Floriane

Hugues de Varine, vous avez créé une typologie des musées communautaires au Brésil ; comme vous le dites, ils apparaissent dans un territoire en développement et appellent à la gestion du patrimoine sortant par ou avec la communauté ; certains musées identitaires ou indigènes ont toujours une forte dimension politique. Ces musées existent-ils en Europe de l'Ouest et en Amérique du Nord et pensez-vous qu'ils pourraient jouer un rôle dans la valorisation de certaines communautés issues de la migration qui ont été longtemps ignorées en Europe et qui aujourd'hui demandent précisément une certaine reconnaissance et appréciation des différentes identités ? Je parle de mouvements comme "Black lives matter" et j'ai deux autres questions d'un étudiant qui n'a pas pu venir. Comment définiriez-vous l'écomusée aujourd'hui ? Comment la définition et les caractéristiques de l'écomusée ont-elles évolué depuis la création du terme en 1971/72 ? Et dernière question, quel est l'avenir de l'écomusée pour vous ? Quels sont les enjeux actuels à considérer, notamment avec la crise Covid 19 ?

### Hugues

*Tout d'abord, il y a aussi beaucoup d'autres types de musées communautaires qui ne sont pas nécessairement écomusées et qui certainement ne s'appellent pas écomusées. Mais dans certains pays, les écomusées et/ou les musées communautaires sont vraiment des initiatives politiques. Cela dépend du contexte, de la situation locale, bien sûr. Mais mon expérience avec le Brésil est claire, les musées indigènes ne se sont jamais appelés écomusées, ils s'appellent eux-mêmes du nom de leur groupe ethnique et ils travaillent pour défendre leur droit à la terre, et leur droit à leurs croyances, le droit à leurs traditions et ainsi de suite. C'est typiquement politique. La même chose s'est produite avec de nombreuses autres communautés, notamment afro-brésiliennes. Dans les pays européens ou l'Amérique du Nord, ce qui signifie le soi-disant monde développé, le monde industrialisé, il y a aussi une tradition, il y a des exemples non pas d'écomusées, mais de musées qui fonctionnent en fait comme des musées communautaires. Vous pouvez regarder ce qui s'est passé dans les années 1960 au moment de la lutte pour les droits de l'homme aux États-Unis où il y a eu un groupe d'initiatives culturelles qui ressemblaient plus ou moins à des écomusées. Le plus*

*important, le plus célèbre et le plus durable d'entre eux est le Musée Anacostia créé par John Kinard, un pasteur évangélique, dans sa communauté noire à Washington DC. Et cela a été créé dans un vieux cinéma. C'est probablement le premier véritable musée communautaire au monde. Il y avait aussi le Studio-Harlem, le Museo del Barrio, tous deux à New York, etc. C'était toujours politique. En Europe, c'est plus difficile de trouver des cas. J'en connais un qui est quand même vraiment une action positive pour une communauté, c'est le musée Sami de Jokkmokk dans le nord de la Suède qui a été créé spécifiquement pour défendre les droits culturels et le patrimoine culturel de la population Sami. Au Canada, vous avez les musées touristiques typiques faits dans diverses communautés autochtones par des muséologues des métropoles pour montrer les cultures locales aux touristes et aux visiteurs extérieurs à la communauté, et vous avez d'autres cas où c'est la communauté locale, la communauté autochtone locale, qui a créé son propre musée pour montrer des choses à son propre peuple. Il y a donc des cas au Canada. Je ne connais pas les autres écomusées du monde, mais c'est vrai que l'écomusée peut avoir et a parfois une dimension politique. Sur l'avenir de l'écomusée. Je ne peux que répéter ce que je dis toujours : pour moi, un écomusée est un corps vivant, un organisme vivant, qui a sa propre vie. Je dois ajouter une chose, c'est qu'un écomusée, dans tous les cas que je connais, a été créé au cours des 50 dernières années, dans un territoire, avec une population, mais pas avec toute la population, avec un groupe de personnes représentant une génération, la génération active au moment de la création. Il est évident que 20, 30, 50 ans après la fondation de l'écomusée, il y a normalement des changements. La nouvelle génération active aura peut-être d'autres idées sur le patrimoine, sur sa gestion et sur les besoins de la population. Le British Museum de Londres est là pour toujours.*

*Un écomusée est là quand il est utile. S'il n'est plus utile, il disparaîtra probablement. Donc comme il n'y a pas de collections, et qu'il n'est pas fait pour conserver cette collection. Il peut disparaître sans problème et être remplacé par autre chose.*



## Océane

Comment est- ce que tout cela peut s'appliquer au musée ordinaire ?

## Hugues

*Le musée ordinaire, le musée traditionnel peut ou doit changer sa pratique et adopter certains principes, certaines méthodes, certains aspects de l'écomusée. S'intéresser davantage à la communauté, s'intéresser davantage au territoire, s'intéresser davantage au patrimoine vivant, c'est ce que je pense, c'est ce qui devrait arriver, mais c'est une décision qui doit être prise par les responsables du musée. Donc comme je l'ai dit avant, le musée, l'écomusée n'est pas vraiment un musée parce qu'il n'a pas de collection, il n'est pas centré sur une collection, même s'il se trouve qu'il en a une. Mais les lois sur les musées, particulièrement en France, que je connais mieux que d'autres, mais c'est vrai aussi au Brésil, au Portugal et ailleurs, c'est vrai à l'ICOM, le musée est essentiellement identifié à sa collection. Or c'est très difficile à la fois de gérer une collection, de la conserver, de la préserver, de l'exposer, et en plus de s'intéresser à la grande diversité du patrimoine vivant, qui disparaît, qui change tout le temps. C'est une chose à laquelle les professionnels des musées ne sont pas habitués, ils font de la conservation préventive, mais c'est autre chose. Dans nos pays européens, à part l'Italie qui a inventé ses lois régionales des écomusées, c'est la loi nationale des musées qui s'applique à tout ce qui porte le nom de musée, y compris les écomusées, donc il sera toujours difficile de faire reconnaître la spécificité des écomusées. Dans un cas en France, l'écomusée Paysalp en Haute Savoie a même décidé pendant 10 ou 20 ans de son existence de ne pas devenir un musée, de ne pas accepter le label musée pour ne pas être obligé d'obéir à la loi des musées. Et cet écomusée a dû gérer un musée, le petit musée de traditions rurales qui faisait partie de son réseau, le réseau local. Alors il gérait ce musée local normalement, comme un musée, mais l'écomusée lui-même n'était pas étiqueté musée. Maintenant, je crois que ça a changé. Je connais des écomusées comme celui de Fourmies ou celui du Creusot-Montceau qui s'appellent écomusée, mais en fait ils sont des musées qui sont complètement asphyxiés par leurs collections. Il y a eu tellement d'objets accumulés pendant la longue période d'action communautaire (années 70-80), notamment par des dons de la communauté ou de partenaires mais le musée n'a pas rejeté ces dons ou a dû les accepter pour sauver des objets importants, donc il est devenu un musée de collection. Et pourquoi pas ?*

## **Camille**

Je me demande si le concept d'écomusée est plus difficile à appliquer dans les zones urbaines et les grandes villes, en particulier de manière écologique ? Ou au contraire, serait-ce une solution durable dans une perspective active de transition écologique ?

## **Hugues**

*La prochaine fois que vous venez en Italie, demandez à Raul dal Santo de répondre à cette question parce que bien sûr ils ont des écomusées dans les villes et lui-même dirige un écomusée urbain. Ce n'est pas un phénomène qui est aussi bien connu que pour les zones rurales. Mais en fait, des écomusées sont établis ou ont été créés dans les villes, dans des territoires urbains, dans des zones urbaines. Le premier, pour autant que je sache, le premier en France au moins, était celui du Creusot-Montceau. Ce n'était pas une ville, mais c'était un groupe de villes. C'était ce qu'on appelle en France une communauté urbaine et c'étaient des zones industrielles, des villes industrielles. En France encore, il y a le cas de l'Écomusée du Val de Bièvre dans le Grand Paris. En Italie, il y a de nombreux cas, dans des villes plus petites, mais aussi dans la banlieue de Milan. A Milan, il y a un écomusée au nord de Milan, un autre au sud de Milan. A Turin, il y en avait un par quartier. À Rio de Janeiro, vous avez je ne sais combien d'écomusées créés dans les favelas. C'est un autre type de mouvement politique. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'accueillir des touristes, mais d'aider les gens à réaffirmer leur existence, leur identité, etc. En fait, la réponse est qu'un écomusée peut être un musée urbain et non urbain. Et le meilleur cas est l'Écomusée du fier monde à Montréal. C'est probablement le meilleur cas au monde en ce moment.*

## **Pauline**

Ma question porte sur les risques qui peuvent survenir dans le cadre de l'expérience de l'écomusée. Est-ce que vous pensez que dans l'expérience d'un écomusée, il peut y avoir un risque de ne plus montrer la réalité telle qu'elle est. Mais une image qu'une population veut montrer d'elle-même. Comme s'il devenait un miroir déformé ou déformant. Est-ce l'une des principales raisons pour lesquelles il devrait y avoir un comité scientifique ?

## Hugues

*C'est un grand danger, à mon avis, pour l'écomusée, en particulier pour l'écomusée rural. A cause de la relation à l'anthropologie. Elle est si proche. Et c'est là que nous devons vraiment être très clairs. L'anthropologue, le musée d'anthropologie travaillent avec les gens comme avec des informateurs, des sources d'information. Et ils collectent des choses intangibles, des souvenirs, des objets, avec leurs significations... Et ensuite, à travers l'exposition et la publication, ils les restituent aux personnes de la communauté, du groupe. L'écomusée, c'est exactement le contraire, c'est le peuple qui agit, du moins en principe, même si ce n'est pas toujours comme ça bien sûr. L'écomusée devrait commencer par les gens et la "Mappa di comunità" en est un très bon exemple. Ils ne se regardent pas eux-mêmes. Ils regardent leurs biens. Ils regardent leurs ressources. C'est exactement comme s'ils regardaient leurs trésors familiaux ou les meubles de leur maison. Ils ne se regardent pas dans le miroir. Ils regardent un environnement naturel, culturel, un environnement vivant, pour comprendre, pour améliorer leur futur, pour améliorer l'avenir de leurs enfants, petits-enfants, etc. C'est donc très différent. Encore une fois, le musée d'anthropologie crée une collection (d'objets ou de données, de connaissances à vocation scientifique). Le meilleur cas, et c'est quelque chose qui a créé un malentendu entre l'écomusée et l'anthropologie, est le musée en plein air. Le musée de plein air, en Scandinavie par exemple, est un musée communautaire facile à créer parce que généralement, dans les petits villages de Norvège ou de Suède, les musées de plein air ont été créés dans le village par les gens. Ils démontaient leurs vieilles maisons en bois pour les reconstruire dans un parc. C'est un musée d'anthropologie typique, même s'il n'est pas fait par un anthropologue, il est fait par les gens du coin, mais pour se regarder eux-mêmes et pour les garder, c'est de la conservation. Nous en avons un exemple en France, l'écomusée d'Alsace dans l'Est de la France. Il a été créé en tant qu'écomusée, mais en fait c'est un musée de plein air. Et en tant que musée de plein air, il a constitué une énorme collection de bâtiments et de maisons, avec leur mobilier. Et même l'environnement des maisons. Il a des problèmes typiques de musée de collection et son public est extérieur, il vient surtout d'Allemagne. Donc c'est un musée, même si on l'appelle un écomusée. Il y a un autre cas en France, très différent. Il ne s'appelle pas écomusée, mais il pourrait en être un: c'est le Musée des maisons comtoises de Nancray, en Franche Comté, près de Besançon. C'est un musée de plein air, mais qui a été réorganisé par une nouvelle directrice il y a une vingtaine d'années pour le rendre utile à la population de la région. L'objectif n'est pas seulement de recevoir des touristes, c'est aussi et surtout d'aider les habitants de la région à améliorer*

*leurs propres maisons, à respecter l'environnement, à combiner la tradition et les normes contemporaines, à apprendre les méthodes de conservation de l'énergie, de traitement des déchets, etc. Pour cela, un bon écomusée doit pouvoir aussi compter sur des chercheurs, et pas seulement des anthropologues ou des sociologues, mais tous les spécialistes qui peuvent aider à mieux connaître le patrimoine vivant, à le gérer et à l'utiliser.*

### **Questions lues par Pauline**

(1) D'où vient votre intérêt pour les écomusées ? Qu'est-ce que vous aimez dans ces projets ?

(2) Pourquoi la nouvelle muséologie et l'écomuséologie ne sont pas spécifiquement enseignées à l'université et pourquoi les écomusées ne sont généralement pas développés par des muséologues. Si ces formes muséales étaient à l'initiative de muséologues, comment cela influencerait-il le projet à votre avis ?

### **Hugues**

*(1) Parce que j'étais intéressé à utiliser le patrimoine pour le développement. Donc l'écomusée m'est apparu comme un outil, un outil très intéressant pour associer la population à son propre développement. Et le développement étant basé sur les ressources : les ressources humaines et les ressources culturelles et naturelles. L'écomusée était une expérience évidente pour le développement local. Et c'est tout. Donc je ne suis pas vraiment muséologue ; bien sûr je connaissais un peu le sujet et les musées grâce à l'ICOM. Mais j'étais aussi critique vis-à-vis du musée. Je m'intéressais à l'écomusée comme étant différent du musée.*

*(2) Je ne pense pas avoir rencontré un écomuséologue qui aurait été formé et aurait eu un diplôme en écomuséologie. Je pense que tous les écomusées que je connais ont été fondés par des personnes qui voulaient faire quelque chose pour le patrimoine, le patrimoine vivant de leur communauté et de leur territoire. La motivation était importante. Les connaissances, la formation, venaient d'autres disciplines. Les gens de musée ont été formés comme muséologues, éducateurs, conservateurs, historiens d'art, ethnologues... Les fondateurs d'écomusées et leurs responsables ont d'autres origines: enseignants, élus municipaux, ingénieurs, aménageurs, érudits locaux. L'un d'entre eux, que je connais très bien, un ami, a*

*été formé en tant que marin. Mais il y a des gens qui sont simplement intéressés à travailler et à mettre en place un groupe de personnes de la communauté pour travailler sur le patrimoine vivant de leur territoire et de leur communauté. Odalice Priosti (fondatrice de l'écomusée de Santa Cruz dans la zone Ouest de Rio de Janeiro) était une enseignante du secondaire, elle s'intéressait à la recherche historique sur sa communauté et son territoire, puis elle s'est intéressée à la mémoire et au patrimoine. Elle a entendu parler de l'écomusée et elle a décidé d'en créer un sur son territoire avec sa communauté. Mais ensuite, des années après la création de l'écomusée, elle a eu l'idée d'obtenir un master en muséologie. Puis elle voulut avoir un doctorat mais, comme à l'époque au Brésil il n'y avait pas de doctorat en muséologie, elle a obtenu un doctorat en éducation. Donc elle a bien été formée à l'université et partiellement en muséologie, mais seulement après avoir créé l'écomusée dans sa communauté. Elle avait à ce moment-là 60 ans. Mais, ça l'a aidée à prendre un peu de distance par rapport à son travail dans l'écomusée. Elle y a rencontré d'autres personnes, elle a connu et étudié d'autres disciplines académiques. C'était important, mais à l'origine, elle n'a jamais été formée et la plupart des personnes que je connais dans les écomusées n'ont pas été formées pour ce qui n'est pas vraiment un "métier", c'est à dire l'écomuséologie. L'écomuséologie est une discipline typiquement non académique. Je ne peux même pas parler de discipline. C'est un jeu. C'est un processus horizontal. L'écomuséologue doit rencontrer toutes sortes de disciplines. C'est quelqu'un avec une expérience dans un domaine quelconque, l'architecture, la philosophie, la géographie, l'enseignement... qui pourra être très bon comme fondateur ou comme coordinateur ou comme membre de l'équipe de coordination d'un écomusée parce qu'il ou elle utilisera son réseau, ses relations pour trouver la compétence dont il ou elle a besoin dans d'autres spécialités que la sienne. Le danger que j'ai toujours rencontré dans les musées, c'est que le directeur du musée soit un archéologue, un historien de l'art, ou un spécialiste des insectes, et il ou elle va systématiquement travailler de préférence dans le champ de sa propre discipline.*

### **Edoardo Bricchetti**

Je suis impliqué dans 5 écomusées en zone de montagne, à la ville, à la plaine et je me rend compte que l'écomusée est un concept abstrait. C'est quelque chose qui doit être mis en pratique. Je réalise, et cela pourrait être une autre question, que dans certains cas, l'écomusée a commencé à devenir une institution politique. Même si cette institution est

politiquement correcte, je pense que dans ce cas l'écomusée perd sa force vitale. Ma question est donc la suivante : comment faire comprendre à la communauté que le territoire est son propre patrimoine ? Je pense que c'est le point crucial, car si nous voulons la participation, la responsabilité et le partage dans la communauté, nous devons faire prendre conscience à la communauté de son potentiel.

### **Hugues**

*Ce n'est pas une question. Je pense que nous sommes tous d'accord avec ça.  
J'ai dit que l'écomusée est quelque chose de vivant. Il pourrait être changé en quelque chose d'autre dans un autre temps, et dans d'autres circonstances, mais notre principale préoccupation est la participation de la communauté.*

*Dans certains cas, la communauté ne participe pas parce que, dès l'école, elle n'a pas senti l'importance d'être unique et d'être acteur.*

# Conclusion

*Alberto Garlandini, Past President of ICOM*

It has been a great privilege to be part of Babel Tower: the webinars have given me and all participants an incredible number of inputs, sparks, suggestions, reflections.

Babel Tower has given us much food for thought. It has been a unique journey through the multivalent, diverse, complex, changing and exciting world of museums and museology. Babel Tower started with Manuelina Duarte's insurgent museologies and Giusy Pappalardo's reflections on ecomuseums, continued with Hugues de Varine's community museums and community museology, and finished with Mario Moutinho's sociomuseology and many museums presenting their innovative experiences.

In conclusion, I would like to point out to some key words and key concepts that are at the core of this debate.

The first key word is change. The world is changing, communities are changing, the relations between countries and peoples are changing and the pandemic has accelerated global change. Museums and museology are relentlessly changing as part of the global transformation.

As the world organization of museums and professionals, ICOM is actively debating the impact on museums of the challenges that our societies are facing: the crisis of traditional social identities, migration and inclusion, human rights and the fight against inequalities and racism, diversity and decolonization; urban regeneration, digital revolution, climate justice and, last but not least, pandemics. Responding to the pressing requests of communities and authorities, museums are taking

new social responsibilities and striving for a new, larger role in society. The core functions of museums are the conservation, exhibition, education, communication and promotion of collections. However, today's museums have also become communication hubs and places of intercultural dialogue, participation and inclusion.

ICOM has 50,000 members from 140 countries. If we look at the resolutions approved by ICOM Triennial Assemblies and at the themes of the last International Museum Days we see how museums' core functions have expanded. Milan's ICOM 2016 Assembly highlighted the responsibilities of museums towards the tangible and intangible heritage conserved outside their walls as well as towards the landscapes and heritage sites that surround them.

Kyoto's ICOM 2019 Assembly recognised that museums have a crucial part in implementing the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and in fighting against the climate crisis. On Earth Day 2021 celebrated on April 23rd, ICOM joined the Global Coalition #UnitedForBiodiversity.

Climate change and loss of biodiversity are urgent challenges – there is no time to waste and museums are more and more active players in this UN's call for action.

When we look around, we see that museums are institutes of reconciliation and participation as well as places for critical thought and pluralistic views. Babel Tower presented many excellent examples of such involvement. In 2017 the International Museum Day discussed how museums deal with contested history and with what is considered “unspeakable” issues by most people.

With the 2017 International Museum Day ICOM highlighted how museums can help communities discuss and reconcile divisive memories of the past and of the present, such as segregationism, colonialism, slavery, civil wars and genocides.

A second key concept that is a fil rouge in Babel Tower is diversity. The 2015 UNESCO Recommendation on the social role of museums was the result of a successful partnership between ICOM and UNESCO and significantly it points out to the protection and promotion of museums and their diversity.

Recently UNESCO estimated that there are 104,000 museums all over the world. Despite their great number, I think that it is not possible to find two identical museums: and if there were, one of them would be useless. Museums were born, have grown, have successfully responded to the needs of contexts marked by a great social, economic, cultural, political, philosophical, religious diversity.

Each museum has its own specific identity, history and mission. Their diversity is their strength, an exceptional treasure to preserve and promote. Babel Tower has presented the experience of a great



number of different, sometimes very different, museums, with diverse background, context, collections, dimension and localization. Each of them is unique and important for the growth of museology and our professional community.

Diversity is strictly connected with dialogue, key word emphasized in the title of Babel Tower.

Culture, heritage and museums promote bridges, dialogue and peaceful relations between peoples and countries. ICOM's slogan Museums have no borders, they have networks is paramount.

Facing a world full of conflicts, museums and ICOM promote all forms of cooperation and dialogue among museums and museum professionals in every country, no matter their governments' policies or their governments' political, religious or ideological approaches.

In times of pandemic, lockdown and isolation, we often felt lonely, personally and professionally. More than in the past we now can understand the importance of professional and personal relations and networks. Facing great challenges, more than ever we have now appreciated the value of exchange of experiences and ideas, of coproduction of knowledge and innovation. Global cooperation and intercultural dialogue are helping us to transform challenges and difficulties in drivers of innovation.

Participation is another key word that I would like to highlight. In May 1972 UNESCO and ICOM organized the Santiago de Chile Round Table on the role of museums in the contemporary world. The Round Table has been a cornerstone in the history of museology. Since then, ecomuseums and community museums have highlighted the importance of participation of communities to museum life, have provided new interpretations of heritage at the service of democratization and local development.

Participation means providing access to culture, heritage and museums' activities to all citizens, with no discriminations. Free access to culture and cultural life is a recognized human right and a key indicator of equity and wellbeing. Babel Tower's debates show how communities not only ask to be consulted or "listened to". Communities demand to be involved in decision making, content development and definition of priorities. Thence comes the incomparable role of museums.

I had the great pleasure to participate in Babel Tower webinar dedicated to the Italian translation of the last book by Hugues de Varine. On the basis of Hugues' extraordinary contribution to museums and museology we talked about ecomuseums and community museums as well as about the crucial role of heritage in enhancing the identity and diversity of communities and in promoting sustainable local development.

When Hughes talks about heritage he refers more to the intangible and living heritage of communities than to their tangible heritage. But what I would like to highlight is the key concept of the role of museums in local development.

The teachings of Hugues' long-standing museological practice are now recognized even by traditional economists. In 2018 ICOM, a non-governmental cultural organization, and OECD, an intergovernmental economic association, co-produced a guide for local administrators on maximising the impact of museums and culture on local development. This successful partnership is a proof of how Hugues' farsighted theories and actions have become acknowledged opinions, not only in the museum and heritage community, but also in national and international governmental bodies.

I would like to conclude my remarks remembering my visit to Japan a few years ago. A friend from a local museum took me to an astonishing traditional Shinto Shrine. For over one thousand years the main wooden building of the Shrine has been continuously rebuilt with the same technique and shape every 40/50 years, using new materials.

For over a millennium the knowledge and practice of Shrine reconstruction has been handed down from one generation to the other. And its identity and religious values have been preserved. The local community thinks that this knowledge and values are part of their heritage. Even if its building materials are recent, the Shrine is undoubtedly part of their heritage. The Shinto Shrine is part of the tangible, intangible and living cultural heritage of the community.

This example highlights that it is high time to bridge conceptual and disciplinary chasms. We are living in a hybrid world where digital activities merge with face-to-face experiences. An hybrid world where promotion and communication of tangible and intangible heritage should be as integrated as possible in order to reach the largest public. A world where museums are developing digitisation and new hybrid forms of cultural experience and dissemination.

Now more than ever museums are melting pots of competences, knowledge, disciplines and professions. A sound spirit of cooperation, interaction, cross-fertilization is indispensable to improve the role of museums in society.

In the last 18 months our lives have been turned upside down. We are living difficult times. Each of Babel Tower's events has been a splendid occasion to breath some pure air, to strengthen old and new friendships, to build up enthusiasm and trust in museums and in our professional commitments. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to join such an amazing and rewarding journey.

# Afterword

*Hugues de Varine*

C'est impressionnant: moins d'un an après le lancement du projet Babel Tower, qui s'est déroulé avec un grand succès en pleine pandémie et dans une totale indépendance par rapport aux institutions nationales et internationales des musées, paraît ce livre qui clôture une des plus audacieuses entreprises solidaires et de coopération internationale que j'aie connues dans ma vie.

En 2021, pendant trois mois, du 12 février au 26 avril 2021, onze webinaires ont eu lieu sous le titre "Les gens de musée en dialogue", à l'initiative de deux professionnelles et universitaires, Manuelina Duarte et Giusy Pappalardo. Préparée par un comité scientifique, impliquant des dizaines d'intervenants de plusieurs pays, parlant trois langues (anglais, français et italien), cette série de colloques a traité de sujets très actuels de la pratique muséale, dans le contexte de la société d'aujourd'hui. On peut sans doute remercier la pandémie qui n'a pas seulement fait fermer les musées traditionnels, même les plus grands, pendant des mois, mais qui a aussi suscité une multiplicité d'initiatives dans ceux qui étaient les plus proches du terrain, mais aussi qui a "appris" aux gens de musée à communiquer entre eux sans formalisme et sans hiérarchie, visuellement et oralement.

Et maintenant arrive ce livre qui ajoute aux enregistrements des webinaires Babel consultables librement un certain nombre de textes de recherche, de réflexion et

d'expérience, qui enrichissent le contenu de ces moments très vivants de partages et d'échanges.

Si je pense à tous les contacts et à toutes les coopérations auxquels j'ai participé ou dont j'ai entendu parler depuis deux ans, malgré ou grâce à la pandémie, on peut considérer que cet ensemble remarquable de dialogues entre gens de musée est en fait la partie émergente de tout ce qui se passe actuellement sur les territoires et entre les musées, dans le monde entier, malgré l'éloignement, les difficultés linguistiques, les différences de statuts et de moyens.

Il faut maintenant continuer à labourer le champ du patrimoine et à réinventer continuellement le musée pour en faire un outil efficace au service du patrimoine, des territoires et de leurs populations.

Je ne suis pas un professionnel de musée, même si j'ai beaucoup travaillé pour et avec les musées dans ma vie. Pour moi, la gestion soutenable du patrimoine matériel et immatériel est une des tâches essentielles de tout politique local ou régional et de tout technicien du développement, au sens le plus large, culturel, social, éducatif, économique, de tout territoire et de toute société. Cette gestion doit articuler le patrimoine avec l'évolution du territoire et avec les besoins de la population. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'attirer et de séduire des touristes, ou d'enseigner des scolaires, mais bien de rendre chaque citoyen, personnellement et collectivement, responsable de l'héritage qu'il a reçu et qu'il doit enrichir et transmettre.

Cet héritage ne se limite ni aux collections des musées et des archives, ni aux monuments et aux traditions reconnus comme exceptionnels par des décrets administratifs ou par des organisations internationales. Il est d'abord reconnu par ses héritiers et ses usagers eux-mêmes. Encore faut-il les en rendre conscients et leur donner les moyens d'assumer leur rôle et ses conséquences. C'est pourquoi le musée doit se mettre à leur disposition pour les y aider d'abord et accompagner ensuite le développement de la communauté et de son territoire.

Le chapitre 1 et le chapitre 10 de ce livre utilisent le mot "process" ou "processus": Je l'utilise moi aussi souvent dans mon livre. Le musée, tel qu'il ressort du livre et des débats de Tour de Babel, n'est pas un "gardien" de collections immobiles, mais un "agent" au service de la communauté et de son développement. Il accompagne un processus qui fait intervenir, non seulement des compétences académiques et techniques, mais aussi des savoirs populaires, des transformations imposées de l'extérieur ou par les évolutions culturelles et sociales. Il coopère avec les autres agents chargés de missions différentes ou voisines, par exemple en matière de santé, d'aménagement du territoire, d'emploi, d'éducation, etc. Qu'il s'agisse de patrimoine bâti, de paysage, d'activité économique locale, de pratiques religieuses, de

recettes, le musée prend en compte la totalité du patrimoine vivant, exprimé d'abord dans le langage de la culture vivante de la population à laquelle il appartient.

Ce livre, comme les débats de Tour de Babel au printemps 2021, montre bien que cette problématique de la gestion du patrimoine commun pour le développement concerne ou devrait concerner la plupart des musées, grands et petits, même si la dimension du territoire concerné peut s'élargir à la nation et même si l'importance de la collection impose des missions plus traditionnelles de conservation et de mise en sécurité. De nombreux programmes de recherche universitaires, certains programmes de l'ICOM, le département de sociomuséologie de l'ULHT, des thèses et mémoires universitaires, des publications scientifiques ou associatives approfondissent de plus en plus les aspects théoriques et critiques des expériences passées ou en cours étudiées sur le terrain: on en trouve dans ce livre un échantillon et les colloques de Tour de Babel en ont révélé bien d'autres.

Cela dit, il faut rappeler, et tout ce qui précède le confirme, que tout ce mouvement mondial tendant à une reconnaissance de l'importance du patrimoine vivant pour le développement durable des territoires et des communautés repose sur des personnes qui œuvrent, le plus souvent dans une dynamique collective, pour inventer et mettre en œuvre des solutions à des problèmes de notre société contemporaine en pensant aussi à l'avenir de l'héritage naturel et culturel de nos sociétés

Qui sont ces personnes ? Que les inventeurs des nouvelles formes de gestion du patrimoine, et en particulier du musée, soient des professionnels de musée, ou d'autres disciplines, ou encore des amateurs-militants de l'action locale, ils ou elles n'ont pas reçu une formation spécifique, tout simplement parce qu'une telle formation n'existe pas dans les universités et les écoles supérieures. Il existe des centres et des programmes de recherche, à commencer par l'ULHT, qui commencent à approfondir et à enseigner divers aspects de ces nouvelles pratiques muséologiques et muséographiques, en relation avec d'autres disciplines. Mais il n'est pas possible encore d'envisager une formation professionnelle "formelle", officiellement qualifiante, pour ce qui est avant tout une pratique de terrain, transversale et multidisciplinaire, peu ou pas reconnue par les législations nationales.

Ce sont les initiatives du genre de Tour de Babel, des programmes associatifs (ABREMC au Brésil, Mondì Locali et aujourd'hui EMI en Italie, FEMS en France, etc.), des groupes et publications sur les réseaux sociaux, les échanges virtuels ou les visites, l'utilisation de programmes européens (de type Erasmus ou Erasmus+) qui jouent le rôle de formation par la mise en commun d'expériences et de méthodes. Ces échanges denses, fréquents, relativement informels, que nous avons constatés et dont nous avons souvent bénéficié,

depuis deux ans, peuvent constituer une première approche, une expérimentation, en vue de la mise en œuvre de formations qualifiantes et de perfectionnements, sous forme d'apprentissage ou d'alternance au sein des réseaux de musées et entre eux, comportant des stages de terrain dans des musées existants, des formations de type MOOC par zones linguistiques sur des thèmes liés aux problèmes pratiques rencontrés habituellement par les responsables, volontaires ou salariés, des écomusées, et un suivi à distance par un professionnel expérimenté désigné par le réseau.

C'est à travers ces formations - solidaires, réciproques, mutualisées - comme à travers les échanges et coopérations quotidiens, que reflètent Tour de Babel et ce livre, que naîtront des générations de musées et de gens de musées "insurgents", ou "hérétiques", qui changeront progressivement les pratiques de gestion et d'éducation patrimoniales.

Merci aux auteurs qui ont composé et permis ce livre, où je suis heureux de voir un écho des pionniers du mouvement dit de "la nouvelle muséologie" et des déclarations de Santiago<sup>76</sup>, de Québec<sup>77</sup> et de Guwahati<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>76</sup> Déclaration de Santiago du Chili, 1972, in « *Mesa Redonda sobre el desarrollo e el papel de los museos en el mundo contemporáneo, Santiago de Chile, 1972* », (reprints of original papers), 2 vol., IBERMUSEOS, 2012

<sup>77</sup> Déclaration de Québec, 1984, *Principes de base d'une nouvelle muséologie*, in [www.minom-icom.net/\\_old/signud/DOC%20PDF/198402504.pdf](http://www.minom-icom.net/_old/signud/DOC%20PDF/198402504.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> Guwahati Declaration, 1988, in BEDEKAR, V.H. (Ed.), « *New museology and Indian museums* » ; New Delhi, Museum Association of India, 1990, p. 65-66

## About the authors

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### **Bruno Brulon**



Museologist and anthropologist based in Brazil, professor of museology at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) and professor in the Post-Graduate Program in Museology and Heritage (UNIRIO / MAST). He coordinates the Laboratory of Experimental Museology at this university, working closely with community-based museums and with several projects at the grassroots level involving cultural heritage and museums. Past Chair of the ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) and co-chair of the Standing Committee for the Museum Definition (ICOM Define). His research currently focuses on museums decolonisation, community action and the political uses of museums and cultural heritage.

Muséologue et anthropologue basé au Brésil, professeur de muséologie à l'Université fédérale de l'État de Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) et professeur dans le cadre du programme post-universitaire en muséologie et patrimoine (UNIRIO / MAST). Il coordonne le laboratoire de muséologie expérimentale de cette université, travaillant en étroite collaboration avec les musées communautaires et avec plusieurs projets au niveau local impliquant le patrimoine culturel et les musées. Ancien Président du Comité international de muséologie de l'ICOM (ICOFOM) et ancien co-président du Comité permanent pour la définition du musée (ICOM Define). Ses recherches portent actuellement sur la décolonisation des musées, l'action communautaire et les usages politiques des musées et du patrimoine culturel.

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### **Giusy Pappalardo**



Researcher in spatial planning at the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture of the University of Catania with area of specialization in Cultural Heritage. Giusy has contributed for several years to an action-research process in the Simeto River Valley in Sicily (IT), which has currently generated an Ecomuseum.

Chercheuse en aménagement du territoire au Département de Ingénierie Civile et d'architecture de l'Université de Catane, avec un domaine de spécialisation en Patrimoine Culturel. Giusy contribue depuis plusieurs années à un processus de recherche-action dans la vallée de la rivière Simeto en Sicile (IT) qui actuellement a généré un Écomusée.

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## Manuelina Duarte



Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido holds a master's degree in Archaeology (University of São Paulo) and a doctorate in Museology (Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Portugal). She also holds a post-doctorate in Museology at the University Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris III. She was director of the Museu da Imagem e do Som do Ceará (Brazil) and of the Department of Museum Processes of the Brazilian Institute of Museums (Ibram). She is a lecturer in Museology at the University of Liege and editor-in-chief of the journal *Les Cahiers de Muséologie*. She also supervises doctoral theses in Social Anthropology at the Federal University of Goiás, Brazil, and in Museology at the Lusófona University, Portugal, and is co-supervising a thesis in Museology at the University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada. She is a member of the board of ICOFOM LAC 2018-2023.

Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido a réalisé un master en archéologie (Université de São Paulo) et un doctorat en Muséologie (Université Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias au Portugal). Elle a également réalisé un post-doctorat en Muséologie à l'Université de Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris III. Elle a été directrice du Museu da Imagem e do Som do Ceará (Brésil) et du Département des Processus Muséaux de l'Institut brésilien de Musées (Ibram). Elle est chargée de cours en Muséologie de l'Université de Liège et éditrice en chef de la revue *Les Cahiers de Muséologie*. Elle dirige également des thèses de doctorat en Anthropologie Sociale à l'Université Fédérale de Goiás, au Brésil, et en Muséologie à l'Université Lusófona au Portugal, et co-dirige une thèse en Muséologie à l'Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada. Elle est membre du Conseil d'administration d'ICOFOM LAC 2018-2023.

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## Judite Primo



UNESCO Chair holder "Education, citizenship and cultural diversity" since 2017. Former Director of the Department of Museology at Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies (ULHT) and Coordinator of the PhD and Master programs in Museology at ULHT (2008-2019). She holds a PhD in Education, Master in Museology from and BA in Museology from the Federal University of Bahia.

Titulaire de la chaire UNESCO "Éducation, citoyenneté et diversité culturelle" depuis 2017. Ancienne directrice du département de muséologie de l'Université Lusophone des Sciences humaines et des Technologies (ULHT) et coordinatrice des programmes de doctorat et de master en muséologie de l'ULHT (2008-2019). Elle est titulaire d'un doctorat en éducation, d'un master en muséologie et d'une licence en muséologie de l'Université fédérale de Bahia.



## Mario Moutinho



Mario Moutinho concluded his Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology – Université de Paris VII in 1983, and is an architect of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts (Paris). Founding member of the International Movement for a New Museology MINOMICOM. He is currently Rector of the Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies.

Mario Moutinho est titulaire d'un doctorat en anthropologie culturelle de l'Université Paris VII, 1983, et est architecte de l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts (Paris). Membre fondateur du Mouvement international pour une nouvelle muséologie MINOMICOM, il est actuellement recteur de l'Université Lusophone des Sciences humaines et des Technologies (ULHT)

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## Andréa Delaplace



PhD in Museum studies and heritage, ED 441 History of Art, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, under the direction of Professor Dominique Poulot. Andrea Delaplace presented her Master's dissertation on the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration at the EHESS – École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales - (Mention Ethnology and Social Anthropology).

Titulaire d'un doctorat en études muséales et patrimoine, ED 441 Histoire de l'art, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, sous la direction du professeur Dominique Poulot. Elle a présenté son mémoire de maîtrise sur la Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration à l'EHESS - École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales - (Mention Ethnologie et Anthropologie sociale).

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## Gabriela Aidar



Coordinator of the Inclusive Educational Programs at the Education Department of the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, in Brazil. Graduated in History at São Paulo University, Diploma in Art Museum Studies and in Museology at São Paulo University. Master of Arts in Museum Studies at Leicester University, UK.

Coordinateur des programmes éducatifs inclusifs au département de l'éducation de la Pinacothèque de São Paulo, au Brésil. Diplômée en histoire à l'université de São Paulo, diplômée en études des musées d'art et en muséologie à l'université de São Paulo. Master of Arts en études muséales à l'université de Leicester, au Royaume-Uni.

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## Olga Van Oost



Director at FARO, the Flemish Institution for Cultural Heritage (Vlaams Steunpunt voor Cultureel Erfgoed). FARO co-hosts the Flemish Museum Network (Vlaams Museumoverleg). The 'museum in transition' is her main research interest. She has published on the digital, the liquid, the agonistic and the postnormal museum. In 2016 she wrote *'Museum van het Gevoel'* ('Museum of Emotions') on new forms of museum experience, and the moral responsibility of museums to take a stance in society. Olga also works part-time at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) in the department of Communication Studies.

Directrice du FARO, l'institution flamande pour le patrimoine culturel (Vlaams Steunpunt voor Cultureel Erfgoed). FARO co-anime le réseau des musées flamands (Vlaams Museumoverleg). Le "musée en transition" est son principal sujet de recherche. Elle a publié sur le numérique, le liquide, l'agonistique et le musée postnormal. En 2016, elle a écrit *'Museum van het Gevoel'* ('Musée des émotions') sur les nouvelles formes d'expérience muséale, et la responsabilité morale des musées à prendre position dans la société. Olga travaille également à temps partiel à l'Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) dans le département des études de communication. Elle enseigne actuellement le cours de "Media and Culture Production".

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## Dominique Schoeni



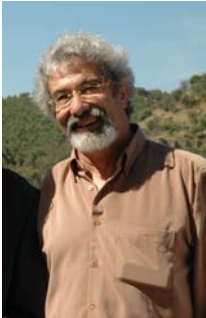
Anthropologist, translator and museologist, holder of a master degree from the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland). Currently working on creative practices in the field of social museology in Rio de Janeiro and on the relationship between museums and territory within a doctoral research at the Department of Museology of the Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon, Portugal. He is also member of the editorial board of the online journal *ethnographiques.org*, of the study group *Museologias Insurgentes en Nuestra America (MINA)* and of the laboratory *Nucleo de Museologia, Território e Sociedade (NuMTes-Moitara)*.

Anthropologue, traducteur et muséologue, titulaire d'un master de l'Université de Neuchâtel (Suisse). Poursuit actuellement une réflexion sur les pratiques créatrices dans le domaine la muséologie sociale à Rio de Janeiro et sur les rapports entre musées et territoire, notamment dans le cadre d'une recherche doctorale au sein du Département de muséologie de l'Universidade Lusófona de Lisbonne, Portugal. Il est également membre du comité de rédaction de la revue en ligne *ethnographiques.org*, du groupe d'étude *Museologias Insurgentes en Nuestra America (MINA)* et du laboratoire *Nucleo de Museologia, Território e Sociedade*.

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## Cláudio Torres

Cláudio Torres was born in Tondela, Portugal, January 11<sup>th</sup> 1939. As an opponent of the Salazar regime and the colonial war, he lived in political exile between 1961 and 1974, when the Portuguese Revolution occurred. He was professor of Art History at the Classical University of Lisbon between 1974 and 1986. In 1978, He created the Campo Arqueológico de Mertola. During archaeological excavations. He discovered several signs of an obscure period of Portuguese history: the late antiquity and the Islamic period. In addition to a copious scientific bibliography, He launched the journal "Arqueologia Medieval" - 15 issues published - and founded the 10 museums of the city of Mertola as well as visitable excavation sites. Among his various recognitions, He received the 1991 "Pessoa" Prize, the Great Cross of Infant D. Henrique and the Medal of Merit of the Portuguese Government.



Cláudio Torres est né à Tondela, Portugal, le 11 janvier 1939. En tant qu'opposant au régime de Salazar et à la guerre coloniale, il a vécu en exil politique entre 1961 et 1974, date de la révolution portugaise. Il a été professeur d'Histoire de l'Art à l'Université Classique de Lisbonne entre 1974 et 1986. En 1978 il a créé le Campo Arqueológico de Mértola et pendant ses fouilles archéologiques il a découvert de nombreuses données nouvelles sur une période obscure de l'histoire du Portugal: l'antiquité tardive et la période islamique. En plus d'une copieuse bibliographie scientifique, il a lancé la revue "Arqueologia Medieval" – 15 numéros publiés – et a fondé les 10 musées de la ville de Mertola ainsi que des sites de fouilles visitables. Entre les hommages reçus, il compte le Prix "Pessoa" 1991, la Grande Croix de l'Infant D. Henrique et la Médaille de Mérite du gouvernement portugais.

## Susana Gómez-Martínez

Susana Gómez-Martínez graduated in Geography and History from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 1990 and completed her doctoral studies at the same university in 2004. While studying, she did internships in archaeological stations from Medieval Times in Spain, France, Israel and Portugal.

She obtained a research grant from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992 and has been a researcher for the Mértola Archaeological Centre (CAM) since that time. She is an Assistant Professor at the School of Social Sciences of the University of Évora where she lectures on mediaeval and Islamic archaeology for both Licentiate and Master's degree courses.

Susana Gómez Martínez a terminé ses études de premier cycle (1990) et de doctorat (2004) à l'Université

Complutense de Madrid. Pendant ses études, elle a effectué des stages dans des stations archéologiques de l'époque médiévale en Espagne, en France, en Israël et au Portugal. Elle a obtenu une bourse de recherche du ministère portugais des Affaires étrangères en 1992 et est depuis lors chercheur au Centre archéologique de Mértola (CAM).

### **Lígia Isabel da Silva Rafael**



Lígia Isabel da Silva Rafael (b. 27/03/1968), is a Senior Technician of History, at the Municipality of Mértola, performing the Coordination of Mértola's Museum. Has a degree in History, specialized in Cultural heritage, a Master degree in Museology and currently is a Phd Student in History at the University of Évora.

Lígia Isabel da Silva Rafael (née le 27/03/1968), est Technicienne Supérieure d'Histoire, à la Municipalité de Mértola, exerçant la Coordination du Musée de Mértola. Titulaire d'un diplôme de premier cycle en histoire, spécialisé en patrimoine culturel, et d'un master en muséologie, est actuellement doctorant en histoire à l'Université d'Évora.

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### **Óscar Navajas Corral**



PhD in History and Museology.

Lecturer and Deputy Director of the Department of History and Philosophy at the University of Alcalá. Member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) and the International Movement for New Museology (MINOM).

He has developed research projects related to social museology, innovation in heritage management and the development of tourist-cultural strategies on the territory.

Docteur en histoire et muséologie. Professeur et directeur adjoint du Département d'Histoire et de Philosophie de l'Université d'Alcalá. Membre du Conseil International des Musées (ICOM), du Comité pour la Muséologie (ICOFOM) et du Mouvement International pour une Nouvelle Muséologie (MINOM). Il a développé des projets de recherche liés à la muséologie sociale, à l'innovation et la gestion du patrimoine et au développement de stratégies touristiques-culturelles sur le territoire.

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## Giuseppe Reina

Giuseppe Reina holds a Ph.D. in Geography, with the thesis "A new landscape planning in Sicily: ecomuseums and community maps". Former project manager of the 'CeDoc' Research Center of the University of Catania, he has collaborated with public bodies and NGOs as an expert on European planning and participatory practices. He has published several scientific articles and among other things, he edited for Marsilio Editore "The ecomuseums: a resource for the future" with an introduction by Hugues de Varine. Member of the 'National network of ecomuseums' in Italy and promoter of the regional law on ecomuseums of the Sicily Region, approved in 2014.



Giuseppe Reina est titulaire d'un doctorat en géographie avec la thèse "Une nouvelle planification du paysage en Sicile : écomusées et cartes communautaires". Ancien chef de projet du Centre de recherche « CeDoc » de l'Université de Catane, il a collaboré avec des organismes publics et des ONG en tant qu'expert sur la planification européenne et les pratiques participatives.

Il a publié plusieurs articles scientifiques et il a notamment édité pour Marsilio Editore "Les écomusées : une ressource pour l'avenir" avec une introduction par Hugues de Varine. Membre du "Réseau national des écomusées" en Italie et promoteur de la loi régionale sur les écomusées de la Région Sicile, approuvée en 2014.

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## Raul Dal Santo

Raul Dal Santo, ecologist, is the coordinator of the Parabiago Ecomuseum. He is also the coordinator of both the Lombardy region ecomuseums' network and Mills Park. His research and work focus on landscape ecology, ecomuseology, sustainable development, participatory local planning and projects, and subsidiarity



Raul Dal Santo, écologiste, est le coordinateur de l'Ecomusée de Parabiago. Il est également coordinateur du réseau des écomusées de la Région Lombardie et du Parco dei Mulini. Ses recherches et travaux portent sur l'écologie du paysage, l'écomuséologie, le développement durable, l'aménagement et les projets locaux participatifs et la subsidiarité

## Silvia Dossena

Silvia Dossena, biologist, is the scientific and operational referent of the Parabiago Ecomuseum and Mills Park. Her research and work focus on landscape ecology, ecomuseology, sustainable development, participatory local planning and projects, and subsidiarity.



Silvia Dossena, biologiste, est la référente scientifique et opérationnelle de l'Ecomusée et Parc des Moulins de Parabiago. Aussi ses recherches et travaux portent sur l'écologie du paysage, l'écomuséologie, le développement durable, l'aménagement et les projets locaux participatifs et la subsidiarité.

### **Lucia Vignati**

Lucia Vignati, ecologist, is the scientific and operational referent of the Parabiago Ecomuseum and Mills Park. Her research and work focus on landscape ecology, ecomuseology, sustainable development, participatory local planning and projects, and subsidiarity

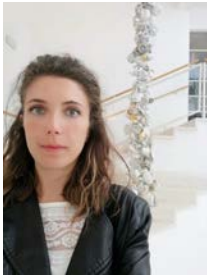


Lucia Vignati, écologiste, est la référente scientifique et opérationnelle de l'Ecomusée de Parabiago et du Parco dei Mulini. Comme Raul et Silvia, ses recherches et travaux portent sur l'écologie du paysage, l'écomuséologie, le développement durable, l'aménagement et les projets locaux participatifs et la subsidiarité.

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### **Vincenza Bonanno**

Graduated in Management Engineering at University of Catania, she is a full-time researcher at the Southern National Laboratory of the National Institute of Nuclear Physics (CT) where she is dealing with project management of research projects. She has been actively involved in sustainable development and proactive protection processes of the Simeto Valley. More recently she is a member of the Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto's board of directors, assuming the role of treasurer. Since the 2019 annual assembly, she has given her contribution to define and develop the Simeto Ecomuseum.



Diplômée à l'Université des Études de Catania, Vincenza PieraBonanno est une chercheuse chez «Laboratori Nazionali del Sud dell'Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare (CT)» où elle s'occupe de project ménagement et des projets de recherche. Depuis plusieurs années, elle participe aussi aux projets de développement écologique et préservation du territoire de la Vallée du Fleuve Simeto. Récemment, elle est aussi devenue membre du Conseil Directive du «Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto» avec le rôle de «Tesoriere» (Trésorière).

À partir de l'Assemblée de 2019, elle contribue à la définition et au développement de l'Ecomusée du Simeto.

## Carmelo Caruso

After a degree in Building Engineering and Architecture, he holds a second level master's in public management of local development. He collaborated with the Laboratory for the Ecological and Environmental Planning of the Territory of the University of Catania for the community mapping activities and to define the participatory governance tools in the framework of the Simeto River Agreement. He is founder and vice-president of Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto, member of the Simeto Ecomuseum's coordination team, scout educator and freelance engineer.



Après le Diplôme d'Ingénierie de la Construction-Architecture, il a obtenu le Master de II niveau «Ménagement publique de Développement Locale». Il a ainsi collaboré avec le Laboratoire pour la Planification écologique et environnemental du Territoire de l'Université de Catania pour l'activité de cartographie de la communauté et définition des instruments du «Patto del Fiume Simeto». Il est le fondateur et le vice-président du Presidio Partecipativo del Patto del Fiume Simeto et un membre du groupe de coordination de l'Ecomusée du Simeto. Éducateur scout, il est aussi ingénieur et travailleur indépendant.

## Valentina Del Campo

Doctoral candidate in Learning Processes and Research Methods – applied to the territory – at the Department of Educational Science of the University of Catania. Her research focuses with the experimentation of new models of museum didactics applied to ecomuseums, in particular in Simeto Ecomuseum, in Sicily. She obtained a Master's degree in Art History and Cultural Heritage with a dissertation on Museology, didactics and museum mediation. For several years, she has been a member of the Board of Directors of the “Presidio Partecipativo del Patto del Fiume Simeto”, and she also contributes to the development of activities related to the Ecomuseum of Simeto.



Est une doctorante en Processus d'Apprentissage et méthodes de recherche – appliqués au territoire – au Département de Science de l'Éducation de l'Université des Études à Catania. La recherche s'occupe des expérimentations des nouveaux modèles de didactique muséale appliqués aux écomusées, notamment l'Écomusée du Simeto, en Sicile. Elle a obtenu la Maîtrise en Histoire de l'art et Patrimoine Culturel avec une mémoire de fin d'études sur la Muséologie, didactique et médiation muséale. Depuis plusieurs années, elle est membre du Conseil Directive du «Presidio Partecipativo del Patto del Fiume Simeto» et elle contribue aussi au développement des activités liées à l'Écomusée du Simeto.

## Medea Ferrigno

She is 29 years old and she lives in Regalbuto, a town in Simeto Valley. After a degree in Building Engineering and Architecture in 2017, she holds a second level master's in *Public Management of Local Development* at University of Catania. Currently, she is pursuing a first level master's in *Participatory Planning* at IUAV in Venezia. She is a member of the Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto, she is dealing with collaborative planning for local development and she works as European Commission's local expert for the BiodiverCities project.

From August 2020 she is a council member of Regalbuto municipality.



Medea Ferrigno a 29 ans et vit à Regalbuto, une petite ville de la Vallée du Simeto. Après avoir obtenu un diplôme en Ingénierie de la Construction-Architecture en 2017, elle a obtenu un Master de niveau II en « Ménagement publique du développement local » à l'Université de Catane. Elle suit actuellement un Master de niveau I en « Progettazione Partecipata » à l'IUAV de Venise. Membre du « Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto », elle s'occupe de la conception collaborative pour le développement local et travaille comme experte de la Commission Européenne pour le projet « BiodiverCities ».

À partir d'août 2020, elle est également conseillère municipale dans la municipalité de Regalbuto.

## Agata Lipari Galvagno

Graduated with honours in Building Engineering and Architecture at the University of Catania. She concluded the academic path with a dissertation about the Simeto Valley development for the community in which she lives, in the framework of the Simeto River Agreement. Since her university education, she decided to take part in civic and social life, contributing to found the Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto.



Diplômée avec mention en janvier 2019 en Ingénierie de la Construction-Architecture à l'Université de Catania, j'ai conclu mes études avec une thèse visant à contribuer au processus de développement local pour la communauté dans laquelle je vis, dans le cadre du « Patto di Fiume Simeto ». Pendant mes années universitaires, j'ai décidé de participer activement à la vie civile et sociale du territoire de la Vallée du Simeto en contribuant à la naissance du « Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto ».



## **Marianna Nicolosi**



Graduated in Law at University of Catania, where she is member of the legal clinic *Coesione e Diritto*. Currently she is trainee lawyer and since then she is committed to social innovation and sustainable development actions in the Simeto Valley through the Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto to whose foundation she has contributed. In the contest of Simeto Ecomuseum she is a member of the coordination team.

Je suis diplômée en droit à l'Université de Catania, où j'ai également été membre de la clinique juridique "Cohésion et droit". Je suis actuellement avocat en exercice. J'ai toujours été engagée dans des actions d'innovation sociale et de développement durable du territoire de la Vallée du Simeto à travers le « Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto », à la fondation duquel j'ai contribué. Dans ce contexte, je fais partie du groupe de Coordination de l'Écomusée du Simeto.

## **Domenico Pappalardo**



Completing his studies in Philosophical Sciences at University of Catania after holding a bachelor's degree in Philosophy with a dissertation about magical thinking during medieval latin. He is an activist in the Presidio Partecipativo del Patto di Fiume Simeto and in other local associations. Thanks to this activism he developed an increasing interest in anthropology and he started to study the social process in the Simeto Valley. He is currently working on his master's degree dissertation work about the Simeto Ecomuseum.

Etudiant en Sciences Philosophiques à l'Université de Catania, il a obtenu un diplôme en Philosophie avec une thèse sur la pensée magique dans le Moyen Âge latin. Depuis plusieurs années, il milite au sein du « Presidio Partecipativo » et d'autres associations du territoire. Dans ce cadre, développant un intérêt pour l'anthropologie, il a commencé à étudier les processus sociaux dans la Vallée du Simeto; il est en train de consacrer son travail de thèse de spécialisation à l'Écomusée du Simeto.

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## Alberto Garlandini

Alberto Garlandini is past President of ICOM and former Chair of ICOM Italy. In 2017 and 2020 he was a speaker at the UNESCO High Level Forums on Museums.

He is President of the Scientific Committee of Trento's Museo delle Scienze, President of Museo del Paesaggio in Verbania, President of the Abbonamento Musei Association, member of the Scientific Committee of Brescia Musei Foundation, on the Board of Directors of Federculture, the National Federation of Public Services for Culture, and of the National Museum of Palazzo Ducale in Mantua (2015-2020). He delivers lectures at universities and international conferences and has been widely published in Italian, English, French and Spanish.



Alberto Garlandini est ancien Président de l'ICOM et ancien Président de l'ICOM Italie. En 2017 et en 2020, il a été conférencier au 1er et au 2e Forum de haut niveau de l'UNESCO sur les musées.

Il est Président du comité scientifique du Museo delle Scienze de Trente, Président du Museo del Paesaggio de Verbania, Président de l'Association Abbonamento Musei, membre du comité scientifique de la Fondation Brescia Musei, membre du Conseil d'administration de Federculture, la Fédération nationale des Services Publics de la Culture, et du Musée National du Palais ducal de Mantoue (2015-2020).

Il donne des cours dans des universités et intervient lors de conférences internationales. Il a été largement publié en italien, anglais, français et espagnol.

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## Hugues de Varine

Hugues de Varine graduated from the University of Paris in History and Archeology. He held several important positions in Institutions, such as the Director of ICOM (International Council of Museums), from 1965 to 1974, first working with Georges Henri Rivière and later as his successor. Along the years, he has nurtured to concept and practice of Ecomuseums and community museums around the world. He continues to collaborate in projects related to heritage and museums in several countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Brazil, among others). His latest book, *L'écomusée singulier et pluriel. Un témoignage sur cinquante ans de muséologie communautaire dans le monde* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2017), has been translated in several languages, including the Italian version (Cooperativa Utopie Concrete editor) discussed in the Appendix of this manuscript.

He shares his reflections in the blog [hugues-interactions.over-blog.com](http://hugues-interactions.over-blog.com), about heritage, museums and development. A selection of his bibliography reflecting his fifty years of activities can be found at [hugues-devarine.eu](http://hugues-devarine.eu)



Hugues de Varine est diplômé de l'Université de Paris en Histoire et Archéologie. Il a occupé plusieurs postes importants dans des institutions, comme celui de directeur de l'ICOM (Conseil international des musées) de 1965 à 1974, travaillant d'abord avec Georges Henri Rivière puis en tant que son successeur. Au fil des ans, il a encouragé le concept et la pratique des écomusées et des musées communautaires à travers le monde. Il continue de collaborer à des projets liés au patrimoine et aux musées dans plusieurs pays (France, Italie, Espagne, Portugal, Brésil, entre autres). Son dernier livre, *L'écomusée singulier et pluriel. Un témoignage sur cinquante ans de muséologie communautaire dans le monde* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2017) a été traduit en plusieurs langues, dont la version italienne (Cooperativa Utopie Concrete éditeur) discutée en annexe de ce manuscrit.

Il partage ses réflexions sur le blog [hugues-interactions.over-blog.com](http://hugues-interactions.over-blog.com), sur le patrimoine, les musées et le développement. Une sélection de sa bibliographie reflétant ses cinquante années d'activités est disponible sur [hugues-devarine.eu](http://hugues-devarine.eu)

**This book is the result of a series of transnational and transdisciplinary conversations around one leading question: how people relate to tangible and intangible heritage to plan a more just and inclusive future in times of ecological transition and societal changes. Such a wide question has been explored by digging into theories and cases that can be interpreted as various forms of experimental and insurgent museologies: spontaneous initiatives, as well as innovative breaches into the institutional machines, showing alternatives to the mainstream. However, here the editors do not want to come out with a new definition. Rather, the book proposes an exploratory journey around different emerging concepts and examples that seem to open some windows of opportunities in the broad and diverse international community. It offers some insights on how various expressions of museologies are changing with current socially and ecologically pressing issues. The idea of the title – Babel Tower – stresses the opportunity of exploring different languages, areas, and jargon related to the field of museums, planning, and experimental devices (such as ecomuseums), their relations with communities, citizenship, territories, heritage, landscape, and the broad debate concerned with sustainability and socio-ecological justice.**

## About the editors

**Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido** holds a Master's Degree in Archaeology (University of São Paulo, Brazil), a Ph.D. in Museology (University Lusófona, Lisboa, Portugal), and a Post-Doc in Museology (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris III: Paris, France). She is a member of the board of ICOFOM LAC 2018-2023.

**Giusy Pappalardo** holds a Master's Degree in Architectural Engineering and a Ph.D. in Regional and Environmental Planning and Design (University of Catania, Italy). After visiting several universities around Europe and the U.S.A., she is currently Assistant Professor of Urban Planning in her alma mater, where she is developing a trans-disciplinary project concerned with Cultural Heritage.