

Museum

No 148 (Vol XXXVII, n° 4, 1985)

Images of the ecomuseum

museum

Museum, successor to *Museion*, is published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris. An international forum (quarterly) of information and reflection on museums of all kinds.

No. 148, 1985



Front cover. Conservation and local participation. The shepherds in the Mont Lozère Ecomuseum and Cévennes National Park in southern France actually inhabit the territory, practising ancestral methods of land use which make the most of the area's resources. The ecomuseum attempts to maintain livestock-moving patterns, to restore and enhance traditional architecture and to contribute to agricultural activities.

Editor: Yudhishtir Raj Isar
Assistant Editor: Marie Josée Thiel
Editorial Assistant: Christine Wilkinson
Design: Monika Jost

ADVISORY BOARD

Om Prakash Agrawal, India
Azedine Bachaouch, Tunisia
Fernanda de Camargo e Almeida-Moro, Brazil
Patrick D. Cardon, Secretary-General of ICOM, *ex-officio*
Gaël de Guichen, ICCROM
Alpha Oumar Konaré, Mali
Jean-Pierre Mohen, France
Luis Monreal, Spain
Syeung-gil Paik, Republic of Korea
Michel Parent, ICOMOS
Paul Perrot, United States of America
Lise Skjøth, Denmark
Vitali Souslov, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

© Unesco 1985
Printed in the Netherlands
Smeets Offset (NBI) bv, 's-Hertogenbosch



Back cover. MUSEU DO PRIMEIRO REINADO, São Cristóvão. This ornamental entrance has not prevented the community from adopting the edifice as its own (see article, page 237).

Authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in their articles and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of Unesco and do not commit the Organization.

Published texts may be freely reproduced and translated (except illustrations and where reproduction or translation rights are reserved), provided that mention is made of the author and source. Extracts may be quoted if due acknowledgement is given.

Editorial correspondence:
The Editor, *Museum*,
Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy,
75700 Paris, France

Subscriptions:
Commercial Services Division,
Office of the Unesco Press,
Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy,
Paris, France

Each issue: 40 F. Subscription rates (4 issues or corresponding double issues per year): 128 F

To subscribers

Constantly rising printing and postage costs are forcing newspapers and journals the world over to raise their prices. Unfortunately, *Museum* is no exception.

To our great regret therefore we must announce that in 1986 the price of a single issue of *Museum* will go up from its present price of 40 to 43 French francs. The cost of a one-year subscription will increase from 128 to 138 French francs.

Images of the ecomuseum

(dedicated to the memory of Georges Henri Rivière)

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Georges Henri Rivière | <i>The ecomuseum—an evolutive definition</i> 182 |
| | <i>Editorial</i> 184 |
| Hugues de Varine | <i>The word and beyond</i> 185 |

IMAGES

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| François Hubert | <i>Ecomuseums in France: contradictions and distortions</i> 186 |
| Jean-Yves Veillard | <i>'The valueless object'</i> 191 |
| Mathilde Bellaigue-Scalbert | <i>Actors in the real world</i> 194 |
| Max Querrien | <i>Taking the measure of the phenomenon</i> 198 |
| Pierre Mayrand | <i>The new museology proclaimed</i> 200 |

REFRACTIONS

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| René Rivard | <i>Ecomuseums in Quebec</i> 202 |
| Kjell Engström | <i>The ecomuseum concept is taking root in Sweden</i> 206 |
| António Nabais | <i>The development of ecomuseums in Portugal</i> 211 |
| John R. Kinard | <i>The neighbourhood museum as a catalyst for social change</i> 217 |
| Milagro Gomez de Blavia | <i>The Barquisimeto Museum: invent or drift</i> 224 |
| Alpha Oumar Konaré | <i>Ecomuseums for the Sahel: a programme</i> 230 |
| Fernanda de Camargo e Almeida-Moro | <i>São Cristóvão: a district ecomuseum</i> 237 |
| Alfredo Crus-Ramírez | <i>The Heimatmuseum: a perverted forerunner</i> 242 |

Photo credits

Front cover: Parc National des Cévennes; 1, 5-7: Musée de Bretagne, Rennes; 2: Écomusée de la Communauté Le Creusot Montceau-les-Mines; 3: J. Tucoo-Chala; 4: J. C. Houssin; 8, 9: F. Portet; 10: G. Tonneau; 13-17: René Rivard; 18, 20: Västerbottens Läns Museer; 21: Hallin; 23: Lars Jarnemo; 24: Ingrid Bergstrand; 25: Fernando Falcão; 26: Henrique Ruas; 27, 28: Museu do Mértola; 29, Miguel Baliza; 30-32: António Nabais; 33-37: Anacostia Neighborhood Museum; 38: P. Diaz; 39, 40: E. González; 41, 42: Morales; 44: Unesco/E. Barrios, B. Galy, S. Robert, A. Vorontzoff; 45, 48: Unesco/R. Louchard; 46: Unesco/M. d'Hoop; 47: Unesco/Philippe Billère; 49-53 and back cover: Fernanda de Camargo e Almeida-Moro; 54, 55: Nicolas Oudin.

ERRATA

In the article 'Curators, Teachers and Pupils: Partners in Creating an Awareness of Modern Art', by Colette Banaigs, which appeared in *Museum* No. 144 (Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, 1984), the caption for Figure 18 (page 193) was incorrectly transcribed. The correct caption is the following: Painted wooden sculptures made by pupils after a visit to the COBRA exhibition prepared in one of the 'teachers' meeting-workshops'. Therefore the reference on page 194 to Alicia Penalba's sculpture *Alada* should be ignored.

The title of the painting by Modigliani, also referred to on page 194, should read *La petite fille en bleu*.

ISSN 0027-3996

Museum (Unesco, Paris), Vol. XXXVII,
No. 4, 1985

1

Threshing in Lower Brittany. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the peasants violently opposed mechanical threshers—which they accused of being noisy, polluting and generally causing a great number of accidents. Today, however, such machines are regarded as a symbol of the 'good old days'.



The ecomuseum—an evolutive definition¹

Georges Henri Rivière

An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public authority and a local population. The public authority's involvement is through the experts, facilities and resources it provides; the local population's involvement depends on its aspirations, knowledge and individual approach.

It is a mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image, in which it seeks an explanation of the territory to which it is attached and of the populations that have preceded it, seen either as circumscribed in time or in terms of the continuity of generations. It is a mirror that the local population holds up to its visitors so that it may be better understood and so that its industry, customs and identity may command respect.

It is an expression of man and nature. It situates man in his natural environment. It portrays nature in its wildness, but also as adapted by traditional and industrial society in their own image.

It is an expression of time, when the explanations it offers reach back before the appearance of man, ascend the course of the prehistoric and historical times in which he lived and arrive finally at man's present. It also offers vistas

1. This is the third and last version of Georges Henri Rivière's text, finalized in January 1980.



of the future, while having no pretensions to decision-making, its function being rather to inform and critically analyse.

It is an interpretation of space — of special places in which to stop or stroll.

It is a laboratory, in so far as it contributes to the study of the past and present of the population concerned and of its environment and promotes the training of specialists in these fields, in co-operation with outside research bodies.

It is a conservation centre, in so far as it helps to preserve and develop the natural and cultural heritage of the population.

It is a school, in so far as it involves the population in its work of study and protection and encourages it to have a clearer grasp of its own future.

This laboratory, conservation centre and school are based on common principles. The culture in the name of which they exist is to be understood in its broadest sense, and they are concerned to foster awareness of its dignity and artistic manifestations, from whatever stratum of the population they derive. Its diversity is limitless, so greatly do its elements vary from one specimen to another. This triad, then, is not self-enclosed: it receives and it gives.

[Translated from French]

Editorial

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Georges Henri Rivière, a founding father of the ecomuseum movement, 'one of the first to perceive the full complexity of the notion of the cultural heritage, its possible extension (and hence the limits to be sought), its ramifications in domains and epochs hitherto ignored'.¹ Although our tribute to him appeared in the previous issue, *Museum* No. 147, grateful acknowledgements of his pioneering work in France and throughout the world are so numerous in the pages that follow that we have chosen to dedicate this special issue to his memory. Indeed, several of the contributing authors have explicitly done so themselves.

Mr Rivière's 'evolutive definition' of the ecomuseum, its *ur-text* as it were, is reproduced on pages 182-3. This is a poor substitute no doubt for the presentation he himself would have made of his rich and varied progeny, for the kind of sweeping critical synthesis he carried to a fine art. But at least we can share with you the comments of another co-founder, Hugues de Varine, who actually coined the word 'ecomuseum'.²

Appropriately enough, the idea for this special issue also emerged in France, from the Ecomuseum of Le Creusot Montceau-les-Mines. The original suggestion of Mathilde Bellaigue-Scalbert, Le Creusot's director, was to combine a survey of ecomuseums with a presentation of the 'new museology', which appeared on the French museum scene in the 1980s. While all the principles of 'ecomuseology' do indeed appear to have been welcomed by the new museology, the ecomuseum movement is not in fact fully coterminous with this latter movement of contestation and renewal. Hence we have chosen to limit ourselves in this issue to ecomuseums proper, with the exception of Pierre Mayrand's contribution, which links the two.

In an historical perspective, could these ecomuseums not be compared to the great twentieth-century mutations in music and the graphic arts, which assigned radically new values and combinations to established parameters? This qualitative transformation of the institution known as a museum has been the focus of complex and ambitious theorizing about new methods and responsibilities and the debate has spread far beyond France's sphere of cultural influence.

The issue opens with some definitions and assessments, from France and Canada, about the nature and potential of the ecomuseum. It continues with reflections and case-studies from other regions, Third World countries in particular, where the changed vision of the museum and its role seems infinitely promising for the mobilization of interest and support. 'A didactic act for ecodevelopment' was the term used in the Declaration of Oaxtepec adopted by an international seminar entitled 'Territory Heritage—Community Ecomuseums: Man and His Environment', organized in that Mexican town in October 1984. And as Alpha Konaré states in his article on page 230 the ecomuseum 'as a mode of participation and management could constitute a major breakthrough in the field of culture and, for that matter, in life in general'.

1. From an article by Frédéric Edelmann in *Le Monde*, 27 March 1985, announcing Georges Henri Rivière's death on 24 March.

2. As recounted by Paulette Olcina, Assistant Secretary-General of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), in a paper entitled 'Ecomuseums: 1971-1984, An Assessment' which she presented at the international seminar held at Oaxtepec, Mexico, in October 1984; the word was coined by Hugues de Varine at a lunch with one of the aides of the then Minister of the Environment in France. It was at the ninth General Conference of ICOM at Grenoble in 1971, where the minister was to make a speech. Rivière and de Varine had briefed him on the new currents in museum work, on the museum as a didactic instrument, designed to build heritage awareness, not for a *public* but for and by a *community*. Hence the search, successfully concluded, for a new word.

The word and beyond

Ecomuseums and ecomuseology ... New incarnations of the museum? Modish neologisms? Alibis for our inability to transform an out-dated institution? None of these judgements is absolutely true, nor absolutely false either. But this is not what matters here.

Rather, we should take stock of the thinking, the experiences and the cases brought together in this long-awaited special issue—all these are precious signs of a deep-rooted movement in the museum world, one that is still inadequately defined and often side-tracked, one that will leave its imprint on the institution and transform the discipline, without being a radical revolution.

It is rightly pointed out that the two words 'ecomuseums' and 'ecomuseology' have emerged among Latins, who have a taste for the verb and a passion for discourse. For one who invented the word ecomuseum almost by accident, its destiny is difficult to comprehend. As for the phenomenon itself, its substance varies from one place to another, despite the efforts of Georges Henri Rivière to give it specific form and meaning. In some cases it is an interpretation centre; in others an instrument for development; elsewhere a park or makeshift museum; yet elsewhere a centre for ethnographic conservation or for the industrial heritage.

Behind these surface variations there is a simple reality: the museum profession is anxiously and urgently seeking a renewal of the museum as a necessary instrument of service to society. To serve a global heritage for global development. To serve man in his totality, embedded in nature in its totality, yesterday and today, seeking above all his future and the intellectual and material means to master it.

This issue of *Museum* is a marketplace of ideas, utopias and achievements. It reflects an impassioned debate which goes far beyond those countries where the ecomuseum earned its credentials. I am impressed by the number and the quality of the contributions. Regardless of their degree of support for the institution, they all demonstrate the usefulness of a modern, renovating concept, indeed the need for such a concept. I also think I see, behind certain awkward formulations due perhaps to the choice of the notion of the ecomuseum as the sole theme for this issue, the wish of all that the modernization of the museum should follow the path laid down by the Santiago round table in 1972 (the 'integral museum')¹ and by the endeavours of so many museum professionals everywhere, in the 1960s and 1970s. This is a path that leads to the totality of the human adventure, both ancient and contemporary, through recourse to the only language which transcends cultural difference, that of the concrete object.

It was *Museum's* duty, naturally, to bring together this striking testimony to the vitality of the museum institution and the creativity of its servants.

[Translated from French]

Hugues de Varine

1. Organized by Unesco at Santiago da Chile in 1972, the interdisciplinary round table on 'The Role of Museums in Today's Latin America' marked a turning point, both for the region and in rethinking the museum's present-day role. Out of its interdisciplinarity emerged the definition of the 'integral museum'. The conclusions of the round table were published in *Museum*, Vol. XXV, No. 3, 1973. See also the article in this issue by Milagro Gomez de Blavia, page 224—Ed.

IMAGES

Ecomuseums in France: contradictions and distortions

François Hubert

Born in Roquefort, Landes, France, in 1952. Graduated in philosophy and the sociology of communication and French ethnology. Organizer of the Écomusée de la Grande-Lande, 1976-82. Curator of the Musée de Bretagne, Rennes, since 1983 and collaborator with the team of Jean-Yves Veillard in the programme of the Pays de Rennes Ecomuseum; he has also co-ordinated the work on the exhibition and publication entitled *Découvrir les écomusées*.

For a decade now, a proliferation of opinions that have confused theory with doctrine has done nothing to clarify the ecomuseum philosophy, the basic ideas of which, in spite of their complexity, had nevertheless been clearly laid down. It is as though the idea had become of such importance (and perhaps it became important in order to attract the subsidies) that under no circumstances must it be specified. The result is that the ecomuseum, which was supposed to concern itself first and foremost with the collective memory, now displays an amazing ability to forget its own history. It has invented a chronology that bears little resemblance to the stages of implementation of the various projects and developed a mythology most of whose heroes never had more than very minor parts to play.¹ Certain publications, some very official ones among them, do not so much as mention Georges Henri Rivière as one of the originators of the idea!

It is impossible, today, to show a foreign colleague visiting France a single example that incorporates all the principles he would find in theoretical essays. His itinerary would take him to four or five sites very far from one another, each of which would show him only one facet of ecomuseology. The general public, for its part, is convinced (whether through imagination or observation) that an ecomuseum is a reconstruction of an old workshop or farm. The discrepancy between theory and practice is now quite evident. True, everyone has made a theory out of his own practice, trying to make it fit the 'evolutive definition of ecomuseums'² even if it was initially very far removed from that definition. There is, after all, nothing to restrict use of the term, and anyone can use it and interpret it as he pleases. People of genius (at times) have run together theories dealing with separate aspects, but because they were not familiar with ecomuseums in practice, they could not produce anything better than purely intellectual

speculation. To make matters worse still, ecomuseums have had to cope with the severe effects of the current economic crisis.

An idea and its distortion

In 1967, the French Regional Nature Parks were established, by grouping together rural councils and providing substantial financial backing in order to implement a policy of economic and cultural development. Georges Henri Rivière took that opportunity to adapt the Scandinavian open-air museums to the French context, with the difference that houses would not be moved to an artificial site, but that sites would be restored to their former condition. These new museums aimed to offer all-round education, not just dealing with cultural practices or architecture but also with the relations between man and his environment.³ They represented a first attempt at a combination of the human and natural sciences. These experiments, for which the name of ecomuseum was coined shortly after, in 1971, clearly expressing their environmental aspect, very soon met with great success, echoing the development in the public at large of ecological and regional ideas.

An additional experiment was conducted between 1971 and 1974 with the support of Hugues de Varine, then director of ICOM. Within the newly formed Urban Community of Le Creusot Montceau-les-Mines a project took shape

1. It is more or less accepted as fact nowadays, for example, that the first ecomuseum was that at Le Creusot in central France, even though it opened in 1971, four years after the French Regional Nature Parks.

2. Georges Henri Rivière produced three successive versions of this definition—in 1973, 1976 and 1980. He deliberately restricted its length, so as to set out the basic features of the ecomuseum while leaving great scope for experiment.

3. Among the best-known of the Park ecomuseums are those of Monts d'Arrée and Basse Seine.

for a museum of man and industry spread over the whole area, making the closest possible contact with the people living there. They were all to be involved in planning, running, evaluation, etc., and their involvement was facilitated by the decision to opt for the status of an association. In 1974, this experiment took the name of ecomuseum, and the new prospects it opened up produced still more ideas, especially about the territory embraced by the ecomuseum and about public investment. From then on, the prefix 'eco' indicated an interest in the natural as well as the social environment.

Ecomuseums thus came into being as a result of the meeting of two movements that came, as it were, from opposite directions.⁴ On the one hand there was a century of thinking on museums, which was brought to a conclusion and summed up by Georges Henri Rivi re and which found an immediate response from the public because of its central concern with ecology and regional ethnology. On the other hand, given the desire for involvement and self-management, there was the need for a new kind of museum. The coming together of the two movements led to the development of a museographical system which, in its ideal form, around the museum of time, organizes a museum of space, a field laboratory (with a workshop, documentation centre and, where appropriate, a shop), and outposts or communities associated with local routes and pathways. This is all managed by three committees—users, administra-

tors and scientific advisers—which allows everyone to be involved in a 'centre of mutual instruction' with the principal aim of developing the community.

The intense cultural and ideological ferment from which the first ecomuseums emerged should not, however, blind us to the fact that they came into being in a period of economic prosperity, unlike subsequent ecomuseums, especially those opened after 1977, which are in the majority. Ideas born in prosperity are always difficult to adapt to a recession, and when factories are closing one after another the ecomuseum must accept that its philosophy of development and even, at times, its existence will be called into question since a large proportion of the public will prefer their resources to be channelled into enterprises that provide jobs.

In addition to unsettling some basic principles, the economic crisis has caused distortions which are much more disturbing. Every difficult period sees a proliferation of historical and ethnographical museums whose purpose is to smooth away worries about the future by extolling the values of the past.

Thus a great number of 'little ecomuseums' have opened since 1977. They rarely build on the base of groups of district councils, as their forerunners did, and for this reason it is not easy for them to expand the area they cover. As a result they find it hard to come up with a clear programme, particularly since their resources are often limited. They never-

theless proclaim loudly and clearly their conformity with the 'evolutive definition of the ecomuseum', since they need to be recognized as such. The term is used to salve the conscience. The elaborate philosophy of development professed by the ecomuseum hides the backward-looking tendencies of most of these newer establishments. In practice, the past is mythified through harvest festivals and the present-day period is totally absent from the museum's programme, if indeed it has a programme. In fact, these different establishments are more apt to tell the sociologist about the fears and illusions of our society than they are to tell the museologist about new museographical practice.

As Jean-Yves Veillard has observed, this is the basic dilemma of the ecomuseum: Is it an authentic reappropriation of a heritage by the people, or is it the refuge of new classes opposed to socio-economic change?

Caught between myth and utopia

Many third-generation ecomuseums (those of the French Regional Nature

4. For detailed histories see Hugues de Varine, 'L' comus e', *Gazette de l'Association des Mus es Canadiens* (Ottawa), Vol. 104, No. 2, 1978, pp. 29-40, and F. Hubert, J.-Y. Veillard and H. Joubeaux, *D couvrir les  comus es*, Rennes, Mus e de Bretagne, 1984, 48 pp., photographs, bibliog. (45 francs).

5. J.-Y. Veillard, 'Les mus es d'ethnographie, les mus es impossibles de l'hexagone', unpublished paper given at a seminar on the ethnological heritage, Rennes, 1983.



2
 COMUS E DE LA COMMUNAUT  LE
CREUSOT MONTCEAU-LES-MINES.
The participation of the population as an
indispensable dynamizing element is a
principle which is at the heart of the
ecomuseum concept.

Parks being the first generation and that of Le Creusot being the second) have taken this contradiction to extremes, leading the French newspaper *Libération* to describe them as the 'museums of the recession'.

They draw their philosophy from the participatory approach of Le Creusot, calling themselves 'community ecomuseums' in order to express the self-development philosophy they preach, as opposed to the 'institutional ecomuseums', initially represented by the Parks generation, in which the public does, in fact, play a less prominent role. In legal terms, the difference between the community and the institutional is that the institutional is attached to a local group or to some official body and the community is independent, deriving its independence from the provisions of the French law of 1901, governing the creation of private associations.

Nevertheless, in spite of its cumbersome nature, administration by some official body does guarantee the continuity of the institutional ecomuseum without ruling out the possibility of a users' association. It might also be argued that the status of association makes the existence of the community ecomuseum uncertain and that its independence from authority is a trap. It must continually go in search of subsidies, which are reconsidered each year and can be used to bring considerable pressure to bear. The future of the ecomuseum depends entirely on the goodwill of its backers and in order to survive it must make concessions, involving itself in political manoeuvres. The ecomuseum programme could then be manipulated by the political party in control, and by a supreme paradox the museum would then become an instrument of manipulation! Seen in this light, the community ecomuseum is a gift to the political authorities, who can limit its cost and at the same time control what it does.

The same may be said of the ideology the ecomuseum develops. Contrary to the spirit of opposition it proclaims, the ecomuseum is far from being subversive, as its programme aims to establish a real consensus between all sections of the population. The three committees thus constitute the formal structure through which this consensus is achieved. The old dream of the golden age is ubiquitous. Through harvest festivals, there takes shape the image of an ideal social life which serves as a point of reference for speculation about the future. The

ecomuseums of industrial areas follow the same rule, since they tend to deal with the history of techniques rather than with social history, and even when they do mention the paternalism of the nineteenth-century mill-owners, they are less forthcoming about the major conflicts, the class struggles and the perennial friction between social groups.⁶

This picture, which we have darkened deliberately, depicts the chief problem of an ecomuseum—that of steering a course between the Scylla of a mythical past and the Charybdis of a utopian future. It is, of course, difficult to be part of the present as can be seen from the experiences of the ecomuseums in new towns, where social differences are compounded with differences in culture and civilization. What can the ecomuseum do in such places except offer a totally artificial identity to people who have been displaced and who, in addition, come into violent conflict with the ways of the original inhabitants?

The territory, another central concept of ecomuseology, takes on such significance in certain projects that it becomes the projection of every 'micronationalist' fantasy. People cheerfully rename hills and valleys, or set up gates to the ecomuseum which do not so much inform the traveller of its existence as show the population the frontiers of its 'little homeland',⁷ extolling its unique qualities and, indeed, its superiority. It is almost as though a minority, bypassing the ballot-box, had legitimized its power by creating a new nation. This is because the ecomuseum, aiming for a comprehensive approach to the territory, naturally develops a strong tendency towards hegemony. All social, cultural and economic activities must pass through it, to the implicit exclusion of

any other body. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that ecomuseums in France have never been subjected to virulent criticism by the political parties or by many newspapers.⁸ They do not cause much trouble, they take care of the socio-cultural life of the community, use voluntary work, cost less than many other kinds of organization and, with their desire to create a better world, serve as an outlet for political militancy.

It cannot be denied, however, that ecomuseums of all kinds are efficient organizers. The philosopher Henri Pierre Jeudy has remarked that 'the making of a museum does more than express in practice the commonly held opinion that conservation is a good thing. It also develops various kinds of cultural exchange. The preparation and development of a museum necessarily imply the bringing together of objects and documents, which generates social communication.'⁹ The programme of an ecomuseum involves a significant sector of the general public and makes for a

6. This point was dealt with in 1978 in a little-known but very interesting article—Anonymous (P. L. N.), 'Un écomusée ce n'est pas un musée comme les autres', *Histoire et critique des arts* (Paris), December 1978, pp. 90-102.

7. This expression comes from the conservative regionalist movements which, from the late nineteenth century, prompted the opening of local museums. See article on page 242 by Alfredo Cruz-Ramirez.

8. Only newspapers of the left and extreme left have made any criticism at all, the French daily *Libération* being foremost in this respect. The only serious critique, to my knowledge, is the article that appeared in *Histoire et critique des arts*, op. cit., a publication which classes itself as extreme left.

9. H. P. Jeudy, 'L'échange et l'objet', extract from a paper given at a conference entitled 'Constituer aujourd'hui la mémoire de demain', held at Rennes in December 1984, whose papers will soon be published by the association Muséeologie Nouvelle et Expérimentation Sociale.



more intense social life. The danger in the community ecomuseum is that it might never progress beyond such a role. What leads to distortions and contradictions is the absence of the scientific dimension from most of these museums. When there is no detachment or spirit of criticism, the 'mirror museum' shows the society in question not as it is but as it wishes to see itself, with all the exaggerations implicit in such an attitude.

Only by comparing a scientific interpretation with the way the inhabitants see themselves can a dialogue be engendered that might lead beyond this situation. However, any possibility of a comparison is ruled out if, instead of a permanent exhibition, scientifically planned on Georges Henri Rivière's 'periodized interdisciplinary' basis, attention is focused on small, temporary exhibitions arranged directly by the public without any outside assistance. This is why the permanent exhibition is the keystone of the ecomuseum and not simply a chance product of its organiza-

tion. Similarly, public involvement should be understood not as the expression of a wide-ranging consensus but as a means of highlighting conflicts and contradictions.

The ecomuseum must not be restricted to conservation alone, but it must be equally wary of community organization activities to the exclusion of anything else, since it is always in danger of over-emphasizing one side or the other. The institutional ecomuseum tends to confine itself to the scientific and conservation concerns of the old, local museums, while the community ecomuseum is tending to rejoin the ranks of the community cultural centres.

Do ecomuseums have a future?

The balance between conservation and outreach to the community does not in itself define the ecomuseum. Most traditional museums achieve it just as well, and have done so for a long time. The originality of the ecomuseum is the

3
ECOMUSÉE DE LA GRANDE-LANDE, France. The Marquèze house—the first park ecomuseums sought to conserve whole environments, within which objects and buildings found a special meaning.





4

A view of the territory of the future Pays de Rennes Ecomuseum as presented in the contemporary Brittany section at the Musée de Bretagne. The ecomuseum must deal with the contemporary, interpreting the present rather than exalting the past.

astonishing capacity it has shown for catching up with its own day, for confronting the present in order to offer it a new humanism over and above the image it reflects. The ecomuseum, like other kinds of museum that came into being at the same time or a little earlier (such as the Musée National, Niamey, the Casa del Museo, Mexico City, and the neighbourhood museum)¹⁰ completely undermined the notion of the universal museum that is fixed in time and space. As an alternative, it presented specific forms by which each micro-society could display its heritage objectively and put into practice in the field (unless it actually helped to elaborate) the ideas of the Santiago round table in 1972, for example that

the museum is an institution in the service of society of which it forms an inseparable part and, of its very nature, contains the elements which enable it to help in moulding the consciousness of the communities it serves.¹¹

But even as it broke with the traditional museum, the ecomuseum needed to find legitimacy. It did not want to lose what it had gained. It wanted, if not a charter,

then at least some 'principles of organization' (in France such principles were endorsed by the Ministry of Culture in 1980) that would guarantee its special status and ensure that it was recognized by 'the authorities'.¹² It did, in fact, gain recognition, and at the same time (one suspects a ploy) so did all the experiments and theories that arrogated its name, robbing it of its value in the process.

As Georges Henri Rivière said:

Ecomuseums are coming on like a house on fire! But the appalling thing is that on the one hand progress is made and on the other there are two or three characters who are jumping on the bandwagon and are making quite a system of it. The idea is so spectacular and so productive that it attracts such people.¹³

The ecomuseum has clearly been through many a battle, and perhaps the decisive ones are yet to come. The ecomuseum does not have to fear this deliberate or accidental dilution or exploitation so much as the changes in society, as its confrontation with the economic crisis has shown. The world of today has little in common with the one that produced the ecomuseum. Beyond the new technologies can

be glimpsed another view of mankind and the world which opens up vast horizons to the ecomuseum, since science museums and centres of scientific and technical culture are apparently restricting themselves to the technical dimension. Perhaps the 'new humanism' of the fourth-generation ecomuseums has happy days ahead.

That fourth generation has yet to be thought up, however.

[Translated from French]

10. See the article by Pablo Toucet, 'The Museum of Niamey and Its Environment', *Museum*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, 1972, pp. 204-7, and that by Coral Ordóñez García, 'The Casa del Museo, Mexico City: An Experiment in Bringing the Museum to the People', *Museum*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, 1975, pp. 71-7.

11. This extract from the Resolutions adopted at the Santiago da Chile round table of 1972 (see *Museum*, Vol. XXV, No. 3, 1973) was quoted as an epigraph to the preparatory documents for the first international workshop of ecomuseums and new museologies, Montreal, Quebec, 1984. See article on page 200 by Pierre Mayrand.

12. See also the chapter on ecomuseums in the report 'For a New Heritage Policy' by Max Querrien, Chairman of the Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites, for the French Ministry of Culture in 1982.

13. From an interview in *Le Monde*, 8-9 July 1979, entitled 'Le musicien muséographe qui inventa aussi les écomusées'.

'The valueless object'

How paradoxical this title must appear in a society where money reigns supreme. The paradox is also implicit in the predominant image of the museum in the societies of the rich countries as a community treasure chest for everything that has any value, even though cultural value and sentimental value are prized more than mere monetary value. It should be noted in passing that what may be called the recovery period, in other words the time taken by an object, such as a home-made toy or a printing block, originally possessing no more than sentimental value, to acquire monetary value, is tending to become shorter and shorter: a period piece need be no more than twenty years old. Nostalgia does not have the same associations for everyone. For people belonging to social groups closer to the production sectors, it is true that museums are seen in another, less flattering light: as lumber rooms. It would be unwise to adopt too black and white a view—the two images are inter-related and interactive. They are merely different answers, at different points in time, to the same question: What is the place of the museum in contemporary society?

Among the recognized functions of the museum the first is, then, to expand its collections by various means—purchases, gifts and bequests—which, true to museum tradition, do not include the activity of collecting in the strict sense, through organized programmes of field research. The image here is of a static museum, although on occasion a great deal of energy is expended in eliciting certain donations...!

Today, what policies for collection development are needed to ensure that museums truly belong to the territory and the society in which they are established?

High points and low points

The most common approach is what might be described as the policy of high points and low points. It is rooted in an historical appraisal of how collections are built up and what they display to repre-

sent a particular region or theme, and both of these in the light of present scientific knowledge. Some fields are amply, not to say abundantly, covered. In other fields there are gaps and weaknesses: these are the low points. Depending on the resources available, the temperaments of the curators involved and the opportunities that arise, a growth policy will either emphasize the high points—consolidating strengths—or give special attention to the low points, through a systematic effort to close the gaps. It may also pursue both goals at the same time.

Of course, these two approaches express a concern simply to extend the usual function of the museum in an up-to-date and intelligent manner; but there is little likelihood that either of them will transform the museum into a means of understanding and interpreting contemporary society.

Take, for example, the case of a *Résistance* museum in a given region. At best, it will have been designed by a team including specialists and associations, and will exhibit two- or three-dimensional objects selected for their suitability as illustrations of what the specialists have to say; at worst, a collection of machine guns and parachutes will be combined with a written commentary verging on eulogy of an association of *Résistance* fighters or war veterans. What collection-expanding policy will be pursued in such a case? At best, collections of 'modern' equipment will be acquired in the form of weaponry produced after the *Résistance* period, so that technical comparisons can be made. At worst, the policy will confine itself to emphasizing the high points and not collecting any further items.

Here, with this extreme example, deliberately chosen for the sake of debate, history grinds to a halt. Another approach might indeed be possible, but this one is a logical consequence of the basic principle that the object must be subordinate to the word. An alternative approach would be to trace contemporary applications of the concept of resistance, by referring to anti-colonial uprisings,

Jean-Yves Veillard

Born in 1939 in Rennes. Advanced studies in history and geography, Licence, DES, CAPES, 1978 doctoral thesis entitled '*Architectes, architecture et urbanisme à Rennes au XIXe*'. Chief curator of the Musée de Bretagne, Rennes, since 1967. Has organized many exhibitions and has published *Description historique et géographique de la province de Bretagne, du Président de Robien*, 1974, and *Rennes naguère*, 1982.

5
Cottage cheese container—a typical everyday object.



hunger strikes and the uses to which resistance is put throughout the world today. Difficult to imagine, given the wariness of political authorities. And yet, if we are to give any serious thought to making museums relevant to contemporary society....

Choosing the few from the many

Our society produces a large number of objects, meaning both the three-dimensional and the two-dimensional, such as writings and images (Gutenberg and MacLuhan have, after all, left their mark). In a society so dominated by the image, it always seems curious that in venerable institutions there should still be a dividing line between objects and documents, with the latter taking second place. This abundance can easily give rise to a sort of bulimia, a desire to collect everything: all objects have an emblematic or symbolic meaning, from the package of frozen food to the micro-computer. Insatiability has its practical limits: time (it takes a huge amount of time to collect everything); space (a combine harvester and an industrial assembly line present obvious problems of storage, conservation and utilization if they are to be shown in a 'real life situation'); and, above all, conceptual span (the whole of contemporary society can theoretically be museified).

There is also the opposite temptation, namely, to specialize in one particular type of object. Here, the museum is always one step behind the collector who anticipates the future. This anticipation is often the result of imaginative projection in response to a social field where important interactions are taking place. For example, the most comprehensive collection on Anti-Semitism in contemporary society from the beginning of the century to the present day is probably in the hands of a private individual, while another has assembled an almost exhaustive collection of political posters and key-rings, with political associations, produced over the past twenty years. But there is no cause for alarm. These collections will, either wholly or in part, eventually end up in a museum.

How is the choice to be made? There is no easy answer, but it becomes easier once the museum is clearly defined as a centre for understanding and thinking about contemporary society, this being an extension of its role in regard to past societies. It will also be easier if the approach is collective and not individual.

Exemplary here are the thirteen Swedish museums that

have found practical solutions to this problem by joining forces in order to document agriculture, fishing and forestry. Each museum is responsible every thirteenth year for a large field project in its own district. Objects and data about individual as well as social life in the agrarian milieu today will thereby be collected in a co-ordinated fashion.¹

In the case of a particular territory, for example a region such as Brittany, it is important to give clear descriptions of its agricultural, industrial and craft production and the socio-cultural patterns that are its defining characteristics. The salient features of local production must be pinpointed, for which purpose it should be enough periodically to select a few characteristic objects, such as the cardboard boxes used to export chickens to the Middle Eastern countries, in the case of one of the sectors of the agriculture-based food industry. But in making the selection, special attention must be given to singling out those objects which, in addition to their primary significance, also reflect a type of economic organization or a development thereof (absorption of a local industry by a multinational corporation, for example). In the case of objects produced outside the territory concerned, the problem of territorial specificity arises in a society of worldwide consumerism. The collections of a museum in Gaspé Peninsula and in the Frisian Islands alike would include a Philips television set and a Coca-Cola bottle, and there would be hundreds of television sets and Coca-Cola bottles in the museums of France. The only relevant criterion would be possession of a consumer prototype (by analogy with an industrial prototype for museums of technology): that is, the first object of its kind, or one of the first, to be used in that particular geographical area, provided that documents are also available to demonstrate its significance. In the case of all these objects there is, however, one medium that usually provides evidence of specificity, if only in the form of the local distributor's mark—advertising. What better example is there of valueless

6
This painted piece of wood is a self-made toy and an object of strong sentimental value. How long before it acquires market value?



1. See article by Sune Zachrisson, 'Agricultural Museums—the Story and Propagation of an Idea', *Museum*, No. 143 (Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, 1984), pp. 121-4.

eur "bleu" labour MONT SAINT-MICHEL



a bad 3 gwech muioc'h

7

Promotional blotter, a record of both the clothing industry and cultural specificity. Its text in Breton extols the virtues of the work clothes (*bleu*) 'they last 3 times as long' —made by the firm Mont Saint-Michel Ariès.

objects, produced in tens of thousands of copies, that often go directly from the letter-boxes in a block of flats into the waste-paper bin in the entrance hall. With their dates clearly established, these objects trace the successive stages and mark the channels whereby the products of the consumer society find their way into people's homes.

In fields such as sport, for example, sweatshirts (whether in Tarbes or Clerder) may come from the same place (a factory in Champagne) but the distinguishing feature will be the symbolism of the colour ('up the reds') or the football club's printed initials.

The multivalence of the messages contained in a given object will be of particular interest: a schoolboy's canvas bag marked by its owner with the initials of

his favourite rock groups will be of both sartorial and cultural significance.

'Like a fish in water'

These words express in a nutshell the place that the museum is trying to make for itself in contemporary society through its collecting policy. For museums it is a matter not of breaking with the past (and it is still essential to bear that past in mind), but of adding another dimension. This new dimension can be added only if museum curators are close observers of the society in which they live, and if they have a finger permanently on the pulse of the people and the forces at work in their own territory.

[Translated from French]

8
Users' Committee of the Community
Ecomuseum visiting the pithead
installations of the Blanzay collieries
(20 January 1985): the group in the miners'
locker room, known as the 'salle des
pendus'.



Actors in the real world

Mathilde Bellaigue-Scalbert

Postgraduate degree in modern literature. Has been professionally involved in teaching and educational research and the supervision of painting workshops and has translated from English numerous works on art and crafts. Secretary of the ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM); has participated in meetings and research work connected with ecomuseology in France and abroad. Director of the Le Creusot Montceau-les-Mines Community Ecomuseum.

In 1984 plans were afoot in France for a reform of training in museum curatorship. The qualifying examination was to be opened to candidates with prior training in a wider range of disciplines, a more interdisciplinary programme of study was envisaged, together with longer and more varied periods of training in the field. At long last some thought was being given to the 'profile' of the curator. In addition, efforts were everywhere being made to improve the organization of museum activities. All this forms part of what is designated by the vague term 'cultural action'. The expression clearly implies a movement by the cultural agents in question towards the public, or, to use today's term, towards various 'target-groups'.

However, it was precisely this one-way movement that was called into question by Georges Henri Rivière more than fifteen years ago, in the early days of ecomuseums. There are still very few people in the museum profession who think—and who act as if—the public can switch from the role of museum visitor to that of museum organizer, or indeed, that of museum founder. Reference should no longer be made, then, to

cultural action but to 'cultural acts' performed by the actual users of the museum.

Such an approach cannot be effective, however, unless it takes account of two essential factors, namely space and time in relation to those users.

Cultural environment/real environment

As a cultural locus, the museum is essentially an unreal environment: spatially, first of all, because it is isolated from its surroundings; temporally, because of the telescoping of historical perspective or the arrested time of aesthetic contemplation; and lastly, because of the behaviour it demands of the visitor. The very etymology of the word 'ecomuseum'—which, let it be made quite clear, has nothing to do with ecology—indicates a determination to incorporate the museum into the real world, the familiar environment in which people live and work. The ecomuseum is based, then, on a life-size territory, or rather on a plurality of territories, of a family, educational, professional, associational, political and also imaginary nature. This reality is what

changes the role of the public, for how and why could a population passively receive an image of itself that is 'objectively' put out by a museum specialist, when that population in fact consists of a collection of subjective sensibilities? The public is in a better position than anyone else to ensure that its identity is respected, if given the means to do so. It is a source of inventors, researchers and informants, while the museologist is the instigator, the mediator and the translator of what that public knows, discovers or recognizes, helping it to produce an ever-greater amount of knowledge about itself and its environment: material evidence of its history, places of residence, ways of life, practices, know-how, attitudes, imaginings and representations of itself; in short, all that makes up its heritage.

It is therefore necessary to set bounds to this territory, to keep it on a human scale to facilitate communication, close analysis, complex knowledge-building, varied approaches and accurate recognition. Hence the scale of the operation must necessarily be 'local'; it must also be confined to the everyday. The ecomuseum exists in a twofold temporal mode: in continuing time, which allows an active relationship to develop between users and the museum personnel, and in the moment, since 'the right time' for each action is important, as not only objects but also people are involved.

Time is not only the first of the unknowables: it is also the medium of recognition, for it is in the course of time that what is unrecognized becomes recognized. It is also in time that what is recognized is gradually forgotten: but time in this instance is no more than raw, inert duration, wherein all glory fades and those

values fortunate enough to be immediately recognized dwindle away to nothing. *The time of recognition is, on the contrary, an organic and active time of incubation: it is a ripening.*¹

Interactive learning through research

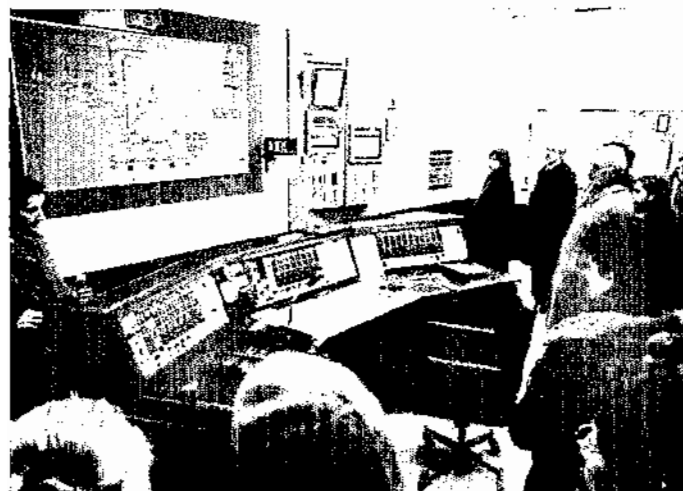
The focus of this approach is the living heritage, used sometimes in new ways by its own beneficiaries, in an unceasing process of recreation which places it at the heart of everyday life; or else it is already safeguarded, preserved in the recesses of the secret life of the mind. To speak of the heritage is necessarily to speak of research, of the inventorying and interpretation of tangible and intangible objects. Such research has usually been conducted by academics or amateur researchers working outside real situations and making people the object of their scrutiny, or, better still, their informants. Within the ecomuseum, however, the aim is to establish a way of working that brings together professional researchers and voluntary amateurs — 'insiders' and 'outsiders' — by combining academic knowledge and empirical knowledge, learning and know-how, in order to invest the territory and its heritage with the greatest possible meaning, use them to further community development and assign to their custodians an active part in research.

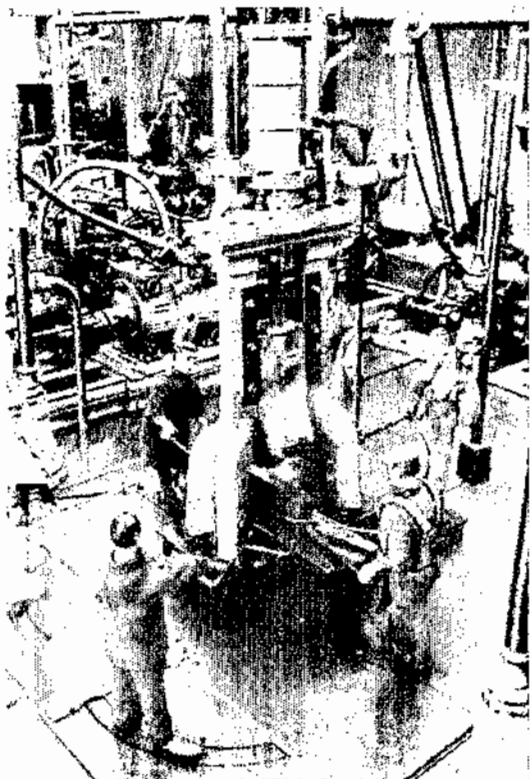
In the Le Creusot Montceau-les-Mines Community Ecomuseum, two activities illustrate this approach, one in its early stages, the other having already spanned several years. The first came into being at a meeting of the Users' Committee in January 1985, during which about

1. Vladimir Jankelevitch, *Le je ne sais quoi et le presque rien*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1981.

9 The Users' Committee members in the television monitoring room.

10 The School House branch of the ecomuseum, Montceau-les-Mines: meeting of the working group on 12 March 1985.





11
Functioning model of the Schneider/Le Creusot foundry workshop c. 1900, made by a retired worker and now being restored by a worker in the factory.

150 people visited the pit-head installations of the Blanzly collieries, guided by professionals (miners, surveyors and engineers) acting in a voluntary capacity, thereby combining learning about the local environment with interactive learning. The same people, at the ensuing working meeting, collaborated with the team of professionals in preparing a project of research and exhibitions on the life of the community today. A working group of mixed membership (local representatives, land-use planners, engineers, trade union activists and workers in the tertiary sector) was set up to provide the team of professionals with the additional expertise needed to study and reveal the present and future development in the spheres of technology, town-planning and economic and social life, of a specific area whose aspect has changed under the impact of the crisis affecting the steelworks and the collieries.

The example of the 'School House' in Montceau-les-Mines shows the present stage of development of a unit of the ecomuseum whose chosen theme is changes in the educational system since the Jules Ferry laws of 1881. These changes are illustrated by three reconstituted classrooms (1881-1923, 1923-60 and post-1960) in a school still in operation. Suzanne Régner, one of the active members of the group, summarizes the history of this unit of the ecomuseum as follows:

Originating in an educational project carried out in 1974-75, the working group on the School House was set up when the temporary school exhibition became a unit of the ecomuseum in 1977. It originally consisted of three individuals: the teacher who launched the project, the departmental Inspector of Schools who was actively involved from the outset, and the person responsible for relations with teachers at the community ecomuseum. The group very quickly expanded; from consisting mainly of teachers, retired or still serving, it went on to acquire a more varied membership. It has twenty-seven members, of whom at least twenty-two are very active, but each is concerned with a different aspect of the work to be carried out. Some respond to individual requests from visitors, as and when needed; others are active in the three research commissions; others, again, keep detailed records, inventory collections

or take care of correspondence and relations with the media.

The age of the participants ranges from 40 to over 70: it is true that the need for maturity and a measure of detachment regarding education and the complex issues it involves tends to filter out the very young. There are fourteen women and thirteen men, and this near equality of numbers is especially noteworthy in view of the very high proportion of women teachers in France. The socio-occupational breakdown of the group is as follows: ten retired teachers (primary or secondary level); nine active teachers (nursery, primary and secondary level, primary-school inspectorate); two persons retired or approaching retirement from other professions (mining, trade); three gainfully employed persons (mining, trade); three non-working mothers (whose husbands' professions vary widely, from retired mine electrician to public health service doctor).

One part of the membership changes according to the interest taken by individuals in the activities planned, while the other forms a permanent nucleus of some fifteen persons who ensure that there is real continuity.

Another member of the group, Clotilde Gillot, describes its spheres of activity as follows:

Little by little, in the course of research and by dint of discoveries, a fund of written documents has been built up, forming the 'School House archives'. They include textbooks (2,710 items from 1836 to 1975), teaching charts (144 sets), pupils' exercise books (245), teachers' preparatory notes, union or educational journals, miscellaneous diplomas awarded to pupils and teachers (a hundred or so, the earliest dating back to 1844) and all the administrative forms concerning the management of a nursery school or primary school from 1880 to approximately 1970.

This catalogue, produced by the combined efforts of members of the School House group, gave descriptions of the objects exhibited 'in real-life settings' in the two reconstituted classrooms, but a number of the articles contained in it were based on documents already piling up in the cupboards. All its illustrations were taken from textbooks or exercise books



12

The *Maison d'École* (School House), officially inaugurated on 28 March 1981, with a plaque commemorating the centenary of the building, one of the town's first municipal schools.

in the collection. More recently, the document holdings have yielded material for the research currently being conducted by two groups of colleagues on the teaching of reading (by comparing and methods) and the use of counting rhymes in the lower grades.

Thanks, also, to our mathematics section (338 volumes), similar research will shortly be undertaken on the teaching of arithmetic in primary schools.

Every year, external researchers, mostly students, come to peruse the documents of the School House with a view to writing a thesis. For instance, in February 1984 a student from the teacher-training college of Dijon did some research on primary-school teachers under the Third Republic. In January 1985, a teacher at the Mâcon Chamber of Commerce was investigating the ways in which each school textbook published before 1881 contributed to Roman Catholic religious instruction in schools. In March a musicology student from Toulouse was looking for information (curricula and timetables) about the teaching of singing in primary schools from 1880 to 1930.

As regards visits, I would point out

that we cannot agree to 'casual sightseeing', and that whereas Sunday visitors are often prompted by nostalgia for their youth, school-children escorted by their teachers are always motivated by a class project, in many cases planned with our assistance.

It should also be noted that the muscographic inventory of the unit is in the competent hands of a member of the group. In 1981 the group also collaborated with university researchers in educational science, and after a number of working meetings produced a book entitled *One Hundred Years of School*.² Lastly, the group helps to instruct ecomuseum trainees in muscology (identification, classification and registration) and ecomuseum unit management.

Seeing is understanding and acting

These basic principles, namely, focusing the museum on a particular territory, time-span and community, continue to yield positive results; but the problem of ecomuseums is more acute today, although couched in similar terms. The emphasis on territoriality is due to an awareness of the expansion of space through rapid exchanges and instan-

taneous communication. If much is made of roots, it is in the knowledge that roots are having to be pulled up as a result of the state of crisis in the world, and that mobility is part of the price that must be paid for endemic unemployment. If much is made of identity, it is due to an acceptance of the gradual intermingling of cultures. If much is made of the time dimension, it is against the background of the ever-quickenning pace of technological change.

To continue with the type of undertaking known as the ecomuseum — whatever it comes to be called subsequently — it will be increasingly necessary for both staff and users to participate fully in community development, making the best use of memory and their heritage as tools for that purpose; for ecomuseums make people see, and 'seeing is understanding, seeing is acting; seeing means uniting the world and humanity, and uniting human beings one to another'.³

[Translated from French]

2. *Cent ans d'école* — groupe de travail de la Maison d'École à Montceau-les-Mines, contributions by Pierre Caspard, Serge Chassagne, Jacques Ozouf, Antoine Prost, Yves Lequin, Guy Vincent, preface by Georges Duby, 'Milieux' series, Editions Champ Vallon, 1981.

3. Paul Eluard, 'Preface', *Anthologie des écrits sur l'art*, Gallimard/Pléiade, Vol. II, p. 512.

Taking the measure of the phenomenon

Max Querrien

French State Counsellor, President of the National Fund for Historical Monuments and Sites, President of the French Institute of Architecture and Mayor of Paimpol (Côtes du Nord). He was Director of Architecture at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs from 1963 to 1968.

In the widely discussed report 'Pour une nouvelle politique du patrimoine' by Max Querrien, President of the French National Fund for Historical Monuments and Sites [Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites], on heritage policy in France, a separate chapter was devoted to ecomuseums. The report was specially commissioned by Jack Lang, French Minister of Culture. In discussing and justifying the considerable expansion of the heritage concept, the author recognized the significant innovations introduced by France's ecomuseum movement. He was able to clarify a number of features, as shown by the following extract.

If we subscribe to the view that 'the ecomuseum results essentially from the coming together of a desire and a response, that it does not correspond to a scheme wilfully imposed upon a territory in order to take charge of it, but rather a desire to take charge of oneself ...',¹ then we shall be wary in our definitions. We shall endeavour to take the measure of the ecomuseum phenomenon, and we shall consider what type of social conventions are most likely to enable public bodies and the state to support its development without misdirecting its dynamics. For a government administration it is a salutary but difficult exercise, let there be no mistake.

Before the ecomuseum, there is the heritage, rescued from public indifference and vandalism, protected, safeguarded, ossified and, as a result, becoming the fulcrum for an intense dialectic between the claim to roots and the rejection of roots, between the need for points of reference and a sense of belonging and the need to live and innovate, ultimately, if necessary, by destroying.

Born of contradiction, the ecomuseum thrives on it. As a repository of the heritage, its impetus is to inventory, collect and conserve. However, its true patrimony is, essentially, the collective memory, whence there emerges a sense of identity which, in its singularity, claims to be at loggerheads with present history and with giving birth to the future. Thus

the ecomuseum lives in a state of tension that discourages any static definitions. Conversely, if the various partners involved in the ecomuseum are to have a correct perception of it, they must be aware of the major requirements to which its existence is subordinated.

The first requirement concerns the territoriality of its field of investigation, which it would be a mistake to reduce to the notion of territorial dependence. Rather, it should be seen as a mission to reveal, in their entirety, all the practices, skills, struggles, subjective outlooks and socio-cultural reference points that characterize a population. Understood in this way, the territoriality of the ecomuseum enables it to confront external challenges of the kind that will prevent it from withdrawing into itself.

The requirements involved are correlated: on the one hand, the local population must assume responsibility for the ecomuseum's activities within the most appropriate institutional structure (generally an association); on the other, local workers must take part in its research and training work.

There is no contradiction involved in this requirement, but rather a salutary provocation, inasmuch as the research activities engaged in must be given the methodological focus and the qualified personnel necessary for them to be acknowledged as scientific research.

As a rule, however, the ecomuseum extends beyond pure knowledge. Its activities lead into a set of concrete social practices in the field, which may range from providing associations, trade unions or official bodies with information, advice or studies, to participation in social struggles. From this point of view, we cannot but draw a parallel between the development of an ecomuseum and the adventure of the 'neighbourhood' town planning workshop in Roubaix which, developing out of a struggle to resist being uprooted, generated a process whereby the group learned to be self-reliant, to come to grips with problems

1. Marcel Evrard and Mathilde Scalbert, *Écomusées—patrimoine et société contemporaine*, 2.3.2. (Unpublished manuscript prepared for Max Querrien's report.)

of the urban environment and to create an urban life-style and praxis that was grafted onto a given architectural legacy.

We are a long way here from the traditional 'museum', and the term 'ecomuseum' does not convey the idea adequately. Moreover, it should be pointed out that an ecomuseum does possess collections, since objects are signs to which the collective memory clings. However, it is more concerned with the 'safeguarding of skills' than with the 'museification' of artefacts.² The objects that it does assemble are bound up with everyday life. Some of them may be eliminated as a result of continuing use, or owing to the wear and tear resulting from their being displayed in operation (motors, etc.). Other objects, once they have been inventoried and studied, may be returned to their owners and reinstated in their environment. Finally, the ecomuseum prefers to add to its holdings through donations and permanent deposits rather than to conduct an acquisitions policy that is liable to unleash the acquisitive instincts of collectors, as was observed when the glassware collection was being established in the Le Creusot Ecomuseum. On the other hand, even if the ecomuseum thereby makes itself proof against penetration by the antique markets, the junk stores follow and take their place.

There is in fact nothing to stop an ecomuseum from having collections managed along traditional lines. In other words, an ecomuseum may include a 'museum' section including, for instance, state-owned holdings subject to the customary controls. We must simply beware of applying to the whole the methods and rules that are suited to the part. The fact is that, in so far as the physical heritage of an ecomuseum is made up of everyday, banal, mass-produced objects, sometimes even in use or moreover reinstated in their own environment, it is obvious that they cannot be conserved in the same way as art museum collections.

Its mission being to make us perceive what we commonly fail to notice, the ecomuseum naturally devotes itself to drawing up inventories, category by category, in every imaginable field—buildings, household articles, locally produced artefacts and handicrafts, and so on—and to creating a readily accessible data bank in which each and every item of the 'heritage' becomes a documentary tool, or can become one if handled with due scientific rigour. It is

both the product and the starting-point of a research process experienced as an exercise in mutual training, involving those in charge of the ecomuseum, its users and research workers, and in which academic scholarship, popular wisdom and technical know-how come face to face.

The forms of expression available to the ecomuseum are various: a centre for research and mutual training, it brings together symposia and seminars attended by participants from other regions, publishes monographs, theses or works by local scholars, sets up temporary shows and permanent but continuously evolving exhibitions, carries its message to the inhabitants of outlying neighbourhoods and hamlets, conducts field trips, organizes audio-visual events, and so on.

It is an institution which insists on remaining tentative and provisional, which we must be careful not to encapsulate in any formula borrowed from other categories. Thus it is perfectly possible to imagine a textile museum, but not a textile ecomuseum, simply because textiles alone do not sum up the total reality—industrial, agricultural, urban and rural alike—of what is to be represented. On the other hand, according to the specific economic and human geography involved, an ecomuseum may have a focal point, for example mines and mining. However, this feature is perceived only in so far as it has served and still serves to shape the social and cultural personality and indeed the subjective essence of the population. It is only in this sense that one can speak, for example, of industrial ecomuseums—although it is wise to choose one's words carefully when so doing.

In any case it is vital to refrain from issuing an ecomuseum label. It is indeed essential that every effort be made to preserve the potential, the promise that the 'make-up' of the ecomuseum bears within it. We must therefore ensure that this formula is not systematically replaced, whether literally or in essence, by that of 'centres of scientific and technological culture' set up at the instigation of the administration instead of evolving out of a dawning collective self-awareness, imbued more with didactic good intentions than with existential spontaneity, limited to a cultural sphere that has undoubtedly been overlooked too long³ but that cannot with impunity be developed uniformly in a segregative environment. Recently, however, there has been a tendency for ecomuseums to drift towards adopting

the structure of 'centres of scientific and technological culture' with, on the horizon, the prospect of a split between the rural dimension, which would fall within the province of the ecomuseums and the National Museums for Popular Arts and Traditions, and the technological dimension, taken over by a network of centres more or less directly linked to the La Villette Museum. If this were to happen, the anthropology of contemporary society would give way to the history of technology, and culture would yield to pedagogy.

[Translated from French]

2. Report on ecomuseum projects in the Department of Isère, 31 December 1981.

3. See Jocelyn de Noblet, *Manifeste pour le développement de la culture technique*, Neuilly-sur-Seine, CRCT, 1981.

The new museology proclaimed

Pierre Mayrand

Consultant in community museology. Professor of cultural heritage at the University of Quebec, Montreal. President of the Association des Écomusées du Québec. Co-ordinator of the First International Workshop on 'Ecomuseums and the New Museology'. President of the Ecomuseums of Haute-Beauce, regional museum. Award of Merit of the Canadian Museums Association in 1982.

The new museology is not just an initiative to promote constant innovation. It mobilizes the supporters of a radical transformation of the aims of museology, and advocates profound changes in the thinking and attitudes of the museologist. This emerged from the first public pronouncements of a group who met in London in 1983, at the General Conference of ICOM, and then in Quebec in 1984 at the First International Workshop on 'Ecomuseums and the New Museology'. The protest first voiced in ICOM's International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) developed rapidly into a movement with its own momentum and structure which is expected to lead to the establishment, in November 1985 (Second International Workshop, Lisbon, Portugal), of an international federation for the new museology. The movement's basic philosophy is expressed in the 'Declaration of Quebec' reproduced opposite.

Why are all these people so dissatisfied? What could have rallied so many so quickly and with such a sense of urgency to a concept still poorly defined and a series of not always convergent initiatives? The cause must lie in the museum establishment's delay in coming to terms with a number of contemporary, cultural, social and political developments. To this must be added what we see as the cumbersome and uncommunicative nature of the bodies which represent it,¹ and also, of course, the underlying context of world crisis and re-evaluation of all human endeavour. But in our view the main cause is the monolithic nature of the museological establishment, the superficiality of the reforms which it proposes and the marginalization of any experiment or viewpoint which might be described as at all committed. Why, for example, did the resolutions adopted by the Santiago round table in 1972 receive so little publicity and follow-up?² These frustrations, added to those engendered by the rigidity of the system and its principles, might explain the enthusiasm which is characteristic of the new museologists. The latter might be reproached with rejecting the sacrosanct principles of the profession and assigning greater importance to social considera-

tions than to the ethics of conservation. They might even be accused of irreverence or of succumbing to a passing fad.³ Nevertheless, measures have been taken and their effects show no sign of abating: in addition to the meetings already mentioned, a Study Day on Ecomuseums, held in Montreal in 1983, led by Hugues de Varine who heralded the 'community' type of ecomuseums;⁴ the founding of associations based on these positions, for example *Muséologie Nouvelle et Expérimentation Sociale* (MNES, France) and the *Association des Écomusées du Québec*; the many articles expressing them; and finally the establishment of training courses in 'new museology' and 'popular museology'.

The movement also has its tradition, which can be traced back through neighbourhood museums, school museums, ecomuseums and more recent work in scenography.⁵ Finally, there were the highlights of the Quebec meeting in October 1984, the moderation of the primacy of the word over action and of hierarchy over conviviality, the self-management of workshops, integration with popular culture, and so on. The evening organized by thirteen villages in Haute-Beauce under the slogan of 'Local museums, for all, by all' demonstrated the feasibility of a popular museology, in spite of the criticisms which might be levelled at it (self-indulgence, attach-

1. Jean-Pierre Laurent, 'Des choses ou des gens: La réalité muséale en France [People or Things: Museums in France]', *MNES INFO ... Bulletin d'information*, No. 1, July 1984, p. 1.

2. Hugues de Varine, 'Santiago da Chile, 1972 — La muséologie rencontre le monde moderne [Santiago, Chile, 1972 — Museology Meets the Modern World]', October 1984. (Working document for the First International Workshop on 'Ecomuseums and the New Museology'.)

3. Marc-Alain Maure, 'Réflexion sur une nouvelle fonction du musée [Thoughts on a New Role for Museums]', *ICOM Education*, 1977/78, p. 31: 'Whether museum or not, this new institution, with its social functions that far surpass the bounds set for cultural activities in the narrow sense, has an important part to play in our world'.

4. Hugues de Varine, 'L'Écomusée [The Ecomuseum]', *Gazette de l'Association des Musées Canadiens* (Ottawa), Vol. 104, No. 2, 1978, pp. 29-40.

5. Jean-Pierre Laurent, 'Essai d'une nouvelle muséologie de la ville [Attempt at a New Urban Museology]', *Musées et collections de France*, 1983, p. 160, pp. 75-7.

ment to the past, etc.): it was an indication that a new era was about to begin.

The semantic debates over the 'Declaration of Quebec' did not prevent the emergence of a general consensus on the basic principles. Taking up once more the ideas of the Santiago round table which had been quietly shelved, the Declaration merely reaffirms the social mission of the museum as a new point of departure and the primacy of this function over the traditional museum functions: conservation, buildings, objects and the public. These probings and explanations owe much to the writing of Hugues de Varine

and René Rivard,⁶ and they have their origins of course in the 'evolutive' definition proposed by Georges Henri Rivière. Their terms are the 'integral museum', the 'global museum', popular and community museology, interdisciplinarity, development ... their ideological foundations are the attempts made to socialize museology and change attitudes. From Santiago to Lisbon (1972 to 1985), we have been witnessing a transition from museology to social and political awareness.

[Translated from French]

6. René Rivard, 'Redéfinir la muséologie [A Redefinition of Museology]', *Continuité*, No. 23, Spring 1984, p. 21: 'In short, certain basic principles of the museum have been called into question: building, collections, public, curators and display'. *Que le musée s'ouvre ...* [Open the Museums ...], October 1984. (Unpublished paper presented to participants in the First International Workshop on 'Ecomuseums and the New Museology'). Hugues de Varine, 'Le musée peut tuer ou ... faire vivre [The Museum can Kill or ... Keep Alive]', *Techniques et architecture*, No. 326, September 1979, pp. 82-3: 'It [the museum] has a new mission: to reflect the entire environment and activity of man ... as a process producing change ...'.

Declaration of Quebec: Basic principles for a new museology

Universal considerations

In a modern world which is attempting to muster all the resources that can contribute to development, museology must seek to extend its traditional roles and functions of identification, conservation and education to initiatives which are more far-reaching than these objectives, and thus integrate its action more successfully into the human and physical environment.

In order to achieve this objective and at the same time involve the public in its activities, museology must have increasing recourse to interdisciplinarity, modern methods of communication used in all cultural action, and modern management methods which involve the consumer.

While preserving the material achievements of past civilizations and protecting the achievements characteristic of the aspirations and technology of today, the new museology—ecomuseology, community museology and all other forms of active museology—is primarily concerned with community development, reflecting the driving forces in social progress and associating them in its plans for the future.

This new movement puts itself firmly at the service of the creative imagination, constructive realism and the humanitarian principles upheld by the international community. It has become a way of bringing people together to learn about themselves and each other, to develop their critical faculties and express their concern to establish together a world which takes a responsible attitude towards its own intrinsic riches.

In this context, the concerns of the movement, which is anxious to adopt a global approach, are scientific, cultural, social and economic.

The movement utilizes all the resources at the disposal of museology (collection, conservation, scientific research, restitution and dissemination, creativity) and adapts them to each environment and project.

Declaration

Considering that more than fifteen years of experience of a new type of museology—ecomuseology, community museology and all other forms of active museology—throughout the

world has been a critical factor in the development of the communities which have adopted this method of managing their future,

Considering the need felt by all participants in the various meetings and by the speakers consulted to do more to achieve recognition for this movement,

Considering the will to establish the organizational basis for joint reflection and experiments conducted on several continents,

Considering the value of a reference framework designed to promote the operation of the new forms of museology, and of linking principles and means of action together in this way,

Considering that the theory of ecomuseums and community museums (neighbourhood museums, local museums) is based on experiments conducted in various areas over more than fifteen years,

The following is adopted:

1. that the international museum community be invited to recognize this movement and to adopt and accept all forms of active museology in its typology of museums;
2. that all possible steps be taken to ensure that the public authorities recognize local initiatives to apply these principles and assist in their development;
3. that, in this spirit, the following permanent structures be established, in close collaboration, to make it possible for these forms of museology to develop and succeed: (a) an international committee for ecomuseums/community museums within ICOM (International Council of Museums); (b) an international federation for the new museology which might be associated with ICOM and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and whose temporary headquarters would be in Canada;
4. that a temporary working group be formed with the following initial mandate: establishment of the proposed structures, formulation of objectives, implementation of a triennial programme of meetings and international collaboration.

Quebec, 13 October 1984
[Translated from French]

REFRACTIONS

Ecomuseums in Quebec

René Rivard

Born in 1941 at Victoriaville, Quebec. B.A. degree, 1963. Administrator-supervisor of historic sites in Quebec and Ontario, 1970-72. Regional administrator for Quebec, 1972-73. Head of interpretation, museology and public service for Parks Canada in Quebec, 1973-79. Consultant in museology, having founded the firm Muséart in 1978. Several missions for Unesco and ICOM.

Before 1970 Quebec had few public museums, no strong museological tradition, and little or nothing in the way of 'conservational' restrictions. When the region's 'quiet revolution' got under way, it stimulated a large section of the public to search for their identity and brought them a new awareness of their heritage. In Ontario and New Brunswick, the two Canadian provinces bordering Quebec, conventional museums were being developed at that time, together with open-air museums and model reconstructions of historical scenes and old forts. But museums in Quebec were dragging their feet, searching for an identity.

At that point, a number of factors came into play that were gradually to transform our museology, moving it towards the new idea of the ecomuseum. There was the declaration of a first cultural development policy for Quebec, large-scale community development work in some areas, experimentation with new approaches to museum development, such as nature centres and interpretation centres, the move to Quebec of the federal bureaux of Parks Canada (which deals with national parks and historic sites) and, last but not least, the increasing involvement of the Office Franco-Québécois pour la Jeunesse (OFQJ) in major exchange programmes between France and Quebec.

1974-79: Quebec develops an interest in the ecomuseum

Informal contacts were established about 1974 between the French regional parks and a number of young museum professionals from Quebec. Georges Henri Rivière directed them towards Mont Lozère, Ouessant Island, the Landes of Gascony, and Le Creusot. Thanks to the shared language, documentation and communications quickly crossed the Atlantic to Quebec. The ecomuseum formula was proposed to Parks Canada for the group of historic buildings of Grande-Grave in the Forillon National Park. Unfortunately, the statutes of this

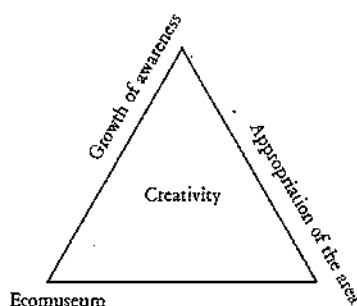
federal organization did not permit it to adopt an idea based on public participation. Nevertheless, it sent a number of staff to study French parks and their arrangements for conservation and public participation.

Visits and training periods were gradually organized and more formal exchanges took place. Quebec invited Gérard Collin, Jean-Pierre Gestin and Georges Henri Rivière, while France welcomed René Milot, Carole Lévesque and René Rivard. The high point was reached in 1979 when, thanks to the OFQJ, one large group from each country followed a month's course in the other country. The ecomuseum formula was considered very promising and Quebec took a lively interest in it.

1979-82: the first ecomuseum in Quebec

A first, cautious experiment took place in Haute-Beauce, where Pierre Mayrand assisted a group of people who were anxious to safeguard an important part of their regional heritage without, however, putting it in a conventional museum. For this purpose, they established the Musée et Centre Régional d'Interprétation de la Haute-Beauce. This enabled the neglected region to recover a measure of pride through a clearer idea of its own identity in the form of the kind of museum supported by its own people and with its own financial resources. Its development, carefully planned by Pierre Mayrand and Maude Céré, paved the way for eventual acceptance of the ecomuseum, the appropriation and interpretation of its territory, and research into the collective memory and popular creativity.

In spring 1980, a group of residents of the south centre district of Montreal who worked in housing co-operatives decided to provide cultural facilities adapted to their situation, perceived as 'blocked in time and space'. Claude Watters, who had been living in the United States, suggested the idea of a neighbourhood museum similar to those in the deprived



areas of American towns.¹ The ensuing discussions among local people soon encouraged the promoters to move on towards the idea of the fully fledged ecomuseum.

In this way, the Maison du Fier-Monde was established and quickly took up the people's demands for improvement of the environment and quality of life of this working-class area. The development zone of Montreal had been somewhat distorted by urban development, which had set up the University of Quebec there, as well as the French language broadcasting centre of Radio Canada. The area had also been split in two by a motorway and over four hundred houses had been demolished in the process. Thus the Maison du Fier-Monde soon became, to use its own description, 'a campaigning ecomuseum'.

Other experimental ecomuseums took shape in 1981-82 in La Rouge Valley, part of the 'high country' of the Laurentides, and in the Iles du Lac Saint-Pierre, an archipelago on the Saint Lawrence River which forms a frail natural and cultural environment. This ecomuseum is known as the Insulaire.

Hugues de Varine visited Haute-Beauce and the other new ecomuseums in 1981 and advocated action that was more direct and more involved in the socio-economic development of the areas they covered. The courses in museology and heritage offered by the University of Quebec and by Laval University discussed the ecomuseums unambiguously and several students took an active part in their activities and their development. Thus the ecomuseum took its place in the museum vocabulary and museum system of Quebec.

Subsequent developments

In accordance with the wishes of the local people, the museum and interpretation centre of Haute-Beauce was renamed in 1983 the Écomusée de la Haute-Beauce. This change confirms the success of a three-year plan drawn up in 1980 and implemented by means of the 'triangle of creativity' and courses in popular museology. Thanks to these courses and to the methods of interpretation and community organization employed, the public is progressing confidently towards the appropriation of its neighbourhood and is developing museographical resources with which to attain the objectives of the ecomuseum.

The triangle of creativity shown on

page 202 is a genuine innovation and a substantial contribution by the ecomuseums of Quebec to popular museology. Its cyclical practice in time and regional space brings specific, attainable objectives within the reach of the population as a whole. 'Haute-Beauce Créatrice', an operation conducted in 1983, gave the thirteen villages of the ecomuseum an opportunity to express their appropriation of their territory by means of monumental symbols and creative activities. The Maison du Fier-Monde did the same, with a collective mural, community activities in the district, and exhibitions connected with the search for identity.

Two new ecomuseums opened—Deux-Rives in the Valleyfield area and Saint-Constant, on the Saint Lawrence River opposite Montreal. These last two, like the ecomuseums of La Rouge Valley and the islands in the Saint Lawrence, have consolidated their positions and, in spite of a certain amount of hesitation and opposition, prepared very promising activities. At the JAL, in Témiscouata County, the idea of starting an ecomuseum has been maturing for some time within the context of a vast co-operative development movement.²

Today, the Quebec Association of Ecomuseums has six members. In May 1983, it organized a one-day conference which was attended by Hugues de Varine and non-specialist representatives of all the Quebec ecomuseums. The conference decided to hold the First International Workshop on 'Ecomuseums and the New Museology', an itinerant symposium which took place in Quebec in October 1984 and led to an international grouping of the principal exponents of popular museology.

The state of affairs in Quebec

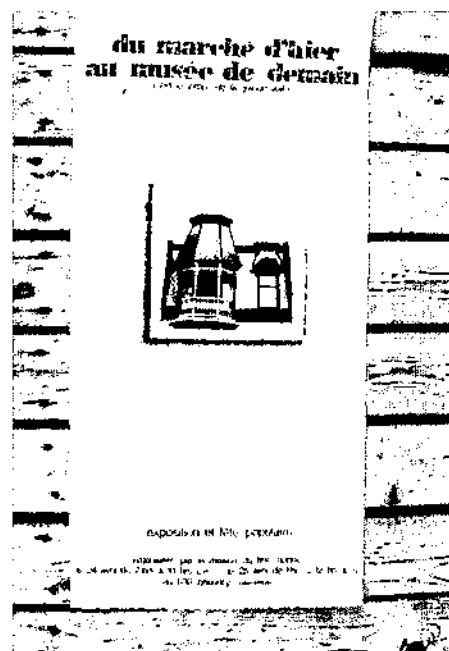
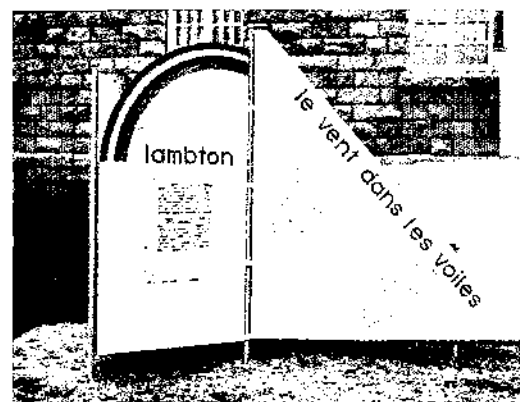
It is interesting to note that the six ecomuseums of Quebec all originated in different ways. None of them is a product of the parks system, as is most often the case in France. It is therefore worth comparing the different reasons which led to the founding of the Quebec ecomuseums: *Haute-Beauce*—preventing the removal of items of local heritage collected by a self-taught ethnographer;

1. See article by John R. Kinard on page 217—Ed.

2. The acronym JAL is the name of a tourism corporation created by three villages threatened by extinction—Saint-Just, Auclair and Lejeune—which decided to join forces.

13

Three-dimensional display by the people of Lambton for 'Haute-Beauce Créatrice' in 1983.

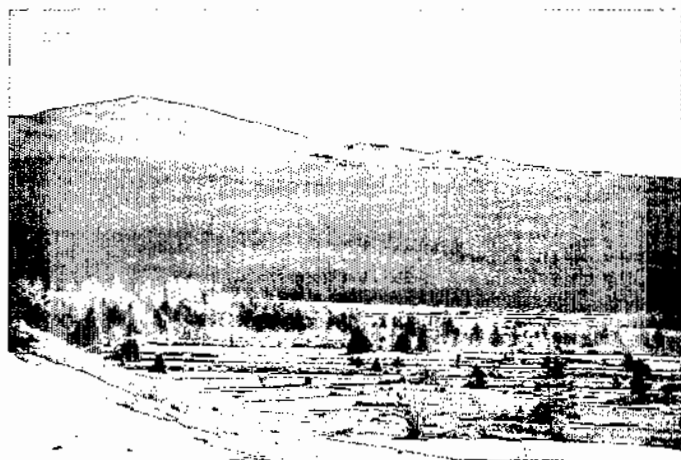


14

Poster for one of the activities at the Maison du Fier-Monde in Montreal: an exhibition for the reopening of the Saint-Jacques market, converted into offices by the town council.

15

Spring landscape in Haute-Beauce.



16

Autumn landscape in La Rouge Valley.



Maison du Fier-Monde—a need for appropriate cultural facilities and means of defence for housing co-operatives in a working-class district; *Insulaire*—the initiative of a heritage student confronted with a frail natural and cultural environment that was further threatened by inconsiderate tourism; *La Rouge Valley*—a heritage society concerned with interpretation and community action; *Saint-Constant*—a project by an ecological education centre, which is growing into an ecomuseum; *Deux-Rives*—a cultural centre set up in 1979 which was developed into an ecomuseum following a seminar on popular museology in 1984.

The ecomuseums of Quebec can take pride in certain special features that mark them off from European ecomuseums, thus demonstrating their distinctive character and initiative and hence their contribution to the advancement of what we call the new museology. These features may be summarized as follows: Public participation is not only considered essential, but it is sought, encouraged and very often obtained at unexpected levels.

This participation does not just consist of voluntary work; it is also financial, since ecomuseums are funded chiefly, or almost exclusively, by subscription and individual contribution.

The approach of the ecomuseums in Quebec is at once interdisciplinary and non-disciplinary, in that none of them has the scientific committee that French ecomuseums have. This fact does not in any way denote fear or disdain of the strict, scientific approach. It shows a preference for integrating professional researchers with the local people and, through the users' committee, ensuring that they are neither

isolated nor made remote from the popular objectives given to their research work by the ecomuseums.

The courses in popular museology that have been on offer for a number of years, especially in Haute-Beauce, are not only an innovation in the practice of ecomuseums but are also a very effective means of dispelling misunderstandings about museums in general, of encouraging participation in the development of the ecomuseum's aids to interpretation and of providing competent workers for community action.

The collective memory of the public is the primary heritage of the ecomuseum, and it is studied not only by a few isolated researchers and scientists but by the people themselves, guided by the most active already among them or who come to the fore.

The people have also to a certain extent regained their 'power of naming' or of redefining their territory, resuming with increased creativity this activity so dear to their ancestors who, a little over a century ago, had done the same when they opened up Haute-Beauce and La Rouge Valley.

An increasing concern by the people living in the areas of the ecomuseums with working on a variety of socio-economic development projects, in the country, in villages and in towns, and a desire to keep these projects on a local or human scale compatible with the public's wishes.

A high level of exchange among the ecomuseums of Quebec, and between them and ecomuseums in other countries, and any organization working in the fields of popular education, economic development, and heritage



appreciation. A number of useful partnerships have been established, for example between two ecomuseums in Quebec and between the ecomuseum of Haute-Beauce and the one in Coglais in Brittany, as well as between an ecomuseum and two other museums in a particular region, forming a network that can offer local people and visitors a greater range of services and more effective means for concerted museum activity.

It is a little over ten years now since that first encounter between the people of Quebec and Georges Henri Rivière, which initiated the ecomuseum movement in Quebec. Now that the 'father of the ecomuseum' is no more, Quebec brings its own jewel to the crown of ecomuseums in different parts of the world, a living crown, resplendent to his memory.

[Translated from French]

17
People's outdoor exhibition on the occasion of the Hay Festival at Saint-Évariste, Haute-Beauce.



The ecomuseum concept is taking root in Sweden

Kjell Engström

Born in 1929. Studied zoology, botany, geography at the University of Stockholm, Ph.D. in zoology. University lecturer, 1957-65. Director of the public department of the Swedish Museum of Natural History since 1965. During the 1950s he was employed as secretary of the Swedish Society for the Protection of Nature and as editor of its periodical. Chairman of the Swedish Museums' Association, 1975-81; Chairman of the Swedish National Committee of ICOM, 1975-81; Chairman of the International Committee for Natural History Museums since 1980. Member of the Executive Council of ICOM. Responsible for the planning of a Museum of the Mountains and Samish Culture at Jokkmokk.

Over the last few decades the development of museology in Sweden has been dynamic. A new look has been taken at the functioning of the old, well-established museums. Their documentation systems have been analysed and made more rational; there has been intense discussion and up-dating of display techniques. In particular, the role of museums in society has been widely debated. As a result, public interest in museums has grown and hence the number of visitors as well. This in turn has led to the creation of many new specialized museums covering subjects such as the forest, toys, motor cars, aviation and the coastal islands. The ecomuseum concept has also come to the fore in the planning of new museums in Sweden, despite the fact that there is still great uncertainty about what an ecomuseum actually is. This is a question much discussed at many congresses and conferences in recent years and as a result we have just about managed to agree on a few straightforward definitions.

What is an ecomuseum?

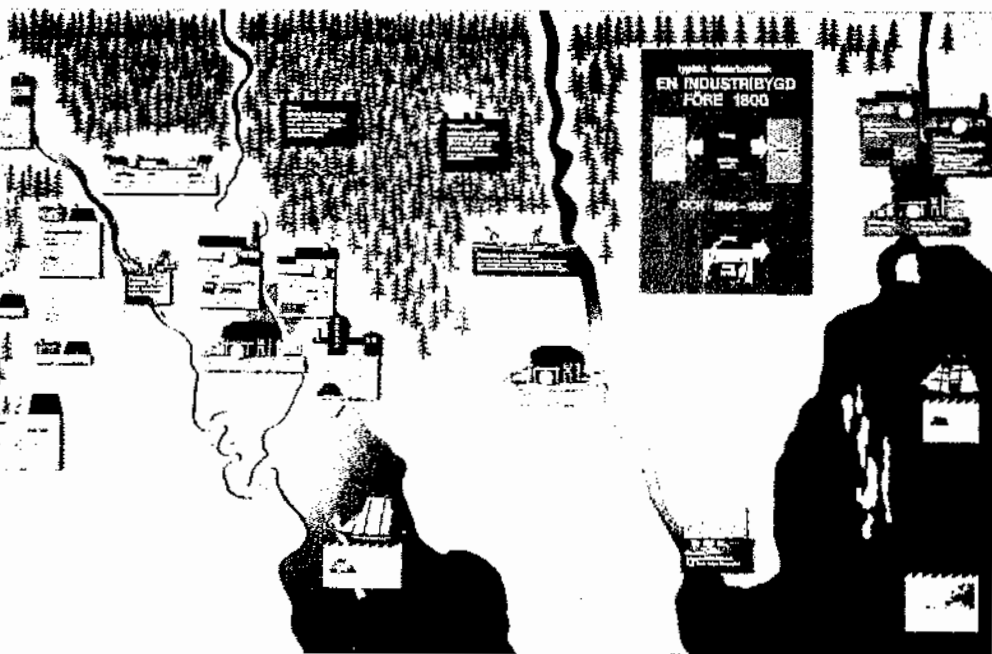
My own understanding of an ecomuseum is based on the discussions of a symposium on 'Museums and Environment' held in 1972 at Bordeaux, Istres, Lour-

matin and Paris.¹ Here many of the basic principles of the ecomuseum were formulated and examined for the first time by an international group. There have been many subsequent attempts to explain the concept further. I myself should like to sum up these discussions and the practical experience gained from the first museums of this kind that have been established.

The concept of 'ecology' is fundamental. The word itself, derived from the Greek *oikos* (household or living place), was coined by the German biologist Haeckel in 1873 for that branch of biology which deals with the interrelations between organisms and their environment. From the earliest discussions on the characteristic features of ecomuseums one of the fundamental principles laid down was that they had to be based on an ecological point of view. Thus they must truly reflect the development of cultural and economic life in relation to the conditions and limitations set by the natural surroundings of the region concerned.

This ecological approach requires an

1. Extracts from the conclusion of the symposium were published in a special issue of *Museum* entitled 'Museums and Environment', Vol. XXV, No. 1/2, 1973. The author wrote the editorial for that issue—Ed.



18

Map showing how the establishment of a steelworks has affected the economy of the region, from an exhibition at the Västerbotten Museum prepared in 1975. This photograph first appeared in Per-Uno Ågren's article 'On the Preparation of a New Exhibit in the Regional Museum of Västerbotten (Sweden)', *Museum*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, 1976, pp. 170-5.

integration of disciplines: to highlight and describe the interactions between the natural conditions and technical, economic and cultural development it is necessary to call upon various scientific disciplines together. Thus the ecomuseum cannot fit in with the traditional classification according to subject, since its distinctive feature is precisely the integration of several different subjects.

Another important principle is the museum's *regional character*. A region in this sense is not primarily an area defined by administrative or legal boundaries, unless they happen to coincide with the boundaries of a zone that forms a whole, because of the unity of its traditions, natural setting and economic life—for example a mining region, a river valley, farming country or an industrial zone. Nor can the idea of an ecomuseum be confined to the building that houses it and is located in a particular spot: it must be extended to cover a complex of facilities all contributing to the same end and laid out according to the centres of interest of that particular museum.

Lastly, and this is a vital principle, the design of an ecomuseum cannot simply be left to some central institution and merely take the form of buildings set aside for academic gatherings, exhibitions and educational activities. It must be brought into being *in collaboration with the population* and reflect their desire to explore, document and explain their own history. An ecomuseum must be intimately associated with the regional population and planned so as to give them a say in its development. Successful attainment of this aim will depend

primarily not on the form and organization adopted but rather on the lines of emphasis selected, which should encourage the local population to take an interest in their own region and culture and in so doing give them a greater say in their own future. Such an approach should also strengthen the desire to make the region known to others.

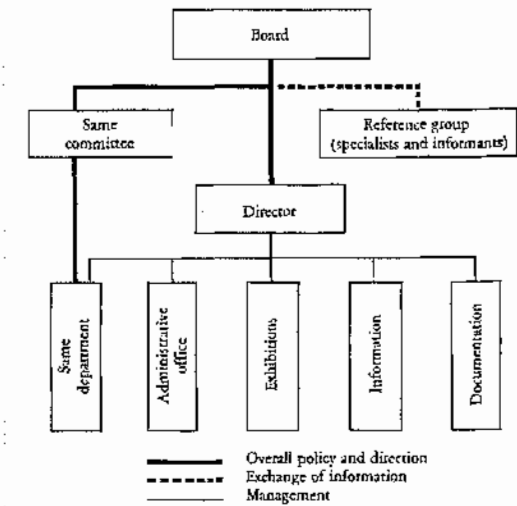
Does Sweden possess museums meeting these criteria?

The short answer is no—there is no museum which meets them in full, though a whole range of museums and related activities go some way towards satisfying the principles we have mentioned.

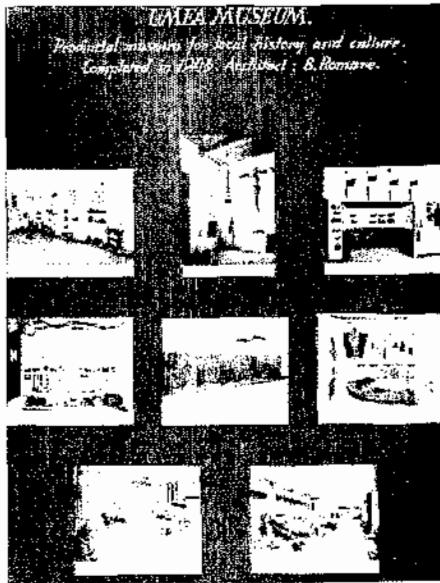
For example, the Skansen Park open-air museum in Stockholm, designed along the lines laid down for it by Arthur Hazelius, has played an important role in refining the ideas underlying the first definitions of an ecomuseum formulated by Georges Henri Rivi  re.² The basic idea of an open-air museum is to group together in some easily accessible place, buildings that come from different localities and periods and to set them in surroundings that recall their original environment. In many cases, this is backed up by activities connected with craftwork, farming or the use of various bygone techniques, all these activities being designed to give a general picture of some particular period and its living

2. See article entitled 'Skansen—a Stock-taking at Ninety', *Museum*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3, 1982, pp. 173-8—Ed.

19
Organizational chart of the planned Samish museum.



20
V  STERBOTTENS L  NS MUSEET, Ume  . A travelling exhibition on this 'provincial museum for local history and culture'.



21
J  MTLANDS L  NS MUSEET,   stersund. Summer cottage with cattle- and milking-shed in the old village of this open-air museum devoted particularly to Lapp culture. Fourteen such regional or local museums were described in *Museum*, Vol. X, No. 3, 1957, in which this photograph first appeared.



conditions but based essentially on ethnological observation and popular traditions. At the end of the nineteenth century many open-air museums of this type were established in Sweden, most of them on the initiative of local associations. Generally speaking, the theme of the exhibition (the houses and associated material objects) is reinforced by displays of woodwork, the weaving of textiles, farming methods, traditional craftwork, music, dancing, folk-tales and so forth.

In many respects these local parks and open-air museums come close to the ecomuseum. As a rule, however, there is no apparent link with the theme of ecology or any concern to integrate various disciplines, and, in many cases, no relation to current social developments; moreover, they are usually extremely local in character. Several large provincial museums have similar features, and ongoing efforts to revitalize some of these institutions are often directed at types of activity resembling those of an ecomuseum.

Some innovative projects recently made public also follow this new trend, which is a sign of adaptation to the present-day car-based form of tourism and the long journeys it makes possible. The principle consists in using a single set of facilities to present the economic history of an entire region, above all by evoking its industries, architecture and

cultural atmosphere. Although this type of organization has been called an ecomuseum, there is no link with ecology and no integration of disciplines, nor does the population have a decisive part to play in developing the project. Such institutions should therefore be classed as historico-industrial or 'fragmented' museums, an outstanding example being the one at Ironbridge in England.³

There is another longstanding activity worthy of interest in this context, even though, strictly speaking, it has little to do with museums. In Sweden there exists an extensive network of study groups, with which local associations are very often involved. Thus, through circles for the study of local history, a great many excellent projects have helped those concerned to build up a detailed knowledge of their local and national past. Studies of this type strengthen the interest shown in the development of society but lead in only a limited way to the accumulation of material relating to local traditions and knowledge, objects and documents gathered and preserved by the community itself.

Thus Sweden does have a number of museums and related activities based on principles closely linked to the ecomuseum concept. Perhaps this is why the ecomuseum itself has not yet really taken root in the country. Perhaps the fact that ecomuseums have developed mainly in France bears some relation to that country's traditionally more rigorous classification by discipline and to the emergence of a trend arising from research conducted in the 1970s on new ways of organizing museum activities.

A new museum on the 'ecomuseum' model

Since 1980 the concept of a museum based on that of an ecomuseum has been developing in Sweden. The attempt dates back to the early 1970s, with the launching of a project to create a national parks museum to serve as an introduction for visitors to the big national parks located in the mountains of Lapland. This museum was to be established at Jokkmokk, a commune harbouring some of the largest national parks.

Although this project was not carried through at the time, it caught the public eye again towards the end of the 1970s. With the authorities deciding to call a halt to the development of its hydroelectric resources, the region was threatened with widespread unemployment, and it was against this changed background that I was asked to examine once again the possibility of implementing the museum project in question.

The study to be undertaken was based on several fundamental assumptions. The museum had to serve as a *national parks museum* and therefore provide visitors to the big national parks with information on the natural environment, the history and the economic life of the regions concerned. To achieve this there would be close co-operation with the various authorities and organizations involved in one way or another with tourism and public information. The museum had to serve also as a *Swedish museum of the mountains* by organizing documentation and information activities on the natural environment,

3. See article by Neil Cossons, founder-director of the museum, entitled 'The Museum in the Valley, Ironbridge Gorge', *Museum*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, 1980, pp. 138-53—Ed.



ecology, population and the economic and cultural life of those regions. During the 1970s the Nordic Same Council resolved to establish a *Central Lappish Museum* in Norway, Sweden and Finland. Could the parks museum serve this purpose for Sweden? One important factor to be taken into account was that the already existing communal museum possessed a collection composed mainly of Lappish objects. The museum could probably even act as a *local centre for cultural activities*, open to the population of the surrounding mountain region.

Since a policy based on such premises pointed quite naturally to the idea of an ecomuseum and the methods this implied, I obviously took it as a model for my final version of the project. This meant that a good many conditions had to be respected.

This particular region has a very special natural environment that in many ways restricts human activities considerably, but at the same time it possesses several of Sweden's principal natural resources, such as mineral deposits, hydroelectric power and forests. The region served by the museum could not be based on administrative boundaries except where they coincided with those of the mountain zone itself.

As the population has long lived in almost total dependence on nature, it is impossible to comprehend the culture that has emerged in the region without taking the natural surroundings in which it developed into consideration. In many regions the Lappish population continue to live from the same principal occupation—the raising of reindeer—as they have done for centuries, though this activity is now being rapidly modernized. Raising reindeer depends entirely on a balanced use of the natural environment, but it is at present under heavy pressure from hydroelectric power stations, mining, the development of tourist facilities, the acquisition of country houses, the expansion of the road network and other side effects of a technological society. As a result, the traditional Lappish economy and culture are in the midst of a profound transformation, and there is little time to collect materials on this process. There is an evident determination within the Lappish population, to set up itself a central museum dedicated to its own culture and capable in addition of playing an important role as a centre for cultural documentation and activities.

After several centuries of an economy

based on farming, forestry, hunting and fishing, the means of livelihood available to the population have also been profoundly transformed since the beginning of this century. A long period devoted to the development of hydroelectric resources is now coming to an end, and the local population is faced with extensive unemployment. In consequence, local movements and the bodies concerned with the people's education are finding themselves entrusted with the vital work of documenting this process and persuading the population to set about finding solutions to their current problems. In this work, the museum can play the key role of an activities and documentation centre, making its skills available to the public.

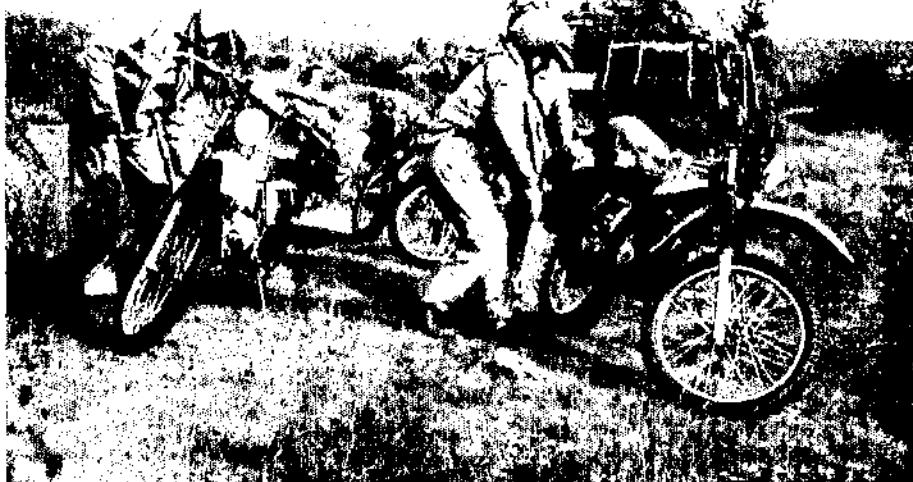
A museum that decides on this approach extends its traditional role of building up collections, conservation, documentation and education. It will also be capable of assuming the decisive task of getting the population of a region not only to perceive the chain of cause and effect in the changes taking place and then analyse its consequences, but also to set about solving for themselves the problems at issue. This broader scope and the methods now being developed make this museum into something different and justify the name of ecomuseum.

A study carried out in 1980-81 resulted in a practical museum project that could be expected to meet all the objectives mentioned above. After much reflection and discussions with the various parties concerned, the government decided in February 1983 to set up an institution to build and run the planned museum. In this institution are represented



23

The changing ecology of the region, the real challenge for the new museum. Here a helicopter replaces dogs to herd reindeer up the mountain.



24

Forty years later, motor-cycles being used by reindeer herders.

the state, the commune of Jokkmokk, the Norrbotten Provincial Council and two Lappish organizations, the National Association of Swedish Lapps⁴ and the Same Atnam association.⁵ AJTTE, the name given to the museum, is a Lappish word denoting a wooden shed, built on piles, in which household utensils, clothes and various bits and pieces are stored between the autumn migration from mountain pasture to forest and the return in the spring.

The museum's collections will range from photographs and films, sound recordings of oral traditions and folk music to books and other written material. It should also be involved in research on a permanent basis, with a special emphasis on developing the Lappish section so that it can serve as the central museum of the Lappish culture in Sweden in the way mentioned above.⁶

The museum is to be organized along the lines indicated in Figure 19. Its permanent exhibitions should combine the natural and historico-cultural aspects in a thematic display devoted to the mountain environment and its climate, the ways in which the people have used nature and how the various forms of culture developed in each period. These displays should, in a clear and straightforward manner, take visitors through the changes that have occurred over the last

few hundred years: in former times people's lives in these regions depended entirely on the natural conditions, whereas today nature is subject to the conditions imposed by human beings. The fragile ecosystem has been radically transformed in the last few decades by, for example, hydroelectric schemes, forestry and mining activities, the expansion of the road network and the introduction of new tree species and new species of fish.

If the visitor wishes to depart from the central theme he can explore certain areas set aside for systematic collections that give a more detailed presentation than the thematic display. In addition, there are plans for a reading room, a study room, and areas for temporary exhibitions and various other intellectual activities.

The exhibitions organized by the museum should not be confined to the building itself. For example, smaller displays, habitat restoration work, or various other local activities could, in collaboration with a variety of local groups and associations, be undertaken on the 'outpost' principle, using facilities away from the museum itself but fully integrated with the purposes of an ecomuseum. With its wide variety of planned activities of all kinds, its publications and its exhibitions, the museum will provide both information and active

leadership for the region's population as well as for visitors from elsewhere.

Since the summer of 1983 a small group of people have been working on the plans for the museum, which are now ready. Building work is due to begin in the summer of 1985. The museum should be installed by the spring of 1987, and it is hoped that some of the displays and training activities can then begin. It will, however, be several more years before the programme is carried out in full.

If we succeed in carrying through the project as we intend, the museum should then function as an ecomuseum, called upon to play a major role in cultural as well as the social development of the locality and its vast hinterland.

[Translated from Swedish]

4. The members of the governing body are designated by the various organizations involved.

5. The members of the Lappish Council are all elected by the Lappish organizations. 'Same' is the Lapps' own term for themselves in their Finno-Ugrian language and is also employed by the states in which they live.

6. The museum will seek to achieve a broader impact among the population it serves than is reflected in its governing body, the aim being to involve a wide range of organizations and institutions, including religious circles, local Lappish associations, nature conservation societies, academic institutions, the nearest regional museums, representatives of the schools and the education authorities.

The development of ecomuseums in Portugal

Since the Revolution of 25 April 1974, more and more local cultural activities have sprung up which reflect the specific character of each community in Portugal. The local museums that have come into being in the past ten years have benefited from the effects of democracy in general and the democratic management of local communities in particular, and have become useful tools for those who founded and who continue to run them. These museums, without overlooking the general objectives that make a museum what it is, namely, collecting, preserving, studying, exhibiting and making known the material and spiritual traces of human lives in their environment, have added a new dimension to traditional museology. Besides building up collections, they seek to make use of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage that can help to understand, explain and experience the social, economic and historical circumstances that moulded the various communities.

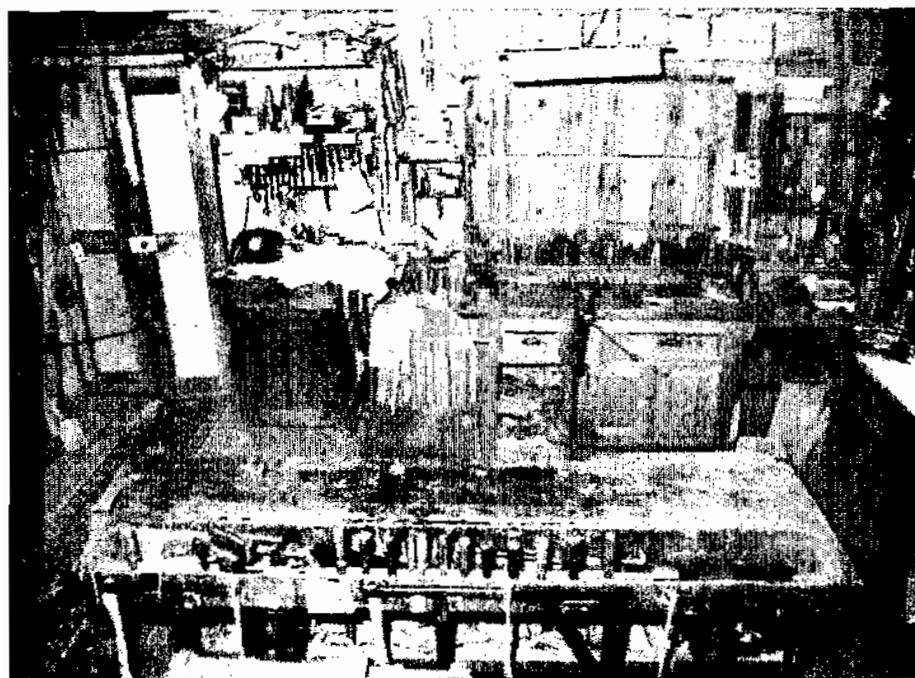
The theoretical and practical principles of the ecomuseum movement have been particularly well received by the population and by many community leaders. In a period of crisis they afford means of reflection and study that may help them to solve their problems and, at the same

time, to discover local resources in the spheres of the economy, energy, technology, tourism, culture and leisure. Most of the local museums which apply these principles have continued, however, to be designated as municipal museums and identified by the name of the locality (usually the largest town in the area). With the advent of this active museology practised by them, the concept of the museum has become broader, extending beyond the confines of the former palace, convent or other building used as a museum, to encompass the entire territory where human activity has left its mark on the natural landscape. Thus museums with these innovative features may be found attached to a municipality (Seixal Ecomuseum, Alcochete Ecomuseum, Rural and Wine-growing Ecomuseum of the Municipality of Cartaxo, Benavente Museum), a parish (Escalhão), several parishes (Ethnological Museum of Monte Redondo) or a small town (Mértola). Their organization follows the well-established pattern. A central unit houses the permanent exhibition and auxiliary departments responsible for collection, restoration, studies, documentation, reserves, temporary exhibitions and educational activities. From this point, visitors are directed to

António Nabais

Born in August 1947 at Oliveira de Frades Viseu, Portugal. Master's degree in history, University of Lisbon; course in curatorship at the Portuguese Cultural Heritage Institute. Director of the Seixal Ecomuseum; history teacher at secondary level and at the International University for the Elderly (UITI). Has published *História do Concelho do Seixal* (Vol. 1: *Cronologia*, Vol. 2: *Barcos*, Seixal, Edição da Câmara Municipal do Seixal, 1981, 1982), as well as articles on local history in various journals.

25
ECOMUSEU DO SEIXAL. Didactic display on fishing in the central unit of the museum.



26
MUSEU ETNOLÓGICO DE MONTE REDONDO. Saddler's workshop.

27
Repair of a cistern using local skills at
Noudar.



28
MUSEU DO MÉRTOA. Beginners' course
on the restoration of wooden polychrome
sculpture.



the museological units distributed over the territory covered. These units afford a means not only of decentralizing activities and facilities but also of involving the population in preserving and re-using *in situ* the significant buildings and objects that make up the local heritage. A further innovative feature of these local museums is the variety of their collections, which reflect the many different aspects of life in the area concerned: geographical, social, cultural, historical, artistic, technological, and so on. The local inhabitants are, of course, closely involved. They bring in objects, provide information about some of the specimens used, participate in the rescue and restoration of objects and help with studies and promotional activities.

The idea of establishing a Portuguese ecomuseum first arose in 1979, in connection with the Natural Park of Serra de Estrela.¹ Under the supervision of Georges Henri Rivière, who twice visited the site, a team of university researchers undertook the preliminary work necessary for the opening of such a museum. The team made contact with the local people, collected ethnographic materials, acquired buildings characteristic of the local architecture and started to carry out scientific research on an interdisciplinary basis. There the project came to a halt. As has been explained by the landscape architect Fernando Pessoa, who was one of the driving forces behind this venture, 'the project miscarried as a result of the ignorance of certain sectors of central government and their inability to see beyond matters of immediate, limited interest'.²

A successful project, on the other

hand, was the municipal museum of Seixal, described in my article on the subject in *Museum*.³ When nominating it for the European Museum of the Year Award Kenneth Hudson wrote as follows:

In Portugal we were highly impressed by the style and effectiveness of the new museums of Seixal and Santiago do Cacém. ... In all these places, exceptional talent, enthusiasm and originality, combined with the acceptance of very long working hours, have produced results that might seem impossible to persons working in museums of a more conventional type and in richer countries.

In November 1984 this museum attained a new stage in its development with the reopening of a traditionally constructed shipyard, made over to it by the General Port Authority of Lisbon. This unit is installed in a former shipyard in Arrentela. It shows the spatial layout of a shipyard with all its infrastructures, and houses an exhibition that depicts nautical life on the Tagus estuary (shipbuilding, river traffic, fishing), including typical boats salvaged by the local authorities: the *fregata*, *varino* and *falua*. The *falua*, entirely restored, is used for guided visits

1. Fernando Pessoa, 'Ecomuseu e parque natural: uma filosofia ecológica de regionalização', *Natureza e Paisagem* (Portugal, National Department of Parks, Reserves and the Environmental Heritage), No. 6, December 1978.

2. Fernando Pessoa, 'O ecomuseu', *Diário de notícias*, 19 December 1984.

3. António José Nabais, 'The Municipal Museum of Seixal — An Ecomuseum of Development', *Museum*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2, 1984, pp. 71-4.

29

ECOMUSEU DO ALCOCHETE. The salt marshes.



along the tributaries of the Tagus, allowing visitors to see close up the still-visible traces of earlier activities in the form, for instance, of water-mills driven by tidal energy, cod-drying installations, large and small harbours, and shipyards. The fitting out of this unit would not have been possible without the help of former workers from the ship-building yards—shipwrights and caulkers—who offered their tools and provided information about the woodworking techniques traditionally used in those shipyards. This historical unit in Arrentela, where ship-building activities can be traced back to at least the time of the Portuguese expansion, also offers the facilities needed for the establishment of a shipbuilding school, where the instructor will be the shipwright who made the models of typical Tagus riverboats at the naval history unit and who describes to visitors the traditional techniques used in building wooden ships.

A water-mill unit is now being prepared. It is hoped that the research and restoration work will be completed shortly and that it will then be able to operate in the service of the community as a study and research centre. Plans are in hand for other units, in the form of the lime-kiln, the winepress, the oil-press, old harbours, archaeological sites (Roman and industrial), old parts of the city and the cultural heritage centre, which already form part of the ecomuseum itinerary. A water unit has been established in a pumping station, featuring ancient and modern equipment that illustrates the development of the water-supply system from early times to the present day.

The educational department of the ecomuseum has improved the quality of its service to educational establishments by organizing temporary and travelling exhibitions and cultural activities in collaboration with schools, or study tours of the various units. So that these study tours can be made throughout the area, the municipality of Seixal has purchased a coach for local people's use. The ecomuseum, meanwhile, is able to provide students, researchers and teachers with written and iconographic documentation together with objects illustrating various economic activities pursued in the area. The local people, who are mainly labourers and workers in the tertiary sector, request the museum's support for group cultural activities in accordance with their aims. The museum's sphere of action already extends beyond the limits of the municipality. Local authorities, educational institutions, associations and other private or public bodies regularly request its assistance.

The Ethnological Museum of Monte Redondo

Founded in 1981, this museum has a notably innovative approach. Although in the beginning the idea was to follow traditional museological practice, confined to the collection and exhibition of 'ethnographic' objects, local forces and local factors combined to influence the original project. The organizing group rapidly became aware of the 'limitations of a museology cut off from its material and social environment and thus condemned to be no more than a form of monologue'.

30

ECOMUSEU RURAL E DO VINHO DO CONCELHO DO CARTAXO. Appropriate contacts with the local population in the *taberna*.



Recasting the original project, the sponsors laid down the following principle: 'The museum should contribute to improving the material and cultural living conditions of the local population'.⁴ True to this principle, the museum, whose area of influence extends over the parishes of Monte Redondo and Bajouca, adopted a new plan of action. A particularly noteworthy innovation is the dialogue that has been set up between specialists, local councillors, and the public, who participate together as a matter of course in the various activities, ranging from the collection and study of objects to the acquisition of premises and fund-raising for the museum, and including promotional work and advertising.

The interdisciplinary nature of the research is guaranteed by the composition of the team of specialists, which has anthropologists, geographers, an historian and an ethnomusicologist as its members. These specialists organize the collections (inventory and card index) and the general document holdings, and encourage the study of the anthropology, history, entomology, botany, ethnomusicology and popular architecture of the region. The museum has established permanent contacts with the university, not only through the work of these specialists but also through its logistic support (accommodation, transport, meals, photographic equipment, etc.) for the student groups that carry out work in the area covered.

The various collections illustrate the main economic activities in the region. They include the articles used by resin tappers, pit-sawyers, potters, tanners,

cobblers, blacksmiths, pruners, wheelwrights, dyers, weavers and mat makers, as well as agricultural implements, furniture and folk costumes. Consideration is being given to ways of establishing museum units, in particular through bringing back into operation saltworks that have not been used for some years.

In addition to these activities of collection and research, the Ethnological Museum of Monte Redondo organizes temporary exhibitions and publishes, under the direction of Armindo de Santos, the periodical *Meridies*, which serves as a link between the museum and universities and research centres, both national and international.

Alcochete Ecomuseum

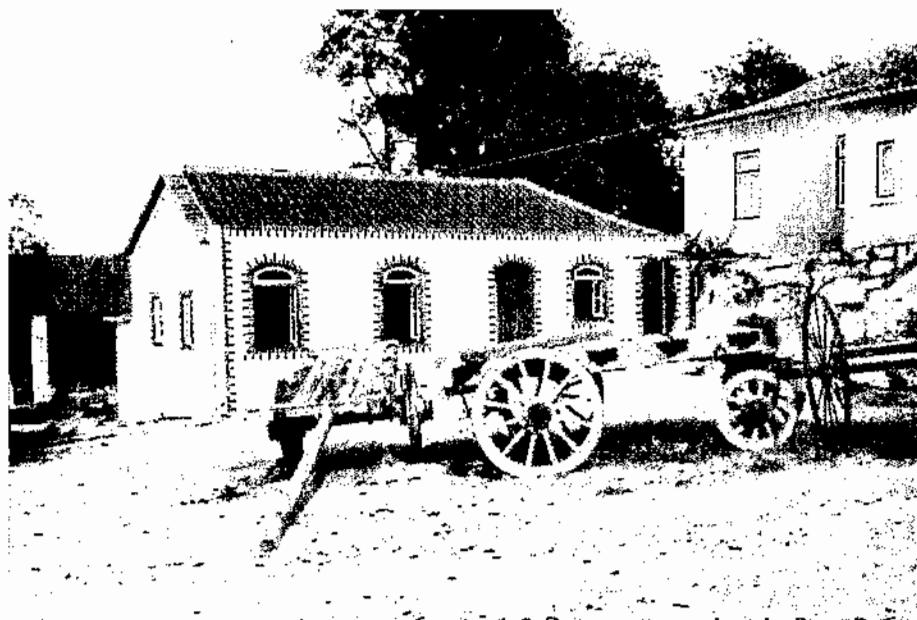
In Alcochete, on the south bank of the Tagus estuary, the organization of an ecomuseum has already reached an advanced stage. The municipality has taken the necessary steps to enable it to open, by fitting out premises for the central section and the museum units distributed through the area and by providing aid for research, particularly in the fields of archaeology, ethnology and history. All this work of seeking out and collecting objects that are representative of life in the municipality has been accomplished with the active collaboration of the inhabitants. The people's local representatives have taken a keen interest in establishing the museum and have made an effort to promote teamwork. Specialists—outside museologists, architects, engineers, ethnologists and archaeologists—have given freely of their services in helping to do all the

research work, draw up the museum's programmes, prepare projects, organize symposia and establish contacts between the population and the municipal and parish councillors.

The museum's central section will be devoted to the simultaneous evolution of the people and the territory of the municipality. Other units deal with those economic activities that, in the course of history, have been most prevalent in the region, such as the working of the salt marshes, agriculture, shipbuilding and river transport. The saltworks unit will consist of an old saltworks that continues, alongside other, modernized saltworks, to function with traditional equipment—the outbuildings, implements, pump, machines, etc. The rural unit is to be housed in an old farm possessing the locally used means of water supply in the form of a *noria*, a well and a tank. There will be a display of farming implements, collected by Jacome Ratton, which illustrate rural life and technological change in farms ranging in size from the smallholding to the large landed estate in the municipality of Alcochete. Other museum units are to be established in the area in order to preserve *in situ* the most significant material vestiges of local history: bread ovens, lime-kilns, potters' kilns, windmills, and so on.

Museum visits will include visits to the Reserve of the Tagus estuary, partly included in the local administrative area, and the old city centre. During the preparatory phase, study tours, symposia and exhibitions were organized for the

4. Museu Etnológico de Monte Redondo, *Meridies*, No. 1, Monte Redondo, 1984.



31
ECOMUSEU RURAL E DO VINHO DO
CONCELHO DO CARTAXO. The central
building of the museum.

local inhabitants, especially for school-children.

Other initiatives

In Portimão, a city in southern Portugal, a commission has been set up to organize the municipal museum. For some time it has concerned itself with inventorying, collecting, preserving and studying the cultural heritage, particularly the industrial heritage. There are fish canneries, only recently closed, which are essential to any study of the contemporary history of Portugal and which form an integral part of the historical landscape of Portimão, as do the neighbouring shipyards. The work under way has led to the salvaging of old machines, lithographic presses and other printing equipment to be reused for educational and cultural purposes.

The museum's activities will be conducted throughout the municipality, especially in the Arade River basin, where urgent measures need to be taken against pollution of the water, gradual deterioration of the banks and silting of the riverbed.

The immediate aims of the Municipal Museum of Portimão are to find solutions to the problems of deepest concern to the local population, namely the pollution and silting of the Arade River and the destruction and abandonment of the nautical and industrial heritage. This is an integral part of the traditional setting and represents for the community a source of economic wealth conducive to the development of industrial activities, fishing, working of the salt marshes and river tourism.

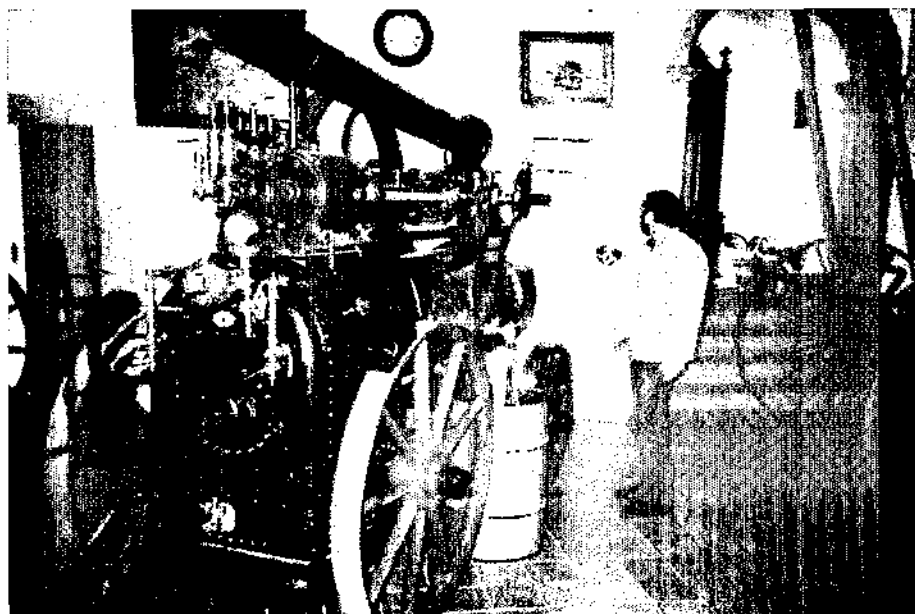
At the beginning of the present decade, the municipality of Cartaxo took the first steps towards establishing a local museum: it purchased an old farm, Quinta das Pratas, converted it to house the museum facilities and exhibition rooms and acquired a varied collection put together by the farmer and stockbreeder Duarte de Oliveira. The exhibits, although numerous and valuable, did not adequately illustrate the predominant agricultural activity, wine-growing. This gap was filled thanks to the collaboration of the local population, who, understanding the purpose and value of the museum, donated objects relating to the various stages of wine production. In 1984, the Cartaxo municipal council organized meetings between farmers, councillors and specialists to discuss what type of museum would convey the truest image of local life and best respond to the real concerns of the people. In the same year, an exhibition was organized to give the public an opportunity to see what kind of museum was being planned for Cartaxo and to discover and appreciate the local heritage. The Rural and Wine-growing Ecomuseum of the Municipality of Cartaxo consists of a central unit housed in the Quinta das Pratas and offers several itineraries for visitors to discover the dwellings and scenery typical of Ribatejo, along with past and present activities in the region and local resources. The museum will place at the disposal of local inhabitants and visitors alike the means of discovering a rural culture that has maintained its vital character in this area where, since the birth of the Portuguese nation, wine-growing has been the

leading economic activity. Plans for the museum include units that will be used simultaneously as study and research centres. The itineraries envisaged will eventually result in a Wine Route which will combine tourism proper with an introduction to the economic life of the region. The aim of the ecomuseum is to make a useful contribution to the development of the region by encouraging people to make better use of local natural and human resources.

Five years ago a novel experiment in archaeology and museology was launched in Mértola. There, too, from the outset, councillors, specialists and local people joined forces to protect, study and make known their cultural heritage. Dr Cláudio Torres, in charge of the archaeological aspects, has said of the work in progress:

Archaeology here is seen as a means of access to a body of knowledge arising from the aggregate of both the near and the distant past. This aggregate is the foundation of the community's collective memory and of a heritage that is its inalienable birthright. Our task was to recover and give permanent form to that memory, its structures and everyday physical expressions, combining the essentially didactic with the socially and economically profitable.

The Mértola Museum consists of various sections scattered throughout the city, which are 'the result of a cultural survey and active involvement in the social life of the region'. The Museum of Sacred Art, established in the old church



of the Misericórdia and its sacristy, where a large number of iconographic materials and religious objects are on display, also restores and treats exhibits; the Blacksmith's Shop, located in the old quarter of the city, fits perfectly into the museological itinerary and bears witness to a craft that played an important role in the life of the community; the Historical Archives, meanwhile, have been collected together and catalogued so that they meet the needs of research.

Research has been given special prominence by the Mértola Museum, especially archaeological research. This has led the way to the establishment of new units: a centre on the art and history of the Islamic period, which will be housed in a handsome seventeenth-century building currently being restored; a Roman history unit (site museum) in the basement of the Town Hall, which has been restored so as to set off the pavements and foundations of a fourth-century urban building; a palaeo-Christian unit (site museum) among the ruins of a basilica dating from the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, considered to be the most important palaeo-Christian epigraphic centre in the country; and the castle, an imposing fourteenth-century architectural structure, where a collection of stone sculptures at present scattered throughout the city will be exhibited in the open air. The Craft Centre will house the growing ethnographic collection and a workshop training centre for the manufacture and sale of woollen blankets, which are still produced in the region.

In the old city of Noudar, five kilo-

metres from Barrancos, the municipality has given its support to an initiative so far unique in Portugal, in the form of a project for the restoration of buildings using traditional building techniques and local manpower. This operation is rescuing traditional techniques from oblivion while at the same time creating new jobs. In the words of Dr Cláudio Torres, 'The aim of our project, over and above our concern to find buried vestiges and evidence of a time lost to memory, is to discover the still-living sources of oral culture and to learn and rehabilitate the manual skills of craftsmen and their time-tested techniques.'

The year 1980 saw the opening in Benavente of the Dr António Cabral Ferreira Lourenço Museum, a donation by Joaquim Parracho and gifts from the general public. The extremely varied collections convey a general picture of the economic, cultural and social life of the inhabitants of the municipality of Benavente and include craftworkers' tools and handiwork, agricultural implements, domestic articles, regional costumes and embroidery, a small number of local archaeological finds, old photographs and postcards, newspapers, journals and books.

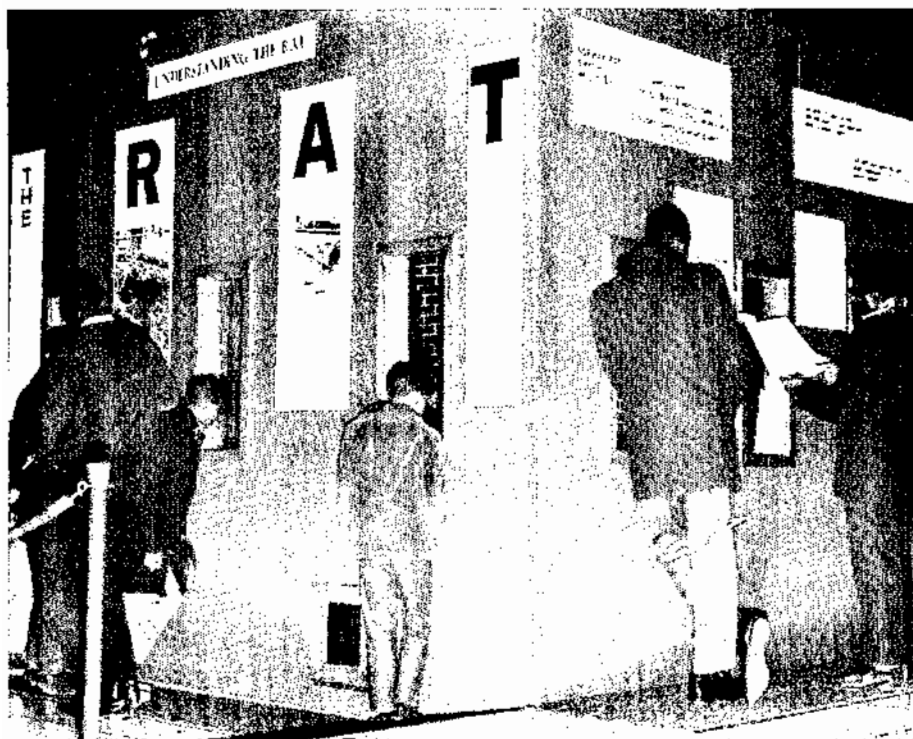
The Benavente Museum's activities include an inventory programme, the organization of temporary exhibitions and school visits, archaeological prospecting and the location of sites, particularly from the Roman period. Two workshops are currently being prepared and equipped. Under the supervision of instructors, they will enable young people to improve their theoretical and practical

knowledge of various activities such as pottery, painting, basketwork, carpentry, weaving and the manufacture of rope and stockings (two traditional local activities). Plans are being made to establish several units, which again is evidence of local interest in the life of the museum, for example a water-mill, a windmill, a farrier's and a saddler's shop (traditional trades that are still flourishing), the Pancas saltworks (a joint project with the municipality of Alcochete), river boats and fishing.

These local museums, whether or not they are called ecomuseums, are evidence of a new, active approach to museology in Portugal, closely bound up with the life of the people. Other examples that could be cited are the Fermentões Museum, in the north, the Escalhão Museum, in the Guarda district, the Carregueiros Museum, in the central part of the country, the Estremoz Museum, the Municipal Museum of Vouzela, the Museum of Penich and many other grass-roots initiatives that have taken shape in recent years throughout the country.

The Second International Workshop on 'New Directions in Museology', centred on local museums, to be held in Portugal in 1985, will thus tie in with a museological movement that displays a variety of innovative features, deserving of study and reflection, and which will certainly make a highly significant contribution to the life of the international community.

[Translated from Portuguese]



33
Understanding the rat was of primary concern to the visitors who viewed *The Rat: Man's Invited Affliction* exhibition at the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum.

34
John R. Kinard addressing Anacostia's historical society. The *Anna J. Cooper: A Voice From the South* exhibition is seen in the background. Anna J. Cooper was a former American slave, who earned a Ph.D. degree from the Sorbonne.



The neighbourhood museum as a catalyst for social change

I had a vision of... a branch museum in a small neighborhood that needed the infusion of form, of design, or varied color patterns and shapes, to inspire its young... We have miles to go and little enough time. The road is still rough and the future unclear, but... we have made a start.¹

When four young, black college students staged a sit-in at a Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, on 1 February 1960, this now historical event signalled the beginning of change in the strategy and momentum of the civil rights struggle in the United States. Old ways and the older leadership were challenged by new, younger voices—voices that heard and marched to a different drummer. No longer would revered American institutions conduct business as usual. While some violently resisted the much needed and sought after changes, masses of people became involved with greater force than at any time since the Great Depression of the 1930s, when people effectively brought about changes in the nation's policies

and institutions—including museums.

Lewis Mumford, the American social critic, philosopher and historian, whose many books explored the relations between modern man and his environment, wrote in *The Culture of Cities*: 'Layer upon layer, past times preserve themselves in the city until life itself is finally threatened with suffocation; then, in sheer defense, modern man invents the museum'. No doubt Mumford felt that museums were buildings with places for the entombment of the relics of the dead above ground, and with no vital role to play in the present or future life of the communities in which they were or might become located. But according to Harris (1978), the success of museums as defined by their founders 'depended upon their effectiveness in reaching a large lay audience, capturing its attention, increasing its knowledge, and shaping its sense of possibility'. And he concludes that museums do have the ability 'to influence a heterogeneous clientele that

John R. Kinard

Born in Washington, D.C., 1936. Graduated from Livingstone College and Hood Theological Seminary (Salisbury, North Carolina) in 1960 and 1963 respectively. Through 'Operation Crossroads Africa' in 1962 he began to establish close ties with African governmental and private agencies. Widely travelled on the African continent, in Europe and the Caribbean, he has been a frequent lecturer and visitor to many national and international museums. A community activist, he has been director since 1967 of the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum.

1. S. Dillon Ripley to John R. Kinard, 22 May 1972.



35
Involvement in the agricultural cycle: boys in one of the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum's science projects harvest crops in a garden adjacent to the museum.

has few aesthetic assumptions or pretensions'.

At an earlier time museums were charged with paying too little attention to the social and cultural needs of the general public. Low (1942) argued against museums giving services only to a privileged audience and vigorously advocated the development of popular education in addition to the traditional museum functions of acquisition, preservation and scholarly study. Thought to be a radical, Low felt that popular education should be extended to the educated middle class. While today that does not seem to be a revolutionary idea, Low was influenced by the visionary John Cotton Dana (1856-1929), who, at the turn of the century, made the Newark (New Jersey) Public Library famous by extending its services to everyone and making the Newark Museum a source of community pride. But not even Low could have foreseen the dramatic and now historical events that would take place in the 1960s, that would radically change his concept of the museum as a social instrument. For who could have predicted the Montgomery (Alabama) Bus Boycott, the March on Selma (Alabama), the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, the influx of blacks and Latinos to urban centres, the physical and spiritual decadence of the inner cities, the rapid growth of white suburban communities, the rise of revolutionary student activity against the Viet Nam war on American college campuses, and a growing counter-culture movement against the establishment, affecting all cultural institutions, including museums.

36

Young visitors to the *Black Women: Achievements Against the Odds* exhibition try out their own reading skills.

Elements in the manifesto

Reaching beyond the conventional concept of a storage place and research centre, the museum of the 1960s became an institution with unlimited chances for growth and responsibility—opportunities that go beyond collecting, studying, conserving and exhibiting its treasures. For in the 1960s, the American museum profession, with some prodding from their non-traditional museum counterparts, became concerned with the idea of museums as instruments for social change. The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum has been described by Gerlein and Lewis (1980) as 'the most enduring and in some ways the revolutionary result of that professional preoccupation'.

Ideas are ever changing. So the idea of the museum as a vehicle for public service evolves constantly in the search for new avenues and opportunities. In 1969, a three-day conference on the role of the museum in the community was held at MUSE, the Bedford Lincoln Neighborhood Museum in Brooklyn, New York. Representatives from the more established and renowned museums met with directors and staff of neighbourhood museums and arts centres from around the country to engage in meaningful dialogue. Among the first of its kind, this conference explored the problem of the lack of contact between museums and the communities around them, for after whites had fled from downtown neighbourhoods following the civil disorders of 1968, many museums found themselves surrounded by divergent groups and discordant sounds. Apart



from the scheduled agenda, the problems of cultural identity, the crisis of the cities, and the need of the United States to reassess and reassert its priorities were among the concerns that the invited conferees addressed. Many of us were trying to design and develop neighbourhood museums and cultural centres to satisfy the broader needs of our culturally impoverished communities.

While I do not deny the value or necessity of collecting and exhibiting evidences of our material culture, I stand with those who also believe that museums must be willing to become instigators of new cultural and social trends. The museum must serve its total community. Just as archaeology concerns itself with the evidence of the past, so must the museum concern itself with artefacts, documents and oral history, which provide a better understanding of the present and can foster a stronger sense of community history and identity. Together, archaeological research and museum programmes can be valuable in the effort to revitalize urban communities and to encourage the restoration of a sense of place among their residents.

The destiny of the museum is the destiny of the community; their relationship is both symbiotic and catalytic. As it reaches out to the community, the museum is enlivened and explores new ways and means of exhibiting the local heritage and of promoting local issues, thus serving as a catalyst for change. Mine, of course, is a maximalist view. There are still museum professionals who feel that big cities with their present surplus of social and economic problems are beyond the realm of their interest or responsibility. Fearing that involvement in urban problems will somehow lead to a reduction of their affluent patronage and aesthetic standards, without helping to solve a single urban problem, many museum directors have simply tried to keep the problems at bay, while hoping that others will quickly solve them. But as Grove (1968) has so wisely stated:

Museum men too rarely encourage dissent or arrange occasions for the open exchange of views about bothersome issues. They say 'don't rock the boat', forgetting that one of the characteristics of a *moving* boat is that it rocks occasionally (*italics added*).

Emily Dennis Harvey (1969), acting director of The Brooklyn Children's Museum in 1967-69, who conceived of

MUSE, wrote in the proceedings of the 1969 Brooklyn Seminar:

It is clear that what is needed before any inner-city museum can be successful is an entirely new way of thinking about museums and the public they serve. For the role of these new neighborhood institutions will fall into place only when there is a new definition of the museum and its functions in our society. But that new definition cannot be imposed on either the museum administration or the community before *fundamental social problems have been understood and grappled with* (*italics added*).

Over the din of sometime harsh and angry voices, difficult questions were asked and bothersome issues were raised, but the boat was moving. Now responsible museum professionals were being forced to view their institutions through the other side of the looking-glass, and, as Grove (1968) has noted, to 're-examine some of their cherished clichés and to chart new courses'. It was at just such a conference in Aspen, Colorado (1966), that the then Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, S. Dillon Ripley, began to consider ways that the Smithsonian might 'establish and operate an experimental Neighborhood Museum in ... a low-income neighborhood in Washington, D.C.'.

The genesis of a neighbourhood museum

The plan to develop a neighbourhood museum was widely publicized, reflecting the Smithsonian's conviction that museums generally have failed to reach the audience that Dr Ripley has described as 'the huge untapped public that has never entered a museum nor enjoyed any of the educational and aesthetic values that museums reflect'. According to Marsh (1968), the community of Anacostia was chosen as the site for the country's first experimental neighbourhood museum because of the enthusiastic interest of the Greater Anacostia Peoples, Inc. (GAP), an aggressive broad-based community group that offered an excellent chance for the Smithsonian to reach beyond its Mall facilities to an aspiring inner-city neighbourhood and in partnership create a small regional or territorial museum similar to those decentralized cultural facilities known as ecomuseums in Canada and France.

All eyes suddenly focused on a new experimental branch of the Smithsonian Institution and on Anacostia—a low-income community of 100,000 residents nestled in the hills and dales of the far south-east corner of Washington. On 15 September 1967, a converted cinema reopened its doors to the community as the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum. Illuminated by floodlights (an evening opening ceremony made it possible for a crowd of 4,000 to attend), a festival-like atmosphere permeated the air as a neighbourhood drum and bugle corps performed to the delight of the audience and a jazz band played in a once vacant lot adjacent to the museum building, now transformed into a small garden. On the podium, Smithsonian and city officials joined neighbourhood leaders, clergymen, a police captain and young people, who in immeasurable ways had helped to make this day possible. In less than a year this museum, produced with the technical skills of the Smithsonian and the combined efforts of the community, was being heralded as a national role model. *Time* magazine (of 21 June 1968) described it as 'the most successful in this field' of 'opening eyes in the ghetto'.

Neither time nor space permits me to give a detailed account of our first, innovative programmes and frequently changing exhibits. One of these particularly attracted and held the public's attention. Our first experiment with an ecological problem in an urban setting, *The Rat: Man's Invited Affliction*, an exhibition mounted in 1969, evoked widespread interest and sometimes controversial comment. But for many visitors and observers alike this exhibit of live rats in a safe and controlled environment was the cornerstone of our success. It not only raised our level of awareness about a social and environmental problem that afflicted many of our neighbours, but also offered valuable information and a solution to the problem of rodent control. And according to Getlein and Lewis (1980), the Anacostia Museum 'made its devastating impact on Washington consciousness with *The Rat*... not a political biography but a scientific, sociological, medical guide to a permanent feature of life in Anacostia'. They concluded by noting that

Since then, exhibitions have explored the community's history, African themes, the social situations of blacks and particularly woman... There is no

permanent collection, but the special exhibitions are always stimulating, even when they focus on appalling reality.²

As Ripley (1969) observed, it was late in their history before museums finally became accessible to the mass of the population, and before people were considered civilized enough to be able to appreciate the cultural offerings of museums. It is interesting to note the role of the church museums in paving the way for the use of museums by the general public, when they opened up their treasure houses to the community on special feast days, holy days and other noted events. I feel certain, however, that former museum administrators must have made this somewhat exclusive admissions policy in the spirit of *ex aequo et bono* (according to what is fair and good). The age of democratic thought and egalitarianism would follow much later.

Involvement

Now far removed from the temple of the Muses, where the nine sister goddesses, the daughters of Mnemosyne (Memory), leisurely presided over song, poetry, the arts and the sciences, today's museums have reached a crucial point in their development. The institution will not change, however, as long as it is not intimately involved with people. Sometimes I think that museum personnel see the public as a necessary encumbrance. They must come to see us; we never need to reach out to them. They are like country cousins who make an annual pilgrimage to visit us, their city relatives, who tolerate their presence, dispassionately listen to their stories and experiences, and are glad when they depart and leave us to our more important work. Even when some of us do welcome the public with open arms, we do not interact enough with them. We do not cultivate a sense of mutual respect, a mutual sharing of ideas, for, believing their ideas to be pedestrian and unimaginative, we shun interaction and lose the opportunity for a rewarding cultural exchange.

Much of the spiritual suffering of our contemporaries can be healed through interpersonal relationships. People have a driving desire to know more about themselves, their history, and their environment, as well as of others who inhabit distant lands and whose cultures and life-styles are so very different from their own. They hunger and thirst for

knowledge upon which to build a better society today, but are shown relics of the past that, lacking a meaningful interpretation, seem not to connect with their heritage, their more pressing concerns of the moment or their hopes and dreams of the future.

In this regard you frequently hear some of our museum officials say, 'Well, that is social work or church work and therefore not the responsibility of a museum'. Are they correct? When one considers that museums, like other great institutions that educate the public, are also influenced by external stimuli and changes in society, then they have both the responsibility and the opportunity to enhance the way that we perceive ourselves, the manner in which we interact socially and culturally. They can inspire and bring into focus our dreams and hopes for a better future.

We are on the threshold of a new century, a century that will demand vigorous and decisive action. If museums are to survive and address new cultural values, then the involvement of people is needed. For, as Ripley (1969) has stated, 'The urban problem is upon us and beats on our ears or flashes out of the newsprint, or snarls at us from shattered shopfronts every day'. The choice is ours to make. Either we can recoil from the challenge and retreat into our prestigious ivory towers, or be willing to take hold of the moment and take the bold and creative steps needed to meet our public on their own terms, in their own neighbourhoods (or territorial regions), and offer them the full range of learning opportunities that are made possible through a wise use of our energies and fiscal resources.

I believe that research into contemporary issues, when put into an historical perspective, can give people a better understanding of the significance of their own lives, serve as guidance for the future and provide information that they can readily understand and use.

Frequently we know more about our existence as organic beings than we know about who we are and how we fit into our social milieu. Far too many people, who have been economically and politically victimized and robbed of cultural integrity, see the world in microcosm. Thus we do not see our true self-worth and connection to a much larger world. Museums can provide not only scientific anthropological information, but, through

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALEXANDER, Edward P. 1979. *Museums in Motion*. Nashville, American Association for State and Local History.
- AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS. 1972. *Museums: Their New Audience*. Washington, D.C., American Association of Museums.
- FELLOWS, Balcha G. (ed.) n.d. *The Making of a Museum*. Washington, D.C., Anacostia Neighborhood Museum. 29 pp.
- GETTLEIN, Frank; LEWIS, Jo Ann, 1980. *The Washington D.C. Art Review—The Art Explorer's Guide to Washington*. New York, The Vanguard Press.
- GROVE, Richard, 1968. Problems in Museum Education. In: Eric Larrabee, (ed.), *Museums and Education*. Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press. 253 pp.
- HARRIS, Neil. 1978. Museums, Merchandising, and Popular Taste... In: Ian M. G. Quimby, (ed.), *Material Culture and the Study of American Life*. New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- HARVEY, Emily Dennis. 1969. In: Proceedings of the 1969 Brooklyn Seminar, *A Museum for the People*. New York, Bedford Lincoln Neighborhood Museum.
- LOW, Theodore L. 1942. *The Museum as a Social Instrument*. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. 71 pp.
- MARSH, Caryl. 1968. A Neighborhood Museum That Works. *Museum News*, October. (Reprint.)
- RIPLEY, Sidney Dillon. 1969. *The Sacred Grove, Essays on Museums*. New York, Simon & Schuster. 159 pp., postlude, notes.
- SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. 1966. A Proposal to Establish an Experimental Neighborhood Museum. 7 pp. (No publishing data.)
- SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. 1972. *Anacostia Neighborhood Museum 5th Anniversary*. Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press. 54 pp.
- STEVENSON, Sheila. 1982. The Territory as Museum: New Museum Directions in Quebec. *Curator* (New York City), Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 5-16.

2. See John R. Kinard's article on the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in *Museum*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, 1972, pp. 102-9.

ethnolinguistics, can help us to see the relations between language and culture. Ethnologists can provide valuable insights concerning the life-styles of different peoples—how they are trained to live in their society, how they choose their mates, marry, make a living, and organize their relations with their fellow men. Such knowledge will help us to understand better the universality of the world and people's connection to it.

Many museum administrators place a very high premium on their professional and academic training, and pride themselves on competently performing their work; still, they seem to lack a sense of purpose. It is the not 'knowing why' (the motivating influences) that can make all the difference. Perhaps the missing element is the desire to take knowledge to those who need it most: the village in the African hinterland, or, even

closer to home, to some rundown parts of the cities where urban problems have walled in the people.

Involvement is most needed if museums of the future are to be valid. They must be of use, they must communicate with the people who have the greatest need for them. A grain of seed may be dropped into fertile soil to sprout another day, sending a youth who is interested in something off to a library or college. As Ripley (1969) observes, 'branch museums near schools in poverty areas could do much to increase those quotients of the standard of living not yet contemplated by the (urban) planners'.

Ripley also raised a question in his essays that is closely connected to the point that I wish to make here.

In a time of crisis, when the urban poor and the urban failures in management

confound us, when the face of America is being smothered by heaps and ribbons of cement, and a pall of smoke hangs over it all, must art (and history) consist of enigmatic nothingness or 'thingness'? (Ripley, 1969).

Ecomuseums answer some of the questions

The answer to Ripley's question may be found in the new ecomuseum idea of the late 1970s and the 1980s.

In 1979 Pierre Mayrand, director of the Haute-Beauce Museum and Regional Interpretation Centre, introduced the concept but not the name to the residents of his community, Haute-Beauce, a remote rural Appalachian plateau in Canada. He spoke to the people about the possibility of their developing a museum and interpretation centre that would also offer

Anacostia's history and prehistory



37

Involving the elderly: senior citizens enjoy a poetry reading.

The prehistory of the Anacostia community is known from collections in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History. Artefacts from the nineteenth century and occasional research in the twentieth century (in the 1930s and later) reveal that the Nacochtanke—the indigenous Indian population—sparsely inhabited the region in the seventeenth century. These people were hunters and gatherers, moving from camp site to camp site with the changing seasons. Known as a trading village (an Indian word, *Anaquash(a)-tan(i)k*, means a town of traders), its men also fished in the bountiful Anacostia River (the eastern branch of the majestic Potomac), and later settled into permanent villages along the floodplains. The English adventurer John Smith visited it in June 1608 and later documented the presence of these sedentary, semi-agricultural people in *The General Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles* (1624). *The Anacostia Story: 1608-1930* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977) researched and written by the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum's historian, Louise Daniel Hutchinson, goes on to describe how the Nacochtanke were gradually driven off their land. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Anacostia became an area of plantations, farms, forests and hamlets populated by English gentry, small farmers, German sharecroppers, African slaves and a developing community of free blacks. After the Civil War, enterprising blacks and whites developed Anacostia into an important community. Acknowledging the history of these often forgotten people and connecting the past with the present is but one example of the kind of creative and collaborative venture in which developing institutions like the Anacostia Museum and the more established and venerable institutions can engage. Indeed Hutchinson's book has been cited by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as the major historical publication on the area.

them cultural services. For in this remote and virtually isolated area there were for the most part no cultural facilities. To make the idea work the people themselves, through their collective memories, would have to establish the importance of their past: their identity and heritage. Then, through their museum, they could concentrate on the present and the future. In an effort to demystify museums, Mayrand encouraged the residents to define collectively the value of their history.

In October 1979, Mayrand presented the idea of the ecomuseum in a document entitled *Building Our Museum Together*, in which he identified the basic principles of his concept: conservation, co-operation and representation. The next year, in a former parish rectory, he opened the Haute-Beauce Museum. The five major functions of this museum can be adopted by other museums that wish to encourage service for and dialogue with the communities they serve. They are: to acquire and present objects that recall local traditions, industries and conditions; to use modern museum techniques to teach visitors about the region and the people (e.g. temporary or travelling exhibits, strategically placed information booths or kiosks offering a succession of changing information and community scenes); to mount exhibitions designed to heighten the sense of self-worth and dignity of the entire population and also help to promote the historical, social and economic life of the region; to develop museum-oriented school programmes; and to provide meeting space for programmes and events that the community wants and needs, that give life to the museum, or that contribute to the definition and dissemination of the social, cultural and economic realities of the region. Sheila Stevenson, an ecomuseum enthusiast from the Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, found that 'the most highly valued element of this sort of museum is the interaction of people'.

In the same article she defined the ecomuseum as a 'territory museum'. She went on to point out that the territory or region itself 'replaces the traditional building; the collective heritage is the collection; the population is the public' (Stevenson, 1982).

Advocates of the ecomuseum idea propose to expand even further the participatory process begun some twenty years ago with the first discussions about the wisdom of breathing life into the community/neighbourhood museum concept. And just as new visions in the 1960s gave rise to the neighbourhood museum movement, in the 1980s the ecomuseum is an idea for a social and territorial integration of the museum. Offering new and vital challenges for today's museums as well as those of the future, this idea of regional or territorial museums devoted to all aspects (natural, historical and artistic) of a region or district need not disquiet us, nor should it be seen as a whip to lash out at the more traditional museum. Rather, if given a chance to develop and succeed, it can enliven our creative spirit and, perhaps, be forged into an important link in the chain of ideas that will assure the continuity of culture and the permanent creation of new cultural habits.

Further, as I understand it, the ecomuseum is a concept that seeks to include and embrace all museums. It is one that, if implemented, has the potential for nurturing beneficial collaborative and co-operative enterprises. For if we have the desire and determination to use our neighbourhoods and communities creatively as learning laboratories and employ the best talents available, we can design and engage in joint projects that will pioneer new research into modern-day issues. Using the skills and techniques similar to those of field archaeologists, who are excited by the discovery of material evidence of past civilizations, we can begin to explore new ways of using our academic training and life experiences to learn more about our

contemporary and very complex society.

A museum can be a window that opens on the world. And while it cannot solve many immediate world problems, as an institution it can reach just beyond its walls and begin to work to improve the quality of life for the people within its reach, especially those in urban areas. Uncertain of our destiny, we must come together in harmony and in friendship to develop blueprints for the future that will articulate obtainable goals. For, as Marsh (1968) has written, 'if we are to preserve our human heritage, we had better make it easier for all people to perceive that they are human beings, related to all other human beings'. And in so doing 'we are seeking to restore the museum to its proper role, as a place to stretch the mind and refresh the spirit, accessible to all'. No longer can we deny the heritage and humanity of the many in our culturally diverse communities who often come to our institutions only to leave them feeling once again empty and alien. As expressed by my colleague Zora Martin-Felton, their plaintive voices tell us

I have looked about and have seen
no one who looks like me.

I have listened and not heard my name
called.

Twenty-five years ago no one would have suggested this role for a museum. But museums have grown and matured in such a way that they can now see themselves as a part of the total landscape of urban and rural communities. More sensitive and responsive to the needs of an open and pluralistic society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in the development of their traditional culture, let the dialogue between museum and their communities continue. Let the museum, as a catalyst for social change, take its deserved place in the annals of human history as one of the most enlightened institutions conceived by the mind of man.

The Barquisimeto Museum: invent or drift

Milagro Gomez de Blavia

Born in 1946 in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. Degree in law, 'Andrés Bello' Catholic University, Caracas, 1967. Joined the staff of the Foundation for the Development of the West Central Region (FUDECO) and later the Central Office for Planning and Coordination (CORDIPLAN). Member of the team responsible for the organization and establishment of the Lara Foundation for Culture and of the Regional Board for the Protection and Preservation of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage since 1981. Appointed director of the Barquisimeto Museum in 1982. Co-ordinator of Museums for the Venezuelan Government until 1984 and consultant to various institutions.

To discuss the Barquisimeto Museum as a successful example of the new options in regional museology requires us to stand back from its daily activities, at this early stage of its existence, in order to label or assess it and try to understand and, what is even more difficult, to explain the reasons for its success.

The presumptuous use of the term 'successful' is justifiable once it is realized how difficult and unusual it is in a short time to make a community feel the need for and secure easy access to a museum, and assign to the latter a leading role in that community's endeavours. Two years of work have produced a solid institution, focused on the regional heritage, which is both a centre of intense cultural activity and a reflection of the community's problems.

The secret of our success was to design and establish the institution for a specific reality, without applying models conceived and set up for other situations. The alternative of 'inventing or drifting' was adopted instead, with its attendant risks.¹ With the guidance of this maxim, a type of museum was planned which would generate its own theory, its own methods and its own techniques.

This spirit of 'invent or drift', supplemented by assessment and correction, has been a constant feature in designing the museum, the sole but immense restriction being to combine effectively the basic characteristics of any museum with our particular requirements.

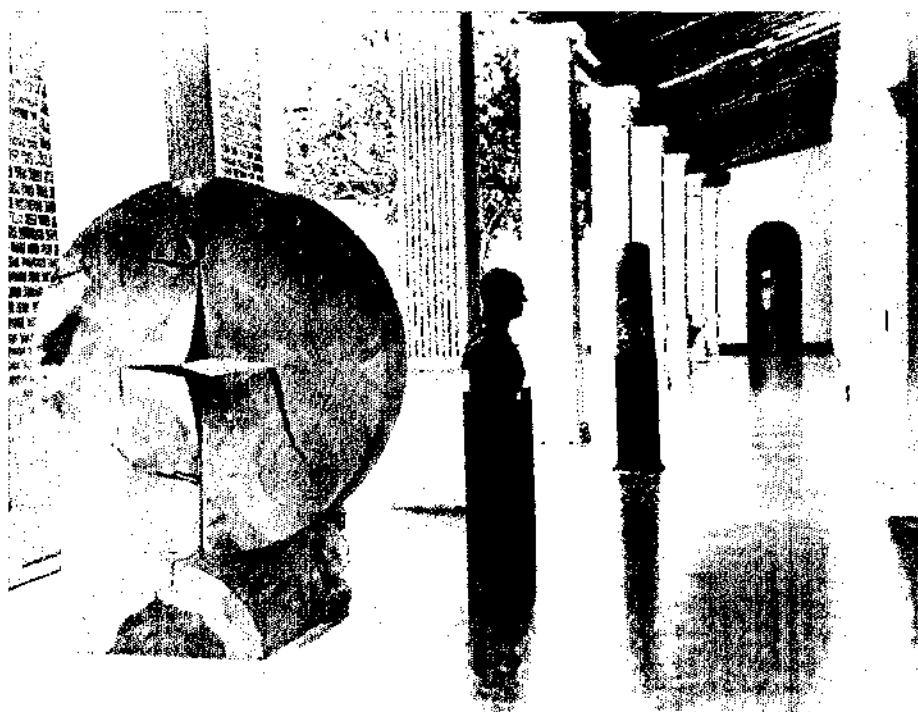
Responding to a real situation

There is one striking feature in the entire process of creating, organizing and developing the activities of the museum: its close links with the needs, potential and options of a particular community, a particular area, with a specific population, namely Barquisimeto and its zone of influence.²

1. Simón Rodríguez, the tutor of Simón Bolívar, the Liberator, pointed out that the choice facing Latin America in its endeavour to find its identity and flourish was to 'invent or drift'. This maxim embodies the spirit which guides the management of the Barquisimeto Museum.

2. Barquisimeto is here viewed not as an isolated city within fixed boundaries, but as a centre generating and receiving activities that are closely linked with neighbouring zones which it influences and from which it cannot be isolated.

38
MUSEO DE BARQUISIMETO. Panoramic view of the magnificent early twentieth-century building, which is within the historical city limits.



39
Barquisimeto Museum sculpture collection.

From the beginning, it was noted that:

Barquisimeto and the whole west central region is the seat of a specific culture with particular characteristics and features that should be preserved within a set of traits and expressions which give it permanent identity; in order to achieve an adequate reflection of our image as a people it is essential to create a suitable institution incorporating the various aspects of our culture.³

The third largest city in Venezuela, with a population near one million, Barquisimeto is the centre of a distinctive culture, including a history extending from the pre-Colombian period to the present. It has gone through violent change as it has expanded from a 'provincial' society to a full-blown city, taking on urban characteristics while facing the risks and problems which accompany 'progress'.⁴ A place had to be found for tradition in order to keep the collective memory from being dispersed and erased. It was necessary to encourage convergence in common aims which would promote the integration of the people.

The government authorities took the first step by issuing the decree establishing the museum. The municipal authorities of Barquisimeto participated in the initiative, designating for it a building constructed in 1917 as a hospital with donations from the community. This now provides the museum with a beautiful architectural setting.

That marked the beginning of a period of intense reflection, with the participation of specialists as well as representatives of the community and the city authorities, aimed at planning the museum's profile on the basis of current museological theory. We aimed at creating a museum which would be open, participatory, essentially educational and living, based on the principles applied by both the ecomuseum and the 'integral museum'. Thus we proposed a museum which would:

provide the community which had created it with a means of recognizing, finding and relating to itself through local, national and universal culture; thoroughly study the cultural elements constituting our existence and roots, starting from the present so as to reconstruct the past and make projections into the future, enriching itself with material taken from history and daily life—not only physical and spiritual vestiges of the past but also personal experiences, oral traditions, music, dance, popular art and all the creative manifestations of the present; endeavour to preserve and disseminate the cultural heritage of the Lara region and actively satisfy the informational and recreational needs of the people of Barquisimeto;

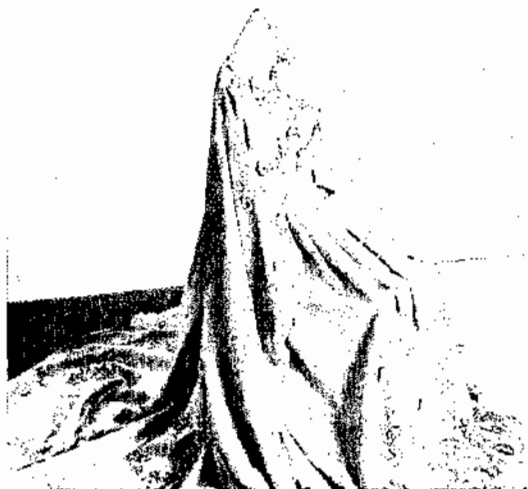
3. From the decree establishing the West Central Regional Museum, Barquisimeto, Venezuela, 1977.

4. See Naim Piñango, *Caso Venezuela: Una ilusión de armonía*, Caracas, Ediciones Cendes, 1984.



40

Robes of the Virgin, patroness of the city, in *The Visitation, the Blessed Virgin in Barquisimeto* exhibition. Santa Rosa Parish Collection.



41

Popular festivals also have a place in the museum.

be a protagonist in the cultural development process of the country and promote the cultural dimension of overall development;

provide a close linkage between the natural fields and produce a comprehensive synthesis of the community's socio-cultural matrix;

lastly, retain the fundamental features of the 'museum' as an institution but vary the content of its activities in accordance with the needs of the community: identification, comparison, integration, enhancement, knowledge and generation of awareness.

All these considerations and postulates were brought together in a proposal prepared by a pluridisciplinary team and submitted to the city authorities, the

Friends of the Museum association and various representatives of the community. It was given massive distribution by a local daily newspaper in the form of a supplement containing the definition, justification and main lines of the project. This proposal was approved in all respects by the project authorities and forms the basis for the museum's activities.

The results reflect the importance of the project for the museum/community relationship, characterized as it is by the emphasis, reflection and recording of experience that enrich and guide its progress. It is not closed and finalized but rather a project for participation and constant dialogue, not only in keeping with the most up-to-date museological

42

Folk art in the museum's displays.



concepts but also attuned to the social and historical situation of an open, living and participating city.

Current state of the initial idea

Another set of tasks involving difficulties, obstacles and limitations had to be faced: how to put into practice those obviously complex specifications? The future of the institution would depend to a great extent on whether it was managed in a technically competent and responsible way.

A number of difficulties confronted the project: museum organization was not being planned in parallel with the restoration of the building, basic collections were lacking, resources were

limited, there were problems connected with the building's change in use and, more particularly, the community's growing expectations. The extensive publicity surrounding the building had in fact confused the community, which had the impression that the museum was already in existence. It was therefore necessary to carry out two concomitant information activities: a preparatory projection and promotion programme 'What is a museum?'; and explain the museum project by describing the underlying theory and the various technical requirements.

As a first step in approaching the problem of launching the museum, the background to the project was summed up and a homogeneous series of proposals presented. These were meant to interpret the interests of the community on the basis of knowledge of the environment and analysis of the various views expressed by the specialists previously consulted.⁵ The museum also had to be given an appropriate organizational structure for the execution of a dynamic programme for the community. All this was laid down in what Georges Henri Rivi re called a 'progressive opening plan', in three parts: administration, space use and programmes, with a preparatory stage to be completed in two years and an initial management stage.

Administratively, the first need was to appoint a governing body—a committee consisting of representatives of the institutions participating in the project, supported by a technical secretariat which manages the museum. It was considered necessary to involve advisers and specialists in the work of management and to have the support of the community on committees assigned to specific tasks such as financing and acquisitions, community promotion and voluntary work. As a result, a solid support group was established in a short time. This gave rise to the creation of a Friends of the Museum association which has done a great deal for the institution.

Since it was difficult to hire suitable staff, due to the lack of adequately qualified people, our needs were satisfied through a combination of contracts with specialists and the selection of other people who knew the community, were willing to serve and could be expected to develop their own skills further to the point of becoming professionals in that particular domain. For this purpose, an advanced training plan, to which all members of the team have access, was set up and is currently operational. They

have been kept aware of the problems affecting the project, not only as regards its philosophy but also in the details of day-to-day operation. This has resulted in the establishment of a solid team with an effective working style.

The Programming Board has been the means used to associate the staff with the museum's activities, channelling the members of the various discrete units and relating them to the overall structure, and integrating the administrative and political lines of emphasis. It fosters participation and promotes co-ordination and evaluation at all levels. As a result, relations are direct and expeditious, bottlenecks and conflicts are readily identified, and effective solutions to them worked out.

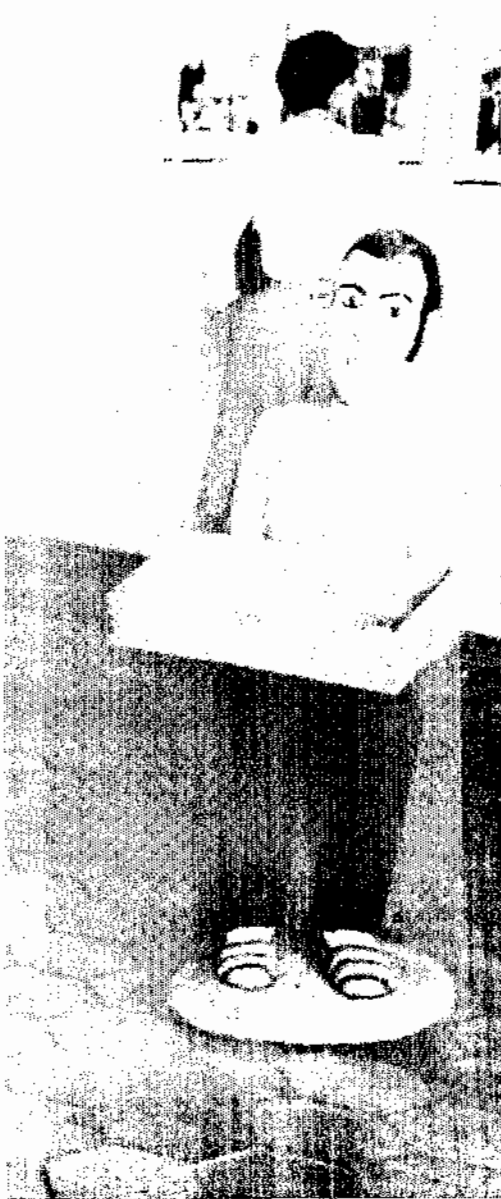
Obtaining economic resources also required ingenuity in order to carry out the bold programmes adopted and to acquire the necessary facilities. In fact, the Barquisimeto Museum was founded at a time of economic recession in Venezuela, and its budget covers no more than the bare necessities. Hence its development must entail the finding of additional resources, and this was accepted as a normal activity by the management of the museum. Its efforts were concentrated primarily on acquiring funds from private business by sensitizing a sector which in our society has no tradition of financing culture. This meant that clear, attractive projects had to be presented and administrative control machinery established.

Another procedure used was the conclusion of inter-institutional agreements, as a means of pooling efforts and funds from various sources; such agreements were the result of reliability in meeting commitments. The support of the Friends of the Barquisimeto Museum has been decisive in this. For its annual programme, the museum plans and implements a programme and budget covering the resources allocated to it by the competent institutions and the additional resources it obtains through a special fund-raising plan.

As to programming, at this preparatory stage, general lines have been laid down establishing annual operational stages within a medium- and long-term planning context.

In drawing up policies, the standards

5. Milagro Gomez de Blavia and Martin Verlini, *Propuesta para la conceptualizaci n, programaci n y funcionamiento de un museo: Caso Museo de Barquisimeto*, Paris, 1982.



43
Tocuyano Period funerary urn, 200 B.C.,
from 'La Salle' archaeological collection,
Camay Cemetery.



laid down by international bodies—Unesco, through its agreements and recommendations to Member States, ICOM, ICCROM and ICOMOS—were taken into consideration as well as national standards adapting them to our specific conditions so that they could be given effect in clear, precise and feasible form.

The progressive opening plan began by giving priority to temporary exhibitions arranged through inter-institutional co-operation. For the collections, a plan was instituted for the preparation of inventories and records and for designing the legal instruments required. In conservation, priority was given to studying the building: the climatic features, security and the establishment of a conservation and restoration workshop. In research, the necessary inter-institutional links were established for a joint action plan to ensure that existing or planned resources for the institution were identified and mobilized. A documentation centre was organized. Since all initial activities concentrated on identifying, educating and attracting a public for the museum, no effort was spared in museum education; this meant that priority and resources were given to an educational plan aimed at adults, young people, children and the public in general, including students and specialists.

The lack of a public was a factor that absolutely had to be overcome when activities began. When the museum opened, there was no indication of what public it was working for. In fact, there was no public as such, so the community as a whole was the potential public. The museum could cater for this either by imposition or by dialogue. The second way was chosen and a start made on encouraging participation. Motivations were stimulated by a lively publicity plan and through social communication channels, approaching institutions and trade unions, and an adroit public relations policy. Particular importance was attached to schools, with information about the museum-school project, exhibitions, an intensive programme of guided tours, and clubs for young people. Free lectures aimed to give the general adult public information on themes related to the museum. The Central University of Venezuela in Caracas participated in this endeavour in a unique museum-university experiment: a long-term collaboration agreement to extend educational action. The exhibition programme also yielded noteworthy results.

Now, two years after these activities commenced, the Barquisimeto Museum has achieved national as well as regional recognition. This is due to its basic mission of devoting attention to the regional heritage while also disseminating awareness of the national and universal heritage, with the result that it has been able to organize exhibitions and events reflecting the identity of Lara in its various aspects, alongside significant displays of universal culture.

To date there have been two national art exhibitions, a sculpture exhibition and one on 'the new nature', which have enabled the museum to become a new point of reference in the visual arts for artists, critics and the public in general. On its premises, the works of regional and national artists have been shown at individual or group exhibitions.

In its daily programmes, the museum not only provides opportunities to organize exhibitions but offers other cultural services as well, including: a film club; sales of handicrafts; a bookshop; tourist services; courses and workshops and special activities for children. The 'Camino del Sol' (Sunshine Street) workshop is held every day except Sunday for children's institutions. The museum's visiting hours have been extended to allow the working public to visit it and at the 'Cafe de los Martes' (Tuesday coffee meeting) members of the public are invited to take part in guided tours and enjoy a cup of good coffee together.

Popular festivals are also held at the museum; the calendar of its main exhibitions is planned in accordance with their dates and incorporated in important activities in the city. Many supporting events are held at the request of the inhabitants, for example a seminar on the community's concern about the future of an urban zone, to which the museum invited officials, specialists and the inhabitants concerned. This enabled the latter to become more familiar with the government's plans and established communication among all parties in the search for a better solution to the needs expressed by the people and the advocates of a better quality of life in the city.

Another procedure for community participation in the museum has been to give the public a chance to have a say in choosing subjects for the exhibition programme. *El Manteco, Pictures and Testimony of a City Market* and *The Visitation, the Blessed Virgin in Barquisimeto* were two exhibitions combin-

ing objects, oral tradition and graphic and bibliographic documentation on two living aspects of Barquisimeto: the commercial and socio-cultural activity generated around the city centre market and the city's most important religious tradition, the visitation of the Blessed Virgin. Both the church and the business community—important forces in the city—collaborated to facilitate the work of collection and gave financial assistance for the organization of these exhibitions. Attendance figures were high, showing that the people of Barquisimeto identified with them and were proud to show visitors these expressions of their most deeply rooted cultural traditions.

Such complex events presented a conceptual, organizational and technical challenge, and the results indicated that efforts to select, train and motivate staff had borne fruit. The search for a different path, for creativity and versatility, are constant features and an effective formula for coping with the conditions of the environment, particularly the limited technical resources, which are a challenge to our ingenuity. The Barquisimeto Museum is today the most comprehensive in the west central region from the standpoint of technical infrastructure, human resources training, premises and, above all, prospects for growth. Functioning as a coalescing factor in the museum movement of the region, the Barquisimeto Museum is a cornerstone for the formulation of alternatives that decentralize resources and options for effective preservation of the cultural heritage and meaningful implementation of policies.

What kind of museum for our societies?

As mentioned above, alongside the ecomuseum concept, of European origin, there has emerged in Latin America the concept of the integral museum. The similarities were pointed out at the Santiago de Chile round table of 1972, at which the concept was born.

Apart from specific peculiarities resulting from their target environments, both types of institution could be classified in either category. When referring to the integral museum concept, we require that:

the museum open up its field and traditional domain for a full realization of the anthropological, socio-economic and technological development of our countries;

the museum open its doors to researchers and institutions of various types; presentation techniques be modernized without involving heavy expenditures incompatible with economic realities; the museum generate evaluation systems enabling it to judge whether its activities are effective in relation to the community.

The integral museum, by definition, plays a leading role in enabling the individual to identify with his natural and human environment in all its aspects. There can be no question today in Latin America of a museum that is devoted only to the heritage; it must also be devoted to development.

We believe that a far-reaching effort of reflection should be devoted to this new situation. Practical reality must be situated within a museological doctrine that clearly enables us to adapt the museum to the needs of an increasingly urgent and complex time and place, one that is fraught with consequences for the future.

As Hugues de Varine pointed out in 1976, hitherto consideration had been given

only to the 'heritage' of objects, regarded as ends in themselves. The museum was there for the objects and the public was authorized ... to contemplate these objects without touching them and often without understanding them. We propose that the order of the factors be reversed and that the starting point be the public, or rather two types of user—society and the individual. Instead of being there for the objects, museums should be there for people.⁶

Instead of a museum 'of', we then must have a museum 'for', a museum for education, for identification, for enhancement, for comparison, for the generation of awareness, and lastly a museum for and as a function of a community.

[Translated from Spanish]

6. Hugues de Varine-Bohan, 'The Modern Museum: Requirements and Problems of a New Approach', *Museum*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, 1976, p. 131.

Ecomuseums for the Sahel: a programme

Alpha Oumar Konaré

Born in 1946 in Kayes, Mali. Former head of the Historical and Ethnological Heritage Division of Mali, and former Minister of Culture of Mali. Currently professor of history and archaeology at the Institute of Higher Training and Applied Research, Bamako, Mali. Vice-President of ICOM since 1983.

Never has a territory, extending almost 5,000 kilometres throughout West Africa from Cape Verde to Lake Chad and covering 5.3 million square kilometres, so captured international public opinion. Today, the Sahel (an Arabic word meaning the border of the desert) displays all the aspects of serious drought: frequent sandstorms; dried-up and silted-up water courses, devoid of fish; dried-up wells; cracked, bare earth; bushland stripped of all that is edible; tracks strewn with the carcasses of animals; miserable harvests; makeshift camps for disaster victims set up around the towns; the exodus of rural inhabitants towards the towns and beyond; half-starved children and elderly people fallen victim to undernourishment, malnutrition and numerous ailments.¹

The cultural consequences of this drought are enormous. In terms of the family unit, which is at the very centre of local culture, all the traditional values of solidarity, hospitality, participation and respect for the elders have been brought into question. The home has tended to become a mere sleeping place, stripped of any cultural activity. People have become drawn into the street, attracted

and captivated by what is 'outside'. It is out there in that 'cultural jungle' that the decadent elements of foreign, particularly Western, cultures have come to prevail. Juvenile delinquency, particularly the prostitution of minors, has developed. Everything is dominated by Mammon. Begging is on the increase.

The drought has led to the destruction of the process of transmission of knowledge, affecting most harshly the very old, those 'living libraries' and guardians of tradition, and the very young, the builders of tomorrow.

Uprooted populations abandon their huts and villages, drawn far away from their traditional habitat, often forever. Such areas are therefore left to plunderers, tourists hankering after exoticism, and smugglers who, in the guise of antique dealers, contribute substantially to the illicit trade in cultural property.

The desert, encroaching regularly each

1. The eight countries of the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal) are classified among the poorest countries of the world (per capita income ranging from \$120 to \$340).



44

Oualata, Mauritania. Interior courtyard of a traditional house. Situated at a crossroads of caravan routes, Oualata, like Tichitt and Chinguitti, is among the last surviving witnesses of the region's former prosperity.

year some 20 to 30 kilometres because of human behaviour (extensive cattle breeding, bushfires and tree felling), is modifying the environment, the plant cover and local living conditions and habitat. Eating habits have changed, thereby strengthening chains of dependence. Food crops are gradually giving way to cash crops. Under the guise of aid, the Sahel is currently being subjected to a transfer of knowledge and know-how which obstructs the use of traditional methods.

As regards arts and crafts, numerous craftsmen can no longer pursue their trade for want of raw materials which have disappeared and because of competition from imported goods. Many craftsmen sell their goods for very little profit, in order to be able to buy a few foodstuffs and direct their efforts towards craft goods for the tourist trade.

A substantial proportion of the local population does not yet benefit from any basic education and cannot have access to it because of the excessive cost of schooling. Many children have been forced to give up school, through poverty and the need to search for food. The actual content of classroom teaching is poorly adapted to rural development and has been subjected to the influence of the Western model. The educational system as it stands today encourages still further the uprooting of the population.

In the face of such waste, which may prove to be irreparable, what can be made of the silence which envelops everything that does not bring in cash payment? What can be made of the silence which surrounds the dangers that threaten the cultural heritage of the Sahel? How can the pursuit of happiness be limited to eating and drinking? How can we overlook the fact that human development is based on man's natural environment, cultural heritage, the creativity of local men and women, the enrichment derived through exchange with other human groups, that development is an improvement in the quality of life obtained through the assertion of a cultural identity?

The efforts made so far for the safeguarding of the Sahel, through the setting up of cultural institutions or the launching of programmes, have been hampered by limited intellectual commitment, which has had little support from unequivocal political commitment. Each of the eight countries of the Sahel, taken as a political entity, possesses at least one national museum in its capital.

The most famous of these national museums are those in Niamey (Niger) and in Bamako (Mali). All these national museums are generally institutions of a very traditional kind, of a pluridisciplinary nature, where ethnography and history have pride of place. The museums have made no provision for the safeguarding of the natural environment, even though some of them possess zoological facilities, and their responsibility does not extend to sites and monuments. Their scope of activity extends beyond the limits of the Sahel alone and encompasses all of the country which they represent. Relations between museums on a regional basis are extremely rare.

In all these countries, projects for local museums are currently taking shape: some of these will take into account all the elements of their environment. One of these is the Ecomuseum of Ziguinchor in Senegal, which is still at the project stage.

Another interesting project is the Sahel Museum of Gao (Mali) opened in 1981, within the framework of a new museum policy adopted on the occasion of the first symposium on museums in Mali in May 1976. This policy defined a programme of regional museums, including the Sahel Museum in Gao. It recommended that museums be democratized in terms of their basic conception, access, modes of communication, programmes and responsibilities in order to ensure that they became institutions that are open to a wide section of the community, which could identify itself with the items exhibited.

It was not until the end of 1979 that practical steps were taken to launch the preparation of the Sahel Museum and it was not before 1981 that the inaugural exhibition took place in temporary buildings in Gao. The museum is the responsibility of the Ministry of Sport, the Arts and Culture and is run through the Regional Directorate for Sport, the Arts and Culture in Gao. It had several objectives:

- to provide the population of the Sahel with a form of education that is different from that provided by traditional schools and which would be aimed at all sections of the community;
- to provide the population of the Sahel with better knowledge of its environment in terms of history, economics, sociology, human ecology, etc.;
- to participate in providing a better working environment for craftsmen;

- to strengthen co-operation between sub-regional cultural institutions, particularly museums;
- to ensure better dissemination of the Sahelian culture in other countries;
- to set up a major documentation centre on the Sahel.

Some four years after it was inaugurated the Sahel Museum in Gao was temporarily closed. This breakdown was due to various shortcomings, some of which stemmed from the kind of faulty organization that could affect any type of museum. Other problems sprang directly from the way the museum's aims were pursued at the local level, some of which were in direct contradiction to ecomuseum principles.²

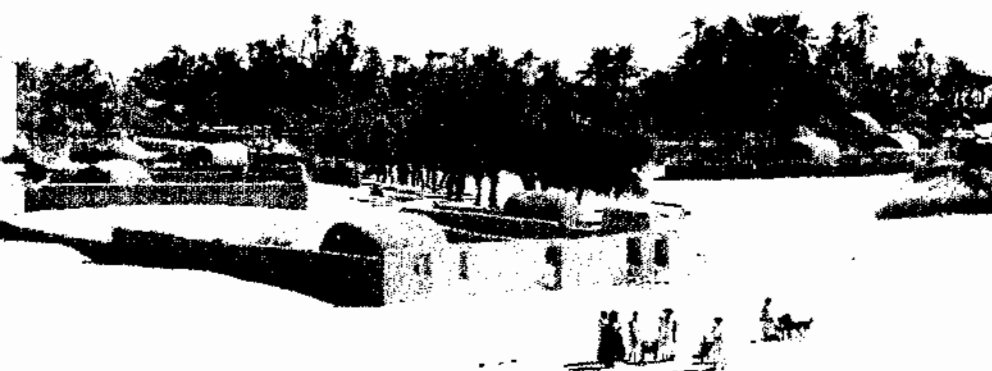
The way the Sahel Museum was planned and set up

The museum was never housed in its own premises. Use was always made of an old family dwelling which was rented for this purpose. This house has small rooms, is in poor condition (cracked walls through which water is seeping) and has no electricity. It can neither provide a place of safekeeping for objects on display nor a pleasant environment for visitors. It barely provides display facilities, let alone any other services that might be required. The terms of the lease allow for no alterations whatsoever.

The museum was subjected to considerable instability in management through the appointment of successive directors (three in four years), the absence of motivation on the part of some and the impatience of others, and because of the problems that have not yet been solved by the central administrative authorities. The director was the only permanent staff member of the museum and the other five members of staff were trainees recruited on graduation from the National Arts Institute. The various directors of the Sahel Museum have received no training other than an introductory course in museology at the National Museum in Bamako. Nor was the museum ever provided with its own budget.

Today, especially after a second seminar on museums in Mali held in April 1985, other reasons of a more profound

2. For an earlier account of the aims and work of the museum see Jean-Pierre Vuilleumier's article 'Museum Programming and Development Policy' in *Museum*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, 1983, pp. 94-7.



45
The oasis of Atar-Chinguitti, Mauritania,
1969.

nature can be seen to have accounted for the museum's deficiencies. These relate to the conditions in which it was set up, the underlying purpose assigned to it, and the relations between the National Museum in Bamako and the Sahel Museum in Gao.

In the absence of any specific financial resources, the Ministry for Sport, the Arts and Culture of Mali wished to benefit from a programme of co-operation financed by the Bremen Overseas Museum in order to set up a preliminary collection. A joint mission undertook research in the Adrar of the Isforas and succeeded in buying from the local populations complete material culture collections, one for the Sahel Museum and the other for the Bremen Overseas Museum.

In order to serve educational interests and through respect for exhibition ethics, it was agreed that the exhibition planned for the museum would be prepared in Bremen and in Mali and presented in the Tamasheq area of the Isforas, in Gao, the regional capital, in Bamako, the national capital, and in Bremen in the Federal Republic of Germany. A critical appraisal of these various presentations was to provide an indication of the way the various populations reacted to the exhibition, to identify more closely the way in which a population saw itself or wished to be seen, how neighbouring populations considered each other and how foreigners reacted to them.

The proposed circuit for the exhibition was not properly adhered to, however, in fact it was soon discarded once the collections had been acquired. The participation of the two partners in the execution of the project (in financial, scientific and technical terms) did not take place in

equal proportions. In actual fact, Mali provided assistance to the Bremen Museum for executing its own programme. Such co-operation without any real reciprocity was not part of any long-term programme defined by both sides. Rather, it was the result of a circumscribed aim, that of helping the Bremen Museum to extend its exhibition facilities, which was not necessarily compatible with the creation of a new museum in Mali. It would be difficult to speak of a local or national initiative on the part of Mali. There was no tradition, furthermore, of previous co-operation between the Bremen Museum and the Mali museum authorities. The innovation which we had sought to bring about proved to be a failure through lack of follow-up activities.

The museum was in fact conceived as traditional, in spite of the fact that a preference had been stated for opening up the facilities to the outside world through organizing itinerant exhibitions or handicraft workshops. The pluridisciplinary approach which alone would have made it possible to encompass all the problems related to development, particularly ecology, was only partial. The museum was essentially planned by specialists—sociologists, historians and ethnologists—who had little to do with the local populations. While the overall aim was to be pluridisciplinary, the holding of individual ethnographical exhibitions, dealing with particular ethnic groups through external funding, posed a major problem: the minority groups felt excluded from such activities. Furthermore, there was no overall programme or development plan which provided a comprehensive approach to the museum. No order of priority seemed to exist with respect to history, archaeology or ecology. There was no provision made in any programme for the training of personnel.

Little local participation

The Sahel Museum project was a 'high-level' decision. Apart from the collection phase, no other phase was understood by the various ethnic groups of the region. The public awareness campaign was limited to the groups visited for collection purposes, whereas it should have involved all the Touaregs and other ethnic groups of the area (Songhoi, Moors and Fulani).

The opening of the first exhibition, on the Touaregs in Gao, at a time of political

tension was interpreted by the inhabitants—mostly Songhoi—as a provocation, an opportunity given to the Touaregs to celebrate their electoral victory over the sedentary population. The inaugural ceremonies and the museum were therefore boycotted by the Songhoi. This proved also to be the case for the celebration of the national day for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage in May 1982. The opening of a second exhibition, this time on the Songhoi (announced well before the opening of the museum), did not succeed in completely dispelling the initial misunderstanding. The population of Gao did not feel directly concerned with the museum; the population involved actually lived

elsewhere. Only the Touaregs arriving in Gao knew of the existence of an exhibition on one of their particular ethnic groups.

The museum appeared to be more specifically aimed at officials and tourists. In fact the initial reaction of the regional authorities was not always positive:

A population which is constantly searching for food cannot be made to take an interest in archaeology or museums or rock paintings; such things can be of little interest for a population of this kind merely because they represent its culture or they involve some future development. The foremost concern is with finding something to

46

Nomad life in Niger.



eat and with enabling the local population to settle on the land.³

In view of this absence of participation, it was impossible to encourage the local population to contribute to the funding, management and development of the museum. It should be pointed out that the participation of representatives from other Sahelian countries (particularly Niger and Senegal) at the international symposium in 1981 remained limited to a presentation of their own experience in the field of museums, without any consideration being given as to how the importance of this new museum could be extended to the Sahel as a whole.

Relations with the National Museum in Bamako

The National Museum in Bamako was designed to be the central 'lung' for the museums of Mali. Its purpose is to provide complementary, co-ordinating and reference facilities and to be a central workshop and laboratory for all the other museums in the country.

The part played by the National Museum in co-operation with the Department for the National Heritage, which is the governing body of the local museums, posed problems with regard to the division of responsibilities without actually requiring a new definition of relations between the local museums and the National Museum. Furthermore, the Sahel Museum did not entertain relations with any other national institution, not even the subregional cultural and scientific institutions or even the museums.

New ideas for museum policy

With the help of the assessments made at the 1985 seminar on museums in Mali, together with the intention expressed by the local authorities to solve the problem of premises, it should be possible to relaunch the activities of the Sahel Museum in Gao. It would appear indispensable, nevertheless, that new applications of museum policy be clearly defined if further 'breakdowns' are to be avoided, which might herald serious consequences for the museum, or even its definitive closure. Whatever new directions are identified, these will remain suspect so long as educated people who are not products of the French educational system are excluded from discussions on the safeguarding of the cultural

heritage. Debate limited exclusively to intellectual circles cannot have any successful outcome and can only lead to more or less covert imitations, whereas the task should be to reverse the trend and bring about a real break with the colonial or neo-colonial heritage. Only those who actually live their culture or help it to survive can think up new autonomous structures. An approach that is different from that offered traditionally by the educational system must be found; the influence of contemporary schooling must be reduced and more importance given to traditional education or to completely new patterns.

New applications must lead to a reinterpretation of the role of education. New structures should provide a homogeneous approach to education, culture and information, brought together as a whole, and should also integrate all the resources of the environment, both human and material. Finding an answer to this particular problem in the Sahel requires the implementation of a long-term strategy involving several generations. Our own cultures, our own experience, must serve as a starting-point for such a strategy. Thought must also be given to the contributions made by the proponents of a new type of museology (in constant quest of man's identity) and to the ecomuseum as a basis for a new and vital phase that is both free and conducive to freedom. This phase will continue to develop, and provide further prospects that are both new and ambitious.

Problems in the African context

The ecomuseum approach poses a number of problems with regard to Africa. The concept of an ecomuseum implies the participation both of the government and of the population. What sort of government can successfully set up an ecomuseum? Is not an ecomuseum the instrument of a society with a great degree of awareness, with a high level of development, which has already solved many political problems and whose citizens already enjoy certain rights? Cannot the will to assume full responsibility for one's society, the very foundation of an ecomuseum, first manifest itself in time before taking shape in space? In our view, the ecomuseum does not, in its present form, take sufficiently into account the immaterial features (speech, ritual, signs, etc.) that are so cherished by societies with an oral culture. If such things are no longer cherished, will man,

who can rebuild or build afresh, continue to do so?

We are convinced that if ecomuseum practice becomes established and involves representatives of the national cultures who have not been trained in foreign institutions, various new approaches, applications and even extensions of the concept will be required. Certain methods will have to give pride of place to the role played by certain social units, such as the family, and by specific resources, such as old people.

What other specific obstacles will have to be overcome in the establishment of ecomuseums in the Sahel? There is, first and foremost, the low population density (today, 33 million; in the year 2000, 50 million: seven to eight inhabitants per square kilometre) over vast areas that are not connected to each other by channels of communication. There is also the multiplicity of countries, with their often artificial political borders that do not correspond to cultural groupings, making it necessary to ensure that the populations of the Sahel are made aware of belonging to the same ecosystem. There is sheer poverty and the fight to survive. Due consideration must also be paid to the concept which the populations have of nature, which they see as a source of wealth for immediate use, to ensure the survival of the community, and not for the satisfaction of future needs. And although the safeguarding of objects certainly means their conservation with all their relevant rituals, it more especially means the creation of better conditions in which such objects can be re-created. So long as craftsmen survive and observe traditions, so long as customs remain, the objects of a particular civilization will live on.

Proposals for our ecomuseums

The Sahel should be viewed as a whole within which various homogeneous, clearly delineated and accessible 'territories' would be defined, according to criteria which would be chosen by the population concerned. There would be as many ecomuseums as villages (or groups of villages) or camps of nomadic tribes (or groups of camps of nomadic tribes), possessing a certain linguistic, cultural or ethnic unity. Such a territorial unit would correspond to a locus of economic activity, of initiatory rites and of community

3. Declaration made by the Regional Governor at the first symposium on museums held in Mali, May 1976.

47

The track from Zinder to Agadès, in Niger.



48

A well in the Atar region of Mauritania.

ventures. The corresponding ecomuseums would be complementary, forming a regional network. Some would be grouped around central units including administrative offices, exhibition halls, laboratories, storage facilities, special itineraries, research facilities, etc. These central installations or 'lungs' would have their own collections, made up of objects taken out of their usual context. They could be housed in the various administrative capitals and run by well-trained technical personnel, who would be the sole permanent staff.

The outlying units would not have their own collections—the objects would remain in the possession of their owners or their users. These would include more particularly those objects being regularly used as part of local cultural life. An object that is 'kept alive' is one that is suitably preserved. Judicious use of radio, and hence of the spoken word, of audio-visual facilities and of informatics would make it possible to prolong the life of these objects and bring an added dimension to such ecomuseums.

Each ecomuseum would have to take responsibility for all the objects, rites and signs, and events which take place within its territory, while giving special attention to series. It would safeguard all these as cultural rather than legal property, as the latter notion would only arise in respect of contemporary objects, those without any specific ownership or those which had belonged to former generations. This would exclude the possibility of attributing a commercial value to them, of discriminating between them. Each community concerned would have

the responsibility for choosing, according to its own criteria, those objects to be preserved as well as those which are of interest to neighbouring communities and to outsiders.

All the objects for which the ecomuseum would assume responsibility would remain within its territory. They would only be moved in accordance with the movement of their populations or their trustees. Otherwise, they could only be moved if they were to be presented outside their usual context.

The existing museum in Gao could be redesigned along these lines to include various outposts and itineraries (for example, the tomb of the Askia, the royal cemetery of Samé). In this way, the Sahel would be provided with a cultural documentation centre and a centre for itinerant exhibitions.

Some objectives

The final goal of the activities of ecomuseums in the Sahel region should be to rekindle the critical spirit and judgement of the local people so that they may identify their own problems to give them new confidence in themselves, greater scope for individual initiative, and to make them more responsible members of the community. The ecomuseums should enable the Sahelian population to assume more fully its identity within its environment. The activities pursued by the ecomuseums would be varied and of a multiple nature and would be conducted by pluridisciplinary teams of personnel. These facilities would enhance a museological approach to the Sahel,

rather than making do with passive contemplation of the past or the present. They would participate fully in man's endeavours to secure his survival, in his quest for food, water and shelter.

What can be done to harness water resources? What can be done to derive the best advantage from the ecosystem? What can be done to fight against the deterioration of the land, over-grazing and deforestation? What can be done to combat desertification? These questions would not be alien to the preoccupations of ecomuseums. If they did not take into account such preoccupations of the local populations, they would be condemned to the status of cemeteries. It would be vital that the co-operation of young people be secured in order to undertake the systematic collection of all objects and traditions threatened with rapid extinction. Through exhibitions, the most important aspects of the life of local populations and their environment would be illustrated and social problems, together with all the decadent elements of our cultural traditions, could also be highlighted.

Many other areas could also be dealt with, such as the history and geography of the Sahelian countries. This would help to emphasize their ancient traditions, facilitate mutual recognition and illustrate the threat and permanence of the Sahelian dilemma. Other subjects might relate to specific ecological problems or national technologies, in order to emphasize the capacity of adaptation to environmental constraints without dependency on external aid for ensuring the development of certain economic sectors, such as arts and crafts and the analysis of trading relations.

The ecomuseums would make it possible to set up new and better-adapted structures for mass and rural education. They would display a genuine commitment to the promotion of national languages through their compulsory use and through the collection and use of any

elements of the oral tradition. The ecomuseums would constitute the best conservatories for plant and animal species and classified areas and monuments. In addition to being leisure centres and cultural documentation institutions, they would also serve as centres to promote solidarity and the development of associative activities.

Conditions for success •

Their success would depend on the extent to which local populations were allowed to participate in every phase of their implementation. Some people believe that such necessary concertation would be protracted and arduous, if not futile. Obviously, participation cannot be limited to surveys in the field or answers to questionnaires. If the confidence of the local populations is to be obtained, they must be made to realize that those responsible for promoting ecomuseums do genuinely share the same destiny.

The establishment of such museums should necessarily give appropriate consideration to the means which local populations have at their disposal, in order to prevent any recurring financial burdens. The museums should reflect the aspirations and the material resources of the populations. In order to achieve this, the projects should be of modest proportions, not of an incidental nature, and should form part of a real programme.

The levying of additional taxes should not be resorted to for building these museums. The local populations should be able to play their part through their various associations (either financially or through practical participation in the activities and building work). The traditional African associations would probably be very mistrustful and unresponsive with regard to projects of this kind. It would therefore be necessary to encourage the setting up of new associations with the help of emigrants who had never dissociated themselves from their orig-

inal environment. External intervention would always have to be carefully defined and planned with the agreement of each territory and would have to be confined to training and technical support.

It would seem rather unlikely that individual states could provide the funding for such museums in their present material circumstances, given the number of difficult decisions that have to be made. Social projects will have to be postponed for some considerable time. The establishment of ecomuseums would have to be undertaken within the context of integrated projects conducted by the various countries, by regional or sub-regional organizations, or by associative or community groups.

We can conclude by pointing out that the vision which the Sahelian population has of man, of the natural world which surrounds him and of the need for the struggle for survival, corresponds to an ecomuseum vision, a specific attitude of self-knowledge, self-recognition and self-imposed responsibility. The ecomuseum experience would contribute to loosening the hold of erroneous development strategies which are the cause of our countries' current failures. As a mode of participation and management the ecomuseum concept could constitute a major breakthrough in the field of culture and, for that matter, in life in general. As in the case of any achievement, it will require self-sacrifice and disinterestedness. It will be a labour of love.

If this transformation, which is not an end in itself, were not brought about in Africa and more especially in the Sahel, local populations would be even less mobilized in the defence of their cultures. Greater cultural destruction would occur, leading to subservience and a loss of cultural identity. If this were to be the case, the path of the cultural struggle would merge more than ever with that of the struggle for life itself.

[Translated from French]

São Cristóvão: a district ecomuseum

To work on a whole district, using its full potential; to arouse the community's awareness by bringing it into direct contact with the natural and cultural environment, developing its traditions, drawing on its roots, and fostering its own creativity; to preserve the overall environment: all these were the purposes of the project that we began to implement, in about 1968, in the Santa Tereza district of Rio de Janeiro.

The conceptual museum of the district

A group of people fired with enthusiasm for the idea —the former Cepi team¹— had decided to take to the streets of this picturesque district, which is located on top of a hill in Rio where some of us lived and where others worked. We had no preconceived ideas. All that we wanted was to discover the district, preserve it and increase its potential. In our thirst for discovery, we found places and people where and with whom we lived intensely; we did our best to encourage their development, using artists' studios, museums and other establishments as meeting places and centres of creativity, and in particular using the local market as a focal point for educational and cultural activities.

The team always tried to be virtually invisible or 'transparent'; it encouraged and participated, but did not interfere, and made no attempt to bring about any significant changes in existing structures. In 1970 we described this very lively experiment to Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine, who gave us their wholehearted support and invited us to play a more active part in the work of ICOM. At the time we called our project 'Conceptual Museum of the District'. The premises of the museum consisted of the entire district, with its participants, life, structures and memorabilia. The programme, which expanded steadily, was redefined often. Later, during the 1971 ICOM General Conference held in Paris and Grenoble, we realized that this trend towards open museum practice, one of a different and more participative kind, was gathering momentum throughout the world, and that in a way it was connected with the ideas of the young ecomuseological movement.²

1. Nucleus of the future MOUSEION—Centre of Museological Studies and Human Sciences—an institution which has launched various programmes and projects of research and action in the field of alternative museology in Rio de Janeiro.

2. In the sense that was later to be analysed by Sven Lindquist, in *Gräv där du Star*.

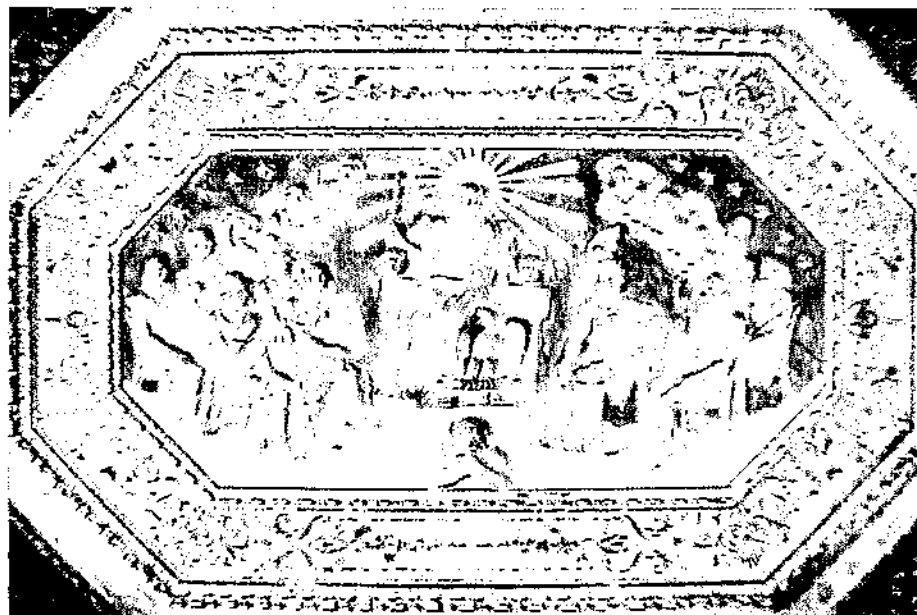
Fernanda de Camargo e Almeida-Moro

Born in Rio de Janeiro. B.A. in museum studies and history. M.A. and Ph.D. in archaeology. Former Director General of Museums, Rio de Janeiro State and President of the Council for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage. Now director for research and applied programmes of MOUSEION; member of the scientific council of the Museum of Astronomy in Rio. President of the Brazilian National Committee of ICOM; member of the Executive Council of ICOM and of the Museums Commission of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnographical Sciences.



49

MUSEU NACIONAL DE HISTÓRIA NATURAL, São Cristóvão. A *Wunderkabinet* where the children of Rio have made their first discoveries of cultural property.



50

The Ferrez ceiling at the Primeiro Reinado Museum — 'the heaven that Reverend Father told us about'.



51
Discovery of scientific toys in the São Cristóvão park.

São Cristóvão, an integrated ecomuseum

We persisted in our endeavour, and when we went to work at São Cristóvão, a splendid district in northern Rio, we began to plant the seeds of a new project for an open museum. The original concept might have seemed similar to that applied at Santa Tereza, but since the district was totally different we were led to stress different aspects. It was in fact a venture in what we have called 'integrated ecomuseology'.³

It is in São Cristóvão, that the *carioca*⁴ child usually establishes his or her first profound relationship with the concept of the universe, with the natural environment and with the past. It is here that, brought by their parents, small children discover the enormous Quinta da Boa Vista Park, the ancient building and the collections of the National Museum, or the silvery domes of the National Observatory 'where you can see the stars through the giant telescope'. It is here, too, that children discover the huge market of the Nordeste, which is as noisy as it is colourful, and where, between mountains of objects and foodstuffs, they may catch a glimpse of singers and storytellers.⁵ One also finds very big *favelas* (shanty towns) clustered on the slopes of the hills, churches that are never empty, samba schools,⁶ businesses—large, medium and small—together with thriving industries. This district, where the royal family and the nobility lived under the Empire,⁷ was later taken over by the upper middle classes, and subse-

quently by a prosperous middle class, while the poor drifted towards the hillsides and settled in the *favelas*.

When the former Cepi team started work in São Cristóvão, several years ago, it did so in the belief that it was embarking on a programme comparable with that which it had carried out at Santa Tereza. But every district has its own personality and calls for a different attitude and different ways of generating awareness. We were obliged to go right into the district and carry out a considerable amount of exploration and analysis before we could tackle the practical task of creating what we consider to be an integrated ecomuseum.

We reached the conclusion that the community was not made up solely of those who had their homes there; we also had to take into account those who worked in the district and consequently used it from sunrise to sunset, as well as the regular buyers and sellers at the Nordeste market, that living Sunday museum where all the inhabitants of Rio who originally came from the north-east flock together to spend the day.

All of this forms a living fabric whose closely interwoven threads are inseparable. The district is a harmonious whole, with no rigid barriers, operating as an indivisible entity. And thus it will continue to live, developing vigorously a rich emotional tapestry.⁸

A museum co-operative for the benefit of the district

When we assumed responsibility in 1980 for inspecting the state museums and,

3. This is the concept of associative community life that we postulated in 1968 with the Santa Tereza project, considerably developed from 1973 onwards with the project for the Museum of Images of the Unconscious (see 'Museum of Images of the Unconscious, Rio de Janeiro: An Experience Lived within a Psychiatric Hospital', *Museum*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, 1976, pp. 34-41), and subsequently formulated in 1974 during a Unesco/UNDP consultation for El Salvador. We continue to draw inspiration from it in all the projects for living, open museums that we are endeavouring to put into effect.

4. The term *carioca*, which originally designated people born in Rio de Janeiro, today applies to all who live there.

5. Feira do Nordeste, a market selling produce from the north-east of the country.

6. Samba schools are groups creating sambas, usually located in the *favelas*, which not only compose music but also set the theme and design the costumes presented in carnival processions.

7. The period between 1822 and 1889.

8. Fernanda de Camargo e Almeida-Moro, *Cartas de São Cristóvão*, Rio de Janeiro, 1980.

shortly afterwards, for the Primeiro Reinado Museum—a pilot unit of the state museums which was located at São Cristóvão—we saw this as an opportunity to speed up the implementation of our project and to associate all the public and private museums of the district in it, together with the National Observatory, which today is itself a museum, the Quinta da Boa Vista Park, the samba schools, and other educational and cultural establishments. Here was a whole collection of institutions which would enliven the district and rouse the community to action, as the Cepi team had done in Santa Tereza with its first programme.

This time we wished to have the support of established institutions, not only because of the very large size of the district but also because we hoped to involve them in our work. They would form a homogeneous whole, conducive to developing the interdisciplinary attitude that should prevail in the collection of everything that belongs to the collective memory. To create yet another institution in the form of the district ecomuseum was out of the question: we had to shape our ecomuseum by incorporating existing institutions into it.

The Primeiro Reinado Museum, the former manor house of the Marchioness de Santos,⁹ played a key role in the first part of the programme by virtue of the research work that MOUSEION conducted on the district. At no time, however, was this role of leader used to the detriment of creativity or of the projects of other participating institutions, for each of these, in a spirit of active participation, proposed its own specific field of action.

The objective was to interweave the activities of the district, to induce the community to increase its creative and spontaneous participation, to encourage transactions and meetings by this means and to infuse new life into local traditions. Our idea to preserve a form of life, for the natural and cultural heritage, including day-to-day activity, was interpreted as a whole—the living history of a community in a given territory.

At the Primeiro Reinado, we did all we could to encourage the community to take part in the daily life of the museum.¹⁰ It was therefore necessary to open the establishment completely to visitors, even giving them access to everyday routine. We made a point of devising a project that was flexible enough to allow us to accept the community's participation in the form in which it was offered and to allow the community, in turn, to come to accept us. We could not conceal the museum's weak points from the public, and while, on the one hand, we endeavoured to promote interaction between the community and the heritage, believing the former to be not only a consumer but also a primary source of material, we demonstrated, on the other hand, the need for a team of qualified specialists, who would be both participants and consumers.

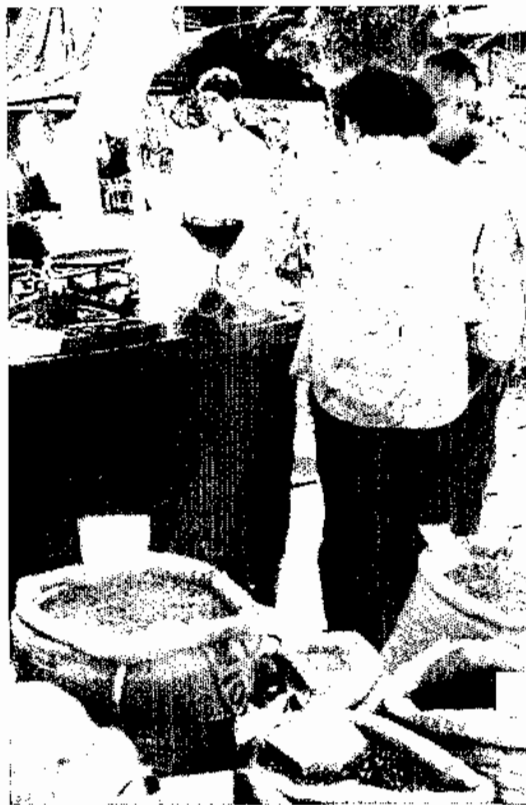
9. Domitila de Castro Canto e Mello, elevated by the Emperor Pedro to the rank of Viscountess and later to that of Marchioness de Santos.

10. Fernanda de Camargo e Almeida-Moro, *O Museu como sistema de educação não formal*, D. O. Bahia, 19 December 1984.



52

At the Feira do Nordeste, foodstuffs which have travelled over 2,000 kilometres.



53

Planning for return ... suitcases at the Feira do Nordeste.

The living universe of the museum

The mythopoeic story of the Primeiro Reinado Museum ensconced in the manor house of the Marchioness de Santos, the Emperor's favourite, was cut down to size: more important now was the discovery of a remarkable dwelling with a vast potential for the enhancement of its beauty and the wonderful collection of paintings and sculptures that it contained. As reinterpreted by us, this manor house is now a place of intense cultural activity, easily accessible, where historical figures are accepted quite naturally as a part of daily life.

One of the team's many plans was to encourage the community to use the museum's premises for its own creative activities. In the early days, local groups of musicians came to play at the museum; later a group of young people came to compose music and practise until one Sunday, when they were ready, they gave a concert in the bandstand in the square next to the market. We exchanged visits with shopkeepers in the district, local garage mechanics, schoolchildren and the inhabitants of the *favelas*, and we were helped by them. We managed to find a bus to transport small children from the shanty towns, who came to take an active part in the life of the district.¹¹

One day, more than fifty children arrived at the National Observatory. The bus stopped beside the Park where the domes of the Observatory are surrounded by tall mango trees heavy with fruit. The children rushed to them, climbed the trees and scrambled down again, stuffing themselves with mangoes; some of the adults in charge gaped at them in amazement, while others tried to restore order; but the instructions were that they should be allowed to do as they pleased. The children did not see the stars that day — they ate mangoes! The next day the bus, crammed with new enthusiasts, parked again under the mango trees. Those who had come the previous day went to see the stars. Those who had come for the first time ate mangoes. On the third day, all the children saw the stars. From the outset, the principle underlying our programme was not to check the natural course of events.

On another occasion we decided to take children who had never been outside their shanty town to the Primeiro Reinado, thus introducing our museum to a first group of children. The effect produced on them by the manor house with its painted walls was indescribable.

Up to that point, these children's relationship with dreams had been channelled through the allegories of the samba schools, which, like all allegories, tended towards caricature.¹² Their reaction to the scenes painted on the walls, neo-classical and tropical combined,¹³ and to the subtle shades of difference in the filtered light of the museum, is difficult to describe. Watching their small faces and their expressive gestures, the members of the staff who came to this museum every day learned something new: what it means to discover something that one has never even imagined. One of the highlights of the visit was when the children threw themselves on the floor to look at the ceiling with its delicate relief work by Ferrez, representing the classical Pantheon.¹⁴ Their excitement was so great that we found it infectious. I heard one child say to another: 'Look, it's the heaven that Reverend Father told us about.'

From the past to the present

Forging links within a community, like enlisting its active participation, is no easy matter, and it is even more difficult to give shape to an open area without imposing any limits or constraints. And therein, perhaps, lay the programme's fascination for us. One of the most important challenges was to reconcile all the wishes expressed: the easiest way of doing this, and in fact the only way, was through acceptance of others just as they are, through discovery and rediscovery.

Sometimes an institution had to make an effort to be more receptive.¹⁵ This was not true of the National Museum of Natural History. The former House of Birds, which is the oldest museum in the country, has a fascinating and varied set of collections: mummified animals, indigenous objects, archaeological collections, herbarium, serpents in bottles — not to mention the antique collection of curiosities. Although some museologists are calling for a more modern type of museology the public still loves the *Wunderkabinet* — the museum par excellence — a place where the children of Rio, whatever their beliefs, traditions or social background, have made their first discoveries of cultural property.

We saw that the public felt deeply involved in this old-fashioned museum and it was our impression that this would always be the case. It has become one of the basic cogs in the development of the whole mechanism, receptive to the present and open to new ideas. For what is

important is not always the museum itself, but the art of extracting benefit from it.

The Park and the houses of the district convey a picture of the environment, the Observatory a vision of the universe, the National Museum a view of the world, and the Nordeste market a feeling of enchantment for everyone and of nostalgia for some. The samba schools radiate joy. The Primeiro Reinado Museum is indissociable from all of these, for its task is to show that the diversity of our people stems from a certain symbiosis, and to respond to this in its activities. But the collections and paintings in its exhibition rooms could not alone reveal the origins of this symbiosis. We therefore had recourse to temporary exhibitions on specific topics: *The Carnival of Venice*, *Taste in the Days of the Empire* and *The Road to the Indies*. These shows carried further the questing spirit of the community, and were all concerned ultimately with the process of acculturation.

In the case of *The Carnival of Venice*, we focused our attention on its origin and development. We reconstituted eighteenth-century Venice in the museum, taking the samba schools as a point of reference. In the *Taste in the Days of the Empire* exhibition, we studied the house itself as the expression of the acculturations that we have absorbed through miscegenation and the way that tastes were formed at the time.¹⁶ The aim of *The Road to the Indies* was to illustrate the intermingling of the races and cultures that have made us what we

11. As Pierre Mayrand said in a paper entitled 'L'Écomusée de Haute-Bœauc', which he presented at the international seminar held at Oaxtepec, Mexico, 1984: 'The ecomuseum is not something to be visited: it is a living experience.'

12. The plots invented by the samba schools include free-ranging allegories of surprising richness.

13. As a result of the acculturation process, tropical iconography has been added to neo-classical iconography. The effect thereby produced is powerful.

14. Marc and Zéphyrin Ferrez, who came to Brazil with the Lebreton (French) mission.

15. René Rivard, 'Que le musée s'ouvre ... ou vers une nouvelle muséologie: les écomusées et les musées ouverts', Québec, 1984, p. 49 (mimeo). The concept of the visitor and the public is replaced here by that of the population; it extends to all the people to be found on the territory within the museum's radius: young people, workers, intellectuals, specific and general groups, etc. It is a fundamental integrating factor.

16. We received generous assistance and advice from the late Professor Mario Praz of Italy.

are since the arrival of the Europeans in Brazil and of the other peoples who followed them. Staged in the same year as the splendid exhibitions on the Portuguese discoveries, organized in Lisbon under the auspices of the Council of Europe, our idea, which was simple, was developed in counterpoint to them.¹⁷ We gave our own view of the question—Europe in former times, Asia and the concept of the Indies as Eldorado, of the silk route and of spices, Africa and the reality that is ours. What we were and what we have become. The museum exhibited a collection of sculptures, and simultaneously it turned another area into a large spice market, which proved to be a major attraction for the Nordeste regulars. It may even have been the lifeblood of the whole exhibition. We also made changes in the area set aside for the museum's permanent exhibitions, and modified the collections themselves.

The community found the exhibition a challenge, and this perhaps was the best reaction that we could have hoped for. The questions that it raised also enabled us to tackle the topic of the São Cristóvão market, analyse it and connect it with the programme. Contrary to many people's beliefs, the Nordeste market at São Cristóvão is not an isolated phenomenon, an airtight compartment within the community: we see it as a place for exchanges, forming part of a process of integration. *The Road to the Indies* exhibition, with its market, gave us the opportunity to broaden our dialogue with the regular visitors to the fair. As in our work on the *favelas*, our concern was to open up new areas of communication and not to modify structures.

In some visitors, who judged by their first impressions and looked no further, we observed a tendency to see the São Cristóvão market as an 'ecomuseum' in itself. But this is a mistake: the market forms an integral part of São Cristóvão and its environment; it cannot be considered in isolation. It is not merely a place for buying and selling regional produce. It would be erroneous to imagine that it is purely and simply a transposition of the north-east to the south-west. No: although it does in fact mark an initial attempt to express a feeling of melancholy, a need to anchor and preserve nostalgia, it is also a place for exchanges, and through exchanges we can not only exist but also possess: these are the means whereby the markets, in conjunction with other structures, build up communication with the community.

At this constantly changing market, where china and basketwork from the north are to be found side by side with different types of flour, seasonings and mixed dishes, one may see storytellers, singers and groups of people who arrived many years ago from the north-east, others who arrived recently, local people, townsfolk and country-dwellers passing by. There is certainly a feeling of nostalgia, for the people from the north-east mingle their past with their dreams and see their far-off land as the unreal Eldorado of their fancies. But new ideas spring up at the same time: new lands inspire new loves, and the market is part of the daily life of the district. Through the market the customs of the people of the north-east are propagated in the community, in an ebb and flow that is the pulse of life itself.

The enchantment of living and sharing in this project led us to pay particular attention to the local staff supporting our efforts. One of the principal hazards of community action is the constant temptation to overstep the limits of one's mission and to trespass involuntarily on the territory of others.¹⁸ The staff of the museum should perform a task of analysis and work as catalysts while remaining invisible, so that eventually, when they have to relinquish the running of the museum, others may all the more easily take their place.

Today, the community is already organizing many activities on its own initiative. All the institutions still participating in other activities are doing their utmost to make them as dynamic as possible. The idea of calling our project the integrated ecomuseum of São Cristóvão mirrors the concept of a vast area with no specific limits and with no interference on the part of the public authorities.¹⁹ It is a community participation project, with no rigid rules, in which we learn that heritage, territory and community are, and must remain, three eternal strands in a single fabric.

[Translated from Portuguese]

17. See article by Y. R. Isar, 'The Portuguese Discoveries and Renaissance Europe', *Museum*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2, 1984, p. 92-8.

18. For the Museum of Images of the Unconscious (see *Museum*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, 1976, pp. 34-41), we paid particular attention to this problem.

19. Here we would quote René Rivard, op. cit., 'Governmental support is not always a *sine qua non* for the creation of an ecomuseum.'

The Heimatmuseum: a perverted forerunner

Alfredo Crus-Ramirez

Born in Mexico in 1956. Studied the history of art at the University of Paris I. In 1981 started research work in museology, concentrating on questions of cultural programming. Organized the *Fête des morts au Mexique* exhibition at the Musée des Enfants (MAM, Paris, 1984).

The author of this article looks at a long-forgotten precursor. He shows how the ideas upon which the Heimatmuseum was based, which became part of the museological legacy built upon by the ecomuseum movement, were distorted to serve the hyper-nationalist aims of Nazi Germany. Naturally, no comparison with today's ecomuseums is intended by either the author or the editors.

It is not surprising that enumerations of the forerunners of the ecomuseum tend to omit any reference to its close relation, the *Heimatmuseum*, or homeland museum, particularly the use made of it by the ideologues of Nazi Germany.

Recent work has shed more light on the role assigned to the arts by the cultural policy of the Third Reich, and the importance which was attached to building up collections.¹ Museums had first of all to be purified—'degenerate' art was excluded—and secondly an educational function was introduced that offered an opportunity to extol the values of the regime.

Alongside the traditional museum there emerged an unprecedented experimental type of museum which was to present the first challenge to the museum as a conservation institution serving cultivated élites and to postulate a museum linked to the life of the community. The local museum had, of course, been in existence since the late nineteenth century, but the concept underwent radical changes which made it an instrument of nationalist propaganda and a genuine educational tool.

Two articles on this new type of museum were published in the review *Museum* by the German curators Otto Lehmann and J. Klersch in 1935 and 1936 respectively.² Klersch saw the increasing number of local museums as a reaction against the changes brought about by the war, including the Depression, and felt they reflected a need for social cohesion and reassurance: 'The revival of the nation's forces and energies after the war brought about a far-reaching transformation in this area; as the public turned away from the traditional museums, they showed increasing

interest in the new *Heimatmuseum*'. Lehmann saw the movement as betokening 'pressure from elemental forces'.

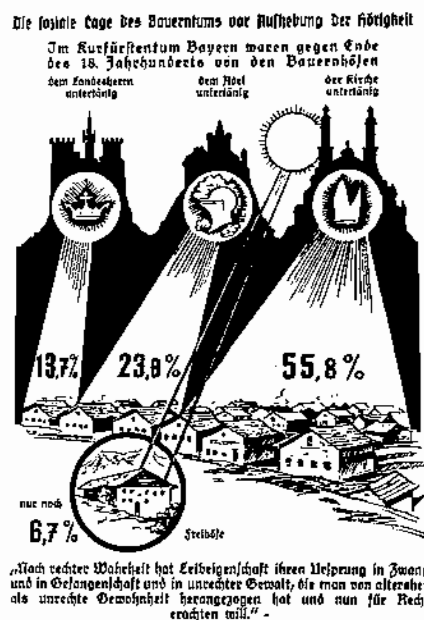
The German curators were well aware of the relation between the crisis and the new type of museum, which has been interpreted as the almost instinctive expression of an attachment felt by individuals to their native land. The reasons for the creation of local museums and the part they played in rebuilding a moral image both for the individual and for the nation are thus clear.

The *Heimatmuseum*, which was part of a vast propaganda programme, had to operate on a scientific basis and not for art for art's sake or collecting for collecting's sake; however, what was described as its scientific basis involved distorting science, and in particular the natural science, with a view to demonstrating the superiority of the Aryan race.

Quite apart from this ideological basis, there was an innovative museographical approach, in the sense that museographic techniques were expected to take account of the users, and in a clear and accessible way illustrate a subject that was treated 'scientifically'. This meant more than merely hanging objects on walls: it involved an effort to impart information. The museum was regarded as an area for communication, in which the object would cease to be a fetish.

This museographic approach involved the use of modern forms of presentation based on the work of the artists and designers of the period whom the regime itself had attacked.³ It was only at the level of presentation that it was possible to see any kind of scientific approach, because the allegedly scientific message of the exhibition was no more than a

54
'The condition of the peasantry before the abolition of serfdom', didactic use of graphics. From *Der Schulungsbrief* [Journal of Education], Berlin, 1938.



systematic reduction of science to prejudice, and an attempt to justify the purpose of the new museums.

The *Heimatmuseum* must induce in the individual a state of mind which in one way or another attaches him indissolubly to his fatherland, to that which constitutes the foundation of his life ... So a far-reaching change was brought about in the very concept of the museum as an entity, but without abandoning a particular element of the German character, namely the concern that everything should be based on scientific principles.⁴

A number of innovatory museological principles are also referred to in Lehmann's text:

- popular cultures are taken into consideration as a vital element, as is the relation between the individual and his environment;
- the basis should be an overall view of human activities, in order better to understand the life and evolution of human groups; and
- the idea that the museum should be regarded as an active element in education.

At that period in France the ethnological museums were being planned with the idea of making them conservatories and laboratories devoted to the study of traditional objects. The Musée des Arts et des Traditions Populaires, which was established in 1935, set itself the task of preserving collections of objects and documents, exhibiting them,⁵ and possibly also engaging in research.⁶

Simplifications of history

The article by Klersch deals more specifically with the establishment of a new museum that was inaugurated in Cologne in 1936 by Goebbels: the Haus der Rheinischen Heimat (Rhineland House). Its establishment followed an exhibition commemorating the one-thousandth anniversary of the annexation of the Rhineland by the German Empire. The subjects it dealt with were of an historical nature, but artistic, craft and economic life were also represented. The new museum was to be devoted to the life of the region, and so was organized along similar lines to the local museums, except that to begin with there was no collection and the designers could therefore apply the new principles described by Lehmann. The word 'museum' was not really

appropriate, so instead of a Rhineland museum what emerged was the Rhineland 'house'.

The museum was intended to confine its interest to local history and features specific to the region. The diversity of the population groups involved did not make this an easy task, however, and there had been population movements which might call the homogeneity of the Rhineland into question. So only the period from Charlemagne to the present day was covered.

Klersch acknowledges that local museums were traditionally run on liberal principles which governed the building up of collections. What he wanted to establish was a museum which not only had links with local life but which always related to the present and never lost sight of its public—the people. It was not intended to be a cemetery or an institution of learning; what the curator had in mind was a place where people could re-establish contact with their history, which was to be presented scientifically in order to distil from it 'the moral strength of the race'.

Finally, at the very basis of the project, there was the educational intent, which found expression in a didactic approach. Models, copies, plaster casts and posters were used to drive the point home, although even today there are many curators who reject such expedients.

As for the genuine substance of the exhibition, it was a matter of presenting history by means of an interweaving of ethnological concepts and historical facts, producing an account from which all conflict had been erased and which extolled the greatness of the state. This unusual museographic approach was based on five key themes: 'the historical and political evolution of the Rhineland, including the Rhineland nobility; the Church and the ecclesiastical states; the Rhineland towns and their bourgeoisie; the farming population of the Rhineland; and the Rhineland economy and its workers'.⁷

The history of the Rhineland was thus reduced to a history of power in a hierarchical context, emphasizing the importance of the state throughout the formation and progress of Germany.

4. Otto Lehmann, op. cit.

5. G. H. Rivière, 'My Experience at the Musée d'Ethnologie', Huxley Memorial Lecture, United Kingdom, 1968; cf. Dossier MATP, Paris, ICOM/Unesco.

6. G. H. Rivière, 'Le Musée du Trocadéro', in the review *Cahiers de la République des Lettres, des Sciences et des Arts*, Paris, Musées XIII, 1930.

7. J. Klersch, op. cit.

55
Peasant Life exhibition presented at the Freilichtmuseum in 1938, as reported in *Der Schulungsbrief* [Journal of Education], Berlin, 1938.



Cultural matters were treated in a purely political fashion: ecclesiastical organization was always described in terms of Church and state, and religious art, for example, was considered merely as demonstrating progress. In the Catholic/Protestant conflict, the progress achieved due to the establishment of Protestant capitalism was commended. Agricultural life was reduced to the history of land ownership from the Middle Ages to the creation of a Nazi Ministry of Agriculture. In fact, the past was seen in terms of the present, respect for the established order was applauded, and an idyllic picture of the future painted:

The *Heimatismuseum* must not be a kingdom of the dead, a cemetery. It is made for the living; it is to the living that it must belong, and they must feel at ease there. The living are continually on the move, from yesterday to tomorrow, and the museum must help them to see the present in the mirror of the past, and the past in the mirror of the present. They will thus experience the intimate cohesion of past and present which begets the future. The crucial task of the *Heimatismuseum* is to serve the people and the present, and if it fails in that task it becomes no more than a lifeless collection of objects.⁸

Slanted educative principles

Klersch also envisaged the formation of collections and, with his concern for education, distinguished between collections for exhibition and collections for study. The latter should be accessible to the public and at the same time should provide an opportunity for more detailed investigation of a topic which had merely been touched on in the permanent exhibition halls. This use of the reserves should be the responsibility of teachers. Klersch attached great importance to school classes spending days in the museum as part of their school curricula, and not just as visitors. The school visit was seen as being an integral part of the museum's educational function. The systematic use of graphic media and clear visual language should create an agreeable impression on the visitor and spur him or her on to make further discoveries.

In this functionalist museology the modernity of the solutions that were found is apparent, as are also the contradictions inherent in a prefabricated

account of history which revealed some inconsistencies of nationalist ideology. The people and the industrial revolution are dealt with without any reference to the working masses. The conservative Klersch explains this omission by saying that the subject will be dealt with later on, but that makes clear the problem posed by the working masses as an entity which is capable of challenging the powers that be and calling 'the attachment to the land' into question by virtue of its social dynamics (politicization, deracination). This exclusion makes it clear that the worker was considered only as part of the community at large and that the existence of a new and proletarian culture was not admitted.⁹ In official Nazi art the image of the worker very often appears in the archaic form of a blacksmith, whereas the soldier and the peasant are glorified in their own right.¹⁰

The Rhineland House as an educational experiment had a potential which was not to be fully realized until much later, in today's museums; but it also uses history as a cover for the desire to impose uniformity and gain control: turning its wealth of visual media to good account, the museum became the custodian of truth and imposed a particular view of history even more convincingly than the school.

Of course the educational aims of the Third Reich now seem both dangerous and pernicious, especially as education was extended to cover all aspects of everyday life and exerted a compelling influence over the world of children and young people. In this context, the museum reinforced nationalist dogma and provided a series of striking images which assisted in the pupils' indoctrination. Apart from the slanted principles on which the *Heimatismuseums* were based, their educative function and their role as precursors in the field of communication also provide food for thought, for the principles enunciated by Lehmann and Klersch reflect an awareness of the role which museums can play in the community as channels of communication and partners in education. Even in today's mass culture, museums are out of step with their social context as a result of the lack of provision for joint action by the various bodies involved in education in the broadest sense of the word.

When ecomuseums were established in France in the 1970s it was hoped that the split between the various institutions involved in cultural activity would disappear, but the ecomuseum is developing

into a research institution and has led to the establishment of small museums organized on the 'region/population/heritage' principle which inevitably raise the problem of territorial identities. But—and this question was equally applicable to the Rhineland House—what is the real identity of regions which have been radically transformed by industrial development both in their morphology and in their population density? Is allowance being made for the cultural pluralism characteristic of contemporary societies?

Today, the increasing momentum of 'museification' demonstrates the need felt by some individuals to identify themselves with a particular history or with lives like those they have themselves led. This is why these ecomuseums present an idyllic image of the past in which the population is able to contemplate its own reflection. The ecomuseum, which ought to have been linked to life, is proving indicative of a malaise, and that is how Clair sees it as we approach the end of the century: 'If the museum wins, it will be in the same way as the desert grows: it advances where life ebbs and, like a benign pirate, plunders the wreckage it has left behind'.¹¹

The French ecomuseum concept has very largely been adopted by the rest of the world and, where arrangements are supervised by the state, has sometimes taken on strong political overtones; in any event ecomuseology has already erected bastions of territorial identity which any political authority could use to propagate its own ideals, playing upon sentiments which are both volatile and ambiguous.

[Translated from French]

8. J. Klersch, op. cit.

9. Hildegard Brenner, op. cit.

10. On the symbolism of the blacksmith, see the catalogue for *La représentation du travail* [The Representation of Work] exhibition organized by CRACAP/Le Creusot Ecomuseum, September 1977.

11. Jean Clair, *Considérations sur l'état des beaux-arts* [Reflections on the State of the Fine Arts], Paris, pp. 22-3, Gallimard, 1983.

- ALBANIA:** N. Sh. Bortimesh Naim Frashëri, TIRANA.
- ALGERIA:** Institut Pédagogique National (IPN), 11, rue AliHadjad, ALGER. Office des Publications Universitaires (OPU), Place Centrale Ben Aknoun, ALGER; ENAL, 3 Bd Zitout Youcef, ALGER. *Periodicals only:* ENAMEP, 20, rue de la Liberté, ALGER.
- ANGOLA:** Distribuidora Livros e Publicações, Caixa Postal 2848, LUANDA.
- ARGENTINA:** Librería El Correo de la Unesco, EDILYR, S.R.L., Tucumán 1685, 1050 BUENOS AIRES.
- AUSTRALIA:** Publications: Educational Supplies Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 33, BROOKVALE 2100, N.S.W. *Periodicals:* Dominie Pty., Subscriptions Dept., P.O. Box 33, BROOKVALE 2100, N.S.W. *Sub-agents:* United Nations Association of Australia, P.O. Box 175, 5th Floor, Ana House, 28 Elizabeth Street, MELBOURNE 3000; Hunter Publications, 58A Gipps Street, COLINGWOOD, Victoria 3066.
- AUSTRIA:** Buchhandlung Gerold & Co., Graben 31, A-1011 WIEN.
- BAHAMAS:** Nassau Stationers Ltd., P.O. Box N-3138, NASSAU.
- BANGLADESH:** Bangladesh Books International Ltd., Ittefaq Building, 1 R.K. Mission Road, Hatkhola, Dacca 3.
- BARBADOS:** University of the West Indies Bookshop, Cave Hill Campus, P.O. Box 64, BRIDGETOWN.
- BELGIUM:** Jean De Lannoy, 202, Avenue du Roi, 1060 BRUXELLES. CCP 000-007023-13.
- BENIN:** Librairie nationale, B.P. 294, PORTO NOVO; Ets. Koudjo G. Joseph, B.P. 1530, COTONOU; Librairie Notre-Dame, B.P. 307, COTONOU.
- BOLIVIA:** Los Amigos del Libro, casilla postal 4415, LA PAZ; Avenida de las Heroínas 3712, casilla postal 450, COCHABAMBA.
- BOTSWANA:** Botswana Book Centre, P.O. Box 91, GABORONE.
- BRAZIL:** Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Serviço de Publicações, caixa postal 9.032-ZC-02, Praia de Botafogo 188, RIO DE JANEIRO (GB).
- BULGARIA:** Hemus, Kantora Literatura, boulevard Rousky 6, SOFIA.
- BURKINA FASO:** Librairie Artie, B.P. 64, OUAGADOUGOU; Librairie Catholique 'Jeunesse d'Afrique', OUAGADOUGOU.
- BURMA:** Trade Corporation no. (9), 350-352 Merchant Street, RANGOON.
- CANADA:** Renuel Publishing Company Ltd., 61 Sparks Street, OTTAWA, Ontario K1P 5A6.
- CHAD:** Librairie Absalomou, 24 av. Charles de Gaulle, B.P. 388, N'DJAMENA.
- CHILE:** Biblioteca Ltda., Constitución n° 7, Casilla 13731, SANTIAGO (21); Editorial 'Andrés Bello', Av. R. Lyon 946, Casilla 4256, SANTIAGO DE CHILE.
- CHINA:** China National Publications Import and Export Corporation, P.O. Box 88, BEIJING.
- COLOMBIA:** Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, Carrera 3A n° 18-24, BOGOTÁ.
- COMOROS:** Librairie Masiva, 4 rue Ahmed Djoumi, B.P. 124, MORONI.
- CONGO:** Commission Nationale Congolaise pour l'Unesco, B.P. 493, BRAZZAVILLE; Librairie Populaire, B.P. 577, BRAZZAVILLE (branches in Pointe Noire, Loubomo, Nkayi, Makabana, Owendo, Ouesso and Impfondo).
- COSTA RICA:** Librería Trejos S.A., apartado 1513, SAN JOSE; Librería Cultural 'García Monge', Ministerio de la Cultura, Costado Sur del Teatro Nacional, apartado 10.227, SAN JOSE; Librería Cooperativa Universitaria, Ciudad Universitaria 'Rodrigo Facio', SAN JOSE.
- CUBA:** Ediciones Cubanas, O'Reilly No. 407, LA HABANA. *For 'The Courier':* Empresa Coprefil, Dragones No. 456 e/Lealad y Campanario, HABANA 2.
- CYPRUS:** MAM, Archbishop Makarios 3rd Avenue, P.O. Box 1722, NICOSIA.
- CZECHOSLOVAKIA:** SNTL, Spolena 51, PRAHA 1 (Permanent display); Zahraniční literatura, 11 Soukenicka, PRAHA 1. *For Slovakia only:* Alfa Verlag Publishers, Hurbanova nam. 6, 893 31 BRATISLAVA. *For 'The Courier' only:* PNS-UEB, Jindřiska 14, PRAHA 1.
- DEMOCRATIC YEMEN:** 14th October Corporation, P.O. Box 4227, ADEN.
- DENMARK:** Munksgaard Export and Subscription Service, 35 Nyre Skovvej, DK-1370 KØBENHAVN K.
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:** Librería Blasso, Avenida Bolívar, No. 402, esq. Hermanos Deligne, SANTO DOMINGO.
- ECUADOR:** *Periodicals only:* Dinacur Cia. Ltda., Santa Prisca n° 296 y Pasaje Sans Luis, Oficina 101-102, Casilla 112-B, QUITO. *All publications:* Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, Núcleo del Guayas, Pedro Moncayo y 9 de Octubre, casilla de correos, 3542, GUAYAQUIL; Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, avenida 6 de Diciembre n° 794, casilla 74, QUITO; Nueva Imagen, 12 de Octubre 959 y Roca, Edificio Mariano de Jesús, QUITO.
- EGYPT:** Centre for Unesco Publications, 1 Talaat Harb Street, CAIRO.
- EL SALVADOR:** Librería Cultural Salvadoreña, S.A., Calle Delgado No. 117, apartado postal 2296, SAN SALVADOR.
- ETHIOPIA:** Ethiopian National Agency for Unesco, P.O. Box 2996, ADDIS ABABA.
- FINLAND:** Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, Keskuskatu 1, SE-00100 HELSINKI 10; Suomalainen Kirjakauppa Oy, Kolivaraankatu 2, 01640 VANTAA 64.
- FRANCE:** Librairie de l'Unesco, place de Fontenoy, 75700 PARIS. CCP 12598-48.
- GABON:** Librairie Sogalivre (Libreville, Port Gentil and Franceville); Librairie Hachette, B.P. 3923, LIBREVILLE.
- GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC:** Buchhaus Leipzig, Postfach 140, 701 LEIPZIG or international bookshops in the German Democratic Republic.
- GERMANY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF:** S. Karger GmbH, Karger Buchhandlung, Angerhofstrasse 9, Postfach 2, D-8034 GERMING/MÜNCHEN. *For scientific maps only:* Geo Center, Postfach 800830, 7000 STUTTGART 80. *For 'The Courier' (German, English, Spanish and French edition):* M. H. Baum, Deutscher Unesco-Kurier-Vertrieb, Beslistrasse 57, 5300 BONN 3.
- GHANA:** Presbyterian Bookshop Depot Ltd., P.O. Box 195, ACCRA; Ghana Book Suppliers Ltd., P.O. Box 7869, ACCRA; The University Bookshop of Ghana, ACCRA; The University Bookshop of Cape Coast; The University Bookshop of Legon, P.O. Box 1, LEGON.
- GREECE:** International bookshops (Eleftheroudakis, Kauffmann, etc.); John Mihalopoulos & Son S.A., International Bookellers, 75 Heriou Street, P.O. B. 73, THESALONIKI; Commission Nationale Hellénique pour l'Unesco, 3 rue Akadimias, ATHENS.
- GUADELOUPE:** Librairie Carnot, 59, rue Barbès, 97100 POINTE-A-PITRE.
- GUATEMALA:** Comisión Guatemalteca de Cooperación con la Unesco, 3a Avenida 13-30, Zona 1, apartado postal 244, GUATEMALA.
- HAITI:** Librairie 'A la Caravelle', 26, rue Roux, B.P. 111-B, PORT-AU-PRINCE.
- HONDURAS:** Librería Navarro, 2a Avenida N° 201, Comayagüela, TEGUCIGALPA.
- HONG KONG:** Swindon Book Co., 13-15 Lock Road, KOWLOON; Federal Publications (HK) Ltd., 2D Feder Centre, 68 Sung Wong Toi Road, Tsimshatsui, KOWLOON; Hong Kong Government Information Services, Publication Section, Bankerville House, 22 Hc Hooge Street, HONG KONG.
- HUNGARY:** Akadémiai Könyvtér, Váci u. 22, BUDAPEST 1; A.K.V. Könyvtársok Belp. Népkoztársaság utja 16, BUDAPEST VI.
- ICELAND:** Snaebjörn Jónsson & Co., H.F., Hafnarstræti 9, REYKJAVIK.
- INDIA:** Onkar Longman Ltd., Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate, BOMBAY 400 038; 17 Chittaranjan Avenue, CALCUTTA 13; 36a Anna Salai, Mount Road, MADRAS 2; 80/1 Mahatma Gandhi Road, BANGALORE 560001; 5-9-41/1 Bashir Bagh, HYDERABAD 500001 (AP); 3-5-820 Hyderguda, HYDERABAD 500001. *Sub-depots:* Oxford Book & Stationery Co., 17 Park Street, CALCUTTA 700016; Scindia House, NEW DELHI 110001; Publications Section, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 511, C-Wing, Shastri Bhawan, NEW DELHI 110001.
- IRAN:** Iranian National Commission for Unesco, Seyyed Jamal Eddin Assad Abadi Av., 64th St., Bonyad Bdg., P.O. Box 1533, TEHRAN.
- IRELAND:** The Educational Company of Ireland Ltd., Ballymount Road, Walkinstown, DUBLIN 12.
- ISRAEL:** A.B.C. Bookstore Ltd., P.O. Box 1283, 71 Allenby Road, TEL AVIV 61000.
- ITALY:** Licox (Libreria Commissionaria Sansoni S.p.A.), Via Lamarmora 45, casella postale 552, 50121 FIRENZE; FAO Bookshop, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 ROME.
- IVORY COAST:** Librairie des Presses de l'Unesco, Commission nationale ivoirienne pour l'Unesco, B.P. 2871, ABIDJAN.
- JAMAICA:** Sangster's Book Stores Ltd., P.O. Box 566, 101 Water Lane, KINGSTON; University of the West Indies Bookshop, Mona, KINGSTON.
- JAPAN:** Eastern Book Service Inc., 37-3 Hongo 3-chome, Bunkyo-ku, TOKYO 113.
- JORDAN:** Jordan Distribution Agency, P.O. B. 375, AMMAN.
- KENYA:** East African Publishing House, P.O. Box 30571, NAIROBI; Africa Book Services Ltd., Quran House, Mfangano Street, P.O. Box 45245, NAIROBI.
- REPUBLIC OF KOREA:** Korean National Commission for Unesco, P.O. Box Central 64, SEOUL.
- KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Bookshop Co. Ltd., P.O. Box 2942, KUWAIT.
- LEBANON:** Librairies Antoine, A. Naouf et Frères, B.P. 656, BEIRUT.
- LESOTHO:** Mazoned Book Centre, P.O. MAZENOD.
- LIBERIA:** Cole & Yancy Bookshops Ltd., P.O. Box 286, MONROVIA.
- LIBYAN ARAB JAMA'HIRIYA:** Agency for Development of Publication and Distribution, P.O. Box 34-35, TRIPOLI.
- LIECHTENSTEIN:** Eurocan Trust Reg., P.O.B. 5, FL-9494, SCHAAN.
- LUXEMBOURG:** Librairie Paul Bruck, 22 Grand Rue, LUXEMBOURG. *For the Unesco 'Courier' only:* 202 avenue du Roi, 1060 BRUXELLES.
- MADAGASCAR:** Commission nationale de la République Démocratique de Madagascar pour l'Unesco, Boite postale 331, ANTANANARIVO.
- MALAWI:** Malawi Book Service, Head Office, P.O. Box 30044, CHICHELI, BLANTYRE 3.
- MALAYSIA:** Federal Publications Sdn. Bhd., Lor 8238 Jalan 222, Petaling Jaya, SELANGOR; University of Malaya, Cooperative Bookshop, KUALA LUMPUR 22-11.
- MALI:** Librairie populaire du Mali, B.P. 28, BAMAKO.
- MALTA:** Sapientias, 26 Republic Street, VALETTA.
- MAURITANIA:** GRA-LI.CO.MA, 1, rue du Souk X, Avenue Kennedy, NOUAKCHOTT.
- MAURITIUS:** Nalanda Co. Ltd., 30 Bourbon Street, PORT-LOUIS.
- MEXICO:** SABSA, Insurgentes Sur n° 1032-401, MÉXICO 12, DF; Librería 'El Correo de la Unesco', Actipán 66 (Insurgentes/Moncal), Colonia del Valle, 03100 MÉXICO, DF.
- MONACO:** British Library, 30, boulevard des Moulins, MONTE CARLO.
- MOROCCO:** Librairie 'Aux belles images', 282, avenue Mohammed-V, RABAT, C.C.P. 68-74. *For 'The Courier' (for teachers):* Commission nationale marocaine pour l'Education, la Science et la Culture, 19, rue Oqba, B.P. 420, AGDAL-RABAT (C.C.P. 324-45); Librairie des écoles, 12, avenue Hassan II, CASABLANCA; Société Chérifienne de Distribution et de Presse, SOCHEPRESS, angle rues de Dinant et St Saëns, B.P. 683, CASABLANCA 05.
- MOZAMBIQUE:** Instituto Nacional do Livro e do Disco (INLD), Avenida 24 de Julho, 1921-r/c e 1º andar, MAPUTO.
- NEPAL:** Sajha Prakashan, Polchowki, KATHMANDU.
- NETHERLANDS:** Publications: Keesing Boeken B.V., Hogehiltweg 13, 1101 CB AMSTERDAM or Postbus 1118, 1000 BC AMSTERDAM. *Periodicals:* D & N-Faxon B.V., Postbus 197, 1000 AD AMSTERDAM.
- NETHERLANDS ANTILLES:** Van Dorp-Edine N.V., P.O. Box 200, Willemstad, CURAÇAO, N.A.
- NEW CALEDONIA:** Reprex SARL, B.P. 1572, NOUMEA.
- NEW ZEALAND:** Government Printing Office Bookshops: Retail Bookshop - 25 Rutland Street; Mail orders - 85 Beach Road, Private Bag, C.P.O., AUCKLAND, Retail - Ward Street; Mail orders - P.O. Box 857, HAMILTON Retail - Cubacade World Trade Center, Mulgrave Street, (Head Office); Mail orders - Private Bag, WELLINGTON Retail - 159 Herford Street; Mail orders - Private Bag, CHRISTCHURCH Retail - Princess Street; Mail orders - P.O. Box 1104, DUNEDIN.
- NICARAGUA:** Librería Cultural Nicaragüense, calle 15 de Septiembre y avenida Bolívar, apartado n° 807, MANAGUA; Librería de la Universidad Centroamericana, Apartado 69, MANAGUA.
- NIGER:** Librairie Muclet, B.P. 868, NIAMEY.
- NIGERIA:** The University Bookshop of Ife; The University Bookshop of Ibadan, P.O. Box 286; The University Bookshop of Nsukka; The University Bookshop of Lagos; The Ahmadu Bello University Bookshop of Zaria.
- NORWAY:** Publications: Johan Grundt Tanum, Karl Johans Gate 41/43, OSLO 1; Universitets Bokhandel, Universitetscentret, P.O. B. 307, Blindern, OSLO 1. *For 'The Courier':* A/S Naresens Litteratortjeneste, Box 6125, OSLO 6.
- PAKISTAN:** Mirza Book Agency, 65 Shahrah Quaid-i-Azam, P.O. Box 739, LAHORE 3; Unesco Publications Centre, Regional Office for Book Development in Asia and the Pacific (ROBDAP), 39 Delhi Housing Society, P.O. Box 8950, KARACHI 29.
- PANAMA:** Distribuidora Cultural Internacional, Apartado 7571, Zona 5, PANAMÁ.
- PARAGUAY:** Agencia de Diarios y Revistas, Sra. Nelly de García Aspillero, Pte. Franco 580, ASUNCION.
- PERU:** Librería Studium, Plaza Francia 1164, Apartado 2139, LIMA; Librería La Familia, Pasaje Penafloja 112, Apartado 4199, LIMA.
- PHILIPPINES:** National Book Store Inc., 701 Rizal Avenue, MANILA.
- POLAND:** ORPAN-Import, Pałac Kultury, 00-901 WARSZAWA; Ars Polona-Ruch, Krakowskie Przedmiescie N° 7, 00-068 WARSZAWA.
- PORTUGAL:** Dias & Andrade Ltda, Livraria Portugal, rua do Carmo 70, LISBOA.
- PUERTO RICO:** Librería Alma Mater, Cabrera 867, Rio Piedras, PUERTO RICO 00925.
- ROMANIA:** ARTEXIM Export/Import, Piaza Stiintei n° 1, P.O. Box 33-16, 70005 BUCURESTI.
- SAUDI ARABIA:** Dar Al-Warar for Publishing and Information, Olaya Main Street, Ibrahim Bin Sulaym Building, P.O. Box 3310, RIYADH.
- SENEGAL:** Librairie Catholique, B.P. 2005, DAKAR; Librairie des 4 vents, 91, rue Blanchot, B.P. 1820, DAKAR.
- SEYCHELLES:** New Service Ltd., Kingsgate House, P.O. Box 131, MAHE, National Bookshop, P.O. Box 48, MAHE.
- SIERRA LEONE:** Fourah Bay College, Njala University and Sierra Leone Diocesan Bookshops, FREETOWN.
- SINGAPORE:** Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd., Times Junction, 2 Jurong Port Road, SINGAPORE 2261.
- SOMALIA:** Modern Book Shop and General, P.O. Box 951, MOGADISCIO.
- SPAIN:** Mundi-Prensa Libros S.A., Caselló 37, MADRID I; Ediciones Liber, apartado 17, Magdalena 8, ONDARROA (Vizcaya); Donaire, Ronda de Outeiro, 20, apartado de correos 341, LA CORUNA; Librería Al-Andalus, Roldana, 1 y 3, SEVILLA 4; Librería Castells, Ronda Universidad 13, BARCELONA 7.
- SRI LANKA:** Lake House Bookshop, Sir Chittampalam Gardiner Mawata, P.O. Box 244, COLOMBO 2.
- SUDAN:** Al Bashir Bookshop, P.O. Box 1118, KHARTOUM.
- SURINAME:** Suriname National Commission for Unesco, P.O. Box 2943, PARAMARIBO.
- SWEDEN:** *Publications:* A/B C.E. Friets Kung. Hovbokhandel, Regementsgatan 12, Box 16350, S-163 27 STOCKHOLM. *For 'The Courier':* Svenska FN-Förbundet, Skolgränd 2, Box 150 50, S-104 65 STOCKHOLM (Postbox 18 46 92). *Subscriptions:* Wenner-Gren-Williams AB, Box 30004, S-104 25 STOCKHOLM.
- SWITZERLAND:** Europa Verlag, Rämistrasse 5, 8024 ZÜRICH; Librairies Payot (Geneva, Lausanne, Basel, Berne, Vevey, Montreux, Neuchâtel, Zurich).
- SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC:** Librairie Sayegh, Immeuble Diab, rue du Parlement, B.P. 704, DAMAS.
- THAILAND:** Sukpanat Panit, Mansion 9, Rajdamnern Avenue, BANGKOK; Nibondh & Co. Ltd., 40-42 Charoen Krung Road, Si-yong Phraya Sri, P.O. Box 402, BANGKOK; Sukst Siam Company, 1715 Rama IV Road, BANGKOK.
- TOGO:** Librairie Evangélique, B.P. 378, LOMÉ; Librairie du Bon Pasteur, B.P. 1164, LOMÉ; Librairie universitaire, B.P. 3481, LOMÉ.
- TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO:** Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for Unesco, 18 Alexandra Street, St. Clair, PORT OF SPAIN.
- TUNISIA:** Société tunisienne de diffusion, 5, avenue de Carthage, TUNIS.
- TURKEY:** Hacet Kitapevi A.S., Istiklal Caddesi, N° 469, Posta Kuusu 219, Beyoglu, ISTANBUL.
- UGANDA:** Uganda Bookshop, P.O. Box 7145, KAMPALA.
- UNITED KINGDOM:** HMSO Publications Centre, P.O. Box 276, LONDON SW8 5DT; Government Bookshops: London, Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Manchester; Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Road, BIRMINGHAM B11 1RD. *For scientific maps only:* McCarra Ltd, 122 King's Cross Road, LONDON WC1X 9DS.
- UNITED REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON:** Le Secrétaire Général de la Commission nationale de la République Unie du Cameroun pour l'Unesco, B.P. 1600, YAOUNDE; Librairie des éditions Clé, B.P. 1591, YAOUNDE; Librairie St Paul, B.P. 763, YAOUNDE; Librairie aux Messageries, Avenue de la Liberté, B.P. 5921, DOUALA; Librairie aux frères réunis, B.P. 5346, DOUALA; Centre de Diffusion du Livre Camerounais, B.P. 538, DOUALA.
- UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA:** Dar es Salaam Bookshop, P.O. Box 9040, DAR ES SALAAM.
- UNITED STATES:** UNIPUB, 205 East 42nd Street, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017. *Order for books and periodicals:* UNIPUB, Box 1222, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106.
- URUGUAY:** Edilur: Uruguaya, S.A., Maldonado 1092, MONTEVIDEO.
- USSR:** V/O Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga, Ul.Dimitrova 39, MOSKVA 113095.
- VENEZUELA:** Librería del Este, Av. Francisco de Miranda, 52, Edificio Galipán, Apartado 60337, CARACAS; Dilas, C.A., Alfidil Ediciones S.A., Avenidas Los Mangos, Las Delicias, Apartado 50304, Sabana Grande, CARACAS.
- YUGOSLAVIA:** Jugoslovenska Knjiga, Trig Republike 5/8, P.O. Box 36, 11-001, BEOGRAD; Drzavna Zaloza Slovenije, Titova C, 25, P.O. B. 50-1, 61-000 LJUBJANA.
- ZAMBIA:** National Educational Distribution Co. of Zambia Ltd, P.O. Box 2664, LUSAKA.
- ZIMBABWE:** Textbook Sales (PVT) Ltd., 67 Union Avenue, HARARE.

UNESCO BOOK COUPONS

Unesco Book Coupons can be used to purchase all books and periodicals of an educational, scientific or cultural character. For full information please write to: Unesco Coupon Office, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris (France).