

## THE FUTURE OF THE PAST: FIRST PERSPECTIVES FOR DOCLEA TODAY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The title of this section consciously recalls that of the project we are currently running in Doclea for 2018-2020 ('The Future of the Past: Study and Enhancement of Ancient Doclea, Montenegro', Project of Great Relevance for Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, MAECI). Here we outline what we, the Italian and Montenegrin teams, have achieved in the first year of campaigning (2017), and what we intend to realize in the following three years. From the outset, our focus was not only on extracting scientific knowledge and seeking the preservation of the site (RINALDI TUFFI, BARATTI, PELOSO 2010), but also to consider its future development and utilisation. In agreement with and with the approval of the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, our final goal is the design and completion of a sustainable plan for the relaunch of the site, in order to hand it back to its community as a tool for socio-cultural and economic growth.

In this paper, we mention only some very preliminary areas of input, partly based on the first experiences had on site at Doclea, and again drawing upon similar enhancement examples coming from Italy (GOZZER 2004; BECUCCI 2007; BARATTI 2012; MIBACT 2017; SANTO *et al.* 2017).

Doclea is set in a beautiful natural landscape, relatively unspoiled by human intervention – with the notable exception of the very invasive railway erected in the late forties of the last century, which cut across the middle of the site. The first observation to swiftly arise is that the site's context is very conducive for the creation of an ecomuseum, or a 'museo diffuso' (an open museum) that could most effectively link the historical-archaeological heritage of the site to the surrounding territory and the resident community. A structure that is more than a simple archaeological park – a concept perhaps by now past its simple beginnings – is required: an innovative conception, capable of becoming an active instrument not only for a sustainable conservation of the existing monuments, but able above all to be developed as a means of fruitful cultural dissemination for both contemporary and future generations (RIVA 2017). Our purpose, therefore, is to give new life to the archaeological site through enhancing its relationship with its wider context, involving not only past human groups, but also the communities living in Doclea today. For Doclea to succeed it must be accepted by the resident community as a fundamental component of its everyday life (RICCI 2006; CARANDINI 2017).

## 2. THE ECOMUSEUM CONCEPT

The term ecomuseum was coined by Hugues de Varine in 1971 (*cit.* in JALLA 2015): «Something that represents what a territory is, and what its inhabitants are, starting from the living culture of people, from their environment, from what they have inherited from the past, from what they love and wish to show their guests and pass on to their children». Starting from this citation, made during the Ninth Conference of the International Council of Museums, it was established that «Un écomusée, ce n'est pas un musée comme les autres... C'est un musée éclaté, interdisciplinaire, démontrant l'homme dans le temps et dans l'espace, dans son environnement naturel et culturel, invitant la totalité d'une population à participer à son propre développement par divers moyens d'expression basés essentiellement sur la réalité des sites, des édifices, des objets, choses réelles plus parlantes que les mots ou les images qui envahissent notre vie».

From these very first definitions, it is clear that the open museum is conceived of not only a tangible and physical space, in which may be exhibited pieces of cultural heritage, but an extraordinary tool able to improve and enhance not only the material cultural heritage of the population, but also its immaterial aspects. The two facets, the material and the immaterial, mutually strengthened by their reciprocal relationships, will be first and foremost an integral part of daily local life, and only then be revealed to tourists. The relation and interplay between territory and local ethnography are evident and important from the start. Well before the coinage of the abstract vocabulary and concepts attached to the term ecomuseum, the real-life promotion of these links were initially and independently developed as instruments to protect the traces of rural societies at a time when rapid and massive urbanization could completely eradicate a thousand-year cultural heritage in no time at all. After an initial propagation of such approaches in France, where there is now a federation of ecomuseums, the idea spread to francophone countries such as Canada, and more recently into many other European countries. This new concept of a museum took root also against many different physical backdrops: border areas, natural parks, former industrial areas, and other places marginalized by the mass tourism development (AUGÉ 1992; MAGGI 2002; REINA 2016). Since the 1990s, these developments are emerging on the world scene as one of the most innovative ways of effecting the difficult marrying up of conservation and development, of culture and environment, of local identity and tourism.

More recently, in the *Declaration of Intent* in the Long Net Workshop held in Trento (Italy) in May 2004, it was stated that «An Ecomuseum is a dynamic way in which communities preserve, interpret, and manage their heritage for a sustainable development. An Ecomuseum is based on a community agreement».

In our particular case, by ecomuseum we mean an archaeological park project, linked to a territory and characterized by traditional lifestyles, whose natural and historical-artistic heritage is above all relevant and worthy of protection, restoration and enhancement. Unlike a normal museum, which usually acts as a container (even in the case of those of considerable size), an ecomuseum is chiefly defined by *not* being surrounded by walls. It is an extensive area without necessarily any defined limits, in which the visitor can enjoy an *en plein air* experience, discovering a landscape of particular interest through following at their whim physical and cultural paths, their curiosity stimulated by encountering educational and research activities, tangibly involving local associations, cultural institutions and the whole community.

An ecomuseum does not remove cultural heritage from its context to display it 'artificially' elsewhere, in the closed space of a traditional museum, but it leaves it undisturbed and in place, an object-lesson in the re-appropriation by the community of its cultural heritage and ultimately identity. It is the community who takes care of the territory in which it is living. Above all, the main daily input of this sort of project is affected by the local communities: they not only participate in the area's activities and so profit in the economic re-launch, but are the first line of defence, responsible for the site's conservation and management. The philosophy behind this sort of open museum is the realisation of a constructive relationship between a population in its entirety, the involved institutions and a multidisciplinary team of experts.

One of the first and most welcome results of the ecomuseum experience is not just the protection of the historical heritage, but the perceptible enhancement of a physical area, with all its cultural features and points of particular interest. The protection of historical and pre-historical remains, the recovery and enrichment of natural environments, the rediscovery of ancient paths and trekking activities, an increase of diverse agricultural and crafts activities with economic benefits, a relaunch of hotel facilities and catering services.

Because such open museums do not have clear physical limits, another aspect of great value is the development of thematic itineraries involving other sites existing in the same territory and facing similar problems. This is achieved through the creation of an interconnected network of cultural sites, bringing out both affinities and peculiarities, all useful for the creation of a richer cultural and tourist experience.

In order to respond to the perceived desired increase among people for 'open museums', as theorized by Fredi Drugman (DRUGMAN, BASSO PERESSUT, BRENNA 2002), ecomuseum projects promote the rediscovery of the identity of the territory through its cultural distinctiveness, and by experiencing a network of places of historical, artistic, environmental and touristic interest.

### 3. A FIRST METAPROJECT ON DOCLEA

The physical features of the territory in which Doclea lies rapidly suggested the ecomuseum approach as a suitable way of handling the site and its natural environment. Both traditional and innovative activities are to be found here, in the fields of pastoralism, agriculture and specifically viticulture. The terrain, even though very near to the capital Podgorica, is still little inhabited: a few built-up areas exist, but most are uncultivated sectors, left open for pastoralism. The presence of the beautiful Zeta and Morača rivers, with small beaches where during the very hot summers it is possible to bathe (if not swim) could be a very positive feature for encouraging visitors.

The lack of very impressive archaeological monuments encourages the establishment, as the key-stone for the enhancement of the territory, of a positive interaction between natural and cultural aspects, rather than one reliant only on archaeological remains. The experience thus will not be limited to the Doclea archaeological site, but will involve also other cultural aspects, some still needing development, and ethnographic activities to be rediscovered and promoted, as well as drawing attention to other archaeological and historical traces, known but not yet valued sufficiently – namely Bronze Age remains (tumulus?), Roman roads and a mine, medieval structures and churches.

The scientific aspect will be not neglected but indeed improved, with spaces and activities on site to preserve and enhance the cultural memory of the territory. Specific attention will be given to the younger generations, in order to attract them into cultural and ethnographic activities linked to their territory.

The project development requires first a requisite framework, i.e. a precise list of the needs and objectives, with an assessment of their various scales and desired rate of progression.

The primary goals for a Doclea ecomuseum are:

- The definition, even if loose, of the large area of the ecomuseum, with particular care paid to the most sensitive areas from an archaeological point of view and to the creation of a rational sequence of areas to eventually and accumulatively be added into the ecomuseum project.
- The design of internal routes, always strictly linked with external ones, already known or to be assessed, in order to regulate visitor flows (including the intended placement of information boards), with the overall aim to connect the site and the ecomuseum with the wider surrounding area.
- Enhancement of the landscape, with targeted interventions also of an environmental nature (arrangement of the greenery, ad hoc plantings, etc.).
- Planning of the support network/infrastructure for the reception of tourists in the territory, with the organization of reservations for overnight stays and catering.

The archaeological site will be the centre of attraction for the ecomuseum, but for the fullest benefit to be derived by visitors, special interventions are needed, including:

- The infrastructure necessary for reaching the site, both for the able and not-able bodied (parking, bus lines, bus stops, accessibility, etc.), with the direct involvement of local institutions.
- The creation of an architectural plan, including all aspects of public reception: from the primary services such as sanitary facilities, refreshment points, etc., to information points and services.
- The review of the information-delivering structures: informative posters, both traditional and on the multimedia, where new technologies can be exploited through the creation of dedicated apps.
- The planning for a permanent laboratory/set-up for the study, the promotion and the dissemination of the knowledge of the site (such could, for example, contain activities for students and children).
- The promotion of teaching and research activities, implemented with the direct involvement of the people and local institutions.
- Protection of the most delicate finds, but avoiding the presence of invasive fences or bollards.
- The installation of plant (hydraulic-electric) to facilitate the most complete use of the site, the correct functioning of the structures and the maintenance of standards of hygiene and safety.
- The creation of traditional museum spaces, using the already existing built structures (as the so-called ‘Old School’ and the Guards Building), in which to locate multimedia, virtual and art exhibitions.
- The creation of new spaces, none-invasive, but able to host small groups of visitors in the open countryside from which enjoy a new visual experience of Doclea and its environment; such spaces to be used also for conferences, meetings, games and educational activities etc.
- The provision of lighting for some section of the site, so as to open it for cultural activities, such as musical and theatrical events, for example, using as an arena the space of the *forum*.
- Implementation of a security alarm system able to protect the site from vandalism and thefts, designed to be not invasive.

The Doclea area is one suited to the creation in villages around the site of modest tourist facilities, such as bed-and-breakfast and family hospitality, so preventing the building of big and invasive hotel infrastructures, with refreshment points at which one may taste local products made with traditional procedures. An open museum here can promote the territory, not only

through the cultural and scientific upgrading of the archaeological site, but through a broad-based sustainable tourism in which the local community itself performs the leading role.

The ultimate aim is that of the rediscovery of the cultural identity of the territory and the collective memory of a community, giving new life to past material culture and traditions, offering to visitors and inhabitants alike an integrated human experience of physical and mental well-being.

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## ABSTRACT

The title of this section consciously recalls that of the project currently running in Doclea for 2018-2020 ('The Future of the Past: Study and Enhancement of Ancient Doclea, Montenegro'). The Authors focus their attention not only on extracting scientific knowledge and seeking the preservation of the site, but also on considering its future development and utilisation. The final goal is the design and completion of a sustainable plan for the relaunch of the site, in order to hand it back to its community as a tool for socio-cultural and economic growth. The rediscovery of the cultural identity of the territory and the collective memory of a community can give new life to past material culture and traditions, offering to visitors and inhabitants an integrated human experience of physical and mental well-being.

