

**Stratigraphic Landscapes:  
ecomuseums and archaeology**

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## **Abstract**

This report is the result of a field research project undertaken between September and December 2009 in Northern/Eastern Italy in collaboration with the Institute of Social and Economic Research Piedmont, Turin Italy. This research specifically addresses the relationship of ecomuseums and archaeology. It investigates how 5 different ecomuseum incorporate archaeological heritage, looking at the trends in current programs, problems and concerns and future plans for the inclusion of archaeology into the ecomuseum landscape. As ecomuseums are directly related to the specific context and needs of its community, a case study of each ecomuseum is also included with information about its context, known archaeological heritage, specific programs, problems, and future plans. Lastly, in conjunction with the specific situation of each ecomuseums, this report provides suggestions from an outside perspective, which could be included to further develop programs related to archaeology.



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## **Introduction**

An ecomuseum landscape is holistic with many opportunities to engage communities with projects in heritage preservation, social and economic development and ecological issues. This report is a case study of five ecomuseums in two regions in Italy that investigates archaeology as one aspect of the total ecomuseum project.

In this report I first briefly define ecomuseums and give the Italian context in terms of laws developed to help support the formation of ecomuseum projects. Next I give some thought to how archaeology fits in the ecomuseum landscape with both practical and conceptual benefits. Following this I summarize current programs, problems and future plans of archaeological inclusion so that the results can be used for practical application by similar institutions. As each ecomuseum is created and responds to the specific needs of its community, this report also includes a brief case study of each ecomuseum involved in order to gain a better understanding of the context, archaeological heritage and more specific area of the programs of each institution. Lastly, I offer recommendations for future development from an outside perspective, usually seen in the specific context of each museum but applicable to many other situations and projects.

# Ecomuseums

## **General definition**

*“The essence of place lies beyond the museum, in the environment itself, and is defined by the individuals who live there.” (Corsane et al. 2009, 5)*

Ecomuseums are dynamic institutions that conserve and interpret tangible and intangible heritage of a defined territory. They are museums of time and space that “serve to conserve and interpret all elements of the environment (social, cultural and natural) to establish the thread of continuity with the past and bring a sense of belonging” (Davis 1999, 5). Ideally ecomuseums are based on a democratic community approach to celebrate local distinctiveness with a long term sustainable development plan. Although each ecomuseum is unique depending on its location and community there are a few overarching defining characteristics originally described by Davis (1999) and modified by Corsane et al (2007).

These are:

- The adoption of a territory (boundaries can be defined for example by dialect, industry, tradition, landscape)
- The identification of specific heritage resources and celebration of these using *in situ* conservation and interpretation
- Conservation and interpretation of individual sites is based on cooperation and the development of partnerships
- The empowerment of local communities; in the creation of the ecomuseum, involvement in its activities, and benefits from its creation (i.e. intangible, tangible or economic)

In addition to these, new initiatives within ecomuseums structures place emphasis on; “self-representation; full community participation in and ownership of, heritage resources and management processes; rural or urban regeneration; sustainable development; and, responsible tourism” (Corsane et al. 2009, 6).

## **The Italian Case**

In Italy, regional laws have given a funding opportunity to the development of new ecomuseums. In 1995 the region of Piemonte passed law 1995/31. The aims of this law are “reconstructing, recording and conserving the historical memory, life, material culture, relations between natural and anthropic environment, traditions and the way in which traditional settlement has characterized the formation and evolution of the landscape.” (1995/31 Art.1) It specifically states that the aims of an ecomuseum should be the conservation or restoration of traditional living environment, conservation of characteristic dwellings, reconstruction of traditional living to produce good and services for sale, preparation of walking trails, active involvement of the community, and

promotion and support of scientific research (1995/31 Art 1).

Because of the encouragement for ecomuseum projects, Piemonte has seen a boom of ecomuseums in the region. However, many organizations are still unrecognized even though they meet the criteria. This is due in part to the economic crisis but also the overwhelming demand of regional funds from communities in Piemonte for their ecomuseums.

Other regions have adopted similar laws. For example, the Friulian Region created Law 10/2006 using examples from both Piemonte and Trentino. This law aims to “recover, testify to and enhance historical memory, life, figures and events, material and immaterial culture, relations between nature and man-made environment, traditions, activities and how the traditional settlement has affected the landscape and the regional territory, within the prospect of directing the territory’s future development towards environmental, economic and social sustainability, responsibility and involvement of both public and private subjects and the whole local community” (10/2006 art.1). In contrast to the Piemonte region, this law makes it necessary that the ecomuseum territory be homogenous. Since the writing of the law only four ecomuseums in this region are currently recognized by the government.

### ***Archaeology and the ecomuseum landscape***

Archaeology has value in the ecomuseum context in both practical and conceptual ways. In the most obvious practical sense ecomuseums allow archaeological heritage to be experienced *in situ* from a site perspective, which gives the optimal understanding of place, looking not only at the artifacts and data but features and the layout on the landscape. At the same time adding another layer to the value of the whole of the territory (Davis 2005).

### **Archaeology and local community**

Archaeology can act as a catalyst to connect and empower community. Through programs, archaeology gives community members a chance to explore their heritage hands-on, provide scientific evidence for or against legends, identity constructions, and local histories, and empower communities to protect and value archaeological heritage by taking local responsibility for sites through the education and understanding of their importance and meaning.

Furthermore, archaeology can be an important meeting point for the creation and development of networks. These networks might develop between various communities with shared heritage like the collaboration between ecomuseums and other cultural institutions. But it also can act as a local meeting place for the professional archaeologist and hobbyist, which aid to balance the “traditional” academic interpretation and the mystic interests of local heritage providing a diverse community voice.

Lastly, it is important point of interest for the younger generations of a community as it starts to teach the value of heritage, helping them to understand the mechanisms of destruction needed in order to reach modern construction visible on the physically and cultural landscape. By giving young adults access to the past, an ecomuseum can foster respect, appreciation and activism on behalf of an irreplaceable heritage (Hoffman 1997, 73)

### **Stratigraphic approach**

Ecomuseums already function in a similar way to archaeology, by taking a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to the community landscape. Furthermore through ecomuseum projects, the various and sometimes disjuncture pieces of the community are joined together, celebrated and better understood.

At a more conceptual level, ecomuseums can use stratigraphy, a basic model of archaeological inquiry to view, interpret and understand their communities through space and time. Applying this “stratigraphic” view of an ecomuseum territory, a community can look beyond the surface and begin to see the intricacies and relationships of layers that build the identity and distinctiveness of a place. This does not only apply to the physicality of structures and ecology but also has strong application in intangible heritage and the links to the tangible. People define their landscapes in a holistic way including not only the tangible aspect like nature, habitat, place and artifacts but also those intangible elements and emotions like wealth, problems, aesthetics, ideology and systems (Meinig 1979). Using a stratigraphic approach, a community can start to understand the multiple roots of their identity and start to overturn simplified identity construction created by political agendas.

## **Methodology**

### ***Desk Study***

A literature review was conducted at various intervals during the period of September –December 2009 at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Turin Italy. This included a review of general ecomuseum literature and a more intensive study of literature collected from the ecomuseums participating in this project.

### ***Field Research***

#### **Ecomuseums Visited**

Five ecomuseums took part in this research project including; Ecomuseo Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea, Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra, Ecomuseo delle Acque, Ecomuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite, and Ecomuseo del Lago d'Orta e Mottaron. Field visits ranged in length from 1 -12 days with the average of 4 days. Despite the varying time in the field adequate information was obtained from each ecomuseum in order to address the research question.

#### **Methods of Data Collection**

In 'field' data were collected mainly through participation and observation. In many instances, I was able to sit in on meetings (i.e. board, community and project planning meetings), participate in workshops, and attend events. Some informal interviews were also conducted. Lastly, site visits were a big part of the program at each museum, where I was able to see the rich archaeological heritage first hand.

### ***Analysis of Results***

Information collected from literature and field research were then summarized to look at the general trends of the archaeology programs, identify issues and provide recommendations for further integration of archaeology into the ecomuseum landscape. Before the publication of this report, a meeting was organized to discuss the results of the project with those participating in this study. This was intended as a starting point for sharing information and ideas in the larger project of the Italian Ecomuseum Network.

## Summary of Results

### ***What ecomuseums are doing to include archaeology***

Archaeology can be incorporated into ecomuseum programs in very creative ways with the potential for multiple levels of community involvement. In this case study, the current trends of archaeological inclusion fit into the concept, purpose and budget of an ecomuseum. While all programs might not fit specifically into “traditional” ideas of archaeology, their contents transmit ‘traditional knowledge’ in order to preserve intangible heritage. This section will summarize the trends and practical application of ecomuseum archaeological programs but further details regarding these programs can be found in each ecomuseum profile.

### **Landscape Walks**

The most frequently used methods were organized walks in the ecomuseum territories. Most walks included archaeology as a part of a holistic view of the landscape but some were organized to visit specific sites, in order to bring awareness or highlight a particular topic. These walks can be implemented in a number of ways 1) With a guide/s to explain the history, legends, environmental, and/or artistic interpretation of a landscape or site 2) Placing permanent informational panels on a trail giving individuals or groups a point of discussion or thought or 3) the publication of a “trail guide” offering various forms of information in a hand-held version. All these methods are interchangeable and flexible and their implementation as a community project can be just as important as the result.

Guided walks have had a good response from community members in the ecomuseums reviewed in this project. For example in Lago d’Orta, which organizes, walks 5 times a year, an average of 150 people attend each walk and at the Anfiteatro Morenico, 90 people attended a walk organized along the Roman Period aqueducts. Not only does high attendance show interest in this type of activity, it inadvertently acts as a mechanism to bring people together that may not normally meet, build community, teach about the landscape and gather new knowledge and information. These also have great flexibility depending on who leads the hikes and which part of the landscape is the focus.

Interpretation panels have a little less flexibility for providing updated information but they can be very beneficial for teachers, tourists, or local explorers who want to have a starting point of discussion. The process of enacting these interpretation panels can be founded in a community process to make them even more valuable in the ecomuseum setting. For example, at Ecomuseo delle Acque 5 panels on a local trail were created entirely by school children over the course of a year. Children wrote, researched, drew and photographed various information about the local landscape and left a legacy for future school groups.

Lastly, trail guide publications are an interesting way to make a self-guided walk

but have flexibility in the type, quantity and changes to information. Again at Ecomuseo delle Acque a series of 8 publications for the different areas/townships of the territory were published (Ecomuseo delle Acque 2007). These include several different walks and focus with fold out maps, photographs, brief histories and information to read on the way. Downfalls could be the expenses of the printing and the distribution of these.

### **School Programs**

The second most frequent inclusion of archaeology is through school programs. Each ecomuseum in this study had a different approach to program curriculum, teaching methods, and target age groups but all used some form of 'hands-on' or outdoor learning. Three of the ecomuseums charged a small fee for the courses to supplement materials and contracting fees. In the past these courses were popular for schools but the recent national government cuts to education have made it difficult for schools to afford any extra expenses including ecomuseum courses. Only one out of the five museums gave the students the opportunity to participate in archaeological excavation (delle Acque) but this is also the only ecomuseum with ongoing excavations in its territory.

School programs should be organized according to the needs of a community and the resources (financial and expertise) of the ecomuseum. Overall these are very creative methods for learning outside of the "classroom" but also outside of the "traditional" museum setting. These types of lessons are very important for younger generation concerning archaeological heritage not just because of the learning that takes place but the stress on the importance of heritage from a young age. Furthermore regardless if there is an ongoing excavation, school programs can let children get their hands dirty and experience archaeology as an explorative process.

### **Workshops**

Workshops are closely linked to school programs but can also be directed at adults or groups of children outside of the normal school context. In most of the ecomuseums these workshops were focused on "intangible" heritage. This means that workshops might not be specifically linked with archaeological research and techniques but they can help participants understand the people of the past through hands on activities.

For example at Ecomuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite, the ecology and the built terraces have become a vehicle to teach workshops in a variety of topics related to these features. Bread baking and wine making workshops give people an opportunity to have a 'hands on' experience of the "traditional" past. The ecomuseum educational consultants have planned activities from the start of the process, meaning children first pick their own grapes from the ecomuseum vines, stomp, bottle and bring home a small bottle of "wine". This structure is applied to many of their workshops, giving participants a holistic perspective of the knowledge they are learning and the interconnections between environment and



local culture.

## Publications

When publications about archaeology were made, these were the result of a community project, exhibition, guide about the legends or guide to experience walks on the ecomuseum landscape.

For example at Ecomuseo Lago d'Orta the book, *Valle Strona Arcaica* (Biganzoli et al 2005), is a survey of archaeological features on the landscape. Both community volunteers and professionals collected these data together and contributed their interpretations.

## Exhibitions

Exhibitions were part of three ecomuseum programs. These were connected to archaeological sites and were housed in locations very close to these sites. Even if they still retained a 'traditional' exhibition style, community projects and photographs were incorporated into the exhibits, allowing the local connection to be shared.

## Excavation/Survey

Lastly, excavation was the least frequent type of program. Ecomuseo delle Acque had the only ongoing excavations and Ecomuseo del Lago d'Orta had a past rock art survey in Valle Strona (mentioned in the publications). While other ecomuseums did have excavations and survey take place in their territory, these were not linked with the ecomuseum activities.

**Table 1: Frequency of Ecomuseum Archaeology programs**

	Landscape Walks	School Programs	Workshops	Publications	Exhibitions	Excavation & Survey
<b>Ecomuseum</b>						
<b>Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea</b>	X					
<b>Valle Elvo e Serra</b>	X	X	X		X	
<b>delle Acque</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite del Lago d'Orta e Mottarone</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X

## ***Problems raised regarding archaeological heritage***

During the field work several themes emerged from the discussions with ecomuseum directors, personal and community members about the problems of archaeological heritage in general or more specifically linked to the inclusion of archaeology into ecomuseum programs. It should be noted that these concerns are quite universal and although many of the ecomuseums in this study may identify with all these concerns or have many more outside of these classifications, this section highlights the most mentioned or noted ones during the field work. Here I will define what is meant by each of these problems/concerns and give real examples from the ecomuseums, the details for the specific situations of each museum can be found in their profiles.

### **Site Protection**

Sites are under threat of destruction or looting whether because people know about a site and try to steal artifacts or people don't know about them and destroy a site during construction or other activities because the inability to recognize its importance. For example this issue was a major concern of the Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra who feared that by exposing sites to the public, certain people might take advantage of that knowledge for their own benefit.

### **Access to Sites**

This is related to important sites that have been closed to visitors or the public by the government or researchers. Making it difficult for ecomuseums to create programs in association with these places. This particular case was raised with Ecomuseo Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea in relation to a Roman Amphitheatre in the territory that has great potential in community programs and tourism but has never been opened to the public to view the remains.

### **Resources and Funding**

A lack of personal or monetary resources to complete proposed projects or develop new programs. All cultural institutions struggle with this point, some like Ecomuseo Anfiteatro have not received regional recognition and thus partial regional support according to the laws, while all others struggle to find affordable solutions to the ever diminishing grants and funds for cultural projects, thus having to make decisions that may in turn exclude archaeology or limit its potential.

### **Artifacts at a Distance**

The storage or display of archaeological artifacts is held in places not easily assessable to local community members. Most frequently artifacts were located in the Turin Archaeological Museum. This was also a situation that was frequent at all the ecomuseums, with the exception of some artifacts that were kept locally in Arterga (Ecomuseo delle Acque).

### **Ecomuseum versus Museum**

In many cases in Europe and North America ecomuseums (or community museums) are seen in a lesser way as compared to the “traditional” museum institution, which often have more conservative conservation, exhibition and educational policies. In the public’s eyes, ecomuseums may not be considered to have the same “authority” over knowledge or culture that a museum is seen to have.

A case in the Biella Ecomuseum (Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra) network is a perfect example of the conflicts between the “traditional” approach to exposing information and the community minded landscape approach of the ecomuseum. Recently a Roman engraved stone was discovered near an important ecomuseum site and community meeting place (la Trappa). According to Italian law this artifact belongs to the state and should be recovered by the museum but and an agreement in exhibiting this stone could be reached so the stone could remain locally. The ecomuseum has provided a reasonable exhibition plan to leave the rock *in situ* but stay protected. However; the Biella Territory Museum does not agree and wants to make another traditional exhibit in house. This is despite the museum's complaints of decreasing visitor numbers and funds. The stubbornness of traditional museums to not only refuse to change their exhibition style but also their relationship with the communities that they are intended to serve is a reoccurring issue in institutional disputes. In the case of Biella it would be more enriching, valuable, and economic for both the community and museum, for the stone to remain *in situ*, yet no compromise is currently willing to be made (See appendix 1).

### **Community Distance from Archaeological Past**

This is more related to a general feeling or attitude of community members and is quite flexible in its application. In a metaphorical way, people may not feel any connection or relation to certain periods of history. For example archaeological remains from the Roman Period may not be considered important or interesting to the current community. This could also be a physical or intellectual distance from archaeological research and artifacts as a result of researchers publishing their findings in university journals or thesis but not sharing with the local community in an understandable way. It is also related to distance created by the exhibition style of “traditional” archaeology museums.

### **Lack of Knowledge/Awareness**

This is simply a result of information not being circulated or absorbed by local communities about the archaeological history. People either do not know or do not want to know about sites and their importance, leading to other problems of site destruction and community distance.

**Table 2: Concerns or Problems with Archaeological Heritage in the Ecomuseum Context**

	Site Protection	Access to Sites	Resources And Funding	Artifacts at a Distance	Community Distance from Archaeological Past	Lack of knowledge and Awareness
<b>Ecomuseum</b>						
<b>Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea</b>		X	X			X
<b>Valle Elvo e Serra</b>	X		X		X	
<b>delle Acque</b>			X		X	X
<b>dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite del Lago d'Orta e Mottarone</b>	X		X			X
			X	X	X	

### ***Local Ideas for Future Inclusion***

The future is key and while current or past archaeology programs may not be enacted, many are planning upcoming activities as well as the further development of current programs. In this section I will briefly outline some of the ideas for future programs in archaeology but more details can be read in the ecomuseum profiles.

### **Creation of Ecomuseum Network**

There are already several networks of communication between ecomuseums in Piemonte, Italy and Europe, however all the museums are working on a consistent network to share ideas between ecomuseums in Italy specifically and possibly internationally in the future. This will inevitably help the archaeological programs through the circulation and sharing of ideas and information.

### **Landscape walks**

Several of the museums have mentioned organizing more integrated or holistic landscape walks (Ecomuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite, delle Acque, Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea, and Val Resia). Other plans include incorporating archaeology but also creating other methods of interpreting archaeological

heritage through art and performance (Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra). Lastly some of the museum mentioned the intention to add information plaques on different points on the landscape.

### **School Programs/Workshops**

It seems that in most cases school programs are in the state of constant revision and development. Ecomuseo Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea is currently developing a school program about archaeology while delle Acque is working to revise and enhance the already existing one.

### **Exhibitions and New Museums**

A collaborative exhibition is being planned in the Biellese Ecomuseum Network (Valle Elvo e Serra) to display an important find found in the territory, however as mentioned in the previous section this process is currently in dispute. Ecomuseo Lago d'Orta is working on putting up new ecomuseums in Valle Strona to display the paleontological findings from local caves. One portion of the museum (a geological section) is soon to be completed but the other portions of the museum await funding.

### **Excavations**

Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra is currently searching for funding to do small scale excavations at one of the dry stone ruins or shelters in the territory and Ecomuseo delle Acque's excavations will continue to be conducted but they are searching for more money in order to expand the project. The other museums mentioned the possibility of doing excavations in the future but they were not actively pursuing the projects or funding.

## Recommendations

It is difficult as an outsider to evaluate an ecomuseum community and their needs in order to give valuable recommendations and advise about future archaeology programs. All the museums participating in this project should be acknowledge for the amazing work they are doing for and with their communities.

I am well aware that the situation of each ecomuseum and current inclusion of archaeology in their programs is dependent on a great number of variables, including staff expertise, community needs and funding. I do not think that archaeology deserves any more of a highlight than other type of program but I do think that it should be included as part of a holistic understanding of a territory or a conceptual model for viewing the community.

Because the majority my own archaeological experience is in working with indigenous communities of North America, I see archaeology as means to empower people, give value to the past and encourage learning and the transmission of traditions. Archaeology may not have these same results in the Italian context although I believe that it can.

In contrast to 'traditional' archaeology museums that in my opinion tend to distance people from the past because of exhibition styles, interpretation methods and practices in conservation; I feel that ecomuseums have a unique position and responsibility not just for the sake of archaeology but for aspects of environment, local community, traditional knowledge and sustainable development. My recommendations are specific to the situations that I witnessed at each ecomuseum but maybe used in a variety of situations. These recommendations may not be possible but I have tried to give valuable input and hopefully reachable programs. Case specific recommendations can be read in each ecomuseum profile.

## **Individual Ecomuseum profiles**

The following sections will describe the situation of each ecomuseum involved in this project. First I give a brief description of the local context and organizational structure of the ecomuseum. Next, I summarize the archaeological heritage and outline the ways that archaeology is currently being included in the ecomuseum programs. I then list the future plans for archaeology programs and some of the community perceptions or problems that is seen in regards to archaeological heritage in each territory. In conclusion I give suggestions specific to the local situation in order to improve the inclusion of archaeology.

## **Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra**

### **(Ecomuseo Biellese)**

#### ***Ecomuseum Context***

Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra is located in the western part of the Biella province in Piemonte. Geographically, the Serra Moraine and the Elvo torrent valley define its territory. Its territory is closely linked with Ecomuseo Anfiteatro, also included in this report. This rich landscape is the central theme of ecomuseum projects as it works to build new relationships between people, record the memories and experience of living in the area, and look towards the future with conservation and asset management.



**Figure 1: Serra Moriane Landscape**

Eleven sites are officially listed as part of the network; including topics in iron working, organ building, traditional architecture, religion and gold mining. These sites are not just conservations of the past; they are living places working towards sustainable development and community empowerment. For example la Trappa, a site of traditional architecture has been under restoration and transformed to a community meeting place. This center used for exhibitions, education, music and art conferences will also be used for cheese production, and as an overnight haven for trekkers, cyclists, donkeys, and horses.





**Figure 2: la Trappa**

Another example of the living museum is la Bessa. This gold mining site from the 1st century BC, is not only a record of Roman exploitation of the area but the host for the Gold Mining World Championships which brings miners from around the world to compete and exchange cultural knowledge.





## ***Organizational Structure***

Founded in 1998, Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra became part of the larger Ecomuseo del Biellese network recognized officially from Regione Piemonte in 2000. There are fifteen main ecomuseums and twenty-four other organizations, associations and cultural institutions in the ecomuseum network. Although cultural institutions employ some staff, many of the ecomuseums depend on committed volunteers. In the case of Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra, volunteers with expertise in various fields have created and now run the ecomuseum projects. The ecomuseum has a main coordinator and several other main people who take charge of the individual sites. In addition to this a board of community members meets on a weekly basis to discuss issues and connect on a personal level.

## ***KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGY***

In the larger Biella territory artifacts have been recovered from the Paleolithic to the historic periods. A number of important Roman sites have been recovered, including a necropolis. Although it is important to look at the whole Biellese province to fully understand the richness of archaeological information, this section of the report will focus on what is found within the Valle Elvo e Serra territory which has a richness all on its own.

### **Rock art**

A recent discovery of an engraved stone at la Trappa has inspired excitement. The stone has been dated to the 1st century BC, correlating with the historical period of Bessa gold mines, and the carvings appear to be made by Roman hands. It is important evidence of the long history human presence on the territory.

Serra Moriane has numerous stone carving on the landscape. These are often keystones of structures indicating the year of construction, family name or symbol. Some are found attached to structures or ruins while others have no associated context. In addition to this there are a number of engravings that appear to have a functional use, like draining or collecting water but these cannot easily be dated.

At la Bessa, there are engraved Celtic period stone panels with the typical pothole pattern found in other places in Northern Italy. The patterns vary in the numbers of holes, channels and size. For example one large panel has a series of paired holes connected with a single channel and appears to be quite unique (see Figure 3). The uses of these stones for the Celtic people are unknown but according to various legends it is suspected that they were used for ritual purposes.





**Figure 4: Celtic rock carvings at la Bessa**

### **Roman Period**

The most notable Roman Period site in the ecomuseum context is the Bessa gold mines (1 BC). This site was probably exploited by the Celts prior to the occupation of the Romans but the most intensive mining that changed the landscape to its current state. The archaeological features at la Bessa include visible channels for gold processing, structural remains (most unstudied) and rock carvings (both Roman and Celtic period).



**Figure 5: Ia Bessa, Roman Period structural remains.**

### **Historical**

The Serra Moraine hosts an interesting historical legacy in a series of farmsteads, stonewalls and enclosures. Construction methods of these features include mortar and dry stone techniques, and often utilize natural rock formations on the landscape. These had/have varied purposes as houses, barns, temporary shelters, storage sheds and animal pens. Many structures have been visibly altered through time and some are still used today showing a continuity of over 400 years.



**Figure 6: Stone structure (once a storage for cheese, now no more in use)**

## ***CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGY INCLUSION***

### ***Walks***

Walks in the territory are frequently organized as part of the ecomuseum activities. These walks generally take a holistic approach to the landscape, leading people the geology, ecology, archaeology and local culture. A recent walk took trekkers on the slopes of the Serra to witness the numerous variety of rock carvings, walls and structures.

### ***School Programs***

Laboratories for schools related to archaeology are available for a number of different ecomuseums in the network. For example, “Middle ages in a box.” “The secrets of the frescos” “We discover our past.” And “The archaeological story of Biella” offers creative ways to learn about the archaeological heritage through walks, hands-on activities, and story telling. The Biella Territory Museum (Museo del Territorio Biellese) also has regular offering of archaeology instruction at the museum.

### ***Workshops***

Outside of the school programs, community workshops have not focused specifically on archaeology, but there have been several projects involved with collecting traditional knowledge and stories of the area.

### ***Publications***

Although the Ecomuseum Valle Elvo e Serra has published a number of histories

about the territory, there are no publications with a focus solely on archaeology. Several publications do exist in association with the Biella Territory Museum but these are strictly research or collections oriented and do not have the community involvement that an ecomuseum should have.

### **Interpretation Plaques**

Several plaques have been placed in key places on the ecomuseum landscape to help with interpretation and understanding of important sites. The most recent plaque was installed near the town of Zubiena with information about la Bessa intended to give information to tourists, especially those attending the Gold Mining competitions.

### **Exhibitions**

A permanent exhibit has been organized in the Gold Miners Museum to help support the interpretation of the nearby la Bessa landscape: this exhibit focuses on the continuity of over 2000 years of gold mining in the region.

The Biella Territory Museum houses an exhibit about the archaeology of the area. This shows the most notable artifacts found in the area in chronological glass cases with information panels. The “traditional” style is scientific rather than community orientated.

### **Excavations/Survey**

There have been a number of excavations in the past, either due to construction of university research but the ecomuseum has not been a part of these.

In September 2009, a group of Spanish archaeologists were working on mapping and understanding the development of the la Bessa Mines. This was not a community driven project but the outside interest in the site was the first occasion and recognition of its importance.

### **Parish Mapping**

Parish mapping projects have been carried out in the past, using mainly video rather than paper support, but not on this specific topic.

## ***PLANS FOR FUTURE INCLUSION***

### **Network Cohesion**

One of the overarching goals of the Ecomuseo Biellese is to make the division between the ecomuseum and the Biella Territory Museum better functioning. It is their hope to use archaeology as one of these tools.

There is also action in creating a more active network between ecomuseums in Italy. A website is in construction and workshops and visits to other museums often take place ([www.mondilocali.eu](http://www.mondilocali.eu)).

## **Landscape Walks**

The ecomuseum is hoping to arrange walk (or event) to various important sites on the landscape. This walk would ideally be interdisciplinary and include geologists, anthropologists, and archaeologists and would in some ways connect the sites to artifacts seen at the Biella Territory Museum. Artists and musicians from the community would be invited to add another layer of interpretation to a points on the landscape, making a performance at one or more of the sites.

## **Excavations**

The ecomuseum is currently looking for options of funding to do a small excavation in one of the structures of rock shelters. This would help to be able to understand the continuity of use and give people in the community a chance to experience the archaeological process hands-on.

## **Exhibitions**

Conversations about an exhibit collaboration with the Biellese territory museum to create an exhibition about the Roman period engraved stone found at la Trappa (Ecomuseo). So far no progress has been made as both institutions are looking for funding. However, as noted in the summary and below in the concerns, it appears that ‘traditional’ museum practices of exhibition will not be compromised to include a community perspective.

# ***COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS***

## **Distance from the Past**

People do not feel connected to the archaeological heritage. This is either because they think of archaeology as “classic Roman age” or they do not know very much about the sites that exist in their territory.

There is also a distance from the artifacts as many are located in Biella Territory Museum or even further in the Turin Archaeology Museum. This distance makes it difficult for people to connect to the objects but also make connections between the places and the material culture that was found.

## **Site destruction**

Many concerns were raised by the archaeologists of the Biella Territory Museum that sites were in danger from vandalism and looting. Because of this there has been hesitation about publishing or making known the existence of sites.

## **Ecomuseum versus Museum**

While a wide variety of school programs are offered through the ecomuseums these programs have yet to gain momentum within the schools. More teachers still turn to the traditional museum before the ecomuseums when looking for



laboratories. They see this as a different type of experience while the ecomuseum could in many ways offer a more holistic experience to students taking them outdoors and to the places.

While discussion about the future exhibition of the Roman engraved stone are just starting. There seems to be some divide about how to accomplish a joint project with the various institutions in mind. The Biella Territory Museum would like to place the stone indoors and make a traditional or scientific display around this. The ecomuseum on the other hand, would like the stone or a copy of the stone to remain in context. Parts of the feelings of disconnect between community and archaeology/ ecomuseum and museum/ landscape and artifacts is the persistence of taking things out of context and putting them into glass cases.

## ***Recommendations***

### **Community Research Awareness**

A set of Spanish archaeologists were working at la Bessa for 2 weeks, using a total station, aerial maps, GPS and with plans to do some excavation to try and determine the development processes of the site. This is the first time archaeologists from outside the local community have taken on research of the area. Because of the importance of the work and the opportunity of the type of work they were doing, it would have been valuable to arrange a community day or landscape walk to correlate with the archaeological fieldwork. This may have inspired some people about the importance of the landscape as well as getting some insight into the process of archaeology.

### **Book Publication**

Although there is some fear that by exposing sites, they will be under threat information about sites should be shared. Perhaps a publication for walks around the rock art sites or the historical structures and rock walls could be beneficially to start to bring about awareness about the importance of these places. This could include information, maps, pictures or community accounts and legends, depending on the scale of the project.

### **Future Exhibit**

For this an acceptable agreement needs to be reached, not only about the future location of the stone but the means in which the exhibit is to be constructed. Creativity should be used in a new exhibit to not only highlight the science and importance of such a find but to bring the community and landscape into the picture. Flexibility on behalf of the museum staff needs to be considered, visitor studies done, and research into new museology. If the museum is to be part of the ecomuseum network it should take on attributes of being valuable for the community.

# Ecomuseo delle Acque del Gemonese

## ***Ecomuseum Context***

Ecomuseo delle Acque is located in the province of Udine in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region. Its territory is a homogenous ecological zone described as an alluvial plain bordered by prealpine mountains and hills. As illustrated in the ecomuseum's name, water is used as the central theme to show local distinctiveness. The rivers, mills, fountains and old public washbasins are all key sites and focal points for continuity, interpretation and community organization. For example, the ecomuseum headquarters is situated inside of a restored mill where visitors can see the importance of water for both power and sustenance.



**Figure 7: The alluvial plain and prealpine hills**

## ***Organizational Structure***

Ecomuseo delle Acque was founded in 2000 prior to the regional law 10/2006 that gave the opportunity for partial government funding. Six municipalities are included in the ecomuseums territory; Gemona, Artegna, Osoppo, Buja, Majano, and Montenars. The office and headquarters of the museum is located in Gemona in a restored mill and each of the other municipalities have varying levels of participation.

## ***KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGY***

The Friulian area has had a good amount of archaeological investigation and

discovery. Although, the Celtic presence is not very apparent, there is a wealth of sites beginning in the Roman period.

### **Rock art**

None was witnessed.

### **Roman Period**

The landscape as a whole is important in the Roman age. For example Artegna was at the cross roads of several important Roman roads including one between Aquileia and Austria. The majority of the hills in the territory have remains of roman fortresses, castles, and sometimes churches. At the Artegna San Martino site the archaeological investigation has revealed a layered and confusing history of built and rebuilt castles, walls and churches spanning from the Roman period to the present.

### **Lombardi**

The ecomuseum territory was one of the key locations of Lombardi settlement. Most of the Roman sites like the hilltop fortresses have continuity through this period. Several of the villages are mentioned in the Lombardi history.

### **Middle Ages**

The city of Venzone is a good example of a middle aged city, although it has been almost entirely rebuilt. It was declared a world heritage site a few years before the 1976 earthquake, which produced detailed documents of the cities architecture and infrastructure. In the rebuilding of the city each brick was placed in the same place but the reconstruction used allows people to see how much was destroyed in the earthquake, using various techniques in the building methods like paint or plaster or bricks.



**Figure 8: Venzone Main Street (reconstruction versus original constructions can be observed in patterns of the plaster)**

### **Historical**

Because of the 1976 earthquake many structures were destroyed, however some have been rebuilt or restored. Within the ecomuseum theme of water; there are several important sites; the ecomuseum headquarters in the mill house, a damn to redirect water built over hundred years ago, natural fountains and washing basins that all maintain a continuity of use.



**Figure 9: Stone mill in ecomuseum headquarters**

## ***CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGY INCLUSION***

### **Walks**

Organized walks are often made in collaboration with schools and a past ecomuseum project worked with local school to make a local education trail. This project placed 5 plaques on the trail with topics about the animals, trees, and environmental changes of the area. All the information on the plaques was researched, written, drawn and photographed by the students. In connection with archaeology some information about the past ways of life was included and a section of the trail follows the old main roman road.



**Figure 10: Ecomuseum Plaque about the animals created entirely by Class 4 children. Each section rotates to match up text, picture and animal trace.**

## School Programs

Since April 2009 the ecomuseum and Artegna Culture Division have been working on connecting school children with their archaeological heritage. This allows children to get their hands dirty at the archaeological excavations where they learn to excavate, screen and clean objects. In October 2009, professional excavations were underway and the children were able to see archaeologists at work before excavating a piece of the site themselves.





**Figure 11: School class viewing Artegna San Martino site before they start their own excavation work.**

### **Workshops/Projects**

Pan di Sorc is an ongoing project that uses “traditional knowledge” in modern flavors. This is a network of restaurants, farmers, and craftspeople that connect the past to the future through the use of traditional knowledge and products. The project grew from a focus around a type of maize bread, once common in the region but almost forgotten. Archaeologically this project relates to the hands-on traditions where one can link to the past through practice. For example a type of weaving and craft with corn husks has a history in the region of at least 400 years but was almost a lost tradition. Workshops sharing this knowledge have given community members a chance to learn to make bags, dolls, ornaments and even seats for chairs.



**Figure 12: Corn Husk Weaving Workshop (finished corn husk bag)**

## **Publications**

An assortment of creative literature and educational material has been published by the museum. This includes books, newsletters, journals and DVD's for children and adults. Some publications are a result or "evidence" of past projects and exhibitions, while others are workbooks intended for educational use for both children and academics. Many of these include archaeology but very few cover only archaeological information

A series of 8 pocket sized books focus on specific locations in the region. These are intended as a personal guide for walks in order to discover the unique pieces of the Friulian ecology, geology, history and archaeology. Each book includes information about 4 different walks with specific information, photographs and fold out maps. Some walks are tours of archaeological sites while others will point out an archaeological site as part of a holistic landscape. These beautiful hardcover books are given for free to community members (Ecomuseo delle Acque 2007).

A small itinerary of the Artegna San Martino site has also been published. This describes the archaeological process, site information, geology, artifacts and architecture. It has information about school activities and lessons in archaeology. This booklet is also given for free and is available at several locations including the exhibition for the site at the City Hall (Artegna Ecomuseo Parco Archeologica [S.D]).

## **Exhibitions**

An exhibition in Artegna was opened in April 2009 to display archaeological



findings from the site, local school children's projects, information and pictures about the community.

### **Excavations/Survey**

The past research in the ecomuseum territory is quite abundant compared to other ecomuseum territories surveyed in this project. The Artegna excavations at San Martino have been underway for 6 years. The town of Artegna manages the site and funds the excavations one month per year. Currently Artegna is collaborating with Ecomuseo delle Acque to help to support community involvement in the research. This collaboration is mostly focused on schools but there are a number of future plans for building on this project listed below. Unfortunately materials from the site are sitting unstudied because of a lack of funds. Excavations have continued once a month in order to retain the permit and now to give students a hands-on opportunity for learning.



**Figure 13: Artegna excavations (1 of 6 areas being explored)**

### **Parish Mapping**

A community mapping project is currently underway with the small village Godo. All members of the community are invited to come share their knowledge at topically organized monthly sessions. None of the topics are archaeology specific but in some cases (like place names) archaeological relevant information or memory may be included into the map.

## ***PLANS FOR FUTURE INCLUSION***

### **Network creation**

Plans are in the works for the integration of all six municipalities into the archaeological programs of the ecomuseum. They are currently trying to forge better relationships with each town government; so far Artegna is the only active participant in this cooperation. The archaeological landscape of the territory is important as a whole and therefore integration of each of these sites will help people better understand their history. Also included in forging better relationships between individual townships is a creation of a website to keep a central update for information and events.

### **Educational Material**

A publication about the San Martino archaeology site is in process and is collaboration between school teachers, the ecomuseum and archaeologists. This publication will be intended as a workbook to inspire students who participate in the lessons on site in continued learning.

## ***COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OR CONCERNS***

### **Distance from the past**

In the case of Artegna, many people do not understand the importance of archaeological research; therefore they do not see the need to spend money on the excavations of the site. People are unaware of the heritage in their own backyards and don't feel connected to the past.

## ***Recommendations***

### **School Programs**

As these programs are underway in development it would be my recommendation to continue to work on creating a structured curriculum within the school system that includes this archaeological component. In the case that I witnessed, instruction in research methods, mapping, and data analysis are conducted in the classroom, while children excavated, screened and cleaned artifacts in the field. When possible combining these activities so that children are mapping what they excavate, sorting what they screen and doing a little analysis of what they clean, would make the activity more holistic and help make the process and importance of archaeological research stick in their minds better. One boy in a discussion at Artegna School said that (and I paraphrase here) "learning outside, using your hands is better and really helps you to remember what you learn."

## **Community Lab Nights**

Considering many of the artifact materials are left unstudied. It would be an interesting project to create a community lab night. For example, if on a monthly basis there was an archaeologist willing to volunteer and a space to gather, community members could be invited to clean, sort and help analyze data from artifacts. The archaeologist could help explain the processes and supervise the work but this gives the community a role in the process of archaeology as well as access to their own heritage. I have been involved in community lab work in the past and have found that some people with no archaeology training have incredible lab skills and end up devoting themselves to an analysis project.

## Ecomuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite

### **Context**

Ecomuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite is located in Cortemilia, in the Cuneo province of Piemonte. Through generations of work and ingenuity the natural rolling hills and valleys have been transformed into a beautiful terraced landscape. The ecomuseum focuses on the terraces as a theme for interpretation, community engagement and regeneration. Three main sites are incorporated into the ecomuseum landscape, which serve as unique meeting points for community. The first is the centre of documentation and interpretation located in the town center. This building acts as an interpretation centre, a children's library, and staff offices, meeting areas, classrooms and digitization center. The building and surroundings has been restored making the outdoor square a pedestrian only zone and expanding the museum outdoors where community exhibits are held.



**Figure 14: Ecomuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite, headquarters**

The second point is a series of dry stone terraces and restored buildings on Monteoliveto. The terraces have been repaired and vineyards revived, as well as the activity of wine making. The buildings have facilities to host a variety of events, workshops and overnight stays.



**Figure 15: Monteoliveto from above**

Lastly the ‘Scau’, chestnut drying hut, is a restored structure that has been put into action with a yearly drying (occurring over a period of 40 days). The building is also used as a community meeting place for regular meetings or story telling. All three points on the landscape are connected through trails.



**Figure 16: ‘Scau’ Chestnut Drying Structure**

### ***Organizational Structure***

The ecomuseum project was founded in 1999. Since the beginning of the project the Cortemilia commune has acted as the overarching political head, distributing finances and approving major decisions. The Ecomuseum's staff includes 6 consultants: 1 Coordinator, 2 educational consultants, 1 agriculture consultant & 2 consultants who are responsible for the organization of the 'Premio di Letteratura, Gigante delle Langhe'. Volunteer participation in projects varies depending on the scope of the project.

### ***KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGY***

Unfortunately not much “traditional” archaeological research has been done in the area and few sites are known or recognized. This is partly due to the lack of outside interest in the area, although it has likely has rich heritage of human settlement visible in the extensive terrace constructions.

#### **Rock art**

None known

#### **Roman period**

A roman gravestone has been relocated into the wall of a house.





**Figure 17: Roman Grave Stone**

### **Historical Structures**

Dry stonewalls and terraces are seen throughout the landscape (some abandoned) of Cortemilia but dates and development of this landscape is not well known. This is a rich part of the archaeological heritage and in

The chestnut house restored by the museum is an interesting and unique structure. No known drying structure of this round shape exists and it is hypothesized that this building had another function before being converted to its current function. The round shape actually makes for a more efficient drying of the nuts.

A Roman era church at the foot of Monteoliveto provides a good example of continuity. The stone structure shows many signs of alteration through the centuries. Its masonry shows evidence of different hands, techniques; with expansions as well as possible deconstructions of extra space. Certain artifacts incorporated into the churches décor appear to have been imported from another location, making for a collage of the centuries.



**Figure 18: Monteoliveto Church**

## ***CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGY INCLUSION***

In the case of Ecomuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite “traditional” archaeology is not a focus in their programs. Some programs which focus on intangible knowledge and traditions are related to archaeology, allowing the past to live.

### **Walks**

There are many different trails on the landscape that at one time connected villages. Trail walks are organized to give people a chance to interact and view the landscape in a holistic way. These paths intersect various examples of terraces, geological stratigraphy of the area and the major ecomuseum sites, allowing guides to discuss the landscapes diverse cultural and environmental heritage.

### **School Programs**

School programs are interchangeable with workshops as courses are offered to schools and independent groups of children.

### **Workshops**

Workshops are the key activity where intangible heritage is transmitted with the possibility of being related to archaeological heritage. A variety of workshops include instruction in stone working, bread baking, pasta and wine making, corn



harvesting, and chestnut roasting. Many of these projects use traditional knowledge or instructed by community elders. The knowledge in these activities is related to past generations and is at risk of being lost. Although these courses are not focused directly on archaeological heritage, the ways in which they are taught are related to the ancestors of the land and the way people of the past lived.

### **Publications**

The ecomuseum has produced a number of book and DVD publications; including a yearly publication of short story contest winners and a catalogue of the Monteoliveto Modern Art Exhibit. In closest relation to archaeology and 'traditional' knowledge, "Ingredienti, La cucina dell'Alta Langa. Dosi, storie, modi", is a cookbook sharing some of the traditional recipes from the region.

### **Exhibitions**

No recent exhibitions were focused on archaeology but community exhibitions are usually done in the open air of the center town square or at Monteoliveto.

### **Parish mapping**

One of the first projects of the ecomuseum was "ABC" parish alphabet.

### **Excavations/Survey**

No recent research has occurred in the area.

### ***Plans for future inclusion***

#### **More holistic integration**

The organization of more landscape walks aim to include geology and other features of the landscape centered on the terraced landscape. If archaeological knowledge, sites or artifacts become apparent this will be incorporated to add another layer of understanding to the territory and community.

#### **Creation of Ecomuseum network**

The ecomuseum is already active in taking part in the exchange of information and ideas between other ecomuseums and cultural institutions in Italy. All are currently working to make this network more sufficient and available for all. The participation in this research project is just one example of the ways the network functions but other examples include the exchange of traditional knowledge in the form of workshop for ecomuseum staff.

## ***COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS***

### **Lack of knowledge**

In Cortemilia archaeological research has not been a focus of the ecomuseum due to other priorities and the needs of the community in social and economic development. It could be that much of the archaeological heritage has been destroyed in the process of modern construction. Artifacts from the territory are suspected either to be in an unknown museum far away or within private homes. Individual families may have information about sites on their property or on the landscape but no one has brought this information to light.

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

### **Community discussions**

It may be of interest to start talking to the community about archaeological heritage more directly. Those who know the landscape best possibly know sites and information and it could provide a more holistic interpretation to the ecomuseum. A future activity or event could incorporate a section to help expose community ideas about the buried history. For example there have been some researchers (Dietler) who have focused on the prehistoric production and trade of wine in Europe, presenting some of this information linked to an already established ecomuseum project might be a good seg way.

### **Terrace mapping project**

During my visit the differences in terrace constructions were pointed out and could be an interesting starting point for an archaeological survey project. A community mapping project to identify the trends and location of construction styles could help to understand the development and history of the landscape. If done in conjunction with local school children it could be a way to incorporate art and science into an outdoor “classroom”. The produced map could be used on landscape walks, and to help community members to visualize and understand the complex terrace landscape in a different way.

## **Ecomuseo del Lago d'Orta e Mottarone**

### **(Ecomuseo Cusius)**

#### ***Context***

Ecomuseo del Lago d'Orta e Mottarone is located in the Verbano Cusio Ossola Province of Piemonte and has its headquarters in village Pettenasco. The territory incorporates three geographic areas: Orta Lake, Valstrona Valley and Mount Mottarone. Continuity is a key theme, connecting the past to the modern life and future of the area. The ecomuseum incorporates a network of small museums, laboratories, botanical gardens and trails. Each site tells a part of the diverse history and culture by focusing on a specific local tradition, trade, art or the relationship of humans to the natural environment.



**Figure 19: Lago d'Orta**

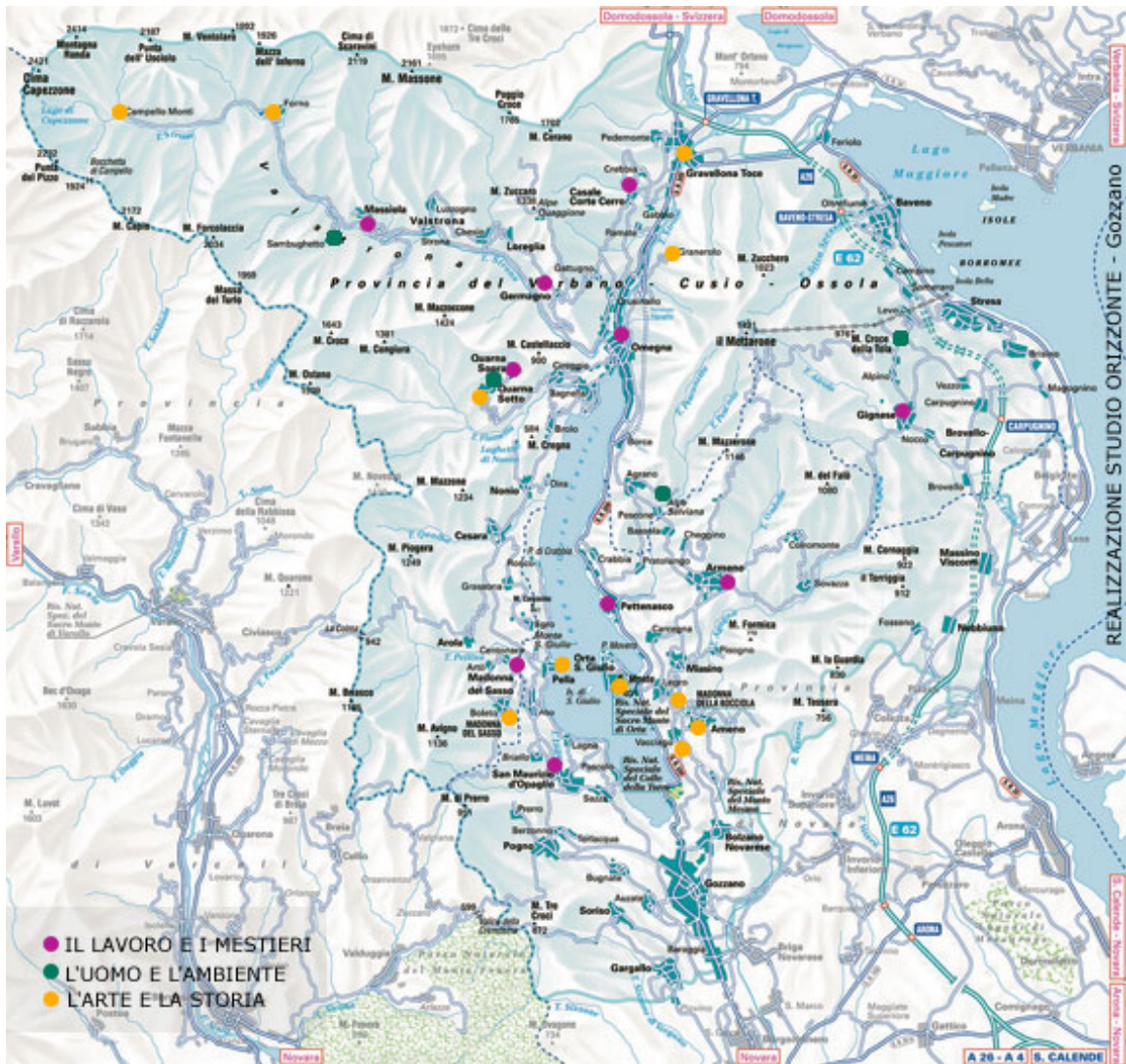


Figure 20: Ecomuseo Cusius Territory

## Organizational Structure

Ecomuseum Cusius has been officially operating since 1997. Currently 38 organizations are involved in the ecomuseum, each which hold a seat in the association. The association votes 7 people from the 38 organizations to sit on the board of directors who meet on a bimonthly basis. A technical director has been decided by the board of directors and has the responsibility to act on decisions made by the board of directors and association and with the help of other administrators, coordinators and contractors, ecomuseum projects are seen in fruition. In addition to this there is a scientific committee that informs the association but have no representative votes in the ecomuseum issues.



## **KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGY**

### **Rock Art**

Rock art is located in many places on the landscape territory. Some have associated legends and stories while others remain a complete mystery. Some of the rock panels date to the Celtic period before the arrival of the Romans and some of these have been modified or destroyed in later periods. This damage is suspected to be a result of the inquisition when places used in pagan ceremonies were “exorcized” to stop their use. Evidence for this is found in historical documentation that is linked to a few specific rock art sites.



**Figure 2: Celtic period stone. The interconnecting potholes and channels are on a sloping panel. When the upper depressions are filled with enough liquid the entire panel is covered. The rock appears to have been partially destroyed at some point in history.**

In the village of Orta a number of rock carvings can be found. At the main cathedral, the granite pillars have been used to sharpen knives (possibly with some spiritual purpose), the game Nine Men’s Morris (tris), is carved in various places, and there are also stones that have roman or celtic inscriptions which appear to have been removed from their original context. As in many of the villages, various engravings on keystones and doorposts give hints into the progression and changes of the village.



**Figure 3: Nine Men's Morris**

### **Pre-Roman Period**

An Iron age necropolis (9-5 BC) was excavated near the village of Ameno. There were over 140 graves were exposed; however, the findings are held in the Turin Archaeology museum and The Novara Museum.

### **Roman Period**

A roman villa and necropolis have been uncovered in the region but these artifacts are located at a distance and the sites no longer remain, not much information is available within the ecomuseum networks.

### **Historical**

There is a rich industrial history in the Cusius territory, thus a number of mills and factories have been partially preserved and either made into museums or monuments. Many other mills, especially some located in the Valstrona valley are still operating in their original or expanded structures. Ecomuseo della Valstrona, Museo dell'Arte della Tornitura, and Fondazione Museo Arti e Industria "Forum" are all examples of mills and factories that have been turned into places of culture and preservation.



**Figure 4: Ecomuseo della Valstrona (a restored wood mill)**

## ***CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGY INCLUSION***

### **Walks**

Landscape walks are organized at various intervals through the year (3 in spring, 2 in fall and 1 in winter) These take place around the lake to various sites on the landscape including archaeological features, like rock art but generally these walks are holistic. There are also walks beginning this year that led people into the caves in Valstrona Valley, a location where paleontological materials have been found. Walks seem to be a great success with 150-200 people coming to participate. They are a great way to bring community together, which may not otherwise meet. They also have brought out information about sites and the landscape known by community members, or opened their eyes into finding new sites. These walks help to teach people the meaning of the landscape and archaeology and show them the importance of protecting it. It has also been a good way to collect local stories and traditions around the sites helping the museum to understand more about their meaning.



## **School Programs**

The Ecomuseum has organized educational programs for schools. Archaeology is one of the options and is directed for children in primary school. Most of these programs are for cost and range from games and activities to more extensive laboratories. Classes are usually taught in the open air and material is shown to talk about the continuity between past and present. A hand on approach is used when ever possible.

In addition to the offered courses the ecomuseum is in charge of a program that involves 500 students yearly. The sponsored project gives the students from schools in the territory a chance to be creative about a particular subject. The project works on various themes, asking children to write and draw about these. Archaeology is naturally included with in some of these themes and could be the focus in the future.

## **Workshops**

Giovanni Crippa, a local artist is one example of the use of workshops in the ecomuseum context. As a ceramist Crippa has taken the time to learn from experimental archaeologists the techniques of prehistoric firing of pottery as well as different compositions and ingredients of local ceramics. On his own he has created reconstruction for museums but has used this knowledge to give workshops for in ceramics and the use of raw clay to build structures. These use a mixture between modern knowledge and technology and ancient techniques. These workshops are done in association with Laboratorio di Arti Visive, which has a workshop housed in the old country school and is part of the ecomuseum network.



**Figure 5: Contemporary ceramics fused with the ancient techniques (artist Giovanni Crippa)**

## **Publications**

In 2005 a book was published about the rock art of Valstrona valley. The book is a collection of 50 sites, told through maps, photos and stories. The survey of the sites was a community project done by volunteers in collaboration with the Verbania museum of Landscape (Biganzoli et al 2005). At the same time a small booklet was also published.

“Tra Archeologia e Tradizione” (Ecomuseo del Lago d’Orta e Mottarone 2000) was published in connection with an exhibition. This publication gives information about excavations, historical people, lifeways and it illustrates the continuity of the form and function of material culture from the region.

Two books on village history were published by organizations in the ecomuseum network; one in 1997 about San Maurizio d’Opaglio and the other in 2009 about Pella. Archaeology is included in the village histories, which are told through multiple voices of local scholars and other community members.

## **Exhibitions**

A past exhibit “Tra Archaeologia e Tradizione” was held in the ecomuseum territory, with a focus on some of the excavations in the area and the continuity of material culture for traditional activities.

## **Parish mapping**

Parish mapping was tried but due to lack of personnel to coordinate the project, a community map was not made.

## ***PLANS FOR FUTURE INCLUSION***

### **Museum development**

Two more museums are in the works to be included in the Cusius ecomuseum network. These are located in Valstrona valley and are focused on geology and paleontology. The museums' plans involve a trail to the caves in which ancient remains of bear, lion and a variety of other animals have been found dating from 40,000 BC (Glacial era). Some permanent exhibits will be housed in Ecomuseo Valstrona and another exhibit space will be at a location further in the valley but the ecomuseums are waiting on additional funds to complete the project.

## ***COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS***

### **Professional 'outsider' versus community volunteer**

Conflicts between laws/professional archaeologists and volunteers seem to be an issue in the area as there is no real cooperation between the two groups. Professionals (usually outsiders) do not know the area and volunteers need to gain trust and appreciation for their work. The ecomuseum hopes to act as meeting point to establish trust and make these connections to enrich the archaeological knowledge of the territory.

### **Artifacts at a distance**

Artifacts from the territory are scattered in several museums in Piemonte, some from a Roman Villa and necropolis are stored in Turin. However, a small amount of artifacts are located nearby in the Mergozzo archaeological museum. Although this museum has no official association with the ecomuseum it at least gives school children and adults a chance to view some of the archaeological heritage from their territory more easily.

## ***Recommendations***

### **School Programs**

The ecomuseum's programs in archaeology are already quite developed but are focused on only one age group. Even though it can be difficult to work with young adults with this age group a teacher can get into more detail about the unique knowledge that archaeology can give us. Because of lack of funding in the school district, a course could be developed for teachers of this age group so

that they could include some local history and projects into their own lesson plans. This could help inspire young people to study archaeology at university or even just to take an interest in their heritage and volunteer in the territory.

### **Connection to artifacts at a distance**

With the walks being such a great success in the ecomuseum program. It may be beneficial to try and arrange a closer connection to other archaeological materials or sites. Perhaps a tour of the collections (storage) at the closest archaeology museum could be arranged to get people up close to some of the artifacts found at some of these sites. This might inspire an initiative for an exhibit, which could borrow artifacts from various museums and give people a chance to see their own heritage in their own territory.

## **Ecomuseo Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea**

### ***Context***

The territory of the museum lies directly over the Serra Moriane from the Biella territory. The geological large amphitheatre carved out by glacier activity mainly defines it. The ecomuseum was created in order to help create a sense of community within the territory and help enact larger projects that the smaller ecomuseums do not have the resources to do

### ***Organizational Structure***

This young ecomuseum was founded in 2008 and is network of a wide range of 24 cultural institutions. The ecomuseums are considered the most important set of members. Ecomuseo Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea has a main director but the members and other affiliates meet on a regular basis. All resources come from member fees as the Piemonte Region does not yet recognize Ecomuseo Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea, although they have complied with the conditions of the law and applied for regional funding.

### ***KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGY***

Academic interest and new constructions in the area have exposed a variety of sites and all periods seem to be represented.

#### **Rock Art**

Rock art in the territory dates as early as 3000 BC but sites have been revisited and changed through time. Some carvings are anthropogenic like a Neolithic Stella (94 x 180 cm) excavated from the middle of the amphitheatre depression. This is held in the Cuorgne Museum as the original site has been destroyed

Three monolithics from the bronze age were originally used to expose prisoners/ These have been moved from their original site; however, they remain outdoors.

Over 1170 Iron Age carvings have been surveyed and remain *in situ*, these are percussion pecked cup marks typical of the Celtic age and possibly use in ceremonies.

#### **Pre-Roman (Bronze age)**

Lake Viverone is the most famous archaeological site in the territory. The site has over 5000 poles that were the structural remains of stilt houses. Underwater excavations found a large assortment of bronze tools, axes, swords, and ceramics. These materials are held in the Turin Archaeology Museum.

## **Roman Period**

Romans conquered the area in 25 AD and a large array of sites remain from this occupation; however, only experts know about the location of many of these.

An amphitheatre is located near Ivrea (90 x 60m), the site has been excavated but is closed to visits

A 7-8 km long aqueduct system was used up until the 1800.

A public bath was found during the construction of a home but proper excavations were not undertaken because of political and financial reasons.

## **Historical**

The territory has a number of abandoned churches dotting the landscape; which are a result of Bishop wars, and fluctuating populations beginning in the Neolithic period.

There are over 30 km of dry stonewalls and terraces, some are still in use but these cannot be easily dated.

## ***Current Inclusion***

### **Walks**

This year the ecomuseum organized along the Roman aqueducts. The walk was lead by archaeologists who are collaborating with the ecomuseum. Over 90 participants showed the interest and need for this type of activity in the territory.

In addition to this information about trails in the area are available for download on the website for individuals to explore, some archaeological information is included but these walks are focused on a more holistic approach to the landscape.

### **School Programs**

The ecomuseum has programs in other topics but has not yet developed the archaeology component.

### **Workshops**

This year the ecomuseum participated in National Days of Archaeology (Oct. 10 and 11). Various hikes, site visits and lectures were organized to discover the archaeology of the territory.

## **Publications**

There are several publications about the archaeology of the area, however none of these are produced specifically by the ecomuseum or with community collaboration.

## **Interpretation Plaques**

So far the ecomuseum has placed three different panels in the territory explaining the archaeological heritage; at the aqueduct, Valle Chiudrillo and Paleo Alte. The archaeological group who collaborate with the ecomuseum wrote the texts.

## **Exhibitions**

No ecomuseum sponsored exhibitions about archaeology have taken place.

## **Excavations/Survey**

Excavations and survey done in the territory were undertaken by professionals and completed before the founding of the ecomuseum.

## **Parish Maps**

To my knowledge a parish mapping project has not occurred although some of the smaller ecomuseums may have undertaken these projects.

## ***Plans for Future Inclusion***

### **Walks**

Future walks to archaeological sites are being planned and will be a regular ecomuseum activity.

### **School Programs**

The ecomuseum sees school programs as a priority to inspire the interest and protection of heritage. They already have programs in other topics but they are currently working with archaeologists to create an archaeology focused school programs

### **Networks**

There are two networks in planning one is within the current ecomuseum territory and will be an online way to share information ideas and plan.

The second is the collaboration with Ecomuseo Valle Elva e Serra. These two ecomuseums share the same landscape, archaeological heritage and even more recent history. The Serra Moriane and modern political boundaries only separate them. This collaboration hopes to bring a more holistic vision of the landscape

and work on future projects together that connects the communities and their shared histories. The fieldwork for this project was seen as the start for this collaboration.

## ***Community Perceptions or Concerns***

### **Regional Recognition**

Because the region does not officially recognize the ecomuseum, they do not receive regional funds or other benefits with in ecomuseum networks. Current laws regarding ecomuseums are not suited to the huge influx of ecomuseums that have been developed in the Piemonte region in the last 10-15 years since the law was written. The application for regional recognition is excepted once a year and over the past years very few application have been accepted due to the lack of funds. Ecomuseum Anfiteatro Morenico di Ivrea has already applied twice and is in need of “start” up costs to put many of their planned projects into action.

### **Site Access**

There are problems with restricted access to archaeological sites with high potential value for education and tourism. For example the Roman amphitheatre has been excavated but never opened to the public for security reasons. The ecomuseum has requested access to this site on several occasions, including the National Archaeology Days but the city of Ivrea rejected this request even though the site would be opened for only a day. Because of this the community is unable to visit and learn about important archaeology sites in their territory.

## ***Recommendations***

### **Community discussions**

The high attendance for the aqueduct walks show there is community interest for archaeology. Although there is very active archaeology research group, it may be valuable to involve the community in discussions about the archaeology heritage in the territory. This could be done in association with future walks and could be a valuable tool for the ecomuseum to collect information about unknown sites, plan appropriate projects and develop other archaeological programs. There is possibly intangible heritage associated with these sites and community discussions could bring out some of the legends and stories, important to a holistic understanding of the landscape. Furthermore involving community in this way empowers activism that could possibly result in petitioning for access to closed sites.



## Appendix 1

### Proposta dell'Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra per il masso inciso rinvenuto alla Trappa

Nell'agosto 2004 un esperto locale ha rinvenuto un masso inciso di importanza archeologica poco a monte della Trappa di Sordevolo, sito dell'Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra dedicato alla tradizione costruttiva.

Il masso, recante un'incisione a forma di pugnale che si ipotizza di epoca romana, si trovava in superficie lungo la pista di accesso alla Trappa tracciata nel 1990, quando fu probabilmente spostato dalla sua collocazione originaria nell'ambito della preesistente costruzione, in parte ancora visibile sul lato opposto della pista.



(Picture of the engraved rock and the pre-existing building  
Il masso inciso e la costruzione preesistente)

Effettuati gli opportuni rilievi e in accordo con gli archeologi del Museo del Territorio Biellese e con la Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Piemonte, nel novembre 2004 il masso è stato rimosso e ricoverato all'interno della Trappa, nella prospettiva di un progetto di valorizzazione che individui una serie di percorsi e relazioni tra i luoghi d'origine e i luoghi di studio e conservazione dei reperti archeologici.

Si tratta cioè di inaugurare una nuova forma di fruizione del patrimonio che indirizzi le risorse umane (volontari ed esperti locali, ricercatori e personale scientifico) e materiali (siti ecomuseali, spazi museali) verso una relazione costruttiva e complementare.

Nel caso specifico, il masso inciso rinvenuto (o la sua copia), al di là del suo specifico valore e della sua precisa collocazione originaria (ormai difficilmente rintracciabile), potrebbe, con l'aiuto di un allestimento simbolico che evidenzia la sua presenza nel paesaggio della Trappa, risvegliare la coscienza degli abitanti sulla presenza diffusa del livello archeologico e sul valore educativo del metodo stratigrafico, rimandando all'allestimento scientifico del Museo del Territorio

dove, lo stesso masso (o la sua copia), potrebbe relazionarsi con il contesto storico che lo ha generato.

È quindi intenzione dell'Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra individuare - con il contributo dei volontari, degli esperti locali e degli artisti che partecipano alle attività della Trappa - i dispositivi attraverso i quali gli "oggetti trovati" possano assumere una forma simbolica più significativa ed evocativa nei confronti degli strati profondi del patrimonio (geologia, archeologia, morfologia), indirizzando così gradualmente la comunità locale verso un naturale approfondimento dei propri interessi presso il Museo del Territorio Biellese, dal quale i ricercatori e il personale scientifico dovranno a loro volta individuare i percorsi per indirizzare il pubblico del museo verso i luoghi d'origine delle collezioni.

In August 2004 a local expert discovered an engraved rock of archaeological interest just above the Trappa of Sordevolo, site of the Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra, whose topic is the traditional architecture.

The rock, whose engraving represents the shape of a dagger, probably date back to the Roman period and was found on the surface along the access path to the Trappas, traced in 1990, when the rock has been probably moved from his original location within the pre-existing building, still partially visible on the other side of the path itself.

After all the necessary surveys and in accordance with the archaeologists of the Museum of the Territory and with the Superintendence of the Archaeological Heritage, in November 2004 the rock has been moved and sheltered inside the Trappa, in the prospect of a project that will underline its importance and will identify a network of itineraries and links between the places of origin and the places where archaeological finds are sheltered and studied.

It is practically a question of creating a new way of heritage fruition that leads all human resources (volunteers and local experts, researchers and scientific personnel) and materials (ecomuseum sites, museum rooms) toward a constructive and complementary relationship.

In this particular case, the engraved rock (or its copy), beyond its specific value and its precise original position (which is unlikely traceable), may, with the help of a symbolic interpretation that emphasizes its presence in the Trappa landscape, wake up the consciences of the inhabitants regarding the widespread presence on the territory of an archaeological heritage and about the high value of the stratigraphical method, sending back to the scientific interpretation of The Museum of the Territory where the same rock (or its copy) may create the link with the historical context that has generated it.

It is therefore intention of the Ecomuseo Valle Elvo e Serra, with the contribution of volunteers, of local experts and of artists that cooperate within the activities organized in Trappa, to identify the best means though which the "finds" can assume a symbolic shape –more significant and evocative- with regard to the deep layers of the heritage (geology, archaeology, morphology), in order to

gradually lead the local community toward a natural deepening of the knowledge and interests and therefore toward a natural approach to the Museum of the Territory , from where visitors of the Museum, thanks to new proposals and ways that the researchers and the scientific personnel will have to identify, will be led to visit the places of origin of the finds.

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