

TRADITIONAL SKILLS AND TRADES

University of Thessaly



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Research and Policy



European Union
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*** TSTs = Traditional Skills and Trades**

Introduction - Definitions

- **Tradition** = The transmission of the way of doing something or customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way (Oxford Dictionaries)
- **Traditional Skills** = All those techniques -closely connected to the everyday life of old times- resulting from the efforts of people, in order to meet their basic needs and make their life easier. Usually, the material products of these skills are called artifacts.
- **Traditional Trades** = The network consisted by a) the passing of technical knowledge from generation to generation and b) the circulation of the artefacts.

Two perspectives on Traditional skills and trades (TSTs):

TSTs as **liabilities**:

- as obsolete production means,
- a hindrance to productivity and profitability,
- to be replaced by technologically more advanced, mass-production methods

TSTs as **assets**:

- repositories of intrinsic value at a symbolic and cultural level
- challenging out-of-sight mass-produced homogeneity
- restoring profitability through distinctiveness and low-elasticity specialist products
- contributing to the 'tourist experience' and hence developing into unique cultural tourism assets.

Why To Promote “ TSTs”

- The reuse of existing infrastructures and crafts is compatible with the principles of **sustainability** (in comparison with the development of new)
- Traditional skills and traditional materials usually have **less environmental impact** (e.g. in farming, building and shipping)
- Some older **TST reoccur** in modern societies with a new character (e.g. concerning leisure activities instead of the used to be every day practices, like riding, sailing, pottering, etc)
- Traditional skills, crafts and trades seem to **attract visitors** to the fields of practice, constituting drivers of tourism development
- Reviving the past** and maintaining links with the tradition is a tourism field with increasing popularity (e.g. revival of historic battles and seafights, medieval tours in European cities, etc).
- Crafting (most often using traditional methods) is a popular leisure practice (gardening, pottery, needlecraft, textile weaving), with professionalization trends (also because of the economic crisis)

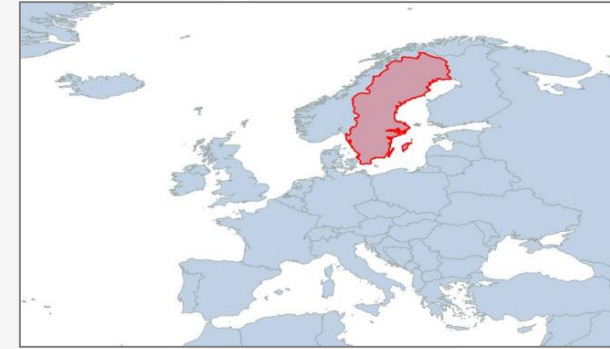
Questions about supporting and promoting “TSTs”

- To what extend maintaining TST conflicts with the pursue for **productivity**.
- Whether the preservation of TST merely for tourism purposes confronts the TST representatives as **picturesque ‘exhibits’**, instead of productive workers.
- Whether the preservation of TST originates from an **‘obsession’ with the past**, and is not compatible with the pursue of social and economic progress.
- How traditional are the so-called TST in a world where everything is driven by **new technologies** (usually the TSTs representatives have also incorporated several achievements of the modern technology in their work, either concerning the used materials, or the ways of promoting their products).
- Given that **modern economy** is a complex and multifunctional ‘machinery’ driven by new technologies is there space for the TST.
- Are the **initiatives** concerning TST really helpful (or TST worth being preserved tend to survive ‘automatically’ while the rest should not be taken care about).

Skansen- Open-air museum



- Located in Stockholm, Sweden
- Founded by Artur Hazelius , in 1891



Skansen is a miniature historical Sweden reflected both in the buildings and their surroundings, from the Skåne farmstead in the south to the Sami camp in the north. The venues illustrate the different social conditions in which people lived in Sweden between the 16th century and the first half of the 20th century. The majority of houses and farmsteads are from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries.



Ballenberg- Open-air museum



- Located in Switzerland
- Founded in 1978
- An important cultural, research and tourist institution that also
- ranks as one of the most important employers in the area.



“The Swiss Open-Air Museum Ballenberg opens a window on rural life in Switzerland in times gone by”

The Aim is:

to preserve historical rural edifices from all parts of Switzerland by taking them apart and reassembling them on common grounds for everyone to visit and as a basis for scientific enquiry.

The museums highlights are :

- The authentically re-assembled buildings and farms dating from the 14th to 19th century.
- A huge variety of Swiss farmyard animals, including breeds that are extremely rare nowadays.
- More than 30 different traditional skills and professions and
- the medicinal herb garden and the historical pharmacy.

Bokrijk- Open-air museum



- Located in the Province of Limburg, Belgium.
- Founded in 1958.



The collection of the Bokrijk Open-air Museum consists primarily of objects that illustrate daily life, primarily in a rural context between the 17th and early 20th centuries. Due to its diversity and wide range, it is a unique collection in Flanders, especially the farming & food collections, as well as the living culture and (to a lesser degree), crafts.

The collection is sub-divided into **theme areas** as:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| - "Living culture" | - "Crafts" |
| - "Farming and food" | - "Transportation" |
| - "Clothing and textile" | - "Trade and services" |

Cultural Foundation of Piraeus Group (PIOP)



- Located in Athens, Greece
- Voluntary non-profit foundation,
- Financed by Piraeus Bank Group.

PIOP has design and create a Network of Thematic Museums in order to support the development of local societies



Aims at :

supporting the preservation and showcasing of Greece's cultural heritage, with an emphasis on its artisanal and industrial technology, and promoting the connection of Culture with the Environment.

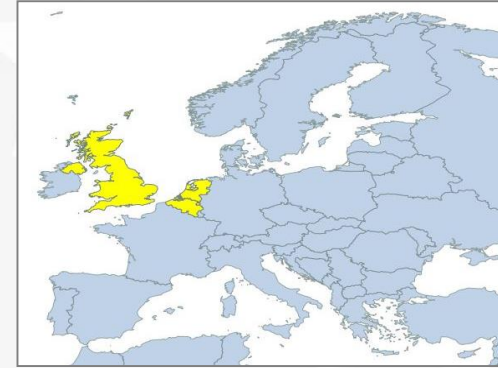
Thematic Museums :

highlight distinctive productive activities, representative of each region, and, through their outreach activities, become a point of reference for the local population. Besides the expanded geographical span of the Network, it is also notable that these museums do not belong either to the Foundation or to the Bank, but to the Ministry of Culture and to local government, whilst PIOP has undertaken the commitment of funding and managing the Network for fifty years.

Traditional Maritime Skills



- Project Partners :
 - Maritime Institute De Ruyter (NL)
 - Cornwall Marine Network (UK)
 - Province of East Flanders (B)
 - Province of Zeeland (NL)
- Funded by the Interreg 2 Seas programme which is part of the European Regional Development Fund.



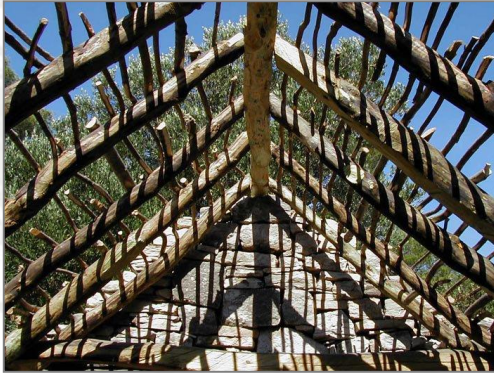
According to the project there are 4 suggested solutions to protect and sustain our traditional boat building heritage :

- Collect and record traditional boat building skills
- Promote these skills in traditional and modern ship and boat building
- Increase the number of people pursuing education and a career in wooden boat building
- Develop an outline for a training programme on traditional boat and ship building skills that can be customised

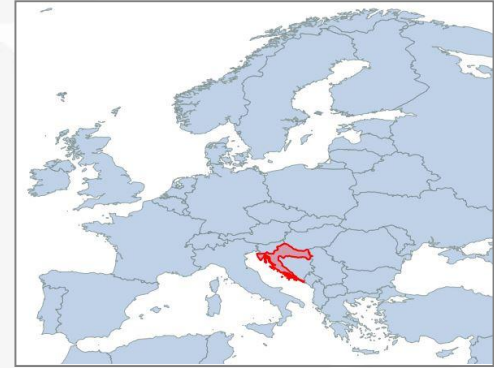
The Traditional Maritime Skills project creates tools as:

- A **training programme** on traditional boat and ship building skills to develop multi skilled boat building professionals
- **Promotional material** for educational organisations e.g. fact sheets, displays, posters and presentations
- An **online virtual learning environment** with a bank of interactive resources

Dragodid.org



- Located in Komiza, Croatia
- European Union Prize For Cultural Heritage/ Europa Nostra Awards 2011
- Preserving Dry-Stone Masonry Techniques of the Eastern Adriatic



- The 4 grada Dragodid project began with the recognition that dry-stone masonry techniques are a part of the region's intangible heritage which is of immense and practical importance for future generations: they produce usable and aesthetic buildings from locally available materials and means.
- The project is an attempt at transferring knowledge and skills from the old masters to future generations of enthusiasts and heritage professionals, through setting up workshops, printed manuals and the dragodid.org website.
- It aims at re-establishing dry-stone as an efficient, aesthetic, humane and sustainable option for the construction of simple buildings and structures in the Mediterranean.

Challenges of the “ TSTs” promotion

- Defining ‘**traditionality**’
- Criteria** to recognize those TST that can or/and should be preserved
- Organize **efficient training** courses and research for diffusing TST and preventing the actual principles and methods
- Recognize that the prevention of TST also requires an **efficient supply of traditional materials**
- Attract **new workforces** to TST
- Find **support and funds** in a programming context which seems to be obsessed with ‘innovation’ and with the so-called ‘creative sector’
- Final (and constant) pursue: an harmonic **combination of the traditional with the modern element**



Thank you



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