

Specificities of the presentation of open-air museums in selected countries of Central and Eastern Europe¹

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The article analyses the idea of open-air museums in selected countries of Central and Eastern Europe while aiming to identify and name the varied focus and specificities of their presentations. These institutions typically combine two concepts: the monument concept, which relates to the protection and presentation of architecture, and the museological concept, which includes the “revival” of these sites through presentation and educational means. A living museum, living history, presenting everyday life, crafts, handicrafts, agricultural work, but also revived technological and military objects, have an inestimable place in the system of modern museum culture.

Keywords: open-air museums, open-air ethnographic exhibitions, Central and Eastern Europe

Introduction

Open-air museums have been a part of museum culture for more than 130 years now, and practically from their beginning, they have ranked among the most successful and most

¹ Špecifický výzkum MUNI/A/1562/2024 „*Muzejní prezentace III - prezentace specializovaných sbírek*“.

visited museum institutions. They conserve and embody a specific national or regional identity, a historical ecosystem, and in many ways they are irreplaceable. The origin of this type of museum is linked to the end of the 19th century and the countries of Scandinavia, from where they spread further into Europe. Their founding was associated mainly with the effort to protect buildings of folk housing and to preserve them from possible extinction. Therefore, not only are classic museum approaches based on the museological principles of preservation of cultural values applied in these museums, but also the principles of monument protection, since the exhibited objects have a dominant, though not exclusive, function in open-air museums. The modern understanding of open-air museums stresses the vibrancy of this institution, that is, the inclusion of demonstrations of activities, period crafts, agricultural or manual work, or other human activities and everyday life through visual examples or by the revival of the given site. This is why such museums are often described as “living museums”. Our article sets its sights on analysing the concept of open-air museums in selected countries of Central and Eastern Europe, identifying their varied focus and specificities of presentation in the studied region, and defining certain characteristic or common features that distinguish them from this type of museums in other regions. At the centre of attention mainly stand the countries of the Visegrad Group, or V4 (Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Hungary), as well as the Baltic countries and Ukraine.

A brief history of the development of open-air museums

When the so-called world exhibitions began being organised in the middle of the 19th century, among the exhibits of interest were not only various models, but also reconstructed interiors of traditional building of folk architecture from several countries. The Vienna World's Fair in 1873 directly presented visitors with a group of folk buildings.² These initiatives, which were further deepened by ethnographic exhibitions in Europe, contributed to the origin of a special type of museum facility – open-air museums.

Swedish ethnographer Artur Hazelius is most often mentioned in connection with the founding of this type of museum. It was he who in 1891 organised and opened to the public under the name “Skansen” what is undoubtedly today the world's most famous open-air museum, located on the island of Djurgården, near Stockholm.³ Hazelius, who had earlier presented the interior of a Scandinavian room at the Exposition Universelle, or Paris Exhibition (1878),⁴ was probably also inspired by the Norwegian collection of folk buildings that King Oscar II, as the patron of the emerging complex, had opened to the public in Bygdøy, near Oslo, in 1881.⁵ Bygdøy was built as a public park as early as 1837, and space was set aside in its centre for rustic wooden buildings. Mentioned in association with this are Christian Holst and especially Nicolay

² ŠTIKA, Jaroslav; LANGER, Jiří. *Československé múzeá v prírode*. Martin, Ostrava: Osveta, Profil, 1989, pp. 7–8.

³ JANOŠTÍNOVÁ, Marianna. Múzeum v prírode – fenomén rôznosti. In: *Múzeá v prírode : Koncepcie, realita a vize*. Čadca: Kysucké múzeum, 2019, pp. 7–8; RYCHNOVÁ, Lucie; MATURKANIČ, Patrik; SLOBODOVÁ NOVÁ-KOVÁ, Katarína; PAVLÍKOVÁ, Martina. Open-air Museums – the Future of the Presentation of Spiritual and Architectural Heritage. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 10, 2022, Is. 1, p. 6, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46284/mkd.2022.10.1.1>; PEDERSEN, Ragnar. *Hedmarks museet 100 år. 1906–2006*, Hamar 2008; RENTZHOOG, Sten. *Open Air Museums : The history and future of a visionary idea*. Kristianstad : Jamtli Förlag, 2007, p. 5.

⁴ ŠTIKA, Jaroslav; LANGER, Jiří. *Československé múzeá...*, p. 7.

⁵ FREDERIKSEN Bjørn; MØRCH, Monica. King Oscar II's collection of authentic medieval houses at Bygdøy, Oslo. In: *Bulletin för trädgårdshistorisk forskning*, vol. 2017, No. 30, p. 13; GAILEY, Alan. Domesticating the Past: The Development of Open-Air Museums. In: *Folk Life*, vol. 38, 1999, No. 1, p. 7, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1179/flk.1999.38.1.7>.

Nicolaysen, who was involved in the creation and presentation of a collection of archetypes of Norwegian wooden architecture, probably the world's first and thus oldest open-air museum project. That collection was established by moving five historic buildings – dating from the 13th to 18th centuries – from different parts of Norway into the emerging collection.

In contrast to this, Hazelius's Skansen was built with the aim of comprehensively presenting the life of the peasant population, not only by transporting folk buildings and their equipment, but also the effort to alter their original surroundings. Hazelius gradually added spiritual culture to this concept, which was represented by dance, music or the spoken word, which, together with living people dressed in period costume, created an atmosphere that conveyed the history of traditional life in Sweden. Hazelius thus combined culture, nature, the material and spiritual sides of the society's life, including space for education about the history of the common life of rural people in Sweden.⁶ This idea then spread quickly, thanks especially to great interest of the public. Open-air museums were at first established mainly in Scandinavian countries,⁷ where they are an important part of the cultural landscape.⁸ However, this type of museum gradually began to spread to other parts of Europe.

Museums that originated on the model of the Swedish Skansen were mainly focused on ethnography, rural culture and everyday country life. In 1909, the museum "Den Gamle By" (The Old Town), which we consider to be the oldest presentation focused on urban culture, was founded in the Danish town of Aarhus. Today Den Gamle By consists of some 75 buildings from towns and cities all over Denmark and presents four different time periods of urban living (1864, 1927, 1974 and 2014). The houses present period rooms, shops and workshops as well as a demonstration of living history.⁹

Along with such ethnographically oriented open-air museums, institutions of a different stamp also later began to emerge. Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, open-air archaeological museums, so-called archaeoskansens or archaeoparks, focused on presenting the life of the oldest societies, documenting them on the basis of archaeological research and findings, also gained popularity among the public.¹⁰ These were initially founded as a result of experimental archaeology, which attempted to confirm various hypotheses about production techniques in the past through experimentation. In this case, too, the effort was mainly to show the everyday life of society, but here, with exceptions, historical reconstructions usually take place,

⁶ RING, Herman A. *Skansen och Nordiska museet anläggningar å Djurgården*. Stockholm : Samson & Wallin, 1893, pp. 8–14; JANOŠTÍNOVÁ, Marianna. *Múzeum v přírode...*, pp. 7–8; GAILEY, Alan. *Domesticating the Past: The Development of Open-Air Museums*. In: *Folk Life*, vol. 38, 1999, No. 1, p. 9, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1179/flk.1999.38.1.7>.

⁷ *Comparing: National Museums, Territories, Nation-Building and Change*, ARONSSON, Peter, NYBLÖM, Andreas (eds.), Norrköping 2008; RENTZHOG, *Open Air Museums...*, pp. 34–38.

⁸ HOL HAUGEN, Bjørn Sverre. *The museum that never came into being – a contribution to the history of regional folk museums*. In: *Norsk museumstidsskrift*, vol. 5, 2019, No. 02, p. 141; WELLE-STRAND. Erling. *Museums in Norway*. Oslo 1974.

⁹ BLOCH RAVEN, Thomas. *Updating Den Gamle By: History and Future of a 100-year-old Open Air Museum in Denmark*. In: *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica*, vol. 55, 2010, No. 2, p. 313, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1556/AEtn.55.2010.2.3>; <https://www.visitaarhus.com/aarhus-region/plan-your-trip/den-gamle-old-town-museum-gdk631880> [accessed, 30.10.2024]. Today Den Gamle By consists of some 75 buildings from towns and cities all over Denmark. The houses present period rooms, shops, workshops, living history. DJUPDRÆT, Martin Brandt. *The importance of atmosphere and spatiality in creating social experiences*. In: *Museologica Brunensia*, vol. 8, 2019, Is. 1, pp. 2–12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5817/MuB2019-1-1>.

¹⁰ These institutions have established a special international organisation: International Organisation of Archaeological Open-Air Museums and Experimental Archaeology. <https://exarc.net/> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

again with the aim of reconstructing the original environment.¹¹ Similarly, open-air museums focused on military, technological or industrial expositions (e.g., water and windmills, open-air mining museums, areas of military fortifications, etc.), or with some other orientation, were founded and presented in the open air.¹² A feature of open-air museums is a specific type of presentation, the so-called “living museum”,¹³ which is characterised by elements of ongoing activities, e.g., the demonstration of different handicrafts, often brought to life by real people as well as domestic animals which were typical of rural life, mainly in open-air archaeological museums through the implementation of living history mediating for visitors.

Development in the founding of open-air museums took place in Scandinavian countries particularly after 1910. This mainly involved Norway, Sweden and Denmark, but also the Netherlands and Finland.¹⁴ For example, this period witnessed the formation of one of Norway’s largest open-air museums – Glomdalsmuseet, formerly called Østerdalsmuseet – which is located by the River Glomme in the town of Elverum.¹⁵ Glomdalsmuseet was built gradually. It was opened to the public in 1911, and today the exhibition comprises 92 buildings (residential interiors, farm rooms and craft workshops) from the period 1612–1940. The museum’s collections (40,000 objects and more than 80,000 photographs) document the history of trade and crafts as well as social life, military service and the development of medicine in the Østerdalen and Solør regions.

In Finland, a national open-air museum was founded in Seurasaari as early as 1909,¹⁶ and open-air museums from Scandinavia quickly spread to northern Germany, too. The first attempts at institutionalisation here began at the turn of the 20th century, starting with the Rhineland-Palatinate Museum in Kommern, which was focused on traditional farming, horticulture and domestic animal breeding.¹⁷ In the neighbouring Netherlands, the Netherlands Open Air Museum (Nederlands Openluchtmuseum) was founded in Arnhem in 1912, focusing on the traditional craftsmanship of millers, blacksmiths and printers.¹⁸

The oldest Polish ethnographic open-air museums likewise have their roots in the earliest years of the 20th century. The Kashubian Ethnographic Park (Kaszubski Park Etnograficzny), founded in 1906, and the Museum of Folk Architecture – Ethnographic Park in Olsztynek (Muzeum Budownictwa Ludowego – Park Etnograficzny w Olsztyнку), from 1909, are

¹¹ PAARDEKOOPER, Roeland. *The value of an Archaeological Open-Air Museum is in its use. Understanding Archaeological Open-Air Museums and their Visitors*. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2012, pp. 27–31; DRAGON, Bohumír. Několik poznámek k budování a provozu archeologického muzea v přírodě. In: *(Re)konstrukce a experiment v archeologii – Živá archeologie*. vol. 7, 2006, p. 88.

¹² DRÁPALA, Daniel. Definice muzea v přírodě a limity jejího naplnění. In: KUMINKOVÁ, Eva (ed.). *Muzea v přírodě : Jedinečná cesta muzejnictví. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě*, 2019, p. 18; BRYOL, Radek. Vymezení metodických zásad zakládání a činnosti muzeí v přírodě. In: KUMINKOVÁ, Eva (ed.). *Muzea v přírodě : Jedinečná cesta muzejnictví. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě*, 2019, p. 35.

¹³ OLINSSON, Sascha Bjarnø. A Museology for Open-Air museums. In: *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, vol. 21, 2023, No. 1, pp. 2–3, doi: <https://doi.org/10.5334/jcms.223>.

¹⁴ GAILEY, Alan. Domesticating the Past: The Development of Open-Air Museums. In: *Folk Life*, vol. 38, 1999, No. 1, p. 11, DOI: 10.1179/flk.1999.38.1.7; RENTZHOFF, Open Air Museums..., pp. 40–41.

¹⁵ HOL HAUGEN, Bjørn Sverre. The museum that never came into being – a contribution to the history of regional folk museums. In: *Norsk museumstidsskrift*, vol. 5, 2019, No. 02, p. 153.

¹⁶ <https://www.kansallismuseo.fi/en/seurasaarenulkomuseo> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

¹⁷ ŠTIKA, Jaroslav; LANGER, Jiří. *Československé múzea...*, p. 15.

¹⁸ <https://www.openluchtmuseum.nl/ontdek?taal=nl> [accessed, 31.10.2024].



Fig. 1-4: View of historic wooden buildings in the Glomdalsmuseet open-air museum (Norway). Photo by Dominika Kuśnierz-Krupa, 2024.

considered to be the oldest.¹⁹ In Central and Eastern Europe, however, such museums began to appear only during the interwar period, though often these were long-planned concepts and ideas that dated back to the end of the 19th or start of the 20th century. A good example of this is the ethnographic museums in what is today the Czech Republic, where the first initiatives and ideas for such a museum were linked to the Jubilee Exhibition in Prague (1891), where a “Czech cottage”²⁰ was presented, but particularly to the Czechoslovak Ethnographic Exhibition in 1895. During the preparation for this exhibition, an “exhibition ethnographic village” was created representing the folk housing of several regions not only of Czechia, but of neighbouring Slovakia, too.²¹ In Czechia, the Polabské Ethnographic Museum in Přerov nad Labem, which is linked to the previously mentioned ethnographic exhibition, has the oldest tradition.²² After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the distinguished Wallachian Open Air Museum was founded in Rožňov pod Radhoštěm in 1925, and for a long time it was a model for the creation of similar facilities in Czechia and Slovakia. A year before that, the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia (*Latvijas Etnogrāfiskais brīvdabas muzejs*) was established in Latvia, and since 1924 up to 118 historical buildings have been collected there in Riga, documenting housing from all the regions of Latvia.²³ In Romania, the “Dimitrie Gusti” National Village Museum (*Muzeul Național al Satului “Dimitrie Gusti”*) was established in Bucharest in 1936 and named after Professor Dimitrie Gusti, who designed it. Along with the individual buildings, he also moved original peasant families into the museum, and they continued to live in the buildings.²⁴

¹⁹ TOMASZEWSKI, Filip; WALCZAK, Bartosz M. An operational windmill in an open-air museum as a conservation challenge: Lessons from projects recently implemented in Poland. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 12, 2024, Is. 3, p. 78, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46284/mkd.2024.12.3.6>.

²⁰ *Sto let práce. Zpráva o všeobecné zemské výstavě v Praze 1891. Na oslavu jubilea první průmyslové výstavy z roku 1791 v Praze*. Praha 1873, pp. 207–208.

²¹ ŠTIKA, Jaroslav; LANGER, Jiří. *Československé múzeá...*, pp. 18–24.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 27.

²³ <http://brivdabasmuzejs.lv/en/museum/museum-history/> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

²⁴ <https://muzeul-satului.ro/despre-noi/istoric-muzeul-satului/> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

In the period after the Second World War, particularly in association with the construction of landscape museums, the concept of open-air museums changed, when newly emerging institutions stressed monument-building approaches, with the main aim of protecting architectural objects. The presentation activities in such museums were manifested mainly by the emphasis placed on the scientific nature of the collections. In contrast, the concentration on this aspect led to a retreat from expressions of national and regional traditions and having an emotional impact on the visitor. The strict scientific nature of these exhibitions effectively meant that these museums became “inanimate” for visitors.²⁵ The concept in the collection-building activities was changed by creating chronological and typological sequences, and presentation activities were focused on presenting the community as a whole with the differentiation of social conditions. In the 1970s, however, this concept was modified, namely due to foreign influences, from a focus on presenting objects to a focus on the people who once used the presented objects. In this period, a story linked to the people who had lived in the buildings was added to the important presentation elements.²⁶ In museum grounds, therefore, we come across various craft workshops (for example, a blacksmith, tailor, shoemaker, painter), food operations (a dairy, bakery, butcher), civic amenities (a church, school, inn, shop, fire station), the dwellings of various social groups, and also with industrial architecture. Open-air museums have thus become not only museums presenting monuments of cultural heritage, but likewise attractive recreation facilities. As an example, we can mention the better-known Norwegian museum Domkirkeodden in Hamar, where examples of traditional building from the Hedmark region from the 18th and 19th centuries, installed in the years 1912 – 1914 from the Oppland Folk Museum, founded back in 1906.²⁷ Along with the monuments of traditional Norwegian architecture, the area is home to the relics of an early medieval cathedral from the mid-12th century, built as a basilica in the Romanesque style, which is roofed over by a modern glass structure.²⁸ Another attraction for visitors is also the reconstructed and modified barn from the 18th century, called Storhamarlåven, which was built on the ruins of the Hamar bishop’s palace, which was destroyed in the 18th century. The restoration and alteration of this unit was done by the world-famous Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn.²⁹ The presentation is accompanied and animated by, among other things, the Gregorian chant of the guides and the use of unique acoustics in the interior of the “glass cathedral”.

²⁵ JANOŠTÍNOVÁ, Marianna. Múzeum v přírodě..., pp. 9-10; VOJANCOVÁ, Ilona. Způsoby prezentace, interpretace, edukace a ožívování v muzeích v přírodě. In: KUMINKOVÁ, Eva (ed.). *Muzea v přírodě : Jediněčná cesta muzejnictví*. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě, 2019, p. 142.

²⁶ JANOŠTÍNOVÁ, Marianna. Múzeum v přírodě..., p. 11; Muzea v přírodě. In: *Lidová kultura* [online]. Strážnice: Národní ústav lidové kultury, 24. 10. 2024 [accessed, 29.10.2024]. Available from www: <<https://www.lidovakultura.cz/prezentace/muzea-v-prirode/>>.

²⁷ PEDERSEN, Ragnar. *Hedmarksmuseet 100 år. 1906–2006*, Hamar 2008; Hedmarksmuseet og Domkirkeodden Hamar. Historikk og årsmelding 1937-39. Hamar 1940; Toaars-beretning 1935-37. Hamar 1937; HOL HAUGEN, Bjørn Sverre. The museum that never came into being – a contribution to the history of regional folk museums. In: *Norsk museumstidsskrift*, vol. 5, 2019, No. 02, pp. 141–155.

²⁸ KRUPA, Michal. Revaluation of Hamar Cathedral as an example of modern creation of historical ruins. In: *Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura*, vol. 106, is. 13 – 3A, 2009, pp. 97–112.

²⁹ KUŚNIERZ-KRUPA, Dominika; KRUPA, Michal. Współczesne sposoby rewitalizacji i adaptacji ruin obiektów sakralnych w Europie (na wybranych przykładach). In: *Wiadomości Konservatorskie*, 2006, No. 20, pp. 48–52; NILS, Mark. *Hamar Cathedral ruins and the protective structure*, Oslo 2001; WALL, Maria. *Climate and Energy Use in Glazed Spaces*. Trondheim 1996; POSTIGLIONE, Gennaro – NORBERG SCHULZ, Christian. *Sverre Fehn*, 2007; POSTIGLIONE, Gennaro; NORBERG SCHULZ, Christian. *Sverre Fehn: Works, Projects, Writings, 1949-1996*, Michigan 2007.

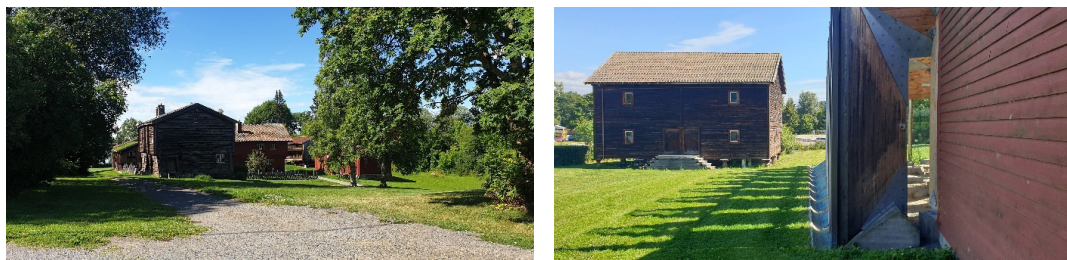


Fig. 5-6: View of wooden buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries in the Domkirkeodden open-air museum (Norway). Photo by Dominika Kuśnierz-Krupa, 2024.



Fig. 7-8: View of the ruins of the Hamar Cathedral covered with a modern glass structure. Photo by Dominika Kuśnierz-Krupa, 2024.



Fig. 9-10: View of the ruins of the former Storhamarlåven barn, converted into a museum, built on the remains of the bishop's palace. Photo by Dominika Kuśnierz-Krupa, 2024.

In the post-war period, open-air museums were established in greater numbers and on the basis of well-considered concepts. Among the most important in Central Europe is certainly the open-air museum in Stübing, Austria, near the Styrian city of Graz (Freilichtmuseum Stübing). This Austrian open-air museum, which brings together architectural representatives from all federal states of the country, was founded in 1962 and opened to the public in 1970. The museum presents more than 100 objects, the oldest of which dates back to the 15th century.³⁰ A second major open-air museum in Austria, the Salzburg Freilichtmuseum, opened in 1984; it presents more than 100 objects from various areas of Salzburg. A nearly 2 km long historical railway is also an attraction for visitors there.³¹ In neighbouring Switzerland, the Freilichtmuseum Ballenberg, founded in 1978 with over 100 typical architectural objects from all over Switzerland, has become an important museum. The presentation of the buildings here is complemented not only by numerous domestic animals, but also by demonstrations of handicrafts, such as basket making, forging, knitting, spinning, weaving and woodcarving.³²

³⁰ <https://www.museum-joanneum.at/freilichtmuseum/ueber-uns/geschichte> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

³¹ <https://www.freilichtmuseum.com/en/the-museum.html> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

³² <https://ballenberg.ch/de/ueber-uns-flm/museumsgeschichte/> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

Open-air museums in Central and Eastern Europe

In Central and Eastern Europe, in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, open-air museums were founded mainly from the 1960s to the 1980s, where efforts to protect and revive respect for regional and national traditions began to be expressed. A stronger impulse in this regard was the work of Jerzy Czajkowski from the Rural Architecture Museum of Sanok (Muzeum Budownictwa Ludowego w Sanoku), which was established in 1958 as a national museum of this type in Poland.³³ The decision to support the construction of open-air museums, adopted in 1956 by the ICOM General Assembly in Geneva, also had a positive effect in this direction. Professional discussions ultimately led in 1957 to a special Declaration on Open-air Museums,³⁴ which accepted these facilities as a collection and exhibition, if the original buildings no longer exist and if the reconstruction work is done by strictly academic methods.



Fig.13: *Rural Architecture Museum of Sanok (Poland)*, Photo by Pavol Tišliar, 2022.

Sanok is the largest open-air museum in Poland, though it is not the oldest one. Its exposition is divided into 4 villages and presents more than 200 objects, mainly dating from the 17th to the 20th centuries. Of particular interest here is the reconstruction of a Subcarpathian town centre with its square from the turn of the 19th century. However, it is far from being the only museum project of an ethnographic nature in Poland. According to the list of members of the Polish Association of Open-Air Museums (Stowarzyszeniem Muzeów na Wolnym Powietrzu

³³ <https://skansen.mblsanok.pl/a/strona.php?id=strona> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

³⁴ ŠTIKA, Jaroslav; LANGER, Jiří. *Československé múzeá...*, pp. 12–13.

w Polsce), 37 such facilities are operating in the country.³⁵ Among the more renowned open-air museums, the one in Nowy Sącz (Muzeum Ziemi Sądeckiej), where an ethnographic park was established in 1975, can be mentioned.³⁶ Several regionally focused museums operate here, e.g., the Opole Village Museum (Muzeum Wsi Opolskiej w Opole, 1961),³⁷ or the Mazovian Village Museum in Sierpc (Muzeum Wsi Mazowieckiej w Sierpcu, 1985).³⁸ Poland is also home to several open-air museums which focus on technology and archaeology.

For Hungary, already rich in museum traditions, the founding of the open-air museum in Szentendre, near Budapest, had great importance. It was opened to the public in 1966, and its collection contains selected representatives of traditional Hungarian architecture from all over the country, presented in tandem with a rich display of objects in the interiors. This is one of the largest museum complexes in Central Europe, covering an area of 60 hectares, and it currently offers more than 400 objects, supplemented by several tens of thousands of different items.³⁹ Here, too, however, the idea of founding an open-air museum matured for a considerably longer time. As early as on the occasion of the so-called “Millennium Exhibition” in 1896, a so-called “ethnographic village” was presented, at first with 24 objects coming from different parts of historical Hungary. More than 60 years would pass, however, before open-air ethnographic museums began to arise in Hungary. Aside from the largest and most famous museum in Szentendre, we can mention other open-air museums in Zalaegerszeg (1968), Szombathely (1976), Nyíregyháza-Sóstón (1970), Ópusztaszer (1976) and Szenna (1982). The mentioned museums are based on historical-ethnographic authenticity, which means they offer authentic material, structures and equipment. The furnishings in them primarily expresses nationality and religious affiliation, the social status of the people who once lived in the buildings and the specifics of their employment and work.⁴⁰

In the former Czechoslovakia, the Wallachian Open-Air Museum, located in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, was for rather a long time the most important exposition of folk dwellings. Its founders were the Jaroněk brothers. Conceptually, the museum at first began with the presentation of town architecture, supplemented later primarily by the traditional folk architecture of the rural people in the area, where log houses of the Carpathian type occur in the Czech Republic, particularly from the Wallachia and Těšín Silesia regions. Additional open-air museums were set up only in the post-war period, and the museum in Rožnov stood as an important example. This museum has had a special status up to now, as together with the Haná Open Air Museum, the Vysočina Open Air Museum and the Zubrnice Open Air Museum, it comprises the National Open Air Museum.⁴¹ The Czech Republic has a relatively large number of not only ethnographic museums (16), but also numerous archaeological open-air museums (13) focused on the periods from prehistoric times to the Middle Ages, or mining museums

³⁵ <https://www.muzeaskansenowskie.eu/czlonkowie/#1517319461653-a4388c57-3ace> [accessed, 1.11.2024].

³⁶ <https://muzeum.sacz.pl/historia-muzeum> [accessed, 1.9.2024].

³⁷ <https://muzeumwsiopolskiej.pl/historia/> [accessed, 13.7.2024].

³⁸ <https://mwmskansen.pl/muzeum-historia/> [accessed, 1.11.2024].

³⁹ <https://visithungary.com/cs/clanky/ethnographic-museum-in-szentendre> [accessed, 31.8.2024].

⁴⁰ *Szabadtéri néprajzi múzeumok*. [online]. <https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/MagyarNeprajz-magyar-neprajz-2/iv-eletmod-41AA/epiteszet-4399/a-nepi-epiteszeti-emlekek-vedelme-4771/szabadtteri-neprajzi-muzeumok-4775/> [accessed, 1.3.2024].

⁴¹ *Národní muzeum v přírodě* [online]. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě [accessed, 29.7.2024]. Available from [www: <https://nmvp.cz/>](http://www.nmvp.cz/).



Fig. 14: *Modrá Archaeological Heritage Village (Czech Republic).* Photo by Pavol Tišliar, 2023.

focused on technology (24). As many as 103 sites are classified as objects of folk architecture with elements of an open-air museum.⁴²

In Slovakia, the idea of having its own open-air museum appeared as early as the end of the 19th century. A leading representative of Slovak museology, Andrej Kmet', was already thinking about establishing such a museum in the mid-1890s.⁴³ However, the first open-air museum in Slovakia only began being built at the Šariš Museum in Bardejov, and it was finally made accessible to the public in 1966. The exhibition here included wooden sacral architecture, specifically churches of the Eastern Rite from the 18th century. The first of these churches had been moved here as early as in 1936.⁴⁴ Due to its limited space, however, this museum did not become a national one. Instead, such a national museum began being built near Martin, a small town in which the Slovak National Museum – Ethnographic Museum is located. In the nearby location of Jahodnícke háje, the foundation of what is today the Museum of the Slovak Village gradually began being assembled starting in the mid-1960s; today it holds more than 150 representative buildings from the Liptov, Orava, Kysuce and Turiec regions.⁴⁵ Alongside these, several regional open-air museums were also created, focusing on presenting traditional

⁴² See KUMINKOVÁ, Eva (ed.). *Muzea v přírodě: Jedinečná cesta muzejnictví*. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě, 2019, pp. 220–223.

⁴³ JANKOVIČ, Vendelín. Dejiny pamiatkovej starostlivosti na Slovensku v rokoch 1985-1950. In: *Monumentorum tutela : Ochrana pamiatok*, vol. 10, 1973, p. 25.

⁴⁴ GUTEK, František. Skanzen v kúpeľoch. Genéza, súčasnosť a perspektívy Múzea ľudovej architektúry v Bardejovských kúpeľoch. In: *Múzeá v prírode : Konceptie, realita a vízie*. Čadca: Kysucké múzeum, 2019, pp. 133–134; ŠTIKA, Jaroslav; LANGER, Jiří. Československé múzeá..., p. 28.

⁴⁵ JAŠŠOVÁ, Simona; SÁKORA, Radovan. Konceptie a východiská výstavby Múzea slovenskej dediny. In: *Múzeá v prírode : Konceptie, realita a vízie*. Čadca: Kysucké múzeum, 2019, pp. 49–54, 59.

life in the countryside, e.g., for the Kysuce (Vychlovka, 1974),⁴⁶ the Spiš and the Šariš regions (Stará Ľubovňa, 1985),⁴⁷ as well as the Orava (Zuberec, 1975),⁴⁸ Liptov (Pribylina, 1991), and north-east Zemplín regions (Humenné, 1984).⁴⁹ Particularly worth mentioning among such ethnographically oriented open-air museums is the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník, which belongs to the Slovak National Museum. This is a specialised workplace presenting the traditional life of north-eastern Slovakia over the last 150 years. The museum was opened to the public in 1986 and presents about 50 different objects.⁵⁰ Another open-air museum – the Open-Air Mining Museum in Banská Štiavnica, which focuses on the mining activity of the region – stands out in Slovakia due to its character.



Fig. 15: SNM – Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník (Slovakia). Photo by Pavol Tišliar, 2022.

As elsewhere, particularly in Northern Europe, open-air museums in Czechoslovakia were primarily associated with the existence of ethnographic museology, i.e., they were

⁴⁶ KONTRIK, Alojz. Skanzen Vychlovka – história a súčasnosť. In: *Múzeá v prírode : Konceptie, realita a vízie*. Čadca: Kysucké múzeum, 2019, p. 73.

⁴⁷ PAVELČÍKOVÁ, Monika. Múzeum v prírode pod hradom Ľubovňa. In: *Múzeá v prírode : Konceptie, realita a vízie*. Čadca: Kysucké múzeum, 2019, pp.110–112.

⁴⁸ JANOŠTÍN, Richard. Pravidelné výchovnovzdelávacie programy pre návštevníkov Múzea oravskej dediny v Zuberci. In: *Múzeá v prírode : Konceptie, realita a vízie*. Čadca: Kysucké múzeum, 2019, p. 178.

⁴⁹ FUNDÁK, Jozef. Expozícia ľudovej architektúry a bývania v Humennom – zvyšovanie komfortu pre návštevníkov, opravy a ochrana objektov. In: *Múzeá v prírode : Konceptie, realita a vízie*. Čadca: Kysucké múzeum, 2019, p. 160.

⁵⁰ DŽOGANÍK, Jaroslav. Skanzen SNM – Múzea ukrajinskej kultúry vo Svidníku: realita tradície a perspektíva modernity. In: *Múzeá v prírode : Konceptie, realita a vízie*. Čadca: Kysucké múzeum, 2019, p. 172.

associated with folk culture and rural architecture, and this stereotype still prevails today.⁵¹ Other institutions, such as archaeological museums or technological monuments, have a similar cultural purpose and methodological foundations. In countries where there were no significant ideological boundaries between different social strata or historical epochs at the time open-air museums were founded, their activities are conceived with regard to a more complex cultural environment. For example, in Polish open-air museums the interweaving of social strata is evident, where adjacent to rural buildings we can also find representative seats of the small nobility with manicured gardens and extensive agricultural facilities. The Sąddecki Ethnographic Park in Nowy Sącz, Poland, can serve as an example. In the former Czechoslovakia, the inclusion of a noble residence in the concept of an open-air museum was rather an exception, a practical step for accumulating several monuments or to emphasise the contrast between the presented social categories. An example is the previously mentioned open-air museum in Stará Ľubovňa, Slovakia, which presents Stará Ľubovňa Castle and the open-air museum of traditional architecture in the grounds beneath Stará Ľubovňa castle.⁵² These and similar reasons are not present in many open-air museums in Western Europe, however, where in a comprehensive environment, in addition to reconstructed country houses, there are also industrial enterprises (Frilandmuseet Lyngby), urban buildings (Norsk Folkemuseum), or noble residences (St. Fagans National Museum of History in Wales).⁵³ This does not mean that there are no museums that are unilaterally focused, e.g., on the urban environment in the already mentioned Danish museum Den Gamle By, or with an industrial focus, as in the Black Country Living Museum in England, or through cooperation with archaeologists, when presenting the Middle Ages, during which a reconstruction takes place.

This brief overview would not be complete without mentioning the national associations, unions and groupings of open-air museums, which are present in all the mentioned countries, across Europe. In the Czech Republic, aside from the Methodological Centre for Open-Air Museums, which was founded by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic,⁵⁴ there is also the Czech Association of Open Air Museums (Český svaz muzeí v přírodě). Likewise, in Poland the Stowarzyszenie Muzeów na Wolnym Powietrzu w Polsce (Association of Open Air Museums in Poland) covers both national and foreign cooperation in that country.⁵⁵ In Slovakia, the Union of Open-Air Museums (Únia múzeí v prírode) works with the Union of Museums in Slovakia (Zväz múzeí na Slovensku).⁵⁶ On the international level, the Association of European Open Air Museums (AEOM), which creates a platform for the sharing of experiences, the organising of thematic academic events and the promotion of open-air museums throughout Europe, was founded in 1966.⁵⁷ It is this sharing of experiences that leads to many of the differences in the activities of open-air museums being more and more often wiped away and balanced.

In the countries of the former Soviet Union, space was more significantly devoted to open-air museums in the Baltic countries, but also in what is today Ukraine. Of interest, aside

⁵¹ BRYOL, Radek. Vymezení metodických zásad zakládání a činnosti muzeí v přírodě. In: KUMINKOVÁ, Eva (ed.). *Muzea v přírodě: Jediná cesta muzejnictví*. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě, 2019, p. 34.

⁵² PAVELČÍKOVÁ, Monika. *Múzeum v prírode...*, pp. 105-120.

⁵³ BRYOL, Radek. Vymezení metodických zásad..., p. 35.

⁵⁴ *Metodické centrum pro muzea v přírodě* [accessed, 29.10.2024]. Available from www: <<https://muzeavprirode.cz/>>.

⁵⁵ <https://www.muzeaskansenowskie.eu/> [accessed, 29.10.2024].

⁵⁶ <https://unmup.zms.sk/> [accessed, 23.10.2024].

⁵⁷ <https://theaom.org/> [accessed, 31.10.2024].

from the already mentioned Latvia, is Estonia, in which the Estonian Open-Air Museum (Eesti vabaõhumuuseum), founded in 1957, presents everyday life and traditional Estonian architecture not only from the 19th century, but also from the 20th and 21st centuries, and the individual periods are shown in contrast with one another.⁵⁸ The presentation of newer types of dwellings or buildings in this way is decidedly not typical for most ethnographically orientated museums in Europe. Eventually, the Museum of Lithuanian Ethnography (Lietuvos etnografijos muziejus) was also founded in Lithuania in 1966 and opened to the public in 1974. The museum's exposition is concentrated on folk architecture but also reflects national and regional customs and holidays.⁵⁹



Fig.16: *Housing of the Middle Dnipro region (Ukraine).* Photo by Yulia Ivashko, 2021.

Ethnographic open-air museums likewise predominate in Ukraine. Among the most well-known such museums in Ukraine is the National Museum of Folk Architecture and Life in Uzhhorod, in the Transcarpathian region (Закарпатський музей народної архітектури та побуту), which in terms of area is perhaps the largest in Europe (up to 131 hectares) and presents traditional architecture from the 16th to the 20th centuries.⁶⁰ The “Shevchenko Hai” Ethnopark in Lviv (Шевченківський гай, Львів), which presents more than 100 traditional buildings representing Western Ukraine and whose roots reach back to the 1970s, can also be mentioned.⁶¹ The oldest open-air museum, however, is the Museum of Folk Architecture and Life of Middle Dnipro Ukraine in Pereiaslav, in the Kyiv region (Музей народної архітектури та побуту Середній Наддніпрянщини), which was founded in 1964 and presents 185

⁵⁸ KULIŠŤÁKOVÁ, Veronika. *Samooobslužná edukace v muzeích v přírodě: návrh řešení pro Valašské muzeum v přírodě v Rožnově pod Radhoštěm*. Magisterská diplomová práce. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2024, p. 46.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

⁶⁰ https://museum-portal.com/en/museums/142_national-museum-of-folk-architecture-and-life-of-ukraine [accessed, 14.3.2024].

⁶¹ <https://lvivskansen.org/pro-muzej/about-us/> [accessed, 1.6.2024].

objects coming primarily from the 18th and 19th centuries. The main emphasis here is placed on peasant life in the lands of the middle Dnipro. It presents primarily settlements in villages, which are grouped based on the nature of their activity: the home of a priest, a potter, a cooper, a tinker, a healer, etc., and also based on their social status: the estates of a yeoman, a widow, a wealthy industrialist.



Fig.17: House of a wealthy Cossack from the village of Volynivka in the Poltava Region (19th century) (Ukraine). Photo by Yulia Ivashko, 2021.

The museum in Pirohiv (National Museum of Folk in Pirohiv, Національний музей народної архітектури та побуту України), located on the outskirts of Kyiv, presents the uniqueness of all the ethnographic regions of Ukraine – Polesia, Middle Dnipro, Podolia, Poltava, Sloboda, Carpathians, the South, with separate expositions of windmills and Ukrainian villages from the 1960s and 1970s.⁶² The museum in Pereiaslav presents peasant farmsteads and wooden churches as well as windmills of the Middle Dnipro region.

Of interest is the emergence in recent years of new open-air museums in Ukraine, referred to as a “skanzen-type architectural complex”. These differ from the original, classic ethnographic open-air museums by presenting accurate reproductions of authentic examples of folk architecture and everyday life.⁶³ This is how, for example, the Cultural-educational complex

⁶² KASHCHENKO, Tetyana; AKHAIMOVA, Anastasiia; HOMON, Olha; CIEPLUCHA, Wojciech. Synthesis of landscape and architecture as a means of expressing national identity. In: *Landscape Architecture and Art*, vol. 19, 2021, No. 19, pp. 31–42.

⁶³ БОРИСЕНКО, Юлія Станіславівна. [BORYSENKO, Julia Stanislavivna] Культурно-дозвілєва діяльність архітектурних комплексів скансенівського типу в Україні на початку ХХІ ст. [Cultural and leisure activities of architectural complexes of scanseniv type in Ukraine at the beginning of the 21st century]. In: *Культура і мистецтво у сучасному світі*, vol. 20, 2019, p. 39. (pp. 30-43.) [ukrainian].

“Mamayeva Sloboda” (Kyiv 2009)⁶⁴ or “The Kievan Rus Park” (Kopachiv village)⁶⁵ and others originated.

Conclusions

We can define open-air museums as a special type of museum, as a museum exposition that usually consists of original authentic architectural objects together with interior elements, located in an environment that is as close as possible to the original, i.e., an authentic environment. Jiří Langer, a leading theorist, branded open-air museums as professional institutions that preserve and interpret folk culture on a scientific basis in the form of a special museum exhibition.⁶⁶ The foundation of an open-air museum is the effort to reconstruct the original historical environment and the original natural bonds of the architectural object to that environment. An open-air museum creates complex scientific interpretations of the life and culture of the population in a defined area in the form of a specialised exposition in an urban environment or in nature. A specialised exhibition presenting a model reconstruction at the same time contains not only spatial, temporal and social contexts, but also natural settings and historical interpretations and contexts, with the aim of achieving the most accurate reconstruction possible of the original historical environment,⁶⁷ the settlement landscape. The exhibition combines exterior and interior elements, which are comprised of buildings (sets of buildings) and collection items, but also the terrain and biological elements.⁶⁸ This definition of open-air museums also reflects the valid definition of the AEOM, and open-air museums in Central Europe (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary) operate on these professional principles.⁶⁹ According to the AEOM statutes, open-air museums are defined as “*scientific collections in the open air of various types of structures, which as constructional and functional entities, illustrate settlement patterns, dwellings, economy and technology*”.⁷⁰

Specifically, the term “skansen” can be used in some countries to refer to open-air museums, following the example of Sweden’s first ever open-air museum. This term appeared and still occurs from time to time not only in the Czech and Slovak, but particularly in Hungarian and Polish environments, where it is fully accepted by the academic community and equivalent to the term “open-air museum”.⁷¹ This term can also be seen in Eastern Europe, for example, in Ukraine. In Western and Northern Europe, different terms are also used to describe this type of museum. These designations are based mainly on the focus and nature of the exposition itself, such as *agricultural museum*, *folk museum*, *living history*, *heritage village*, *museum village*, *living farm*, or even *eco-museum* or *archaeological park*.⁷² From the mentioned terms, let us stop for a

⁶⁴ <https://mamayeva-sloboda.kyiv.ua/en/about-us/> [accessed, 30.6.2024].

⁶⁵ <https://parkkyivrus.com/ua/> [accessed, 30.6.2024].

⁶⁶ LANGER, Jiří. Muzeum v přírodě jako forma teaurace památek lidového stavitelství. In: *Národopisné aktuality*, vol. XIII, 1976, No. 3, p. 179; also see DRÁPALA, Daniel. Definície muzea..., p. 20.

⁶⁷ BRYOL, Radek. Vymezení metodických zásad..., p. 31, 34; MICHALIČKA, Václav. Múzea v přírodě – specifika kulturně-paměťového konstruktů. In: KUMINKOVÁ, Eva (ed.). *Múzea v přírodě: Jedinečná cesta muzejnictví*. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě, 2019, p. 56.

⁶⁸ *Múzea v přírodě v České republice: Teoretická a metodická východiska*. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě, 2020, p. 29.

⁶⁹ BRYOL, Radek. Vymezení metodických zásad..., pp. 32–33.

⁷⁰ https://theaom.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2024_Statutes-of-the-Association-of-European-Open-Air-Museums.pdf [accessed, 31.10.2024].

⁷¹ DRÁPALA, Daniel. Definície muzea..., p. 17; *Múzea v přírodě v České republice...*, p. 23.

⁷² OLINSSON, Sascha Bjarnø. *A Museology...*, p. 5.

moment at the concept of an eco-museum, which is truly very close to the concept of an open-air museum.⁷³ The common features of both types of museums are their living history; the integration of common people into history; the creation of a national, regional and local identity, a regional context or local culture, and reconstruction of the original environment. The connection between an eco-museum and the concept of an open-air museum can also be seen in the field of environmental education.⁷⁴

An open-air museum as living history, a living farm, or directly a living museum indicates one of the typical characteristics of museum presentations in these institutions. To enliven the presentation, not only models in period clothes and arranged doing specific activities are more often used, but the role of a guide who can, for example, perform demonstrations directly, is also important.⁷⁵ Without a doubt, an authentic demonstration by a direct bearer of a living tradition of the most diverse fields of human activity has a greater impact on the visitor. The relationship between the visitor and the open-air museum cannot be formulated only from the position of visual experience and passive obtaining of knowledge about the way of life or the use of buildings and their equipment. The modern approach of the “living museum” is expressed mainly through specialised presentations and activation and educational programmes for visitors, which are often focused on traditional demonstrations of handicraft technologies, folk art creation with the direct active involvement of the visitor,⁷⁶ but also with manifestations of folklorism or an encounter with an experiment, which can often be seen in the museums of Central Europe. From this it is clear that open-air museums also fulfil a educational function, and visitors not only gain new information in them, but also an experience and an active form of relaxation.

With some exceptions, open-air museums in Central and Eastern were generally established 50–60 years later than in Northern and Western Europe. Ethnographically oriented open-air museums largely predominate in this environment, but there are also numerous technological museums (e.g., specialised mining museums in the Czech Republic). Modern and innovative trends are used in their presentation activities, focusing more significantly on the interactivity of the visitor. A common part of the approach of such museums is the accessibility of open-air museums for visitors with special needs, but also the use of modern technologies (e.g., QR codes with expanding information).

⁷³ NAVAJAS CORRAL, Oscar. Ecomuseums in Spain: an analysis of their characteristics and typologies. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 1, pp. 7–26, https://muzeologia.sk/index_htm_files/mkd_1_19_O_N_Corral.pdf; MAGLIACANI, Michela. *Managing Cultural Heritage: Ecomuseum, Community Governance and Social Accountability*. Palgrave Pivot 2015, pp. 48–60; GÖZ, Seda; GÜNERÖZ, Ceren. Power of Museums: Ecomuseums for Sustainable Environment, Development and Diversity. In: *Milli Folklor*, 2023, Is. 139, pp. 5–17, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58242/millifolklor.1066485>; ZAPLETAL, Miloš; MURIN, Ivan. Úloha ekomuzea v ochraně přírodního dědictví. In: KUMINKOVÁ, Eva (ed.). *Muzea v přírodě : Jedinečná cesta muzejnictví*. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě, 2019, p. 45; BRYCH, Mariia. General approaches to spatial formation of open-air museums exhibition. In: *Space & Form*, 2020, No. 43, p. 115, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21005/pif.2020.43.C-01>.

⁷⁴ ZAPLETAL, Miloš; MURIN, Ivan. Uloha ekomuzea..., p. 45.

⁷⁵ ŠIMŠA, Martin. Model prezentace, prezentace jako objekt teorie. In: KUMINKOVÁ, Eva (ed.). *Muzea v přírodě : Jedinečná cesta muzejnictví*. Rožnov pod Radhoštěm: Národní muzeum v přírodě, 2019, pp. 132–135.

⁷⁶ OLINSSON, Sascha Bjarnø. A Museology..., pp. 8–9.

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