



Ethnographic Museums: a journey through traditions

*George Henri Rivière, a French scholar, said:

"The ethnographic museum is a mirror in which a community can recognize itself, reading its origin, its identity, its future, and it is the instrument with which it can understand the problems of its future".

*Ethnographic museums have the task of collecting, conserving and enhancing the anthropological evidence of the territory it represents, creating a truly precious center of culture and research.



*This type of museums in Italy and in Sicily are much more widespread than others and also very important because they represent the aspects of traditional life in the various areas of our country, with objects and reconstructions.

*What is a museum? What are the functions of museums? The museum is a collecting institution, as has been universally written by many; a primary purpose of the museum has been to assemble, preserve, interpret and research the material of cultural, religious, artistic, or scientific significance, determined by the mission of each particular institution with the intention of providing education of people.

- * *Collecting* refers to the assemblage of tangible material.
- * *Preservation* concerns the general responsibility to maintain that tangible material as close to the condition in which it was received for the edification and enjoyment of future generations.
- * *Research* is the most important definition to understand a museum.

*The primary focus of the ethnographic museum is not the object itself but the cultures of the peoples who made the objects that are also collected, interpreted, and preserved in the allowed walls of the museum.

* So, what is the role of the ethnographic museum? The general consensus seems to be that the work of the museum remains bound to collect objects but the intention to provide education and to preserve traditions, remains the most important role.



*Today's ethnographic museums can be characterized in two ways, both related directly to the new attention to Intangible Cultural Heritage which, in fact, remains part of the history of early collections or they are also sites of community collaboration in all the aspects of their work not just the work in collections. Many have kept this dual level of achievement, others continue to strive to reach these goals.

