

HISTORY DISPLAYED: MUSEOGRAPHY AND THE NOTION OF “TERRITORY” IN POST-WAR ITALY

(Em português p. 158)

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The particular relationship between Italian museums and local history has been an immensely important theme in recent critical literature on museological and museographical practice. In Italian critical theory the term “museography” signifies all that which relates to display – from museum architecture and design to methods of presenting information.¹ In this essay I will examine themes of local history and observe how, and to what extent they have been evidenced in museographical practice.

The Unification of Italy in 1860-61 ensured the presence of a centralised government, but this in no way cancelled the fundamental composition of Italy, which was (and is) one of individual regions, each with diverse cultural characters. As a result, a ‘history’ of Italy can only be traced with difficulty, through the reconstruction and incorporation of various local histories. Every museum is intimately connected to its region, not only because of the local circumstances which caused the museum’s creation, but also because the museum, consciously or unconsciously, serves in some way to reflect, through the display of objects, the particular civilisation inherent to the locality. I argue that this sense of the museum both as element and expression of local culture has been unusually important in Italy, where regionalism, perhaps more than elsewhere, is at the centre of cultural identity.

Since the 1970’s the public utility of the museum in Italy has been doubted.² In literature, and in particular in the highly influential writings of the historian and museum director Andrea Emiliani, the history of museology is not an object of celebration, but of a certain regret for the irreversible dismantling of the ‘territory’, in which the museum was instrumental. In a country whose main points of reference are regional and ecclesiastical the notion of ‘territory’ is necessarily complex – a structure both spatial and temporal, forming a historic context for the production, collection, uses and physical settings of objects. The notion of context implies an ‘equilibrium’ between an object and its socio-artistic

function or role in its original site. The disruption of this equilibrium occurred in the nineteenth century, firstly in the creation of Napoleonic museums such as Brera in Milan, conceived as stores for confiscated goods and as vehicles for Republican propaganda, and secondly in 1866, when a wave of anti-clericalism following state unification caused the creation of a law allowing the devolution of goods from church to state ownership.³ The museum was thus the instrument of a widespread decontextualisation, or dislocation, of objects from their ‘territorial’ sites. This eminently negative aspect of museum history has been forcefully characterised by Emiliani, who terms the museum “a site of artistic deportation”, and “a concentration camp, where pictures, objects, [and] in a word, the past, come to be [separated] from their contextual vitality”.⁴ This rather bitter view of museum history has come to constitute a school of thought, and has had a central influence on much museum criticism and planning in the last three decades.

The *Fondo Caput Mondi*, planned in 1996, allows people and institutions to become ‘friends’ of the city of Rome in the same manner in which museums organise Friends Associations. This is the most recent manifestation of the theme of the territory itself as museum, which has had a notable currency from the years of the Napoleonic Regime (the protest of Quatremère de Quincy at the removal of artworks from Italy to France), to recent years (André Chastel’s *Italy, museum of museums*, 1980; Franco Minissi *The museum outside the museum*, 1983).⁵ Profoundly influential in critical thought, the notion has served to increase the sense of the museum institution and building as an instrument of territorial destruction, for the museum is seen to subtract and rehouse artefacts from the territory. However, as a corollary the notion has had the effect of posing an associative link between the two concepts of museum and territory. Some of the damage of decontextualisation could be repaired, the thought runs, if the museum were to commit itself to the communication of information of a territorial,

rather than merely an artistic, nature. Emiliani, talking of the profound lack of initiative in museums since 1866, clarifies this solution, proposing *global* conservation and museographic methodologies not limited to the inside of the museum building but involving, by way of the valorisation of the intrinsic relationship between museum and city, the conservation and self-display of the urban environment itself. The museum, ideally, becomes instrumental in the generation of a historic local consciousness:

The museum in its third age [i.e. the modern museum after the Napoleonic regime and after state unification] is simply and obviously the museum-city. It is the city which organises itself in an urbanistic vision which, finally, is not merely defensive and tactical, that is to say, conservative, but which returns to use all of itself, with the help of all its historical richnesses, to rediscover an identity...⁶

The distressing interpretation of Italian museums as “concentration camps” clearly does not involve all museological models: the collections of the Medici (at the Uffizi, Palazzo Pitti, etc.), and the recent church museums have more to do with localised collection (papal, individual, and ecclesiastical) than with the two enormous and sudden nineteenth century redistributions of the artistic patrimony described above. These museums, which have involved a *gradual* redistribution of material over many centuries, have their own particular links with the territory, in its sense as context for historic collection and museographical experimentation, and because they show the material expression of historic social power structures. Notwithstanding the separateness of these museological models formed on historic ducal and ecclesiastical collections, it may be said that in recent years they too have adopted the preoccupation with the interpretation of the territory and its historicity brought to light by the museums created in the nineteenth century.

The ways in which the territory, in its historical aspect, can be presented through the display of objects depend on the type of museum, and the kind of collection it holds. Italian Museums can be classified in four types: regional, civic, historic and church-owned. This classification is not based on the official denominations (national, civic and private), but rather on their respective historic characters and functions.

1. The Regional Museum

The majority of regional museums were formed in the nineteenth century, amalgamating different pre-extant collections, usually derived from the leading families and from ecclesiastical communities. Perhaps in this case more than in any other the Italian museum can be seen as an instrument of decontextualisation, in that the histories of the collections which went to make up the new museum collection are passed over, and no sense of the previous ‘lives’ of the objects is available to the visitor. The result is usually a traditional display of artworks or archaeology exhibits: artworks are explained, if at all, in reference to a monographic art history, i.e. biographical information about the author and, occasionally, information concerning the circumstances of the artwork’s production; archaeological exhibits are explained in relation to their discovery and for what they signify for social and urban organisation in, for example, Roman or Etruscan eras. The cultural values which objects assumed *after* such source moments (e.g. as parts of successive collections, religious and symbolic values in the local environment, as sources of inspiration for artists and intellectuals of later periods) is not the focus of exhibition. Usually museographic methodology serves to sever notions of locality yet further: the internal architecture, in part because of a taste for the ‘neutral’ environment which was developed and exercised in the after-war years, makes little or no reference to possible previous architectural contexts of the objects.⁷

In what ways does the regional museum reflect the territory? In considering this question it is necessary to bear in mind the nature of the museum collections, which can be archaeological or artistic. These are the primary categories (which sometimes merge) with which large museum collections are almost exclusively concerned.

i) Archaeology

Here the link with territory occurs in a geographic or topological sense. Most exhibits have been discovered in the process of the excavation of the physical territory. The task of the archaeology museum has been the interpretation of the territory through exhibits. The temporal focus of such exhibition is usually narrow, in that it is limited to the interpretation of the *first period* of object usage.

In short, the museum can communicate much about the territory in antiquity, but nothing about its aftermath. This limitation, however comprehensible from the point of view of exhibition coherence, nevertheless involves a disregard of certain aspects of the successive local history which exhibits are capable of illustrating and in which they have had successive active roles, when an excavated object assumes new significances and functions in later periods. A rare exception to this rule of disregard can be seen at the Archaeological Museum in Florence, where the display of the Etruscan *Chimera* bronze [fig. 1] includes an analysis of its importance as a political symbol in sixteenth century Tuscany.

ii) Art

The museum display of the artwork is a relatively modern construct permitting an aesthetic appreciation of a range of objects which in the past had a variety of uses and social values. The exhibition of 'artworks', as has been noted, is in a sense a territorial and ethnographic "history of work" in its most cultural manifestation.⁸ The delineation of such a history, which tends to be talked about in terms of local 'schools' of artists, is facilitated by the fact that large museums naturally possess a nucleus of exhibits of local production. This territorial aspect has been expanded upon in some cases, perhaps most coherently at the *Pinacoteca* in Bologna, where, since the 1950's, acquisition and exhibition programmes have been geared specifically towards providing as complete a picture as possible of the history of local art production.⁹ A history of object production, however, is quite distinct from a history of object usage. The neglect of this latter history limits the levels of comprehension inherent in display: the artwork is understood synchronically, at the moment of its production; its subsequent *activity* in local social history is not presented.

2. The Civic Museum

In its official sense this term is used to denote a museum run by local authorities, outside the control of the *Soprintendenze ai Beni Ambientali Architettonici Archeologici Artistici e Storici*¹⁰. In this sense the civic museum collection is difficult to define: it ranges from rich collections and imposing museum structures like that of the *Castello Sforzesco* in Milan, to eclectic collections belonging to small provincial

towns. It is in this latter form that the civic museum has found favour in critical literature. Usually founded in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the civic museum has been seen as the ideal interpreter of the local territory,¹¹ in that, like the regional museum it is considered an instrument for the collection of "experiences connected to the world of work".¹² These experiences are, however, of a provincial nature and hence tend more towards instances of craft and manufacture than to the status of artwork. This leaning in itself, along with extraordinarily heterogeneous collections, has been seen as a more efficient and sensitive testimony to the complex of human activity in the territory.

The civic museum exhibits the life of the local territory in three principal ways: in the presence and interpretation of urban history documents (from maps and archaeological exhibits to architectural fragments, epigraphs, decrees etc.); collections based on local industry and manufacture (the civic museum of Vigevano, for example, includes a historic collection of shoes, representing the traditional industry of the locality), and in the display of collections of various nature left by eminent citizens (ethnographic, archaeological, natural history, artistic, curiosities), representing something of the intellectual and cultural activity to which the city has been host. A vehicle for civic pride, the museum is active in making local history, divulging consciousness of the same and providing a physical site for social and intellectual activity. However a consciousness of the potential of these qualities has only been *rediscovered* in the last thirty years, notably in the constant championing of the civic model in the numerous publications of Andrea Emiliani, who characterises the local museum "an active workshop for our observation of history", and "a window on the virtues of the city".¹³ The result, after some years of neglect and indifference, has been a re-evaluation of the civic museum in practical and economic terms – in redisplay which do not compromise the original character of the museum, or which maximise the link with the territory. Moreover the new critical success of the civic museum, along with the popular influence of analogous institutions abroad, such as the Museum of London, has caused the creation of a similar museological model – the 'museum of the city', directed by a consciously limited collection plan towards a more precise interpretation of the urban territory, openly inciting

the visitor to revisit the city in the light of information presented in the exhibition. In this renovation of the model of civic museum the collection is again eclectic, but object hierarchies are removed:

In the reorganisation of the new Museum of Florence...we will be able to leave behind the idea...of creating a museum of 'great masterpieces'; this does not mean that there will be no artworks, but such exhibits, notwithstanding their undoubted artistic value, must be considered principally as historic documents and have the same function as any other object or didactic panel.¹⁴

3. The Historic Museum

Clearly all museums are 'historic' in the fact that they all have a 'past' and all functioned actively (to different extents) in local history. However, with the term 'historic museum' I intend to discuss a more specific and limited model: the museum as a monument to historic collection and museographical experiment. The most famous example of this model is perhaps the modern day organisation of the collections of the Medici family in Florence, which are principally divided between the sites of the Uffizi, Palazzo Pitti and Palazzo Vecchio. The collecting of the Medici family has played such a notable part of Italian art history and historiography that these sites themselves are in a sense conscious exhibits, testifying to the rich texture of historic art patronage and mutations in taste between various epochs and various members of the family. The buildings have been used as art display spaces for some centuries, including, at various points in time, the domestic display of art works connected to individual taste and collection or to the requirements of state reception, the *studiolo*, the long gallery and finally to the status of public museum. This stratification of museographic usage, in itself object of study, is necessarily a great element of the focus of exhibition in the museums, in that every artwork and interior recalls, and is part of, this history. This focus is achieved primarily through the maintenance or reconstruction of some of the historic display spaces to be found in the museums, or in the reconstruction of 'antique' displays. Examples are the reconstructed *studiolo* of Francesco I at Palazzo Vecchio (which Francesco himself dismantled in order to remove the objects held to the new Uffizi gallery), the restored *Tribuna*, and the reconstruction

of the sixteenth century display of portraits in the corridor at the Uffizi.¹⁵

In the desire to conserve and reconstruct such historic display spaces it is possible to observe a museographic focus which does not limit itself to the concept of the (single) artwork, but expands to include a particular local history, which in this case, taking as its centre the importance of the Medici family in Florence, is social and economic (relation of the ducal family to the rest of the populace), urban (commissioning and acquisition of buildings) and artistic (patronage, production and collection). These aspects form only a small part of a 'complete' local history, and clearly the scope of the museums is limited to exhibiting only those 'moments' or episodes of local history in which their owners, collections and buildings were active elements. The history of collection, as is frequently recognised in Italian literature, can be understood as part of the history of local and national culture.¹⁶

Unfortunately this close relationship between the historic museum and the urban territory is not always as manifest as it could be. Arguably the gradual formation of the museums and the extraordinary history of collection which they imply have an exhibition value equal to the traditional display of single artworks understood individually. The collections, their distribution in Florence and their aspect as part of local history can be understood fully only by way of the presentation of information about historic collection and museography, which would serve to contextualise, and in many ways to bring to life, an otherwise rather arid, arbitrary and incomprehensible display of artworks. This contextualisation, i.e. the valorisation of the historic museum institution as an active force in local history, was in large measure evidenced in 1982 by the exhibition "The Uffizi: four centuries of a gallery". Unfortunately the exhibition was temporary, and the lesson learned on the obvious link between the historic museum and the territory has resulted in few practical (permanent) recapitulations since that date. The reconstruction or conservation of the historic display space is a fundamental tool in the representation of aspects of local history, but in the absence of explanation it serves only to enhance the knowledge and visitor experience of those already conversant with this local history.

4. Church Museums

Exhibition in church museums concerns ecclesiastical activity in the territory – clearly an aspect of great importance in Italian social history. The objects on display (architectural fragments, sculpture, paintings, relics, tapestries, vestments, metalwork etc.) are usually presented as artworks. Their mutual contextualisation in museum space serves, however, to imbue the objects with a sense of their historic functional values. The *Museo delle Opere del Duomo* (Museum of the Cathedral Works) presents a complicated display model, as the holdings and their exhibition relate to aspects of the built environment which are often physically external to the museum building (cathedrals, baptisteries, cemeteries etc.). The architectural and artistic history of the ecclesiastical patrimony, as well as being a focus of exhibition *per se*, is also the means by which the local history of religious activity is understood. The display of the cathedral museum of Pisa is characteristic of this approach, which operates a correspondence between the visitor route and the presentation of information in stages: a progression from the ‘outside’ of the ecclesiastical buildings (large objects, community), to the inside (small objects, applications, religion, individuals). The exhibition begins with models, photographs and sculptures from the façades of the church buildings, presenting the external architecture (the initial and primary referent – the pre-known ‘way in’ to the network of information about the religious art and life of Pisa) and moves gradually down in scale, ending with artefacts from the internal and human operations of the buildings, such as chalices, relics, and vestments.

Physical links with the territory are manifold: the collections interpret, and are derived from examples of ecclesiastical architecture in the vicinity; the museum is often presented as an integral part of the tourist itinerary, for example in the sale of joint tickets; the museum building, if not in the church itself, is usually a historic church owned building (convents, monasteries, etc.);¹⁷ the display of artefacts in the museum interacts with that of the ecclesiastical buildings, as church sculptures are gradually removed to the museum and replaced, in their original sites, with copies.

5. The Musealisation¹⁸ of the Territory

Museographic space does not necessarily have to be a building...The cities and territories, geographically defined by their traditions and relative problems, are the new spaces of the contemporary museum.¹⁹

The recent interest in what the museum can communicate about the territory has been accompanied by an analogous phenomenon: the reading and consideration of the territory itself as a museum, and of its immovable monuments as exhibits. This occurs in the application of three interrelated ‘museum’ methodologies to the environment outside the museum building – valorisation, conservation, and museographic presentation. Valorisation involves the study of potentials in the self-exhibition of the territory, and leads to the creation (or discovery) of new points of cultural interest in the built environment – ranging from the formulation of historic itineraries to proposals to encourage and facilitate visits to cultural sites such as historic gardens, castles, villas, convents etc.²⁰ Conservation regards the realisation of such potentials, along with the maintenance of territorial spaces such as archaeological sites and buildings of architectural and historic interest [fig 2]. These activities bear an obvious relation to the exhibition of the ‘indoor’ museum, which seeks to interpret exterior space without the aid of those objects or buildings still situated in their original contexts in (and constituting) the built heritage. Such conservation activity ideally involves the possibility to cross-visit between ‘original’ sites and the museum. Museographic presentation outside the museum, as recently adopted in northern Italy to great effect, involves open air text panels which explain the history of a given urban space or act as labels for buildings and statues.²¹ More widespread is the use of museum furniture (barriers, showcases, picture hanging structures) and text panels in churches, whose interiors, as a consequence, come very much to resemble those of the museum [fig. 3].²²

The result of the adoption of such methodologies is a particularly symbiotic relation between museum and territory, whose respective ‘exhibitions’ and cultural roles become complementary:

Museum collections hold that which the city has not been able, or has not known how to conserve in situ...The substantial difference between institutionalised museum and that outside, distributed in the city, is constituted by the

*artificiality of the former in respect of the latter; the process of musealisation of the museum proper is determined by premeditated acts, whilst for the [urban environment] musealisation occurs spontaneously and almost unconsciously.*²³

The territory, as I have mentioned, is an immense construct made of innumerable material and cultural stratifications and sedimentations. The museum institution is capable of demonstrating only the broad outlines of this construct as applied to local history. It is, however, the sense of 'global' museological consciousness current in recent literature which has allowed the territory to exhibit itself.²⁴

Conclusion: museum perspectives on local history

The adequate representation of local history in museum exhibition depends upon the ways in which artefacts (the material product of such local histories) are perceived and utilised. Various communicative potentials of artefacts, singly and in sets, must be evidenced simultaneously in order to delineate a local history. The artefact can be both object and means of exhibition: the monographic presentation of its individual qualities does not preclude the possibility of its acting as a document for the illustration of broader aspects of local history. A two-fold focus – on the single object and on the global framework – is required in order to trace the link, and ultimately the integration, between the territory and its artefacts.

Museum objects in Italy are usually considered in the light of their artistic value. In the after war years this limiting perception resonated in display design, in prototypes of Carlo Ragghianti's exhibition aesthetic of "pure visibility" (1974). Notwithstanding the undoubted architectural value of such museum interiors (e.g. the works of Carlo Scarpa, Franco Albini etc., now studied and conserved in their own right), the application of this aesthetic effectively excluded a large network of possible museum communications. According to Ragghianti's model of thought the artwork, in its visual and material aspects, is autonomous, and cannot be utilised in the communication of non-monographic information – it must be seen as the artist intended it to be seen, and not in the light of the alternative and successive values it may have assumed.²⁵ To maximise the visual qualities of the

artwork ulterior information about the processes which created the conditions of its production, the events surrounding this production, its mutating roles after production, and information which can be gleaned from the artwork regarding other spheres (not necessarily 'artistic') of social existence and activity, tended to be passed over. In the large art museum this approach remains.

The later advent of interest in the rapport between museum and territory, in some ways a reaction to the aesthetic of "pure visibility", can be seen to be gaining ground in exhibitions on historic collection (such as those on the Barberini and Farnese collections in 1995), in the re-evaluation and rejuvenation of the civic museum and, through the valorisation of monuments external to the museum, the activation of the territory itself. The popularity of the territorial theme implies a redefinition of the purposes of museum display, along with a reconsideration of the kinds of information we expect from an 'artwork'. The traditional display of artworks in Italy, which is based on aesthetic sacredness, the history of production (rather than the history of use) and the notion of artist's intention, is clearly as arbitrary as any other rationale.²⁶ It has predominated because of its correspondence with twentieth century art criticism and aesthetic theory (from Benedetto Croce to Konrad Fiedler and Carlo Ragghianti) and because it lends itself easily to coherent and uncomplicated display.

It is opportune to comment here that any new museographic emphasis on local history must interrelate with, or help to prompt, a redefinition of the *iter* of popular 'art' tourism. The constant reduction in the number of *local* visitors, accompanied by an increase of foreign attendance is a phenomenon which has been recently noted.²⁷ This trend, encouraged for the commercial benefits it gives, nevertheless threatens to remove the museum from the contemporary local consciousness, placing it instead (also as a result of rapidly increasing entrance charges²⁸) in the exclusive sphere of international mass tourism,²⁹ which, unfortunately, can tend to pinpoint only certain cities (Venice, Florence and Rome) and certain museums containing well-known 'masterpieces'. By this system artworks are presented for quick, acritical iconic consumption, with no

scope for the documentary communication of the local cultural histories in which those artworks were elemental. The purpose of such 'fast' tourism is a realisation of the individual's sense of contact with the 'quality' and 'authenticity' of famous and pre-known artworks, whereby any wider vision of the complex role of the stratification of objects and their roles in territorial history is necessarily passed over. It is necessary, though, for economic and pragmatic reasons, largely impossible, to recuperate the potential for the communication of this 'wider vision' by introducing guide accompanied tourists into the sphere of local history and by slowly demythologising those artworks which, though justly famous, have come incorrectly to assume such immense popular totemic value that they now concisely *symbolise* Italian cultural history, causing the diffusion of a gross simplification and misrepresentation of the same.

The local history of the territory is a larger and infinitely more uncomfortable theme than the *anti-theme* of the totemic art work. It can only be managed with some difficulty in the museum display, and would seem to imply enormous quantities of text corresponding to the various readings both of objects and of the territory *through* objects. Computer technology (in particular hypertext applications) and temporary exhibitions may facilitate the equilibrium of object communications, but a more courageous, more difficult and long-sighted solution lies in the reappraisal of the purpose of museum visiting, and in the research of a new museographical methodology, capable of presenting artwork and territory in their respective autonomy, and also in their intrinsic relation – a methodology which could help change the way we look at objects.

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¹G.C. Argan, 'Museologia e Museografia', *L'Opera d'Arte e lo Spazio Architettonico: Museografia e Museologia*, ed. M. Garberi & A. Piva, Milan, 1988, p.131. See also C. De Benedictis, *Per la Storia del Collezionismo Italiano: Fonti e Documenti*, Florence, 1995, p. 9.

²See for example A. Emiliani, 'Musei e museologia', *Storia d'Italia V, I Documenti*, vol. II, Turin, 1973, pp.1615-1655; A. Emiliani, 'Il museo, laboratorio della storia.' *I Musei*, Milan, 1980, pp.19-46; A. Emiliani, 'Il museo-città.' *Il Museo Diffuso*, Milan, 1987, pp. 9-13; A. Chastel, 'L'Italia, museo dei musei.' *I Musei*, Milan, 1980, pp.11-19; G.C. Argan, *cit.*

³Known as the "leggi eversive dell'asse ecclesiastico".

⁴A. Emiliani, 1973, *cit.*, p.1621.

⁵The notion has been recently rediscussed by the ex-Minister for culture Antonio Paolucci, who states, "[q]ui da noi il museo esce dai suoi confini, dilaga nelle piazze e nelle strade, occupa le chiese e i palazzi, moltiplica i suoi capolavori nelle città e nelle campagne. Tutta l'Italia è un museo a cielo aperto." He clarifies that this stratification of material culture has determined the character of tutelage undertaken by a territorial superintendency, rather than the localised museum directors characteristic of tutelage in other countries (in A. Paolucci, 'Italia, paese del «museo diffuso»', *La Gestione dei Musei Civici: Pubblico o Privato?*, ed. C. Morigi Govi & A. Mottola Molfino, Turin, 1996, p.36.)

⁶A. Emiliani, 1987, *cit.*, p.11.

⁷V. Frati, 'Il rapporto museo-città: il caso di Brescia' *I Musei*, Milan, 1980, p.223. There are notable exceptions to this rule: museum architects such as Carlo Scarpa, Franco Albini, Franco Minissi and the BBPR group, made extremely sensitive use of the sense of previous architectural context both in comprehensively excluding it or in subtle allusions formed by wall textures and colours and the precise collocations of works. Such museums constitute nonetheless a minority with respect to the neutral (and economic) displays which Carlo Cresti has termed "contenitori di sequenze espositive acritiche." (C. Cresti, *Scritti di Museologia e Museografia*. Florence, 1995, p.27).

⁸A. Emiliani, 1980, *cit.*, p.39. Though ethnographic material proper (i.e. that relating to agriculture, fishing, alimentention and craftwork) falls mostly out of the sphere of argument of this article, for parallel discussions of the numerous Italian ethnographic museums I refer the reader to the excellent *Guida ai Musei Etnografici Italiani* (G. Forni, F. Pisani, R. Togni, Florence 1996).

⁹A. Emiliani, 'L'attività della Pinacoteca Nazionale' *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna*, Bologna, 1987, p.xxiii.

¹⁰This article does not intend to furnish any technical description of the mechanisms and institutions of tutelage in Italy, which can be found in P. Wright, 'Inside Italy' *Museums Journal* VI, London, 1991, pp.25-33.

¹¹For example, "i musei civici italiani furono subito investiti anche di ruoli ideali, come quello di raccogliere le testimonianze delle civiche virtù passate e delle indipendenze comunali...[essi] divennero così il punto cruciale della nostra città; e il punto di partenza per ogni futura conoscenza, tutela e valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale di interi territori", in C. Morigi Govi & A. Mottola Molfino, 'I musei civici: «imponente vetrina delle virtù della città»', *La Gestione dei Musei Civici: Pubblico o Privato?*, ed. C. Morigi Govi & A. Mottola Molfino, Turin, 1996, pp. 7-8.

¹²A. Emiliani, 1980, *cit.*, p.39.

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁴G. De Julis, 'Un nuovo spazio espositivo per Firenze: il museo della città.' *La Città degli Uffizi: I Musei del Futuro* Florence, Sansoni Editore, 1983, p.54.

¹⁵P. Barocchi 'La galleria e la storiografia artistica', *Gli Uffizi. Quattro Secoli di una Galleria*, Florence, 1982, p.149.

¹⁶Frati, *cit.*, p.224.

¹⁷Though the use of historic buildings is particularly characteristic of ecclesiastical museums, the generality of the practice must be stressed. Emiliani notes that of Italy's museums 27% are historic houses or palaces, 30% ex-churches or convents and 20% castles and bastions. (A. Emiliani, 'I musei civici: significato storico di un modello italiano', in *La Gestione dei Musei Civici: Pubblico o Privato?*, ed. C. Morigi Govi & A. Mottola Molfino, Turin, 1996, p. 20.)

¹⁸"Musealisation" is derived from the recent Italian term "musealizzazione", which signifies the phenomenon of a physical site (and, therefore, the objects within such a physical site) becoming, or taking on the characteristics of, a museum.

¹⁹A. Piva, *La Costruzione del Museo Contemporaneo. Gli Spazi della Memoria e del Lavoro*. Milan, 1991, p.20.

²⁰G.C. Romby & P. Roselli, 'Alla scoperta del patrimonio architettonico del territorio fiorentino' *La Città degli Uffizi: I Musei del Futuro*, Florence, 1983, p.140; C. Cresti, *cit.*, p.24.

²¹For example in Milan, Vicenza and Verona.

²²The churches of Verona are a case in point. The *Associazione Chiese Vive* has created visitor itineraries, introduced labels into the churches, entrance charges and multiple-tickets. The current leaflet for the *Associazione* discusses the churches of Verona as "true and proper museums of paintings and sculpture as well as being architectural monuments."

²³F. Minissi, *Il Museo negli Anni 80'*. Rome, 1983, pp.131-133

²⁴See Chastel, *cit.*, Cresti, *cit.*, Minissi, *cit.*

²⁵C.L. Ragghianti, 'Per un nuovo museo', *Museologia* V, Florence, 1984, pp. 115-123.

²⁶G.C. Argan, *cit.*, p. 133.

²⁷N. Macgregor 'Il sistema anglosassone dei trustee nei musei: un'idiosincrasia inglese o un modello imitabile?', *La Gestione dei Musei Civici: Pubblico o Privato?*, ed. C. Morigi Govi & A. Mottola Molfino, Turin, 1996, in particular p.31.

²⁸"Pensate che in quindici anni il biglietto d'ingresso nella fiorentina Galleria dell'Accademia (una delle più frequentate per via del «David» di Michelangelo, totem del immaginario artistico universale) è aumentato di ben ottanta volte." (A. Paolucci, *cit.*, p. 33.)

²⁹I stress that I discuss only one aspect of international tourism, the economic importance of which within the tourist industry, though seemingly immense, cannot be quantified. I do not intend, with this discussion, to place all foreign tourists in Italy within the same unfortunate category, nor do I wish to discriminate against foreign, in favour of local, museum visitors. I stress, moreover, that my comments on the ways of looking at art characteristic of this brand of tourism are subjective, being merely the product of personal observation.

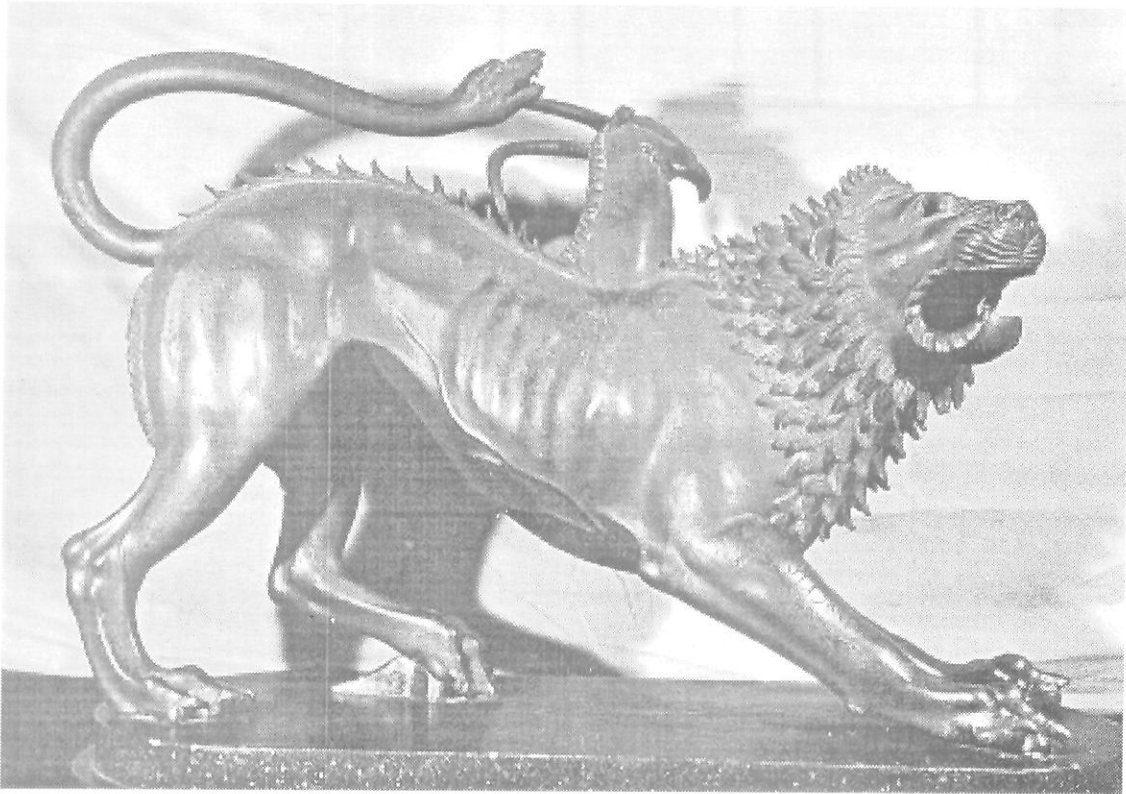


Fig. 1 - The etruscan *Chimera*, found in Arezzo in 1555, Museo Archeologico di Firenze.

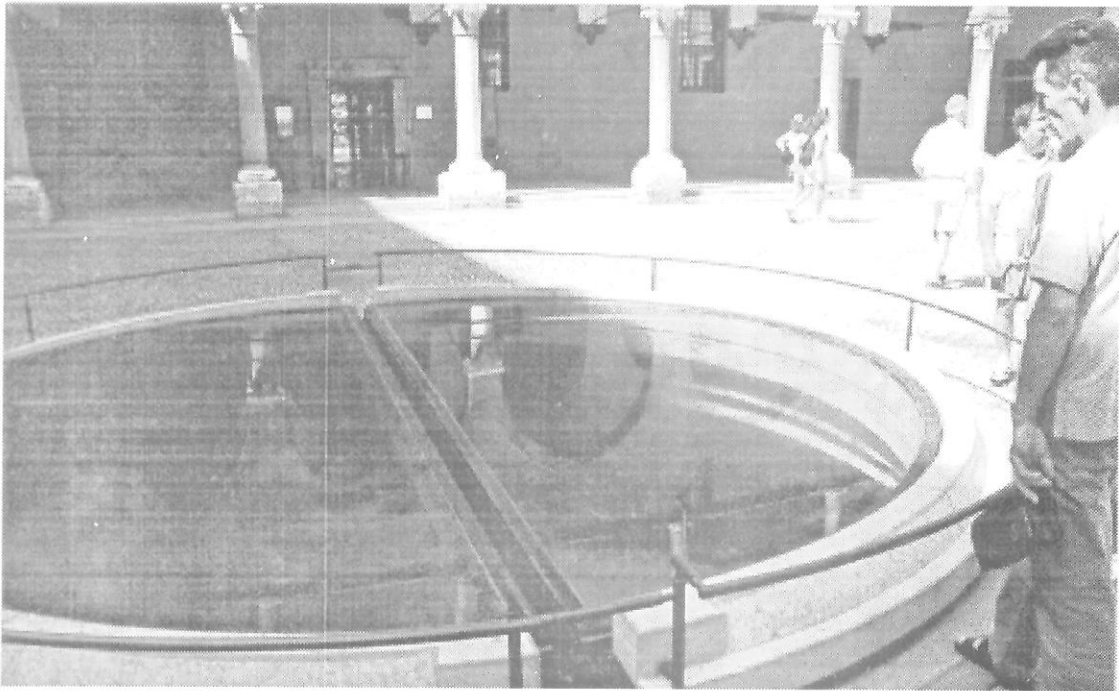


Fig. 2 - Rediscovering different layers of civic history: a 'window' onto the excavation of a Roman dwellin in a renaissance piazza in Verona.



Fig. 3 - Text panel in the church of San Zeno, Verona.