

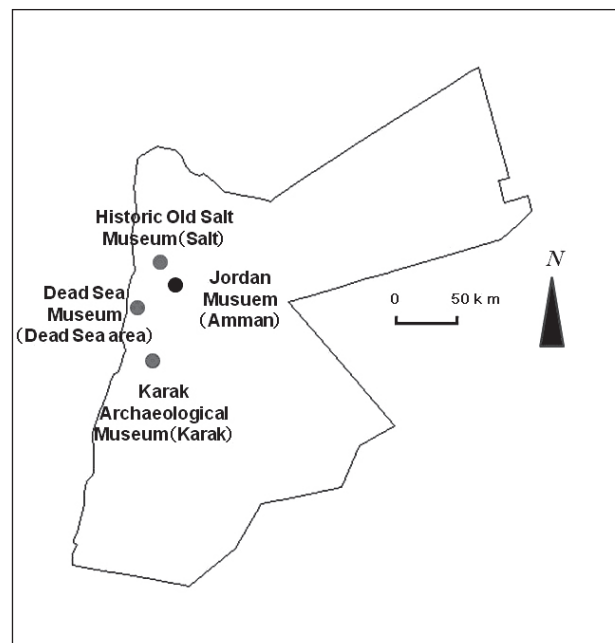
Role of Museums Within Jordanian Local Communities: Case Studies of the Karak Archaeological Museum, Historic Old Salt Museum and Dead Sea Museum

Introduction

Since 1999, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) in Jordan and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have implemented the Tourism Sector Development Project (TSDP)¹. The geographical foci of this project include Amman, Karak, Salt and the Dead Sea region. As part of the project, four museums, *viz.* the Jordan Museum (National Museum) in Amman, Karak Archaeological Museum, Historic Old Salt Museum and Dead Sea Museum (FIG. 1), were newly established or renovated. The JICA cooperation includes construction of these four museums, as well as preparation of the museum exhibitions, enhancement of the museum operation management systems and activities in the field of collection management, conservation and education. In this paper, of the four museums in which JICA has been involved, it is the three regional museums, *viz.* the Karak Archaeological Museum, Historic Old Salt Museum and Dead Sea Museum, which are discussed. The exhibition and community awareness program of each museum are focal points of this study.

Potential Role of Regional Museums within Local Communities

Regional museums have a potentially important social role within local communities. With rich local collections, regional museums can be centers of education, study and local heritage for local people. Potential roles for regional museums include:



1. Map showing the four museums with which JICA has been involved.

1. The Department of Antiquities, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Karak Governorate, Balqa Governorate, Madaba Governorate, Greater Amman Municipality, Greater Salt Municipality, Greater Karak Municipality, Salt Development Cooperation, Karak De-

velopment Cooperation, Jordan River Authority, Natural Resources Authority, Royal Scientific Society, Royal Society for Conservation of Nature, Yarmouk University, Hashemite University and Jordan University also cooperated with TSDP.

1. Promotion of local community awareness of their own history and heritage.
2. Visualization of the local area, including its history and culture, for local people (mainly through exhibition).
3. Conservation of local heritage, not only material culture (such as archaeological or folklore collections) but also intangible heritage.
4. Participation of local people in heritage education and presentation.
5. Development of community-based tourism based on the diversity of regional heritage; museums can play a role as gateways to local heritage tourism.

In recognition of these potential roles for museums, JICA has implemented this museum project in Jordan as a part of a wider heritage tourism project aimed at bringing direct or indirect benefits to local communities through tourism based on local heritage. The three regional museums discussed below are expected to fulfil the potential roles outlined above (see also Oyama 2007).

Karak Archaeological Museum

Karak Archaeological Museum (KAM) is one of local archaeological museums operated

by the Department of Antiquities (DoA). This museum deals with the archaeology and history of the Karak area, as well as the history of Karak castle and the city of Karak.

The permanent exhibition room of KAM (FIG. 2), which was renovated through the TSDP (JICA *et al.* 2000b), is located in the lower court of Karak castle². This room is one of the original halls of the castle. Renovation of the exhibition included expansion of the exhibition space through the addition of a newly renovated annex room. The new KAM exhibition was opened in 2004.

The concept of KAM is as follows:

1. To be a regional museum for Karak, which presents the local history of Karak castle, the city of Karak and the Karak region.
2. To promote local community awareness of their own cultural heritage and the history of Karak.
3. To be an information point for heritage tourism in the Karak region, where tourists can obtain information about the history and heritage of Karak castle, the city and the region.
4. To be a gateway for heritage tourism in Karak, which is crucial for the local economy.

The target area of KAM was defined as the



2. Main exhibition space at Karak Archaeological Museum.

2. The permanent exhibition room of KAM was temporarily closed for renovation work at the end of December 2013. This article describes its condition before the temporary closure.

Karak region, corresponding to the area of Karak governorate. This area was part of ancient Moab (Miller 1991: 1), so 'Moab' is one of the key topics in the KAM exhibition. The Ghor area was originally included within the scope of KAM, but after the opening of the 'Lowest Point on Earth Museum' in Ghawr aş-Şafī, the Dayr 'Ayn 'Abata exhibition was moved from KAM for demarcation purposes.

Exhibition of KAM

The content of the permanent exhibition is as follows:

1. Introduction
 - a. Geography of the Karak region and city of Karak, focusing on the main archaeological sites along the Kings Highway.
 - b. Timeline: archaeological periods and main historical events associated with Karak and Jordan, from the Palaeolithic to the modern era.
 2. Local history of the Karak region
 - a. Dawn of history: Palaeolithic and Neolithic in Karak; display includes a hand-axe from Wādī 'Isal and flint tools from Wādī al-Ḥasā.
 - b. Cities of the plain: Early Bronze Age cities in the Ghor area, including Bab adh-Dhrā' and Numayra. Early Bronze Age pottery, gold earrings and necklaces from Bab adh-Dhrā' are on display.
 - c. Egyptian influence on Karak: the Egyptian campaigns by Tuthmosis III (ca. 1482 - 1450 BC) and Ramesses II (ca. 1304 - 1237 BC) probably included the Karak area (Miller 1991: 8). The Balū' stele from Karak is also referred as an example of Egyptian influence.
 - d. Moabite Kingdom: the story of the 9th century BC Moabite king Mesha is told through display of a replica of the Mesha stele. The Karak inscription, a basalt fragment displaying the Moabite language that was discovered in 1958, is displayed. Iron Age pottery, mainly from the Iron Age city of Balū', is also on display, including a terracotta model of a shrine from Balū'. The exhibition topic also includes the domination of the Moabite kingdom by Assyria after Tiglath-Pileser's campaign of 734 - 732 BC (Miller 1991: 10).
 - e. The Nabataean kingdom and Karak: Nabataean sites in the Karak region, such as Dhāt Rās and al-Qasr. A Nabataean relief within Karak castle is also introduced.
 - f. Karak in the Roman period: the *Via Nova Traiana*, which was constructed by the Emperor Trajan between 111 and 114 AD, passed through the Karak region. It passed al-Rabba (*Rabbathmoba / Areopolis*), the main city of the Karak region during the Roman period. In the east, there is the Roman fort at Lajjun, which was part of the *limes arabicus*. Artifacts from the Rabba excavations are on display.
 - g. Karak in the Byzantine period: Karak was the seat of a bishop, being depicted in the Madaba mosaic map as *Charachmoba*. The display includes artifacts from a Byzantine tomb at Muhay and a lamp from Lajjun depicting the tree of life.
 - h. Battle of Mu'tah: the first battle between Muslim troops and Byzantium in 629 AD.
 - i. Mediaeval sugar production: the Mamluk sugar factory at Ṭawahīn as-Sukkar in Ghawr aş-Şafī.
3. History of Karak castle and the city of Karak
 - a. Karak castle and the fortified city of Karak: the city is situated on a hill at an elevation of ca. 1,030 m; Karak castle lies on the southern edge of the town. Surrounded by steep valleys, the city is a natural fortress that could only be accessed via two tunnel-entrances in the west and east of the city (Mayer 1990: 118). The city was also surrounded by towers and a

- wall. The concept of Karak as a fortified city is reinforced through a model.
- b. Geopolitical importance of Karak (*Darb al-Hajj* trade route): Karak lies on the pilgrimage route to Mecca (*Darb al-Hajj*), that connected Damascus with Mecca, as well as serving a conduit for trade between Syria, Egypt, Palestine and the Arabian peninsula (el-Majali *et al.* 1987: 311-315). In view of the geopolitical importance of Karak, the Crusaders constructed a castle there to control the pilgrimage and trade route (Hillenbrand 1999: 292). By using an interactive topographical map, the geopolitical importance of Karak is underlined.
 - c. Karak in the Crusader period: Karak castle was constructed by Payen the Butler, a lord of the Latin Kingdom, in 1142 (Mayer 1990: 116) in order to relocate the lordship of Oultrejourdain from Shawbak to Karak. After several sieges by Ṣalāh ad-Dīn, the castle finally fell into Ayyubid hands in 1188 (Pringle 1993: 286-287). The display also focuses on the last Crusader lord of Karak castle, Raynald de Châtillon (*ca.* 1125-1187).
 - d. Importance of Karak to the Ayyubids: the geopolitical importance of Karak, which is situated halfway between Damascus and Cairo. Karak also served as the administrative center for *Imārat al-Karak*.
 - e. The Mamluk kingdom at Karak: Following the capture of Karak by Baybars in 1263, Karak became the administrative center for *Mamlakat al-Karak*. Parts of the castle, the city wall and towers were rehabilitated by Baybars; several urban facilities were constructed there during the reign of al-Nasir Mohammad (Brown 1989: 290).
 - f. Mediaeval warfare: the defensive system of Karak castle, *e.g.* fosse; glacis; towers; arrow slit) is introduced, along with siege engines used against the castle, such as catapults and siege towers. A catapult stone excavated from the castle is also on display, as is chainmail and a ceramic grenade.
 - g. Pottery from Karak castle: a display of imported glazed ware, such as Syrian 'blue-and-white' pottery excavated from Karak castle, indicating the taste of the Mamluk ruling class at Karak (Brown 1989: 297-298). Ayyubid - Mamluk hand-made coarse ware is also on display as a comparison.
4. Bab adh-Dhrā' tomb
In order to display Early Bronze Age burial customs, objects from the Bab adh-Dhra tombs are displayed as they were discovered in the chamber of an EBIA shaft-tomb (Schaub 1979).

Local Community Awareness Program by KAM

In order to promote awareness of the history and heritage of Karak amongst the local community, activities as outlined below have been implemented by KAM.

1. Education programme with local schools and NGOs, *e.g.* Karak castle cleaning campaign, Karak castle drawing event, excavation experience, pottery-making, archaeological site visits in the Karak area, lectures on heritage in Karak and workshops on museum education. Most of the educational activities were implemented as part of the International Museum Day (18 May) programme.
2. Museum newsletter, introducing the museum and the history of Karak to local people.
3. Designing a museum logo, based on the lion-embellish of Baybars depicted on the Baybars tower in Karak city, in order to promote KAM amongst locals.

Historic Old Salt Museum (Abu Jaber House)

The old city of Salt, situated about 30 km north-west of Amman, is notable for its 19th and 20th century architectural heritage (FIG. 3)³. The Historic Old Salt Museum (HOSM) was newly established in the old city by the TSDP. Located in the center of the city, the Abu Jaber house (*Bayt Abū Jābir*) - built between *ca.* 1892 and 1906 - was renovated as a museum (FIG. 4). The plan for HOSM goes back to the

1980s, when a heritage center was proposed as part of the old city of Salt development plan (Dar al-Handasah 1981). Subsequently, in the 1990s, a plan to renovate the Abu Jaber house as a heritage museum was proposed (RSS 1990). This plan was finally realised as HOSM via the TSDP (JICA *et al.* 2000c). It opened in November 2010 and is operated by the Balqa Directorate of MOTA.

The main target area of HOSM is the old city of Salt and its surroundings. HOSM deals with



3. Old city of Salt: view from Jada'a lookout, overlooking al-'Ayn square, the Grand Mosque, Daoud house, English complex and site of the castle (qal'ah).



4. Historic Old Salt Museum (Abū Jābir house).

3. 659 examples of architectural heritage, dating from 1750 to 1950, were registered by the 'Plan for Action' study (RSS 1990),

while 1,017 examples of architectural heritage, predating 1980, were documented by the JICA study (JICA 2010: 7).

the architectural heritage, folklore and modern history of Salt, primarily from the middle of the 19th to the middle of the 20th centuries. Archaeology is not covered by HOSM, as Salt Archaeological Museum already covers the archaeology of the Balqa region.

The concept of HOSM is as follows:

1. To be a place where local people can rediscover their own culture and the history of Salt
2. To be a place where local people can participate in heritage protection (local people are the main stakeholders in the museum).
3. Protection of the tangible and intangible heritage of Salt through promotion of local community awareness.
4. Information and research center for the study of Salt.
5. Core of the Salt Ecomuseum (SEM).

Under the SEM plan, the old city of Salt and its surroundings are considered an ‘ecomuseum’ or open-air museum. HOSM will play an important role as the core of the SEM, *i.e.* an information and research center for local heritage as well as the starting point for a tourist trail. Tourists visiting Salt will learn about local heritage and history in HOSM and will then visit several heritage sites in the old city (the ‘satellite’ of SEM) via a ‘discovery trail’ based on different themes.

HOSM Exhibition

The contents of the permanent exhibition are as follows:

1. Land and History of Salt
 - a. Geography / topography of Salt city: characterized by three hills (*Jabal Jadūr*; *Jabal al-Qal‘ah*; *Jabal as-Salālim*) and the yellow limestone quarry, which was once the main source of building material for the old city.
 - b. Salt in the ‘golden era’: modern history of Salt, focusing on the so-called ‘golden era’ from 1870 to 1950 (Khatib *et al.*

1995). Under the *tanzimāt* reforms in the Ottoman empire, the Salt area was reorganized as a *kaza*. A *Kāimaqām* was newly appointed to Salt in 1866 and a *Saraya*, or Ottoman regional administration office, was established in the center of the city (Tarif 1994: 94-109). It brought political stability to Salt, which in turn resulted in immigration to the city, especially by merchants from Nablus who wanted to expand their commercial activities over to the east bank of the Jordan river. Salt grew rapidly as a result and its architectural character changed from rural to urban (Khatib *et al.* 1995: 351-356).

- c. Education history: educational institutes in Salt from the 19th to 20th centuries, such as Ottoman-period *katātīb*, mission schools and Salt High School, which opened in 1925 as the first government high school in Jordan.
- d. Medical history: two aspects of medicine in Salt. First, folk medicine, focusing on the *attarah* (herbal medicine shop) in *Suq al-Hammam*. Part of the *attarah* was reconstructed in this section with the cooperation of local *attarah* shop owners. Second, modern medicine, focusing on the English Hospital, the oldest modern hospital in Jordan which was built in 1875.
- e. Municipality history: the history of Salt municipality (*Baladiat as-Salt*) from its establishment in the late 19th century to today.
- f. Salt in its regional context: trade was the main factor in the prosperity of Salt. Wheat, butter (*samn*), sumac (*summāq*) and wool were trade products from Salt. Local wool was exported to Europe as the ‘*balkawi*’ brand (Rogan 2002: 29,133). It should be noted that ash from a plant called *al-qiri* (*Salsora kali*) was special product exported from Salt to Nablus,

which was then used in olive oil soap production (Tarif 1994: 620-621).

- g. Salt before urbanisation: the pre-1866 village-type architecture of Salt (Khatib *et al.* 1995: 355-356) is on display as original-size reconstructions.
- h. Agriculture: agriculture in the Balqa region, with a display of farming tools. Water mills in the Balqa region are also introduced.
- i. Architecture and master builder: the architectural heritage of old city of Salt, such as the Touqan house, Sukkar house, Khatib house etc.. The display includes the history of the Abu Jaber house, with a focus on its master builder from Nablus, Abd al-Rahman al-Aqrouq (1851 - 1944). Original building materials from the Abu Jaber house, such as roof-tiles imported from Marseille, are on display.
- j. King Abdullah I room: *madāfeh* guestroom dedicated to a memorial exhibition of His Late Majesty King Abdullah I.

2. Local Culture of Salt

- a. Traditional music and games: folk music instruments, such as the fiddle (*rabābah*), and folk games, such as *manqarah*, that can be seen being played by locals in al-‘Ayn square today.
- b. Traditional costume: display of *khalaqah* (FIG. 5). This giant-sized woman’s dress is considered to be the traditional costume of Salt.
- c. Wedding: folk wedding ceremony in Salt (audiovisual). Folk wedding objects, such as a bridal box (*sunduq ‘urs*), are on display.
- d. Local industry: local shoemaker in *Suq Iskafiyye* with a display of shoe-making tools. Raisin production and dyeing in Salt are also introduced.

3. Life at a Traditional House in Salt

- a. *Mooneh*: storage space for food in traditional houses in Salt. Storage



5. Khalaqah exhibition at the Historic Old Salt Museum.

facilities, such as cabinets for food (*nemlieh*) and storage containers for wheat (*kwalah*), are on display.

- b. Kitchen: traditional kitchen utensils and local diet in Salt. Display includes the large kerosene heater originally used for cooking in the Abu Jaber house.
- c. *Madāfeh*: the *madāfeh* is the guestroom of traditional houses in Salt and shows the culture of hospitality in the city. This room, with fresco paintings on its ceiling, is the original *madāfeh* of the Abu Jaber house. Coffee utensils, used to serve Arabic coffee to guests, are on display.
- d. Bedroom: reconstruction of an original bedroom, with a bed used in the Abu Jaber house.

Local Community Awareness Program by HOSM

Local community participation is essential for HOSM, as well as for SEM. Therefore, HOSM has developed the following community programme:

1. Activities with local schools in the education room.
2. Demonstration of traditional tool-use by elderly locals.
3. Old storytelling (*hakawati*) by locals.
4. Demonstration and teaching of folk game (*manqarah*) by locals.
5. Participation of local people in the setting-up of exhibitions.

Dead Sea Museum

The Dead Sea Museum (DSM) is located within the Dead Sea Panoramic Complex⁴ (FIG. 6), situated on Zara cliff overlooking the Dead Sea. DSM was newly constructed under the TSDP (JICA *et al.* 2000a) and opened in 2006. The operator of DSM was the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN). Its main target area is the Dead Sea and surrounding region. The collection and exhibition also covers parts of the Jordan valley and Wādī ‘Arabah.

DSM is a holistic regional museum. Multidis-

ciplinary fields concerning the Dead Sea area are covered in DSM, such as geology, ecology, archaeology, history and environmental problems. The museum concept of DSM is as follows:

1. A place to discover ‘What is the Dead Sea?’.
DSM is expected to be an encyclopedia for the Dead Sea area.
2. Information center for local people, as well as tourists, about natural and cultural heritage in the Dead Sea area.
3. Education center for the promotion of local community awareness of the Dead Sea and heritage in the area, as well as protection of the environment.
4. Gateway to heritage tourism in the Dead Sea area.

DSM Exhibition

The exhibition space (FIG. 7) is divided into four zones covering ‘the origin of the Dead Sea’, ‘ecosystem’, ‘humans and the Dead Sea’ and ‘the Dead Sea in danger’. The exhibition content is as follows:

1. Origin of the Dead Sea
 - a. Formation of the Jordan Rift based on two formation theories: vertical (or graven) tectonics and horizontal (or strike-slip) tectonics (Abed 1985: 81).



6. The Dead Sea Museum at the Dead Sea Panoramic Complex.

4. The Dead Sea Panoramic Complex consists of several facilities, including a museum, conference room, restaurant, shop and viewing point overlooking the Dead Sea.



7. Permanent exhibition at the Dead Sea Museum.

- b. Ancient lakes preceding the Dead Sea: Lake Usdum (7 - 3 million years ago); Lake Shagour (2 million years ago); Lake Samra (Upper Pleistocene); Lake Lisan (70 - 60,000 to 15 - 11,000 years ago).
 - c. Rocks from formations around the Dead Sea: Pre-Cambrian conglomerate; Cambrian sandstone; Triassic sandstone; Jurassic sandstone; Cretaceous sandstone; Cretaceous chalk marl; Pleistocene travertine; Pleistocene Lisan marl.
 - d. Volcanic rock from Mukawir: basalt; tuff; lava; volcanic bombs.
 - e. Fossils from the area: Jurassic bivalvia; Upper Cretaceous gryphaea; Upper Cretaceous echinoid; Upper Cretaceous gastropods; Upper Cretaceous ammonite.
 - f. Rocks and minerals with economic value: oil shale from Lajjun; tar sand from Wādī ‘Isāl; clay from Swayma; travertine from Dayr ‘Allā; tripoli (*diatomaceous earth*) from Karak; phosphate from al-Hisa; copper ore from Wadi Khalid; gypsum from Karak; salt from the Dead Sea shoreline; sulphur from the Dead Sea shoreline; calcite from Wadi al-Mujib.
2. Ecosystem
- a. The vegetation region of the Dead Sea area, *viz.* Tropical / Sudanian region (al-Eisawi 1998: 6).
 - b. Plant species characteristic of the Tropical / Sudanian region, such as calotropis (*Calotropis procera*), Christ’s thorn jujube (*Ziziphus spina-christi*), sodada (*Capparis deciduo*), salvadora (*Salvadora persica*) and maru (*Maerua crassifolia*).
 - c. Folk use of plants in the Sudanian region, such as the use of salvadora as a tooth-cleaning tool, or of Christ’s thorn jujube as fuel or for prayer beads.
 - d. Animals in the Mujib Nature Reserve, such as Nubian ibex (*Capra ibex nubiana*), striped hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*), Blanford’s fox (*Vulpes cana*), rock hyrax (*Procavia copensis*) and red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*).
 - e. Fish species in *wadis* flowing into the Dead Sea, such as Dead Sea garra (*Gara Ghorensis*), doctor fish (*Garra rufa*) and a type of ray-finned fish (*Capoetra damascina*).
 - f. Bird species in the Dead Sea area, such as Tristram’s grackle (*Onychognathus tristramii*), Dead Sea sparrow (*Passer moabiticus*), Palestine sunbird (*Nectarinia osea*), Arabian babbler (*Turdoides squamiceps*) and fan-tailed raven (*Corvus rhipidurus*).
 - g. Life in the Dead Sea: halophilic bacteria.

3. Humans and the Dead Sea

- a. Outline of prehistory in the region, such as early human immigration through the Jordan valley, the Neolithic village at Jericho, the Chalcolithic site of Tulaylāt al-Ghasūl, Early Bronze Age settlement at Bab adh-Dhrā‘ and Numayra and the Damyah dolmen site.
- b. Export of bitumen (asphalt) from the Dead Sea to Egypt for embalming. Bitumen collected from the Dead Sea and samples excavated from Zara / Kallirrhoe are on display.
- c. Zara / *Kallirrhoe*: Roman and Byzantine site, notable for its port and villa that was visited by Herod the Great. The bath complex remained in use until the Byzantine period and was depicted on the Madaba mosaic map as *Therma Kallirrhoes* (Strobel *et al.* 1986: 381). Artifacts from the Zara excavations, including a Herodian lamp, juglet and glass bottle, as well as a coin from the Roman period, are on display.
- d. Copper-smelting site of Faynan. Copper ore, slag and moulds are on display, showing the copper production process.
- e. Dead Sea scroll and Qumran cave.
- f. Jordan river and baptism site.
- g. Dead Sea products, such as mud for cosmetic use.
- h. Production of indigo, sulphur and tar in the region.
- i. Mamluk sugar production in the Dead Sea area, as at Tawahin as-Sukkar.
- j. Expedition to the Dead Sea by W. F. Lynch in 1848.

4. Dead Sea in Danger

- a. Rapid decline of Dead Sea water level at a rate of around 1 m per year (Nihoul *et al.* 2004: 290-291).
- b. Sinkhole recently reported in the Dead Sea area as a result of dropping water levels (Abelson *et al.* 2003).

- c. Possible solution for the preservation of the Dead Sea, such as the Dead - Red canal.

Local Community Awareness Program by DSM

Since opening, DSM has implemented education activities with local schools. The targets of education activity are mainly local schools in the Madaba and Ma'in areas. Activity programmes include exhibition tours by curatorial staff and lectures by DSM staff about DSM and related environmental issues.

Concluding Remarks

Regional museums can bring a picture of the land, its culture, history and heritage, to life, mainly by exhibition. They can tell the story of the areas in which communities live. Local people have the opportunity to rediscover their land and heritage through museums. Awareness amongst local communities of their own heritage may lead to community-based heritage tourism that can benefit local people. Museums can also play a role as gateways to regional heritage. Experience gained with the three regional museums discussed here highlights the potential roles of such institutions.

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