

## **Abstract**

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This research focuses on the emergence and development of agricultural museum practice and theory in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, with special attention to the establishment of knowledge networks between different transnational actors; contributing to the identification of theoretical change and methodological trends in the development of this museological field.

The Skansen Open-Air Museum in Stockholm, a folklore museum, and the Hungarian Agricultural Museum in Budapest, a national museum with a markedly technical character, both founded in the 1890s, were the two pioneer institutions of this kind, acting as role-models for later initiatives around Europe and beyond. This bipolar ancestry reflects the variety of approaches possible, still today, in the realm of agricultural museology: one can find agriculture-related museums focused on technical matters, food and nutrition, folklore, specific industries or sectors, etc. Furthermore, the museographic approaches and curatorial options of these institutions can vary considerably from re-enactment of traditional practices to the science-centre-inspired display of environmental matters.

At a time when environmental, agricultural, and food related matters gain increasing importance in museums, it stands as essential to know the history and development of these intuitions. Through the adoption of a transnational approach, this thesis intends to establish a historical geography of agriculture museums, identifying and mapping transnational trends and key networks. Special attention is devoted to the antecedents and creation of the *Association Internationale de Musées d'Agriculture* (AIMA), founded in 1966 in Czechoslovakia and involving institutions in both sides of the Iron Curtain. The *Acta Musearum Agriculturae*, the journal of this organisation, constitutes an essential source for this work, allowing for a better understating of the main theoretical debates within the agricultural museological milieu, in a particularly constrained political context. Other sources, produced by international organisations (like the ICOM) or national institutions complement the research.