

Notes from the editor

Salt and health

Since some decades, over-consumption of salt is accused of affecting man's health in a negative way. Four recent studies have been carried out in France and they all show that the Frenchmen consume twice as much salt as the World Health Organization recommends (10-12 grams instead of recommended 5-6 grams). Over-consumption of salt can lead to serious illness, especially cardiovascular, and to hypertension. It can also worsen certain pathologies like osteoporose and some cancers.

This over-consumption is linked to changes in our eating habits. We absorb a lot of "hidden" salt through readymade food (fast food, conserves, bread, soft drinks, etc). Most of this type of food is heavily salted and the consumer has no possibility to control the quantity he absorbs. Today, 80% of the salt we consume come from food we buy ready. The public authorities in France would like to reduce this amount significantly.

The traditional salinas should be aware of these studies and respect the results. Without "pushing" towards over-consumption, the traditional salinas can even use these studies to communicate with their customers, because we should have in mind that this type of salinas normally attract consumers that are interested in using high quality salt in moderate quantities.

This forth ALAS Newsletter has salt-museums as central theme.

I hope that you all will find some interesting reading!

His Saline
In sale salins (but not more than 5 grams per day!),

In this issue:

Theme: Salt-museums

Page 2-3

A case study from Piran

Page 4-5

The four ALAS museums

Page 6-7

Report from PMC

ALAS final conference

ALAS web-site

Addresses

Calendar

Page 8



Aphanus fasciatus (see page 8)

The ALAS Newsletter is published with the financial support of the European Commission



ECOS-Ouverture is the European Commission's Programme for Co-operation between the regions and cities of the European Union and

Cervia

(Adriatic Sea, Italy)

Cervia was until very recently an important site for salt production. The industrial salina was closed down a few years ago, but a small traditional salina is still operating. The *Camillone salina* has worked for hundreds of years and the *Gruppo Culturale Civiltà' Salinara* manages both the salina and the local salt-museum. An enthusiastic team of merry gentlemen harvests the salt on a daily basis in summer. The museum will soon move into new buildings in the harbour. These were formerly the storehouses for the salt.



Eros Marzelli, the happy salter, prepares for the harvest.

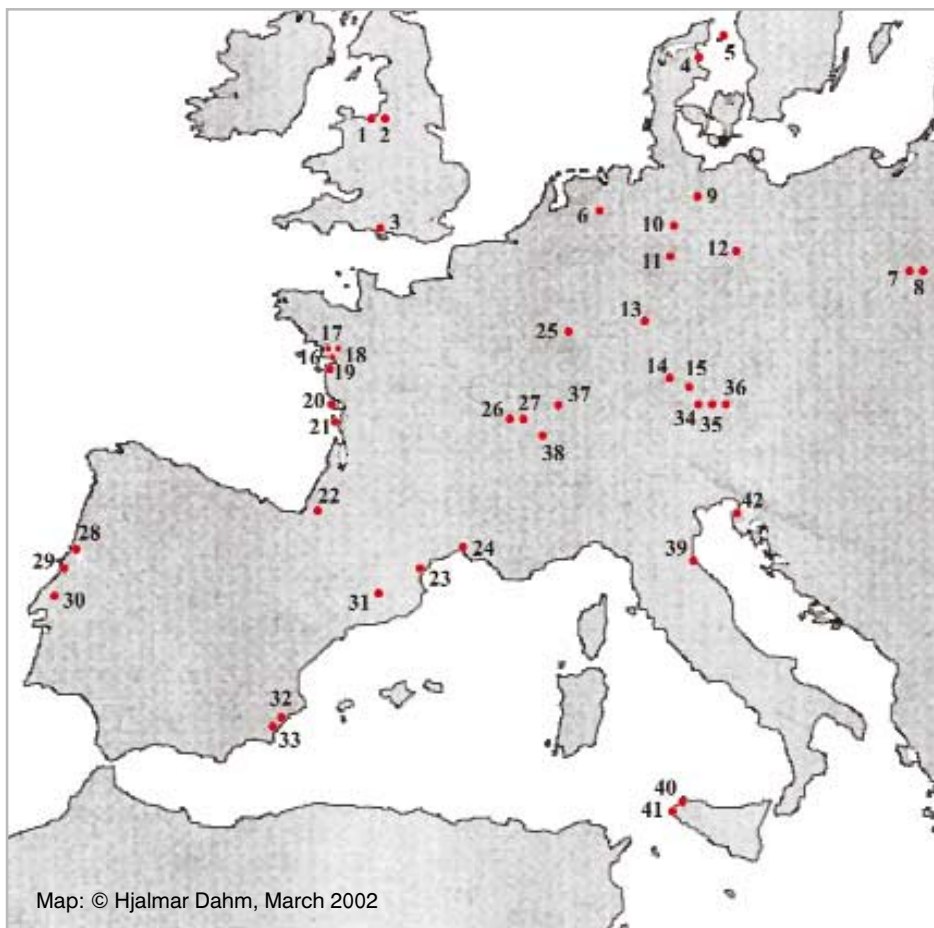
This forth ALAS Newsletter has salt-museums as central theme. It has therefore been printed in 500 copies for a wider distribution than the previous issues. It has been sent in several copies to the existing salt-museums, both in Europe, USA and Japan.

If you receive the Newsletter for the first time, we would be glad to put you on our mailing list (the subscription is free!). You just have to send a simple request to our email-address: alas@otenet.gr

Salt museums

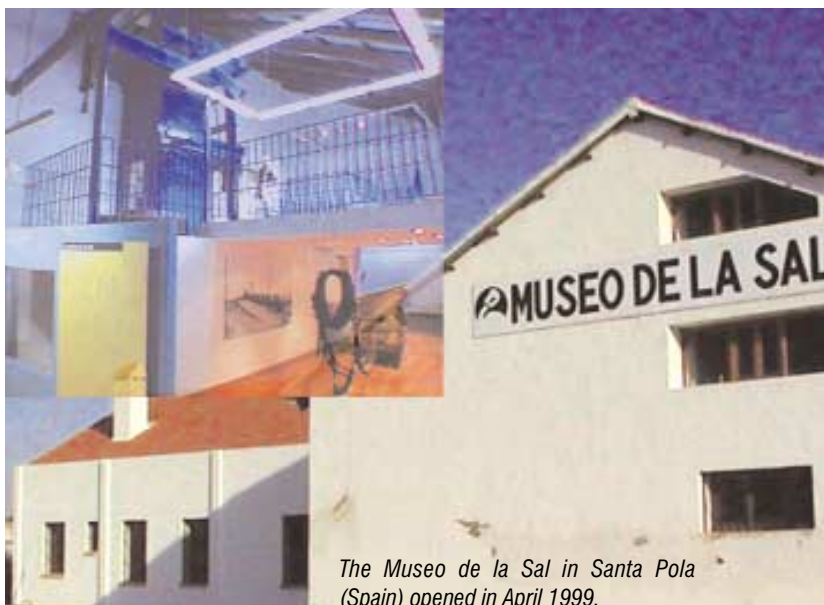
Would you believe me if I told you that there are more than 40 museums that deal with salt? Well, that is at least the result of a questionnaire I sent out last autumn – and there might be more to discover. Before anybody starts to make objections, I must also say that my definition of a museum is rather wide and some of you might not agree to call *all* the structures that I have found “museums”. Some might be visitors centers linked to a nature park, others eco-museums, some have valuable collections, others more simple exhibitions. But all deal with salt and salt-production in one way or the other.

I am fully aware that some structures – especially visitor centers – have been left out. I have been to information centers in Portugal (*Alcochete, Setubal and Castro Marim*) where the exhibitions also show both the ecology and the work in the salinas. It has



Map: © Hjalmar Dahm, March 2002

therefore not been easy to set the limits, but the inventory has only just started.

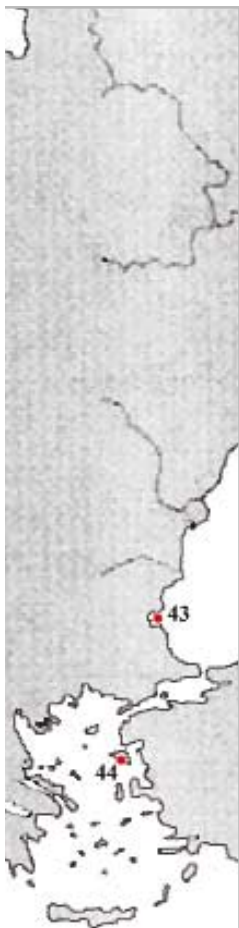


The Museo de la Sal in Santa Pola (Spain) opened in April 1999.

The questionnaire contained 34 questions, ranging from the name and address of the museum to number of visitors and contents (exhibitions, publica-

tions, cafeteria, etc). Most of the structures answered quickly, but some had to be reminded several times. The questionnaire was only available in English and French, so many answers from Germany, Spain and Italy had to be obtained through other research (visits on the spot for instance). I must admit that I am still waiting for some, even prominent, museums to send in their answers.

The result is that ALAS now disposes of a **data-base** that contains up-to-date information about most salt-museums in Europe (and the world?). It has also allowed me to make the map that shows the distribution throughout Europe.



The answers to the questionnaire clearly show that the differences between the structures are important:

- Some are very old (the Musée des Marais Salants in Batz-sur-Mer has roots from 1887 and the Salt Museum in Northwich was founded already in 1889), but many museums are less than ten years old.
- Some museums belong to municipalities, others to private

Salt museums

United Kingdom:

1. Lion Saltworks, Northwich
2. The Salt Museum, Northwich
3. Saint Barbe Museum, Hampshire

Denmark:

4. Danmarks Saltcenter, Mariager
5. Laeso saltsjuderi, the island of Laeso

The Netherlands:

6. Zoutmuseum, Delden

Poland:

7. Salt-mine in Wieliczka,
8. Stanislaw Fischer Museum, Bochnia

Germany:

9. Deutscher Salzmuseum, Lüneburg
10. Salz- u. Kali-Bergbaumuseum, Bad Salzdetfurth
11. Salzmuseum, Bad Sooden-Allendorf

12. Halloren- und Salinemuseum, Halle
13. Besucherbergwerk (Salt mine) in Bad Friedrichshall

14. Salzbergwerk in Berchtesgaden

15. Alte Saline in Bad Reichenhall

France:

16. Musée Intercommunal des Marais Salants, Batz-sur-Mer
17. La Maison du Sel / Terre de Sel, Guérande

18. La Maison des Paludiers, Saillé/Guérande

19. Ecomusée du Daviaud, Marais Breton

20. Ecomusée du Marais Salant, Ile de Ré

21. Maison du Saunier, Ile d'Oléron

22. Musée du sel, Salies de Béarn

23. Musée du Salin de Gruissant

24. Musée de la Camargue, Parc Naturel Regional

25. Musée du Sel, Marsal

26. Saline Royale, Arc-et-Senans

27. Anciennes salines, Salins-les-Bains Portugal:

28. Museu Marítimo de Ilhavo (Aveiro)

29. Future Ecomuseu do Sal, Figueira da Foz

30. Inland salina in Marinhas do Sal, Rio Maior

Spain:

31. Mon de Sal (salt-mine) in Cardona

32. Museo de la Sal in Santa Pola

33. Museo del Mar y de la Sal in Torrevieja

Austria:

34. Hallein

35. Hallstatt

36. Althaussee

Switzerland:

37. Vereinigte Schweizerische Rheinsalinen AG in Schweizerhalle

38. Société Vaudoise des Mines et Salines of Bex (Aigle)

Italy:

39. Salt-museum and salina in Cervia

40. Salt-museum in the Nubia-Paceco salina, Trapani, Sicily.

41. Salt-museum and traditional salinas in Mozia, close to Marsala, Sicily

Slovenia:

42. Museum of salt-making, Piran

Bulgaria:

43. Future salt-museum, Pomorie

Greece:

44. Future salt-museum in Lesvos

Outside Europe:

Mexico

- Museo de la Sal in Colima

Japan

- Tobacco and salt museum, Tokyo

USA

- Salt museum, Onondaga, Syracuse (N.Y.)

foundations or even to salt producing companies.

- Some have 20 permanent employees (Austria), others work on a voluntary basis (Delden).

- Some receive several hundred thousand annual visitors (Austria), others some thousand only.

- All museums are placed close to sites where salt is (or was) produced and their exhibitions mainly deal with that type of salt.

- Some museums are oriented towards history, others to the

work of man (technology), the natural environment (ecology) or economy of salt production.

- Some museums deal also with other subjects (Tobacco and Salt Museum in Japan, Museo del Mar y de la Sal in Torrevieja).

- Some produce books, some have a rich library, some welcome researchers, others have boutiques or cafeterias.

But these differences show the width of the subject and that salt can be treated in many interest-

The Museum of Salt-making

The wind-driven pump: the traditional way of lifting water from one system to the next.



During a workshop at the ALAS conference in Figueira da Foz (September/October 2001), several problems when setting up museums were unveiled. Out of the four ALAS sites, only Piran has a working museum. The three other sites are just in their initial phase and still need to clearly define both the contents and the future management of their museums.

The experience of the Piran museum, which opened in 1991, is interesting for all people setting up and running museums. Together with the Technical Working Group 5 (Cultural heritage and Salt-museums) in ALAS, the team in Piran is currently working on a specific technical letter and the following text is an extract of their first outcast.

ing ways.

Exchange and networking

Only very few museums indicated that they have exchanges with other similar structures, but most answers indicate that there is an interest of setting up a network between all salt-museums and information centers. That could be a task for ALAS to take care of, both through our website and at the Final Conference in November.



An uncertain destiny for the Fontanigge basin

The salt-pans in Fontanigge were abandoned in 1967 and the degradation of the site has continued. The former "summer-houses" are ruins without roofs and the salinas often lie dry in summer. Nobody any longer takes care of the dikes along the canals. To maintain this area is a heavy burden for the state and the municipality of Piran. Today, the basin's destiny looks very uncertain, but the work on a global management plan for the area has started

The report

The final report is not yet available, but the compilation is still going on, so if you have more information, please send it to me.

Hjalmar Dahm
hdahm@geo.aegean.gr

The long way from an idea to a ready museum

The need to set up the Museum of salt-making close to Piran was expressed almost 40 years ago. In the 1960s, Dr. Miroslav Pahor, the former Head of the Maritime Museum, and his colleagues thoroughly studied the Fontanigge and Lucija salinas. In 1963, together with Tatjana Poberaj, he published a book, "The Old Salt-pans of Piran".

The Fontanigge salt-pans were soon abandoned. The Lucija pans were destroyed and a marina was built. For an easier access, Dr Pahor



Legal protection

The two basins of salinas in Slovenia (Strunjan northeast of Piran and Secovlje to the south) are both protected as "Landscape parks". In April 2001, the museum of salt-making was proclaimed "cultural property of national significance" by a government decree.

Several international conventions also support the work at the museum:

- World Heritage Convention (1972),
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export

and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970),

- Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985),
- several other UNESCO and Council of Europe recommendations.
- Since 1993, the Secovlje salinas are also protected under the Ramsar Convention (wetlands of international importance). Especially the status of "cultural property of national significance" opens up new possibilities to receive certain financial aid from the Ministry of Culture.

in the Secoveljske soline



wished to set up the Museum of Salt-making at the Strunjan salt-pans. In 1984/85, an inventory of the Secovlje salinas' cultural heritage was made by ethnologists Zora Zagar (Maritime Museum in Piran) and Mojca Ravnik (Regional Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, Piran). On the basis of some new research, it was decided that the Museum of Salt-making was to be set up in the Fontanigge basin and not in Strunjan. In spite of the fact that the site is somewhat distant and that the access is difficult (if you do not come by boat, see further down!), it eventually proved to be the best choice, because the museum is placed *in situ*, in a more traditional setting.

This shows that a museum is not made over a night, but requires years of work and reflection.

Co-operation between institutions and specialists

The 1984/85 inventory was also the ideal opportunity to start a close co-operation between the two institutions. The Regional institute takes care of the fixed cultural and natural heritage, the Museum cares for the conservation, protection and presentation of the movable cultural heritage.

When reconstructing the salina and the buildings, different experts

from both institutions took part: ethnologists, architects, historians, technicians, etc.

Restoring the houses and the salt fields

The first phase of the project took place between 1989 and 1992. Two salt-pans houses with their environs and their appertaining salt fields and reservoir (*fossado*) were reconstructed. The houses were rebuilt in a pre-WW1 manner, i.e. without use of concrete.

Thanks to the knowledge of the old salters, the salt-fields were restored in the "old way". The salt is harvested on a daily basis in summer, the bottoms of the crystallisation pools are covered with a layer of *petola** and a traditional wind-driven pump lifts the water from one section to the other.

Defining the aims of the museum

The basic aim of the Museum of Salt-making is the conservation, protection and presentation of the ethnological and technical heritage of the "old pans". (The salt-fields in Lera and Strunjan have been modernised in early 20th century, but the harvest is still manual.)

The Museum shows one of the characteristic "salt-pans streets", and the way people lived and worked here 100 years ago. Through this, the museum contributes to the conservation and the revival of this age-old activity, not to lose the precious knowledge that has been passed on from generation to generation for many centuries.

The museum also carries out pedagogical and research activities related to the rich cultural and natural heritage of the area. Practical courses in salt-making are also made.

Project: A pier and a conservation programme

The Museum has now worked for more than 10 years and has some

The chronological setting up the Museum of Salt-making

1960s	Study by Dr. Miroslav Pahor (head of the Maritime Museum in Piran) and his colleagues.
1963	Publication of the book "The Old Salt-pans of Piran". (This book, out-of-print, contains excellent photos by Josip Rosival.)
mid-60s	Fontanigge basin is abandoned, the Lucija salt-pans are transformed into a marina. The salinas in Lera and Strunjan continue working.
1972	Proposal to make a salt-museum in the Strunjan salt-pans.
1984-85	Proposal – by Zora Zagar and Mojca Ravnik – to make the salt-museum in the Fontanigge basin instead.
1990	The Secovlje salinas become a landscape park.
1991	Opening of the salt-museum in two restored buildings along the Giassi chanel. The museum also includes two salina units that have been traditionally restored.

* **Petola**: A 10 to 20 mm thick crust ("carpet") on the bottom of the crystallizing pools (*cavedins*). It is based on a layer of gypsum and a blue-green algae *Microcoleus corium*. The petola is firm and allows the salters to walk in the pools wearing their wooden *taperini*. It also prevents the salt from mixing with the clay and the salt is very white. Petola was introduced by salters from Pag island (Croatia) already in the 14th century. The making of petola requires skill and regular maintenance.

The Technical Letter

will be ready in May. If you wish to receive it, please feel free to order a copy (free of charge) by sending a simple request to: alas@otenet.gr

Other Technical Letters are on their way and you can find the complete list on our homepage:

www.alas.gr (publications).

One major aim of the ALAS project concerns the restoration or creation of salt-museums on all four sites. Piran disposes of both an existing salt-museum and a working salina, Pomorie will create a new museum in a restored

building. In Figueira da Foz, the municipality has bought a salina, the funds from ALAS has allowed its restoration and a new museum project is being developed. In Lesvos, the restoration works are about to start.

Eco-museu do Sal

At the very start of the ALAS project, the municipality of Figueira da Foz acquired an abandoned salina, the *Corredor da Cobra*. It is situated in the southern part of the salt marshes. Thanks to the project, the salina

was restored and in 2001 it produced salt for the first time in many years. The old building (to the left on the drawing) is the existing traditional storage house – and also the space for the salters to rest and seek cover. It will now be repaired with the ALAS funds. This house is

a part of the eco-museum, and a small exhibition of tools can already be seen. But a new building (to the right) will be made to host the final exhibitions and audiovisuals. The plans have been made by Ana Reis, a young architect at the municipality.



13.000 visitors every year. New projects are on their way, partly thanks to ALAS.

Along the mouth of the Giassi channel a landing pier will be built. This will certainly lead to a livelier arrival at the pans than by car along the old path.

The conservation programme, which has partly already been made, is supplemented and extended within the ALAS programme. It is based on the new inventory. The conservation programme is a professional project report binding on all further cultural property planning. It encloses a description and evaluation of the unit, the emphasis being on the assessment of the actual state and particularly on the proposals concerning the renovation and the new activities to be carried out in the area. It is important that different professions - as well as the future users - take part in the making of the conservation programme, if we wish the project report to be truly applicable.

A similar, although not as detailed, project report is being prepared within the framework of the ALAS programme for the entire Fontanigge basin. A detailed documentation will be made on the basis of the 1984-85 inventory and other preliminary documentation supplemented with the data gathered during the latest inventory. The project report will include description and evaluation of the entire area, description of its actual state and

proposals for the implicit works that will prevent further dilapidation of buildings and other structures.

More information:

Please contact the museum's curator, **Zora Zagar**

zorislava.zagar@pommuz-pi.si

Home-page:

www2.arnes.si/~kppomm/index.htm

"Salinas are part and parcel of the history, culture and landscape of Figueira da Foz. Until a recent past, salt production in the Mondego estuary was one of the most important economic activities of Figueira.

The typology of the salinas and the production technology show several particularities that are not found in

other salinas of Portugal and the rest of Europe. An artisanal technique, extremely cared and well adapted to the environment, has remained until now, granting the salinas of Figueira a true salt gardens character.

Considering that the decline of the activity has lead to a progressive desertion or transformation of the area, the Figueira da Foz city council acquired in 2000 a salina called "Corredor da Cobra" (the Cobra's corridor). Here a museologic nucleus concerning salt production will be installed.

This salina, besides being a demonstration unit within the compass of the Eco-Museum, will also work as a training area for new salters, support-



The restoration works have started on the future museum building. (Photo: Milcho Skumov, March 2002)

Μουσείο Άλατος Λέσβου

The salt museum in Lesvos will be placed on one of the island's two salinas, in Skala Polichnitos. A hundred-year-old building will be restored and the whole salina will be an outdoor part of the museum.

The building will contain exhibitions on salt production in Greece and Europe. The biodiversity around the salina will be another important issue. The visitors will be able to buy products and books related to salt and the island of Lesvos. The upper floor of the building will be reserved for administration and space for research, library etc.

A nature trail will allow the visitors to discover the salina and the coastline.

The plans have recently been accepted by the competent authorities and the works on the buildings are about to begin.



The building of the future salt-museum in Polichnitos (plans by Michalis Biskos, December 2001)

Muzej solinarstva

The Fontanigge salt-pans were abandoned in 1967. Since then, some life has returned into this area thanks to the setting up of the *Museum of Salt-making* in the Secovlje salinas.

The basic aim of the Museum of Salt-making is, to conserve the unique ethnological and technical heritage, which significantly co-created the economic, social and cultural development of the Slovene littoral. The Museum presents, in detail, the way of life and work of the salters of the old Piran salt-pans as well as mediaeval salt-making technologies. In the museum salina, the traditional production of salt in accordance with the mediaeval methods, is reinstated. The salt making depends on weather conditions, tides, and *petola* (see page 5).

The visitors to the outdoor museum can get well acquainted with the ancient procedure of salt-making and the everyday life in the old Piran salt-pans, and can even buy natural sea salt. The museum also offers a possibility of scientific research and educational demonstrative work. The latter means an active participation in maintenance work carried out in salt fields, harvest and storage of salt. For an authentic presentation, the museum had to be set up in the open air, in the salt-marshes. The selected site enabled the Museum to be set up in the traditional environment, where the oldest cultural heritage has been relatively well preserved and where the salt actually is produced.

The restoration activities were carried out from 1989 to 1991 with the participation of the Regional Institute for the Conservation



One of the two salt-museum buildings and the salina in summer. (August 2001)

of Natural and Cultural Heritage Piran and the Maritime Museum "Sergej Masera" Piran. Two houses with their immediate surroundings were renewed, as well as their adjacent salt fields and the channel for the inflow of seawater. The museum has been functioning for a good decade under the auspices of the Maritime Museum "Sergej Masera" Piran.

In the meanwhile it is clear that only the first phase of the project has been carried out. The contents of the Museum have gradually widened a great deal, also thanks to the ALAS project. Amongst the most important objectives of the project is the conservation of the traditional production of salt, as well as protection, conservation and presentation of cultural heritage of the Secovlje and Strunjan salt-pans. The specialisation of architectural heritage within the Museum will be finally stipulated in the conservation programme covering the revitalisation and management plan for this nationally significant cultural property.

At the moment, the following works financed by the ALAS project are being carried out within the Museum of Salt-making:

- **restoration of the existing museal collection** (reconstruction of a salt-pans house and its residential conditions);
- preparation of a **concept for the permanent collection** in the future third salt-pans house (written, pictorial and physical presentation of the pans with an emphasis on the old Piran salt-pans);
- all the formal procedures for **building a pier** in the estuary of the Giassi channel have been completed to enable the beginning of its construction in the year 2002;
- from 2001 onwards, **the movable and fixed cultural property has been inventoried and re-inventoried** at the Secovlje and Strunjan salt-pans;
- a special **project report** concerning the Fontanigge basin is being prepared. Amongst other things, it will include an integral protective regime and certain development orientations, which hopefully will contribute towards conservation and revitalisation of this monument, together with all its cultural and natural qualities.

Zora Zagar, curator

Report from the PMC 8-10 March

The Project Management Committee met during three days in Mytilene. The PMC is the project's supreme decisional body and representatives came from all four sites to work during an intensive weekend. A main issue was to examine the progress reports for the interregional tasks and studies that are carried out. Several of these have been delayed and the following months will have to be very productive. The PMC further took decisions on the coming events, particularly the Final conference that will be organized in Lesvos in November.

The sites also reported about the local activities. The restoration of the museum buildings, for instance, advance on all ALAS sites.

ing a global strategy that allows the maintenance of salt making.

The museum is predicted to be fully operating in mid-2003, although some interpretive structures will be installed already in 2002, allowing the creation of a thematic itinerary around the salinas (nature trail). Even without the necessary structures, the area may be visited individually or in a group. And the marnoteiros (salters) who work on the restoration of the salina are able to give all the explanations concerning the production process."

Renato Neves (Mae d'agua)

Muzej na Solta

The municipality of Pomorie acquired and restored a small salina some decades ago. The salina produces salt which is harvested daily in summer, by hand and with traditional tools. The salter, Kyriakos Voyiatzis, 72 years old, manages the area and during summer his

For more information and the programme:
alas@otenet.gr or www.alas.gr

ALAS calendar
for coming events

17-20 May 2002
Annual Conference in
Piran

20-22 September 2002
Project Management
Committee in Pomorie

22-24 November 2002
ALAS final conference

Salt pigs

Some ten years ago, Hjalmar (a *globe-trotter*) bought a so-called salt pig in Southwest England. We asked the potter Maro Kritikou in Mytilene to make us some similar models. Here are the three first ALAS salt pigs – we will now see if there will be a follow-up of this idea.



Addresses to the four sites (project-managers and technical operators)

Lesvos, Greece

AENAL

Kountourioti 1

GR-81100 MYTILENE

Tel +30 251 044 956,

Fax +30 251 048 115

Spiros Efstratiou, project manager

Hjalmar Dahm, assistant p.m.

alas@otenet.gr

Pomorie, Bulgaria

ALAS office

Yavorov Blvd 40A

BG-8200 POMORIE

Tel/Fax +359 596 78 56

alas@unacs.bg

Milcho Skumov, project manager

Elena Kafadarova, assistant p.m.

Figueira da Foz, Portugal

Municipality

Av. Saraiva de Carvalho

P-3080 FIGUEIRA DA FOZ

Tel +351 233 403 300

Fax +351 233 403 310

Sonia Pinto, project manager

sonia.pinto@cm-figfoz.pt

Renato Neves and Rui Rufino

(Mae d'agua), technical operators

littorina@mail.telepac.pt

Piran, Slovenia

Commune of Piran

Tartinijev trg 2, SLO-6330 PIRAN

Tel +386 567 103 00

Robert Turk, project manager

robert.turk@guest.arnes.si

+386 567 109 01

ALAS Newsletter is published by AENAL
(Development Company of Lesvos)
Kountourioti 1, GR-81100 MYTILENE, Greece

Editor

Hjalmar Dahm, assistant project manager

hdahm@geo.aegean.gr

All photos in this issue: Hjalmar Dahm (if not indicated other).

Painting of fish on page 1: Marios Flash (*Aphanius fasciatus* is a small fish that can be found in the salinas. It tolerates high fluctuations in both temperature and salinity.)

Direct email to ALAS: alas@otenet.gr

For local language Newsletters (translations), contact the local project manager.



Next ALAS Newsletter: June 2002

This will be a special issue on traditional salinas in Europe. Please send manuscripts before 15th of May

grandson, Giorgi (18) gives him a hand.

On the site, two buildings already exist. One will host the museum and the other will be used by the people working on the salina. Both buildings are now being restored with the funds of ALAS. According to Milcho Skumov, ALAS local project manager, the restoration works will be finished this summer.

The Municipal museum of Pomorie has an important collection of old photographs from the salinas, models, tools and other valuable documents. This material will be exposed in the new salt museum.

The museum and its exhibitions will be open when the ALAS Project Management Committee meets there in September 2002.

www.alas.gr

The ALAS homepage is worth a visit. For those of you that have not visited it for some weeks, you will find many changes. It now works much faster and the layout has changed. You can also find all previous Newsletters and we recommend you to print them out, because this simplifies the reading

The ALAS project will end at the end of this year. The final conference aims sum up the results and also show ways of continuing to work for the salinas. The conference will gather participants from the four ALAS sites, decision-makers, representatives from international organizations and institutions. It is also open to people from other European salt producing sites.

