



■ **Fig. 1** A traditional Viking banquet in the longhouse (all photos: Lofotr Viking Museum)



■ **Fig. 2** In summertime more sportive visitors are free to row the Viking ship over the inlet waters

Creating products for tourism – the example of Lofotr Viking Museum

Lofotr Viking Museum provides an example of the successful co-operation of an open-air museum with the local tourist industry.

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According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), a cultural heritage site is defined as “a place, locality, natural landscape, settlement area, architectural complex, archaeological site, or standing structure that is recognized and often legally protected as a place of historical and cultural significance” (ICOMOS 2007, 3). In the case of open-air museums, immovable structures such as reconstructed

buildings or settlements are revitalised with an array of movable, tangible items like furniture, arms or clothes, and intangible heritage such as dances, ceremonies or songs.

In order to reconstruct the daily life of a distinct people of the past, and to present it in a certain context, archaeologists and heritage professionals must interpret from often scarce or scattered resources such as excavated objects, scriptures or oral traditions that have been passed on from one generation to the next for centuries. Heritage therefore always contains a great deal of interpretation, and heritage sites, open-air museums being one example, are a modern-day means of consuming knowledge about the past (Cassia 1999, 247).

With shrinking household budgets, many heritage sites suffer from a shortcoming of public subsidies. Especially smaller institutions, which can hardly cover their operational costs and are left to continue their mission of research and education. Moreover, they have to compete with modern, well-capitalized leisure facilities such as theme parks or marinas for an increasingly demanding and fun-spoilt audience.

As a consequence, more cultural heritage managers and museum directors put a stronger focus on an over-regional audience and on partnerships with the tourism industry. The reluctance to cooperate with tourism, however, still pervades the minds of many heritage professionals (McKercher and DuCros 2002, 13). Due to their scientific background and a strong object focus, some heritage managers consider themselves rather as “guardians of heritage” than as providers of access to it (Garrod 2000, 684). Heritage is often associated with an inherent quality that can only be appreciated by either local residents or a small educated cultural elite (WTO 2005, 47). On the other hand, tourism as a social and economic phenomenon is often equalled to mass-consumption and commercialisation (WTO 2005, 47).

Lofotr Viking Museum

Lofotr Viking museum is located in Borg in the Lofoten archipelago in Northern Norway. The archaeological site was established in 1995 after excavations revealed the ground structure of the largest Viking settlement established around 500 A.D. ever found in Europe. It is one of Norway's biggest out-and-indoor museums focused on experimental archaeology. The centrepiece of the ¼ sq km site is the world's largest longhouse, which has been meticulously reconstructed to resemble what it may have looked like in the Viking era. This site further contains a boathouse and two ship reconstructions from the famous Gokstad ship excavation near Oslo. It offers a range of products combining heritage with food, nature and sports. The visitor segments range from school children, individual and business travelers to cruise tourists.



■ **Fig. 3** The “Lofotr” placed at Borg is a copy of the 23 metre long Gokstad ship from the 9th century excavated near the Oslo fjord

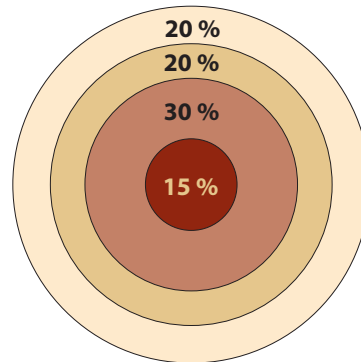
However, heritage and culturally motivated tourism have always had mutual influences. Tourism to sites of cultural significance has existed at least since the time of Greek antiquity. The Grand Tour to cultural centres like Rome or Venice was a fixed part of the cultural and personal education of young noblemen in the 16th and 17th century Europe (Timothy and Boyd 2001, 11). In the 20th century this former elite activity of cultural tourism has found its way into the middle classes of the Western world and – given better and cheaper means of transports – has become a mass-phenomenon (Prentice 2001, 7).

Consequently, modern cultural tourists are no longer the wealthy and/or highly sophisticated types in their forties, but people of multiple interests who mix visits to archaeological sites with sports activities, shopping trips or sun-bathing on the beach (Silberberg, 1995, 362). The challenging task of today’s heritage managers

is to adjust their presentation to those visitors that have a differing cultural and knowledge background – and therefore differing grades of interest in heritage. Silberberg has developed a useful model that categorizes these modern cultural tourists (that make up 85 % of the total number of leisure tourists) into four categories.

The four categories of cultural tourists

(Silberberg 1995, 362)



From inner to outer circle:

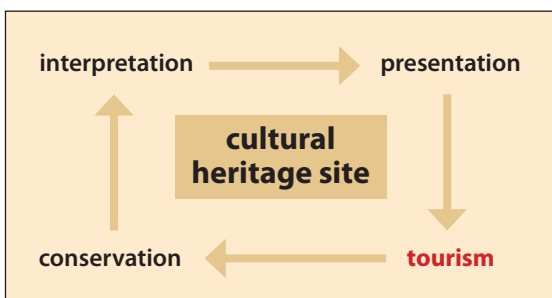
- Cultural tourists “**greatly motivated**” by culture come to a place for primary cultural reasons. They make up 15 % of all leisure tourists coming to a place.
- Cultural tourists “**motivated in part**” by culture come to a place to experience culture among other non-cultural activities.
- “**Adjunct cultural tourists**” consider culture as an adjunct to another primary activity that gives the motivation for the visit, i.e. shopping.
- “**Accidental cultural tourists**” do not travel for cultural reasons but accidentally end up being involved in a cultural activity, i.e. carried along by friends.

ism bring benefits not only in terms of higher visitor numbers, but also in per-head spending, marketing and fund-raising.

Lofotr Viking Museum in Norway gives a good example for such a successful cooperation. Located on the Lofoten islands it is an archaeological open air museum, and one of the biggest in Norway focused on Viking heritage. It has developed many products and packages tailor-made for differing regional and over-regional customer segments. To address these different segments with different grades of interest in the Viking heritage, it has designed products and packages together with many outdoor activity providers, tour operators, hotels and camping sites in and outside the Lofoten archipelago.

In cooperation with the regional adventure-activity providers “XX Lofoten” and “Orca Lofoten” the museum has created an attractive mix of outdoor sports and heritage. As one example it offers hikes or snow-shoe walks to the museum’s entrance followed by a guided tour where visitors can immerse themselves in the life of the Vikings. For less-sportive visitor segments and business tourists there are 7 different group arrangements based on older Northern Norwegian food traditions such as the “Lady’s Banquet” or “Odin’s Victory Dinner”. These events – combining a traditional meal and a feast ceremony – are also popular as parts of incentives or conferences for business tourists.

On special occasions the museum invites to events like the New Year’s banquet combining a sledge ride with a traditional Viking food ceremony inside the torch-lit longhouse. In cooperation with the Hurtigruten Cruises Line, Lofotr has created an event especially for the time constrained cruise tourists. This “Hunting the Light” tour combines a fairy teller, Nordic myths, and a Viking banquet with meat and mead together with the Chieftain and his family. Such products created with the tourism industry not only allow the museum to charge a higher price, they also bear great potential to turn adjunct, partly or accidental cultural tourists into greatly motivated visitors who return the next day at regular opening hours.



■ **Scheme 1** Cultural heritage management and tourism as complementary agents Adapted from Millar (1989, p. 9)

Silberberg’s categories are not static: An accidental cultural tourist can become adjunct or even greatly motivated and vice versa.

Partnerships with tourism companies bear the potential to not only attract the greatly motivated, but also those cultural tourists who Silberberg categorises into adjunct or partly motivated (*ibid*, 363). Common products associated with tour-

All events and arrangements of the museum can be booked offline in the hotels and guesthouses within the islands and on the website of the local tourist boards Destination Lofoten AS (www.lofoten.info) or of the county of Nordland (www.visitnordland.no). Thus, the museum can rely on powerful marketing and sales channels that promote its Viking heritage to a broader international audience. Product partnerships have another crucial advantage. If a heritage site proposes concrete point-of-sales that benefit the cultural and tourism development of a whole region, it is more likely to receive funds from public cultural and tourism bodies than for projects without a clear definable benefit. Many of Lofotr's products were realized under the lead and financial support of "Northern Coastal Experience" (NORCE)-a project between several Northern countries that aims to promote coastal culture to international tourists (www.norce.org).

A discussion about tourism and heritage cannot be closed without dedicating few words to the concept of "authentic" products. Authentic in this context means that they "portray the past in an accurate manner" (ICOMOS 1994, 237). Despite concessions in the presentation for tourists, the products and heritage should not lose its inherent quality and therefore its value for certain parts of society. Although the authenticity concept is hard to define, presentation techniques like laser shows or multimedia shows should never become more important than the content – that is the story the heritage tells us.

The curatorial policy of the Lofotr Viking Museum is concerned with creating Viking products with the most accurate presentation possible to which local residents can also relate. Despite the emphasis on tourists, the museum's board is also concerned with involving the local residents. With its biannual Saga play, a Viking festival, and school camps it addresses foremost the local population.

To sum up, the case of the Lofotr Viking Museum illustrates a good symbiosis between heritage, tourism and a 'product development approach' in the heritage sector. Adaptations of the presentation towards tourism

can create more audience and real investments into further conservation and regional development.

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Summary

Le développement de l'offre touristique - l'exemple du Lofotr Viking Museum

Avec des budgets en baisse, beaucoup de sites patrimoniaux souffrent d'un déficit de subventions publiques mais doivent néanmoins répondre aux attentes d'un public venu se divertir. C'est pourquoi beaucoup de conservateurs et directeurs travaillent en partenariat avec l'industrie du tourisme. Le Lofotr Viking Museum est un exemple d'une coopération réussie avec des prestataires locaux d'activités de plein air, des tour opérateurs et des hôtels, pour étendre l'offre aux tourisme sportif ou d'entreprise, sans pour autant délaissier le tourisme culturel et de proximité.



■ Fig. 4 The impressive longhouse reconstruction of the museum, placed on a hilltop



■ Fig. 5 A magical feast ceremony performed by the „volva“ – the wise woman and healer

Zur Erstellung von Produkten für den Tourismus – Das Beispiel des Lofotr Wikinger Museums

Mit schrumpfenden Budgets leiden viele Kulturerbestätten an der Verringerung der öffentlichen finanziellen Förderung während sie zugleich mit modernen Freizeiteinrichtungen um Besucher konkurrieren. Als Folge davon gehen mehr und mehr Kulturmanager und Museumsdirektoren Partnerschaften mit der Tourismus-Branche ein. Das Lofotr Wikinger Museum ist ein gutes Beispiel einer erfolgreichen Kooperation mit örtlichen Anbietern von Outdoor-Aktivitäten, Reiseveranstaltern und Hotels, mit welchen gemeinsam besondere Veranstaltungen für Freizeitsportler und Geschäftsleute angeboten werden, wobei auch für die Kultur-Touristen und die örtliche Bevölkerung weiterhin Angebote vorgehalten werden.

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