



Promotion of a Cultural
Area Common
to European Rural Communities

RURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE IN EUROPE: FROM PAST TO PRESENT

A Synthesis Report of Research



RURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE IN EUROPE: FROM PAST TO PRESENT

A Synthesis Report of Research

Compiled and edited by
PRISMA

Athens 2009

EDITOR

Fouli Papageorgiou

AUTHORS

THEME 1

Fouli Papageorgiou, Effie Karpodini-Dimitriadi, Louisa Karapidaki, Danilo Marandola, Giorgio Ciccarelo, Angela Zeoli, Maria Pia Graziani

THEME 2

Édouard de Laubrie, Colette Foissey, Vanessa Doutreleau, Zsolt Sári, Zsuzsanna Szabó, Owe Norberg, Anne Chanonat, Sophie Normand-Collignon.
Thanks to Elodie Guilhem.

THEME 3

Effie Karpodini-Dimitriadi, Louisa Karapidaki, Fouli Papageorgiou, Janusz Mazur, Kiril Topalov, Leonora Boneva

TRANSLATORS

THEME 1

Louisa Varelidi, Danilo Marandola

THEME 2

Naureen Bolwell-Prioux, Monica Sjögren, Beáta Dobossy, John Tarnóc, András Tarnóc, Tamás Rákócz

THEME 3

Effie Karpodini-Dimitriadi, Marilena Sanida, Agata Matuga, Nora Boneva, Zvetanka Raichevska, Janeta Mihaylova

The CULT RURAL Exhibitions were held at:

THEME 1. Landscape Stories. From tradition to sustainability

Basilica of San Marco, Heraklion, Crete, Greece
Tower Clocks' Museum, San Marco dei Cavoti, Italy
National Folklore Museum, Baths of the Winds, Athens, Greece

THEME 2. S.O.S. Save our Sources!

Ecomuseum Marquèze, France
Hungarian Open Air Museum, Szedendre, Hungary
Ljusdalsbygdens Museum, Sweden

THEME 3. Rural heritage and collective identity Building the sustainability of rural communities

Museum Kresow in Lubaczow, Poland
National History Museum, Sofia, Bulgaria
Folklore and Historical Museum of Komotini, Greece

Published by PRISMA - Centre for Development Studies
Empedocleous 17, GR-116 35 Athens

Athens 2009

Design by Ability Integrated Communications, Athens

Photographs from the nine exhibitions organised in the context of CULT RURAL project by:
Velissarios Voutsas, Janusz Mazur, Fouli Papageorgiou, Zsolt Sári, Owe Norberg

Preface

THE CULT RURAL PROJECT

CULT RURAL or Promotion of a Cultural Area Common to European Rural Communities is a transnational project co-funded by the European Commission in the context of “Culture 2000”, the Framework Programme in Support of Culture.

CULT RURAL looks at the heritage of rural areas, trying to link the past with the present and draw lessons that are valuable for contemporary life and the sustainable development of rural areas. The project, carried out between October 2006 and September 2009, is implemented by a dynamic transnational partnership, bringing together museums and related associations, universities and research organisations of the public and private sectors.

Background and aims

There is no doubt that rural heritage is an important aspect of European culture, which should be protected and preserved. Furthermore, the rural heritage, both cultural and natural, has a lot to teach contemporary societies: for example, the traditional methods of exploiting natural resources and related technologies, may provide ample inspiration for energy saving today; or the continuity of rural cultural heritage and its role as a source of community identity and bonding, may provide an additional challenge to the globalisation of culture.

CULT RURAL aims to:

- Highlight and document the heritage of European rural regions, demonstrating its links to social and economic development and sustainability.
- Raise the awareness of contemporary Europeans of the common rural heritage, boosting local cultural identity and pride.
- Provide an “arena” for intercultural dialogue.
- Promote cooperation and networking between rural heritage museums and other cultural operators in rural areas.
- Encourage rural heritage museums to “open their doors” to transnational joint activities.
- Improve the skills of professionals and their capacity to identify, preserve and promote the rural heritage of their region/nation.
- Provide guidance for the development of rural areas in a sustainable way through the preservation and promotion of heritage.
- Attract the younger generation to become involved with rural heritage and culture.

Activities

The activities of CULT RURAL fall into three main groups:

- **Research and documentation** of the special features of the common and unique European rural heritage
- **Organisation of thematic exhibitions**, on the basis of the research results. Nine exhibitions have been held in Sweden, Greece, France, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland, organised jointly by the project partners on three different themes:
 - a) Landscape Stories: from tradition to sustainability
 - b) SOS – Save our Sources
 - c) Rural heritage and collective identity: building the sustainability of rural communities
- **Networking** between individuals and organisations that

have an active interest in rural heritage and sustainable development, by:

- a) Setting up a European Rural Heritage Network;
- b) Organising a summer academy and a conference on the theme of the project
- c) Organising 4 transnational and 7 national workshops to discuss and debate the theme of the project and gain feedback for the research and the exhibitions.
- d) Set up a website **www.cultrural.net** to make the activities and products of the project accessible to everyone.

The co-organisers and associate partners of the project are:

Co-organisers

Sveriges Hembygdsförbund (Swedish Local Heritage Federation), Project leader (SE)

PRISMA Centre for Development Studies (GR)

The European Academy for Sustainable Rural Development -Euracademy Association (GR)

Muzeum Kresów in Lubaczów (PL)

Hungarian Open Air Museum (HU)

Institute of Bio-Meteorology, National Research Council of Italy (IT)

Fédération des Musées d’Agriculture et du Patrimoine rural (AFMA)

National History Museum (BG)

Associate Partners

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Regional Studies, West Hungarian Research Institute (HU)

Musée national des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée (MuCEM) (FR)

The Jagiellonian University of Krakow, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Culture (PL)

The Academy of Balkan Civilisation (BG)

Museum of Cretan Ethnology (GR)

Cultural Association of Komotini, Folklore and History Museum of Komotini (GR)

This volume brings together the main results and conclusions of the research that was carried out by the co-organisers and associate partners of the project, including also a selection of photographs from the 9 exhibitions. The report is organised in three parts, according to the three themes that were adopted by the partnership to guide their investigations and the exhibitions:

Part 1. ***Landscape Stories. From tradition to sustainability***, based on the research theme “Rural cultural landscapes: the interaction between rural communities and the natural environment”

Part 2. ***SOS Save our Sources!***, based on the research theme “Inspiration, innovation and technology: the rural perspective and the global pressures”

Part 3. ***Rural heritage and collective identity***, based on the research theme “The socio-cultural construction of rural identity: from the material to symbolism”.

The short versions of the thematic research reported here have provided the basic concepts and built the scenarios for the corresponding exhibitions.



Contents

SYNTHESIS REPORT OF RESEARCH FOR THEME 1

Landscape Stories. From tradition to sustainability	7
Introduction	9
Unit 1. The landscape of awe	12
Unit 2. The landscape of mild exploitation of nature	15
Unit 3. The landscape of forceful conquest of nature	17
Unit 4. The destruction of landscape	18
Unit 5. Landscape in art.....	19
Conclusion	21
Bibliography	23

SYNTHESIS REPORT OF RESEARCH FOR THEME 2

SOS SAVE OUR SOURCES!.....	25
Introduction	27
Unit 1: How did all this happen?	29
Unit 2: How are we reacting?.....	31
Unit 3: Always more... ..	33
Unit 4. ...and if we cultivated our garden? Energy.....	36
Unit 5. ...and if we cultivated our garden? Recycling and anti-waste.....	37
Unit 6. ...and if we cultivated our garden? The countryside is in the plate.....	39
Unit 7. Together and not alone.....	41
Definitions	42
Bibliography	43

SYNTHESIS REPORT OF RESEARCH FOR THEME 3

Rural heritage and collective identity. Building the sustainability of rural communities	45
Introduction	47
Unit 1. Apotropaic and protective rites	51
Unit 2. Symbolisms of fertility and the rebirth of nature.....	54
Unit 3. Ecstatic rituals.....	58
Unit 4. Rites of passage	59
Conclusion	62
Bibliography	62



SYNTHESIS REPORT OF RESEARCH FOR THEME 1



Landscape Stories From tradition to sustainability



Culture 2000



Introduction

Rural landscapes form an essential part of our heritage; they are significant witnesses of the past and present relationship between man and the natural environment. They constitute an integral part of the natural and cultural heritage being a timeless archive where the ways people have lived and organised themselves are depicted. A **landscape** consists of the visible features of an area of land and is a complex notion with many overtones, calling for a deeper understanding of both nature and culture which are both also multi-layered. According to the European Landscape Convention, launched in 2000 by the Council of Europe, *“Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”*.

The first formal use of the term landscape comes from the geographer Otto Schultze in the early 20th century who defined two forms of landscape:

- the **natural landscape** (*Urlandschaft*) or landscape that existed before major human induced changes, and
- the **cultural landscape** (*Kulturlandschaft*) a landscape created by human culture.

The rural landscape mirrors the relation of man with nature along its evolution and the development of man’s material civilisation. Human interventions upon the landscape for cultivation, mining, exploitation of water resources and the wind, habitation, communication etc., have resulted in decisive changes of the landscape. Over time the landscape underwent a variety of transmutations, demonstrating different aspects of the relationship between man and nature: awe and respect of man for nature, that makes his survival possible; man’s efforts to conquer nature, making his survival easier and more secure; and lastly, the irrational and complete imposition of man over nature in present times, aiming to maximise the exploitation of natural resources, without realising what this means for future generations.

There are four general stages that can be identified in the evolution of the relationship between man and nature over time. These stages –awe, mild exploitation, conquest, destruction– followed one another during the process of social and technological evolution, but they also coexist in the present time as each stage does not eliminate the previous one. Thus, these stages represent coexisting facets of the relationship between man and nature.

The **first stage** is characterised by man’s fear and admiration for nature; the landscape becomes the bridge for their meta-physical relationship. Its elements gain symbolic meanings for man’s survival. Trees, water, mountains, rocks, acquire a symbolic existence, and are linked to magical spirits, fairies, heroes and gods. Out of the symbolic meanings of the landscape, myths, songs, poems and rituals are born.

The **second stage** reflects the first phases of man’s dominance over nature, which is characterised by respect for the landscape, the use of simple technologies and local materials, the emergence of “lay wisdom”, the discovery of clever construction techniques, the invention of environment-friendly survival and economic development methods. The

cultivation of the land with simple agricultural tools brings about the first changes to the landscape, in combination with construction methods using stone, wood, hay or soil, and the mapping out of roads for transporting people and goods. These elements become “landmarks” of the landscape which is clearly now being transformed through man’s influence. This influence however remains mild and does not upset the harmony between man’s activity and nature.

The **third stage** is characterised by the intensity of man’s dominance over nature, the use of complex technologies and non-local (globally developed) materials and construction methods. The intensive and extensive cultivation of the land with mechanised and automated production methods and the use of agrochemicals maximise the exploitation of natural resources and transform radically the landscape. At the same time, the materials, the aesthetics and the use of buildings and other man-made interventions, become the new “landmarks” that undermine the cohesion of the landscape, disconnect it from the natural environment, upset its historical continuity and impose its “globalisation”.

In the **fourth stage** we are confronted with the destruction of the landscape that results from the irrational exploitation of natural resources. Fires, floods, cyclones, droughts, brought about by climatic change or other violent reversals of environmental balance, brought about by human activity and efforts to maximise profits from the exploitation of natural resources (for tourism, agriculture, industry, housing) lead to disaster and cut off the landscape from its natural characteristics. The emergence of a “landscape of horror” warns us that nature’s endurance is limited and that our civilisation, which depends on such endurance, is at risk.

By focusing on these stages and the facets they signify in the relationship between man and nature, the research and consequently the exhibition, attempt to raise certain basic questions for the future of this relationship that reflect upon the future of our civilisation. Are we led to a utopia that either ignores the violent and irrational attempt of man to dominate the natural environment or accepts the absolute destruction as inevitable? Or can we perhaps redefine our relationship with the landscape through a radical change of our attitude and behaviour and accept sustainability as our top priority and our duty to future generations? Reading the “landscape stories”, as revealed stage-by-stage through the evolution of the relationship between man and nature, we are guided to a “recognition” trip along those elements of our cultural heritage that offer important lessons for sustainability and the redefinition of our relationship with the landscape.



Historical and Cultural Background

The “landscapes stories” were researched in the two participating countries, Greece and Italy, uncovering ethno-graphic elements that stand witness to the different stages described above and reviewing modern practices of reasserting man’s conquest and reshaping of the landscape. In Greece, the research focused on the whole of the country, with special reference to mountainous areas and large plains of the mainland as well as the Aegean islands and Crete. In Italy, the research focused on the wider region of the Apennine range, and in particular on the Beveneto Province with its characteristic Samnitic tradition.

Greece, due to its very long and important history is characterised by the richness and diversity of its cultural landscapes. Such landscapes are rife with landmarks, symbols of time and space: they include those that shape agricultural land (terraces, fences, parapets), overland communication means (footpaths, bridges, roads) and buildings for various uses, isolated or in groups (settlements). A remarkable continuity is still present in many Greek landscapes, especially those that are insular, to be found either in upland areas on the mountains or in the islands. The first and second stages in the evolution of man-nature relationship are visible in most rural areas of Greece, through a variety of monuments or more humble heritage constructions, including bridges, paths and buildings or settlements, ancient or more recent; and through myths, legends and rituals that are still practiced in rural areas, providing a remarkable link between antiquity and present times. Indeed, these rural customs, myths and traditions keep the memory alive and have become through time the main determinants of rural cultural identity. Place names (*toponyms*) of Greek rural areas also reflect mythology, history, religion, values and details of everyday life, personal names and variable characteristics of the Greek world. Many rural places still keep their ancient names offering a close link to the past human history of the area: these names may be prehistoric, archaic, roman, Byzantine, and in some cases Venetian and Arabic. In the more recent history of Greece, since medieval times, the long periods of occupation, both by western conquerors (Venetians, Franks) and Ottomans have influenced the way rural settlements developed, the way they were positioned in the landscape and their architecture. Thus landscape has become a “palimpsest of symbols” where socio-economic evolution, migratory movements and religious symbols left their mark.

In Greece, as elsewhere in Europe and in the Mediterranean more specifically, the countryside has suffered the consequences of the industrial revolution, and was changed drastically during the second half of the 20th century and in the 21st century due to uncontrolled development, ad hoc land uses, fires, desertification, over-exploitation etc. These two extremes, the ancient or traditional landscape, full of symbols and meanings, and the contemporary landscape affected by aggressive economic development, coexist, often side by side, giving many examples of the different stages of the processes that formed and shaped man’s relationship with nature. The dilemma in contemporary Greece is dwelling

on the exploitation of the landscape heritage for economic profit. This is becoming very acute in islandic and coastal areas which have already experienced radical transformation of their natural environment in order to accommodate the demands of tourism.

In **Italy**, the countryside is also the complex result of several millennia of history and successive civilisations and cultures. As Piero Bevilacqua notes, the complexity of the Italian landscape is due to the “fingerprints” that many civilisations have left in the cities and rural areas. These civilisations have provided, over time, a large contribution of new plants, cultivation techniques, ways to capture and use water, buildings and artefacts. This makes the Italian countryside unique but also points out to common elements with landscapes in many other European countries. For the purposes of the CULT RURAL project, a focused investigation has been conducted in the historical region of Sannio. The Sannio (Samnium in Latin) is located in mid-southern Italy, and was “governed” by the civilisation of the Samnites in the VII-VI century b.C. and I-II century a.C. The territory of the Samnites was mostly concentrated in an area which today coincides with the regions of Abruzzi, Molise, Campania, Basilicata and Puglia. The Samnitic influence is still strong in determining the culture, landscape, society and beliefs of an important section of the rural populations of the Italian territory.

The adaptation to different regional conditions and different economic and social structures has diversified the countryside. Environmental factors, cultural systems, types of settlements and architecture of farm buildings, merged to shape unique rural landscapes. The main agricultural systems, such as “Cascina” (farmstead) or the farm houses of “Mezzadria” (sharecropping) are the most obvious signs of a very complex structure. Similarly, the traditional practice of transhumance marked the landscape with the main routes of herds’ passage, as shown by the characteristic Tratturo (an ancient transhumance path), which joined the plains of Apulia to the green pasturelands of Abruzzi, crossing all the mid-southern Apennines.

During the 20th century, the number of people working in agriculture started to decline. This decline was sharpened from the 1950s onwards, when Italian farming experienced the agrarian reform, the mechanisation of farming and the transformation of the structure of farms, leading from family based to corporate farming. Also, the fast expansion of forests, due to the abandonment of agricultural land in the mountainous areas, is a characteristic phenomenon of that time. In a nutshell, the changes in the last 60 years have seen, besides a reduction of cultivated area, a more radical change in agriculture and livestock farming, which drastically affected the rural landscape. Greenhouses, tunnels, shade nets, are now widely used in the fields for floricultural and horticultural products, often compromising significantly the aesthetic quality of the countryside. Also, the Italian landscape tends to assume progressively a homogenised appearance, characterised by the simplification and trivialisation of landscape forms and the loss of the cultural aspects that

marked the Italian countryside for centuries. This, of course, is a process that involves not only Italy but many other European countries as well as North America, giving the problem an international character.

The framework of research synthesis for theme 1

This report brings together the main points of the research on Theme 1: “Rural cultural landscapes: the interaction between rural communities and the natural environment” carried out in Greece and Italy. It thus presents the main concepts that guided the exhibition “Landscape Stories: from tradition to sustainability”

This synthetic report aims to highlight important aspects of our cultural heritage directly related to the rural landscape – a heritage that we often choose to ignore or undervalue. These aspects were illustrated in the exhibition, which through an itinerary in time and space, attempted to redefine the instrumental and value-laden relationship of contemporary man with the landscape. By directing our attention to the present, which is often destructive for the landscape, we can rediscover tradition and carry on our heritage of sustainability to the future.

The report is organised in five units, four of which reflect the stages or facets of the relationship between man and landscape, as described above, whilst the fifth examines the perception of landscape’s changes and meanings through the eyes of the artists. The conclusions, finally, pose the question of whether the future of the relationship between man and landscape is utopian or sustainable. The exhibition adopted the same concept, leading the visitors to an itinerary that explores the heritage of the landscape, unfolding before their eyes the successive stages of the evolution of man’s relationship with nature. In brief, the units of the research, which also formed the scenario of the exhibition, refer to:

1: The landscape of awe, depicting the primeval, meta-physical relationship of man with the landscape, as reflected by the mythology of trees and water.

2: The landscape of mild exploitation of nature, presenting traditional man-made elements of the landscape that are adapted to its form and consistence, reflecting man’s respect for nature.

3: The landscape of forceful conquest of nature, offering examples of human interventions that transform the environment, upset its balance and inflict wounds on its aesthetic value.

4: The destruction of landscape, showing the consequences of some of the present-day devastations inflicted on the landscape of contemporary Europe.

5: The landscape through the eyes of the artists, guides the reader (and the visitor to the exhibition) to seek the meaning of the catalytic glance of the artist, which decomposes and reconstructs the landscape through a series of social, cultural and historical codes.

Unit 1. The landscape of awe

This section depicts the primeval, metaphysical relationship of man with the landscape. Prehistoric men felt the need from the start to deify the imposing landscapes around them, which were often the source of fear as well as admiration. The need for familiarisation led humans to perceive anthropomorphic or divine signs in landscapes. Rocks, mountains, rivers, springs, forests and canyons were the features of stories with heroes, gods and mythical personalities. They were full of legends and folk traditions, beliefs and prejudices, divine blessings and curses. Many of these traditions and beliefs have survived until today and are expressed through popular customs, myths, sayings and prejudices.

Prominent in the folk traditions has been the mythology of trees and water. The research, and the exhibition under Theme 1, focused on these two elements, tree and water, which offer rich and characteristic examples of symbolic meanings, customs, rites and myths, reflecting the feelings of awe towards the forces hidden in natural landscapes.

Trees

The **tree** has always had a special place in the process of myth-making for the landscape. It was thought as the home of gods or spirits, and there are many references to holy trees near ancient temples or monasteries in Greece as well as in Italy. Symbol of fertility, vitality and immortality, the image of which is according to Carl Gustav Jung an archetype in the individual and collective unconscious, the tree was bound very strongly with people across the ages.

The symbolic meaning of the tree is deeply rooted in ancient cosmogonic perceptions being an element that connects the social and natural environments. It combines many myths and popular beliefs, traditions and cultural representations. The tree, with its branches reaching up into the sky, and roots deep into the earth, has been seen as a link between heaven and the underworld, uniting above and below. As such, it is also related to immortality, fertility and regeneration; and its worship was prevalent in antiquity. Trees are close to Gods and they are considered to possess a soul being inhabited by spirits (dryads) that must be respected. From this derives the idea of the sacred and divine tree but also of the sacred grove, which achieved the status of a religious institution.

In Christianity, trees were vested with regenerating virtues and miraculous qualities: for example, the blessed palm, olive and bay leaves of the Palm Sunday are thought to keep away the evil spirits. There are different ways in which people express their worship to trees, such as prayers, incensing, hanging of icons and offerings over the trunk and the branches. A tree may become sacred because it is considered as the symbolic epiphany of the God or a saint. Numerous are the popular beliefs for sacred icons of Christ, Virgin Mary and various saints miraculously found close or under a tree. Trees have been also associated with the fate of individuals. In most Greek rural areas there was –and still is– a tradition to plant a tree on the occasion of a child’s birth,

which is thus connected to the longevity and good health of the child.

Greece

The most celebrated tree in mainland Greece, as well as in the Aegean islands, is the olive tree, which has been worshiped for its therapeutic qualities since ancient times, in parallel to its nutritional value and the qualities of its timber. It is depicted as divine, ceremonial, the “tree of life” with the priestesses dancing in ecstasy around it in the Minoan frescos of Knossos. The olive tree was also used by ancient Greeks in funerary and burial customs, as well as in religious mysteries, as ancient historians and writers stated in their descriptions (Herodotus, Pausanias and Plutarch). Goddess Athena secured the protection of Athens by offering an olive tree, whilst Hercules inaugurated the athletic games of ancient Olympia with the planting of an olive tree. For the Athenians the offering of an olive wreath and a bottle of olive oil signified the recognition of victory.

The olive tree and its products continued to have a special meaning in the Christian religion. In the Christian sacraments the olive oil has an important initiating, deterrent (apotropaic) and purgatory role from baptism to death. Many are the folk traditions related to it and many are the ritual practices, some still in use. All are linked to people’s wish to protect the tree and secure its productivity. For example, at the end of July islanders perform a symbolic action, called “petrification of the olive oil” (*petroma*) aiming to assist the olive to stay undamaged until the period of harvesting: they go to the olive groves before sunrise and put a stone on the trees.

Very old olive trees have always a “dry heart”. According to a folk tradition from Naxos, during the Crucifixion of Christ all the trees let their leaves fall down as an act of mourning. Only the olive tree kept its own, because the mourning was inside its heart. According to a Cretan folk narration, the olive is blessed because Jesus Christ tried to find shelter under an olive tree which was steeped by His tears. Ever after the olive tree became the most blessed tree and olive oil acquired sacred qualities.

At present, the olive tree is accepted internationally as a symbol of victory, peace, friendship and good will.

Italy

In the Samnitic culture, many trees are linked to rituals and religious traditions. Woods were considered as the house of gods, and trees were planted near temples, while the dead were buried near evergreen trees. The walnut tree has always been a holy tree in the historical region of Sannio. Its fruits, roots and leaves have toxic qualities known since ancient times, but also therapeutic qualities that have been used for the preparation of medicines. These qualities of the walnut tree have been considered as “magical” and led to myths and pagan ceremonies centered on the “janare” witches –daughters of nature deities– in ancient times and during the middle ages.

Walnut is a tree common to many European rural areas and

plays an important role for the landscape, for food and for timber production. Walnut arrived in Europe from Asia Minor in ancient times. Greek and Roman mythology enriched it with symbolic meanings that, during the centuries, were assimilated by popular culture. In Greek mythology, walnut was linked to the goddess Artemis (whose name “Caryatid” refers to the sacred walnut), worshipped in fertility propitiation rituals. In Sannio (around Benevento province), the walnut tree is still today rich with meanings and beliefs, as a result of a sedimentation of different cultures and influences. Among these beliefs, the legend of the Witches of Benevento is a popular one.

According to the legend, an ancient walnut tree in Benevento was used by witches to gather around it and perform primeval rituals, with dances and magic formulas, at predefined times in the year, according to the moon phases and to seasonal rhythms. The origins of the witches legend can be found in cults of ancient goddesses such as Ecate (subsequently identified with Artemis by Greeks and Diana by Romans), Empusa, Lamia. These goddesses were linked to magic and mystic feminine rituals. Ecate, for instance, was worshipped in black magic rituals, which involved dances around a holy tree, a similar practise to rituals dedicated to Artemis and Diana.

The word “*Janare*”, used in Benevento dialect to name “witches”, probably derives from the word “Dianaria”, the servant of goddess Diana. According to this theory, during ancient times the witches of Benevento were supposed to be servants of Goddess Diana, and used to perform rituals below a walnut tree to propitiate fertility. The link between the walnut tree and the feminine divinity continues in the Middle Ages, when *Janare* were characterised as “witches” by the Christian Church. Together with *Janare* all other women that were able to recognise and use plants for medical purposes where characterised as such. However, despite the Christian persecution the legend survives till today, protected and nurtured by rural culture as a result of local inhabitants’ adoration towards and peaceful relationship with nature and the environment.

Water

The **water**, being a basic element of the evolution of man, has been also linked with legends and sacred ceremonies in most civilisations. Many symbolisms are associated with water: it represents the membrane that divides the visible part of the earth from the non-visible part under the earth, which is unknown and mysterious. It also represents a substance for cleaning the body and this leads to the notion of catharsis and purification, whilst its obvious importance for the fertility of the earth has led to a diversity of rain initiation ceremonies.

Thus, three aspects of water are prominent in Mediterranean civilisations:

- As a layer, it reflects the primeval waters that created the Universe. The distinction between upper waters, linked to light and life, and lower waters, linked to death and

darkness, can be found in many religions.

- As the main purification medium in religious and pagan rituals.
- As a source of spiritual and physical regeneration.

Greece

The water is one of the four elements of ancient Greek philosophy, celebrated as a source of life and symbol of nature’s birth and rebirth. In ancient Greek mythology, water separates the world of the dead from the world of the living (along River Styx) but it also largely contributed to the regeneration of the earth after the Flood with which Zeus punished the impious. Mythical creatures (dragons) were believed to dominate the places that contained water and prevent people from using it. Good spirits, the nymphs, either in the rivers and lakes (*Naiads*, *Kriniids*, *Potamids*, *Limnads*) or in the sea (*Nereids*), also dominated water and were helpful to people. In the Greek popular tradition *Naiads* have been replaced by the Fairies, *Neraides*, who prefer places close to water springs, fountains and rivers. Usually they appear after midnight and enjoy teasing people, who must avoid them, especially men, who might even lose their voice if they speak to them.

Lykeus Zeus was the supreme god who ought to be propitiated to allow rain to fall on the earth and fertilise the land. In ancient Arcadia, for many centuries the ritual appeal to Lykeus Zeus was connected to witchcraft. According to Pausanias, geographer and writer of the 2nd c. B.C, “...*Agno is a spring on Lykeus mountain, which, similarly to Istros river, provides the same quantity of water during winter and summer. If there is a drought and the crops and trees dry out, the priest of Lykeus Zeus, after praying to the water and offering sacrifice, agitates the surface of the water with a branch, without immersing it in it. As soon as the water shakes, steam is produced, which forms a cloud, and this attract more clouds and the rain falls down in a short while on the land of Arcadia...* Today, a few meters away from the peak of Lykeus mountain, invocations for rain are performed during the hot month of July in the chapel of Prophet Elias, the rainmaker of Christian religion.

Water is also celebrated for its cleansing power, through which it obtains metaphysical qualities. Water cleans the body and by extension, purifies it. Therefore it has a highly symbolic meaning and becomes a key “purgatorial” element in pagan ceremonies and religious rites. In Christianity, water is intrinsically linked to baptism symbolising cleanliness, purity and rebirth. On the 6th of January, when Epiphany is celebrated, it is a common practice to bless the waters: the sea waters in order to become friendly to sailors and other sea travelers; and the springs and fountains in order to be purified. Also, many churches have been established close to water sources dedicated to Virgin Mary, Source of Life (*Zoodochos Pigi*).

Water is linked in popular tradition with good luck and the powers of prediction. The custom known as “*The treat of the fountain*” has been practiced on New Year’s Day in many rural settlements of Crete: villagers visit a spring,

Unit 2. The landscape of mild exploitation of nature



drink its water and throw in a coin. In some other places people throw small coins in wells for luck, making a wish which they expect to come true. As a central element of life, water is linked to immortality and connected to prediction, as shown by the custom of *Klidonas* which is based on water divination and is still practiced in many areas of Greece. All these practices are passed down from generation to generation, becoming part of the “shared consciousness” of rural communities. Preserved partly or in total, they are vestiges of indigenous knowledge characterised by a deep respect for the environment.

Italy

Water is the vital sap of earth that gives off energy and is essential for agriculture and livestock. At a time when there was no running water in the houses, water supply was assured by springs, rivers and wells. These were considered as sources of life and this made them sacred elements of the landscape.

The deities of the water in the Samnitic tradition of Italy are related to the revival of the matriarchal society. An important water deity was Mefiti (meaning in the middle - between the sky, the earth and the underground world) who has been worshiped for her therapeutic qualities and was linked to the power of the underground waters as well as to the disinfectant qualities of the sulfur emissions from the earth. At the same time the water in wells is worshiped as the symbol of the journey from the “overground” world of the living to the “underground” world of the dead. The well constitutes also a deep wound made into the earth to intercept underground waters. In this perspective, digging a well was a violent act, a manmade structure that penetrated the maternal bosom of the earth. The latter was linked to the belief that digging deep into the earth uncovers underground “truths” that should be hidden from human sight. Human actions and structures that intervene with nature in this way, were considered as a challenge to nature, an “offence” that ancient Greeks called *hybris*. This “offence” could provoke the revenge of Gods, who preserve the sacred cosmic equilibrium.

Thus, those guilty could also pay with their life for this kind of misconduct. Looking down a well means looking at “secrets” that are normally hidden from human sight, as this allows the communication with the *ctonio*, a world inhabited by tenebrous creatures jealous of the light. For this reason an unfortunate observer than leans over the well may be grasped by a **long hand** that inexorably drags him below towards the “secret/sacred” world he dared to peer at. In the Sannio area, the frightening creature who lives in the wells is known by the name of *Manalonga* (the long-hand spirit). Its form is indefinable but it was believed to be a feminine spirit of the water, like the ancient Greek *Naiad* or *Ondine* according to Germanic tradition. *Manalonga* has its parallel in several cultures, with a practical meaning: in the Sannio area, for example, *Manalonga* is a bogey for children, used by parents to keep them away from the danger of falling inside a well.

This section presents the characteristic elements of the landscape that reflect the cultural heritage developed during this stage. Traditional cultivations, terraces, small or larger buildings-landmarks, footpaths, routes and settlements, make up a creative “dialogue” between man and landscape.

Landscape is the product of a continuous transformation process, characterised by successive changes. These changes may stem from geological or climatic phenomena or from human interventions. The cultivation of the land and the construction of the first buildings signal the start of landscape’s transformation, which continued for thousands of years as a mild intervention upon the natural environment. The use of agricultural tools and the shaping of the landscape to make cultivation easier (e.g. with the creation of terraces in sloping surfaces) left the first imprint of man’s dominance on nature, with new landscape forms emerging that included cultural elements. This new landscape was enriched with “landmarks”, such as buildings bearing different uses, materials and forms. Constructions for habitation, transportation and communication, manufacturing or worship are clad with local materials taken out of the landscape itself, adopting forms that are inspired by the nature surrounding them or based on simple and functional building methods.

Some examples are given below, concerning paths and transportation routes, bridges, dry stone buildings and terraces, rural settlements and other characteristic landmarks that adorn the landscape, combining a function necessary for the rural economy and ingenious use of technology and local materials.

Footpaths represent one of the first interventions of man on the landscape over the ages. They served the need of communication with other people, transportation of herds and commodities, access to distant cultivations or other productive activities. They took a variety of forms: from narrow cobbled roads or walks marked on the earth with simple means by animal farmers, to the construction of larger scale passages, comparable in function with present day motorways. An impressive example of such a passage is the Italian *tratturo*.

Tratturi (from the Latin word *tractoria* which means the public right to use a road) were passages used by animal farmers to move their herds along trails of grassland, from valleys and plains to the mountains and vice versa, when the seasons changed. This practise started thousands of years ago when men, hunters at the time, followed their prey along natural paths that animals seasonally used because of the fresh pasturelands (during the summer) or to avoid snow (during winter). In the Apennines, the long mountain range that crosses Italy, sheep transhumance represented for centuries (8th to 1st century B.C.) the basic food-generating activity for many pre Romanic civilisations of central and southern regions (e.g. Samnites). Sheep transhumance during the Roman times developed to an important economic activity (as an indication, in Latin, sheep = *pecus* and money = *pecunia*).

Across the centuries transhumance paths increased in importance and developed from primeval natural paths to “grass freeways”, a well organised system of routes which

spawned taverns, villages, farms and pastoral huts. One of these routes is called “Regio Tratturo” (the Tratturo of the King). This route is 221 kilometres long and was originally 110 metres wide, linking the village of Candela, in the warm plains of Apulia with the village of Pescasseroli on the fresh high mountains of Abruzzi. The Regio Tratturo path and the transhumance system represent an important part of the rural heritage for many Italian regions. Society, culture and economy were influenced by these trails and this is still evident today in architecture, local customs and landscape, representing symbols of peaceful and sustainable exploitation of nature by humans.

Bridges are probably the most important example of the dominance of man over nature, because of their function as well as their aesthetic value. Many legends and traditions describe haunted bridges and angry rivers, vindictive natural or evil creatures, and even human sacrifices that imply the revenge of nature over human dominance. A characteristic example of such a legend is that of Arta bridge, in Epirus, Greece, where the wife of the head craftsman had to be sacrificed in order to appease the spirit of the bridge and allow its construction to be completed. Bridges were built in pre-industrial times with natural materials, mostly stone and wood. Stone bridges, many of which remain intact today, represent miracles of technology. Many examples of the unique technology of the arch-shaped stone bridges are found in Epirus, a region in north-west Greece, and especially in areas along the mountain range of Pindos.

Dry stone constructions, made with local stones recycled from the tending of the fields, with excellent endurance in weather conditions, have been used from a very early age in the Mediterranean to provide shelter for humans, animals or crops, pave footpaths and roads, delineate property, improve sloping land and make it suitable for agriculture, provide a shell for cottage industry activities. Dry stone masonry (*xerolothia*, in Greek), that is walls built with stones without any binding material, are typical, among other things, for the building of two characteristic landmarks of the pre-industrial landscape: **terraces** and **circular huts**.

Terraces are formed by successive dry stone walls, thus converting sloping ground to level farmland that can be cultivated. The terraces are used even in our days for cultivating olive trees and vineyards in Greece and Italy. They represent an important intervention of man in the course of his effort to exploit hill and mountain slopes for cultivation. By utilising local stone, the dry stone walls that support terraces blend chromatically and in texture with the wider landscape, while the curves created by the terraces shape a new landscape of exquisite grace and aesthetic value. These walls also protect the ground from erosion, bear well the pressure of the ground and the water (because they do not have any connecting material); and encourage biodiversity, by offering shelter to cowslips, butterflies, spiders, lizards, snakes and snails, but also to rare species of plants. Terraces transform open spaces to landscapes of heritage, while at the same time they improve the micro-environment and the micro-climate.

Dry stone circular huts date back to the later neolithic period,



when dry stone buildings with a roof made of branches were constructed; and the prehistoric period, when, besides the megalithic monument and cyclopean walls, smaller religious or functional dry stone constructions were also erected in slopes of hills or mountains. These are found in many regions of **Greece**, and in particular in the island of Evia, called “drakospita” (dragon houses). Dry stone huts, with a domed roof, are still found in many areas of mainland Greece and in the islands. They were traditionally used by shepherds for overnight stay, rest during the day, storage of their products or most prominently, cheese-making. These are called *tholoi* (domes) in Magnisia, Kefalonia, Tinos, Lefkada, Kalavrita and in the mountain area of Serres; and *mitata* in Crete. In **Italy**, dry stone huts represent an important point in the process of evolution of the transhumance architecture; they are called *stazzo* and have the functions of shelter, storage, milking and cheese production. In cases that the stazzo has also additional functions, it is adjoined to other constructions, like sheep cotes and dog enclosures. Dry stone huts blend into the landscape harmoniously, through their shape, size and texture, representing one of the earliest examples of man’s efforts to come to terms with his environment, using his skills and wisdom to transform it to his benefit, but with respect.

Rural settlements offer unique opportunities for studying the harmonious integration of larger scale interventions in the landscape. Traditionally, rural settlements represent the best synthesis of people’s ability to modify the environment to their own advantage with the least impact. Typical examples of harmonious blending into the landscape are settlements whose morphology and colours fit in with their surroundings: the village of Anavatos in the island of Chios is hard to discern from a distance –it becomes a part of the rock on which it is built– whilst the villages of Zagoria in Epirus follow the morphology of the slate rock on which they stand. In contrast, island settlements, especially in Cyclades, constitute a white decoration of the gray rock that hosts them. The medieval settlements of Benevento, in Italy, fit in the undulations of the hills and mountains that surround them, projecting their fortification-like shapes, maintaining and enhancing the colour range and the shape of the wider landscape.

Moreover, it should be noted that the unique **vernacular architecture** of a region reflects and supports that region’s own identity. Beyond its aesthetic value, it provides a unique and irreplaceable record of certain aspects of intangible heritage: local responses to the conditions of everyday life, such as technology and skills, and ways of organising social life. The way buildings are shaped depends on the limits imposed by local resources, the productivity of the farm and the storage needs of the crop system. The layout depends on environmental and social factors, including safety. Recurring materials, shapes and volumes, always connected to local conditions, define specific architectural types that become representative of the various places. As for the climate, the structure is arranged so as to make the most of local environmental conditions, e.g. in central Italy south-facing walls have wide façades and arcades, while north facing ones are thicker; while in the Aegean islands south-facing walls have small windows, to protect the building

from the hot sun of the summer.

Other **landmarks** of the rural landscape include isolated small-scale buildings, such as chapels, shrines, fountains, wine-presses, hedges, windmills, watermills, pigeon lofts, castles, etc. These buildings through their unique regional architectural features create the “identity” of the landscape, by blending harmoniously with its morphology and colours.

In **Greece**, typical landmarks in the countryside are the **wine** and **oil press-houses**, the **pigeon lofts**, the **windmills**, the **watermills** and the water **fountains**, some of which are decorated with monumental sculptures. Among the most exquisite landmarks are the small **churches** and the **monasteries**, as well as small **roadside shrines** showing the way to churches. In the islands, the churches and chapels that decorate the landscape are votive offerings of the seafarers or their families. They take simple or more complex forms, adorned with one, two or three aisles, covered with domes or roofs –with or without lanterns– and simple or more sophisticated wall joints, the small churches are the most eloquent expression of humility and spirituality.

In **Italy**, along the transhumance routes, landmarks served also as fixed points for the orientation of shepherds and the location of their position during the movement of herds. The most recurrent structures along the tratturi are the **taverns**, but also the **rural churches**, able to offer spiritual comfort and shelter. Taverns were usually situated in the proximity of rivers or water springs and performed several functions, beyond offering rest and food to travellers and shepherds, such as the exchange of animals and trading. Along the tratturi, during the centuries, other kinds of buildings have been constructed, most notable of which are the **masserias**, large agrarian buildings that were the center of the agricultural economy from the 15th century onwards, but especially during the 19th century. They consisted of groups of agricultural buildings with many and diverse functions, bearing witness to many generations of families that lived there.

Unit 3. The landscape of forceful conquest of nature

The mild dominance of man over nature that was characterised by a dialectical relation with the landscape, was followed by a stage of intense dominance that started with the industrial revolution. The tractor made it possible to cultivate large stretches of land, and in conjunction with harvesting and threshing machinery and pesticides, increased productivity in agricultural activities and imposed uniformity on the agrarian landscape. Typical landscape landmarks, such as dry stone walls and hedges, disappeared and were replaced by new milestones, such as wind turbines or dams. Intensive cultivation altered the scale of the rural landscape and, driven by the objective of maximum exploitation of natural resources, led to its radical transformation. Thus, the industrial revolution

signals a new type of human interventions that transform the environment, upset its balance and inflict wounds on its aesthetic value. Intensive mechanised cultivation, new roads, dams, quarries, wind turbines, impose indiscriminately their presence and result in new shapes of landscape.

At the same time, materials, aesthetics and the use of buildings are no longer related to the local conditions, and human intervention upon the landscape acquires a global character: one sees the same silos, the same wind turbines and the same dams all over the world. The globalisation of technology and materials cuts off the landscape from its locality. The landscape becomes fragmented. Mild exploitation survives in mountainous, non accessible and island areas, whilst the morphology of landmarks and settlements changes according to the needs and requirements of modern technology. Areas of mild exploitation alternate with areas of intense exploitation and landscape “pockets” emerge: tourist landscape, protected landscape, agro-industrial landscape, cultural landscape etc. The cohesion and continuity of the landscape is seriously injured.

Landscapes inevitably change. It depends on one's attitude and culture whether to perceive the change as intrusion or not. For example, do we perceive photovoltaic panels **and** the cylindrical bales of hay as intruders in rural landscapes, both of which were invented a few decades ago? Do we perceive wind turbines **and** modern farm buildings as intruders? Do we perceive the genetically modified crops as intruders?

It has been observed through the ages that new human interventions are usually perceived as intruders to the “traditional” landscape, only to become a positive element of the landscape some years or decades later. Farmsteads, windmills and railways that changed the landscape some centuries ago, today have become monuments to be protected and in harmony with their territory.

In the meta-industrial era, globalisation in the economic, socio-political, technological and cultural realms has had significant consequences for the environment. Many of the environmental challenges have become shared concerns across the world: land use changes, climate change and global warming, reduced water availability and quality, loss of biodiversity, soil degradation, sea-level rise, all have serious impacts, especially upon rural areas, affecting rural landscapes and leading to their degradation.

It has been also accepted that few areas in Europe remain in their natural state: in most landscapes there are traces of human interaction resulting from centuries of migration, human settlement and land reclamation and exploitation. In terms of land use, agriculture can be singled out as having had one of the heaviest influences on Europe's landscapes, because it affects habitats and species which depend on such natural elements as soil, vegetation and access. In parallel, the influx of economic activities, such as industry and tourism have contributed to the deterioration and character change of rural landscapes, while external pressures, such as demands for urban expansion or production of renewable energy have also had an effect.

The demands which will fall upon the landscapes of Europe in coming years form a massive challenge to all. They include:

- expected large-scale migrations of people, into and within Europe, and from the countryside to the cities, leading to heavy demand for new housing, services and infrastructure in the receiving regions;
- massive investment in infrastructure –railways, roads, airports, electricity services, water supplies etc.– and in industry, agriculture and other development;
- heavy emphasis on renewable energy, including investment in wind turbines, hydro-electricity and solar-energy plants, which all have major impacts on the landscape;
- measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, for example through heavy investment in coastal and flood defenses;
- continuing massive growth in tourism, with the demands that it makes for facilities of all kinds.

The tendency in recent years has been to protect rural landscapes by designating them as national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, nature reserves etc., and preserve also the manmade features and buildings that have given landscape its character in pre-industrial times. Numerous EU regulations and decisions have been issued to this effect. But further to that, a new consciousness needs to be developed that everyone has a stake in the landscape. It is important that everyone should have the opportunity to have a say on how it changes and develops, and how it is used and kept in good condition. The European Landscape Convention has made an importance contribution to this direction, binding governments to the protection of rural landscape and the preservation of its natural and cultural features.

Unit 4. The destruction of landscape

Beyond the conquest of nature by force, as discussed in the previous chapter, the relationship between man and nature has taken the route to devastation in the 21st century. The rural landscape is a witness to this devastation.

Throughout history, changes in the balance among the elements of nature created catastrophes. These changes, up to the beginning of the 20th century, were the result of natural causes and contributed to a great extent to the revival of nature and the evolution of the morphology of the planet. With the advent of industrial revolution and technological progress, human intervention upon nature's elements, whether purposeful or not, has upset their balance and created preconditions for catastrophes. Climatic change is the most evident of the phenomena that have disturbed the natural balance, with such consequences as forest fires, drought, floods, hurricanes, melting of the glaciers, desertification of agricultural land etc. It is important to understand where and how natural disasters

might arise and what can be done to reduce their impact on people and the environment.

It is a commonly accepted fact today that Europe's natural environment, its production systems (agriculture, fisheries, forestry, terrestrial ecosystems) and other key socio-economic sectors (tourism, energy, human health care, built environment) are under great pressure from both environmental change and socio-economic development. Society faces a wide range of natural disasters that can have serious social and economic consequences for people and their livelihoods, and negative environmental consequences, causing destruction to delicate habitats and ecosystems as well as to the landscapes that harbour them. For example:

Flooding and landslides are expected to increase in frequency and magnitude. Since 1998, Europe has suffered more than 100 major floods, causing extensive damage. The massive flooding in central Europe in 2002, for example, was the worst since 1845 – and scientists predict this is only the beginning of the trend as climate change accelerates. A recent example of severe flooding in the winter of 2009, preceded by gale-force winds that neared 200 km per hour, left its tragic mark in the regions of Gironde and Landes in southern France, where one of Europe's largest forest areas exists. The first estimations in France were that between 30 to 50 million cubic metres of trees, mainly pine and poplar, were felled by the storm; and that it could take a century before the Aquitaine forest can return to its former majesty after its destruction. The tragedy conveyed by the devastated landscape of Gironde and Landes reminds us in a vivid way that the dominance of man over nature has limits that cannot be trespassed.

Several countries in Eastern Europe show signs of accelerated **desertification**. At the same time, each year since 1990 the average land area and population affected by droughts has doubled. Water scarcity is a problem that affects most EU Member States and around 100 million inhabitants in 26 river basin districts throughout Europe.

The wide ranging impacts of climate change in the last decades have also affected **agriculture**, both in terms of quantity and quality of produce. Agriculture, however, is one of the major components of the European rural landscapes, giving them their distinct character and value. The abandonment of agricultural land, either because of the reduction in the value of production or because of rural migration towards urban centres, is already affecting the landscapes of Europe. It is characteristic that in Italy from 1920 till today the extension of forests has almost doubled at the expense of cultivated areas. At the same time, agriculture, as mentioned in the previous chapter, threatens the bioversity and the shape of rural landscapes, especially through the expansion of monocultures, achieved by eliminating natural elements that were considered unnecessary or an obstacle to mechanisation (i.e trees, hedges, ditches or small rural buildings).

The loss of the rich and varied **biodiversity** that was once typical of the European landscapes has affected drastically their character, following the intensive exploitation of natural resources by industry and agriculture, the pressure of

expanding populations, industrial technologies and transport, and last but not least, the change in climate.

Forest fires should also be considered: they have important economic consequences, which are likely to increase under a warmer climate, with an enlargement of the fire prone area and a lengthening of the fire season. In 2007, fires destroyed a vast wooded area in Greece, in the regions of Peloponnese and Evia, devastating not only the landscape, most of which has great historical and archaeological value, but also the rural communities that inhabited the burnt area. During the same year, the historical mountain Parnes was burnt and the fires were repeated two years later, in 2009, in the wooded slopes of Attica, very close to Athens. Similarly big fires were experienced during the first decade of the 21st century in Spain, France and Italy. Indeed, burnt forests represent a recurring landscape in the Mediterranean countries, with tragic consequences on the economic and social viability of their broader territories. The burnt landscape represents a dark facet of modern civilisation.

Another type of human intervention that spoils the landscape and creates catastrophic conditions relates to **waste**. Poor management of urban and industrial refuse and in particular uncontrolled waste disposal in forests, gorges, hills and mountain slopes, rivers, streams etc. increases the risk of fires and the pollution of surface and underground waters. However, this is part of everyday reality in many Mediterranean regions, including Greece and Italy. The landscape of waste is a landscape of catastrophe that threatens our civilisation.

Unit 5. Landscape in art

Art has provided an alternative, more emotional view of the landscape and the interventions of man in his effort to conquer it and subjugate it. This view complements the more objective consideration of the landscape and the changes affected by man on it, either with respect or conceitedness. In the exhibition, visitors are invited to derive their own conclusions, assemble their own path of impressions, thoughts and feelings and decide what kind of future they would like for themselves, their children, and the children of their children. They are guided in this errant by the catalytic glance of the artist, sometimes nostalgic, sometimes sarcastic and sometimes looking with grief to the future created by us all.

The glance of the artist helps us to probe more deeply into this problematic, complementing it with emotion, lyricism or abstraction. In the exhibition, the utopian landscapes are shattered to passing impressions, “fly” in the air or are shut in a suitcase so that we can take them with us as mementos, un-linked and cut off from their immediate environment. They become small fetish, hanging disorderly from the strings of our memory, without cohesion or identity. They are broken up into pieces, many of which have no relationship to a territorial landscape, but are mixed with emotions caused



by threatening questions, such as those related to violence or blind consumption. Multicoloured or black and white, the landscapes of modern artists reconstruct coastlines, mountains and gardens, castles and trees with hardness or nostalgia, relieved by romanticism or full of sorrow for the shattering of the relationship between man and nature.

Pictorial representation of the landscape has always been one of the favourite subjects in the arts and a source of inspiration through time. In all forms of visual art, painting, sculpture, engraving, micro sculpture, as well as in many forms of artistic handicraft (pottery, embroidery, weaving, batik) from ancient times to the present day, landscape art has produced important works.

In ancient times, Minoan art has celebrated the landscape, as shown in pottery decorations, stamps, as well as the frescos of the Minoan palaces, where often the landscape dominates or defines an anthropomorphic picture. A similar narrative approach is observed in the frescos of the Cycladic civilisation as well as in decorations of vases, whilst in Mycenaean art the representation of the landscape becomes more schematic and abstract. At the peak of ancient Greek art, particularly during the classical period, the landscape acquires a special role in daily life, as architects and sculptors are inspired by it and try to mirror it in buildings and statues. In ancient Greek and Roman pottery and reliefs, the landscape is used as an abstract but important element which identifies the place, as for example in the case of an olive tree and a rock representing Acropolis. Also, landscapes are the most common subject, together with mythological scenes, of Roman art in wall paintings and mosaics in houses and tombs.

With the predominance of the Christian faith, painting acquired initially a symbolic and allegorical role while later on the religious subjects prevailed. In Byzantine art, the landscape is depicted in an austere, stylised and non-real form and is utilised only to emphasise the holiness of the scenes, as for example in the scenes of the Crucifixion (imposing mountainous landscape). Paradise scenes are an exception as in that case a rich, heavenly, almost naturalistic landscape depiction is called for. In post Byzantine art and especially in wall paintings, the landscape becomes a substantial element of the representation, although it never becomes the sole element of a picture.

During the middle ages, in the paintings of Europe, the landscape appears initially deified and accompanies religious scenes. During Renaissance, the landscape acquires an important narrative role and is used in such themes as hunting or to express political utopia, whilst slowly becomes more prevalent and is depicted more and more at a large scale. A reference is due in this context to the famous painting by Georgeone "The tempest" dated around 1505 (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), with its imposing landscape and the disproportionately large human figures at the foreground of the picture.

Later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, topiography emerges as an autonomous subject in art, starting from the Dutch painters and creating a School in Italian art that served as a

model for the realistic art of the 19th century. Dutch artists with their idyllic landscaped subjects inspired by real landscapes, became indeed a pictorial model and sparked off a series of "realistic" paintings in the 19th century. For example, in England a naturalistic landscape painting style emerged, represented by Constable and Turner who in turn influenced later-day painters, such as the French impressionists.

Impressionism provided a turning point in landscape painting that led artists to leave their studios, work in the open air and depict accurately the light and their personal "impressions" of the landscape at the moment of creation. At the post-impressionist period, the freedom of expression increased greatly the possibilities open to artists in landscape depiction. In contemporary art, artists are inspired and sensitised by the landscape, question their art and become creative. Sometimes they depict the landscape realistically, sometimes with awe or a nostalgic mood, and sometimes disjointed, distorted, illusory, utopian. Cubic landscapes, futuristic landscapes, surrealist landscapes, phobic landscapes, abstract landscapes dominate painting. Artistic expression, liberated from rules and restrictions, develops a continuous dialogue with landscape, conveying admiration, fear, sorrow or hope through painting frames, videos, installations or sculpture.

Conclusion: Utopia or Sustainability?

The relationship between man and landscape undergoes a crisis in the 21st century. This crisis reflects on the future of our civilisation and requires from all of us to put forward questions and try to answer them. Can we redefine our relation with the landscape through a radical change of attitudes and behaviour, on the basis of sustainable development? Or do we prefer to close our eyes to the coming catastrophe, adopt the romanticism of the past and/or merely be sarcastic about the mistakes of our present civilisation? Do we want to develop a sustainable relationship with the landscape or are we trapped in a utopian reality?

The "landscape stories" as they unfold through the successive stages of the efforts of man to dominate nature, help us to reconsider the lessons learnt by the mild development stage and adapt these to the challenges of the present day and the requirements of sustainable development. Nevertheless, the development of the rural territory is not a uni-dimensional concept. It brings together many dimensions –economic, social, cultural, technological– and an integrated approach is required for sustainable development. Similarly, the landscape is a multi-dimensional space that is made up from many parts or "pixels": agriculture, natural environment, exploitable resources, people, society, history, cultural heritage. These parts should form a cohesive total if we wish to reach the aim of viable and sustainable development.

Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It is the setting for people's lives. Thus, landscape has:

- Economic value: it offers opportunities for economic activity; businesses, visitors and residents are attracted to good quality landscapes.
- Social and community value: it can contribute to community cohesion and sense of ownership.
- Cultural value: it contains or relates to elements of history, art, folk traditions.
- Environmental value: it encompasses all the natural elements that make this "place" distinct.

Landscape is therefore a vital resource in the development of any region. The way landscape is used, managed and protected and even created, determines the sustainability of development. Moreover, we must realise that our landscape is changing, and the pressures it has to withstand originate from many sources, such as the need for sustainable housing and jobs; the globalisation of production and consumption; or climate change.

Change should be managed to have positive effects. This demands a common approach by farmers, policy makers, administrators and the civil society that is not easy to realise. Many issues come to the fore regarding landscape change: the revitalisation and protection of biodiversity; the preservation and restoration of vernacular architecture; the study of local traditions to benefit from the wisdom and ingenuity of older technologies and cultivation methods; the wise use of energy and water resources.

The recent years are witnessing a wide range of protection and preservation efforts aiming at maintaining the landscapes for the future. Indeed, people often start to value something when it is threatened and the recent consequences of extreme natural phenomena that have led to large scale devastation (forest fires, desertification, floods, hurricanes, drought etc.) in Europe prove that. The European Landscape Convention provides a framework to protect valued landscapes and to help manage landscape change. It also offers the opportunity to the member states to learn from each other and share experience. It states that

"The landscape... has an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields, and constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity... is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity; ... is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas;... its protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone."



Bibliography

Greece

- Antrop, M., Why landscapes of the past are important for the future, *Landscape and Urban Planning* 70 (2005), pp. 21-34
- Beriatos, Elias, *Uncontrolled Urbanisation, Tourism Development and Landscape. Transformation in Greece*, 44th ISOCARP Congress, 2008
- Brosse Jaques, The sacred tree, *UNESCO Courier*, Jan. 1989
- Christou Ch., *The mountainous landscape in Greek painting*, Athens 1991 (in Greek)
- Council of Europe (2000), *European Landscape Convention*, 20X2000, European Treaty Series - No. 176,
- Esteban Zamora A and Pulgar Luque E., Man makes Space, Space makes Man in E. Karpodini-Dimitriadi (ed) *Ethnography of European Traditional Cultures: Society, Cultural Tradition, Built Environment*, European Seminar II- proceedings, Athens, 1996
- Euracademy Thematic Guide 7, Sustainable 2020 for Rural Environment in Europe, (ed. by Fouli Papageorgiou), Euracademy Series, Athens 2008.
- Faegri Knut, *The Cultural Landscape: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Hilary H. Birks, Cambridge University press 1988.
- Forbes Hamish, *Meaning and Identity in a Greek Landscape: An Archaeological Ethnography*, Cambridge University Press, 2008
- Kampouridis Ch., *Greek topiography from the 18th to the 21st century - Vision, experience and reshaping of the space*, Athens 2009(in Greek)
- Lambraki-Plaka M., *Greek topiography 19th-20th century*, Exhibition Catalogue, Athens 1998 (in Greek)
- Marmaras Elias, Influences of customs in the formation of the Cycladic vernacular settlements, in E. Karpodini-Dimitriadi (ed) *Ethnography of European Traditional Cultures: Society, Cultural Tradition, Built Environment*, European Seminar II- proceedings, Athens, 1996
- Papathanasiou Maro, The tree in Geek Mythology, *KATHIMERINI* Newspaper, November 30th 2003
- Philippidis, Demetris, *Greek traditional architecture*, volume 2, Cyclades, and individual volumes on Andros, Mykonos, Naxos, Paros, Santorini, Sifnos, Syros, Tzia (Kea), Tinos, Crete, Melissa editions, Athens 1982-1991
- Provatakis Theocharis, *Engravings of Greek Folk Engravers, 17th-18th century*, Municipality of Athens - Cultural Centre for Folk Art and Tradition, Athens 1989
- Psillakis Nikos, *Monasteries and Hermitages of Crete*, Heraklion 1994 (in Greek)
- Psillakis Nikos, *Folk rituals in Crete*, Heraklion, 2005 (in Greek)
- Spanakis Stergios, *Towns and villages of Crete*, Heraklion, Crete, 1991 (in Greek)

- Stewart Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern (eds.), *Landscape, Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, London: Pluto Press, 2003
- Taylor Ken, Cultural landscape as open air museum, *Humanities Research* Vol. 10 No. 2, 2003, pp 51-61.
- Vasiliades Demetris, *A view of Aegean Architecture from a restless optical angle*, Athens 1975 (in Greek)

Italy

- Barbieri G., *Osservazioni geografico-statistiche sulla transumanza in Italia*, Rivista Geografica Italiana, 1955
- Battaini Dragoni G., *Vernacular architecture and rural landscape. A perspective for sustainable development*, in FUTUROPA Magazine, n°1/2008
- Bevilacqua P., *Il paesaggio italiano*, Editori Riuniti, 2002
- Brosse J., *Storie e leggende degli alberi*, Edizioni Studio Tesi, 1991
- Carnevale S., *L' Architettura della Transumanza*, Palladino editore, 2005
- D'Atorre P., A. De Bernardi, *Studi sull'agricoltura italiana: società rurale e modernizzazione*, Feltrinelli Editore, 1993
- De Spirito A., *Il paese delle streghe*, Bulzoni editore, 1976
- Di Cicco P. (1996), *Il Molise e la transumanza*, Istituto Regionale per gli Studi Storici del Molise, 1996
- Di Lello R., *Aspetti di vita agro-pastorale*, A.S.M.V., 1979
- Ginzburg C., *Storia notturna. Una decifrazione del Sabba*, Einaudi, 1989
- Micadi E., *Pietre d'Abruzzo. L'architettura agro-pastorale spontanea in pietra a secco*, Carsa, 2007
- Moscato S., *L'Italia prima di Roma*, Electa edizioni, 1987
- Murray M., *Le streghe nell'Europa occidentale*, Garzanti, 1978
- Palasciano I., *Le lunghe vie erbose*, Capone, 1981
- Pasquinucci M., *La Transumanza nell'Italia romana*, 1979
- Pasquinucci, Strutture agrarie e allevamento transumante nell'Italia romana, Pisa, Bibl. Studi Antichi
- Piperno P., *Della superstiziosa noce di Benevento*, Forni Editore, 1984
- Pitrè G., *Bibliografia delle tradizioni popolari d'Italia*, Clausen, 1894
- Salmon E. T., *Samnium and the Samnites*, University Press, 1967
- Sangiorgi F., The vernacular rural heritage: from the past to the future, in FUTUROPA Magazine, n°1/2008
- Sereni E., *Storia del paesaggio agrario italiano*, Laterza, 1962
- Trump D.H., *Central and southern Italy before Rome*, London, 1966



SYNTHESIS REPORT OF RESEARCH FOR THEME 2

SAVE OUR SOURCES

SOS

INSPIRATION, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY:
THE RURAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE GLOBAL PRESSURE



Culture 2000



Introduction

The research conducted under the 2nd Theme “Inspiration, innovation and technology: the rural perspective and the global pressure” focused on three countries: France, Hungary and Sweden. The text that follows provides a synthesis of the research that was used to construct the scenario of the exhibition S.O.S., Save Our Sources! This synthesis, and the exhibition, could also be titled “Return to our Sources!”, constituting a message of warning, which aims at strengthening the sensibilities of the young and adult public towards the environment, notably through the prism of rural heritage. Indeed, rural heritage constitutes a major resource anchored in landscape, in skills, in techniques or traditions, from which our present lifestyle may draw inspiration and advantage.

But let’s see first what we mean by rural heritage. Rural heritage is defined by the material or immaterial elements that are considered worthy to be transmitted to future generations and which constitute reference points for understanding rural history, over more than a thousand years. Rural heritage is not necessarily old and is not limited, for example, to animal-drawn implements. Today’s agricultural mechanisation will be tomorrow’s heritage, even if it is associated with productivity-based agriculture. Could there be a rural heritage more virtuous than another?

The collections of ethnographic museums are rich with tangible and intangible works suitable for highlighting rural knowledge and the daily life of peasantry. Rural heritage is, indeed, one of the treasure-troves, still largely unexplored, which offers re-adaptable references in our present world of crisis. Through the lifestyles, the mental and emotional attitudes and the sensibility of the forefathers, is there not a lot to learn? The agricultural world of long ago, not at all mythical, opens up landscapes, techniques, knowledge, knowhow and traditions... to be repossessed with patience and modesty. These are the sources and the resources of everyone.

A source of inspiration may precisely come from periods when consumer goods were rare, “Old Times” when natural heritage was protected, for better exploitation certainly, but with a strong desire for economy, and a sharp awareness of parsimony. Rural knowledge before the Industrial Revolution, but above all before World War II, should not be copied but used as a source of inspiration. This research, and the SOS exhibition, propose a re-reading of rural collections to extract the “best” lessons. Amongst traditional activities and customs four main factors must be pointed out to our young ones: the idea of time and rhythm, the understanding of the value of consumed products resulting from work and rare resources, the refusal of consumerism and influence of fashion; and lastly, the possibility of recharging one’s batteries through ancestral rites, festivities, and common human values.

ranges, including the Alps. Nearly 30% of French territory is covered by forests, boasting 136 different kinds of trees and an extraordinary number of large animals including a substantial population of deer. France’s natural heritage is protected through the establishment of a large number (over 2000) of national and regional parks, nature reserves and designated areas for protected species, protected coastal areas.

The territory that is now France became a state in the Middle Ages, over a millennium ago, created by the obstinate and unifying will-power of the kings and then of the Republic. The country’s past is illustrated by a heritage of buildings and cultural artefacts accumulated from the Stone Age to the present day, from the Lascaux caves to the Louvre Pyramid, including the cities of Roman Gaul, cathedrals, princely chateaux and industrial architecture. Among all these, France seems to be a territory with an astonishing diversity. French people enjoy the pleasures of the diverse products of the land, such as cheeses and wines, and their use in cooking. Varied language roots, dialects and habits complete the picture, together with the variety of cities, most of them with a very old history, while the countryside is full of diverse rural landscapes.

Rural France, rooted in very old traditions, is now threatened from declining demography, low productivity of family exploitations, abandonment of land and reforestation, while tourism appears to be a viable possibility to achieve economic development, especially in the Center, from the south of Lorraine to the Pyrenees, through Auvergne and the Limousin. This is “France of the blank”, but also an exceptional reserve of history, nature and culture, with an always alive heritage, a place of memory.

Hungary is located in Central Europe, in the Carpathian Basin surrounded by the Carpathians, the Alps and the Dinara Mountains. Hungary is a mixture of eastern and western cultural influences together with the traditions of a 1000-year-old state. Pagan tribes arrived in the Carpathian Basin around 896 and assimilated the smaller and greater local tribes. Later on, throughout their history, Hungarian rulers invited priests, artists and teachers to enrich Hungarian culture. Monuments of the Roman Empire as well as spas from the age of the 150-year-long Turkish rule, medieval castles and magnificent cathedrals all bear witness to a stirring history.

Despite its relatively small size, the country is home to numerous World Heritage Sites, UNESCO Biosphere reserves, the second largest thermal lake in the world (Lake Hévíz), the largest lake in Central Europe (Lake Balaton), and the largest natural grassland in Europe (Hortobágy). The Hungarian cuisine is a prominent feature of the Hungarian culture, just as much as the art of hospitality.

It was in the beginning of the eighteenth century that the present style of Hungarian folk art took shape, incorporating both Renaissance and Baroque elements, depending on the area, as well as Persian Sassanide influences. Flowers and leaves, sometimes a bird or a spiral ornament, are the principal decorative themes. Nearly all the manifestations of

Historical and Cultural Background

France is the largest country in Western Europe with a long-stretched coastal zone, extensive plains covering two thirds of its total area and several impressive mountain



folk art practiced elsewhere in Europe also flourished among the Magyar peasantry at one time or another, their ceramics and textile being the most highly developed of all.

Sweden is a part of the Scandinavian peninsula and thus, the country shares much of its natural character, climate, history and culture with the other Northern countries, Finland, Norway and Denmark. Due to the outstretched landmass from the north to the south, there are great variations in natural conditions and climate. The real big agricultural corn areas are to be found in the southern parts of the country while in the northern part there is still more of a mixed kind of agriculture, with cattle husbandry and forestry. In the most northern provinces, there is still reindeer husbandry practiced by the indigenous groups of Sami people (Laplanders). The province chosen for research is in the middle part of Sweden but regarded as being the southern province of the northern part (södra Norrland). Here the culture is still characterised by traditional folk music, especially played by young people, traditional handicraft, attitudes, food etc.

Sweden has been a constitutional monarchy since the 13th century. Before that, the definition of "Sweden" varied over time. Traditionally, up to the second half of the 19th century, Sweden was a country of agriculture based on a variety of activities, including fishing. During the second half of the 19th century, a massive process of industrialisation transformed the country, which also marked the "rural exodus" as part of a deliberate policy to transfer people from the agricultural sector to the industries. In the late 1960s and 1970s a strong counter-movement, called the Green Wave was developed as a genuine "popular" phenomenon, encouraging young people to leave the cities and move out to old, often forlorn farms in the countryside. Today a new movement of rural re-dynamisation has succeeded the Green Wave. A phenomenon that unites the country is, however, the great number of NGOs and voluntary work. The social capital, the trust between people, is an essential and necessary condition for the survival of the Swedish countryside and part of the Swedish heritage, dominant in rural areas.

The framework of research synthesis for theme 2

It may seem paradoxical, or out-of-time, to use ancient knowhow as a source of influence, of innovation and action. Indeed, isn't it turning back, denying progress, science, discoveries, efforts and talents? What answers can the testimonies of the past bring to daily life today? How can those skills, often disappeared, help to reflect on contemporary behaviour, to modify it, and to better understand the territory where we live? And what role may be attributed to museums in such a perspective? What can these institutions, keepers of various heritages, do in such a procedure?

There could be a strong temptation to idealise a part that has disappeared. However, this is the main pitfall to be avoided: the bygone rural world was neither better nor worse than today. But by studying it, we can draw from old sources new

ideas in order to advance our present thinking and improve our everyday practices, i.e. draw lessons that we can use today to the best advantage of our societies. This is the guiding concept of the research and the exhibition.

The text that follows is organised in 7 units, which also correspond to the structural sections of the exhibition. These units pose questions and make provocative comments regarding the use of natural resources by our present-day civilisation.

Unit 1: How did all this happen?

Unit 2: How are we reacting?

Unit 3: Always more...

Unit 4: ...and if we cultivated our garden? Energy

Unit 5: ...and if we cultivated our garden? Recycling and anti-waste

Unit 6: ...and if we cultivated our garden? The countryside is in the plate

Unit 7: Together and not alone

Unit 1: How did all this happen?

Pass on the message!

Keep time... Think over... Flashback... Keep your eyes open..., Less is more..., Take time..., Move..., Use local..., Eat seasonal..., Don't waste... Be together..., You have the choice..., Enjoy your life... messages have been derived from the research and used to punctuate the exhibition, guiding the visitor like alarm signals.

The research has taken advantage of the contemporary work of Ph Klarsfeld showing an untamed world at the limits of human habitation. This work proves necessary for understanding the modifications and the violent alterations in our life span. Critical changes are due to the progressive domination of man over the environment through an unceasing evolution of agricultural technology, aiming always at greater production. Different factors impose themselves (politics, climate, demography) and modify the relationship between man and his environment. An instability is created causing irremediable and planetary damage. This awareness provokes a recent reaction from public authorities and from citizens.

One of the rare undertakings of the authorities, on all continents, is the conservation of natural reserves and of biodiversity, such as natural parklands. The research leads to an acknowledgement of the major disorder of our industrial societies: over-consumerism and over-production are altering our environment in a non-reversible manner.

A past not so out-of-date!

Rural heritage, its techniques and its skills can help us daily: revise our manner of being, change our automatisms, consume otherwise. It is a question of not submitting to restrictions as before, but to consciously choose a voluntary approach engaged in time. So, for energy, the use of local resources, wood, earth, wind, and sun, becomes preferable to the transport of primary materials with related risks. In the

same manner, recycling answers a strong desire to control consumption; better to reuse than to throw away, and to buy solid and lasting goods. Food consumption must be encompassed in a new way of thinking: eat less but eat better with the awareness that good nourishment depends on the conservation of the environment. The countryside is in our plate! We can conclude this argument with a rediscovery of traditional solidarity. The responsibility and the choice of each of us, as citizens, is expressed through voting.

The factors of "progress"

The hazards of climate, political events or the different degrees of mechanisation have resulted in great inequalities in the levels of development throughout the world. All these elements are interwoven and are permanently interconnected.

There are strong differences and discrepancies according to the periods and the countries. The combination of a mild climate, and a stable, enlightened government, allows demographic growth: the more men available the more arms for working and producing; but also more mouths to feed. The conjunction of unpredictable factors is therefore favourable or not to the birth of new ideas, techniques and knowledge.

In the Neolithic period humans progressed from the stage of hunting-gatherers to that of farming-breeders. This evolution, extremely slow, spread to more and more numerous human groups in the course of centuries, the aim of each society being self-subsistence. The plough, animal-driven then by mechanical traction up to motorisation, explains the rapid evolution of agriculture, notably from the end of the 19th century with the Industrial Revolution.

Overproduction, at first synonymous with well-being and the domination of a nation, overtakes Europe in the 1980's. The context is that of the consumer society: always produce and consume more. Certainly intensive agriculture does feed entire populations but to the detriment of the environment (water, earth) and to the population's health (pesticides in fruit and vegetables, mad cow's disease...). Sanitary crises become more and more frequent and the depopulation of the countryside continues because of the diminishing need of labour in modern agriculture.

In industrialised countries, hyper-production has generated problems in the management of agricultural land and in the degradation of the environment, bringing on irremediable upheavals.

S.O.S..

In 1866 70% of the working population is devoted to agriculture. This percentage changes to 43% in 1906, then falls to 7% in 1985. Today farmers represent 3% of the active population.

The average production of wheat in 1930 is 11,5 quintals per hectare, then 31.9 quintals in 1965, to reach 68.7 quintals in 1994.

To harvest 1 acre of wheat in 1800 it took an hour with a sickle, in 1850, a 1/4 hour with a scythe. In 1900, 2 mins with a reaper, in 1920, only 40 seconds with mechanical traction. In 1990, hardly 30 seconds with a harvester.

Unit 2: How are we reacting?

Tools, harnessing, mechanisation and motorisation

From the first tools in cut stone, from prehistory to the most powerful tractors, such instruments have been invented and used to exploit nature. The aim being to reduce human effort and to significantly increase production. The evolution of these tools has therefore transformed human labour, reducing physical effort and expanding its possibilities. Working conditions have changed; the impact of man on nature too.

The development of the productive forces of agriculture comprises four main stages:

- Manual agriculture uses human energy and hand tools. For example, the hoe, for the preparation of the earth, and the scythe, for harvesting cereals, are universal tools still in existence. The tool may be considered an extension of the body, an intermediary of action.
- Harnessed agriculture, which continues till the middle of the 19th century, comes from the domestication of animals. It uses animal energy to pull waggons and carts, ploughs and tillage implements. In the Middle Ages, the replacement of the ox by the horse, marks an essential stage in this evolution by the diversity of the inventions (harness collar, horse shoe...). Water-mills, then wind-mills, ensure the grinding of cereals. The bellows and the hammers in the ironworks function with hydraulic force. The industrial revolution is advancing.
- Mechanised agriculture is established with the use of the reaper, of the winnower...
- Motorised agriculture springs up at the end of the 19th century, with the steam engine, the internal combustion engine and the first applications of electricity. These new forms of energy permit a greater effectiveness and efficiency for harvesting and the daily farmwork, including that done by women (skimming milk, making butter). Motorised agriculture is established in industrialised countries only in the second half of the 20th century.

The earth in question

The balance between human societies and natural surroundings was broken in the 19th century with the Industrial Revolution, a period which certain scientists qualify as the “Anthropocène” era: This new geological era is characterised by the fact that the results of human activity dominate all the other evolution factors of the ecosystems: globally needs outstrip the regenerating possibilities of the Earth.

The “Anthropocène” is the fruit of a plurimillennial evolution which witnesses, in an irregular manner but with an everpositive average tendency, the growth of the world population and the increasing consumption of natural resources.

The causes of this imbalance between an ever-growing population and limited natural resources are complex and difficult to classify; the natural factors (climate) and the cultural factors (social organisation, beliefs, technology) are determining and often interdependent. For example, in the 20th century, the world population was multiplied by 4, but the consumption of energy by 40: here it is the cultural factor which dominates the

modern urban lifestyle (“cultural standards”) being at the origin of excessive needs (one may speak of “wastage”, in view of the risks taken, in the long run, by humanity).

Nature has a strong capacity of resistance in the face of the attacks it endures, provided there is time to assimilate them; but if the limits of regeneration are overtaken, then damage is irreversible. This is testified by the extinction of over-hunted animal species in the 20th century. Crossing the limits of regeneration often unleashes complex chains of worsening consequences: for example, the desertification of the Sahel augments the rhythm of rural exodus, which has the effect of increasing urban concentration, the sources of pollution and over-intensive farming.

In the past, five “mass extinctions” have affected the Earth, the most well-known being the one which saw the end of the dinosaurs at the end of the secondary era (- 65 million years).

The lesson of these extinctions is clear: they are possible, and they witness the elimination of dominating species to the benefit of hitherto marginal species.

Today, man being the dominant species, and the disappearance of animal and vegetable species having reached a rhythm until now unknown (30 000 per year!), a sixth mass extinction has begun and directly threatens humanity.

Earth in question?

Today, man has taken, over all animal and vegetable species, a domination due to great population and to the power of technology. The major risk is the exhaustion of natural resources and hence the survival of humanity. The phenomena are world-wide and require local measures in a global perspective, which implies a democratic awareness, a sharing of profits and losses (without which conflicts will multiply) and world-wide governance. The conservation of the resources of the earth, and amongst them nutritive resources, is a priority setting in motion suitable technologies elaborated with the particularly useful aid of “traditional” empirical knowledge.

The rural Exodus in Hungary

For two centuries, significant numbers of people from rural areas have moved towards the cities. This phenomenon increased in scale in the second half of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century to satisfy, with cheap abundant labour, the needs of thriving industry. Agricultural mechanisation had an important impact on this rural exodus which resulted in abandoned villages. The production-driven agricultural policy, introduced after the 2nd World War, favoured mainly big exploitations, capable of upholding an ever-growing agricultural production. Small agricultural holdings, unable to adapt to market demands, progressively disappeared.

European subsidies often encouraged this abandonment of small farms, considered as not viable.

Till today, rural people leave their villages and move towards big cities seeking an easier life or to benefit from a larger work market. The rural population is becoming older and older, and a growing number of villages die out after the departure of their inhabitants.

How are we reacting?

The question of the exploitation and the domination of nature by man has preoccupied philosophers since antiquity.

However, it is only since the 19th century that a timid awareness appears, with the exponential growth of population in newly industrialised countries. In the 20th century, international conferences multiply, in view of the multiple degradation of the environment: industrial pollution, disappearance of numerous vegetable and animal species, depletion of resources, climate warming.

The concept of “lasting development” thus emerges, and is formalised and defined by the Brundtland report in 1987: *“a development which answers the needs of present generations without compromising the capacity of future generations to answer theirs. Two concepts are inherent in this notion: the concept of “needs”, and more particularly the essential needs of the poorest, to whom should be given the greatest priority, and the idea of the limitations that the state of our techniques and of our social organisation imposes on the capacity of the environment to answer present and future needs.”*

And if throughout the summits, great resolutions have since been taken, they are rarely followed by concrete results.

Parallel to the institutional steps taken, citizens and various associations react and rally to protect their environment.

The theoreticians

Since antiquity, philosophers such as Plato drew attention to the threat implicit in man’s dominance upon his environment and the irreversible consequences of this behaviour towards nature. Malthus, an economist of the late 18th century, warns against the increase in population, outpacing that of the resources. The point of no return with environmental disasters begins in the 20th century. The resources of the planet are not extendable. The growth model of the so-called developed countries is not viable in the long term. In 1972, the first conference on the environment is organised by the United Nations and held in Stockholm; it will be followed by many other international summits, but with small results. Climatic warming and the major ecological disasters of the late 20th century finally force the governments to react.

It is in this context than the Brundtland report is drawn up in 1987, in the name of the Norwegian Prime Minister of the time. He imposes the term “lasting development” on the international scene and emphasises the notion of “globality” in the action of mankind in a report to the United Nations “Our Common Future”. Words attributed to Saint-Exupéry are chosen to introduce this report: “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children”. In 1992 an Earth Summit opens at Rio; that is where the founding texts like those relative to global warming are elaborated.

Henceforth it is a question of moving into action with Agenda 21 (21st Century). “Think global, act local” is an important, new concept.

But summits come and go and are all alike: generous and worthy intentions, recommendations, assessments, recognition

of urgencies and priorities, the creation of labels, certifications, etc. The last in date, the protocol of Kyoto, was scarcely, if not at all, followed by action, being not yet signed by the main polluters of the planet.

The citizens

Associations, Non-Governmental Organisations and ordinary citizens, rally equally to react. In 1971, Greenpeace, an international association, makes its entry among the independent organisations which campaign in favour of the protection of the planet. This association has both ethical and environmental objectives. In the face of the multiplication of natural and ecological disasters, many others follow, working towards, if not the limitation of disasters, at least the setting up of legislation which penalises the big polluters and compensates the victims.

Hungary “Danubesaur”: the barrage at Bős-Nagymaros

The barrage at Bős-Nagymaros was built to utilise the common section of the Danube between Hungary and Slovakia. Its establishment was agreed in 1977 by the two countries. Its aim was energy production, the safety of navigation, defence against floods and land development. Its main planned parts were a dam, a channel with a power plant in its centre at Bős and the barrage at Nagymaros. A strong civilian opposition escalated against the building of the power plant system, in parallel to the changes in the political scene (a transition from socialism to pluralistic democracy) since 1980. A group called Duna Kör (Danube Circle) was formed in 1984 and its members fought against the barrage via newsletters, open discussions and passive protests. Their actions aimed at educating people about possible natural damages. The planned interference would have badly affected the basic flow of the river and also the deposition of the dregs and the level and quality of the water –harming the drinking water of the surrounding areas. The building process was halted because of pressure from society in 1989, but its case went to the Court of The Hague when the Slovaks wanted to divert the river. The judgement condemned both parties: Hungary broke up the treaty of 1977 illegally while Slovakia put the barrage in operation in the same illegal way. Both parties were forced to compensate. At the end the barrage of Bős-Nagymaros never came to existence in its original form. The government of Hungary adjudicated on the rehabilitation of the river and the surrounding areas in 2004.

Cultivating a new outlook

From the 1960s onwards, the first actions are taken towards the protection of landscape and biodiversity at European level. In the National Parks, human intervention is highly controlled if not forbidden. If human activities have gradually brought on the disappearance of untamed natural spaces, one may however question the meaning of Nature without man, unless the latter is simply invited to contemplate it from afar, through pictures...

Several years later, the creation of Regional Natural Parks tries to find a true balance between environment and human activities. Ecomuseums and many National heritage museums



Unit 3: Always more...

are created in this context; they endeavour to show the life and the work of man in a given territory.

S.O.S.

15 to 50 % of animal and vegetable species may have disappeared by 2050, representing 1 million species, including 1/4 of existing mammals today.

The rhythm of extinctions is accelerating. Some scientists do not hesitate to suggest the possibility of the 6th mass extinction of living species after the previous, well-known one of the dinosaurs, 65 million years ago.

- 1 bird out of 8;
- 1 mammal out of 4;
- 1 amphibian out of 3;
- 3 insects out of 4;
- 8 shellfish out of 10.

Heritage: open air museum, national park

Our heritage binds us to the past and it is a correlation point in the present. We live with our heritage today and we will pass it on to the future generations. The origin of the expression goes back to the time of the French revolution. It was then when the notion of national heritage was introduced: the destruction of the works of art, religion and science was prohibited. Museums, large art and science collections, treasures were soon established. The meaning of "heritage" has been changing constantly from religious, royal, artistic, scientific, metropolitan, rural to heritage of the third world and finally to world heritage. These days cultural heritage incorporates built, immaterial, natural, ecological, intellectual and genetic heritage as well.

The protected spaces

The 45 regional Nature Parks in France are 40 years old. Each one spreads over the territory of a remarkable rural zone which is thus protected, as the inhabitants who live there respect the environment. Men are part of the project. These parks cover all types of landscape; one finds volcanoes, forests, sea shores, hedged farmland, terraced land, mountain landscapes and vast arable plains.

The 9 National Parks are territories in which the flora and fauna, and the natural milieu in general, are protected from the action of man. He is not at the heart of the project. The territory is generally chosen when the conservation of the flora and the fauna, of the soil, of the sub-soil, of water and, in general, of a natural milieu, presents an exceptional interest.

The aim is to save this milieu from all human intervention likely to alter it. In this way, thousands of vegetable and animal species known or little-known are protected.

Created in 1975, the Coastal Conservatory has the mission of protecting the coastline. It implements a land policy aiming at the lasting protection of natural spaces and of landscapes of sea and lake shores. The Conservatory ensures today the protection of 117.220 hectares or 600 natural areas, representing about 1000 km of maritime shores.

Always more: overexploitation, overproduction and overconsumption

In the Middle Ages, Europe's population was growing. Agricultural territories, newly cleared and cultivated, supplied food for the needs of the expanding urban zones. After a period of relative stagnation, the 19th century and its Industrial revolution open the way for a new period of productivity. This was accompanied by ecological disasters. Always more, such is the motto of the engineers and specialists of the 10th and 20th centuries "science without conscience...". Many resources are not inexhaustible: fresh water, forests, fish, or even petrol...

From the Middle Ages, man takes possession of the landscape. He shapes it and redraws it according to his needs: deforestations and reforestations, plantations in flood areas, diverting rivers, drying marshlands, altering coastal areas...

Man's grip grows incessantly. This phenomenon is very evident in the so-called developed countries. One goes from the small shop to the supermarket then to the hypermarket.

The caddies fill and overflow. Obesity lurks. The handling of rubbish becomes a major problem.

Human waste and also animal waste due to the over-concentration of livestock and of intensive agriculture imbued by added elements (fertilisers, insecticides and pesticides) poison both humans and the planet.

The forest in question

Wood has always been a major, even vital, resource for man. Wood serves as a source of energy: it has numerous domestic uses for heating, lighting, cooking, food etc. It is also transformed into wood coal for the needs of craftsmen (notably blacksmiths) and for industries (e.g. metallurgy). Wood is also primary material for the construction of dwellings (rafters, walls, floors etc.) It is also used for the construction of means of transportation like carts, railway wagons, boats etc.

This resource remains fundamental in man's daily life until the introduction of steel for construction, of coal for industry, of tin and plastic for domestic use.

Today clearings in certain regions of the planet (Amazonian forest for example) are related to programmes of commercial and industrial exploitation. The clearing of forests has always destroyed biodiversity and the forests' role as "carbon wells."

On the other hand, forests continue to grow in certain countries (France), thanks notably to concerted action by public authorities and sylviculturists.

S.O.S.

Each year, thirteen million hectares of forest (the equivalent of Greece) disappear.

In Amazon, the destruction of the forest equals 1.9 million hectares each year, being the equivalent of 7 football grounds per minute...

Each week, 400 000 hectares of tropical forests disappear under the blows of the chain saws.



S.O.S.

In a business firm, the annual consumption of paper is 75 kg per person, being the equivalent in volume of 2 whole trees.

Sweden: Nasty-smelling sulphur and scid rain

Sodium hydroxide and sulphur are used for the production of pulp to set free the useful cellulose fibres from the ligneous wood. When sulphur is burnt, sulphur dioxide is produced – an acid oxide. Other volatile sulphur compounds also arise, which are nasty-smelling and cause big problems.

Those nasty-smelling gases have been one of the big problems of pulp industry. Nowadays most of them, however, are led into a soda heater where they burn and get purified.

Sulphur dioxide reacts with water from clouds, eventually producing the very strong sulphuric acid. At present pulp and paper industry accounts for only 1/6 of the total sulphur discharge in Sweden. Other combustions answer for more than 1/3 and transport for 1/4 of the total discharges.

Another significant source of acid rain is nitrogen oxides of which 60% come from road traffic. Nitrogen oxides also contribute to the green-house effect.

Agricultural land managed in proportion with environmental demands can moderate the effects of acid rain, except for coniferous woodland. There, the consequences will be devastating, as in the water courses. Acid down-fall remains one of the serious contemporary environmental problems.

Sweden: The forest as living space and raw material

Up to the beginning of the 20th century the forest was a precondition for agriculture in Northern Sweden. Farming summer pastures was well established already in late Iron Age.

Enduring animals were let loose in the summer farm pastures in the woodland. The forest was farmers' land and had no major commercial market value. With time, rivalry arose about the products of the forest. Around the turn of the 16th century Finnish immigrants arrived and started to burn woodland. They burnt the forest to the ground and in the hot ashes they sowed a special king of rye. The first burning gave enormously rich crops.

During the late Middle Ages mining factories started to grow in Central Sweden, particularly in Bergslagen. The need for charcoal was enormous and the forests were devastated. Wood became scarce. That is why, from the end of the 17th century, blast furnaces and forges were built along the coast of Norrland and up the streams of the river valleys where there was a rich supply of timber.

It is not, however, until after the mid 19th century that the really big changes of the forest came about. There was then a radical change in Swedish society. A more modern system of representation of the people replaced the old four Estate Riksdag (Parliament).

Old obstacles of trade were removed and a capital market began to grow. Big technical innovations could be used. Those changes enabled the industrialisation of the country. The most exceptional expansion took place in agriculture. That is when

the forest got its big commercial value.

After an economic decline for the saw-mill industry at the turn of the 19th century, pulp factories now appeared like a string of pearls along the coast of Norrland, thus replacing the insatiable needs for rough wood of the saw-mills by a hunger for softer pulp wood.

Hungary: The locust tree (Robiniaps eudoacacia)

There are more locust tree forests in Hungary today than in all other European countries. However, this species is not native in Hungary, it comes from North America. It can be found mainly on the Great Plains (Alföld), and many liked it for its toughness and for the good quality honey its flowers give.

The first trees may have appeared in Hungary in the 1720s in parks and on the side of roads. The fact that the number had been getting smaller in the 18th century and local as well as national rulings had been introduced to stop this tendency also contributed to its spread. Planting was propagated by landlords and intellectuals, too. Such a person was the evangelical vicar, Sámuel Tessedik, who dedicated his life to educating the peasant youth and reforming rural agriculture. A greater spread of the locust tree took place in the 19th century when it played an important role in stopping the drift of sand between the Danube and the Tisza and in the afforestation of the Great Plains. But at the same time the locust tree downgrade its surroundings: it extrudes the native plants and so it forces many of the animals that live in the forest to leave. Hungary signed the 1992 Treaty of Biodiversity in Rio and cast her vote against extraneous species, undertaking the task of monitoring the already affected areas, stopping the spread and recovering the natural biodiversity of the cleaned areas. WWF Hungary and Védegylet joined forces to achieve a ruling that prohibits the planting of locust trees in areas of highly precious natural value.

Agriculture in question

In less than a century, the extensive peasant agriculture of industrialised countries, the achievement of centuries of adaptation to our climate and our land, has been swept away by intensive, industrial, chemical agriculture. The latter uses the whole battery that (petro) chemistry has perfected (chemical fertilisers, insecticides, pesticides, etc.) to augment production levels. The soil is now just a support, a substrata among others. Besides, more and more cultivations do without it (chicory, tomatoes, etc.). All that the plant needs is supplied in a form directly assimilated by the roots.

Thus, in France, for the year 2006, 70000 tons of pesticides were used as protection against destructive insects, and also toadstools... in agricultural areas. Gardens and communal open spaces only consume 10% but with a much too strong dosage. The result: we find pesticides in 90% of rivers and in 60% of underground water.

The balance developed over the centuries is disappearing little by little from the land cultivated with intensive agriculture which is largely held to question today, both from a sanitary and environmental viewpoint.

Hungary: River control

In the Middle Ages floods were not a common type of natural catastrophe or such a serious danger factor as they are since the 19th century until today. The level of water during floods was several metres lower in the past at the wide, open flood areas of the rivers, because of the large forests in the catchment basins. People settled on the higher grounds next to rivers and cultivated the floodplains in accordance with local capabilities, which means that to control rivers they used natural dikes at the riverbanks and secluded courses. We know of numerous devastating floods against which we protected ourselves with river control, artificial courses and lakes. The methodical modification of the flow of river Tisza in the mid-19th century accelerated the previously slow movement of the water. More than a hundred windings were cut off, decreasing the length of the river by 40%. The flood areas dried out and were used for agriculture, while the river became navigable by ships. We used to say that the great work of river control was a success, although it created several new problems in the last 150 years: the uncertainty of water level has grown, the course widened, navigation became harder because of the newly emerged shelves; barrages and dikes were built in an anarchic way, with a catastrophic impact on the environment.

Wealth increases, also inequalities

Inequalities are more pronounced now than ten years ago. The world is, as a whole, richer but the distribution of this wealth is more and more uneven within and between countries.

France does not escape from this tendency. The report on world social issues in 2005: "The crisis of inequality", published by U.N. in 2005, makes the following assessment: the smallest salaries are getting lower while the highest incomes are greatly increasing. Access to services such as health, education or drinking water is subject to the same growing inequalities. Thus, more than a billion people do not have access to clean water and 2,6 billion do not have access to sanitary installations.

S.O.S.

"One is poor in Vietnam when one walks barefoot, in China when one doesn't have a bicycle, in France when one doesn't have a car, and in the United States when you only have a small one....everybody is poor (or rich) for somebody."

– André Gorz.

In 2005, the 500 richest people in the world had a total income exceeding that of the 416 million poorest. Alongside these extremes, 40% of the world's population lives with less than 1,5 euro a day, and represents hardly 5% of world revenue.

Globalisation of danger

Man dwells in a planetary village... explosive.....

With the opening of the markets, the frantic and ever growing circulation of goods and energy, badly controlled hyperproduction, natural and sanitary disasters, all these draw new cut-off lines in our daily lives. Pollution introduced

by over-industrialisation has caused major and irreversible climatic disorders and the consequences make daily news: Erika, Tchernobyl, tsunamis and forest fires, floods and hurricanes... As many environmental disasters as human dramas.

Junk food

Junk food, this is the word which sums up the eating habits of our rich countries. It describes a manner of eating which, for several decades now, is continuously spreading from its starting point in the United States.

Eating quickly, everywhere and all the time, identical tasteless food; such is the aim. The quality of the basic food as well as the choice of processing methods in line with the principles of lasting development are completely secondary, since the diversity of treatment as well as the battery of authorised additives (colourings, emulsifiers, preservatives, flavourings, etc.) achieve precisely the taste and texture that is so pleasing to the customer.

The production of junk food does not only have disastrous effects on our health (obesity, risks of heart disorder, "bad" cholesterol) but also on the social structures of Northern countries and even more on the Southern (unemployment, rural exodus, delocalisation, disturbance of markets for local products, etc.). It equally affects biodiversity, air quality, water quality and even the stability of the climate; in a word, all our Earth.

S.O.S.

In the world, more than a billion adults suffer from over-weight, of which at least 300 million are obese. On this same planet, each minute, 15 people die of hunger.

Unit 4. ...and if we cultivated our garden? Energy

Energy

It is important to know one's garden to cultivate it better. The importance of the knowledge of a milieu, this is what rural heritage best teaches us. In former times this knowledge was at once intuitive, experimental and acquired by transmission from generation to generation.

Rural heritage offers many examples of economising energy. Even if there is no question of renouncing running water, electricity and other services of our western societies, functioning since the beginning of the 20th century, it is however urgent to study yesterday's lifestyles in order to better manage those of today.

Natural and local materials like earth or wood are cheap and we already know their use and their advantages; these materials allow for limited building costs, they ensure economy of energy given of their insulation and heat-retaining properties and they have started to inspire contemporary architects.

The free and unlimited sources of energy obtained, for example, from the use of the wind or the sun are more and more viable alternatives to replace fossil energy. Coal and petrol cannot be renewed at the pace of the ever-growing needs of the planet. The stock is limited, the needs unlimited.

S.O.S.

As a result of the specialisation and the globalisation of the economy, the jeans that you find in your supermarket cover 27700 km before joining the stock!

Short history of energy

The use of energy by humankind goes back to the domestication of fire, in prehistory. Several thousands years ago, the first sailing boats appear, then paddle wheels: man learns how to master wind and water.

Until about 1800, the energy needs of the different societies are almost totally provided by renewable energies. With the increase of population, wood as a source of energy is exploited in an intensive manner. Factories are located along water courses (mechanical energy) and near forests (heat and steam). About a quarter of agricultural grounds are devoted to the production of cereals for animals used for agriculture and transportation, which makes them the first biocarburants!

It is only in the 19th century that the use of fossil energies is developed, at first with coal, then with petrol at the beginning of the 20th century and finally with gas and nuclear power in the second half of the 20th century.

This "Energy Revolution" related to the Industrial Revolution, explodes the energy needs of our societies. In spite of the petrol shocks of 1973, 1979 etc., the consumption of energy continues to accelerate.

S.O.S.

The global consumption of energy has moved from 6 to 10.2 billion tons (petrol equivalent) between 1973 and 2002, representing a rise of more than 70%. In France, hothouse gas emission from transport has increased by 20% in 11 years.

If one added up the energy consumption of all the computers in France that are left connected, it would represent the annual electricity consumption of a city of 1200000 inhabitants! Each computer that remains connected consumes from 84 to 840 KW per year.

France: From the windmill to the Aeolian

Cereals are crushed by the mill to change them into flour. Since antiquity the mill was driven by water and then by wind from the 11th century. The windmill is the ancestor of the Aeolian. This type of energy draws its name from Aeolus, "god of the winds" and son of Poseidon in Greek mythology.

An Aeolian is a device utilising the energy of the wind. Traditionally, Aeolians were used to draw water up from the depths of wells. They were used to convert the energy of wind into mechanical energy.

Today, when one speaks of the Aeolian, one thinks more of the device which converts the energy of the wind into electric energy (wind turbine). Aeolian energy is a form of renewable energy. Wind supplies free and unlimited energy, rediscovered today as a possible substitution for fossil energy, known for its limited resources.

From solar energy to the photo sensitive cell

Solar energy is the energy given by the sun through radiation, directly or diffused through the atmosphere. Solar energy is at the origin of the water cycle and the wind cycle and of photosynthesis created by the vegetation, on which depend the animals via the food chains. Solar energy is therefore at the origin of all forms of energy on Earth with the exception of nuclear energy, of geothermal power and of tidal power.

Man uses solar energy to transform it into other forms of energy: food energy, thermal energy... and thus since antiquity for heating water or for the preservation of fruit through desiccation.

Today, "solar energy" is often used to produce electricity or the thermal energy obtained therefrom. For example, photovoltaic solar energy is electricity produced by the transformation of a part of the radiation of the sun with a photovoltaic cell. In 1839, Antoine Becquerel pioneered the discovery of this notion. Several cells are regrouped to create a solar installation for a private home or for a solar photovoltaic power station.

Hungary: Clay building in the past and to day

Clay building is not a new technology, almost 30% of the world's population lives in houses made of clay. Because of environmental problems, the ever-growing population and the need for cheap, energy-efficient homes many have started again to look into the possibilities of traditional clay construction.

In the eco-village at Gyűrűfű three methods were used to build houses of clay and straw. The most common type is the stuffed wall. In that case the base is made of bricks, and wet earth is pressed between shutters. To build the walls of a 100 square meter house like that takes approximately 10 days. Another method is building with bricks made of clay and straw. In the third case, two timber parapets are erected at half meter distance from each other and the space in between is filled with light clay.

The advantages of clay houses are: they require only a small amount of energy, they can be very cheap and they are comfortable for those who live in them because they keep warm inside, balance inner humidity, let the air flow in a favourable way and they are also sound-proof. The drawbacks are: walls have to be protected from water, rain and moisture; and it is worth building only on suitable grounds.

Sweden: Timbered house with dovetailed logs at the corners

Since the time of the Vikings, houses in Sweden have been built of timber logs. For centuries knowledge has been kept alive - both of the craft itself and of the building materials.

In the Swedish conifer area timber houses dominate the build-up landscape. Moreover, the climate is too grim for the wood-damaging insects. That is why timber houses from the 13th century are still functioning according to their original purpose.

The principal gain regarding energy and environment is the possibility of producing the houses on location, without any transport harmful to environment. Besides, they can be built with mere muscle work.

If a newly produced timber house gets enough insulation from the supportive logs of the bottom and the top and is equipped with insulating glass windows, it will meet all the building standards of today. Termoträ® or other locally produced insulation material should of course be used.

The timber house is also easy to dismantle and to erect again in a new place. It is recyclable! Should a timber house be left to dilapidate, it just falls into decay and follows the natural cycle without damaging consequences for the environment.

Unit 5. ...and if we cultivated our garden? Recycling and anti-waste

Recycling and anti-waste

Rural heritage equally conveys values that one could qualify as "good sense attitudes": re-use, for example, objects from our daily life, repair them instead of throwing them away, recycling them when worn out. In rural culture, every object is taken to its natural end or it is transformed into another object, and so on, until its almost entire physical elimination. For example, dress material was formerly very expensive. Having a fine trousseau was a sign of richness and of quality for the young bride. A length of material was cut into sheets. The worn sheet was mended. Over-worn, it became tea-towels, then rags, then nappies, then a basic ingredient for paper pulp. Working clothes were mended and repaired with pieces of the same material and thus worn to the thread.

In Sweden, worn textile pieces are transformed to produce a new primary product for other creations: bed-covers and carpets are made from this recycling. This domestic economy teaches us to forgo over-consumption and wastage, to refuse the paper handkerchief and the throw-away biro, to prefer the solid and re-utilisable. In Hungary, another kind of recycling appears with the re-utilisation of traditional decorative motifs in contemporary fashion.

A new stance, inspired by traditional rural culture, should thus allow a better understanding of daily functions. Learning from the forefathers that things have a value as well as a price; to know that man can find fulfillment also in simplicity, and that it is often better to try to be than to have.



S.O.S.

The recycling of paper uses 60% less energy and water than the making of paper. The French do about 20 million machine-washes per day, and use 40kg of washing-powder and 10 kg dish-washing powder per year: Sufficient to destroy the eco-system of a pond of 6 hectares and of 1.5 metres in depth.

France: Detergents from ashes

A detergent is a liquid or solid mixture of products used for domestic or industrial washing. The cleaning action is assured by detergent products like soap.

In some countries, detergents are still made from cinders and water, as were in Europe and America in bygone times. The quantities are approximate and the result depends on practice and the oral tradition. In the past, it was also made from plants such as the "saponaire".

Detergents today come in the form of powder, liquids, or tablets. They are mostly very polluting, and it would suffice to use old methods, adapting them to modern technologies to diminish their polluting effect on the environment.

Indeed, detergents remain in waste water and, even after treatment, are thrown out into nature. Washing powders create immense pollution, by the presence of more or less unstable, toxic and residual molecules. Thus, for example, washing powders contain products derived from petrol, manufactured by a very polluting industry. The other components (colourings, preservatives, etc.) can also act brutally on the environment.

France: From swaddling clothes to disposable nappies

In Europe, for a long time babies were swaddled in pieces of cloth. The first examples date from Roman antiquity. Swaddling was to avoid deformation. A first layer of bandages maintained the splints keeping the legs straight and hands open. Two other layers wrapped the baby keeping it warm. The ankles of the child were tied.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, in the North of France, the "pichou" kept the baby's legs very straight. It was a system of tight layers, made from old sheets and blankets, or new "wassingues" (floorcloth).

In the 20th century, layers became cotton nappies, fastened with big safety pins, pink or blue. The invention of disposable nappies dates from 1956. After a few trial years, rectangular disposable nappies were commercialised at the end of the sixties, under the name of Pampers. Today, disposable nappies dominate the market.

Disposable nappies are generally used from birth until the day when the child is "clean", around two and half years. A child generally uses about 2000 nappies a year, coming to a total of 4000 to 6000 nappies. Thus, at the scale of France: 3 billions of nappies need 5.6 million trees and 47000 tons of crude oil to produce 15200 tons of plastic.

Throw away nappies

Disposable nappies are essentially made of wood paste (chlorine whitened), plastic and several chemical products

aimed at hiding smells, perfuming, absorbing liquids or changing them to gel. Each baby, before reaching the clean stage, uses about one ton of nappies. This represents an equal amount of rubbish (not compostable) ending in garbage.

Washable nappies

A washable nappy is made like a throw away, that fastens with press buttons or scratches. Models vary to adapt to each baby and to the needs of each family. These washable nappies are often made from cotton (biological or not), from flannel, polyester, or hemp or bamboo. Above this textile nappy, waterproof pants are added to avoid dump.

There are also the "complete" washable nappies. These are in one piece, and do not need protection, because the outside is waterproof.

Disposable nappies: practical but at what price?

- the price: comparing throw away nappies and washable nappies, the latter cost about two times less.
- the impact on the environment : one disposable nappy is used for a few hours then remains 200 to 500 years lying in the Earth. A cotton nappy may be used 200 times, then may become a rag and disintegrates totally in six months.

France: Gleaning

Is gleaning fashionable, an anti-wastage practice, or simply a necessity for some? Whatever the case, gleaning is a tradition in the agricultural and the maritime world. Already in the Middle Ages, many texts recount scenes of gleaning, but it is truly in the following centuries that this activity finds its meaning. Gleaning is controlled by law. The owner of the gleaned ground (field or coastal shore) may refuse entry, but respecting an old practice, he generally allows gleaners on his grounds, once his own harvest is completed.

What is gleaning?

Gleaning is collecting everything that farmers or other owners leave on that ground. Gleaning is authorised in daytime, with the agreement of the owner. Practised at night, the activity is considered as theft. The famous painting by Millet "The gleaners", highlighted this rural activity which today has more and more followers in the fields, the shores or in urban markets.

Painting by Millet "The gleaners":

In 1857, Jean-François Millet painted three women, among the poorest in the country, obliged to glean to eat, thus illustrating the misery of the rural population following the realist tradition, without sordidness. The three women portray the three movements of gleaning: leaning down, gathering, standing up. The work of these women is drudgery (bent back, poverty of the harvest), but their clothes are not rags. This poverty (and a certain social injustice) is accentuated by the apparent richness of the wheat harvest in the background. Millet paints a swarm of birds in the sky, ready to devour the forgotten grains, like the gleaners.

Hungary: Aquanauta - folk art and national design

We cannot only recycle energy and resources but intellectual

products as well. The designers of the group Aquanauta made something brand new in their 2006 collection called Pure Source: they coupled the motives and forms of Hungarian folk art with modern, astounding material and form combinations. Its presentation in Covent Garden, London, was not only a huge success among lay fashion fans but also among representatives of the local fashion scene. The designers tried to use motives from each of the traditional Hungarian provinces. The final collection not only gave a new character and drive to Hungarian "haute couture" but the clothes re-interpreted such clichés from Hungarian folk art and tourism as the hussar, matyó embroidery or the "Miskajug".

Unit 6. ...and if we cultivated our garden? The countryside is in the plate

The countryside is in the plate

Rural heritage is multiple: landscapes, agricultural techniques, but also regional products and gastronomy. Indeed, the means of cultivating, of producing, of preparing, or even consuming food are the keys for understanding a region. The diversity of products is due to the immense variety of landscapes, of agriculture and of breeding. Thanks to the knowledge and the preservation of this diversity we may fight against the uniformity and the poverty of taste, embodied today in one word: "junk food".

Food brings into play behaviour patterns, methods of cultivation and of breeding, processing techniques (food processing industry), the distribution process (transport, marketing). All these aspects have an impact both on our health and also on that of our global eco-system, our planet.

To show in our behaviour a greater respect for eco-systems, we must re-invent rapid distribution, local and seasonal food, grouped purchasing, more support for lasting agriculture, and also the promotion and the upkeep of indigenous varieties and species. What we eat is cultivated in the countryside.

"The landscape is in our plate", from the coasts of the Atlantic to the "Grazing Land" pastures of Northern Europe, passing through the oak groves of Hungary.

S.O.S.

Before arriving in our plates, beans imported by plane consume 10 times more energy than that necessary for locally produced beans.

France: Cheese from Auvergne: a small slice of landscape in our plate

At the heart of the Massif-Central, Auvergne is like a green island in the middle of France. Its contrasted landscape, made of generous curves and of bony summits, was, at first formed by volcanic eruptions, the melting of glaciers, then by

man and his livestock. The Auvergne is diverse.

In the domain of agriculture, this diversity is present in the production of cheese: forty kinds in all, of which five possess an AOC (Appellation of Controlled Origin). Their production seems very ancient. Little by little, it becomes more formal from the end of 18th century. Man has given them place names: of towns like the “fourme d’Ambert”, le “saint-nectaire” (name of a town and name of an evangelising saint of Auvergne) or of a region such as the “cantal”. Some are imposing by their size, not to impress the client, as a marketing advantage, but simply for practical reasons. All are made daily, just after milking. The “cantal” or the “salers” (both cylindrical cheeses of a diameter of almost 40 cm weighing 45 kgs) are made in high summer pastures, at more than 1000 metres of altitude. Their size was originally due to transport problems between the farms and the “burons” (small mountain workshops).

The Auvergne, a huge plate of cheese? As announced in a 1970s advertisement: without doubt, a land shaped by man and the transmission of his knowhow.

Sweden: Natural Pastures

As late as a hundred years ago the forest, the woodland outside the farmland, was the main resource of pasture for the cattle. Traditional native breeds –cows, sheep, goats and horses– made good use of the nourishment that was there. They often moved over vast areas while grazing, eating what pleased them most. Both physically and mentally they were well equipped to manage on their own.

Thanks to their great ability to move, their possibility to choose the best suitable grazing plants but also thanks to their genetic constitution, the animals provided meat reminding that of game regarding protein and healthy cholesterol. The milk was fat and rich in nutritious substances, easy to make into cheese, to churn and to use for making cream.

At the end of the 19th century the forest pasture began to an increasing extent to be replaced by enclosed pastures and an increased use of concentrated fodder. The aim was to get high-producing milking animals and fast-growing meat to replace the native breeds. The result was among other things a much larger volume of milk per cow, but it had an inferior ability to curdle and the meat was fatter but with less good cholesterol. The new breeds were not suitable for grazing in the woodland and the need for fertilisers in the production of cattle food increased.

The high quality of milk and meat from animals feeding on forage from natural pastures and hay fields is well-known today. So are the specific qualities of the traditional native breeds. There is a bigger demand for meat from animals grazing in natural pastures than can be supplied. As for milk products, it is even more difficult. It is a dynamic sector still growing.

Sweden: Tåtmjolk Pinguicula: fermented milk

From Carl von Linné’s Flora Lapponica, 1737: “...*some fresh just picked Pinguicula leaves, of any kind, are put in a sieve and the milk still warm from the cow is poured over it. After having soon been sifted, it is left a day or two to turn sour while*

it acquires much more viscosity and firmness; whey does not separate as is the usual case. Hereby the milk becomes highly delicious despite a reduction of cream. Once such milk has been prepared, there is no need for new leaves to make more, since one only has to mix half a spoonful of the earlier milk with new milk. The new milk thereby acquires similar quality and power to transform, like yeast, more new milk. Even if such transformation is continued endlessly, the last milk obtained seems not in the least to have diminished in power.”

France: The harvest of salt

On the Atlantic Coast, the salterns and their complex hydraulic network were built in medieval times and subsequently maintained by the hand of man. They are called “sauniers” (workers who collect salt) from Ile de Ré to Ile de Noirmoutier or “paludiers” in the region of Guerande.

After the crisis of the 1970s, young people came to the salt activity in connection with tourism and the will to harvest quality agricultural products. They renewed the tradition by perpetuating the techniques of the past, in a secular landscape, without a tree, situated on the coast under the sea level.

Harvesting activity is seasonal, taking place in the summer. Sunshine and wind are needed, but not rain. Knowhow resides in the management of the water in the different basins of the salterns, permitting the process of evaporation and crystallisation.

In the heart of the salterns, in the crystallisation place, two kinds of salt are harvested: a naturally fine salt which floats on the water surface called “fleur de sel”, used in cooking; and the heavy salt which rests on the clay bed, used for salting meat.

Hungary: Culture in the sinkable plains: use of the fish passes

At present the forest reserves around Tisza river contain one of the last floodplains of Europe. Nagykörű, a settlement somewhere in the middle of the Tisza area, experiences the same troubles as other similar settlements. After regulating the river, they had either too much or too little water: floods, inland waters and droughts followed each other. A plan was made to solve the problem (Land Management Programme for Nagykörű) and it also targeted the restoration of notch usage. The aim was to use the landscape’s original characteristics to connect the protection of nature with a management system. Notches were small carved ways in mounds along the river, where the water could leave the bed and withdraw. The constantly well kept, deepened and cleared notch in the floodplain makes possible several kinds of farming: growing hay, fruits, willows and fishing. During river regulation small, so called “cubik holes” remained, where earth was dug to build barriers. The holes called “fish cradle” and “fish cemetery” became connected with a system built in 2001. This made it possible to control simultaneously the water level and fishing possibilities. The canal system diverts water that is left from the floods into the Tisza across a flood gate. At the end of summer or in autumn, when the

fish offspring is strong enough, the bigger ones are caught in the leading canal while the others can make it into the River Tisza.

Hungary: The Mangalica pig

After driving out the Turkish from Hungary only a few porcine species were left in the areas of the Muslim subjection. The Hungarian Bakony pig completely disappeared until the mid 1840s, but the breeding of mangalica by crossbreeding the Serbian Sumadia was already flourishing. Mangalica pigs grow up slowly, are very prolific (usually breeding 5-6 piglets), they bear well and at the same time require outside keeping. They were kept free in the forests where they ate acorns. They were decimated at the end of 19th century because of the destruction of forests, the smaller need for fatty porcine meat and the pestilence: the mangalica became an endangered species by 1960. Thanks to the genetic banks the further breeding of mangalica became possible. The mangalica had more and more international success because of its good quality meat, which is also an ingredient for the world famous Spanish Serrano ham. The mangalica sausage of the Rendek family from the Kiskunság is now also protected by the SLOW FOOD movement. People who prefer bio food also like mangalica for its dark, good quality meat and because it is kept free outside. The meat of the mangalica contains less water than that of pigs which are kept inside. Worth mentioning are the vitamins and minerals it contains and that it has less unsaturated fat.

Hungary: Marigold, potato, cabbage, nettle

Cabbage Brassica oleracea

Cabbage has a good impact on the digestive system, it helps to restore intestinal flora. Raw cabbage juice speeds up the process of recovering from gastric or duodenum ulcer and it protects the mucous and gastric membrane. In folk therapy it is used for curing catarrh and to treat pimples and minor wounds. Its antioxidant content slows down the imbibition of carcinogenic substances. Young mothers with breast inflammation were also advised to use cabbage soup fermentation.

HINT! Palate inflammation can be treated with cabbage juice!

Potato Solanum tuberosum L.

Potato is an essential food for us because of the carbohydrate it contains, being one of the most important sources of energy. It contains a lot of protein and minerals (potassium, calcium, iron, phosphorus), vitamin B and C. The fiber of potato also helps digestion. Folk therapy advises to use the juice of it to treat gastric ulcer and to drink tea made of it –it must be consumed for no more than 2 weeks– to strengthen the body’s resistance. Raw potato can be used to treat skin mutation.

It is also known as a cosmetic, it refreshes the skin as raw fermentation and it whitens the skin when cooked together with milk.

HINT! Raw potato juice can be used against sour stomach!

Marigold Calendula officinalis

Marigold is excellent for treating gall bladder inflammation, spasm and is also a good disinfectant. Used also in case of stomach or bladder catarrh, inflammation of varicose vein or mucous membrane, leg fester, eczema, wounds and bee stings. The cosmetic industry uses it as an ingredient for cream ointment, just like homoeopathy does.

HINT! Ointments made of marigold are perfect against pain caused by sunburn and pimples.

Nettle Urtica dioica

There are numerous possibilities to use its leaves and shoots for herbal infusion: it is excellent as a general corroborant, it has also blood-cleansing and purgative effects.

Moreover, it can be used against bladder catarrh, rheumatics, gout, cutaneous disease, fall of hair, rise in blood-pressure and gastritis. Many drink nettle tea during spring as part of blood-cleansing cures since it washes out urinary sand and stones, though these may be prevented and treated; or use it in bath water for rheumatics or as fermentation for rash (eczema). It contains silica that strengthens connective tissues, nails, and hair bulbs.

HINT! Washing your head with nettle-water is good to prevent fall of hair, dandruff and greasy hair.

Hungary: Compost

Nature-friendly gardening starts with the improvement and sustenance of the ground’s productivity. Compost is the world’s oldest and most natural ground improver. One-third of domestic waste is organic (cut grass and plants, pieces of vegetables and fruit, kitchen trash) of which fertiliser can easily be made for our indoor and outdoor plants. Cut and piled up in the shadow under a layer of ground these “green goodies” turn into compost quickly in the summer heat.

Compost saves a lot of money, too, since one has to buy less fertiliser and use less the trash containers.

Unit 7: Together and not alone

Together and not alone

Through the diversity of rural knowhow the vivacity of the populations living in the countryside is expressed. It is with this latter aspect, the living and the human, that we conclude the exhibition. Rural societies in former times maintained much deeper social ties than today. Some of the socio-economic systems present in bygone rural societies may inspire less individualistic life styles; for example the Kalàka in Hungary may be adapted to today’s needs. A sociability to be re-invented, taking into account the individualism of our societies, the new networks of communication, and also the cultural and associative networks. More widely, this territorial solidarity is also expressed through the upkeep of public services which revitalise rural territories and help to fight against their isolation and their depopulation.

It is not a question of idealising community life styles, but of taking inspiration from them to overcome loneliness, even in urban surroundings, or the abandonment of certain rural zones. “Think global, act local” is without doubt the concluding message, to be understood in the light of the 11 messages which punctuate the exhibition.

Hungary: The “kaláka”

In the traditional Hungarian peasant communities the family assets included not only the land and working tools but also the neighbours, friends and relatives. The network of relationships that had to be continuously taken care of, could be effectively mobilised when something extraordinary broke the usual ways of everyday life. Kaláka is a kind of joint/social work, involving the members of the community in work for each other, based on favour or mutuality: they work together and usually it is with some kind of entertainment. The most common events for kaláka are reaping, harvesting or weaving. When it comes to the “friendly agreements” of the kaláka, good faith is the only guarantee. The baths of Székelyföld that are rich in minerals, are being renovated since 2001 in kaláka. It was organised with the participation of land architects, wayfarer architects, university students, teachers and local village people. The aim is that participants learn from each other how to re-create our heritage from our own efforts and with the help of the community, and how to make use of it to preserve human values, too.

Sweden: Fiddlers’ Rallies

The first fiddlers’ rallies were arranged as competitions in the beginning of the last century. One of the big rallies is that of Delsbo. The Delsbo rally is also the oldest of those still being arranged –it was 100 years old in 2008.

A special form of spontaneously improvised music is born as the fiddlers meet outside the stage, in “the bushes”. That form of playing is therefore called “buskspel” (bush-playing), where anyone from two fiddlers to big associations can play together. Someone or some people play a well-known tune and the others join in by improvising second parts. Together they create a moment of joy for themselves as well as for the audience.

France: The “Societies of Gascony”

The people of the Landes (including Gironde Landes) for several years now are experiencing a recomposing of social rapport in its broader meaning (neo-rural populations, cultural equipments, contractual politics, associative actions etc.).

The Societies remain, notably through this action of the Federation of Societies of Gascony, important places of local sociability, brought to play an important role in territorial development.

Born at the end of the Revolution, these high places of village politics met their peak in the Third Republic. Two privileged themes emerge from the history of the Societies: the creation of a social space reserved for men and the development of a political conscience, led the societies to be often the object of clashes between Republicans and Clergymen.

Through their evolution, the new rapport that they established with the municipalities and associations, “touristic products” of which they become the actors, the Societies are the reflection of a real social restructuring. They represent “indicators” of the social rebuilding underway in High Lande.

France: Local services in rural areas

In the rural world, the notion of local amenities covers a certain number of activities, concerning local shops (greengrocers, bakeries) as well as local services (doctors, post office etc.). The mail service symbolises the notion of public service, notably because it is with the postman that the rural inhabitants have the most regular contact, this civil servant linking isolated individuals with the outside world. The upkeep of the postal services is, because of growing privatisation, at the heart of conflicts related to the survival of public services in underpopulated, isolated rural areas. The disappearance of the services could have dramatic consequences, leading to the neglect of large territories.

Today, local services tend to disappear and move towards urban and semi-rural zones, more attractive because essential activities and populations are concentrated there. The most isolated rural people must turn to individual transport more and more, costly over longer and longer distances. The upkeep of a minimum of local services is often vital for rural municipalities confronted, otherwise, with a drain of young people towards urban zones, and the ageing of an older remaining population. The preservation of local services is the guarantee for the survival of numerous rural areas.

Definitions

Rural policy

This idea was created in late 80’s and the early 90’s, when the Common Agriculture Policy needed reform. The Mac Sharry concept pointed out that the development of rural areas depends not only on the agricultural sector but on all the rural economy and society as well. The rural policy means realising the rural development concept as a complex process.

Rural development is a deliberate process of sustained and sustainable economic, social, political, cultural and environmental change, designed to improve the quality of life of the local population in rural areas.

Subsidiarity

As we can read in the Cork Declaration 1996: “Given the diversity of the Union’s rural areas, rural development policy must follow the principle of subsidiarity”.

It must be as decentralised as possible and based on partnership and co-operation between all levels concerned (local, regional, national and European). The emphasis must be on participation and a “bottom up” approach, which harnesses the creativity and solidarity of rural communities. Rural development must be local and community-driven within a coherent European framework.

Bibliography

France
Becchi Egle, (dir.), Dominique Julia (dir.), *Histoire de l'enfance en Occident*, tome 1 (Poche), Seuil, Collection: Points Histoire, 2004
Brunel Sylvie, Le développement durable, collection Que-sais-je? *Développement durable et territoire*, Paris, PUF, 2004
Brunhes Mariel-J, Delamarre Mariel J, *La Vie Agricole Et Pastorale Dans Le Monde - Techniques Et Outils Traditionnels*, Glénat, 1999,
Brunhes Mariel-J, Delamarre Mariel J, *Transports Ruraux, Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires*, Collection: Guides ethnologiques, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1972
Brunhes Mariel-J, Delamarre Mariel J, Hugues Hairy, *Techniques de production: l'élevage, Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires*, Collection: Guides ethnologiques, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1971
de Planhol Xavier, Paul Claval, *Géographie historique de la France*, Fayard, 1988,
Duby Georges (dir.), Hugues Neveux, Jean Jacquart, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Histoire de la France rurale, tome 2: De 1340 à 1789* (Poche), Seuil, Collection Points Histoire, 1992
Duby Georges (dir.), Maurice Agulhon, Gabriel Désert, Robert Specklin, *Histoire de la France rurale, tome 3: De 1789 à 1914* (Poche), Seuil, Collection Points Histoire, 1992
Duby Georges (dir.), Michel Gervais, Marcel Jolivet, Yves Tavernier, *Histoire de la France rurale, tome 4: Depuis 1914* (Poche), Seuil, Collection Points Histoire, 1992
Gimpel Jean, *La Révolution Industrielle Du Moyen Age*, Seuil, Collection: Points Histoire, 1975
Le Roy Ladurie Emmanuel, Gisèle Lambert, *Paysages, Paysans*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Réunion Des Musées Nationaux, 1998
Leguay J-P., *La Pollution au Moyen-Âge*, Editeur: Jean-Paul Gisserot, Collection: Gisserot-histoire, 1999
Marseille Jacques, *Une Famille De Paysans Du Moyen Age À Nos Jours*, Hachette, 1980
Miquel Pierre, La France et ses paysans - Une histoire du monde rural au XXe siècle, L'Archipel, 2004
Moulin Annie, *Les paysans dans la société française* (Poche), Seuil, Collection: Points Histoire, 316 p., 1988
Pitte Jean-Robert, Histoire du paysage français, Tome I, Editeur Tallandier, Collection Approches, 1986
Pitte Jean-Robert, *Histoire du paysage français*, Tome II, Editeur Tallandier, Collection Approches, 1989
Rabourdin Sabine, *Les sociétés traditionnelles au secours des sociétés modernes*, Editeur: Delachaux et Niestlé, Collection: Changer d'ère, 2005
Tatu Natacha, *Les éoliennes*, Le Nouvel Observateur N°2253, january 10th, 2008
Veyret Yvette (dir.), *Le développement durable: approches plurielles*, Paris, Hatier, Collection “Initial”, 2005.

Hungary
Granberg Leo - Kovách Imre-Tovey Hilery, *Europe's Green Ring-De-peasantisation in the Rural Fringe*, Barnes & Noble, N.Y., 2001
Hungarian Ethnography II. [Magyar Néprajz II.], *Farming*, [Gazdálkodás] Edited by: Paládi-Kovács Attila, Budapest, 2001

Hungarian Ethnography IV. [Magyar Néprajz IV.], *Way of life*, [Életmód], Edited by: Balassa Iván. Budapest, 1997
Hungarian Ethnography VIII. [Magyar Néprajz VIII.], *Society*, [Társadalom], Edited by: Paládi-Kovács Attila, Budapest, 2000
Kovács Terez (ed), *From the Sustainable agriculture to the rural development. [A fenntartható mezőgazdaságtól a vidék-fejlesztésig*. IV. Falukonferencia] Pécs, 1997
Kútvolgyi Mihály, Tóth Péter, *Mangalica*, Libri, Budapest, 2001
Ray Christopher, *Culture, intellectual property and territorial rural development* in: Sociologia Ruralis 38.1, 3-20, 1998
Szabó László, *The ethnography of the work*, (A munka néprajza), Debrecen, 1997
Szelényi Iván, *Socialist Entrepreneurs. Embourgeoisment in Rural Hungary*, Madison University of Wisconsin Press, 1988
Szűcs Ildikó, Rausz Attila (eds), *Sustainable Development Indicators in Hungary*, Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2007.

Sweden
Ankert K., Frankow I., *Den svenska trasmattan, en kulturhistoria*, Bokförlaget Prisma, 2003
Arnborg G., Carlsson Å., Hagman T., *Mulens marke, r* Förlag HG Arnborg, 1987
Bebyggelsehistorisk tidskrift. 27 Hälsinglands bebyggelse före 1600, 1994
Bebyggelsehistorisk tidskrift. 45 Kring Hälsingegårdarna, 2003
Berndtsson L., et al, *Fakta omvärld - inspiration*, SOU 2006: 106, Jordbruksdepartementet/Regeringskansliet, 2006
Bodvall Gunnar, *Bodland i norra Hälsingland: studier i utmarksodlingarnas roll för den permanenta bosättnings expansion fram till 1850*, Uppsala universitet, 1959
Cserhalmi N., *Fårad mark. Handbok för tolkning av historiska kartor och landskap*, Bygd och natur// Sveriges hembygdsförbund, 1998
Eskeröd, A., *Jordbruket under femtusen år*, LT Förlag, 1973
Grenander Nyberg G, *Svensk slöjdhistoria*, LT:s förlag 1988
Grenander Nyberg G., *Lanthemmens vävstola*, Nordiska museets förlag, 1975
Johansson E., et al, *Periferins landska*, Nordic Academic Press, 2002
Jonsson Stina och Sune, *Örtabok: blombilder*, Stockholm, 1979
Myrdal J, et al, *Det svenska jordbrukets historia, Volume I-V*. Nordiska museet. Natur och kultur, 1998-2003
Nylén A-M., *Hemslöjd, den svenska hemslöjden fram till 1800-talets slut*, Håkan Ohlssons förlag, 1968
Olaus Magnus, *Historia om de Nordiska folken*, 4 band Stockholm, 1982
Ränk Gustav, *Från mjölk till ost*, Nordiska museet. 1987
Ryd Lilian, *Kvinnor i väglöst land*, Stockholm, 1995
Ryd Yngve, *Timmerhästens bok*, Hedemora, 1991
Sjödín Nicke, *Kvinnfolk*, Bjästa, 1982
Tillhagen Carl-Herman, *Folklig läkekonst*, Stockholm 1958
Wedin M., Herou L., Stenman L., et al, *Det skogsfinska kulturarvet*, FINNSAM/Finnbygdens förlag, 2001
Werne Finn, *Böndernas bygge - traditionellt byggnadsskick på landsbygden i Sverige*, Wikens förlag, 1993
Westholm E. Amcoff, J., *Mot en ny landsbygdspolitik*, SOU 2003: 29, Näringsdepartementet/Regeringskansliet, 2003
Widmark Per Henrik, *Beskrivning över provinsen Hälsingland hörande till Gävleborgs län*, 1945



SYNTHESIS REPORT OF RESEARCH FOR THEME 3

Rural heritage and collective identity

Building the
sustainability
of rural
communities



Culture 2000



Introduction

Culture plays a leading role in contemporary societies, contributing to the network of relationships between people and the environment, both rural and urban. Modern societies show an increasing interest in preserving their culture and especially their cultural heritage, both movable and non-movable. Protection and promotion of cultural heritage has been seen as necessary in many countries, while its potential has been sometimes exploited as a factor of development. During the past decades many efforts have been made –at international and European level– to increase social awareness of traditional cultural values in order to prepare people to accept them as a contribution to sustainable development. In relation to this, cultural heritage and cultural identity have been the subject of continuous study and investigation, in an endeavour to understand the different folk cultures and to build a link between tradition and modern life.

The interest in folk culture in Europe has been connected with great intellectual trends in the close of the 18th / beginning of the 19th century: Enlightenment, Romanticism and Positivism. A renewed interest in folk culture followed the recent ecological movement and the contemporary quest for one's roots. In this context, emphasis has been laid on expressions of cultural identity, especially those connected to rural customs, rituals and festivities. Such cultural elements have been traditionally used to mark the progressing of time, informing about events important to the whole community, usually related to the change of seasons, religious celebrations or important stages in the course of human life (birth, starting a family, death).

In the present research, special emphasis has been given to the symbols and signs that build community cohesion and identity, while effort has been made to study the deepest meaning of cultural manifestations. For each custom or ritual, there is a short description of the main elements, its main symbols and signs of expression, its original character and mission that in most cases is aimed at securing good fortune or fertility. Whenever possible, additional comments are included explaining the recreational character of a ritual. An effort has been made to show the contribution of rituals, rites and customs to the formation of cultural identity within rural communities, and their role in the preservation of cultural heritage.

Rural customs and various events, including rituals, rites and celebrations, keep the collective memory alive and manifest, in the most eloquent way, the strong foundation and the values of a community upon which social and cultural evolution has been built. Some definitions will help to create a common understanding while perusing this research:

A custom indicates the repetitiveness of a certain pattern of behaviour, which is laden with symbolic meaning, undertaken by members of a community in specific situations that bear special significance for the community; it may also be a regulative instrument of social relationships. **A rite**, being in its classic version a realisation of a myth (which is at the same time a specific scenario of actions and behaviours), regulates the relationships between a social group and its surrounding real environment, including also the super-

natural world. A rite is realised publicly and solemnly with all richness of symbols and magic practices closely related to the philosophy of life and the system of beliefs (as R. Tomicki put it "religious - mythological image"). **A ritual**, is either identified with a custom, or used interchangeably with the concept of a ceremony; it bears, in any case, the meaning of a precisely specified mode of action, such as ceremonial gestures or celebratory processes.

The past decades have born witness to various efforts for the protection of cultural heritage, while the potential of such heritage has been exploited as a factor of economic development. In recent years a large number of traditional buildings have been restored, renovated and reused. Local traditions, rural rituals and values have been brought to the forefront, while arts and crafts and related activities have been seen as means of empowerment of local people. Thus folk culture has emergent as a constituent part of sustainable development.

Geographical Historical and Cultural Background

Rural customs and other folk rituals and events play a leading role in the culture of the three countries participating in this thematic research and exhibition. The national or regional profile of the areas that became the focus of the research, in terms of history, geography and cultural evolution and characteristics, provide the background to understand the expressions of contemporary folk culture.

Greece has one of the longest standing cultural traditions due to historical and geographical reasons. Greece lies at the South end of the Balkan Peninsula in the crossroads between Europe and the East. Great civilisations and cultures have left their impact through the ages all over its geographic extent. Ancient Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans had moulded the Greek regions and influenced their peoples. Rural areas, especially those of the North (Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace) were the ones who felt deeply the various changes, which at the same time largely contributed to their cultural evolution. Change and continuity have been definitely the underlying features of these rural areas, especially in the period from the late 19th century until the Balkan Wars, when neighbouring territories in Greece, Bulgaria, and to a certain degree Serbia and Romania experienced competing national movements claiming brethren in Ottoman areas of Northern Greece, on historical, linguistic, cultural and religious grounds.

In the period from 1912 to 1925 various migration phenomena, in certain cases forcibly, led to the settlement in these regions of a number of population groups (from Asia Minor, the Turkish Black Sea coastal area, Eastern Thrace etc.). This had consequences to the social and cultural identity of rural communities, especially those of Northern Greece. The geopolitical changes of 20th century largely affected the areas of Greek Macedonia and Thrace, which were characterised by two main elements: firstly the multiplicity of cultures that



resulted from the rapid, revolutionary geopolitical changes of the 20th century in social and economic structures; and secondly, the constant quest of then different social groups to secure the harmonious coexistence of their different identities and cultural particularities.

Both East and West have exercised influences on Greek culture, while great civilisations have left their impact through the ages all over the Greek territory. Living in the same geographical area for centuries, speaking a language that has naturally evolved from antiquity, Greeks continue, mostly in rural communities, to exercise their traditional customs and rites. Rituals dating back to antiquity, signs and symbols expressed on different occasions, especially during festive events combining Christian and pre-Christian elements, depict the multifaceted and multilevel cultural identity of rural areas. A plurality of mutually interdependent signs and symbols guide and regulate the social practices of everyday life. Consciously or unconsciously reproduced, they provide a cultural code that manifests itself on various occasions.

Poland, situated in Central Europe, has a culture closely related to the country's long history. The Polish folk culture is closely connected to the formation of the feudal system, reflecting the life and situation of peasantry, including customs, rites and rituals, feasts and festivals of a unique character. The research concentrated on the territory of Małopolska, which is situated in the south-eastern part of the country, constituting a unique centre of the Polish Carpathians, not only in the geographical sense, but also the cultural one. Małopolska is one of the oldest (10th c.) and the most important regions of Poland. The main centre of the area, Cracow, was the capital of the country until the end of the 16th c. During the time of the annexation (1772-1918) Małopolska, which was under the rule of Austria (the so-called Galicia), played an important role in the reconstruction of the Polish state, regained after the 1st World War.

The folk culture of Małopolska was shaped as a result of many centuries' changing settlement processes. Małopolska was characterised by constant migration of people, including populations of Polish, German, Russian, Valach and Jewish origin. Indeed, the ethnographers distinguished in Małopolska as many as twenty-four ethnic groups. All these groups "manifested" their identity by a number of cultural elements such as architecture, attire, dialect, customs and rituals. This ethnic, cultural and religious "melting pot" formed throughout centuries an extraordinary richness of cultural landscape. In the territory of Małopolska the research concentrated on two regions: Podhale and Rzeszów.

Podhale is a historical - geographical land in the south of Małopolska which spreads at the foot of the Polish Tatra mountains, the highest mountain massif in the Central Western Carpathians. This relatively small area (approximately 34 km x 24 km), bordering on Slovakia in the south, constitutes a unique centre of the Polish Carpathians not only in a geographical sense but also in a cultural one. Podhale is commonly regarded to be a bastion of vivid and genuine folklore, where elements of folk tradition are fostered and

creatively developed by its inhabitants called "podhalańscy highlanders" or "Podhalanie".

Rzeszów lies in the Sandomierska valley, whose relatively rich soils, a well-developed net of rivers and streams and mild climate made agriculture the basic industry of Rzeszowiacy. The area includes native Polish people of the western part of the former Ruskie voivodship, who settled there a long time ago. The folk culture of Rzeszowiacy was formed during its over-six centuries of historical and social development, initiated by intensive settlement of people of Polish origin in the 14th and 15th centuries on the territory. Due to their relative wealth, the local communities adopted a distinct ethos expressed in monumental buildings, richly equipped interiors, decorations and attire which are characterised by elements of rural and noblemen's fashion, as well as rich customs and rituals.

Bulgaria is situated in the middle of the Balkan Peninsula –one of the geographically most varied and fertile regions in Europe. The two components of the Bulgarian nation – proto-Bulgarians and Slavs, after a certain period of dynamic migrations, founded their common state. The wealth of elements of different ethnic and later on of different religious cultures, strongly influenced the rural culture in Bulgaria and determined its basic characteristics and development. Because of the fertile and flat fields, abundant vegetation and mountainous countryside, Bulgaria traditionally developed (and is still developing nowadays) the sector of agriculture, including fruit-growing, stock-breeding and timber industry; it also developed craftsmanship, connected both with the rural and later with the town culture, traditionally comprising textile and clothes, metal, leather, ceramic and wooden wares, building and other occupations for the needs of everyday life.

Bulgaria adopted Christianity in the 9th century and as part of Byzantium, it became a powerful state in the European South-eastern region during the Middle Ages. Under the cultural influence of Byzantium, the Bulgarian culture played the role of a "bridge" connecting Antiquity and Byzantine civilisations with the rest of the Slavonic world. The tool that helped this cultural interaction was the Bulgarian language, the first Slavic liturgical, literary and state-administrative language.

A significant change in the traditional culture became apparent with the coming of the Turks in the 14th century and the mass conversion to Islam in some regions. To a great extent, the rural culture preserved its traditional character, although it adopted new characteristics, primarily connected with the compulsory new and entirely different religious canons that later increasingly penetrated into more and more activities of everyday life. The festive-ritual system turned out to be a fundamental factor for preserving the cultural identity of the Balkan man and of the Balkan Christian community and its further sustainable development.

Today the question is whether the features of the new rural culture can guarantee the sustained development of the culture itself and of significant aspects of rural life in the Bulgarian regions, including the identity of the rural

communities. A dilemma facing rural culture today is also whether it can offer solid motives for people living in the countryside to remain there – for example by developing rural tourism through preserving the local natural and cultural resources.

The framework of research synthesis for theme 3

The thematic synthesis of the national research reports was aimed at providing the main directions for the formulation of the exhibition scenario and the selection of the objects to be exhibited. The focus of this synthesis lies in the **symbolisms** that have been preserved in the conscience of rural communities, thus remaining alive as a foundation of their collective identity. Celebrations, weddings, rituals and customs provide a forum for community gatherings and for revival and preservation of long-held traditions reinforcing the community spirit. Symbolic events may have lost their potency in present societies; however their significance remains high, because customary and traditional acts incorporate a nostalgic dimension, relating the past to the present, keeping the collective memory alive and demonstrating, in a unique way, the difference between everyday life and celebrations. The latter have a primary function as sources of joy and cultural expression, usually through dancing, singing and sharing food and drink. The present research attempts to interpret the role of such events in the process of social and cultural evolution, to show how social capital is being built and enhanced.

This report is structured along four "thematic units" that reflect manifestations of symbolic acts in the ethnography and current practices of the three participating countries, Greece, Poland and Bulgaria. These units refer to:

- a) apotropaic and protective acts,
- b) symbolisms of fertility,
- c) ecstatic rituals, and
- d) rites of passage

and reflect also the structure of the exhibition scenario.

Unit 1. Apotropaic and Protective Rites

This unit includes apotropaic and protective rituals and customs related to the 12-day feast of Christmas and to the carnival. Christmas brings with it a rich range of customs expressed with the preparation of special breads and the performance of rituals related to divine adoration and the warding off of evil spirits. The meaning of these customs and rituals is relayed through a diversity of objects: animal-head or demonic masks, bells, swords and shepherd's sticks, as well as musical instruments forming parts of masquerades, are worn by children or adults to drive away the evil spirits and the forces of winter and darkness; carolling bells, houses, boats, holy crèches, Christmas decorations and porte-bonneur form part of rituals related to the religious character of Christmas; specially decorated breads and wafers depict the hope for affluence and abundance of food throughout the year.

Disguises and masquerades during the Twelve days of Christmas and the Carnival

The **apotropaic** (warding off and protecting against evil) customs and rites are most probably the earliest in human culture. They appeared as a specific reaction of man against the destructive or demonic forces perceived by him as a threat to his very existence. Taking place in crucial periods of the year – the winter solstice and the awakening of the earth in spring– they are an irrevocable segment of the folk calendar and ritual system of rural culture. In the chain of customs, disguises and masquerades hold a significant place, especially those practised during the **Twelve Days**, from Christmas to Epiphany, and during the **Carnival** period.

In **Greece**, disguises are among the most persistent rural customs of the Twelve Days (*Dodekaimero*). Costumes constitute, as in many other cases, a non-verbal sign of expression and communication among the members of a community. The disguisers of the *Dodekaimero* wear animal skins, cover their faces with masks and hold or tie bells around their waist. They walk or dance around the villages in groups and do performances with symbolic meaning whose main purpose is to drive away the evil spirits that threaten nature from blossoming and producing new fruits. The masks are thought to depict the souls of the dead ancestors, who are recalled to protect the community; however, they may draw their origin from the ancient demons of vegetation.

The groups of disguisers bear different names, *Kallikantzari*, *Lykokantzari*, *Rogatsia* or *Rogatsaria*, *Babougeri* etc. The most representative disguises are those appearing in some areas of Western Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Kali Vrysi, Monastiraki in Drama, Nikisiani in Kavala etc.). They include disguises which have as main elements the masks, worn principally to protect the face and conceal the wearer's identity, but having also an **apotropaic character** driving away the evil spirits, the forces of darkness and winter, "opening the way for the spirits of light and the coming of spring". Also symbolic is the role of the bells that reinforce the apotropaic character of the mask. The resounding **bells** are used, irrespective of the material and method of their

construction, to ward off evil by virtue of the sounds they produce. Bells moved on from their original use (means by which the flock could be recognised by the shepherd, frightening away wild animals) to a metaphysical one, and were worn to keep away evil spirits and demons. They thereby acquired a magical and religious quality, which was extended to other uses in folk tradition, invariably of a symbolic nature.

In some places (e.g. Monastiraki in Drama, Nikisiani in Kavala), disguisers organise "drama" performances in the streets. Accompanied by musicians, they frighten the people by throwing at them ashes from the bags they carry or by the sound of their bells. In some cases a mimic action of ploughing or a sword game with large wooden swords ending up with a performance (Nikisiani) of an eventual death and resurrection of a member of the group or a wedding re-enactment (Kali Vrysi) completes the ritual.

During the period of **Carnival** (*Apokria*) masquerades are to be found all over Greece, but especially in Thessaly, Macedonia and Thrace and in some islands, for example Skyros. The symbolic purpose continues to be present, although these generally have the character of light-hearted entertainment. The masquerades are known by a variety of names (*Karnavalia*, *Koudounati*, *Koukougeri*) and appear in groups, some of which are standard (e.g. the bridegroom-bride pair), while others are formed on the inspiration of the moment. The wearing of animal skins, masks in a variety of shapes and large sheep and goat bells hung around the waist are the main features of these disguises. They also have their local variations, often associated with local historical events.

The masquerades in the district of Naoussa in Western Macedonia are a characteristic example. The custom, known as the dance of *Yenitsaros* and *Boula*, is connected with the fighting of the inhabitants against the Turks during the Ottoman occupation. Its origin is found in the ancient ceremonies celebrating the coming of the spring. Symbolic movements, dances and other mimic gestures make up the initial forms of the custom, to which new elements have been added during its evolution. Those in disguise cover their faces with impressive wax masks, all white with colours in the place of eyebrows, a false moustache attached and three very small openings for the mouth and eyes. They also cover their chests by multiple rows of coins that produce a particular sound while moving or dancing.

Amongst the most impressive carnival masquerades are those held at Sochos (a mountain village near Thessaloniki). They begin with the *Triodion* and climax on the last Sunday of Carnival and Clean Monday. The disguisers are called *Karnavalia* and differ from those in other regions in two main features: the face mask and the bells. The mask (today made by a black woollen material - *Sayiak*) is decorated with colourful geometric designs and beads. It ends up in a peculiar pointed head dress filled with straw as an extension of the mask, which is colourfully decorated by narrow paper ribbons and with a fox tail at the top; horse hair is used for the moustache. Around the waist of those disguised are tied five heavy bells, especially selected for this purpose. Holding a long stick or a wooden sword in one



hand and a bottle of strong drink in the other, *Karnavalia* go around the streets striking their bells, offering drink from their bottles to the people they meet and exchanging wishes. Folk musicians also participate. The custom is shared by the entire community, being closely connected with productivity of the fields and flocks.

The character of carnival disguises in the countries of western and central Europe is slightly different, although they have many common elements with Greece, notably the costumes and the masks.

In **Poland** the Carnival (*Zapusty*) covers the period from New Year or the Epiphany until Ash Wednesday. It is the prolongation of the Twelve day of Christmas, preceding the Lent period and Easter. It is a period of joy and revelry, the highlight of which is the last days of carnival, called “*mięsopust*” or “*ostatki*”. The rich carnival rites include colourful and joyful processions of people wearing fancy dress, animal masks and looking like monsters. Until recently, in the territory of Małopolska, fancy dress processions were the continuation of Christmas carolling. On one hand they had a religious character, since they reminded the villagers and town inhabitants of the evangelic events related to the birth of the Messiah. On the other hand, they had magic functions: to imbue the soil and animals with fertility and people with good luck in the forthcoming year. If the carol singers and people in fancy dress missed a house, it was a bad omen. Only men went carolling, mainly bachelors and lads, forming a colourful and humorous travelling folk theatre. The popular sign of carol singing groups was a star - moveable, polygonal, carried on a long pole, lit from the inside, as a reference to the Star of Bethlehem and a symbol of good luck. They also carried a **crib**, a small richly decorated edifice with mobile or static figures inside, related to the scene of Christ’s birth, accompanied by “*Herod*” and animal monsters: a goat, a bear, a stork, a horse and a “*turoń*” - an ancient magic animal.

The tradition of a mobile crib was derived from nativity plays that were initially held in churches. At the end of the 18th century the cribs, as a carolling rite, were taken out of churches to perform scenes related to Christ’s birth. Small, moveable cribs with portable statuettes were constructed by folk artists; they took the form of a stable with two towers on the sides. A typical Polish specialty was widening the gallery of characters accompanying the main plot of the birth of Christ, by including statuettes of peasants, merchants, inn owners, soldiers and other people, who the viewers are familiar with from everyday life.

The richest setting among the cribs was given to the so-called “**Cracow crib**”, considered to be one of the phenomena of Polish folklore. It dates back to the middle of the 19th century, when the carpenters, brick-layers and tillers from the suburbs and neighbouring villages, deprived of jobs during winters, started making small cribs for presents and bigger ones for the groups of carol singers. In the beginning of the 20th century, under the influence of master mason Michał Ezenekier, a characteristic crib form evolved related to the architecture of Cracow’s buildings.

Carolling with “*Herod*” is a peculiar show referring to the evangelic record of the birth of Christ, the Homage of the Three Wise Men, the Massacre of the Innocent and the death of King Herod. An important role is played by people dressed up like animals and supernatural, weird creatures. They are very animated, running all over the place, snapping their moveable mouths gore with their horns, and at a certain time performing an enactment of death and resurrection. These monsters symbolise fertility and the revival of nature, and their presence in a house is intended to provide good luck. Herod’s death, which completes the play, represents the death of nature and its rebirth in the spring; it also symbolises the birth of a new King -Jesus. All the participating characters must have appropriate outfits (fur coats, old uniforms, cardboard armour, helmets and wooden sabres), and, most importantly, fanciful masks covering their faces. Fancy dress, set gestures and behaviour are meant to reflect the character of specific people and scenes. The devil is very active; besides a mask with horns and tongue, a tail and chain, it has a fork, with which he threatens the residents of the house, particularly the children. The show lasts from a few to over ten minutes and finishes by collecting contributions for the carol singers.

An interesting form of carolling in the territory of eastern Małopolska (the neighbourhood of Rzeszów and Gorlice) is the so-called “*Draby noworoczne*”. The carolling groups include men or boys dressed up in fur coats, masks with moustache and high conical hats made of straw. Their legs, arms and bodies are sometimes tightly wrapped with straw. Noisy tinplates and chains are attached to the costumes. The villagers await “*Draby*”, whose presence would bring good luck to the inhabitants of a house, but they also fear them, as they leap into a room very much like robbers, make noise and shout incomprehensibly; the owners of the house try to grab them and give them offerings.

The **Bulgarian** mythology has it that during the twelve days, the earth is visited by the evil-doing ghouls, vampires, goblins and by the most malicious and frightful demon, *Karakondzho*. To oppose the wicked creatures, the *koledars* are joined by the *kukers* (mummers), who perform the major apotropaic function of driving the evil hordes away. The kukers are young men disguised behind huge frightening masks or with blackened faces, dressed in sheep and goat furs, girded with clattering bells and a wooden phallus usually sword-shaped. The time of the masquerades varies from region to region - the games are performed on different festive occasions, associated with winter solstice or spring equinox - Christmas, New Year, *Sirni zagovezni* (the first Sunday before Lent).

The *Surva* international carnival of masquerade games in Pernik is an interesting modern form of the old custom. Traditional kukers with their horrible masks and deafening bells, clad in furs or “decorated” with multi-colour trumpery, disguised brides and bridegrooms, priests, bear-keepers with trained bears, gypsies, doctors, tax collectors, barbers and other interesting characters participate in the public “spectacle”. The great popularity and vitality of the kukers’ masquerades is due mainly to their theatrical nature.

Christmas rites

The celebrations and the rituals taking place just after the shortest day of the year, have a dual meaning: to drive away the evil spirits, forces of winter and darkness that, according to ancient popular beliefs, are fighting nature and the blossoming of the earth; and to ensure happiness and fertility for the family and the community in the new year.

In **Greece**, Christmas customs include carol singing (*kalanda*), performed by groups of young children, the decoration of Christmas tree (or a boat/ship); the preparation of the Christmas table, that must have abundance of food; and the lighting of the fire, which has a sacred and apotropaic character against evil spirits (*Kallikantzari*) that invade the houses and will be driven out in Epiphany with the holy blessing of the waters. On Christmas Eve, groups of boys and girls holding metal triangles or drums and other musical instruments visit the houses and narrate the miraculous story of Christ’s birth while they address wishes for good health and happiness to the inhabitants of the house. Housewives reward them in order to ensure good fortune and abundance. Christmas table is an occasion for the family to meet and celebrate together. Christmas bread (*Christopsomo*) richly decorated (*ploumidia*), different kind of pies and candies (*Christokouloura*) are included in the festive meal. The tree with its decorations and greenery that symbolises life and vegetation or a decorated ship (common in the islands) bring warmth and joy into the house.

In **Polish** folk tradition Christmas is considered to be the most important celebration of the year. It is also called “*Gody*” or holiday celebrated “with dignity”, particularly solemnly and reverently, just like a wedding. In this sense Christmas, which takes place during the winter solstice, is considered as a moment of marriage between day and night, light and darkness. In the rich set of Christmas rites, many beliefs from pre-Christian times have survived. Matrimonial and agricultural fortune-telling is conducted, and the connection with spirits of deceased ancestors sought.

On Christmas Eve all actions performed have a magic and fortune-telling meaning, often of All Souls’ Day character. The exceptionality of this day is emphasised by the decoration of the living room. An important role is played by green branches of a spruce or a fir, the so-called “*podłazniki*”, popular in Małopolska and in Podhale, hung from the ceiling or attached to paintings, decorated by various objects made of straw, blotting paper and fruit - mainly apples and walnuts. Of great importance for the Christmas rites were also, in older times, the presence of sheaves of wheat in the room, the straw spread on the floor, the hay placed under the table cloth on the Christmas Eve table, as well as spiders elaborately made of straw, which were hung from the ceiling. Such decorations protected the house from evil, while the fruits were considered to be the traditional food of the deceased spirits.

The highlight of the Christmas Eve was a solemn dinner. It was opened with the ceremony of sharing “*opłatek*”, a thin, rectangular piece of cake made from wheat flour without yeast, characteristic only of Polish culture. It came in special forms with engraved decoration related to the symbols of Christmas

and refers back to a pagan custom of sharing bread as a sign of brotherhood and peace, while decorations, the so-called “*światy*”, were symbols of protection and prosperity for the family. On the Christmas Eve table there were abundant dishes also meant to provide the house with good luck and wealth.

Almost similar rites are to be found in **Bulgaria**. According to the Bulgarian tradition, the *koledars*, carol singers, (bachelors, engaged or newly married young men) are the acknowledged characters in the sacred night rituals. The *koledars* carry shepherd crooks in their hands; they are dressed in traditional holiday costumes and wrapped in heavy hooded cloaks, with high fur caps, decorated with strings of popcorn, dried fruit, bunches of flowers or box-sprigs. The entire requisite symbolises not only the potential power of life, but also the power of man to oppose the evil forces that roam the world during that night. Led by the experienced *stanenik* (king), who carries a wooden wine vessel (*baklitsa*) and a ritual tree –most often an apple or fir branch– the koledars set out on their round. They visit every house in the village, sing carols, give blessings for health and prosperity to the family and are in turn rewarded with gifts and more blessings. The symbolism of the festivity is to imply the idea of eternally reviving nature. This explains why the world tree motif has survived in many carols and why Christmas predictions are so suggestive.

Christmas Eve, known also as Badni *vecher*, is the greatest family holiday of the Bulgarians. People believe that the prosperity of the family, the good harvest and the fertility of livestock during the coming year depend on that particular night, which accounts for the rich symbolism of ritual practices and dishes that enhance the festivity.

Early in the morning, festively dressed women knead the ritual breads using the best flour, while young unmarried or newly married women sing ritual songs. The Christmas breads as symbols of bloodless offerings are lavishly decorated with doughy birds, leaves, crosses, suns, circles etc. Another kind of bread is dedicated to the main rural occupations – agriculture and stock breeding– its decoration consists of images of domestic animals, pens, vineyards, wine casks etc. The third kind of ritual bread is a ring-shaped bun.

The central moment in the preparations for the holiday is the *badnik* (Yule-log). A hole is drilled in a freshly cut oak, pear or beech log, in which incense grains, wine and olive oil are placed, wishing for a rich crop. The opening is sealed with beeswax and wrapped in white linen or hempen cloth. Arranged in this way, the *badnik* is placed in the hearth and “the new fire” is kindled. The anointed badnik is not only a symbol of the new sun, but also a representation of the Tree of life and is ready to be offered to the newly born God. The Yule log should burn in the hearth till morning; its coals have magic and healing power over the whole year.

Christmas dishes are meatless. They are arranged on a low table or a layer of straw, spread on the ground around the hearth, so that everybody faces the fire. Boiled dry beans and wheat, rice, lentils, dried fruit, raisins, dried peppers, all



of them swell up when cooked –thus they can be interpreted as symbolising child conception and particularly pregnancy, with the developing foetus in the womb and the emergence of a newborn infant. Garlic cloves (against evil unclean force), onion bulbs (for the family to enlarge and property to increase in number like the many layers of the onion), honey (for a “sweet” life of the young), nuts and other fruit are invariably served on the festive table.

The eldest man in the family smokes the table, the rooms, the pens, the granary, the sheds and the yard with incense and “invites” God to the table. A prayer is said; then he raises high the round flat bread with a silver coin kneaded in it (for the wheat to grow high) above the heads of the master and the mistress of the house and breaks it. The first piece of the bread is left by the icon of Christ’s Mother kept in the house. Whoever gets the bread with the silver coin is considered the luckiest individual for the new year.

The **Christmas tree** became an element of the New Year celebrations early in the 20th century, but its traditional decoration is associated with the Christmas table. The Christmas tree was initially adorned with dried fruit, popcorn and self-made toys and later on with shiny multi-coloured toys, specially made for the occasion. The abundantly decorated Christmas tree stands for the Tree of Eden, heavy with fruit; the everlasting green of the fir-tree symbolises the expectation of and the belief in the spring revival of nature. Under the Christmas tree, Santa Claus puts presents for the children.

Unit 2. Symbolisms of fertility and the rebirth of nature

The fertility of the earth is symbolised by the rituals of Easter and by harvesting celebrations that conclude the cultivation cycles. Easter is for Christians the most sacred event of the year, symbolising also the regeneration of the earth and its preparation for bearing fruits. The dividing line between religious and fertility rituals is very fine: palm crosses, *lazarines*, Easter eggs, *epitaphios*, specially decorated breads are complemented by parades and ceremonies that transcend faith to symbolise health, fortune and a good harvest. Harvesting celebrations include also symbolic objects such as bowls with grains and fruit, ear corns and special breads.

Easter celebrations

Easter is the most significant celebration for the Christian world. Closely associated with spring and the renaissance and rebirth of nature, it incorporates rituals and customs that can be traced back to antiquity.

In **Greece**, Easter –also known as *Lambri* or *Anastasis* (resurrection)– incorporates not only the religious element of Christ’s resurrection, but it is also the most significant spring celebration, symbolising the joy of people for the revival of

nature and the beginning of earth’s creativity.

The highlight of Easter celebrations is the Holy Week, an extension of the Lent with an intense experience of fasting, full of symbolic actions contributing to the understanding of the Divine Drama. Although the ritual of the Orthodox Church is performed by the priests (men), women are almost exclusively involved in the dressing of the Epitaph (Holy Sepulchre) and in the other preparations in the houses and in the Church. The almost exclusive participation of women in the ritual practices celebrating Easter is explained by the fact that women are linked with fertility and growth, they give life and birth. Therefore all the customs and rites related with the death and resurrection of nature and humanity are dependant on the feminine knowledge and competence. Resurrection is preceded by Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, while the songs (*agermoi*) of Lazarus Sunday, bearing his name (Lazarus *agermoi*), are widely known and popular. Groups of boys and girls dramatically narrate the story of Lazarus and announce his resurrection while carrying baskets with freshly cut flowers and collecting the eggs of Easter. In some cases only girls participate in the songs of Lazarus (named *Lazarines*) while married women are excluded. The reason for this is that Lazarus had only sisters. In Western Macedonia, Thessaly, Central Greece and the Peloponnese, the custom had an intense social character since it offered to girls the opportunity of coming into contact with the micro-community of their village, walk around the houses show off their skills and become known as potential brides. The *Lazarines* hold a basket decorated with flowers in which they place white eggs offered by the housewives. The baking of bread-made figurines depicting Lazarus also carry a pre-resurrection symbolism (Aegean Islands), as well as the procession of effigies on flowery funeral beds of Lazarus (Epitaph) made out in rough shapes and colourfully decorated (Cyclades, Crete, Ionian, Epirus). In inland Greece, Lazarus breads are distributed for the souls of the dead.

Lazarus’ Saturday, before nightfall, is considered the most appropriate time to prepare the palm leaves that will decorate the churches the next day, Palm Sunday. The blessed palms along with the flowers will be distributed to the attendees of the service and be kept at their homes to drive away evil. In the rural areas they used to ritually strike the palm bundles in the fields, the trees and the vineyards.

Holy Thursday and Holy Friday are associated with funerary customs. It is a common practice for women to visit the cemeteries and to decorate the tombs with flowers. The most important event of Holy Friday is the evening procession of the Epitaph, led by the liturgical flags and the cross, and in some places accompanied by local bands playing funeral marches. In most places a women’s chorus sings special songs contributing to the atmosphere of devotion. In the islands, the procession of the Epitaph takes place close to the sea. In the older days, the custom was to expose in the main door of the house the costumes of sea-farers lost at sea. The procession of the Epitaph is also closely connected with popular customs, the purification of the houses and the lands, and the commemoration of the dead, because according to

ecclesiastical tradition Christ visited Hades and met the souls of the dead. In general, the Epitaphs gather all the power of the Holy Week. Therefore, sick and weak people used to pass three times under the Holy Sepulchre hoping to receive the blessing to reinstate them in good health.

It is well known that ritual symbols constitute an integral part of the festivities lending a special interest to each ceremony. Easter symbols are abundant. The egg is the symbol of Easter par excellence. Eggs, mainly the ones painted red, are known throughout the Orthodox world. Considered as a source of life and perfection, the egg symbolises in the Christian religion, as in antiquity, rebirth and good fortune. Red was used by ancient Greek and pre-Christian cultures as a powerful, apotropaic colour. In Christianity it is linked to Christ’s blood, which is considered as a means to drive away evil. Keeping intact the egg during “egg tapping” is a sign of good health, while greetings follow a specific ritual: “Christ has risen” to which the response must be “He truly has risen”.

Easter symbols (candles and flowers, bread and *tsourekí*) are considered to have a miraculous power, while the lamb is the main Easter food in the whole Orthodox world. The Ecclesiastical symbol of the lamb, denoting Christ according to the Apocalypse, symbolises the victory over death. In the whole Mediterranean civilisation lamb, and especially the newly born, is the expression of the renewal of nature taking place in spring. Its destiny is to be sacrificed in order to secure this renewal.

Since Easter is not only a religious but also an ancient rural spring feast, it is important to be celebrated in the open air and accompanied by music, dance and athletic games, the latter aimed at demonstrating power, skilfulness and community spirit.

In **Poland** symbolic elements of traditional Easter rites are: a green twig, water, fire and food, including an egg and Easter cake, the so-called “*paska*”.

The highlight of Easter is the Holy Week. It begins on Palm Sunday, which commemorates Christ’s solemn arrival at Jerusalem. On this occasion, the villagers bless Easter palms in churches as symbols of reviving life and vitality, considered to acquire curative and magic powers after their blessing. In different sizes, the palms are made of willow twigs and other evergreen plants, decorated with flowers made of blotting paper and ribbons. It was believed that the ritual touch or blow with a palm restored vitality to people and animals. In the territory of Małopolska there was a common custom of putting crosses made from palms under the first ploughed ridge, intended to secure a good harvest and protect the crops from storms and hail.

On Holy Saturday churches carry out the ritual blessing of water (purifying and curing power), fire (power destroying evil) and food intended for solemn breakfast on Sunday of Lord’s Resurrection. Coals from the blessed bonfire and water were taken home and used in households both as apotropaic objects and home medicine. The traditional “*święconka*”, a basket with blessed food contains “*paska*”, horseradish, salt, smoked ham and sausages, a statuette of a lamb (made of cake, sugar or



plaster) and eggs –“*pisanki*”– decorated with various designs and techniques. Eggs were shared during the Easter breakfast; they were given as presents, used as a cure for disease and for the protection of the house and its residents against evil.

Another important Polish custom is “*Śmigus-dyngus*”, traditionally held on Easter Monday. On this day people pour water over each other, which is meant to provide health, good luck and rich harvest with its purifying and reviving power.

In **Bulgaria**, Easter is celebrated in a similar way. With the “maiden” character of their rites, *Lazarovden* (St. Lazarus’ day) and *Tzvetnitza* (Palm Sunday) repeat in a unique way the “male” Christmas - this time, however, it is the young girls called *lazarkas* that herald the spring awakening of nature. The girls dress in bride’s clothes to imply expectations of getting married; magnificent wreaths of flowers and peacock plumes adorn their heads. Similar to the *koledars*’ groups, the *lazarkas* go from house to house (in some places they visit the fields, meadows and sheep pens as well), sing songs of praise, wishing the host and his family health and prosperity. In return, they get fresh eggs. Around the baskets with the offerings, they perform a special dance “*Buenetz*”. Later on, people gather in the village square where the common *lazarkas*’ dance starts.

Finally, the *lazarkas* let their wreaths float on the river water. They believe that the girl whose wreath comes first will be the first to marry; she is also chosen as “*kumitza*”, the leader of the *lazarkas* next year. The participation of the young girls in the *lazaruvane* marks their socialisation –it means that they have grown up and are ready to marry.

After the church service on Palm Sunday, consecrated willow tree twigs are woven into wreaths to decorate the icon and the doors of the house. The willow tree is considered a symbol of everlasting youth and eternally reviving nature and its twigs are expected to bring health to the family. Women girdle willow twigs round their waists to get enough strength for the harvest. Willow tree twigs are placed on the graves of ancestors too.

At Easter, the expectations of people that awakened nature will bring health to them and their livestock and fertility to the land, are the centre around which the symbolism of the holiday is structured. The first painted eggs are dyed in obligatory red; one is put by the home icon, the second on the ritual bread and the third one is rubbed on the face of every child for health. They keep these eggs throughout the year, as they are believed to possess healing properties. The painted eggs have rich decorations of geometric and stylised anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and vegetation representations (birds, butterflies, fish, snakes, spiders, swastikas, leaves etc.). The ritual breads are round or oval pleat-shaped buns, sometimes with a hole in the middle, but always with a red egg fixed on them.

Easter is also the time when the whole village celebrates with songs and dances; the girls swing on swings for health and for the love of a good-looking young man and not of a dragon! Close relatives and friends with their families visit each other, share the festive table, exchange ritual breads (during the last century they were generally called “*kozunaks*”) and dye eggs. “Egg tapping” is also performed in the same way as in Greece: people strike each other’s egg and the holder of the last intact

egg will be the healthiest person over the next year. On that day, people greet themselves with “Christ has risen” and get the response “He truly has risen”.

Harvest rites

In **Greece** the traditional rural customs were –and in many cases still are– closely related to agricultural activities and rituals are usually linked to a feast day, which par excellence aims to guarantee the survival of people. Combining pagan and Christian practices, most of them have been preserved across the ages as having a great significance for securing the yield of the fields and in consequence a good year for the family and the community.

For the farmers the ploughing of land and the harvesting of crops are considered very important moments in a year. Farmers offer the first fruits (6th of August) to the church to be blessed (especially in northern Greece and Thrace). Many symbolic actions are related to sowing; among them is the Feast of Seeds, known by the ancient name *panspermia*, which is celebrated on the feast day of the Virgin Mary (Presentation of the Virgin, 21 November), called “*Messosporitissa*” i.e. protector of grain in the middle of sowing period. During this day in many rural areas people eat as a main meal a combination of boiled cereals and vegetables, and share a small portion with neighbours in order to guarantee the abundance of crops.

Among the symbolic actions linked to the cycle of cereals, it is worth noting the sowers’ habit of tying the last ears of corn in a nice bouquet with different forms (comb, cross etc.). This is sometimes hung around the icon stand in the house (the place where they usually keep the icons) or hung from the ceiling. In some regions (e.g. in the island of Karpathos) they leave in the fields some ear corns, while tracing around them a magic circle with a sickle.

In **Poland**, especially in eastern Małopolska, the celebration of a solemn end of harvest was called “*wieńcowiny*” or “*okreżne*”. Recently, the term “*dożynki*” has been adopted, which is popular in the whole country. The rite originating from pagan traditions, is related to the cult of fertility deities, starting after the completion of the most important works in the fields, mainly at the end of August and September. It could be also held a little earlier on 15th August - the day of Assumption of St. Virgin Mary, called in Polish the God’s Mother “*Zielnej*” holiday. In this way the God’s Mother is considered to be the patron of soil and its crops: herbs, flowers, cereal and fruit.

The “*dożynki*” rite starts on the day of completing the harvesting of the cereal. The harvesters produce a sheaf –“*snopek żniwny*” decorated with flowers, and a wreath of cereal ears, which they give to the host and the hostess. Thanking them for their hard work, the host invites the harvesters to an evening party. On the field a small amount of the uncut cereal is left, the so-called “*przepiórka*”. This is a symbolic contribution for field animals, which has an older origin (a gift for the world of spirits). The *dożynki* rites in manor houses were much more spectacular in older days.

Unit 4. Rites of Passage

For this occasion a special *dożynki* wreath was made, which was brought to church in a solemn procession of men and women in smart clothes, musicians and harvesters. After the blessing it was given as a gift by the best harvesters to the squire. The rite was accompanied by *dożynki* songs recounting the hard work, expressing wishes of good luck for the host and encouraging him to treat the harvesters. The squire, the owner of the fields, paid the harvesters their remuneration; then the party began which lasted until late at night. The *dożynki* rites along with all other basic rites are still practised. The role of host has been taken up by local government representatives at various levels, and the *dożynki* rite has assumed the form of a folk festival. A characteristic element of *dożynki* is still the wreaths made of different kinds of cereal, decorated with ribbons, herbs, fruit and flowers. The tradition requires that the grains from the wreath should be added to spring sowing in order to secure a good harvest. The traditional wreaths most often had a shape of a crown or a hemisphere. The modern form of a wreath depends on its creators' ingenuity, but it is always set in the Polish folk and religious tradition.

In **Bulgaria**, the last of the summer “prosperity-wishing” customs is related to the end of harvest. Then the so-called *brada* (beard) is made from the largest full-eared wheat spikes, specially left uncut by the reapers. The spikes are tied with a red thread and the ground around them is dug with the point of the sickle, then it is watered and “fed” with pieces of bread in the four cardinal points. The harvesting women start singing and dancing around the *brada*. The best of the harvesters ritually washes her hands and cuts the spikes in one cut; then she weaves them in a pleat (*brada*). The decorated brada is solemnly carried to the village and is left in the granary where it is kept until next year. This symbolic act is meant to secure a future good harvest. Similar to that are the preparatory sowing practices in autumn. The largest seeds are chosen and mixed with tiny pebbles symbolising the wish for the wheat to grow large. The sower puts a red object in the measuring vessel – a red pepper, a bunch of flowers or pieces of red yarn and also a comb – so that the wheat becomes ripe (symbolised by red) and thick as the comb's teeth.

Unit 3. Ecstatic Rituals

Anastenaria or **nestinar dance** is a representative example of ecstatic rituals practiced in the Balkans, allegedly of pagan origin. With roots in ancient times, these rituals have kept alive the memory and bonds of communities who many generations ago arrived from the Black Sea to Thrace. Barefoot villagers walk over hot coals on St Constantine and Helen's day, performing an ecstatic dance influenced by the sound of a special tune. Symbolic objects include dressed ikons, as the central item of the ritual, musical instruments (lyra and drum), sacred kerchiefs (amanetia). Although turned into a tourist

attraction in recent years, the ecstatic abilities of firewalkers that are inherited or attained after a lengthy preparation and meditation, remain solid parts of a rural tradition that has managed to stay alive. Today this ritual is practiced only in **Greece** (Anastenaria) and **Bulgaria** (Nestinar).

In **Greece** this custom is only held in parts of East Macedonia, mainly in the villages *Ayia Eleni* and *Langada*. The most remarkable part of the custom remains the fire-walking that takes place in the evening. The fire is lit up early in the evening by a member of the group who has inherited this privilege by his forefathers. When the flames have died down and a thick bed of red hot coals has formed, the *Anastenarides* arrive holding the “*amanetia*” and icons of the saints and dancing continuously. They begin a circular dance around the red coals while the music grows louder and louder arousing the dancers into a state of ecstasy. At the same time, sighs (*anastenagmi*) are heard, from which the custom takes its name. The *Anastenarides* start to walk on to the coals and dance on them with bare feet, without appearing to be burnt or to be in pain and without the soles of their feet being harmed in any way. According to descriptions of scholars, walking on the fire is the supreme proof of sanctity of the dancer. The fire walking and the immunity to the burns of the *Anastenarides* attract many visitors. Many scientists, mostly psychologists, observed the custom in order to find an explanation of this immunity, which still remains unexplained.

In **Bulgaria** nestinar takes place in the Strandzha villages. The cultural context of nestinar dance, regarding both its nature and observance, goes back to ancient pre-Christian times. The distant prototype to the *nestinar* ritual was most probably a certain act of sacrificial offering on fire. Elements of the earliest prehistoric human culture, ancient priestly rites and sun-cults are clearly perceptible in the nestinar festivity. Ancient local Thracian practices have also infiltrated the *nestinar* ritual act.

The religious and sacred nature of the custom gradually imposed on it the observance of a complex set of ritual acts – holding the icon of Saints. Constantine and Helena with raised hands, falling in a deep religious trance (“*prihvashtane*”, “*obzemane*”, meaning “obsession”), acquiring the capacity of foretelling events, particularity of the nestinars' cries during the fire-dance, a dancing mode including crosswise or circular movements around and in the live coals, etc.

The very practice of this ecstatic dance confirms that the cultural phenomena that bring the Balkan people together are time-resistant. The traditional observance of the *Anastenaria* festivity on May 21st in different villages in *Strandzha* is shared by their Northern Greece neighbours who come especially for the day. The joint celebration strengthens its authenticity and, by increasingly attracting young people, the *nestinar* tradition becomes not only interesting and arresting, but it also turns into an on-going interaction of traditional and modern spiritual cultures and a factor of social and ethnic rapprochement.

Rituals celebrating the passage of nature from one season to another and the passage from adolescence to married life and maturity in the lifecycle of humans, have always had a special significance, imbued with symbolic acts and objects. The summer solstice days are celebrated by fires and divinations, coinciding with St. John the Baptist's day, on the 24th of June. Fire symbolises purification, but also protection against misfortune, bad luck and illness. Divinations accompany the solstice celebrations: love fortune-telling, interpretation of dreams and clairvoyance, all connected to future love and marriage. The wedding celebrations have their own symbolic objects and parades: rich bridal dresses with decorated head cover and jewellery, wedding flags, dowry chests and special foods, including decorated breads, cakes and pomegranates.

Summer solstice fires and future predictions

Rites of passage celebrating seasonal changes are usually held during solstice days. A well known Greek custom, that of *Klidonas* (“Soothsayer”) is celebrated on 24th of June, the Feast day of Saint John the Baptist, marking the summer solstice, a natural phenomenon that impressed traditional people and led to many superstitions. St John's day provides an opportunity to revive all the customs and practices of the summer solstice, when the inverse movement of the sun begins, that of decline, which six months later will lead to the winter solstice. In almost every country of Europe people celebrate the longest day of the year by lighting up fires. These open air summer fires have their counterparts in the winter fires during Christmas.

In **Greece**, the summer solstice fires are not only lit for jubilation and purification, but they are also meant for protection against misfortune, bad luck and illness, which traditionally man feared would happen due to the suns' gradual decline. Traditionally, wreaths of flowers made according to the custom on the 1st of May, and dried by the summer solstice, are thrown into the fire in many regions. People usually jump over the fires to ward off bad luck and misfortune. On that occasion, people also wish to have a glimpse of the future and become involved in prediction exercises. The most common of these practices is the prediction by means of water, a ritual that is a community concern rather than an individual one. The divination by means of water remains unchangeable through the centuries and follows the same ritual since the 11th century. On the evening of the 23rd of June, a young girl, whose both parents are alive and in good health, goes to the central fountain of the village to take water. She carries a pot and without speaking to any one (“wordless water”) brings it to the house where the divination will take place. There, young persons who wish to predict their destiny, throw into the water some precious personal objects (eg a ring, a cross) preferably made of gold or silver. They then cover the pot with a red piece of cloth and secure it by a chain and a lock. They put this (“*Klidonas*”) outside the house, where it remains the whole night to be seen by the stars. The following day they gather in the house and the same person who secured the *klidonas* opens the pot and takes out the objects, one by one, making predictions about the future, inspired by the look of the objects. In Thrace the custom is known as Kalogiannia and

ends up with traditional dances and music.

In **Poland**, St. John's rites, called “*Sobótka*”, “*Kupała*”, were held on the night preceding St. John the Baptist's day, the shortest night of the year. At that time, according to a folk tale, the earthly world is visited by creatures from beyond the veil and spirits of dead ancestors. This holiday has pre-Christian roots and was originally related to the End Holiday (*kupała*) celebrated to worship Slavic god *Swarożyc*. The tradition of St. John's night is related to the mystery of life, the triumph of light over darkness, fertility and love fortune-telling. It is a holiday of fire and water. In the evening, on river banks or in hills or clearings or in places often visited by creatures from other world, according to folk beliefs, bonfires were lit, the so-called “*sobótki*”.

Girls dressed in white, with belts made of herbs, joined by boys, gathered around the fires and started dancing, singing and jumping over the flames. Herbs with miraculous powers, protecting people from evil spirits, were burnt in the bonfires.

At Midsummer night young people would also have a ritual bath. Submersion in water or bathing in night dew was to provide them with health and beauty, as well as happy love and marriage. Wreaths were laid by girls on rivers to predict matrimonial fortune. The wreaths made of herbs, wild and garden flowers, with a candle attached to a board in their middle, were the symbol of maidenhood. Good luck was brought by the wreath which floated on the river without meeting obstacles, or was taken out by the girl's beloved one.

In **Bulgaria** *Enyovden* (St. John the Baptist's nativity) takes also place on the day of the summer solstice. As nature passes to a new state of potency on that day, *Enyovden* is the right time for divinations and magic acts with a symbolic character. In the night, the heaven opens, the stars come down close to herbs and provide them with greater curative power; the upper and the lower worlds gather together and the universe becomes crowded with magicians, vampires, dragons and wood nymphs. The emblematic fire jumping is not practiced anymore on that day, but the Bulgarian tradition has preserved it on *Simi Zagovezni*.

Even before sunrise, maidens, young married and older women go to pick up fresh herbs and flowers; they tie them into a posy, called Enyo's bunch, as it is believed that the herbs have the greatest healing power on that day and that this curative property weakens every day until it is completely lost (this phenomenon has been indeed scientifically proved). The herbs and flowers picked up at dawn are pleated into big, human size wreaths, through which all family members pass, for good health.

Because of its transitional nature, *Enyovden* is attractive for divinations and for acknowledging a significant change in girls' life, i.e. that they have reached sexual maturity and are ready to get married. The ritual of *Enyo's Bride* is directly connected with the maiden's passage to a new status. The main character is a small girl, St. John's earthly bride, whose wedding attire is a sign of the girl's wish for getting married. The maidens solemnly carry “*Enyo's bride*” to every house, to the fields, pens etc. After that the traditional “singing over



the rings” is performed. The previous night every girl put her posy with a ring attached to it in a copper bucket with “silent water” (the vessel is filled with water from the spring and carried home in silence, thus water is believed to preserve its magic mediatory power). Enyo’s bride, blindfold, takes the bunches out of the vessel one by one, while the girls sing songs hinting at what their future bridegrooms will be like. These short songs, containing riddles and metaphors, reveal different aspects of people’s everyday life. Such divinations via singing are performed for prosperity, health and a better future for the entire family. Because of the ancient character of the custom, similar songs-metaphors are well known to some other Slav and Balkan people.

Wedding rituals

Wedding belongs to the rites of passage that have a special importance for the life cycle of persons in all societies, marking a new phase in a person’s life. All the ritual actions reproduced during the wedding have a social meaning and their significance is consciously or unconsciously recognised. Many bridal traditions and rituals, still observed today, draw their origin from the past when evil spirits were believed to rule people’s existence, being envious of happiness and awaiting every chance to attack people’s joy and good fortune. Therefore, the bride and groom should be protected and their happiness ensured. Music, singing and dancing represent an attempt to drive away these spirits by the noise they produce.

In **Greece**, marital customs are diverse, stemming from local traditions and reflecting different regional cultural identities. However there are some common elements which compose the nucleus of the custom in all variations. In every traditional Greek marriage there are three main parts to be observed: the preparatory rites, the wedding ceremony and the week after the wedding with extension of the rituals.

The preparatory rites include the invitation to relatives and people from other villages to attend the wedding ceremony. The ceremony is announced in several ways, mainly by sending young boys as emissaries. They usually hold baskets with fruits, nuts, candies made from sesame seeds and honey (melekouni or sesamomeli) or drinks and sing traditional songs inviting people to attend the event (today invitations are sent in a printed form).

The bridal bread is a fertility symbol which represents well-being and is said to bring good luck and health to the couple. The traditional wedding day is full of symbolisms. Both parties are dressed in separate homes. Relatives and close friends assist the bridegroom to get shaved and dressed with new clothes, usually traditional ones. Young girls assist the bride to wear the traditional wedding costume embroidered with bright colours aiming to protect her from evil spirits and demons. The purpose of the bridal veil is the same; it is believed to protect the bride from the evil eye of an ill-wisher. Relatives of opposite families adorn the bride with gifts of gold jewellery. Local musicians play traditional folk music. As a general rule (although this also depends on the local tradition) the wedding takes place in the bride’s village. A band escorts the groom to

the church and another band escorts the bride. When the bride is ready to leave the house, relatives from the bridegroom’s side come to receive her from her father and walk her to the church. The man on a horse holding the flambouro (wedding banner) rides usually in front of the group.

The flambouro, one of the most important wedding symbols in many Greek areas, is a flag made usually by a big square piece of red cloth put on a long wooden stick and decorated with different elements according to the local tradition. In Macedonia they use kerchiefs to adorn it; in some places they put on it a pomegranate, a symbol of fertility, or other fruits.

In Sarakatsani’s villages the Flambouro is made on the Friday before the wedding either by a young unmarried boy or by the groom’s mother. With a cross on it, a symbol of faith, it is decorated with many other fertility and prosperity symbols - coins, apples, gold or coloured ribbons or threads, chains, etc. In some Sarakatsani areas three Flamboura are prepared with stitched wooden pompons (kiritsia) flower shaped and with bells in their centre, symbols of fertility and having an apotropaic function as well. Coloured pompons also decorate the bundle of logs to be used for the cooking of bread and food for the wedding ceremony. The pompons will be offered later on by the groom’s mother to the women taking part in the wedding preparation. She will also give them kerchiefs, which will be used to lead the dances.

The wedding ceremony, with a few exceptions, takes place in the church. Once it is completed, the newly weds are walked to their home accompanied by friends and relatives. In front of their future home the groom’s mother receives the bride and welcomes her by offering honey, sweets or nuts. In some places they also offer a glass of water or bread, while a pomegranate is given to the bride to break by throwing it to the courtyard floor in order to secure prosperity. The wedding feast takes place right after the bride’s reception with drinking and folk dancing.

In **Poland**, celebrating marriage is connected to a set of customs and rites shaped by tradition. At this important and symbolic moment of transition, change of family and social status, the wedding rites are intended to secure good luck to the bride and groom.

Traditionally, wedding ceremonies lasted from a few days to a week and they were held at the time of “zapusty” or in autumn after the harvest. In the territory of Małopolska after confirming the possibility of solemnising marriage (the so-called “zwiady”), matchmaking (“zmówiny”) takes place, and later “zrękowiny”, comprising elements of old property contracts. The initial consent to solemnise a marriage and the agreement on a dowry, accompanied by ritual of drinking vodka and paying for announcing the wedding in church, meant the beginning of preparations for the wedding. A host and a hostess (“swaszka”) were chosen, as were the best men, and wedding clothes were made, food and drinks were gathered and guests invited.

In the Rzeszów region the wedding was preceded by a party at swaszka’s (the so-called “swaszczynny”). The wedding ceremony was started by “zrękowiny” in the morning, and after

the parents’ blessing the wedding procession moved towards the church, and then to the bride’s house, where the wedding reception and the party with musicians had been arranged. In the meantime, another wedding procession had to overcome colourfully decorated barriers - and in order to cross them it had to pay with vodka and sweets. The most important wedding ritual was “oczepiny” symbolising the transition from maiden status to that of a married women. It was performed by taking the wreath off the bride’s head and putting on it a bonnet. On completion of the wedding there was a rite of moving the bride to her husband’s house together with the dowry kept in a wooden, colourful chest.

The wedding rites were accompanied by numerous items. They were: a wedding “rózga” (“wiecha”) - the symbol of the bride’s maidenhood. It was made the day before the wedding and it was used for wedding rites until “oczepiny”. “Rózga” was made by a top of a spruce, on which a rich decoration of flowers, herbs, fruit, feathers, and ribbons was placed. The bride’s wreath, decorated in the region of Cracow with a bunch of flowers and ribbons, was also artistically distinguished. Having taken the wreath off, a bonnet decorated with sequins, beads or made of lace, was put on the bride’s head and covered with a kerchief.

An important role in the wedding ceremony was played by the wedding cake (the so-called “korowaj”) – a round bread decorated with artificial flowers, feathers, birds made of pastry, herbs, and apples. Cutting and sharing the cake completed the wedding ceremony.

In **Bulgaria**, a wedding is the most important event in the life of the rural man and woman. Through it, the reproduction of the clan is secured and its striking rituality guarantees the sustained development of the community. That is why the magic nature of the wedding rites and the close relation of ritual and song have survived until modern times.

The main characters are the bridegroom, the best man and his wife, the bride’s brother-in-law, the matchmakers. Ritual wedding bread of rich symbolic decoration is kneaded. In both houses, wedding banners (white and red) are prepared -they will be later combined in one. The wedding tree - a pine or fruit tree, is adorned with gaily coloured threads (against evil eyes), with flowers (for happy and long-lasting marriage) and fruits (for the young couple’s fertility).

The wedding ceremonies are accompanied by songs. The saddest ones are performed while the bride’s hair is ritually braided, the wedding wreath is made from flowers and the bride’s face is veiled with thick white or red cloth. In the early 20th century, the white bridal dress appeared as a symbol of her immaculacy and purity. “Taking” the bride from her home is not easy - the bridegroom is forced to “fight” or give “ransom” for her. Sometimes he just slips a gold coin in her mother’s bosom - a tribute to her mother’s milk. Wheat, millet, nuts or dried fruit, sweets and small change are thrown by the public for health and fertility while the bride is leaving home and on completing the wedding ceremony.

A significant moment of “passage” is when the bride enters the bridegroom’s home on a spread-out white cloth. Her mother-

in-law hands the bride a bread, honey and fruits in order to “bring prosperity” to the house, “presents” a small child (symbolising the future childbirth) and finally takes her to the fireplace to bow and pay her respect to it. The bridegroom’s mother leads the young couple into the house in a yoke or with a kerchief tied around their heads - symbols of shared hardships and toils. The songs accompanying the ceremony are full of joy as new help is coming.

The preparation, upkeep, exposition and transfer of the maiden’s chest with her dowry to the bridegroom’s house is heavy with symbolism. The maiden chest often remains the only “personal territory” of the married woman.

The virginity of the bride is publicly announced with rifle shots and the bloody spots on her white chemise serve as a proof of her immaculacy. After the wedding guests’ expectation is thus satisfied, they drink “mulled brandy”. The last stage of the “passage” is the act of removing the bride’s veil and of taking her wreath off - the change in her social status brings a change in her clothes, adornments and headdress too.

Conclusions

Celebrations and rituals have a central position in rural communities reinforcing the process of social identity building. Many of these are strong even in our days, providing an opportunity to members of a community to meet and rejoice together. All customs and rituals described above and illustrated by the objects and the related material of the exhibition, show in the most striking way that beyond differences, all these have common elements that form the common European heritage. They also reflect not only the wealth of rural culture, but also similarities that bind rural cultures together and can strengthen their values towards a sustainable future for rural communities. In contemporary, multicultural societies, in which there is a strong need to reinforce the intercultural dialogue, the various values of rural communities (intellectual, ethical, aesthetic) can contribute to cultural and social balance. Traditional cultures are not only able to offer elements that help us to understand “the other”, but can also direct people towards social forms that do not isolate the individuals but, on the contrary, help them to function as members of a social entity.

The experience of post-modern societies, in which values are confused and the relations between the individual and the community are de-constructed, suggests that a return to traditional social values can give heed to an important lesson, that of integration; integration of the individual into the group, of art into everyday life, of death into life, of the body into existence, of nature into culture. In the post modern societies two cultural notions coexist: “tradition” and “modernity”, once antagonistic, but now converging in order to achieve development. It is indeed one of the main goals of development to transform contradictions into complementarities and encourage people to act less as mere observers and more as active members of their community, becoming more human, more responsible and happier in the end.

Bibliography

Greece

- Anest-Couffin Marie-Christine, *Le temps mythique et l'oeuf dans le calendrier populaire grec*, PACT/EURETHNO: Actes IV, 1992
- Antzoulitou-Retsila Eurydice, *The marriage crowns in modern Greece*, Athens 1980
- Bouvier Bertrand, *Le Mirologue de la Vierge I. La chanson populaire du Vendredi Saint*, Genève 1976.
- de Coppet Daniel (ed), *Understanding rituals*, Routledge, 1992,
- Ekaterinidis G., *The Karnavalia of Sohoh near Thessaloniki*, Athens 1984 (reprint)
- Ekaterinidis G., “Spring customs of popular cult from Serres”, proceedings of the *1st Folklore Symposium of Northern Greece*, Thessaloniki, 1975
- Ekaterinidis G., *Anastenaria: legend and reality*, Athens 1993 (reprint)
- Van Gennep Arnold, *Les rites de passage*, 1909 and 1981 (reprint)
- Karpodini-Dimitriadi E., Greek cultural identity and regional development. The role of traditional culture in regional development, *Annual of the Institute of Regional Development*, Athens 1992 (reprint.)
- Karpodini-Dimitriadi E. (ed), *Ethnography of European traditional cultures-Their role and perspectives in a multi-cultural world*, Athens 1995
- Karpodini-Dimitriadi E., Masquerades during carnival, *Ethnography of European traditional cultures-Their role and perspectives in a multicultural world*, Athens 1995
- Karpodini-Dimitriadi E., Les cloches et les masques festives en Grèce, VI Atelier PACT-EURETHNO, *Les marqueurs du temps, la cloche; invention européenne du temps compte*, St Martin de Vésubie, 4-9 Avril 1993.
- Kannelopoulos Kanellos, *Hellas: Festivals and Customs*, Vergas Publications, 1997
- Kyriakidis Stilpon, Easter Red eggs, VIII Byzantine Studies Congress in Thessaloniki, *Proceedings III*, 1957
- Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *Culture: a review of concepts and definitions*, New York, 1963, 1953
- Loukatos D. S., *Christmas Customs*, Athens 1984,
- Loukatos D. S., *Easter and Spring Customs*, Athens, 1998
- Loukatos D. S., *Introduction to Greek Folklore*, Athens 1977
- Megas George, *Introduction to Greek Folklore*, Athens 1972
- Megas G., *Issues of Greek Folklore*, Athens 1975
- Megas G., *Greek Calendar Customs*, Athens 1982.
- Megas G., “The garden of Adonis in Serres” *Serraika Chronika*, v. 9, 1979.
- Puchner W., *Popular theatre in Greece and the Balkans (a Comparative study)*, Athens 1989
- Puchner W., The Popular and traditional theatre in the Balkans, in E. Karpodini-Dimitriadi (ed), *Ethnography of European traditional cultures-Their role and perspectives in a multicultural world*, Athens 1995
- de Sike Yvonne, *Fêtes et croyances populaires en Europe, au fil des saisons*, France (Bordas) 1994

- Taylor Paul, *Investigating culture and Identity*, London, Harpers Collins, 2000
- Tylor E. B., *Primitive Culture: researches into the development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom*, Gloucester, M.A., 1958
- Tomkinson L., *Festive Greece: A Calendar of Tradition*, Athens 2003

Poland

- Boże Narodzenie w Radomskim z cyklu „Radomski rok obrzędowy”, Radom 2002
- Braun K., Zwyczaje doroczne, Warszawa 2007
- Burzyński T., Z badań nad obrzędowością rodzinną wsi z okolic Lubaczowa, „Rocznik Lubaczowski”, t. IV, Lubaczów 1990, s. 61-120;
- Burzyński T., Zwyczaje, obrzędy i wierzenia okresu Adwentu i Bożego Narodzenia wsi okolic Lubaczowa, „Rocznik Lubaczowski”, t. V, Lubaczów 1994, s. 113-158;
- Bystroń J.S., Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce, wiek XVI-XVIII, T. I i II, Warszawa 1976
- Chwalba A. (red.), Obyczaje w Polsce. Od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych. Wydaw. Nauk. PWN, Warszawa 2005
- Gloger Z., Rok polski w życiu, tradycji i pieśni, Warszawa 1908
- Janicka-Krzywda U., Rok karpacki – Obrzędy doroczne w Karpatach Polskich, Warszawa-Kraków 1988
- Kuchowicz Z., Obyczaje staropolskie, XVII-XVIII wiek, Łódź 1975
- Kwaśniewicz K., Zwyczaje doroczne górali podhalańskich, Nowy Sącz 1996
- Michalikowa L., Chrząstowscy St. i Z., Folklor Lachów Sądeckich, Warszawa 1974
- Nowak J., Dzień wigilijny Bożego Narodzenia i jego symbolika w dekanatach tomaszowskich (diecezja zamojsko-lubaczowska), Ku prawdzie w miłości, Księga pamiątkowa poświęcona Księdzu Biskupowi Profesorowi Janowi Śrutwie, pod red. Ks. Stanisława Koczmary, Lublin 2002, s. 223-237
- Ogrodowska B., Święta polskie. Tradycje i obyczaje, Warszawa 2000
- Ogrodowska B., Polskie obrzędy i zwyczaje doroczne, Warszawa 2006 (seria Ocalić od zapomnienia)
- Ogrodowska B., Polskie tradycje i obyczaje rodzinne, Warszawa 2008
- Piskorz-Banekowa E., Polskie Betlejem. Państwowe Muzeum Etnograficzne, Warszawa 2002
- Reinfuss R., Szopki krakowskie, Kraków 1959
- Romanowicz M., Folklor górali żywieckich, Warszawa 1978
- Ruszel K., Lasowiacy. Materiały do monografii etnograficznej, Rzeszów 1994, s. 121-151
- Ruszel K., Leksykon kultury ludowej w Rzeszowskiem, Rzeszów 2004
- Seweryn T., Tradycje i zwyczaje krakowskie, Kraków 1961
- Smosarski J., Oblicza świąt. Biblioteka Więzi, Warszawa 2005
- Szymanderska H., Polskie tradycje świąteczne, Warszawa

- 2003
- Szajowski E., Cieszanowskie opłatki, „Kresowiak Galicyjski”, nr 1, styczeń 2002, s. 6
- Tradycyjna wigilia [KGW w Kobylnicy Wołoskiej], „Życie Podkarpackie”, nr 51, 21.12.2005r., s. 23
- Winiarska K., Trojanowska M., Burzyński T., Nad nim Anieli w locie stanęli i pochyleni klęczą... Z ikonografii Bożego Narodzenia, Przemyśl 2006
- Woś J., Wigilijna wieczerza, mówi Aniela Mrówka, szefowa KGW w Cewkowie Woli w pow. Lubaczowskim, „Nowiny” (dodatek „Nad Sanem”), nr 250, 24-28 grudnia 2003r., s. II
- Witkowski Cz., Doroczne polskie zwyczaje ludowe, Kraków 1985
- Zadrożyńska A., Świętowanie polskie, Warszawa 2002

Bulgaria

- Angelova, R. *Les masques populaires bulgares* – Schweiserisches Archiv für Volkskunde, 63, Basel, 1967, 226 –239.
- Dawkins, R. W. The modern carnival in Thrace and the Cult of Dionysos, –*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1906, № 26, 191-206.
- Florece, V., *La maison rurale et la ferme comme unité sociale du parallélisme entre Slaves du Sud et Slaves de l'Ouest*, in: Етнографски и фолклористични изследвания в чест на Христо Вакарелски по случай 80-годишнината от рождението му. С., 1979
- Forsyth, M., *Listen, Daughter, and Remember Well...*, Sofia, 1996
- Gencev, S., Bulgarian Folk Customs with Theatrical Elements. – In: *The Folk Arts of Bulgaria*, Papers presented at a symposium Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 1976
- Gennep, A. van. *The rites of passage*, London and Henley, 1977
- Ivanova, R., *Traditional Bulgarian Wedding*, Sofia, 1987
- Katzarov, G., *Karnavalbräuche in Bulgarien*, Archiv für Religion-swissenschaft, 1908, № 11, 407-409.
- Katzarova, R., *Surovakari. Mascherate invernali nel territorio di Pernik, Breznik e Radomir*. – In: Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Linguistica e tradizioni popolari. Gorizia-Udine-Tolmezzo, 1969, Udine, 1970
- Kuret, N., *Die “Alten” in den Maskenumzügen Sudosteuropas*, in: Етнографски и фолклористични изследвания в чест на Христо Вакарелски по случай 80-годишнината от рождението му. С., 1979
- Nikoloff, A., *Bulgarian folklore folk beliefs, customs, folksongs, personal names*, Cleveland, 1975
- Nikov, N., *Holidays of the Bulgarians in myths and legends*, Sofia, 2004.
- Sanders, I., *Balkan Village*, Westport, CT, 1949
- Tcherkezova, M., *Les Jeux carnavalesques bulgares – coutumes de fertilité, de santé et de théâtre populaire*, in: Le masque dans la tradition européenne. Exposition dans le Musée International du Carnaval et du masque à Binche, 1975
- Wace, A. J., *Mimring plays in the Southern Balkan*, The Annual of the British School in Athens, 1912–1913, № 19.

