

CULT-RURAL

Promotion of a Cultural Area Common to European Rural Communities

"Culture 2000"

Framework Programme in Support of Culture

1st Transnational Workshop

Stockholm November 2006

0. Introduction

The AFMA and the MuCEM are associated in the framework of this European programme.

The French Association of Agricultural and Rural Heritage Museums (AFMA)

Founded in 1982 under the double patronage of the Ministries of Agriculture and Culture, the AFMA aims at the studying, conserving and giving value to rural Heritage in all its aspects : movable heritage (old implements, agricultural machinery), building heritage (rural architecture) and landscape heritage.

Agriculture is understood here in its largest meaning, as it is the practice in France, including old specialized productions (viticulture, livestock, textile plants...) as well as forestry, hunting, and fresh-water fishing, without distinction of time.

Deliberately open to all enthusiasts of rural heritage and of the history of agriculture, the AFMA brings together all those who are fond of a territory or of a collection, farmers, museum curators and collectors, students, researchers, teachers, coordinators, associations and organizations...

The AFMA :

- Makes a network of agricultural museums and of the different actors of rural heritage.
- Organizes forums on subjects relative to the knowledge of the most varied heritages (agriculture mechanization, oil production, working the ground, animal traction, etc).
- Organizes debates on the role of rural museums in local development.
- Makes expert evaluations for people, associations, and collectivities.

AFMA permits members to benefit from regular collaborations with the principal French and international actors who work with the same methods.

At the French level, AFMA is the privileged partner in the highlighting of heritage in relation to public services and patrimonial associations :

- The Ministries of agriculture, of tourism, and of culture
- National Museum of Mediterranean and European Civilizations (MuCEM)

- The heritage associations and federations : Ethnozootechnie association, the Ecomusée Federation, Country Houses of France, the Heritage Foundation

The AFMA defends the interests of its members at a national level

It:

- Takes part in the triennial plan on "the rural heritage and local development" set up by the Ministry of Agriculture
- Is a Member of the Permanent Commission of the rural heritage (CPTR) created by the Ministry of Agriculture
- Is a Member of the " Nature Club of the House of France" a structure of the Ministry of Tourism

The National Museum of Mediterranean and European Civilizations (MuCEM)

MuCEM is the heir to the MNATP founded on May 1, 1937 by the Popular Front government. Initially sheltered within the musée de l'Homme, a building was devoted to it in 1968 by the architect Jean Dubuisson. Inaugurated in 1974 and 1976, its permanent exhibition is devoted to traditional rural life, during the period from the 18th century to the 1950's, the pre-industrial aspects having initially been privileged in the collections.

Very quickly, the Museum opens towards other cultures, the urban cultures since the Sixties. The museum rapidly undergoes an audience crisis at the end of the Eighties. With the arrival of its current director in 1996, the museum develops a programme of acquisitions on contemporary ethnology, in Metropolitan France, in the overseas French Territories.

Since 2000, the museum is developing a new mutation by approaching a civilizational vision opening towards the cultural domain of Europe and the Mediterranean. It receives the collections of the European Department of the Musée de l'Homme.

The new museum will be installed in Marseilles, second town of France and the first port of the Mediterranean. It will constitute from here to the 2011 horizon, the emblematic equipment of the "City of the Mediterranean", it represents the first creation by the State of a large national museum outside of Paris.

It will be devoted to the resemblances, differences, interactions or contrasts between the cultures of Europe and the Mediterranean through the dominant traits of their civilizations.

A new scientific and cultural project was elaborated by the museum team, enriched by the research of a scientific committee composed of national and international specialists. It is notably expressed by interflow between the French popular cultures and the European civilizations, between national and international collections...

A new museography will be created with a permanent reference exhibition, with temporary exhibitions treating the main social questions, a Forum space as well as a cultural centre in relation to the other public equipment of the City of the Mediterranean.

An international architecture competition was organized by the Ministry of Culture in June 2002. A jury met on February 13, 2004 in order to select the team of architects,

among eight teams of international fame, to build the Museum of the Civilizations of Europe and the Mediterranean.

The jury chose the project of the team Rudy RICCIOTTI/Roland CARTA for the museum. And the project of Corinne VEZZONI for the Conservation Centre. This project is characterized by the museum at the edge of the sea in the town centre, divided between an historic building "the Fortress of St John" and a new building. The Conservation Centre will be situated near the St-Charles Station.

The museum retains a very strong interest for rural culture, as testified by the close relations that are always maintained between the AFMA and MuCEM.

1. Central concepts

1.1 Culture

The term "culture" such as we understand it in a museum of mankind (or of anthropology) defines all technical and ideological systems permitting a social group to live (or to survive) in a given geographical and historical context, composed of possibilities and constraints which it must organize for its benefit.

It is also the entire group of the signs and the codes which permit the members of a given social group (local, regional, social and economic category, age group etc.) to distinguish themselves from the others, including the closest, and to recognize each other. This recognition allows social solidarities, which are always preferential, to function.

It therefore concerns a language made simultaneously from material signs and individual signs and from individual and collective behaviors (material and immaterial cultures) which, like any language, has a vocabulary, a grammar and a syntax. This language has a history (constitutive stages, made of evolutions and moments of crystallization) and continues to evolve. These changes, which result at the same time from the evolution of external pressures (background, demography, etc.) and of specific dynamics (notably the role of the elite) integrate the different cultural influences by aggregation, interbreeding, creolization or on the contrary by rejection.

The role of museums, as a scientific resource, is at the same time to collect the most highly documented witnesses of these cultures, and to share the knowledge which they authorize from a comparative and critical point of view, so that it is possible for outsiders (from another time, another region, another category...) to understand equally the meaning of birth, instructive not only for the pleasure of knowledge but also (all cultures being permanently subjected to transformation), for the exercise of the citizens' choices in the present.

1.2 Cultural heritage

Definition of rural heritage according to the report presented to Mr. Jacques TOUBON, Minister of Culture and Francophonie, April 1994 by Mr. Isac CHIVA, Director of studies at the School of the Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS) :

Belonging to the rural cultural heritage :

- buildings, forming what is called rural architecture, aggregated or not (villages, hamlets, habitat, and dispersed buildings);
- landscapes designed through the ages by people living from the land and, more generally, from the exploitation of natural resources,
- products of the soil adapted to the local conditions and the needs of the men who cultivated them;
- the techniques, tools and know-how which allowed their creation and which remain indispensable for their maintenance, restoration, modification and modernization, respecting constructive logic and the overall esthetic : buildings/habitat/landscape.

That is to say these techniques englobe symbolizations and cultural significations in the full meaning of the word.

However, we can't speak about rural cultural heritage without referring to a double evidence : men who use it, who live from it, who have often taken a decisive part in the survival of these possessions, have a more and more firm and clear feeling that this richness belongs to them. But at the same time, rural space, with the heritage it represents and contains, is henceforth considered, equally, as the property and the space of all men, from cities and from the countryside.

1.3 Sustainable development

We understand by "sustainable development", according to the definition suggested in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the Brundtland Report :

"a development which meets the needs for the present without compromising the capacity of future generations to answer theirs. Two concepts are inherent in this notion : the concept of "needs", and more particularly of the essential needs for the necessitous, to whom must be given greatest priority, and the idea of the limitations that the state of our techniques and our social organization impose on the capacity of the environment to meet present and future needs".

1.4 *Other*

2. Research outline

2.1 Background

France offers a great diversity of landscapes due to a crossroads geographical situation between Mediterranean influences (cultivation of the olive-tree and vine, aromatic plants, horticulture, sheep farming, grouped habitat and urban tradition, farmhouses, country houses, occitane language...), oceanic (pine, pisciculture, salt, cattle farming, pig farming, dispersed habitat, hedged farmland, farms...), and more continental (hops, cereals, potatoes, beetroots, industrial history...). Moreover, it is necessary to note the specificity of the mountain zones (the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Massif-Central, the Jura-Vosges...) which far from the main axes of communication were always regarded as strongholds of the local traditions. These zones favourize the conservation and the patrimonialisation of numerous objects relating to rural life.

This diversity of biotopes related to geological and climatic diversity presents a sample of various ways of approaching a territorial ecology : way of construction (orientation of the buildings, choice of materials...), way of life (placing of the hearth, the places of rest, meals, furniture and materials...), way of using the resources (for the food, clothing and upkeep, labour...).

Generally the patrimonialisation of rural culture is the reflection of the XIX century elite and follows certain patterns. Patterns and stereotypes, for example, conservative Brittany from Celtic background.

As everywhere, material heritage is distinguished from immaterial heritage ; and within material heritage there is a division between movable and fixed heritage.

The rural architecture stimulated a growing interest after the second world war, the modernization of agriculture having brought on considerable upheavals from the point of view of rural habitat, farm buildings and farming techniques. The built heritage was threatened and many associations came to its rescue.

The interest for movable heritage was variable according to times. From the XIX century until the second world war, a gathering of heteroclite collections was constituted by amateurs who collected evidence of a preindustrial rural culture : agricultural techniques, farming, home furniture.... At that time, the museum is the illustration of the large historical provinces of France, Brittany, Normandy, Aquitaine, Basque Country... In the Sixties, the creation of the regional natural reserves, then the "écomusées" (open air museums) express a renewal of interest for different regions, greatly menaced by desertification. Many local museums were created and highlighted the objects from smaller territories, but always associated with pre-industry. In the Eighties, with the development of decentralization; the museums multiplied, and almost proliferated. In parallel, three types of museums are created : the first axed on a gastronomical product or a technical speciality, for example the house of prunes or the knife museum, these museums constitute centres of know-how. The second are museums of production, which retrace an activity, for example milk or mechanization, from the historical point of view and for technical evolution up to a very contemporary period. The first two types of museums are windows of territories. The third type corresponds to museums created by associations and individuals often around a mono-thematic object : the tractor...

In 2006, the AFMA listed 2000 museums relating to the rural heritage in France, of which less than 10% are controlled by the Ministry of Culture.

One of the originalities of Western Europe is the distinction of erudite culture and popular culture in a very clear way deriving from the great collections of the XIX century. This elitist view always impregnates the collective conscience with regard to the rural heritage, less recognized and valorized than other forms of art, such as contemporary art which benefits from a positive image. Museums keep a considerable material heritage, composed of millions of objects, witnessing popular creative talent. These objects suffer abandon, lack of publication, study, exhibition.

To give a new reading to these objects, the interpretation of the criteria of creation should be approached in a novel way.

2.2 Selection of themes

Project: Sources and resources of a durable European development

Traditional rural culture can be a reserve of ideas and technical alternatives capable of bringing solutions to environmental problems generated by our contemporary societies : insertion of buildings in landscape, farming methods, way of living, of insulating, of energy saving, of saving materials etc.

It's a question of summing up the practices and objects intervening in the management of natural resources by various processes such as recycling, salvaging, intelligence in the exploitation of natural properties of the raw materials. In the rural societies, a certain conscience of saving resulted in hyper-use of each material thus reducing the production of waste to the minimum. This conception of the resources involved a permanent adaptation of the gestures and attitudes towards transforming daily life and giving birth to a production of objects adapted to an economy of subsistence. In the zones of cold climate, the need for calories to fight against the cold justifies a profitability of the fat content. Thus animal greases (pig) will give place to a particular mode of cooking, boiling, which allows a maximum use of the nutritive matter. This mode of consuming applies to other objects or matters used in the domestic sphere (textile, metal, wood, straw). Thus, the rural economy has for a type of functioning an indispensable notion for the future of contemporary economy, recycling.

All resources are used to exhaustion and may pass from one domain of utilization to another. For example, the worn sheet will be transformed into tea-towels or nappies for the new-born baby. Wood is used to make clogs, chips are used to feed the fire in the hearth, and cinders from the combustion of wood will be used as a bleaching agent in the wash. In the same way, dish-water is mixed with the pig's food. The worn clog will be transformed into a sheath for the stone to sharpen the sickle. This society was not

confronted with the problem of the management of waste, keeping the objects as long as possible in the domestic cycle.

In the preindustrial rural society, the stages of the various operational chains are organized according to this principle of economy, so that the taking away or the use of the natural resource has a reasoned objective.

It is possible to consider that this mentality also involved similar attitudes in the field of artistic creation. In a more general way, the mental posture related to the constraint could have generated a procedure close to that in the field of Popular Art in the countries of the European region.

To create is also to economize : economizing creating time, economizing decorating time, economizing materials, this combination giving place to an exacerbation of ingeniousness and effectiveness.

The relative permanence of this mentality can be analyzed by a certain immobility. This immobility could be analyzed by the means of the anchorage of peasantry in time and space.

A key to the understanding of the rural world resides in a particular conception of time. This time, cyclic, founded on a repetition of agricultural work, seasonal and calendar festivals, anchor the peasant in an almost atemporal vision of the world. At the same time, the strong anchoring and the feeling of belonging to a territory or a land doubly anchors the peasantry in an eminently stable system.

This environment tends to cause a reiteration of the same gestures on materials known for indexed uses. The transmission of knowledge by the oral way or by imitation of the gesture ensures the perenniality of a certain mode of production.

The collective practices of the rural world imply an adaptation of work and ways of life according to the soils and rhythm of the seasons. This way of living together in a community requires shared symbolical inscriptions. But also means of individual distinction within the group, notably illustrated by the ornaments of popular art. It would be interesting to study the aesthetic forms which these functional objects take within the framework of an interdependent economy.

The peasantry had acquired empirical knowledge, often rigid but not preventing adaptations of erudite knowledge (Olivier de Serres, for example). The modes of consumption and contemporary productions are not dependent any more on the immediate environment which however offered simple and effective solutions.

Our current societies put the question of better managing this heritage on a world scale. The rural societies can teach us without passeist or nostalgic vision an ecology of our resources and of their use on the territory. Everything seems to oppose these two types of society. One, is a society which tends to resolve the vital question of subsistence. The other is a society of surabundance which tends to resolve problems coming from overconsumption.

Can't we and shouldn't we question ourselves about what these peasant societies may have bequeathed us ?

The confrontation of the various solutions brought into the seven Member countries of the operation "cult rural" from a technological point of view as well as from the resulting material point of view would offer to all partners a global vision, a kind of repertory of choices for the politicians, the industrialists, and the general public.

2.3 Methodology

The setting up of this project requires :

1. The Study and the analysis of the various types of solution found by the rural heritage to manage the resources
 - management of the sources of energy
 - management of materials and of the land
 - management of work
 - management of the transformation of materials
 - management of waste
2. The study and analysis of the modes of transmission of know-how
3. The locating of what exists, inventory and selection in the collections of the institutions of the network "Cult- Rural", objects and practices related to this know-how
4. The study and analysis of the material heritage in usage, the basis of this know-how
5. The comparative study past/present of the different zones covered by "Cult-Rural"
6. Collections and investigations (pictures, films, photographs, objects) necessary to the safeguard (urgent ethnology) of these practises

Indicative list of objects :

The AFMA and MuCEM can dispose of the heritage material of all the museums of agriculture and relating objects from the museums of France.

- Elements of habitat : roof, traditional building materials, doors and windows, models, plans, investigation into rural architecture (EAR), investigation into traditional furniture (EMT)...
- Domestic interior (elements of the hearth, furniture...)
- Clothing
- Operational chains (from corn to bread, from fleece to clothing, from earth to the pot, from the piece of wood to the yoke...)
- Ecological unit from mountain area (way of life)

This project could be integrated within the framework of collaboration and work with various European museums around the oeuvre of the ethnologist Eugenie Goldstein.

General orientations for itinerant exhibitions :

From the perspective which emphasizes ecological techniques used by the rural populations of pre-industrial times.

Feeding mankind :

- preserving food

Nourishing the land

Nourishing the animals

Living :

- heating
- cooling
- using
- recovering
- recycling

Travelling

Protecting

Healing

Exploiting local resources.

3. Conclusion

Summing up of aims :

1. **To use** the material and immaterial heritage of the museums as a useful source of information for the management of resources
2. **To promote** rural culture as a source of information for our contemporary societies
3. **To define** what in the past can be used and re-adapted to contemporary problematics
4. **To find** through a knowledge of the past the means of a reasonable use of natural resources
5. **To consider** rural heritage as a source of inspiration. Beyond know-how and objects, it can have a didactic role in mental schemes against shortage. Shortage which is presently facing on another level our societies

6. **To teach** young people a new respectful way to live in the world, conscious of environment and of their responsibility in daily behaviour : to adopt a citizen attitude
7. **To create** a link between generations. Through knowledge of the older generations, to allow by the means of sensitizing workshops to renew a dialogue where seniors would be the teachers, invested with a very positive and attractive image
8. **To diffuse** in the largest possible manner the importance of using these practices and easily applied methodologies.

The French delegation
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