RehabiMed

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QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE PROJECT TO PROMOTE THE REHABILITATION OF TRADITIONAL MEDITERRANEAN ARCHITECTURE

FEBRUARY 2005

The NOUH is enhancing Egypt's urban landscape

Egypt has decided to improve the urban landscape of its cities and has therefore created the National Organization for Urban Harmony (NOUH) within the Minister of Culture. This body controls visual impact and coordinates district improvement schemes, especially those involving urban and architectural heritage. It was created last summer, and the results of its work can already be seen in projects such as the revalorization of the western bank of the river Nile at Luxor, the rehabilitation of the neighbourhood around the old Imbaba airport and the equipping of the tourist route between the Nile and the temple of Edfou.

The NOUH, whose president is Doctor Samit Gharib, is housed in a historic building of the Citadel of Cairo (a building constructed by Saladin in 1176). It comprises various centres for information and documentation, urban project planning, the preservation of valuable buildings, urban environment control and the conservation of natural spaces and gardens of historic interest.

In all the projects in which they participate, the NOUH's experts seek to respect the urban environment and the atmosphere of places, and to preserve the unique characteristics of old buildings. Their aim is to improve urban space in cities in close collaboration with other Egyptian institutions.

The NOUH has promoted the improvement of the urban landscape along one of the Nile canals in Luxor.

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Kalopanagiotis launches a revitalization project

This photomontage shows the old quarter of Kalopanagiotis after the rehabilitation project.

The Cypriot village of Kalopanagiotis, situated in the Troodos massif, hopes to recover its original character and become a tourist attraction by means of a project to rehabilitate its traditional architectural heritage and its landscape. The project begins in the first semester of 2005 and will end in 2008, with an investment of two million euros, financed by the European Union, the Cypriot State and Kalopanagiotis Council. The District of Nicosia is responsible for the project and has already presented it to the inhabitants of Kalopanagiotis, who received it very favourably.

The project will concentrate chiefly on the old town where various freelance architects are drafting projects for intervention on the basis of a meticulous diagnosis and photographs of the original state of the buildings and constructions in question. The work centres on the recovery of façades, paving, tiled roofs and public fountains, and will be supervised by the Department of Antiquities. The electricity lines will be undergrounded; concrete walls will be clad with stone and a historic house is to be rehabilitated as an arts centre.

Various paths will be built leading to monuments on the outskirts of the town.

Approximately 300 people currently live in Kalopanagiotis, though in the 1970s the village had as many as 1500 inhabitants. The village was a major tourist complex between 1930 and 1950 thanks to its sulphur springs that made it the spa town of Cyprus. However, the political instability of the 1960s and 70s saw the emigration of the townspeople to the cities, with very negative consequences for tourism.

La Campania protects its rural architecture

One million euros of regional funds set aside for work on villages in La Campania

The bill 'Basic regulations to safeguard and revalorize traditional rural architecture' envisages the protection of rural architecture constructed in the 13th-19th centuries in the territory of La Campania (Italy). This body of legislation of the Giunta Regionale della Campania follows the line established by both the European Landscape Convention, of 20 October 2000, and the national act 'Disposizioni per la tutela e la valorizzazione dell'architettura rurale' (2003).

These new regulations include the protection and revalorization of farming settlements and historic rural buildings, taking a census of rural heritage, typologies, the interventions to be carried out and the incentives for undertaking them. Regional grants are also offered for rehabilitation work, maintenance, consolidation and restoration, and the functional adaptation of spaces and installations. Regulations also prevent owners modifying the buildings or using them for different purposes without regional authorization; they are also obliged to allow public access to their property on at least one day a month. The subsidies meet up to 45% of the cost of interventions.

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euromed HERITAGE

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the opinions of the European Commission

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RehabiMed news

The RehabiMed regional symposium will centre on the rehabilitation of traditional architecture

The first public presentation of RehabiMed will be the regional symposium Rehabilitating Traditional Mediterranean Architecture, which will take place in Marseilles (France) from 22 to 24 September this year. The symposium will bring together experts from all countries in the Mediterranean basin who will pool their viewpoints and debate political strategies, management models and current rehabilitation techniques.

The work of these professionals in the fields of architecture, urbanism, human sciences and politics will offer a 21st-century response to the challenge of defining ways to revitalize the traditional architecture present in historic city centres and rural settlements scattered across the territory.

The symposium will take place in a year, 2005, which has been declared Year of the Mediterranean, marking the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process, which aims to share a history and traditions in a common Mediterranean space of peace and prosperity. More information: rehabimed@apabcn.es, by calling 933 933 770 or www.rehabimed.net.

Marseilles will be the meeting point for experts with a whole range of different viewpoints, means and circumstances.

PROGRAMME

Regional Symposium: Rehabilitating Traditional Mediterranean Architecture

Marseilles. 22, 23 and 24 September 2005

Thursday, 22 September 2005

The Mediterranean habitat

Living in the Mediterranean
- The environment
- Demographic and social dynamics
- New relations between the urban setting and the rural environment

Traditional Mediterranean architecture
- Shared characteristics
- Typologies, richness and variety of the habitat
- Specific forms of habitat
- The role of open spaces (public and private)

Debate

Urban rehabilitation (I)

Territorial planning
- The evolution of the role of rural and urban nucleuses in the organization of the territory (decline or attraction)
- Heritage value: helping or hindering development?

Present and future challenges
- Improvements to the habitat
- Social and economic development and revalorization of architectural heritage
- The role of rehabilitation in sustainable urban development

Debate

Friday, 23 September 2005

Urban rehabilitation (II)

Guidelines for the 'project' in traditional settings
- Conservation or demolition: the dialectic of memory and contemporaneity
- Urban forms to be maintained or reinvented

Models of rehabilitation projects
- A global approach as a response to long-term objectives
- Concertation and citizen participation
- Public and private agents (governability)

Debate

Rehabilitating buildings

Knowledge of the built: the RehabiMed method
- Complete diagnosis prior to the project
- Structural safety: technical inspections and preventive maintenance

Adapting the traditional dwelling to the demands of present-day life
- Definition of the criteria of habitability (accessibility, lighting, comfort, outdoor spaces, etc.)
- Traditional intervention techniques versus industrial procedures (complementarity or marginalization)

Debate

Conclusions

Saturday, 24 September 2005

Visit to rehabilitation schemes

The groups of experts are making headway

The three RehabiMed networks of experts are working full time on their respective fields of research. A group of experts is drawing up an inventory of the rehabilitation experiences of each country, which will then be introduced into a database. Those experiences that are most interesting in terms of results achieved and their potential for use as models of good practice will generate missions and meeting points for the agents.

The network of experts appointed to create an urban rehabilitation management method are starting to prepare working instruments and models. The experts commissioned by RehabiMed to improve the rehabilitation of traditional buildings in the Mediterranean are also continuing their work.

Two RehabiMed collaborators at the Egyptian university of Zagazig.

The project now has its own website

The RehabiMed website can now be visited at www.rehabimed.net. The website is an instrument that allows communication between all RehabiMed members and makes the project known to the general public. It contains all the information generated by RehabiMed and presents information related to the rehabilitation of traditional architecture in the Mediterranean basin.

Brigitte Colin 'The reuse of urban architectural heritage contributes to the transmission of the city's collective memory'

Since 1995, architect Brigitte Colin has been in charge of the Cities and Architecture programme of the Urban Development Section of the Social Sciences, Research and Policy division of the UNESCO. She previously worked for 13 years for the UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Department, where she was responsible for the museums and historic sites of north Africa, and the preservation of historic cities in the same geographical area.

Colin is a specialist in architecture and urban and regional planning in Arab countries, and is also in charge of the intersectorial project Urban Development and Freshwater Resources: Historic Coastal Towns, the MOST programme, and other architecture research projects and prizes. She is also the contact with regard to the cooperation of professionals, NGOs and UN-HABITAT on the Social Sustainability in Historic Centres project. Her contributions to the interview below are personal, and should in no case be attributed to the institution she represents.

Q: Do we have a 'moral' obligation to continue defending an architecture that is linked to uses that are gradually disappearing?

A: Yes. Architecture is one form of testimony of any culture and it forms a particular part of the common identity of the citizens, inhabitants and users of cities; this is how the reuse of urban architectural heritage helps to transmit the city's collective memory.

Q: What do you consider to be the essential values of traditional architecture that need to be preserved, and which can we give up?

A: That's too broad a question to give a precise answer, but traditional architecture linked to the history or to the traditions of people in a specific cultural situation should as far as possible be reused rather than preserved.

The tourist sector has brought about major transformations in traditional enclaves. Can sustainable tourism generate overall interventions that also respect traditional architecture?

To answer this question we have to agree on the definition of sustainability applied to tourism. In some situations, tourism-related development has proved to be a way of revitalizing historic cities. Unfortunately, the phenomena produced by uncontrolled tourist-related activities often lead to the destruction of traditional heritage in the interests of conserving certain historic monuments to reuse for tourism-related purposes only, and the increase in phenomena of gentrification in urban centres. In any case, the consequences of tourism for traditional societies, be they good or bad, generally have an irreversible effect on the social and cultural transformations of these societies.

Q: Some rehabilitation interventions turn small enclaves into great theme parks. Is this kind of caricature better than disappearance?

A: It seems preferable to harness the media associated with new information technologies in order to transmit some kinds of testimony than to create culture 'zoos'.

Architecture is a part of shared identity

Q: Is the rehabilitation of buildings and the revitalization of urban areas the key to preserving heritage values? Where is the dividing line?

A: When rehabilitating historic centres, it is important that all the project agents are involved at all levels, from the project to completion. Turning inhabitants into agents in the future of their neighbourhood is one proof of success. The urban fabric is a sum of complex parameters in which the lives of the people who work or live in the district is as important as the conservation of its stones; one thing shouldn't rule out the other.

These days, some historic districts are often home to rural or foreign immigrants with fewer resources who simply don't have the capacity to rehabilitate a dwelling that is not theirs. Yet the wealth of the cultural traditions that they contribute can help to revitalize the cultural traditions of these old districts if grants are given to improve their habitat. But the basic question lies in education and in the training of politicians and architects and planners: the revitalization of historic urban areas is linked to property problems. The rehabilitation of a building sometimes involves operations in speculation that are rarely controlled by the powers that be. The conception on the part of architects of participatory projects to rehabilitate buildings or entire districts could go some way to curbing these phenomena.

Reflections

From restoration to rehabilitation

Architectural restoration emerged in the late 18th century very much under the influence of the archaeological discoveries of Herculaneum and Pompeii. The early 19th century saw the start in Italy of a debate about heritage conservation that valued the original parts and clearly highlighted newly incorporated elements. The architects Raffael Stern and Giuseppe Valadier were particular exponents of this trend. Later, in France, Violette-le-Duc addressed the issue of restoration with the clear aim of returning monuments to their past splendour and in England, taking a diametrically opposed approach, John Ruskin proposed the strict conservation of what already existed. At the end of the 19th century, Camilo Boito set out to reconcile these two opposing viewpoints with his recommendations for scientific restoration.

Internationalization. At the initiative of Gustavo Giovannoni, in 1931 Athens was the venue for a meeting about heritage protection and the Athens Charter was drafted for the Conservation of Monuments. This was the first international referent to outline criteria for heritage interventions and the need for multidisciplinary work and the documentation of interventions, and served as a referent for the legislation of many countries.

After some years of confusion and the application of very differing criteria, in 1964 the 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments was organized in Venice. This meeting gave rise to the Venice Charter, which picked up the contents of the Athens Charter and added traditional buildings and urban complexes.

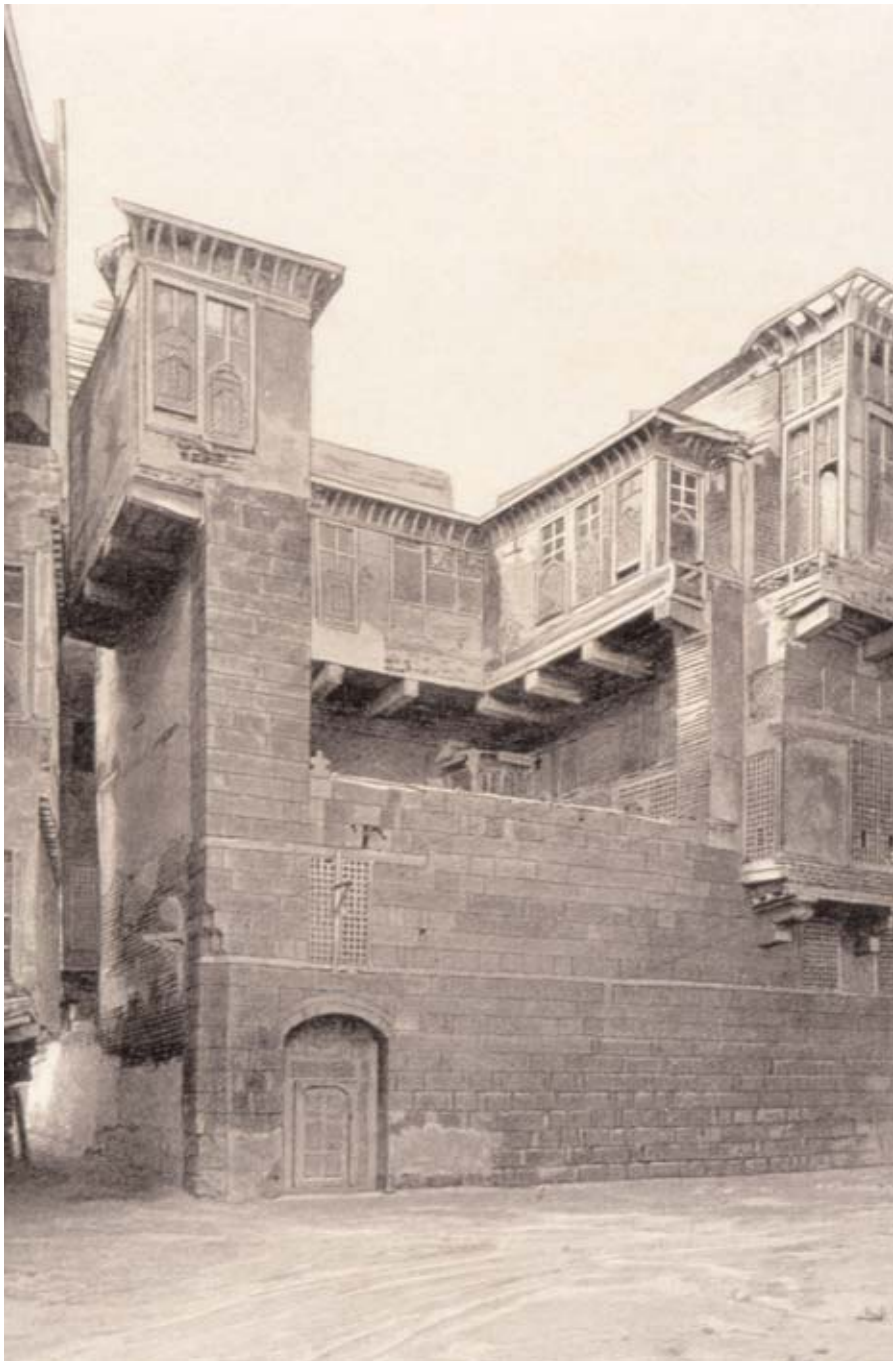
Rehabilitation. In 1975, at the initiative of the Council of Europe, the Amsterdam Charter and Declaration on Architectural Heritage came into being. They addressed the issue of the physical and social degradation of historic centres, their heritage value and the need to adopt political measures for rehabilitation. The new feature here was the concept of 'integrated conservation', going beyond the restoration of monuments to promote urban rehabilitation in general and implant measures of social balance (preventing the exodus of the population, maintaining the character of districts, etc.).

Venice is an outstanding international referent for professionals of restoration.

RehabiMed Vocabulary

	Grotte	Hut	Tent	House
Arabic	كَـهـف	كُـــوخ	خَيْمَـــة	بيت، منزل، مسكن
Catalan	Cova	Cabana	Tenda	Casa
French	Grotte	Cabanon	Tente	Maison
Greek	Σπηλιά	Καλύβα	Σκηνή	Σπίτι
Hebrew	מערה	צריף	אוהל	בית
Italian	Grotta	Capanna	Tenda	Casa
Spanish	Cueva	Cabaña	Tienda	Casa
Turkish	Magara	Kulube	Çadır	Evi

Graphic evidence



14th-century palace in Damietta (Egypt) drawn by Mignon with an almost photographic attention to detail.
Published in 1904 in Le Tour du Monde, Hachette, Paris.

'It is the view of a dead city whose winding alleys are lined with old palaces; a view of serene calm, like a projection of a far-off time that is disappearing.' This remark about the city of Damietta, written by the renowned Egyptologist Albert Gayet (1856-1916), is taken from the article 'Coins d'Égipte Ignorés' published in May 1904 in the magazine Le Tour du Monde. In addition to introducing us to the city's history, Gayet gives a detailed description of many of its buildings, the rich materials used and some of the construction techniques, always emphasizing the value of these constructions and criticizing their state of abandonment. The article was illustrated by various artists of the time, including Mignon, the author of the drawing published here, and is a vital document providing information about buildings that no longer exist.

Agenda

Heritage Month in Tunisia

'Culture and heritage at the service of touristic development' will be the theme of Heritage Month in Tunisia (18 April to 18 May). Activities will include the stepping up of the restoration and rehabilitation of numerous sites and monuments, the creation of tourist circuits to promote regional and local specificities, and links between the private sector and a new lease of life for historic sites and monuments. The month also aims to promote the trades involved in traditional heritage architecture.

Architectural heritage structures

This 22-24 June sees the organization of STREMAH 2005, the 9th International Conference on Structural Studies, Repairs and Maintenance of Heritage Architecture. The meeting is organized by Wessex Institute of Technology (UK) and will present the latest scientific and technological advances to be applied to the conservation of our architectural heritage. This year, the conference, with 18 years of experience, will take place in Malta. More information: Caroline Weaver cweaver@wessex.ac.uk.

Living in Earthen Cities

The congress Living in Earthen Cities - Kerpic'05, which will take place on 6 and 7 July 2005 at the Technical University of Istanbul (Turkey), deals with multiple aspects of earthen architecture, including disaster prevention. The congress will offer the complementary viewpoints of architects and engineers on such varied issues as materials, construction, environmental sciences and marketing. More information at www.kerpic.org.

Architectural heritage

The international meeting on Mediterranean architectural heritage (RIPAM 2005), organized by the Science Faculty of MoulayIsmail University, will be held at Meknes (Morocco) from 26 to 28 September. The meeting will provide a platform to debate architectural typologies and construction systems, and further exploration of materials, techniques and conservation methods. More information: www.fsmek.ac.ma.

Earthen Construction

The fourth Latin-American Seminar of Earthen Construction (SIACOT) will be held in the town of Monsaraz (Portugal) from 7 to 15 October 2005. The seminar is organized by Proterra, an international multilateral project of technical cooperation that centres on the transfer of earthen construction technologies to the production sectors and social policies of Latin American countries. More information: www.ceped.br/proterra/index_e.htm.

Heritage and Setting

'Monuments and Sites in their Setting: Conserving Cultural Heritage in Changing Townscapes and Landscapes' is the title of the 15th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium of the ICOMOS, which will take place from 17 to 21 October 2005 in Xi'an (China). More information at canada.icomos.org. canada.icomos.org.

PUBLICATION NEWS
Orientations sur la réhabilitation urbaine

150 pages
Council of Europe, October 2004
ISBN 92 871 5527 5
Language: French
17 euros
This study of the evolution of urban rehabilitation since the 1960s, based on legal references and texts of the Council of Europe, defines a model of urban rehabilitation and proposes practical tools generated by the experience of rehabilitation projects and activities carried out since 1973 by the Programme of Cooperation and Technical Assistance.

WEBSITE
Conservation of Palestinian heritage

http://www.riwaq.org
Riwaq, a Palestinian NGO specializing in the conservation, protection and dissemination of the architectural and cultural heritage of its country, is celebrating thirteen years of existence. It has consolidated itself as a point of reference for NGOs in the preservation, rehabilitation and dissemination of traditional architecture.

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