

Minutes - ARRE Scientific Meeting
« How to recount the European history of the royal residences »
Palace of Versailles Research Centre
7 - 8 April 2016

Agenda, list of participants and downloadable presentations on Basecamp:

<https://basecamp.com/2837399/projects/12430530>

One of the objectives of the meeting was to define actions highlighting the historic ties between the royal residences and a way of working together. Two topics were discussed: firstly, how a joint research project could enhance the European history of the residences and secondly, how residences can tell this shared history to their audience.

The proposals resulting from the meeting are summarized below.

PROPOSALS:

I) Develop an official, modern and functional definition of royal residences
(Andrea Merlotti – Venaria Reale)

The first definition of “royal residence” is taken from article 3 of the ARRE Statutes.

<http://www.europeanroyalresidences.eu/fr/statutes>

However, this definition should be improved. The second definition is given by ICOM DemHist, which defines 9 categories of historic houses. The "royal residence" is included in the category "Power houses (palaces and castles open to the public)."

<http://demhist.icom.museum/shop/data/container/CategorizationProject.pdf>

To compile a definition of "royal residence", we must firstly distinguish "residence" from "museum". The main difference between the two lies in the role conferred by history and the recognized identity of the residence. This definition should be acceptable to all ARRE members and take into account the specificity of a royal residence in comparison to other types of institution.

II) To recount a common European history

a) How to recount a common European history (Pilar Martin Laborda – Patrimonio Nacional)

All the royal residences tell the story of their courts on their visitor tours. ARRE Members insist on the national character of the research carried out in their palaces, so there is no specific research on how to recount European history. We need to try to interpret history from a European perspective and teach it with innovative methods. Visitors need to experience something unique, so residences should offer this experience in an educational and understandable way, using the exterior architecture of the palaces and the works of art as a medium, together with specific learning resources - timelines, photos, treasure hunts, etc.

b) Telling the history of the 20th century (Andrea Merlotti – Venaria Reale)

Proposal to focus on the theme of political identity and use of the residences in the 20th century. In this sense ARRE could put in place a project organised in three phases:

- **November 2016:** identification of researchers, officers, academics or research units within ARRE able to start off the research on this theme with an initial meeting to discuss methodology.
- **November 2017:** organisation of a closed-door seminar to present the initial research results and discuss the next steps. .
- **November 2018:** to mark the centenary of the end of WW1, schedule a conference on the identity of the residences in the 20th century and present the results of this research to the public. Venaria is ready to host this conference.

c) Project “Europe of the Courts” (Elena Taddia - CRCV)

Europe of the Courts (not the Courts of Europe) is a research project developed by the Palace of Versailles Research Centre.

Considering courts as:

- The archetypes of European identity,
- Places of movement and transfer,
- The founding institutions of European civilization.

These Courts should not be considered as a facet of each national history, but as a network history. We invite residences and especially their research centres (Versailles, Venaria, Warsaw, and Potsdam) to participate in this joint project on the identity of the Court at a European level. Further information will be transmitted by the end of the year after the meetings of the steering committee.

III) How to design more European content in each residence

a) **Call for articles** (Mathieu da Vinha - CRCV)

Each residence could write a manifesto or an article describing "how its palace is European." The collected articles would demonstrate exchanges between the royal residences and could be highlighted on a European visitor's tour in every palace. We could exchange these articles between our residences and enrich them according to everyone's knowledge. They could be published on the Internet or in a collective publication. This approach would put into practice the network's work.

b) **Studying and connecting the historical figures of our residences** (Samuel Wittwer - SPSG)

- *Let them talk:* the royal residences have sources (letters, diaries, etc.) in which historical figures talk about Europe, and as such they link the European courts. Through these very personal documents, the public would have direct and privileged access to historical figures.
- *Let them guide:* These figures could guide us through the private and public living spaces of their palaces.
- *Let them represent:* our residences hold many objects given as gifts, both from personal and political/state relationships; their symbols and codes are key to understanding European court society.

Update: 15 June 2016

- c) **Participating in the exhibition about Maria Theresa in Schloss Schönbrunn** (Martin Mutschlechner – Schloss Schönbrunn)
In 2017, Schönbrunn is planning a major exhibition on Maria Theresa, one of the representatives of Court Culture. Influences and European links between dynasties could be highlighted. Participation of ARRE members in this exhibition could certainly give added value to the project.
- d) **Virtual museum – such as the Web application Timeline** (Clara Gorla – Venaria Reale, Vincent Heymans – Coudenberg-Former Palace of Brussels)
In the European context, ARRE could develop a digital project, such as *Timeline*. In this project the residences could recount history through the circulation of artists who worked in the palaces, through the circulation of artwork, models and styles, and through the historic, iconographic and allegoric decor of the palaces, and narrate them chronologically or by theme.
- e) **Organising a “European Royal Residences Day”** (Pilar Martin Laborda – Patrimonio Nacional)
On this day, more European content would be on offer for visitors. For a first edition, we could rely on the written correspondence between the figures of the residences, cf. "Let them talk" mentioned above.
- f) **Writing a common guide book** (Andrea Merlotti – Venaria Reale)
Work on writing a guidebook about all the European royal residences presented through their common features from a perspective that unifies Europe.
- g) **Organising a joint exhibition between several residences** (Andrea Merlotti – Venaria Reale)
- h) **Creating an itinerary of European Royal Residences** (Elena Taddia - CRCV)

NEXT STEPS – Who? How? When?

Each participant is invited to indicate any progress related to his or her proposal.

- Definition of “royal residence”
- Call for articles “European figures of the royal residences”
- Define European aspects of each royal residence
- Project “Identity of the residences in the 20th century”
- Project “Europe of the Courts”

Etc.

To be noted:

Interesting website: <http://www.premoderndiplomats.org/>

Symposium “*Rituals of Power. The Ceremonies of Courts and States from the Late Medieval Period to the Modern Era*” organized by the Royal Castle in Warsaw, 6-8 October 2016 <https://www.zamek-krolewski.pl/en/education/rituals-of-power>

Exhibition and symposium organised by the Patrimonio Nacional for the tercentenary of the birth of Charles III of Spain (1716-1788), October 2016

In 2020, the Prince’s Palace of Monaco is planning a temporary exhibition to reconstitute and present the former collection of the Princes of Monaco.