

The second international workshop for craftsmen in Lithuania

During the examination of all the logs that were gathered around the building site the craftsmen made several remarks about the quality of the wood and how they had been treated in the original construction process. These observations were important to bear in mind in the further restoration of this 19th century dwelling house. Our first question was about the sills – the bottom logs – in the building. All the other logs in the building were hewn by a broadaxe, but the sills were sawn. Had they, at some time, been exchanged during an earlier repair or rebuilding of the house? Due to the bad condition of the sills it was hard to tell if they had been manually sawn or if it was done in a mechanical way. And how should we treat the new logs that had to replace the old sills?

This and other questions we discussed during the second international workshop for craftsmen that took place in Lithuania from the 22nd of September till the 2nd of October 2001. Within the programme “Wooden culture through Europe” the series of seven workshops is focusing on securing and developing knowledge in crafts related to the interpretation and analysis of the European building heritage. The programme also wants to draw people’s attention to the problems concerning the wooden heritage and to create conditions needed for its protection.

Another example of small details was how much bark should be taken away from the new logs that had to replace the old and damaged logs in the buildings. Some of them would not be visible after the restoration but after the discussion among all the participants, architects and craftsmen together, we decided to use the exact same method on the new logs as the one that was used with the old ones.

The workshop was held in the Daugyvenė’s Cultural History Museum - Reservation, in Radviliskis region in the middle part of Lithuania, 167 km Vilnius. The museum is situated in the district of Daugyvenė’s Landscape Preservation, which is well known for its cultural and historical objects. The museum consists of the farmstead of Burbiskis manor with the 28 hectares of park with ponds system; the Raginenai archaeological complex - a mound and tumuli; and Kleboniškių ethnographic village where two buildings were going to be restored. The director of the museum, Egidijus Prascevičius, had proposed to transfer two buildings from the end of the 19th century to the museum - a dwelling house from Arimaiciai village in Radviliskis region and a granary from Voroniai village in

Pakruojis region. The buildings had authentic, characteristic architecture for that region and they fitted perfectly the village forming criteria. Both buildings had been built in farmsteads of rich farmers in 1885.

The farmer Aidukas

The dwelling house was built of logs whose sides were hewn by a broadaxe. It was standing on a solid, but not deepened foundation. At first the house had a thatched half-hipped roof. After a rebuilding it became sloped, and later, in the 1960-ies it was covered with slate. The pediment on the street side is from planks and the other one from logs. The dwelling house has two ends. The “daily room” for the family called “*grycia*” was in the end on the street side. It had dirt-floor made from clay; a stove made of clay and bricks, covered with plaster and whitened. In the other end “*seklycia*” - the good or the guestroom and a small sleeping room - were situated. They had floors made of boards. This end was not heated. Both ends were connected by the middle part of the house – the entrance hall and a pantry - “*samara*”. The living room, the good room and the pantry had ceilings of boards, fixed on beams and covered with boon. There was no ceiling in the entrance hall. The structure of the building is typical for the traditional dwelling house in Aukštaitija. During the last years the dwelling house has not been used. The owner, who inherited it after his father’s death, lives in a stone house near by. The granary has been built of logs on a foundation of stones under the corners and a few other places to bear the construction. It had sloped roof covered with straw. In the 1960-ies the covering was changed to slate. The pediments have been made of logs. The granary has a rectangle form (9,7 x 6,37 m) and two rooms with the entrances at the front side of the building. One room was for grain. The owner of the farmstead built himself the granary himself. The farmer, Aidukas, was not only a farmer, but also a carpenter as his father and grandfather. His son, Ignas Aidukas, became a carpenter too. The carpenters Aidukai used to build dwelling houses, granaries and other buildings in the whole region. There is a possibility, that in 20th century they were the carpenters that built the Paduobiai manor. The last owner of the granary, the Aidukas’ granddaughter, said that the noble man had given 30 hectares of land as a gift to each of her grand-grandfather and his two brothers that were also carpenters. Otherwise they would have had to

serve in Car's army, because they had no land. After the Soviet occupation the granary was nationalised. A collective farm used it. In 1965 the former owners had a possibility to buy (!) it back from the collective farm. For the last period the granary was used as a storehouse.

Special documentation

The museum bought the buildings in the beginning of July. Special documentation of the granary, such as examination, conditions of heritage protection and appeal for the transference was needed, because it was a listed building. Today, in Lithuania, there is a lack of possibilities to preserve buildings of the old heritage *in situ*. In many cases the only alternative for preservation of valuable buildings of the traditional wooden architecture at the countryside is to move them to open air museums. There are no financial opportunities to preserve this heritage in a large scale *in situ*. Only a very few wooden buildings have been restored in Lithuania in 2001; the Kurtuvenai granary and a few churches. Today new technologies brought from the West makes wooden traditional building unattractive and its heritage unpopular. The desire to get closer to Western culture stimulates seeking connections in the fields of the cosmopolitan architecture like stone architecture of baroque, classicism and other historical periods. The traditional wooden architecture is lacking in the consideration of the problems from the society and institutions and it is not appreciated properly. There is no strategy and system for the protection and renovation and there is a lack of people caring and a lack of money. The survival of the wooden architecture and especially of the wooden dwelling architecture appears to be a huge problem.

That is why the participation in the all actions of the project "Wooden Culture" is important for Lithuania. This gives an opportunity to rediscover Lithuanian wooden heritage, in the international European space and also to change attitude towards its value and traditions. And, the Lithuanian participation in the international project "Wooden culture", with its old traditions and valuable wooden heritage, could be an important support to achieve the main objectives of the project.

The forests were cut down

Lithuania belongs to the region where wooden building dominated from the very beginning of the civilisation till the Second World War. The country had perfect natural conditions for wood to grow. Two thirds of

Lithuania's area has been covered with wood until the beginning of the second millennium. In the 18-19th century most of it was cut down about one third of the area is covered with wood¹. Until the middle of the 20th century wood was the cheapest and most common building material in Lithuania. It suited perfectly for the buildings in this damp and cold climate. This created good conditions for developing carpentry schools and a rich wooden architecture. Unfortunately, the oldest heritage has not survived. It was swept away by the wars of the 17-18th century followed by the ruins, famines and plague. In the further centuries not so much was destroyed. Original and rich heritage of wooden architecture from the 18th to the beginning of the 20th century consists of old farmsteads, manors, little villages, suburbs, resorts and sacred ensembles. The conditions and survival possibilities differ a lot. Sacred architecture is one of the best preserved since local religious communities took good care of it. 265 churches, more than 100 chapels and about 220 belfries are preserved. After the 2nd World War, during the period of Soviet industrialisation and collectivisation², wooden dwelling architecture started to vanish rapidly. In 1990, when independence was gained, the process of urbanisation became much more intensive. The complicated economical situation made people move from the countryside and the villages to the big towns. The settlements in the countryside, the basis of the wooden dwelling architecture, vanished bit by bit. More and more buildings were left without use and were pulled down or brought to ruins. Manors appeared in extremely bad condition; about 500 ruins of wooden manors' farmsteads are known. Soviet industrialisation had a bad influence over the old carpentry traditions. Old crafts disappeared as when the old carpenters died.

Kleboniskiai village

The first day of the workshop in Kleboniskiai village we were guided by Egidijus Prascevicus to get acquainted with the surroundings. The village lies in a picturesque valley, on the right bank of Daugyvene

¹ Lithuanian area is 65 000 km², 18 900km² covered with wood: pine forests 37.2 % and spruce forests 23.4%

² At the Soviet time intensive urbanization started - people moved to the cities to escape from work in the collective farms: until the War 80% lived in the countryside, in the seventies the number decreased to 40%.

River. The street of the village winds parallel to the river. It is surrounded by old trees and has an open place only in the central part of the village. The rows of the old trees in straight angles to the street and the river, indicates the places of previous farmsteads. Dwelling houses and granaries stand close to the street and, in some distance, the sheds and bathhouses close to the river. The traditional flowerbeds with asters and dahlias under the windows of the dwelling houses were in blossom at the time of the workshop. The barns are settled on the top of the valley, where the fields begin. Traditional fences made from small planks, branches and stakes fences off the street and the farmsteads. A small wooden chapel transferred from Zilaiciai, stands at the entrance of the village. In a smith's house, smith's working and wood processing tools are exhibited. Three of the six dwelling houses belong to the museum. Various things from the everyday life of farmers in the end of the 19th century are exhibited there. In three granaries, a threshing barn and two hay barns, expositions of working tools, machines and other agricultural objects are stored or exposed. A bathhouse is still in use. After we had crossed the river at the bridge, we walked up to the cemetery that is located the forest on the other side. Further, on a hill, stands an old windmill built in 1884. It works again after the reconstruction in 1998. Albinas Lukosevičius - the miller and the head of the economic department of the museum - takes care of milling grain for the visitors of the museum.

Almost all the buildings in the village are built of logs in the end of the 19th century. Their structure and constructions are typical for this region. The two-end dwelling houses with an antechamber in the centre stand one end facing the street. Living rooms of masters called "grycios" are in the end by the street side, in the other end – the good rooms, "seklycios", are located. Granaries have one or two rooms. They are quite big, because the land in the region is fertile and harvest is always good. In the granaries of two rooms: one room is used as a corn-bin and the other for storing things and as a sleeping room sometimes. The buildings of the farmstead differ only in details of equipment, plan and constructions. This depends on the richness of the farmstead.

A sign of wealth

During the discussion about the bottom logs in the dwelling house, several of the participants claimed that they have to be changed sometimes during a repair. Since logs were processed by a saw one argued that they must be of a later date, when the saw was avail-

able. But, on the other hand, at this time in Lithuania in the late 19th century, the saw was not unusual. Wealthy people like at the manor's or rich farmers, wanted sawn wood. Wood processed by saw was a sign of wealth. And we know that a rich farmer built this house. So maybe he started off with sawn logs but very soon realised that it was going to be too expensive and continued his building in the more traditional way? New questions and hard to find any answers. But we could all agree that for the future generations it is important not only to read about this discussion in a report, or read about "The introduction of the mechanical saws in Lithuania" or about the recourses of the rich farmers in general terms. It is also a great asset to see these differences between the logs in reality - in the houses - and also give a possibility of a tactile comparison and experience of history.

Due to the premises of this workshop we had to start from the dismantled buildings that were moved to the museum. This was of course a disadvantage for the overall method and for the participants. The participants couldn't see the buildings in their original places. They had to begin the analysis of the buildings from the separate details. The pieces of the buildings were placed according to the principle of the layouts. All the elements, paying no attention to their condition, were laid around the foundations on the sites where they would be built up again. That's why a very precise documentation, showing the detailed pulling down process and the marking of every piece, was needed. But, the participants could also benefit from this situation. Especially the craftsmen were very interested to examine all the small details of the logs that were gathered around the two building sites. There were remarks that hardly would have been made before a complete dismantling of the buildings. For example about the small difference in width between the root end and the top end of the logs.

To start the workshop with two dismantled buildings, just several stacks of logs around the building sites, were challenging for us as organisers and managers. The documentation of the buildings helped the participants in their imagination of the buildings in their original conditions *in situ*.

A horseshoe above the door

The dwelling house and the granary have the same log-house construction. Rasa Bertasiute, architect from the Lithuanian open-air museum and participant in the workshop, told about the buildings and the pulling down process. The participants got acquainted with the drawings, photos and the scheme of the dismant-

ling process and marking system. Egidijus Prascevicus and Rasa Bertasiute presented an exhibition about this process that was placed conveniently at the granary close to the work sites. The exhibition showed plans, layouts of the facades and two sections; all the drawings in scale 1:50. During the dismantling of the dwelling house one could state the fact that the walls of the central part of the building have been reconstructed and the ends of the building had been changed in a later phase. Inside the *kamara* some soot have been found and therefore an archaeological investigation was executed by archaeologist Algis Juknevicus. Remains of a primary hearth have been found under the dirt-floor. Crosses carved in logs have been noticed in the corners of the building and remains of candles in them. Above the opening of the *kamara* a horseshoe had been placed. All these things indicate that the old customs have been very important - the crosses and candles protected the building from evil, the horseshoe was for "filling" the bins of the *kamara*. The photogrametric laboratory of the Monument's Restoration Institute has measured the dwelling house and the measuring of the granary was made Rasa Bertasiute. Detailed photos were also taken. Important data about the building process of the constructions, different reconstructions and repairing over more than a century was gathered after having questioned the owners and aged local inhabitants.

In order to introduce the participants to the wooden Lithuanian heritage, and put the two houses in wider context, we went on study tours. We visited both Aukstaitija (Highland) and Samogitia (Lowland). In these regions two different Lithuanian tribes lived. The structure, proportions and constructions of their buildings differed as well.

Samogitia is in the Western part of the country and is full of wooden manors and sacred architecture. We visited Plateliai wooden church and Berzoras sacred ensemble consisting of a church, bell-tower and chapel. All these buildings are representative for the traditional vernacular sacred architecture of the 18th century. We also visited the Birzuvenai manor. The farmstead of the manor retained its complexity, which is very rare in Lithuania. Some of the buildings had been changed into masonry in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, but several wooden buildings are still left from the middle the 18th century, for example the noble men's house and the granary, *oficina*. The woodworker's houses, the smithy, two threshing barns of the original construction are all from the beginning of the 20th century. This is the only farmstead that has kept the structure of a regular rep-

resentative yard built up with wooden houses from the 18th century. And the structure of a farmstead itself, except the buildings, have remained the same from the 17th century. The farmstead is in bad condition and there is a big danger for its survival. The chief architect of Telsiai region, Algirdas Zebrauskas, and a specialist of cultural heritage, Daiva Dapkeviciute, told about the problems of the farmstead and the efforts to save it.

The Lithuanian open-air museum

During the workshop we also visited the main Lithuanian open-air museum, which is situated 25 km from Kaunas. On the way to the museum, in the territory of Kaunas Sea Regional Park, we went on an excursion to a Lithuanian forest. Forester Povilas Vasiliauskas told about dominating tree's species, their specific features and the utilisation in the traditional building.

The Lithuanian Open Air museum is situated close to the small town Rumsiskes on the bank of the Kauno sea, which was formed in the 1960-ies when a hydro-electric power station was established on the river Nemunas. The small old town Rumsiskes was in the valley of that river and was drowned after the dam was built. The inhabitants of the small town have been moved away. The old wooden church of Rumsiskes was transferred to the present Rumsiskes settlement. The church was built of logs in 1707 in a traditional way of the middle part of Lithuania – laconic and modestly decorated. The interior design, with the smooth, painted walls as a background for finely carved altars, pulpit and organ choir, is also very characteristic to the Lithuanian sacred architecture. The museum opened in 1974. About 130 buildings and around 46 000 other exhibits from all parts of the country can be seen within the enormous museum area of about 175 hectares. Buildings from the 18th-20th century are set in groups according to ethnic regions of Lithuania; Aukstaitija, Samogitia, Dzūkija and Suvalkija. One has also tired form characteristic settlements like big and small regular and scattered villages and individual farmsteads. The small town is situated in the middle of the museum. The last specimen of the oldest Samogitian dwelling house with an open hearth in the middle, called *numas*, can be also find there. This building is mentioned in the literature of the 14th-17th century. Later a building like this was used for other household activities.

In this way the museum provides a retrospective view to the Lithuanian wooden village architecture of the 19th century. Complexity, organic connection with nature, laconic forms, moderate decoration and

colouring - all that is very characteristic for Lithuanian country-side architecture. Characteristic relief and surroundings of different regions are chosen for villages and farmsteads in the museum. Buildings and farmstead are set in an environment close to the original.

Many similarities

After the first examinations and discussions mentioned above the participants could come to a first conclusion presented in a general discussion. The national teams described the thoughts and questions that were most interesting for them. According to that, there were some analyses of the construction, but most of all the process of both construction and materials. The different national teams also presented comparisons of the layouts, the constructions and the materials. It was very interesting for us all to see that for example the dwelling house from the 19th century has great similarities in many countries. And we could also see that within “the log-house family”, with so many similarities all over Europe, maybe the biggest differences is in the roof constructions.

As mentioned before it is hard to protect valuable domestic buildings *in situ*. The only way to maintain them is to transfer the buildings to open air museums, regional parks and other places, where they will be used and have an owner. That’s why the creation of methods for the transferring based on the old building traditions is so important. Due to the lack of interest of this cultural heritage we wanted the workshop to provide a basis for the dissemination of information and crafts skills through a European co-operation. We also wanted to demonstrate the sustainability of traditional building materials and technologies through the conservation of two existing historic buildings. At the same time we could take the opportunity to popularise an attitude to the process of restoration, which would be based on the old technologies among the professional restorers and the local specialists in the sphere of wooden building and cultural heritage. And finally we hoped to popularise wooden building in the society and in this way create opportunities for the use of old technologies in today’s wooden building.

The Daugyvene’s Cultural History Museum and the Kleboniskiai Village were a perfect place for these purposes. The museum is often full of visitors and open to society. This was a good opportunity to present the project to the society and to arouse curiosity in the wooden heritage.

The village is a very old settlement. It was estab-

lished during the royal land reform in the 16th century¹. It has been allotted 25 valakas during the reform and belonged to the parsonage of Seduva. The title Kleboniskiai comes from the word *klebonija* that means parsonage in Lithuanian language. The structure of the village changed as time went by, but the main part that was established in the 16th century, survived till the beginning of the 20th century. Fourteen farmsteads, settled in both sites of the street, formed the village in the beginning of the 20th century. In 1926, during a new Lithuanian land reform, the village has been broken up into separate farmsteads. Only three farmsteads were left in the primary place of the village. In Soviet period the part that had been left was badly ruined.

People living in a museum

An exposition of a rural mode of life was established and the reconstruction of the old structure of the village was started due to Egidijus Prascevičius own initiative in 1989. Today the village has 6 farmsteads with 26 buildings. Local people still live in three of them, living a traditional farming life. The other three farmsteads with 16 buildings belong to the museum. Restored buildings

¹ The aim of the reform was to arrange the ownership of land and to adapt it to the “three field” system. The land had been measured, valued and divided into certain units- *valakas* (the size of one *valakas* depended on land’s quality and it was about 21 hectare). Services and taxes for the manor have been counted from the *valakas*. All the land of a village has been divided into three fields. Each farmstead got one third of *valakas* in each field. In one of the fields the village has been settled. The structure of the village has been defined by certain rules. According to them, it was allotted in narrow stripes of land one third of the *valakas* each. Dwelling houses, cattle sheds, bath-houses - all the buildings that were carefully protected from fire - stood in one side of the street; granaries, threshing barns, the buildings for storing things and harvest, on another side.

in situ and transferred buildings from other regions in the neighbourhood have formed them. The primary village structure is rebuilt by placing the transferred buildings in the places where the old buildings stood in the end of the 19th century. This reconstruction is partly based on the archaeological investigations by archaeologist Algis Juknevičius. The remains of the primary building have been found in the place chosen for the dwelling house, indicated by the substructure and three dirt-floors from different periods of time. That shows that a dwelling house stood in the place before and has been rebuilt several times.

During the workshop of course the “field experiences” shared by the participants during the work was the basic exchange of knowledge. But there were also a lot of other activities. There were presentations for visitors and presentations, or small lectures, by the members of the workshop, both for each other and also during the Guest programme. We could listen to lectures about “French wooden constructions and the characteristics of their restoration”, to “Changing Windows in Objects of Heritage: Tendencies and Problems” in Poland and “General Characteristics of Wooden Architecture and the Problems in Conservation of Wooden Buildings in Turkey” from Turkey. The carpenter Robert Carlsson from Sweden talked about “The Continuity of the Carpentry Traditions in Sweden”. He told us about the experience acquired during other wood restoration projects. One of the guests, the - Lithuanian architect Giedre Filipaviciene, spoke about “Wooden Architecture in Trakai: problems in restoration”. Many of the presentations were made in the evenings, after dinner, and were followed by discussions.

In the beginning of the workshop a film about the dismantling of the granary and literature about Lithuanian wooden architecture was presented. Also a documentary, “Disappearance of Zverynas”, was showed. The film was about one of the residential districts in Vilnius, built up with small wooden houses in the end of 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century and suffering the invasion of the contemporary building. The participants from the guest countries had also brought some material - video, slides about wooden architecture, their renovation and protection.

Wooden heritage protection

During the Guest programme there was a seminar for the specialist from the Lithuanian cultural heritage protection. It aimed at propaganda for the wooden heritage protection and renovation based on old

technologies. We also wanted to introduce to heritage protection systems, problems and ways of solving them in other countries. 47 specialists of the Lithuanian cultural heritage protection institutions came to the seminar from all over the country. The guests, having arrived to the museum early in the morning, could observe the work process of the carpenters. The curator of the project “Wooden Culture” from the Council of Europe Nuria Sanz took part in the event too. She presented aims and factors of the project to the participants of the seminar. Göran Andersson (Sweden) introduced with the idea and goals of the workshop project and, Rasa Bertasiute presented the objects of the workshop. Later, in a threshing barn turned into a conference room, the participating architects in the workshop made the following reports about the wooden heritage and its protection in their countries: “Activities and Networks Within Building Conservation in Sweden” by Henrik Larsson and Göran Andersson; “The General Characteristics of the Wooden Architecture in Turkey and Conservation Problems of wooden Houses” by Can Hersek; “Organisation and Problems of the protection of monuments in Poland” by Dominik Maczynski; “Short information on Wooden Architecture in Romania” by Annamaria Halasz and “Some characteristics of Finnish Wooden Buildings and Their Protection” by Harri Metsälä. Abundance of questions and discussions followed the reports.

The seminar ended with an evening party. The folk group “Seduva” from Radviliskis region performed Lithuanian traditional songs for the participants and the guests. Everyone was charmed and captivated by melodious songs of Romanian carpenter Vasile Pop.

The last day of the workshop was dedicated for the demonstrational work of the carpenters and evaluation. For the demonstration each national group had chosen a characteristic constructional detail, which was, or still is, used for building in that country. The demonstrational works were really an interesting element in the workshop, not only for the participants of the workshop but also for the guests of the final day.

Important for the local society

This last day the representatives of Lithuanian Ministry of Culture and local authorities, organisers and sponsors took part. The programme co-ordinator and representative of the Council of Europe, Nuria Sanz, introduced everybody with the objectives of the programme “Wooden Culture throughout Europe”. The representatives of each national group did an evaluation report about the workshop and gave short characteristics

on good things and shortcomings. Late in the evening the participants of the seminar gathered in the dining room in the old dwelling house for the last time and said goodbye to the organisers of the workshop, the workers from Daugyvene's museum and Radviliskis region and the members of the Ministry of Culture.

Afterwards members of different Lithuanian organisations evaluated the event according to the reflections of the society. It was especially important for Radviliskis society. A lot of local people used to come and observe the work of the workshop. That aroused wonder not only about wooden heritage and its restoration, but they also felt as they belonged to a part of Europe's society. The organisers of the workshop, the workers from Daugyvene museum, were delighted with the extremely warm atmosphere. The carpenters who have been working there received a lot of experience and rendered their own. Another important thing is that they have founded new colleagues in other European countries. The professionals - the members of the cultural heritage Protection - also left satisfied with the results. The participants of the educational seminar that was held during the workshop for specialists could get acquainted with common work and ideas of architects-restorers. The reports about heritage problems made by Swedish, Finnish, Romanian, Turkish, Polish participants were very interesting and valuable for their everyday work.

One of the general aims of the project 'Wooden Culture throughout Europe' is to attract the attention of the state institutions and the society to the wooden heritage as a common European value. There is a hope that this aim has been achieved. Lithuania takes an active part in the project and the workshop is a result of this.

It has been important in spreading movements of the society and the work of state institutions at the protection of wooden heritage. In general, the project cooperate powers working in the field of wooden heritage in Lithuania. It provides the opportunity to relate the own wooden heritage with the heritage of all the Europe, to define own and general problems, modulate their solutions and, at the same time, to preserve and to enrich the common European heritage.

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