



PRISME



Colloque CNRS-PRISME / Université de Strasbourg

Financer le patrimoine religieux

Funding religious heritage

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La préservation du patrimoine culturel apparaît comme une figure récurrente du cahier des charges des pouvoirs publics, sans que la légitimité de cet engagement ne soit remise en question. Si les périodes de crise des finances publiques peuvent se traduire par une diminution du volume financier engagé, le principe même d'une intervention publique semble s'imposer. Connaissant la part considérable qu'occupent les édifices du culte et leur mobilier au sein du patrimoine culturel, la question se pose d'une éventuelle singularité de cette catégorie du patrimoine religieux lorsqu'elle est abordée sous l'angle financier.

Ce colloque poursuit principalement deux objectifs : recenser les dispositifs financiers applicables en France et dans d'autres États européens et extra-européens ; apprécier précisément la spécificité du patrimoine religieux au sein de la problématique plus générale du financement des cultes d'un côté et du financement du patrimoine culturel de l'autre.

Au préalable, il convient d'interroger la réalité de la contrainte financière dans la tâche de protection du patrimoine. Dans quelle mesure les difficultés qui accompagnent un tel objectif sont-elles imputables au facteur financier ? Le manque de moyens financiers régulièrement invoqué est-il toujours déterminant ?

Ensuite, apprécier la spécificité du patrimoine religieux au sein du patrimoine culturel du point de vue du financement constitue une étape logique mais incontournable et renvoie à la conciliation entre deux systèmes de financement parallèles : les ressources liées au patrimoine culturel d'une part mais aussi les moyens accordés aux organisations religieuses par les pouvoirs publics. Le point de vue de responsables de l'administration du patrimoine permettra d'enrichir les conclusions que l'on aura pu tirer de l'analyse des systèmes applicables. En outre, il convient d'appréhender le patrimoine religieux dans sa double dimension de protection et de mise en valeur. Ce second aspect de la gestion du patrimoine soulève en effet la question de la distinction entre financement d'activités religieuses et soutien à la valorisation culturelle des bâtiments concernés.

L'analyse mérite d'être étendue à d'autres systèmes de relations Églises-État, afin d'observer comment, d'un État à l'autre, se conjuguent les deux sources de financement et de là les deux logiques qui les sous-tendent, à savoir la protection d'un patrimoine d'intérêt public d'un côté et la contribution à un exercice effectif de la liberté de culte de l'autre. Il est frappant de voir les similitudes en matière de protection du patrimoine religieux, qu'elles proviennent d'un consensus autour de l'importance symbolique de ces biens ou de l'affirmation du manque de moyens. Mais la mise en perspective de ces systèmes nationaux révèle aussi leur complexité. L'existence d'un premier financement des édifices du culte entraîne-t-elle une diminution de la participation des pouvoirs publics au titre du patrimoine, ou les deux logiques sont-elles étanches ? De manière générale, comment s'articulent le financement lié à la dimension patrimoniale de ces bâtiments et le soutien économique dont bénéficient les cultes pour entretenir leurs édifices ?

Au final, l'enjeu consiste à déterminer dans quelle mesure ces dispositifs de financement sont, ou non, perfectibles et quel rôle joue la dimension religieuse de ce patrimoine dans une possible évolution.

One observes a widely shared agreement on the necessity to maintain the cultural heritage. All countries in Western Europe have passed an apposite legislation, sometimes a long time ago. As a consequence, grants made available for repair of historic buildings are like a steady point on the financial agenda of public authorities, the legitimacy of this commitment remaining unquestioned.

Nevertheless, the same countries also share a repeated lack of funding to achieve a satisfying maintenance of the valuable buildings and goods. The insufficient means could even amount to a marked feature of this issue of heritage management and it seems unlikely to weaken with regard to the phenomenon of "heritage inflation" and in times of financial crisis. These statements particularly apply to the - very often - most important part of this heritage, namely religious buildings - especially places of worship. Whether in the countryside or major cities, religious buildings play a central part in this debate and might be subject to the same challenges. The question nevertheless remains to know how much influenced is the funding of the places of worship by this additional cultural dimension, and, inversely, whether those buildings are subject to specific legislation.

Hence, the purpose of this seminar is two-fold. On the one hand, it aims at mapping the sources of funding of religious heritage. On the other hand, it seeks to investigate the alleged specificity of this heritage.

The first step consists in **mapping the funding**, having in mind to assess the exact part of funding in the global process of heritage management. Indeed, repair costs are very often - if not systematically - higher than what can be borne by public, but also private means, especially in times of financial crisis, and imply a multi-sources funding. Moreover, the parts played by respectively government, local authorities, religious authorities and trusts can vary from one country to another.

Furthermore, the need for identifying better the various origins of funding mainly comes from the statement that besides the financing of religious heritage as part of cultural heritage, religious buildings potentially benefit from the state support system for religious groups. As a result of history, historical places of worship may benefit from support system, which serves the maintenance. How do both sources of funding combine? Is funding religious heritage still funding religions? Do the religious authorities perceive financing they would not receive strictly on religious grounds? All these questions implies beforehand to achieve a mapping of the available financial sources.

In addition, beyond the amount of funding, the question arises of the use of such a funding, which calls for coordination between partners.

The interest in mapping this funding also lies in the overall question of a possible improvement.

This seminar also seeks to assess the **specificity of religious valuable buildings** within this general debate on funding heritage. Does a special treatment of the buildings derive from their religious dimension? Does the fact that they are still in use impact on the resorting to traditional sources of financing? This topic should be investigated in the light of the questions raised by state support to religious groups in general, which reflects the particularity of each domestic State-Church relationships system.

First, the state support to religions systems put in place very often in the XIXth century still weigh on the currently enforceable regulations.

Secondly, and above all, the legitimacy of such financing is often questioned in now secularized societies. One argument in favour of financing lies in the contribution to social life of religious groups throughout the activities of common interest they carry out. Does this argument apply to religious heritage and how? Indeed, the funding of some places of worship might draw its legitimacy from their being used for activities other than worship, particularly as they provide venues for cultural events.

Thirdly, the claim of more equality among religious groups when it comes to public funding is one of the main challenges public authorities have to face. Many European states experience difficulties in the extending to other religious groups of the State support system applicable to settled denominational organizations. As regards religious heritage, does it apply as strongly to places of worship of other denominations and faiths?