

Call for papers (English)

Extremely rare in the Middle Ages, frequent in the 16th and 17th centuries in the Nordic countries, produced in large quantities throughout Europe and its colonial possessions in the 18th century, land-plot mapping (estate maps, farm plans, enclosure maps, cadastral survey plans, judicial survey plans, etc.) did not wait for the geometric and general cadastre of the 19th century to conquer the continent. They were also numerous in colonial America, but also in Japan during the Edo period and during the Qing Empire in China. As the pride of local archives, these maps have long been the highlight of exhibitions retracing the past of a village. Thanks to their digitization and online publication, they now adorn the websites of city councils and have become accessible to all, satisfying the curiosity of local inhabitants as much as the work of researchers. The important role they play is mainly due to their aesthetic qualities and their ability to evoke a place, easily recognizable for a readership of local origin, where an old text will seem off-putting and only readable by a specialist.

Despite this visibility, these sources are nevertheless considered as secondary documents, depending on a written corpus that is thought to provide, alone, the legitimate subject of a historical study. Nevertheless rural historians understood very early how much profit could be drawn from these testimonies on the ancient spatial, economic and social organization of village communities. The article that Marc Bloch devoted to them in the very first issue of the *Annales*, in 1929, attests to the vivacity of this scientific approach in several European countries in the interwar period. This historiographic tradition has remained uninterrupted until today, reinforced by the possibilities that data processing offers for the use of these sources. But although insightful analysis on the implementation and the use of field systems is found in a large number of local and regional works, national syntheses remain rare and partial, and European syntheses even more so. It is emblematic of the centrality of the text in relation to these maps that we know their conditions of production, circulation and use only when they are accompanying textual sources. The 1998 conference in Paris on land terrier and terrier maps, which undertook a European comparison centered on France, and the conference of 2003, dedicated to the cadastre and covering more closely and more homogeneously the whole continent, are characteristic of this approach.

From a different perspective, the history of cartography, which has been developing strongly for the last forty years, has also been interested in this type of source, even though smaller scale maps – globes, world maps and regional atlases – have generated more interest. From the 1990s onwards, works initiated in England, by Roger Kain, Elisabeth Baigent and David Buisseret, among others, put land-plot mapping at the center of research. They have tried to reconstruct the social conditions of its production and use, with particular emphasis on the sponsor-cartographer partnership. The development of land-plot mapping from the 1570s to the 1800s seems to be associated initially with the emergence of new methods of estate management, intimately connected to an integration into a market for agricultural products, and then to the progressive adoption of this tool by public authorities in their tax policies, despite the resistance it raised. The richness of the English archive materials, combined with the dynamic history of cartography across the Channel, have helped stimulate research in other places, but have also revealed the delays in some projects, and the fact that local initiatives remain disconnected.

The identification, the digitization and the online publishing of these maps has accelerated, and occupies archivists, curators, archaeologists and historians throughout Europe. These approaches, which are less and less isolated, have already stimulated exchanges and synthesis work on a continental scale, as in Pisa in 2016. But we cannot say as much about the historical analysis of these corpora, which are still largely underexploited. For the moment, many questions are only answered at the local or national level, whereas they concern processes that are visible across the continent and its colonial dominions. In addition to the fragmentary nature of academic traditions, the main difficulty for historians is to consider sources rooted in the variety of social, economic and political systems in the early modern period, which contrast with the normalization of state cadastral enterprises in the early 19th century. In addition, the legacy of old archival logic, with the arbitrary constitution of map collections isolated from their original documentary environment, often confronts the researcher with a silent corpus.

Our objective is to overcome these obstacles by engaging in a comparison of the reasons for production and social uses of rural land-plot maps during the *Ancien Régime* in a European and colonial context. The expression ‘rural land-plot map’ refers to any type of graphical representation of plots of land with the same crop and belonging to the same owner, in a socio-legal context where there is a superposition and a diversity of property rights. It excepts *a priori* urban plans, where mainly built lots are represented, but also the general cadastres established by states and based on equal taxation, such as those initiated under Napoleon in 1807 or Francis I of Austria in 1818. But it includes a very wide range of large-scale maps, produced for a variety of purposes – litigation, taxation, inventory for economic purposes, prestige operations, land consolidation, colonization – and for a variety of sponsors – ecclesiastical or secular lordships, States, village communities, single individuals – over a period of time from the 15th to the mid-19th century.

This conference will bring together researchers with a thorough knowledge of a large corpus of maps and capable of reflecting on the following four points, detailed in the attached questionnaire:

- Why were land plots mapped? (Sponsors, normativity of the map, legal value of surveying and cartographic production, theoretical uses)
- How were they made? (Techniques and cartographic vocabulary, visible authors and invisible authors, economic calculation of the cost of the map)
- What were their social, economic and cultural uses for contemporaries? (Legal value of the map, established uses, modifications and circulations, record keeping and obsolescence, map and perception of the space)
- What does the historian do with these maps and how does this justify the creation of his corpus of research (sources that are both cartographic and textual)? (Historiographic approach and regional or national academic tradition, nature of cartographic material for contemporaries, creation of research corpus, current uses)

The ultimate goal of the conference is the preparation of a synthetic publication, which will be published in partnership with the *Presses Universitaires de Rennes* and the *Éditions Universitaires d’Avignon*. The chapters of this book will not be the proceedings of the conference, but texts which will take into account the reformulations made to the initial research questions

during the conference discussions. It will also include additional papers which will not be presented orally at the conference.

Abstracts of paper proposals must be sent by e-mail to the two organizers (3,500 characters maximum) as well as a brief CV (institutional affiliation, main publications) of one page, in the form of two PDF files, before June 6, 2018. The languages of the conference are French and English. The novelty and the richness of the proposed approaches, as well as the diversity of the geographical origins of the studied corpora, in order to cover the widest area possible, will be the main criteria for the selection of the papers for the conference and for the chapters of the final publication. Registration is free and the organizers will cover the accommodation costs.

The conference will be organized by the research centres CREA AH UMR 6566, University of Rennes 2) and CNE (UMR 8562, University of Avignon).

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