Patrimony

After the mobility to the Azores, we were asked to carry out a work on the intangible heritage of the island of São Miguel. That said, our choice fell on the museums we had the opportunity to visit, Carlos Machado Museum and the Culture House, as well as the traditions that are strongly linked to the essence of the island, namely the worship of the divine holy spirit and the pilgrims.

All the places we visit on the island are truly exceptional, however, those we will talk about in our work have made it possible to enrich our knowledge about the history of the island.

*Culture house*

The Culture House located in the municipality of Ribeira Grande, is also known as the “Municipal Museum”. It was the residence of Gaspar Frutuoso, who lived here and wrote his famous “Saudades da Terra”.

During the visit, we found permanent exhibitions on topics such as Archeology, Sacred Art, Water Mills, Mill, Architecture ‘tea’, Tiles, Clothing, Ceramics. We also find traditional workshops set up to portray what a Shoe Shop, Carpentry, Weaving, Tin Shop and Barbershop was like in Ribeira Grande. We can also see the busy Nativity scene of the Lord Prior, commonly known as the Nativity Scene of the Lord Prior. The nativity scene is one of the main elements of the museum, there are couples and people who “come to visit religiously” this nativity scene every year for Christmas. Some say that if they don't do it, it doesn't feel like Christmas.

All of these exhibitions allow visitors to learn more about the city's culture.

*Carlos Machado Museum*

The Carlos Machado Regional Museum is located in the city of Ponta Delgada, on the island of São Miguel (Azores), being the oldest museum in the archipelago founded in 1876 by professor and naturalist Carlos Maria Gomes Machado.

Throughout the years, the Museum’s collections were enriched by new donations and acquisitions, growing larger in number but also on diversity. To the founding collection – Natural History – there were later additions such as African ethnography (1893), Art (1912) and, in the 1930’s, Regional ethnography, much due to the prolific cultural activities of that time, focused on studying the islands’ own identity traits.

With the acquisition of the Saint Andrew convent in 1930 came the opportunity to gather in the same building all the collections of the Carlos Machado Museum, by then already named after its founding father. In 2006, the Sacred Art collection was moved to the Jesuit college church nearby, where it is shown as part of a permanent exhibit.

It is the Carlos Machado Museum´s mission to study and preserve heritage and through it unveil and promote Azorean culture and Azorean identities, focusing on educational activities aimed at several publics. It is a place of inclusion, where identities are expressed and diversity is promoted, where ideas are put forward and generations meet, where citizenship is developed and past and present are united.

*The pilgrimage of São Miguel*

The pilgrimage of São Miguel, started as a consequence of the violent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that occurred in Vila Franca do Campo, a Portuguese village on São Miguel Island, in 1522 and 1563.

At that time, natural catastrophes were seen as divine punishment for man's sins. Therefore, the local priests encouraged the people to practice devotion and processions. The people of São Miguel began to make a pilgrimage through the chapels, churches and chapels of the island, asking for protection and divine intervention to resolve their males and afflictions.

The Romanesque tradition is very much alive in the hearts and lives of the inhabitants of S. Miguel, however, there is no knowledge or record of its existence on the other islands of the Azorean archipelago.

The pilgrimages are composed only of groups of mens, all around the island, that follows the seven weeks of Quaresma. The various groups leave their locations weekly. There are more than 50 groups, with a few dozen elements. Each group takes a week to complete the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage takes place over eight days. Currently, they count on the collaboration of the clergy throughout their realization. Parishioners welcome pilgrims to their homes, providing them with the evening meal and hot water with salt for feet tired from walking. The pilgrim carries the bag of food on his shoulder for the other meals of the day. The Ave Maria is the predominant song of the entire pilgrimage.

Through emigration, the Azorean people took with them, among their various customs and traditions, the pilgrimage, as well as Feasts of the Holy Spirit. These two events bring groups of pilgrims from the immigrant communities of the North American continent, returning to the island to express their faith in their sacred places, invoking the Blessed Virgin throughout the journey.

*Worship of the Divine Holy Spirit*

The cult of the Holy Spirit dates back to the time of D.Dinis and Queen St. Isabel.

Almost disappeared from the main land remains alive in Azores, especially on the islands of São Miguel, Terceira, Santa Maria, Pico and Flores.

In general, during the weekly festivities there are “illuminations”- a mixture of veneration of the insignia of the Divine and joyful conviviality- and the “o pezinho” is sung to the butler and to the people who make generous offerings to the Holy Spirit. The ritual sequence of the feasts of the Holy Spirit allows a set of meals, gifts and distributions of ceremonial food to the population. In these gifts are included in some localities, the soups of the Holy Spirit -made from cooked beef and slices of wheat bread- various varieties of breads and batters, biscuits and sweets. These soups are offered by the butler to the entire population.

Finally, the feasts of the Holy Spirit vary depending on the islands and localities. Although differently celebrated in each place, they constitute the best symbol of the Azorean soul because of the ability to reconcile real diversity with the ideal unity.

The Erasmus experience in the Azores that our school provided us was something unforgettable that made us grow not only personally, but also in knowledge and enjoy every minute as if it were the last.

We are confident that teaching, to be good, does not always need to be within four walls and Erasmus + has given us the opportunity to learn different cultures and share moments with friends that will surely be for a lifetime. Our greatest wish is that all schools could be able to give this opportunity to as many students as possible and of course if you ever have the opportunity to visit the Azores, do not waste it because what is national should be valued in the best way possible.