

Impressions of the 9th Context-meeting in Nasbinals, Aubrac, France

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As an accompanying person I am allowed to contemplate a very mixed and international group coming together for a couple of days to discuss various aspects of Taming Context at Nasbinals, Aubrac.

The Aubrac-Plateau with its stone walls, green pastures and rustic villages reminds me of the painting *Small rhythmic landscape* by Paul Klee. The surroundings seem timeless, a bit lonesome and draughty, yet possess a wild charm with lots of wildflowers, typical Aubrac-cows, beautiful horses and green hills, divided by rough stone walls and rows of trees.

The ferme equestre, where we are staying, has a stable with a couple of horses, a manège and a guesthouse, mostly for pilgrims on their way to Santiago di Compostela [Via Podiensis]. We have the entire house with nicely equipped rooms to ourselves. Marie-Claude Moisset, our hostess, prepares divine meals. With simple but fresh ingredients she is able to create excellent three-course meals, for example a dish with the name *truffade*. It's a sort of thick pancake made with thinly sliced potatoes that are slowly fried on fat until tender, then mixed with thin strips of *Tome fraîche*. It is served with very tasty home-made sausages.

Thursday night, Marie-Claude and Gérard, her husband, enter the dining room holding a very large pot containing the specialty of the region, the *aligot*. *Aligot* is made from mashed potatoes blended with butter, cream, crushed garlic, and the melted cheese from the region, *Laguiole*. The dish is ready when it develops a smooth, elastic texture. Gérard demonstrates this with a ladle, which he holds very high. This dish was prepared for pilgrims who stopped for the night in that region. And of course we enjoy with every meal a glass of red wine of the Languedoc and are rewarded afterwards with a perfect espresso from Frans' famous coffee-factory in room 3.



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We are allowed to ride on the horses, Wednesday in the manège and Thursday on a one-hour trail through a misty rain, which makes the whole experience seem even more magical. Frans, our self-assigned Context-meeting-photographer, shoots sophisticated photo's and posts them immediately on his blog titled Heurse Ridingue en France.

Because there is only one big room at the ferme, the conference is taking place in this dining room. Three times a day the conference members have to remove their laptops to allow us to eat at the tables. That way I'm able to contemplate from the sidelines, without intruding, even if I don't understand a lot.

An impression from a late-night workshop at Nasbinals about xml: Hans is speaking, Arthur covered with a thick plaid coughing and sniffing, wearing two hats against the windy cold from the Aubrac and his own cold, Tobias drinking Languedoc-wine from an espresso cup, Frans working his iPhone, Alan sipping Aubrac beer, treasurer Mojca doing her financial report for the Context group meeting, while Sietse is playing the violin in his room for a concert next Sunday in the Netherlands. The same violin Willi can use for his lecture about the f-holes!

I enjoyed the stay, the surroundings, the company and the meals (not necessarily in this order)!

Alan, thank you very much for your excellent organization!