

Workshop

The future's in the Past

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- Workshop by Antonello Migliozi (MUSA), researcher in Natural Sciences and responsible for the MUSA / Archivio Filangieri Topotheque)

Background introduction

Without a doubt, photographs form a vital part of historical source material. To make this valuable source material publicly accessible and visible online, communities now have the opportunity to use the service platform "Topotheque". The Topotheque is specifically available for small municipalities and communities offering an easy to use tool with which historical source material kept in private hands can be digitized (thus preserved), indexed and identified with date and location (by users) for research purposes. Within the international network of local Topotheques, this online collaborative environment opens up a unique chance for crowdsourcing and international team work.

From an anthropological point of view, photographs and in this case Topotheques not only reconstruct but even more raise awareness of local historic memory. Topotheques strengthen regional and local identification within a cross-border perspective and are by nature 'archivi inconsapevoli' - 'unsuspecting archives' - to say it with the words of the historian Serge Noiret (European University Institute). The Topotheque platform by its nature contributes to the perception of public history.

In the natural sciences photographs are viewed as functional sources with which to detect various land-cover patterns scattered throughout a landscape¹. These aspects become elements according to which indexes of the landscape values can be created leading to the identification of the functions and of the related landscape services. These indices are also used to achieve surveys addressed to specific users groups (urbans, tourists, farmers, etc.) each of which related to a specific function (identity, recreation, production). The surveys are assessed by statistical methods to determine the preferred patterns of each group. The identification of preferences, allowing their use in the evaluation procedures and spatial planning and the enactment of specific laws to support such activities. Another result from these analyses may even indicate how and where the preferred patterns were presented in the "real world". That is, does the real land cover pattern of a place matches the preferences by the landscape users living in it?

The workshop

The workshop will present these two intertwining perspectives, starting from a concrete study case which the ICARUS Didactics Working Group, within the project "co:op" (WP5), is currently developing and which is based on the potential of the Topotheque. The aim is to show how a

¹ The landscape here is considered as a public good evidencing historical and cultural heritage traces and open spaces (both geographical and with regard to social appropriation).

project which came into being as preservation of the past and of the memory can be important for the development of the future of all European citizens, too.

Especially when it comes to an aspect as important as the landscape we live in.

The MUSA Centre and the Department of Humanities (DSU), both from the University of Naples Federico II, started the publication of the collection on the Topotheque platform within the EU-funded project “co:op”. The [Centro MUSA Topotheque Collection](#) is principally dedicated to photos from the Angerio Filangieri archive (preserved in the MUSA), consisting of over 50.000 items (photos, maps, books, documents). The Topotheque contains at the moment pictures selected from five old cities of the five provinces of Campania region: Sessa Aurunca (province of Caserta), Vitulano (province of Benevento), Massa Lubrense (province of Naples), Candida (province of Avellino) and Pisciotta (province of Salerno).

In this context, the photographs and the documentation of Angerio Filangieri (now available online in the Topotheque Centro MUSA) are particularly valuable sources because they already contain the above-mentioned indicators useful to the knowledge and the development of the territory. In the next months, the ICARUS Didactics Working Group will organize one or two sessions of interviews based on the photos in said Topotheque, coming from two different kinds of territories. The Group would like to demonstrate that the photos of Angerio Filangieri on the Topotheque platform can have an impact on real life and lead to a virtuous cycle that result in awareness, in inputs for change from the tourist point of view, economic and political ones. At the same time this will inspire in diverse local contexts in Campania the foundation of a series of new Topotheques linked to the already existing Topotheque Centro MUSA (with links, etc.). In this way, the landscape photographs will encourage the retrieval of the collective memory through media enabling interaction between publics and private citizens or associations.

With this workshop it is intended to share the plan of promoting the Topotheques in cooperation with the ICARUS network, to collect feedback on this project and foster discussions and maybe suggest to experiment in other national contexts with similar experiences based on the Topotheque with the aim to create a large platform of data for evaluation in the future.