

ICOA1129: TO PROMOTE URBAN HERITAGE CULTURE IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION REVOLUTION: A NEW CREATIVITY

Subtheme 03: Protecting and Interpreting Cultural Heritage in the Age of Digital Empowerment

Session 2: Use of Digital Technology for Dissemination and Interpretation

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Abstract: Much of the current debate on a "responsible" heritage safeguard regarding the increase of different forms of information with the aim to spread knowledge of the complex historical towns' stratification and to promote the "values" of urban heritage in national and international general public and stakeholders. A crucial aspect of the conservation of cultural heritage is that the urban heritage (tangible and intangible) was not sufficiently interpreted and promoted; a big gap exists between the richness and the complexity of the historical city, as living organism, human and functional tissue, social and economic life, and the ignorance of these "values" both by the local community and by the "visitors" and tourists. The dissemination of information and knowledge is fundamental to engage the interest and understanding of the wide public of tourist circuits.

The issue of the communication and the promotion of the urban integrated conservation knowledge is a subject closely linked to the cultural tourism more extensively informed and trained, that cannot be reduced to activities of urban design. Therefore the dissemination of information must be "scientific" and creative to take advantage of the new approaches of the modern digital resources to promote a good cultural understanding to oppose the marketing and mass tourism pressure in the historical towns and in WHL urban sites. The culture in fact can become a big catalyst of creativity.

This paper, on the basis of my previous researches, will focus its interest to analyze general principles of broad application of Urban Communication in the outstanding existing urban assets in the world, particularly with the advent of the technological innovation. In fact the innovation of the knowledge through the multimedia and digital technologies (ICT), in primis the digital urban signage, offers today more opportunities and possibilities. I will speak about this theme, demonstrated with a confrontation of

different specific examples and propositions in Europe, Asia and Latin America- enhancing opportunities and possibilities to protect, interpret and promote cultural heritage. The digital system of signage is becoming increasingly familiar to larger sections of the community and essential to understand their potential to promote understanding and engagement amongst diverse communities. We will demonstrate, by means of best practices that it is mandatory that a good communication signage system be designed and inserted since the beginning in planning urban heritage revalorization and in the consequent management plan as a fundamental component of the participation process also to guarantee the conditions for the effective perpetuation of the values.

Key words: *urban heritage, information revolution, urban digital signage, new creativity*

Introduction

A crucial aspect of the conservation of cultural heritage is that the urban heritage (tangible and intangible) was not sufficiently interpreted and promoted; a big gap exists between the richness and the complexity of the historical city, as living organism, human and functional tissue, social and economic life, and the ignorance of these "values" both by the local community and by the "visitors" and tourists. The Presentation will focus its interest on **the thematic of the urban communication and the promotion of the urban values** of the historical cities, **subject closely linked to cultural tourism more extensively informed, trained and creative, that is** a "responsible" cultural tourism. In these pages we will enhance the increase of different forms of the scientific information in the age of the digital multimedia revolution to promote a **spreading knowledge of the complex stratification of historical urban centres. The urban Signage**, as it is commonly called the *totems* realized in the urban spaces, are, in our opinion, the first signs to communicate the knowledge of the cities' values to all the visitors. The topic involves a problem of management of urban spaces as well as of the infrastructure, with the projects and proposals made on this issue. The Paper put attention in a synthetic manner to these **Principal points**: 1. The historical cities are favoured sites and attractor of cultural tourism; 2. The new possibilities to communicate the historical city history to the visitors in the age of multimedia information revolution; 3. The informed and creative cultural tourism: The digital urban signage

1. The historical cities are favoured sites and an "attractor" of cultural tourism. The rediscovery of urban identity

In the last years the historic cities with a high density of cultural heritage became the most popular cultural destinations, for the remarkable must of the culture: as the principles monuments of the "art-cities" (museums, public spaces, spirit of the place, various and mega events). (Colletta T. 2008). **The historical towns are invaded from touristic flows does not informed about the urban values of the heritage preserved in the historical towns.** The mass tourism, not informed, creates a negative impact into the structure of the historical towns and consequently a very poor visit's experience. Moreover the tourism of culture can carry out a role of diffusion of knowledge of the historical towns, as a cultural resource and not only as consumption or marketing of the heritage.

Nowadays, the negative consequences of these choices have begun to be recorded and modern tourism practices are making a turn towards new ideas and for a qualified tourism. Consequently, **new policy terms and directions emerge, emphasizing the terms of sustainable, quality, responsible, informed and finally creative tourism.**

Many historic cities have started surveying their built environment and important places, primarily to serve the tourism industry. However, very few have engaged in broader cultural mapping to identity a wider range of attributes, also related to intangible components, such as processes and traditions associated with this built environment, which are important to maintain, and where possible to enhance, the historic city's full range of urban heritage values. (Bandarin F., 2011). The "urban heritage values" must be made clear from the outset and be used to define urban development strategies and policies, with related programmes and actions (UNESCO, WH Centre 2004). We have had recognized the importance

of the urban knowledge of the historical cities and the priority to communicate their qualities and values, since the ICOMOS Ravello Workshop 2012 (Colletta T., 2013). Moreover we are conscious that is really difficult to explain the complexity of a historical city with all the characteristics related to it (historical processes of development, the transformations various areas of the city, stratified structures, public open spaces, cultural historical landscape, traditional customs etc..) and to make a correct comprehension to all visitors (Guidoni E., 1976). In most cases, successive historic layers are either placed one next to the other or they are placed one on top of the other, each culture influencing the next phases in the city.

It is necessary instead to consider some of the ways in which tourism can affect the authenticity of historic areas and measures that can be taken to prevent this from occurring. In our experience we **have noticed a shortage of a suitable information-promotion regarding the urban heritage**. The urban culture is important resource of urban memory. **The urban culture founded on the identity and authenticity of every historical towns;** this must be the first objective of the urban heritage promotion. **The rediscovery of urban identity it is necessary for a real quality of the visit's experience and the shortage of historical urban knowledge.**

2. The new possibilities to communicate the historical city' history in the age of computer science information revolution.

The aim is **to promote a qualified cultural tourism** concentrate in the historic town's knowledge. Visitors frequently ask for a *clés de compréhension* to understand the stratifications of the assets of the historical town and its artistic and urban culture: that is the meaning and the collective memory of a town. Therefore, an important question is how could we succeed to communicate the history of the city in the heart of urban centres, namely the information about the successive transformations of the streets, squares, markets, castles, religious buildings, monuments, etc., in the site of their current location, compared with the "ancient".

The urban values must be communicate and made clear to everybody even the occasional visitors. Informed and Participated Tourism of Culture with innovative Knowledge (Colletta T.,2013).In the ICOMOS Ravello Workshop discussion some good practices have emerged too regarding the different possibilities of the urban communication and the awareness of its urban values for the promotion of cultural tourism, not only for marketing but for increasing awareness to the local community. The use of "innovative" approach to dissemination is possible according with the use of new forms of all new technologies of communication (ITC) to promote urban knowledge, therefore must be "scientifically" organized, in many possibilities and especially the digital urban signage. (Colletta T. 2016

We discussed the production of the innovative strategies for a creative tourism and a dissemination of the urban heritage culture in the age of digital information revolution in the Florence workshop (Colletta T.,Niglio O.,2016). **In this way is necessary to use the great opportunity offered from these multimedia technologies with the presence in network system.** On the basis of my previous researches my point of departure is that the advent of the technological innovation and knowledge always more specialized, produce new possibilities, new experiences and *best* practices that are very important to know and to put in confrontation. In this way one of the best topic in the field of Urban Communication is **the urban signage** through highlighting public spaces and offers the **opportunities and possibilities to promote cultural urban heritage knowledge**. I will put attention and focus on the comparison of different propositions of digital urban signage in the historical European, Asian, Latin American cities.

The proposals, projects and realizations have been compared to underline the best practices and to compare them.

3. The informed and creative cultural tourism: The digital system of urban signage through the technological innovation

In my opinion an “informed” tourism of culture for inhabitants and visitors is necessary to renewal and too modernize the urban culture with a new very creativity. The culture in fact can become a big catalyst of creativity. These issues have been the subject of discussion on an academic, scientific-research, social and political level. Emphasis on creative tourism is a positive development connecting tangible and intangible cultural heritage and strengthening the diversification of the products of cultural tourism. **The innovative urban signage** in the historical towns, by the multimedia and digital technologies (ICT), might be a first step to reorganize the information about the urban heritage and in the same time is good promotion of its values for inhabitants and visitors. The first Applications of the new technologies to the cultural urban heritage diffusion are today *the urban signage*. The issue of a good urban communication founds **not only the** touristic information about the historical cities. Signage methodologies differ as to their functional content and aesthetics and have created numerous negative symptoms, or false messages, which can create confusion. We **have** several types of signs and sign materials as **the topographic urban signage, but very few exempla with the history of city and its historical squares**. However, it appears that the strongest element remains the message transmitted by the signage, which concerns the area’s identity and the layers of the urban history. This dynamic stance is also expressed through a successful **new urban signage of public space (Panels, Totems, Paline etc.)** attracting and supporting the cultural and experiential tourisms in the historic centre. A good exempla of urban signage was made in Senigallia historical town, it inform about the Rocca Roveresca and their urban location through the maps with the city’s transformations by QR Code references (2011). The good knowledge of the historical town and the process of the complex stratification are in the urban signages in Naples; the Totems explain the new public works of the Metrolines, the history of the site and the new archaeological discoveries (2015)(Fig.1,2). The urban sign with the urban history of the site by the historical cartography and views are now (2015-2016) also in Milan, Florence, Pistoia, Gubbio with the Appl references. The urban sign with the urban history of the site by the historical cartography and views are now (2015-2016) also in Milan, Florence, Pistoia, Gubbio with the Appl references.



Fig.1- Senigallia. The Rocca Roveresca,



Fig.2- Napoli. Underground Station: Urban signages and the urban history of the site (Source: author's personal archive)

The application of the new technology in the urban signage, by Qr Code, was produced in Lugo (Spain) by the *proyecto URBAN*, financed by the *Ayuntamiento de Lugo y el Fondo Social Europeo de desenvolvimiento regional (FEDER) de la Unión Europea*, for the innovatives strategies in the economic and social regeneration for a sustainable development.(Gonzales Fernandez E.;Goy Diz A.,2016)



Fig.3. Lugo. Example of urban signage in the historic centre, with .Qr Code.
(Source Lugo, Servicio Municipal de Arqueología)

The urban contemporary signage in Kyoto (Japan) by Kyoto University (Department of Urban Management) put in evidence the research of a work group in *Planning and Management Systems*. The production of the urban communication (in four languages: giapponese, inglese, coreano and cinese.) is fundamental in the Japan cities to understand the urban transformations of the 20th century with adequate maps and historical information of the public spaces.



Fig.4- The Panel with the urban communication in Kyoto(Japan).(source Colletta, Olimpia Niglio, 2016)

The urban signage informs also about the the history of the new projects that have rehabilitated historical zone and monuments. That is the case of the canal river (Hori-Kawa River)with a pedestrian street along the Horikawa Dori ,near Nijo Castle.



Fig.5. Kyoto. Hori-kawa River the urban signage to show the river history and its monuments (Source Colletta, Niglio, 2016)

In my opinion one of the best practice in the system of urban signage, has realized in the renewal of Quarter/*Barrio Mouraria* on Lisbona. The rehabilitation of the *Mouraria Barrio*- Medieval quarter, under the castle hill, has inserted into the management project the urban signs realizations (2011-2015). The general map of the rehabilitation project shows the principal stops of the cultural touristic itinerary where are located n.10 urban signs in n.10 Stops, to give evidence to the urban “values”. In every big Totems it possible to read singular urban history of the site near the general and local maps and the restoration works (in Portuguese and English) as well as in its communicative-internet field enriches the unique identities and feeds each historic city’s branding and image. More specifically, urban history is as well as in its communicative-internet field enriches the unique identities and feeds each historic city’s branding and image.



Fig. 6,7,8. Lisboa, Bairro Mouraria: the renovated Largo da Rosas and Achada square, with the Totems: Stops nn.2.3 in the general itinerary touristic map(Source: author's personal archive)

More specifically, urban history is The signage of creative activities as a basic communication element, in the natural (material) field of their public space, as well as in its communicative-internet field enriched the unique linked to modern living through highlighting traditional creative activities and promote new cultural tourism. All the alternative possibilities for creative tourism are now open.

Conclusions

It is mandatory that a good **communication signage system be designed and inserted since the beginning in planning urban heritage revalorization and in the consequent management plan** as a fundamental component of the participation process also to guarantee the conditions for **the effective perpetuation of the values**. New financial activities and initiatives emerge, thus creating optimistic expectations. The urban heritage revalorization one notice certainly a potential and incomparable economic resource for the local people, but it is necessary a good planning, not only for touristic activities, but also for a good understanding of all the cultural actions in the contemporary urban transformation process. **The culture in fact can become a big catalyst of creativity.**

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