

THRACE

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KOMOTINI

PAPER ABSTRACTS
DIGITAL



Mapping the History
and Culture to Enhance
the Tourist Economy

EDITED BY ANGELOS PALIKIDIS



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INTRODUCTION

This volume includes 30 academic papers, presented during the final conference of the project 'Digital Thrace: Mapping the History and Culture to Enhance the Tourist Economy,' which lasted for 3 years (2021-2023) and involved 32 researchers from various disciplines (History, Archaeology, Anthropology, Art History, Museology, Public History, Literature, Linguistics, Archives, Pedagogy, Demography, Computer Science, and Heritage Management). The conference took place in a hybrid format in Komotini on June 1-2, 2023, and was part of a long series of scientific events that contributed to the development and promotion of a multifaceted project with research and developmental orientation. The main deliverables are a digital platform and an augmented reality application for mobile devices—two tools that map the history and culture of Thrace and provide insights into its cultural heritage.

'Digital Thrace' is a multi- and inter-disciplinary research project emphasizing on the cultural diversity of Thrace. Visitors and researchers can discover traces, buildings, monuments, and artifacts from the prehistoric era, the Archaic and Classical periods, the Hellenistic and Roman times, the Byzantine and Ottoman era, as well as the 20th and 21st centuries by making use of the digital tools. The interactive map also includes all museums, representative objects from their exhibits, as well as useful information about their identity and activities; also more than 30 memoranda of cooperation have been signed with state and private institutions (religious, archaeological, academic, archives, etc.). Additionally, 25 educational programs on local history have been designed, and seminars are being held for educators.

From an epistemological perspective, 'Digital Thrace' adopts modern principles and methodologies that go beyond conventional positivist views and the linear history narratives previously followed in the region. Central concepts in the project's approaches are space and time, seen through the lens of modern historical and cultural studies, constituting the research fields of spatial or regional studies. These approaches fall within the framework of globalization and the decolonization of humanities and social sciences, far from traditional forms of ethnocentric local and regional history perspectives. Instead, our approach zooms in and out, exploring micro- and macro-histories, while examining the position of the study area within broader geographical units and its interplay with other regions – conceptualized as "translocality". In studying historical time, the project surpasses positivist perceptions by adopting complex temporal concepts such as Braudel's temporalities and the notions of continuity, discontinuity, change, and rupture. On the other hand, in the fields of pedagogy and history education, the project adheres to the principles of constructivism, intercultural education, cooperative and problem-based learning, historical thinking concepts, and the theory of historical consciousness.

The overall goal of the project is to retain and draw in young and senior researchers in Thrace, as well as to create a sustainable international interdisciplinary network. However, 'Digital Thrace' is a pilot project. It lays the foundations, designs, and organizes the infrastructure, creates educational programs, and develops digital tools on selected objects, sites, and monuments. In this sense, this project may mark a milestone not only for the research community but also for the ethno-cultural societies of Thrace.

Thrace on the threshold: society, economy, culture

Angeliki Giannakidou

Founder & President of the Ethnological Museum of Thrace

Abstract

The research and promotion of the history and culture of Thrace have been statutory goals of the Ethnological Museum of Thrace since its establishment in 2002. We strive to connect the knowledge of the cultural heritage of the region with the concerns of modern society. We study the history of Thrace, focusing particularly on its integration into the Greek state in 1920, the refugee crisis of 1923, the economic crisis of 1929-30, the Second World War, the German and Bulgarian Occupation from 1941-44, the Civil War, and the Cold War era. Throughout this period, Thrace underwent significant economic and social transformations, often remaining on the sidelines of the Greek state's development plans and experiencing marginalization. Today, in the age of energy networks and new geo-economic rearrangements, Thrace has returned to the forefront.

Thrace is a cultural palimpsest that can support sustainable development policies. The region boasts an environment of great aesthetic and ecological value, largely untouched. Its people inherit a long tradition of craft knowledge and are familiar with a rural culture that still survives. The character of its communities has been shaped through the values of peaceful coexistence, solidarity, and respect for diversity. However, the migration of the rural population, especially the young, to other regions of the country or abroad, as well as outdated business activities, undermine any innovative effort.

We strongly believe in and promote the tripartite "Culture-Creation-Economy" model, which holistically integrates every form of local culture and transforms it into authentic travel experiences and high-quality, unique products and artifacts. This is why, alongside the height of the fence on the Evros river, our vibrant culture should stand against any historical revisionism.

The union of the so called “Western Thrace” with Greece and its significance

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Abstract

The defeat of the Greek Army in Asia Minor in September 1922 resulted in the de facto repeal of the Treaty of Sevres (August 10, 1920). The Greek “revolutionary Committee” appointed Eleftherios Venizelos, the former prime minister, as representative to the negotiations between Greece and Turkey in Lausanne (November 1922-July 1923). Venizelos’ main objective was to ensure Greek sovereignty on the Aegean Sea. In order to achieve this goal, defeated Greece had to maintain its sovereignty over Macedonia and Thrace and the islands near the west coast of Asia Minor. As such, it was crucial for Greece to convince Turkey to quit its claims in the so-called “Western Thrace”. During the armistice negotiations held in Mudania in October 1922 between the Entente and Turkey, the Turkish delegation asked the Greek Army to immediately evacuate the so-called “Eastern Thrace” in order to impose the occupation of the Turkish army. Venizelos understood that the Turkish objective was to control the Dardanelles Straits. Thus, he accepted the Turkish terms and the Greek government ordered the evacuation of the region. In exchange Venizelos achieved the consensus of Turkey to recognize Greek sovereignty over the islands of the Northern and Eastern Aegean Sea and over the so-called “Western Thrace”. At the same time, this solution offered the opportunity to the Greek Government to resolve two major issues: First, to install in “Western Thrace” 100.000 refugees who had abandoned “Eastern Thrace” in October 1922 and, second, to ensure the Turkish consensus for the Ecumenical Patriarchate to remain in Istanbul. In exchange, Greece accepted that 90.000 Muslims could remain in “Western Thrace” as a Religious Minority.

Keywords: The Lausanne Treaty, Eleftherios Venizelos, Thrace, refugees

Field research in folklore and ethnographic material collection in Thrace: the work of the 'Laboratory of Folklore and Social Anthropology' at the Democritus University of Thrace

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Abstract

In this paper is examined the way in which the “Laboratory of Folklore and Social Anthropology” at the Department of History and Ethnology of the Democritus University of Thrace, in Komotini, studies the events of both the old traditional and the modern popular culture in Thrace. The field research program, the international collaborations and the research programs undertaken, designed and carried out by the Laboratory are presented, together with the scientific conferences and workshops it organizes, as well as its publishing program, and the program of digitization and electronic utilization of the Greek cultural heritage data, but also its various educational activities. All the above activities are developed into the context of informing Greek and foreign colleagues about the methodological and theoretical developments of the study of the events of Greek traditional culture, so that Greek folklore studies are promoted through the necessary today scientific and research synergies.

Keywords: Folklore studies, folk culture, Thrace, digitization, cultural policy

The digital challenge for history and the humanities

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Abstract

Digitality is changing the contemporary societies; it not only provides new techniques and tools, but also modifies key concepts and claims, and has a decisive effect on people's relationships, social behaviors, collaborations, interactions, and networking with others. Thus, knowledge is also changing: in the access to and the acquisition of knowledge, in the collectivities of knowledge, and in the interactions of knowledge. This paper attempts to highlight the changes caused by the digitalization on the epistemologies and ontologies in History and the Humanities during the first decades of the 21st century. Into this context, digital history is approached as a new historical practice which preferentially converses with the various versions of digitality in the fields of humanities and historical studies. Digital history is also connected to cutting-edge aspects of digitality, such as the digital public history and the digital humanities.

Keywords: digitality, history, digital humanities, public history

Thrace and the national claims of Greece at the end of the First World War

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Abstract

The region of Thrace has been the subject of a long-term diplomatic struggle by the Greek state, with the aim of maximizing Greek influence and dominance in this geographical area, which was claimed by three interested parties (Ottoman Empire, Greece, Bulgaria). After a brief reference to the developments of the previous years, it is emphasized that the entry of Greece into the First World War (1917) and the association with the camp of the victors strengthened Greek expectations in view of the peace negotiations. At that time, in the last months of 1918, the issue of Thrace took a central position in the territorial claims of the Greek side, especially after the Congress of the Thracians was held in October of that year. After lengthy negotiations, western Thrace was initially placed under Allied control, before being definitively ceded to Greece with the Treaty of Sèvres in the summer of 1920.

Keywords: Thrace, First World War, peace negotiations, Greek territorial claims

Reconsidering the history of the south-east Thrace during the Late Ottoman Period

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Summary

The research conducted to examine the history of the south-east Thrace (nowadays part of the Greek state) during the late Ottoman period, within the framework of the European funded research program 'Digital Thrace: Mapping the History and the Culture for the qualitative improvement of tourist destinations in Western Thrace', revealed the poor bibliographic production and the insufficient documentation concerning the historical narrative of the region. The existing literature focuses on the ethnic rivalries among the non-Muslim subjects of the sultan that emerged in the broader area of Thrace from the mid-19th century onwards and on the narrative of the military and diplomatic events that led to the incorporation of the region into the Greek state. The Ottoman political framework is completely absent from the contents of the existing traditional literature, while other aspects of the region's historical evolution are totally ignored. The aim of the present study is to examine several aspects of the historical development of the region, that were ignored by the traditional historiography, and to emphasize the efforts made by the Ottoman authorities to promote the devotion of all the subjects of the empire, regardless their religion, to the patrimonial figure of sultan, in order to prevent the diffusion of the nationalistic currents among the non-Muslim populations of the Ottoman realm.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Thrace, Tanzimat, Russian-Ottoman War of 1877-1878, Balkan Wars, The Western Thrace Temporary Government

Mapping archives on the history of Thrace: archival availabilities and research questions on the history of health of the region

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Abstract

One of the objectives set in the program of 'Digital Thrace: Mapping history and culture to enhance the tourism economy' was the mapping and recording of the available historical archival collections of the modern and contemporary history of Thrace, held by archives, libraries, museums, institutes, research centers and in general any cultural institution, public or private, which could store archival material related to Thrace, in Greece and abroad. The paper consists of two parts. The first part will present the aims of the database construction, the methodology followed to set it up, the problems that arose and the solutions chosen to address them, as well as the future objectives that have been set. In the second part, a preliminary endeavor has been made to show possible uses of the database on the research field of the history of health in Thrace during the 20th century, and some research questions in combination with the archival availabilities have been put.

Keywords: Archives, Health, Disease, 20th century

Clock towers in Komotini and Xanthi; modern landmarks in the urban ottoman landscape

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Abstract

Clock towers are important landmarks of the late Ottoman period in the urban center of various cities in the Balkans and in the wider Eastern Mediterranean region. Acun (2011:1-2) has recorded 26 clock towers in modern Greek territory, two of which are in Xanthi and Komotini. Nowadays, these two towers are a symbol and landmark of the cities that have been raised. However, at the time they were built, apart from symbolizing the scientific and architectural progress of the place, they performed a very important task: the coordination of clocks at a time when accurate time measurement was an extremely difficult task. These are projects that mark a period of great socio-political changes, rapid technological development and a more general “modernization” of societies on a global level. In this study, an attempt is made to highlight the historical, socio-economic and political background of the construction of the clock towers, their importance for the time they were built and in general their symbolism at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

Keywords: clock towers, timing Rooms, Muvakkithane, Clock tower of Komotini, Clock tower of Xanthi

Oral History in Thrace; archive availability and educational uses

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Abstract

This paper first describes the theoretical framework that connects the development of oral history with the evolution of museums and its introduction to formal and non-formal education. Subsequently, the oral history archives of Thrace, created by museum, academic and cultural institutions, are listed and evaluated. Their main characteristics are highlighted, as well as their capabilities and inadequacies, in terms of form, organization and the access they provide to researchers and users. Reference is also made to the position occupied by the oral history of Thrace in the 'Digital Thrace' research project. Finally, examples of the educational use of oral testimonies, based on the principles and the methodology on the new History Didactics, are offered in the didactic scenarios of local history, created within the framework of the project.

Keywords: oral history, education, local history, interculturalism, museums, archives

The development of demography in Rodopi region during the 20th century

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Abstract

The modern population history of Thrace is formed according to data and records from the second half of the 19th century. The most important events that affected the composition of the population are recorded at the beginning of the 20th century. The main characteristic of shaping the population was following border changes and population movements. In particular, the Balkan wars and the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), as well as other events such as the definitive border settlement between Greece and Bulgaria and the Treaty of Lausanne, consolidated the demographic status of Greek Thrace. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Greek state received massive flows of refugees, which, however, cannot be compared to the refugees of the Asia Minor campaign and destruction (August 1922), neither in the volume of the refugee populations nor in the quality of the rehabilitation programs. The arrival of refugees in the country from 1922 onwards, radically changed the social and economic structure of the country.

Key words: Demography, Refugees, Migration, Population Exchange, Treaty of Lausanne, Thrace

Archaeological Site Digitization; The Case Study of the Fortress of Kalyva

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Abstract

The Fortress of Kalyva, located northwest of the city of Xanthi, was built by Philip II of Macedon around 340 BC and was used for a period of almost nine centuries, until the 6th century AD. The fortress' excellent state of preservation offers the ideal conditions for its digitization using 3D photogrammetry techniques, a process that offers many and strong incentives for use in the wider cultural sector. The digitization technique used for this research is Structure from Motion (SfM), and the PC software in which the main body of work was carried out is Reality Capture. Using an unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) and conventional cameras, photographs were taken and processed in order to produce a high-resolution 3D model of the Fortress, which successfully fulfils many of the motivations for digitization in the cultural sector. The process, however, presents certain difficulties, both technological and environmental, the overcoming of which will be the goal of ongoing research at the Fortress.

Keywords: Fortress of Kalyva, archaeology, digitalization, photogrammetry

Old and recent findings on the archaeological map of Byzantine Thrace

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Abstract

The geographical position of Thrace played a key role and contributed to the historical development of the Byzantine Empire, from its beginning to its fall. Gleaning the archaeological remains in the Regional units (R.U.) of Xanthi, Rhodope, and Evros that survive today – like the castle of Didymoteichon, and the church of Panagia Kosmosoteira in Pheres – or brought to light through earlier or recent archaeological work – such as the extra muros cemetery basilica of Polystylon, the three-aisled basilica on Potamos of the R.U. of Evros, and the bathhouse inside the castle of Komotini – reveals aspects of the ecclesiastical, secular, and fortification architecture and, consequently, of the daily life of Byzantine society. These remains, sometimes impressively preserved, (e.g., the wall of Anastasioupolis and the fortress of Pytheion) and sometimes fragmentarily so (e.g., the fortification of Gratianou), constitute the body of archaeological evidence that reveals to a greater or lesser extent the structure and organization of important Byzantine towns, castles, settlements, fortresses, and monastic complexes, as well as their communication networks and influence, while, at the same time, forming the archaeological map of Byzantine Thrace.

Keywords: Byzantine Thrace, byzantine monuments, byzantine archaeological sites, historical topography

The Metropolitan Church of Saint Athanasios in Didymoteicho; history and art

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Abstract

During the 19th century, Didymoteicho was one of the Kazhades that belonged to the Sanjaki of Adrianople, the homonymous vilayet in Thrace. It was a relatively developed region, with significant commercial activity and a remarkable intellectual and educational level. Its Metropolitan Church, dedicated to Saint Athanasios, is located inside the castle of Didymoteicho. Around the same period, it was rebuilt from the ground up, with the help of the Christian community of the city. It is a three-aisled basilica, a typical architectural form of the time. The simple external view church, has an impressive interior, with an elaborate wood-carved ensemble and, in particular, its imposing baroque iconostasis. In addition, this feeling is enhanced by the despotic icons primarily, which stand out with their bright colors and gold engravings, most created by Nikolaos Adrianopolitis. These artworks placed in the most prominent part of the temple, the iconostasis, state in their inscriptions that they have been donated by the guilds of the city, while there are some that were donated from individual believers.

Keywords: *Didymoteicho, Agios Athanassios, post-byzantine art*

Art and public space in Thrace in the 20th and 21st century

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Abstract

In this paper I will examine the public monuments in the region of Thrace and the visual arts in general. I will try to shed light on the mechanisms and forces that systematically validate dominant narratives through public sculpture, while at the same time weakening and marginalizing subservient identities and memories. Furthermore, I will explore the symbolic and ideological value of works of art in the construction of a “commonly accepted” public image and collective identity at the level of a local society consisting of different communities and collectives. Moreover, I will focus on the artistic standards of the periphery, whether they are defined by a dominant culture or by institutions of power, and on the impact they have on regional art, local memory, and identity.

Keywords: art, public sculpture, public space, memory, collective identities, Thrace

Museums in Thrace: Mapping and critical overview through traditional and modern museological approaches

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Abstract

This paper, as part of the museological research conducted within the context of the project 'Digital Thrace: mapping history and culture to enhance the tourism economy', aims to provide an overview of the museum landscape in Thrace. Specifically, it focuses on the southwestern part of Thrace, after its integration into Greece in 1920 up until 2022. The first part includes the systematic mapping of the museums and their collections, taking into account the historical development and the role of museums in Greece since the establishment of the Modern Greek state. The second part presents Thrace's museums through representative examples of both traditional and modern museological approaches. Finally, the third part, attempts a brief evaluation and critical analysis of their exhibitions, existence, operation and management. At the same time, it explores their relationship and significance within the local community and among the various ethnic groups of the region. This analysis takes into consideration the evolving trends in museology, the growing influence of technological sciences, and the impact of digital media on museum practices.

Keywords: Thrace, museum, museology, local history

Outlining the evolution of museum education in Thrace: Educational policy and programs of museum education

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Abstract

It is a fact that the institution of the museum by definition involves change, with the ultimate goal of providing quality and essential services. In the context of the ever-changing societies in which they flourish, museums are constantly looking for ways to communicate with their audiences and meet their needs. The museums in Thrace, representing and preserving its history, have carved and continue to shape their own path, in an effort to follow the museological standards that put the museum experience and learning in a prominent position. The present study attempts to outline the museum-pedagogical development in the region of Thrace, tracing the educational policy and the educational programs of its museums. For the needs of the research, the study was specialized in certain characteristic examples of Thracian cultural institutions, which constituted the case studies of the research. In order to evaluate the overall course of the museum-pedagogical planning in Thrace, a specially designed recording and evaluation protocol was used, which essentially formed a list of quality criteria of the educational services under investigation.

Keywords: Cultural institutions of Thrace, museum education, educational policy, museological standards, Thracian History

Thracian Dialects and Gamification

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ABSTRACT

This publication strives to introduce pedagogical strategies rooted in playful learning for the seamless integration of Thracian dialect instruction into the classroom. Commencing with a concise literature review delineating the characteristics and contemporary status of Thracian dialects, the study employs the board game «Θρακιώτικα» from Ntoliálalia editions as an illustrative model. The article demonstrates the efficient utilization of these educational tools within the school context, showcasing their efficacy in the instruction of Thracian dialects.

Keywords: Gamification, Thracian dialects, dialect instruction, linguistic variety.

The linguistic landscape of Thrace as a multilingual space

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Abstract

This paper looks into how multimodal texts in various languages that are found in urban spaces can be analyzed from the perspective of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics and how the linguistic landscape can be used as a research instrument and a rich source of data for the understanding of issues related to multilingual practices. The study of linguistic landscapes aims to add another view to our knowledge about societal multilingualism by focusing on language choices, hierarchies of languages, contact-phenomena, regulations, and aspects of literacy. More precisely, the study investigates what languages are publicly present in the major towns of Thrace (Komotini, Xanthi, and Alexandroupolis), who the language users are, and how the distribution of particular languages reflects the multilingual nature of this multicultural region in Greece. The photographic data was collected from the streets of the 3 towns and included official street signs, shop signs, billboards, advertisements, restaurant menus, notices, etc. The signage was categorized thematically, according to language and the sign ownership, and qualitative analysis was carried out. The results of the study offer a clear indication of the status and role of the various languages found in Thrace.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape, multilingualism, superdiversity, semiotic landscape, translanguaging

Religious syncretism in Thrace: from Rhesus and the Thracian Rider to Saint George

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Abstract

The paper explores the phenomenon of religious syncretism in Thrace, focusing on the transition from the ancient mythological figure of Rhesus and the Thracian Rider to the Christian Saint George. Through a historical and cultural analysis spanning centuries, the paper investigates the intricate relationship between the Thracians and their association with horses, which evolved into a religious character through the worship of the Thracian Rider, a deity placed within a later historical context. A central question addressed is the apparent discrepancy between the Thracians' renowned equestrian culture and the relatively late emergence of the worship of the Thracian Rider as a prominent religious figure. Drawing upon literary sources and historical accounts the paper uncovers the deep-rooted religious significance of Rhesus in the Balkan Peninsula, serving as the earliest evidence of his worship among the Thracians. The analysis extends to the syncretic nature of Thracian religious beliefs which included deities such as Apollo, Dionysus, Asclepius, and Hygeia etc. This synthesis of local Thracian beliefs with Greek gods supports the theory of syncretism, wherein diverse religious traditions merge and coexist. The transition of the Thracian Rider into Saint George within the Christian tradition exemplifies this syncretic process. The paper elucidates the parallels between the two figures, highlighting their shared attributes and the gradual assimilation of the Thracian Rider's worship into Christian religion.

Key words: Religious syncretism, Thracian Rider, Rhesus, Saint George, Asclepius, Apollo.

Linguistic idioms of Modern Greek: the case of Thrace

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Abstract

The present study examines the Modern Greek idioms of Thrace, focusing on their vocabulary and distinctive features, as well as their idiomatic place-names. The research focuses on areas, where modern Thracian idioms are still spoken, namely the zone from the east of the prefecture of Kavala to the prefecture of Evros and the Samothrace. At the same time, the field of research extends to areas that today do not belong to the Greek territory, but were formerly inhabited by speakers of Thracian idioms. These are areas of Eastern (former) Thrace (present Turkey), such as Saranda Ekklesies and Adrianople, as well as areas of Northern (Northeastern) (former) Thrace (present Bulgaria), such as Sozopol and the province of Kavakli. After the Population Exchange, speakers of Thracian idioms transferred their particular linguistic features to Greece. Today, the linguistic idiomatic records of Thrace are preserved mainly through its folklore writings, while special dictionaries and scientific writings contribute substantially to the preservation of its linguistic wealth. Finally, it is worth noting that at the level of vocabulary, unique words and phrases, variations of Common Modern Greek words, borrowed words from Ancient Greek, Medieval Greek and other foreign languages, such as Turkish and Bulgarian, are observed.

Key-words: idioms, Thrace, vocabulary

Local History in a different way: Pedagogic recontextualization in the research project 'Digital Thrace'

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Abstract

In the modern school pedagogical theories, that focus on building knowledge are being used, enriching students' cognitive schemes, actively engaging them in the learning process, cooperating and cultivating critical thinking, observation and empathy skills. In particular, through historical education, students as acting subjects can (co)shape the school reality, discuss, reflect, perceive, question and take part in a dynamic and interactive process. The above are the foundations of the pedagogical team of the research project 'Digital Thrace', on the basis of which didactic scenarios from the historical reserve of Thrace are designed. In this paper, I will focus on key pedagogical pillars and the possibilities that multimodal material from the local history of Thrace can offer for pedagogical transformation through teaching activities.

Keywords: Transformative education, didactic scenarios, pedagogical principals, interdisciplinarity, digital technologies

The Local History of Thrace in preschool education: Playful and creative learning

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Abstract

Local History plays a dynamic role for education in preschool age, as for any other level of education, leading to the achievement of multi-level goals related to the socio-sensory development of the child. Its integration into the educational design ensures an attractive learning experience and always coexists with active teaching methods and an abundance of educational tools. In addition, the evolution of learning theories and the multitude of techniques and tools that the teacher has at his/her disposal in order to equip his/her educational quiver, come to completely refute any reservation regarding the respective subject of study and the developmental limitations of the preschoolers.

The present study summarizes the framework and the basic principles according to which the educational process is formed in the preschool age, while subsequently bringing Thrace to the fore, giving indicative examples of teaching scenarios that have been created and continue to evolve, which highlight the history and tales of the place. In this way, students are involved in experiential activities of a playful and exploratory nature, while taking their first steps towards the realization of the endless relationship between the past and the present and the future.

Keywords: Thrace Local History, preschool education, playful learning, creative learning strategies, cultural heritage education.

Title: Harnessing art to advance creative expression and teaching of the local history of Thrace in Primary Education classes

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Abstract

The present paper deals with ways to transform the students' established perception, found and cross-examined through research, of History as a meaningless, difficult to understand, odious and boring lesson, into an exploratory and active experience. Prompted by the historical documents posted on the 'Digital Thrace' platform, pedagogical scenarios, micro-scenaria and teaching proposals are created for the teaching of the Local History of Thrace, using art as an interface. The great contribution of art to education is highlighted, introducing students to the values of culture and historical literacy. Teaching models related to the observation and study of works of art and monuments are mentioned, so that by utilizing them our pedagogical goals are adequately fulfilled. It is recognized that every innovation is a challenge for teachers, as well as a significant challenge for historical education. However, the school ought to be transformed into a school of culture and research.

Keywords: art, local history, Thrace, monuments, evidence

‘Digital Thrace’ and history education: cultivating adolescents’ historical thinking through traces of the past

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Abstract

This study is part of pedagogic recontextualization of the historical and cultural material of the ‘Digital Thrace’ platform, and refers to history teaching. In particular, it proposes methods and techniques through which evidence of the platform could be utilized in order to cultivate students’ historical thinking. First, it provides a brief overview of the current orientation of history education concerning discourse on aims, topics and methods. It also analyses aspects of historical thinking and its relation to historical consciousness and citizenship. Moreover, it presents the characteristics of the platform’s material and the prerequisites of its meaningful utilization in history lessons. Subsequently, it suggests teaching examples based on the findings of research concerning the adolescents’ historical thinking. In conclusion, a precondition for powerful use of platform’s evidence is to regard history as a procedure of (re) constructing the past and not as a body of information to recall.

Keywords: citizenship, historical consciousness, historical thinking, history didactics, history skills, procedural / second-order concepts

Thrace in Greek history textbooks since 1923

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Abstract

The present study approaches the presence of the history of Thrace and its regions in the history textbooks of Primary and Secondary Education in Greece from 1923 to the present day. In particular, it studies references to “sensitive and controversial” historical issues related to Thrace, such as the Population Exchange and the history of the Muslim minority. First, an analysis of the history didactics in the Greek educational system is attempted, and consequently the inclusion of Thracian history in school textbooks. An issue that concerns historians and more specifically historians of education is the subject matter and content of school history textbooks. The transition from scientific historiography to school historiography and the composition of school narratives presupposes a selection process, which is done with specific criteria. This results that historical events of some regions of the Greek territory are illuminated in different ways, while some others are mentioned epigrammatically, almost not at all or are even kept silent.

Keywords: history textbooks, Thrace, sensitive historical issues, school education, History Didactics

Metadata enrichment in digital cultural heritage collections using machine learning techniques: the case of ‘Digital Thrace’

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Abstract

The use of artificial intelligence in the field of cultural heritage gives new perspectives in its promotion by exploiting mechanisms for automatic generation of textual descriptions of images and automatic enrichment of metadata published in the semantic web, facilitating the search of digital cultural material and the interconnection of local collections. This paper describes the applications of artificial intelligence in the field of culture, with particular reference to the potential for cultural heritage enhancement. Also, an application of machine learning in the enrichment of metadata of documents is presented, which utilizes the data of the platform of the project ‘Digital Thrace: mapping history and culture for the qualitative upgrading of the tourism product’.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, cultural heritage, digital collection, deep learning

Design and Development of a digital cultural data platform in Laravel environment: The ‘Digital Thrace’ Case of Study

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Abstract

The collection and processing of cultural data, as well as the sharing of knowledge, are fundamental factors for the understanding and preservation of Cultural Heritage. In recent years, the majority of Cultural Heritage Institutions have been striving to make their collections and monuments more attractive to visitors by utilizing innovative digital technologies. This approach seeks to provide visitors with services and experiences that align with their interests. This study examines the importance of digitizing cultural information and presents the case of the ‘Digital Thrace’ platform, a comprehensive system for recording, documenting, managing, searching, studying, and promoting the rich cultural assets of the Thrace Region in Greece, from antiquity to the present day.

Keywords: Digital Heritage, Data Digitization, Laravel, Digital Thrace, Web Platform

Cultural user experience: the case of 'Digital Thrace'

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Abstract

In recent years, interest in the interaction between cultural aspects and Human-Computer (HCI) has grown significantly. The evolution in the field of culture has led cultural structures and spaces to increasingly try to enrich their cultural content, doing things they could not do effectively before to discover new aspects and directions in the cultural experience offered to the user. Those involved in the field of culture and cultural heritage are looking for new ways of engaging visitors through the latest technological innovations. However, the issue of user experience lacks extensive theory and empirical research, particularly in the cultural context. The importance of understanding the user experience has been recognized in the initial studies conducted, which aimed to investigate the determinants that govern the user experience. Many researchers argued that research on the stage of user emotional experience is still limited and requires further examination in relation to its interactions; limited studies of user experience have been conducted in the context of cultural experience.

Keywords: user experience, digital culture, cultural routes, cultural user experience, personalization

Crossing Thrace with Augmented Reality

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Abstract

Augmented Reality is a modern technological trend in information technology which, through the camera stream of a mobile device (smart phones and tablets but also smart glasses like Microsoft HoloLens, and Google Glass) and advanced algorithms (spatial mapping, image recognition, machine learning) enriches the physical world of the user, as it is perceived through their mobile device, with selected digital content. In 'Digital Thrace's' augmented reality application, the technology allows the user to recognize the items of interest in their surroundings and to orient themselves towards them, regardless of the items distance. Also, using geographic coordinates, it displays the items of interest on a map for direct monitoring of their location and the user's location. The map follows the user as he navigates through space (e.g. in a city) and informs them of the items that are nearby. Finally, in constant communication with the 'Digital Thrace' data server, it retrieves information that can be adapted to the user's choices and profile, for a more personalized experience. The user experience ends up displaying photos and information about the selected items on the screen of the mobile device. The above functions make the application a digital personal tour guide that accompanies the user on his touristic or educational tour of the cities of Thrace.

Keywords: Augmented reality, Geolocation, Tourism, Visitors, Landmarks, Enhanced location services, Pathfinding, Mobile application

Accessibility of digital images and maps for individuals with visual impairment or blindness

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Abstract

In this study, we conducted a small-scale literature review to investigate the accessibility of digital maps for individuals with visual impairments or blindness using smartphones and tablets. We present findings from the research and propose techniques that can enhance accessibility by reducing or eliminating barriers encountered when using current applications such as 'Google Maps.' Additionally, we discuss the integration of new features, such as 'haptic feedback,' which could assist individuals with visual impairments or blindness in developing better conceptual maps of the digital content they explore.

Keywords: Digital maps, digital accessibility, visual impairment, blindness, assistive technology, haptic feedback



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