“TrasiMemo” Memory Bank of Trasimeno Area. Working together to create development perspectives

Daniele Parbuono

Anthropologist, Chongqing University of Arts and Sciences (China) and University of Perugia (Italy). E-mail: daniele.parbuono@hotmail.com

Revista de Arquitetura IMED, Passo Fundo, vol. 7, n. 2, p. 23-44, Julho-Dezembro, 2018 - ISSN 2318-1109
[Recebido: 10 outubro 2018; Aceito: 05 dezembro 2018]
DOI: https://doi.org/10.18256/2318-1109.2018.v7i2.2998

Como citar este artigo / How to cite item: clique aqui! / click here!
Abstract

“TrasiMemo. The Trasimeno’s Memory Bank” is a complex project – started thanks to a collaboration between university researchers, professionals of Cultural Heritage, artisans, local administrators and stakeholders – which aims to valorize crafts knowledge and memories, interpreted as a specific form of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The epistemological starting points refer to three main areas of the anthropological and museological debate: “cultural heritage”, ecomuseum theory, and craftsmanship “know-how”. After an initial phase of conception and sharing of the path with many local actors, we started an ethnographic research in order to “gather memories” through the use of computer and audio-visual equipment. The significant corpus of data composes the nucleus upon which is founded the physical layout of the “Bank” and the web archive, both connected to a series of workshop experiences managed in collaboration with local artisans. The general objective of the project (in progress) is to “reactivate”, starting from the ethnographic research, important Heritage’s items for the Trasimeno lake area, trying to stimulate, in the craft field, new professional dynamics which take together historical experiences and contemporary working possibilities.

Keywords: Anthropology, Cultural Heritage, Ecomuseum, craftsmanship, development
“TrasiMemo. Banca della memoria del Trasimeno” is a scientific research project, an attempt to protect and promote memories, knowledge and know-how. It is aimed to an operational reflection about local development in Trasimeno lake area, which is located in Umbria region (Italy). Until now, its concrete outcomes have been a small museum set-up, a web archive and some workshops on specific local crafts (textiles, wood, terracotta, iron and metals), the collaboration with many local associations and the establishment of numerous concrete relationship on cultural heritage topics. TrasiMemo is the result of the collaboration between Paciano (Pg) City Council and Specialization School in Anthropological Cultural Heritage (Scuola di specializzazione in Beni demoetnoantropologici) of University of Perugia (in agreement with the Universities of Florence, Siena and Turin) – located in Castiglione del Lago (Pg) – in relationship with a network of those we could define «militanti locali del patrimonio» (DE VARINE, 2005, p. 22).

On theoretical level, the project is developed around two main conceptual point: cultural heritage and ecomuseums principles.

The term ‘heritage’ derives from the Latin *patrimonium*, word composed of two terms: *pater* ‘father’ and *munus* ‘duty’ which literally meant ‘duties of the father’ and, by extension, ‘duties of the father respect to the sons’, that is all possessions of the father transmitted for inheritance to sons. Therefore, «Il diritto romano che ha formato una parte della coscienza occidentale, considera il patrimonio come l’insieme dei beni familiari intesi non secondo il loro valore pecuniario ma secondo la loro condizione di beni trasmissibili» (POULOT, 2006, p. 131).

It is Dominique Poulot who explains in which way a modern discourse on heritage began in the nineteenth century in connection with the “strict” constitution of nation-states:

*Ovunque in Europa si celebra la conservazione delle antichità nazionali come un dovere patriottico. La nazione diviene l’incarnazione per eccellenza della patrimonialità assorbendo per così dire nel suo principio tutta la ricezione degli oggetti culturali del passato. L’appropriazione ha luogo attraverso il riferimento a una comunità immaginaria e la salvaguardia del patrimonio è generalmente accompagnata dalla credenza nel progresso. […] questo è quello che avviene con l’invenzione di antenati fondatori, con la costruzione di una storia ampiamente condivisa e passata allo stato, per così dire, di conoscenza diffusa all’interno del corpo sociale, con l’affermazione di una lingua e di una letteratura comuni, con l’erezione di monumenti che rafforzano il senso di appartenenza a una collettività, con il consolidamento e la perpetuazione del folklore e infine con la progressiva sensibilizzazione riguardo al paesaggio concepito come una rappresentazione del paese* (POULOT, 2006, p. 135).
A first scientific report about the new semantics of cultural heritage concept in the contemporary time was traced in 1993 conference of Tours, “L’Europe entre cultures et nations”, coordinated by Daniel Fabre; particularly in the session “Identités et patrimoines”. According to Pietro Clemente, first president and today honorary president of SIMBDEA (Società Italiana per la museografia e i beni demoenontropologici - Italian Society for Museography and demo-ethno-anthropological heritage):

In questo convegno [...] si disegnano entrambe le posizioni che si ritrovano poi anche nel dibattito italiano, una che vede nel lavoro antropologico sul patrimonio una valorizzazione delle culture locali e popolari contro le tradizionali scelte elitarie della cultura museale, l’altra che vede invece nei musei e nella valorizzazione locale del patrimonio processi politici di costruzione dell’identità che osteggiano prospettive culturali più ampie (meticciati, ibridismi, cosmopolitismi). Nel dibattito italiano invero si è raggiunta una buona compatibilità di prospettive anche nella situazione un po’ paradossale dell’antropologo che è al tempo stesso operatore dinamico e promotore di un “certo modo” di fare musei e patrimonio, e insieme “strabicamente” osservatore partecipante dei processi socio-culturali che il patrimonio mobilita (CLEMENTE, 2006, p. 159).

In the Italian anthropological debate, there is who have confidence in the instruments of supranational institution regulations (UNESCO, Council of Europe) on soliciting or promoting policies for the protection and safeguarding of different heritage aspects supporting the so-called “communities” (BORTOLOTTO, 2010, 2013; CLEMENTE, 2017; GIANGRISTOFARO, 2018; LAPICCIRELLA ZINGARI, 2017).

Unlike these positions a critical anthropology of cultural heritage is supported by Berardino Palumbo whose writings since two decades represent a central theoretical point of reference for those who decide to work on these issues. Starting from L’Unesco e il campanile (PALUMBO, 2003), in dialogue with a wide international literature, in his works he traces a research route that shifts the attention to the political processes of heritage definition, rather than to the “essentialization” of individual elements of heritage. According to this approach, the processes of “patrimonialization” concern forms of public space manipulation, political-social conflicts that are played around the agency of people and powers displayed, objectification of cultural elements, poetics of “space/time” constructions. These constructions – through “patrimonialization” processes – concern also the concepts of locality, territoriality, the definition dynamics of local imaginations within larger and less manageable global process (APPADURAI, 1996). That is why, as Giovanni Pizza (2015, p. 181) reminds us, «[…] l’antropologia, se
riflette sulle sue connivenze nella produzione della località, può a pieno titolo passare allo studio delle tecniche di produzione della località [...]."

It is precisely in the idea of “weighted” locality production that we can identify a common ground between controversial and debated definitions of cultural heritage and ecomuseum theory. The ecomuseum concept was born in the Seventies, in France, when Hugues De Varine and George Henri Rivière – among the promoters of “Nouvelle Muséologie” – within a general and deep conceptual deconstruction of “museum” as a depository institution of absolute and universal sociocultural values, shift attention on the need to work at local resources level. They elaborate a work track – then experimented in the following decades in different ways and places – with the aim of democratize the access, recognize and use of those potentialities that today we could define “cultural heritage” (DAVIS, 2004), basing on the ICOM (International Council of Museum) debate. On the one hand there are the growing problems related to environmental protection – «Believing that all museums in the world are concerned with the gathering of documentation on the basic conditions of human existence and the preservation of the natural and cultural environment»1 – on the other hand, the influences of student and feminist movements of the Sixties and, in general, of post-modern debate, define a new idea of museum as «risposta popolare e progressista alla museologia borghese delle grandi istituzioni francesi» (PINNA, 2014, p. 3). The “Nouvelle Muséologie” outlines a definition of museum in opposition to the nineteenth-century idea of absolute and universal values temple, custodian of knowledge produced by hegemonic political and cultural elites, unable to overcome what John Kinard (1972) identified as blatant disregard of minority cultures. Especially according to Hugues de Varine, the museum should have been transformed from a passive spectator of the surrounding dynamics to a participant and active actor of development2, favouring a full democratization of cultural heritage process.

The term “Ecomuseum” was literally coined at “La Flambé” restaurant of Paris in the Spring of 1971, during «una colazione di lavoro [che] riuniva intorno allo stesso tavolo Georges-Henri Rivière, ex direttore e consigliere permanente dell’ICOM, Serge Antoine, consigliere del ministro dell’Ambiente Robert Poujade, e me stesso [Hugues De Varine] a quel tempo direttore dell’ICOM» (DE VARINE, 2005, p. 243). In fact, after the 9th ICOM General Conference, held in Paris and Grenoble in 19713, ICOM together with the French Ministry of the Environment, in 1972, organizes a symposium in which they begun to define the possible range of ecomuseum action, based on what

---

1 Resolution n. 5 “Museums and environment”; X General Assembly of ICOM – Grenoble, France, 10 September 1971.
2 “Museums and Development” is the central topic of VIII ICOM General Conference, held in Cologne and Munich in 1968, debated also in the spring of 1972 in the round table organized by ICOM and UNESCO in Santiago de Chile (see «Museum», vol. XXV, nº 3, 1973).
3 “The museum in the service of man, today and tomorrow: the museum’s educational and cultural role".
Rivière (1973) describes as the need to reflect about balance between man, social and natural environment.

In 1980 Rivière elaborates a very cogent definition of the ecomuseum concept, which will be published in its third and last version as a sort of manifesto entitled *The ecomuseum – an evolutive definition*, in “Museum” Journal of 1985:

An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public authority and a local population. The public authority’s involvement is through the experts, facilities and resources it provides; the local population’s involvement depends on its aspirations, knowledge and individual approach. It is a mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image, in which it seeks an explanation of the territory to which it is attached and of the populations that have preceded it, seen either as circumscribed in time or in terms of the continuity of generations. It is a mirror that the local population holds up to its visitors so that it may be better understood and so that its industry, customs and identity may command respect. It is an expression of man and nature. It situates man in his natural environment. It portrays nature in its wildness, but also as adapted by traditional and industrial society in their own image. It is an expression of time, when the explanations it offers reach back before the appearance of man, ascend the course of the prehistoric and historical times in which he lived and arrive finally at man’s present. It also offers vistas of the future, while having no pretensions to decision-making, its function being rather to inform and critically analyse. It is an interpretation of space-of special places in which to stop or stroll. It is a laboratory, in so far as it contributes to the study of the past and present of the population concerned and of its environment and promotes the training of specialists in these fields, in co-operation with outside research bodies. It is a conservation centre, in so far as it helps to preserve and develop the natural and cultural heritage of the population. It is a school, in so far as it involves the population in its work of study and protection and encourages it to have a clearer grasp of its own future. This laboratory, conservation centre and school are based on common principles. The culture in the name of which they exist is to be understood in its broadest sense, and they are concerned to foster awareness of its dignity and artistic manifestations, from whatever stratum of the population they derive. Its diversity is limitless, so greatly do its elements vary from one specimen to another. This triad, then, is not self-enclosed: it receives and it gives (RIVIÈRE, 1985, p. 182-183).
Hugues de Varine for his part, already at the end of the Seventies, began to develop a broad and differentiated vision of the concept, in which «[…] l’accento è posto sulla comunità, protagonista di un processo di riappropriazione del proprio passato in funzione di una prospettiva di sviluppo sostenibile» (JALLA, 2016, p. 80). In fact, De Varine, in his “community variant” states that:

*L’ecomuseo […] è in primo luogo una comunità e un obiettivo: lo sviluppo della comunità stessa. Ha, inoltre, una funzione educativa generale che si fonda su un patrimonio culturale e su un certo numero di attori, entrambi appartenenti a quella stessa comunità. È, infine, un modello di organizzazione cooperativa orientata allo sviluppo e un processo critico di valutazione e di correzione continue* (DE VARINE, 2005, p. 249).

According to this approach, that anticipates key issues of the subsequent international debate (Unesco⁴, Council of Europe⁵, policies of the individual nation-states), local cultural heritages recognized as such by specific groups of stakeholders and managed in a “productive” way by ecomuseums built by low (bottom up approach) should have been interpreted as active components of sustainable local development.

The articulated debate about cultural heritage and ecomuseums put a strain on the conception and classical functions of museum, opening interesting work spaces in contemporary local contexts. The planning idea of TrasiMemo makes its way from these assumptions. Starting from the awareness of the difficult relationships among different levels of institutions, regulatory instruments and capital requirements, TrasiMemo was conceived as an attempt to elaborate, propose, refine and follow “good practices” in order to foster collaboration between public and private parties for the “reactivation” of precious local possibilities (even if underestimated).

The City Council of Paciano – little town of about one thousand inhabitants – was able to use a small public funding made available by the Umbria Region through the “GAL Trasimeno-Orvietano”, a public-private company leader of the constituting “Ecomuseo del Paesaggio del Trasimeno” (which has not yet been started). Also thanks to the indispensable mediation of Cinzia Marchesini – council member of Paciano (now deputy mayor), already graduated in Anthropology (master and Specialization School) –, in February 2013, City Council and University subscribed an agreement, approved in March, to realize a project idea to be discussed with the local associations and with all the interested people⁶.

⁶ The parts in which I describe the project “TrasiMemo”, even if reviewed, updated and expanded, are partially taken over by Parbuono 2015.
At this point, the University of Perugia through Specialization School and “Uomo & Territorio” Department (today merged in “Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione” Department) – at the time directed by Giancarlo Baronti who assumed responsibility of the project – set up a specific research group whose scientific direction and coordination was entrusted to me.

The first purpose of the group was to identify the aspects that could represent possibilities of “local development” (DE VARINE, 2005) not only starting from the attraction of tourist flows – a matter that for a long time has attracted most attentions of the territorial and regional “political discourse” (PARBUONO, 2013) – but starting from the growing need to increase the areal professional offer. The work to realize a dense ethnographic research project and its subsequent museological (both physical and virtual) outcome on the theme of craftsmanship, represented an effective synthesis with respect to the urgency of protection and conservation of memories related to localized knowledge and practices. Moreover, it is an answer for political and administrative need to offer food for thought aimed to create new territorially characterized professional experiences.

The craftsmanship summarizes the effective aspects of human interaction with territory, taking together multiple competences that, interacting, have strongly contributed to the creation of rural and urban landscape scenarios within which local communities employed knowledge of space and places, manual, technical and scientific skills, creativity, consolidated relationships between traditions and innovations (SENNETT, 2008). Through the craft develops a «nuova intelligenza del fare» (FEDERICI, 2013, p. VII) able to connect different knowledge and skills that increasing each other can guarantee the right regeneration degree of a given area economic potential. Generally, they can guarantee ever-renewed forms of “local development”, often central in the most tired political-administrative rhetoric. The references to the practices of local knowledge passing on and transformation have assumed a central importance in contrast with the “essentialist” perspectives

---

7 It is the “Gruppo di ricerca e di progettazione sistema musei-Beni culturali e paesaggistici del Trasimeno”, established in 2013 and composed by: Giancarlo Baronti (former Director of Specialization School, today retired); Daniele Parbuono (scientific director and coordinator); Patrizia Cirino, Lorenzo Dogana, Francesco Farabi, Glenda Giampaoli, Cinzia Marchesini, Paolo Sacchetti, (graduated of Specialization School); Giulia Becchis, Loris Bendotti, Giulia Giannini (at the time, student of Specialization School); Giovanni Marco Castellaneta, Margherita Sanchini (graduated of Master in Anthropology). For “TrasiMemo” project actively worked: Baronti, Cirino, Farabi, Giampaoli, Marchesini, Parbuono e Sacchetti.

8 I use the plural word considering that «[…] la stessa nozione di “comunità”, così spesso usata come se si riferisse ad una realtà data, cela l’articolazione conflittuale che la contraddistingue e che la rende un contesto ben poco unitario, compatto e monologico, come gli studi sulla patrimonializzazione ci hanno insegnato» (APOLITO, 2007, p. 15).

9 See: ANGINONI, 1986; ELLEN, 2006; ELLEN; FUKUI, 1996; ELLEN; PARKES; BICKER, 2000.
(CAOCI, 2009) which – especially in the local political debate – treats this themes in an exclusively historical-archaeological (if not neo-evolutionary) way. In fact, in this project of protection and valorise of memories, craftsmanship has been considered as an element that distinguishes territorial characteristics and resources that is not possible to reproduce elsewhere: a vehicle for renewal of professional, therefore economic, local possibilities (CAOCI; LAI, 2007).

To preserve this knowledge – which can be considered among the multifaceted Intangible Cultural Heritage\(^ {10}\) aspects – and make it available to conscious users could give rise to a process of local future construction, leveraging by the past, but acting today (Scarpelli 2007). This process is also aimed to attract a specific visitors’ target\(^ {11}\), but firstly it is aimed to develop increasing self-awareness forms of the available resources in the area.

Ad esempio, Hugues De Varine uno degli inventori del concetto di “ecomuseo”, riconosce nel visitatore colto e consapevole un fattore essenziale di immagine e una risorsa per lo sviluppo locale; mentre ci sarebbe da temere addirittura un abbassamento del livello culturale della popolazione, se ha troppo a che fare con i turisti comuni – che a questo punto appaiono poco meno che culturalmente infetti (SCARPELLI, 2007, p. 152).

With this approach the issue of touristic flows must be analysed in relation to the implementation of a possible local resources development. It can be considered a consequence of cultural heritage valorisation more than a cause. In TrasiMemo the cultural heritage represented by the memories of craftsmanship is not only relegated to

---

\(^{10}\) Within the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage”, the cultural heritage and particularly the intangible cultural heritage are defined as follows: «Article 2 – Definitions. For the purposes of this Convention. 1. The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development. 2. The “intangible cultural heritage”, as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship».

\(^{11}\) A tourism defined as “responsible” (or “sustainable”) as an alternative to “mass tourism”. For example, see: AIME, 2005; CIPOLLARI, 2009; NASH, 1996; SIMONICCA, 1998.
the aesthetic transmission of the past but, selected according to the needs of the present (LENCLUD, 2001), is recognizable and usable for the contemporary needs of people who are interested in using it (DE VARINE, 2005).

Therefore, from the design phase beginning the creation of a peer work table was encouraged where the owners of memories about craftsmanship practices were able to confront with currently active craftsmen and interact with scientific skills of a researchers group. Berardino Palumbo, in 2009, taken over and commented – once again12 – by Fabio Dei (2013), proposes three possible professional (anthropological) postures with respect to the “patrimonialisation” processes, thanks to which we could define “TrasiMemo” project as a “participated” work of heritage anthropology (PALUMBO, 2009). The “participated” position – unlike the “internal” one «che semplicemente accetta le categorie patrimoniali di senso comune e il ruolo di expertise concesso all’antropologia dal discorso istituzionale, senza porsi i problemi epistemologici sopra accennati» (DEI, 2013, p. 135), and in addition to the “critique” one which «invece si pone in modo metadiscorsivo verso i processi di patrimonializzazione: ne fa oggetto di analisi etnografica, senza confondersi con le loro categorie» (ibid.) –, as Palumbo (2009, p. XXXIX) explains:

[...] più che una specifica strategia conoscitiva, sembra essere una postura intellettuale capace di muoversi tra abitudini “interne” e propensioni “critiche”. Gli studiosi che assumono un’attitudine “partecipativa” rispetto al campo del patrimonio [...] sono di solito consapevoli [...] del carattere “politico” della propria partecipazione [...]. La scelta partecipativa comporta quindi, da un lato, la necessità di operare con e attraverso le “cose” del campo patrimoniale, dall’altro l’obbligo di oggettivare i processi di produzione/costruzione di tali “beni”, il proprio coinvolgimento in tali processi e, infine, i più ampi scenari all’interno dei quali operano la logica patrimoniale e i suoi attori.

The research group, during ethnographic work as well as during museographic rendering phases, constantly interacting with numerous stakeholders, has designed and redesigned action strategies. This, on the one hand, have also allowed the local political levels to relate with an epistemological lexicon to them substantially unknown, on the other hand have always kept high the attention level on the shared selection processes of the topics and memories to be further explored. The aim has never been to favour particular aesthetic attention on handicraft products “historic”, “precious”, “unique” or

currently disused; nor to look at the handicrafts as art pieces on which to hypothesize new museum actions.

The TrasiMemo protagonists are not the objects themselves – that with Krzysztof Pomiam (1999) we could define “semiophores” – as much as the narratives connected to them, the memories of use and construction, the professional lives behind them: the domestic and daily use of handicraft (aspect that distributed shared competences in the communities, above all in the past), the work organization, the local raw materials use, the development of always renewed skills.

The memory of territories and knowledge that helped to build them becomes an important point of reference on redefining less invasive housing strategies to foster ever greater quality of life for today and for the future. The relationship between human beings and territories has developed over centuries of adaptations and reciprocal conditioning forms, through a lasting cultural “work” that – precisely starting from the resources and possibilities available near the places of life – has determined specific professional knowledge. In contrast to these deep kinds of relationship between “environment” and human groups:

La liberazione progressiva dai vincoli territoriali (dettiritorializzazione) ha portato nel tempo a una crescente ignoranza delle relazioni, tra insediamento umano e ambiente, relazioni che hanno generato l’arte di edificare, la storia dei luoghi e la loro identità, unica, riconoscibile, irripetibile. La distruzione della memoria e della biografia di un territorio ci fa vivere in un sito indifferente, ridotto a supporto di funzioni di una società istantanea, che ha interrotto bruscamente ogni relazione con la storia del luogo (MAGNAGHI, 2010, p. 30-31).

A critical re-reading of the processes of “dettiritorialization”, in diachronic and synchronic way, can be an effective instrument of deep knowledge, thus of the “obviousness” critics and deconstruction of essentialism that often connotes the cultural heritage public dimension.

The main issue of this research-action then becomes to make memories – recovered and preserved – “good to think” and above all “good to act” as incisive heritage elements capable to awake (cultural, social, professional, economic, tourist) territorial dynamics, now dormant. As Mario Turci wrote (2012, p. 52), «Il patrimonio
è l’ereditato che può concorrere alla qualità della vita (dormiente e passivo se solo conservato e mostrato, attivo e produttivo se scambiato e negoziato in forme partecipative, quindi donato). The recognized heritage becomes property of everyone. It is where relationships realize negotiation products, where the dialogue between different subjects (operators, stakeholders, scholars, communities) can produce new forms of culture, as well as new forms of social and economic well-being. TrasiMemo aims to transform craftsmanship memories in “active heritage” to be shared quickly and easily even through the web possibilities.

Remember to “donate” memory through active museum networks and, above all, through an expandable digital storage platform that makes available to present and future generations an important body of information like a basis to create professional (productive, tourist, commercial) credible projects, sustainable and unique, because connected to specific “cultural landscapes” (MITCHELL; RÖSSLER; TRICAUD, 2009).

From an executive point of view the project has been divided in four macro-sectors: ethnographic research and systematization of materials related to four specific aspects of handicraft (textiles, wood, earthenware, iron and metals); physical installations on the ground floor of the prestigious Palazzo Baldeschi owned by the Umbria Region, but granted to the Paciano Municipality and probable future location of the Trasimeno Municipalities Committee; web archive (www.trasimemo.it); workshops with particular collaboration with primary and secondary schools.

The research group, elaborating the general idea – thanks to the continued contact with the municipal administrators and technicians of Paciano – has started a phase of relationship with the most interested local actors and consequent adjustment of the job prospects. After collecting the first availability and receiving all suggestions from the meetings, the research group started to meet people who in some way could give memories and craftsmen still in activities; persons willing to invest time and knowledge for the project realization. This peculiar aspect of ethnography has led researchers not to “participate” in the professional activities under investigation, but to “participate” to all common feelings, those worries, emotions, needs, urgencies, tensions, that involved persons expressed (directly and indirectly). The “participation” is however one of the preconditions of ethnography but, in this specific project, “participating” has become an essential necessity, considering the immediately perceptible effects of the work which from the beginning would have produced a strong impact on the public scene. The same for the imaginations of possible future representation (and self-representation) of the involved community parts.

For this reason, those who once defined themselves as “informants” have been considered as integral component of our work team, therefore involved in the planning settlements as well as in the content and even aesthetic choices for collected and systematized materials. In the same time we tried to submit the research data to a
continuous critical exercise that allowed us to keep in mind the complex relationship between researchers, political decision makers, craftsmen and “memory bearers” 14. Despite the thick relationship – I would say the “cultural intimacy” (HERZFELD, 1997) – created throughout several months regular attendance (September 2013 – March 2014), on January 29th 2014, it was organized a specific general meeting in which the research group was able to share with the “work group” (consisting of about fifty people) the first results of ethnography. Furthermore, they could collectively verify the yield of the first expographic attempts.

At this point – also thanks to the work of the museum enterprise in charge of the execution already involved in the ethnographic research – in February began the physical (and digital-virtual) realization of TrasiMemo.

The ground floor of Palazzo Baldeschi, which can be accessed from the adjacent street (Paciano main street), was conceived as an exhibition and workshop space available to visitors and inhabitants. The aim was to build a public meeting space and, in the same time, a focus about territory from which visitors can access the different paths (tangible and intangible), inside the municipal boundaries but also extended to the Trasimeno lake area. Moreover, inside the “museum” spaces the constant presence of temporary exhibitions (photographs, paintings, handicrafts, etc.) related to the treated themes was foreseen. The associations and all the interested subjects of the territory have an active role in these temporary events management.

The “Room of craft and craft knowledge” was designed as a physical access point to the archive. The installations (PADIGLIONE, 2009, 2013) here are conceptually referred to the four craftsmanship field on which, at least in this moment, the project was focalized. The construction of space plays on the symbolic reference. The evocative sensation that we wanted to cause in the visitor is strongly linked to the “archive” concept, which in this case returns from virtual to real. The path is in the opposite direction than the custom, according to which archives are constructed starting from the material collections or repertoires. In TrasiMemo project, the starting point is the virtual archive (it can be accessed from a location created in one of the rooms) of which only some traces are created in the physical exhibition aimed to rise curiosity and interest. Therefore, at the visitor is offered the opportunity to feel himself evocatively in an archive only partially constituted with real (tangible) symbolic objects – objects “witness” (LATTANZI, 2013) –, with graphics, with images, but which then must necessarily be explored in full within the virtual space. Specifically, the exhibition is concentrated around four desks (archive model) placed in the middle of the room. Each desk has been transformed into a support dedicated to the exhibition of some handicraft and some tools related to the four themes: a desk for each theme. Moreover,

14 As Barbara Tedlock (1991, p. 69) wrote, we have tried to pass «From participant observation to the observation of participation», considering our presence as one of the project constituent elements, then as a point to be negotiated repeatedly in the relationship with all the involved subjects.
the desk-showcase offers interactive in-depth thanks to small touch-screen tablets (one for each desk). This specific desks usage is a clear reference to the complex dimension of the anthropological concept of “culture”. Where in the first life of the object only elements of the hegemonic culture were contained, the installation suggests a wider definition of “culture” that does not exclusively concern “intellectual” dimension: those desks, in the life of museum narration, contain traces of oral culture, of transmitted know-how, of places’ knowledge, which can occupy the same spaces previously dedicated to books and written documents. The part of the wall in front of each desk is dedicated to four infographics, printed on opaque transparent “plexiglass”, related to specific themes, synthesis of the ethnographic work. In the back of the room there is an archive model dresser, inside which there are cards – that we define “stories of lives and objects” – and “didactic micro-paths and tactile interactions” with the raw materials. It is placed in the middle of the “Wall of writings” which shows entire semantic fields organized on the words of the interviewees and realized with the selection of the linguistic transcriptions. The room is completed by a “soundscape” (COLIMBERTI, 2004; SCHAFER, 1985) aimed at creatively synthesizing the four spaces that speak about places and work dimensions starting from specific sound markers.

The laboratories, instead, are placed in different spaces between the ground floor and the last floor. These are concentrated on the production of ceramics and terracotta, weaving, manipulation of wood and metals, decorative arts, but also gardening, reading, creative production. It is particularly interesting the workshop created by Cinzia Marchesini in collaboration with the cooperative “Frontiera lavoro” and “Centro di Salute Mentale del Trasimeno - USL Umbria 1, Servizio Sanitario Regionale” (Mental Health Center of Trasimeno): “TrasiMemo Arts & Crafts” (MARCHESINI, 2017), a project about use of cultural heritage in the field of “mental health”. Specifically, it consists in a permanent weaving workshop to which weekly takes part a group of people with “mental illness”.

The central part of the “exhibition”, the objective of the research data public outcome, therefore the central focus of the whole project, is the online archive. The debate started by UNESCO on “digital heritage” concept has drawn attention to web archives of memory (GEISMAR; MOHNS, 2011) that serve not only to preserve “incorrupt” knowledge and practices, but are based on sharing, accessibility and democratization (SAVA; POP, 2010). Therefore, this kind of knowledge is potentially accessible to mass public through the web (FOULONNEAU, 2003; MAJ; RIHA, 2009). The benefits of internet (BONACINI, 2011) allow us to reconstruct the informative richness and complexity of the survey object (GRIMALDI; TRINCHERO, 1998) thanks to the collaboration of different mediums in the same “place”: photos, videos, recordings, documents, writings, etc. These benefits can also promote the development of a direct relationship with people, to continue a dialogue that leads to improve the
collection and processing of data (UNDERBERG, 2006), as well as the analysis models connected to them.

As Daniele Jalla recently wrote, where it is possible, to overtake the exclusive promotional use of internet to favour the maximum “digitized” sharing of cultural heritage, seems to be one of the main objectives to go “beyond the crisis” of contemporary museographic conceptions (JALLA, 2013).

The archived heritage – to be constantly updated – together with the workshop practices can contribute to the diffusion of knowledge and to “reactivate” the legacy constituted by the collected memories. Precisely the distinction between active and passive heritages, shown and donated heritages, leads us to reflect on a further constitutive issue regarding the possible socio-economic consequences of this project: the local craft memories can be used as start-up resource to test new forms of production?

Questo capitale è ereditato e ciò significa che gli eredi devono gestirlo: non basta conservarlo nel senso fisico del termine. Occorre farlo vivere e produrre, trasformarlo affinché resti utile. Ciò implica una profonda presa di coscienza, di generazione in generazione, non soltanto del contenuto del patrimonio culturale, ma anche delle esigenze della sua gestione (DE VARINE, 2005, p. 23).

The problem of management raised by Varine invests all aspects of heritage (tangible and intangible). If TrasiMemo aims to overcome the limits of the necessary physical preservation of the handicrafts and tools in traditional museum exhibitions, supported by laboratory activities, it is also a starting point (a start-up, a common basis) for a concrete territorial action. For this, it has been conceived as the first level of the path, as an instrument that aims to manage the “emergency” of cultural heritage. TrasiMemo is a tool and not the end of the trip. Daniel Fabre reminds us:

[…] questa valorizzazione dei processi, socializzati e incorporati, rientra a sua volta, irresistibilmente, nella logica della conservazione materiale, poiché oggi tutte le arti della performance aspirano a essere fissate attraverso la registrazione visiva e sonora che bilancia il loro carattere istantaneo e finisce per costituire archivi e collezioni che perennizzano la singolarità della rappresentazione (nel senso teatrale del termine) e pongono a loro volta problemi sensibili di perennizzazione del loro fragile supporto. Mentre, d’altro canto, i “tesori viventi”, questi maestri incaricati di trasmettere ciò che sanno fare, finiscono per occupare inevitabilmente la posizione di artisti le cui performance e le cui produzioni sono ambite, qualificate, monetizzate ad alto prezzo e a volte conservate in musei che li identificano come forma e materia (FABRE, 2013, p. 44).
The memories take on a greater heritage value (cultural, productive, socio-economic) only if from audio-visual recording level – even if protected, catalogued, indexed and disseminated through the archive possibilities – they get back to be materialized (or better, to be incorporated) in concrete people activities. They can reinterpret in contemporary practices the historical needs and guarantee its survival and renewal. For this reason, the material protection of the craftsmanship cultural heritage – work tools and work products (museum action) – must be considered as fundamental, as well as all forms of audio-visual “capture” (even the amateur ones) of territorial memories should be encouraged: think about how much memory several coordinated smartphones conserve and could conserve. But the only real guarantee of survival of craftsmanship cultural heritage is the concrete use of the knowledge related to them, by people interested to transform them into real activities of present and future production:


The issue of protection and manage of craftsmanship cultural heritage then is strictly connected to the issue of “knowledge” and “know-how” transmission: by definition this can not only be didactic, purely theoretical, exclusively educational.

In this way, the University of Perugia researchers and municipal administrators of Paciano, five years after the creation of TrasiMemo, are working about new projects and search for public funding to continue the activities following five main topics: legal normalization; new research phase; updating of physical and virtual exhibition; activation of paths; “widespread atelier” project.

From the legal point of view, TrasiMemo, completely in charge of the Paciano municipality, is recognized within the regional museum system and in the future, it should become one of the “antennae” of the “Trasimeno landscape ecomuseum”. In everyday life, it is managed by employees of a cooperative and volunteers of the “ProLoco” association (local voluntary association) who also work as guides. Many volunteers play an important role for the survival of the project; they employ a lot of
their free time by donating skills and organizing workshops or activities: Monica the weaver; Solidea the ceramist; Jody, Anna and Leanne who take care of the palace’s rose garden; Giuseppina who holds the drawing workshop; Vanessa and Marco who organize summer camps for children named “Estate a TrasiMemo”; Monica and Maria Grazia who promote literary meetings; Suzannah who holds the English language workshops. This particular style of management that provides a sort of institutional coverage by the municipal administration ownership, within which forces and resources move on the level of informality, guarantees a sort of creative and performative “flexibility”. Different people, who have different roles and assignments, who can devote different times, skills and resources to TrasiMemo, mingle themselves within the non-schematized possibilities of recognized – but not very constrictive – local management formula. TrasiMemo is not a museum, it is not a laboratory (or workshop), it is not a research, it is not a design office, it is not an atelier, it is not a school, it is not a souvenir shop, it is not an association, it is not a municipality, it is not an economic algorithm: it is something that unites all these points pushing the conception of new collective work possibilities. For this reason, the legislation with difficulty can offer propulsive tools that do not exercise a constrictive power. However, the local stakeholders feel the need to organize themselves as an institutional coordinating “unit” with at least a scientific component and an administrative component.

Even if the legal side is becoming central for the future developments, the first part to be increased is undoubtedly the research one; it is de facto almost stationary since the first realization of the project. For about two years, numerous projects aimed to obtain public funding are presented to improve the old fieldwork and to start new ethnographic researches: the uses of the waters, the olive landscape, the food heritage (just to bring some examples).

Only by continuing the ethnographic research it will be possible to update the exhibition components (physical and virtual) and create new installations, in a propositional circle that from the research can move on to the narration and consequent application of the acquired, protected and regenerated knowledge.

From the real and virtual access points of TrasiMemo, it will be necessary to activate a series of external paths aimed to stimulate a deeper knowledge of the Trasimeno area. The itineraries could be used by the local people – increasing a self-awareness necessary to understand what resources and potentiality are available to improve the living spaces conditions – and by visitors who could count on different levels of deepening for different expectations. The path concept is linked to an interconnected series of possible “crossings”: historical, archaeological, ethno-anthropological, architectural, agricultural, landscape. In this way, the “memory bank” becomes a new portal that, by combining multimedia, immaterial, documentary, didactic and informative levels, pushes outside, to the rich territorial vitality. We have to consider this as a tool for revitalizing the locally characterized life chances.
But the goal that is most discussed at this point of the TrasiMemo experience is undoubtedly the so-called “widespread atelier” (name chosen by the municipal administration together with the main stakeholders). In short, it consists to recover a series of basements and disused garages along the town central street, making them available to craftsmen who intend to activate new professional ideas. The whole phase of the project should be coordinated by the (hypothetical) scientific-administrative structure of TrasiMemo with the aim to provide a public support for the first years of craftsmanship activity: a particular kind of start-up that should support the craftsmen on the economic aspects, on the creation of possible sales networks and common commercial strategies, on the research for innovation and development. Therefore, the hypothesis is to configure TrasiMemo as a broad platform of possibilities that (in a central Italy small town, with less than a thousand inhabitants) can gather knowledge, memories, emergencies about the present, but also hopes for the future, planning, professionalisms, with the aim to foster sustainable forms of local development.

The continuous collaboration between public institutions and locally active people, among municipal administration, university and craftsmen, could guarantee the correct balance between scientific dimension and professional-economic needs of the area. In this, the thought of Tullio Seppilli, formalized in a paper of fifty years ago, demonstrates great relevance:

La funzione sociale dell’antropologia culturale, e il rapporto fra momento della ricerca scientifica e momento delle scelte di valore e della responsabilità sociale dell’antropologo culturale si articolano perciò a tre livelli: a) individuazione (scelta) delle situazioni problematiche che vanno posti come campi prioritari di ricerca, come oggetto di interpretazione scientifica; b) diffusione dei risultati della ricerca come contributo alla consapevolezza sociale; c) presa di posizione rispetto alle possibili utilizzazioni operative dei risultati della ricerca e collaborazione ai programmi di intervento coerenti con tali obiettivi attraverso la partecipazione alla precisazione dei fini e degli strumenti dell’intervento, alla previsione dei suoi effetti, al suo svolgimento, e al controllo dei suoi risultati (SEPPILLI, 2008, p. 76).

Deciding to participate at the activation and promotion of this kind of project means to assume the scientific and political responsibility of developments, results and possible implications. It means to clarify roles and to explicit positions; it means to debate (often to conflict) and to build; it means to believe that a research effort can be an important resource for those who choose to live and work in a small town like Paciano.
References


