Typographic Topology/Topographic Typography. Reading the Urban Identity Through the Historical *Typescape*: Hypothesis for an AR Situated Mobile App

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Abstract. Starting from the idea of an alternative way of reading and interpreting the urban space and its evolution through the Farias' concept of *Graphic memory*, the research project proposes the concept of *typescape* as a way of investigating a complex territory from a social, urban, and linguistic point of view. It is an interpretative key that allows to read the *genius loci*, or rather a complex and stratified urban identity, from one side, but also the gentrification processes induced by transformations that have partially modified, overwritten or progressively cancelled the richness of the original identity. The paper presents and discusses the design and prototype of *Bozen-Bolzano AR* situated mobile app that adopts *phygital* storytelling to explore the cultural and intangible heritage of the city according to the methodology already developed and test in different cities such as São Paulo, London, and Venice.

Keywords: Cultural and Intangible Heritage · Typescape · Graphic Memory · generous interfaces design · geo-storytelling

1 Introduction: Cartographies of Emotions

"The only journey possible would now appear to be within signs, images: within the destruction of direct experience." Luigi Ghirri [1].

If it easy to read the urban morphology on a map – showing the planned structures as well as the texture spontaneously shaped by the community or the pattern configured by the buildings and architectures – the living experiences is elusive in this visualization modality and scale, or the more complex the layers of social practices and symbolic values are, the more we need a broad and articulated range of two and three-dimension, multisensorial, multimodal, and synesthetic communication modalities.

Besides, some territories offer a further richness of interpretations thanks to the socio-historical sedimentation they witnessed. If, in some cases, the city has been read as a text, a warp and weft of signs and presences, as in the case of the typographic maps drawn by Paula Scher [2], it is the *peri*-textual references – and their co-location – the *para*-text [3], to reveal the meaning, otherwise not perceivable by adopting a pure editorial

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metaphor. The tag clouds depicted to recreate the shape of the spatial – urban, national, or worldwide – outline is based on "hand-painted place names, information and cultural commentary" where the personal perspective and the alternative vision of the designer are "expressionistic" as well as "geographical" at the same time. According to Simon Winchester – author of *The Map That Changed the World* [4] – Scher's work reclaims the charm of maps in the age of GPS. These maps charts are more than just a territory: "a mural […] presents the country's geography and cliwmate, showing networks mountain ranges, rivers, and weather streams in a chaotic, colourful jumble on the map. Scher also created paintings depicting median home prices, driving times and mileage, counties and zip codes." [5]. As she states in an interview: "It's aesthetic, and also emotional […] I describe it as abstract expressionist information – that you are taking information and manipulating it to create a sensibility. […] I think the painting is all about being bombarded with media and how you see and hear things" [6] (see Fig. 1a). The letters, used as keywords based on data interpreted by the artistic filter and forming the topology of an actual and abstract place at the same time, derive their own meaningful powers from the expressive side of typography and the significant aesthetic layer rooted in the shape of the character, in their visual emphasis and stylistic morphology and create an impressive and impressionistic narrative of the places. "I began painting maps to invent my own complicated narrative about the way I see and feel about the world. I wanted to list what I know about a place from memory, from impressions, from media, and from general information overload. They are paintings of distortions" Scher finally states about the creation of her imaginative though relatable world [7]. "An irreverent, artful antidote to GPS appification" according to Popova "MAPS is a beautiful antidote to the sterile objectivity of location-aware apps and devices, reminiscent of Ward Shelley's analog data visualization and the poetic subjectivity of *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination*" [8]. This approach to maps, then, seems to give back to cartography an emotional dimension able to reconnect with people, more like the community-driven Waze's *live map* app instead of the efficient and commercial representation of Google Maps.



Fig. 1. a) Paula Scher, Tsunami, 2006. *Paula Scher: MAPS*, Princeton University Press, 2011; b) Alighiero Boetti, *Mappa del mondo* 1971–73, embroidered linen canvas. Suzeau & Boetti Collection, Castello di Rivoli, Museo di Arte Contemporanea, Torino (WikiCommons).

A similar elaboration can also be found in the artistic work of Alighiero Boetti. Based on the first experimentation of the *Planisfero politico* (1969) [9] the *Game Plan* cartographies and atlases reproduce the outlines of states and continents on which the corresponding flags are imprinted. However, this weaving of images and colours, seemingly "realistic" in the heraldic symbology of the national flags, is interwoven with the materials and experiences of the author during his travels, e.g., in Afghanistan in 1971 and 1979 (see Fig. 1b). "*Mappa del Mundo* is a colorful, beautifully crafted tapestry showing each country emblazoned with its own flag, examining borders, frontiers, nationalism, and patriotism. The frames are emblazoned with Italian and Persian texts, selected by Boetti and the craftswomen. […] Geopolitical changes were tracked throughout the world, transforming a simple idea into a political vision by visualizing territory disputes and regime changes." [10].

2 Urban Signs: The Vertical Side of a Horizontal Route

James Clough – a professional calligrapher, scholar, and professor at Politecnico di Milano – in his book about mapping the historical commercial and public sings in Italy mentions how "Intuitive, original and witty, improvised and elegant […] From the ornate Tuscan style of the 19th century to the eccentric letters of Art Nouveau, from the grandiose architectural inscriptions of the 1930s to the delightful works of the surviving old sign painters, from Fascist ghost lettering to those on manhole covers" the signs and inscriptions are the mirror of the Italian society. "Even before typographic fonts dominated the scene, there was never any real standardisation in letter design in Italy and no manual for sign painters was ever printed. This freedom, detached from pre-established models, the skill of the craftsmen and their creativity make Italian signs so extraordinary." [11]. As Clough underlines, it is possible to follow the evolution of the urban space through shop signs and other signage systems, together with the style/language of graphic design as well as the transformation – political, social, economic – of the urban organism throughout time. Typeface styles – slab-serif and Romans – of the late 19th century, give way to the Deco, linear and then functionalist wave of the 20s and 30s that in some nations hybridise Modernism with political and propaganda connotations, as in the case of the Piacentini's public buildings, or other monumental public buildings that have left a profound identity mark in many Italian cities (see Fig. 2).

Scrolling through the 300 photographic images of the first edition, it is possible to notice how, from north to south, from city to city, the signs change and invent forms of vernacular expression, local aesthetics that represent the specific characteristics of places and in turn contribute to generating their identity: a great local and authorial variety, an intangible, graphic aesthetic, territorial and artistic heritage. Shops, buildings, and places, real or fictional, as narrated visually in extreme illustrative synthesis by Aoi Huber Kono [12], which correspond to places that did exist, every day and familiar places, shops, and workshops, once familiar and now disappearing or dying out.

According to the psychogeography approach, proposed by Gianni Biondillo [13] – architect, writer and professor of *Psychogeography and territory storytelling* at the University of Mendrisio, a "transdisciplinary practice where different areas of knowledge focusing on territory understanding converge: sociology, economy, geography, anthropology, urban planning, but also, literature, art, movie, philosophy and so on" – is by



Fig. 2. Public buildings from the fascist era in Bolzano, details of archigraphy and inscriptions (Photo: Beatrice Citterio)

walking that we experience the city enjoining it at a spatial, time-based and human scale, where the point of view is not the abstract zenithal and aseptic of a map, but rather an eye-vision based on a proprioceptive perspective, a multisensorial, haptic, embodied and situated exploration. Urban Typography, heraldic and commercial signs, wayfinding and signage systems, the visual noise of advertising become structural, meaningful, and connotative elements of the actual, personal, human, and social path through the experienced space. "The physical, emotional and aesthetic experience serves to overcome prejudice towards a space erroneously considered 'banal', predictable, taken for granted, in order to reach a new awareness of the everyday landscape, a palimpsest where the meanings and dreams of the populations that have inhabited it and still inhabit it are deposited. Finally, narrating means sharing the knowledge acquired, in the hope of stimulating in others, through storytelling, the desire to repeat the experience themselves [14]. The approach of walking as a way to access the knowledge of a territory reverberates in the geo-storytelling approaches [15] i.e., the way of narrating a place through geolocated information and contents to be explored *in-situ*, that means mediated by the space as a main driver [16].

3 Inquiring Space Through Typography

The research, then starts from two convergent point of view on typography. The first is deeply connected typographic culture although interpreted according to original perspectives.

Typography, like many other declinations of design culture, has in fact always been a generous and promising field for exploring, experimenting, and innovating design languages. Sometimes even a playful place to express one's personal poetics with relative freedom, as well as a vision – beyond – the times in which designers have found

themselves operating. From the intellectual rigour of the Vignellis [17] and their refined formal repertoire concentrated on distilling archetypal forms – masterfully expressed in the New York underground map, indebted to the lesson of the Bauhaus and a certain *Milanese* culture – to the negation, beyond pure textuality, of the use of lettering made by Carson [18] (see Fig. 3a) – which declares the end of typography with the density of its overwriting, precisely to subvert the functional vocation, the readability, of the text and a structural incommunicability – the *dressed word*, as Monguzzi defines it is one of the structural and structuring elements of visual language shaping many experiences in our daily lives. Vice versa, Pierre di Sciullo's synaesthetic and multimodal typography (see Fig. 3b) that shouts or whispers the message [19] recovers the tone of voice, typical of the spoken word, and translates it into the visual dimension, just as Sagmesiter's [20] writing engraved on skin and flesh *physicalises* it by returning to the primordial form of engraving. From the forementioned typographic textures of Paula Scher, which create interwoven worlds of words and emotions, to the dynamic and parametric typography of David Jonathan Ross [21] (see Fig. 3c), which appropriates any possible space, reconfiguring itself to visualise the message it conveys, between graphic transcription of spoken words or unspoken ideas, typefaces are, therefore, a fundamental and indispensable element in the expressive range of visual design and human communication. Fonts are both expression of the vocation of a culture as well of the personal and professional approach of a designer, moreover, they can convey meaning "over-and-above the actual semantic content of whatever happens to be written" as declared by Sara Hyndman – of *Type tasting* research group in London – and the collogues Carlos Velasco, Andy Woods and Charles Spence of the Department of Experimental Psychology of the Oxford University in the liminal study *The taste of typeface* [22]. From this perspective, in fact, typefaces are not just absolving at the most cognitive, functional part of typography, i.e., to convey information and meaning thank the visual transcription or the graphical code, but rather rile on the most expressive side of them. The synesthetic component, pointed out experimentally by Hyndman's work, shows how typefaces activate interactions at a visceral level, that it at a perception one, enabling emotions, feeling connected to implicit values and meaning overcoming the pure visual component in favour of intangible ones deeply rooted on the personal as well as the collective experience.



Fig. 3. Typography a) David Carson b) Di Sciullo; c) Ross

The other approach here explored and adopted as a research format is the one developed by professor at University of São Paulo Prisicilla Lena Farias [23, 24] and further implemented in the Italian context in Venice by professor Bulegato and Bonini Lessing [25] at IUAV. Farias introduces the concept of *graphic memories* as a way to understand visual artifacts as a way to make sense of local identities through signs as contributes of "the design of a local graphic design history […] as a spatially situated and geographically located phenomena" [26] and she establishes the Memoria Grafica Paulistana/Tipografia Paulistana web site started in 2011, to show the results of the research brought out on the graphic memory of the city of São Paulo (2008–13) experience partially replicated in Venezia. While the project aimed to collect data from primary sources – letterpress printing shops heritage, newspaper and so on – and indirect or secondary sources – such as bibliography, literature review and documentary research – then interpreted, visualised and geolocated, to be navigated thank to different approaches, e.g. visual, logical [27] and filters, the experience held in Venice – recently presented by Bulegato & Bonini Lessing at SID conference in 2022 – is more focalised on the signage and way-finding system of the city i.e. the typescape of the city (see Fig. 4) the Venice urban lettering. In this second wave of the research, like the for mentioned exploration brought out by Clough, the focus is on the lettering on façades of commercial establishments able to convey a rich heritage of the evolution of the city, where historical signs are textured with graffiti and tags, transformed, overlapped, or dismissed according to the urban and social evolution of the environment.



Fig. 4. Venezia *typescape*: examples from the *Typographic Landscapes* web site (Photo: https://sites.google.com/usp.br/typescapes/venezia)

As in other cases, visual – such as color [28, 29], architectural styles and systems [30, 31] – sensory – soundscapes [32, 33], smells and/or other synesthetic perceptions– or other values emerge as possible drivers of people experience in connecting, appropriating, building and shaping the urban space and its symbolic and intangible values, typescape seems a promising way to explore and understand the planned environment as well the spontaneous social sedimentations.

4 Research Project: *Poros* u. *Laubengasse*

Poros u. Laubengasse. Typographic topology/Topographic typography is part of the wider research project, namely ALICE developed as a startup fund of the Free university of Bozen-Bolzano coordinated by professor Letizia Bollini, aimed to questioning the elements of the urban identity through intangible or implicit historical, and social values.

Given the cultural, linguistic, political, and architectural complexity of the context under investigation, the project has been divided into three phases, of which the first *Poros u. Laubengasse* explores the historical core of the city center (see Fig. 5).

Although in Italy there are other significant cities with a relevant heritage of covered-walkways, porticoes and colonnades – i.e., Bologna considered and awarded by UNESCO Intangible Heritage 2021 as the town with the world longest extension of arcades (62 km) – nevertheless the "Undergassen" are a significant element in Bolzano's urban morphology in terms of identity and historical evidence. In the western culture the porticoes are a significant structure, from the Stoà Poikìle in Athens to the spontaneous structures of the medieval period (those of bologna date back to the 11th century), from the planned architectures of the urban galleries of the late 19th century – like the Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert in Brussel, or the Galleria Umberto I in Naples – to the interior structures of now-decadent American malls [34], an osmotic poros between the public space of the street and squares and the diaphragm in between and the commercial or private one. The research project, according to the research method developed by Farias, identifies in the depicted heraldic, in the archigraphy, and in the commercial signs, i.e., the *typescape*, the promising key of interpretation of the historic and contemporary meaningful identity of the inner part of the city relating them to the spatial connection and evolution.



Fig. 5. Images of the Laubengasse/Via dei Portici in Bolzano (Photo: Beatrice Citterio)

4.1 Research Questions

The research project, according to the research method developed by Farias [35] and Farias, Bulegato & Bonini Lessing [25], identifies in the depicted heraldic, in the archigraphy, and in the commercial signs, i.e., the typescape, the promising key of interpretation of the historic and contemporary *meaningful* identity of the inner part of the city relating them to the spatial connection and evolution.

The proposed questions are oriented to 3 main research topics [36, 37]: a) the **urban** transformation; b) the **social** transformation; and c) the **cultural** transformation interpreted to indirect mean significant in the transformation of the *genius loci* i.e., the graphic memories and the built typescape. In particular the research questions are organised according to 4 macro areas:

1. Is it possible to adopt the typescape to understand and track back the historical evolution of the city center? And to map time-based thresholds of the urban and social transformation?
2. Is it possible to relay on the typescape to identify recurrent patterns connected to the cultural a linguistic to decodify intertwined aspects of the Bolzano's complex social identity?
3. Is it possible to adopt the typescape as an index of historical preservation or gentrification of the city center?
4. Is it possible to adopt the graphic memory to understand the sense of the local identity and spatial situated or geographically related phenomena?

4.2 Method

The first level of investigation adopted was that of graphic memories, precisely in order to make the study being developed on the typescape of Bolzano replicable and comparable with that already conducted, on the Italian territory, in Venice. A photographic mapping, which started from the street of the porticoes and which in the second and third phase of the research will be extended to the area beyond the Isarco (Oltreisarco) with characters and buildings from the fascist era and to the area of Gries, i.e. the conurbated part of German-speaking, or better to say – Süd Tyroler, culture. The photographic plan includes the mapping of the frontal and perpendicular signs to the internal perimeter of the porticoes with a subsequent correction of the distortion of the images due to the shallow depth of the building body or of the portico itself, thanks to the operational contribution of Beatrice Citterio, a student of the MD course in Eco-social design who collaborated in the mapping phases of the project. The images of individual house, and commercial spaces were then geolocalised and made accessible on Google Map[1] (see Fig. 6). The result should in fact be a potential further contribution to national mapping and the creation of a shared, interoperable database.

However, as the research questions are more extensive and focused on the urban, social and cultural transformations of the city of Bolzano, a second approach, based on time evolution [38] and the visual superposition of changes was adopted to understand and visualise the historical modifications of the urban area. Two strategies were adopted to develop this part of the research.

a) On the one hand, the photographs taken and those available on Street View were compared to understand the changes between the two mappings by referring to the dating of the images uploaded on the Google platform, as well as the collective memory with reference to the last three years (2020 since the beginning of the COVID emergency that has had a significant impact on the commercial activities) thanks to

[1] Map available at URL: https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1OVc6L9nLOndxuyh2cFnyMFk-bG1vz88&ll=46.499331367792706%2C11.35465623927816&z=18.

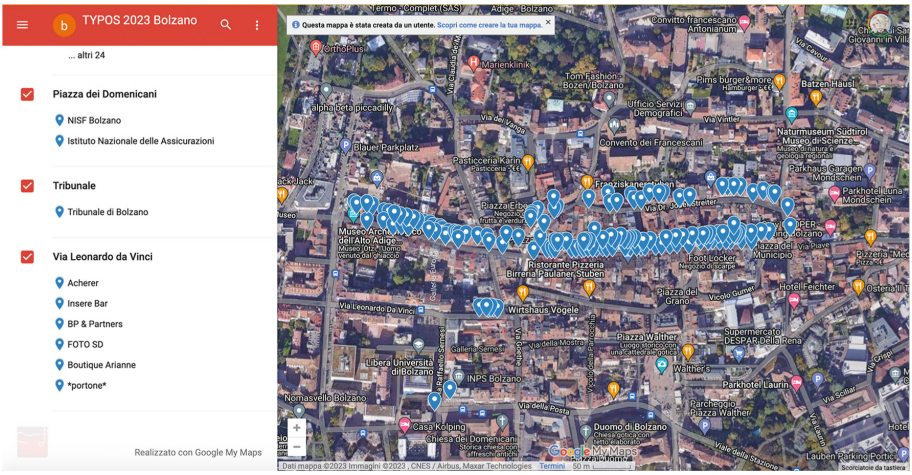


Fig. 6. Urban photography safari geolocated on Google Maps (Credits: Beatrice Citterio)

interviews. How the prospects of the wall curtain from Piazza del Municipio Vecchio to Via del Museo have changed in just 3 years is visible thank to the association between the images and the platform (see Fig. 7).

b) On the other hand, indirect sources have been explored to find the previous destination of the building, nowadays mainly occupied by shops of multinational companies and international brand franchising. Research in the historical archive of the city of Bolzano (Archivio Storico Città di Bolzano[2]) to find historical pictures of the porticoes to compare with the current ones, postcards or any other visual documentation of the previous destination or topology of the area. Secondly an extensive bibliographic and literature review is in progress to find direct or indirect mentions and documental about the destination, private or commercial of the spaces of the covered walk side. In particular, following the suggestions of Dr. W. Kofler Engel [39] director of the Platform Cultural Heritage Cultural Production (https://www.culturalheritage.unibz.it/) of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and previously director of the Department for the preservation of Monuments of the Province, the monography *Häsergeschicthe von Altbozen* [40] has been adopted as reference to go back to the intended use of buildings since the eighteenth century. The book in fact tracks back the property of the building of the city center specifying if they were meant for private o company/commercial use. Combining these primary and secondary sources will, then, allow to reconstruct the evolution of the Laubengasse and the rest of the urban territory.

[2] http://www.comune.bolzano.it/cultura_context.jsp?ID_LINK=782&area=48.

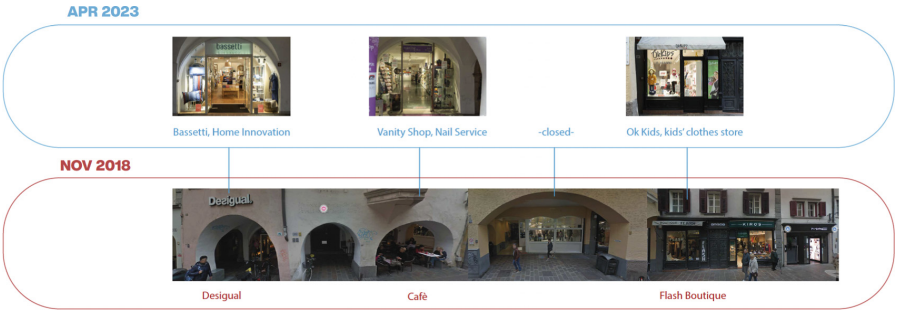


Fig. 7. Comparison between a) Photosafari 2023 (Photo: Beatrice Citterio) and b) Google Street View

4.3 Case Study: Augmenting Experience

However, the original method implies the mapping of the archigraphies and commercial signs on a (*Google*) map, the ALICE research project final scope is to explore the potentialities of *phygital* storytelling [41, 42] in the field of cultural, intangible and landscape heritage. For this reason, a mobile application based on Augmented Reality has been proposed and prototyped in order to offer a different experience when navigating the urban space, together with the geobased-visual and logical information offered on the map [27]. Having the possibility to discover a different story and to visualise a previous configuration of the porticoes make people more conscious and aware of the overall evolution of the street and the surroundings to favor a) a connection between *citisens* – used to the place, but probably blind to the longitudinal as well to the micro transformation constantly reshaping the urban identity – and the historical and contemporary evolution of the city; b) *tourists* attracted by a postcard-picture of the city – crystalised in a stereo-typical image but disconnected from the previous heritage– and not aware of the overall gentrification of the more characteristic area of downtown together with Piazza delle Erbe; c) *off-site students*, a huge community living in the city for a specific period of their lives but somehow reluctant to connect or commit to penetrating deeper into the identity of the city; among the possible persona *spectrums* [43] developed for the project.

The phygital mobile application[3] *Bolzano-Bozen Typescape AR app* (see Fig. 8) becomes the moment in the research development, in which, in a practice-based research perspective, conjectures at a more theoretical level are translated into an interaction model to be subsequently validated. In particular, the application aims to propose to the identified personas, as potential privileged interlocutors of the project, an alternative experience of the city, even in its more historical and everyday parts, but perhaps for this reason the more stereotyped. Inspired by previous case studies developed mainly in the last decade – thank to the raise of geobased social media such as Four Square, primitive metaverses of 3D interactive environments, e.g. Second Life, and, of course, by the

[3] Prototype available at URL: https://www.figma.com/proto/fDON9tKYInkT4v3TQC994y/bolzano-ar?node-id=1-2&scaling=scale-down&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=1%3A2.

introduction of mobile devices – the application proposes, and hybrid navigation played on a dual level. On the one hand, augmented reality makes it possible –using tags and the idea of proximity – to transform the house and shops under the arcades into touchpoints, i.e. *points of interest* that make it possible to explore the place using the typescape as a key conceptual and visual access key. AR is indeed the way to introduce a different narrative of place based on generous interfaces [44], but above all designed to conduct people to looking at reality from a different perspective. Historical documents, archive images, and direct and indirect testimonies configure an enriched and augmented alternative image, not only in technological standpoint. An immersion in images and stories that restore to the fleeting visit focused on large buildings of historical cultural importance and monuments, to the distracted stroll or daily transit, the depth of the intangible culture that created this heritage and its evolution not only in historical, but above all in human, social and urban terms. Connected to the map and the geolocalised points on it, the application also allows users to take 'historical selfies', i.e. in a process of participation and sharing, to create selfies set on the historical stage or, better still, on the augmented superimposition of images, photos, sketches and archival visual materials.



Fig. 8. Images of the *Bolzano-Bozen Typescape AR app* prototype (Credits: Maria Letizia Mastroianni)

The AR mobile application prototype is meant to be tested with people – according to human-centered and qualitative methods – in order to understand main potentialities of the proposed situated interactions:

a) How a phygital approach, namely an hybridization between physical – spaces – and digital – augmented and overlayed information – in exploring a cultural, intangible, distributed heritage environment can improve knowledge sharing and awareness.
b) The role of social perception of the typescape in terms of local culture connected to the specificity of the trilingual history of the city, i.e., Italian, German and Ladin-speaking communities.

c) The impact of mass tourism in the gentrification dynamics of the city center and the progressive falsification of the identity of the place and the sustainability according to the slow movement/tourism approach.
d) The potentialities of using the application in eliciting narrations and testimonies that map the recent evolution of the territory through collective memory.

4.4 Discussion

In this first exploratory phase, some patterns seem to emerge when thinking both to the archigraphy and the commercial signs, that is the typescape.

a) A first pattern seems to emerge from the comparison between the actual occupation of the spaces in the porticoes and the historical records of the ownership transfer of the properties, in the majority of cases [40] the real estate is mainly belonging and presumably for private use and only in recent time have been put to commercial use. The *Häsergeschichte von Altbozen* monography just mentions if the ownership belongs to a private subject or to a company that allegedly buys it for commercial purposes. However, it is not possible to infer from this data the intended use of the entire building or of the ground-floor rooms on the porticoes. Therefore, these assumptions need to be further verified thanks to cross-referencing available data with additional archival or documentary sources.
b) Gathering the images produced during the photo-safari is possible to classify and cluster the elements depicted according to shared parameters. On the one hand two semantic differentials, to be possibly used interviewing people during the user-testing phase have been proposed: the axis heritage—contemporary/new and the axis local—global. The first couple is aimed to understand the historical evolution, and consequently the renovation, or the erasure of historical traces of the porticos' (commercial) space, while the second is an indicator of the globalisation or, better to say, the gentrification, of this area. After a careful analysis to identify and classify the subject, pictures have been distributed on a scaled timeline – a sort of stave – to organise the materials to be then interpreted. Three different recurrent combinations seem to appear: 1) old commercial signs and a preserved façade; 2) a new commercial sign and a preserved façade; 3) a new commercial sign and a new façade. In the first case – e.g. the Apotheke zur Madonna where the mural inscriptions survived on both sides of the arcades and indeed are intentionally restored (see Fig. 9) – the typescape is preserved and part of the environment heritage, although evolved as a living organism.



Fig. 9. Farmacia Madonna/Apotheke zur Madonna (Photo: Beatrice Citterio)

The second condition is well represented by in Fig. 10. The local apparel company "Maximilian" – a condensed san-serif typeface – is nestled in the ancient frame of the under portico, artistically and richly decorated under portico, a reminder of a bygone time and urban style.



Fig. 10. Maximilian Basic, local apparel company (Photo: Beatrice Citterio)

Finally, the third possible combination, that means when a globalized or multinational company locates a store in the historical context without any connection with it (see Fig. 11). Both the shop signs and the windows are totally indifferent to the porticos structure and identity following standardized guidelines imposing the same architectural style in every country.

The impact of gentrification on urban historical structure and morphology is particularly evident in this last example. Not only the private space has been progressively eroded in favor of the commercial destinations, but the latter are more oriented to satisfy shopping and consumeristic behaviors – also intercepting city-users and tourists – rather than satisfying the daily needs and dynamics of residents and citizens. Furthermore, resident population – according to filtering-down theories – is



Fig. 11. One of the 575 worldwide Terranova's shops/franchising (Photo: Beatrice Citterio)

likely to be pushed away from the city center for the benefit of Airbnb and other short-term rental services and digital platforms.

c) The porticos in Bolzano – compared to those in Bologna, for instance – are rather low and narrow. This characteristic creates several difficulties in the photo mapping. Moreover, perhaps because of this limitation, historical images, such as postcards, do not depict the under portico, but the facades of the houses, making it difficult, if not impossible, to identify historical signs or to infer the private or public use of the spaces (see Fig. 12).

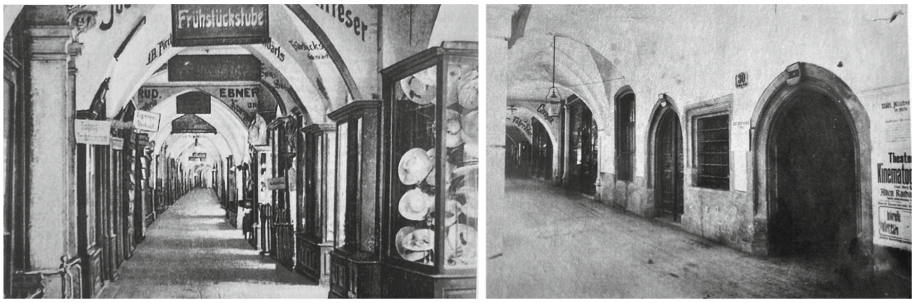


Fig. 12. Historical pictures of the Laubengassen (Source: *AltBozen*)

5 Conclusions

The project described here in its general outline and in its first operational phase, starting in the first quarter of 2023, intends to explore a different key to the level of urban territory, the development and evolution of its identity through parameters linked to the production of graphic signs or graphic memories that constitute its typescape of the city of Bozen-Bolzano. On the one hand, the project proposes an original and alternative approach

that explores, through material, spatial, social but at the same time intangible values, the identity of the city and its historical, urban social and political evolution. On the other hand, it uses a methodology that has already been developed and tested in three different urban contexts – as mentioned São Paulo in Brazil, London and Venice – to make the model itself reproducible and interoperable and, in the future, to participate in a possible mapping exercise involving other cities, at least in the Italian territory, rich in experiences, cultures and ideas from the point of view of both local and vernacular cultures and artistic, graphic and typographic.

To do this, two design paths were adopted: a graphic and typographical mapping of heraldic and commercial signs, starting from the central and historically most relevant part of the original urban core, compared with primary and indirect archive and documentary sources mapping and research, which will be expanded in three successive stages to the rest of the urban text with particular attention to the Italian area developed from the 1920s-30s beyond the Isarco river and the German area of Gries.

The second line of research development focused on aspects of experience and interaction for potential target groups identified in the area, translated into a mobile application in which augmented reality becomes the driver of access to and interaction with content and historical-cultural narratives of the area. The forms of reality mediated by technology – augmented, virtual, mixed or blend – allow an exploration that tries to reproduce the three-dimensionality of the world or to enter a direct relationship with it in a situated experience augmented and enriched by the technology itself. Besides, the perspectives opened up by the typescape approach and, in general, by the use of graphic memories as a way to read the urban fabric offers an original point of view both for the people exploring the space thanks to mobile device and the Augmented Reality, as well as for designers widening the 2D possibilities of the visual/touch based interfaces. The combination of these two factors in mobility creates the scenario to transform space-related data into a narrative concept to be explored using one's own situated senses.

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