

### Landscape as a cultural value



*Photo from the archives of St. Demetrios*

#### Introduction

Water landscapes do not exist in human life only as objects of the natural environment. The natural environment becomes part of the human experience; it becomes part of our personal, social and historical life.

One of the most characteristic examples of the above perspective is the connection of the water landscape with the city and its history. A port, a river, a seafront do not only shape the landscape, but also enter the collective memory of the inhabitants and visitors, as the landscape's special cultural characteristics, which are expressed through art (e.g. songs, photographs, movies, etc.). Even the historical memories of the inhabitants of a place may have been connected with elements of its water landscape: rivers, lakes, harbors and bridges are often places connected to special moments in history, both at times of war or peace.

This investigation will help understand how the water landscape becomes a cultural value, which does not remain unchanged over time but monitors the changes brought about by the natural and human impacts on it.

The investigation can be implemented by following these steps:

#### 1) Planning

In Planning, students and teachers design their investigation activities on landscape, for instance they decide what to do, how to do it, when to do it, where to do it.

According to the topic or issue chosen for investigation, the class will need to identify what kind of actions to undertake in terms of literature review, hands-on research

activities, and it will identify the most suitable methods and list the needed materials to gather the necessary information.

Expert stakeholders from local research centres, universities and local authorities can be contacted as a valuable opportunity to access up-to-date knowledge and to make use of scientific equipment.

## 2) **Performing**

In Performing the investigation, the class implements the devised plan, and follows the steps of action along the project timeline. Data collection can regard environmental data during a field trip, a survey on the perceptions and views of the local community, or investigations on historical and artistic documents regarding the landscape of interest. Specific materials, equipment and worksheets can be used, allowing students to approach methods and software of common use in research. Experiments can be performed to understand the reason for certain phenomena.

## 3) **Data analysis and interpretation**

In Data analysis and interpretation, the collected data are analysed and interpreted in order to understand the extent of the issue (generating new knowledge) and the relations between the factors and variables that are involved in the investigation.

## **Objectives of the Investigation**

To learn about:

- ✓ Using Art to represent and express the landscape.
- ✓ Studying the landscape through History, Archaeology, Literature and Language studies.
- ✓ How the local inhabitants transform the landscape from a natural element into a cultural value.
- ✓ The interconnection between scientific fields.

To be able to:

- ✓ Understand that the landscape is not limited to its physical dimension.
- ✓ Discover the history of a place through the changes in its landscape.
- ✓ Be inspired by the landscape for expression through art.
- ✓ Engage in active civic participation to protect the landscape, thus protecting the local identity.
- ✓ Work in teams, using art as a common expression.

## **HOW TO INVESTIGATE**

**When:** After the Conceptualization Phase (Step 2)

**Time estimated:** 3-4 teaching hours and fieldwork

**Where the activity takes place:** in the classroom and outdoors

**Method (how the students have to work):** group-work and individually

**Art activity** - in every step of investigation students are invited to produce an artistic product inspired by their investigations: texts, photos, drawing, videos, music or sound, meme (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meme>), patchwork/collage, theatrical performances.

In the classroom, the students are divided in groups. The teacher/facilitator could follow the steps suggested in the table below:

<p><b>Planning</b></p>	<p>Students are divided into three groups, depending on their interests: historians-ethnographers, artists and archaeologists. Each group plans the investigation phase, following the guide below:</p> <p><b>Historians-Ethnographers:</b> A group of students with the help of their teacher prepare a basic questionnaire in order to interview locals about the memories or legends they have regarding their city or neighbourhood, from the past to the present, and especially regarding the water landscape selected. Another group conducts a brief literature review: a) on the origin of the first inhabitants and the reasons for their settlement in this place and b) on those elements of the water landscape (e.g. port, rivers, etc.) that played a special role in the history of their place.</p> <p><b>Artists:</b> Students with the help of their teacher look for movies, photos and songs that depict the area and its water landscape. They also investigate the changes that time has brought to the landscape under investigation.</p> <p><b>Archaeologists:</b> The students in the team of Archaeologists will proceed to the identification and recording of archaeological monuments of the ancient, medieval and modern periods in order to select the most important and study them in more detail. The field observation and the photographic depiction of the monuments will play an important role in this research.</p> <p>Students and their teachers define and invite a group of experts interested in collaborating and contributing to the investigation (e.g. from the University Department of Local History or the University Department of Ethnography, local writers, etc.)</p>
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<p><b>Performing</b></p>	<p><b>Historians-Ethnographers:</b> A group of students interviews 10-12 old residents. They collect, group and analyze the results of their research. Another group of students, performing a short literature and internet research, write a short story: a) on the settlement of the first inhabitants and the subsequent population evolution of their city and b) on those elements of the water landscape (eg port, rivers, etc.). ) that played a special role in the history of the place. Fill in worksheet 1.</p>
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	<p><b>Artists:</b> Students focus their research on the following areas: Photography, Cinema, Songs. They also conduct literature and internet research. Fill in worksheet 2.</p> <p><b>Archaeologists:</b> The students organise the material in three historical periods: Antiquity, Middle Ages and Modern Era. They also conduct literature and internet research. A field visit will follow and the findings will be recorded. In addition, the findings will be mapped digitally through the SIFTR platform. Fill in worksheet 3.</p>
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<p><b>Data analysis and interpretation</b></p>	<p>All data can be analyzed and discussed with stakeholders to highlight their relations to current local circumstances in terms of the social, historical and artistic context. Students will discuss the experiences they have gained during the investigation: the problems they encountered, the questions they could not answer, etc. Finally, they discuss what a water landscape means to human civilization and, in general, how important it is to protect our environment.</p>
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## WORKSHEET 1

	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1.	Do a Google search for historical articles and photos related to your city. Compose a short chronology or a presentation on the settlement of the first inhabitants of the city and its subsequent evolution.	
2.	Do a Google search for historical articles and photos related to your city. Compose a short historical text with the main historical events related to the water landscape of your area.	
3.	Generate a timeline with the changes that the elements of your selected water landscape underwent during the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.	
4.	Find names of places, sports teams, roads, etc., named after a river, port, lake or stream.	
5.	Record and analyze popular beliefs and myths/legends related to the area and its water features.	

## WORKSHEET 2

	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1.	Visit <a href="http://www.youtube.com">www.youtube.com</a> .  Find songs that have references to the water landscape or the wider area. Write and comment on your findings.	
2.1	Do a Google search for old movies shot in your area or region.	
2.2	Using a movie editor, isolate scenes of your city.	
2.3	Match the movie locations to the same locations today and identify the differences in the landscape between the two historical periods.	
3.1	Find photos of your city online from different historical periods.	
3.2	Create a collage by juxtaposing photos of the past with the present.	
4.1	Write a theatre play about the most important element in the selected water landscape.  Select and play a scene. Record it in video.	
4.2	Compose your own music for the above scene or select its soundtrack.	

## WORKSHEET 3

	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1.1	Perform a literature review through the internet and the school library in order to locate places of archaeological interest in the water landscape and in the wider area.	
1.2	Organise the monuments into 3 historical periods and select the most important from each period to study in more detail.	
1.3	Visit and take a photo of the monuments.	
1.4	Map the monuments on a digital map through the Siftr application ( <a href="http://www.siftr.org">www.siftr.org</a> )	