



Visualisation and History

Sala Belvedere, Villa Schifanoia, Florence
18-19 March 2010

Organised by Prof. A. Romano and Dr. G. D. S. Sood

This workshop on ‘visualisation and history’ is motivated by the idea that visualisation is one of the basic ways in which man approaches and makes sense of his world. Thus, visualisation is - or ought to be - invaluable for historians in at least two senses: for those seeking to articulate the past in ways meaningful and comprehensible to us today, and for those trying to grasp the realities of past lives. Not to use sources, techniques and approaches vested in (formal) visualisation is to deprive history of tools of great utility and, more generally, to bar us from faithfully representing major facets of our subject. Despite this, almost all current historical approaches and practices remain wedded to verbal sources and to verbal modes of analysis and reasoning. This need not be the case. Indeed, this workshop argues that this should *not* be the case.

For these reasons, this workshop aims to highlight the constraints of the ‘verbalistic’ paradigm in historical scholarship. At the same time, it elaborates practical ways in which formal visualisation can help historians to break free from present constraints and further their scholarship. The workshop will do this by focusing on three overlapping but distinct themes: modelling reality and visualisation; analysing the past and visualisation; and scholarly reasoning and visualisation. Drawing on the expertise of historians and social scientists, these themes will be approached through a combination of surveys and detailed case-studies, each of which will be followed by an open discussion.

Day 1: 18 March 2010

09.15 - 09.45 Welcome

Session 1. Modelling reality & visualisation chaired by G. D. S. Sood (HEC, EUI)

09.45 - 10.30 Scott A. Boorman (Department of Sociology, Yale University)
A larger model-building context for visual models

10.30 - 11.15 Jean-Marc Besse (Egogeo, CNRS, Paris)
Visualisation and the construction of knowledge

11.15 - 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 - 12.30 Discussion

12.30 - 14.30 Lunch

Session 2. Visual techniques & the past chaired by A. Molho (HEC, EUI)

14.30 - 15.00 Gergely Baics (MWF, EUI)
GIS and historical reasoning: Mapping household provisioning, New York City, 1780-1860



15.00 - 15.30 Christian Brzinsky-Fay (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin)
What you get is what you see. The role of visual inspection in sequence analysis

15.30 - 16.15 Discussion

16.15 - 16.45 Coffee break

Session 3. Interpreting the past visually chaired by S. A. Smith (HEC, EUI)

16.45 - 17.15 Elisabetta Corsi (Università di Roma la Sapienza)
Images and sacred architecture in Beijing during the early modern period

17.15 - 17.45 Claudio Pogliano (Università di Pisa)
The visual contagion in the history of science

17.45 - 18.30 Discussion

20.00 Dinner

Day 2: 19 March 2010

Session 4. Communication in visual modes chaired by S. Conrad (HEC, EUI)

09.30 - 10.15 Ebba Koch (Institute of Art History, University of Vienna)
Visual strategies of self representation in history painting of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1628-58)

10.15 - 11.00 Discussion

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee break

Session 5. Conclusion: Visualisation & history chaired by A. Romano (HEC,EUI)

11.30 - 12.30 Discussion

12.30 Lunch