COST Action CA18126 Writing Urban Places New Narratives of the European City

***Core Group meeting in Osijek***

**Friday, April 29 2022**  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (Filozofski fakultet)  
Lorenza Jägera 9, 31 000 Osijek

Present in person: Sonja (host), Klaske (minutes), Susana, Giuseppe, Jorge, Onorina, Marcel  
Present online: Angeliki, Dalia, Luis, Carlos, Slobodan, Kinga

**1. Short report from the Training school**

Sonja, Giuseppe, Susana and Ororina report from the summer school:

Participants: 18 international / 15 local, a good mix of people from different backgrounds: literature, translation studies, architecture, geography, political science.

The group worked on urban narratives based upon local novels, combined with workshops in writing, drawing and plaster modelling. Participants were challenged to work outside of their own comfort zone. A number of city walks were made, the weather was not always good, a rainy day limited to possibilities for outdoor drawing.

Good coverage in local media: articles in local papers, radio broadcast  
Onorina has actively recorded the event for our Action’s social media: filmed testimonials of participants for your Instagram and you-tube channel, photos and films of the urban walks and workshop activities.

On the last evening, the new issue of the *Writingplace* journal, edited by WG2 was presented (and live-streamed on Instagram-live) by Klaske, Sonja, and two of the authors: Giuseppe and Sernaz.

→ The Core group congratulates Sonja and the organizing team for their excellent organisation.   
 Jorge remarks that the interest of local media in our event has precisely to do with the fact that it is a mid-size city: here, our presence and activities have more impact than in bigger cities where already multiple events are taking place.

**2 Preparations Upcoming Fieldwork events:**

**Tampere 8-10 june**All participants have been invited, Dalia presents the programme:

DAY1   
WG3 meeting + workshop.   
lecture visual methods by Pauwels  
site explorations (and WG3: testing the repository)

DAY 2  
Poetic Practices, workshop by Jeremy Hawkins  
On-site work on subjects and objects  
Midnight poetry session.

DAY3  
Bringing the material together: Photo-poetics.   
Exhibition  
Involving the local actors

→ Many thanks to Dalia and the local team (Elina, Panu) and workshop tutors Luc and Jeremy for the preparation

→ We have a brief discussion on the use of the term “local actors” / stakeholders / citizens / agents / participants /subjects/ travellers / inhabitants

→ Who will take care of the documentation of the process?   
Not clear who is going from WG1.   
From the core group, Dalia and Klaske will be there (Klaske can do some recording during the event)

**Canakalle**Team: Giuseppe, Carlos, Adriana , Sanne, Sonja.   
Giuseppe has been in contact and received feedback from Slobodan /Luis.   
The call will be announced shortly on our website, aiming for ± 20 participants.

From the core group, Giuseppe, Sonja, Carlos and Susana plan to join (?)  
Sanne is considering joining on behalf of WG1 for the media strategy.

The distance between Canakalle and Istanbul is a logistic challenge

The Center for Urban Studies in Istanbul may be the venue for the first, theoretical part of the workshop;

Then, travel to Canakalle. The travel time may be used as workshop time, making a narrative&visual travelogue.  
In Canakalle: on site workshop at the archeological site of Troy, and visit to the new Troy museum.

The workshop will explore how the myth gets transformed

→ The set-up sounds promising!

→ The LOS budget can be used for local transport if necessary.

→ Klaske recommends a fragment from “Dreaming by the book” by Elaine Scary, which discusses how Homer uses particular literary techniques in the Ilias to vividly depict the Trojan wall, the main characters and the battle.

**Skopje (fieldwork + MC meeting)**Team: Slobodan, Blagoja, Ana, Marija, Aleksandar

Slobodan presents the main ideas, departing from the Brutalist architectural heritage in Skopje, using a theatrical approach to regard the building as personalities. The outcome may also have a performative component.   
The call for participants will be announced after that of Canakalle.

Following the workshop, the MC meeting will take place

The date was proposed for 20-23 of September, Slobodan proposes to do it one week later: September 27-30  
→ core group agrees with the new date

→ we discuss the format MC meeting:  
-would this also include WG meetings, as many participants are already there?  
-do all MC members need to be there physically or could this be hybrid? That may save budget that we can better dedicate to the workshops themselves (so far, all the fieldwork projects become more expensive than estimated: higher LOS, more participants).  
-could we invite only the MC members who are also active WG members, and asks the rest to join online?

**3. Ongoing projects**

**Other destinations**Giuseppe and Sonja report about the state of affairs.   
Many promising entries, now the authors/ submitters are asked to contact original authors or publishers to get permission.  
Also poetic texts are welcome.

**Mid-size city**WG2 is working on the parameters for the mid-size city  
A padlet has been created where WG members can submit their contributions  
Online WF2 meeting to discuss the parameters  
During the training school, interviews have been held to ask participants about their views of the mid-size city.  
Contributions can be sent to [WG2.WUP@gmail.com](mailto:WG2.WUP@gmail.com)

Reflections on the mid-size city in the discussion today:  
These cities have escaped the inhuman scale of modernity processes, there is still a human scale and a sense of rootedness. Could we state that in a metropole, humans serve the city while in the mid-size city, the city serves human life and meaningful activities?

Narratives are able to capture that deeper sense of urban humanity, of relationships between people and urban places, that have not been recognized so far, as main focus of urban studies has been on the big cities?

Still many mid-size cities have become subsumed in the metropolitan idea (ie Tampere presenting itself as “2nd biggest city in Finland”)  
See also the OASE issue89 *Medium: the mid size city as a European condition and strategy*, that was one of the point of departure for our COST application.

**Repository**Dalia and Carlos report:   
good quality and scope of the entries!  
all contributors have received feedback and we are now receiving the revised versions of submissions   
the WG3 meeting in Tampere will be dedicated to the repository: discussing entries, possibly new entries, testing the proposed assignments in the city

→ question: how to keep it open? Also the Vademecum, it ias a product but also should remain open for new additions. Jorge suggests that the ‘glossary’ page on the website could be used more actively

**Writingplace#7**Not that many good submissions on the call for papers. Some off topic, some still underdeveloped (just an abstract, for instance).

→ the call will be extended until late May. potential contributers (especially from WG4) will be actively approached

**4. Submitted Applications**

**ITC conference grant**

## Marcel reports on ITC grants: so far, this grant period, we have had one ITC grant, from Pavel Horak from Prague, going to a conference at Cork University, Ireland, for a conference paper and panel on “Capital Magic: Esoteric Narratives and Shaping the Capitals of East-Central Europe”.

## The conference has not yet taken place. Marcel will ask Pavel to report tot he COST website.

**Virtual mobility grant**   
Klaske presents the new applications for the Virtual mobility grant. We have received two applications form scholars from the Ukraine. Their topics are relevant to their Action but it is unclear how they want to contribute and with whom they are seeking to collaborate. Marcel has contacted them several times by email and did not receive any response. Therefore, we will reject the applications.

**STSM grants**

Kinga and Klaske present the 3 STSM applications.

**Approval:**Angeliki Sioli

-the application is very clear, with clear expected outcomes,and in line with the topics of the Action   
-the project is immediately related to one of our fieldwork events.   
-there is some criticism about the title of the application, the core group advices to change the title so that it is not merely about ‘female’ perspectives, but perhaps ‘other’ perspectives.

**Approval:**Sergios Strigklogiannis

- the topic has been evaluated as very interesting and in line with the topics of the Action   
- the application was evaluated by the STSM Committee and Core Group of the CA18126 higher than others  
- Even though the topic (myth) is connected to the Action, the work is carried out in Basel, and does not link to ongoing activities of our Action. We suggest that the candidate gets in contact with Giuseppe (or Giuseppe gets in contact with him!), and presents his work in relation to the City and Myth workshop in Canakalle

**Rejection:**Eleni Oureilidou

- the topic is interesting, however too convergent with the issues proposed and studied in the first edition of STSM by the same candidate

**5. Future Perspectives  
Towards grant period 4**

Klaske gives a short presentation to start the discussion about our plans for the last grant period, and the final outcomes of the Action.

**Final book publication**Apart from all our journal issues, the Vademecum and Repository, could we think of a final publication which brings together a lot of the work we have been doing, and perhaps sets an agenda for further research? A key ambition is to publish a book, which is built up of both scholarly reflection on the main topics of our action, provided by the chairs and working groups, and a part that discusses all the case studies.

A possible structure for such a publication could be as follows:

PART 1 Reflection

-General introduction

-The Mid-size City

-Meaningfulness, Appropriation, Integration

-Methods for Urban Narratives

-Fieldwork practices

-How to tell: reflections on communication

-How to teach: reflection on the Training schools?

PART 2 Action

Case studies: the visited cities

Almada, Limerick, Osijek, Tallinn, Delft, Tampere, Canakalle, Skopje, Porto (+cities for GP4)

For part one, the Action chairs and working group leaders would have an important role in providing the key chapters, while in part 2 we would ask the local hosts and organizing team to link our activities to a presentation on (narratives on) the mid-size city at stake.

→ Other suggestions for structure:

-mix the reflections and the fieldwork, have part 1&2 in parallel, more dynamic?

-use training school results as visual intermezzo’s

-how to teach (trainingschools), How to tell (WG1 communication) How to read (narratives)

→ We discuss **possible publishers** for this book:

- Palgrave Macmillan: Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies

- Lexington series Toposophia: thinking place/making space

-the big names: Routledge, MIT press etc. The core group agrees that a European publisher would be preferred given the character of our Action.

-ACTAR: very interesting European publisher, very good distribution, high reputation in the field of urban studies and architecture.

-NAI010 publishers Rotterdam: they published our journal and Vademecum, so it would be an easy follow-up.

The core group agrees that ACTAR would be a very nice option, Jorge will contact the publisher to inform about the possibilities.

**Final event**The final event would take place in Delft, in September 2023

→ What to present:   
-All chapters of the book?  
-results of the STSM’s?  
-results of the Training schools?

→ Who would be our audience, the network members or also a wider audience?  
Should we invite guest/key note speakers who could respond to our Action and give us suggestions for new steps towards further research and/or implementation in practice and urban policies?

Angeliki proposes (together with Saskia de Wit of WG2) to organise, as part of the final event, a fieldwork workshop in Delft, using the Vademecum & Repository of Methods

[after a wonderful city walk and lunch, we continue the discussion on the future of our Action]

**5. Future plans**

**Fieldwork projects / meeting in GP4**

The core group agrees that several meetings should be scheduled in GP 4 with the core group as/with an editorial board for the book and the final event. These meetings could be held in cities that are a bit more central and easier to reach than the mid-size cities: Prague, Bucharest for instance.

Further, the ambition is to organise more fieldwork events / a training school in the line of those we are organizing this year. These events should take place late 2022 or Spring 2023, so that they could still be part of the final book.

→ Luis and Slobodan suggest to first approach the promising candidates from last year’s call: Chemnitz, Riga and Tirana. Depending on their response and availability, we might approach other possible candidates or relaunch the call for host cities. It is suggested that the current hosts (Sonja, Dalia, Giuseppe, Slobodan) will help evaluating the proposals.

**New funding opportunities**

The final part of the afternoon is used to discuss future possibilities, after our COST Action closes.

We have established a big and productive network, in which several topics and possible research lines emerge. We discuss how our Action could be the springboard for further research and further collaborations.

For each possible future perspective, it would be important to formulate very clear goals:   
Why embark on this new project?   
What do we have to offer?

Possible scenario’s to further think about in the upcoming months:

**Doctoral network MSCA.**  
MSCA Doctoral Networks will implement doctoral programmes, by partnerships of universities, research institutions and research infrastructures, businesses including SMEs, and other socio-economic actors from different countries across Europe and beyond. MSCA Doctoral Networks are indeed open to the participation of organisations from third countries, in view of fostering strategic international partnerships for the training and exchange of researchers.

→Given the interdisciplinarity of our network and the geographical scope, we would have good chance to set up a PhD network on City Narratives in Europe.

**ERC synergy**

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→ This grant would allow for funded research, but it is limited to only 2-4 partners. Of course, we could think of several ERC synergy projects coming forth of our COST action.

**Horizon Europe**For instanceCalls within Cluster *Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society* (not yet open)→ grants within the Horizon Europe programme would allow for funded research, for a consortium. It would be a big step, but we have built up some expertise with COST.

**New European Bauhaus**  
Jorge and Susana will join a COST meeting on this in Brussels next month

**Erasmus key action**   
These are 2- 3 year project in higher education.  
Work packages seem quite flexible.   
→ this grant allows for further collaboration within education between 3 European countries.

**HERA Humanities in European Research Area.**→ to be investigated

**Closing**We close the meeting at 18:00 with drinks and a huge thank you to Sonja for hosting us!  
Next core group meeting, online at Monday May 23, 16:00 CET, <https://tudelft.zoom.us/j/94221588137>