

Dungeon. Iconography of an Archetype (Venice/online, 24-25 Sep 24)

Università Ca' Foscari, Venice / online, Sep 24-25, 2024

Claudio Castelletti

"Dungeon. Iconography of an Archetype from Antiquity to the Digital Age", organized by Paolo Berti, Claudio Castelletti and Stefania De Vincentis.

International conference promoted by VeDPH – Venice Centre for Digital and Public Humanities, Department of Humanities Ca' Foscari University of Venice, in collaboration with the Department of History, Philosophical and Art History Studies, Tor Vergata University of Rome, 3ARC – Ancient Art Architecture (<https://www.3arc-edu.it/>), Università eCampus and the Department of Linguistic, Literary, and Aesthetic Studies, University of Bergen.

The word "dungeon", from the French "donjon", originally described a fortified tower, often used as a prison. The first known use of the term, in its early form "donioun", appears in the Middle English romance "The Seven Sages of Rome" in the Auchinleck manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS. 19.2.1), dating from around 1330. In this story, the Latin poet Virgil, believed in the Middle Ages to be a sorcerer and necromancer, creates an "automaton" equipped with a cross-bow and places it in a dungeon next to a constantly burning fire, which he magically ignites. This suggests that the dungeon, from its very literary origins, was closely associated with the visionary imagery we now associate with the fantasy genre.

In the centuries that followed, the term dungeon developed to describe a "dark or subterranean" space (Samuel Johnson, "A Dictionary of the English Language", London 1755). By the 20th century, primarily through the jargon of role-playing games, it broadened to encompass all kinds of subterranean settings, from castle dungeons to networks of caves, mines, crypts, and catacombs, usually characterized by a maze-like array of corridors and chambers plunged in darkness. In this regard, the dungeon has emerged as an artistic, architectural and literary archetype, manifesting itself in various forms and meanings through different eras.

Through systems of ludic and popular culture, the dungeon has gradually established itself over the last few decades as a critical infrastructure for a broad reflection on the connection between imaginary spaces and agency (Espen Aarseth, "Allegories of Space. The Question of Spatiality in Computer Games", in "Cybertext Yearbook 2000", ed. by Markku Eskelinen, Raine Koskimaa, Jyväskylä 2001, pp. 152-171). Dungeon maps are now gateways to the investigation of subcultures, experimental map-making, world-building, and models of the emerging complexity of the digital age (Paolo Berti, Stefania De Vincentis, Gabriele De Seta, "Megadungeon", in "Magazèn", Special Issue, 4:2, 2023). Furthermore, the dungeon has not only persisted as a popular setting for tabletop and role-playing video games, but has also accompanied the cross-cutting development

of our relationship with digital space (C. Thi Nguyen, Games: "Agency as Art", Oxford 2020): concepts such as open world, sandbox, and massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) have reshaped our perspective on interactive practices and embodied a metaphor for a postmodern ecology that is both labyrinthine and multi-layered.

The international conference "Dungeon. Iconography of an Archetype from Antiquity to the Digital Age" aims to provide a multidisciplinary perspective on the topic of subterranean and labyrinthine spaces as an iconographic "topos", tracing a path from the ancient labyrinths through the medieval and modern ages to the multi-layered architectures of today's digital culture.

Conference Advisory Board:

Espen Aarseth, Paolo Berti, Giuseppe Bonaccorso, Claudio Castelletti, Carolina Fernandez-Castrillo, Gabriele de Seta, Stefania De Vincentis, Franz Fischer, Stefania Macioce, Serge Noiret, Carmelo Occhipinti, Jussi Parikka, Cecilia Vicentini

Scientific Secretariat:

Elisa Corrà, Antonello Molella, Jonatan Jair López Muñoz, Olga Concetta Patroni

PROGRAM:

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

Sala Geymonat

9.00 Institutional Greetings

Daniele Baglioni (Director of the Department of Humanities, Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Franz Fischer (Director of the Venice Centre for Digital and Public Humanities, Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Introduction

Paolo Berti (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Claudio Castelletti (Tor Vergata University of Rome)

Stefania De Vincentis (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

9.30-10.00 Keynote Lecture

Carmelo Occhipinti (Tor Vergata University of Rome), La "spelunca" di Francesco I de' Medici. La Tribuna degli Uffizi come grotta ipogea tra luce e ombra

10.00-11-30 SESSION 1

Chair: Franz Fischer (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Massimo Cultraro (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, ISPC, Catania), Immagini e (ri)costruzioni simboliche del Labirinto dall'eta del Bronzo alla tarda Antichità

Gennaro Ferrante (University of Naples Federico II), "Dentro alle segrete cose". Sotterranei e labirinti nell'architettura fantastica dell'"Inferno" di Dante

Fabio Camilletti (University of Warwick), Aneddotica purgatoriale e spazi dell'oltremondo tra letteratura e folclore

11.30-13.00 SESSION 2

Chair: Federico Bulfone Gransinigh (G. d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara)

Federica Caneparo (University of Chicago). "E vede la gran torre in su la riva": bastioni, prigionieri, sepolcri e magioni nell'"Orlando Furioso"

Barbara Tramelli (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano), "Fata Viam Invenient": The Representation of the Labyrinth in Sixteenth-Century Emblem Books

Cecilia Vicentini (eCampus University), "Forme fantastiche et come de'insogni": grotte e grottesche nel pensiero di Pirro Ligorio

Tania De Nile (Tor Vergata University of Rome), "Aggiramenti in aria, chimere, fantasmi, e bizarie molto stravaganti": gli oltremondi sotterranei tra grottesche e inferni nordici

13.00-14.00 Lunch break

14.00-15.30 SESSION 3

Chair: Stefania De Vincentis (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Luca Rossato (University of Ferrara), Tejas Chauhan (CEPT University), Indian stepwells: 15th century underground structures between sky and earth in search of source of water in desert areas

Claudio Castelletti (Tor Vergata University of Rome), Dedali architettonici nell'"Hypnerotomachia Poliphili" e nell'immaginario rinascimentale tra gusto antiquariale e senso allegorico

Martin Raspe (Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome), Enigmatic forms and labyrinthic patterns: Borromini's architecture and the dungeon

Nevio Danelon (Sapienza University of Rome), Elisa Corrà (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), Federico Boschetti (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Institute for Computational Linguistics), Imaginary and Actual Spaces: The Labyrinth of Egypt from Herodotus to Modern Archaeology

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

Sala Geymonat

9.30-10.30 Keynote Lectures

Mark Algee-Hewitt (Stanford University), Data crawling: Transmediation Between Exploration and Experimentation

Espen Aarseth (City University of Hong Kong), Hypogaming: A brief history of ludic dungeons

10.30-11.30 SESSION 1

Chair: Gabriele de Seta (University of Bergen)

Roger Luckhurst (Birkbeck College, University of London), The Dungeon Gothic, from Walpole's "Otranto" to Welbeck Abbey

Antonello Molella (University of Macerata), Oltre lo schermo: i dungeon digitali come eterotopie ludiche nell'era virtuale

Serena Malatesta (University of Padua), Il dungeon infernale: immaginare Dante dal Trecento ai giochi di ruolo

11.30-13.00 SESSION 2

Chair: Paolo Berti (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Maria Cristina Misiti, Giovanna Scalonì (Istituto centrale per la grafica – MiC, Rome), Nelle carceri di Piranesi: dall'idea alla costruzione dell'immagine

Flavia Orsati (HII – Heritage International Institute, Rome), La prigionia del labirinto: l'immaginario iconografico di Maurits Cornelis Escher

Stefania Portinari (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), Livello 256. La persistenza del labirinto negli anni Ottanta e Novanta tra pittura e "rovine" letterarie

Stefania De Vincentis (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), Stanze difettose, gravità spostate e geometrie illusionistiche. L'artista e il museo dalla "graphic novel" al multimediale

14.00-15.30 SESSION 3

Chair: Carolina Fernández-Castrillo (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)

Laura Leuzzi (Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen), Dungeons, caves and churches: Journeys through Machinimas

Paolo Berti (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), Mondi in costruzione: il "dungeon infinito" e spazi sotterranei della media art

Gabriele de Seta (University of Bergen), Just add more layers: Metaphors of depth in machine learning

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Information – Venue and Access via Zoom:

The conference will be held in Venice, Università Ca' Foscari, Sala Geymonat, Malcanton Marcorà – Dorsoduro 3484/d and online via Zoom:

<https://unive.zoom.us/j/82109102083?pwd=YbUqMOVE6p6OY3t6bRXxdaqzVA6jJu.1#success>

meeting ID: 821 0910 2083

passcode: Dungeon24!

Reference:

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