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Territori, the Italian web portal of cadastres and historical cartography

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Summary:

Territori is the Italian web portal of cadastres and historical cartography realized during 2011 by the company Hyperborea on assignment of the “Direzione Generale per gli Archivi”. Territori belongs to the National Archival System (SAN) that aims at offering a unique point of access to Italian archival sources: Territori is one of the sub-portal of the SAN. Territori represents a single access point to the documentation preserved in all the Italian State Archives that joined in the project.

Every Italian State Archive that realized filing, cataloguing and digitization project of their maps and cadastral sources can join in Territori, improving the global documentation managed by the portal and following its promotion and valorization aims.

Territori: the project

Territori (www.territori.san.beniculturali.it) is the Italian web portal of cadastres and historical cartography: an online “space” dedicated to the web publication and valorization of cartographic and cadastral documentation preserved by Italian state archives and by other cultural institutes and administrative bodies.

Since the 90s the cartographic and cadastral documentation was one of the first to be managed through digitization processes, with the aim of being preserved for a long time and of answering to lots of requests by people. As time passed lots of institutes developed several projects based on different archival approaches, descriptive levels and tools used. Territori is a “federation” of these preexisting projects: every project keeps its individuality and peculiarity, but at the same time it is related to the other projects, with the aim of providing a better valorization. Territori web portal is a part of the wider Italian National Archival System project, that provides a unique point of access on the web to the archival sources of Italy: Territori represents one of the sub-portals of the Italian National Archival System.

Territori was planned and realized by the company Hyperborea during 2011 on assignment of the DGA (“Direzione generale per gli Archivi”, the Italian general management for the archives). Hyperborea was born in 1995 and it is specialized in the application of Information and communication technologies to the cultural heritage sector.

Hyperborea developed Territori on the basis of the features of the other web portal that belongs to the National Archival Web Portal. The communication structure, the articulation of the several sections, the informative architecture and the browsing mechanism were planned to be uniformed to these of the other web sub-portals, while the several functionalities were suited to the peculiarities, contents and features of the subject.

Territori represents a single access point to the cartographic and cadastral documentation preserved in all the Italian State Archives that joined or will join in the project. The first project partners were Milan State Archive and Trieste State Archive that made their data and images available for the realization of a first release of the portal. Initially, the web portal Territori allowed the consultation of the “Catasto Teresiano” of Milan State Archive and of the “Catasto Franceschino”

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of Trieste State Archive. The example of the first institute was followed by Genoa State Archive and Venice State Archive that made the Genoa “Historical Cartographic” and the “Censo Stabile” of the Regno Lombardo Veneto available.

The last release of Territori was published online in the 2012 and the link was inserted within the Italian National Archival System website, in the area dedicated to the “Portali tematici” that also includes the web portal “Archivi d’impresa” and “Archivi della moda”.

In the June 2013 the La Spezia State Archive decided to join to Territori: during the 2013 the cartographic and cadastral documentation of the Archive will increase the whole heritage managed by Territori. Every other Italian State Archive, cultural institutes or administrative bodies that realized filing, cataloguing and digitization project of their maps and cadastral sources can join in Territori, improving the global documentation managed by the portal and following the promotion and valorization aims of the project.

Events and public presentations about Territori

Territori was born in the 2011 and it was presented to the national and international archival community, thanks to the relevance of the subject and to the strategic importance of the project.

The first release of the portal was presented the 7th of November 2011 in Trieste, in occasion of the 21st International Archival Day, the international conference organized every year by Trieste State Archive. In this occasion the features and the functionalities of the portal were illustrated in relation of first data and images made available by Trieste State Archive and Milan State Archive. Another public occasion for the presentation of Territori was during the event “I poli archivistici e le reti informative” organized by two Italian institutions, MIBAC (“Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali”, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities) and DGA (“Direzione generale per gli archivi”), from the 15th to the 17th December 2011.

At last the 25th of March 2013 in the “Archivio Centrale dello Stato” of Rome there was an official event exclusively dedicated to Territori. The event was organized by DGA (“Direzione generale per gli archivi”) in collaboration with Hyperborea and it represented an occasion to talk about how Territori was born, how it is made, the subscriptions of other projects, the proposals of improvement, the suggestions of semantic web. A part of the event was dedicated to debate about Italian projects related to the historical cartography and cadastral documentation that will be integrated in Territori in the future.

The features of Territori

Territori is based on DIVENIRE a platform developed by Hyperborea during 2009 on assignment of Venice State Archive and planned for the online publication and consultation of archival series and high resolution digital reproductions.

The peculiarity of Territori is the ability to offer not only the description of the cadastral and cartographic documents, but also the related high resolution digital reproductions, in order to allow the consultation of the maps with full details. This feature makes the portal an attraction both for the scientific research about a territory and for non-specialist users. The cadastral and cartographic heritage represents an interesting source for the scientific research and it is also attractive for the consultation of maps by non-specialist users.

The sections of the portal Territori

Territori is made of several sections, each one offers every user lots of ways to interact with data, information and cultural heritage in general.

The homepage

The homepage of Territori web portal is divided in three main parts. The upper part contains the navigation bar with the links to the sections of the portal: the “menu” is always present during the navigation into the pages except when the user has access to the system of a specific Preservation Institute; in this case the user will find the consultation modality of the DIVENIRE and will interact with the interface of the system.

The central part of the homepage is divided in two groups of boxes. The first one is formed by six boxes that represent the link to the pages of the global section “Accedi alle mappe” (Trovarchivi, Soggetti produttori, Fonti, Timeline, Accesso geografico e Ricerca). The boxes are shortcuts and allow the user to have direct access to the preferred content avoiding the standard route through the navigation bar.

The lower part of the homepage contains the “Gallery” a slideshow of images (of the thumbnail) of the best document digital reproductions. Clicking on every image the user can have access to the images visualization system made available by specific DIVENIRE system to which belong the digital reproduction of a document or a map.



Figure 1: Territori homepage.

The archives that joined in the project: the section “Trovarchivi”

The section “Trovarchivi” allows the user to visualize the institutes that joined in the project. The section presents both the interactive map with the geographical localization of the institute and the list of the institutes with the links for the direct access to the consultation system of the several

heritages. In this way the user has an immediate vision of all the partners that are contributing to the portal with their documentation.



Figure 2: Trovarchivi section of Territori.

The sections “Soggetti produttori” and “Fonti”

The sections “Soggetti produttori” and “Fonti” provide an overview of both the institute or the people that produced the documentation shown by Territori during the time, and the detailed description of the various sources of the documentation. Today the sources available on Territori are: “Cartografia Storica di Genova”, “Catasto della Venezia Giulia”, “Catasto Franceschino”, “Catasto Teresiano”, “Censo Stabile del Regno Lombardo Veneto”, “Fondo dell’Archivio Piani”, “Nuovo Catasto Terreni”, “Nuovo Censo Lombardo”. Every source can be browsed through an interactive interface based on both the tools provided by Territori and the tools that belong to each State Archive. The user has three ways to have access to the source. He can browse all the documentation of the source, consulting the archival description of every archival unit and visualizing the high resolution image. The user can make a full text research in the source, finding a preferred item already known. He can also make a detailed research setting different parameters to filter the results.

Timeline and geographical access

The “Timeline” is an innovative tool that can show the cultural heritage in relation to the time during which the documentation was produced. In the Territori portal the timeline was thought and developed to show the archival series and the sources in relation to their temporal collocation.

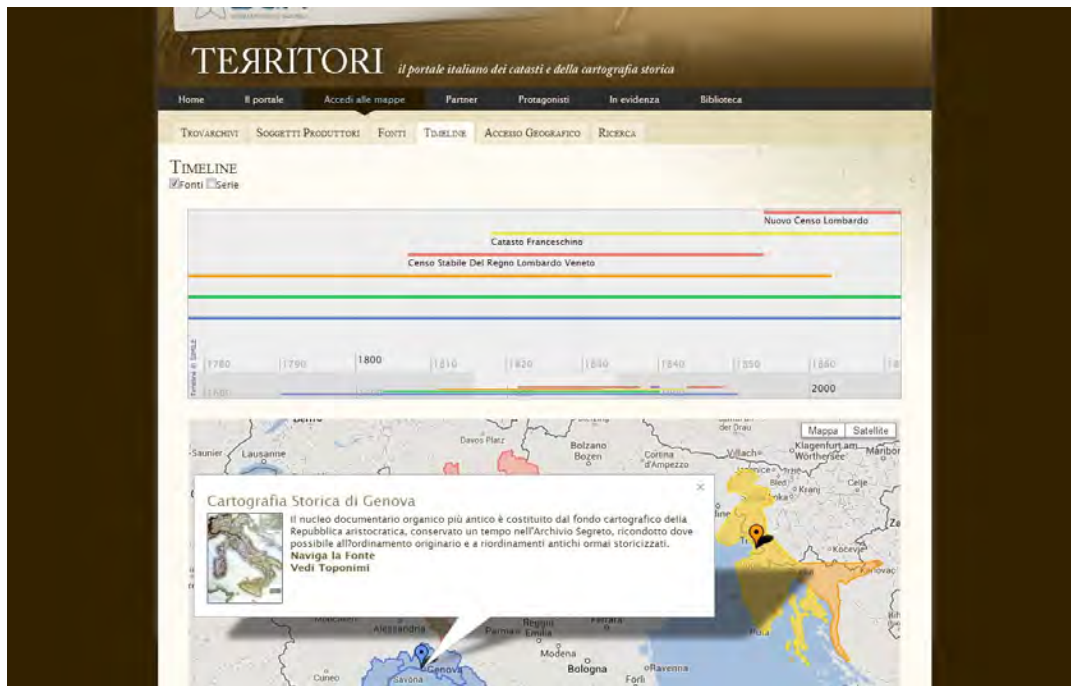


Figure 3: The timeline of Territori.

On the timeline the archival series are represented as lines that move from two chronological points. The timeline can be browsed to find the year of interest and visualize which documentation was produced in a specific period. Every cultural item shown in the timeline is connected to the geographical area in which it was produced, thanks to an integrated visualization tool; clicking on every item a pop-up window provides an overview of the full description of the source. Territori also offers the georeferencing of the toponyms related to the managed documentation: this is the functionality of the “Accesso geografico” section. An interactive map, based on a cluster system, shows all the “density area” where there are lots of clustered toponyms. Clicking on each toponym a pop-up window shows the related sources and all the documents that belong to it, offering the user the possibility to browse the archival description and to visualize the high resolution digital reproduction.



Figure 4: The geographical access in Territori.

The researches in the heritage of Territori

The “Ricerca” section of the Territori web portal allows the use of a search engine that allows the user to make different typologies of operations: a general research, a research for people, a research for toponyms and a research for maps typology.

Through the “General research” it is possible to make researches on the whole digital resources available in the portal, independently from belonging source and from preservation institute where there are the related documents. The “General research” was planned following the “Google-like” style, allowing the user to write the preferred term in a form.

The “Research for people” and the “Toponym research” operate on the base of the same functionality, offering the user the possibility to select a letter from the alphabet and consulting all the results (people and toponyms) that start for the selected letter. Clicking on every result it is possible to obtain all the additional researches, the belonging source and the preservation institute.

The “research for maps typology” allows the user to have a global and immediate vision of the different typologies of material that belong to the heritage managed by Territori: for every typology there is the number of units, the origin and the source.

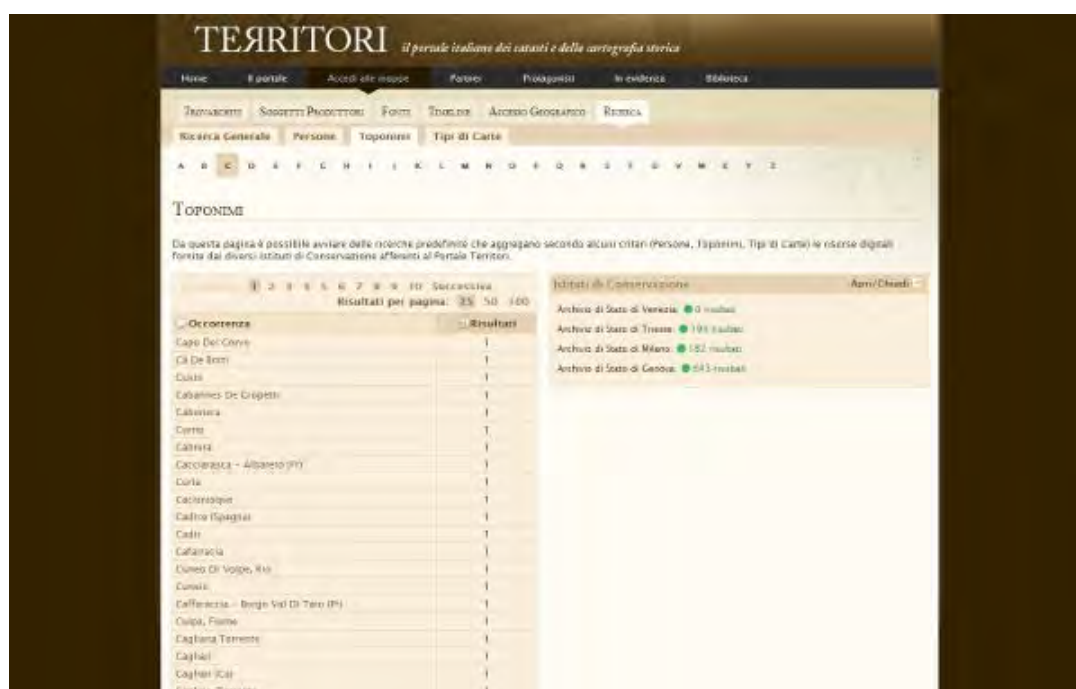


Figure 4: The researches in Territori.

The other contents of Territori: the sections “Protagonisti”, “In evidenza” and “Biblioteca”

Territori has lots of sections that manage contents useful to integrate information and data that the user learns with the consultation modalities of the archival domain. These contents provide context elements and general knowledge useful to focus the aims of the portal also by non-specialist user.

The “Protagonisti” section present the description of all the characters of historical relevance named in the documentation managed by the portal. The section represent a way to arouse interest in the users who, starting from an easy textual content, can consult the archival material trying to find information and details about the character they read.

The section “In evidenza”, based on editorial content, is thought to communicate information about events, news, appointments related both to the Territori portal and to all the State Archives and other institutes that joined or will join in the portal. It is an integrated communication modality to keep Territori users always updated on all that happens around the portal and the “archival life” of the partner of the project.

The section “Biblioteca” presents all the bibliographic sources related to the subject, lots of these resources are related to the OPAC SBN, in order to locate the libraries that preserve the researched texts and to have access to the file of the library.