

Students perspectives on University and
Academic Heritage:
a comparative study between Bologna and Modena
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University and academic heritage and tourism nexus has been significantly discovered in the framework of cultural tourism strategies. Yet, as others old universities, the University of Bologna and the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia have played a pivotal role in designing the urban plan and the image of the cities for centuries and they continue to do so.

Codifying, valuing, communicating academic and university heritage beyond museification became an incentive for the creation of new networks of knowledge, as well as of urban and international cultural itineraries, both for residents and for tourists. Among others, all these are giving the opportunity to discover and to increase awareness of the role that university has played for the evolution of the city. This phenomenon builds up on the dimension of studentship and professorship that have been significantly characterised universities models, anecdotes, university governance choices, etc. Moreover, it creates new interactions with the citizens, where universities are a reference point for the cultural life with a central role in designing, modifying and re-functionalise the urban plan of the cities.

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These phenomena are highly connected with the processes of preserving and communicating the sense of heritage. However, citizen, university staff, students and visitors are often unaware of the universities' heritage. This is the starting point of this paper presenting a joint research project linking geographical tertiary education, the sense of heritage awareness and the sense of belonging to a place and embedness of academic heritage in students' undergraduate curricula.

The paper presents the results of the preliminary experimental activities done in 2018 and 2019 within two courses of geography in Bologna and in Modena with the aim at investigating:

- Prior knowledge of the 2nd year students of the basic geo-historical elements of their universities;
- The knowledge of the location of some academic and university heritage sites and the role in the space-time composition of the city;
- The significance of material and immaterial university and academic heritage;
- The willingness to participate to the university life and the experiential feelings in the discovery of their university academic and university heritage.

Reflecting on academic and university heritage aims at stimulating the creation of new educational paths within the university, with a greater involvement of students in the university life, as well as in the relationship between universities, schools and citizens in order to improve the “uses”, the participation and the governance of the past.

Fig. 1 - University Museum Network of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

Source: Authors' elaboration

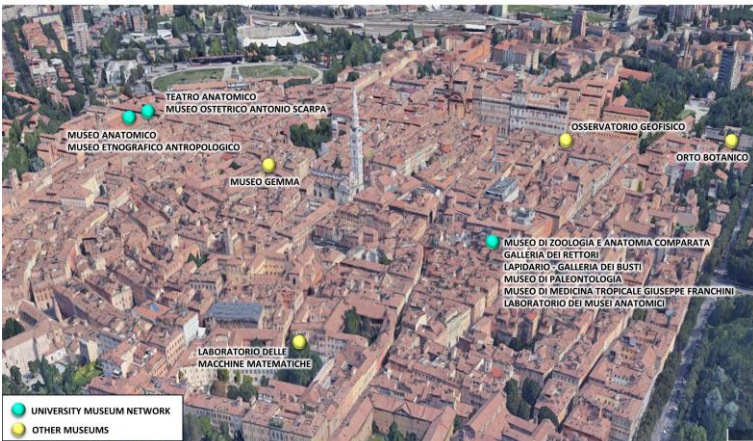
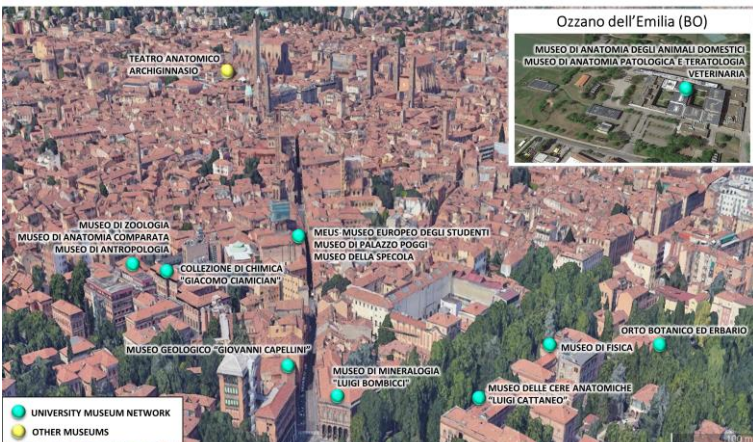


Fig. 2 - University Museum Network of Bologna.

Source: Authors' elaboration



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