Audiovisual Archives as tokens of cultural heritage
in the Hellenic Parliament library: a case-study

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The Hellenic Parliament Library

- Founded in 1845
- Housed in 3 buildings (Athens, Greece)

http://library.parliament.gr
https://www.facebook.com/hellenicparliamentlibrary
https://www.instagram.com/hellenicparliamentlibrary
VALUES

Credibility
Transparency
Equity
Openness
Inclusion
Civic engagement

MISSION
Interconnection between the Parliament and the citizens with information and knowledge
Goals

➢ Efficient support of parliamentary work, through collection, documentation and archiving of materials and data produced by parliamentary procedures and services

➢ Provision of timely, reliable and non-partisan information

➢ Collection development through acquisition of a) books, periodicals and publications b) parliamentary archives, c) “public figures” archives, d) rare books and works of art

➢ Maintenance, conservation, documentation and promotion of the Parliament's cultural capital through outreach activities (exhibitions, educational programs, seminars, book labs and reading groups, etc.).
Some statistics

- Online Catalogue (https://opac.parliament.gr/)
- 377,649 bibliographic records
- 379,587 authorities
- 625,319 items
- 30,000 bibliographic records edited per year
- 4,000 authorities edited per year
- 4,000 new book titles per year
- Digital material
  - 3,000 items (currently not online)
  - 12,000,000 jpg of digitized material (50% available online, subject to copyright law)
- Free access to databases, e-journals, e-books
- Parliamentary Archives
- Collections of Political Figures
- Press Collection: newspapers and serials from
  the pre-revolutionary period (i.e. before 1821) onwards
The Film

Disorder due to the ban on Cretan deputies entering the Greek Parliament
Conservation and restoration
(La Camera Ottica laboratory of the University of Udine)
Newsreels

- c. 1910
- Short documentary films with news of national or international interest
- Presented just before a film in cinemas or in special theatres
- Covered all aspects of political, cultural and social life, from wars to sporting events, coronations to suffragette demonstrations
- Silent at the beginning
The Cretan Question

- The island of Crete formed part of the Ottoman Empire since 1571
- Under occupation after the establishment of the Greek state in 1830
- 1830-1898: continuous rebellions
- 1898: autonomous under Ottoman sovereignty and under the joint protection of the Great Powers (England, France, Italy, Russia)
- 30.5.1913: Unification with Greece

Content Analysis

A. The narrative content: Multimodal Discourse Analysis

- Analysis of various and different semiotic modes involved in a discourse, aiming at integrating the representational/ideational (the content of text), interpersonal (relations among people) and textual meanings (structure of text) achieved by various elements

- Meaning production is seen as being realized by a combination of language, image (still or moving), sound and action

- Multimodality and social semiotics, together, render it possible to ask questions around:
  - meaning and meaning-making resources and mechanisms
  - the agency of meaning-makers
  - the constitution of identities
  - how ‘knowledge’ is produced, shaped and constituted etc
“No document is politically neutral or objective”

- Italy was one of the Protecting Great Powers of autonomous Crete
- Italy was in war with the Ottoman Empire
- Italy had vital interests in Eastern Mediterranean
- Cretan issue could cause a new war with the Ottoman Empire
The “protected”, “absent” protagonist of the day

- The violent push back is described by using a passive construction
- No direct connection to the violent incidents
- “Present” only through his moderate and consensual intervention
- No mention that could provoke accusations for insensitive attitude and authoritarianism
Content Analysis

B. The pragmatic context: the film’s evidential and informational value

• Archives are witnesses to the past, providing evidence, explanation and justification for activities, actions and decisions (ICA, why-archiving)

• Visual documentation tells us a story beyond the moment - it illuminates the place, the time, the trends and the spirit of the age (SPP, Conference 2023)
Shoe-shiner

Street vendor

Photographer

Feather dusting vendor
Future prospects
Digital Humanities

➢ Semantic annotation and analysis of content
➢ Correlation through a multitude of information of a high degree of heterogeneity

Techniques:
Video captioning/Summarization (e.g. identification of demonstration, march, venue based on landscape analysis/recognition of iconic buildings, etc.).
• Machine Learning and Optical Character Recognition (OCR)
• Text summarization
• Layout Analysis (e.g. images, articles, titles, captions, logos, etc.).
• Sentiment analysis
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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