

BIO-MAPS: Biographical map library of writers and poets of three European countries

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Keywords: literature, cartography, map, storymap, education

Abstract:

Three universities and three secondary schools from Spain, Portugal and Hungary together with the European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO) are participating in the Erasmus+ KA201 project entitled "Biographical map library of European authors", which began in December 2020 and will be finished in June 2023. Our main aim is to create a map-based library of writers and poets born in those three countries that can be freely accessed on the web. This online library is created in Spanish language in interest of supporting the teaching of subjects related to grammar, literature, history, and others not only in the Spanish secondary schools, but also in the bilingual secondary schools of Portugal and Hungary. Each country chose fifteen of their most important and internationally-nationally recognized writers and poets, whose life and literary work is included in the national curricula.

The workflow followed for the creation of story maps can be divided into two main phases:

- First phase: Data collection, including biographical data and making emphasis on those geographical (geo-referenced) data that connect an author to specific places where he lived and worked. Other interesting geographical data are those that, for example, appear in novels and allow us to create interactive maps for the representation of the content of these books. At the same time, the data collection is completed with the search for multimedia data to be used to complete and illustrate the text or to be included in the maps.
- Second phase: the making of the story maps, which begins with the making of maps and follows with the selection of design and specific solutions to present the collected data in a dynamic, attractive, and interactive graphic way.

The collected data is visualized using interactive web maps as well as story maps that together form the online map library. The tool selected for this purpose was ArcGIS Online, a cloud-based web environment to create and share interactive web maps, which is considered as one of the most powerful web-based mapping solutions currently (Figure 1). Authors summarized and evaluated the experiences gained during the making of maps and story maps with ArcGIS Online, while different aspects were considered during the analysis of advantages and disadvantages that not only specialists, but teachers and pupils could face when using web mapping services and ArcGIS Online specifically.

The project is not limited to the creation of the online library, we also developed other activities. All the participating colleagues are also interested to test how the online library can be used in the practice. The main and most traditional aim is promoting its' use in the classroom, during the teaching of subjects related to literature, geography, history, etc. At the same time, secondary school students collaborating in the project (and those who are going to be future users of the library) are already developing linguistic communication skills in Spanish, as a main or a secondary language. However, we are also interested to test the most practical use of the new library in activities planned outside schools. By this reason, "literary routes" will be planned for secondary schools in each of the participating countries. It means that groups of selected pupils will visit those local places that can be found on the maps included in the story maps, which are related to a specific stage in the life of a writer or poet.

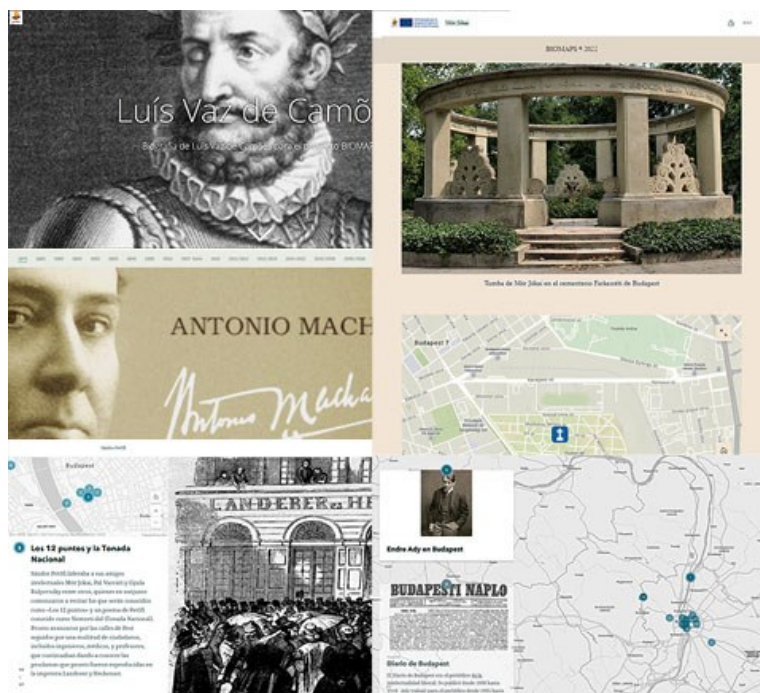


Figure 1. Examples of story maps that have been created in the project.

At the same time our institutions develop different types of activities within the project to popularize these new solutions between teachers and students. One of them was the GIS Day organized in the Károlyi Mihály Hungarian-Spanish Secondary School in November 2020, which was a great success to be repeated in the next years (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Photos taken in the GIS Day celebrated in the Károlyi Mihály Hungarian-Spanish Secondary School, Budapest (Hungary).

Based on the intermediate results and experiences, it can be concluded that the online biographical map library offers numerous options to help and make effective contributions to learning and teaching in secondary schools. Storytelling maps are innovative and engaging online solutions to present, teach and pay tribute to the literary heritage of a country in a more interactive and varied way, thus contributing not only to its teaching in schools or to its use by students, but also to its popularisation among the public in general.

Acknowledgements

This research has been funded by the Erasmus+ project „Biographical Map Library of European Authors (BIO-MAPS)” (2020-1-ES01-KA201-082590) of the European Union.