Back to QGis: Georeferencing

Summer School on Digital Humanities

Web site: https://bit.ly/dt4h-gis

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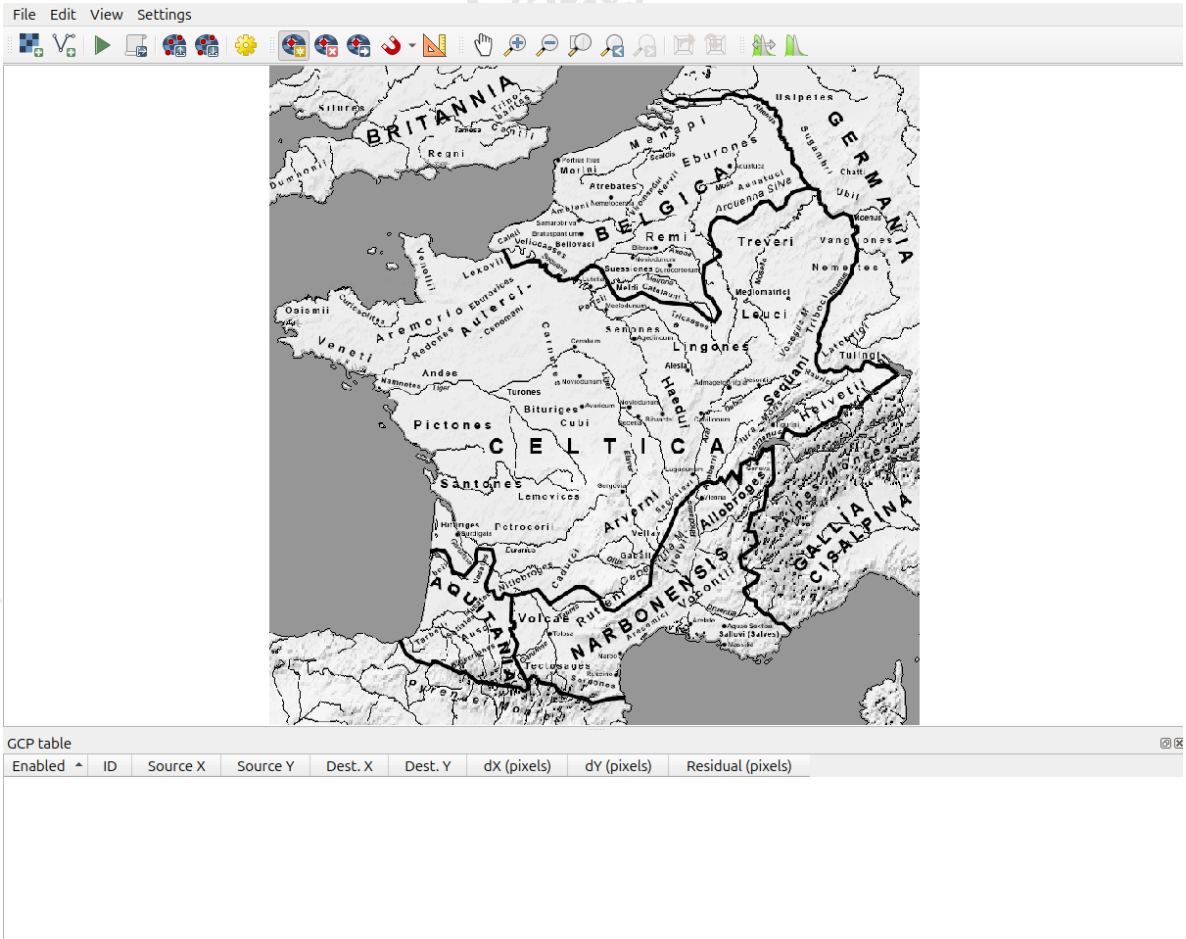
Back to QGis: Georeferencing

- Georeferencing involves transforming an image into a map
  - assigning geographic coordinates to each pixel in the image
- To achieve this, match points on the image with corresponding locations on an accurate reference raster (e.g., OSM)
- A georeferencing tool then calculates the coordinates for all pixels
  - Accuracy improves with the number of reference points
  - The image may need morphing (non-linear transformation)
  - Optimal reference points are distant and non-aligned
- QGIS provides tools for this task

Georeferencing: Preparation

- Create a new project and load the reference raster (OSM)
- Adjust the scale to match the area covered in the map
- Observe the code in the bottom right corner: EPSG:3857 (WGS84/Pseudo-Mercator)
  - This is the usual projection for Web mapping
- Open the Georeferencer tool:
  - Select Layer -> Georeferencer... to open a new window
- In the *Georeferencer* window:
  - Select File -> Open Raster
  - Locate and open the image file you want to georeference

Unreferenced image loaded



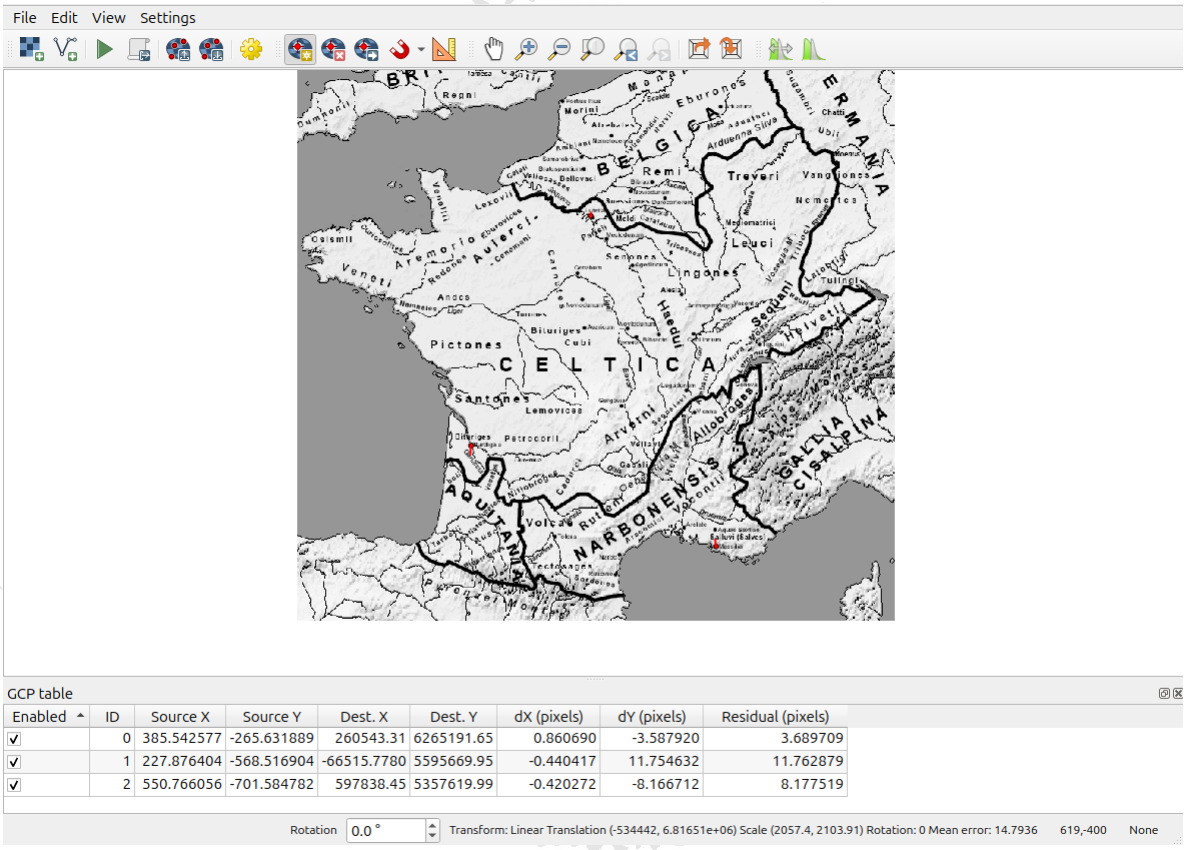
Setup the transformation type

- Configure transformation settings:
  - Select Settings -> Transformation Settings
  - Choose a transformation type (TPS is generally suitable)
  - Ensure the SRS is set to EPSG:3857 - WGS84/Pseudo-Mercator
  - Specify a target file for the result
  - Enable "Load in QGIS when done"
  - Click OK to apply the settings and return to the Georeferencer window

Matching Points

- Repeat the following steps for at least three (distant, non-aligned) points on your map image:
  - Identify a recognizable detail on the map image that also appears on the reference raster
    - e.g., in an ancient map of France, *Lutetia* corresponds to modern Paris
    - Use arrow keys to move and the mouse wheel to zoom, but clicking is disabled
  - Click when the crosshair is positioned over the reference detail (e.g., *Lutetia*)
  - A window appears to input the coordinates
  - Click the From Map Canvas button
  - The map and dialog disappear, and you return to the OSM raster with a crosshair pointer
  - Locate the corresponding point (e.g., *Paris*) on the raster and click
  - QGIS extracts the geographic coordinates from the raster
  - The map reappears with the coordinates filled in
  - Click OK and repeat for at least three points

The map before georeferencing



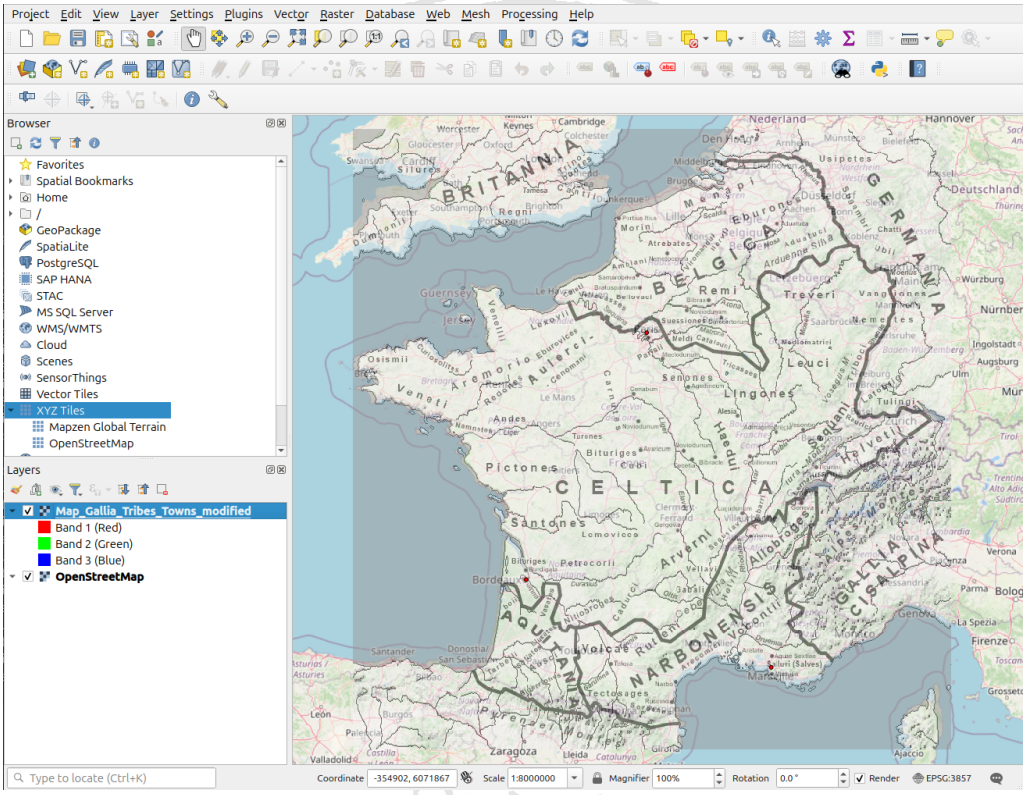
Running the Georeferencer

- Once all reference points are set, apply the georeferencing algorithm
- Click the green triangle in the *Georeferencer* toolbar to start the process
- A pop-up will confirm completion
- Keep the Georeferencer window open and switch to the main QGIS window to inspect the result

Inspecting the Result

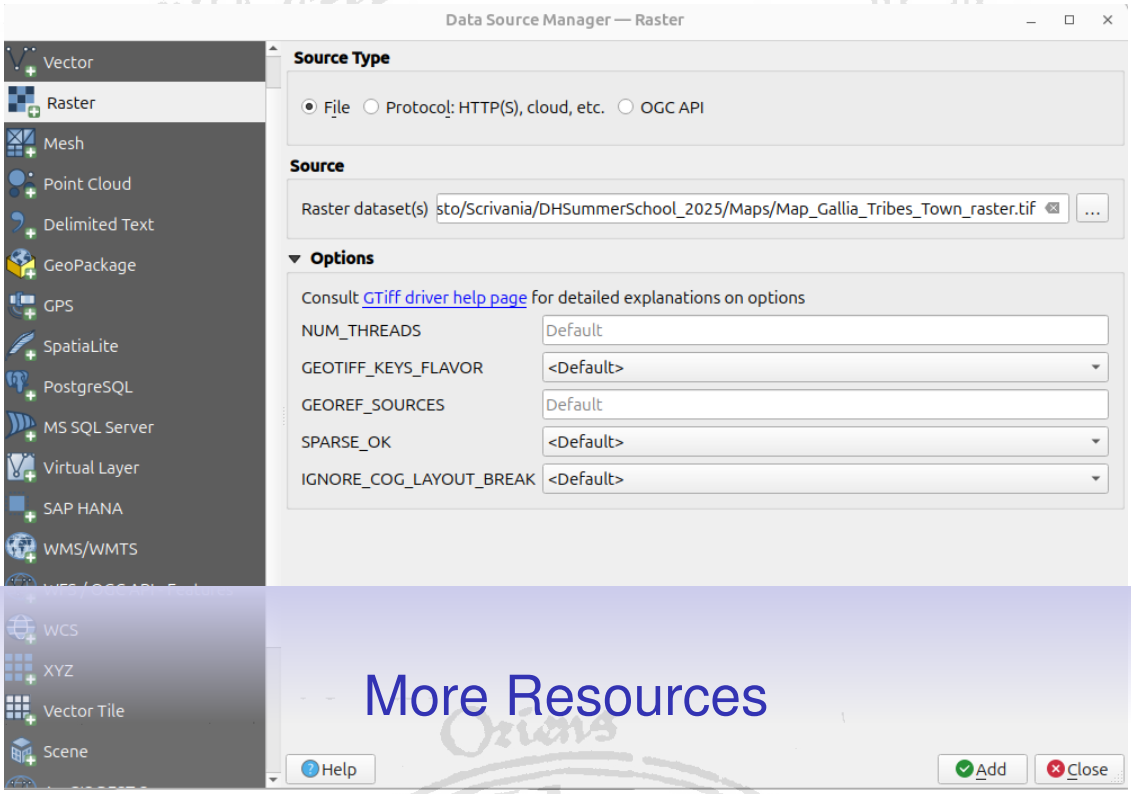
- The image appears as a new raster layer in the main QGIS window
- To assess the georeferencing accuracy, adjust transparency:
  - Right-click the new layer in the Layers panel and select Properties -> Transparency
  - Set Global Opacity to approximately 50
- The next slide illustrates an OSM raster of France with a georeferenced historical map of ancient tribes
- The three reference points used: Paris, Marseille, and Bordeaux
- Observe how the northern coastline differs between the maps
- If the result is unsatisfactory:
  - Remove the layer
  - Return to the *Georeferencer* window to add more points
  - Repeat the georeferencing process

Referenced image generated



Use Your New Raster in QGIS

- During the georeferencing process, you specified a location to save the new raster
- To load it in QGIS, open a new project and access the Data Source Manager
  - Select Raster as the data source type
  - Click File to choose the raster format
  - Browse your filesystem and set the Source field to the path of your new raster



More Resources

- Find in-depth QGIS tutorials at https://www.qgistutorials.com/en/
- Access geographic data (such as OpenStreetMap) from regional and global sources:
  - https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/ (Explore available *datasets*)
  - http://wms.pcn.minambiente.it/mattm/servizi-di-scaricamento/ for downloading *WFS* resources to import into QGIS
- Try an engaging tutorial: https://www.qgistutorials.com/en/docs/3/working_with_terrain.html
  - Learn to add contour lines to QGIS maps