

THE VALUE OF WORKSHOP TEACHING AND SOME REFLECTIONS

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Beyond the pleasure coming from working in beautiful places, operating on extremely interesting architectures, getting feedback from the participants and seeing them taking significant step forward as professional and cultural operators, the lessons learned from fourteen different workshops and from a large set of activities in Archaeological areas, Built Heritage and valuable Cultural Heritage items in the past ten years, is double. On one hand it comes clear that a correct dataset, proper documentation and following archiving is always a valuable resource for the management of the Patrimony and allows the real development of knowledge and the connection between the historical value and any following event along the way. In any possible future case, from new research to possible transformations of the surveyed subjects, these archives are a witness that goes far from the simple photos and fix a robust point in the state of knowledge about a place and its architectures. Operating in articulated scenarios, like it is for the “recomposition” of itinerant items moved from the place of finding to far (and very far) museums is a classic sample of how the research may be widening a field and pose solutions in line

with the Logic of “Patrimony of the Humanity” which is a strong concept that should be reasoned keeping the distance from nationalistic or just melancholic logics of real or supposed belonging. What comes out from this variety of activities, May appear fragmentary, isolated, a series of sparse parts in episodic research. But this can be more a point of strength than a weakness. Indeed, at now the structuring of rational national and international digital archives is on the way, pretty far for being completed and efficient, a number of tentatives in years have taken their way, proposing more or less innovative approaches and interventions in the creation of dedicated archives that rarely remained alive after the end of each financed projects. But things are ongoing and this progress is on two fronts: the first correspond to the group of large, structured archives, like the Italian National Digitalization Program (Progetto Nazionale di Digitalizzazione - PND) and Internet Culturale (Biblioteca Digitale Italiana - BDI) or Portale Inventari & Archivio Digitale (Sistema Archivistico Nazionale - SAN) and European, which may considered the most aged tentative of defining an extended catalogue, at the moment their real capacity in offering access to digital survey

products is quite inconsistent, but not out of the intentions. The other front is one of the initiatives from the school, academic, research and enthusiast communities, single or multiple tentatives, at small or even medium size, that aim at the production of specific contents and are spontaneously creating a vast and sparse archive of contributions. They may look dispersive, but in their multiplicity they contribute to other research and produce results and enhancements to the knowledge in the most various fields. In this series of products the use of existing platforms for sharing and presenting contents is quite common, with results that are sometimes solid and durable, sometimes live just the time of each project. In this scenario, keeping durable, efficient, archives of the materials is not helped by the software development, which tends more in a stubborn innovation with poor real benefits than in promoting easy recovering procedures for the older data. The logic of “throwing away” old things seems uncompliant with any Digital Heritage intentions, but is constantly applied in the software market. For this, producing and storing the original data “as acquired”, developing them in the most various software, but in the whole producing basic, long term compliant

formats, looks like the best way to give a future chance to gather data. Storing them online can be a proper solution, thus a wearisome, time consuming and quite expensive physical backup (especially on optical supports like DVD and Blue-Ray discs) is still nowadays an extra safeguard for important contents. Some updates on the data formats, along the years, may contribute to an even more complete and efficient long life of the digital survey datasets.

This first point, obviously, does not solve how this procedure leaves an apparently incoherent group of original and processed data. The most effective reply to this condition is probably leaving them in this way and embracing the logic of dissemination “from the base”, taking time for

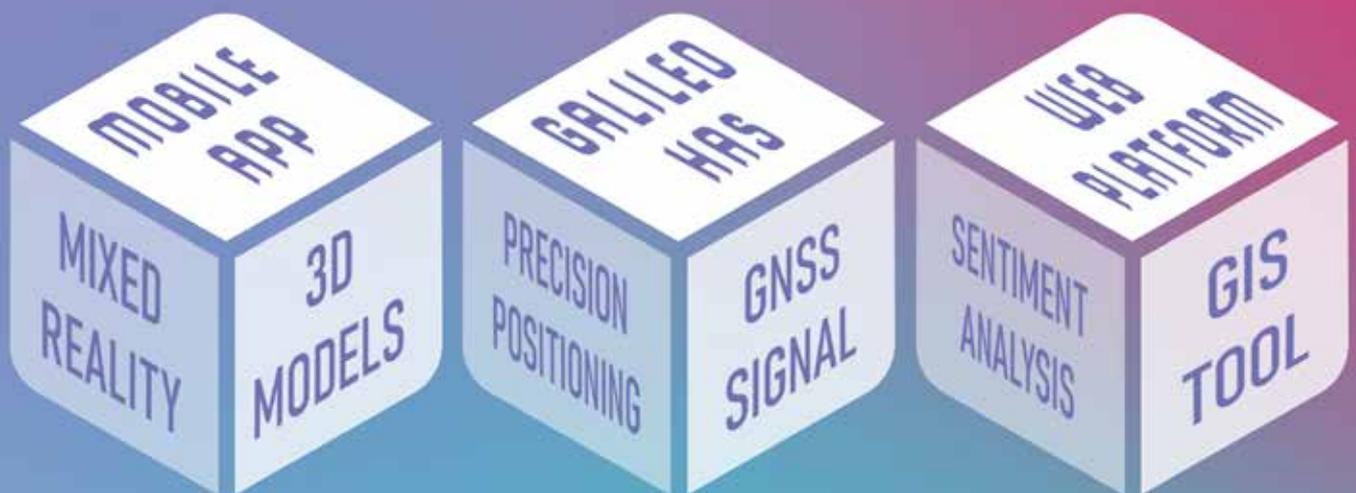
producing accurate and shareable models and representations exploiting existing platforms that make these archives easy to retrieve and find. A model uploaded in sketchfab.com can be found by a variety of people searching for that specific item; one or more graphic boards or short reports produced from a thesis or at the end of a research may be uploaded and shared on zenodo.org or figshare.com with instant and efficient DOI (Digital Object Identifier) attribution, so to make their localization a constant from that moment. A short video, even without a professional cut or montage, may take part to the youtube.com or vimeo.com platforms, allowing the fast communication of some results or leaving a trace of that

workshop or research activity. The interlinking of these contents to other scientific products may expand and enhance the quality of papers in conference proceedings and journals, bringing them a step forward in the digital heritage scenario and extending the options for clear and exhaustive communication.

In conclusion, until the definition of archiving protocols that take into account the preservation of usability and guarantee the maintenance of future readability of the data, both collected and processed, the open dissemination of all the components of the studies and projects is to be considered the most appropriate strategy for improving the longevity and integrity of the scientific documentation of the Cultural Heritage.

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