The e-volution of Information Communication Technology in Cultural Heritage

Where Hi-Tech Touches the Past: Risks and Challenges for the 21st Century

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## Contents

Recording with Laser Scanning of Santo Tomas Royal Monastery: a Travel into the Past in Honour of Christopher Columbus  
*D. G. Aguilera, J. G. Lahoz, J. Herrero, A. L. Muñoz* .................................................. 1

Towards a Versatile Handheld 3D Laser Scanner  
*F. Arnaoutoglou, A. Koutsoudis, G. Pavlidis, V. Tsioukas, C. Chamzas* .............................. 7

Cultural Itineraries in the Region of Xanthi Using Web-based GIS Technologies  
*A. Balla, G. Pavlogeorgatos, D. Tsiafakis, G. Pavlidis* ....................................................... 13

“The Warrior of Caere”: An Example of Virtual Reconstruction  
*L. Bordoni, S. Rubino* ........................................................................................................ 17

Large Orthorectified Photo Mosaics for Archaeology  
*K. Cain, P. Martinez* ........................................................................................................ 22

A City Revealed. New Technologies Increase Our Knowledge of Roman Lucca  
*L. Camin* .......................................................................................................................... 24

Automatic Coarse Registration by Invariant Features  
*A. Chimienti, M.I. Cadoni, R. Nerino* ................................................................................ 29

Designing a Real-Time Playback System for a Dome Theater  
*D. Christopoulos, A. Gaitatzes, G. Papaioannou, G. Zyba* ................................................ 35

Mapping Ancient Mediterranean Trade Networks  
*D. Constantinidis* ............................................................................................................. 41

GIS Three-Dimensional Features to Recover City Centers  
*F. Cotroneo, V. Barrile, M. Cacciola* ................................................................................. 44

VISAGE: An Integrated Environment for Visualization and Study of Archaeological Data Generated by Industrial Computer Tomography  
*L.I. Dimitrov, E. Wenger, M. Šrámek, E. Trinkl, C. Lang-Auinger* .................................... 49

Documenting Events in Metadata  
*M. Doerr, A. Kritsotaki* ..................................................................................................... 56

A Toolbox for Movable Books Digitization  
*J. Dupire, S. Domergue* .................................................................................................... 61

*M. Forte, S. Pescarin, L. Pujol Tost* ................................................................................... 64

The Museum’s Mind: A Cybermap for Cultural Exhibitions  
*M. Forte, E. Pietroni* ......................................................................................................... 70

Extraction and Mapping of CIDOC-CRM Encodings from Texts and Other Digital Formats  
*M. Généreux, F. Niccolucci* ............................................................................................... 74

DEMOTECH – Development of a Monitoring System for Cultural Heritage through European Co-operation  

New Possibilities in 3D-Documentation Using Digital Stereo Photogrammetry  
*F. Henze, G. Siedler, S. Vetter* .......................................................................................... 85

A Tourist Guide System for Ancient Cities. Case Study: BISHAPOUR  
*M. Kashiha, M.R. Malek, F. Farzam* .................................................................................. 91
Historical Archive of the Aegean ‘Ergani’:
Visualising the Archival Experience, a Museum Multimedia Application
C. Konnaris, E. Mavrikas, G. Pehlivanides, V. Stournaras, M. Tsakogianni ................. 96

Virtual Reality and Stereo Visualization in Artistic Heritage Reproduction
S. Livatino, D. Cuciti, A. Wojciechowski .......................................................... 102

An Ethical Overview of Long-Term Perspectivism

Presentation of an Integrated System for the Recording and Documentation
of the Cultural Heritage of a Historic City.
Digital Registry for the Historic Centre City of Nafplion
H. Maistrou, D. Psychogyios .......................................................... 114

Persian Heritage Archive
A. Malian, M. Zolfaghari .......................................................... 119

MUST System – Location Based Services
and Multilingual Simultaneous Transmission for Tourist Fruition
P. Maurelli, A. Cinnirella, S. Faralli, A. Labella, M. Pierro, F. Rosa ......................... 124

Intra-site Level Cultural Heritage Documentation:
Combination of Survey, Modeling and Imagery Data in a Web Information System

The Processing of Laser Scan Data for the Analysis of Historic Structures in Ireland
M. Murphy, E. McGovern, S. Pavia .......................................................... 135

Low Cost Integrated Spatial Information System
for Polish Cultural Heritage Promotion and Preservation
J. Nowak, M. Happach .......................................................... 140

Computer-Assisted Estimation of the Original Shape
of a Japanese Ancient Tomb Mound Based on its Present Contour Map
K. Ozawa .......................................................... 143

Combining GIS and 3D Graphics to Form a Tool to Empower Digital Visualizations
on Cultural Heritage
A. Papakonstantinou, V. Christodoulou, N. Soulakellis .......................................................... 147

Function-based Shape Modeling for Cultural Heritage Applications
G. Pasko, A. Pasko .......................................................... 153

Efficient Field Capture of Epigraphy via Photometric Stereo
J. Paterson, K. Cain .......................................................... 159

Complex Documentation of Charles Bridge in Prague by Using Laser Scanning,
Photogrammetry and GIS Technology

Graphical Annotation of Semantic Units in a 3D GIS
for Cultural Heritage Research and Presentation
T. Reitz, J. Haist, D. Wigg-Wolf .......................................................... 169

New Trends in High Resolution Survey for the Cultural Heritage
Metric Survey Applications for Restoration
F. Rinaudo, L. Bornaz, L. Peretti, C. Porporato .......................................................... 175

Photo-Tacheometry – Recording Geometry and Creating a 3D-Model on Site and in One Step
M. Scherer .......................................................... 181
The e-volution of Stereoview Technology in CH Data
W. Schuhr, E. Kanngieser .................................................. 186

The Encyclopedic Concept in the Web Era
A. Sideris ................................................................. 192

Presenting Uncertainty in Archaeological Reconstructions
Using Possibility Theory and Information Visualisation Schemes
M. Sifniotis, K. Mania, P. Watten, M. White .......................................................... 198

Beauty or Beast? – A Review of CIDOC-CRM Applications and Thesauri in Archaeology
G. Sugimoto ............................................................... 203

Surveying Monuments by Who’s Standards
K. Tokmakidis .................................................................. 209

Realtime Intrasite Documentation from above:
The Case of Balloon-Mounted Wireless Photography
K. Uotila, I. Huvila, H. Lehtonen, J-E. Wahlberg ......................................................... 213

Integrated Methodologies for Data Elaboration and Real Time:
Villa of Livia (Via Flaminia Project)
L. Vico, A. Moro, F. Galeazzi, M. Di Ioia, N. Dell’Unto .................................................. 219

VR Modeling in Research, Instruction, Presentation and Cultural Heritage Management:
the Case of Karanis (Egypt)
W.Z. Wendrich, J.E.M.F. Bos, K.M. Pansire ............................................................. 225

Photogrammetry in Architectural Study: A Message from Architect to Surveyor
R. Yoshitake, J. Ito, H. Watanabe, N. Kochi ............................................................... 231
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This volume contains the so-called “short” papers presented at the VAST2006 International Conference held in Nicosia, Cyprus, on 30 October – 4 November 2006. The Conference is a joint effort of several organisations and continues the successful series of VAST Conferences, which started in Arezzo, Italy, in November 2000, on the eve of the 21st century.

VAST Conferences focus on the applications of Information and Communication Technology to Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. In particular, special attention is paid to computer visualization technologies and 3D modelling, which have an outstanding importance in the explanation and communication of heritage to a broad audience of visitors. The variety of themes presented are of equal importance, such as the documentation of heritage, the foundation of preservation and specific technologies, such as mobile computing and 3D data capture and processing. During its life, VAST has shared its goals with EPOCH, the European Network of Excellence on ICT applications to Cultural Heritage (www.epoch-net.org), and naturally became the venue for hosting the reports of the Network’s activity. Since 2004, EPOCH has become the primary supporter of VAST, which also hosts the Eurographics Workshop on Graphics and Cultural Heritage since 2003. Eurographics also became the publisher of the “full” papers proceedings. In the 2006 edition, other organizations have joined in this effort.

One of these organisations is CIPA, which is one of the oldest International Scientific Committees of ICOMOS (The International Society for Monuments and Sites) and was founded in 1968 jointly with ISPRS (International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing) to facilitate the transfer of technology from measurement sciences into heritage documentation and recording disciplines. CIPA originally stood for the Comité International de Photogrammétrie Architecturale (http://cipa.icomos.org). However, this old and well known name no longer describes the full scope of CIPA activities, therefore CIPA Heritage Documentation was established, which is now an organization that endeavours to transfer technology from measurement and visualisation sciences to the disciplines of Cultural Heritage recording, conservation and documentation. CIPA holds an International Symposium every two years. Accompanying these Symposia, frequent specialist workshops are held, which deal with specific topics. The topics chosen for this year are dedicated to e-documentation and standardization in Cultural Heritage.

Another contributing organization is fairly new but excitingly important for the joint event. The EuroMed conference functions as a bridge between European and Middle East countries and it allows the distribution of knowledge throughout the entire region. The theme of this conference was dedicated to IT in Cultural Heritage.

The papers contained here are shorter in length, but not lower in quality. Authors have chosen to contribute preliminary results of work-in-progress in a shorter form, while mature research is presented in the “full” papers volume. “Short” papers have been peer-reviewed and due to the great number of submissions, only a small part of them could be accepted and published.

If the number and quality of papers should measure the success of the joint event, these “short” papers would substantially contribute in both regards. Moreover, we consider this conference as a successful event because it managed to bring together so many participants and to join the efforts of different organizations, all contributing to a better knowledge of our common heritage.

The papers contained here deal with project activities, i.e. applied research, organization, on-field applications and the lessons learnt from these. Authors have chosen to report their successes and problems when trying to match theory with reality, which in our opinion is not less important than the advances in theoretical research presented in the “full” papers volume. “Project” papers have been peer-reviewed and due to the great number of submissions only a small part of them could be accepted and published.

David Arnold, UK, Marinos Ioannides, CY, Franco Niccolucci, IT, Katerina Mania, GR
Short Paper Index by session

Places and Journeys

Aikaterini Balla, George Pavlidis, Despoina Tsiafakis, Gerasimos Pavlogeorgatos
Cultural Itineraries in the Region of Xanthi using Web-based GIS Technologies .................................. 13

Helen Maistrou, Dimitris Psychogios
Presentation of an Integrated System for the Recording and Documentation of the cultural heritage of a historic city. Digital registry for the historic centre of the city of Nafplion. ............ 114

Lorenza Camin
A City Revealed. New Technologies Increase Our Knowledge of Roman Lucca ................................. 24

Mona Kashiha, Mohamad Reza Malek, Fariba Farzam
A Tourist Guide System for Ancient Cities. Case Study: BISHAPOUR ........................................... 91

Dora Constantinidis
Mapping Ancient Mediterranean Trade Networks ....................................................................................... 41

3D modelling

Galina Pasko, Alexander Pasko
Function-based Shape Modeling for Cultural Heritage Applications ....................................................... 153

Michael Scherer
Photo-Tacheometry - Recording Geometry and Creating a 3D-Model on Site and in one Step - .............. 181

Kazumasa Ozawa
Computer-assisted estimation of the original shape of a Japanese ancient tomb mound based on its present contour map .................................................. 143

Francesco Cotroneo, Vincenzo Barrile, Matteo Cacciola
GIS Three-Dimensional Features to Recover City Centers ...................................................................... 44

Memory institutions

Maurizio Forte, Laia Pujol Tost, Sofia Pescarin

Maurizio Forte, Eva Pietroni
The Museum’s Mind: a cybermap for Cultural Exhibitions .................................................................... 70

Joanna Nowak, Marlena Happach
Low Cost Integrated Spatial Information System for Polish Cultural Heritage Promotion and Preservation .......................................................... 140

Christis Konnaris, Tsakogianni Marousa, Stournaras Vagelis, Pehlivanidis Giorgos, Efthimios Mavrikas
Visualising the Archival Experience, a Museum Multimedia Application ................................................. 96

Willeke Wendrich, Jolanda Bos, Kandace Pansire
VR modeling in research, instruction, presentation and cultural heritage management: the case of Karanis (Egypt) ......................................................................... 225

Abbass Malian, Mahmoud Zolfabhari
Persian Heritage Archive .................................................................................................................................. 119
Standards and documentation

Go Sugimoto
Beauty or Beast? - A Review of CIDOC-CRM Applications and Thesauri in Archaeology .......... 203

Martin Doerr, Athina Kritsotaki
Documenting events in metadata ................................................. 56

Elise Meyer, Pierre Grussenmeyer, Jean-Pierre Perrin, Anne Durand, Pierre Drap
Intra-site level cultural heritage documentation: combination of survey, modeling and imagery data in a web information system ......................................................... 129

Thorsten Reitz, Joerg Haist, David Wigg-Wolf
Graphical Annotation of Semantic Units in a 3D GIS for Cultural Heritage Research and Presentation ......................................................... 169

Michel Généreux, Franco Niccolucci
Extraction and Mapping of CIDOC-CRM Encodings from Texts and Other Digital Formats ...... 74

Kostas Tokmakidis
Surveying Monuments by Who’s Standards ......................................... 209

Laser scanning

Diego Gonzalez Aguilera, Javier Gomez Lahoz, Jesus Sabas Herrero Pascual, Angel Luis Muñoz Nieto
Recording with Laser Scanning of Santo Tomas Royal Monastery: A Travel into the Past in Honour of Christopher Colombus ......................................................... 1

Fotis Arnaoutoglou, Anastis Koutsoudis, George Pavlidis, Vasilios Tsioukas, Christodoulos Chanzas
Towards a versatile handheld 3D laser scanner ........................................ 7

Fulvio Rinaudo, Leandro Bornaz, Leonardo Peretti, Chiara Porporato
New Trends in High Resolution Survey for the Cultural Heritage

Maurice Murphy, Eugene McGovern, Sara Pavia
The Processing of Laser Scan Data for the Analysis of Historic Structures in Ireland .......... 135

Data Capture

Antonio Chimienti, Marinella Cadoni, Roberto Nerino
Automatic Coarse Registration by Invariant Features ........................................ 29

Kari Uotila, Isto Huvila, Hannele Lehtonen, Jan-Erik Wahlberg
Realtime Intrasite Documentation from above:
The Case of Balloon-Mounted Wireless Photography ........................................ 213

Kevin Cain, Philippe Martinez
Large Orthorectified Photo Mosaics for Archaeology ........................................ 22

Jerome Dupire, Sebastien Domergue
A Toolbox for Movable Books Digitization ................................................. 61

Photogrammetry

Frank Henze, Gunnar Siedler, Sebastian Vetter
New Possibilities in 3D-Documentation Using Digital Stereo Photogrammetry ............... 85

Ryuichi Yoshitake, Juko Ito, Hiroto Watanabe, Nobuo Kochi
Photogrammetry in Architectural Study: A Message from Architect to Surveyor ............ 231
Karel Pavelka, Jirina Svatuskova, Jiri Preisler, Michal Necesanek, Radim Balik, Veronika Nemcova, Josef Pazdera
Complex Documentation of Charles Bridge in Prague by Using Laser Scanning, Photogrammetry and GIS Technology ...........................................163

James Paterson, Kevin Cain
Efficient Field Capture of Epigraphy via Photometric Stereo ..........................................................159

Dissemination
An Ethical Overview of Long-Term Perspectivism .................................................................108
Annika Haugen, B. Skar, J. Solstad, T. Risan, V. Bakkestuen, L. Erikstad, T. Guttormsen
DEMETEC – Development of a Monitoring System for Cultural Heritage through European Co-operation ................................. 80

Athanasios Sideris
The Encyclopedic Concept in the Web Era ...............................................................192

Patrick Maurelli, Alessandro Cinnirella, Stefano Faralli, Anna Labella, Mario Pierro, Flavio Rosa
MUST System: Location Based and Multilingual Simultaneous Transmission of Cultural and Tourist Content ..............................................................124

Virtual Environments
Salvatore Livatino, Domenico Cuciti, Adam Wojciechowski
Virtual Reality and Stereo Visualization in Artistic Heritage Reproduction ........................................102
Luciana Bordoni, Sandro Rubino
“The Warrior of Caere”: an example of virtual reconstruction ............................................. 17

Dimitrios Christopoulos, Athanasios Gaitatzes, Georgios Papaioannou, Gjergji Zyba
Designing a Real-Time playback system for a Dome Theater ..................................................... 35

Lola Vico, Alessia Moro, Fabrizio Galeazzi, Marco Di Ioia, Nicolo dell’Unto
Integrated methodologies for data elaboration and real time: Villa of Livia (via Flaminia project) ............................................................. 219

Visualisation
Leonid I. Dimitrov, Emanuel Wenger, Elisabeth Trinkl, Milos Smyrek, Claudia Lang-Auinger
VISAGE: An Integrated Environment for Visualization and Study of Archaeological Data Generated by Industrial Computer Tomography ........................................... 49
Walter Schuhr, Erich Kanngieser
The e-volution of Stereoview Technology in CH Data .............................................................186

Maria Sifniotis, Katerina Mania, Phil Watten, Martin White
Presenting uncertainty in archaeological reconstructions using possibility theory and information visualisation schemes ..................................................198
Apostolos Papakonstantinou, Euagellos Christodoulou, Nikolaos Soullakelis
Combining GIS and 3D Graphics to form a tool to empower digital visualizations on Cultural Heritage .............................................................147