2008 AIA Workshop Proposal
Web-based research tools for Mediterranean archaeology

Organizers/Chairs: Pedar Foss and Rebecca Schindler, DePauw University

Workshop Statement:

In recent years several powerful Web-based research tools for Mediterranean archaeology have emerged; this workshop brings together researchers who are building and/or maintaining them. Having examined each other's projects beforehand, presenters demonstrate their own projects, assess their functionality and usefulness, and discuss future needs and possibilities.

The projects range from macro-scale (country- or Mediterranean-wide meta-data) to micro-scale (specific sites and artifact types). Two initiatives are on-line databases for archaeological fieldwork. Foss and Schindler demonstrate MAGIS, an inventory of survey projects across Europe and the Mediterranean. Fentress demonstrates The Fasti OnLine, which records excavations in Italy and several neighboring countries. Both projects employ web-based GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to allow spatial and database searches. With the release of Google Earth and Google Maps, GIS functionality for tracking landscapes has become widely available to mainstream, not just specialist, users. Savage offers The Jordan Archaeological Database and Information System (JADIS) as a case-study of how Google-GIS functionality may be employed in archaeological research.

Numerous archaeological projects use the Web to present and collect data (to varying degrees of detail). Watkinson and Hartzler demonstrate The Agora Excavations on-line, an example of how the web can clearly present a complex, long-excavated site though its organization of artifacts, documentary materials, and visual interfaces. Heath then gives a close-up look at the on-line study collection of ceramics from Ilion; what is the potential for web-based reference collections to enhance the study of ceramic production and distribution?

ArchAtlas, presented by Harlan and Wilkinson, and the Pleiades Project, presented by Elliott, both seek to link geo-spatial and archaeological data through on-line collaborations. These projects raise issues of interoperability and shared datasets. ArchAtlas aims to be a hub for interpretive cartographic visualization of archaeological problems and data; Pleiades is developing an atlas of ancient sites. Finally, Chavez from the Perseus Project considers the challenges of accessibility, sustainability and viability in the ever-changing world of technology -- how do we ensure that these projects are still usable twenty years from now, and what new resources can we imagine developing?

These projects are representative of the types of on-line initiatives for Mediterranean archaeology in current development. Their tools enable the compilation and dissemination of large amounts of information that can lead to interesting new questions about the Mediterranean world. This is a critical time to step back, assess the resources and consider future needs and desires.

(Words: 397)

Presentations/Demonstrations (10 minutes each):

1. Pedar Foss, DePauw University, "MAGIS (Mediterranean Archaeology GIS): cataloguing regional surveys on the Web (http://cgma.depauw.edu/MAGIS/)," 10 minutes.
2. Elizabeth Fentress, International Association for Classical Archaeology, "The Fasti OnLine (http://www.fastionline.org/)," 10 minutes.
3. Stephen Savage, Arizona State University, "Building National-scale Archaeological GIS Databases for the Web with Google Earth and Google Maps: A Case Study from Jordan (http://archaeology.asu.edu/jordan/index.html)," 10 minutes.
4. Bruce Hartzler, ASCSA, and Charles Watkinson, ASCSA, "Publishing material from the Agora excavations online (http://www.agathe.gr/index.html)," 10 minutes.
5. Sebastian Heath, American Numismatic Society, "Digital Publication of Greek, Roman and Byzantine Pottery from Ilion (Troy) (http://classics.uc.edu/troy/GRBPottery/)," 10 minutes.
6. Tom Elliott, Ancient World Mapping Center, UNC, "pleiades.stoa.org: open collaboration and the enhancement of historical geodata (http://pleiades.stoa.org/)," 10 minutes.
7. Debi Harlan, Oxford University, and Toby Wilkinson, British Institute at Ankara, "ArchAtlas: potentials for linking geospatial and archaeological data at the global scale (http://www.archatlas.dept.shef.ac.uk/)," 10 minutes.
8. Robert Chavez, Perseus Project, Tufts University, "Future Perfect: web-based research tools over the long-term," 10 minutes.

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