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edited by

Julian Bogdani,
Riccardo Montalbano,
and Paolo Rosati

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Contents

Foreword.....	iii
ArcheoFOSS 2020 Committees	v
Use, Application and Development of Free/Libre and Open-Source (FLOS) Tools in Archaeology	
Strumenti digitali open-source per la documentazione della cultura visuale paleo-mesolitica: dati preliminari da un flusso di lavoro sulle decorazioni incise su supporto calcareo dalla Grotta di Santa Maria di Agnano (Ostuni, BR)	1
<i>Michele Pellegrino, Donato Coppola</i>	
Valutazione integrata delle dinamiche di rischio di erosione del suolo in presenza di depositi archeologici. Il metodo proposto dal progetto RESEARCH (REmote SENSing techniques for ARCHAeology).....	13
<i>Stefano De Angeli, Fabiana Battistin, Federico Valerio Moresi, Philip Fayad, Matteo Serpetti</i>	
Rome – NE Palatine slopes: open-source methodologies and tools for the analysis of ancient architectures	24
<i>Emanuele Brienza, Giovanni Caratelli, Lorenzo Fornaciari, Cecilia Giorgi</i>	
Un <i>workflow</i> open-source per l'elaborazione delle immagini termiche da drone.....	35
<i>Gabriele Ciccone</i>	
Analysis of urban mobility in 18th-century Rome: a research approach through GIS platform.....	44
<i>Renata Ago, Domizia D'Erasmus</i>	
Towards FreeCAD experimentation and validation as a FOS HBIM platform for building archaeology purposes.....	55
<i>Filippo Diara, Fulvio Rinaudo</i>	
FLOS for Museums: open solutions to train communities and manage heritage sites.....	68
<i>Paolo Rosati</i>	
The <i>virtual countryman</i> . A GRASS-GIS tool for ancient cultivation recognition	79
<i>Augusto Palombini</i>	

Little Minions and SPARQL Unicorns as tools for archaeology	90
<i>Timo Homburg, Florian Thiery</i>	

Creation, use and Promotion of Open Data and Open Formats in Archaeology

The ArchAIDE Archive: the open-data policy and management of material covered by copyright.....	101
<i>Francesca Anichini, Gabriele Gattiglia</i>	

SITAR: a new open-data infrastructure for a public archaeology of Rome	108
<i>Mirella Serlorenzi, Ascanio D'Andrea, Riccardo Montalbano</i>	

SPARQLing Publication of Irish $\text{+}^{\text{+}}\text{-}$ Ogham Stones as LOD	119
<i>Florian Thiery, Sophie C. Schmidt, Timo Homburg</i>	

Towards an ontology of the Museum of Archaeology of the University of Catania: from the digitization of the legacy data to the Semantic Web.....	128
<i>Nicola Laneri, Rodolfo Brancato, Salvatore Cristofaro, Marianna Figuera, Marianna Nicolosi</i>	

Fieldnotes for the development and publication of open standards for the vectorisation of archaeological and architectonic topographic legacy data.....	138
<i>Julian Bogdani</i>	

Analysis and comparison of open and non-open spatial formats for archaeological research	148
<i>Andrea D'Andrea, Francesca Forte</i>	

Open Data, Open Knowledge, Open Science: The new research group at the Institute of Heritage Science (CNR)	158
<i>Alessandra Caravale, Alessandra Piergrossi, Irene Rossi</i>	

FOSS, Open-Data e archeologia: qualche riflessione su passato, presente e prospettive future	168
<i>Marco Ciurcina, Piergiovanna Grossi</i>	

Appendix

An introspective, incomplete, view on the activity of the FLOS community dealing with Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.....	178
<i>Julian Bogdani, Federico Sciacca</i>	

Foreword

This volume represents the editorial outcome of the 14th edition of ArcheoFOSS international conference, which took place on 15–17 October 2020 on the World Wide Web. The event has been held annually since 2006 and is dedicated to the theoretical framework and actual application of free and open-source software solutions and the promotion and encouragement of the Open Data paradigm for archaeology and, more generally, for Cultural Heritage.

Compared to the past editions, the 2020 conference introduced some substantial changes. First of all, the pandemic crisis due to the COVID-19 outbreak, forced us for the first time to hold a Web-based conference, a solution that introduced some important advantages. For example there was the facility to overcome geographical distances and therefore greatly broadening participation, both in terms of speakers (presentations, workshops, demos) and audience. Additionally we had the possibility to share thoughts on the specific topics of the conference with foreign colleagues from different backgrounds (universities, research centres), widening consequently the network of collaboration. We hope that the effort to open the ArcheoFOSS conference beyond Italian national borders – and beyond a small circle of individuals who in the last years have tenaciously and with great difficulty tried to keep alive the spirit of the conference – will not remain isolated, but will be further pursued in the next editions.

Another innovative aspect was the introduction of a panel dedicated to open data, open formats and open standards. While these topics have not been absent in the previous editions, the main focus has always been on the development and application of FLOS software and hardware solutions for Cultural Heritage. By specifically calling for papers dealing with the free sharing of data, we tried to go beyond software and technological development. Open and reusable data publishing platforms, available in open formats, and distributed with open licenses with no bias on the tools with which the data were created. The aim was to encourage and enhance the creation and publication of open archaeological archives, easily re-usable by the community.

This volume well represents the approach taken at the conference and the extensive participation it received. Eighteen high-level and peer-reviewed papers, well distributed in two thematic sections – application cases and development, and open data – contributed by more than forty Italian and foreign scholars, researchers and freelance archaeologists working in the field of Cultural Heritage. For an event organized at no cost, without funding or support of any kind, these are significant numbers, which reward us for the great organizational and editorial effort. The most important budget line was invested in releasing this book as open-access, using a CC BY license. We strongly believe that the conference proceedings must strictly follow the spirit of the event, and that the free distribution and sharing of the volume is a *conditio sine qua non* for its publication. This also marks a break with the past, when open-access was not always a prerequisite. It is worth noting, furthermore, that these proceedings are being published only one year after the conference. This is a decisive turnaround, which testifies to the strong will to revitalize the ArcheoFOSS community. Technology is evolving very fast, and it is not uncommon to read on fresh publications about outdated software and

workflows or scripts that have already disappeared, greatly reducing or nullifying the utility of the publication, if not (perhaps) for the academic careers of its authors.

Not strictly related to this book, but important to the ArcheoFOSS community, was the decision to accelerate the publication of the 2019 edition, which was neglected due to financial issues and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, it was decided to alternate ‘lighter’ versions of the conference, mostly focused on workshops and hands-on sessions, demos, etc. and more ‘traditional’ ones, based on paper presentations. This will hopefully facilitate the prompt publication of the proceedings and regain a closer relationship with younger and frequently more active researchers.

Looking to the future, we all hope for the end of the current pandemic emergency, but it is clear how much this crisis sped up many cultural processes already ongoing, by changing our lives, our way of researching, teaching, experiencing and communicating archaeology.

In the coming years, the financial resources earmarked to fund digital projects in the field of Cultural Heritage will be substantial (consider, for example, the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan). The challenge for our community is therefore to stand ready to proactively suggest solutions to govern and guide this change, rather than passively undergo it.

As editors, we would like to thank Wikimedia Italia and the Ministero della Cultura – Direzione Generale Educazione, ricerca e istituti culturali for financially supporting the publication of these Proceedings; the University of Pisa, which granted us the use of the infrastructure and support for the streaming of the three-day conference; the colleagues of the Organising Committee, who shared with us the organization of the conference; the scholars and researchers who supported us as reviewers in the evaluation process for the conference and for the publication. Last but not least, we thank the members of the outgoing and current Scientific Committee, whose experience and competence guarantee the scientific quality of ArcheoFOSS initiatives.

The Editors

Julian Bogdani
Riccardo Montalbano
Paolo Rosati