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The Archaeological Map for the Reconstruction of the Ancient Topography of the Greek and Roman City of Taormina

Lorenzo Campagna, Giuseppe Scardozzi

Abstract

TRearch is aimed at the production of a tool that could be useful both for the reconstruction of the ancient urban planning and its development during the Greek, Roman and Medieval ages, and for the management and preservation of the archaeological heritage of Taormina; in fact, the new archaeological map could be included in policies aimed at an urban development that respects the existing ancient remains and promotes their enhancement of value.

The paper concerns the research project started in 2009 and aimed at the production of the archaeological map of Tauromenion/Tauromenium, on which the modern Taormina lies. The project is carried out by the Department of Ancient and Modern Cultures of the University of Messina and the Institute for Archaeological and Monumental Heritage of the Italian National Research Council, with the cooperation of the Archaeological Superintendence of the Province of Messina and the Archaeological Park of Giardini Naxos.

The research project involves a context characterised by a long continuity of life during centuries and it is based on:

- 1) archaeological and topographical surveys using a differential GPS system and a total station;
- 2) systematic study and analysis of archival documentation, previous bibliographies and historical cartographies;
- 3) interpretation of aerial photos, in particular those taken between the years 1920s and 1940s, when some sectors of the ancient city and necropolises were not still covered by the extension of the modern town.

All the collected data were georeferenced in a digital archaeological map, where all the ancient monuments and structures, both still visible and those re-buried after small-scale excavations, are integrated on a up-to-date large-scale vector cartography. The map is integrated in a web-oriented GIS platform developed using open source software and cloud computing solutions; it is aimed at the data management and sharing between the different institutions involved in the project.

Therefore, the research is aimed at the production of a tool that could be useful both for the reconstruction of the ancient urban planning and its development during the Greek, Roman and Medieval ages, and for the management and preservation of the archaeological heritage of Taormina; in fact, the new archaeological map could be included in policies aimed at an urban development that respects the existing ancient remains and promotes their enhancement of value.

Keywords

Archaeological map; Taormina; Hellenistic and Roman urbanism; WebGIS; Preservation.

Full Text:

[PDF](#)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5463/lac.2014.28>

Refbacks

- There are currently no refbacks.



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LAC 2014 proceedings – ISBN 978-90-825296-0-9 – is an open access initiative supported by the University Library, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

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|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Title | Title of document | The Archaeological Map for the Reconstruction of the Ancient Topography of the Greek and Roman City of Taormina |
| 2. Creator | Author's name, affiliation, country | Lorenzo Campagna; University of Messina, Department of Ancient and Modern Cultures, Messina |
| 2. Creator | Author's name, affiliation, country | Giuseppe Scardozzi; National Research Council of Italy – Institute for Archaeological and Monumental Heritage, Lecce |
| 3. Subject | Discipline(s) | Archaeology |
| 3. Subject | Keyword(s) | Archaeological map; Taormina; Hellenistic and Roman urbanism; WebGIS; Preservation. |
| 4. Description | Abstract | <p>TResearch is aimed at the production of a tool that could be useful both for the reconstruction of the ancient urban planning and its development during the Greek, Roman and Medieval ages, and for the management and preservation of the archaeological heritage of Taormina; in fact, the new archaeological map could be included in policies aimed at an urban development that respects the existing ancient remains and promotes their enhancement of value.</p> <p>The paper concerns the research project started in 2009 and aimed at the production of the archaeological map of Tauromenion/Tauromenium, on which the modern Taormina lies. The project is carried out by the Department of Ancient and Modern Cultures of the University of Messina and the Institute for Archaeological and Monumental Heritage of the Italian National Research Council, with the cooperation of the Archaeological Superintendence of the Province of Messina and the Archaeological Park of Giardini Naxos.</p> <p>The research project involves a context characterised by a long continuity of life during centuries and it is based on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) archaeological and topographical surveys using a differential GPS system and a total station; 2) systematic study and analysis of archival documentation, previous bibliographies and historical cartographies; 3) interpretation of aerial photos, in particular those taken between the years 1920s and 1940s, when some sectors of the ancient city and necropolises were not still covered by the extension of the modern town. <p>All the collected data were georeferenced in a digital archaeological map, where all the ancient monuments and structures, both still visible and those re-buried after small-scale excavations, are integrated on a up-to-date large-scale vector cartography. The map is integrated in a web-oriented GIS platform developed using open source software and cloud computing solutions; it is aimed at the data management and sharing between the different institutions involved in the project.</p> <p>Therefore, the research is aimed at the production</p> |

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|-----|-------------|---|--|
| 5. | Publisher | Organizing agency, location | CLUE+ Research Institute for Culture, Cognition, History and Heritage |
| 6. | Contributor | Sponsor(s) | |
| 7. | Date | (YYYY-MM-DD) | 2016-10-31 |
| 8. | Type | Status & genre | Peer-reviewed Article |
| 8. | Type | Type | |
| 9. | Format | File format | PDF |
| 10. | Identifier | Uniform Resource Identifier | http://lac2014proceedings.nl/article/view/52 |
| 10. | Identifier | Digital Object Identifier (DOI) | http://dx.doi.org/10.5463/lac.2014.28 |
| 11. | Source | Title; vol., no. (year) | LAC 2014 proceedings; Multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research in Landscape Archaeology |
| 12. | Language | English=en | en |
| 13. | Relation | Supp. Files | |
| 14. | Coverage | Geo-spatial location, chronological period, research sample (gender, age, etc.) | Taormina, Sicily, Italy |
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