Oceans of Data

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Integrated Methodologies for Knowledge and Valorisation of the Roman Casinum City

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Abstract
This contribution focuses on the ruins of the Roman town of Casinum, in southern Lazio, Italy, of whose past remains a significant archaeological area. The Archaeological Complex, despite the interest in its monuments, still lacks a structured survey that analyses the area as a whole, integrating individual events and emergencies with the context. The methodological approach of this work will develop and deepen the analysis and the knowledge of some monuments through an integrated survey of the site, with the aim of enhancing a complex landscape between an urban and archaeological context.

Keywords: Casinum, Roman urbanism, roman classical architecture, amphitheatre, Roman theatre

Introduction

The focus of this article is the documentation, interpretation, valorisation and communication of the Roman city of Casinum, which was a thriving city, particularly near the end of the republic and later in the imperial era (Carettoni, 1940).

This archaeological area, despite the interest and the importance of its monuments, has been studied from a primarily archaeological point of view. The area still lacks records that analyse the individual findings and the environment through a structured survey, in order to exploit the site in its entirety. From the ancient urban layout emerges the remains of the Via Latina, the Amphitheatre, the Theatre and the mausoleum attributed to the Roman matron Quadratilla, part of ‘gens’ Ummidia. Recently there have been some very interesting discoveries related to parts of a Roman villa dating to the imperial period, which should stimulate a deeper, organised method of study for the town planning system.

Our research includes several integrated methodologies and a large staff. The main part involves a laser scanner survey of the whole area. There are many others steps involved, including digital processing of documentation, interpretation and communication of the Casinum Archaeological Area. Another objective of our work is to integrate the analytical data from the laser scanner survey of a complex monument with a more traditional and direct analysis performed through watercolour drawings in order to document the intangible aesthetics of the site (Cigola et al., 2016).

Cassino and Montecassino Abbey

Today, Cassino is a modern town between Rome and Naples. The city has been completely rebuilt after the destruction during the World War II, and it is quite famous for the Montecassino Abbey. Cassino is located just below the mountain where the Montecassino Abbey is situated. The history of the city of Cassino and the Benedictine monastery of Montecassino are very closely linked. The cities built environment appears to be historically characterised and consolidated up to the Second World War, when any traces of its past were lost.

The history of Cassino is still of importance, and dates back to ancient times. The first settlement of the site dates back to the sixth century BC, when first the Volsci and then the Samnites permanently established themselves in the Liri valley, building the first houses of Casinum (the ancient city). The Samnite centre was then occupied around 272 BC by the Romans who made it a castrum (fortified place) with a settlement of about 4,000 veterans. From Roman prefecture, Casinum became municipium and in the third century AD it was...
archaeological and architectural cultural heritage. Our objective should be not only to increase the data provided by survey and achieve a more complete and comprehensive monitoring even of the intangible aspects that are difficult to measure and record, but also to build up a folder of valid and complete data. An interactive cataloguing system, including the survey drawings and watercolour images of the archaeological site in Cassino, can become a continually updatable database, one which is valid for operators in this field as well as for those involved in the maintenance and enhancement of this area.

Conclusions

The use of digital detection and representation techniques for the documentation and study of archaeological sites and historic buildings, has increased significantly in recent years. After an initial test phase, a practice that is common among Superintendencies, a team of surveyors, archaeologists and scholars has been established, according to which digital technology can be an important means for optimising resources for the conservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage that are so widespread in our territory. From this point of view, the research, which is still in the preliminary phase, aims to analyse, produce knowledge and increase appreciation of Roman *Casinum* in its entirety and in detail, and for its findings to be contextualised in a complex landscape between the urban and archaeological area.

Casinum Archaeological Heritage includes tangible and intangible goods. Keeping this site in the present for the future is connected with actions such as Identification, Analysis, Preservation, and Restoration, with specific technical meaning. Each of these areas of intervention includes not only technical actions and expertise, but requires more cultural evaluations in the respect of the concept of Archaeological Heritage. In summary, Casinum Archaeological Area can be also understood as a complexity of activities through a very wide range of disciplines whose aim is to identify, evaluate, and preserve past achievements for the benefit of subsequent generations by preserving the memory of the past and inspiration from it for future enhancements and appreciation of current results.

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