



“EXPERIENCING THE CASTLE”.
INNOVATIVE MODELS OF FRUITION AND DISSEMINATION
APPLIED TO THE NORMAN CASTLE OF ACI CASTELLO
THROUGH SAMOTHRACE ECOSYSTEM

di

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The attending museums and/or heritage sites for seeking education or learning opportunities has been recently surpassed by a new form of experience, based on the idea that visiting is itself a form of cultural production¹. It has been already emphasized the crucial visitor's role in the museum visiting and this new approach brought to the concept of “Heritage Making”. Viewed in this sense, heritage assumed a new and significant meaning in terms of a more or less complex and articulated discourse that “frames a set of cultural practices that are concerned with utilizing the past for creating cultural meaning for the present”².

Recently, heritage-making started to be conceived as the main aim of museum or archaeological sites visiting, viewed as an embodied set of practices or performances in which visitors continually re-interpret cultural meanings, investing emotionally in the fruition of the past and negotiating identity and sense of place.

In the last two decades and, more prominently, after the pandemic COVID-19 diffusion, the idea that the discovery of the past can actively contribute to a better understanding of the present and to an enhanced awareness of the future, brought several institutions to adopt a new approach in the management of Cultural Heritage and museums in particular. “Past for future” is the slogan promoting the new exhibition asset of the Archaeological Museum of Taranto (MarTa); “The Myth with the Future all-around” forms the new visual identity of the Archaeological Parc of Herculaneum, which adopted the Hercules knot as metaphoric symbol of an ideal link between past and future, old and new city, tangible and intangible; The Prizzi Confer-

¹ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Smith, 2015, 19-34.

² Smith, 2006.

ence, organized in 2022 under the auspicious of the General Direction for Education, Research and Cultural Institutes of the Ministry of Culture, organized by the Rotta dei Fenici - Itinerario Culturale del Consiglio d'Europa, entitled "Percorsi culturali tra passato e futuro: un'Archeologia per tutti" ("Cultural routes between past and future: an archaeology for everybody").

The pandemic and, in particular, the lockdown, seems to have improved the perception of the crisis already started years ago at a global level, and to have encouraged a new idea of the past that is not simply part of our cultural "baggage", but more actively a means of rebirth and growth in terms of sustainable design and planning of a future within everyone's reach.

In July 2020 the European Council approved NGEU (Next Generation EU), known in Italy as Recovery Fund (or Plan) aimed to sustain Member States afflicted by the Pandemic. Italy joins the program in 2021 by approving the PNRR (Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza) which is articulated onto 6 missions, or thematic areas or Pillars, aimed to face specific sustainable and innovative challenges. The Mission 1, with a budget of 40,29 billion, conjugates "Digitalization, innovation, competitiveness, culture and Tourism", just focusing on improving Cultural Heritage and tourism through digital means. Main aim is enhancing heritage sites and improving accessibility and inclusivity of minor regions. Large sums of money flow to research institutions and public administrations through several call for proposals which encourage participatory models between public administrations, private companies and associations. The PNRR seems to provide an important new possibility of recovery and renovation, also allowing the formation of new job figures and competences.

In this context, the management of Cultural Heritage follows a new direction towards digitalization and innovation. Cultural Heritage innovation, according to the PNRR mission, is fundamentally aimed to a global accessibility of the information and to the creation of digital infrastructures useful to an open access to the knowledge. The final goal of this long process of renovation would be a more rapid development of the scientific research, on one hand, and large diffusion and dissemination of Cultural Heritage among common people.

Just in this perspective, archaeological sites and/or archaeological museums assume a significant role, for their fruition bears a substantial subjective component, in which the active role of the heritage can be re-negotiated in terms of meaning-making, messages vehiculation, meanings transmission, between the site itself, document of the past, and the visitor³.

³ Pappalardo, 2019, 241-252.

The way in which institutions responsible for the enhancement and communication of archaeological heritage, at the national, international, and community levels interpret *heritage-making* is documented by relatively recent studies⁴, which emphasize the complex nature of the act of visiting as a “commitment to remembering certain histories”⁵, according to the model of the three L theory (Learning and Lifelong Learning)⁶. Just in this scenario, museums become a sort of “facilitators of memorable experiences”⁷ more than simple service providers.

What briefly resumed forms the main goal of the TASK 3 (Spaces and Fruition) of the Pillar 6 (Cultural Heritage), Spoke 1 of the large PNRR SAMOTHRACE⁸.

The main goal of the TASK 3 is to define new strategies that can improve user involvement in realities such as museums and Cultural Heritage sites, thus promoting interactive and engaging experiences, first and foremost by encouraging visitors to actively participate, also offering the opportunity to create a deeper connection with Cultural Heritage.

TASK’s activities focused on the Norman Castle of Aci Castello (province of Catania), identified as “Living Lab” experimentation site, who’s responsible is the writer. The choice was dictated by the historical and monumental richness of the site, as well as the Castle’s role in cultural and identity terms.

In this perspective, the knowledge-base of the visitors, their expectations and prior experiences, as well as the skill and expertise of those who manage the offerings, assume an essential role in determining and co-creating the value of the “product” Museum⁹.

By applying the co-creative perspective to the Cultural Heritage visiting, the construction of an integrate system is fundamental, based on the active participation of all figures involved: visitors, Institutions, archaeologists and stakeholders, as conscious actors of the processes of interpretation and “making sense” of the past¹⁰. In other words, the historical and cultural values of

⁴ Dicks, 2000; Bagnall, 2003, 87-103; Macdonald, 2005, 119-136; Macdonald, 2009.

⁵ Macdonald, 2009.

⁶ Pappalardo, 2019, 241-252.

⁷ Ross et al, 2017, 37-47; Prentice & Andersen, 2007, 89-106.

⁸ The president of the SAMOTHRACE foundation is prof. Salvatore Baglio; the Spoke 1 leader is Prof. Salvatore Mirabella; the WP6 Cultural Heritage leader is prof. Anna Gueli; the Task 3 leader is prof. Filippo Stanco.

⁹ Prahald & Ramaswamy, 2004.

¹⁰ Minkiewicz et al, 2014, 30-59; Moscardo, 1996, 376-397.

Cultural Heritage, instead of Cultural Heritage itself, would be supposed to be the main resource and tool for conveying unforgettable experiences¹¹.

Eleonora Pappalardo

As part of the SAMOTHRACE ecosystem a research action about the creation and implementation of integrated systems to ensure the preservation and enjoyment of Cultural Heritage¹² was carried out, focusing on the Norman Castle of Aci Castello.

A preliminary overview of the actions to be carried out is essential, especially in the context of a project such as SAMOTHRACE, which aims to have an impact in economic and social terms, and which wants to propose long-term solutions. An in-depth knowledge of the case study is certainly a key element for the success of the actions to be undertaken, which is precisely why a preliminary requirements analysis is essential. This is an activity that finds its theorization in the Requirements Engineering¹³, a discipline that establishes the methods for defining and managing the requirements that a “product”, in the broadest sense, must possess, with the aim of identifying the relevant ones, documenting them according to specific standards, managing them in a systematic manner and achieving consensus among the stakeholders, correctly understanding their desires and needs.

The first aspect to be considered is contextual knowledge, which in the case study presented here means an in-depth understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the monument, which is at the heart of the enjoyment actions to be undertaken. In this case “*the Norman Castle is itself an ECOSYSTEM: a composite site in which naturalistic, historical and archaeological elements blend*” (E. Pappalardo). It was the fulcrum of the development of the Aci territory in the medieval period, the oldest part, built on a pre-existing Roman fortification known as “*Castrum Jacis*”. The historical vicissitudes have also influenced the architectural ones of the monument, which is configured as a rich palimpsest of chronological stratifications. Its archaeological and historical potential, and the multi-layered territory to which it belongs, make it possible to experiment with new protocols for the use of Cultural Heritage, to be understood as artefacts and the spaces that contain them. Since 1985, in fact, the Castle has also been home to a Civic Museum.

¹¹ Ross et al, 2017, 43.

¹² Research Project “*Creazione e implementazione di sistemi integrati per la realizzazione di installazioni che assicurino la preservazione e la fruizione dei beni culturali*” RTDa SAMOTHRACE Marianna Figuera, supervisor prof. Pietro Militello.

¹³ Pohl, 2010.

The other aspect to be considered when talking about enjoyment is that it refers to the main moment of communication between the archaeologist and/or art historian and the public, being the last step of the “conceptual chain research-preservation-valorization”¹⁴. This step translates into a series of actions aimed at the community, the social well-being and the personal enrichment of individuals. In this sense, it is essential to first takes into account the beneficiaries of the fruition tools, modelling all the actions to be undertaken on their demands and desires.

To communicate, moreover, the mandatory starting point must be the intention to narrate, i.e. not simply conveying specific notions, taking it for granted that comprehension is easy for all categories of audience, but creating storytelling. Comparison with stakeholders is in this sense fundamental to undertake successful communication. The requirements analysis involves a direct confrontation with these figures, to understand what the target audience is before planning an action that, as in this case, involves a fragmented reality of users. One must start by considering the different categories that constitute the non-specialist public, which differ according to age, level of education, origin, cultural affiliation, etc.¹⁵

A better way of analyzing the nature and importance of requirements is to use the so-called Kano model¹⁶, which looks at them from the user’s point of view and allows more requirements to be found than when focusing only on the requirements explicitly formulated by stakeholders. It classifies characteristics into five categories. (1) *Delighters* (or excitement factors, unconscious requirements) are features that users are not aware of, that is why they are called unconscious. If a delighter is absent, no one will complain, but when present, this can be a differentiating feature that attracts lots of users. (2) *Satisfiers* (or performance factors, conscious requirements) are something that the users explicitly ask for. (3) *Dissatisfiers* (or basic factors, subconscious requirements) are features that the users do not ask for. Here, however, the reason for not asking for it is that the feature is so obvious that they cannot imagine it not being part of the “product”; these features are tacitly considered as must-haves. (4) *Indifferent* (or I don’t care) are the requirements that most users simply don’t care about whether they are present or absent, their satisfaction remains neutral under either circumstance. (5) *Reject* (or I hate, reverse requirements) are the requirements that cause dissatisfaction when present and satisfaction when absent.

¹⁴ Manacorda, 2010, 139.

¹⁵ Visser Travagli, 2012, 35.

¹⁶ Verduyn, 2014.

In Aci Castello, a fruitful dialogue was established with them through specific meetings with political and institutional representatives and events such as “*Arte e Scienza*” (Aci Castello, 15-16 March 2024) which was an opportunity to engage with locals, cultural associations, school groups, tourists, etc. in order to better understand which characteristics of the fruition tools are taken for granted, which are unexpected and which requirements are explicitly requested. These occasions were fundamental to clarify some of the project’s strengths and to analyze the effectiveness of the solutions both from a communication point of view and in relation to the social context and the economic environment.

Obviously, focused actions concerning aspects such as preservation and use, must be modelled ad hoc on each individual case study, for which the peculiar aspects that characterize it must be highlighted and the weaknesses analyzed. In the case study of the Norman Castle, the weaknesses encountered concern various factors: (1) the complexity of the monument, whose historical vicissitudes have also influenced its architectural ones, and which is therefore configured as a palimpsest rich in chronological stratifications; (2) the complexity of reading the multi-layered stratification created not only by the aforementioned diachronic superimpositions, but also by the multiple activities of restoration, reuse, etc.; (3) difficulty of use due to practical problems intrinsic to the monument itself (difficulty of access, presence of architectural barriers); (4) difficulty in directing the visitor towards a historical-architectural context which, although unique in its territorial context, risks being perceived as a “minor site”; (5) absence of visitor support to improve the structural understanding of the monument and its enjoyment.

The challenge is to be able to turn some of these critical issues into strengths. A discriminating factor is the use of alternative methods of fruition that exploit the potential offered by multimedia tools. The latter, in fact, can convey even complex concepts in a captivating and intuitive manner for many types of users, including a middle-aged public that is now accustomed to constantly dealing with tools such as tablets and smartphones.

In the case of the Castle, the rich architectural palimpsest risks being obscured by the difficulty of comprehension by the non-specialist audience. In order to overcome the limitations of classic visitor aids, such as traditional panels, which in themselves are not particularly attractive, the use of “iconic-visual” tools¹⁷ that mainly involve sight becomes fundamental (e.g. 3D reconstructions and models, multimedia presentations, animations through virtual reality, holograms, interactive panels, etc.), capable of capturing the at-

¹⁷ Copeland, 2004, 138.

tention of the users in a totalitarian manner and allowing an integrated reading of the monument capable of filling the information gap of the architecture.

Digital tools then become indispensable for overcoming the difficulties of access to the Castle for some categories of users: in this case, it is necessary to rely on “indoor” communication. The latter makes use of closed spaces and a narrative approach that can consider chronological or thematic aspects¹⁸. In order to avoid losing the real perception of the complexity of the Castle and to be able to recreate the atmosphere linked to the experience of the on-site visit, solutions range from the realization of films, virtual tours, immersive visits, etc., to the choice of using “action” tools¹⁹ that encourage a dynamic and active enjoyment by the public, such as tactile visits, serious games, etc.

Regarding the Castle’s location, not far from other tourist attractions, it is necessary to succeed in including it in the “ordinary” tourist circuits, without letting it be crushed by the great competitors represented to the North by Taormina and to the South by Catania. This is possible by appealing to the characteristics that distinguish it and make its visit unique, and not the repetition of an experience already performed elsewhere. It is not enough merely to enhance its historical-architectural peculiarities, but to place it in a broader context that is the Aci territory, characterized by the presence of a complex settlement history with archaeological evidence ranging from prehistory to the 19th century. It is here that the construction of a narrative based on digital technologies which is also, why not, low cost, replicable and with dynamic contents for the interaction with the public. This kind of narrative must be constructed in an inclusive manner, making visits interactive and dynamic for any type of user.

Marianna Figuera

In the last years, museums are expanding their role and becoming more sensitive towards universal inclusion, increasing the relationship between the territory and its inhabitants while also considering sustainability. In recent years, museums have tried bringing people closer to Cultural Heritage by promoting innovative activities that use new technologies.

At the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM held in Prague in 2022, the definition of a museum was updated. According to the new definition, a museum is a permanent non-profit institution that serves society by research-

¹⁸ Figuera, 2022, 80.

¹⁹ Copeland, 2004, 138.

ing, collecting, conserving, interpreting, and exhibiting tangible and intangible heritage. Museums are open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, and they promote diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically and professionally while encouraging community participation. Museums offer various educational, entertaining, reflective, and knowledge-sharing experiences²⁰.

As new technologies increasingly influence daily life, this aspect is also reflected in the relationship between museum users and cultural content. Creating digital content not only increases the accessibility of Cultural Heritage but also represents the user's ideas, identity, and values. Today, interactive experiences aid in the understanding and disseminating knowledge, thanks to the recreation of exhibited objects combined with textual, vocal, and visual communication that guides the visitor along the way²¹.

Indeed, within Cultural Heritage, new technologies are revolutionizing the structures and processes for the dissemination of knowledge, especially after the pandemic, which helped accelerate the digitalization process that began more than 10 years ago²².

The use of digital technology not only enhances the appeal of museums but also raises visitors' expectations for an engaging and memorable experience²³.

In Italy the Italian Ministry of Culture (MiC) and the local government authorities manage more than 3.400 public space for Cultural Heritage, as museums, gallery and archives²⁴.

Studies conducted by Statista Research Department²⁵ in 2022 and 2023, were interested in studying the total number of visitors to museums and private and public institutions and organizations in Italy, managed by the MiC, focusing on the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused in terms of tourist presence and the adoption of new technologies within cultural spaces.

In 2022, restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19 were lifted. The study conducted during that year showed that the number of tourists visiting museums increased by 108 million, which is three times the attendance

²⁰ <https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-approves-a-new-museum-definition/>. Last visited May 2024.

²¹ Salvietti et al, 2023, 1-92.

²² Parry, 2013, 213.

²³ Salvietti et al, 2023, 89-91.

²⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1139246/number-of-museums-in-italy-by-type/>. Last visited May 2024.

²⁵ <https://www.statista.com/aboutus/our-research-commitment>. Last visited May 2024.

recorded during the pandemic. However, while this data indicates a gradual recovery, it still falls short of pre-pandemic levels. A March 2023 study found that QR codes and beacon devices were the most commonly adopted changes in Italian museums. Only 12% of museums offered augmented reality experiences, and just 1% used 4D elements. Furthermore, only 80% of museums had digitized their collections, and online ticket sales represented only 10% of total sales in one month²⁶.

Another study conducted by the EMA (European Museum Report), also in 2022, helps us to understand the situation of museums in 34 other countries²⁷.

The analysis indicates that only twelve countries have included technological innovations, digital output and research, digital exhibitions, virtual reality, digital databases, digital libraries, digital media, shared collection systems (CMS) within their museums, digital images, and digital reconstruction. In addition, the results show that some countries, such as Scandinavia, have nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels of visitors in 2022, whereas others, like the UK, are still recovering. After the pandemic, some selected countries faced other crises, such as the war in Ukraine, exponential energy price increases, and inflation²⁸.

Museums are now promoting digital activities that aim to change the perception of what museums are all about. Museums should no longer focus only on collecting, documenting, preserving, and exhibiting collections. Instead, they should reinterpret their collections in the context of learning societies and advancing digitization. This would ensure a more involved visitor experience and a better understanding and appreciation of Cultural Heritage²⁹.

Combining heritage digitization with a visual narrative can enhance the user experience. For over a decade, museums have popularized storytelling. The art of storytelling is based on the simple idea of conveying information through an engaging and exciting story that captivates and entertains the listeners³⁰.

²⁶ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1326970/most-popular-museum-technologies-italy/>. Last visited May 2024.

²⁷ The countries examined were Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

²⁸ European Museum Academy, 2022, 3-64.

²⁹ Olesen, 2016, 283-298; Buršić et al., 2023, 213.

³⁰ Vaglio, 2018, 27; Cajelli & Toniolo, 2018; Di Russo, 2018, 185; Bonacini & Marangon, 2020, 408.

Storytelling has many applications and can be used in various fields with different actors. In the cultural field, digital storytelling is commonly used in education, cultural mediation, and tourism. With the help of new means of communication and diffusion, it is now possible to reach a larger audience and eliminate distance and time constraints³¹.

In 2005, Kristopher J. Blom and Steffi Beckhau conducted research that highlighted the importance of using interactive storytelling and virtual reality in emotional storytelling. For a story's author, conveying emotions to the audience is the most challenging part, as it depends on the user's cultural background, origin, and emotional state at that moment.

The Mateas' Façade project³² demonstrates how Emotional Storytelling connected to the Interactive Storytelling System can guide the story and consequently the user's emotional journey³³.

In 2014, the Salinas Museum in Palermo, Sicily, became the first museum in the region to display its collection digitally. The museum was closed for renovation for four years, during which time some of the collection was digitized and made available online. This allowed visitors to learn about the museum's treasures without visiting the site. The museum's digital presence was mainly focused on educational activities, such as exhibitions, commercials, and virtual history, which were shared on various social media platforms. These efforts increased the museum's visibility and helped to create an active community that participated in multiple initiatives during and after the closure³⁴.

In 2020, research conducted by Bonacini and Marangon revealed the significant impact of storytelling on the community when applied in the #iziTRAVELSicilia Project. The Universities of Catania, Palermo, and Macerata collaborated to create educational workshops that involved students, tutors, and teachers in developing audio guides for the #iziTRAVELSicilia project. The results of the research were very positive, demonstrating that storytelling not only transmits knowledge but also increases the sense of belonging in young people, helps them understand the cultural identity and values of the community, and fosters a greater appreciation for them³⁵.

Another example is the one that has been applied since 2021 in the Zoology Museum of Rome, whose objective was to increase the experiential in-

³¹ Brouillard et al, 2015, 16-19; Maulini, 2019, 174; Bonacini & Marangon, *ivi*, 409.

³² Mateas, 2002.

³³ Blom & Beckhaus, 2005.

³⁴ Bonacini, 2016, 225-255.

³⁵ Bonacini & Marangon, 2020, 420-421.

volvement of visitors by promoting multimedia content such as visual storytelling and interactive iconography. In this project, an avatar named Mr. Arigoni deli Oddi was created, who interacts with visitors through gestural commands and guides them during the visit. Diagrams, sketches, images, objects, and interactive visualizations allow users to acquire and understand information quickly and effectively. Images are processed more easily by the human brain than text, and the multi-surface environments created within the museum help to engage physically and intellectually through a series of actions³⁶.

The project carried out in collaboration with the SAMOTHRACE ecosystem, TASK 3, aims to guarantee the enhancing, use, and accessibility of the Aci Castello Museum. The project also focuses on people with visual and motor disabilities. To enhance the visitor experience, storytelling, in combination with the concept of Embodiment, will be used. In this case, embodiment will be applied to cultural and archaeological tourism to activate cognitive and bodily phenomena that arise as a reaction to exposure to specific physical places. This transformation of physical places into active elements triggers a new perception of the same place. Furthermore, embodiment is based on the principle that the bodily component directly affects the origin of emotions and knowledge, activating empathic feelings in the visitor³⁷.

Conducting an in-depth study is crucial to effectively protecting and enhancing Cultural Heritage. Knowledge can realize the actual value of a cultural asset and help protect, improve, and make it accessible to all. This involves effective communication and capturing the audience’s interest to help them learn about unknown knowledge.

The process is long, and we are just at the beginning. The research focused on the archaeological collection, which consists of two rooms: an internal and an external exhibition. The internal exhibition room contains 233 objects dating from prehistoric to medieval periods, including intact vases, restored vases, fragments of vases, lithic, obsidian, and flint tools, and a bronze ring. On the other hand, the external exhibition room contains various objects, such as parts of anchors, fishing tools, cannonballs, amphoras, and more, which will be studied later.

The first step in studying the archaeological materials was to verify their provenance. From the documentation provided by the Superintendence for Cultural and Environmental Heritage of Catania, with Dr. Angela Merendino, and the Municipality of Aci Castello, it was found that much of the material was donated to the museum by local populations and not found in document-

³⁶ Salvietti et al, 2023, 81-92.

³⁷ Pappalardo & Vaccaro, 2022, 151-161.

ed excavations. Thus, an exact chronology for these objects could not be determined, and only an approximate discovery area is known for some cases.

Several phases were taken to implement the project. The first phase involved the creation of a digital archaeological card for each object in the museum, along with accurate photographic documentation. Each piece was also given an inventory number, and the digital card included the type of object, material, size, degree of conservation, and technical, morphological, and decorative characteristics. When possible, the provenance and range of chronology were also included. For some types of objects, a chronological range was determined through comparison analysis and the study of decoration and shape. After completing my work, I better understood the museum's strengths. Even without their primary contextual information and dating, archaeological materials are still crucial for comprehending the evolution of Sicily's Cultural Heritage.

These materials cover almost the entire history of Sicily, demonstrating the differences between cultures throughout time. Objects with similar functions are not merely different in body shape and decorations but were also made using distinct methods, processing and firing techniques, and with or without coverings. These aspects showcase each historical period's innovative and evolutionary techniques and the most prevalent customs and activities. The second step of my work involved creating a digital storytelling video.

Museums typically use information panels and captions to communicate cultural knowledge to visitors. However, these methods are often insufficient. As a result, museums are adopting new systems, such as Digital Storytelling, to enhance visitor engagement. Digital Storytelling is an interactive and captivating way to communicate with the public, especially the younger generation.

To create a Digital Storytelling within the Aci Castello museum that effectively communicate the museum's importance, we used previously studied and documented materials, selecting the most significant pieces. Subsequently, we realized a storytelling that narrates the museum's history and its importance to understand the Sicily history, highlighting its social, cultural, and technological evolution during the ancient age. To enhance the visitor experience, the museum plans to create faithful reproductions of the objects in the collection using 3D printing technology. Each reproduction will be connected to a QR code that will direct them to watch the digital story once scanned by a visitor's electronic device.

The museum aims to activate the visitor's senses of touch, hearing, and vision, encouraging them to engage with the objects and the digital story.

This will enhance visitors’ understanding and appreciation of the museum’s exhibits and trigger a sense of belonging within the museological context.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a reflection on the conception of Cultural Heritage and its management in the light of the impact of the pandemic which has placed at the center of the European agenda a rapid reconsideration of the role of culture and our past in the creation of territorial development, both in cultural, social, and economic terms. The way we relate to Cultural Heritage has changed, emphasizing the role of the past in the creation of a better present and the design of an inclusive and sustainable future. The focus is on the preliminary outline of the actions to be carried out for the preservation and use of the case study of the Norman Castle of Aci Castello, 'Living Lab' experimentation site of the MUR-PNRR Project SAMOTHRACE "SiciliAn MicronanOTech Research And Innovation Center" - Ecosistema dell'innovazione, Spoke 1 - University of Catania - Work Package 6 Cultural Heritage, Task 3. Specifically, highlighting its peculiar aspects, analyzing its weaknesses, and applying the Requirement Analysis principles: the challenge is to be able to turn some of these critical issues into strengths. A discriminating factor is the use of alternative methods of use that exploit the potential offered by multimedia tools. The objective is to ensure the enhancement, enjoyment, and accessibility of the Aci Castello Museum, with particular attention to persons with visual and motor disabilities. To enhance the visitor experience, storytelling will be used in combination with the concept of Embodiment.

Questo articolo presenta una riflessione sulla concezione del Patrimonio Culturale e sulla sua gestione alla luce dell'impatto del COVID-19 che ha posto al centro dell'agenda europea una rapida riconsiderazione del ruolo della cultura e del nostro passato nella creazione di uno sviluppo territoriale, sia in termini culturali che sociali ed economici. Il modo di rapportarsi al Patrimonio Culturale è cambiato, enfatizzando il ruolo del passato nella creazione di un presente migliore e nella progettazione di un futuro inclusivo e sostenibile. L'attenzione si concentra sulle azioni preliminari da realizzare per la conservazione e la fruizione del caso di studio del Castello Normanno di Aci Castello, sito di sperimentazione "Living Lab" del Progetto MUR-PNRR SAMOTHRACE "SiciliAn MicronanOTech Research And Innovation Center" - Ecosistema dell'innovazione, Spoke 1 - Università di Catania - Work Package 6 Cultural Heritage, Task 3. In particolare, evidenziandone gli aspetti peculiari, analizzandone i punti di debolezza e applicando i principi della Requirement Analysis: la sfida è riuscire a trasformare alcune di queste criticità in punti di forza. Un fattore discriminante è l'utilizzo di modalità di fruizione alternative che sfruttino le potenzialità offerte dagli strumenti multimediali. L'obiettivo è garantire la valorizzazione, la fruizione e l'accessibilità del Museo di Aci Castello, con particolare attenzione alle persone con disabilità visiva e motoria. Per migliorare l'esperienza del visitatore, verrà utilizzato lo storytelling in combinazione con il concetto di Embodiment.