

## **2006-2020, fourteen years of mine between the CHNT and all the rest**

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### **Introduction to some kind of a “diary”**

In 2006, when I began a stable activity as a university researcher at the former Faculty of Architecture in Florence (after the years of the PhD and various annual temporary contracts), I started looking around for more than just working in the Florentine pool. Some recent experiences in those years, like taking part to the organization of the Forum UNESCO in Florence in 2006, were telling me that it was worth to make a try in connecting to scholars from Northern Europe. At that moment a print on a table in the office of the PhD coordinator arrived in my hands, it was the call for the CHNT. The period, the subject, the program were too interesting to miss the participation and with Sergio Di Tondo, one of my assistants at that time, we organized the contribution and the travel. Most of all reading "informal farewell at the Byeronymous" was revelatory... "if they close the conference drinking beer, these people know how to live" and so we went on, curious about what it would be. It was a revelation, it was not easy at all and it was the perfect premise about the real value of being a scholar. The place, the people, the absence of distances between participants, the high level of debate, the passion and interest from many, all were making the occasion a pleasant surprise. In 2006 it was time to present the first results from our digital surveys from the Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, started in 2004, collecting all the skills gathered in the previous four years running around with the earlier 3D laser scanner units. We were prepared to present our results, maybe not to see Hans Taller getting up from the public during the questions/answers shouting at us, it was great, we spent time with him exchanging research stories in front of a beer many times since then.

### **Passion for research and its effects on life**

From that time no edition of the CHNT was missed from me. In 2006 the paper with S. Di Tondo, "An empowered stratigraphy representation using laserscan pointcloud" was, in the end, the result from a period when the digital survey was a subject heavily under development, the weight of a 3D Laser Scanner was almost insane in front of present ones, a pioneer period when even the terminology for these tools was yet evolving. Thus, from that first conference in Vienna, it was clear that survey subject with high complexity was a very interesting field for experimenting, while some exchange with archaeologists brought our attention to rupestrian architecture and in the following year, in 2007 a contribution with F. Piras and G. Guccini "The stone of the elephant, the survey of what was not surveyable" brought back to CHNT an experience on a rupestrian and very organic artefact. Thus the monumental, fascinating ruin showed out its prevailing rule in the following months and with the researches about the Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli were ongoing, in 2008 it was once again time to bring new results, with F. Fantini and S. Di Tondo, "Investigations on some Villa Adriana's vault systems using three-dimensional digital survey", in 2009 with M. Pucci and A. Blanco, The Small Baths in Hadrian's Villa – A ground test for enhancing the approach to the digital survey and reconstruction for archaeologists and architects. These last two presentations underlined the robust evolution of the 3D laser scanner systems and especially of their post-processing solutions. The more and more interesting feedback brought back from the CHNT, pushed toward thinking a more dynamic and structured way to organize the presentations, so in 2010, with G. Corsaro and the contribution "Cryptoporticus: a hidden system under the skin of the ancient town" (once again taking place in the Hadrian's Villa), the presentation itself was a way to present drawings, contents, concepts in a complete way. 2010 was also the year of my entrance in the Scientific Committee. An honour and a joy, properly celebrated in the social occasions of that same year. With this new condition, my interaction with the CHNT grow and I started chairing sessions and bringing more colleagues and collaborators to take part in the event. All of them turned to be very enthusiastic about the conference, coming back one year after the other appreciating the quality and the mood of the conference. In 2011, with S. Columbu, all the intuitions gathered about integrating 3D Laser Scanner with other kinds of data brought to the contribution "From the small elements to the urban scale: an investigation where the petrophysical study of materials and architectural shape analysis try to read a masterplan in the Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli (Rome, Italy)". In that same year a poster with G. Anzani, E. Fabrizi "Abu Simbel. A re-lecture after half a century" shared our solution in giving the sense to research otherwise impossible in the year of the so-called

“Arabic Spring”. In 2011 I took part to the very first “on the field” activity with Willem Beex and Benno Ridderhof, colleagues (and friends) from the Netherlands, a workshop based on the survey of the Theseus Temple in Vienna: a one day spot with a great time and productive results. So wrong, the following year saw the “sunset” of the Hadrian’s Villa research. It was once again the colleagues at the CHNT teaching me that research cannot go on without adequate resources and so the six years of sporadic but intense survey and collaborations in this monumental place reached their dead end. With this song end, a lot of new ones started, while a variety of different fronts became more relevant and challenging. The first results from these new research lines, based on rupestrian architectures (well supported by the previous experiences on the “Elephant Stone”) arrived at the CHNT in 2012 with the chairing of a specific session and a contribution with C. Crescenzi: “The CHRIMA project: Investigating the rupestrian architecture in the Mediterranean area” in the same year a poster With A. Pasquali and A. Mancuso, “The “Theseus Tempel” in Wien. Digital results one year after the CHNT 16 measurement seminar” wone the CHNT poster award with our great satisfaction. 2012 was also the year for a very intense special session: “Poster – Earthquake in Emilia (Italy) 2012”, well supported by my assistants of that time with a great poster that still today is on a wall in our Department Photographic Laboratory. With the “rupestrian things” going on, in 2013 it was time for a contribution focusing on valuable subjects, so with M. Andaloro and Tatiana Pignatale we brought to the attention of the conference “The Church of Meryem Ana in Göreme, Cappadocia, correct documentation for a meaningful heritage at risk” and in the same year, with M. Pucci, “SfM digital survey and modelling for the Museum of the sculptures of the basilica of St. Silvestro, catacombs of Priscilla in Rome” was one more confirmation of how stable was the presence of photogrammetry in our workflows. 2014 was the right moment to present large research brought on with S. Columbu in Sardinia: The church of St. Saturnino in Cagliari, Sardinia, reading the levels of history through the use of digital survey and the petrophysical study of materials was a sample from the 17 churches surveyed in Sardinia during the 2012 and 2013 using both 3D Laser Scanner and photogrammetry. In 2015 “Reading the project and “reverse design”: an architectural approach to digital reconstruction” was one of the rare “solo” contributions I have ever presented at the CHNT conference, my preference for working in teams and appreciating suggestions and even the challenge of any possible little mess has always found a great companion in the occasion of the CHNT conferences, an event excellent for sharing experiences, not to take part alone. So in the large group of people that were moving from Italy to Vienna each year in November, that year there was also a classic result from another teamwork, with M. Pucci, M. Mariottini: “The St. Donato Cathedral in Arezzo, digital reconstruction of a completely lost architecture”. In those years the intervention on large and extremely ruined architectures was quite common, so in 2016, with M. Carrara, S. Lami “Destroyed Places and Ancient Wars. Digital Tools for the Montecastrese Fortress” was our proposal for the session about digital reconstruction together with a poster with A. Mancuso and A. Pasquali, “The Tower of Torrenostra in Torreblanca – Spain: studies and documentation for a landscape archaeology reconstruction” an extract from the large Toviva project brought on with Pablo Rodriguez-Navarro since 2015. 2017 saw the start of a robust collaboration with y colleagues from the Construction Science disciplines, so together with an unusually large group composed by G. Cerri, G. Pirazzoli, M. Tanganelli, T. Rotunno, S. Viti, the contribution entitled “Role of the New Technologies on the Artifacts Seismic Vulnerability: The Case of the Bartolomeo Ammannati’s “Fontana di Sala Grande”, National Museum of Bargello Court” was the occasion to show how the digital survey solution and in general a fully digital approach was capable to contribute to the safeguard of Cultural Heritage. But the real only in that year was a too much narrow dress to me, so in the same conference there were other two works, a presentation with B. Guastini: “Virtual Museum as a New Reality: The Case of the “Paper Architectures” Rebuild” and a poster with A. Frascari and S. Giraudeau: “The Halicarnassus Mausoleum, a Digital Rereading. Step 1: The Statues at the British Museum”. Sooner or later we will start the step 2... I may promise, but I am not that sure... In 2018 with the twenty years of CHNT maybe I exaggerated a little... Two presentations, one with Y. Ricci and Andrea Pasquali: “A Petrified Petrifying Eyesight: A Story for the Medusa’s Heads from Istanbul, Turkey” and one with S. Bertocci and M. Şevketoğlu: “Graffiti Photogrammetry, Extracting the Signs from the Walls of the Kyrenia Castle” and two posters, one with S. Bertocci, Alessandro Camiz, Zeynep Ceylanli, M. Şevketoğlu: “The Kyrenia Castle, an Approach to Digital Documentation in the Cyprus Island” and one with M. Tanganelli and R. Paolucci: “Great Statues and Seismic Vulnerability – A Photogrammetric Approach for Early Safeguard”. 2018 was even the year in which I started a very nice work with Willem Beex, the survey of a large maquette representing Maastricht hosted in Lille, France, but the beginning of 2019, with the very sad death of Willem left me without a friend and a precious colleague. But that work was brought to the end for the best and in November

2019, with G. Soeters, it was time to present the contribution “Maastricht, the city, the maquette and the collection at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille” in the special session entitled in memory of Willem Beex. It was the main focus on that year, but having the spirit of a juggler is something that I can’t escape, so there was also a poster with R. Paolucci and M. Tanganelli: “A multimedia approach for the digitalization and the protection of great statues”. Obviously, at the moment of the writing, it is too soon for talking about the present CHNT25. In this year, the main subject “Artificial Intelligence”, combined with Archaeology or Architecture may be a tricky subject, so I am really curious about the final results, even in this very complicated, online, dark and difficult 2020, the options for great debates and self-progress are extremely well promising.

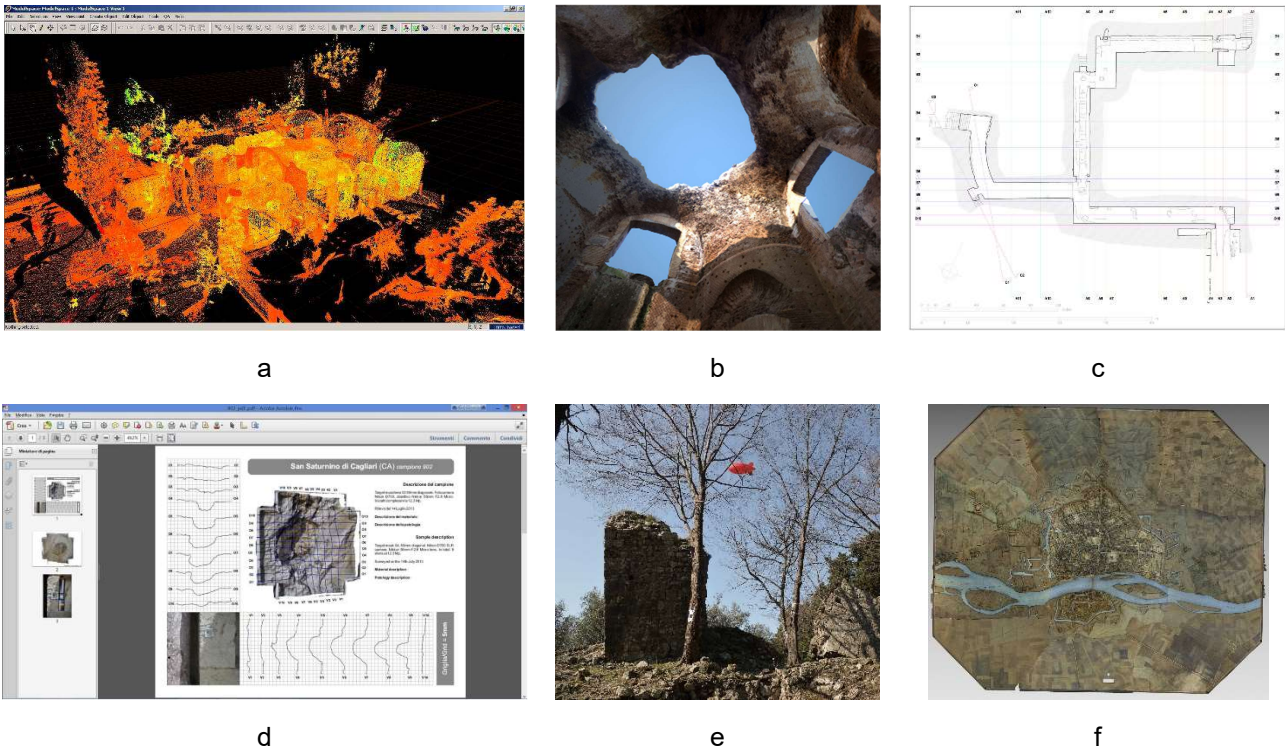


Fig. 1. Just a short mosaic of images listed in this researches and CHNT “diary”: a) the great bath at the Hadrian’s Villa, 2004 b) the small baths at the Hadrian’s Villa, 2009 c) the Cryptoporticus at the Hadrian’s Villa d) Photogrammetry of stone samples on the Romanesque churches in Sardinia e) Aerial photogrammetry of the Montecastrese fortress in Camaiore, Tuscany f) Digital model of the Maastricht maquette from the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille (France).

### Last words (for now)

Once a collaborator of mine write a joke about me and our group saying that one of our common tasks was “surveying something even if the Superintendency, the owner, the PhD course director and the subject itself don’t want you to do it”, in these years with the CHNT as a recurrent event, I have often thought about this joke, while it happened to stay in this rule while “something interesting” was well suitable for a contribution to this conference was seen around. And at any time, for sure, the feedback, debate, talking and comparing different experiences even the simple chatting about a survey mission in its “social” implications, all of this has given back so much to make any effort and messy situations worthy to bring the results here in front of the other colleagues and friends. In 25 years the CHNT is never been one of the many conferences made for rising some funds, promoting someone on the podium, or were only a few people can talk and present their ideas, but a place where everyone brings proposals and researches and is asked to share and debate, where people most of the time are amazed by the venue and by the mood they get back. A perfect place for a scholar at the start to understand that research is a value and for an aged scholar to find back the spirit that moved him one time. 25 years are gone and for sure other 25 would be all worthy to continue.

### References



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