

Publication

Timeo interretem et dona ferentem. On ARACHNE and the Potential and Limits of Publishing Archaeological Catalogues Online

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Catalogues are one of the most important types or aspects of publications in archaeological research. Although often more sophisticated regarding typology, methodology and contents, most publications of archaeological material still tend to adhere to the technical layout shaped in scientific catalogues of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This neglects the possibilities provided by technological developments of the last decades, especially by the evolution of online publishing. The object-oriented database ARACHNE shows what is and what might be possible by publishing archaeological catalogues online. There are few restrictions regarding the publication's extent, illustrations, availability or further use – and a variety of possible enhancements such as interactivity, contextualisation and digital methods of analysis. Publishing archaeological material in web environments clearly oers many advantages over the traditional publication in print. However, the latter is still absolutely predominant in archaeological work – but are there any substantial reasons for that? Showing examples of catalogues published by the Rome department of the DAI, this paper demonstrates that online publications are nothing to be afraid of. In fact, archaeologists should appreciate and make use of the gifts oered by the internet.

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