"HUMANITIES, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY"

Management of cultural heritage in the digital age

Our times are undoubtedly those of *blue*, as Luciano Floridi puts it so appropriately. He means that these are the times of the triumph of digital. To fully inhabit the present, it is therefore necessary to continue making a radical reckoning all the way to its destination, as suggested by this PhD course, by means of the phenomenon of digitalization – the hallmark of our age.

To achieve this, we must *first* investigate the *impact* digital has on our lives, how it has transformed them, and how it is still doing so. We can then also investigate the *opportunities* presented by digital, as well as the *risks* or *dangers* to which it inevitably exposes us.

That said, focusing specifically on the opportunities offered by digital, they include the enablement of a new method of cultural heritage management.

The new technical tools at our disposal provide us first and foremost with the option to reproduce and digitally catalog works of art and historical/artistic heritage. Improved *conservation* of our cultural heritage is therefore possible; at the same time, they also make it *quicker* and *easier to access* these assets, or *share* them with all interested parties.

In addition, these tools are also configured as an excellent resource with a view to all the work to disseminate and raise public awareness of local heritage.

Last but not least, and even more so, some of the most recent technical tools at our disposal also enable improved *study* of historical/artistic heritage. They give us the opportunity to conduct sophisticated and complex analyses to provide us with a greater and more profound understanding of our works of art, of their history, and of the complex process of 'composition' undergone to create them.

A panoply of opportunities is opened up by digital, despite there being no lack of risks: the digitalization of cultural heritage must indeed be configured as *positive assistance* in cataloging, study and human research. However, it is essential never to lapse into *abuse*, which eliminates the inventiveness and originality that are a prerequisite for everyone who works in the cultural field, none of whom can delegate this task to any technological tool.

With this direction in mind, the Diocese of Pavia is offering PhD students the opportunity to grasp all these challenges, by providing access to the best of their historical and artistic heritage for their research. More specifically, the students will therefore be able to:

1) *originate* new forms of sorting, digital cataloging and raising awareness of the more than 1070 parchments conserved at the Diocesan Historical Archive, running from the 9th to the 14th centuries;

2) sort, digitally catalog and raise awareness of materials relating to the history of Pavia Cathedral (from the medieval protobasilicas to the 20th century, via the major contributions made by Leonardo da Vinci and Bramante). Students can draw on all the documents archived at the Cathedral Chapter, Vestry Board and Sacristy.

In both cases, PhD students will be offered access to documents of the utmost historical and artistic value, which have been optimally conserved and have never been studied or subject to research. They will therefore be able to conduct entirely *original* research, to enable the candidates to come into contact with a large amount of remarkably rare material of considerable artistic quality.

To conclude, the Diocese is also offering PhD students the opportunity to share their research findings, in particular by digitally cataloging their work as part of the Beweb/CEI.Ar. project, a national initiative launched by the Italian Episcopal Conference aimed at describing, sorting and creating an online inventory of the Church's historical archives.