

ICA projects in the eastern Mediterranean

Italian Archaeology in Egypt and MENA Countries

The Central Institute for Archaeology (ICA) recently established as part of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities (MiBAC) has the aim of supporting and coordinating archaeology in its broadest definition, providing standards, guidelines, publishing opportunities and geographical digital platforms to encourage the open archaeological data sharing and dissemination. One of the targets of its mission is to promote, at international level, the role of Italian archaeology organizing, both in Italy and abroad, lessons, conferences, debates, presentations, workshops and temporary expositions (figure 1).

ICA is currently coordinating three archaeological projects in the eastern Mediterranean with the aim of developing and testing, through a synergic work, standard systems related to survey methods and archaeological documentation.

At the Roman-byzantine site of Elaiussa Sebaste (modern Ayaş, Akdeniz Bölgesi, southern Turkey) ICA is working on the development and implementation of a GIS able to manage the wide-ranging and heterogeneous amount of data collected in more than twenty years of research by the Italian archaeological mission of "Sapienza" University of Rome; through a theoretical debate and on field day-by-day testing, the team is selecting the minimum and essential information that should be recorded even by other archaeological missions interested in joining on line interoperable digital platforms (figure 2).

Similar support is provided for the newborn Archaeological Multidisciplinary Project at Maasser el-Shouf - Qalaat el-Hoson (University of Naples Suor Orsola Benincasa, Lebanese University and Directorate General of Antiquities of Lebanon), aimed at the study of human occupation, from the Bronze Age to the Ottoman period on the southern mountains of Lebanon, serving as a link between the Beqaa valley and the Mediterranean coast. During the first campaign, photogrammetric surveys have been carried out by using a drone for the 3D representation and specifically designed applications in an archaeological and territorial context. Surveys and surface cleaning of structures have been undertaken in order to define the occupational phases and the site functions, along with the systematic collection and analysis of materials. First aid conservation treatment of the findings has been performed. Preliminary analysis of a monumental building, rock-cut tombs and materials suggests that the period of most intense occupation corresponds, until now, to the Roman period (1st century BC - 2nd cent. AD) (figure 3).

On the basis of the agreement signed with SAIA (Italian School of Archaeology at Athens) in 2017, ICA is also providing technical support to the recognition of archaeological documentation in order to produce standards and guidelines to be applied on the excavations directed by SAIA in Greece. This work will be functional in the elaboration of a protection and fruition program for Greek sites as requested by Greek's authorities (figure 4).



Figure 1/ Central Institute for Archaeology (ICA). Mission.

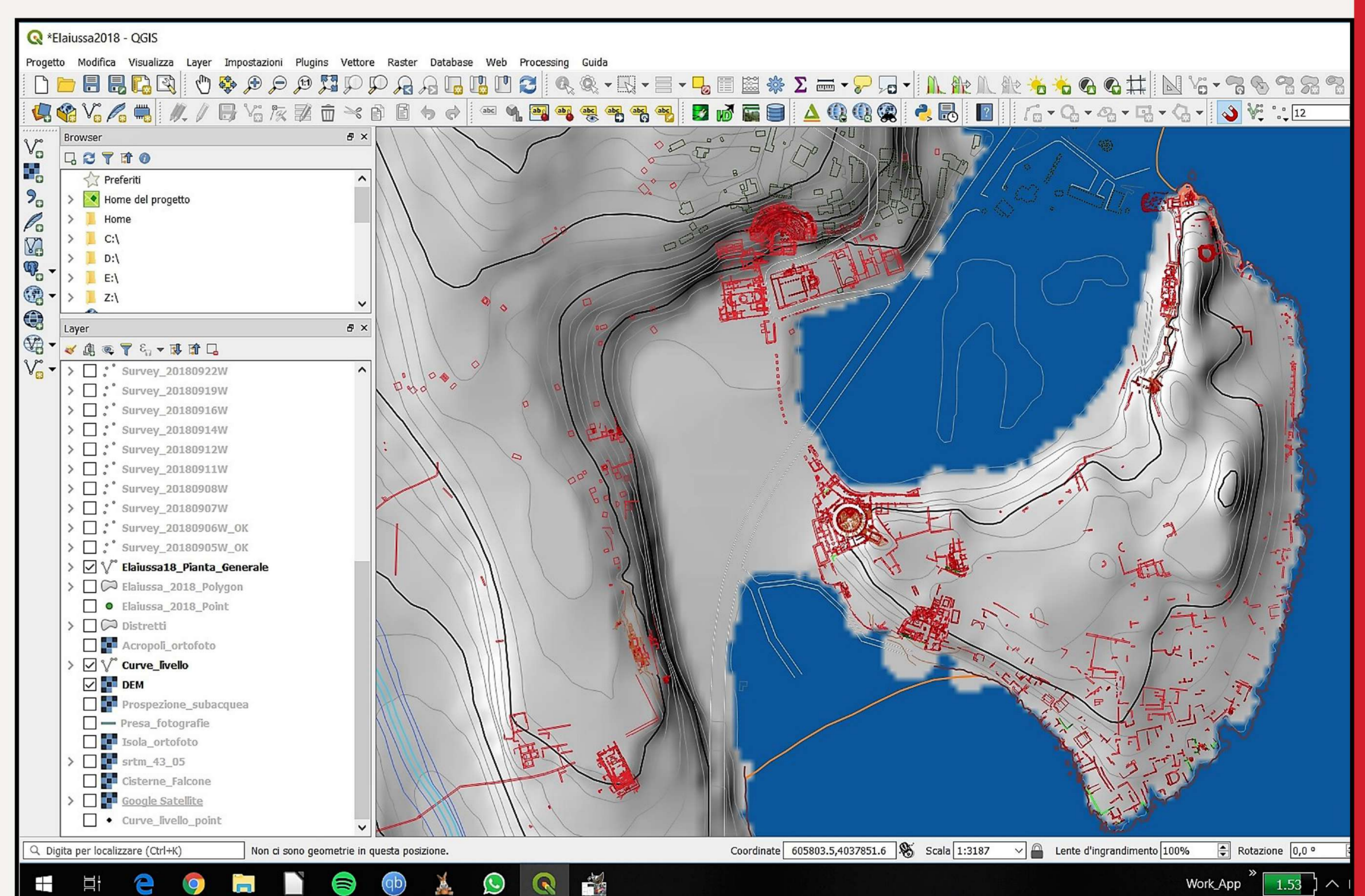


Figure 2/ Elaiussa Sebaste (Turkey). Digital Elevation Model of the site.



Figure 3/ Qalaat el Hoson (Lebanon). Photogrammetric restitution of the survived territory.



Figure 4/ Gortina (Greece). In the foreground the Odeion, in the background the hill of the Acropolis.

Part of the ICA team and supported excavations



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