

Carolina Frías

Roman Villa of l'Albir
Open Air Museum, Spain
cfrias@alfas.com

Daniel Tejerina

University of Alicante, Spain
daniel.tejerina@ua.es

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VRA360 Project: Immersive Technology Applications for Heritage Interpretation and Tourism Management at an Archaeological Site

The VRA360 Project, developed by the Roman Villa of l'Albir Open Air Museum and the University of Alicante, is based on an innovative understanding of the museum as an active agent in the socialisation of heritage and the dissemination of non-hegemonic narratives. Furthermore, it considers that the use of digital tools allows us to transcend the traditional one-way content transmission model, reimagining the museum as an interactive learning space where not only data, but also values, are conveyed.

This presentation analyses the three immersive tools developed at the museum over the past ten years: an augmented reality guide, a 360° short film, and a virtual reality app. These resources are not conceived as mere entertainment, but as educational tools that complement the visit to archaeological remains that, without interpretive support, are difficult for the general public to understand.

Ultimately, the VRA360 Project represents a model for how immersive technologies can transform the interpretation and tourism management of an archaeological site. By combining technological innovation, academic rigour, and social sensitivity, this initiative demonstrates that it is possible to renew how heritage is presented to the public-making it more accessible, inclusive, and participatory. The three initiatives implemented at the museum-the applications for the baths and the cella vinaria, and the 360° short film-not only enrich the visitor experience but also open new avenues for exploring the tourism potential of ICTs. Based on this experience, new lines of research and practice are emerging, which will continue to explore the vast potential of immersive technologies in contributing to the enhancement and democratisation of heritage knowledge in contemporary societies.

Carolina Frías holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Alicante and Master's Degree in Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage from the University of Valencia. Since 2008, co-director of the excavation and museum development project of the Roman villa of l'Albir (Alicante, Spain), an ongoing initiative. Since 2011, serving as director of the Roman Villa of l'Albir Open Air Museum and as Municipal Heritage Technician at the City Council of l'Alfàs del Pi. Responsibilities include co-directing archaeological excavations at the Roman villa of l'Albir, organising exhibitions and public outreach activities, and coordinating excavation projects and the enhancement of cultural heritage assets. Author of several monographs and scientific articles on Roman settlement in the province of Alicante, as well as on the management and tourism valorisation of cultural heritage. Lecturer in the Master's Degree in Professional Archaeology and Heritage Management and in the Master's Degree in Virtual Heritage at the University of Alicante. Since 2019, a member of the Board of Trustees of the MARQ Foundation (Valencian Community Foundation – Archaeological Museum of Alicante).

Daniel Tejerina is an archaeologist specialised in digital technologies applied to Cultural Heritage. Since 2012, he has served as Co-Director of the Master's Program in Virtual Heritage at the University of Alicante, where he works as a researcher and lecturer on subjects including 3D modelling (Blender), real-time engines (Unreal Engine), and digital photogrammetry. His research focuses on the reliability of virtual reconstructions in the context of cultural heritage. He is particularly interested in the implementation of frameworks that promote transparent, traceable, and academically robust digital methodologies for the documentation and visualisation of archaeological and architectural remains. These frameworks provide a structured approach to managing the interpretative processes that underpin virtual heritage projects.

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