

Culturgame.it presents AquaMANN

A new video game for the National Archaeological Museum of Naples

Maria Oddo & Napolitano Elisa & Caterina Serena Martucci & Angela Rita Vocciante & Annamaria Di Noia, Serena Venditto & Ludovico Solima | Italy

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The Culturgame.it industrial research project uses an experimental approach to study applied games for the enhancement of cultural heritage and scientific dissemination. (On the use of games in museums, see, among others: Barekyan and Peter 2023; Ósović and Ramić Brkić 2020; DaCosta and Kinsell 2023.) The common thread of the video and *phygital* games developed during the project is water, a crucial resource in the history of human societies and a vital part of ecosystems. Three demonstration sites were chosen, each with an on-site solution designed to be used in the museum, and an off-site solution for remote use.

- At the Museum of the University of Sassari, the focus is on the microscopic world of phytoplankton;
- At the Darwin Dohrn Museum of Naples, games focus on marine fossils and the underwater sound ecosystem;
- At the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, the game solution focuses on various roles of water in history, e.g. for communications, as a source of subsistence, and as bodily refreshment.

This presentation goes into some detail about the mobile video game developed for and with the National Archaeological Museum of Naples.

Video games & MANN

The MANN (*Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli*) is a promotion and production pioneer of applied games for the advancement of historical-archaeological heritage. Among the best-known and most studied initiatives in this area is the *Father and Son* video game, with surprising results in terms of downloads, popularity and the average age of users (Solima 2018, Solima 2020). As well as producing a sequel, *Father and Son 2*, the museum recently experimented with traditional analogue games, creating a 3D-printed chess set with pieces inspired by masterpieces in the museum collections. Games in all forms are, for the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, effective tools for creating engagement and reaching new audiences (see Mills 2022 on the search for new audiences).

AquaMANN

The AquaMANN video game is promoted by the National Archaeological Museum of Naples and created in collaboration with Protom as part of the CulturGame project.

The game aims to raise awareness among younger audiences about knowledge, respect, and, therefore, conscious use of water. It is a journey through the ancient world, exemplified by museum artefacts.

The basic idea is to show how water is one of the elements underlying the birth of civilizations, not only as a fundamental source of life but also in its centuries-long role in navigation routes, trade, communications and contact among peoples, as well as its social and religious functions.

The game consists of five scenarios, each corresponding to a historical period and collection: Pre-history and Protohistory, Ancient Egypt, pre-Roman Italy, Pompeii and Rome. In each off-site game scenario, players must complete different routes, doing them in the shortest possible time and collecting the most *hydríai*, Greek-world water vases.

Players using the on-site version are asked to attentively observe the chosen works, get to know them better and exercise their analytical skills and, above all, their curiosity.

The game is suitable for children from eight to thirteen years old.

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