Call for Papers – International Conference

From the Romanesque Monument to the Digital Medium: Knowledge Production, Cross-Border Mediation, and Heritage Reconfigurations

Scientific Rationale

For the past three decades (Deloche, 2001), the development of digital technologies has profoundly transformed research practices, mediation processes, and heritage-making in the fields of art history and archaeology, as well as the institutional and communicational frameworks of cultural heritage (Baujard & Houdy, 2013). The digitization of corpora, enriched iconographic databases, 3D reconstructions of lost or altered buildings, immersive devices, virtual tour platforms, and interactive and transmedia narratives have durably reshaped modes of access to artworks, monuments, and scholarly knowledge (Andreacola, 2014). These transformations—widely analyzed in museology and information and communication sciences—take on particular significance in the field of Romanesque art, whose buildings are often geographically isolated, weakly mediated, and marginalized within traditional cultural circuits.

Alongside these evolving practices, digital museums have emerged, whether autonomous, hybrid, or affiliated with existing museum institutions or tourism structures (Schmitt & Meyer-Chemenska, 2015). However, despite their technical sophistication and increasing visibility—accentuated in particular by the post-Covid context and by policy-driven calls for innovation and funding mechanisms—digital museums continue to suffer from fragile and ambivalent institutional, scientific, and heritage recognition

(Appiotti & Sandri, 2017). Are they museums in their own right, mediation devices, enriched visual archives, or transitional forms of heritage-making? This uncertainty of status calls into question classical definitions of the museum, legal and professional frameworks, and the analytical categories mobilized by the humanities and social sciences.

Within this context, the conference aims to analyze digital devices devoted to Romanesque art as fully-fledged socio-technical and communicational objects, belonging to what information and communication sciences define as computerized media (Tardy & Jeanneret, 2007), carrying narratives, symbolic values, and interpretative choices. The goal is to examine the promises, limits, and stakes of these devices, both in terms of the production of scholarly knowledge and its mediation to audiences, by crossing perspectives from art history, archaeology, museology, and information and communication sciences.

This reflection is also part of a broader epistemological inquiry into the very notion of "Romanesque art." Coined at the beginning of the 19th century by Charles de Gerville in a context marked by the emergence of art history and medieval archaeology as scientific disciplines, the term designates a set of architectural and artistic productions characterized notably by the use of the semicircular arch, the barrel vault, and a claimed lineage with Roman techniques. However, major art historians such as Henri Focillon and Georges Duby have shown how the unity of Romanesque art is partly the result of a historiographical construction that is both operative and reductive. This reassessment invites a renewed examination of the current scientific relevance of this category, in light of the regional, technical, and functional diversity of Romanesque buildings, as well as the new digital tools capable of renewing analysis, comparison, and interpretation of forms.

It is within this perspective that the cross-border ROMTUR program (Interreg POCTEFA) is situated—*Digital innovation to enhance little-known Romanesque heritage and stimulate tourism development in less dynamic areas*. Bringing together France, Spain, and Andorra, this project aims to promote a shared Romanesque heritage on the scale of historical Catalonia. By mobilizing digital technologies, the program seeks to make visible a heritage that is both geographically isolated and marginalised in media representation, while renewing forms of scholarly knowledge, cultural mediation, and heritage storytelling.

The conference, organized at the University of Perpignan Via Domitia from 8 to 10 June 2026, proposes to examine the current state of research on Romanesque art in the age of contemporary digital technologies. It will analyze how digital devices contribute to the redefinition of scholarly knowledge, the construction of new heritage narratives, and the broadening of audiences, while questioning issues of legitimacy, standardization, and institutional recognition of digital museums. By bringing together art history, archaeology, and information and communication sciences, this conference seeks to contribute to a critical reflection on contemporary transformations in the heritage-making of Romanesque art.

Reference Links for the ROMTUR Project

POCTEFA ROMTUR Programme – CRESEM

Thematic Tracks

Track 1 – Digital Technologies, Building Archaeology, and the Renewal of Scientific Approaches to Romanesque Art

This track explores the contributions of digital technologies to the renewal of fundamental research on Romanesque art, particularly in the field of building archaeology and architectural analysis. Papers may address the use of surveying, analysis, and visualization tools—such as photogrammetry, 3D scanning, digital modeling, or geographic information systems—applied to architecture, sculpture, or painted decoration.

Particular attention will be paid to methodological and epistemological issues related to the production, management, and use of digital data: reliability of surveys, articulation between quantitative data and qualitative interpretation, renewal of chronological and construction hypotheses, as well as issues of sharing, preservation, and reuse of digital corpora. Proposals are invited to critically examine the role of these tools in processes of scientific interpretation, between knowledge enhancement, new regimes of evidence, and analytical limitations.

Track 2 – Digital Museums: Museality, Institutional Recognition, and Critical Issues

This track proposes to examine digital museums in light of classical and contemporary definitions of the museum, processes of musealization, and forms of exhibition writing specific to digital environments. Papers may analyze digital museums as hybrid cultural and communicational devices, at the intersection of exhibition, archive, and media.

Special attention will be given to issues of institutional and scientific recognition and legitimation: the ambiguous status of digital museums, legal and professional frameworks, authority discourses, and evaluation criteria. Contributions may also address sustainability issues—environmental, technological, and cultural—by questioning the durability of digital devices, digital heritage memory, and the tensions between innovation, obsolescence, and heritage responsibility.

Track 3 – Digital Mediation, Audiences, and Territorial Development: Uses, Experiences, and Cultural Tourism

This track proposes to analyze digital mediation devices for Romanesque heritage through the lens of audience uses, experiences, and modes of reception. Papers may focus on digital heritage narratives, mediation devices (mobile applications, interactive itineraries, augmented or virtual reality, online platforms), and territorial development strategies, examining their articulation with contemporary forms of cultural tourism.

Particular attention will be paid to visitor practices and experiences—whether on-site, hybrid, or remote—as well as issues of accessibility, inclusion, participation, and co-construction of knowledge. Proposals may also examine the effects of these devices on representations of heritage, modes of cultural appropriation, and territorial dynamics, at the intersection of scientific mediation, tourism attractiveness, and cultural democratization.

Target Audience

The conference is intended for lecturers and researchers, doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, and Master's students in art history, archaeology, and information and communication sciences, as well as professionals working in heritage, cultural mediation, and digital technologies applied to cultural assets.

Indicative Bibliography

(Bibliography remains unchanged; titles are cited in their original language.)

[Full bibliography as in the original document]

Organization

Paper proposals should be sent by email to:
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Organizing Committee

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Submission Guidelines

Paper proposals (maximum 1,000 words) must include:

- the title of the paper;
- the research question and objectives;
- the theoretical framework;
- the methodology and/or corpus studied;
- the main scholarly contributions.

They must be accompanied by:

- 5 to 7 keywords;
- a biographical note of 100 to 150 words.

Accepted languages: French, English, Catalan, Spanish.

Keywords (indicative list):
Romanesque art; digital museums; heritage; digital mediation; architecture and building archaeology; cultural tourism.

Timeline

Submission deadline: **30 March 2026**
Notification of acceptance: **17 April 2026**
Conference: **8–10 June 2026 – University of Perpignan Via Domitia**