

# Codice Pelavicino: between Digital Edition and Public History

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The Codice Pelavicino is a medieval manuscript (XIII century) stored in the Archivio Capitolare Lunense (Sarzana). It is composed of 426 pages and contains copies of documents from the 900 (year of the diploma of Berengario king of Italy in favour of the Bishop of Luni) to the 1289. The Codice Pelavicino Digitale Project was born in 2014 as part of an initiative of Enrica Salvatori, long time member of a research group for the critical edition of the Codice Pelavicino and now scientific manager of the project and head of a large *équipe* composed by members coming from very different disciplines and environments. Nevertheless it was eventually possible to create a productive collaboration between everyone involved in the project at any level, overcoming any methodological or conceptual problem raised during different phases. Thanks to the software EVT, developed in the University of Pisa by a team led by Roberto Rosselli Del Turco and distributed with open source licence, it was possible to offer to the Archivio Capitolare Lunense – where the manuscript is stored – and to the Accademia Capellini of La Spezia a digital edition that allows the study of the manuscript without the need of a physical consultation and on the other hand shows all the features -enhanced- of a traditional critical print edition. Choosing an open source tool for the Codice Pelavicino was rather an ideological choice, because the ultimate purpose of the project was to make this manuscript - very important for the local history - accessible to everyone.

In the first phase of the project a selection of the texts from the manuscript has been encoded in the TEI format. The aim was to mark up not only the structure and the information of the *regesto* for each document, but also to create a series of lists (in particular: names of people, names of places, notary's *signa*) to connect with the respective occurrences inside the texts, so that we can find the information any time it appears. This feature has meant a significant change in the architecture of EVT but it was very relevant in order to give an important support in the research feature. Other aspects of EVT have been changed, more or less considerably depending on the feature, in order to fit the needs of the manuscript; however this has allowed the group to dispose of a very specific and efficient tool for the Codice Pelavicino.

The proposed paper wants to highlight the characteristics of the edition and the major problems that were faced, together with the process that led to the choice of a digital product to an

environment - Academies, ecclesiastical Archives e local historians-, traditionally reluctant to these kind of innovations. After a cautious acceptance of the suggested solution, today the two institutes, to which it has to be added the culture centre "Niccolò V" of Sarzana, are enthusiastic proponents of the project. A contribution to the shifting came from both the objective conditions - too high cost and time required for a traditional edition-, and the progressive approach of the local historians to the digital world. In general, the whole enterprise was conceived as involving many different aspects regarding also the exploration and interaction with the content, rather than a mere digitalisation of a book. Due to the huge amount of material produced by the deep study of the manuscript, the interaction with the users community is seen as very important to improve the features provided (or in some cases also suggest corrections to the content). In fact, in order to promote this progressive and conscious approach it was chosen to publish online a partial and open edition, so that every researcher can collaborate and improve the product.

The site has been built and designed precisely to transform a specialized edition in a project of public history, where participation and interaction of the public is welcome and encouraged. Our choice, in the end, was to offer an edition which is at the same time a tool for sharing and involving the local cultural environment, mostly interested in the content of the code.

For the future the team is working on improving the search feature, making every document accessible also using the original publication date. There also other elements that have been partially ignored in this first phase, left for future study: the most interesting in our opinion are the names of places, that it might be interesting to connect with urban settlement still present nowadays, and the notary signs, relevant for some experts. Handle these contents would necessarily involve new kind of professionals into the group, which is totally in line with the spirit of collaboration between disciplines that has led to the product we are presenting here.

## References

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