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E-review

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E-Review

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The CMA e-review evaluates electronic resources, websites, digital archives, blogs, mailing groups, and multimedia relevant to our discipline. For this themed issue of CMAS we have examined several electronic resources in the field of archaeology and education. All the reviews were written by Sjoerd van der Linde, with the exception of the *Foundation of the Hellenic World*, which was written by Kostas Kasvikis.

HEREDUC — Heritage Education

Available through <http://www.hereduc.net/>

The HEREDUC website is part of the *HERitage EDUCation* project, an initiative developed in several European countries and funded through the Socrates programme of the European Commission. The project aims to create new educational methods, strategies, and suggestions for lessons based on heritage, and it has developed a guidebook for teachers¹ which can be downloaded as a PDF from the website. This guidebook concentrates on how teachers might integrate heritage education in primary as well as secondary teaching. The website and the guidebook are used together in training courses run by HEREDUC at several European locations.

Both the teacher guidebook and the website contain a wealth of information on practical heritage approaches and useful case studies. But whilst the publication is legible and accessible, this is unfortunately less true for the website. The basic structure of the website contains background information and contact details on the HEREDUC project, and seems to function mostly as a platform for downloading the teachers' handbook. Unfortunately, downloading the publication was not possible without login passwords, whilst information on how to obtain these not readily available on the website. In addition, the country specific areas (which include Flanders, Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands) of the website do not cover the full information of the teachers handbook in digital format, but rather support the book by providing heritage approaches, resources, and links to educational operators and institutions in the country. Again, a wealth of useful information can hereby be found for external visitors to the website, but it is rather unfortunate that the more structured contents of the heritage handbook are not easily available.

The country specific pages of the website differ substantially in the structure and quantities of information provided, and are probably most useful with supervision of HEREDUC professionals on how to access specific resources during the training courses. Many of these pages contain useful information, but it is all too easy to lose track within this part of the website; broken links and empty pages are unfortunately a common issue, and external links do not open in separate windows.

On a similar note, the translation function of the website does not always work properly, so that one is often referred to the wrong parts of the website.

In short, the HEREDUC website is definitely worth visiting for the vast amount of interesting information that can be found for those willing to spend some time searching, as for the useful contact details and links available. Considering the quality and quantity of the work developed by HEREDUC, its website deserves to be made more accessible.

Note

¹ Veerle De Troyer, Jans Vermeersch, et al 2005 *Heritage in the classroom. A Practical Manual for Teachers*, reviewed in this issue by Sarah Dhanjal.

Sharma Centre for Heritage Education

Available through <http://www.sharmaheritage.com/>

The Sharma Centre for Heritage Education is a non-profit educational trust in India which conducts activities in the field of archaeological research, cultural resource management, and education. The trust does a wonderful job in involving local communities in India's cultural heritage and its preservation, in particular by providing educational resources, workshops, and outreach activities for children and teachers from underprivileged backgrounds. Most of this is done through their children's museum located in Chennai, which is currently being renewed as the Kolam Children's Museum. Although the website itself is fairly simple, containing mostly background information and contact details, it is very much worth a visit in order to keep track, or support, this important initiative.

Texas Beyond History¹

Available through <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net>

Texas Beyond History is a public education service provided by the University of Texas at Austin with fourteen partner organizations. It does an excellent job of promoting the archaeology of Texas itself but it also provides a mass of resources for teaching about the past and the techniques of archaeology — from lesson plans to period information, all easily downloadable as PDF and with useful information on how to integrate these plans meaningfully within the curriculum. The well-designed 'Kids Only?' section of the website is both fun and informative. It contains interactive games, fact sheets, information on writing research papers, interesting links, and much more. A great resource for teachers, children and heritage professionals alike.

Note

¹ Compiled in collaboration with Mike Corbishley.

Foundation of the Hellenic World

(Reviewed by Kostas Kasvikis, Dept of Primary Education, University of Western Macedonia)

Available through <http://www.fhw.gr/fhw/>

The Foundation of the Hellenic World (FHW) is a privately funded, not-for-profit cultural institution that aims to preserve and disseminate knowledge about Hellenic history, culture, and tradition. It also aims to contribute to a broader appreciation of the universal dimension of Hellenism and its culture through time. Amongst many scientific and communication initiatives it has taken in order to achieve its aims, it has created the ‘Hellenic Cosmos’, the cultural centre of the Foundation of the Hellenic World, located in Athens.

Part of the Foundation’s work is presented at the building of ‘Hellenic Cosmos’, while another part is accessible through its website, which is available in Greek and English and includes a fair description of its scientific activity. This is the most informative and important area in terms of democratizing knowledge to the wider public, and is divided into several sections.

The section on ‘Historical Projects’ run by FWH itself provide public access to historic sites and information on Greek history and culture in a diachronic perspective¹ but also about the Olympic Games.² At the ‘Hellenic Cosmos’ section a detailed presentation of the FHW’s educational policy and activities is available. These include, amongst others, the *Tholos* (the Foundation’s new dome-shaped Virtual Reality ‘Theatre’ for presenting its digital collections — unfortunately not available on the website), a detailed presentation of the Foundation’s *digital projects* (most of them with an archaeological content, including virtual tours at Ancient Miletus, Olympia, Messene, and the Agora of Athens), as well as *educational programmes* and *exhibitions* at the Culture Centre. Educational programmes such as ‘Representation of an excavation’ and ‘Interactive travelling at the ancient Agora’ look promising, dealing with a wide range of themes that focus on Greek and world cultural heritage as well as on the scientific character of archaeology, but detailed information on these programmes is unfortunately not available online. Important is the section of the website that presents the different departments of FHW, as it allows an appreciation of the foundation’s scientific activities which include academic research, data management, and research into the visual representation of the past via internet, multimedia, films, documentaries, and 3-D reconstructions.

Another interesting section is ‘Sites for children’, which provides links to websites produced by the Foundation’s research teams specifically aimed at children. Apart from informative links such as ‘Education for children’, ‘Summer in the city’ and the amusing ‘IMEakia’, there are two outstanding web-linked informative multimedia applications available, ‘Polemon’ and ‘Theodoros’.³ These aim to inform young visitors about the history of the Roman Empire during the first to second centuries AD through the biography of Antonious Polemon the Sophist, and about tenth-century Byzantium through the life of a Byzantine monk and his journey around Greece and Asia Minor. Both multimedia applications outline aspects of politics, society, economy, religion, and topography and apply narratives, historical references, glossaries, timelines, games, and other informative links. Finally, the section ‘Asia Minor’ reveals links to websites (which are only available in Greek) that deal with the research and documentation of the diachronic Greek presence in the area, including a useful range of literature and multimedia resources on Greek topography,⁴ the genealogical history of Greek peoples of Asia Minor origin,⁵ along with free access to the first volume of the Encyclopaedia of Asia Minor.⁶

The website of the Foundation of the Hellenic World succeeds in providing information on both Greek history as well as on its activities, and is well designed and highly accessible for a wide range of different target groups. Its educational products, although not always fully accessible online, will undoubtedly be useful for visitors to understand and interpret several aspects of the Greek past by means of both textual resources and material culture. However, (over-)emphasizing the Hellenic World ('Greekness') and its subsequent connotations (reinforced by the institution's impressive digital applications), could possibly create to its visitors — students and teachers included — a sense of Greek cultural hegemony where the Greek past is the pinnacle of a hierarchy of cultures, thus eliminating, or at least diminishing, the phenomenon of interrelation between different cultures in the past.

Contact

The e-review section of CMAS is a work in progress. We very much welcome comments and assistance by our readers to increase its scope and effectiveness, as well as suggestions for electronic resources (with or without written reviews) for consideration in future E-reviews.

Notes

¹ Available through <http://www.e-history.gr/> and <http://www.hellenichistory.gr/>

² Available through <http://olympics.fhw.gr/>

³ Available through <http://polemon.fhw.gr/> and <http://theodoros.fhw.gr/>

⁴ Available through <http://www.mikra-asia.gr/>

⁵ Available through <http://www.fhw.gr/depts/genealogy/>

⁶ Available through <http://asiaminor.ehw.gr/forms/fmain.aspx>

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