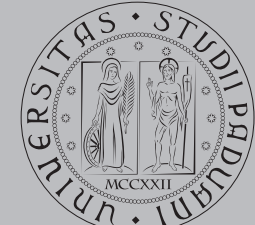




# Knowledge and conservation of ancient floors through the virtual restoration of the contexts

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF TESS WEB PORTAL

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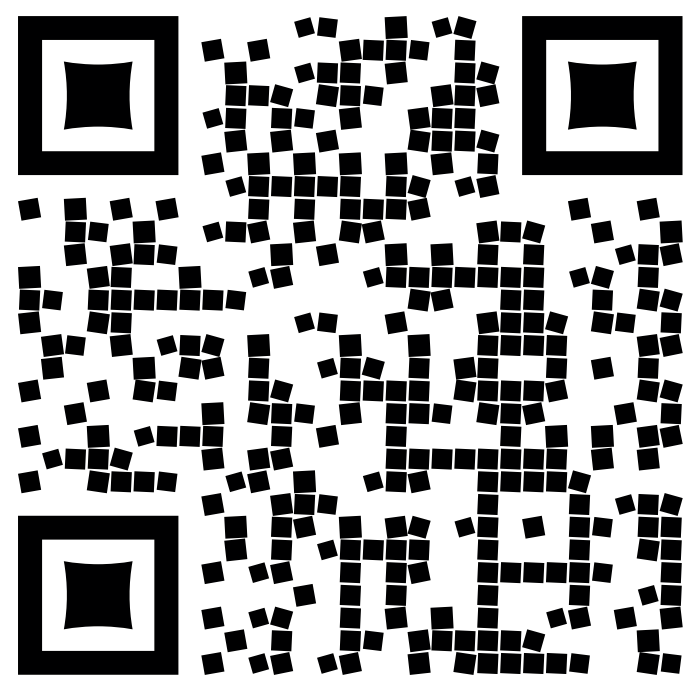
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DEGLI STUDI  
DI PADOVA



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The web portal “TESS - Sistema per la catalogazione informatizzata dei pavimenti antichi” (created and directed by University of Padua - Department of Cultural Heritage) has been available online since June 2016. The main aim of this project is to provide a tool of knowledge, protection and enhancement carried out not only to insiders (cultural heritage Institutions, scholars), but also to a wider public. TESS, in fact, offers the opportunity to study ancient floors (4th c. BC - 6th c. AC) of the Italian Peninsula with an integrated approach that takes into account a multiplicity of data sources (e.g. archaeological context, technical and decorative features etc.).

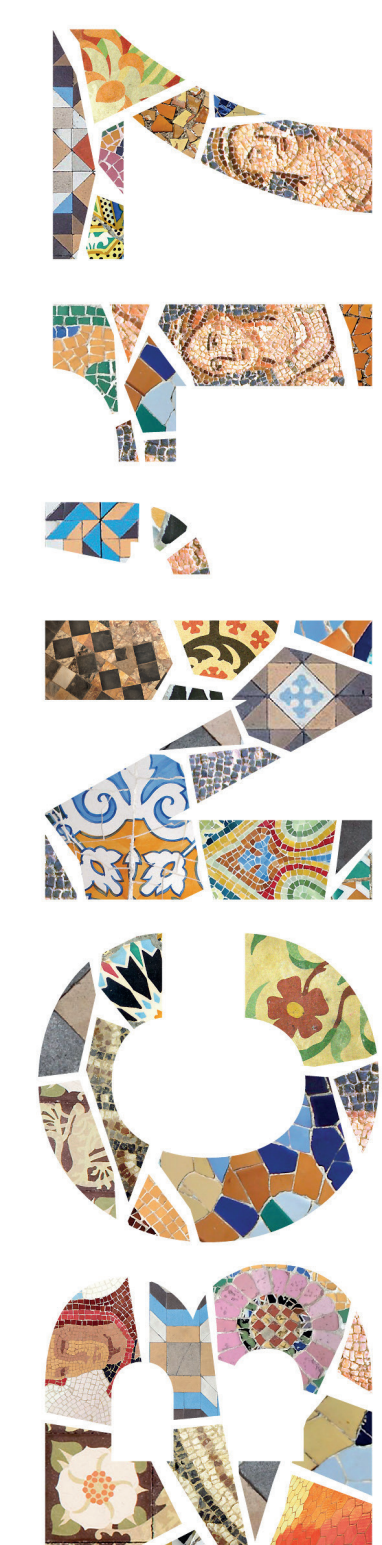
The web portal gives the possibility to perform simple or complex researches: the results, geo-referenced on Google Maps, are extracted from a database that collects about 16,000 forms, one for each floor and each one linked to its geographical and archaeological context (room, building). More generally the database, whose entries are also provided with information about conservation and restoration, offers to the experts in various disciplines a powerful tool for a “virtual restoration of the contexts”, reconsidering together settlements and floors, particularly those brought to light during old excavations and “re-contextualized” in the database.



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## “READING” THE MOSAICS: INFORMATION ABOUT CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

The web portal contains, where possible, all the information related in various way to the protection of the pavements, such as storage location and conditions, availability, etc. Special attention is also given in identifying modern and ancient restorations. These latter ones, in particular, allow significantly to increase the research opportunities in the study of the ancient floors and it is for this reason that they received the highest attention as regards both their archaeological investigation and their conservation (see, in this box, the emblematic case of the mosaic from Verona, Piazzetta Pescheria).



## “BRINGING HOME” THE MOSAICS: A VIRTUAL RESTORATION OF THE CONTEXTS

The critical analysis and homogenization of data are preliminary and essential activities to the implementation of TESS archive. This is a very demanding operation, which however is absolutely necessary to eliminate or reduce problems related to the interpretation and identification of ancient pavements, in such a way as to return them to the correct classification. Moreover, the relational structure of the database gives us the opportunity to put each floor in its own archaeological context: this is very important especially for the off-site pavements (such as those preserved in museums and collections or described in archival sources), because we were able to reconstruct very large and articulated “sets” of mosaics, more comprehensible in their diachronic development.