

Ancient Egypt Research Associates: developing a GIS for the « Lost City of the Pyramids »

Camilla Mazzucato

(PLATES LXX-LXXVIII)

Nel 2005, il gruppo AERA GIS iniziò lo sviluppo di un GIS per integrare, analizzare e gestire la grande quantità di dati raccolti nella « Città perduta delle piramidi ». Il gruppo AERA GIS sta attualmente digitalizzando i dati di scavo del passato, integrandoli con quelli ottenuti con il telerilevamento e gli studi specialistici, al fine di mettere a disposizione dei membri del gruppo internazionale AERA elementi precisi e facilmente accessibili, di fornire loro un supporto e contribuire a svelare la complessità archeologica della piana di Giza.

Since 2005, the AERA GIS team has been engaged in the challenging and exciting task of joining the international and interdisciplinary team of archaeologists and specialists involved in the recording and interpretation of the evidence of past human activity on the Giza Plateau. The main aim of the GIS team during these past three years has been the implementation of a GIS capable of supporting and improving the many years of AERA's research at Giza (pl. LXX, fig. 1).

Geographical Information Systems have been defined by the American National Centre of Geographic Information and Analysis as « information systems supporting geographical data »; they are database management systems designed for the acquisition, manipulation, visualization, management, modelling, and display of spatially referenced data.¹

The GIS systems characteristically describe the world using ATTRIBUTE RECORDS (what it is present) and LOCATION RECORDS (where it is).

With their ability of being an integrated technology, Geographical Information Systems provide archaeological research with a tool that can be extremely useful for recording, storing and managing spatial information (RECORDING the EVIDENCE) but can be as well of great help in displaying and highlighting spatial patterns and in improving the understanding of ancient landscape and past human activity (ANALYSING the EVIDENCE: pl. LXX, tab. 1).

Over the past seasons, a great deal of effort has been put forth by the GIS team towards the development of a system able to routinely use this technology to:

1. M. ALDENDERFER - H.D.G. MASCHNER, *Anthropology, Space and Geographic Information Systems*, Oxford 1996, p. 4; C. RUGGLES, *Abstract Data Structure for GIS applications in archaeology*, in G. LOCK - J. MOFFETT (eds), *Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology*, 1991: CAA 91, « BAR » 577, Oxford 1992, p. 108.