

# DELIVERABLE

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## Inscription-themed teaser video and documentary

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**Authors:**

Luca Giberti (QED)  
Silvia Orlandi (Uniroma1)  
Raffaella Santucci (Uniroma1)

**Reviewers:**

Alessandra Giovenco (BSR)  
Claudio Prandoni (Promoter)

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## Revision History

Revision	Date	Author	Organisation	Description
V0.1	15/01/2015	Luca Giberti	QED	First draft – structure of the document and philosophy of work
V0.2	12/02/2015	Luca Giberti Silvia Orlandi	QED UNIROMA1	Second version, including approved storyboard and assorted revisions
V0.3	05/03/2015	Silvia Orlandi Raffaella Santucci	UNIROMA1	Third version
V1.0	30/03/2015	Luca Giberti	QED	Fourth version - with link to video incorporating partner feedback given during plenary meeting in Cyprus
V1.1	08/04/2015	Luca Giberti	QED	Added reviewers' notes and a brief description of shots. Other minor tweaks were made

### Statement of originality:

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides a short overview of the production of the EAGLE promo video, which was conceived mainly for the Internet. The video can be watched on the EAGLE website at <http://www.eagle-network.eu/about/eagle-promo-video/>.

This deliverable might be updated at a later phase of the Project, according to the Project's needs.

## STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

This document comprises four chapters.

Chapter 1 is a short introduction, providing a brief overview of the philosophy with which the video and the overall strategy for mass communication were conceived.

Chapter 2 details the key steps in the production of the video.

Chapter 3 provides the link to watch the video.

Chapter 4 sums up the conclusions and the outlook for the inscription-themed documentary.

## **1 INTRODUCTION: AIMS, TARGET AUDIENCE, DESIGN & COMMUNICATION PHILOSOPHY**

Since the time when we were writing the EAGLE EC Project proposal, the video promo was conceived as a means to prime the interest of a larger audience, made up of non-specialist Web users. The way EAGLE has been structured since its inception means that other research activities carried out within this project are being disseminated through more appropriate, 'traditional' academic channels, such as published papers, conference proceedings, printed brochures.

The last 10 years have marked a gradual but seemingly unstoppable shift in user preference towards sharing video over other types of content, which makes video the ideal means of dissemination for viral diffusion over the Web. More specifically, we had envisioned that the main vehicle through which EAGLE could reach mass audiences, and thus attract them to the EAGLE Portal and its collections, would be the Flagship App for recognising inscriptions. Hence, the decision was made from the very start to make the App the focus of the EAGLE promo. This also meant that the main target audience segment for the video would be comprised of computer- and smartphone-literate tourists.

Given today's overcrowded Internet scene, which is characterised by very short attention spans on the user's part, we aimed to make something impactful, so as to attract people's attention. To this end, the director sought several ways to build drama in the story being told. However, at the same time, we also wanted to preserve the main spirit of the project, i.e. to be an exhaustive and authoritative resource of specialist knowledge, but also to make this knowledge accessible and available to everyone.

## 2 DEVSING AND PRODUCING THE EAGLE PROMO

The director and producer, Luca Giberti, had written the script for the promo whilst contributing to the EAGLE project proposal. Said script was refined as EAGLE progressed. Although the DOW explicitly calls from the start for the use of animation, the possibility was investigated to actually shoot the script with actors: several European locations were considered and different expenditure/shooting scenarios were thus drafted. However, it soon became apparent that hand-drawn animation was the best choice, for several reasons:

- first of all, because cartoons are a universal visual language, appreciated and/or understood by a very large demographic;
- secondly, because hand-drawn animation stands out and look 'precious' in the overcrowded panorama of Internet video;
- thirdly, unlike in films, budget constraints in cartoons do not translate directly into hard limits on the fantasy of the creator;
- fourthly, the degree of stylisation afforded by cartoons allows the director to tell with a lot of irony even the most dramatic stories;
- fifthly, cartoons also have the added bonus of allowing one to tweak the mood of scenes even after the edit is complete; this is an important advantage in a project with such a large consortium, and it proved indeed very useful in this case as well.

These considerations serve to illustrate the complex and sometimes delicate interplay of creative, productive, communication, and 'diplomatic' issues at play when making a video for an EC project.

Having elected to make the promo in cartoon rather than in filmed form, the production contacted a small but high-profile animation studio, renowned in Italy for its well-regarded work on several TV commercials.

The director and chief animator then went through a phase of brainstorming and concept sketching, which in turn fed several script rewrites, made in order to exploit to the fullest the evocative power of animation. Thus the original script, which revolved around a generic funerary inscription, was changed to reflect the much more dramatic and compelling story behind the main inscription on the Arch of Septimius Severus in Rome. It soon became apparent that, by carefully choosing the shots, the whole arc of the subsequent (or of the preceding) history of Ancient Rome could be evoked – an even bolder concept which makes the video a more ambitious, but also riskier, proposition. This storytelling strategy was also conducive to featuring a lot of visual detail, which would not just make the video more interesting, but also prompt online viewers to play the promo again and again, multiple times. Insofar as possible, only original sources from Ancient Rome, such as frescoes, mosaics, vases, were used as a visual reference for the drawings.



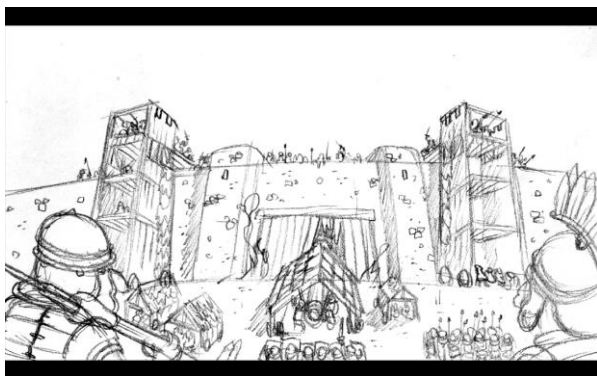
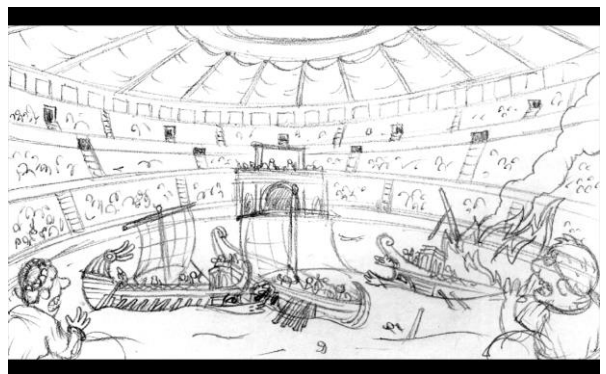
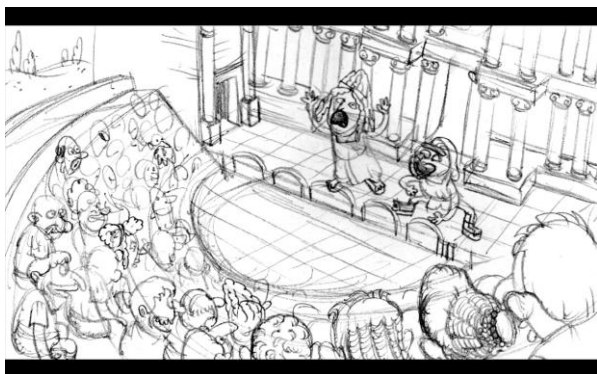
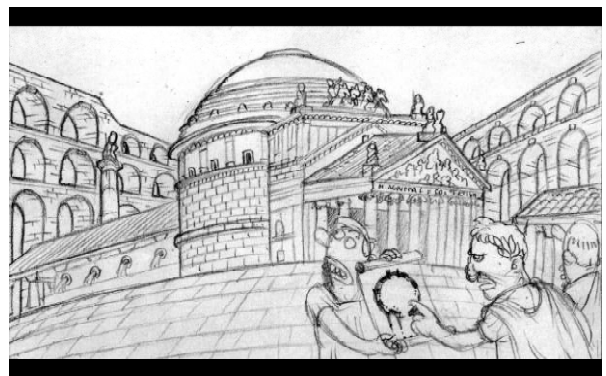


Figure 1: some of the concept sketches



In the meantime, the production also contacted a film score composer, a foley artist, and a sound designer.

The director then also started to work on the music with the composer, recording a temp score. Several versions of the videoboard and of the storyboard were produced, tweaking in turn the music or the drawings. A final version of the storyboard and videoboard was produced and submitted to the Project Coordinator for approval. The shot list for the part devoted to Rome is as follows:

- 1 Portrait of Septimius Severus and his army, including the Legio Parthica.
- 2 Portrait of Septimius Severus with his wife Julia Domna and sons Caracalla and Geta.
- 3 Murder of Geta at the order of Caracalla.
- 4 Damnatio memoriae of Geta.
- 5 Theatre scene (palliata) featuring the birth of Helen from an egg.
- 6 Urban scene from the Suburra in Rome.
- 7 Building of the Aurelian Walls and of aqueducts.
- 8 Scene from the Sack of Rome in 410 AD.

Then drawings were scanned and the animation proper started, which took about two months, including colouring. Several versions of the temp music were produced in the meantime, following the organic evolution of the animation work. Foley work proceeded in the meantime.

Once the picture was locked, the music was finalised and then mixed with the final versions of effects and foley.

The promo thus produced was tested with a sample of the target audience. No score cards were used given the relatively low number of people involved, but viewers were informally quizzed about what they liked or disliked and what they understood. Different ethnic groups and nationalities within the test audience were sampled, albeit not systematically.

Then the promo was screened at the EAGLE Plenary Meeting in Cyprus on 10 March 2015. The video was generally well received and the majority of members in the Consortium liked it. Some partners provided useful criticism, which was duly taken note of, requesting some changes. The changes, related to the appearance of some characters and to the mood of some scenes, were carefully implemented in the following 20 days, requiring a substantial amount of work, which resulted in a more light-hearted and paradoxical version of the same story and concept.

Given the limited budget that can be allocated to dissemination and outreach materials for an EC project, devising and producing them is always a balancing act between the need to streamline the process and that of keeping the partners in the Consortium informed and of checking for their approval. This is best decided on a case-by-case basis, depending both on the concept being developed and on the composition of the Consortium. In the case of the design of printed materials, these were presented 'as is' to the EAGLE Consortium, i.e. only at the very end of the design process, having been approved by the Project Coordinator - and they were met with unanimous praise. For the video promo, a few more adjustments were required, a contingency for which the producer had budgeted accordingly both time and resources.

### 3 LINK TO THE EAGLE PROMO

The promo can be watched at the following link:

<http://www.eagle-network.eu/about/eagle-promo-video/>



## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND REMARKS

We have detailed the key steps in the production of the EAGLE promo, which is now ready to be shared over the Internet.

Regarding the development of the EAGLE documentary, several key steps have been taken towards pitching it to TV stations. In particular:

- a critical mass of inscription-related stories has been garnered with the help of the EAGLE partners, with view to using these stories in the actual production, if/when it will get under way;
- an overall concept for the documentary has been researched and articulated in written form, as a series for factual television;
- a candidate host/main character for the above series has been chosen and contacted.

The next steps will be to research the demographic of the target audience, as well as the related slots on candidate worldwide broadcasters. Once this will have been accomplished, the financing strategy will be finalised and commissioning editors working within the various broadcasters will be contacted, with view to assembling an international co-production.