

# FIRST INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ABRUZZO'S HISTORICAL HERITAGE

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## **International Network for Architecture and Archaeology**

The Castel di Sangro workshop is part of a decade-long series of international educational initiatives carried out under the aegis of various participating universities. Among the many, we wish to recall: Panagia Acheiropoietos, 2014, Cyprus; Castel Madama, 2016, Italy; Salamis 2017, Cyprus; Kyrenia Castle, 2018, Cyprus; Camerino, 2018, Italy; Galata waterfront, 2019, Turkey; Horrea Agrippiana, 2020, Italy; Castelvechio Calvisio, 2020, Italy; Horrea Agrippiana, 2021, Italy; Castelvechio Calvisio, 2021, Italy; Priene, 2022, Turkey; Forum of Theodosius, 2023, Turkey; Castel di Sangro, 2024, Italy.

The recent establishment of the International Network for Architecture and Archaeology (INAA) <https://www.architecture-archaeology.com/>, an international research organisation, has enabled us to bring together, on a single website, all materials from previous workshops and summer schools, serving as a launch platform for future initiatives. These educational events have all been characterised by a dialectical relationship between architecture and archaeology, which we consider essential for the training of architects. Another

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common thread in these experiences is the constant presence of Italy and Turkey. Whenever possible, we have sought to alternate locations, bringing Italian students to Turkey and Turkish students to Italy. This has not been without bureaucratic challenges—such as obtaining visas—and financial ones, as mobility has always been self-funded.

Over the years, we have realised that not only our motivation—explained below—but also that of the participating students has always been very high, which has encouraged us to continue. In ten years, we have never required participation fees from students, except in rare cases where we collected minimal contributions (about €50 per student) to cover unforeseen expenses. Italy and Turkey share a unique and unparalleled architectural heritage, encompassing not only the legacy of the Roman Empire but also monasteries and medieval castles. It is no coincidence that they are the countries hosting the largest number of UNESCO sites in the world. This heritage represents a formidable research resource for heritage-related studies. Furthermore, though to varying degrees, Italy and Turkey also share a limited capacity to intervene in these contexts with enhancement projects linked to cultural use. In essence, a clear and high demand for accessibility and heritage valorisation, driven by tourism, encounters a relatively weak response in terms of design output. For various reasons, interventions in these sites are difficult, and when they do occur, the design responses are often inadequate. This highlights an insufficient training of students—the future professionals—on documentation and design in heritage contexts. This motivation has driven us over the past ten years to pursue this initiative. We believe that we have a duty to continue this educational project and bring it to a more structured level in the future, in order to secure financial resources capable of supporting the enthusiasm of our students, who have always participated with great commitment.

### Castel di Sangro: Technologies and Design

From 20 to 27 July 2024, the international workshop dedicated to the historical heritage of Abruzzo, entitled “Castel di Sangro: Technologies and Design”, was held at the Conference Hall of the Museo Civico Aufidenate in Castel di Sangro. Professors Alessandro Camiz, Daniela Ladiana and Giorgio Verdiani, together with the Aufidenate museum director Mario Rainaldi were the scientific coordinators of the event. Twenty students participated, from various universities including the University of Malaga, the University of Thessaly, Abdullah Gül University, “Sapienza” University of Rome, and “G. d’An-



Figure 1. Poster of the “International Workshop on the Historical Heritage of Abruzzo: Technologies and Design”, 2024 edition.

nunzio” University of Chieti-Pescara. The workshop began with a conference at the Museo Civico Aufidenate, entitled “Minor Historical Centres: But Why Minor?” which presented recent research and projects on the historical heritage of Abruzzo and, in particular, on Castel di Sangro. Throughout the week, experts from various fields delivered lectures and in-depth studies on methodological and operational aspects related to the workshop themes, such as the enhancement of small historical centres, the use of digital technologies for documentation and conservation, and archaeology as a driver of social development. On the final day, we presented and publicly discussed the results of the workshop. The Castel di Sangro workshop was characterised by a highly collaborative and participatory international working environment in the development of the proposed themes. From a methodological perspective, one of its central features was the emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration. Coordinators and tutors promoted not only synergy among students but also their interaction with external professionals and distinguished figures invited to participate in the seminars. Moreover, the presence of institutional representatives and local citizens enriched the students’ reflections and design proposals, offering a valuable opportunity to engage with the social and cultural reality of the context. The design challenge unfolded in a context of strong connection with the territory, not only linking participants with the working environment but also putting them in direct and dialogical contact with the local community and with the political and professional actors.

The workshop focused on activities related to the enhancement and design of historical heritage including: digital sur-

*Fig. 2. Group photo of the “International Workshop on the Historical Heritage of Abruzzo: Technologies and Design”, 2024 edition.*



vey of the conventual building to acquire detailed knowledge; digital modelling of the conventual building to support management and scheduled maintenance; architectural design of the annexed volumes and open spaces, with the aim of redeveloping existing areas and increasing opportunities for use.

The participants carried out all the activities directly on the project sites, with an integrated approach blending both theory and practice. The success of the First International Workshop on Abruzzo's Historical Heritage confirmed the validity of our teaching approach, which integrates theory and practice through direct immersion in project sites. This event, the most recent in a decade-long series of educational initiatives, demonstrated that the workshop is a true laboratory of innovative ideas and a model of interdisciplinary collaboration.

It has traced a path that should be continued and further developed, especially in a region such as Abruzzo, so rich in heritage, turning the workshop into a recurring event in these territories. This would make it possible to establish a stable network of universities, institutions, and professionals, able to address systematically the challenges of conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, with a particular focus on Abruzzo's minor historical centres. A key element for the future is the strengthening of local community involvement. The workshop highlighted the importance of dialogue between experts and citizens, not only to enrich projects with in-depth knowledge of the territory but also to foster a stronger sense of belonging and active participation. Integrating communities into decision-making and design processes could transform our workshops into a model of social as well as cultural innovation. In conclusion, the future of this series of workshops lies in its ability to evolve into a permanent platform for exchange, combining research, education, innovation, and practical interventions. In this way, we can contribute to building a renewed vision of the relationship between heritage and territory, strengthening the mission we have consistently pursued over the years.

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