

Events

Study Days Fortified Architecture. Survey and Restoration

Antonio Conte

The UID Scientific Committee has granted its patronage and logo for the *Study Days Fortified Architecture. Survey and Restoration* which took place in March of 2016 in Bari, at the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture (DICAR) of the Polytechnic University of Bari. On behalf of UID, I would like to thank everyone for the work done and for the valuable act of dissemination provided to the entire scientific community and particularly to the education of our young people, starting, for purposes of research or simply for related learning, to construct a knowledge base strongly rooted in a territory of architectural works built specifically as castles for the defense and protection of these places.

The Organizing Committee composed by Valentina Castagnolo, Rossella de Cadilhac, Paolo Perfido, Gabriele Rossi and Domenico Catania, in close collaboration with the Scientific Committee, developed the initiative structured in three days, with guest speakers in the first two days and the third spent in visiting a few castles in Puglia.

The research group 'Architectural Heritage and Historical City' of the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Bari has been conducting research for many years on the theme

of fortified architecture, developed in several studies concerning towers and fortified houses, walls and urban defenses, and castles located in the territory of Puglia, with particular attention to the alterations due to the advent of firearms, to transformations into noble palaces, to changes in functions, to the character of types and forms built in close relationship with techniques and materials.

With the two Study Days held at the Polytechnic of Bari, the intention was to open a confrontation between national and international experiences and to reflect on the subject in the field of survey and representation, history, restoration and archaeology.

At the same time as the days dedicated to the speeches of many speakers, a poster show session was set up, in which the latest experiences were compared. Among the publishing and representation activities of the research group of the Polytechnic of Bari with the Scientific Community, the first large volumes of the *Monografie di Rilievo, Architetture barocche di Terra d'Otranto*, edited by Gabriele Rossi, were also presented.

The Scientific Committee also selected five works worthy of mention for their originality and innovative value in the field of survey and representation.

The different sessions organized in communication and knowledge activities introduced different experiences in strategy and theoretical approaches to architecture and were presented with studies of great value on fortified architecture, from Angelo Ambrosi, Paul Arthur, Vincenzo Cazzato to Giovanni Carbonara. The session on general approach issues and on survey and representation methods for fortified architectural structures displayed the different cultural positions that in a different form are the product of our Schools of Architecture, from Riccardo Florio, Giovanna Massari, Carla Amici, Valentina Castagnolo, Paolo Perfido, to Gabriele Rossi and many others.

The session that developed the theme of restoration and valorization certainly received, due to its wide-spread wealth of issues and case studies, considerable interest and stimulated deep criticalities that today represent some theoretical results with advancement of research and interest of national and international importance. In this regard, I would mention the vigorous contribution of Vito Cardone, *Survey and Restoration*, at the conference International Speeches. Castles and Fortified Cities held in Pisa in 2001.

It is clear to our community that these relationships between the world of

representation, of history and of restoration are strong cultural ties with deep roots, and the results and scientific advances of one part support the others in a continuous exchange of growth, position and critical review. These knowledge and integration processes become more apparent when dealing with the theme of fortified architecture, that contains them authentically in the complex forms of the building effort. The history and archaeology session contributed, with several essays and through descriptions and representations, to enlarge the knowledge of numerous cities and fortifications of the middle and southern Adriatic area with documentary sources and research prospects of extreme interest.

Those who did not participate and would like to know more about the contributions presented by the speakers should wait for the publication of the proceedings of the conference which, in any case, will not contain the richness of the debate and of the speeches that took place with the freshness and lucidity of oral contributions.

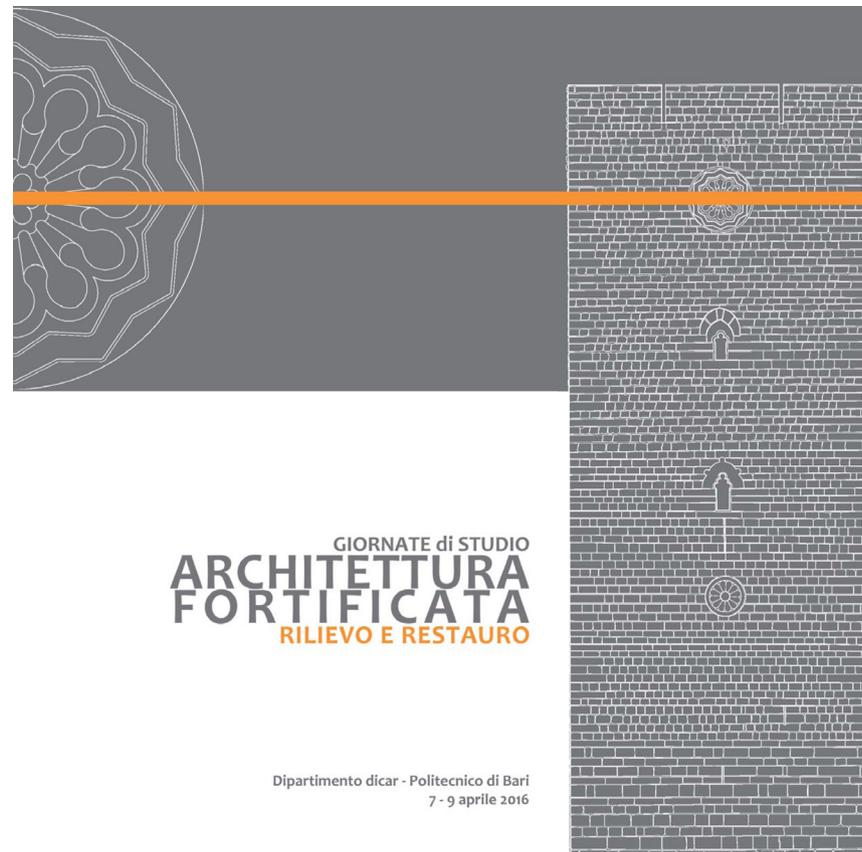
Certainly, the study days, developed with a seminar-like structure, made it possible to trace a possible course of a collective work of the Polytechnic that is rooted in a teaching and research organization that in the dimension of building, precisely in the materials and in the stone of these places, finds its set of rules.

The research group thus defined an ideal perimeter within which to specify methods and theoretical approaches for understanding the close relationships between documentation, survey and representation technique, between science, technique and experience and between construction and

technologies that have been improved throughout history. This history is for us a dense web in which to recognize not only the rules, the principles, the regimes and the rationality of these examples that were dealt with in the speeches and systematized in reasoning and projects, but also the dense network that Federico II and others, here in these places, have delineated over time.

The fortified dimension and the image of this territory, of a city or architecture is always defined by different values, parameters and economies, by successive stratifications, collective memories that fix the defensive or protective peculiarities and, at the same time, establish the constructive features that in history have specified qualities and vocations. In some cases, special conditions or vocations overwhelm others; it is cer-

Fig. 1. Study Days. Fortified Architecture. Survey and Restoration. Program cover.



tain that, in both the cases of Puglia and Basilicata, the layout and design of fortifications left a strong sign and a still-important history, rich in connotative elements of the landscape. The entire region is covered by a network of small and large defenses, towers and fortifications that in the past played a role of control and power over the territory, and that today stand as historical and symbolic references within urban areas and the territorial landscape context.

These artifacts, belonging to different ages, are presented as historical and symbolic references, within urban areas and in a territorial context involving the neighboring regions, from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian sea.

The sense of this meeting and the development of multiple works of research and documentation aim to define a kind of small or partial atlas, a path of knowledge that gives us a still partially unknown heritage to be protected, valorized, restored and recovered.

The survey, from simple to complex measurement activities, that is, scanners and drones, is the first necessary step for a correct restoration and preservation hypothesis.

Philological analysis supports archival research, surveys and historical iconographies, becoming an important moment in the study representing the premise for new investigations, some skillfully exhibited with the use of new digital tools that have deeply investigated materials and technical and building technologies.

For others, the theme of fortified architecture was a pretext for more general considerations on survey, the interpretation of artifacts, the interpretations of history, as well as the applied methodologies and survey tools. Speeches were related to several complex constructions such as fortifications, castles, towers and wall systems that, starting from historical necessities, summarize in themselves elements of urban complexity. The examples enclosed a plurality of meanings and functions ranging from defense to residence, to communal spaces and spaces for administrative life, which do not coincide with a single formal idea and are compared to very different architectural types and models, taken from treatises to modern manuals.

In some researches, through deep analysis, parts and elements characterizing

these fortified structures have been identified: walls, bastions, towers, walkways, crenellations, gates, entrances, moats, drawbridges, courtyards, terraces and scarp walls. These artifacts have often undergone changes to the norms and to the military principles with variations, at times of great complexity, that tend to distinguish and make them a component of the place and the city, and not separated from them.

Puglia and Basilicata are 'lands of castles,' small defensive structures located within a vast territory, and there is no city or small urban agglomeration that does not have, inside or in the immediate vicinity, a small or large castle even though today it is a simple ruin or toponym. The walls mark the permanence of a defensible urban form and define the historical limit between city and countryside.

This complex account of the memory of architectural and landscape heritage during those study days has enabled us to acquire tools for 'observing' these places with greater sensitivity and analytical spirit and with the consciousness of the value they also possess, intrinsically, for widening the spiritual dimension of the knowledge of our history.

Author

Antonio Conte, Department of European and Mediterranean Cultures, University of Basilicata, antonio.conte@unibas.it