

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ARCHITECTS AND MASTER BUILDERS IN MEDIEVAL ITALY

JANUARY 21–22, 2027

Castello del Valentino, Politecnico di Torino



Politecnico
di Torino



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA



ISTITUTO
SUOR ORSOLA
BENINCASA



PRIN 2022
"Architects and Master Builders
in Medieval Italy"
Finanziato dall'Unione Europea
NextGeneration EU



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ARCHITECTS AND MASTER BUILDERS IN MEDIEVAL ITALY

CALL FOR PAPERS

Politecnico di Torino
Castello del Valentino
21-22 January 2027

The conference aims to update our knowledge of architects and master builders active in medieval Italy. From the eleventh century through the Gothic period, Italy represented a major arena for the development and evolution of the architect's role within the broader European context. It was in Italy, in fact, that written sources first recorded some of the most celebrated master builders of the Romanesque age, such as Buschetto in Pisa and Lanfranco in Modena—figures who emerged from the traditional anonymity of construction workers and distinguished themselves as highly skilled professionals. This development took place within the framework of the communal civilization, where civic institutions promoted public works and recognized the dignity of labor in service to the urban community.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, narrative, epigraphic, and administrative sources allow us to trace developments in the building sector and to identify the most renowned masters who shaped the history of architecture in Italy. New professional figures also emerged during these centuries, including engineers, hydraulic specialists, and experts in civil and military architecture, active in the communes, the Papal States, and the Norman, imperial, Angevin, and Aragonese territories of southern Italy. Taken together, these experiences make medieval Italy a privileged observatory within the European framework for understanding both the collective organization of construction labor and the emergence of the architect as a professional figure, characterized by technical expertise, theoretical knowledge, social standing, and relationships with political power.

The conference seeks to foster reflection on these themes within an international perspective, encouraging dialogue among scholars from different disciplines, including not only architectural and art history, but also economic, military, literary, archaeological, and cultural history.

The chronological scope of the conference extends from the sixth to the fourteenth century. Papers will be organized into the following thematic sections:

1. **The Architect as a Professional Figure:**
technical and supervisory roles on the building site; education and training; iconographic representations; social recognition and public prestige.

2. **The Names of the Architect:**
terminology in medieval Latin and vernacular sources; technical distinctions; cultural relationships with classical tradition, theology, scholastic philosophy, and early Italian literature.

3. **The Architect's Tools:**
working and design instruments; drawing and methods of representation.

4. **Professional Roles in Building Industry:**
organization of construction sites; master masons, stonecutters, carpenters, surveyors; the rise of engineers in military and civil works.

5. **Master Builders in Medieval Sources:**
administrative records, epigraphic evidence, masons' marks, and narrative sources; building guilds in the society and economy of the Italian communes.

6. **Master Builders and Material Culture:**
reconstructing the activity of organized groups, including anonymous ones, through the comparative study of masonry, materials, techniques, and building forms.

7. **Italy in the International Context:**
investigations and comparisons between architects active in Italy and comparable professional figures documented in Christian Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and the Islamic world.





The conference will feature both invited speakers and speakers selected through this call for papers. Scholars interested in participating are invited to submit their proposals to the Scientific Committee (archimed@polito.it) by 30 September 2026. Proposals should consist of an abstract of no more than 2.000 characters and a brief CV of no more than 1.000 characters, combined in a single file and indicating the relevant thematic section.

Presentations will be approximately 20 minutes in length. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process by 30 October 2026. Authors whose proposals are accepted must confirm their participation by sending an email to archimed@polito.it no later than 20 November 2026.

The conference organizers will provide lunches and coffee breaks for all selected participants but will not be able to cover travel or accommodation expenses.

Following the conference, speakers will be invited to submit their papers for publication in an edited volume. Contributions will undergo a peer-review process. Final manuscripts must be submitted by 31 May 2027, and publication of the volume is planned by the end of the year.

Official languages: Italian, English and French.

KEY DATES

Proposal submission deadline:

30 September 2026

Notification of acceptance:

30 October 2026

Registration deadline:

20 November 2026

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Carlo Tosco, Politecnico di Torino (chair)

Valerio Ascani, University of Pisa

Xavier Barral i Altet, Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris

Giovanni Coppola, Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples

Kai Kappel, Humboldt-Universität, Berlin

Dany Sandron, Sorbonne University, Paris

Amadeo Serra Desfilis, University of Valencia

Guglielmo Villa, Sapienza University of Rome

Politecnico di Torino, Interuniversity Department

of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning

viale Mattioli 39, 10125 Torino, Italy

Info: archimede@polito.it

The conference is organized within the framework
of the National Research Project of Relevant Interest
“Architects and Master Builders in Medieval Italy” –

Call 2022 Prot. 2022YXESH7

Funded by the European Union

NextGeneration EU.



Politecnico
di Torino



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITY OF ROME



ISTITUTO
SUOR ORSOLA
BENINCASA

