

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery
in Early Modern Period
(XV-XVIII century)

International Conference

organized by Giulia Ceriani Sebregondi,
Francesca Mattei, Danila Jacazzi

Scientific and organizational secretariat by
Giorgia Aureli and Giorgia Pietropaolo

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Rectorate Conference Hall

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Viale Ellittico, 31, 81100, Caserta, Italia

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Juan Carlos Mantilla, Francesca Mattei, Alper Metin,
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Milena Viceconte, Lorenzo Vigotti

PRIN 2022 PROJECT

The Vesuvian Lost Cities before the "Discovery".
Source, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period



velociproject.org

Topographia urbium à Nembro et à Nino eorumque posteris fabricatarum
in A. Kircher, Turris Babel sive Archontologia, Amsterdam 1679 (The New York Public Library Digital Collections)



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LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

DANILO JACAZZI*Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"*

Daniela Jacazzi is a full professor of Architectural History at the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design at the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli". Jacazzi is an art historian with profound expertise in early modern Campania territory, art and architecture. She has extensively published on the Terra di Lavoro area, Luigi Vanvitelli, Pompeii, and the architectural connections of the Regno di Napoli with the Mediterranean basin and with Central America.

Il territorio di Pompei in età moderna

Thursday, 16 October 2025

*Textual Sources for the Reconstruction of Lost Cities***First Session – 10:30**

Current histories emphasize that the exact topographical location of ancient Pompeii had been lost over time. Yet many clues, already highlighted by scholars in the 18th and 19th centuries, suggest that it is possible to reconstruct a parallel history of the site, evoked and recorded in ancient literary and cartographic works.

Pompeii, according to some scholars perfectly identifiable in the ash-covered plain, was not completely buried by volcanic debris, as recent research has highlighted.

The highest parts of the buildings protruded from the ground, later destroyed for the recovery of objects and building materials.

Evidence and memories of ancient Pompeii resurface in archival documents and historiographical works that preceded the Bourbon excavation campaign, demonstrating the continuity of the memory of the lost city.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

JOSIP BELAMARIĆ

Institute of Art History in Split; Department of Art History, University of Split

Josip (Joško) Belamarić is the head of the Institute of Art History in Split and a Professor at the Department of Art History, University of Split. From 1991 to 2009, he served as Director of the Regional Conservation Institute of Dalmatia. He received his MA and PhD degrees from the University of Zagreb. Belamarić has published numerous books, studies, and articles on the urban history, art, architecture, and urbanism of early modern Dalmatia. He has also directed conservation projects in Dalmatia and curated number exhibitions.

In Search of the Lost Palace The First Attempts at an Ideal Reconstruction of Diocletian's Palace in Split

Thursday, 16 October 2025

Textual Sources for the Reconstruction of Lost Cities

First Session – 10:50

The “termite-like” work of generations transformed Diocletian’s Palace into a medieval town. The ancient past remained as a mirage of its former importance. The vision of the palace’s past lingered in local memory, and from the 13th century onward, efforts emerged to reconstruct its ideal form.

The presentation will offer a new interpretation of Antonio Proculiano’s *Le antichità di Spalato* (1558), of a hitherto almost unknown work on Diocletian’s Palace. In contrast to other Renaissance *laudationes* about Dalmatian cities (and there are around 60 of them!), this speech is the most prominent example of what Hans Baron dubbed *Bürgerhumanismus* – Civic humanism, which was ‘one of the most influential of all concepts in the history of ideas’.

Proculiano’s reconstruction of Diocletian’s Palace remained the most comprehensive vision of its original form until Robert Adam’s groundbreaking work two centuries later.

His perspective, imagined from horseback, brought the palace to life as a dynamic city, where architecture and human activity intertwined, portraying a structured social order fully integrated into its environment.

The palace he re-created in the spirit is not a mere agglomeration of palaces and houses, squares and streets, but a place of correlation, i.e. interplay between architecture and the human body in motion, between the humanized environment and the people living in the Palace, each with a precise role in its complex organism, fully identified with its whole.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV–XVIII century)

FRANCESCA MATTEI

Università degli Studi Roma Tre

Francesca Mattei is an Associate Professor of Architectural History at Roma Tre University and the Associate Investigator of the VeLoCi Project. Her research focuses primarily on early modern architecture, the study of architectural drawings and treatises, and the relationship between literary erudition, antiquarianism, and architectural culture. Recently, she has been conducting various studies on the relationship between architectural history and geography, applied to the Vesuvius area and the Po Valley.

Pirro Ligorio e le città vesuviane

Thursday, 16 October 2025

*Textual Sources for the Reconstruction of Lost Cities***First Session – 11:10**

This paper examines the figure of Pirro Ligorio (1512/13–1583) – artist, architect, and antiquarian – as a key to addressing the central question of the VeLoCi project: what was known about the Vesuvian cities before the archaeological excavations began in the eighteenth century? The paper is divided into two sections. The first analyzes the sources produced by Ligorio on the Campanian cities, particularly Pompeii and Herculaneum, within the broader context of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century antiquarian studies. The second section explores Ligorio's observations in relation to contemporary studies on natural disasters.

The analysis focuses on three of Ligorio's works: the *Enciclopedia delle Antichità* (1569–1583), the *Libro di diversi terremoti* (post-1570), and the map of the Kingdom of Naples (1558). A comparison between his textual and cartographic sources reveals Ligorio's hypothesis on the location of Pompeii and Herculaneum within the *Campania Felix*. This hypothesis, though ultimately incorrect, was based primarily on textual sources without the benefit of empirical field investigations. The analysis of the *Libro di diversi terremoti*, in which Ligorio discusses both seismic and eruptive events, provides insight into his scholarly imagination, particularly his interest in Mount Vesuvius as a natural monument with an ancient history—an ideal subject for antiquarian study.

Despite the limitations imposed by a partial knowledge of the territory, Ligorio's work inspired subsequent cartography, notably the maps of the Kingdom of Naples by Ortelius and Magini. This influence demonstrates the vitality of antiquarianism as a discipline that successfully integrated the study of history, nature, and science.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV–XVIII century)

GREGORIO ASTENGO*IE School of Architecture and Design, Madrid/Segovia*

Gregorio Astengo is an architect and historian with degrees from Turin Polytechnic and UCL, where he also earned his PhD (2019). He has taught at UCL, Queen Mary, Syracuse London, Northeastern University London, and is currently Adjunct Professor at IE University Madrid. He was postdoctoral researcher at ETH Zurich (2019–23) and Postdoc Mobility Fellow at Birkbeck (2023–25). His work focuses on early modern property development and architectural representation. He is co-editor of the upcoming volume *Real Estate: Histories of Architecture and Capital* (Zurich: gta Verlag 2026).

Views of Palmyra in the 17th and 18th centuries

Thursday, 16 October 2025*Textual Sources for the Reconstruction of Lost Cities***First Session – 12:00**

In 1691, the remains of the ancient city of Palmyra for the first time became known to public, thanks to the travel accounts of a group of British merchants. The reports were published in *Philosophical Transactions*, the journal of the Royal Society of London, and consisted of a long description of city, accompanied by an illustration. This was an ample panorama, almost 180° wide, engraved on a long foldout page, and captured a rich landscape of free-standing columns, broken stones and remnants of temples, providing a meaningful interpretation of the city's remains.

It was especially through this image that Palmyra, until then the object of mythical speculations and conjectural histories, became part of the European public discourse on architecture, travel writing and early archaeology. Versions of this celebrated view were reproduced time and again throughout the 18th century, from Cornelis de Bruijn's *Voyage au Levant* (1700) to Johannes Fischer von Erlach's *Entwurf Einer Historischen Architectur* (1725). Its influence can also be found in Robert Wood's *The Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) and Louis François Cassas' *Voyage Pittoresque de la Syrie* (1800).

This paper unpacks the genealogy of Palmyra's visual reproductions between the 17th and 18th centuries. In so doing, it points at the authorial fluidity of early modern antiquarian narratives, which often appropriated second-hand sources such as this. Through acts of copying, manipulation and transformation, this view turned into an exotic archetype of Palmyra's archaeological legacy.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

CONCETTA LENZA*Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"*

Cettina Lenza was full professor of History of Architecture at the University of Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli'. She is ordinary member of the Academy of Archaeology, Letters and Fine Arts of Naples, corresponding member of the Pontaniana Academy and of Etruscan Academy of Cortona. She is also a member of the Wissenschaftlicher Beirat der Stiftung Bibliothek Werner Oechslin and of the Board of Directors of the Centre for the Study of the History of Architecture in Rome. She is also coordinator of the Scientific National Committee on 20th Century Heritage of ICOMOS Italia.

The Etruscan myth in narratives of the origins of lost cities in Campania

Thursday, 16 October 2025

*Textual Sources for the Reconstruction of Lost Cities***First Session – 12:20**

This contribution aims to retrace the brief period of Etruscan influence as it intertwined with the “discovery” of the cities of Herculaneum, Pompeii and Paestum. This phase gave rise to the hypothesis that their origin was linked to the presence of the Tyrrhenians on the Campania coasts, as formulated by members of Tuscan academies. In particular, Marcello Venuti supported “the dominion of the ancient Tuscans over the coast of Naples” and, mixing classical authors and the Old Testament, proposed as the founder of Herculaneum a fabulous Phoenician or Egyptian Hercules, instead of the Greek one.

A similar thesis was also formulated by Alessio Simmaco Mazzocchi, who, on the basis of hypothetical linguistic roots, hints at the existence of an original Paesto (from the Phoenician term Pesitan), preceding the Greek Posidonia, identifying its founders not as Greek colonists from Aetolia (the Dorians mentioned by the Latin geographer Solinus), but as the inhabitants of Dora, and therefore Phoenician sailors, later known as Tyrrhenians or Tusc. The Etruscan origin of Paestum was further supported by Paolo Antonio Paoli in his *Dissertationes* published in 1784 accompanying the plates of drawings commissioned by Count Felice Gazzola of the famous temples that survived in the Capaccio plain, which he attributed to the Tuscan order. Thus, such narratives influenced the interpretation not only of lost cities, but also of the very genealogy of architecture and the theory of orders.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

ALESSANDRO BRODINI

Università degli Studi di Firenze

Alessandro Brodini is an associate professor of History of Architecture at the University of Florence. He graduated in Architecture from the Politecnico of Milan and obtained a PhD in History of Architecture and Urban Planning from the Iuav University of Venice. In 2008, he was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome, where he was a research fellow until 2013. In 2011, he won a research grant at the Iuav University, in 2013-2015 he was a postdoctoral fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung at the University of Bonn, and in 2016 he obtained another research grant at the Iuav University.

He has participated in numerous national and international conferences; his publications concern the history of 16th-century architecture. He is also interested in the role of patronage in the 18th century, the relationship between literature and architecture, and finally 20th-century architecture in Italy.

“Certi belli sassi et prede piccade antiquissime”: The fifteenth-century Lapidarium in Brescia

Thursday, 16 October 2025

*Lost Cities between Antiquarian Research and Material Exploration***Second Session – 14:10**

In 1616, the Brescian historian and antiquarian Ottavio Rossi published a map of his city's antiquities in his book *Le memorie bresciane*, thus anticipating by two centuries the archaeological excavations of the Roman forum, which only began in 1823. However, interest in “lost” Roman Brescia had begun long before Rossi took an interest in it.

In 1480, fragments of Roman epigraphs and bas-reliefs emerged during work to renovate the southern façade of the new *platea magna*, now Piazza Loggia. The municipality immediately decided that the stones should be preserved for use as ornaments in public buildings. This gesture, which showed far-sighted conservationist sensitivity, was in fact underpinned by a clear political desire to use the ancient finds to redesign the contours of Brescia's civic identity, exploiting the recovery of those Roman origins that Venice itself could not boast. In 1485, the finds, together with some specifically carved *all'antica* epigraphs, were walled into the lower register of the long prison building and the Montecvecchio, thus giving rise to a veritable *Lapidarium*.

My paper analyses the ways in which the city, drawing on its own memory, constructed a new image of itself, thanks in part to the work of humanists and antiquarians such as Michele Fabrizio Ferrarini and Taddeo Solazio, and rendered it in architectural form in the white stone façade of the *Lapidarium*.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

GIULIA CERIANI SEBREGONDI*Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"*

Giulia Ceriani Sebregondi is Associate Professor of History of Architecture at the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" and holds the Italian National Habilitation as Full Professor. Her research focuses on early modern Italian architecture, with a particular interest in construction processes, patronage, and the circulation of technical and antiquarian knowledge. She has held fellowships from institutions including Harvard, the Getty Foundation, and CASVA, and is Principal Investigator of the PRIN 2022 project *VeLoCi – The Vesuvian lost cities before the 'discovery'*.

When were the Vesuvian lost cities discovered? Traces and Evidence about Ancient Stabiae in the Early Modern Period

Thursday, 16 October 2025

*Lost Cities between Antiquarian Research and Material Exploration***Second Session – 14:30**

The established narrative of the aftermath of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 suggests that the Vesuvian cities lay buried and forgotten until the Bourbon excavations of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Early modern sources, however, present a more complex picture. Archival records, antiquarian texts, and occasional material finds indicate that remains of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplontis, and Stabiae were noticed and sometimes accessed long before their "discovery."

This paper focuses on the early modern perception of Stabiae, whose remains emerged within the landscape of Castellammare di Stabia. From the 16th century onwards, scholars and architects described walls, inscriptions, and roads uncovered during building or agricultural works. These observations, although fragmentary and incidental, attest to the continuing visibility of the ancient settlement within the early modern environment.

The research explores how these traces were understood by contemporary humanists and antiquarians, and questions why they did not play a larger role in broader debates on Antiquity. A possible explanation lies in the apparent modest nature of the evidence, which did not correspond to expectations shaped by classical texts.

Through the example of Stabiae, the paper highlights the need to reassess the notion of "discovery" and considers how early modern encounters with ancient ruins informed local knowledge, perceptions of the past, and the evolving relationship between lost and living cities.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

PAOLO BELARDI, FRANCESCA FUNIS

Università degli Studi di Perugia

Graduated with honors in Civil Construction Engineering in 1982 at Sapienza University of Rome and student of Vittorio De Feo, **Paolo Belardi** is full professor of “Composizione architettonica e urbana” at the University of Perugia, where he is the Rector's Delegate for Heritage. He also taught in the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza Università di Roma and the Second University of Naples. From 2013 to 2018 he was director of the “Pietro Vannucci” Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia. He is the author of numerous monographs, including *Why Architects Still Draw* (MIT Press, Cambridge Ma. 2013). In 2016 his name was included in the Roll of Honor of the City of Perugia “for the quality of the contribution provided to the growth of the city from a cognitive and planning point of view”.

Francesca Funis is an architect, PhD and researcher (RTDB) in History of Architecture at University of Perugia. For three semesters Professor of History of Renaissance Architecture at Kent State University, for nine years Adjunct Professor at the University of Florence (DIDA-Department of Architecture), with assignments from MIBACT, an American fellowship and research grants, she has focused her studies on architecture of the second half of the 16th century, on Medici patronage, on building techniques and on urban development. She has dedicated many publications to these themes, two exhibitions at the Uffizi Gallery and three monographs.

**The Paolina fortress of Perugia:
a buried city that has preserved the
memory of the medieval city**

Thursday, 16 October 2025

*Lost Cities between Antiquarian Research and
Material Exploration*

Second Session – 14:50

Perugia is not a lost city, but it is a city that buried its medieval fabric in 1540, when Pope Paul III ordered a commission of technicians, including Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, to build an imposing fortress within and against the city. In order to give volume and body to the fortress, the minute medieval fabric and the houses of the Baglioni family are not sacrificed but become the substructures of the new fortified structure, giving life to an urban cross-section unique in the world, in which the view of the sky is denied by a tangle of brick vaults (A. Rossi, *Un progetto per Perugia. Rivivere la città sepolta*, in “Casa Vogue”, 1984, No. 155, pp. 318-321).

On the other hand, the history of Perugia is marked by continuous demolitions, mostly by the Perugians themselves. A suicidal vocation (B. Zevi, *Messaggi Perugini*, Industrie Buitoni Perugia, Perugia 1971, p. 1) sealed in 1860 by the umpteenth demolition of the Paolina fortress and, consequently, by the burial of its underground spaces. This apparent “suicidal desire”, however, has promoted the preservation of the memory of the medieval city, which was not dismantled – as generally happens – for the rebuilding of the Renaissance city.

New documentation sheds light on the construction procedures for the fortress: materials used, construction techniques and water supply used by the Perugians to bury the medieval city and build the bastioned fortress. This documentation also clarifies the reasons why, in Perugia more than elsewhere, buildings are systematically demolished to recover materials for construction needs.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

GIORGIA PIETROPAOLO*Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"*

Giorgia Pietropaolo is an architect and holds a PhD in History of Architecture from Sapienza University of Rome. She is currently a postdoc team member in the VeLoCi project. She works on a broad range of topics, from residential to landscape and historical gardens' architecture, from urban history to the reception of antiquity. Other research interests include archaeology and architectural conservation. On these topics, she has participated in conferences and scientific publications. She also collaborated with the Italian Ministry of Culture and was part of several research groups.

Beneath Resina: Traces of Herculaneum before the excavations

Thursday, 16 October 2025

*Lost Cities between Antiquarian Research and
Material Exploration***Second Session – 15:40**

On the site of ancient Herculaneum, buried under tens of meters of lava and debris following the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, a new town arose: Resina. Today, this name is little known to most, although it remained in use until 1969, when the revival of the Roman toponym "Ercolano" virtually buried the history and memory of Resina. In fact, the most recent historiography, except for contributions by local scholars, leaves a gap of roughly seven centuries, from the Plinian eruption of 79 AD to the archaeological discoveries in the early eighteenth century, resulting in the loss of a remarkable heritage of material culture. It is therefore worth asking: what was Resina like in the early modern period? And, furthermore, did the discoveries of the eighteenth century really represent the first awareness among the inhabitants of Resina – and more broadly – of the ancient Roman city beneath their homes?

This presentation aims to integrate the intertwined histories of Herculaneum and Resina, two cities overlaid one upon the other, both materially and conceptually, over the centuries. It first reconstructs the historical development and urban form of early modern Resina. It then examines the relationship between Resina and the buried city of Herculaneum, showing that an awareness of the ancient settlement beneath Resina already existed in the early modern period, as reflected in toponyms, narrative accounts, and archaeological finds. Finally, the paper considers whether, and to what extent, some of these early discoveries were recognized at the time as belonging to the buried city, and why they were not more fully acknowledged or valorized in the collective memory.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

DANIEL FERNANDO MACÍAS PARRA*Università Iuav di Venezia*

Daniel Fernando Macías Parra, architect and holder of a Master's degree in History and Theory of Art, Architecture, and the City. I have participated in research groups on Colombian architecture built between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition, I have worked as a consultant in the formulation of special protection and management plans for cultural heritage assets, including the campus of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and the Museo de la Policía Nacional de Colombia.

I have carried out teaching activities in the advanced secondary education program in the area of Design and Graphic Communication at the Colegio Isla del Sol IED. I am currently a doctoral candidate at IUAV University of Venice, where I have had the opportunity to deepen my knowledge of Italian architecture in general, and Venetian architecture in particular.

As part of my doctoral training, I have undertaken research stays at the Universidad de Sevilla, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the Universidad de las Américas in Puebla, and the National Institute of Anthropology and History, among other institutions, within the framework of my dissertation on the Franciscan convent of Cholula.

The Site of the Franciscan Convent of San Gabriel in Cholula

Thursday, 16 October 2025*Lost Cities between Antiquarian Research and
Material Exploration***Second Session – 16:00**

The *Relación Geográfica* of Cholula from 1582 states that the convent of San Gabriel was built upon the ruins of the temple of Quetzalcóatl and that this site was regarded as the most important within the territory inhabited by the Cholulteca. Based on sixteenth-century sources.

The narrative begins with Hernán Cortés, who described Cholula at one of the most dramatic moments of the conquest of New Spain: the Massacre of Cholula. The memory of that sacred place was also preserved in indigenous codices, which recount the pilgrimages of various Nahua peoples until their settlement in the valley of the Atoyac River, in lands that would later be compelled to recognize as their sovereign a king from across the Atlantic.

Archaeological excavations carried out around the convent do not allow us to conclude with certainty that the temple of Quetzalcóatl lay beneath the foundations of the Catholic complex. This is due both to the limited scope of the excavations and to the fact that, as Cholula was one of the principal religious centers in central Mexico, the city was subject to an intense campaign of destruction. Some petro glyphs still visible among the convent's walls bear witness to this. Although the existence of a large temple cannot be confirmed, stairs, platforms, and depictions of the omnipresent rain god Tláloc have been uncovered.

Cholula was never a buried city, but rather one that was destroyed and rebuilt upon itself multiple times. The pyramid that dominates the site—at first glance appearing to be a modest natural hill—is, in fact, the product of successive building campaigns: an artificial mound raised to house the gods, just as the sacred continues to inhabit Cholula to this day.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

GIUSEPPE PIGNATELLI SPINAZZOLA*Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"*

Giuseppe Pignatelli Spinazzola is Associate Professor of Architectural History at the Department of Humanities and Cultural Heritage of the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli. He is a member of the Faculty Board of the PhD course in *Architecture and Cultural Heritage*, of the ICOMOS - Scientific Committee for 20th-Century Heritage, and of the Board of Directors of the Italian Institute of Castles. His research focuses mainly on topics related to urban history between the 16th and 19th centuries, fortified architecture between the 17th and 18th centuries, and landscape transformations in southern Italy between the modern and contemporary ages.

From Corpus Civitatis to hillside hamlet. Destructions and rebuildings of the Città Nova of Annunziata in Massa Lubrense

Thursday, 16 October 2025

*Lost Cities between Antiquarian Research and Material Exploration***Second Session – 16:20**

With the help of archival, bibliographic, and cartographic sources, this proposal aims to recover the memory of the hilltop settlement of *Annunziata* in Massa Lubrense – at the tip of the Sorrento peninsula – founded around 1160 and destroyed several times over four centuries to punish the community for its intolerance of royal power. Designed to accommodate the administrative, social, and religious functions of a population seeking a leading role in the economic and political dynamics of the peninsula, but still lacking an urban center of reference, the original *Corpus Civitatis* was razed to the ground in 1273 by Charles of Anjou for its loyalty to the Suevians during the wars of succession to the Neapolitan throne. Abandoned for over a century, the town was refounded in 1389, but destroyed one more time in 1465 by the troops of Ferrante of Aragon for the support it offered to the Angevin crown. Once again, this was a highly symbolic gesture, followed by a long period of oblivion that ended in the mid-16th century with the reconstruction of the town on the initiative of the *Universitas* and the viceregal military authorities. An interesting example of a fortified *citadel*, since its completion in 1597, the *Città Nova* was doomed to a new decline and relegated to the role of a hamlet until its abandonment centuries later.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV–XVIII century)

LORENZO VIGOTTI*Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna*

Lorenzo Vigotti is an architectural historian at the University of Bologna, currently leading an European project on the circulation of architectural knowledge between medieval Persia and Italy, in collaboration with Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran (www.iraniandomes.eu). He is also leading Pupilli, a research analyzing Florentine household inventories to examine shifts in spatial organization within domestic residences between the 14th and 15th centuries (www.pupilli.org).

Lorenzo holds an M.Arch. from the University of Florence and a Ph.D. in architectural history from Columbia University.

The City of Soltaniyeh in northern Iran

Friday, 17 October 2025*Visual Culture and Cartography, Travel and
Exploration Reports***Third Session – 9:30**

This paper explores the enduring perception of Soltaniyeh's magnificence in Western narratives, particularly in connection to its grand mausoleum (1302-12), which boasts the largest dome in Iran. Strategically positioned along the Silk Road, linking Tabriz to the central Iranian plateau, Soltaniyeh served as the Ilkhanate Empire's summer capital for a brief period (1306–1335) before its decline due to the Timurid invasion and the Black Death.

My research highlights why the city was well-known in Europe, focusing on its diverse international community—primarily Italians—who resided in Soltaniyeh before its decline. It also examines how the city's brief prominence persisted in Western accounts for centuries. Soltaniyeh features prominently in maps such as the Catalan Atlas (c. 1375) and Fra Mauro's map (c. 1450), as well as in travelogues written by ambassadors, clergy, and merchants. These sources reveal the rapid erosion of historical knowledge about the city and its mausoleum, with both locals and visitors often perpetuating contradictory narratives.

The architectural significance of the monumental dome was also the key factor in renewed interest among archaeologists and architects from the late 19th century onward. These international efforts ultimately played a crucial role in revitalizing the site's importance for Iranian institutions, eventually leading to Soltaniyeh's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

GIORGIA AURELI*Università degli Studi Roma Tre*

Giorgia Aureli is an architect and PhD in History of Architecture (Sapienza, 2018: *Urbino e Fossombrone: città e residenze accanto ai palazzi ducali nei secoli XV e XVI*). She has been adjunct lecturer (Sapienza, 2020/21), fellow at the Carlo and Marise Bo Foundation (Urbino, 2021), and postdoctoral researcher at Roma Tre University (2023/24), where she recently completed a postdoc in the VeLoCi project (2024/25). She contributes to teaching (Roma Tre) and to research in the project *Building a Renaissance. Networks of Artists and Patrons from Ticino and Lombardy in Rome (1417-1527)* (SUPSI, Mendrisio). Her research interests range from the study of early modern architecture and urban and landscape contexts, particularly in the Roman and Urbino areas, to contemporary architecture, with special attention to the continuity between the Renaissance and Antiquity.

Percorrendo le città vesuviane di XV e XVI secolo tra narrazione e osservazione dell'antico

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Visual Culture and Cartography, Travel and Exploration Reports***Third Session – 9:50**

The paper examines travel as a tool for investigating the knowledge and memory of Vesuvian cities in the early modern period, with particular attention to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Roads and routes crossing the territory are not merely transit routes, but occasions for exploration and instruments for constructing and transmitting knowledge, where direct experience intertwines with the mediation of literary and antiquarian traditions.

The analysis focuses on sources documenting passage through the Vesuvian area, emphasizing accounts often neglected by the historiography on Vesuvian cities, which provide a multifaceted picture of the territory: from the still-visible material remains of antiquity, to the memory of mythical foundations and lost cities, and to landscape elements depicting an environment where nature, architecture, and historical memory coexist. Different perspectives on the same itinerary – ranging from topographical description to historical evocation and symbolic construction – allow for the reconstruction of a complex scenario of landscape perception, where observation of the present engages with the legacy of the past.

Finally, the study situates these descriptions within the broader cultural and political context shaping their production, focusing on the protagonists of the journeys, local erudite networks, and antiquarian practices accompanying the experience of the sites. Within this framework, the Vesuvian landscape in the early modern period emerges as a space of convergence between diverse experiences, knowledge, and interests, full integrated into the wider Neapolitan territory.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

JUAN CARLOS MANTILLA*King's College London*

Juan Carlos Mantilla is Lecturer in Global Hispanic Studies and World Literature at King's College London, where he leads the MA in Comparative Literature. He holds a Ph.D. in Latin American and Iberian Cultures and Comparative Literature from Columbia University, and an undergraduate degree from Universidad de Buenos Aires. His work has been supported by the SSRC, Bard Graduate Center, John Carter Brown Library, and the Max Planck Institute, and the Iberoamerican Institut in Berlin, and others. Recent publications appear in *Vistas*, *Revista Telar*, *Relating Continents*, and *National Epics*.

Phantom Cities of the Living Library: The Early Modern Imagining of Amazonian Urbanscapes

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Visual Culture and Cartography, Travel and
Exploration Reports***Third Session – 10:10**

The 2022 application of LiDAR technology to the Bolivian Amazon revealed extensive human modifications to the landscape, uncovering a stronghold of the Casarabe Culture (500–1400 C.E.), characterized by urban centers with platforms and pyramidal architectures. This novel discovery is the latest in a long sequence of theories about settlements hidden beneath the Amazon rainforest—an idea that emerged in Indigenous pre-Columbian storytelling and circulated globally through early modern European conquest and colonization treaties. The early written accounts by Spanish conquerors talked of densely populated settlements in the 16th century Amazon, and the early modern written and cartographic creations that followed produced spectral images of golden citadels, courts of warrior women, and the elusive lost settlement of Paititi, blending pre-Columbian historical thought with European travel narratives of lost cities.

Through maps of the Amazon, Andean manuscripts, and the 1599 illustrated editions of two foundational European narratives about the region—Hans Schmidl's *Vera Historia* and Walter Raleigh's *Brevis et admiranda*, this paper examines the early modern approach to lost Amazonian settlements as part of a fluid, ever-mutating continuum in which Indigenous mythology and historical knowledge intertwine with early modern European natural history and speculative geography. The Amazon, as conjured in early modern texts and images, is not a depiction of the landscape but a shifting mirage of phantom cities—moving through space and time, crystallizing in engravings and narratives. Forever deferred yet perpetually possible, these spectral urbanscapes embody a paradox: they cannot be found, yet they can always be imagined anew.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

MILENA VICECONTE*Universitat de Lleida*

Milena Viceconte is a Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Lleida (Spain). After her PhD in History of Art obtained in 2013 (University of Naples Federico II - University of Barcelona), she has been a postdoctoral fellow for the ERC project DisComPoSE (2018-2023), dealing with issues related to disaster imagery in early modern period, and for the VeLoCi research project (2023-2024), working on the analysis of figurative sources on the Vesuvian lost cities. Among her recent publications, the volume *Heroes in Dark Times. Saints and Officials Tackling Disaster (16th-17th centuries)*, co-edited with Gennaro Schiano and Domenico Cecere, Rome 2023.

La presenza delle città sepolte nella produzione vedutistica cinque e seicentesca

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Visual Culture and Cartography, Travel and
Exploration Reports***Third Session – 11:00**

Considering the early modern representations of the Vesuvian landscape, those that refer to the ancient cities buried by the eruption of 79 AD are limited to few examples, mostly related to the sudden restart of the eruptive activity of the double cone that took place in December 1631. As is well known, this unexpected disaster, with tragic consequences for the area near the crater, brings about the beginning of a prosperous period of studies on the phenomena of the earth, which included, in addition to theoretical analyses and first-hand observation, the rereading of classical texts about the great Plinian eruption that led to the collapse of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplontis, and Stabiae.

The aim of this paper is to examine the Vesuvian figurative repertoire in which the reference to the buried cities lies in the presence of their Latin toponyms together with those indicated the modern settlements damaged by the new eruption, such as Torre del Greco and Torre Annunziata. As will be argued, the reasons behind this reference, which clearly evidences the interest of contemporary erudites for precisely identify the original locations more than a century before the official excavations, must be linked to the spreading in the Neapolitan scientific literature of a new way of understanding the eruptive Vesuvius activity from an historical perspective.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

ALPER METIN*I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies*

Alper Metin studied Architecture in Venice and Rome and earned a PhD with honors in Architectural History at Sapienza University of Rome (2022) with a dissertation on the origins of the so-called Ottoman Baroque. After holding positions as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bologna and adjunct professor at Sapienza, he is currently the I Tatti & Dumbarton Oaks Joint Fellow at Harvard University. His research explores the circulation of architectural forms, technical knowledge, and materials in Mediterranean cross-cultural exchanges, with a focus on Italo-Ottoman interactions.

The Death or Survival of the Archetypal Ancient City: Athens Observed by Cornelio Magni (1674), a Traveler from Parma in the Ottoman World

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Visual Culture and Cartography, Travel and
Exploration Reports***Third Session – 11:20**

Few cities bear an ancient heritage as overwhelming as Athens. Although its illustrious past was never wholly forgotten, before the crystallization of its image in the Western learned imagination and the systematic unearthing of its antiquities between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the city was perceived in very different terms. Beyond the Acropolis, centuries of Byzantine and Ottoman rule had so thoroughly reshaped the urban fabric that it was scarcely recognizable in relation to its classical visage. Yet the surviving architectural remains—partly buried or incorporated into medieval and early modern structures—still offered attentive visitors fleeting but vivid glimpses of the ancient city par excellence.

Among them was Cornelio Magni, an astute traveler from Parma who reached Athens a decade before the Morean War, a conflict that would inflict devastating damage on the Parthenon. This paper reexamines Magni's observations, recorded in his *Relazione della Città d'Athene, colle Provincie dell'Attica, Focia, Beozia e Negroponte* (Parma: Galeazzo Rosati, 1688), a source surprisingly neglected by scholarship despite its wealth of insights. The analysis also juxtaposes Magni's account with that of the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, who visited the city seven years earlier. How did a seventeenth-century Western traveler perceive Athens: as a vanished antiquity or as a living city? And to what extent did his perspective converge with—or diverge from—that of a local observer?

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

DILETTA HABERL*Università degli Studi dell'Aquila*

Diletta Haberl, art historian, is a PhD candidate in Art History at the University of L'Aquila with a scholarship in the program Literatures, Arts, Media: Transcodification. Her research focuses on German and Dutch travelers along the Via degli Abruzzi between the 18th and 19th centuries and the rediscovery of medieval monuments beyond the traditional Grand Tour routes. She graduated with honors from Sapienza University of Rome and has published and presented studies on artists such as Herta Ottolenghi Wedekind zur Horst. She has collaborated with MuNDA and the Bibliotheca Hertziana and is an active member of ICOM Italy.

La riscoperta delle città perdute in Abruzzo nel periodo del Grand Tour

Friday, 17 October 2025*Visual Culture and Cartography, Travel and
Exploration Reports***Third Session – 11:40**

In the nineteenth century, numerous European travelers ventured along routes far removed from the customary paths of the Grand Tour, turning their gaze toward territories considered marginal within the Italian peninsula. These explorations led to the rediscovery of forgotten cities and landscapes, offering new perspectives on Italy's historical and natural heritage. Their accounts did not amount to mere documentation but sought to reconstruct the historical memory of the places they observed. Analytical and often detailed descriptions reveal the growing interest of the period in the vestiges of the past and in processes of cultural stratification. Attention was not limited to monuments but extended to the surrounding landscape: mountains, plateaus, valleys, and villages were evoked as powerful settings, capable of amplifying the symbolic value of ruins and generating complex aesthetic and intellectual experiences. In this perspective, the landscape was not regarded as a simple backdrop, but as a living component of historical memory, a space where nature and culture constantly intersected. The written reports and visual works produced by these travelers today represent valuable sources for understanding how Abruzzo, in particular, was perceived as a tangible testimony of a meaningful past. They contributed to a process of valorization that concerned not only material vestiges but also the environmental context in which they were embedded, in line with the nineteenth-century sensitivity toward the conservation of cultural and landscape heritage. The rediscovery of peripheral cities and territories, closely linked to their natural environment, played a central role in the construction of a cultural identity that intertwined historical and landscape dimensions.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

ARIANNA CAMPIANI*Sapienza Università di Roma*

Arianna Campiani is assistant professor at the Department of History, Anthropology, Religions, Art, Performing Art (SARAS) at Sapienza University of Rome. Her research focus on Mesoamerican urbanism and architecture, with a particular interest on the Maya Area during the Classic Period of Mesoamerica (300-900 CE). She works at Palenque and its region since 2008. Arianna Campiani has been a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow at the Department of Ancient World Studies at Sapienza University of Rome with the Global Fellowship project MAYURB-839602 during 2020-2022.

The “re-discovery” of the Maya city of Palenque: views and interpretations between the XVIII and XIX centuries

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Visual Culture and Cartography, Travel and
Exploration Reports***Third Session – 12:00**

At the end of the XVIII century, the debate over the origins of the indigenous populations of New Spain led to the modern “re-discovery” of the ancient Maya city of Palenque (Chiapas, Mexico). The first official visit took place in 1784, when José Antonio Calderón was escorted by local natives, who had always been aware of the ruins, to the “stone houses” emerging from the tropical forest. This first expedition was followed by others, aimed at gathering information and drawings, as well as extracting artifacts, that would help identifying the builders of the mysterious ruins. Torn between Carthaginians, Romans or Phoenicians, only few explorers attributed to local indigenous people the ability to build the lost cities. This debate, which already started in Guatemala learned circles at the end of the XVIII century, would continue in enlightened European circles following, in 1822, the publication of captain Del Río’s expedition report (from 1787). The fame of Palenque spread rapidly, fueling disquisitions and interpretation, and a race to retrieve more documents and objects able to establish a consensus over the origin of the ruins and of their builders. In this presentation, I will analyze the production of drawings and reports concerning Palenque between the XVIII and mid-XIX centuries, and focus on how interpretations and representations changed depending on the way information was disseminated and on the opinions of the actors involved in the debate.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

FEDERICA CAUSARANO*Università degli Studi Roma Tre*

PhD in History of Architecture and Urban Planning (IUAV, 2020) and architect (Roma Tre, 2015). Her doctoral work addressed the reception and interpretation of Nero's *Domus Aurea* between the 16th and 19th centuries. Her master's thesis on Marcello Piacentini and the Via della Conciliazione project won the B. Gravagnuolo Prize (2016). She has pursued her research and teaching in the History of Modern and Contemporary Architecture through postdoctoral positions at IUAV, the Fondation Le Corbusier, and Roma Tre University.

Fragments of Lost Rome: the image of the Domus Aurea in the Early Modern Period

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Myth, Imaginary, and Cultural Memory***Fourth Session – 13:50**

Speaking of Rome, it seems paradoxical to refer to the *Urbs Aeterna* as a lost city. Yet its history is marked by layers of urban development that have been hidden or erased over time. Traces of some of these layers were preserved only in written sources until archaeological advances brought tangible traces to light.

Pliny the Elder and Suetonius describe Nero's *Domus Aurea*, a palace so vast that it either surrounded or replaced the entire city of Rome. Built after the fire of 64 AD, the project was short-lived, interrupted by Nero's fall in 68 AD. Nevertheless, numerous enigmatic ancient accounts have survived, fuelling its fame and preserving its memory. Despite the belief that its ruins had disappeared under urban development, the *Domus* persisted in imagination, inspiring reconstructions, especially in the early modern period.

Explorations of the Neronian remains on the Esquiline began in the late 15th century but remained unrecognised until the 19th century. Subsequent excavation campaigns enabled the correlation of material evidence with ancient sources without diminishing the value of earlier interpretations. A critical review of these attempts highlights the influence of literature and visual representation on the depiction of the *Domus Aurea*, akin to a fragment of a lost city that has paradoxically endured in the collective imagination as a myth.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV–XVIII century)

LORENZO GATTA

I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies

Lorenzo Gatta received his PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art in 2024. Currently a Berenson Fellow at Villa I Tatti – The Harvard Centre for Italian Renaissance Studies, he is developing a project on the political resonance of Indigenous North American architecture across the early modern Atlantic world. He has held fellowships at the Nederlands Interuniversitair Kunsthistorisch Instituut in Florence and the Institute of Advanced Studies at University College London, with forthcoming appointments at the Italian Academy (Columbia University), the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the John Carter Brown Library.

Hochelaga's Transatlantic Afterlife, 1535–1678 (Canada)

Friday, 17 October 2025

Myth, Imaginary, and Cultural Memory

Fourth Session – 14:10

Before its abandonment in the late sixteenth century, Hochelaga had stood since 1200 AD in what is now Montreal as part of a vast political network of Iroquoian communities along the Saint Lawrence River. First depicted in Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi* (1556) as a fortified town organised around collective longhouses, Hochelaga continued to reappear in European sources long after its physical disappearance. This paper traces Hochelaga's transatlantic resonance across early modern travel literature, cartography, and visual representation. Often dismissed as "a Palladian speculation" on the state of nature, Hochelaga's spatial organization can be repositioned within the broader history of cross-cultural exchange that shaped Europeans' reliance on Indigenous knowledge in grappling with the 'New World.' Even if distorted through a colonial gaze, the Iroquoian principles of decentralisation, reciprocity, and matrilocality articulated in the town's layout acted as critical vectors for reimagining the politics of space beyond European frameworks of state formation, property relations, and gender norms. As a 'lost city,' Hochelaga endured in early modern imaginaries as a compelling vision of social creativity that foregrounded network over centre, mobility over permanence, use over ownership, consensus over command.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

DELIA COSENTINO*DePaul University, Chicago*

Delia Cosentino is Professor of History of Art and Architecture at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. Currently a Mellon Foundation Long-Term Fellow at the Newberry Library (2025-2026), she co-authored *Resurrecting Tenochtitlan: Imagining the Aztec Capital in Modern Mexico City* (UT Press, 2023) and wrote *Las Joyas de Zinacantan: Arte Colonial en el Monasterio de San Miguel* (Colegio Mexiquense, Mexico, 2003, 2007). She curated *Ceramic Trees of Life from Mexico* (Fowler Museum, UCLA, 2003), *Colonial Andean Art from the Thoma Collection* (DePaul Art Museum [DPAM], 2009), and *Nexo/Nexus: Latin American Connections in the Midwest* (DPAM, 2016).

Gladiators in Altera Roma: Tenochtitlan in the European Imagination (Mexico)

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Myth, Imaginary, and Cultural Memory***Fourth Session – 14:30**

After its capture in 1521, Tenochtitlan was Hispanicized to become Mexico City. Meanwhile, the lost Aztec capital became the subject of a conceptual resurrection in the European imagination. Its early colonizers made sense of the bygone native city through a classical lens, leading some contemporary scholars to describe its colonial perception as an “Altera Roma.” This paper focuses on a culminating moment in this process as seen in the work of Mexican Jesuit philosopher Francisco Xavier Clavijero who published a wildly popular history of the Aztecs while exiled in Italy during the 18th century. It was the circulation of Clavijero’s *Storia Antica del Messico* (Cesena, 1780), including its engravings of the Aztecs, their cultural traditions, and their built environment, that fostered a powerful impression of the lost imperial capital. One of Clavijero’s most influential prints features Aztec gladiators against an urban backdrop that recalls an Albertian ideal city, while the foregrounded figures recall fights in Rome’s Colosseum more than 1000 years earlier. From the sixteenth century forward, images, texts, and the language around a specific genre of native warrior in combat were curated, merged, and translated by various agents across time and space to produce, in Clavijero’s time, a polished neoclassicized view of the otherwise fading Aztecs in an increasingly distant Tenochtitlan.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

STEFANIA CASTELLANA*Università del Salento*

Stefania Castellana obtained her PhD in Italian Arts, History, and Territory in the Context of Relations with Europe and Mediterranean Countries from the University of Salento, where she is currently *cultrice della materia*. She held a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Naples Federico II within the framework of the PRIN 2017 research project *The Renaissance in Southern Italy and in the Islands*. Previously, she was a research fellow at the Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi in Florence and at the Associazione del Centro Studi Normanno-Svevi in Bari.

Her research focuses primarily on early modern visual culture, with particular attention to the circulation of artists and artworks in the Adriatic region and Southern Italy. She has presented papers at several academic conferences and published contributions in scholarly journals, edited volumes, and exhibition catalogues, as well as two monographs.

**Gold, Shells, Absence:
identity and memory of the 'lost'
Tarent in the notes of the erudites
and European travellers between
XVIII and XIX centuries**

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Myth, Imaginary, and Cultural Memory***Fourth Session – 15:20**

“Never was a place more completely swept off the face of the earth than *Tarentum*”: when Sir Henry Swinburne (*Travels in the Two Sicilies*, 1777-1780) travels through Taranto, he uses these words to show his displeasure about the betrayed expectations to run into some vestiges of the ancient *Tarentum*. His disappointment represents the common mood of many European travellers who can't find nothing about Taranto such as it was described by ancient poets, historians, humanists and chroniclers.

This paper aims to give an idea about some tangible and monumental aspects observed by travellers and erudites in Taranto between XVIII and XIX centuries, trying to give back some useful elements to understanding the early modern era in Tarent, currently readable only as watermark.

When they denounce the missed (and expected) meeting with the antiquity, unconsciously they describe a part of Taranto destined to disappear itself, after Italy's unification and, especially, during the several phases of industrialization.

This speech addresses the following issues:

- The reports of the city in XVIII and XIX centuries and the comparison between Taranto and other Italian and European cities.
- Some lost tangible aspects related to the paysage in XVIII and XIX century: gold, shells, terracotta.
- Tales of medieval and early modern monuments in Taranto related to city portrayal.
- Travellers and their relationship with the antiquity.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

MARIA CAROLINA CAMPONE*Scuola Militare "Nunziatella" di Napoli*

Maria Carolina Campone, M.A., PhD in History and Criticism of Architecture, is Classical Languages Professor at the Military School "Nunziatella"-Neaples. Former Adjunct Professor at "Seconda Università degli Studi di Napoli" and University "Federico II", is Vice-Director of scientific journal "Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano", member of the scientific committee of the scientific journal "Arte Cristiana" and co-director of the "Pecile" series for the Perugia-based publishing house Graphe. Among her recent research are the *Patria Costantinopolitana*. A list of her publications is available in <https://independent.academia.edu/Campone>

Constantinople, the "second Pompeii": the myth of the city buried by the Patria Costantinopolitana in modern travel literature

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Myth, Imaginary, and Cultural Memory***Fourth Session – 15:40**

In 18th and 19th century literature, Constantinople is often an "underground" city, and its natural cavities hide inaccessible and mysterious places.

This image, also the result of the orientalism and exoticism typical of the period, draws inspiration from the rediscovery of the *Patria Costantinopolitana*, a corpus of texts composed between the 8th and 12th centuries: in these texts, Constantinople is presented as the heir and continuator of cities that had disappeared or been destroyed by natural disasters.

In fact, around the year 1000, some celestial phenomena and climatic fluctuations had codified an image of the Eastern capital as an almost depopulated and ruined place (although not in accordance with reality), threatened by dark omens and by an astronomical and climatic situation perceived as hostile and dangerous, as reflected in the *Patria*. The signs of the Vesuvian eruption that occurred around 968, correlated with the constant references to negative omens, justify the presentation of the city as "buried" and of the Basilica of Hagia Sophia as a vessel capable of guaranteeing the salvation of both the soul and the body.

Through the renewed success of these texts, we thus witness, in nineteenth-century travel literature, a characterization of the city as a "new Pompeii" - as well as a "new Rome" and a "second Jerusalem" - which, amplified by the rediscovery of the Vesuvian cities, brings to completion a literary and identity-building process that has its roots in the Middle Ages.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)

ADEKUNLE ADEYEMO*Redeemer's University, Ede, Nigeria*

Adekunle Adeyemo is an architect and architectural historian who holds a PhD from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and lectures at Redeemer's University, Ede, Nigeria. His research focuses on architectural history and theory's intersection with the humanities where he often uses extra-architectural concepts to interrogate objects and phenomena. He received both PhD and publishing grants from Gerda Henkel Foundation, Germany; C3 New Scholarship from Davidson College, USA; and an Azrieli Architectural Archive Fellowship, Israel. A fellow of the Ife Institute of Advanced Studies, he has presented his research at in-person conferences in Germany, Ghana, Israel, and the United Kingdom.

The lost city of Oyo-Ile in Yoruba Cultural Memory and Identity

Friday, 17 October 2025

*Myth, Imaginary, and Cultural Memory***Fourth Session – 16:00**

The Yoruba, one of the most urbanised people groups in Africa, has Oyo empire as the largest of its historical empires with its territory stretching from present-day south-west Nigeria to other parts of West Africa and the Bight of Benin at the height of its powers in the 17th and 18th centuries. This paper examines the Oyo empire's capital, the lost city of Oyo-Ile or Old Oyo, in Yoruba cultural memory and identity. Accounts of missionaries and British explorers reinforce Yoruba historiographical and narrative traditions on the size, influence, and features of Oyo-Ile. Although the city was abandoned following persistent attacks by its adversaries and the war killing of its ruler, it holds a prominent place in Yoruba cultural memory and identity. The establishment of a new Oyo as a capital at another location, built in the former's pattern with a similar but smaller palace, and having similar governance structures, illustrates its importance. Furthermore, the new Oyo's rulers professed grand ambitions to return to Oyo-Ile, although these never materialised. However, Yoruba people acknowledge the Oyo empire as the height of the people group's civilisation, and Oyo-Ile as its symbol. The egalitarian culture of Oyo-Ile, perceived as desirable, is linked to the Yoruba's aspiration for education and advancement which has driven many actions. Oyo-Ile also promotes Yoruba nationalism, which the people continuously strive for through political, social, and cultural groups with varying degrees of success. Whereas today Oyo-Ile lies in ruins at the Old Oyo National Park, its ideas and ideals remain vibrant in Yoruba Cultural memory and identity.

LOST CITIES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources, Experience, Imagery
in Early Modern Period
(XV-XVIII century)

International Conference

organized by Giulia Ceriani Sebregondi,
Francesca Mattei, Danila Jacazzi



Many cities, all over the world, have disappeared over the centuries, abandoned – but perhaps never forgotten – destroyed by natural disasters or buried under new urban layers, re-emerging for different reasons. Fascinating historians, explorers, archaeologists, architects, and artists, the ‘lost cities’ - both literally and metaphorically - have continued to exist in literary sources, descriptions, chronicles, and sometimes in iconographic representations.

Starting from the case study of the Vesuvian cities, the international conference *Lost Cities in a Global Perspective: Sources, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period (XV-XVIII century)* is aimed to investigate in an interdisciplinary and comparative way the material and imaginary dimensions assumed by the lost cities in a global perspective, before the birth of archaeology as a science in the 18th-19th century.

PRIN 2022 PROJECT
The Vesuvian Lost Cities before the "Discovery".
Source, Experience, Imagery in Early Modern Period



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