

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR PhD STUDENTS AND RECENT PhD GRADUATES



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DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE
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ARCHITECTURE AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE. Methods and practices for interpreting the built environment.

ANCONA, 25–26 FEBRUARY 2027



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The PhD Programme in Civil, Environmental, Building Engineering and Architecture (ICAEA) at Università Politecnica delle Marche organizes and promotes the Conference “Architecture as a Historical Source. Methods and Practices for Interpreting the Built Environment,” to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and critical exchange among young scholars working on the built environment as a source of historical knowledge.

The built environment is primary historical evidence: its layers make socio-economic, political, and technological developments tangible, expanding the boundaries of traditional historiography based on archival and iconographic sources. Space, therefore, moves from being the setting of human action to a tool for decoding relationships between communities and their environment.

Viewing architecture as historical evidence means reading materiality as a document. Building alterations, infrastructural continuities, urban stratifications and traces of conflict take on the role of primary sources, capable of complementing or challenging traditional historiographies.

Historiography thus emerges as a dynamic dialogue between archival evidence and spatial sources, assigning the built environment a decisive role in reconstructing historical events. In recent decades, this dialogue has advanced significantly through the integration of spatial analysis technologies - such as GIS, photogrammetry, remote sensing, and three-dimensional modelling - with methods drawn from historiography, thereby expanding the field of investigation into architecture and urban contexts. These tools strengthen the interdisciplinarity approach required to investigate the built environment and enable the correlation of heterogeneous datasets - material, cartographic and archival - creating a solid bridge between humanities, digital technologies and computer science.

In parallel, recent research approaches have highlighted the investigative value of architecture and the built environment in interpreting historical and contemporary events. Emblematic examples include the pioneering studies of Forensic Architecture, which also highlight the connections between space, power and technology and recognize the built environment as a privileged historiographical source. The integration of these experiences into the conference aims to trace a theoretical-methodological and operational trajectory, alongside the plurality of perspectives currently available, without claiming to exhaust their richness.

Based on these premises, the initiative aims to bring together researchers from different fields, united by a shared interest in the spatial dimension of history and in the methodologies required to interpret it. With no geographical or chronological restrictions, theoretical, methodological and case-study-based proposals are welcome.

RESEARCH THEMES

Contributions may explore one or more of the following themes:

- **Architecture as a source:** interpreting buildings, infrastructures, cities and landscapes in historical reconstruction;
- **Analytical methodologies:** critical approaches to reading the built environment as historical evidence;
- **Digital technologies and spatial analysis:** the contribution of GIS, geomatics, 3D surveying, photogrammetry and remote sensing to historical research;
- **Source Integration :** relationships and convergences between material evidence and

archival, cartographic and iconographic sources;

- **Traces of social and political processes:** how territories and architectures record conflicts, transformations, reconstruction and dynamics of memory;
- **History and historiography:** the role of architectural history in renewing contemporary historiographical research practices.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

The Call for Papers is open to PhD students, as well as PhD graduates who obtained their degree within one year before the call deadline, from the fields of history, archaeology, architecture, restoration and conservation, engineering, urban studies, geomatics, geography, digital humanities and other related disciplines.

CONFERENCE FORMAT

The conference will consist of presentation sessions for accepted papers, followed by a session using Open Space Technology, a dynamic and engaging method in which discussion topics are freely chosen through spontaneous, creative and highly productive exchange. For this reason, **the conference will be held entirely in person.**

VENUE AND DATES

The conference will take place on 25 and 26 February 2027 at Università Politecnica delle Marche, Monte Dago campus, in the city of Ancona.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

1. Abstract: maximum 300 words, in Italian, English, French or Spanish; title and five keywords.
2. Curriculum vitae: maximum 250 words.
3. Form to be completed at the following link: <https://forms.gle/XeXTDWWV2Jh8d5Di7>
4. **Deadline for abstract submission: 10 November 2026.**
5. One abstract per author. No registration fee.

The selection results will be communicated to participants by 30 November 2026.

For enquiries: architetturaevidenza@gmail.com

Conference curated by ICAEA PhD students: Ileana Schiavelli and Alessia Strozzi.