

# as4

## architectures of the soul

4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

understanding the past,  
shaping the future

19th - 21st October 2023  
Monastery of Batalha (Portugal)

Book of Abstracts

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Image Database (<https://kos.aahvs.duke.edu/>) and Visualizing Venice (<https://www.visualizingvenice.org/visu/>). The capacity of digital technologies to communicate stories about objects and places to the public has been a special focus of her work (<https://dahvc.org/project/medieval-color/>). From 1994 to 1998 Caroline Bruzelius was Director of the American Academy in Rome. She is a Fellow of the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Medieval Academy of America, and the Society of Antiquaries.

## 17. Cultural memory as a mediator in the (re)construction of atmospheres

The emptiness of a building is mainly noticed by the absence of people in a particular use, and when it enters a process of degradation or even ruin, the perception of its ancestral experience fades and amplifies the feeling of the end of a cycle. A kind of archaeology of time underlies this, whose exhumation has the cultural memory of the place as its methodology, where memories of the experiences that took place there can be prospected. However, these memories don't always coincide with the materiality in presence, in other words, with the material history that has disappeared. Museum discourses tend to crystallise materiality by associating it with the historical-stylistic and/or temporal-identity process in terms of art history and/or architecture recognised by a certain canon. However, the approach we seek to follow is based on cultural memory, where we look for experiential memories and the respective ambiances they have generated. The relevance of the anthropological knowledge of ancestral users, in their daily lives, in a long chronology of adaptations and hybridisations, enhances the perception of the meaning of use and consequently the interpretation of the spaces to be safeguarded and valued in the context of the intervention. The extinction of the use of a building for which it was designed, along with abandonment, disintegrates the very meaning of architecture. Therefore, the reuse of this same building, from the strict perspective of valorising the ruin as a symbol of an aesthetic/artistic entity, is still an artificialisation of architecture. Although we comply with all the procedures and recommendations of the heritage charters and good restoration practices, what goes beyond these is the sense of cultural memory as an intangible value that mediates and humanises the interventions. These were the principles we followed in the valorisation of the Conventos dos Capuchos and São Paulo de Alferrara.

Keywords: senses, cultural memory, places, heritage, atmospheres

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**Sofia Aleixo** is an architect, an academic, and a researcher. She is an expert in architectural heritage conservation, architectural conservation design, and its implementation on-site, which became the reason to pursue a doctoral research on the topic, focused on cultural values and Theory of Change, in Oxford-UK, where she lived and taught at IARD Master. Teaching Design Studios at the University of Évora since 2002, she is currently an Associate Professor. Research Full Member, CHAM-SLHI/FCSH-UNL responsible for the area of Architecture in the Magazines of Ideas and Culture Project. Collaborator Researcher at CHAIA and IHC-CEHFCi, at University of Évora.

## 18. The Abbey of Montecassino. *Succisa Virescit* (Italy)

Focus of this contribution is the Benedictine abbey of Montecassino. It was founded by St Benedict in VI century; it is the cradle of Benedictine monastic order and also a center of spiritual, cultural and artistic irradiation for Italy and subsequently, with the spread of the Benedictine order, for whole Europe. St Benedict arrived in Montecassino in 529, founding the first Benedictine monastery. In the 11th century Montecassino experienced the most splendid period of its history, with Abbot Desiderio who was elected Pope Victor III in 1086. Under the abbey of Desiderio, the monastery underwent significant transformations, becoming one of the most important architectural complexes of the Middle Ages. Each historical period leaves a trace on the monument. The great transformations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries deeply affect the architectural history of the abbey, transforming it into a great monument of the Renaissance and the Baroque and hiding the medieval structures. During the Second World War, on February 15, 1944, the abbey was completely destroyed by a ferocious bombing; the following year the reconstruction began and was officially concluded on 25 October 1964 when the abbey basilica was reconsecrated for the fourth time since its foundation. Montecassino abbey is one of the most important monuments of European monastic architecture; it has been visited and studied by the greatest masters of the Renaissance and