

In honor of Professor Luigia Binda

Professor Luigia Binda has been active in masonry education and research for over 25 years at the Department of Structural Engineering of Politecnico di Milano, Italy. Her numerous research papers, published in journals and conference proceedings, have established her as a leading figure at the international level in the field of inspection and conservation of heritage masonry structures. She is among the pioneer and influential researchers who have more significantly contributed to ascertain the study of historical structures with the status of an advanced and distinct scientific discipline. Her wide expertise covers areas such as inspection technologies, in-situ and laboratory experimental investigation, limit analysis, damage and durability of masonry structures, long-term behavior and seismic vulnerability, among many others.

Prof. Binda's research contribution has been acknowledged by her nomination as member of a very large number of scientific committees of different organizations such as RILEM, the Masonry Society (TMS) in the US, of the International Masonry Society in the UK. She has been also nominated Honorary RILEM Member and Convener of Cluster E of the same organization, promoting and managing most of the activity in the masonry field and therefore opening the way for several further Technical Committees' contributions. She played a fundamental role in disseminating the knowledge in her field of research both at national and international levels, and at the national Italian level she gave substantial contributions to the activities promoted by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and by the Civil Protection regarding the conservation, also in emergency conditions, the architectural heritage.

She is member of the Editorial Board of the international journals Construction and Building Materials, International Masonry Journal and International Journal of Architectural Heritage. In consideration of her outstanding research she has received a number of awards among which the Canadian Masonry Symposium Award in 2001, the J. B. Scalzi Award from TMS in 2002, the Timber West Award from BMS in 2006, the Research Award for the Best Paper of the Conference and the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Structural Faults & Repair International Conference, Edinburgh 2008.

After her official retirement on November 2008, many colleagues from different countries agreed in organizing a Symposium on her honor. The symposium was dedicated to acknowledge her precious scientific contribution while encouraging her to keep actively working in research and education. The call for the symposium was very successful and the symposium was actually celebrated in Milano, on May 8th, 2009, with large attendance and valuable scientific discussion. The symposium offered a very good opportunity for dissemination in recent advances on inspection, analysis and conservation of masonry structures and historical construction. The present issue includes a series of papers based on the presentations offered in the Symposium.

We take advantage of this opportunity to express to Prof. Binda our gratitude for all her insight, cooperation and friendship during so many years.

Claudio Modena
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