



DAY 1 10th November 2016

Aula Magna / Main Hall

Università degli Studi di Firenze

Piazza San Marco, Firenze

Saluti di apertura / Opening Salutations

Prof. Luigi Dei

Magnifico Rettore dell'Università degli studi di Firenze

Good morning and welcome to this second International Conference on Modern Age Fortifications of the Mediterranean Coast. I am very glad to give you the warmest greetings and wishes by the University of Florence.

After the first edition in two-thousand fifteen in Valencia, we are very happy to have been as hosting Institution and city for this second edition. I read with great interest the programme of your meeting and I was truly impressed by two interesting peculiarities: the interdisciplinary approach and the strong contamination among research topics often separated, I mean scientific-technological versus human sciences. It's the great

challenge of nowadays, that of realising a merging between branches of knowledge for long time walking on separate and distant pathways. In two-thousand one I founded, together with some other Colleagues from the Faculties of Sciences, Humanities, Architecture and Engineering, two University - Course first level and Master – in diagnostics and material science for cultural heritage conservation. These course are still alive and they are built according to the same spirit that animates your Conference: trying to make speaking among them different skills all aimed to give a contribution for the safeguard of the cultural heritage. Today Mediterranean, as always occurred in the past, is not a peaceful mirror of water. It's a wonderful basin, but rich since ever of contradictions, tensions, together with the maximum expressions of the human artistic creativity.

This is the great paradox of the Mediterranean basin. Among the same waves that saw wars among ancient ships, or commercial exchanges, both looking far from the coasts the fortifications you are studying now, we are present today defenceless at terrible tragedies close to the Lampedusa coasts. And possibly asking ourselves about our past could succeed in understanding and trying solutions for the dramatic events that mark our times. You discuss about cultural heritage – namely fortifications between fifteenth and eighteenth – that belong to now Europe and northern Africa countries and in the middle the ancient and always present Mediterranean Sea. Knowing our past and studying the various and different evolutions of the history of such critical part of the world can help in finding some new routes onto which making peaceful paths. It's important to establish strong cooperation among the countries the fortifications of which you are studying.

Our School of Architecture in Fès Maroc goes right in this direction. We can have hope in the future of our Mediterranean basin and world only if you declare the first place of knowledge, reason and internationalisation. Education and culture are the best instruments to win the battle against ignorance that is the best humus onto which bad plants germinate and grow. Recent events in Europe and on the other side of the ocean warn us that cooperation, share, solidarity must try to replace competition, closure, hyper-protection of national interests. The road is a steep rise, but we must try to climb: schools, Universities, research, knowledge and intellect are our weapons.

Therefore, I thank you for the contribution you give to this struggle of the reason against the irrationalism, of the culture and research against the ignorance, of the progress of the knowledge against the regression to the darkness of the intellect. Excuse-me for my rapid leaving, but I have to participate to a conference at the International Fair for restoration and conservation.

I would like to wish you a success for this meeting hoping you can also enjoy with the beauties of our city.

Thank you so much for your attention