

CAL Undergraduate Research Scholarships Scheme 2017
Project Proposal Form

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| School/Dept: | CBOMGS, CAHA |
| Project Title: | At the Crossroads of Empires: the Longobard Church of Sant'Ambrogio at Montecorvino Rovella (Salerno), Italy |

Project Summary

The church of Sant' Ambrogio in Salerno (Italy) is one of the best preserved examples of Lombard church architecture in southern Italy and contains some of the finest examples of ninth-century fresco work in western Europe.

Discovered under overgrown vegetation in the 1970s, the church awaits a systematic archaeological and historical study although it is clear that the site has the potential to be one of the most significant in early medieval history, placed as it is at the crossroad of the Lombard Principality of Salerno and Benevento and the Byzantine and the Carolingian Empires

The Crossroads of Empires project aims to offer a preliminary investigation of the site's archaeological and documented history, which will culminate in an application to have the site formally recognised by the European cultural commission 'Nostra Europa' and a conference designed to promote awareness of the site among the academic community and general public. The project is a collaborative venture between scholars based at the Universities of Birmingham and Salerno (Italy), and will feature a team of specialists and students from both institutions working alongside one another to reconstruct the history of the site and explore ways in which we might promote its historical value to a wider audience.

What the researcher will do

There are 2positions available for this project.

Role 1 (2.5. weeks)

The first role will join the archaeological team, headed by the Università di Salerno, helping in the excavation and recording of the church site's standing features as well as preliminary soundings in the vicinity of the church. You will also assist in the excavation of the site and cleaning and recording of finds, as well as filling in site reports and other documentation association with the project.

Role 2 (2.5 weeks)

The second role will take a more heritage based approach. You will assist a member of the University of Birmingham's team from the Ironbridge Institute exploring ways in which we might make the site more accessible to visitors, including the creation of interpretation boards, a museum exhibition and liaising with the local community of Montecorvino to explore ways of managing the site as a sustainable tourist destination. Both candidates will also have the opportunity to present their research findings and experiences at academic meetings in the UK.

Skills required by the Scholarship holder

Essential

- An enthusiasm for all things ‘medieval’.
- A willingness to collaborate as part of a team
- A willingness to travel and reside in Italy for a period of (2–3 weeks)
- Good organisational skills
- Good communication skills

Desirable (but not compulsory)

- Knowledge of Italian
- Previous archaeological/museum experience

How will your Project benefit the Scholarship holder?

The scholarship will provide students with first-hand experience of working as part of a large international team, which will serve to consolidate their organisational and collaborative skills as well as provide them with significant networking opportunities with leading scholars in the field. Students involved in the project will also gain practical experience in archaeological excavation and technique, which will offer invaluable skills to those seeking careers or post-graduate study in a history/archaeology related discipline. In addition, students will attain vital skills in the management and conservation of historical sites, including experience in curating and disseminating research findings to public and scholarly audiences and engaging with leading heritage bodies such as the European Commission.

How will the Scholarship benefit your Project?

Archaeological and heritage projects such as these always benefit from large teams of enthusiastic researchers, which allow us to gather as much information about the site in the space of a single season. As with many archaeological sites in Italy, Sant’Ambrogio is at risk of further decay, and conditions can change rapidly in the span of a single year. Therefore, the opportunity to have representatives from the UG scholarship scheme will enable us to process a larger amount of information in a single season. This will substantially benefit our applications for further funding to the European Commission and to have the site officially recognised on its heritage list. Secondly, in terms of heritage management, current UG students have a much better understanding of modern digital formats, such as Twitter, Instagram, and Android Apps, which are integral to promoting the project to younger and future audiences. Student participation in this scheme thus offers an invaluable perspective that cannot be easily replicated by older researchers accustomed to more traditional formats of public engagement.

The student involvement in this project will contribute directly to research that will result in the creation of a conference dedicated to the church and a related edited monograph.