

## **Unearthing Earthen Architecture**



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### **ABSTRACT**

It is regarded as one of the most original and powerful expression of mankind's ability to create an eco-friendly built environment by making use of the resources readily available from the earth. Today, Earthen Architecture is found in over ten percent of the World Heritage properties. Manifestations of these are seen in places of worship such as churches, mosques and temples, Houses of Parliament, Great Houses, and in the residences of the ordinary citizens. Barbados's architectural foundation has been laid on earthen architecture; which is exemplified throughout the entire island. From the majestic coral stone structures that beautifully adorns the landscape and remain a special point of interest to locals and visitors alike, to the small decorative pieces made of the same coral stone, and of course we cannot overlook the our clayton tiles ((a special tile made from clay and used on the roof of our buildings and on our floors. In fact the Caribbean region in the West Indies offers great examples of this, and demonstrates how architecture could learn from and be inspired by history and heritage. From the examples of our first settlers the Amerindians, to the second settlers the Europeans, and our enslaved who were brought here from Africa to work on the sugar plantations, all three groups have left behind an interesting legacy of earthen architecture of which we all could be justly proud. Our cultural landscapes and archaeological sites have been enriched and embellished by earthen architecture. We continue to call attention to its cultural importance through research and publications, and this has led to its consideration as a heritage of humankind worthy of protection, preservation and conservation by local government and international bodies such as UNESCO. The economic quality and availability of the many material used in earthen architecture are testimony to it great potential to contribute to the alleviation of poverty and sustainable development. "Unearthing Earthen Architecture" will present the case of Barbados, making mention of a few examples to be found in the neighboring island. It will show that by following the examples of previous builders who made use of earthen architecture, we can create a built environment in harmony with our natural surroundings, resulting in a society conducive for healthy living and productive.

**Keywords:** Vernacular building heritage, bioclimatic, Sardinia.