

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE 1
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

**Images from the territory. The imaginary as form of territory
structuralisation in Valsesia and Monteregio**

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This thesis research work has been completed gathering from their original-historical sources, folkloricity information such as histories, legends, traditions, superstitions, folk-medicine tales, and, in general all those imaginary facts orally handed down to posterity.

Popular imaginary grants the possibility to read the code of practical, artistic, architectural etc. cultures. Such code, moreover, outlines the thinking and ways of living the territory of country communities.

This research work is part of a large and ambitious survey bearing the title of "Images from the territory. The imaginary as form of territory structuralisation" planned by Prof. Alberto Borghini.



The Monte Rosa mountain

Such research aims to formulate a “fantastical-imaginary” way to enjoy the territory not just as a land but rather for its landscape peculiarities. It comes out an “imaginary” way to live the territory collectively by means of an in depth investigation about the areas from which the tales come from, which ultimately identifies the geographical-territorial sites. The scenery, the territory is taken, here, as an “Imaginary network”, as a gathering of stories geographically distributed. There it has been obtained an imaginary description of the territory, which shows its more specific peculiarities, a sort of imaginary geography from which the landscape shows those details which generate tales and stories.



Proh, the Devil's bridge

The most important aim of this work is on the spot investigation. This research work has enlighten to me many little details tied to the local “microgeography”: forgotten pathways, neglected houses, castles, bridges, rivers, chapels once centers of devotion, medicine and masterpieces from the ancient world. The “microgeography” of the area can be easily reidentified. The local findings have been handed down to posterity from the Walser and Novarese dialects, saving both syntax and the modulation of the oral “spoken” habits. However the bibliographical research has not been neglected, this was quite important to confront the tales. Besides books of general content we have

found descriptions which are not easily available, writings from parish-churches, papers from villages and from local writers. To set up the formulation of the thesis, which basically is documentary, we have done our best not to deviate from the original content, and avoided superficial and misleading comments. This choice we made because it is believed that a person from Varallo Sesia would describe a fact happened in Quarona differently from the watching of an inhabitant of Quarona: in fact stories travel, get modified and tie themselves to the new territory. An index has been created to identify the tales. The research work has mainly considered the area from Valsesia and Monteregio which includes severe glaciers and very sweet hill slopes, rivers at the foot of the valleys and nice-fields, can be admired from the 4000 metres high Monte Rosa mountain; the silent spectator of the history. Men's history: the primitives of the Fenera caves, the romans innovators, the longobards rulers, all the way to the walsers population who from the Swiss and Austrian lands settled in the territory infusing their nordic culture. This melting pot of cultures has helped progress and (especially with the advent of the Christianity) has created tales and legends including terrifying ones.....

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