The Drosso castle: an island to be valorised
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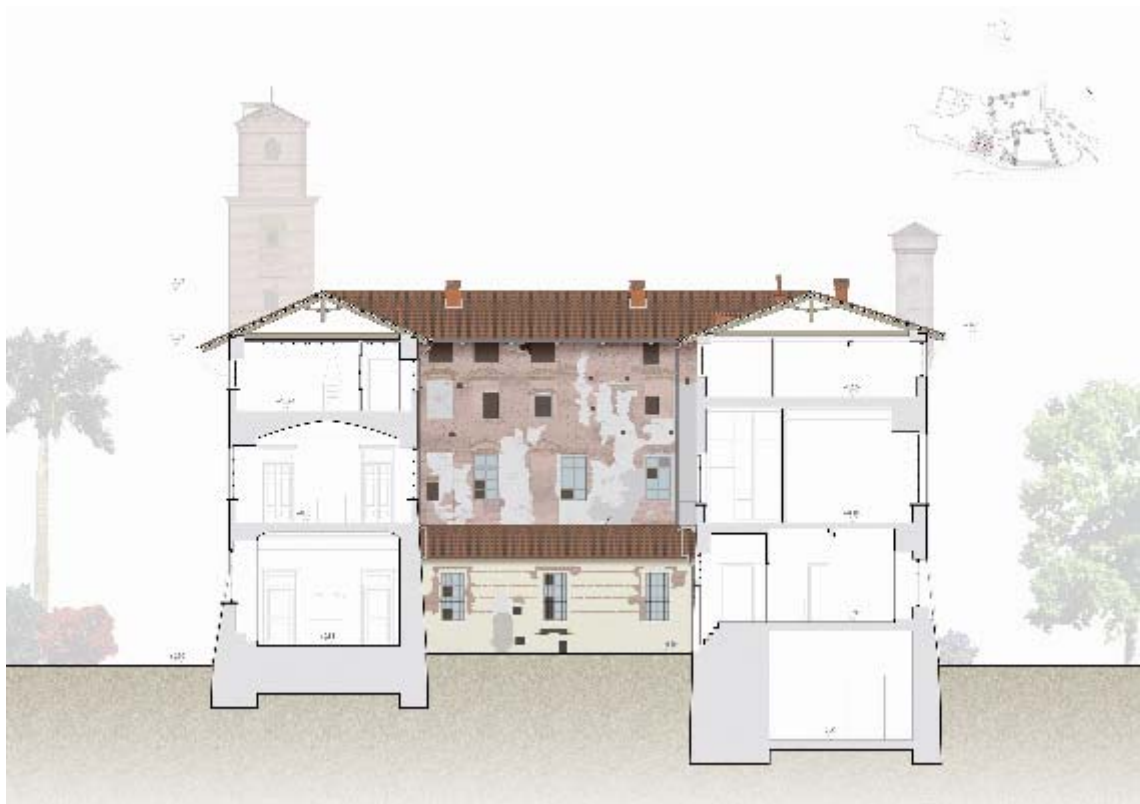Tutor: Maria Adriana Giusti

The Drosso castle is a remarkable model of a manor of medieval origin, situated on the southern border of the municipal territory of Turin, beyond the southern ring road and the highway to Pinerolo. No specific publications or exhaustive research have been elaborated so far on the castle and it was this fact that stimulated us in the choice and preparation of this thesis, which will be the most in depth survey available on this architectural construction.
We developed a 360 degrees-analysis on the castle and its outbuildings, reconstructing its history and its building phases, through the consultation of all archived documents and the comparison with the survey *in situ*. We photographed the current situation of the deterioration of the brickwork and we elaborated a hypothesis of a functional renovation, taking into consideration the urban and landscape plans concerning the river Sangone and the green areas in Turin.

Historical plans

According to the historical analysis, the castle was built on an ancient Roman settlement, on which a toll gate for Pinerolo was set up in medieval times. Subsequently it became part of the estate of the Abbey of Staffarda and the Cistercian monks built the first bell tower. The first fortification works date back to 14th century, when the Vagnone family built the northern towers, followed later by a progressive process of enrichment that culminated in the 19th century with the ri-medievalization of three facades by the Gromis family, the present owners of the castle, and the transformation of the pre-existing Italian garden into an English landscape park. The last chapter of the history of the castle was written by the Germans, who commandeered it for their SS headquarters in South Turin, bringing numerous changes to the stone and brickwork and adding the electrical and water systems.

Inner courtyard: southern wing

Currently the estate is in a state of abandon. The recent restoration of the roof structures effected by the architect Gabetti prevented further deterioration of the brickwork, which is undamaged from a structural point of view. Nevertheless the furnishings and the decorations have been removed and vandalized almost everywhere in the estate. The same cannot be said of the farmsteads adjacent to the castle, which are in a rather alarming state of structural deterioration, only recently having undergone reconstruction work by the building cooperative Stella.
The area pertaining to the castle includes, in addition to the formal garden and to the farmsteads, wide agricultural fields and an area of brushwood located along the river Sangone.

These areas have been purchased by the municipality of Turin within the project "Torino Città d'Acque", which plans the recovery and the safeguard of the river banks of Turin and of the neighbouring municipalities. With this as a starting point and also in connection with the project for the axis of Corso Marche, we have elaborated a large scale valorisation project, with a view to the recovery of the area of Drosso, mainly under a naturalistic profile, converting it in a sort of historical-landscape "island", within the Turinese industrial outskirts and linking it to the other existing "islands" or projects under way along the Sangone and the axis of Corso Marche. More specifically in reference to the castle we propose a conservative intervention and the placing of congressional, representative, reception and restorative activities, in order to avoid the creation of a trauma for its structure and its historical image.

Eye-bird view and details of the project

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