

**The “closed roof” in Alta Valle Tanaro and restoration project in Mindino (Hamlet near Garessio, Italy)**

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The essay, starting with an architectural – constructive analysis of an area of Alta Valle Tanaro, arrives at the formulation of a restoration project of the traditional building estate of a mountain hamlet in the village of Garessio (Mindino hamlet).

Considering the lack of texts about the construction culture of the nowadays deserted mountain areas which has been handed on only orally, it is possible to analyze the buildings themselves which are, as long as they exist, the real proof of a basic technology connected to the forced use of the available resources.

The first part of the thesis deals with the analysis of the location factors, with the structure and organizations of the deserted mountain hamlets in Alta Valle Tanaro (Garessio and Ormea) which are situated in an altimetric zone between 1000 and 1300 meters on the sea level.

In the second part the discussion about the single building is examined more closely thanks to an inquiry on the structural arrangement and on the used materials carried out with the help of inserts containing information about these subjects (masonries, orientations, roof, stairs, floors, doors and windows) and related to the following building types:

- for the dwelling: house with gallery (“cà”), isolated block hut (“casot”)
- for the work: stable (“stala”), barn (“scapita”)
- community: chestnuts drying hut (“scau”), oven to bake bread (“fùrn”), truna (“truna”), hollow for the milk products preservation (“séla”).

A special attention is paid to the type of buildings with “closed roof”. This building type is very rare in Italy and it serves not only the purpose of protecting from the inclemency of the weather the inner rooms but even the top of its walls. In fact it applies the inverse principle assigning to the frontal walls ending with a gable the task of closing the edges of the thatched roof. The two pitches take on a lower form in comparison to the frontispieces and they cover only the two side walls, while the frontal ones are protected by slabs of stones placed in a stepped order (“ciaplà”). Such a contrivance is due to constructive reasons: the gable consists of horizontal stripes made of blocks that are not cemented one another and go on narrowing up to the top so that the gable appears to be stepped in order to satisfy the high slope of the roof. The frontispieces were set out as stairs with the main task of protecting the straw pitches from the wind action but they could also be used to climb on to the roof to replace the straw, to sweep the snow or to put out fires.



Garessio, Trappa hamlet, Parone area:  
building with “closed roof” (stable – barn).

The third part concerns the restoration project of a mountain area in Mindino hamlet. This area has been chosen for the widespread presence of such a building technology and for the good geographical position: in fact it is situated not too many kilometers far from the ski – station of Garessio 2000 and from the Castle of Casotto.



Garessio, Mindino hamlet, Borgo area:  
row consisting of oven, hut and drying hut.

The project implies the construction of a holiday village consisting of: residences, meeting and information points, active museum/playroom, farm holidays and mountain-bike hire. Everything is realized through reutilization measures with cultural and tourist aims respecting the traditional building estate. It implies moreover the restoration of the existing buildings respecting the structure of the “closed roof” adding new connecting blocks between the edifices, inside and outside stairs and rooms that create a solid mass at the back of the buildings. In the middle of the hamlet a playing area equipped for picnics is planned to be created around a particular chestnut tree. The trunk has been partly hollowed to obtain a room to be used as toolshed or as playroom for children.



Garessio, Mindino hamlet, Borgo area:  
“the house in the tree”.

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