The alpine architectural heritage in Troncea Valley hamlets
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The area taken into consideration in this thesis is the Troncea Valley [pict.1], which is located in the upper Chisone Valley, inside Pragelato (TO) municipality. The area is surrounded by ridges ranging from 2650 to 3220 m, the minimun altitude being 1650m in the bottom of the valley.
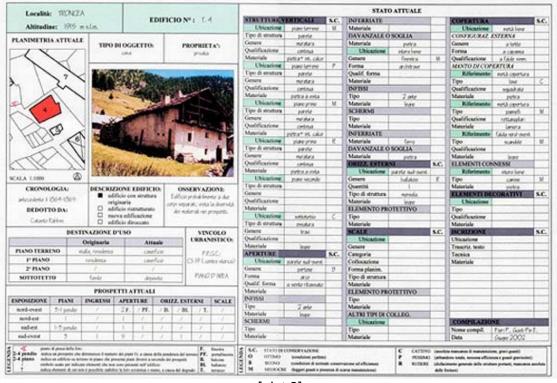

Pict.1

Landscape and nature are of great importance. In 1980 a National Park has been created in the upper part of the valley, aiming at saving and developing the environment, architecture and culture of these mountains. The six valley hamlets have different features: Plan and Pattemouche, which are located in the bottom of the valley near Sestriere road no 23, have been restored in the last few years for tourist purposes ; Joussaud, Laval, Seytes and Troncea, which are located half-way up the mountain-side and whose population drastically sinked immediately after the First World War, are now ghost towns, seasonally inhabited by shepherds.
The study of the morphological, geological, climatic and landsliding features of the area was an essential starting-point in order to single out the criteria that once guided

the position and the shape of the hamlets. Following these guide-lines and the information of the urban development plans we were able to determine the changes the hamlets underwent in the past. The evolution of the single hamlets could be seen comparing the land registers: Rabbini's, 1922's and the present one. We photographed and catalogued the existing buildings, we examined their use, the different kinds of houses (according to their position compared to the contour lines and the position of the entrances), the important elements and the materials employed for the façades.

We considered possible prospects for the future of the valley and checked their feasibility, comparing our results with those obtained by technicians already working in the same field. Their suggestions were a stimulus to get a deeper knowledge of the building techniques (vertical structures, openings, horizontal structures and connections, roofings) and the materials used by the inhabitants of the valley to build the houses.

[pict.2]

As a result of this study, we became aware that the restoration and the development of these hamlets is particularly difficult because the technicians lack a specific training on traditional building techniques and materials.

Pict. 3

In the light of this information, we propose the restoration of Seytes [pct.3] (the only hamlet which has not yet been involved in any project), suggesting new functions for the old buildings. An ecomuseum and a workshop should be obtained, in order to train technicians, masons and carpenters on the traditional techniques, how and where to use them, because "chiunque abbia a cuore le sorti del restauro […] dovrebbe impegnarsi a fondare una scuola, affinché i procedimenti e le tecniche che ancora possono tramandare i vecchi maestri siano recepiti e appresi da coloro i quali […] intendono perpetuare una tradizione ormai in esaurimento"

[1] *"everybody should engage to found a school, with the aim of handing down the procedures and the techniques of the traditional masters to those who want to preserve the old tradition from oblivion"*

 (Montagni C., Costruire in Liguria: materiali e tecniche degli antichi maestri muratori, Manuali Sagep, Genova, 1988.)

We then studied the possibility of restoring the buildings, using parameters and criteria that could be of use to the other hamlets as well. A historical and strictly philological method of restoration should be applied to those parts which are meant to be preserved, while the building of new parts should be carried out using new materials and modern techniques combined with wood and stone.

This way, the alpine hamlets of Trocea Valley will be acknowledged not only a tourist function, but a cultural function as well.

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