

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

The Ligurian *caselle* of Imperia. Accomodating facilities for alternative tourism in the hinterland and in the Ligurian montainous region

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Stone is the essential element of ligurian folk architecture on a great part of the territory. For hundreds of years stone has been adapted to the specific cultures characterizing the different valleys and has shaped the surrounding hinterland and the ligurian montainous region, contributing to a typical agropastoral lanscape. As a result, its inhabitants always had to learn how "to cohabit with stone", using it to make that which was necessary to live and work. Still, this environment is only partially similar to the other milieus facing the Mediterranean sea, where stone has represented the basic building material for centuries.

This thesis focuses on the local archaic architecture, the *maxëi* (the neverending landscape of dry-stone walls) and, more specifically, the *caselle* (the little and odd constructions in stone with tholos covering). Thanks to a scrupolous classification (106 cards concerning the relevant constructions), it also speculates on their constructive characteristics, their dislocation, their state of preservation.

Architettura Rurale Ligure – <i>manufatti in pietra a secco</i>		
Le caselle nei dintorni di Imperia		Tav. 39
	<i>Valle:</i> Imperò	<i>Comune:</i> Pontedassio
	<i>Località:</i> Pontedassio	<i>Quota:</i> 100 m
	<i>Exp. ingresso:</i> S-E	<i>Vegetazione di contorno:</i> olivi
	<i>Alta densità</i> X	<i>Isolata</i>
	<i>In cresta</i>	<i>Fondovalle</i>
	<i>Uso:</i> Ricovero per attrezzi	
	<i>Tipo:</i> Circolare	<i>Stipiti:</i> verticali
<i>Copertura:</i> Piana con manto erboso		
<i>Pianta e sezione/f:</i>		<i>Breve descrizione:</i>
		<p>Casella di piccole dimensioni semi-addossata alla fascia che presenta una copertura piana, ricoperta di manto erboso con tracce di <i>ciappa</i> sommitale che risulta attualmente rimossa. Le pietre utilizzate sono di media-grossa taglia.</p> <p>Gravi segni di degrado sono leggibili internamente ed esternamente al manufatto, e lo rendono nel complesso insufficiente dal punto di vista statico e strutturale.</p>
		<i>Stato di conservazione:</i> INSUFFICIENTE
		<i>Elementi storici o singolari:</i> /
		<i>Note:</i> /
<i>SCALA:</i> 1:100	<i>Data:</i> 14-11-98	<i>Schedatore/i:</i> Gollo P. – Moretto B.

Card-type of the ligurian *caselle* of Imperia.

The territory where the *caselle* are located is vast and extends over a large area, from the sea to the top of the Ligurian Alps, sometimes reaching some areas within Piedmont. In addition, it is almost completely deserted, because of the crisis affecting such local economic resources like pastures and olive groves. It is difficult to predict the future for this area. This thesis does not tend to present a utopian project but aims to develop a positive and realistic proposal. In fact, the object of our research is the realisation of accomodating facilities in a place where there are lots of pastures and lots of *caselle* and, eventually, near what we call a "casone di pastori" (a sort of huge shed for the shepherds).

Potential guests, tourists and/or students, could spend their holidays or take school trips there. They could eventually get in touch with what remains of this agropastoral economy and with the various anthropic signs made of stone, which are slowly disappearing.

The constructions are classified on the basis of their position and of their shape which depend on altimetry.



Casella with circular plan in the Impero valley (1.200 mts)

CASELLE WITH CIRCULAR PLAN:

They can have a perfect circular plan, a horse-shoe plan, or, more rarely, an elliptical plan. Trunk-conical- or cylindrical-shaped, or with trapezoidal section according to the covering (see the *pinnetas* or *nuraghe* in Sardinia or the *trulli* in Puglia), this type is widespread in medium-altitude areas and it is located in olive-grove regions, but it is also present in the pasture-lands above 1000 metres. Despite its altitude, it is also the most common type of *caselle* available on the fields of the Pizzo d'Evigno. Their average inner diameter is 2-2,5 metres, but constructions having more than 3,5 metres in diameter are sometimes available.



Casella with quadrangular plan in mountainous areas (Mt.Grande 1.400 mt)

CASELLE WITH QUADRANGULAR PLAN:

They can be square- or rectangular-shaped, with rounded or sharp jutting corners and, in front view, they can be parallelepiped or trunk-conical. These *caselle* are most frequent at an altitude between 800 and 1200 metres. They can be completely isolated or often located against a *fascia* (a typical ligurian terracing) or against a rock or an elevation of the terrain. We have also noticed that the quadrangular constructions are more voluminous than the circular ones. This type is especially widespread in the mountainous areas.

SOTTOFASCIA CASELLE:

This type consists of a simple niche dugged out in the terrain of the terracing. They are typical of coastal and hilly areas; they are usually horse-shoe-shaped, but some example with quadrangular plan, rectangular door and internal vaulted-roof are also present on the territory. The external cover is the ground-level itself or is 40-50 centimetres above the ground and is dome-shaped. Their construction techniques had many limitations and had to be continuously re-adapted to environmental contingencies, because they had to take into account the considerable weight of the overhanging earth mass and the possible tangle of roots often jeopardizing the stability of the walls.

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