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**The devotional architectural system of the Holy Mount of Crea: a new plan for information and protection**
by Angela Maccianti and Fiorenza Tento
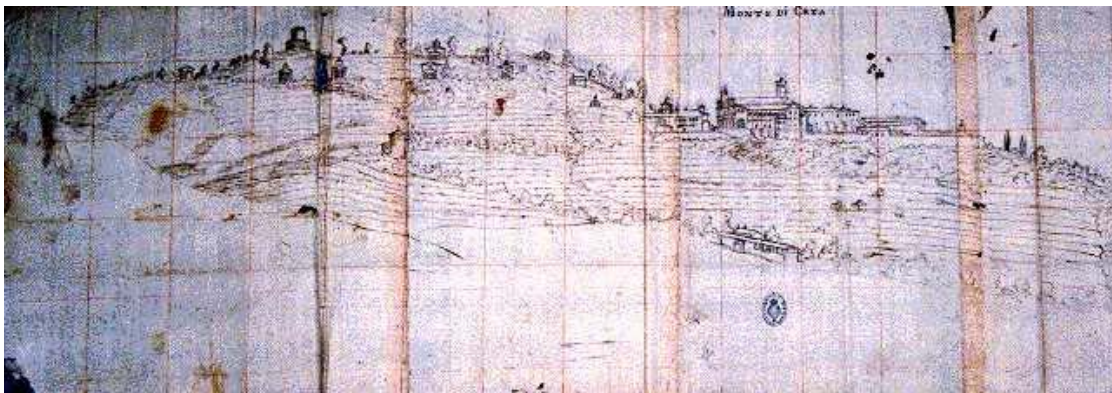Tutors: Mario Dalla Costa, Carla Bartolozzi, Giorgio Cracco

This work analyses the architectural system of the Holy Mount of Crea with the purpose of including it into a protection plan based on a constant data updating and on a regular and exact selfconsistency check.

The research begins with the analysis of the debate about the Holy Mounts grown during the last twenty years. In fact there has recently been a new care about historical, religious, artistic phenomena previously considered of minor importance. Consequently there is now a more correct attitude towards the review of some "document-monuments" of the past.

The research continues with a critical study on the evolution of the Holy Mount conception itself, from the early XV century examples to the more recent XIX century accomplishments.

Coming specifically to the Holy Mount of Crea, we analyse the anthropological symbols on the territory and the birth of that Mount worship, bounded to the confirmed presence of Celtic-Ligurian groups around the V century b. C.

The study then follows all the historical events concerning the Sanctuary and (from the end of the XVI century) the Holy Mount, born with the purpose to represent the most important events of Virgin Mary's life, so that "higher glory and worship" could be given to the Sanctuary, following the Varallo pattern.



View of Holy Mount of Crea

Today the Holy Mount is completely different from the original plan. The XIX century upheavals have changed the scenographic setting, increasing, through a grown sensibility for the natural scene of the Holy Mount, the aspects connected to the pilgrims' active and emotional presence, which is signed by a constant exchange of the actor for the spectator. The theme itself around the Holy Mount goes from a Marian exaltation to a Rosary representation. So along the Holy Way, now signed by 23 chapels, besides the five joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries based on the New Testament, we can find some different religious subjects: two episodes about Saint Eusebio's life, one episode based on the Old Testament, five stories based on the Apocryphal Gospels. Whereas there are only five chapels left on the "Way Back", built to let the pilgrims have a different route to follow on their return and to have one more opportunity to meditate on Holy Martyrs' or Eremites' life episodes.



Chapel XII - Jesus's disputation in the Temple (inside)

In order to outline a protection plan for preservation, accomplished mainly through prevention and maintenance more than through repairs, we have worked out an observation card representing the first phase of a comparative analysis, aimed at knowing, identifying and classifying the problems concerning the structure and the decorations of each building. The drawing up of the cards is supported by a review of previous studies promoted by Regione Piemonte.

Each card basically consists of two parts:

- a graphic-photographic body that gets its information from different sources in order to draw an outline as clear as possible of both present conditions and history of each building.

- a descriptive body consisting of an exact analysis of all the aspects concerning the chapels' setting, history, structure, architectural and decorative style, materials, failures and degradation.

The whole work intends to support a policy for the preservation of the Holy Mounts in such a way that each building be always considered as a whole with the inseparable Holy Mount architectural system.

Chapel I, Saint Eusebio's martyrdom, tridimensional model

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