

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO  
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE 2  
Degree in Architecture  
*Honors theses*

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**Cultural properties in Ala Valley. Religious building, a diffused patrimony**  
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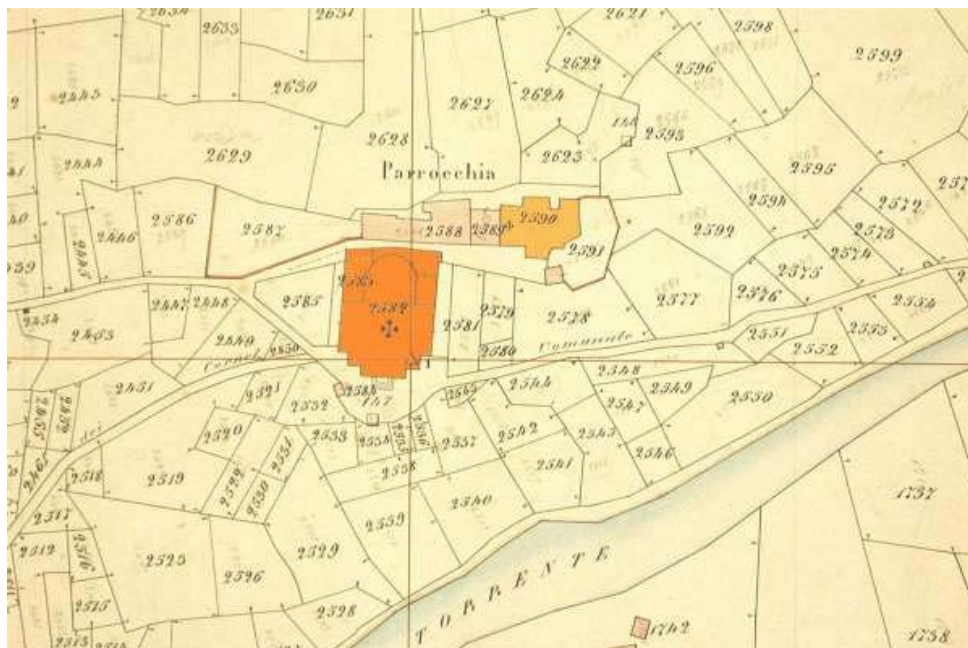
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The thesis is part of the studies conducted by the Department House-City of the Polytechnic of Turin finalized to the individualization, to the analysis and to the exploitation of the environmental cultural properties.

Central theme of the thesis is the individualization, the historicization, the analysis and the cataloguing of the cultural properties in Ala Valley (one of the three valleys of the Lanzo Valleys in the province of Turin, including the villages of Ceres, Ala di Stura and Balme), with particular reference to the religious architecture.

The research is based both on the bibliographical and archival documentation, and on the direct analysis of the manufacture and the territory. For what regards the first part of this work, it has been possible to use some bibliographical, archival and iconographical documents, available in the libraries and in the public and parish archives. The State archives of Turin and the town archives result fundamental concerning the iconographical sources: to such purpose have been analyzed and compared the land register Rabbini (for the case study 1860-1861) and the actual land register.



Map of Balme (particular in reduction)  
(in State archives of Turin, *land register Rabbini*, 1861, enclosure D of the original map of the Village of Balme, scale 1:750)

In order to the historicization and the analysis of the buildings of cult it is also important the consultation of the historical documents retrieved in the parish archives. The pastoral visitation and the reports on the state of the churches allow to know the conditions of the buildings during the centuries. The report that gives the most detailed descriptions is that one compiled by archbishop Francesco Lucerna Rorengo of Rorà in 1769, where present a picture that allows to appraise the development and the capillary diffusion of the cultural structures of the valleys, introducing a dense list of churches and chapels and reporting hundreds of votive pylons disseminated on the analyzed territory.

Always in the archives of the parishes it has been possible to consult the parish gazettes, source of precious information for this research: here there are detailed descriptions of the interventions of restauration which were done in the parish churches and in the chapels. Here are also published short studies conducted from "lovers" of these places on some villages and on their chapels and interesting articles that underline the artistic patrimony of the valley.

The bibliographical documentation doesn't consist only in the consolidated bibliography, but also in the consultation of the descriptive and illustrated guides for the holiday-makers and the mountain-climbers, of the parish gazettes, and of the historical documents found in parish archives.



Document of 1769 that authorizes the construction of the chapel of Monaviel (in parish archives of Ceres)

The analysis on these places has consisted in systematic operations of photographic relief of the single religious buildings to verify and to describe the actual situation. The individualization and the cataloguing of the cultural properties has also brought to effect an ampler analysis of the territory in its landscape, urbanistic and infrastructural values. In a particular manner from the comparison among the maps of the land register Rabbini and the maps of the actual land register can be noticed the changes, not only of single buildings, but also of local ways' system during the centuries. In some cases these transformations have not influenced the pre-existence, nevertheless other times they have even involved the demolition of the pre-existent buildings, when they rose on the layout of the new road. On the base of the consulted and analyzed material, an articulated and analytic card has been compiled, for every religious building. For every building are given informations on its history and on its cadastral data; and then there are the geographical position and the analysis of the actual situation both textually described and through photographic relief. The historical photographic documentation has also been reported when it has been possible to find it.



Chapel of San Bernardino in Ceres (1900)

The purpose of this job is to realize a preliminary study to the exploitation, to the preservation and to the recovery of these precious testimonies, documents of an ancient culture.

Fiftyfive marks scattered on this territory that may become an idea for an itinerary through the history, the architecture and the nature that everyone can rediscover running along the paths and the ancient mule-tracks of the Ala Valley.

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