

St. Peter's abbey in Ferrania, Italy. The architectonic and urbanistic transformations in medieval, modern and contemporary times

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The thesis is about Ferrania Abbey, which is set in the municipal territory of the city of Cairo Montenotte in the province of Savona. It deals with it from the architectonic, building and urbanistic point of view.

Starting from an historic analysis aiming to highlight the events that led, in a more or less evident and significant way, to the urbanisation of the area called "*alta val Bormida*" or "*val Bormida superiore*" we arrived at a more circumscribed analysis focalized on the nucleus at present denominated "*borgo san Pietro*".



Our aim is to create a map dating the diverse buildings. A starting point to understand the architectonic transformations related to the historical and urbanistic alterations.

The instruments used are;

- the urbanistic location of the buildings and the impact which it exerts on the morphology of the urban settlements in the territory of "*alta val Bormida*".
- The study of documents concerning the abbey event, in particular those of specific architectonic kind

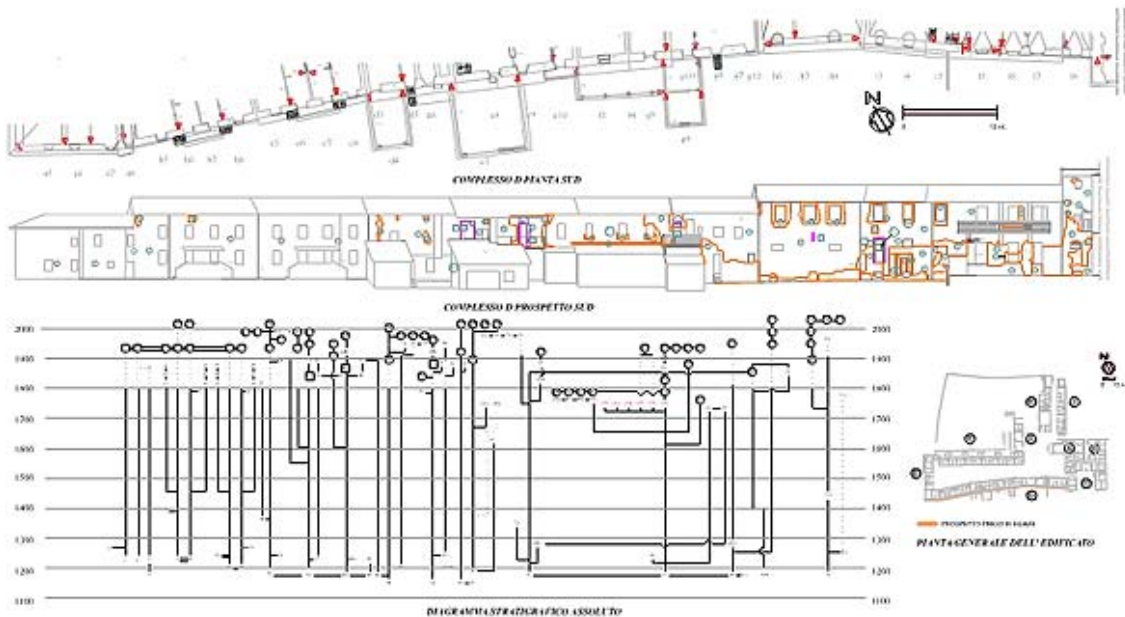


- The architectonic survey and the compiling of the stratigraphic and “mensiochronological” (dating through measurements) analysis.
- The hypertext as a compiling instrument of the thesis, in such a way as to have always under control, during the consultation, both the precise data and their global and synthetic sight

We started with a close examination of the documents concerning the abbey which later became a commendam. This was then transformed into a noble residence with a farm attached to it and eventually it had been divided into lots.

To cope with a low availability of source material we had to resort to a direct study of the building. We carried out an experimentation, which conjugates the direct approach of the already consolidated technics of stratigraphic and “mensiochronological” analysis adopted by the Institute of History and Material Culture (ISCUM) and by the Science Department for Architecture of the University of Genoa, with an accurate historical-urbanistic research.

The approach adopted for the stratigraphic analysis starts with the compiling of a basic relief on which are pointed out the various stratigraphic units. A stratigraphic unit is a portion of the building which has uniform characteristics as far as aspect and most of all temporality are concerned. After having pointed out the different stratigraphic units we drew up a graphic of pertinent dating, defined matrix. The matrix, combined with the study of records and the dating analysis, gives us the full picture of the history of the buildings.



In this case we have worked mainly with the aids of the “mensiochronological” analysis, only in isolated cases we carried out the epigraphic analysis.

“Mensiochronological” analysis is applicable on visible portions of bricks. You have to catalogue all the portion of the building made in bricks that are visible. Then you examine the measures related to thickness, width, length of the individual brick together with other reference such as colour for example. On the base of the elaboration of these data you proceed with a comparison of the “mensiochronological” curves which show the changing of the bricks during the centuries.

Both approaches proved a valid compendium to each other and made it possible to draw a satisfactory overall picture, our point of arrival but also a starting point for further studies. Taking into account that researches on rural or popular buildings follow their own course this thesis could well be a prototype.

The quantity of the data and the variety of the kind of information made us to choose hypertext as a method of communication. So as to give visual immediateness to all the results and to point out the interlacements, incongruities, and the superimpositions even though maintaining their specificity.

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