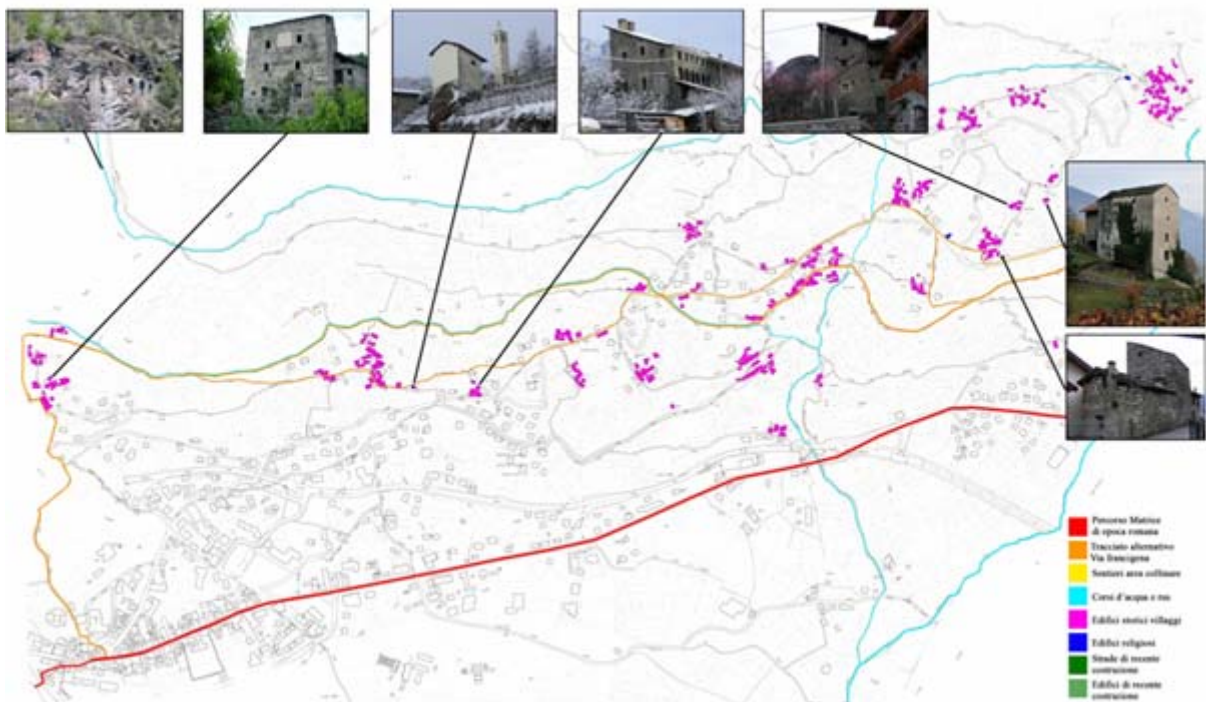


POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture (Construction)  
**Honors theses**

**The Emarèse Tour Decré:**  
**Recovery and exploitation of the historical patrimony and its landscape**  
by Gabriel Lombard  
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Co-tutors: Ornella Bucolo and Giuseppe Pistone

My personal interest for Middle Ages and the fact that I'm living in a place such as Aosta Valley, which nowadays still retains a strong linkage with this historic period so fascinating and picturesque, suggested me the importance of looking into some aspects that connect current Aosta Valley's territory with the late Middle Ages anthropization.

A narrowing of the field of research followed these opening remarks; I tried to focus my interest on a precise area in the municipality of Châtillon: it concerns the space at the bottom of Mount Zerbion, in the Northern side of the small village, which inhabitants call "Châtillon Hills" for the natural configuration of the land.



*Cadastral cartography in scale 1:1000 (here out of scale). Hilly area of Châtillon, positioning of the historical units of the villages and of the main late Middle Ages ruins kept in good condition up to the present day*

This portion of territory impressed me for the relevant number of late Middle Ages ruins. These ones, not that much interesting from an artistic point of view if compared to the remarkable historic heritage in Aosta Valley, seem to suggest a particular interpretation from a systemic perspective. The remains were the junctions of a network of villages connected by historical routes which had a prominent function in the design of the landscape, influencing the future development of the area up to the present day.

In a limited portion of the area it's possible to observe a number of fortified houses and chapels, which could seem to be placed randomly. Actually, the present road system doesn't allow us to detect the strong relation which bound them in the past through a close net of paths. The paper goes on according to an analysis of the landscape and the anthropic structures which influenced the former, in such a way to reconstruct the complex mix of relations and affairs which led to the development of this area during late Middle Ages. The research, carried out by mean of consultation of the Sardinian land office and of the historic cartography, allowed to locate the settlements and historic routes which, after having been restored on current cartography, let us make an interesting comparison between the historic and the present layout of this place.



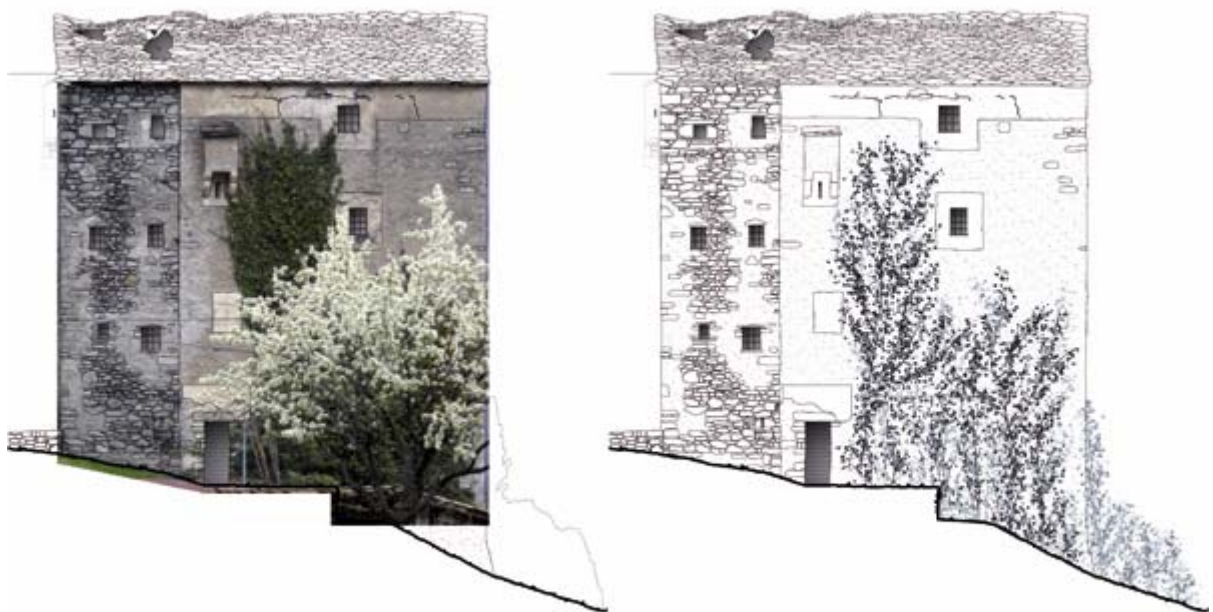
*Images of the Emarèse Tour Decré from North-West and South-West*

The second part of the work consisted in a further narrowing of the field of research, concentrating on a single building: the so called "Tour Decré" in Emarèse, chosen for its central location in this space and because particularly interesting from an historic and artistic viewpoint.

Many buildings inside this area have been set a little aside from the research, probably due to the big amount of similar cases present on Aosta Valley's territory, and, maybe for the lack in reliable sources which could have allowed to reconstruct historical events.

The "Tour Decré" in Emarèse, subject of my research, has been considered for a very long time much less ancient than it actually was and this probably is the cause why any survey has ever been made about the building and its ornamental backgrounds. This is the reason why I have chosen to focus on this edifice which, not yet object of particular studies, still has intact charm and strong impressions of an historic period which deserves to be further investigated in this location.

Then the path goes on with a not easy at all survey of the edifice, made using the techniques of photographic straightening and direct survey.



*Comparison between the image straightened for the indirect survey of the facade and the final result of the survey*

Side by side I performed a stratigraphic analysis of the Tower and of the different alterations which characterised its development. This kind of analysis has been put together with an historic research at Regional archives, aiming at finding news and documents concerning the Tower.

The analysis work finally steers towards another crucial aspect regarding this kind of building that is the analysis of static upheaval of the stone walls.

I tried to face the problem with a comparison between the upheavals phenomenology observed on the Tower and those observed on other edifices similar to it in the same portion of ground.

In the last part of this paper I attempt to pull the strings from the previously stated considerations with the aim of letting them come together in an upgrade suggestion. This one should follow a track similar to the one described so far, that is moving from an overall picture of improvement of the historic landscape and routes, to a greater attention towards single historic buildings. An improvement aimed at enabling a fruition of this territory also from a touristic perspective, since the landscape value is undeniable and it would allow discovering again an important local piece of history, which has been too long forgotten.

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