



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Honors Thesis

Master of Science in Sustainable Architecture

Abstract

**The other Apennines.
Morphological study and new collective spaces for the Bormida Valley.**

Tutor/Correlator

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What would happen if we turned our backs to the Alps and tried to observe the Italian peninsula looking towards the Mediterranean? We would notice the existence of a vertical Italy, linked by a backbone, the Apennine one, which expresses in every part a uniform culture, an anthropological, urban, morphological and cultural unicum.

It is right where the Apennines are born, a few kilometers from the Colle di Cadibona, that the rolling hills cultivated with vineyards of Astigiano and Monferrato are transformed into a mountain landscape. Here the ups and downs between narrow semi-unknown valleys reveals at times a cruel and primordial land, rows of oaks and beech woods that divide pastures and hazel groves cultivated on the midcoast: the Valle Bormida, straddling the border between Piemonte and Liguria, a marginal and not investigated territory.

What is proposed in this work is a journey, a path of rediscovery of a complex territory, which has its roots in the Apennines and is represented here without any nostalgia and rhetoric; a land marked by history, that shows the scars of a recent past that has driven it away and put it on the margins, forcing it to be place among other places, hardly accessible. What this contribution wants to do is to give space and dignity to a Valley that has lost its voice and risks losing even its memory, in the fight against a modernity without rules.

Through a study of the places, milled between the kilometers of many inaccessible roads and villages apparently emptied, it reveal a Bormida Valley not at all lonely, but that shares with other territories of the ridge of this country, same identities, chronic issues and attempts at innovation. Forgetting, or at least trying to do so, the Valley as an area polluted for over a century by the ACNA of Cengio, what remains? A unique environmental context comes to light in which a human physicality told of itself by the stones, the same, that from the ruined castles become part of the houses that build the villages and the steep terraces that, even if buried by the woods, continue their centuries-old battle against gravity.

Swinging then on the line, between hopes and reality, this work poses a final question, to understand how to reduce inequalities, sharing in a more equitable way the rights of citizenship, through design proposals that offer an alternative life scenario to those who live here or here choose to return.

A new future for an unknown and different Apennines, the other one.

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