

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture  
***Honors theses***

---

**Survey instruments for a study of a phenomenon widespread in Piedmont. The decorated ceilings of the South Piedmont**

by Elisa Ottino

Tutor: Antonia Spanò

Co-tutor: Margot Pellegrino

The research is developed in the study of some decorations of the gypsum ceilings of Monferrato, this is a particular building system documented from the end of the sixteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century, that replaces the wooden planking lean on beam warping with a gypsum jetty. The great ornamental effect embellished the interiors of homes which conceded a few simple design solutions.



Gypsum ceiling photographed in a private home in Bagnasco (Montafia)

This research is part of a much larger framework of studies and surveys that began in '70 by the will of the Arch. Enrica Fiandra, who decided to study and analyze them. Within this line of studies in progress, my contribution to the research aims primarily to explore some specific aspects of small-scale phenomenon, in particular the study of the decorative motifs through a comparative reading historical texts and other elements sure of inspiration, architectural buildings, belonging to the reference in the area, or the carved wooden doors.

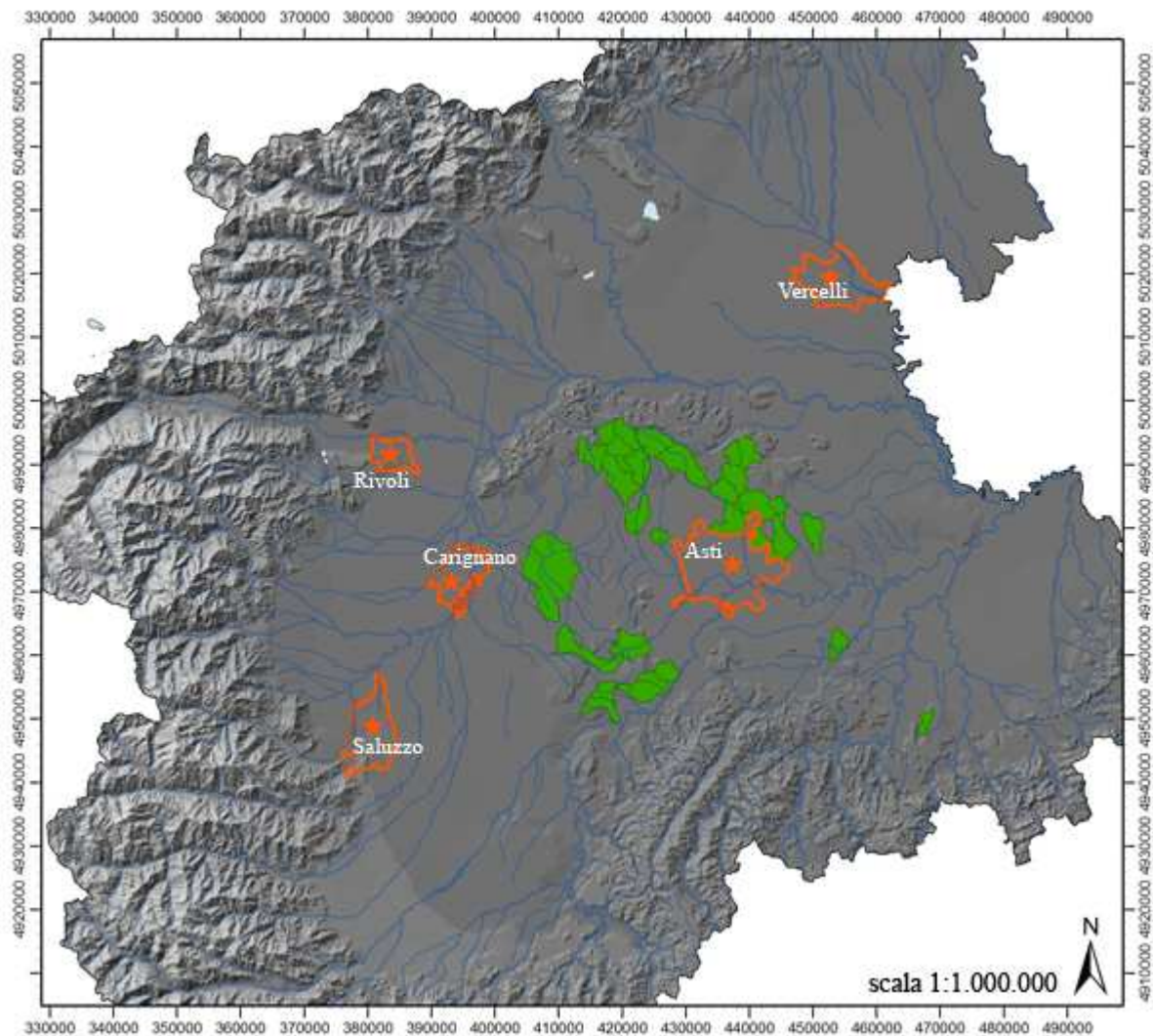
The gypsum boards bearing decorations in relief are geometrically defined by their many decorations and in relation to the latter are spread across a large area sub/regional level. It is precisely for this reason that this work was built on the use of both methods of investigation of detail, both on its study of the territory. Through the latter, such as Geographic Information Systems, we have investigated the phenomenon in context and historical area, in addition, the use of photography and photogrammetry have allowed a detailed analysis of the gypsum ceilings and wooden doors.



Gypsum ceiling type E

To achieve the desired objectives and previously argued was crucial to make use also of the help of historical research, which was done through consultation of historical material. You tried to perform a focused reading of some works that could relate to this issue and were able to increase the knowledge of the decorations on the ceilings of gypsum in relation to other comparable elements in wood on the ground.

The search for stylistic similarities between these decorations and wooden doors of Piedmont was essential. The development of cards that identify the various similarities between the patterns made it possible to understand the strong relationship between these two worlds. The circulation, dissemination and implementation in the territory of traditions and knowledge, could be due to the designers and craftsmen who, in contact with the great power centers where large construction sites become places of profound culture, wherever they spread their knowledge moved.



Geographical distribution of types of ceilings and wooden doors with characters stylistic analogy

The wording of the cards was a preparatory step for further investigation, or the display and analysis of the phenomenon through a few maps made with the help of GIS have revealed that the spatial proximity between the municipalities in which they placed the wooden gates considered and where are the slabs of stone with similar stylistic features is a predominant feature.

In addition, the drafting of the maps that compare the structure of the historical-territorial lands of the Piedmont with the spread of the floors, for which the overall research project has identified various types and forms, has led to important conclusions, namely the location of the phenomenon of ceilings on border territories that suffered changes over the centuries

For further information, e-mail:

Elisa Ottino: [eli.ottino@gmail.com](mailto:eli.ottino@gmail.com)