

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
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Honors theses

THE DAILY LIFE “ANTHOLOGY” IN THE HOUSE OF ETERNITY. The widespread heritage of cemeteries between valorization and the computerized construction of memory

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This thesis aims at analyzing the historical and artistic heritage of the complex cemetery system, which consists of the architectural elements of the church, aediculae and gravestones, in the aerea of Canavese, with the purpose of creating a method of knowledge through the GIS program and make communities aware of their symbolic, cultural and architectural values, and create upkeep programs, preservation and more careful expansions projects.

In the first part have been retraced the places occupied by the tombs for centuries, laws and models that have governed its development in Italy and in Europe, on the outside and inside the city. Starting from the Roman law of Twelve Tables of 450 BC which prohibited burials within the city, passing through the medieval custom to be buried near the saint's body and then inside the churches in the city, up to the Royal Patents of Vittorio Amedeo III of the 1777 and the Medical Police Decree of 1806 that have decreed the creation of extra-urban cemeteries.

In the second part, after choosing the cemeteries to analyze, links and physical relationships with the territory and the occurred changes have been identified. Then followed the stage of historical and technical knowledge of artefacts through inspections and archival research, the photographic survey of the architectural elements, the cataloguing of historic gravestones by the analysis of symbolic elements, the epigraphs, the state of preservation of materials and of any photographs. In the third part the gathered data were entered into a database and through GIS associated with their physical position on the territory, thanks to a digital support. The creation of thematic maps has led to new keys to interpret our territory, like the wars that led to the formation of memorials and standardization of tombstones and architectural element, socio-demographic events such as high infancy and women mortality, medical and scientific issues like epidemics of cholera and Spanish flu that struck our countries in 1900 and in 1916-1917, technological development in the use of photography on ceramics and new materials such as reinforced concrete.

As a result emerged the need for a classification of the elements, the first step for conservation, as witness of their presence, the collaboration between several institutions involved in territory management, preservation and valorisation of cultural heritage. This is necessary for the creation of regulations aimed at protection, restoration and upkeep planning for the recovery of local identity and to mark out cultural experiences in order to carry out sustainable development of the cities and territory.

The space system designed through the thematic maps, which represent items of great historical and artistic value, architectural styles, the authors involved, allows an immediate reading of the cemetery. Moreover the tables that highlight the most critical condition, materials and construction techniques set priorities and recovery directions to be carried out to protect this complex heritage.

Finally, in order to encourage the community to stay in the cemeteries, to read their history, it has been designed an intervention project in the cemetery of Favria whose basic principles can be applied in other cases.

The target was to get closer to the model of the cemetery-park redesigning the distributive paths, paving and including plant elements. This choice was influenced by the adaptability to the site, the effect to be created in the mood of people, mark the ancient routes, create shade, mitigate the visual perception and low maintenance, thus converting the cemetery in a place to live.

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