

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture for the Built environment  
***Honors theses***

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**Ceva in the Late Middle Ages. Urban Structure and Architectural  
Reconstructive Analysis and Hypothesis with TIR Contribution**

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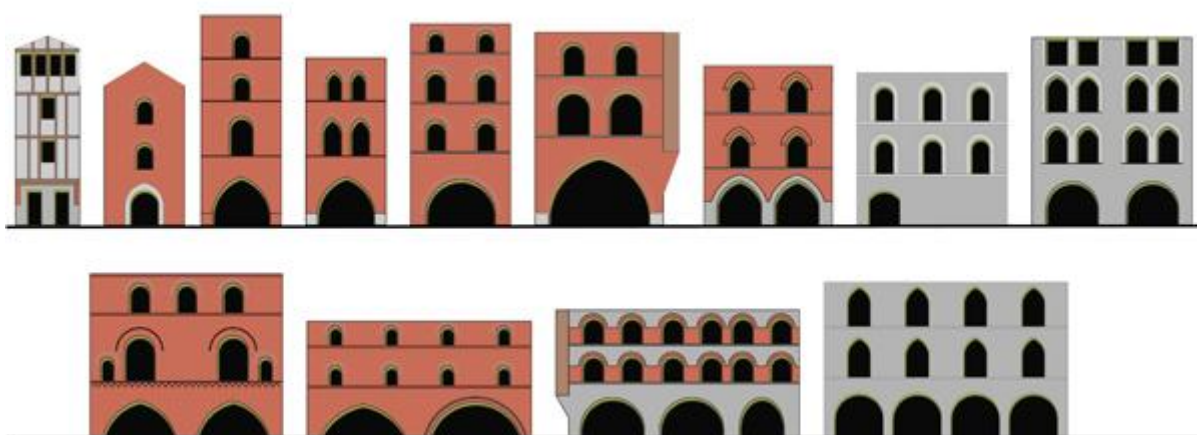
The objective of this work has been to try to cast light upon the development modalities and the features of the urban area of Ceva (CN) between the 13th and 14th centuries, when the town reached what is considered its political and economical apex and took on the title of capital of the Marquisate of Ceva. Unfortunately, no specific studies have ever been carried out regarding this issue. As far as archival sources are concerned, the history of this town is significantly lacking in information. At the same time, some recent restoration work carried out in the historical centre have revealed the presence of very well-preserved façades which date back to the Middle Ages.



Moreover, historically, it is believed that Ceva experienced a quick commercial decline starting in the middle of the 14th century, leading to a suspension in the building activity.

Therefore, in order to make up for the lack of information, it was decided to employ thermographic survey techniques as they are non-invasive and repeatable and can be used to analyse the building structure beneath the plaster to identify the remains of the medieval town. Initially, however, the characteristics from the Middle Ages which are visible in the urban setting were identified. With the thermographic survey technique, various observations are carried out, in different climate conditions, to corroborate the reliability of the obtained signal. For this reason two surveying campaigns were carried out, the former on 20 March 2012, which included 30 façades and the latter on 30 July 2012 (which was extended to almost the entire urban area). It included 57 façades, with the acquisition of 816 thermographic images. It is important to note that, as the two campaigns were carried out in different environmental conditions, the choice of samples was subject to completely different criteria, in order to survey as many fronts as possible in the best conditions and in the shortest time to control expenditures. The analyses make it clear that most of the present façades are the result of the adaptation of the pre-existing structures. Actually, various drains, seams and repaired holes dating back to the Middle Ages were found.





On the whole, 13 different constituent types of medieval cells were counted, and through the singling out the morphological features considered useful for dating, it was possible to infer the periods of the different composition types. A very complex picture was outlined, which defined some typologies which were used for very short periods, while others characterized the whole building activity; for example in the case of the embossed structures. Some observations regarded the building structures (4 typologies were singled out), revealing that the building production in Ceva between 13th and 14th century was not only characterized by fired brick fronts at sight. The influence of models coming from different geographical areas also emerged, with a clear Ligurian derivation in the first half of the 14th century and a return to traditional Piedmontese 13th-century models around the middle of the 14th century. Later on, it was possible to make a hypothesis concerning the development of the urban area which constitutes the present historical centre, starting from a commercial village on the left bank of the river Tanaro towards the 10th century and the fortifications in the 11th and 12th centuries on the right bank with the subsequent building of a village (13th century) along an important commercial axis in the extreme southern part of the alluvial plain. Then, the urban area developed northward till the mid-fourteenth century, with the creation of a new commercial suburb (Borgo Inferiore).

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