

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture (Rehabilitation and Revaluation)
Honors theses

The Tower: from castle to dovecote. Evolution between IX and XVII century in the province of Reggio Emilia

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Purpose of my research is to investigate the evolution of the structure of the tower made from X to the decline in the XVII century, demonstrating the continuity, in the Apennines in the province of Reggio Emilia.

The studies published to date have addressed in a separate policy and agrarian history from that architectural and urban of rural settlements; these studies were conducted with a purely descriptive of the artifacts, without relate their texture and layering with the historical context within where buildings have come to form.

My research starts instead from historical background of the area, from distrection of late antique epoch, the importance achieved under the rule of the Canossa family, until the next decay and fragmentation in the communal period, which is accentuated with the passage under the rule of the Este to better analyze the context in which the towers evolve.

To do this have proved very useful studies of A. Balletti and newer ones of O. Rombaldi, especially the latter for information found. Rereading these documents, mainly relating to rents or sales contracts notary, under a different point of view, I was able to understand the consistency of rural housing and funds between the thirteenth and fifteenth century.

On the origin of the model to which the tower-houses are inspired there are currently two main schools of thought: the first model he sees as the towers of the countryside, then the castles, supported by R. Comba and the second takes, the towers late medieval towns, carried out by A. Settia. Despite the amount of published studies have not yet arrived at a final result.

In Emilia-Romagna, the first studies on the landscape, the settlements and the relationship between them and the rural dwellings have been published by L. Gambi early fifties and, most recently, the same issues have been dealt F. Bocchi.

Given the fragmentation of the Apennines between neighboring duchies of Parma and Modena, the search for documents related to this area took place not only at the State Archives of Reggio Emilia, but also that of Parma, Modena, and in the historical the town of Castelnovo ne' Monti, from the end of the sixteenth century the administrative center of the mountain.

The documents analyzed are mostly registers, which have allowed us to reconstruct the material substance of the house at various times, the time span covered by these documents is from 1415 at the end of the eighteenth century, enabling you to verify that the mutations lodgings undergo.

From the registers consulted could also extract data on the extent of land related to the individual property to check whether the buildings with dovecote was related assets greater than or less than the average, which would allow to determine with greater certainty a hierarchy among the rural buildings mentioned.

The arc of development which result from my research starts from the towers of the castles, all belonging to the Canossa family, towering buildings that make up the oldest of which there is evidence, such a model is moved to the city from the end of the twelfth century with the urbanization of the Canossa's nobility that transfers the pattern of the ancestral home, to return again in the countryside with the advent of the lordship of the Estense.

In the lands surrounding the tower house remained until the mid-sixteenth prerogative of the rural gentry, notary and military, a landowner of a lot of land, eventually losing its main function of the home and got demoted to service building, such as pigeon tower.

In this evolution, the towers change shape and structure, the context in which they are placed, intended use and clients, that remains constant over time is to be a "symbol": symbol of protection and strength when it comes to castles, political and economic power for the city's towers, wealth for the tower-houses emerging as an element in the landscape when it becomes dovecote.

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