



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Honors Thesis

Master's degree Science in Sustainable Architecture

Campus D'Oc

Ipotesi progettuale di Scuola d'Architettura nella borgata di Castes
per il recupero del patrimonio edilizio alpino a Elva, in Val Maira

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ABSTRACT - ENG

The recovery project for the village of Castes, in Elva, is set within a very specific territorial and historical-cultural context, which requires a thoughtful and sensitive design approach that takes into account the historical, architectural, and natural characteristics of the alpine mountain environment. The primary goal is to breathe new life into the village, which has gradually faded over the years, through an intervention that combines the enhancement of the local heritage with social and economic sustainability. Transforming Castes into a mountain-based school campus, designed to accommodate housing, classrooms, training workshops, as well as more traditional spaces such as stables, dairies, and artisanal production facilities, represents an ambitious objective. This aims to combine the recovery of the village with social integration and the revival of an autonomous economy based on traditional trades and short supply chains. In contrast to the mass depopulation that took place in the past, the project's intention is to overcome the city-mountain dichotomy by fostering student collaborations between academic institutions and schools of all kinds, and local expert figures, who are increasingly becoming extinct. These figures can and must transmit a lifetime of experiences, knowledge, and traditional techniques, which would otherwise be lost forever, bridging the generational gap that has forgotten the true values of the mountain. The goal is for this very specific knowledge, until now confined to some museums in the alpine valleys, to once again enrich the cultural heritage of students and professionals, in a world that is increasingly focused on the branching and specialization of arts and crafts. The following chapters will summarize the key aspects of the project, highlighting the crucial steps of historical and documentary research, methodologies, strategies, and objectives. Starting in the first chapter with an analysis and initial insights into the territory of the Maira Valley, its history, the deciphering of its tangible and intangible heritage, and its traditional crafts (which were later recovered during the design phase), the investigation will move to the social issue of depopulation and the analysis of the buildings, enriched by the significant contribution of the *genius loci*, Franco Baudino, in the form of an unpublished interview, which was fundamental in the development of the project. The third and fourth chapters will focus on the village at the architectural scale, addressing the survey/cataloging of buildings and the architectural design process, from masterplan to details. The fifth chapter will conclude with an architectural-construction manual applied to the village, seeking to gather the architectural elements present and study the possible methods of intervention through a philological restoration approach.