POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE 2 Degree in Architecture Honors theses

Defence works of Ossola Valley. Looking for a visibility to preserve

by Loredana Allegranza and Stefano Battistetti

Tutor: Carla Bartolozzi



The topic of our degree thesis is the development and reclaiming of the widespread minor architectural heritage among the territory this matter concerned the restorers closely during the Forties. Gustavo Giovannoni (1873-1947) supported and promoted research studies of so-called minor architecture. This term is coined to set the common buildings value against the monumental architecture. His volume called old cities and new buildings was published in 1931 and statest he small mass of houses is more useful then the great sightseeing to know and exploit that awesome historical documentation turned into stone. The area of our analysis is the Ossola valley, alpine part of Verbano-Cusio-Ossola district, included from high Formazza valley (1274 mt above sea level) to the commune of Mergozzo (204 mt above the sea level).

The subject of our degree thesis is the analysis of today's defensive works of Ossola valley. They are part of a cultural heritage to study and preserve.

In fact this territory is plenty of several Ancient buildings that turned into defence structures and checkpoints over the centuries.

They are not real military architectures but simple civil buildings.

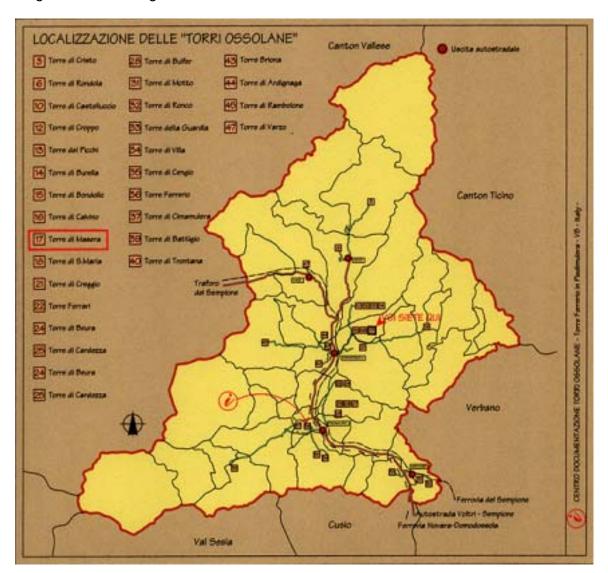
Local seignory and communities promoted their constructions to safe their large estate and provisions overworking their strategic planning during several centuries (about XII-XVI cent.).

An overall and real study of these works gives a rising in value to the single architecture our thesis target is the construction saving but also the meaning of the whole system.

In Ossola valley we can use the word defences for these three important centres:

- -Fortified village of Domodossola:
- -Fortified village of Vogogna;
- -Mattarella castle.

Minor architectures growed up near those three places: are towers, castles, casemates, strongholds and barrages.



Not doing an overall analysis about the fortified centres of Domodossola, Vogogna and Mattarella because of a several and complete studies done over the years, our degree thesis takes a look into minor architectures even unknown to the locals and not really appreciated for their value.

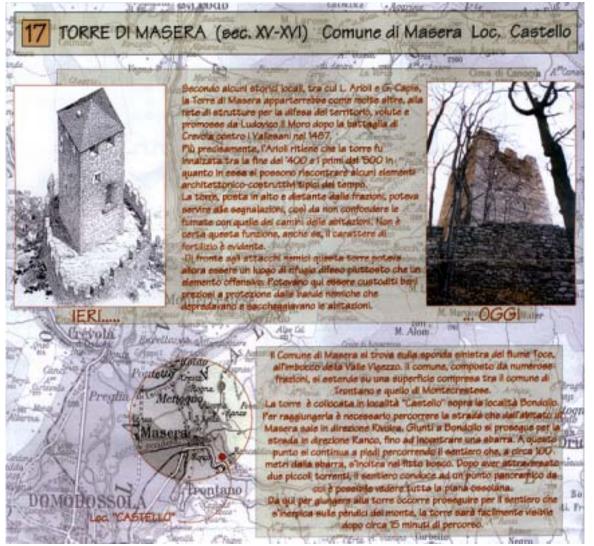
A.d.s. poll (Association of historical residences) says there are about 50,000 strongholds and castles scattered along our peninsula unfortunately their owners don't care and save for it.

The sorry truth is that for the most important military architectures there's always a careful pile of studies and restoration works sponsored by Conservation of Ancient Buildings Boards whereas minor ones have got a plenty of saving and restoration troubles.

They paid no attention to these minor works because there isn't much knowledge about this architectural heritage that's why our thesis subject is spreading this knowledge starting from a local level. We think tourist see sighting paths can be a useful mean to increase in value this system web.

First part of our thesis is the survey and analysis by cataloguing and patterns, the second one is an elaborations of infos above and containing a proposals and solutions of restoring

we face the subject of knowledge and accessibility to the tower defences, doing a pattern of tourist paths and a system of signs useful to get better information to visitors. At the end we got a study in depth where finding our re-making in fuction kinked to the tourist paths above mentioned.



We also did a sample of tourist brochures useful to find out the works of our analysis. (Check enclosed pics).

Hope you enjoy our analysis not simply as a theoric reserach but as a real instrument of well-doing restoring ancient works and saving the Ossola landscape and territory. It's necessary to promote all the enterprises of spreading to awaken the pubblic opinion to this point.

For further information:

Loredana Allegranza, e-mail: lore.all@libero.it Stefano Battistetti, e-mail: ste.batt@libero.it