

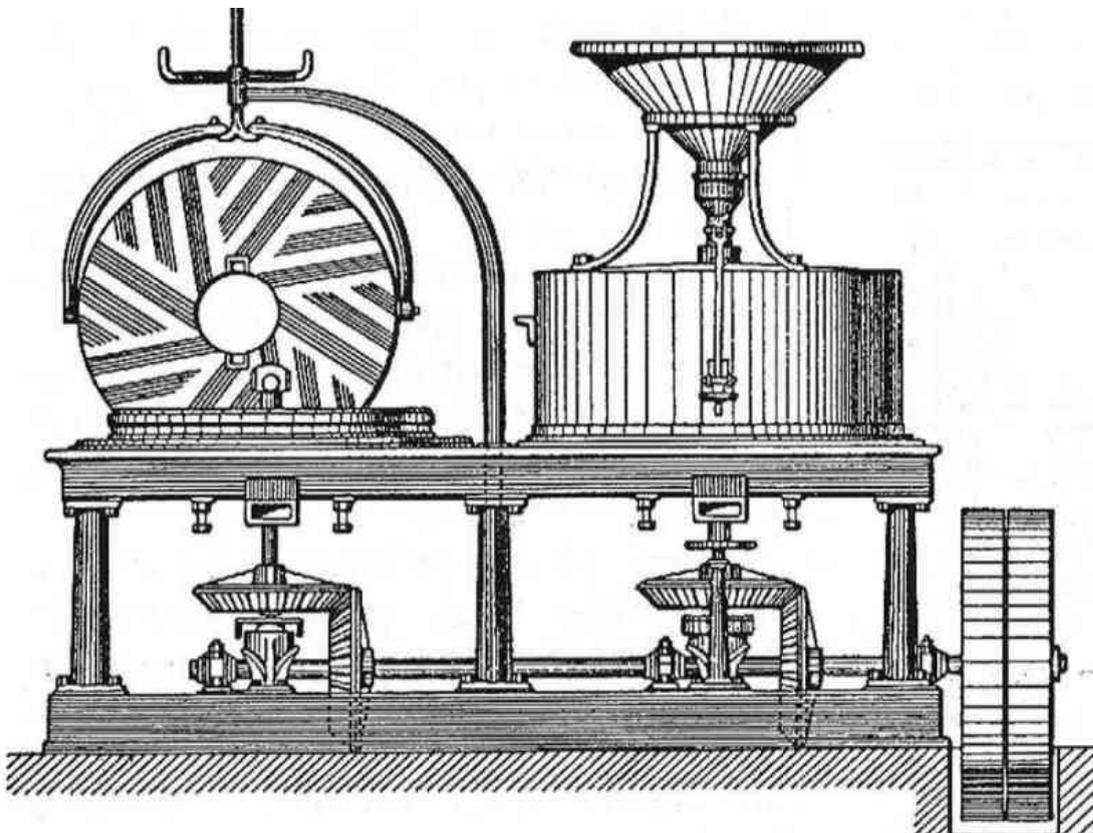
The milling of cereals: historical events and material records in the Monregalese

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This thesis focuses on the presence of cereal mills over the territory. It is the result of a research based on the extant material records and on the historical events that allowed the persistence of the ancient milling method "by millstones" over time .



(picture n. 1)

We got interested in this issue during the years we spent at the university of Mondovì. After a careful analysis, we realised that many mills had fallen into a state of neglect because they were not used anymore, whereas others had been demolished and replaced by modern reinforced concrete houses. These were especially built where the town centre mostly spread out. However, the statements made by local inhabitants prove that they are still interested in preserving these constructions. Few people have seen their dream come true so far, as the whole community is not yet aware of the relevance, not only architectural, of these

buildings. We started to wonder whether a study, establishing the value of these constructions and emphasising the importance of such heritage, could help the local community understand how relevant such mills are and, eventually, lead them to invest private capitals in their recovery.

We based our study on the available historical sources concerning this subject and on the analysis of the "material proofs" present on the territory. In fact, according to the territorial definition of the *arrondissement de Mondovi* (end of the 16th century), a census of cereal mills was carried out. We were also able to card-index thirty mills and most completely reconstruct their building and productive history. A synthesis of all these data has helped us prove that traditional criteria unremittingly characterized the production over the years, although technological innovations led to the substitution of the traditional milling techniques by an industrial method.

To that end, we took into consideration the factories producing millstones for the mills, particularly the one established by Luigi Blanc. At the end of the XIX century, this gentleman brought the industrial production of French millstones to Italy. These millstones were well-known because of their excellent quality. Our research supplied a lot of information about his industrial enterprise, which was the first national factory of French millstones (picture n. 2) importing the production of millstones from La Ferté into Italy.



(picture n. 2)

This revelation allowed us to suggest that these buildings should be restored and preserved, as they represent potential "exhibits" informing us of those events. Moreover, our investigation led us to conclude that the presence of these stones provides substantial evidence of a "Non revolution" phenomenon, at least as regards the territory and the context which we examined.

As a consequence, we propose a recovery of such cereal mills in order to "reactivate" them, instead of simply turning them into museums. On this purpose we got interested in the rural *bed and breakfast* law, applicable to those mills which are still inhabited, even though they are inactive at the moment. This law was successfully applied to *the Mulino del Coppo* (picture n. 3), near Castelletto Stura.



(picture n. 3)

In fact, it was this law that contributed to preserve the construction, which would have otherwise disappeared.

Even the so-called *Ecomusei* law (passed in 1955) helped us pursue and elaborate this project, as it provides for the protection of the historical heritage thanks to the promotion of recreational and teaching activities in places where it is still possible to lead a traditional kind of life.

Not only do we have to protect those places which are culturally and architecturally valuable (such as castles, churches and palaces), but also we must preserve the cultural heritage located in rural areas, as it also contributed to the history of a nation.

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