

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

The recognition of an abandoned territory: the case of Mombasiglio

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While searching for bibliographic materials relating to the villages of the Tanaro Valley-the Mongia and Cevetta Valleys, I have noted a great deficiency of research on historical and cultural territory, on the usual ways of architecture, on minor road system, on toponymy for this part of the "Alpi liguri" mountain chain.

It is true particularly for the villages of the lower valley; they have an archivistic lack in common, starting from the cadastral one.

My work places the municipal territory of Mombasiglio in the centre; it is the first village of the Mongia Valley.

For all the Middle Ages and over, Mombasiglio is a road junction in the contact between Liguria and the lands over the mountain ridge; only when traffic was diverted onto a road in the valley bottom, which continues from Ceva through the Tanaro Valley, and when the railway project wasn't passed, the centre of Mombasiglio knew a progressive depopulation and a general abandonment.

With regard to the subjects of the study, the research took up material structure of habitat (dispersed settlement / agglomerated settlement); the investigation of this programme has asked for collateral research into tracing and use of road system, into hydrographic system, into changes of agrarian landscape which are determined by the incidence of the residence, the cultivated field, the pasture and the wood: these are the elements on which the relation between man and territory has centred in the course of history.

But this investigation doesn't confine itself to making an "inventory" of the state of things: it subtends an analysis of the process of territorial growth: the historical persistences, which are called "material wrecks of the past" by Rinaldo Comba, rise to documentary sources "which are to be used by regressive method for reconstructing the aspect of a territory or a settlement in a certain period". Rinaldo Comba recalls what Marc Bloch said, too: "The regressive method, when it is correctly used, doesn't ask the anterior period for a photo to project for a fossilized imagine of far-off times. By this method, we have to take the last imagine of a film which has to be unrolled; although we'll discover many lacks trying to do this operation, we'll have to be firm in respecting its mobility".

Now then, it's a study on the history of the material culture of Mombasiglio.

The filing of the architectonic persistences had accomplishment by taking a census of cultural and environmental goods. Among the usual ways of architecture brought to light by this operation, the "S. Giovanni del Bosco" farm-house, once church and simple benefice with title of priorship, stands out as an isolated example. I decided to dwell on this building for a careful study, identifying it with an emblematic example of an abandoned building patrimony.



S.Giovanni del Bosco farm house

In the scarcity of written references about this architectonic persistence, the building represents a material document: the relative chronology of the building is established by the analysis of the architectonic structure and precisely by bringing out some significant sutures on the inside and outside building apparatus. A proposal of absolute chronology of the several building phases is made combining the informations from both of fronts.

The operations of classification and qualification is instead extended to all architectonic persistences and then to "homogeneous areas", or rather to those territorial portions which clearly have particular orographic features, a peculiar variability of the agricultural-wooded tissue and special architectonic persistences. These operations subtend the individualization of those characteristics of "good" which are to be understood as rigidity on one side, as chance to transformation on the other.

A "catalogue" of the compatible architectonic interventions comes alongside the indication of operating line of approach for every territorial ambit recognised as "homogeneous area": it is the result of a sistematic investigation of the components of the building organism.

This study should give a substantial contribution to planners, managers and superintendents for the wardship and the exploitation: infact they can easily and quickly learn an adequate knowledge of cultural and environmental goods. Consequently it should fill in the gaps which are put forward in the contents of PRGI: they concern both the consistence of the building patrimony and the natural and environmental resources of the territory.

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