

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

Conservation and Refunctionalization of the Fort of Vinadio

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The fort of Vinadio is located in the Valle Stura di Demonte. The choice derives principally from a sentimental fact; I realized that for me, as for all Vinadiese, the Fort is seen as the colossal hug of a giant that protects us. Maybe the fact of having explored it completely in our adolescence, usually in secrecy because it was considered dangerous, allowed us to discover it in all its parts and to come to know it deeply. In the collective imaginations of the children, entering the fort was scary and the fact that the thing was forbidden made us even more curious. Growing up, the fort assumed for me a completely different nuance and above all, studying the history of architecture, I was driven to appreciate the structure and I no longer saw it as a big monster to avoid. The idea of the thesis was to restore the heritage that, if not protected and adequately conserved, runs the risk of being lost, degrading further. Its restoration, on the other hand, can assume many interesting perspectives, not only as a place to visit but as a site for cultural exchange, a location for congregation, and as a development center for tourist activities.



Panoramic of Vinadio

The fort, built in 1834 to prevent the access of possible invaders from France, must become now the instrument to attract people that travel without impediment across the Maddalena pass. My thesis mainly concentrates on the conservation and refurbishment of the fort for possible tourist development. I focused on the Carlo Alberto barracks because it is one of the places that shows the greatest degradation and because during the period of maximum development of the fort it was the central node of the whole fortified system.



2005 - Carlo Alberto barracks

This work develops in four chapters: the first one concerns the history of Valle Stura from the moment in which the defensive structures were first discussed, starting with the fort of Demonte, and then describing the steps that led to the construction of the fort of Vinadio. The second chapter contains an analysis of the town to understand how it transformed and developed over time and how the fortifications impacted the buildings of the village. The third chapter analyzes the eighteenth-century barracks and describes the degradation of the Carlo Alberto barracks.



1880 - Carlo Alberto barracks

The last chapter, finally, focuses on the intended purpose of the fort in its entirety and considers a series of possible paths for visitors, keeping in mind the intent of giving a new function to the Carlo Alberto.

Thinking of a possible restoration of buildings like these is not simple, because of the need for funding that only large entities like the Piedmont Region or the European Community can provide on the basis of targeted projects. Moreover, in this case it is necessary to work on structures that had, when they were built, functions that are no longer compatible with modern uses, except for military purposes. Every possible restoration struggles with the need for different spaces, the reality of scarcely lit rooms, the difficulty of heating, and the limited access for people with disabilities. It could be possible to think about including the fort in a broader system of tourist sites, like for example the nearby Valle delle Meraviglie and France, since the western Alps are scattered with alpine forts that were built in the middle of the nineteenth century and that are located on the border between Italy and France.

Therefore, in the broad view of a united Europe, hiking and driving itineraries could be created to ideally connect these sentinels of the Alps, and to transform them from machineries of war into places of community and exchange.

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