

DANIELA PITALUGA

FABIO FRATINI

(édité par/by)

**CONSERVATION ET MISE EN VALEUR
DU PATRIMOINE ARCHITECTURAL ET PAYSAGÉ
DES SITES CÔTIERS MÉDITERRANÉENS**

CONSERVATION AND PROMOTION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND
LANDSCAPE HERITAGE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL SITES

7

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DANIELA PITTALUGA

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Ce livre est un ouvrage collectif, dont les contributions ont été élaborées à partir de la conférence RIPAM 7, organisée à Gênes du 20 au 22 septembre 2017 par le DAD - Département d'architecture et de design (Université de Gênes) en partenariat avec le CNR-ICVBC Institut national de recherche, Institut pour la conservation et la mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel de Florence).

This book is a collective work, with contributions developed starting from RIPAM 7 conference, organized in Genoa, 20 to 22 September 2017 by the DAD - Department of Architecture and Design (University of Genoa) in collaboration with the CNR-ICVBC (National Research Council, Institute for Cultural Heritage Conservation and Valorization, Florence).

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Daniela Pittaluga et Fabio Fratini ont travaillé ensemble sur les textes initiaux (comprenant les sections "Qu'est-ce que le RIPAM?" et "Conférence RIPAM 7", les remerciements et les index) et sur les descriptions des thèmes et sous-thèmes (sections A et B et sous-parties). Cependant, Daniela Pittaluga a écrit les parties en français et Fabio Fratini a écrit les parties en anglais, ils sont auteurs de certains articles et les éditeurs de la partie restante.

Daniela Pittaluga and Fabio Fratini worked together on the initial texts (including sections "What is RIPAM?" and "RIPAM 7 Conference", acknowledgments and indexes) and on the descriptions of the themes and subthemes (section A and B and subparts). However, Daniela Pittaluga wrote the parts in French, and Fabio Fratini wrote the parts in English. They are authors of some articles and editors of the remaining part.

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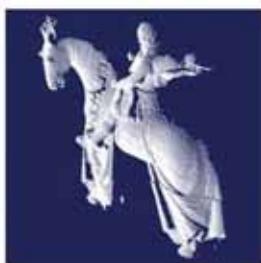
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The "round tower" of Monterosso (Cinque Terre): historical-archaeological investigations and renovation project

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Summary. In the coastal village of Monterosso, considerable remains survive of fortifications built up through time to control the territory and defend it against Saracen raids. The so-called "round tower" is located in the area of the Castle, on a dominating position on a mountain rock which stands out in the landscape. The tower is on an area belonging to the municipality, currently abandoned and overrun by vegetation, where one can also identify remains of wall structures, perhaps of medieval dwellings. This work presents the result of historical-archaeological investigations carried out by the Dipartimento Architettura e Design (Department of Architecture and Design of the University of Genoa), aimed at renovating the area, and sets out goals and choices made for the renovation project, currently being drawn up on behalf of the Segretariato Regionale del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali per la Liguria (Liguria Regional Office of the Italian Ministry of Culture).

Keywords: fortifications, Liguria, history, conservation, cultural promotion.

Introduction

The opportunity for this study arose because of the effects of the devastating flood which struck the historic centre of Monterosso in 2011. This village has considerable cultural value, acknowledged by its great importance for international tourism. It should be remembered that it is the main village of the area called "Cinque Terra", inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1997 and a National Park since 1999. The MiBAC- Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (Italian Ministry of Culture), taking into account this value, provided funds to help renovate the landscape of Monterosso and Vernazza, the two villages struck by the flood, in order to promote two areas of important cultural interest¹.

¹ Funding was issued through ALES S.p.A. (Arte, Lavoro e Servizi per la tutela del patrimonio culturale italiano, merged in 2016 with ARCUS S.p.A.), a company of which MiBAC is the sole shareholder, designed to support and promote cultural heritage. A convention was signed in 2017 between ALES and the Segretariato Regionale, and is now being completed on schedule.

The Direzione Regionale del MiBAC (today the Segretariato Regionale) decided to provide funds for the area of Monterosso² for the following reasons. First of all, the site belongs to the Municipality, so it is public property, an indispensable condition for providing such funds. Second, the area enjoys many qualities, both in terms of scenery and as a cultural asset; it is located within the historical defence system of Monterosso, between the Castle and the XVIth-century Capuchin Monastery; it is rich in historical elements, the most outstanding of which is the so-called "round tower"; it is placed in a core position, along the crest of the promontory separating the medieval historic centre from Feginna, the more recent part of the town (fig.01); it represents an exceptional panoramic point to appreciate a view embracing the Cinque Terre, from the Mesco cape to Tino island. Third, the area is in a state of abandonment and decay which is compromising the integrity of the structures present there.



Fig. 01 : Photo from the air after the 2011 flood. The project area is circled

Finally, it is important to point out that the area, and the fortifications of the Cinque Terre in general, have not been much studied. The fortifications of Monterosso, especially, are quite complex to read: one can easily recognise parts built in different epochs, but the diachronic

² The area of Vernazza, which has a presumably medieval tower, resembles that of Monterosso (cf. BOATO & 2017 and A. DECRI, *The fortifications of Vernazza in Cinque Terre*, in this same meeting).

layout and detailed stratification still await deciphering. So a project in this place can be an opportunity for obtaining more profound knowledge.

Study of the tower was the focus of preliminary investigations, carried out thanks to a convention between the Segretariato Regionale and the DAD³. This paper shows part of the results of such institutional collaboration between public bodies, which came to its conclusion in 2017.

The castle and the walls

Monterosso was first mentioned in 1056, when the Marquess Guido son of the deceased Alberto stipulated *in loco Monte Russo* a deed of donation of lands located on the islands of Portovenere to the monastery of Santa Maria e San Venerio del Tino [FALCO 1920]. This deed, remembered by all authors who deal with Monterosso, suggests that Monterosso in the XIth century was under the Obertenghi domination, though we actually know nothing of its nature and size at that time. In the XIIth century, Monterosso was under the influence of the lords of Lagneto and Celasco, allied with the Genoese, and between the XIIth and XIIIth centuries it was involved in various ways in the political events of the times and in the progressive and conflictual appropriation of Eastern Liguria by Genoa⁴. Evidence of the presence of a fully efficient castle appeared only in 1245, when it was directly controlled by Genoa: the inspection undertaken in that year by the delegates of the Genoese Podestà shows that there were defenders and weapons, but provides no details concerning their number [FORMENTINI 1954, p.12]. The first mention of the church of San Cristoforo⁵, which one still see atop the crest where the ruins of the castle lie, dates back to the first half of the XIIIth century. The small church, completely plastered over and hence hard to date, was probably originally the church of the *castrum*, as well as the only parish seat before the new church of San Giovanni Battista was built between the XIIIth and XIVth centuries [CAPPELLINI, ZATTERA 2007, pp.66-80 and 124-126]. It was also

³ Scientific Director for DAD Prof. S.F. Musso, coordination of the survey Arch. G. Garello, laser scanner survey Prof. C. Battini, archaeological analysis of the architectural structures Prof. A. Boato.

⁴ SCARIN 1962; PAVONI 1989. In 1254, the *castrum* of Monterosso was listed among other castles and lands (including Vernazza and Corniglia) which Pisa was obliged to return to the Republic of Genoa [BIBOLINI 2000, doc. 1030].

⁵ ZAVERIO 1923, p. 12: deed of 18/11/1231 (notary Salomone I, 371) which mentions the priest Andrea rector of the church.

used as a cemetery church, as shown by some XIIIth and XIVth century requests to be buried there⁶. In 1341 and 1342, the fort of Monterosso had a podestà and two men (servientes), paid for by Genoa, whereas in 1391, the podestà (in this case also called the castelanusie castle keeper) had at his service 6 men⁷. It is only in the early XVth century, thanks to a description by Jacopo Bracelli, that we get to know that the village was protected by walls⁸. The historical defence system, which we have no other information about, was shown by Matteo Vinzoni in his famous cartographic collection made for the Genoese Republic in 1773 (fig.02). Some elements can still be clearly recognized : on the highest part of the promontory, the Castle, along the perimeter of which there are two towers with a quadrilateral base, and which is currently taken up by the cemetery⁹; a third tower, quadrilateral too, rises above the gate leading to a large walled in area; below the gate, a part of the walls disappears into the overgrowing vegetation; between the church of San Cristoforo and the Capuchin Convent stands the round tower to which this paper is dedicated.



Fig. 02 : Vinzoni M., Il dominio della Serenissima Repubblica de Genova in terraferma, 1773 (Genova, Civica Biblioteca Berio, manuscript). Detail of table 32

⁶ Wills of July 11, 1261 and of September 5, 1314 [ZAVERIO 1923, p. 12]. The transcript of these deeds is in GRITTA 1972, pages 181 and 185-187.

⁷ ASGe, Antico Comune 45, c. II v., c. CLXII r. and ASGe, Antico Comune 102, c. IIII r., quoted by BUONGIORNO 1973.

⁸ ANDRIANI 1924, doc. V, p. 245 (for the date of circa 1418, see p. 149). Bracelli speaks of Monterosso as a fortified site (oppidum) located near the sea (*iuxta mare situm*) and protected by a high wall (*arduomurotutum*).

⁹ Established according to Napoleonic laws [CAPPELLINI, ZATTERA 2007, p. 70].

The “round” tower

When the study began, what little was known about the tower came from Vinzoni's XVIIIth century map, which showed a situation resembling the current one.

Later bibliographic research brought up many mentions of this structure in volumes dedicated to fortifications in Liguria and in tourist guides, accompanied however by a total lack of historical information. In the texts which were consulted, the dating of the tower was uncertain, swinging between an unlikely IXth century [GANDO 2015, pp. 17-18] and a more generally shared XIVth century [ZAVERIO 1923, p.151; CONTI 1927, p.121; SCARIN 1962, p.38; MARMORI 1968, p.43; FAGGIONI 2008, p.285]. The only document found so far dates back to 1588, the year in which the Genoese Republic collected information on the state of defence of this part of the coast, following raids by Saracen pirates. It was then that the podestà of Monterosso spoke of a tower “facing the sea”, two floor high (*alta di due volte*), which could support the more powerful Torre Aurora in case of minor clashes (*scaramuzze*)¹⁰. This quotation seems to refer to the round fortress and to its military importance, still alive in the XVIth century. Further research in the archives has failed to bring up other results. Therefore, the only path we can follow is that of direct investigation, in the context of so-called “building archaeology”.

To start, the University undertook a survey of the tower, of the area and of the main wall structures there, using various techniques¹¹. A good survey, in fact, is the foundation for both historical research and a renovation project.

Even though the building appears to be “round” - as its popular name reveals - we immediately realised that the layout is more complex than a circle (fig.03). One can make out two parts: the one facing the sea is U-shaped, though slightly asymmetrical, while the part facing the mountains consists of an arc with a curving radius shorter than the base of the U. Stratigraphy analysis reveals that the two parts coincide with two construction phases, characterised by different masonry textures. Their outline is clearly visible, despite the accurate junction work.

¹⁰ ASGe, Senato, Foglietta, 1114, *Relazione dell'i forti artillarie e munitioni*, July 27, 1588 (partly transcribed in QUAINI 1993, p. 87-88 and BIAGIONI 2001, p. 94). The tower now called Aurora, at the time, was equipped with several pieces of artillery and an “ordinary guard” of eight men.

¹¹ Topographic survey, laser scanner survey, photogrammetrical survey in Structure from motion mode using Agisoft Photoscan software.



Fig. 03 : From the left: plan of the tower at 1.60 m above the entrance level (41.60 m above sea level); side view: notice the vertical junction between the oldest and the most recent part; side facing the sea

The outside walls contain further traces of the history of the tower. For example, one can see battlements at the top of the tower, but one can also identify a second set of battlements incorporated into the wall, present only in the U-shaped part (fig.04). Rebuilding of the battlements was probably due to a change in military needs, related to the introduction of firearms, and took place at the same time as the formerly U-shaped tower was closed. The shape of the openings gives us further information. The two openings in the U-shaped part, built at the same time as the wall, have only an internal splay (fig.05); they are arrow slits, like others to be found in the nearby Tuscan Lunigiana area¹². On the side facing the mountain are two more small openings, which also seem to have been built together with the wall and, unlike the others, are splayed both inside and out. These openings certainly belong to an epoch later than the introduction of light firearms, which could be handled more easily if the opening had a double splay. In Lunigiana, external splays seem to have been adopted after the end of the XVth century [GALLO 2004, p.60]. Another trace concerns the great sealed opening at the first floor. It is clearly a doorway - due to its size - and we can hypothesise that it was transformed before being sealed, though at present it is still not possible to say when this took place. However, one can say that the

¹² For example, those of the Rometta tower [GALLO 2004, p.57].

current door was made after the walls, and that the one on the first floor was the original entrance.



Figg. 04 and 05 : Top with double battlements and arrowslit facing the sea

To conclude, even though the scarce literature which has been identified speaks of a medieval tower, it is clear that the building has gone through at least two phases. During the first phase, the tower had a U-shaped layout, with the open part facing the castle. Building of this part of the tower may be dated to the Middle Ages, between the XIVth and XVth centuries, before firearms were introduced¹³. The second phase, when the tower took on a cylindrical shape, may date back to the XVIth century, considering the typology of the slits facing the mountains and of the battlements. This transformation probably took place before 1588, when we know it was able to support the underlying Aurora Tower, something which would have been difficult for a tower still having a medieval design and open on one side. The change may have taken place at the same time as the change in the quadrilateral tower leading to the medieval ring of walls: the latter too - originally opening inward - was closed; and there too, one notices the transformation of the upper battlements in order to adapt them to firearms¹⁴. Unfortunately, in this case too, we lack archaeological information or documents able to specify the moment the transformation took place.

When it became "round", or perhaps later, the tower underwent a further transformation in its outer shape: on the side facing the sea, placed on a lower level due to the slope of the land, a scarp wall was in fact added

¹³ A more ancient date seems to be ruled out by the kind of masonry, which uses mixed materials (stone and brick), some re-used.

¹⁴ Investigations carried out for a university graduation thesis [CERRUTI 2017/18].

and completely bound the base of the building over again (fig.03). This scarp, beside having a different masonry texture from the upper part, was clearly laid upon the wall, as can be seen by the detachment in the contact area.

Ground supporting walls

The project area is terraced, something typical of all the Cinque Terre. However part of the walls holding up the ground (in the survey, called E and H) do not seem to have been originally designed for this purpose. Unlike the others - made of dry stone - they are tied together by lime mortar. They also feature the presence of quadrilateral niches laid out at regular intervals, and this is their peculiarity (figures 6 and 7).

Stratigraphical analysis of the wall H has shown that the part fitted with niches was connected to a contemporary perpendicular wall about 65-70 cm thick, later cut: the façade which is currently visible was therefore the interior face of the wall of a building the dimensions of which it is currently impossible to define. The use of roughly treated stone laid out in layers, typical of medieval Ligurian buildings, allows us to imagine they are remains of buildings dating back to those times.

Documentary sources attest that there were houses "in the castle of Monterosso" (*in castro Montisrubeti*) in 1280 and again in 1314¹⁵. In his Annals, Giorgio Stella tells us that on July 28, 1396 Monterosso was set on fire on the orders of Cardinal Ludovico Fieschi¹⁶. According to Don Antonio Bono¹⁷, after this episode, some inhabitants repaired houses damaged by fire, but many built new houses near the sea ("si cominciò a fabricar ala marina"), where the historic centre is still located. One may therefore imagine that the original nucleus of the village, or part of it, was located near the Castle and the first parish church of San Cristoforo, inside the imposing walls mentioned by Jacopo Bracelli in the early XVth century. Only afterwards the village grew behind the beach and around the new church of San Giovanni Battista, which began to be built in the XIIIth

¹⁵ ASGe, Notai Antichi, 42/I, 30/8/1280; will of 5/9/1314 transcribed in Gritta 1972.

¹⁶ Stella Giorgio, Stella Giovanni, *Urbis Genua e origo et progressus praeclaro que Genuensium gesta ab Anno 1299 ad Annum 1422 Georgio Stella Scriptore et ad Annum 1435 protracta a Joanne Stella eius Fratre*, Archivio Storico del Comune di Genova, Manoscritti, Ricci, 0107, XVIIIth century (pdf in <http://www.storiapatriagenova.it>).

¹⁷ Bono da Monterosso Don Antonio, *Il tesoro della Cervara*, 16th century manuscript, Biblioteca della Società Economica di Chiavari.

century. The walls which have been identified may therefore be remains of residential buildings.

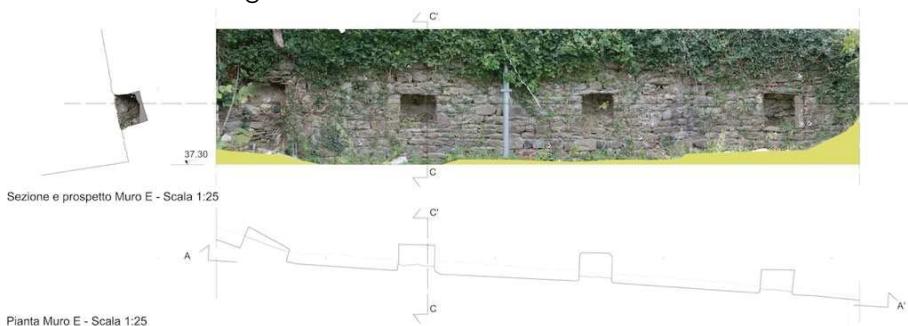


Fig. 06 : Survey of wall E



Fig. 07 : Wall H where - on the side of one of the niches - one can see a contemporary perpendicular wall, later cut

There are still many historical questions waiting for an answer, and it is to be hoped that restoration of the tower and renovation of the area may provide further opportunities for study. We wish however to remark that the small round tower has come down to us in its authentic shape, and this is something quite uncommon. Acknowledgement of this aspect is the foundation of the conservation project.

Restoration and regeneration

The regeneration project for the whole area, aimed at making it available to the public, has therefore the double objective of conservation and

promotion of the historical elements described here. Two sides of the same coin, the necessary coexistence of which implies subtle dialectics. The idea of the project was to provide the visitor with a cultural experience: putting together, in this site which in recent centuries has also been used for farming, a collection of plants representing the historic cultivations of the territory, a kind of botanical garden of the Cinque Terre. Concerning conservation, besides the necessary operations of cleaning, consolidation of materials and integration of the heavily eroded mortar joints, it will be necessary to carry out some works aimed at structural consolidation and above all at seismic improvement. The tower shows no significant cracks. However, for safety of people and in order to comply with current regulations, it is absolutely necessary to improve its capacity of resistance. Besides some specific interventions for consolidating the masonry, hoop ties have been applied in order to absorb the effect of horizontal thrusts. At the same time, the walls with niches will be restored, with some structural interventions.

While problems affecting conservation are of a rather common type, the issue of promoting the area has turned out to be more complex. Exactly as with many historical buildings in Italy, restoration of ancient elements goes hand in hand with transformation of use. This has happened with many famous museums, where the new activity takes up a space designed for entirely different purposes, which are no longer feasible. Such transformation however is not something alien to the ancient building, indeed it enriches it, conferring an aesthetic dimension on several levels to the new use. For this reason, Italian museums - which almost always owe their existence to this relationship - have a dimension which is different from that of museums set up in new buildings, as often happens on the other side of the Alps or of the Atlantic.

From this point of view, the garden being designed takes up a space dominated by the presence of memories. The project calls for a narrative path winding along the terraces, where the species of vegetation typical of the agricultural history of the Cinque Terre are aligned. This path is also an ascent to the tower, located at the top. Along the path, from bottom to top the tower can be glimpsed from several spots, providing a backdrop which fits in well with the semantics of the linear narrative being proposed. In a similar manner, the walls with niches - of which even the inhabitants of Monterosso had hitherto been unaware - will be emphasised by some small variations in the ground, as well as by night time lighting. The new function will not downplay the presence of

historical elements. In fact, public use as a sort of museum will make it possible to see these centuries old constructions in a new way, to express their special building features and to increase awareness of their significance.

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