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BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

TRANSPPOSITION OF CULTURAL SYSTEMS
AND MILITARY TECHNOLOGY OF
FORTIFIED LANDSCAPES

EDITED BY
SANDRO PARRINELLO
STEFANO BERTOCCHI
GIOVANNI PANCANI



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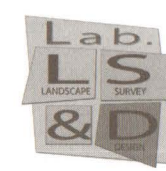
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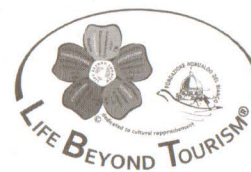
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CASTLES AND FORTIFIED SYSTEMS IN ABRUZZO: THE CASE STUDY OF ACCIANO

Carlo Raffaelli, Sara Porzilli

University of Florence, Italy

Keywords: *Fortified systems, Acciano (Abruzzo-Italy), historical documentation and survey*



Views of walls-houses in the Acciano's center.

THE DEFENSE NETWORK ALONG THE FRANCIGENAS' ROADS IN ABRUZZO: PROPOSAL AND ANALYSIS¹

The territory of Abruzzo region is characterized by different environmental structures where, starting from the chain of central Appennino towards Adriatic sea coasts, it may be observed how the phenomenon of the fortification has organized a common net of fortified centres and villages through all centuries. Castles and towers are the main part of a complex protection system disseminated on land and they are nowadays the only elements by which we can reconstruct the pattern of the historical landscape. We have lost the real and global memory of this landscape, today we can observe only traces inside remains of walls, or into structural parts of the historical centres. Through the analysis of the different urban centres it is possible discovering various types of defensive structures, each one belongs to a village, but at

the same time, each one is put strategically inside a system network based on relationships and cooperation among the villages in the different valleys. This organized system has contributed to the development of a structuring process of the territory². There are about one hundred of architectures traceable to this system like castles, towers, fortresses, fortified palaces, castles fences and strongholds³. The choice of the strategic points where to establish strongholds was linked to the need to control the entire territory crossed by the ancient old sheep-tracks⁴, used by the transhumant herds for periodic shifts from the pastures that went through the Appennini to the Apulia⁵, providing the opportunity to a possible intervention and rapid communication in the territory, if an aggressor could arrive intent to threaten the integrity of the system. Even today, if you retrace the main crossroads of the "grass routes" of Aquila basin, you can enjoy with a wide-ranging look at the many castles and fences which overlooked the medieval towns. Particularly it is possible to identify two recurring types: the use of house-walls in the mountain villages, while in the hilly areas are identified residential real castles and fortresses of high ground. The territory of Abruzzo, starting from XIV-XV's century, is crossed by important routes of pilgrimage, in the wake of Crusades, these routes linked major points related to Cristianity. Particularly among the Francigenas' roads, this territory was crossed by the Adriatic course, which passed the region from North to South, and then Tyrrenian course, which passed perpendicular to the axis of connection with Rome. From these routes depends on the mesh network of fortifications in this area, which belongs to a system that can't be explained by a single period but it is required a reading of the stratigraphic scale aims to consider the development of compositional functional models, military technology, which demonstrated the presence in this land of civilization and cultural patterns belonging to different and well distinguishable historical periods. A systematic study that starting from

the survey will be able to produce drawings and models which can be queried on the subject of critical readings and in-depth analysis about the signs of these episodes, this is fundamental to achieving thematic patterns useful for understanding this system of cultural, social and political traces through the history.

THE CASE STUDY OF THE HISTORICAL CENTER OF ACCIANO

The capital of “Acciano” is a small village, probably of Lombard origin, which is built on a morphologically complex limestone ridge, heavily influenced by hilly terrain on the steep slopes to the left side of the Aterno river. The historic center of Acciano, contains fortified medieval houses within the still existing perimeter walls, denoting its origins as a fortified town with three ports: “Port Torrone” on the north-west near the circular defense tower with clear modifications from the mid-sixteenth century, “Martin’s Gate” to the east, outside of which stood the Hospital and “Port Hague” under the Castle to the south. The history of the entire village begins in the fourteenth century with construction of the city walls, stratifying itself in time with numerous reconstructions and the rehabilitation of many buildings. The project of integrated measurement of the entire historical center⁶, designed to build a new cartographic-based architectural map of the historic centers of the entire area, was planned according to the proposed objectives and purposes⁷, organized in differentiated phases and levels of study, established depending on the urgency of the first “emergency phase” interventions and subsequent stages decreed by the policies of Reconstruction. The urban layout of the town of Acciano is organized according to a continuously branched urban fabric characterized by narrow streets and numerous underpasses. The rocky ridge on which the town develops is a privileged vantage point for the defense of the village as it affords deep views both up and down the valley, aside from its strategic position, the town’s defense system was formed by walls, towers and “walls-houses”, while at the rear there is a “pseudo gap” or dry mote placed to defend the castle (which was later called the palace, probably because of the previous presence of a feudal palace and then the town hall) and the “Hague port” from possible invaders. The entire town is built to facilitate its defense, in fact, roads, overpasses and dead end streets with dozens of shooting-holes, hidden in the walls everywhere, allowed the habitants of Acciano to defend themselves. Interestingly, the center’s main road, has no direct way out, at the end of the road there are three gates, the first on the left, closed by a door to form a holding compartment, leads to a fenced area within which you can see various shooting holes, the underpass at the middle, which is also closed by a door, opens directly onto a cliff overlooking the valley, only the third path, on the right, leads to the tower, probably second after the castle for its defensive importance to the town. The real link between the castle and the tower is a road parallel to the main one and well camouflaged allowing one to pass from one place to another without being seen by those following the apparent main road. These defensive compartments are present and well preserved throughout the town and are characteristic of medieval centers. The analysis and



Snapshots of point clouds views of the laser scanner survey of the Acciano's center and Beffi's castle.

study of the town's current state at an urban and architectural level has been made possible through an integrated instrumental survey campaign using the latest technologies such as laser scanners on topographic ground supports and low altitude aerial photogrammetric detection systems that can produce highly reliable maps, complemented by digital representations, three-dimensional virtual reality systems and the application of GIS systems. The detailed functionality of the construction of an integrated system of data, regarding urban structures and aggregates, both in terms of the assessment of architectural and environmental value, as well as for what we can learn about the effects of the earthquake, is essential for the planning of the reconstruction. The use of the above mentioned technologies will also serve as an effective database for future monitoring of the various complexes and town centers which have been documented.

NOTES

¹ Carlo Raffaelli is Architect and doctoral student (Ph.D) at the National School in Science of Survey and Representation (Cycle XXV) at the University of Florence, he was responsible for the section "The case study of the historical center of Acciano".

Sara Porzilli is doctoral student (Ph.D.) at the National School in Science of Survey and Representation (Cycle XXVII) at the University of Florence, she is the author of the section "The defense network along the Francigenas' roads in Abruzzo: proposal and analysis".

² As it is known generally the phenomenon of fortified settlements began to spread before the year one of thousand, between the IX and X century and lasted until Renaissance. Even from the story of the great abbeys on the centre and south Italy it is possible to confirm this historical period, in fact center like MonteCassino, San Vincenzo al Volturno, and San Clemente in Casauria already in medieval times had considerable estates and centers.

³ To study the censuses of castles in Abruzzo, see Chiarizia Giuseppe; Latini M. Luce; Properzi Pierluigi "Atlante dei castelli d'Abruzzo, Repertorio sistematico delle fortificazioni", editore CARSA (collana Il patrimonio artistico d'Abruzzo), 2002.

⁴ The most important in the area of Castel di Sangro: the Lucerna-Castel di Sangro, the Pescasseroli-Candela and the Celano-Foggia.

⁵ Lorenzo Quilici, Stefania Quilici Gigli "Fortificazioni antiche in Italia: età repubblicana", L'ERMA di BRETSCHNEIDER, 2001, Roma.

⁶ The Working Group of the Faculty of Architecture, coordinated by Prof. Stefano Bertocci, who is collaborating on the Reconstruction Plan of the City of Acciano, in the province of L'Aquila, in the crater of the earthquake of April 6, 2009, analyzed in particular the historic centers of Acciano, Roccapreturo, Beffi, Succiano and San Lorenzo of Beffi located in the natural Park Sirente Velino.

⁷ Survey of the areas affected by the earthquake of April 6, 2009, as already identified by the local administration pursuant to the Decree n.3/2010 the Deputy Commissioner for Reconstruction and activities relevant to the preparation of the updated base mapping necessary for the preparation of the Reconstruction Plan of Acciano.



Snapshot of point clouds view of the laser scanner survey of the Acciano's center.

The international conference "*Between East and West: transposition of cultural systems and military technology of fortified landscapes*" is organized in order to compare the results and the updates about the several researches made by experts of various nationalities, about the theme of cultural routes and fortified landscapes. The scientific knowledge, the analysis, the documentation and the architectural survey of the heritage in all its meanings, are essential instruments for the understanding and the improvement of any information and sign that history and culture has produced in each places or in a specific geographic area. These signs are in any case the result of the transposition of cultural models, of building technologies and offensive and/or defensive strategies, that have been tested, consolidated and exported for a long time, and that have determined the image of whole territories. The implementation of the knowledge, the specific studies and the documentation programs, also constitute the main basis for the exercise of critical and interpretative activities, in order to training and to develop a particular settlement, city or area. Besides, they are also useful for the expectation of the necessary specific planning for the conservation and the improvement, that are aimed at promoting the conscious development of human activities in that places. This international conference aims at comparing the experiences made in this scientific area, that have allowed the development of operational methods for researches useful for the correct understanding of both the architectures and the historical and archaeological complexes. Furthermore, it also aims at taking into consideration the cultural and environmental contexts of the contemporary history, giving essential advices for a critical reading and a proper evaluation about the conservation actions for this important heritage.



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