
TITLE

Designing Contemporary Architectures for the Revitalization of Traditional Hamlets in Lessinia, Verona

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the role of traditional materials in defining local architectural identities and the potential for their integration into contemporary design and architectural education. The study is based on initiatives carried out at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies and the School of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering, and articulates along two main trajectories. The first involved an international design studio engaging foreign students in field-based learning activities in Lessinia, a mountainous region north of Verona. The second includes three ongoing master's theses developed within the Architecture and Urban Design program. The research focuses on the architectural heritage of Lessinia, where the use of local limestone has historically informed settlement patterns and construction techniques, resulting in a vernacular architecture characterized by a specific material culture. This tradition demonstrates a coherent constructive logic, with a recognizable tectonic language developed through the skilled use of available resources (Magagnato et al., 1982; Turri et al., 2003). The study questions how such legacy can be meaningfully referenced in contemporary architectural practices, avoiding

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stylistic imitation or reductive application of preservation norms. In addition to design and material considerations, the study addresses broader socioeconomic processes – such as depopulation, tourism-driven transformations, and seasonal use – that impact the conservation and transformation of this built heritage. The two educational formats have generated different interactions with the territory, combining fieldwork with collaborations involving local institutions and stakeholders. The paper aims to contribute to ongoing debates concerning the role of traditional building cultures in contemporary design processes, and their relevance in architectural education. The case of Lessinia offers a critical framework for exploring sustainable and culturally informed approaches to rural revitalization, with implications at both local and international levels (Lin and Devabhaktuni, 2020).

Lin, J. and Devabhaktuni S. *As found houses: experiments from self – builders in rural China*. Applied research + design publishing, 2020
 Magagnato, L., Pasa, A., Zorzi, F., Pavan, V., Muscarà, C. *Architettura nei mon-ti Lessini*. Taucias Gareida, 1982.
 Turri, E., Pavan, V., Trincanato, C. B., *L'architettura di pietra in Lessinia. Un incontro con la pietra, la cultura, l'ingegno, a ritroso nel tempo*. Numero Uno Design Book, 2003.