

## *Et renovabis faciem terrae*

*Gli oratori delle confraternite di San Quirico di Valleriana come tramite per la rinascita del paese*

## *Et renovabis faciem terrae*

*The oratories of the congregations of San Quirico di Valleriana. A vehicle for the town's rebirth*

*San Quirico di Valleriana è un borgo fortificato medievale dell'antica lucchesia, che si trova sugli Appennini ad una quota di ca 540m slm. È uno dei "centri minori" sugli Appennini soggetto a spopolamento. Tuttavia sia San Quirico sia la Valleriana nel suo complesso sono organismi di notevole interesse culturale-artistico e paesaggistico e con discrete potenzialità economiche e produttive. Attraverso lo studio storico, tipologico e architettonico degli oratori delle confraternite del castello, unitamente alle storie e caratteristiche specifiche di queste, è stata compiuta un'analisi delle relazioni che intercorrono in un centro abitato altamente storicizzato nel tessuto urbano fra le diverse architetture civili e religiose e la comunità paesana. L'intenzione è quella di indagare quel "quid" che permetta a questo e ad altri centri storici minori di prendere coscienza delle proprie peculiarità e attraverso di esse promuovere una rinascita e riqualificazione del paese, con lo scopo di ripopolarlo. La ricerca e di conseguenza il progetto hanno visto interessato il paese di San Quirico nel suo complesso, con particolare attenzione ad alcune architetture abbandonate, scelte per le loro peculiari caratteristiche e per il ruolo che nei secoli hanno svolto nella vita della comunità.*

*San Quirico di Valleriana is a walled settlement of ancient Lucchesia (the territory surrounding Lucca, Italy) dating to the early Middle Ages, set in the valleys behind Pescia at about 540 metres above sea level. The residents have gradually deserted this settlement after the end of the Second World War, as well as many other "minor" settlements on the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines, to find better job opportunities and living standards elsewhere.*

*Via a historical, typological and architectural assessment of the castle's oratories and congregations, the relations between religious architecture and the settlement's community were analysed with the explicit intention to understand what can trigger the complex process of requalification and enhancement for the village's future.*

*Analysis and project involved San Quirico as a whole but special care was paid to the oratories, which could once again accomplish some key functions in the dynamics of the castle; mostly because of their peculiar characteristics and for the role they have already played during the centuries in the community's life.*



**Sara Basile**

Sara Basile, architetto e ricercatrice indipendente, si laurea alla Facoltà di Architettura di Firenze nel 2016 sotto la guida del prof. Michelangelo Pivetta e del prof. Alessandro Merlo. Attualmente lavora come architetto nella ricostruzione del centro Italia in seguito al terremoto del 2016 e collabora con diversi enti di ricerca nel campo del riuso e della valorizzazione del patrimonio architettonico.



**Alessandro Merlo**

Ricercatore Icar-17, si è laureato nel 1996 presso la Facoltà di Architettura di Firenze con G. Cataldi e S.L. Ortega. Nel 1999 vince il dottorato di ricerca in "Rilievo e Rappresentazione dell'Architettura e dell'Ambiente" e consegue il relativo titolo nel 2002. Nel febbraio 2014 ha conseguito l'abilitazione nazionale come Professore Associato per il settore scientifico ICAR / 17.

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Keywords: **Oratories; Congregations; Appennines; San Quirico; Restoration**

## I. Introduction (Alessandro Merlo)

The conservation, promotion and management of cultural heritage is, as is known, an issue that pertains closely to the Institutes for Clergy Assistance and other religious institutions that own or manage a significant portion of Italy's building heritage.

This issue is especially critical in north-central Tuscany – the Valleriana valley system (Fig.1) behind the city of Pescia – and in other areas that have been left at the periphery of the political and economic developments of the past century. The lack of infrastructures and services and limited access to job opportunities have long forced residents to abandon these locales. Agricultural, farming and woodland areas have also been abandoned as a result, and interest toward the local building heritage has dwindled – mainly since usage of the buildings has been discontinued.

The valley's landmark is the remarkable presence of ten settlements within an area of just 50 kmq. They developed prematurely in rural communities during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, for well-known reasons. Valleriana was divided into two distinct areas: valle Arriana and valle Avellana, respectively west and east of the watershed between Pesca di Pontito and Pescia di Calamecca. The former belonged to the Pieve of San Tommaso "de Arriano" (now Castelvecchio), and the latter to the Pieve of San Martino di Avellano. Both Pieves belonged

to the diocese of Lucca.

Documents show that in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, bishops and lay masters started initiatives to create a number of small municipalities, with the aim of monitoring and defending their own administrative borders, which were a point of contention between Lucca, Pisa and Florence. In February 1339, the two valleys were separated politically. Valle Avellana and the towns of Pietrabuona, Sorana, Vellano and Castelvecchio were placed under Florence's jurisdiction. Valle Arriana and the towns of Medicina, Fibbiella, Aramo, San Quirico, Stiappa and Pontito remained under Lucca's sway. (Fig.2) The boundary between the two valleys would become the political border between the Republic of Lucca and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany until 1847.

Perhaps due to the hostilities between Lucca and Florence over the control of this "middle land," the prelate nullius diocese of Pescia was created, which comprised all the territories formerly under the diocese of Lucca, then placed under Florence's.

The effective separation of the two valleys ensued, bringing forth enduring anthropological, cultural and religious differences.

## II. The Castle of San Quirico (Alessandro Merlo)

The Castle of San Quirico, which always remained under Lucca's jurisdiction, stands

on a hillside on the eastern side of Mount Battifolle. The fortress constitutes the original settlement and stands at the highest altitude. The first and second sets of defensive walls that surrounded it, along with the residential area, did not encircle the Church of Santi Quirico e Giuditta (documented in 880 A.D.). A third set of walls would eventually enclose the church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the buildings stand on progressively declining terraces marked by the synthetic ridgeback pathway between the fortress and the church and the analytic ridgeback pathway between Fibbiella and Castelvecchio. (Fig. 3)

Starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, four oratories were built on the last of these terraces around the church (which saw the addition of a baptismal font in 1407, and only became a Pieve in 1718): the oratories of San Sebastiano, Santa Maria Maddalena, Immacolata Concezione and San Quiricino. A rectory and a theater were also built, hence the town's groundbreaking role as a cultural center and hub for daily communal life activities and religious celebrations.

It was not incidental that these activities and celebrations took place near religious buildings. In Valleriana, at least until the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, faith was an essential component of everyday life, similarly to other towns removed from bigger urban areas.



Fig. 1 Topographic the compartment Lucchese paper [...], scale 1:28 800, 1850, 73x48 cm (Cartographic Archive IGM, cart. 66, doc. 1)



Fig. 2 Representation of San Quirico di Valleriana plan and environmental section. Scale 1:1000



- PRIMITIVA ROCCA / **FIRST FORTRESS**
- PRIMA CERCHIA DI MURA / **FIRST WALL**
- SECONDA CERCHIA DI MURA / **SECOND WALL**
- TERZA CERCHIA DI MURA / **THIRD WALL**
- COMPLETAMENTO TERZA CERCHIA DI MURA / **COMPLETION THIRD WALL**
- - - - - PERCORSO MATRICE / **BASE PATH**

- |                                     |                                |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 0_ CANONICA /<br><b>RECTORY</b>     | 3_ IMMACOLATA<br>CONCEZIONE    | 6_ ORTO DEL RETTORE /<br><b>PARK OF THE RECTOR</b> |
| 1_ CAMPANILE /<br><b>BELL TOWER</b> | 4_ SANTI SEBASTIANO E<br>ROCCO | 7_ TEATRO DI SAN GENESIO<br><b>/ THEATER</b>       |
| 2_ SAN QUIRICINO                    | 5_ S.M. MADDALENA              |  |

Fig. 3 Schematic and diachronic evolution of the defensive structures of San Quirico. Distribution of selected and investigated buildings around the church of Santi Quirico e Giuditta in San Quirico

### III. The Congregations of San Quirico (Alessandro Merlo)

Every resident of San Quirico belonged to a congregation or a cooperative. These were akin to “extended families” that would accompany the residents in their spiritual lives.

A clergyman (usually the parish priest) would supervise the brotherhood’s activities, which usually involved planning celebrations and processions for the patron saint and other religious festivities, giving out blessed bread on Maundy Thursday, setting up oratories and altars, and transferring the ill and the deceased from the town of Pescia to the castle and from the castle to the cemetery. Congregations also taught the catechism and did charitable work, especially to help the brothers during financial hardship. In case of legal disputes, the brothers would receive help from the brotherhood itself. Without the congregations, the whole community would have lacked access to essential forms of assistance, both material and spiritual.

San Quirico was home to many congregations throughout the centuries<sup>1</sup>. Not only did the most important own altars in the church of Santi Quirico e Giuditta, (Fig. 3) but they also built their own oratories.

The *brotherhood of Santi Rocco e Sebastiano* was active in San Quirico from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Before its reform on October 11, 1718, the brotherhood was presumably only dedicated

to San Sebastiano. Thus, the inscription on the brotherhood’s altar’s epigraph in the church also presumably dates to the same period. It reads: D.O.M./DIVISQUE/SEBASTIANO ET ROCHO. The brothers provided assistance to the poor and the ill.

The *brotherhood of Santa Maria Maddalena* was founded in 1570 after, on July 22, 1539, the residents of San Quirico fended an attack from Florence thanks to the saint’s intercession. The brothers, who wore black hoods, would plan celebrations in her honor and promote charitable work to benefit the residents.

The *brotherhood of the Beata Vergine dell’Immacolata Concezione* had likely Franciscan origins<sup>2</sup> and was devoted to charitable work and to planning celebrations for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the Nativity of Mary. An 1859 charter documents the beginning of the brotherhood’s activities. The brothers wore a white hood. The organization was eventually dissolved in 1975. Through the decades, the brotherhood acquired a number of properties, as can be gathered from a 1698 log.<sup>3</sup> One of them was the San Quirico “hospital,”<sup>4</sup> located near the southern gate of the 16<sup>th</sup> century walls. The hospital was probably a shelter for wayfarers who could not gain access into the village at night.

The *brotherhood of San Quiricino*, chronicled in documents between 1753 and 1976, was refounded in 1957 by the parish priest. Nineteenth century documents show that the brothers, who wore red hoods, primarily taught the catechism to children in preparation for the First Communion.

Among minor 18<sup>th</sup> century congregations were the congregations of San Genesio and the brotherhood of Misericordia.

Chronicles of the *brotherhood of San Genesio* date back to 1713, when it was probably refounded. The brotherhood owned an altar in the church and a nearby theatre, which was most likely built during the first decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After the brotherhood was dissolved in 1906, a committee took charge of the administration of the theatre and the altar. In 1915, the committee merged with the sectional goods committee in San Quirico.

The *brotherhood of Misericordia* has been active in Valdinievole since the 16<sup>th</sup> century and still provides medical assistance to residents.

### IV. The San Quirico Oratories (Sara Basile)

*San Sebastiano*

This irregularly shaped oratory was built in an end space between the 15<sup>th</sup> century walls and the church’s left-hand transept. (Fig. 4) A

### ORATORIO DI SANTA MARIA MADDALENA

### ORATORIO DI S. SEBASTIANO E ROCCO

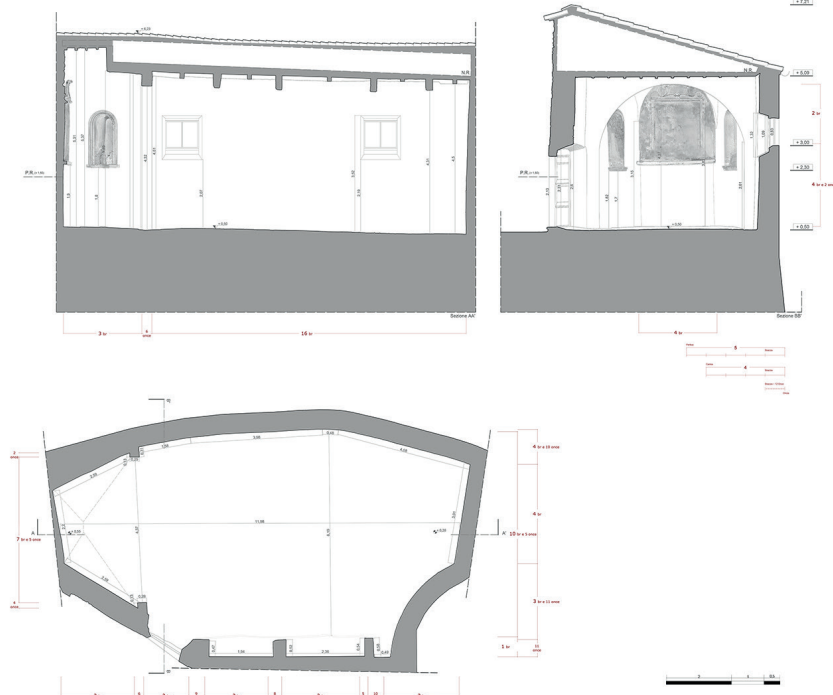
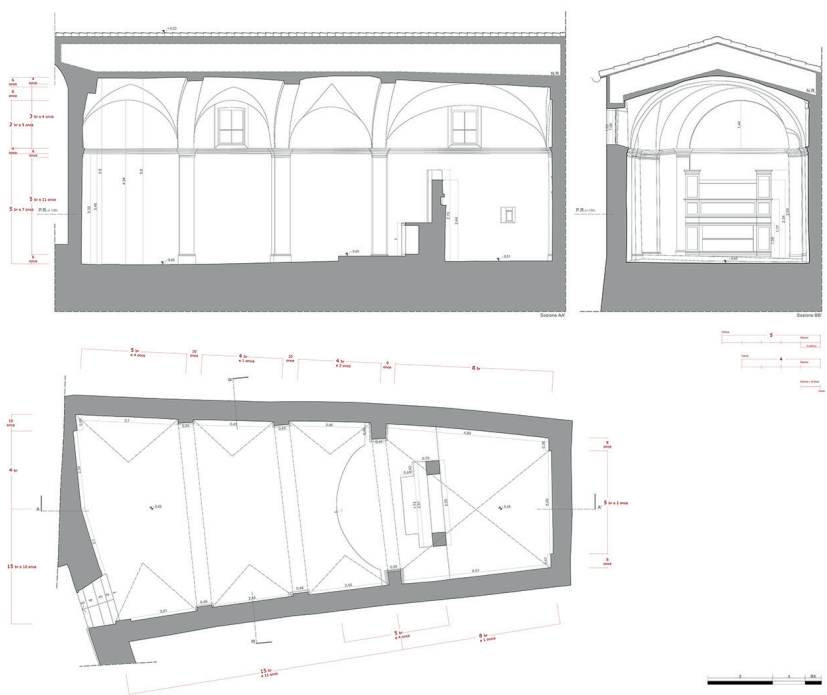


Fig. 4 Geometric take-over of the oratories of Santa Maria Maddalena and San Sebastiano e Rocco in San Quirico di Valleriana

door in the apse gave access to the church. The date of the oratory's erection is uncertain. The inscription on the door's jamb provides a *terminus post quem*: "COP. SAT. SEB. FECE. A. D. 1572"<sup>5</sup> (erected by the Brotherhood of San Sebastiano, A.D. 1572). In the *Catasto Leopoldino* (the real estate registry in effect in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany), the oratory appears as belonging to the church under item 917. Thus it also appears in an early 1900s real estate registry, this time as item 231.

After the Council of Trent, the oratory and the brotherhood were "reformed," as mentioned in a document also indicating that the construction work on the altar began in 1735 and the vault was completed in 1747. The brotherhood used the building until the early 1900s. In the 1960s, the building was turned into a tailor's shop first, and then into a warehouse.

A blocked lunette placed over a lintel stands on the current entrance, which faces a piazza on the side of the church. Relative to the piazza, the current entrance is at a height of +0.50m. The original entrance was located by the church's apse, and was probably walled up upon termination of the brotherhood's activities. The pavement's inclination creates a difference in height of about 0.20m between the north and the south sides of the church's atrium. The east front, which is part of the walls, opens on an upward terrain. Relative to the latter, the lower ceiling stands at around

+6.50m in height. The building's main axis is parallel to the transept's axis.

Both visible fronts of the oratory are built in sandstone, with ashlar of different kinds and dimensions. The covering is single-layered, with brick shingles and tiles. The atrium's wooden roof is made of beams and flat tiles. It most likely dates to the 1900s and is currently under renovation. The plan has eight sides, one of which is curved and leaning against the left-hand side of the apse. Two square lights face toward the outer side of the town. A few openings are carved into the walls, with small wooden doors. The brotherhood probably used the openings as storage space. The apse features two semi-cylindrical and one square wall niches decorated with plaster. A slightly curved arch (span: 4.35m) separates the apse from the atrium. The ceiling features an uncompleted groin vault that have partly collapsed. Up to a height of about 2.30m, the atrium's walls feature regularly warpage stone blocks. The wall right above is painted in light blue. A slit with arch is found by the walled-up door.

#### *Santa Maria Maddalena*

While the erection date is uncertain, an inscription behind the altar evokes the 1723 renovation, when the Ambon was completed. (Fig. 4) The oratory was active until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before being abandoned and reconverted to a warehouse

for sacred furniture. Then, in the 1980s, it became home to a permanent nativity scene. The entrance to the atrium, of about 96 sqm, is a door in the church's right-hand transept. The oratory's planking level is at a height of -0.60m relative to the right-hand transept.

The oratory shares its northern border with the Santi Quirico e Giuditta church's transept and sacristy. East and south, it leans against a section of the 15<sup>th</sup> century walls, on a highly sloping piece of land. Relative to the latter, the oratory's ceiling is at a height of about 6.50m. On its western side, the oratory shares a border with the rectory. In the *Catasto Leopoldino*, the oratory is registered as belonging to the church, under item 912, while in the early 1900s registry, it appears as item 234. The main axis, north-to-south, is aligned to the transept's axis. The building is completely removed from the piazza and can only be reached through the church. Compared to the other oratories, Santa Maria Maddalena stands at the lowest height and is the vastest. The atrium is an irregular trapezoid divided by four arches, which in turn are sustained by pilasters. A lunette vault covers the atrium, while a rib vault covers the altar and a compartment behind it.

The altar stands on a curved basement in *pietra serena*. It is made of white, red and green marbles, with geometrical frames. The floor is slightly inclined compared to the longitudinal axis; the inclination varies between 5 and



10 cm. The finishes and frames are in *pietra serena*. The flooring is made of diamond *cotto* tiles.

The east side features several openings. Only two, found by the joint with the covering, are not blocked. The lower level, which can be entered from the rectory's yard, is as large in surface as the upper level. It currently serves as a cellar and features two openings, which are not aligned with those on the upper level. The saddle roof is made of tiles and shingles. A narrow passageway separates the rectory from the oratory. The passageway is 0.50-1.5m wide. The west side features two openings of the same kind as those on the east side.

#### *Immacolata Concezione*

The building, facing east-west, stands at the foot of the village, on a pathway between the fortress and the church near the rectory's garden. (Fig. 5) A jump in height of about 2m is found on the south side of the area, and it is sustained by a 2.5m tall *filaretto* wall. In the *Catasto Leopoldino*, the oratory is registered under item 918 as belonging to the church. In the 1900s real estate registry, it appears under item 212. The oratory was built at the end of the 1500s and renovated (or completed) in 1616 – as indicated on an inscription on the main façade – presumably when the San Quiricino oratory was erected beside. The Immacolata Concezione oratory was abandoned in the 1960s and is currently

used as a warehouse.

The building covers a surface of about 100mq. Two sides are free, whereas the back side is attached to other buildings and the right-hand side shares a side with the San Quiricino oratory.

The entrance faces the church's entrance and stands at a height of +0.90m relative to the bell tower piazza. The main façade is surmounted by a cabin roof with a phytomorphic element. A metal cross stands upon the latter, which echoes a Corinthian half-capital with coils and floral insertions.

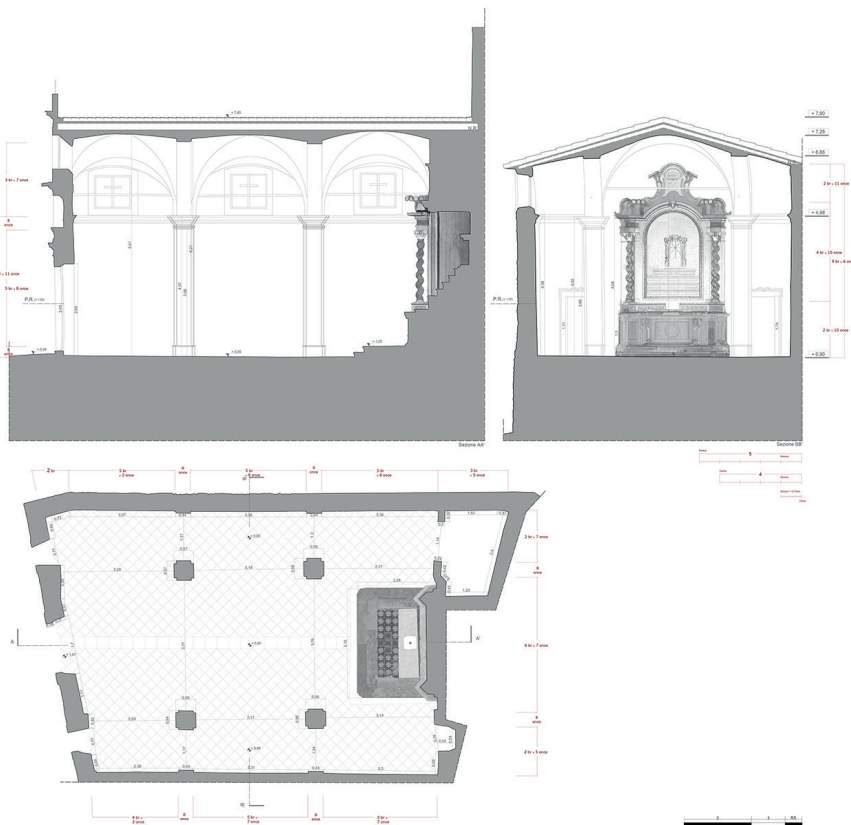
The entrance door features a *pietra serena* architrave and is surmounted by a triangular pediment split at the top. The inscription on the frieze reads: "SOCIETAS CONCEPTIONIS 'B. MARIAE VIRGINIS."<sup>6</sup> A wall niche opens upon the pediment. It features a Mediterranean scallop decoration, which most likely held a statue of the Virgin Mary. Farther up, a cornice crosses the whole façade, delimiting a triangular area. A rectangular window, with a *pietra serena* architrave and a thin, protruding semielliptical windowsill stands on the triangular area's axis. On the two sides of the main entrance are two square windows framed within *pietra serena* blocks and protected by gratings. An inscription on a corner wall stone reads the year 1616. The side front features three square, slightly splayed openings, centered in the middle of the side spans' lunettes. The walls are made of irregular stone blocks

displayed with mortar. The interior is divided into three naves. The central nave is covered by rib vaults standing on cruciform pillars. The side naves feature barrel vaults. Frames, arches, stuccos and *pietra serena* slabs define the geometries. The walls are painted in white plaster. The main altar, richly decorated with red and green stuccos and marbles, stands on a two-step stone basement. The second step features tiles with floral bicolor decorations. A medallion with the symbol of Marian devotion is at the center. On the two sides of the altar, two red marble Solomonic columns hold capitals made of composite material. The capitals hold a curved trabeation framing a wall niche that contains the tabernacle. A winged cherub figures on the keystone. A title block over the altar bears the inscription "MACULA ORIGINALIS NON EST IN TE."<sup>7</sup> The last left-hand bay leads into a room that is now being used as a warehouse.

#### *San Quiricino*

The building, facing east-west, is in continuity with the Immacolata Concezione oratory. (Fig. 5) There is a 0.45m difference in height between the north and south side, but the planking level inside is almost fully horizontal. In the *Catasto Leopoldino*, the land lot, belonging to the church, appears as item 919. In the real estate registry from the early 1900s, it's number 213. The building shares a wall with the Immacolata Concezione oratory

ORATORIO DELL'IMMACOLATA CONCEZIONE



ORATORIO DI S. QUIRICINO

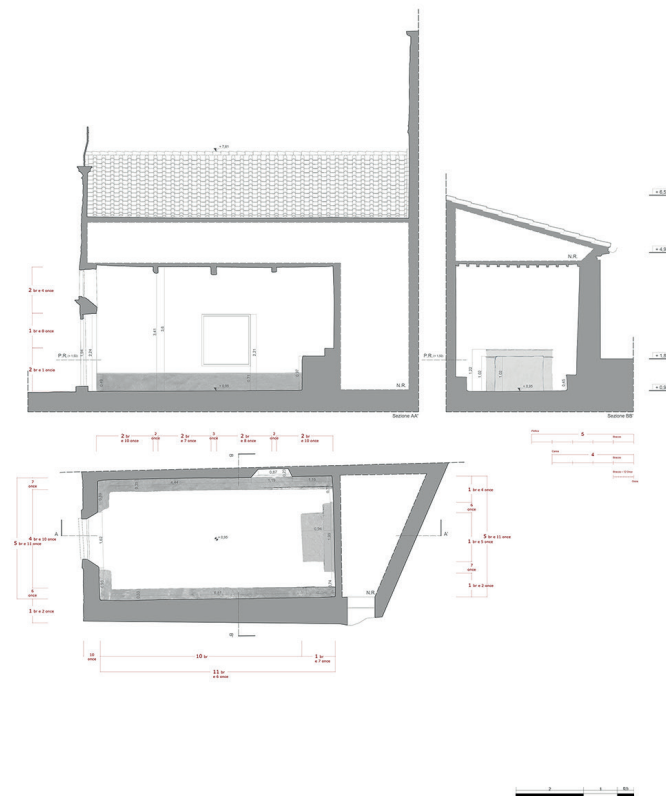


Fig. 5 Geometric take-over of the oratories of Beata Vergine dell'Immacolata Concezione and San Quiricino in San Quirico di Valleriana

and was probably built in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Chronicles of the time<sup>8</sup> report that the building underwent renovation between 1734 and 1740. At that same time, the altar, a painting (now gone missing) that decorated it, and a portion of the ceiling above the altar were built, and the façade was also completed. The oratory was abandoned in the 1970s, and is now employed as a warehouse. The building's entrance stands at a height of +0.90m relative to the bell tower piazza. The exterior is free on two sides. One side shares the walls with the building behind, and the fourth is right beside the Immacolata Concezione oratory. The interior features a single atrium of about 38 sqm, covered by a single slope.

The entrance on the main façade, built in sandstone, features a *pietra serena* architrave with a protruding splayed frame. A *pietra serena* square window is above the frame. At the top, two connect a triangular pediment to the building's corners. The left-hand spiral is unfinished, while the right-hand spiral ends in a double polygonal capital. A cross stands upon the pediment, on a stone base that resembles the Calvary's mountain. The corners are made of stones of larger dimensions, to strengthen the walls' connection. The oratory features two openings: a window with a *pietra serena* architrave on the façade, and a round window framed between ashlar on the side front. Two small-sized square holes are also on the side

front, which point to the previous existence of a dovecote. The interior features a square plan, with stone pews less than half a meter high on the two longer sides, and a small altar on the far wall. A rectangular wall niche with a wooden door is on the left side to the entrance. The plain ceiling is made of wooden beams and flat tiles. Two parallelepipeds, placed against the wall, constitute the altar. The floor is made of polished concrete.

## V. The Buildings Managed by Religious Institutions in the Church's Surroundings (Alessandro Merlo)

### *The Santi Quirico e Giuditta Church*

According to Francesco Baroni<sup>9</sup>, the history of the S. Quirico church can be divided into three periods. The first period dates from the church's foundation to 1519. A decree granting to a fund from 880 A.D. attests to the presence of a church in San Quirico. However, the document makes it clear that the building and the land that belonged to it are way older. In 1519, Pope Leo X separated the Pieve of Pescia from the Lucca diocese, thus forming an independent parish diocese *in prepositura nullius*. The Pieve of Castelvecchio, of which S. Quirico was a filial church, was thus dismembered. S. Quirico, along with Stiappa and Pontito, moved under the jurisdiction of the Pieve Medicina. This created dissents and fights between the diocese's parish priests and

the population. In 1407, a baptismal font was built in the church, even though it had yet to become a Pieve. Renovation in the 1500s<sup>10</sup> gave the church its current appearance.

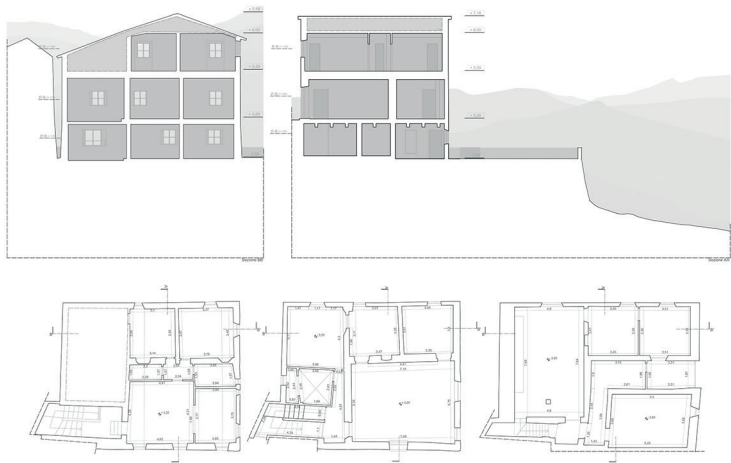
The second period lasts from 1519 to 1718. Following dissents and complaints owing to the distance between the two castles, on February 3, 1590 it was ordered that the churches and the parish priests in Fibbiolla and Aramo would remain under the S. Quirico parish. The rose window on the façade was opened during the 1622 renovations. The church became a Pieve in 1718, with the intervention of then-parish priest Pompeo Micheli of Vitiana.

The third period lasts from 1718 to 1925, when Baroni's book was published. In the 1910s, under parish priest Vincenzo del Chiaro, the church underwent major modernization works. The bell tower was isolated, the battlements were refurbished, the baptismal font was moved inside the church, the church was daubed and the rectory was renovated.

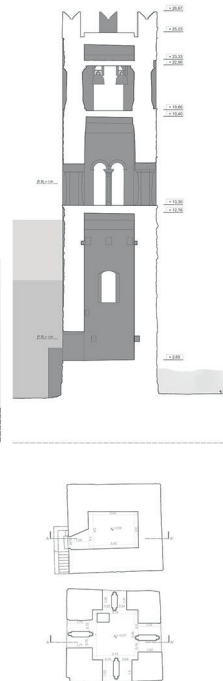
### *The Rectory*

Images are the only sources of information available on the church. They show the building as originally formed by two separated structures of different heights. (Fig. 6) The taller structure was the rectory itself. Presumably, only later was an extra level added and was the rectory expanded toward the other structure. The church's martyrology<sup>11</sup>, which only features the buildings belonging to it,

CANONICA



CAMPANILE



TEATRO DI S. GENESIO

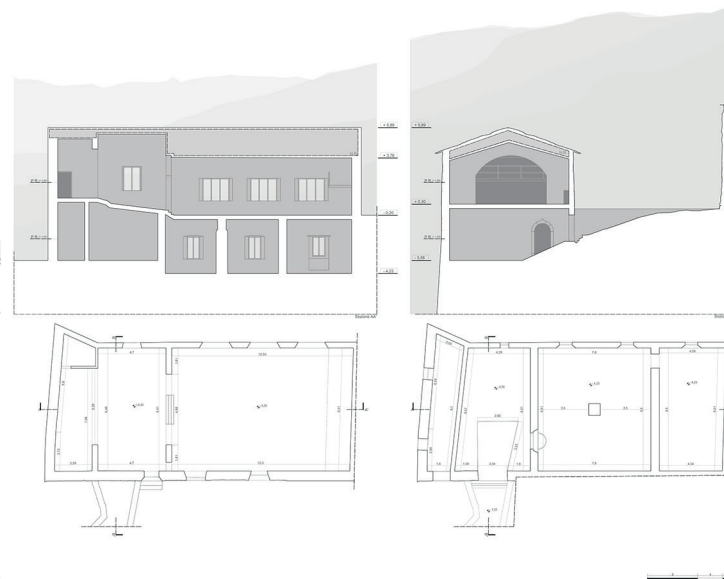


Fig. 6 Geometric take-over of the rectory, the bell tower and the S. Genesio theater in San Quirico di Valleriana

contains a sketch of the rectory's configuration before the 20<sup>th</sup> century renovation that gave it its current appearance. The main front faces the church. Two of its levels are above ground and the back level, facing the yard, has three. The number and the position of the windows are the same as today's. The main door's architrave, however, looks different from the bossaged arch of today's rectory, which ends in a cusp and bears a date of 1597. The façade was probably renovated at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, whereas the building should date to a century prior, just like the new church.

#### *The Bell Tower*

Originally functioning as a watch tower, the bell tower's configuration is typical of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Documents in the parish archives date its erection to 1515-20, though these were most likely just partial renovation works to the building, happening at the same time as the construction of the new church. (Fig. 6) Throughout the centuries, two buildings were added to the original tower. One was a baptistery between the tower and the north side of the church. The other construction, on the east side of the bell tower, functioned as a cemetery. Following the demolition of these two buildings between 1909 and 1925, the bell tower was separated from the church. At the same time, battlements were added to its top. In 1979, the covering underwent necessary renovation and in 1985, a lightning damaged

the bell tower, and monetary compensation was received as a result.

The tower is currently 26.80m high, which includes the battlements. The plan is quadrilateral, 6 x 6.50 x 6 x 6.1 meters in size.

#### *The Theatre*

No information is available on the construction of the theatre, which belonged to the brotherhood of San Genesio. (Fig. 6) The only *post quem* reference is a small inscription with the year 1611 on the main façade. In 1916, the building was sold to the local Misericordia and converted to a ball room. An arts and crafts company has been using it since the 1980s, while the lower level functions as a warehouse. The current structure was formed by the union of several types buildings and is comprised of two levels. The first building belongs to the rectory, which used it to breed silkworms, and faces its yard. A sketch in a genealogical trees' book<sup>12</sup> shows that the theater's structure was shorter than today's building. Thus, the original theatre was most likely located in the basement, beside the silkworms' room.

### **VI. The Project for the Restoration of the Urban Space (Sara Basile)**

The reason for any architecture project is found in the memory of the location the project is designed for. The memory relies on a profound understanding of human history.

Designing in a multilayered context requires getting in close contact with the history of a given location. Memory informs the project and is found both in human works and the minds of the humans who can decode those works. In order to establish a fertile relationship with the architecture of the past, it is essential to understand the logic behind its construction and renovation over time. Any contemporary project must be consistent with that logic for its users to assimilate it.

The congregations were not created to provide a social response to urban problems. Their charitable work and assistance to the people in need stemmed from the brothers' urge to identify themselves with Christ and the divine charity to, in turn, better themselves.

The yearning for beauty (and the creation of beautiful works), creativity and community assistance all emerged from the signature features of those organizations. Religious celebrations, for instance, involved all associations, religious and secular alike. When that happened, disputes were less likely to erupt. Even competition was channeled toward something more positive. Over time, congregations built their own meeting points, giving way to a new style of architecture merging the typical features of both religious and civil buildings.

With San Quirico, it seems necessary to recreate the system of relations, which was lost over time, between the buildings standing

on the church's piazza: the oratories, the rectory, the theatre, the bell tower and the public spaces. These buildings, each with its own features and purposes, must regain their active public functions in the lives of residents and visitors alike.

The research behind the project aimed at identifying the necessary elements to "re-humanize" a rich location that was abandoned poorly. The research provided useful interpretation for the architectural pattern that hosts the oratories, especially regarding the proximity between buildings with cultural purposes and their visual relations with the surrounding landscape. Both help users discover pre-existing beauty.

### *The New Cultural and Social Pole of Valleriana*

The heart of the system is the church's piazza, which hosts the oratories, the theatre, the rectory and its yard, and the bell tower, which is a pivot of sorts.

Each of these buildings was placed in relation with the others and the surrounding land, thus rekindling old relations (especially visual) emphasizing the San Quirico castle's existence within a bigger picture.

To become a cultural center, the town needs to be equipped with spaces and tools to welcome a large public. "Accoglienza", "Manifestazione", "Ristoro" (Welcome, Presentation, and Comfort) are the key words behind the project. (Fig. 7)

The "albergo diffuso" concept will foster hospitality. We also plan on converting the rectory into a youth hostel with communal bathrooms.

The main urban spaces will host events all year round. The oratories will play a key role to that end. San Sebastiano will become a conference room. (Fig. 8) Santa Maria Maddalena will host a permanent exhibit. San Quiricino will be home to an interactive museum on the town's history. (Fig. 9) Immacolata Concezione will accommodate temporary exhibits. The bell tower will become accessible again and will be turned into a vertical museum exhibiting the bells the Magni family<sup>13</sup> would forge in San Quirico until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The tower will be an observation point again, and so will be the rectory's yard. The latter will also be re-opened to visitors, giving them access to beautiful views. The theater of S. Genesio will be restored in its originally function. (Fig. 10) New pathways inside and outside town will tell its history. From a trail around the walls, visitors will observe the fortresses that would protect the city for centuries. The pathway to the cemetery and the monument to the fallen will be an occasion to remember World War II and the 1944 Nazi carnage.

All the elements in the project will stem from a single cubical modular element (length of the side: 2.40m) made of wood and weathering steel, broken up and repeated in different ways depending on location and function. Thus,

users will be able to find their way in space, and it will be easier for them to identify the structures and the relations between them.

The additions will always be separate from all that pre-existed, but still profoundly linked to it. The environments will become habitable again – certainly in a different way than what they were originally conceived for, but in full consistency with their identity.

### Notes:

1. The confraternities documented in the registries are: the congregation of SS. Rosario, the congregation of Vergine dei Dolori, the congregation of Sacro Cuore di Gesù, the congregation of Terz'Ordine, the confraternity of S. Luigi Gonzaga, the confraternity of SS. Sacramento, the congregation of Christian doctrine, the group of Madonna del Soccorso and Madonna del Tamburino, the confraternity of Cordone, the group of Madonna di Pompei, the confraternity of S. Genesio, the confraternity of Misericordia, the confraternity of Santi Rocco e Sebastiano, the confraternity of Beata Vergine dell'Immacolata Concezione, the confraternity of S. Quiricino
2. Vergine dell'Immacolata (Blessed Virgin of Immaculate Conception) is the protector of the Franciscan order, which, since its foundations, was a fervent defender of the Immaculate Conception doctrine in opposition with the Dominican thinkers.
3. The documents were found in the rectory's archives, in the Santi Quirico e Giuditta church in San Quirico di Valleriana
4. "It was a tiny house beside the castle's entrance, where it descends under the Cappella del Soccorso's house's portico. The hospital is found in the logbook under item 1632, and was entrusted to the Company that manages the house and the hospital. In the Compagnia della Concezione's books, I read that the confraternity managed the Hospital, and by owning the house it owned the community." Baroni F., Un gioiello della Valleriana, S. Quirico la chiesa e il castello nei documenti lucchesi, Libreria editrice Baroni, Lucca 1925. An inscription on the house bears the years 1615 and 1616
5. Even other confraternities in other towns acquired a different name at a later time. The inscription on the original oratory's door – which only mentions San Sebastiano – and the crest right beside – which depicts the symbols of the saint (the arrows and



LUOGHI /PLACES

- SPAZI DI ACCOGLIENZA  
**/WELCOME**
- SPAZI DI RISTORO  
**/COMFORT**
- SPAZI DI MANIFESTAZIONE  
**/PRESENTATION**

PERCORSI /PATHS

- ACCOGLIENZA  
**/WELCOME**
- MANIFESTAZIONE  
**/PRESENTATION**
- STORICO  
**/HISTORICAL**

A1\_ OSTELLO **/HOSTEL**

M1\_ TORRE ESPOSITIVA /  
**EXPO TOWER**

M2\_ SAN QUIRICINO

M3\_ IMMACOLATA

M4\_ SAN SEBASTIANO  
E ROCCO

M5\_ S.M. MADDALENA

M6\_ PARCO SULLE MURA  
**/ PARK ON THE WALL**

M7\_ TEATRO **/THEATER**

Fig. 7 Project master plan indicating the functional distribution and pattern of flows

EXPOSITION ROOM SANTA MARIA MADDALENA

CONFERENCE ROOM S. SEBASTIANO E ROCCO

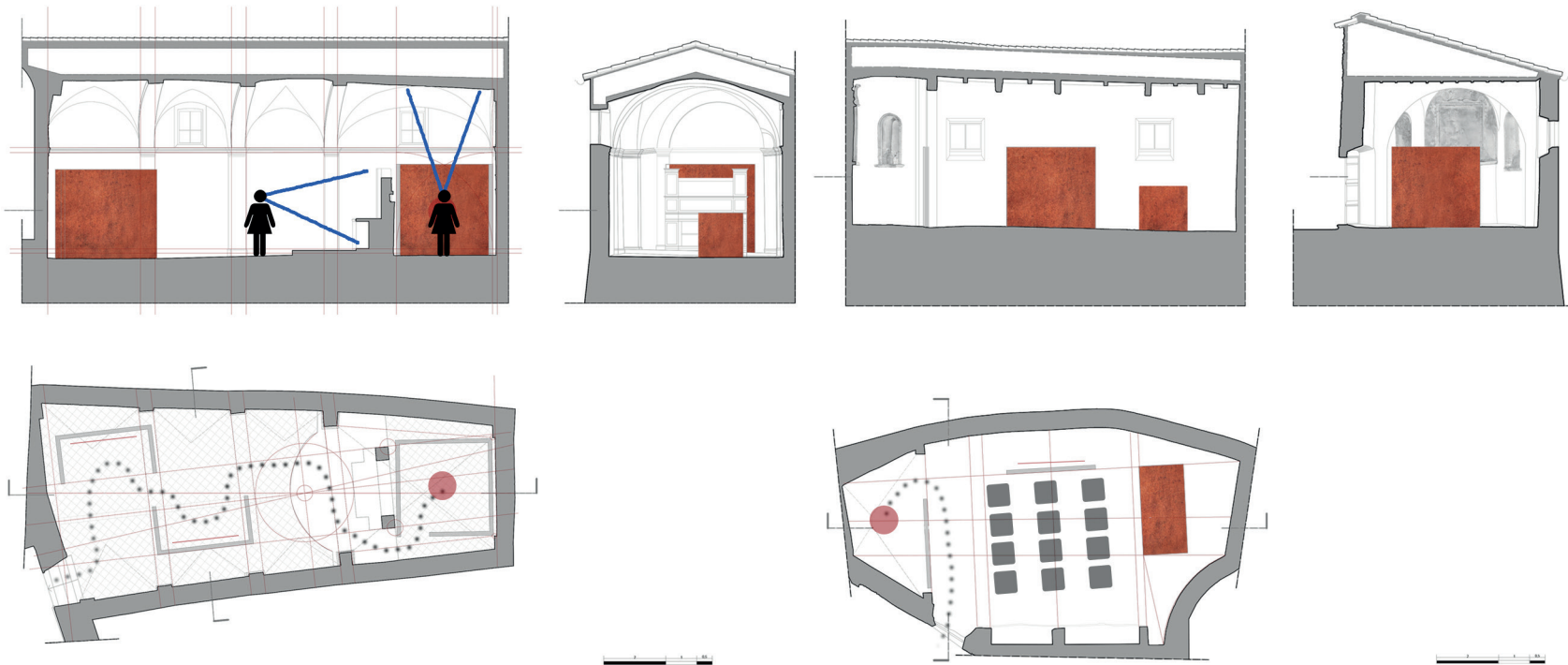
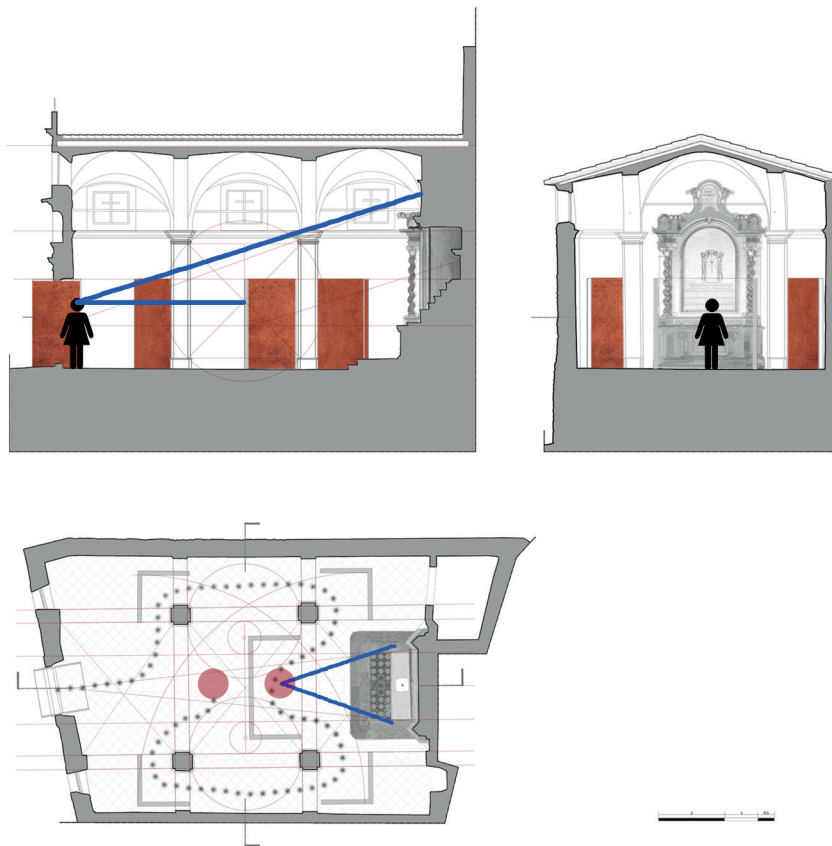


Fig. 8 Schematic representation of reuse projects of Santa Maria Maddalena and S. Sebastiano e Rocco



EXIBITION ROOM IMMACOLATA CONCEZIONE



INTERACTIVE MUSEUM S. QUIRICINO

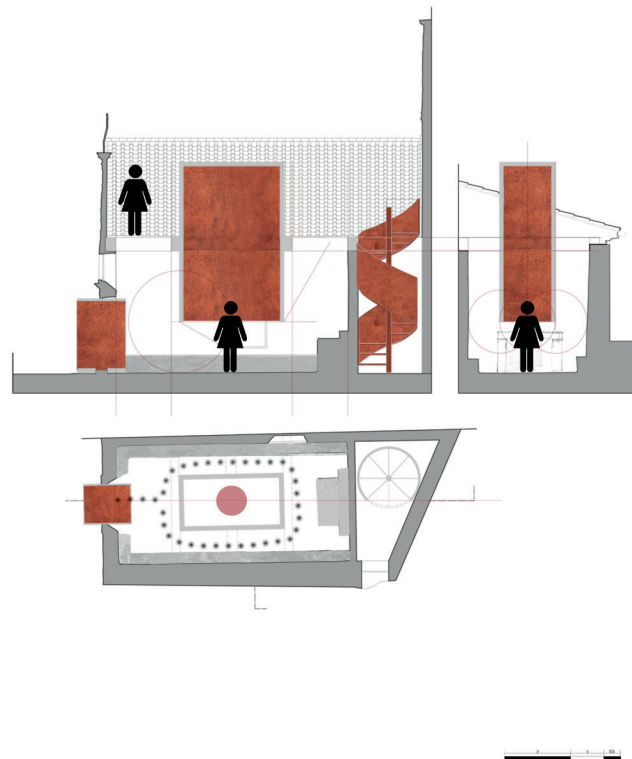


Fig. 9 Schematic representation of reuse projects of Beata Vergine dell'Immacolata Concezione and S. Quiricino

GUEST HOUSE

EXPO TOWER

S. GENESIO THEATRE

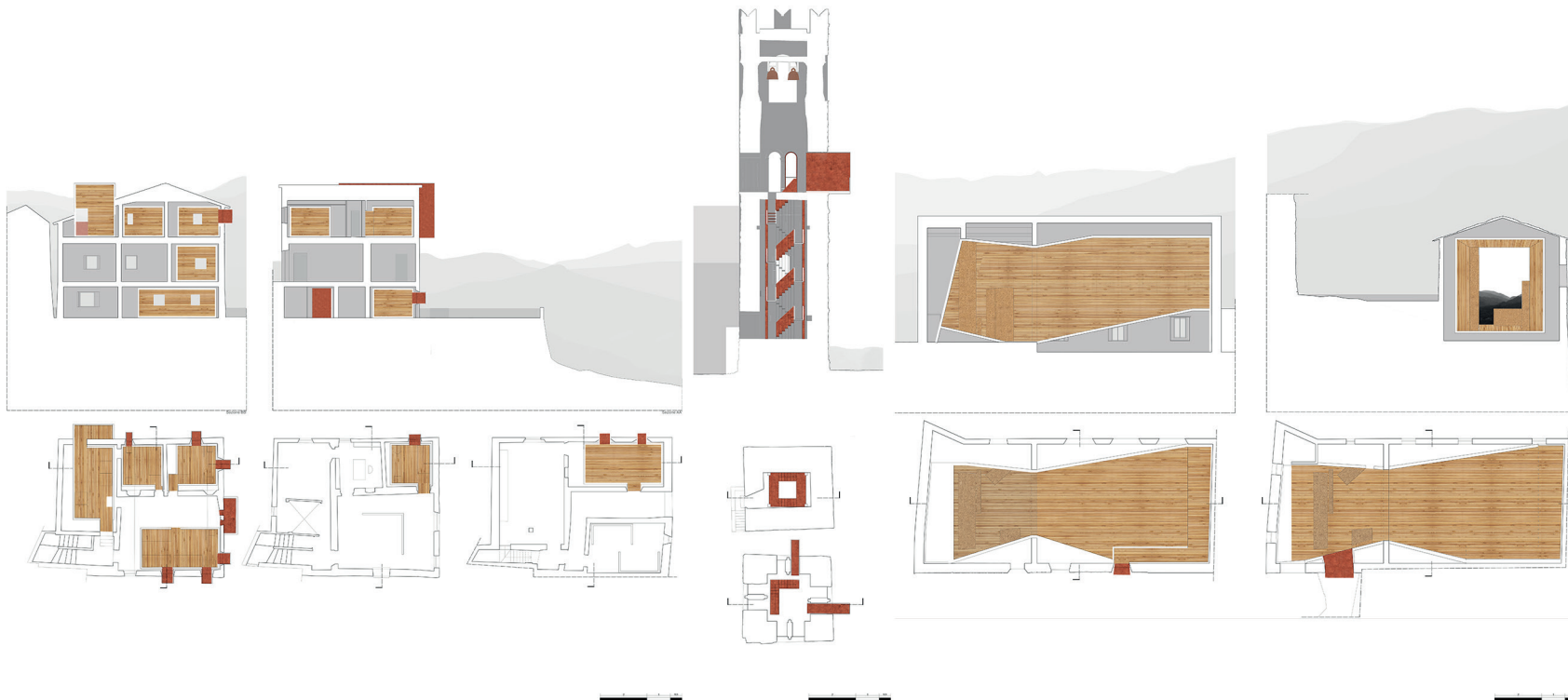


Fig. 10 Schematic representation of reuse projects of the hostel, the exposition tower and the theater of S. Genesio

the crown) – seem to indicate that

6. “Confraternity of the Conception of the Virgin Mary.”

7. Line from “Tota pulchra est Maria,” an old Catholic prayer dating to the 4th century. It is one of five antiphons in the second Vespers’ psalm for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

8. “Book of the Confraternity of [...] of S. Quirico,” started on May 3, 1735, found in the rectory’s archives in the Santi Quirico e Giuditta church. The first page reads: “The expense. The confraternity of S. Quiricino’s facade was made by Bastiano of Bastiano Fontana Cad. of Carlo. Carlo son of said Bastiano was treasurer in 1734, 1735, 1736, 1737, 1738, 1739, until April 18, 1740 and made the expense for the Altar of said Oratory, with the painting, with the purchase of the ceiling, which covers said Altar, and renovated the oratory.”

9. Baroni F. 1925, *Un gioiello della Valleriana, S. Quirico la chiesa e il castello nei documenti lucchesi*, Libreria editrice Baroni, Lucca (cfr. also Repetti F. 1843, *Dizionario Geografico Fisico e Storico della Toscana*, vol 4, Firenze; Biagi G. 1902, *Guida della Valdinievole*, R. Bemporad & Figlio Librai-Editori, Firenze)

10. “Says a note in the parish’s archives: ‘Our church of S. Quirico was erected in 1500, as per the date on the door on the rectory’s side: A.D. MCCCC. The cross was completed in 1500. The oldest memory I have found and seen is the burial site in front of the S. Antonio’s altar, dating to 1415. It seems like the old name of the church was S. Simone e Giuda, though that doesn’t leave me satisfied. But I will refer to Ser Ciomeo Pieri, who on April 27, 1450 registered a tribute of one lira and four cents that the people in S. Quirico di Valdriana owed to the parish. I have not, however, found any indications on the books that this tax was actually paid.’ The person who wrote this was probably right. Nothing points to the existence of an older name for the church (SS. Simone e Giuda). The name S. Quirico appears in documents from 890 and 980, in the 1260 catalogue, in the 15th century catalogue (as opposed to the one from 1387) published by Bongi (Inventory) and in the oldest memories in the parish’s archives.”

11. Martyrology of the church of Santi Quirico e Giuditta, dating to the 17th century, stored in the rectory’s archives

12. The “Genealogical trees’ book of San Quirico’s families” stored in the rectory’s archives

13. The family forged many bell towers around Lucca, Tuscany and Umbria until it stopped all activities in the 1960s, after moving to Lucca. The S. Maria degli Angeli’s bell in Assisi is one of them. The Magni family passed down from father to son their bell-forging secrets for several generations. They were based in S. Quirico until 1881, when they moved to Lucca in the S. Concordio area. The family’s name and whole genealogical tree still appears on the parish books

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