

## Back in the *tabià*. Traditional know-how in the recovery of the alpine rural architecture

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### *English abstract*

The problem of reuse and conservation of *tabià* is part of the more general process of transformation of the mountain agriculture, that creates new landscapes (renaturalized spaces) and deserts obsolete rural buildings. In fact, in the last years, we noticed not only the diffused abandonment of these old rural buildings, but also a parallel process of re-signification of them as **heritage**.

The reuse of this heritage – a process already started – must be an occasion to keep its historic documentary value, and trade it to the next generations. Rural architecture is far from Monument: its value is collected most in spatial value, technical details, surfaces value: it is a **document**.

The conservation of *tabià* is possible only if we give them the maintenance they have lost, which is strictly linked with their attending. That is why we say **back in the *tabià***.

Nowadays it seems to be very difficult to realize good quality recovery: new uses transformations often sacrifice just the values we appreciated in rural architecture before its reuse, its **authenticity**.

It is now necessary to invert the perspective and begin to ask oneself no more “how can I get a house from this *tabià*?” but “**how can I live in this *tabià*?**”

To make real this new perspective many **handbook for rural architecture recovery** were published in many rural areas in Europe, and mostly on the Alps, in those communities who were interested in improving the quality of the reuse process.

Handbooks study firstly how these buildings are made (their “**anatomy**”), and how they work (their “**physiology**”); secondly they give some advices for reuse this heritage without damaging it.

Go back in a *tabià*, to live in it, means in fact to face some questions: some evident **functional interventions** and some **equipments interventions**.

But this is not enough. There is something even more important: **structure interventions** and **surfaces interventions**. These kind of interventions are crucial because:

- 1) We must do them even if we don't change the function (even only to repair the *tabià*)
- 2) These are the first interventions we do and the last we design (often they are not designed at all, but decided directly on site)
- 3) These activities request more specific know-how, and often the technicians don't have it
- 4) The customer (owner of the *tabià*) is often excluded from this kind of choices
- 5) These interventions are mostly subtractions and substitutions, of maximum danger for rural architecture values

So, beside anatomy and physiology, it is very important to study **pathology** of the rural buildings, to understand how to take care of them, preserving their authenticity and trading their value.

This is hard to do if there is no more specific know-how on site. Technicians competence is important but also **craftsmen know-how** is indispensable to have good quality results. Traditional technical know-how is not everywhere conserved. So it is very important to identify and collect these competences in every area, because often old craftsmen:

- 1) can have kept some useful repairing know-how, used in traditional maintenance
- 2) they are those who physically intervene on the building and decide its surfaces final destiny
- 3) traditional techniques are more compatible with old buildings structures

Some old craftsmen are still keeping their competence; they are often very happy to demonstrate it and wish to trade it to young people. This is a great opportunity: while recovering buildings, to recovery know-how (**material and immaterial heritage**).

This recovery process needs to be understand in the specific economic contest, to verify the possibility to introduce the traditional know how in the rural architecture recovery process.

*In October 2005 Viviana Ferrario and collaborators were charged by Euris to do some interviews to old craftsmen in the two areas Comelico and Biois, to begin a fist **traditional alpine building know-how collection**, that could be completed in future*