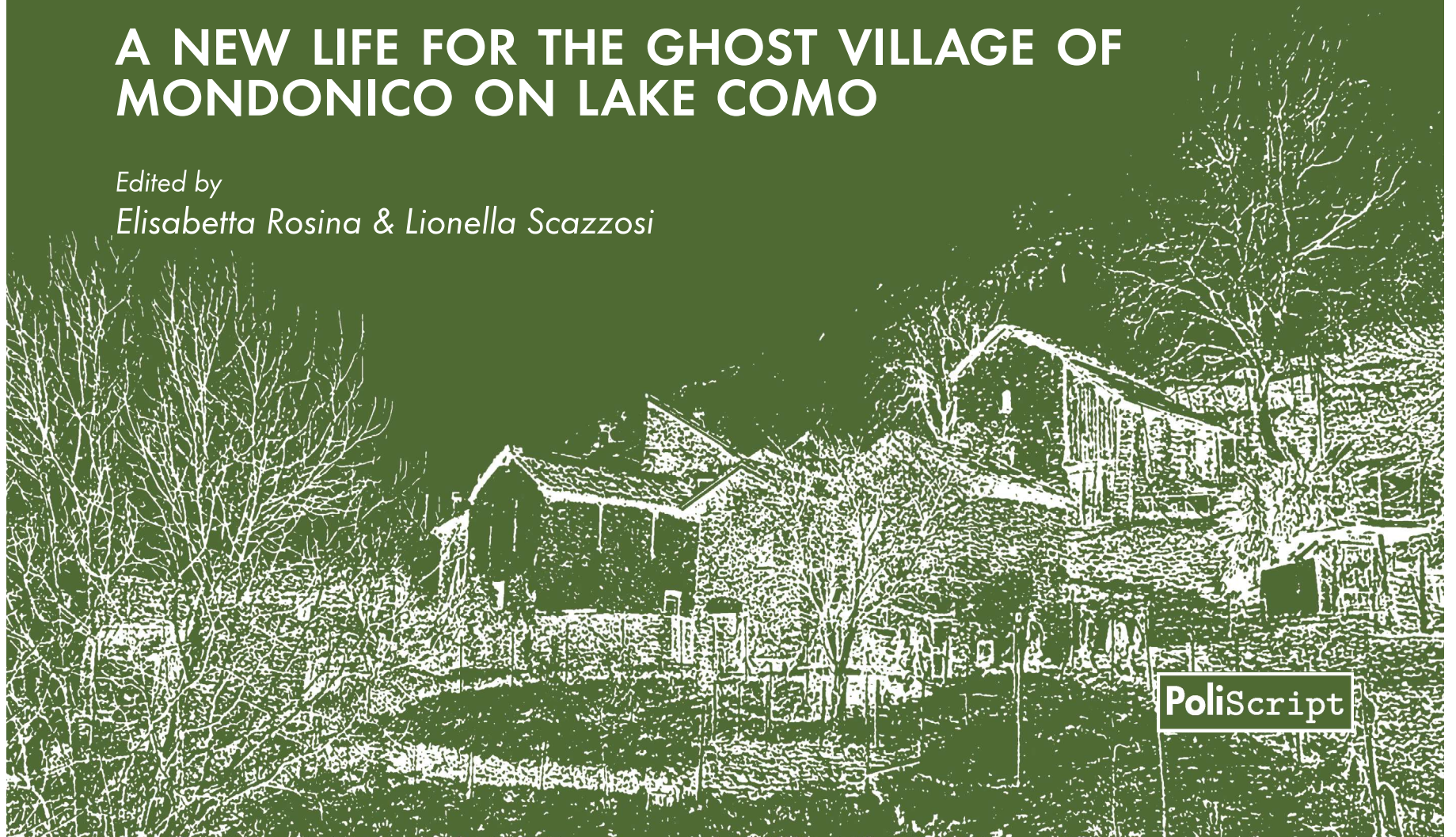


THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF BUILT AND LANDSCAPE HERITAGE

A NEW LIFE FOR THE GHOST VILLAGE OF
MONDONICO ON LAKE COMO

*Edited by
Elisabetta Rosina & Lionella Scazzosi*



The conservation and enhancement of built and landscape heritage. A new life for the ghost village of Mondonico on Lake Como

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Identification of the ancient centres of Mondonico and Dorio since the 18th century through comparison of historic property registers

Elisabetta Rosina

The authors analyzed historic documentation consisting in maps of the Dorio area and a list of property owners in the historic archives of Como. This analysis and comparison deal primarily with maps dating back to the 18th century: “*Seconda stazione*”¹, “18 marzo 1873” and “*aggiornamenti 1898*”, the version updated in 1889². In addition, a bibliography of development on Lecco Lake shores and a historical documentation, regarding the history of the churches of Dorio and Mondonico, completed the research.

The information contained in the historic property registers allowed the researchers to identify the extension of the ancient historic centres and the shape of the urban blocks, and made it possible to understand the development and transformation of the ancient town centres, in particular for the town of Dorio.

The authors compared the maps, considering the differences in the accuracy and graphic representation among the maps, mainly due to different map purposes, and the availability of tools for survey, scale, and

graphic codes.

The recent air photogrammetry permitted recognition of the perimeter and provided location of actual buildings by localizing them in the older maps³.

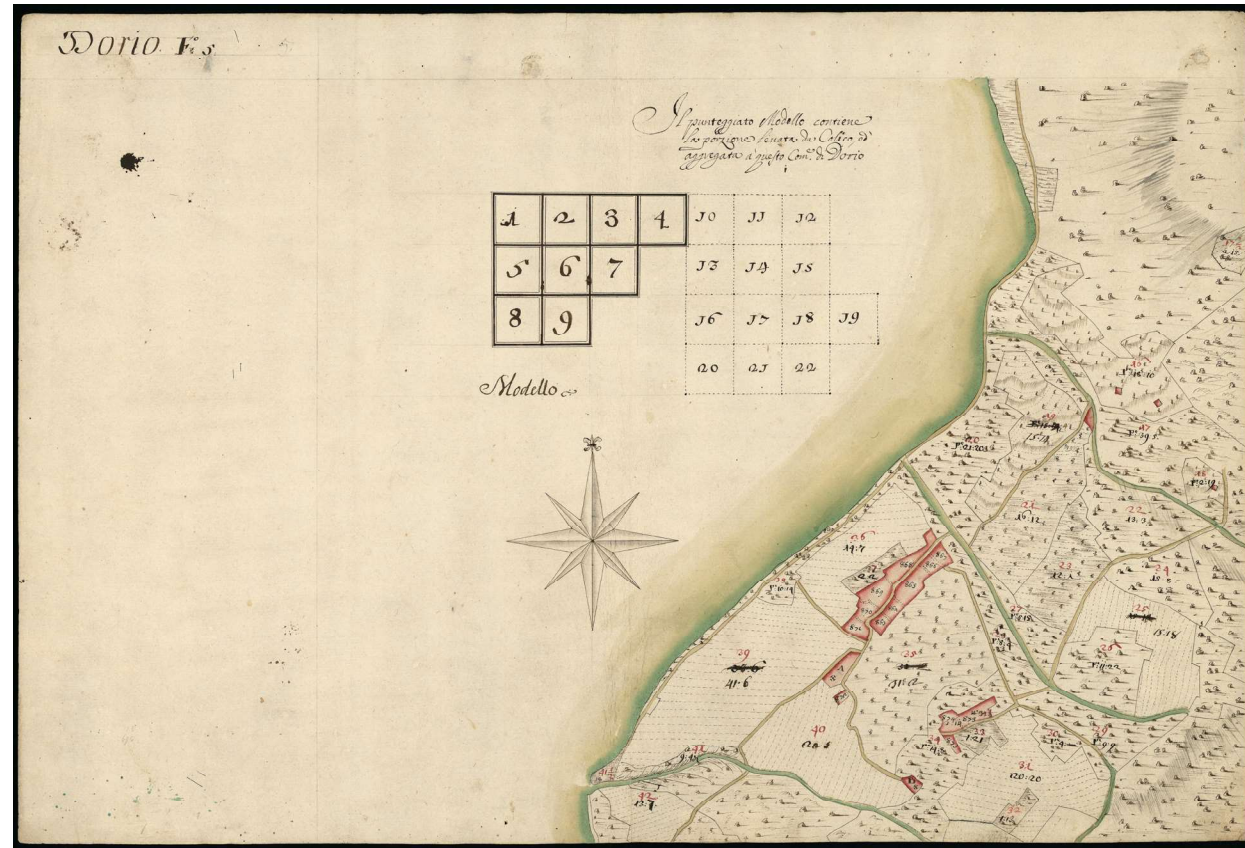
Mondonico and Dorio villages are particularly suitable for the micro-analysis method because their ancient centres still maintain many of their historic features, while the presence of materials even permits detection of the most ancient structures.

So far, the ongoing research has not taken into consideration any notarial deeds other than purchase and sale of buildings, nevertheless it is possible to notice the permanence of the same families (or at least of the same surnames).

Mondonico

The authors compared Page 5 of ASCO¹ (Fig. 1), the map of the following property register², the Lombardo Veneto map³ (property sale register from 1860 to

Fig. 1 - Maria Theresa cadastral map, 18th century.
(source: ASCO¹)



1903) and the 1898 updated document⁴ (Fig. 2). The centre of Mondonico is easily recognizable in the 18th century property register, given that the residential area seems to be almost like it is today. Nevertheless, the low level of accuracy of the block and building shapes and of the annexed fields do not allow a precise evaluation of all the transformations occurring after the 18th century. Despite the low level of accuracy, the first remarkable differences are in the path that connects the village to the lakeside and Dorio. In the 18th century map, the main path from Dorio to

Mondonico is "Via ai Boschi" (the name at present), which in the 19th century map was named "Strada Comunale da Dorio ai monti". The entrance to the village is from the East, on the opposite side of the entry today. There are no connections between the village and the Church of Saint George.

In the 19th century map, the Church of Saint George is connected to Dorio by what is now the main path from Dorio, and the so-called "Strada comunale da Dorio a Panico".

In neither of the two maps there is mention or sign of the present Wayfarer Path ("Sentiero del Viandante").

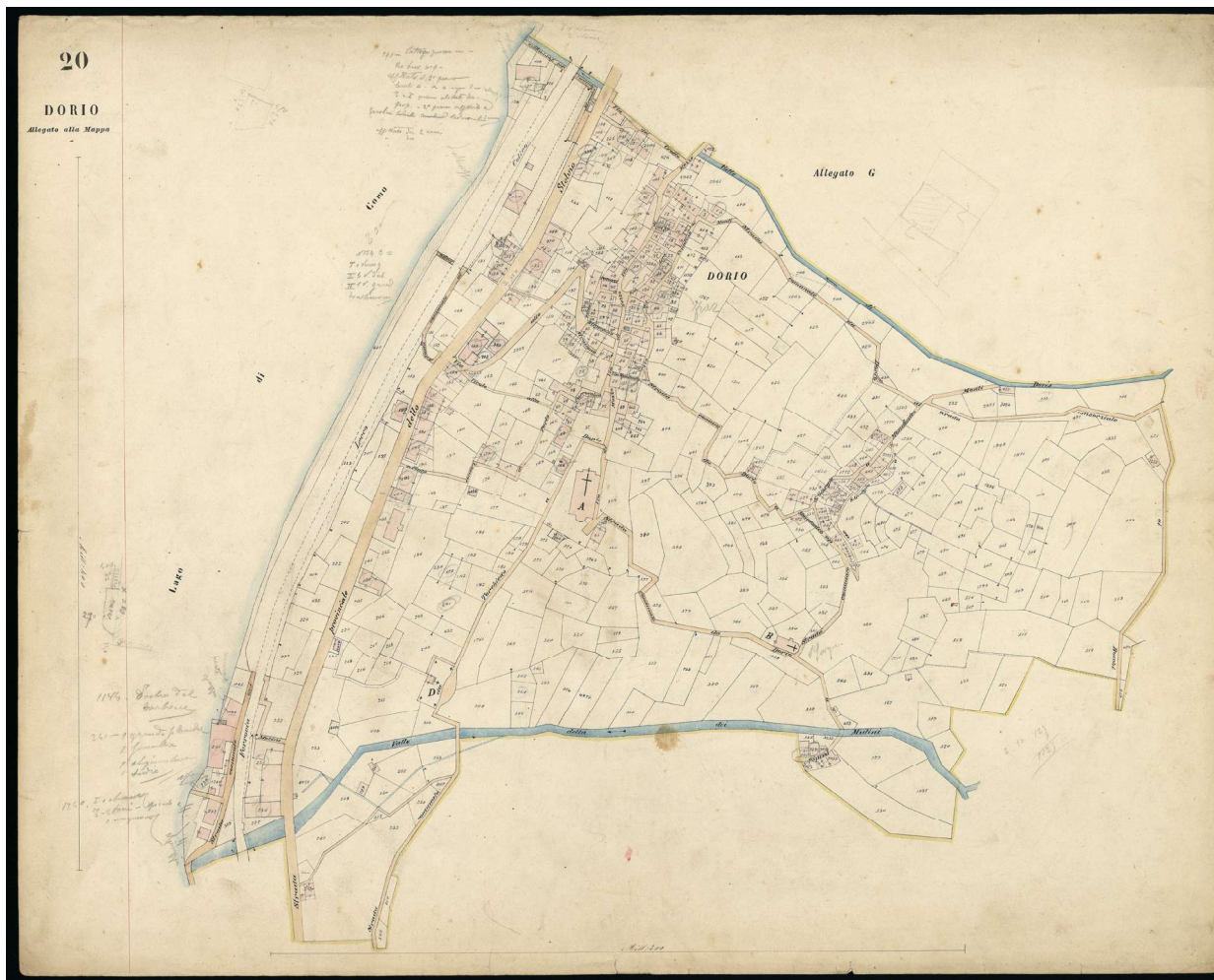


Fig. 2 - Lombardo Veneto cadastral map, year 1898. (source: ASCO⁴)

Another clue that the path did not exist in the past (see the document dated 1746 and referring to the arrival of the bishop Giuseppe Pozzobonelli in Dorio in the third part of this book “*Historical documentation*”). The village of Mondonico is settled along the only street that connects the village to Dorio from the East, and three cadastral maps (873, 874, 875) represent its plant, where the buildings do not have any dif-

ference in graphic symbols for courtyards, gardens, herbal gardens and buildings. The extension of the cadastral maps, corresponding to the same urban blocks in the 19th century map, reported in Table 1. In the 18th century map, it results a strong reduction in the areas next to the cadastral maps, which could be due to many factors. In the 19th century map, many properties are highly

Table 1 - Comparison of the extension of buildings in the cadastral maps of Mondonico, 18th and 19th centuries.

Property extension (18th century map)	Map number (18th century)	Property extension (19th century map)	Map number (19th century)
344.25	873	196.35	457, 458, 459, 461, 463, 467, 468, 3223
374.96	874	202.89	441, 1771, 440, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455
122.71	875	71.99	443, 444, 447

fragmented, there are many owners, and they are different even in every block of the village. The average size of the houses is about 20 sq.m. each, whilst in the 18th century map a bigger variation in their size can be seen, ranging from about 21 to 113 sq.m.

In the 18th century map, the use is primarily residential. Only in cadastral map 875, is the owner shown as the parish church of Sant'Agata Tremenico, and the property includes a part of the "massaro" house (farmhouse).

In the 19th century map, on the other hand, the uses are all recorded as stables and barns, apart from the farmhouse (the only building with this specific use) in cadastral map 461; the owner is Bettega Sacerdote Pietro, Antonio, Teodoro, Sacerdote Giovanni and Sacerdote Francesco brothers of *quondam* Ambrogio, with an extension of 4 *pertiche* (about 26.18 sq.m). The economic value is 1 or 2 Austrian liras, higher than the value of other buildings of the same size: the income is higher because of a more profitable use and/or a higher volume (although the plan shows the

same size, this house was probably taller than other similar ones).

There are some changes in the cadastral map updated in 1898: the plan of Saint George church shows a rectangular ledge along the northern side: this is the ossuary (see the next chapter regarding the churches in Mondonico and Dorio). This can be recognized in an early 20th century postcard (an undated postcard) as well.

In the 1898 updated map, there are two new buildings (maps 972 and 466) with a similar size to the others. Another variation is present in map 436, in which the shape of a small building has a sign that shows a connection with the land beside it: both, the building and the land, were property of the same owner. The building was probably a storage shed for agricultural use. Similarly, a shed for farm tools, or a small warehouse, is located in map 3233, replacing the previous larger stable and barn. On the contrary, the new building in map 473 is wider than the previous one.

Ongoing bibliographic research has not yet supplied any further documents regarding deep changes to the ancient centre of Mondonico since the end of the 19th century.

Dorio

The comparison of the 18th and 19th century land registers document the evolution of Dorio's historic centre, Page 5, ASCO¹, the map of the estate register², the Lombardo Veneto map³ (property sale register from 1860 to 1903) and the 1898 updated document⁴.

In all the maps, the development of the centre is along the longitudinal axis (the present "Via Cesare Battisti") that crosses the centre in a North-South direction. The

"*Contrada di mezzo*" street maintains the same direction and extension as that in the 19th century map, excluding the new crossroads. In map 869, indeed, it was inside an urban block, in the 18th century land register, and it was the property of ten owners. Its use was residential. In the 1898 updated document, there is also a small blue rectangle in that area, probably representing a water supply (a wash tank or a fountain). The irregular shape of the crossroads is probably due to the need of opening new entrances for the buildings on the sides of that rectangle (maps 94, 95 and 88, 19th century map). The use is still recorded as farmhouses in the 19th century, as it was in the 18th century.

In the 19th century maps, at street level, the pattern of the urban fabric shows a number of perpendicular alleys to the main street ("*Contrada di mezzo*"). The drawn alleys show that paths were not outside, but ran through the buildings. Moreover, the drawn alleys have signs indicating large steps and a steep slope. On the contrary, the "*Contrada di mezzo*" drawing does not show steps; the street was probably a road open to vehicles. Another interesting result comes out from the comparison of the 18th and 19th century maps: a new road. Upstream from the village, it runs in the parallel direction to "*Contrada di mezzo*", with a similar width, and is almost flat, it follows the natural curves of the land.

In the 18th century map, upstream from the central street, the urban blocks maintain a compact shape, on the other side, in 18th and 19th century maps, the downstream blocks have ragged edges. Indeed, there are many empty spots along the exterior perimeter (for example: cadastral maps 74 and 103, 19th century): the empty spots represent courtyards or gardens. These cadastral maps show the half of what represented in the 18th century maps. For example, in cadastral

map 868 (18th century), the surface area of the block is about 757 sq.m.; while in the 19th century map, the surface of the total built area is 386 sq.m.

Comparison of cadastral map 871 (18th century) with the 19th century maps (it corresponds to maps 72, 71, 70, 69, 68, 66) also shows a decrease in the extension of the buildings and fragmentation of the estates. In the 19th century map, the upstream eastern block contains recent small buildings (not present in the previous maps), used as stables and barns.

The new Church of Saint George was built in 1858 on the same site of the previous church (even if now it is dedicated to the Holy Virgin), separate from the historic town centre. It has a large parvis, the only large open space in the village.

A new path, connecting Dorio and Mondonico, appears in the 19th century map: it is the "*Strada Comunale da Dorio a Mondonico*", from the southeastern edge of Dorio to the Church of Saint George in Mondonico. It runs through the village of Mondonico, and represents the best connection between the small village and the old church.

In the map, there is also a new road, the "*Strada Comunale da Dorio alla Nazionale*", connecting the village with the new two-lane road, open to vehicles, along the lakeside, connecting Lecco and Colico.

At last, the path connecting Dorio's church with the cemetery is named "*Strada Comunale da Dorio a Torchiedo*" in the 19th century map, and it also connects with the hamlet of Torchiedo.

The development of Dorio village at the end of 19th century: final observations

Comparison of the property registers shows that Dorio village substantially did not change between the end of 18th and the first half of the 19th century, even

Table 2 - Comparison of the extension of buildings in the cadastral maps of Dorio, 18th and 19th centuries.

Property extension in the 18th century map	Map number (18th century)	Property extension in the 19th century map	Map number (19th century)
108	863	176.72	55, 56, 47, 58
243	864	268.35	43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54
560.25	865	543.24	21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 37, 39, 40, 3028
87.75	866	111.27	10, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
299.97	867	255.25	11, 2, 8, 7, 5, 12, 13, 15, 5227, 6
756.74	868	386.16	105, 104, 81, 74, 103, 102
531.76	869	523,6	100, 101, 99, 98, 95, 96, 94, 93, 92, 88, 91, 90, 89, 87, 86, 97
374.96	870	379.61	83, 85, 84, 76, 77, 78, 79, 75, 73
308.96	871	248.71	72, 71, 70, 69, 68, 66

though the population increased fourfold (134 people lived in Dorio in 1790, 369 people in 1853). Most of the new inhabitants probably built their houses in the part of the land where the risk of landslide was lower, in the hamlets of Torchiedo and Panico.

Graphic representation of Dorio village consists of only nine cadastral maps in the 18th century (n 863-871), showing properties belonging to many different owners (for example, the property in map 868 belongs to 17 owners). The use described as "part of a house for owner's use" is the same for all the buildings (despite of map 868, where the use is "part of a house, stable and herbal garden", owner Dell'era Antonio quodam Eugenio, extention 2 2/4 tavole).

On the contrary, in the 19th century cadastral maps, there is much more numbering (there are 85 partitions) and many more owners: one owner may own one or two rooms. The high number of owners does not mean that every owner was living in each room, as it was a family house; the use of the room was probably not continuously residential, or the rooms were not continuously used every day of the year, it depended on

the cycles of agricultural activities and livestock breeding. Dorio had its expansion at the end of the 19th century, along the national road, on both sides, and mainly on the upstream side (9 upstream buildings, 1 on the lakeside), as documented in the updated map of 1898. The updated map is very interesting, and it shows many variations in the last few years before the new century.

The main change is the railway station and railway project (built in 1903): the shape of the station is penciled in on the 1898 map. In this map, the station project provided annexed buildings and space (cadastral maps 121, 122, 130, 131, 3229) as it would be built 5 years later (apart from the southwestern building). Moreover, in the 1903 updated map, the cadastral map 133 is divided into maps 133 and 269, and there were two more buildings in addition to the already existing one in map 132. The inauguration of the railway between Colico and Bellano took place in 1894, and the tunnels through the mountains slopes beside the lake were completed within a few years. In this way, the trains could safely travel between the two



Fig. 3 - The project of the railway, built in 1903. (Municipality Archive of Dorio)



locations, but Dorio station did not yet exist: the station opened a few years later, between 1899 and 1903. Another important event gave its contribution to the development of Dorio: the construction of the Bettega spinning mill. In the map updated at the end of 19th century the factory already exists: the headquarters and the spinning wheels are in maps 235, 236, 238, 241, 242, outside the village, beyond the cemetery,



Fig. 4 [left] - The project of the railway, built in 1903. (Municipality Archive of Dorio)

Fig. 5 [right, top] - Overview of Dorio (1927): on the left the road "Strada Comunale da Dorio alla Nazionale" connecting the village with the new two-lane road, open to vehicles, along the lakeside; it connected Lecco and Colico and it was built in the 19th century. On the right the railway connecting Dorio to Milan (south direction) and Sondrio (north direction). (source: picclick.it/Cartolina-Saluti-Da-Dorio-Lago-Di-Como-Viaggiata-321656524331.html#&gid=1&pid=1)



Fig. 6 [right, bottom] - The Dorio's railway station in 1920. (source: picclick.it/Cartolina-Dorio-Como-La-Statione-260908919269.html)

Fig. 7 - Detail of the factory
(source: ASCO⁴)

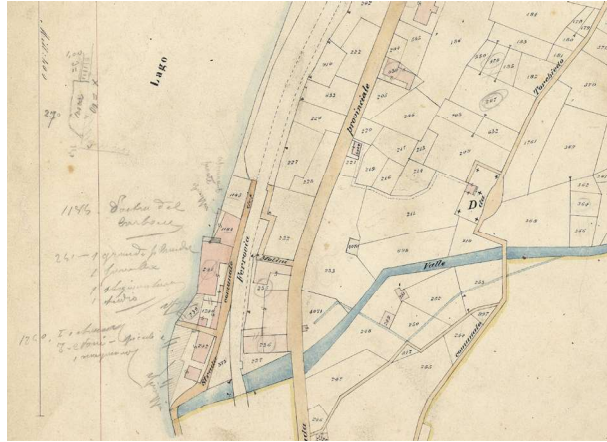


Fig. 8 - The factory's
view from the lake.
(source: picclick.it/Dorio-Lago-di-Como-Panorama-S-L-261107818309.html)



Fig. 9 - Detail of the map
showing the new cemetery
(source: ASCO³)



on the lakeside. Because the railway station did not yet exist, a red pencil line towards Lecco shows the access road in maps 131, 148, 151, 153.

The spinning mill was an important resource of work for the local people; but the commercial practice declaration, dated to 1903, (see the document listed as n 20) states that a large part of its employees were women (33 out of 39), so most men did not work there.

Nevertheless, the opening of the factory in 1895 increased job opportunities for the local community: the 1897 census recorded that 85 families were living in the municipality, and therefore one or more members of almost one third of the local families worked at the factory.

The factory area also changed, although the number of workers did not register a big increase in the first thirty years of 20th century (list of workers in 1939, listed as document n 24): in 1903, there were 33 registered workers, while in 1939 there were 36. The restoration of the factory was therefore probably necessary to modernize the production plant and warehouses and for an optimization of the spaces and facilities. The factory was basically expanded to the north side (cadastral map 1184) and small new buildings appear in map 1240 (a pencil drawing shows the new warehouses) and towards the south side (map 242).

The railway cut through the industrial site along the north-south axis, and so there was the need of a new entrance to the area. The new access road was a southward extension of the old consortium road "al Molino". To the south, the extension connected the "Stelvio" national road to the factory by an underpass, permitting vehicles to transit under the railway line; to the north, a pedestrian underpass connected the main road with the factory street.

Cadastral map 1240 also shows a new direct connec-

tion to the lake from the modified old consortium road "al Molino".

The building shown on map 238 was demolished to clear up the land for the new railway line; furthermore, the same owner unified cadastral maps 235 and 236 into a single map (numbered 236 since that date).

The lakeside maps also registered many changes due to reinforcement of the lakeshore (with additional pebbles and soil, to prevent any overflow of the lake towards the railway tracks, in addition to the higher level of the railway if compared to the shore level).

Another important construction project in those years was enlargement of the cemetery and adjacent areas, already shown in red ink on cadastral maps 209, 1761, 368 in the 19th century map.

The 1898 updated map also shows a large residential expansion of Dorio to the upstream direction of the "Stelvio" road: from the railway station to cadastral map 205, the land remained without constructions, but from map 630 to the end of the village, 18 new buildings were added. Among these, the map includes new municipality headquarters (map 203), which were already penciled on the 19th century map, in addition to three of the 18 buildings added later.

In these years, Dorio had its greatest growth in the number of residences, and the most common type of new buildings was the three-floor family house, built next to the new road, with a small garden in the back (usually a holiday house for families coming from nearby cities, such as Milan). Some buildings were also built along "Via del crotto" on cadastral maps 627, 231, 225, 198, 108. All these maps are the result of a fragmentation of the map 108 (19th century), with the exclusion of map 627.

On the other side of the road, towards the lake, only

one building was built in addition to the station and the factory, probably because of the steep slope of the shore, which discouraged any further development of the village in this direction.

Some variation also took place in the town's old centre. Small and isolated buildings rose at the edge of the village (cadastral maps 1150, 4068, 964); some empty urban areas in the dense urban fabric (map 50) were filled in, and the enlargement of the building can be noticed on map 73. Moreover, we can notice further fragmentation in land ownership (map 403 and 327), small buildings construction, new pedestrian paths crossing the fields, a new urban fabric from the east side to the west side (the new consortium road of Perlo) of the town, and the change of the Parish Youth centre (map 62).

Endnotes

(1) Shelf-mark: ASCO, Fondo UTE, Catasto Teresiano, serie mappe, Dorio, cart. 336, foglio rettangolo n. 5 (172.)

(2) Shelf-mark: ASCO, Fondo UTE, Catasto Teresiano, serie mappe, Dorio, cart. 336, foglio dei Beni di Il Stazione (172.-1760)

(3) Shelf-mark: ASCO, Fondo UTE, Catasto Cessato o Lombardo Veneto, serie mappe, Dorio, cart. 155, foglio rettangolo n. 20 (year 1860)

(4) Shelf-mark: ASCO, Fondo UTE, Catasto Cessato-Aggiornamenti, serie mappe, Dorio, cart. 155, foglio rettangolo n. 20 (year 1898)

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