

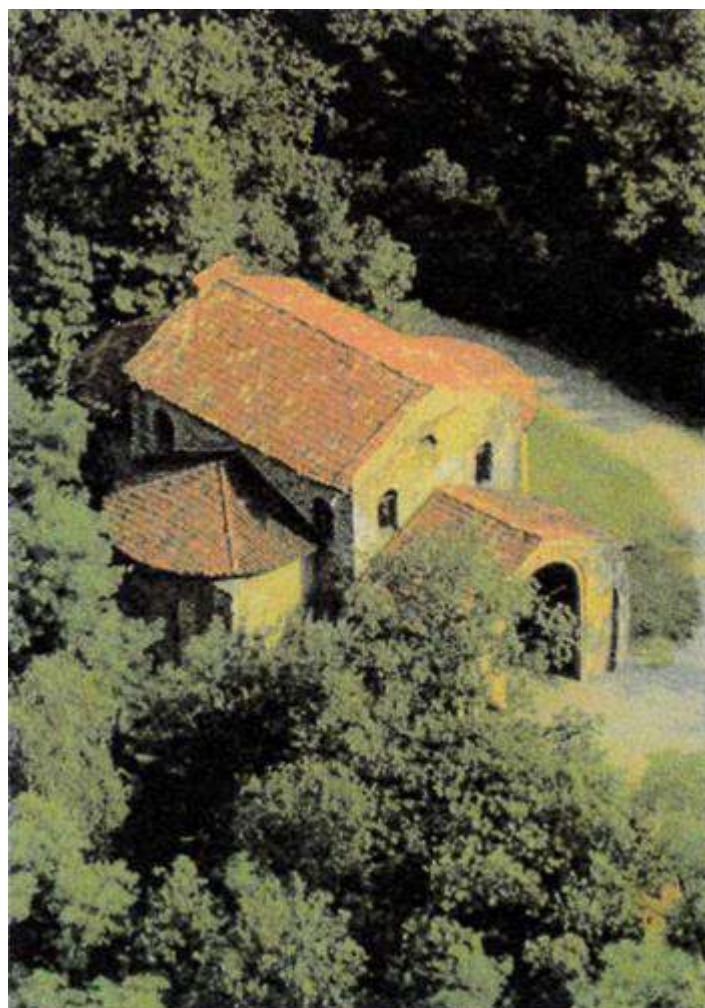


RESTAURO MONUMENTALE E ARCHITETTONICO
CONSOLIDAMENTO STRUTTURALE

CASTELSEPRIO - VARESE

SANTA MARIA

FORIS PORTAS



FUNCTIONAL RECOVERY AND
VALORISATION OF THE CHURCH

THE RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA FORIS PORTAS

The church of Santa Maria Foris Portas is a building inserted in an archaeological complex of exceptional historical-artistic interest in the immediate vicinity of the ruins of the village of Castelseprio in the province of Varese.

The building stood on the area outside the walls of the village (hence the name of Foris Portas), which certainly assumed considerable importance if in the V century it could boast a basilica, a baptistery and a city wall.

Of all this, today only ruins remain, for which, through a careful archaeological campaign, the Superintendence has done and continues to do an important safeguard work.

In particular, the area on which the church stands is a grove with dense vegetation with the typical characteristics of the pre-Alpine heath.

The uncontrolled way in which the vegetation grew, the notably humid climate and the presence of a nearby pool of spring water, have originated the conditions under which the disruptive action of humidity, very active throughout the year, has affected all the structures in the form of mold, lichen and condensation.

The problems recorded both inside and outside the church, were the cause of worrying degradation phenomena, especially for the precious pictorial cycle.



(External and internal view of the Apse)



(Photo of restoration from the biological attack of the plaster with "Japanese paper")

Inside the church there are precious and ancient pictorial cycle that narrates the life of Mary according to the apocryphal oriental Gospels: these are paintings made with lime colours, on a trace drawn on the mortar.

The excessive humidity of the internal microclimate of the church, with the consequent insalubrity of the air, caused the deterioration of the paintings depicting the childhood stories of Christ.

The deterioration of the plasters, their progressive detachment caused by the drenching and the continuous washing away from rainwater led to the disintegration of

the bedding mortars with the consequent formation of cavities and detachments of material, both localized and extended.

After a careful diagnostic campaign for the recognition of the infesting diseases that undermined the walls, the mineralogical-petrographic investigations on the plasters and mortars to identify their characteristics, the relief of the internal microclimate responsible for the degradation of the frescoes and the drafting of a designed restoration aimed at a precise compatibility of the interventions, restoration work began, completed in the spring of 1997.



(Detail of the cleaning and consolidation phases of the plaster)

THE RESTORATION:

- Realisation of a chemical barrier at the base of the walls for reducing the capillary rise of soil moisture, injecting siloxane-based resins into the bedding mortar courses;
- Recomposition of walls and plaster, where these were disaggregated or insufficient, with mortars formulated according to the indications provided by Laboratory Tests;
- Consolidation of the not cohesive plasters of the most damaged and susceptible to fall area, by glazing with Japanese paper attached to the surfaces with acrylic resin.

Prior to all this, a general cleaning of the surfaces have been carried out with detergent and emollient wash using deionized water, intervening where necessary with soft silky brushes.

All the wall surfaces were then treated with a water repellent based on oligomer siloxanes, applied by spray.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that, at the same time as the restoration of the Church, in the nearby areas, traces of possible archaeological pre-existences were sought. To this end, geophysical investigations were carried out using the georadar for the identification of buried structures and the preparation of explanatory maps.



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