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BUILT HERITAGE AND WATER RESOURCES IN CASE OF HISTORICAL TANNERIES OF SOLOFRA. RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT.

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The proposed paper aims to provide methodological strategies for restoration and reuse of the old tanneries of Solofra in Campania. A built heritage with high structural and typological specificities that has characterized for centuries the identity of a territory, which draws from the rivers the primary source of livelihood. The architectural complex for the tanning of hides of Solofra, built in the sixteenth century in the east part of the city, called Toppolo, stand at the confluence of two river courses and represent, today, the tangible heritage of the historical identity of Solofra and deserves to be preserved and enhanced.

The birth and the consequent development of tanning activity in Solofra depend on the position of the town, near the sheep-farming paths and especially near forests and waterways. The tanning of hides, according to the traditional method, requires, in fact, a considerable amount of water that in Solofra is guaranteed by the presence of two streams that close to the urban center flow one into the other and then descend towards the valley of Sarno. This condition has led since 1300 the birth of numerous tanneries which, although altered over the centuries, still retain original traces and sometimes they conserve the same use.

The strong bond with the water of the citizens of Solofra is documented since the first corpus of statues of the City, in which, during the XIII century, city tanners establish shifts for water use. At that time, the tanneries were simply dugged in the ground, open to the sky or covered by temporary wooden sheds, open toward the river.

The use of architectures aimed to the production of hides dates back to the sixteenth century, when there were already 51 "houses" used for this purpose. During this time, in fact, tanneries at two levels has been documented, born to successive overlays, where the first floor was deputed to the tanning operations and the second to finishing operations. It was only since the nineteenth century, however, that the factories take the form of real industrial plants and with the development of urban infrastructure networks they gradually lost their relationship with the waters of the streams, replaced from the city aqueduct.

Today, the tanneries of Solofra suffered a relocation that has re-aggregated them in a new industrial area of the city. The original buildings, however, are still perfectly visible in the urban fabric of the historic "Toppolo" and in sporadic cases they are still used. The proposed paper, through studies and unpublished documentary sources aims to increase the knowledge of this case and highlights how to classify this heritage and to restore it constitutes an extraordinary opportunity to give back an identity to Solofra and to recover its organic role within the surrounding landscape and its relationship with water.

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