

CASTELLAN MEETINGS 2010

San Colombano al Lambro – March 21st, 2010

Piacenza – June 2nd, 2010

Rovato – September 26th, 2010

Vigoleno of Vernasca – October 10th, 2010

What: researches about Middle and Modern Ages fortifications.

Where: San Colombano al Lambro (Milan), Piacenza, Rovato (Brescia), Vigoleno of Vernasca (Piacenza).

How: informal meetings (Italian language).

When: from March to October 2010.

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A topic not much tackled in divulgation works concerning the **fortified architecture**'s its influence upon historical developments which led to our days' reality. In facts, the explanations given to the public often confine themselves to examine some structure details or to exalt – if not 'reinventing' – some chronicle episodes; vice versa, they can result technical and sectorial, suitable only for 'experts'.

What **Davide Tansini** proposes with *Castellan meetings* [*Incontri castellani*] it's a **particular approach to castled architecture: well-contextualized and documented discussions**, in a **strongly interactive relation with the people who take part in**. **Simpleness, consistency and clearness** are the ingredients of this communicative formula, which amalgamates a **scrupulous historic-scientific method** to a **reserved and cordial conversation**.

The subject chosen for 2010 are the **connections among some types of fortifications**: *borgo*, castle, *rocca*, town walls and citadel. Title of this meetings series is *...not to trust's better!* [*...non fidarsi è meglio!*], which sums up the problematical cohabitation among the different elements which every day referred to the fortifications: civilian and military, social and environmental, economical and cultural.

Four the localities chosen to outline thanks their ancient fortalices *Castellan meeting*'s tread. All are placed in the central Po Valley: **San Colombano al Lambro** (Milan), **Piacenza**, **Rovato** (Brescia) and **Vigoleno** of Vernasca (Piacenza).

The ‘trace’ of the **communicative course**’s wholly composed by the **personal researches of the same Tansini**, local historian and studios in fortified architecture, associated to the **Istituto Italiano dei Castelli** and of the **Istituto per la Storia dell’Arte Lombarda**. Among historical «continuities» and «discontinuities» the four fortifications draw attention to the **numerous links with the present reality**: links not only of mere material keeping, but also of **influence upon inhabitation ‘tissues’, social evolution and local economical conditions**.

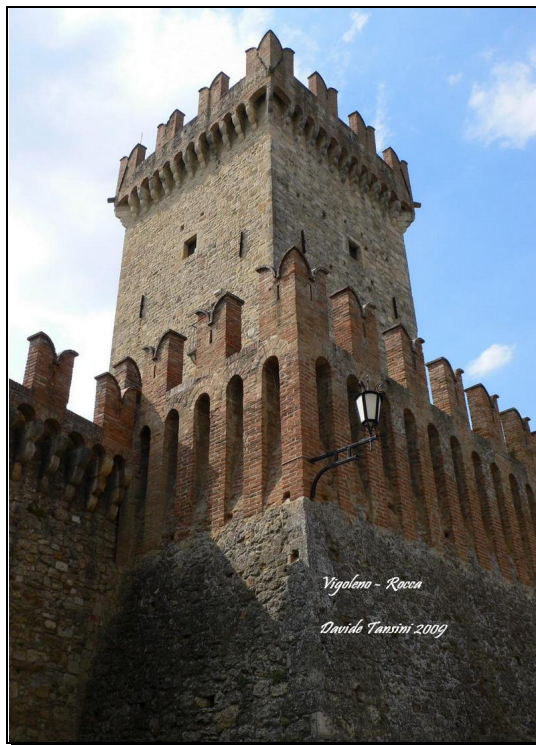
San Colombano al Lambro’s the first appointment (**March 21st**). The *banino* complex rises on slopes of a hill which dominates the inhabited area, lapped by the Lambro River and placed just off the Po. It’s composed by the **Rocca** placed at the summit of the hill and by the so-called **Ricetto**, which descends along the northern slope towards the town. Already **attested in the XI Century**, the fortification was then articulated in the **rocca/castle couple** – the one military, the other residential – in a **separation relation** which found with wide diffusion in the late Middle Ages. In San Colombano al Lambro such architecture and management model was kept till the *Cinquecento*, for all the seignories period (**Visconti** and **Sforza** in the first place), in a



comparison between two different but equally pressing necessities: defending a locality from external menaces and protecting it from those internal.

The second meeting instead concerns **Piacenza (June 2nd)**. In the **conspicuous ‘heritage’ of fortified and military architecture** the *padana* town owns, it’s considered as an example the so-called **Farnesian Citadel [Cittadella Farnesiana]**, placed South-West of the historic centre. So vast as not much known, it’s a **pentagonal bastioned structure**, which was required by the duke of Piacenza and Parma **Peter Louis Farnese** at the **half of the XVI Century** against

incidental coups de main and town riots. However having undergone destructions and tamperings – also for the insertion in a military hub still existing – its surviving parts restore the image of the grandeur and of the tactical and strategic conceptions at the base of the project, in a **relation «against» the local population**; besides, they make it important as **comparison with other** today disappeared or not longer whole **citadels** (Asti, Casale Monferrato, Mantua, Messina, Milan, Turin).



The third meeting considers the case of **Rovato (September 26th)**. The small town in the country of Brescia's placed at the southern end of the Franciacorta takes origin from an **ancient borgo**, locally called Castle [Castello] and **already documented in the XIII Century**: of this fortified complex – a **stone walls equipped with corner towers** – they remain **conspicuous and significant parts**. Still in the XVI Century the fortalice plant entrusted large part of its own **safety possibilities and functions to the local inhabitants**: so close was the **partnership with the population – decidedly «pro»** – that Rovato's historic centre's still now distinguished in very strong manner.

Castellan meetings' fourth and last appointment bears on **Vigoleno** of Vernasca (**October 10th**). Here, the **medieval borgo**, placed on a cliff between the valleys of the Arda and Stirone torrents, interacts with two other fortified structures, that's the **Castle [Castello]** and the **Rocca**, in a **precise scanning also functional**: the *borgo* for the population, the Castle for the feudatory, the Rocca for the garrison. In this **height Middle Ages defensive complex**, resetted up between XIV and XV Century, the interaction among the various fortalice components synthetizes a **deep union relation**: also thanks to the reduced sizes of the inhabited area, the ancient fortifications are 'melted' in an **homogeneous structural whole** which well reflects **medieval period's own inhabitation and fortification conception**.

The title *...not to trust's better!*, with the four chosen localities (San Colombano al Lambro, Piacenza, Rovato and Vigoleno), fixes a **particular course – and tread** – left

marked not much on architectural characteristics or episodes of historical chronicle, but on a **deeper reality**: the origin, the function, the arrangement of the fortalice entity, their connections with the neighbouring environment and above all with the people whose life was combined for various reasons to the same fortifications. To sum up, protagonists aren't inactive stones, but **evidences of a past on which it's found the present reality**.



Useful information

How to reach the mentioned localities.

- **San Colombano al Lambro. Motorways:** **A1** Milan-Neaples (del Sole) **Casalpusterlengo** or **Lodi** exits; **A21** Brescia-Turin (dei Vini) **Castel San Giovanni** exit. **Extra-urban roads:** **SP ex SS 234** Cremona-Pavia (Codognese), **SP 19** Sant'Angelo Lodigiano-San Colombano al Lambro or **SP 23** Lodi-San Colombano al Lambro.
- **Piacenza. Motorways:** **A1** Milan-Neaples (del Sole) **Piacenza Nord** or **Piacenza Sud** exits; **A21** Brescia-Turin (dei Vini) **Piacenza Ovest** exit. **Extra-urban roads:** **SS 9** Milan-Turin (Via Emilia), **SS 45** (di Val Trebbia), **SP 10R** (Padana Inferiore), **SP 587R** (di Cortemaggiore), **SP 6** (di Castell'Arquato), **SP 564** (di Val Nure) or **SP 28** (Agazzana). **Bus lines:** terminal of **Piazza Cittadella**. **Railways:** **Bologna-Milan**, **Piacenza-Turin** or **Cremona-Piacenza** lines, **Piacenza Station**.
- **Rovato. Motorway:** **A4** Turin-Venice (Serenissima) **Rovato** exit. **Extra-urban roads:** **SS 11** (Padana Superiore) or **SP 51BIS**. **Railways:** **Milan-Venice** or **Bergamo-Brescia** lines, **Rovato Station**.

- **Vigoleno. Motorway: A1 Milan-Neaples Fiorenzuola or Fidenza-Salsomaggiore** exits.
Extra-urban roads: SP 12 (di Genova) or **SP 359** (di Salsomaggiore e Bardi).

Castellan meetings [*Incontri castellani*] concern exclusively the researches led by Davide Tansini in historic-architectonic ambit. *Castellan meetings* neither have nor intend profit-makings; they're neither lectures nor conferences; they're neither guided tours nor accompaniment or touristic promotion activities. As free informal and casual gatherings among private citizens every participant's singly responsible of his own behaviour during the meetings. Dates and places can undergo variations and cancellings without Davide Tansini has neither obligation nor responsibility to forewarn.

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