



THE FARMHOUSES

This point of interest is found in Cernobbio - [Path 2](#) - Stage 2

DESCRIPTION

“Most of the farmhouses had a court (locally called *curt* or *l’era*), i.e. a large communal courtyard where activities were carried out, and where the various entrances to the house and farm were located; there were also porticos (*pòrtich*) used in winter as a space for manual labour.

The house was built on several levels, and access to each level was through external staircases, interposed by balconies with wood railings (*lòbia*); firewood was generally placed under the stairs. On the ground floor - the coolest area – there was access to a small vaulted stone wine cellar (*cantinin*) used to store not only wine, but dairy products and some cuts of meat, too. On the upper levels there was a ventilated, dry room, called granary (*granée*), used to store harvest products, mainly corn and grains (*panìch*), nuts, and salami. A special room was reserved for silkworm breeding.

The house consisted of but a few rooms: a very large kitchen (*cüsina*), which was the centre of domestic life, and the bedrooms (*stanz*). The toilet, a small hut with simply a pit hole in the middle (*letrina*), was placed outside.

Whether attached or separated from the dwelling house, the farm consisted of two rooms: on the lower floor the stable to shelter livestock, and upstairs the barn for the storage of fodder, often taken down by making it fall through a wooden trap door.

The size of the stable (*stala*) varied according to the quantity and variety of animals kept; the coexistence of different species bred for family use was frequent. The stable was low, paved with gravel or pebbles (*risciàda*), with a wooden manger (*parzéf*) on one or two of the perimeter walls; the larger premises were divided in two by a passage with gutters on each side to drain off animal manure. A stable of about fifty square meters could fit as many as ten cows.

The barn (*cassina*), sometimes vertically separated by dividing beams, could reach a height of six meters. One part would hold small bundles (*cruségn*) of chestnut tree shoots (*zémbul*), which, together with hay, were the cattle’s food in winter, and leaves, mainly of beech and fern (*föia*), which formed the cows pallet (*stram* or *lécc’*); the other, hay (*fén*), the pile whereof could be four meters high”.

(From *Testimonianze di vita contadina in Rovenna*, Cernobbio 1998)