

FOUNTAINS, DATED 1800; PALAZZO MONTALVO, DATED 1565

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ABSTRACT

From 2002 "Il Borgo Antico", non profit Association (Onlus), has been working in the coastal park of Tuscany dedicating to the repair and restoration of fountains and washing places which were built during the first half of the 19th Century for the population's water supply.

Since the advent of the main communal supply, many of the numerous fountains in the villages an countryside, and buildings which are usually beautiful examples of Tuscan architecture dell'Ottocento have been abandoned, condemned to degradation; even worse, this has entrained the loss of good fresh spring water.

In 2002, a few citizens of Castagneto Carducci and a few volunteers of the Servizio Civile Internazionale, offered their services and a restoration program was begun, using material of the period and style of the original buildings under the attentive eye of the Architect of Soprintendenza ai Beni Culturali e Monumenti di Pisa.

The Fonte Carpoli, the Fonte Foiano, at Castagneto, the Fonte Giulia and Fonte dell'Aquila, at Bolgheri and numerous others, constitute the memory of the social and economical history of Castagneto Carducci.

In three years of activity, the Association Il Borgo Antico as enhanced its experience and professionalism; now it is preparing the project of restoration of a building, Palazzo Montalvo, dated 1565 at Sassetta, the smallest village in Tuscany. Two architects, expert in the restoration of historic building are making the project.

We trust, within two years, to make the Palazzo Montalvo again available to the population of Sassetta.

1. INTRODUCTION

Along the country roads around Castagneto Carducci, on the Etruscan coast of Tuscany, you come across the ruins of many fountains and washing places.

Built at the beginning of 1800, these fountains provided drinking water for people and animals of the community and were used also for washing clothes and for irrigation. They were in use until about 1980 when the construction of a rural pipeline connected running water to all houses.

After this date, the fountains were no longer used, and consequently degradation ensued, speeded up by the absence of upkeep and by the removal of bricks and building material for other use.

However, the worst damage, in the long run was the consequential loss of spring water.

In 1996, an old lady met the writer and suggested the restoration of "*mi fontina*" (my little fountain), as she described nostalgically Fonte Carpoli, which she had known as a child.

Ten of most important fountains, which were well built and formed part of the economical and social life of the village, could be restored and made viable again.

Imagining how the fountains were once, the lady's suggestion and the sight of the ruins sparked an interest in their restoration by using the same "spontaneous" architectural manner of former times, constituted an interesting challenge for our group. For this purpose in 2002, a non profit Association (Onlus) was created under the name of Borgo Antico, devoted to the realisation of the above mentioned projects.

After the mayor's refusal, for many years, to consider the restoration, owing to objecting lack of funds and also because of scares enthusiasm, a group of four friends decided to seek the collaboration of Servizio Civile Internazionale, a voluntary organisation and to begin the restoration with the help of private contribution and donations of building materials from firms, artisans and shop owners of the village. The architect Lorenzo Mancinotti of the Town Hall Public Works Dept, who had backed the project from the start,

convinced the Town Council to grant their support of the and collaboration.

In Summer 2002, volunteers of the S.C.I. started work on the restoration of the fountain, filling 12 small lorries with mud and detritus, and consuming a dozen metal brushes used for cleaning recuperated old stones to be re-used.



Figure 1. The fountain before reconstruction

At the end of the cleaning and clearing work, Erich Bleuler, a Swiss/Castagnetanian, one of the four animators of the project, began the reconstruction of the clothes-washing area, everyday teaching the female volunteers how to lay bricks and stones, in the face of scepticism and incredulity of passers-by.

Day by day, the columns grew (see paragraph "Execution of the Project"), and on 30th of July 2002, after 24 days work, the 9 reconstructed pillars were ready to receive the 5 long beams and rafters, which formed the skeleton of the washing-area's roof, the longest part of the fountain.

In the Autumn and Winter 2002, and in Spring 2003, restoration work was continued as time and disposition of local craftsmen permitted.

In July and August 2003, twelve volunteers from S.C.I. and three local builders restored the spring room, the reservoir and the fountain.

In 2004, having received more financial aid, many days of voluntary work were donated by local people on the paving zone, on the preparation of a picnic and parking area, including the creation of flower beds. This completed the fountain project.



Figure 2. Reconstructed Fountain



Figure 3. The Fountain before the inauguration

On December the 8th 2004, Fonte Carpoli was inaugurated; the mayor unveiled the epigraph affixed on the reservoir, dedicated to all the volunteers involved in the project:

“Fonte Carpoli, 1835
Restored in 2002-2003

By generous work of International Civil Service
and the artisans of Castagneto Carducci”

Another epigraph on the fountain itself, dated 1835 reads as follows:

“The year one thousand, eight hundred and thirty five
Always lucky and happy be
Because is that year
Luigi Merlini, Mayor
Right honourable magistrate
Father of his community
Recreated Castagneto with this water
For many years desired in vain”

2. PALAZZO MONTALVO

To be assigned as Social Centre of the Community and as seat for Post-graduate Master in Oenological Studies is the most important building, historically and architecturally in the Commune of Sassetta (Livorno). It was built in the 16th Century on Medieval foundations on the highest, dominant part of Sassetta’s small urban centre. The principal prospect of the building facing the Plebiscito Square, heart of the social life of Sassetta. The main entrance to the Palace is by a flight of steps, which lead up from Plepiscito Sq to a pensile garden, which focuses on the Square below.

On the rear, on the East side of the building, there is an enclosed courtyard, which looks out on the Church Square, where the Church of Sant’ Andrea stands.



Figure 4. The front of Palazzo Montalvo

The building, characterised by old style supporting brick walls, is “C” shaped and is formed by a principal block, developed on three levels above ground and a basement, and another block built from the ground floor a first floor area which is reached by an external staircase.

The principal aim of the project is the restoration of the Palace which, because of the lack of maintenance has been declared unsafe in view to use it as a Centre for social activities for the population of the village. T

The ground floor shall be devoted to social activities; the first and second floor shall be devoted Post-graduate Oenological Master courses held by the Pisa University Agricultural Department.

2.1. Analysis

After the analysis of the conformation and existing arrangements of the building, we propose the following utilisation of the areas:

Ground floor

a - Recreational Centre for children (assigned area, 93.27 sq.m)

b - Social Centre for adults (89.06 sq.m)

c - Room for Cultural and Sporting Association (110.90 sq.m)

d - The North side portion of the building, consisting of a made up of the ground floor and

First floor will be dedicated entirely to health care Centre, being the area independently

accessible from the rest of the building (67,00 sq.m)

First floor

- a – Rooms for Post-graduate Oenology Master courses (359.91 sq.m)
- (298.15 sq.m)
- Second floor
- a – Large Conference Room and small rooms for offices

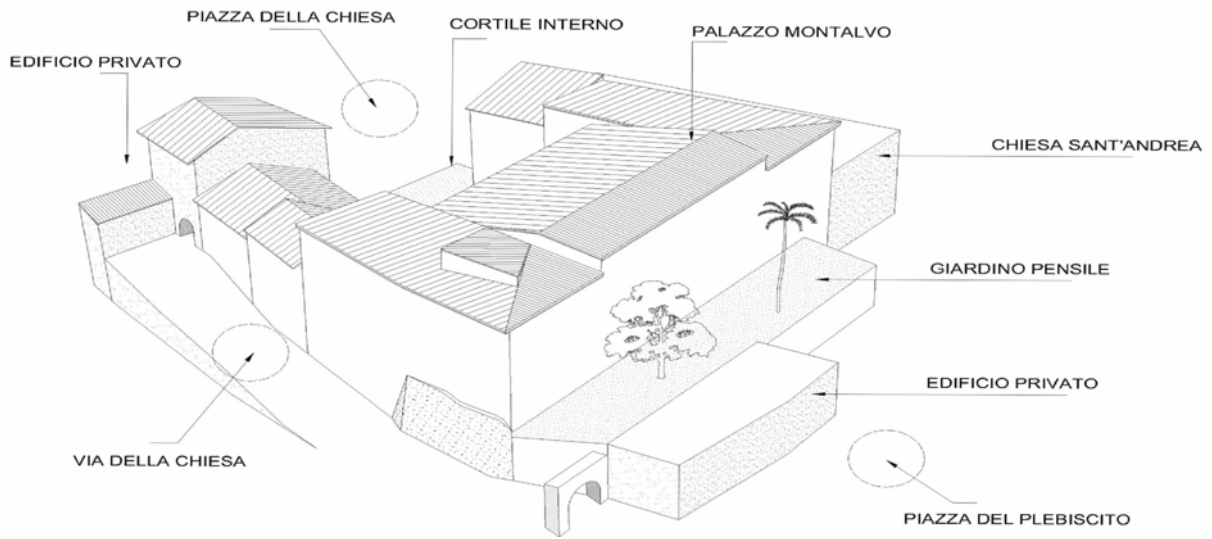


Figure 5. The Analysis of Palazzo Montalvo

2.2. The cost of the project

In order to obtain the proposed arrangements, with all necessary services (Heating, Illumination, etc) in accordance with the 13/89 Law, the total surface of 1292,79 sq.m, the estimated cost of the project will be of 1500,00 /sq.m x 1292,79 sq.m = Euro 1 745 266.50.

To this sum we must add the estimated cost of Architects' fees, Vat and miscellaneous of 404 733,50 € for a total of 2 150 000.00 €.

3. CONCLUSIONS

This July starts another one working camp for fountains reconstruction. The our Associations hopes to have the possibility to use 3D to make our work better.