



FESTIVAL DEL PAESAGGIO

PALACE AND PARK ESTENSI

Varese, via Luigi Sacco 5



THE PALACE

In 1766 the duke of Modena, Francesco III, general captain and governor of the Austrian Lombardy, guest to Biumo Superiore of the marquis Paolo Anthony Menafoglio, decided to purchase as holiday residence the Tomaso Orrigoni's house, near to Porta Campagna, in the suburb. Varese with his castles, had been subjected to Maria Teresa D'Austria, with civil and judicial powers, in June 23, 1765, Immediately after the acquisition, Francesco III began the amplification of the ownership Orrigoni through the annexation of the neighboring grounds, so, until the end of 1768, he could already take possession of the building.

The interventions of renovation and of rebuilding were made during the summer of 1766 until 1773. The garden was ready since 1771, when Francesco III was established in almost definitive way in Varese.

The architect and civil milan engineer Giuseppe Antonio Bianchi was entrusted of the project and he directs the jobs, performed from more than five hundred people, employed also to make the hills of Castellazzo plain in order to plant there the gardens.

In 1780 the duke Francesco III died and the ownership passed to Renata Teresa D'Harrah, his third wife. She made the will for her great-nephew, the marquise Beatrice Serbelloni Trivulzio, that left all to his son George Trivulzio and to her daughter Cristina Trivulzio Archinto.

This last sold the building in 1836 to the doctor Carlo Pellegrini Robbioni that it restructured it and rented numerous room. To the building a was also annexed a silk factory, that currently is a Tax Office (before it was the site of the local authority art department).

This last one died and in 1850 his nephew, Caesar Veratti sold the whole ownership in 1882 to the Common of Varese, that used it as center of the town offices, judicial, administrative and as apartment



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for the subprefect.

The building is constituted by a central nucleus whose two side wings are already connected from the existing underlying porch in the Orrigoni's house. The long forehead, is on Sacco's street with the central body a bit back, and three great portals in stone and balconies with handrails made of beaten iron.

Entering from the main entrance, that immediately introduce to the central porch and to the courtyard of honor, we can pass from the view of the external façade, imposing but austere to the inside façade, which alternates some plain walls and some curves walls, and which overlooks the scenic garden, with a projecting balcony with an iron andrai, made in 1767, sustained by shelves and columns in stone of Viggù. The inside of the building represents a peculiar example of the so-called "barocchetto teresiano". In the ground floor we find the big saloon of honor, today called "Saloon Estense", that constitutes the better preserved environment, in late Baroque style with a fireplace in stone of Viggù, surmounted by a portrait of the duke. On his vault it detaches a fresco of Giovanni Battista Ronchelli representing Jupiter, Venus and Love: the choice of this particular mythological subject is a clear allusion to the third marriage of the duke that was celebrated in 1768, in this room.

On the background of walls adorned by refined plasters, two monumental staircases, of which the main one has been enriched with niches with eighteenth-century female busts, conduct to the noble plan: the first staircase has almost been intact with the ancient vault with frescoes, while the ceiling of the second one has been replaced by a skylight.

Upstairs, among the private apartments of Francesco III and her niece Beatrice there is a Dance hall that occupies two floors in height, with the balconies for the musicians, whose decoration, sober and refined, is used only for plasters without coloration, it already anticipates the evolution of the Baroque one toward the first neoclassic.

THE PARK

To the start of the jobs the Francesco III's intention, who had 70 years old, was that to realize a sumptuous building where parties of his rank could be organized in an open garden.

In August of 1766 it began the realization of the park, in which it had directly involved the same Francesco III, always supported by the architect Bianchi, who had lent already its work in the yard of Schönbrunn.

The project, not realized, ideally connected with the inside gardens, included in front of the building a stately entry with a curvilinear exedra with a perspective background and the closing of the road that conducted to Laveno, reopened only in 1840 after the purchase of the building from Carlo Pellegrini Robbioni.

During the first months for the construction of the garden were employed, as we said, a hundred people, to carry away the soil with the purpose to lower the height of the hill "Castellazzo", and to break down the ruins of the castle.

The beautiful view from the park to the entrance it is developed at first sight in plain, with the central avenue that softly reaches a circular tub and then goes up on the high ground with paths in radial pattern and with stairways, edged by two symmetrical berceaux of hornbeam that arrive to the sum of the Belvedere. To the center of the high ground there was a nymphaeum, still present in his basical forms, with three niches, coated in limestone and statues of fauns.



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The flower beds of the parterre are in french style and symmetrical, crossed by a central avenue that from palace's porch arrives to the basis of the hill, wide the double compared with the other two avenues.

To satisfy the passion of the duke for the hunting, he adapted a part of the park with oaks, elms and chestnut trees and it was erected an hunting lodge.

On the southern slope of the hill, it was preserved the vine-trellis grapevine and it was planted a garden and a cultivation of the fruit trees, probably pear trees and apple trees.

It appears clear the intention of Francesco III and the architect Bianchi to lead away from the schemes of the Italian garden, to be near to the French model, discernible in different elements, as the presence of tall and evergreen plants or the prevalence of some vegetable elements on stone elements.

After the duke's death in 1780, during the XIX century, the park suffered deep transformations.

The interventions of Carlo Pellegrini Robbioni intended to reflect a conversion of the Italian garden to the Italian to english model - romantic English park, characterized by the refusal of symmetrical and geometric schemes for freeer forms, inspired to the spontaneity of the nature.

So, they decided to remove the garden and the orchard and to build a silk factory (now disappeared), on the west side of the building, and also bird cages and enclosures for fallow deer.

Water's basin for the irrigation of the garden was turned into a little pond for the swans endowed with falls and caves and in 1846 a tall panoramic tower was erected near Villa Mirabello.

After Robbioni, in 1850, his nephew Cesare Veratti purchased and annexed new grounds, included the one that today it's used as parking, between Sacco and Verdi street.

Inspired by the models of the english garden, they inserted, groves, brooks, artificially places as if they were spontaneous. But above all they added plants to the Italian garden, among which the Ginkgo Biloba, a plant typical of China and of Japan, placed next to little pond's swan and in front of some beech trees. The tree has an height of almost 30 meters and a circumference of more than three meters and in autumn the leaves from the green become gilded, in contrast with the reddish coloration of the beech trees.

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