

IN CARRARA A MARATHON IN HISTORY, ART and CULTURE.

THE CATHEDRAL (DUOMO) XI – XVI century



Carrara is one the most ancient Italian municipal districts and it preserves a very interesting and picturesque old town centre which has remained partially intact although somewhere it has been stratified through the years from the XI to the XX c.

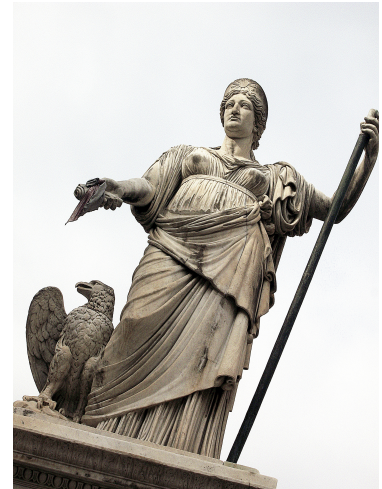
The most representative monument is the cathedral (Duomo) which is dedicated to St. Andrew. Its construction started in the XI century and it represents both Romanesque and Gothic styles. Extraordinary is the admirable front with a stained glass rose window with ornamental apertures and with the higher loggia embroidered with marble laces that almost anticipate

the international Gothic style.

THE MONUMENT TO MARIA BEATRICE D'ESTE, XIX century, IN PIAZZA ALBERICA.

The monument to Maria Beatrice d'Este is situated in the centre of Alberica square (piazza Alberica) and it was inaugurated in 1826.

At its base there is a bas-relief sculpted by art: Matteo Bogazzi, Giuseppe Del Nero and Giovanni Tacca. The Statue of the Duchess was sculpted by Pietro Fontana in 1824, who took inspiration from the iconography of Juno. The monument is completed by a fountain with a basin on top of which lies a crouched lion, which is a copy of a piece in the Egyptian collections in the Louvre.



THIS PLAQUE IS AT MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI'S HOUSE WHICH IS LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF PIAZZA DUOMO E VIA FINELLI

Michelangelo had spent a lot of time in Carrara from 1497 when he came over to choose the marble block with which he sculpted the Pietà. The material to create his sculptures had for him an

extraordinary importance.

According to Michelangelo an artist has to follow his own idea (that is to say a preconceived form of divine inspiration) freeing it from the superfluous matter. For this reason he conceived the sculpture “by removing” (*per via di levare*) the art par excellence, that is to say extracting the desired shape from the marble block where it was previously imprisoned. The relationship between Michelangelo and Carrara was often stormy and conflicting but always intense and fruitful. He had always maintained the contact with the town through “the pieces of Carrara” that he had been holding in his hands all his lifelong. We can say that his “unfinished” sculptures, beyond representing the metaphor of the human soul fighting against sin, imperfection and brutality in order to try and reach the divine perfection are also symbolic representations of the hard and wise extraction work of the precious marble from the sharp Alpi Apuane.



PALAZZO DELL'ACCADEMIA DELLE BELLE ARTI (EX PALAZZO DEL PRINCIPE) XVI-XVII century (PALACE HOUSING THE ACADEMY OF ART FORMALLY CALLED PALAZZO DEL PRINCIPE)

La Rocca – Castello (The Rock – Castle) was part of the defense system of Carrara, it was built in the XII century.

In the XV century a palace was added and subsequently Alberico I Cybo-Malaspina transformed it into a residence worthy of the new

princedom.

The Palace became the Academy of Art headquarters by Elisa Bacciocchi Bonaparte.

The current structure is the result of the restorations of 1924.

The interiors are suggestive and present various marble sculptures either original or copies of the ancient ones.

As an example, we find the Niche of Fanti Scritti (Edicola di Fanti Scritti) dating back to I-II century A.D. and other artworks of the most important local sculptors.

PIAZZA ALBERICA XVI-XVII century

In the very heart of the old town center of Carrara there is the spectacular Piazza Alberica.

Alberico I Cybo-Malaspina commissioned it in the XVI century, and during the centuries it has been enriched by magnificent palaces of the local nobility.

Particularly stunning is Palazzo del Medico XVII-XVIII century, where the portals and the windows decorated in marble stand out from the splendid purple red plaster.



Also magnificent is the Palazzo Orsolini XVII-XVII and Palazzo delle Logge XVI-XVII: Palazzo delle Logge is characterized by a row of round arches held up by slender marble columns.



FONTANA DEL GIGANTE XVI century.

The Fontana del Gigante (the Fountain of the Giant), close to the Cathedral, is an unfinished work by Baccio Bandinelli (1487-1559), it was commissioned by Andrea Doria and dedicated to Neptune.

In addition, in Carrara, it is possible to visit these other places:

- The Marble Quarries, for examples the marble basins of Torano, Fantiscritti and Colonnata.

- The Museum of Marble, Viale XX Settembre - close to the football stadium

- The Center of Plastic Arts, Via Canal del Rio, 3

- Palazzo Cucchiari, Via Cucchiari.

...and a lot more...

For any further information please contact APT Massa Carrara, tel 0585 240046.

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