



VILLA RACHELE, FORMERLY BECCARIA

You can find this point of interest in Ossuccio - Path 1 - Stage 5

This point of interest is not located along the itinerary but can be admired from a panoramic point at the West end of the Island.

DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

On the “puncia” (a local term meaning “point”, peninsula) facing the Comacina Island, in Sala Comacina’s territory, stands a three floor mansion - Villa Rachele, formerly Beccarla – built on three floors between the second half of the 18th century and the first part of the 19th century, on a large semicircular terrace overlooking the lake.

In the surrounding park, based on a plan by architect Giuseppe Balzaretti, enriched by laurels, olive trees, cypress-trees, cedars and magnolias, there rises a moving funerary monument of Marquis Giulio Beccaria (who died in 1858), the son of the famous Cesare and maternal uncle of Alessandro Manzoni, and of his wife Antonia Curioni (who died in 1866): a small sic column trabeate temple surmounted by a semi-spherical dome, under which there is a statue of a young woman in prayer, the work of sculptor Bassano Danielli. After the death of Giulio the villa was transferred to Cesare Cantù, scholar and patriot, and his daughter Rachele, the wife of Angelo Villa Pernice, an MP at the first Italian parliament in Florence, who set up a literary salon known as the “Accademia dei pedanti (*Academy of the Pedants*)”, animated by leading figures of the Italian culture of the time, such as Antonio Fogazzaro, Tommaso Gallarati Scotti and Ettore Verga, historian and director of the Archive of the Sforza Castle in Milan, to name but the most renowned. At the death of Rachele Cantù, the villa was inherited by Rachele Martelli, the wife of Emilio de Marchi, who wrote here “Col fuoco non si scherza (*Do not play with fire*)” (1901), a novel mostly set in the villa itself, which from then on was named “Villa Rachele”. It is now a private property.