



ALESSANDRO VOLTA'S COUNTRY HOUSE IN CAMPORA

You can find this point of interest in Como 6 – Stage 2.

INFORMATION

Location: the building that was the country villa of Volta is located in via Campora 1 in Camnago Volta-Como

Paving: via Campora is paved; at the entrance gate to the property there is a stone strip, while the driveway to the house is partly paved in stone, partly lawn

Architectural barriers: –

Access: it can be accessed from via Campora or via Clerici, as the house is at the intersection of the two streets with via Ravanera

Services: the terminus of the city bus is right in front of the house, at which there is a fountain and a bench. A stone bench is also leaning against the garden fence wall, to the right of the entrance gate. ATM and shop in via della Pila

Leisure and Catering: two restaurants in the various hamlets of Camnago

Other information: the building is now used as private homes and therefore cannot be visited.

DESCRIPTION

(by Silvia Fasana)

The Volta family's house was in the centre of Como, in the Contrada di Porta Nuova, but during his childhood Alessandro Volta spent a lot of time in the villa of Campora in Camnago, with an adjoining agricultural courtyard, and during the last years of his life he moved there in the spring and summer months. Maurizio Monti, in the *Life of Alessandro Volta*, contained in *Memorie comensi*, Writings collected for the Congress of Agronomists that was to take place in Como in the autumn of 1865 (1867) wrote: «*In his youth, his villa was Campora, and he liked the less solitary residence of Lazzate. In Campora he gladly mingled with the peasants on the farm, in the farmyard and on the benches of the rustic kitchen. He told them about the strangest things in the world, showed them some experiments in physics, or proposed riddles. Lying down at the time of the grape harvest at their tables a little happier than usual, he ate macaroni, polenta, rice with them [...] Tireless in his studies, he persevered for hours, forgetting food and rest; nor did he feel the impressions of heat and cold, although in other times he was jealous of them. Logical in the search for facts, exact to the point of scruple in evaluating and comparing them in the most minute circumstances*».

Volta was also interested in agronomy: during his study trip to various centres of Switzerland, Alsace and Savoy in 1777, he saw in the small village of Aiguebelle, some peasants who were picking strange tubers, potatoes, imported to Europe after the discovery of America, but not yet widespread in Italy. Moved by curiosity, he wanted to try them, take them home (also showing them to his noblewoman friend Teresa Ciceri Castiglioni) and promoted their cultivation, starting from his land in Camnago Volta. For her part, the physicist's wife, Teresa Pellegrini, was a passionate breeder of silkworms on the estates of Campora and Lazzate and the scientist himself

had been interested in silk processing on several occasions. Campora was definitely Alessandro Volta's favourite residence; in fact, he wrote, full of nostalgia, about this to his brother in 1781 while he was in Geneva for study reasons: *«In Campora there will be our priests who will leaf through breviary and tobacco, and empty glasses, and after lunch we will climb together on the mountains among the chestnut hedges, the brambles of the brushwood.. »*

The villa that once belonged to Volta is now a private home; on the side of the entrance gate to the property, on the right, a plaque recalls: *«It was this solitary house / the favourite autumn home / of / Alessandro Volta / in the 1st centenary of the invention of the battery »*.

Particularly striking is the large lime tree standing on the left side of the entrance gate.