



MUSEO DELLA CIVILTÀ CONTADINA

IL CAMBONINO VECCHIO



CASCINA A CORTE CHIUSA

This farm, with its square structure and the distribution of its buildings, represents a clear example of the so-called “cascina a corte chiusa”, that is to say a barnyard closed by numerous buildings with one principal entrance and a second one used by the farm workers when they must reach the fields, a typical construction for this area.

This particular arrangement is the result of a centuries-old evolution, which has transformed it according to the necessities and the common sense of the countrymen and which has been slow, long and progressive.

THE MUSEUM



The town council acquired the farm in 1976 and inaugurated it in 1978, under the Zanoni mayor's administration. Simultaneously many other ethnographic museums opened and the residential district of "Cambonino" was founded.

Countless events are organised in the museum: many conferences and concerts, which performs traditional music reminder of the country life of the farm during the XIX-XX centuries; but also a Microfestival of Theatre and Ancient Music which takes place in the little church, some exhibitions and a World Competition of Microfairytale, for kids and adults.

The role of this museum shouldn't be underestimated in order not to forget our origins, history and traditions.

The small panels fixed on the walls of the farmstead "Cambonino Vecchio", constitute the new itinerary to be followed by people who want to understand the historical value of

the container (the Farmstead with his walls) and the content that means the collections of the Museum of the Agricultural Civilisation.

A tour describes in detail the "Cambonino Vecchio" we see nowadays with its squared structure and the functional distribution of its constructions all aimed inside the courtyard, representing an example of the "closed courtyard" of the Cremonese area we understand how this type of structure is the result of the centuries-old development rather than a simple ancient tradition.

Some new buildings were added during the nineteenth century which changed its morphology from the "open courtyard" to the closed one.

The evolution, which is not only agricultural but also architectural, historical, economical, social and political makes it one of the most important monuments in the whole city.

THE FARMSTEAD

"Cambonino Vecchio"

The farmstead is located in the suburbs in the North-West of Cremona, it has been a property of the district since 1976 and is the headquarters of the museum since 1978. The property has been in the state archives since the Middle Ages. The structure of the farmstead, which was originally surrounded by many and vast fields helps not only the foreigner but also the local visitor to understand the agricultural tradition of the Cremonese area based on the wideness and good quality of the land so that could guarantee sustenance to more

families. Nowadays the farmstead is uninhabited because of the process of agriculture transformation which started in the 1950s. Nevertheless there are different associations such as the dialect group "El Zàch" and "Amici della Cucina Cremonese" that promote the ancient traditions linked to the territory.

The Cambonino Vecchio is a closed court farmstead, because there was only one way to enter and to exit. Inside the farmstead there were about 70 people, therefore it was a small community.



THE MAIN ENTRANCE AND THE CHURCH CLUB OF B.V. DI CARAVAGGIO

The public church club, located on the right of the main door of the farmstead, is built using the brick material from the destroyed buildings of the Cambonino area. The church, whose furniture was possibly provided by Bellani, was named after Beata Vergine di Caravaggio in 1840.

The little church in 1865 was excluded from the contract of rent of the small farm and resulted isolated on three sides: the south one (mezzodi), the east one (mattina) and the north one (monte). The consolidation of the church club with the others buildings of the left wing of the farmstead took place after 1880 at the moment of the construction of the new stables.

A particular circled planimetry characterizes the church which is also provided with a sacristy on the left side and a loft on the first floor for the master's family.

There are two entrance, the main one outside available from everyone and a second one accessible from the inside used by the inhabitants of the farmhouse.

Nowadays the farmstead is involved in the parish of S. Giuseppe al Cambonino, built recently, which has celebrated for some years some traditional functions during the evenings in the month of May and for the Celebrations dedicated to Father Silvio Pasquali, who was probably born in one of the farmer's house in the 1864. For about 10 years he had been a priest at Cremona's diocese. Then in 1887 he was sent to India, where he died at the age of 60. Thanks to his pastoral efforts the nuns of St. Anna monastery, which he founded in India, had promoted his process of beatification.



THE BARNYARD (XX° century)

The barnyard, rebuild in the 40s, was constructed exactly in the middle of the farm. In this way, that space was never covered by the shadow of the surrounding buildings and always sun-drenched, so that the seeds could dry quicker.

It is slightly curved in order to let the water flow away in the drainage ditches as faster as possible. These ditches are used still today and, thanks to a system of slopes and tunnels, the rain water is poured into the ditches outside the farm.



THE FARMERS' HOUSES (XV° - XVI° centuries)

The seven farmers' houses, as many other houses in the area of Cremona, are independent one from the other. On the ground floor there is the kitchen with the fireplace and the storage room, while upstairs we can find two bedrooms.

The houses were probably build using the tiles' materials deriving from the previous demolitions of some rural buildings and deeply restored during the second half of the XIX century.

The building of the seven houses took place between 1840- 1850.

At that time the number of families who lived on the farm increased up to 9 (42 souls). Probably the 8th and the 9th families lived in the old buildings placed in the north wing. The wage-earning family, which stayed in the 1st house on the left, had to open the front door at sunrise and to close it at the sunset.



THE GROUND FLOOR

(XV°-XVI° centuries)

Over the fireplace there was always the photo of the wife's parents.

The wife was going to live in the house of the husband and she was taking with her the photo of his parents to remember them.

The electric light didn't exist, but the countrymen used the candles. There was not even running water and consequently there weren't neither sinks nor taps.

Thus they drunk the water from a bucket and every day the children had to make sure that the bucket was always full. They provided the water from the well.

Then the children had the task of going taking the milk from the Bergamino (who looked after cows). Farmers ate a large quantity of

polenta which is a typical dish of Northern and Central Italy cooked in a large copper pot, known as a paiolo in Italian.

Polenta takes a long time to cook (one hour) and was mixed with a stick.

As soon as the polenta was cooked it was knocked by the pot directly on the cutting board, with the plate they had to pay attention that the polenta didn't overflow from it and with the plate they made a cross (countrymen blessed everything: fields, animal and meals too) then they cut it in squares with this thread.

The silkworm breeding was an activity parallel to the agricultural one because it was used for the farmers in order to to earn more money, to pay debts or to buy a new bicycle.



THE FARMHAND'S BEDROOM

(XV°-XVI° centuries)

On the first floor there is the farmhand's bedroom, where all the family slept together: the parents and the children often shared the same bed, while the babies slept in small cradles, placed near the bed.

There was also no heating at the time, in fact in this room it was really cold, consequently they placed a "frate" under the sheets, which was a wooden structure in which they used to put a pot filled with embers before going to sleep.



THE CYLINDRICAL PILLAR

(XIV°- XV°? centuries)

AND THE PIGSTY

(XIV°- XV°? centuries)

The cylindrical pillar, in front of the stable, is perhaps the oldest witness of the farmstead and sustained the meeting point of the northern side roof and the western side roof. On the western edge there was the carriages' door, which was sided to the ancient contrada of Cambonino.

This door was bricked after the building of the breeding pigsties, with barrel vaults.

In the small hall on the left of the pillar there are three pigsties for fattening, above which there are three hen coops.



THE OLD COWSHED

(XV°-XVI°? centuries)

AND THE BARN

(XV °?- XIX centuries)

The old cowshed is the most relevant example of the Cambonino Vecchio original nucleus. The light came in through six little windows on the northern wall and through four similar windows, plus two doors, on the southern wall. Today is still possible to see just one door and a window.

Above the cowsheds there is the wide barn with a terracotta roof.

The farmer, who took care of the cows, was called a Bergamino.

He had the complete responsibility of the cows, he had to feed and give water to them but also to milk them and clean the stable. It is the reason why, by necessity, he had to sleep on a bed in the stable.

Each cow had a name, for example "Minerva or Ines" and the Bergamino knew all of them. In order to milk the cows, the Bergamino sat on a stool, which had only one leg, and, by placing his head on the belly of the cow, he milked them.

THE LAUNDRY ROOM

(XIX° century)

AND THE ANCIENT STABLE OF THE HORSES

(XV°century)

The ancient stables with a ceiling of arches and vaults supported by a central column hosts the Laundry room. The ceiling is black because of the cooks' smoke, which came out only through the window. The concrete floor slopes to the door, allowing the waters' drainage.

The ancient stable of the horses is one of the oldest witnesses of Cambonino Vecchio, but it was made useless by the porch closure and meant to be a dairy product warehouse.

Through a rectangular door with an arch beam, you can enter from the Laundry room into the squared room.

The room has got a ceiling formed by four pavillon vaults, supported by round arches, which are located on a Botticino marble column.

The room has recently been restored by Piazzini Ernesto Sponsor and nowadays contains object and tools which has been in the old Piazzini blacksmith's shop. Piazzini Ernesto is a historical company, from the 1924 leader of the local market, with four generations of experience, which handed down from father to son the knowledge and the secrets of the work, without neglecting the technological innovation, the updates and the modern training, with innovative solutions, products and personalized services.



THE MANAGER' S HOUSE

(XV°-XX° centuries)

The manager's house can be recognized by the little steeple on the rooftop, that marked the time of the rural community. The present façade was probably built after the siege of Cremona of 1648.

Under the house (in the north -west part) still nowadays we can view the icebox where during the winter season the snow (or the frozen water of the ditches) was accumulated and pressed and in the hot season allowed the conservation of the food products.

The house hosts on the first floor the dialectal association "El Zach" and the Music Hall, realized by Piazzzi Ernesto Sponsor. One room on the ground floor has been turned into a Cooking School for children and in the other one has recently been opened a new Exhibition Space "Terra Fiume" dedicated to professional fishing on the river Po with the aim of underlines the importance that the river Po had many years ago. This exhibition has been realized by the Ghizzoni's family.

THE MASTER'S HOUSE

(XIX°-XX° centuries)

The master's house, built in the 1980s, is composed of 3 floors. On the ground floor, composed of 4 spaces, the central door allows entry to the bocchirale, a wide corridor which connected the courtyard with the outer garden. In the Cremona farms, that was the "representation room". The structure of the ceilings of the bocchirale, rebuilt in the 90s, is similar to Pompeian decoration.

A stonestair leads upstairs to the first floor, composed of seven rooms with floral decorations, and to the attic where there is the granary. The main room, the bocchirale, is nowadays used for events and exhibition, while the lateral space is the teaching classroom.



THE EAST BUILDING

(XIX-XX century)

The buggy shed was used by the farmer or by the master to store the machinery, which was used to move around the farmstead. The shed is characterised by the presence of two rock lanes, which are called trottatoie, inside the pavement.

The porch, already existed in the layout of the land register of 1890.

The shutter was needed to ensure the perfect air circulation of the farm. In the middle of the farm, there was the aia, which was used for the drying of the cereals, which were produced on the land.



THE CARRIAGE'S DOOR

(XIX° century)

The carriage's door was the exit to the fields for the agricultural machinery and the workers. Nearby, when the cowshed was built, the new tanning for the dung was placed.

It was almost surely built in 1880, with the porch of the south side and the next door dairy farmer's house.



THE SOUTH BUILDING (XIX° century)

The ensemble porch, stable and barn are amongst the main elements of the Padan farmstead. A pre-existing engraving, which is located under the roof peak, reveals that the year 1880 was the year of the edification of the entire building. This building is formed by the new cowshed, with the barn and the porch, and by the dairy farmer's house.

The enormous capital invested in the construction of the new cowshed symbolizes the beginning of cow farming for economic purposes at the Cambonino farmstead. In that moment the first industrial cheese factories were founded.

Below the seven aisles could be farmed at least 70 cows, if they were tied to metal racks of the magers, which were attached to the long sides of the walls. After the 70's restoration, the cowshed perspective, located under the porch, appears to be scanned by pillars, which hold the perimetral walls with two doors and five wide windows. The doors and the windows lets inside a great amount of brightness, which was never seen in a old traditional cowshed.



THE DAIRY FARMER'S HOUSE (XIX° century)

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THE NEW HORSE STABLE

(XIX° century)

The new horse stable was built closing the space between the church club and the new cowshed. The construction is without the porch and it has a barrel vault and overhead a small hayloft. The entrance of the stable is made up of a large rectangular door and high enough for one person at a time of horse.

During the hot season the door could be opened, blocking the free passage of animals with a pole. The horses were used for the agricultural activities and for towing wagons and carriages.



This booklet is meant as a guide for visitors who wish to be introduced to the historical importance of the collections of the Museum of Folk and Farming Culture, housed in the setting of a traditional local farm.

The texts in this booklet come from the information panels present in each section of the museum, which were written in 1999 and recently updated.

The texts were summarized and translated into English by the following students of the local Lycée of Modern Languages, as part of a work-experience project during the school year 2016-2017 : Bonvini Veronica, Mondini Carlo, Santini Alice, Zerbini Alberto, (Year 4 Class C), Cristofolini Chiara, Rubino Sara (Year 4 - Class D), Donadio Francesca, Jitariu Roxana, Vidari Elena (Year 4 Class E) . The project was coordinated by Mrs Nicoletta Fiorani, teacher at the same school.

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Cremona

COMUNE DI CREMONA



Museo della Civiltà Contadina
Il Cambonino Vecchio

MUSEO DELLA CIVILTÀ CONTADINA

"IL CAMBONINO VECCHIO"

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