



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



Palace of Podestà

The medieval palace of Podestà, probably dating back to the middle of the XIII century and today the premises of the municipal library, already appeared rather damaged in the early years of the twentieth-century, so much so that several times the necessity of a restoration intervention was spoken of. Further serious damages were caused to the building by the earthquake of June, circumstances which made the restoration even more urgent. However, in the following years, the bureaucratic negotiations necessary to finance and begin the work slowed down the times, so much that only in 1934 the situation was reopened, above all thanks to the decisive intervention of the Cassa di Risparmio of Florence, the president of which was Marshall of Italy Guglielmo Pecori Giraldi.

The banking Institute, therefore, allocated the sum of 150.000 lire for the restoration works, with the intention of also favouring the setting up, inside the rooms of the palace, of a historical museum of the I Army, which had fought in the Great War under the command of General Pecori Giraldi. The restorations, projected and directed by the engineer Augusto Lorini, who changed the lines of the building according to the taste of the period, began in 1934 to be concluded three years later.

Right from the beginning of the works, as is proved from the archival documentation, they thought of entrusting Dino Chini with the restoration of the pictorial parts, more precisely the conspicuous group of the antique **Coat of Arms** of the Podestàs of Borgo San Lorenzo, painted in the entrance hall on the ground floor. But only in 1937 the engineer writes to the prefectorial Commissioner of the Council: "the work of systematization and decorative restoration will be carried out by the craftsman Dino Chini". Moreover, a survey exists of the technical office of the municipality of Borgo San Lorenzo of 30 giugno 1937 for the systematization of the coats of arms and the completion of the restoration, in which specific reference is made to the plaster in correspondence with the entrance and stairs, and to the restoration of the existing frescos according to the instructions of the Superintendency.

Even though it seems unquestionable to refer, on the base of the documentation available, to the work of the pictorial restoration carried out by Dino Chini, it should be pointed out that in the historical archive of the Municipality of Borgo San Lorenzo a letter of the prefectorial Commissioner is to be found, dated 1934 addressed to Galileo Chini, in which precise reference is made to the fact that the latter would have accepted the job of supervising the restoration work of the decorations, an assignment, however, of which we do not know the consequence.

It is, however, probable that Dino Chini worked on the pictorial decorations of the Palace of Podestà for the whole second half of 1937, intervening substantially in the entrance hall on the ground floor. He probably carried out the simple geometrical decoration of the splays of the front door and the window ex novo, as well as the wide base skirting board of the walls, and the painting in geometrical and neo-fourteenth-century taste of the adjoining chapel, visible even from outside, dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi. As regards the restoration of the numerous painted coats of arms, it seems that Dino intervened in quite a substantial manner. These show, in some cases, a remarkable graphic and chromatic vivacity, so much so as to bring to mind the style of Galileo and in some cases traditional taste prevails, perhaps because of the desire to adapt himself more to the preexistent painting.

Therefore, not being a preservative restoration as we consider it today the coats of arms have clearly acquired the characters impressed by the intervention of Dino, who shows himself gifted with a skilled hand and an able accomplisher, alone, of works sometimes quite close to the style of the more famous members of the Chini family, such as Galileo.