

Castagnole Piemonte

A document dated 1037 mentioned that the territory of Castagnole already belonged to the territory of the Counts of Turin and therefore its first feudatories were the Bishops of Turin, followed, in the 13th century, by the Counts of Piossasco of the branch De' Rossi. To Pietro, lord of Castagnole, the castle and the village of Piobesi were assigned. In 1500 the territory was subjected to the Counts of Piossasco of the branch of Scalenghe, and in the 18th century it definitely passed to the Savoy family. In 1706, the countryside was crossed by the French army going to set the siege to Turin, and by the Austrian army supporting the House of Savoy. In 1863 a decree of the king Vittorio Emanuele II of Savoy added the attribute "Piedmont" to distinguish this town from the homonym centres in the Monferrato and Langhe.

The Middle Ages left some notable evidences. The **church of St. Peter**, which used to be the parish church of the town, was founded around the year 1000, and it is already mentioned in a document of Landolfo, bishop of Turin, dated 1037. With the development of the inhabited area, the parish church became more and more decentralized and was slowly abandoned, so much that, in 1672, the parish moved to the church of S. Rocco, located inside the town and therefore easier to be reached. Despite some restorations developed in 1548, it collapsed partially in 1684. During the 20th century it was submitted to big interventions that gave it the current aspect of a new romanesque building, with a hut-like façade. The three-aisled inside, contains two ancient frescoes representing *St. Apollonia*, invoked against the tooth ache and the *Madonna with Her Child*, a valuable painting of the XV century attributed to the Master of Cercenasco. The building is located inside the cemetery enclosure. The **Palace of the Earl Piossasco** ("castelletto") is described in 1293 as a true castle, consisting of a building next to a courtyard to the tower. Around the fortifications there were a flooded area, probably a ditch and a drawbridge; the fortress-like structure is still partially recognizable in the building, that reminds the typical thirteenth-century palaces, a typology quite common in the territory (Carignano, Pancalieri...). In the countryside between Castagnole and Scalenghe, rises the **grangia of Buonluogo**, an ample farmhouse preserving evidences of the Monastery of Buonluogo, founded in 1190 by the Folgores, Lords of Scalenghe and Castagnole. This female monastery quickly got the control over an ample territory. Here the Lords were usual to sojourn periodically, guests of the nuns. Several noble families, among which the marquises Romagnano of Virle, concurred to the fortunes of the monastery; in 1303 it passed to the Cistercian abbey of Casanova (Carmagnola). The abbots imposed a severe seclusion to the nuns, forcing them, in 1597, to move to the monastery of St. Andrew in Chieri. The Cistercians turned a part of it into a *grangia* (i.e. a farmhouse). Some parts of the ancient nucleus are still recognizable: the chapel of St. Mary with its bell tower, an iron cross (12th century?), the guesthouse for the farmers working for the monastery, part of the dormitories, the refectory and an ancient balcony in pine wood.

Also in Castagnole the Baroque age has left some evidences, by inserting precious architectures sometimes contrasting with the simplicity of most buildings. The '600 and the '700 are broadly documented by churches, chapels and noble buildings. In the Vittorio Emanuele square you can find the **parish church of St. Rocco**, placed as a scenic backdrop, built as ex voto after the 1630 pestilence. Its inside preserves some nice baroque altars, nineteenth-century paintings of Oddino Morgari, a beautiful pulpit (1754), two marble alto-relievoes of Amedeo Lavy, the First Engraver of His Majesty the King of Sardinia and pupil of the famous neoclassic sculptor Antonio Canova. In the **church of St. Bernardino** (XVIII century, confraternity of the "Battuti Bianchi"), there is a plaster copy of the Madonna statue (1829), the original being a beautiful silver statue once located in the church of the "Consolata" of Turin. Lavy elected as his summer residence the **Palace of Tetti Pesci**. The '700 building includes a U-shaped edifice, consisting of penthouses for forages, equipments, of the stalls and of the villa, an elegant building with sober Baroque features. To the end of Roma street we can find the small chapel of **St. John The Baptist**, a simple 18th century building. On the same street, the elegant brickwork façade of **Palace Marengo**, a noble

construction of the '700, preserving notable original parts, such as the wooden front door and an ample staircase. The building has been attributed to the school of the architect Bernardo Antonio Vittone, active in the 18th century in Carignano and Turin. Also the **Town hall** is an 18th century building, although its features are hardly legible today for the later interventions of the 19th and 20th centuries. The square behind the town hall is closed on one side by the **Covered Market**, thus giving a quite interesting urbanistic effect. For a curious itinerary we suggest to follow the Alfieri Street: lifting your eyes to the walls of the houses, you may admire a long gallery of devotional **frescoes** of the 19th and 20th centuries. In Ojtana village there is the small **chapel of the SS. Trinity**. In a house of the same village, in 1880 was born Monsignor Giovanni Battista Pinardi, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Turin, for whom the process of beatification is in progress. In the past, the town – today nearly totally devoted to agricultural activities - produced two important articles: bricks and silk. The **Furnace**, built in 1925-26 and located in the countryside towards Piobesi, is an interesting testimony of the production of bent tiles and bricks; still today its essential structure (chimney, oven, roofing, threshing floor of desiccation) makes a beautiful show of itself, reminding an age when the work was not yet facilitated by machineries. In Castagnole, it is still well recognizable the building of the **Silk-Factory** (19th century). Of the native structure only the deposit of cocoons (north), the silk-mill (west) and the tub for the provisioning of the water (courtyard) are preserved.

Events and Fairs

Fair of St. Peter and Paul: from the Sunday after June 29th up to the following Tuesday.

Animated by merry-go-rounds, dances, children games and gastronomic events managed by the local “ProLoco Association”, dedicated to the valorization of the local agricultural productions such as, besides meat and milk, the “*Cariton*” (typical winter cake stuffed with grape). The fair is concluded by beautiful fire works.

Exhibition for the exchange of small animals (third Sunday of every month)

Autumn fair (last Sunday of October): it has reached the 134th edition and gathers in the same day the zootechnical show and the agricultural and the commercial fair. In the zootechnical show the most beautiful animals of the local farms are displayed, especially the appreciated “*Piedmontese bovine breed*” and a lot of milk cows of the most known local breeds famous for their *high* quality milk. The commercial fair is devoted to the local typical products, to the traditional foods, to the ancient works and to the most interesting traditions luckily inherited from our grandparents.

Fair of St. Anthony (January) traditional benediction of the tractors and other farm equipment, preceded by “the rectors' begging”, ancient tradition to pick up funds for the parish church.

For information

Town hall, 2 via Roma, tel. 011.9862811

www.comune.castagnolepiemonte.to.it