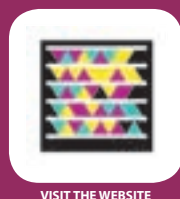


THE LEONCINO WELL

For some time, La Sala has had a well in which, not infrequently, trash ended up. In the fifteenth century the city decided to clean it and also embellish it with two columns supporting an entablature from which to drop the bucket for water. The diligent communal administrators thought about savings; so of the two columns, one was salvaged from an ancient monument, the other made and paid for. In fact, it is still clear that the two are not identical. Yet with one eye on savings, the administrators were also careful to pass down their names to posterity by having their titles and coats-of-arms engraved upon it.

In 1529, when the danger loomed that the imperial troops passing through central Italy would also pass by Pistoia (leading at a minimum to the usual looting), the citizens of Pistoia asked the pope Clement VII, a Medici, through their local bishop for their city to be spared. The pope, who two years earlier had suffered the terrible sack of Rome by the Emperor, had at that time become allied with Charles V, and received from the emperor himself (who perhaps should be forgiven for the atrocities committed by the Roman mercenaries) the granting of the request. At that time, the people of Pistoia placed on the well the *Marzocco*, namely the lion that is the heraldic symbol of Florence, the city and duchy where, in fact, the Medici family resettled after having been previously expelled. In the natural game of wars and alliances, Rome lost (and by a lot!) but Pistoia escaped.



VISIT THE WEBSITE



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ITINERARIES OF ART AND HISTORY

LA SALA, THE STOMACH OF THE CITY

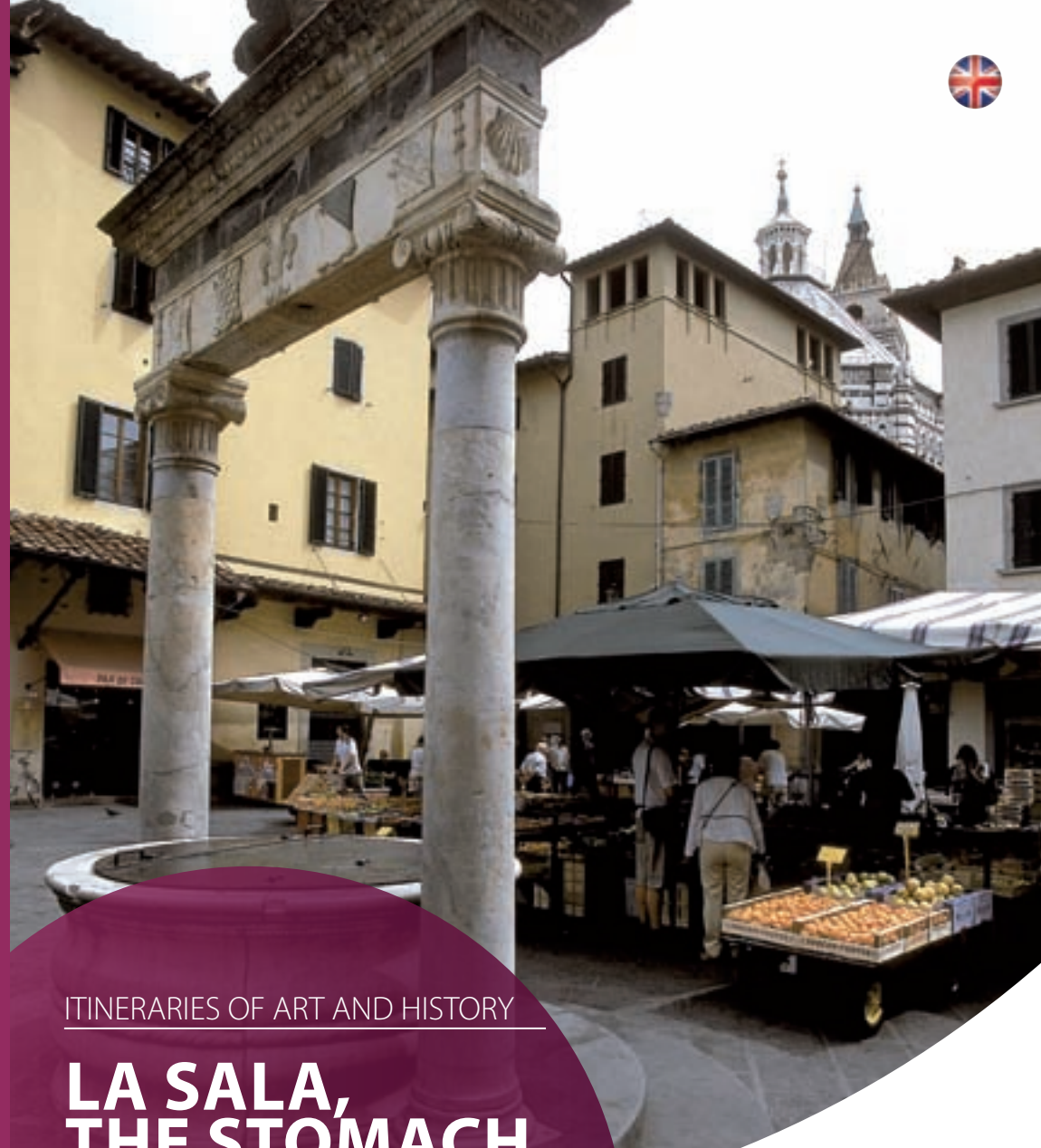
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AGENZIA
PER IL TURISMO
ABETONE PISTOIA
MONTAGNA P.S.E.



Intervento realizzato all'interno delle azioni previste dal progetto interregionale (L.135/2001 art. 5) "Valorizzazione comprensorio sciistico tosco emiliano" cofinanziato da Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri - Dipartimento per lo sviluppo e la competitività del turismo - e dalla Regione Toscana



ITINERARIES OF ART AND HISTORY

LA SALA, THE STOMACH OF THE CITY

Piazza della Sala, which retains the name (*Sala domini regis*) of the Lombard political power at the time, already by the Middle Ages had become a place for the sale of food-stuffs. However, the area around La Sala, in addition to the square, included artisanal workshops, taverns, and shops. The place-names are still significant: Via di Stracceria (for cloth), Via del Lastrone (where according to an ancient document “fish” was sold, mostly from the river and probably frogs from the moats), Via del Cacio (for cheese), and Via dei Fabbri that was called Dei Ferrivecchi (for iron). The types of mercantile buildings at that time, still in large part visible, included storerooms that opened on to the street or the square, with stone counters on which to display

the goods. Wooden shutters closed up everything in the evening and the family often lived on the floor above.

Four churches – among the oldest in the city – were found in this small parish: Sant’Anastasio, San Michele in Bonaccio, Santa Maria del Giglio (there is now a restaurant on the street of the same name), and Santa Maria in Corte, later displaced by the Baptistery. There was no lack of taverns – probably run by popular and cheeky tavern-keepers – including La Tina, La Serena on Via degli Orafi, and Il Leone on the lane that has kept its name.

In the Middle Ages, next to the “old” La Sala was the “new” one, namely the small square today called the Piazzetta dell’Ortaggio (where until



recently fish was sold there). But it had another occupation during the communal period; there, the *donne cortesi* lived and worked, in the city’s privately run but publicly regulated brothel, it was “tolerated” by the same church so as a way of avoiding worse temptations and sins. The Jewish ghetto also faced this square, as seen on the San Matteo parochial map published in 1718 by the curate Simone Corsoni.

