



EN

VILLA QUADRIO

Guide to the architecture and to biographical portraits of its protagonists

CULTURA



COMUNE DI SONDRIO



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INTRODUCTION

Villa Quadrio, historically known as Palazzo Quadrio, dates back to the dawn of the twentieth century when it was a private house built in San Rocco's, then suburban area in Sondrio, where there were still cultivated plots of land along the route to Tirano and Alta Valtellina. Commissioned by the Commendatore Emilio Quadrio de Maria Pontaschelli, who in 1913 married Teresina Tua, a renowned violinist and teacher at the conservatoires Verdi in Milan and Santa Cecilia in Rome, the residence was conceived and designed by the Architect Adolfo Zacchi in the same year and built by the Engineer Francesco Polatti. The project was inspired by a historicist and eclectic taste where the Neo-renaissance style predominates. Emilio Quadrio died in 1933, and, by will, his wife was the sole testamentary heir, who in 1935 donated the villa with its furnishings to the Municipality of Sondrio for cultural purposes. Therefore, in 1937 the residence became home to the public Library Pio Rajna (founded in 1861), the Historical Society of Valtellina (established in 1921), and the Valtellina Museum of History and Art (founded in 1947 and opened in 1951, then moved to Palazzo Sassi de' Lavizzari in the early nineties). Moreover, the rooms and spaces of the Villa were used in the years for important temporary exhibitions: the '*Prima mostra d'arte decorativa antica e moderna in Sondrio*' (T.N.: *The first exhibition of ancient and modern decorative art in Sondrio*), and the '*Mostra della pittura e del ritratto nelle Valli dell'Adda e della Mera dal XV al XIX secolo*' (T.N.: '*Exhibition of paintings and portraits in the Adda and Mera Valleys from XV to XIX century*') in 1938, the '*Mostra del Risorgimento italiano in Valtellina e nel Chiavennasco*' (T.N.: '*Exhibition of Italian Risorgimento in Valtellina and Valchiavenna*') in 1959, '*Immagini de 'I Promessi sposi*' (T.N.: '*Images of 'The Betrothed*') the famous historical novel by Alessandro Manzoni,) in 1973-74, '*I disegni dei Ligari*' (T.N.: '*Drawings of the Ligari*') in 1982, up to the most recent exhibition dedicated to Pio Rajna in 2018.

The building's image and the model that characterizes this elegant residence reveal its architectural refinement and celebrate a love story characterized by social prestige and genuine cultural depth. The decorations, furnishings, as well as the artistic and documentary legacies, show an antiquarian taste, a passion for history, and a high vision of culture devoted to collective fruition. Villa Quadrio is a tangible symbol of Memory and Beauty.

Exteriors and interiors have substantially maintained their original look over the years, partly restored thanks to recent renovation works, besides a necessary adaptation of electrical and plumbing systems to safety regulations. Some areas were modified for usage purposes, such as the construction of a staircase with a lift in the northern access area, and a furniture redesign in 2013, in line with the needs of space intended for use as a library.



EXTERIORS*

The building with its rectangular plan is composed of three floors: the basement holding the depots of Rajna Library; the mezzanine with its offices, reception, reading rooms with open shelves, a concert and conference room, an audio library, and a video library; the first floor with study rooms, areas with open shelves, newspaper and periodical library, the rooms dedicated to the Collections of Rajna, Valtellina and Valchiavenna, Mascioni, and the Emilio Quadrio Art Atelier.

Emilio Quadrio was a commissioner for Sondrio of the Executive Committee of the Pavillion dedicated to the Lombardy Region at the Expo in Rome, held in 1911 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy; the temporary architectural unit was designed by Adolfo Zacchi, one of the major exponents of the renovation and philological

reinterpretation of historical styles. Starting from this event, the Villa Quadrio commissioner's choice fell on Zacchi, marking this way the deep cultural reasons at the root of this fantastic work.

Villa Quadrio shows several features which draw inspiration from the Renaissance constructional language of Lombardy and Valtellina, without leaving out an international late-nineteenth-century eclectic taste, and a relation with the early twentieth-century modern architecture noticeable in Sondrio, such as Villa Gianoli designed by the engineer Filippo Orsatti, with its capitals characterized by large flowery patterns, just a few meters from the villa, and the Art-nouveau building like Casa Rusconi, designed by Giuseppe Ramponi and located in the historic centre near Piazza Garibaldi.

The use of terracotta in wall coverings, in tiles framing

* Note for readers: the designations of use assigned by Adolfo Zacchi in the project drawings available at the Archives and Library of the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano, are reported in the text in *italics* and with the first letter capitalized. The description of internal rooms located on the mezzanine and first floors, open to the public, takes into account the current layout adopted by Rajna Library.

and surrounding the fixtures and string-courses, characterizes its strictly Lombard identity; Zacchi sees and uses this material in the majority of the Milanese buildings. The corner balcony is typical of the fifteenth-century residences, like the Bicocca degli Arcimboldi in Milan, while the chimney pots partially follow those of the historical palaces in Teglio, and the battlements with wrought iron spiral inserts, remind the castle architecture that was historically popular in the territory of Valtellina. The facade design with entrance porch and two side wings show some national references; in fact, they might derive from Villa Farnesina in Rome, designed at the beginning of the sixteenth century by Baldassarre Peruzzi and commissioned by the banker and patron Agostino Chigi, it now belongs to the Accademia dei Lincei (T.N.: Academy of the Lincei). The characterizing aspect of all the building's exterior facades, covered at the base by a terracotta curtain punctuated by granite ashlar, immediately catching the observer's eye, is the complex regular 'writing' of bichromate graffiti, an ancient widespread ornamental technique in Lombard and Alpine areas. Graffiti can also be seen in Sondrio in the internal courtyard of

Palazzo Carbonera, a Renaissance aristocratic residence that preserved its original aspect and more recent constructions, such as the Neo-renaissance Palazzo Pretorio and the former Law Courts, that currently house the Sondrio Town Hall. Antonio Giussani restored the first building and built the second one. Other graffiti may be noticed on Palazzo del Governo, designed by Giovanni Muzio in a twentieth-century style, that is currently the seat of the Prefecture and Provincial Administration. The Villa Quadrio graffiti follow a precise subdivision of themes inspired by traditional stylistic repertoires, from the 'upholstery-styled' geometric and modular patterns to phytomorphic motifs like small palms and lilies – regularly distributed on the mezzanine and second floor, once again separated by the terracotta string-course and a graffiti festoon frieze – up to anthropomorphic and antique elements such as: grotesques, racemes, coats of arms, medallions, garlands, plant volutes, rosettes, griffins, putti, acanthus, cornucopias, antique vases, and also inscriptions. Moreover, it is possible to notice the love knot motif, image of the archetypal union of male and female principles; therefore, the marital bond between the owners, but also the infinity symbol-sign,



representing a metaphor for the persistence over time of art and beauty beyond the limit of earthly life, cyclically transmitted across generations.

The main entrance located on the west facade is introduced by a sober and austere stone staircase in shades of grey, leading to the Art-nouveau porch of the mezzanine, surmounted on the first floor by a loggia. Granite columns limit its side overlooking the garden with Corinthian capitals holding up the round arches; the other sides are closed by half-columns followed by two wooden side doors with terracotta crowning, the same material was used in the classical tympanum above. The local granite (*ghiandone* and *serizzo*) is used for banisters, some of them with decorated relieves, for wainscoting and outer perimeter of the big central door with wooden leaves, studs, and stained-glass doors, next to big windows. Ribbed vaults are decorated with vegetable patterns surrounding regular sequences of love knots, which are the symbolic protagonists of this space. On both sides of the central door, some traces of the original decoration are characterized by vertical festoons, while the same floral and geometric pattern of the ceiling enriches the five oculi. The three oculi on the facade depict medallions with the portraits of Emilio Quadrio

de Maria Pontaschelli's notable ancestors: Alderano Quadrio (1123), the first ascendant of some note, captain of a 'powerful army of people from Valtellina' during the conflict between Como and Milan; Stefano Quadrio (1438), businessman and Ghibelline man-at-arms; Antonio Maria Quadrio (1524) who by imperial order of Charles V was given the title of Count of Colico and Lord of Isola. The Quadrio's coat of arms, introduced on the facade by the coloured-majolica emblems, is reproduced in several parts of the building, defining the identity and calibre of the residence: on the west corner of the main facade, in graffiti, in artificial stone inserts, in the capital of the half-columns located at the entrance and in the ancient ones of columns placed in the garden, on the coffered ceiling of the entrance hall, as well as painted on the walls, moulded in stuccos and handle metals, on furnishings. The coat of arms motto says "Quocumque veritas stant" and the CUBI STABILITAS inscription on the tiles of the denticulate string-course denotes 'stout-heartedness, balance in life.' The coat of arms is described in a printed document available from Quadrio's Collection at the Archivio di Stato di Sondrio (T.N.: State Archives of Sondrio):

«*Escutcheon*. A field transversally divided into two equal parts, of which the lower one is fully red, and has three cubes [term replacing "dices" Author's note] of white marble, one placed below and two above, to form a triangle. The field's upper area is entirely yellow, that is to say, Gold, and contains a black eagle, in an upright position, with open wings and feet, wide-open rostrum, and the tongue outside / *Friezes*. A frog-mouth helmet laid on top of the escutcheon, open or visored, with a royal crown above and two black eagle wings, open on top, each one containing a part of the escutcheon with the three white cubes mentioned above [see Author's note above] in the middle».

Twelve windows, four on each floor, space out the facade's two side wings: the smallest windows located in the basement are rectangular with a depressed arch, closed by wrought-iron bars enriched by some patterns reproducing a star divided into four parts. On the right, the openings show a more structured and plastic design: on the mezzanine floor, a small balcony made of artificial pink stone creates a horizontal movement, while a big eclectic arched window, framed by pilasters and inserts of spiral columns, also made of artificial



stone, is embellished all around by graffiti with fluid and soft lines characterized by a humanist and antique taste (Zacchi's location plan indicates the original presence of the *Library* in the corresponding internal space). There is a small corner balcony on the upper floor, overlooking the *Camera dei forestieri* (T.N.: *The Guestroom*).

There is a bench on the left corner of the ground floor, and the large majolica coat of arms with pure-gold finishes is placed between the mezzanine and the first floor, connoting the aristocratic status of the building. Below there is a wrought iron lamp in the medieval Gothic style, which formally reveals the secondary entrance on the north facade, protected by a small shelter abutting on the two walls of the re-entrant area and a small stone column with an octagonal plan and Corinthian capital, replicated exclusively for decorative purposes on the walls enriched with graffiti revoking the Sforza's memories. This entrance can be accessed through a stone staircase, while the compact banister is made of the same stone.

Six openings on each floor mark the facade, a second lamp is located on the left, and a large arched window stands out; it opened onto the *Historical Library* area. The



window, which seems to communicate at a distance with the one located on the main facade in terms of material, size, the imposing crowning, and the graffito patterns, is surmounted on the first floor by a small balcony with balustrade and a triple lancet window, all made of artificial stone. Furthermore, the opening is surmounted by a majolica replica of the Andrea Della Robbia's medallions depicting the putti in swaddling clothes made in 1463 for the porch of the *Spedale degli Innocenti* (T.N.: Hospital of abandoned children) in S. Marco, Florence, one of the first Renaissance civil architecture works carried out according to the original project of Filippo Brunelleschi and the first specialized orphanage in Europe for childcare. The putto in swaddling clothes on a blue background is surrounded by a vegetable garland composed of leaves, fruits, and flowers. Besides being an explicit historical and formal reference to the Italian Renaissance, such a recalling is consistent with the twentieth-century building's overall design and is indicative of the sensitive attention of the commissioners to the world of childhood in troubles and the never-faded love of Teresina Tua for her twins, that she had with her first husband, who died prematurely.

On the east facade, the imposing volume of the elegant bow-window catches the attention, it represents a typologically monumental and austere reproduction of the art nouveau solutions of the early twentieth century, while a large terrace lays on the porch leading to the basement, and is connected to the garden through side staircases. The facade on the ground floor shows a double depressed arch supported by a granite column. The spaces are open and bright thanks to the presence of large windows on the mezzanine floor and a four-lancet window on the first floor. Spaces are delimited on the sides by windows and small corner balconies, all overlooking the garden, which once was vaster than today and was also intended for growing vegetables and fruit trees. The graffito decoration finds in this architectural insert its best and 'aerial' development within the almost circular, whirling, and light dynamics of classical signs, even if figures appear in symmetrical sequences within the vertical and horizontal spaces dividing the openings. Besides the date 1914 written in Roman numerals (A. D. MCMXIV), there is an inscription framed by a laurel wreath saying FELICITER ERECTA (happily built); it reveals an interesting resonance in the words of Quadrio

reported in a letter written on 10th October 1915 to Zacchi:

«I am more than pleased to be able to express my thanks for the wonderful success of the new house in the Lombard sixteenth-century style, for which you supervised the drawings and directed the construction with such an exquisite artistic taste and love. Your house was successful in its entirety, to such an extent as to stir the technical experts' admiration and be praised by art lovers, thanks to the magnificent arrangement of different rooms and areas and to its beauty in every detail [...]».

There is a lyre with a laurel wreath in the central pilaster's composite capital, the original musical instrument identifying the string family, and explicitly indicating the inner space's function, the *Sala Concerti e Conferenze* (*T.N.: Concert and Conference Room*).

In the first years of the twentieth century, the garden, which is naturally and structurally connected to the Villa, was vaster, and over the years, it had undergone changes and partitions due to expansion and occupation requirements. The project drawing shows the presence of flowerbeds, still partly intact, with gravel paths,



symbolizing the Italian approach of this open space. Other elements along the artificial retaining walls would suggest the existence of a vertical garden and the presence of Tuscan columns placed parallelly on the north side and a stone path, reveals a vegetable growing, a pergola with climbing plants that suits the overall design of the building: the project even shows a more considerable extension which continued on the west-side corner. In addition to the essences cultivated over the years, like monumental cedars, palm trees, hedges, pines, magnolias, a spruce stands out; it is the only survivor of the three specimens planted by Teresina in memory of the end of the First World War. Nearby there is a small building of Christian worship built «In memory of Quadrio de Maria Ponteschelli Andrea Gaetano di Agostino (Chiuro 1803 - Sondrio 1882)», as mentioned on the plaque with his portrait on a bronze medallion, work of the sculptor Egidio Gunella. The originally taller boundary wall with a wrought iron crowning and the entrance gate were designed by Zacchi with spiral and starry inserts; they have been replaced by the current enclosure with a simplified design.

The south facade completes the path to discover the exteriors of Villa Quadrio, continuing and expanding in the

garden with flowerbeds, which were initially excluded by Zacchi – a space delimited by a boundary wall – while the terracotta chimney pots and battlements with metal spiral inserts stand out, they are typical elements of the sixteen-century Lombard architectural tradition. On the first floor, two corner balconies of different sizes seem to communicate at a distance; the biggest balcony connects the east and south facade, and the even layout of windows finds its harmonious conclusion in the large opening located on the mezzanine floor, which is enriched by graffiti patterns and is a perfect duplicate of the nearby opening on the west corner.

In 2004, an important restoration work on all facades became necessary due to the unavoidable and natural deterioration of graffiti plaster, wall paintings, and different materials. Such an intervention restored the original look of Villa Quadrio through a detailed analysis followed by a capillary cleaning, restoration, and protection of all surfaces and different finishes. The restoration, performed by the Architect Sara Beatriz Gavazzi, was financed by the State thanks to the allocation of the 0.8% share of the personal income tax (IRPEF) to this project.





INTERIORS

MEZZANINE FLOOR

The Villa's several rooms had different functions, connected not only to the everyday use of a private house but also to the owners' intellectual and artistic profession.

Enter Villa Quadrio and slowly walk through its spaces is a sort of walk through time which confirms the historicist orientation and eclectic taste of designer and commissioners: a revival from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the twentieth century characterizes the overall image of walls, furnishings, decorations and ornaments, stuccos; a distinctive sign of elegance and harmony consistent with the design of the architect. The entrance, which can be accessed by a large stained glass door, introduces the Hall where the monumental wooden staircase leading to the first floor stands out, with banisters that continue the graffiti and anticipate, in the wall decorations, the pattern of the ancient vase with vegetable elements and ribbons. The walls are painted

with heraldic and phytomorphic motifs, and on the imposing coffered ceiling, which could recall the ceiling of Masegra Castle, the emblems of Quadrio's coat of arms are reproduced. A certain austerity characterizes the space due to the dark colour of walls and low gradation of light, filtered through the round and slightly opaque tiles of the stained glass of the door and windows.

The medieval beginning of this 'journey' continues in the *Sala di passaggio* (T.N.: *Passage Room*) where Emilio Quadrio commissioned the set up in an elevated position of an authentic seventeenth-century wooden choir, inherited from his mother's side, and carried away from the Guardian Angel little church, a building located in the area on the so-called 'via dei palazzi' (T.N.: Street of palaces), included in the ancient via Valeriana, that is the connection route between the current piazza Carbonera, followed by piazza Cavour after the bridge over the Mallero (in the past piazza Vecchia or piazza del Mercato) and piazza Quadrivio, the street with



many exclusive residences built between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, belonging to the aristocratic families of the city: Carbonera, Marlianici, Longoni, Sassi de Lavizzari, Sertoli. The Carbonera's family coat of arms is carved at the centre of the choir, and the decorative patterns with vegetable elements characterized by emphatic baroque volutes are taken and reinterpreted in the twentieth-century wooden ornament of the four doors and four glass cabinets; the ivory white of the painting gives brightness and seems to imitate the stuccos of the seventeenth-century.

A second movable asset that was disassembled, transferred, and then reassembled in the Villa is the so-called *Carbonera Stüa* dating back to the sixteenth century, coming from a palace of the same name at the Guardian Angel, always inherited by Emilio Quadrio. It was connected to the choir through a passageway between church and palace desired by its founder Francesco Carbonera in the mid-seventeenth century. The stüa is a very popular ancient piece of furniture in the Alps used to insulate the interiors against the cold; it was present both in aristocratic residences and in more humble houses. It consists of a wood-paneled room, usually warmed by a majolica stove, often enriched by carving, ornaments, inlaid work, and inserts



made by cabinet-makers and skilled artisans. Generally, it is used as a living-room or small study, and its history is linked to the one of the commissioning family that gives it its name, that is why the coat of arms are present in some stüa. A sumptuous and imposing paneling characterizes the walls of the Carbonera Stüa, reported on the project drawing as a *Dining room* and located in the north area between the *Wardrobe-Office* and the *Historical Library*, divided into embossed square, rectangular and rhomboid frames; the same pattern is harmonically replicated on the doors, acting also as a counterpoint to the circular and oval shapes of the ceiling. The space holding this stüa was bigger compared to the original one; it was, therefore, necessary to add a wooden panelling to the four sides of the upper part, also inserting a series of shelves and two console tables closed by doors: a mimetic and philological integration that could respect the general layout and the cultural reference of the furniture. The Carbonera Stüa is made of Swiss pine and naturally emanates a scent of resinous essences. Its geometric design differs from the more complex one of the carved and inlaid stüe that can be seen at Palazzo Pretorio and in Palazzo Sassi de Lavizzari, the latter houses the civic museum of the town (MVSA):

the sixteenth-century Rigamonti Stüa – purchased by the Municipality in the fifties after the dismantling of a building owned by the Carbonera and installed in the mayor's office – and the seventeenth-century Salis Stüa, belonging to the building and historical evidence of the Grisons domain in Valtellina (sixteenth to eighteenth century).

The *Concert and Conference Room* occupies the central part of the floor, an important and bright area thanks to the large windows located on the east wall with composite pilasters and capitals and small rusticated ashlar inserts, to the white shades characterizing the crowning of the neoclassical doors leading to the side rooms, and to the large glass door which connects it to the reception. A sequence of coats of arms with the letters TQ (Tua Quadrio), an aristocratic monogram, is depicted on the walls with warm tones. The false ceiling is decorated with festoons, plant volutes, acanthus leaves, rosettes, floral patterns, art attributes, garlands, and the lyre, the absolute protagonist of this part of the building. A specimen among the panels reveals an underlying tempera decoration, where the lyre pattern emerges on a green background, followed by some presumably



vegetable forms. At the centre there is a golden chandelier and, on the four corners, some circular frames delimit musical instruments on one side - lyre and violin, pan flute, clarinet, recorder, horn, tambourine, triangle – and a score within a flood of laurel leaves, poets' and musicians' attribute. On the other side, there are some objects evoking arts and crafts depicted; they are surrounded by oak branches to symbolize strength, resistance, and persistence over time: palette and paintbrushes, a composite capital, pen and inkpot, a book, a square, a pair of compasses, and a hammer. Therefore, the *Concert and Conference Room* is the beating heart of Villa Quadrio: having been conceived to host concerts organized by the owners and intended for a selected audience, also coming from other provinces, it is characterized by an excellent acoustics.

The *Historical Library* (today a room with open shelves) follows the Carbonera Stüa, open on the north side by the large vaulted window covered with wood and further lighted on the east. Some laurel leaves are painted with tempera on the ceiling and 'communicate' with fine lines intersecting in small squares, forming prototypes of fret

patterns; on the corners, a shape evoking an emerald set in gold forms the centre of a 'whirl' of acanthus leaves on an antique red and gold base.

This room communicates at a distance with the *Music Studio*, located in front of it on the south side, an area currently used for children's books. The three rooms that follow one another from south-east to south-west represent a real stuccoes gallery, in an ideal continuity with the *Concert and Conference Room*. The first room's painted walls depict tapestry patterns with stylized cones and leaves in green and golden yellow tones. Four angels wrapped in light clothes and playing the harp, violin, triangle, and flute 'soar' on the ribs of the vault, above a neoclassical podium. Laurel sheaves and tempera grotesques alternate on the frames delimiting the ribs. A golden chandelier further embellishes this room, presumably intended for Teresina Tua to be used as a private study. The next room is the *Reception Room*, a treasure trove with pastel green and orange shades with partly gilded stuccoes. A dense classical decoration emerges, and there is tangible evidence of a red marble fireplace. Some putti hold wreaths of flowers and acanthus volutes, female faces/



masks are depicted above, while rococo embossed ornaments with cornucopias and ancient vases constitute the crowning of frames and fake ceiling. The *Study of the Commendatore* is a sober room with a cloister-vault ceiling in a predominant soft green shade acting as a background to dense monochrome tempera decorations characterized by vegetable stylizations alternated with four small stucco rosettes. The last room but one is the *Vestibule*: on the walls, the Quadrio's coat of arms, the TQ monogram, the love knots, and the lily are repeatedly reproduced within a fake architecture on a sky blue background. A geometric frieze is depicted on the upper part, while on the cross vaults and lunettes it is possible to observe some festoons with fruits and laurel sheaves, leaves and pink quadrilobate flowers (presumably dog roses), various types of large ancient receptacles with branches and stems with hanging flowers and fruits (most likely oranges), and, finally, thin and light ribbon volutes tied to one another. It is a celebratory area that evokes the garden's spring and summer flowering and a symbolic place of good omen. Finally, the *Library* concludes the path and corresponds to the corner section of the two large twin windows located on the south-west facade: the blank walls leave room for a flat ceiling, painted with frames in soft colours and early twentieth-century patterns.

FIRST FLOOR

The rooms' layout with open shelves holding books and magazines and the study rooms partly correspond to the premises beneath. The floor plan is designed on a central axis with the same sequence of rooms, flanked on the right and left side by the two symmetrical wings with duly arranged spaces, rooms with a flat ceiling decorated with tempera painting with geometrical, vegetable, and tapestry patterns, fake frames, masks, coats of arms, plant volutes, crowns and festoons with fruits in Empire and late 19th-century, coming close to the Art Nouveau, a decorative repertoire also used in the interiors of the town middle-upper-class' and nobility's palaces.

A big loggia overlooks the west side on the central axis, where it is possible to observe the wooden beams supporting the roof protected by stone slabs. An unbroken line delimits a serially repeated frieze with a floral pattern on the roof structure and along the building's entire perimeter. It represents a graphic concession including any possible style, but that could re-evoked the one of the red fresco on a white background characterizing

the main building of Masegra Castle: a stylized image of fifteenth-sixteenth century brickworks, but also the geometrical styles that embellish the hydroelectric power plant of Gaetano Moretti in Grosio (1907-10) and of Darvino Salmoiraghi in the nearby Ponchiera (1909-12).

Inside the building, there are the *Living-room* and the *Gallery*, two communicating areas through a large glass door, and a wooden wainscot, where the soberly covered doors connect them to the side rooms. The solid wood is also used in the large windows overlooking the loggia and in the monumental four-lancet opening located on the east, corresponding to the *Concert and Conference Room's* big windows on the lower floor. The *Gallery* is a place used for official receptions, cultural promotion, and public events: on the side sections of the fake ceiling, there are six wrought iron lamps and, once again, it is possible to see tempera mural paintings with festoons, volutes, big acanthus leaves, garlands, and Quadrio's coats of arms. The upper part is divided into two: a skylight and its painted replica, a simple orthogonal grille that softens decorations' fast rhythm.

The left wing of the building housed the *Hallway*, the



owners' and servants' *Bedrooms*, and the *Linen room*: now the premises hold the Historical Society of Valtellina and the Rajna Collection 'Fondo Rajna', a rich collection of books and ancient documents that are partly preserved into old binders. The right wing, located in the south, was intended for *Bedrooms*, *Linen Room* and *Lavatory*, and a second *Hallway*. These premises hold the Valtellina and Valchiavenna Collection – the room where it is located is named after Giovan Battista Gianoli (Sondrio 1890-1968), director of the library since 1948 and first curator of the Valtellina Museum of History and Art – and the Mascioni Collection. Finally, the *Living-room* and the *Camera dei forestieri* (*T.N.: The Guestroom*) form an area with publications of architectural and artistic interest that has been recently named 'Atelier delle Arti' (*T.N.: Art Atelier*) and dedicated to Emilio Quadrio, where it is preserved his eclectic desk with a wooden riser (reporting his initials above EQ). Such a desk was probably designed by Zacchi and included among the furnishings inherited by the Municipality of Sondrio together with the building, such as wrought iron chandeliers, a cupboard with the initials QT, a mirror with a carved golden frame, two sofas, inlaid chests with hunting scenes, and chairs (the latter at the Valtellina Museum of History and Art).



BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS

ADOLFO ZACCHI

Cesena 1877-Milan 1968

Architect, professor, school inspector, and restorer, he studied architectural and ornamental design at Cesena and Bologna's secondary schools and graduated in architectural design from Brera Fine Arts Academy in the early twentieth century. A pupil and collaborator of Gaetano Moretti (Milan 1860-1938), like his master, he was the author, interpreter, and expert on the historicist and antique code of architecture generated from the reflections and the works of Camillo Boito (Rome 1836-Milan 1914) and Luca Beltrami (Milan 1854-Rome 1933), both active in the Regional Office for the Preservation of Monuments in Lombardy founded in 1891 to protect the cultural heritage. Therefore, Zacchi draws inspiration from a philological reinterpretation of the Lombard Renaissance for designing private residences such as Villa Quadrio in Sondrio, Casa Piana and Villa Fossati in Milan, built between the second half of the 1910s and 1920s, the result of a careful compositional, formal, and material interpretation of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century buildings located in the regional territory, engaging with an eclectic vocation characterizing the period between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

To Zacchi, the individual and collective awareness of the historical monument, as well as a constant study of the historicist code, was of paramount importance in order to celebrate the theme of local identity, national belonging, and a modern transposition of beauty which is separated from the aesthetic innovations of modernist and rationalist taste. Following this moral and aesthetic direction, he designed the Lombardy Region Pavillion for the Expo of Rome held in 1911 by reproducing a Renaissance wooden Stüa at Palazzo Besta (T.N.: Besta Palace) of Teglio for the Province of Sondrio. In 1928, together with his brother Aldo, he planned Palazzo Cusini (T.N.: Cusini Palace) in Milan, resorting to a classicizing design that finely follows the twentieth-century footsteps characterized by a clear monumental matrix. The most important and sound commitment of Zacchi focused on design and restoration works for the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, particularly from 1912 up to the second post-war period, also by taking care of its extension towards via dell'Arcivescovado in the thirties. He drew the statues of the high altar and designed the new choir, completing the works on the marble floor; in 1943, he secured the polychromatic glass windows before the war bombing of the city, and during the post-war, he restored and

took care of the exhibition areas of the Duomo Museum. He also participated in the Sant'Ambrogio architectural complex in Milan and other ecclesiastical buildings with new projects and restoration works.

EMILIO QUADRIO DE MARIA PONTASCHELLI
Sondrio 1855-Rome 1933

Emilio Quadro, a leading exponent of the Lombard intelligentsia, nephew of the famous patriot Maurizio Quadrio, graduated in the 1870s from the prestigious University of Padua, then he moved to Milan where founded a publishing house and consolidated his political proximity to the left parties. In the 1880s, he moved to Sondrio and founded the 'Rivista alpina di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti' (T.N.: Alpine magazine of Sciences, Literature, and Arts) where he published the pieces of writing of important intellectuals and authors like the writer and journalist Matilde Serao (1856-1927) and Antonio Ghislanzoni (1824-1893), the author of the *Aida*, the libretto set to music by Giuseppe Verdi.

Emilio Quadrio was a journalist, polemicist, and writer, literary critic, publisher, music lover, and public administrator, awarded the title of 'Commendatore,' thanks to his top position in the Sondrio's Section of the Radical Party, with its political focus on pragmatic and progressive aspects, such as the lay approach

of schools, the management of the economic and social development within a broad and structured social reformism. Quadrio was among the founders of the 'Associazione nazionale della Stampa' (T.N.: National Association of Press) and held important positions in the Public Administration of the Municipality and Province of Sondrio of which he was the head from 1906 to 1910, by implementing the convention with the Municipality of Milan on the exploitation of water

resources for energy production. In 1881, he established in Sondrio the Quadrio printing works, that published different economic, historical, social, and literary pieces of writing, including technical reports and scientific papers. Among the several titles, we can mention: *Sondrio e dintorni*.



Emilio Quadrio, 1881.
Permanent entry card to Italian
Industrial Exposition in Milan
(Archives of Rajna Library,
Fondo Emilio Quadrio)

Guida illustrata con carta geografica del Mandamento e panorama del Corno Stella (Carlo Saffratti, 1895); *Giuseppe Verdi. Discorso pronunciato il 10 febbraio 1901 nel Teatro Sociale di Sondrio* (Ferruccio Martini, 1901); *La preparazione dei maestri in Valtellina ed una questione urgente che la riguarda* (Omobono Buzzi, 1892); *Ferrovia Sondrio-Tirano. Relazione dell'Ing. Guido Parravicini* (1898); *Mattero Bandello novellatore lombardo. Studi* (Domenico Morellini, 1899); *Le streghe in Valtellina. Studio su vari documenti editi ed inediti dei sec. XV-XVI-XVII-XVIII* (Vittorio Spinetti, 1903); *Il naturalista valtellinese. Giornale di scienze naturali* (Mario Cermenati, 1886).

In 1885, he founded the magazine 'La Provincia' which included, two years later, in 'La Valtellina,' and left it in 1910 opposing to his own party:

«As far as I could, I am aware that I have contributed to the economic and moral exaltation of my territory. The news concerning our province was genuinely reported for over a quarter of a century by my magazine. The trust of readers in 'La Valtellina' has never been undermined because I always wanted and tried to create a magazine intended for the reading public, focusing on the interests of our province in harmony with those of the Great Italian Country». ('La Valtellina,' 13th December 1910).

Becoming the President of the Board of Directors of the Hospital of Sondrio 'Ospedale Civile di Sondrio' and the

President of the Provincial Charity Commission of the 'Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde'(T.N.: Lombard Provinces Savings Bank), he took up a decisive role in the local socio-political set-up. In the second decade of the twentieth century, he left the Radical Party and approached moderate and catholic spheres, regaining control of the magazine 'La Provincia' with its printing works, of which he still held a share. In 1913, he married the violinist Teresina Tua, and then they moved to Villa Quadrio. In the mid-1920s, they moved permanently to Rome, where he died in 1933, designating his wife as sole heir.

Among his pieces of writing we can mention: *Fisime d'amore*, Giuseppe Galli editore-librajo, Milan 1879; *Ermengilda, leggenda del secolo XVII*, Galli e Omodei librai editori, Milan 1877; *prof. F. Martini*, Galli e Omodei, Milan 1878.

Quadrio's Collection 'Fondo Quadrio' is distributed and preserved between the State Archives of Sondrio and the Rajna Library, a rich paper heritage composed of books, prints, drawings, photographs, documents, but also ancient parchments, all materials of historical, political, social and cultural interest, «being Emilio a passionate scholar and collector of "books, autographs, documents, and political and artistic memories" (Emilio's will)» (taken from "Bollettino delle

Famiglie Quadri e Quadrio”, A. XXIII, no. 45, October 1994). In particular, the Autographs Collection ‘Fondo Autografi’ preserves some letters addressed to Quadrio written by friends and important exponents of the intellectual and artistic world of the time, such as the men of letters Giovanni Bertacchi, Gabriele D’Annunzio, Pio Rajna, the librettists Arrigo Boito and Antonio Ghislanzoni, the painters Angelo Morbelli and Leonardo Bazzaro, the politicians Filippo Turati, Anna Kuliscioff, Luigi Credaro, Romualdo Bonfadini, Giuseppe Marcora, the musician Alfredo Catalani, the phthisiologist Ausonio Zubiani, and the Nobel Prize winner Dr. Camillo Golgi. Moreover, the collection includes the collection of letters of Maurizio Quadrio, Emilio’s uncle.

TERESINA TUA QUADRIO

Torino 1866-Rome 1956

She was a violinist of undisputed fame between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, highly reputed throughout Europe. From a humble background, she stood out since childhood thanks to her talent for music, fostered with loving care by her father Antonio and mother Marianna Rabino, an amateur violinist and guitarist, respectively. Together with their daughter and another violinist friend, they formed the quartet called ‘Quartetto Tua’ to perform in Turin’s squares and other

cities between Piedmont and Liguria. Thanks to the good offices of a patron who listened to her playing in Nice, where the young girl took private lessons from the violinist Zucchi, she could enroll in the Conservatoire of Parigi in 1877, also obtaining a scholarship which enabled her and her parents to live in the French capital free from financial straits. Student of the famous Belgian musician Joseph Lambert Massart (Liege 1811-Paris 1892), and fellow student of Claude Debussy (Saint-Germain-en-Laye 1862-Paris 1918), she graduated in 1880 with honours. She won out over 25 competitors, the prestigious ‘Premio Nicodami,’ an academic recognition that had not been awarded for 50 years. This point marked the beginning of a successful career that led her to perform in the main Italian cities, but also in Berlin, Paris, Saint Petersburg, in Switzerland, New York, and Siberia, supported by great natural talent, thanks to which she was given the name of ‘Angel of violin,’ as well as by strict discipline and a deep self-awareness as an artist, woman, and intellectual (of particular note are her critical contributions published on the magazine ‘Nuova Antologia’ in the early twentieth century, and her *Joseph Joachim. Ricordi e Note*, Nuova Antologia, Rome 1907, a biographical essay on her master and friend with whom she performed in Bergamo in 1897, the ‘prince’ of violinists, and Johannes Brahms’ collaborator-inspirer). During her career, she met several personalities of the musical world of the time,

concert artists, and composers, such as the already-mentioned Johannes Brahms, Giuseppe Verdi, Sergej Rachmaninov, Franz Liszt, Henryk Wieniawski, Edward Grieg, Richard Wagner. Moreover, on 31st January 1892, the ‘Gazzetta Musicale di Milano’ (T.N.: Musical Gazette of Milan) writes about her:

«Ms. Tua has an absolutely unequaled artistic personality; and while I am at it, I hasten to remark that in her personality the psychic qualities as an artist prevail over the mechanical ones even if well-developed ... Ms. Tua, more than just performing as a virtuous artist, feels and expresses her music in a highly poetical and ideal way. In the midst of technical difficulties and hardinesses, the charm of melody and singing stands out, and the sound wave emanated from the strings can almost be compared to the plasticity of movement and sculptural poses; it is characterized by nobility and elegance of shapes, and expresses thrills of passion and gentle feelings».

In 1889, she first married the Count Ippolito Franchi-Verney della Valletta (Turin 1848-Rome 1911), musician and music critic, becoming, in turn, a ‘Countess’; the following year, she gave birth to her twins who, unfortunately, died very young. It was a tragedy that kept her off the stage and further shaped a delicate sensitivity, thoughtful of moral and material difficulties, and people’s grief. In 1893, the composer Marco Enrico Bossi dedicated to her the first *Violin and Piano Sonata*

in *E minor op. 82*, a composition that Tua included in her repertoire. In 1911, after a long illness, Count Ippolito died. In 1913, she married Emilio Quadrio, that she met a while before on the occasion of some concerts organized in Aprica for a cultured and refined audience, such as Camillo Golgi, Filippo Turati, and Anna Kuliscioff.

From 1914 to 1924, when she also lived in Sondrio, Teresina taught at the Conservatoire of Milan, after being unanimously appointed for artistic merit by the Commission headed by Arrigo Boito. In 1915, she performed in the last official concert of her career, in Trieste. During the years of war, she served as a voluntary Red Cross nurse, receiving three silver medals from the Red Cross, the War Office, and the Ministry of the Interior.



Teresina Tua Quadrio in a portrait of the famous photography studio Elliot and Fry of London, around 1885-90 (Archives of Rajna Library, Teresina Tua Quadrio's suitcase).

This constant attention to people in trouble led Tua naturally to be active in charity works, performing during concerts whose proceeds were allocated to poor people, and helping artists in trouble like the opera composer Alfredo Catalani. In 1924, she organized a violin concert performed by her students at the Public Theatre of Sondrio to celebrate the centenary of the building's inauguration; in the same year, she moved to Rome and taught at the Santa Cecilia Academy for ten years.

In 1933, following her second husband's death, Teresina inherited all his possessions and donated most of them to public and religious institutions. Depriving herself of comfort and wealth obtained thanks to her talent and undisputed cultural worth, and also donating her precious violins, like the Stradivari's that is now preserved at the Conservatoire Verdi of Turin, she definitively enters the convent in 1940 as Suor Maria del Gesù (T.N.: Sister Mary of Jesus) in the Order of Perpetual Adoration, where she died at the age of 90.

In 1935, according to her will, Villa Quadrio, with its furnishings and collections, became the Municipality of Sondrio's property. Among the artworks we can mention the *Bust of Teresina Tua* by the sculptor Santino Bianchi – displayed in the Carbonera Stüa – a painting of Otto Melcher

portraying Saint Cecilia, patroness of music, a portrait of Alfredo Catalani painted by Leonardo Bazzaro and exhibited at the Civic Museum of Sondrio (MVSA), as well as the bronze version of the plaster cast made by Paolo Troubetzkoy entitled *La signora Adelaide Aurnheimer Ratch dopo il ballo* of 1897 (T.N.: *Madame Adelaide Aurnheimer, After the ball – 1897*).

Since 2016, the Historical Archives of Rajna Library contain and preserve the so-called 'Valigia di Teresina Tua Quadrio' (T.N.: Teresina Tua Quadrio's suitcase), a Collection donated to the Municipality of Sondrio including the most beloved and precious 'assets' preserved by the musician until her death, an indissoluble bond with moments and affections of past life, that she brought to the convent and guarded with care. A 'casket' holding the photographic portraits of the violinist and her fellow musicians, worthy of note the famous Joachim Quartet, Arturo Toscanini, Giacomo Puccini, Ernst Shelling, Marco Enrico Bossi, of Queen Margaret, but also print portraits of Giuseppe Verdi and Nicolò Paganini, old documents related to the aristocratic Quadrio Family, vintage pictures of the Villa, the original score of the 'Romance for violin' composed by Giulietta Gallo and dedicated to Teresina, biographical press cuttings published after her death collected by the other sisters.

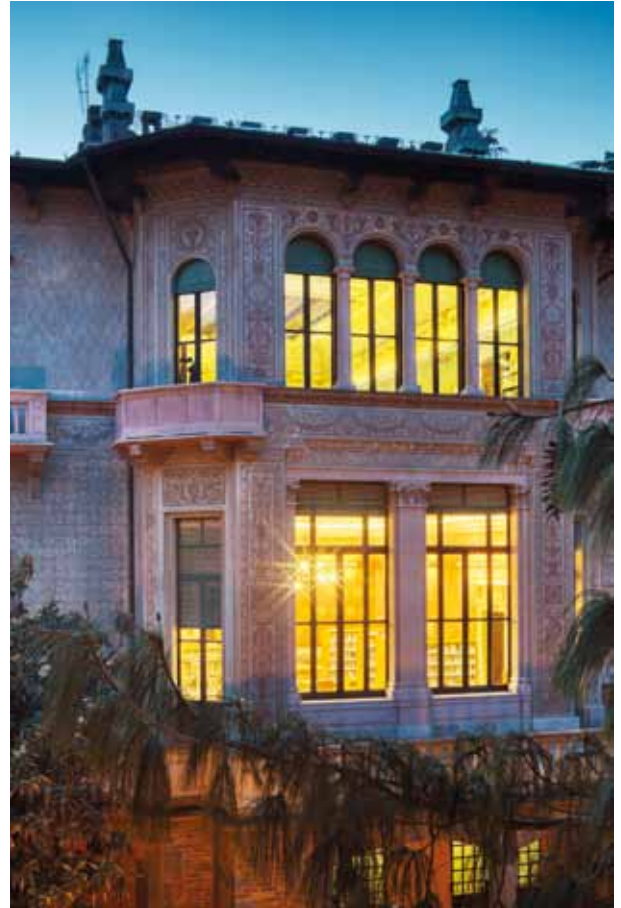
The consulted bibliography, archives, and Internet websites are published on Rajna Library's website at <https://www.visitasondrio.it/site/home/vivi/biblioteca-rajna.html>

Sondrio, 10th October, 1915.

Most Illustrious Cav. Architect Adolfo Zacchi

*I am more than pleased to be able to express
my thanks for the wonderful success
of the new house in the Lombard sixteenth-century style,
for which you supervised the drawings and directed the construction
with such an exquisite artistic taste and love.*

Enrico Landini





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