La Consulta “impacchetta”
il Re sui tetti

Consulta “wraps up”
the King on the roofs

Maria Luisa Filipello Buzzi

On November 20, “the monument”, as it is commonly known to the people of Turin, was restored to its original splendor. It has towered, above the avenue dedicated to the first king of Italy, since 1899, and together with the Mole Antonelliana, is the most recognizable symbol of the city.

Il monumento, realizzato in bronzo e granito da Pietro Costa, è conosciuto ed amato dai Torinesi sia per il grande realismo dei tratti che per la forte valenza simbolica di Re Vittorio Emanuele II, padre dell’Italia Unita.

This bronze-and-granite monument by Pietro Costa is well-known and beloved by Turin’s inhabitants for its realistic features as well as for the strong symbolic value of Re Vittorio Emanuele II, the father of united Italy.
COME SI ARRIVÒ ALLA COSTRUZIONE DEL MONUMENTO
Chi era Vittorio Emanuele II, il “re galantuomo”
di Angela Griseri, Segretario e Consulente storico-artistico
Il Monumento a Vittorio Emanuele II è, non solo uno dei più importanti dell’Ottocento, ma anche uno dei fulcri più significativi nella storia e nell’urbanistica della città.
Non era facile, anzi era davvero un rischio, fare un monumento per un personaggio come il re galantuomo, il padre della Patria che aveva cercato di “fare gli italiani” e che era l’apprezzato anche dalla regina inglese Vittoria per il suo carattere autentico, perspicace, schietto e rude, rapido e brusco nell’esprimersi, fuori dalle convenzioni delle corti e delle aristocrazie. Un re entrato nella viva memoria collettiva come un riferimento pilota, arricchito da una cornice di aneddoti popolari. Aveva inaugurato, accanto al concetto di reggia, luogo di rappresentanza ufficiale, quello delle dimore dedicate alla privacy, trait-d’union con la natura dei boschi, terreno aperto alla caccia.
Per il monumento, la giuria aveva puntato a selezionare un bozzetto che fosse legato al carattere del sovrano. Altrettanto significativo il luogo scelto, al centro del raccordo dei grandi viali della nuova urbanistica: così, nella sua Torino, il re avrebbe guardato dall’alto il verde delle alberate che, nell’asse viario che conduceva a Porta Nuova ed al parco del Valentino, segnavano lo sviluppo europeo della città. Nei gruppi scultorei collocati alla base – l’Unità, la Fratellanza, il Lavoro e la Libertà – si erano trovati per i richiami alle iconografie patriottiche, mentre il re, liberato da ogni retorica e modellato con una percezione robusta – attentamente realizzato ogni particolare della divisa d’ordinanza – aveva il piedistallo delle colonne in granito rosa, che il restauro ha resi-tuito all’originario splendore con le sue magnifiche vene.

**Attualità & Iniziative**
**Restauri**

**Actuality & News**
**Restorations**

**Impegno:** nel 2002/2003 il ripristino dell’asse del Belvedere e del Teatro d’acque nei Giardini di Villa della Regina. È un bel curriculum!


In basso a destra: l’impiantatura allestita per il recente restauro, durato dalla primavera all’autunno 2001. Nel restauro delle parti in bronzo della statua si è fatto uso di una tecnica innovativa che deriva dall’industria di precisione: la saldatura con un abrasivo tenero, ricavato dalla macinazione dei gusci di noce (lavori eseguiti dal Laboratorio Rava & C.)

The scaffolding built for the restoration works that lasted from Spring to Fall 2001. The bronze components of the statue have been restored with a new technique used in the precision industry: they were sandblasted with a soft abrasive obtained from the grinding of nutshells (by Laboratorio Rava & C.)
Anyone who visited Turin from March to September could not help but notice the high scaffolding erected at the intersection of Corso Vittorio Emanuele and Corso Galileo Ferraris. The scaffolding was used to “wrap” and hide the monument to King Victor Emanuel II, affectionately known as “the King on the roofs” by the people of Turin, while it was being restored.

The wrapping displayed the logos of the 27 companies of Turin that formed a group named “Consulta per la valorizzazione dei Beni artistici e culturali di Torino” (Council for the improvement of Turin’s artistic and cultural heritage), and marked the latest project sponsored by this association. Before the “re-unveiling”, which took place on November 20 in the presence of the President of the Republic, Carla Azeglio Ciampi, many newspapers carried informative articles about the monument and the events surrounding the restoration.

Rather than write about the monument in this article, I would like to provide readers with some details about Consulta and its accomplishments. Consulta was founded in 1987 by six private citizens (company executives) who formed an association of prominent companies in Turin that were willing to pay an annual fee to help improve the artistic and cultural heritage of their city. This is an organization that knows how to act quickly and efficiently, able to ignore bureaucracy and where actions speak louder than words. It takes full advantage of well-known technical and artistic consultants, such as Renzo Giubergia, President of Consulta.

The daily newspaper, “La Stampa” distributed approximately two hundred thousand copies of the insert “A monument restored to the city”, which contained a history of the monument and the events surrounding the restoration. After the work was completed, Umberto Levi, professor of Risorgimento history and ex-director of the National Museum of the Risorgimento, Pier Luigi Bassignano, director of the historical AMWA archives, also gave lectures on this topic at the Unione Industriale (Industrial Association).

In April 2001, I was appointed to the Consulta board, to represent Buzzi Unicem and replace Mr. Barzaghini who had been an active member since 1987. I was selected to be a member on the basis of my close ties to the city of Turin, as well as my university degree in classical studies. This is a very interesting position that I have accepted with a great deal of pleasure.
and operates with the full consensus of municipal, provincial, and regional authorities that are very often galvanized into action themselves by the very efficiency of Consulta.

To date, the total investments for these restoration projects amount to over 12 billion Lire. The next project on the books is the restoration of the Belvedere and the Waterworks in the Villa della Regina’s Gardens. A very nice program indeed!

In 2001, new important members have joined our association, including IFI, the Industrial Financial Institute, the Italdesign-Giugiaro, the Seat Yellow Pages and Telecom Italy. Always mindful of the artistic and cultural heritage of Turin and Piedmont, Buzzi Unicem will continue its commitment to the preservation of this history.

WHY WAS THE MONUMENT BUILT?
Who was Victor Emanuel II, the “honorable king”
by Angela Griseri, Secretary and historic-artistic consultant

The monument to Victor Emanuel II is not only one of the most important artifacts of the 1800s, but also one of the most important cornerstones in the history and the town planning of the city of Turin. It was not an easy task, and some might say risky even, to create a monument to a figure like this, the honorable king, and the father of the country who sought to “create Italians”. The king was also admired by Queen Victoria of England for his original, discerning, frank but simple, quick and brusque personality, who did not fit the conventional mold of the court or the aristocracy, and who entered the collective memory as a pioneer, so to speak, bolstered by a legacy of popular anecdotes. Besides the palace, which was the place of official representation, he also introduced the concept of the private residence, the link to nature and the forests, and thus the land available for his beloved hunting.

To construct the monument, the panel had decided on a scale that resembled the character of the king. The location they chose was also significant, because it was at the crossroads of two large streets in the new city. In his native Turin, the king would be able view from above the green trees of the avenues leading to Porta Nuova and the Valentino park, signifying the development of the city along European lines. The sculptures at the base of the monument were a tribute to patriotic icons, namely Unity, Fraternity, Work, and Freedom. The king, who did not need any rhetorical references and whose modeling was very faithful to his likeness where every detail of his regimental uniform was copied, had a pedestal and columns in pink granite, which the restoration has returned to their original splendor with its magnificent veining.
The restoration of the monument completes the “trilogy of the Risorgimento” which began with the restoration of the House of the Subalpine Parliament, which ratified national unity, namely the Italian Parliament as proclaimed by the King of Italy, but which was never used and became a visual symbol of the bitter disappointment felt by the people of Turin that the capital had been moved to Rome.

The monument to Victor Emanuel II merges these two moments in time. Conceived as an homage to the king who embodied the suffering, the anxieties, and the hopes of the Risorgimento, it also marked the fact that Turin was able to overcome the crisis that had struck the city with the loss of its political capital, and turn its attention to transforming itself into a modern industrial metropolis. The same year that the monument was inaugurated, the Fiat company was founded.