

The Fountain in Misericordia Square

The Puppiorona fountain, located in Piazza San Salvatore, represents an important point of historical and traditional reference for Lucca's citizenry, in that the nickname given to the naiad with her uncovered breast* refers to Puppiorona Square. It was also known as Misericordia Square because for many years this historical organization was located here. The square was called Piazza della Legna in past years when firewood was sold here, though this name eventually fell into disuse.

The historic white marble fountain is surmounted by a naiad, a figure from Greek mythology who delivers water to the city and wears the classic feminine peplum (tunic) held in place by a buckle on the left shoulder, which has fallen down since her arm is supporting an amphora full of fresh water. The girl has a beautiful face and her hair is gathered in curls tied by a silk ribbon. The sandals on her feet are typical of 500 BC in ancient Greece.

This neo-classical monument is composed of a main fountain on the south side, opposite the flow of water coming from the Pisan mountains. Below the main fountain, a basin serves as a drinking point for draft animals. On the sides are two other small fountains and two basins. The entire sculpture is enclosed by a wrought iron railing to protect it from passing carriages and carts.

Elisa Baciocchi Bonaparte and Marialuisa di Borbone with her son Carlo Ludovico requested that the statue be designed by Lucca artist Lorenzo Nottolini. It was then built by Luigi Camolli between 1838 and 1842. To date, citizens and tourists supply themselves with the water that flows from its three fountains.

— by *Gabriele Muratori*

*Ed. note: the word *puppa* is Latin for *breast*

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