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Industrial Growth and Socio-Economic Impact: An Analysis of Armi's Manufacturing History in the Mongiana Industrial Village of Serre Calabria

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Abstract

The Mongiana Arms Factory in Calabria (Italy), built in 1852, constitutes a significant example of 19th century armoury. Designed by Domenico Fortunato Savino, active from 1852 to the mid-1860s, the factory produced 2000-3000 weapons annually for the bourbon army, with a peak of 7000-8000 in periods of maximum production. He introduced the «Mongiana» spring-loaded rifle, replacing the French model of 1842. After the unification of Italy, it lost relevance, being downgraded to a transformation workshop, and later closed. Today, part of the Ecomuseum of the Ironworks and Foundries of Calabria, the building has been under restoration since 2013. The Museum of the Royal Bourbon Ironworks, the result of a careful recovery process, allows for an in-depth exploration of the historical, economic, and technological role of the factory in the panorama of the steel industry of the time.

Keywords: Iron and steel, Economic history of Southern Italy, Mongiana, Royal Bourbon Factories

Introduction

Calabria, «extreme offshoot of the ancient Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies» (Gentile, 2007-2008), still today preserves those distinctive features resulting from centuries of foreign domination, urbanistically

recognizable in many of the villages of the Serre from which, forcefully, the Bourbon essence of the Region emerges : it is in this territory that, in the 18th century, weapons factories began to be built to complement extraction plants such as that of Mongiana, a true model of «industrial archaeology» (Brasacchio 1977) erected by the workers employed in the adjacent ironworks and «equipped with housing and technical infrastructures» (Gentile 2007-2008), which, right under the Bourbons, solemnly became the Iron and Steel Hub of the Kingdom of Naples.

However, the first extractions in the area have their origins in the 8th-7th century BC, when, on the one hand, the indigenous populations exploited the Stilo (Orsi, 1926) quarries and, on the other, the Greek colonists there took copious quantities of lead, silver and copper intended for the minting of the coin of the city of Kaulon (De Sensi Sestito 2004; Berard, 1963, Fiorenza, 2019), also with regard to the medieval era, archival sources return a diploma, dated 1094, with which the Count of Sicily, Roger Guiscard, granted the community of the Order of San Brunone da Cologne (Tromby, 1773), the exploitation of the Stilo deposits pertaining to the abbey (Gentile 2007-2008).

The ancient legacy was, in 1313, then confirmed by an edict with which Robert of Anjou, King of Naples, in ordering that state officials do not subject the extracted material to any type of tax or duty, imposed that:

> «[…] *On the contrary, when the forges were rented to merchants, they were required to pay the government three times a year in addition to the rent to the monastery* [...]» (Gentile 2007-2008).

When, in 1442, the Aragonese dynasty took over from the dominance of the Anjou family, Emperor Alfonso V «the Magnanimous» made southern Italy a «political, administrative and territorial unicum» (Gentile 2007-2008). ; inspired by the work of the, in the sixteenth century, Charles V established a policy of reorganization of the Calabrian economy, thus giving new impetus to sericulture and to that iron and steel activity favored by a geo-territorial conformation rich in dense woods, for the supply of wood necessary for combustion, and functional river networks for the energy supply of the blast furnaces (Galasso, 1967).

Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the phenomenon known as «itinerant ironworks» (Gentile, 2007-2008), developed in Calabria, a direct consequence of the implementation of the obsolete so-called method. «Catalan style» (Gentile, 2007-2008) which, involving fusion in very large furnaces, required the use of large quantities of wood: therefore, every time an area was deforested for needs related to productivity, the plants were «transferred to virgin areas» (Gentile, 2007-2008); thus, to facilitate

transferability, they were designed to be easily removed (and without the intervention of the so-called «wall masters» (Gentile, 2007-2008) and made of wood and other perishable materials.

After a period of Austrian domination that lasted only twenty-seven years, in 1734, the enlightened Charles of Bourbon began a series of reforms aimed at relaunching the industries, trades and manufacturing of the Kingdom: Calabria was not exiled from this wave of reform and indeed (Caligiuri 1966), with the accession to the throne of Ferdinand IV, mining production reached its historic highs (Gentile, 2007-2008) The new sovereign, under whose administration the site of Mongiana (Gentile, 2007-2008) arose in 1770, in fact decreed the definitive decline of the era of itinerant ironworks, sanctioning the birth of the first permanent factory, the design of which was entrusted to Gioffredo, Neapolitan architect:

> «*The renowned Calabria Ultra ironworks had to be transported from Stilo to the Mongiana, because in Stilo, in addition to the difficulty of transporting the ore, there was also a lack of woods for the use of coal. The Court therefore sent Mr. Goffredo to Calabria (1771), who visited the woods around the Mongiana, measured and leveled the waters of the two rivers Ninfo and Alaro, which were to move the wheels and give wind to the furnace, and serve for the uses of the workshops, he designed the entire building, including a small church, and for many years he had the direction and management of the ironworks transported there from Naples*» (Rocco , 1785; Pane,1939).

In 1783, however, the earthquake that struck southern Italy, not sparing Ultra Calabria from devastation (many of which urban centers were completely razed to the ground), placed the bourbon government faced with the urgency of launching suitable reforms. to guarantee a prompt reconstruction: the «arduous task of restoring its ancient face (where possible) or rebuilding from scratch» (Gentile 2007-2008), the Region, were entrusted, among others, to Vanvitelli's pupil, the architect Sintes, and the engineers La Vega and Winspeare (BNN, 66), as well as a host of geologists and naturalists.

In contrast with an urban structure attributable to those Greco-Roman canons of the Hippodamian tradition, Mongiana was reborn, whose genesis, free of any political connotation, lay in the spontaneous initiative of those workers interested in ensuring that the site responded more to production needs than to housing: the village square was therefore dominated by the Royal Arms Factory, around which houses were built all the same «in shape and size» (Gentile, 2007-2008), covered in plaster, with pitched roofs and

wrought iron railings (Durbiano, Robiglio, 2003), whose linearity did not other than magnifying the «real nature of the clients» (Gentile, 2007-2008) of the Fabbrica.

The first Bourbon arms factory in Calabria

The first «serious attempt to design an industrial building in the Neapolitan kingdom» (Rubino, 2004), was recorded in 1736, when King Charles of Bourbon ordered the construction of the first arms factory of the Royal Court, which, according to D'Ayala, was completed only six years later (Rubino, 2004) , in the Stilo area, on the Ionian side of Calabria:

> «*With a most venerated note to the Secretariat of State on the 9th of this month, she deigned to order this court, which having the M.V. resolved to build the factory for the rifle barrels in the ironworks of Stilo as the most suitable and convenient place for it, all the provisions are given by the same tribunal* [...] *in the meantime, practical people will be brought from Barcelona and Biscaia for the management of the aforementioned factory. In fulfillment of the sovereign commands of Your Majesty, the royal engineer D. Giuseppe Stendardo was immediately given the task of meeting with Count Balbassor, interim commander of the artillery to inform him of the situation of that mountain of Stilo and the workshops that are there , so that he could determine what should be done* [...] *the said Count Balbassor was of the opinion that a practical person should be sent there to recognize the best site, where the workshop for the rods themselves should then be built* [...]. *Naples, 30 July 1736*» (D'Ayala, 1847).

Indeed, since, in the multiple inventories inherent to both the Stilo and Assi complexes, no mention is made of the arms factory, nor does it appear plausible that it could have been built in an area outside of that where the state ironworks stood, some assume that the intent was repressed in its planning phase, while, on the other hand, Rubino believes «that [the arms factory] was only partially built» (Rubino, 2004), representing the events it connected:

> « […] *an emblematic example of the disorganization of the public company in the first years of the bourbon reign*» (Rubino, 2004).

In this regard, due consideration should be given to the fact that, between 1712 and 1761, the original residence of the Ferriere di Stilo was renovated into a building with an adjoining courtyard,

«*Whose description seems to be able to refer to a downsizing of the initial idea of the arms factory*» (Rubino, 2004),

resulting from the planimetric evidence (ASN, fasc. 63/6; ASCZ, cart. I): strongly desired by the King and financed by the state coffers, this suffered the fate of the bankruptcy of Lamberti, who had been entrusted with its administration in 1742 (Rubino, 2004) ; in the meantime, moreover, the completion of the modern Torre Annunziata plant declared it de facto unusable, consequently causing its dismantling to allocate it (presumably) to other uses (Rubino, 2004).

Leaving aside the question of whether the first Bourbon arms factory was built or not, the analysis of those few design drawings that have survived to date and which, despite not having been signed in the meantime, were, by D' Ayala, attributed to that Giuseppe Stendardo engineer (D'Ayala, 1847); the archive sources contain, in this regard, four drawings, of which the first, entitled «*Plano terreo para la fabrica de lo Canônes de fusiles, en las Montânas de Stilo*» (ASN, XVII, 12). represents the ground floor of the building, the second and third (ASN, XVII, 13), almost identical show the main floor (ASN, XVII, 14), while the fourth and last, with the heading «*Frontespicio de la fabrica para los laboratories de los Canônes de fusiles de la Montânas de Stilo*» (ASN, XVII, 15) illustrates the main facade.

If from the caption of the archive drawings the intended use of the main floor is clearly understood, which should have constituted the accommodation for the administrative staff and, partially, for the workers, the same drawings show the main façade as «*bare and slightly underlined by the slight protrusion of the two corner pilasters and the string course*» (Rubino, 2004) in any case, this project, overall, is of great interest as the Stendardo was the first to face that «compositional problem (Rubino, 2004) which, not only, ten years later, would involve that Sabatini, designer of Torre Annunziata but which , in the 18th century, will affect all industrial buildings: the complexity, that is, of harmoniously integrating, in the same organism, both spaces with residential and administrative use (which, based on the practices of the time, had to respond to certain architectural canons), and environments intended for production (Milizia, 1972), «*which instead were only suited to a healthy rationality of distribution and construction*» (Rubino 2004).

Despite being devoid of any typological reference, the Standard adopted an architectural solution that Rubino defined as «elementary» (Rubino, 2004), placing the forges at the end of the internal courtyard, while the residence rooms were «on the main front» (Rubino, 2004); Sabatini will not accept this compositional compromise and, in Torre Annunziata, will

allocate the production functions only to the ground floor, on which he will superimpose, on a second floor, the representation ones, with the result of «volumetrically highlighting the two different functions of the building» (Rubino, 2004).

From the «Cane Factory» to the «Weapons Factory»

The decision to manufacture weapons in Mongiana derived from the combination, on the one hand of Carascosa's (Marino, 2016) assessments of the economic advantages of using iron on site and, on the other, of Murat's diligent intention to give a decisive response to the «hunger for weapons that plagued» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979) the Napoleonic Empire.
The «Barrel Factory», as it was called, therefore came into operation in 1814 and, although it originally had the sole task of making rifle barrels to be shipped to «Gioachinopoli» (Franco, 2019), it was subsequently tasked with producing all the pieces of the weapon: these, in any case, continued to be sent to Torre Annunziata for final assembly, not because they were in Mongiana

> «[…] *we did not have the expertise to assemble the components of the weapon, but since during the journey, the assembled rifles could suffer damage* [...]» (Franco, 2019).

To the fact that, while Naples acted as an Arsenal and distributed the weapons assembled to the various military corps, Mongiana was confined only to a place of production, Franco gave a personal, and shareable, reason, presuming that:

> «[…] *it was better not to have in such an isolated place and defended only by a small garrison many weapons ready for use, possible spoils of troublemakers*» (Franco, 2019)

The «Fabbrica delle Canne» did not excel in structural grandeur built in a short time and often subject to the floods of the Ninfo and Allaro, it benefited, however, from the mastery of the Neapolitan and, not infrequently French, armourers.

Then, when the second Bourbon period began in 1815, the name of the factory changed to «Regia Manifattura e Armeria» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979), from the «Stato delle Rimesse» of 1818 we learn that, in just six months, it produced 1422 barrels (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979), 500 breeches and «other minor accessories» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena), while the «Laminiero», in the entire year, produced 146 plates for sabers and sidearms and the «Officina del Maglietto sul Ninfo» 524 «plates for barrels» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979).

The work pace remained prolific over the years, with an annual production capacity of no less than three thousand firearms (Franco, 2019)
In 1850, however, the Crown commissioned Domenico Fortunato Savino to design the imposing building known as the «Royal Arms Factory», whose authorship, for a long time, was erroneously attributed to Lieutenant Colonel Pietro Tonson Latour (Marino, 2016) on the «Construction Engineer», Manno and Matacena expressed themselves as follows:

> «*He will be the one to take care of the restoration of the old buildings, to draw up new projects, to conclude procurement contracts; he is the designer of the Arms Factory, the new barracks, the foundry, the roads, the cemetery, the new workshops, the bridges and canals*. […]» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979).

The Factory as resulting from Savino's projects had nothing in common with the «Royal Manufacturing and Armoury»: it stood out on a surface of 1,614 m2 and was divided «into three buildings on a scale along the slope of the hill, leaning against the course of the Ninfo from which the driving force [was] derived» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979). The first building, in addition to housing the caretaker, had a room used to store the plates and another, instead, intended for the «School of arts and crafts» (Marino, 2016) for the children of the labourers; the second building was divided into two independent compartments, one for «the forgers of barrels, sidearms and battery pieces» (Marino, 2016) and the other for «the millers and machines» (Marino, 2016).

As for the third, Matacena reported that it is a three-level building, specifying that:

«on the ground floor there were the grinding stones, on the first the workshops of the cane and dagger filers, on the second the adjusters» (Matacena, 1983).

The entrance to the complex is surprising for the classical imprint that characterizes its style, undoubtedly unusual for a factory, defined by «two robust fluted columns surmounted by an architrave decorated with lacunar motifs» (Gentile, 2007 – 2008), the execution of the work was entirely entrusted to local craftsmen who used molten cast iron for a very fine decorative workmanship, about which Grimaldi wrote:

> «[…] *are in the hands of more than medals, necklaces and other objects worked with Mongiana ironwork to imitate those of bronze and to equal similar ones worked in foreign countries*» (Grimaldi, 1845).

At the time, cast iron had very rarely been used in construction and, for the most part, this had happened in Campania, both for the construction of the suspension bridges over the Volturno and Garigliano and for the construction of the greenhouses of the botanical garden of Naples: therefore, the frontal aspect of the Fabbrica, in addition to representing a considerable form of expressive experimentation with cast iron, de facto gave the building a place in the Italian history of iron architecture, to the point that even Manno and Matacena they explored its technical peculiarities in depth:

> «*The interest of [this] building is based on several aspects. First of all, the front, with the entablature entirely in cast iron, composed of two imposing columns, 4.80 meters high, and the historiated architrave. Then the articulation of the atrium: two columns and four semi-columns also in cast iron, half the height of the external ones, make up a sort of spatial Serlian*» (Di Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979).

The authors, it is right to mention, are, however, both in agreement in believing that Savino, rather than demonstrating the expressive possibilities of cast iron, nurtured an even stronger need defined as «advertising» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979), therefore wanting:

> «[…] show, on the entrance façade, what was produced at Mongiana, and with what accurate technologies»[i] (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979).

Despite the creation of the «Real Fabbrica», the weapons continued to be shipped disassembled from Mongiana to the «Reale Montatura» in Naples; in particular, in 1851, over 1200 pieces including barrels, plates, nipples, bayonets, ramrods and breech screws arrived in the Neapolitan area, while in the month of March 1858 alone, 167 rifles were sent (Franco, 2019). Indeed, only a year later, the presence of «weapon assemblers» and controllers in such a large number was recorded in the factory that it was reasonable to assume that, from 1859, not only the components of the rifles were prepared in the factory but also also provided for the assembly of the latter, before allocating them to the requests of the military corps of the Kingdom (Franco, 2019); these were rifles with rifled barrels (Franco, 2019), with graduated sights, and on which the engraving "Mongiana" was stamped, indicating both the place of production as well as the model of the weapon (Franco, 2019).

In 1860, the «Royal Factory» was at the height of its production capacity, reaching peaks of eight thousand firearms in periods of greatest demand (Franco, 2019)

With the Unification of the Kingdom, however, the Factory encountered the same critical issues as the Foundry, no longer being able to deliver slabs of a quality equal to that which they had become accustomed to in Torre Annunziata: it was precisely those responsible for the Torre Manifattura, in 1864, to send a report to the Government regarding the poor condition of what was received, legitimizing the aforementioned to order that the Mongianese product be replaced with that of Aosta and Lombardy (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979).

Indeed, the Torre management, having well understood that, with the new Government, there would be no space in the south alone for two arms factories of the same size, implemented a strategy of discrediting Mongiana's product, in order to guarantee its favor of Neapolitan public opinion and save itself from closure: in the first three years of unity, therefore, the «Real Fabbrica» deprived of supplies to the Infantry was granted, as a mere palliative, the supply to «corps of greater specialization but of lesser size» (such as the Royal Carabinieri and the Artillery) at a rate of 35,520 Lire per assortment.

Soon, more than one proposal reached the ministerial tables from Mongiana in which it was ensured that, if the suggested improvements were made to the plants (and whose costs were requested to be covered), the «Real Fabbrica» would be able to produce at a rate of 28,820 Lire per assortment, well below those of the northern manufacturers.

No response came from the Ministry and, indeed, in the mid-1970s the factory was converted into a «Major Repair Workshop» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979), with the task of transforming the old National Guard rifles «from flint to lightning» (Franco, 2019).

In 1876, what had been the «Royal Arms Factory» closed its doors definitively; before public opinion, the «closure of the distant and peripheral Calabrian manufacturing» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979) was not at all unpopular: this was therefore how the plan, plotted by the Torre management for over a decade, came to fruition.

The method of processing artillery shells

The «Regulations for the Administration and Conduct» (BNN, 53), amended in 1792 in all the ironworks of the kingdom, gives a precise image of the expertise and skill required of the ironsmiths in the casting, casting, and calibration phases, so that the projectile, as a finished product, could «be admitted by the Artillery»: (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979)

> «*4 men are needed to make the balls... two iron bars must be heated together so that one gets red hot while the other is being worked on, so that no time is wasted. One of the Forgiari makes the ball, two bat, the fourth blows and takes care of the fire. When the iron is hot, the forger takes it with his left hand, presents the end on the lower part of the mould, and with his right hand places the upper mould, continuously turning the iron in his hand, while the others are striking, until the ball is seen rounded, then it leaves the mold, presents the hot bezel to the ball, which must not yet pass through it; if it is excessively large, he lowers it back into the mold, and having reached the point he wants it, places the tail of the same on the vertical cutter, abandons the mold, takes the handle cutter, with which he detaches the ball by means of a blow given by one of the forgers... Having divided the ball from the iron bar, the Forger takes it with a clothespin and puts it back in its socket where he finishes rounding it, making it hit with small but very thick blows and turning it in all directions. Thus perfected, he must pass the ball into the hot gauge and not into the cold one...*
> *The balls are made in molds made of two pieces; the flat bottom one is kept on the anvil by means of a pointed square tail, which inserts itself into one of the holes commonly made in the anvil, the upper one is made like a hammer. To build the lower part of the mold, start by forming the tail at the end of an iron bar... The bar is cut according to its thickness... A piece of steel is welded into it... Meanwhile the piece intended to form the Once the cavity is red-hot, the cavity is started with a steeled and tempered round awl... It is then enlarged using a cold ball of the caliber of which the mold is desired...*» (BNN,53).

Although the detailed theory underlying the so-called the «shell casting» method, indeed, the practical procedure, which had to be carried out exclusively manually, required compliance with dozens of precautions which left no room for improvisation: it is therefore not surprising that the «men of art» those in charge of this processing received, from the Artillery Corps, the admission of the projectiles they manufactured only in 1810, nine years after the decision, by Captain Ribas, to replace the aforementioned method with the so-called «sand molding system», which «allowed the molten iron to be poured into the molds and ensured rapid mass production» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979).

The casting in the wooden brackets, which were made by «carpenter modelers» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979) and covered with a mixture made of goat hair and refractory clay, allowed the optimization of working

times and gave, as a result, projectiles, both empty how full, with perfect shapes:

> «[…] *reduced to the state of water (liquefied iron) it is taken with the spoons of soft iron decorated with clay, and it is poured into the molds that have been deliberately formed before the furnace, according to what you want to melt... The molds of the projectiles are some wooden brackets in two halves which, by introducing beaten earth, make the projectile void with a bronze lobe of the caliber required which, after leaving its impression in the area, is removed by making a hole in the arena itself with iron instruments, called a mouthpiece, through which the liquefied iron is introduced* […]» (BNN,53).

In the first decades of the 19th century, Mongiana was therefore a laboratory where «practice (validated) or (rejected) theory»: on the one hand there was in fact the class of technicians, on the other that of theorists, who there they came to experiment with autonomous initiatives on which, subsequently, they had to instruct the laborers called to carry out those very same initiatives.

Furthermore, in 1837, the Foundry Regulations were reformed: from that year, several dozen calibers intended for the strongholds of the Kingdom began to be produced in Mongiana, based on models from the Arsenal of Naples; (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979) however, both the technical-cultural and iconographic heritage has unfortunately been lost.

The Mongiana model Bourbon infantry rifle: notes

The only authoritative proof of the industriousness of the Royal Manufacture of Mongiana, which has survived to date, is a rifle with the «R»(egia) «M»(anifattura) «di Mongiana» mark engraved on the outside of the lock and the indication of the year «1851» stamped inside (De Stafano Manno, Matacena, 1979): it is a model identical to those that were produced there between 1852 and 1860 «at the rate of about twenty examples per month» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979) and with the «Ma» (invoice) «Re »(ale) «from Mongiana», differing only due to the size of the barrel (De Stefano Manno, Matacema 1979).

The first to study its technical characteristics, and to report a production of around one hundred and thirty pieces per month, were Cimino and Arrigoni who, to the 40-inch model, attributed the name «Bourbon infantry rifle mod. Mongiana»(De Stefano Manno, Matacena 1979); these, in addition to highlighting how little the «Mongiana» had in common both with the rifles supplied to the Army of the Two Sicilies and with the carbines used

by the «Hunters» battalions, analyzed their similarities and differences, both structural and dimensional, compared to the «French rifle mod. 1842», which inspired the «Mongiana».

From the authors we therefore learn that:

> «*The barrel (of the «Mongiana») is 45 mm longer and the lock, although of the French «spring back» type, has no tie rod between the spring and the hammer nut. The transmission of the raising movement is direct by friction and not indirect as in French. The finishes, iron in the French, in the «Mongiana» are made of brass (including the shield and excluding only the triangular counterplate)*» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena, 1979).

Conclusion

As mentioned, with the Unification of Italy the Mongianese iron and steel industry, as in all of Calabria, underwent an irreversible process of decay: the unified Government concentrated the production of metal products in the northern factories, of which the direct and immediate consequence was the notable growth in the unemployment rate where one of the most important metallurgical centers in all of Europe once existed.

The workers, forced by hunger, emigrated en masse, causing, together with the depopulation of the territory, it's inevitable structural degradation; the «Royal Weapons Factory», however, after it was decommissioned, was occupied by those citizens who remained in Mongiana and converted to residential use.

We had to wait until the second half of the last century before we saw a proposal arriving on the Region's tables regarding the initiative of a «museum-territory» (De Stefano Manno, Matacena 1979), the result of the mutual agreement between the municipal administration of Mongiana and the Superintendence of Heritage architectural and environmental aspects of Calabria: the programme, with the aim of restoring a new historical-cultural identity to the population, envisaged the conservative restoration of the ancient iron and steel plants and the creation of an eco-museum thanks to which the traces of the extraction and processing of the mineral, in full respect of the forest and river heritage from which the plant was fed.

The Region provided a first loan at the beginning of the Seventies and a second one in the Eighties (Franco, 2019); however, faced with the distortion of the Savino Factory, Franco critically defined the interventions carried out:

«[…] *more than a restoration*, […] *a freely interpreted reconstruction of the factory*» (Franco, 2019).

In fact, an archaeological survey of the area is enough to see how the structure, in addition to having undergone planimetric modifications, has been completely distorted in its frontal aspect: the local stone masonry has been replaced by an «ashlar» (Gentile, 2007-2008) cladding as, a pediment with tympanum was superimposed on the two Doric columns of the entrance, with the aim, perhaps, of evoking Hellenic-style buildings.

Whatever the intent of its designer, we cannot understand the rationale behind choices that have suppressed the essence of the Factory, blowing away, like dust, the history written by man on its stones: to what was a true and the pride of the arms industry of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, nowadays, it seems more appropriate to refer to it with the phrase «factory of the architect Gennaro Matacena», rather than of the construction engineer Fortunato Savino.

It is therefore considered appropriate that, in a future intervention, the state of the places be restored to the original conditions, also with respect for a figure, that of Savino, who, in Mongiana, offered not only his art but, rather, a large part of one's life.

As for, however, the fate that the «Real Fabbrica» faced following the unification, as happened to the Mongiana factory, once again we are faced with the case in which «what could have been» and «what that really was» sadly diverge in terms of limits, overcoming which the House of Savoy did nothing to move.

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