

DISCOVERING FONTANA DELL'ACQUA PAOLA



Nearly all the monuments of the Renaissance and Baroque periods in Rome were built at the expense of older buildings, which the various popes and cardinals saw only as quarries for building materials. The “Fontanone del Gianicolo” (the large Janiculum fountain) is a case in point. Pope Paul V Borghese ordered the fountain’s construction using marble from the Roman Forum and Forum of Nerva. The columns came straight from the old Basilica of San Pietro, which the Pope was rebuilding. The architects, Giovanni Fontana and Flaminio Ponzio, used the Roman triumphal arch as their model, and created a fountain which was imposing enough to please a Pope intent upon self-aggrandizement. The Pope’s coat of arms (the eagle and the dragon) appears repeatedly on the fountain. Sorrentino brings out the monumental nature of this work.

His camera views the work from many angles, conveying a sense of the grand style adopted on this occasion. The fountain appears in one of the first scenes, when a Chinese tourist overcome by the heat (or perhaps by the beauty of Rome) faints in front of the fountain. Here, the view over the city is truly marvellous. The Pope had chosen a spot where monumental and functional considerations blend perfectly. Here, the aqueduct restored by the Pope reached its destination. It once brought water to the mills operating on the slopes of the Janiculum.

For visitors
Via Garibaldi