

VILLA FICANA IN MACERATA, THE RESTORING WORK OF A RAW EARTH QUARTER

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This speech deals with earthen houses built in the Marche, particularly focusing on what is happening in the town of Macerata, where Villa Ficana, one of the few urban areas completely composed of raw earth houses, is located.

The quarter is formed by about fifty small and quite low buildings, arranged in parallel clusters; they are two-storeyed, some with an internal staircase, others with an external staircase and a small lodge as a covering.

The raw earth buildings, known as *atterrati*, were built in the middle of XIX century, originally to be rented properties, employed by workers and farm workers.

The building technique is *massone* (cob), but unfired bricks are used as well.

Although these buildings represent a poor way of living, they often show a particular attention to the aesthetic aspect, revealed by the analysis of the facades, always balanced and symmetrical, and revealed by the entry staircase, sometimes supplemented with ornamental elements.

After being abandoned for a long period, now the district is finally revalued, and through its main organism of conservation, the State considers the *atterrati* as much as other very important monuments.

In 2003 the Architectural Heritage and Landscape Authority issued the tutorship laws (law 490/99) usually applied to buildings and artistic works.

During last year a restoring work, ordered by the Macerata Council, was executed – I was one of the planners.

The piece of work, carried out using traditional techniques, was finished on thirty of June 2006.

During the restoring work an *atterrato* was rebuilt using adobes on purpose produced by a local kiln.

The Ficana's restoring work is very significant because it allowed to learn once again how to use raw earth for building, to realize a new raw earth building (in a seismic area) and to produce again a very ancient material – adobe – using actual technology.

Key words: Historical buildings, cob, adobe

See the abstract sent by arch Gaia Bollini too.