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Cultural Heritage

The De La Noix Fountain



Why not, after a stroll, pause for a while in the shade under the canopy of the tall plane trees and enjoy the coolness of the De La Noix Fountain? Did you know that this monument is steeped in history?

In 1387 Provence became part of the Kingdom of France, having previously been ruled by the Counts of Provence. In 1402 Louis II, Duke of Anjou, King of Naples (1377-1417), one of the last ruling Counts, granted the town of Lorgues a charter. This included privileges, franchises

and probable tax cuts for the citizens.

It was under Louis XV in 1771 that the people of Lorgues built the Fountain for the prestige and beauty of the town and to show their gratitude to Louis II, Count of Provence. It was called the Fountain of the

"Ormeaux" (young elms) after the original trees which stood in the square. Having become diseased they were later replaced by the plane trees you see today.

The fine basin of the fountain, in the style of Louis XV is topped by a column carved out of

Carrare marble from Tuscany, with a ball known by the people of Lorgues as the "walnut". The dolphins and the blazon of Lorgues, featuring a dog with a standing lion, affixed with the motto, 'Fortitude and Loyalty' were carved by the sculptor Joseph CHIEUSSE.

Many monuments in Lorgues were designed by the architect Jean Antoine TORCAT from Marseilles, for example the Law Courts in Neuve Square (1763)

In 1818 after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, the De La Noix Fountain was restored. Three marble slabs were added each with a theme in Latin, complete with slight mistakes and deletions.



The east facing slab

The east facing slab reads: "Louis II, Duke of Anjou, King of Naples, Count of Provence in Gaul, for their oft tested loyalty, granted the citizens of Léonicas (Lorgues) in the year 1402, various privileges to be confirmed, renewed and increased over time". These slabs were designed to

make light of the Napoleonic era in order to strengthen the bond of loyalty that had always existed between the inhabitants of Lorgues and the monarchy.

The slab facing west

The slab facing west reads : "The motto 'Fortitude and Loyalty' granted in the past to the fathers, was passed on to their sons by Louis XVIII, as they had shown themselves worthy of their fathers' virtues since on the 27th of June in the year 1813 while monarchy was besieged by rebels commanded by their impious chief (Napoleon I), they paid honour to the Fleur de Lys by never surrendering in the face of threats and danger."

This slab refers to the 27th of June 1815 (an engraver's error?), ten days after the defeat of Waterloo when the people of Lorgues barred Napoleon's troops led by Marshall Brune from entering the town. Brune had been instructed by the Emperor to crush opposition in Provence before reaching Toulon. In this way the citizens proclaimed their loyalty to the monarchy a few days before Louis XVIII returned to the throne on July 14th.

The slab looking south

The slab looking south reads: "This fountain dating back to the Antiquity was restyled in a more elegant way in the year 1771 under Louis XV, under the consulates of J. Reynier (mayor), C. Olivier and V. Ventre. The town blazons destroyed in the dark moments of our history were returned, new inscriptions engraved in the year 1818 under Louis XVIII, under the consulates of F. Fauchier, M. Laborel, and A. Fabre." This slab is on the one hand a clear reference to what Lorgues benefits from in terms of natural resources such as the underground water which has allowed the building of numerous fountains thus facilitating the water supply of an ever growing population. On the other hand it is also a reminder of the people of Lorgues' constant loyalty to the French monarchy when faced with the Revolution ■

In this fountain we see reflected the history of the town of Lorgues from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, which is a reminder to all who pause here whilst enjoying it's coolness and beauty.

