



MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE
E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE



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Sustainable Development Foundation

CHARTER OF ROME AND NATIONAL PARKS

First report on synergies

between Natural and Cultural Capital





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PREFACE

During our six-month experience of Italian Presidency, we promoted the initiative to valorise synergies between Natural and Cultural Capital.

Thus, with the support of all States Member, Italy drew up the “Charter of Rome on Natural and Cultural Capital”. This document aims to combine the need for environmental conservation with the relaunch of a green economy. It identifies the development of our knowledge of sustainable investments and “green” jobs, based on the interconnections between Natural and Cultural Capital.

The areas of the Italian National Parks are the most fitting example: they are rich not only in biodiversity, but also in archaeological, historical, architectural and artistic heritage in general.

This heritage is clear evidence of the history of these territories, of the origins and events of the populations that have lived there for thousands of years, sometimes modelling the land to make it even more unique. It is the visible evidence of a historic relationship between Nature and man, but also of living alongside important ecosystems, which have ensured a heritage of biodiversity and landscapes among the richest of Europe.

The first Report on synergies between Natural and Cultural Capital is one stop along a path which considers first and foremost the National Parks’ common identity within the system of Protected Areas as both custodians of biodiversity and actors to give added value to those areas.

Within the territory of the National Parks lies a biological and cultural diversity of ecosystems and ecosystemic services essential to our wellbeing. However, there are also strategic, social and economic perspectives that can be evaluated and developed to offer young people in particular the chance to link their future to the extraordinary natural and cultural resources, which are the heritage of our country.

To reconstruct the history of man’s presence and the main historic passages of the populations of these lands, to enrich this narrative with a description of the cultural heritage present in our National Parks, highlighting the details of greater historic, archaeological and artistic value, serves to apply a system to a series of information that, until now, were only available in fragmentary form.

With this in mind, the Directorate-General for the Protection of Nature and the Sea, with the support of the Sustainable Development Foundation, has conducted this survey to discover the consistency of the archaeological, artistic and architectural heritage of historic interest available in our National Parks.

Maria Carmela Giarratano



INTRODUCTION

The 23 Italian National Parks¹ cover a surface of nearly 1.5 million hectares, equal to approximately 4.8 % of the national territory. An extensive, complex, heterogeneous territory, which includes islands, sea shores, hilly areas, mountain ranges and involves 530 municipalities scattered over 18 regions.

Within these Protected Areas, we can find not only natural beauties, but also an immense heritage of archaeological, historical and cultural artefacts. An understandable wealth if we consider that Parks enclose places man has frequented since ancient times, places that have been used as settlements or as routes to move from one place to another. The great Alpine and Apennine passes, fluvial plains, wide stretches of sea shore, were the stage for people of the Mediterranean to meet and exchange knowledge, languages, traditions, beliefs and religions.

The Italian Parks are, therefore, the result of human communities and environment cohabitation. In some cases, it has been a specific, anthropic activity, which has created and maintained habitats of conservative interest. Everywhere, the mosaic between Natural and human elements shapes the landscape and gives back a particular identity to each location. Being conscious of the archaeological sites, buildings and settlements located in our Parks will help our understanding of the history of these communities and the changes occurred in the territory.

The results of the census conducted by the Directorate-General for the Protection of Nature and Sea, although not yet final, outline a framework that, enforced by numerical data, will strengthen our awareness of the exceptional value of the Cultural Assets in our National Parks. In their territory and the surrounding areas, within what can be considered the tourism influenced area of each Park, we can count 405 archaeological assets and 1,244 artistic and architectural assets of historic interest. This is a numerically sizeable heritage of extraordinary variety, a journey lasting thousands of years amidst prehistoric sites, archaeological areas from the Greek and Roman eras, hermitages, churches, fortifications, noble palaces, mediaeval villages and historic paths.

They are all part and parcel of major importance of the overall panorama of the cultural heritage of our country. Some of them have a profile that transcends our national borders. In 2014, the little towns of the Cinque Terre and the Excavations of Pompei, the second most visited cultural site in Italy, were among the favourite destinations of foreign visitors.

This volume summarises the cataloguing work carried out and takes a quick look at the salient, cultural features identifying each Park. An introductory note gives the main historic events that have occurred within each area, followed by a brief illustration of a few of the most representative assets, chosen according to four criteria:

- the absolute importance in relation to our national, historic and archaeological heritage;
- the relative importance of the historic and artistic evidences present within the boundaries of each protected area;
- the state of conservation and, therefore, the ability of a vast public to understand the asset;
- accessibility and user friendliness.

¹ The twenty-fourth, the National Park of the Gulf of Orosei and the Gennargentu has been formally designated and founded, but is not yet operative



It does not, therefore, intend to be an exhaustive guide to the cultural heritage of National Parks, but simply a door to access its discovery, a first step towards recognising a value which has not been given due attention yet.

On the other hand, the results of this survey will not serve merely to complete our static knowledge of the value of our Parks. They will be used for different means of communication to exploit these territories. This is an essential step to improve information regarding the attractions of these areas, to make them easier to organise and use, to facilitate a link between strategies of nature conservation and policies of local development.

Our increased knowledge of the consistency of our cultural heritage must act as a stimulus to identify the means and actions capable of encouraging synergies between Cultural and Natural Assets. To arrange the patchwork of local qualities into a system is a way to develop virtuous experiences of green economy, emphasising the competitive elements of our Parks.

The sector that can use the most benefits by strengthening these connections is certainly tourism. The image of Italy worldwide continues to be strongly linked to its cultural offer, not only as historical, artistic and landscape richness, but also to its gastronomy specialties, crafts and traditions. This combination of elements is what attracts foreign travellers the most. This type of cultural tourism is in continual expansion and represents a considerable share, a little over 30% of the entire national sector.

Furthermore, the latest trends show an increased demand to visit minor towns and to acquire a more detailed knowledge of alternative, less well-known destinations.

In this scenario, our Parks possess all features required to play a major role to satisfy the growing demand for a holiday experience that allows Nature, tradition, culture and food and wine to be combined in a relatively short time. Obviously this is insufficient in itself. We need to be able to radically innovate our offer, by keeping abreast of the rapid evolutions of the market. Primary services must be adequately qualified before we can give a value to our cultural identity.



GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Panda Photo - G.Pollini

Its History

The Gran Paradiso National Park embraces a vast area of high mountains, ranging from valley bottoms at a height of 800 metres to the 4,061 metre-high peak of the Gran Paradiso itself. The first certain testimony of anthropisation of this area is a hill settlement of huts, dating back to the final phase of the Neolithic period, between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC. From this period onwards, probably during the transition from the Late Neolithic to the Early Chalcolithic period, new communities began to settle here, foreshadowing technological and metallurgical innovations, as confirmed by the discovery of an extensive necropolis and lithic industry in Villeneuve. Systematic occupation has been confirmed by the discovery of a vast area with megalithic monuments of worship and burial at the church of Saint-Martin-de-Corléans in the suburb

to the west of the city of Aosta. This area had been actively used throughout the 3rd millennium BC. The Bronze and Iron Ages, on the other hand, left very few traces.

During the 2nd century BC, the Romans gradually colonised the Cisalpine region. The area was controlled by the Salassi and was later incorporated into the Augustan Transpadania Gaul. Rich in agricultural and mineral resources, it also controlled the Alpine belt and the regions to the north. The Salassi are mentioned by the ancient historians, Cato and Polybius from the beginning of the 2nd century BC, when they were forced to give their mines and valley bottom to the Romans following the victory in 140 BC of Appius Claudius Pulcher. Their final surrender to Aulus Terentius Varro Murena came in 25 BC, when they were sold as slaves. How the Romans organised the territory



can be seen not only from the foundation of the Augustan colony of Augusta Praetoria Salassorum, but also from the layout of the numerous roads, such as the consular road to Gaul.

With the fall of the Roman Empire between the 4th and 5th centuries AD, the population decreased and the main settlements declined at the same time. Raids and unrest also marked the break-up of the urban fabric and the beginning of an initial process of ruralisation. The previous Roman road network became the corridor for a new ecclesiastical organisation.

The phenomenon of encastellation began in the 11th century. Defence structures to dominate the mountain tops, preside over the main communication roads in order to exact tolls and to control agricultural plots of land (the source of sustenance during invasions and civil wars) became widespread. From the mid 14th century, local wars ceased and there was a period of security, which saw the early strongholds abandoned and the

construction of structures more similar to lordly homes in accessible areas. From 1559, following the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis the Kingdom of Savoy was established and Emmanuel Philibert regained possession of these lands. He subjugated his vassals and prevented them from building or repairing any military structure.

In 1856, Victor Emmanuel II declared the Gran Paradiso Mountains a Royal Hunting Reserve to save the Alpine ibex from extinction after years of extermination first in Austria in the early 18th century, then in Switzerland at the beginning of the 19th century and again in France in the Dauphiné. The royal hunts continued into the early 20th century and enabled a close network of roads to be created through all the valleys in the Park and a corps of specialised guards to be set up. In 1920, Victor Emmanuel III donated the hunting reserve to the Italian State on condition it became a National Park to protect Alpine flora and fauna.



ITS HERITAGE



AQUEDUCT BRIDGE OF PONT D'AËL

The bridge stands in the hamlet of Pont d'Aël on the right of the road leading from Aymavilles to Cogne and spans the River Grand-Eyvia at a height of 56 metres. The inscription on the bridge shows it was built in the 3rd century BC, during the 13th consulate of Augustus, at his expense and for the private use of Caio Avillio and Caio Aimò Patavino. The single arch bridge is 56 m long, 2.40 metres wide and has a covered passageway and the aqueduct on top. The structure probably served to supply water for "industrial" purposes to extract and process the "bardiglio" marble from the quarries further down the valley at Pesse.



AYMAVILLE CASTLE

Situated in the town centre, it was first mentioned in 1278, when the structure consisted of a single square tower surrounded by the outer walls, as was common in contemporary defence architecture in Val d'Aosta. In 1357, Amadeus VI of Savoy granted Aymon of Chaillant the fiefdom of the castle. He strengthened its defences, as the stronghold was probably considered too vulnerable as a result of its position on the plain. Four round corner towers were added with machicolations and embrasures, as well as a double outer wall with a moat and drawbridge. Recent studies have confirmed the various construction stages in chronological order from the



Middle Ages, when the building had a single, square floor plan, to the eighteenth century, when it was enlarged and given the elegant residential structure it retains today. This final construction stage meant the elimination of the fortified parts and defences. Baroque loggias were built between the corner towers and the external spaces were redesigned. The Castle also holds the collection of the Academy of Saint Anselm, an institution founded in 1855, which contains examples of modern and contemporary art, collected by Vittorio Cacherano Osasco della Rocca-Challant, the last direct heir of the noble family of Val d'Aosta. A vast, terraced park stretches around the castle, in which stand two buildings constructed in different periods, the grandze and the stables. Over the last 10 years, these have been restored to working order and are now used to house the museum services and hospitality facilities.



CASTLE OF INTROD

The first complex dates back to the 12th century, when it consisted of a square donjon surrounded by an outer wall. In 1260, at the time of the rise to power of the Sarriod family who held the dominions of Introd and La Tour (Saint-Pierre), Pierre Sarriod d'Introd extended it and transformed it into a stronghold with a polygonal floor plan. It was badly damaged as a result of two devastating fires in the mid 19th century and was restored at the beginning of the twentieth century. Next to the castle stands a structure known today as "Cascina L'Ola" which, in the past, had been a stable and hay loft. Opposite, the fifteenth century granary still stands, a rare example of a mediaeval building in Val d'Aosta made solely of wood.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF SAINT MARTIN DE CORLEANS

Lying on the borders of the Park, this site is one of the most astonishing examples of megalithic burial and cultural architecture in the Val d'Aosta. Discovered in 1969, the area dates back to the 3rd millennium BC, and continued to be inhabited until the beginning of the Bronze Age (2000 BC). For reasons as yet unclear, it was then completely abandoned and for over a millennium it gave way to the cultivation of cereal crops. Investigations have identified four successive phases: the oldest saw the construction of a ritual site, featuring a series of totem poles and votive offerings at the base of cattle skulls. The second phase saw ritual ploughing and the orthogonal alignment of anthropomorphic stone stele, menhirs and platforms (the latter linked to ritual wells containing mill stones and cereals). The third phase, dating back to 2400 BC, stands out for its more funereal purpose, as different types of dolmen monumental tombs have been found. This final phase records a violent upheaval in the area, with documented overthrowing of the anthropomorphic stele and their reuse as chamber tombs for new burials.





VAL GRANDE NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Panda Photo R.Mattio

Its History

The Val Grande National Park stretches over the territory of 13 municipalities and protects one of the greatest natural areas in the entire Alpine arc, distinguished by an extremely low level of urbanisation and lack of major infrastructures.

Rock incisions and the identification of archaeological sites have given rise to the hypothesis that the mountain was first settled during the transition stage between the Neolithic/Chalcolithic (6000-2500 BC) and the Bronze Age (2500-1200 BC). In this period, there appears to have been a stable settlement, concentrated mainly on the natural terraces next to the stretches of water (such as Mergozzo, Feriolo and Suna) or on the rocky outcrops near the lakes (material from an ancient village perhaps dating back to the Neolithic period was found in Bieno at the end of

the nineteenth century during work on a methane pipeline, and again in 1992, during maintenance work on the same pipe). During the same period, there were temporary, high altitude settlements, given the impervious nature of the place, founded simply to search for natural resources (minerals and metals), for drovers during the summer or for trading across the mountain passes.

Moving on to the Iron Age, the territories around Lake Maggiore - almost always areas lying along the bottom of a valley or near lakes - were settled by new ethnic groups, bringing the Golasecca Culture, which developed around today's towns of Sesto Calende, Castelletto Ticino and the town with the same name of Golasecca.

Beginning in the 4th century BC, the area of Verbano and Ossola was involved in major changes with the



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arrival of the Transalpine Gauls, who settled here and mixed with the autochthonous populations. New settlements grew up, the life styles and burial customs changed. Now the rite of burial within a tomb marked by stone slabs prevailed, as can be seen in the necropoli of Piedmont in Ornavasso and Gravelona and in the mountain areas of Toceno. The Roman conquest of the Lepontine Alps began a stable process of anthropisation of the mountains. The northern portion of the Park was full of flourishing towns, identified as Roman vici, such as Druogno, Santa Maria Maggiore, Toceno, Vocogno, Craveggia, Malesco, Folsogno di Re and the narrow valley of Cannobina, the latter for its link with the nearby Vigezzo Valley. The Roman conquest also brought new elements: the appearance of new ceramic shapes and new materials, the neglect of the Lepontine language and place names which favoured Latin and Roman names, as shown by a funereal epigraph with mixed Roman and Lepontine names on the wall of the parish church in Bieno. Incipient Romanisation also enabled the development of road infrastructures, as confirmed by an inscription in the rock in Vogogna referring to works to construct the Roman road of Ossola in the year 196 AD, a major road axis in the direction of the Alpine passes coming from Mediolanum and Novaria. The numerous finds discovered in the areas around Val Grande have enabled us to reconstruct across a very wide chronological order the existence of an economic structure based on the exploitation of timber (prehistoric axes and Roman adzes), the extraction of stone (iron picks and earthenware artefacts), agriculture, husbandry, hunting and fishing (weights for fishing nets). Further information on the products from the Alpine area are provided by the ancient authors, Strabo and Pliny the Elder, who mention cheeses, wool and animal skins, resin, pitch, honey and wax. During the Late Middle Ages, thanks to the minor importance of the Sempione pass - even though it was the pathway for Lombard, Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta merchants - the territory of Val Grande

appears to have escaped the barbaric invasions. A document from the early 11th century describes these lands as uncultivated and wild and describes the valley as a "Valdo", or forest. Shepherds found shelter here in the characteristic "balme", prehistoric depressions carved under the rock. Between the 10th and 12th centuries, as a result of the mild climate the valley landscape began to show a slow development following which the woods and wild lands became pastures, thanks to progressive deforestation (such as the Nembro Valley). Summer mountain pastures and spring and autumn meadows began to appear, often contested among the various communities. Alongside the poor art of humble dwellings and paved mule tracks, this period saw flourishing Romanesque art, such as the churches of San Bartolomeo in Villadossola, Sant'Abbondio in Maserà and Santa Maria in Trontano. They were all the work of artisan 'picasàss', the stone masons from Ossola with their nailed boots, famous throughout Italy. They are said to have excavated the quarries of Candoglia at the entrance to the Park, which provided part of the marble used to cover the Cathedral of Milan. In the 13th century, the bishops of Milan and Novara contested the upper Verbano and Ossola valleys. They rose to the rank of free Communes and, in 1387, became the property of the Visconti family. In the late sixteenth century, the Borromeo family transformed the entire area into a fiefdom and thus it remained until 1749 when, under the Treaty of Worms, Ossola and the Val Grande became part of the dominions of the House of Savoy. During the Second World War, Val Grande played a key role in the clashes between the Wehrmacht and the partisans, who had taken refuge here amidst its wilderness (in June 1944 the German army brutally searched the area and carried out mass executions in Pogallo, Fondotoce and Bèura). After the war, the valley was gradually abandoned and the territory returned to nature: the wood regained its spaces and swallowed up mule tracks and other signs of the presence of man.



ITS HERITAGE



THE MEDIAEVAL VILLAGE OF VOGOGNA

The first inscription to document the existence of this splendid village appears on a parchment of 970 AD. Older evidence, such as the famous Celtic stone mask of Dresio and the tombstone that refers to the construction of a Roman road in 195 AD are proof the area was already inhabited during the Roman era. However, it was only in the 14th century, thanks to the Visconti family, that the village became of some importance. In this period, following the destruction of the nearby village of Pietrasanta due to flooding, a large group of inhabitants moved to Vogogna, which at the time had become the seat of the vicariate of the Municipality of Novara, with territorial jurisdiction over all of lower Ossola. We know that in 1348, Giovanni Visconti, bishop and lord of Novara, decided to build the Palazzetto del Pretorio, the village walls and probably the main body of the castle, this latter inspired by the simple architecture of the irregular-shaped Alpine castles. The mediaeval village has kept some interesting houses, decorated with arches, porticos, frescos and coats of arms. The oldest is Casa Marchesa dating back to the mid 14th century. Remains of the village can be traced on the slopes of Mount Orsetto, whereas on the summit lie the conspicuous ruins of the Fortress, abandoned in 1514 after a military attack by the town of Domodossola.

The praetorian palace was built along the architectural model of the Lombard “broletto” and features a series of acute arches resting on squat columns. The ground floor was used for public assemblies and the market, whereas the upper floor held rooms intended for administrative or legal functions. The top of the façade is dominated by the heraldic coat of arms of the Visconti family.

The stronghold stands on a construction probably of late mediaeval origin, within a fortified structure, an outpost linked with other towers to control the mountain chains of Ossola. Thanks to Giovanni Visconti, it became a true stronghold and was given its current appearance.



THE CADORNA LINE

Along one of the roads leading to the Park - in Cuzzago on Mount Proman (Premosello Chiovenda) and along the slope leading from the Folugno Pass towards Mount Zeda, we find the remains of a discontinuous defence line, winding its way for over 200 km from lower Val d’Ossola up to the Orobic Alps in Lombardy. The defence line was constructed partly before 1915, during the period of the Triple Alliance against the French. Between 1916 and 1918, the fear of a new attack, this time by the Austrians and Hungarians, convinced Field Marshal Luigi Cadorna to prepare an imposing defence structure, consisting of trenches, military stations, 296 km of roads for heavy vehicles, approximately 398 km of mule tracks, communication trenches, tunnels, munitions depots, sentinel posts and bunkers for machine-guns.



CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA (TRONTANO)

Santa Maria (or Nativity of Maria) in Trontano preserves its original façade, considered one of the most beautiful examples of Romanesque art in Ossola. Trontano depended on the parish church of Domodossola, but the frequent flooding of the Rivers Toce and Melezze often prevented access. Thus, a church was built in Trontano to welcome its inhabitants. The building was extended and modified until it reached its present shape. The old layout was a rectangular room, facing west to east, with a semi-circular apse at its head, lost during rebuilding and the extension of 1554. The measurements of the original church correspond to the current central nave, which was covered by a gable roof, constructed using thick beams and covered with “piode” (the local name for earthenware tiles). The apse was inspired by the church of San Bartolomeo in Villadossola and is divided into five pilaster strips, crowned with blind arches. It also had three narrow windows. The bell tower was built a few years after the church, on top of the rocky spur nearby. On the base there is an inscription which gives the date of construction - the end of the 12th century - and some decorative details, perhaps prepared for the church, but not used. The strong tower was crowned with a double row of blind arches, which are still visible. About two thirds of this bell tower were destroyed and then rebuilt.



GALLIC-ROMAN NECROPOLIS IN ORNAVASSO

Excavations carried out between 1890 and 1891 brought to light the necropoli of San Bernardo and of In Persona, which stretch over a total area of 3,700 m². The necropolis of San Bernardo is the larger of the two and has yielded the majority of the burial tombs, with rich funerary accoutrements consisting of jewellery, arms, pottery, tools and coins. The prize quality of these objects from the Mediterranean testifies to the presence of a rich aristocracy in contact with Rome. The arms, on the other hand, are of Celtic tradition, and highlight the independence of this community from the Roman hegemony. The necropolis of In Persona, used between the end of the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD, is less complex and more unpretentious. Arms are rare, a sign of their complete subjugation to Rome, as are the coins and precious accoutrements, the result of a radical, social and economic change and a loss of power and riches by the preceding aristocracy.





STELVIO NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Panda Photo - T.Vailo

Its History

The Stelvio National Park embraces a mountainous territory spangled with majestic peaks and moraine valleys, adorned with extraordinarily ornate ecosystems. The magnificent natural wonders are a backdrop to a landscape of pastures, terraces, farmsteads and fortifications, testimony to an ancient, respectful, human presence.

Certain traces of the first settlements are recognisable in the Solda and Trafoi valleys, major routes of communication from east to west. They began in the Bronze Age, a period in which there is proof of stable settlements on the Caschlin and Weiberbiidle hills, which created two major necropoli north of the park (Corces and Covelano). With the end of the Bronze Age and in the subsequent Iron Age, the area saw the culture

of Luca-Meluno flourish. Evidence can be seen in some groups of dwellings (Caschlinboden, Weiberbödele, Patleiboden) and in some open-air cultural sites connected to sources of water (Valnair, Tramantan and Solda, Tre Fontane, Bagni Vecchi di Bormio).

Throughout the Iron Age, contacts with the surrounding cultures appear to have been limited. The same influence of the Etruscan-Italic culture only appears in a few artefacts (stele of Bormio, depicting a warrior) and in the introduction of the use of the alphabet. Similarly, the great Celtic migrations of the 4th century BC did not permeate the cultural substrate of the so-called Rhaetian populations, which flourished in these areas in the second phase of the Iron Age. At the end of the



Rhaetian war in 15 BC, which saw Claudius Drusus occupy Alto Adige and join his brother Tiberius, Augustus conducted a census on the region of Trentino and part of Alto Adige under the Italic Regio X (Venetia et Histria).

After the fall of the Roman Empire, this region saw the dominion of the Ostrogoths and the Franks, who used it as an outpost against the Longobard advance. This was followed by the invasions by the Huns of Attila, who destroyed many towns in the valleys of the Adige. In the 8th and 9th centuries, Charlemagne placed it amongst the territories of his Sacred Roman Empire, as “court”. The emperor founded the convent of the Benedictines of Müstair (Monastery).

In the Middle Ages, the Lombard area of the Stelvio Park was part of the “Magnificent Land”. The name, reported in mediaeval documents, comes from the considerable richness of the area, both in naturalistic and economic terms, and refers to the countryside around Bormio. At the time, the countryside enjoyed enormous privileges connected to the taxing of goods in transit which crossed this area using the Alpine passes to reach northern Europe. In this period, the County of Bormio was a sort of small, independent, democratic state, governed by its own statutes, with its own army and with a power of “mere and mixed empire”. In the Late Middle Ages, the entire zone was controlled by the bishopric of Coira. In the 14th century, after the plague had decimated

the local population, the Bavarians advanced via the Val Venosta and arrived in Silandro, where they began a slow process of Germanisation.

The main ecclesiastical principalities ceased to exist under Napoleon, who suppressed the monasteries and took away all the properties in Venosta from the bishop of Coira. In 1809, the Tyroleans rebelled against the French-Bavarian domination and fell under Austrian control. During the First World War, the area was the stage for continual struggles, ending with the definitive separation of this territory from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. On 10 September 1919, the Treaty of Saint-Germain decreed the annexation of the Italian-speaking Southern Tyrol and the German-speaking Southern Tyrol (today’s Alto Adige) to the Kingdom of Italy, whereas the Brenner Pass became the new state border.

The twentieth century saw a decline in the population, as in other mountain communities, and seasonal emigration became permanent, especially in the second half of the 20th century. The cultivated spaces, including the woods and Alpine pastures, were gradually abandoned, as they no longer served family economy or trade. Nowadays, the rural landscape still features hay lofts, sawmills, mills, mountain pastures and masi (the term comes from the mediaeval Latin mansum, from the verb manere, to remain), typical examples of farmsteads, made of stone and timber as homes and to protect animals and store forage.



ITS HERITAGE



GLORENZA

A mediaeval town featuring imposing town walls, with cusp guard and three wide access gates, porticos, narrow alleyways and splendid noble houses. At the crossroads during the Roman epoch with the Via Claudia Augusta and the ancient trading route towards Switzerland, the village was mentioned for the first time in 1163 by the name of “Glurnis” (“ontaneto” or “noccioleto”) [hazel grove].

The present name was used for the first time in a letter of concession from Duke Ottone dated 30 April 1304. At the beginning of the 14th century, the town played an important strategic role as it held the monopoly to trade salt from the Tyrol. On 12 May 1499, it was destroyed by the Swiss troops during the Swabian War, after which it was rebuilt by Ferdinand I of Hapsburg.



CASTLE OF CASTELBELLO (CASTELBELLO-CIARDES)

This fortification rises majestically on a rocky spur along the left bank of the River Adige. Although there was most probably some sort of construction before the 12th century, the castle was built at the request of the noble Von Montalban family and dates back to 1238, when the work was mentioned in an official document. In 1303, it became a judicial seat. Subsequently, it changed hands numerous times until, in 1531, it became part of the estate of the Hendly family.

In 1956, it was purchased by the State, which began an imposing work of restoration ending in 2001. The interior preserves the chapel, richly frescoed in the early 14th and mid 16th century, the “alte Kuchl” (the old kitchen), the inner rooms and the courtyard.



COIRA CASTLE (SLUDERNO)

This splendid fortification overlooks Sluderno at the entrance to the Matsch valley between the town of Merano and the Resia Pass. The building dates back to 1260, when the bishop prince of Coira, Heinrich von Montfort, decided to build it to contain the advance of the lords of Mazia (today's Matsch).

In 1504, the Trapp family, the current owners of the castle, came into possession and began major restoration work involving the palace, the loggia and the chapel, to transform the castle into the most beautiful Renaissance residence in Alto Adige. Today, tours are given inside the building to visit the rooms, which house furnishings of different periods. In the ancestors' hall, we can follow the family portraits from 1600 to 1800. The most impressive room is the 1570 loggia, with the genealogical tree of the Trapp family stretching across the vaults.

Also worthy of attention is the chapel, which houses a Romanesque Madonna of 1270, and above all, the arms room with the largest private collection of arms and armour of 1350.





DOLOMITI BELLUNESI NATIONAL PARK



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Its History

The National Park of the Belluno Dolomites extends entirely north of Val Belluna and includes Mount Pavione, the Vette Feltrine peaks, Piazza del Diavolo, the Plains of Eterni-Errera-Val Falcina, the Scura valley, the Monti del Sole mountains and the western Schiara.

Siliceous tools found on the summit of Mount Avena confirm the first human presence in this area from the beginning of the mid Palaeolithic era, a time when the more advanced, more organised Neanderthal men appeared, skilled stone and bone engravers, dedicated to hunting large mammals. Traces of work to extract and process stone are also documented in the upper Palaeolithic era. In the same period, small groups of nomads, hunters-foragers, occupied open-air sites and sheltered

under the rock, as evidence of artefacts from living quarters show in Val Cismon and the Hunter's tomb, dating back to about 12,000 years ago. Other archeological finds, such as the Mesolithic site of Mondevà di Sora, where a tomb was found with rich burial accoutrements, have led archaeologists to abandon the idea of an "anthropological vacuum" in prehistory in the central area of the Belluno Dolomites and to put forward the opposite theory of the presence of a community of hunters, who were by this time semi-sedentary.

The Neolithic era (5500-3300 BC) is the moment when evidence of permanent settlements becomes more numerous, as we pass from a society dedicated to foraging and hunting to one with an economy based on agriculture and



husbandry. Now, man was building villages, as testified by the numerous finds. With the end of the Bronze Age came a rapid transformation of the local communities and the crossover of different cultures and peoples. The Iron Age saw Belluno, Cadore and Alpagò, on the one hand, involved in Celtic influxes. On the other, it records a considerable presence of Paleo-venetians in Mel and Cavarzane, a people with origins in Asia Minor (today's Turkey). Of no less importance was the presence of Rhaetian influence, as proven by the numerous traces to be seen in the town of Feltre.

Romanisation of this area is noticeable from the end of the 3rd century BC, when the military occupation by the Roman army was followed by not only political and administrative, but also town planning interventions. The territory of eastern Veneto, which Livy called *Venetorum angulus*, saw a slow, pacific Roman penetration, shown by the founding of the Latin colony in Aquileia in 181 BC. Numerous arterial roads were built (such as the *Via Annia*, the *Via Postumia* and the more recent *Via Claudia Augusta Altinate*). As a result, numerous municipia were built, such as *Bellunum* (Belluno), *Feltria* (Feltre), *Iulium Carnicum* (today's Zuglio) and *Opitergium* (Oderzo), from the mid 1st century BC onwards. At this stage, the entire area covered a relevant strategic role to control the Alpine passes. The two most important municipia, Belluno and Feltre, were built on military sites, and in the 1st century BC, the military road, *Claudia Augusta Altinate*, was opened with the strategic purpose of rapidly connecting Altino with the territories of *Rezia* along the Danube.

In the Middle Ages, Belluno and Feltre became Episcopal seats. After being dominated by the Byzantines, Longobards and Franks, it became a territory of hierarchies, in which these two towns

played a leading economic and political role over the minor fiefdoms. This situation eased following the famous battle on the plain of Cesana between the people of Belluno and those from Treviso. The result ended territorial unity and the dominion of Feltre and Belluno. The two towns united in a single diocese in 1199, but in later centuries they were subjected to the domination of numerous seigniories: in 1200, by the *da Romano* and the *da Camino* families, in 1300, by the *Scaligeri*, *Carraresi*, the great German houses (*Luxemburg* and *Brandenburg*) and the *Visconti* families.

From 1420, Venice conferred unity and order to the region. The dominion of the *Serenissima* lasted until 1797 and coincided with a long period of peace, except for the dramatic event of 1510, which saw the destruction of Feltre following the invasion of the imperial troops during the war between Venice and the *Cambrai* league. Venetian domination encouraged the territory to grow: Venice could now fulfil its own requirements and exploit the mountain territory, rich in woods and mines. It increased trade with the two towns specialising in the manufacture of swords in Belluno in particular, and of woollen cloth in Feltre.

From the 17th century onwards came the slow, inexorable, economic decline of Venice. After its definitive fall in 1797, the territory fell under French and Austrian military rule. In 1805, Veneto was incorporated into the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy and the towns of Feltre and Belluno formed the Department of the *Piave*. After the Congress of Vienna and the defeat of Napoleon, Feltre and Belluno were established as part of the *Lombard-Venetian* Kingdom.

In 1866, at the end of the 3rd War of Independence, a plebiscite of the citizens was to decide annexation of the province to the Kingdom of Italy.



ITS HERITAGE



THE CERTOSA OF VEDANA (SOSPIROLO)

In the Commune of Sospirolo, over the site which, from 1155, had seen the Hospice of San Marco (as proven by the seal of Pope Hadrian IV) an extensive monastic complex was built in the 15th century. This finally replaced the preceding place of rest along the road, although it continued to offer help to pilgrims. In 1456, the structure became the site of the Carthusian monastery. In 1521, it was extended with the addition of a large cloister, but was burnt down at the end of the 17th century. After losing all religious functions due to the order of suppression by the Venetian Republic in 1769, in 1882, it once again became a place of spiritual retreat.

At present, the Certosa is closed to visits, as it is home to the closed order of nuns. The current structure has a well-defined, organic layout, arising from the union of three cloisters: the large and the small cloisters and the courtyard of obedience. On the sunniest north and east sides are the monks' cells, initially 6, but then increased to 8 in the mid 16th century, when the layout could be considered final.



MINES OF VALLE IMPERINA (RIVAMONTE AGORDINO)

The mining site of Valle Imperina is an interesting example of pre-industrial and industrial archaeology. The site extracted and processed silver and copper and would appear to have been active from 1417, as the first documents testify. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that the Romans also extracted in this area. The entrepreneurs of Agrodino, Belluno and Venice were the first to rush to the easily accessible deposit. In 1615, the site was purchased by the Lombard, Francesco Crotta, who established an organic, well-structured company, which remained in the hands of his heirs until 1787, when it merged with the nearby state company of the Venetian Republic. In 1886, management passed to the Kingdom of Italy and then, in the early 20th century, to Montedison that managed its activities until 1962, the year it finally closed down.

The site consists of the remains of 16 buildings (the main warehouses, the melting furnaces, the electrical station, the stables, the coal bunker, the powder magazine, the manager's villa, the "hospital", the smithies' forge, the system to wash, crush and process the mineral, living quarters and offices). Three entrances to the underground area, two exits from water drainage tunnels and the route taken by the miners of the area that connected the mines to Forcella Franche have all been preserved.



PIAZZA DEL DUOMO (FELTRE)

The archaeological investigations conducted from the 1970s brought to light structures belonging to a residential and commercial district of the ancient Feltria, found beneath the sacristy of the Cathedral of Saint Peter. We can recognise the remains of dwellings, workshops and other buildings, overlooking two roads, of which some pieces of large Roman paving stones are still visible. One of these structures has two large rooms, paved with large marble slabs and mosaics. It is thought to be the schola (seat) of the main professional associations of the period, such as carpenters, blacksmiths and rag dealers. The area shows signs of continual use even after the collapse of the town, as proven by the remains of some religious buildings dating back to the 8th-10th centuries AD, perhaps belonging to the Episcopal see in its oldest phase, and the circular baptistery, dated 11th-12th century AD.





CINQUE TERRE NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Panda Photo - G.Marcoaldi

Its History

The National Park of the Cinque Terre, the smallest and most densely populated of the National Protected Areas, protects an area in which the signs of man's presence are not obviously evident, but which represent the very identity of an unmistakable unique landscape, "a cultural landscape", nominated by UNESCO as one of the World Heritage Sites.

The first traces of anthropic activity in the area are the Palaeolithic finds of flint artefacts and human bones in the Grotta dei Colombi on the island of Palmaria, which at that time was probably still joined to the mainland.

The thick covering of woods, the abundant wild life and the presence of rocky shelters made this territory particularly suitable for hunting, as shown

by the discovery of smoothed axes and other tools to kill animals, which can be ascribed to the Neolithic period. The use and date are uncertain, however, of the menhirs found in the area around Campiglia Tramonti, near today's Capella di Sant'Antonio.

During the Bronze Age, as in other areas in Liguria, a territorial organisation was imposed known as pagense, as the primitive nuclei met in districts called pagi, which were ruled by specific castellari, prevalently defence structures. The small towns in the Cinque Terre were protected by a fortification on Mount Castellaro dominating the pass into the Valley of Pignone.

Roman colonisation took place slowly due to the strenuous resistance of the local populations, as



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reported in many military chronicles. There was a more significant presence during the reign of Augustus, as some nuclei living in the hills of Liguria joined the Romans from nearby Val di Magra and founded some settlements along the coastline. Even the Latin origin of many of the place names - such as Corniglia, fondo di Cornelio; Riomaggiore, rivus maior; Monterosso, mons ruber - leads us to imagine a progressively more assiduous Roman presence and an increasing use of the roads of communication.

It was in the Middle Ages, however, that occupation of the area of the Cinque Terre became more stable and the town layouts used at the time are still visible. In the 11th century, nuclei from the Val di Vara settled definitively along the coast, now no longer subject to Saracen invasions, where the mild climate enabled them to cultivate products such as olive trees and vines. 5 main towns were founded - Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Riomaggiore and Manarola - in addition to some secondary villages, all initially inhabited by farmers. Only at a later stage did the inhabitants of these areas look seawards - first as a communication route and then as a possible source of sustenance - and dedicate themselves to fishing and working the fields according to the seasons. Documentary sources testify that a few years later, in 1170, a galley from Vernazza took part alongside Genoa in the war against the Pisani.

From the 11th century onwards, man's monumental work began to transform the territory. He gradually eliminated the natural vegetation and where previously there had been steep slopes, he created flat areas to cultivate crops. This led to the creation of a system of terraces and dry stone walls, the feature that identifies the landscape of the Cinque Terre and has made it famous throughout the world. Everything was done using material that could be found on-site. Sandstone extracted from the ground and broken into suitably sized pieces was used for the dry stone walls. The soil was sieved and piled on to the terraces on top of a layer of vegetation, dug in to make the soil more fertile. Thus, they obtained flat strips, locally known as *ciàn*, supported by dry stone walls, where they began to cultivate citrus fruits, olives and, above

all, grapevines.

As we have said, the growing anthropisation led to villages being founded to replace the older settlements half way up the mountain.

Monterosso is the town furthest west of the Cinque Terre, situated in a hollow overlooking Mesco Point to the east, surrounded by a series of hills sloping down towards the sea. Founded in the 11th century by people who had descended from the slopes of Soviore, where the inhabitants of Albareto had taken refuge in the 7th century during the invasion of the Rotari, Monterosso was a fiefdom of the Obertenghi and of the Da Passono lords. In 1276, it was handed over to Genoa, and fortified. The town consists of two nuclei overlooking the shore: Fegina and Monterosso. The latter, the older settlement, has partly maintained its linear village structure along the Buranco Torrent, now covered. Vernazza was founded around the year one thousand by the inhabitants of a nucleus located at the current site of the hamlet of Reggio. It rapidly acquired strong maritime traditions and, in 1276, was ceded by the Fieschi to the Republic of Genoa, which gave it strong fortifications and a port. Built along the Vernazzola Torrent, its urban layout has remained untouched and is divided into alleyways connected by steep steps and short transversal paths. The presence of precious architectural elements, such as loggias, porticos and doors are witness of the high tenor of life compared to the surrounding areas which this town enjoyed for a long period of time.

Corniglia, a hamlet of Vernazza, perhaps founded by the Romans, was part of the domains of the Counts of Lavagna and then of the lords of Carpena during the Middle Ages. In 1254, Pope Innocence IV gave it to Nicolò Fieschi, in whose possession it remained until 1276, when the village passed under the dominion of Genoa. Traces of mediaeval buildings are still visible in parts of the town. The tower, on the other hand, was built in the 16th century as a defence against Saracen raids.

The origins of Riomaggiore date back to before the Middle Ages, as it was founded in the 8th century by a group of Greek refugees, who had escaped persecution by Leo III. The first certain historic news regards its concession by the Fieschi to



the Republic of Genoa (1276). The town layout is organised according to paths laid at right angles to the main axis. The houses are built following the curves in the level of the land. The oldest are built according to the “Tower House” model.

Manarola, a hamlet of Riomaggiore, was founded at the end of the 12th century by the inhabitants of an ancient nucleus, halfway up the mountain side near Volastri. It stretched along the final length of the Torrent Groppo, now covered, around which a series of ancient Tower Houses were built, nowadays multi-coloured houses. In 1276, Manarola also passed from the hands of the Fieschi to the Republic of Genoa and was given a defence fortification, around which the main nucleus of the town has developed over the years.

Over the following centuries, the inhabitants of the Cinque Terre continued to dedicate themselves to agricultural activities. The terraced area gradually reached a considerable size and covered the slopes up to a height of 500 m. This result was obtained by enormous sacrifice on the part of the farmers, in

an environment which made it continually difficult to create and maintain the cultivated areas. From the second half of the 16th century the economy began to stagnate and then to decline slowly. In recent times, the impossibility to mechanise some agricultural production processes and to introduce other technological innovations that would facilitate work in the fields has helped increase this phenomenon - common to other areas of Italy - of a decline in agriculture. The inhabitants of the Cinque Terre began to leave their homeland and emigrate and the subsequent abandonment of the land triggered preoccupying phenomena of landscape degradation.

This trend was broken by the increasing interest in tourism the area aroused and, as a result, new activities were created, beginning in the second half of the 20th century. This was followed by the creation of the Park with the aim of protecting nature and the landscape and of creating socio-economic conditions, which would enable man to constantly guard the territory.



ITS HERITAGE



THE PRE-ROMANESQUE CHURCH OF THE SANCTUARY OF THE MADONNA OF SOVIORE (MONTEROSSO)

This magnificent religious complex stands in a beautiful, isolated position on the slope of Mount Soviore, dominating the coastal arc below, in an area where ancient paths, probably of Roman origin cross each other. According to legend and oral tradition, the place could be the ancient Ligurian-Roman town of “Alabreto” on the slope of Pignone, destroyed by the Rotari in 643, during the Longobard conquest of the Maritima Italarum. The first documents concerning this place of worship date back to the 13th century, and they mention numerous bequests left to the church by the faithful. Nevertheless, word of mouth and the age of the place of worship, together with the archeological discoveries in the surrounding territory all lead us to believe a previous religious structure existed here.

The façade with its ogee arch portal and bell tower is all that remains from the 12th century. The interior was profoundly modified during the 18th century. Next to the sanctuary under the porticos are the pilgrims’ rooms, today’s guest rooms. An analysis of the brickwork and scrapings taken recently has established the mediaeval origin of part of the complex used as the reception. This supports the sources that give evidence of pilgrimages to Soviore from throughout Liguria already very early on.



THE CHURCH OF SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA (RIOMAGGIORE)

Situated at the top of the town, it was built in 1340 under licence from the bishop of Luni. The façade was restored in 1870 in a neo-Gothic style, keeping the original rose window. The interior is divided into three naves, separated by ogee arches, and houses a canvas by D. Fasella depicting the Preaching of John the Baptist, a wooden cross by A.M. Maragliano and a magnificent Agati mechanical organ. If we walk around the side of the church, we descend to the 16th century "Oratorio dei Disciplinati", which houses the fifteenth century triptych, depicting the "Madonna with Child between the Saints John and Domenico"



CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE VIRGIN MARY (MANAROLA)

The church was built in 1338, as the plaque on the right-hand side of the façade confirms, in a dominant position overlooking the village of Manarola. The Ligurian Gothic-style structure was probably the work of the Antelami Maestri. It has a simple façade with a rose window and columns and tracery of a different design, under which opens the ogival portal with fourteenth century decorations. The basilican layout is divided into three naves. The interior was heavily rebuilt during the Baroque period and houses: a painted crucifix dating back to the second half of the 15th century, a Renaissance marble tabernacle, and behind the main altar is a 15th century polyptych with Madonna and Saints.





APPENNINO TOSCO-EMILIANO NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The mountains of the National Park of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines are of great naturalistic value and have a fascinating landscape, which man has helped model with his daily activities since prehistoric times. The view of the rounded peaks, large forests and high meadows is enriched by the signs left by the populations over the centuries: from the anthropomorphic stele to the ancient paths of shepherds and charcoal burners, from the traces of the Roman era to the Byzantine fortifications, from the churches and palaces which adorn the mediaeval villages to memories of the Risorgimento and the 2nd World War, when the Gothic Line passed across these slopes. This wonderful equilibrium between man and nature over time has given the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines the right to become part of the network of UNESCO's

“Man and the Biosphere” programme (MaB). The presence of man in prehistoric times is fragmentary in this area. However it becomes more stable from the late Bronze Age onwards, during which period stretches of wood were burnt or chopped down, to make space for pastoral activities. Numerous finds are testimony to the intense population of the area. These include the famous, enigmatic Stelae Statues of Lunigiana, anthropomorphic sandstone stelae with sculptured male and female figures. Production spanned an extensive period from the 3rd millennium BC to the 6th century BC.

During the Bronze Age, as Strabo tells us, there is evidence of the presence of a people of shepherds and farmers known as the Liguri. They settled throughout the territory in castle-like constructions



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or in high pasture refuges to control strategic places. They were divided into Apuans (between the Rivers Serchio and Magra, the Apennines and the sea) and the Friniati (the Emilian portion of the Apennines).

Due to the resistance of the Ligurian people to giving up their autonomy, the Roman conquest of the Apennines was heavy and radical in the first decades of the 2nd century BC. After the 1st and 2nd Punic Wars, the Ligurians were subjected to Rome's aims to expand. Once it had defeated the Celtic tribes and established the province of Cisalpine Gaul, it proceeded to completely subjugate these lands with two military campaigns in 187 BC and 180 BC, and the Apuan Ligurians were deported to the Sannio region. During the principality of Augustus, the area was given a new administrative order and was integrated into Regio VII Etruria and Regio VIII Emilia.

With the fall of the Roman Empire, the entire area was contested by the Byzantines initially, followed by the Longobards later. The former fought the Ostrogoths and in order to protect the town of Luni, they prepared a defence line of fortifications on the mountain tops, such as the Castrum Campas (in the Val di Taro), the Castrum Carfaniensis (perhaps Castelvecchio in Piazza al Serchio in Garfagnana), the Castrum Versiliae (perhaps Aginolfi Castle) and the Castrum Soreion (at Sorano in Filattiera). Following the defeat of the Byzantines in the mid 7th century AD, the Longobards settled in these territories and organised them under a monarchical-aristocratic rule. They remained there for just over a century and they gave way to the Franco rule.

At the decline of the Carolingian Empire, power was split between the numerous lords and noble families. This period stands out for the actions of Matilde di Canossa who enlarged her fiefdom from Lombardy to the borders of the Papal States and completely absorbed the current territories within the National Park of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines.

There are numerous signs of her presence: parishes, churches, towers and fortifications, such as Villa Minozzo (RE).

The Malaspina family also settled in these lands: large portions of the Lunigiana and Garfagnana regions were part of their fiefdoms, extending from Liguria to Lombardy. Today, the memory of their dominion is enclosed above all in the fortifications used to defend the territory: the Castle of San Giorgio in Filattiera (MS), the Castle of Verrucola in Fivizzano (MS), the Castles of Terrarossa and Bastia – both in the municipality of Licciana Nardi (MS) – built to control passage along the Via Francigena and access to the Lagastrello pass, respectively.

The Estensi lorded over the Emilian side for centuries and added the Duchy of Massa Carrara to their domains in the 18th century. The Estensi built new homes and embellished other existing houses, but above all they were rich patrons of the artists and literary men attending their court. Amongst them was Ludovico Ariosto, who for a time held the post of Governor of the Garfagnana and managed the Royal Fir Wood, a centuries-old wood of beech and white fir, which can still be visited in the municipality of Villa Minozzo. The arrival of Napoleon in the Duchy of Modena and Reggio ended the power of the Estensi at the end of the 18th century.

During the Second World War, the mountains of the Park were the stage for major episodes by the Resistance. Today, you can still see the signs of the fortifications along the Gothic Line and follow themed itineraries that follow the paths along which the Partisans moved.

From the Middle Ages and throughout the various epochs, the most common form of settlement were the villages, which continue to spangle the slopes and valleys. The most interesting from a historic and architectural point of view are: Apella (MS), Cà Avogni (RE), Camporaghena (MS), Cecciola (RE), Corfino (LU), Tavernelle (MS) and Vallisnera (RE).



ITS HERITAGE



HERMITAGE OF BISMANTOVA (CASTELNOVO NE' MONTI)

Close to the little town of Castelnovo ne' Monti, in the heart of the Reggio Apennines, looms Pietra di Bismantova, a spectacular limestone massif, which originated in the Miocene era (19 million years ago). The unmistakable profile of the Pietra - mentioned by Dante in his Divine Comedy - rises in isolation, and has always been the most distinctive feature in the Reggio Apennine landscape.

Standing at the foot of the crag at 947 m a.s.l. is the hermitage of Bismantova, built at the beginning of the 15th century (first mentioned in 1411). From 1617, this mystical place became a destination for pilgrimages and a few years later, it was consecrated to the Blessed Virgin. Inside you can still admire the 15th century oratory, partly rebuilt in the 17th century, with its frescoes by the Emilian maestri of the period.



PIEVE DI SORANO (FILATTIERA)

The parish church of Santo Stefano di Sorano stands on the plain of Filattiera, along the ancient road of the Via Francigena. The structure we see today dates back to the 12th century. It has stood on this strategic site since prehistoric times, as the discovery in the surrounding area of seven stele statues (one of which is walled into the step of the presbytery in the right-hand nave) has proved. After the Roman era, during which it appears to have been a mansio (farm) probably belonging to the gens Suria, the area was occupied by the Kastron Sereon guarding the defensive Byzantine line in the 7th century. Again during the Longobard period, there is a mention of Leodgar, the Longobard bishop or steward, who began the Christianisation of the Lunigiana area, according to an inscription now preserved in the nearby church of San Giorgio. Today's parish church, built between the 11th and 12th centuries during the ecclesiastical reorganisation of the Diocese of Luni, experienced centuries of splendour until it was abandoned and then converted into a cemetery chapel from the 15th century onwards. The building technique of the exterior features a collection of river stones, whereas the interior has three naves of different lengths, without a transept. The bell tower also remains and looks more like a guard tower.



FORTRESS OF VERRUCOLE (SAN ROMANO IN GARFAGNANA)

The Fortress, situated above the tiny village of Verrucole in the heart of the Garfagnana, stands on a rocky spur 600 metres a.s.l. controlling the upper valley of the Serchio. The complex was commissioned in the 11th century by the Gherardinghi family, aiming to dominate the area and ward off any attempts to expand by the Bacciano family in the territory of San Romano. At this stage, the site covered two separate peaks joined by a ridge: on one stood the fortress with military functions, and on the other was a domus communis for administrative purposes.

Towards the end of the 13th century, the family saw its realm in Garfagnana decrease and after a brief period in the hands of the Guidicconi, the fortress passed into the hands of Spinetta Malaspina.



From the 15th century, the fortress was transformed into a military outpost by the Este family of Ferrara. At first, they transformed it into a citadel, consisting of a polygonal enclosure, known today as the “captain’s vegetable garden”, with towers for the powder magazine and two fortresses, one square and the other circular, both administered by the lords of the castle. Subsequently, some modifications were made according to a project of the architect from Carpi, Marc’Antonio Pasi. These included the raising of the circular tower, the demolition of the square tower and the inclusion of ramparts. The complex was abandoned from the end of the 18th century to 1985, when it became the property of the Municipality of San Romano.



FORESTE CASENTINESI, MONTE FALTERONA AND CAMPIGNA NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

Man’s use of the area of the Casentinesi Forests dates back to ancient times and has always been influenced by the nearby city of Arezzo. In the Roman period, occupation of this territory

intensified during the 1st century BC, during which two colonies were established. The ruins of residential settlements visible in several places at an altitude between 360 and 630 m date back



to this epoch. Evidence of these sites, especially in the municipalities of Poppi and Bibbiena, can be found in areas where fictile fragments have surfaced.

From the little information available, we can deduce that, during the Middle Ages, the Clusentinum returned to the March of Tuscany, a frontier area between the communes of Arezzo and Fiesole. Between the 9th and 10th centuries, the crisis in public order and the de-structurisation of the Carolingian system of territorial government weakened the central powers and strengthened local power as a result. This was held by the bishops of Arezzo, a few lordly families and by numerous monastic foundations in the area. The Guidi, in particular, had gained power over the right bank of the River Arno. They were lords of a large portion of land extending along the entire Apennine ridge and on the Romagna side and they consolidated their estates in the Casentino area in the first half of the 11th century.

The frequency and importance of the monastic foundations in this territory played a strategic role in communications in the Apennines. During this period, the Casentino forests became mountain hermitages open to the strictest forms of obscure asceticism. The dissolution of the rights of the bishops of Fiesole in the Casentino valley preceded that of their colleagues in Arezzo and facilitated the rise of the Guidi family, who seized the main road links giving access to the Florentine area and used the fortresses of San Niccolò, Raggiolo, Montemignaio and Poppi to dominate the western side of the system of communications

The religious orders were centred on the valley roads and determined the creation of new towns to add to the territorial network of parishes along the main arteries crossing the Casentino area.

Responsible for the process of encastellation, which had given the Casentino area its turreted, military skyline, the aristocracy who had divided the territory during the early Middle Ages now bowed to the dynamic trading towns of Florence and Arezzo, and began a process that would divest their feudal power in favour of that of the communes.

The map of the political boundaries in the Casentino was altered several times during the alternating

communal feuds. Bibbiena, an ancient nucleus of the Episcopal estates of Arezzo, followed in the wake of the decline of its archbishop Guglielmino Ubertini after the Ghibelline retreat at Campaldino (1289).

Following its victory at Campaldino, Florence decided to create some outposts along the Arno and founded the “new lands” of San Giovanni Valdarno, between Figline and Montevarchi, the Terranuova Bracciolini, opposite Montevarchi and Castelfranco di Sopra, between the diocese of Fiesole and Arezzo. At the same time, the Florentines refortified Montevarchi and Figline, whereas they consolidated their expansion in Arezzo in the north-eastern hollows, by strengthening the defences in Bibbiena and reconstructing the walls of the fortress in Sansepolcro in 1318.

The self-governing fiefdoms finally ended with the Florentine victory at the battle of Anghiari (1440).

The following centuries (from the 16th to the 18th) saw the consolidation of holdings and scattered settlements: villas - farms, built using urban properties, on which numerous farmsteads depended.

By the nineteenth century, a considerable demographic rise was recorded, with an increase in the town centres on the plains. New crops were introduced, such as tobacco, and traditional cultivations, such as the olive and vine, were strengthened.

In the meantime, the Casentino area became involved in the fragmentation of the large agricultural estates. In 1787, Pietro Leopoldo was appointed by Pietro Ferroni to design a “Casentino carter’s road” which was to rise from Pontassieve to the Consuma pass in order to better connect these marginal areas already used frequently by many travellers.

At the same time, a large wool factory was built in Stia along the banks of the Arno. By incorporating the fifteenth century wool and water mills, it became an economic centre of major importance for the entire area, thanks to the renowned production of Casentino felt.

Between 1879 and 1888, the Arezzo Stia railway was constructed and used for winter transhumance from the Maremma towards the Casentino area.



ITS HERITAGE



THE LAKE OF THE IDOLS (STIA)

Situated south of the peak of Mount Falterona, just a few hundred metres from the spring of the River Arno, the Lake of the Idols is an extraordinarily important archaeological site, where the most conspicuous evidence of worship in the Etruscan world was discovered.

In May 1838, following a lucky find on the banks of the lake of a tiny bronze statue of Hercules, further searches led to the stretch of water being dried out and to the discovery of one of the richest votive deposits of the Etruscan world. 650 bronze statues were recovered and the stretch of water which, until then, had been known as the Cherry Orchard Lake, was renamed the Lake of the Idols.

Unfortunately, the 1838 intervention was less of an excavation and more like earthworks, which irreversibly damaged the stratigraphy of the site. In 2003, a new, multi-disciplinary campaign of investigations was begun. The new excavations enabled approximately 200 bronzes (including little statues, votive anatomical figures and animal figures), 9,000 aes rude (unformed pieces of cast bronze used as coins), and over 4,000 fragments to be recovered. The study of this material revealed the site had been occupied over a long period of time, presumably from the 6th to the 3rd century BC. It also confirmed the cultural importance of the votive deposit, an important element of worship along a territory that joined various towns of Etruria (from those known as the true Etruria to those of the Paduan Etruria).



THE MONASTERY OF CAMALDOLI (POPPI)

A beautiful panoramic road from Ponte to Poppi takes us to Camaldoli. The religious complex, linked to the Benedictine congregation founded by Saint Romuald in the 11th century, consists of two distinct parts, the hermitage and the monastery, immersed in the monumental forest the monks have managed for centuries. The stable union between the hermitage and monastery constitutes a unique structure in the Benedictine tradition and one of the liveliest communities of western monasticism.

The first seat for the order was built around 1023 in a place called Campo Amabile, in an area belonging to Count Maldolo of Arezzo (Ca' di Maldolo). Here, Romuald from Ravenna came to an agreement with the bishop of Arezzo and ordered five cells to be built, together with the small oratory of San Salvatore, whereas in Fontebona below, he reorganised the hospice for pilgrims crossing the Apennines along the Via Flaminia Minor. At the end of the 11th century, the hospice was transformed into the monastery of the blessed Rodolfo and the Congregation of Camaldoli of the Order of Saint Benedict was consecrated in 1113. Afterwards, Camaldoli became increasingly important both as a place of prayer and as a centre of conservation of the territory and diffusion of culture.

The monastery complex of Fontebona has been transformed considerably over the centuries. It consists of three main parts: the church of the saints Donato and Ilariano, the Guest Rooms and the Monastery.

The mediaeval church, decorated by Spinello in the fourteenth century, was rebuilt in the sixteenth century and completely restructured between 1772 and 1776. The plain façade contrasts with the Baroque decorations inside. The church also houses important works by Vasari.

The monastery guest rooms, the ancient Hospitium, preserve a cloister known as the cloister of



Maldolo which, together with the nearby remains of the chapel of the Holy Spirit, shows features of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic. The sixteenth century layout of the monastery is built around a “mountain” cloister with an arched portico on two sides. The current pharmacy - part of the old hospital dating back to 1048 - preserves carved walnut furnishings of 1543 containing ceramics and glass from the 16th-18th centuries. Above the pharmacy is the monks’ large refectory, built in 1609, covered with a wooden coffered ceiling with painted papier mâché decorations. The road rising from the monastery through the thick pine wood leads to the hermitage, the first seat of the order. The hermitage complex preserves the primitive floor plan with the individual monks’ cells dating back to the 16th century, aligned in five rows inside an enclosure. At the bottom of the central avenue stands a small Romanesque church with apse and bell tower, commissioned in 1220 by Count Ugolino of the Segni Counts.



THE SANCTUARY OF LA VERNA (CHIUSI DELLA VERNA)

Above Chiusi della Verna, perched on a limestone cliff stands the Franciscan citadel of La Verna. The result of numerous building interventions - carried out mainly between the 13th, 15th and 16th centuries - La Verna is the most famous convent in the Casentino area and the heart of the Franciscan cult. The history of the foundation of the first nucleus of hermits dates back to 1213, when Count Orlando Cattani of Chiusi gave Francis of Assisi the mountain and wooded area where the vast complex stands. In subsequent years, the first cells were built, together with the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli (1216-1218), also founded as a result of the initiative of Francis of Assisi.

La Verna evolved continuously and was formed by fitting in additional parts that were adapted to suit the inaccessible land.





ARCIPELAGO TOSCANO NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Panda Photo - G.Marcoaldi

Its History

The National Park of the Tuscan Archipelago, the largest marine park in Europe, includes all the main islands of the Tuscan Archipelago: Elba, Capraia, Gorgona, Pianosa, Montecristo, Giglio and Giannutri. The different geological formation of the islands influenced their diverse shapes and environments. Man has also contributed to this heterogeneity. He has lived here from ancient times, used the natural resources and played a significant role in forming today's landscape.

The Park can boast an unusual, continuous occupation, which has left extremely important traces dating from the Palaeolithic period, almost without a break to the Renaissance. The visible macro-themes of the occupation of the archipelago are linked to the exploitation of iron, to residential occupation determined by the beauty of the places

and to the control of the sea routes.

In the coldest period of the last glaciation, approximately 20,000 years ago, Elba and Pianosa were part of a vast peninsula which stretched from the Tuscan coast towards Corsica as a result of the drop in the sea level. The Palaeolithic hunters and Neanderthal man were, therefore, able to reach these areas rich in wild life on foot. Stone tools and waste materials found in some sites on the island of Elba and Pianosa are clear evidence of these periods of occupation.

It was, however, the metals, and especially the copper present on the eastern side of the island, which gave rise to a stable community settlement, beginning from at least the 3rd millennium BC, between the late Copper Age and the early Bronze Age. According to some sources, the extraction of



minerals on the island appears to have been the work of the “Ilvates”, a people from today’s Liguria, hence the name “Ilva”, the ancient name for Elba. A strong rise in the population can be seen at the beginning of the Iron Age, when we find numerous settlements on the slopes of Mount Capanne, founded by communities of shepherds and farmers. If we can legitimately conjecture that the trading of iron existed before the Etruscans refined the process techniques, it is certain that, by the 7th century, this metal was rare and was only used to make arms and precious decorations. The need to protect this precious, natural resource led to the creation between the 5th and 4th century BC of a defence system of strategic points, from which to control the landing places. Hill-top fortresses have been identified in various places on the island of Elba. Between the 4th and the 1st century BC, the steel industry on the island expanded, as shown by a massive presence of waste found throughout the island. A large extraction and processing plant has recently been discovered in Cavo that was active between the 3rd and the 1st century BC. The intense population of the islands in this period is seen in the necropoli of Proficuo and Burraccio. The early Middle Ages are currently the period which is least documented. Some finds indicate that in the period between the 9th and 10th century, extraction of iron began once again and that later between the 11th and 12th centuries it began to be processed in Maremma.

During the rule of Pisa (11th century) and the following rule of Genoa - limited only to Capraia - defence works were increased with the construction of fortresses and settlements on high ground.

In 13th century Gorgona, the ancient Urgon, already inhabited perhaps by the Etruscans and certainly during the Roman era, the people of Pisa built a fortress, today known as “Torre Vecchia” [Old Tower], thus named after the Medici built the current “Torre Nuova” [New Tower] in 1406.

At the same time a system of parish churches and suffragan churches spread throughout the area: single-nave, fairly small buildings, with apse and wall belfry, according to a Romanesque model from Pisa without any polychromy (parishes of: San Michele in Campoliveri, San Lorenzo in

Poggio, San Giovanni Battista in Campo, San Giovanni near Portoferraio; and the churches of: Santo Stefano alle Trane and SS. Pietro and Paolo in Campo all’Elba).

In 1399, Elba, Montecristo and Pianosa became part of the Appian state of Piombino. During this period, there were numerous pirate incursions, which damaged the settlements and had a negative effect on the island population. The fortresses of Marciana on Elba and Montecristo were rebuilt and new mountain fortresses were built high up in response to these attacks.

Later, around the second half of 1500, Elba passed under the rule of Cosimo I de Medici, who founded Cosmopolis, today’s Portoferraio, around the ancient Roman Fabricia.

At the beginning of 1600, the south-easterly part of Elba became the property of the Spanish, who built the forts of San Giacomo and Focardo around the Gulf of Langone. In the same period, churches that were often isolated were rebuilt or built in the full spirit of the Counter-Reformation to become proper sanctuaries.

With the reforms in Livorno put in place by Pietro Leopoldo towards the end of 1700, land reclamation and terracing was carried out in order to cultivate vines, giving rise to scattered towns and new centres of gemination. Traces of these terraces and what was named “heroic” cultivation because of the steep slopes without the aid of any mechanisation still remain.

In 1796, Elba was occupied by the English and three years later by the French, who unified it with Tuscany. From 1814 to 1815, it was an independent domain and Napoleon’s residence.

In the second half of 1800, agricultural penal colonies were set up on Pianosa, Gorgona and Capraia, which enabled the agrarian landscape to be maintained for some considerable time. At the same time, there was a surge of mineral working on the island of Elba. 1899 saw an industrial turning point, with the foundation of the Società Elba and the construction the following year in Portoferraio of the first carbon coke blast furnace to produce cast iron, and then steel.

The iron and steel complex was irreparably damaged by the Allies’ bombs and ceased working



at the end of the Second World War. The mines, concentrated in the areas around Rio Marina, Rio nell'Elba and Capoliveri, continued working until 1981. The extremely interesting mineral heritage

and industrial archaeology can be visited and forms part of the Mineral Park of the Island of Elba, which is based in the former Palazzo del Burò in Rio Marina.



ITS HERITAGE



THE CIVIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM – FORTEZZA DELLA LINGUELLA – VILLA DELLA LINGUELLA (ISLAND OF ELBA)

The Civic Archaeological Museum opened in 1988 in the Fortezza della Linguella, built by Cosimo I de Medici. It houses archaeological material in chronological order from the 8th century BC to the 5th century AD, from discoveries both in the sea and on the island in the districts of Elba and Capraia.

The topographic tour is organised chronologically, with panels illustrating both the context and more general topics concerning the ancient populations on the islands.

Between the museum and the Renaissance buildings, in the spaces not occupied by the fortress, lies the excavation of Villa della Linguella. This archaeological complex, the oldest part of which stretches as far as the sea and is partially submerged, was partially obliterated by the sixteenth century factory works. For this reason, the rooms are divided into two distinct parts: a first area, parallel to the fortress of San Francesco and a second, which occupies the central portion. The complex of great historic importance offers evidence in chronological order from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD. Of particular interest are the floor decorations, dating back to the mid Imperial era.



THE ROMAN VILLA “DELLE GROTTI” (ISLAND OF ELBA)

Already known to scholars in the 18th century, it was subjected to systematic excavation campaigns in the 60s and 70s by the Archaeological Superintendency. It stands in a superb panoramic position on the promontory, along the south-east edge of the Gulf of Portoferraio. It was first built in the 1st century BC, only to be abandoned round about the end of the 1st century AD. Over three centuries later, the structures on this site were reused by the first monastic communities who settled on the island.

The villa appears to be divided into blocks, depending on the building on which it stands: the central area was intended as a residential section and a large part of the living quarters was occupied by an artificial basin supplied by a tank placed higher up. The bath is surrounded by a peristyle.



VILLA DEL “BAGNO DI AGRIPPA” (ISLAND OF PIANOSA)

According to tradition, this beautiful building standing on the beach on the east coast of the island was built for the exile of Agrippa Postumus. The young man spent the last seven years of his life here until 14 AD, when Tiberius had him assassinated.

The monumental complex, cut on the west side by the massive wall of the Penitentiary, faces in the direction of the compass points, and was built along the east-west axis. It is overlooked by: a theatre, a swimming pool, a circular room and a fish tank.

Palazzo di Agrippa, the residential portion of the villa described above, lies beneath the maximum security wing, the “Agrippa Section” of the former prison of Pianosa.



MONTI SIBILLINI NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The National Park of the Sibillini Mountains protects an area of approximately 70,000 ha, straddling the Marche and Umbria, in which natural features alternate with extraordinarily beautiful landscapes

and historical architecture, evidence of man’s occupation dating back to prehistoric times, capable of leaving the equilibrium of the places unaltered.



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Evidence of a stable anthropisation in this area can be seen in the discoveries of surface artefacts, such as rhabduli, rough splinters, flint heads and blades, already dating back to the Middle Palaeolithic Period. The Lower Palaeolithic Period, on the other hand, is documented by the discovery of roughly hewn flints from a stone industry (from Campo dell'Ara in Sigliano, north of the Park) and a pebble depicting a naked female figure with a dog's head (Cesolone, in the Tolentino area).

The Apennine civilisation, which lasted for a long time throughout the Sibillini Mountains, developed in the Bronze Age. Examples have been found in Pievetorina, where crescent-shaped handles, arrow heads and pottery have been discovered, and on Mount Primo at Pioraco, where the famous hoard of bronze artefacts was discovered inside a tiny cave.

Commencing with the Iron Age, the most conspicuous finds reveal a new cultural facies: Picena civilisation, originating or coming from the Balkans. This period saw a social structure divided into aristocratic groups, dedicated to agriculture and sheep-farming, which increased its economy by imposing tolls on trading that crossed the obligatory points between the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic Sea. The necropoli in the orientalising stage (7th century - early 6th century BC) were scattered in bands inland, near the Apennine passes, such as Tolentino.

Although the inland territories of Sabina tightened their cultural links with the area of Ascoli Picena, as documented in particular in Norcia and Cascia, elements of Umbrian cultural tradition can also be traced, as shown by the Apennine deposit of bronze, stereometric human figures. The place name of Rasenna proves the Etruscans were also present in the area of Visso.

From the end of the 4th century BC, the region gradually became increasingly involved in the Roman expansion and was occupied for the first time after the defeat in the battle of Sentino (295 BC) of the Senone Gauls. This was followed by the submission in 290 BC of the Praetutii, garrisoned in the ager Praetuttianus (near today's Teramo). This change in the situation made life between the Romans and the Piceni difficult and led the

latter to rebel. As a result, one part of the territory was annexed to Rome and the inhabitants were granted citizenship without the vote, another was confiscated and the inhabitants deported to the area between Campania and Lucania on the Gulf of Salerno.

Later, during the social war, the Piceni took up arms once again against Rome, but their territory was soon occupied by Caesar's troops and subsequently assigned to the veterans. Signs of land division are present along the Sibillini Chain, together with Roman evidence throughout the Park, proof that during this period the territory was profoundly reorganised with a larger road network and the foundation of several major towns, such as Urbs Salvia and Tolentium. The Augustan regional order placed the area in the Regio V Picenum and the Italic communes kept their autonomy.

After the crisis of the Empire, first the invasions by Alaric followed by the Greek-Gothic war destroyed the town and decimated the inhabitants, forcing the survivors to seek shelter on the hills, which led to the creation of small villages. Under Longobard rule the area was fragmented by numerous monastic and clerical figures throughout the territory, representing that phenomenon defined as monasticism. The Foglio al Tronto founded monasteries which were often a day's walk one from the other.

From the 10th century onwards, the name Marca used to identify the area bordering the Empire (e.g. Marca di Camerino, Marca di Fermo) appears for the first time under the Ottoni. Gradually during the 12th century, the free Communes were established, together with the so-called "Comunanze", rural communities which exploited the area and organised it into indivisible and inalienable properties, over which they had the right of sowing, grazing and forestage. Over the centuries this enabled the exploitation of the woods and pastures to be preserved.

The entire Park is characterised by numerous mediaeval towns, often in a strategic position along the main communication roads. This was the period in which settlements were established with fortified walls and access gates around the square, church and noble palace. Nowadays, some of these



towns are considered the most beautiful villages in Italy and they maintain their original structure and preserve examples of considerable historic and architectural interest.

During the brief Napoleonic digression, the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment also spread throughout this area. Following the Treaty of Tolentino signed with Pope Pius VI, the French Emperor obtained

the right to occupy Ancona and proclaim the Roman Republic, which also absorbed Fano, Senigallia and Ascoli. This experience was short-lived and the entire area returned once again under the control of the Church in 1816.

In 1860 with the battle of Castelfidardo, the area was occupied by the Piedmont troops and definitely annexed to the Kingdom of Italy.



ITS HERITAGE



ABBHEY OF SANT'EUTIZIO (PRECI)

In the 5th century, the Syrian monks led by Saint Spes, a monk, who was the spiritual father of Sant'Eutizio, San Fiorenzo and the inspiration for Saint Benedict from Norcia, built the Abbey on top of a previous oratory dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The Abbey is remembered not only for spiritual reasons, but also because it was home to a school of writing where the Confessio Eutiziana, one of the oldest and most important documents written in the vernacular, was composed between 936 and 1037.

Until the 13th century, the Abbey was also home to an important medical and surgical school, which gave rise to the Surgical School of Preci, famous throughout Europe. A community of Benedictine monks currently live in the complex. The structure was built on a terrace, placed under the caves which had been home to the first Syrian monks in the 5th century, and comprises two courtyards, the first of which gives access to the mediaeval church.

The church, nestling against the rock face, has kept its original façade, with a Romanesque-Spoletino door, embellished with a rose window and the symbols of the four evangelists. Inside, there is a single nave decorated with 14th and 17th century frescoes, a raised presbytery and a crypt containing the body of Saint Eutizio, a 16th century wooden chancel and an 8th century sculpted stone, already present in the previous church. The first floor of the Abbey houses the Museum, whereas towering over the complex are the caves, dug into the rock that the monks used as shelter in the 5th century.



SANCTUARY OF MACERETO (VISSO)

The Sanctuary of Macereto can be considered the highest expression of 16th century Renaissance architecture. The building was built on the upland of the same name in 1529 to replace a previous church of 1359. Tradition tells the story that it was built at the spot in which a mule, carrying a statue of the Madonna from Ancona to the Kingdom of Naples, knelt down.

Work was begun by the architect, Giovan Battista da Lugano, who was inspired by a preceding project of Bramante, and continued after his death by Filippo Salvi da Bissone, who completed it in 1556. The octagonal-shaped sanctuary has three entrances and a small temple in the centre,



engraved with the story of the miracle of Macereto. The structure belongs to a much larger architectural complex, which includes the church, the Pilgrims' House, the Guard House and the Palazzo delle Guaita. The original bell tower collapsed when the ground sank.



BASILICA OF SAN BENEDETTO (NORCIA)

According to tradition, the Basilica standing in the main square in Norcia was built between 1290 and 1338 over the remains of the Saint's birthplace. The building has a Gothic, gabled façade dating back to the end of the 14th century with an ogival portal and a central rose window with the statues of Saint Benedict and his sister Saint Scolastica on each side. In 1570, the Loggia dei Mercanti, or Portico delle Misure, was erected on the right-hand side in order to provide the town with a covered market for cereals. The interior floor plan is a Latin cross, with a single nave and polygonal apse. There are two levels with the main church on the upper level and the crypt below.



ROCCA DI ARQUATA (ARQUATA)

The Rocca, built for military purposes, is a true fortress, an excellent example of thirteenth century mediaeval architecture in the Marches Apennines. It lies in a strategic position of control, standing on a rocky spur overlooking the entire valley of the River Tronto and the Via Salaria as far as the boundary of four regions (Marche, Umbria, Lazio and Abruzzo).

The history of the fortress is linked to that of the town of Arquata in an area continually contested by several towns, and to the figure of Queen Giovanna II of Angiò who stayed here. The Rocca was built between the 11th and 12th centuries at the same time as the village was growing. At the death of Frederick II, for fear that Manfredi of Sicily could extend his rule and take new lands, the town of Ascoli proceeded to erect a Fort to protect its boundaries from external raids and sealed an alliance with the town of Arquata. Again in 1400, the town was contested by Norcia and Ascoli and continued in this way until the 16th century.

During the Napoleonic rule, the Rocca was rebuilt with casemates and artillery stations. After the Unity of Italy, it was abandoned and had to wait until the early 20th century before restoration was begun to reconstruct the highest tower and the hexagonal donjon.

Built with blocks of local sandstone, the fortress still retains its walls, with a communication trench and machicolations, two dovetailed, crenelated towers and the remains of a third donjon. The first part to be built was most probably the 12 metre-high, hexagonal donjon on the south-east corner, at the base of which the walled-up openings of the old escape tunnels can still be seen. The keep was constructed between the 14th and 15th centuries. The 24 metre-high, square-based north tower was intended for sighting and extreme defence purposes. The final part to be built was a circular donjon 12 metres high, situated on the south-west corner, the terrace of which served to house pieces of artillery.





CIRCEO NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The Circeo National Park protects a territory of extraordinary natural beauty with archaeological remains and historic architecture - evidence of ancient, anthropic occupation - which enhance the fascination and attraction of these places.

Numerous prehistoric caves open up along the sides of the Circeo promontory. Of these, the best known is the Guattari Cave, discovered in 1939 south-west of San Felice Circeo, where a skull of Neanderthal man was found. Numerous other finds of the stone industry are proof that man occupied this area intensely throughout prehistoric times.

The colony of Circeii was founded together with Signa by Tarquin the Proud at the end of the 6th century BC. In 491 BC, it was occupied by the Volsci, led by Coriolanus and was only re-conquered at

the beginning of the 4th century by the Romans, who established a second Latin colony there and built the walls around the Acropolis.

During the Imperial era, the beauty of the surrounding area attracted the attention of numerous patrician families, who built a series of suburban villas here, used as permanent and holiday residences. The area between the promontory of Circeo and Lake Sabaudia has the largest number of these buildings. Among the most famous are the Villa of Domiziano (1st century AD), which extends along the banks of Lake Paola, and the contemporary Villa, built on the tiny peninsular of the Casarina area, which became a hermitage during the Middle Ages.

Throughout the area the ruins of buildings serving the villas and urban nuclei are still visible. These



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include hydraulic systems visible in the remains of ancient aqueducts, wells, tunnels and large semi-interred tanks that, when they were no longer used to collect water, often became shelters for men and animals. Even more characteristic are the peschiere, the large aquaculture tanks for fish, shellfish and crustacean farming, all popular ingredients in the dishes of the time. The largest were the peschiera di Lucullo - south of Lake Sabaudia, consisting of two concentric rings with four different sized tunnels - and the Bacino Absidato, a large rectangular tank built inside Villa Domiziano.

Other evidence of activities linked to products from the sea is the murenari, structures built specifically to breed moray eels, the Emperors' favourite food. One of these, comprising several tanks and a mechanism to regulate the change of water, is visible in the port of the island of Zannone.

The construction of some major road infrastructures dates back to Roman times. These include the road connecting Hostis (ancient Ostia) with Terracina, along a route which probably followed the Via Severiana (3rd century AD). Some major canal works were also built. During the period of Nero, the Fossa Augusta was designed to link the coastal lakes, continuing as far as Terracina across the northern part of Circeo. A few stretches remain of this road along the Pedemontana and at Selva Piana. The stretch linking Lake Monaci with Lake Caprolace was rebuilt in 1721, when Pope Innocence XIII ordered another large artificial water work to be built, which later took the name of Canale Papale.

The decline of the Roman Empire led to a gradual depopulation of this area. The disrepair of the Via Appia reduced the number of travellers passing through, as they preferred the piedmont routes. As crop farming was abandoned, so the marshland increased, and gradually Nature reclaimed the area. Thus, we have little information about this territory for the entire period of the early Middle Ages. Devastated by the Goths of Alaric in 410, it was conquered by Totila in 846 and subjected to forays by the Saracens in the same period.

The entire area was later governed by various noble families until it became the property of the Annibaldi, who ceded it in 1301 to the Caetani.

This family governed it almost continuously for just over 400 years. During this period, the most determined attack on the power of the Caetani was led by Alessandro Borgia, whose strategy aimed to strengthen the rule of his own lineage. Pope Alexander VI enticed Giacomo Caetani to Rome, and imprisoned him in the prisons of Castel Sant'Angelo, where he had him poisoned. All the estates of the Caetani in the Circeo area then passed into the hands of Lucrezia Borgia.

Following the death of Alexander VI in 1503, the Caetani regained possession of Sermoneta and of the other fiefdoms. In 1506, a concession was obtained from Pope Julius II and work began to rebuild the castle and fortress and the first nucleus of today's town of San Felice di Circeo was built.

A few years later in 1562, Pope Pius IV forced Cardinal Niccolò Caetani, liege of San Felice Circeo and Sermoneta, to strengthen the papal coastal defence system to defend it from attacks by pirates. In a short time, he built Torre Paola, Torre del Fico, Torre Cervia and lastly, Torre Moresca on the promontory. Of the latter only the foundations are still visible.

In the 16th century, Popes Leo X and Sixtus V began major reclamation works in the Pontina plain and significantly extended the surface of agricultural land. The greatest impact, however, took place in the second half of the 18th century under Pope Pius VI. A large drainage canal, the "Linea Pio" canal was built, together with a series of minor canals, running perpendicular to the former, spaced a mile apart and linked to a series of minor roads named *migliare*, a place name still used today. This enabled a vast area to be used and cultivated under the hills around the plain and at the same time restored the Appia as the main road linking Rome and the South.

The functional structure created with the *migliare* system linked to a main drainage canal was a major project for a series of interventions, implemented during the most intense period of the Pontina reclamation, begun at the end of 1800 and reaching its peak in the following twenty years until 1918.

In 1934, the Circeo National Park was established to safeguard a piece of the landscape that had survived the growing anthropisation of the



plain, where the desire to create new spaces for agriculture had eliminated the marshes and other magnificent natural areas, such as the forest of Terracina.

In the same period, the so-called Città di nuova

fondazione [Towns of new foundation] were built on completion of the reclamation work to colonise the newly distributed lands. These included Sabaudia in the centre of the Park area, one of the highest expressions of Rationalist architecture.



ITS HERITAGE



VILLA DI DOMIZIANO (SABAUDIA)

Villa di Domiziano occupies an entire, roughly triangular peninsula of 46 hectares, overlooking Lake Paola from the east. After the first phases of occupation dating back to the early 1st century BC, the Villa underwent two main interventions: one, the larger, dating back to between the end of the 1st century BC and the first half of the 1st century AD; the second, completed during the final years of the Domitian era, was important for the interventions on the decorations and on the water distribution system.

The other numerous phases were simply phases of use or limited interventions of restoration or reorganisation. The succession of building activities and interventions on what had already been built has left us a vast, complex group of buildings, 70% of which is unknown.

Up to now, four areas of the villa have been excavated: the northern area, known as the “area del Bacino Absidato”; the southern part, or “Area Termale”; a third sector has recently been excavated in the Central area, occupied mainly by three imposing storage tanks; a fourth section, to the east of the reserve, where the Great Tank was discovered.

Aerial photos and systematic measurements to scale of the land and structures that have emerged have all shown, however, how dense building occupied the middle areas and stretched without stopping throughout the peninsula. This makes Villa di Domiziano one of the most important structured, residential complexes in the Roman world, which can be compared to that of Villa Adriana in Tivoli.



THE CANAL PORT OF PAOLA (SABAUDIA)

The southern parts of the coast of Lazio have coastal lakes behind the dunes, the formation and position of which have played a primary role in the dynamics of the coastal population. Of particular historic and naturalistic interest are those lying within the boundaries of the Circeo National Park: the lakes of Fogliano, Monaci, Caprolace and Paola. Despite anthropic intervention linked to reclamation, the lakes preserve their shape arising from the natural processes of formation featuring a continual exchange with sea water as a result of frequent sea storms, and above all from a system of canals activated by the equilibrium of the tidal currents. The availability of water



routes parallel (*fossae per transversum*) and perpendicular to the coast (*fossiones*) made the coastal lakes behind the dunes a precious natural resource that had already been exploited at the time of Nero. The Canal Port of Paola belonged to the list of Roman canals, the *fossae*, built as ports and trading canals, which exploited the artificially restored river estuaries or new artificial excavations. This was a highly complicated work of engineering, consisting of a system of sea wharfs with foundations holding back the barrier of dunes pushing forward. During the late Republican period, a vast system of port occupation arose around this infrastructure, of which traces remain of a heating system in a pool to raise fish and of an altar on the western cliff of the Circeo promontory.



VILLA DEI QUATTRO VENTI (SAN FELICE CIRCEO)

The monumental complex known as “Villa dei Quattro Venti” [Villa of the Four Winds] occupies a south-easterly branch of the Circeo promontory, a short distance from the historic town of San Felice Circeo. What remains to be seen of the ancient factory is nowadays divided into two terraces: a lower one shaped in the form of a solid triangle, and the other standing above the first which has a clear rectangle perimeter.

The first mass we come to as we enter the archaeological area from Via Marco Emilio Lepido is that of the imposing foundation of the first terrace. This is the main body of a factory, which was part of the steep slope falling away down to the coast from the plain, on which stood the historic town of San Felice Circeo. It created an artificial terrace, picturesquely placed half way between the port and the old residential quarters.

The main body occupying the first terrace consisted, however, of an additional foundation wall above which there is a view stretching from the Pontine islands to the Gulf of Terracina. Until recently, this site was believed to be the residence of exile of Lepidus, but following recent studies it has been identified as the sanctuary of Circe. This is a similar type of structure to the Sanctuary of Palestrina or to that of nearby Terracina.





GRAN SASSO AND MONTI DELLA LAGA NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The presence of man inside the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park has been ascertained from the Upper Palaeolithic Age. It was confirmed by the discovery of stone tools at Campo Imperatore (Fonte della Macina) and in the famous Cave at Male di Assergi.

There is little evidence of occupation of these mountains during the Neolithic period (6th-4th millennium BC). The Bronze Age (4th-3rd millennium BC), however, shows increasing use of the Park, not only for pasture and hunting, but also as places of burial: this is shown by the discovery of a necropolis at Assergi inside a gravel pit.

During the Middle Bronze Age (1,700-1,350 BC), there is a profound change. The settlements gradually move higher, giving preference to the highlands of valley bottoms or to previously occupied plains.

The Iron Age (1st millennium BC) shows an increase in the number of villages in the main areas, featuring fortifications and ditches surrounding the villages, and a network of roads begins to develop to connect the settlements with their respective burial areas lower down.

From the 6th century onwards, the territory was inhabited by the Sabelli, who later became known as Sabines in the north-west and Vestini in the middle and lower Aterno valley. Rome did not fail to attempt to expand and in 290 BC, M. Curio Dentato conquered the Sabine Amiternum and a large part of the Vestini area. The Roman conquest did not, however, lead to a true urbanisation, so that the population continued to live in their previous villages and the urban layout was irregular: the area featured vici in easily accessible places and oppida along the mountain slopes or on the plain.



CHARTER OF ROME AND NATIONAL PARKS

First Report on synergies between Natural and Cultural Capital

Only in the Late Republic, following the Social War (91-89 BC) and at the beginning of the Empire did the municipia appear, even though they did not substantially modify the layout of the settlements. In fact, they were mainly public and religious structures, intended for the inhabitants, who continued to live in their primitive villages: a sort of “town without inhabitants” (examples include Amiternum and Forum Novum). The road system was extended during this period and included not only main routes, but also a network of sheep tracks and an extensive labyrinth of minor paths for local use, inherited from the pre-Roman period. The main arteries included the Via Caecilia, crossing the Park from north to south, and the Via Claudia Nova, which runs round the south of the Park. The territories included in the Augustan Regio IV became part of the province of Flaminia et Picenum during the Diocletian era, only to be absorbed by the province of Valeria at the end of the 4th century AD.

In Late Antiquity, the villages fell apart and were slowly abandoned and although they did not disappear completely, they became smaller.

During the Middle Ages, following the Longobard rule and the early Carolingian period, there were profound changes with scattered settlements, confirmed by the widespread numbers of buildings of worship owned by the monks, documented from the 8th century onwards. Even though the data available does not allow us to define the territories of the dioceses or any gastaldates, the documentation from the end of the 8th to the mid 9th century, on the other hand, reveals the important role of towns, such as Amiterno and Civitas Marsicana (today's

San Benedetto dei Marsi), surrounded by the properties of Longobard families and taxed lands. The road network also developed in this period and not only did this follow the previous Roman arteries, it also included a network of roads that acted as the boundaries of the great abbeys and which, in some cases, allowed people across the mountainous passes and river valleys.

During the Carolingian period, riches were distributed amongst the monasteries and nobility, penalising the town authorities and local communities. The land distribution led to conflicts, such as those between the rural community of today's valley of Tirino (part of the diocese of Valva at the time) and the powerful Benedictine abbey of San Vincenzo al Volturno.

The mid 12th century saw the area subjugated by the Normans and at the same time the borders with the lands of the Church were established. The area was fortified particularly on the mountain slopes, and villages with a rural economy were established in the foothills.

In the modern era, the entire area continues to preserve a marginal frontier aspect, due to the numerous changes in power determined by the alternating rules of Anjou, Aragon and Bourbon. Throughout all these years, the role of the towns became stronger with the addition of fortifications, churches and noble palaces. The result today is that this area is dotted with extremely fascinating, well-preserved villages, 5 of which have been nominated amongst the most beautiful villages in Italy (Amatrice, Castel del Monte, Castelli, Civitella del Tronto, Santo Stefano di Sessanio).



ITS HERITAGE



AMITERNUM (L'AQUILA)

A Sabine town on the borders of the Vestine territory, it takes its name from the River Aterno and is the birthplace of the distinguished historian Sallust Crispo. Although it survived the fall of the Roman Empire, it was slowly but surely abandoned during the 10th century. The ruins of Amiternum are visible today not far from L'Aquila. It preserves the remains of a theatre, the amphitheatre, the entire perimeter of which is easily recognisable, comprising two rows of arches, the ruins of a late-Roman building, probably for public use, with a series of rooms arranged around a colonnaded courtyard.



CASTEL MANFRINO (VALLE CASTELLANA)

Commissioned in the second half of the 13th century by the Swedish king Manfredi to guard the borders between the Papal State and the Kingdom of Naples, it lies on top of the remains of a Roman castrum. The castle stands on a rocky promontory between the Salinello Torrent and the Fosso Rivolta. It has a quadrangular floor plan and winding, 20-25 metre-wide perimetric walls. The fortification still preserves the remains of three towers, of which the most imposing has to be the north tower, known as the Anjou donjon. The south tower served to signal with mirrors or fire to communicate with the Rocca of Civitella del Tronto, whereas the third, central or "Male" tower was reserved as the home of the lord of the castle.

All around are the ruins of different types of buildings, such as stables, guard rooms, soldiers' quarters and a square construction identified as the chapel.

Castel Manfrino covered a major strategic role throughout the 15th century, when it succumbed to the same decline and abandonment as other similar castles, which lost their supremacy as impregnable sites following the introduction of gunpowder.



THE FORTRESS (CIVITELLA DEL TRONTO)

A work of first-class military engineering, it covers an area of approximately 25 hectares and extends 500 metres along a rocky spur with a sheer drop to the valley of Salinello. The first news we have of a fortification is in 1225, when the people of Ascoli took a castle by force, a defence bastion in a system to defend and control the Apennine border of the Valle dei Vibrata, the natural frontier between the Kingdom of Naples and the Papal State.

In 1556, Bernardo Buontalenti designed a new system of fortification with the addition of defence machinery. The architecture was only redesigned at the end of the 16th century (fortified citadel with 5 towers and a perimeter wall with patrol walkway) with the re-arrangement of internal spaces (the Governor's Palace, the church of San Giacomo, the soldiers' quarters, the storehouses, the water tanks, the large Piazza d'Armi and the quartering of the French troops). In 1820, the fortress was completely rebuilt to retain its Renaissance aspect and during the siege by the Piedmont troops in 1860-61, it was destroyed and subsequently stripped of its materials and partly dismantled.



NECROPOLIS OF FOSSA (FOSSA)

Discovered by chance in 1992 in Casale, it is an important piece of evidence from the pre-Roman era. It features imposing tumuli 10-20 metres in diameter and menhirs that stand 4 metres above ground level. Brick chamber tombs from more recent periods can be seen. Amongst the finds there are 575 accoutrements, amongst which those of the first half of the 1st millennium BC stand out in particular (swords, lances, buckles, perforated iron disks, pots, arms and bronze ornaments).



ROCCA CALASCIO (CALASCIO)

The highest and one of the most impressive fortresses in Abruzzo. Founded around the year one thousand at 1494 metres a.s.l., it dominates the valley of the River Tirino and the Navelli Plain. During the Renaissance period, it was given four cylindrical corner towers with a central, square, male tower. The Rocca belonged first to the ancient barony of Carapelle. Then, it was given by King Ferdinand to Antonio Todeschini of the Piccolomini family, and was subsequently acquired by the Medici with Santo Stefano di Sessanio in 1579. The earthquake in 1702 was decisive and the majority of the population moved to the newly built town of Calascio nearby.





ABRUZZO, LAZIO AND MOLISE NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Panda Photo - R.Polini

Its History

The National Park of Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise has been occupied by man since the Palaeolithic period. During the summer, numerous hunters from the more temperate zones of inland Abruzzo, such as the Lake of Fucino, would move around the mountain areas, impassable in winter, to hunt ibex, chamois and marmots and to search for silica, using the caves and natural shelters.

A process of systematic occupation of the territory began in the Iron Age, which led to the creation of fortified settlements, situated high up to control the compulsory transit points along the River Sangro. One of these villages certainly occupied the area where Opi now stands, whereas a second was situated on the high pastures surrounding Lake Barrea. Already from the late Iron Age, small settlements appeared along the routes of communication next to the fortified settlements on the highlands. The inhabitants lived on sheep farming and they cultivated crops for local

consumption.

During the 5th century, various Samnite populations gathered here, the Marsi, Volsci and Pentri, and they established tiny ethnic states run by noble oligarchies. Discoveries of pottery from this period within the Park borders are evidence that even during the Samnite period, the population continued to occupy the highlands which provided excellent observation points over the Sangro basin. For the Pentri Samnites, the Upper Sangro Valley was a frontier land and place to trade with the Marsi from around the Fucino area and with the Volsci settled in southern Lazio.

The structure of the area, closed between high mountains and marked by deep gorges discouraged an attack by the Romans for many years. However, even these territories succumbed to the government of Rome after the final defeat of the Samnites in 290. The area within the boundaries of the National Park of Abruzzo was incorporated



into the Roman prefecture of Atina.

During the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, the settlement system was transformed. Although the populations of the Upper Val di Sangro continued living on the highlands to control the territory, they occupied the large area of foothills and created large settlements located along the main roads at meeting and trading points.

Only in the 1st century BC, when the Romans also granted citizenship to the Pentri Samnites, did the long period of Romanisation, begun over two centuries before, come to an end and the administrative system changed profoundly with the creation of the municipality of Aufidena (Castel di Sangro).

In Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the major towns (Val Fondillo, Pian del Molino) in the valley continued to be occupied and side by side with them monastic settlements began to rise, especially at the hands of the Cistercian hermits. Furthermore, the continual political uncertainties led to the re-occupation of the highlands that had been previously fortified in pre-Roman times: the “Castles” that had dominated the landscape until

recent times, gave rise to the typical, modern towns perched above the Val di Sangro (Opi, Civitella Alfedena, Barrea). According to some scholars, the position of these villages had practical, rather than defensive purposes: it was worth building the villages on rocky spurs and leaving the valley bottom free for crops. Many of these settlements have preserved the typical features of their mediaeval structure and are well worth a visit (Opi and Scanno are in the list of the most beautiful Villages in Italy).

The majority of the villages on the Molise side stood on hills and rocky spurs or in easily defensible places. Over the last two centuries, this custom was replaced by the tendency to build scattered buildings, in single homes or small rural nuclei, due to the increased security which meant that encastellation was no longer necessary and due to the splitting up of the large feudal estates. These new types of settlements featured villages with extensive agricultural surfaces, which gradually recorded a progressive reduction in the numbers of inhabitants in the original nuclei.



ITS HERITAGE



THE ACHILLE GRAZIANI CAVE (VILLETTA BARREA)

Within the area of the Park, the most important evidence of man’s presence up to the Bronze Age has been identified in caves and shelters under the rock, opening out on to the mountain slopes overlooking the River Sangro and other rivers. The most well-known and most studied archaeological cave is the one named after Garibaldi’s captain, Achille Graziani, who was the first to explore it in 1876. Inside the cave, beneath surface levels containing Roman material and other materials dating back to the Bronze Age, a particularly important stratigraphy was identified linking back to the Upper Palaeolithic period.



PICCOLOMINI CASTLE AND THE TOWERS (BALSORANO)

Piccolomini Castle stands on a highland on the left bank of the River Liri at the southern opening of the Valle Roveto. It was built in the second half of the 15th century on a pre-existing defence structure. The first documentary confirmation dates back to 1089, when Balsorano is mentioned as a castrum and then again in the 12th century as a castellum.



The imposing building is extraordinary in size and type and has an irregular pentagonal floor plan with circular towers at each corner, presumably built by the Angevins, and an L-shaped courtyard. The building was built on rock immersed in a lush park with a footpath winding its way to the main entrance. The beautiful interior decoration was restored in the 1930s. At Starze, on the banks of the River Liri on the plain below the castle of Balsorano, the remains of two towers rise from a splendid poplar wood: one square one, overgrown with vegetation, the other incorporated into the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie. The complex was closely linked to the fortress of Balsorano and acted as the outpost below. An ancient Roman road connects the two sites and can still be used today.



THE TOWER (GIOIA DEI MARSI)

An important watch tower to defend the village below, the circular tower of Gioia dei Marsi is perched on a rocky spur to control the Forchetta di Sperone pass. The tower is circular on the outside and octagonal inside, with an external diameter of approximately 8 metres and a height of 16 m. At the raised entrance, two shelves can be seen that suggest the use of a retractable wooden ladder.

The tower has recently been stabilised, as its foundations were subject to serious subsidence compromising its stability. It stands on the site of an ancient Marsi fortification. The village around the towers was destroyed by several earthquakes and currently lies abandoned.



THE FORTIFICATION (LECCE DEI MARSI)

The remains of a fortified circuit with internal towers are still visible on an outcrop in the heart of the valley of Lecce Vecchio, already mentioned by sources in the mid 11th century. The fortification was positioned to control the path leading up the Vallone of Lecce Vecchio and the drovers' roads linking the area to the Upper Val di Sangro, as well as the larger drovers' road, Pescasseroli – Candela.

The most recent studies on the preserved structures have identified the west and south sides of the bailey. The wall surrounding the rocky outcrop is founded on an earlier defence structure of the Marsi. The presence of these fortifications encouraged a stable settlement to grow in the 11th century.



THE CASTLE (PESCASSEROLI)

At the foot of the “pesco”, a rocky outcrop, stands “Castel Mancino”, a strategic fortress that dominated the valley: some traces remain of the perimeter towers on the trapezoidal floor plan. The fortification, built mainly for defence, dates back to the 10th-11th century and was destroyed in 1141 by Riccardo di Capua. Belonging to the enclosed type of castle, the fortress consisted of a square tower donjon and an enclosure with five circular towers.





MAJELLA NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi - R.Polini

Its History

The Majella has welcomed groups of humans beginning in the Palaeolithic period, when *Homo erectus* and then *Homo sapiens* first appeared, as shown by the finds in the sites of Valle Giumentina, Grotta degli Orsi and Grotta del Colle.

During the Neolithic period (6600 - 4500/4000 BC), thanks to a change in the environment and to the arrival from the east of agricultural peoples, a new, more stable community began to develop, which preferred to settle in tiny villages, raise animals and produce pottery to cook and preserve food. The largest settlement in this period was the village of Fonti Rossi in Lama dei Peligni. Its discovery in 1914 began the idea of the so-called Man of the Majella. Additional proof of continual occupation from the beginning of the Neolithic period until the

end of the Bronze Age was found in the Grotta dei Piccioni (Bolognano), located on a rocky outcrop dropping steeply down to the River Orta. Discovered in 1954, the cave was used mainly as a place of worship and was frequented intensely by shepherds and their flocks. It has revealed light axes, sickles, flint fragments, millstones, pestles, obsidian, ornamental shells and pottery.

The Bronze Age, barely distinguishable from the preceding period to which the pottery, bronze artefacts and cave and rock paintings have been dated back, can be found in numerous locations, such as Tocco da Casauria, Bolognano, Caramanico, Serramonacesca, Pretoro, Rapino, Pennapiedimonte, Fara San Martino, Rivisondoli, Pacentro and at Madonna degli Angeli. From the



late Bronze Age, sheep farming played a vital role in the economy of these communities, thanks to a dry, ocean climate, excellent for vegetation growth and the subsequent increase in farming activities. The Iron Age was the moment in which what is known as the “Apennine civilisation” stabilised to fully represent the Italic people. The territory was organised into a crown of fortified settlements, built on the highlands surrounding the plain, with the exception of the eastern border, defended naturally by Mount Morrone.

The Italic period saw the development of the Picene civilisation which gave rise to fortified settlements perched on top or along the slopes of the Apennines. The various tribes, such as the Peligni, were organised into a sort of city state, called *touta*, guided by an annually elected leader with two assemblies. In the pre-Roman era, the territory was divided into *pagi* which, in turn, were divided into one or more *vici*. Around the Majella massif stand the towns of Corfinium, Sulmo, Interpromium, Cluviae and Iuvanum. Within this framework of settlements, the sanctuaries, such as the one at Sulmona dedicated to Hercules Curino, played an important role.

During the Augustan principality, Abruzzo and Molise were placed into the IV region Sabina e Samnium and the territory of Peligno was divided into three districts, each guided by a *municipium*: Corfinium (Corfinio), Sulmo (Sulmona) and Superaequum (Castelvecchio Subequo). During this period, sheep farming became popular once again and the road network was extended to transform some of the ancient drovers’ roads into large arteries. The region was now connected to Rome by the main road of Via Valeria, later to become Claudia Valeria, which led to Pescara. The main road also crossed the Via Claudia Nova (from Amiterno) and the Via Minucia, which crossed the Peligno territory passing through Sulmona.

In the Middle Ages, the Longobard invasion of 568 AD and the subsequent domination by the Franks at the end of the 8th century assailed this region, lying half way between the Duchy of Spoleto and the Duchy of Benevento. The place names still preserve evidence of the Longobards in the Majella area and similarly, the worship of

San Michele Arcangelo, protector of converted Longobards, became popular. From the 9th century, an extensive network of monasteries grew throughout the territory under the three important abbey centres of San Vincenzo in the Volturno area, Montecassino and San Clemente in Casauria. Between the 11th and 12th centuries, a process of encastellation took place throughout the Majella area when, encouraged by the monastic or lay seignories, the population settled in proper villages in dominating positions, surrounded by walls to protect themselves from invasions.

From 1140 onwards, the Normans under Ruggero II were garrisoned in this area and annexed it to the Regnum Siciliae. Frederick II unified the region’s administration and established Sulmona as the capital. Things remained thus until, in 1254, L’Aquila was founded.

The Majella territory in the late Middle Ages saw stories of feudal and local seignories, such as Cantelmo and Caldoras, intertwine with those from Naples and Rome. During the Angevin period and again in the Aragona period, the area played a vital role in the peninsular. From the 12th to the 16th centuries, some towns grew considerably along the Apennine dorsal, such as L’Aquila, Popoli, Sulmona, Castel di Sangro, and some mountain villages working in the droving industry (the latter still the linchpin of the Majella economy until the end of the 18th century). Artisans specialised in working stone, wood, wrought iron and stuccoes came from Lombardy and settled in Abruzzo after the earthquake of 1456.

Although between the 17th and mid 19th century we can speak of a bourgeois mountain civilisation, consisting of a well-to-do, highly cultured class, under the Unity of Italy conditions of life on the Majella changed radically and there was a profound crisis, with the exodus of the bourgeoisie and a high rate of migration.

In the 19th century, brigands spread across the area, as shown by “La Tavola dei Briganti” [Brigands’ Table], large slabs of rock that had slid down Mount Cavallo in front of the Orfento Gorge, on which the brigands, shepherds and probably all those who had come to this place, a sort of general headquarters according to local tradition,



had carved their names, thoughts, brief writings, invectives, homelands and left them for eternity. Amongst these inscriptions, the most famous is

the one that reads “in 1820 Vittorio Emanuele II king of Italy was born. Before it was a kingdom of flowers now it is the kingdom of destitution.”



ITS HERITAGE



SANCTUARY OF HERCULES CURINO AND HERMITAGE OF SAN ONOFRIO DEL MORRONE (SULMONA)

The sanctuary of Hercules Curino, Italic deity, protector of the flocks, stands half-way up Mount Morrone in Sulmona. It is attributed to the Peligni and dates back to the 4th century BC. It was probably partially modified by the Romans in the 1st century AD.

The sanctuary consists of two terraces: on the lower terrace, there are fourteen rooms, probably for domestic use, the remains of a wall that was part of a columned portico and the stairway leading to the sepulchral chapel. The ritual “stops” in the structure, such as a donation box for offerings, placed at the bottom of the stairway, and a fountain inserted into the last step (used for purification) are still visible. The upper level was originally completely covered and preserves the remains of a sepulchral chapel, dating back to between the 2nd and 1st century BC. Traces of polychrome fragments of decorations can still be found on the walls. During excavations outside the chapel, fragments of dedications to Hercules inscribed by the worshippers were found when the plaster crumbled. The graffiti are no later than the mid 1st century AD, when an earthquake and landslide buried the sanctuary. Higher up and set in the west wall of Mount Morrone is the hermitage of Sant’Onofrio, the last to be built by Pietro da Morrone, who only stayed there once in 1293, because the following year he was elected Pope with the name of Celestino V. Pietro returned to Sant’Onofrio Pietro after his abdication and remained hidden there until February 295, when he left with the aim of reaching Puglia to embark for Greece.

The hermitage is built over three levels: on the ground floor is an arcaded loggia with a wooden ceiling and 15th century frescoes; the first floor contains the frescoed oratory painted by Maestro Gentile from Sulmona in 1200 and the cells of Pietro da Morrone and Roberto di Salle; on the second floor, there is a panoramic terrace overlooking the Peligna valley.



ABBEY OF SAN MARTINO IN VALLE (FARA SAN MARTINO)

At the Gole di San Martino, at the “entrance” to the Vallone di Fara San Martino, archaeological excavations conducted between 2005 and 2009 brought to light the important Benedictine abbey of San Martino in Valle, completely obliterated during the famous flood of 1819.

Thanks to archive sources, we can reconstruct the historic events of the complex of religious buildings. First, it was autonomous like all Benedictine monasteries. Then, in the 12th century, it passed under the local Episcopal authorities. Later, it was handed over to a liege and then annexed to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Chieti.

The Benedictine historian, D. Guglielmo Salvi, suggested that it was one of the first Benedictine



monasteries in Abruzzo, probably founded by Saint Benedict himself after 520 AD. The rock sanctuary preserves the remains of a gate of a church, preceded by a monumental arched portico, a bell gable, a large courtyard and several parts of a monastic factory built into the rock, that were continually used from the 9th to the 18th century.



HERMITAGE OF SAN GIOVANNI DELLA MAJELLA (CARAMANICO TERME)

The hermitage of San Giovanni stands at a height of 1227 metres on a sheer wall in the Valle dell'Orfento, below Pianagrande. The site is one of the wildest, most inaccessible hermitages frequented by Celestino V, who spent a period of penitence here between 1284 and 1293. To reach the hermitage the path rises up steps cut into the rock, but you need to crawl face down to cross the narrow ledge.

Inside there remain two rooms, an altar and the tanks to collect and purify the water, cut entirely out of the rock.



HERMITAGE OF SANTO SPIRITO DELLA MAJELLA (ROCCAMORICE)

The hermitage of Santo Spirito was dug out of the rock in the upper valley of Santo Spirito and is considered one of the largest, most important of the entire Majella region. Although the precise date of its construction remains unknown, it is supposed to have been dug before the year 1000. The first certain evidence of a settlement dates back to Desiderio, the future Pope Vittore III, who lived there in 1053. Later in 1246, Pietro da Morrone arrived there and rebuilt the cenoby to house the Celestina Congregation. He also added the church dedicated to the Holy Spirit.

In the following two centuries, the monastery was abandoned and only in 1586 under the monk, Pietro Cantucci from Manfredonia, did religious life return to these places. The monk built the Holy Steps, entirely cut into the rock, which lead to the “hanging” gardens and to the Oratory of the Maddalena. In the final years of the 17th century, Prince Caracciolo di San Buono added guest accommodation, the current “Casa del Principe” [The Prince’s House].



ROCK TOMBS OF SAN LIBERATORE (SERRAMONACESCA)

The complex of buildings stands at a height of approximately 330 m along the River Alento. It has 3 arcosolium tombs, a niche and a tiny chapel with some frescoes which are, unfortunately, illegible. From the type of burial, common in Christian catacombs and linked to a certain medium-high class of people, it has been possible to date the complex to a period after the 10th century AD.

On the basis of only the archaeological data and place names available, it was probably a religious complex of cave worship dedicated to San Giovanni (as yet called San Giuannelle), organised by a group of hermit monks, who lived in the area between the 8th and the 9th century, to ensure a dignified burial for members of their community.





VESUVIO NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Panda Photo - A.Nardi

Its History

The history of the Vesuvius National Park has always been influenced by the volcano. Its dominating size for those arriving by sea made it “the mountain” par excellence, a sacred mountain, a “Iuppiter Vesuvius”. And it must have appeared even more so for the inhabitants living close to the volcano, along the coast and in the narrow district of the valley of the Sarno, enclosed between its slopes to the north and the dorsal of the sub-Appennine chain in Campania.

Volcanic activity in the area dates back to at least 400,000 years ago, the age of some of the lava found at a depth of 1345 m, and it has periodically erupted with great intensity. This explains the absence of any evidence of man’s presence in the oldest epochs. However, it is possible that the

memory of similar catastrophes remained for a long time in the collective memory of the indigenous peoples and of the Greek and oriental merchants: the entire area was known as a land of fire by the first Greek colonies in the 8th century: here lies the forge of Efesto, here was the stage for the battles between the Gods and the Giants, and the name of burning plain (pedion Phlegraion) that Greek historians sometimes gave to the entire area of Campania is easily understood.

There is insufficient data to outline a reliable picture of the population of the territory of Vesuvius during the older periods. Its mythical inhabitants - according to Servio, Virgil’s commentator - were the Sarrasti, the ancient people of the Sarno that the poet from Mantua remembered as being



subjugated by Eballo, king of the Teleboi of Capri. The few pieces of archaeological information we have come from the necropolis of the “Gaudo culture” at Piano di Sorrento, from the mid Bronze Age village in Palma Campania and from the mid Bronze Age necropolis in the same area in Pompei. During the Iron Age, there is evidence of settlement in a series of villages along the valley of the River Sarno: the remains found in the necropoli of San Marzano sul Sarno, San Valentino Torio and Striano enable us to understand the material culture of these people, probably of Oscan origin.

It is certain that from the mid 8th century BC, the villages nearest the delta of the Sarno were given the first features that can be reconnected to the Greek colonisation. However, it appears that there had already been some elements of acculturation which had arrived by a more ancient, better structured road which ran from Capua to Nola, encouraging the organisation of urban communities. Nocera, Pompei, Stabiae and Vico Equense appear to have been described from the end of the 6th century BC as Etruscan or Etruscanised settlements.

Little is known of the history of the settlements in these towns, with the exception of a few urban dynamics: it is known, for example, that the Etruscans, who founded Pompei at the end of the 7th century BC, had a very ambitious project. According to a design already used by the Greeks in Cuma, they took the ideas from an indigenous village, including, however, a larger area within the walls than was needed for immediate use.

A radical change in the occupation of the territory came as a result of the entry of Roman power in Campania with the Samnite wars. Until then, the Samnites and people of Campania had probably not altered the layout of the territory they had inherited from the Greeks and Etruscans. On the contrary, the Romans forced their model of organisation, founded on colonisation and re-colonisation.

The dormancy of the volcano, which was not believed to be active in that period, facilitated

the anthropisation of the area. Urban centres flourished on the fertile plain, the mountain sides were covered with garlanded vineyards, whereas the upper slopes preserved woods full of wildlife. However, volcanoes in this area typically have long periods of rest before catastrophic events. Thus, on 24 August 79 AD, the volcano became active once again after a period of dormancy that had probably lasted about eight centuries. It covered the surrounding areas in just over thirty hours with approximately 4 km³ of magma in the form of pumice and ash. The eruption destroyed the towns of Pompei, Ercolano and Stabia, involving an area within approximately a 100 km radius. It almost completely destroyed the existing volcano, Mount Somma, and began to form the more recent cone that is still visible, the Vesuvius in the strict sense of the word.

Subsequently, Vesuvius had another substantial dormant period, interrupted by the violent eruption of 472, which devastated Pollena. In the following years, there was a series of eruptions which were not catastrophic. The last of these in 1139 marked the beginning of a new dormant period, which led to the construction of settlements scattered across the slopes of the volcano and to the cultivation of the lands almost as far as the summit. Vesuvius re-awoke on 16 December 1631, with the most violent eruption in the recent history of the volcano. The pyroclastic flows from the eruptive column reached a height of 19 km and the mud slides due to the simultaneous heavy rainfall reached the sea and devastated all the towns between Pollena to the north and Torre Annunziata to the south-west.

From then on, there has been a further 18 eruptive cycles, separated by brief intervals of dormancy, never longer than 7 years and each ending in a violent, so-called “final” eruption. The strongest recorded were those of 1906 and 1944, the last time Vesuvius erupted, which almost completely destroyed the towns of Massa and San Sebastiano.



ITS HERITAGE



THE SITES OF POMPEI AND ERCOLANO

Although slightly outside the administrative boundaries of the Vesuvius National Park, these sites are of fundamental importance in the history of this area, marked so profoundly by the eruptions of its volcano, that they are considered to all intents and purposes to be a cultural heritage in their own right for the Park itself.

Pompeii stands on a volcanic plateau on the southern slope of Vesuvius, approximately 30 metres above sea level and a short distance from the estuary of the River Sarno.

The population that founded Pompeii were certainly the Oscans. However, there is some doubt as to whether the name of the town is Greek or Oscan in origin. The fortunes of the town were linked to its position on the sea, which made it the port for the towns in the hinterland of Campania in competition with the Greek towns on the coast. During the 2nd century BC, with the advance of the rule of Rome, the town went through a period of intense economic development, especially for the production and export of wine and oil. This state of wellbeing was reflected in a considerable development in public and private buildings: this period saw the construction of the Temple of Jupiter and the Basilica in the area of the Forum. The Imperial era opened with the entry into Pompeii of pro-Augustus families, evidence of which can be seen in the Building of Eumachia and the Tempio della Fortuna Augusta. In 62 AD, a disastrous earthquake caused very serious damage to the buildings in the town. The following years were spent in a massive work of reconstruction, still under way at the time of the fatal eruption of Vesuvius on 24 August 79 AD, when Pompeii was buried definitively by a thick shower of ashes and lava.

In the Augustan era, the little town of Ercolano saw major reconstruction: many public buildings were built and restored including the Theatre, Basilica, the aqueduct, the network of public fountains, the temples of the Sacred Area, the Suburban Thermal Baths, the Central Baths and the Gymnasium.

The ruinous earthquake of 62 AD had made many buildings dangerous and Vespasian financed the restoration of the so-called Basilica and the Temple, but many other works of restoration have also been archaeologically documented.

The town was not very big. It has been suggested that the total surface inside the walls was approximately 20 hectares with a population of about 4,000 inhabitants. With the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 BC, Ercolano was completely submerged by a river of volcanic mud. The ashes mixed with water solidified, resulting in an absolutely exceptional phenomenon of conservation which has enabled excellently preserved organic, vegetal evidence, fabrics, furnishings and portions of buildings to be found.



VILLA OF OPLONTIS (TORRE ANNUNZIATA)

Oplontis is recorded in the Tabula Peutingeriana with the symbol used for thermal towns. The town was destroyed by the eruption of 79 AD, but began to be explored in the Bourbon period, followed by systematic excavations from 1964 to 1984. The remains of one of the most important villas as regards Roman pictorial decoration, the so-called Villa di Poppea, named after Nero's wife, Poppea Sabina, emerged from the excavations. Two construction phases can be seen in the building. The oldest (mid 1st century BC) held two symmetrical nuclei, the central nucleus



(atrium - viridarium - triclinium), including the baths to the west, and a servants' quarters to the east. Both had wide porticos overlooking the gardens to the north and south.

The second phase in the Giulio-Claudia era saw the addition of a sumptuous residential area to the eastern quarter. Sculptures found in a storeroom and not in the places they were supposed to decorate, together with the total absence of objects of daily life, suggest that the villa was uninhabited at the time of its destruction.



THE VILLAS OF THE "GOLDEN MILE"

The Golden Mile is a stretch of road between Ercolano and Torre del Greco, measuring one mile according to the system of measurement used in Naples during the 18th century. A series of magnificent residences of southern Regio and Bourbon origin stood along it, almost all of which were built in the eighteenth century.

The first villa along the Golden Mile is the "Villa de Bisogno de Casaluce", built in the 18th century. This is followed by "Villa Aprile" of the same century, built for Riario Sforza and restructured at the beginning of the 19th century, when the vast park already full of statues and fountains was embellished in the Romantic style with a tiny open-air theatre, transformed into fish pool at the beginning of the 20th century.

"Villa Campolieto" is the most famous residence in the Vesuvian area. Begun in 1755 by Mario Gioffredo for the Sangro di Casacaldena, it was completed by Luigi and Carlo Vanvitelli. During the Second World War, it was seriously damaged and had to be abandoned, but was then restored in 1982. An entrance hall leads to a well-lit vestibule opening on to an elliptic courtyard and a garden. On the left-hand side of the vestibule is the stairway designed by Vanvitelli leading, as in the palace of Caserta, to the upper vestibule, covered with an elliptic dome. Many of the rooms were frescoed by Fedele Fischetti, Giuseppe and Gaetano Magri and Giacomo Cestaro. "Villa la Favorita" was built in 1768 by Ferdinando Fuga for the Prince of Aci and, on the latter's death it became royal property and was then passed on to Caracciolo di Santobuono. The façade differs from the customary design of the Vesuvian villas, as it does not have a central main entrance. Instead, there are two symmetrical doors, beyond which is the semi-circular stairway at the front of the building. The majority of the interiors have lost their original decoration, with the exception of the frescoes by Crescenzo Gamba in the vaults of the raised floor of the "Chinese Room", the Piano Nobile and the rooms with Moorish decorations.





CILENTO, VALLO DI DIANO AND ALBURNI NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The National Park of Cilento, Vallo di Diano and Alburni holds valuable evidence of the history and civilisations of the Mediterranean. These lands have kept their traditional features, which can be seen in the organisation of the territory, the paths and the system of settlements and structure of the crop cultivation. This historic, stratified structure and the presence of sites of world importance, such as Paestum, Velia and the Certosa di Padula, all make the historic cultural values of this territory of extraordinary interest.

Man's presence in these lands dates far back to the Lower Palaeolithic period (500,000 years ago), as shown by the traces of *Homo erectus* found in Marina di Camerota. Occupation continued throughout the Palaeolithic period, certainly

facilitated by the diffuse presence of caves and ravines, which were used as shelter. Numerous remains of Neanderthal man date back to the Middle Palaeolithic period. These are mainly stone tools used for hunting, discovered not only along the coast (in the area between Marina di Camerota and Capo Palinuro, in the caves of Cala, Poggio and in the large Cave of Scario), but also on the Alburni Mountains. These were the same places that would later be occupied by *Homo sapiens*, traces of whom have been found in the coastal caves, along the ridge paths (Grotte di Castelcivita) and in the Vallo di Diano (Pertosa).

These ancient paths allowed the local communities to come into contact with the populations of the Apennines or with those who climbed from the



Adriatic coast, as shown by the similarity in the shape of the objects found in other sites. This organisation of activities was consolidated in the Bronze Age, when the paths were commonly used for transhumance and trade and exchanges multiplied. However, the same phenomenon also took place by sea: the Cilento area became a crossroads between populations of very diverse cultures and origins.

The foundation of the Greek trading centre of Ischia and that of Cuma triggered exchanges and interaction between the local people and the Greeks, who came to these areas probably along the ancient obsidian routes. The early 6th century BC saw the birth of a new power over the Tyrrhenian Sea: Poseidonia, which was to become the Roman Paestum, founded by the Sybarites, who arrived along the Apennine paths. On the contrary, the people from Phocaea in Asia Minor came via the sea and in 540 BC, with the support of Poseidonia, they founded Elea, the city of Parmenides and his Eleatic Philosophic school, one of the most important and most famous in the classical world. Elea became an important trading centre, thanks to its two ports and its proximity to Poseidonia. Throughout the Archaic period, many other places in the Vallo di Diano were established and kept close trading relationships with the Greek cities in the Ionian and Tyrrhenian Sea.

At the end of the 5th century BC, the Lucanians occupied Eboli, Pontecagnano and Poseidonia. During this domination, the entire area experienced a period of considerable splendour.

In 273 BC, the Romans' relentless expansion towards the south led to the foundation of Paestum and, five years later, Picentia (with people who had been deported from the Piceno area), on a site which can be roughly identified as today's Pontecagnano. The towns in the interior developed considerably from the 2nd century AD onwards and the coastal area was revitalised with numerous

villas. The silting up of the ports and rampant malaria contributed to the subsequent decline. When life and commercial activities began again, the hub of civilisation had now moved northwards and Salerno became the most prestigious town in the entire area, experiencing moments of significant political and cultural importance.

Following the fall of the Western Empire (6th century AD), the Cilento area was subjugated by barbarian rule and became a land of conflict. Of interest during these centuries was most certainly the feudal rule of the Longobards, who profoundly reorganised the territory, and the diffusion of Basilian Monasticism. The mix of different cultures continued, monasteries and abbeys were founded in which the Greek and Latin rites lived side by side. Dating back to this period are some gems, such as the Badia of Pattano, with the Chapel of San Filadelfo, and the frescoes of the Basilian Chapel in Lentiscosa. In 1076, the Cilento area was conquered by the Normans who introduced the latifundium and assigned extensive lands to different barons. There began an intense period of exploitation of the farming population, which continued under the subsequent rule of the Sanseverino family, the Swabians and the Angevins, often causing bloody revolts. Charles II of Anjou separated the lands of Irpinia and Benevento from the principality of Salerno (Principato Ultra and Principato Citra), a separation which continued until the Unity of Italy. In subsequent years, the Cilento area returned to being a prevalently rural region, marked by an economy that was unable to flourish and triggered considerable phenomena of emigration, especially after the Second World War, and the mountains were abandoned. Recently, this trend has been reversed and numerous initiatives to promote tourism have given back the edge to these places, especially the villages, still full of churches, noble palaces and fortifications.



ITS HERITAGE



PAESTUM (CAPACCIO)

The imposing ruins of the Doric temples of Paestum, rightly considered one of the most important archaeological towns in Italy, are truly impressive and majestic. Situated in the valley of the River Sele, along the south-eastern coast of the Gulf of Salerno, the area of Paestum extends southwards as far as Punta Licosa and eastwards to the foothills of the Alburni mountains.

The discovery at Gaudio of an extensive necropolis from the Iron Age provides us with evidence that indigenous populations lived in the area of Paestum even in remote times.

It was, however, towards the end of the 7th century BC that Greek colonists from Sibari founded a town they named Poseidonia (town dedicated to the god Poseidon). The town flourished to become perhaps the most important agricultural and maritime centre of the entire plain of the River Sele and Lucania, and in 400 BC it was conquered by the Lucanians, who gave it the Italicised name of Paistom or Paistos.

The circumstances which led to the Roman conquest of the town in 273 BC are unknown and the name subsequently became Paestum. The Romans built several buildings in Paestum, including the Forum, the Baths, the Italic Temple and the Amphitheatre. Although it was still inhabited during the Middle Ages, Paestum was then abandoned as a result of the malaria and Saracen raids.

Although known from the 16th century, its ruins remained almost unknown and forgotten, overcome by brambles and undergrowth, until the mid 18th century, when Charles II of Bourbon decided to open the road corresponding to the current main road, where they were rediscovered and could be visited once again.



VELIA (ASCEA)

Two fairly similar tales, the first by Herodotus (Histories, I, 163-167) and the other by Antiochus of Siracuse recorded by Strabo in his Geography (VI 1, 1), allow us to understand the phases of the construction of Velia (Latin name Elea) in great detail.

According to Antiochus, when the then General Argago of Ciro conquered Ela, all those who managed to escape boarded the ships together with their families and arrived first in Corsica and then in Marseilles. Driven away, they sailed southwards and disembarked on the shores of the Cilento region and founded Elea approximately two hundred stadions away from Poseidonia. The town was built on a promontory, originally overlooking the sea, although nowadays it stands about 0.5 km away as the coastline advanced. The promontory was also the site of the first settlement in the Archaic period (just after 540 BC). The town later extended downwards and inhabited areas sprang up on the plain. Together with Paestum, Elea was allied to Rome and provided some of the ships during the war against Hannibal. It strenuously defended its freedom and Greek identity, even during the Imperial era.

Towards the end of the Republican era, Velia became quite a famous place thanks to its climate, which led high-ranking families in Roman society to build their villas there. The economy of Velia was seriously hit when its ports silted up, to the point that the southern port was made a necropolis. In the Middle Ages, it became an Episcopal seat. Whereas the lower part was abandoned fairly early on, a castle was built over the acropolis that obliterated the Ionic temple beneath. In the 17th century, it was finally abandoned for good.



THE CERTOSA DI SAN LORENZO (PADULA)

With its imposing complexity, the monument on the hilltop on which the town of Padula stands, is one of the largest monasteries in the world (51,000 m²) and is certainly one of the most magnificent in Europe for its sumptuous architecture and art treasures.

Originally named “Certosa di San Lorenzo” and owned by the Basilian monks, it was founded in 1306 by Tommaso Sanseverino, lord of Marsico and of the Vallo di Diano, who donated it to the Carthusian order.

The structure is typical of the Carthusian monasteries: the accommodation of the Carthusian fathers, who lived an ascetic life, was at the top. Below were the lay brothers, who took care of the administration of the order’s property and of the agricultural and craft activities, and looked after relationships with the local communities.

The grocery, the grocer’s house and the guest accommodation were arranged around the external courtyard. The religious building with its cloisters and Baroque church is surrounded by a large boundary wall inside which stands the “Giardino della Clausura”. The main body of the Charterhouse is Baroque (17th-18th century). It is said Charles V stayed here in 1535.

In a corner of the cloister of the little cemetery is the Founder’s Chapel, containing the tomb of Tommaso Sanseverino. Inside an elegant elliptical stone staircase leads to the antechamber of the great library. The complex was completed in the 19th century and although it has undergone many transformations over the centuries, it has always maintained the same structure.

When Bonaparte conquered the Kingdom of Naples, the monastic orders were suppressed and the Charterhouse fell into disgrace. The Carthusians returned to the monastery when French rule ceased. Today, the Charterhouse has become a lively centre for cultural events and houses the Archaeological Museum of Western Lucania.





ALTA MURGIA NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The National Park of Alta Murgia comprises a territory of great landscape beauty in which the limestone plateau on the Adriatic and Ionian slopes soften into gentle slopes and fields, where magnificent rocky crests alternate with deep gorges and sun-baked plains.

This area has been occupied since ancient times by farmers and shepherds. Apart from the first sign of anthropisation in the cave of Lamalunga, documented by the discovery of a skeleton which can be dated back to the Middle Palaeolithic period (150,000-200,000 BC), from the end of the Mesolithic period (around 3,000 BC) the first stable settlements are recorded and a new economy began to develop, based not only on agriculture, probably practised by populations from the coast, but also on the first nomadic drover activities. During this period, the social structure was mainly

settlements in caves.

In the Bronze Age (1550 BC-1200 BC) and again in the Iron Age (9th-8th century BC), the culture did not differ a great deal from that of the bordering territories. Between the 9th and 8th century BC, the area recorded the rise of a warrior aristocracy, a rapid development of villages, both on the hills and in the plains, and a productive economy based on agriculture and husbandry. At the same time, agricultural villages spread around Altamura, Pulo and Gravina-Botromagno and in the territories of Ruvo and Minervino, as testified by the large number of tombs found.

In the 7th and 6th centuries BC, trading with Greece and the colonies of Magna Graecia encouraged the people of Alta Murgia to differentiate themselves from the Messapians and the Dauni. The straw roofed huts were replaced



by rectangular houses, inspired by the Greek model with a tiled roof. Their pottery using the main geometric patterns (pedunculate swastika, the Maltese cross and “gallinaccio”) testifies to the process of Hellenisation. On the contrary, the proto-historic, indigenous tradition maintained the funerary ritual of burial in a curled up position, with mainly imported pottery as accoutrements.

The following period featured a series of conflicts between the Italic populations, determined mainly by the expansionist tendencies of the Oschi and Samnites. This was followed by a strengthening of the alliance between Rome and the various town centres. This phase was marked by the radical transformation of the urban fabric of the territory of Murgia, following the construction of the new Via Appia, connecting with southern Italy and with the coastal areas and lands of the East via the Via Traiana. Several important resting stations, such as Ad Pinum (perhaps today’s Spinazzola), Silvum (Gravina), Blera and Sub-Lupatia (perhaps the area of Jesce, to the south-east of Altamura), were built along this artery across the slopes of Murgia. This phase showed a slow, radical Romanisation, which was most apparent in the land division of the plains, such as Butuntinus (of Bitonto) and Rubustinus (of Ruvo). This phase records major deforestation to make spaces for sedentary and transhumant sheep-farming, where the Apennine flocks of Sannio and Abruzzo came for the winter. With the end of the Roman Empire, the area of Alta Murgia held only a marginal function and saw a partial demographic contraction, which gave rise to a fragmented, autonomous structure, divided into micro-areas, each with specific settlement dynamics. On the one hand, the area to the north of the Murge had a higher concentration of more densely inhabited settlements, whereas the western Murge were divided into Imperial villas, agricultural settlements (vici) or simple farms, as shown in the vicinity of Gravina in the valley of the River Basentello.

On the other hand, inland areas, such as those towards the coast, were more liable to depopulation. With the Greek-Gothic wars in the mid 6th century AD, depopulation of the area rose to the extent that we can conjecture a high concentration of

inhabitants in the vici and municipia. After the Goths took control, Christian worship spread and the best archaeological evidence of this is to be found in the rural building of worship of Belmonte in Altamura.

During the early Middle Ages, Alta Murgia was given a secondary role as a border between the area controlled by the Longobards and the Greek Byzantine area. These areas were once again depopulated. Most of the villages used in the preceding centuries were abandoned and new settlements were created inside caves and rocky ravines.

Under the Byzantine rule, true urban towns began to appear, particularly on the western slopes, such as Minervino, Montemilone, Acquatetta, Montepeloso and Gravina. Under the Normans and then under Frederick II, followed by the Angevins, the new settlements mainly followed the encastellation system. Defence structures appeared in Ruvo, Altamura, Spinazzola, Castel del Monte, Gravina, Garagnone and Santeramo. The sole aim of the system was to develop wide-ranging control over the territories in order to manage agricultural activities more effectively. One such example is the Castle of Garagnone, positioned to control the wheat trade, at the point where the ancient Via Appia meets the roads towards Ruvo, Corato, Andria, and Barletta further along towards the coast.

During the Angevin and Aragonese era, Alta Murgia was once again redefined into functional areas linked to the growing husbandry and to the reorganisation put in place by the famous Dogana menae pecudum in 1433: the lands of Bitonto, Ruvo, Corato, Andria and Minervino constituted the so-called “Riposo delle Murge” [Repose of the Murgia]. The western part of Alta Murgia also gave rise to the great “general repose”, and was divided into defence, payments and hire and other types of control and administration envisaged by the Dogana. This enabled the lands to be assigned to those who were able to settle in these areas, including people from other areas, such as the shepherds from Abruzzo, who began to occupy them radically (as proven by the place names from Abruzzo alongside those of Puglia).



CHARTER OF ROME AND NATIONAL PARKS

First Report on synergies between Natural and Cultural Capital

From the 16th century onwards, there was an increase in the number of settlements. This was to remain unchanged in subsequent centuries and constituted the cultural and architectural heritage which continues to characterise the landscape

of Alta Murgia today. Farms, jazzi (sheep pens) and rural lodges, all rural buildings, were now indissolubly linked to the agricultural activity of the area.



ITS HERITAGE



CASTEL DEL MONTE (ANDRIA)

This is a unique masterpiece of mediaeval architecture that was added in 1996 to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. Commissioned by Frederick II of Swabia, it was built according to the design of an unknown architect, although tradition loves to claim the project was designed by Frederick himself. It is a canonical example of Gothic architecture, with hints of Romanesque and classical features. Built of different types of stone - limestone, breccia corallina, and eastern marble - the Gothic structure plays on the natural colours of these stones.

It stands in a strategic position half way between Andria and the Castle of Garagnone. The interpretation of the function of the building remains controversial (a hunting lodge or military building?), although the word castle refers clearly to the poliorcetic terminology. The absence of a moat, machicolations and drawbridge on the one hand, and the luxurious finishings and decorations on the other, make its use as a residential structure plausible.

With the fall of the Swabians, the building became a prison and also served as a refuge for noble families during the plague of 1665. The building was abandoned from the 18th century and used by shepherds, brigands and political refugees, who stole all the precious furnishings and decorations. This situation continued until 1876, when it was saved by the state and restored. These conservation interventions restarted with greater intensity after 1928.

The castle has an octagonal layout with eight octagonal towers. There are two floors, each with eight rooms. The two floors were connected by three spiral staircases, each built inside a tower, each of which held a bathroom. Two windows opened on each façade: one single lancet window on the ground floor and one double lancet window on the upper floor. Only the north façade facing towards Andria has a mullioned window with three lights.

The main entrance is accessed via two ramps of symmetrical steps and opens in the façade facing east. Made of breccia corallina, it is obviously inspired by the classic influence of a triumphal arch, with capitals reflecting the Corinthian order. The Gothic style, however, emerges strongly in the elongated shapes and ogival arch of the entrance. The eight trapezoidal rooms on the ground floor are all built in an extraordinarily similar style. The inner octagonal courtyard has essential objects. Some 18th century accounts make special mention of an octagonal pool in the centre of the clearing, probably connected to a large tank below ground. Of the sculptured decorations in this area, only one slab remains, depicting a procession of knights and a fragment of an anthropomorphic figure.

Various shaped doors and windows open on to the courtyard but they lack a symmetrical scale and appear to have been made according to the use of the rooms inside. The upper octagonal



floor is a precise replica of the ground floor. The eight rooms are covered by a vault supported by thin ribbed columns and are lit by the light coming in through the windows (double and triple mullioned). The lunettes between the ribs of the vault have panels similar to the Roman grid. This is a unique example of a return to this ancient construction technique. The complex is extremely interesting for the precious materials used to cover its surfaces: only partly preserved mosaics, majolica and vitreous paste, but known above all through the works of local writers in the 18th and 19th centuries.



CATHEDRAL (RUVO DI PUGLIA)

This is one of the best examples of Romanesque architecture in Puglia. Dating back to the Norman period (12th-13th century), it underwent significant restoration during the last century. The façade has a rose window, with twelve rays of little columns with trefoil arches, at one time framed within a cusp crowned with little arches. Three doors open in the lower part of the façade: the two side doors have a pointed arch profile, whereas the one in the middle has a round arch and is richly decorated on the cornice and archivolt, in the centre of which stands the Eternal Father on the throne with the lamb of the apocalypse. The bell tower rises on the right-hand side of the church and was used as a defence tower and prison.

The interior has three naves, divided by five arches on each side with asymmetrical extrados on composite pillars. It reflects the Gothic verticality of the façade with three semi-circular apses on the rear side. The central nave and the transept are covered by a wooden roof with uncovered beams, whereas the side naves have a terraced roof.

Between the 16th and 17th centuries, some chapels were opened up in the side naves and then reclosed during restoration in the early 20th century. Excavations beneath the cathedral in the seventies also revealed Roman and Apuan layers, built prior to the construction of the cathedral.



JAZZO FORNASIELLO (GRAVINA IN PUGLIA)

The site of Jazzo Fornasiello still preserves traces of a rich, Apulian, agricultural settlement, which can be dated back to between the 4th and 6th century BC. The archaeological area is situated at the foot of the Murgia plateau on the border between the territories of Gravina and Poggiorsini. The village shows an initial settlement with huts and burial remains - dug directly into the rocky floor - to hold the dead in a curled up position (unfortunately during excavation the tombs were found to have been raided; the few artefacts remaining enabled them to be dated between the first half of the 6th century and the early decades of the 5th century BC). A second phase of life in the village saw the construction of a large stone building, called Casa dei Dolii, divided into a series of juxtaposed rooms. The discovery in one of these rooms of numerous fragments of large containers has led to the hypothesis of its use as a storeroom for food supplies, perhaps for the community of Jazzo Fornasiello. The other rooms, on the contrary, were probably used for artisan activities.

The latest excavations in 2010 identified an imposing defence circuit around the village, with a double layer wall, with internal filling and an external moat fortified to the north by a curtain wall.





GARGANO NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The area of the Gargano National Park can be identified with that of the “Palaeolithic Daunia”, one of the most complex structures known in Italy. As described by numerous Latin authors, the promontory of the Gargano had thick extensive woods. The abundance of timber, together with the availability of flint played a fundamental role in helping the Neolithic population. The villages consisted mainly of small groups of huts, found mainly along the coastline, starting from the banks of Lake Varano as far as Peschici, Vieste and even further south than Mattinata. They were situated in some hollows, which opened in the deep gorges opening on to the Tavoliere plain. The cultural affinities found between the sites in the Gargano and the agricultural villages lead us to believe the former belonged to the same ethnic, cultural group

of the plain, from where small nuclei of populations had moved to the promontory.

During the Enolithic period (3rd millennium BC), the villages were small and consisted of huts with their foundations in the ground (Coppa Cardone) or resting on rocky surfaces (Punta Manaccora). During the Bronze Age (2nd millennium BC), models of territorial occupation were established that preferred strategic positions not only for defence purposes, but also for trading within a wide radius. The morphological features of the Gargano area favoured sheep-farming and contributed to the diffusion in this region during the mid Bronze Age of some customs of Proto-Apennine and Apennine cultures.

The entire coastal strip and foothills of the Gargano was seething with both open-air and cave



settlements of varied duration. One of the most important of these, Coppa Nevigata, significantly erected a robust stone wall all around to control the port of call along the Mediterranean trading routes. During the Bronze Age preference was given to sites close to the sea: along the coast, some of the well-known sites include Monte Saraceno and Manaccora; inland on the higher ground there were settlements in Bagni di Varano, Monte Tabor, Monte Civita and various others.

In the Roman era, the ethnic groups corresponded with the varying morphology of the territory: in the north, flat and with outlets to the sea, with possible landing strips, were the Apulians; in the south, with a high coastline and rare, but fertile valleys, were the Dauni. As in previous periods, the entire area had few roads, only the sea. The Gargano led down towards the ports on the Adriatic: there were numerous possible landing sites in addition to Uria (Vieste), as testified by Pliny who described the portus Agassus, the portus Garnae and the lacus Pantanus, all places the location of which is uncertain today.

With the exception of the communities of the Merinates and the Matinates, the only urban centre in the entire Gargano were Uria (Vieste), which around the 1st century BC began to be surrounded by villas, and Sipontum, a port and well-organised settlement.

The Greek-Gothic war (535-553) led to the discontinuity and destruction of towns in the Daunia, highlighting a lack of authority by the Roman administration, which created the conditions for a rapid diffusion of Christianity, as proven also by the numerous Paleo-Christian complexes which arose during this period in numerous places on the promontory.

Lorenzo Maiorano, bishop of Siponto, was the person behind the foundation of the sanctuary of San Michele, which encouraged the development of pilgrimage for Saint Michael, as a result of which the Gargano entered into the history of western mediaeval civilisation.

The connection between Benevento, seat of the duchy, and the Gargano, seat of the veneration of Saint Michael, remained constant in this area

throughout the Middle Ages and encouraged the religious and economic development of the towns in the Gargano, especially those along the main road which would later be called the Via Sacra Longobardorum.

The recapture of the Gargano by the Byzantine Empire at the end of the 9th century and the administrative weakness that followed the conflict facilitated frequent raids by the Saracens and Slavs along the Adriatic coast. The indigenous populations settled inland and created cave settlements, some of which are still visible in the historic centres of Peschici (the District of Caves at the entrance to the town), of Vico del Gargano (Casale, Civita and Terra) and Monte Sant'Angelo (Junno District).

Under Norman rule, all of Puglia flourished. Relative political stability set the basis for a cultural, economic and social rebirth, facilitated by the Norman attitude towards autonomous governments and the privileges granted to the expanding urban classes. The Gargano was to actively take part in the cultural rebirth of Puglia, seen in the construction of churches, palaces and castles. Emblematic examples are the churches of Santa Maria and San Leonardo in Siponto, the cathedrals of Vieste, the Abbey of Santa Maria di Tremiti, the Church of Santa Maria di Monte Devia in San Nicandro Garganico, the Abbey of Calena in Peschici, the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Tumba and the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Monte Sant'Angelo, all featuring a new, autonomous, and innovative artistic language compared to Byzantine art that prepared the foundations for the diffusion of Romanesque art in Puglia.

Under the rule of the Swabians, the urban landscape changed dramatically across the entire region, passing under Frederick II and his son, Manfredi, from the "civilisation of cathedrals" to a civilisation of castles. In the Gargano, Manfredi strengthened the castrum of Monte Sant'Angelo and built castles in Vico del Gargano, Vieste, Carpino, San Nicandro Garganico, and Apricena. Above all, in 1256, he erected a proper city, Manfredonia, after Siponto had been destroyed by an earthquake.

Under the Angevins and Aragons, the distinguishing cultural features were lost and infeudation became increasingly entrenched to give rise to a massive



CHARTER OF ROME AND NATIONAL PARKS

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reorganisation of cereal production and husbandry farms. This process of ruralisation later became a distinguishing feature of the entire economic and social development. The introduction of the Customs House for sheep, by Ferdinand I of Aragona determined the complete abandonment of all the lands of the Capitanata, which was deprived of a rich economic heritage, and only used now as a land of pasture and transit for the flocks from Molise and Abruzzo, to become a grazing area. All this caused the disappearance between the 14th and 15th century of numerous rural villages and the phenomenon, still present today, of centralisation in urban towns. The territory was marked by a tight network of sheep tracks for the transit of cattle, with resting posts, field and sheep farms, as well as the typical, famous enclosures known as “jazzi”.

The years between the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century were marked by raids by the Turks and by the massacres at Vieste (1554) and Manfredonia, which was completely destroyed in 1620. Subsequently, during the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic, numerous defence towers were built along the coast, many of which are still visible today. At the beginning of the 19th century, the territory was transformed yet again with the review of the land registries and the division of the properties. The initiative did not give the results hoped for due to the strenuous resistance of the local nobles, large landowners and the clergy. The need for land, however, was strong and determined the start of a long process of impoverishment of the woodland and forest heritage of the Gargano.



ITS HERITAGE



THE MUSEUM SYSTEM IN THE GARGANO

With the exception of the National Museum in the Castle of Manfredonia, the only state institute in the province of Foggia, the museum system of the Gargano is mainly a collection of heterogeneous finds from private collections beginning in the 19th century.

The civic museum of Mattinata houses an exhibition of stone sculptures from Mount Saraceno. The Superintendence is also curating a programme to set up specialised museum collections: the Flint Museum in Peschici preserves materials from Valle Sbernia; the Palaeolithic Museum is in Rignano and collaborates closely with the Museum in Manfredonia, where numerous initiatives are held regularly regarding the many prehistoric sites in the Park.



COPPA NEVIGATA (MANFREDONIA)

This is a multi-stratified site, in which the close superimposition of stratigraphic sequences from the Neolithic period to the Iron Age has resulted in the formation of an artificial hill. The oldest evidence obtained by dating shells place the settlement of Coppa Nevigata around 6,200 BC and identifies it, therefore, as one of the oldest Neolithic settlements of the peninsula. The discovery of a trench surrounding part of the village is similar to other smaller examples in the area of the Tavoliere.

Furthermore, Coppa Nevigata demonstrates a complete sequence for the Bronze Age (2nd millennium BC). The discovery of numerous shells of *Murex trunculus* is significant proof of artisan activities taking place within the village, linked to the extraction of purple dye. During this period (Proto-Apennine), the site saw the construction of large, dry stone wall with access to the village



protected by two towers with a semi-circular front. The need for such a defence work was linked to the role of the settlement, an easy landing place on the lake and nodal point for the trading and transit routes. Subsequently, the village moved eastwards and occupied the little promontory overlooking the laguna, protected in the direction of the mainland by a new surrounding wall, which partly re-used the previous towers. During the Sub-Apennine period, the village was organised on a regular layout, with streets, buildings and terracing along an axis set at 45 degrees compared to the cardinal points.



SIPONTO (MANFREDONIA)

The archaeological site of Siponto stands at approximately 700 m from the current coastline along the southern edge of the Gargano, immediately south of the modern town of Manfredonia in the area joining the limestone massif and the Tavoliere plain.

Numerous finds show how the site was occupied during the Iron Age and then more continuously from the 5th century BC. However, it was only later in the Roman era that the little town reached its maximum splendour.

Sipontum (Siponto) was founded at the beginning of the 2nd century BC., as punishment for the people from Arpi for their pro-Carthage support after the battle of Canne. First founded in 194 BC, it was followed by the repopulation of the colony in 184 BC certainly in the area which lies today near the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Siponto.

Like all Roman colonies, Siponto also had a maritime defence purpose: the walls followed the tuff ledge overlooking the laguna. Inside, was a rather small trapezoidal-shaped surface. We know for certain from literary sources speaking of transactions of cereals and a navigable canal connecting the colony to nearby Salapia (area of Lupara-Giardino) that by the end of the 2nd century BC, Siponto had an important port.

The modern SS89 highway probably follows the decuman, the main road of the Roman town. Little can be seen of the walls today: enclosed within the Masseria Garzia, we can recognise the remains of the grid structure of the amphitheatre, built using the same technique as other imposing structure visible at Mascherone. Both belong to the same work of construction.

As a result of its privileged geographical position and flourishing trading, Sipontum continued to shine throughout the early Middle Ages and became a major port of call and one of the busiest ports of the lower Adriatic Sea.



CASTEL PAGANO (APRICENA)

The era in which this fortress was founded is uncertain. It is believed, however, to have been built before the construction of Apricena, before the second half of the 9th century.

The castle already flourished in the 11th century under the seigniorship of the Norman count Enrico. Then, Rainulfo, duke of Aversa, handed it over to Ruggero, lord of Rignano, after a long, bitter war. Frederick II of Swabia restored it and left a garrison of Saracens there, named "Pagano". Later, the village became the fiefdom of Manfredi, son of Frederick II and founder of Manfredonia, and later it was donated to the kings by royal right. In 1496, King Ferdinand gave it to Ettore Pappacoda of Naples, who returned the entire area to its original splendour and who also built the Sanctuary of Stignano. It subsequently passed through many hands, and was finally bought by Prince Cattaneo of Sannicandro in 1768. It suffered several earthquakes, including the devastating one in 1627, as various documents testify, when Apricena and the surrounding area was severely damaged.



Today, the ruins consist of a 50 m-long and 1.5 m-high wall with two openings, which used to be doors with decorated door posts. This wall forms an angle on the left with the small remains of another building, whereas to the right it joins a circular tower, which currently is no higher than 5 m. A continuous, slightly banked wall starts from this tower with a steep drop to the valley below. A third wall closes the quadrangle to the south. In one corner stands the main, five-faced tower, six or seven metres high. Within the quadrangle, traces of walls can be seen but they are insufficient to explain the internal structure of the castle. The village was gradually abandoned at the beginning of the seventeenth century as the inhabitants of Apricena moved away, probably as a result of the severe shortage of water.



APPENNINO LUCANO VAL D'AGRI LAGONEGRESE NATIONAL PARK

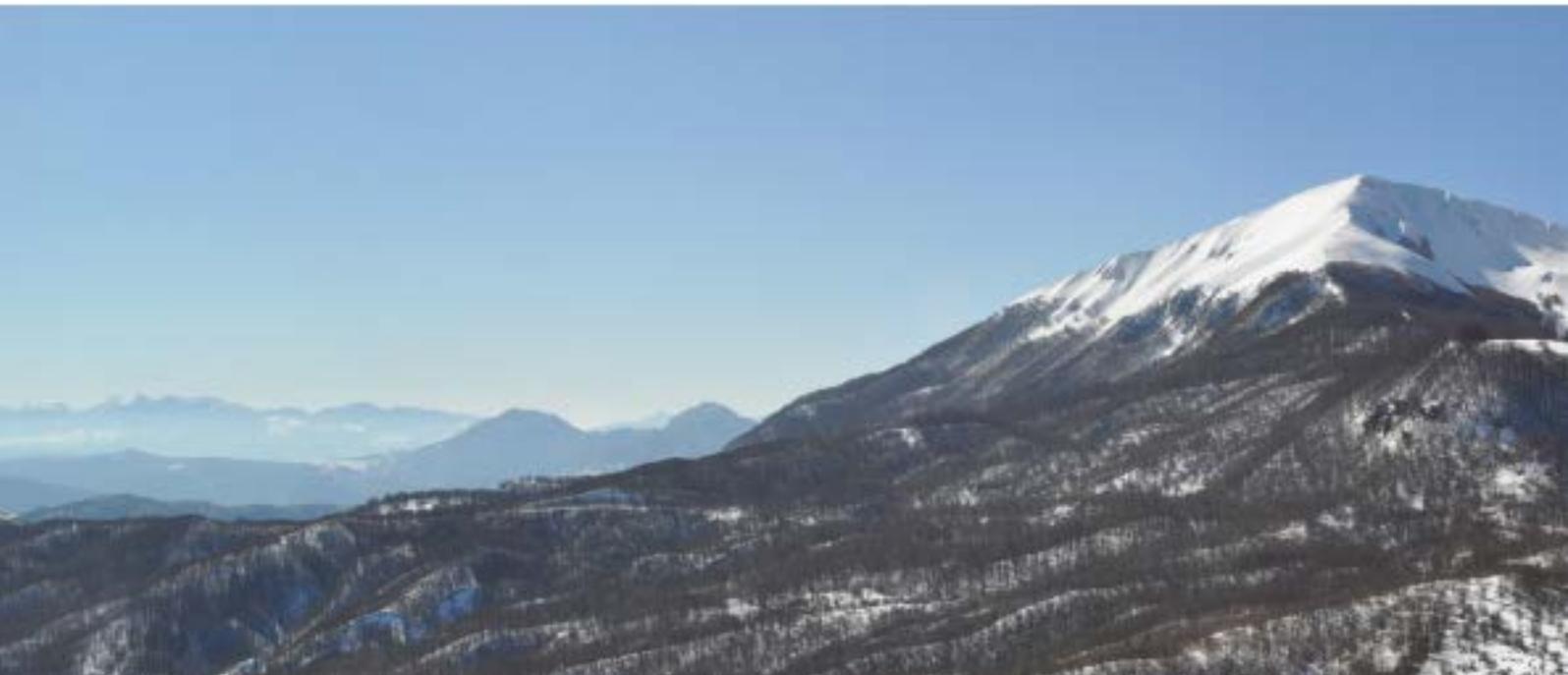


Photo property of Antonello Priore

Its History

The territory of the Apennine Lucano-Val d'Agri-Lagonegrese National Park comprises some major mountain passes and the natural communication path of the valley of the River Agri. It boasts a very ancient, anthropic occupation and as a result of its unusual position it has always been a meeting place of populations with different cultures and traditions.

Man's presence has been ascertained between the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age, as documented by the finds in the cave of Latronico and more generally along the Ionian coastal strip.

During the Iron Age, numerous settlements concentrated on the highlands, in particular close to the largest rivers. Two cultural areas began to



emerge, identifiable on the basis of their different types of burial: along the Ionian coast and in the Val d'Agri lived a population of Oenotrian culture, who buried their dead lying on their backs; another population settled inland, on the borders with Apulia, who buried their dead in a curled up position.

The Greek period has left more evidence. Colonisation led to a clear demographic rise, as testified by numerous necropoli, including those of Alianello and Aliano in the middle of the Agri valley. Archaeological finds have shown it acted as a hinge between the peoples of the area, who acted as intermediaries between the Ionian Greek influence at one end and the Tyrrhenian Etruscan-Campana at the other

From an archaeological point of view, the process of Romanisation taking place during the early 3rd century BC became a moment of profound social and economic restructuring of the entire region: the nucleus of territorial organisation became the villa system as the fortifications on the highlands were abandoned. Significantly, Grumentum was the only centre with any urban features in the hinterland and was surrounded by small rural settlements. Another watershed moment was the war with Hannibal following which, due to the support the Lucanians guaranteed to the African general, the area was truly depopulated following punishment from Rome, in which the rebellious towns were raised to the ground and the citizens deported as slaves.

During the age of Augustus, there were signs of recovery, as shown by the rural settlements: the resulting villa system left important traces throughout the region. Nevertheless, the area was to remain isolated and the main towns gradually lost their ancient splendour, leaving the region in a constant state of abandon until late Antiquity. Not by chance did Alarico plunder the area of Potenza in 402 and, in the following century, it was annexed by the Longobards to the Duchy of Benevento and then to the Principality of Salerno.

Basilicata played a major role in the first half of the 11th century, when Melfi became the capital of the Norman state. Under the rule of the Angevins, the conditions of the region worsened still further, also as a result of a massive phenomenon of depopulation. Plagues, famines, earthquakes and wars exacerbated the demographic situation over the following centuries.

Later, this area became part of the Neapolitan Republic and fought against the Napoleonic armies. It fell under Bourbon rule until the Unity of Italy.

Towns of historic importance include Brienza (Burguntia or Burgentia), probably founded by the Longobards in the 7th century. The town was dominated by the imposing ruins of the Angevin castle, or Castello Caracciolo, restored in 1571, around which the mediaeval town wound its way. Some buildings of worship preserving frescoes and canvases of great artistic importance can be visited in the town.

Marsico Nuovo is an agricultural town overlooking the Agri valley. Founded by the Marsi in the 6th-5th century BC (Abellinum Marsicum), it was an ancient gastaldate, a county under the Longobards and Episcopal see. At the top of the town stands the church of San Michele Arcangelo, the first cathedral in the town, with a 13th century stone door decorated with leaves and flowers. In front of this stands the 12th century Church of San Gianuario, with characteristic door posts, decorated with anthropomorphic bas-reliefs.

Standing high up dominated by the peak of Mount San Enoc on the western ridge of the upper Val d'Agri is Viggiano, the ancient pagus of Grumentum, which derives its name from the Roman lord, Vibius. Fortified in the 10th century by the Longobards, ancient Bizzano took part in the Ghibelline revolt of 1268 and was the fiefdom of Giovanni Pipino at the beginning of the 14th century. Large stretches of walls and parts of the side towers remain of the feudal castle, destroyed by an earthquake in 1857.



ITS HERITAGE



GRUMENTUM (GRUMENTO NOVA)

Grumentum was founded half way through the 3rd century BC and was the result of a complex phenomenon linked to the Romanisation of Lucania. There are various aspects which define the urban character of Grumentum and its political role. First and foremost was the orthogonal layout of the town of Greek layout and its position next to where several roads converged which connected not only with Venusia and the Via Appia, but also southwards with Eraclea along the Via Popilia.

Traces of paved roads and the use of opus coementicium are evidence of the Lucanian phase of the town, dating back to somewhere between the 3rd and 2nd century BC. Coins testify to relationships with Naples, Eraclea, Metapontum and Taranto.

During the social war at the beginning of the 1st century BC, Grumentum sided with Rome and was repeatedly occupied by the Italics. The first signs of new construction work can be seen half way through the century. Interventions intensified from the Augustan era and the early Imperial era when an aqueduct, baths, a theatre and an amphitheatre were built. During the same period, the forum area was developed and probably took place when it acquired the statute of colony.

New complexes of public buildings appeared within the older road grid, keeping to the same orientation, with the exception of the amphitheatre. Both the forum and the theatre, as other buildings were built within the already occupied areas. Throughout the Imperial era, Grumentum, together with Venusia and Potentia, represented one of the few urban centres in Lucania, the only ones to be directly connected to the main roads in and outside the region. Grumentum played a major role, therefore, in the political and commercial dynamics of the time. Archaeological documentation has revealed a very lively economy: the public buildings were continually maintained and strengthened with the addition, amongst other things, of a second baths and basalt paving for the most frequented roads. The 5th century was a conclusive moment in the life cycle of the town: in the first half of the century, the main public monuments and the area of the forum showed signs of abandon. The only exception was the Church of Santa Maria Assunta, a place of worship and burial ground at least until the 13th-14th centuries.

After its decline, the area on which Grumentum stood was used in various ways. Architectural elements from the urban necropolis were reused as material to build the tombs of the little necropolis built in the 7th century in the district of San Marco. Subsequently, the entire hill was used for agricultural purposes which led to the disappearance of many remains of the ancient city.

The current Archaeological Park of Grumentum comprises some urban sections (amphitheatre, theatre and forum), whereas the museum holds a vast archaeological documentation on the Roman town and the upper Valle dell'Agri in pre-Roman times.



CASTELLO CARACCIOLO (BRIENZA)

Built during the Angevin period, it dominates the cliff of Brienza and was named after its most famous owners, about whom we have some information. The Caracciolo family acquired it in 1428 and owned it until 1857, and over the years they extended it.

Inherited by the Barracco family, it then fell into the hands of lieges and administrators who dismantled it and even sold the building materials, leaving it in a serious state of abandon.



Badly damaged by the earthquake of 1980, it still preserves its Angevin features with its powerful cylindrical donjon and circular half tower, which dominate the cliff. Access was difficult due to the steep hillsides and was only possible through the main entrance, reached by a wide stone stairway leading to a terrace on an embankment. According to the Longobard methods of fortification, the castle was also protected by the curtain wall formed by the aggregate walls of the houses which surrounded it, protecting it from enemy attacks. Scene of numerous legendary stories and setting for the opera “Rodolfo from Brienza”, it was said to have 365 rooms, one for each day of the year.



CONVENT OF SAN ANTONIO AND CIVIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM (RIVELLO)

The former convent of “San Antonio”, also known as the convent of the “Minori Osservanti”, dates back to the 16th century and stands at the bottom of the town of Rivello.

The church front preserves traces of 16th century frescoes and has a door reminiscent of Catalan architecture surmounted by the crest of Rivello. Inside, the church has a deep Presbyterian domed apse with clear Baroque additions. The barrel vault is embellished with recurring motifs in the stucco decoration along the side walls.

The convent refectory preserves a sixteenth century “Last Supper” and other badly damaged frescoes by Giovanni de Gregorio.

The complex houses the Civic Archaeological Museum, which displays material from excavations carried out in the nearby towns of Serra Città and Piano del Pignataro, home of the indigenous inhabitants in close contact with the Greek colonies on the Tyrrhenian coast.





POLLINO NATIONAL PARK

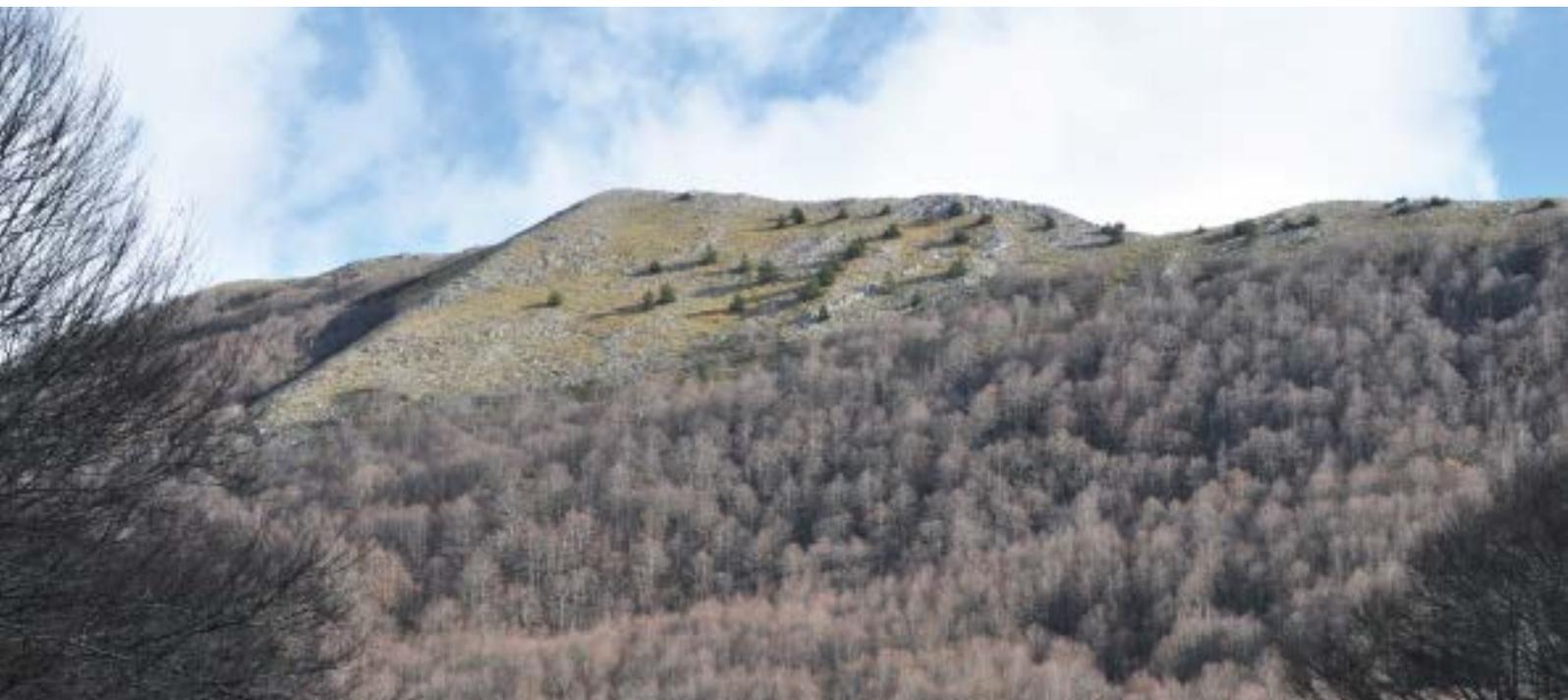


Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The vast territory of the Pollino National Park, the largest in Italy stretches for 192,565 ha and includes two regions - Calabria and Basilicata - and two seas - Ionian and Tyrrhenian. From antiquity it was the inevitable meeting place for populations of different origins. The traces of different cultures that followed and crossed each other are clearly visible today in these mountains. The oldest evidence of man's presence in the Park area was discovered in Celimarro di Castrovillari, a site situated along the valley of the River Coscile. This place has revealed amidst the layers of a travertine ledge, stone artefacts dating back to the Lower Palaeolithic period mixed with fragments of the remains of mammals, including the aurochs or wild ox (*Bos primigenius*), extinct for centuries. Of major importance are the Palaeolithic finds in the cave of Romito, in the municipality of Papisidero, one of the most important prehistoric sites on the

peninsula. A limestone boulder at the entrance to the cave bears the engraving of the magnificent figure of a bull, dating back to approximately 12,000 years ago. This is the largest cave drawing from that period in Italy and is considered one of the most important pieces of evidence of prehistoric art in Europe. Other bovine figures have been found on the same boulder, as well as some burial sites near the cave.

During the Metal Ages, the area was assiduously occupied. Proof lies in the funerary accoutrements from the Iron Ages from Laino Borgo and Castello - along the Lao valley, an ancient waterway used for travel and movement - the Enolithic settlement of the cave of Donna Marsilia in Morano, Bronze Age pottery discovered in Senise and Castelsaraceno. The foundation on the Ionian Sea of the Achaean town of Sybaris links the massacre of the Pollino area to the Greek colonisation of Magna Graecia.



The trading and commercial exchanges of the Sybarites developed along the routes over the passes and along the valley bottom as far as the Tyrrhenian Sea, where they founded the town of Laos, which played a fundamental role in the relationships between the Sybarites and the Etruscans. The Hellenisation of the indigenous communities of the Pollino led to the flourishing of towns of Italic civilisation, including that of Cersosimo

Soon, however, cohabitation between the indigenous populations and Greek colonies became difficult. A period of bitter clashes began, which only ended when Rome conquered the entire area. A few years after taking this area, the Romans built the Via Popilia, the first road to cross the heart of the massif to connect Reggio Calabria and Capua. It established one of its stations in Morano and another in Rotonda, the ancient “Nerulum”.

Via Popilia continued to be used throughout the Middle Ages as a fundamental artery of communication. However, it also became part of the route the pilgrims used to reach the Holy Land. It crossed the pass of Campotenesse and in the area of Morano passed through the mediaeval settlement of Sassone, the remains of which nowadays constitute an impressive archaeological site.

The arrival of Norman rule led to the creation of large monastic centres, which soon played a central role in the socio-economic dynamics of the individual territories. The need to cultivate and make their land productive forced the monks to favour colony settlements that were exempt from taxes and free from the harshest duties. Thus, some towns grew up around these religious structures. This was the case, for example, of Francavilla sul Sinni – founded for the presence of the Certosa di San Nicola – and San Basile, serving the Byzantine monastery of San Basilio Craterere.

Between 1470 and 1540, numerous exiles arrived from Albania, fleeing from their homeland invaded by the Turks. They settled on these mountains and established small communities that carefully kept the language, customs and traditions of their homeland. In subsequent years, as a result of other waves of migration, they consolidated

their presence and founded numerous little towns: Civita, San Basile, Lungro, Acquaforsa, Plataci, Frascineto, San Costantino Albanese and San Paolo Albanese. The Albanian community of the Pollino is one of the largest in Italy. In Civita and San Paolo Albanese you can visit the museums of the Arbëreshe Civilisation, which hold numerous objects, tools and local customs and objects of great religious interest from the Greek and Byzantine rite.

The number of places of worship grew considerably in the same period. Some of these were built, as in the past, in a very beautiful landscape. Particularly noteworthy is the Church of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli in Papisidero, set in the gorges of the River Lao, the Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Armi in Cerchiara, with significant examples of Renaissance art perched on a steep rocky cliff, the Sanctuary of Santa Maria dello Spasimo in Laino Borgo, better known as Santa Maria delle Cappelle for its fifteen tiny chapels frescoed with scenes from the life of Christ.

Numerous noble palaces and fortified structures also stand next to the sacred buildings in many towns within the Park. Chiaromonte is a splendid example. During the Middle Ages, the town began to look like a walled land as the ancient fortress was transformed into a proper castle with the construction of a powerful surrounding wall with three gates. There are numerous castles: the Aragonese Castle of Castrovillari dating back to 1478, an extraordinary example of military architecture attributed to Francesco Giorgio Martini, handed down to us almost intact; the Norman castle of Senise, part of a defence complex created to defend the valley below; the feudal castle of Episcopia (14th century), with a thirteenth century tower which, although altered by subsequent interventions, has maintained its original imposing aspect.

The historic town centres contain a considerable number of noble palaces, mainly built between the 16th and 19th centuries. Some of the most beautiful include Palazzo Dolcetti, Lauria and Di Giura in Chiaromonte; the original Palazzo Mazzilli in Calvera, embellished on the outside with a cornice depicting the four seasons, the noble houses Frabasile and



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Verderosa in Episcopia, Palazzo Amato in Rotonda and Palazzo De Filpo in Viggianello.

Despite the numerous, continual earthquakes, many villages have preserved their original structure

and have truly magnificent historic centres. Some of these worthy of note are Aieta, Civita, Morano Calabro and Viggianello, included among the most Beautiful Towns in Italy.



ITS HERITAGE



CASTELLO ARAGONESE (CASTROVILLARI)

Begun in 1461 and inaugurated about thirty years later in 1490 at the same time as those in Belvedere Marittimo, Corigliano Calabro and Pizzo Calabro, the castle was commissioned by Ferdinand I of Aragona to keep the restless population under foreign rule at bay.

Due to lack of funds, the castle was never actually completed and the dates shown on the inscriptions of the four castles were probably for celebratory purposes. The building sums up the typical features of Aragonese fortifications. Inside it had a rectangular layout with cylindrical towers at each corner, whereas on the outside it would have been surrounded by a moat, no longer visible today. Due to the different sized towers, almost perfectly situated at the four cardinal points, it took on a trapezoidal shape.

The largest tower to the right of the entrance acted as a donjon, and was decorated with deep round arches and by a stone circle which ran all round the perimeter of the fortification. Used as a prison, the main tower earned itself the name of “infamous tower” as a result of the torture inflicted on the prisoners shut within. Above the entrance, reached via a drawbridge, is a marble plaque with the Aragonese coat of arms, and the inscription in 15th century letters is in remembrance of the foundation and intended use of the castle. The manor, used as a prison until 1995, is now open to the public and is one of the least well-known, but best preserved Aragonese castles in Calabria.



CAVE OF ROMITO (PAPASIDERO)

The cave, discovered in 1961, is fundamental proof that the Pollino area was already inhabited in the Upper Palaeolithic period. The site consists of the cave dug about twenty metres into the limestone rock, which can be reached via a narrow tunnel, and of a shelter stretching about 34 metres eastwards.

Traces of assiduous occupation of the cave by Homo sapiens have been demonstrated by the numerous stone and bone remains found and above all by the famous engraved graffiti of two bovine figures (*Bos primigenius*) on the cave walls. The largest figure, approximately 1.20 m long, is engraved on a boulder measuring approximately 2.30 m in length and tilted at 45°. The horns, seen from the side, are projected forwards and have a closed profile. Great care was taken over some of the details, such as the nostrils, mouth, ear and lightly drawn eye. The folds in the skin on the neck are very clear and the cloven feet are very well drawn. A cut crosses the figure of the animal near the position of the kidneys. Below the large figure of the bull is another, finer engraved bovine figure, showing just the chest, head and part of the back. Opposite the boulder with the bull stands another boulder approximately 3.5 metres long with apparently incomprehensible engraved lines.



The Neolithic occupation of the Romito Cave, carbon 14 dated to 4470 BC, is confirmed by the discovery of about fifty fragments of pottery, which reveal the existence of the obsidian trade passing through from the Aeolian Islands. Some burials dating back to approximately 9,200 BC were also found in the cave, each containing a couple of people. One of these couples was found in the cave, whereas the other two were in the shelter not far from the boulder with the figure of the bull.



CIVIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM (CASTROVILLARI)

It can be found at the Franciscan proto-convent, next to the Municipal Art Gallery “Andrea Alfano”. The collections comprise over 2000 finds discovered around Castrovillari and cover a chronological period ranging from the Neolithic period to the Middle Ages. They provide a panorama of the continuity of life in the area. The remains from the excavations conducted in Papisidero and works of 12th century Arabic-Norman art stand out in the collection.





SILA NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The Sila National Park protects an ancient mountain complex, generated by orogenesis prior to the one which gave rise to the Apennines. A steep escarpment rises from the surrounding plains to a vast plateau lying at a height of between 1200 and 1500 m.

The place name Sila comes from an Oscan word corresponding to the Latin *silva*. The entire area had been covered since ancient times by immense forests, which were to become its distinguishing feature.

There is not much information regarding the anthropic presence in the prehistoric era. Until recently man's presence was believed to have been only episodic. The climate and abundant dangerous wildlife probably made these places rather unwelcoming. Recent studies, however, suggest a stable presence of small nuclei living in huts and caves (traces found in the Grotta di Boia in Campania) who made arms with stone or obsidian points and probably cut

the trees to use the timber, as shown by the large bronze axes found at Timparello dei Ladri, near Lake Ampollino.

The Sila area continued to lack true settlements even in subsequent periods. The Calabrian populations, the Itali, Enotri and Morgeti, lived in the surrounding plains and occasionally occupied the plateau in order to use the abundant natural resources.

Around the mid 8th century BC, Sybaris and Kroton were founded on the Ionian Sea, a few kilometres from the eastern foothills of the Sila. They were destined to become two towns of the greatest cultural and political importance in Magna Graecia. The surrounding areas were subjected to deforestation and used for agriculture. The colonies rapidly improved their economic conditions and strengthened their trading. For this purpose they used not only sea routes but also internal paths, which mainly followed the river valleys, to reach the Tyrrhenian coast.



In the 4th century BC, the Greek colonies declined and the territory was gradually transformed. During this period, the Bruzi landed in Calabria. These were people from the north who were essentially hunters, shepherds and farmers. They specialised in making pitch from the resin extracted from the pine trees. This was very popular in ancient times for waterproofing barrels or containers, building ships, making moulds for bronze statues or, as Pliny the Elder writes, for use in cosmetics and medicines.

Soon the Bruzi (or Brettii) founded their own towns of Consentia, Pandosia and Petelia, and entered into conflict with the Greek colonies, now called Italioti. They attacked and conquered some of their towns, including Hipponion, today's Vibo Valentia, and Sybaris. This was the highest point of the civilisation of this people, who looked at the expansion of Rome with hostility. Not by chance in 280 BC, did the Bruzi make an alliance with Pyrrhus against the Romans who, at the end of the conflict in which they were victorious, punished them severely and confiscated the extensive forests to take enormous quantities of timber to construct buildings and ships. History basically repeated itself during the Punic Wars, when the Bruzi sided with Hannibal. When, in 203 BC, the general abandoned Calabria, Rome easily quenched pockets of revolt and inflicted an even more severe punishment: they took away the title of city-state from Consentia, dissolved the Bruzi Confederation and confiscated almost all the land, transforming it into a Roman colony. The final episode in this saga took place in the 1st century BC, when the Brettii attempted to re-acquire greater autonomy by joining the revolt of Spartacus who, for many months, found shelter and sustenance in Sila. Over 10,000 Bruzi died in the final battle in 71 BC. From then onwards, Rome put into action an aggressive policy to exploit the area with intense deforestation of the Sila Mountains.

This area remained wild for a long time afterwards without any major stable settlements. In 1189, the Cistercian monk, Gioacchino da Celico, remembered as Gioacchino da Fiore, founded a monastery called Badia and created the monastic order of San

Giovanni in Fiore. Over the years, the Badia received donations and tax relief from various sovereigns who followed one another, fascinated by the authoritative figure of the abbot Gioacchino, whose fame as a scholar spread throughout Europe. The village of San Giovanni in Fiore was built around the monastery from 1500 onwards to become an important cultural town in Calabria, which still preserves an interesting historic centre.

Deforestation continued and became even harsher throughout the territory. Many state-owned forest lands, intended for civic use, were "usurped" by private individuals and transformed into agricultural lands. This phenomenon continued until the 19th century and created a great deal of tension, which ended in yet more insane destruction of the forestry resources. Shepherds, farmers and large landowners systematically burned the woods to obtain areas to cultivate. The development of rural activities determined the settlement of a new stable population and the extension of existing nuclei which became towns, such as Celico, the birthplace of Gioacchino da Fiore, Spezzano della Sila and Taverna, from the Latin taberna which probably referred to a stop on a road which rose from the Ionian coast to the Sila in Roman times.

Between 1860 and 1875, the newly created United State constructed approximately 180 km of roads as a result of concerns over banditry. This contributed to the dynamics of anthropisation and artificialisation of the land, because the exploitation of timber was being carried out on an industrial scale, with large concessions managed by forestry companies from all over Italy. There was a further intense period of deforestation after the Second World War, when the Anglo-American Allies plundered the forests of tall pine trees of the Sila as redress for war damage. Shortly afterwards in 1956, the second stretch of narrow gauge railway line was inaugurated, which was supposed to link Cosenza and Crotona across the plateau. The railway line, currently closed, was, however, considered one of the major works of railway engineering in Italy. The station of Silvana Mansio at an altitude of 1405 m is the highest in Italy.



ITS HERITAGE



THE ABBEY (SAN GIOVANNI IN FIORE)

Built in 1189, it was consolidated and restored in the 16th century and then in 1928 and 1970. The abbey has a single long nave, with a very prominent transept, the flat arms of which are covered by a cross vault and communicate via quadrangular rooms around the main central crossing. The church structure has several features which make it stand out from the classic Cistercian model. The Florense monastic ideal brought several innovations, such as the isolation of the side chapels and the presence of a 13th century crypt, restored in 1929.

A rather large door, which can be dated back to 1220 and which bears signs of the fire of 1799, opens up in the façade. The architectural decoration of the door has capitals with palms and archivolts decorated with oak leaves, above which is a large oculus without any columns.

The interior has a decorative cable running along the walls and houses some precious wooden ecclesiastical furnishings, dating back to the 17th century. Four 18th century canvases by C. Santenna are preserved in rooms next door. The remains of the cloister and cells have also been preserved. The Demagogical Museum of Economics, Employment and Social History of the Sila is currently housed inside the Florense Abbey.



THE CHURCH OF SAN DOMENICO (TAVERNA)

The church of San Domenico, which currently houses the Civic Museum, was transformed between 1670 and 1680 into Baroque shapes: the interior has a single nave with painted ceiling, and houses a considerable number of works by Mattia and Gregorio Preti.

At the church entrance is a Pietà, the work of G.B. Ortega (1603); the walls and ceiling have stuccoes and frescoes by the workshop of the De Rosa family; below are 17th century altars exhibiting canvases by Mattia Preti: "The Martyrdom of Saint Peter of Verona"; "Saint Francis of Paola spreads his cloak"; "Saint Sebastian"; "Madonna with child amidst the Saints Nicola and Gennaro".

A more recent high altar to replace that of 1678 stands in the presbytery. It has a frontal with the Immaculate Conception in the centre, a wooden, sculpted lectern and wooden chancel and the back wall bears the famous "Christ fulminating the world", a mature work by Mattia Preti.



THE SANCTUARY OF THE SPINA (PETILIA POLICASTRO)

The Sanctuary owes its name to an ancient relic kept here until 1975, when it was unfortunately stolen. Access to the building is via an impressive path marked by the aedicules of the Via Crucis, which crosses a deep valley over a 17th century single-arched bridge. It is one of the first minorite monasteries in Calabria. Founded in 1431, it became an important Franciscan sanctuary and was subjected to heavy rebuilding between the 16th and 18th centuries.

The church has a painted wooden ceiling and a splendid high altar, with a balustrade made by S. Troccoli in 1764. A Madonna with child attributed to G.D. Mazzolo stands in a niche on the left-hand wall. Numerous vestments and ecclesiastical furnishings covering a period from the 16th to the 18th century are preserved in the church.





ASPROMONTE NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The Aspromonte National Park includes part of the mountain range in the far south of the peninsula and derives its name from the Greek word *aspros* (white). People already began to populate this area in the Lower Palaeolithic period and occupation can be documented throughout the Neolithic and Eneolithic periods and the Bronze Age. The Iron Age recorded a considerable increase in the settlements, usually located high on the plateaus overlooking the coastal strips. Some of them were of a considerable size, judging by the number and type of remains found in the necropoli.

During the 8th century BC, Calabria was involved in a flow of migrants from various regions in Greece. Two famous poleis were founded in the area immediately next to the Park: Reggio and Locri Epizefiri. Reggio was built between 720 and 715 BC on the Calabrian coast of the Strait of Messina by Calcidese colonies. Following the indications given by the Oracle of Delphi the colonies settled in a site

called Pallantion, northeast of the River Apsias, between the sea and the mountain range. Reggio soon became one of the most important towns in Magna Graecia and achieved considerable political and economic importance in the 5th century BC.

Locri was founded between the end of the 8th century BC and the beginning of the 7th century BC by a nucleus of colonists from the area of Locris, a region in ancient Greece. The town grew rapidly in political and economic importance and experienced long periods of splendour, especially during the Archaic period, thanks to its alliances with Reggio and Siracusa. During the 2nd Punic War, it sided with Hannibal and, in 205 BC, it was conquered by the Romans. Although it became a Municipium (89 BC), it experienced a long period of decline, marked by a gradual depopulation. The difficult environmental conditions - the coastal areas were highly malarial - and the frequent Arabic raids made the last inhabitants completely abandon the town



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and move inland between the 7th and 8th century BC.

The entire area of Aspromonte was placed under Roman rule at the end of the Punic wars and became highly romanised, particularly after direct roads were built during the second half of the 2nd century BC. With the advent of Byzantine rule, this region, named Brutia, became a *thema*, a province of the Eastern Empire. The entire area experienced a period of relative tranquillity and economic stability, characterised by the diffusion of small agricultural properties and new crops, such as the mulberry, which allowed it to increase trading with Muslim Sicily. At this time, numerous monasteries were built and Aspromonte and its caves became the refuge for many hermits.

After being given a feudal structure under Swabian rule, Calabria was divided during the 12th century into two *giustizierati* or districts: that of Val di Crati to the north and that of Calabria to the south. The boundary between the two sub-divisions ran to south of the Sila and divided the areas in which people spoke mainly Latin dialects (Bruzia province), from those where they spoke mainly Hellenised dialects (Byzantine province).

The Aragonese on their arrival (1442) roughly maintained the previous division. They contrasted Calabria Citeriore or Citra, today's Cosentino, with Calabria beyond the River Neto, which was further divided into I and II, the first with the main town of Reggio, the other with the main town of Catanzaro. The reorganisation carried out by the Bourbons in 1816 maintained the old Aragonese tri-partition, which was then carried over to the order of the new Italian state (1860).

The Park territory is characterised by a stratification of very old and very complex historic and cultural signs, not all of which are as yet fully known or clearly understood.

One of the main signs of identification is the existence of the so-called "Grecanic Area", a district which spoke the Grecanic language or Grico dialect. This was a dialect that evolved differently from Modern Greek and its origin is still debateable: some scholars believe it is linked to repopulations in Byzantine times, others say it is connected directly to Magna Graecia.

The bond with the natural landscape and anthropic occupation is very evident here. In fact, the morphology of the area has determined the model of settlement, which can still be clearly seen.

The settlements were organised diagonally along the valleys cut by the rivers, especially in the spectacular cutting of the River Amendolea, which acted not only as a link between the coast and the hinterland, but also as a means of separating the towns rising on opposite slopes.

Due to their geographic isolation in inaccessible places, the towns in the Grecanic area have maintained a rich, historic, architectural and cultural heritage which, although it is not considered very highly, is still very impressive,

The main town is Bova, one of the most beautiful Villages in Italy, which stands on a site showing signs of occupation from prehistoric times. Recent archaeological investigations have highlighted a continual occupation of the area by ancient peoples, linked to an economy based on agriculture and sheep farming. The town is dominated by the ruins of a Norman Castle, dating back to the 10th-11th century, standing on a rocky spur. In addition to this building, it also has noble residences from the early 18th century, such as Palazzo Nesci and Palazzo Mesiano.

Other elements of extreme historic interest are to be found in the Locri area. Due to the looting by the Saracen pirates during the Middle Ages, the coastal area has preserved very little of the immense architectural and artistic heritage of its great splendour under Greek colonisation. These traces have been kept inland in the river plains and in the foothills. Symbol of the cultural importance is the little town of Gerace, which represents one of the towns of greatest architectural and artistic merit in all Calabria.

Some suggestions have been made that it was founded by the people of Locri, who were forced to abandon their homeland to flee from the Saracen peril during the 9th century. Recent archaeological excavations have brought to light tombs from the Bronze Age, which would appear to show the area was already occupied in the pre-Hellenist period. It was an important Byzantine and Norman town and despite its favourable position, it was subjected



to frequent attacks by the Saracens, who repeatedly looted it. Nevertheless, it is still full of beautiful art, preserved mainly in its Cathedral, one of the most well-known Norman Byzantine buildings in Calabria. Of the ancient walls surrounding the historic town centre, today only some of the gates remain, such as those of Borghetto, Sole or Bombarde. In the higher part of the town stands the castle, which unfortunately is in ruins.

Another significant historic complex is that of the so-called Gioia Tauro Plain between the slopes of the mountain massif of the Serre and the north-western slope of Aspromonte. The towns within this area have all been completely rebuilt after the earthquakes of 1783 and 1908. Some of them have preserved the historic layout of the typical urban structure of mediaeval and eighteenth century

villages.

The town of greatest interest is San Giorgio Morgeto, founded according to tradition by the Oenotrians (2350 BC), although we have no archaeological evidence of this. Today, it is one of the most interesting historic villages in Calabria: narrow winding alleyways lead to the upper part of the village, where the ruins of the mediaeval castle stand. The town centre has some interesting buildings: of particular importance is the convent complex of the Dominican fathers, founded in 1393. The building has an impressive porticoed cloister and stands on an imposing architectural floor plan. To the right stands the monumental church of San Domenico, which houses some valuable, 18th century, wooden statues.



ITS HERITAGE



THE SANCTUARY OF SAN LEO (BOVA)

The church was built in 1606 and contains the relics of the Italo-Greek ascetic thaumaturgist, protector of the town. The building has a 17th century stone portal; the interior is built on a rectangular floor plan with a single nave and side chapels, with a Baroque high altar, built in 1753 and restored several times. In the niche above the altar is a white marble statue of San Leo, dating back to 1582, at the side of which stands the chapel altar (1732), embellished with columns culminating in a curvilinear tympanum.

The church also hosts a precious, eighteenth century canvas, depicting a Madonna treading on a snake, attributed to Calabrian painters influenced by the Neapolitan school.



THE SANCTUARY OF POLSI (SAN LUCA)

The Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Mountain or Sanctuary of Polsi stands in a deep gorge formed by the slopes of Montalto and by the other valley of the Fiumara Bonamico. The oldest phase of the sanctuary dates back to the Byzantine period. However, the place was also enriched with donations made by the count Ruggero the Norman in 1144. The sanctuary was abandoned by the Byzantine monks when, in 1481, the Greek rite was definitively abolished.

The original structure was destroyed mainly by the earthquake of 1628 and was rebuilt in 1730 and 1737. With the establishment of the Cassa Sacra [Sacred Fund], after the earthquake of 1783, the sanctuary lost many of its precious objects.



The external façade is fairly simple, with a saddle roof and the bell tower alongside. The high altar, consecrated in 1737, holds the venerated statue of 1560 of the Madonna of the Mountain with child in her arms.

The festival of the Madonna di Polsi has been celebrated for several centuries on 2 September. Believers flock to the sanctuary from every corner of Calabria after days of walking. The pilgrimage rite is celebrated in a particularly intense, mystic atmosphere.



THE CATHEDRAL OF SANTA MARIA ASSUNTA (GERACE)

In the central square of Piazza Tribuna stands the majestic façade of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta. The history of this grandiose, Byzantine-Norman building is complex and very structured and was part of the initial occupation of the town. Recent archaeological investigations have identified the crypt as the first religious cell of the building, built on Basilian foundations dating back to the 7th century, probably connected to caves used as cave churches.

Numerous layers followed one another over the centuries and the first chronological point linked to the structure can be dated back to 1045 in connection with the consecration performed by the bishop Pasqua.

The floor plan is similar to the Basilian type with a Latin cross, three naves, a transept and dome. The structure extends over a surface of 1898 m²: it is the largest church in Calabria.

From the outside it appears to be heavily fortified as a result of the high, compact, limestone wall, with beading in straight lines and two oculi in the pediment. Two apses protrude from this wall. The one on the left has a small embrasure, whereas the one on the right has a Baroque style door.

The western façade is closed by a narrow courtyard and partly obstructed by a robust, nineteenth century bell tower. The central door with a large recessed window above reflects the severe Romanesque style.

The interior is very plain with a wooden trussed roof, single recessed doors and windows, the only decoration being the columns and salvaged capitals, arranged in two rows of ten.





ASINARA NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The island of Asinara preserves archaeological evidence dating back to the Neolithic period, visible at Piano Campo Perdu, Campo Faro and La Reale. More common are the signs of significant anthropic occupation in the Roman era. In his *Naturalis Historia*, Pliny the Elder mentions Asinara for the first time calling it “Herculis Insula”, a name which was then extended to the small island of Piana. The largest concentration of traces dating back to this period can be found in the area of the Lazaret, a wide plain overlooking the best port of call on Asinara, that of Cala Reale. The chronology of this evidence - mid 1st century BC - and its position, lead us to think that the structure of the Roman settlement on the island can be linked to the foundation of Turris Libisonis (Porto Torres), interested in exploiting the rich reserves of grey granite in the areas of Cala S. Andrea and Cala Reale.

In the late Middle Ages, the island lost many of its inhabitants due to incursions by the Arabs. During the period of the first administrations when, around

the middle of the year one thousand, Sardinia was divided into 4 kingdoms or giudicati, in turn divided into curatorie, it was part of the curatoria of Nurra, owned by the Doria and occupied by communities of fishermen.

In 1325, the Doria seized it and subsequently, in 1331, it was granted to Sassari as a grazing area. During the wars between Aragona and Arborea, the island was the scene of wars, and then remained deserted. The fishermen who came there were unable to avoid it becoming the base for pirate fleets who continued to disembark on Asinara for the whole of the following century.

When Sardinia passed under Savoy rule, the concession to Sassari was revoked and an attempt was made to colonise and populate the island by starting some agricultural activities. The experiment did not give good results and from the 19th century onwards, the island was used first as a Lazaret and then as a penal colony.



ITS HERITAGE



CAMPO PERDU - DOMUS DE JANAS

The domus de janas - literally houses of the fairies – are structures of uncertain use (tombs or homes?) of the Neolithic period. The oldest evidence of the anthropic occupation of Asinara is a well-preserved centripetal, multi-cell domus de janas, which can be found at Campo Perdu.

The presence in this area of a soft limestone substrate facilitated the quarrying of the domus, but at the same time did not favour the preservation of other finds, which could prove useful to provide further information regarding the activities of the tiny Neolithic community that settled in this site.



THE SYSTEM OF COASTAL TOWERS

The complex of the island coastal towers was part of a system built to guarantee a better defence of the area from raids by the corsairs.

The oldest tower is that of the Island of Piana, placed on the little island between the coast of Sardinia and that of Asinara. It is an 11 m-high cylindrical construction, built in 1595, and stands out for its discreet state of conservation.

Later, between 1609 and 1610, the towers of Trabucado, Cala d’Oliva and Cala d’Arena were built to the north of the island, of which only the former is in a stable condition. All three have a cone-shaped base and an internal diameter of approximately 4 m. They were intended for defence and signalling.



THE SETTLEMENTS

The main settlements on the island were built between 1768 and 1885.

In the bay of Cala d’Oliva, on the upper stretch of the east coast, a little village was built for a nucleus of fishermen’s families from Camogli. The places of historic and architectural interest in the village are the Church, built over the remains of another chapel, the existence of which was already known in 1842, and the Cemetery, certainly built before 1885.

Inside Cala Reale, situated at the top of the island, a settlement was created at the beginning of the 19th century to house some fishermen’s and shepherds’ families. Other historic buildings include the Royal Palace, the residence used by the Savoia, now the headquarters of the Asinara National Park, the hospital and the chapel, built to respond to the needs of the numerous Austrian and Hungarian prisoners, stationed here during the First World War.



THE HEALTH AND PRISON STRUCTURES

Following the division of the island territory between the Ministry of the Marine, to create health structures for quarantine, and the Ministry of the Interior, to build a Penal Agricultural Colony, a considerable number of buildings were constructed and existing buildings were transformed and integrated.

In particular, the structures connected to the Maritime Health Structure required specialised types of



infrastructures which, at the time, were of considerable medical and scientific value. For this reason they were built brand new and even though they are in a certain state of decay, they constitute an important architectural heritage for the island.

On the contrary, the adjustment of preceding agro-zootechnical structures to the needs of the new Agricultural Colony triggered rare interventions and more precise constructions were limited to making the so-called “ramifications” to house the detainees and guards.

Evidence also exists on the island which is not strictly architecturally based, but is still important because it is the expression of the inhabitants’ activities during a certain historic period: these “signs” include the prisoner of war camps from the First World War and the modifications to the land made to enable it to be cultivated, such as the water systems of Campo Perdu or the terracing near Case Bianche.





MADDALENA NATIONAL PARK



Photo property of MATTM- Direction for the Protection of Nature, Studio Paolo Gherardi

Its History

The first signs of man on La Maddalena date back to the prehistoric period, as confirmed by traces found on the peninsula of Abbatoggia, in the north-west of the island.

The remains in the area between the bays of Cala Gavetta and Cala Chiesa in the south are evidence of a Roman settlement dating back to the period between the first half of the 1st century BC and the 4th century AD. The site continued to be occupied until the Middle Ages, when the island was called Porcaria and was particularly well-known for the monastery “de Sancto Angelo de Porcaria”, belonging to the Benedictine order.

Subsequently, La Maddalena remained uninhabited, or nearly, for several centuries. The inhabitants returned during the 18th century and the current town was founded in 1777 at Cala Gavetta. The town developed quickly and was given a system of fortifications where war ships landed. In 1804, Admiral Horatio Nelson established his logistics

base for his fleet in the Mediterranean and stayed there for about three years before the Battle of Trafalgar. When in 1943, after the fall of Fascism, the king had Mussolini arrested, the dictator was taken there and held prisoner. He spent some time at Villa Weber before being transferred to the Gran Sasso. The ancient settlements on the island of Caprera date back to the Imperial Roman era. They were concentrated around the western coastal areas close to the islands of La Maddalena and Santo Stefano. Traces of a garrison of this period have been identified at Arcaccius along the central western shores. Some necropoli have been discovered in the hinterland of Cala Scavicco, in the Tola valley and in Petrajaccio, in the south west of the island. In 1767, together with other islands in the archipelago, it was occupied by the Sardinian navy and annexed to the kingdom. In 1854, Giuseppe Garibaldi settled there and built a house, which he turned into a farm. He left in 1859 to take part in



the War of Independence and the Expedition of the Thousand. He returned in 1867 and remained there until his death in 1882.

The three islands of Razzoli, Budelli and Santa Maria constituted the dismantling between 3000 and 2000 BC of a united island complex that had formed during the Flandrian Transgression of 6000 – 3000 BC. The use of the narrow straits between the islands by the ancient navy is suggested by the discovery of a fragment of an Attic kylix, dating

back to the mid 5th century BC. The only one of the three islands that was certainly inhabited in ancient times was the Island of Santa Maria, where there is evidence of the 13th century Ecclesia Sancte Marie de Budello.

The island of Santo Stefano is roughly rectangular in shape and its coastline has a single cove, Cala Villamarina, where archaeological excavations have confirmed a mid Neolithic settlement.



ITS HERITAGE



GARIBALDI'S HOUSE MUSEUM IN CAPRERA

Today, Garibaldi's House Museum is part of the "Museum of the Garibaldi Compendium", consisting of a group of buildings, appurtenances and heirlooms belonging to the General and now owned by the State.

Giuseppe Garibaldi set foot on Caprera for the first time on 25 September 1849. At the end of the first month of his stay, he decided to purchase some land and an old house which he rebuilt with the help of his son. The tour of the complex is a very interesting experience. The structure is situated in a particular impressive setting, close to the sea, where granite rock emerges from the typical Mediterranean vegetation. Inside is a collection of heirlooms and personal objects, which reveal the general's passions and daily activities during his stay: the tools to work the fields, his desk, the bureau-stand given to him by Queen Margherita of Savoia, the bed in which he spent his final hours, facing the window through which he could see Corsica. Outside, you can visit Garibaldi's tomb and the tiny cemetery where his sons are buried.

There is also a museum dedicated to the General in Forte Arbuticci. The Fort, which has been completely restored, was a key element in the complex defence system which made the Archipelago a fundamental node in the protective network of the Tyrrhenian Sea and central part of the Tyrrhenian coast of the Peninsula. The museum holds a collection of approximately 200 pieces, including works and documents that tell the life of the hero of the Risorgimento. Next to the exhibition spaces there is a specialised library and video library, a small screening room and multi-media stations, where it is possible to consult original documents preserved in the most important Italian archives.



THE SYSTEM OF FORTS AND FORTIFICATIONS

Although designed and built in three different historic periods, it constitutes a formidable example of how architecture conceived for military purposes can become a harmonious part of the landscape. The presence of these structures in the territory dates back to three distinct historic moments: from



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1767 to 1806; after 1887; between the First and Second World Wars.

The first nucleus dates back to the moment in which, in order to definitively affirm its rule over the islands of the archipelago, the Kingdom of Sardinia occupied it by military force. The first “fort” of the archipelago was built at the end of 1771 on the island of Santo Stefano, precisely on the eastern point of Cala di Villa Marina (La Torre). In the following years, the defence system was extended with the construction of another six small forts: Sant’Andrea, Balbiano, Sant’Agostino, San Vittorio, Santa Teresa and San Giorgio. The purpose of all these works was to confirm possession of the archipelago and provide a safe, protected support base for the young Sardinian Navy.

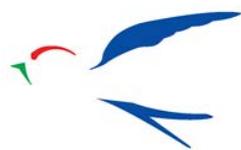
Fort Carlo Felice that owed its name to the Duke of Genoa, who held power in Sardinia from 1800 to 1805, is evidence of this initial stage in the fortification of the archipelago. His task was to defend the roads to Porto Camicia, the landscape of the Moneta and to sail the entire area in the north-east, where it was thought the enemy could land more easily. The fort consisted of high inaccessible walls with a carefully decorated, neo-classical entrance and a fortified gate on the west front also in the neoclassical style, similar to that of the Palazzo del Governo in Carloforte.





Cultural Heritage in Italian National Parks in **NUMBERS**

NATIONAL PARKS	ARCHEOLOGICAL HERITAGE	ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE	TOTAL
Gran Paradiso National Park	7	38	45
Val Grande National Park		18	18
Stelvio National Park		48	48
Dolomiti Bellunesi National Park	2	16	18
Cinque Terre National Park		46	46
Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park	3	191	194
Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona and Campigna National Park	1	21	22
Arcipelago Toscano National Park	8	10	18
Monti Sibillini National Park		247	247
Circeo National Park	34	9	43
Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park	1	39	40
Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park	9	51	60
Majella National Park	6	35	41
Vesuvius National Park	31	10	41
Cilento, Vallo di Diano and Alburni National Park	188	75	263
Alta Murgia National Park	9	11	20
Gargano National Park	24	120	144
Appennino Lucano Val d'Agri-Lagonegrese National Park	6	11	17
Pollino National Park	35	105	140
Sila National Park	6	76	82
Aspromonte National Park		30	30
Asinara National Park	25	1	26
La Maddalena National Park	10	36	46
Total	405	1244	1649



Charter of Rome on Natural and Cultural Capital

Foreword

The Charter di Rome is a bridging initiative on the interrelations and interactions between Natural and Cultural Capital. It aims at strengthening nature and biodiversity policy, mainstreaming it into other policies related to the territory and the economy.

The current economic crisis in many Countries calls for rethinking economic policies and the promotion of measures aiming at supporting long-term and sustainable growth and jobs to be implemented at all governance levels, from EU to national and regional.

The EU Strategy 2020 on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is a key step towards the establishment of a renewed European governance, centred on the needs of society and of the whole planet, as well as to the close links between economic, social, and environmental policies, including jobs (COM/2010/2020).

The European Commission put all of these issues at the centre of a number of initiatives to relaunch growth and jobs in the EU, such as the “Green Employment Initiative: Tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy” (COM/2014/446).

Among the potential instruments and initiatives to be implemented on the promotion of green jobs, some key strategic ones are those supporting investments on the restoration and conservation of Natural Capital and on the development of synergies between Natural and Cultural Capital, such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy (COM/2013/249). The overall goal is to tap into both of these Capitals to generate economic benefits, employment opportunities, and support key sectors such as tourism.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (COM(2011)244) refers to the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystems and their services and contributes, among other, to the EU’s sustainable growth objectives and to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change, while promoting economic, territorial and social cohesion and safeguarding the EU’s cultural heritage. The Strategy also emphasises that the full implementation of EU nature legislation is key to conserving and restoring biodiversity, and hence Natural and Cultural Capital.

The EU Birds and Habitat Directives ((2009/147/EC; 92/43/EEC) aim to meet “ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational ones” and “to promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements, ... making a contribution to the general objective of sustainable development; whereas the maintenance of such biodiversity may in certain cases require the maintenance, or indeed the encouragement, of human activities”.



The European Natural Capital is intimately linked to the cultural dimension and history of the EU. Taking into account Natural and Cultural Capital assets together in decision making is essential in the EU given the human influence on ecosystems. We all want to ensure that this influence remains positive and sustainable. The Charter of Rome on Natural and Cultural Capital seeks to achieve the long-term vision of the EU 7th Environmental Action Plan: in 2050, we live well, within the planet's ecological limits. The Charter of Rome aims at providing support for the protection, conservation and enhancement of Natural Capital and to further develop synergies with Cultural Capital in the European Union and its Member States.

NATURAL CAPITAL

1. Improve the knowledge of Natural Capital

Biodiversity and ecosystems, our Natural Capital, are a primary asset. They directly and indirectly provide goods and services that are vital for human well-being and economic prosperity. We all depend on nature for our existence.

Therefore good knowledge, research, and sharing of data on biodiversity and ecosystems are essential. This knowledge base should be made more accessible to citizens and decision makers to ensure that policy continues to build on a sound understanding of the state and dynamics of the environment.

To address this challenge we need to:

- Promote and Support scientific knowledge on Natural Capital at the international, national, and local levels;
- Make information and quality data sets and systems available to research and decision making, either in public and private sectors;
- Map, assess, monitor, evaluate, plan and manage ecosystems and their services.

2. Invest in Natural Capital

Investment in Natural Capital supports smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe.

To address this challenge we need to:

- Provide economic and financial incentives to support Natural Capital investments(cost/effectiveness) in the public and private sector;
- Implement methodologies for accounting for natural capital stocks and flows, including the economic flows aimed at the enhancement of Natural Capital;-Increase communication and information to all on the overall benefits of ecosystems as the pillars of Natural Capital;
- Include Natural Capital and ecosystem approaches into all territorial decisions, spatial planning and management.



3. Secure the functionality of natural and healthy ecosystems

Ecosystems are the components of Natural Capital. Healthy and resilient ecosystems can provide society with a full range of economically valuable goods and services.

To address this challenge we need to:

- Strengthen the implementation of the EU nature legislation and the contribution of the Natura2000 network to protect Natural and Cultural Capital;
- Make use of good knowledge and data on biodiversity, ecosystems, their structures and functions, and on links with ecosystem services and associated benefits;
- Maintain, restore and enhance ecosystem capacities to provide a range of goods and services and associated benefits;
- Explore Natural Capital as a solution to major challenges such as those related to urban areas, climate change and adaptation, agriculture and soil, forestry, hydrogeological risks, tourism and recreation.

CULTURAL CAPITAL

4. Link Natural and Cultural Capitals

Human influence on European ecosystems has been constant, widespread throughout History. The Cultural Capital is the capacity of human populations to deal with the Natural Capital.

The Cultural Capital is related to three main features of individual people and groups in each given and specific geographical and socio-economic context: knowledge, including the traditional and scientific dimensions; capacities as the way knowledge is retained, increased, elaborated and developed; practices corresponding to all activities producing tangible and intangible flows of goods and services.

Natural and Cultural Capitals are dynamics and in synergies, often positive, providing goods and services with different degrees of contribution from each capital, e.g. forest wild fruits vs. arable irrigated crops.

To maintain a positive link between Cultural and Natural Capitals we need to:

- Take into account social and cultural dimension of ecosystem management;
- Promote locally-adapted knowledge, capacities and activities with positive impacts on Natural Capital;
- Link benefits, goods and services from ecosystems (supply) with the patterns of culture, society and economy (demand).

5. Create synergies among green infrastructure, urban and rural areas

Species, habitats, ecosystems, land units and infrastructures are part of a multifunctional and interconnected spatial structure of natural and semi-natural areas. Green infrastructure connects natural and semi-natural areas with urban and rural areas.

They are drivers for transition to a green economy and have many natural, cultural, social and economic connections.



To address this challenge we need to:

- Identify the inter-connections and multifunctionality of natural and semi-natural areas as human-related;
- Improve the synergies between natural and semi-natural areas (including protected areas), green infrastructure, urban and rural areas;
- Map, assess, monitor, evaluate, plan and manage the territorial links between natural and semi-natural areas, green infrastructure, urban and rural areas;
- Consider green infrastructure as a cost-effective alternative or complementarity to 'grey infrastructure' in support of both nature and people.

CONCLUSIONS

In line with the EU nature and biodiversity strategies, directives and overall policies, a strong interconnection between Natural and Cultural Capital assets, and between these assets and activities with a territorial dimension are vital for the conservation and sustainable management of ecosystems in Europe, in particular in the context of the current financial and economic crisis.

Further investigation on the linkage among Natural and Cultural Capital needs to be put in place, with special reference on those knowledge, capacities and activities that contribute to sustainable management of biodiversity.

Mainstreaming ecosystems and their services into policies, strategies, planning, management and practices of public and private actors is an important way to achieve key targets and for the development of a sound green economy, that needs to be implemented at EU, national and regional level, starting from the opportunities provided within the financial framework 2014-2020.

In order to achieve these objectives the EU and its Member States will need to: - improve the knowledge of Natural Capital and data availability; - pursue the full implementation of the EU nature legislation; - enhance the contribution of Natura 2000 to the conservation and restoration of Natural and Cultural Capital; - promote efficient investments from both public and private sectors; - maintain and restore healthy and productive ecosystems; - identify and account for stocks and flows of ecosystems goods and services, as well as - integrate Natural and Cultural Capital values in sectoral policies.



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CREDITS

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Work Group

Ministry of the Environment: Eleonora Bianchi, Diego Martino, Francesco Randisi

Sustainable Development Foundation: Giuseppe Dodaro, Vittoria Papa, Anna Parasacchi, Diego Ronchi

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Editing

Delia Milioni

