

## TOURISTIC, ARTISTIC AND HISTORIC ITINERARIES.





## Touristic, artistic and historic itineraries.

### **Editorial project and coordination**

Pier Giacomo Sottoriva and Bruno Maragoni

### **Texts**

Pier Giacomo Sottoriva (based on "Piccolo Grand Tour" by Pier Giacomo Sottoriva, revised and adapted by Pier Giacomo Sottoriva and Bruno Maragoni).

### **Translation**

Quadrivio Traduzioni Roma

### **Photography**

Apt Latina Archives, Fabrizio Ardito, Diego Caruso, Martino Cusano, Attilio Francescani, Paola Ghirotti, I-BUGA, Noé Marullo, Bruno Maragoni, Paolo Petrignani, Carlo Picone, Luciano Romano, Pier Giacomo Sottoriva, Sandro Vannini.

### **Layout and graphic design**

Guercio Design di Latina

### **Printing**

Primaprint - Viterbo (2010)

### **Published by**

**Azienda di Promozione Turistica della Provincia di Latina**

04100 Latina, Via Duca del Mare, 19.

Tel. 0773.695404 Fax 0773.661266

[www.latinaturismo.it](http://www.latinaturismo.it) [info@latinaturismo.it](mailto:info@latinaturismo.it)

# Contents

Touristic, artistic and historic itineraries.

Aprilia  
Cisterna di Latina  
Ninfa

8



Rocca Massima  
Cori  
Norma

14



Sermoneta  
Valvisciolo  
Bassiano  
Sezze

22



Latina  
Sabaudia  
Pontinia

30



Roccagorga  
Maenza  
Prosecco  
Pisterzo

44



Fossanova  
Priverno  
Roccasecca dei Volsci  
Sonnino

50



San Felice Circeo  
Terracina

58



Monte S. Biagio  
Fondi  
Lenola  
Campodimele  
Itri  
Sperlonga

66



Gaeta  
Formia  
Minturno

80



Spigno Saturnia  
Castelforte  
Suio Terme  
SS. Cosma e Damiano

92



The Pontine  
Islands

96



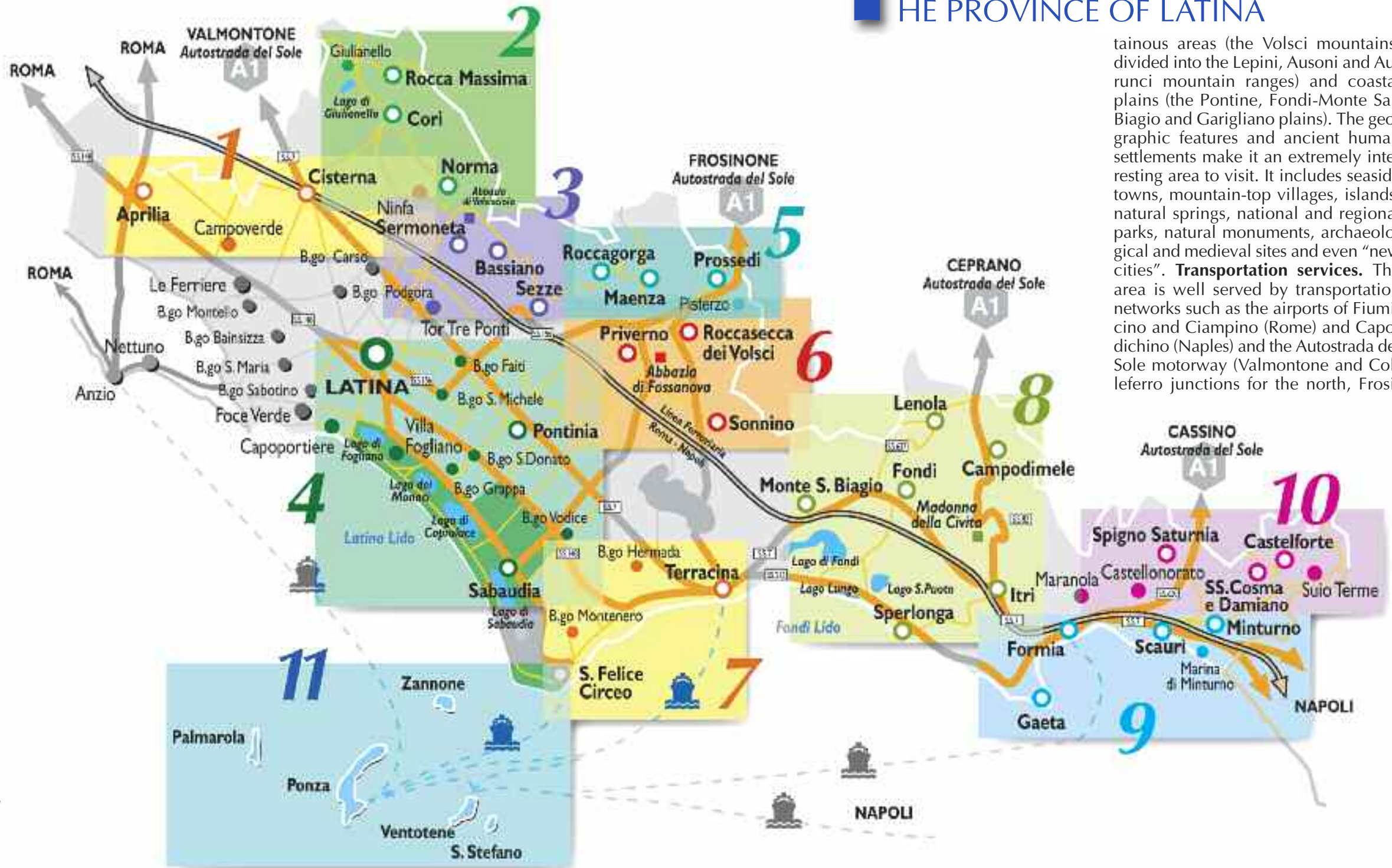


*Touristic, artistic and historic itineraries.*

# THE PROVINCE OF LATINA

Established in 1934, the province of Latina (33 municipalities) extends over 2,250 square kilometres, covering almost equal proportions of hilly, moun-

tainous areas (the Volsci mountains, divided into the Lepini, Ausoni and Aurunci mountain ranges) and coastal plains (the Pontine, Fondi-Monte San Biagio and Garigliano plains). The geographic features and ancient human settlements make it an extremely interesting area to visit. It includes seaside towns, mountain-top villages, islands, natural springs, national and regional parks, natural monuments, archaeological and medieval sites and even "new cities". **Transportation services.** The area is well served by transportation networks such as the airports of Fiumicino and Ciampino (Rome) and Capodichino (Naples) and the Autostrada del Sole motorway (Valmontone and Colferro junctions for the north, Frosi-







none junction for the central area and Ceprano, Cassino and San Vitore junctions for the south), the SS7 Via Appia and the SS148 Via Pontina trunk roads. It is also served by the Roma-Napoli railway service with stations in Aprilia, Cisterna, Latina, Sezze, Priverno, Monte San Biagio, Fondi, Itri, Formia and Minturno Scauri, from whence all the areas of the province are within easy reach. **The coast.** Stretching over one hundred kilometers from the River Astura (to the west on the border with the province of Rome) to the River Garigliano (to the east on the border of Latium with Campania, and the province of Latina with the province of Caserta), the coast is lined with beaches of golden sand and rocky promontories and headlands. The coastal towns of Latina Lido, Sabaudia, San Felice Circeo, Terracina, Fondi Lido, Sperlonga, Gaeta, Formia and Minturno-Scauri offer a diversified range of hotels, campsites, villas, holiday homes and flats, farm holiday facilities, bed & breakfasts and guest houses, while there are marina facilities in San Felice Circeo, Terracina, Sperlonga, Gaeta, Formia and Scauri and landing stages in River Rio Martino (Latina), River Sisto, River Badino (Terracina) and River Garigliano (Minturno). The province also includes the Archipelago of the Pontine Islands, a group of volcanic islands (with the exception of Zannone) characterized by a wealth of colours, magical environments and fascinating sea-beds. **Hills and mountains.** Over half of the territory and two thirds of the municipalities of the province lie in hillside and mountain areas. Indeed, the entire length of the province is washed by the sea and distinguished by a range of mountains (Mount Semprevisa and Mount Petrella both stand at over 1500 metres) and hills inland. Since ancient times, the plateaus of the mountain ranges have been occupied by the towns of Cori, Rocca Massima, Norba (now known as Norma), Sezze, Lenola and Itri, while other towns (Sermoneta, Bassiano, Roccamare, Maenza, Sonnino, Prossedi, Priverno, Roccasecca dei Volsci, Monte San Biagio, Campodimele, Castelforte, SS. Cosma e Damiano and Spigno Saturnia) date back to the middle ages, as can clearly be seen by their medieval buildings and urban layout. **Parks and nature reserves.** The province includes numerous areas of great environmental interest. The largest nature reserve is the Circeo National Park, which includes parts of Latina, Sabaudia, San Felice Circeo and Ponza (Zannone), while the three regional nature reserves in the province - Monti Aurunci Regional Park, Riviera di Ulisse Regional Park, which includes the protected areas of Monte Orlando (Gaeta), Gianola-Monte di Scauri (Formia-Scauri) the Promontory of Tiberius' Villa and Costa Torre Capovento-Punta Cetarola (Sperlonga) and Monti Ausoni and Lago di Fondi Regional Park, which includes the natural monuments of Camposoriano (Terracina and Sonnino), the Temple of Jupiter Anxur (Terracina), Lake Fondi and the Mola della Corte-Settecannelle-Capodacqua (Fondi) - are flanked by various natural monuments including Torrecchia Vecchia (Cisterna and part of Cori), Lake Giulianello (Cori and part of Artena), Cima del Monte-

Acquaviva-Quercia del Monaco (Lenola) and the gardens and ruins of Ninfa (Cisterna and Sermoneta), the jewel in the crown of the natural heritage of the province with a wide variety of plants and flowers from every corner of the globe and the remains of a medieval town. The natural features of the province also include the State nature reserve and protected marine area of the islands of Ventotene and Santo Stefano. **Natural springs.** Famous for the curative virtues of its waters, the Terme di Suio (Castelforte) are located in the extreme south of the province on the banks of the River Garigliano in the volcanic basin of Roccamonfina. Hotels with spa facilities designed to exploit all the properties of the local spring water open on a daily basis to offer a perfect alternative to a day at the beach or entire vacations dedicated to treating various illnesses (see Castelforte-Suio Terme). **Culture.** The numerous cultural attractions include the archaeological sites of Minturnae, Sperlonga (Tiberius' Grotto and archaeological museum), Norba, Formia (Cicero's Tomb and archaeological museum), Mezzagosto (Priverno), Cori (Temple of Hercules), Sabaudia (Domitian's Palace on the banks of the lake), Terracina (Temple of Jupiter Anxur and Emilian Forum) as well as the medieval towns and castles of Sermoneta, Fondi, Itri and Gaeta. The Gothic-Cistercian abbeys of Fossanova (Priverno) and Valvisciolo (Sermoneta); the various sanctuaries (Holy Trinity and Montagna Spaccata in Gaeta, Madonna della Civita in Itri, Madonna del Colle in Lenola, Madonna del Soccorso in Cori, Santa Maria della Sorresca in Sabaudia and Madonna della Delibera in Terracina) are all worth visiting.



# A PRILIA

Located on the border between the provinces of Latina and of Rome, Aprilia was founded on 25 April 1936 as the fourth “new city” to be built by Benito Mussolini - who outlined the first foundations of the new metropolis with a plough - on the recently drained Pontine marshes. Inaugurated on 29 October 1937, the initial city was a small rural town built around a central nucleus of public buildings (a town hall, a church, a school, a Carabinieri barracks, a Casa del Fascio, an Opera Balilla building, an office of Opera Nazionale Combattenti, a trattoria, a small hotel, a post office, a cinema and housing for civil servants), almost completely destroyed during the violent battles between German

## ITINERARY No. 1

*Aprilia  
Cisterna  
Ninfa*

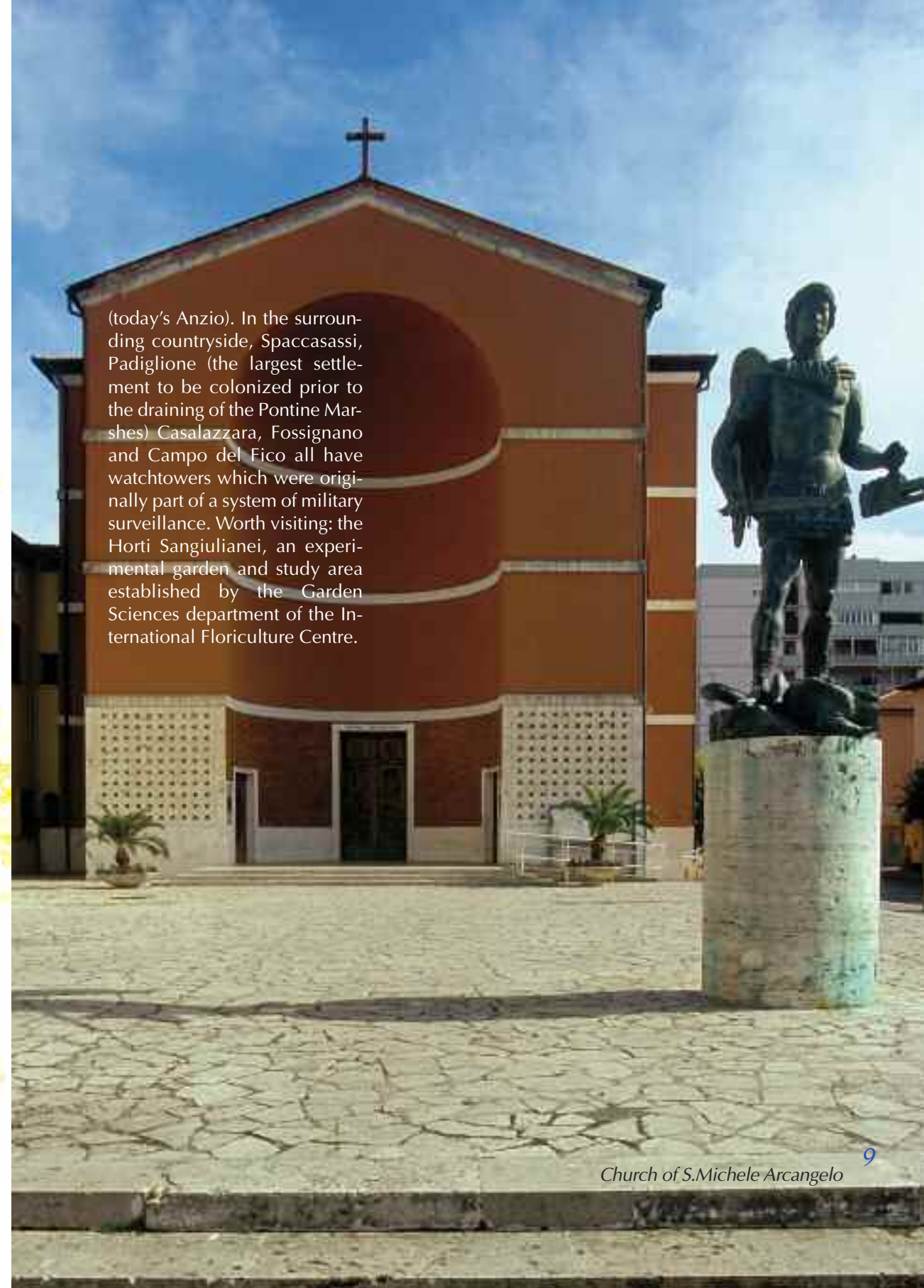


and Allied Forces which took place from 22 January 1944 (when the Allied Forces landed at Anzio) to May 1944. All that can be seen of the original city now are the porticoes, the cinema, the parish church of S. Michele Arcangelo, a bronze statue of Archangel Michael located in front of the church (restored in the 1990s) and the bell tower reconstructed shortly after the war. The ancient history of the territory and the foundation of Aprilia is recounted in a Permanent Exhibition of the History of the City at “G. Pascoli” institute. Throughout the territory it is possible to see signs of human inhabitation in ancient times (stone and bronze articles created in Vulsci settlements such as Longula in Buon Riposo, various underground structures and the bass-reliefs of Antinoo-Silvano by Antoniano di Afrodizia at Torre del Padiglione); in Carano, the Mausoleum of General Menotti Garibaldi, the son of the famous Hero of Two Worlds, who is buried there together with his wife, children and other relations, is worth visiting. Traces of ancient and modern history are also to be found in Carroceto whose small 17th century church dedicated to St. Anthony was built to mark a visit to the village by Pope Innocence XII during the inauguration of the Porto Innocenziano in Anzio, while the village of Campo di Carne stands around a railway bridge which was the scene of a bloody battle between German and Allied forces in 1944. Furthermore, Campoverde was home to the first domuscultae to develop after the fall of the Roman Empire and consisted of the church of S. Pietro in Formis (today only a name) and a number of public buildings, while Via Selciatella (a stretch of the ancient Via Appia consular road), marks the route taken by Poppea when transporting her donkeys to the “Feriae in Antium”



House of General  
Menotti Garibaldi

(today's Anzio). In the surrounding countryside, Spaccasassi, Padiglione (the largest settlement to be colonized prior to the draining of the Pontine Marshes) Casalazzara, Fossignano and Campo del Fico all have watchtowers which were originally part of a system of military surveillance. Worth visiting: the Horti Sanguiliane, an experimental garden and study area established by the Garden Sciences department of the International Floriculture Centre.

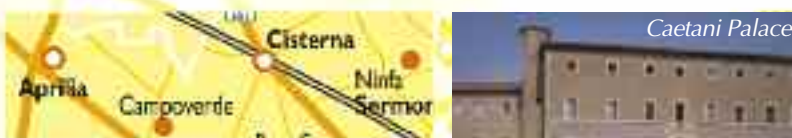


Church of S. Michele Arcangelo



# CISTERNA

On the western edge of the Pontine plain, in Roman times Cisterna was the last station prior to the Pontine Decennovium and was crossed by the Via Appia (the modern day Via Bufolareccia), where it is still possible to see the remains of a Roman funeral monument. The origins of Cisterna can be traced back to the settlement of Tres Tabernae at km 58 on the Via Appia where, as in Forum Appii, Saint Paul met the first Christians from Rome on his journey to the Italian capital (61 AD). The municipality of Cisterna covers a vast territory between Aprilia, the coast and Fogliano; thus it is believed that the city was connected to the domusculatae of S. Pietro in Formis and Ninfa. As Cisterna had wel-



comed the future Pope Alexander III during his enthronement in nearby Ninfa in 1159, many of its most important buildings were destroyed by the pope's enemy Barbarossa. In later times, the old town hall was destroyed in the war and rebuilt according to very different architectural principles, as was the church of Assunta, which houses a marble statue of Saint Rocco, and Palazzo Caetani. Nevertheless, these are perhaps the only (semi-) original buildings still standing in Cisterna.



Church of Assunta



Decorations of the Church of Assunta



Biondi fountain

On the first floor of Palazzo Caetani (built in 1560 on the Frangipane fortress), the Sala degli Zuccari was frescoed by various famous painters, while the rooms of the second floor are dedicated to a series of permanent and temporary exhibitions. In the cloister a staircase leads to a room, perhaps originally used as a cellar, from which a central corridor leads to a series of tunnels running 15 metres under the palace. Many of the inhabitants of Cisterna hid in these tunnels during the bombings of the Second World War (from January to March 1944). The public gardens in the centre of the town are home to the monumental Biondi fountain, a representation by Ernesto Biondi of the goddess Feronia triumphing over malaria. Approximately 3 km north of Cisterna on Via Appia lies Le Castella, the site of an ancient Roman and perhaps Italic settlement in which the ruins of various walls, wells and burrows as well as coins and fragments of statues and everyday utensils have been found. During the draining of the Pontine marshes in the 1930s, two other villages were established: Doganella di Ninfa, most of whose original buildings still survive, and Borgo Flora. The territory of Cisterna also includes the "natural monuments" of Torrecchia Vecchia (part of which is located in the municipality of Cori) and Ninfa. Torrecchia, which was part of the feudal property of the Caetani family at the end of the 13th century, stretches over about 600 hectares, 60 per cent of which is covered by forest. Recognized as a "natural monument" in 2007, the area has survived all the vicissitudes of the 20th century and is home to rare examples of flora and fauna in a most valuable landscape.



# NINFA

Most of Ninfa lies in the municipality of Cisterna (although part of the village is answerable to Sermoneta), but is geographically dominated by Norma. As can be evinced from the ruins of public buildings and houses still visible today, Ninfa was originally a medieval village built around a small Roman temple dedicated to the water and wood nymphs of the fresh water streams of the Lepini mountains. Remains of this temple can still be found in the lake which formed when the Caetani family built a dam at the end of the 13th century. The waters of the lake also reflect a medieval tower and the well preserved crenellated walls of the (totally empty) castle. Destroyed in 1159 for being the



place in which Pope Alexander III was elected to the papacy, Ninfa enjoyed its maximum splendour in the early 14th century, after a series of property and land acquisitions and the completion of several fortification initiatives by Pietro II Caetani, the nephew of Pope Boniface VIII. But the castle could not be saved from continuous attacks, a fire and a sacking, at the end of the 14th century (1381 or 1382). The town's inability to regain its former glory led it to be gradually abandoned, becoming completely deserted when a wave of malaria infected the area. Indeed, writing at the end of the 19th century, the great German travel writer Ferdinand Gregorovius noted the .... *"fabulous ruins of a city which, with its walls, towers, churches, monasteries and houses, stands half submerged in the marsh, buried under thick ivy [...], a place [...] more graceful than even Pompeii, whose houses stand as stiff as mummies dragged out of the volcanic ashes. Above Ninfa there undulates a fragrant sea of flowers [and] every wall, every church and every house is enveloped in a veil of ivy and on all the ruins fly the purple banners of the triumphant God of Spring (Wanderjahre in Italien).* Brought back to life in 1920, when Gelasio Caetani restored the original buildings and oversaw the planting of a new garden according to a layout designed by Marguerite Chapin Caetani, Ninfa passed into the hands of Lelia Caetani and her husband Hubert Howard. On the death of these latter owners, Ninfa was donated by the Caetani family – together with Sermoneta castle – to the Roffredo Caetani Foundation, an organization dedicated to Leila Caetani's father. Thus, nowadays the numerous ruined medieval churches – the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, where Pope Alexander III was crowned, and the churches of



Remains of the Church of S. Maria Maggiore



Gardens and lake of Ninfa

San Biagio, San Paolo, San Pietro and San Giovanni – as well as the castle, the city walls, the houses, the watch towers, the remains of the riverside landing stage, and the bridges (including one Roman bridge) are flanked by a marvellous garden containing thousands of plants, bushes and forest trees (including many different roses and other fragrant plants) from all over the world arranged in to great chromatic effect by the latter members of the Caetani family. Ninfa is open to visitors from April to October, on the first Saturday and the successive Sunday of each month (and on the third Sunday of the month from April to June) and on the first Sunday of November. School groups and other groups of at least 30 people may book visits at any time of the year. On 15 December 2009 the territory of Ninfa was expanded with the inauguration of the re-naturalized Area of Pantanello, which includes over 100 hectares of the type of vegetation and natural environments which occupied the area prior to the draining of the Pontine marsh. The aim of this re-naturalized area is to offer educational and scientific services via the implementation of study programmes and monitoring initiatives together with national and international research institutes. Part of the area is also used for school teaching initiatives, in collaboration with the Regional Parks Agency for environmental education and the ecological training of "mini-guides".



# Rocca MASSIMA

Rocca Massima stands on the highest elevation in the province of Latina, entrenched on a hill at 746 m asl. It overlooks the southern Albanian area and Valle del Sacco, protected by hills covered by a wood of Holm oak and oak that gives the entire area great naturalistic value. The Rocca (fortress) probably rose on the ruins of Caerwentum (7th century B.C.), as born witness to by the remains of polygonal walls in the areas of Mount St. Angelo, La Selva and Lubro. There were continual

## ITINERARY No. 2

Rocca Massima  
Cori  
Norma



battles over the territory between the Volsci and Romans, as in many centres of the Lepini mountains. In medieval times, it was owned by the Annibaldi family, who had a small castle and defence structures built in the 12th century; the castle may have been the "fortress" from which the place got its name, on Mount Massimo. From the Annibaldi family it passed into the hands of the Malabranca, Pierleoni and the Conti families. The Conti family held the Rocca until 1597, then it passed to Cardinal Antonio Maria Salviati. At the end of the 18th century there was another transfer to the Borghese family, then to the Doria Pamphili family. The quiet entrenched centre has the typical features of medieval clusters: steep, narrow streets and buildings crowded against each other like a defence shield for the home of the feudal lord, which only retains a few original elements and belongs to private persons. A cylindrical tower protected the entrance to the town. The houses of worship are not especially important from an artistic point of view. However, the urban church of San Michele Arcangelo, probably from the same era as the castle, was transformed at the end of the 18th century: the ceiling is ornamented with lacunars, the small central nave ends in a circular, decorated apse. Outside the town, one finds the little church of Carmine (early 17th century) and that of San Rocco (16th century), the annexed convent of which has been abandoned.



Panoramic view



# CORI

Along the road from Roccamassima to Cori extends **Giulianello**. Battlements were set up around the site at the turn of the first millennium; apart from a moderate amount of administrative organisation, these battlements ensured military defence against barbarian invasions. Enfeofed to the Conti family and then to the Malabranca, Salviati and Borghese families, the fortress preserves the ancient palace of Cardinal Antonio Maria Salviati and the church of San Giovanni Battista ed



*Panoramic view from the temple of Hercules*

Evangelista (17th century), where a Bambin Gesù, sculpted out of olive wood, has been housed since 1799; it is supposedly the original of the one which was preserved in the church of Ara Coeli in Rome and disappeared in 1993, after a theft. Cori's origins, dating back to six or seven centuries before the founding of Rome, fall under the Trojan and nearby Orient myth; Dardanos supposedly founded the town and Korax founded it again. After being conquered by the Volsci in the 6th century B.C., Cori was a Latin colony and a Roman colony starting from 493 B.C. Its fidelity to Rome remained intact over the centuries and was the cause of its destruction by Frederick Barbarossa. The town-planning design is aimed at defence: a tightly grouped, impregnable acropolis, with a strong, compact lower part, all of which is defended by a system of polygonal wall; the many parts still visible belong to three construction techniques from different epochs between the 6th and 4th centuries B.C. During medieval times the walls were restored and strengthened with towers and bulwarks and three gates were built: Romana, Ninfina and Signina. The monument-symbol of the city, overlooking the Pontine plain, is the Temple of Hercules, built in the Doric style in the 1st century B.C. All that remains of it is the pronaos, whereas the cella was probably incorporated into the adjacent Church of San Pietro. Following allied bombings on 30 January 1944, only the bell tower was left. Another temple was the one dedicated to Castor and Pollux, this, too, from the 1st century B.C.; only two columns remain, leaning against a modern building. The Roman era left other traces in the lower part of the town, including the so-called Pozzo



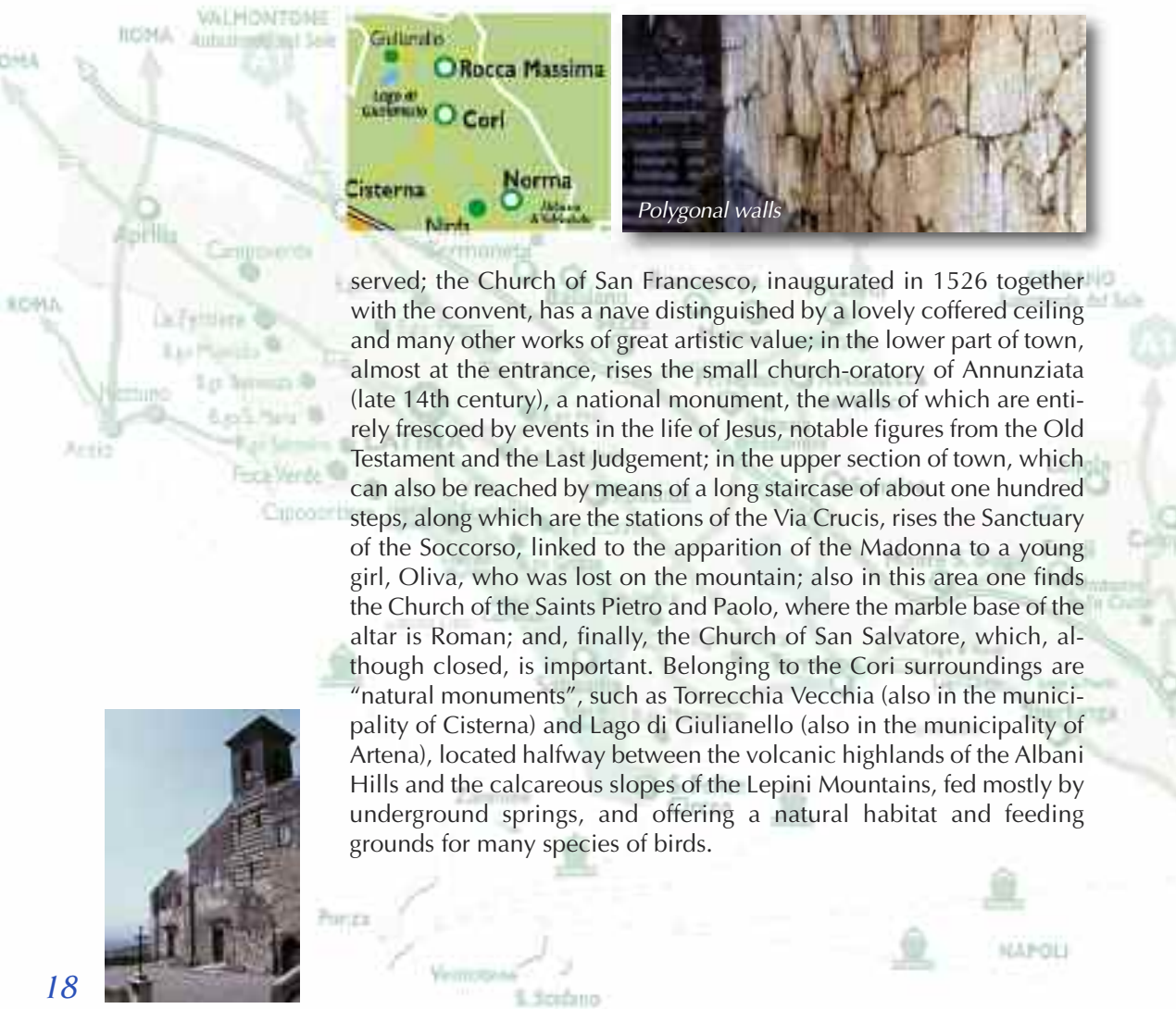
*Frescoes of the chapel of the Annunziata*



*Temple of Hercules*



dorico (Doric well), which may have originally been a water reservoir or thermal structure. The Ponte della Catena spans the underlying gully. Subsequent art may have begun with the 15th century Church of Santa Oliva, which rises on the remains of a pagan temple. A lovely convent stands next to the church and is now the seat of the museum of the City and Territory that opens onto the charming cloister marked by two rows of columns with capitals bearing sculpted motifs; opposite the convent stands the renaissance Palazzetto Luciani and next to it the modern Municipal Building, which incorporates part of the megalithic walls. Sacred buildings are well represented: the Church of Santa Maria della Pietà rises on a pagan temple, where the relics of two blessed Cori inhabitants, Sante Laurienti and Tommaso Placidi, are pre-



served; the Church of San Francesco, inaugurated in 1526 together with the convent, has a nave distinguished by a lovely coffered ceiling and many other works of great artistic value; in the lower part of town, almost at the entrance, rises the small church-oratory of Annunziata (late 14th century), a national monument, the walls of which are entirely frescoed by events in the life of Jesus, notable figures from the Old Testament and the Last Judgement; in the upper section of town, which can also be reached by means of a long staircase of about one hundred steps, along which are the stations of the Via Crucis, rises the Sanctuary of the Soccorso, linked to the apparition of the Madonna to a young girl, Oliva, who was lost on the mountain; also in this area one finds the Church of the Saints Pietro and Paolo, where the marble base of the altar is Roman; and, finally, the Church of San Salvatore, which, although closed, is important. Belonging to the Cori surroundings are "natural monuments", such as Torrecchia Vecchia (also in the municipality of Cisterna) and Lago di Giulianello (also in the municipality of Artena), located halfway between the volcanic highlands of the Albani Hills and the calcareous slopes of the Lepini Mountains, fed mostly by underground springs, and offering a natural habitat and feeding grounds for many species of birds.



Church of S. Oliva

War memorial





# NORMA

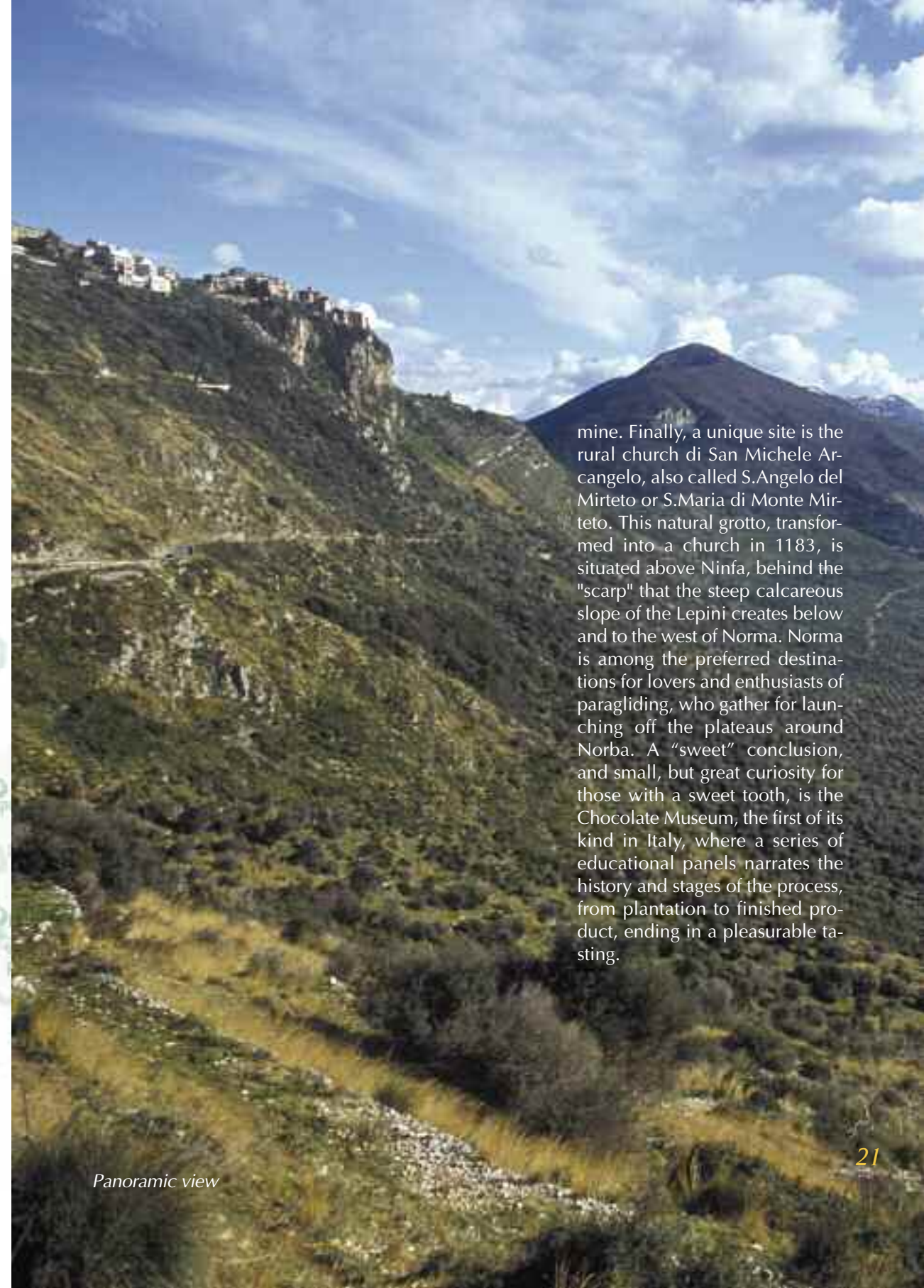
Built at 433 m. asl. on a rocky spur, overhanging the Pontine plains, this town arose out of the destruction of Norba, between 81 and 80 B.C., through the work of Silla. The town was never reconstructed, although some of its surviving structures are still being used, as revealed by an early Christian church, identifiable in the ruins of the smallest temple of the lesser acropolis. In its position outside today's Norma, Norba was protected by a circle of polygonal walls, one of the most well



known examples of megalithic protection, with the Porta Maggiore opening towards Norma. The city was grouped around two elevated centres: the Acropoli Minore, perhaps the oldest, and the Acropoli Maggiore. Sites of ancient public and private buildings have been identified in the ruins: the Temple of Diana, the Temple of Juno Lucina, deemed the largest and oldest, and two other smaller temples on the Acropoli Minore. Some findings uncovered during excavations are displayed in the Civic and Virtual Archaeological Museum, Antica Norba. Modern Norma resulted from a settlement that arose after the destruction of Norba. It initially belonged to the Church, then was passed to the Conti di Tuscolo, the papacy, the Frangipane, Tuscolani and Colonna families, Cardinal Benedetto Caetani, who became Pope Boniface VIII, and Scipione Borghese. The historic centre of Norma developed inside the ancient circle of walls, between Porta Maggiore and the Porticina, and included the ancient parish church of Santa Maria, built by the Caetani brothers in 1533, the baronial palace and a maze of houses, covered passageways, flights of steps and alleys that formed a compact aggregate. At Porta Maggiore, expansion began when the connecting road between Norma and the Appia was constructed. The most important religious building is the parish church, dedicated to SS. Annunziata, that may date back to the 12th century, but which has been reconstructed several times. These reconstructions resulted in the opening of two chapels, the Rifugio and the Rosario. Also worth mentioning are the church dell'Immacolata e S. Rocco and the new church, rising on a chapel dedicated to the Madonna del Car-



Norba - Porta Maggiore



mine. Finally, a unique site is the rural church di San Michele Arcangelo, also called S. Angelo del Mirteto or S. Maria di Monte Mirteto. This natural grotto, transformed into a church in 1183, is situated above Ninfa, behind the "scarp" that the steep calcareous slope of the Lepini creates below and to the west of Norma. Norma is among the preferred destinations for lovers and enthusiasts of paragliding, who gather for launching off the plateaus around Norba. A "sweet" conclusion, and small, but great curiosity for those with a sweet tooth, is the Chocolate Museum, the first of its kind in Italy, where a series of educational panels narrates the history and stages of the process, from plantation to finished product, ending in a pleasurable tasting.

Panoramic view



# SERMONETA

This is a medieval centre overlooking the Pontine plains, with its origins sunk into the process of embattlements and enfeoffment, that belonged to the Counts of Tuscolo, the Annibaldi families and the Caetani family, starting from 1297, who were divested of it by Alexander VI Borgia in the late 15th century, but then regained possession of it upon his death (1503). The formation and urban development of this hill town are clearly marked by the necessity of defence; it is built entirely of local stone and enclosed by walls having five gates or doors. The

## ITINERARY No. 3

*Sermoneta  
Valvisciolo  
Bassiano  
Sezze*



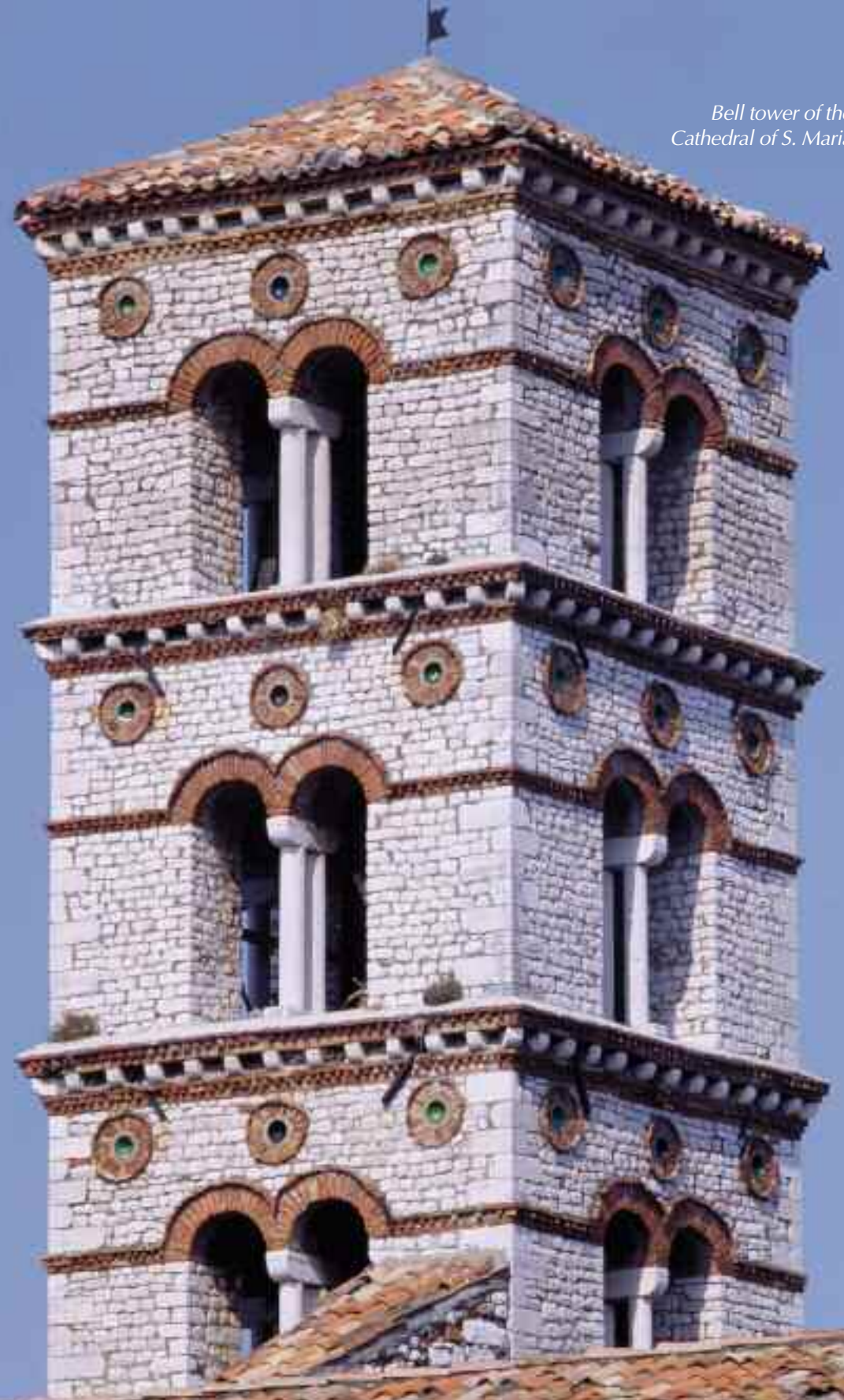
*The historic centre*

northwest section gathers around the little church of Sant'Angelo; in the eastern section the bastion of San Sebastiano was added to the original defence structure in the mid-15th century and fortifications with horn-work bastions were constructed in 1546. The built-up area is more crowded below the castle, the construction of which may have begun in the 11th century. It underwent two interventions under the Caetani family and during the brief period it was held by the Borgia family, who rendered it a formidable military machine, made up of a progressive system of defence: citadel, moat, drawbridges, drop-gate, a series of compulsory passageways exposed to fire, drill grounds, the small tower and the massive keep, which could also be isolated with walkways and steps. The residential part holds a vast hall on which various rooms converge, such as the Painted Rooms, bearing this name due to the frescoes in the Pomarancio style; the underground part that opens onto the dungeons, with graffiti, sketches and writings made by the prisoners who were held there; on the side opposite the drill grounds stood the Home of the Cardinal, with residential rooms, and below this were the stables. A walk around allows one a view of the drill grounds, where the Church of San Pietro in Corte was built and where the remains of some members of the Caetani family were kept; it was destroyed by Cesare Borgia in 1499. The castle is owned by the Roffredo Caetani Foundation, set up by the last descendent of the Caetani family, Donna Lelia, and her husband Hubert Howard, who died in 1977 and 1987, respectively. The fabric of the town features various areas and constructions: the 15th century building that houses the



*Caetani Castle*

*Bell tower of the  
Cathedral of S. Maria*

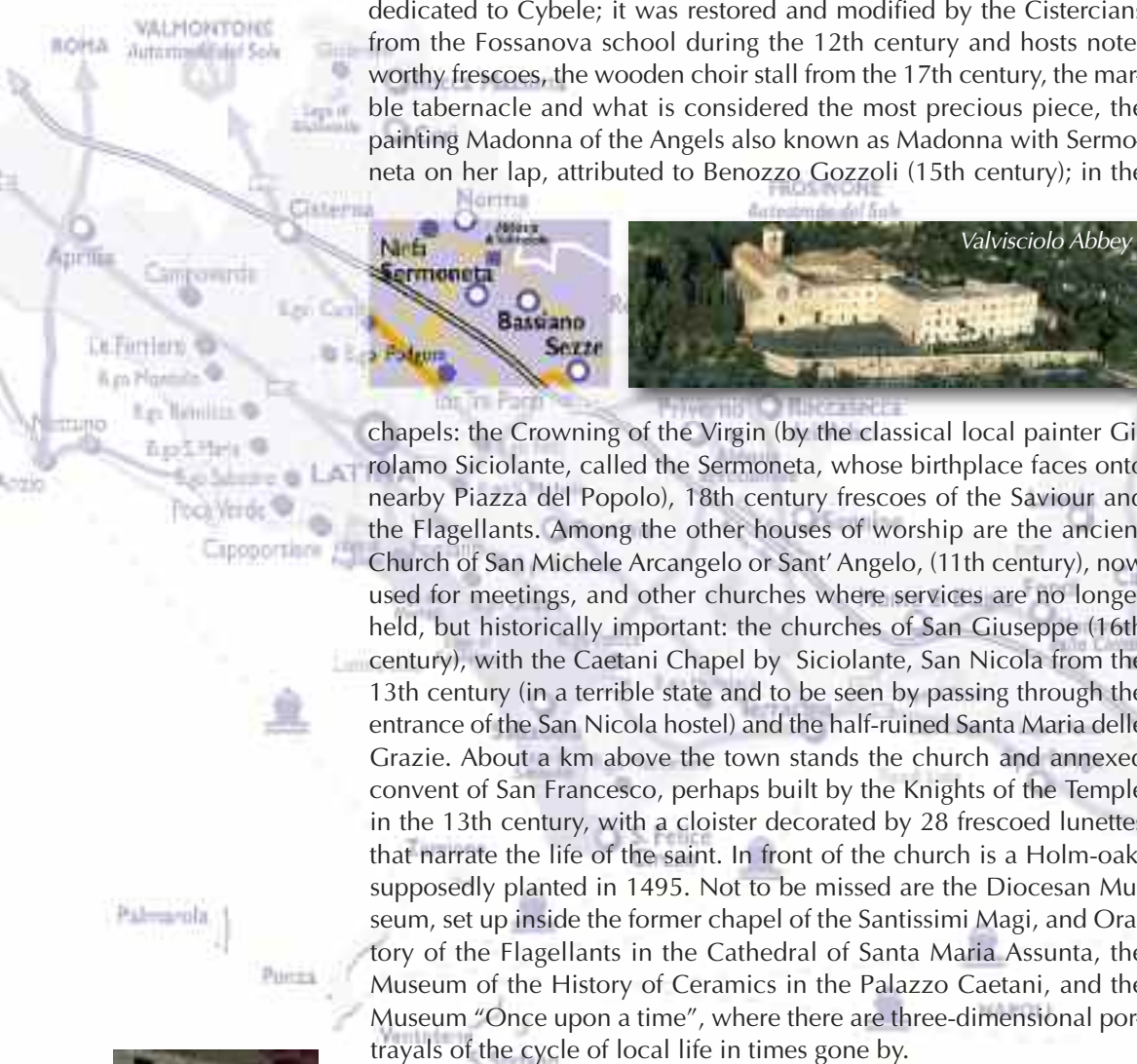




# V

## ALVISCIOLO ABBEY

Town Hall, some tower-houses, the Belvedere, the ancient synagogue (today a private home), the Merchants' Loggia and the Cathedral of Santa Maria. The cathedral may have been constructed on a temple dedicated to Cybele; it was restored and modified by the Cistercians from the Fossanova school during the 12th century and hosts noteworthy frescoes, the wooden choir stall from the 17th century, the marble tabernacle and what is considered the most precious piece, the painting Madonna of the Angels also known as Madonna with Sermonea on her lap, attributed to Benozzo Gozzoli (15th century); in the



chapels: the Crowning of the Virgin (by the classical local painter Girolamo Siciolante, called the Sermonea, whose birthplace faces onto nearby Piazza del Popolo), 18th century frescoes of the Saviour and the Flagellants. Among the other houses of worship are the ancient Church of San Michele Arcangelo or Sant' Angelo, (11th century), now used for meetings, and other churches where services are no longer held, but historically important: the churches of San Giuseppe (16th century), with the Caetani Chapel by Siciolante, San Nicola from the 13th century (in a terrible state and to be seen by passing through the entrance of the San Nicola hostel) and the half-ruined Santa Maria delle Grazie. About a km above the town stands the church and annexed convent of San Francesco, perhaps built by the Knights of the Temple in the 13th century, with a cloister decorated by 28 frescoed lunettes that narrate the life of the saint. In front of the church is a Holm-oak, supposedly planted in 1495. Not to be missed are the Diocesan Museum, set up inside the former chapel of the Santissimi Magi, and Oratory of the Flagellants in the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, the Museum of the History of Ceramics in the Palazzo Caetani, and the Museum "Once upon a time", where there are three-dimensional portrayals of the cycle of local life in times gone by.



*The façade of the Abbey*

Towards the valley, on the slopes of Monte Corvino, the Valvisciolo Abbey faces the plains. Its original core may date back to a Basilian settlement replaced by Cistercian monks in the second half of the 12th century. The façade of the abbey is in stone; its centre is a rosette with a diameter of 5 metres, and it is completed by a sloping roof; the inside is made up of a large central nave and two smaller lateral aisles. The church-convent complex, which underwent changes during the second half of the 19th century, just after the Second World War and in 1998, houses important Pomarancio frescoes (16th century). Since 2003, the Abbey has hosted the Gallery of Abbot Stanislaus White, dedicated to the Irish monk who directed it between the late 1800s and early 1900s. During the years 1902-1903 in the foothills at Caracupa, a necropolis attributed to the Iron Age was excavated (most of the finds are housed in the Pigorini Museum in Rome).



*The cloister of the Abbey*



# BASSIANO

On a small hill, facing north, towards Monte Semprevisa (the highest peak of the Lepini with 1535 m.), Bassiano may have been founded in the 11th century. In the 13th century it belonged to the Annibaldi family, who sold it to Pietro Caetani, nephew of Boniface VIII, in 1297. The



*The historic centre*

Caetani family had the military structure built, that is, the walls linked to nine towers, which enclose the historic centre (13th-14th centuries). The village itself was a defence element; it develops in a spiral, with winding streets connected by narrow steps, moving up vertically, with short cross lanes, stairs and covered passageways from the gates up to the stronghold. It was once dominated by the keep, a cylindrical tower, now in ruins. Standing here is the Collegiate Church of Sant' Erasmo, a 14th century temple that was damaged by lightning and underwent large-scale interventions in the 16th century, mid-1800s and 1900s. The building preserves some 16th century frescoes that surfaced in 1960: a painting of the Sacred Heart attributed to Bernardo Cavallucci from Sermoneta, and Ascension of Christ between Saints Erasmus and Francis by Francesco de Castello Flander, as well as a 16th century marble tabernacle. Not to be forgotten among the other houses of worship are the disused church of Santa Maria (12th century), a small Benedictine coenoby, and the Church of San Nicola of Bari, (12th-13th centuries), restored after the Second World War and where some frescoes and paintings can still be admired, such as the Saviour by Girolamo Siciolante from Sermoneta and the Madonna with four saints. The Palazzo Caetani (16th century) was restored in 1985-86 and now houses the town hall. The lower floors host the Museum of Writings, dedicated to Aldus Manutius the Elder (1449-1515), a celebrated humanist, inventor of new printing characters and great printer and publisher, who was born in a house that is still standing on a street bearing his name. About 3 km from town, in the area of Selvascura, stands the sanctuary and hermitage of the Crucifix, that can be reached by taking a vehicular road, but better is on foot. The Crucifix is a large wooden statue, sculpted by a monk from Bassano, Vincenzo Maria Pietrosanti, in 1673. Alongside the sanctuary is the opening to a grotto, once a hermitage,



*Medieval houses*

where some young friars reverted to the principles of the most absolute, rigid poverty. On Monte della Trinità (857 m.), there is another sanctuary, completed in 1938, towards which a traditional procession moves from the town on the feast day of the Trinity.

A few kilometres from the town, on Via Semprevisa, one finds the monastery of "Cenacoli Serafici" (Seraphic Cenacles).



*Stairs of the Porticina*



# S EZZE

Positioned on a hill, detached from Monte Semprevisa, the ancient Roman colony of Setia (382 B.C) was a castrum defended by stalwart polygonal walls. Its medieval design can be seen in the town-planning layout: grouped houses, staircases and narrow streets leading upward, where one finds Piazza De Magistris. The oldest section is testified to by stretches of the aforesaid polygonal walls (showing four different constructive styles), running along the town perimeter and visible in the upper section, where the acropolis with its so-called bastion once stood, and below the church of Santa Parasceve at Porta Pascibella.



Below the Roman Gate one finds the so-called Temple of Saturn, perhaps a defence structure, which then became the substructure of a villa. The most prestigious symbol of the Middle Ages is represented by the Duomo of Santa Maria (13th century), built out of local stone, according to the gothic principles of the nearby Cistercian school of Fossanova; it was positioned on top of the romanesque construction. The Duomo was consecrated in 1364 and radically restored and changed after the fire that destroyed it in the 16th century. Other houses of worship are the Church of Santa Parasceve (11th century), now closed, leaning against a stretch of the polygonal wall, the church of San Pietro (17th century), near the historic Palazzo De Magistris, now seat of the Town Hall, the church of the "Zoccolanti" (from zoccolo = sabot), in the former Capuchin Convent, the church of San Bartolomeo or Sant' Antonio, near the former convent that now houses the civic hospital, the small churches of San Giuseppe, near the wood of the Capuchins, and Santa Lucia, and the 18th century former convent of the Clarisses, with a small contemporary church. In the historic centre one can see the monumental fountain, near the Town Hall and the fountain of the Lions (both 19th century), and the war memorial (1925). A medieval building on Largo Buoizzi houses the Archaeological Museum (former Municipal Antiquarium), containing collections dedicated to prehistory, the Roman and medieval eras, and a small picture gallery. The archaeological section includes epigraphs, objects, utensils, cippi, a large mosaic on the site of the Roman Curia, votive figures, votive



offerings. Also worth seeing are the Museum of Toys Typical of the Lepini Mountains, a collection of about 400 objects, some of which have ancient origins, and the Museum of the Peasant Civilisation in Sezze Scalo, where the principal constructions of rural civilisation are repropounded, and where the Herbarium of the Lepini Mountains is housed. Downhill from Sezze is the fraction of Sezze Scalo that arose starting from the 1920s. In the surrounding area are various places of interest, such as some prehistoric settlements, e.g. the Roberto Shelter and the Iolanda Grotto, where sketches of hunters and graffiti of animals, remains of fauna and the lithic industry, dating back ca. 18 thousand years, were found. Here is also the grotto known as Arnale del Bufalo, where, in 1936, a schematic drawing of a man, dating back to a period between the Mesolithic and Neolithic ages, was identified as the so-called uomo a phi (Greek Phi-shaped man) that was then brought to the Pigorini Museum in Rome. Significant archaeological remains can be seen in the countryside, such as the substructures of a large country villa from the Roman age, the so-called Grottos and, in the area of Archi di San Lidano, the remains of a temple, probably dedicated to Juno (dating back to the 4th century B.C., but built upon a much older sanctuary); and the mausoleum known as Petrara Tower. In the foothills one can see the medieval tower known as Acquapuzza (12th century) that gets its name from the small sulphur spring in the area of Tufette.



View from the  
"Chair of the Pope"



# LATINA

Latina was the first “new city” to be founded following the draining of the Pontine marshes. Established on 18 December 1932 with the name Littoria (which was eventually changed to Latina in 1945), on 18th December 1934 it was appointed capital of the new province of Latina. The history of Latina is a story of migrant labour, construction, destruction and rebirth. Now the second largest city in the region of Latium, Latina was designed by Oriolo Frezzotti, a rationalist architect

## ITINERARY No. 4

Latina  
Sabaudia  
Pontinia

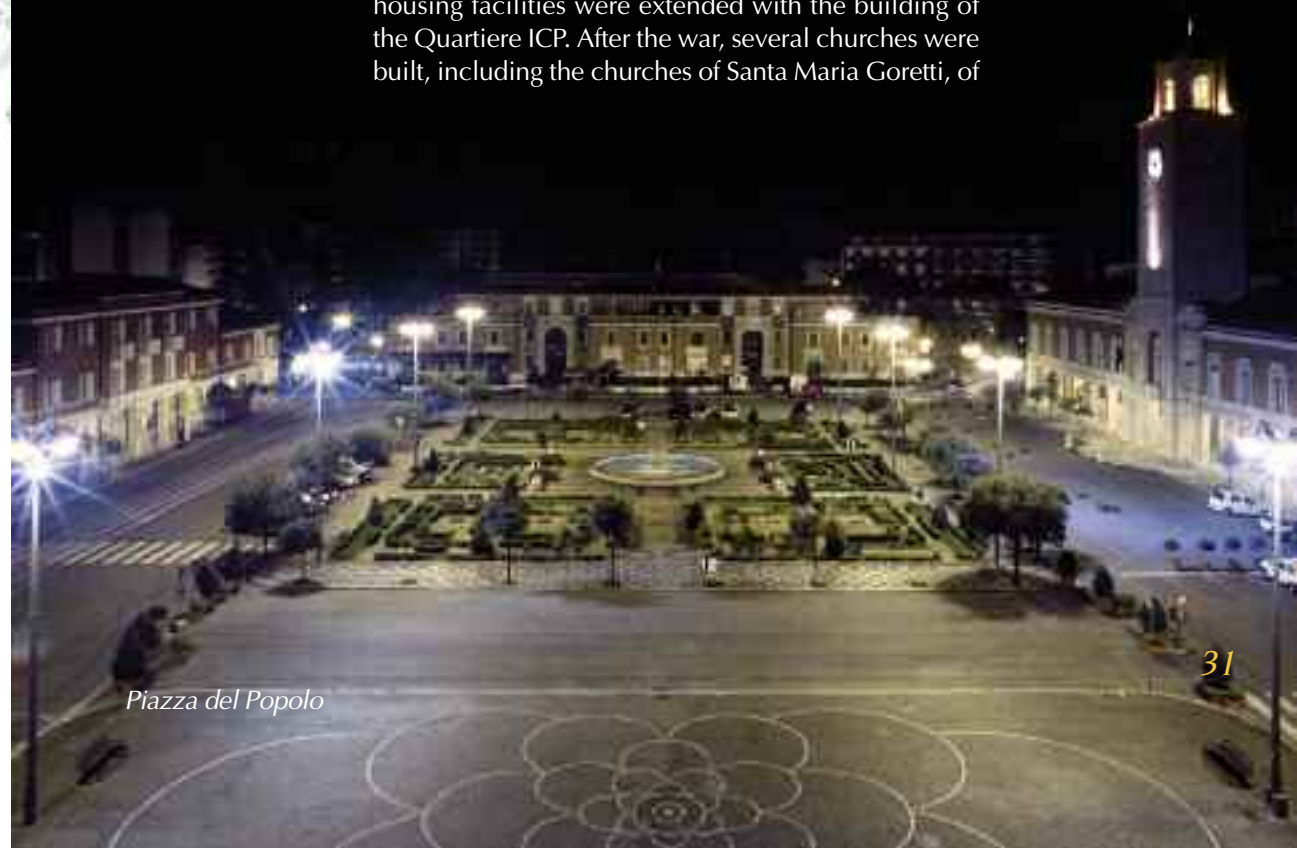


who took just a few months to create the urban layout and main buildings of the city centre. The main square in the centre of Latina, Piazza del Popolo (formerly Piazza del Littorio), is surrounded by public buildings including the City hall, the former offices of the Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (now Circolo Cittadino), the former hotel “Albergo Italia” and the Financial buildings. To the south of the square stands the Post office, one of the “most notable examples of second wave futurism” in Italy, while to the north of the square stand the Infant school, Palazzo Incis and Vittorio Veneto technical high school. The city’s law courts are located in the neighbouring square, Piazzale Bruno Buozzi. Just a short distance from Piazza Comunale lies Piazza San Marco and the cathedral of the Evangelista whose bell tower contains three bells known as the bell of San Marco, of the Virgin and of the Redeemer. On one side of the square a building which was once the Opera Nazionale Balilla now houses the Duilio Cambellotti Museum, while the other side is occupied by the Casa del Combattente. Piazza della Libertà is decorated with an allegorical fountain featuring huge stone ears of corn, while the sides of the square are lined with the Palazzo del Governo (Prefecture and Provincial Offices). The most typical square in Latina is Piazza del Quadrato, which is home to the



Palazzo Comunale

Palazzo dell'Opera Nazionale Combattenti and a statue dedicated to Il Genio della Bonifica [Army Engineers of the Drainage Initiative]; Piazzale Prampolini is home to the sports stadium, a typical example of the architecture of the time. Other buildings which date back to the foundation of the city include the Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia building, the headquarters of the Consorzio di Bonifica, the former Distretto Militare, now a university building, the police headquarters and Palazzo M, whose floor plan takes the shape of initial letter of the Duce’s surname (Mussolini) and whose gardens are decorated with statues of Fertility and Abundance. The last of Latina’s public buildings is the Casa della Cultura in Viale Umberto I, which is home to two theatres - Teatro Grande and Teatro Ridotto – as well as various conference and exhibition halls. Dating back to the same period are the housing facilities built by public administrations for the new citizens of Littoria. The clean architectural lines and distinctive layout (around communal courtyards) of these homes make them a fine example of rational urban residential housing. In 1934, the housing facilities were extended with the building of the Quartiere ICP. After the war, several churches were built, including the churches of Santa Maria Goretti, of



Piazza del Popolo



the Immacolata, of Santa Rita and of San Francesco. The numerous museums and exhibition centres originally included the Civica Galleria d'Arte Moderna, a modern art gallery opened in 1937 following the donation of various works by artists invited to the 20th Venice Biennale and the 2nd Rome Quadrennial, many of which were lost during the war. This gallery has now been replaced by the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, housed in the Palazzo della Cultura. This building is also home to the "M. Valeriani" Museum of Coins, Medals, Engravings and Photographs", whose collections include a large number of 18th, 19th and 20th century exhibits illustrating the development of the art of medal making, as well as 20th century texts and photographs documenting the founding of Littoria and other Italian cities established under the Fascist regime. The Opera Nazionale Balilla



The original post office

building in Piazza San Marco is home to the Duilio Cambellotti Museum, a collection of works by Duilio Cambellotti, while the historic former Opera Nazionale Combattenti building in Piazza Quadrato is home to the Museum of the Pontine Marshes, whose collections document the history of the territory from pre-drainage times until its complete agricultural transformation in 1956. In nearby Borgo Sabotino, the Antiquarium Comunale in the Procoio (enclosure) is home to a collection illustrating the economic and social conditions of the Pontine area up until Roman times (including items from the excavations of Satricum and a fine marine archaeology section). Close to the parish church in Borgo Podgora, the Museo Sessano 50 dalla Lestra al Podere illustrates the history of the Pontine plain from the period immediately prior to the drainage initiative to the landing of the Allied forces at Anzio. Finally, particular mention should be made of the Centro Esposizioni Storiche Piana delle Orme at Borgo Faiti, a private collection of over 50,000 antiques – including rare examples of wartime machinery and weapons, rural vehicles and equipment and toys - displayed in 14 different pavilions. Although Latina is one of Italy's most recently founded conurbations, the history of the territory dates back to extremely ancient times. A settlement dating back 350 - 500 thousand



Rio Martino

years was recently discovered in Quarto delle Cinfonare close to Borgo Montello, while other signs of prehistoric life have been found at Lake Fogliano close to Colle Parito. The Pontine plains are also scattered with various archaeological ruins, the most important area being Le Ferriere (in Borgo Montello), where it is possible to visit the ruins of Satricum. First excavated in 1896-1898, when many items were taken to the National Museum of Villa Giulia in Rome, the acropolis of Satricum was dominated by the temple of Mater Matuta, (6th century BC), even though the area was inhabited as from the 9th century BC. Since 1978, excavations by Dutch researchers have continued to recover and organize the site whilst awaiting the establishment of a real and proper museum.



Cathedral of S. Marco



### The surrounding area.

The territory of Latina incorporates numerous villages. Starting from the north, the first place of interest on the Via Appia is a school founded in 1911 by an enlightened group of teachers, but no longer open to visitors. A short distance from Casal delle Palme there is a bridge across the Acque Medie canal built at the end of the 18th century by Pope Pius VI in order to enable use of the Via Appia during drainage of the marshes. The bridge is decorated with emblems of the Papacy, Rome, the House of Savoy and the Fascist government. A couple of kilometres further south, where the Via Appia crosses the road to Latina Scalo, an aedicule erected in 1786 commemorates the drainage initiative implemented by Pope Pius VI with the words *Auctoritate Pii VI*



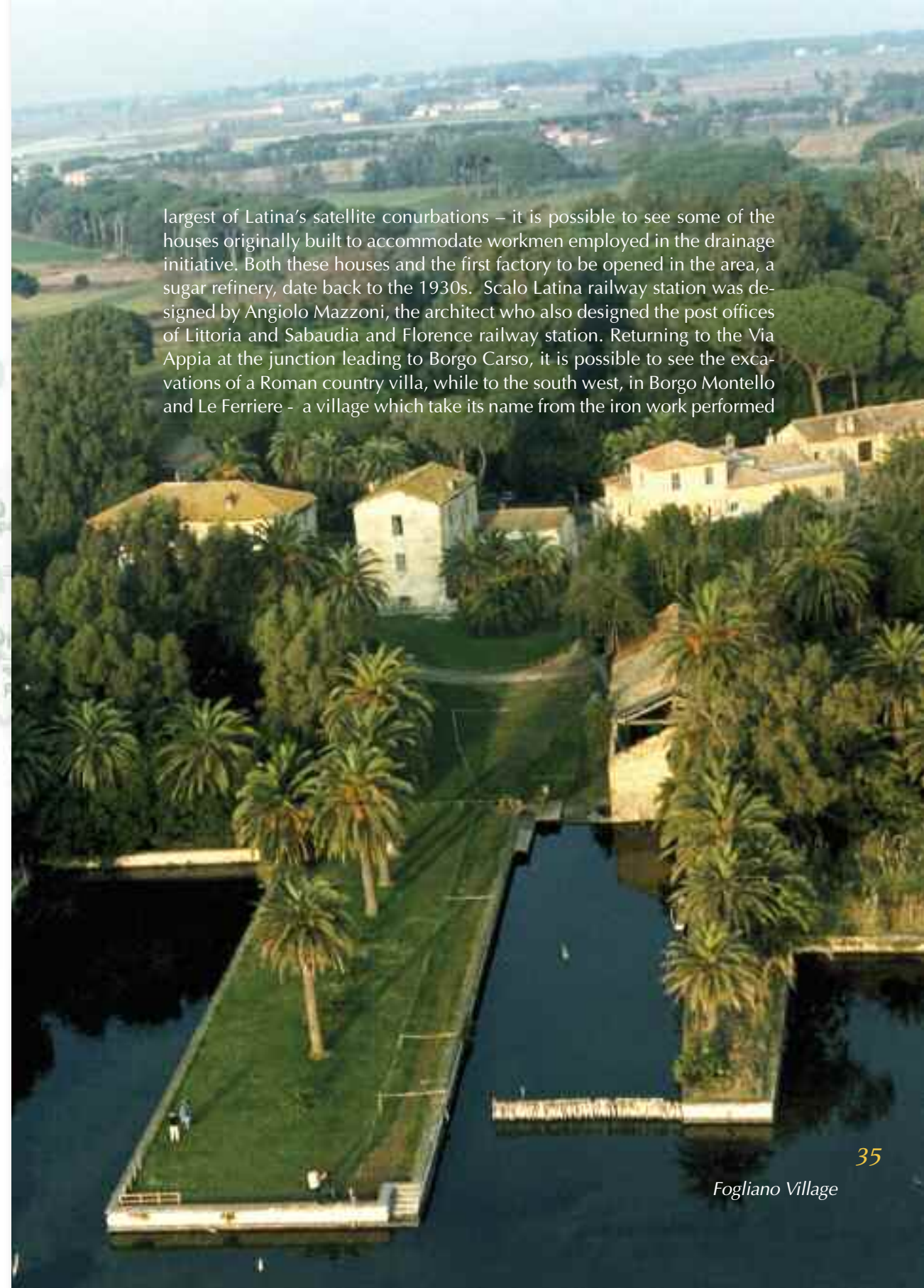
Borgo Piave

*Pont.Max./ Appiae tractus/ ad Pissinariam/ quem aquae stagnantes/ interruperant/ pontinus iunctus/ ageribus munitus/ anno MDCCLXXXVI/ curatore Francisco Mantica/ Praef.viar.* Two years prior to the construction of this epitaph, the Via Appia was reopened (on 27 July 1784) after having been abandoned throughout the 8th and 9th centuries as a result swamping. Continuing south towards Tor Tre Ponti, the 18th century church of San Paolo stands just a few hundred metres ahead of a Roman bridge over the River Ninfa. The bridge is decorated with a number of small aedicules with marble slabs commemorating the imperial reconstruction of the Via Appia. Indeed, Tripontium marked the start of the Decennovium, a 19 mile stretch of the Via Appia up to Terracina recorded by Horace in his Satire N° VII. A few kilometres further south, Borgo Faiti, a village established after completion of the drainage initiative of the 1930s, marks the point at which the waters of the River Cavata join the Linea drainage channel. The countryside opposite Borgo Faiti, in the territory of Sezze, was once the site of Forum Appii (statio romana), a place referred to in the Acts of the Apostles as the place at which Saint Paul met the first Christian communities on his way to Rome. Throughout its length, the Via Appia is lined with epigraphs praising various Roman emperors. Turning back to the crossroads with the epitaph and heading towards the hills, in Latina Scalo - the



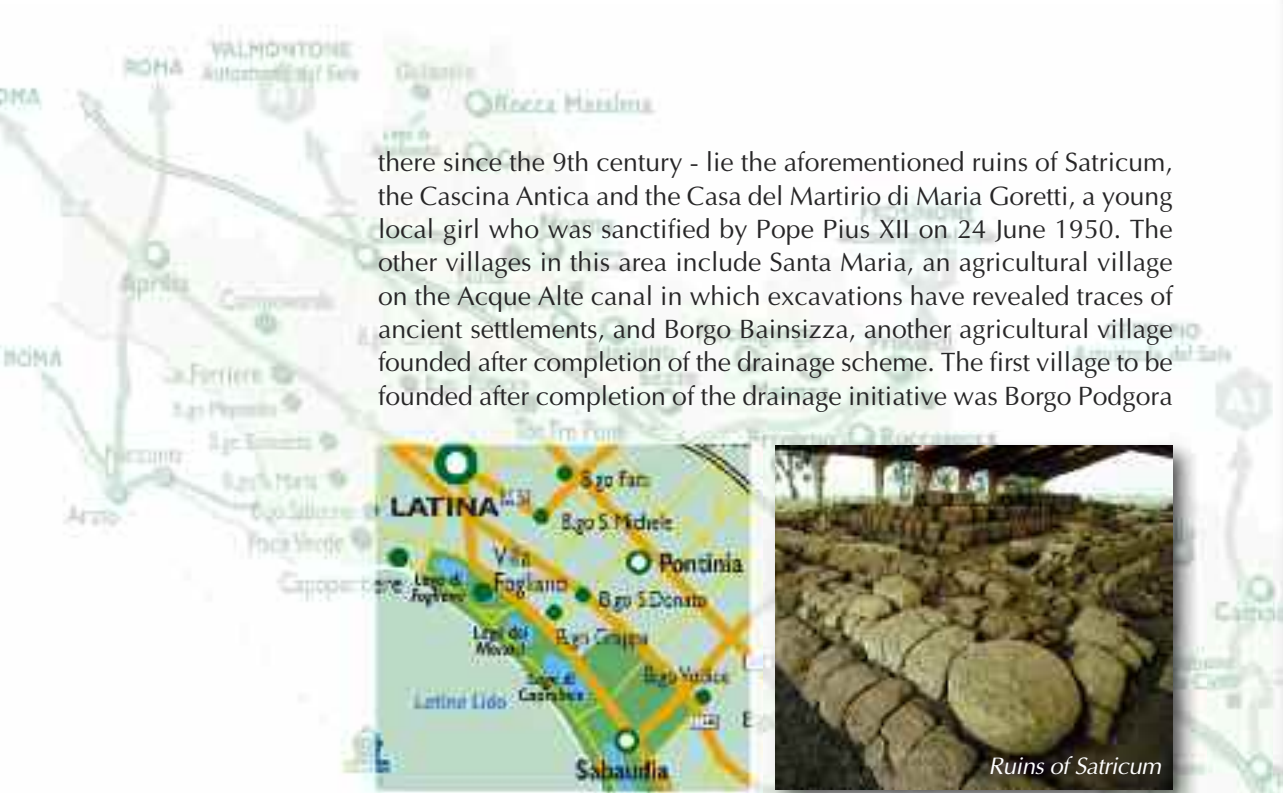
Church of S. Michele

largest of Latina's satellite conurbations - it is possible to see some of the houses originally built to accommodate workmen employed in the drainage initiative. Both these houses and the first factory to be opened in the area, a sugar refinery, date back to the 1930s. Scalo Latina railway station was designed by Angiolo Mazzoni, the architect who also designed the post offices of Littoria and Sabaudia and Florence railway station. Returning to the Via Appia at the junction leading to Borgo Carso, it is possible to see the excavations of a Roman country villa, while to the south west, in Borgo Montello and Le Ferriere - a village which take its name from the iron work performed



Fogliano Village





there since the 9th century - lie the aforementioned ruins of Satricum, the Cascina Antica and the Casa del Martirio di Maria Goretti, a young local girl who was sanctified by Pope Pius XII on 24 June 1950. The other villages in this area include Santa Maria, an agricultural village on the Acque Alte canal in which excavations have revealed traces of ancient settlements, and Borgo Bainsizza, another agricultural village founded after completion of the drainage scheme. The first village to be founded after completion of the drainage initiative was Borgo Podgora



*Ruins of Satricum*

(Sessano), although the only original building still standing is a small stone church. A few kilometres from Borgo Podgora lies Borgo Piave, while to the south east, in Borgo San Michele, it is still possible to see many of the original buildings, including the church, the water tower, the chemist's, the clinic and the school. The village of Borgo Isonzo has now been incorporated into the suburbs of the city of Latina, although it is still possible to see the former Opera Nazionale Combattenti building. The seaside area of Latina Lido is delimited by two settlements dating back to the end of the 1920s: Borgo Sabotino to the west and Borgo Grappa to the east. The Procoio in Borgo Sabotino (now home to the Municipal Antiquarium) is a monumental tribute to the area's pre-industrial agricultural vocation while further proof of the areas vocation prior to the drainage initiative is provided by the 16th century Foceverde tower, a privately-owned water tower located at the mouth of Acque Alte canal. Borgo Grappa, to the east of Latina Lido, grew up around a farm on Casal dei Pini and in Roman times was already a flourishing settlement. Many of the buildings of interest in the area date back to the years of the drainage initiative. These buildings include a water tower, a former school and a number of cottages and farms. The area of Fogliano to the west of Latina Lido is dominated by the state-owned Fogliano Lake, which is managed by Circeo National Nature Reserve. Having developed as a fishing village owned by the Caetani family, Fogliano is now home to the Offices of the State Forestry Commission. The 19th century botanical gardens can only be visited with a guide.



*Tor Tre Ponti*



*Borgo San Michele*



*Borgo Montello*



*Borgo Grappa*



*Borgo Sabotino - Procoio*



*Borgo Carso*



*Borgo Podgora*



*Borgo Bainsizza*



*Le Ferriere - House of martyrdom of S. Maria Goretti*

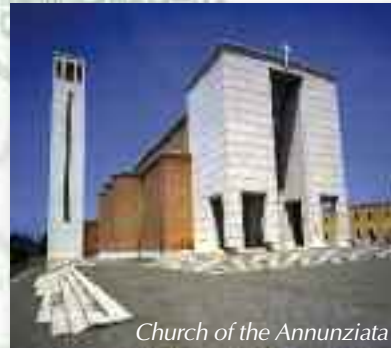


*Borgo Faiti*



# SABAUDIA

The second “new city” to be established following the drainage scheme of the 1930s was Sabaudia. Founded on 5 August 1933 and inaugurated on 15 April 1934, the town was designed by four young rationalist architects - Gino Cancellotti, Eugenio Montuori, Luigi Piccinato and Alfredo Scalpelli - who designed all the main buildings: the town hall, the Casa del Fascio, the Dopolavoro, the Caserma della Milizia Fascista and the Carabinieri and Police barracks, the church and



Church of the Annunziata

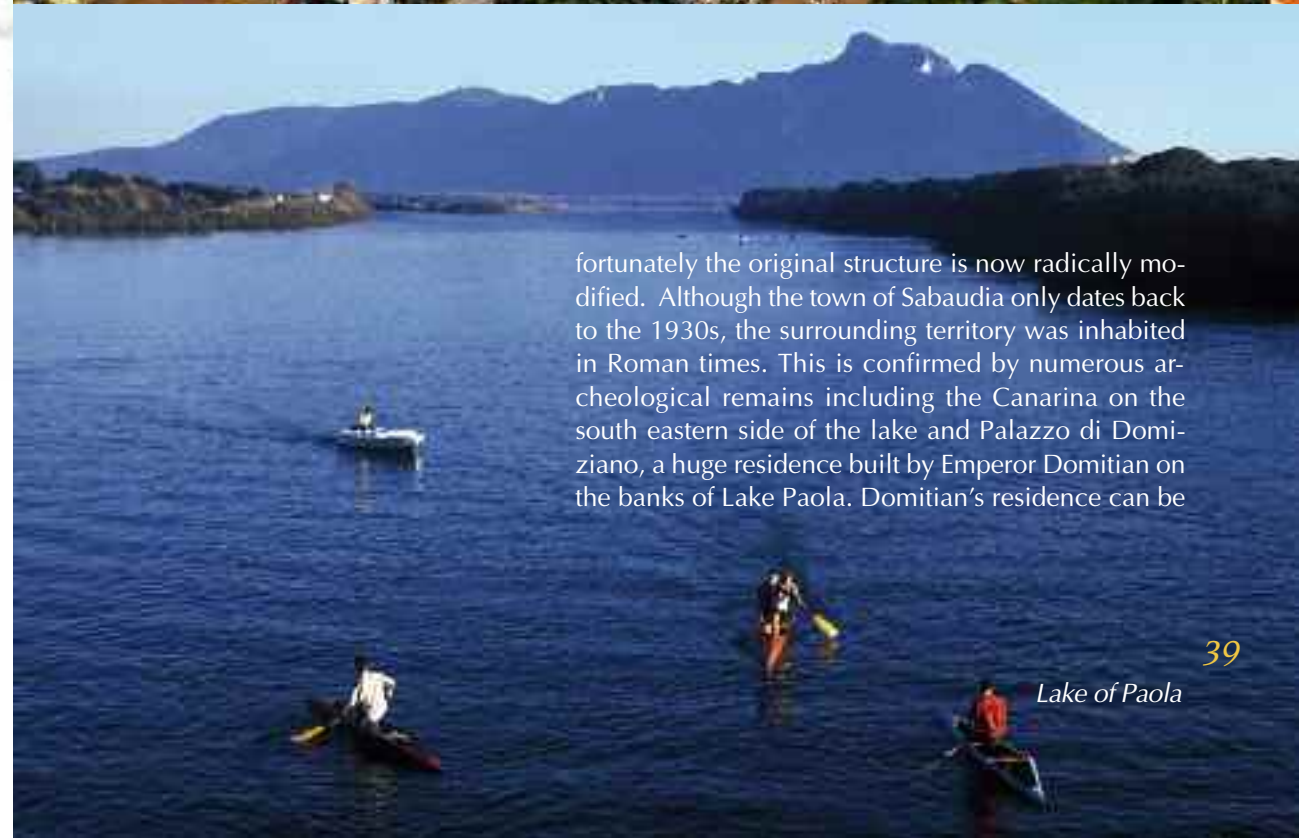
baptistry, the nursery, the hospital, the Opera Maternità e Infanzia building, the covered market, the cinema, the slaughter house and various civilian housing facilities. Of the other buildings in the town, the sports ground, water tower, Casa del Balilla and school were designed by Oriolo Frezzotti, while the (now privately owned) Opera Nazionale Combattenti building and the cemetery were designed by Angelo Vi-cario and the post office was designed by Angiolo Mazzoni. Dominated by a 46 metre tower, the town hall (Palazzo Comunale) is also home to a museum dedicated to Emilio Greco, a local artist (buried in Sabaudia) who donated over ninety works of art to the local community. Piazza del Comune is lined with the former Casa del Fascio, a hotel, a cinema and the church of the Annunziata, whose façade is decorated with a huge mosaic illustrating the founding of Sabaudia and an image of Mussolini embracing a bundle of corn. The 47 metre church bell tower is not joined to the church but rather stands alone as a separate building. Just before Ponte Giovanni XXIII, a bridge across Lake Paola built in the early 1960s, stands Caserma Piave, an Italian navy barracks built in the 1930s, while the path on the right leads to the Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Sorresca, a medieval sanctuary founded by Benedictine monks in the 5th-6th century in a disused Roman building. The building has been restored several times and un-



The town hall



Panoramic view



fortunately the original structure is now radically modified. Although the town of Sabaudia only dates back to the 1930s, the surrounding territory was inhabited in Roman times. This is confirmed by numerous archaeological remains including the Canarina on the south eastern side of the lake and Palazzo di Domiziano, a huge residence built by Emperor Domitian on the banks of Lake Paola. Domitian's residence can be





visited by appointment by contacting the Head Office of Circeo National Nature Reserve. To the east of Lake Paola, a Roman fish farm (now in privately-owned property) known as the Piscina di Lucullo, is connected to the sea by a conduit, while the Roman canal joining the lake to the sea at the base of the Circeo promontory is controlled by a lock built by Cardinal Lucio Collisola. As well as the aforementioned places of interest, it is also well worth visiting Museo del Mare e della Costa "Marcello Zei" (Marcello Zei Museum of the Sea and the Coast), whose collections are clearly illustrated with exhibition panels explaining the development of the relationship between man and the sea. Marcello Zei was the Director of the Study Centre for Ecology in the Quaternary period and many of the museum's exhibits refer directly to the local



Remains of Domitian's Villa

marine environment (and especially the biocenosis of the coastline of the Quaternary period). The museum also includes a prehistoric section whose many lithic and bone fragments clearly document the transformation of the territory following the last ice age. The most important naturalistic, biological, historic and cultural events to have affected the various environments of the region are also illustrated in the Museo Naturalistico - Villa di Domiziano (Domitian's Villa Natural History Museum) in the Visitors' Centre of Circeo National Nature Reserve. At Lestra Cocuzza on the Via Litoranea, a small building which originally housed a marshland school and clinic has now been transformed into the Centro di Documentazione della Scuola e della Sanità nella Palude "Claudia Ortese" (Claudia Ortese Marshland School and Health Documentation Centre) where it is possible to consult a wide range of writings, books and original documents. Finally, the halls of the Torre Civica in the town hall (Palazzo Comunale) are home to a Mostra Permanente delle Decorazioni della Divina Commedia (Permanent Exhibition of Illustrations of the Divine Comedy). The public buildings of Borgo San Donato - the former Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro - and Borgo Vodice - church, school and former hospital - are all fine examples of the architectural style of the period in which they were constructed.



The civic tower



The sea, the dune, the lake



# PONTINIA

The third “new city” to be established on completion of the drainage initiative was Pontinia. Founded on 19 December 1934 and inaugurated on 18 December 1935, Pontinia was laid out by Alfredo Pappalardo, an engineer of the Opera Nazionale Combattenti (the organization which funded the building of the new city) pursuant to a directive which required the construction of a city without any particular decorations and only the very simplest buildings. The original



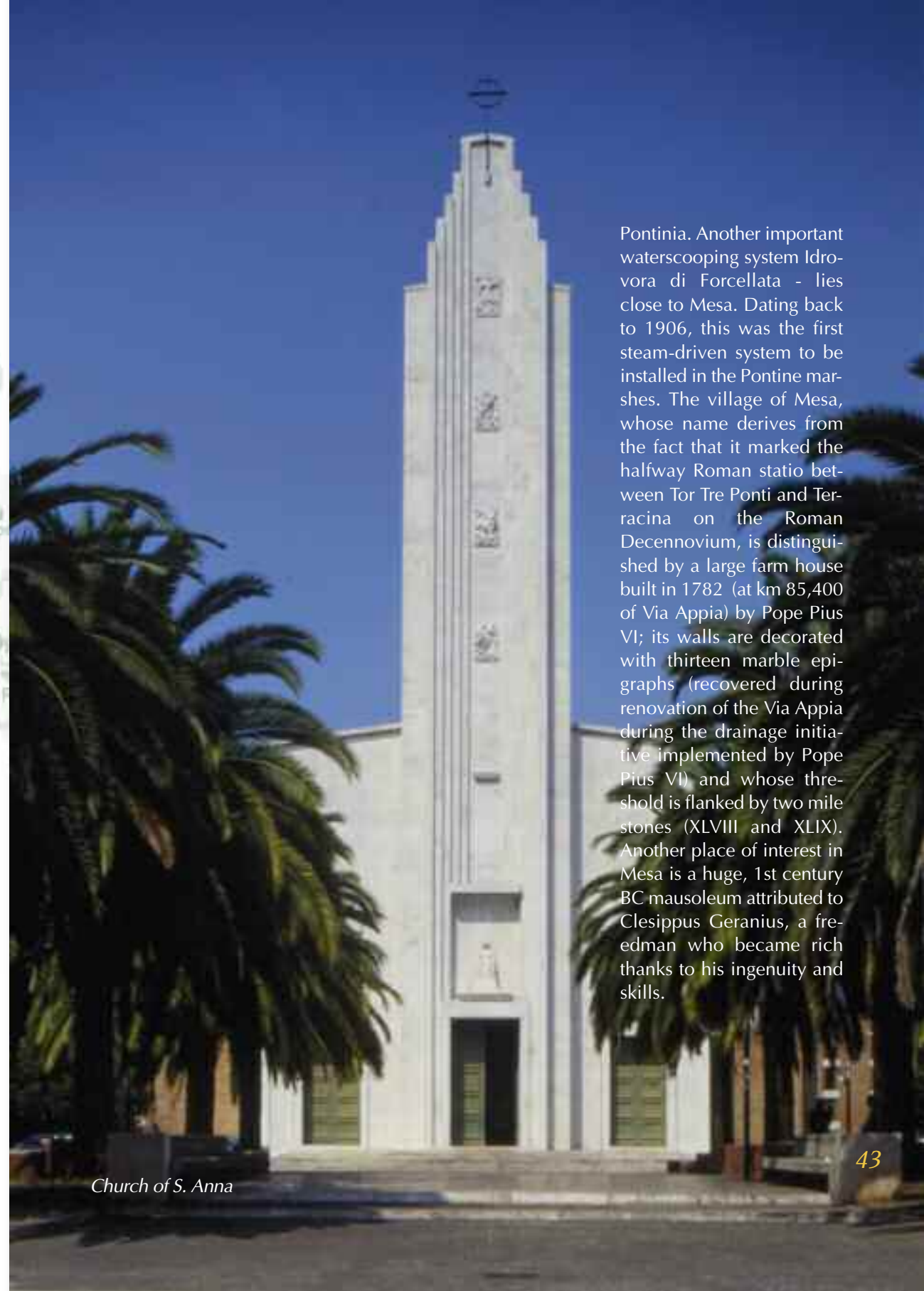
Mesa

buildings thus included a town hall, a church, Carabinieri barracks, a cinema, a hotel, some schools, a water tower and, naturally, a Casa del Fascio. As the urban area of Pontinia expanded, it eventually incorporated Borgo Pasubio, a village established prior to Pontinia, whose town hall, (Palazzo Municipale) is decorated with a brick tile façade and topped with a 20 metre tower. The entire perimeter of the cornice of this building is engraved with one of Mussolini’s favourite phrases: *E’ l’aratro che traccia il solco, ma è la spada che lo difende...* (*The plough cuts the furrow, but the sword defends it*). The gothic façade of the parish church of Sant’Anna rises to the top of the 42 metre bell tower which is positioned in the centre of the façade, while the recently restored Casa del Fascio now houses the Museo La Malaria e la sua Storia (Museum of the History of Malaria), whose fine collection of antique tools, medicines, books, documents, maps and graphs illustrates the history of the Pontine marshes during a plague of malaria which affected the entire area and the results of the anti-larval and anti-anopheles initiatives implemented during the drainage scheme. The municipality of Pontinia embraces an area with many springs, rivers and canals. To the north of the Via Appia, one of the lowest areas in the territory, there is an important waterscooping system, which was inaugurated on 19 December 1934, the same day as the founding of



The civic tower

Pontinia. Another important waterscooping system Idrovora di Forcellata - lies close to Mesa. Dating back to 1906, this was the first steam-driven system to be installed in the Pontine marshes. The village of Mesa, whose name derives from the fact that it marked the halfway Roman statio between Tor Tre Ponti and Terracina on the Roman Decennovium, is distinguished by a large farm house built in 1782 (at km 85,400 of Via Appia) by Pope Pius VI; its walls are decorated with thirteen marble epigraphs (recovered during renovation of the Via Appia during the drainage initiative implemented by Pope Pius VI) and whose threshold is flanked by two mile stones (XLVIII and XLIX). Another place of interest in Mesa is a huge, 1st century BC mausoleum attributed to Clesippus Geranius, a freedman who became rich thanks to his ingenuity and skills.



Church of S. Anna



# R

## OCCAGORGA

The origins of Roccagorga, as for other communities in the Valle dell'Amaseno, are identified with the settling of groups of families, escaping from the destruction of Privernum. Situated on an outcrop of Mount Nero (at 547 m. asl), it rose in the shadow of various feudal passages: from the Church to the Annibaldi, Conti di Ceccano, Caetani di Sermoneta, Ginnetti di Velletri, Orsini and Doria-Pamphili families, the latter being the last feudal lords. The town develops around the 18th

### ITINERARY No. 5

Roccagorga  
Maenza  
Prossedi  
Pisterzo



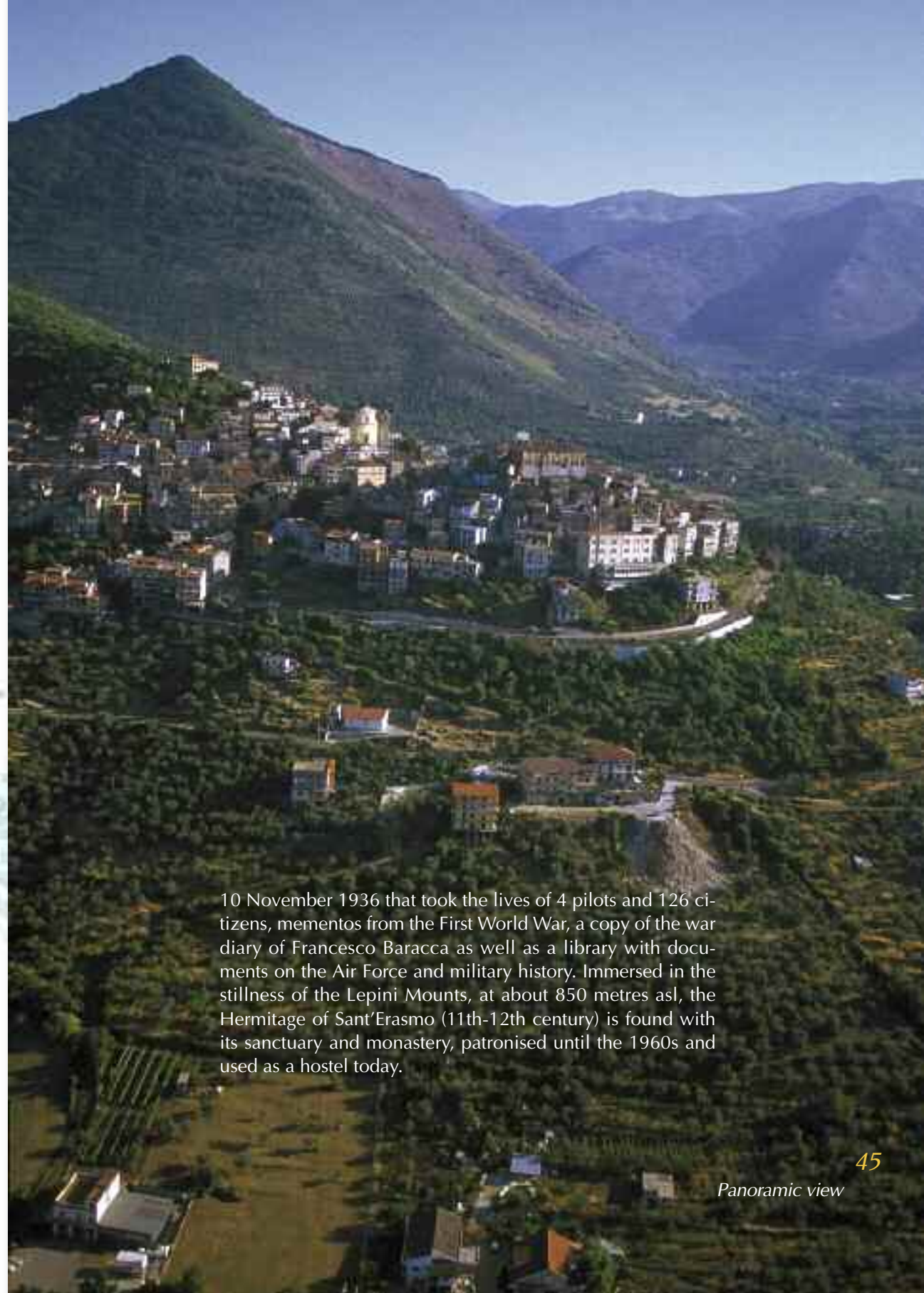
Rural landscape

century Piazza VI Gennaio, which opens out onto a natural "saddle", the uppermost parts of which are occupied by Palazzo Baronale and the Parish Church. The Palazzo Baronale, built during the Middle Ages, but changed and enlarged several times, is grouped around an inner courtyard and composed of two buildings separated by a small donjon-bell tower surmounted by a clock. Construction of the church began at the end of the 17th century and was completed at the beginning of the 18th century and is dedicated to Santi Leonardo ed Erasmo; it was restored after the destruction caused by the earthquake in 1753. The two structures are separated from the central widening by two spaces, reorganised during the early years of the 21st century: small gardens below the feudal palace and, more particularly, the so-called Rifolta (revolt), below the church, that houses memoirs of the occurrence that gave the square its name. On 6 January 1913 a crowd gathered to protest against the poor economic conditions in the town and countryside. Soldiers called in to make "law and order" fired shots against the citizens, killing seven and injuring forty of them. Some rooms on the ground floor and basement of the Baronial Palace house the Ethno-Museum of the Monti Lepini that narrates the development of the local community through rites and myths, the aforesaid tragedy on 6 January 1913, the rural and peasant culture and musicology, etc. Another place to visit, of a completely different kind, is the Museo degli Assi dell'Aeronautica (Museum of Air Force Champions) set up at the G. Restaini school. It holds documents about the plane crash in the town on



Piazza VI gennaio

10 November 1936 that took the lives of 4 pilots and 126 citizens, mementos from the First World War, a copy of the war diary of Francesco Baracca as well as a library with documents on the Air Force and military history. Immersed in the stillness of the Lepini Mounts, at about 850 metres asl, the Hermitage of Sant'Erasmo (11th-12th century) is found with its sanctuary and monastery, patronised until the 1960s and used as a hostel today.



Panoramic view

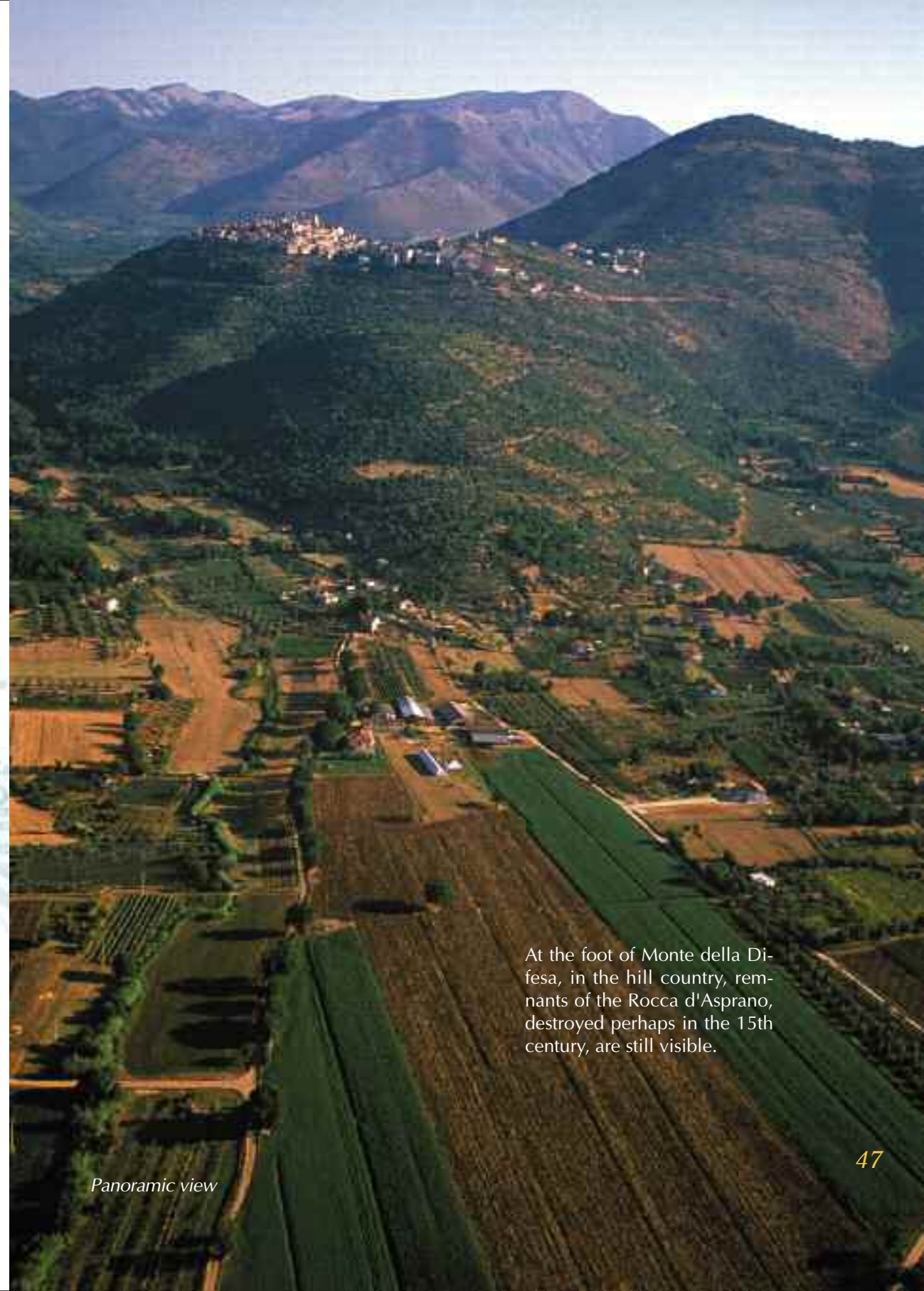


# M AENZA

Positioned on a hill opposite Roccagorga, Maenza overlooks the Valle dell'Amaseno as if from a balcony. Behind it, drawing the boundary with the province of Frosinone, are Monte Calvello and vast areas covered by chestnut, beech and Holm-oak trees. Its origins date back to the Middle Ages, as shown by the typical feudal battlements that were the basis for a defensive urban design: steep, narrow streets, houses built "in a spiral" and the dominant castle. The town belonged to the



Counts of Ceccano until the mid-15th century, when it passed to the Caetani family and, thereafter, to the Aldobrandini family, Cardinal Antonelli, Secretary of State to Pius IX, the Antonelli family and, finally, to the Counts Pecci, family of Pope Leo XIII, the pontiff of the "Rerum novarum" Encyclical and social doctrine of the Church. The original core of the castle may date back to the first half of the 9th century; then it was modified by the Counts of Ceccano and the Caetani family. It has high, massive walls, marked by a scarp and vast parade ground, which underscores its isolation. The most interesting part is on the second floor, where one finds the room of St. Thomas Aquinas, a guest of his nephew until a few days before he died in Fossanova in 1274. Apart from the castle, the oldest section of the town presents: the ancient, and now abandoned, Church of San Giacomo, in the upper area; the Church of Santa Maria Assunta in cielo, separated from the castle by a narrow street, rebuilt forty years after its construction at the expense of Pope Leo XIII and enriched by an organ from the Roman Basilica of S. Giovanni in Laterano and a triptych, of which only the central icon remains, portraying the Virgin and Child with two Musician Angels. After a collapse in 1952 that destroyed the mural paintings, it was restored in 1956. Other historic-monumental buildings are the church with its small annexed convent, Santa Reparata, on the square bearing the same name and where a stone fountain stands; the "covered square", once a market and recently restored; the Palazzo Pecci, now the Town Hall, with the nearby loggia-terrace, opening onto the panorama of the Valle dell'Amaseno. In the outlying areas one finds the ruins of the Castello di Montacuto, dating back to the 12th century.



At the foot of Monte della Difesa, in the hill country, remnants of the Rocca d'Asprano, destroyed perhaps in the 15th century, are still visible.



# P

## ROSSEDI - PISTERZO

Located on a hill on the border with the province of Frosinone, Prossedi was formed as battlements, just like the nearby communities, and belonged to the Counts of Ceccano, Annibaldi, Massimo and Altieri families. A sign of this feudality is the Baronial Palace; its solid structure, accentuated by four rectangular bulwarks and lightened inside by a vast courtyard, towers over the town. Religion is represented by the Church of Sant'Agata, having a wall of "live" stone and mortar, anima-



Church of S. Agata

ted by semicircular elements filling up the sides of the façade up to two-thirds the height of the building. The layout is a Greek cross, surmounted by a cupola defined by four great pillars. Another church, in the Romanesque style, dedicated to San Nicola, opens onto steps that end in a small gateway defined by small columns and a barely splayed archway. Many ancient mural paintings have been brought to light here. The façade is embellished by a rosette. At the lower gates to the town, one can see a lovely fountain that Benedict XIII had built in 1727. The territory of Prossedi comprises the neighbouring town of Pisterzo (at 466 metres asl), on the other side of the Valle dell'Amaseno, classified for governing purposes as a hamlet. It is accessed by a pleasant ascent of about 5 km starting through the woods. From a town-planning point of view, it is an appealing centre (despite some excessive use of metal fixtures), with small streets that cross it, uncovering unique spots and lovely little buildings. It is U-shaped with constructions prevalently in local stone and plastered. At the highest point stands Palazzo Gabrielli, once the residence of the feudal lord, the piccolo Palazzo del Capitano, former seat of public administration, the Church of San Michele Arcangelo, with three naves, that was reconstructed in 1924 after the fire that had practically destroyed it three years before, and a war memorial.



8th century fountain



Gabrielli Palace



# F OSSANOVA

Leaving Priverno southward on Via Marittima II, stands Fossanova Abbey, one of greatest examples of Gothic-Cistercian architecture in Italy. Surrounded by a small village (very similar to Citeaux, the place in which the Cistercian Order was established), Fossanova Abbey provided the cultural, religious and architectural model for the whole of southern Latium and, more generally, for Burgundian-Gothic architecture throughout Italy. The abbey was consecrated on 10 June 1208 by

## ITINERARY No. 6

*Fossanova  
Priverno  
Roccasecca dei Volsci  
Sonnino*



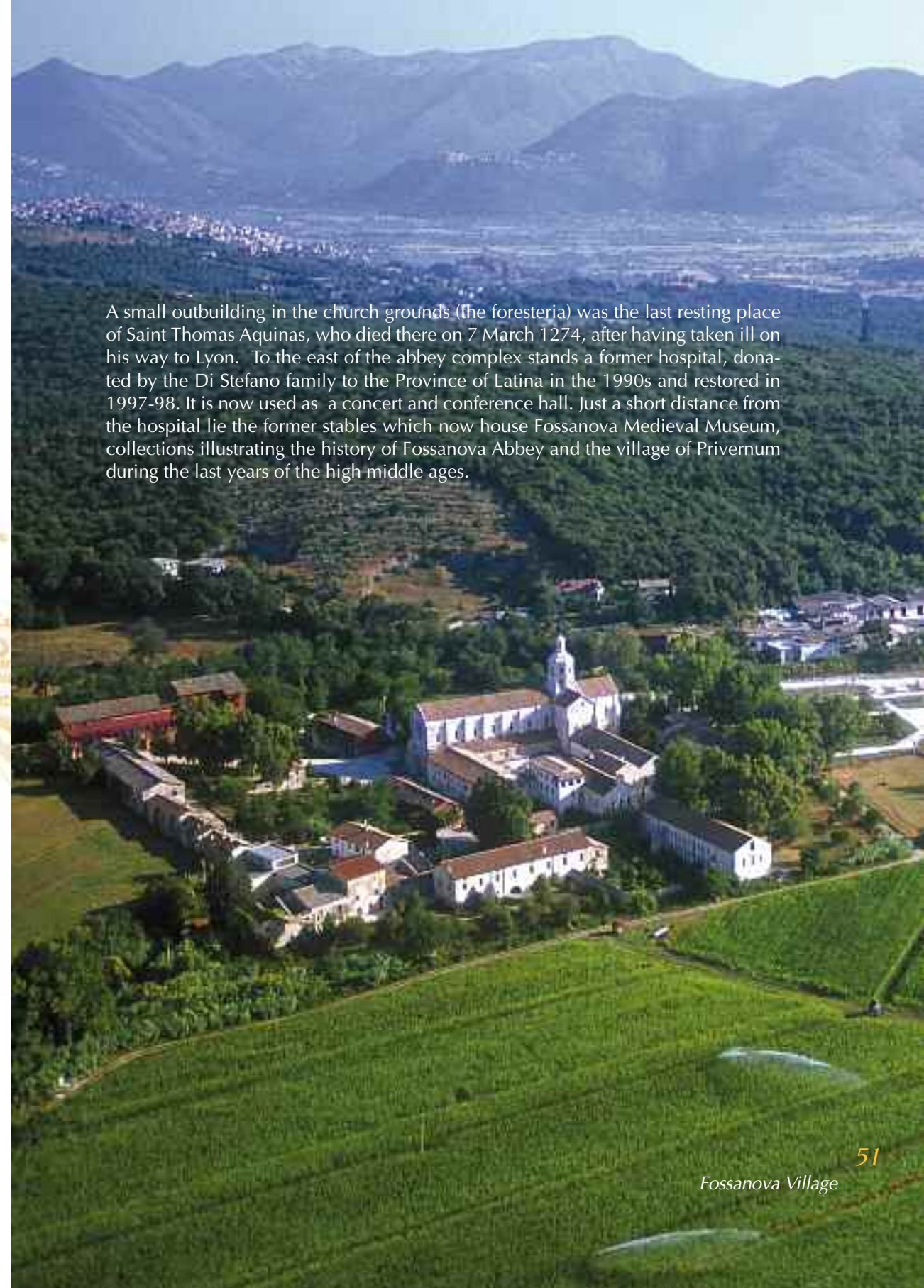
*Columns of the cloister*

Pope Innocent III. The Abbey was built of local stone; the huge, imposing façade with its delicate rose window, the lantern, the simple central nave lined with elegant pillars and the finely ribbed ceiling make it a masterpiece of 12th century architecture. The complex also includes a chapter house, a cloister decorated with a cornice of binate stone columns and a refectory. The abbey has been restored on several occasions, during which traces of Roman constructions, an ancient cemetery for the monks and various primitive workshops were brought to light.



*The nave of the Abbey*

A small outbuilding in the church grounds (the foresteria) was the last resting place of Saint Thomas Aquinas, who died there on 7 March 1274, after having taken ill on his way to Lyon. To the east of the abbey complex stands a former hospital, donated by the Di Stefano family to the Province of Latina in the 1990s and restored in 1997-98. It is now used as a concert and conference hall. Just a short distance from the hospital lie the former stables which now house Fossanova Medieval Museum, collections illustrating the history of Fossanova Abbey and the village of Privernum during the last years of the high middle ages.





# P RIVERO

Overlooking the Amaseno valley, the village of Priverno clings to the slopes of Colle Rosso on the route to the sea used by many ancient migratory populations, including the Volsci people who settled in the area in the 6th century BC, establishing the village of Privernum. Destroyed by the Romans in 329 BC, Privernum was immediately rebuilt on the plain of Mezzagosto, only to be destroyed by the Saracens, following which its inhabitants sought refuge in the nearby hills and dispersed among the neighbouring villages. The remains of many public and pri-



vate buildings have been found in the area, including the ruins of temples, a forum and a theatre as well as inscriptions, statues, fragments of sculptures. In addition, the ruins of several villas and country houses are still visible in the area. Many other finds are now conserved in Priverno Archaeological Museum. In the middle ages the hillside village was protected by a defensive wall with seven gates. The main gates were the Porta Romana and the Porta Napoletana, which led to the centre of the village (now marked by Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II), the town hall (Palazzo Comunale) and the Cathedral of Santa Maria Annunziata. The town hall was built in the early 13th century, although it was substantially altered between 1856 and 1864, while the cathedral was consecrated by Pope Lucius III in 1183, having been destroyed by Frederick Barbarossa in 1159. Built over an existing Romanic style building, the cathedral houses numerous important paintings (including the 15th century Madonna d'Agosto) and the (maybe) skull of Saint Thomas Aquinas, who died at Fossanova Abbey. In the centre of Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II stands a fountain - Fontana dei Delfini - built in 1877, while the building which lines one of the sides of the square, Palazzo Valeriani-Guarini, was commenced in the 13th century and completed in the 16th century, although it was completely demolished and reassembled in 1925. The centre of Priverno is characterized by narrow lanes, steep pathways and staircases leading to numerous places of interest: the 13th-15th century church of Sant'Antonio Abate, the 9th-10th century church of San Benedetto (formerly the bishops' palace) and the 11th-13th century church of San Giovanni Evangelista as well as the 16th century church of Santa Lucia, the 13th -15th church of San Cristoforo e San Vito and the 18th cen-



The clock of the town hall

tury church of Santa Maria del Suffragio. The various buildings of artistic interest include the 17th century Palazzo Zaccaleoni (which was built over medieval foundations), the 18th century Palazzo Marzi Cancellotti, (also built over medieval foundations) and the 19th century Palazzo Guarini-Tacconi. The former Palazzo dell'Episcopio houses the Municipal Archaeological Museum whose collections illustrate the history of Privernum and the surrounding area. Displayed in twelve rooms, the exhibition includes items from local housings, mosaics, a Hellenistic floor and a mosaic device showing the Rape of Ganymede. Next to the museum, the ancient church of Santa Chiara (restored in the 1990s) is now used as an exhibition and convention centre. Just a few kilometres from Priverno, the castle of San Martino stands in a 33-hectare oak forest which covers almost all the side of the hill. Restored in 1998, the castle was originally known as Palazzo Gallio, as it was inhabited by Cardinal Tolomeo Gallio between 1565 and 1569. Several rooms of the castle now house the world's first museum of pure and applied mathematics (Museo della Matematica "Giochiamo all'infinito"), whose interactive approach enables visitors to explore the most abstract of the sciences by means of a real and proper, hands-on experience.



Piazza Giovanni XXIII



# R

## OCCASECCA DEI VOLSCI

Located at the top of a spur of the neighbouring Monte Curio and overlooking the Amaseno valley, Roccasecca dei Volsci was probably founded following the dispersal of the inhabitants of Privernum in the second half of the 9th century. Established as a feud of the Catholic church, the village then passed into the hands of the Frangipane family, the counts of Ceccano, the Carafa family and the Massimo family, who were the lords of the village for two centuries before it was



Temple of S. Raffaele

transferred to the Gabrielli family in 1761. The medieval origins of Roccasecca dei Volsci are clearly visible in the urban layout: narrow lanes lined with houses huddled together on the slope up to the village centre (Piazza Umberto I), church and palace. The medieval parish church of Santa Maria Assunta was heavily altered in the early 17th century by the Massimo family. On the other side of Piazza Umberto I, the recently restored, 15th-century Palazzo Massimo houses the Museum of Freemasonry, the only museum of its kind in Italy and one of only two similar structures in Europe. Despite its size, Roccasecca dei Volsci has many interesting buildings to be visited: the Chapter House (Palazzo del Capitolo), the church of San Sebastiano, the 13th-14th century church of Santa Croce, the temples of San Raffaele and of Santa Maria della Pace. The neoclassical temple of San Raffaele was built in the 17th century at the top of the village and is decorated with various frescoes attributed to the schools of Domenichino and Pietro da Cortona, while the temple of Santa Maria della Pace, at the foot of the village, was constructed by the Massimo family in 1661-62 and contains a small altar and a 17th century fresco. Just a short distance from it lies a rural chapel, known as the chapel of "gli Cimmorono", which is still the point of arrival of several local Whitsunday processions.



Temple of Madonna della Pace



Panoramic view



# S ONNINO

Located at the top of Colle Sant'Angelo, Sonnino is laid out according to an urban plan known as the a cascata (hierarchical) system. Founded in the early 9th century, it was originally a feud of the Domini di Sonnino family before it passed into the hands of Count Onorato I Caetani of Fondi and was then transferred to the Colonna, Borgia and Carafa di Stigliano families. After only seven years as feudal lords of Sonnino, the Carafa family transferred the village back to the Colonna



*Typical alley*

family who remained as lords of the village until the feudal system was abolished in 1816. For a long period the village was home to an active gang of brigands, its greatest exponent being Antonio Gasbarrone. The village centre occupies the highest part of the hill and its steep staircases and fourteen narrow lanes are lined with fine medieval buildings and towers. Surrounded by walls with several gates (known as posteluras), the highest point of the village is marked by Torre Antonelli, the last remaining part of the primitive castle, which takes its name from the last family to own it. The road which leads from the castle to the heart of the village, Via di Mezzo, was the only main street in the village until well into the 16th century, when a new road, presently Via Giacomo Antonelli, was built. Just below the castle stand the 15th century church of San Marco (restored and altered in the 18th century) and the church of San Michele Arcangelo (later transformed into the sanctuary of Maria Santissima delle Grazie) which was founded as a chapel of the castle in the 14th century. Other places of interest in the village are the 15th century chapel of San Sebastiano, which is decorated with the coats of arms of the Gaetani d'Aragona, Counts of Fondi and Sonnino, and contains a 16th century stone tabernacle and a fine Candelabra of the Paschal Candle, and the church of San Giovanni Battista in Via di Mezzo, which also probably dates back to the 13th century. The recently extended local history museum (Museo delle Terre di Confine, founded in 2004) in Via Giacomo Antonelli illustrates the history of the village and its century old struggle to defend the territory against Privernum and the brigands who terrorized travellers through the no-mans-land between the borders of the Papal states and

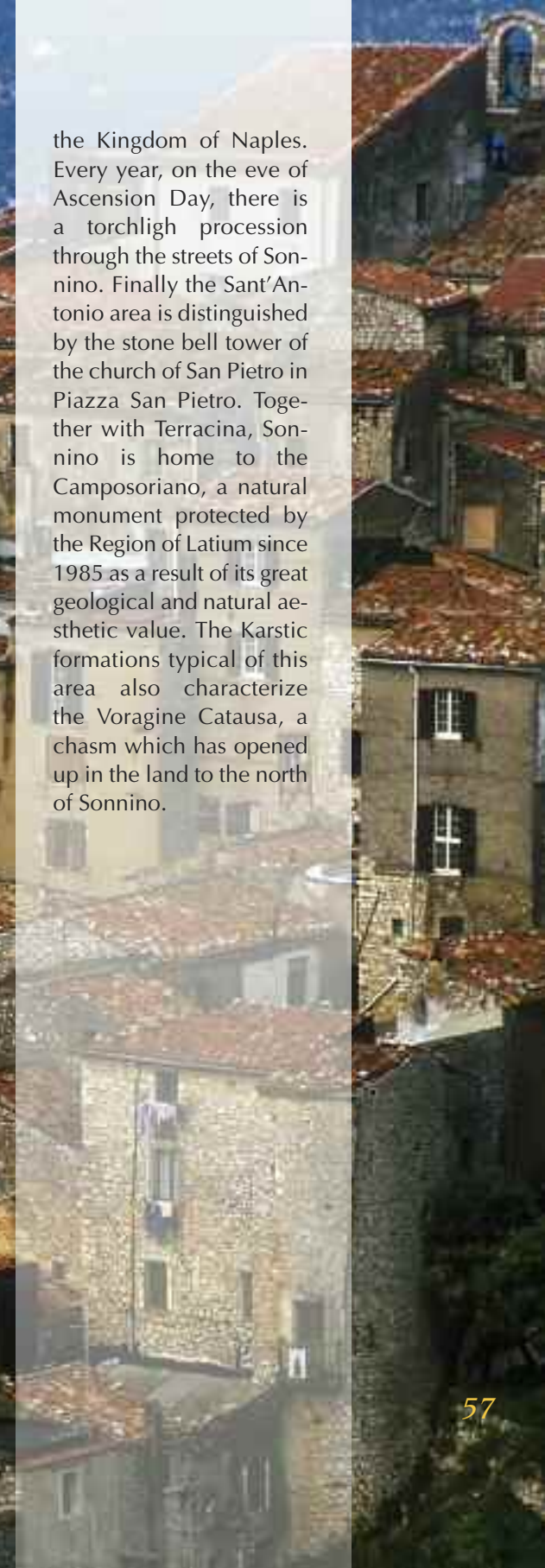


*Antonelli tower and Church of S. Marco*



*The historic centre*

the Kingdom of Naples. Every year, on the eve of Ascension Day, there is a torchlight procession through the streets of Sonnino. Finally the Sant'Antonio area is distinguished by the stone bell tower of the church of San Pietro in Piazza San Pietro. Together with Terracina, Sonnino is home to the Camposoriano, a natural monument protected by the Region of Latium since 1985 as a result of its great geological and natural aesthetic value. The Karstic formations typical of this area also characterize the Voragine Catausa, a chasm which has opened up in the land to the north of Sonnino.





# SAN FELICE CIRCEO

Mythology, prehistory and archaeology are in evidence across the area, seen in the monuments and nature of San Felice Circeo, together with the Middle Ages and modern times. Ulysses and Circe recall the fictitious enigma of the time; the sea grottos guard the signs of hunting populations and great geological events; the mighty walls of the acropolis and the remains of villas recall the Pre-Roman and Roman age and coastal towers recall the Middle Ages; the historic centre plunges into

## ITINERARY No. 7 San Felice Circeo Terracina



the history of the 8th-9th century fief. As regards prehistory, the most important sea grottos are the Capre, the Fossellone and Breuil, where proof of primitive pre-historic man was found. The most famous grotto is "on land", Grotto Guattari, situated in the garden of the Hotel Neanderthal. In 1939 it was reopened by the palaeontologist Alberto Carlo Blanc, who uncovered a layer of animal fossils and a ring of stone at the centre of which was a skull (now in the Pigorini Museum in Rome), ascribed to a Neanderthal man, who had lived not less than 50 thousand years ago. Pre-Roman and Roman culture is represented by many, scattered monuments, beginning with the polygonal walls (6th century B.C. and Etruscan period) that enclosed the acropolis, at the summit of the promontory, and formed a defence system with the walls, which can be glimpsed in some parts of the town. What remains of the passage of Circeii to the Volsci and then to the Romans are: the Villa dei Quattro Venti where the triumvir, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, was relegated in 36 B.C.; a thermal building, near the canal - also Roman - that links the sea to the lake; the great excavation that was almost certainly a stretch of the Fossa Augusta from the Neronian age, that empties into the sea and bears the name of Rio Torto (today culverted); remains of villas, often engulfed by the forest, the most important of which is the splendid Villa of Domitian (see Sabaudia); and the large basin of Lucius Faberius Murena (inaccurately said to be of Lucullus), a circular fish farm, situated a few hundred meters from the sea, but connected to it to ensure an exchange of water. Another important ruin is the so-called Temple of Circe, a platform of ca. 40 x 25



Polygonal walls



The statue of the Christ of Circeo



meters, bounded by mighty support walls and polygonal blocks (6th century B.C.), standing on the highest point of the Circeo promontory. During the Middle Ages the town was a fief of the Frangipane, Pironti, Annibaldi and Caetani families, as well as Prince Francesco Ruspoli, the Orsini family and the Reverend Apostolic Chamber (1720). The latter sold it to Prince Stanislaus Poniatowsky, nephew of the Polish King Stanislaus Augustus, who returned it in 1822 to the Church that held it until the Unity of Italy. The historic centre is a closed village that centres around the Baronial Palace (16th century) of the Caetani family, today the town hall, still marked by the defence walls, having two gates and the 13th century Tower of the Templars with its 19th century clock. Set up in some of the rooms in the tower is the Permanent Exhibit of



Homo Sapiens et Habitat with a collection of authentic finds belonging to prehistoric and protohistoric cultures, both regional and non-regional, fossils of fauna, replicas of rare paleoanthropological fossils and ethnographic objects from all over the world. Descending to the coast, one can see four surviving coastal towers that protected the area from Saracen invasions: Torre Cervia, Torre del Fico, Torre della Vittoria, all 16th century, private towers, and Torre Olevola (15th century). As regards houses of worship, special mention should be made of the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, also dedicated to the Holy Shroud (Santa Sindone), since one of the six authentic reproductions of the shroud, preserved in the Duomo of Turin, is kept here. A permanent exhibit is dedicated to the Santa Sindone. San Felice is also a modern tourist spot with a lovely sea front, hotels and similar structures and places for relaxation, animation and a small, but efficient tourist harbour. A unique submerged monument is the Christ of Circeo, a bronze statue of the Saviour that was sunk about one mile from the harbour, at a depth of 18 meters, in 1992. Approximately five km from the town, towards Terracina, rises the hamlet of Borgo Montenero, built during the reclamation in 1934. The entire facility and civil buildings of this time still stand. During the summer season, the city is linked to the Island of Ponza by fast motorships.



The historic centre



The harbour



Promontory of Circeo and east coast



# TERRACINA

This Voscian city, bearing the name of Anxur, and thus even older than Rome, stands on the consular road, Via Appia, begun in 312 B.C. It acquired great commercial and military importance, which reached its maximum expression during the Imperial Age, when Trajan had the harbour enlarged (it was completed by Antoninus Pius and lengthened by Gregorio VII) and Via Appia deviated along the coast, by cutting through the cliff known as Pesco Montano, and abandoning the diffi-



cult hilly route that crossed the upper city. The Imperial Age was also the beginning of the decline of Terracina, bound to the crossing of armies and the presence of the Ager Pomptinus, that started reverting back a marsh as a result of neglected maintenance of the canals and rivers. The Saracens gave a further stroke against the city and it withdrew upwards, to be protected by the Byzantine walls. The medieval city was superimposed on the Roman city, but living was difficult until the end of the 18th century, when Pope Pius VI started up the first modern reclamation of the Pontine marshes that led to: the reopening of the Appia, the construction of the new district that took the name Borgo Pio from him and the return of harbour activities. Today Terracina is clearly divided into two parts: the Voscian-Roman, medieval and late 18th century hill centre, and the flatland, seaside city. The hillside city is set among Roman and medieval buildings, especially clustered on Piazza del Municipio and its immediate surroundings. Here we find the Forum Aemilianus, built by order of Aulus Aemilius, skirting the northern side of Via Appia, of which part of the stone-based road is visible as well as the ancient pavement, which passed under a four-sided arch that made up the monumental entrance to the forum to the east. On the northeast side of the square, a portico and part of the cavea and stage of a Roman amphitheatre were recently brought to light. Other significant remains, such as the Capitolium, encircle what was the Main Temple, upon which rises the Cathedral of San Cesareo, built in its current form in about the 11th century and consecrated in 1074. The first conclave outside Rome was hosted here on 12 March



Mt. S. Angelo and eastern basin



Panoramic view

1088 and elected Urban II. Apart from the mosaic floor, great value is also placed on the ambo, decorated with mosaic tesserae similar to the ones that illustrate the candelabra of the Paschal candle, considered a masterpiece by the Cosmati brothers. The cathedral is completed by a splendid brick campanile (13th century). Palazzo Venditti or Pironti (14th century) is aligned with the cathedral and the Bishop's Palace (Palazzo Episcopale) stands on the opposite side not far from the campanile. The nearby medieval tower, or grain silo (13th century), houses the City Archaeological Museum "Pio Capponi" on the ground floor, where material documenting the various periods of the history of the city and the territory are exhibited. New exposition spaces, set up in rooms below the Duomo of San Cesareo, display floor mosaics that pertained to a domus from the 2nd century A.D.. Behind the square rises the 18th century Palazzo Braschi and, a bit further down, the Palazzo della Bonificazione Pontina (18th century), built on a pre-existing Roman structure. The walled city includes many other noteworthy structures, such as the house-towers, residential build-



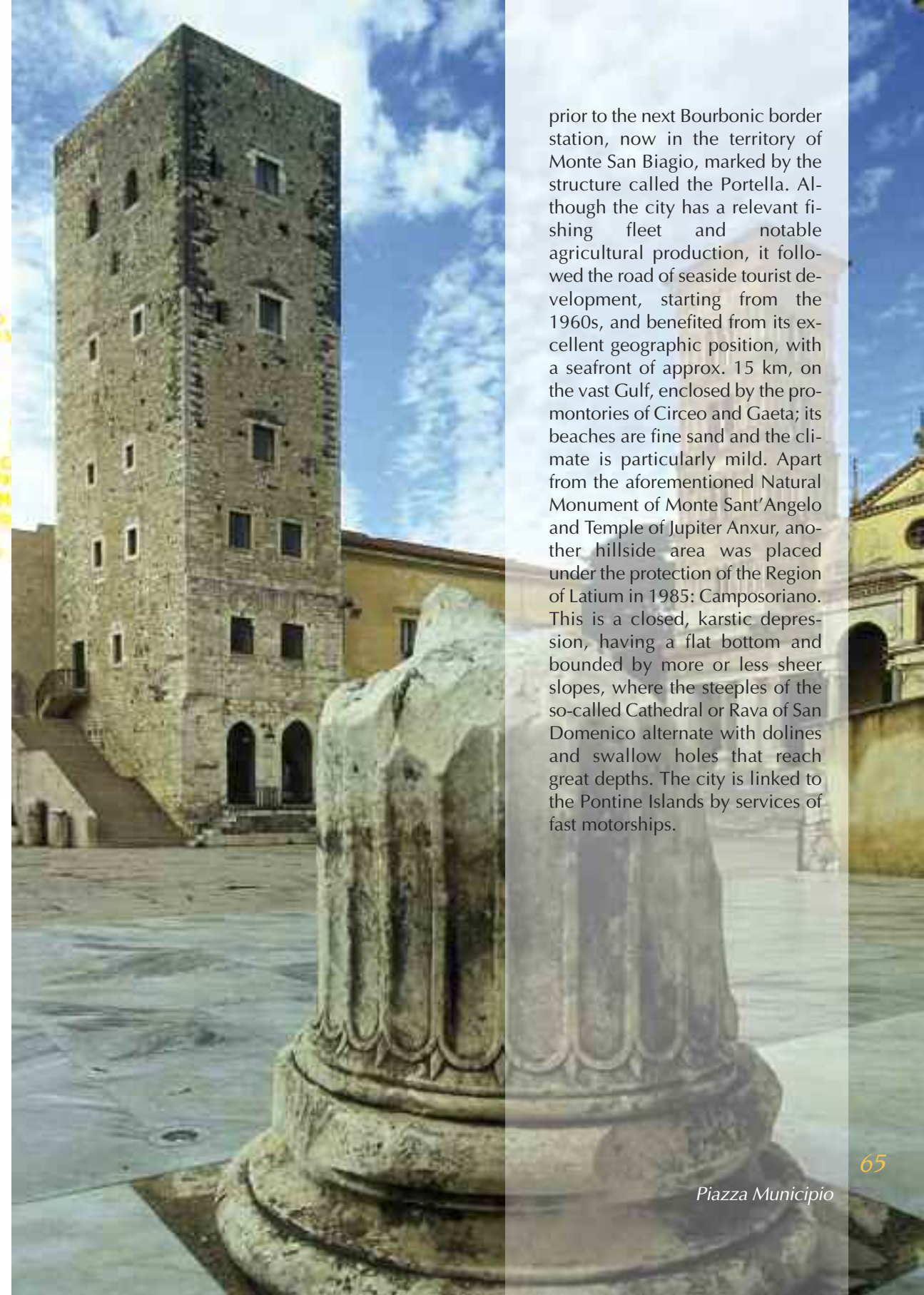
dings, communication walkways, now transformed into lanes, some historic buildings and monuments as the Frangipane Castle or Rocca Traversa (12th century), the Church of the Purgatorio (17th century), the former Church of San Domenico with its former convent (13th century), the former Church of San Francesco and the former convent (13th century) overlooking Memorial Park, a small botanical garden full of typical species. Leaving the historic centre, one enters onto the panoramic route; it runs along part of the walls and defence towers and some Roman burial grounds, then ascends to the summit of Monte Sant'Angelo (277 m.), up to one of the symbols of Terracina, once the Temple of Jupiter Anxur (a natural monument). The current construction only comprises the strong substructures (1st century B.C.), on which the tem-



ple rested. The new city developed around the 18th century Borgo Pio and also shows traces of the Roman era, that is, the aforesaid Trajan Harbour and Pesco Montano, the Severian Forum and a temple dedicated to the Goddess Feronia, at the foot of Monte Leano. Along Via Roma stands the neoclassical church of the Santissimo Salvatore that houses a sculpted group portraying the Pietà, said to have been fashioned by Canova. The entire road is flanked by 19th century constructions; this was a prolific period for the lower city, marked by Piazza Marina and prestigious homes: the residences of Antonelli, Melloni and Rappini families, Casa Lepri, and Palazzo Capponi. The flat northeast territory comprises an area bounded by the Ausoni Mountains and closed to the west by Monte Leano (676 m.): this is the Valle, also known as Valle dei Santi, crossed by the ancient route of the Appia, where one can still glimpse stretches of the ancient stone road. Rising on the site where the valley straddles the mountain is the small rural church of San Silvano, while the sanctuary of the Madonna della Delibera stands on the side entering the city. Towards the sea, where the carrier canal empties, transporting water from the Linea canal and Ufente and Amaseno rivers, one can see the privately owned tower of Badino (16th century). On the opposite side, towards Fondi and along the Via Appia, one finds the ruins of the Gregorian Tower. Before reaching the tower, there is the Porta Napoli or Porta XX Settembre, set against Pesco Montano. Following along the Appia towards Fondi, the Epitaffio Tower recalls the border of the Papal State with the Kingdom of Naples. This is where a neutral area began, a kind of no man's land,



Natural monument of Camposoriano



prior to the next Bourbonic border station, now in the territory of Monte San Biagio, marked by the structure called the Portella. Although the city has a relevant fishing fleet and notable agricultural production, it followed the road of seaside tourist development, starting from the 1960s, and benefited from its excellent geographic position, with a seafront of approx. 15 km, on the vast Gulf, enclosed by the promontories of Circeo and Gaeta; its beaches are fine sand and the climate is particularly mild. Apart from the aforementioned Natural Monument of Monte Sant'Angelo and Temple of Jupiter Anxur, another hillside area was placed under the protection of the Region of Latium in 1985: Camposoriano. This is a closed, karstic depression, having a flat bottom and bounded by more or less sheer slopes, where the steeples of the so-called Cathedral or Rava of San Domenico alternate with dolines and swallow holes that reach great depths. The city is linked to the Pontine Islands by services of fast motorships.

Piazza Municipio



# M

## ONTE SAN BIAGIO

Monte San Biagio faces towards the plains from a spur on Monte Calvo. The Emperor Sergius Sulpicius Galba may have been born in this town. The funeral monument at km.110.500 on Via Appia supposedly belongs to him, although recent studies attribute this monument to Julius Frontinus. Other signs of Romans in this area are the walls in opus reticulatum that jut out near the cemetery along Via Appia. The history of the town is linked to that of Fondi, since Pope John VIII handed it and

### ITINERARY No. 8

Monte San Biagio  
Fondi  
Lenola  
Campodimele  
tri  
Sperlonga



Panoramic view

other towns over to the Dukes of Gaeta in the 9th century. The town was protected and overlooked by the originally Lombard castle, rising upon a Roman building, but heavily modified over subsequent years, and encircled by walls with four towers. Almost in the centre of the town is the Parish church of San Giovanni Battista, founded, perhaps, in the 7th century, but transformed between 1727 and 1748. Housed here and worthy of note are a silver bust of Saint Blaise, a perfectly functioning 18th century organ and the triptych by Cristoforo Scacco, "The wedding of Saint Catherine" (16th century), portraying the Virgin with Saint Catherine (centre) and The Saints John the Baptist and the Evangelist (sides), "The Last Supper (in the lunette above), Christ and the Apostles (in the base predella). Some people associate Scacco's work with his presumed birth here, because a house where he lived stands in this town (architecturally interesting is the small portico at its entrance, which is named "dello Scacco"). Other religious merits of the town are: the small church of le Spiagge or of the Madonna della Mercede, at the entrance to the town (17th century), built by the Mercedari; the small church of San Rocco, on the street of the same name and perhaps from the 12th century; the church of the Madonna della Ripa, (9th-10th century) and the rural chapel of St. Angelo del Peschio also known as di San Michele, built on Sant'Angelo hill and now abandoned. A construction of note is the Portella, on the plain along the



Church of S. Giovanni Battista - Triptych of C. Scacco



The historic centre

Appia, formed by two cylindrical towers connected by an arch that spans the Appia. This was the toll structure on the boundary with the Kingdom of Naples. Here began "no man's land", which extended for a couple of kilometres, up to another boundary, the papal post of the Epitaph. In 1933, the narrow passage of the Via Appia beneath the arch was abandoned for the current, external diversion. Leaving the town in the direction of Fondi one encounters the "Sughereta di S.Vito", considered one of the vastest cork oak forests on the Italian peninsula. Covering approximately 300 hectares, the younger trees alternate with majestic cork oaks, having odd forms and sometimes monumental sizes. Part of the municipal area falls within the Natural Monument of Lago di Fondi, recently incorporated into the Regional Park of the Monti Ausoni.



# F ONDI

Fondi is located in the innermost area of the plainland and is touched by the sea along a stretch of approx. 11 km (Lido or Salto di Fondi), between Terracina and Sperlonga, and by the lake of Fondi. The city's origins precede those of Rome; its citizens strenuously opposed the Roman invasion in the 4th century B.C. and paid for this with the denial of all rights until 188 B.C, when Fondi obtained "civitas pleno iure". The poet Virgil places the mystery of the town of Amyclae in the



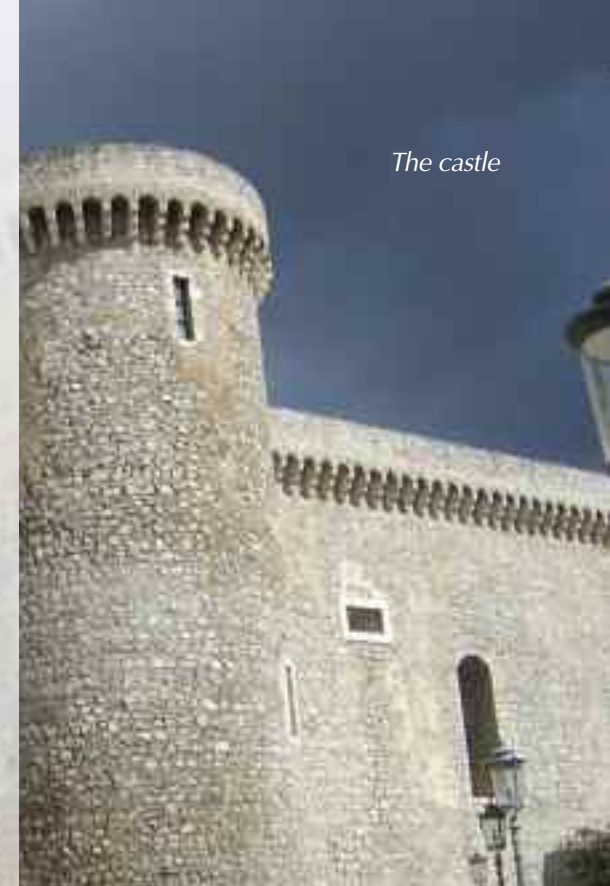
*The west coast*

Fondi area or nearby Sperlonga, but no traces of it have been found. With the decline of Rome, Fondi underwent devastating invasions by the Saracens, but had its authority reinstated thanks to the Dell'Aquila family, who were succeeded by the Caetani family in 1299. This family brought the city to the political heights of the times, until the very early years of the 16th century, when Onorato III left the fief. The city then passed to various other families: Colonna, Gonzaga, Carafa and Mansfeldt, who dragged it down into decline and poverty. The presence of Roman monuments is of lesser importance due to the many stratifications that followed. However, some findings are preserved in the Civic Museum and cloister of the municipality; others have recently come to light in rural areas, among which is a Roman bridge, near which a mausoleum was supposedly dedicated to Gavius Nauta or Marcus Ulpianus. The city is founded on a town-planning layout based on the axes of the original Roman plan, i.e. entirely inside the mura – partially Roman and partially medieval – which remained until the early 20th century, when the need for living quarters pushed the first families outside the walls. A good part of the ancient fabric remained intact and extends along Via Appio Claudio; over time, everything that made Fondi the capital of the Duchy developed inside its walls: both civil and elegant buildings, houses of worship and even a "giudea" (medieval Jewish district) almost intact. Today, innumerable things from the ancient



*Church of S. Pietro  
The ambo*

castrum have been hidden or trivialised by "modern" interventions, but many are still visible and have been recovered. The itinerary for this city starts from the Castello, the construction of which may have begun in the 14th century; it is a rectangular-shaped building defined by two corner towers and a keep. It was the place of last defence and from here one could reach the nearby Baronial Palace or del Principe or Palazzo Caetani, in private hands today, by means of a small aerial bridge. Adjoining the Baronial Palace is the Duomo di San Pietro, built upon a pre-existing temple, of which no trace remains; among the various artistic and historic works of value is a polychromatic mosaic by Domenico Purificato, a pulpit adorned by Cosmati-style mosaics and the marble chair on which it is said the antipope Clement VII was seated, when he was crowned in 1378. Other relevant religious buildings are the Church of Santa Maria Assunta, or Santa Maria in Piazza, constructed on the site of the Roman Republican Forum; the Church of San Domenico with its former convent; the Church of San Francesco, outside the city walls, with the Franciscan convent that now hosts offices of the town hall; the small rural church, Santa Maria del Soccorso, on the edge of the Appia; and the small Sanctuary of the Madonna della Rocca on Monte Arcano. One of the great monuments in Fondi, recently restored, is the Abbey of San Magno, a majestic stone complex with an annexed convent that rose on the site of the very ancient Cenobitic community. Also worthy of a visit is the Civic Archaeological Museum "8 Ottobre 1877", located on the ground floor of Castello Caetani, where approx. 400 finds derived from excavations carried out in the municipal territory are housed. Among these is a marble mummy case dating back to the 4th century B.C. The Region of Latium has placed two areas under environmental protection, hereby declaring them natural monuments: the Lake of Fondi, linked to the sea by the Canneto and S. Anastasia canals, and the area of Mola della Corte-Settecannelle-Capodacqua, located almost in the centre of the town of Fondi.



*The castle*



*Lake of Fondi*



# LENOLA

Positioned on a hill at 430 m asl, between mid-Ciociaria and the sea, Lenola stands on an important transhumance route, which linked the Valle del Liri to the plains of Fondi, protected on three sides by Monti Ausoni. In very ancient times, the pagi settled here, that is, villages of shepherds, one of which was the castelliere of Monte Passignano, at 519 m. asl. The fortified villages were elementary defence structures that used a dominant position to advantage and were protected by



*The historic centre*

rubble. During the Roman era, Lenola was incorporated into the Tribus Aemilia, along with nearby centres. Bearing witness to this period are the walls, parts of watermains and the remains of some rustic villas. The medieval town centre occupies the highest part of the hill and has a defence system made up of walls, with the traditional encircling layout, homes adjoining each other, narrow alleys and steps leading up to the Baronial Palace, of which only a tower remains, now owned by private persons. Among the buildings of worship are: the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore that no longer shows any features of its medieval origins, due to repeated interventions; the Mother Church of San Giovanni Evangelista, served only for some events; the small rural churches of the Madonna delle Benigne Grazie, and the Madonna del Latte, in a state of neglect, reminiscent of the early devotion of the women who asked the Mother of God for her blessing, to be able to give milk to their newborns. Other rural elements are the small Church of Santo Spirito near Monte Appisolo and remnants of the "castrum de Ambrise", which included the defence walls, a small castle, a couple of small churches and various homes for the farmers, shepherds and, above all, the garrison. It was abandoned in, perhaps, the 16th century. The most important moment in the modern history of Lenola coincides with the rise of its most beloved monument, the Sanctuary of the Madonna del Colle. The church was built between 3 May 1607



*Sculpture along the Scalinata della Pace*



*Sanctuary of the Madonna del Colle*

(placement of the first stone) and 8 September 1610 (open for services). However, its raising to sanctuary was proclaimed by Pope Urban VIII in 1826. The venerated image of the Virgin and Child stands on the main altar. The sanctuary was connected to the historic centre by a flight of steps, which was supplemented in 1987 with patterns, designs, sculptures in bas-relief and mosaics, meant to express a concept of peace, to which the steps are dedicated. The territory of Lenola hosts the small Natural Monument Cima del Monte-Acquaviva-Quercia del Monaco, a mosaic worth seeing, where natural beauties are interwoven with historic, archaeological remains, such as the ancient urban centre of Acquaviva.



# CAMPODIMELE

Campodimele is the smallest centre on the Pontine slope of the Monti Ausoni and one of the smallest overall in the province of Latina. But its small size is compensated by far by the virtues of the landscape and by what has made Campodimele a village of longevity. Statistics have not yet explained the reasons for this cheering virtue: if it is the air at its altitude of 647 metres or nourishment or just an innate serenity of character, but reality has it that, among the people of this centre, there are



more 80-year-olds, 90-year-olds and 100-year-olds than in any other town in Italy; everyone walks along with straight backs, firm legs and eats as he or she pleases, the food being, in general, still genuine. One of the hill defences of the Duchy of Fondi, then belonging to the Caetani family, the town is a cluster of homes, which have only recently left the town walls, constructed for defence reasons and overlooking the valley below. Upon reaching Campodimele, the first encounter is with the medieval city walls, restored jointly with eleven semi-cylindrical towers during the 1980s. Then there is the small, sedate square, facing the municipal building, below which an open-air theatre has been obtained. The built-up area rises in a very cramped space, following classical defensive principles, that is, narrow, impervious streets, an infinite number of small, steep flights of steps and closely placed houses so as to form an intense defence of the highest point, where the Church of San Michele Arcangelo stands. The town offers two lovely views: one towards Monte Faggeto (1259m.) that can be comfortably reached on foot, pausing for refreshment at the spring known as Faggetina; the other towards the more distant Monte Ruazzo (1315m.). On a high point of the town, but separated from it, is the Monastery of Sant'Onofrio, a monastic complex, built during the Middle Ages by monks governed by the Abbey of Montecassino and completely resto-



The secular elm



The historic centre

red in the late 1980s. Campodimele is the seat of the Regional Park of the Monti Aurunci that placed a special territory under protection because of its environmental peculiarities. It encompasses over 45,000 hectares that include the entire Aurunci mountain system as well as the municipalities of Fondi, Formia, Itri, Lenola, Spigno Saturnia and others in the province of Frosinone, extending almost to the sea, in protection of the Gulf of Gaeta.



# TRI

The municipality of Itri is situated on the Appia, on a hillside, but its territory reaches to the sea, although only for a few hundred metres between the coastlines of Sperlonga and Gaeta. The Castle is the principal symbol of the town, in which the medieval part has maintained the original design. Construction of this part began at the fall of the



*The castle*

Roman Empire, in order to allow citizens to defend themselves against armies and bands of raiders who travelled over Via Appia. The Castle has been completely restored. Its components were built in different periods, but in all probability it was founded after the first Saracen forays, towards the second half of the 9th century, by the Dukes of Gaeta. There are three main towers and four minor towers, all connected by a parapet walkway or by residences of the lords of the manor. Near the Castle rises the Collegiate Church of San Michele Arcangelo, on a small square, the erection of which, at the top of a flight of steps, may have begun in the 11th century. Another monument, on the other side of the Appia, was the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, dating back to the 12th century and destroyed during the last war: all that is left is the perimetral layout and bell tower in "live" stone. On Largo Diaz, in the lower part of town, there is a fountain, built in the early 19th century under the government of Joachim Murat; it precedes the other section of Itri, the new, expansion area, that, however, boasts an older core represented by the Church of the Santissima Annunziata, built in the 14th century. In 1771, the town became the birthplace of the highwayman Michele Pezza, later nicknamed Fra' Diavolo, whose house, standing in the historic centre, is still marked out. A museum, Museo Demoantropologico, is dedicated to the phenomenon of banditry in lower Latium; it is divided into three sections: Historical grounds, Mythical grounds, Local grounds. About 12 km from the town, on Monte Fusco, stands the famous Sanctuary of the Madonna della Civita, a dear place of popular worship and destination of ongoing pilgrimages.



*Stretch of the ancient Appian Way*

The sanctuary houses thousands of ex-votos, from among which a collection of the oldest plaques was selected and organised in 1997. Leaving the town in the direction of Rome, one can see a long stretch of the ancient route of the Appia romana, recently brought to light; however, another, more important segment of the ancient consular road exists a few kilometres from the town, going towards Fondi, in the so-called Gole (gorges) di S.Andrea. It is a stretch of approx. 2 kilometres, supported by a perfectly visible polygonal stone wall, up to the point where it joins the new Appia and continues until the subsequent junction in the municipality of Fondi. In a canal overlooking the valley below and straddling the Roman and modern routes of the Appia, one can catch glimpses of the remains of a stone building, an ancient fort, last used by the Bourbons in an attempt to check the Piedmontese laying siege to Gaeta in 1860-61.

*The bell tower  
Church of  
S.Michele  
Arcangelo*





# S PERLONGA

On a ridge of the hilltop of San Magno that plunges into the sea, a small community was settled by Basilian monks in the High Middle Ages. Around that basic settlement, a village of fishermen and small farmers may have been established. But the area on which Sperlonga rises was settled back in prehistoric times, as revealed by finds recovered in the sea grottos. Through the building of Via Flacca Romana in 186 or 184 B.C., together with a marvellous coastal itinerary, the Romans had the possibility of visiting new holiday areas. The most important visitor was



*The east beach*

Emperor Tiberius; relevant ruins remain of his magnificent villa maritima, which stood partially on the coast and partially on the highlands behind it. In the largest of the sea grottos, Tiberius created a nymphaeum, the so-called Antro di Tiberio, served by a huge basin for the reproduction of fish, and embellished by large Hellenistic-style statuary groups. In the late 1950s, while works for opening the modern State Road (S.S.) Flacca were in full swing, thousands of marble fragments, belonging to the decorative statues of the villa, were found buried under a blanket of sand. To recover the fragments, a museum was created in 1963, in which a workshop was set up for reconstruction of the most damaged statues. The pride of the National Archaeological Museum is four great statuary groups, relating episodes of the adventures of Ulysses: Ulysses' boat between Charybdis and Scylla, The Theft of the Palladium, The Blinding of Polyphemus, and the so-called Pasquino Group. Theatrical masks, herms, marble heads, including the famous Head of Ulysses, statues, such as Ganymede raped by the eagle, and fragments of statues, bas-reliefs out of frieze and various materials, found during the excavations, complete the exhibition. The ancient centre of Sperlonga has almost totally kept its features: houses clinging to the steep slopes, alleys and sets of steps that climb between narrow passageways, according to an unchangeable design that makes the town a kind of monument. Remaining of the medieval centre are



National Archaeological Museum – Head of Ulysses



*Remains of the villa of Tiberius*



*Panoramic view*



the ancient fortalice at the summit of the settlement and the remains of two doors, the Carrese or Portella and the Porta Grande or Marina. The memory of the defence against the raids from the sea is entrusted to the Truglia tower, at the extreme end of the promontory of Sperlonga, overlooking the small dock. The tower was built in 1532 on the foundations of a Roman lookout tower. It was demolished by the hords of Kheyr-ed-din Barbarossa, who had disembarked on these shores to kidnap the beautiful Julia Gonzaga in Fondi. The tower was reconstructed in 1611, but destroyed again by the Turks in 1623 and brought back to life once and for all during the century thereafter. Only scattered remains bear witness to the existence of three other 16th century towers from the defence system of Sperlonga: the torre centrale, the torre del Nibbio, which was the peak of the Castelletto, and the torre Capovento



restored during the 1950s, but collapsed in February of 1994. Inside the town, we find the Mother church of Santa Maria Assunta in cielo, formerly Santa Maria de Speloncae, (12th century), mentioned in a document of the Codex Caietanus from 1135 as an important place of worship in southern Latium. Today it is used for conferences. Other buildings of worship are the small church of San Rocco and the unpretentious rural church of S. Maria della Capanna on the other side of Lago Lungo. Sperlonga has substantially developed its vocation as a seaside resort by exploiting the lower part, situated in an enviable geographic position along the Tyrrhenian coast, with its long sandy shores in both the built-up centre and the so-called Rivas of the East and the West. The tourist-environmental assets are completed by the presence of two lakes: San Puoto, used by the ancient Romans for fish-farming, and Lungo, also called "the eyes" of Sperlonga. These areas are protected by the institution of the natural monument Promontorio Villa di Tiberio e Costa Torre Capovento - Punta Cetarola, subsequently incorporated into the Regional Park "Riviera di Ulisse".



Truglia tower



The harbour and the west coast



# G AETA

Gaeta was already a destination of choice during the Roman era as can be seen by the important seaside villas, such as those of Fonteius Capito and Consul Lucius Munatius Plancus, near the sanctuary of the Trinity on Monte Orlando, on the summit of which rises the great mausoleum dedicated to him. Another relevant site is the remains of the mausoleum of Lucius Sempronius Atratinus. Likewise of interest and much more numerous are structures from the Middle Ages. Owing to

## ITINERARY No. 9

Gaeta  
Formia  
Minturno



its position, Gaeta was a natural fortress, first transformed into a castrum, then an independent duchy and, finally, into a military, economic and cultural centre under the rule of the Docibile family. Its independence lasted from '839 to 1140, before falling under the control of the Normans. Then, it was compelled to adhere to the Kingdom of Naples again and, for this reason, was laid siege to sixteen times, the last of which ended with the fall of the Kingdom of the Bourbons and the Unity of Italy. This intense history left significant traces in the two chief districts, Porto Salvo and Sant'Erasmo. The origins of the former are linked to the military function of the latter: the gates of the stronghold were closed every night until dawn, and the farmers and fishermen began building temporary shelters outside the walls, until an actual district was formed, which then became an independent municipality bearing the name Elena (1897-1923). The churches of San Giacomo Apostolo and Santa Maria di Porto Salvo stand in the village. The Sant'Erasmo district is the historic heart of Gaeta, accessed by crossing the ancient Gate of Carlo V, with the adjoining chapel of Santa Maria de la Soledad; Via Annunziata, with its ancient buildings; Piazza Traniello, with the 18th century building of the Gran Guardia; the small harbour of Santa Maria; the dock of the Nautical School of the Customs Officers; the church of San Giovanni a mare; alleys, steps, corridors and ascents, where the most important monuments of medieval Gaeta are found. The most significant one is the Cathedral of Sant'Erasmo, where many valuable historic-artistic works are housed, including the main Baroque altar with the 18th century Crucifix and the bronze statues of saints Erasmus and Marcianus, various paintings, a crypt keeping the relics of the aforesaid saints and, above all, the 13th century candelabra of the Paschal candle or column decorated with



*The medieval quarter of S. Erasmo*

figures. The treasure of the Duomo, resplendent with sacred fixtures and medieval golden ornaments of great value, is displayed at the Museum of the Diocese and Piety in the Park of the Aurunci Mountains, set up in the adjacent Palazzo De Vio, which houses: important archives of ancient parchments concerning the ecclesiastic public life of the Duchy of Gaeta, starting from the 13th century; important paintings; the magnificent Exultet, three parchment scrolls dating back to the 10-12th centuries; and the Standard of Lepanto, hissed on the admiral's flagship of the papal fleet, engaged in the naval battle of Lepanto. Silhouetted at the summit of the medieval district is the massive structure of the Angioino-Aragonese Castle, begun in the late 10th century and repeatedly enlarged by the Normans of Frederick II of Swabia, the Anjou families of Charles I of Anjou, the Aragonese family and Charles V. At the close of the 16th century, little remained of the old Docibile stronghold; in fact, today one can justly speak of two castles, an Angioino and an Aragonese, both built in the shelter of a cliff. The one in a higher position is the so-called Aragonese Castle, fortified on three sides by massive cylindrical towers and having a lower defence addition. The lower part is actually the Angioino Castle, built on a square layout with four circular towers at the corners. Along Via Angioina is the Church of San Francesco that Ferdinand II of Bourbon had built on the site of a small, 13th century oratory-convent, recalling the visit of St. Francis of Assisi. Returning to the lower part of the district and entering Via Annunziata, one encounters the Church of



*The split mountain and Grotta del Turco*





Santissima Annunziata (1321, rebuilt in the 17th century) that preserves works of great interest, such as a 17th century wooden choir stall, an 18th century altar and a painting of the Virgin with Child. Next to the church is the small Grotta d'Oro, covered by a wooden-barrelled and gilded-coffered ceiling. The Institution bearing the same name makes up part of the Annunziata; it is one of the oldest social works and now houses the Historic-Cultural Centre and takes care of a permanent exhibit of ancient paintings and properties of the Annunziata. It also manages the Historical Municipal Archives, "Nicola Magliocca" and the Historical Archives of the Santissima Annunziata Institution. Other churches, where services are no longer held, are Santa Maria della Sorresca and Santa Lucia or Santa Maria in Pensulis. The protected area of Monte Orlando is the green lung of Gaeta, extending across 89 hecta-



Statue of the Religion Church of S. Francesco

res, 59 of which are land and 30 seaside areas, incorporated into the Regional Park "Riviera di Ulisse", at the peak of which is the Roman mausoleum of Lucius Munatius Plancus and the water reservoirs for the villa of the Consul. Monte Orlando is chiefly characterised by its military works that protected the entire city: the walls and bastions of Charles V, walls and buildings constructed by the Bourbon, factories for explosives, batteries, powder kegs, used until the end of the Second World War, pillboxes and tunnels that opened into the hill and still today allow for reaching the lower part of the mountain. On the side facing the beach of Serapo stands the sanctuary of the Trinity, also known for being part of the the so-called Montagna Spaccata (split mountain). To the left of the church is the descent to the opening of the Grotta del Turco, while, to the right, a passage, along which are the stations of the majolica-tiled Via Crucis, leads to the steps that reach an especially charming place in the central grotto. Tradition has it that the opening to the grotto occurred upon Christ's death, when, according to the Scriptures, the outer layer of the temple of Jerusalem split. On the walls on the right, a handprint recalls the miraculous mark impressed by an unbelieving Turkish sailor, who mocked the pious tradition of the emergence of the grotto and leaned against the rock that miraculously softened. The city has a stretch of coastline that runs at mid-coast along the National road (S.S.) 213 Flacca, with the lovely beaches of Sant'Agostino, San Vito and Arenauta, interrupted by the promontory of the "Scissure", prior to the little beach of Ariana, bordered to the east by the promontory of Torre Viola, and the sandy shores of Serapo.



Church of the Annunziata



The bell tower of the Church of S. Erasmo



# F ORMIA

Located in the centre of the Gulf of Gaeta, a transit area along the Tyrrhenian route since the most ancient times, and aided by the mildness of the climate, Formiae was very successful as a place of pleasures during the Roman era. Although its ancient parts were covered by subsequent constructions, it retains much scattered evidence of them: the megalithic walls on both the sea side and on the hills; remains of villas along the coastline; some archways of the Roman aque-



*Panoramic view*

duct in the Mola district; the arches supporting the municipal Villa; the remains of the pools for breeding fish rising in the harbour; the Macchione building on the seashore; the imposing walls of Nerva; the epigraphic stones of Piazza della Vittoria; and the ancient theatre in Castellone, presently a block of flats. In the eastern section of the city, in Giànola (a protected area inside the Regional Park "Riviera di Ulisse"), one can also find evidence of the remains of a seaside villa from the 1st century B.C., on top of which rises an octagonal building (the Mamurrum?). At Villa Caposele or Rubino, which also belonged to Ferdinand II and Francis II, the remains of a luxurious Roman villa are visible in a park that descends to the sea and to the small Roman harbour of Caposele, restructured by the Prince de Ligny. On the Rome side of the Via Appia, there are remains of the fountain of San Remigio, with the paving opposite the Roman Appia and the mausoleum said to be that of Cicero made up of a cylindrical building that rose to a height of 24 metres and can be visited by prior appointment with the archaeological museum. A few hundred meters away, as the crow flies, on the hill known as the Acervara, stands the tomb of Tulliola, supposedly dedicated by Cicero to his daughter Tulliola, who died before him. In the district of Castellone stands the ancient Cisternone, a monumental, irregularly shaped hydraulic structure (1st century B.C.), along the inner side of the fortification walls, brought back to its ancient magnificence in October 2003. The cistern was fed by springs rising in the hilly area and supplied water to public and private buildings in the plainland city by means of a distribution network. The essential remains of Roman Formia are held in the National Archaeological Museum, located in a wing of the 18th municipal building, known as



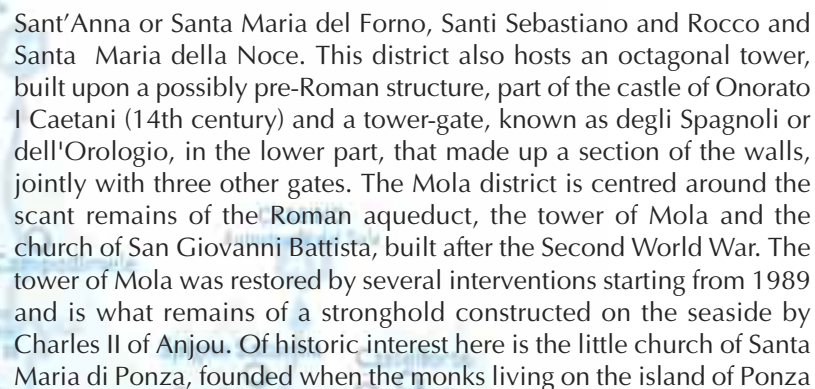
*Roman Cisternone*



*The harbour*

"Stalloni dei Borboni". The collection is chiefly made up of sculptures, (1st century B.C - 1st century A.D), honorary male and female statues, inscriptions, friezes and portrayals of divinities and mythological figures that decorated luxury villas along the coast, and public buildings. Abandoned after devastations by the Saracens in 846 A.D., the city lost its name and was broken up into two small villages, Castellone to the west and Mola to the east, until 1862, when the Unity of Italy saw its reunification and it acquired its classical name again. In the Castellone district stands the Church of Sant'Erasmo (4th century) former pre-Roman and Roman fortress and medieval bulwark: its current aspect dates it back to the 15th-16th centuries. Tombs, friezes and stuccos from various ages, including the Lombard style, are collected in the Archaeological Museum housed in the church itself. Other small churches are





returned to the mainland to escape Saracen raids. The hill hamlets of Maranola, Castellonorato (independent communes until 1928) and Trivio, and the hamlet of Penitro on the plains, belonged to Formia. Maranola belonged to the Caetani of Fondi and, together with Castellone Castellonorato and Suio Alto, one of the outposts of the fief, was defended by a small castle. All that remains of the latter are ruins centred around a square tower that has been restored. The village preserves an interesting urban layout with narrow, winding streets and relevant constructions, such as the belvedere, and the churches of Santa Maria ad Martyres and San Luca, where numerous “Madonne del Latte” are frescoed. A road runs from Maranola to Monte Redentore, which gets its name from a 4-meter high statue, placed here in 1901 to celebrate the start of the twentieth century of the Christian era. Just below the summit, a grotto, the sanctuary of San Michele Arcangelo, opens into the rock; it was restored in the neogothic style during the second half of the 19th century. An annual procession winds along the sides of the mountain to bring and take back the statue of the saint. Not far from Maranola are the hamlets of Trivio, with the church of Sant’Andrea Apostolo, and Castellonorato, the *Castrum Honorati* created by Onorato I of Fondi and destroyed in 1552 by the pirates of Sinan Pasha, and the church of Santa Caterina. The city is linked to the Pontine Islands by ferry and hydrofoil services.



*Mausoleum of Cicero*

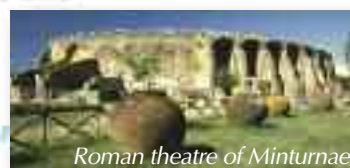


*Mola tower*



# MINTURNO

Minturno is the easternmost municipality of the Gulf of Gaeta and concludes the seaside part of the province of Latina and the region of Latium. Its boundary is marked by the Garigliano river, the Liris, that had a Roman harbour active for nine centuries, which also served the nearby city of Minturnae, one of the most important "dead cities" in Latium. Latium made up part of a confederation of Aurunci centres (the "Pentapoli" of Suessa, Sinuessa, Ausona, Vescia and Minturnae),



Roman theatre of Minturnae

broken up by the Romans in the 4th century B.C. Minturnae managed to survive due to its important position on the Appia and near the river. The Roman city stood on top of the Italic city and prospered until the fall of Rome, when its position on the Appia exposed it to the raids of armies. It was then abandoned by its inhabitants who found refuge on the nearby hill, where a city rose that was partially built out of materials removed from the abandoned city. Minturnae develops along road axes; the decumanus, the ancient stretch of the Via Appia, still shows the integrity of its paving. The most significant aspects of the city are the theatre, the Republican Forum, the Imperial Forum, a thermal structure, the macellum, foundations of temples and a series of inscriptions. The antiquarium, housed in the tunnels supporting the steps of the theatre, includes acephalous statues and a collection of dedicatory inscriptions or ex voto, found in the sacred area. Beyond the Appia, there are many intact arches of the Roman aqueduct, while the scant remains of a temple to the Goddess Marica (9th century B.C.), one of the earliest known sacred places, were isolated near the mouth of the Garigliano. Many of the finds excavated at Minturnae in the early 19th century and 20th century were transferred to the National Archaeological Museum of Zagreb, the Philadelphia Museum in the United States and the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, or were used elsewhere, such as in Gaeta (two sarcophagi placed at the base of the bell tower of the Duomo). Next to the Roman city is the British Military Cemetery where the remains of British soldiers who fell during battles in 1943-44 are buried. In this same area is the Bourbonic Bridge over the Garigliano, known as "Real Ferdinando", taken from King Ferdinand II of Bourbon who had it built. Work on it began in 1828 and



Baronial Castle

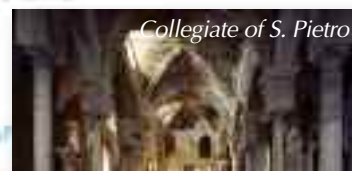
Scauri







it was the first chain bridge in Italy and second in Europe, after the one built by Telford in Great Britain. The Germans blew it up in the fall of 1943 and it has undergone numerous restoration interventions. The new city that rose on the hill initially took the name of Traetto and became Minturno in 1879. Towards the late 8th century, Pope Leo III had walls built around it and made Traetto a castrum, defended by the current baronial castle; its strength contributed to the city developing into a duchy. The historic centre is composed of a road grid along which one finds noteworthy monuments, the most relevant perhaps being the Collegiate Church of San Pietro (11th-12th centuries, modified in the 18th century). Inside is an ambo from the 13th century, the candelabra of the Paschal candle and the chapel of the Sacrament. In Corso Vitto-



*Collegiate of S. Pietro*

rio Emanuele III, the former Church of San Biagio houses the Aurunco Ethnographic Museum, dedicated to the local peasant and seafaring civilisation. The Castle, perhaps founded in the early 9th century, then changed in different ways, develops around a vast courtyard and, apart from the mighty walls, includes a cylindrical tower, a square-based tower and the large Hall of the Barons. Not far from here is the Church of San Francesco, a work by Onorato I Caetani, Count of Fondi (14th century) done over after the French stripped it in 1799 and after damages from the Second World War. Adjacent to the church is the Municipal Building that makes use of the ancient convent annexed to the church and now detached; restorations started up in the late 1900s are proposing an interesting philological aspect, together with the functional recovery of the rooms. Halfway up the ascent towards the entrance to the town stands the Church of the Annunziata (13th-15th), repeatedly damaged by wars (1799, 1943-44) and fire (1888), with frescoes from the 13th and 14th centuries. Minturno boasts a stretch of coastline of ca. 7 km (hamlets of Scauri, prominent resort destination during the Roman era, and Marina di Minturno), comprised between the maritime hill projections of Monte d'Oro (or Monte di Scauri with the regional protected area of Giànola-Monte di Scauri and appealing pebble beach), where the remains of a 16th century square tower are visible, and Monte d'Argento (Argenti castrum), where a Saracen defence rose and recent digs have brought to light worked marble, coins and human remains. In the easternmost part of Scauri, there may have been the harbour of a settlement; of this remains the place-name, Pyrae, and what is commonly called the Gate of Pyrae. The area still shows a high polygonal wall, including the medieval tower of the Mills.



*Archaeological area of Minturnae*



*Panoramic view*



# S PIGNO SATURNIA

Founded after the wartime events of 1943-44 forced the inhabitants of ancient Castrum Spinei to abandon their village and move elsewhere, Spigno Saturnia is a new conurbation located on the road between Cassino and Formia. Although it has no monumental features, the village develops around a dignified village hall (Palazzo Comunale) and the church of San Giovanni Battista. Castrum Spinei occupies a valley on the eastern slopes of the Aurunci mountains, just below Monte

## ITINERARY No. 10

Spigno Saturnia  
Castelforte  
Suio Terme  
SS. Cosma e Damiano



The historic centre

Petrella (1533 metres above sea level). The Karstic caves and natural springs of this ancient mountain serve almost all the villages of the south of the province of Latina with water. The largest of the springs is the Capodacqua spring, a source of water connected to the town of Minturnae by means of an imposing aqueduct built by the Roman Emperor Vespasian in 72 AD. At the end of the 17th century a small church dedicated to San Gerardo was built close to the spring. This church is only officiated once a year, on 11 August, in order to celebrate the patron saint's day. Another spring, known as Canale spring, lies at 1216 metres above sea level. Spigno was part of the feudal territory of Traetto (Minturno) and was owned by several feudal lords. The ancient village was built according to the lie of the land and the defensive needs of ancient times and was thus distinguished by closely packed houses and narrow lanes and staircases. The village was originally dominated by the ruins of a medieval castle with a high square tower and side keeps, which was however destroyed by the Germans in the Second World War. The medieval church of Santa Croce, with a nave and two aisles, was extended in the 18th century and restored after the war.



Church of S. Giovanni Battista

# C ATELFORTE

The eastern-most municipality of the province of Latina with Santi Cosma e Damiano, Castelforte lies on the border between the region of Latium and the region of Campania, divided by a stretch of the River Garigliano. The medieval village was established in the early middle ages close to the existing 12th century castrum of Suio Alta, which it has now incorporated, in an area which has been inhabited since ancient times. Indeed, the ruins of various megalithic walls have been found in the nearby area of Ciesco, a five hectare area of land crossed



Panoramic view

by both the Rio Grande and the Rio Rave, which scholars believe was part of the aurunca pentapolis, which also included the city of Minturnae. The flat lands of Castelforte were also inhabited in imperial times and indeed the area is scattered with the ruins of numerous villae rusticae and bathing facilities (especially close to the banks of the River Garigliano where Suio Terme now stands). Originally part of the dukedom of Fondi and Traetto, the village passed into the hands of the Caetani family before being transferred to the Colonna, Gonzaga, Carafa, di Stigliano and della Spina families and, indeed, despite various 19th century reconstructions and alterations to the road layout, the village is still pervaded by a medieval atmosphere. Dominated by a high 14th century square tower, Castelforte is surrounded by stretches of the ancient defensive walls whose gates, Porta Santa and Porta Cianca, are interspersed with small towers. Inside the defensive walls it is still possible to see Palazzo Leo, Palazzo Duratorre, Palazzo Petrucci and Palazzo Cinquanta. Dating back to the 10th-11th century, the church of San Giovanni Battista, which was reconstructed after the Second World War, is flanked by a narrow lane known as the "jurèa", the Giudea, as it commemorates a now-destroyed Jewish ghetto. During the Second World War, Castelforte played a central role in the manoeuvre leading to the breaking of the German Gustav Line and was awarded a Gold Medal for Civilian Valour.



14th century tower



# SUIO TERME

Located on a small hill (148 metres above sea level) close to the village of Castelforte, Suio Alta or Suio Vecchia is a characteristic medieval settlement whose houses are arranged around the small castle and surrounded by a city wall. In the middle ages, Suio castle controlled the movements of all the traffic passing through the Garigliano valley below and in 1040 was donated by Count Ugone of Gaeta to the Abbey of Montecassino. The religious places of interest in Suio Alta



Garigliano River

include the 13th century small church of Santa Ilaria in Pensulis Located on the banks of the River Garigliano, whose warm, freshwater and hyperthermal springs have been famous for their therapeutic properties since ancient times, Suio Terme is a spa town to which many visitors come in order to take advantage of the chemical and chemical-physical characteristics of the local waters. Undoubtedly flowing from a single ancient stratum, these waters are sulphureous, bicarbonated, calcic, alkaline- and earthy and flow at a temperature of between 15 and 64° C. The properties of the waters are best exploited in balneo-therapeutic and mud-therapy treatments and irrigations, by means of inhalations, aerosols, and nebulizations for the treatment of respiratory diseases and by endotympanic insufflations for the treatment of hearing problems. The diseases which most benefit from treatment with the waters of Suio Terme are muscular-skeletal diseases, female genital infections, skin diseases and ear, nose and throat problems.



The therapeutic waters of Suio Terme

# SANTI COSMA E DAMIANO

The history of Santi Cosma e Damiano goes hand in hand with that of Castelforte as the two municipalities were frequently ruled by a single administration. Indeed, the border between the two villages still passes through the middle of several buildings. Santi Cosma and Damiano takes its name from two doctors decapitated by Emperor Diocletian at Antioch who, according to monastic records, passed through this area, although it was originally known as Casali, as were all small rural



Panoramic view

settlements. In the 15th century the village controlled the underlying valley from Ventosa tower, operating together with Castelforte castle and the castle of Suio Vecchio. The village has several churches, the church of San Martino, the parish church of Santi Cosma e Damiano and the church of Santa Lucia. This latter church was frescoed by Porchetta (1932) and contains a fine portrait of San Luca di Francesco Niola (1906). Other places of interest in the village include the 17th century Palazzo Tibaldi (frescoed with a mixture of 17th and 20th century frescoes, these latter by Gaetano Paloscia, the nephew of Abruzzian painter Michetti).



Ventosa tower



# THE PONTINE ISLANDS

The archipelago of the Pontine Islands is almost in the centre of the Tyrrhenian Sea and composed of two groups of islands: Ponza, Palmarola, Zannone and Gavi to the northwest, Ventotene and Santo Stefano to the southeast and, in the centre and isolated, the Scoglio della Botte (barrel rock). Ponza and Ventotene are linked to each other and to Formia (ferries with car transport and hydrofoils), and Terracina (ferries with car transport and fast motorships), San Felice Circeo (motorships during the summer), Anzio (ferries and hydrofoils), and Fiumicino and Naples (ferries with car transport and hydrofoils). The two main islands have various services for reaching the other islands.

## ITINERARY No. 11 The Pontine Islands



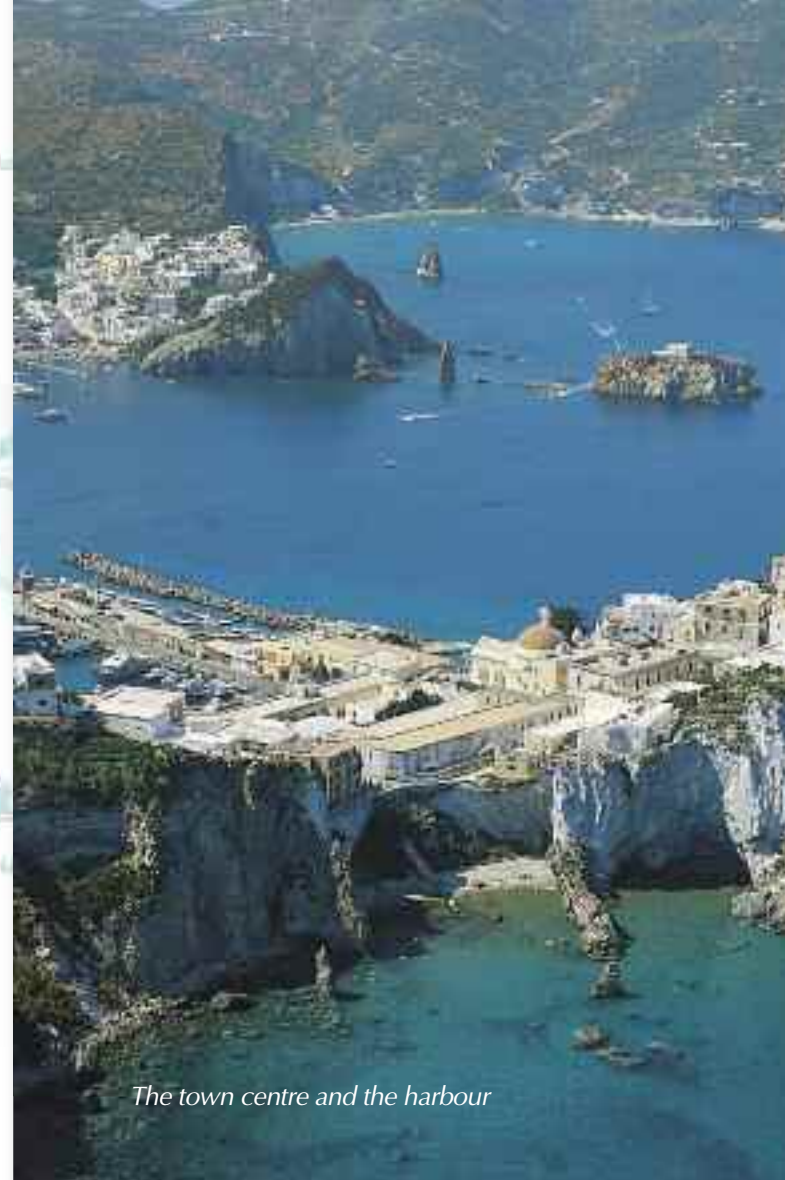
Punta Capo Bianco

# PONZA

The largest of the Pontine Islands, Ponza, was inhabited by pre-historic man. As a point of reference on the routes between the Middle East, Greece and Italy and base for the Roman fleet, it became a strategic and civil centre, as confirmed by the four aqueducts that collected and transported spring and rain water throughout the island, by means of waterways, and up to the enormous reservoirs excavated into the rock. They have withstood time (grottos of the serpenti, Dragonara and Aniello Tagliamonte, grotto of the Ospedale, and Bagno Vecchio and the Madonna) and were used in the 18th century for housing convicts employed in construction works on the new urban centre. Other Roman works are the tunnel of Chiaia di Luna, leading to the beach of the same name, and the tunnels of Sant'Antonio and Giancos, leading to the hamlet of Santa Maria and the northern part of the island, and a



The historic centre



The town centre and the harbour



Chiaia di Luna

luxurious villa, of which some ruins remain and the terraces of Punta della Madonna. Under this hill, a large fish-farm was dug into the rock, at sea level, known as the Grottos of Pilate, in which mostly moray eels were farmed. The last remembrances of the Roman presence are connected to the exile and martyrdom of some Christians, among whom was Pope Silverius, now the Patron of Ponza, confined here by Justinian, prior to being moved to Palmarola, where it is said he died on 11 November 537. A little chapel on the rock that watches over the entrance to the small western beach is dedicated to him. During the Middle Ages Ponza was the home of monks and hermits, who created a small Benedictine, then Cistercian, monastery in the village of Santa Maria and another one on the little island of Zannone. In 1542 the islands were allocated to Pier Luigi Farnese, commander of the Papal troops, and, thereafter, to Charles III of Bourbon, who promoted their recovery. From 1734 to 1777 the immigration of peasant families was supported in order to repopulate the islands. For this



purpose, between 1772 and 1793, under the direction of a major in the Engineer Corps, Antonio Winspeare, and with the collaboration of Engineer Francesco Carpi, the current urban centre was built on a semi-circular harbour and formed by buildings, rising along today's Corso Pisacane: the town hall, military buildings of the Musco Pier, the Lighthouse, the parish church of the Trinity, now also dedicated to San Silverio and Santa Domitilla (1778), the old customs shed, and the tower called dei Borboni, today a hotel. The northern hamlet of Le Forna develops along the provincial road, whereas the public centre is gathered around the church of the Assunta. On one of the coastal capes, pushing out into the sea, one can see the ruins of Forte Papa, which, together with other pillboxes and batteries, was supposed to



Islet of Zannone

defend the island. Circumnavigation of the island allows one to fully appreciate the astounding alternation of hollows, grottos, cliffs, coves, and bays, with their picturesque, enchanting, colourful mixtures: Punta della Madonna, the aforesaid Grottos of Pilate, the Faraglioni della Madonna, Parata degli Scotti, the great Faraglioni del Calzone Muto, the high, protruding Punta della Guardia, where the coastline gently curves up to Punta del Fieno, leading to the most beautiful beach on Ponza, Chiaia di Luna, overhung by a 100-meter-high yellowish-white cliff, and closed off by Punta Capo Bianco. This natural spectacle continues with Punta Faraglioni and the rift of the little peninsula of the five Faraglioni di Lucia Rosa, with its small beach, and Punta Capo Bosco that introduces the peacefulness of Cala Feola and its natural swimming pools, with the hamlet of Le Forna making up the backdrop. Dubbed Punta del Papa, other small coves are encountered before reaching another pearl of the island, Cala Fonte, followed by Cala Felce and Punta dell'Incenso, separated from the uninhabited islet of Gavi by an arm of sea 130 m. long. Continuing the circumnavigation, one encounters Cala Gaetano, Cala Spaccapolpi, with its natural arch, and the Faraglione di Aniello Antonio. These sights precede Punta Nera and Cala d'Inferno, closed off by a wall of rock, into which steps have been carved in order to connect Le Forna to this stretch of the sea and the harbour. After passing the Scoglio del Parroco, one reaches Cala del Core and Cala Frontone with its sandy beach, and the Scoglio Ravia,



Islet of Palmarola  
Faraglione di Mezzogiorno

up to the area of Santamaria. The islet of **Zannone** makes up part of the Circeo National Nature Reserve and stands ca. 6 miles from the harbour of Ponza. It can only be reached by own means or by one of the boats linking it to Ponza during the summer. Circumnavigation of the island is relatively quick but even the eyes of a non-expert in geology can detect the difference between its cliffs and those of Ponza and Palmarola. The landing place at Punta del Varo can only be used by good weather and excellent sea conditions and is linked to the sea by means of an underwater channel. The island shows the ruins of the Benedictine convent of Santo Spirito of Zannone and the fishpond dug into the rock, of particular archaeological interest. **Palmarola** was the mine of pre-historic man, who arrived here from Circeo by canoe in order to gather obsidian from Monte Tramontana. On the slopes of its hills, there are many house-grottos that were excavated by the people of Ponza, who went there to fish

or cultivate small plots of land, starting from the 18th century. The only landing place is at Cala di San Silverio. A sea excursion reveals environmental qualities quite similar to Ponza and a precipitous landscape that plunges into a transparent, uncontaminated sea. Cala del Porto, protected by the high Faraglione di San Silverio, is the starting point. Dubbed Punta Tramontana, it offers a spectacular view of geology and sea erosion, the so-called "cathedrals". Passing these, one arrives at Punta delle Brecce and the Forcina. Proceeding towards the south are Punta Vardella, Cala Brigantina, Scoglio Suvace and Punta di Mezzogiorno with the impressive Faraglione of the same name and Scoglio Cappello, the Natural Arch or rather former arch, Il Fucile and Scoglio Pallante.



Chromatisms of a little bay



...the azure of the sea



# V ENTOTENE

Ventotene is a tiny islet, but which history has assigned great roles as a place of relegation and political confinement and, more recently, a great European stage. It was already relevant during the Roman era, as demonstrated by: the remains of Villa Giulia at Punta Eolo, the gilded prison of the daughter of Emperor Augustus, plundered by art merchants and friends of the Bourbons during the 18th and 19th centuries, then destroyed by wind and rain, further dismantled to recover building



materials and now the centre of an important archaeological area; immense water reservoirs in the grottos of Buoi, or the Convicts, and Villa Iacono; the fish farm below the lighthouse; the Roman harbour, entirely excavated out of the tuff and still used for small boats, and of which some arches and mooring bollards can still be seen. Ventotene is also linked to the mass Fascist political prison created here in 1939, when about 800 political prisoners were brought to the island. Perfect proof of that dark period remains: in fact, this little island was the birthplace of the first document of Italian Europeanism, the Manifesto per un' Europa libera e unita (Manifesto for a free, united Europe) (now commonly known as the "Manifesto of Ventotene"), written in secret by Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi and Eugenio Colomi between 1941 and 1942, and secretly distributed. Spinelli's ashes are now kept in the small island cemetery. Modern history of Ventotene, like that of Ponza, began when the Bourbons decided to colonise it in the mid-18th century. Peasants were sent here to build a new village, designed by a major in the Engineer Corps, Genio Antonio Winspeare, assisted by the engineer Francesco Carpi. The small size of the settlement does not hide the quality of the town-planning design. Created along a simple, rational construction line, the core was grouped around the ancient castle and the church of Santa Candida. Now the town hall, the castle also hosts the Historic Archaeological Museum, where significant finds from the excavations of Villa Giulia, finds retrieved from the



*The roman harbour*



*Cala Rossano*



*Roman fish pool*



seabed, and historic and geological documents are collected. Also worthy of a visit is the Museum of Migration and Ornithological Observatory that offers an opportunity to experience direct contact to the fascinating world of bird migration along the Europe-Africa route. A monument sui generis is the underwater wreck of the motorship Santa Lucia, sunk on 25 July 1943 by English torpedo bombers; it lies on shoals at a depth of ca. 40 meters, about a mile and a half from Punta Eolo. The two main swimming beaches are: Cala Rossano, located in the basin of the new harbour, and Cala Nave, opposite to which two great rocky forms are silhouetted (Nave di Terra and Nave di Fuori) and the so-called Scoglietello. There are also other stretches of beach, although access to them is not very easy. These are, to name a few, Cala Batta-

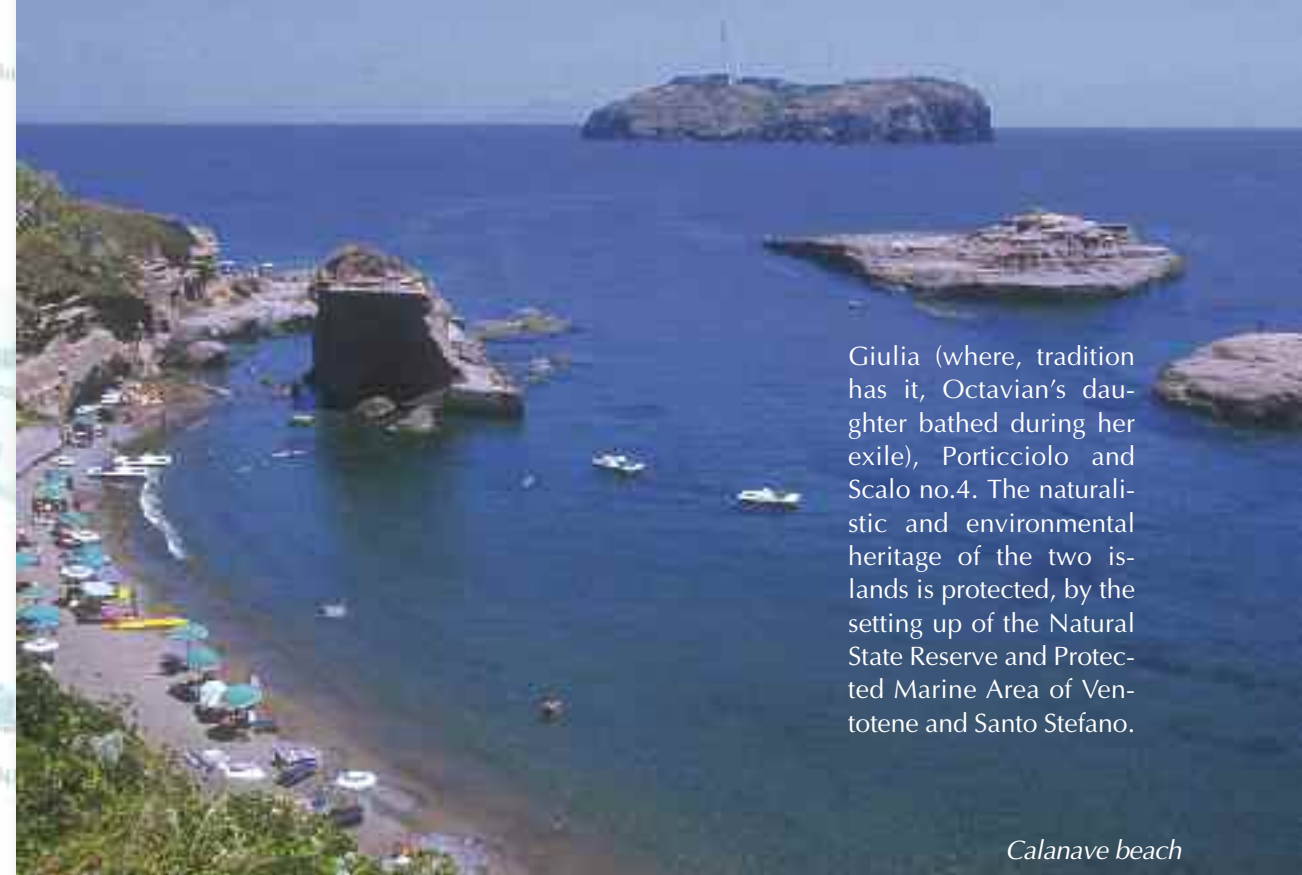


The historic centre

glia, Parata Grande, and Capo dell'Arco. Punta Eolo does not have a beach, but a tuffaceous platform allows for sunbathing and diving into the sea. Obviously, the best way to appreciate the island and its magnificent water is by sea. Starting from Porto Romano and heading westward, one encounters the tuffaceous platform in front of the Roman fish pool, towered over by the lighthouse, Cala Nave and, after passing a series of small grottos, one reaches Cala Battaglia and the little beach of Parata della Postina. From here on, one begins to notice a change in the shape of the rock, which has its highest point at Punta dell'Arco, where the tuff gives way to trachyte and basalt. Continuing along, one encounters the Semaforo (Signal Station), the small coves of Moggio di Terra and della Paratela, Punta Pascone and Parata Grande. From here steep steps lead to the village, Punta Eolo, overlooking Porto Nuovo and the vast basin of Cala Rossano. The islet of **Santo Stefano**, a little over a mile from the Roman harbour of Ventotene, is uninhabited and dominated by the building of the former Bourbon life-confinement prison, built in 1795 on plans by Francesco Carpi. Imprisoned here were common criminals, irredentists like Luigi Settembrini, anarchists like Gaetano Bresci, murderer of Umberto I, and antifascists like Sandro Pertini. The prison was closed in 1964. Abandoned and left to plunderers, it now belongs to the Municipality and can be visited by guided tour. The main mooring areas are Marinella, Burrone or Morrone, followed by Punta dei Sospiri, from whence cliffs lead all the way to Vasca



Calabattaglia beach



Calanave beach



Islet of S. Stefano