



Apulia

Between myth and history



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APULIA

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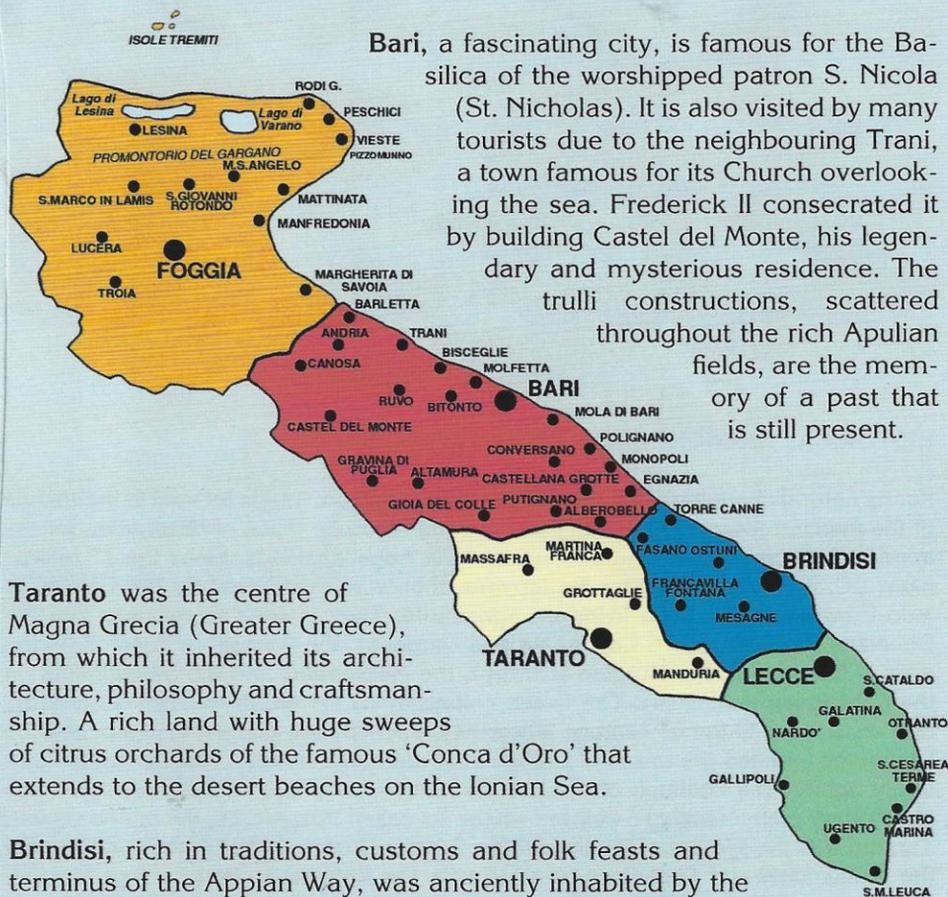
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Apulia and its provinces

Foggia is characterized by diverse natural landscapes that range from the famous Apulian Table, to the Umbrian Forest, the amazing beaches of Gargano, the picturesque villages and some holy places visited every year by many pilgrims.



Bari, a fascinating city, is famous for the Basilica of the worshipped patron S. Nicola (St. Nicholas). It is also visited by many tourists due to the neighbouring Trani, a town famous for its Church overlooking the sea. Frederick II consecrated it by building Castel del Monte, his legendary and mysterious residence. The trulli constructions, scattered throughout the rich Apulian fields, are the memory of a past that is still present.

Taranto was the centre of Magna Grecia (Greater Greece), from which it inherited its architecture, philosophy and craftsmanship. A rich land with huge sweeps of citrus orchards of the famous 'Conca d'Oro' that extends to the desert beaches on the Ionian Sea.

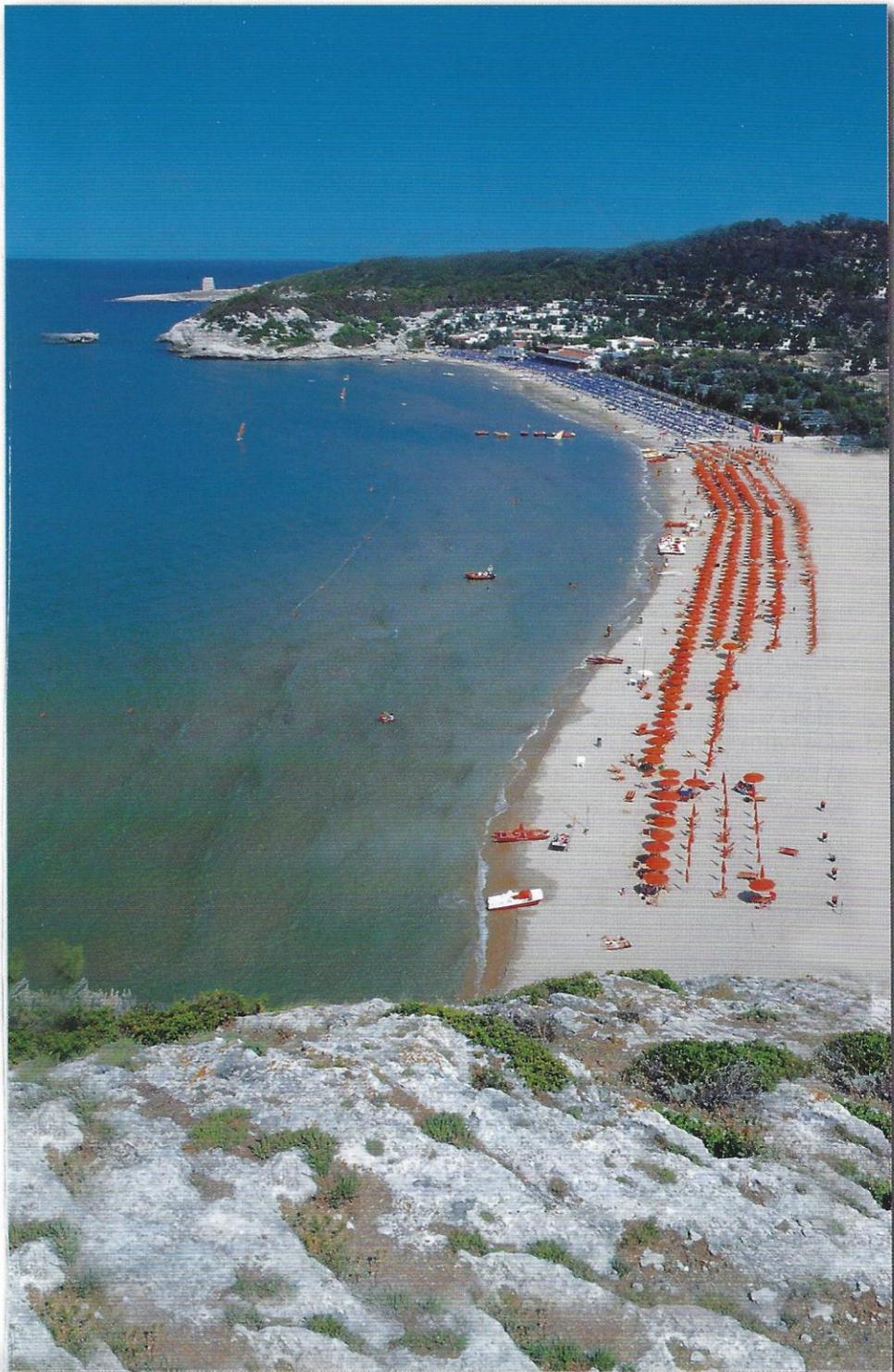
Brindisi, rich in traditions, customs and folk feasts and terminus of the Appian Way, was anciently inhabited by the Messapians. In the past it was well-known for its ancient harbour, centre of very important sea trades and communications.

Lecce, Byzantine land with amazing landscapes, ancient historical traditions and aristocratic roots, is characterized by a Baroque architecture. Cradle of the arts and cultural events thanks to the successful combination of western and eastern civilizations, it recalls in the daily life the past folklore. Its pure beaches on the Ionian and Adriatic sides are well-worth a visit.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For its natural characteristics and geographical position, as it is located in the middle of the Mediterranean sea, Apulia has been the favourite place of destination for the immigrants coming from the Balkans and the Aegean islands. Since the 3rd millennium BC, it was inhabited by the Iapygians, that were considered by the Greeks an Indo-European population living on agriculture. They divided themselves into the Daunians, (in the modern Capitanata and Gargano), the Peucetii or Poedicli (in the area of Bari and in the Murgian territory), the Messapians and the Salentinians (in the Salentinian Peninsula). The Greek colonisations started in the 19th century BC and went on up to the 8th century, when they reached their climax. In this period the Laconians founded the towns of Gallipoli, Otranto and Taranto. The Iapygians fought firmly against the coalition of the two civilisations to preserve their pastoral roots and pottery craftsmanship (well-known the so-called *trozzelle*, i.e. decorated vases). Taranto was the symbol of the flourishing Greater Greece, but after the wars against the Messapians and Lucanians, it allied with the Romans to find a coastal outlet. A period of decadence followed and brought to the final victory of the Romans in 272 BC. Once the whole region was conquered, Rome started a cultural and civil unification of these ethnically different peoples. The marine communications with Epirus, Macedonia, Greece, Syria and Egypt encouraged cultural and commercial exchanges and the construction of many roads to facilitate travels to Italy. In the Middle Ages, Christianity spread in Apulia, and many bishop's seats were built. After the apparition on the Gargano of the Archangel Michael (as the religious and historical traditions tell), a Sanctuary in San Marco was erected. Under the German-Byzantine wars, a dark age started and lasted until the Lombard invasion in Brindisi, Taranto and Bari against the Byzantines. Even the communications with the East were less frequent. In the 9th century, the Muslims conquered Taranto, and Bari became an emirate. But both Bari in 876 and Taranto in 880 came back to the Eastern Empire.



This second Byzantine domination lasted for about two centuries and brought to the re-flourishing of the business activities and to the repopulation of the countries. Several eastern communities developed here, like the Hebraic communities of Venosa, Taranto, Bari and Oria. Apulia was a meeting point between the Roman-German and the Eastern-Byzantine world. For this reason, the region has long been considered the cradle of arts and cultures. Also the intervention of both the Benedictine monks with their monasteries and the Basilians with their 'laure', sort of caverns dug in the rock and decorated with precious and wonderful frescoes (between Taranto and Bari), was meaningful. The inhabitants of Bari, supported by the Normans and headed by the rebel Melus, a representative of the Lombard aristocracy, started new fights against the Byzantines that ended in 1071, when the whole region was subdued by the Normans. The handing over of Apulia from the Byzantine to the Norman Emperor caused a temporary standstill of the regional territorial expansion, and only afterwards the business relationships with Amalfi, Venice, Ragusa, the Slav and Greek coasts and the East restarted. During the last years of Roger's II rule, Apulia flourished both economically and culturally. In 1194, the Emperor Henry IV of Swabia became King of Sicily and through his heir Frederick II, the region enjoyed one of the best periods of its history. Frederick II loved so much this land that he renewed it through reforms useful for its growth. He protected the middle and rural classes for the sake of peace and quiet through a severe administration which gave a one of a kind cultural and artistic flourishing. Monuments, cathedrals and castles were built and the best experts were employed in the administrative fields. As he died, all this stopped. Even if Manfred, son of Frederick II tried to rule according to his father's teachings, he was overcome by Charles Anjou in 1266. The fights against the Aragon's domination in the Angevin period affected the economy of the whole Kingdom. Apulia was at the mercy of raids, the *Communes* were sold to unscrupulous Lords and expensive collections were asked to the lower classes. Ferdinand I of Aragon fought against the Angevin partisans with the help of the Sforza Family and an Albanese Prince. This region was also ruined by the Turkish raids that brought to the conquest of Otranto





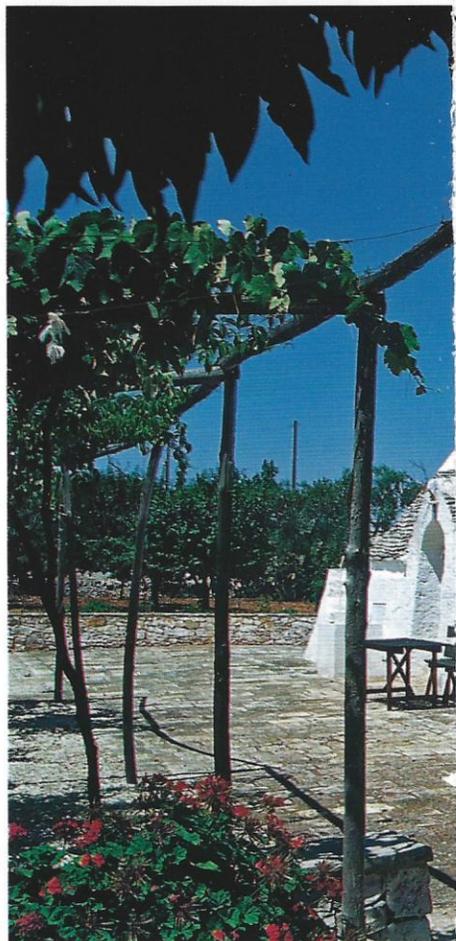
in 1480. Alphonso, Duke of Calabria, allied with the Apulians and reconquered it. In 1500, during the French-Spanish war, the famous 'Challenge of Barletta' happened. The Spanish people settled in the Kingdom of Naples, defeating the French. Most of the region (Vieste, Monte Sant'Angelo, Andria, Castel del Monte, Bitonto and Venosa) was under Gonzalo of Cordova, the first viceroy of Naples and one of the most important feudatory. France did not accept the defeat and with the troops of Lautrec invaded and sacked Apulia. But in 1529 France was driven out by Spain. Apulia, victim of several Turkish raids, was provided by Spain with arms for its defence. Along the coasts lookout towers and castles were built, and also the harbours of Otranto, Taranto, Gallipoli and Brindisi were provided with arms. Economy failed because of a strong taxation policy wanted by Spain. Agriculture and fishing were not anymore the main economic resources of the region, which fell in decay. When in 1647 in Naples Masaniello's rebellion broke out, also in Apulia several insurrections started. Natural misfortunes like the plague increased the crisis of this land that had been impoverished from misgovernment and misery. Banditry spread between the 12th and 16th century and in 1559 with the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, the Spanish rule came back. Cultural academies were built and the Baroque art spread above all through the area of Lecce and Salento. In the 18th century, during the Polish War of Succession, Apulia was under the Austrians. But with the peace of Vienna, in 1738, the Region came back to Charles of Bourbon, who chose Naples as his private residence to be closer to his subjects. Charles's and his successor Ferdinand IV's merits focused on the promotion of reforms limiting the feudal and clerical power and the construction of private buildings and roads; harbours were re-modernized and the Tavoliere (Apulian Table) was partially reclaimed. The clerical properties were excised and some lands that the feudatories had encroached on the Communes were given back. In the Region, the first Enlightenment ideas were not accepted by the lower classes who had suffered from ignorance, submission and oppression for centuries. The first 'Sanfediste' (reactionary) rebellions took the Region at the mercy of

raids and destruction. In 1806, Joseph Bonaparte came to the throne but the French government lasted for just ten years. However, all feudal laws were abolished (e.g. the ecclesiastical mortmain, the tax on sheep), towns like Bari and Brindisi developed, while Taranto became the first French naval base in the fight against England and Russia. With the Congress of Vienna, the whole South came back to the Bourbon Family of Ferdinand IV. The Table was divided into latifundia and the Bourbon repression caused the growth of the Carbonarist movement. The first 1820 risings in Nola gave the green light to a series of riots in Manfredonia, Lucera, Cerignola and Bisceglie, repressed by the Holy Alliance. In 1860 with the Italian Unity, Apulia became an Italian region.

The long years of foreign occupation, war and repression ended, but a new drama was starting in the 'South'. Banditry invaded the region and was repressed only with a military intervention. New reclamation schemes started in the Table. The middle class managed the land which was worked in a more organic and efficient way. In fact, in the 20th century, the Apulian landscape got the actual aspect with olive groves, vineyards and orchards. The first trades started and the naval harbours used in WW I were improved and used for trading. The University of Bari was founded together with the so-called Fiera del Levante (local fair), that is still very popular. Another important phase for the Apulian development was the construction of the Aqueduct that solved the lack of water of the past times. With the arrival of the Italian Republic, the South shook out of its torpor, and the local politicians and trade unionists fought to approach the Apulia region to Italy and to improve its economy. The construction of roads, private buildings and important harbours on the Mediterranean sea encouraged trading and farming development, the chief occupation of the region, giving Apulia its independence. However, nowadays one of the main problems due to a strong demographic growth is unemployment.

GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

Apulia is bordered respectively by the Adriatic and Ionian Seas and by the Basilicata, Campania and Molise regions. It comprises 19,348 Km² and is mostly plain with low coasts broken by the mountainous Gargano Peninsula and the plateau of the Murge area. The Gargano area is karstic and full of caverns in depth, and its range exceed for a few 1,000 metres of height. Its beautiful coasts are at intervals indented or sandy. Tourism is one of the most important economic resources. The Murge, also known as 'the Karst of the South' because of their karstic nature, are peculiar for



their round-shaped karstic formations. They sensibly change the Apulian landscape that in this area is stony and barren. Murgia is divided into Alta Murgia (High Murgia) in the inland, Bassa Murgia (Lower Murgia) near the coast, Murgia of the coast and Murgia of the *trulli* (traditional Apulian stone dwelling with a conical roof). There are also the Murge of Salento and of Taranto. The Table, another precious resource of the territory, covers 3,000 km². From a geological point of view, the plain is made of layers of marine deposits; since the Roman period, the Murgian economy had been based on sheep farming and agriculture. The most important rivers are Fortore and Ofanto, insufficient water resources for the regional needs. The most important lakes are those of Lesina and Varano on the Gargano. The climate is Mediterranean with warm and windy summers especially on the reliefs. Winters are instead mild and rainy even if weather has changed remarkably in these last years.





BARI and its province



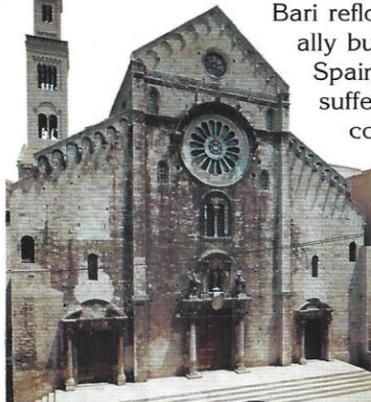
Basilica of S. Nicola (11th-12th century)

The land of Bari, in the middle of the Apulia region, in ancient times was inhabited by local populations of Illyrian origins, like the Peucetii. Since the 2nd century BC it had been famous for its harbour that linked it to the main Mediterranean cities. Its roads were all practicable thanks to the Roman heritage and in fact it could have trade exchanges with the rest of Apulia. The Eastern Roman Empire took it away from the Ostrogoths in the 6th century AD and it was contested for other two centuries. At least the Lombards conquered and transformed it in a castaldo seat. In 847 it underwent first the African-Muslim rule and then in 871 Ludovic II, the Western Emperor. But in 876 Bari was reconquered by the Eastern Emperors. After centuries of submission, Bari in the first half of the 11th century reached its welfare thanks to its harbour and trade exchanges. The anti-Byzantine revolts were headed by Melus of Bari and in 1071 with Robert Guiscard Bari went under the Normans. From the far Turkey, sailors of Bari brought back to the city the mortal remains of St. Nicholas. From that day on, the construction of the Basilica of Bari became a pilgrimage destination from all over Europe. Another important historical event was the Council called by Pope Urban II in the crypt of the Basilica, to reconcile the Latin Church to that Orthodox. Although the Schism was inevitable, the city flourished under the Normans. The local fights against the invaders were so frequent that William I decided to destroy Bari. William II rebuilt it and protected the locals and the clergy. Under the Swabians, King Frederick II was suspicious of the inhabitants of Bari for he did not consider them loyal to the crown. However, he built there a castle and founded a fair that under the Bourbon rule became very famous for growing trading and cultural

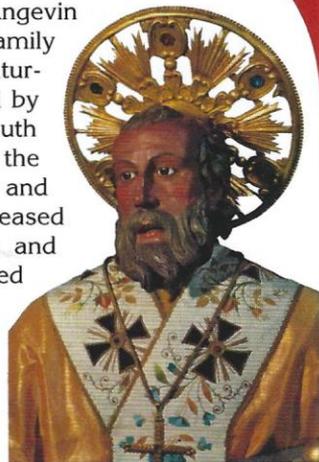
exchanges. The decline of the city started under the Angevin and Aragon dynasties. Under the Sforza family Bari refleurished artistically and culturally but when it was reconquered by Spain, it declined again. The South suffered for a general poverty, the conflicts between aristocracy and

the exponentially increased lower classes, the riots and the 1656 plague that killed 12,000 locals. Bari was subdued by the Austrians and the Bourbon family and only after the Unity of the Italian Kingdom it slowly recovered. But in 1898

new calamities like chol-



Cathedral of S. Sabino



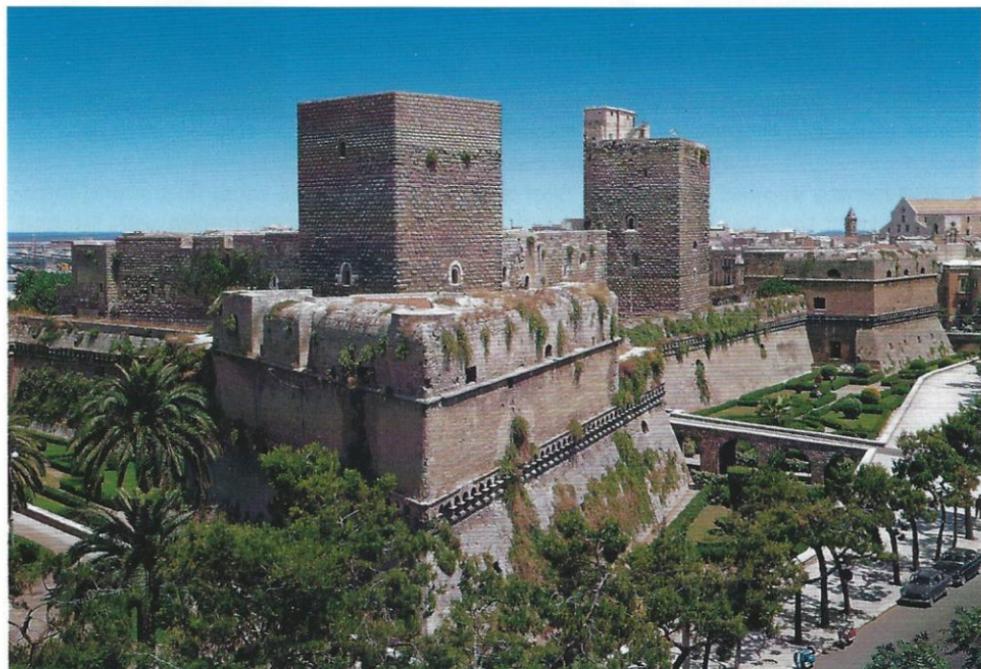
S. Nicola

era and famine sapped its stability. Bari is actually one of the most flourishing farming centres of the South. Even its naval services allow marine trades with Greece. The Fiera del Levante is the first trade market of the whole South, second in Italy to Milan's only. The old town centre offers the tourist enchanting spots rich in history and tradition and extraordinary buildings and monuments in Romanesque style, like the famous Basilica of St. Nicholas. The mortal remains of the Saint were stolen by some local sailors in Mira (Turkey) and given back to the Abbot Elias, who built the Basilica in honour of him as he was appointed Bishop. The three-portal oriental façade of the Basilica hides admirable works of art like the bishop's throne of the Abbot Elias. Well-worth a visit is the Cathedral in honour of San Sabino, a precious



The Margherita Theatre on the Promenade

example of Romanesque-Apulian style. Built up in 1170 on the ancient Cathedral, it was consecrated in 1292. Its interior formed by a central nave and two side aisles is really majestic and in the crypt the mortal remains of San Sabino are preserved. Another very interesting Romanesque construction with four corner towers is the Castle of S. Gregorio (St. Gregory) erected by Frederick II on previous Byzantine and Norman fortifications. Embellished under the Sforza family, it lost fame at the death of Bona Sforza. The Historic Museum near the Cathedral of S. Nicola preserves old military weapons and documents. In the new city, quickly grown after the demographic boom, the Petruzzelli Theatre, one of the most famous Italian theatres, stands out. The Archaeological Museum collects all the local findings of the Classic Age. A new construction is the Stadium of San Nicola (St. Nicholas) by the world-wide famous Italian architect Renzo Piano, which can host up to 60,000 people.



The Castle of Frederick II of Swabia

Piazza Vittorio Veneto with the Cathedral

CANOSA

Canosa, the ancient Canusium, located at the foot of the Murgian plateau in the Table and in the valley of the river Ofanto was probably founded by Diomed, and its name derives from Diomed's dogs (cani). Since the 3rd century BC, it was a very rich trading and industrial town, specialized in the manufacturing of cloths and pottery. It mint-



ed its own silver and bronze coins. First allied with Rome, under the social wars it rebelled against it and afterwards became a Roman Municipium. During this period many temples, sepulchral monuments, thermal baths and also an amphitheatre, were built. Canosa was the most ancient Apulian dioceses that knew more favourable periods under the Lombard rule. Byzantines made of Canosa a Bishop's seat; the Saracens destroyed it and in the 10th century it was rebuilt. The Cathedral of S. Sabino was built in 1080 and due to the 1689 earthquake renewed. In the 19th century the façade was rebuilt and the lower vertical segment of the Latin-cross plan was lengthened. The interior is therefore built in different styles among which the Romanesque-Apulian style predominates in the ancient church.



The Cathedral's ambo

On the right side of the Cathedral, the burial place of Bohemond I of Antioch, son of Robert Guiscard, can be visited. A square-shaped mausoleum with an imposing and inlaid portal in Byzantine-Muslim style. Dated back to the Roman Age are the Lagrasta Hypogea, the most remarkable set of apogees in Canosa (funerary rooms built in local style) and the well-known Temple of Jupiter Taurus. The Church of S. Leucio represents one of the most ancient early Christian temples of the South of Italy. It was probably built in honour of Minerva and was embellished and changed several times in the centuries until year 1000 when it was destroyed. The Baptistry of San Giovanni (St. John) and the Basilica of S. Sofia (St. Sophia) near the ancient Roman necropolis are well-worth a visit. Other historical sights are the Arch in honour of Consul Terentius Varro, defeated in Cannae and the Bagnoli funerary monument.

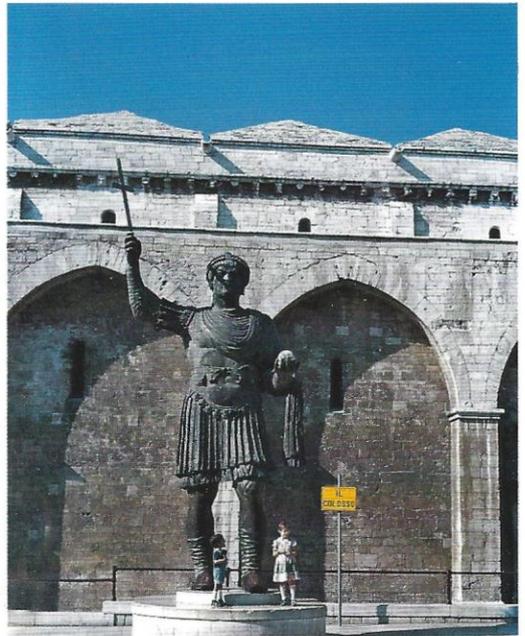
BARLETTA

Barletta known as Barulum by the Latins and called Baretum by Strabo, became a famous summer resort of the close Canosa. St. Paul and St. Lawrence ordered to build a Christian Temple there at the end of the 5th century. After the end of the Roman Empire, Barletta was conquered by the Goths, the Byzantines and the Lombards and afterwards it was ruled by the Greeks. It was an important Norman town though it underwent a period of fights and unrest. Tancredi proclaimed it 'city' and it was a bishop's seat for more than six hundred years. Charles of Anjou fortified it with walls and developed trades with the East. With the Aragonian defeat, during the fights between the French and the Spanish, Barletta became a popular battlefield with the famous 'challenge of Barletta'. Thirteen French Knights fought against as many Italians headed by Ettore Fieramosca. The Italians won and got back to Barletta with the prisoners. They were celebrated by the Spanish and by the locals. On the battlefield a monument was put up and Massimo D'Azeglio wrote a document that made the story famous. Every year, on the last Sunday of July a beautiful performance is played to remember this historical event.

The **Colossus of Barletta** is one of the most representative monuments of this city. This huge bronze statue of 5,11 metres of height probably representing Roman Emperor Theodosius II is dated back to the 4th century AD. It was probably transported to Italy by a Venetian ship probably wrecked while returning from the sack of Constantinople in the fourth Crusade (1204) and was found on the coast of Barletta. The Cathedral of S. Maria Maggiore was built in 1140 and its imposing Romanesque-Apulian façade shows some Renaissance elements. The Hohenstaufen Cas-



tle was built by the Swabian Dynasty on a previous Norman construction and then it was embellished under the House of Charles I of Anjou. The Basilica of the Santo Sepolcro is a remarkable work of art. Its Romanesque-Gothic façade was several times renewed. The Cellar of the Challenge recalls that famous historical event. The Church of Sant'Andrea (St. Andrew), dated back to the 12th century, collects several works of art of the 17th and 18th century. In Barletta the famous artist De Nittis was born and his works are collected in the homonymous Civic Museum, which also preserves ancient findings. In the surroundings of the city, the Sanctuary of the Madonna dello Sterpeto is well-worth a visit for the Byzantine icon of the Madonna.

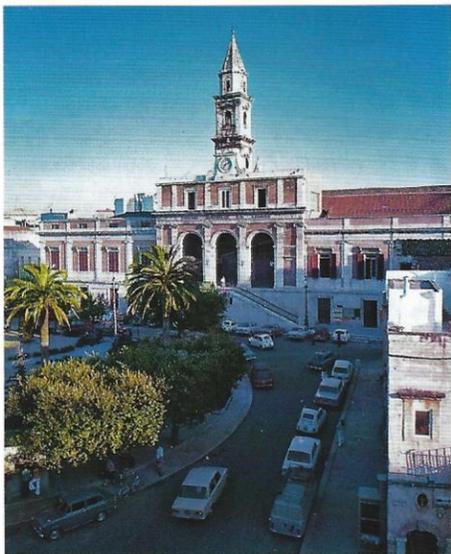


The 5.11-metre-high Colossus of Barletta



ANDRIA

Populated city and important farming centre, Andria is visited by numerous tourists for its ancient churches and works of art. Since Pre-history it was inhabited by local populations and during the Roman Age famous were the stations of the Via Traiana (ancient Roman road built by Emperor Trajan as an extension of Via Appia) and in the Middle Ages the several villages of Loco Andre, built in the 9th century. The Norman King Peter I united the population, founded Andria, and fortified it in 1064. Frederick II loved it for its inhabitants' loyalty to the crown. In 1228 the son of Frederick II, Conrad was born in Andria, and his father's two wives, Iolanda of Brienne and Isabel of England were buried here respectively in 1228 and 1241. Magnificent the 12th-century Cathedral in honour of the Assunta, built on a primitive Church of which only a crypt remains. It was totally rebuilt in 1438-65. Inside the Cathedral, the Chapel of San Riccardo (St. Richard), first Bishop of Andria, can be admired. The treasure preserved in the sacristy is well-worth a visit. In the 9th/10th-century crypt, the grave ruins of Frederick's II wives can be visited. The beauty of the Church of San Domenico (St. Dominic) dated back to 1398 is well-worth a visit for a 16th-century precious wooden sculpture of the Madonna with the Baby. The Church of S. Agostino (St. Augustine), built in 1200 by the Templars, shows an ogival portal rich in embellishments.

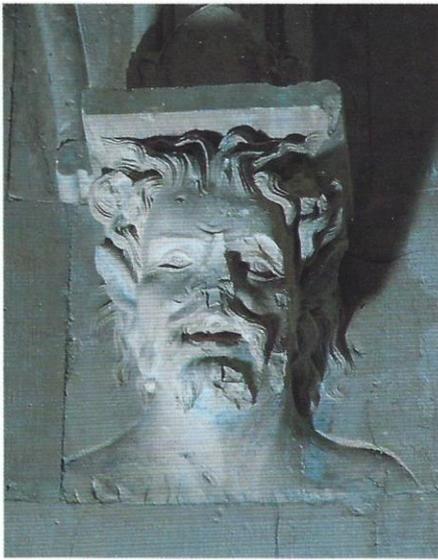


CASTEL DEL MONTE

Perfect and original example of Swabian architecture, Castel del Monte stands on one of the highest rises of the Murge, in a position outstanding the endless plains of the Apulian land. The fair stony fortress, notwithstanding the ravages of the time and its tormented existence, mirrors the genius of Frederick II, the splendour of the Kingdom of Sicily and the







Ornamental grotesque masks

tragic loneliness of the German imperial dream. Located between Sicily and Germany and overlooking the 'faithful' Andria, Castel del Monte testifies and shows the ancient traditions of power and richness. It is a unique masterpiece of medieval military architecture. To the historians it represents a mysterious riddle seeing that the date of its construction and its function are unknown and above all it is not certain that Frederick II has ever lived there. Even the names of the architects and sculptors who worked there are unknown. It has been ascertained that Frederick during his transfers was followed by the whole court and used to bring with him the documents of the court that were probably destroyed during the battles. It is supposed that the construction of the fortress started after the return of Frederick from the Holy Land, after visiting Omar's Mosque in Jerusalem. Fond of buildings with a symmetric plan, Frederick II had been touched by the beauty of the Palatine Chapel of Acquisgrana and the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna.

The architectonic geometry of Frederick II is not a spontaneous moment of his ingeniousness but the expression of a medieval thought which has been realized through a long progress. For this reason, in the following centuries Castel del Monte was appreciated all over Europe by the strongest defamers of the Emperor. Castel del Monte has not to be intended as a defensive fortress because it has neither a moat nor a drawbridge. Even turrets for bows and crossbows or stables, dormitories, subways, prisons and kitchens to host the garrison have not been built. Recent studies assert that the castle was not probably used as a hunting lodge or as a resort place because its structure was too bare. What was



Frederick's II drawing

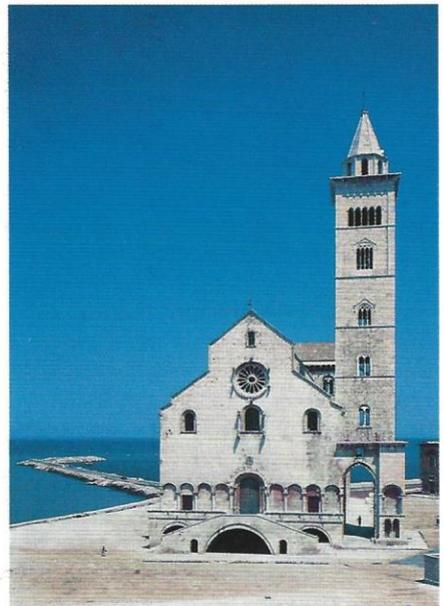
Castel del Monte? What did it represent in the past times? Why is Castel del Monte not mentioned in any documentation of that age? Why cannot architects date back its origin? According to the last theories, Castel del Monte has a mysterious and concealed meaning. In order to leave a tangible trace of his existence, Frederick II built the most beautiful and enigmatic fortress in the world. The castle is thought to be halfway the meridians of the Cathedral of Chartres and Cheops's Pyramid, two constructions deeply loved by Frederick. Cheops's pyramid hides a secret that man has been searching since ancient times: a room located at 74 metres of depth. The same message is in the Cathedral of Chartres. Castel del Monte was also built according to extraordinary mathematic calculations that allow the sun to lighten specific places in Castel del Monte and the shadows to be perfect in time and length corresponding to the zodiac constellations. The architecture testifies the harmony of both Gothic-Romanesque-Apulian and Arab-Norman styles. When the Swabian dynasty went under Charles Anjou in 1266, Manfred's sons, Enrico, Federico and Azzolino were imprisoned in Castel del Monte. Castel del Monte belonged to the Consalvos, Carafas and the Earls of Ruvo and fell into disrepair after hosting merchants, brigands and shepherds. In 1876 it came back to the Italian Government and named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (1996).

Courtyard interior. Arch surmounted by an equestrian bust and a frenchdoor on the upper floor.

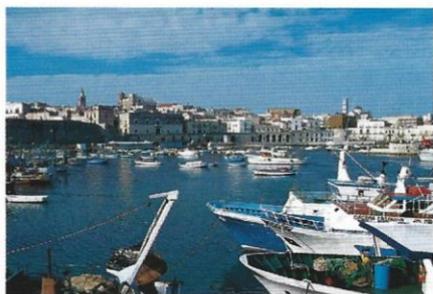


TRANI

According to the legend, Trani was founded thanks to Turenum, son of Diomed. In the 9th century, after the destruction of Canosa, it became diocese seat and Lombard outpost. It became a famous harbour for the trades with the East and with other Mediterranean cities. Under the Norman rule it was independent and around 1063 the *Ordinamenta Maris*, the oldest marine code of Middle Ages, was issued. Frederick II endowed Trani with the building of a castle to protect the harbour, since the town had become as well famous as Bari. Under the Angevin and then the Spanish it lost its importance. In the 17th century, Philip III founded the University of Juridical Studies while the fine arts were respectively in the hands of the Academies of the Pellegrini and Oziosi. Trani is known all over the world for its marvellous



and imposing Cathedral overlooking the sea in honour of S. Nicola Pellegrino (St. Nicholas the Pilgrim), a young Greek boy who celebrated the love for God. He loved the Poor and children but was fought, mocked and abused by the Rich. After being fustigated on his arrival, he died in few days in front of the Church of S. Maria. To compete with Bari the ambitious inhabitants of Trani decided to sanctify this poor Greek boy. On the ancient ruins of the Church of S. Maria a Cathedral was erected in 1097. It was many times rebuilt and only in the last decades, after some restoration works, it reacquired its original beauty. The façade, a masterpiece of the Romanesque-Apulian architecture, is covered with white-rose stones that catch the eye in the sunny and warm summer days. It is also surrounded by a finely decorated cornice. The portal, made of wood covered with bronze by Barisiano da Trani shows a bas-relief recalling Byzantine, Saracen and Romanesque models. The interior hosts a crypt apt to preserve the mortal remains of S. Nicola. In the nearby, the Church of S. Maria della Scala is well-worth a visit. The Romanesque Church of Ognissanti (All Saints' Day) was instead built in the courtyard of the Templar Hospital. Trani is popular for the production of a famous muscatel wine and the working of the 'stone of Trani'.



BISCEGLIE

Farming and trading centre, Bisceglie became in these last years one of the most visited beach resorts. Of medieval origin, it belonged to Robert Guiscard, who ceded it to the Earl of Trani. Pope Alexander II put here his diocese. Under the Swabian rule, it reached a certain welfare until the Angevin rule. In 1490 the Aragonians surrounded it with walls that are still nowadays visible. To

be visited the small Church of S. Margherita (St. Margaret), a small Romanesque-Apulian construction erected by the Imperial Judge Falco in 1197. Splendid and rich the Romanesque-Apulian Church of S. Adoeno founded in 1074 in honour of S. Adoeno, protector saint of the Norman soldiers. In the interior a 12th-century font and the Madonna with the Baby by Palvisino can be admired. The Cathedral, started by will of the Norman Earl Peter II in 1073, was ended in 1295. Its façade is decorated with a plain baldachin portal supported by columns carrying some griffins. The well-restored and stately church with a nave and two side aisles shows besides the presbytery a wonderful carved wooden choir coming from the Benedictine Abbey of S. Maria dei Miracoli (St. Mary's Miracles Abbey), near Andria. Along the road to Corato, the ancient **dolmen of the Chianca** can be admired. Discovered in 1909, it is one of the oldest Italian prehistoric monuments. Turned eastwards, like all these type of constructions, it consists of a corridor and a cella in which several animal bones, fragments of vases and remains of young and adult skeletons were found. In front of the cella an uncovered corridor (dromos) can be visited.



The Chianca Dolmen: one of the most ancient Prehistoric monuments of Italy.



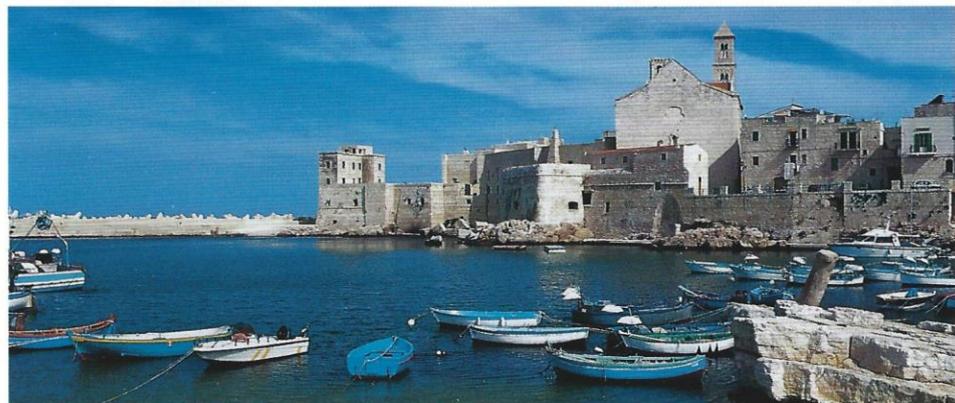
MOLFETTA

The ancient Duomo (Cathedral) seen from the port.

Molfetta is a pleasant sea town that has been inhabited since the Aeneolithic. In the 12th century it became a bishop's seat and an important trading and maritime centre provided with one of the biggest and most efficient fishing fleets of the Adriatic area. The Cathedral of the Assunta (Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption) represents one of the most beautiful monuments of this town thanks to its huge Baroque façade and the statue of St. Ignatius of Loyola. In the interior precious paintings of the 18th and 19th century are preserved. The old Cathedral is a majestic Romanesque-Apulian church dated back to 1150. These three-dome splendid building was ended in the 13th century. One km far from Molfetta, the 1162 Church of the Madonna dei Martiri (Madonna of the Martyrs) is well-worth a visit for the artistic value of the icon of the Madonna of the Martyrs brought from Constantinople, now displayed on the high altar. The Pulo of Molfetta is one of the most important Apulian dolinas. Along its walls, marvellous anciently inhabited caverns open, where archaeological findings were discovered.

GIOVINAZZO

Giovinazzo, small farming centre with a peculiar harbour and picturesque sea views. Of ancient origins, it has a medieval area where the ancient Romanesque-Apulian Cathedral stands out. Well-worth a visit the 14th-century Church of the Holy Spirit.



A view of the small port

BITONTO

Bitonto, big farming centre with a limited demographic growth due to the massive emigration is popular thanks to its splendid Cathedral. Butuntum, Messapian city, was inhabited by Greek settlers of whom findings of vases, sepulchres and coins have been found. Under the Romans, it became a Municipium and in the barbarian age it decayed. In the 11th and 12th centuries, thanks to a flourishing period, many churches, among which the Cathedral, were built. The cathedral was built between 1175 and 1200 in honour of St. Valentine and



The Romanesque Cathedral in honour of S. Valentino

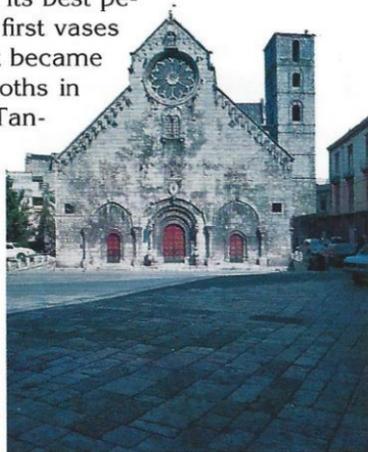
represents one of the best examples of Romanesque style in the land of Bari. It is the faithful copy of the Basilica of St. Nicholas in Bari. Amazing the central door of the façade and of relevant value its right side, divided into six merloned arches. The Latin-cross plan interior with three circular apses and naves separated by intertwined capitals, can be admired together with the graves of the Bishops Barba and Musso by the side of the portal. On the left side of the Cathedral, the bishop's building hosting the Diocesan Museum stands out. Not to be missed the Sylos Sabini Palace with its Gothic-Catalan portal, the Gothic Church of St. Francis of Assisi (1286) which hosts interesting wooden sculptures and paintings of the 16th and 17th century and the Abbey of S. Leo, built by the Benedictines in the 9th century.



Cathedral's interior: the ambo

RUVO DI PUGLIA

Ruvo di Puglia is a farming centre popular for its wines and olives. It was famous since ancient times for the manufacturing of pottery. In fact in the Jatta Museum are preserved the best examples (around 2,000 pieces). It belonged to the Peucetii and lived its best period from the 5th to the 3rd century BC. In fact the first vases and coins are dated back to this historical period. It became a Roman Municipium and was destroyed by the Goths in year 463. Under the Normans it reflowered and Tancred unified it to the county of Conversano. Frederick II fortified Ruvo di Puglia which became an independent fief. In 1510 it was sold to the Bishop Oliviero Carafa and remained a family possession up to 1806. The Attic and Corinthian vases of Ruvo are partially of Greek and Italic production (less numerous those with black figures in comparison with those with red figures). On the model of the Greeks, an Apulian production of vases started: red figures in a black background. The first premises for the manufacture of pottery were built in Ruvo. The first vase reproductions were more



The Romanesque Cathedral: end of the 12th century

precious from an artistic point of view than the latest, above all in the drawing execution which was more imprecise. These works of art were destroyed until 1810 and were appreciated only later and therefore preserved in the most famous European museums. The splendid and imposing Cathedral was built around the end of the 12th century. To be admired the twelve-beamed rose window and the three portals among which the central one is more richly ornamented.



The Romanesque bridge of Gravina di Puglia

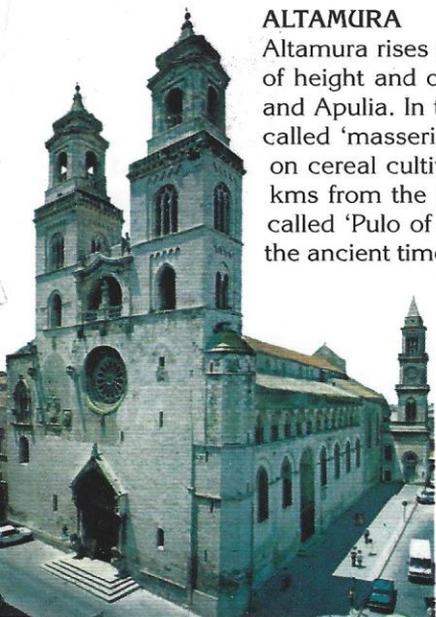
GRAVINA DI PUGLIA

Gravina stands at the border of deep gorges (called ravines) dug out on the Ionian sides of the Murge. The gorge of Gravina is due to a superficial erosion of the ground and in ancient times the local inhabitants use to exploit tufa rocks to make dwelling places. It is thought it was built in the 5th century AD, when the inhabitants of Silvium, in order to escape the barbarian invasions, took refuge in the ravines.

Gravina, Byzantine stronghold against the Arabs and Lombards, was Greek until the 11th century. Afterwards it acquired Latin customs and traditions. In 1313 Robert Anjou founded here a fair which became famous in the following years. Its history is marked by the fights between the Angevins and the Durazzeschi. Its Churches carved out from the tufa rocks (e.g. the Church of St. Michael) are very peculiar. Amazing the Byzantine frescoes found in numerous caverns of the churches like the Church of the Madonna della Stella of S. Vito Vecchio and the Cavern of Tota. Well-worth a visit the Romanesque Cathedral built in 1092 by Humphrey of Hauteville. It was renovated and enlarged afterwards, taking a Renaissance look. Inside, a 16th-century choir and a masterfully carved wardrobe can be admired. The Pomarici Museum and the ruins of the Castle of Frederick II, built by the Florentine architect Fuccio in 1231, are well-worth a visit.

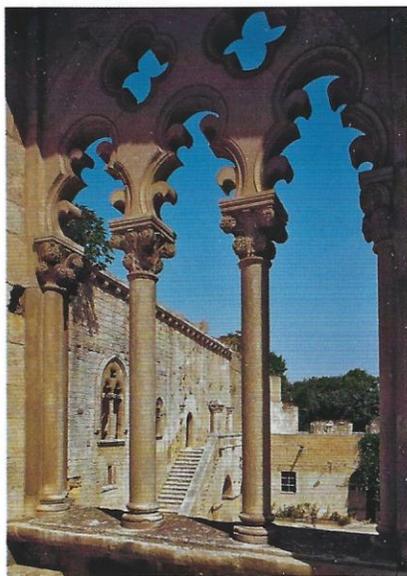
ALTAMIRA

Altamura rises on the highest point of the Murge, at 473 meters of height and overlooks a long border ditch between Basilicata and Apulia. In the town scattered by typical local constructions called 'masserie' (farms), it prevails the farming activity based on cereal cultivations, almond trees and vineyards. At about 6 kms from the inhabited centre, one of the biggest karst dolina called 'Pulo of Altamura' can be visited. Findings attest that in the ancient times it was inhabited. Altamura was built by Frederick II around 1230. The Cathedral is a marvellous example of Romanesque-Apulian art. Precious the portal, the rose window and the women's galleries. In the interior, a wonderful altar by the Bernini School, a wooden choir and a Pulpit by the brothers Pisani are preserved. Valuable the pictures by the Neapolitan School. Not to be missed the churches of S. Nicolò de' Greci (St. Nicholas of the Greeks), S. Domenico (St. Dominic) and S. Lucia (St. Lucy).



GIOIA DEL COLLE

Gioia del Colle, famous for local handicrafts (embroideries, pottery, wood intaglios and wrought-iron working) is visited by the tourists above all in summertime for its peculiar old town centre. It has been inhabited since ancient times but the modern town rose around a Byzantine fortress. It belonged to the Normans and Swabians and was county of the Acquaviva, of the Aragon Family and of the Princes De Mari of Acquaviva delle Fonti. In the old town an imperial castle founded by Riccardo Siniscalco can be admired. It was embellished afterwards by Frederick II in 1230. It was built with towers and large walls and it has a trapezoid plan. The interior has four large halls; the room of the throne can boast an imposing stony throne. On the ground floor, the Archaeological Museum collects interesting findings coming from the Necropolis of Mount Sannace and of Santo Mola. It is recommended to visit Mount Sannace, two kms far from Gioia, seeing that from 1957 to 1962 here archaeological excavations were carried out to bring to light one of the most important acropolises of the old Peucetia.



The Castle: detail from the interiors

NOCI

This small city is located in the eastern Murgia, named of the 'trulli'. Here life still passes slowly, like in the past. It is cultivated with olive trees, vineyards and almond trees and very good dairy products can be tasted. On an enchanting hill the marvelous Benedictine Convent of **S. Maria della Scala** can be visited. The ancient Church of **S. Maria del Barsento** is located in the homonymous fortified farm dated back to the 6th century.

*Putignano's Caverns
discovered in 1931*

PUTIGNANO

Putignano, farming and industrial centre, inhabited since ancient times as some Peucetian graves testify, was a fief of the Benedictine monks of Monopoli. It is famous for its ancient and typical carnival parade of multicoloured carts. In the old town centre to be visited the 1158 Church of St. Peter with its pompous façade, the ogival portal, a double fascia of reliefs and a cornice of intertwined leaves. To be admired also the rose-window. Another famous Church is that of S. Maria La Greca, built by the Greeks on the ruins of a Pagan Temple. It was restored in the 16th century and preserves a splendid icon on the altar and the reliquary head of S. Stefano. The cavern of Putignano, discovered in 1931, is well-worth a visit, for its alabaster concretions in the karst cavity.





THE ABBEY OF THE MADONNA DELLA SCALA

On a pleasant and quiet hill, where the heart finds the long awaited calmness, this Abbey is located. It still preserves its Romanesque-Apulian façade and is visited every year by several tourists. The first small church of the 12th century was united to the new Abbey. Here are buried two benefactors Laura Lenti and Emanuele Caronti, who founded the Benedictine Monastery. The name Madonna della Scala (staircase or ladder), wonderfully portrayed on a painting by Ernesto Bellandi, means that the Madonna represents the staircase which brings us to God. The monks founded the Monastery on the estates of Lady Lenti. The works started in 1930 and ended in 1970. The monks are nowadays very important for their spiritual tribute to the believers.

CONVERSANO

Conversano, flourishing farming centre of Peucetian origins was probably the ancient Norba, a Roman colony of the 3rd century BC. Subdued by the Byzantines, Goths and Lombards, thanks to the division of the Duchy of Benevento, it went under the Princes of Salerno's control. Geoffrey of Hauteville was the first count, but in the following years the county belonged to different families. In fact the county went under the Briennes, the Enghiens, the Lussemburgs, the Orsinis and the Acquavivas of Aragon. It is a bishop's seat and hosts a 'Liceo' specializing in classical studies and a very important boarding school. The overlooking Swabian-Norman



The Cathedral (11th -12th century)

Castle with a trapezoid plan and huge cylindrical and polygonal towers preserves in the interiors a lodge and a beautiful Renaissance porch. The Cathedral founded between the 11th and the 12th century shows a 14th-century façade of remarkable beauty. Behind the Cathedral the Monastery of St. Benedict is important to be noted. In the Church of St. Benedict, next to the Monastery, it is placed the grave of the 'Guercio di Puglia' ('The squinter of Apulia'), alias Earl Giangirolamo II of Con-

versano, called 'Guercio' for his blind eye and because he was a cruel, violent and vindictive tax collector, who ordered to hang and flay laics and priests. Well-worth a visit the 1636 Church of S. Cosma which preserves valuable paintings and frescoes by famous artists like Carlo De Rosa, Domenico Finoglia and Fracanzano. The lakes of Conversano are natural hollows covered by dry stones to a depth of 12 metres, that in ancient times were probably used for collecting rainwater. Not far from Conversano, in the 15th-century Church of S. Maria dell'Isola, the sumptuous sepulchre of Giulio Antonio Acquaviva, dead in Otranto in 1480 during a battle against the Turks, is really interesting, as well as the gracious 12th-century small Church of St. Catherine. On Castiglione's hill an ancient medieval town centre, probably built on the ruins of a Peucetian town, can be admired.



MOLA OF BARI

Mola di Bari is a small medieval town centre already famous for its seaport at the time of the Crusades. It was destroyed and then rebuilt by Charles Anjou in 1277. In 1278 Charles Anjou commissioned the construction of a defensive structure to Pierre d'Angicourt. Another famous monument is the Romanesque-Renaissance Cathedral of St. Nicholas.

POLIGNANO

Polignano, first urban agglomeration, rose probably with the name of Neapolis. The built-up area has nowadays reached a cliff pounded by the waves that in the last centuries carved suggestive marine caverns. In these caverns, archaeological findings



Polignano. View from the seafront terraces.

have been discovered to testify the presence of man from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age. In the ancient village, the Mother Church of the Assumption, ornamented with a beautiful late-Renaissance portal supporting a bell tower, can be visited. The interior exhibits masterpieces and valuable paintings. Northwards the stately cliff, one of the most beautiful Apulian caverns, the Palazzese Cavern, with a huge terrace and a restaurant, is well-worth a visit. The Church of S. Vito, three kms far from the inhabited place, is named after the body of the Saint, which is kept in the votive chapel.

MONOPOLI

Monopoli, a farming and fishing centre inhabited in the Middle Ages after the destruction of Egnazia became important under the Byzantines and the Normans. The stately Baroque Cathedral built in 1107 shows its magnificent façade and adjacent bell tower. Valuable the paintings preserved in the interiors and the Byzantine icon of the 'Madonna della Madia' dated back to 1280. Not to be missed the Church of S. Maria Amalfitana built on a 12th-century Basilian Cavern. The Castle, fortified by the Spanish to protect the town from the Turkish invasions, has a polygonal plan and overlooks the harbour. Nearby the built-up area, the Abbey of S. Stefano, erected by Geoffrey of Hauteville in 1086, can be visited. The surrounding beach is really impressive.



CASTELLANA

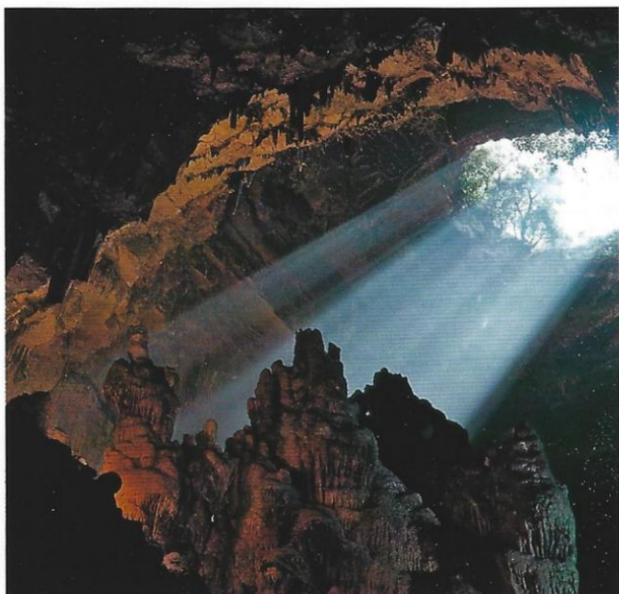
Castellana is a pleasant town located in a karst area scattered by caverns and dolinas. A long time ago, there was a semicircular hollow where meteoric waters were collected and slowly absorbed by the soil. Around year 1000, the small town belonged to the Earls of Conversano, that ceded it to the Benedictine Monastery in 1086. Abbot Eustasio in 1162 gave facilities to those who wanted to work the land nearby the church and in 1267 Castellana went under the abbesses of the Monastery of Conversano. It was sacked by the Hungarians in 1347 and afterwards was ceded first to the Caldora, and then to the Orsini family. Only under the rule of the Countess Dorotea Acquaviva d'Aragona, it flourished. Not to be missed the mother Church with sculptures and paintings of the 16th and 18th century.



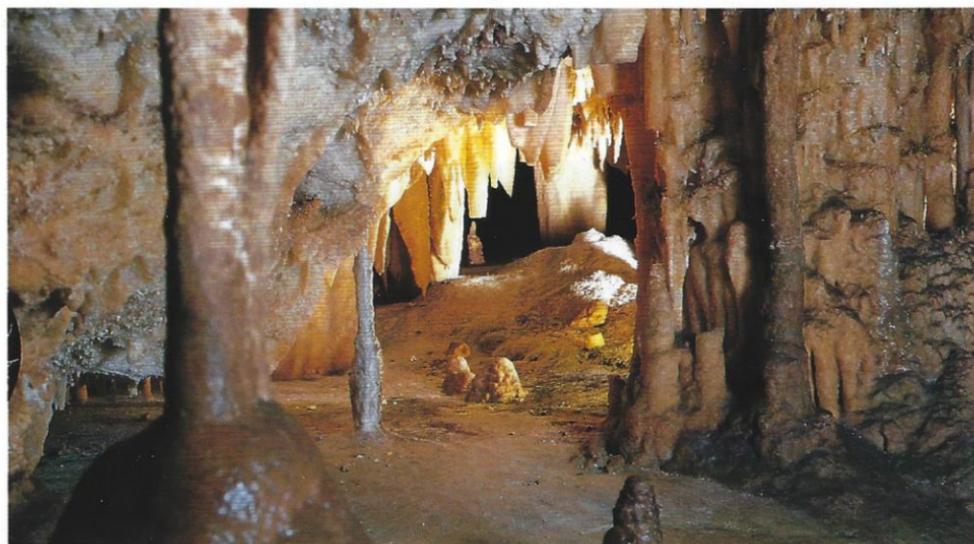
THE CAVERNS OF CASTELLANA

The caverns of Castellana are the hidden pride of Apulia, a quite and magic place where man discovers the beauty of nature. The caverns located in a karst area, are a set of cavities and corridors that extend in depth. The water, which seeps flowing from above, has found the way to reach the lowest areas and eat away the limestone. The corrosion process has been favoured by the chemical agents contained in the water itself. In fact, as the water seeps into the subsoil and reaches the limestone, it gets warmer and emits high

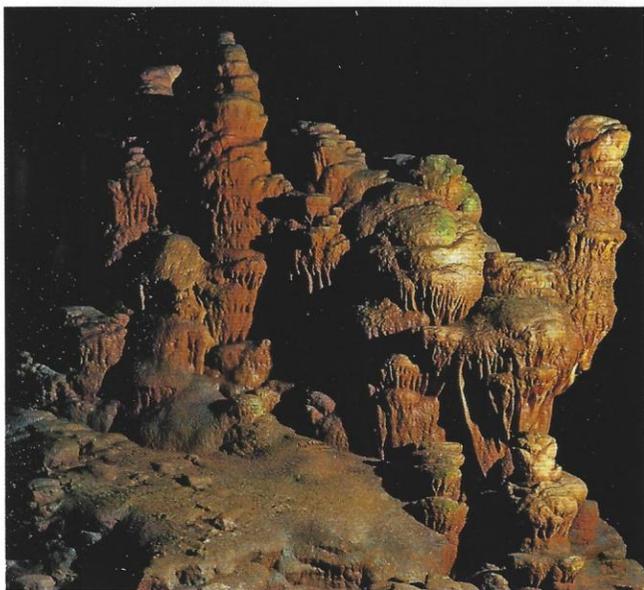
corrosive acids and gases. Limestone is dated back to 190 million of years ago and is made of calcium carbonate due to the slow bedding of organic deposits. With the emersion of the Apennine crust also the limestone rose several meters above the sea level, flaking off and favouring the karst phenomenon. Stalactites and stalagmites are formed by the age-old water process of calcium carbonate dissolution and subsequent evaporation through which limestone deposits develop. They are fantastic and dreaming landscapes and atmospheres that attract the tourist curiosity. When stalactites and stalagmites join together forming long columns of amber-coloured crystal, we immediately think to their ancient age. Starting from Grave, after about



The Grave



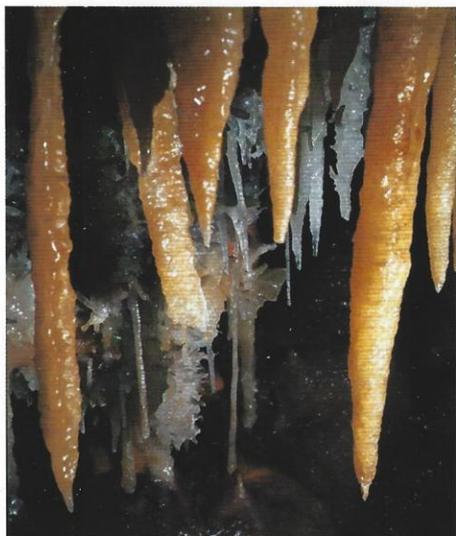
The Madonna.



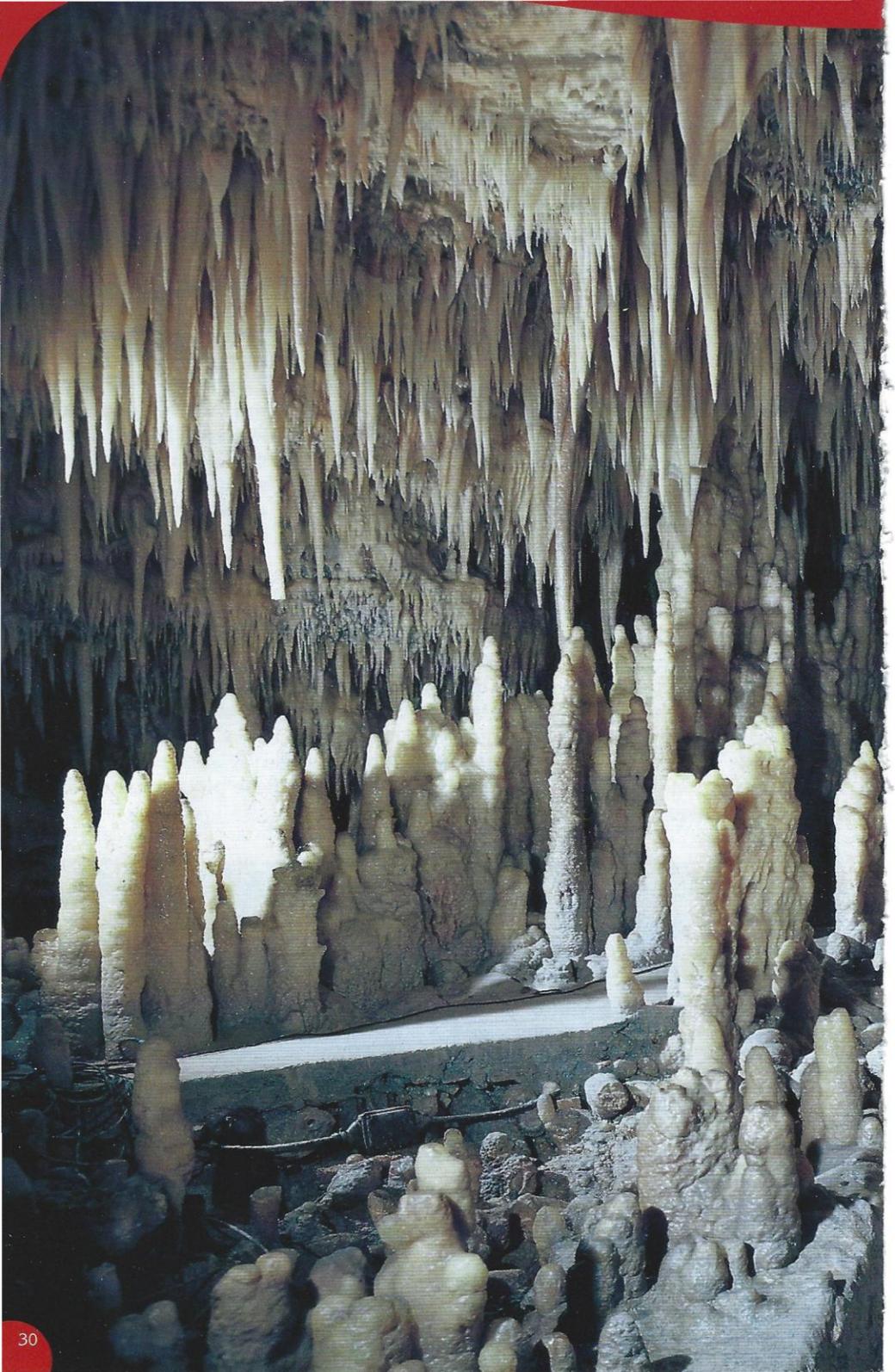
Monuments

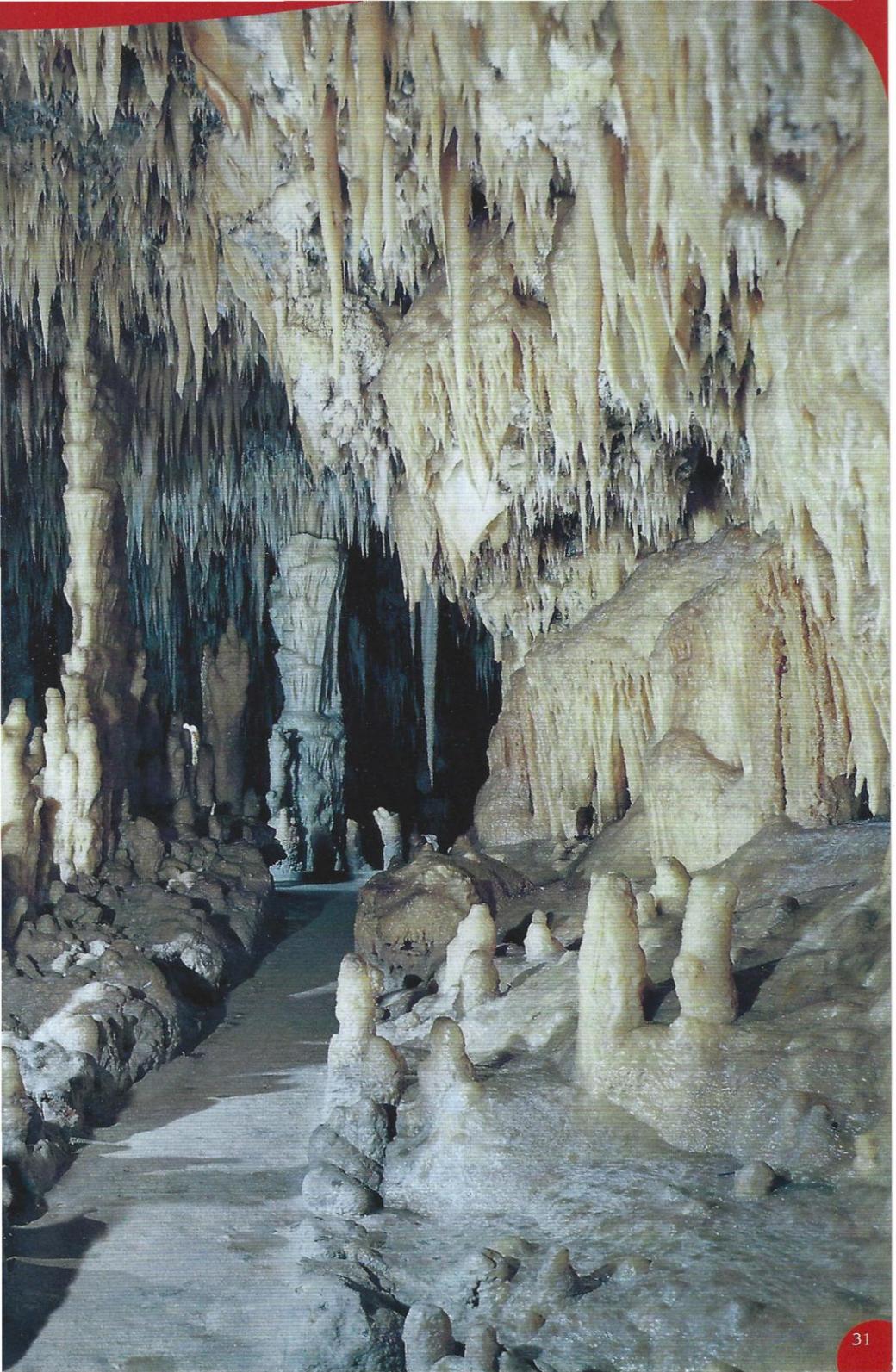
one km, it is possible to meet a large quantity of chambers and tight spots called in different ways, according to the imaginary shapes they recall. Grave, Grotta Nera (Black Cavern), Corridoio dell'Angelo (Angel's corridor), Cavernone dei Monumenti (Big Cavern of the Monuments), Cavernone della Civetta (Big Cavern of the owl), Cavernetta del Presepe (Small Cavern of the Nativity), etc. Inside, the temperature is always around 15° C; the track continues for other 3 kms but it is not opened to the public. It

is thought that the groundwaters are 200 meters below the tracks' level and that in time they will form marvellous spots to be explored. Caverns have always been considered by man mysterious places linked to fantastic legends. In fact, the farmer while coming home after a working day noticed how a sort of fog coming out from the Grave Cavern was dispersed by the wind; about this phenomenon he started to dream up and invent strange characters and situations. Thanks to the first explorations of the caverns, among which we remember that led by speleologist Franco Anelli, fear has disappeared and in the following years these places started to be visited more frequently by the tourists.



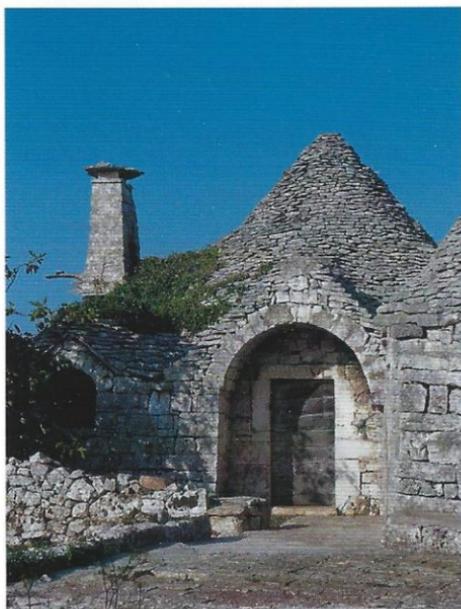
Eccentric stalactites. On the following page: the white cavern.





THE TRULLI

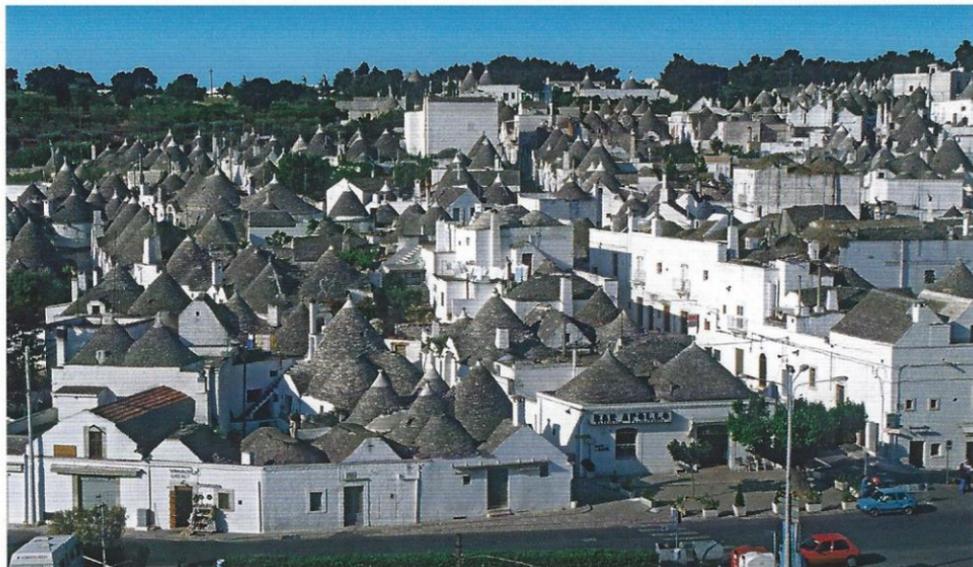
The trulli, traditional Apulian circular-shaped stone dwelling with a squared plan in the interior, are built on a rocky ground. The building raw material can be easily found in the local area. It consists of stones roughly cut and layered dry without any cement or mortar, so that the walls are thicker and stronger. The trullo has a conical roof made of more and more slight layers, leaving an opening that is capped by a keystone surmounted by a decoration which can have different meanings. The exterior side of the cone is covered by the so-called 'chiancarelle', thin limestone sheets. The origin of the trullo is so ancient that similar constructions can be found also in Turkey, and in the village of Harran, mentioned in the Genesis.



Period Trullo

ALBEROBELLO

Alberobello is one of the most suggestive towns in the world for its traditional trullo-shaped dolls' houses. There are about 1070 of these constructions which represent a cultural heritage for Apulia. They belong to private citizens that offer hospitality to the curious tourists. The biggest trullo is in Piazza Sacramento and is called the Sovereign Trullo, one of the few built with two floors. Its name derives from the wild oaks (arboris belli) of the surrounding area. It was probably erected thanks to the Earls of



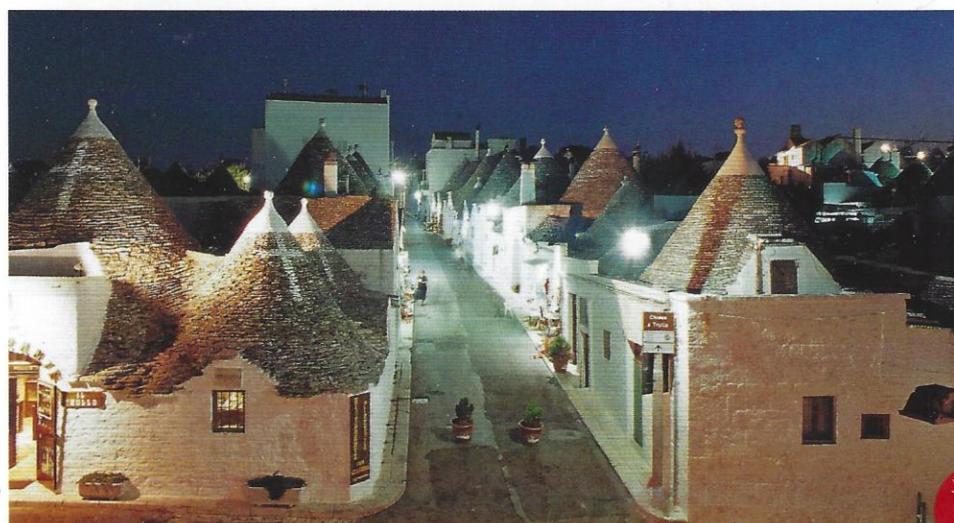
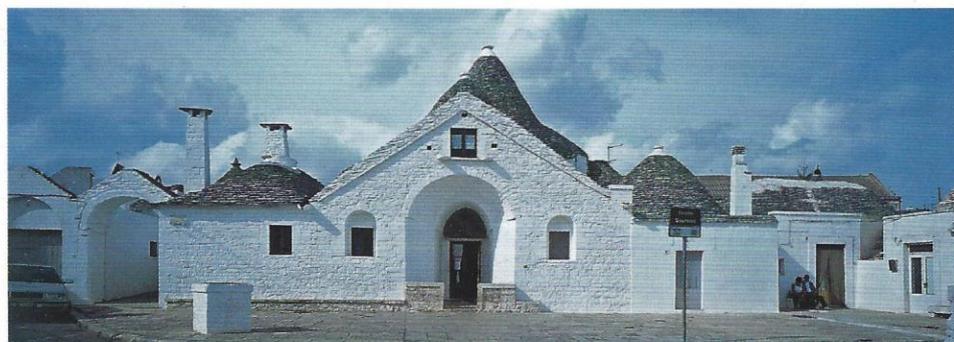
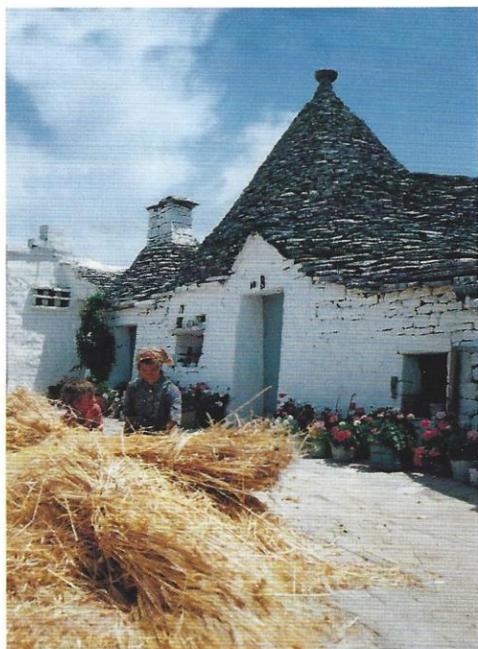
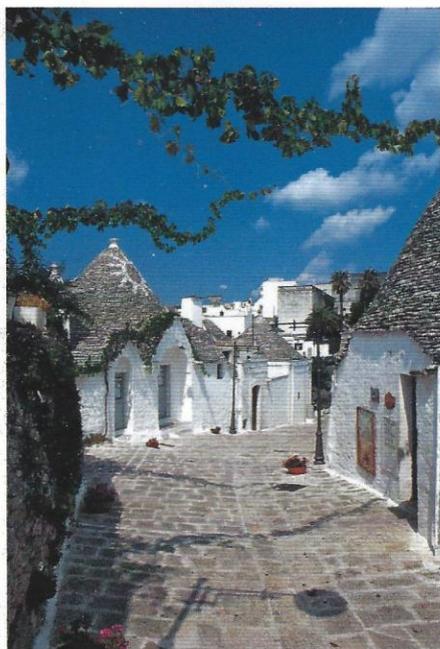
Typical village of trulli.

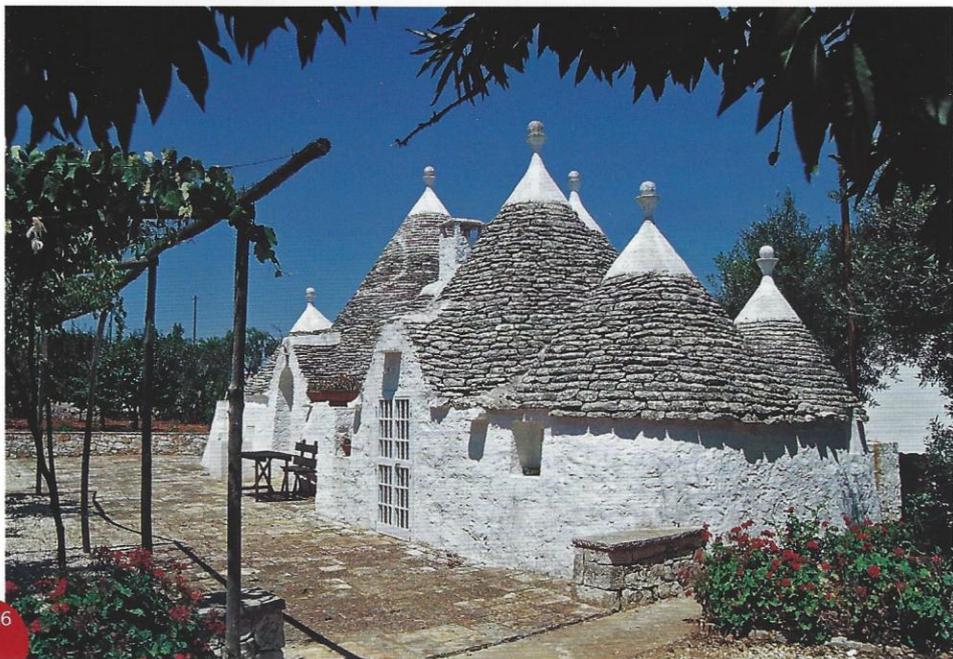
Conversano, the Acquavivas, but it was enlarged when the famous Giangirolamo 'the squinter of Apulia' chose it as his rural residence by building a villa, a bakery, a mill and a tavern. Well-worth a visit the Church of Balsente, not far from the inhabited centre, built in the homonymous 6th-century farm.

Wandering along the alleys of the small town it is possible to find spots of charming beauty, as it was a long time ago ...

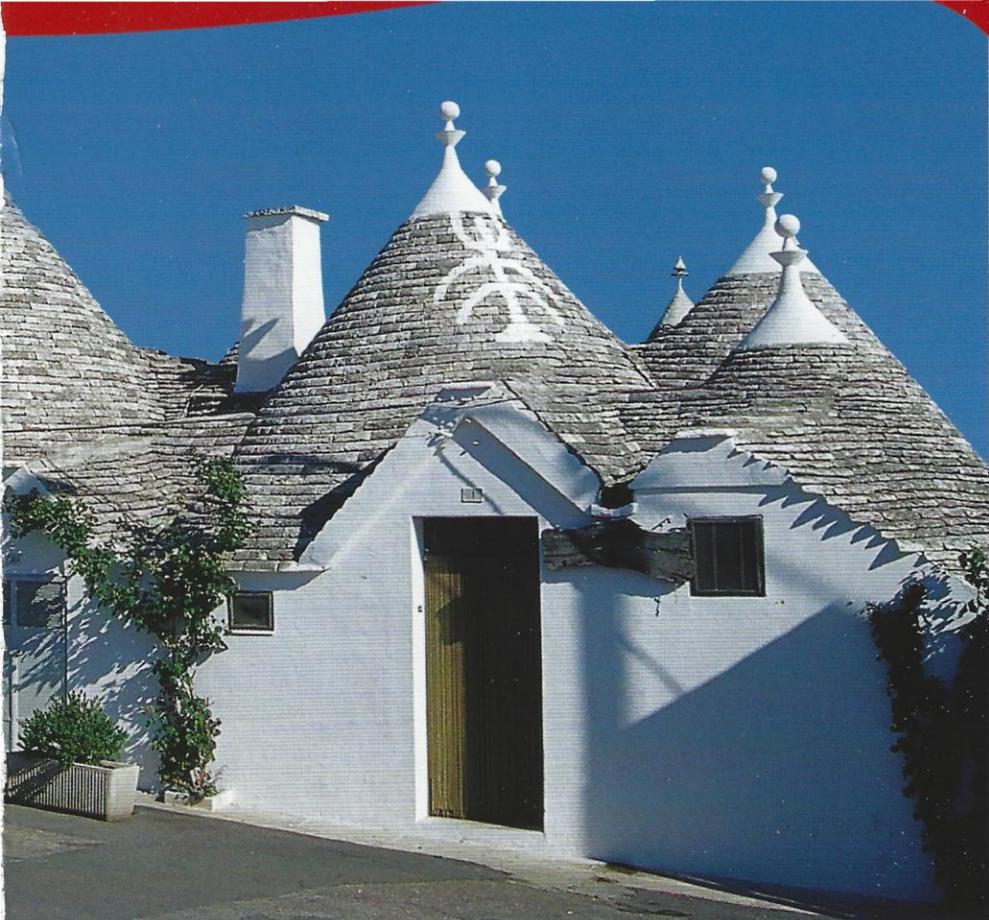


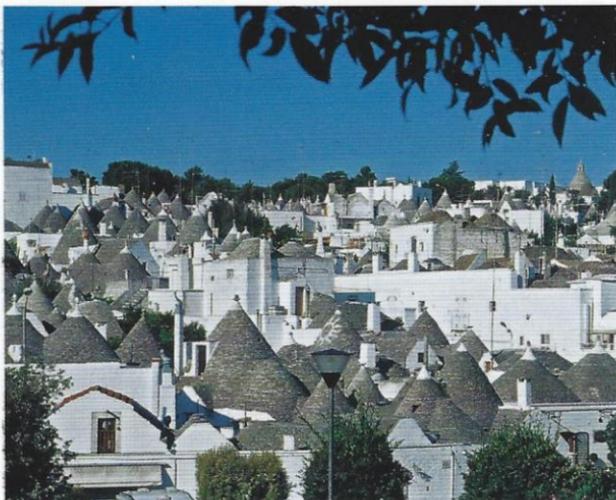






Trulli houses in the town of Alberobello, Italy.





16th-century Church of S. Antonio

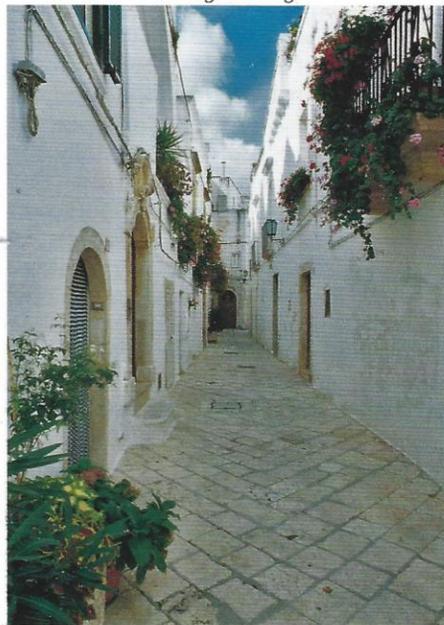
LOCOROTONDO

Traditional small-town endowed with a charming location, Locorotondo overlooks the Murgia and the trulli and its name derives from the circular-shaped construction of the built-up area. Thanks to the economic and tourist development of the South in these last years, the old town centre is so well kept that seems a fairy tale place. Valuable the Mother Church of S. Giorgio (St. George) and the Gothic Church of S. Maria della Greca. Flourishing farming centre, Locorotondo produces a guaranteed quality wine which is famous all over Italy.



View of the town from the valley

Among the alleys





FOGGIA and its province

Foggia, capital of the province of Foggia, is located in the middle of the Apulian Table and is an important trading and farming centre. Its name derives from the cisterns (fovae) used to collect corn. The most flourishing period of this city was under the Swabians and Frederick II, who loved it very much. He built there a mansion-castle (1223) and many roads

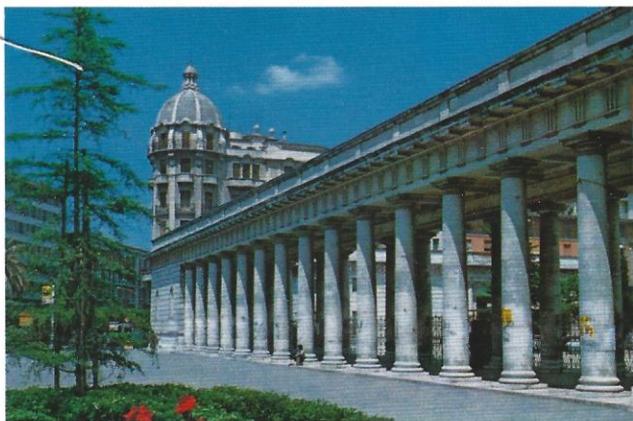
to facilitate the trading exchanges. During the Angevin period it became the most important land property of the Capitanata. Its pastures were used by the Abruzzian shepherds and its estates were rich in vineyards and corn cultivations. Alfonso of Aragon in 1447 set up there the **Customhouse of the sheep track**, a sort of tax for the migration (transumanza) of livestock. Profits were high thanks to such duty but the farming development was blocked. In 1528 the French sacked Foggia and destroyed it. Also under the Spanish things did not improve. In 1731 it was destroyed by the earthquake and then rebuilt under the peaceful Reign of the Bourbons. Joseph Bonaparte abolished the Customhouse which was brought



Piazza Cavour.

back by Ferdinand of Bourbon. Thanks to the Unity of the Italian Government the Customhouse definitely disappeared and the city became in 1870 one of the most important communication centres between the North and the South. Nowadays the Table is an important economic resource of Apulia, especially for the farming technological development. The main cultivations are cereals, beetroots and vegetables. Considerable the production of wine and olive oil. Well-worth a visit the Cathedral of **S. Maria Icona Vetere**, built in 1172 by William II the Good and restored in 1600 after the 1731 earthquake. Its name derives from the Byzantine icon of the Madonna, preserved in the inner chapel and found, according to a legend, in 1073 in a pond where three little flames appeared to three shepherds. For this reason the coat of arms of the city portrays three fires. Not to be missed the **Arpi Palace** where the sole ruin of the marvellous castle of



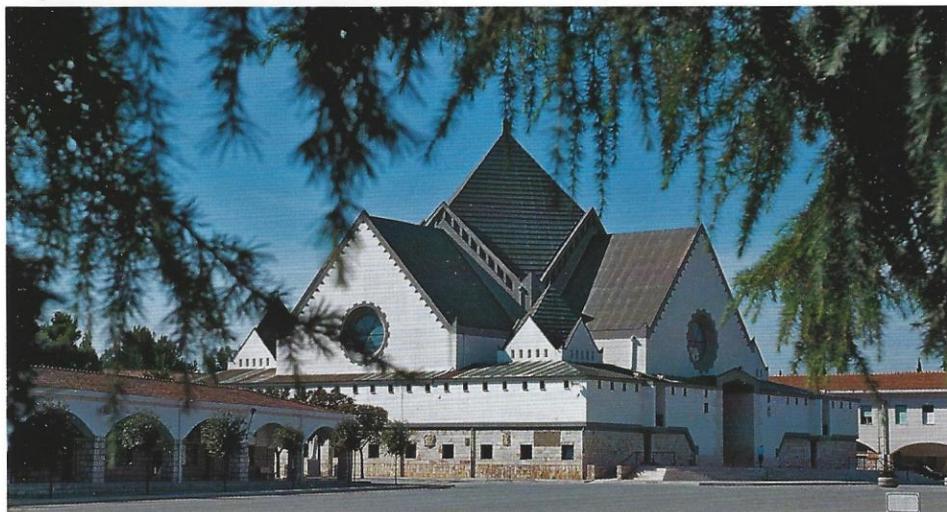


Municipal garden main entrance

The Sanctuary of the **Madonna dell'Incoronata** (the Crowned Madonna) is one of the most beautiful monuments of the last decades and is few kilometres far from Foggia. It is a renowned pilgrim place for the statue of the wooden black Madonna. It is said that the Madonna appeared to a farmer called 'strazzacapp' in a wood. After the apparition, the farmer found the wooden statue and decided to build a Monastery in 1066. The last Saturday of April, particular celebrations in honour of the Crowned Madonna are organized and last throughout the whole month of May.

The Sanctuary.

Greek-cross plan: Romanesque rose windows soften the geometric structure



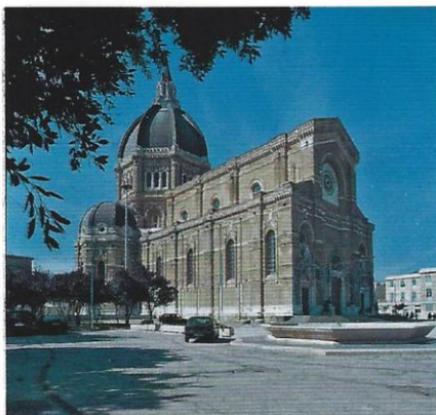
Frederick II is preserved: the big arch of a portal made by Bartolomeo da Foggia. The Palace hosts also the **Civic Museum** divided into four sections. In one of these sections we must point out the Lapidary which collects architectonic ruins of the early Christian age.



*The small Madonna:
Our Lady of the
Wood*

CERIGNOLA

Famous Apulian town centre that has been inhabited since ancient times. The 1731 earthquake partially destroyed the centre and a year of misery followed. Fortunately in the following years the farming activities re-flourished bringing affluence here. Its valuable wines are exported everywhere and also the cultivation of olive groves is important. The local olives are as big as the Greek ones and are sold all over Europe. Not to be missed the Gothic Cathedral and composer Mascagni's House, where the famous 'Rustic Chivalry' opera was composed.



The Duomo (Cathedral)



Wet dock with fishing boats. In the distance, the salt collection

MARGHERITA DI SAVOIA

This little beach resort centre is well-known for its salt pits. In fact at the end of the 3rd century BC salt was extracted and this activity is nowadays still of primary importance. Margherita di Savoia is famous also for the thermal baths where various types of thermal treatments are offered.

LUCERA

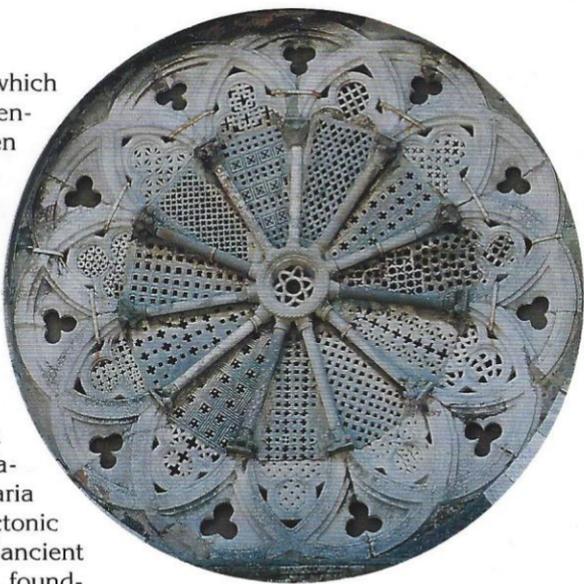
Ancient town subdued by the Romans after a long battle against the Samnites (until the 3rd century AD), acquired the right of minting its own coin. Emperor Constantine appointed Lucera as chief town of Apulia and Calabria. The most flourishing period was under Frederick II who transformed Lucera in one of the most impregnable fortresses of Italy against Popes and Guelphs. When Frederick granted the city and part of his army to the Saracens, his loyal allies, Lucera developed surprisingly from an economic point of view and was embellished with Mosques in the place of churches. Charles II Anjou wanted to reconquer the city, already famous as a Muslim centre. Saracens were therefore driven out of the town, new churches were rebuilt and Lucera was renamed 'Town of St. Mary'. It became chief town of the Capitanata and Molise until 1806, then passed to the chief town of Foggia. Lucera, thanks to its historical background, is rich in monuments that are notable. The Cathedral of the Assumption was built in the 14th century by Charles II and was ended in 1317. Valuable for the imposing Gothic façade has a severe and unadorned interior with marvellous frescos of the 15th and 17th century. The Castle of Frederick II, dated back to 1233 and enlarged by Charles I Anjou has two cylindrical towers called of the 'Lion' and of the 'Lioness' that are marvellous for their grandeur. Not to be missed the Museum which exhibits local findings.



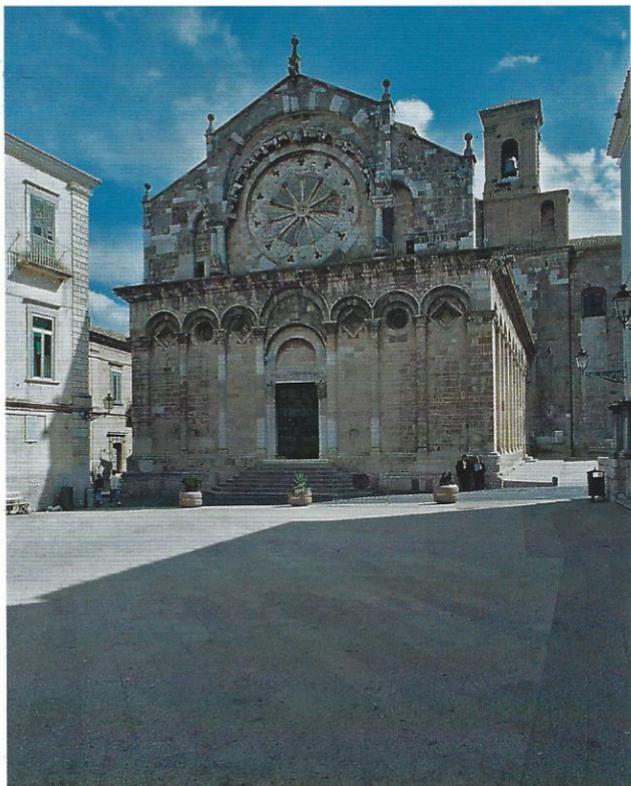
*Fortifications of the Swabian Castle.
Close-up of the Leonessa Tower*

TROIA

Pleasant farming town centre which rose on the ancient Aeecae, a centre belonged to Hannibal and then to Fabius Maximus in 214 BC. In 1019 it was refounded as a Byzantine fortress against the Normans. The bishops made of it the stronghold of the Apulian Duchy although it was already a Norman seignory. In 1133 the Normans destroyed it but the bishops brought it back to its fame. Frederick II razed the town to the ground in 1229. Troia is famous for the Cathedral of S. Maria Assunta, a Romanesque architectonic masterpiece of the Capitanata (ancient name of the province of Foggia), found-



The marvellous rose-window of the Church of St. Mary of the Assumption. Refined stone working, a masterpiece of the Romanesque-Apulian style.



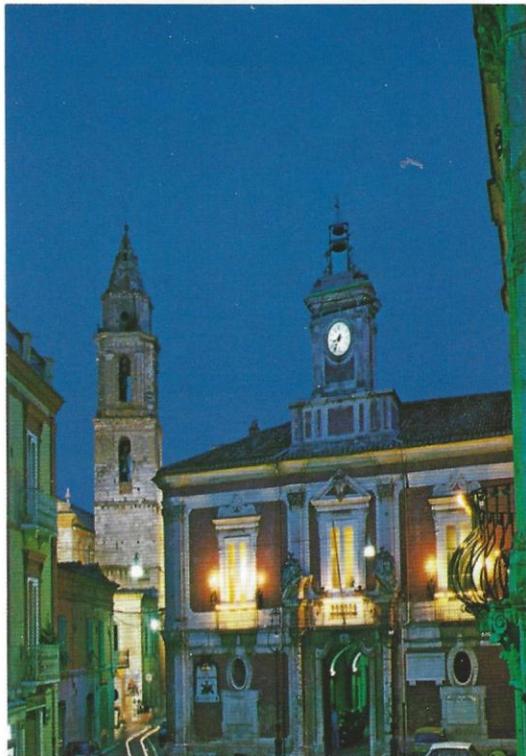
ed in 1093 by Bishop Girardo. The three-nave Latin-cross plan is divided by twelve columns. The beautiful façade shows a huge rose-window with eleven beams divided by small columns linked to intertwined arches. Precious the bronze door by Oderisio da Benevento, with decorated and various-shaped panels. The Byzantine-Arab style merges wonderfully with the Romanesque one in an unreal stony lace.

BOVINO

Bovino, old Roman colony where Hannibal camped in 217 BC, still preserves the ruins of an Aqueduct and the walls and towers of a castle. It was burnt by Ottone I and the Norman Drogone built on the Roman ruins a castle that was later enlarged by Frederick II. Not to be missed the 10th-century Cathedral and the Castle, that in the 18th century became the Ducal Palace of the Gonzaga family.



The Duomo (Cathedral) of St. Mary of the Assumption (10th century). Above the rose-window an Ox-head shaped effigy



Town Hall Square

SAN SEVERO

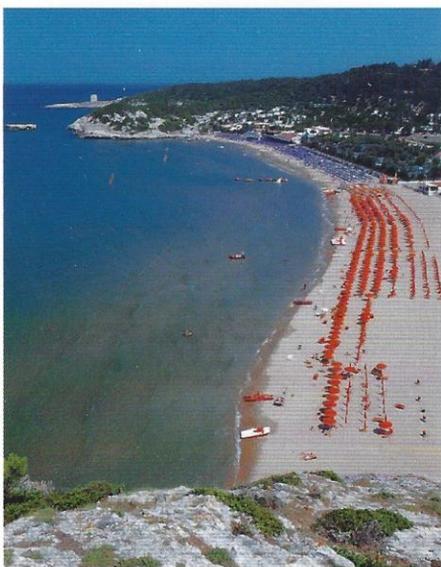
The archaeological finds discovered in the local territory belong to the lower Palaeolithic and the following eras until the Bronze Age. The flourishing farming centre, known for its valuable wines exported all over the world, was a corrupted small town centre and on 8th April 1116 Abbott Adenolfo of Torremaggiore proclaimed an order act to regulate the judiciary and fiscal administration. Robert Guiscard, after having conquered San Severo, ceded it to the Benedictines of Torremaggiore, then, in 1230, Frederick II sold it to the Knights Templar. Being sought-after by noble families, San Severo was sold by the Count Vico to the State Domain. Well-worth a visit the Cathedral of S. Maria Assunta (Our Lady of Assumption) in the square of the city, the ancient Monastery of the Celestines, actual seat of the town hall, the Mother Church of St. Severino with its Romanesque façade of the 12th century and the fabulous portal leaned on leonine sphinxes and ornamented with Acanthus leaves.

Not far off the town centre, the ruins of Castel Fiorentino can be visited, place where on December 3rd, 1250 Frederick II of Swabia, King of Sicily and Roman-German Emperor died 'among the Princes of the Earth, the Wonder of the world'. A Sovereign, who often drove mad the most turbulent subjects but who proclaimed, for the first time in history, laws apt at guaranteeing dignity and freedom to Man. For this reason he was considered one of the most modern Monarchs of the past and the forerunner of Renaissance.

GARGANO

Gargano is a 2,015 km² long jutting promontory which in the South-Eastern side of Italy forms a backbone while northwards a mountain with two lakes that of Lesina and that of Varano. Originally the area was calcareous with a typical karst aspect plenty of caverns, dolinas and groundwaters that suddenly resurfaced and then plunged in the Adriatic sea.

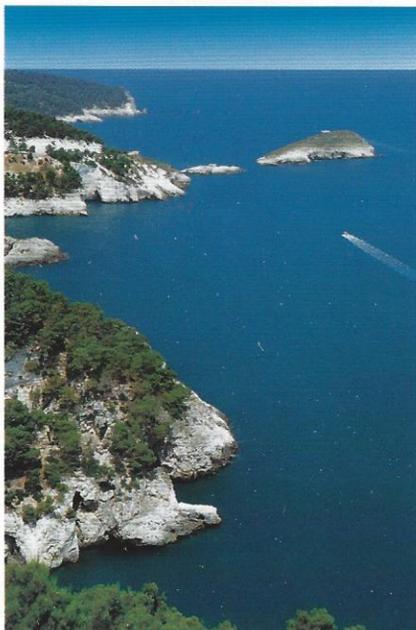
The Gargano is like a solitary giant overlooking the wide plain of the Table, rich in slopes on both the coastal and continental sides. The inhabited centres are built on terraces, like for example S. Giovanni Rotondo. In the past times, Gargano was plenty of woody areas that nowadays are reduced to the eastern Umbrian Forest, to the central Spigno, Quarto and Manfredonia woods and to the luxuriant Marzini pine forest between Rodi and Peschici.



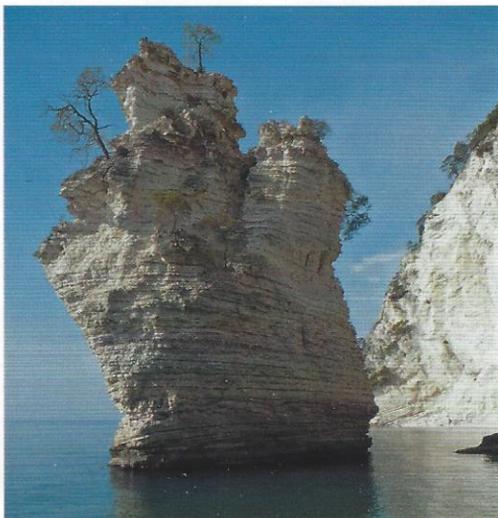
Enchanting beaches and lonely cliffs in the heart of Gargano.

The chief economic resource of this area is tourism; in fact Gargano's beaches are so marvellous that can enchant the visitor. Several hotel structures, camping areas and serviced apartments have been built in the last ten years to facilitate the tourist stay.

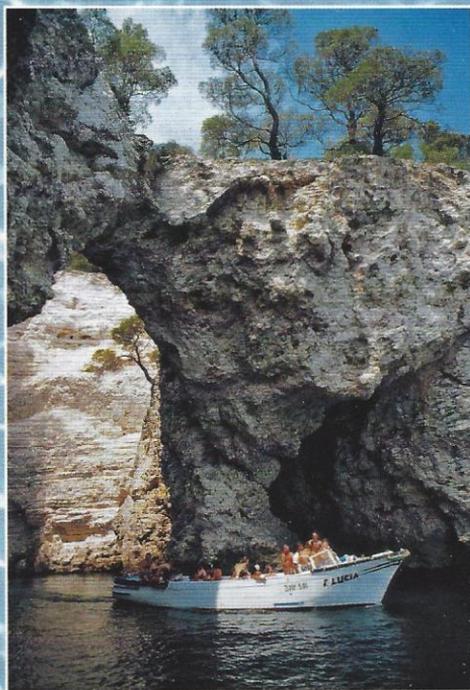
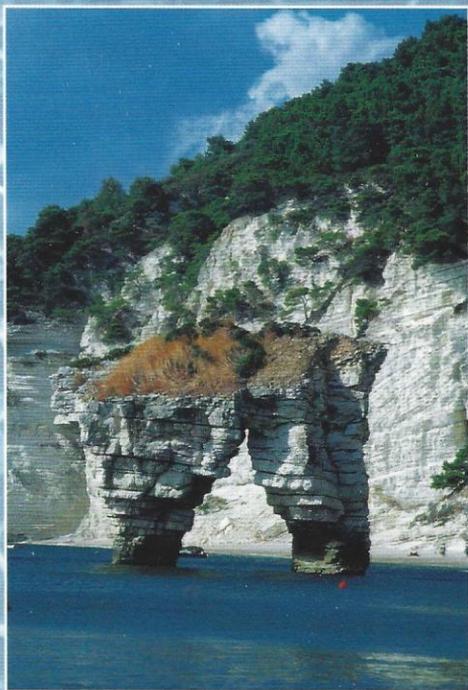
Other important economic resources are farming, the cultivation of olive grows, fishing and sheep farming. This economic development has been favoured by the communication routes (road, railway communication) that have linked Gargano to the rest of Apulia.

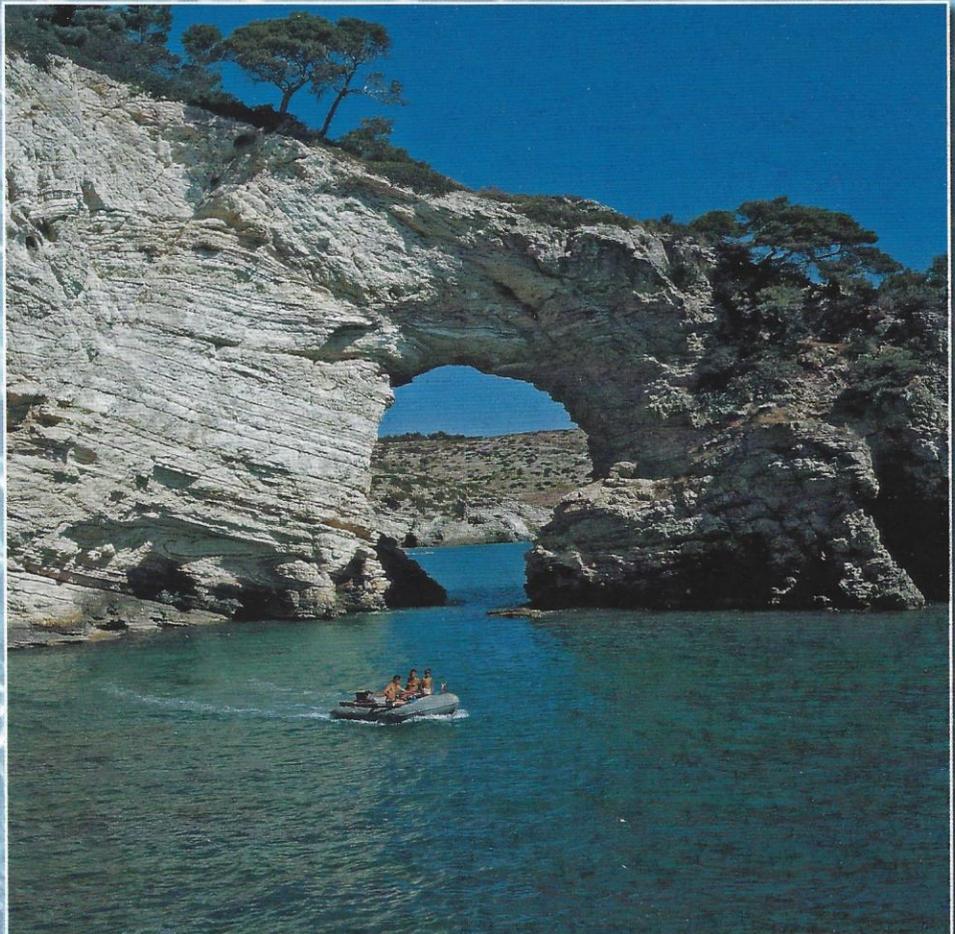
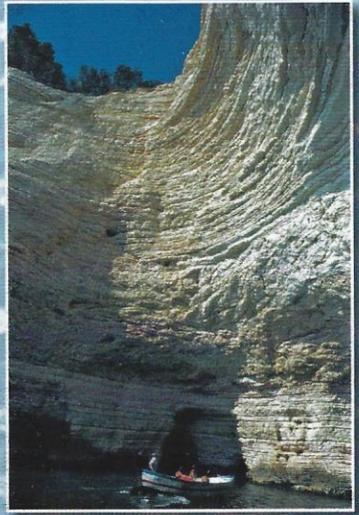
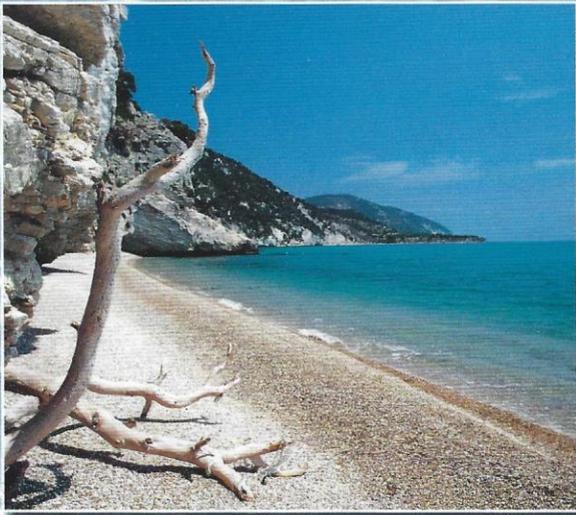


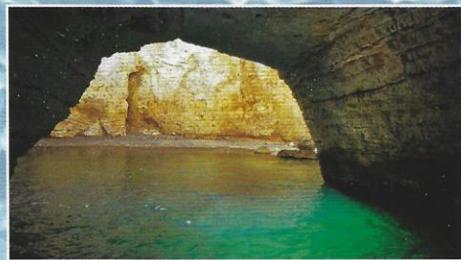
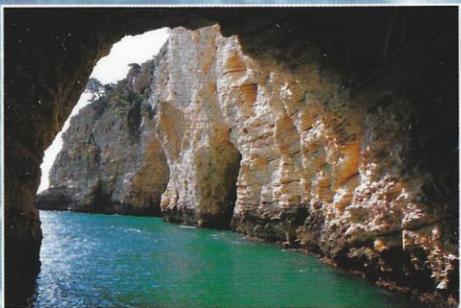
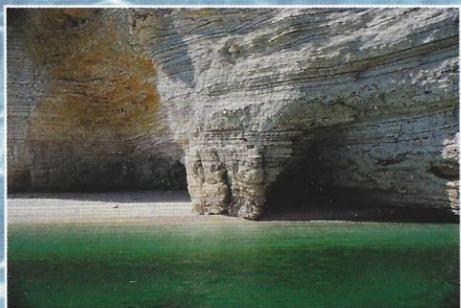
Gargano's Head

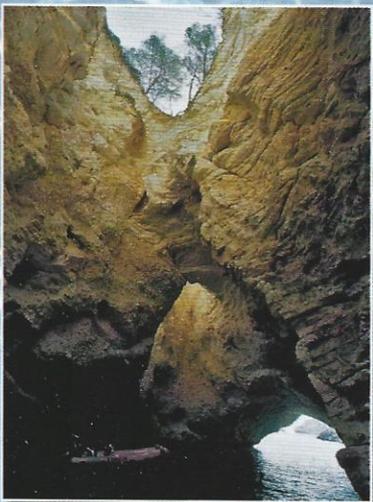
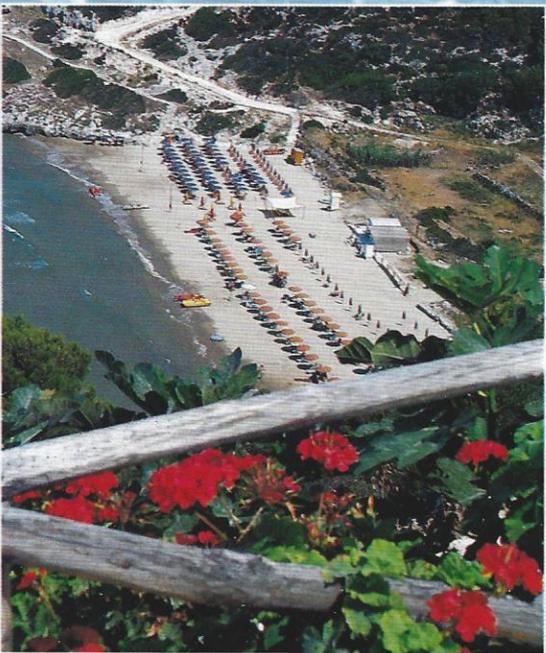
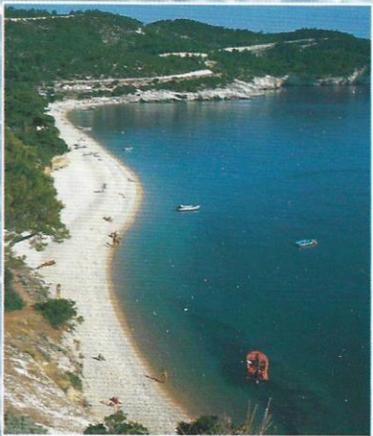
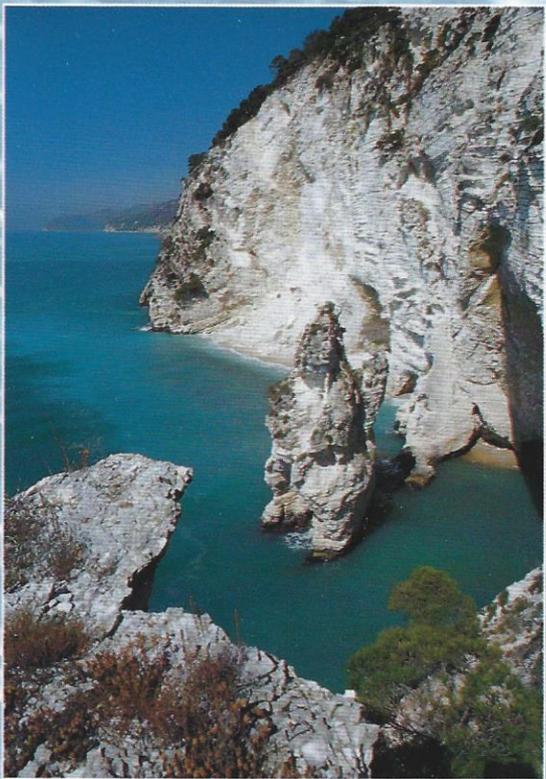
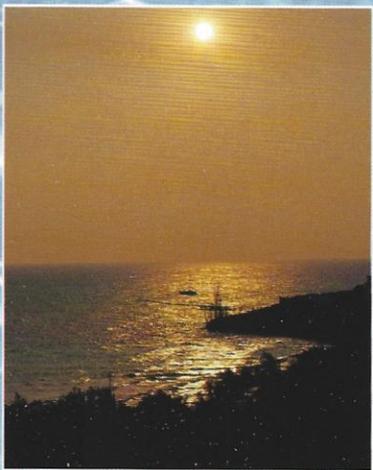


Visit to Gargano's Caverns: paradisiacal spots among bays, caverns, beaches and cliffs on a sea with changeable colours.









APRICENA

Apricena, Apulian town located in the northerner part of the Table, was totally rebuilt after the 1627 earthquake. From an historical point of view, it is famous thanks to Frederick II, who after capturing a wild boar in the surroundings, decided to prepare a dinner to celebrate the event (apri-coena). The Emperor lived in Apricena from 1221 to 1226 and built there a castle for hunting. The territory was afterwards subdued by the Angevins and the feudal seignories. Not to be missed the Baronial Palace dated back to 1658, which preserves the ancient ruins of Frederick's castle. The economy of Apricena is focused on quarrying the local marble stone, on farming (corn cultivations) and on producing wine.



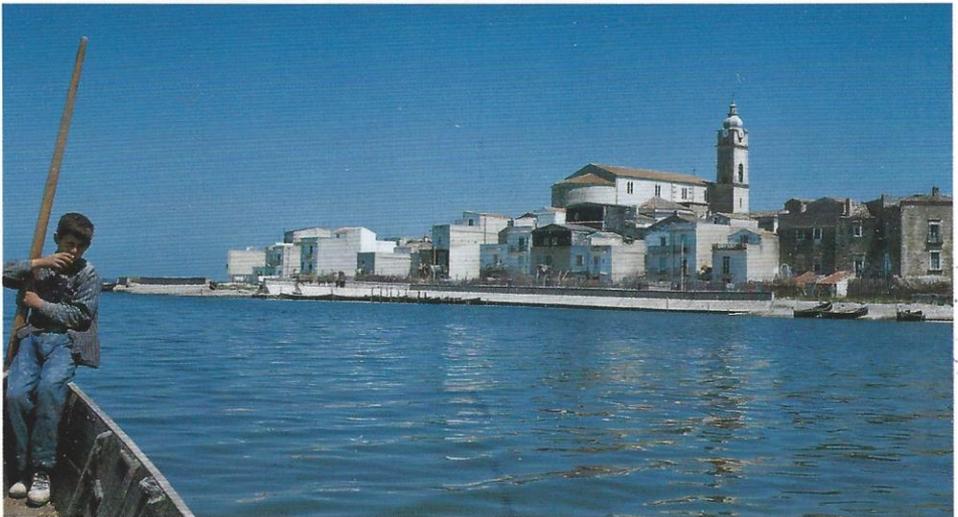
A town view



Extraction of valuable marbles

THE LAKE OF LESINA

The coastal lake of Lesina has a surface of 51 Km² and a depth that varies from 60 centimetres to 1.50 metres. A narrow tongue and two channels, the mouth of the river Schiapparo and that of Acquarotta separate it from the sea. It is well-known for fishing eels and in winter time it is visited by hunters of bald coots, widgeons and geese. Along its rivers, finds of the Bronze and Neolithic ages have been discovered.



THE LAKE OF VARANO

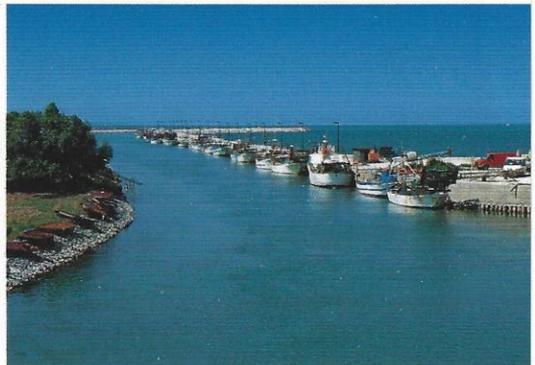
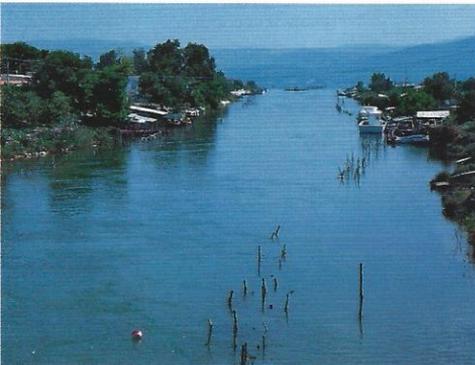
The coastal lake of Varano, not far off that of Lesina, has a surface of 60 Km² and a depth of 5.5 metres. It is surrounded by a luxuriant maquis and reed thickets and is just 900 metres far from the sea because of sandy dunes called 'the Island'. Two mouths interrupt the Island: eastwards the mouth of lake Varano and westwards that of Capoiale. The lake is full of fish and aquatic birds.



Mouth of Varano's lake



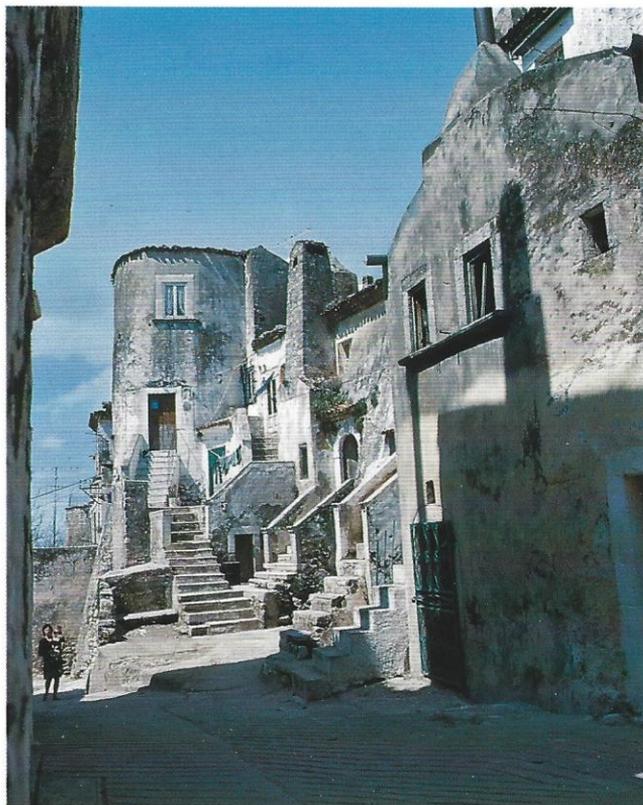
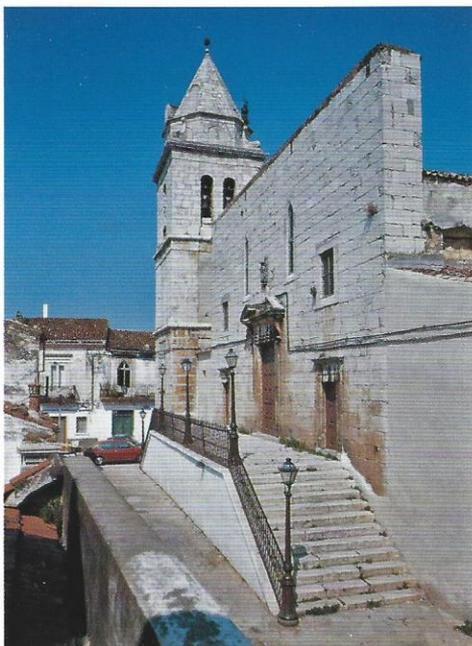
Lake's Entrance and Exit



SANNICANDRO GARGANICO

At 224 metres above the sea level, among olive grows, orchards and vineyards, the farming and populated town centre of Sannicandro Garganico, stands out. In the old town, the 15th-century Castle, built by the Della Marra family on an ancient Norman fortress, is well-worth a visit. Like all medieval castles, it has a quadrangular structure with square-shaped and cylindrical towers. On the right of the façade, a gracious 18th-century lodge with five windows and a central balcony, can be admired. In the surroundings not to be missed the karst caverns and the Pozzatica dolina, a huge hollow 650 metres long, 120 metres deep and 400 metres wide.

Mother Church



VICO DEL GARGANO

At 445 metres above the sea level, the little farming village of Vico del Gargano, is located. In ancient times it was inhabited by populations coming from Thrace, Greece and Illyria. According to some experts, it was identified as the ancient Gargara, where the name Gargano comes from. Few ruins remain of the ancient castle and fortification built under the Norman-Swabian period, while the rebuilt towers are actually inhabited.

Typical alley

RODI GARGANICO

Ancient marine town centre found by the Cretans, it became a Greek colony and later on it was inhabited by the Rhodians in the 8th century BC. It was identified by the experts with the ancient Roman city of Uria and most likely with Portus Garnae, as Pliny said.

Of these period, the ruins of the tabularium remain, as the famous local historian Michelangelo De Grazia testi-

fies. An epigraph wall on the façade of the Sanctuary della Libera shows that the city under the Romans was ruled by a Comes (count), an official and tax collector. In 485 AD it was destroyed by the Goths and since late Middle Ages no testimonies remains. Allied to Frederick II of Swabia, the city was sacked by the Venetians in 1240 and fortified with defensive towers against the frequent Saracen raids. From 1446 Alphonse I of Aragon proclaimed it fief until the first years of the 19th century. In 1538 the first Capuchin convent of the Gargano was built in Rodi and nowadays, after the restoration works, it emerges in its whiteness from the greenery of olive grows.

Well-worth a visit is the Marian **Sanctuary of the 'Madonna della Libera'**, built in mysterious circumstances. In fact the image of the Madonna was moved here by Venetians shipping Byzantine icons. The legend tells that when the Venetian ship passed Rodi, it had to stop because a superior force was keeping it from sailing. The captain could not explain what was happening and when he disembarked and reached the city, he saw the picture of the Madonna on a rock and thought that the inhabitants had committed a theft. He took the picture and the day after he left Rodi. But the phenomenon happened again: the ship didn't sail and the icon was found in the same place of the day before.

A miracle happened and the Madonna, free to choose the land she would protect, was given Rodi by the Venetian captain. Then, the Church of the Madonna della Libera was erected and became Sanctuary and place of pilgrimage.

Ridgecaps are very peculiar ...Survivor sentinels of those generations believing in



Aerial view of Rodi Garganico. In the background the lake of Varano

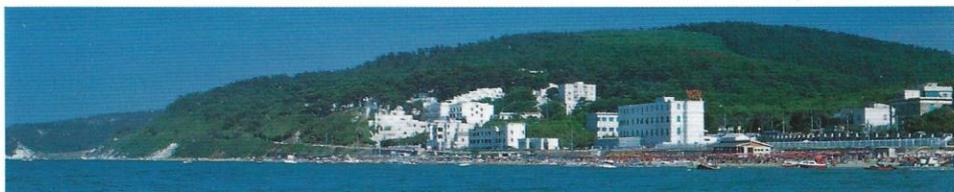


A view of the village

the true values of life, they are not only the stylistic finishing of a building, but above all the magic touch that only the hand of Man can move, giving them a mysterious vitality. These 'poor' ridgescaps, last guardians of the past, survived the thoughtless insensitiveness of the present, are aristocrats evoking the musicality of a simple and deep speech, sifted by the time and permeated of history.



Among the alleys of the ancient village



SAN MENAIO

Settled on the sea between a thick pinewood and a fine white sand beach

San Menaio stands on a rise rather close to the sea. In ancient times a Church in honour of St. Menna with adjacent dormitory stood upstream of the present tower. It is clear that the name of the village derives from the name of S. Menna that in the popular language became S. Minà and in Italian language S. Menaio. Well-worth a visit is the 1606 tower built in the main square of the town.



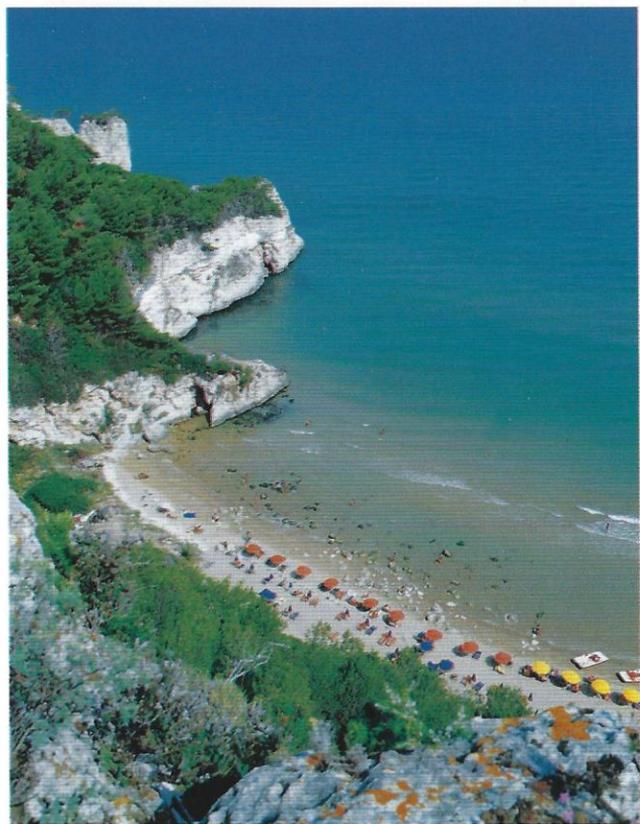
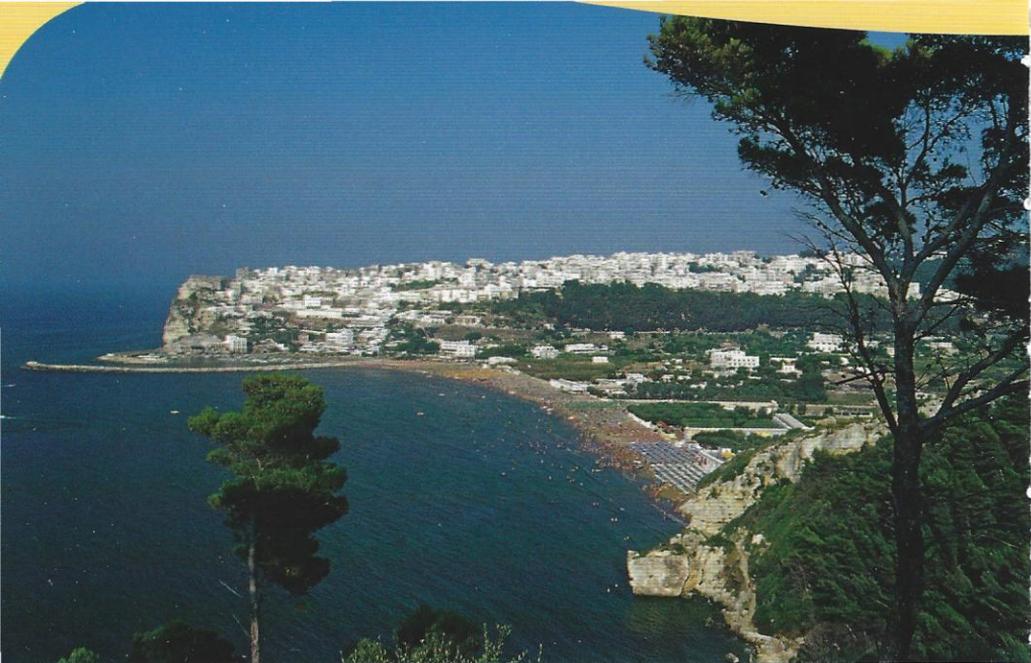
PESCHICI

This pleasant small town built in 970 on a fortress falling sheer to the sea, was founded by the Commander of the Schiavoni, Sueripolo. Peschici was also the seat of the **Abbey of St. Nicholas**, on the Tremiti Islands. On the rock a Medieval castle belonging to the defensive constructions wanted by the Swabians along the coasts, must surely be visited. In the parish church are instead preserved the statues of the **Madonna with the Baby**, **St. Dominic** and **St. Peter**. The small town shows rather eastern features;



in fact from the lime whiteness, it is possible to distinguish small rounded-shaped houses. Peschici is the pride of Gargano because of its extraordinary landscapes that have attracted the tourist attention and thanks to the quality of services and the





uncontaminated nature. In the wide hollow between the Rock and the verdant hills surrounding Peschici, the beach adorned by Pinetrees of the **Marzini Forest**, can be admired. Not to be missed the enchanting **marine caverns** that from the inlet of Mount Pucci reach the beaches of **Manaccore**, **San Nicola** and **Calenella**. Valuable the ruins of Prehistoric settlements found in Mount Pucci, Cape Manaccora, Macchia a Mare and Ariola. Very remarkable is the Abbey of **St. Maria Calena**, dated back to the 11th century.

Mount Pucci

VIESTE

Vieste rises on the eastern side of the Gargano promontory. It was a Greek colony, a Roman Municipium and bishop's seat. Rich in findings it was inhabited since the Palaeolithic Age, and in Neolithic it belonged to groups of hunters that deforested a part of the area to make it habitable. They settled in caverns like the Intreviglio Cavern, south of Molinella, where raw materials belonging respectively to the Stone and Bronze Age, were found. The first villages rose in the present Molinella, Palianza,



Ariola and Manacore. The most flourishing period of Vieste was between the 10th and 11th century. From 1400 on it was invaded by the Saracens and in 1554 by the cruel Turk Pirate Dragut. In this occasion 5,000 people were beheaded in front of the Cathedral on a rock which is called 'Chianca'. The old town centre shows a medieval architecture and is peculiar for its step alleys and white houses adorned by any sort of flowers. On the promontory the 1240 castle of Frederick II stands, and in the nearby, the 11th-century Romanesque-Apulian Cathedral is not to be missed.

Pizzomunno is the most beautiful beach resort of Vieste. The high monolith overlooking the sea separates the two beaches of the small town. Not far off Vieste, along



Vieste from Cape S. Francesco

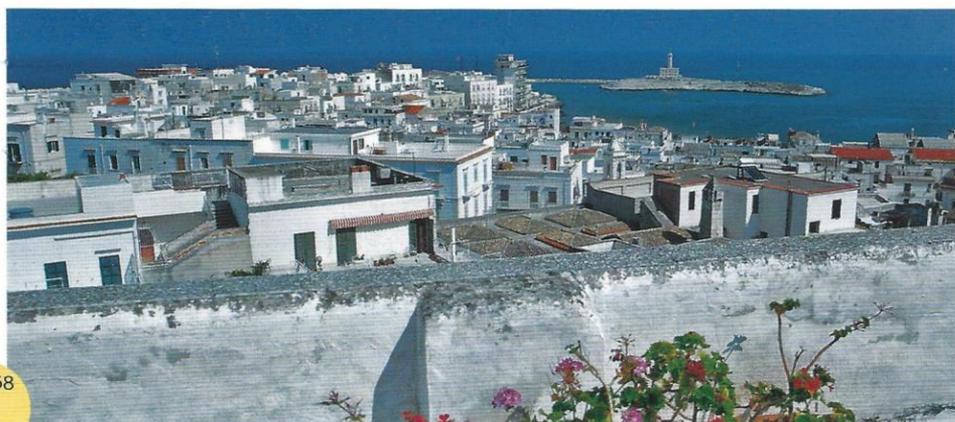


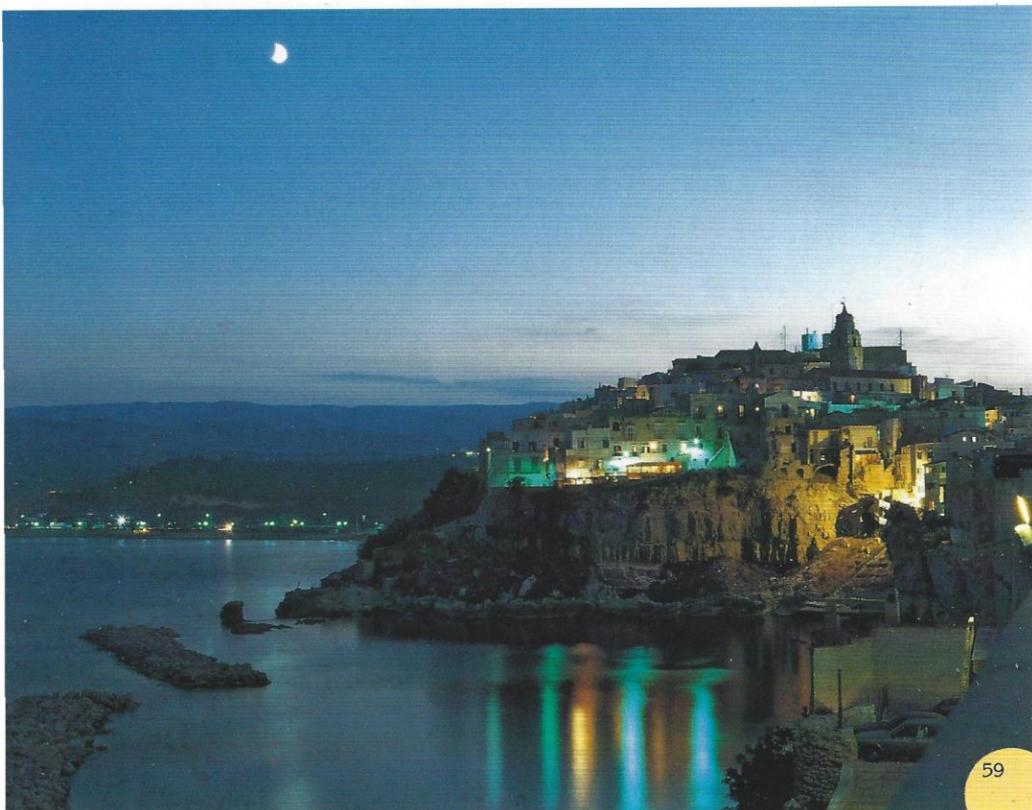
Cape S. Francesco

the 89 national road, the Sanctuary of St. Maria di Merino can be visited. There, the ancient city of Merinum rose and the ruins of Augustan dwellings were found thanks to the excavation works started in 1938. Even the Salata and Caprarezza Caverns of the early Christian Age (3rd century) merit to be visited.



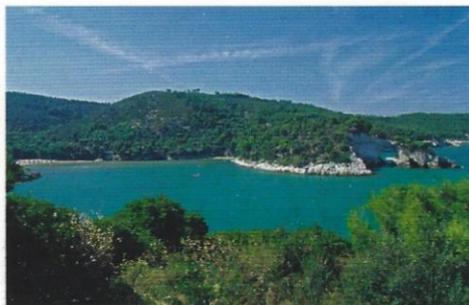
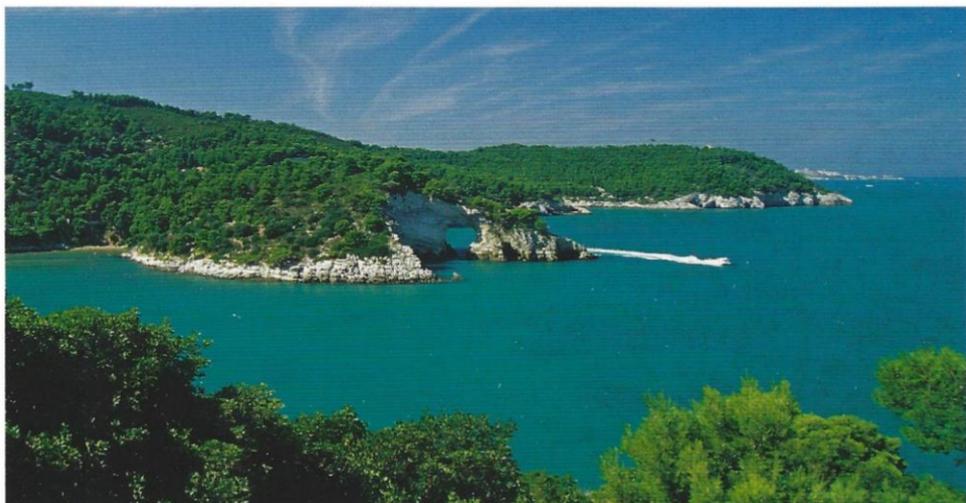
Pizzomunno, the imposing cliff symbol of Gargano









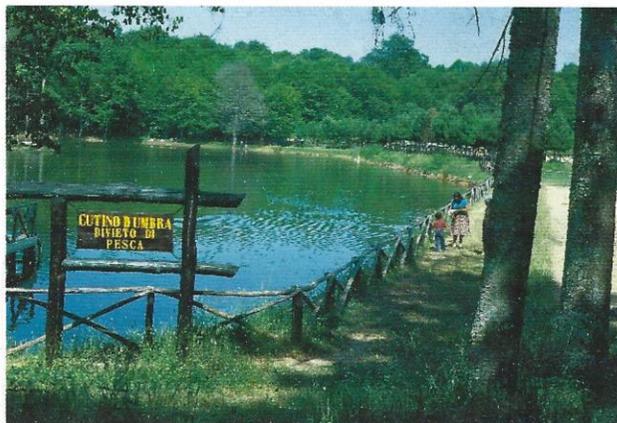


The enchanting bay of Pugnochiuso, between Vieste and Mattinata, in a fiord that protects it from the dangers of the sea.



THE UMBRIAN FOREST IN GARGANO'S PARK

The Umbrian Forest, located in the central-east part of Gargano, extends on a surface of about 10,500 hectares, which includes the territories of Umbria, Iacotente, Sfilzi, Manotecca, Ginestra, Mount Barone and the isthmus of Varano. The Forest

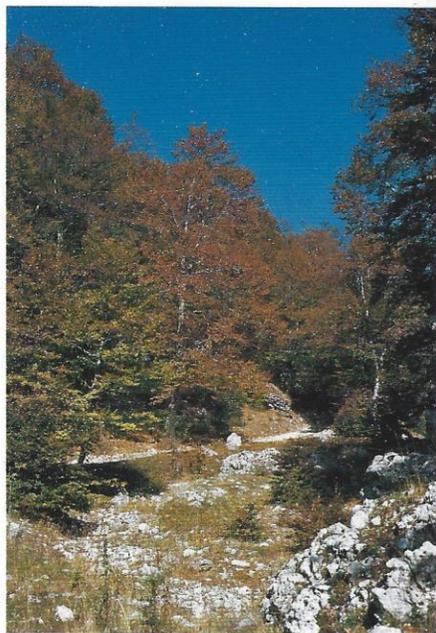


is crossed by a thick road network from which radiate five byroads managed by the forest rangers. This territory, that in summertime is visited by tourists for its shady and fresh spots, is plenty of parking areas. The two natural reserves of Cisco-Falascone and Sfilzi can be easily visited thanks to pedestrian tracks.

The flora is characterized by beeches, firs, Turkey oaks and hornbeams, while towards the sea, it changes with Holm-oaks, pinetrees, lentisks, cypresses and lindens.



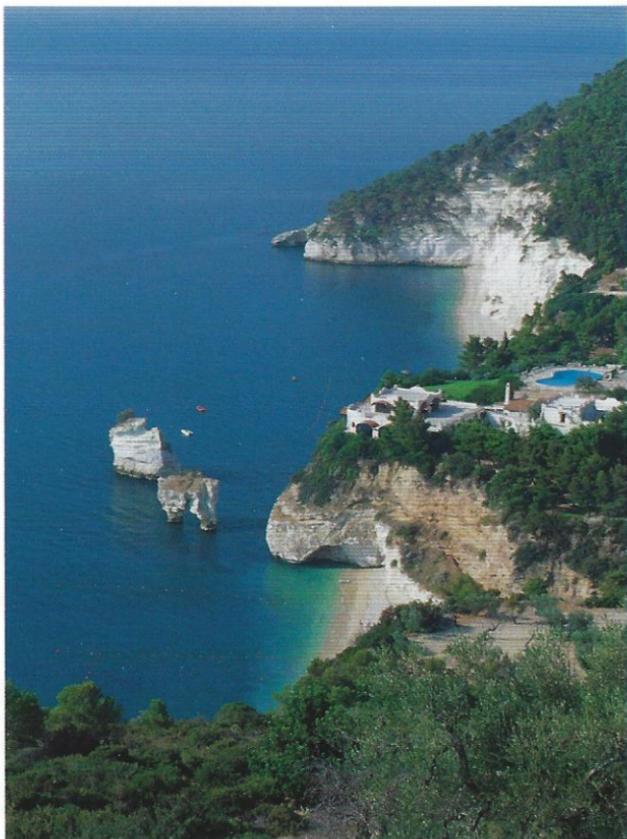
Woods of oaks, beeches, and Aleppo's pinetrees characterize the landscape



The presence of fallow deer, roes and bucks brightens up the place, but the visit of the small lake, of the Fallow Deer Park, of the Hotel-refuge Foresta Umbra and of the Church of S. Antonio, is even more pleasant. Wide hollows that can also reach 40 metres of depth, are in the territory of Iacotente. Every year, on the last Sunday of the month of July, the Forest Festival is celebrated. It is a folkloristic event which involves all the tourists and excursionists coming from anywhere.

BAY OF THE ZAGARE MATTINATA

Mattinata, famous for its white houses plunged in a luxuriant hollow of olive grows, is one of the most privileged tourist holiday resort of Gargano. Its ancient origins are due to Archytas's wreck, a famous mathematician, head of the city of Taranto. According to Pliny, the first inhabitants were driven away by the lapyges coming from Illyria. Matinum was destroyed by a terrible earthquake. In the nearby Agnuli, the excavation works have brought to light mosaics, walls, reticulated works and Roman coins. The new town was built uphill, not much far from the sea. Well-worth a visit is the Abbey of the Trinity on Mount Sacro, and near Agnuli an ancient Roman villa. Close to Mattinata, there is a place called Mattinella, which is famous for its uncontaminated beaches. The coast that from Mattinata leads to Vieste is beautiful for the views that can be admired from the cliffs falling sheer to the sea. Among these, we cannot miss the valuable **Bay of the Zagare**, where a famous hotel complex is situated.



Mattinata's bay

MANFREDONIA

Pleasant town at the foot of Gargano's promontory, Manfredonia is well-known for the harbour linked to the Adriatic cities. It rose in 1256 due to the will of Manfred himself and then the populations of Siponto settled there. Manfred started to build there the Castle that was ended by the Angevins. The city was also fortified by strong walls and towers (at present only four of them remain, three cylindrical-shaped structure and a four-sided one). It was sacked several times but withstood Lautrec's troops. The Turks, instead, succeeded in destroy it in 1620. The majestic **Cathedral**, dated back to 1680 preserves the sacred paraments given by Benedict XIII. Behind the Cathedral, the 1677 bell tower and the Palace of S. Chiara (St. Claire), at present archiepiscopal seminary seat, stand. To the north of the town, the caverns of Scaloria and Occhipinto are important tourist stops for the Neolithic archaeological finds discovered there.



The Castle. Typical military construction built by Manfred

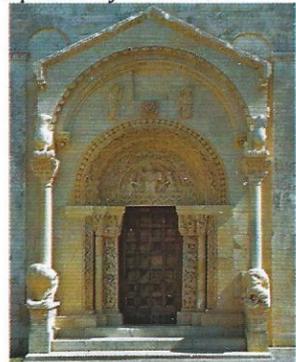


Church of S. Leonardo

by the Lombards, Slavs and Saracens. In 803 Charlemagne annexed it to the Duchy of Benevento. In 1039 it was conquered by the Normans and later on Frederick II built there the hospital of St. Lazarus for sick and contagious people. After the 1223 earthquake, Siponto was destroyed and abandoned. The population moved to the new Siponto, built by Manfred in 1256 and from which the name of Manfredonia derives. The **Cathedral of S. Maria Maggiore of Siponto** is important from an historical and cultural point of view and its location was probably the site of the ancient Roman city. The Romanesque square-shaped plan, with a dome recalling the oriental style, was restored in the 13th century. In 1975 it was restored again. The imposing portal rich in carvings and supported by two wonderful animals, can be admired. The interiors host an early Christian sarcophagus in the high altar. Near the Cathedral recent excavation works have brought to light the ruins of an early Christian Basilica, which was erected on the ruins of an ancient Pagan temple in honour of the Goddess Diana.

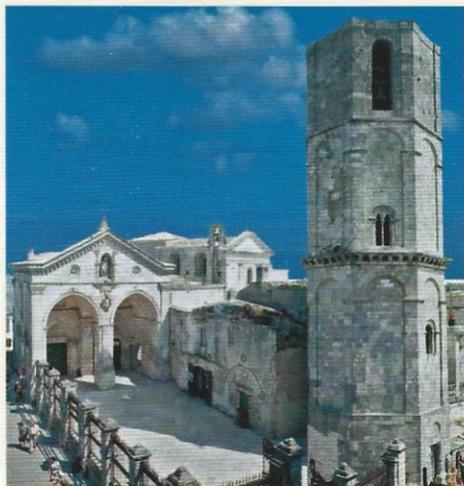
SIPONTO

Siponto, according to some legends common to many Adriatic cities, was founded by Diomedes. According to Livy, the harbour of Arpi was placed in a strategic position during the Roman Empire. In 194 BC, the Romans, after the submission of Arpi, made of Siponto a colony. It was conquered by Odoacer in 485 and Theodoric in 488, and then it was plundered



Portal of the Church of S. Maria Maggiore. Column-bearing lions (animal-shaped architectonic elements)

Holy Places

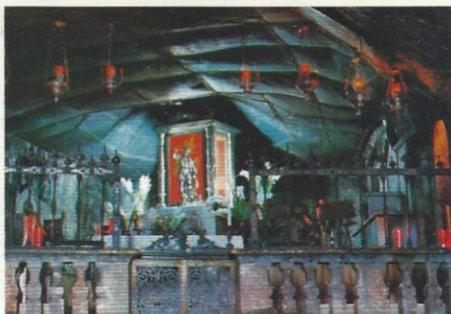


The Gothic façade of the Sanctuary and the bell tower

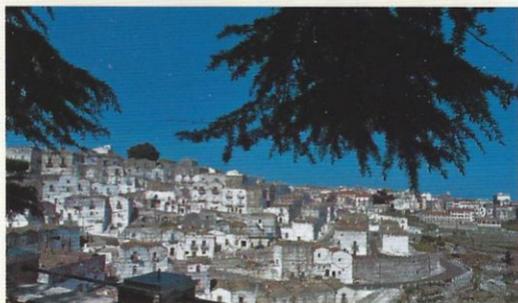
MONTE SANT'ANGELO

It rises at 796 metres of height in a beautiful geographical position which overlooks the Apulian Table and the Gulf of Manfredonia. It was one of the most ancient holy places of Christianity. After the apparition of the Archangel Michael, a Church was built there in 493. The Sanctuary was probably erected in the 6th century and became the 'National Sanctuary' of the Lombards. In 869 it was destroyed by the Saracens and then rebuilt by Ludovic II in 871. It was sacked several times until in the 10th century it became a stronghold of the Latin church. The rebel Melus recruited here the Norman pilgrims against Byzantium. When it was conquered by the

Normans, it became a pilgrimage place and was visited by religious people, crusaders and sovereigns. The fief was ceded in 1177 to Queen Jane of England and then to the Swabians and Angevins. Valuable is the façade of the Sanctuary. Inside the Sanctuary admirable are the marble altar where the statue of the Archangel is placed. In front of the bell tower, the grave of Rotari is thought to be a Baptistry or a Mausoleum. In the nearby, the ruins of the Church of S. Pietro (St. Peter), the Church of S. Maria Maggiore, the Church of San Benedetto dei Padri Celestini (St. Benedict of the Celestines) and the adjacent Monastery, the Church of S. Antonio Abate (St. Anthony Abbot), the Church of S. Maria degli Angeli, the Abbey of Pulsano, and the Abbey of the Trinità (Trinity). The Castle was embellished by Frederick II who lived there with Bianca Lancia, Manfred's mother.



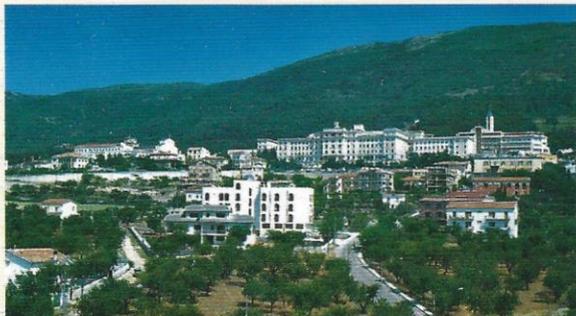
The mythical cavern where the Archangel appeared



A town view



The Castle

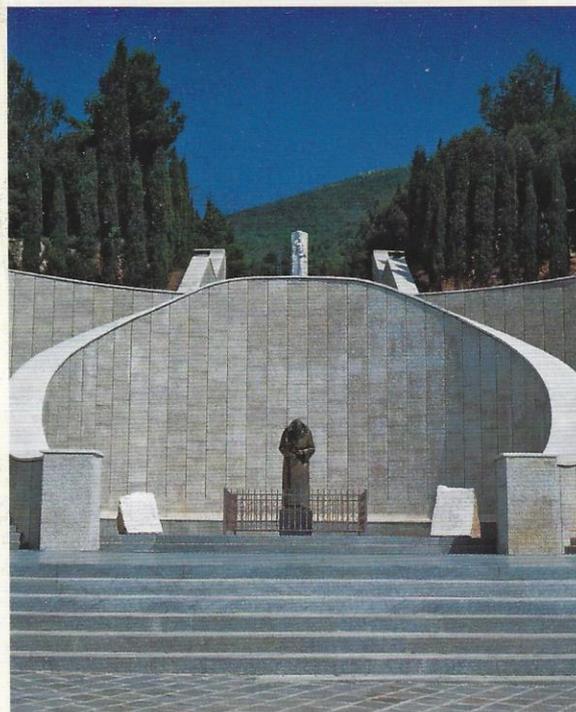


SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO

San Giovanni Rotondo, holy place at 566 meters above the sea level, has been inhabited since Prehistory even if it is thought to have been built around the 11th century. In fact the pilgrims going to S. Michele used to stop in this place, which was fortified by Frederick II. San Giovanni is a pilgrimage place because in the convent of the Capuchins adjacent the small Church of S. Maria delle Grazie, lived **Padre Pio da Pietrelcina (Father Pius from Pietrelcina)**. His devotion for the poor brought him to build a hospital called 'Casa sollievo della Sofferenza' ('The House for the Relief of Suffering'), built thanks to the charity of thousand believers. Padre Pio had borne the Holy Stigmata for over 50 years. He died on 23rd September 1968 at 2:30 a.m. In the following years many prayer groups developed and his charity activity is still present nowadays. Every year, in the night of 23rd September a solemn evening get-together holds thousand pilgrims coming from everywhere. On the ledges of Mount Castellana, Francesco Messina has portrayed a solemn Way of the Cross.



The Sanctuary



The Way of the Cross



The House for the Relief of Suffering

COMMEMORATION OF THE DEATH OF ST. PIO FROM PIETRELCINA

Testimony of Padre Pellegrino Funicelli

After 9pm on 22 September 1968, when Padre Mariano had already left cell No. 4 and I had entered, Padre Pio called me through the intercom asking me to come to his room. He was in bed, lying on his right side, and all he asked me was what time was showing on the alarm clock on his bedside cabinet. I dried some small tears from his reddened eyes and returned to room No. 4 to listen in to the intercom which was always switched on. The Padre called me a further five or six times until midnight and each time his eyes were reddened by tears, but it was a peaceful and serene weeping. At midnight, just like a small frightened boy he pleaded with me: "Stay with me, my son", and he began to ask me with increasing frequency what time it was. He looked at me with pleading eyes, clenching my hands tightly. Then, as if he had forgotten the time, which he had continually asked me, he asked: "Have you said Mass?". I

smiled and replied: "Spiritual Father, it is too early just now for Mass". And he replied: "Well, this morning you will say Mass for me". I said: "But every morning I say Mass for your intentions". After this, he wanted to make his confession and, after his sacramental confession he said: "My son, if the Lord calls me today, please ask my confreres to forgive me all the trouble I have given them and ask them and my



spiritual children to say a prayer for my soul". I replied: "Spiritual Father, I am sure that the Lord will let you live for a long time, but if you are right, may I ask you for a last blessing for the confreres, for all your spiritual children and all the sick?". And he said: "Of course I bless them all; better still, ask the Superior to give this last blessing on my behalf". "And what will I say to Pia, Hector (his niece and nephew) and to your family and to Sister Pia?". "They know how much I love them", he replied bursting into tears, "I bless them all, I bless them all". Finally, he asked to renew

the profession of his religious vows. It was one o'clock when he asked me: "Listen, my son, I cannot breathe easily here in bed. Help me to get up. I can breathe more easily sitting on the chair" One, two or three o'clock were usually the times when he would get up to prepare for Holy Mass and, before sitting on the armchair, he would go for a short walk along the corridor. That night I noticed to my great



amazement that he was standing up straight and walking briskly just like a young man, so much so that there was no need to support him. Reaching the door of his cell, he said: "Let's go for a while on the balcony". I followed him, keeping my hand under his arm. He himself switched on the light and, reaching the armchair, he sat down and looked around the balcony as if he were looking for something. Five minutes later he wanted to return to his cell. I tried to lift him



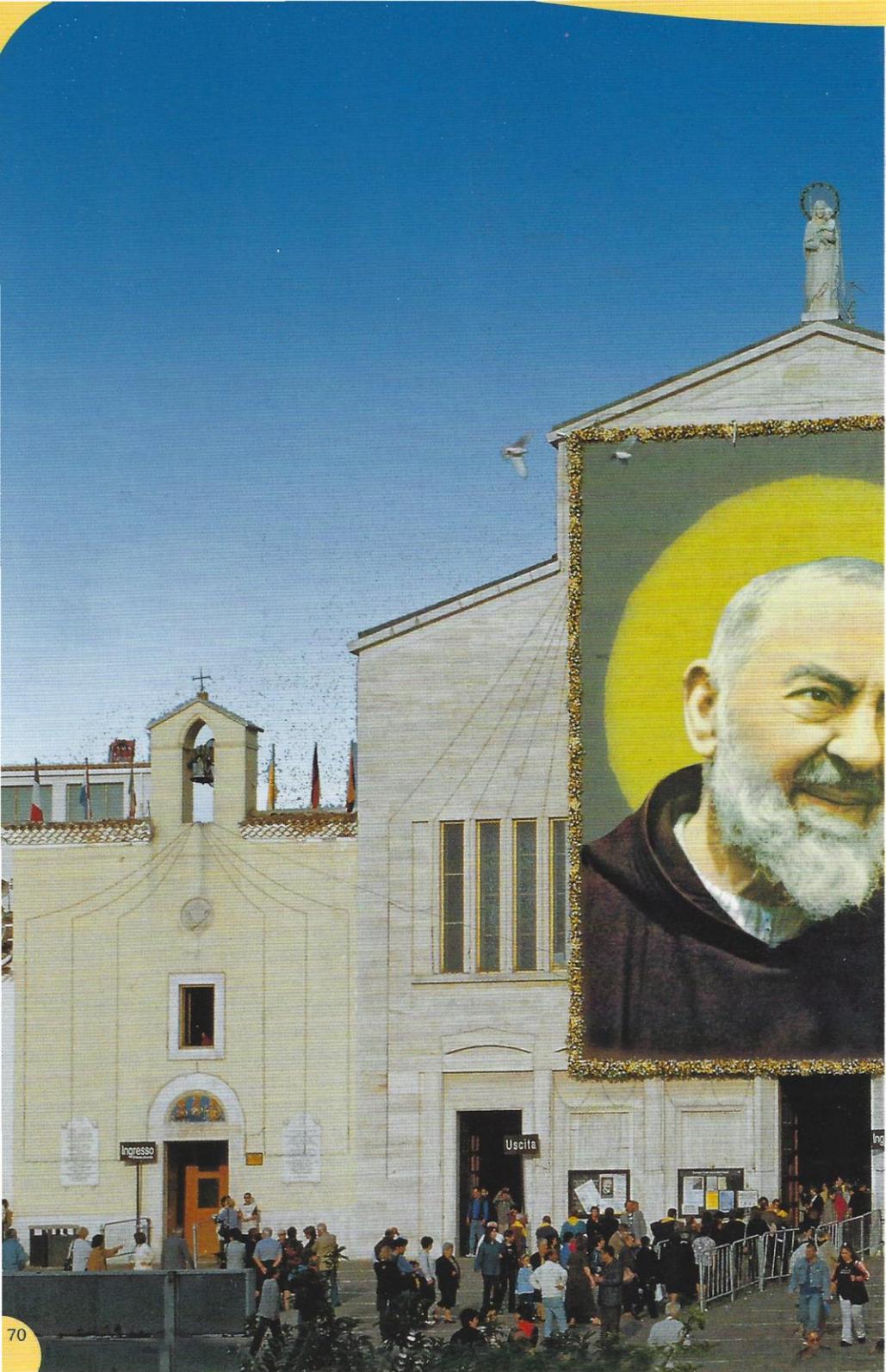
up but he said: "I can't make it". In fact, he felt very heavy. "Spiritual Father, don't worry", I said to him, giving him encouragement and straight away getting his wheelchair which was nearby. I lifted him under his arms from the armchair and sat him in the wheelchair. He himself lifted his feet from the ground and placed them on the footrests. Back in his cell, when I had eased him back into his armchair, looking at the wheelchair and indicating with his left hand he said to me: "Take it outside". When I went back inside his cell, I noticed that the Padre was becoming very pale. His forehead had broken out in a cold sweat. I became frightened, however, when I saw that his lips were turning blue. He continuously repeated: "Gesù, Maria!" (Jesus, Mary) in an increasingly frail voice. I got up to go and call a confrere but he stopped me, saying: "Don't waken anyone". I set off just the same and, running, I had reached only a few steps outside of his cell when he called me again. Thinking he was calling me to tell me the same thing, I turned back. But when I heard him repeat: "Don't call anyone", I replied, pleadingly: "Spiritual Father, leave it to me". I ran towards the cell of Padre Mariano but, seeing the door of Brother Bill's room open, I went in, turned on the light and shook him: "Padre Pio is ill!". In a moment, Brother Bill reached the Padre's cell and I ran to phone Dr. Sala. He arrived about ten minutes later and as soon as he saw the Padre, he prepared everything necessary to give him an injection. When everything was ready, Brother Bill and I tried to hold him up, but not having much success, we had to lay him on his bed. The doctor gave him an injection and then helped us to settle him in his armchair, while the Padre repeated in a barely audible voice and the movement of his lips becoming weaker: "Gesù, Maria!". Having been called by me, the Father Guardian arrived immediately, as well

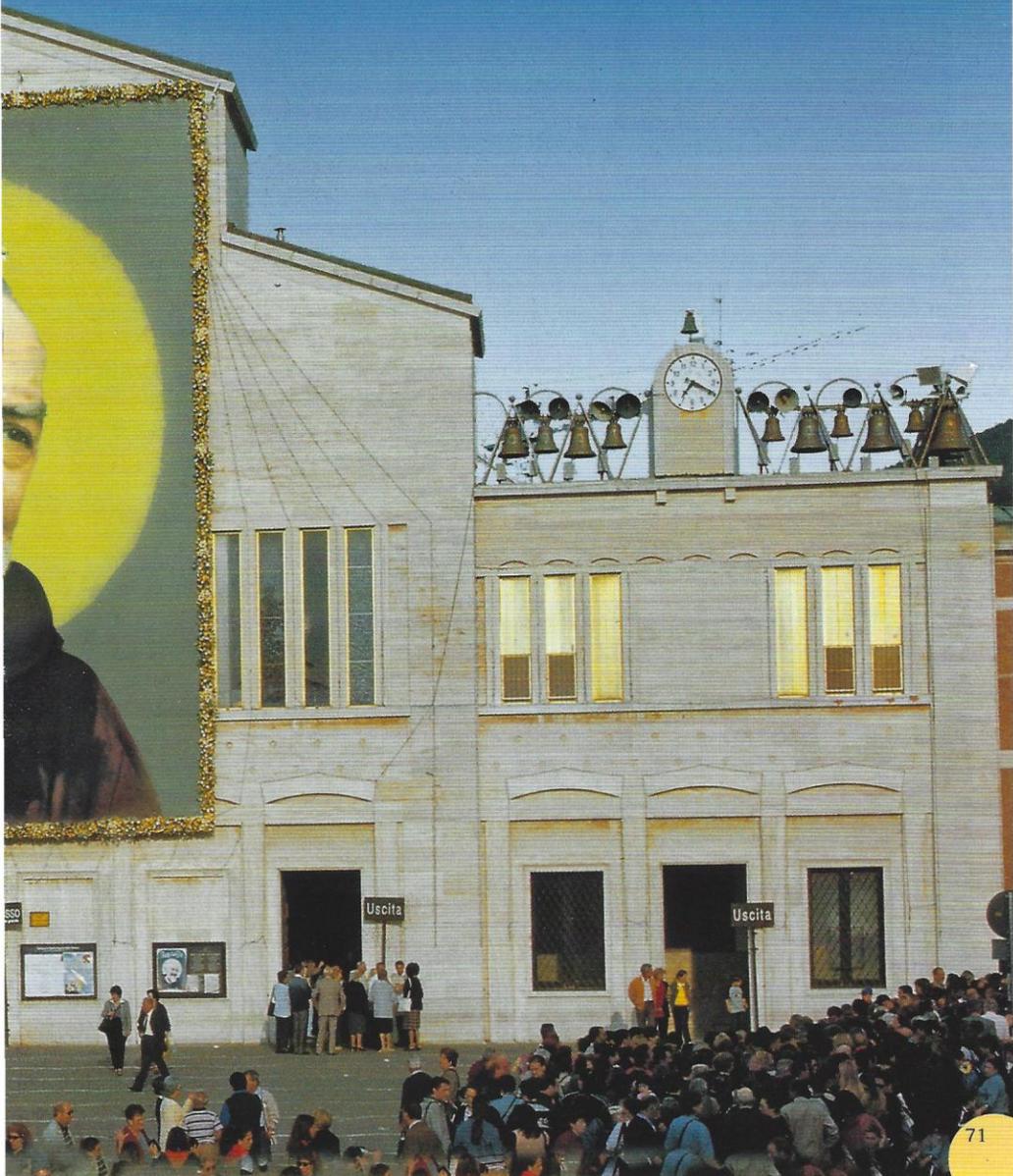
as Padre Mariano and other confreres; while having been called on the telephone by Dr. Sala the following started arriving one after the other - Padre Pio's nephew, Mario Pennelli; the Medical Director of the Hospital, Dr Gusso; and Dr Giovanni Scarale. While the doctors were giving him oxygen, firstly through a tube and then through a mask, Padre Paolo of San Giovanni Rotondo administered to the Spiritual Father the Sacrament of the Sick, and the other confreres, kneeling all around him, were praying. At approximately 2.30, he gently bowed his head towards his chest, and gave up his spirit.

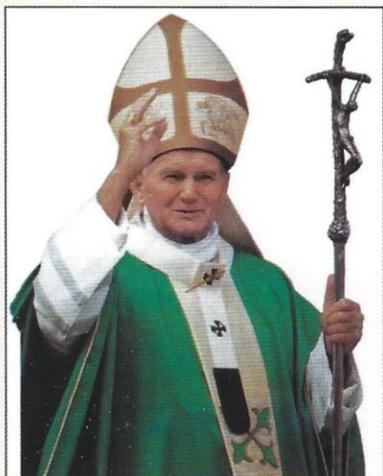
San Giovanni Rotondo, 29 September 1968



In witness thereof,
Padre Pellegrino Funicelli
 From St. Elia a Pianisi (CB)







His Holiness Pope John Paul II

CAROL WOJTYLA AND ST. PIO

In 1947 a young Polish priest met St. Pio for the first time; his name was Karol Wojtyla. He was left an orphan by his mother and elder brother when he was still a child and then at 21 he lost also his father. He devoted himself so much to the studies that became a lecturer and soon Bishop of Cracow. He had two close friends, a married couple that often collaborates with him in family services. Wanda and Andrej represented the family that Wojtyla had lost. Young Bishop Wojtyla was then in Rome, attending Vatican II. He received a letter from Krakow which informed him that Wanda, mother of four children, was seriously ill with throat cancer. The doctors had decided to operate on her, but the hope of saving her was almost nil. Wojtyla thought about St. Pio. He wrote to St. Pio a letter in Latin, asking

him to pray for his friend. Wanda could not die because her daughters need her so much. The letter was handed to St. Pio that remembered immediately the Polish young Father, to whom he predicted his lection as a Pope. Msgr. Angelo Battisti handed the letter to St. Pio, who replied, after reading it: "Angelo, I cannot say no to this request." Few days later, Msgr. Angelo Battisti returned to San Giovanni Rotondo, with a second letter of Archbishop Wojtyla, in which he thanked St. Pio, saying that the young Wanda who was ill with cancer was suddenly healed before entering the operating room.



SAN MARCO IN LAMIS

Farming centre dated back to the 11th century and located at 550 metres above the sea level, near the Convent of S. Matteo. The convent was built in the 6th century under the Lombards and was named after St. John the Baptist.

It became a famous Benedictine centre ceded to the Cistercians in 1311 and to the Franciscans in 1578. In the following years it was entitled to S. Giovanni in Lamis while at present it is named after S. Marco in Lamis. Valuable the church which preserves the 14th-century statue of S. Matteo. Well-worth a visit the Cavern of Montenero, near S. Marco in Lamis, 6 kilometres far from the road to Cagnano Varano. Numerous and interesting the stalactites and karst phenomena.

In the nearby of S. Matteo's Convent, in the heart of the Gargano promontory, Borgo Celano can be visited. It is a place along the sacred way, where pilgrims use to stop. At the foot of Mount Celano, the village offers an interesting view on the Table and the Gulf of Manfredonia.

The Convent in S. Marco in Lamis



The archipelago of the Tremiti Islands



The archipelago is in front of Gargano Promontory and is made of three small islands: **S. Domino**, **S. Nicola**, and **Capraia** and two cliffs: **Cretaccio** and **La Vecchia**. These islands were called by Horace the Diomedean Islands, because Diomed, son of the Aetolian King, after the war of Troy berthed there. The rocky Island of S. Nicola has an old town centre with ancient roads and the Castle of the Badiali. In 771 BC, Paolo Diacono was exiled there after betraying Charlemagne. The

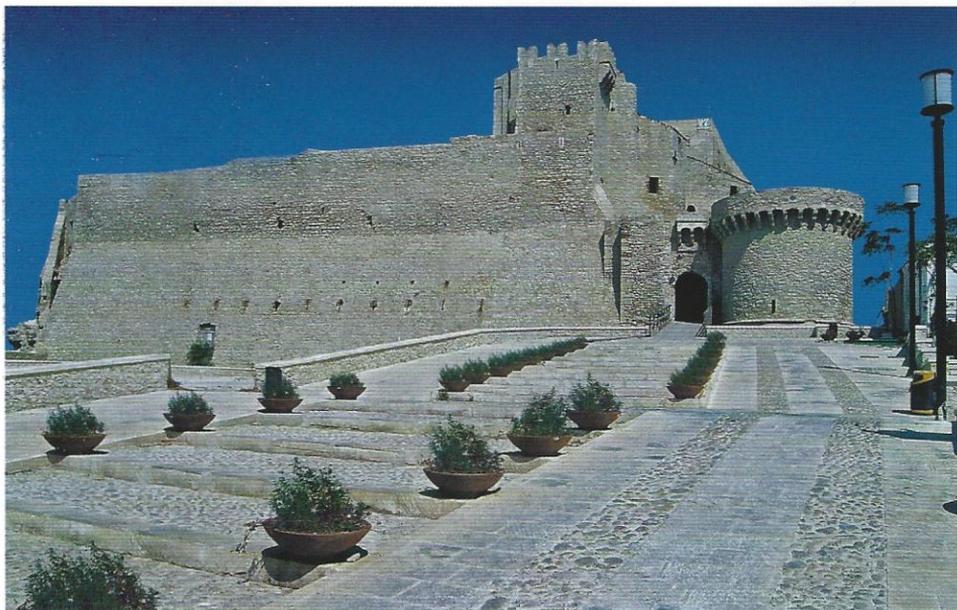
Romans were the first population that used the Tremiti Islands as a deportation place for those considered immoral, like for instance Julia, Agrippa's daughter. S. Nicola was a penal colony under Ferdinand II of Bourbon, King of Naples and Sicily. Here the most cruel sly devils were imprisoned. Ferdinand decided to send the little orphan girls of the Holy Saint Assumption to repopulate the islands, but the Neapolitans stopped him and so hundreds of prostitutes replaced them. In S. Nicola Mussolini used to deport mafiosi and political intriguers. The island of S. Domino is the longest and most luxuriant island of the Archipelago, called by the Benedictines 'the garden of Heaven'. There several caverns can be visited i.e. the Salt

Cavern, the Cavern of the Violets, the Cavern of the Sea Ox, one of the most spectacular and beautiful, the Cavern of the Morays, the Cavern of the Sea Swallows and that of the Crocodile. Between S. Nicola and S. Domino, the so-called 'Pagliai', monolithic cliffs that look like straw stacks, can be admired; the small island of Cretaccio has a clayey-limestone conformation of the ground. Behind S. Nicola, the island of Capraia is well-worth a visit. Its name derives from the fact that in ancient times goats and

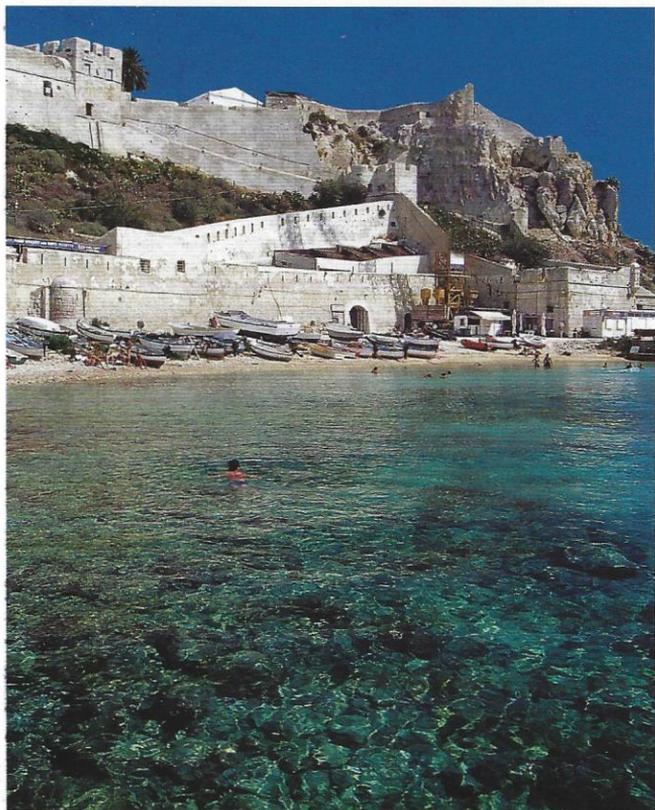


The Archipelago of the Tremiti Islands

sheep were brought there to pasture. It is inhabited and has one of the best 'archetielli' (one of a kind natural sculptures modelled in the rock by the wind) of the whole Archipelago. The Castle of the Badiali, built by Charles Anjou, was a stately defensive fortress built to fight against the fearful Saracens. It held a cistern 17 metres deep for collecting the rainwaters. The Church of S. Maria del Mare (St. Mary of the Sea) in S. Nicola was built by the Benedictines in 1405 and totally rebuilt by the Laterans; in the 17th and 18th centuries it was embellished and restored. Valuable the Renaissance façade with the marvellous portal by Andrea Alessi and Niccolò di Giovanni Cocari (1473). The Romanesque mosaic flooring is dated back to the 11th-12th century. The high altar shows a Gothic wooden polyptych with 15th-century statues in relief and a wonderful wooden crucifix by an anonymous artist of the 13th century. The legend says that in 312 BC in that place an hermit lived to whom the Madonna appeared and showed the place where the treasure of Diomed was hidden. Thanks to this wealth, the hermit built a church. Not to be missed the neighbouring Pianosa Island, inhabited in wintertime and visited in summertime by tourists and fishermen.



The Castle of the Badiali



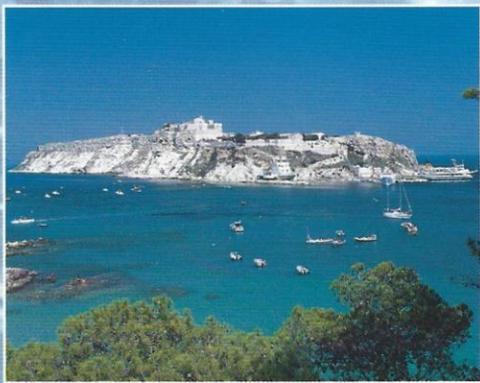
Fortified walls to protect the Castle



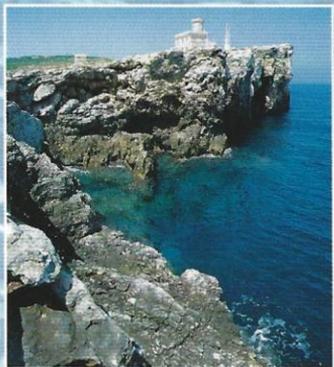
The portal of the Abbey Church of S. Maria a Mare (St. Nicola) and the precious wooden polyptych of the 15th century, behind the high altar



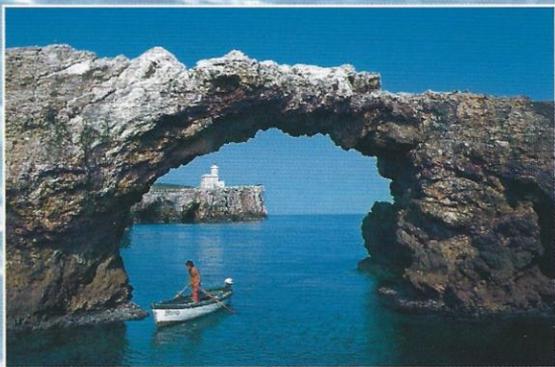
Cavern of the Marine Ox



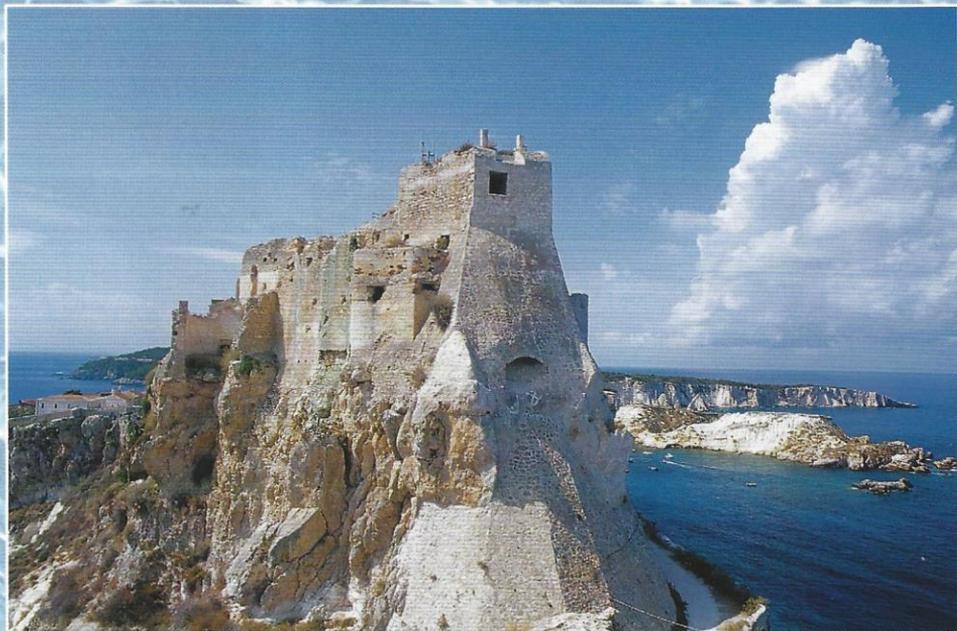
S. Nicola seen from S. Domino



Pianosa Island

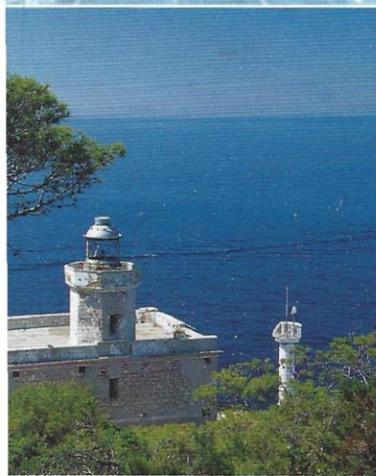
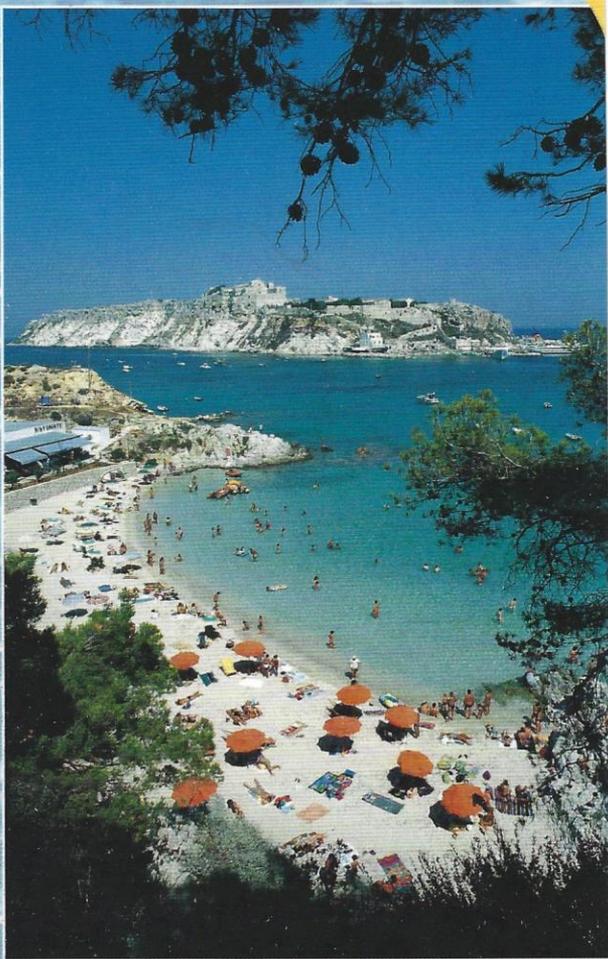
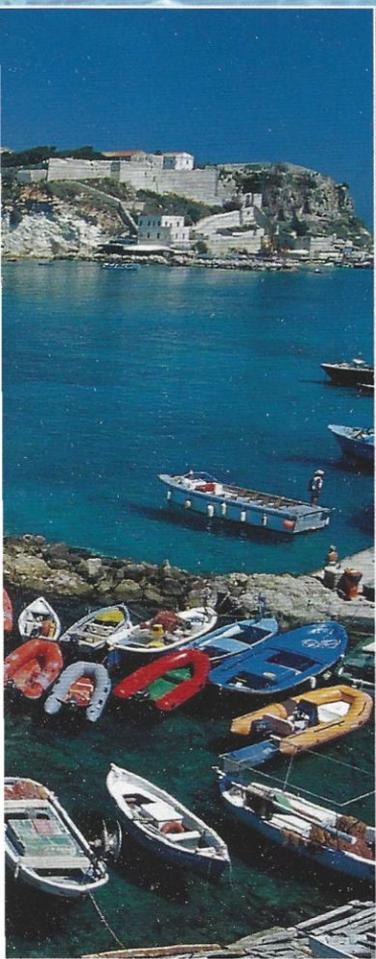


he architello of Capraia.

















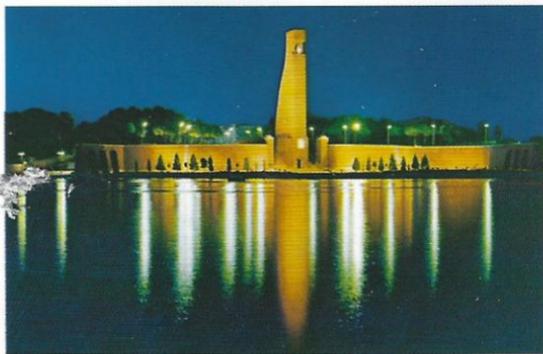


BRINDISI and its province



It is a pleasant and lively sea town with one of the most beautiful harbours of the Mediterranean sea divided into two parts by a narrow and deep shipway, called Small Harbour. It is made of two long inlets, the west and the east, that semi-circularly surround the peninsula where the city rises along the famous Roman columns marking the end of the Appian way. Its name derives from Brenda or Brendion (buck head)

because the shape of the harbour looks like harts horns. The legend says that Diomed founded Brindisi after his return from the War of Troy, but actually it seems that it was founded by Japygian populations of Illyrian origins. In 266 BC the Romans reached Brindisi and tried to conquer the Adriatic area. For this reason, in 244 BC Brindisi became a Latin colony and a landing place towards the East. Brindisi and Taranto became the two most important Roman strategic centres to push off Hannibal. The Appian Way connection between Rome and Brindisi was a turning point for the economic and social development of this city. The Latin culture influenced very much Brindisi's life and art and Virgil died here in 19 BC while he was coming back from Greece. The cult of Christianity was introduced in Brindisi by S. Leucio and for this reason Brindisi had been a bishop's seat for many years. With the fall of the Roman Empire, it was sacked by the Saracens and destroyed by Emperor Ludovic II.



Monument in honour of the Seaman

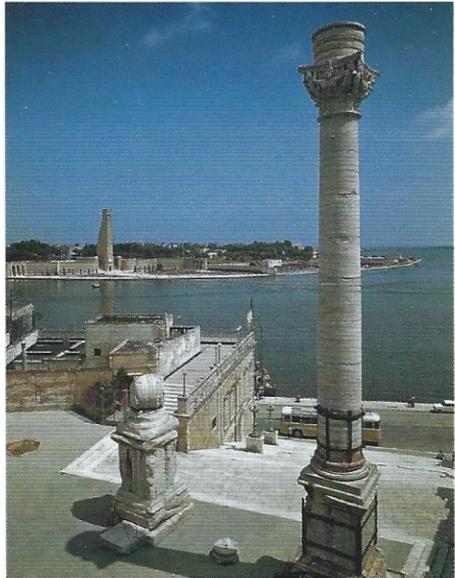
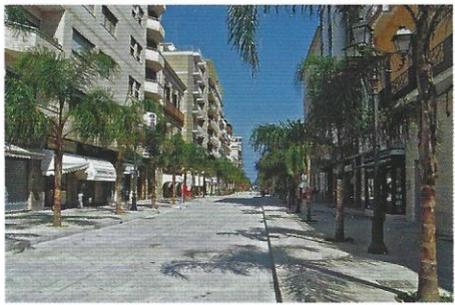


The Duomo of Romanesque origin



Under the Swabians and Frederick II's rule a period of glory started. The latter built in Brindisi a fortress with a mint inside and ceded it to Manfred, Prince of Taranto. Under the Angevins things went better. The city with its harbour was enlarged with new churches and fortifications and enjoyed numerous privileges. This favourable period lasted very few. As Raimondo Orsini del Balzo bought the fief in 1383, lots of wars started and a terrible earthquake hit the city in the 15th century, destroying everything. Under the Aragonians, Ferrante of Aragon rebuilt it and a big castle was erected on the ruins of a Monastery. Brindisi, grateful to the King for this act of generosity, showed its faithfulness to the Aragon Dynasty. In the following years, it was conquered by the Spanish with the partition of Granata. Brindisi rose up with Masaniello but a terrible epidemic restrained the revolt. Only after many years it revived again with the construction of a railway network in 1860, that linked central Italy to the North. The harbour was enlarged and monuments and new buildings were constructed. Its harbour played an important role during WW I. Meaningful are the works of art of this city, like for example one of the two columns marking the end of the Appian Way (of the other only the base remains that was given to Lecce). This column is 19 metres high, with an Attic base crowned by a marvellous capital portraying Jupiter, Neptune, Mars and eight tritons. The **Trajan Well** and four pools testify the hydraulic works of the Latin people. Numerous medieval monuments are well-worth a visit. The **Church of S. Benedetto (St. Benedict)** dated back to 1080 shows a beautiful decorated Romanesque portal and a cloister with little-column quadruple lancet windows. The Church of **S. Lucia (St. Lucy)** is famous for the Romanesque columned crypt and the Byzantine murals. The 17th-century Church of **S. Maria degli Angeli (St. Mary of the Angels)** shows a gracious façade adorned with floral decorations and putti. The ceiling is enriched with marvellous frescos like the St. Francis's Rapture and St. Claire's chronicles. The Romanesque **Duomo (Cathedral)**, built in 1089 and subsequently restored, is famous because in 1225 the marriage between Frederick II and Iolanda of Jerusalem was celebrated. After the terrible earthquake of 1746, it was rebuilt. The interiors preserve a valuable mosaic flooring that recently has been

brought to light near the high altar. The **Castle** erected by **Alphonso** also known as the Red Castle was built by Alphonso I of Aragon in 1445 on the ruins of an ancient Benedictine convent. The **Swabian Castle** with a squared donjon and corner towers was built by Frederick II in 1227 and was surrounded by a moat which was in the following years embellished and modified by Ferdinand of Aragon and Charles V. In 1810 it became a prison and at present is owned by the Italian Military Command of the Navy. The Church of **S. Maria del Casale**, very close to Brindisi, is well-worth a visit for its artistic value. The Romanesque-Gothic Church was erected by Philippe Anjou, Prince of Taranto. Its Latin-cross plan preserves wonderful Byzantine-Gothic frescos of the 16th century. The **fountain of Tancred**, that was probably built by the homonymous Norman King to celebrate the wedding of his son Roger with Urania of Constantinople, was used as a trough for the Crusaders' horses before the departure for the Holy Land. Not to be missed, the **Archaeological Museum**, where finds of the Roman and Greek Age are collected.



Columns marking the end of the Appian Way

FASANO

Fasano has been inhabited since ancient times and this is testified by the dolmens found in the near district of Piscomarano. Its past is still commemorated through a local feast which celebrates the attack of the Turks on June 7th, 1678. Its location near the sea and on the first ledge of the Murge of the trulli, the opening of the Safari Park and of Fantasyland, attract a lot of tourists.

Piazza Ignazio Ciaia, seat of the Town Hall



THE SAFARI PARK

The Safari Park is a huge fenced park where the wild animals live free. It is possible to come close giraffes, lions, elephants and other species, respecting the natural environment. A small train drives the visitors all around the park. In the old town centre of Fasano the ruins of an ancient castle owned to the Bali Family, can be admired. Fasano was a place subdued to the Knights of Malta. The Mother Church also known as the Church of St. John the Baptist, is in Renaissance style (1600).



Zoo main entrance

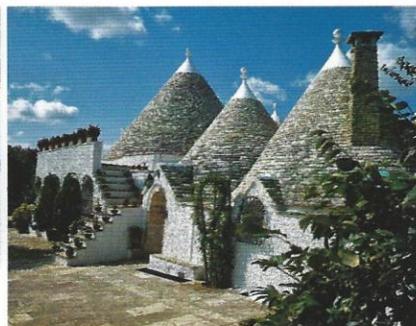


THE FOREST OF FASANO

It is at 397 metres above the sea level, in the plateau of the Murge. From here it is possible to admire a breathless view on the trulli scattered and plunged in the greenery and the vegetation varieties.

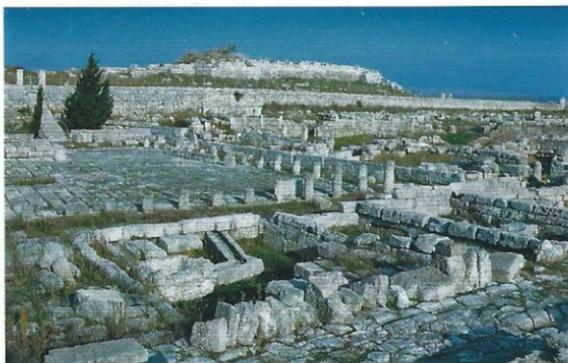


Villas plunged in the wood



EGNAZIA

Ancient town between Bari and Brindisi and place of interest for many archaeologists. The ancient Gnathia was cited by Horace in his writings as the last stop of his travel from Rome to Brindisi. It was an important trading centre where probably pottery works were manufactured. This explains the discovery of a furnace. The urban plan and the forum are dated back to Emperor Trajan. The excavation works brought to light settlements of private residences, stores, markets and of two early Christian Basilicas respectively of the 4th and 5th century AD, that preserved one of a kind polychrome mosaics. Also an amphitheatre, a necropolis and an acropolis have been found and at present the excavation works are going on to discover new finds.



Archaeological excavation works



A village view

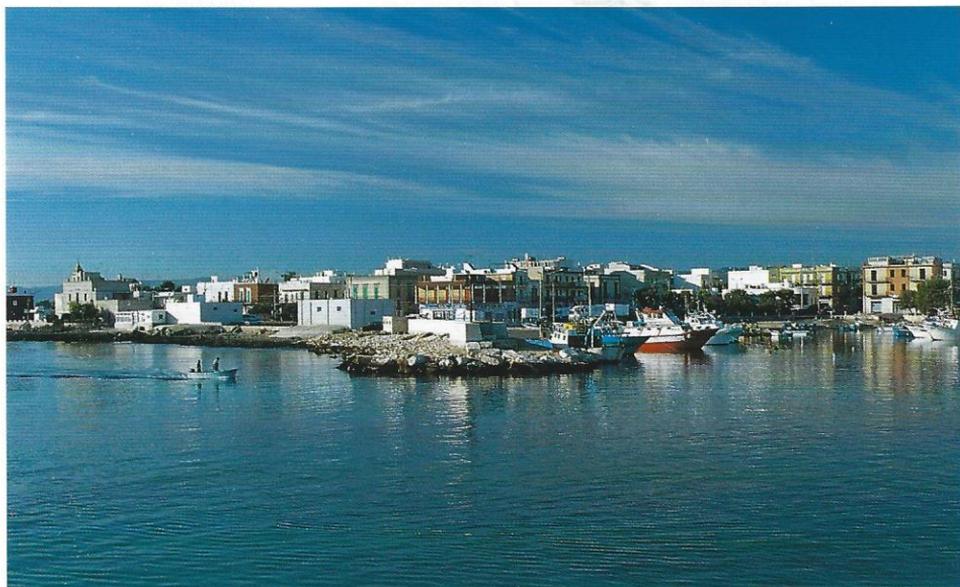
the Bishops of Monopoli. Between 1505 and 1513, it went under Venice and then the marquis Del Vasto. The inhabited centre with its eastern features is characterized by gathered dwellings and narrow and tortuous alleys. This type of constructions favoured a cohabitation among the inhabitants that became friendly and familiar one another. Valuable the Romanesque Church of **S. Nicola**, that was restored in the following centuries and preserves a sculpture by Stefano from Putignano dated back to 1517. The **Municipal Garden**, located at the gates of the village, overlooks the Valley of the Itria. The quadrangular-shaped Municipal tower dates back to the Norman-Swabian age. Another tower, belonging to the Aragonese fortification, is at present inhabited.



The Itria Valley

SAVELLETRI AND TORRE CANNE

Fishing village and pleasant sea resort Savelletri is visited every year by an increasing number of tourists for its quietness, uncontaminated sea and proximity to Fasano. Not far off Savelletri, another pleasant tourist resort also known as a thermal resort is Torre Canne.

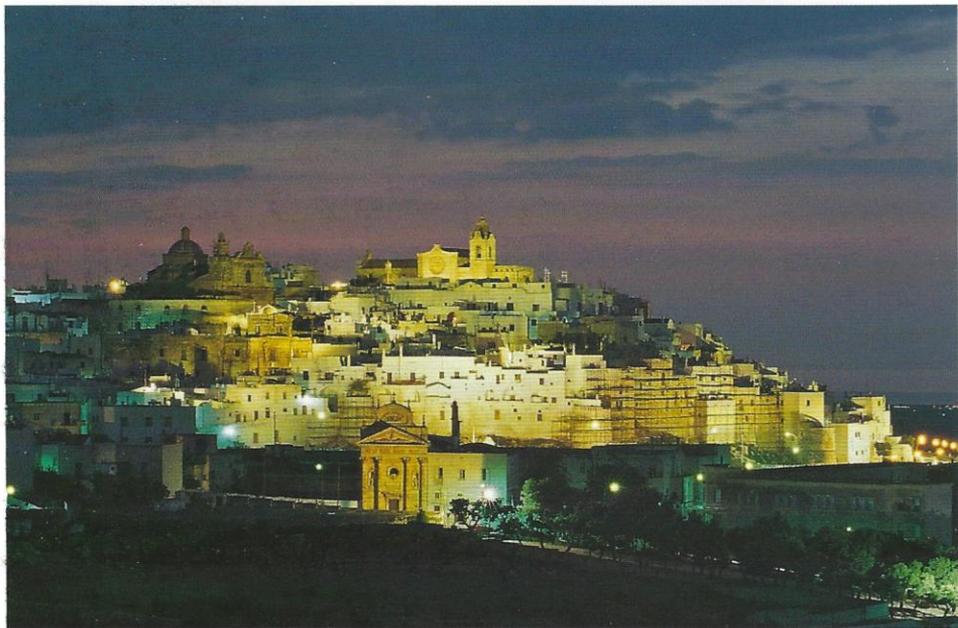


Above, the port of Savelletri. Below, Torre Canne: the small port



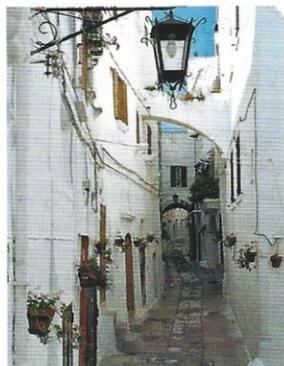
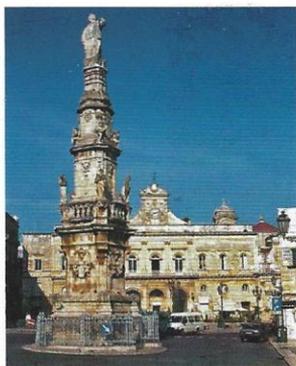
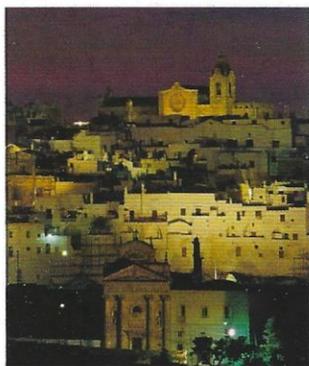
OSTUNI

Ostuni was built on three hills in a luxuriant area at the ends of the Murge. This one of kind small town centre had Messapian origins. Its name derives from *astu neon*, which means 'new city'. Under the Byzantines it became an important diocese seat. It belonged to the Normans, to the county of Lecce, the Principality of Taranto, the Duchy of Bari and was a fief of the Lopez y Rojo family. In summertime Ostuni assumes a quite Arab aspect which recalls the coastal villages of Andalusia. The white-washed walls, the multicoloured balconies, the sun light and the plays of lights and



Nocturnal scene. The enlightened Cathedral overlooks the town centre

shadows that strongly contrast with the colours of the countryside, dazzle the enraptured tourist. The 1435 **Cathedral** shows a beautiful Gothic façade divided into three pilasters. The Latin-cross planned interior preserves marvellous Baroque chapels. It is also possible to admire the ruins of the **Castle** built in 1198 by Geoffrey Count of Lecce, which was destroyed in 1559. Not far off Ostuni, the 1561 Church of **S. Maria la Nova** is well-worth a visit. It was erected at the main entrance of a cavern where precious frescos of the 12th and 15th century are preserved. At 3 kilometres from S. Maria la Nova, the **Sanctuary of S. Oronzo**, a famous pilgrimage place, can be visited. It was built in 1600 in front of the cavern where the Saint took refuge. A source in the nearby is thought to be miraculous. Not far from here not to be missed the 12th-century Church of **S. Biagio in Rialbo**, with frescos imitating the Byzantine style. In the months of July and August the city celebrates the fair of the Terracotta Whistle, a typical product of the local handicraft. Not to be missed the feast of S. Oronzo on August 26th-27th, where amateur or experienced jockeys ride along the town streets.



In the middle, Piazza delle Libertà: the 20.75 metres high spire of S. Oronzo. On the right, alleys of the old town centre.

SAN VITO DEI NORMANNI

Farming town centre at 108 metres above the sea level, was named after S. Vito degli Schiavoni, because until 1863 it hosted a Slav colony. In the 12th century Bohemond de Hauteville built a Castle that was modified afterwards and that at present preserves only a square-shaped tower. In memory of the Battle of Lepanto, not to be missed the Baroque Church of **S. Maria della Vittoria** which preserves precious paintings and sculptures in relief. Not very far from San Vito, the **Limitone** or the **'Paretone'** (big wall) of the Greeks, the ruin of a 2 kilometres long, 1.5 metres high and 6.5 metres wide megalithic Byzantine wall bordering the territory of Otranto, is well-worth a visit. In the same direction, along the road in an area rich in vegetation not to be missed is the **Cavern of St. Blaise** which displays wonderful frescos with Greek inscriptions representing the evangelic chronicles. The **Cavern of S. Giovanni** instead shows frescos with Latin inscriptions, a testimony of true faith.



The Castle



Town centre. In the distance the Castle

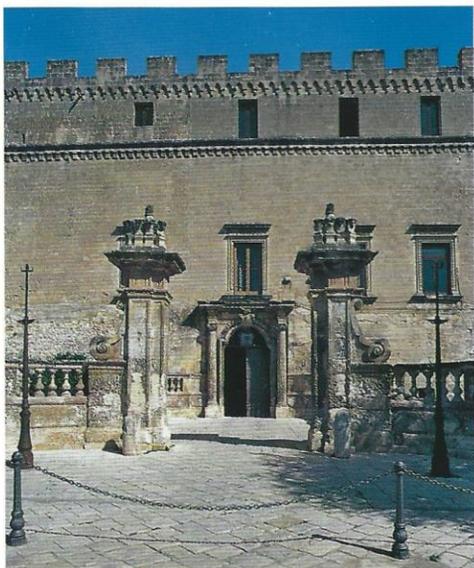
CEGLIE MESSAPICO

Small town centre with eastern features located on the ruins of the ancient Messapian acropolis of Kailinon. In the 1521 Mother Church paintings by Carella are exhibited. The Castle, built by the Sanseverinos around an ancient Norman tower towards the end of 1300, was subsequently modernized becoming a luxury residence in 1525. In the interiors valuable frescos dated back to 1600 are kept.

FRANCAVILLA FONTANA

A wonderful small town at 140 metres above the sea level, inhabited since Pre-history and owned by the Messapians, it became famous when Philippe I Anjou discovered there a Byzantine icon portraying the Virgin Mary on a wall. A church was built in honour of the Madonna and the local inhabitants built all around their dwellings. In 1364, Francavilla was fortified and subsequently Raimondello del Balzo Orsini widened the walls. In 1517, Francavilla was ceded to Roberto Bonifacio and annexed to Oria, but in 1572 it was bought by the Genoese Davide Imperiali who held it until 1782. The Imperiali Palace was built in 1450 by Giovanni Antonio del Balzo Orsini and was restored by the Imperiali in the 18th century. It is a luxury

construction characterized by the Baroque features. Its rectangular-shaped plan is surrounded by a moat. In the courtyard, accessible through a marvellous 18th-century portal, a font of the 15th-16th century can be admired. Now the palace is seat of the town council. The Duomo (Cathedral) was built in 1743 according to a project of the Roman Barigioni. The Baroque façade shows two stately statues of Sts. Peter and Paul. The Greek-cross plan shows paintings by Domenico Carella and a magnificent reliquary with a silver bust of St. René. Valuable for their architectonic structure, the 17th-18th-century Giannuzzi-Carissimo Palace, the Caniglia-Cito Palace, the Basile Di Castri and Argentina Palaces. The **Specchia Miano** is one of the best preserved sepulchral Messapian monuments, located at 8 kilometres from Francavilla. It has a circular-shaped plan with a diameter of 20 metres and a height of 11 metres and is built in dry-stone.



The Imperiali Palace



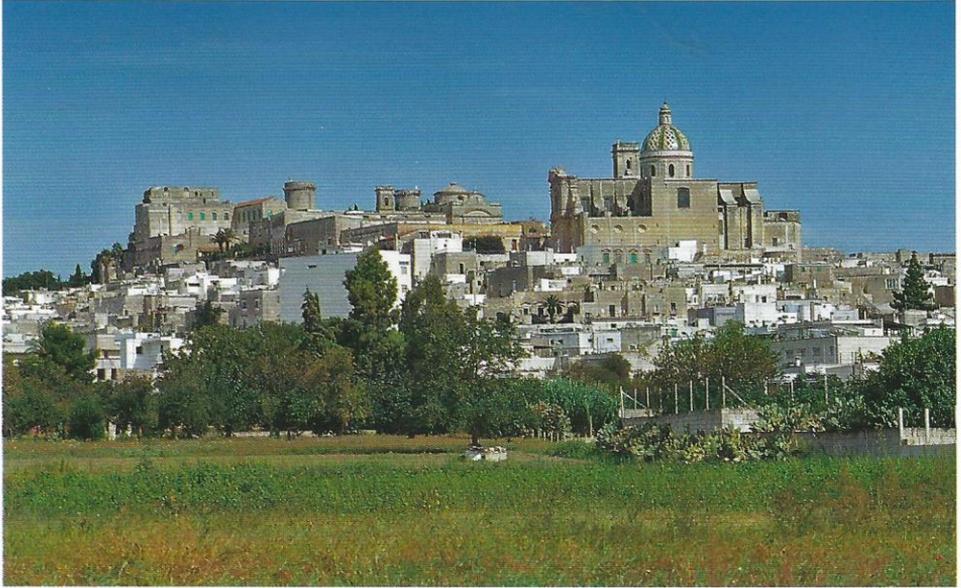
The Castle

interiors preserves a beautiful painting by Palvisino (Madonna of Mount Carmel). The **Castle** was built by will of Robert Guiscard and then totally destroyed by the Saracens recruited by Manfred. Manfred rebuilt it in 1256, adding towers moats and powerful walls, but in the following years it was changed several times. In 1653 the

MESAGNE

Mesagne, farming and trading town centre at 72 metres above the sea level, was a Messapic centre which was later conquered by the Romans. Valuable monuments the **Church del Carmine** (of Our Lady of Carmen) dated back to 1305 and decorated with pilasters and small arches on the façade while in the

Mother Church was erected on the ruins of a previous Angevin Church. Peculiar is the façade rich in statues, while the interior is decorated with several paintings of a certain artistic value. In the ex convent of the Celestines the town hall is hosted as well as the Civic Museum which collects findings and Latin epigraphs coming from the Messapic necropolis. Near the town hall the 1738 Church of **St. Mary in Bethlehem** with a façade formed by two statues and Baroque stuccos, can be visited.



ORIA

City view

Oria, one of the most important Mesapic centres rises at 166 metres above the sea level in the plain of the Table of Lecce. Rich in ancient historical events, Ori was a Roman Municipium and was subdued by Hannibal in the Middle Ages. It became also an important Hebraic centre. The Goths, the Byzantines and the Lombards conquered it, while the Saracens sacked it. Like most of the medieval small town centres of this Apulian area, Oria has a picturesque and clean aspect thanks to its peculiar architecture. The gathered houses are painted every year with whitewash and follow one another along narrow and tortuous alleys. The **Cathedral**, rebuilt after a terrible earthquake in 1750, shows a magnificent Baroque façade. The **Bishop's Palace**, imitating the Renaissance style, was changed in the Baroque period. The 1227-33 **Castle** of Frederick II is an authentic masterpiece. Its triangular-shaped plan was probably thought to be a defensive place, with three towers of the Cavaliere del Salto and dello Sperone southwards and a quadrangular-shaped tower that probably was the main entrance, northwards. The basement extends for about 80 metres. The castle was many times modified according to the needs of the lords of the castle. The interior preserves a wonderful set of jewels, coins, vases and Messapic bronzes belonging to the old owners of the Castle the Martino Carissimo Family. Well-worth a visit is the small **Basilica** in honour of the **Ss. Crisante and Daria**, where wonderful frescos can be admired. Close to Oria, the ruins of the Church of the Madonna of Gallana which exhibits in the apse a Byzantine fresco portraying the Blessing Christ between two angels. Five kilometres far from Oria the Sanctuary of S. Cosmo della Macchia is not to be missed.



TARANTO *and its province*

Taranto is a big city on the Ionian sea, probably founded around the 8th century BC by the colonists coming from Sparta. The legend says that Phalantus, the parthenian leader founded a colony in the land already settled by the Iapyges. Besides the legend, it has been ascertained that the dialect of the inhabitants of Taranto was the Laconian and that the laws, the magistracy and all the institutions were Spartan. In the early years it was probably inhabited by the Messapes. The area was rich and the geographical position on the sea was strategic for trading. The first centuries of life of this city were marked by small wars to expand the territory. In the province of Salento, Taranto founded the colony of Gallipoli and gained privileges on Turi and Metaponto as a political protectorate. During the first half of the 4th century, under the rule of Archytas, politician and great man of culture, Taranto became rich and wealthy even if it was always threatened by the Messapes, the Lucanians and the Bruttii. It fought against the Romans who backed the Lucanians and after several battles it was subdued by Fabius Maximus, suffering humiliations and ravages under the Roman Empire. In the following years it was the arena of fights and conquests. It went under the Byzantines, the Dukes of Benevento and was occupied by the Saracens that destroyed it in 927. It was totally rebuilt by



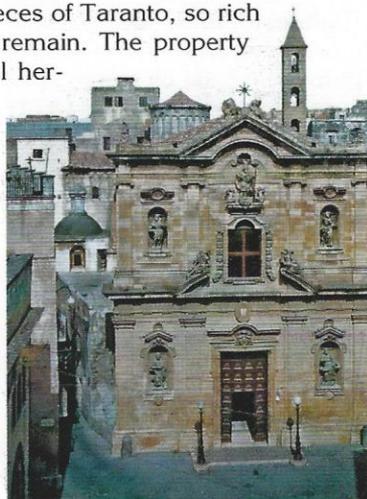
The promenade





The drawbridge

Emperor Niceforo Foca who transformed it in a military seat and Byzantine stronghold against the Normans. Under the rule of Bohemond de Hauteville it became a fief and was later on ceded to the Norman, the Swabians and the Angevin Kingdoms. In 1301 Philippe I Anjou became Prince of Taranto. Taranto was ceded respectively to the Del Balzo and Orsini families. With Raimondello Del Balzo Orsini, Taranto became an independent signory, but as he died, the Principality went under Ladislao of Durazzo as he married the widow of Raimondello. In 1502 Taranto was conquered by Consalvo of Cordova and later on it was fortified by John of Austria. Taranto is famous for its port and military naval base; in fact its history has always been influenced by its location on the sea. From 1806 to 1815 it was the main French naval base against England and Russia. The Bourbon Dynasty did not care much of Taranto that instead regained importance after the unity of the Italian Kingdom. It was an important naval base during WWI and WWII and was seriously bombed above all in WWII from 1940 to 1945. On November 11th, 1940 three Italian battleships, the 'Littorio', 'Duilio' and 'Cavour', were sunk. At present, three main residential complexes characterize Taranto: the old medieval town centre, between the Big Sea Island and the Small Sea; the new city, with modern premises and ongoing constructions and the suburb near the railway station, where industrial and trading activities are mainly carried on. Among the artistic masterpieces of Taranto, so rich in Greek, Roman and Medieval history, few finds remain. The property speculation has damaged these precious historical heritage. To be remembered the marvellous Roman Amphitheatre, few ruins of a Dorian Temple and a

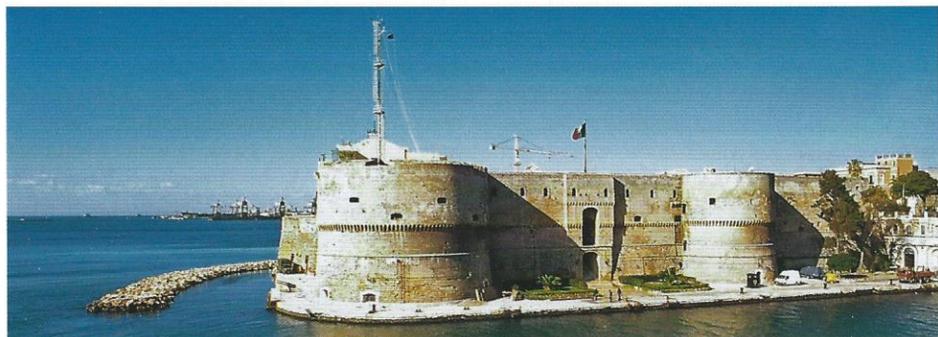


The Cathedral



The Aragonese Castle

Roman Thermal bath. About the necropolis, some graves of the 4th and 3rd century BC are visible. In the National Museum, several archaeological finds dated back to Prehistory and belonging to the excavation works carried out in the ancient Lacedaemonian area are collected. It is possible to know the art and civilization of Greater Greece thanks to the several furnishings, small statues and jewels brought to light.

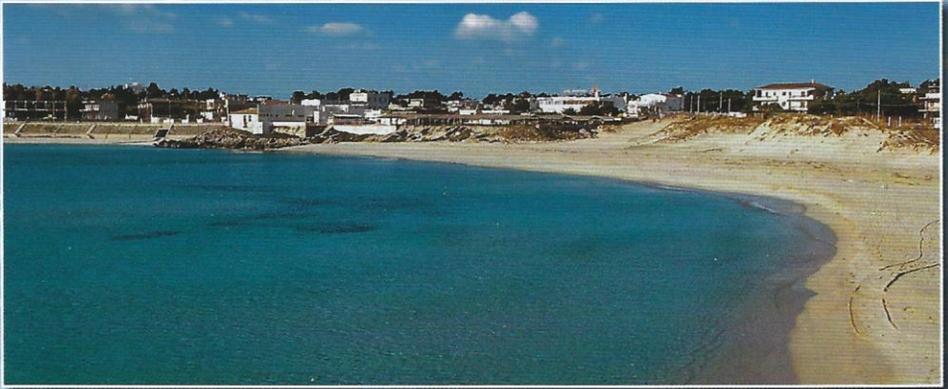


Not to be missed the head of Aphrodite of the 4th century BC. The Castle erected by Ferdinand of Aragon between 1481 and 1492 on previous Byzantine fortifications and restored and enlarged in 1577, was transformed into a prison in the last century and now is the Navy Command seat. Close to the Castle, a swing bridge that allows the navigation between the Big and Small seas, can be admired. **The Duomo (Cathedral) of S. Cataldo**, built in 1070 on the ruins of an ancient building has been modified several times. In the last years it regained its ancient structure, except the Baroque façade by Mauro Manieri, dated back to 1713. The bell tower, many times restored, was built in 1413. The Chapel of S. Cataldo, modified many times, still shows its beautiful Baroque shapes and the mortal remains of **S. Cataldo**, Bishop of Rachau in Ireland. Well-worth a visit is the 11th-century Baroque Church of **S. Domenico Maggiore** and its peculiar façade.

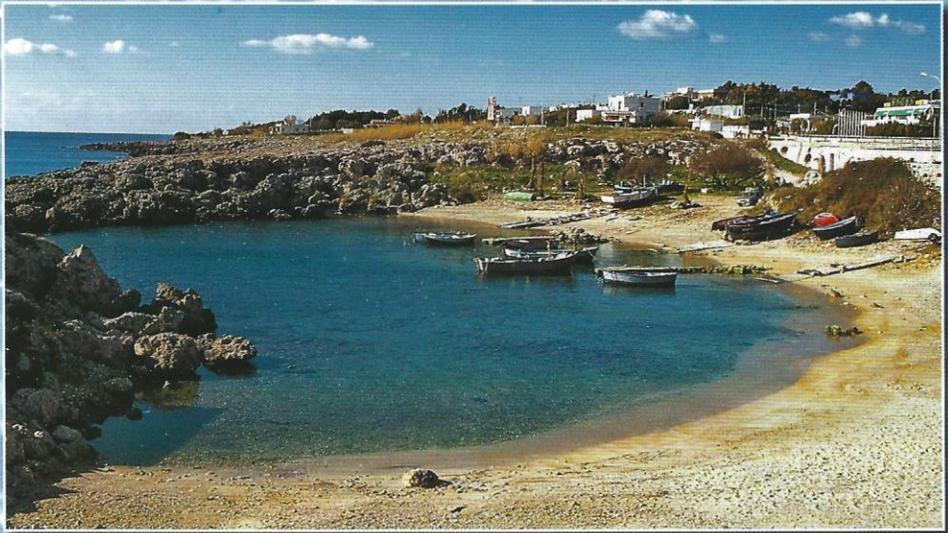


Gandoli Lido

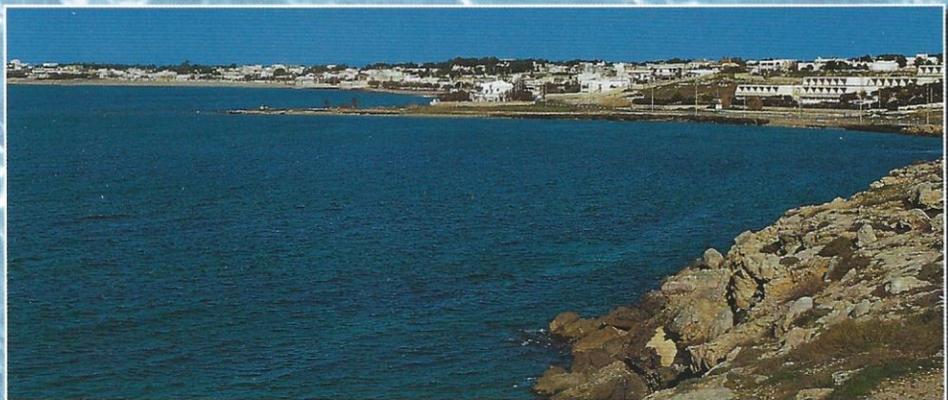
The beaches of Taranto



Reeds



Marina di Pulsano.



Torre dell'Ovo.

MANDURIA



The Cathedral

Manduria is a small farming town centre 10 kilometres far from the Ionian Sea, which produces olive oil, wine and cereals. Several farms scatter the landscape that is used as pasture. Its origins are Messapic. It was ruled by Archidamo, King of Sparta who died under its walls in 338 BC. It was reconquered by Hannibal but the Roman Consul Fabius Maximus sacked and reconquered it after deporting many prisoners. In 977 it was destroyed by Totila, the Lombards and the Saracens. It flourished in the 11th century and was ruled by the Bonifacio and Imperiali families. The sole trace of the existence of the Imperiali family is **Palace Imperiali**, built in 1719 by the Prince Michele Imperiali. The portal and the balcony with an iron balustrade are well preserved;

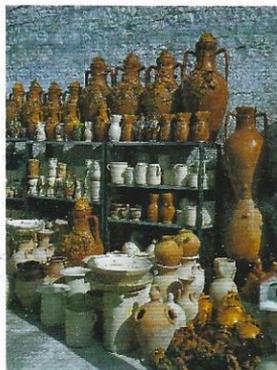
interesting is the courtyard with its flight of steps. In the **Town Hall**, near the 18th-century **Convent of the Carmel**, the **Municipal Library** which collects rare volumes and editions of the 16th century, is hosted. The Romanesque **Cathedral of S. Gregorio Magno (St. Gregory the Great)** was later restored in Renaissance style. The façade is divided into three portals. The elegant and luxury interior with capitals decorated with dolphins and human heads, is not to be missed. Valuable the 1534 font with pictures of Christ and of the Apostles.

In the apse there are 12 statues of the Saints sculpted in Lecce stone placed within an imposing Renaissance cornice by Buffelli. In the side naves five big precious paintings by Solimena are preserved. Not to be missed the elegant late Middle Ages palaces like Gigli Palace, Giannuzzi Palace, Dragonetti Palace and Galli Palace, with the typical 16th-century portals and balconies with iron balustrades. **Fonte Pliniano** is a cave where a low-mineral-content water gushes.

It was reminded by Pliny and it is peculiar because here the water level is always constant. Ruins of megalithic walls of Manduria, dated back to the Messapian Age can be admired near the Capuchins' Church.

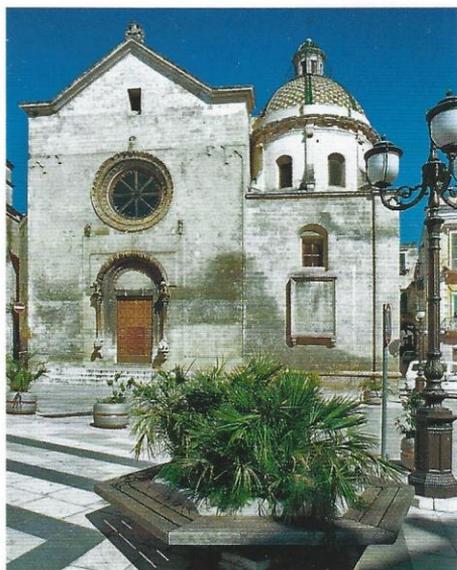
GROTTAGLIE

Grottaglie, farming centre at 130 metres above the sea level, famous for working pottery since ancient times when the local potters used to trade their handicraft products. It is really picturesque to visit the road of the potters, behind the Castle, a place plenty of shops, where any sort of item is showed in the windows to attract the tourist. Some pieces are so elaborated that represent objects of inestimable artistic value: stoups or dolls and horses, a parody of the French courtiers. Grottaglie was inhabited in the 10th century by some inhabitants of the surroundings that took refuge in caverns. It belonged to the Bishops of Taranto and then became fief of the Cicinelli and Caracciolo families. The 11th-12th-century **Mother Church** has a beautiful Romanesque-Apulian



MARTINA FRANCA

Martina Franca, wonderful and pleasant town centre on the southern side of the Murge, has been discovered and revaluated in the last decades as a tourist place. Oasis of peace, it rises at 431 metres above the sea level and is well-known for its healthy climate and for the production of guaranteed quality wines, cereals and vegetables. It developed at the beginning of the 14th century thanks to Philippe Anjou, Prince of Taranto and became fief of the Loffredo of Monteleone



11th-12th-century Mother Church

portal framed with leaves of Acanthus placed on small pillars with column-bearing animals. Valuable the inner Baroque Chapels with precious high-reliefs (The **Annunciation**). The Castle was built by the Bishops of Taranto in the 14th century. It consists of a donjon with a quadrangular-shaped tower. Several are the cavern-churches to be visited, like the ones in the **Foranese** and **Casalpiccolo** ravines. The 18th-century **Sanctuary of S. Maria Mutata** is instead valuable from an historical and artistic point of view. It was erected by the Basilian monks and in the interior precious frescoes like the **Madonna with the Baby** and a 15th-century wooden crucifix, can be admired.



Small square. In the background the Church of S. Martino



Ducal Palace

Angevin Family, of the Tocco Family, Orsini Family and at least of the Aragonians. In the Middle Ages the State demesnes were distributed among the rich landlords that had obtained by Ferdinand of Aragon the administrative mandate of the city. In this way big farms were built in the whole territory to work the land. The workers were not satisfied of their role and claimed their rights on the public domain. In Martina a revolt headed by Vittorio Montanaro, a blacksmith, broke out. Other rebellions against the landlords broke out. In the last decades, thanks to the awareness campaign of this city, an economic growth has positively involved all the social classes. This is why Martina Franca is a modern and innovative city. The town centre of Martina Franca is **Piazza XX Settembre**, where the **Municipal Garden**, former Park of the Grace Convent. The **Church of S. Antonio**, restored in the last years and built in Gothic style, can boast a magnificent 1736 painting of the Madonna of the Graces by the local painter Leonardo Antonio Olivieri. In Piazza Roma the stately **Ducal Palace**, built in the second half of the 17th century and with remarkable paintings by Carella, is well-worth a visit. Valuable also the **Church of S. Martino** of the second half of the 18th century, precious example of the local Baroque style. Not to be missed also the noble mansions, a testimony of the medieval historical backgrounds of the ancient village and of the 'White Powder' art of the local masons.

MOTTOLA

Mottola, small town centre at 387 metres above the sea level, inhabited since Prehistory, became a Lombard centre that in 846 was destroyed by the Saracens. It was a Byzantine fortress first, then it was destroyed and rebuilt by the Normans in 1102. It was ruled by the Angevins and the various feudal families since the 19th century. Valuable the Cathedral of the Assumption built in 1200 and modified and enlarged in 1507. The portal of the façade has two columns supported by two lions. The bell tower is dated back to the 14th century. In the surroundings of Mottola, crypts and hypogeal chapels, like the Chapel of S. Nicola, the Crypt of S. Margherita, the Chapel of S. Angelo, with frescos quoting some Greek inscriptions, the rocky Church of S. Gregorio with 13th-century frescos, can be visited.



S. Nicola's crypt: the Archangel Michael



Crypt of Abbot St. Antony. Two Saints.

MASSAFRA

Small village at 110 metres above the sea level, located on a karst hollow called 'the ravine of Massafra or of S. Marco'. It rose around the Year 1000 and under Charles I Anjou became fief of Odo of Soliac. Then it was ceded to the Principality of Taranto. In 1494 it was destroyed by the French. The most relevant Church is that of S. Benedetto (1680), where the marvellous paintings by Carella can be admired. The Cathedral's construction started in 1853. Valuable 18th-century paintings are preserved there. In the walls of the ravine, medieval caverns that were inhabited in ancient times can be visited. Numerous the crypt-churches to be visited like those of S. Marco, S. Leonardo (13th century) and Candelora, which has been recently restored. Among ancient houses, the 16th-century Castle with its four-sided plan, the three cylindrical and an octagonal towers stands out. It was a Norman fortress which was changed by the Pappacoda family.



Largo Umberto.

CASTELLANETA

A gracious town centre located in the picturesque ravine area. It was the birthplace of a famous actor, **Rudolph Valentino** to whom a monument has been dedicated.

Valuable the 14th-century **Cathedral** that was totally modified in 1700. The interior keeps a chapel in honour of the Holy Sacrament and a precious marble altar.



Pinewood in Marina di Castellaneta

In the nearby the 1603 Convent Church of **S. Francesco** is located, where it is possible to admire precious 18th-century frescos.

Marina of Castellaneta is a beautiful tourist beach resort, with huge beaches and a thick pine-wood.



Monument in honour of Rudolph Valentino

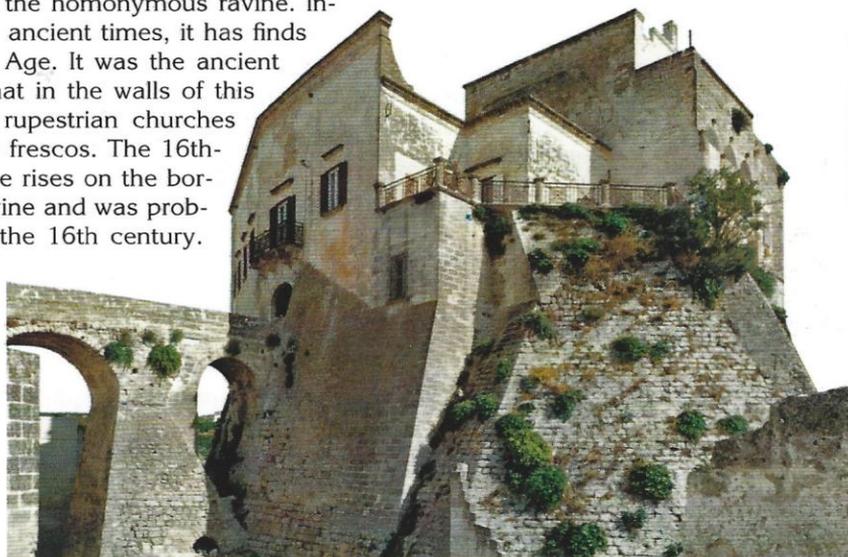


The Cathedral

GINOSA

At 240 metres of height, the village of Gino-sa stands on the homonymous ravine. In-habited since ancient times, it has finds of the Greek Age. It was the ancient Genusium, that in the walls of this ravine hides rupestrian churches with precious frescos. The 16th-century Castle rises on the border of the ravine and was probably built in the 16th century. The Mother Church is dated back to 1554.

The 16th-century Castle



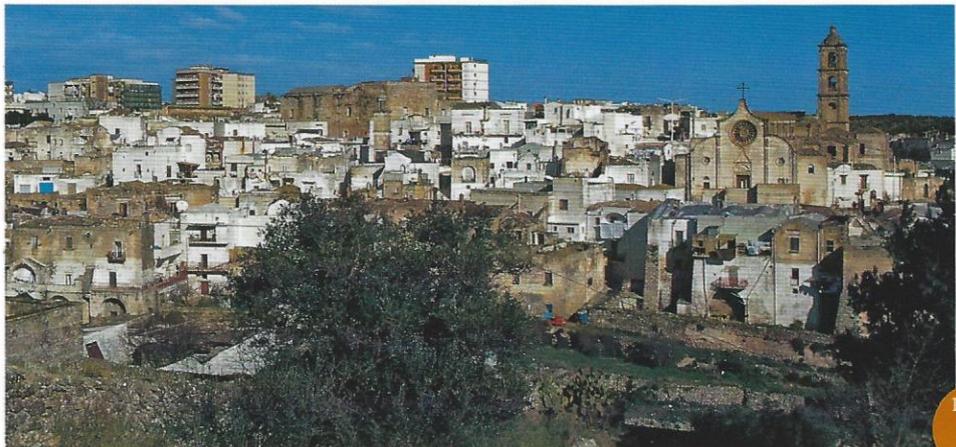
GINOSA MARINA

Ginosa Marina is a marvellous complex of small villas, hotels and bathing establishments that every year hosts a great number of tourists appealed by the uncontaminated sea.



LATERZA

Small but populated farming centre at 340 metres of height, it has been built on the edge of a ravine 200 metres deep and 500 metres wide, the biggest regional ravine. Rich in vegetation for the woods that surround the small town centre, it attracts tourists for this huge gorge. For this reason many rocky settlements and crypt-churches were built there. The **Castle**, dated back to 1353, was built by the Triggiano Family. The mother church of S. Lorenzo shows a beautiful arch-façade with a small cuspidate portal.



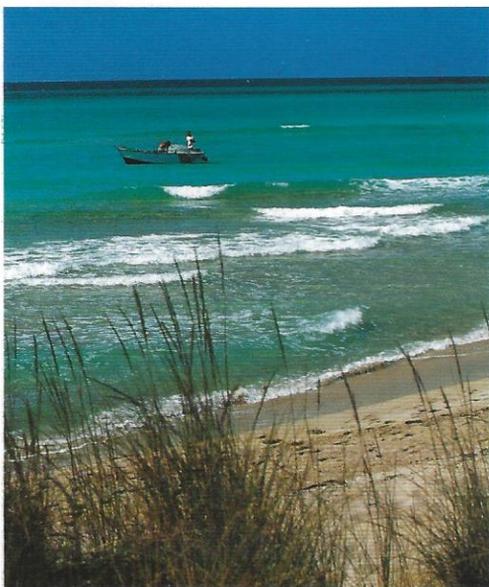
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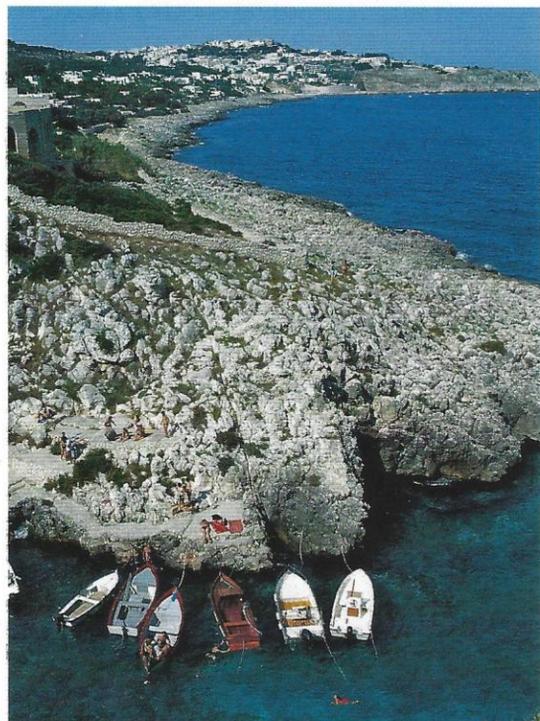


THE SALENTINE PENINSULA

The Salentine peninsula is a rock of limestone is the south-eastern extremity of the Italian region of Apulia. It is a sub-peninsula of the main Italian peninsula, sometimes described as the "heel" of the Italian "boot". Northwards it borders the provinces of Bari and Taranto, eastwards the Adriatic Sea and westwards the Ionian sea. Southwards, the Cape S. Maria of Leuca divides these two seas. Salento is not mountainous but quite plain, it is not crossed by rivers but has two modest lakes called Alimini. It encompasses the land borders between the Ionian and the Adriatic sea. The cliff becomes in some parts indented and inaccessible or sandy. This land is mainly fertile and lives on farming. The limestone nature of the soil favours cultivations of tobacco, olive grows, vineyard and vegetables. The water which in the past through the erosion phenomenon hollowed out the soil forming caverns, tunnels, etc., in Prehistoric times favoured the development of different populations.



Ionian coast. Marina of Ugento



Adriatic coast, Acquaviva resort. In the background, Castro.

The morphologic environment contributed to the historical background of Salento. Its huge plains were the arena of invasions and raids and maritime trading exchanges with the East side of the Mediterranean area.

The archaeological finds collected in the museums of the provinces testify that first a freezing cold period, when, to make it clear, the boreal penguin lived, followed a previous hot age, and then an interglacial stage came, similar to the present climate. The most ancient find of the Prehistoric Age is located in the Cavern of the Venuses (in the town of Parabita) and it consists of two bone statues of a female figure. The murals found in the **Cavern of the Deer** (in Porto Badisco) testify a peculiar example of Salentinian Neolithic art. The dolmens, made of three upright stones supporting a large flat horizontal capstone (ta-



Torre dell'Orso: the Due Sorelle.

ble), the **menhirs**, monolithic upright standing stones and the **specchie**, 4 metres high heap of stones, are instead dated back to the Bronze Age. The function of such monuments is still object of debate. Around the 6th century BC an Illyrian contingent berthed at Apulia and the actual region was called Iapygia and divided into Daunian, Peucetia and Messapia (the present Salento), i.e. between two seas.

The **Archaeological Museum of Lecce** exhibits many Messapic inscriptions and the Messapians were probably considered the ethnic group that took the place of the Cretans and that did not succeed in unifying the whole wide peninsular territory. This unification was instead possible under the Romans, when the language, the institutions, the civil and military regulations and the Arts were influenced by the Latin language. In the post-Roman Age, many Greek monks took refuge in this country to escape the persecutions against the cult of the images (iconoclasm).

However, the most incisive political, religious and social period was that of the Byzantines. The church of Otranto became the main spiritual seat of Salento and depended directly on Constantinople. The cult of the Greek saints spread rapidly, the Greek language replaced Latin and the Abbeys of the Basilian monks spread everywhere. Farming, trading and cultural centres developed and the feudal Norman organization, resulting from the conquest of the 'men of the North' started the westernization process that would change the old Byzantine administrative geography. Lecce was

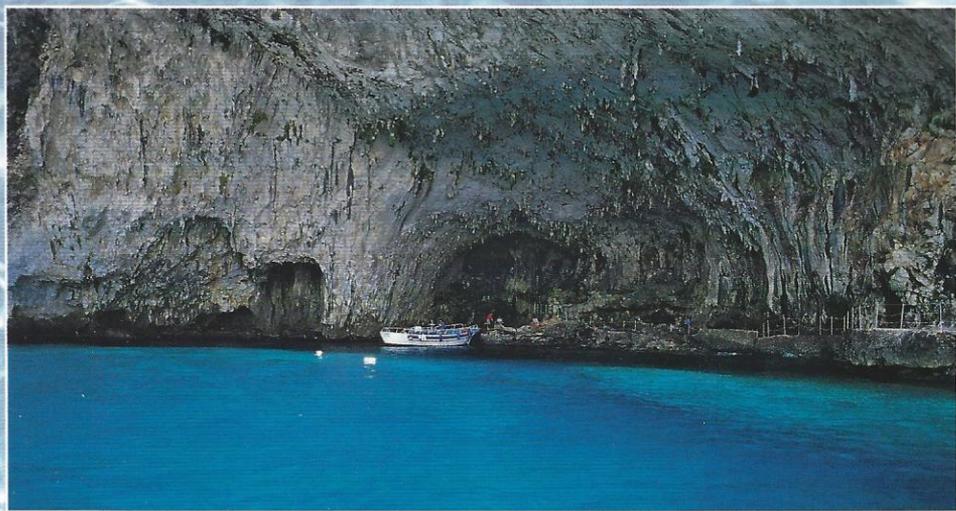


Alimini's beaches

so favoured that it became the 'capital of the county'. At the same time, the Romanesque-Salentinian style spread because it synthesized Byzantine and Oriental elements not only from an architectural, but also from a furniture-style point of view. An example is the mosaic flooring of the Cathedral of Otranto and the precious mosaic curtaining which decorates the walls of the Church of S. Maria della Croce in Casaranello. The Angevins, the Brienne and the Enghien Dynasties went after the rule of the County of Lecce and therefore of Salento. Still nowadays the traces of their passage are visible; without any doubt, the most recurring characters are those of Mary of Enghien (1367-1446), wise administrator and her husband Raimondello Orsini del Balzo, Prince of Taranto, that conferred to the city of Lecce important judicial, administrative and political powers that were extended to the provinces of Bari, Foggia and Matera. The sudden death of Giovanni Antonio Orsini, Maria and Raimondello's son, put an end to the supremacy of the County.

Under the Aragonese Kings, the directives were straightaway issued by Naples, capital city of the Kingdom and cultural centre of the whole Mediterranean area. The last decades of the 15th century were marked by a series of tragic events. The famous Turkish siege of Otranto in 1480, that was stopped by the valorous inhabitants of Otranto, that sacrificed their lives to defend the city and the Christian faith. 800 local inhabitants were tortured because they did not abjure the Catholic religion. As the Turks were definitely driven away, the Salentinian territory conquered by the Spanish was fortified with maritime and inland sentinel towers and fortified farms with drawbridges.

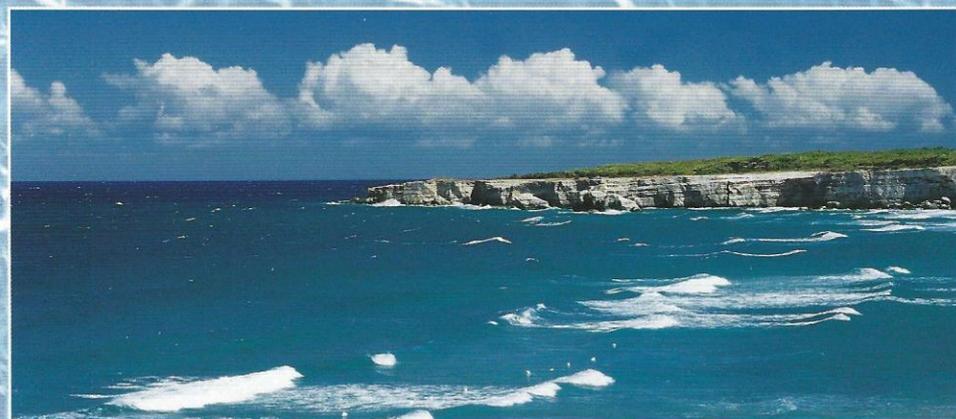
A promenade in the old town centre of Lecce and in other centres of the province testifies the peculiar architectonic style, fantasy and execution of well-known monuments like the building complex of Piazza Duomo, the Churches of S. Croce and St. John the Baptist, the Cathedral of Gallipoli and the courtyards of Maglie.



Castro. Zinzulusa Cavern



Porto Cesareo: Chianca Tower



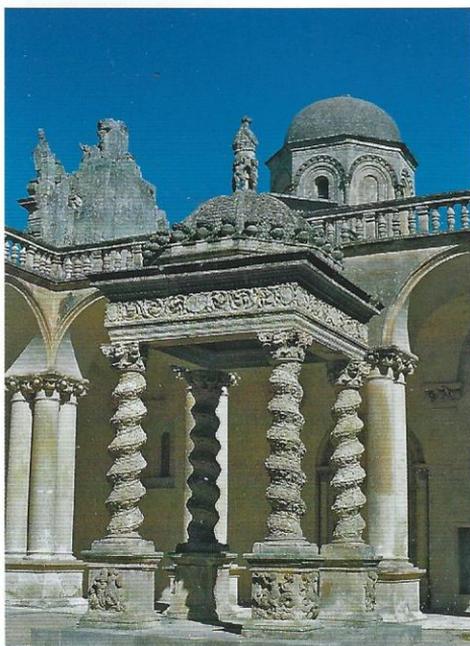
Torre dell'Orso.

LECCE and its province



Lecce, wonderful Baroque art and cultural city of the land of Otranto in the middle of the Salentine Peninsula, was the ancient Iapygian Lupiae. The Greek geographer Strabo located it in the inland, while Pliny, Mela and Ptolemy on the sea. Even if the inhabited town centre was probably built in the inland, it was linked to the harbour erected by Adrian in the area of S. Cataldo, where Octavian landed after the murder of Caesar. Lecce flourished with the arrival of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who, since he born in Salento, wanted to enlarge the city and increase the economy. Lecce, devoted to the Eastern Empire, was disputed for years with the Lombards, the Saracens, the Greeks and invaded by the Hungarians and Slavs. It belonged to the Byzantines until the death of Otto II in 983 and was subjected to Byzantium for the language, culture, religion and Bishop. It became a county

in the 11th century under the Norman rule. From then on, its religious Greek culture turned Roman, according to the Abbeys of Cava and Montecassino. It became seat of the 'giustizierato' (the term refers to a type of country subdivision that was used by several former Italian states in the medieval period) of the Land of Otranto **Litium**, which was the biggest city of Salento Peninsula. It underwent the Swabians of Frederick II who left it to his son Manfred. Under the Angevins it became fief of the Brienne and d'Enghien Families and after many fights in 1446 was ceded to Del Balzo Family and the Aragonese Monarchy. The flourishing periods took to Lecce wealth, richness, art, culture and trading. Several times the Turks tried to sack it, but Charles V fortified it and built a defensive castle. Under the Spanish, in Lecce started a cultural period also known as the Apulian-Baroque period, that made this city so peculiar. That is why a lot of buildings, churches and monuments were erected. Centres for Historical Studies and Academies were founded. In the 18th century new schools to study Maths, Economics and Politics were built. Several rebellions broke out against the Bourbon

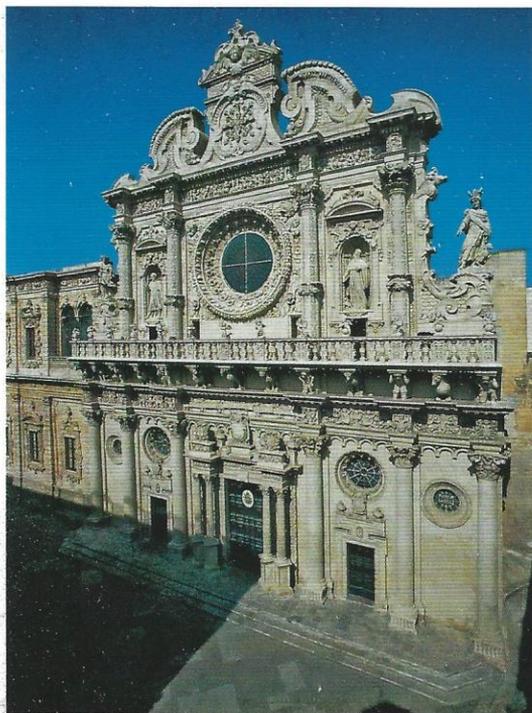


Monastery of the Olivetan monks. Baroque niche



Among the alleys of Lecce, a lodge with transennae.

Dynasty that were violently repressed. Notwithstanding the concessions given by the sovereigns, the difference between the social classes was too evident. In 1758 the first theatre was built. Under the French, the rich and cultured bourgeoisie took the power and revolts broke out among the lower classes and the farmers. But also in this case the repressions were violent. After the Italian Unity, Lecce developed from an economical point of view preserving its cultural imprinting of university city.

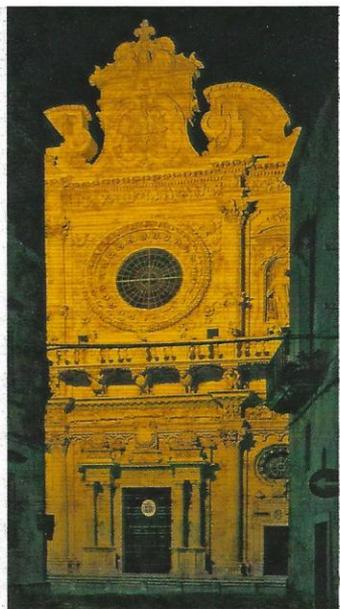


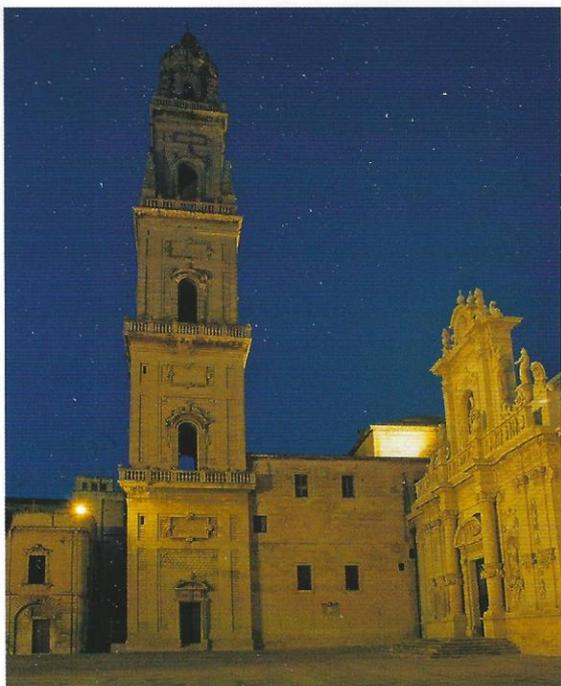
Basilica of the Holy Cross: a lacework. The most spectacular monument of the Baroque of Lecce.

THE BAROQUE STYLE called 'of Lecce' is so defined for the particular function and role it played in this city. It was a type of architecture and sculpture that started around the 16th-18th century in Lecce and in its province. It was the stone of Lecce, a rag homogeneous and warm coloured limestone that can be cut with the blade of a knife, the main character of such art. The craftsmen of that historical period enjoyed themselves in making refined decorations according to the inspiration of the moment. Lecce, nicknamed the 'Florence of the South', has always represented the victory over the death to the spokesmen of the cultural environment: the virtuoso play of ornaments and frills that enthusiasm the bewitched spectator. The biggest representatives of this period were: Antonio and Francesco Zimbalo, Gabriele Riccardi, Giuseppe Zimbalo also known as the 'gypsy' because of his histrionic personal-

ity, Achille Carducci, Giuseppe Cino and the refined Cesare Penna. In the old town centre, it is possible to admire churches, mansions, dripstones, balconies, vases and coats of arms of elevated figurative refinement.

THE MONUMENTS are several. The Roman **Amphitheatre** of the 2nd century AD was brought to light during the excavation campaign of 1938. It could hold around 25,000 spectators and was 102x83 metres wide. The Roman Theatre was found in 1929, could hold 5,000 spectators and was the sole theatre found in Apulia. A masterpiece of the Baroque style of Lecce is the façade of the **Basilica of the Holy Cross (Santa Croce)**, an elaborate lacework. The construction works were commissioned by Walter VI of Brienne in 1353, were stopped when he died and were restarted in 1549 thanks to the Architects Zimbalo Penna and Riccardi. Only in 1695, after 150 years of hard work, the ambitious church was ended. The history of this monument embraces three centuries that are visible even if they have been masterfully mixed by the masters of art and human imagination. Imagination has no limits when observing the whole pompous Baroque façade decorated with statues and lace worked ornaments. The long balcony shows 13



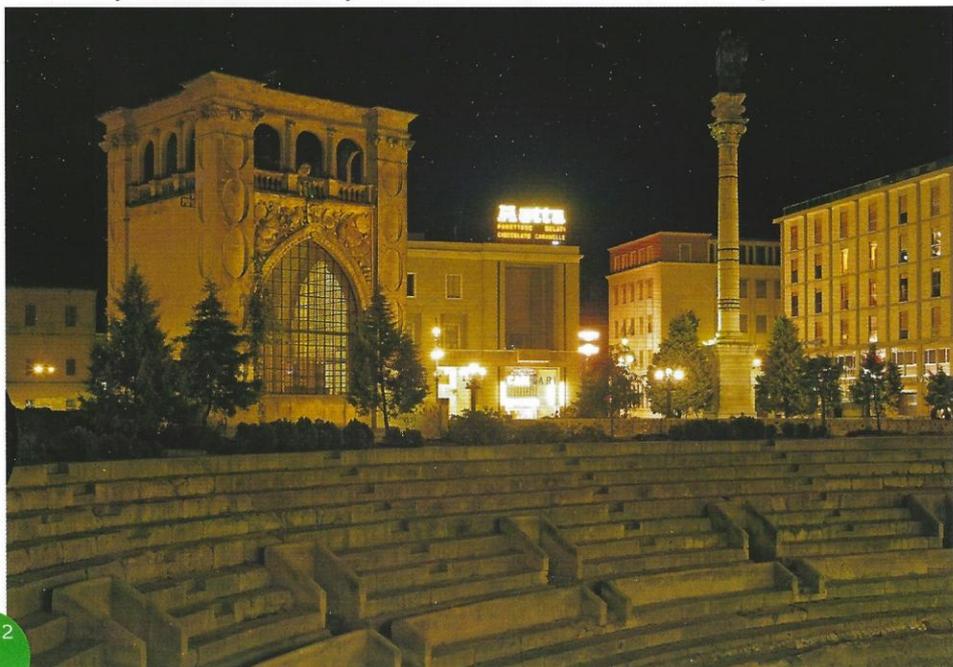


Piazza Duomo.

Below: a Roman Amphitheatre

1661 bell tower by Giuseppe Zimbalo is 68.38 metres high. The 1400 Bishop's Palace is in Piazza Duomo. Marvellous the **Seminary** by Giuseppe Cino dated back to the 17th-18th century. The façade is rich in ornaments and shows a striking portal. The courtyard has a well finely decorated. The church of **Our Lady of Graces** built

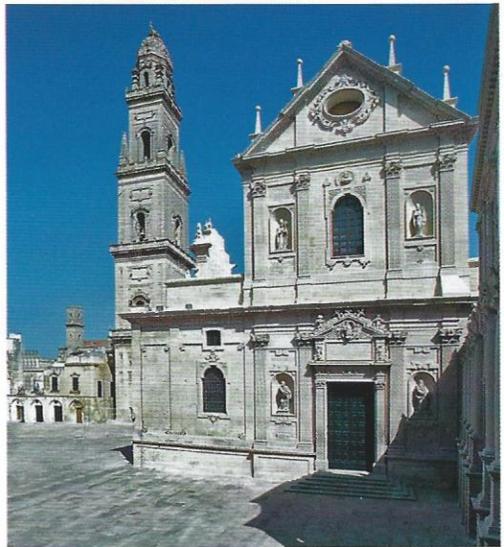
amorettos that in the history of the religious representations have never been portrayed so happy, ironic and joyous. Two huge niches hold two statues those of St. Celestine V and St. Benedict. The ostentatious interior is surmounted by 16 different columns. The apse has 7 altars and 7 chapels. Paintings adorn the whole Church. The experts consider the façade as the most valuable work of art, because according to them, the interior is a limit to the imagination of those admiring the exterior. The **Palace of the Prefecture**, in the nearby of the Basilica, was a Convent of the Celestine monks. The **Duomo (Cathedral) of the Assumption** was built in 1114 and modified and ended by Giuseppe Zimbalo in 1659-70. Valuable the secondary façade where the Statue of St. Orontius is located. The



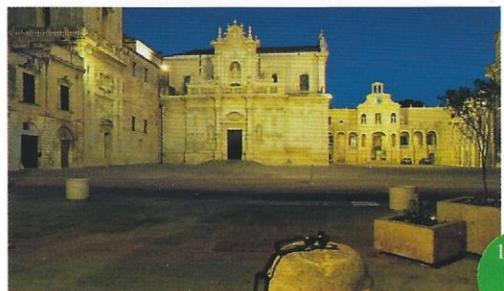


The Church of St. Nicolò and Cataldo, built by Tancredi around the end of the 12th century

in 1590 preserves precious paintings and frescoes. Not to be missed the churches of **S. Matteo**, of the **Carmel**, **S. Chiara**, **S. Antonio** and of **Our Lady of Graces**, all built between 1600-1700. The Town Hall was a Celestine convent built by the Zingarello with a façade preciously ornamented. In the previous years it was seat of the Provincial Museum that now is hosted in the Argento Palace. It collects several works of art and finds of the ancient Apulia. The Church of **S. Cataldo** was built by Tancred in 1180 and is a valuable example of the Norman architecture. The Baroque façade is rich in statues of the saints and was probably made by Giuseppe Cino. In the surroundings of Lecce not to be missed the excavation works of **Rudiae**, a Messapian city destroyed by William Malo, King of Sicily. Valuable the finds brought to light and the graves, hypogea and an amphitheatre. Well-worth a visit is the Aragonese Castle of Acaia.



The Duomo and its bell tower seen from the open gallery

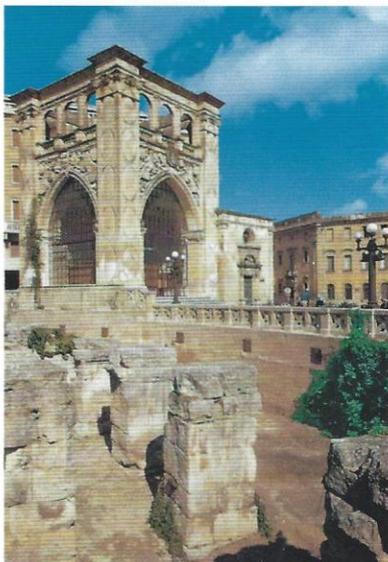




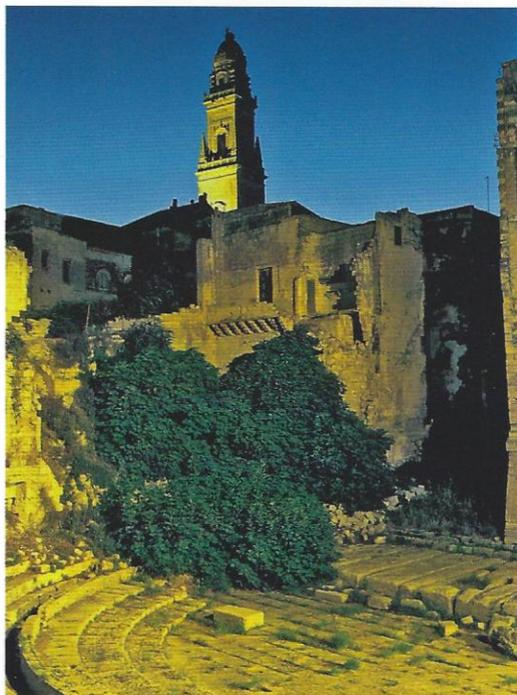
The Palace of the Seminary: 'The pozzale'.



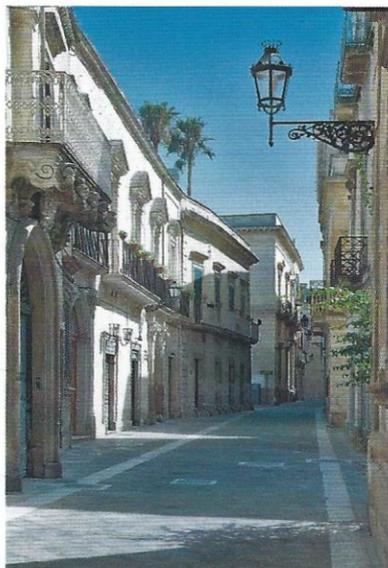
Celestian monastery and the Church of the Holy Cross



Roman amphitheatre and loggia



The bell tower of the Duomo seen from the amphitheatre



Via Palmieri.



The Abbey of S. Maria delle Cerrate

SQUINZANO AND SANTA MARIA DELLE CERRATE

Squinzano is a small town centre famous for its wine and farming production. The Parish Church of S. Nicola, built in 1600 is really remarkable and has not to be missed. It was built in Renaissance style with a huge portal. The 1663 bell tower is the perfect copy of that of Copertino. Not far off Squinzano it is possible to visit one of the most beautiful Apulian Abbeys, S. Maria delle Cerrate. It was founded by an atheist like Tancred who, after falling in love with a woman, was imprisoned in a cell where the Madonna del Cerro redeemed him. This story is masterfully reported in the Jerusalem Delivered by the Italian poet Torquato Tasso and this is not the sole legend told about the origins of this holy place. In fact it is said that the Count Tancred while was running after a hind to kill it, saw the Image of the Mother of God and, deeply affected by this apparition, founded a Basilian Monastery that called S. Maria delle Cervate. In 1500 it was abandoned and then transformed in a hospital for the terminally ill patients of Naples. In the following years it was enlarged but was sacked by the Turks. In 1965 it was annexed to the Province of Lecce that brought it to the ancient beauty. The façade shows

Romanesque features and the linear and heavy-going Norman style. The interior was totally frescoed but the plaster has damaged everything. The baldachin of the altar holds an inscription and Byzantine capitals. Outside do not miss the beautiful Baroque well dated back to 1585. The cloister is supported by small columns and is an architectural masterpiece.

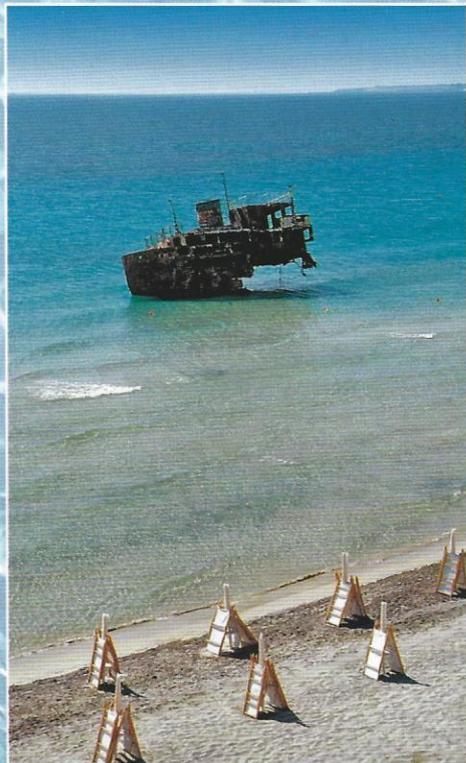


The well in the courtyard of the Abbey. The cloister is an architectural masterpiece

The Adriatic coast of Salento



Le Due Sorelle (The Two Sisters). In the background Torre dell'Orso



Alimini's Lakes

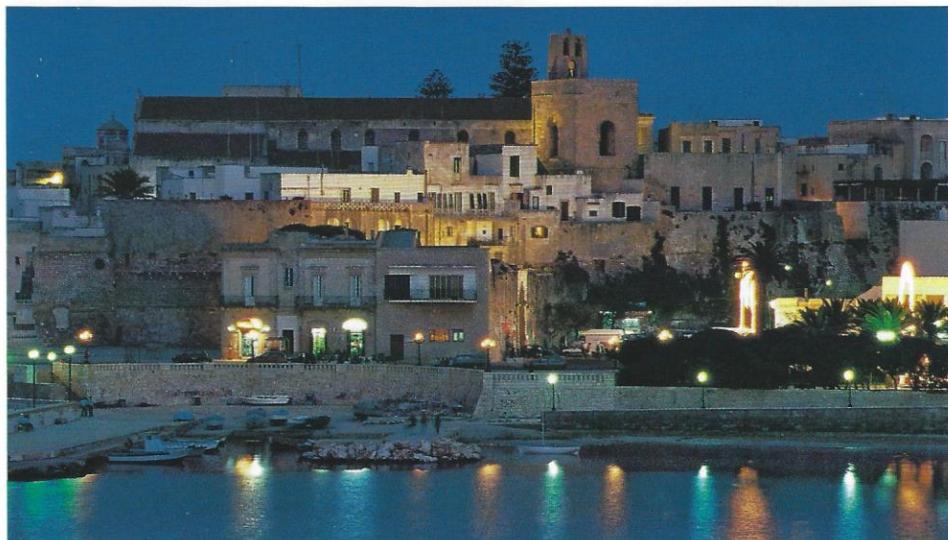


Wreck on Alimini's beaches



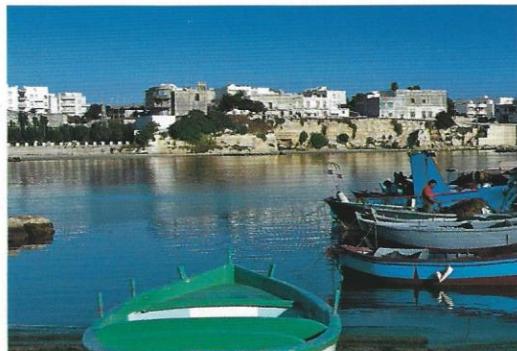
OTRANTO

This marvellous city located on the eastern side of Italy, was named after the torrent Hydrus, that crosses it. It was ruled by the Greeks because of its proximity to Greece, then it was ceded to the Lombards and the Byzantines, becoming an important harbour for the exchanges with the East. In the 9th century it was held by Bari and became the sole Byzantine Archbishopric seat all over Italy depending from Constantinople. Then it passed to the Pope, but it was attacked several times by the Saracens, the Normans and the Greeks. In the 11th and 12th century Otranto lived its best years. The late Middle Ages marked this city of power struggles. It went under

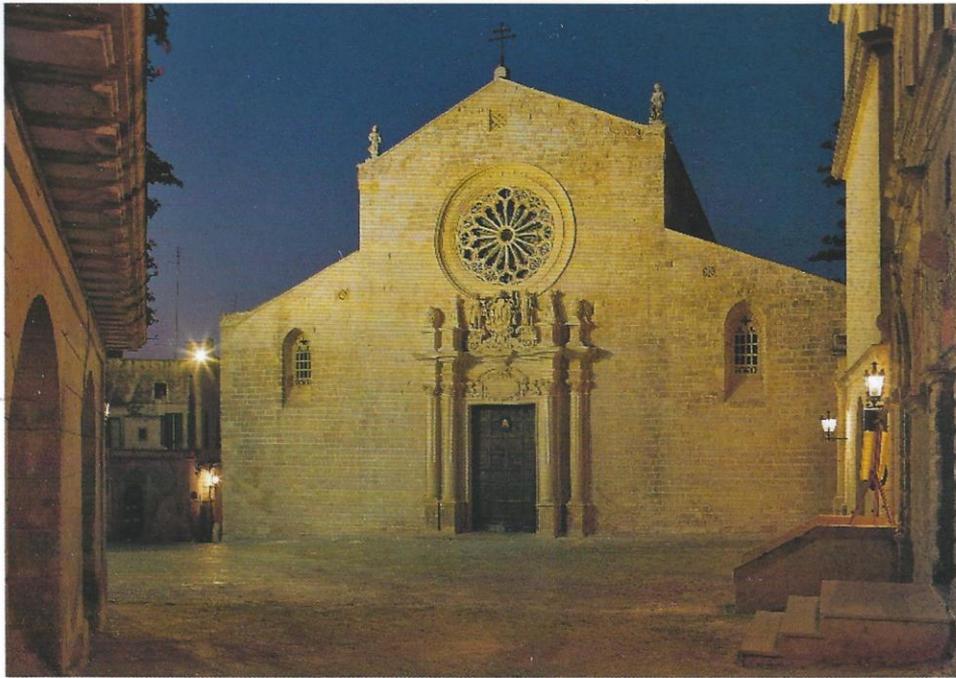


Otranto: nocturnal scene

the Normans, was faithful to the Swabians and was conquered by the Turks headed by the terrible Acmet Pascià in 1480. It was reconquered by the Aragonese Family. This series of different historical and cultural events are still nowadays visible in the city. Along the narrow alleys, it is easy to meet big stony balls, weapons fired by the Saracens during the state of siege. Otranto is a sea resort where every year the tourists visit the architectonic beauties of the monuments. The wonderful **Cathedral** is famous all over the world for its precious mosaics, object of studies. The flooring

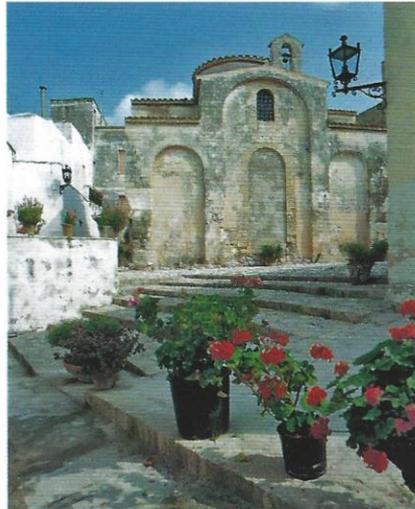


On the left, the lighthouse. On the right Otranto seen from the promenade



The Cathedral of the Assumption and the marvellous sixteen-beamed rose-window

was made by the monk Pantaleone in 1163 and represents a series of images that extraordinarily follow one after the other in portraying the 'life tree'. 600,000 tesserae represent the sacred and the profane mysterious life of Man in the religious world. In the right nave Man is portrayed in his degeneration. In the presbytery the story develops with new mythological events. In the apse the mosaic portrays the wrath of God on the city of Ninive, while on the left nave the division of the good and the evil is represented. The **Cathedral of the Holy Assumption** was built in 1080 and embellished after the Turkish invasion. The façade shows a sixteen-beamed rose window and a Baroque portal dated back to 1674. Another wonderful Byzantine church is that of **S. Pietro**, built in the 11th century and that preserves numerous frescos with Greek inscriptions. The pentagonal-shaped Castle with towers and a moat, was built by Ferdinand of Aragon. Valuable the **Pinta Tower** for the historical value that has handed down. It was discovered only in 1976 and is still subject of debate. This peculiar construction was probably used to bury the dead. Later on, after the advent of Christianity and the first persecutions, it became a secret place for practising the cult, perhaps under the Constantine Age.

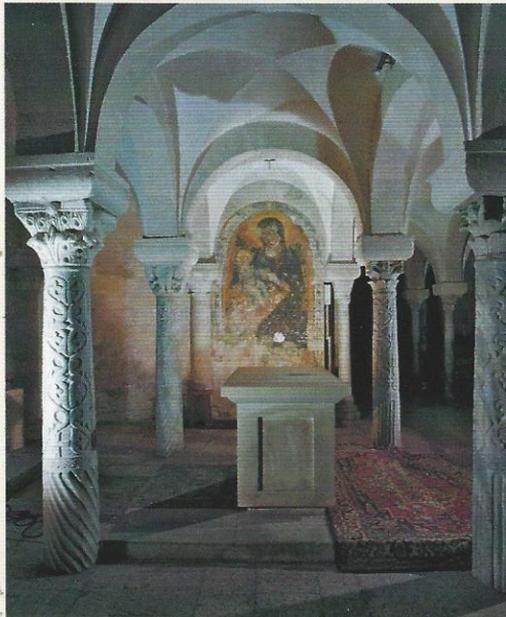


*Small Byzantine Church of S. Pietro
(12th-13th century)*

The interior of the Cathedral of Otranto was in honour of the 'Assumption'. It was erected in 1080 by Roger the Norman. It is an original example of early Christian architecture. Valuable the pompous mosaic flooring, unique in the world, by the monk Pantaleone (12th century), which shows Byzantine features and where the 'life tree' is portrayed.



Details of the flooring: 'mosaics' of the zodiac and presbytery



Interior of the Cathedral: the crypt's altar with a fresco portraying the Madonna.

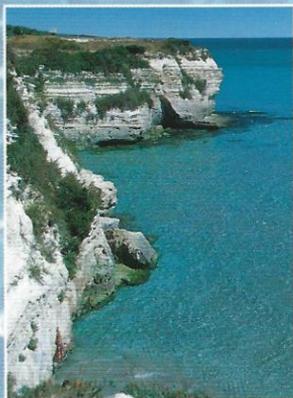
The crypt is supported by 42 columns of different marbles.



Otranto and its surroundings



Watermill



The Specchiulla



Porto Badisco.



Interior of the hypogeum of the Pinta Tower, of which no convincing explanation has been given.



S. Andrea.



Coast of Otranto

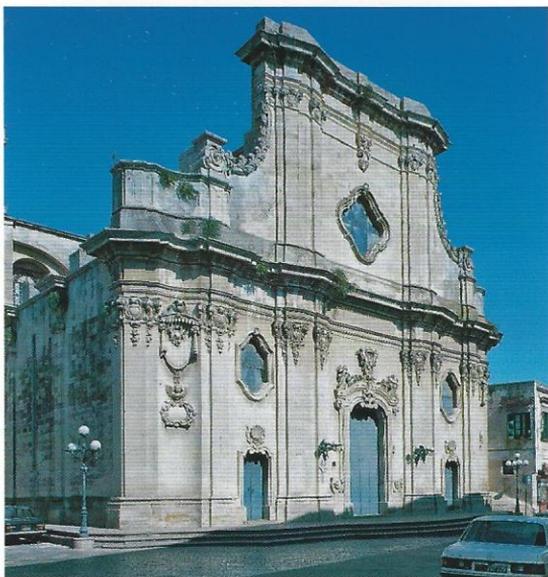


High coasts of Leuca

MAGLIE

Famous industrial and trading centre, renowned for the local craftsmanship of embroideries and wrought iron working. The 1600 Church of **Our Lady of Graces** was built in Baroque style and the 1700 Baroque Parish Church shows a beautiful bell tower that is similar to that of the **Duomo** (Cathedral) of Lecce. Well-worth a visit is the **Municipal Museum of Palaeontology**, where the remains of the prehistoric fauna are collected.

Mother Church façade



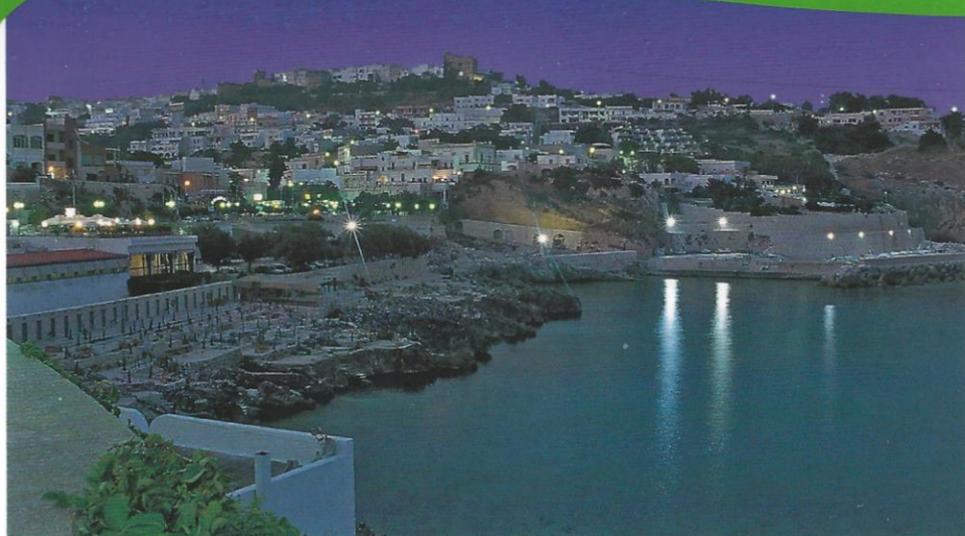
SANTA CESAREA

Santa Cesarea is famous for the thermal resort located on the Otranto Canal, a place of extraordinary beauty. Well-worth a visit the marvellous **Romanelli Cavern** discovered in 1879, that shows not only karst phenomena but is also an important site for the study of fossils belonging to different prehistoric ages.



Porto Miggiano- Below: View. In the background the lights of Castro.



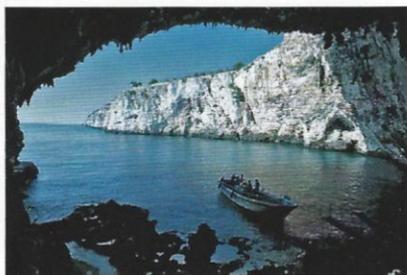
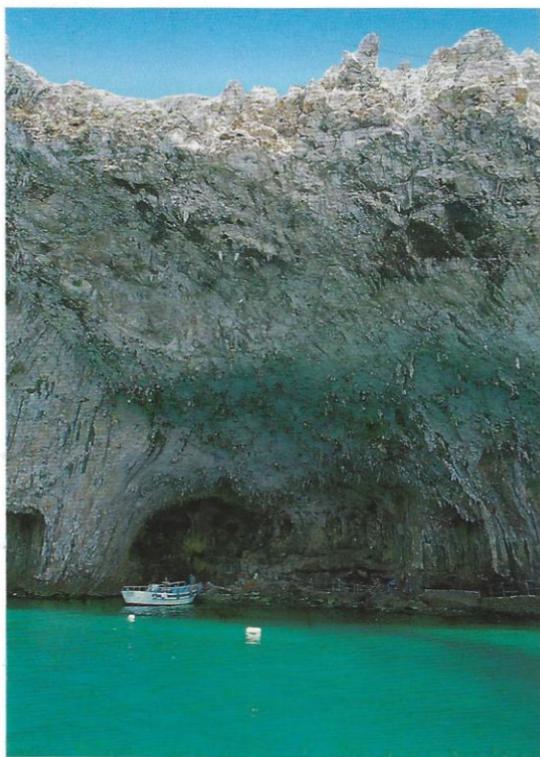


Nocturnal view of Castro

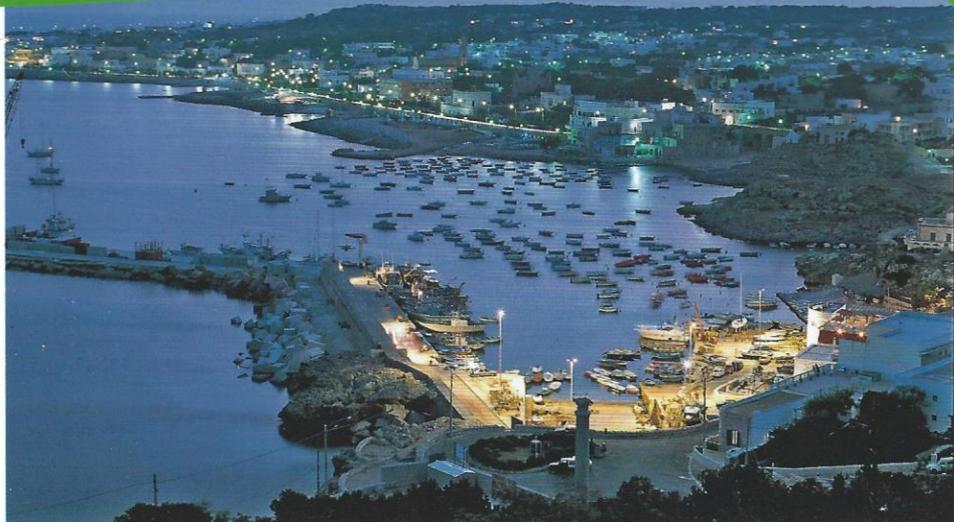
CASTRO - CAVERN OF THE ZINZULUSA

This small farming centre was probably founded by the Greeks. Then it became an important Roman trading centre and in the Middle Ages a Bishop's seat. It was often attacked by the pirates because of its proximity to the sea and for this reason still visible fortifications were built. The **Castle**, built on the ruins of an ancient Roman fortress, was restored several times. The 12th-century Cathedral, imitating the Oriental style structure, preserves Romanesque sculptures and paintings of the 12th-13th centuries. **Castro Marina** is a beautiful sea resort located in a picturesque and quiet place.

The **Cavern of the Zinzulusa** is an extraordinary cavern for Apulia, where numerous stalactites and stalagmites can be admired. Here also some Palaeolithic finds were discovered.



The cavern sunken in the promontory

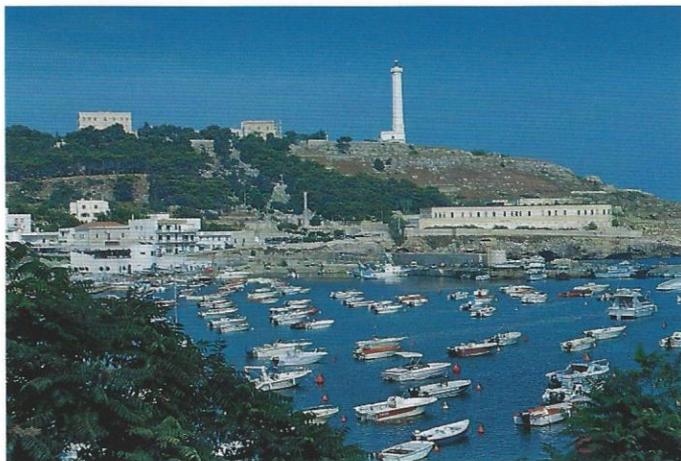


Leuca: the eastern point of Italy

LEUCA

Leuca is located in the far eastern heel of Italy, the meeting point of the winds and the waters from the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic Sea. The Sanctuary rises on the extremity of Punta Meliso promontory which is bordered by two seas: the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea. The sanctuary was attacked and destroyed several times

by the Saracens and in 1720 was definitely rebuilt. It was a place visited by many pilgrims devoted to the Madonna and was probably built on the ruins of an ancient temple in honour of Minerva. It is said that people once in their lives have to visit this place as living or dead people, to go to Paradise. The interior shows a wonderful painting of the Madonna by Andrea Curaci. The Madonna in this sacred place protects the voyage of the sailors.

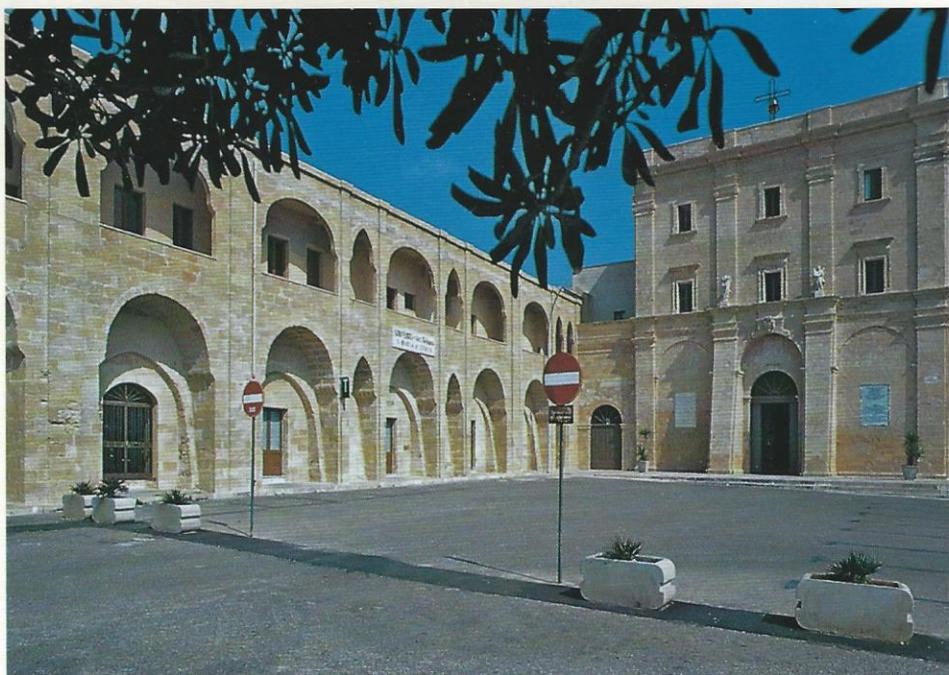


The lighthouse on the cliff. It is 47 metres high from its base, and 102 metres high from the sea level.



Group of fishing boats in the port

Sanctuary 'S. Maria de Finibus Terrae' (S. Mary on the End of the Land)

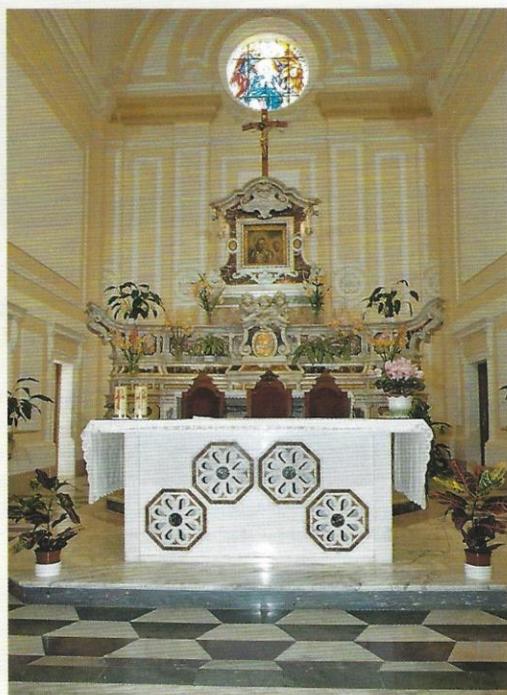


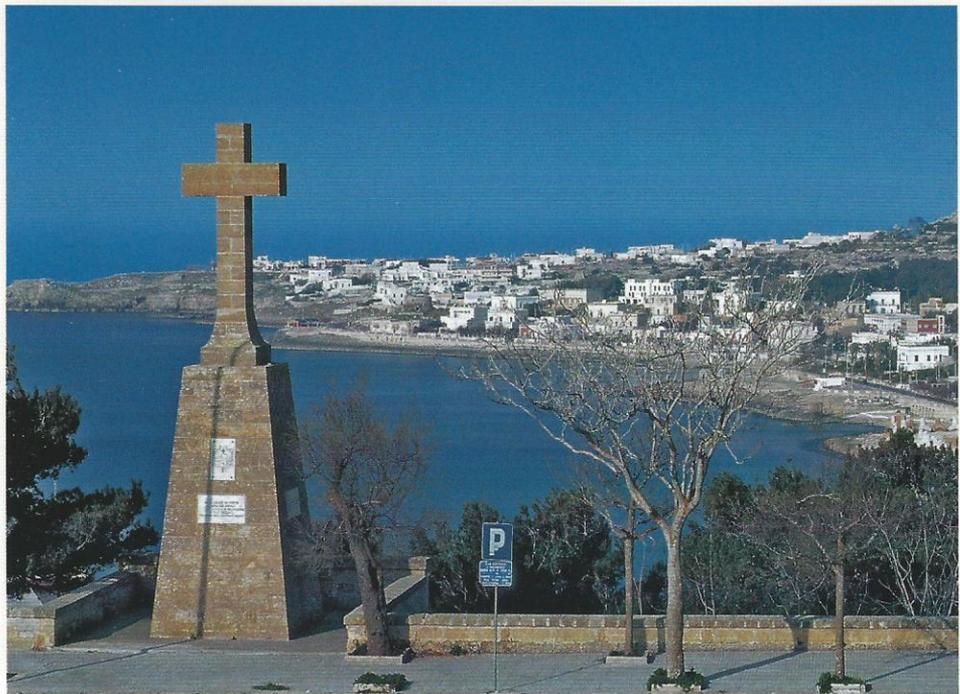
The Sanctuary of S. Maria di Leuca



*The image of the Madonna
'S. Maria de Finibus Terrae'
(St. Mary on the End of the Land)*

Altar



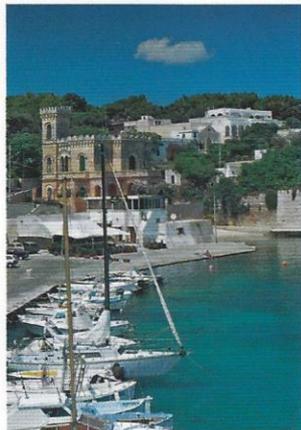


TRICASE

Famous farming centre by the medieval aspect that must be visited for its well-preserved monuments. The **Gallone Palace** is an ancient 14th-century Castle; the 1770 Baroque mother church shows in the interior precious paintings by Paolo Veronesi and Palma the Young. Tricase Porto is a pleasant tourist resort where a genuine fresh-fish cooking can be tasted.



Ciolo Bridge



Tricase



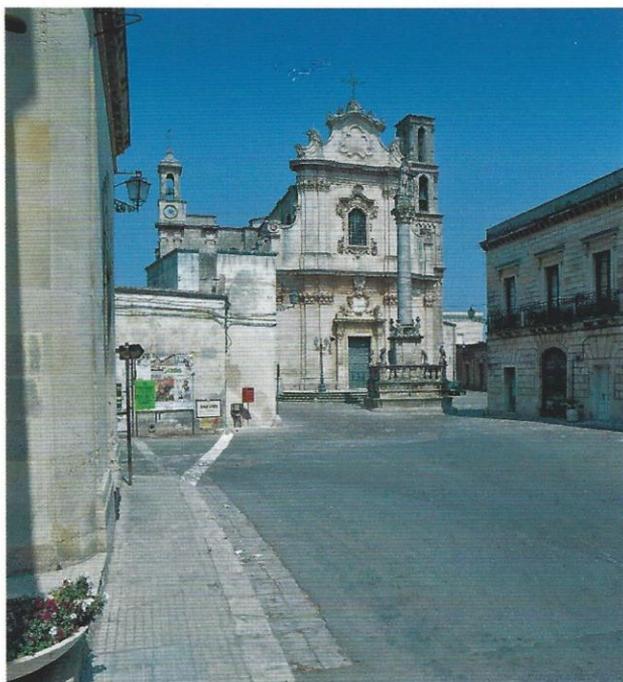
Small port



Church of S. Maria del Foggiaro

PRESICCE

Few are the historical news about the origin of this small town. The local historian Giacomo Arditì dates back to the 4th century AD the foundation of this place. The series of feudatories that for donation or legal assets ruled the fief of Presicce from 1088 to 1806, date in which feudalism was abolished, have been instead documented. Presicce is a small, pleasant and cleaned town centre crossed by roads on which 16th-18th-century mansions and Baroque monuments stand. Among these, the Parish Church of **S. Andrea**, an 18th-century construction with a Baroque façade by the local architect Saverio Negro, is well-worth a visit.



Parish Church in honour of S. Andrea. Opposite, the 18th-century column of the patron saint.



CASTRIGNANO DEL CAPO

This town centre developed around Year 1000, after the destruction of the hamlets of Vereto and Leuca. But ancient caverns and bone remains testify that its origins were dated back to the Messapian Age. Under the Norman rule, Castrignano built two towers and rebuilt the fortifications destroyed by the Saracens. In 1739 the earthquake destroyed part of the small town, the cathedral and the ancient Norman fortalices. Later the Baroque Church of S. Michele was rebuilt.

Alleys of medieval aspect

PATÙ (CENTOPIETRE)

Patù stands on the ruins of the ancient Vereto, as the graves and the last local finds attest. It is famous for the archaic Messapic monument of Centopietre, on the outskirts of Patù, near the Church of S. Giovanni. In the 10th century, **Centopietre** was transformed in a Church in honour of S. Geminiano. In 1873 it became a national monument.



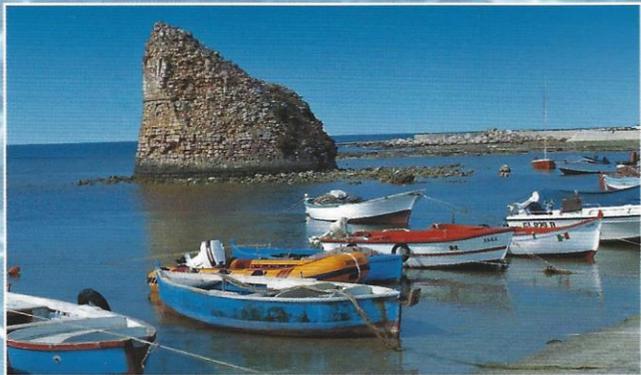
Ionian coast of Salento



Vado Tower. In the background the beach of Pescoluse.



Turquoise sea on the beach of Pescoluse.



Pali Tower: picturesque spot on the Ionian coast.



Uncontaminated beach



UGENTO

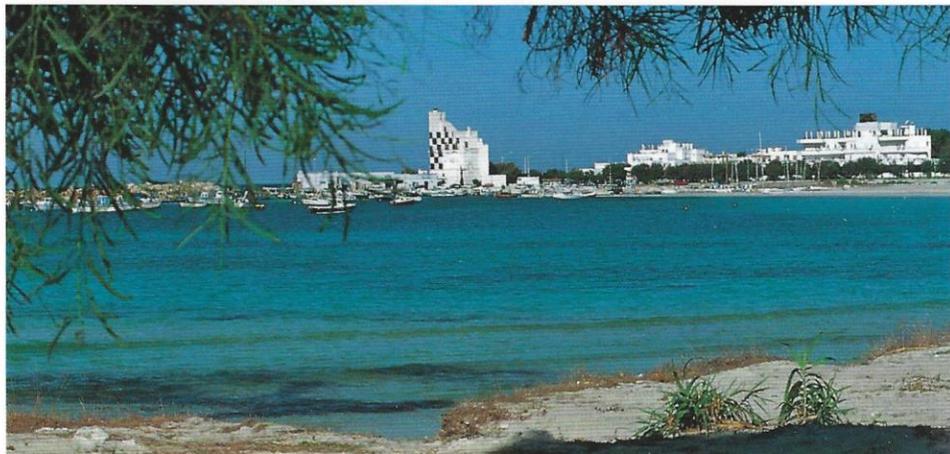
Ugento was inhabited since Prehistory as numerous finds dated back to the Messapic Age (coins, tombs and graffito) attest. It is thought that it was an important and independent Messapic centre. Under the Greeks the small town progressively decayed. The Goths and Saracens sacked it several times. In the 11th century it underwent the Normans and restarted a flourishing period thanks to the Prince Raimondo Del Balzo who annexed it to his jurisdiction. It was newly destroyed by the Turks and this decadent period lasted until the first half of the 17th century, when under the feudatory of the Pandone family, it regained wellness. During the 18th century, the main monuments have been changed. The **Colosso Palace** preserves an interesting collection of weapons, bronzes and coins.



Town centre

TORRE SAN GIOVANNI

The inhabitants of Ugento have their marina in Torre San Giovanni. The Tower was built in 1563 on the seashore, near the ruins of the ancient port of Ugento (Romanesque Age). It is a famous tourist and sea resort thanks to the cleaned waters and the fine sand.



Torre S. Giovanni.



The Church of St. Mary of the Holy Cross, known as the Church of Casaranello

CASARANO

Casarano was founded by the Romans, as two famous experts of local history assert and afterwards was Hellenized for more than five centuries. The actual inhabited centre developed thanks to the Late Middle Ages depopulation of the close Casaranello. The most important testimony of the Byzantine Age is the Church of **S. Maria della Croce**, also known as **Church of Casaranello**. Here the ancient town centre of Casarano stood and Pietro Tomacelli, elected Pope in 1839 under the name of Boniface IX, was born. The church has a basilican plan without a transversal nave and a simple façade with a circular-shaped window. The interior with a nave and two side aisles has six pillars while the high altar is located under the dome. The dome and the vault are covered by Byzantine mosaics representing animals, religious symbols and geometrical patterns. Casarano is at present an important economic and trading centre of lower Salento.

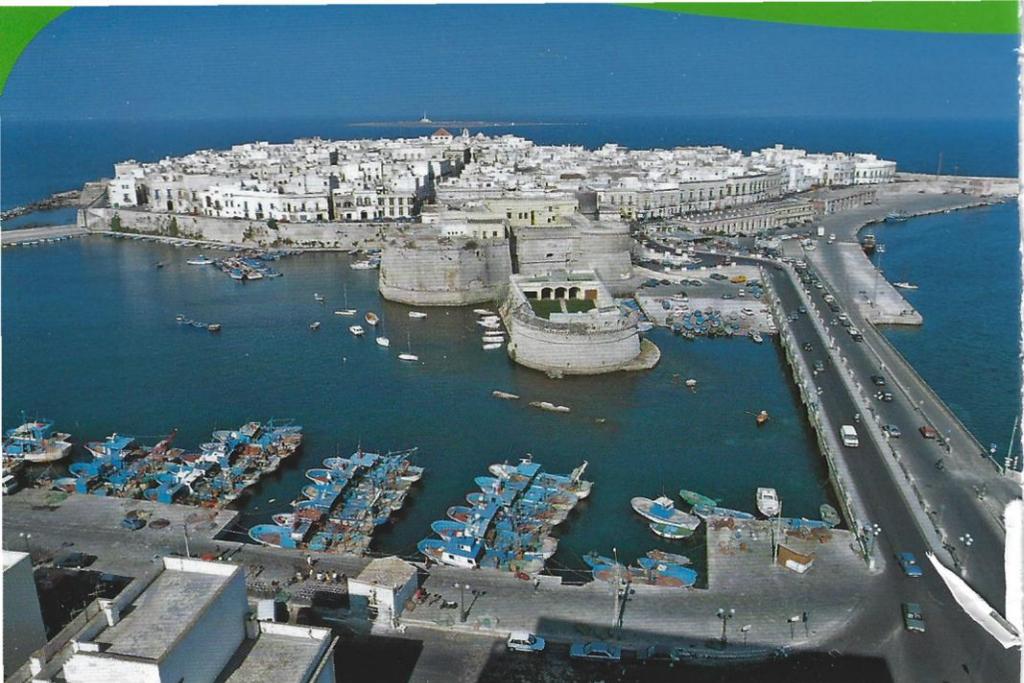


Octagonal spire on which the Statue of St. John, protector saint of the town, is located

MARINA OF MANCAVERSA

Famous beach resort, marked by a vegetation on the coast and characterized by efficient bathing establishments for a demanding tourism.

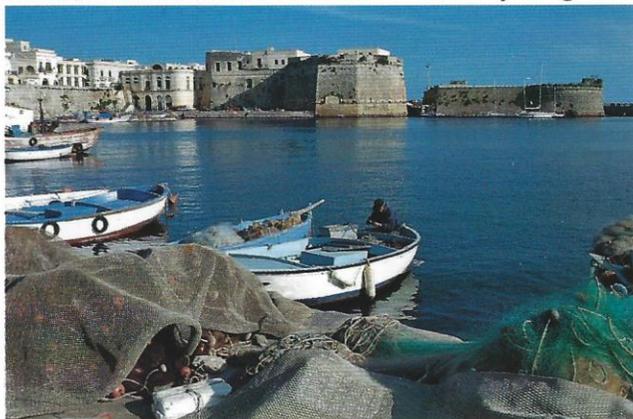




Gallipoli 'Treasure of the Ionian Sea'.

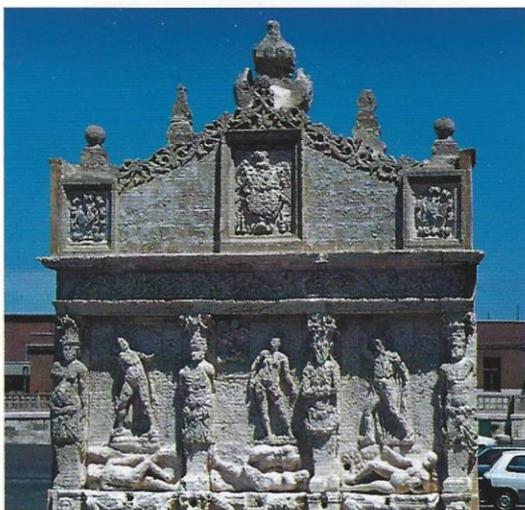
GALLIPOLI

Gallipoli, very ancient small town centre located on the west coast of the Salentinian peninsula, in summertime is visited by many tourists for its marvellous sea. It is divided into two areas: the modern and the old town. The new town includes all the newest buildings including a skyscraper. The old town, instead, is located on a limestone island, linked to the mainland by a bridge built in the 16th century. The Messapic name of the ancient Gallipoli was Anxa. It was a Roman Municipium and was faithful to the Swabian King Frederick II. Charles Anjou built there a 15th-century Castle that was ceded to Raimondello Orsini. Then Gallipoli underwent the Aragonese and Bourbon families. In 1860 a group of Garibaldians proclaimed it free from the Bourbon rule. The **Cathedral of Gallipoli was built in honour of S. Agata in 1629** and the beautiful façade was ended after some years. The interior is predominantly Baroque and shows beautiful paintings by Malinconico, Luca Giordano and Catalano. The imposing **Castle** was commissioned by Charles Anjou at the end of the 16th century on an already existent Byzantine structure. It is formed by a 1522 Ravelin that stretches out the sea and a four-sided fortification with corner towers. The polygonal tower in the south-eastern corner is the Byzantine castle. Valuable the **Greek-Roman fountain**, the most



The harbour. In the background the castles.

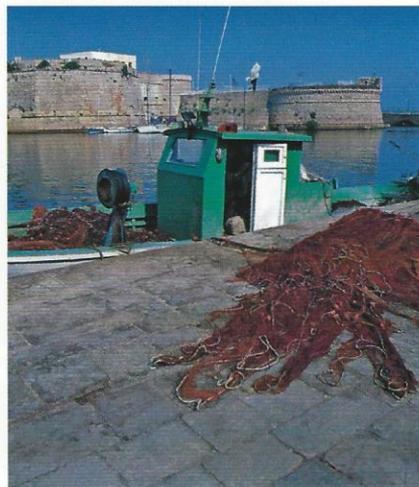
ancient fountain of Italy at the borders between the new and old city. It shows ornaments and caryatids and three paintings portraying the mythological metamorphosis of Dirce, Salmace and Biblide. At present the fountain is unfortunately corroded by the sea salt. Gallipoli is rich in amazing palaces built in the 16th and 17th century, like: the Pirelli Palace, the Ravenna Palace, the Balsamo Palace and the Venneri Palace. The Municipal Museum, founded by the naturalist Emanuele Barba, collects remarkable archaeological finds. Some rooms instead host fossils and numismatics. The town is nowadays living on tourism.



The Greek-Roman fountain



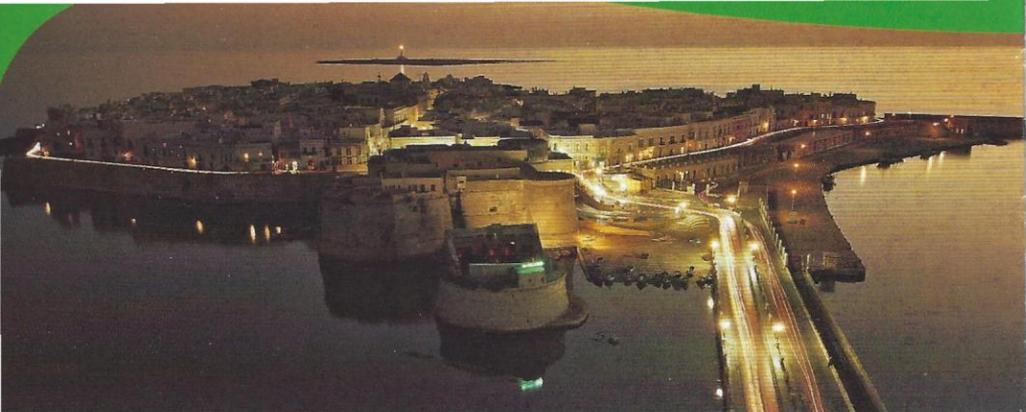
Porto S. Giorgio, West riviera



The castle with the Ravelin

Purità quarter

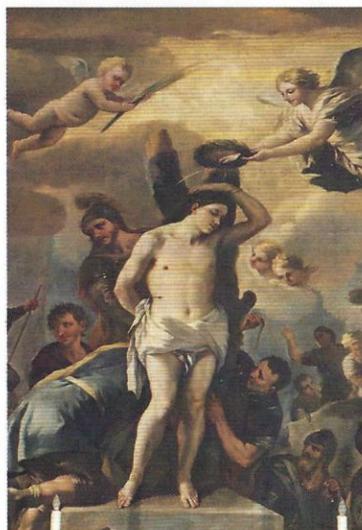




Gallipoli

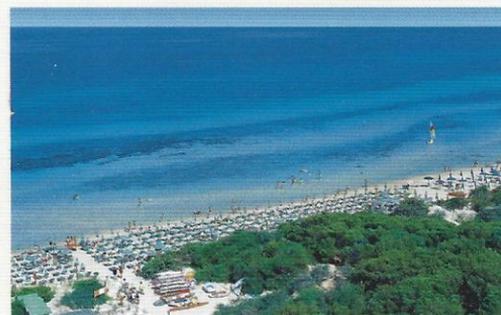
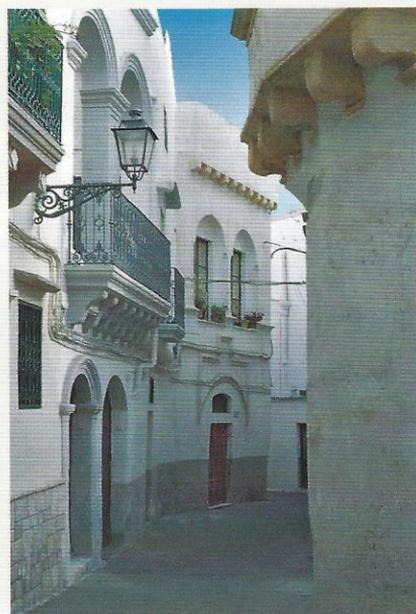
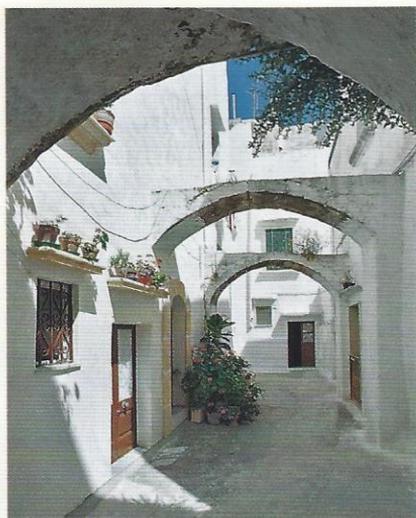


Baroque façade of the Cathedral built in 1630. On the right, the interior

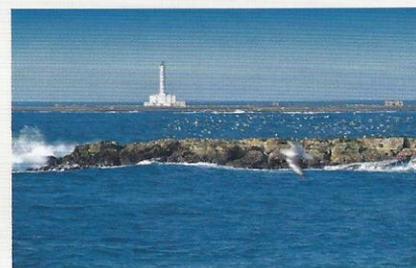


Paintings by Coppola, aristocratic painter of Gallipoli: the Martyr of St. Agatha and St. Sebastian

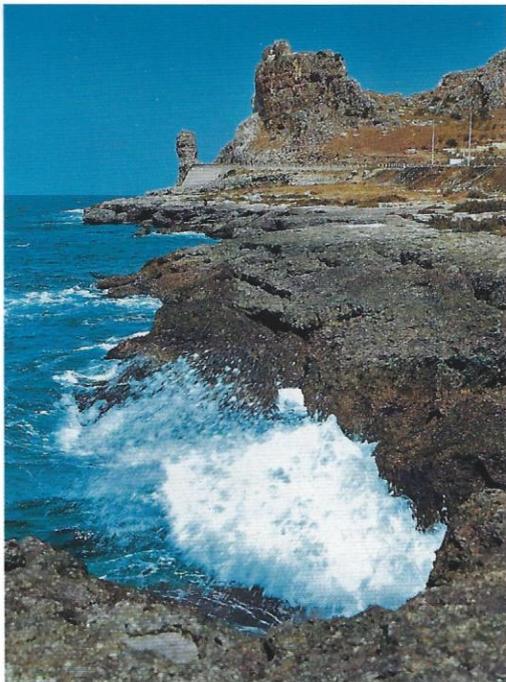
Among the alleys and courtyards of Gallipoli



Rivabella



The Island of S. Andrea



MONTAGNA SPACCATA

Montagna Spaccata is between Rivabella and Santa Maria al Bagno. The promontory is crossed by a road dominated by a cylindrical tower.

Far off Gallipoli, northwards, the Neretina riviera, characterized by a picturesque coast rich in bays and beaches.

QUATTRO COLONNE (FOUR COLUMNS)

Quattro Colonne, a place with a Moorish architecture, took this name for its resemblance to a 16th-century fortified town with four-sided towers.



SANTA MARIA AL BAGNO

Small beach-tourist resort was inhabited since ancient times as fragments of Roman graves, discovered along the coast, testify.



SANTA CATERINA

Santa Caterina, located in a little rocky bay repaired by the winds and dominated by four square-shaped towers, is located in a spot that embraces all the coast up to Gallipoli.



PORTO SELVAGGIO

It is a sheer drop from the cliffs to the clear sea; a fantastic natural inlet with deserted spots of peace. The pinewood embraces the whole landscape and surrounds the coast. The view that can be admired from the highest rocks is for those tourists fond of wild nature.



NARDÒ

This is the biggest town centre after Lecce, and it is an important farming and trading centre. The ancient Neretum belonged to the Salentinians and became a Roman Municipium. In the Middle Ages it was a Byzantine centre and afterwards was conquered by Geoffrey the Norman who fortified and transformed it in a fief. Until the 15th century it preserved the Greek and Latin rite. The Turks sacked and conquered it in 1480 then, after four years, it was ceded to the Venetians. It belonged to the Aragonese, Del Balzo and Acquaviva families and was contested with the Acquaviva and Imperiali families. The Risorgimento was an important cultural chance for Nardò.

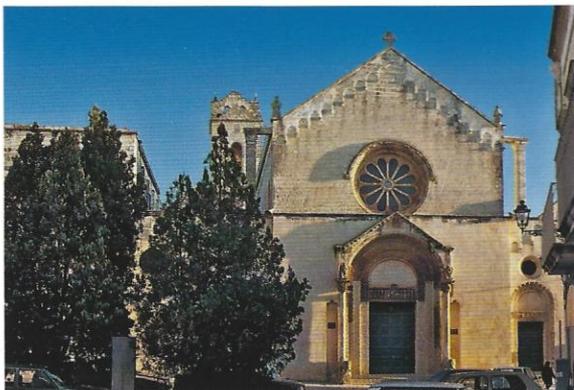


15th-century Castle

The **Cathedral** is one of the most important monuments of the town centre. It was built by the Benedictines in 1090 and was modified in the following centuries. In the first years of the 20th century it regained its primary structure. The interior is surmounted by six different columns per side. The 1230 earthquake damaged the cathedral but lots of things were rescued. Valuable the paintings imitating the Byzantine style and the wooden carved Black Cross. Of valuable historical interest the **Osanna**, a Baroque-Gothic circular-shaped niche. Gracious the Church of **S. Domenico**, where the Baroque architecture prevails.

GALATINA

Galatina, one of the most important centres of Salento, has been inhabited since ancient times and became notorious for the 1384 Church of S. Caterina commissioned by Raimondello Del Balzo Orsini. The interiors preserve valuable frescoes and the graves of Raimondello and his son Giovanni Antonio. The Parish Church of the Ss. **Pietro e Paolo** shows a marvellous Baroque façade.



*the Gothic-Roman Basilica of S. Caterina,
dated back to the 14th century*

PORTO CESAREO

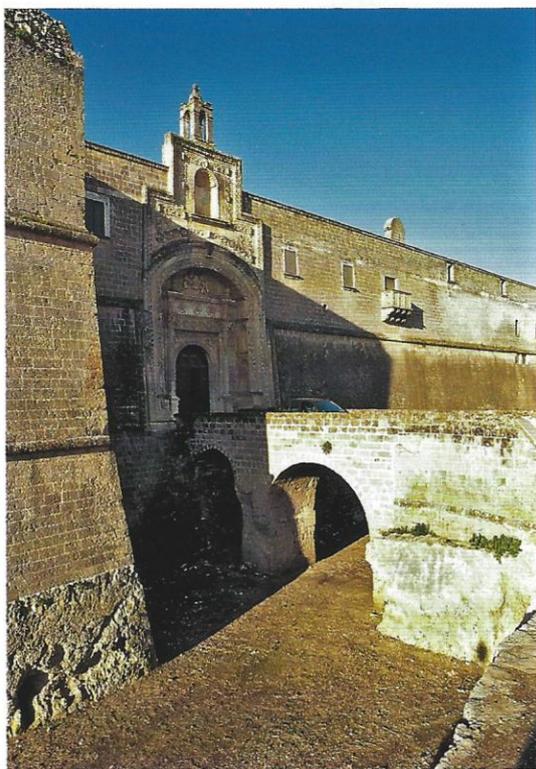
Porto Cesareo is a small sea centre visited in summertime by many tourists. Fishing is the main economic resource seeing that the sea is here rich in fish and crystal clear. The coast is at intervals low and indented and numerous are the cliffs and small islands that surround it. One of these cliffs is linked by a bridge to the dry land. The **Isola dei Conigli** (Island of the Rabbits) can be reached on foot and is well-worth a visit for the luxuriant vegetation made of Aleppo's pinetrees, acacias and bushes of lentisk.



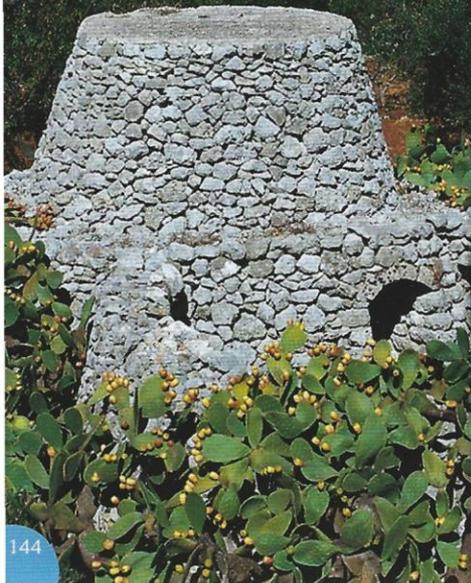


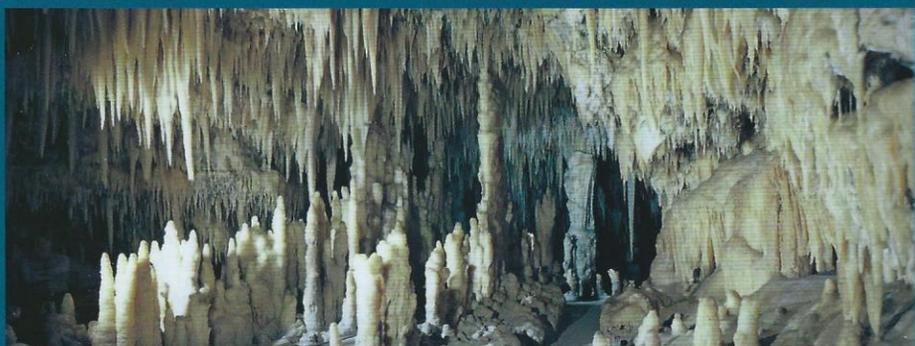
COPERTINO

Copertino is an important farming centre cultivated with olive groves, vineyards and cereals. It is divided in the old and modern city and is well-worth a visit for its monuments and for the **Castle**. In fact it is the best preserved construction all over Salento. It was built in 1540 by Evangelista Menga on behalf of Alfonso Castriota. It is an imposing trapezoidal construction which holds an Angevin donjon in the middle. It is surrounded by a moat and shows a marvelous Renaissance portal. Into the **Chapel**, the sarcophagi by Umberto and Stefano Squarciafico and frescos portraying S. Sebastiano and S. Caterina di Alessandria by Strafella, can be admired. The **Collegiate Church or Madonna delle Nevi (Madonna of the Snows)** was founded in 1088 and modernized in the following centuries. The 1588 bell tower in Baroque style was probably built by Tarantino.



The Castle.





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