



Provincia di Rimini

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MALATESTA & MONTEFELTRO



RIVIERA DI RIMINI

LEGENDS, MYSTERIES AND CURIOSITY OF THE PROVINCE OF RIMINI

travel notes



Places and tour itineraries



Where we are



**LEGENDS, MYSTERIES
AND CURIOSITY**
of the Province of Rimini

Riviera of Rimini Travel Notes

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LEGENDS, MYSTERIES AND CURIOSITY

of the Province of Rimini

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INTRODUCTION

A fascinating journey of discovery

Legends, mysteries, curiosities, reside in every corner of the Earth of the Lordships. And the Renaissance Lordships referred to here are those of the Malatesta and of the Montefeltro that in the territory of the Province of Rimini developed and fought one another, alternating in the domain of feuds and cities.

The territory is dispersed with castles, fortified villages, fortresses, and towers which still hold many historic memories, but not only of remembrance, because they also hold curious stories within, real and fantasy, such unique characters whose stories are halfway between reality and myth, and there is still much more including ancient rituals, archaic beliefs, traditions handed down through the centuries, superstitions originating from popular customs, puzzles, and ghost apparitions.

Attraction and suggestion are therefore the guiding thread that accompanies the historical places, but it is not only here that they overwhelmingly arise.

A special fascination captures the visitor into the woods, chestnut groves, in mountain trails lined with votive cells, on the riversides and in the plains revealing the childhood of the world with spontaneous vegetation which has been the same over thousands of years and with a myriad of fossils that appear to the naked eye.

In the abandoned cemeteries, green rectangles on the tombstones that are the paradise of the soul, in the natural caves and in the tombs excavated by man whose origins are still secret, along the forgotten or unfinished railroad tracks, in the dismantled mines that have now become a museum with an ancestral burden to the son of the darkness who populates the bowels of the earth.

Then there are the sacred places, the speakers, the churches, the cathedrals which host works of art, crucifixes, frescoes and paintings depicting virgins worshiped for centuries, able to give benefits and miracles, and even chapels that guard the remains of saints, many found in this territory since the origins of Christianity.

Among them is the Malatestian Temple, today the Cathedral of Rimini, which alone is a unique and extraordinary monument, a hymn to man, to the created and to the philosophy of Humanity, with its constellation of signs to be interpreted beyond what is to be enjoyed, because through this we have the connection with beauty, aesthetics and stylistic perfection.

In the province of Rimini, so full of beauty and strong references, from the sea to the mountains, starting from the capital to the smallest villages, highlighted is the attractive aspect that is colored by the mystery,

the esoteric, the magical, the mythological, the cryptic, and the unknown,

This is because of natural coincidences, for legacies of history, culture and popular traditions, for human intervention, moved by contingent and spiritual needs, influenced from the dialogue with nature and its secrets.

History and prehistory have left indelible signs to find and to learn, but new reasons have been added to them in every era, to re-engage the curiosity and try to give answers to the often unexplained phenomena.

They have been handed down, and are still alive today, extraordinary stories, populated by ghosts, legendary moments, and legends of mythological beliefs, strange and indecipherable phenomena. And always in this land of sacredness and spirituality they have been able to generate faith in miracles and in visions.

Similarly, the memory was never forgotten of the figures close to the world of alchemy, esotericism, masonry and neither for the search of the supernatural. And those as much alive are the ones born or who lived here, by their will or by imposition, which dialogue with the parallel worlds, like that of the art world, especially of poetry and of cinema.

Lastly, there is also research and studies in science fiction, specifically designed to stop the moment in which ghosts reveal themselves before returning into their oblivion. All of this structure in the present contents of this guide wants to lead you along unusual paths, but with great emotional impact.

Have a good trip.



CHAPTER I

ANCIENT BELIEFS

Witches, goblins, demons, spirits

Going into our forests, among century old chestnuts or beech trees from dense foliage is not just the beauty that strikes us. The sea of green which fascinates us, treading underbrush where fruits and flowers attract our senses, also conveys a deep sense of mystery. Kidnapping in this sense is ensured because of the presences that are felt, often albeit mild, or at least not too intrusive or pervasive, and are unexplainable.

And here they reappear in the mind through the folk tales, the legends that recount of presences, sounds, lights, all mysterious and full of suggestions. These are stories that embellish our valleys and our countryside, those around the city of Rimini and the towns of the province.

If you happen to meet an elderly person and they begin to talk to you about the inhabitants of the woods and of the things that happen, be assured that you will be very impressed. There are in fact a few people who have been Protagonists of unusual facts, to which they have been unable to give answers or have traced them back to popular beliefs. A strange presence, sounds and noises in the trees, sudden lights in the night; ghosts of a thousand appearances, with horse heads or hooded like black friars, small and wise creatures of the woods crouched behind a tree trunk or hidden away in a cave. Sometimes they may appear in the form of eyeballs that wander through the bushes and play tricks on the humans and animals, for example they make braids in the horses' mane.

The reports, between the hills of Emilia and Romagna, were many. But who are the eyes that spy on us? Are they goblins? Gnomes in the woods? They are an ancient entity, called *Mazapégul*, which goes back to the Celtic culture. This is essentially a goblin, part monkey and part cat, with a red cap, which comes out at night and is attracted by the horses to which they interweave the manes. So elves, fairies, gnomes, goblins and all those fairy creatures that belong to the world of the unknown do they really exist? And from locals you can hear that the *Mazapégul* do not just live in the woods but visit the stables, the homes, the bedrooms, and the kitchens of the folk! In short, the folk tales on their existence are abundant.

Of course you have to go back decades, when in our countryside and mountains once there was the belief in magicians, in witches, in malice 'the evil eye', curses, beliefs that have remained alive until the very first years after the war, then to just disappear at least in appearance.

You have to go back in time to find the roots of these popular beliefs and precisely when these lands were inhabited from the Celts that were nothing more than the strain of that population that was then called Galli.

The Rituals of the Celts

The religion of the Celts, like most ancient religions, had two aspects: an esoteric and a folk one. Their priests and guardians of the religion were the Druids. The folklore level was an accessible mythology and from a series of rituals that slowly incorporated also some archaic elements dating back to the Neolithic era and from solar telluric and lunar cults.

All people in Gaul chose their own protector number by attributing to it also a particular name, so that by analyzing the features of more than three hundred Celtic Gods, at least mentions once the epigraphic, in the end it seems to find oneself at the hand of many dual divinities, similar in attributes, but concealed under different names.

For example, as Giulio Cesare writes, they divided the year into two seasons only: the season of the black months (Winter) and that of the bright months (Summer). The Celts, the children of the night, therefore began to start the year in the black months, winter, with *Samhain's* sacred feast celebrating the night before the dawn of the 1st of November.

It was the most important holiday of the Celtic year, a sacred feast of excellence that lasted for three nights, and it was considered the night when the doors of the Afterworld opened as they allowed the transit between the two planes of reality.

In Samhain, human time was suspended from the intervention of the Sacred, and this made it possible for the intrusion of the mystic into the real world. What does this celebration suggest to you? The analogies with our Feast of the Dead and that of All Saints are remarkable.

The night before the dawn of February 1st was celebrated by *Imbolc*, the feast of the flocks which greeted the worst of winter. This corresponds to the Roman feast of fertility and purification from the impurity of the winter, what we call "lomm at mèrz" or "focarina or focaraccia" or "the old saw". The bonfire "focaraccia" well known since being portrayed by Federico Fellini in *Amarcord*. This bonfire was moved to March and the highlight is usually at the eve of the Feast of St. Joseph on the night of the 19th, but in many areas first a big bonfire is lit while singing and drinking for the end of winter.

However, the date of the Imbolc did not disappear because it was absorbed from the Christian holiday of Candelora. The name comes from the fact that it is the day when all the lamps and candles are lit up, thus





making a huge light, and this was the typical Roman celebration that was celebrated in the middle of February, then transformed by Christians into the blessing of candles, symbol of Christ “light to enlighten the people,” as Jesus was called at the time of his submission to the Temple of Jerusalem, as prescribed by the Jewish law for the firstborn males.

Beltane is the feast that fell in the night before the dawn of May 1st, a festival devoted to the “Fire of Bel” as the name says, which recalls the Belenus Gallico, the God of Light, marking the start of the good season and thus also the beginning of raids and conquests.

So if they still exist in Rimini as well as in Romagna traces of mythology, that is, of superstitions and beliefs, it must be said that they originate from paganism and the religions of the Celtic populations that before the Romans inhabited these lands.

They have spread and have remained through time because, as it is known, folklore is very slow to abandon its traditions, and its rituals. And one of the surviving elements of that mythology is the undoubtedly known *Mazapégul*.

That is, the popular domestic goblin belonging to the Goblin Spirits. Some have identified the origin of this goblin to be of Celtic mythology, which in the Latin traditions of the Lares, filtered through the mystical-astonished experiences which use the *Amanita Muscaria* of the Neolithic populations. Others find their derivation in Umbrian culture, in the form of adoration to the woodpecker; others still find a connection with the Etruscan god Tages. In any case very similar figures, antecedents of the *Mazapégul* are traced across the Mediterranean.

Mazapégul

Mazapégul is the typical goblin of Romagna, mischievous and cowardly that passes nights in annoying the people, whether they are young girls or mature men.

It belongs to the small family of night goblins, made up of several tribes including the Mazapedar and the Calcarel, spread throughout Romagna. A fictitious character for excellence, in the folklore of Romagna the creature is somewhere between a goblin and a demon, the psychological vampire. It is a very small being, a hybrid between the cat and the monkey,

Above to the left
**representation of
the goblin called
'Mazapegul'**

Above to the right
**exotic attractions,
early twentieth
century, of the**

**traditional Fair
of the Cuckolds
in Santarcangelo
di Romagna**

Below
**livestock market
at the Fair of the
Cuckolds "Fiera
dei becchi"**

with gray fur, and with a red beret on its head. And being one of the many nightmares, he is a real master in inducing weight to the belly and horrible dreams.

He can be found everywhere, even in the intimacy of the house, so it is necessary to know what he loves and what he does not love to be able to make it leave. Women are told that to get rid of the inconvenience, they have to be seen in the evening eating a piece of bread while pretending to remove head lice. The Mazapégul becomes so offended that it is no longer is seen, but not for the outrage he suffered, but because it believes he's protecting an unclean person. Similarly you can eat bread and cheese, while being on the toilet, to make it run away!

To defend oneself from the Mazapégul it was once thought it useful to stretch a sack on the blanket of the bed, so he stayed away with the fear of being caught and locked up. Having also a great aversion to water, this was another good antidote. Another method is to spread a handful of rice grains on the window sill; he counts them one by one, until the sun comes up and then runs away.

Remember that without its cap, the goblin loses its talents. But it's not okay to take it away from him. There is a story about a beloved girl, who had removed the beret and did not want to give it back to him. He then threatened her with a heavy spite and one night when the girl went dancing she suddenly found herself naked. Mazapégul as well as other mysterious presences were conversation starters in the stables, at night and in the waking hours, but also in the tavern, or were dear themes to the storytellers who travelled from trade fair to fair, market to market.

Storytellers like those of today, which meet at the *San Martino Fair*, on November 11th, in Santarcangelo di Romagna, and up until the 1930s/40s of the last century, they performed beside trained bears or mischievous monkeys. The world of fairs was varied and rich of ancestral and archaic folklore. Even though the transgression reigned at that time, and in those days all was allowed, also not paying the taxes - they were provided institutional franchises - or make betrayals public - still well-known today are the residual horns placed under the great triumphal arch dedicated to Pope Clement XIV - there was never a lack of respect for the Mazapégul.

They were part of old tales, and they were old stories, mysterious





facts which had witches as protagonists, of shadows who chased passerby's on certain roads, and with sudden appearances of strange men.

The best ones to creating suspense, they claimed to have seen witches and boogeyman with hoods walking around the countryside at night. Some swore that the next door neighbor, an old lady, was actually a witch and that brought bad luck "evil eye"; someone went saying that they had danced (absolutely forbidden by the parish priest of the village) with a wonderful girl and only at the end of the dance he realized that he had legs and feet in the form of a goat, a sign of the incarnation of the devil. Many people, young and old, felt to be targets of evil and various curses and there were so many remedies to make it go away.

Places that tell a story

Places like the collective imagination represent storage of beliefs, myths, and legends that in fact are the most secret essence of communities. They reveal fears, dreams, expectations, and hopes. From this inner and collective universe they take shape of witches, goblins, werewolves, devils, and angels, who inhabit the skies and mountains, caves, grottos, and forests.

Over the centuries, visions, mindsets, optics, proverbs, and sayings are born when the natural and the supernatural often get confused. Even the atmospheric phenomena, trauma, and natural disasters are read as curses or wonders.

Here we cannot devote space to this aspect more clearly anthropologically, because this is a tourist-cultural guide, but through the trip we suggest on how to understand these wonderful places that you will go through and which will bring in a further charm that derives from mythology, popular religiosity, and archaic spirituality and much, much more.

The crossroads "crocicchi"

Once there was a very precise place where it was said "there you can see it". But what? It was what was called the boogeyman or the "Old witch". The place was an intersection. And if you did not want to die, or see the strange apparition in that place, one could not make any noise, not even breathe, for it might have felt or seen you even in a dark night and

Above
depicted sculpture
of Ecate, Goddess
of the crossroads

Below
votive cell with
Saint Leo in
the background

would have given you bad luck, the “evil eye”.

The crossroad is the point where several roads cross between one another, generally four, which form a cross, here is the derivation of the name. In the case when there are three streets, it is called trivium. In magic it is a place of immense power. The crossroads between different roads is indeed seen as a metaphor of the intersection between different worlds, such as for example our world and the spirit world. The crossroads also represent choice, the freedom to take a road rather than another.

In some ways, they represent absolute freedom. And complete freedom has always frightened man! There are many stories about these places. In the past, Greeks and Romans placed Hermes / Mercury statues at the crossroads, because God was considered the natural protector of the roads and of the travelers who were passing by. In Rome there were statues of Lares Compitales, that is, the Lari of the intersections.

Crossroads and trios were placed under the protection of the Ecate Goddess, also known as Trivia, for her threefold nature. Being a deity devoted to the transition from one dimension to another, obviously places filled with such power have been dedicated to it.

With the advent of Christianity, the crossroads have come to bear the real work of demonization, for the purely pagan meaning. In such places suicides and witches and even vampires were buried there.

Many legends are set in these places where deals with the devil are said to be made, often through the witches that came here to meet their dark lord. There was also a way to sign the pact, you just had to get a box with a lock of hair and a little bit of his own blood, then bury it at the center of a crossroads and wait for the devil to make his appearance.

Christianity has found ways to deal with the beliefs that come about from paganism and has introduced something familiar to us in the crossroads. Walking in the countryside or along the main mountain trails still today it is easy to find votive cellars, kiosks, sculptures or painted stone slabs. Inside are the statues of Our Lady Madonna, other Saints or Christian symbols. In Romagna, the Settefonti crossroad is well-known in the municipality of Casola Valsenio, considered particularly powerful because in it are seven roads that cross, and on the night of St. John, the legend says that the witches come down from the sky to pass by riding





the black sheep. And it is also possible to see them while they hold a meeting, as long as one places their chin in the middle of a stick or of a wooden pitchfork.

Apart from legends, you can often see the votive cells and those that are least remote are filled with devoutness; you understand it by the lights that are lit or by the flowers. Where they have been defaced or neglected over time, the base still stands, naked and bare, which is still a sign of comfort and protection for the walk.

And we would like to quote the words of the poet Tonino Guerra, drawn from one of his Manifests, published by “Maggioli Editore” in the 1980s.

***Admonishment for short meditations
to the people of Romagna who are always in a rush***

In November I returned to the lowest hills that descend from Montefeltro and I passed through the midst of peach orchards full of red leaves and on the high meadows that dominate the Marecchia Valley with Verucchio's tips, San Marino and Montebello all the way to the small uphill of Santarcangelo against the blue line of the sea. I sometimes found, small columns sometimes crooked and sometimes hidden by weeds, and sometimes arranged without respecting their poetry. Who built these cells probably wanted to counter a grace that was received, or perhaps hoping to take away the fear of a strange presence from a crossroad, especially at night, the ghost with the head of a white horse, or they wanted to meet a saint for some religious comfort.

Often in the niches repaired by a screen, the ancient image was replaced by a plaster statue or by a stone or nothing at all. In these violent and scary times, how nice would it be if we could slow down our race across the world and reflect for a few minutes, to be with God if we are religious, to think about ourselves and about our lives if we do not believe in the saints, in short, to go on a different journey to try to answer these questions that have no definite answers.

Scholars of Santarcangelo and all of the nearby villages and of the great Romagna, give life to these ancient meeting points, embellishing them with a rose plant or wisteria flowers and perhaps a stone that can be a rustic seat for a brief meditation.

Tonino Guerra

The cemeteries

So far we have told you about the presences in the homes or in the crossroads, we now move onto the cemeteries, the old ones, those abandoned on the hills, in the countryside or in the most remote fractions. This is about the “Paradise of the memory,” as defined by the poet Tonino Guerra, that is, rectangles of silence where to find oneself and to talk with death. The poet has indicated some, which we recommend to visit.

He also offers explanations and talks about how a cemetery should be different to what it really seems to be like today, throughout Italy. For example, he describes a cemetery that he loved so much, because of its location being a terrace overlooking the sea. This is the cemetery of Saint John of Galilee, in the valley of Uso, which is alongside the one of Marecchia, a few kilometers from the village of Torriana, in the municipality of Poggio Torriana. As he writes in a Manifesto published in the eighties by Maggioli Publishing:

Declaration of love for a cemetery

I appeal to the inhabitants of St. John of Galilee and to the municipal authorities, to take care of their enchanting cemetery, that flying carpet on Montefeltro, so that it becomes a mandatory engagement for those in Romagna and beyond, for whom seek art and poetry.

The secret, probably, is to remove the idea of death and instead make it something that is monumental. Yet how come in other parts of the world young lovers love to meet and stay in cemeteries? Here, we must remove the black hood that we have thrown onto the tombs of our great-grandparents, grandparents, and sometimes children, of the disturbing and often scary presences.

I really wish for the St. John's cemetery to be an aerial garden where birds, disoriented travelers, people on holiday, purposely arrive to enjoy a moment of charm besides those who might truly believe that they are definitely lost.

P.S. Not only flowers but also millet spikes for birds and more serene lighting for all and no longer those shaky candles. So death may seem sweeter.

Tonino Guerra



Dichiarazione d'amore per un cimitero.

Mi rivolgo agli abitanti di San Giovanni in Galilea e alle autorità comunali, perché abbiano cura del loro incantevole cimitero, quel tappeto volante sul Montefeltro, in modo che diventi un appuntamento obbligatorio per quanti in Romagna e fuori, cercano le cose d'arte e la poesia. Il segreto, probabilmente, è togliere l'idea della morte a qualcosa che invece è il suo monumento. Eppure come mai in altre parti del mondo i giovani innamorati amano incontrarsi e sostare nei cimiteri? Ecco, bisogna sollevare la cappa nera che abbiamo gettato sulle tombe rendendo i nostri nonni, i bisnonni e a volte i figli, delle presenze inquietanti e spesso paurose. Vorrei tanto che il cimitero di San Giovanni fosse il giardino aereo dove gli uccelli, i viaggiatori disorientati, la gente in vacanza, arrivino di proposito per godere un momento d'incanto vicino a chi si crede definitivamente perduto. **P.S.** Non solo fiori ma anche spighe di miglio per gli uccelli e luce più serena per tutti e non più quei tombi tabulati. Così la morte può sembrare più dolce.

IL MIO

ADRIANO

Tatino Guerra



Other declarations of love were made on abandoned cemeteries those which are no longer functional and remain with the silent mystery of death and the mute echo of prayers. Among these, the first place indicated, and the visit is a must, the former cemetery of Maiolo, in the common homonym: a green rectangle enclosed by an ancient stone wall in sight and a double gated entry, a true "Paradise of the soul" in which spirituality and peace supremely reign.

Among other things pointed out, he mentions the Castle of Monte Maggio in the municipality of San Leo, where some iron cross is still inclined and there is a rusty marking of where once was the space for a body. All the rest is a field bordered by a wrought iron gate and outer walls that begin to crumble.

There are also the cemeteries of Caioletto in the municipality of Sant'Agata Feltria, which is now totally abandoned, of Montebotolino in the high Valley of Marecchia in the municipality of Badia Tedalda, of Cavoletto in the municipality of Piandimeleto not far from Pennabilli.

And why not welcome and accommodate in these "paradises of the soul" even the ancient names, always as the poet suggests?

The cemetery of names

Here is an indication of something that does not exist or perhaps exists in a corner of our imagination. For a while with some friends we are mentally creating a garden cemetery; a cemetery without tea-lights and without flower bouquets and photographs, a serene and cheerful world but at the same time where graves could be represented by small obelisks or stones or rocks or perhaps bushes of vegetation. It could also be a cemetery without the dead, a cemetery of names because names and nicknames often have more resistance than ashes and above all remain as an eternal witness also to those preferring earth, after twenty years they are taken away and removed from the eyes of visitors.

A graveyard that should not be scary but in some way let us understand that we will live longer together with the surrounding nature.

Tonino Guerra

And if you visit these cemeteries you have abandoned your imagination, and are still not satisfied, and you would want to run to other shores, here are the folk stories about what “was seen” or still “seen” in cemeteries. Because even here, like in the crossroads, it is said that “you see” and “you feel”. On what you hear is not where we will stop but on the fact that there are strange presences that are felt and so it is the case to do so. On the seeing there are in fact a few doubts. It was not rare to notice blue flames or sometimes other colors and an explanation exists. It also has a name: will-o'the-wisp.

The will-of-the-wisp

The phenomenon, referred to as the will-of-the-wisp, is the appearance of pale flame-shaped lights predominantly of bluish color, sometimes yellow, other green or red, which occur at ground level.

These are cold lights, which do not produce smoke or even burns. They have always been observable at night or even at dusk in particularly in the cemeteries even though they were said to come and go, spotted even at swamps or wetlands.

The origins were unknown, for the most part the phenomenon had a mysterious meaning, and on this, legends and myths were built. It was believed that they were the appearance of dead souls, again wandering and looking for their ultimate destination, souls of passed away children even before they were baptized who needed to appear to gain peace.

They would say, that they were spirits of evil people who wanted to frighten or mislead passers-by.

Also a good legend about the will-o'the-wisp that is still around is which considers them the apparitions of pure souls ready to protect or indicate the right way for travelers.

In fact, the will-of-the-wisp has a scientific explanation. With progress in the field of chemistry it is understood that such fires are produced by the gases that develop from the degradation of organic substances.

Their formation seems to be due to the gas exhalation of decomposed biological material, and can be seen in cemeteries placed near graveyard areas where natural methane gas concentrations can be found





at a superficial level, which can inflate and create strange flames that rise upward for a few meters, with strange wave-like movements.

Decomposition of organic material outdoors is called aerobic decomposition. Both plants and animals are largely composed of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. And when decomposition occurs in the presence of oxygen in the air the products of the decomposition are water, carbon dioxide and heat. In the wetlands the decomposition occurs in an anaerobic environment: organic species that are found below water and underground. Anaerobic bacteria contribute to decomposition with the formation of methane, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, phosphine and more. Rising above from the ground and from the water, the gas enters the atmosphere, methane blends with phosphine generating blue light.

Here is the explanation of the phenomenon of the blue flames which were often seen in the cemeteries when the corpses were not sealed in zinc plated coffins.

By the way, lights, flames, and other lighted trails appearing in the night or at dusk or at dawn, even in Rimini the legends squander and fairy tales are passed down.

In fact, instead of wandering souls or aliens or UFOs as they are called, these shards of light have a scientific explanation. You just need to ask about the bizarreness of certain atmospheric or terrestrial or astronomical phenomena. For example, seismic lights, meteors, agglomerates of plasma and gas.

Light phenomena

Legends full of mystery also tell stories in Rimini's countryside of strange lights that can create fright and in any case create the belief of supernatural origin.

Today we know a lot more, but up to a hundred years ago, illiteracy and ignorance also dominated our lands. So whoever saw it enhanced the story of imaginative events, and gossip did the rest.

The luminous phenomena that manifest themselves in the atmosphere or at the level of the terrain and still today are seen by more witnesses; most of the time they are brought back to UFO type phenomena or alien events, and the imagination of the individuals indulges. Because of the

strangeness of the event, but above all because of a lack of knowledge in astronomical or physical-natural phenomena makes one ignore the details.

They actually have a scientific explanation that once in our area most people did not understand.

For example, most were not aware of the existence of seismic lights or will-o-the-wisp lights, or even bright balls.

Seismic lights are bright phenomena that are spotted in previous periods or in conjunction with seismic events. Witnesses report of these strange lights in the sky, which are manifested with various shapes, colors and variable intensity. Studies and research have been carried out for years and the triggering causes appear to be in the characteristics of the earthquake itself and of the period preceding it, not overlooking the possible formations of natural electromagnetic fields.

The luminous balls are instead a plasma, an internal ionized gas of which electrons and ions move independently without being linked to one another. Plasma is a big electricity conductor due to the free electrical charges, thus providing excellent responses to electromagnetic fields. It is considered as the 'fourth state' of matter, distinguishing itself from solid, liquid and gas.

Intense light can also derive from a meteor. On a daily basis there are entrances to the earth's atmosphere of meteoroids and in the same way disintegrate, emitting various intensities of light.

The ghosts of the Province of Rimini

We have so many ghosts, so many as to make those of the castles of Scotland envious. The majority are in the Romagna region and regularly make themselves come "alive".

There are many castles in the province of Rimini and in at least ten these ghostly shapes are present which have been inscribed since memorable times.

In some cases, as you will read later on, voices are heard, some requesting for help or sobbing, which happens with little Azzurrina, who wanders around the Castle of Count Guidi, which, seven hundred years ago, was part of his family, at Montebello of Torriana.

The story of the little Ermelinda Malatesta, daughter of Constance



and Ugunuccio. On June 21st, 1375 she mysteriously disappeared into the castle's depths and was no longer found. Her nickname comes from the tinted hair her mother gave her to hide the fact that her daughter was albino. In fact, because of her albino features, in those times she would have been suspected of witchcraft. At the end of the summer solstice for every shine you can hear noises of footsteps and tears coming from the castle.

As always Azzurrina seems to have been caught in the profile with her new companion, a hooded spirit that seems to have been recently photographed. And some experts say it might be the mother and that the population of the spirits in the Count Guidi castle is destined to continue to grow.

In other fortresses, one can see escaping along the walkways and the corridors, like a sudden wind, white flowing cloaks, as it happens at Santarcangelo di Romagna.

It is in fact that the presence of these figures made of spirits is not only testified by the word or the gaze of the flesh and bones of men, but by sophisticated equipment that stop the image and the word, or better the sounds. Modern times has come to the aid and even the greatest unbelievers just need to give up in front of what the machines unveil. If the human senses are wrong, the tools are not!

So you just have to believe it.

Among the cities where paranormal phenomena were recorded that stimulate the imagination of the old and young, as you will always see in Valmarecchia, Santarcangelo where in the upper part of the Malatestian Fortress, in the moonless nights, the ghost of a young bride walks continuously. It's nothing other than the well-known Francesca from Polenta who was married to Giovanni Malatesta called The Cripple. She definitely stayed here but it is not sure that she died here, murdered, with her beloved Paolo, by her husband. Going up the river of Marecchia one reaches Verucchio, where in particular winter nights, tradition conveys the appearance of the ghost carriage of Malatesta, driven by bulls, passes through the village and then falls down the hill leading to the river. And going up higher one reaches the ruins of what was once the ancient Maiolo, where castle and fortress were destroyed in 1700 by a landslide, which also destroyed the valley following a violent storm, while according to the legend

it was because of the divine punishment inflicted by the angelic dance that was practiced there. Some of those damned souls still roam without peace and in the woods below is narrated of the strange sightings of dancing figures, in the light of the full moon. In the Valley of Conca, it is Montefiore Conca hosting the ancient ghosts, very strange, because it seems as though they choose different homes to show themselves, even though the results of the devices have traced them back to the Malatesta Fortress. It is no less than of Mondaino, with ghosts that were signaled not long ago to the policemen in service at an electoral venue. In Riccione there is a story about a ghost in eighteenth-century clothing running down while crossing a country road. In Morciano of Romagna, instead, according to legend, the ghost of a young victim of an accident.

In short, in the Rimini area, there are ghosts for all tastes, and yes it's about little girls, women, lovers, the elderly, just look for them and you may happen to find them.

CHAPTER II
**FROM THE
SEA TO THE
MOUNTAINS
PASSING
THROUGH
THE MYSTERIES
OF HISTORY
AND OF MAN**

Before you encounter the route in detail, we present you with a summary of what you should expect if you take the journey in search of the occult and mysterious. You must start from Rimini, the capital city that is full of philosophical meanings, spirituality, symbolism, and much, much more. You will have to go to the Malatestian Temple, today the City Cathedral, and you will see how it emanates religious and philosophical thoughts and introduces you into the universe of art of signs, allusions, quotes, and images that are innate to the mystery. Basically the sculptures, the engravings, and the decorations that can be explained with traditional religious terms, bring in and allow other readings, certainly not immediate, not easy, but surely fascinating mystery. For example, depicting planets and zodiac signs may have a reading that is described as heathen, as did Pope Pio II when he stated that the church was full of heathen gods and profane things.

If you wanted to synthetically try to distract the plot from any of its points, it can be said that the Temple was a metaphor of the world and to accurately interpret its initiatory symbolism, it can help the twenty-two tarot keys. But about the Temple, which is by no chance defined as “of discord and wonder” and is even unfinished, we’ll talk about in due time, while here we must add that the city offers fascinating, curious places and characters, linked to one another and hardships from the gloomy or otherwise unclear.

Let’s take from these Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, whose story is full of legends. And let’s talk about Sismondo Castle, that is, the fortress that comes first in the city center. Also, like the Temple, transformed by Sigismondo, who made it his home and the center of art and of the philosophical knowledge of his time, as it be fitted with Renaissance lords.

It must be said that this castle or perhaps the former residence of the family, could also have been the background to Paolo and Francesca’s murder. The two lovers sung by Dante in the *Divine Comedy*, in the fifth hymn of Hell, here they were at home. Moreover, the young lover is always called Francesca of Rimini.

It is a fact that while several castles appropriated the historical story, it is certain that the fifteen-year-old was taken to Rimini to be married to Giovanni Malatesta, brother of the beloved Paolo. Then, it’s Boccaccio that supports it, the crime happened here and was not denied by the local journalists for the next two centuries.

And it is always in the Middle Ages that another young lady lived, whose life is a mystery. This is about Chiara, who was blessed after living as damned. Rich and beautiful, relative of Malatesta, she is married sev-

Top left
**Blessed Chiara
from Rimini**

Top right
**Saint Nicholas
of which Rimini
holds some relics**

Below
**Rimini,
Home of the Surgeon
'Domus del chirurgo'**

eral times and dedicates herself to pleasures. Then, one fine day she gets dressed in iron, and starts to swallow toads to expiate all the faults and walks around the city preaching and consuming herself in her faith. Pope Pio VI beatified her because a nun who appealed to Chiara healed of her scurvy. Those who would like to observe her, she is laid to rest in Corpolò, in the church of Santa Maria.

If you are interested in relics, you have to follow those of Santa Claus, here called St. Nicholas, but to which is associated the myth of Babbo Natale. One of his hands is in the Malatestian Temple and his left humerus, is found in the church of Saint Nicolas, built in the place where in 1177 the ship which carried his body or his parts was thrown.

But even before the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Rimini had played an important role and its history left behind signs. One just needs to think about the Roman period and to that surgeon who lived here, by the sea, not anymore, in a beautiful villa that has also given us his tools (unique to world) for his operations on its patients and which was just called the "surgeon's home". To think that the villa and his precious tools were unknown to others, the mere existence was unknown, until recently there were renovations made to the Piazza below.

And we arrive to the twentieth century and to the most legendary figure of Rimini today: Federico Fellini. Even in his case the legends are many, and by all named as a great liar, and he did not deny it, he embellished everything. There the greatest curiosity about him is that he rebuilt his city elsewhere, without ever filming anything here.

Valmarecchia

Leaving Rimini one takes the road that goes back to the Marecchia River, which is diverted to its delta so as to create another curiosity and leads to discover a magic valley named after the river: Val Marecchia or Valley of the Small sea, the Maricula or Maricla as the Romans called it.

At the time, its flow rate was very broad, albeit always variable during the seasons, so seemed as a small-sized sea appearing to the legionnaires and the Roman settlers who settled here since 268 B.C. when the rightful Latin colony Ariminum (Rimini) was founded, the city of the river Ariminus (Marecchia).





You should know that not far from Rimini, there is a place, one thinks, located on the Roman road, the well-known Iter Tiberinum today Marecchiese where cannibalism was practiced. Certainly in the Middle Ages, in the West, it was not rare, as told and written by the scholar, professor of literature and anthropology, Piero Camporesi, in his volume "Il pane selvaggio" the wild bread. This case shows Procopius of Caesarea who in the sixth century witnessed and described the Byzantine Gothic war. "It is said that two women, in a certain countryside beyond Rimini, ate seventeen men: since they were the only left survivors of that village, those who traveled there went to stay in their homes, and they killed them while they slept, and ate them." Passing from Rimini to the high valley, the invitation is to scrutinize the clearings and the profiles of the hills and beyond, because it is where the places full of mystery meet, stories, and legends like the one told and many others that we go on to mention. Even here in the Middle Ages there were those who robbed hikers, who asked them for a fine but more frequently just robbed them instead. Often times one was left beaten and left with nothing on. Think of the times of famine or plague when the wondering human assumed animalistic and metaphysical aspects.

Along the way, in the locality named Saint Martin of the Mills "Mulini", a Tower will grab your attention, properly called Tomb, as well as the fortified farms of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It is private and therefore cannot be visited but from far away you can admire it and it's worth it. Because it's almost all intact for all its height of about twenty meters and clearly signs of works from the 14th century can be seen. Of course it lost the drawbridge and the moat but it presents itself well as a fortified palace where the warehouses and masters' rooms were located, in this case belonging to the Malatesta family. From here we suggest to reach **Santarcangelo di Romagna** where one must visit the volcanic rock "tufo" caves characterized by the double mystery of the origins and of the destination. Perhaps tombs for the ancient cult of God Mitra but also warehouses and escape routes for the Lords of Malatesta and for the inhabitants during wartime.

The city of Santarcangelo is presented in a very curious way in the days of the well-known "Saint Martin Summer", that is to say, close to the

day of the Feast of the Saint that takes place on November 11th, when the fair takes place. During the Fair dedicated to the saint, interestingly, the sneer of the cuckolds, which in the past were publicly ridiculed with serenades below the home, meanwhile today the ox's horns are hanging on the Arch of Ganganelli that give the swaying signal to the persons travelling. The fair for centuries was the moment for transgression, which documents attest to going back to the Roman times. Everything was allowed, even taxes were suspended, and there were many rituals of passage that marked the arrival of the winter season.

Of the city and its countryside we will talk about later on, now we will continue our journey along the valley in the direction of **Poggio Torriana**.

Here, in the territory of the new municipality, which Torriana and Poggio Berni merged, there is an open fossil park that takes us back of millions and millions of years. In fact the fossils found in Poggio Berni in the beam of the Marecchia River, those who are already lowering their gaze can easily see, are from ten million to 10 billion years old. And they are the protagonists of the Park of the quarry, a fascinating mysterious journey, that brings us back to the beginning of time. At certain times of the year there is a special welcome from the giant dinosaurs during the event of 'The world of dinosaurs'.

A few kilometers away is the Castle of **Montebello** which is a must to stop by, because here is where Azzurrina lives and her legend has now crossed the region's borders. The little girl, albino daughter of Ugolinuccio Malatesta, fell into a basin on a rainy night. The body was never found while her cries remained imprisoned within the walls so that there are days in which she makes herself heard.

Across, on the other side of the road there is **Verucchio**, full of fascinating mysteries revealed by the graves and from the abandoned settlements, emerging from excavations still going on and from exhibits kept in the Archaeological Museum. An exhibition path not to be missed for what it tells about the ancestors of the Etruscans people which here held a very important place. Matriarchy, trade with the East, and funeral rites, are some of the themes dealt with in the museum's sections where you can admire precious jewelry and amber and an astonishing wooden throne. Other ancient stories tell the story of the Malatesta fortress where the aura





of Mastin Vecchio lives, the patron of Malatesta lordship quoted by Dante in the *Divine Comedy*.

Next stop **San Leo**, nicknamed 'eagle's nest', which was the capital of the Italian Kingdom under Berengario II from 962 to 964. The city is saturated with fascination practiced by the healer and mason Count of Cagliostro, who after attending the most important Courts of Europe, was imprisoned by the Pope in the fortress of the leontina, guilty of heresy, and died there of unknown causes. His life, just like him, is interwoven with everything mysterious and just like then he continues to have disciples and followers. Even today, in his cell, unexplainable things happen.

The aging of cheese, named by the poet "Amber of Talamello", which comes from the dug trenches beneath the medieval village of **Talamello**, is another of those mysteries of the valley. And this lies in the fact that the process is only partially known. It involves a natural transformation, an unknown that originates from the bowels of the earth.

In the municipality of **Novafeltria**, scattered with gunpowder mills, where the smugglers got their supply, is worth reaching, which is the former Sulfur Mine of **Perticara**, today the Sulfur Museum. It is a source of unexplainable legends and events that take shape from ancient times.

The legend of the angelic dance and the resulting divine wrath are the common explanations of the destruction of the Rocca fortress, told by the people of **Maioretto**, which now stand out like keepers of the ruins. From the Middle Ages to the '700s events and geological disasters have evolved making the stories of the castle evermore fascinating. The same as accompanies the bread making that **Maiolo** wanted to have relive in the old ovens scattered throughout the countryside, are now widespread in a museum.

In **Pennabilli** there are many emotions: in the Museum of Stone, Mateureca, there are experiments on the concepts and ideas of math with intent to pass on knowledge and emotions; in the Museum of the *World of Tonino Guerra*, it's poetry that evokes images, stories, and visions. In the municipality of **Tower of Bascio** the legend of Fanina Borbone of France married to a Captain of the Carpegnas lives on, destroyed in the nostalgic soul of her Paris. And here is the birth of *Brother Matthew*, founder of the Capuchin order, known for their vigorous preaching: "Sinners to hell."

He left Pennabilli in 1700 for the unknown Tibet in those times, where he stayed for 30 years, *Father Orazio Olivieri*.

Going towards the hot spring we meet **Casteldelci** where Dante Alighieri found shelter, and the trace of his footsteps run along the same path. On the peak of **Faggiola Nuova**, Captain of the Uguccione fortune, Lord of Faggiola, hosted Dante in his castle during his exile and saw in him the 'Veltro', a hunting dog, having the ability to unify the fate of Italy, as he writes in his Hymn of Hell. During the path to the access to the ruins of the manor, the source of the fever born from the tears of Uguccione's repentance. A few kilometers from the medieval center of town, is **Monterotondo**, where Nicola Gambetti lived and who had special healing powers. After much difficulty, he managed to make Queen Margaret of Savoia give birth, with the supervision of distinguished doctors, he who for this reason was appointed as the doctor of the Kingdom. Peppino the brother also remained in the legend, in his case for supernatural reasons which allowed him to be able to move immeasurable weights.

And if so far we have talked about ghosts, sovereigns, captains of fortune and princesses, now it is the time for fairy tales. To know more about this theme one just needs to reach **Sant'Agata Feltria** and here is the fortress, La Rocca Fregoso, located on the boulder of the "Wolf", an ideal representation of the fairytale illustrations and recently the Castle of the Fables, with exhibitions and even multimedia installations being in theme. The town since ancient times is in the presence of hermits, mystics and silent men, as witnessed by the endless convents, where today you can also stay for a vacation.

Valconca

The other valley of the province of Rimini, which is a territory full of imaginative events and legendary characters is that of the stream basin of Conca.

Here without a doubt the first stop must be **Gemmano** to visit the caves of **Onferno**, Hell, according to Dante which he narrates in his visions. Impressive for their evocative capacity and robbing of your gaze and memory, allowing a descent into the womb of the earth, tickling the visitor also for the presence of a large colony of children dwellers in turn of





darkness. There is a large colony of bats that surpass by far the population of the town residents. You cannot ignore **Montefiore Conca** where wandering spirits lie in the great Malatestian Castle. It seems that just recently they have found the ways to manifest itself with determination, just browse the pages of the local newspapers, to the point to be taken personally!

It is reported that in 1993 an exhibition was organized on the theme of witchcraft and on that occasion some paranormal phenomena occurred. Interviewed experts of the mystic confirmed the presence of ghosts of a man and a woman. The first one with his head under his arm which for this was identified as Lorenzo of Berardo Cocolino decapitated by Malatesta Guastafamiglia in 1344. The woman instead had the appearance of Constanta Malatesta Ungaro the protagonist of a sexual scandal, at those times common but equally punished by death.

A similar phenomenon happened in **Mondaino** where in 1987 something paranormal disturbed the municipal elections. The ghosts of two assassinated lovers manifested themselves in front of the police who were guarding the polling stations, but many scholars of the mystic invited them to leave the castle. Since then the two unlucky lovers were no longer seen but it is known that ghosts do not warn of their presence. The nearby municipality of Saludecio is known for the presence of a good spirit, which is the one of the Blessed Beloved, just recently made holy by the parish church and in the museum there is a dedication to learn about his life stories and his mysteries of faith. In the same municipality is the village of **Cerreto** with its ancestral rituals to capture the attention, especially in that liberating period that is carnival, that masks and costumes of the past relive. Even on the inhabitants the legends wander out of their proverbial naivety.

The witches of our village could not be ignored on our trip. So here it is. One just needs to go to **San Giovanni in Marignano**. Here the witches and their magical rituals are dedicated to a great event in June, *The night of the witches*, on the summer solstice, in an atmosphere dark and impressive made up of mystery, magic and secrecy but also of music and shows of various genres and nature. Always in San Giovanni between the end of the '700s and early '800s, lived Artemisia, a fascinating character, traditional healer, whose house is still visible. She enjoyed great reputations thanks to the ritual of Saint John's oil which identified bad luck 'evil eye' and spells.

CHAPTER III
**CHARACTERS
BETWEEN
DREAM AND
LEGEND**

The damned lovers: Paolo and Francesca

Everyone knows the tragedy of the two unlucky lovers, Paolo and Francesca, but it is not certain where it actually took place. In Romagna several Malatestian fortresses have been candidates in hosting the known lovers and over the centuries some more than others have snapped up the exclusivity. We would like to tell of the many mysterious factors that play a role here and often legends take over the overwhelming reality. In spite of non-coinciding dates and of non-existent documents. We begin this investigation with the first hypothesis.

For some, the terrible event took place in the primitive fortress of Sant'arcangelo di Romagna. But Rimini is sure to have hosted them and it is known that today the unlucky lovers are found at the Gradara Fortress. However, here is their story. Francesca from Ravenna was the daughter of Guido of Polenta the Minor, lord of Ravenna, "beautiful and of dignified spirit, polite and courteous, and of the rules of the fairer talk." Unfortunately, the city of Ravenna, like other towns of Romagna, was fought by conflicts and political struggles and Francesca "a flower in the mists of tons of iron" as D'Annunzio described it, was just an innocent victim. In practice one had to imitate the laws and customs of the times in which marriages were political and strategic alliances. So it was decided she would marry Giovanni Malatesta nicknamed "Gianciotto," the son of the powerful Lord of Rimini. And here the fatal deception was roused for fear that the girl would refuse. Francesca was made to believe that she would marry the fascinating Paolo nicknamed "The Handsome", brother of Gianciotto, who went to Ravenna with a special procurer, joining her for the marriage. Francesca accepted with joy and without any doubt, she was happy to say "I do" without knowing that Paolo married her "artificially" by proxy, that is, in the name and on behalf of his brother Gianciotto.

When she arrived at her future Malatestian home, she realized of the deceit. Paolo was not her husband but it was Gianciotto. Despair captured her and her despair did not stop, but it grew day by day. Soon enough the young lady was able to console herself in the arms of the one she had loved from the first moment, her brother-in-law Paolo, but the happy story soon turned into a drama, because one day Gianciotto, returning to castle, perhaps warned by a faithful servant, or perhaps by his Malatestian brother from the Eye 'Occhio', surprising the two lovers and killing them by trammeling them with a blade. And the story of their affair became forever part of history, firstly with the Malatesta family, from Polenta, the Lords of the time, but also in the history of international literature that remained so fascinating and was sung. The first to do that was Dante Alighieri. The tragedy of Paolo and Francesca is known thanks to the supreme and the V

chant of his *Divine Comedy*. The poet placed Paolo and Francesca in the second circle of hell, that of the lustful, where an infinite storm percolates souls, so lovers are subjected to a wind similar to that of the passion that overwhelmed them. At this point, the dilemma remains: the location of this tragedy. The real setting could really be Santarcangelo. Presently no one can know for sure. To support this hypotheses, are some historians and experts and there are also those who claim to have seen, in moonless nights, the restless spirit of Francesca, dressed in white, walking, and sighing, through the alleyways of the medieval village, and properties which hold her eternal suffering. And in the Rocca Fortress, creaking and drafts are interpreted as lamentations of the pain from the incident.

Together let us see this ancient fortified residence that belonged to the Lords of the Malatesta Family.

The Malatestian castle of Santarcangelo di Romagna was built in 1300, as well as the boundary walls and the drawbridge, even though it assumed its current aspect later on, in the following century, during Sigismondo Pandolfo's lordship that strengthened it to resist the attack of new weapons. A curiosity: Sigismondo lowered the Tower by about 12-13 meters, losing the prerogative of the highest castle tower in Italy. La Rocca Fortress of Sant'Angelo, today it is made up of a 1386-year-old tower and a structure with three polygonal towers built on Sigismondo's request, as he remembers the inscription next to the main entrance. It has an elegant main courtyard with a medieval tank and from here one can access three large living rooms that preserve sixteenth - century ecclesiastical furniture from the sacristy of the church of San Romualdo of 'Classe' of Ravenna. Today it is the residence of the family of Princes of Colonna and you can visit it by making a reservation.

The story tells that Concordia Malatesta lived here, daughter of Francesca, who asked her grandfather to build a convent of the 'Order of the Buried Alive' in memory of her mother, and precisely she was killed in Santarcangelo. The folktale adds that Concordia Malatesta, in despair for her mother's death, she then retired to the Convent of the "Buried Alive" founded by her and located in the current Monache square, where now sits the most recent Clares, next to the beautiful church dedicated to St. Catherine and Barbara, and where it is also possible to stay. In the square





there is a ceramic tomb, walled on the façade of a house, with the image of a sad girl which recalls back to the memory of the ancient legend for the visitor.

Since history is not supported by documents, it is certain that Paolo and Francesca could be found at the time of the murder at any one Malatesta fortress, even which of Rimini, today there is one that is an official candidate hosting the fact, the Fortress Rocca of Gradara.

Gorgeous and fascinating the town of Gradara already lurking in the distance, when you are along the highway you can see it appearing up there intact and elegant, between the green of the countryside full of olive trees and vines, with its boundary walls and the preserved castle from the wear of time. The fortress and its village being fortified represent one of the best preserved medieval structures of Italy and the two walled enclosures that protect the Fortress, the most exterior of which extends for almost 800 meters, make it one of the most impressive. The Castle stands on a green hill at 142 meters above sea level and the keep, the main tower, rises up 30 meters, dominating the whole valley. Its lucky position makes it protected and near the sea, making it, since ancient times, crossroads of trades and people. The Middle Ages witnessed it as the theater of clashes between the two Lords, Malatesta and Montefeltro, always in favor of conquering territories and fortresses. Exactly the Malatesta gave it its actual appearance, building the Fortress and the double boundary walls between 1200 and 1300 on a pre-existing tower from 1100. Their domain ended in 1463 when Federico of Montefeltro conquered the fortress at the command of papal militias. Gradara will pass through different powers from the Borgia, to the Della Rovere, to the Medici, confirming its role as the scene of clashes in the tumultuous Pontifical Territories. Under the Malatestian rule, as the legend says, the tragedy of Paolo and Francesca took place here, and was made famous by the moving and passionate Dantesque verses: *"he kissed my trembling mouth, Galeotto was the book, and who wrote it: was the day we no longer read"*. The two were surprised by Gianciotto who stabbed them with a sword. Dante places Paolo and Francesca in hell among the lustful, condemned to divine damnation, but with his verses, he pushed them to eternal commemoration, elevating them to the symbols of love.

The director of poetry: Federico Fellini

The entire world knows who Federico Fellini is. It is a famous name in the international cultural landscape since forever, and when he was alive his films always made news.

Death did not fade this fame; instead the myth became a legend. And his name has even generated an adjective: 'fellinian'.

Many people know that Federico Fellini was born in Rimini, in 1920, and took his Rimini in his heart throughout his life. Indeed, it is better to say that the memory of his city and of its people have been the protagonists of many of his films, and one of them in particular, the mythical *Amarcord*, has become a common memory.

His childhood games, teen jokes, troubles, the joys and bitterness of maturity, the great story intertwined with the local one, with fascist dictatorship, the traditions and culture of a civilization like the Romagna one, strongly drenched with Catholicism and anarchism: everything is has become the memorial patrimony belonging to all.

And thanks to his descriptions and the continuous recalls of the places he visited and lived, we recommend doing a city trip, searching and appreciating those places. You can find homes inhabited by his family, changing so many, but almost all still exist, except the first one where his birth was recorded, the one on Via Dardanelli number 10, which has been replaced by a building of the fifties.

The tourist or the curious one who runs through the city streets can find himself in front of the Nursery of the Nuns of St. Vincent which he attended. The Elementary School, Carlo Tonini, on Via Brighenti, the summer school of the Salesians at Marina center at the Church of St. Mary Ausiliatrice which he saw being built. And yet, the Ginnasio headquarters at the Gambalunga Library in the same street, so that of the high school at Palazzo Buonadrata in Corso Augusto and Castel Sismondo, the destination of his "first escape" from home to the tent of the ambitious Circus, which was put up in front of him.

The piazza of the castle of Rimini, Fellini has included it in his film on clowns, clowns, exactly, where there is a scene where right in front of the Castle a circus is mounted. This is an important moment for the direc-





Above
**Federico Fellini
and his wife
Giulietta Masina**

Below
**Federico Fellini's
picture depicting
The Grand Hotel
of Rimini**

**Association Archive
"Federico Fellini
Foundation"**

tor's life, as he says; he decided to work in the world of shows because he fell in love with the circus.

In short, a fascinating journey that reveals the man Federico was and tracks a special biography focused on the reality of a realistic mapping.

It is said that the Rimini shown in the *Amarcord* movie is not the real one, even though in all effects it looks like it - Fellini never shot any film in his hometown - but the sites are well traced and visible, and when you meet them the emotion you feel is very strong.

Churches, streets, bridges, palaces, the Village of San Giuliano, the palate at the Canal Port are still there, are in their place and memory lights up. For example, raising one's eyes to the upper floors of the Gambalunga Civic Library, here one imagines the class of "discos" of the Ginnasio who studies yes, but above all dreams and causes trouble, for example, he pees into a paper tube and makes it get to the schoolmate feet who is at the blackboard.

Or even proceeding to the Malatestian Temple, wonderful exemplary of Renaissance art, looks back to the cathedral, to the shop of FeBo, that is, of Federico Fellini and his friend, the painter Demos Bonini, who earned cash drawing caricatures.

And if your desire contemplated the meeting with the spirit of the great director - and he had many secrets with the spirits and mysteries, just read his constant contacts with well-known magicians and seers - look for him in the city as we told you, in the houses he lived in as a boy, in the schools he attended, in the Fulgor Cinema, or at the Grand Hotel. You will find him as is at the City Monumental Cemetery where he is buried beside his wife Giulietta Masina and his son Pier Federico, born March 22, 1945 and died prematurely twelve days after birth.

The bow of a bronze ship, which can also be interpreted as a sail, shiny, bordered by a very thin water blade, realized by his friend, the sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro, cradles them in eternal rest and welcomes visitors, with the certainty that fame of the visionary and brilliant director of Rimini continues to stay alive in the world as long as it may exist.

Amarcord and the ghosts

Fellini calls his most personal film with a word taken directly from the dialect of Romagna: 'amarcord' (I remember), expounding his roots

in a great cinematic painting. The warm ground that accepted his seed of life, his place of origin, with this film Fellini gives it back to the world in the form of art. *Amarcord* is considered without a doubt the most autobiographical film of the Rimini director: the title itself is a statement and a confirmation.

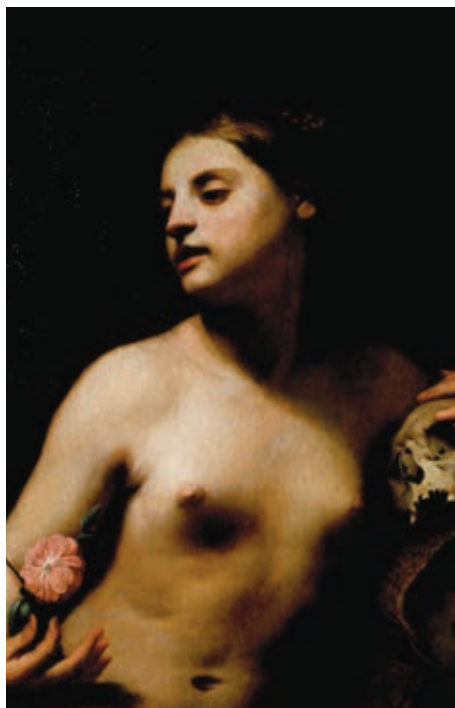
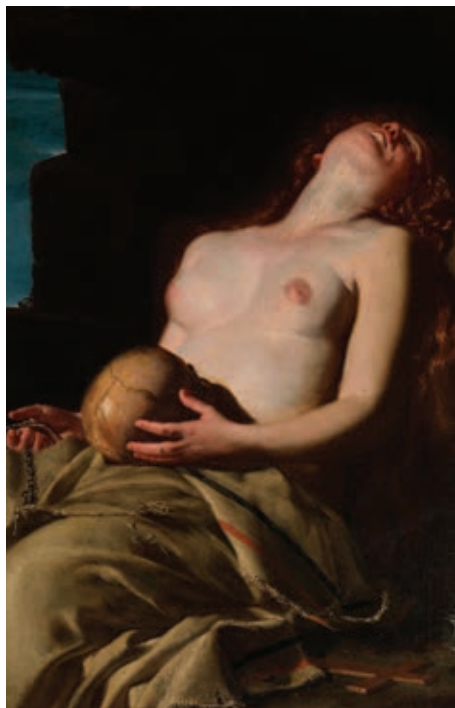
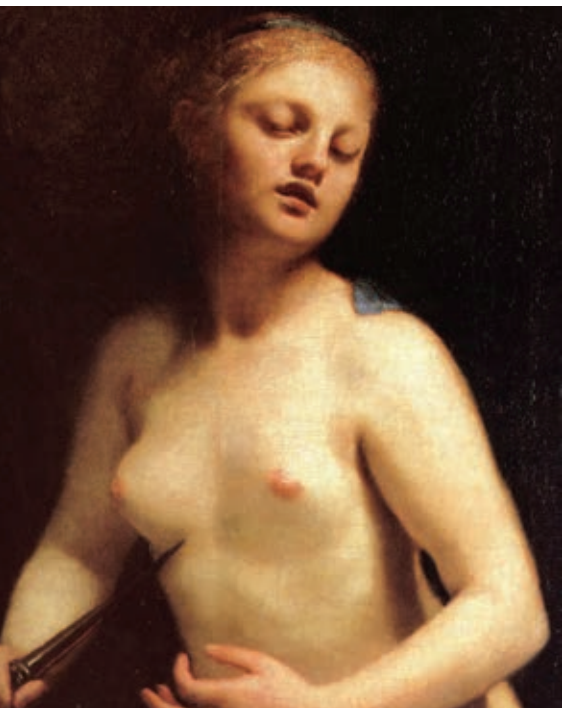
Fellini remembers through the eyes of his alter ego, which for once it's not Marcello Mastroianni but his friend Titta, or rather, Luigi Benzi, played by Bruno Zanin. Everything else represents what revolved around Federico and Titta: Rimini, their youth, friends and the figures that populated the reality of Rimini and Romagna.

Even in the music of Maestro Nino Rota, tenderness of the memory is captured; the notes that accompany the viewer's eyes are sweet and light like the pieces memory alive in Fellini, that with them he carried out a profound psychoanalytic work to transfigure awareness of his city saying:

"I cannot consider Rimini as an objective fact. It's and only a dimension of the memory. In fact, when I'm in Rimini, I'm always attacked by settled ghosts. Maybe these innocent ghosts could give me, if I stayed there, an embarrassing dumb question, to which I could not answer with somersaults, lies; while one must bring out from its country the original element, but without deceptions. Rimini: what is it? It is a dimension of memory (a memory between the one another, invented, adulterated, and shameless) on which I speculated as much, that was born in me, a sort of embarrassment."

So he wrote, in the song entitled *Il mio paese*, Inserted in the Volume titled *La mia Rimini*, Editor Cappelli, Bologna, published in 1967 (then reprinted by Guaraldi Rimini in 2003), prior to *Amarcord*. He never denied the direct derivation. Also the drawings and sketches confirm that the director sketched during the preparation and the productions of the film, some actually portray the same words as the text like the two characters "Bestemmia" and "Giudizio". The film was released in theaters in 1973 and awarded with an Oscar (its fourth) in Los Angeles in 1975 (as the best foreign film of 1974), it was an international success, so to become one of the best known films of all the time, just like it's director.





**Works by
Guido Cagnacci**
Top left
Lucrezia

Top right
*Maddalena
penitent*

Lower left
*The death
of Cleopatra*

Bottom right
*Allegory of Vanity
and of Penance*

Guido Cagnacci is the painter of sensuality

Cleopatra, Lucrezia, Maddalena, naked or discreet, are women by Guido Cagnacci, the painter of Santarcangelo di Romagna, who was however also author of great sacred canvases, as was customary in his time, the XVII Century. The protagonist of the European naturalism of the seventeenth century lies among the greats like Caravaggio, Reni just to name two of his contemporaries.

The painted women were his luck, while in real life was not the same with those which he had sentimental and loving relationships.

One in particular, too high for him according to the society of those times, was the cause of the breakthrough in his career. That 'impossible' relationship according to the society of those times caused him countless misfortunes, which reverberated on his brilliant career. Problems started with his patrons and he had to give up what might have been his biggest venture: the realization of the fresco in the Chapel of Our Lady of Fire in the Forlì Cathedral.

He had to flee and took refuge in Venice in 1649. He chose to live on the lagoon for ten years under a false name (Canlassi).

He had no public commissions; he painted "room paintings," "half figures" of refined sensuality for private buyers.

He then moved to Emperor Leopold I in Vienna, and was beside the Viennese Court and died in 1663 at the age of sixty-two. But we return to the noble woman who marked his ruin. She was a young widow of Rimini who had promised herself with a contract. But she was noble and the painter, laying his eye on her "had offended the honor of the greatest Rimini castes". She also had a substantial dowry in her name that the parents were not willing to lose. So many legal wrangling broke out to give rise to a trial. It happened when the Cagnacci, the restless and quarrelsome disposition, in 1628 kidnapped the woman from the convent where she had been sheltered and tried to marry her. And worsened the situation by claiming the dowry, even though she had remarried with a nephew. The story became bitterer because it was the father of Guido, Matteo Cagnacci, who revealed to the police the secret place where the woman was hidden, perhaps to receive less punishment for his child. And so Guido was banned from Rimini, but he did not receive any seri-

ous convictions, which he certainly could have been given.

Moreover, the father was aware of his son's talent and always gave privilege to his choices. Matteo Cagnacci, a prosperous leather worker, did not oppose when the only male son of his, decided to take a different path. He sent him to train in Bologna, the second city of the State of the Church, full of opportunities and it wasn't an easy choice to make financially. In the beginning of 1617, at age 16, Guido moved to Bologna and stayed there for four years. After Bologna, where from Cento twenty-eight year old Guercino arrived, Guido moved to Rome for at least two stays of which the longest, the last in 1621-1622. Maybe following the Guercino, when Gregory XV Ludovisi became pope who was the Archbishop of Bologna, and where the master of Cento worked. Guercino and Cagnacci lived in a house of the present street of the Babuino, in the same parish of San Lorenzo in Lucina, in the artistic circle they gravitated the Parisian Vouet, the Serodine Ticino. In the times of his stay in the various cities there are traces of testaments of his father Matteo written in 1643. An act that represented another style for that "bizarre humor": Matteo left his estate to his two daughters and to Guido only what he owed to him as the firstborn, but reduced for all the expenses that, twenty years earlier, he had supported for his professional training. Great training for a great artist, who in his life cannot claim to have been favored by destiny.

His existence was full of dark moments and foresight of many secrets, perhaps disappearing with him.

He was considered the "last" pupil of Ludovico Carracci "who died with his brush in hand" in 1619. And being the protagonist of such absolute greatness what was the "divine Guido" (Reni) now coming to the last paintings, against which, however, Cagnacci gets very different results. Guido was full of inspirations, teachings, and experiences "always keeping a substantial mental independence," as critics observe, who wrote a lot about his works. When they talk about his painting, more than the "clear" Caravaggio-ism of Orazio Gentileschi, they say to look at Vouet, which is the "naturalism of Caravaggio especially the courtly elegance and sensuality ". But one thing in him is constant: it is the "Sought ambiguity between sacred and profane".





Cagliostro who inspired the great novels

The city of San Leo is linked to this character: the *Count of Cagliostro*, known as *Giuseppe Balsamo* from Palermo, where he was born in 1743, curator and sorcerer, heretic and mason, alchemist and trickster. In the capital of Montefeltro, he spent his dark years, imprisoned by the *Holy Inquisition* after the accusation of heresy, despite his abjurations and repentance. A sad presence for San Leo, which from its guest received infinite notoriety, already deserved for its ancient and grandiose history, for its location and art. And the Castle in a special way is tied to him ever since his imprisonment, starting from 1791 until his death in 1795.

Federico of Montefeltro could not have imagined his magnificent mansion, redesigned in full Renaissance by the ingenious architect Francis di Giorgio Martini of Siena, was remembered for its Cagliostro. For history it does this and more, and little does it matter to deal with the controversial topic: who was Cagliostro really. The phenomenon is such that it has assumed amazing proportions, in Italy and in the world. It is best to leave the character in the indefinability, as it already was, in the century of the enlightenment. It is suffice just to mention the authors like of Dumas, Schiller, and Tolstoy, who in him found inspiration for the characters of their novels. Goethe wrote "consider Cagliostro a rascal and his adventures of religious crews", while the Venetian Casanova defined him as "a slacker genius who prefers the vagabond life instead of the hard-working life." In fact the role of the Sicilian was always wrapped in mystery, so life, death, and the disappearance of his corpse, after his burial, a few steps away from the leontina Fortress.

Full of occult by whomever wrote about him, and who follows him still today, and who on his birthday bring a bouquet of red roses on his wooden bed inside the cell without ever being seen by anyone. A prison called "the Cockpit", once without any entry besides a small hole where the food was dropped down through and with a single opening towards the outside, with several layers of grilles, with a view on the Cathedral and Pieve.

He was the creator of excellent facts, derived from the benevolence of noblemen and even kings and queens, but fell victim to traps that provoked his demise. His membership to the Freemasonry with a personal aspect, interpreting and applying doctrine according to beliefs of the Egyptian sect rituals, of which he was the founder and a great master. An

Above
**the Fortress
of San Leo, the
work of the architect
Francesco di
Giorgio Martini**

Lower left
**mask for medical use
in the Museum of the
Fortress of San Leo**

Bottom right
**depicting the Count
Giuseppe Balsamo
named Cagliostro**

unusual one, Son of the Enlightenment from which he did not learn much about, in terms of scientific and philosophical precision, meanwhile he did the cosmopolitanism. He lived in such a way, to overcome the limits of life itself, and San Leo celebrates this ever so present memory.

A life beyond death

Joseph John Battista Vincenzo Pietro Antonio Matteo Balsamo is known all over the world as Alessandro, Count of Cagliostro or more simply Cagliostro. Born in Palermo on June 2, 1743 by Pietro Balsamo, a cloth merchant and Felicità Bracconeri.

At the premature death of his father, Joseph was welcomed into the orphans' institute of San Rocco but fled many times from that place. So that is why his mother thought to entrust him, in 1756, to the convent Fatebenefratelli of Caltagirone to which the hospital was annexed, where the young man learned about the properties of herbal healing, knowledge that would have been useful in years to come. He was let go from the convent or maybe escaped, it is actually from there he soon left for Egypt, and then landed in Rhodes and in Malta. Returning in Italy, he lived in Rome and here, on April 21, 1768, he married Lorenza Serafina Feliciani.

Being a discreet designer, he lived falsifying documents, diplomas and seals, until he and his wife were exposed. That is why they moved to France, first in Aix-en-Provence where they met Giacomo Casanova, and then in Antibes, where with the earnings of Lorenza's prostitution, they got the money to reach, Barcelona in 1769. Here too Lorenza was pushed by her husband into the arms of rich men and, with one of them, lived in Madrid. Being hunted, they moved to Lisbon, where Lorenza became the lover of the banker Anselmo La Cruz, but after one year they took refuge in London, where they organized the blackmail for damages from naive Quakers.

Further audacious affairs in London made the two run away throughout Europe, but their lives did not change. Cagliostro took refuge in the masonry, where in this place began "L'Espérance", belonging to the Rite of the Strict Observance.

From 1779 still travelling between Germany, Latvia, Russia, and Poland. In Strasbourg he pretended to be a medical doctor who was able





to cure with herbs and miraculous remedies, and his fame reached its climax, until he arrived in Paris. He decided to establish the Freemasonry of Egyptian Rite by joining the Gran Cofto, a depositary of great mystery, remaining secret.

Trouble was always waiting for him around the corner, and of the necklace scam, on August 22, 1785; Cagliostro was imprisoned at the Bastille. He was defended by the best lawyers in Paris, of whom; one helped him write a Memorial. On May 31, 1786 Parliament recognized his innocence but he was forced to leave France and to leave for England. By now however, his bad reputation had spread to the point where he opted to return to Italy.

In Rome, two spies of the papal government became interested in the Masonry. Cagliostro, without suspecting anything, performed for them the initiation ceremonies, violating the prohibition set by the Papal State. He was reported and locked up in Castel Sant'Angelo. The charges were very serious: from masonry, to magic, to pimping, counterfeit, scams, slander, and publication of seditious writings. Largely retained based on the wife's statements and on writings and affirmations released over the years by Cagliostro himself, he defended himself as a simple charlatan, and presenting his wife as a prostitute, immoral and unreliable. But this was not accepted, and being aware of his desperate situation, he wrote to the pope and recanted on April 13, 1791. He was saved from the death penalty, but was sentenced to life imprisonment, and imprisoned in the impenetrable and inexpugnable fortress of San Leo, where he died of mysterious circumstances on August 26, 1795.

When he was alive and after his death his followers continued and continued to grow, convinced of his hidden occult powers and curative abilities, attracted by the strong charismatic personality. This translates into such a strong notoriety that is passed on over time.

CHAPTER IV

RIMINI

The Rimini of the Temple

Nothing is more mysterious here in Rimini is other than its Temple, said Malatestian, among the first buildings of the Renaissance in Italy, today the Cathedral of the city.

For the patron and leader Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, the most well-known member of the Rimini Empire, was the place that for its excellence expressed its character, it will, but also its time with flashes of artistic, cultural and philosophical rebirth, typical of the Renaissance.

The first architectural work of architect Leon Battista Alberti, started in 1447, it is the mausoleum of the lord of the city Sigismondo Malatesta, how he called himself, as well as in the spirit of time and even more, great artists, philosophers and scholars of his time.

A masterpiece of art and architecture where the highly plastic solution of the volumes constitutes the typological characteristics of the new space concept of humanism.

And from the historical-architectural side, it is of great interest also in the same way for its countless recalls to mystery. It is about secular devotion, starting from the fresco, Saint Sigismondo revered by Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, who depicts the Lord of Rimini kneeling in front of Saint Sigismund King of Borgogna, the work of the great artist Piero della Francesca, who signed and dated it 1451. At first glance it can seem like a devotional scene, absolutely traditional like the subject, with the lord standing in front of his patron saint. In truth, the interpretation that Piero della Francesca gave him is entirely new. First, in content, for the absolutely free relationship, and natural, today we would say devotional, that links the figures together, all immersed in a calm light and in a space of rational construction.

We must then talk about innovation, also about the simple forms, regular and harmonious, capable, as never before, to exalt the humanity and dignity of the characters, their intellectual nobility, their physical beauty, and also capable of conforming the divine powers and land, by virtue of a conception of dignity and rationality common to the saint and the client.

The candid mantle of the Temple of Alberta, as it still appears today, was not started when Piero della Francesca signed his fresco. Therefore, it is the first manifesto for Rimini and Romagna, of the true Renaissance. That was because he flattered the prince; he confused the interested artists only in the exterior, but at the same time invited the scholars to open up a glimpse of humanity in their research, announcing a utopian future based on reason and poetic comfort. Master of enchanted silences, of

meditated breaks, Piero della Francesca with his style anticipated the new times. A sobriety that might seem conflicting with the sculpted decorations of the chapels inside the Temple, where shields from parades and garland triumph, streamers hanging from the arch ways, cloths and festoons festively painted on the tombs. In fact, this is not the case because within the interior there is a peaceful harmony. And the decorations even petrified do not clash for its excess. In this environment, Agostino of Duccio's thin reliefs give it preciousness and extreme elegance. To be observed with attention are the cherubs that play and chase; musical angels with the face of children; Virtue and Sibille that show the symbols and elegant drapes; Apollo and the Muses, the Planets and the Constellations that form a picturesque countryside, wearing exotic costumes, except Venus, who is naked, and triumphs above the sea between the flight of doves.

Although it seems the opposite, everything can be explained in terms of traditional religion. So that even the strange signs of the planets and of the zodiac, that are not strange horoscopes, but enhance the perfection of the heavens and of the Creator, God.

Unfortunately, at that time, the interpretation wasn't as so, also because of the political quarrels of the Lord of Rimini with the Pope, the head of the Church saw paganism and lack of religion in it. Pio II, enemy of Sigismondo, affirmed that that church was full of heathens and profane signs, and he accused him of discrediting the Lord of Rimini.

It was worth nothing, the fact that, in the inscriptions written in Greek on the external sides, explained with clarity that he was "dedicated to the immortal God and the city" for the dangers survived and for the victories reported in the "Italic war". In the same way that, in the elegant classical inscription of the front, he had reiterated to have built it "by vote".

For the Lord of Rimini this building was a dream, unfortunately an interrupted dream because of his fall in misfortune and a premature death. He wanted to make a temple for the glory of God, of the city, and to make his own name immortal and an immortal dynasty.

It was also a dream for the architect Leon Battista Alberti, who wanted to make it a monument of exaltation of the intellectual nobility of man, under new thinking, that of humanism.





Philosophy and mystery at the Malatesta court

We are in the 1400s, with the return of the Greek studies, the standard of school returned, the Academy, which Plato founded on the basis of the Pythagorean communities. Then the Florentine Academy came to be, of which Gemisto Pletone was the founder. And still the Roman Academy, of which Leon Battista Alberti was among the main associates, the Neapolitan one and finally the Malatestian. The latter, although unable to compete with the vivacity of Florence, the solemnity of Rome and the depth of Naples, represented a distillate of knowledge through various talents that poured into the court and into the Temple, the treasures of their doctrine.

At this point a brief recording is necessary, a mention to what the academies and their teachings meant. We must start a bit further back.

For centuries, the official philosophical, dogmatic, taught in schools dominated, which was given the definition of *Scholasticism*. It was based on Aristotelian logic which claimed to arrive to the truth, proceeding with rigorous reasoning, based on unquestionable premises. On the contrary there was Platonism, centered on 'scientia scientiarum', which proceeded with a doctrine passed down only to a few, and had its root in Pythagorean, over time affecting esoteric societies. His teachings veiled and enigmatic; through Plato and Pythagoras, they claimed to have originated by the Chaldean magicians, Egyptian hierophants, Persian Zoroaster and by Hermes Trismegistus, (in Latin *Mercurius ter Maximus*) a legendary person of the Hellenistic age, revered as a master of wisdom and considered the author of the 'Corpus hermeticum', to which its attributed to the foundation of the philosophical movement known as *Hermetic*. A distinctiveness of this philosophy was the declared intention to abstract from words, to devote themselves to the contemplation of the things taught in their essence.

While in Rimini, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta reigned, the Middle Ages were ending and the Renaissance was starting. And if one views from the esoteric point of view, it represents the synthesis between the concepts of cathedral builders, with deep 'symbology' and the relations with the Order of the Templars, and those of the Platonic humanists bound to the practice of hermetic.

In the academies are taught the principles of the ancient sciences

in the form of, astrology, Kabbalah, Tarot, Magic and Alchemy. All had the same field of application: the discernment of the laws that hold the Universe. But they also possessed another purpose that was only speculative but practical, aiming at a supreme ambition that was defined as: realization of the "Great Work".

Sigismondo had created his brotherhood, of which he was called the "King", and included, among others, artists, philosophers, poets and scholars such as Leon Battista Alberti, Giorgio Gemisto Pletone, Matteo de 'Pasti, Roberto Valturio, Basinio da Parma, Agostino of Duccio, Matteo Nuti, Piero della Francesca, Giusto de 'Conti, Bonifacio Bembo, Tobia of the Borgo, Porcellio, Trebbiano, Biondo from Forlì, Francesco Filelfo, Gaspare Broglio Tartaglia. The Lord of Rimini will honor some of them by welcoming their remains into the Temple where he had placed his own burial ground, among them, the philosopher Giorgio Gemisto Pletone resting in a sarcophagus located on the right side on the outside of the building.

Gemisto Pletone taught in Italy, perhaps even in Rimini, definitely in Florence. He embodied Platonism; he attacked the cleric estate, he advocated a form of classic communism, in essence a Platonic organization of society. He developed an eclectic philosophical system, in which the boldness of his thinking was allied to a natural tolerance, to a curiosity that did not allow him to despise any intellectual contribution, without first digesting it and incorporating it into its spirit; he was the heir of Pythagoras and Neo-Platonists, but also of the Alexandrian Gnostics and the ineffable seduction of the Kabbalah. In fact Pletone theorized, according to the cohesive Renaissance culture, a world dominated by human rationality that would have made it perfect under the guidance of scholars, possessors of the mysterious knowledge where Christianity and Islam came together, the Greek and Oriental gods, and lastly Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy.

The seed that spread, germinated in a fruitful adventure, which would have blossomed in the Florentine Academy and in the Medicean (Medici family) splendor, finally, in the fruits of the disciples Marsilio Ficino and Pico of Mirandola. For this Sigismondo, fighting in the crusade of Morena during the siege brought to Mistra, where in 1452 the philosopher had died; in 1456 he withdrew the ashes together with those of other scholars, in the arcades on the side of the Temple.





Metaphorical incompleteness of the Temple

From the time of its construction, it was evident that an allegorical element was indispensable: the Temple was a work destined to pass through the centuries, in a feeling of eternity, shaped by a succession of inaugurations. To appreciate the unquestionable progress of construction, but also as a symbol of revitalizing stimuli, which the prince and his court needed, to keep immeasurable hope, the prince's unfinished dream to leave a glimpse of his boundless nature.

Sigismondo who cultivated this dream shared it with the architect Alberti and with a few others in the circle of initiates, including Matthew, Augustine, Basinio and Bonifacio, who finished one after a few years, among the most beautiful card decks in the world, the Tarocco Visconti, whose 78 plates served as a mute library in the meetings of the Malatestian confraternity.

In the same way from the arcane readings, here is the invitation to read the details: the elements of the Planetary Chapel and to put them together with the speculative responses found in the Liberal Arts, which go back to the Cell of the Relics, or ascend to the Ark of the Ancestors, or towards the tomb who awaited Isotta and the initiates.

At this point, beginning to distract from the plot from any one point, for example the Zodiac proposition or the nine Muses with Apollo who enlightens them with his immortal flame, the "Universal decade", symbol of "money", and an intuition could be reached: The Temple was a metaphor for the world, its theme, the history of humanity.

It is fairly unique that for over five centuries, no one linked the mysterious treaty of Bonifacio Bembo's of great philosophy with the iconography of the Temple. In fact to precisely interpret its symbolism nothing can help besides the twenty-two keys of the tarots. But, probably, as Oswald Wirth says it did not just happen, and that is, the tarots "constitute the authentic alphabet of initiates, thanks to which a shrewd intellect can learn to decipher certain graphic puzzles, intended to convey secrets that would be dangerous if they were spread indiscriminately."

Malatestian Temple
Above
Piero della Francesca,
fresco depicting

Sigismondo Pandolfo
Malatesta in prayer
in front of Saint
Sigismondo (1451)

Below
Chapel of the Planets
with the monument to
Vescovo Vanzi

The Malatestian Temple a place for meditation

That the iconography of the Temple contains arcane meanings known to the closed circle of the Malatestian court which was revealed by Roberto Valturio, friend and adviser of Sigismondo, who in one famous move from the *De Re Militari* (XII, 13) had referred to “symbols derived from the most penetrating occult of philosophy, and equally likely to attract scholars as long as it remains hidden to the will.” A story - the modern critics say - “famous and quoted from those who claim that the temple has cryptic and arcane meanings.” Valturio’s words coincide with those of Geber or of Jabir ibn Hayyân, an Arabian writer of the VIII century, Sufi and alchemist, who formulated the first synthesis of alchemical doctrine in the treatise, translated into Latin in the XIII century, ‘Summa perfectionis magisterii’ in its nature, in which declares: “We do not have to express our magisterium in darkest terms, but not even with evidence that makes it comprehensible to everyone. For my side I will teach it in such a way that nothing is hidden from the wise, even without ceasing to be obscure to the mediocre spirits. As for the stupid and the crazy, they will not be able to understand us (...) “. And even the Greek alchemists declared that they only speak to those who were initiated and trained, and to the confirmed medieval alchemists: “All that we say here, it only addresses the wise, not the ignorant.”

On September 13, 1998, a newspaper article, in the Sunday supplement of the authoritative daily newspaper, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, dedicated to the Temple, has Marco Bona Castellotti come to the conclusion that it “takes consistency for the conception of the Malatestian Temple, Platonizing and hermetic, woven with esotericism and not foreign to the Oriental influences.”

As to the mystery there is often embarrassment, even a reading of the Temple through its symbols has been put into the background.

The Lord of Rimini wanted to address those, who wanted to awaken the ideas of the intellect, and urged meditation and reading of thyself, to gain knowledge. And this is the interpretation of the “know yourself” of Socrates. The understanding of the Temple, understood as the symbol referred to man, as the Socratic imperative reminds us, of the unfinished teamwork that of Sigismondo with his companions of the art undertaken.

Sigismund’s message could of been this: without the appropriate





knowledge of oneself, one cannot give adequate knowledge of the 'Great Architect'. The man who learned to consider things as symbols, people as temples of the Spirit and actions as rites, is someone who has learned to constantly remember who he is, where he is in relationship to the universe, and of his foundation, how he must behave with his own brothers, and what he must do.

The mystery of the sacred in the city

The sixteenth century, was a characterized by a strong revival of religiosity, and in particular, of a renewed faith in the figure of Our Lady handed down to us through countless miraculous episodes. The invigorated Marian devotion affected the entire Rimini territory, but also Montefeltro, Valconca and the Republic of San Marino.

In Rimini she opened up with a clamorous public miracle right at the gates of the city, at the first mile of Via Flaminia. The intervention of Our Lady prevented the execution of a pilgrim unjustly accused of murder. It was 1506. The people of Rimini, immediately wanted to build a sanctuary in that place, to honor and preserve the sacred image of Our Lady with Child, that rose next to the scaffold prepared for the execution, where the miracle took place, and they wanted the sanctuary to be perpetually public. This is the church called Colonnella, completed in 1514, always of municipal property, which still retains the miraculous image.

There were other miracles in the territory that are now part of the province of Rimini, which will be discussed in the following chapters in their respective geographical areas. Here we tell you about what happened in Rimini.

The miraculous episodes that happened throughout decades, gave birth to various places of worship in the city center, where to the Madonna of Carmine, to the Madonna Addolorata (sorrowful), to the Madonna of the Rosary, had high altars built in their churches of the Carmelites (St. John Battista), the Servants (Santa Maria of the Servants) and San Domenico (destroyed).

Following many prodigious miraculous events, the town of Rimini included the Madonna on the list of its patron saints and, in 1696, placed a bronze image on the corner of the municipal building, wearing a bronze

canopy, and a lamp that the damsels of the town, in livery, had to light every evening at the Ave Maria and on some special occasions at the sound of trumpets.

The miraculous Madonna of Rimini faithful over the centuries

In July 1796 a modest image of the *Blessed Virgin in the anticipation of childbirth*, painted by the painter Giovanni Battista Costa, preserved in the oratory of the ancient Rimini Brotherhood of St. Jerome (and now in the oratory of St. Giovannino, of the same Brotherhood) began to “move her eyes”. The phenomenon was found by the bishop’s fiduciaries and then by the bishop himself, and it aroused wonder, enthusiasm and great manifestations of faith throughout the diocese.

A Madonna also worshiped in Sant’Agata Feltria, in the church of Cappuccini, moved her eyes.

At that time there were similar miracles also in Rome and in many places in the Papal State: more than one hundred and twenty were counted and approved with canonical processes. The phenomenon lasted many months and Pio VI decreed on July 9th to be a special feast, that of the “Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary”.

The arrival of the Napoleonic troops, in Rimini in February of 1797, prevented the spread of these reproductions of the miraculous Madonna, and hindered its worship.

However in 1850, a copy of Our Lady of Saint Jerome, was placed in the chapel of the former Clarisse’s of Rimini, she too began to “move her eyes”. And again, there were a lot of manifestations of faith, that the prodigy, acknowledged by all, aroused in the territory; indeed the fame and the devotion for this Madonna spread quickly everywhere, even to the Americas. This is about the Madonna, still very revered with the title of Saint Mary of Mercy, located on the main altar of the sanctuary of the same name, called Saint Chiara, built in her honor in 1852.

How to explain these wonders? It seems that on the eve of the invasion by the Napoleonic Army, and that no less traumatic for the people, the troops of Piedmont, the Virgin wanted to just assure that her watchful presence and her maternal protection were present.





Saint Anthony from Padua to Rimini

This 'modern' saint has been added to the 'historical' protectors of the diocese of Rimini in 1599.

Later, many more were added, namely Nicola of Bari in 1633, Nicola of Tolentino in 1672, Filippo Neri in 1703, Francesco of Paola in 1735, Emidio in 1787, but no one reached popularity like St. Anthony.

The fact is that from the beginning of the XVI century, a tradition was rooted from a long stay in Rimini, a stay that was accompanied by many well-known miracles. Above all, it is worth remembering the miracle of the fish that ran on sea shore to hear his sermon. Along this story, told is the miracle of the hungry mule kneeling in the presence of the Holiness. The first is also narrated in the *Fioretti* of St. Francis and is generally and without difficulty located in Rimini; the second is contended between the different cities.

The presence of St. Anthony in Rimini is generally placed in the third decade of the 13th century, when the city was infested with paternal heresy. In regards to his devotion, it was located locally since the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the city was in disarray during the passage to the direct domain of the Church and for the Malatestian demands; it was disturbed, just like the whole state of the Church, from a widespread of poor government to the deep concern. Causes which later brought the Dominican Girolamo Savonarola to the stake, it was 1498, and also to the great reform Protestant of Augustian Martin Luther (1517).

Traces of the saint from Padua, in Rimini are well-known and deserve to be followed.

In the ancient "forum" of Rimini, today's elegant Piazza Three Martyrs, there is a dedicated temple for St. Anthony, which was built in 1518 in the place where tradition says the miracle of the mule happened. From the year it was built, it had many remodels and the last one dates back to the earthquake of 1672.

The temple faces the church called "of the Paolotti" (the Minor Friars of Saint Francis of Paola), in whose ancient apse a beautiful piece of Guercino (1659) was sculptured depicting Saint Anthony of Padua which is now preserved in the City Museum. In the apse of the Church of Rimini

Above
**Surgeon Tools
of Eutyches at the
Museum of the City
in Rimini**

Below
**Mosaic floor
in the Domus
of the surgeon
in Rimini**

ni, as it is now, rebuilt after the war, the two Rimini miracles referred to the saint are illustrated by Achille Funi's great frescoes (1972). Instead it doesn't exist anymore, destroyed during the war, the little church built near the port to remember the miracle of the sermon of the fish.

Celebratory events are held each year to commemorate the two miracles.

Time travel

Eutyches' domus

The remains of the "Surgeon's Domus", belonged to the military doctor Eutyches, which are found in Piazza Ferrari, near the Museum in an accessible structure. They are well visible by looking at the internal path, the different rooms: the small entrance, overlooking the nearby hinterland that led into a hallway and an interior corridor. On one side a space opened up to a garden, while on the other side there were several walled environments. The living rooms are decorated with polychrome frescoes and geometric and figurative motif mosaic floors, including a dining room (*triclinium*), one bedroom (*cubiculum*) and two living rooms, the first with a precious mosaic of Orpheus among the animals. In a more laid-back position, some service rooms like a warm environment (hypocaust), a latrine and, upstairs, a kitchen and pantry. The sudden collapse allowed the preservation of furniture and domestic furnishings, found among the rubble on the floors of the house. Among the many amazing materials, including polychrome frescos, coffered ceilings, a fine glass pane, a marble basin, pieces of statues, pottery, oil lamps, the rich surgical and pharmacological equipment stands out, which testifies to the profession of the latter owner: Definitely a physician of great experience and skill who, as was often the case, had to be formed in Greek cultural environments reaching Ariminum, from the East. The Levantine origin of the character, also suggested by the adherence to epicurean ideals, is clearly proved by both the Greek scriptures he incised on two jars for the conservation of medicinal herbs, found in the medical tavern, with his own name, probably *Eutyches*, which was written on the wall from a patient housed in the room's bed. The particularity of the surgical tools retrieved in the domus, without gynecological





logical instruments, largely intended for interventions on bone trauma and endowed with a very rare iron, used only to extract arrow tips from meat, which seems to indicate a professional experience matured in the army, perhaps in one of those *valetudinarian* militaries located along the borders of the Empire that represented only the health facilities of the Roman world similar to our hospitals.

The fascinating primitive arts

The Museum of the Glares "Sguardi" is one of the most interesting museums in the world, for the beauty and rarity of the preserved artifacts. It inherited ethnographic materials of the *Museum of Primitive Arts - Collection "Dinz Rialto"*, founded from the explorer of Padua Delfino Dinz Rialto in 1972. This Museum, acquired by the City of Rimini between 1975 and 1979, had several venues and became enriched over time with further collections (by Ugo Canepa of Biella, Bruno Fusconi of Cesena, of the Conventional Minors of Rimini). It has a cutting exhibition, which takes into account the inevitable gaps in the rich available documentation, consisting of several thousand pieces and focuses mainly about how the western man looked at extra-European cultures, hence the name of the museum. From the discovery of the Americas and to other distant lands, its glances were different from time to time: scandalized and shocked, surprised and curious, fascinated and aestheticized. For such attitudes the museum intends to give space without a doubt an invitation to a reflection of modern "history", which may be helpful in a loyal understanding of the world of "others", of different civilizations", once far, today very present in our reality.

The Museum has ten rooms that are housed in a delightful eighteenth-century building suitably restored, which once housed the "Museum of the Missionary of the Graces", located right in front of the precious shrine of the Madonna of the Graces, on the sweet hill of Covignano. Important exhibits are displayed that come from China, Oceania, Africa and from America. Amongst others, a highly refined Chinese painting of the seventeenth century, African fetishes and masks, Mayan works, and pre-Columbian cloths. On the ground floor there is an area for contemporary exhibitions.

Curiosity of Rimini

Stories and legends of a millennial bridge

The Devil's Bridge

The ancient Tiberius Bridge is also known as the 'Devil's Bridge' a secular legend that tells about its origin and its might.

Started by the Emperor Augustus in the 14th century, it was completed by his adoptive son Tiberius in 21 A.C. From its latest builder, this admirable example of Roman technique, took its name and was covered with the legend that today it still accompanies its millennial stones.

It took seven years for Tiberius to complete the construction of the Ariminum Bridge, begun by his father. The work went by slowly due to accidents and newly built parts collapsing. It seemed to be a work destined to not see the light, and to undermine the emperor's glory. So Tiberius, after praying in vain to all gods played his last card and interrogated the only supernatural being who could give a hand: the devil. And as the legend is told it seems that he really did.

Tiberius called on him to come and help him. And he did so: he would build the bridge, but in return he would take the soul of the first who crossed it. The emperor accepted, and the devil started to work. The construction of the bridge was completed in one night and was solid and impressive. It was the moment of the inauguration and the official procession was ready for the parade, when the emperor remembered that he had to get rid of the covenant with the devil. Tiberius ordered that, before everyone else, a dog had to pass on the new bridge. So it was, and the devil, who was waiting for his soul on the other side of the bridge, was surprised. Shocked with anger, he decided to take revenge instantly, and destroy the bridge.

He kicked the stone several times, but in vain, it was built too well, it was indestructible. So he had to go, but to testify of this episode, there are the remains of goats' imprints on one of the big stones on the side that overlooks the city.

It remained standing for almost twenty centuries, leaving it unscathed from the wars, enduring urban traffic, makes one wonder if it really is the work of the devil!





Ponte Giberio

o Ponte del Diavolo

un monumento indistruttibile

The Devil's Stone

There is another legend, or rather another version of the legend, in regards to the famous Tiberius Bridge. Here is what has been passed down. Before operating on this exceptional achievement to be finished, the Emperor Tiberius addressed the Father of the Gods in this way: "Lord, where can I find the material suitable for this construction? his God replied: "At the Mount of Perticara you will find fine sandstone and in abundance". The Emperor asked how he could bring it back to Rimini. Here comes the devil's intervention. "Only the Devil can help you with this task and I will pass on the word." This is the proposal: "Spirit of the darkness, the people of Romagna are building a bridge over the Marecchia and they need you to transport the stones from Perticara to here. If you help I will give the first soul that cross the bridge." The evil accepted the task and immediately began to work. The works were completed soon. Now it was God's turn to keep his word, but he first sent a dog across the bridge. The devil, disappointed and angry, refused to carry the last cargo. So at Mount Perticara there was still one boulder left, destined for the Tiberius Bridge in Rimini, and so the "The Devil's Stone" "Sasso del Diavolo" was born.

Ancient waterways in and around Rimini

The flows of the underground of Rimini

An underground Rimini exists, and in certain parts of the Historic Center you walk on top of it without knowing. Around the Castle of Sismondo there was an ancient moat that recent excavations have once again brought it to light. Below what was once the Galli Theatre, the foundations of an ancient Basilica have appeared, and digging, the city of Romagna emerges here and there, while caves and tunnels reveal themselves and always conceal themselves with a certain amount of mystery. As in the gallery it was wrapped around from Piazza Cavour stretching out towards the Malatesta square. The result of a survey found that actually there is a tunnel that has an average height of 1.80 meters and the width of about 1.20 meters. It is in masonry with a vaulted roof always wrapped in masonry and it is about three meters deep. Is this an escape route? A secret path? Who knows. Many scholars speak of an ancient 'workable' path built

between 1829 and 1840 in coincidence with the renovations of the old water pipelines to allow inspection of each section of piping and to facilitate its maintenance. Water coming from the spring located on the current street Dario Campana, which met at the city walls, behind where a 'pool' appeared to be or rather a tank, to continue, to the Fountain of the Pigna, at the water reservoir and at the Old Fisherman's Fountains. So nothing really of extraordinarily secret, at least in appearance, but rumors and sinister tales remain alive today, because here like everywhere else there is a magical relation with earth, the springs, in short water holds the relationship between the surface and the underground that creates curiosity, questions and fears to which are answered by creating myths, legends and fairy tales. Among them, the most fascinating one tells how going down from the Fountain one enters a secret entrance to the galleries and from here it goes off and arrives up to the Covignano tufus 'tufo' caves. In this regard, the story of the White Friars, the olive grove monks of the white sax of the St. Mary abbey of Scolca, in San Fortunato. Monks who were considered to be craftsmen of rites bloodthirsty and blasphemous, to the point that through the passageways made kidnapped girls disappear. It has been said for centuries that one of the caves holds an evil treasure, the result of their crimes.

The springs of wellness in Rimini

There has always been plenty of water in the Rimini area and provided by the springs, was rationally exploited by the Romans through the construction of the aqueducts certainly made in the Augustan era and perhaps even before, in the last days of the Republican age. Water resources were taken from several sources from which distribution began at the heart of the city through stone pipes, bricks and lead pipes.

One of these was and is in the Covignano area, named as a reservoir of biodiversity from the dual aspect, ecologically speaking, because it is an Eco mosaic, from the many floristic and fauna specimens and in the cultural sense, since its landscape is a rural mosaic and historical result of a happy one and profitable interaction between man and the earth. It was one of the first manned areas in Europe, presenting a sacred aura since the pre-historic era, proto historical and Roman. In the Middle Ages, like everyone





Above
**Covignano of Rimini,
La Galvanina Museum**

Below
**Covignano of Rimini,
Church of Saint Mary
in Scolca today
San Fortunato**

else the most hospitable hills, were chosen as the place for hermitages and monasteries, enriched with more and more valuable religious buildings. Fertility of the soil and countless natural springs, made it so the land was always more cultivated, to produce oil and wine. So the entire area was flourished with colonial houses, lordly residences, and fortified palaces.

In these pages we find it interesting to tell you about the springs, so we will focus on the story of what were called the Baths of Covignano, now known as Galvanina.

Over the centuries the name has changed, as some town scholars point out, such as Cartocetti, Delucca and Rimondini, who reveal the events around the springs that flow to the slopes of the hill. Originally named Heaven, in the high Middle Ages called Scolca, and also Mount Zion, also as the settlement of the Girolamini Friars from the 15th to the 18th century.

The exploitation of thermal waters took place in Roman times as taken from the studies carried out, while in more recent times between 1547 and 1577 gained practicality, on the initiative of a man of Rimini, Guido Ubaldo Zanotti or Gianotti, whose project involved the noble and the literate, and even Giorgio Vasari, the artist who for Rimini created the splendid work, oil on the table, that depicts the Adoration of the Wise Men, preserved in the Church of Covignano of Saint Mary in Scolca, today called San Fortunato. And just to Vasari it is attributed the drawing at the base of the sixteenth-century Monument of the Galvanine spring.

Following many passages from proprietor to proprietor, after the family Zanotti, came the marquis of Soardi in the '700, then the Melandri family from 1887 which opened the first bottling plant in 1901, and finally the Mini family from the mid-twentieth century, the creator of modern industrialization which provided Rimini with its first thermal spa in 1970.

To conserve and make history accessible to everyone, from antiquity to the modern age, from the Hill of Covignano, in 1970 the "Museum of La Galvanina" was created, which exhibits some natural materials, as well as archeological, artistic, and architectural works recovered during the restoration work of the Monumental Spring, and the upgrading of the park and the establishment. Among the works exhibited, filled with charm, "a female head" of the first imperial era and the sixteenth-century coat of

arms which today became the symbol of Galvanina S.p.A.

Those who come to Rimini find a word familiar, and this is Sacramora. It means "sacred residence" and its origin is explained soon. According to an ancient legend between 961 and 973, in the Adriatic Sea an arch containing the body of a martyr was found. These, were of the offender of Christ's confessor, were closed in the ark with snakes and sandstone rocks, and in the end thrown into the sea. It was the sarcophagus of Saint Giuliano, said to be of Rimini, just for this reason.

In fact it is Saint Giuliano of Anazarbo, educated by his Christian mother of the new religious faith. Of Istrian origin, growing and not making it a mystery of being a Christian, he was reported to the proconsul of the city of Flaviade at eighteen years of age, who imposed sacrifices to the gods. He refused and therefore was tortured and led to Anazar, Cilicia, on the coast of Egea. He was sentenced to death, locked in a sack with poisonous snakes and thrown at sea. The orthodox tradition tells that his remains, after long wanderings, were recovered in Alexandria of Egypt and later brought to the Antioch basilica. According to Catholic tradition, the remains were stranded at the island of Marmara and six centuries later on a summer night in 957, the rock on which it was placed on, made the sarcophagus slip off and in 962 went up north to Rimini, in Viserba, at a point on the shore where a spring gushed out.

The place of discovery took the name of Sacramora, or "sacred residence". The area at the time was marshy, but some pools of water gave origin to springs and one of them became Sacramora, whose waters still today are considered healthy and diuretic.

The Spring, however, despite its ancient origin, is currently in the state of abandonment and the establishment that bottled the water is out of production. The worship for Saint Giuliano is rather special in Rimini, a city that proclaimed him a patron in 1225, together with St. Gaudiz. A Christian martyr from Dalmatia, saw his relics as prey to the wars and raids beyond the Adriatic coasts, where they are now, in the church of St. Giuliano Martyr in the homonymous village of Rimini, already a Benedictine Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul. The arc that holds them comes from its land, being made of Istria stone. His recurrence is on March 16th according to the Catholic Church, on April 18th for the Armenian Church,





on June 21st according to the Orthodox Church, while in Rimini on June 22nd, the day when, in the twelfth century, a palio was run in his honor, not far from the abbey. According to the ancient Rimini statutes, on June 22nd, the authorities went to pray in the sanctuary before seeing the racing horses on the path that went from the Viserba bridge to Piazza of the Three Martyrs. At that time, the local Coin workshop, marked coins with the word 'Sanctus Iulianus'.

A controversial statue between Pope Paolo Borghese and St. Gaudenzio

To show their gratitude to Pope Camillo Borghese the people of Rimini had built and placed in the most important Piazza of the city, Piazza Cavour, a statue depicting him. They made Nicolas Cordier make it, a French sculptor, while the merging of the work took place by Sebastiano Sebastiani of Recanati, and Giovanni Arrigoni designed the stone base of Istria. The inauguration took place in 1614. After about two centuries, with the arrival of Napoleon's troops in the city, we arrive at 1797, the people of Rimini were afraid, given the anti-clericalism of Jacobin, that was destroyed and melted. That was how a stratagem was devised to save it. Pope Paul V and was no longer such and became St. Gaudenzio, patron of the city. The bishop's miter took the place of the tiara, the papal keys emblem was eliminated and in its hand a pastoral stick was placed. Nothing could be said to the Jacobins about the patron, who left it in its place. So until 1929, when Mussolini, signed the Lateran Pacts, he also made the people of Rimini adapt to the new times and to the reestablished relations between the Kingdom of Italy and the State of the Church. There was intervention on the sculpture, and again on the head of what was of Pope Paul V Borghese, the miter was cut and repositioned with a crown. The pastoral was removed and the keys of St. Peter were repositioned in his left hand. But for the people of Rimini it is still the patron and the elderly as well as the citizens, most desecrating continue to believe that the hand instead of being blessed, is there with three fingers raised asking for "three coins of *saraghina*", seen that the statue is overlooking the old fish market.

The legendary kidnappings of virgins

The legends that are told in Rimini are innumerable and not all are worthy to be acknowledged, but this is because the place in where it is set exists. It is said in fact that a number of underground galleries have been excavated under the ground of the Hill on which everyone has been walking on for centuries and they start from the Marian Sanctuary down to the central Piazza Cavour. At one time, you could explore them, and even today you can explore them, but you cannot know where they lead to, and also because they have been closed off in many places. Used by lords of the city to escape and find shelter in case of danger, to preserve foods and for other purposes, it is difficult to know exactly. But the real legend is known.

A maiden in her white nightgown was raised from her bed by two powerful and massive arms. The older friar carried her, abandoned in a deep sleep, while a younger one followed them close by, looking around in a cautious way.

It was late at night and the darkness of the medieval "Piazza dé Revenderoli", now Piazza Cavour, favored kidnappings. The friars dropped into a trapdoor and brought the sleeping load along the tunnel. Upon arrival, at the cellars of the convent, they went up to the corridors and found themselves in a room, where a group of confreres waited for them, and at the sight of the two they exclaimed in chorus: "In God's name, you have done it again! Good job Brother Bartolomeo".

The legend continues as such: another friar with a ruby face, pulled up the young maidens head and made her drink a mixture. While she was raised, the hood that covered the head fell off and her long red hair came out. While she was also awakening a voice emerged from the buzz, it was that of the Supreme Father, who scolded them for the stupidity of having kidnapped a red-haired virgin, causing bad luck. And he continued: "I will end this dangerous tradition that has been going on for too many years, it will eventually cause serious problems with the inhabitants of Rimini. God wanted you to choose the wrong young lady to warn us of his discontent. This is an evil omen since the red hairs is a symbol of the evil forces and bring misfortune. A confrontation right inside the walls of our sacred refuge. Go away! Bless it and take her away! This girl is not loved by God, and can never imitate the Virgin Mary."





Above
**Rimini, Pigna
Fountain, detailed with
the famous phrase of
Leonardo da Vinci**

Bottom left
**the Leonardo project
of the water organ**

Bottom right
**the water organ
made by the architect
Pier Luigi Foschi**

Friar Bartolomeo, the kidnapper, intervened in this way: "Father, how will we represent the event that recalls the miracle of the Mother of God, and how can we give birth to our convent without the help of a virgin girl? Tomorrow is the anniversary and like every year, the chosen young lady will have to imitate the Virgin Mary in our sacred commemorative representation. Who will impersonate Our Lady of Grace?" The Supreme would answer by saying he would make the girl a statue, while she was being brought back to her bed after drinking the sleeping potion, so that she like the others kidnapped would have remembered nothing. That was how the foolish custom, to celebrate a living representation in secret, ended. And the people were always invited to attend the event in the light of sun, but above all in the eyes of God. This was for all the centuries to come.

Leonardo da Vinci and the Pine Cone 'Pigna' Fountain

Agostino di Duccio, on one of his bas-relief, in the fifteenth century Malatestian Temple, depicted a fountain. It's the one found in Piazza Cavour, the square of power where the Malatestian once dominated - since the Castle was well visible, without the Galli Theater covered the view - and today's municipal one, where the City Hall is hosted.

It is called the Pigna Fountain and its merit is also to have influenced a great artist of all time. "Let me get some harmony with several falls of water, as you saw at Rimini's spring, as you have seen on August 8, 1502."

The writer is no less than Leonardo da Vinci who, called to Rimini by Duke Valentino as a military engineering consultant, he was amazed by the musicality produced by the many water channels from the fountain of Rimini, to the point of designing a hydraulic organ. Leonardo never built it, but in 2002, during the celebrations in the Fifteenth Century of his coming to Rimini, one was realized by the Architect of Rimini Pier Luigi Foschi, and it still functions. In 1543 the monumental fountain underwent renovations and the statue of St. Paul was placed at the top. The latter, however, was removed in 1797 by the Jacobins who, arriving in Rimini, proceeded to replace it with a large marble pine cone, which gives its name and is still visible today.

The Templars and St. Michelino in Forum

Among the mysterious places in Rimini there is a small church named St. Michelino in Forum and it's the Templar Church of Rimini. It is located near Piazza of Three Martyrs and was dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. The first installation dates back to the fifth century and seems to have been born from a previous Roman Pantheon, as evidenced by some inscriptions. Today it is well known for its Romanesque apse and although unknown to many, it is worth finding it, and seeing it. With a document, Pope Lucius II in 1144 assigned the sacred building to the Knights Templar, that is, those who had the task of protecting the pilgrims who went to the Holy Tomb. In 1308 the emanation of the order of expropriation of the Templars by Pope Clement V with the order of the expropriation of Templar goods, even this Church of the Templars of Rimini, who suffered the same destiny and the knights were persecuted. In 1310 in Cesena the interrogations were held for the two Templar knights who lived there. They were Giovanni of Todi and Andrea of Siena, but in spite of what was foreseen an inexplicable destiny changed their fate. The promoted inquisition in Romagna by the archbishop of Ravenna, Rinaldo of Concorezzo, took place in Ravenna in the council of 1311. The interrogation of the Templars of St. Michelino was concluded with the incredible invalidation of confessions obtained under torture, defined as "unlawful". The two were acquitted imposing them only with "purgation", which consisted of demonstrating one's own innocence with the support of some witnesses who interceded on their behalf in front of the Bishops. The two Templars were thus absolved, an absolute unique case. For a long time it was questioned why this was this absolution adopted towards a church, not so important especially compared to other more prestigious Templars. Was it just coincidence or was there another mysterious reason? We do not know, but in the meantime the little church, even though irreparably ruined, still exists and has some traces of preserved frescoes.

The Clock Tower that challenged the earthquakes

In the square that was once the ancient Roman Forum Rimini, now Piazza of Three Martyrs, if you look up you will notice a beautiful building with a Tower and a clock. The Tower was built between 1547 and 1560





but a big earthquake for the city, severely damaged it to the point that the Municipality ordered Buonamici an architect to redesign it in 1759.

It was rebuilt and equipped with the most sophisticated and ingenious watch of all time, very beautiful and complex, still perfectly functional today and still with some unknown some functions. A complicated device, with a double dial for the first hours, a tedious calendar for the second, a crown with bas-reliefs that show the zodiac signs in correspondence to the months and moon phases, as well as a cell of bells that translate the signals of the mechanism, creating the chimes for the hours and quarters of the hour.

But the one that stands today, is no longer the same Tower, because two other strong earthquakes in the second half of the 1800s and in the first half of the 1900s, damaged it again and destroyed the bell tower. So it was decided to rebuild it again, Rimini couldn't bear being without its Clock tower. And this time to protect it from the earthquakes, it was thought to use reinforced concrete.

Since it was in the fascist twenties, Mussolini to celebrate the completion of the work, he gave the city a copy of a great bronze sculpture, that of Julius Ceasar.

To remind everyone of the place where the great leader of Rome, after the passage of the Rubicon, harangued his legions, thus giving rise to a new and glorious period for the history of Rome. The inauguration took place in 1933 and the statue was positioned at the foot of the Tower, where the central arc of the colonnade was specially buffered. After the war, in the place of the statue, a monument to the fallen soldiers was placed and now Julius Caesar was placed in the corner of the square on the same side that leads towards the Tiberius Bridge.

CHAPTER V
**THE
MYSTERIOUS
VALMARECCHIA**

Our path continues out of the provincial capital along the way of the Marecchia River and the road that runs along it and named after, Marecchiese, already Iter Tiberinum.

The mystery lies in every corner of the Marecchia Valley. Its castles, its villages, and its paths are intrigued by emanating suggestions and charm. The attraction is fatal. Believe what we tell you!

And which is supported right from the spring, which is on the Pumpkin 'Zucca' Mountain, where there aren't any streams, but it is composed of so many drops of water that go down the slope through the grass. Unique image that, thanks to the story of the poet and screenwriter Tonino Guerra, conquered a great director such as Theo Angelopoulos to the point of titling one of his movies *The Spring of the River*.

Then there is the Valley, which appears tough in some parts and soothing in others, able to give, as Tonino Guerra wrote, "the childhood of the world".

This applies all the way to the sea, seen from above, as claimed by the poet quoted "it is a long and blue line".

The Marecchia has attractive landscapes, both for natural coincidences and for the interventions of man, always moved by necessity, at the same time, material and spiritual, constantly influenced by its intense dialogue with nature and its secrets.

Throughout municipalities in Valmarecchia we suggest a map to follow: it is the map of the places, protagonists and the curiosities that make it unique and to be absolutely visited carefully.

Santarcangelo di Romagna

The tufa (limestone) caves

The caves, more than 200 surveyed, of great charm and suggestion, are indissolubly linked to a mystery: that of the origins. Ancient dating and secretive use are hypothesized. There is talk about tombs for the worship of the pre-Christian God Mithra, of escape routes of the lords, the Malatestians, but also weapons and ammunition depositories and for food commodities. Yet, despite the scientific studies, explanations still have not been found.

The visit is so impressive and intriguing that it allows you go with your mind in search of the most diverse explanations. Its glare instead it feeds of beauty and wonder, because their own conformation is unexpected and curious.

They represent the most remarkable and important phenomenon of Romagna, where underground wells and walkways are widespread. Such a wide and complex system as that of Santarcangelo di Romagna is however unique. All of the town's historic center rises on an immense pattern of mysterious tombs, often also linked to, within which large circular spaces are found, salt, caves, niches, and walkways. They are of different sizes and shapes, organized and articulated variously, all of great architectural interest and value.

The entire hill, called *Monte Giove*, the *Mons Iovis* of the Roman era, where it is not excluded that cults are paid homage to the Father of the Gods, and is crossed by over five hundred caves, called *Tuface Caves*, of which over two hundred surveyed. Despite surveys, studies and research, it is not known yet with precision their origin or primary function, so the dating and the hypotheses are innumerable. Certainly they create a fascinating underground city with patterned environments, arranged also on several levels. Although with some architectural variants, they have common traits, of which the most important are: the constant positioning and the freedom in the floor plan development in respect to the path of the roads.

From the typological point of view, they can be traced back to three main categories. In the first case they are parallelepiped or in cube shaped rooms with the function of storing produce. A second category has to do with the galleries of a complex form, which cannot be considered of a single typology: their shape is very elaborate and not suitable for utilitarian use.

The numerous ones are those belonging to the third group: cavities which can be traced to a "comb-like" structure with a central tunnel or a sloping central corridor, flanked by niches and side paths, many, which most often ends in a vast circular shaped environment, also equipped with radial cavities, or semicircular or rectangular niches. These are most often apsidal, the rooms themselves possess apses, and there are plenty of ventilation wells. Among the many, the Happy Grotto, which, after the grand access ramp, has a large rectangular compartment with pillars distributed in two rows so to scan it in three aisles as if it were a basilica, and in axis with the access ramp it has another two-aisle atrium on which it opens to a circular room.





The analogy with similar caves in France and in other places in Asia Minor, have suggested to scholars of the religious uses, believing them to be places of pagan cults or early Christian hermitages. In particular it was thought to be basilicas of the communities of the Basilian Monks, representatives of the Oriental Monachism (monkhood) in the West.

In the documents these hypogeums are reported back to the 1400s and seem too existed since unmemorable times. It is in the 1700 that the documentation about them is very consistent. It often speaks about their use as deposits: of food, weapons and wine.

Beyond the real answers that are missing on their origin and their destination, what matters most is the charm of the path they offer, unexpected and great suggestion for their infinite evocative power. They guarantee such a precious meeting so much as to justify a special journey. They are open every day and often even in the evenings, always making a reservation. They still also coincide below the palaces and homes, which some property owners are happy to show you, and it's easy to find a contact even by just attending one of the restaurants or inns of the Medieval core.

Cagnacci the cursed artist

Mysteries and passions, as we have seen in the previous chapter, dedicated to characters from a life full of charm and legends, characterize the life and artistic production of this great artist, bizarre and extravagant, born in Santarcangelo in 1601, who excelled in pictorial art, anticipating the future. There were numerous turbulent events that characterized his restless existence, including an attempt to escape with Teodora, a young widow of the noble Rimini family of the Stivivi, for whom in 1628 Guido Cagnacci was pursued and banished from Rimini.

Pope Ganganelli and his death in the honor of intrigues

In honor of Lorenzo Ganganelli, when he was proclaimed Pope Clement XIV, the city that gave birth to him on October 31, 1705, built the great Arch that stands in the same square. He was elected in the conclave of 1769 which was the most contrasted in history. The bottom line was the fate of the Fellowship of Jesus. The powers of the time were compact in the expectation that a Jesuit friend would not be elected. So, after a period

Above
**trumpet fish fossil
from the fossil deposits
of Marecchia**

Below
**inside the castle
of Montebello with
the portrait of the
ghost of Azzurrina**

of three months and 179 votes, on May 19, 1769, the choice fell on Lorenzo Ganganelli, certainly because he was a declared enemy of the Jesuits, but also because it was the least invisible to the various opposing factions.

Since becoming a pontiff, Clement XIV soon had to believe that, for the good of the Church, it was necessary to accomplish this brave act, even though he was aware of what it would take. Thus, on July 21, 1773, he issued the *Dominus ac Redemptor*, which he decreed the dissolution of the Fellowship of Jesus. The reactions did not take long in arriving from around the world. And not much time passed before Pope Ganganelli began to have health problems. He immediately had a sudden worsening that led to his death on 22 September 1774. The rapid decomposition of the body generated, then as a result, the suspect of poisoning, with the fear that he himself cultivated, but the personal physician established that the death was due to natural causes.

Poggio Torriana

The youngest ones are only ten million years old

Ten million years ago to 10 billion. It is the timing of the fossils that have been found in the seabed of the Marecchia torrent and which have given life to the *Park of the quarry*. A mysterious path as much fascinating that brings one back in time. The Park is dedicated to the important Marecchia fossiliferous field, and its location is strongly significant in a twofold way: on one hand the environmental recovery of the activity of a quarry that had settled there was allowed; another because its location is near a fossil fuel field which presents an extraordinary peculiarity: the largest number of specimens ever found in the Mediterranean basin, among these fossils of fish living today only in tropical and subtropical waters such as the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.

Montebello and Azzurrina's ghost

The Montebello Castle is linked to the legend of Azzurrina. It is about Guendalina, called Azzurrina for her "sky-colored eyes and light hair with blue reflections", as recounted in the seventeenth-century stories. She was the young daughter of Ugolinuccio or Uguccione, the feudal lord





of Montebello of 1375, who was the protagonist of a sad news story. It was June 21st of that far year when, in the underground icehouse of the old fortress, the child disappeared and was never found. It is said that she fell, chasing a ball on a rainy night while the siege seemed furious at the Rocca fortress. Her body was never found asks still for a burial, therefore her cries remained imprisoned between the walls of the Castle. Several times a year and on the summer solstice in particular, the date of the disappearance, mysterious things happen. But we need to start a little further back.

Guendalina seems to have been born albino, and to protect or hide this matter, her parents colored her hair. But the whiteness of albinism does not retain color; reacting to the pigment it became blue. Here in part the strange designation is explained. About her disappearance there are no proceedings found, despite this however, the fascination of the story still exerts on Castle visitors, on television producers, on simple curiosities, it remains in the archaic. And they go up to the road that leads to the millennial Rock of *Mons Belli*, following what the manuscript says, "It is told that at the end of the summer solstice of each shine, a sound coming from the underground tunnel is still heard."

In 1990, the Castle was open just one year, but the legend already widespread. There are those who immediately come to blindly support her, who disputes her, many fear her, others laugh at her, but they all talk about her. Then on June 21st of that year, sound engineers interested in such episodes carry out their first recordings. The equipment is sophisticated. All frequencies are engraved. In the studio, listening starts: thunder, a roar of violent rain, and then... a sound. In 1995 it is repeated. It is always on June 21st, new recordings are made but the sound is the same. In the year 2000, always being June 21st, a summer solstice and that sound repeats itself.

The legend continues to amaze scholars and researchers; they even add images and the searches continue. Visitors and tourists can listen to all the recordings. The reactions are diverse: to some it sounds like a little girl crying, to others a laugh, many say they feel a voice, some hear it saying a word, and many others say they hear nothing more than wind and rain in a thunderstorm. Leaving to free interpretation, it is certainly useful and magical to go up and visit the Castle, so that each one follows the mystery that they think suits Azzurrina.

Verucchio

The forerunners of the Etruscans

The many Villanovan tombs, the excavations still underway and the finds kept in the Archaeological Civic Museum, at the Monastery of St. Augustine, highlight the presence here, from XI to VII centuries B.C., of a civilization, which many now define it as being of Verucchio. Due to the richness of the artifacts found in tombs and in huts, the complexity of the life of the community, which are certainly fit for the Villanovan civilization, progenitor of the Etruscan, but here it is extremely high and perfected to induce it to be defined as autonomous by similar populations.

Matriarchy, trades with the East, with the Balkans, with ancient Greece from which the red or black clay jars come from, the northern lands of the Baltic from which the amber comes from, in great quantity and worked by the modern goldsmiths; the funeral rituals and the burials of the people, Etruscan ancestors are fascinating elements on which there is still much to discover. There is a chance to watch the excavations, and the Archaeological Park still awaits completion, that will eventually welcome the lands which have the tombs and archaeological sites, as well as showing the planting of the vines of that time, drawn from the seeds found from which precious red wine is already produced, called *Torello*, from a sculpture present in the Museum.

The Old Mastiff quoted by Dante

From the splendid Malatesta Fortress dominates much of the Adriatic Riviera, from the Ferrara coast to the Gabicce foreland. Dating back to the 11th century, it is called the Fortress of the Rock for its position on the high rocky spur. Its historical, as well as architectural importance is in the fact that it was the birthplace of the *Old Mastiff* quoted by Dante in the Comedy. And the Old Mastiff is the ancestor of the Lords of Malatesti or Malatesta, as they are called today. From here Malatesta from Verucchio also called the centennial "Centenario", left at the time of the conquest of Rimini, of which he was later revered governor. His old age, along with ferocity and determination of a leader, of course somehow common in almost all the lords of his time, he did the rest in contributing to the Old Mastiff designations.





Above
**San Leo, sleeping
in the cell of Cagliostro**

Below
**The representation
of Cagliostro in
a lesson with Count
Saint Germain,
famous Alchemist**

San Leo

The Count of Cagliostro and his embarrassing and mysterious existence

The story of Count Giuseppe Balsamo, called Count of Cagliostro, healer, heretic, mason, and alchemist, after attending the Courts of Europe, ended in San Leo. Here he was imprisoned by the Holy Inquisition and died of mysterious causes in a cell of the ancient fortress, built on the project of Francesco of Giorgio Martini. Mystery followed his death, with the disappearance of his body, buried at the foot of the cliff and immediately stolen. His life and the events that characterized him are undoubtedly of great interest that has never diminished. And meanwhile others recognized as the founder of Egyptian Freemasonry, for others a scammer who had legal trouble and tried in any way possible not to be prosecuted for his wrongdoings. What matters is his eternal reputation that continues.

Strange and inexplicable facts tied to him, still happen today. For example, in his cell unexplained episodes are recorded. Among these are the removals of a bunch of red roses on the day of his death, without anyone ever seeing him or the person responsible for this gesture.

His life has been analyzed by historians and scholars, and has been a source of inspiration for artists and writers. The fact remains that, his image, his inventions and discoveries are inextricably linked to the city of San Leo.

Riziero of Pietracuta

Between legend and history it is not always easy to see the real path and it is difficult to take a position. The writer Fabrizio Battistelli being of Valmarecchia, he made his position, convinced that Riziero of Pietracuta can tell us a lot about his time and his place of origin. So he decided to dedicate a narrative collection consisting of two novels, edited by Einaudi, *The Conclave; Riziero and the Invisible College*, and a book of *Riziero's Tales and the game of Tarots*, edited by Imprimatur. A character that actually existed, Riziero brings with him historical adventures in part yet secret, that the author is slowly revealing. He did it in his books and he did it with Fellini, accompanying him on the character's footsteps, as the author told. After reading *The Conclave*, named as a worthy detective story of Dumas,

Above
**Ruins of the Castle
of Pietracuta**

Below
**Talamello, pits
for the conservation
and seasoning
of the typical cheese**

fascinating and enthralling, the director wanted to visit the ruins of the Castle of Pietracuta, built by Francesco of Giorgio Martini who repeatedly hosted the Duke Federico and then became Riziero's birthplace. So much was Fellini's liking for the character who thought of a movie, affirming it on several occasions. Unfortunately he did not succeed in bringing his desire to completion, while Battistelli is succeeding with his stories that bring much attention to this character that originates from history, which feeds on legends and tells of a rich and fertile land, to be visited and to know.

Talamello

The amber that delights the palates

In the excavated pits, under what was once the ancient medieval castle, of which towers and walls remain, amber matures. In reality, it is not the precious stone that comes from the shores of the Baltic Sea, but a cheese, the "Pit 'Fossa' Cheese" to which later the poet Tonino Guerra donated the designation, namely "Talamello Amber". Because just like amber, it remains a long time within the holes dug in the sandstone, which the origin is also uncertain. Here it undergoes a completely magical transformation. Despite the large phenomenon and studied in many parts, it still has many unexplainable scientific aspects. Documents are attested from the 15th century, although it seems to have already existed from the time of ancient Rome, it is kept in clay without molding, actually in the bowels it acquires its intense flavors and scents that characterize it compared to other dairy products. And today it is found on the tables of restaurants around the world, and starred chefs have created specially designed dishes to enhance the perfume and the flavor of this cheese from the color and mysteries of amber.

A fair in November is dedicated to it, just after three months of being in the pit, it is taken out and brought to light.

Novafeltria

Perticara the house of sulfur

The Perticara mine, from antiquity to today, is loaded with legends and events also wrapped in the unfathomable.





Among the most important of Italy, it has over 100 km of galleries placed on 9 levels. It was active from 1741 until 1964 even if there are many clues to a much older mining activity. The place lives still today, thanks to an important museum, *Sulfur Historical Mining Museum*, which testifies the long and complex history, and makes it recalls the activity at various stages, from extraction to melting sulfur, and all culminating in the mine, faithful and realistic as well as suggestive, the reconstruction of an underground itinerary. Peticara is a mining basin for vocation, because for five million years, deposits among its clayey marble layers of plaster and sulfuric limestone were made. Hence a mining activity that has made the local economy tremendously blossom and the entire Marecchia Valley. And next to it are stories that have become over time fantasy stories, enigmatically enriched.

In the territory, connected with the extraction of sulfur, there were gunpowder mills that ceased activity with the closure of the mine. In the High Valley there were many installations, one of them in Novafeltria which is preserved just like a municipal museum; it is the former Bonifazi Gunpowder factory.

Prehistoric Torricella

Here there has always been a prehistoric sacrificial altar. It certainly can be, seeing it, refers to a boulder that in any case because of its form recalls the ancestral rites of ancient inhabitants. A sandstone boulder that is 7 meters long, 3 wide and 2 tall, which on top there is a large basin. From there a groove departs with a jump that leads to a smaller basin at the bottom. There are several monuments in the Valley caves, often called "devil's stones" that attract interest, especially for the halo of mystery that accompanies them.

In the territory, others are found, precisely in Peticara, Maiolo, San Leo, Pennabilli, Miratoio, Sant'Agata Feltria, and Saiano.

Maiolo

Divine punishments and landslides

The legend of the "angelic dance" and the destruction of the Fortress of Maiolo (Maioletto seems to be the name given by the people, then became the toponym) stay together. The collapse would indeed have been because

Above
**Ramparts and city
walls of the destroyed
Castle of Maiolo**

Below
**One of the old wood
ovens of Maiolo**

of divine punishment, as it is handed down from the Middle Ages. In fact the fortified fortress of Maiolo was damaged by the explosion of the powder and part of itself, along with the ancient village, were destroyed in the '700 due to a ruinous landslide, and preceded by forty uninterrupted hours of rain.

And in Maiolo even the memory on paper was not spared, since in 1737 the Archives of the Municipality burned. Folk tales and geological disasters, here as elsewhere, have always been interwoven to explain such shocking facts that the people did not know how to justify, and behind it all they saw the arcane.

Bread and fire

There are so many bakery ovens in the area that are still used, especially in June during the Bread Festival and make up a widespread Museum. With them continue to live the extraordinary millenary stories of ethnographic and anthropological interest, which are linked to the bread making.

Pennabilli

The beautiful Friday

On the third Friday in March of 1489, it was the 20th, in the Castles of Penna and of Billi a miraculous phenomenon occurred. The fifteenth-century image of Madonna of the Graces of Pennabilli, frescoed in 1432 in the church dedicated to St. Christopher, said of St. Augustine, dating back to the 11th Century, controlled by the Augustinian hermits from 1374 to 1810 from which it got its name, had tears pouring out from the right eye.

Some astonished, marveled, and incredulous people wanted to dry up the tears with pieces of cloth, but the tears continued to come out down the cheek, leaving a trace on the sharp face.

Two other miracles linked to this Madonna have remained in history, the apparitions of 1517 and 1522. This is why it is called the *Madonna of the tears of Pennabilli* and in Montefeltro it is the most Marian image most celebrated and venerated with the title of *St. Mary Novissima of the Graces*, or more simply, *Madonna of the Graces*. The prodigy of tears aroused great impression and was judged as a pitiful, maternal warning of misfortunes that occurred without delays. In 1517, during the war started





by Lorenzo de 'Medici at Francesco Maria della Rovere, Pennabilli, it was besieged by the Florentines, but on February 17th, the Madonna appeared on the walls and made the assailants scatter. The fact was repeated on February 22nd, 1522. The troops under the command of John of the Black Bands, camped under the walls again, trying to capitulate the city and the fortress. The Duke of Urbino noted the situation was in a strong minority, so he advised the people to leave the city. Everyone fled except 14 valiant soldiers. At dawn some of them went down to negotiate the surrender. The enemies accepted, provided that everyone would surrender as hostages. In despair and in sorrow, those left, withdrew to counsel. At nightfall while the enemies roamed around the walls, trying to penetrate the castle, in the sky between fiery glows, the image of the Virgin with her son in her arms reappeared. The city was saved again. The image is still very much worshipped and the third Friday in March, called "Beautiful Friday" in memory of the night of 1489, in Pennabilli solemn traditional celebrations are held.

Mateureka Museum of Calculus

In many laboratory rooms you will experience the concepts and ideas of the mathematics with the intent of transmitting not only knowledge, but mainly, emotions. You can observe, the infinity and the zero; manipulation of the Pythagoras theorem or plunge into an exciting journey of a fractal; play with the first numbers and the Greek pi numbers or stay fascinated by that gold "number" that makes everything around us seem beautiful, and to discover, slowly, that mathematics is at the core of computer science, the internet, virtual reality, and of robotics, and that its presence is within our everyday lives.

Basque 'Bascio' and Fanina Tower

At High Basque, called the Basque Tower, in the current destroyed castle, of which the watch tower remains, lived Fanina of the Bourbon of France coming as a bride to a Captain of Carpegna. The young princess got homesick for her Paris. The poet Tonino Guerra has dedicated some verses to her and an installation, featuring a beautiful colored duck. As the poet remembers, Fanina, who came from the French capital and wanted so much to go back to it, was consumed by shouting from the balcony of the tower: "Paris Paris help!"

Casteldelci

In Monterotondo the healer of the queen

Monterotondo today is part of the Aretina island within the municipality of Casteldelci. Here the house still stands, a large palace, where Nicola Gambetti was born, lived and was buried. A special man that everyone said possessed supernatural powers. He was a very capable, wise healer, and had a profound knowledge of medicinal herbs; he possessed so much experience and had great success with the healing he had done. These were talents that brought him to be even called by Queen Margherita of Savoy who was barren. Much time passed and a prince wasn't born, despite the court having consulted the greatest doctors. Only Nicola Gambetti succeeded, the queen gave birth without any problems and a perfect healthy prince was born.

Since then he was declared as the physician for royal decree.

His brother, also called Peppino Gambetti, possessed powers, but in his case it was a tremendous force, even in this case he was considered supernatural. Many have handed down incredible stories about him, as his strength allowed him to eradicate giant trees, and to lift up and move huge weights.

Uguccione of the Faggiola and Dante

On the Mount of Faggiola New 'Nuova', in the municipality of Casteldelci, the confirmation came after the recent archaeological excavations, the castle ruins of Captain Uguccione of the Faggiola, thirteenth century Lord of Casteldelci meet. It was very important in his time. It is suffice to say that Podestà of Arezzo, Pisa, Lucca and was vicar of the Emperor Henry VII in Genoa.

Dante stayed in his castle during his exile, and friendship between the two was such that the poet saw in him the *Veltro*, the ability to unify the fate of Italy, as Alighieri writes in his *Divine Comedy* in the Hymn of Hell.

In the access route of *The Spring of the fever* born from the tears of repentance of Uguccione, along the road called "Dante's Road".

From the Senatello torrent, Mulino of the Rio area to the from the Mulino del Rio area to the historic center, where the tower is part of the





first and most ancient castle of the lordship, instead there is the “Dante’s trail” which includes a beautiful medieval bridge to a single arch that is, after that of Tiberius, the most aristocratic of the valley.

Sant’Agata Feltria

The Fortress of the Fairy Tales

The Fregoso Fortress, ideal representation of fairy tale illustrations, has now become the *fairy tale museum*.

Perched on a sandstone boulder, called “The Rock of the Wolf” it seems to have sprung from the paintings by Maxfield Parrish, the painter of the fairy tales. The Museum, aesthetically beautiful, rich in content, innovative and spectacular from a structural and exhibition point of view, he catches in the sign what has always been said about this space. And at the moment it is unique and an unedited in the national landscape.

Four dedicated rooms developed with four main themes. They are filled with books, videos, excerpts, scripts, themed animations, even multimedia, that inform, always starting from the approach based on Emile Zola’s infatuation. Alongside the craftsmanship achievements state-of-the-art technologies have been used to create a pleasant balance between tradition and innovation.

To view the stars

Another recommended itinerary at Sant’Agata Feltria is the well-known museum from its name ‘To View the Stars’, consisting of different and unusual dioramas, or scenes of religious reflection. It was realized over three years of work, under the direction of nativity master Marco Fantini. A collection of some of the most significant works of Italian and Spanish nativity sculptors.

Most of these “reflection stops” are located at the Sant’Agata capital.

The route can start from the rooms next to the suggestive church of St. Francis of the Rose, worthy of a visit, in fact what remains of a hermitage church, in which the saint of Assisi prayed at in 1213, passing through Sant’Agata. Another setting is Fregoso Palace, which used to be the Town

Hall, where the 17th-century Mariani Theater is located on the ground floor. A scenery of great charm at the convent of St. Girolamo and, outside the city, the fascinating locations of Rosciano, Pereto, Maiano, Badia Mount Ercole.

Curiosity in Valmarecchia

If you are also travelers looking for stories, characters and curiosity, try to follow these indications, taken from poetic suggestions, popular suggestions that reveal many magical places and as for magic we mean surprising and seductive.

Marcosanti Palace

Among these places is the elegant castle for weddings, as the poet Tonino Guerra named it. And it's good to follow his words.

The Castle of Weddings

*Until recently the old women farmers told girls they had to marry:
"Remember that the big party you must have it at the Castle of Weddings".*

Unfortunately, they repeated just a sentence of an ancient tale of Romagna, which told of a young woman who could not get married because she could not find the famous Castle. Today this Castle exists: it is the Marcosanti Palace of Poggio Berni.

Finally, even in Romagna, the places of great encounters in life begin to have class and splendid memories. And it's only here that the married couple can leave in memory an exemplary favor that is kept in the showcase of the museum. Then within 25 years, they can return to see it to celebrate their wedding anniversary and after 50 years their golden anniversary.

In short, the dust of their voices and their profiles will remain forever in the air of these closed lounges of centenary walls.

Tonino Guerra

The Castle belongs to Poggio Berni and is called Marcosanti Palace. From its history, the reason for the new name is attributed by the Poet Guerra. It is one of the oldest fortified complexes, it goes back to the

13th century, and best preserved in the Rimini hinterland. Historically it is known as “Tomb of Poggio Berni” because in the Middle Ages the word tomb indicated a fortified building generally built on a hill or however, in a place suitable for defense. It is of Malatestian origin, as attested in some documents in which are listed the goods of the Lordship of the Malatesta, and as witnessed by a frieze placed in the court of the Castle. It is in brick and features the typical Malatestian chessboard, ornaments a six-pointed arc in the inner courtyard. The building was the protagonist of a series of ownership passages also because of the fact that it had an important role in the politics of the family alliances, assuming, often, the goods went to the dowry of the daughters. Hence the idea of Tonino Guerra, emotionally attached to the site, to rename it “The Castle of Weddings “. In 1418 it appeared among the goods listed as a dowry of Laura, said Parisina ‘from Paris’, daughter of Andrea Malatesta, lord of Cesena, married to Nicolò III Marchese d’Este. Parisina was assassinated in 1425, because she was accused of frolicking with Ugo, of her own age and natural son of her husband. Two years later, the goods returned to the Malatesta, to then have a new prerogative, this time Margherita of Este daughter of Nicolò III and wife of Roberto Galeotto Malatesta. After a temporary possession of Violante of Montefeltro, widow of Cesena Novello Malatesta, the Tumba Podii Ibernorum was bought by Cardinal Stefano Nardini, who in 1473 gave it to his nephew, Count Christopher Nardini from Forlì who had married Contessina Malatesta, a natural daughter of Sigismondo.

In the next three centuries, the Papacy had ownership of the Castle several times Castle succeeding the Nardini and the Montefeltro house. To Christopher Nardini, who died in the Battle of Colle Val d’Elsa in 1479, succeeded his natural son Peter, who was tarnished with various wickedness and not even his death was enough to appease the wrath of Pope Innocenzo VIII, which with the Papal Bull of December 12th, 1489, imprisoned for life all the members of his family. After three years, on May 23rd, 1492, the Nardini’s segregation was commuted with the donation to the Apostolic Chamber of almost all of their possessions, among which was the Fortilitium and the extensive estate of Poggio Berni.

In 1492, Innocenzo VIII ceded the fortress to Giovanni of the Rovere of Aragon, father of Francesco Maria, the future Duke of Urbino. The next



year he went to Doria who, six months later, handed it to Guidubaldo I, the last duke of Urbino of the Montefeltro house, husband of Elisabetta Gonzaga. In 1557 Guidubaldo II Duke of Urbino decided to pass it on to Count Orazio I of Carpegna, but not even a year later, he gave it to the cardinal of Urbino, Giulio of the Rovere.

The Castle maintains the connotation of personal possessions, tied to tarnished dowry, even in a solemn public act, developed after long negotiations, between the Roman Curia, Francesco Maria II of Rovere, Duke of Urbino and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. In the important convention, stipulated on April 30th, 1624, the landmark property and the legacy of the last Duke of Urbino, was allocated to his niece Vittoria of the Rovere, married as a child to Ferdinand II de Medici, son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Possessions those were dear to them even if they were kept far in the other domains of the Grand Duchy of Romagna.

In 1738, with the extinction of the Medici's house, the whole property was passed to the Lorena who, however, gave it to Francesco of Lorena in 1763, husband of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. So years later it was seized by the family of the Albanian Princes and followed by the family of Paul Marcosanti. The great estate was dismantled, and so was the Castle, especially following the Second World War. In 1974, the present property began recovery and the scientific restoration of the Palace reviving its noble charm and its historical memories.

Villanovans and funeral rituals

The Villanovans were an ancient people of the Etruscans with state-of-the-art equipment in cultivation, craftsmanship and construction. A guardian of the Villanovans' legacy is the Archaeological Civic Museum set up in the Convent of St. Augustine in Verucchio, a jewel for its rare finds. Here, thanks to the avant-garde design project, you enter in the life of the town that stood on the hill of Verucchio, life evidenced by the materials of over five hundred burials dug along the slopes. There are very rich funeral outfits that give back the image of a society of princes and warriors.

Characteristic of the Villanovans is the funeral rite, of cremation with tombs in wells containing a terracotta urn closed by an overturned bowl or a napkin with the funeral collection.

The Princes and Their Tombs

The marvel of the exhibits in the Archaeological Museum is not only linked to their story and their refined aesthetics, but also true for the extraordinary story about social, political and economics of the Protohistoric civilization called of Verucchio 'verucchi's'. The archeological documentation in fact, although it is almost exclusively of the funeral type, allows highlighting of the most relevant aspects of this civilization through materials that reflect the main internal dynamics of the community, as well as relationships with the outside.

The roles and social relationships of family groups are understood; the organization shapes of daily life and the rituals that accompanied the various moments of life, especially death; beliefs in the afterlife; and still the handicraft productions; directions of travel and relationships with even distant regions, such as the Balkans and the Baltic lands, who enter the context of Verucchio in the most active exchanges of the era.

The collection characterizes the dead, both men and women, also for their belonging, especially to families of very high rank, presumably noble groups, whose power and prestige were certainly from the control of a larger territory, surrounding the cliff of Verucchio, where they handled trades and productions.

There are more evident finds made in the Tomb called "of the prince" (tomb Lippi 89), which was one of the main funeral collections ever found in Verucchio, so far. A tomb dedicated to the Throne Hall of the Archaeological Museum with the same reconstruction. A reconstruction that represents the original shape and size of the tomb structure, within which the wood box is placed, which included the collection and the storied throne, also in wood. Numerous objects accompanied the deposition. Some followed the deceased on the stake as personal ornaments, dresses, insignia, arms, wagons, pottery; others were destined to the afterlife and used during the cremation and burial rituals.

Multiple signs of the deceased's prestige, document that it should be one of the most authoritative members of the local elites, perhaps invested in more roles of military, civilian, but also religious. The most significant of these symbols is the wooden throne, not the only exemplary of thrones from Verucchio, but the best preserved and most representa-

tive one. It in fact preserves a complex figured decoration that inside its back, it includes real and actual scenes, rich with significant complex and perhaps unmistakable meanings that attract curiosity and desire to deepen the knowledge of this ancient and advanced people, which for certain seems to be based on a matriarchal culture.

In the richest burials, discovered in ditches were rectangular, large cases with, a funerary urn wrapped in a cloak, pottery, furniture, objects of use, weapons, and textiles. The collection identifies tombs as male and female: among the first they are distinguished those of warriors who have horse bites, swords, spearheads, axes, knives; on the other, apart from ornaments and ceramic pottery and bronze, bronze and amber fibula, silver and gold jewelry, spindles and spools. A unique one is made up of precious fabric findings including a large semicircular cloak with woolen yarn.

Mutoid Waste Company and the art of recycling

In Santarcangelo on the bed of the Marecchia river there is a place that looks very mysterious and undoubtedly overflowing with uniqueness.

The Mutoid Waste Company lives and works there, a community of artists that was founded in London in 1986 but has been headquartered in Santarcangelo di Romagna since 1991.

The collective of performers, founded by Joe Rush and Robin Cooke in collaboration with Alan P Scott and Joshua Bowler, in the Car Breaker Gallery of Freston Road in London, chose its name by being inspired by the TV series *British Blake's 7* in which the Mutoids were reconditioned human whose personality had been removed.

Immediately they specialized in organizing entertainment events, collective in which the musical proposition played a primary role which mixed psychedelic rock and dub reggae, a subgenre of reggae music, embracing at the end of the late 80s the new movement of acid house, an American genre of dance music, of course electronic.

They were called in 1990 in the Romagna city, by the director of the *Theater Festival in the Square* who was asked to present their shows, roaring and heaped when they went on scene, or rather in the squares and in the streets with the music sound and with big trucks and cars disguised



as dinosaurs, followed by a sort of modern Argonauts a bit punk and a bit futuristic. And they were extraordinarily courageous artists and out of the norm, as being able to get projected up, challenge the fire, driving vehicles like space missiles. And much, much more.

Thanks to the giant welded sculptures and self-propelled, exclusively using recycled material, as well as for the bizarre and the futuristic adaptations of disused buildings in which they presented their shows, the *Mutoid West Company* initially stood out in the artistic English landscape, then in Europe and in the world.

The company soon found itself well in Santarcangelo thanks to a cultural environment and a very vibrant community and opens to the new, so they decided to establish one of their locations in the world here. Installed was an old quarry along the Marecchia river, owned by the state, creating a “waste village” called *Mutonia*.

Over the years, movies and documentaries have been filmed on them, highlighting the life of the village, showing a form of open community and free where precise rules on drug rejection and on respect for diversity are based.

Here they continue to live, their children attending town schools, here they continue to perform their performativity and visual activities based on the creative recovery and on the relationship of man with nature in a perspective post-industrial view.

Their name sums up the philosophy of life of its members, working through recycling. And today they do not build anymore, only the materials needed for their performances, carrying out a wide range of projects of installations, parades, celebratory moments as well as sculptures and art objects that sell to the public.

They essentially create, starting from inorganic waste of different types such as, iron, plastic, rubber, glass fiber, aluminum, copper, and brass. Giving life to sculptures that are absolutely unique and distinctive.

A constant flow of mutation that accompanies not only the conception, but the very collection of materials, the processing technique, to the implementation of the finished project.

Mutoid Waste Company is therefore proposed as a group of recyclers capable of reusing urban waste by turning them from scrap into



artwork. And who visits their village of Santarcangelo can soon realize it. The Mutoids essentially implement nomadism: traveling, working in different parts of the world, each with their own particular style and field of application, always ready to be dragged from their passion of deriving new shapes from already repudiated objects and therefore ready to assume a new and diverse nature.

Scrap processing requires a considerable amount of equipment, such as flexible, hammers, welders, drills, punches, riveting machines, screwdrivers, eyelets, wrenches, compasses, brushes, airbrushes, glues, and resins along with their twenty-year experience, from which they gave birth to the most various artistic creations: sculptures, works, collaborations, installations, exhibitions, stage shows, parades and square shows, parties, music, festivals, workshops, theater constructions, amusement parks, public locales and costumes for cinema and fashion.

Over the years the group has participated in several important events, in Germany, Italy, Japan, Great Britain, and Spain. Their performance was also included in the closing ceremony of the 2012 Paralympics in London.

Unfortunately, they have also had to suffer hardships related to complaints from private people on the alleged illegality of the field, and thanks to the extraordinary support from citizens and from the national and international political world, who mobilized in their favor, the community of Mutonia got the recognition by the Superintendents of Bologna and Ravenna of good citizens. So in February 2014 the Municipality of Santarcangelo issued a court order with which he acknowledges the recognition obtained.

Every year during the Christmas season, the city appears to be originally well decorated and in the name of ecology, also worthy of some artists of Mutonia, which produce luminaires and festoons with plastics, metals, glass and many other recycled materials.

To enjoy their accomplishments just visit Mutonia, but also reach Rimini from the Adriatic Interstate and at the crossroads with Via Marecchiese underneath the overpass, you encounter a magnificent sculpture, which depicts a large tree, made with car lights.

A real train and one a dream

It is often the story of a place to reveal the mysteries and just as often in that place traces are encountered. And it's not about legends, even though their suggestive burden is very powerful.

Let's talk about trains that do not travel anymore and abandoned railroads. You have to know that an old railway line connected Rimini with Novafeltria. A second line of Rimini with the state of San Marino, (which here we will not deal with because it is part of another state, the Republic of San Marino precisely) and a third line, unfortunately never completed, which started from Santarcangelo di Romagna and headed for Urbino and then Fabriano, passing through San Leo, Auditore, and Casinina. The last path cut through the Apennine ridge concerned, that it was parallel to the Adriatic Sea and was not easy to cross, particularly with the train binaries. But at the end of the nineteenth century this seemed possible because it was when everything was considered feasible in the name of progress and of modernity. Passing through valley to valley, building viaducts and galleries, challenging the territory, a link could be created since then non-existent and realized through the great symbol of positivist progress represented by the railroad. The Santarcangelo di Romagna - Urbino line was wanted by the Ministry of War, under the Baccarini law of 1879, which needed an alternative railway that went parallel along the coast of the Adriatic, which this reason it was too exposed to attacks. The area crossed was, as it is today, of great charm, and the line would have combined two cities of art, rich in history, art, and architectures, and two territories with many analogies albeit distant, because separated by three chains of hills. The fact is that while the Rimini - Novafeltria line worked for many years, from 1916-22 to 1960, this remained a dreamed railway line. Or rather unfinished, never carried to completion, due to the outbreak of the First World War, after the start of the work in 1895. It was only partially realized in Santarcangelo and throughout the Valley of Marecchia all the way to the territory of San Leo, (the works were completed in 1918), with galleries next to the Mazzocco River which still exist and are visible, the same in the stretch of Urbino land up to Fabriano, the middle part still to be completed. So the story is this: the train never transited and remained only an imaginary train.

Today these lines are only traces, because they do not work any-



more and in many parts their tracks has been embedded in the carriage-way. Much remains in the collective memory. The memory is still very vivid and clear for many of those who, then, students, from the valley with the train came to Rimini to attend the middle schools and the high schools and for many who at the time moved as commuters. Not being functioning railroads anymore, but having visible tracts here and there, along where they once were, creates a great interest and an enormous curiosity that is colored with mystery.

It is no coincidence it's working, and somehow this has already happened, to safeguard the tracks left behind, the stations and the toll booths are still standing. Also, there are sites dedicated to the abandoned railways and national associations that take care, even through specific projects, to keep the focus on those dismal lines that have great historical, geographical, social, economic interest and many other implications.

A few years back, for a time, a possible restoration of the Rimini-Novafeltria section was mentioned, also in the form of an above ground subway, considering always the ever increasing difficulty of an only road, Marecchiese, first of the state and now provincial, that travels all over the Valley of Marecchia. By now, however, much of is the original track no longer exists and it seems very difficult to retrieve it, so the hypothetical project was set aside.

Here we talk about why their story, documented by artifacts that meet along the way to the Valley, is perceptible with even the distracted glance and the curiosity immediately lights up to find out more, to know more and to understand how it was when one took the train to attend school, work or just get into town for a doctor or professional visit.

And it is a railroad that has fascinated writers and poets, among them Ezra Pound who used it to visit the Valley of which he had been lord of his beloved and song, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta. Tonino Guerra himself recalls the travels of the American poet in the verses dedicated to him.

Some data concerning the Rimini - Novafeltria Railway (at the time of the Royal Decree, it was 1903, approving the construction, it was referenced to Mercatino of Talamello, then became Mercatino Marecchia and finally Novafeltria): 18 stops in 18 stations, some larger and with different

services, as is also evident today from those remaining in discretion conserved; thirty-four kilometers long for a line of a narrow gauge, therefore not electrified.

Between Dogana of Verucchio and Pietracuta the route of the line was modified in the second post-war period, recovering the former stations and part of the Santarcangelo di Romagna - Urbino unfinished line, more favorable from the horizontal and vertical alignment point of view, abandoning the original track. The ground was largely embedded in the SP 258 highway, and in other areas canceled by urban development.

The still visible traces of this ex-railroad as well as the Santarcangelo - Urbino, are some bridges of which some in ruins and others in good condition, used as pedestrian walkways, many ex-stations, including those of Villa Verucchio, Dogana, Pietracuta, Novafeltria.

Some routes have had virtual restorations and remakes to be considered and used as green tracks, to use to walk on or with a bicycle.

The transformation is very interesting because it creates green path areas that allow for the rediscovery and enhancement of the territory and in the same time it helps to preserve the memory of what these places once were, loaded with stories, affairs, and lives. In short, a fascinating heritage to know, protects, and saves, even just as a memory.

These two railway lines are here, in Rimini and speak, ready to tell about the micro and macro history, it's worth looking for and finding them, it's a way to discover another of the many hidden treasures and mysteries that dwell in this land.

The Silk Road in Rimini and in Valmarecchia

It is always fascinating to think about the silk road and the trades with the East, but it is less the story of the mills and the worm farms on the Malatesta land. Cultivating the worms and producing silk, today seems to be a story that has the flavor of a legend, but it was also a reality in Rimini and in the valleys of Marecchia and Conca, even as a researcher writes in her book, *The Silk Roads in Rimini*, production was a vocation of the territory. Vocation, documented by archive sources that reconstructs the development phases of an economic activity of primary importance between 1600 and 1900. The documents reveal the treatment techniques



of worm raising in Rimini in 1500, the production sites, among spinning wheels and spinning mills, in some cases still exist, silk markets and the craftsmen including families whose names are still well-known. Studies have led to reconstructing the silk paths in the province, to retrieve the ancient spinning mills and the cultivation areas of worms, active until the end of the twentieth-century, opening up new researches and horizons for future development.

In Italy the cultivation of silkworms and the production of raw silk continued until the fifties and sixties, during which they began to be moved to countries with lower labor costs, especially in China, but things are changing there also, with rural population who are abandoning traditional farming activities and hence also the cultivation of silk worms. That's why they were born and are being born in Italy the plans to rearrange the silk cycle.

There is already a genetic bank with 200 silkworm breeds and 60 varieties of mulberry, which provides the breeders with the eggs. Some have arrived in Valmarecchia. So that also in Rimini the ancient art will be revived, born between 4000 and 3000 B.C. in China, where the first silk cocoon came from, cut off by a knife's blade, and where, around it many legends were born.

One of these, narrates of Lei-Tsu's, young wife of the emperor, who was having tea in the garden, when the cocoon of a worm fell into the cup. Annoyed, grabbed it to remove it from the tea, but with the heat of the drink it began to unravel. Meter after meter, it covered the garden. She observed it and appreciated its shine and strength. She then understood that this mysterious thread was to be woven. The empress entered into the pantheon of the Chinese gods, with the name "Mother of the Silkworm".

Another legend tells instead of a group of women walking around in the garden, coming across a strange white fruit, too hard to eat, and decided to boil it. The fruit was disgusting, therefore impatient, they started to beat it with sticks, as to manage to unravel it and discover that it was a thread.

CHAPTER VI
**THE
MYSTERIOUS
VALCONCA**

Even in Valconca, the mystery path is rich and winds along the Conca river and its tributaries. City, villages and small towns, mountainous, hilly and flat areas tell of stories and characters that have to do with the arcane and legends filled with charm. The river accompanies the trip but above all the castles, sometimes the villages, in a special way the caves, attract with their beauty along with their secrets and enigmas that inhabit them. Traveling in the various municipalities of Valconca there is a route of ancient and magical flavor to be discovered, tasted and cannot be forgotten.

Montefiore Conca

Ghost victims of sexual scandals

Wandering spirits lie in the mighty and inexpressible castle of Montefiore Conca. The fortress, which hosted kings and emperors in its magnificent regal spaces, including frescoed rooms by Jacopo of the Avanzi, offers interesting insight on court life. In 1993 an exhibition was organized on the theme of witchcraft and surroundings, and on that occasion paranormal phenomena occurred. They spoke of them for a long time and still today they are being studied. And the apparitions seem to preach on such research.

At the time, interviewed experts of the occult, confirmed the presence of the ghost of a man and a woman. The first one with his head under his arm for this it was identified as Lorenzo di Berardo Coccolino, decapitated here by Malatesta Guastafamiglia in 1344. The woman instead had the appearance of Constanza Malatesta Ungaro protagonist of a sexual scandal. Intrigues and assassins were not rare and the Malatesta family certainly was no exception.

Gemmano

Onferno and its Dante Caves

It is said that they inspired Dante Alighieri, and their peculiarity is that they host a community much bigger than the number of the inhabitants of the whole municipality. It is about Onferno, a name that since 1810 replaced *Hell*, believed by the Bishop of Rimini Gualfardo too diabolical. A place characterized by caves, actually a complex that expands for 750 meters in the bowels of the plaster of Valconca, already famous in antiquity and held to be so mysterious, that as for their darkness have conquered precisely the name of *Hell*.

They are populated by a colony of over four thousand bats, of six species, all harmless, some of remarkable scientific value because they are in danger of extinction. Scientists from different ages have identified in these caves the place to which Dante would be inspired to describe the hells in his *Divine Comedy* and at least eighty would be the analogies among the landscapes described in the Hymn and those of the caves, starting with the gateway.

In addition, many testimonials have been collected about Dante staying in these parts. However, it remains certain that the great underground space, once inaccessible, aroused uneasiness and fear. If today the infernal adjective is no longer used, the mysterious adjective remains intact. And next to the mystery, the charm and the beauty that the cave radiates should be mentioned, and which in turn fits into a natural context equally interesting protected in the homonymous of the *Natural Reserve*.

The caves are entirely accessible through a path that allows to explore the whole system and to admire the enchanting environments with crystals, limestone cascades, fireplaces with “cave pearls”, knolls among the largest in Europe, canyons, collapsing salt and bottlenecks, concretions of calcium salts from a bizarre form and with the bats that offer a close observation. The visit is guided by qualified personnel who at the entrance provide you with a helmet and torch.

Mondaino

Castle escape routes to escape the ambushes

Mondaino was one of the most important castles in Valconca. In 1289 had long been in the hands of the Lords of Rimini, the Malatestas, who had made a cornerstone at the borders with the lands of the Lords of Montefeltro. Following repeated fights between the two families, exactly in 1462, it was conquered by Federico of Montefeltro, a bitter enemy of Malatesta who then gifted it to the State of the Church. Surrounding walls that originally were so powerful that they counted thirteen towers, the front door, the Marina Gate, with many louvers for lifting the drawbridge, the fortress placed on a large base ‘shoe’-stand, making the idea clear of how the fortification was impressive and important. Today, thanks also to the enrichments and



embellishments that follow, including the beautiful semicircular square 'Piazza', which also form a very picturesque nucleus and of great attraction. At the same time it is what you do not see that contributes to the increasing fascination, because from the Fortress Rocca there are two long and steep underground tunnels. Rediscovered not long ago, they had been partially filled of dirt and led to the river. Of course they were the escape routes and were definitely secret passages to also send messengers.

Alongside the military purposes, they also served for the water supply. Just as in the literature concerning the fortifications, they frequently track secret passages, this actually exists, the result of a discovery that aroused much wonder.

Ghosts of Lovers Without Identity

A strange and inexplicable phenomenon happened in Mondaino in 1987. Something paranormal disturbed the municipal elections. The ghosts of two assassinated lovers manifested themselves in front of the guarding police at the polling stations. Numerous occult scholars invited them to leave the castle and so it was. The identity of the two unlucky characters was never known. Waiting on their return, the story of their visit is passed down.

Saludecio

Cerreto and his ancestral rituals

In the town of Saludecio there is the village of Cerreto.

The fortified village of Cerreto is a place that still maintains its medieval features. It is considered one of the "ghost towns" and it is easy to guess the reason: it has almost no inhabitants.

Its origins sink back to distant times, but the first written testimony of its existence dates back to 1231, when it was under the municipality of Rimini; at that time it had no more than fifty inhabitants. In the fifteenth century it was under Venezuelan domination, and then until 1860, it was part of the Papal State. The village is a few kilometers from the municipality of Saludecio to which it belongs administratively, and in context of a scenic and naturalistic landscape of great beauty. A peculiarity of Cerreto is the fact of it being an enclave outside of the municipality of Saludecio in





the territories of the municipality of Mondaino. Whoever visits the village will immediately notice the bell tower of the church, former civic tower of the city, which rises high and around, it is also possible to admire the old restored walls of the old fortified city.

Here, however, there is also something else that catches one's attention. Its ancestral rituals, especially in the liberating period of carnival, which lets masks and costumes of a time relive.

In addition, legends about the locals are wasted, by passing on their proverbial "naivety".

Montegridolfo

Malatesta, litigious family

Montegridolfo, like Saludecio and Mondaino and other towns in the area, in the first half of the fourteenth century they were the scenes of domestic struggles in the Malatesta family. The cousins Ferrantino Novello, Galeotto and Malatesta Guastafamiglia were those who quarreled among themselves without any restraint. The first was the son of Ferrantino and Malatestine nephew up to the eye, the other two were Pandolfo I's sons, brother of Malatestino. The fights, or rather the struggles, lasted a long time and were resolved with the defeat of Ferrantino, who was allied with the enemies, Montefeltro, and had formed a personal lordship located on the hills of Romagna, near Urbino. The whole territory was a victim of these struggles, to the point that Ferrantino himself had it completely destroyed in 1336. Five years later it had been rebuilt by Galeotto and Malatesta Guastafamiglia, following an urban plan which made it more powerful, thanks to the higher walls and the addition of four towers, and which is still largely intact today.

The truly beautiful Castle system, fully restored at the thresholds of 2000, rests on an embankment, surrounded by tall walls sloping down to the ground (shoe-like), the homes are scrupulously lined up along three parallel roads and its access is through a tower door drawbridge. The fortress, whose remains are embedded in the Viviani Palace, by the name of the noble of Urbino who was the owner, named Knight of Napoleon Bonaparte, was generously donated in 1503 by Cesare Borgia, the Valentine, to his beloved "boa", don Micheletto.

San Giovanni in Marignano

The witches and the night of San Giovanni

Of Benedictine foundation, San Giovanni in Marignano, has a medieval urbanistic facility, even though it is not placed on top of a hill but on a plain. Its walls, which once stood by moat, which today the floor remembers the tracks, and the tower of access, dating back to 1300 with fifteenth-century additions.

Its territory, which was swampy and inhospitable, was reclaimed in the XII century and immediately became the 'granary' of the Malatesta Lords. A place documented by over two hundred surveyed granaries, present in the historic center, accompanied by their interesting legends.

On the tombs fairy tales were born, like the one who saw them inhabited by kidnapped girls and monstrous animals ready to swallow them. This especially happened in the Night of St. Giovanni, between June 23^d and 24th, when it was possible to easily see witches who manifested themselves under large trees and in crossroads. To stay harmless you could pass through places where they were meeting, with a wooden fork under your chin.

The "dew" was providential, that is the falling dew on the meadows in the morning during this passing night, lived on for centuries as a powerful magical moment. The inhabitants wet from the "dew" were not attacked by moths and garlic, a vegetable that is already full of beneficial healing properties and used in magic very much, and with the "dew" was considered even more medicinal. The water drawn from the well at dawn, kept your site well and body healthy.

Just from San Giovanni, a good witch originated, Artemisia. A charming character, a traditional healer, who lived here, her house is still visible, between the end of the 18th and the early 19th centuries. She had a famous reputation even in the surrounding areas from which many people went to undergo her treatments and rituals of San Giovanni's oil with which the evil eye was identified and also quickly eliminating spells.





Curiosity in Valconca

At Montefiore Conca the legendary treasure of Malatesta and many ghosts that guard it

Treasures and ghosts have always been the most popular and appreciated inhabitants of the medieval castles. And it seems that the magnificent, dazzling fortress of Montefiore Conca preserves them both, indeed it is about a treasure and different ghosts. But let's discuss the first.

The mystery of the precious treasure is somewhat intriguing and tempting, because it would be nothing less than the treasure of the Malatesta family, the Lords of Rimini, who would have hidden and kept it here.

It has been sought for a long time, by using various kinds of resources, to go back to the place where the Malatestian treasure would be hidden. Still today it has not been yet discovered and the hiding place remains wrapped up in the mystery, secret more than ever.

Many have been involved in the search, for documents and places. And there has also been someone who seems to have found clues. Among them the canonical Vitali who wrote the story of Montefiore in 1828. It argues that the treasure exists and was hidden by Sigismondo Pandolfo in the Fortress of Montefiore. Here are his words: "The Malatestas, under siege, had to hide in a hurry and fury, the treasure, in "certain walls"...". Vitali was convinced maybe they were the walls of the Fortress? Who knows but the question is relevant since there is a place in the castle called the Treasure Tower, maybe it's not enough as an indication?

It is worth adding that the naming is supported by significant events. Here is what is handed in that place.

In May, 1952, the tower was struck by a lightning during a terrible storm. And, despite the existence of a powerful lightning rod at the top of the Fortress. Many noticed a contradiction, pointing out that maybe there was something hidden there that had attracted the lightning, perhaps silvery and gold walls for centuries inside of the mighty walls.

The Tower was later called "Devil's Tower", it is said to discourage the malicious people in search of precious metals and who knows what else, but also to preserve the honor of Donna Costanza, whose ghost has the right to rest in peace and freedom, which she could not

Above
**Mondaino, moments
of the demonstration
The Palio of the Fawn**

Below
**historical photo
of the factory
of the Galanti
Accordions
of Mondaino**

have as alive, hopefully enjoying her treasures.

And by introducing Constance as you see, we talked about another ghost that lies here. Someone claims it was Azzurrina's mother, the little girl lying between the rooms of the Montebello Castle. And it is known that Constance belonged to the Malatesta family, specifically the only daughter of Malatesta the Ungaro. According to some historian reconstructions, the young woman married in 1363, and the Marquis Ugo d'Este but remained widowed at twenty-two in 1370. At the death of her husband she returned to live in the Fortress of Montefiore from which she left, with a rich dowry. Beautiful and dashing she found a way to console herself, dedicating her time and tenderness to many lovers. She was found in bed with a German mercenary, maybe named Ormanno, she was not forgiven. Her uncle ordered a hitman to kill them both. But the hit man refused to kill the beautiful Constance, perhaps thinking about the reward she promised. But the life of the poor young girl was now marked, the furious Foriuzzo brought her death, which followed orders on October 15, 1378. Was she really killed? Here the story gets complicated. A few years later, the name of Constance was still alive in recorded documents.

What's to be believed? Were they talking about another Constance or her ghost?

It is worth going, to have a listen or see in person if the beautiful young lady is still there who moves gracefully by crossing frescoed walls, circling on the high wooden ceilings and maybe mocking those who have not yet discovered her treasure.

In Mondaino the secrets are in the notes

The curiosities that sometimes lie behind an object or a family are so interesting, to almost seem like hidden treasures that if discovered leave you gawking.

In this case we talk about a place, a historical family and music!

The Galanti family, which has linked its name to music, has another close bond with Mondaino. This is where the story starts, at the beginning of the twentieth century, and here is where the musical instruments are produced that for over a century hold the name Mondaino in the world.

Antonio Galanti lived with his family and earned a living performing



as a musician at fairs, as was used at the end of the Nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. Music was his strongest passion and this led him to create the first Galanti accordion.

From there the step was short, thanks also to his brother Egidio who was instead the founder of the first company, together they started the production of accordions, the factory, and already in 1917 was a model depot.

The factory was restored and now can be visited, rather it should be visited for the surprises it reserves.

They quickly deposited the patents in the United States. It was for state-of-the-art tools, both technically and aesthetically. The Galanti did not neglect marketing, at the time still unknown. They treated it so special that in the 1930s the Galanti were played by the best accordionists and advertised by actress Paulette Goddard, a famous star, an actress of cinema and theater, as well Charlie Chaplin's girlfriend.

In Mondaino, in 1932, the new establishment was inaugurated, Fratelli Galanti "Galanti Brothers", also innovative from an architectural point of view, among the first in Italy to be made of reinforced concrete, today also an interesting example of industrial archeology.

With the Second World War, the activity stopped. Soon after the family started marching with innovations.

The Galanti invented the loose bass, that is, a device that allowed to play the bass freely and to adapt it to the musicians' creativity. They then realized that it was necessary to adapt to the new musical tastes, alongside the accordion, other instruments such as electric guitars, the electronic organs and vibraphones. With the innovative spirit, Egidio's children built the first electronic organ that was made in Italy.

One of them, Marcello, left his brothers and founded the *Viscount International S.p.A* in 1969, to exclusively devote him to the design and construction of organs. With a highly qualified staff he created a company, still active today, which in those years was definitely innovative, with sales divisions in Italy and abroad as well as several research and development laboratories with specific tasks including (components, sound generation, carpentry). Initially, commercial efforts were directed towards the countries where organ culture was widespread, such as the Netherlands and the United States.

The challenges imposed by the new digital technologies made the Eighties characterized by an evolution of the quality and performance of products such as keyboards, pianos and electronic and classical organs. Innovation is the key word and is continuous.

In 1999 Marcello died and his children Mauro and Loriana decided to continue the long tradition of the Company with renewed enthusiasm, entering in catalogs the Pro Audio Voice System product line, featured from differentiated solutions born from the long experience in the musical industry.

Viscount is currently an important research and production center of musical instruments and professional audio in Europe.

CHAPTER VII

FAITH AND MYSTERY

The places of the spirit

Rocks hollowed out by prehistoric hands for ancestral rituals testify to an ancient spirituality, as you will read in Chapter VII.

Verucchio has already shown to give birth to moments of religious life of the Villanovan people. The Museum of the City of Rimini and the Historical Archaeological Museum of Santarcangelo, so as Riccione and Cattolica, give back traces of this represented religion for the Romans.

In this chapter, we consider the Christianity of the territory this began to be organized from the first centuries after Christ. We make a time leap and we go on to tell you about those early Christians who escaped from persecution in Dalmatia, reaching Rimini and moving into the hills to establish communities and spread Christianity. Let's talk about St. Gaudenzo who became bishop of Rimini; founder of the city on the Titan of San Marino who took its name; of Saint Leone, who was called Mons Feretrius by the Romans (hence the name of the Lords and of the Montefeltro Region), had to take care of the souls who lived there, enabling a future development of the Christian community to formulate a diocese later on. So that in the territory, already in the VIII century there were two dioceses, a long-established one in **Rimini** and the other in **San Leo**.

And today it is still so, one is called of Rimini (in Latin: *Dioecesis Ariminensis*) and the other of San Marino and Montefeltro (in Latin: *Dioecesis Sammarinensis-Feretrana*).

Traditionally, the foundation of the Rimini diocese is attributed in the third century and it is recognized as the first bishop Saint Gaudenzo (or Gaudenzio). First bishop historically documented is Stemmio, who participated in the Roman synod of 313.

In 359 Rimini hosted a council of the Western episcopate that discussed the thorny issue of Arianism. The diocese was always immediately subjected to the Holy See until 1604 when it joined the ecclesiastical province of the Archdiocese of Ravenna.

While the first mention of the Diocese of Montefeltro dates back to 785, when Carlo Magno, with the approval of Pope Adriano I, instituted it as a Suffragan place, to the Archdiocese of Ravenna. However, the first mention of a bishop of Montefeltro dates back to 826, when the bishop Agatone participated in the synod of Rome ordained by Pope Eugene II. For the entire ninth century the presence of bishops on the chair of Montefeltro is well attested.

A journey into Christianity

The majesty of cathedrals

To allow a trip to Rimini's Christianity we propose the visit to its cathedrals. The most famous and accessible, since it is in the city center of Rimini, is the famous sacred building called Malatestian Temple, which we said was erected by Sigismondo Malatesta on Leon Battista Alberti's project on the pre-existing church of San Francesco, a splendid building this remained unfinished due to his fall in misfortune followed by his death, attested in 1468.

The cathedral of San Leone is very old, dedicated to the founder saint of San Leo (the ancient Mons Feretrius), consecrated in 1173: a large building of Romanesque forms with a raised presbytery on a large crypt where the lid of the sarcophagus of the saint is kept. His body is guarded there since 360, his death was on August 1st, a date still celebrated today in San Leo, it was taken away in 1014 by the German emperor Enrico II, but as it is said, the horses became enthralled and the imperial court was forced to leave the body of the saint at Voghenza, a fraction of Voghiera in the province of Ferrara. At that point the Emperor left right away to Germany without the body of the saint, where it is still preserved today. The Leontina Cathedral has the apses exposed to the East, like all the ancient sacred Christian buildings therefore the entrance to the faithful is placed on that side.

In 1577, in **Pennabilli** a "new cathedral" was founded; restructured several times in the Nineteenth Century, which was placed besides that of San Leo.

And always speaking of Cathedrals when we mention the lordly **Basilica of San Marino** dedicated to the founder saint, Marino precisely. It arises in the Square *Domus Plebis* and is depicted on the Sammarinese ten cent euro coins. The place where the nineteenth-century building stands today, in the 4th century there was a parish as attested by the document of 530, *The Life of San Severino* by the Eugippius monk.

The intimate gathering of the parishes

The spread of Christianity made it possible for churches to be built, at the sides of the most important roads. In the abundant medieval docu-





Above
**Parish of San Martino
in Verucchio**

Below
**Church of Poggiolo,
built next to the
destroyed Augustine**

**convent, in the
municipality of
Talamello**

ments, in any case many have remained and the existing ones are no doubt worthy of attention. Indoors you breathe the ancient spirituality and the gloom that characterizes it, just like the purity and the rigor of the shapes, provide the right space for meditation and prayer.

Among them the oldest is the Parish of **Santarcangelo di Romagna**, dedicated to Archangel Michael, one kilometer from the center, with typical features of the Ravenna-Byzantine art of the sixth century.

In **Villa Verucchio** there is the Parish of San Martino, rustic Romanesque Gothic architecture.

In **San Leo** the Parish dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta, of the eleventh century, is on an older building of at least two centuries, as the ciborium of the Duke Orso indicates, the buyer, cited along with the construction period, between 881 and 882.

Always along the Marecchia is the Parish of San Pietro, at the Ponte Messa of **Pennabilli** with the Romanesque architecture of the late 12th century.

The quietness of the monasteries

Places of archaic and traditional mystic charm are the monasteries. Many of them include Rimini both Franciscan and Benedictine but also belonging to other orders. Among the monasteries, the oldest among Benedictine monasteries, dedicated to San Gregorio, founded by San Pier Damiani in 1060, and in **Morciano**, a few miles from the center. There are considerable ruins.

Among the Augustinian convents the most important, founded in 1200, in the center of **Rimini** has the church, dedicated to San Giovanni the Evangelist, known as Sant'Agostino, one of the largest in the city, which preserves in the apse and in the bell tower the greatest and best testimonies of the "School" of Rimini paintings that make up one of the most important artistic movements in the 1300s in northern Italy, *"the school of the 14th century in Rimini"*. In Sant'Agostino, the body of Blessed Alberto Marvelli is preserved (it was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2004, whose spiritual affairs and life intersect deeply despite his young death at age 28 in 1946 and are worth exploring).

Augustinians are always the church and the monastery of **Veruc-**

chio, which today hosts the museum of Villanovan civilization.

In **Talamello** from the destruction of the Augustinian convent of Poggiolo, comes a masterpiece of the Rimini school of the fourteenth century, the Crucifix, much worshipped, already attributed to Giotto, but of Giovanni of Rimini, preserved in the parish of San Lorenzo.

It is part of the Augustinian convent built in the 14th century, the church of St. Christopher (called Sant'Agostino or even the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Graces) in **Pennabilli**, rebuilt starting from 1521. It preserves a miraculous 15th century Marian image. The oldest Augustinian church of Montefeltro is in Miratoio, dated 1127, very up-to-date, that preserves the relics of the blessed Rigo of Miratoio, Augustinian hermitage who died in 1347.

From the 13th century the Dominicans had a great convent in Rimini with a church completely demolished.

The remains of a lordly Dominican convent, of a very elegant style and renaissance rigor, are at **Pietracuta of San Leo**, where it was built at the end of the '500 and early '600 thanks to donations from Giovanni Sinibaldi of Rimini. You can still admire the massive facade, part of the cloister and the church of 1640, from which a beautiful Crucifix of the fourteenth century is from, and is now in the Church of SS Pietro e Paolo of Pietracuta.

Even the Gerolomini congregation had convents and churches in all the important centers, among the surviving, are of the ones of **Saludecio** and of **Sant'Agata Feltria**.

The Franciscan message is reflected in the presence of the Saint, in May 1213, it was received in **San Leo**, by Lord Orlando de Cattanei from Chiusi, the donation of Monte of Verna and always in San Leo, where it was led by a sacred fire, in 1244 in the convent of St. Igne arose, with its impressive cloister, bell tower belfry and a church dedicated to the Madonna. Continuing his journey towards Rimini the saint stopped at the foothills of **Verucchio**, where a hermitage stood and there he made some miracles happen. He made a spring of healthy water spurt and planted a dry cypress. The hermitage was transformed into a convent which today still stands at **Villa Verucchio**, a place of great suggestion and spirituality, and preserves the plural centenary cypress in the cloister planted by St. Francis with a height of 25 m, following the collapse of the summit on





December 6th, 1980, and the trunk's circumference being 7.37 meters. The adjoining church with a thirteenth century door, which preserves a Crucifixion, painted in the fourteenth century by an artist of the "School of Rimini".

Even in **Santarcangelo**, Franciscans are still present even if their old convent was left to house an Elementary School in Piazza Ganganelli. Today it is on the Hill said of the Capuchins.

Rimini recounts the memories of Saint Anthony of Padua, which is told here, made the miracle of fish and that of the mule, to convert the Patarini heretics, in memory of which the small Temple of St. Antonio was built in the sixteenth century in the square of the Three Martyrs. And in Rimini the most important Franciscan church was the Malatestian Temple, next to a destroyed convent from the last war. Surviving convents are those of the sixteenth century of **Maciano of Pennabilli** and of **Montemaggio of San Leo**.

The oldest Marian sanctuary in the province of Rimini is Franciscan, the Madonna of the Graces, which rises in **Rimini** on the hill of **Covignano**.

So the Sanctuary of Our Lady of **Montefiore**, the most famous of the Conca valley, whose origins date back to the fifteenth century, when the hermit Bonora Ondidei had a fresco made on the cell wall he had built, among the woods an image of the nursing Madonna. In 1409 the hermit left that building to the Franciscans, of which only the wall with the sacred image survived, still called the Madonna of Bonora.

Marian devotion

We talk about images of the Virgin Mary to which miracles have been attributed.

In the Conca valley, crossed by a road traversed by pilgrims for Loreto, many churches are dedicated to Our Lady.

In **Montegridolfo**, in the church, next to a hospital for pilgrims, frescos have been retrieved that offer more than a reflection for Marian worship.

Also in Montegridolfo, in **Trebbio**, there is a Marian shrine entitled the Blessed Virgin of Graces, whose origins are bound to an appearance of the Madonna to two peasants in 1548.

Also in the valley of Marecchia, is rich of churches dedicated to Our

Above
the Blessed Virgin of
the Graces in Trebbio
of Montegridolfo

Below
Our Lady of Tears
of Pennabilli

Lady. Tied to two Madonna appearances, in 1517 and 1522, the Sanctuary of Madonna of the Graces of **Pennabilli**, in the Augustine church. Here is a fifteenth-century image of the Madonna that was miraculous for the first time on the third Friday of March in 1489, by pouring tears.

In the Pisa region of **Maciano**, in 1523, another appearance of Our Lady was reported, followed by the immediate construction of a church of beautiful Renaissance forms devoted to the *Madonna of the Olive*, entrusted in 1552 to the Franciscan Observants who assisted the convent.

Among the numerous Marian churches of Montefeltro, the Cell of the **Talamello** cemetery, from 1437, frescoed by the painter Antonio Alberti and the church of Santa Maria of Antico, founded in the municipality of **Maiolo** from the counts of Oliva of Piagnano towards the middle of the fifteenth century, it preserves an elegant 15th century original door and in the Presbytery a *Madonna with Child* in vitrified terracotta attributed to Luca of the Robbia.

The miraculous apparitions

With the renewed Marian cult that characterized the 16th century, the miraculous apparitions of Our Lady followed. The phenomenon did not just happen in the city of Rimini, but there was a proliferation of the apparitions of the Virgin throughout the territory. They are still being talked about today, and in many cases are celebrated, both in Montefeltro and in Valmarecchia also in Valconca.

In **Pennabilli**, the Madonna sent her signs several times, even if the remembered dates are: 1489, 1517 and 1522. It is called by the people, *Our Lady of the tears of Pennabilli* and in Montefeltro it is the most celebrated and venerated Marian image with the title of Santa Maria Novice of Grace, or simply Madonna of Graces, painted around 1432 in the Augustinians church of St. Christopher.

The first prodigy of tears aroused great impression and ferment throughout the territory. It was judged as a pitiful, maternal warning of upcoming misfortunes, which in fact did not delay, in the form of wars, sieges, and looting.

Later, in 1517, during the war moved by Lorenzo de Medici to Francesco Maria of the Rovere, Pennabilli was besieged by the Florentines, but



on February 17th, the Madonna appeared on the city walls and made the besiegers flee. And again, Our Lady appeared on the Pennabilli Walls to protect the inhabitants on February 22nd, 1522. After this other miracle the people of Pennabilli, very grateful for what happened, decided to expand the church of St Christopher and in 1528 placed a refined marble shrine of Renaissance style, then again enriched and almost hidden in the seventeenth century by a larger and richer Baroque wooden structure with carvings and figures.

The image is still much worshiped. The third Friday of March, called "Beautiful Friday", in memory of the one of 1489, at Pennabilli is a day of solemn celebrations and of great feasts. The gratitude must continue to be expressed because the Virgin's protection, they say, has been experienced several times over the centuries and even recently, for example During the Second World War.

The veneration of the "Madonna of tears" proclaimed "Queen of Montefeltro " is extended to the entire diocesan territory, the church of St. Christopher, popularly called St. Augustine, was officially declared in 1950 the "Marian Sanctuary of the Diocese". On September 21st (or the next Sunday) is the "Thanksgiving" for the constant protection provided by Our Lady to the town and to the entire diocese.

Always in the Pennabilli Municipality, another Marian image is venerated. Precisely in Maciano, localities close to the capital town. Here the Virgin appeared in 1523 to a lady called Giovanna, originally from San Leo. She was a poor woman and somewhat naïve as written by the notary bishop who collected the deposition and who defined her as a 'semi-fatwa mulier'. To Giovanna the Madonna asked her to build a church in the place of the apparition. In the years to come, with the contribution of all the surrounding communities in Maciano, one of the most beautiful Renaissance churches of Montefeltro was built. It is Santa Maria of the Olive of **Maciano**, which was immediately entrusted to the Franciscan Friars. On the door there is the date 1529, which is the year of its completion. The complex is quite interesting and worth a visit, also to admire the original frescoes in the lunette of the cloister.

The last fifteenth-century miracle of Rimini related to the Virgin always took place in the Marecchia Valley, in the municipality of Santarcan-

gelo. It happened in Castle of San Vito, in 1593, in front of a modest image of Mary painted in a countryside cell. Here also, with a municipal competition, a great Marian shrine dedicated to the Visitation. A grand church, begun in 1596 and completed in 1605, which was unfortunately destroyed by the retreating Germans in 1944 and rebuilt in a modern style in 1964. It is now entrusted to the Passionist Convents.

Always in the valley it is worth visiting other Marian places of great beauty and suggestion. The first is in **Saiano**, in the municipality of Torriana. On the cliff raising off the Marecchia River a small sanctuary was built next to a Romanesque cylindrical tower. It is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin of Carmine, which a plastic representation of great sweetness is preserved on the altar, perhaps of the fifteenth century, to which appeals to the prayers especially from pregnant women of the valley. It is still a destination for many pilgrimages and is easily accessible by walking through a picturesque road that crosses the river.

The second place not to be missed is in the historical Montefeltro, near the cemetery of **Talamello**. A cell was built here, in the middle of nature that holds a wonderful example of late-gothic art. It dates back to 1437 and it is all covered with frescoes by the painter from Ferrara, Antonio Alberti. It's a rustic cell, desired by a Franciscan, the bishop of Montefeltro, Giovanni Seclani, who is depicted kneeling at the feet of the Virgin with the Child, among many images of saints and under the scenes depicting the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Wise Men, and the Presentation to the Temple. The cell was once preceded by an open four-door to accommodate travelers and pilgrims which came here in many. Many of them have graffiti on the painted plasterboards their names with the date of their passage and sometimes their origin or destination, according to an inveterate, a bad habit, however in this case has left valuable elements over time to understand the localities' attendance.

Passing through the territory of the ancient Republic of **San Marino**, bordering the province of Rimini, you can visit the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Servants of Valdragone, located at the foot of the mountain in a very suggestive place. It is the name itself to evoke the medieval legend that said it was infested by a dragon. In the sanctuary, from the beautiful Renaissance porch, a fifteenth-century Madonna of Flemish aspects

is venerated, enclosed in a beautiful polytechnic of the next century, enriched by carvings and gildings.

In the Conca Valley, a similar apparition is well documented in 1459 on the border between the dioceses of Rimini and Montefeltro, precisely in **Trebbio of Montegridolfo**. Here too, as the Madonna asked the two people to whom she appeared to, a church was built, whose altar is ornamented by a beautiful shovel that depicts the miraculous appearance. This was painted on the testimony of the seers themselves, the sixty-year-old Antonia Ondidei and the young Luca Antonio of Filippo, in 1459, then "in real time" by the painter Pompeo Morganti. The background of the painting is interesting, with the view of Montegridolfo and its countryside.

After the double appearance of Our Lady to the two humble people, which took place on the Trebbio road, from the Latin trivium, where three roads cross for religious rites since antiquity, in 1548, on the same place the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin of Graces was built, restored in 1740. It preserves the mills millstone with the footprint of Our Lady, who came down from heaven. The event is evidenced from the notary deed that collects the testimonies of the protagonists.

Always in Valconca, at **Montefiore**, stands the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Bonora. It rises not far from the village and it is the most celebrated and frequented Marian sanctuary of the Diocese of Rimini. Its origin is thanks to a secular hermit, certainly Ondida of Bonora, who with the written testament in 1409 left to Franciscan tertiaries his goods and the cell he had the image of the Madonna of Milk painted. Around this image, revealed miraculous, the sanctuary grew, then completely restored in the first decades of the twentieth century. The Marian image still retains an archaic 14th-century style, and the tall altar dominates the modest church. Numerous ex vows, in sacristy, testify of worship and grace received by the faithful. The Virgin, from the stern and sweet face, with a royal crown on her head, is in a pious maternal attitude: with her hands she clings onto the divine little boy to her breast, which is greedily drinking the milk. The dress is red in color with a damask blue mantle. The image belongs to the Giottesco-Romagna painting school and also the subsequent upgrades have kept the characteristic features of the fifteenth century Madonna. In 1796 the Napoleonic laws suppressed the convent and Cell of Bonora was

closed. Nevertheless, the pilgrimages of the population continued for the image of Our Lady and in 1833 there was a fascinating fact that increased the fame of this marvelous place, already adored: the miracle. Annunziata Rossi, a 31 year-old farmer living in the village of Montefiore, was severely ill by a form of what we call today, vitamin deficiency. The best's medical examiner of the area issued her a deadly diagnosis. The woman then decided to go and pray before the image of Our Lady of the Cell of Bonora. Dragging along alone with fatigue, she prayed intensely asking for her to heal and returned home completely healed. The Curia 'administrative apparatus' of Rimini carried out a regular canonical trial and the miracle was historically verified. In 1834, to best preserve the image of Our Lady, given the state of progressive abandonment and ruin of the Bonora Cells, it was decided to cut the wall where it was painted, to carry it to the village of the St. Paul parish. But something stopped this project. Every time that the bricklayer attempted to detach the painting from the wall; he was blinded and could not continue the job. So the pastor was forced to change his plan and in 1835 commissioned an engineer from Gemmano to realize a placement project and an expansion of the Cell. In 1837 the bishop of Rimini set up the Shrine in Rettoria, entrusting the pastoral service of the pilgrims to a priest. Over the years, works and extensions followed. On May 16th, 1926 the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Pietro La Fontaine crowned, during a solemn ceremony, the image of Our Lady and the event is remembered every year on the second Sunday of May.

Miraculous souls

In a journey where real events are colored with mystery, faith, and devotion, where reason often cannot be explained, men are also met, exceptional figures, dedicated, good, pious who devote themselves to others and for others risk their own lives, to then save them at the moment of death or at difficult times, and phenomena, recognized as miracles. These are the saints and the blessed that are many in our province. In the thirteenth century there is the strict **Saint Aldebrando**, in charge of the Canonical, that the hagiography wants to engage in antipathy preaching. He became bishop of Fossombrone, where he died prior to becoming a saint in 1250.



In the same century **Saint Amato** of Saludecio, a farmer, pilgrim and founder of a hospice, who died around the year 1300 after completing one of his devoted journeys to Santiago de Compostela. Just recently the canonization process was completed. Amato Ronconi, born in 1226, attended the Franciscan convent of Formosino nearby Mondaino, then he chose like Francesco, to make life ravishing to the point of pushing himself five times to the Spanish sanctuary. He wore the pilgrim's tassel, tied by a leather lace with an apron for charity, on his neck the conch of the pilgrims of Santiago. When he did not travel he converted his house, into a hospice for pilgrims, welcomed and fed, and if the provisions ended; here is the miracle, like that of the turnips. In the garden they were planted that same morning and when he bided to collect them they were already very big. During the fifth pilgrimage to Santiago, an angel predicted his death, and then on his return home, he made a donation of all his goods and died. It was 1292. Many who touched his body, which was not decomposed, regained their health, so people began to call it Blessed. This was declared by the Church in 1776. Among his wonders was the protection of the town during the war.

Slightly later are **Gregorio Celli** and **Giovanni Gueruli** of Verucchio, the first Augustinian hermit and the second canonic, and the **blessed Simone Balacchi** of Santarcangelo, Dominican.

The canonic Gregorio Celli, born in Verucchio in 1225, still much followed today, died at 118 years old with the youthfulness of a young man. Among his famous devotees Pope Ganganelli, Clement XIV, thanks to him for the beatification. According to tradition, after his death a mule presented itself to carry his deceased body to the convent of St. Augustine in Verucchio, where Galeotto Malatesta made archery and a chapel for the holy relics, which today are in the Collegiate Church of Verucchio. Numerous miracles were attested since 1600.

A very significant figure of the **Blessed Chiara from Rimini**, who died in 1326: a church woman without rule, zealous and penitent after a sudden conversion followed by an unregulated life, mystical and active in works of charity, founder of a monastery of poor women with the title of St. Mary Annunziata, then of the Angels, suppressed in 1797.

The dispersal and displacement of relics of saints and blessed

caused from the Napoleonic suppression and from the Second World War, have made sure that only a few of them today enjoy a particular devotion. In particular, the Blessed Gregorio Celli of Verucchio, the Simone Blessed Balacchi of Santarcangelo whose remains are kept in a chapel of the Collegiate Church, destination of many faithful's who invoke protection in virtue of his ability to do miracles; and the Blessed Amato, who is revered in the parish of Saludecio. Also dedicated to him is an interesting and rich museum adjacent to the church, of which it is also part of.

It seems that the Church of Rimini after the 300s and almost to our times did not care to propose to the faithful the example of other remarkable figures for their spirituality and their holiness. Other local saints and blessed are not found in the modern age, with the exception of the older brother of Sigismondo Malatesta, Galeotto Roberto, lord of Rimini from 1429 to 1432. Galeotto Roberto, taken by religious zeal, was not attentive to the political problems, so much to be called upon to "duty of his state" by the pope himself, but immediately after his early death (he was a bit over twenty) he was proclaimed blessed by the people. We do not know of any influences from the Malatesta family and of the Franciscans (in fact he was a tertiary Franciscan); however enjoyed a remarkable worship, supported by many miracles. Worship that faded after the translation of his mortal remains in the church of San Francesco (in 1687) and then to disappear altogether at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Even the Franciscan diocese had its saints.

In Miratoio in the municipality of Pennabilli, the relics of **Blessed Rigo** (Enrico) can still be worshiped. They are found in the ancient Augustinian hermitage-convent, which is worth a visit, where he lived for a while in solitude and penance and then died in 1347. Always in the municipality of Pennabilli, **Fra Matteo of Bascio** it is remembered with respect and veneration, the founder of the Cappuccini, beatified in 1625, which can be found in the following paragraph. Born in 1495 near the Bascio castle, "he was rough to handle, indeed not sociable, and this stemmed from some his own and naturally melancholy." Characters that fit the Cappuccini Rule that he wanted to

create at all costs. It was 1515 when he entered among the Franciscans in the convent of Montefiorentino, near Frontino, where he was

ordained a priest. Here he undertook evangelization of the Montefeltro villages with an apocalyptic preaching and penitential tone that made him known in the area. In particular he reiterated the respect for the Franciscan rule and frequently complained of the failure of this on behalf of his confreres. In 1525, because of its growing dissatisfaction and restlessness, he decided to abandon the convent to go to Rome and ask Pope Clement VII the permission to follow the example of Francesco in the life of poverty and itinerant preaching. He obtained the Pope's permission to lead an eremitic life outside the convents, following the Franciscan rules and preaching indefinitely with a new tunic with a hood with sewn tassels without bezel or scapular. The only obligation the pontiff imposed was to present himself every year for the chapter, in front of the minister of the providence, of the observers of the sign of obedience. In April 1525 the Franciscans of the Marca held their chapter and Matthew went to make the act of submission but was arrested as a renegade. As he was freed, he resumed his preaching and had always more followers, but his mishaps with the Church institutions did not finish. He however continued his life as a penitent preacher, restive with prophetic-penitential characteristics throughout the peninsula. He used simple rhythmic phrases so that they could easily be understood by the illiterate, he had songs of devotion sung, "he preached the crucifix," and concluded shouting "sinners go to hell". He died on August 6th, 1552, in Venice, while he was resting in a corner of a bell tower of the church of St. Moise', that was offered to him for the night. He had a common burial but on October 3rd his body was exhumed and transferred to the Church of the Observants of St. Francesco of the Vineyard where he began to be worshipped as a saint.

Also in Pennabilli father **Orazio Olivieri** was born to whom beatification was not acknowledged, but his work of evangelization and communion among peoples was very great.

The Capuchin friar left his hometown, born in 1680, to have founded the first Mission in Tibet. In Lhasa he created an excellent relationship with the monks and the population. He brought a printer and wrote an Italian-Tibetan dictionary, which was also translated into English. This was the esteem that he earned among the religious Tibetan, who was called "White Head Blade".



The dictionary, which was recently found, had lost its traces while it was known that Father Orazio was carrying a bell. It was discovered in 1994 and its sound was recorded and brought to Pennabilli.

On June 15th, 1994 His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, XIV Dalai Lama, in visit at Pennabilli, on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the death of the missionary, he listened to the chimes of the bell, exiled since 1959, so he could hear it, thanks to the memory of Father Orazio, a sound of his beloved land. On his home in via Olivieri, two tombstones recall the figure of the Cappuccini missionary and the visit of the Dalai Lama.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the local Church was inattentive towards the devoted men and we had to wait until the Eighteenth century to officially recognize their holiness.

They were the "Romagna" Popes, from Santarcangelo Clement XIV (Pope Ganganelli who abolished the Jesuits order, to which his city dedicated The Piazza Grande and the Triumphal Arch), the people of Cesena Pio VI and Pio VII were the ones to register the Blessed. That after having observed the antiquity of the cult of which they were locally subject to. Since the Second World War, the pastoral utility was included to propose to the faithful the example of personalities, that were distinguished for the exemplarity of their lives and close in time blessed seculars and religious people were officially proclaimed.

Among these **Pio Campidelli**, a young Passionist who died in 1889, beatified in 1985, born in Poggio Berni where it's still possible to visit his house today. Fourth of six children, who had manifested a good soul as a child, prone to prayer and study. It was often seen him removing rock from the road to avoid swearing from the passers-by. He met the Passionists at age 12 and immediately decided to follow that path, but was asked to wait because he was still too young. In 1882 he entered the convent and dressed as a Passionist; giving everyone a testimony of a coherent and joyful life and being distinguished by his extraordinary devotion to the Eucharist, to the Crucifix and Our Lady. He did not become a priest because he got sick with tuberculosis. He died on November 2nd, 1889, as he himself predicted, only at 21 years old. During the disease he repeated several times: "I give my life to the Church, for the Supreme Holy Father, for the congregation, for the conversion of sinners, and

especially for the sake of my beloved Romagna". He was buried in the cemetery of St. Vito but the remains of what was called the "Sanctuary of Casale" in 1923, they were transported to the Sanctuary of Casale. On March 21st, 1983, Pope John Paul II proclaimed it Pio "Worshipful" recognizing in his life the unequivocal signs of holiness. On December 6th, 1984, the Miracle by Sister Maria Foschi for Pious intercession was approved. On November 17th, 1985 was declared "blessed". The Church remembers her on November 2nd, while Passionists congregations celebrate the worship on the 3rd.

There is **Sister Elisabetta Renzi**, educator, born in Saludecio in 1786, died in 1859 and beatified in 1989, **Sister Maria Rosa Pellesi**, Franciscan tertiary of St. Onofrio, who died in 1972, beatified in 2007; and a secular, engineer **Alberto Marvelli**, who died in 1946, beatified in 2004.

In the second half of the nineteenth century in the diocese of San Marino and Montefeltro, **Father Agostino of Montefeltro** stood out. Born in Sant'Agata Feltria on March 1st, 1839, which his house can be visited today, on Via Giannini, his name Luigi Vicini. He was a Franciscan, illustrious scholar and preacher, considered a benefactor of the Risorgimento, as a supporter and promoter of the ideals of freedom and domination. His personality and work were very great, not only as a religious, but also and above all as a man of culture, strongly involved in political affairs linked to the unity of Italy. Famous for his sermons, he did not disdain to speak of very delicate arguments for the era, concerning his homeland and politics, drawing criticism and accusations from the ecclesiastical environment and none. Born in 1839 as the firstborn of a wealthy family, who became a priest at the age of 22. In 1867 he entered a deep moral and religious crisis, which led him to flee with a girl from his village to Florence and Milan, after taking refuge alone in Switzerland, where he tried to commit suicide. The crisis ended in 1870 and redeemed his vocation, Luigi decided to enter the Order of the Minors, taking the name of Father Agostino of Montefeltro. It was then that his great oratory ability became famous, capable of attracting people from different kinds of education and social extraction. His most famous sermons were those pronounced for Lent of 1889 in Rome, in the church of

St. Carlo on the Corso, which aroused great excitement and enthusiasm and were even published. In the social field, with his speeches he contributed in the preparation of the land at the *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leone XIII and promoted several initiatives in Pisa and the province, where he founded several schools and congregations of Sisters, *Daughters of Nazareth*, who professes the Rule of the Third Ordinance of St. Francis. He died in Pisa in 1921.

Pasquale Tosi of St. Vito, missionary and explorer is a Jesuit who went among the American Indian tribes and the Eskimos of Alaska, conducting a passionate missionary and explorer action. He was born in the parish of St. Vito of Santarcangelo in 1837. Ordained priest in 1861, he entered the Society of Jesus the following year. He then lived twenty years among the American Indians of the Rocky Mountains, and twelve with the Eskimos of Alaska, learning dozens and dozens of local dialects, being able to complete the grammar of the Eskimos and an Eskimo-English vocabulary, then published by the US state government. He also took a long exploration journey beyond the Straits of Bering, where no European had ever set foot. He got sick, and died in the Alaskan capital in 1898.

CHAPTER VIII
**THE
LANDSCAPES
OF THE SOUL**

In this chapter, we describe the landscape, as a whole with fascinating and evocative places at a glance. So let's talk about the emotions that arouse, the evocative force they transmit by being in contact with our interiority. Social history and cultural life is not overlooked, which took life just from the nature of the places and from their beauty, and is inspired by the poetic vision of whom, possessing this gift, could read it with their enchanted eyes. In each paragraph you face one of these fascinations, describing aspects and peculiarities.

Poetic spaces

Enchanting landscapes, over time have become enriched thanks to the fruitful creativity of artists who wanted to leave their footprints. And the case of the spaces for reflection, which the Master Tonino Guerra designed, poet, writer, screenwriter, painter, and an all-around artist who was born and lived in Valmarecchia, where he also chose to die. His motto was, that other beauty would added to the one that already existed, because it supported "The beauty will save the world". And like a modern Tolstoj he didn't want to just fight for the safeguard of places but also to promote new stimuli for their attention and appreciation.

In the valley his poetic creations structured a widespread museum that carries the title '*The Places of the Soul*' and is about to become a Literary Park.

In some cases Guerra did not want to add anything to the locations, but only to sing them, making it known through its verses and his prose. He put them in a hypothetical museum which he called the *Shattered Museum*. Then, to each one he gave names and titles that allude, evoke, and enchant.

The Places of the Soul

They are productions, each with their own characteristics and themes, but all unified by the goal of soliciting the soul and to move the imagination. Among these Tower of Bascio, *The Fossilized Garden* and in the city center of Pennabilli: *The Garden of the Forgotten Fruit*, *The Road of the Sundials*, and *The Sanctuary of Thoughts*.

Altogether they are numerous and starting from the high valley they accompany the visitor along the entire axis of the Marecchia River.

Garden of Liseo

The first location Ranco, in the upper valley, where Guerra's poetry, collected in *The Garden of Liseo* volume becomes concrete and enters at

the bottom pushed into the village where the character of his poem lived, Liseo. His phrase in the book that tells how “solitude keeps company” just likes the one speaking of God. “To say that God can be a lie, saying he is not is an even bigger lie.” Here where the farmer lived, prayed and kept his garden, there are two gravestones with war-like phrases that remember of their existence.

The Fossilized Garden

At the base of the millennial tower, at Bascio Alta, in a meadow, which is a large terrace on a universe of hills, mountains, valleys, and seven ceramic carpets, made by Gio' Urbinati, seem to be laid by the wind, while the lush grass and shrubs lurk towards breathtaking views. The garden, designed by Guerra, is dedicated to seven historical characters who were born or who crossed the valley, including Dante Alighieri, Giotto, Ezra Pound, and Ugucione of Faggiola “to not forget the memory.”

The Madonna of the Rectangle of Snow

It is a chapel in Ca 'Romano, or rather a miniature church located in the middle of the meadow, half woods and half meadows, built, as narrated, in a place indicated by a divine sign. It was partially destroyed and the poet wanted to rebuild it, embellishing it with ceramic works of art and indications so the origins remained. “In the '700 he wanted to build a temple and for years there was no suitable ground to guarantee safety and stability. A day in August of 1754, snow fell which painted a white rectangle right. So they realized that the Madonna was pointing to the space on which the small church was to rise.”

The Field of Names

“In this little village clinging to the mountains, there is a lawn of grass quiet on which marble slabs were laid dedicated to Federico Fellini and Giulietta Masina. A sanctuary where the names are honored of those who gave art and emotion to humanity.”

With these words Tonino Guerra describes the place of peace to Petrella Guido who wanted to dedicate to Federico Fellini and Giulietta Masina, from which is named *The Field of Names*.





The Garden of the Forgotten Fruit

The first unique museum created by the Master and the first in Italy dedicated to the ancient fruits. "A Museum of Tastes," he said, "that collects the missing species of fruit trees and shrubs of Romagna, but also many works of art made by artists of the area from its collaborators. The space has been around for twenty years and worth a visitation for its variety and singularity of species including the mulberry planted by the Dalai Lama and works, among others, like the *Chapel of Tarkoskyji* created with stones of abandoned churches of the valley, as well as the fountain named *The voice of the Leaf*.

The Refuge of the abandoned Madonnas

Inside the Garden is a collection of sacred images painted by artists of various origins called by Master Guerra. The poet's idea was to remember those, now lost, that adorned the cells at the crossroads of country roads.

The Road to the South

It's a long journey in which one can admire, seven giant sundials depicting famous paintings designed by Guerra "to not forget that time is measured with the light". They are all on the wall except for one which is on the ground, over the old sink in the *Garden of the Forgotten Fruits*, marking the hour with the shadow of the person that from time to time represents the gnomon.

The Sanctuary of Thoughts

It's a garden where an ancient fig tree that grew following along the stretch of the walls belonging to the castle of the Malatesta, Lords of Pennabilli, even before Rimini. In the green there are sculptures designed by Guerra that structure a space for meditation and for the inner dialogue, "for the good and bad thoughts." An angle full of spirituality that brings back to the Orient and the Zen philosophy.

The Fountain of the Snail

At Sant'Agata Feltria there is the "snail who with words of water tell

about” how important it is to choose the path of slowness. A poetic message that goes beyond the artifact created by Guerra, beautifully placed along the great staircase of the city center and the product of the skilled hands of the marvelous Mosaic sculptor Marco Bravura.

The Bridge of the Stairs

In Pietracuta where Marecchia takes the form of a large sea, with fine sandy beaches and others with pebbles (where on the opposite shore stand the cliffs of Saiano with its pilgrimage sanctuary), with the beautiful season a *Bridge* is thrown, called *the Stairs*, because it calls back to the stairs that once stretched along the crossing. In memory of those gestures, the poet of the valley asked for a walkway to be placed to allow the passage to thousands of visitors each year, attracted by the beauty of the place but also with the desire to sunbathe in peace.

The Tree of Water

It is the “portrait of our river that moves its branches among the rocks in the summer, thus becoming the tree of water”, recited by Guerra’s poem that he dedicated to this fountain, and designed by him. It was built in Torriana, in the city center and it’s a bronze cast of a mulberry tree in which the branches are splashes of water.

The Fountain of Memory

It is in Poggio Berni and draws attention to the many fossils, in which it took its shape, which is found along the Marecchia right in the stretch belonging to this municipality. “A fossil that keeps company to whom wants to stop and travel in the memory of their thoughts”, according to Guerra.

The submerged meadow

It is a meadow of water and the grass is made up of swamps, while the Malatesta fortress and the medieval village of Santarcangelo di Romagna are mirrored in the large basin. The place for rest, meditation and meeting with poetry of a man who was born here and started to write his works.





The Fountain of the Pine Cone

It's a sculpture of Istria stone in the shape of a pine cone and its project is born from an idea of Tonino Guerra. This intervention, which changes the pre-existing fountain in Piazza Ganganelli in Santarcangelo di Romagna, adding the decorative element of the pine cone and creating new and enjoyable water games, realizes one of the Suspended Projects of the deceased artist.

The Shattered Museum

Pozzale

In St. Antimo, in the municipality of Sant'Agata Feltria, there is a large medieval well for the collecting of rainwater, hidden between the vegetation and seen from a small window, which seems to open to a completely hidden world. "It's round like a tower tall a meter and above a bush of green leaves that create a hat for it", read in a poem of Guerra's. It is such a surprise, that it is worth the trip.

The Park is one hundred footsteps

In fact it was named by the poet, the Park of the Hundred Meters and it's not a park, he imagined it, since it is a natural place that enchants for its peculiarity of being wild as "at the time of childhood of the world" when "the boulders rolled over the water" to create a Zen garden. Wondering stones that stopped on this creek, the Storena, which is a tributary of Marecchia. Its course is in Ca' Romano and flows to Ca' Raffaello.

The Canaiolo and the path of 'The world's childhood'

In the territory of the municipality of Pennabilli, within the Park of Sasso Simone and Simoncello, from Monte Carpegna and from the plains of Cantoniera two water courses are born, the Canaiolo and Paolaccio ditches, that joins the Messa torrent. They are impervious, almost completely unknown, but by far evocative, that bring thrill for their wild beauty, especially *Canaiolo*. Places with a flora, a fauna - a kingdom of wolves and wild cats - and a very interesting morphology, capable to conquer the gaze and stay imprinted in one's memory. The scholar Guerrieri in *the*

embellished Carpegna Volume and the Illustrated Montefeltro gives it this description: “The *humble* torrent, vulgarly called the Messa is born from an abundant fountain, that springs from a high and steep Balza of the Mount of Carpegna, that from the band that makes its waters from high to low a rush course, maximum from its alive spring to that dangerous and horrible path of the *Canaiole*. (...) there it passes through the steep way named snail.” At the junction point between the two ditches a Y is formed, from the enchanting beauty to the bitterness and the wild aspect. Here a group of Buddhist Tibetan monks threw the dust of the Mandala created in Pennabilli during the Dalai Lama visit in XIV and the celebrations of Father Orazio Olivieri, the Cappuccini father of Pennabilli origin, who in 1700 was a missionary in Tibet for more than 30 years.

Soanne, its mills and the Lake of Andreuccio

In the territory of the Soanne locality, in the municipality of Pennabilli, there are the ruins of old mills. They are embedded in the ground and in the rock and between them water still moves clear and powerful. The ruins of Molino Soanne, hidden in the bush, with two jumps, and those of Molino of Borgonovo, one kilometer above Soanne, placed along a torrent and in proximity of a waterfall in perfect harmony with the surrounding natural environment. Places loaded with magic and history, which should be sought as Guerra recites in his verses, “the miracle of the fresh flowing water makes you feel inside what you’re looking at”. In the case of the lake of Andreuccio it’s always water what’s talked about, immersed in an area of intense nature, surrounded by woods that in every season provide landscapes of enchanting beauty.

The Sea of St. Francesco

The beautiful view is right on Marecchia, near Ponte St. Maria Maddalena, where there are two ancient mills including the *Mill of Sandaci or Sandaccio*. We are in the territory of San Leo, before the bridge, and Novafeltria immediately afterwards. The area is easily reached by going downhill by car to the *Molino Vecchio* ‘Old’, today used as a restaurant called *Spiga D’Oro*. It is a stretch where the river assumes an unexpected shape and somewhat singular. Rock giants emerge beneath which the wa-





ter is deep and form gorgeous perpetual movements. Like many pools they offer themselves for diving and regenerating baths. Smooth stone peaks are scattered almost as if they were thrown by a Cyclops, here and there, with the task of acting as sentinels of the river. Hence the poet Guerra's conviction of one a cool rest stop also for St. Francesco of Assisi, lands which he crossed and lived. It is indeed proven of his coming to the area, especially in San Leo, where the evidences are certain and documented. When the full is reached, boulders emerge, as soon as the peaks and the water, that frightfully rises, run swirling.

Discovered landscapes

Montefeltro Renaissance Views is an interregional project for the territory's enhancement, of international relevance that does not originate from fantasies or legends, but takes shape from scientific research conducted in parallel to the territory and works of art of the Italian Renaissance.

A landscape and environmental study, historical and social, artistic and monumental, which has allowed the discovery of an invisible but real world. Thanks to it, emerges the fact that it lives on in the landscapes of today, the Montefeltro by Piero della Francesca, by Leonardo Da Vinci, of Vasari, and many other artists of the 1400s and '500s.

For five centuries, it was wondered where the landscapes inspired by Piero della Francesca were geographically located and the territorial backgrounds of masterpieces of other artists. Walking through our valleys it is easy to comment: here are the backgrounds of Piero, here are the scenes of his hills, the many profiles, one behind the other, sweet and delicate, among the mists and the colors of the morning. But after it was studied, analyzed, then they were concretely tracked. The landscapes of Piero have finally been rediscovered. They scoffed them in the hills of Montefeltro, between Romagna and the Marche, two scholars, a video maker and landscapist and a Geomorphology professor, in fact, two "hunters" of landscapes.

Everything starts from the first landscapes that have been found. Those are paintings by Piero della Francesca in the *Dictatorship of the Dukes of Urbino* of 1475 preserved at Uffizi National Gallery: Behind the

portraits of *Federico* of Montefeltro and his consort *Battista Sforza* and behind *the Triumphs*.

The mountains, rocks, and rivers are the same as the artist saw in the lands of the Duchy of Federico of Montefeltro, going to Urbino and to Rimini from St. Sepolcro along the Valmarecchia, on the Ariminensis road (from Arezzo to Rimini, along the Marecchia River - once Ariminus) which he used to reach Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, another great buyer. All landscapes were recognizable in the modernity.

Mountain profiles, hill lines, flat horizons, rivers and above all villages and castles, including San Leo, Maioletto, Talamello, Pennabilli, retrace one by one and there are panoramic views that give exactly the same look of those times. The emotion becomes tangible and the extraordinary view, leads you to go beyond time and space to reach the feverish and glorious history of the Renaissance's centuries.

From the results of the comparison between Giorgio Vasari's works (painter, architect and historian of 16th century Italian art) - accustomed to move between Arezzo, Rimini, Ravenna, plowing through the *Iter Ariminensis* - and real landscapes, the two scholars mentioned above have found similarities and matches that are important travel indications and observations. Similar studies have been carried out on the works of Leonardo Da Vinci, including *Madonna Litta*, at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and in particular *La Gioconda* '*Mona Lisa*'.

The backdrop of the well-known portrait offers scenic traces of landscapes of Montefeltro well-located by scholars. Leonardo traveled in these lands to reach some of his business destinations, including Rimini and Cesenatico and it is certain that his gaze lay there so as to depict it in his famous canvas. The territories of Pennabilli, Casteldelci and other neighboring municipalities reveal correspondence with the landscape of Leonardo, though compressed, behind the enigmatic noblewoman.

From the analysis of the backgrounds of the works of Piero della Francesca and of Leonardo da Vinci, and among them the *Dictatorship of the Dukes of Urbino* of the great artist of St. Sepolcro to the *La Gioconda* born from the genius hand Vinci, not only the originals were born and magical projects but of real, and actual cultural and tourist paths of great charm and suggestion.

They are traceable in Montefeltro, for historical features, cultural and landscaping, a unique area of its kind, in the inside of its landscape that makes up the Renaissance masterpieces not only mentioned above.

So in reference to Piero della Francesca you can admire the backgrounds of many of his paintings from the Renaissance Balconi specifically set up in the region of Montefeltro of Romagna, in San Leo in two points, and in Sant'Agata Feltria, and you can choose to be accompanied by specialized tourist guides and by actors who interpret the characters of the era, including the same artists or protagonists of their works.

The same thing applies to the real landscapes that make up the background of La Gioconda by Leonardo da Vinci that you can admire from the 'viewpoints', in the territory of Montefeltro at Pennabilli, in two places, and in Villagrande just crossing the provincial and regional boundaries. Even in this case you can choose to be accompanied by specialized tour guides and by actors.

With these points it resumes its life in an outdoor museum "Invisible landscapes", they are revealed as "places of art", found in numerous in this area, which the great painters of the Renaissance brought in their eyes and chose as the backgrounds of their works. After the visits even the public can carry them forever in their eyes and in their own memory.

CHAPTER IX
**WHERE
NATURE IS
MYSTERIOUS**

In this section, we suggest areas of great suggestion: crystal hills, clay deserts, woods of patriarchal trees telling the history of places and men; rock formations somewhat mysterious for origin and uses, and much more. We present features and peculiarities to invite you to discover their charm very dense of arcane.

Rocky Monuments from the Secret Face

In this section we deal with cliffs, caves, shelters, boulders and rocks, cavities, basins (single, multiple, parts) that over the centuries they have become sacrificial, miraculous sessions, hermit bunks, but sometimes also stones called “of the devil”.

They have given rise to environments of great interest, above all for the mystery alone that has always accompanied them, both for their function and their origin but also for the meaning attributed to them by men in various historical eras and social environments.

Each stop of the tour that covers them is worth the visit. In Valmarecchia they structure a very rich journey between the middle and the upper valley.

It begins with **Saiano**, territory of **Poggio Torriana**. The hole where the Sanctuary dedicated to the Madonna of the Rosary rises, the rock somehow crumbly has special conformations. One of these invites and favors the seat. But this is not enough: it is said that she is of help to pregnant women, however, once you lay on the boulder, they pray to the miraculous Madonna found here.

In the town of **San Leo** two are the places on the route of the rocky monuments. One is at **Mount Fotogno** (near the locality of Tausano) where one encounters an average Miocene mass, known as “Mass of Tinnacle” or “Tinaccio”. On limestone, sandstone, there have been formerly obtained tanks, some on the other vertical part and others on the upper part. Two of them are connected to each other through a drain hole of about 10 inches. On the outer side there is another hole that appears to be the drain of another excavation.

A second tub is in **Tausano** on the ridge from which Varco Biforca goes to Tausano. It seems to approach the rocky tombs even though it has limited dimensions.

The third place is located in the **historical center** of Leonton, right on the north side of the Duomo, between the Duomo itself and the Bell Tower, where there is an excavated large stone, rectangular, becoming a vat to collect rainwater, no coincidence, there are numerous carvings around it leading to the tub. It also has a hole but we do not know where

in alto
**vasca rupestre
doppia di Torricella
a Novafeltria**

in basso
**vasca rupestre singola
di Monte San Marco
a Montecopiolo**

it drains today. Some elements support its potential cultural pre-Christian value, as Massimiliano Battistini says who extensively studied it, just like the other rocky tubs in Valmarecchia.

In the municipality of **Maiolo** in the woods on the right bank of the river Fosso Rasino, affluent of Marecchia, the boulder is called “The bed of St. Paolo”. Two meters high with a five-by-five meters mole. It could have been used as a tomb in a hypothetical prehistoric rocky necropolis or even Roman. Some scholars believe it might have been used also to collect rainwater given the numerous grooves in its edges. Traditionally it is said St Paul lay there during one of his journeys to rest hence the cult of the saint and the custom of sitting on the tub to cure rheumatic and back pain.

In **Torricella**, in the municipality of **Novafeltria** another tub, in this case double, made from large sandstone. It is isolated, seven meters long, wide three meters and tall two meters. Even here in the higher part there is a larger tub, from which a groove slides with a leap leading to a smaller tank below. On the edges and along the walls there are decorative carvings, cups and small steps. Some scholars affirm that it could have been used in prehistoric times as sacrificial ara, hence the tourist signage that has this titration.

“The Devil’s Rock” is the name of one of the typical boulders of Mount Aquilone of **Perticara**, always in the municipality of **Novafeltria**. It precipitated from the rocky base on which it had been for millennia, but for some time has been relocated. The legend built around this curious stone says that this is the last stone left behind for a whim of the Devil. It was in fact intended for the construction of the bridge of Tiberius in Rimini! It’s nice to imagine it but somewhat unlikely in reality.

The journey between the boulders of the mystery continues to **Pennabilli** where, at one kilometer from the village, in the Tregenghe locality there are two big round stones with a diameter of three meters and two in height. Inside, two square tubs were excavated through a hole. This indicates a likely function linked to the production and a very old scope.

And in **Sant’Agata Feltria** there is “The bed of St. Silvestro” or “Bed of St. Ottaviano.” It is in the locality of **Mount Benedetto**, in woodland in Osteria. In fact, the sandstone rocks of this type are numer-





ous here, and come from the collapse of the rock formation of Mount Ercole. On one of them, a large basin was formed. The legend tells us that this bed has welcomed the tired limbs of Friar Silvestro who had chosen this afresh forest as his hermitage and penance site, chosen to lead him to the Holiness, hence the name that it still holds today.

Even in this case we talk about curative properties and there is a signpost with the Sacrificial Ara. Always at Sant'Agata Feltria in **Villas of Mount Benedetto** there is another small double tub with two elliptical holes. The context is very interesting because within the woods in which it is found there are numerous rocky boulders present with different workings, such as cups, hollows, and steps always carved in the rock.

The rocky monuments are also caves, grottoes and even these do not lack in our path. In the vicinity of the old castle of **Miratoio**, in the territory of **Pennabilli**, some caves are well known and historically frequented. Miratoio's hilltop is predominantly sandstone rock, intensely fractured and subject to collapses that have determined the emergence of these cavities. All have been given a name, including: "Cave of Barlaccio" and "Lair of Morroni" that at the end of World War II, it was a refuge for Slovenian soldiers escaping from the imprisonment camps of Anghiari, in the nearby Tuscany. Then there is the Cave called "Blessed Rigo", which is best known, traditionally the shelter and a place of penance for the Augustinian Hermit Beato Rigo. Listed in the sources also as Arrigo or Enrico, he lived in the 14th century. Inside is a step in the guise for kneeling. And yet the grotto of the "Dark Cave" characterized by two inaccessible and inconvenient entrances, which during the war hosted local families. There are other smaller, difficult to explore cavities and among them the "The Split of the Devil" or even "Grottoes of the Bats", forty meters long and positioned at 865 meters above sea level. Today, however, its entrance is obstructed by large debris.

Among the cliffs of interest on which rock climbers climb. Passionate for this sport, professionals, beginners and amateurs find in Valmarecchia bread for their teeth and for each one there is his own: easy walls in the guise as a school gym and the most difficult ones. The cliffs where climbing takes place can be traced back to the middle valley in San Marino, Verucchio, Saiano, San Leo, Maiolo, Pennabilli, the most difficult ones

in Perticara, Terra di mezzo, Vigliolo, Mount Aquilone, Balze, and Mount Fumaiolo. And believe it, that the valley seen from above, lets you experience shivers and dizziness from hanging in the void, is not bad!

Who loves to feel even more thrill, from Perticara can jump into the void with a hang glider to then fly over the whole valley.

In Valconca it is only the high valley that reveals mysterious traces even though it is mostly related to the use of boulders as tubs for rainwater or for wine processing, all in regional and extra provincial territory. However, they have not been included as belonging to the local folk culture, like in other places.

The arboreal Patriarchs the caretakers of millennia energies

The arboreal patriarchs are the monumental trees, the centenarians, often immense, who for centuries are guarding the territory and tell the history. They also tell of legends and mysteries, having in their midst, gaps, passages that people used to use as remedies, healing, holding the energy of the plant so strong to win over illnesses and maladies. Other uses were related to the temporary need of a shelter, to protect themselves from enemies, but also from storms, snow or other bad weather, or when one was away from home land use related reasons, for hunting, for harvesting of the fruits of the forest and of the underbrush. From anthropological studies emerges that also from us, as well as in the East, where the elderly still embrace the trunks to understand the millennial energy, it was used to pass the infants who had difficulty growing, inside an oak or a chestnut hollow, and this would have saved the child from certain death and favored his regular growth.

Knowing how to recognize, defend and enhance them, helps to find the natural places and to safeguard the biodiversity. Their value is equal to that of the castles and historic villages, and in the mystery that surrounds them, trace back to our roots. For this reason they are surveyed, reported to then be safeguarded. In some cases, this has been happening for a long time due to their connection with special events, characters, customs, traditions; an example for everyone: the cypress planted by St. Francesco in **Verucchio** where the Franciscan monastery stands, which is worth a visit.

The secular tree also has a symbolic meaning, just think about a





“family tree” or a “cosmic tree”. But what should be highlighted is that old trees are considered natural micro ecosystems because many animal and plant species live there. That’s why they have a strong educational value, representing an important window on the territory, and a reference for the study of the natural environment, starting from the state of health of air and water. They are actually biological recorders. Analyzing with the appropriate equipment, the various rings of their trunk, not only allows you to know their age, but they are also a map of the climatic variations, pollution, exceptional occurrences, such as fires, floods, hurricanes and more. And you can go back in time depending on their age: two, three, four hundred and more years.

Even in the Rimini province you can find them in old gardens, in peasant farmyards, and often in areas hardly accessible, that have favored their longevity, thanks to isolation from urbanization, and deforestation, etc.

The most common species in the uncultivated areas and in the forests are oaks and beeches. In the farmhouses of vines and mulberries, the testimony of an activity, that of silkworm, which in the past has played an important role in the family economy. And on the walls of the farmhouses, pomegranates, jujubes and figs. In the cultivated fields, centennial olive trees grow, sculptured, often twisted but still bear fruit abundantly. The areas where olive trees are most commonly encountered are in the municipalities of **Montegridolfo**, **Saludecio** and **Coriano**, and in Valconca. Taxus trees, sycamores and chestnuts are added to the above mentioned types and cedars, pines, that come from far away countries depending on the fashion and styles of the time, they decorate parks and gardens of historic villas. If you are interested in older specimens, here is a summarized list. At the moment, the first on the list, with an estimated age of 800 years, is the cypress of St. Francesco in Verucchio, in the Franciscan convent that is said to be traditionally planted by the Saint. The taxus called “of the pharmacy” in **Cattolica**, in the city center has an estimated age of over 500 years, and always in Cattolica, but in this case in the suburbs, two black mulberries that are over 300 years old. In **Montegridolfo**, in St. Carlino a 700 year old olive grove and at the Castle, monumental olive trees of over 400 years, in **Mon-daino** multi-centennial specimens of tamarisk and oaks. Over 300 years

old for many chestnut trees in Mount Faggeto in **Montefiore Conca**, similar specimens in the Chestnut Jungle at Uffogliano, municipality of **Novafeltria**, in Valmarecchia. Always in this cypress valley in Ca' Fagnano, in the municipality of **Torriana**, with over 380 years and the oak of Saiano, not far from the Palace, which is about 250 years old. In the town of **Montecopiolo** the centenary beech tree of Pianacquadio, unique to Italy examples of truly impressive dimensions. Even in **Rimini** secular plants are found: not to miss the lime tree of St. Fortunato, on the Hill of Covignano, an estimated age of 400 years. There are many arboreal patriarchs in the province, impossible to list them all, but it will not be difficult to see them passing through the valleys and hills.

The hills of crystal

The valleys of the province of Rimini, which wind around the eastern Apennine of Romagna, are intersected by the "Romagna vein of chalk". Truly "hills of crystal" which are searched and experienced for their overflowing beauty. In Rimini they do not reserve great scenarios like the Apennine of Imola, but these geological environments, with their games of light and the landscape peculiarity, are far from precious. Geologically, it is a calcium sulphate ridge, which is partly crystallized and layered into imposing banks, that emerge, crossing the territories of the municipalities of Torriana and, more to the south, those of Montescudo and Gemmano.

The gypsum- sulphurous formation, precisely because of its composition, the extraordinary morphological variety and the typical flora and fauna, has greatly influenced the construction of the landscape, leaving a mark in the history of these places and in the lives of its inhabitants. "Plaster cooked and grinded - in a chronicle of 1504 - is used to make houses." It is no coincidence that the quarries existed and still exist, for its processing. It is a natural wealth which is surprising and fascinating, and in particular the gypsum crystallizations leaves astonishment. The sea water was evaporated; about six million years ago, in the Pliocene era, and the sea invaded our lands and lapped the hills, calcium sulphate deposited, and giving origin to the chalky crystals with the typical shape of spear or sword tips. Being a very soluble matter, along the ridge that goes from Modena to Pesaro,

phenomenal karsts developed, besides making the landscape unique, have also shaped it with gypsum, others were fractured and remained buried, not randomly among clayey and marly layers, many fossils are discovered, such as a Poggio Berni in Valmarecchia and in Mondaino of Valconca.

The toponymy also comes in hand by pointing out the places of outcrops. Here are the Gypsums along the road leading from Torriana towards Montebello, The Mountain of Gypsum, with the small locality of Gesso between Montescudo and Sassofeltrio. And in Mondaino the *Val-mala*, the Woods of *Albereto*, the river bed of the *Rio Ventena* and the *Onferno Grottoes* in Gemmano. They all have a distinct, geological, individuality combined with a landscape richness, vegetation and zoological. In fact here, plant species that survived in the millennia dwell here, true botanical relics, including ferns and succulents of the genus *sedum*. And among the animals that have found refuge are also rare birds of prey, like the *falcon* and the *harrier*.

The desertified badlands

They are fascinating but they also incite a bit of loss, especially for the hardness of the landscape and for the idea of instability. This is so because the hills where the badlands dominate are full of crumbling, splits, erosions, and turmoil. Often they are long and sloping ground blades, like nude gothic, white peaks, where chromatic streaks can occur due to gold mineralization, carmine, and ocher. On their edges, wooded or cultivated land. They too however, teem with vegetarian, though scarcely apparent: heroic seedlings adapting to difficult conditions. They have fleshy leaves and stems, breathable surfaces, are *halophytes*, that is, full with salt, which allows them to have enough strength to draw water from the depths of the ground.

The *artemisia caerulescens* is the most common, by the name of the queen Artemisia who first discovered its therapeutic properties. Among the animals adapting to the harsh climate of the badlands, a crustacean, the *Armadillidium zangerii*, is an insect, a *beetle* with a shining blue color, that leave their burrows only at night. The badlands are the result of cracks that took place on clay substrates. Rain water not penetrating into the ground, washed it away, flowing downwards and eroding the sides. These



are “scaly” clay or “chaotic” clay formed by since 140 to 5 million years ago, in the Cretaceous and Mycenae eras.

The Apennine in Italy is characteristic almost everywhere and also in the province of Rimini has areas of great interest. Running through them gives off a strong effect, almost finding oneself in the territories belonging to the Prehistoric era, to mythical places such as Cappadocia in Anatolia, or the Colorado in the United States. When more ravines converge in the so-called compluvium of a valley (from the Latin *compluvium* ie where the waters flow), they are called “badland amphitheatres”. In Rimini the area with these characteristics are different. There are two major ones in Valconca: the *Amphitheater of Onferno*, in the municipality of Gemmano, and the *Amphitheater of Rio Salso*, in the locality of Montespino in the village of Mondaino. In the valley of the Rio Ventena, the nearby calcareous plains of Tavoletto, in a territory no longer of the province of Rimini, but of Pesaro and Urbino. In Valmarecchia of great suggestion is the *Amphitheater* located in *Maioretto*, in the municipality of Maiolo. The walk in the winter, is seductive, albeit not easy, because of the clay becomes mud and in the summer it becomes dusty. But the uncertain steps of the ravines is rewarded by fairy-tale images that envisage foreshadowing the Dantesque purgatory and hell. Nude and inhospitable, stealthy steep as sandbars tell, keep the signs of their old history, with the rapid flow of water and the perpetual movement which we must surrender to without fear.

And for those who want to venture to extreme altitudes, loving the verticality and the void, should climb the wall, also all equipped like those surveyed in Valmarecchia, where the ruins of the castle of Maioretto, insist on the summit. In the valley, next to Mount Aquilone, Perticara, as well as Pennabilli and Verucchio, as told, are also the cliffs of San Leo, Pietramaura, San Marino, Balze, Mount Fumaiolo that structure a true place for the enthusiasts.

The yellow gold of the mine

Man has always tried to shape nature. Try to reap its benefits, exploit it to guarantee survival to the future generations. Here there is the exploitation of water, subsoil, the forest, and the extraction of minerals. In

the next paragraph we take a trip to the former sulfur mine of Perticara which is still able to tell much about that hidden underworld.

The Perticara mine in the municipality of Novafeltria was among the most important in Italy, with 100 km of tunnels on 9 levels. Active from 1741 to 1964, even though many clues point to a more ancient extractive activity, today is halted. However, the place has not been abandoned; rather, it lives thanks to an important museum that shows the long and complex history. Perticara is a mining area for vocation, as for five million years ago, among its clay marl layers of gypsum and sulfuric limestone were deposited. With the mining activity, the economy could only flourish. Whole neighborhoods arose to offer home and reception to thousands among which were miners and workers. Shops, church, theater, recreation facilities, sports ground, a place of the latter of repeated victories of a team, which incredibly came to play in the Italian Serie C championship.

The area of the mine is particularly fascinating and a visit is of course necessary, among towers, wells, ovens, cableway pylons, rails and trains. The same is facilitated and enriched by the museum's space: The *Sulfur Mineral History Museum* is located right in these exciting places where the mine operated and where it faithfully retraces the steps of the activity. Exciting and moving for the powerful evocative force as it proposes direct contact with the mining reality: one of the first examples of industrial archeology that emerged in Italy. Born to bring back a common story of the European people, it's organized through a thematic path to copy the various phases, ranging from extraction to the fusion of the sulfur. Everything culminates in The Mine, a faithful and realistic reconstruction of an underground itinerary. Not to be missed.

The strength of the water and the ancient mills

Black powder mills

Connected to the extraction of sulfur, the gunpowder mills. In the High Valmarecchia in 1700 there were 22 plants, of which 14 were on the main shaft of Marecchia and 8 on the tributaries. In the '900 three continued productivity, ceased due to the employment in the mining activity of synthetic explosives, such as dynamite and more practical derivatives to

handle. Some factories still exist and can be visited, the same ones that once ensured many affairs in the valley, partly illegal, with the presence of many smugglers, who found shelter in the chestnuts of Uffogliano, Mount Benedetto and Mount Ercole, in the woods of Massamanente and Montetiffi. In 1490, in the Talamello mills gunpowder production started that ended in the second half of the twentieth century after about 500 years of activity. So in San Leo, where the *Molinaccio* still has its name, of typical derivation of that dangerous activity. The *Molino of the Pieve* is truly rare for its production of gunpowder in Novafeltria which has been recently restored. The former Bonifazi Gunpowder Factory was perfectly preserved and is now a property of the municipal. It's in two small rooms and inside is held, wooden rammer equipment, vertical hydraulic wheels, and cylindrical containers for mixing, system of rammers in the filling mill. It is on the road that leads to Maiolo, in Pieve, Via Pieve n.15, before the bridge coming from Novafeltria.

The roads of the mills

Along the Marecchia River and its parallel channels, and on the Conca, the ancient milling activity is evidenced by historical mills, in small part still in business, in some cases for the milling of cereals, and others for the production of electricity. They have been surveyed by rigorous research and in both valleys it is possible to undertake the road of the mills, from the lower to the upper valley. It's a must-see path for its beauty of its places, even when they have been abandoned, but above all for the slice of life it brings back, and also for the understanding of how they were fundamental for the economy of the territory. They were also places filled with symbols and presumptions that were also considered disturbing. It was believed that the figure of the miller centered on magical and seductive practices. He worked day and night and stopped only in the case of drought. The water was used first by the millers because the survival of the majority of the population depended on them. That is why the time of drought the peasants could only water the gardens when the mills were off on Saturday afternoon and the Sunday. The miller lived on the mill, with the dwelling directly linked to the work spaces. The gory events that could happen inside were due to the fact that they sometimes left themselves outside the



strictest standards of coexistence, above all those linked to morality, which the millers were said to be not very respectful. It is no coincidence that the proverb over time is: "He who goes to the mill becomes a miller."

More than two hundred mills were in Valmarecchia. In the low valley there were well 35 along the *Channel or Viserba Moat* which went from Ponte Verucchio and died at Viserba of Rimini, the *Patara Moat or Patarina* with 19 mills, which always departed from Ponte Verucchio and died in the sea in Rimini, and the *Municipal Moat of Mills* from which it got its name of the place later called St. Martino of the Mills. This met and crossed the *Viserba Moat* and ran to Santarcangelo where it fed the 5 city mills and served other activities like dry cleaners, mangoes, fishmongers, washrooms, and slaughterhouses. In the high valley 82 are counted: 16 in San Leo, 23 in Novafeltria, 6 in Maiolo, 7 in Sant'Agata Feltria, 16 in Pennabilli, 12 in Casteldelci, and 2 in Montecopiolo. The others were in Tuscany, in the province of Arezzo and in the Republic of San Marino. Today 165 have been surveyed, even though only few survived in good condition and can be visited. Among these the *Moroni Mill* and *Sapignoli Mill*, now the *Museum of the milling art*, in Poggio Torriana, *Ronci Mill* at the Bridge Messa of Pennabilli, where the sawmill and water mill are active which produces grinded flour by rock. Others have been restored and resettled but have not maintained their intended use. They give justice to what they once were. Among these the *Mill of Piega* in the locality of the same name, in the municipality of San Leo, now an accommodations structure called *San Leone Inn*. Also in the municipality of San Leo, in Mount Fotogno, but right on Marecchia, near the bridge Santa Maria Maddalena, well visible from the Provincial Marecchiese Road, the *mill of Sandaci* or *Sandaccio*. On the opposite side of the bridge, in the territory of Novafeltria, another ancient mill that has become a restaurant, called *Spiga d'Oro*.

So in Valconca, along the river, run many channels of mills, as the historian Adimari wrote in 1616. On its shores seventy-five mills were once counted, indeed Mollini, wrote another scholar, the Guerrieri, which administered the water flow of the river. Here the water was abundant and did not require the construction of pits, instead, it was necessary to carry out continuous maintenance work on the water ducts due to frequent floods. Today traces of 63 factories remain, all surveyed, even though not

all are identifiable as mills. About 43 on the left bank from Adriatic Misano, passing through St. Clemente, Mount Colombo, Montescudo, to Montecopiolo, and 20 on the right bank, starting from San Giovanni in Marignano, Morciano of Romagna, Montefiore Conca, Gemmano up to Montecopiolo. Some mills in the Morciano territory, such as Balzi and the Leardini di Sotto, have been preserved over time despite the restorations. Many mills underwent extensions with the addition of further millstones at the end of 1700: for acorns, whose flour was used as animal food, for sulfur used to produce the gunpowder called “black dust”, and even the woad. Diversifying production created more profitable earnings.

The mills of the woad

The territory of the high valleys of Marecchia and Conca offers a journey in the past in the discovery of one of the most important local productive activities of the 18th century: cultivation of the woad. The “woad” or “glastum” is an herbaceous plant that was cultivated in many parts of Europe. For about four centuries (XIV-XVII) it was the main resource of many Apennine territories making up the basis of the economy. It was used to dye fabrics blue, the blue of Piero della Francesca, and the color was born out of a complex workmanship that formed a thriving economic activity. Until the blue was produced from the woad, it was supplanted by the indigo from India. The economy was tied to the woad as evidenced by the numerous mills found on the entire Rimini territory, now abandoned in the fields, along the streets or reused in the most varied forms, making it a base for crosses, embellishment in gardens or have been excavated for water troughs use. And it’s easy to trace them because of their shape: that which acted as a fixed base was channeled to radially allow spillage of the dough and sewage.

The museums, custodians of folklore memory

In relation between anthropology and technology great attention was given in the provincial territory by the museum system. To these lands there are several museums dedicated to it. Popular culture, traditions, costumes, everyday life, work, and technological development are the issues addressed with scientific rigor but at the same time of great

attractiveness. In the specifics there are four museums on the agricultural world: the *MET-Ethnographic Museum* of Santarcangelo di Romagna, the first to be born and become a reference for others, the *Ethnography of Valliano* in Montescudo, that of the Rural Arts in Sant'Agata Feltria and the common one of Bread in Maiolo. And then, like it has been said in the previous chapters, there is the *Museum of Milling* at the *Sapignoli Mills*, in Poggio Berni.

Through these exhibition spaces you enter an unknown universe even though not too far from the point of view of time. Getting closer to the finds and real environments or reconstructed, is a fascinating way to closely feel the relationship with the earth, the sense of gestures and daily struggles, beliefs and customs that also up to 40-50 years ago belonged to our grandparents and which modernity has supplanted. A world in the Rimini area, especially the coastal area, has been rapidly altered by the upheavals in the economy and in the mentality from the rapid development of the seaside industry.

The enchantment of the forest and the undergrowth

Wood and coal

Climbing up the mountain, in the impervious forests of Sant'Agata Feltria, Casteldelci, and Pennabilli, the most mountainous areas of the province, between cliffs, ravines, thick woods of bushes and cedar trees are repeated unchanged and over time immemorial, and the cyclical rites that accompany the seasons. Let's talk about the cycle of fire and wood, like the stifled carbonates that in these parts are still lucky to be found on the walking or horseback riding paths. And when you meet the wood chips made from charcoal that seem like volcanoes, the magic is felt throughout. It's about extraordinary constructions because the wood, is prepared to produce the coal, is arranged by wise hands, in an extraordinary charming way. There are two procedures. For charcoal a hollow hole is dug then it is covered by a metal sheet, raised enough, at the right time, for it to allow a calm and slow combustion of the small wood buried in its interior. And it is precisely that piece called carbon that serves for barbecue and grills. Instead, for charcoal noble wood is needed and stood up piece on piece,



to create an almost semi-fluid shape, even three meters high. Multiple and meticulous operations are performed in a succession marked with gestures and times handed down for millennia. Above the wood, laid out in an artistic way, meadow cuttings are laid out (lacing), then leaves and finally soil, the so-called shirt. At the top of the coal an opening that is the mouth of the oven to fuel the combustion. When the fire makes its voice heard here is where the coal begins to live. An intense smoke comes out of the crevices, like so many geysers that spring out from the slopes of the volcano, which continues slowly for days and days, even up to twelve days. When it stops breathing, wait for cooling, the shirt is removed and it is checked, the charcoal is ready.

These are also the lands of the lumberjacks that cut and collect wood for fireplaces and stoves. Also the work of the lumberjack needs an ancient knowledge and cannot be improvised. And as for the charcoal burners their origin is known, but you can never really know where they can be found. They form working teams that move with various transports and then they stay at the workplace in huts equipped with sleeping bags.

Even if today the donkey has been replaced by trucks and everything is mechanized, it is still a tough business that lasts all year long, also due to the wide use of fireplaces and stoves in the city.

The gifts of the earth

As you travel along the Rimini hillsides, you meet, especially in the summer and in autumn many searchers, with dogs and without, in groups but also loners. It's easy to guess that those with the dogs are the truffle finders, which here especially the black is abundant, also the precious white is also present - the latter in times of famine was almost comparable to gold - as evidenced by the costs on the stands at fairs, as well as the well-known Sant'Agata Feltria that is held every Sunday in October, called the *National Precious White Truffle Fair*.

Even Mondaino dedicates to the famous tuberous, and not just to it, an autumn initiative called *Fossa cheese, truffles and Ceres goddess of agriculture*. Usually it's on the third Sunday in November the day dedicated to the precious *Tuber Magnatum*.

Also for mushroom seekers these lands are a true paradise, rich and precious, because all the varieties are present, from common porcini to the ovules, to the honey fungus, to the basidiomycete “tamburo”, to the ramaria “manine”, also the most rare, like springy ones, just think of the famous *prugnolo* mushroom, to which is dedicated the thirty-year old festival of the end of May in Miratoio of Pennabilli. And next to mushrooms and truffles, this is a land that offers wild asparagus, crayfish, raperonzoli, borage, mallow, rosoline and a thousand healthy field herbs.

The Chestnuts grove of Smugglers

Some forests, present “as islands” in the providence, are made of chestnut trees that give October delightful walks, even if, often on sloping slopes and with not mild temperatures, it isn't that easy. However, it is suitable for both the young and old, and it can be practiced either in High Valmarecchia, near Talamello, Uffogliano, Perticara, San Leo, Casteldelci, or in high Valconca in Montefiore Conca and Gemmano. And in October in both valleys, with fulcrum at Talamello and in Montefiore Conca, festivals are held in homage and guided and harvest tours are organized. The places are easily traceable and in some cases you can come to an agreement with the landowners for a good day-to-day harvest. In Montefiore on Mount Faggeto, one of the most important forests in the province stretches out, both for its presence of very old specimens and also for the especially rare flora that inhabits it; all in a landscaped patrimony of great value. Other chestnut groves that form the core of Montefiore are those of Case Suore, Mount Maggiore and Mount Auro.

In Uffogliano of Novafeltria you find the best known chestnut groves in Valmarecchia, called the *Chestnut jungle*, where it stood, on a spur of a rock the ancient castle called “castellaccio”. The entire ridge is covered by a thick forest and the same ruins of the castle are full of vegetation in several places.

And this is where the smugglers were hiding at the time of gunpowder production, when the sulfur mine was in operation, sulfur, they were familiar in territories between Sogliano, Uffogliano, Ponte Uso and Novafeltria. Another smuggling market was for tobacco which was often





concealed the actual soil and provided extra spare change that were not taxed or in control by the farm master.

Other chestnut woods, even bigger, meet on Mount Pincio in Talamello, at Mount Ercole, Mount Benedetto, visited at one time by the gunpowder smugglers who found refuge there when they were pursued first by the papal police and then by those of the Kingdom of Italy. Last but not least the Casteldelci chestnut groves, characteristic by their mountain life and source of subsistence.

The introduction of chestnut cultivation is probably thanks to monks who settled in the valleys during the Middle Ages, but could date back to the Roman times. Food subsistence was not the only benefit the local people got from chestnuts. The expansion of culture was favored by other important activities. Among these, in the Marecchia valley, the sulfur extraction. To support the tunnels, deep hundreds of meters, props and beams of chestnut were used, one of the most durable woods in Europe.

With the advent of the industrial era, the chestnut lost much of its importance. Fruit trees, affected, among other things, by serious illnesses, were abandoned and in the decades following the Second World War, the progression of well-being has increasingly tapered the centenary bond between man and the chestnut. The cultivation of chestnut was then relegated to a limited area, under the care of few enthusiasts.

Fruits no longer forgotten

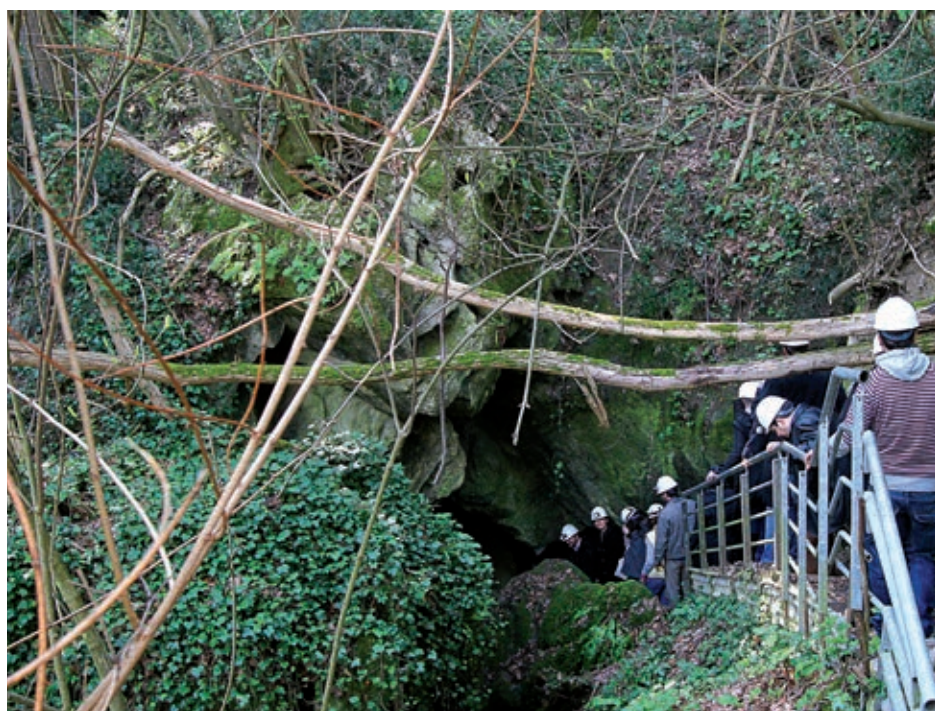
The poet Tonino Guerra dedicated to them a museum, the Museum of the Flavors calling it *the Garden of the Forgotten Fruit*. Here he recovered the fruits, abandoned with colonial homes, in the meadows and farmhouses. They were rescued and revived to give the flavors, perfumes, and colors of a time. The sensitization derived from this singular installation has made more and more people search for those fruit plants and wherever possible to preserve them. It often happens on the hills to meet ancient fruit plants, such as *apples of the rose*, *limoncello apples*, *rusty*, *quince*, *fox pears*, *Rennet apples*, *medlar apple*, *Cornelian cherry*, *whitebeam*, *kumquat*, *cherry plum*, *dog rose*, *hawthorn*, *blackthorn*, *juni-per*, those species that once formed the backbone of the peasant farmers economy and are now being rediscovered. For those who do not feel to

search for them in the territory, can comfortably observe and buy them in the *Feast of the Forgotten Fruit* that takes place between September and October at Pennabilli, or go to Saludecio where at the end of April an event that has been held for over two decades, dedicated to the natural titled *Saluserbe* takes place. Among exhibitions, conventions, and meetings there is also the Spring Market for lovers of naturopathic, medicine and alternative cuisine.

The Grottoes

The natural grottoes

The territory boasts the presence of natural caves that are worthy of being walked and crossed. Already known for their antiquity they were considered very mysterious that for their darkness they conquered the title of Hell 'Inferno'. Today they are called the Caves of Onferno, in the territory of Gemmano, a name which since 1810 has replaced Hell 'Inferno', believed to be too diabolical by the Bishop of Rimini Gualfardo. The reason is: here particular caves are present, indeed a complex that grows for 750 meters in the bowels of the Valconca gypsum vein. Some scholars wanted to see in these caves the place where the poet Dante Alighieri was inspired to describe the underworld in his *Divine Comedy* and there are at least eighty similarities between the places described and the landscape of the caves, starting with the entrance. Moreover, many testimonies have been collected on Dante's stay, exiled in this area. Ugolini, the historian, says Dante's arrival here dates back to the 1305's and the date corresponds to the Dante's passage in Romagna. However, it remains certain that the great underground space, once largely inaccessible, provoked anxiety and fear. Nowadays there is nothing hell like anymore, but its charm remains unchanged. Another peculiarity is the fact that it hosts a community much bigger than the number of inhabitants of the municipality. The caves are populated by a colony of over four thousand bats, (against the one thousand of the Gemmano residents); there are six species, all harmless, some of remarkable scientific value because they are in danger of extinction. The beauty of the caves fits into a natural setting just as interesting today protected by the vast



Nature Reserve. They are entirely accessible through a path that, from an altitude of 290 meters drops to 70 and allows exploration of the underground system to admire very suggestive environments. You encounter polished ceilings, in other places loaded with crystals, and limestone cascades, chimneys with “pearl grottoes” and mammals among the largest in Europe. You cross canyons, collapsing salt and straits, but the presence of an entrance lower than the higher exit makes for excellent ventilation. Their composition is made of chalky rock, being the result of erosive action from the infiltration of water on layers of soil of different compactness, permeability and solubility. Of karstic morphology, they have an underground water flow and a series of cavities at various levels connected together by tunnels, narrow passages and crevices. The water running over the cavity surface has created the concretions of bizarre forms of calcium salts. The illumination is measured in accordance with the precious colony of bats that it hosts, which in the summer is visible and in June it looks busy with reproduction. On average in a year 500 bats are born, which in the first ten days are transported by the mother hunter to then arrange them in a protected space governed by the adult females. A good opportunity for a close observation and above all to overcome the proverbial beliefs regarding bats: they do not stick to hair, they feed on insects and not blood!

The visit to the Caves, which lasts a little more than an hour, is guided by qualified staff that provides you with a helmet and torch at the entrance. It is recommended to wear shoes with good bottoms because the moisture can make the walk slippery, and jackets or raincoats even in the summer - the temperature it is between 12-14°C. The thermal effect caused by the caves - the spills of vapors from the darkest recesses is frequent, a phenomenon visible in the nighttime hours, especially in the winter - has influenced the outdoor environment by creating a microclimate that favors the growth of rare botanical species in the area. Among them the *evergreen oak*, *rough bindweed* and *ferns*.

Hypogea born from man's hand

The territory of the province of Rimini, both for its geological conformation and for the needs of the population and the lords who reigned,

is rich of underground, natural structures as we have written, above and artificial, created by man, as we see in this paragraph. We have talked about it and it's about very well-known and well-studied caves. We refer to the hypogeum complex of Jupiter Hill in Santarcangelo di Romagna where there are more than two hundred tunnels and caves of large and impressive dimensions, still linked to the mystery of their origins and destination. A type of hypogeum that is not unusual to find in places where the land dates between the Middle Ages and subsequent centuries.

In addition to the large and significant complex of Santarcangelo, even in Cattolica the existence of different nuclei it is well-known. Also in Mondaino and Saludecio, as you have read in the previous chapters.

In the capital city there are hypogeums structures are evidenced in centuries by documents, but the city, given the sea level and the presence of water in ascent slope, it does not have an underground duct network that is particularly well developed. There are numerous cellars and the caves born for the operation of buildings and in particular the conservation of food. From here, the creation of grain pits, icehouse, tanks, wells, waste disposal rooms, lavatories, and burials.

In Rimini we have always known the viable duct, of which we have written, from the fountain of Piazza Cavour, passing through via Poletti and under Piazza Malatesta, and goes towards via Dario Campana. In the present shapes it was created, largely in the nineteenth century, to draw water to the fountain. This presence has fueled curiosity and at the same time imaginative stories. As the one we mentioned concerning the 'white friars' that is the Olivetan monks who from their St. Fortunato Abbey in Covignano, secretly moved in the city and kidnapped girls. Such an imaginative story as it is fantastic, but you cannot hide the fact that in Covignano there are many caves.

The graceful sloping of the hills in the present area is a hypogynous setting of extreme interest as it is rich and articulated. There about sixty and they are cellars placed underground religious buildings and patrician homes chosen as summer dwellings, built over the XVI-XIX centuries, where the food was kept, then used as war shelters. They are obtained by digging in the sandstone of marine origin, which is very compact, and it's not tuff.



In the last century, around the second half of the 1990s, the A.R.R.S.A. (Rimini Association for Historical and Archaeological Research) this patrimony was studied and surveyed. It was when the search for the Grotto of Romiti started, the most famous of Rimini and its surroundings because Luigi Tonini in 1848 spoke about it in his History of Rimini. The most accredited hypothesis was that it could have been a “burial of the times of Romiti”, the shape of the plan with two rooms enriched by many side niches suggested to think about the Etruscan cemetery structures.

Used by the Romiti, that is, the Girolamini friars, order founded by the Blessed Pietro Gambacorta from Pisa, who had built their convent on the hill of Heaven, on the highest part of Covignano, which was then the ancient Scolca. In 1916 the grotto was included in the monumental buildings of the Rimini district and in 1932 it is inserted into the monumental list of the city and its territory. The Monastery of the Girolamini, however, suffered serious destruction during the war and later it was used as a wine cellar, nowadays it no longer exists, and no one ever mentioned the grotto again. With the change in ownership there was an attempt to find it but was unsuccessful. One had to wait until 1997 when the A.R.R.S.A, under the direction of the Superintendent for Archaeological Heritage of Emilia Romagna, searched for it in the surroundings. The researchers led by him who had lived and operated the cellar for many years and who remembered its position for war refuge, closed and filled, began to dig and remove the rubble. A shaft was discovered with a broken barrel vault. It was a corridor that went in the opposite direction of that hypothesized and seemed recent. Continuing to dig it was discovered that the cave was covered and the lining was older, presumably 1,600s, like the convent. Eliminating the filling a big hole caused by a bomb that had centered the cave, a hole in the ground opened that allowed to find a corridor that developed, intact, in depth, it was the Grotto of the Romiti, where inside were the remains of those who had fled during the World War. And on the bottom wall graffiti, dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the cave had become a kind of attraction, after Tonini had spoken and written about it.



Pits and barns

Preserving food was an imperative when refrigerators did not exist. So they resorted to the icehouse, the iceboxes, and so on in the Malatestian period, as in Coriano, in Santarcangelo di Romagna, also possible to visit and observe. Then there are the barns built for grain and cereal storage, just go along the streets of the historic center of San Giovanni in Marignano and Santarcangelo di Romagna. Then there are the pits, sometimes dug in tuff soils, but especially in sandstone rocks, in which the cheese is preserved very well, indeed aged. That's what is called the "cheese of the pit" and is considered a delight for the palate for gluttons and connoisseurs. This tradition exists from long ago, that was carefully restarted and scientifically restored in the '70s / 80s in the last century. In the pits the cheeses take on the aroma of wood, truffle, and moss, from the surrounding environment. The flavor can be sweet to spicy, depending on the milk used and the pits themselves. Being buried for three months, from August to November, it comes out different, with a strong decisive smell, always edible. That smell today is called perfume. To taste the flavor and see the pits, you have to go to Talamello in Valmarecchia where in November a special festival is held, called Fair of Talamello Amber, as the poet Tonino Guerra wanted to call the cheese preserved for three months in the pits, which here are about fifteen. Also in Sant'Agata Feltria and in Perticara there are cavities used for aging, although experts speak of refinement and not properly buried. In Valconca the tradition was renewed with rigor, in a special way in Mondaino where on the third Sunday of November you can taste the "unburied" cheese. And from the pits emanates an intense scent that spreads throughout the whole countryside town involved in the festival, all the way to inebriate.

Parks where the arcane is at home

The "green sea" of the province of Rimini, a fascinating territory which presents every type of trail and offers breathtaking landscapes, is exalted in the natural parks. Here we invite you to first visit and walk or horseback to the *Interregional Sasso Simone and Simoncello*: 4847 acres, distributed between the provinces of Rimini, municipality of Pennabilli, and Pesaro / Urbino, with the *Pennabilli Naturalistic Museum* which is also a visit center.

The Natural Park has a Cerreto among the most extensive of Italy and two tablelands that seem to belong to the canyons of Colorado and Arizona.

Always in Valmarecchia, one of the two main valleys of the province, *the fauna Oasis of Torriana*, where the *Naturalistic Valmarecchia Observatory* is located and where the attraction points are the veins of the gypsum always in Torriana.

Not far away, there is the *Oasis of Ca' Brigida* in the territory of the municipality of Verucchio, with the *WWF Environmental Center*.

And at Poggio Berni the *Park called of the Cava*, dedicated to the important the fossiliferous field of Marecchia that lies right on the river-bed. In Valmarecchia there are several bridleways and the river lends itself to be enjoyed even by those who practice canoe / kayak riding.

The Valconca has two parks.

In 1878 a dam was built along the river that formed the lake called *Bacine of the Conca* and was included into the river park called *Protected Landscape of the Conca Stream*.

The other park is of the *Marano*, equipped for visits and stops, which borders with the Republic of San Marino.

And at Mondaino there is the *Arboretum Environmental Education Center*, called *Arboreto Park*, a botanical garden, formerly an experimental arboreal of Mediterranean flora, of nine acres, specializing in trees and shrubs, which has over 6000 species of trees, with two woodlands, small forests, a pond and marked trails.

In Gemmano there is also the well-known *Nature Reserve Orientata* that includes the Grottoes of Onferno: 123 acres protected for the undoubted naturalistic value.

Sasso Simone and Simoncello Nature Park

Because it is one of the most beautiful naturalistic areas on the peninsula and we dedicate our pages to this park, with the invitation for readers to reach it. It offers among one of the most important Cerreto of Italy and two tablelands which, as mentioned, recall the American canyons. At the borders with the same name Tuscan nature reserve that falls in the municipality of Sestino, province of Arezzo, and is included in the ancient territory of Montefeltro distributed between the Emilia Romagna





and Marche regions, its 40 km from the Romagna coast. The landscape, mountainous hills, are affected by the surveys of Sassi Simone and Simoncello, Mount Canale, Mount Palazzolo with altitudes of 670 and 1415 meters, of Mount Carpegna, the summit of the park and the watershed between the valleys of Marecchia, Conca and Foglia. The area of competence is on six municipalities: Carpegna, Frontino, Montecopiolo, Piandimeleto, and Pietrarubbia, in the province of Pesaro and Urbino and Pennabilli in the province of Rimini.

The Park Authority was established with Regional Law. The most significant morphological element of the area is represented by the sharp contrast between the limestone outcrops, that form the main surveys, and the predominant clay component, which give rise to the hilly landscape, and sweet and harmonious.

From the geological point of view, the whole area of the Regional Nature Park of Sasso Simone and Simoncello is made up of a large crowd of chaotic heterogeneous lands, called "Casting of the Valmarecchia". The constituent lands of the "casting" have formed in the Liguria area, from where they slowly slipped towards the east, crossing over those originating in the Umbra-Marchigiano-Romagna areas. The erosive processes caused by water, wind and snow on the blanket in a selective manner, have corroded and removed the lighter silvery-marbled materials, making the hardest rocks emerge: that is how the "Sassi" originated. The main features are the two tabular reliefs (mesas) of Sasso di Simone (1204 m) and Simoncello (1221 m). They are about 300 meters apart, but at one time were probably united as evidenced by the abundance of accumulations of debris interposed between them. They come with intense disruption, due to tectonic deformation taking place, clearly visible on the most exposed margins in the South.

Walking along the paths of the park it is evident the parks diversified vegetation. The area around the two Sassi is occupied by a forest dominated of Cerro, extended for over 800 acres. Significant is also the presence of species such as beech, hornbeam, white as well as black, maple and ash as well as white hornbeam and domestic. On Mount Carpegna and east of Sasso Simone the forests are made up of hazel and maple, that in the autumn season they color the peaks with warm tones. The high parts of

Mount Carpegna, once occupied by beech and white spruce trees and then deforested, today host meadow-pastures that in late spring are covered by many orchid species. The vegetation below 800 meters is characterized as woods with a high mix of tree species: downy oak, oak cerris, black hornbeam, ash, field maple and Neapolitan maples are the most common and between the shrubs, dogwood, Cornelian cherry and hazel. The oak cerris, of oak genus, dominates with the white hornbeam the vast Mediterranean forest which from Passo of the Cantoniera extends over 800 acres, up to Sassi Simone and Simoncello and Valpiano. This forest has splendid holly specimens, various types of maple, big ash and beech; in the undergrowth grows many species of herbaceous species such as the common baccarat, the marigold lily, while on the edge of the prosperous forest the knapweeds, rare and very common here. On the sunny slopes of Mount Canale, of Mount Cassinelle and Mount Carpegna, used mainly for grazing, the vegetation landscape is dotted with shrubs such as the common widespread juniper and dog rose. This environment includes hawthorn, blackthorn and blackberry. In the woods above 1000 m, where the climate is cooler, beech predominantly appears, accompanied by the mountain maple and sometimes the English yew, from the curly maple, from the majestic alpine and from the holly, while from the dense leaf carpet ferns sprout.

The City of the Sun

The heart of the park hides the City of the Sun, called Heliopolis built by Cosimo I de' Medici starting in 1560. It was supposed to symbolize the power of the House, in a peripheral area of the state at a difficult governable time. This city-fortress on the top of Sasso Simone, of which almost nothing remains arise with late-Renaissance urban criteria. It counted about 50 residences of the same size including the leader's residence. Then there were courts, prisons and a chapel in addition to the old church dedicated to St. Michael Archangel. There were also bunkers, with weapons and munitions deposits, an oven, a forge, a melting pot, a porch for the weekly market and two access doors. Several roads connected the Sasso with the nearby castles, and a paved "master" road, that led to Florence. The strategic-military idea in creating a city-fortress on the Sasso, so daring and somewhat crazy, collapsed when climate de-

terioration made life almost impossible at such high altitudes. In 1627 the fortress counted 46 inhabitants and fifty years later, now deserted, lost its military defense role. Then the weather did the rest. Today walking on the cobblestones, still well arranged, from the ancient access road, the emotion is strong and there is a sense of satisfaction for the courage to have challenged nature in such a way. A large tank for rainwater for civic use is still visible and two for military use, part of the structures of the defensive walls, and through the thickest vegetation there are weak road traces along where the quarters opened. More are the traces of the passage of man on the wide plains of Simone. There is the cross, in memory of the religious settlement and some relics kept in the Museum of Sarsina attests of the presence during the Bronze Era, around 1000 BC and while barbarian raids. The strategic vocation of the site was essential to motivate those who urbanized Sasso, before all, the Benedictines monks, we are in the 12th century, following the Malatesta in the XV and the Medici in the XVI. Thanks to the first there was the construction of an abbey dedicated to St. Angelo, probably on the site of a Lombard chapel (St. Angelo was the protector of Lombard), which was also built on a previous place of worship. The Benedictine motto "pray and work", was found on the Sasso and in the surrounding landscapes, a wealth of pastures and woods. The arrival of winters particularly rigid and the opening of new and more convenient pilgrimage routes contributed to the decay of this site, which saw an almost definitive collapse with the plague of 1348. The suppression was made by Pope Pio II, in 1462, which was aggregated to the Monastery of Piandimeleto. One small church remained, attended during the summer fairs. The last attempt to repopulate was carried out by Cosimo I de' Medici in 1566, retracing the political and strategic goal of Malatesta Novello, lord of Cesena and Sestino. The Duke de' Medici was already part of the Montefeltro government around 1520, and in the reorganization politics of the territory, the construction of a city-fortress was a valid stronghold for the achievement of reaching the Adriatic. The radiant sun, symbol of the new "ideal city" was symptomatic of the culture and military strategy of the time. In 1673 the military defense was abandoned, and the political motivations ceased with the death of Francesco Maria II Della Rovere and the devolution of the dukedom of Urbino to the Church.

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