

Adristorical Lands

Newsletter



Issue n.2 - February 2014

WALLED TOWNS, FORTRESSES AND CASTLES

Travelling along the Adristorical Lands, the visitor will come across numerous towns that still preserve their enclosing walls, towers, gates and castles.

Starting in the late Middle Ages, where powerful families governed the main towns along the old Roman roads and the two coasts of Adriatic Sea, an integrated system of walls, gates and fortresses were constructed, in most cases on or over existing early medieval, ottomans or even Byzantine buildings.

The itineraries aims to give visitors a general picture of the complicated defense systems - many of which still functioning today - that profoundly redesigned the layout of the towns and villages they incorporated: different itineraries for a full immersion in the new urban fabric that the city walls and strongholds built during the 14th and 15th centuries gave to the existing towns and hamlets. Important religious monuments and Roman vestiges will also be pointed out to give a broad overview of the changes that these human settlements have undergone through the centuries, as well as a backstage view of how "War and Peace" generate destruction and re-generation.

From the Mostar's bridge to the castles of the Land of Bari; from the Medieval fortified villages in the Alps in Friuli to the solitary castles in Sannio, from the walled towns in Veneto to the historical weapons' collections of Piran and Split, from tours to historical festivals and representations, Adristorical Lands can make you taste a true medieval experience.





PHOTO: The Norman-Swabian Castle – Bari

Bari

Spotting outposts on the sea or strategic observation points on the hills. The castles of the province of Bari, of a Norman Swabian and Angevin origin, are surrounded by the blue sea, the white historical centres and the red fertile land of Puglia.

The Norman-Swabian Castle of Bari, an imposing fortress on the edge of the old town, dating back to 1132. Wanted by the Norman King Roger II, was destroyed in 1156 by William the Bad and rebuilt in 1233. It was enlarged and transformed into a noble residence by Aragona and Sforza families. It's one of the city's symbols

The castle of Monopoli, built in 1552 by Carlo V on Punta Penna promontory, unified the already existing church of Saint Nicholas in Pinna dating back to the X century, the roman portal dating back to the I century and the messapian walls of the V century.

A little bit northward, in Mola di Bari, another Angevin castle overlooks the sea. Restored for the first time after the Venetian siege, it has the shape of a star-shaped polygon and is surrounded by strong slope walls.

The view on the plains degrading from the castle of Conversano is magnificent. Built on the still visible ancient megalithic walls, it has a trapezoidal shape and a crenellated bastion with fire mouths. From the monumental entrance dating back to late baroque you accede the Picture gallery where the ten paintings by the XVII century painter Paolo Fenoglio concerning the "Jerusalem set free" are kept. The originally rectangular castle of Gioia del Colle, on the contrary, of a Norman origin (IX century). In 1230 Frederick the II of Sweden made it quadrangular and equipped it with an inside court and four towers (today only two are remaining).

The first nucleus of the castle of Sannicandro di Bari, wanted by Niccolò Piccinigli in 916 to be protected by the Saracen invasions, has a Byzantine origin.

Molise

Imposing castle structures, fortresses and walls, but also decaying ruins, scattered over the territory of Molise, contain the history of a past very different from our contemporary period, but still retains all its charm. The Monforte Castle dominates the chief town, Campobasso. In 1456 it had several architectural innovations: in addition to the excavation of the moat, the east building of the imposing entrance gate, the drawbridge and ravelin were made 4 round towers that served to protect and through the underground tunnels, served as an escape route for the garrison and inhabitants, to the thick forests of the hill.



PHOTO: Ancient centre and Swabian Castle – Termoli



The Swabian Castle, visible from afar, with its massive size characterizes the ancient centre of the town of Termoli: its constructive geometry is a perfect interpenetration of solids.

The Pandone Castle in Venafro is the witness of the continuity of the town in more than two thousand years of history. Henry Pandone transformed the fortress into a Renaissance residence, adding a magnificent Italian garden and an airy loggia painted with the images of his powerful horses, known throughout the peninsula.

Turned repeatedly over time, the Pignatelli Castle of Monteroduni took its present shape around the turn of the century when, following the trend of the free medieval reconstructions were made the embattled wings crowning the apex.

The Castle of Cerro controls the entire upper Volturno valley at 500 meters above sea level, imposing and merging with the landscape

Abruzzo

Abruzzo the atmosphere of memory...Abruzzo takes pride in its outstanding art, culture and traditions heritage.

The Region's rich and amazing history lives through the architectural beauty of its towns, narrated by the multitude of forts and stone villages, perched and scattered amongst breathtaking mountains. Each part of its territory preserves hidden treasures, where nature and art merge boosting visitors' sense of discovery and adventure and capturing their imagination forever. Castles, fortresses and small towns appear in all their glory like splendid emotional paintings ready to fascinate travellers who can delve into time and feel the mysterious sound of Abruzzo's enchanted places.

Among all the charming villages, there are Rocca Calascio, Crecchio and Civitella del Tronto. The fortress of Rocca Calascio sits atop a 1500 meters high hill and has served in the past as protection and control point of the territory; this glorious structure has been and still is used as a set for several movies that made it famous around the world. Crecchio, in the province of Chieti, is a medieval village that houses the majestic 13th century Ducal Castle. Finally, Civitella del Tronto, one of the most interesting and historically important towns in the region, is well-known for its fortress, a magnificent stronghold which was built in the Renaissance period to defend the Kingdom of Naples against various invasions and remains today one of the most impressive works of military engineering.



PHOTO: The Fortress - Civitella del Tronto



PHOTO: Castle - Offagna

Marche

The Marche hinterland, with its rolling cultivated hills, represents a perfect combination of human, nature, culture and traditions.

There are many tiny hamlets all through the entire region, similar to enchanting oasis permeated of history and culture, where time seems to have stopped, allowing a pleasantly slow and livable pace, measured only by the hours and seasons inexorable passing by. Countless itineraries are possible to discover the most hidden villages of the Marche, where you can still experience an atmosphere of genuine authenticity.



The project is co-funded by the European Union, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance”



Small towns, like pearls set in timeless landscapes, still retain the original features, where works of the past are ongoing activities and people devote a warm welcome for visitors. Traditional crafts and typical flavors to be unhurriedly discovered in a human-tailored environment: from Montefeltro to the Sibillini mountains, from Gabicce shore to San Benedetto del Tronto, the Marche region offers a large number of opportunities to get lost in perfectly preserved towns and hamlets, where you can still breathe a Medieval and Renaissance atmosphere.

By car, by bike or by any other means of transport, out of the most touristic routes and sightseeing the less crowded and well-known cities, you can rediscover the real Italian lifestyle, being only led by your own curiosity. In the Marche region nineteen Municipalities are member of "The most beautiful villages in Italy" club, which gathers small Italian towns having a strong historical and artistic value; furthermore, in all the territory there are seventeen Municipalities awarded with the orange flags, the prestigious ensign the Italian Touring Club assigns to inland municipalities meeting the best standards in hospitality.

Ravenna

The Roman Emilia Road has determined the so-called process of 'incastellamento', i.e. a progressive castle building, that transformed settlement patterns also in the countryside of the province of Ravenna. Along the ancient Roman route is located



PHOTO: La Rocca estense della Bassa Romagna - Lugo

Faenza, a very important town from a commercial point of view, especially thanks to its handmade pottery and ceramics. You can make a little detour to visit the ancient village of Oriolo dei Fichi with its very particular hexagonal tower, built on the site of an ancient Roman castrum.

To penetrate into the heart of the Apennines you just need to taste a Sangiovese wine glass and enjoy the below landscape. Brisighella is a fascinating medieval village almost intact, dominated by the Clock Tower and the Venetian Fortress built to defend and control the road getting to Tuscany. Not far is located the pleasant thermal village of Riolo Terme, characterized by its Sforza Fortress.

In opposite direction, you can join in just a few minutes Bagnara di Romagna, a good place to taste the local flat bread 'piadina' and to admire the stronghold built by Visconti family and then passed under the dominion of Sforza. Another place closely linked with its glorious past is Lugo: you can't miss a walk on Wednesday in the lively local market -one of the most important and ancient of our region- that takes place in front of the Este Fortress. At last Ravenna, with the stately Brancaleone Fortress built in the XV century, well-known today thanks to its beautiful public garden and its summer outdoor film screenings, concludes our short discovery journey.

Città Murate

Testimony of a distant past that has come down to us, small gems in which are kept treasures of great value, the walled cities represent communities that find in the walls their historical and cultural identity.

Este, vital center during Paleovenetian period, that still preserves the remains of the castle surrounded by walls 1000 meters long and where now is housed the Atestino National Museum.



The project is co-funded by the European Union, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance"



At Monselice, tourists can still “immerse” themselves in the atmosphere of medieval village and the Mastio Federiciano, the city walls and the mighty castle, with its rich collection of weapons and armor, bear witness to the strategic importance of Monselice during Middle Ages.

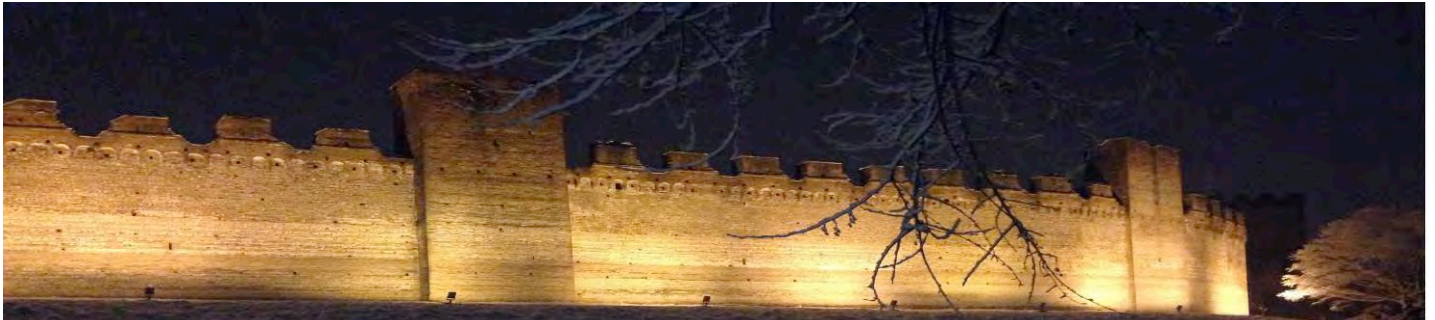


PHOTO: Night view of the city walls - Cittadella

Cittadella with walls of over 1460 meters long, which have a still practicable and preserved parapet walk. Thanks to a multi-year restoration, the walls of Cittadella are today one of the rare example of viable walls at 360°. By this way, tourists have the change to admire the city from new and privilege points of view.

“Miniature” walled city, Noale still preserves the ancient defensive system based on the use of Marzanego river’s water, the suggestive remains of the castle and the Fortress of Tempesta, the noble family that ruled the city for many years.

Finally, be enchanted by the beauty of Portogruaro that from the beginning was characterized as a town protected by battlements, a moat and walls of which now are visible only three gates of it: Tower St. Ghottard, Tower St. Agnese and Tower St. Giovanni.

Walled cities: not only remembrance and charm of the past, but living elements of our territory.

Veneto

In order to safeguard the commercial routes, the Republic of Venice erected walls, bulwarks and forts along the Mediterranean Sea. For history and sea lovers, we recommend a visit to the Naval Museum where imagination can fly throughout centuries, admiring the Bucintoro, the doge’s vessel overlaid with gold and accurate illustrations of the Arsenal, where worked more than 5000 men, to launch, thanks to a formidable organization, up to 2 galleys per day.

Today its large open spaces hold events of the International Art Exhibition. Even when the Venetian Republic fell down, the fortification of the lagoon continued: Forte Marghera, a well preserved military complex is nowadays a charming venue for exhibitions and a pleasant park. The Torre Massimiliana stands on the island of S. Erasmo and it’s a part of the larger ensemble of the Forte S. Erasmo.



PHOTO: The Arsenal - Venezia

The island has always been the garden of Venice: from here comes the typical artichoke whose first fruits are true delights. Another unusual place to visit is the island of Certosa, where in the thirteenth century stood an Augustinian and Carthusian monastery. The island, then converted to military use, has become nowadays a nautical center.

Witnesses of war and peace are visible even in the mainland: Padova, for example, is surrounded by mighty walls with a moat and decorated with monumental gates that allowed the entrance into the city. In the province of Rovigo, in Arquà Polesine stand the



medieval castle and the hunting lodge, built in the twelfth century. The castle is characterised by a embattled tower and in the sixteenth century it was partially restored as a luxurious open countryside residence, as well as exquisitely adorned with frescoes.



PHOTO: Castle - Duino

Friuli Venezia Giulia

A tour to discover the history of this area, ruled by different people in the past, is an unforgettable experience.

Our itinerary starts in Duino, with its castle spectacularly perched above a cliff overlooking the sea, offers a stunning and breathtaking view of the gulf of Trieste. Its rich and varied visitor attractions reflect the eventful history of Thurm und Taxis family, who still owns the property, and of famous artists the family hosted in the past such as Rainer Maria Rilke who wrote the Duino Elegies.

Tucked away just a few miles, there is Gorizia with up on the city hill, the magnificent castle. Built at the beginning of XI century and bombed during World War I, it was rebuilt during the thirties, but the historical atmosphere is still the same. Heading towards the Friulian water – rich lowlands, along the ancient Roman Via Julia Augusta, comes the Medieval walled town of Strassoldo. Owned by the same family of German origin since the beginning, it encloses inside the walls the Upper and the Lower Castle. Closed by, Palmanova, the fortress city built by the Venetians during XVI century against a Turkish invasion, with its ancient gates, baluards, the pitch and the defensive architecture. The tour ends in Valvasone: Medieval walled town with a historical Castle, surrounded by a pitch and ancient walls.

Looking for a true Medieval atmosphere? Save the date: the historical reconstructions in Palmanova and Valvasone during Summer!

Pirano

Along the beautiful and wild karst ridge, where the rocky landscape and karst limestone and Čičarija meet the “grey” Istria, made of clay and sandstone hills, ran the ancient border of the Byzantine possessions. Even today there are, like sentinels of a truly unique natural landscape, the remains of several ancient fortresses and isolated towers of sighting. Follow their tracks passing through Osp) to Socerb Castle, Črni kal, Podpeč, Kubed until Movraž (11th century). The old sighting line became, in the middle ages, the border between the Republic of Venice and the Habsburg monarchy. The Habsburgs integrated the most important strategic points by building forts (Socerb Castle/Kubed, XV sec.). The danger of Turkish assaults prompted the fortification of karst caves in the cliffs below the existing towers. The natural cavity became so in turn small additional fortifications (Socerb, Črni kal, Podpeč, XV sec.). An exception to the local level is represented by the Church of Hrastovlje and walled Valley closure Gradin (15th century).

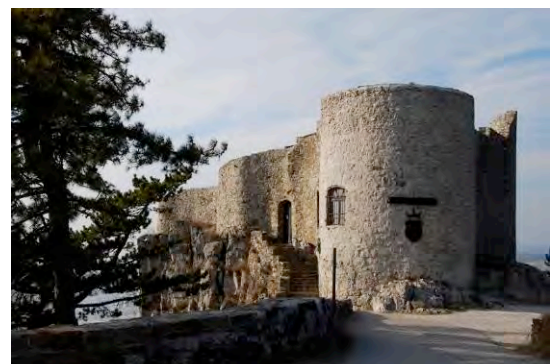


PHOTO: Socerb Castle

The structures represent the typical medieval architecture of fortifications with their functional setting, the composition of circular towers, difficult access, internal links, added buildings, regular construction with local sandstone blocks and openings closed separately.



Herzegovina – Neretva Canton



PHOTO: Walled town - Daorson

Daorson (Greek - ΔΑΟΡΣΩΝ) was the capital of the Hellenized Illyrian tribe Daors which lived in the valley of the Neretva River from 300 until 50 BC. The remains of this once most powerful city in the wider area are in Ošanići near Stolac in Herzegovina. The city was composed of three parts, of which the central was the stronghold - the Acropolis, which was surrounded by "Cyclopean" walls made of huge stone blocks (similar to those of Mycenae in Greece). To the south and south-west of the acropolis there are Podgradina terraces on Greben, while to the

east the pre-acropolis area is expanding at Banje with residential, commercial and shopping areas of the settlement.

All the important administrative, public and religious buildings were placed in the acropolis. The Daors accepted the Greek language and alphabet, and were in constant commercial relations with the Greeks. The remains of numerous amphorae for wine and fine ceramic parts were found, but the most valuable finding is a bronze helmet decorated with a number of Greek characters: Aphrodite, Nike, Helios, Dionysus, Muse, Pegasus and others, and the inscription similar to the inscription on the helmet found in Macedonia. Also, remains of a granite sculpture of Cadmus and Harmony were found, and the Illyrian relief with thirteen snakes and five pairs of eagle wings. In a smaller building a coin mint was found with appropriate tools and dies. The importance of money was significant, showing the independence of the Daors tribe.

Croatia

Tor is the Old Greek tower at the island of Hvar and the best-preserved Greek structure in the Croatian Adriatic region. Its Croatian name Tor comes from Latin turris, meaning tower. Built in the inaccessible rocky summit over the town of Jelsa, it was part of the surveillance system used to signal by fire and smoke the approach of Illyrian vessels since the relations between the Greek colonists on the Adriatic and domestic Illyrians have always been strained.

The tower built by the Greeks living in Pharos, nowadays Stari Grad, in the 4th century B.C. is 7.4 m long and 6.2 m wide, and rises to the height of 6 m. It is made of large megalithic blocks. Lying around are circular stone structures, remains of an unknown fortified Illyrian settlement.

On 29th December 1876, British explorer Sir Richard F. Burton visited the tower. He was astonished by the scene and left the next description: »The site is singular; the apex of the rocky arete, utterly without water, except from rain, and apparently isolated.«



PHOTO: Tor Greek Tower - Hvar



Tor is situated near Humac, one of six etno-eco villages on the island of Hvar included in the cross-border project Adristorical Lands. Humac is a village of 140 little stone shelter houses build up from 13th to 17th century which were used only in the time of cultivating nearby fields. In the local tavern visitors may have a rest and get delicious local food. The strenuous climb to this special places is always rewarded with a breath-taking view on the coastal mountains, surrounding islands and the deep sea.



PHOTO: The Fountain Gate of the antique city of Lissus (IV c. BC)

Amidst a beautiful setting, visitors can clearly see evidence of a multitude of building techniques and construction phases used over centuries.

The castle's enclosed 1.5 hectares are now green carpet of grass, but one studded with the dividing square remnants of facilities that hold great cultural and historical significance to this day. Welcome to the castle of Lezha, where you will find history interwoven in layers

Lezha

Grazie alla sua vantaggiosa posizione geografica, la città di Due to the advantageous geographical position the city of Lezha has been inhabited since the mid-first millennium BC. There is still visible evidence of the walls of the ancient Acropolis of Lissus from the 4th century BC as well as the fortification walls of the city dating the 3 century BC.

All passed here, in the Lands of the Ancient Illyrians; the Hellenes, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Byzantines, The Celts and the Slaves, the Normans, the Venetians and Ottomans, the Austro Hungarians and both the world wars, having at all times been fighting, holding strong, submitting and regaining freedom from all of them. But, what is most interesting, here you can still find the traces of the old Illyrians, in the everyday costumes of the woman of Kallmet, inherited down from the millenniums. The byzantine historian Anna Komnena called the castle of Elison (Lezha) "a castle in the air, which can be seen from all four sides".

Today the castle of Lezha remains a wonder of the ages.

LEAD PARTNER



PARTNER



Associazione Città Murate del Veneto



Provincia di Bari



Provincia di Ravenna



Turistička Zajednica HNK-HNŽ
Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Tourist Board
www.hercegovina.ba



POMORSKI MUZEJ
MUSEO DEL MARE
PIRAN-PIRANO



ASSOCIATO:



Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Culture
Republika Hrvatska
Ministarstvo kulture