

CAMPOBASSO

THE CHURCHES, THE CASTLE AND THE HISTORICAL CENTRE

8



CAMERA DI COMMERCIO
DEL MOLISE



AERIAL VIEW OF THE HISTORICAL CENTER



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CAMPOBASSO

The churches, the castle
and the historical center



CAMERA DI COMMERCIO
DEL MOLISE



*On page 3: Coat of arms of the city placed on the keystone of Porta Sant'Antonio.
Above: View made in 1742 by the Regio Agrimensorio Giuseppe Giovannitto di Oratino
(A. Cimmino and Campobasso State Archives). Below: Campobasso in a print from the early
twentieth century. On the next page: The Monforte castle in a postcard from the 1920s.*



The historical centre of Campobasso

The origins

The territory of Campobasso has been occupied and transformed since the Samnite era. The first core was built on the top of a rocky ridge, called over time with various toponyms not always appropriate (Sasso, Monti, Monte di Sant'Antonio), and currently it overlooks the modern city which has developed in recent centuries at the foot of the original ancient village. According to some scholars, the original wall fence formed by roughly squared blocks, would have surrounded the top of the "Mountain" for a perimeter of about 800 m, superimposed dry with a subsequent filling of the internal section. It would have been built to guard the Matese-Taverna del Cortile Tratturo that converges on the most large Tratturo Castel di Sangro-Lucera, and the communication routes that crossed the Campobasso territory. In addition to the walls, the most accredited sources attest to the presence of a temple dedicated to Hercules in the place where the San Giorgio church stands today, and a limestone slab on which the inscription *Osca*, improperly used as the threshold of a tavern built on the ruins of the San Michele Arcangelo church, was engraved. Some historical sources document that the "Mountain" was

already occupied in the Lombard period, between the eighth and ninth centuries. AD, from a lookout and surrounded at the top by a first wall, including the Santa Maria di Supra or Santa Maria Maggiore church, the lookout itself, the cemetery, the San Michele Arcangelo church, and stopped near the San George church. In the 10th century a second city wall was built, which incorporated the churches and residential areas of San Bartolomeo and San Mercurio, where a slit belonging to the time of the transformation is still visible today. A unitary plan was born that organizes the settlement in relation to the morphology of the territory with respect to the fortress, which constitutes the center of the village. This is a radiocentric scheme in which the main arteries intersect, which follow approximately the "isoipse" and the secondary roads that solve the altitude jumps and end with a door (many cases). Historical sources affirm that, with the subsequent Norman epic, the entire agglomeration was united with the rest of the city by means of defensive structures, built taking into account the orographic conditions and the multiple needs of the city organization, such as that of completing the defense of the castle built in this period.



Monforte castle

The castle dominates the city of Campobasso from a hilltop, sweeping the view to the Maiella and the Tavoliere delle Puglie. Historians such as Masciotta, Ziccardi and Mancini believe it was built during the Lombard domination and fortified during the Norman domination by the Counts of Molise; Galanti, Perrella and Croce believe it was built in 1458, when Cola Monforte rebelled against Ferdinand I d'Aragona that would have had it built to ensure an efficient defense. Cola Monforte modified, enlarged and largely rebuilt the castle, perhaps destroyed by the earthquake of 1456. In 1458, he reinforced the existing walls developed in a spiral along the declivity of the mountain, equipping them with towers, until he reached the pitches, where he erected another circle of walls. Today the castle has an almost rectangular plan, an aspect and imposing mass, the bases of truncated cone towers on three edges, the redon one, the square and raised keep on the

whole body of the building, as well as a crowning with merlons, a few square windows, with slits and an entrance with a drawbridge on the southern side. The restorations carried out on the perimeter walls accentuate the contrast between the exterior that has taken over the original physiognomy, and the interior, largely empty and uncovered. The wing that overlooked the courtyard, which was accessed via the drawbridge, now appears as a large entrance courtyard. On the opposite wing, on the ground floor, you can find the Memorial to the Fallen in War. From here, through a narrow staircase, you reach the upper floor, from which you can enjoy a splendid panoramic view. Currently the Municipality of Campobasso is the owner of the castle.

Below: The square castle dominates the city. On the side, top: View of the castle with access door located on the square behind it. Bottom: Internal courtyard and wall overlooking the modern urban area.





The churches of the historic center

Saint Leonard

The San Leonardo church stands on flat ground which, to the south-east, throughs the current via Cannavina (formerly via Borgo). Its structure and the decorative elements it contains, date back to its construction in the second half of the thirteenth century. Therefore, as the Collegiate Chapter of San Giorgio was transferred to it in 1338, it became necessary to extend the church.

According to Ziccardi, it also hosted a lay brotherhood. The interior of the church is very sober, presenting a single nave divided into three arches. The arches that run right and left, have squat columns with a square section, surmounted by capitals with Byzantine-inspired decorations.

The roof is pitched with two pitches and inside it has a wooden truss structure. Along the nave, precisely under the arches, there is a lack of secondary altars. The flight of steps is the ele-

ment that divides the ship from the presbytery. At the sides of this room, at the top, you can see the arches with circular section columns where presumably the choir had been placed. In the past, a chore in carved wallut reserved for the canons of the Collegiate. After the Second World War, the interior of the building was completely renovated, respecting the canons of Romanesque art. During the works, a cemetery was found under the flooring of the central area. Some changes have seen the abolition of the old Main Altar to make its presbytery more spacious and functional.

The earthquake of 1456, called Santa Barbara, caused serious damage to the entire perimeter of the church. The same bell tower on which the "University of Campania clock" was placed, was completely destroyed and it was never rebuilt. That very serious event radically transformed the building: today its structure has almost nothing more than the original one. In

fact, observing carefully from the outside, it is possible to notice from the cut of the stones of the roof not only its radical renewal, but also an arbitrary elevation of the walls, which made it higher than the original. Only the very fine monofora window located on the facade to the left of the portal is authentic, while on the right there is a trace of a monofora window that was probably walled up during the reconstruction.

The dense decoration with scrolls, leaves and flowers of the band that adorns it, is stylistically similar to the ornaments of the window of Santa Maria della Strada in Matrice of the '400-'500. Next to the single monofora window there's a block of stone with the pagan sculpture of a well modeled ox. The portal has a Gothic pattern, slightly splayed,



surmounted by a pointed arch. It contains a spiral rib that rests on two columns, one smooth and the other worked, with acanthus leaf capitals and bases of the time. In the capitelli, the artist seems to seek known chiaro-scuro effects not with strong incisions, but with a certain gradation of planes, so that the leaves, hollowed out, buy relief by detaching themselves from the base plane and creating a tunnel work around the tips. The bezel does not have sophisticated sculptural workmanship. The only element present is a small bas-relief representing a agnello crucifero. Another particular element of the facade is the double staircase located on the sides of the terrace where the portal overlooks. In the past, this ladder had a balustrade railing, which was replaced in 1900 with the current railing.



On the previous page: Facade of the San Leonardo church. On this page, from top to bottom: Interior of the church; frieze depicting the crucifero lagnello; artistic monofora window; bas-relief depicting an ox.



Saint Anthony Abbot

It was an ancient oratory of the Benedictine hospice of Santa Maria de Fora. In 1509 the Trinitarians came into possession of the place transforming it into a hospital. In 1572, on the remains of the old building, they erected the current church, consecrated to very holy Antonio and Leonardo abbots for their own influence on the people. The Congregation of the same name immediately settled in this church, whose affiliates were farmers and craftsmen. In 1809 the Congregation was suppressed, while in 1829 the church became the seat of the parish of SS. Angelo and Mercury. The Sant'Antonio Abate church is located outside the door called "della Chiaia". The church has a single nave on whose sides there are four worked marble altars, topped with oil paintings [the canvas depicting a miracle of San Benedetto was attributed to Guercino (1591-1666)], and statues dating back to the XVI-XVII century, graven on baroque golden wooden blades. On the left side of the altar, towards the presbytery, there is a small terrace where the church organ in gilded wood is present. The external attic has a coffered decoration. The presby-

tery is divided from the rest of the church by a large lowered arch, frescoed with sculptural motifs. The high altar is located close to the wall and it is made of worked marble. At the sides of the presbytery, at the top, there are two frescoes surrounded by scrolls and typical Baroque decorations. The upper floor of the presbytery and the nave are frescoed. In the nave there is the Crucifixion of Jesus, while in the presbytery his Resurrection. Along the walls there are the frescoes of the well-known painter from Campobasso Michele Scaroina representing facts and miracles of Sant'Antonio and San Benedetto. The facade is smooth, with a rose window in the center and an portal with architrave decorated with small pilasters with floral and scroll motifs. Above the architrave there's a Latin inscription (Haec Deo Optim. Max. Beatoque Antonio BC - Leonardo a confratribus erecta est aedes - MDLXXII), which testifies to which saints the church is dedicated, when it was built and by whom. On the eastern side, there's a Gothic-style door which had finely carved wooden shutters. After the restoration the door was walled up and now you can only admire the pointed arch.





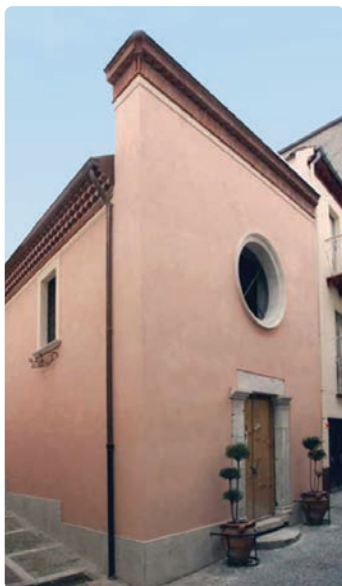
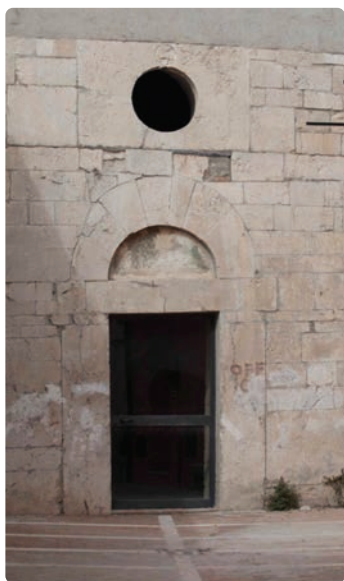
Above: Four altars in worked marble, surmounted by oil paintings and statues dating back to the 1500s and 1600s, embedded in Baroque golden wooden blades. Opposite: The anonymous facade of the Church and internal view with the main altar at the bottom.

Saint Nicholas

Along the via Sant'Antonio Abate, near the building where Paolo Saverio Di Zinno was born, there is the San Nicola church. It can be considered a chapel, not presenting great artistic and architectural decorations, despite its internal Renaissance-Baroque workmanship and with the large oculus of the facade. One of the statues that was present inside, depicting San Nicola, is preserved in the Sant'Antonio Abate church. Externally, the facade has a rose window with a simple portal in its invoice. That building is closed to worship.

Saint Mercury

The San Mercurio church was built around 1100-1200, outside the walls, when Campobasso was still a small village. In 1459 Cola Monforte decided to enlarge the city walls, building one with a fan-shaped, leaving the rear part of the church and the main facade on the opposite side outside the walls. In 1600 the church was the seat of the homonymous parish and it was aggregated to that of Sant'Angelo or San Michele Arcangelo. In 1826 the



parish itself was merged with that of Sant'Antonio Abate. Its structure is in Romanesque style, testifying to a rose window placed towards the top of the facade. Its construction is made up of simple white stones and asymmetrically squared and placed one on top of the other with an interlocking method. The ancient church has a simple arched portal surmounted by an uncarved lunette. A small crucifero agnello is carved above the architrave.

The rear part looks like an "old house" devoid of architectural value. On that, there's a small portal surmounted with architrave and by another lunette without decorations. This facade respects the front one in the construction.

On the two sides of the portal you can see two rectangular windows, both falling inwards, which break the linearity of the facade, giving it movement and a more interesting appearance from an architectural point of view.

Above: The San Nicola church. On the side: Facade of the San Mercurio church. Both buildings retain little of the ancient architecture. On the side, top: Facade and interior of the Santa Maria della Croce church.

Holy Mary of the Cross

The church was built in the year 1000, in Norman times, by faithful of popular origin who met in the Congregation with the name of Crusaders. Their association was recognized with pontifical diplomas in 1073, 1130 and 1143. Santa Maria della Croce, from a simple recipe of the Congrega, was elevated to Collegiate by vescovo Carafa in 1583. The earthquakes of 1358 and 1456 caused a lot of damage at original structure. Today, its interior is divided into three naves. In the aisles there are four altars, two of which are located in the loggias on the right and left of the presbytery.

Topping the two altars there are the statues of the Sacro Cuore di Gesù and the Maddonna Addolorata with the Cristo Morto. The remaining altars are smaller in size. Above them there are a statue of Sant'Antonio Abate and a painting probably from the sixteenth century school. The central nave is separated from the two sides by a colonnade with round arches. The same colonnade is joined by a round arch, on which a large dome with lantern, placed between the naves and the presbytery, rests.



You have three steps climb marble to access. The high altar, in Baroque style, is in marble. The side walls to it are embellished with some paintings. The external facade is certainly one of the most important in the historic center, presenting the largest number of decorative elements. This structure can be divided into three rectangles: one larger in the center, where the main entrance is located, and two smaller ones on the sides, where the secondary entrances overlook. On the main rectangle, in turn, we can identify:

- a smaller rectangle, which encloses the architraved portal surmounted by a round lunette, without decorations; the piers that hold the lunette are decorated with many small pilasters and moldings;
- a square above the small rectangle, where there is a rose window;
- an isosceles triangle which includes the roof.

On this page: The facade of the now deconsecrated San Paolo church. On the side, above: The bell tower of the San Bartolomeo church and, below, the external facade. In the background, the Terzano Tower.

Saint Christina

Nothing remains of the church; even its location is uncertain. We only know that the building was completely destroyed with the Sant'Anna earthquake in 1805.

Saint Paul

At the end of via del Castello, at the foot of the Monforte castle, there is the San Paolo church. The first certain historical information about it dates back to 1662 and they are related with the San Giorgio church. G. Masciotta hints at an ancient structure of modest proportions, located at the end of an urban road, "deconsecrated by several years, and used as a depot for funeral wagons and end-of-life tools." Over time, the facade of this church was plastered. Its portal, surmounted by a rose window, has a pointed arch, while the two side elevations are smooth and they have four monofore at the top. The bell tower with its bell remains is intact at the rear. The church has been deconsecrated to the public.



Saint Bartholomew

Romanesque-style construction, which dates back to the year 1000, it has always been the seat of the homonymous parish. Located along the road leading to the Monforte castle, near the tower of the so-called Delicata Civerra (Torre Terzano), in a 1310 writing the arciprete Nicola Tarantino states that the San Bartolomeo church is none other than the parish of the Greek Basilians, sold to the Cavalieri of Malta. This is one of the few certain historical sources relating to this church before 1371, when there is also news of its possible use as a city cemetery. Its interior is structured in a complex way. The central nave is separated from the surrounding areas by a stone colonnade surmounted by round arches. Each column has capitals decorated. Other rooms develop on the sides of the central nave. In the one on the right, excavation essays have been covered again by the floor, while on the left only a small portion of the church can be seen. Originally, its facade consisted of the central body only, where the portal is today. Subsequently, the two lateral wings were added. In the elevation, however, there are two large blind arches on pilasters, flanking the very flat prothyrum, supported by projecting pillars.



The exposed roof covering follows the height of the aisles.

The central rose window is surmounted by an eagle which stands on a shelf supported by three heads, on whose two sides stands an ox in the round. The sides of the building have hanging arches at the top that rest on shelves. The rear side has three apses, with small windows, without moldings. The whole complex is characterized by the delicate relief of the friezes of the facade, the lunettes, the blind arches and the rich portal which has the motif of five distorted radial columns in the center. There's also a complex iconography in the figurative scenes.





On this page, above: Interior of the San Bartolomeo church and, below, the upper part of what was once a stationary cross placed on the churchyard. Opposite: External view of the San Giorgio martire church.



Saint George Martyr

The dating of the church remains uncertain. The historian Silvestri believed that the church was built in 1099. Di Iorio instead expresses his hesitation regarding Silvestri's studies demonstrating, thanks to the help of an ancient parchment, that San Giorgio was already a consolidated body in 1100, more precisely around the 1099. It was archpriestal church until 1525, although its Collegiate Chapter, made up of 25 canons, was transferred in 1338 to the underlying San Leonardo church, believed to be the most convenient location to reach. Inside the church, with three naves, there is the main altar in polychrome marble built in 1629. Under the canteen there's a high relief sculpture of Saint George on horseback trampling the dragon. In the front and behind the main altar there is the effigy of San Carlo Borromeo in the middle of two wardrobes. From the left nave you can enter the San Gregorio chapel, probably dating back to 1300, whose octagonal dome, with a pointed arch cross, is decorated by frescoes.

The facade, like that of San Bartolomeo, is divided vertically into three large blocks. In the center there is the largest block, where the main door faces. Here there are two safe phases: one below, which is the oldest, and one above the capitals. Both clearly differ in the type of construction: a poorly maintained masonry at the bottom and a succession of well-cut stone blocks that are closely connected upwards. This type of processing is also present in the San Mercurio church. The capitals are particular for their protrusion with respect to the axis of the elevation. In the two facing the church portal, there are two rectangular coves that are not random or the result of breakage, but specifically built. Silvestri saw in them a probable point of support for a wooden roof. The portal is architraved and it's surmounted by a carved lunette, which is divided into two semicircular areas. At the center an agnello crucifero is depicted and surrounded by pointed oval leaves, which are intertwined with schematized bunches of grapes, carved into small cubes or circles. Deep rudimentary incisions of leaves





with sharp edges are present everywhere. Above the portal there is the rose window that has no particular decorations. The bell tower is also Romanesque, square and with mullioned windows. In the Northern part we find a relief pelican. Subsequently, two other wings were added to the central body, creating a remarkable contrast with the whole. On the left side of the building, there is a rough wall that surrounds the ancient cemetery. In this point there is a small window with bars above which a crucifix has been

placed (stolen in 1975, it was fixed in the wall outside the cemetery in 1382), while, in the lower part, there is a tombstone divided into two parts by a stone with relief of a human head.

Another important element of the entire monument is the inscription engraved near the sepulcher of the master sculptor Paolo da Popoli. In fact, in beautiful Gothic letters, it is possible to read: A.D. MCCCLXXXII sepulcrum Galoppini, Magister Paulus de Populi me fecit.





Holy Mary of the Mount

The Santa Maria del Monte church, also called Maggiore or *de supra*, is located on the same level as the Monforte Castle and is placed in front of it, on the highest point of the hill of I Monti, from which you can admire an enchanting view. As early as the 13th century, as evidenced by documents, a church existed here that was also used as a burial place for members of the feudal families. Over the centuries the church has undergone numerous renovations and currently the most ancient architectural element of the entire sacred building is the central portal in stone, with pointed arch and the following Gothic inscription: AD MDDDDXXVII hoc opus fecit fieri Antonius de Arturo pro anima quondam Massolae. The epigraph informs that in the year 1427 Antonio di Arturo had done this work for the soul of the late Massola. Santa Maria del Monte was the parish seat until 1829, the year in which, when the city expanded at the foot of the mountain, the parish was transferred to the Trinity church.

On the previous page, above: Artistic lunette with agnello crucifero and, below, decorative stone elements placed on the facade of the church with a view of the internal dome. Above: The Holy Mary of the Mount's facade.

Since 1905 the church and the adjoining convent have been entrusted to the Capuchin monks, who also hosted San Pio da Pietralcina for a short time. The paintings created by the artist Amedeo Trivisonno are interesting. In the niche of the front wall there is the Byzantine wooden statue of the Madonna and Child, dating back to 1334 and by an unknown author. The church is very popular with Campobassani, who see the patroness of the city in the Madonna del Monte.

In May, many faithful attend the rosary and the solemn daily masses that end on May 31 with the traditional procession and the infiorata dedicated to the Madonna.

Saint Michael Archangel

The church no longer exists. Giambattista Masciotta believes that its foundation is earlier than 1319

Saint Rocco

The foundation date and location are ignored.

Holy Cross of Battenti

Perhaps a convent with an annexed church occupied by the Flagellants, even if its location is still uncertain.

Saint Salvatore

The exact location of the church is not very clear.

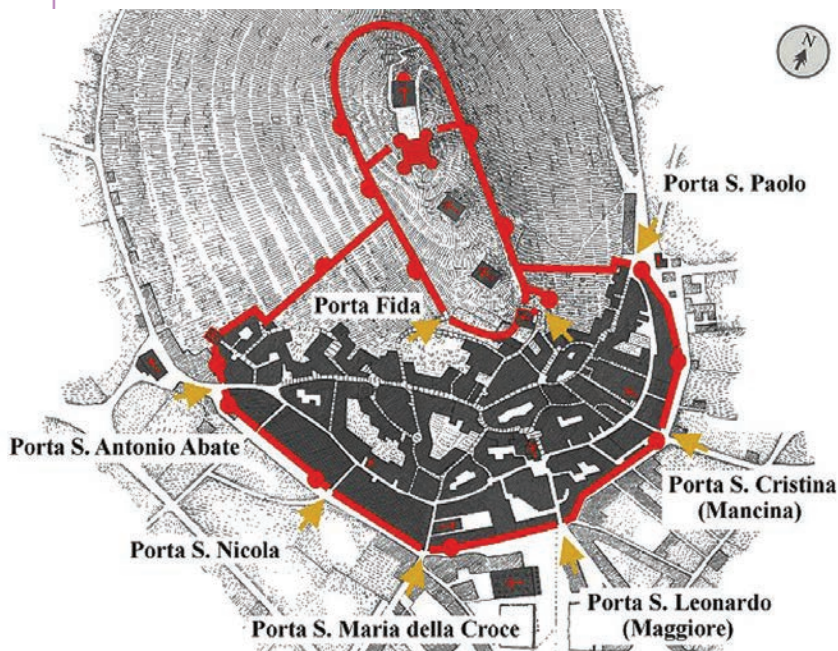
The Gate of the Monfortian Walls

In the continuous and enveloping line of the first city wall located on the top of the mountain, as some historical documents attest, three doors opened near the San Bartolomeo church. From the sources it seems that Porta del Monte was still in operation in 1682. The second gate, located a short distance from that of the Monte, was immediately behind the bell tower of San Bartolomeo, where traces of its existence are still present, while the third was configured with that of the Monte, which was doubled to increase the efficiency of the weapons depot. The second wall, built in the lower part of the urban core, was equipped with fortified doors positioned in the points where the ancient Tratturi flowed.

Porta Sant'Antonio Abate, whose toponym comes from the church located in the village, is also called Porta della Chiaia and it's located in the extreme western tip of the wall. On its round arch, on the key, there is the coat of arms of the city which bears the date



On this page, above: Porta Sant'Antonio Abate. Below: Plan of the layout of the access gates to the city (by A. Cimmino). On the side, the other urban gates: Porta San Nicola, Porta Santa Cristina or "Mancina" and Porta San Paolo.





of 1775, probably the year in which it was subjected to transformation and expansion. Walled on the left wall, the coat of arms of the Monforte family has the writing A.C. MCCCCLXIII (1463), which is the year of its construction. The building transformation of Campobasso in the eighteenth century (an example could be the opening of Porta Nuova also known as San Nicola di Bari) represents the most direct testimony of the city's radical expansion in that century. The door of Santa Maria della Croce was built in the western part of the city wall. Some historians argue that it was demolished, together with its keep, in 1864. The main central door, which gave direct access to the village, was the one known by the name of Porta San Leonardo and it was in front of the large market square built outside the walls. It was built in 1476, although it was later demolished and rebuilt with the extension of the inhabited area, eventually including the new square in the old village. This door did not meet much luck and so it was destroyed a second time and subsequently rebuilt in 1725 by the will of Duke Mario Ca-

rafa. It was definitively demolished in 1836. The door located along the eastern part of the walls is called Porta Mancina, because it is located to the left of the Porta San Leonardo, and it's also called Porta Santa Cristina, as it lapped with its structure the nearby Santa Cristina church. The last door, located in the far eastern part of the walls, is the one known by the name of San Paolo, due to its proximity to the San Paolo Apostolo church. On the arch you can see a coat of arms of the Monforte-Gambatesa family, bearing the date A.D. MCCCLXXIV (1374). The relief sculpture represents a transversal band in which three shields follow one another with the upper part not outlined. Today the door is characterized by a round arch which is not underlined by segments arranged interlocking in the wall. Near all these doors there is always a tower, a reinforcement element located in the weakest point of the walls. These structures still retain the name of the owners who purchased them in the 19th century. The Terzano Tower is among the best preserved.



The noble palace

Japoce palace

It rises in the homonymous Largo and it was owned by the Baroni Japoce family, which emerged between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and it was interested in large investments in livestock and cereals. Among the prominent personalities of that family we remember Francesco, who lived in the eighteenth century, who distinguished himself for the ability to manage his properties and who at the same time worked hard in public affairs, to the point that he played a decisive role in the claims at state ownership of the University of Campobasso, as evidenced by archival sources. The perspective of the building is characterized by the monumental stone portal, adorned with carved acanthus leaves, the same one found in another portal in the historic center of Campobasso, precisely in via Sant'Antonio Abate at no. 99, in

Opposite page: Terzano Tower in whose rooms Delicata Civerra was imprisoned. Below: Palazzo Japoce, with its magnificent portal decorated with carved acanthus leaves, houses the offices of the Mibact Molise.

front of what there was once the home of Paolo Saverio Di Zinno. The Japoce palace, dating from the 17th-18th centuries, was renovated between 1997 and 2007 and today it houses the offices of the Archaeological Superintendency and the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage.

Farinaccio-Biccarini palace

The building is located at no. 5 of via Sant'Antonio Abate and its elegant elevation is clearly visible also from Largo San Leonardo. The facade is decorated with two loggias, one on the first and one on the second floor, and on each there are four openings with round arches resting on columns. In the upper part of the corner of the building, towards the San Leonardo church, there is the stone coat of arms depicting the lyre instrument and seven Florentine lilies. The beautiful portal on the ground floor is made up of soft limestone casings. Probably the palace, built in the seventeenth century, was the seat of a convent. In 1930 it was purchased by the Farinaccio and Biccarini families whose name it still bears.



Cannavina palace

The building is located along via Vitorino Cannavina, a lawyer, a very fine jurist and prominent politician locally (mayor of Campobasso from 1902 to 1906) and also nationally. The façade has an imposing Neoclassical portal, above which there is the coat of arms with two rampant lions resting on three hills with a pine tree in the center. On the emblem there is the marquis crown.

The building was originally inhabited by the Carafa family, dukes of Ielsi and feudal lords of Campobasso, then by the Campobassan barons who in 1742 ceded it to Salvatore Romano, nominal owner of the fief. In 1783 the palace was sold to Michelangelo Salottolo and from 1891 it became the property of the Cannavina family, from which it takes its name. It currently belongs to several private individuals.

Below and on the side: Interior and entrance of the Palazzo Cannavina, the exclusive residence of the city currently used as a B&B. On the next page: The sumptuous portal of the Palazzo del Regio Tribunale and, at the bottom, Piazza dell'Olmo in the historic center.

The palace, as mentioned had been owned by the local barons, was rebuilt after the passage to the Salottolo family; the portal was lightened by baroque overloads and reorganized with simpler forms, such as ashlar side pillars. In the internal part there is a bright square courtyard, from which the staircase leads to the houses on the two upper floors.



Palace of the Royal Court

The building is located in via Ziccardi at number 13 and it can be recognized by the sumptuous eighteenth-century stone portal. It was the seat of the Royal Civil and Criminal Court and its underground rooms were used for the imprisonment of prisoners awaiting trial.

Piazza dell'Olmo

Piazza dell'Olmo corresponds to the open space located in the upper part of the historic center of the city, where the homonymous street converge, via Monticelli and via Pennino; it is so called because of an elm, perhaps spontaneously grown there, which over the centuries has been replaced several times.

It has been mentioned in the notarial deeds on several occasions since the 16th century and in the notarial deed for the notary Prunauro of 23 November 1587 it is stated that in this square there was a cellar that preserves fresco wine in its deep underground caves.



Associazione Centro Storico



Associazione Centro Storico

Underground Campobasso

The basements, created over the centuries by man's work, represent a hidden reality of the ancient village. Much of the stone was extracted in order to build the buildings, so you can imagine the volumes existing in the subsoil. Following the catastrophic earthquake of 1456, Count Cola di Monforte designed the new city, with a defensive structure, equipping it with double walls, interrupted by the doors that gave access to the village. He used existing voids by connecting them together and making them functional to military logic. A cobweb of tunnels, a sort of "network" in the Middle Ages that allowed rapid communication from multiple points. Among the basements, there are some sections of the ancient walkway that allow us to speculate that garrisons could move quickly from one tower to another and from the surrounding

walls to the top of the hill. Over the centuries the basements have undergone various destinations: towards the end of the 15th century, with the expansion of the city and the establishment of the customs thanks to the edict of Ferrante d'Aragona, the flour, salt and meats's warehouses were opened; during the Second World War, they were used as air raid shelters; in the Sixties, they were used as discos and meeting places for young people, due to the size of the premises and the soundproofing. They were subsequently abandoned and no longer used for social purposes. *(Taken from the site of the Centro Storico Campobasso Association)*

Below: Access stairway to one of the numerous rooms in the basement of the historic city center. Over the years they have been used as "hidden" connecting routes, as warehouses for food storage and also as entertainment venues.



INFO AND USEFUL NUMBERS

Municipality of Campobasso

Saint George Palace
Piazza V. Emanuele, 29
Phone 0874 4051

Visits to the Historical Centre

Campobasso

Historical Centre Group onlus

Via Chiarizia 7
Phone 338 7474373

Visits to the Monforte Castle

RTI In Cima

On-call phone 327 4992312

Winter opening hours

From October to March

Morning: 9.00 am to 1 pm

Afternoon: 3 pm to 5 pm

Summer opening hours

From April to September

Morning: 9 am to 1 pm

Afternoon: 3.30 pm to 7 pm

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- 2 MAB Unesco reserve "Alto Molise"
- 3 The Swabian Castle and the old village of Termoli
- 4 The archaeological Area of Altilia/Sepino
- 5 The monumental complex of San Vincenzo al Volturno
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