

Cultural heritage guide

General information

SARDEGNA





REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

Cultural heritage guide

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History, archaeology, art

The prehistoric period

From 100,000 years ago to 1800 B.C.

The history of human presence in Sardinia begins in the Lower Palaeolithic period, as shown by findings of stone objects that can be dated back to 450-100,000 years ago. These objects, in flint and quartzite, were found in the north of the island, in the Anglona region and from the point of view of their type, they are part of the stone industries classified under the names Clactonian and Tayaciano. These objects were probably made by individuals from the species *Homo erectus*, one of the species from the *Homo* genus to which modern man belongs. Worthy of mention is the recent discovery of a whole phalanx of a human thumb in a cave in Logudoro. This important finding has been dated to a probable 250,000-300,000 years B.C. As far as concerns the Middle Palaeolithic period, we should say that until now, we have found no traces of human presence in Sardinia for this period. This absence may be explained by a gap in our knowledge and not as the actual situation. Findings from scientific excavations in the cave of Grotta Corbeddu in Oliena date back to the Upper Palaeolithic era. These include animal bones and fragments from a jawbone and other human bones. The animals were native to the regions of Sardinia and Corsica: the *Megaceros cazioti*, a type of deer, now extinct,

The Prehistoric Age	from 100,000 years ago to 1800 B.C.E.
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The Nuragic Age	from 1800 to 500 B.C.E.
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The Phoenician-Punic, Roman and Vandalic Age	from 900 A.C.E. to 534 A.C.E.
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The Byzantine and Judical Age	from 534 to 1326
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The Aragonese and Hispanic Age	from 1326 to 1718
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The Sabaudian and Current Age	from 1718 to the present day
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the bones of which show signs of having been worked by man, and the *Prolagus sardus*, a rodent which is also extinct. These findings have been dated back to somewhere between 20,000 and 6,000 B.C. The Ancient Neolithic period (6,000-4,000 B.C.) marks an important turning point in the island's history. The invention of pottery made it possible to produce recipients of various sizes and for different purposes; the fact of passing from a system of subsistence based on hunting and gathering, to one centred around agriculture and domesticating and farming animals led to radical changes in the procurement of foods and a progressive increase in the population as well as profound consequences at social and economic levels. This period is characterised by the production of pottery known as cardial, from the name of the shell (*cardium*) used to mould decorative features on the surfaces of items. Caves and shelters beneath rocks were the typical dwellings of the period. Sites where cardial pottery has been found include the caves at Su Carroppu (Carbonia) and Filiestru (Mara). In the Ancient Neolithic period, systematic use of obsidian from Monte Arci, in the Oristano area also developed. Obsidian was a precious resource for the production of stone items, and it was widely used in Sardinia. The obsidian from Monte Arci has also been found in areas off the island.



On the left:
Menhirs, Goni

On the right:
Anthropomorphic
menhirs at Tamuli,
Macomer.

These findings have often been interpreted as a sign that there was widespread trade in obsidian from Sardinia. In the Middle Neolithic period (4,000-3,400 B.C.) we find the birth of the Bonuighinu culture. The name used for this culture comes from the site at which the first archaeological findings were made: the Bonuighinu cave (also known as Sa Ucca de Su Tintirriolu) in the Mara area of Sassari. Pottery from this new cultural phase



in Sardinian history has a characteristic black-brown-coloured shiny surface and is often decorated with carvings or imprints. Also characteristic of this period are the burial caves and the items that accompanied the deceased to the next world. Worthy of mention is the Cuccuru is Arrius burial site in the Cabras area, where numerous statuettes of the 'Mother-Goddess', a steatopyge with highly accentuated female forms have been found. In the Recent Neolithic period (3,400-3,200 B.C.) the archaeological situation becomes increasingly divided as well as more complex. This has led



Charming view of Nora

scholars to group similar findings together into facies without achieving the coherence and complexity that characterise actual 'cultures'. One of these facies is known under the name of San Ciriaco from a location in the Terralba area of Oristano. Pottery production is characterised by the typical profile of the pots. Even the famous green steatite cup (found in the megalithic circle burial complex of Li Muri near Arzachena and first thought to be pertinent to the Ozieri culture) has now been included in the San Ciriaco facies due to a strong resemblance to the pottery it produced. The first Domus de Janas or 'fairy houses' - typical cave-shaped tombs cut into the rock - date back to this period, as do the megalithic circle tombs mentioned above, which were accompanied by small menhirs. The Final Neolithic period (3,200-2,800 B.C.) is the age of one of the most important cultures in Sardinian history, the Ozieri culture and its name comes from the San Michele cave, near to the modern-day town of Ozieri. Pottery from this culture is particularly rich from a decorative viewpoint, with circular motifs, spirals, festoons, stars and human figures, all types of decoration that are also found in similar forms off the island, which goes

to show that Sardinia had opened out to acquire new cultural inputs that seem to have come from the areas of Crete and the Cyclades. As well as the traditional items in flint and obsidian, we have the first evidence of the extraction and working of metals, in particular copper, as can be seen from dagger blades and ornaments found with burial items. Even tomb types begin to differ: Domus de Janas, dolmen, allées couvertes, and megalithic circles, often accompanied by menhirs. Some tombs were made imitating the forms of dwellings, in particular, rectangular huts with a double sloping roof supported by a solid wooden trabeation. Also worthy of mention is the way in which representations of the 'Mother-Goddess' evolved, passing from the naturalistic steatopyge forms, typical of Bonuighinu style, to an extremely stylised pattern in the form of a "cross" or traced and perforated. The acquired ability to extract and work metals (first copper, but then lead and silver) is the event that marks the passage from the Neolithic to the Early Eneolithic period (2,800-2,600 B.C.), in which we can include the two Sub-Ozieri facies, identified for the first time at the Su Coddu (Selargius) and Filigosa sites, from the name of the Domus de Janas burial site preceded by a long corridor in the Macomer area. Of all the sites worth mentioning, there is the outstanding 'altar-

Tomb at Pranu
Murteddu



temple' of Monte d'Accoddi (Porto Torres), which is comprised of a platform in the shape of a truncated pyramid on which there is a votive temple with Mesopotamian ziqqurats. The Abealzu culture takes its name from the access ramp. The shape of this monument is reminiscent of the burial site of the same name located in the Osilo area and which marks the Middle Eneolithic period (2,600-2,400 B.C.). Typical features of this

culture are flask-shaped pots decorated with mammillary forms, which are similar to pots found in mainland Italy and in the French-Swiss area. Also of great importance are the anthropomorphic menhirs and menhir statues found in Sarcidano-Mandrolisai. The menhir-statues are often said to be “armed” on account of the presence of a two-bladed dagger, interpreted as a symbol of power, and of a figure in the higher part of the statue, known as ‘upturned’ and interpreted as a funeral symbol. With the passage to the Late Eneolithic period (2,400-2,100 B.C.) came the Monte



Pots from the Monte Claro culture.

Claro culture, which takes its name from the hill in the Cagliari area where several tombs containing typical ceramic items were found. These are large pots (situle), tripods and bowls with coloured surfaces ranging from red-hazel to light hazel and blackish brown. The vertical or horizontal ribbing or grooves are also typical decorations as is the ‘polished’ decoration that marks several forms. The Eneolithic period (2,100-1,800 B.C.) comes to a close with an important culture, present throughout Europe and known as the Bell Beaker Culture. The name comes from the typical upturned-bell-shaped, richly decorated beakers. Another interesting feature is the presence of the brassard, a special rectangular plate used by archers to protect their wrist against the vibrations from the bowstring after firing an arrow. It is thought that the Bell Beaker culture was introduced by wandering metallurgists who integrated with local people.

The nuragic period

from 1,800 to 500 B.C.

The passage from the Eneolithic period to the Bronze Age marked a crucial moment in Sardinian history. The fact of passing from previous cultures to the Nuragic civilisation meant profound change and even the different terminology - passing from 'culture' to 'civilisation' - reflects this. On the threshold of Nuragic civilisation we find, as part of the Ancient Bronze Age (1,800-1,600 B.C.), the culture known as Bonnanaro, named after the town in Logudoro that is the site of the Corona Moltana underground burial site where typical findings from this period first came to light. This culture, once considered by scholars to be the first stage of nuragic civilisation, shows significant change in terms of pottery production, as the overabundance of decorative features found on bell-shaped items now disappears. Mention should go to the medical practice of live trepanation of the skull, where the subjects on whom the operation was carried out survived, as shown by re-calcified bone. The passage from the Ancient Bronze Age to the Middle Bronze Age (1,600-1,300 B.C.) marks the true

Arrubiu Nuraghe,
Orroli



beginning of the cultural phase that we call the nuragic civilisation. The symbolic monument of this civilisation is the nuraghe, a tower-shaped building in large more or less evenly worked stones. Inside this building there are one or more rooms, one above the other, and on top, the characteristic false dome or tholos roof. This type of building is found either as a single tower or in more complex versions, with a central tower

and other towers alongside it. Villages of stone huts were also built around many of the nuraghi. There are also other types of building: protonuraghi, pseudonuraghi or corridor nuraghi and the giants' tombs. The latter, which were used for collective burials, feature a characteristic bull's head layout. There are two main types: with one room and an exedra built in orthostatic blocks, as is the case of Li Lolghi (Arzachena), or with a room and exedra in rows of bricks, such as the tomb of Domu 'e S'Orku (Siddi). Many nuraghi were built in the successive stages of the Recent and Final Bronze Age (1,300-900 B.C.), while other, older buildings were also converted from single-tower nuraghi into nuraghi with several towers. This is the case for nuraghi such as Su Nuraxi in Barumini (recognised as a world heritage site by UNESCO), Santu Antine in Torralba, Losa in Abbasanta and Arrubiu in Orroli. Other giants' tombs using different new architectural solutions were then built and this is also the chronological stage marking the origin of well temples, such as Sant'Anastasia (Sardara), Santa Vittoria (Serri), Santa Cristina (Paulilatino), Predio Canopoli (Perfugas), holy wells such as Su Tempiesu (Orune) and Rebeccu (Bonorva) - both linked to the worship of water - and megaron temples such as Cuccureddi (Esterzili) and Serra Orrios (Dorgali). In this



Su Nuraxi,
Barumini

period, trade links with contemporaries from in and around the Mediterranean became more intense, in particular with the Mycenaean's and the Cypriots, who were interested in Sardinia's mineral resources. Significant findings have been made of 'panella' (flat convex) and 'pelle di bue' (ox-hide-shaped) ingots. The passage from Final Bronze Age to the Iron Age (900-500 B.C.) is one marked by profound changes. There are

changes in the production of pottery, which is once more richly decorated in a style known as 'geometric'. The layout of some nuraghi is changed, with significant rebuilding and at times, the partial dismantling of towers and bastions, as shown by the Genna Maria nuraghe in Villanovaforru. Village layouts change, passing from isolated circular huts to a group of buildings bordered by a single walled perimeter with central courtyard in common (so-called "blocks"). The production of weapons in bronze increases, as does that of bronze statuettes. Small bronze statues, made

Holy well
of S. Cristina,
Paulilatino



for religious purposes, show the entire people of the nuraghi: archers, hoplites, boxers, wrestlers, various female figures, animals, items linked to daily life, small models of nuraghi, ships and other things. The stone statues found near to the burial site of Monti Prama (Cabras) show, in the same style as the bronze statuettes, various life-size human figures. All of these profound changes were triggered by various factors, including the stable settlement on the island of the Phoenicians.

The phoenician - punic, roman and vandalic periods from 900 A.C. to 534 A.D.

The arrival of the Phoenicians in Sardinia seems to have been peaceful. Thanks to this people, the nuragic world came into direct contact with the urban model that had for some time become established in the Mediterranean basin. It was in this period that a series of Phoenician trading emporia were established, going on to assume all of the features



Roman amphitheatre
in Cagliari

of real towns. Between the 9th and 7th centuries B.C. the coastal towns of Sulki (Sant'Antioco), Karali (Cagliari), Nora (Pula), Bithia (Domus de Maria), Cuccureddus (Villasimius), Tharros (Cabras), and Othoca (Santa Giusta) were founded, as were the inland towns of Monte Sirai (Carbonia) and Pani Loriga (Santadi). The burial items found in various necropolises, which include areas for sacrifice and for the burial of children and small animals, known as tophets and located outside the town walls, date back to the earliest period of Phoenician presence in Sardinia. Inside the town walls there were houses, public buildings, craftsmen's workshops and shops, and temples, with an acropolis upon which an important shrine usually stood. The introduction of writing also represents a revolutionary element in Sardinia, to the extent that it was used as a powerful instrument to support the urban model that had been extraneous to the nuragic culture up to this point. This situation of relative equilibrium between different cultural forces on Sardinia was upset by the arrival on the island of the Punics or in other words, the men of Carthage, the powerful Phoenician colony founded in North Africa towards the end of

the 9th century B.C. The encounter on the island between Phoenicians and Carthaginians and therefore, between peoples that recognised the same political, social and economic models, led to a conflict that had not occurred when the nuragic people came into contact with the Phoenicians. Archaeological information from Monte Sirai, one of the key sites in Phoenician and Punic strategy when it came to controlling territories on the island, shows evident traces of fire and destruction that can be referred to the very period in which the Carthaginians arrived in Sardinia. The success of the Carthaginian's ambition to conquer the island was also aided by a political and military alliance with the Etruscans, which not only had repercussions at local level, but it also had effects that were felt throughout the Mediterranean. Sardinia's passage under Carthaginian rule further accentuated the integration of the islanders and the Phoenicians, which remained active long after the island was conquered by the Romans. Carthaginian presence was also strengthened by the founding of new towns, including Neapolis (Guspini) and Cornus (Cuglieri). Agriculture became particularly intense in this period, above all the production of cereal crops. The passage of Sardinia from the sphere of Carthaginian control to that of the Romans was a result of the first Punic

Ruins of Nora
Pula

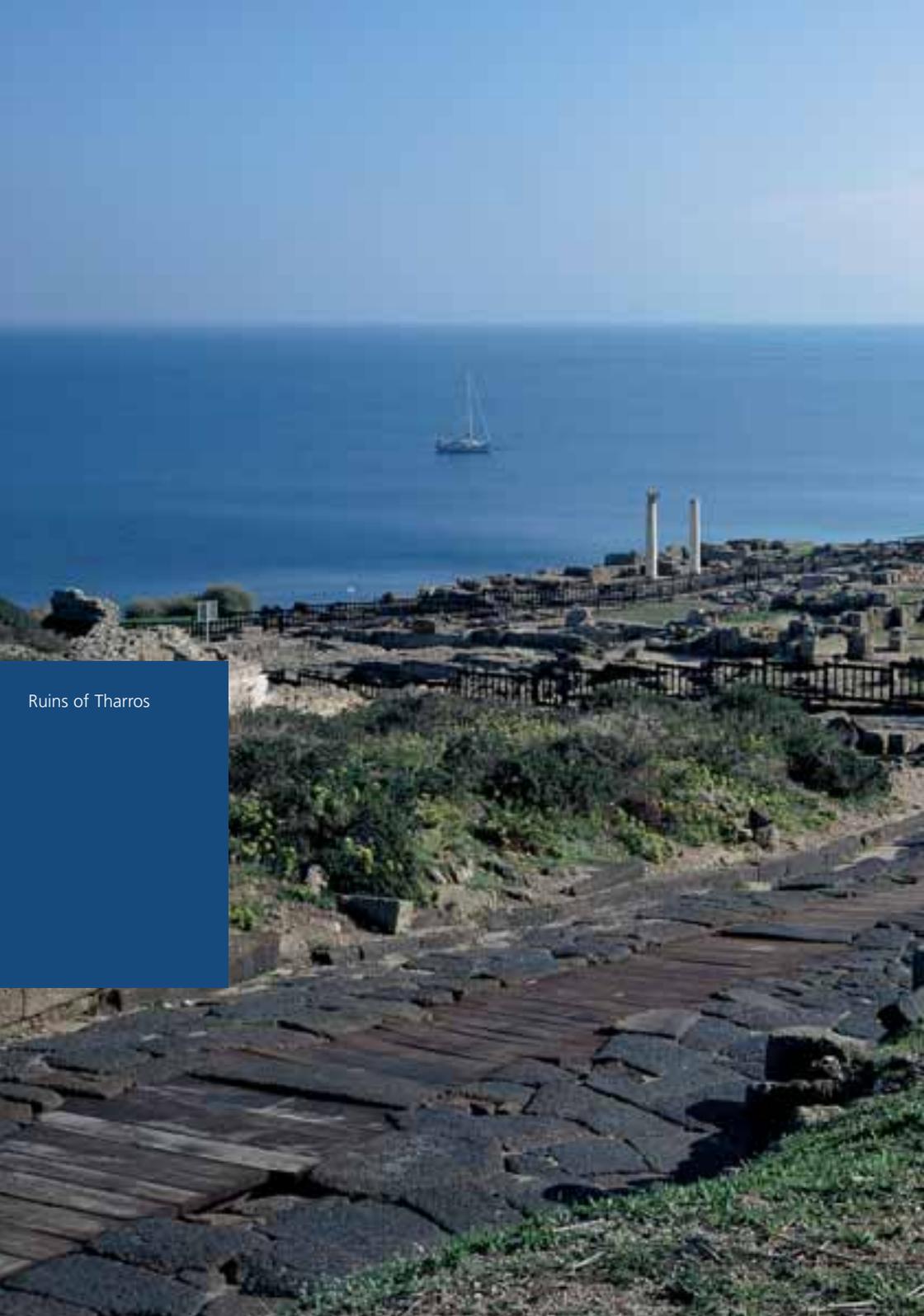


War (264-241). Since it was impossible to satisfy the economic requests of the mercenaries stationed on Sardinia, Carthage was forced to cede control of the island to the Romans in 238 B.C. In 227 B.C., Sardinia became a province of Rome, under the control of a governor. From that time on, the romanization of the island became increasingly intense, although the Sardinian-Punic cultural matrix did not cease to remain alive.

The towns on the island were adapted to Roman style and layouts and in terms of building, they were given the same main buildings that made the Roman cultural model stand out throughout the empire: theatres and amphitheatres (Nora and Carales), baths (Forum Traiani, now known as Fordongianus), temples (Antas near Fluminimaggiore), aqueducts (Turrus Libisonis, now known as Porto Torres), and town and country villas, often with beautiful mosaic flooring.

Roman rule was first and foremost based on the road network, built on original road sections to which they added link roads between the main and penetrating sections to make access and control of whole areas much easier. The most important road linked Cagliari to Porto Torres and was for the most part re-traced when laying out the "Carlo Felice" road (the modern-day S.S. 131). Agriculture and mining were intensified in Sardinia during the Roman period, thanks to the introduction of the latifundium, or large estate. In particular the extraction of silver-lead in the mines at Sulcis-Iglesiente was increased. It was probably here that around 190 a group of Christians was sentenced to hard labour, a fact that contributed to the introduction of Christianity on the island.

Between 460 and 467, Sardinia passed under the rule of the Vandals, who had established their own kingdom in North Africa. In 534, the island was conquered again by Justinian and it returned under the Roman Empire, the centre of which had moved from Rome to Constantinople. Then the period of Byzantine's rule started, which would continue until around 1000, and the creation of the four Giudicati (held by judges).



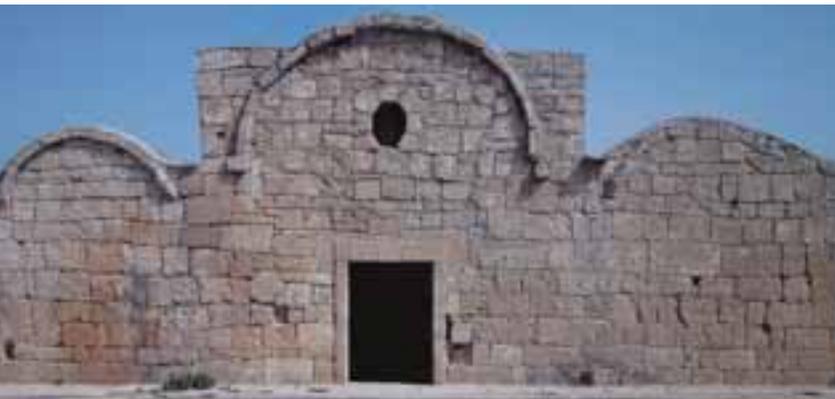
Ruins of Tharros

The byzantine and giudicale periods

from 534 to 1326

In the 4th and 5th centuries, we have news of the first Sardinian bishops and the first martyrs. Christian presence increased with the arrival of the Vandals and continued under the almost five hundred years of Byzantine rule, which began in 534 when Justinian's troops conquered the island, led by Belisarius.

After its political dependence on the Roman Empire, which was ruled from Constantinople, the island was then entrusted to two authorities: the praeses, who had a civil role, and a dux, who took care of military affairs and who, from around 800, also absorbed the powers of the former, creating the figure of the iudex ('judge'). Byzantine art remains mainly consist of architecture, the most significant being San Saturnino, Cagliari, the shrine of Sant'Antioco and San Giovanni in Sinis (Cabras), all cross-shaped churches that differ in terms of the sections joining the dome with the area below: in the first two, there are wells and in the third, pendentives, systems borrowed from the architecture of



On the left
and in the other side:
Byzantine church
of S. Giovanni
di Sinis,
Cabras

Constantinople. These churches, which were models for a series of lesser cross-shaped buildings, were renovated in later periods. While there is little remaining in terms of paintings, there are extremely important sculpted pieces, mostly fragments of original works, separated from their original settings.

The Cagliari National Archaeology Museum contains a stupendous capital from around 525 circa. Different areas around Cagliari, above all





Sant'Antioco, have yielded numerous marble fragments from columns and the slabs from around the presbytery as well as a variety of Greek inscriptions. Romanesque architecture was the most representative movement in the island's art during the Middle Ages and it was expressed in a highly relevant historical period, the giudicale. Judges were local representatives of the Byzantine emperor and they became independent in around 1000. The result was that the area was divided into the four kingdoms (giudicati) of Cagliari, Arborea, Torres and Gallura.

On the left:
Romanesque
Cathedral
of S. Nicola,
Ottana

On the right:
S. Sabina Nuraghe,
Silanus



The same time saw the reorganization of the Church. As well as a strong presence of monks called upon by the judges (the first donations date back to 1065), the Church institutions began to be divided into dioceses, under bishops and archbishops. It was in this context that the judges, through donations, favoured the arrival on the island of Benedictines (from Montecassino, Saint Victor in Marseille, Camaldoli, Vallombrosa, and Cîteaux) who established their monasteries in Sardinia. There was a cultural rebirth under the protective wing of the Holy See.

We should also not forget the increasingly stable and deep-rooted presence of the Republics of Pisa and Genoa, whose trading activities on the island led to repeated conflicts. Their presence often interfered at political level and brought about the end of three giudicati (Cagliari, Torres and Gallura), which fell into the hands of lords from Pisa and Genoa after 1250. These historical circumstances contributed to the circulation of new artistic currents on the island, which became established within the local substrate and left their most important traces in military and above all, ecclesiastic architecture.

Romanesque churches are mainly to be found along the road from Cagliari to Porto Torres, but they are also located throughout this area. The buildings are different in colour, according to their location; in fact, builders used local materials for these monuments, which then blended perfectly with their natural surroundings, remaining characteristic features today. In Gallura we find granite buildings while, as we move towards the centre of the island, the material prevalently used is volcanic rock, often together with sedimentary rock; while in Campidani, warm-toned limestone is most commonly used. Chronological distinction characterises the churches from the giudicale period. It is possible to identify an early Romanesque period, from between 1050 and 1150, characterised by the presence of craftsmen from Pisa and Lucca (San Giovanni, Viddalba) as well as Catalan and Provençal craftsmen, who arrived in the wake of the monks from Saint Victor in Marseille (San Saturnino, Cagliari, and Sant'Efisio in Nora near Pula).

The buildings from this period are large with a tendency to favour structural factors over decorative features. The most important buildings from the time are San Gavino in Porto Torres, Santa Maria del Regno in



On the left:
Church of S. Pietro,
Sorres

On the right:
Church of
SS. Trinità
in Saccargia

Ardara, Santa Maria in Bonarcado and the cathedrals of Santa Giusta, Sant'Antioco di Bisarcio (Ozieri) and San Simplicio in Olbia.

This period of experimentation was followed by the mature Romanesque period, between 1150 and 1250, in which there was an evident deeper link with Pisa, which was also guaranteed by the solid presence of merchants with important roles in economic and political fields.

Architecture from this period also reflects the experience of Pisan





Church of
SS. Trinità
in Saccargia.

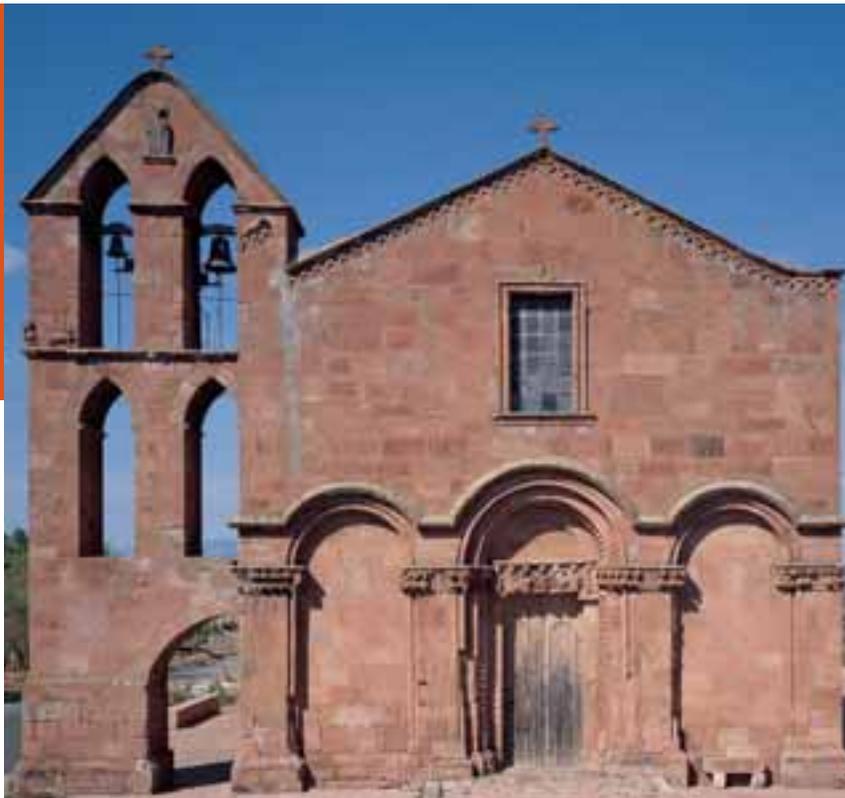
craftsmen. Starting with the church of San Nicola in Ottana, a building dating to halfway between the two periods, it is possible to see new solutions with the completion of grandiose buildings where more and more room is given to architectural decoration.

This new decorative style, which is mostly evident on the fronts of the buildings, included false loggias on top of one another and is best exemplified on San Pietro in Sorres. From 1160, another innovative feature was introduced with the spread of bi-coloured work, which consisted of alternating rows of dark Sardiniae et Corsicae in 1297. Within three years, the Castle of Cagliari was conquered, to the disadvantage of the Pisans.

One nucleus of resistance to the island's conquest was formed by the Pisan and Genoan lords of the Doria and Malaspina families, and the giudicato of Arborea, with which Aragon engaged in a long war, only emerging victorious in 1410. From this moment on, the Iberian peninsula - Catalonia in particular - was the main point of reference for the island from political and administrative viewpoints (in fact, the main Catalan

institutions were imported to Sardinia), as well as in terms of culture. However, ties with Italian culture were only severed in Cagliari, while changes occurred gradually in the giudicato of Arborea and on the rest of the island. The cathedral of Santa Maria di Castello in Cagliari is based on Italian gothic style, while the oldest Catalan gothic building is the shrine of the Madonna in Bonaria, alongside the monumental basilica. After the Catalan conquest of the Castle of Cagliari, a Catalan gothic chapel containing Catalan coats-of-arms was added to the right of the main altar, to mark possession of the city.

Church of S. Pietro
di Zuri,
Ghilarza

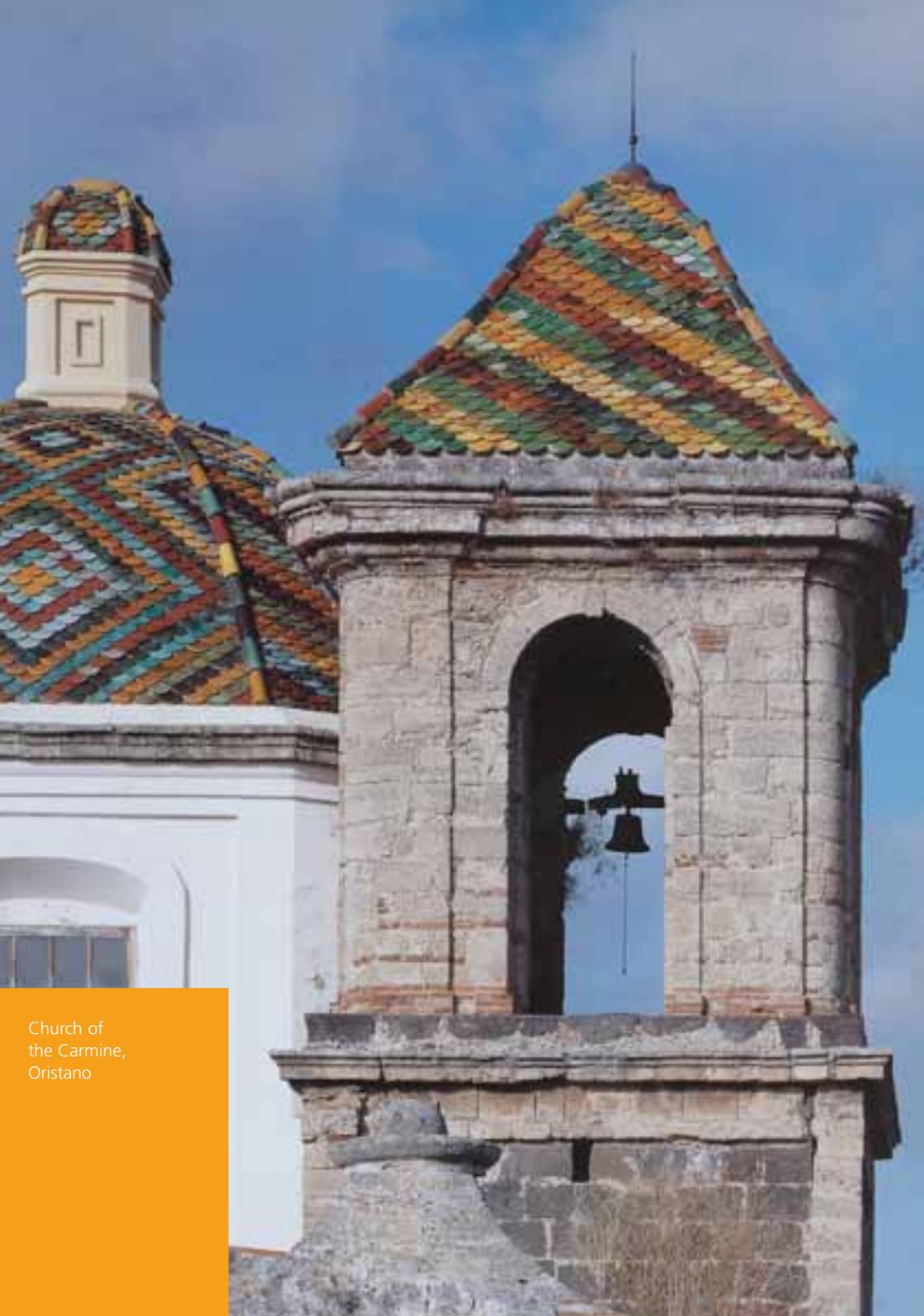


The aragonese and spanish period

from 1326 to 1718

Aragonese and Spanish rule conditioned the political situation as well as the cultural characteristics of art in Sardinia, leading to the persistence of late-gothic architecture until well into the 17th century.

The most widely used layout for late-gothic churches in Sardinia is the single hall with side chapels and raised presbytery, cross vault and flat front, finished by merlons and complete with diagonal buttresses (these last details from Catalan civil architecture). A square bell tower would stand to one side at the front, as on the church of San Giacomo in Cagliari. A more simplified layout has a single hall, with pointed area below arches supporting a wooden ceiling, side chapels and a sober front with gothic doorway and an oeil-de-boeuf, or circular window, above it. The marriage of Iberian and Italian cultures was fertile ground for the development of Sardinian artistic culture in the period post 1450. In this sense, the introduction of the retable, a complex altarpiece combining architectural, sculptural and pictorial elements was fundamental. In the centre it usually has a niche containing the statue of the Virgin, surrounded by painted wooden compartments decorated with gilded stucco frames and completed by polvaroli (projecting frames to protect against dust) and a horizontal altar step. Some of the most important examples come from the demolished church of San Francesco in Stampace and can now be seen in the National Gallery of Paintings in Cagliari. Some of the most venerated images of the Virgin Mary come from retables, such as the Madonna di Valverde in Alghero, the Madonna del Fico in San Pietro in Silki and the Santa Maria di Betlem in Sassari as well as Nostra Signora di Bonaria in Cagliari, a prototype from Campania of the wooden sculpture decorated with the estofado de oro that characterised Sardinian works for at least two centuries. The beginnings of late-gothic painting included, between 1350 and 1450, Catalan artists who sent their works to Sardinia. These include Joan Mates, who painted the courtly gothic Annunciation Retable for the chapel of the same name in San Francesco in Stampace. The Retablo di San Martino in Oristano, now in the Antiquarium Arborense, is attributed to the circle of Mateu Ortoneda. In the first two decades of the 15th century, Portuguese artist of Tuscan school, Alvaro Pirez, created a retable for the church of San Domenico in Cagliari, of which a Madonna and Child with refined late-gothic linearism remains



Church of
the Carmine,
Oristano

(National Gallery of Paintings, Cagliari). After 1450, various Iberian artists came to settle and work on the island. In 1455, Catalan painters Rafael Thomas and Joan Figuera came to Cagliari with the task of painting the San Bernardino da Siena Retable for San Francesco in Stampace. Joan Barcelo had settled in Sassari, as documented between 1488 and 1516: his Visitation Retable, for the chapel of the same name in San Francesco in Stampace, mixes elements of Valentian and Flemish culture. The unknown artist who worked under Barcelo was responsible for the Nativity Retable (from San Francesco in Stampace), with its bright colour tones and resplendent golden backgrounds with a Spanish-Flemish flavour. A new and more modern sense of light and space appears in the works of important artist Maestro di Castelsardo, who takes his name from the retable painted for the cathedral of Castelsardo. He also painted the San Pietro Retable for the parish church in Tuili (dated 1500) and the Porziuncola Retable in San Francesco di Stampace in Cagliari. His work influenced the style of Giovanni Muru, painter of the altar step for the Ardara Main Retable (1515). We must wait until the early 16th century to see the formation of a local school, with its best exponent in Pietro Cavarò, member of a family of painters from Cagliari in activity for more than a century, who trained in Barcelona but who was aware of the currents in the new style of Italian renaissance painting. In 1518, he signed the beautiful Villamar Retable and in 1533 he was commissioned to paint the Holy Christ Retable for the church of San Francesco in Oristano. On his death (1537) his son continued the work of his flourishing workshop with obvious elements taken from Raphael, while Antioco Mainas created works with a more popular style. Mannerist painting was also well represented, in particular by the works of the interesting but still mysterious Maestro di Ozieri (Madonna di Loreto Retable in the cathedral of Ozieri, Sant'Elena Retable in the parish church of Benetutti, Holy Family in the Gallery of Paintings at Ploaghe). Between the end of the 16th and the early years of the 17th centuries, the south of the island saw the work of Neapolitan artists Bartolomeo Castagnola, Giulio Adato, Ursino Bonocore and Francesco Pinna from Alghero, who worked in Cagliari (Sant'Alberto Altar Piece in the church of the Carmine, and the Sant'Orsola Altar Piece now in the Gallery of Paintings) and other towns in Sardinia (Suelli, Villamar) in a style that was influenced by styles from Campania, either directly or mediated by print. When it comes to sculpture, mention should go to Scipione Aprile, who made the marble mausoleum of

Emanuele Castelvì in Samassi (1586). Also important are the works in wood, embellished with the *estofado de oro* technique that includes the application of gold leaf, which is then covered in colours that are scratched away to reveal the gilding, forming floral or geometrical motifs imitating precious fabrics. With few exceptions, one can say that the island's architecture showed no expression of Italian Renaissance influences, unless mediated and combined with Catalanian late-gothic style into tasteful popular expressions that became traditional for Sardinian stonemasons.

The Cathedral,
Sassari



Therefore, the construction of the church of S. Agostino Nuovo (1577-80) in Cagliari was emblematic of a new change of direction, inspired by Italian style and introducing a Renaissance sense of space in its Latin cross layout, classical style decorations and dome.

The 17th century was a period of searching for relics throughout the island and to house the findings from excavations, the charming Martyrs' Crypt was built in the cathedral in Cagliari (1616-32). The new religious orders, founded in the counter-reformist period, played an important role in the spread of Baroque art, especially the Jesuits, who introduced this new style into their churches, such as Santa Caterina in Sassari and San Michele in Cagliari. Over the century, Sardinian cathedrals were modernised, renewing their interior decorations with precious marble of different colours, inlaid with the help of craftsmen from Genoa and then Lombardy.

One important intervention in Cagliari cathedral was the work of Giulio Aprile: the Mausoleum dedicated to Martino il Giovane (1676) and the Altar of Sant'Isidoro (1683-84). However, the production of highly decorated gilded wooden altars in Spanish tradition continued for many years,

replacing the painted retables, and they were the work of master craftsmen from Sicily, Campania and Sardinia. In terms of paintings, mention should go to the works sent to Sardinia by Ligurians Giovanni Carlone, Domenico Fiasella, and Orazio de Ferrari as well as those by local artist Pantaleone Calvo. In Cagliari, Domenico Conti worked for the Mercedari Order, with a cycle of canvases showing the Saints of the Order, while Giuseppe Deris worked for the Jesuit and Minim Orders.



Painting by Giuseppe Sciuti. Provincial Council Building of Sassari.

The savoy and contemporary periods from 1718 to the present day

Between 1714 and 1718, the island first passed under Austrian rule and then under the Piedmontese. With the possession of Sardinia, the Savoy family acquired its royal title. Late Baroque art continued to remain in vogue throughout this century. From 1720 onwards, the Savoy government dispatched valid military engineers to Sardinia, first to strengthen fortifications and modernise bridges and roads. These engineers then began to restore old buildings and to design new ones. We should mention Felice de Vincenti for his design of the Basilica di Bonaria in Cagliari (1722), Saverio Belgrano di Famolasco for the Università e Seminario Tridentino (1764), Giuseppe Viana for the Carmine church in Oristano (1786), and Giovanni Francesco Daristo for numerous works in the cities of Cagliari, Iglesias, Carloforte and Oristano. Thanks to these men, the island's culture became more Italian, adhering to the ways of

Barocchetto style of Liguria and Piedmont, which also spread thanks to the importation of marble statues and furnishings (altars, frontals, pulpits, balustrades, and baptism fonts), precious items in silver and beautiful fabrics. However, Sardinia's best sculptor in the 18th century, Giuseppe Antonio Lonis, who made many beautifully inlaid religious statues in the finest colours for numerous churches on the island, perfected his craft in Naples. In terms of painting, we should mention the works from the beginning of the century by Roman artist Giacomo Altomonte, who was responsible for the frescoes decorating the Vestry of San Michele in Cagliari, with the help of Neapolitan Domenico Colombino. We should also mention the work of Pietro Angeletti, member of the famous San Luca Academy, who painted various canvases for the cathedrals of Ales and Cagliari, the parish church in Solarussa and Sant'Eulalia in Cagliari at the end of the century. The first half of the 19th century saw the spread of neo-classical art in Sardinia too. The major exponent of this current was sculptor Andrea Galassi, who also succeeded in becoming established in artistic circles in Turin, working for the Gran Madre di Dio church. While sculptors took the route of mass production, above all of funeral statues, Giovanni Marghinotti emerged in the field of painting and, over the course of the century, he became an exponent of the main cultural directions of the period, from neo-classical beginnings and celebrations of the Savoy family's patronage of the arts, to romanticism and then a folkloristic vein that led him to be the first to use popular Sardinian costumes and traditions in Sardinian art. In the second half of the 19th century, Sardinia shared in the climate of urban renewal that characterised the whole of Italy, which was committed to creating modern middle-class cities. In this sense, the figure of Gaetano Cima played a fundamental role. Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Cagliari from 1840 to 1864, he educated a whole generation of more and more qualified technicians who were increasingly aware of the importance of design orientated towards the principles of order, symmetry and proportion. However, public building continued for many years to feature neo-renaissance characteristics, with a marked tendency for monumentalism and eclectic styles, inspired by historical revivals. Emblematic examples of this, could be found in Sassari and Cagliari in the decorations of reception rooms by Giuseppe Sciuti and Domenico Bruschi respectively and in Cagliari, in the new Civic Building, by Crescentino Caselli and Annibale Rigotti, which combined neo-gothic



elements with Art Nouveau features. It was in this climate that, between the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century, that contemporary art began to take hold in Sardinia. In a period spanning twenty years, Sardinian art began to acquire its own particular character where individual artists could be recognised and, persuaded of the specific identity of the Sardinian people, they began to become aware of the cultural value of their work. In this new dimension, the Sardinians began to emerge across the Tyrrhenian Sea, in places institutionally dedicated to the promotion of

On the left:
La Madre dell'ucciso,
by Francesco Ciusa

On the right:
Grande festa
campestre,
painting by
Giuseppe Biasi



the arts. In 1907, Francesco Ciusa triumphed at the Venice Biennial Exhibition with a plaster sculpture *La madre dell'ucciso* (The Dead Man's Mother). Antonio Ballero, within the limits of his self-taught training, began to exhibit at the most important national shows. Between 1913 and 1915, Giuseppe Biasi was one of the leading figures in the Secessions of Rome. In Cagliari the episode that began to define the figurative movement on the island, was the decoration of the rooms inside the new Civic Building.

It was an historic occasion: for the very first time, local artists were appointed to perform such a prestigious public work. Unfortunately the terrible bombings of 1943 destroyed the works of Francesco Ciusa in the Council Chamber and of Mario Delitala in the Museum Room. Still preserved are the works by Filippo Figari, who, in the period between 1912 and 1914, completed the decorations in the Marriage Room with his cycle entitled *L'amore in Sardegna* (Love in Sardinia), and by Felice Melis Marini, who was commissioned for the works in the Mayor's Offices where, using his beloved landscapes, he produced three panoramic views

of Cagliari, seen from different viewpoints: from the countryside, from Mount Urpinu, and from the Gulf. After the First World War, there was a general rejection of avant-garde experimentalism and of decorative aestheticism.

The attention of many artists, especially that of brothers Federico and Melkiorre Melis, was above all focused on the applied arts. The aim was that of renewing works of art through reference to local ethnographic traditions, re-evaluating popular culture.



Mattino in un villaggio sardo, painting by Giuseppe Biasi

However, the centralism of the Fascist cultural system aimed to stifle calls for regionalism. Integration into national culture was achieved at a high price: regional culture and the traditional ways of life and thought were reduced to pure folklore. Alongside important works to roads, water systems and ports, many public buildings were built during the twenty years of Fascism: university institutes, the courts of Cagliari and Sassari and schools are just some of the architectural examples inspired by the “ministerial” style that featured so heavily on public buildings throughout Italy. However, there is no shortage of buildings complying fully with the canons of Functionalism, which is well represented by the interventions of Ubaldo Badas in Cagliari. Another fundamental aspect was the creation of the new towns of Arborea, Fertilia, Carbonia and Cortoghiana, unique cases where room was made for the avant-garde with the result of giving architectural concreteness to metaphysical scenarios.

The period following the Second World War highlighted contrasting attitudes among artists. On one side there was the part that continued with the themes and painting styles of the great masters from the early

20th century in Sardinia, such as Biasi, Figari, and Delitala; on the other hand, there were those who, like Eugenio Tavolata, proposed an intelligent reworking of popular Sardinian tradition in the light of contemporary design, while yet others attempted to innovate the cultural scenario on the island, placing it within the vital circuit of the Italian and European avant-garde. In 1957, when Mauro Manca won the Premio Sardegna at the first National Painting Biennial in Nuoro with his work *L'ombra del mare sulla collina* (The shadow of the sea on the hill), there was a heated debate in the local press between supporters of the figurative art and promoters of abstractionism. In fact, this was an important watershed for artistic research on the island: for the first time in Sardinia official recognition was given to a non-figurative piece.

Young artists emerged who turned to the lessons of the historical avant-garde to create their abstract or figurative works: the visionary dream of surrealism, and bright, exasperated expressionist chromatism, freely interpreted, became their most effective means of showing dissent and the wish to take their rightful place in Contemporary Art. In this period, three artists entered the world of architecture: the call to archaic traditions proposed by Costantino Nivola in Nuoro in 1967 for the renovation of

Costantino Nivola's
sculptures exhibit,
Orani



Piazza Sebastiano Satta, the creation of the Piano d'uso Collettivo Gramsci, by Giò Pomodoro in 1977 in Ales, and the open-air theatre of Porto Rotondo, unmistakably linked to the name of Mario Ceroli, mark Sardinia's cultural context in an extraordinarily positive manner.

Routes

ROUTE 1

CAGLIARI

Time: one day



Starting at the railway station and going along Via Roma towards the port, on the left you come to the Cagliari Town Hall, which was built between 1899 and 1907. Its architectural style drew inspiration from Aragonese Gothic architecture that was common in Sardinia between the 14th and 15th century, with typical Liberty flower patterns. The interior decoration was entrusted to important Sardinian artists, in particular to Felice Melis Marini and Filippo Figari, who is also responsible for the decoration in the Wedding Hall and the Council Hall. Leaving the town hall and heading left along Via Roma, go along the characteristic colonnade that represents one of Cagliari's most typical walks. When you reach the wet dock, turn into Viale Bonaria where you find Palazzo del CIS, which was built between 1987 and 1992 from a project by Renzo Piano. Continuing along Viale Bonaria, you come to the Hill of the same name, on top of which stand the Sanctuary and Basilica of Bonaria, side by side. The Sanctuary, which was built between 1324 and 1326 by the Aragonese, bears the typical forms of Gothic-Catalan architecture. Inside you can find the greatly revered wooden simulacrum of the Madonna di Bonaria (15th century) and the painting on

wooden board of the Madonna del Cardellino by Michele Cavaro (16th century). The nearby Museum contains works of art and the mariners' votive offerings that were donated to the sanctuary. The neighbouring Basilica, which is much larger, was started in 1704 from the project of the military engineer Felice De Vincenti; it was later altered by Giuseppe Viana in 1778 and finally completed with its present façade in 1954. The whole complex is characterised by the use of calcareous stone from the same hill, at the foot of which stands the nineteenth-century Cimitero Monumentale (Monumental Graveyard), which skirts the avenue of the same name. Go along Viale Cimitero, turning left into Via Logudoro and you will come to Piazza San Cosimo, where there is the old church of San Saturnino, dedicated to the martyr from Cagliari, who was decapitated in the year 304 during the persecutions of the emperor Diocletian. The church was built in the 6th century with a domed, cruciform ground plan and renovated in the 11th century. Going along Via San Lucifero and Via Iglesias, head for the historical quarter of Villanova and turn into the first stretch of Via Garibaldi to Piazza Costituzione, which is overlooked by the Bastione di Saint Remy (Bastion of Saint Remy) built between 1896 and 1902. The Bastion is

Basilica of Bonaria,
Cagliari



characterised by its great picturesque staircase, which starts at the square, branching off into two ramps, and joins a series of terraces, with a covered walkway that skirts Viale Regina Elena. The route continues uphill along Viale Regina Elena, commonly known as "Terrapieno", and reaches the Public Gardens, where there is the Galleria Comunale d'Arte, (Municipal Art Gallery). Since January 2001, the Gallery, which is the first building in Sardinia to become the site of a museum, has housed the precious Ingrao

Collection, which represents the greatest Italian masters of the twentieth century. There are works by Umberto Boccioni, Giorgio Morandi, Filippo De Pisis, Mario Mafai, Felice Casorati and Mino Maccari. There is also a display of a selection of 74 works from the Civic Collection: artists from Francesco Ciusa and Giuseppe Biasi to Maria Lai and Costantino Nivola are among the greatest protagonists of twentieth-century Sardinian art. The last part of Viale Regina Elena leads through the gate of the same name to Piazza Arsenale, which is set within the Castle and is the most important of Cagliari's four historical quarters. From the square you reach the Cittadella dei Musei (Museum Citadel), which is a modern museum complex inside the old military Arsenal area. Here you can find the Museo Archeologico Nazionale (National Archaeological Museum) and the Pinacoteca Nazionale (National Picture Gallery). The first contains the most important collection of archaeological finds in Sardinia dating back to between the Prehistoric and Byzantine age. Particularly noteworthy are the little statues of the mother goddess, the small bronzes of the Nuraghi, the Phoenician-Punic jewels (including the famous necklace in vitreous pastes found in Olbia) and the lead ingots dating back to the Roman age. An important set of pictorial retables dating back to the 15th -16th century are preserved in the



The Church of S. Saturnino, Cagliari

picture-gallery and 17th -19th century paintings documenting the history of painting in Sardinia. In the citadel you can also see the interesting Anatomical Wax Collection by Clemente Susini and the Museo Siamese "Cardu" ("Cardu" Siamese Museum) with collections of arms, porcelains and oriental objects. After leaving the nineteenth-century Porta Cristina, go along Viale Buoncammino, where there is a beautiful view over the historical quarter of Stampace, until you see the grand Roman amphitheatre (2nd century A.D.), whose steps are partially dug into the rock,

Palazzo del CIS,
by Renzo Piano,
Cagliari



which is still used for open-air concerts and lyric operas. Alongside the Grotta della Vipera (Viper's Cave) which is also dug into the tuff of Cagliari, it is the Roman city's most important surviving monument. Double back to the torre pisana di San Pancrazio (Pisan Tower of San Pancrazio) (1305), which was designed with the Elephant tower (1307) by the architect from Cagliari Giovanni Capula to defend the Castle's north entrance. Turning into Piazza Indipendenza and continuing along Via Martini you come to what is now Piazza Palazzo with the Palazzo Regio and Cathedral of Santa Maria. The Palazzo Regio, which was an ancient seat of the viceroys from Iberia and then Piedmont (series of beautiful eighteenth-nineteenth-century portraits in the Sala degli Alabardieri), occasionally held the exiled court of Savoy between 1799 and 1814. It was decorated at the end of the nineteenth century by the painter from Perugia Domenico Bruschi as the seat of the Provincial Administration, with scenes from Sardinia's history and classical mythology. The Cathedral of Santa Maria, which was built at the beginning of the 13th century by the Pisanis, became a cathedral in 1258. The bell-tower is the only remaining structural Romanesque element. The pulpito di

Guglielmo (made between 1159 and 1162) also belongs to this period; it came from Pisa cathedral between 1310 and 1312 and was taken apart in the second half of the 17th century on the occasion of the Baroque reconstruction of Cagliari cathedral. Two Gothic chapels are also preserved inside: to the left of the altar is the one from Pisa, and to the right the Aragonese one, which was completed after 1326, when the Catalan-Aragonese conquered the island. Again in the 17th century, the Crypt was made for the relics of Sardinia's saints and martyrs, and contains the neoclassical funeral monuments of Maria Luisa di Savoia, the queen of France, and the young prince Carlo Emanuele di Savoia. Inside there are precious, polychrome marbles, Baroque altars and funeral monuments of archbishops and viceroys, the mausoleum of Martino il Giovane, the king of Sicily, beautiful eighteenth-century altar pieces and noteworthy sacred furnishings in silver, which are today partly preserved in the nearby Diocesan Museum. Going down towards the historical quarter of Marina, turn into Via Manno and take a left turn into Via Baylle where there is the church of Sant'Agostino. The church was built at the end of the 16th century and is Sardinia's most Renaissance church. The secondary entrance to the church of Sant'Agostino leads into Largo Carlo Felice, which you go back up until you



Sculptures by Sciola,
San Sperate

reach Piazza Yenne, after this turn into Via Azuni, which ends with the façade of the Baroque church of San Michele, which was built by the Jesuits in the second half of the seventeenth century. The sacristy, in Rococo style, which was frescoed by the Roman Giacomo Altomonte, is characterised by the stylistic coherency of all of its pictorial, wooden and marble furnishings.

ROUTE 2

CAGLIARI PROVINCE

**Pula - Uta - Villaspeciosa - San Sperate - Assemini - Muravera
Villaputzu - Orroli**

Time: one day - Length: about 105 Km

Ruins of Nora,
Pula



Follow the SS 195 from Cagliari and on the right of the road you will see the nuraghe Antigori, just before the entrance to Sarroch (20 Km), where there is also the nuraghe Sa Dom'è s'Orku. Fragments of Mycenaean ceramics were found at the first site, testifying to commercial exchanges between the Nuraghi people and sailors from the east Aegean area. After reaching Pula (30 Km), follow the road that takes you to the ancient town of Nora after 3 Km, which was founded by the Phoenicians between the 9th and 8th century. The town flourished in the Punic and Roman ages and was abandoned before 1000. Mosaic floors are preserved here, as well as a Roman theatre. The Romanesque church of Sant'Efisio towers over the beautiful beach before the entrance to the excavations. It was built before 1089, the year it was donated to the Benedictine monks of San Vittore di Marsiglia by the judges of Cagliari. The church is the point of arrival for the procession, which takes the statue of Sant'Efisio every year, at the beginning of May, from Cagliari to the place of martyrdom, with crowds of people joining in wearing traditional costumes. Going back about 22 Km along the SS 195, turn left for Macchiareddu. After about 13

Km turn right and head for Uta following signs. When you reach the town, cross the centre and head for the southern outskirts, where there is the Romanesque church of Santa Maria. The church was built towards the end of the 12th century using various materials: different shades of marble, volcanic stone and especially limestone, with interesting symbolic and decorative sculptures. Heading towards the SS 130, go about 5 Km towards Villaspeciosa. At the edge of the town centre stands the Romanesque church of San Platano, which was recorded for the first time in 1135 as belonging to the Benedictine monks of San Vittore di Marsiglia. It has an unusual plan with two naves that are completed by an apse and separated by arches resting on ancient capitals and columns. Following the SS 130 towards Cagliari, more or less level with Decimomannu, you reach the crossroads for San Sperate and then head for the town centre about 10 Km away. It is here that Pinuccio Sciola started his murals in 1968 and planned to transform the centre into a "town-museum". The initiative found favour with various foreign and Italian artists, including Foiso Fois, Primo Pantoli, Giorgio Princivalle and Gaetano Brundu. The beautiful "murales" that were created express the culture and feelings of the people of Campidano despite drawing inspiration from Latin-American figurative forms, in particular Siqueiros. Thanks to the Scuola Internazionale di Scultura (International School of Sculpture) of San Sperate, whose main supporter is Sciola, the town's artistic tradition lives on today and the area has become a design laboratory for artists and for new and modern forms of artistic expression. Going along the road again towards Decimomannu, take the SS 130 towards Cagliari and turn off for the town centre of Assemini. Behind the beautiful parish church of San Pietro, in late Gothic-Catalan style, stands the Byzantine church of San Giovanni battista that is of interest for the Greek characters and two inscriptions preserved inside, which date back to between the 10th and 11th century. Here mention is made of Torcotorio, the archon of Sardinia and his wife Getite, and Nispella, the wife of another Torcotorio respectively: they are the names of the oldest judges in Cagliari known to us.

ROUTE 3

CARBONIA IGLESIAS PROVINCE

Iglesias - Carbonia - Sant'Antioco

Calasetta - Tratalias - Villaperuccio

Time: one day - Length: about 110 km

Phoenician-Punic
fortified settlement
of Monte Sirai,
Carbonia.



A long tree-lined avenue leads to the town centre of Iglesias, and this takes you to Piazza Sella, where there is the Monument to Quintino Sella by Giuseppe Sartorio (1885) and, in nearby Piazza Oberdan, the war memorial by Francesco Ciusa (1928). Head into the historical centre to Piazza del Municipio, where there is the Gothic cathedral of Santa Chiara, which was built before 1284-85 and completed by 1288, as we can see from the inscriptions. At the side of the Town Hall follow Via Satta and Via Don Minzoni, turning right at the end of this into Via Roma. At civic number 45 there is the Museo dell'arte mineraria (Mining Art Museum), which preserves examples and instruments that have made the history of the Iglesiente mines: period photographs, plastic models and original machines. Inside you can visit an authentic gallery. If you head north along Via Roma and turn left into Via Cattaneo, an urban stretch of the 126 state road for Carbonia and Sant'Antioco, you leave Iglesias, past the nineteenth-century quarter and roads, towards the abandoned mining plants, where the metalliferous complex of Monteponi stands out on the right. The age-old activity, which made it one of the most important

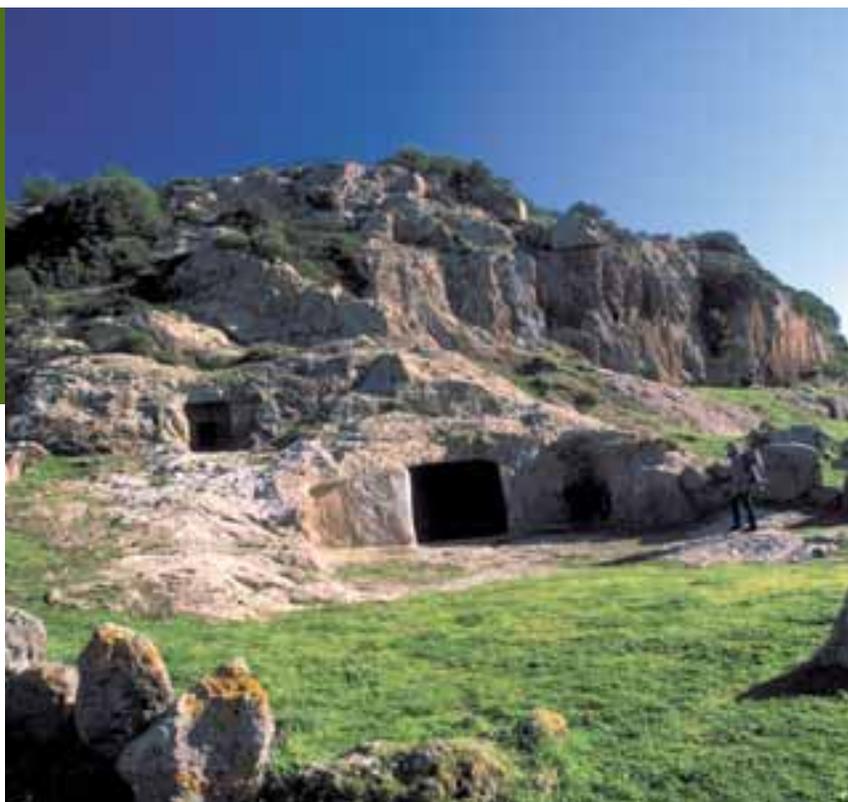


Gothic cathedral
of Santa Chiara,
Iglesias

centres in Italy for the extraction of lead and zinc minerals, is documented by the importance of the plants and the number of dumps. Don't miss the fresco entitled *La miniera* (The mine) (1950) by Aligi Sassu in the guestrooms, and the abandoned mining villages of Sa Macchina Beccia and Seddas Moddizzis. Following the SS 126 south again you easily come to Carbonia after about 20 Km. The small town, which is one of the most characteristic examples of a "founded town", was built in just over two years and inaugurated by Mussolini in 1938. The typical fascist building centres around Via Roma, where there is the square of the same name that is characteristic for its east-facing terrace arrangement; it is the main centre, around which there are the most important buildings: the town hall, the church, the Littoria Tower and the "dopolavoro" (Fascist institution that organised workers' free time activities). The church of San Pontziano is particularly interesting; it was dedicated to the Roman pope in the 3rd century, who was condemned to hard labour in the Iglesias mines and consequently became the protector of the town and coal. Following the SS 126 south, continue for about twenty kilometres until

you reach the town centre of Sant'Antioco, leaving the important fortified centre of Monte Sirai on the right, which was built in the Phoenician-Punic age on top of a hill as an excellent strategic point for controlling the area. The fortress was founded by the Phoenicians of Sulki, modern day Sant'Antioco, a port centre, which maintained its importance in Roman and Punic times. The site was abandoned for a long time because of raids carried out by the Saracens, which led to the disappearance of monumental ruins, except for the acropolis (where a pair of stone lions was found) and the funeral area, which includes Phoenician-Punic chamber tombs and the tophet (a place of sacrifice and burial for children and small animals). The finds, which are preserved in the newly opened Antiquarium, come from the ancient city. The church of Sant'Antioco stands in the historical centre; it was dedicated to the local martyr and built on top of Phoenician-Punic age connected chamber tombs that were turned into catacombs. The style of the church is Byzantine and it preserves fragments of marble sculptures dating back to between the 6th and 11th century. A precious silver shrine made by Sisinnio Barrai from Cagliari in 1615 to keep the cranium of Saint Antioco is also preserved inside. The route continues to the island's second municipality, Calasetta, which is reached after about

Domus de Janas
at Montessu,
Villaperuccio



10 Km. In Via Savoia there is the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea (Contemporary Art Museum) set up inside the municipal abattoir, which has not been used for over forty years and which was renovated for the occasion. The exhibition is made up of the donation by "Ermanno and Maria Rita Leinardi", with over 109 works by 103 artists from all over the world, which were collected over a period of forty years thanks to the artist Ermanno Leinardi's involvement in the international art scene. This collection differs from the island's other collections because of the important presence of informal, concrete, constructivist and abstract works of art. Besides local artists, there are also many foreign artists: Sergej Poliakov, Sonia Delaunay, Jean Leppien, Hisiao Chin, Yves Popet, J.F. Dubreuil, Claude Pasquer, Charles Bezie and many others. There are also many Italian artists, who are important from a historical point of view: Giuseppe Capogrossi, Lucio Fontana, Bice Lazzari, Mauro Reggiani, Mario Radice, Luigi Veronesi, Piero Dorazio, Paolo Minoli, Achille Pace and Nicola Carrino. Going back to Sant'Antioco, turn right for Palmas after about 15 Km and head for Tratalias; if you follow signs you will come to the old built-up area where there is the Romanesque cathedral of Santa Maria, which was erected between 1213 and 1282 as a centre for the diocese of



The mine,
Masua

Sulcis, after Sant'Antioco and before Iglesias. Continue from Tratalias to Villaperuccio to visit the Prehistoric necropolis of Montessu, which is one of the greatest funeral areas in Sardinia at Domus de Janas, with graffiti and traces of paintings picturesquely dug into a rocky ridge.

ROUTE 4

MEDIO CAMPIDANO PROVINCE

Sanluri - Villamar - Barumini - Orroli - Tuili - Sardara

Time: half a day - Length: about 40 km

Su Nuraxi Nuraghe,
Barimini



The first part includes a visit to the town centre of Sanluri, where there is the Castle and Museo Risorgimentale (Risorgimento Museum) in Piazza Castello. The Castle, known as the Castle of Eleonora d'Arborea, built when the Giudicato of Cagliari was under the influence of Pisa, was completely renovated in 1300. It belongs to the Villasanta family and is home to the Museo Risorgimentale Duca d'Aosta (Duke of Aosta Risorgimento Museum). Inside there are relics from the wars of independence, the colonial wars and the second world war, swords and furnishings belonging to the Bonaparte family, Gabriele D'Annunzio's collection of letters and a rich collection of waxes dating back to the 16th -20th centuries, reproducing monuments, historical figures and religious scenes. Going along Via Carlo Felice you come to the square where there is the parish church of Nostra Signora delle Grazie, which was rebuilt in its present form of Piedmont "barocchetto" between 1781-86 from the project of Carlo Maino and Antonio Ignazio Carta. From the east outskirts of Sanluri, follow the road for a few kilometres to the junction for Villamar. Turn left after about 8 Km and you will come to the built-up



centre of Villamar, the old capital of the Marmilla curatoria (administrative division), which is characterised by its historical centre with ladiri architecture (bricks made of raw mud). Going along Via Vittorio Emanuele III, you come to the Romanesque church of San Pietro and from here you reach the parish church of San Giovanni Battista, which preserves the Retable of Villamar painted by Pietro Cavaro in 1518. In the centre of the work a niche contains the wooden statue of the Virgin and Child surmounted by the scene of the Crucifixion. San Francesco (receiving the stigmata), the Archangel Michele, San Giovanni Battista and the Baptism of Christ dominate the side sections. While episodes of the life of Mary are portrayed in the predella. Take the SP 197 from the northern outskirts of Villamar. After passing Villanovafranca and Las Plassas, after about 10 Km you will come to the town centre of Barumini, where there is: the striking monumental ex-Capuchin complex of San Francesco, which dates back to 1609, now the site of an active Cultural Centre; Palazzo dei marchesi Zapata, that dates back to the first quarter of the seventeenth century, characterised by its classicist windows and late Gothic decorations; the parish church dedicated to the Beata Vergine Immacolata built in late Gothic style in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Ruins
of Marmilla Castle,
Las Plassas

Church of Madonna
delle Grazie,
Sanluri



If you leave Barumini and head east across the slopes of the important naturalistic area of giara di Gesturi, you come to Orroli, where there is the nuraghe Arrubiu, one of the largest in Sardinia. Its central tower, surrounded by bastions, is preserved for a height of over 16 metres. Excavation work is still being carried out. Leaving the west tip of the built-up area of Barumini, you come to the nuraghe Su Nuraxi, which is the

most famous, also because it is classified by UNESCO among the monuments that belong to the world heritage. It was built after 1600 B.C. and inhabited until at least 500B.C.

Surrounded by the village with residential huts and general meeting areas, the impressive size of the central keep with three overlapping areas rises on the complex of towers, giving the nuraghe a polylobed form. A visit inside is particularly suggestive and unwinds along routes, some outside and some through narrow corridors made in the mighty walls of the basaltic blocks.

Continuing along the same road you come to the nearby centre of Tuili. The parish church of San Pietro Apostolo stands in the upper part of the town and preserves the beautiful Retable of Tuili by the Maestro of Castelsardo, the only work by this author, which can be dated to between 1489 and 1500. The figure of the Virgin on the throne and child is painted in the middle, surmounted by the Crucifixion, whilst figures of saints dominate the side panels.

Take the road from the south outskirts of the town to the town centre of Sardara, past Pauli Arbarei, Lunamatrona, Villanovaforru and Collinas; here there is an important thermal complex and also several interesting churches in the built-up area: San Gregorio, with a beautiful Gothic double-lancet window and Santa Anastasia, which stands on a sacred well that dates back to the Nuraghi period.

Outside the built-up area, near the ancient Roman baths there is the church of Santa Maria is Aquas and, secluded upon a hill on the road to San Gavino Monreale, there are the ruins of the ancient castello giudicale di Monreale (judicial castle of Monreale).

ROUTE 5

ORISTANO PROVINCE

Ales - Arborea - Santa Giusta - Oristano - Fordongianus

Time: one day - Length: about 80 km

Ruins of the
Phoenician-Punic
city of Tharros



Beneath the chain of Monte Arci, an important obsidian deposit in Prehistoric times, we come to Ales where you can admire the beautiful seventeenth-century Cathedral, which was rebuilt by the master builder from Genoa, Domenico Spotorno. In the nearby Diocesan Museum, which will be opening soon, you can admire valuable examples of art (paraments and holy silver vessels) and documents about the work of the bishops who succeeded each other in time. When you reach the SS 131, after about 17 Km, take the junction for Uras and go through the centre until the crossroads on the SP 126, which you take to the right. After 14 Km you will come to the town centre of Arborea that was founded in 1928 with the name of Mussolinia, which is characterised by the symmetrical arrangement of the buildings in the central square. Of these buildings, the church of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice is particularly interesting with an altarpiece by the painter Filippo Figari. Leaving Arborea, take the road north to Santa Giusta and after about 12 Km you will come to the town centre. It stands on the site of the ancient Phoenician-Punic city of Othoca, which later became a Roman city. The ex Romanesque cathedral of Santa Giusta



Cathedral of S. Maria,
Oristano

dominates the site from the top of a knoll. It was started after 1118 and completed by 1144. It is unique because of the crypt, which is the only one in Sardinia built in Romanesque style, whose vaults rest on ancient capitals and columns. Continuing north, after 5 Km you come to the town centre of Oristano.

From Piazza Mannu, where one of the medieval gates of the boundary wall opened, turn left into Via Vittorio Emanuele, at the end of which there is the cathedral of Santa Maria. The cathedral built in Romanesque style in the 12th century on top of an earlier Byzantine building, preserves two splendid marble plutei with Lions clawing fawns and Daniel in the lions' den which were re-worked at the back by a Catalan sculptor when the cathedral was extended and the gothic transept was built. Of this only the Rimedio or Santissimo chapel remains. The stone statue of the Madonna and Child engraved in the 14th century by a Catalan artist is worshipped on its altar.

The wooden statue of the Annunciation (attributed to Francesco di Valdambriano, an early 15th century sculptor from Tuscany) is preserved in a side chapel. The church was completely rebuilt between 1729 and 1745 and the wings of the transept were added in the nineteenth century in Neoclassical style according to the design of Cominotti. Two bronze doorknockers with a lion-like head by the master Placentinus dating back to 1228 are preserved in the so-called Archivietto (17th century), as well as the plutei. A series of illuminated manuscripts with texts of Gregorian chant embellished by precious miniatures is also of particular importance. The oldest ones date back to the 13th century.

The secluded monumental medieval bell tower that stands on the square was completed with a dome according to the design of the Savoy military engineer Davisto in Piedmont Barocchetto style; nearby is the old Seminary and Bishop's Palace. Continuing along Via Duomo you come to the Gothic church of San Francesco, which was rebuilt in Neoclassical style in 1838 by the architect Gaetano Cima and preserves two important medieval works of art. These are the marble statue of a Holy bishop by Nino Pisano (about 1360) and the so-called Crucifix of Nicodemus (14th century), a large wooden sculpture whose most apparent characteristic is the dramatic expression, hence its inclusion in the sombre Gothic crucifix type.

Continuing right, after crossing Piazza Eleonora, take corso Umberto and you will come to Piazza Roma, where there is the medieval tower of San

Cristoforo (or Mariano). This supreme monumental building from the ancient boundary wall preserves its fifteenth-century bronze bell, which regulated life in the community. The monumental complex of the Carmine convent and church is particularly important; it was built in the eighteenth century according to the design of the Savoy architect Giuseppe Viana, with a homogenous architectural style and interior decoration (stucco work, wrought iron and inlaid marble). After taking Via Garibaldi, you come to the Gothic church of Santa Chiara, which was built between 1343 and 1348, and from here to the Antiquarium Arborense, which contains two panels from the Retable of San Martino (15th century) and important collections of archaeological finds dating back to the Prehistoric and Byzantine age, in particular from the Oristano area. Take the SP 388 east from Oristano and after about 25 Km, you come to the town centre of Fordongianus, which was built on the site of the ancient city of Forum Traiani. Only the Roman baths are left of the city, with pools fed by springs of hot and cold water, in an extremely beautiful area along the bank of the Tirso river. Outside the built-up area there is the Romanesque church of San Lussorio, which is dedicated to the saint who was martyred in 304 under the persecutions of the emperor Diocletian.



Excavations of the phoenician-punic and roman city of Tharros

ROUTE 6

ORISTANO PROVINCE

Cabras - Bosa - Santu Lussurgiu

Bonarcado - Milis - Ghilarza - Abbasanta

Time: two days - Length: about 150 km

View of Bosa



Leave the built-up centre of Cabras, north of the gulf of Oristano, on the pond of the same name, and head south for capo San Marco, the extreme south tip of the Sinis peninsula. The city of Tharros was founded here by the Phoenicians between the 9th and 7th century B.C. and was one of Sardinia's most important cities in Roman and Punic times. Its flourishing commercial trade can be seen from the jewels and other finds found at the necropolis, which testify to the far-reaching exchanges between eastern and western Mediterranean countries. Vast residential quarters and temple structures are preserved in the urban area, including the base of a sanctuary cut into the stone. Turn back for a stop before the Byzantine church of San Giovanni di Sinis, whose dome is incredibly beautiful especially when seen from inside; then on to the hypogeal sanctuary of San Salvatore, which is also well-known because many Italian westerners were filmed in the village at the top. The sanctuary was built on the site of a very old water cult. Drawings, paintings and Roman age inscriptions are preserved in the underground areas. Going back along the road to Cabras, take the coastal road 292 northwards and after about 60 Km, you will

come to the centre of Bosa. The Pinacoteca Comunale (Municipal Picture Gallery) is situated in Casa Deriu, number 57 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, the small town's main artery, and here works are preserved by the painter, decorator and ceramist Melkiorre Melis, one of the principal supporters of applied arts in twentieth-century Sardinia. Perched on the top of the hill of Serravalle, Malaspina Castle was built in various phases after 1112. The Gothic chapel of Nostra Signora de sos Regnos altos is preserved inside the boundary wall with 14th century frescoes only on three walls that show: the Last supper, a series of saints and the Meeting of the three living and the three dead. Heading back up the left bank of the Temo and following Via Sant'Antonio Abate, you come to the Romanesque church of San Pietro extra-muros, which was built between 1073 and 1300 as Bosa cathedral. Going back 23 Km along the road 292 to Cuglieri, take the road to Santu Lussurgiu and turn off after 14 Km for the woodland area where there is the Romanesque church of San Leonardo di Siete Fuentes. The nature of the place indicated the construction of a hospital, which was built in the 14th century by the order of the Hospital workers of San Giovanni. Continuing south past Santu Lussurgiu, after 8 Km you come to



View inside the holy well of S. Cristina, Paulilatino

Bonarcado, a small town set on the slopes of Montiferru where there is the complex of Santa Maria, with a sanctuary and church. The Byzantine sanctuary built on the ruins of a brick Roman spa building, of which only one pool and window remain, is dedicated to the Madonna di Bonacattu. This popular name originates from the title of the original sanctuary that was dedicated to the Vergine Immacolata ("panachrantos") who was worshiped in Byzantine times. The Virgin portrayed in a 15th

century terracotta basrelief is worshiped inside.

after building the northern façade, in Neo-Romanesque style.

The Romanesque church of Santa Maria shows two building phases and is cited in the Condaghe di Santa Maria di Bonarcado, whose papers date back to between the 12th and 13th century. This is a pergameneous code related to the administration of the monastery, which is currently kept at the University Library in Cagliari. An interesting picture of society at that time appears from this document, because it testifies to the links between the monks and other important institutions, as well as including a recording of the monastery's possessions.

Continuing south, after just 8 Km you come to the small centre of Milis, on the outskirts of which there is the Romanesque church of San Paolo inside the graveyard enclosure. You can visit the imposing nuraghe S'Uraki, where excavation work is still being carried out at the nearby centre of San Vero Milis. When you reach the SS 131 in the direction of Abbasanta, after about 22 Km, take the junction for Ghilarza, whose built-up centre can be reached after 3 Km. On the northern outskirts of the built-up area there is the Romanesque church of San Palmerio next to an Aragonese tower.

After leaving the eastern outskirts of Ghilarza, when you reach the junction for Boroneddu, head up left for a few kilometres to the built-up area of Zuri, where there is the Gothic church of San Pietro, which was started in 1291 and completed by 1336.

The judicial purchasers of Arborea played a vital role in the affair, in particular Mariano II de Bas Serra, who commissioned the master Anselmo from Como to construct this building explicitly in Gothic style. Last century, in the twenties, the church was taken down from its original position and rebuilt, stone by stone, on its current site to prevent it from sinking as a result of the creation of Lake Omodeo, which is an artificial basin of the Tirso River. From Ghilarza get onto the "Carlo Felice" (SS 131) road and opposite the link road you can visit the beautiful, tri-lobed, Middle Bronze Age nuraghe Losa, which is characterised by its daring building techniques. After a short distance, leave the "Carlo Felice" road and head for the Nuraghi sanctuary of Santa Cristina, where there is a well temple (11th century B.C.) that is rightly known for the refined cutting technique and laying of the basaltic stones, which form the steps and sacred well with a false dome.

SASSARI

Time: half a day



Cathedral
of San Nicola,
Sassari

The cathedral of San Nicola was founded back in the 12th century, but only the Romanesque bell-tower remains of this period. The next important date as regards building is 1441, the year the diocesan centre was moved from Porto Torres to Sassari, when the Gothic-Catalan style cross vaults were built, while the façade and portico were rebuilt before 1718. Here, the statues of S. Nicola and the martyrs Gavino, Proto and Gianuario stand out in special niches. Important works of art are preserved inside. The high altar is particularly noteworthy with the fourteenth-century Madonna del Bosco, as well as priceless paintings and the neoclassical mausoleum of Placido Benedetto di Savoia, count of Moriana, by Felice Festa (1807). The objects in the Diocesan Museum are very interesting (silver, sacred paraments and the splendid processional standard on board dating back to the sixteenth century). The monumental Palazzo Ducale stands behind the cathedral in Piazza del Comune. It was built at the wish of the duke of Vallombrosa between 1775 and 1806 by the engineer from Piedmont Carlo Valino in neo-sixteenth century style and today it is home to the Municipal Administration. If you take Via Turritana and turn right into Via Università, you come to the Palazzo dell'Università. The decoration in the Great Hall is particularly

interesting. It was entrusted to Mario Delitala, who completed the four great panels between 1928 and 1930, which narrate episodes from the history of the University of Sassari. The same artist is also responsible for the two great mythological paintings, which decorate the Great Hall in the nearby Liceo Classico "D.A. Azuni". Crossing the gardens again and the Emiciclo Garibaldi, you come to Piazza d'Italia which is dominated by the impressive Palazzo della Provincia (designed by Eugenio Sironi and Giovanni Borgnini), and built in Neoclassical style between 1873 and 1880. The council hall, on the first floor, was decorated with frescoes (1881) by the Sicilian Giuseppe Sciuti. The neo-Gothic Palazzo Giordano, which was designed by the architect Luigi Fasoli in 1878, also stands in the same square. Two of the rooms inside were frescoed by the painter from Rimini Guglielmo Bilancioni. From the square follow Via Roma and you will come to the Palazzo di Giustizia. The edifice was built in various phases, but the original design dates back to 1929. The use of red trachyte and, more importantly, the presence of the ancient colonnade are classical motifs typical of monumental representative architecture. The mosaic of the great stair-case inside by Giuseppe Biasi is particularly noteworthy. In Via Roma there is also the Museo Nazionale "Giovanni Antonio Sanna" ("G. A. Sanna" National Museum), which was set up at the end of the nineteenth century thanks to the generosity of the entrepreneur and politician from Sassari. Inside, it houses an important collection of archaeological finds dating back to the Prehistoric and Byzantine age and a Picture Gallery with important paintings on board dating back to the fifteenth and sixteenth century, as well as priceless nineteenth-century paintings by Giovanni Marghinotti. Heading back up Viale Umberto northwards, you come to Piazza Mercato where there is the Chiesa della Trinità (Trinity Church). To the right of the building a stairway leads to the Fonte di Rosello (Rosello Fountain), embellished with the statues of the Seasons, which was built in its present late Renaissance style by marble workers from Genoa in 1606.

"Palazzo della Provincia"
(Provincial council building) designed by Eugenio Sironi and Giovanni Borgnini, Sassari



ROUTE 8

SASSARI PROVINCE

Alghero - Fertilia - Porto Torres

Codrongianos - Ardara - Torralba

Time: one day - Length: approx. 150 km



View inside
the church of
San Gavino,
Porto Torres

Alghero is a beautiful coastal city of mediaeval origin. Its fortified Aragonese city walls can still be seen today and it still makes use of the Catalan language. The cathedral of Santa Maria stands in Piazza Duomo. Its oldest structures provide an example of the pure Catalan gothic style, while the transformations in the interior and on the façade date back to the end of the 18th century. It houses the neoclassical mausoleum of the Duke of Monferrato, brother of King Carlo Felice of Savoy who died in 1799. This work was sculpted by Felice Festa (1807).

The adjacent Museo Diocesano, housed inside the ancient oratory of Nostra Signora del Rosario, displays priceless silver, filigree and coral artefacts, together with ancient devotional wooden simulacra and paintings. From Via Roma, behind the cathedral, turn into Via Carlo Alberto, the location of the church of San Francesco, built between the 15th and 16th centuries. This church has a beautiful star-studded vault in the presbytery, an 18th century marble altar, rich decorations and lovely cloisters. It also houses an impressive simulacrum of Christ rosegat.

Continuing along Via Carlo Alberto, we come to the Jesuit church of San

Michele, built in the second half of the 17th century by the Ligurian master builder Domenico Spotorno, who worked on the Baroque rebuilding of Cagliari and Ales cathedrals.

At around 6 Km to the north of Alghero, we come to the village of Fertilia. The village was constructed between 1935 and 1939, with its regular design being part of the “foundation cities” project implemented by the Fascist regime in Sardinia. Continuing 34 Km to the north, we come to the coastal town of Porto Torres, founded by the Romans in the 1st century B.C. as a colony named Turris Libisonis. The archaeological site comprises a vast sector of the Roman baths, stretches of the aqueduct and the necropolis, where the Romanesque church of San Gavino stands. This Romanesque building, made from warm-coloured local limestone, was built between the 11th and 12th century. It was preceded by two earlier churches and was used as a cathedral until the bishopric was moved to Sassari in 1441. The crypt was developed to celebrate the discovery of the reliquaries of the martyrs Gavino, Proto and Gianuario, in the early 17th century. After taking the road for Sassari, you will come to Monte d’Accoddi after a few kilometres. This is the site of a fascinating terraced temple/altar (2800-2600 B.C.), which has been compared to a

View of Alghero



Mesopotamian ziqqurat. The Romanesque church of the Santissima Trinità di Saccargia stands on a plain at around 13 Km to the south of Sassari, in the administrative district of Codrongianos. It can be reached from the main road SS 131.

This isolated country church was part of a Camaldolese Benedictine monastic complex (documented since 1112), whose remains are still the subject of archaeological investigations. The church, built during the 12th century, is one of the best known Romanesque churches in Sardinia, thanks to its spectacularly tall bell tower (partly rebuilt) and the two-colour building technique, which alternates layers of white limestone with layers of dark vulcanite.

The church still preserves its frescoes in the central apse, painted by a Pisan artist at the end of the 12th century. Painted on four different levels, they feature a false fabric drape, a figure kneeling before San Benedetto and episodes from the Passion of Christ at the bottom: Last Supper, Judas' Kiss, Crucifixion, Burial, Descent into Hell. Above this we see the Madonna, San Paolo and the Apostles, while at the top we see Christ in a mandorla surrounded by angels and archangels.

From Saccargia it is just a short distance to the fork for Ardara, located 10 Km away on the slopes of Montesanto. Its importance in the middle ages lay in the fact that it was home to the giudici turritani (rulers of Porto Torres), of whose castle just a few ruins remain today. The palace chapel (still intact), now known as the Romanesque church of Santa Maria del Regno, was annexed to the castle. Located in a strategic position dominating the outskirts of the town, it is one of the island's most imposing Romanesque churches.

The priceless Ardara main retablo (1515) is located in the presbytery. It is very large and illustrates episodes from the life of Mary and figures of saints painted in the predella, including San Gavino.

The frontal table, at the centre of the predella, depicting the Pietà, is signed by Giovanni Muru. Continuing south along the main road SS 131, we come to the so-called "valley of nuraghes" in the Torralba district. The Santu Antine nuraghe really stands out, providing the most complete expression of nuraghic architecture together with Su Nuraxi in Barumini and Losa in Abbasanta. Santu Antine is a trefoil nuraghe, in which a strong bastion with three minor towers supports the central tower, which now stands at around 18 metres high.

ROUTE 9

OLBIA-TEMPIO PROVINCE

Olbia - Porto Rotondo - Porto Cervo

La Maddalena - Caprera - Tempio Pausania

Time: one day - Length: approx. 155 km

Stella Maris Church,
Porto Cervo



The Olbia city district has been frequented since Neolithic times.

Archaeology has not confirmed that the city was founded by the Greeks, but it has highlighted continuous settlements in the area, as is the case with all Sardinia's most important ports.

The Romanesque church of San Simplicio, built in granite in the early 12th century, stands in Via San Simplicio, not far from the railway station. Once you have left the northern outskirts of Olbia behind you, take the Costa Smeralda provincial road and, after around 20 Km, you will come to Porto Rotonda, a prestigious tourist resort with a well-equipped tourist port. This town is characterised by the buildings around Piazzetta San Marco. We should mention the open air theatre, with its broad semicircular terraces in rough granite.

Based on an idea of the artist Mario Ceroli, who designed the local church of San Lorenzo, the theatre was inaugurated in 1995. The structure hosts performances of various kinds and can seat around 700 people. Proceed west from the crossroads, returning to the Costa Smeralda provincial road at 24.5 Km. The road winds round towards Porto Cervo, which is around



Particular
of the Retable,
Ozieri

27 Km away. This is the biggest town on the Costa Smeralda and the site of the first operations carried out in the area by the consortium from 1962 onwards.

The church of Stella Maris stands in a very panoramic position. It was designed by Michele Busiri Vici, in the Mediterranean style typical of the Costa Smeralda. After driving 18 Km inland, take the SS 125 main road north and, after around 18 Km, you will come to Palau, where you can embark for La Maddalena, the only town in the archipelago of the same name. From Piazza Garibaldi, also known as the red square because of the colour of its paving, follow Largo Matteotti until coming to the parish church of Santa Maria Maddalena.

The church still houses two silver candlesticks and a crucifix presented by Admiral Nelson, together with his autograph. Leaving the town behind and following the promenade from Piazza Umberto I, through the suburb of Moneta, we come to the dyke that links the island to Caprera.

A slow climb leads to a pinewood, where the road forks. Take the road on the left, which leads to the vast area housing the Garibaldi Estate. The complex comprises the buildings, relics and all the property that once belonged to Giuseppe Garibaldi. It is now the property of the Italian state, which has restored it and opened a museum. The key focus of the visit is Garibaldi's house. It has been arranged to reflect the original purposes of the various rooms, although this has changed repeatedly over the years: the arms, flags, apparel, furniture, numerous photographs and paintings, including the portrait of Garibaldi by Saverio Altamura painted from life in 1860, bear witness to the last 26 years of the general's life. Returning to the SP 133 road, turn left and continue for 23 Km, following signs to Tempio Pausania. The main body of the town occupies the top of a terrace to the north-west of the Limbara massif. The Railway Station is well worth a look, as the painter Giuseppe Biasi contributed to its decoration.

The artist's contribution is a long frieze that runs all the way around the ticket hall, above the wooden panels that clad the walls. Biasi depicts his favourite subjects with highly effective ornamental language: the women of Osilo, drinkers and scenes of daily life that are extremely appropriate for a railway building.

NUORO PROVINCE

Nuoro - Galtelli - Dorgali

Time: half a day - Length: approx. 50 Km



Museum of Sardinian
Life and Popular
Traditions in Nuoro.

In Nuoro, the ancient district of San Pietro slopes down towards Piazza Sebastiano Satta. Designed by Costantino Nivola in 1967, the piazza is characterised by the contrast between the granite sculptures and the pre-existing, primarily 18th and 19th century architecture, amongst which we can see the house where the poet was born. After repainting the buildings white and positioning large granite blocks on the paving, Nivola enhanced the square by inserting some small bronze statues in small niches (the originals are conserved in the MAN) depicting the local poet at different times of his life. The MAN (Museo d'Arte della Provincia di Nuoro), is located just a short distance away, in a 19th century building at n° 15 Via Satta, behind Corso Garibaldi. Inaugurated in 1999, the building's first and second floors house a hundred works by 20th century Sardinian artists, selected from the collections of four Nuoro-based public bodies: the Province, the Municipality, the Chamber of Commerce and the Provincial Tourist Board. The museum displays major paintings and sculptures by Francesco Ciusa, Antonio Ballero, Giuseppe Biasi, Mario Delitalia, Carmelo Floris, Giovanni Ciusa Romagna and Costantino Nivola. The ground floor and top floor are

home to galleries set aside for temporary exhibitions. If you head down Corso Garibaldi towards Piazza Giovanni, and cross back through Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, entering Via Guerrazzi, you will come to Via Antonio Mereau, where the Museo della Vita e delle Tradizioni popolari sarde is located. The museum, divided into 18 galleries, displays clothing and objects typical of Sardinian life and crafts. It features traditional clothing from various different towns, especially in the Barbagia area. The traditional dress of each town is characterised by multicoloured fabrics, the cut and the fine embroidery. The rugs, blankets, covers and bags bear witness to the range of weaving techniques used. Another considerable section is dedicated to the goldsmith's art: buttons, pins, necklaces, earrings, reliquaries and amulets. The collection also comprises a series of traditional breads and cakes, carved chairs and benches, baskets made from different materials, woodwind instruments with marsh reeds, and a series of everyday items such as bread stamps, bone and horn cups and pumpkin flasks. The series of traditional local carnival masks is also very interesting. Going back up Via Mereu, we come to the large square dominated by the cathedral of Santa Maria della Neve. Built between 1833 and 1854, on the basis of the designs and under the direction of brother Antonio Cano, it is characterised by its neoclassical

Sebastiano Satta
square,
Nuoro



façade and still houses some works of great value, including the panels of the Via Crucis painted by Carmelo Floris and Giovanni Ciusa Romagna. Meanwhile, when turning left out of Piazza Giovanni into Via Asproni, we come to the Museo Deleddiano, at No. 42 Via Grazia Deledda. This museum is situated inside the house where the female writer was born and where her personal effects, photographs, letters, first Italian and foreign editions of her works, autographs, press cuttings and various other items regarding her life and work are conserved. There is also a reproduction of her Nobel prize for literature, which she won in 1926. Following Via Chironi, we come to Viale della Solitudine, site of the Chiesa della Solitudine, built to the design of Giovanni Ciusa Romagna between 1947 and 1954, on the site of an earlier 17th century church dear to Grazia Deledda, who has been buried here since 1959. The church preserves the simplicity of the building described by the local writer, enriched by the contribution of Eugenio Tavolara, who created the great bronze door, by the Via Crucis, the tabernacle, the candelabras and the cross. Taking the SS 129 main road from Nuoro, we come to the town of Galtelli after 21 Km. This town played an important role in the middle ages, when it was the site of the diocese. The incomplete cathedral and the ancient church of San Pietro, decorated with 13th century frescoes and described by Grazia Deledda in her novel *Canne al vento*, stand on the outskirts of the town, inside the cemetery walls. After driving along the SS 125 for 21 Km, we come to Dorgali, a famous tourist resort that is also home to the Museo Salvatore Fancello. Housed in Casa Dore on Corso Umberto, the museum is dedicated to Salvatore Fancello, a local potter from Dorgali, who died in 1941 during the Second World War. The collection features part of his intense production. A large drawing, created on the occasion of his sculptor friend Costantino Nivola's wedding, is of considerable interest, depicting country scenes with fantasy animals.



Giants' Tombs,
Dorgali

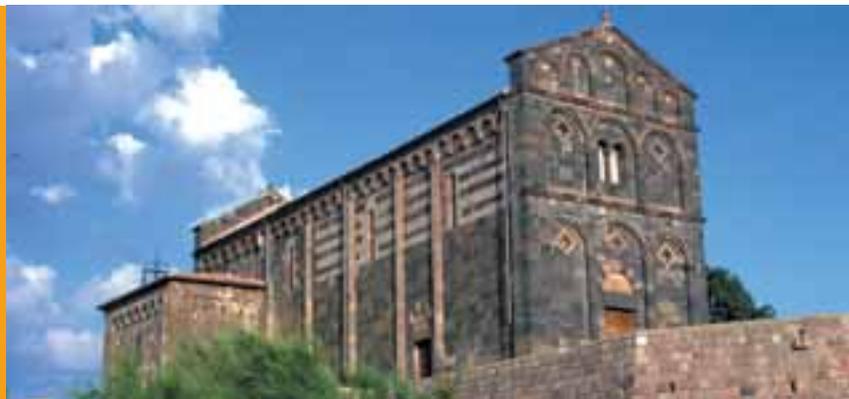
ROUTE 11

NUORO PROVINCE

Silanus - Ottana - Orani - Olzai - Fonni - Atzara

Time: one day - Length: approx. 125 km

Romanesque
Cathedral
of S. Nicola,
Ottana.



The town of Silanus stands on the slopes of Monte Arbo. Just outside the town, following the signs, we come to the complex with the nuraghes and the Romanesque church of Santa Sabina. Built in the 11th century, it is the only Sardinian Romanesque church with a circular plan, an apse and a dome. Following the SS 129 main road towards Nuoro, turn right for Ottana after around 7 Km. The town is a further 10 Km away, after having passed the SS 131 main road. The Romanesque cathedral of San Nicola, consecrated in 1160 by Bishop Zaccaria, stands on the southern outskirts, in an elevated position. The cathedral houses the 14th century Ottana Altarpiece, painted with tempera on a panel with a gold background and subdivided into three main sections, depicting San Nicola and San Francesco. Narrative scenes on either side depict some of the main events in their lives. However, the most interesting element is the cusp with the Virgin Enthroned with Child, because kneeling at her feet we can see Bishop Silvestro and a young nobleman, Mariano IV d'Arborea with a sword and ermine, whose identity is stated by the painted inscription. Following the SS 131 main road towards Nuoro, turn off into the SP 128



provincial road after around 15 Km. After around 9 Km we come to the town of Urani. The Museo Costantino Nivola, inaugurated in June 1995, is housed in the old renovated municipal washhouse, at Via Gonare No. 2. The works on display document significant stages in the artistic career of Costantino Nivola, born in Orani and one of the most original sculptors of our time, and his never ceasing relationship with the culture of his homeland. The collection mainly comprises marble and travertine sculptures, but there are also ceramics, bronze and cement creations on display. In 2004, an additional section was inaugurated, dedicated to the sketches that Nivola drew for his murals on large American public buildings. At around 7 Km to the south of Orani we come to the fork for the town of Olzai, around 5 Km away. The Casa Museo di Carmelo Floris is located in the Sant'Anastasio district, on the street of the same name. It was once home to one of the main figures in 20th century Sardinian art. This ancient building was purchased by the Municipality of Olzai, which restored it in 2001, generally respecting the original structure. The second floor is occupied by the beautiful, brightly lit studio where Carmelo Floris contemplated the wonderful landscape, the small stone houses and the majestic mountains that inspired his works. The interesting Plague Retable

On the left:
Plague Retable,
Olzai

On the right:
Inside the
Church of the Vergine
dei Martiri,
Fonni



is conserved in the church of Santa Barbara. It was painted at the end of the 15th century by an unknown artist, known as the Master of Olzai and considered to be the first exponent of a specifically Sardinian school of painting. Follow the 128 road and turn off for Fonni. Continue down Corso Carlo Alberto, the town's main street, until coming to the square where the sanctuary of the Vergine dei Martiri stands.

The complex comprises the convent, the basilica and the oratory of San Michele. The convent and church were completed in around 1632-33, whilst the cumbessias and the oratory were erected during the following century. Interesting work was carried out in the 18th century, with the construction of a new sanctuary named "Sancta Maria ad Martires". The sanctuary also houses interesting original naïve paintings by Pietro Antonio and Gregorio Are. Following road 128 in a southerly direction, past Sorgono, we come to the town of Atzara after around 40 Km. This town is home to the Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, situated in Piazza Ortiz Echagüe. Its creation is ideally linked to major events in the early 20th century, when the Spanish costumbrist painters arrived in Atzara, fascinated by aspects of the traditional local culture. The lively and cultured town of Atzara thus became the centre for the development of a native, Iberian inspired pictorial language, as well as an essential stopping place for the training of major artists, who stayed there for longer or shorter periods of time: Francesco Ciusa, Antonio Ballero, Giuseppe Biasi, Filippo Figari, Mario Delitala, Carmelo Floris and Stanis Dessy, to name but a few of the most famous artists whose



On the left:
La festa della
Confraternita di
Atzara,
by Antonio Ortiz
Echagüe

On the right:
Interior of the Vergine
dei Martiri Church,
Fonni

works feature in the rich exhibition. The museum also displays works by Antonio Ortiz Echagüe, Bernardino Palazzi, Pietro Antonio Manca, Mauro Manca, Gino Frogheri, Antonio Atza, Gavino Tilocca and many more.





ROUTE 12

OGLIASTRA PROVINCE

Barisardo - Lanusei - Tortoli

Time: one day - Length: approx. 110 km

On the left
and in the other side:
Mario Delitala's
paintings,
Santa Maria
Maddalena Cathedral,
Lanusei



Following the scenic East Sardinia main road (SS 125), passing through the centre of San Priamo with its ancient sanctuary of the same name, we come to the town of Muravera after around 10 Km. The parish church of San Nicola is worthy of a visit. Built in 16th century late gothic style and flanked by the square bell tower (1609-10), it houses 18th century marble structures, wooden altars and beautiful statues.

Not far away is the 16th century Moorish Tower of Five Houses, unusual for Sardinia. Just 3 Km away, we come to the nearby town of Villaputzu, home to a beautiful 18th century parish church dedicated to Santa Caterina d'Alessandria.

This church conserves contemporary carved marble structures, in Rococo style (there are a good six altars) and beautiful wooden sculptures, which can be dated between the 16th and 18th century.

Continuing along the SS 125 main road, at around 10 Km from Villaputzu we come to the Romanesque church of San Nicola, one of Sardinia's two red brick churches. Built towards the end of the 12th century, it has a single nave and a wooden roof. Its exterior is decorated by suspended

arches supported by corbels with decorative carved geometric patterns. Continuing along the SS 125 in a northerly direction, we come to the town of Barisardo after around 50 Km.

The parish church of Nostra Signora di Monserrato is well worth a visit, with its beautiful, 35-metre tall 18th century bell tower, designed by the skilled Piedmontese architect Giuseppe Viana (1778).

It has a Latin cross plan with a single nave and three chapels per side. It has barrel vaulting and an octagonal dome which demonstrates its 17th century design. It was only completed at the end of the 18th century, when it was equipped with marble altars by the Intelvi marble workers Michele Spazzi and Giovanni Battista Franco.

The church houses a copy of the Holy Family of Francis I by Raphael (dated 1559) and a beautiful wooden statue of the Madonna of the Rosary, by the Neapolitan Gaetano Franzese.

Taking the SP 390 provincial road, continue along it for around 15 Km until coming to Lanusei, in its panoramic setting.

The town is the site of the diocese and hosts the cathedral of Santa Maria Maddalena, a modern construction built in the 1860s over the sight of a 17th century building. It is decorated with a cycle of canvases on the life of Mary Magdalene and Christ, painted in 1927 by the painter Mario Delitalia. Tortolì, a port location and major tourist resort and commercial centre, stands on the coast. It is around 20 Km from Lanusei. Formerly the site of the bishopric from 1824 to 1927, its 18th century parish church of Sant'Andrea apostolo conserves the main altar by the marble worker Giovanni Battista Franco (1802-03), a choir and numerous wooden statues dating to between the 17th and 19th centuries.



