

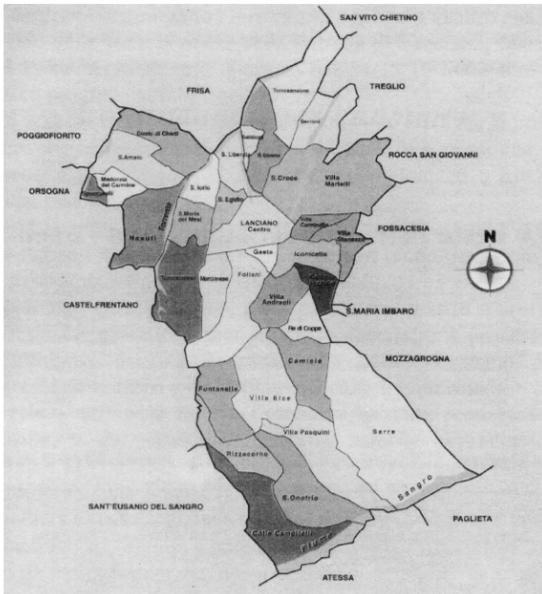
**Maurizio Angelucci**

## **LANCIANO**

**(my hometown, of which I have  
completed the history of all its territory)**

*With the only photographic narration of the entire  
area of Lanciano town by Nicoletta Di Ciano*

Lanciano's history Pocket Books 2019



Lanciano's Map

## **How I completed the history of my hometown, Lanciano**

I published my first books about the history of my hometown, Lanciano, by *Storia, Folklore, Arte e Cultura della mia Lanciano* (“*History, Folklore, Art and Culture of my Lanciano*”) in 1985 and, in 1989, by *Le tradizioni della mia Lanciano* (“*Traditions of my Lanciano*”).

But I did not composed anything new about the history of Lanciano.

Then, while I was working as a foreign language teacher, I was always studying books and manuscripts of ancient and modern local writers as Fella, Antinori, Romanelli, Bocache, Corrado Marciani, ecc.

the meantime, there were non-stop writings about Lanciano town, while a complete history of its entire area was lacking, such as that of its outskirts and its 33 hamlets, a third of its territory and its inhabitants. So my creativity was developing to write a history of the entire territory of Lanciano once and for all.

So, in 2002, I published...



... that is, the 1<sup>st</sup> history of 33 hamlets of Lanciano town, the 1<sup>st</sup> discovery of the date of construction of many hamlets' churches and the 1<sup>st</sup> photographic service of the entire Lanciano's area.

{ **Contrada (plural contrade) is an Italian word that indicates the suburban rural areas of a town (i. e. the English "hamlets") that are an integral and irreplaceable part of the territory of a city together with its historical centre and its suburban quarters.** }

In 2005 I published *1<sup>a</sup> Storia di tutto il territorio di Lanciano-1<sup>st</sup> History of the entire Lanciano's territory*, to complete the entire Lanciano's area with the 1<sup>st</sup> history of its OUTSKIRTS QUARTERS of: Mancino, Fiera, Sant'Antonio da Padova, Santa Rita, San Pietro, San Giuseppe and Olmo di Riccio.





**THE TOWN OF LANCIANO,  
MORE HISTORY THAN LEGEND**

### **The town of Lanciano**

Lanciano is a welcoming, dynamic and relaxing town located in central Italy, in the Abruzzo region and in the province of Chieti, 220 km. far from Rome.

The area of all its territory is of 66,09 square kilometres with 36,740 inhabitants (but the Lancianesi are all over the world) located at 284,42 metres above sea level, and its lowest point is in the hamlet of Serre with its 35 metres a. s. l., while the highest point is the area of San Nicolino in the hamlet of Marcianese with its 400 metres a. s. l.

Lanciano enjoys favourable weather conditions thanks to its position between the Adriatic Sea, at 12 kms., and the mountain chain called Majella, about thirty kilometres far.

Lanciano borders in the north with the small towns of Frisa, San Vito Chietino and Treglio; in the east with those ones of Rocca San Giovanni, Fossacesia, Santa Maria Imbaro and Mozzagrona; in the west, with the small towns of Castelfrentano, Orsogna, Poggiofiorito and Sant'Eusanio del Sangro; the Sangro river, in the south, separates it from the small towns of Atessa and Paglieta;

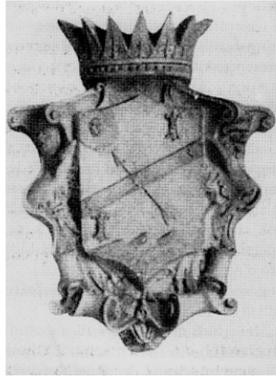
Lanciano is crossed by the small torrent Feltrino, about twenty kilometres long, which rises near Castelfrentano and flows into the Adriatic Sea in the locality of San Vito Marina.

Lanciano is twinned with the towns of Berazategui (Argentina), Qala (Malta), Perho (Finland), Vaughan (Canada) and Visegrad (Hungary).



Lanciano at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century  
From Pacichelli Giovan Batista, *Il Regno di Napoli in prospettiva* (that is "The Reing of Naples in perspective"), Naples, 1703

### The emblem of Lanciano



The oldest emblem of Lanciano, probably dating back to the XV century, is located on the ancient portal of the church of San Nicola in the quarter Sacca, and it is carved in stone with a Samnite shield containing two golden lilies and a lance pointing towards the rising sun. It synthesizes the tradition according to

which the first symbol of Lanciano was given by the Franks towards the end of the VIII century, then enriched by the Angevins with two golden lilies and, at the end, by the Aragoneses with a silver band, containing three golden stars ending with six points and placed above the figure of the three hills on which the town of Lanciano was founded. The current emblem is very similar to the old one and is always enclosed in a Samnite shield with a blue background, with a royal crown above it and another crown with laurels below, containing the lance, the rising sun, the golden lilies and the three hills on which the historical centre of Lanciano stands.

### **The Glorious History of Lanciano Town**

The history of Lanciano town really begins in the Neolithic (5<sup>th</sup> millennium B. C. in the Abruzzo region), according to archaeological excavations carried out in 1969 in its hamlet of Marcianese and other more recent traces of the Bronze Age found out in its historical centre and in its hamlets of Iconicella, Sant'Egidio and Serre.

Further findings have revealed interesting prehistoric discoveries, such as weapons, tools, huts and a large amount of bones of human and animal species, which testifies that this area was populated since those remote times.

There is not a certain knowledge about prehistoric times, but we can easily imagine the current Lanciano that was then a territory with a series of hills about 300 metres high, where peasants and shepherds lived in huts and/or caves and hunted wild animals and drew water from small streams.

This could support one of the theories that localizes the first roots of Lanciano in its hamlet of Santa Giusta, although each area of the town may have been its original nucleus.

It is only a legend, however, the Trojan origin of Lanciano, which originates from Greek sources as the well-known and not credible theory about the foundation of Rome. Like other cities in southern Italy, Lanciano has a non-stop tradition that dates back its foundation on September 1, 1181 B. C., after the destruction of Troy by one of soldiers of Aeneas,

Solimo, who had decided to found a little village called *Anxia* to pay tribute to his brother Anxa. Another tradition tells us that the town of Sulmona was also founded by Solimo, and it is also believed that Lanciano was founded by Diomedes.

The etymology of Lanciano is unknown and many hypotheses, referring to words of various dominant peoples, have been made. Summarizing the historical tradition, its Greek name was *Anxia* or *Anxianon*, substituted during the Roman Empire by the Latin *Anxanum* or *Ancianum*, while in the Middle Ages, under the influence of the first Italian language and of the local idiom, we had *Lanciano*, a very probable italianization of "Lanciane".

Lanciano has a long and proud history, documented by coins, ceramics, oral traditions, Latin historians, ancient road maps and so on. *Anxanum* really existed on Peutinger's Tables, while *Anxano* was written in the itinerary of Antoninus Pius.

The ancient historians disagree about the first site of Lanciano which, most likely, has always been in the same position in which, in the Middle Ages, the historical centre developed.



The ancient region of the Frentania, which extended from the Foro and Fortore rivers to Majella's mountain chain, including the small towns in the province of Chieti and almost half of the territory of the current region of the Molise.

The history of Lanciano is the story of the gradual settlement and colonization of its territory. The first inhabitants whose racial origins are known were the Oscans, the Sabines, the Umbrians, the Volscians and the Samnites from whom our ancestors descended, the Frentani who settled in the region of Frentania, around 800 B. C., practicing a tribal life based on the agriculture and trade. Then came Greek, Etruscan, Roman and other Indo-European peoples.

Around 340 B. C., the Frentani joined the Samnites in the fight against Rome, but were defeated and the secular civilization of Frentania began its decline. Many Frentani distinguished themselves during the Roman wars against Pyrrhus and Hannibal, as the warrior Oplaco Ossidio who, in the battle of Eraclea in 280 B. C., was about to hit

Pyrrhus but was killed to death. A century and a half later, the Frentani and their neighboring peoples claimed, in vain, Roman citizenship and allied themselves with the peoples of the Marsi, the Marrucini, the Peligni, the Samnites and others of southern Italy such as the Apulians and the Lucanians. The Frentani and their allies gathered in a confederacy and organized themselves into a government taking modeled Rome as a model with the consuls and a senate, while *Corfinium* which became *Italica* (now Corfinio), was their capital city. The allies revolted against Rome and the so-called social war began in 90 B. C. At the beginning, Rome and its allied cities of northern and southern Italy had small defeats, until the Roman *lex Iulia* guaranteed citizenship to all those who would return under Roman rule. Thus the confederates were divided among themselves and the conflicts were concentrated in the region of the Samnium, where the triumph of the famous general Sulla represented the turning point in the war, which ended in 88 B. C. with the victory of Rome. So the Frentani were forced to ally with Rome while the Italian peninsula obtained its first historical unification.

During the Roman Empire some Roman writers (Titus Livy, Sigonio, Pliny the Elder, Varro, Ptolemy) described Lanciano as a busy emporium for trade and traders. From the beginning of the town occupation, the Romans put their urbanization policy

into practice. The streets were drained and paved and many roads have been built to connect Lanciano with the countries of the region of Frentania, such as the Frentana-Trajana and the Tiburtina-Valeria, which connected Rome with the current regions of Abruzzo, Molise and Apulia. Temples, theaters, baths, villas were built, while stone houses had running water and a heating system by using firewood. Lanciano had had long periods of peace and civilization and its inhabitants had many comforts. Agriculture and trade were flourishing and local fairs, the "Nundinae Mercatus", were always crowded and profitable (they took place in the locality of "la Selva", in the hamlet of Sant'Egidio). Moreover, Lanciano was not only a frontier town of the Roman Empire and became an important "Municipium", as a marble memorial plaque preserved in its Town Hall reminds us. In the midst of all those events, the town expanded and being beautified with other lost buildings and temples remembered by the written tradition as the temples of: Apollo, in the quarter Civitanova; Mars, under the current cathedral; Lucina (alias Juno for the Frentani), near the church of Santa Lucia; Pelina, near the ancient demolished church of San Maurizio; Bacchus, in the area of the church of San Biagio. Yet the spread of Christianity has obscure origins, was certainly slow, difficult and hindered by pagan rites, but during the seven centuries of Roman domination there was the transition from the paganism to the new religion, and the history of Lanciano is full of

ancient churches built on pagan temples. [The only memorial that connects the Roman Empire to the modern Lanciano is the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Ponte Diocleziano, dedicated to the famous Roman emperor, according to an inscription retrieved in 1785 under the same bridge.]. [The emperor August had divided all the territory of the Italian peninsula into eleven regions and Lanciano was included in the Samnium, where Lanciano remained in the subsequent division into seventeen regions made by the emperor Costantine, while in the Middle Ages the regions of the same Samnium and the current Abruzzo would become a single region.].

In 476, there was the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire while the barbarian peoples came in waves from the mountains and the coast. After having fired and sacked the cities, barbarian peoples settled in the countrysides while the citizens, who were no longer accustomed to defend themselves, were easily defeated. That meant the decadence of the town of Lanciano that was now insecure, without earth ramparts almost certainly erected by the Romans, so that the people returned to live in uncultivated lands while the roads had become impassable. The bloody fighting for supremacy among barbarian peoples continued with looting, destruction and massacres, and, as they were heathen and fierce, all traces of Christianity and Roman civilization disappeared.

The historical sources of Lanciano are vague at that time, but with general histories we know the town passed under Byzantine power, after they had won the Goths in the second latter of the sixth century, and the Latin language, culture and legislation became thoroughly Greek.

The situation was again chaotic when the Longobards arrived at the same time and advanced towards the southern part of the Italian peninsula, with the exception of some regions where Byzantine authority continued. The Longobards were pagans, persecuted Christians, destroyed churches and their invasion marked profound changes in social customs and ways of life. The Italian territory was again divided and Lanciano was incorporated in the duchy of Spoleto and then in the duchy of Benevento. The trouble was that citizens had been accustomed to referring to a monarch during the Western Roman Empire, while now they did not identify themselves without a strong central power. The Church was able to convert the Longobards who respected the conquered people while the Benedictines kept alive the light of civilization. The Longobards were organized in tribes, called 'fare', as we find in many names of small towns around Lanciano, such as Fara San Martino and Fara Filiorum Petri (probably the name of the region Aprutium, then Abruzzo, was born in Longobard era). The Longobards had fallen into the bad habit of razing cities to the ground and many historical centres of the towns were rebuilt

after their almost total destruction. At that time the town of Lanciano was not worth mentioning and the local literary tradition refers to its demolition by the Longobards in 571 and, not long after, a castle would have been built; there is no evidence about it, but the remains of a castle are visible in the quarter Lancianovecchia (probably it was the first nucleus of the historical centre of Lanciano). Lanciano is rich in legends like the one related to the year 610 when San Maurizio, the first protector of the town, whose church was located in the quarter Lancianovecchia and was demolished in 1819, suddenly would appear in sight in the valley of the torrent Feltrino and helped local people and the Longobards to defeat the Byzantines.

Finally, the struggles between the Longobards and the Byzantines ended with the victory of the latter and the Greek monks of the religious order of St. Basil settled in the old church of Saints Legonziano and Domiziano on which, in the eighth century, the first Eucharistic Miracle of the Catholic Church took place, according to oral tradition but there are the Sacred Relics (this is the most important religious event in the history of the region Abruzzo). Then the church of San Francesco of Assisi (1252-58) was built on the site of that one of Saints Legonziano and Domiziano.

During the 8<sup>th</sup> century the Longobards wanted to occupy a large part of Italy and the Papacy asked Franks for help, who after the famous victory of

Charles Martel at Poitiers in 732 had safeguarded Christianity and preserved European civilization from the Islamic expansion. The Carolingian king Pepin the Short descended in Italy and then his son Charlemagne won the Longobards in 774. A few years later the Franks occupied Lanciano and defeated the Longobards who gave no further problems and were content to keep their fiefs. A document of 973 signed by the Teatin (of Chieti) marquis Trasmondo, regarding a donation to the Abbey of San Giovanni in Venere at Fossacesia, certifies the existence of the "civitate Anxani". Under the Franks, Lanciano was once again annexed to the duchy of Spoleto, then to the Marca Teatina and finally to the duchy of Benevento. Their kingdom was successful in bringing stability and the order was restored to Lanciano. The Franks introduced the first feudal hierarchy and divided the lands, so that everyone could have a work while the most representative citizens exercised the power. The progress of the agriculture improved the miserable existence of the poor and there was a long period of prosperity in Lanciano, then perhaps with 2,000 inhabitants. The Franks had an excellent administrative organization, governed wisely, standardized the Catholic religion and built many schools. When Charlemagne was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire into the Basilica of San Pietro in Rome on Christmas day of the year 800, Rome had been separated from the Eastern Empire and the Roman Catholic Church, which had had

since 728 many lands in donations, had become an independent and important state very close to Lanciano. According to the local literary tradition Pepin, son of Charlemagne, to repress a revolt of some Longobard barons, caused many ruins to Teate and other nearby cities in 801, among which it is said that Lanciano was damaged. When Charlemagne died in Aachen in 814, the crisis had been enormous and his successors made many wars that led to the dismemberment of the empire and the final sunset of the Carolingian dynasty in 888. They were years of anarchy while around the year 1000 southern Italy was composed of many Longobard duchies, little city-states and various Byzantine provinces. Nobody had the absolute power to rule the misgoverned Lanciano, still in danger during the recurrent invasions of Hungarian, Saracen and German who were making pirate attacks along the coast to steal any treasure they found, and there were many massacres of citizens, famines and a long, bitter period of economic decline while the town was almost abandoned. People were little more than servants, by the need of working in exchange for protection.

The new conquerors, the Normans, were also dedicated to looting and robbery, but their kingdom would have triumphed over the situation of anarchy and put an end to the Longobard and Byzantine domination in southern Italy. The Normans, coming from the region of Apulia where they already

reigned, conquered Lanciano around 1060, when their captain Hugh Mamouzet ended the conquest of the territories belonging to the religious power of Teate. According to local history Mamouzet resided into the castle of Sette, in the Val di Sangro at about 10 kms. far from Lanciano, and he was the lord of Lanciano that was under the jurisdiction of Robert, Count of Loritello, who lived in the castle of Rotello, near Larino or, perhaps, in Termoli. Probably the Normans are the earliest sovereigns of Lanciano of whom we have written documents if we consider authentic a lost paper of 1062, reported by many local writers and signed by Mamouzet himself, in which it was ordered to surround the entire town of walls. On the contrary, it is certain that of that ancient defensive line of the Norman age only a great tower of the Torri Montanare stands supreme today. [The name of Mamouzet can be read in the famous *Chronicon Casauriense*, that is the Chronicle of the Abbey of San Clemente a Casauria, in the province of Pescara, written in the mid-eleventh century and testifying to the presence of the Normans in the region of Abruzzo. That is also an extraordinary document for the knowledge of the Normans, whose original manuscript is now in the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris since it was brought there by Charles VIII in 1494.]. The Normans were one of the most open-minded dynasties with a tolerant and lively spirit, so the life changed radically under them and churches were reopened, the public order assured and commercial traffics revived the towns. But the

most revolutionary of the Norman changes was the development of the feudal system, although it had already been adopted by the Franks, and the surprisingly modern idea of doing a tax survey to find out the real composition of families and of what they possessed, including the number of people and animals, so that they could know who and what could be taxed. With them the royal power was strengthened and Lanciano became a prosperous agricultural community with 2,000 estimated inhabitants. We can hypothesize that under their domination it was born the entire territory of Lanciano and its hamlets. In 1088, after an earthquake, as the most important local oral tradition says, a statue of the Madonna with the Child was found during the restoration of the Ponte Diocleziano; since then, the veneration of the Madonna del Ponte (that is the "Madonna on the Bridge", because the cathedral dedicated to her was built on the Ponte Diocleziano), the patroness of Lanciano, began. It is also interesting to emphasize their importance in the development of our vernacular language, when Latin was replaced by Norman French as the language of the ruling classes, while ordinary people still spoke the native language, a mixture of Osco, Greek, Etruscan and Latin languages. It was then, in all probability, that our dialect was completed, with Norman French words learned in "situation" and new lexical and grammatical elements. For example, like the French words "bouteille", "main", whose local

pronunciation is similar to the French language, and whose main characteristic are the final letters of many words with an immutable and silent "e" mute as occurs in our idiom. Today our dialect, whose sound affects everyone at first, is our distinctive speech, and has a typical pronunciation and a vocabulary full of words borrowed from a variety of languages.

Mamouzet died in 1097 and the town of Lanciano depended on Robert, Count of Loritello. At his death the new count was Robert II until 1113, when he was followed by the last count of Loritello, his son William of Hauteville who died without heirs. In 1130 Lanciano depended on King Roger II of the new Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, a strong monarchic state whose capital was the opulent Palermo. After the kings William I (the Bad) and his son William II (the Good) who died heirless in 1189, the Norman kingdom ended but they left Lanciano stronger and more united than ever before.

Then came the Swabians. The direct successor was Constance, daughter of the Norman king Roger II, who was engaged with her husband, the new king Henry VI of Swabia, in many wars of succession and conquered the kingdom of southern Italy in 1194. [The local literary tradition tells us that in 1191 the Jews, who had perhaps settled in Lanciano since the year 1000 with an important financial power, were readmitted to the town, from which they had been

expelled in 1156, and settled in a Judea in the quarter Sacca. That according to a Convention of November 5, 1191, consisting of 18 articles, signed both by the town of Lanciano and by the Jews, which is persisting the wrong belief about the real Jewish's life in Lanciano. Their 80 families would have been relegated in the quarter Sacca, but I think it was too small to receive them all. They Jews would have had the well-known restrictions in their affairs, in lending money for interest, in the obligation to stay home at night, in the imposition of wearing a small yellow cloth to be recognized, and so on. But the Convention does not say the truth because they were welcome in the reign and lived in perfect harmony with the Lancianesi. Moreover, some limitations described in that document were ratified by Pope Innocent III, in the Twelfth Ecumenical Council (Lateran IV), only in 1215 and made operative by the Emperor Frederick II of Swabia in 1221. It was imposed to wear a special small yellow cloth the men, a yellow veil the women, to be distinguished from the Christians, and the prohibition of the exclusivity of Jewish to lend money. In effect, the rich and enterprising Jews resided in Lanciano under the protection of the sovereigns like queen Joan, who at first allowed San Giovanni from Capestrano to persecute them and then made other encouraging concessions to the Jews themselves, and by the kings Ladislao in 1400 and Ferdinando in 1463.].

Henry VI died in 1197 and his heir was the infant Frederick, who become emperor Frederick II in

1220. He was a truly enlightened ruler who sponsored the foundation of the university in Naples in 1225 and, around 1230, had divided the kingdom in nine provinces while Lanciano was one of the largest cities in the "Abruzzo" region. Probably Lanciano had had other privileges by the Franks and the Normans but its history began to be documented under the Swabians. By a diploma sent from Rome in April 1212, Frederic II Second granted the town for its loyalty to the crown by many tax reductions. The outstanding event was when Lanciano became a State property city, by a diploma of king Manfred sent from Naples in April 1259, with which Lanciano had the castles of Piazzano and Sette, located in the countries bathed by the Sangro river. At this time, referring to the demographic studies, we can estimate about 4,000 people living in Lanciano. If the Normans had built walls all around the town, the most important churches of Lanciano were built under the Swabians: Santa Maria Maggiore (1180 and expanded in 1227); San Nicola (1242); Santa Lucia (1250); Sant'Agostino (in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century); San Francesco of Assisi (1252-58); a small chapel built in 1203 by Andrea from Lanciano, on the Ponte Diocleziano, which was the first nucleus of the future Cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte.

The great enemy of Frederic II was the Papacy who wanted the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily independent of each other, and when the emperor

died in 1250 his heirs failed in their policy of reconciliation with the Holy See.

The new king of the Kingdom of Naples, and of Lanciano, was the son of Frederic II, Conrad IV, while his other "illegitimate" son Manfred had the regency of the Kingdom of Sicily. Conrad IV died in 1254 and left his infant Conradin as his heir, but Manfred reigned again and was crowned emperor in 1258. So the Papacy called Charles of Anjou, brother of the French king Louis IX, and after the death of Manfred in the battle of Benevento (1266), and when the fifteen Conradin was captured at Tagliacozzo and executed in Naples (1268), the Swabian dynasty ended and Charles I of Anjou became the king of the new Angevin Kingdom.

Under the Angevins Lanciano, which had sided with the Swabians, was once again a fief of Chieti, by a diploma dated July 4, 1269, under the rule of the Seigneur Raul de Courtenay. His daughter Matilda succeeded him and married Count Philip of Flanders. When Matilda died in 1300, the only interest of Philip in his town was receiving many taxes. The citizens claimed their rights to the Court and a popular uprising broke out in Lanciano on September 25, 1302 against Philip. [In 1269 the capital of the kingdom had been transferred from Palermo to Naples, but Sicily didn't want the arrogant and intolerant Angevins and after the Sicilian Vespers, in 1282, the great island remained under the

Aragonese becoming an independent kingdom from Naples. Thus the strong centralized state of the Normans and expanded by the Swabians had lost much of its prestige with the separation from Sicily.]. [In 1273 the Abruzzo region was divided in two parts by the same Angevins, taking the river Pescara as a border line, and Lanciano was included in the "Abruzzo Citeriore", that is *Abruzzo Citra Flumen Piscariam*, in the territories located on the left bank of the river (the other one was the "Abruzzo Ulteriore", that is *Abruzzo Ultra Flumen Piscariam*). Two years later, the two territories of the Abruzzo region were reunited, but were again separated in 1284.]. The new king Charles II of Anjou, by a diploma sent from Naples on February 28, 1303, restored the town's state demesne in Lanciano. The lands were divided among the people while Lanciano reconquered the castles of Piazzano and Sette, and now those ones of Rizzacorno and Belvedere in the Valle del Sangro. [In 1305 Pope Celestine V transferred the Holy See to Avignon and for seventy years the church in Italy was under the absolute control of the Angevins.]. In 1308 the family of Philip of Flanders was expelled from Lanciano, and the town would have been independent from the feudal lords until 1640. By a diploma sent by the new king Robert of Anjou from Naples in 1311, Lanciano had a sort of town council and a mayor, chosen among the members of the richest local families. The following year, by the same king, the town owned the castle of Paglieta. The son of the

king, prince Charles who acted as vicar of the kingdom, by a diploma of the year 1320, exonerated merchants and fairgoers from the heavy taxes claimed from Ortona on the goods directed towards Lanciano. For a long time the fairs were boycotted while the Lancianesi sacked Ortona, beginning a secular period of bloody struggles between the two towns. The Angevins gave rise to a legal system applied to the whole kingdom instead of usual local customs and ecclesiastical rules prevailing up to then. The transcription of governmental actions began and the parchment registers of the Angevins would be interpreted as literary sources for writing the history of the kingdom (unfortunately most of those documents were burned by the Nazis in November 1943 at the small town of Nola). Other remarkable events took place during the years of the Angevins in Lanciano: the beginning of the activity of a noteworthy mint; the establishment of the "giustizierato" (a Law Courts); the institution, in 1304, of a new local authority, the Mastroggiurato, who had the task of preventing unfair competition and of regulating the quality and price of goods during the glorious fairs of Lanciano. Probably Lanciano had more than 5,000 inhabitants in 1340, but the bubonic plague in 1348, known as the Black Death, and famines too, had reduced its population to about 4,000 inhabitants. In the meantime, the wars with the town of Ortona persisted.

King Robert died in 1343 and the heir to the throne was his seventeen niece Joan, who would have had

four husbands and the first, Andrew of Hungary, was cruelly murdered in 1345, probably for a conspiracy organized by the queen herself against him while Louis, Prince of Taranto, became her second husband. Louis had to fight against another Louis, king of Hungary, who wanted to avenge his brother Andrew. Lanciano and other surrounding cities became a property of Louis of Taranto, but they sided with the king of Hungary and were besieged by the troops of Galeotto Manfredi in 1351. Lanciano and its allied towns had a series of successes under the leadership of Corrado Lupo, but in 1352 the king of Hungary had to return to his nation and Joan I was brought back to the throne in Naples. Thus Lanciano returned under the control of the queen and possessed the fiefs of the hamlet of Sant'Amato, and the towns of San Vito, Vasto and other territories. Louis died in 1362 and the queen had two other husbands, James III of Aragon and in 1376 Otto of Brummswich, and without sons.

Charles III of Durres who had married Margaret, sister of queen Joan, was the legitimate heir but Joan herself had designed Louis of Anjou to the throne. Charles III of Durres, with the support of the Papacy, became king of Naples in 1381 and ordered the killing of the queen one year later. It was the end of the direct Angevin branch and the beginning of the Angevin dynasty of the Duratian branch. But the "old" Angevins claimed their own rights of succession to the throne and there were many battles

by mercenaries troops in the hinterland of Lanciano, led by Ugone Orsini who flanked Louis of Anjou,. The town of Lanciano supported the cause of the Duratians and safeguarded an absolute control over its old fiefs (neighboring small towns and those close to the mountains). In 1384 Lanciano had the castles of Frisa, Guastameroli and Sant'Apollinaire from the king Charles III, and in 1385 San Vito and the Abbey of San Giovanni in Venere. These wars ended with the death of Louis of Anjou in 1384, but Charles III was killed in Hungary two years later. The battles between the Duratians and the Angevins continued with the final victory of Ladislaus I in 1399 and his entry into Rome around 1401, after having won Louis II who had been recalled by the Papacy. During these fights in the region of Abruzzo the famous captain of fortune Attendolo Sforza supported Ladislaus, while Braccio da Montone sided with Louis. Ladislaus granted the Jews, on July 27, 1400, to live and trade freely in Lanciano. He also granted the greatest benefits to Lanciano by many diplomas and the town regained almost all countries situated in the region of the Frentania. By a diploma on July 11, 1390, other lands at Rizzacorno. By another diploma of July 17, 1391, the fief of Borrello and in 1392 the fiefs of Civitaluparella, Fallo, Pescopennataro, Pizzoferrato, Quadri and Rosello. In 1396 the fiefs of Casalbordino and Gessopalena. In 1406 those ones of Castelnuovo (today Castel Frentano), Crecchio and other lands of Vasto and of the hamlet of Sant'Amato. We must

underline a centuries-old local tradition about Milasio from Milazzo who taught the art of making needles in 1412, so that local needle-cases were renowned in the Middle Ages when Lanciano was an important commercial centre for needles. There is still Via degli Agorai ("Street of the Needle-Cases") in the quarter Lancianovecchia.

Ladislaus died in 1414 without sons and her sister became the queen Joan II, and there were still years of war because the new queen, who had been married twice without sons, adopted as a king the prince Alphonse V, son of the king Ferdinando of Aragon, Sicily and Sardinia, to resist against Louis III of Anjou who declared war against her in 1420. But when Alphonse V claimed the ownership of the whole kingdom, the queen chose as her heir Louis III in 1423. Meanwhile, almost all territory of the region of Abruzzo was in revolt against the authority of the queen and many lands, in 1420, were distributed to the nobles who remained loyal to Joan II.

Lanciano had succeeded in freeing the small town of Torino di Sangro and had bought it in 1420, also obtaining many tax exemptions for its fiefs from the queen. Braccio da Montone conquered many towns and became the governor of the Abruzzo while the troops of Joan II, with the help of the professional soldiers of Attendolo Sforza's, pursued them. Then Lanciano gained the fiefs of Arielli and Lama dei Peligni and Canosa in 1421, but those small towns were reconquered by the rebels barons and the rich

Lanciano, which paid a lot of money for their possession, had to bring them back under the authority of the crown. In 1423 Braccio da Montone occupied Lanciano, but Attendolo Sforza liberated it at the end of the same year.

[Lanciano had had other diplomas, from Joan I in 1365 and 1372, and from Ladislaus in 1395, which authorized the building of a port at San Vito, but there was the opposition of Ortona. Finally, the port was built after a diploma from Alphonse sent from Castellammare di Stabia on May 12, 1422. Probably the port existed in Roman times to connect with the Dalmatian coasts and was called Gualdo. There were numerous bloody struggles between Lanciano and Ortona for its possession, until when San Giovanni from Capestrano succeeded in reconciling them on February 17, 1427, and the port of San Vito passed under the control of both towns. Six years later the conflicts began again and only in 1441 Lanciano, with the support of the Aragoneses, had the total right to use it, while local fairs obtained more and more success. Two centuries later, following the decay of the fairs of Lanciano, the port of San Vito lost its importance. It would have been rebuilt at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.].

Queen Joan II died in 1435 and the year before, after the death of Louis III, she had designed the latter's son, René, as her heir, while Alphonse V of Aragon and also the Papacy claimed the throne. Then René, deployed with Giacomo Caldora, conquered

almost the territories of Abruzzo and Alphonse V escaped from the region in 1438.

Giacomo Caldora died in 1439 and his son and heir Antonio fought together with René but they were defeated by Alphonse V who completed the conquest of Naples in 1442, becoming king Alphonse I of the new Aragonese dynasty in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (with Sardinia). All of southern Italy had been reunited since the Sicilian Vespers (1282).

The town of Lanciano, for its loyalty to the king, was called the "Aragonese town" and had many advantages. As the fief of Treglio in 1441 and a diploma sent from Benevento on January 22, 1441, when Alphonse had divided the kingdom with René, which confirmed the town's State property of Lanciano and of its fiefs, the total use of the port of San Vito, the rejection of the peace made by San Giovanni from Capestrano, as well as other fiscal gains at the expense of Ortona which had joined the Duratians-Angevins.

Two years after, by another diploma, Lanciano fortified the port of San Vito and could defend it if it was attacked. Other diplomas were sent: from Naples in 1447, for the supply of salt to the fiefs of Lanciano and its surroundings cities; from Torre Annunziata on March 11, 1450, ordering the duration of local fairs for fifteen days in May and August and authorizing other simultaneous exhibitions that could be placed not less than thirty kilometres from

Lanciano; from Traetto in 1453, confirming the old privileges to local authorities to make laws and establish prices and weights; from Naples on May 16, 1457, assigning to Lanciano all the earnings of the fairs.

Alphonse had inherited a kingdom oppressed by exorbitant taxes, but in 1443 he reformed the tax system by replacing the Angevin "colletta", that is to collect money for each person and animal, by a fixed tax for "fuochi" ("fires" families), without no other extraordinary contribution. Because families were composed of many people, their economy improved. In 1447 Lanciano had 973 families and about 4,000 inhabitants but a twenty per cent of them died during the shocking earthquake on December 5, 1456.

Alphonse I 'the Magnanimous' visited Lanciano in 1458 and died in the same year, after having divided his kingdom again: his brother John got Aragon, Sicily and Sardinia, while his illegitimate son Ferdinando had the Kingdom of Naples (with Lanciano).

The new king of Naples Ferdinando (called Ferrante) claimed his ecclesiastical rights to the throne and crossed beyond the confines of the temporal power of the papacy, while prices increased. By a diploma sent from Capua on June 28, 1458, and two other non-dating, Lanciano retained all its fiefs, the privileges for its "millennial" fairs and the rights on the port of San Vito.

The king visited many towns and came to Lanciano in the summer of 1459.

The Papacy and the barons rebelled against king Ferrante with the support of John of Anjou and the captain of fortune Iacopo Piccinino who, around 1460, conquered many towns of Abruzzo.

Two years later the Aragonese triumphed over their rivals with the help of the famous Albanian national hero Gjergj Kastrioti Skenderbeu and reconquered all the towns. In two letters, dated January 31, 1460, and January 15, 1461, king Ferrante thanked Lanciano for its loyalty and by a diploma of twenty-one chapters, sent from Naples on March 1, 1463, granted Lanciano against the Angevin Ortona. By another diploma, also dated March 1, 1463, we know that the Jews had the same rights as the Lancianesi.

Then the king Ferrante returned to Lanciano in 1464.

A tradition of local history tells us that the town of Lanciano, in 1470, rejected an attack by the nearby small town of Castelnuovo (now Castel Frentano) and preserved its fief.

There were other revolts by the barons in Abruzzo (1484-87) and the public order was restored after hard-fought battles.

At that time Lanciano was completely surrounded by defensive walls, moats, ramparts and the donjon known as the Aragonese Torrione, still visible near the large fountain called Fonte del Borgo, was built in 1480, thus completing the building of the medieval walls. On November 18, 1488, by a letter sent from Sulmona, due to the need to restore public

safety, the king ordered the expulsion from Lanciano of the Schiavoni (Albanians, Dalmatians and Slavonians) who settled in the countrysides of the town where the same Schiavoni founded the hamlet of Villa Stanazzo in 1484.

King Ferrante died in 1494 and his son became king Alfonso II who sent a diploma from Naples on March 14, preserving the old privileges of Lanciano. Only a year later, following the famous expedition to Italy of Charles VIII of Anjou, Ferdinand abdicated to the throne in favour of his son Ferdinand II, who fled to Ischia in February 1495 after the transitory success of Charles VIII. When the Angevin king was forced to flee to France, Ferdinand II regained his kingdom in July and married Jeanne of Aragon.

Lanciano had flanked Ferdinando II who, by a diploma sent from Sarno on October 28, 1495, confirmed the previous Aragonese privileges, revoked the concessions made by the Angevins to the town of Ortona and recognized the right of independence of the diocese of Lanciano from that of Chieti. But his kingdom was very short and he died childless in 1496.

The new king, his uncle Frederic II, confirmed the old privileges to Lanciano by a diploma sent from Gaeta on November 15 1496. Charles VIII died in 1498 and the new king of France, his cousin Louis XII, claiming the rights of Angevins invaded the Kingdom of Naples. Frederic II called his powerful uncle Ferdinando of Aragon the "Catholic", but he and the French king divided, by the treaty of Granada

in 1500, the kingdom of Naples among them, while Frederic resigned the throne and had the duchy of Anjou in France.

Thus the efficient Aragonese domination ended in 1501 in southern Italy, Louis XII conquered the entire region of Abruzzo and we know that he stayed in Lanciano in August 1501. So there were many conflicts between the two occupying powers until when the captain Gonzalo from Cordova won the French in the battles of Seminara and Cerignola in April 1503.

By the armistice signed in Lyon in 1504, the French maintained the duchy of Milan while Ferdinando 'the Catholic' was the undisputed king of the Kingdom of Naples, with Sicily, which was really ruled by viceroys. So Lanciano had lost its "independence" and the kingdom of the Spanish viceroy would last until 1707. Ferdinando the "Catholic", by a diploma sent from Naples on April 29, 1507, reaffirmed the rights of Lanciano.

[In 1492 Christopher Columbus had unwittingly discovered the New World, which had a negative influence on the Mediterranean world while the secular way of trading moved towards the Atlantic Ocean. Despite this important event, the importance of the fairs of Lanciano would have been resisted for more than a century.]

[In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the fairs of Lanciano fairs were very crowded with traders and visitors coming from other cities of the region of Frentania and Italy. There were also Dalmatian, Greek, French, German, Jewish, Spanish, Asian and African peoples. The fairs took place twice a year, from May 31 to June 15, and from August 31 to September 15, and they

were very important in the kingdom and sometimes the dates have been changed due to wars and natural disasters. From many bills we know there was a great demand for books, caps, Murano glass, cotton, saffron, and the town was also a centre of slave-trade, while export articles were grain, leathers, oil, wine, wool and other foodstuffs. The trade with the other side of the Adriatic Sea was very profitable and the important Republic of Ragusa (nowadays the town of Dubrovnik) had a consular office in Lanciano, while members of the largest Italian and European cities lived into it.].

When Ferdinando the “Catholic” died in 1516, the great emperor Charles V succeeded him and Lanciano was a town of the Spanish Empire on which “the sun never set”.

In that period the famous painter Polidoro di Mastro Renzo, born in Lanciano in 1515, carried out his renowned artistic activity in Venice.

The year 1515 was historically important for the city of Lanciano when it had its archiepiscopal seat. There are no documents attesting that Lanciano was an ancient episcopal centre with a bishop, but the town had always been under the diocese of Theatinus (Chieti), according to the oral tradition since the 6<sup>th</sup> century and by other acts since the last years of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when the bishop of Chieti was represented in Lanciano by the archpriest of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Lanciano wanted its religious independence from Chieti, already

ratified by Ferdinando II of Aragon and Ferdinando the "Catholic", and the Lancianesi had negotiated by the Marsican Angel Maccafani, who had a wide circle of acquaintances and went to Rome to meet Pope Leo X. Then, by a papal bull, sent from Rome on May 28, 1515, Lanciano had its episcopal seat and Maccafani was its first bishop. The papal bull of 1515 is a very important historical document about the greatness of Lanciano which was "...one of the largest and most prosperous cities of Abruzzi, located in a splendid geographical position and surrounded by many small towns, rich in history and fiefs, very famous in the kingdom of Naples for its crowded and profitable fairs, with its magnificent churches and monuments, with highly educated men and theologians..." and that it was now "... independent from the Teatinus diocese, with its first bishop's residence in the Cathedral of Santa Maria dell'Annunziata and cash contributions from citizens...". On April 20, 1516, the first bishop of Lanciano Angel Maccafani settled in the rooms of the cathedral and was warmly welcomed by the faithful, while the disputes with Chieti never ended. On June 5, the bishop Maccafani was arrested at the behest of the duke of Termoli, the chief of the province instigated by Chieti, but he was immediately freed.

On October 20, 1518, Lanciano obtained the authoritative approval of its bishop's residence by the emperor Charles V, but, on July 1, 1526, Pope

Clemente VII had established the Archdiocese of Chieti with jurisdiction over Lanciano.

Only in 1547, Lanciano would have been detached from Chieti and depended on the Holy See. On July 21, 1559, Lanciano suffered the interdict by the Archbishop of Chieti and in sign of protest some placards were placed secretly on the portal of the church of San Nicola.

The turning point was on January 26, 1560, when the dominican Leonardo de Marinis became the sixth bishop of the town and had the brilliant idea of establishing the archbishopric in Lanciano.

On November 29, 1560, he went to Naples, where he was received by King Philip I, and then to Rome, to meet Pope Pius IV. In the end, by the papal bull of January 9, 1562 the Archbishopric in Lanciano was elevated '*... with the urgent need to reconcile the diocese of Lanciano and that of Chieti...*' but Lanciano had not obtained any religious power over its fiefs and nearby cities.

Leonardo de Marinis was the first archbishop of Lanciano from March 1562-67 and remained far away from the town since he took the prestigious position of secretary of the famous Council of Trent. When the Council ended in 1563, he returned to Lanciano but he was soon recalled to Rome to contribute to the compilation of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*.

[The Diocese of Ortona, which had been linked to that of Campi since 1569, was suppressed in 1818 by Pius VII and joined under the jurisdiction of that

of Lanciano, while Campli was assigned to Teramo. Pope Gregorius XVI, by a bull of 1834, re-established the Diocese of Ortona now ruled by Lanciano. It was the Archdiocese *Lancianensis (et Ortonensis)* which changed into that of *Lanciano and Ortona* on November 24, 1945, to become the current Archdiocese of *Lanciano-Ortona* on September 30, 1986. The current seat of the Archdiocese is in the Archbishop's Palace in Lanciano since the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.].

From 1505-1534 Lanciano was upset by bloody feuds between two factions of the noble Riccio local family.

The Riccio family, whose thirst for power was the cause and effect of many bloody struggles, lived in Lanciano since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, while now they were divided in a "legitimate" branch and another "illegitimate".

The ancient local historical literature reports the struggles began on October 13, 1505, when the rich merchant Bernardino Pelliccioni of Perugia, who had married a local woman, was killed by his brothers-in-law who wanted his money. Pelliccioni's frightened wife took refuge into Pietro Riccio's home, who occupied the office of Mastrogiurato, having the money inside a jewelery case. Then her brothers stole the treasure to accuse Pietro Riccio who, on November 15, was killed by another Peter Riccio of the "illegitimate" branch of the family.

There were violences, murders and fires until October 20, 1506, when the families made peace, but the hostilities began again on July 13, 1513, when Achille Riccio and other members of the "legitimate" family killed Sallustio Florio, the lawyer of the "illegitimate" Riccio, near the church of San Bartolomeo in the hamlet of Follani. Therefore the Florio families allied themselves with the "illegitimate" and two members of the "legitimate" were soon killed. So there were two factions of the Riccio: the "legitimate petronians" led by Pietro, and the "illegitimate antonians" led by Antonio and supported by the Florio families.

Moreover, local brutal fights were extended in the regions of Abruzzo and Marche, involving Lanciano with the famous Italian wars between the Spaniards, flanked by the petronians, and the French, supported by the antonians.

Then, some members of the Riccio were imprisoned, hanged and exiled from the kingdom.

Other crimes occurred in Lanciano on February 10, 1514, on October 16, 1515 and on March 11, 1516. In 1526, the Black Death killed many Lancianesi.

In 1528, the famous general Odet de Foix, vicomte de Lautrec, lieutenant of the French King Francis I, led the French expedition to the conquest of the kingdom of Naples and when he was near Chieti the "legitimate" called the help of Spaniards. The latter could not contribute to the safety of Lanciano while the petronian Tullio Riccio formed an army to

protect the borders of the Abruzzo region, the kingdom of Naples and even the town of Milan. Lanciano was defenseless while the antonian Antonio Riccio were tired and desired their return home. They reached Lautrec in Chieti and together with the French troops attacked Lanciano, which was defended in the Fiera quarter, and conquered it fighting in the other part of the town facing the Torri Montanare on February 13, 1529.

Then Lautrec went to Naples and left Lazzaro Orsini as head of Lanciano, while the antonians killed many people. When the "legitimate" Tullio Riccio returned to our areas, he went to the castle of Paglieta to persuade the antonians to attack it, what actually happened on September 20, 1529, but the antonians could not conquer the castle.

So the count of Palena, Giulio Di Capua, went to Lanciano to bring the town back under Spanish rule and that only happened when Lautrec died of plague in Naples.

Lazzaro Orsini and the antonians fled to Barletta, where they took part in many battles led by Renzo da Ceri, while the petronians forced the Spaniards to surrender Lanciano. Then the antonians, led by Federico Carafa, moved with twenty-six little vessels from Barletta to Ortona but they failed to conquer it. So Carafa and the antonians conquered the defenceless Lanciano by passing through Porta San Nicola located in the quarter Sacca, and there were still pillages, thefts and people barricades into the churches.

Then the Spaniards impeached Lanciano for high treason and the town lost its fiefs of Paglieta and San Vito, assigned to Rancho Lopez, and of Arielli and Canosa, given to Emmanuele de Vega.

The antonians came back to Lanciano on August 24, 1530, then fled and returned again on April 25, 1531.

Finally, in 1534, Sciarra Colonna and the chief of the province Capoferro acted as peacemakers and the hostilities between the two factions headed now by Riccio Riccio and Federico Florio ended after thirty years of crimes.

On March 20, 1536, the emperor Charles V sent a letter from Naples to avoid other fairs around Lanciano when the local ones were running. In 1556 Charles V abdicated and gave the kingdom of Naples to his son Philip II who continued the wars until the Peace of Cateau-Cambresis (1559), which put an end to sixty years of conflicts and recognized the Spanish hegemony over Italy (and Lanciano).

Philip II sent a diploma from Toledo on 26 January 1561, reconfirming the previous rights of Lanciano over its surrounding cities.

In the summer of 1566, one hundred Turkish vessels under the command of Piali Pascià (a recurring name in the stories of the cities of the Tyrrhenian Sea) invaded our coasts, in vain defended by the control towers built near the mouths of the rivers. The Turks sacked everything they could,

killing and enslaving women, the elderly people and children, slaughtering animals, while many people took refuge in Lanciano. At least the Turkish danger ended with their final defeat in Lepanto in 1571.

In 1596 Lanciano had 1353 families and about 6,000 inhabitants.

The new king of Spain Philip III gave the last diploma to Lanciano, sent from Naples on February 15, 1608 while, due to the debts contracted by the court, and the development of other fairs in various towns of central Italy, local fairs went into crisis.

But the decline of Lanciano really began under the kingdom of Philip IV, when the towns were bought and sold as if they were houses or common objects.

[Meanwhile, in 1618, Lanciano had its first Cadastre, about the four quarters of its historical centre and the small towns of Santa Mara a Mare (now Santa Maria Imbaro) and Petra Costantina (the current Mozzagrogna), plus the hamlets of Lanciano of Villa Stanazzo and the neighbors ones of Villa Canaparo and Villa Cotellessa, without reporting a great part of the territory of Lanciano as the hamlets of Valle Santa Giusta, Sant' Amato and Rizzacorno.].

The Spanish wars had always been very expensive and the court had to pay the debts by selling state-owned cities like Lanciano. One of the creditors, Alessandro Pallavicino, duke of Castro, wanted Lanciano and its rich fiefs and bought it with the "discount" on August 1, 1640. Lanciano, then inhabited by 6,000 people, had reached the lowest

point of its glorious history. On October 6, 1640 and towards the end of the same year, the citizens rebelled and put to flight a representative of Pallavicino, who had come to take possession of Lanciano. Then a local commission including the lawyer Federico Cafaro went to Madrid, in an unproductive way, to show the historical diplomas of Lanciano. Lanciano wanted to return under the rule of some reigning and a local delegation went to Florence in June 1641 to establish contact with the Medici who owned the duchy of Capestrano and other cities in Abruzzo. Their attempt failed and on March 17, 1643, a letter was written to Ferdinando II, the grand duke of Tuscany, who replied on May 23 thanking the townspeople, but without saying anything about their request to be governed by the Medici themselves. Pallavicino died indebted in 1646 and, on October 14, the Marquis of Vasto don Ferdinando Francesco D'Avalos became the new owner of Lanciano and its fiefs. There were other claims to the court and many heavy taxes were imposed by the D'Avalos until when, on July 20, 1647, a rebellion broke out in Lanciano, undoubtedly inspired by the revolt led by Tommaso Aniello nicknamed "Masaniello" that had broken out in Naples the previous July 7. The brief uprising was led by another hero of the history of Lanciano, the local native Carlo Mozzagrugno called "Carlone" ("Big Charles" for his great physique) and by the merchant Antonio Striglia. Many prisoners were freed, the agents of the D'Avalos were persecuted

and the chief of the province of Chieti, Michele Pignatelli who resided in Ortona, came to Lanciano to calm souls. Then the judge advocate sent by the court of Naples, Francesco d'Andrea, settled in the convent of Sant'Agostino to explain the reduction of taxes while some other local delegates went to Naples to restore the state-owned state to Lanciano. The answer did not come and the D'Avalos were powerful. The uprising on July 20, 1647 in Lanciano began at the moment that Francesco d'Andrea was trying to pacify the rebels in Piazza Plebiscito, when there was the attack of rioters led by Carlo Mozzagrugno, who came down from the quarter Lancianovecchia and met other rebels led by Antonio Striglia coming from Via Corsea. The rebels initially won and local people chose Carlo Mozzagrugno as head of Lanciano until the end of August, when Pignatelli reconquered the town while "Carlone" and his supporters escaped. Lanciano, unlike Chieti, which was at first sold and then had returned to be a State property city, remained under the D'Avalos while Mozzagrugno and nine other Lancianesi were hanged in the town of L'Aquila on October 23, 1647.

Then the Black Death of 1656 killed many Lancianesi and 1,353 families in 1596 had become only 1073 in 1670, and in several documents many surnames mentioned in the cadastre of 1618 had disappeared.

Ferdinando D'Avalos died in 1665 and the other owners of Lanciano until 1806 were: his brother Diego, who died in 1697 and succeeded by his son

Cesare Michaelangelo who died heirless in 1729. Then Giovanni Battista, and in 1749 his brother Diego who died in 1776 and was followed by his son Thomas.

The new king of Naples Charles II died childless in 1700 and after the wars of the Spanish Succession and the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 the Kingdom of Naples, including Lanciano, came under the guidance of the House of Bourbon of Austria of the emperor Charles VI.

The government of the viceroys continued and during that brief period of Austrian rule there were no other significant changes, while wars were heavily reflected on the budget of the cities.

The armies of Charles VI were defeated in 1734, when Charles of Bourbon regained the kingdom and took the name of Charles III, king of Naples and Sicily.

This time the Neapolitan dynasty distinguished itself from that one of the House of Bourbon of Spain, and Lanciano, which depended on Spain since 1504, returned to being independent of the Spain.

In 1735 the Austrians tried to have a revenge, but they were finally defeated at Velletri.

Charles III and his prime minister Bernard Tanucci made many reforms and their ruling was very useful to abolish some feudal benefits and to reduce taxes belonging to the Roman Curia. The Cadastre was also reformed for a more impartial taxation system

and in 1747 Lanciano had its second Cadastre of two thick books, which referred to the whole of its territory, that is to the historical centre and the hamlets of Lanciano, through which we know the town in that year had 1,045 families and 6,288 inhabitants. When Charles III ascended the throne of Spain, his third son, Ferdinando IV (later Ferdinando I of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies) became king of Naples and Sicily in 1759. The regent Bernard Tanucci continued to confiscate religious properties and other feudal prerogatives until when Ferdinando married Marie Caroline, sister of queen Marie Antoinette of France, and John Acton became the new prime minister in 1777. After the execution of her sister-in-law Marie Antoinette in 1793, Ferdinando changed his politics, persecuted those who had the ideals of the French Revolution and in 1798 joined the Second Coalition against France. After the Italian victories of Napoleon Bonaparte, the Roman Republic was established in February 1798, but in November Ferdinando IV declared war on France and his troops led by the Austrian general Mach reconquered Rome.

In December 1798 the French troops of the commander-in-chief in Italy, general Championnet, took possession of Rome. Then most of the French army, divided and led by the generals Championnet, Macdonald and Mathieu, marched towards Naples and conquered it, while other armies invaded the region of Abruzzo where the general Lemoine

occupied L'Aquila and Popoli, and the general Duhesme forced to surrender Civitella del Tronto, Pescara and Chieti. All those territories were included in the Neapolitan Republic, established on January 23, 1799, while king Ferdinando IV and his court were forced to flee to Sicily, then under the supervision of Nelson's fleet. In the region of Abruzzo the French met only weak resistance from the Bourbon troops, but they were strongly fought by the so-called "masses" of populations and suffered many losses. Those "masses", i.e. large "bands" of people, rebelled and became protagonists of the struggles under the encouragement of the fugitive king Ferdinando IV to defend the independence, the honour of the kingdom, religion and property against the garrisons of French. In the province of Chieti the "masses" were commanded by Giuseppe Pronio from Introdacqua and they hoisted Bourbon flags in many cities, but their revolt was useless after the reconquests by the French troops of general Couthard. The French were in the area of Lanciano when its city delegates Niccolò Pollidori and Francesco Paolo Bocache went to Ortona to tell them that their town would not have resisted.

On January 4, 1799, the French easily entered Lanciano under the command of the General Monnier, while the members of the wealthier families were designated as local representatives. The University had now become a Municipality and the local governors were Felice Gigliani, as president, Mattia Brasile, Niccolò De Cecco, Carlo

Filippo de Berardinis and Francesco Paolo Bocache. Two Lancianesi, Antonio Madonna and Carlo Filippo de Berardinis (Mansueto Carabba took the latter's place in the municipality of Lanciano), together with the president Melchiorre Delfico of Teramo, were the triumvirate of the executive power in the region of Abruzzo that had its headquarters in Pescara since January 12, 1799.

The civil situation was chaotic and bloody. The Republican patriots promoters of "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité" were not lacking, but most of the people, especially in rural and mountainous areas, remained alien to the changes promised by the French Revolution and they, who did not want idealism and wars but their daily bread, rebelled against the new social order proposed by the French.

There were many political upheavals in Lanciano that was invaded by the "masses" coming from the cities of its hinterlands on February 5, when the seat of the municipality, the present Town Hall, where many historical memories were burnt, and the home of the wealthy citizen and municipal treasurer Francesco Carabba, were besieged by local Bourbon supporters led by Vincenzo Giordano and his son Fioravante. It was a terrible day and Ermenegildo Bocache, brother of the local historian and reporter of those tragic events Uomobono, was killed. The family of Francesco Carabba and his son Mansueto barricaded themselves and set fire, killing several attackers who tried to sack their basement-flat.

The members of the "masses" were everywhere and citizens took refuge into the archbishop's palace. On February 7, at a meeting in the church of Santa Maria la Nova (the current church of Santa Giovina), Fioravante Giordano became the chief of Lanciano.

[Meanwhile, from the number 4 of the official newspaper of the Neapolitan Republic, the 'Monitore Napoletano' of February 12, 1799, it was read that Lanciano had become the capital of the Sangro district. The number 5 of February 16 had established the boundaries of the department of the Sangro. In number 6 of February 19 the district 16 cities of the Sangro department were written: the capital Lanciano, and then Ortona, Palena, Alitta, Pescocostanzo, Castel di Sangro, Agnone, Barranello, Campobasso, La Riccia, Trivento, Larino, Termoli, Serracapriola, Dragonara and Vasto.].

In the meantime the French of Couthard were reconquering many cities and occupied Lanciano on February 20, when they entered from the city gates of Porta San Biagio and Porta Santa Maria la Nova after awful fights. Despite Couthard's assurances, there were many hangings and Fioravante Giordano was saved by the intercession of Francesco Carabba's family. The city of Lanciano had to pay a lot of money to the occupants, while the municipality was restored and the civic guard was strengthened.

On February 25, 1799, the Lancianesi took part in the conquest of the little rebel town of Guardiagrele.

In March local republicans raised the “freedom’s tree” in Piazza Plebiscito, painted with colours of the French flag, and there were dances and songs.

At the end of April, the French troops were called to fight in northern Italy and some republicans remained to defend some cities, while the Bourbons and the “masses” controlled most of the territories.

Meanwhile Pronio had restored the monarchy to Chieti and Ortona and, on May 11, 1799, he entered Lanciano. The day after he had many rebel citizens arrested without ever knowing their political ideals and in the evening, at nine o’clock in Piazza Plebiscito, those prisoners were humiliated among the shouts of the crowd and constituted a sad choreography around the “freedom’s tree” which was pulled down and replaced by a cross with images of Bourbon monarchs.

On May 15, the prisoners were transferred to Chieti and Pronio left as head of Lanciano Biagio de Ilio. A nephew of the same de Ilio, on May 16, injured the young man Diodato Bocache and the two were fighting while Diodato’s father sheltered his son into the house of Giuseppe Brasile, where Diodato himself was killed by the most ardent followers of De Ilio. Then there were the usual looting. Pronio came back to Lanciano on May 22 and the town had to pay a lot of money for the initiative of the Republican Giuseppe Brasile, who changed his political field becoming the captain of

the local “masses” while Vincenzo Giordano was appointed local governor.

Only the town of Pescara, defended by Ettore Carafa, duke of Ruvo, was to conquer and the “masses” of Pronio besieged it on May 24, while the same Pronio was appointed general by Ferdinando IV on June 2. The short history, less than 6 months, of the Neapolitan Republic ended on June 13, 1799, while the armies composed of Bourbon soldiers, peasants and brigands, entered Naples under the command of Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo and protected by the fleet of the admiral Horatio Nelson.

The republicans were forced to surrender with a promise to save their own life, but the Bourbons did not keep the agreements by the will of Nelson, and there were brutal reprisals, even in Lanciano, while Fioravante Giordano became governor again.

On June 30, the fortress of Pescara capitulated after plunders and terrible explosions of gunpowders while, on September 4, 1799, Ettore Carafa was beheaded in Naples and there were demonstrations of joy for the return of the Bourbons.

Unfortunately, There was also a deplorable act of cannibalism in Lanciano, when Francesco Carabba and his wife Scolastica were murdered and their bodies were dragged in the streets until when a certain Francesco Paolo Orsini roasted and ate the meat of Francesco Carabba himself.

It was problematical ruling the town and Pronio came back in vain to Lanciano at the end of August 1799.

In September. Ignazio Ferrante was appointed by the court of Naples to organize legal actions in the region of Abruzzo, and delegated his own powers to Lanciano to a lawyer of Chieti, Antonio Gigli, to arrest the republicans on charges of having rebelled against the king.

In December, Republican governors were imprisoned in the rooms of the convent of Sant'Agostino and among the republicans of the common people there was the local writer Uomobono Bocache.

In the first months of the year 1800, some local prisoners and others from the towns near Lanciano were transferred to Chieti and sentenced to prison in March.

By an edict of the King Ferdinando IV in April, some local prisoners were soon released, including Uomobono Bocache, Felice Gigliani and Mansueto Carabba.

The situation was always uncontrolled and on September 12 many people were arrested and killed in Lanciano, such as that Orsini who had eaten Francesco Carabba's meat.

Vincenzo and Fioravante Giordano, and captain Giuseppe Brasile, were arrested and taken to Pescara for their inability to put an end to political crimes, but were soon released.

In that same time, Napoleon Bonaparte reconquered Italy by the victory at Marengo (on June 14, 1800) and the armistice in Florence (in March 1801) with Ferdinando IV, when peace was ratified

between the two contenders and the right of residence for some French contingents in the region of Abruzzo.

By other decrees some Republican prisoners were freed but also, unfortunately, many common criminals. Then the French, after the Treaty of Amiens in May 1802, withdrew from the Kingdom of Naples. Then the French returned to control some provinces and a garrison led by General Soult settled in Lanciano, in the quarter Civitanova, in June 1803.

Meanwhile, some local people had pulled down the chapel with the image of the Bourbon monarchs in Piazza Plebiscito, causing other persecutions against French supporters, or simply suspected, although the Kingdom of Naples was at peace with France.

On May 18, 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte became emperor and was crowned at Notre-Dame de Paris on December 12. His victories worried the court of Naples, which was trying to organize its armies in the event of a French invasion.

In the early days of December 1805, the Spanish captain Navarra arrived at Lanciano, while Fioravante Giordano came back from Naples to counter-attack French troops.

Joseph Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon, was sent with an army to the Kingdom of Naples in February 1806 and became the new king while Ferdinando IV fled to Sicily. In the same month the French troops occupied many towns in Abruzzo without bloodshed and entered Lanciano where they

were welcomed triumphantly. During his short reign Joseph Bonaparte abolished the feudal system by the decree of August 2, 1806 and by the law of September 1, 1806 ordered the distribution of all state lands, closed many monasteries and confiscated ecclesiastical properties. Then, he reduced taxes, established a parliament, reorganized the army and did many public works utilities with the reconstruction and expansion of the roads on the occasion of his visit to Abruzzo in October 1807, when he could not come to Lanciano for a plot he had discovered against him. He also reformed the judicial system in 1808 by the election of the judges of peace and Antonio Madonna was the first in Lanciano that was the seat of the Tribunal while the Court of Appeal was in Chieti.

On July 15, 1808, Joseph became king of Spain and Joaquim Murat, the brother-in-law of Napoleon, was placed on the throne of Naples (just like Joseph, he was only a "viceroy" under Napoleon). On September 16, the court was transferred to Chieti while Lanciano had the Court of Appeal, whose seat was in the current Archbishop's Palace, located in the Largo dell'Appello in the quarter Civitabova. Murat established the registers of civil status, held for centuries by the church, and continued the reforms of his predecessor. After the defeat of Napoleon in Leipzig (on October 1813) the Kingdom of Naples fell and Murat was allied with the Austrians to maintain the throne. He came to nothing and tried,

with the Proclamation from Rimini on March 30, 1815, to gather all the Italian people in their struggle for unity and independence. But people wanted peace, Murat was alone and fled from Italy while the Bourbons returned to Naples on June 8. Then Murat, to regain the kingdom, landed at Pizzo Calabro but was shot on October 13, 1815.

After the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) and the Bourbon restoration Ferdinando IV, who had returned to Naples in June 1815, became Ferdinando I, king of the Two Sicilies (with the article 104 of the Congress of Vienna Sicily was annexed to the new State).

However times had changed and the emerging bourgeoisie wanted a constitution and to be represented in a government, while throughout the Italian peninsula there were strong feelings, ideas and theories to support the unification of Italy. But the movement of the Carbonari was too secret and the message of the conquest of national independence was incomprehensible for the common people.

Some revolts took place in Pescara and Città Sant' Angelo in March 1814.

Because Lanciano had supported the French cause, the Court of Appeal was transferred to L'Aquila in May 1817.

After the popular uprisings of 1820, the general Guglielmo Pepe went to Naples and the king granted a constitution on July 13, 1820. There were free

elections and Lanciano was a district of the “Abruzzo Citeriore” where, on September 3, its citizen Saverio Brasile was elected. Then the king revoked the constitution, dissolved the parliament and returned to the throne in March 1821 with the support of the Austrians.

Even in our territories many local rioters were killed or expelled, such as Gabriel Rossetti of Vasto, a carbonaro precursor of future Italian unity and then a great poet of English literature.

Ferdinando I died in 1825 and his son Francesco I ascended the throne. The latter's son, Ferdinando II, became the new king in 1830 and promulgated several amnesties for political dissidents, but he turned out to be a true despot when repressed the revolts.

Ferdinando II arrived at Lanciano on September 16, 1832, from the sheep-track through the small towns of Torino di Sangro and Santa Maria Imbaro, and the following morning he left the merrymaking town to visit other provinces of its kingdom, without answering Ferdinand II arrived at Lanciano on 16 September 1832 from the path sheep through Torino di Sangro and Santa Maria Imbaro, while the following morning he left the cheerful city to visit other provinces of his kingdom, without answering to the Lanciano's request to become the main city in the district and get the Court of Appeal back.

[From 12 to 18 September 1833, the first “Feste di Settembre”, the town feasts in honour of Santa Maria del Ponte, took place.].

The king Ferdinand II married Maria Cristina of Savoy in 1832 while his hereditary prince Francesco was born in 1836; in the same year Ferdinando II was widowed and the following year he married Mary Therese of Austria. On September 26, 1839, he inaugurated the first section of the Italian railway (Naples-Portici), developed the merchant marine and improved connections between Naples and Sicily.

There were other sectarian agitations in the region of Abruzzo, in 1831, in 1837 and in 1841, but they had always failed for the insufficient adhesion of the common people.

On April 22, 1847, king Ferdinando II returned to Lanciano, through the sheep-track from Torino di Sangro and Santa Maria Imbaro, and he attended a performance at the Teatro Fenaroli, then dedicated to the hereditary prince Francesco and built in 1840 together with the first cemetery in the hamlet of Valle Santa Croce.

The Lancianesi did not distinguish themselves in the years of the unification of Italy, when the power of the Bourbons broke their resistance and it was rather difficult for most of the common people to realize “utopian words” as “national unity”, “freedom from the stranger”, “confederation of various Italian states under the leadership of the Pope”, “confederation of various Italian states under the dynasty of Savoy”, and so on.

In the elections on April 18, 1848, following the constitution granted by the king on February 10 under the stimulus of the revolt of Palermo, no one

Lancianesi were elected and the deputy of our territories was the great patriot Silvio Spaventa from the small town of Bomba.

The parliament had to be inaugurated in Naples on May 15, 1848, but its activity did not begin because of the bloody fights between the Bourbons and the people.

In the new elections held on June 15, the same deputies of April 18 were elected. But the new parliament had a short life and was dissolved on March 12, 1849.

Some rioters post up antiBourbon leaflets into Lanciano and Charles Madonna (Lanciano 1809-1891), the local hero of the Risorgimento, who had saved his hometown from French reprisal on February 22, 1799, became the secretary of the mazzinian "Giovine Italia" in Naples, but was arrested on December 1850, then sentenced and released.

Lanciano supported the Bourbons and after the death of Ferdinando II the new king became his son Francesco II, destined to become the last Bourbon king.

The rest of the history is well-known. The 1089 "red shirts" of Giuseppe Garibaldi liberated the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in September-October 1860 while the Piedmontese army led by generals Cialdini and Fanti had conquered the northern and central Italian peninsula with the exception of Rome, the region of Veneto and part of the region of Lazio.

The kingdom of the Two Sicilies came to its end at the moment that Garibaldi gave it away to the king Vittorio Emanuele II of Savoy, on October 27, 1860, at their historical meeting near the small town of Teano.

Vittorio Emanuele II did not come to Lanciano and in the afternoon of October 18 he was welcomed to Chieti where he attended a Holy Mass in the cathedral of San Giustino while, shortly after, he took a walk along Corso Marrucino surrounded by the enthusiasm of the people.

On September 8, 1860, Lanciano had joined the new kingdom of Italy.

Lanciano had 16,000 inhabitants in 1856 and 18,000 ones in 1861.

In February-March 1861, the first parliament of Italy was inaugurated, the capital city was transferred from Turin to Florence on September 15, 1864, the region of Veneto was annexed in July 1866, until when, after the liberation of Rome on September 20, 1870, the whole of Italy was united with Rome as its capital city.

Unfortunately the glorious Italian Risorgimento had "bloodstained hands" due to the armies of Garibaldi and Savoy that looted towns and killed many innocent people.

The Central-Southern Italy, from 1861 to 1867, was shocked by the brigandage and bloody battles between the brigands and the new official power, after which there were five thousand dead. The

brigandage was supported by the Bourbons exiled in Rome and by the clergy against the new Italian rulers; but it also arose from the dissatisfaction of the peasants when the lands were given to wealthy owners, by the general call to arms that removed the workforce from their families and by the economic crisis.

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Thus the peasants, the seventy per cent of the population, had a liking for brigands and the district of Lanciano was the theatre of many battles by some former soldiers of the Bourbon army and small gangs composed of underage criminals who made plunders, kidnappings, tortures, killings with the catastrophic need for guerrilla warfare and self-financing. They kept in check government forces by exploiting their extraordinary mobility and the perfect knowledge of lands and cities, mountains and woods, with sometimes the complicity of the people. Brigands were dressed in black, wore wide-brimmed hats and

had long beards and hair falling on their shoulders, so that they seemed much older than their age (on average they were about twenty-five). In January 1861, there was a massacre in the territory of the small town of Poggiofiorito, when a platoon of guards coming from Lanciano went to capture the band of Nunzio Mecola of Arielli and many Lancianesi, including the lieutenant Filippo Prosini, were killed and beheaded. The band's leaders had curious and famous nicknames. The Lancianese Antonio Fanci, born in the quarter Civitanova, was known as "Strillo" ("Scream") because of his intimidating band of forty members while people took refuge in their homes when the bandit "Stelle" was arriving. Nicola Colaneri was born in Castelfrentano in 1845 and became the protagonist of many bloody "exploits" in the hamlets of Lanciano of Sant'Onofrio, Rizzacorno, Colle Campitelli and other neighboring ones, where he was well-known as "Zacarèlle", which means in our dialect a person who is putting on frills. Then Domenico Valerio of Casoli, nicknamed "Cannone", which is expressly "Channon" for his band, the biggest and the most dangerous in our areas.

In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lanciano played a fundamental role in the national and world-culture by the important literary works of the local and famous Rocco Carabba's Publishing House which contributed significantly to 'form the consciences of the Italian people'.

Lanciano also changed its "urban face" and the year 1879 was crucial in its millenary history by the first town planning made by the local engineer Filippo Sargiacomo (1839-1922). The Municipality of Lanciano had announced a competition on August 10, 1878, widely advertised in the largest Italian cities, but the only one to participate was Sargiacomo who delivered his project on July 31, 1879. By now the historical centre was insufficient to satisfy new local needs, while Lanciano had to go beyond its walls to project itself into the future. The first works concerned Via dei Frentani, Corso del Popolo (now Corso Roma) and, above all, Piazza Plebiscito, the ancient architectural centre around which the ancient town developed in the Middle Ages, which was now becoming the main axis of the extension of the new town. The level ground of Piazza Plebiscito showed a steep slope in the part of the street that led to the current covered market and, to reduce the gap of its altitude, it was necessary to pull down some porticoes, which extended from the current Town Hall up to the Salita dei Gradoni and joined Via Corsea by another portico starting from the current Corso Roma. Some houses have been demolished and there were many disputes between the municipality and private citizens. These first works lasted until 1885 and the streets of the historical centre had a new flooring and became five metres wide. The main architectural orientations had been traced and, towards the end of the century, the

buildings located between the cathedral and the area below the bell tower of the church of San Francesco of Assisi were pulled down.

In the years from 1890 to 1900, many Lancianesi, like millions of Italians, had left Italy overcrowded for the Americas, wearing only a suit and a cardboard suitcase to try their luck abroad. They had emigrated to escape unemployment, low wages and exorbitant taxes, and emigration offered new ways of working and living for peasants and craftsmen.

In the early twentieth century, houses were supplied with drinking water by building the aqueduct called Verde (referring to the Verde river), coming from the mountains of the small town of Fara San Martino and about forty kilometres long. Thus the greatest part of the citizenship had water and on June 5, 1904, a large fountain was inaugurated in Piazza Plebiscito to symbolize the important event.

Around the same time the centre of the town had its first telephone lines, many schools had been built in some hamlets and Lanciano had begun to be sufficiently enlightened (but, nowadays, in 2019, many streets of our hamlets are still in darkness and some rural areas do not have sewers).

Meanwhile Sargiacomo, under the impulse of the municipal administration of Major Gerardo Berenga (1860-1945), was updating his initial plan, and the countryside of the Fiera quarter saw the birth of

Corso Trento and Trieste (1905), parallel to Corso della Bandiera, and the glorious Palazzo degli Studi (1911) which was the seat of the important Gymnasium.

In the First World War 270 Lancianesi died to defend national interests.

During the years of Fascism they were built many noble mansions in the Art Nouveau style (in the 1920<sup>s</sup>), as well as tenement houses in the Fiera quarter (1926), plus the Communal Arcades (1927) and a beautiful Communal Park (1926-28). In the same 1920<sup>s</sup> the first nucleus of the current hospital was built in the lands of the hamlet of San Giacomo della Fiera being now the hospital (1843) near Corso della Bandiera too small.

[In the years following the unification of Italy Lanciano needed a railway station. Finally, in 1909, the building of the Sangritana railway began to connect Lanciano, which had 18,000 inhabitants, with Ortona and its inland small towns crossed by the Sangro river which inspired the name of the railway line. In August 1912, the Sangritana railway station had just been built nearby the end of Corso Trento e Trieste where the first train from San Vito-Lanciano arrived. Already in 1915 were opened the railway stations of Ortona, Marina of San Vito, San Vito Chietino, Treglio, Castelfrentano, Guardiagrele, Casoli, Archi, Atessa, Villa Santa Maria, Castel di

Sangro and Ateleta. There were improvements in terms of civilization, economy and transitivity, until when the railway was closed due to the damage of the Second World War in 1943. After the war the railway to San Vito Chietino-Lanciano-Castelfrentano was reopened and only in the 1950's the Sangritana railway was completely rebuilt and modernized after the vigorous protests of isolated inland small towns. Then Lanciano had a lot of traffic being well connected with Pescara and, nowadays, with the main national and European trains. The new local station had been built in 2001 behind the convent of Sant'Antonio da Padova, in the lands of the hamlet of Santa Croce.]

In 1930's Lanciano enjoyed a good quality of life and was full of hotels, restaurants, industries, coffee-houses and other commercial activities of a very active population. In the same thirties, the two streets parallel to Viale delle Rose were built.

[At the very end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth one, traditional theatrical activities were becoming increasingly obsolete and were replaced by the successful formula of the so-called "Café-Chantant". There had been the collapse of traditional theatre and the glorious Teatro Fenaroli immediately became a popular destination and had to reorganize its repertoire. So that everyone could take part in his own story while there were many performances interpreted and written by ordinary people, the "dialectal operettas"

that would have marked the history of Lanciano until 1950<sup>s</sup>. Many inns had been opened for the pleasure of meeting and talking, while spaghetti and wines inspired vernacular verses which have enriched our local idiom. Some of those places were very famous and their characteristic names still live in the memory of townspeople: “La Corona d'Oro” (“The Golden Crown”), “La Salute” (“The Health”) and “La Volpetta” (“The Little Fox”). Another important meeting place was and is Casa della Conversazione (“House of Conversation”), built in 1875 on the first floor of the Town Hall and enlarged in the year 1900 with a large ballroom, which is always the ideal habitat for discussions, social games, meetings and cultural debates. There were also many cafeterias that served as reference points for cultural and lively discussions until the advent of television and cinema which has profoundly changed local life since the early decades of the 1950<sup>s</sup> and 1960<sup>s</sup>.].

The glorious history of Lanciano was inside the soul of its citizens who rebelled against the Nazi occupation in the tragic days of October 5-6 1943; thus, in 1952, the town obtained a gold medal for its past martyrdom from the Italian Republican government.

April 20, 1944, was another terrifying day when, during a celebration of the liberation of Lanciano, at noon in Piazza Plebiscito, some German aeroplanes in withdrawn discharged bombs at random by

making a carnage while joy became a tragedy with many civilian deaths.

The rest is a common history in other Italian cities, such as:

the indefatigable activity of the inhabitants of Lanciano in the immediate post-war period, by a long and difficult reconstruction of its medieval historical centre, the Corso Trento e Trieste, its suburban quarters and its hamlets;

the freedom regained that encouraged citizens to participate in political activities, the victories of the "Democrazia Cristiana" political party allied with other centrist parties, the defeats of the left-wingers political parties, the isolation of the right political party, the successes and betrayals of the electoral promises, the successful careers of the political volte-faces, while the inhabitants reconciled in a peaceful climate without reprisals against the fascists even though many people were beginning to think about the young age of the local rebels who fell during the days of October 5-6 1943;

the migration and depopulation in 1950's, the developments and the crisis of agricultural and industrial activities in 1960's, the unstoppable process of overbuilding that have made Lanciano insufficient of green spaces;

the passion for the Beatles' world-wide popularcultured music that stimulated the artistic creativity of many local groups;

student agitations and industrial crisis in the late 1960<sup>s</sup>;

the political fights in the early 1970<sup>s</sup> between the right and left extremists, fortunately without having left them dead on the streets as unfortunately happened in many other Italian cities;

the boom of private radios and televisions in the 1970<sup>s</sup>;

then politics was upset by corruption while in 1992 “the rope was broken” with the so-called Tangentopoli (which means that people have to pay to find a work), while also in Lanciano there were excellent arrests and it reached the sensational victory of the right party in November 1993, by a vote of protest then became a strong popular consensus in 1997 when a part of the same right party became a civic list allied with another centre-right party and they won against another centre-right party and a centre-left one, while the real centre-right party had clearly won also in 2001 and in the spring of 2006...

[about the judge Antonio Di Pietro and his national and mondial reputation for the so-called “Mani Pulite” (“Clean Hands”) and its fight against corrupt politicians, he was rumoured that he had been engaged to a local girl in 1970<sup>s</sup>, which turned out to be true as I have been confirmed from the man was supposed to be his father-in-law and from the family of the same judge at Montenero di Bisaccia, the birthplace of the latter, about the love story between

“Tonino” Di Pietro and Elsa Di Campli who was born in Lanciano.];

there were also the successes of the local football team in the dilettantish series and then in the fourth ones, up to the bankruptcy in the mid-1980<sup>s</sup> and the successive rebirth, by promotion to the third serie of national football team and the conquest of the semi-professional Italy Cup in 2002;

in the last years local politic situation was stagnant, and local politicians were too busy in their matters without knowing how to solve citizen problems, until May 2011 with the historical victory of centre-left parties allied with two municipal lists, which had approved the town planning planned by the previous local government. Nobody can predict the future...Let's hope for the best!

**THE HISTORICAL CENTRE OF LANCIANO**



The Cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte (centuries XV-XVIII) and its Bell Tower (1610-1621) dominate Piazza Plebiscito in Lanciano.

### **The Historical Centre**

The very ancient town of *Anxanum-Lanzano-Lanciano* has a very aged and fascinating history. The town, enlarged in Roman times, was destroyed at different times by invaders and earthquakes, while its development began in the Middle Ages, as its historical centre shows today, when it was built on three hills (Erminio, Selva and Pietroso) around a central nucleus, the Corte Anteana, the current Piazza Plebiscito, as a reference point for future expansions.

By various writings of ancient local historians we know that the four quarters of the historical centre, Lancianovecchia, Civitanova, Sacca and Borgo, were built in the Middle Ages and, after a careful historical examination, we are only sure that Lancianovecchia was the first quarter while the different periods of birth of Civitanova, Sacca and Borgo, in Norman and Swabian times, overlapped.

Each quarter developed on a hill, crossed by a main street and two parallel ones, around a church that regulated daily life. Then encircling fortified walls were built and people entered through nine narrow stone gates to stop enemies.

Piazza Plebiscito has always been the propelling centre of Lanciano where people met, did business and held public meetings; here it could assisted to the characteristic medieval shows as the performances of the actors of road companies and the sacred processions.

**Piazza Plebiscito** is rich in monuments, such as the majestic **Ponte Diocleziano** on which stands the imposing Cathedral-Basilica of Santa Maria del Ponte. An inscription recovered in 1785, during the great restoration of the new Cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte, tells us the bridge was dedicated to the Roman emperor Diocletian and probably is dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. No one could know what the bridge was like in Roman times, when it could be a simple wooden passageway to connect the town and the lands of the Fiera quarter where the markets took place. The bridge stood in a landscape lacking of the current Cathedral and Corso Trento e Trieste (1905), and was surrounded by the countryside of the Fiera quarter and the area of Pozzo Bagnaro, while the rivulet Pietroso came from the present Ponte della Stella located in Ferro di Cavallo street (which is in the shape of a horseshoe) passed under it. In the year 2000, thanks to archaeological excavations, an ancient path was discovered and opened to the public under Piazza Plebiscito, leading from the Ponte Diocleziano to the slopes of the Pietroso hill, where there are the remains of a Roman cistern located under the Sanctuary of San Francesco of Assisi. What we see today is a medieval bridge repeatedly damaged, repaired, enlarged, superimposed, flanked and strengthened in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, when its present imposing structure was given. Initially, it was built with square stones and probably had three round arches with, undoubtedly, two towers placed at its ends, of which that one sited

towards the Fiera quarter was one of the nine gates of the town, called Santa Maria del Ponte. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, for building the cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte, the valley was deforested and the bridge Diocleziano was enlarged, in height and width, with sandstones and a cross-vault supported by gigantic columns and five pointed arches. So there was a covered passageway for wagons coming from the sheep-track, while its upper part was a crowded footpath during religious functions. So it was built, towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the current pedestrian crossing on the bridge, the "Corridoio", was built with the reinforcement of columns and arches. In the same period the Auditorium, now used for musical concerts and other performances, was built in the covered passage.



Ponte Diocleziano (III century)

Unfortunately, the bridge is also famous for suicides of people throwing, just in the middle of the "Corridoio" after having counted "33 steps", in the valley below after a flight of fifty metres. I never understand why local authorities close the bridge to pedestrian transit after each dead, limiting general freedom and risking creating a precedent with other suicides in some other local place.

At the end of the Ponte Diocleziano, there are the rooms of the ancient hospital of Santa Maria della Sanità, of the second half of the XV century, and the church of San Giovanni di Dio, of the end of the XVI century, both closed to worship and whose buildings were the seat of the first bishop of Lanciano in 1515.

The fascinating history of the **Cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte** has developed slowly over the Ponte Diocleziano in the course of ages. No other



church symbolizes so much the religious and folkloristic spirit of Lanciano so as its cathedral. According to tradition, in 1088, men at work while they were restoring the Ponte Diocleziano found out an earthen statue of the Madonna with the Child, which is still venerated as the patroness of Lanciano,

the Madonna del Ponte. Soon after it was built a little chapel under the bridge, at first dedicated to Santa Maria delle Grazie. A larger chapel dedicated to the Madonna del Ponte was built at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and that one was the first nucleus of the current Cathedral. But the **first Cathedral** of the town was that one of **Santa Maria dell'Annunziata** very ancient and documented since 1031, which was built on the ruins of the ancient church of Santa Maria in Platea. The church of Santa Maria dell'Annunziata, restored in 1397 and completed in 1412 with the rose window, became the first cathedral of Lanciano when the town had its diocese in 1515 (and the archbishop seat in 1562). Little by little the chapel was becoming the church of Santa Maria del Ponte and it was connected to the first cathedral of Santa Maria dell'Annunziata by an internal wall around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. So the local faithful had the "Cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte e dell'Annunziata". The first cathedral of Santa Maria dell'Annunziata, with a single nave and three altars consecrated to the Virgin Mary, San Giovanni and San Liberato, had its religious importance only on holidays. The building of the current cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte began in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but its architectural developments were always slow until 1785, when the decisive works to enlarge it began and the superb dome was added. In 1819 the ancient cathedral of the Santa Maria dell'Annunziata was demolished due to negligence and all the energies

were directed towards the expansion of that new one. Today, the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte is a beautiful neoclassical model. The façade has three portals and four huge columns surmounted by a very large balcony. The only nave leads to the high altar, where, inside a niche, it is possible to see the earthen statue of the Madonna with the Child and the large statues of Sant' Ambrogio, Sant' Anastasio, Sant' Agostino and San Girolamo. There are also side altars adorned by religious paintings, a Holy Sacrament Chapel and a 16<sup>th</sup> century silver pastoral. The church receives its own light from large windows in stainless glass and precious biblical frescoes, painted by Giacinto Diano, can be seen on the walls. Since 1909 the Cathedral is a Basilica.

The Cathedral was closed several times during the twentieth century. For damages from 1929 to September 1933, when it was reopened to celebrate the first centenary of the crowning of the Madonna del Ponte. From 1952-56 when, due to the collapse of some beams, many restorations were made, many marbles were added on the high altar and on the walls, the façade and the dome were rebuilt and enlarged, and the statue of the Madonna del Ponte was restored. From 1984-1994 as a consequence of an earthquake.

Our Cathedral-Basilica of Santa Maria del Ponte is, together with the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, the pride and the greatest expression of the art and religiousness of Lanciano. Finally we

recall that many local bishops and archbishops were buried under the same cathedral.

[About another legend of the apparition of the statue of the Madonna on the Bridge, it must be said that it dates back to the IV century and was venerated until 726, when the iconoclasts wanted to abolish the cult of sacred images and the statue itself was hidden in a column under the Ponte Diocleziano. There is another version, documented by five letters written from 1762-75 by the Archbishop Ludovico Antonio Antinori to the local canonical Silvestro Cinerini. Those letters have disappeared, but the local writer Uomobono Bocache transcribed them telling us there was a vision of the Madonna that became a painting from which some sculptor inspired to make the statue around the half of the XV century, or only its lower part, because tradition tells us that in 1088 only half of the statue was found, in its upper part (it is evident the joint of its lower part.). History or legend? Only the local devotion to the Madonna del Ponte cannot be doubted ... and we have a magnificent Cathedral-Basilica!].

The nearby bell tower of the cathedral, called '**Lu Campanile**', stands majestically in Piazza Plebiscito as a symbol of Lanciano. It is a large bricked tower, built from 1610 to 1621, 37 metres high, it has a quadrangular shape and three-storied decorated in Ionic, Doric and Corinthian orders. From its summit, we hear a tinkling of bells every morning from 8.00 to 8.30 and in the evening of December 23 (during La Squilla, a more important tradition than Christmas in Lanciano). Every day a cannon shot is fired at noon.



In Piazza Plebiscito there is a marble **Monument dedicated to local fallen in the First World War** (inaugurated on September 13, 1926 by the Royal Prince Umberto of Savoy)...



...and the **Town Hall** of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. [In 1862 the municipality was transferred from the convent of San Francesco of Assisi, of which some rooms became the seat of the Court, to the site of the ancient College of the Scuole Pie near the Fenaroli Theatre, and in the last decades of the nineteenth century and early twentieth one this municipal building was enlarged.]



### The quarter Lancianovecchia

The first **quarter** of the town, **Lancianovecchia**, developed on the hill called Erminio, but we don't know when it was founded, or after a destruction by the Longobards in 571 reported by oral tradition, or after a terrible earthquake in 770. However, a castle was probably the first building of the quarter, whose ruins can be seen in Via degli Agorai (the "Street of the Needle-Cases"), but its current architecture of the quarter dates back to the X century.

The main street is Via dei Frentani, which connects the Lancianovecchia quarter and Piazza Plebiscito, while its parallel streets are Via degli Agorai and Via dei Bastioni ("Street of the Ramparts").

In the quarter, there are ancient buildings, little squares, blind alleys and very characteristic medieval walls.



Immediately at the beginning of Via dei Frentani there is the **Fenaroli Theatre**, built from 1840-50 near the site where since 1735 there was the Collegio of the Scuole Pie, of which the Scolopi Fathers had made the centre of local education. The theatre was dedicated to a Bourbon prince and then to the famous local musician Fedele Fenaroli. Outside, it shows a large cornice supported

by four columns and, among these, three large bronze portals. Inside, there is a huge concert-hall, with 57 richly embroidered boxes located between the stalls and the gallery. The Lancianesi have always been theatregoers, despite the advent of moving cinemas and, later, radio and television. Nowadays, successful plays are often sold out for months in advance.

Near the theatre there was also the church of San Giuseppe Calasanzio.

At the end of the ascent of Via dei Frentani, there is Largo Tapia, with the **Palace** called of the **Capitano**, recognizable for its bright red colour, and close-by there are two other palaces of ancient local noble families datable to the XVI and XIX centuries.



Further on, a large bell tower stands out in front of you, the **Torre of San Giovanni Battista** called “Candelora”, which is the only evidence of the church built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and demolished in 1949. This church is documented in the *Book of Decime* (consisting in a tax of one tenth of the profits due to the church), that

is the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3740, as *S. Johannis*. The tower was built with bricks and stones and has a parallelepiped shape divided into two parts by a cornice.

Always along Via dei Frentani there is the **church of Sant'Agostino**, dating back, by Pope Bulls, to the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was restored in 1690 while other substantial modifications of its interior were made in 1827, in 1910 and, above all, in 1920, when the marble high altar containing many Sacred Relics, such as the head and an arm of St. Simon the Apostle, was built. The façade made of free stones has a Gothic portal and many friezes and sculptures, such as the group of the Virgin and the Child placed into the fanlight. Its interior surface in Baroque style has a nave and, among other religious treasures, there are wooden statues of saints, pictures about biblical themes, a baptistery and a 17<sup>th</sup> century candelabrum. The bell tower was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The church was an Augustinian convent and the monks left it in the mid-seventeenth; they returned at the end of the same century and stayed there till the abolition of the convents in 1809. In the church of Sant'Agostino some relics of the saints Simon the Apostle, Judas



Thaddeus and the saint Apollonia are preserved and venerated since the mid-fifteenth century in the chapel of the saints Simone and Judas Thaddeus, to whom the confraternity having their names is dedicated.

Next to the church of Sant'Agostino, there is the little **church of S. Croce**, built in 1583. The oral tradition tells us that it was a stable when a second Miracle Eucharistic took place here around 1270, and whose Sacred Relics exist and are preserved into the town of Offida, in the region of the Marche (see the *chapitre of Eucharistic Miracles*).



At the end of Via dei Frentani, there are the typical two-storey **Botteghe Medievali** (15<sup>th</sup> century). There are two ancient doors on the ground floor: one of which has a pointed arch and the other recalls the 13<sup>th</sup> century Burgundian style. Its upper floor can be reported to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and you can read an inscription of the name of his owner, Nicolaus Rubeus.



Shortly after Piazza dei Frentani, there is the oldest **Church** in Lanciano, **San Biagio**, documented since 1059 and in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3737, as *S. Blaxii*. It has a rectangular shape and was built with bricks and square stones in Romanesque style, while its portal is off from the 13<sup>th</sup>



century and its bell tower with mullioned windows is of the 14<sup>th</sup> one. There is a very ancient crypt under it and there was also the little church of San Giorgio documented in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The church is closed for worship and is only open during the celebration of the saint on 3 February.

In the medieval Lanciano, all surrounded by walls, one entered through nine stone gates and the only “survived” is **Porta San Biagio**, located behind the church of the same name above the sheep-track that crossed the Pozzo Bagnaro’s area where there was the Fonte of Santa Lummina. Porta San Biagio was built with stones and has a 13<sup>th</sup> stoned pointed arch.

here were two other stone gates in the quarter Lancianovecchia, that one called Sant'Antonio of Vienna, built a century after the namesake 13<sup>th</sup> century monastery with a hospital located under Porta San Biagio, and the other called Pozzo Bagnaro, of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, located in Via dei Bastioni, at the beginning of the steep descent leading to the valley near the Ponte Diocleziano.



The historiography of Lanciano of the mid-fifteenth century recalls the church with the adjoining hospital of Santa. Caterina, which was near Porta San Biagio, but due to the narrowness of the place it must have been a simple chapel and some houses were used as an emergency hospital during the plagues.

Lancianovecchia had five other parish churches: San Biagio, San Giovanni Battista, San Lorenzo, San Martino and San Maurizio, but in 1827 the church of Sant'Agostino became the only parish one. The crumbling church of San Maurizio was pulled down in 1825, while that one of San Martino was demolished around 1850 and the other one of San Lorenzo around 1880. The church of San Martino

was located in Largo Tapia in the same place as the current Palace of the Capitano, while the churches of San Maurizio and San Lorenzo were in the squares of the same name. Those churches were documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, as *S. Mauriti*, number 3738, *S. Laurentii*, number 3739, and *S. Martini*, number 3741.

The church of San Maurizio probably existed since the 7<sup>th</sup> century and it must have been the first religious building in Lanciano.

Lancianovecchia was also known for its potters, coppersmiths and needle-cases in the medieval world, although craftsmanship flourished until a few years ago. There is also Via del Ghetto in the quarter, perhaps inhabited by Jews in the seventeenth century.



Ruins of the very ancient Longobard castle, of which local historians believe it would have been the first nucleus of Lanciano.



The Lancianovecchia quarter



Alleys of the Lancianovecchia quarter

### The quarter Civitanova

The building of the **quarter Civitanova** began on the Selva hill in the X century, when people from nearby villages and merchants who came to local fairs settled here (Civitanova means a new town). Walking through its streets and typical narrow alleys, we can guess that the original nucleus of the quarter developed around the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

The main street is Via Garibaldi with the parallel ones of Via Umberto I and Via della Ripa.

You will notice immediately the **Torri Montanare**, so called because they are located in front of the mountainous system of the Majella. They are two towers, made



of bricks and stones, which were part of the medieval walls. The internal tower, of the XI century, has a rectangular shape and the other, external, built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, is lower and square. Inside there is a large space for outdoor theatre performances and other events.

The Towers are in a good state after the restoration in the 1970's and from here you can enjoy one of the best urban landscapes.

Next to them was another door, Santa Maria la Nuova, which gradually lost its defensive function until it was demolished.



The Torri Montanare in Lanciano

Nearby, there is the **church of Santa Giovina**, built from 1504-1513 after having pulled down and on the same site of that ancient church of Santa Maria Maddalena that was documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3757, as *S. Marie Magdalene*. The church of Santa Giovina was at first named Santa Maria la Nova with the monastery (1586), whose rooms were used as a



prison until a few decades ago, and was dedicated to Santa Giovina in 1850. Since then the relics of the saint are kept close to the high altar where people venerate her on 20 July 20. The church is made up of bricks arranged horizontally on the façade with three portals and, on the top of the central one, there is a very simple lunette with an ogival arch without decorations and, above, circular stained glass windows. The interior has a nave with large and small columns. The church was restored mainly in 1860.

Close to the church of Santa Giovina, you see the immense **Palazzo Arcivescovile** of the sixteenth century and the adjacent Seminary of the seventeenth century with the ancient portal of the demolished Cathedral of Santa Maria dell'Annunziata and, inside, there is the little church of San Gaetano built in 1680. There is also the Diocesan Museum, rich in many sacred objects



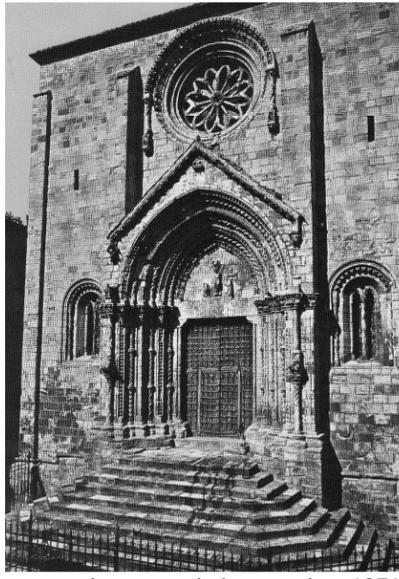
useful for the conservation and reconstruction of the history of Lanciano. In the nearby Via Finamore there are a large building used as a school until some years ago, built in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that was, at first, the church and the hospital of San Nicola dei Ferriati and later, on the same site, it was built the church of San Carlo later dedicated to San Pantaleone, documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3758, as *S. Pantaleonis*, which was the seat of the confraternity of San Carlo and then it was destined to receive some Clarisse and to the education of girls from poor families.

Going along Via Garibaldi, right in the centre of the quarter, there is the church of **Santa Maria Maggiore**, one of the most beautiful monuments in Abruzzo. By seeing it, it is easy to think what was the faith in the Middle Ages but it is not only an architectural jewel, but also a container of various treasures of religious art.

According to an old parchment it was built in 1227.

Legend claims it was erected where once there was a temple

dedicated to Apollo, but excavations carried out in 1971 determined that it had never been a pagan temple of Apollo under it and the church existed since 1180. The church is documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3743, as *S. Marie*. Many restorations have marked its secular



history and the decisive works in 1968 gave the church its primitive structure of the twelfth century. When you are inside life seems to be slower and easier. Along the side of Via Garibaldi, it is possible to see its bell tower with several columns, mullioned windows on the first floor and three mullioned windows on the rest; the Gothic portal was the main entrance door in the Romanesque church. But it is in the small square parallel to it that the church shows its greatness and architectural value. The portal, the rose window and the entire marvelous façade were skillfully carved by the local Francesco Petrini in 1317. Petrini himself, after having modified the original church, had opened the way for subsequent expansions. The extraordinariness of the Burgundian Gothic style is evident in all its regal aspect which dates back to the first works made in the XVI century when the church was enlarged on the right side of the façade, with the addition of the Renaissance style rose window. Other expansions were made in 1540 and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. You enter the church through a Gothic portal located in a side street. Inside it, with one central nave and two aisles, you can watch the Romanesque round-arches while, going towards the high altar, an extraordinary mixture of Romanesque and Gothic styles catch the eye. To the right of the high altar, you can admire a wooden triptych of the 16th century, by Girolamo Galizi of Bergamo, depicting the Madonna with the Child and Saints. Behind the high altar, there is a large altarpiece of the Assumption of Mary painted

by Giuseppanagelo Ronzi of Penne in 1811, but, above all, you must focus all your attention on the fantastic specimen of Sacred jeweller's art, a large, engraved and enamelled processional silver cross, one and a half metre high, worked by Nicholas of Guardiagrele in 1422. The church of Santa Maria Maggiore is the seat of the confraternity of the Piety and Conception.

Another gate, called Porta Della Noce, was located on the borders of the Civitanova and Sacca quarters. There are also some palaces of ancient noble families in Via Garibaldi.



Door of entry of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore



The two rose windows of Santa Maria Maggiore's



Ramparts in the Civitanova quarter



A fountain in the Civitanova quarter



The native house of the author Maurizio Angelucci, in Santa Maria Maggiore Street, at Alley n° 10, number 10, in the Civitanova quarter in Lanciano



Garibaldi Street in the Civitanova quarter





Alleys in the Civitanova quarter in  
Lanciano





Panorama of the Civitanova quarter



Salita dei Gradoni (a very large staircase)

### The **quarter Sacca**

The **quarter Sacca** began to develop on the hill called Selva starting from the XI century as an extension of the quarter Civitanova. Sacca can also be derived from the duties which were paid here, in Latin "saccus", or from "o sack", with reference to its building when was necessary to create a place to defend the town from invaders.

Via Garibaldi, coming from the quarter Civitanova, is the main street around which medieval houses and narrow alleys were built, and its parallel streets are still Via della Ripa and Via Valera.

The church of San Pellegrino, documented in the XI century and destroyed by fire in 1206, was the referent building for the development of this urban area.

The church of San Nicola was built on its ruins in 1242, and it became monumental when it was transformed and expanded with the adjacent church of San Rocco over the centuries.

The **church of San Nicola** is documented in the Rationes Decimarum of 1324-1325, number 3744, as *S. Nicolai parochiales*. The ancient entrance of the church was at the end of Via Garibaldi, where there is still a portal, but today we enter by a side access located under the 15<sup>th</sup> Bell Tower with mullioned windows in Romanesque and Gothic styles. Inside, the church has a rectangular shape with three naves and a high altar in marble where the statue of St. Nicholas is placed into a large niche. Among many other ecclesiastical treasures there are a 15<sup>th</sup> silver monstrance, several oil-paintings and wooden statues of saints. A few decades ago, in the underlying rooms of the church, some very ancient parchments and frescoes, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, were discovered. They constitute its religious patrimony together with an interesting museum. St. Nicholas is celebrated on December 6<sup>th</sup>.



Church of San Nicola (XIII century)

Very little is known about the **church of San Rocco**, dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century by some ancient documents. It was built by leaning it on the structure of the church of San Nicola and because of the large size of the religious building the two churches are very attractive, so that the quarter Sacca is better known as "Sande Rocche". The façade of the church of San Rocco is made of bricks like the bell tower located to the left of the roof, and there are two columns richly intertwined with spiralling elements of flowers on both sides of its portal. Internally, there are the statues of San Rocco, located in a small chapel to the left, another of San Sebastiano, to the right of the main altar, a Madonna with the Dead Christ and religious paintings. Worshipping is possible on January 20 (San Sebastiano) and on August 16 (when the popular feast of San Rocco takes place). The church is the seat of the confraternity of San Rocco.

Porta San Nicola was near the two churches and was demolished in 1863.

In nearby Via Cavour, there is the church of **Santa Maria degli Angeli**, built in 1584, which is a product of medieval and Renaissance epochs. The whole façade is made of bricks and stones, with a portal located under a tympanum where you can see an inscription carved in marble: “Ave Regina Angelorum”. The church is not open for worship.



Not far from here and near the Market Hall, there is the four pointed arcades of the **Ponte di Lamaccio**, also called of the “Mazza” or “Ammazzo”, documented since the 11<sup>th</sup>



century, which was reinforced in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and reconstructed in 1837, to connect the quarters of Sacca and Lancianovecchia. The name Lamaccio was not a surname but it indicated a marshy area caused by an open sewer.

### **The quarter Borgo**

The **quarter Borgo** began to develop on the hill of Pietroso in the XI century, simultaneously with the growth of the quarters of Civitanova and Sacca and around the ancient church of the Saints Legonziano

and Domiziano, on which the present church of San Francesco of Assisi was built in 1252-58.

Borgo, from the Germanic word Burg, means a suburban part of the town. Corso Roma (the ancient Corso del Popolo) is the main street and its by-roads are Via dei Tribunali and Via Fieramosca.

Along Corso Roma there is, on the left, a 15<sup>th</sup> century portico located under a common house that was an ancient mint of the Angevin state. A **column** of that portico, called **of the Ortonesi**, wants to remember a deplorable episode of the struggles between Lanciano and Ortona to take advantage of the port of San Vito Marina. When some Lancianesi cut the ears to seven Ortonesi and they mixed their bleeding ones with the lime during the building of this column.



Not far from the column, on the right side of Corso Roma, there is the **church of Purgatorio**, opened for worship in 1737. Its neoclassical façade is made of bricks and stones and has a portal, a rectangular rose window and a quadrangular bell tower of 1805. Its interior is mainly made in Baroque style around the large columns, the high altar in marble and two small lateral ones. The church is enriched by religious

treasures that belonged to the ancient cathedral of Santa Maria dell'Annunziata: wooden statues of saints, oil paintings, vestments, a bronze bell, a reliquary containing the blood of San Pantaleone, ex-voto, and so on. The statue of San Pantaleone came from the lost church of the same name located in the quarter Civitanova. As soon as you enter, to the right, there is the statue of the Madonna of the Carmine. The church also houses two statues of Our Lady of the Rosary, one flanked by those of St. Dominic and St. Catherine, and the other, placed inside a niche, which is the protagonist, on Easter morning in Piazza Plebiscito, of the meeting of the Saints, with the statues of St. John the Baptist and Our Saviour. The church of Purgatorio is the seat of the confraternity of the Santo Rosario.



The façade of the **church of San Francesco of Assisi** is in front of the church of Purgatorio while, if you return to Piazza Plebiscito, you will notice the whole shape of the church and its 15<sup>th</sup> century bell tower with the apse, the arcades, the mullioned windows and an octagonal dome. The sanctuary is very renowned and visited every day by pilgrims coming from all over the world to make a profession of faith towards the first Eucharistic Miracle of the Catholic Church which, according to oral tradition, but Sacred Relics exist, took place here in the year 700. [According to tradition, the Eucharistic Miracle took place in the church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano, documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3742, as *S. Leguntiani*, which was located under the current San Francesco of Assisi's bell tower. The church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano was officiated by the Basilians and tradition tells us they were expelled in the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the same church came under the religious authority of the Benedictine abbey of San Giovanni in Venere; then it returned to the diocese of Chieti and in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century it was assigned to Franciscan Friars of the Minorites. When the convents were abolished by Napoleon



in 1809, the church became the seat of the “decurionato” (the town council) until when it was transferred to the college of the Scuole Pie on which the current Town Hall was later built. Then the monks left the convent and returned there in 1953. The monastery was in the building close to the current church of San Francesco of Assisi and until about thirty years ago it was the seat of the court and then of a secondary school.]. The façade of San Francesco of Assisi’s church is very simple with its large stones, the rose window and the fanlight lacking of decorations, but its bronze door, manufactured in 1975, is rich in various scenes about the history of the Eucharistic Miracle and the life of San Francesco of Assisi, while the upper part of the same façade has a variety of sandstones which are the remains of the ancient cathedral of Santa Maria dell’Annunziata. Until a few years ago there were many Baroque ornaments of unique beauty, but the church has been restored in recent years and has regained its 18<sup>th</sup> century artistic whiteness. Internally, there is a single nave with large columns and the high altar in marble where it is possible to venerate the Sacred Relics of the first Eucharistic Miracle in the history of the Catholic Church placed into a silver monstrance of 1713. There are also side-altars, some shrines, a Processional Cross, some paintings by Donato Teodoro of Chieti and other sacred objects into the large sacristy. During the last restoration works in the year 2000, some 16<sup>th</sup>

century frescoes representing the Last Judgement reappeared in the rooms of the church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano, used for centuries as private shops, which had never noticed anything. The church of San Francesco of Assisi, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was the seat of the confraternity of Santa Maria dei Raccomandati.



Church of San Francesco d'Assisi in Lanciano (1250-58), where the Sacred Relics of the first Eucharistic miracle recorded in the history of the Catholic Church are kept.

About fifty metres from here, right in the middle of Corso Roma, there is the **church of Santa Lucia**, built in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century when the populous quarter Borgo quarter needed another parish church. It was destroyed several times and the most important reconstructions occurred at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> one. Legend tells us that it was built on the ruins of a temple dedicated to Venus (called Lucina by the Frentani). The bricked façade has



a Gothic portal, a rose window and a truncated 16<sup>th</sup> century bell tower. Its interior with a single nave is striking for its Baroque style that shines in all its splendor like the marble high altar, the side-altars, the large and small columns, and the statues of St. Raphael, San Francesco Saverius, Father Kolbe, the Sacred Hearth of Jesus, St. Joseph with the Child and that one of Our Lady of Sorrow placed into a chapel to the left of the high altar, where there is also a large 15<sup>th</sup> century wooden statue of Santa Lucia. The majesty of the church is also visible in Via Fieramosca and in the adjacent alley. In 1809 the church was closed

by the Napoleonic edict and the parish was returned to the church of San Francesco of Assisi. Then the church of Santa Lucia was reopened for worship and had religious jurisdiction over the hamlets Villa Carminello, Villa Andreoli, Villa Martelli and Villa Stanazzo until the twentieth century. The popular feast of Santa Lucia take place on December 13. The church of Santa Lucia was the seat of the confraternity of Sette Dolori.

At the end of Corso Roma, there is the **church of Santa Chiara**, whose date of foundation is unknown. But in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3763, it was called *S. Clare monialum*. By other documents of the XIII century we know it was a monastery of Clarisse, who were recalled to their religious duties at the end of the XVI century, when the same monastery was assigned to that one of San Francesco of Assisi. Probably there will be been an exodus of nuns to the lands of the hamlet Serre, where I discovered a little house that was a hermitage in an area remembered as Difenza delle Monache. Towards the middle of the XVII century the monastery was enlarged on



the local walls as can be seen near the Aragonese Torrione. With the abolition of the convents in 1809 the same monastery was used as a barracks during the Second World War. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it returned to being a church with restorations in Baroque and neoclassic styles. Its bricked façade has a portal, an austere fanlight and four rectangular windows arranged horizontally and vertically under a fronton surmounted by the bell tower. Its rectangular interior with a single nave sees the predominant white colour in the vaults, with the dome and eight small round windows above the marble high altar which has, at its sides, two columns adorned with floral elements and, to its left, the chapel where the faithful worship the large wooden statues of Dead Christ (which parades along the main streets of Lanciano during the solemn Good Friday Procession, organized by the Charitable Archconfraternity of San Filippo Neri which goes out the church at about seven o'clock in the evening.). In the church of Santa Chiara there are also noteworthy 19<sup>th</sup> sacred pictures by Francesco Paolo Palizzi and a 17<sup>th</sup> Silver Cross.

At the end of Corso Roma there was Porta Santa Chiara, pulled down in the middle of the nineteenth century. - A little church of St. Philip Neri, which was built in the XVI century on the same site of a church dedicated to San Giuseppe,

was located until a few years ago in Via dei Tribunali.

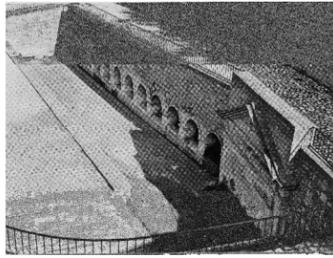
Just before the church of Santa Chiara, at the end of the steep Salita delle Monache, there is an ancient **religious building**, built and inhabited by the **Filippini Fathers** during the XVII century, then assigned to the nuns of Santa Chiara and in the second half of the twentieth century it was used as a nursery school, while it is now an active and pleasant meeting place for the elderly.



Behind Santa Chiara's church stands a large round keep, the **Aragonese Torrione**. It was built in 1480, when the Aragoneses had completed the construction of the local walls. Outside, it is made of bricks and internally is composed of a mixture of bricks and stones. It was restored in 1972.



Going down for about a hundred metres there is the **Fonte del Borgo**, a washing place of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is a brickwork with a series of arcades with, at the centre, six heads of lions from whose mouths drinking water flows.



Pietrosa Square in the Borgo quarter

At the beginning of the road leading to the Fonte del Borgo, there was Porta Sant'Angelo, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and demolished in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and nearby, where there is now an ancient house, there was the church of Sant'Angelo with a hospital. If you look at some old photo of Lanciano from the early twentieth century you will notice that the large and historical Piazza Pietroso located behind the Sanctuary of San Francesco of Assisi, was a huge, deep and very large moat that had just been filled with earth. In the quarter Borgo there is the characteristic Piazza del Malvò located between Via Corsea and Via Umberto I°, at the quarter Civitanova borders. The square takes its name from the ancient Valley Malavalle (to indicate a bad-smelling filthy place caused by an open-air sewer) which had a deep depression of ground which was stuffed in the XVIII century when it became the current Piazza Malvò. Here, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was the Ponte dei Calzolari with arcades that went from the beginning from Via Corsea to Salita dei Gradoni built and built on the sewer leading to Ponte di Lamaccio. In this Lanciano's area each street was marked by trades and shoemakers and prostitutes were in Via Corsea, sellers of ropes in Via dei Funai, commercial and public shops in Via Umberto I°, and so on.

**LANCIANO'S SUBURBANS QUARTERS**

The **quarter Mancino** is located in the west area and 100 metres from Corso Trento e Trieste. It is still developing along and around Via del Mancino, ending with a steep descent that leads to the outskirts of Lanciano, and with other streets such as the long Via del Verde (which takes its name from the river Verde) and other ones full of modern buildings and dedicated to the most important rivers of Abruzzo.

There is also the **zone of Santo Spirito** in the neighborhood, so called for the ancient church whose construction was begun in 1293 in the old hamlet Bordella, by will of the abbot Onorio of the order of Morrone. Another proof of its existence is in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1308, number 3468, where we read the *Monasterium S. Spiritus ordinis Murronensium*. A few years ago the church was restored after years of neglect and shows a surprising simplicity in its entire brick structure, the portal, the lunette and the bell tower.

The **church of Santo Spirito** is rich in traditions according to which it was a convent of hermits, in an ideal place for a solitary and contemplative way of life in that area of the medieval countryside of Lanciano countryside. Tradition says that the hermit Pietro di Morrone V



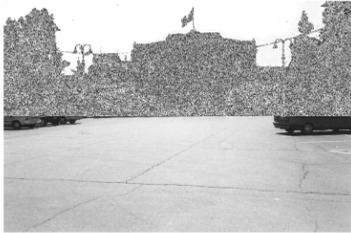
lived here, i. e. who became Pope Celestino V in 1294 and resigned after only six months to escape the supporters of Boniface VIII. who took his place as pope. In 1654 the convent was suppressed, passed to private owners and was inhabited by the cloistered nuns. The church is still closed to worship and is now an interesting museum of Abruzzese transhumance.

Shortly before the beginning of the Mancino district there was the convent of the **Carmelite Fathers**, built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with the annexed church of the Holy Crucifix worshipped as San Mauro that was demolished in 1939. Another church dedicated to San Pio X had to be built on its site, but this purpose wasn't carrying out while the cinema Imperiale was built on it towards the end of 1950<sup>s</sup>. The convent was very extended, as can be seen in a famous lithograph of Lanciano in 1600, where it stands outside the historical centre in the immensity of the countryside. Its well was a tragic tomb of many victims of the bloody struggles between Bourbon and Napoleonic. Some Lanciano's history books make confusion between this convent and the church of Madonna of the Carmine in the hamlet of Villa Carminello, which didn't exist in the XVI century and dates back to 1904 (according to my first dating about it in my *Contradando per Lanciano* in 2002).

The secular area **Fiera**, that is the **fifth** historical **quarter** of the medieval Lanciano, begins immediately after the end of the Ponte Diocleziano and until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was simply a countryside area with ancient houses around the current Corso Bandiera, which takes its name from the flags, citizen and of the kingdom, that the Mastrogiurato raised at opening of the glorious local medieval fairs. This happened at the end of Corso Bandiera, in the area of the main local promenade where people take a walk going up and down (called the “struscio”) from Corso Trento e Trieste). The medieval quarter Fiera was enlarged in 1925-30 with the construction of the first tenement houses in Piazza della Vittoria, with reference to the “happy” end of World War I and the subsequent development of the long Viale delle Rimembranze, flanking the beautiful Villa Comunale, that is the Communal Park built in 1925-28 that ends in a characteristic square area called il “Quadrato” for its shape.



The first citizen hospital (1843), located at the beginning of Corso Bandiera



The old station of Lanciano (XX century)



Corso Bandiera



An alley at the Corso Bandiera in Lanciano



Palazzo degli Studi (1911) in the Corso Trento e Trieste



The main promenade in Lanciano

Il “Quadrato” is part of the **quarter Sant’Antonio** which takes its name from the homonymous **convent of Sant’Antonio da Padova** and, in a nearby roundabout, there is Via per Fossacesia, a long road that leads to the small town of Fossacesia, which ends at a crossroad with traffic lights and roads leading to the town of the sea and the mountains and to the largest and most populous quarter of Lanciano, Santa Rita. The convent of Sant’Antonio da Padova has been developing on the ancient site of the church of Sant’ Angelo della Pace, built around 1430 to commemorate the reconciliation between Lanciano and Ortona, which were fighting for the possession of the port of San Vito, ratified with an act of peace

signed on February 17, 1427, by the jurist and then a Franciscan friar San Giovanni from Capestrano” (a parallel street to Via per Fossacesia is dedicated to the saint). The convent has always been an important religious reference, even when it was closed by Napoleonic decrees in 1809 and in other periods of its history. The oldest part is on the right of the entrance, with its quadrangular cloister of the fifteenth century composed of five brick arches of which the last was added towards the end of the sixteenth century, while the facade is highlighted by the enormous marble surface with a large gallery. There is also a portico at the entrance, with a chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Conception placed just before a stoned portal that leads into the church where other doors let into its refectory, the friars'



rooms and a precious library while, almost everywhere, are many statues and

paintings. The convent of Sant'Antonio da Padova was enlarged in the mid-eighteenth century and there were numerous restorations, the most important of which were made around the early years of the 20th century and in 1930. The convent was badly

damaged during the Second World War when a bomb fell in the middle of its cloister, as can be seen in some photos placed on the same cloister's walls. After the war the convent had to be rebuilt, and it was decided to enlarge it, as actually happened in the second half of the 1950s and at the beginning of the 1960<sup>s</sup>. An orphanage was thus built for the first time in the rooms adjacent to the cloister and on the land destined to be built with a donation dating back to the mid-17th century. The orphanage has been a home for the elderly since 1980. The new convent was completed in the early 1960<sup>s</sup> and then dedicated to Sant'Antonio da Padova. The very high and modern Bell Tower, the Campanile della Pace, visible from neighboring towns such as Guardiagrele and which symbolized the new part of Lanciano, was inaugurated in the early 1970<sup>s</sup>. Inside, the church with a single nave shows a Baroque style in the main altar, the side altars, the columns and there are also several paintings of Sant'Antonio da Padova, San Giovanni from Capistrano and others related to biblical themes, plus many wooden statues and some relics of the saints Antonio da Padova and San Francesco of Assisi. June 13 is Sant'Antonio's Day, with civil and religious feasts and a very important evening procession along the street of this new area of Lanciano.



“Sant’ Antonio da Padova’s Peace Bell Tower”



**Santa Rita**, the largest and most populous **quarter** of Lanciano (with about 7,000 inhabitants), was built in 1978 in the south-east area and 2 kms. from the city centre, to the borders of the hamlets of Iconicella, Villa Martelli, Villa Stanazzo and Villa Carminello. The quarter was dedicated to Santa Rita in May 1996 and until then was known as the “167 zone”, with reference to the national Law of April 18, 1962, n. 167, - “Dispositions to promote plans for the building of popular houses and shops”, - then supplemented by the laws of July 21, 1965, and October 22, 1972, n. 865, which inspired local administrators in 1973 to make a change to the urban planning of what would become the largest quarter in Lanciano. Being in the suburban area of Lanciano, the “167 zone” was also lovingly called, and not in a ridiculously way, “a satellite area” by the Lancianesi. Its urbanization has certainly been too cemented, but some green areas remain and it is in continuous expansion and, everything considered, local politicians have improved living conditions for future generations. This quarter certifies the foresight of politicians who solved the problem of comfortable accommodation at popular price for a fifth of Lanciano’s population, while most of them came from the four quarters of the historical centre (Lancianovecchia, Civitanova, Sacca and Borgo).

The displacement of many citizens was a real cultural revolution for natives and very affectionate residents of their historical centre, with a great sensibility deriving from histories of generations

always engaged to preserve their attachment to the life of the medieval quarters of Lanciano. But the citizens realized that in a city so rich in history the needs and requirements of a transformation and evolution of its urban profile and the quality of life had reached an irreversible historical phase of urban, residential and cultural development of “their” Lanciano, which had preserved over the centuries the original features of its historical center, with very intelligent design variants with which the city had modernized and adapted, respecting the sensitivity and life needs of its inhabitants.

At the beginning of the construction of the quarter, Holy Mass and other religious services took place in a large hall, today known as the Sala della Cultura, adjacent to the current Santa Rita’s church. As the population was increasing the faithful wanted a ‘real’ church, more spacious and architecturally and culturally better suited to meet their spiritual needs.

While the parish of the Spirito Santo was established in the old church from 7 December 1982, a new church continued to be thought of and the first projects were presented in 1990.

The building of the present **church of Santa Rita** began three years later and it was consecrated to the Holy Spirit on April 30, 1995. With its enormous circular shape the church stands as a true point of reference for a great part of the quarter and its characteristic red brickwork is similar to other modern city churches (San Pietro, the Madonna del Pozzo in the hamlet of Villa Elce and the new church

of the Madonna of the Grazie in the hamlet of Marcianese). A high bell tower, entirely made of reinforced concrete and resting on a squared base, is on the right side of the church and against the façade, while its 'trunk' is leaning to a slender shape that help the faithful to ascend to Heaven, with three spaces where three bells made in Agnone are placed, weighing, respectively, about 300 Kg, 200 Kg and 100 Kg, and, at its top, a large steel cross. Near the bell tower, there are eight stoned sculptures regarding the various events of the Resurrection of Jesus. You enter through a large bronze portal and you will note a plaque on the wall about the consecration of the church on April 30, 1995, as well as a statue of the Madonna with the Child and large stained glass windows rich in religious scenes and on the most important muments of Lanciano and some landscapes of region Abruzzo. Into its voluminous and airy interior with a single nave, the benches are arranged in a semicircular shape that can receive, also counting the places on one's feet, almost a thousand people; on the wooden ceiling and on the plastered walls there are some paintings carved in wood of the fourteen stations of Way of the Cross. Near the stoned altar, the ambo and the baptistery, there are some sculptures of the



Lamb of God and of the four evangelists; an enormous crucifix is on the wall behind the high altar and, at its sides, two paintings about the Holy Spirit flying in the sky to represent the desire of mankind for eternal life. Finally, to the sides of the altar, there are a statue of the Madonna with the Child and that one of Santa Rita of Cascia, the protectress of the quarter, which is carried in procession on May 22 at the end of the novena.

The main streets in the quarter are dedicated to the local Francesco Masciangelo, Corrado Marciani, Hippolito Sabino, Giulio Sigismondi and other famous historical figures such as Giuseppe Mazzini and Gabriele D'Annunzio.

**S. Pietro's zone** ("St. Peter's"). The first 1879 town planning of Lanciano had considered a new expansion of Lanciano to the area of Viale Cappuccini ("Cappuccini Boulevard"), but the project was rejected due to lack of funds. In the difficult and slow reconstruction after the Second World War, the vast area known now as San Pietro has been developing along and around the main road leading to Castelfrentano, Viale Cappuccini, built from 1810 to 1850, with its big parallel roads of Via Belvedere and Via Martiri 6 Ottobre that is dedicated to the local martyrs of 1943. The current quarter San Pietro was a secular zone making part of the ancient hamlet of Follani, which extended itself soon after the church of Santa Chiara with a portion of it documented in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as the Piana di San

Bartolomeo hamlet, with the homonymous little chapel on which site was built, towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the convent of San Bartolomeo, inhabited and officiated by the Cappuccini Friars who, until a few years ago, lived in the new church of San Pietro. The quarter has been growing around 1950's, with the benefit of improved economic conditions and by the popular acclaim about the construction of a large church, to fulfill the religious needs of this area that was increasingly characterizing the city of Lanciano. There was then a little church dedicated to San Pietro, located just in the middle of Viale Cappuccini, in the little square before the stairway leading to the actual church consecrated to the same saint. The old church was closed for worship and crowded only during the feast of San Pietro on June 29, and it was demolished when, on September 8, 1954, the parish was elevated, and people had a new church built in 1956 in modern style and opened for worship the year after.

The **new church of San Pietro** was built by reinforced concrete and covered by red bricks with a quadrangular bell tower, a portal and a flight of stairs leading into its interior rich in columns and stained glass windows. They were brought here, from the old little church, the 18<sup>th</sup> wooden busts of San Pietro with the keys of the Paradise and San Paolo holding a sword. In the 1980's the church with one big nave was redecorated and enriched with frescoes about

biblical subjects and a huge apse representing the Sermon on the Mount. The church is well-lit by other stained glass windows and there are a huge organ-



pipes, the statues of Father Pius and the Madonna with the Child, plus a large crucifix and the wide presbytery built towards the end of the second millennium. There are also an open space for parish activities and two rooms for religious meetings. Cappuccini Friars lived into the church until some years ago. The feast of San Pietro takes place on June 29.



The ancient **church of St. Bartolomeo** is officiated inside an home for the elderly people, which every now and then is closed when available resources exhaust for political inefficiency, and it is surrounded by a large green space with playgrounds, while another green area could be that where there was the tobacco factory at the beginning of Viale Cappuccini (the rich

entrepreneurs are building what they want with the cement and the power of their money).

The streets Guglielmo Marconi, Augusto Righi, Luigi Galvani, Antonio Pacinotti, Antonio Meucci, Alessandro Volta, Galileo Ferraris, Galileo Galilei already existed in 1955, while the 1958 town planning regulated the urbanistic development of the quarter San Pietro, taking advantage of its happy location along the ascending Via Martiri 6 Ottobre and Via Ferro di Cavallo (so called for a bend remembering the form of a "Horse-Shoe"). They were also built, in the lands located at the end of the little hill in Via Martiri 6 Ottobre, the first houses of the **San Giuseppe quarter** (" St. Joseph") that developed in the half of 1960's and it was affectionately called the quarter of the 'cambiali' (that is of 'bills', when people bought everything in instalments). The municipal **stadium** was built in the half of 1960' and was inaugurated with the Italian track cycling events and then used for soccer matches or, occasionally, for some performance of famous singers.

The **Olmo di Riccio quarter** is in the east zone of Lanciano, at the end of Via del Mare (that is a road leading to the Adriatic sea), in another secular area of Valle Santa Giusta, a superhamlet which contained some other hamlets. The name Olmo (that is Elm-Tree) di Riccio derives from a legend that is lost in the mists of time, about a Count Riccio, who was probably a member of that powerful noble local family who was protagonist of the local fief against the family Florio in the first thirty years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and an elm-tree located in the middle of its lands (in the actual Olmo di Riccio Street) about a hundred metres from the present parish church of the Sacro Cuore (that is the Sacred Hearth). In medieval times the elm-tree was the meeting point of discussions and decisions taken in towns and in a sort of democracy and it was usually in front of a church, which was here that one of Santa Giusta (that is St. Justa), documented since 1000 and restored in its actual structure in 1860. The development of this restful city zone had been required by the 1958 town planning, which wanted expanded the horizons of the citizens together with the extension of the other suburban area of Cappuccini Boulevard-St. Peter. The building of the new quarter Olmo di Riccio was quite rapid, after the deforestation of the secular countryside area and the following construction of many tenement houses and villas from 1960-63.

The **church of the Sacro Cuore di Gesù** (“Sacred Heart of Jesus”) is just in the middle of the Olmo di Riccio quarter and is its the main reference point for residents’ life. A plaque placed in the lower section of the wall, behind the door and to the right, recalls



the opening of the church on January 28, 1990. Externally it shows its modernity with its 1994 bell tower.

In its interior, with a huge quadrangular room and a large marble high altar behind which there is a fresco of Jesus Christ, there are the statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Madonna, St. Anna with the Child, Father Pius of Pietralcina and St. Joseph with the Child, while the wood-working art is predominating in a Crucifix, in the large confessional and in the pictures of the Way of the Cross on the walls. There is a large space for juvenile activities under the church and a small outdoor park equipped for the socializing amusements of children. The patronal festivity of the quarter takes place in a Sunday of the second half of June, with a rich civil and religious program having its top with a very crowded evening procession.

Before the actual church, into the basement where there is a primary school now, there was another church, built from 1967 to 1970.

\*\*\*The religious tradition of the church of the Sacro Cuore wants to perpetuate that one of a private chapel, built after the First World War and sited into a villa in Via del Mare, neat the actual Liceo Classico ("Grammar School"). A statue of the Sacro Cuore di Gesù was venerated there and the Holy Mass was officiated each first Friday of the month and in different days in June. The chapel was definitively damaged during the Second World War and then replaced by other buildings used as shops. The quarter's life is developing around Via Napoli, Via Torino and Via Ortona, and it is well linked to the Fiera quarter and the centre of Lanciano, 1 Km. and a half far, by the long Via Panoramica ("Panoramica Road").

**CONTRADANDO PER LANCIANO**  
(Lanciano's 33 hamlets history)

Lanciano is a very ancient town, objectively rich in History Folklore, Art and Culture, but its glorious local literature has always been limited to marginal notes about historical, artistic and folkloristic vicissitudes of its 33 hamlets.

*Contradando per Lanciano* wants to complete the secular historical panorama of the town of Lanciano, which always had short data only about some of its 33 hamlets.

The neologism **Contradando** means a new way of making literature, so that every story of cities do not ignore the irreplaceable contribution of their hamlets.

This first monography of Lanciano's 33 hamlets wants to give them their right historical prominence and it will be a new literary source in the future historiography of our city.

Its achievement has been possible by my contacts with common people and my inspections in the whole areas and churches of Lanciano's 33 hamlets.

It has been very difficult to invent a typology of an historical research having as literary sources a few and incomplete news, but only of some hamlets having churches (so why *Contradando per Lanciano* is the first complete history of Lanciano's 33 hamlets).

The methodology has regarded at first an heavy study of Lanciano's monographies and of its parish and city archives, but in this case the historical reconstruction would have been incomplete.

Therefore, I made researches to realize human situations and social problems, focusing any kind of

questions about literary and oral traditions, giving impulse to the knowledge of the most important lesson of civilization of Lanciano's 33 hamlets.

So I interviewed parish priests, I listened to histories, I perceived life's situations, I considered historical roots, I consulted secular documents, I dated churches and I took a census of their artistic patrimony.

The literary structure has been rather difficult.

At first I wanted to follow the calendar of the patronal festivities of the 33 hamlets, beginning from that one of Santa Liberata (taking place on the first Sunday of May) and ending with that one of Torre Sansone (whose festivity was on the first Sunday of October, but since 2008 the patronal feast saint was anticipated at the last Sunday in August).

Then the first hamlet of my history has become, almost automatically, Torre Sansone, because of the fascinating history of the Lancianese Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa (1820-1889), bishop of the town of Lucera from 1872 to 1889. Monsignor Cotellessa was buried under a private chapel then became the church of the Immaculate Conception in the Torre Sansone hamlet, as I found out during very fruitful researches, which have confirmed an oral tradition that constitutes an authentic scoop for Lanciano's history. In fact, the bishop of Lucera Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa was totally unknown about Lanciano's illustrious men and I will make active myself to remember him with some commemorative stones on the church of the Immaculate Conception in the Torre Sansone hamlet

in Lanciano and in its house in Piazza Plebiscito where he was died (it has not been possible to locate his native home, because the Birth Certificate and the Register of Baptism tell only the Sacca quarter and not the street where he was born) and dedicated him some road plus a township of the hamlet Torre Sansone in Lanciano with the town of Lucera.

Moreover the tale has been developed following the chronological order of hamlets's patronal festivities, in spite of the religious situation of some faithful who make reference to other churches and other parish priest for the closeness to their houses.

The photos of the whole churches of Lanciano's 33 hamlets are by Nicoletta Di Ciano, born in the Santa Giusta hamlet, and they are also a novelty for those religious treasures of popular art that had to be handed down to posterity.

Lanciano's 33 hamlets are: *Torre Sansone, Serroni, Santa Giusta, Santa Croce, Santa Liberata, San Iorio, Sabbioni, Iconicella, Villa Stanazzo, Colle Pizzuto, Re di Coppe, Camicie, Villa Andreoli, Serre, Santa Maria dei Mesi, Torremarino, Sant'Egidio, Madonna del Carmine, Nasuti, Spaccarelli, Sant'Amato, Costa di Chieti, Villa Carminello, Marcianese, Gaeta, Follani, Villa Elce, Villa Pasquini, Fontanelle, Villa Martelli, Sant'Onofrio, Rizzacorno and Colle Campitelli.*

{Contrada (pl. contrade) is an Italian word meaning suburban rural areas of a town (i. e. the English 'hamlets') that constitute the entire territory of a city together with its historical centre and its suburban quarters.}

## **The Torre Sansone hamlet**

**(the 1<sup>st</sup> dating of the Immaculate Conception's church in the hamlet Torre Sansone in Lanciano)**

The **Torre Sansone hamlet**, 399 inh., is in the east and 4 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, along the provincial road leading to San Vito Marina.

There were no documents about the church of the Immaculate Conception and the only way to date it, for the first time, consisted in elevating the elderly people to literary source rank.

For that, in the evening of October 6, 2001, the Saturday of the patronal festivity of the hamlet that takes place on the first Sunday of October (but, since 2008, it takes place on the last Sunday in August), I went to the church to see its artistic treasures but I was not sure to find out the obscure origins of the church which was never date.

People of all ages told me about a story, handed down for generations, about a bishop buried under the church, then built by will of bishop's own family.

What seemed to be an invented rumor stimulated, instead, my creativity and, after long and winding investigations, I realized that it was all true. At last un-hearded events about the history of Lanciano can be written. What a history... Follow me!

The news on the name of the bishop were confusing and some people remembered him as Gioacchino Cotellessa and others like Adolfo De Cecco.

First of all we, must clarify that the name of the bishop was Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa, but the other two names were not wrong because Gioacchino was his only brother and owned the land's property around and behind the church of the Immaculate Conception, then bought by such as Adolfo De Cecco.

So my initial contacts by that great invention that is Internet, and in Vatican City and in some Southern Italy bishops' sees had been unsuccessful, as well as my tiring consultations on the various books of the dead, from 1827 to the early twentieth century, of the parish of Sant'Agostino in Lanciano to which the Torre Sansone hamlet belonged.

At last my determination was rewarded with a stroke of luck during the consultation of the authors' file in Lanciano's Diocesan Library: here the bishop left a very important sign, with a book concerning the period in which he was bishop about a diocesan Synod in the Cathedral Basilica of Lucera, from 21-23 September 1875, while the same book was published by the Publishing House Urbano at Lucera.

There is a bishop's dedication on the first page: *"Monsignor Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa, already Canon of Penitential (Confessor) at the Lanciano's Cathedral, offers his first diocesan Synod to the Library of the Blessed Chapter. On August 21, 1875. Lucera (the translation from the Italian is mine)."*

At last I had found out the real bishop Cotellessa and with those encouraging signs I got in contact with the diocese of Lucera, which confirmed he was

born in Lanciano but the same diocese was only documented from 1872 to 1889, from his appointment as a bishop until his death, when he had presided over that diocese.

I still had to find links with the church of the Immaculate Conception in the Torre Sansone hamlet in Lanciano, and I persisted on discovering his date of birth and death, the stages of his ecclesiastical career, when he was died and where he was buried.

Here are the results. Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa was born in Lanciano on November 8, 1820, at the 10,15 a. m. (Birth Certificate n° 515 of the Lanciano's Municipality, with the attached Register of Baptism, preserved in the Lanciano's Historical Archives) from Antonio (born in 1800) and Rachele Sbetico (born in 1799). The future bishop of Lucera was born in the Sacca quarter, where he was baptized in the fourteenth-century church of San Nicola from Bari on November 9 (it wasn't possible to locate his native home, even after seeing the *Status Animarum*, because then it was not used to write the name of the street and the house number). He was ordered as a canonical on September 20, 1845 in the eighteenth-century Seminary of Lanciano (Archbishop's Bulls, volume III, paper 49, preserved in the Lanciano's Diocesan Historical Archives), and also did the professor in the same Seminary. In 1855 he was a Canonical Penitentiary of the Lanciano's cathedral (the certificates are preserved in the Lanciano's Diocesan Historical Archives).

Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa was the bishop of Lucera from February 23 1872 until his death in Lanciano, on May 23, 1889, at three o'clock a. m., in a house sited at 30, Piazza Plebiscito (Death Certificate of the Lanciano's Municipality, recorded on May 29, n° 158, that does not specify the place of its burial).

The bishop Cotellessa he had health problems in the last years of his life when the diocese of Lucera was trained by the archbishop of Benevento Camillus Siciliani from Rende since February 3, 1888; the same diocese, after the death of the bishop Cotellessa, had its new bishop Joseph Consenti only in 1894.

Many people at Torre Sansone are remembering old rumours about the bishop Cotellessa, who lived the last time of his life in the palace behind the church of the Immaculate Conception, always keeping to oneself that sculptured round marble of the Saint Face of Jesus, still in evidence on the church's walls.



The Lancianese Monsignor Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa has left an indelible mark in the history of Lucera, in those very hard years following the unification of Italy and the capture of Rome on September 20, 1870.

The ideas of Cavour about the “free Church into a free State” guaranteed full religious freedom and the separation of church and state., while Italian bishops were engaged to direct their efforts towards the new religious courses of the dioceses of the young Italian nation, at last a free country after centuries of oppressions.

Monsignor Cotellessa is still remembered in Lucera because he was able to handle that difficult time, both religious and politics, which marked the transition from the House of Bourbon to that one of Savoy. He also supported the religious urbanization of Lucera with the enlargement of the Episcopal Palace, the works to the 14<sup>th</sup> century Angevin Dome dedicated to the Santa Maria of the Assunta which was brought back to its original state, the reopening to worship of the fourteenth-century church of Sant’Antonio the abbot and the diocesan Synod he presided over in 1875.

Meanwhile, I had enough material for a possible monograph about an illustrious fellow-citizen, completely ignored by the books of his hometown, and the mystery of his place of burial was always in my thoughts.

So I examined, at the Lanciano’s Historical Archives, the registers of the dead who were buried in 1889 in the city cemetery (built in the mid-nineteenth century), but I didn’t find the bishop’s name.

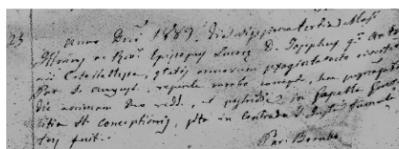
Then I came back again to the Lanciano's Historical Diocesan Archives to see again the books of the dead of the Sant'Agostino city parish.

This time, knowing exactly what I was looking for and when he was died, I had the clear evidence that the Excellency Monsignor Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa was buried into the private little chapel consecrated to the Immaculate Conception, and on his tomb was later built the church of the Immaculate Conception in the hamlet Torre Sansone.

We have written evidence of it in the *Mortuorum Liber* of the parish church of Sant'Agostino in Lanciano, ab year 1857 to 1892 one - paper n° 287 - verse n° 25, which is a sensational discovery about the history of Lanciano and the first historical dating back of the church in the Torre Sansone hamlet: *'ANNO Domini 1889. Die vigesima tertia maji Illustrimus ac Reverendissimus Episcopus Lucerae Dominus Josephus quondam Antonii Cotellessa aetatis annorum sexaginta octo circiter parochiae Sancti Augustini repente morbo correpto hac supra scriptae Die animam Deo reddidit et postridie in Capella Gentilitia Sanctissimae Conceptionis sita in the contrada Sancta Justa tumulatus fuit. Parocus Bomba.'*

In short, "on May 23, A. D. 1889, the most Illustrious and Right Reverend Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa, bishop of Lucera, was suddenly dead in God's hands when he was sixty-eight. His parish church was that one of Sant'Agostino in Lanciano and he was buried in the Holy Chapel dedicated to

the Immaculate Conception in the Santa Giusta hamlet (in reality it was in the Crognale hamlet, today the Torre Sansone hamlet in Lanciano, *Note of the author*) - parish priest Bomba”.



Valle Santa Giusta was a vast territory including many other hamlets. Monsignor Cotellessa was really buried in the area of the ancient Crognale hamlet, which was extending along the left side of the road leading to San Vito Marina, that is from the zone of the actual church of the Immaculate Conception at Torre Sansone hamlet until a double bend so-called of “Za’ Carmela’s”, about two kilometres far.

The church of the Immaculate Conception didn’t exist in 1899 and, according to oral tradition, Gioacchino Cotellessa have supported its foundation.

Another history begins...

Gioacchino, the bishop’s brother, was born on October 31, 1822 in the Civitanova quarter in Lanciano, and he was baptized in the parish church of Santa Maria Maggiore on the first of November (Birth Certificate n° 139 of the Lanciano’s Municipality, with the attached Register of Baptism, preserved at the Lanciano’s Historical Archives). All the history of Gioacchino’s family is in the family’s

paper n° 795, volume 9 (in the Lanciano's Historical Archives); we will only use it for what concerns the history of Lanciano, to which the Cotellessa family has given a valuable contribution that I published for the first time in *Contradando per Lanciano* (2002). Gioacchino was married to Angela Teresa Lotti (1823-1886) and had eight sons and a grandson, born in 1882, whose name was Giuseppe Maria as the bishop of Lucera and his great-grandfather. In the section regarding the Excellency Monsignor Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa, we know he was a "confessor" in the local Cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte (then a Basilica in 1909) and he has always been residing in Lanciano until his death on May 23, 1889. The family's paper refers to the famous Via degli Agorai, but a further clarification is necessary, because it was in this house that the bishop died, when the address had in the meantime become 30 and 31, Piazza Plebiscito. In fact, in the 1875 Lanciano's Cadastre (in the Historical Archives), sheet n° 225, page 232, updated with the sheet 2190, nine Gioacchino's city properties are mentioned, but we are only interested in two of them.

The house sited in 30 and 31, Piazza Plebiscito, where the bishop died, was to the right of the staircase behind the 1926 marble War Memorial in Piazza Plebiscito leading to the Market Hall; precisely behind two doors and where there is a pizza house now. This house was partially demolished in 1890 ("petition of Gioacchino Cotellessa to obtain a public ground in order to rebuild his house in Piazza

Plebiscito”, preserved in the Lanciano’s Historical Archives, X category, envelope n° 14, dossier n° 7), because it was an extension of Via of the Agorai at the moment the first works in Piazza Plebiscito were in progress, according to the 1879 town planning by the engineer Filippo Sargiacomo.

By now Piazza Plebiscito, the main city square and its shaping point of connection in the Middle Ages, was becoming the most important key for the expansion of the modern Lanciano.

That house was rebuilt and sold on August 28, 1891. The other property was a magnificent country-house in the Crognale hamlet, now the current Torre Sansone hamlet; that was purchased by Adolfo De Cecco on August 10, 1889. The property in hand is the estate behind the church of the Immaculate Conception at Torre Sansone and that **wonderful palace** (dated on February 18, 1878 in the 1875 Lanciano’s Cadastre), now leaving in decaying abandonment, even if it has characterized the history of the hamlet in various ways: as an oil mill in early twentieth century, when there was a stable for horses that made the wheel turning; as a sumptuous holiday home; as a primary school from 1930’s until the beginning of 1950’s. Gioacchino donated some land in the Crognale hamlet and the church was raised on the religious little chapel where his brother Giuseppe Maria the bishop had been buried. The building of the church dedicated to the Immaculate Conception in Torre Sansone began, therefore, to the late nineteenth century and nobody knows if Gioacchino,

died in 1899, realized its whole structure. Other confused oral sources thought that Gioacchino was also buried under the church.



Cotellessa's Mansion (1878) in Lanciano

To verify those other rumours, bearing in mind that Gioacchino was not an ecclesiastic, I have considered the 1839 prohibition, by the Intendenza of the Province of Chieti, to bury the dead under the churches.

With the date of Gioacchino's death, on December 8, 1899, in Lanciano, 1, Ravizza Street, at a half past nine p.m. (Death Certificate of the Lanciano's Municipality, n° 326), I have gone to the city cemetery and in the 1899 registry of burials, at n°s 380, I have found his name among those buried in the first chapel on the right as soon as one enters, built in 1861 and a property of the Santa Maria della Concezione and Carità Archconfraternity which has its seat in the city church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

Then, in the seat of the Archconfraternity', in the upper rooms of the church, I saw, among the wonder high-backed chairs, the emblem and the inscription

(dated on March 30, 1872) of the Lancianese Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa, a month after his appointment as bishop of Lucera on February 23, 1872.

So the **church of the Immaculate Conception** in the Torre Sansone hamlet in Lanciano was edified in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, on a land donated by Gioacchino Cotellessa. It was raised on the private chapel where the bishop of Lucera Monsignor Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa was buried, and whose mortal remains lie down just before and under the high altar, to the left of the entrance. The church has a rectangular structure, very extended and narrow, that only shows a small sculpture of the Holy Face on the outer surface and the bell tower built around 1910. The Façade has a portal and two windows at its sides and, above, a stained glass window with the image of the Immaculate Conception. Inside, with a single nave, there is a marble high altar behind which there are a 1945 crucifix and the statues of Sant'Antonio of Padua, the Immaculate Conception and a small Madonna. In the ceiling, reachable by a spiral staircase, there are the nineteenth-century statues, which should be restored, of St. Alphonse, Sant'Antonio of Padua, the Madonna with the Child, and all of them are dressed in garments of great value, as the nineteenth-century Madonna wedding dress; there are also an ancient holy water font, a small sculpture of San Francesco and the first crucifix of the church. About a statue of San Rocco,

devoutly “Sante Ruccucce” for the faithful, no one knows where it is now. The church was restored in 1970 and until some decades ago the friars of the Sant’Antonio of Padua city convent were celebrating Mass here.

The hamlet Torre Sansone takes its name from a Tower which was in a private house, located a hundred metres after the State Professional Institute of the Agriculture, going to San Vito Marina. In the cellar of this house there is the basement of what was a medieval Tower with more storeys, windows and small arches; it was demolished in the mid-sixties for building a villa.

The patronal feast of the hamlet Torre Sansone takes place on the first Sunday of October and it ends the cycle of the yearly feasts of the hamlets Lancianesi (but, in the last years, it takes place in the last Sunday in August).

The procession of the Immaculate Conception takes place at half past four in the afternoon, and it comes out from the church and goes until the State Professional Institute of the Agriculture, then it returns towards Lanciano to a grocery store from which it turns again and come back to the church.

The church of the Immaculate Conception at Torre Sansone depends on that citizen one of the Sacro Cuore in the Olmo di Riccio quarter.

There is a nursery school in the hamlet. [The photo of the bishop Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa was published in *Contradando per Lanciano*.].



The Lancianese Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa (Lanciano 1820-1889), bishop in Lucera from 1872-1889, was buried under a private chapel then became the actual church dedicated to the Immaculate Conception (built in the late XIX century) in the hamlet Torre Sansone in Lanciano



A marble bust of the bishop Cotellessa is into the Palazzo del Capitano in the Lancianovecchia quarter

### **The Serroni hamlet**

The **Serroni hamlet** (459 inh.) is in the east and 4 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

The Schiacchiozza Forest divides the hamlet in two uncommunicating zones: the most of its inhabitants are living along the right side of the provincial road leading to San Vito Marina, while other people reside near the Villa Martelli hamlet at the borderlands of the small town of Treglio.

All the inhabitants go to the polls at the State Professional Institute of the Agriculture sited in the hamlet Torre Sansone (with obvious problems of distance for who are living near Treglio).

The religious and scholastic situation are contradictory: the great part of its inhabitants go to the church of the Immaculate Conception at Torre Sansone hamlet and to the primary schools in the Olmo di Riccio quarter, while other people depend on the church of San Donato the martyr of Villa Martelli and attend the primary schools at Treglio.

I suggest joining, by some present or future town planning, the two areas of the same Serroni hamlet in touch with each other, by raising a small bridge on the forest and/or extending some existing roads, without modifying the unspoilt natural beauty.

The etymologic origin of Serroni is not clear, but it is a recurrent name in other quarters and hamlets of southern Italian cities, and it is also a very common surname in the world .



### The Santa Giusta hamlet

The **Santa Giusta hamlet**, 833 inh., is in the east and 3 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

The first nucleus of ancient *Anxanum* (today Lanciano), according to some historians, was in the Santa Giusta hamlet.

It's an exceptional archaeological evidence, however, a plaque found out at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> here, which demonstrates the municipality of Lanciano during the Roman Empire. It was framed in the lower part of the wall under the clock of the Bell Tower in Piazza Plebiscito, and it was partly destroyed by the last bombs of the Second World War; now it is on the top floor of the Town Hall, just before the room of the Mayor. The fragmentary inscriptions on the white marble have always been a puzzle for those who wanted to know its meaning and Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), one of the greatest historians of Roman archaeology, and 1902 Nobel Literature Prize, declared authentic it and "translated" it (it is written about a call of a meeting by the chancellor of the province and the names of some local decurions). Mommsen himself came to Lanciano, but not in 1840 as local historians write, but in one of the years from 1844 to 1847, when he was charged by the Academy of Berlin to study the Roman inscriptions (we know from his diaries that he was in Teramo and Chieti in July 1845, and came to Lanciano in a few days of 1846 and/or in 1847). The content of the plaque was repeated in two of his

monumental works, in the *Inscriptiones Regni Neapolitani Latinae* (Leipzig, 1852), and in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1883), where we read the names of *Anxani*, *Colle Castellare* and *Santa Iustam*. The inhabitants of the Santa Giusta hamlet should honour Mommsen with an inscription on their church and dedicate him some road, in Lanciano or/and in the hamlet.

\*\*\*Tradition tells us St. Justa stayed here for some time and the Church was dedicated to her. The church's name is written in historical and clerical documents, dating back to the half of the year 1000 and in 1455. In the 1324 Book of Decime, that is the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3756, it was called *S. Iuste*. The first feast of the saint female of the hamlet took place in 1554, in one of the first days of August.

Probably the site of the **church of St. Justa** has always been the same, at the end of a steep descent, just in the middle part of the hamlet's territory. It got its actual shape in 1860 with a rectangular structure, a bricked façade, a porch with Romanesque arches and three doors, of which the central one is larger than the other two; on the façade, there is a plaque remembering the martyrdoms of the fallen "sandejjustere" during the First and Second World Wars. Its inside, with three aisles, has big columns with capitals in Corinthian order which support the vaults rich in frescoes and the statue of St. Justa is



inside a large niche behind the marble altar with a balustrade (until some years ago there were two statues, because around 1860 it was made that new one, but the faithful rebelled against the demolition of the first St. Justa's statue). There are also the statues of Our Lady of Sorrows, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Sant'Antonio of Padua, and all of them

are dating around 1930; there are also the corporal remains of St. Justa, coming from Bazzano (AQ), placed in a urn near the high altar.

The patronal festivity takes place on the first Sunday of August, with an evening procession from the church of St. Justa to Via del Mare and return. The church of Santa Giusta depends on that one of the Sacro Cuore of the city Olmo di Riccio quarter.

There is a nursery school in the hamlet.

\*\*\*The Pentecost is a special day in the Santa Giusta hamlet, as everyone can realize by seeing spiritual values of its inhabitants. After a daily long wait, at last it's evening, when the procession moves slowly from the church and is going on a little hill,

“Lu Castellane”, where the faithful pray for about a quarter of an hour under an enormous Jesus Christ’s Cross. Then the religious cortege crosses the hamlet up to the Calvary, a small marble monument recalling the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The statues of Santa Giusta and a small Madonna are placed on benches of wood and they are carrying on shoulders by volunteers, while the faithful are saying the rosary and all together, with roses, lilies and other sort of flowers, are singing religious hymns. The road is full of rose, red and yellow petals that, like coloured snowflakes, lie on the statues in procession. Then the procession comes back to the church, where the children put the flowers in glass vases and the parish priest officiates the Mass. Finally they dance until late in the night to revive and strengthen the harmony among the inhabitants.

\*\*\*In the hamlet Santa Giusta, in the middle of the homonymous wood, not far from the city church of Sacred Heart of the Olmo di Riccio quarter, there is a private chapel. The place was a refuge in the terrible days of German occupation in the dramatic winter of 1943. In 1947, to thank God after having escaped death, there was built the chapel for worship a small statue of the Immaculate Conception.. Nowadays the chapel is in a very bad state.

#### **The Santa Croce hamlet**

The **Santa Croce hamlet**, 496 inh., is in the southeast and 1 Km. from the centre of Lanciano. It

shares the Schiaccchiozza Forest with the hamlet Serroni, in a large area known until a few decades ago as Torre della Madonna (that is Tower of the Madonna, so-called because of a small statue of the Madonna placed in the middle of the wood, where there was also a mill called Spagna- that is "Spain").

Here there is the first city cemetery, which dates back to 1840 (another city cemetery is in the Madonna del Carmine hamlet). Facing it, there is one large memorial cross remembering all Lancianesi fallen in wars.

The new railway station has been built, in 2001, in the Santa Croce hamlet.

\*\*\* In Via del Mare in Lanciano, nearby the Grammar School Classic, there was a chapel into a villa. It was built after the First World War and the faithful worshiped a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Holy Mass was celebrated on the first Fridays of the month and in different days in June. The chapel was ruined during the Second World War and replaced by other buildings then used as commercial shops. Today its cult is perpetuated in the church of the Sacro Cuore in the city Olmo di Riccio quarter, that is the actual parish church of the Santa Croce hamlet.



The new station in Lanciano (2001)

## **The Santa Liberata hamlet**

The **Santa Liberata hamlet** (to venerate the “Madonna della Libera”) has 381 inhabitants and it is in the north and two kilometres from the centre of Lanciano, just after the road coming from the Market Hall.

The hamlet was for centuries the main entry road to Lanciano, being connected with Ortona, the main harbour of the ancient region of the Frentania and a landing place of remote conquering peoples.

The first documents about the Santa Liberata hamlet are dating back since the beginning of the fifteenth century and are related to deeds of sale of lands, donations to the church and the reports of city Archbishops’s visits, and, above all, the old papers relating to the patronal feasts in the first days of May. More recently its history has been marked by the kilns (in italian language “furnaces”), of which the almost intact edifices of two them are standing today (anciently it was the Fornaci hamlet).

From autumn 1943 until the following spring, the ‘sandeliberatesi’ saw their lands occupied by heavy fights between Allies and German troops in retreat.

The **church of Santa Maria della Libera** dates back to the XVII century and its rectangular shape had the actual aspect in the last 1960’s, by the building of the atrium, the rooms then used as rural school and the essential restorations to repair Second World War’s damages. The church has an access

with a gate and a door and, above it, a tympanum, a clock and the bell tower. In September 1995, some works were made on the bricked façade, even enriched by three ceramic and mosaics which summarize the entire history of the hamlet: they represent the Madonna of the Libera with the Child; a nursing mother; a little shepherd who prays and watches the flock. Those scenes



want to remember the devotion towards the Madonna of the Libera, the rite of prayers to “Santa Fumija”, alias St. Euphemia, the protectress of pregnant women, and the old paths of the pastures that passed through the grassy open space in front of the church, a crucial point along the Royal Sheep-Track L’Aquila-Foggia. Inside the church, with a single nave and vaults, there are a marble altar rebuilt in 1970, paintings of the Stations of the Cross, statues of Santa maria della Libera with the Child, St. Euphemia, St. Joseph with the Child, Our Lady of Sorrows and a statuette of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The original statues of Santa Maria della Libera with the Child, of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as its valuable fine silky white mantle with gold embroidery and the garments of the Child, and the

other of St. Euphemia, of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with a blue silk robe and embroidered in gold, are in the museum of San Nicola di Bari's city church.

The patronal feast of the Santa Liberata hamlet which takes place in the first Sunday of May inaugurates the patronal feasts of Lanciano's hamlets, with a procession along the streets near the church.

The church of Santa Maria della Libera depends on the city one of San Nicola from Bari.

#### **The San Iorio hamlet**

The **San Iorio hamlet** (157 inh.) is in the north and 3 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, towards the provincial road leading to the small town of Frisa.

Its ancient names were San Giorgio and Sant'Apollonia.

The parish church is that city one of San Nicola from Bari.

#### **The Sabbioni hamlet**

The **Sabbioni hamlet** (76 inh.) is in the north of Lanciano, nearby the Market Hall.

Probably its name derives from some little stratum of sand and its fields are crossed from the torrent Feltrino, such as those of the hamlets Torremarino, Marcianese, Santa Maria dei Mesi, Santa Giusta and Torre Sansone. Here, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there were

two churches: Sant'Andrea, called as the ancient hamlet, and the other of Sant'Agata with the convent.

The latter one belonged to the Lancianese canonical Don Charles Fenaroli, the brother of the famous local musician Fedele and, from the beginning of the XIX century, the zone was known as Villa Fenaroli, while today it is a city sector called Rione Fenaroli.

In the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, there is the church of *S. Andree*, number 3754, and that one of *S. Agathe monalium*, number 3764.

Moreover, under Porta San Biagio, there was the church with the convent of Sant'Antonio of Vienna (XII century), documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3760 as *S. Antonii*.

Nowadays the parish church is that city one of San Nicola from Bari.



## The Iconicella hamlet

The **Iconicella hamlet** (809 inh. plus 170 people who are living in Via Mameli, for a total of 976 inhabitants.) is in the south and 3 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

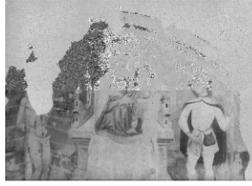
The first nucleus of **the church dedicated to Santa Maria, so-called of the 'Conicella'**, dates back to 1524, when a very small church, called "Cona", was built along the Royal Sheep-Track L'Aquila-Foggia, by Panetta MSSO (as it is written on a plaque on the church's facade, certainly a pseudonym of the artist, which was read as Majo, Mazio or Masio, but he could well be Massimo or Tommaso).



The church was enlarged in 1601 by will of the archbishop Paolo Tasso and it was

with a single nave until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the aisles were added. The most important restorations, in the nave and in the high altar, were made in 1928 and a year later. The church is very large and entirely white with a rectangular shape, a façade, a porch of 1933 and a bricked bell tower built in 1898 and restored in 1990. A central portal and two small side ones lead into its interior

with three aisles, where there is the 17<sup>th</sup> fresco representing the “Madonna della Conicella with the Child” who is between the saints Rock and Sebastian while the Holy Trinity is watching her, which was restored in 1898 and is rich in stone columns coming from Majella’s mountains and finely worked with



capitals in Corinthian order. The church is also enriched by some frescoes of a group of Angels, the statue of St. Vincent Ferreri and two ones of the “Madonna della Conicella with the Child”, of which that one that is carried in procession on the second Sunday of May is on a side-altar.

A plaque placed on the church’s walls remembers the Lancianese priest Floraspe Renzetti (1777-1833), buried under it, who was the founder of the city hospital at Corso Bandiera in 1843 and to whom the current Hospital is dedicated.

A 1949 Calvary is outside the church.

The important procession in honour of the Dominican St. Vincent Ferreri takes place on April 5, and until a few years ago it was developing for the whole hamlet and in our idiom is customary to say “Sande Vincenze cche jjeve pe’ li culle” (“the saint used to go along the little hills”); nowadays the route has been halved.

The procession of the saint patron of the hamlet, “Santa Maria della Conicella”, takes place on the

second Sunday of May since 1602, to granted a plenary indulgence and ends with a Holy Mass at six o'clock in the evening, celebrated on the sound-box, where then singers chosen by the local committee festivities will make show.

The church of the "Madonna della Conicella" depends on the parish one of Villa Stanazzo.

There is a primary school in the hamlet.

\*\*\*Closely linked to the life of Iconicella hamlet is *La Squilla*, a religious celebration unique in the world, that takes place in the evening of December 23, a day more important than Christmas in Lanciano (*see the chapter about Lanciano's traditions*).

### **The Villa Stanazzo hamlet**

The **Villa Stanazzo** hamlet (523 inh.) is in the southeast and 4 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

The first historical documents date back to 1047, 1087, 1176, when Villa Stanazzo and Villa Scorciosa (the actual hamlet of the town of Fossacesia) were one hamlet, "Girolo", which was a fief depending on San Giovanni in Venere's abbey.

Villa Stanazzo was founded in 1484 by the Slavonians (Slav who escaped from Turkish) when they settled here in very modest houses after their expulsion from Lanciano.

The hamlet derives its name from one of their families, Stanazzo, which were extinct from here in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Villa Stanazzo refused to pay heavy taxes imposed by Lanciano and there were repeated legal disputes until when the same Villa Stanazzo became a municipality with a town council composed by some local families in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; in 1806 the hamlet was re-joined to Lanciano.

Its inhabitants had always expressed their desire of independence and they were very proud of their bakery, whose economic fortunes had aroused strong protests in Lanciano. The bakehouse existed in 1700 and it was located very close to the stanazzese Town Hall that was behind the actual church; the same bakehouse was demolished in 1840 while its ruins were used for building a little stanazzese cemetery that was in the area of the present crossroad before entering the hamlet, where there was a little chapel dedicated to St. Vincent Ferreri which was demolished in the 1960's.

The ancient hamlet Girolo had two churches, San Nicola and St. Lawrence, which were pulled down in 1591.

The **actual church of Santa Maria degli Angeli** (that is "St. Mary of the Angels") was built from 1611-1617 with a nave and enlarged in 1755; the right side-aisle was added in 1856 and the left one in 1864. The church of Santa Maria degli Angeli has a rectangular shape with the facade and three doors, of which that central one, slightly higher, is under a stained glass window and the other two under rose windows. The sacristy, dating to the middle of the

seventeenth century, is on the left and under the bell tower built in the year 1900 with its three-storeys in brick and a clock, where the bells, supported by columns and arches, were placed by mid-1700. Inside, there are frescoes on the walls and a bricked high altar (1988), behind which there is a large niche containing the statue of the Blessed Virgin of the Angels, donated in 1950 to replace the old one of 1825. Entering the church you'll see, almost unconsciously, the statues of St. Lucy and St. Sebastian, placed inside a niche behind us, and that one of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the right side; there is also a 17<sup>th</sup> century painting on the left side wall, representing the Madonna of the Angels with the Child, surrounded by four Angels who watch her appearance to San Francesco of Assisi in the presence of the saints Antonio da Padova, Carlo Borromeo, Andrea the apostle and Ludovico. Then there is another marble altar with a painting of the Saint Face of Jesus blessed by Pope Pius X on July 29, 1908, to replace an old picture that in 1871 would have shown some signs of sweat into a house of an inhabitant of the hamlet (since then it began the devotion for the Holy Face which is carried in

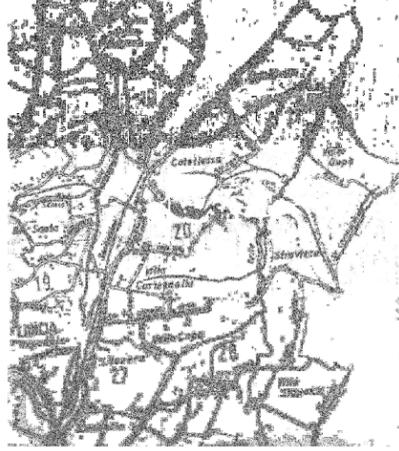


procession on the third Sunday of May). Nowadays the church dominates the little square dedicated to its first parish priest, Don Philip Di Marco, who wrote an excellent history of Villa Stanazzo.

The church of Santa Maria degli Angeli at Villa Stanazzo is a parish one since 1919.

The Patronal Feast takes place on August 2.

In the hamlet, there are a nursery school and the Wine-makers Co-operative "Rinascita Lancianese".



#### **The Colle Pizzuto hamlet**

The **Colle Pizzuto hamlet** (387 inh.) is in the south and 3 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

Its name, as other Italian areas, would have to derive from some particular pointed stone ('pizzuta' in our dialect). The Colle Pizzuto hamlet, together with the those ones of Villa Andreoli, Iconicella and Re di Coppe, hosts the Agriculture National Fair in April.

The parish church is that one of Santa Maria degli Angeli at Villa Stanazzo hamlet, but its inhabitants directed their religious life with the nearby Santa Maria della Conicella one.

#### **The Re di Coppe hamlet**

The **Re di Coppe hamlet** (292 inh.), with a strange and incomprehensible origin of its name, is in the south and 3 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

Here is the Frentana Co-operative of Milk.

Inhabitants depend on the parish church of the Villa Andreoli hamlet.

#### **The Camicie hamlet**

The **Camicie hamlet** (89 inh.) is in the south and 4 kms. from the centre of Lanciano. Its name probably derives from an ancient Camicia family.

Inhabitants depend on the church of Villa Andreoli hamlet.

### The Villa Andreoli hamlet

The **Villa Andreoli hamlet** (1027 inh.) is in the south and 3 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, just before a crossroad leading to the Val di Sangro (that is the Valley of the river Sangro). It was handed down to posterity that a private chapel dedicate to the Holy Trinity was built by will of such a Sabatino Andreoli in the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so that his wife, seriously ill, could follow the Holy Mass.

The chapel was then gradually enlarged to become the actual **church of the Holy Trinity** (to perpetuate the ancient hamlet's name, known as the 'Padreterne'-that is 'Eternal Father'). It is difficult to date with exactness the church, undoubtedly existing in 1842, when a certain Neri made the sculpture of the Holy Trinity sited behind the high altar. What is certain is that the church was at first built with a single nave and then expanded with other two. It has a rectangular plan, with the façade and 1919 three wooden portals, of which the central one, larger, has, at its sides, two columns with Corinthian adornments, and a fronton with a sculpure of Jesus Christ and, over it, a small crucifix. The three-tiered bell



tower was built in 1912 and restored in 1989-90. Inside, there are some frescoes on the ceilings, some stained glass windows, a large high altar on which there is an artistic working in glass-reinforced plastic representing the Last Supper, and behind which, inside a large niche, is the above mentioned sculptured group of the Holy Trinity (1842); to the left, above a marble tabernacle, inside a niche, there is a statue of the Madonna of the Carmine; to the right, there is a marble side altar, encircled by the statues of St. Joseph with the Child, Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Vincent Ferreri, which seem to protect the large statue of Dead Christ, which, after several years, was reported in procession on 2002 Good Friday.

The church of the Holy Trinity refers to the city churches of Santa Lucia and of Sant'Antonio of Padua and became a parish one in 1974.

Patronal Feast: on Sunday after the Pentecost.

\*\*\*The evening before the patronal feast a painting of the Holy Trinity is carried in procession (the 'Pardon') for about hundred metres up to a 1994 religious chapel, where it remains for the entire day of celebration and then returning to the church. Close to the 1994 religious chapel there is the old one recognizable by a large red cross in its small front.

### The Serre hamlet

The **Serre hamlet** (263 inh.) is in the south and 7 kms. from the centre of Lanciano; it is reachable by a well asphalt road leading to the Val di Sangro.

The name Serre could recall an ancient human settlement in an area rich in vegetation.

The **church of Sant'Antonio of Padua** was built in 1947 by mutual consent between the faithful and the Franciscan Friars of the



Sant'Antonio of Padua's convent in Lanciano. It has a rectangular plan, the walls of concrete with small

bricks arranged in a zigzag decoration and the bell tower. The whole façade is made of bricks and the door was built in 1950, as it is written on a small iron incision. The single nave interior has a marble high altar with a crucifix on it and, to its centre, a tabernacle containing the Holy Sacrament; to the left of the altar there is a small statue of the Madonna of Fatima; to the right, inside a large niche, there is a statue of the patron saint of the hamlet, bought in Padua when the

church was built; finally, there is a painting of the Last Supper.

In the hamlet, going towards the Sangro river, in a road to the right of some bends, some people drew my attention to a house that was a very ancient hermitage of nuns, in the ancient area of the hamlet recalled, in our dialect, as "Difenza". There were no documents about it, but there was actually the hamlet named La Defense here, which together the lands of Cerratina zone, constitute the actual Serre hamlet, where there are two communal landfills.

The patronal feast takes place on the second Sunday of August, when the statue of Sant'Antonio of Padua goes out in procession with the same itinerary of the Ascension Day.

The church depends on that one of the Saint Trinity of Villa Andreoli.

\*\*\*Ascension-day is celebrated with a procession in which the Blessed Sacrament, preserved into the high altar, is carried by the parish priest under a canopy and supported in turn by four faithful; it goes outside the church to a nearby cross, then it turns again, pass in front of the church yet, come up with a double bend at 100 m. and the procession ends with the return to the church.

### **The Santa Maria dei Mesi hamlet**

The **Santa Maria dei Mesi hamlet** (that is “St. Mary of the Months”), with 359 inhabitants, is in the west and 2 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, along the provincial road leading to the town of Orsogna.

The hamlet had had several names in the course of ages, and all of them are derived from its church. In the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3752, it was called *S. Marie in Bisti*. It became *Santa Maria in Visis* in a 1374 notarial deed, concerning the rent of a land, as well as in another 1381 notarial instrument about to some bequests to Lanciano’s churches. In 1477 the church and the hamlet were called *Santa Maria in Miscia*, from which the curious dialectal name still in use of “*Sanda Mara a Miscie*”. But, in a contract of the October 1610, about the rent of a vineyard, it was *Santa Maria in Viso*. Then, in two other documents, relating to the years 1493 and 1525, it is indicated the nearby San Pietro alla Collina hamlet (that is “St. Peter on a Hill”) which included the lands of the actual Torremarino hamlet.

Probably, in the Sciacquarelli locality, there was the monastery of the Virgin Mary, mentioned in ancient history books and inhabited by Augustinian monks towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Lanciano’s history books talk about a first church of Santa Maria dei Mesi, dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and perhaps located a short distance away from and

behind the current one, which was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and restored in 1996. The **actual church of Santa dei Mesi** has a rectangular structure, the façade with an entry protected by an iron gate and three doors introducing to its inside with a single nave and a marble altar behind which,



in large niches, there are the statues of Santa Maria dei Mesi, to its centre, and those ones of Sant'Antonio the abbot and St. Vincent Ferreri, at its sides.

Outside the church there is a Calvary rebuilt in 1984.

Pope Gregorio XIII, in a brief of March 9, 1585, granted a plenary indulgence to those who prayed into the church on Fridays in March. Since then, it began the procession of the Way of the Cross on the last Friday of Lent. Still today the procession is coming out from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, passed close to the Archbishop's Palace and the Torri Montanare, takes a short cut behind a double bend in the Sciacquarelli zone and reaches the church of Santa Maria dei Mesi. Taken from my book *Contradando per Lanciano*, this procession has been resumed on Friday March 14, 2008, starting at 20:00 from the Torri Montanare and directed towards

to the church of Santa Maria dei Mesi, across the steep hills of the small sheep track for Orsogna, on which have been implanted 14 great crosses recalling the stations of the Way of the Cross.

The patronal feast takes place on the first Sunday on July, in alternance with that one of the neighboring Torremarino hamlet.

The church depends on the city parish church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

\*\*\*Nearby, there is a hill called of the 'Cicciolanze', which is an intriguing new dialectal word to indicate the action of local students who play truant.

\*\*\*A popular belief is deep-rooted in the hamlet, by which a miraculous event took place into the church in 1836, when the Madonna allowed an oil-lamp was always lighting while nobody filled it with oil.



The ancient school at Santa Maria dei Mesi (1898)



An ancient house in the hamlet Santa Maria dei Mesi

#### **The Torremarino hamlet**

The **Torremarino hamlet** (519 inh.) is in the west and 5 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

In the past it was known as Torremarina, and together with the hamlet Santa Maria dei Mesi constituted that one of S. Pietro alla Collina, with the church of *S. Petri de Collina* documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3751.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century **church of Santa Maria in Castello** (that is “St. Mary in Castle’s”), more



commonly known as the “Madonna della Luce” (‘Madonna of the Light’), was restored in 1990 and a few years ago. The church has a rectangular structure and a simple façade with a door introducing to its interior with a single nave and a small marble altar behind which, to its centre, there is a 16<sup>th</sup> large painting representing the Madonna with the Child and the inscription “Ego sum lux mundi” which has certainly inspired the faithful words of “Our Lady of the Light”, and, to the sides of the altar, there are the statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and an Immaculate Conception. Many paintings on biblical subjects are on the ceiling.

Patronal feast: the first Sunday of July, in alternance and joined with that one of the Santa Maria dei Mesi hamlet.

The church of Santa Maria in Castello is only opened for worship during the summer months and depends on the city parish church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

About the origin of the hamlet’s name, also recurring in other Italian localities, no one remembers any tower, which will certainly have belonged to some family Marino, a very common surname in Lanciano.

The territory of the Torremarino hamlet is very extended and to the borders with the Marcianese hamlet and that ones of Castelfrentano there is the zone of Torremarino Alta.

### The Sant'Egidio hamlet

In the north area of Lanciano, below the large medieval walls of the Civitanova quarter, from which you'll enjoy the most beautiful cityscape with the



wonderful background of sea and mountains, 158 people are living in the **hamlet of Sant'Egidio**.

Here there was the ancient hamlet of San Leonardo with the homonymous church documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3747, as *S. Leonardi*.

The church of Sant'Egidio dates back to the XVI century but another ancient church is documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3753, as *S. Egidii*.

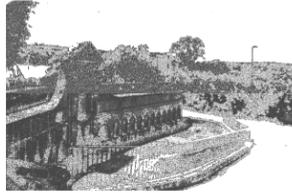
The **present church of Sant'Egidio**, with a single nave, has a rectangular shape. It is situated at the end of a steep-descent, close to a house that was built on the same site where there was the wood known as "la Selva", where, in ancient times, the Roman markets ("Nundinae Mercatus") took place. Shortly before the beginning of the Second World War, the church

subsided by the weakness of its foundations and there were found many bones of corpses. On that occasion the statues of St. Lawrence and St. Camillus, placed behind the altar, to the sides of that one of Sant'Egidio the abbot, were destroyed. Then it was used as a hiding place for weapons in the years of the war. The statue of Sant'Egidio the abbot, in stone, of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was repaired in one arm and in the stick, and it stands now inside a large niche behind the marble altar. In the church there is also a small statue of the Madonna and the paintings of the 14 stations of the Way of the Cross are on the side walls.

Patronal Feast: September 1.

The church of Sant'Egidio depends on that one of Santa Maria Maggiore.

\*\*\*In the Sant'Egidio hamlet there is the **Fonte of Civitanova**, built in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and restored in 1825. It was built in bricks and stones and was the oldest fountain of the nine which existed in Lanciano. Under a large triangular fronton, there are twenty-two arcades from which water is flowing down into a large wash-house. Because of its huge size local people call it the "Fonte Grande" (the "Big Fountain").



\*\*\*Always in the Sant'Egidio hamlet, two hundred metres after the Fonte of Civitanova, there is a **little temple** dedicated to the **Madonna of the Salette**. It is a private Lady chapel built by



will of the dean of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore Francesco Paolo Sargiacomo (1832-1915), on the plan and direction of the works by his brother the engineer Filippo (1839-1922), on their land. The foundation stone was laid on November 19, 1870 and the main structure of chapel was built in a month. A year after, even though the bell tower was still missing, a bell was bought at Agnone. Another year passed and they were constructed the door, the small altar and semicircular windows. The first festivity and procession in honour of the Madonna of the Salette took place in September 19, 1873, to recall the same day of 1846 when the Madonna appeared to two shepherds, Melanie Calvat and Maximin Giraud, in the locality La Salette of the French village of Corps. In the following spring, the shed and the bell tower, where the bell was put, were built. Since then, the nineteenth of September the procession to honour

the Madonna takes place, and it is attended from the city archbishop and the parish priest of the hamlet. The novena is postponing from 18-26 September, in order not to superimpose it to that one of the Lanciano's patroness, Santa Maria del Ponte. The religious Lady chapel was restored in 1967.



The double bent in the hamlet Sant'Egidio (in Sciacquarelli zone)



### **The Madonna del Carmine hamlet**

In the north zone of Lanciano, going towards Orsogna, there is a crossroads and in an ascent road to the right the territory of the **Madonna del Carmine hamlet** (185 inh.) begins.

The **church of Madonna del Carmine** was built in 1862 and restored in 2002. It has a rectangular structure with a colonnade, a façade with a rose window, the bell tower (dated 1897) with an electric clock and the bells protected by a brick railing. In its interior, with three naves, there are some 1886 paintings on the ceiling, and a semicircular apse above the high altar behind which, inside a large niche, there is a statue of the Madonna del Carmine and a small statue of another Madonna at its side. On the left, there is the altar of the Purgatory with paintings of St. Gabriel of Our Sorrows and the Madonna of the Carmine; in a corner on the right, there are two statues of St. Roch and St. Joseph with the Child and, to one



side, another altar where is preserved a large Dead Christ statue, which is carried in procession on Good Friday, and over it, inside a large niche, a chalk statue of Our Lady of Sorrows.

There is also a canonical house (1954) facing the church.

The church of Madonna of the Carmine is a parish one since 1949.

\*\*\*The hamlet has a own Good Friday procession that comes out from the church of the Madonna del Carmine and stops into that one of Sant' Amato; then the religious cortege comes back till the area ogf the Spaccarelli hamlet, from where it returns into the church of the Madonna del Carmine. This happens around 6 o'clock in the evening, because then faithful go to the solemn procession of Dead Christ in Lanciano.

Patronal Feast: July 16.

Nearby and behind the church, there is the second city cemetery, opened in 1972 and fully operational since 1977. There is also a nursery school in the hamlet.

#### The **Nasuti hamlet**

The **Nasuti hamlet** (507 inh.) is in the north and 5 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

The ancient hamlet Pareti takes its actual name Nasuti from the most common local surname.

In the hamlet there is the area of Valle Consumo (how do say "Consumption Valley", but we don't know its derivation), which begins immediately after the lands of Santa Maria dei Mesi hamlet and, going along the descent road towards Orsogna there is, on the left, the zone of Candeloro, with a little area called "Checocce" ("pumpkins"). Coming back for three hundred metres and always going along the road leading to Orsogna, there is the Wine Grower's Cooperative Madonna del Carmine' and, just before, turning on the left, it begins a steep ascent crossing the centre of the hamlet Nasuti.

The parish church is that one of the Madonna del Carmine hamlet.

#### **The Spaccarelli hanlet**

The **Spaccarelli hamlet** (with only 32 inh.) is in the north and 7 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, just before the territory of Orsogna.

Very ancient houses characterize the hamlet and it is depopulating in a worrying way, but a large portion of its lands belongs to the lands of Castelfrentano.

Its name derives from the fact that some people came from Castelfrentano to chop wood, and in many ancient documents Spaccarelli was associated to the ancient hamlets of Moro and Filatoppi.

The parish church is that one of the Madonna of the Carmine.



Ancient houses in the hamlet Spaccarelli

#### **The Sant'Amato hamlet**

The **Sant'Amato hamlet** (355 inh.) is in the north and 6 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, shortly beyond the church of Madonna of the Carmine hamlet.

The very ancient hamlet Sant'Amato was a fief with the castle of 'St. Mato', granted to Lanciano by the Benedictines of San Giovanni in Venere in the XIV century. Various landowners had it under their jurisdiction and some documents date back to 1316, 1351, 1406 and 1443. Other papers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century relate to deeds of land's sales and Lanciano's finances for its maintenance.

The **church of Saint Amato** dates back to the XVI century and has a rectangular structure. It has been enlarged and lengthened around 1925 and, turning around its perimeter, you can see stones and bricks of the ancient religious building. The bell tower was built three years after and then it was bought the largest bell that with the smallest and oldest one, give a rhythm of life to the “sandamatere”. In its inner surface with a single nave, inside a large niche behind the marble altar, there is a great statue of Saint Amato carved in wood at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are also small niches with three statues of a certain value on the side walls, Our Lady of Sorrows, Sant’ Antonio the abbot and St. Sylvester I the Pope, and all of them are with framework in wood and valuable clothes; there are also a small chalk statuette of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ and a small Madonna with a crown of lights. The whole religious scene is dominated by a huge wooden Crucifix suspended in the air and held by a rope.

The Sant’Amato hamlet celebrates its patron saint on the second Sunday of



July and it is twinned with the cities of Sant'Amato of Vinci (near Florence) since July 1980 and from Sant'Amato of Nusco since July 2003.

The church of Saint Amato depends on the parish one of Madonna of the Carmine.

#### **The Costa di Chieti hamlet**

The **hamlet Costa di (of ) Chieti** (319 inh.) is in the north and 7 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, towards the roads leading to the towns of Poggiofiorito and Frisa. In the hamlet, on a small inland hill, there are the ruins of a quadrangular medieval tower which had more floors, has remained intact until the 1950's and it is sited in the hamlet Sant'Amato's borderline to which it belonged for many centuries. A voluntary service association has brought the surrounding land and I hope that tower's remains will not be demolished. The parish church is that one of Madonna of the Carmine but the nearest one is that of Sant'Amato. Going back along a road leading to Lanciano, shortly before the hamlet Santa Liberata, there are some small gullies, situated along the Shepherds' route L'Aquila-Foggia that is dividing the Lanciano's hamlet of Costa di Chieti from the Frisa's hamlet of Badia. These gullies, a fifty metres high, shaped on a hill, have a kind of magic and seduce with their 'wild expressions' sculpted by secular erosions that have discovered the clay lands. The gullies astonish among the relaxing landscape, and the best way to enjoy their beauties consists in

walking along the very narrow path running through it. Nowadays the soil is very strong and don't suffer the arid or rainy climate, so that the invisible hydrogeologic progressions are very slow in modelling slopes of this Lanciano's zone. These gullies will have surely inspired the name 'Costa' to the hamlet.

#### **UNHEARD-OF LANCIANO'S HISTORY**

*THE WONDERFUL HISTORY ABOUT THE LEGEND OF THE DISAPPEARED TOWN OF 'FILA'.*

*THE INHABITANTS IN THE HAMLETS LOCATED IN THE NORTH ZONE OF LANCIANO (NASUTI, MADONNA DEL CARMINE, SANT'AMATO AND COSTA DI CHIETI) PRESERVE HISTORICAL MEMORY FROM SEVERAL GENERATIONS, A HISTORY ABOUT A BURIED TOWN, NEVER WRITTEN BY HISTORIANS, OF WHICH EVERYBODY TELLS ITS NAME WAS 'FILA', WITHOUT KNOWING AND BEING ABLE TO ADD OTHER HISTORICAL DATA IN ORDER TO TRACE ITS ARCHITECTONIC AND ETYMOLOGIC ORIGIN (OR, ALSO, IT COULD HAVE BEEN "PHILA"). THIS IS A SENSATIONAL NEWS AND ONLY A LEGEND UNTIL WE RECEIVE PROOF TO THE CONTRARY, BUT THE WORLD IS FULL OF LEGENDS ABOUT LOST TOWNS THAT ARE WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED. FROM THAT THE HISTORY OF VERY FAMOUS FINDINGS, BUT ALSO OF CLAMOROUS FLOPS, OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITIONS HEADED BY "OBSTINATE" EXPLORERS WHO ARE TEACHING US IN EVERY LEGEND THERE IS SOMETHIN TRUE. FOR MANY HISTORIANS, THEY ARE A PURE INVENTION OF POPULAR FANTASY, BUT WITH THE LOST TOWN OF "FILA" WE HAVE A LITERARY NOVELTY FOR LANCIANO'S HISTORY, BUT NOT ONLY OF ITS TERRITORY, WHICH WE CAN'T CONFIRM OR DENY. MEANWHILE I ACCOMPLISH MY DUTY BY WRITING A*

STRONG ORAL TRADITION TOTALLY OBSCURE TO THE ABRUZZO'S HISTORIOGRAPHY, HOPING TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY IN THE PRESENT OR MORE PROBABLY IN THE FUTURE, BY EXCAVATING IN THE AREAS WHERE MANY PEOPLE THINK THE TOWN OF 'FILA' WAS BURIED (IN THIS REGARD I HAVE SENT, WITHOUT RECEIVING ANY REPLY, SOME LETTERS TO THE ABRUZZO SOVRINTENDENZA, TO OTHER QUALIFIED AUTHORITIES, TO THE PRESS AND, ABOVE ALL, TO THE COMMON PEOPLE). THE TALES ABOUT ITS EXACT GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION ARE EXAGGERATED, OR VERISIMILAR, OR INSUFFICIENT, LACKING OF ANY KIND OF SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL REFERENCE, WHILE I SUGGEST TO FILL THIS HISTORICAL GAP BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCHES. SOME PEOPLE DESCRIBE ITS EXTENSION FROM ORTONA TO SANT' EUSANIO DEL SANGRO, BUT IN THIS CASE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LARGER THAN LANCIANO, AND IT IS VERY STRANGE ITS ABSENCE IN ANCIENT MAPS AND IN BOOKS BY OLD WRITERS WHO CAME TO THESE ZONES. OTHER PEOPLE, MORE CREDIBLE, TELL ABOUT AN OUTPOST IN ROMAN TIMES AND THAT FACT WOULD BE JUSTIFIED WITH ITS PROXIMITY TO ORTONA, THE MOST IMPORTANT PORT OF THE ANCIENT FRENTANIA REGION, WHILE IN THIS CASE WE WOULD HAVE APPROXIMATELY DATED THE EXISTENCE OF "FILA". FINALLY, THE SHORTAGE OF RELIABLE NEWS IS THE SUBSTRATUM OF ORAL STORIES. FURTHERMORE, ABOUT 'FILA', SOMEONE THINKS THAT SOME FAMILIES, ALSO COMING FROM OTHER ZONES, DURING THE BUILDING OF NEW HOUSES AND VILLAS, WOULD HAVE FOUND OUT SOME SKELETONS AND MANY ANCIENT OBJECTS AS COINS, COPPER BASINS, POTS, AMPHORAS, AND SO FORTH, SO THAT A PART OF THE POPULAR TRADITION BELIEVES THOSE LUCKY PEOPLE HAVE BECOME RICH WITH THE OPENING OF NEW BUSINESS ACTIVITIES.

### **The Villa Carminello hamlet**

The **Villa Carminello** hamlet (124 inh.) is in the southeast and 4 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, surrounded by palaces and villas of the town quarter Santa Rita.

The **church of Madonna of the Carmine** (“Carminello” in our dialect) was built in 1904, and I made its first historical dating in my *Contradando per Lanciano* in 2002. Located among the houses, facing the little square where the annual patronal festivity takes place, the church is made of bricks, with a rectangular structure, a small facade, a portal and the bell tower. Its nave contains a marble altar behind which there is a large statue of the Madonna of the Carmine inside a niche and, at its sides, there are the statues of St. Joseph with the Child and San Nicola and, at its side walls, those of San Rocco and of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Patronal Feast: on Sundays before or after July 16. The church depends on the city parish one of the Spirito Santo (Holy Spirit) of the town quarter Santa Rita.

Along the National Road flanking the city Santa Rita quarter, very close to a traffic lights, there is the

**little church** of the **Spirito Santo** (that is of the “Holy Spirit”), which was the parish one of the homonymous hamlet having the same name of the surrounding valley crossed by the rivulet Arno. The little church of the Spirito Santo, built in 1405 and restored in 1726 and 1950, has a nave. The actual church of the Spirito Santo of the city Santa Rita quarter has taken its name from it.



In the neighbourhood, behind a filling station, there are the ruins of the 14<sup>th</sup> century church of Santa Veneranda the Vergin, a martyr of the 1<sup>st</sup> century; it was called ‘**St. Venula**’ in the popular parlance as the homonymous hamlet. The ancient local writers Fella, Antinori and Bocache spoke about it, and the hamlet’s name is written in the 1618 Lanciano Cadastre. In 1921 the church, which had two entries and a painting of Santa Veneranda, was declared a National Monument of Lanciano. It was letting in decay in the last decades.

### **The Marcianese hamlet**

The **Marcianese hamlet** (802 inh.) is in the west and 3 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, along the road leading to the town of Castelfrentano. Here, in

1969, some excavations have brought to light huts and bones of the human species and animals ones dating to Neolithic times (5<sup>th</sup> millennium B. C. in Abruzzo).

Towards the end of XIII century there was the church of Santa Maria delle Piane, which gave its name to the homonymous hamlet and is documented in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3749, as *S. Marie de Planis*.

The name Marcianese recalls the Marcianesi, who inhabit the town of Marciana in the Elba island, and the town of Marcianise in the province of Caserta.

In the Marcianese hamlet there was the church of San. Grifone (1568), which gave its name to a very extended valley and was near the famous Villa Paolucci (built towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) that was the German headquarter in 1943.

Hamlet's life is developing around **two churches**, one of 1896 and another inaugurated in 2001.

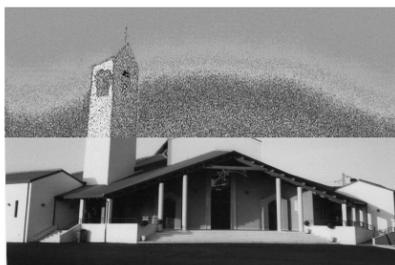
The "**old church**" (1896) is situated in the middle of a very crowded crossroads with traffic lights, and it has a rectangular structure, a bricked facade, a portal and the bell tower. Inside, with a single nave, there are an altar made of travertine, the paintings of the 14 stations of the Cross, various frescoes on the walls and on barrel vaults, a statue of the Our Lady Of Lourdes and that one, richly dressed, of Santa Maria delle Grazie with the Child.



The “old” church in the hamlet Marcianese (1896)

The “old church” had become too narrow to contain all the faithful during religious functions, especially when it became a parish church in 1979. So that, on July 7, 2001, the **modern church of Santa Maria delle Grazie** was opened, without excluding the religious importance of the “old” one. In fact, the statue of Santa Maria delle Grazie stays in the 1896 church and it remains in that “new” one only during the novena of the hamlet’s festivity on the second Sunday of July. The modern church of Santa Maria delle Grazie is three hundred metres farther the “old” one, and it is huge and comfortable with a very useful parking-place. Outside it expands as an irregular geometric circumference that contains the façade and a colonnade with a big portal and two smaller ones, a Roman bell tower with three bells and an iron-sculptured crucifix. Its interior is impressive and immense, with a single nave that has been the fulcrum of lateral enlargements, which are extended up to the huge roof truss. Here everything

is religiously expressive: the baptistery; the altar in travertine; an enormous 2001 fresco spreading all over the walls behind the high altar, and representing the Madonna with the Child in the act of embracing all mankind; a grand room for religious, cultural and pleasant initiatives; a lateral Ferial Chapel, expressly built according to new dispositions required from the Italian Episcopal Conference, with about fifty seats where Holy Mass is celebrated on working-days at 18:30.

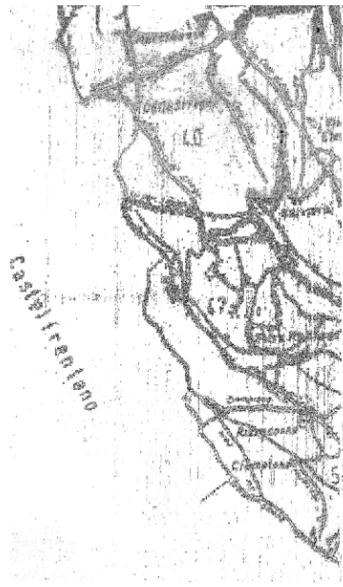


The “new” church in the Marcianese hamlet (2001)

In the last fortnight of May takes place, in a portion of the territory of the Marcianese hamlet, while the other one will be completed a year later, the “Peregrinatio Mariae”, when some houses are giving “hospitality” to the statue of the Our Lady Of Lourdes, preserved in the resto of the year into the “old” church.

Patronal Feast: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of July.

A kilometre after the new church there is the area of San. Nicolino.



#### **The Gaeta hamlet**

The **Gaeta hamlet** (104 inh.) is in the west and 2 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

It takes its name from the most known local surname. Of the old wooded hamlet almost nothing has remained and nowadays two large shopping malls frantically move its life.

There is a nursery school here.

The referring church is that new one of Santa Maria delle Grazie in the Marcianese hamlet.

#### **The Follani hamlet**

The **Follani hamlet** (1010 inh.) is in the west and 3 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

Follani is of vague origin and its ancient name was Scenciati. Its territory is very extended and, in the past, it was the San Bartolomeo hamlet, documented since 1300, with an old chapel recorded in the *Rationes Decimarum* of 1324-1325, number 3761, as *S. Bartholomeis rurales*.

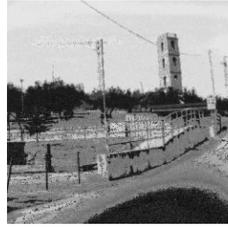
A homonymous church was built towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century on its site and it still exists into the ex-home for the elderly people located in Viale Cappuccini.

There are a primary and a nursery school in the hamlet.

The referring church is that new one of Santa maria delle Grazie in the Marcianese hamlet.

### The Villa Elce hamlet

The **Villa Elce hamlet** (339 inh.) is in the south and 6 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, along the provincial road leading to the Val di Sangro and to the town of Atessa. Its name will be probably derived from some Elce family then became Dell'Elce. Here there was a first church dedicated to the Madonna del Pozzo, venerated since the half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the faithful went on pilgrimage to the chapel dedicated to her in the Piscino hamlet at Capurso, a town near Bari, where the worship of that Madonna began. The old church was in danger of falling and was pulled down in the year 2000 after a long, controversial and difficult decision; today only its 19<sup>th</sup> century three-storey bell tower stands.



The **new church** of the **Madonna of the Pozzo** (that is "of the Well") is opened for worship since May 23, 1990. It has a bricked facade, a large bell tower and a well made of bricks near it. A portal introduces into its large religious-room where there are a large marble altar and the statues of the Madonna of the Pozzo, Our Lady of Sorrows and San Rocco; a statue of the Dead Christ is into the sacristy.

There is a wide car parking space outside the church, and, nearby, a building turned into a very practical place for who have some handicap of their health.

The church of the Madonna of the Pozzo became a parish in 1975.

Patronal Feast: on the last Sunday in July.

Other important processions are that one of San Rocco that takes place on the last Sunday of September, in order not to overlap it with that one on August 16 in the city church of San Rocco, and the other of the Blessed Sacrament, on the last Sunday of October.



The church of the Madonna del Pozzo (1990)

### **The Villa Pasquini hamlet**

The **Villa Pasquini hamlet** (123 inh.) is in the south and 7 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

It took its name from the from the widespread surname Pasquini.

Inhabitants depend on the church of the Madonna del Pozzo at Villa Elce and Holy Mass was officiated, until 2004, at 8 o'clock in the morning on Sundays, into an edifice of the old primary school, then modified for religious functions with a small altar, a little statue of the Immaculate Conception and a statue of St. Margaret from Antioch, which was carried in procession on the Ascensions-day.

There is, in the hamlet, the Community "Progetto Vita" ("that is the Project for Life"), for the sake of helping drugged.

### **The Fontanelle hamlet**

The **Fontanelle hamlet** (204 ab.) is in the south and 9 kms. from the centre of Lanciano.

Its name derives from the abundant springs of water of its subsoil.

Inhabitants refer to the church of the Madonna del Pozzo at Villa Elce.

## **The Villa Martelli hamlet**

The **Villa Martelli hamlet**, so called since the 15<sup>th</sup> century from the very popular surname Martelli, has 838 inhabitants and it is in the southeast and 4 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, along the road leading to the A14 superhighway, to the town of San Vito Chietino and towards the Adriatic National Road.

After having bordered the houses of the city Santa Rita quarter you'll meet the church of San Donato the martyr sited in a little square; going on one's way you'll reach an unspalted road leading to the Treglio's industrial area (the old "Via della Gallina Morta", that can be translated as "Death Hen's Street", of which I wrote in *Contradando per Lanciano* in 2002 it would have been dedicated to one of the greatest figures in the history of Lanciano, Francesco Petrini, the author of the stunning Santa Maria Maggiore's Gothic façade, but then the street has been dedicated to San Savino.

The **church of San Donato** the martyr was built in the half of the eighteenth century with the materials of that one of St. Savinus. The church has a rectangular structure and its bricked façade is reminiscent of the Renaissance style as the storey bell tower, to three orders, on which is carved there is a small statue of the Madonna; the

portal has, at its sides, some bricked columns and a simple semicircular window above it. Its interior with a single nave has a marble high altar, behind which there is a large oil-painting on wood representing the Madonna with the Child; to the sides of the high altar there are some 18<sup>th</sup> lamps and small columns with capitals in Corinthian



order and above it, a depiction of the Holy Spirit. There are also unburied mortal remains into the crypt. The ceiling is formed by a wood trusses and tiles. The wooden 18<sup>th</sup> century statue of San Donato the martyr is inside a niche to the left wall, and he wields a book and a crescent-shaped sickle that symbolizes the power of the saint to “cut”

the “bad moon” of people with epilepsy. An 1854 wooden statue of St. Michael the Archangel is near the right wall and other statues are those of the Madonna and of Jesus Christ. Just at the entry, to the left, there is a reliquary containing the bones of saints, donated by a parish priest from Mantua. The church’s last restoration was made in 1970.

The church of San Donato the martyr was under religious jurisdiction of that Santa Lucia’s city

church until when, in 1792, it was elevated to parish. The church of the Villa Carminello hamlet depended on the parish one of San Donato the martyr until a few decades ago.

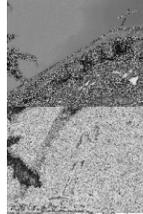
\*\*\*The eight of May is St. Michael the Archangel's day, with a civil and religious program culminating with a procession at 7 in the evening.

There are a nursery and a primary school in the hamlet.

Patronal Feast: on August 7.

### **Sant'Onofrio**

The **Sant'Onofrio hamlet** (that is "St. Onofrius"), with 330 inhabitants, is in the south and 9 kms. from the centre of Lanciano, along the road leading to the Val di Sangro's industrial area and to the town of Atessa. The old church of St. Onofrius, built in 1467 and whose remains are standing on the highest hill, belonged to the ancient Rizzacorno hamlet; it was damaged during the Second World War and closed to worship in 1943. Almost certainly, according to a 1363 deed of gift, there must have been another church of Sant'Onofrio of the hamlet Rizzacorno, that is sixty years later the Angevins had removed



Rizzacorno from the rule of Chieti to include it in Lanciano's State demesne. About this 1303 church, twenty years ago, during some works, the rests of that seemed to be a church appeared in a bend, to the left side of the road leading to Atessa, 300 metres after the crossroad going to Fossacesia. Now the place is completely covered by grass.

The **actual church** of **Sant'Onofrio** of the homonymous hamlet, erected in 1962 and opened for worship in

1964, is one of the largest liturgical buildings in Lanciano's countryside. It was built with large stones of the mountain, like the nearby big square bell tower. The church has a rectangular



structure with a façade and one portal with a large sculpture of Sant'Onofrio carved in stone and a porch that allows the side entry and supports the sacristy. In its huge inside, with a single nave, there is a stoned high altar, a 1986 bricked ambo

and three large windows; on the left wall there is a large wooden statue of Sant'Onofrio and, in front of it, upon a small altar, a chalked Immaculate Conception one. The church became a parish in 1974.

Sant'Onofrio occurs on June 12, but in the hamlet the patronal feast takes place on the first Sunday of September (because of the Franciscan friars of the convent of Sant'Antonio of Padova in Lanciano, who some decades ago were involved in religious services of the church, could not overlap this holiday with that citizen one of Sant'Antonio of Padua on June 13).

### **Rizzacorno**

The **Rizzacorno hamlet** (277 inh.) is in the south and 9 kms. from the centre of Lanciano. Ancient papers tells us that Rizzacorno, a name of uncertain origin, which was probably a surname of some feudal lord, was a fief of Chieti and it was assigned to Lanciano in 1303, after a territorial reorganization by the Angevins. Then its history went on with that one of Lanciano and it was constantly sold to each new feudal conqueror.

In the 1308 *Rationes Dedimarum*, n° 3468, it is spoken about the *Clerici Riczatornu*.

The above mentioned 1363 document about a church of Sant'Onofrio that was in then Rizzacorno hamlet tells us that it was replaced in 1467 by one dedicated to the same saint in the

same place, and it was irreparably damaged during the battle of the Sangro River in the winter of 1943. On the hill below, in 1962, it was built the actual church dedicated to the saint in the new Sant'Onofrio hamlet.

Soon after the Second World War the inhabitants of Tizzacorno desired to preserve the peace; so that in August 1947 was completed the building of the **church** of the **Madonna della Pace**. It has a rectangular structure and the façade with a portal on which there are four big bronze

bas-reliefs depicting the Madonna with the Child, the Madonna, Sant'Anton



io of Padua with the Child and Jesus Christ; a circular window, a small cross and the bell tower in concrete are above the portal. In its interior with a single nave there is the high altar with a bronze panel representing the disciples of Emmaus; behind the high altar there are the statues of the Madonna of the Peace, in a large central niche, and those ones of Our Lady of Sorrows and Sant'Antonio of Padua.

Patronal Feast: on the last Saturday of August.

There is a primary school in the hamlet.

The church of the Madonna of the Peace depends on the parish one of St. Onofrius.

### **Colle Campitelli**

The **Colle Campitelli hamlet** (as to say "Campitelli Hill"), with 99 inhabitants, is in the south and 9 kms. from the centre of Lanciano. The name derives from the most common surname and, until the Second World War, it was called Campitelli.

The **church** dedicated to the **Our Lady Of Lourdes** was built in 1983. It looks like a mountain church, with its rectangular structure, the plaster and the bell tower. The interior has one nave, with a marble altar, behind which, inside a large niche, there is a chalk statue of the Our Lady Of Lourdes, carried in procession the evening of the patronal feast on the penultimate Saturday of August, and celebrated on February 11, the day dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, with a Mass at 6 o'clock p. m. and a torchlight procession outside the church. Next to the altar there is another small statue of Our Lady of Lourdes worked in wood.



The church of Our Lady of Lourdes in the hamlet  
Colle Campitelli depends on the parish one of  
Sant'Onofrio.

**The Patronal Festivities in the  
Lanciano's 33 hamlets**

The way of living in Lanciano's contrade is always very enthusiastic when there are the patronal festivities, which mark the yearly period of maximum intensity in the hamlets's life.

We don't know the origins of these popular feasts, but they would have been inspired from medieval shows and sacred processions that took place in the main squares of every towns and hamlets.

The civil and religious celebrations are organized by a committee consisting of three or four people, "Li deputati" ("deputies"), who are chosen a week after the end of each patronal feast among the inhabitants, and one of them will act as a president to sign contracts and receipts.

Committee's members are engaging throughout the year to look for the missing money and find it with family offers and the organization of dinners, dances and trips to near and far sanctuaries. The committee shall also pay the priest and the sacristan.

Each hamlet's festivity is announced by the bells of the little churches, recalling the faithful to pray and sing the novena. It seems that in the hamlets they can breathe the festive atmosphere of the famous verses of Leopardi (*the translation is mine*):

*'Now the small bell is announcing the feast; and with that sound you would say each heart takes its own comfort'.*

The coming days of each hamlet's festivity are very important, when inhabitants are interested to know the program, about events taking place and singers that will come, while people are watching the arrangement of the arcades with multicolour lights that will lighted the streets in feast days until to the churchyard where is placed, as usual, a big soundboards used in village festivals.

Meanwhile women go to Lanciano to buy all everything they need and then they go home to prepare traditional dishes: the lasagna, the bread of Spain, the maccheroni with eggs and made by a special guitar, all sort of cakes and the main food of these joyful days, a hen broth with simple ingredients such as onions, parsley, carrots and salt.

The various programs of the festivities are also concerning cycling and walking races, the performances by singers, popular games by now rare as the greasy pole and the tug-of-war, or people prefer to walk among the carts of street vendors and chat with friends or with tourists and emigrants who have returned for the occasion; musical bands, at different times during the day, cheer up the hamlet.

Processions and Holy Masses capture the main interest where, after the Holy Mass, is nearly a duty to buy blessed rolls and drink blessed wine,

offered by residents and extracted from some wooden barrels lying near the portals of the churches.

Waiting fireworks is always very important while the 33 Lanciano's hamlets are in competition for the organization of the best fireworks show: it is always a spectacle to see that stream of people looking at the sky that suddenly fills with variegated colours.

Then the singers continue their shows while people are eating peanuts and roast sucking-pig and drinking also beer until the end of the patronal festivity, while they are already thinking to the next hamlet's festivity.

#### Calendar of Lanciano's contrade festivities

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of May	S. Liberata
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of May	Iconicella
Sunday after the Pentecost	Villa Andreoli
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of July	S. Maria dei Mesi and/or Torremarino
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of July	Marcianese and S. Amato
July 16	Madonna del Carmine
Sunday before or after July 16	Villa Carminello
The last Sunday of July	Villa Elce
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of August	S. Giusta
August 2	Villa Stanazzo
August 7	Villa Martelli
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of August	Serre
The penultimate Saturday of August	Colle Campitelli
The last Saturday of August	Rizzacorno
September 1	S. Egidio
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of September	S. Onofrio
1 <sup>st</sup> first Sunday of October	Torre Sansone

\*In the last years the patronal feast of the hamlet Torre Sansone takes place on August.

The ancient **Royal sheep-track L'Aquila-Foggia** entered the territory of Lanciano nearby the gullies in the Costa of Chieti hamlet, proceeded to the Santa Liberata hamlet near the church of Santa Maria della of the Libera that was built on it as an oasis of peace for both people and animals; then it passed through the area of Pozzo Bagnaro and reached the zone of the current hospital, from which it went on towards another point of comfort and mystical contemplation, the church in the Iconicella hamlet, and from here the sheep-track was forked in two directions: going straight ahead to the provincial road for Mozzagrogna, and going to the right towards the lands of the hamlets of Colle Pizzuto, Re di Coppe, Serre and Villa Pasquini.

The sheep-tracks were the ways of communication for the passage of shepherds and flocks during their transfers in spring from the lands of Apulia, now insufficient of grass, to the rich pastures of grasses of the forests of the Abruzzo's mountains, and for their backward journeys in autumn, when the first winter colds forced to return to the warmer Apulian plains.

It was the transhumance, which ensured an uninterrupted cycle of the sheep livelihood, and it is an integral part of our folk tradition tank to memory of herds led by pastors and by packs of dogs who crossed the hilly and mountainous pastures and each time the shepherds that took

sheep pens, the 'stazzi', where the local people approached to socialize and buy genuine products.

Sheep-tracks are survived to the bulding of the main roads and highways, and they are staying to the sides of those ones, with their tracings that were as ancient superhighways since the Aragonese times, who had followed and traced the ancient paths of the Roman Empire already delineated since Neolithic times in a region that had in the stock-raising one of its more vital reasons. A permanent museum of the Abruzzese transhumance is into the church of Santo Spirito in the Mancino quarter in Lanciano.

Why do we say "**cafóne**" in Italy?. The inhabitants of the Italian hamlets are called with an insulting dialectal Italian word, "cafóne", plural 'cafóni' (how do you say "yokel-yokels"), to refer to a rude, vulgar and bad-mannered person. This is only a stupid and unfounded prejudice that can be tailored to anyone, not only against people born in the country. In reality 'cafóne' may be also used to indicate someone who was born into the city and not only those ones who plays the important activity of agriculture. Sometimes "cafóne" is addressed towards someone in a negative way, about his way of dressing, the strange colour of a car or for some other incomprehensible reason. The most authoritative Italian dictionaries treat various branches of its derivation, but "cafóne" still

remains of uncertain origin and it could also have been the result of some extemporaneous expression of someone who was arguing with someone else and would have said him to be a “cafóne”, a word that is always used in a distorted sense when it is used to indicate only peasants. One of the most acclaimed theories is that ‘cafóne’ would have been derived from the dialectal expression of southern Italy “nghe ‘na fune” (that is “with a rope”), with reference to the rope used by the peasants to attack their tolls when they went to work, or about the same rope with which they led the oxes to the city markets, but the same peasants would be better characterized with the hoe or the plough. “Cafóne”, according to Cicerone in his *Filippiche* (VIII, 3.9), could also be derived from such a *Cafo*, who lived in the times of Caesar and Mark Anthony, who would have behaved arrogantly in some land conquered so that someone defined him to be a “Cafóne”.

**Others historical Lanciano’s hamlets (in brackets the current zones):** - Arno (Santa Croce, Villa Martelli) - Bel Luogo, Panzecorame, Selva Rotonda, Santa Margherita (Villa Pasquini) - Bordella (in the Mancino quarter) - Buongarzone, Carriera, Cerrete, Galeotti (Villa Elce) - Campione (Rizzacorno) - Cerratina, Ripa Bassa (Costa di Chieti) - Colle Strega, Fonte (Fontanelle) - Costa Taverna (Madonna del Carmine) - Cotellessa, Valle Cupa, Stravizza (Villa Stanazzo) - Cotogno, Rotelle, Coste di Brenta, Rubanitte (Colle Pizzuto, Re di Coppe) - Feltrino, Morelli (Santa Giusta) - Fosso San Giacomo (Camicie) - Giammarino (Follani) -

Le Piane, Duveghetti, La Piccola Sicilia (Sant'Onofrio) -  
Ponticelli, Picchiatilli (Iconicella) – Sant'Apollonia (San Iorio) -  
San Giacomo (near the present hospital) - Selva, N' giucchi (Colle  
Campitelli) - Vallebona (Sant'Egidio).

**Other Hamlets, but not located:** - Bufalara, Piane La Fara  
(Rizzacorno?) - Canali, Piane di Cambio (Santa Maria dei Mesi?) -  
Caprafico, Cese, Colle Iariccio, Colli Noce, Le Coste, Ponte  
Arcolino, Quarticcio, Vallone di Creoli, Vallopici, Vernara.

**The 3 Eucharistic Miracles  
of Lanciano's tradition**



### **The 3 Eucharistic Miracles of Lanciano's tradition**

The religious tradition of the Catholic Church records several Eucharistic Miracles, among which the most important are those of Trani (1000), Ferrara (1171), Augsburg (1194), Alatri (1228), Daroca (1239), Santarem (1247), Bolsena (1263), Cascia (1300), Hasselt (1317), Blanot (1331), Bologna (1333), Macerata (1356), Bagno di Romagna (1412), Faverney (1608), Siena (1730), and so on.

The town of Lanciano has a secular tradition of three Eucharistic Miracles, and the first in the history of the Catholic Church took place here in the eighth century, while the second one occurred around 1270. Although there aren't any written evidences, it is a fact that the Sacred Relics exist. The tradition of the third Lanciano's Eucharistic Miracle is only testified by a picture.

Whether the Eucharistic Miracle of Bolsena, worshiped in the cathedral of Orvieto, is the most famous in the world and gave rise to the celebration of the Corpus Domini in 1264, this one of Lanciano (8<sup>th</sup> century) is the first among all.

The Sacred Relics of the eighth century **first Eucharistic Miracle** were investigated by the science in 1970-71, which came to the conclusion that meat and wine are of the human species and have the same type blood AB, and in 1981, when it

was reaffirmed the affinity between the flesh and the heart of a human being.

Therefore there are the Sacred Relics recognized by the science but it is doubtful the datation of this Eucharistic Miracle, the place where and how it happened.

The mystery testified from the Sacred Relics makes it, surely, a question of faith while the historical memory of the prodigy was preserved by the oral belief then enriched by books of the centuries XVI and XVII.

Old local writers spoke about an ancient parchment where the history of the year 700 Eucharistic Miracle was narrated in Greek and Latin languages, but it was unfortunately stolen some centuries after by two Basilian monks, with the evident purpose to remove the traces of their shame to have doubted.

All the lost history of the Eucharistic Miracle was related in an inscription on a 1636 stone plaque placed to the right side wall of the actual city church of San Francesco of Assisi where we can read (*the translation form Latin language is mine*): 'AROUND THE YEAR 770 IN THIS CHURCH, THEN DEDICATED TO THE SAINT LEGONZIANO OFFICIATED BY THE BASILIAN MONKS, OF WHICH ONE OF THEM DOUBTED ABOUT THE REAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST, THAT IS IF THE HOLY HOST WAS THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE WINE HIS BLOOD. AFTER HAVING CELEBRATED THE MASS, THE HOST WAS CHANGED IN BREAD AND THE WINE IN BLOOD. THE PRODIGY WAS IMMEDIATELY SHOWN TO THE FAITHFUL AND THEN TO ALL CITIZENS. THE MEAT IS

STILL ENTIRE WHILE THE BLOOD IS DIVIDED IN FIVE IRREGULAR CORPUSCLES WHOSE TOTAL WEIGHT IS THE SAME ALTHOUGH EACH OF THEM ARE ALSO TAKEN SEPARATELY. IN THE SAME WAY AS YOU CAN SEE NOWADAYS IN THIS CHAPEL MADE AT HIS OWN'S EXPENSE BY JOHN FRANCIS VALSECCA IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD MDCXXXVI'.

Imagine the fear and the astonishment of a monk who suddenly was in front of human flesh and wine during the Holy Eucharist!

However, the historical tradition tells us that Basilian monks, who escaped from the Orient later the edict of Leo III the Isaurian in the first half of the VIII century, or maybe they were already celebrating in Lanciano from some centuries, settled themselves in the church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano and that they would leave it at the end of the twelfth century.

Then the Benedictines hold themselves under the religious influence of San Giovanni in Venere's abbey in Fossacesia until the arrival of the Franciscan Friars who settled into the church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano in 1252, on which the church of San Francesco of Assisi, where the Sacred Relics were transferred into a tabernacle, was built.

The Sacred Relics were placed in a chapel beside the main altar and were brought, in 1636, on its right side where you can read and see the stone plaque described above.

The Sacred Relics were preserved in an ivory reliquary for centuries, since 1258 into a tabernacle

and since 1713 the Flesh is into a silver monstrance while the Blood is in an ancient rock-crystal ampulla.

Since 1902 the Sacred Relics are located behind the marble high altar built in the same year, and they are daily visited by pilgrims from all over the world. On November 3, 1974 the Cardinal Wojtyła, the future Pope John Paul II, came to Lanciano to venerate them.

[The date of foundation of the church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano is unknown and it would have been built, as the local legend recites, on the same site of an ancient church dedicated to St. Longinus, that is Quintus Cassius Longinus, the famous Roman centurion who pierced Jesus Christ with a lance immediately after his death. There is a strong local tradition according to which Longinus was born in Lanciano, but there are no historical sources about it, and many cities in the world claim to have been his birthplace. Longinus is being supposed born in Lanciano by an inscription, found in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in a fountain near the church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano and reported from ancient historians, where it was written "Q. CASSIUS LONGINUS SUA F. P." (Longinus made to build it at his own expense). Some historians believed the same name of Lanciano, the ancient *Anxa*, *Ansanum*, *Ancianum* until the XI century, then *Lanzanum* at the beginning of the XIII century, would be derived from his famous 'lance'. The church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano, that

was under the actual bell tower of the church of San Francesco of Assisi, was mentioned in documents of the XII century, in Pope Bulls of the half of the XIII century when the new church of San Francesco of Assisi was built on it, and in the 1324-1325 *Rationes Decimarum*, number 3742, as *S. Leguntiani*. After when the new church of San Francesco of Assisi was opened for worship that one of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano was deconsecrated. The Franciscan Friars left the church in 1809 after the Napoleonic suppression of the monasteries and they will be returned only in 1953. In the same 1809 the church of the Saints Legonziano and Domiziano became a State property and then it was turned into shops by private person until 1990's, when the religious and civil authorities bought back it and were made important restorations that have reported it to its ancient structure (with the important discovery of the 16<sup>th</sup> century frescoes about the Last Judgement).].

Of the **second Eucharistic Miracle** of the Lanciano's tradition the Sacred Relics also exist in a shape of a scorched and bleeding Host plus a bloodstained frying pan and a table-cloth.

Oral tradition tells us it happened around 1270 in a stable, which was in the same place of the present little church of Santa Croce, just after the church of Sant' Agostino in Lanciano.

When a woman called Ricciarella, wishing to win back the love of her husband Jacopo Stazio, followed

the advice of a Jewish witch and set on fire a Holy Host to derive an erotic potion from it.

So Ricciarella hid the Host in her chest during the Holy Communion, and together with the Jewish woman placed it on fire; instantly the Consecrated Host bleed while the frying pan and the table-cloth got dirty of blood.

That explains the reason why everyone who was born in Lanciano are also nicknamed by the curious dialectal word 'Frjiacriste' ('to fry Christ').

Then the Jewish sorceress tried unsuccessfully to extinguish the fire with wax and ash; then the two women covered the bleeding Host and the frying pan with a table-cloth, while the 'fruits' of the prodigy were buried in the stable.

What a surprise when Jacopo saw his horses kneeling before the place where the Sacred Relics were hidden! Ricciarella and her husband kept the miracle a secret for seven years, until when she gave a detailed report of the prodigious event to the parish priest of Sant'Agostino, Jacopo Diotallevi, who brought the relics of the faith from the stable to his church.

When the monk was transferred to the church of Sant'Agostino in Offida (in the region Marches) he took with him the Sacred Relics of second Eucharistic Miracle of the Lanciano's tradition.

One month later the Sacred Relics were brought to Venice where the some Diotallevi bought a precious shrine where they were placed.

The Sacred Relics were just boarded and they were going to Offida but, while the tale is becoming more and more unlikely, as soon as the ship left the port all Venice's bells began to ring between a general fear and the city authorities decided to discover the responsible for the strange sound.

The silversmith revealed to have sold the reliquary to Diotallevi and a ship ran after that one which carried the Sacred Relics, being able to see but not reach it when it was stopped by some divine will.

Finally, the prodigious Eucharistic Miracle sailed towards Offida where, since then, is commemorated on May 3.

On May 3 2003 a fragment of the frying pan and another of the table-cloth have been brought back to Lanciano into the St. Cross' little church in the Lancianovecchia quarter.

Of the **third Eucharistic Miracle** of the Lanciano's tradition, there aren't any Sacred Relics but it is only witnessed by an oil painting of the seventeenth century or to the previous one, which is located into the sacristy of San Francesco of Assisi's church. It represents five men playing dice and when one of them puts into play the Sacred Host, a dog (the nature) bites him on the nose while an old man is pointing at the sky. The framework will have been drawn from one of the world-wide medieval legends, rose in the XI-XIII centuries, about the desecration of the effigy and of the Passion of Christ usually made from Jews during their ritual ceremonies.



## **Lanciano's Customs and Traditions**

It is advisable to visit Lanciano in September to better understand its popular culture and the special atmosphere of these days.

The city patronal feasts, the **‘Settembre Lancianese’**, unit hearts and minds of the Lancianesi emigrated to all over the world, while those ones who live in the Americas and Australia organize their returns every three or four years

The first of September is the anniversary of the Lanciano's founding, whose birth, legendary, would have taken place on September 1, 1181 B. C., and the feast month begins with traditional shots of bombs, at midday sharp, on the top of the BellTower in Piazza Plebiscito where the city flag, blue and yellow, is hoisted.

There are two important preludes: the shot of bombs from the same Bell Tower on August 29 or 30 at one o'clock a.m. and the popular feast in the evening of August 31.

#### **In the evening of August 31**

If you are in Lanciano in the evening of August 31, please consider carefully ...there is a very huge crowd walking slowly up and down along the Corso Trento e Trieste and in Piazza Plebiscito, around the numerous stalls, full of toys and the latest craft products.

Boyfriends give to their sweethearts gift baskets containing flowers and fruits, candies and chocolates, and then they looking for earthenware small bells

(symbolizing this gathering of people). Not far from here, near the Market Hall, farmers sell agricultural products to remember the ancient Roman “Nundinae Mercatus”, which occurred in the area of the present Sant’Egidio hamlet.



The famous earthenware small bells of Sant’ Egidio



The overflowing crowd in the evening of August 31

### **The Mastrogiurato**

Since 1981 the performance of the Mastrogiurato takes place in the last Sunday of August or, more probably, in the first Sunday of September (but only in 1983 did not take place). It is always very crowded and recalls many foreigners.

This important historical figure was instituted by the Angevins in 1304 and he was elected from the inhabitants of the historical centre's quarters (Lancianovecchia, Civitanova, Sacca and Borgo) during the glorious local fairs in May and September. When the Mastrogiurato was acting in person with full powers to ensure the public order and the exact length and weight of goods.

Nowadays, at 7 o'clock in the evening, the Mastrogiurato, pompously dressed, meets with the representatives of the historical quarters in Piazza Plebiscito, where there is an exchange of 'military courtesies', while the actors with their medieval costumes are ready and the fantastic parade is passing along the Corso Trento e Trieste, Corso Bandiera and it reaches Viale delle Rose at the end of the Fiera quarter, where the Mastrogiurato hoists the ancient local flag and that Angevin one.

This wants to recall the opening of Lanciano's medieval fairs, while the Mayors of nearby towns, who come from Frisa, Castelfrentano, Mozzagrogna, Rocca San Giovanni, Sant'Eusanio del Sangro, Santa Maria Imbaro, San Vito Chietino and Treglio, are showing their own flags.

The splendid ceremony ends when the fantastic cortege return to Piazza Plebiscito, while thousands of people are watching the Mastrogiurato and his suite evoking the Middle Ages, the Golden Age of Lanciano.



The Mastrogiurato in Lanciano

#### **‘Lu Done’ (-Il Dono-‘The Gift’)**

**‘Lu Done’** takes place on September 8 and relates to the strong veneration of the local people towards ‘their’ Madonna del Ponte, following to the oral tradition according to which, in 1088, during the excavations to restore the Ponte Diocleziano in large part destroyed by a powerful earthquake, a statue of the Madonna was found out.

In ancient times, ‘Lu Done’ used to be a pagan rite when Greeks and Romans worshiped many gods and

offered them some presents; now, it's a Catholic representation dedicated to the Virgin.

'Lu Done' starts at 10 o'clock in the morning on September 8, the day of the Virgin, and is very important for understanding the folkloristic links



between the town of Lanciano and its 33 hamlets.

The parade goes along the main local promenade and Corso Trento e Trieste, while the country-folkers, with their gifts and wearing traditional costumes, follow the banners indicating their hamlet of origin; a lot of people are watching carefully them and the tourist compares it with its folklore.



The weather is almost always nice when, surrounded by a large crowd, farmers carry the fruits of their hard work, especially corn, while women offer their hand-made gifts into copper pots, worn on their head, filled with grain and enriched with many vivid floral ornaments.

Actor and spectators, while listening in the soundtrack of festive accordions, sing local religious hymns in honour of the Madonna del Ponte,

while wagons and farm tractors, packed of agricultural products, are marching in line slowly and performing scenes of rural life.

'Lu Done' has its acme as soon as it arrives to the cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte in Piazza Plebiscito, where the gifts will be sold, in the evening on a bandstand, to finance town's feasts.

[Historical sources about 'Lu Done', which is strange enough for such an important folk tradition, are defective. We only know that the Archbishop Paolo Tasso celebrated the birth of the Virgin Mary with a solemn Mass in the cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Then there were some donations in money, both from citizens and foreigners, which were used to repair the roof of the church. It will be developed then the idea to coincide September 8 with the donations to the Madonna del Ponte during 'Lu Done', but the parade of Lanciano's hamlets didn't exist. The hamlets were not considered in the 1618 city cadastre that only mentioned Piazza Plebiscito, the quarters of the historical centre of Lancianovecchia, Civitanova, Sacca and Borgo, and only the hamlets of Villa Stanazzo and its surroundings ones. Only with the city cadastres of 1747 and 1875, the names of the Lanciano's hamlets began to be written. But September 8 was already an important market day in Lanciano and such a religious performance was very appropriate during the long days of the first Feste di Settembre ("September's Feasts") in 1833; then "Lu

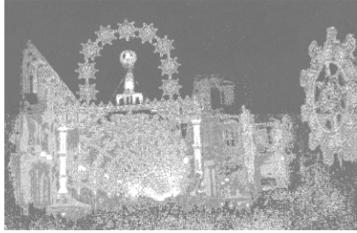
Done” was gradually developing over the years, when citizens offered the money and the farmers the fruits of their lands. However, with my book *Contradando per Lanciano*, the whole starring of ‘Lu Done’, i. e. the 33 Lanciano’s hamlets, with one third of the town’s population, have made their debut in the history of their town.].

**“Settembre Lancianese”  
(The patronal feasts in Lanciano)**

The patronal feasts in Lanciano, in honour of Santa Maria del Ponte, whose first edition goes back to 1833, take place in September 14, 15 and 16.

On September 14, at four o'clock in the morning, during the “White Night”, Lanciano is very very crowded inside and outside the race-course when there are fireworks as a traditional “overture”.

Two first isolated bombs, at three and a half and at a quarter to four early in the morning, draw the attention of those who have been dancing all night long and woke up who was still sleeping.



As soon as the fireworks are over people take a walk and buy traditional local pizza, while some band is playing music. What a crowd! What a mess!

Horse-races capture more and more people's interest and everyone can have fun in public and private parties and chatting or eating in restaurants and snack-bars. Every midnight, you can watch fireworks, a real competition that will award, at the end of the festivities, the best artist. While waiting for the pyrotechnic display, everybody can enjoy open-air concerts, of bands and famous performers of national pop music, which are offered near the old railroad station and in Piazza Plebiscito.

Town's patronal feasts are mainly devoted to the Madonna and the most important event is the solemn Mass and the religious procession to venerate Santa Maria del Ponte, which takes place on September 16, at seven o'clock in the evening.

On September 16, at midnight, the latest fireworks announce the ending of the feasts... the rest is melancholy.

[The "White Night" of September 14 in Lanciano is correlating to the night of August 18, 1933, when two delegated Lancianesi were coming back from the Vatican after they had obtained, the previous August 7, the two crowns to adorn, in the statue, both the Virgin and the Child. They were stopped at Castelfrentano the evening before, on Saturday August 17, in order they entered the city on Sunday. Very soon an improvised procession started from

Castelfrentano to the church of Santa Chiara in Lanciano where it came in the dead of the night. Then they followed the first great 'Feste di Settembre' with the coronation of the Virgin and the Child. So the "White Night, nowadays very popular in many cities' world, was invented in Lanciano on September 14, 1833.].

[About the so-called "white night" ... in Internet, typing "wikipedia/white night", you can read:"The *White Night* is an initiative of several large cities in the world to organize events and entertainments during a whole night. Often this is accompanied by outstanding service to the public transport or extended opening hours of shops or museums.". And again:"The first such initiative was created in Berlin in 1997, but the first *White Night* was on 5/6 October 2002 in Paris and has been repeated every year since the first night between Saturday and Sunday in October. The *White Night* in Paris is twinned with that of Rome, a year younger, held at the same time, in mid-September. It should be recognized that the Notte della Taranta, born in Melpignano, under the patronage of a community in the province of Lecce) anticipated these events in 1998.).."]].

**Actually the first *White Night* was held in 1833 in Lanciano town in Abruzzo region, and still the night between 13 and 14 September is celebrated again. This custom is not lost for over 150 years (actually since 1833, and *this note is mine*).**

\*\*\*There are also photographic, philatelic and numismatic exhibitions during the “Settembre Lancianese”, plus a dialect poetry competition and an exhibition of the latest craft products.

### La Squilla



December 23<sup>rd</sup> is a day more important than Christmas in Lanciano. It's *La Squilla*, a tradition of its kind unique all over the world. It seems an ordinary Christmas day but in the evening, from 6 to 7, an uninterrupted sound is heard from one small bell called *La Squilla* and placed on the top of the Bell Tower in Piazza Plebiscito. It is accustomed going into the home of the older relative to kiss his hands, exchange greetings and forget the old grudges. But someone is embarrassed in making peace, or does not want for nothing, while others less fortunate remember the dead or imagine receiving gifts. I know quite well who was born in Lanciano and so I am sure that emigrants in every part of the world are celebrating *La Squilla*.

*La Squilla* is dating back towards the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the local Archbishop Paolo Tasso and the faithful went on a short pilgrimage, from the Cathedral to the church in the Iconicella hamlet, 3 kms. from the city centre. This walk wants to remind the journey of the Virgin Mary and Joseph to take

part in the census in Bethlehem, or symbolizing the journey of the shepherds to the Jesus' cave.

This tradition, *La Squilla*, was brought back into vogue since December 23, 1984.

### **Christmas Time**

**Christmas time** in Lanciano is celebrating with the exchange of gifts, the dispatch of letters of wishes, the visits to relatives and friends.

Christmas Eve is devoted to fasting and during lunch does not eat meat and its by-products, but the fish is allowed. The dinner in the evening is composed of nine different dishes, the so-called 'Il Cenone' ('a very abundant dinner), made of lentils, peas, beans, vegetable soups, potatoes, sausages, peas soups, fried cabbages, spaghetti with tuna fish, fried sardines, stockfish and snails with tomato sauce, pigskin, eel, 'cotechino' (that is a pork sausage, just the Italian way), red and white wines, champagne type wines, fruit salad, fruits, sweets, coffee, liquors. At midnight people go to church and then back home to play cards and discuss to strengthen their bonds of affection, despite television programs had misused the real meaning of human links.

On the morning of Christmas people go to the Holy Mass and then have a rich lunch with nine richly dishes of chicken and turkey broths, home-made pasta with tomato-sauce, baked chicken with potatoes, veal-cutlets, vegetables, nougats,

'panettones', sweet, fruits, wines, liqueurs, but the main dish is the broth cardoon with small balls of meat. Then people spend the afternoon talking about family ties and general problems. In the evening they are used have a light dinner of meat.

In the days following Christmas, life restarts its normal rhythm until the New Year's Eve, when people will meet in dance parties cheering themselves full of an unrestrained exuberance and expects the midnight uncorking bottles of champagne and hoping a happy new year with dances that go on until dawn. The characteristic food of the New Year's Day is the 'ravioli', small square pieces of home-made pasta stuffed with meat, ham, sausages, spices and entirely covered with tomato-sauce.

The Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas time. The night before, children hang stockings at the foot of their beds, while their parents and relatives tell them the Befana is coming. Nowadays, children discover too early the true identity of the "old woman" who is bringing toys, while the ones who appreciate mostly this event are children who receive toys rarely.

### **January 17 - Sant'Antonio abate)**

Modern life is continually evolving and few people know the real value of traditions involving old and new generations. The folklore still survives by the attachment of the people of "once", and the interest of some young people.

On January 17, Lanciano's rural world honours Sant'Antonio the abbot, the patron from adversity and temptation.

It's a common knowledge that the saint, after the death of his parents, was a hermit in the Egyptian desert in the III century, where he led an austere life and he was able to resist to devil's temptations.

Sant'Antonio the abbot is also the patron of animals and you can see his image located at the entrances to the stables or on the animals' hanging. A priest still blesses the animals in the countryside while people are paying in kind.

Really the feast starts in the evening of January 16, above all in some Lanciano's hamlets, when you can watch groups of people playing the part of the saint, of the devil and of the guardian angel. Moments after you can here people intoning dialectal hymns about the saint's life. Later the organizers and the actors go from door to door where they receive eggs, hams, sausages, and so forth.

Nowadays, this tradition is only important for some people who are thinking of "old good times".

### **February 3<sup>rd</sup>- San Biagio**

In the evening of February 3, there is an unusual flow of people going from Piazza Plebiscito to the oldest town's church, San Biagio, to venerate the saint.

Here parish priests anoint the throats of the faithful with a Holy Oil, to protect them from the diseases of the throat.

Legend recalls when the saint saved and blessed a boy whose throat had been partially closed by a fishbone.

Later the faithful are spending their time in harmony outside the church, where there is the sale of very small votive rolls, the 'panicelle', and of special round cakes, the 'taralli'.

### **Carnival Time**

Lanciano's usual life, in the days before Fat Tuesday, is upset by deafening noises coming from drums rolling behind enormous carnivals' figures, made of paper-pulp and representing caricatures of very famous personalities or of some local person or fact.

The tradition of Carnival derives from an ancient pagan ritual in which old and negative things were burnt, as a process of purification through the fire which is a material instrument marking this popular tradition that close the winter time and announce springtime.

The mockery of friends, laughs, sneering words, fine tricks are still actual even if years go by and the modernity produces the replacement of traditional masks (Punch, Pant and Brighella) by those of cartoon heroes, while the local creativity is reduced to a series of insignificant carnivals and Lanciano needs something more relevant.

At seven in the evening of Shrove Tuesday, in various public places, carnivals are shot for the fun of the people and then they are going to dance or eat the foods typical of this popular festival, especially the "cicerchiata" (a very sweet round-cake made with cooked pasta, eggs and flour, all linked with honey), or the "maccheroni alla chitarra" (our special dish is obtained by using a wooden-made device covered by silver-steel strings, the 'guitar', where housewives cut home-made flat pasta).

I forgot ... the night of the carnival is often cold.

### **The Holy Week**

A short time before the Holy Week, traditional cakes are prepared in many houses and bakeries. There is always a great demand for the "Fiadone", a rustic cake made of eggs and cheese. Eggs, flour, sugar and almonds are the basic ingredients of traditional Easter cakes with the characteristic shapes of hearts, horses, dolls that are donated to children and loved ones.

On Maundy Thursday, at about 9 o'clock in the evening, local faithful go to the most important town churches to kneel and pray.

On Good Friday, the solemn procession of the Dead Christ begins around 7 in the evening, when the wooden statue of the Dead Christ and the confraternity of San Filippo Neri ("St. Philip Neri"), whose members organize the religious event, leave the church of Santa Chiara going in procession along the ancient roads of the historical centre, then proceeding through the Corso Trento e Trieste, Corso Bandiera and Piazza Plebiscito. Carriers are holding on their shoulders the Jesus'coffin while a blindfolded and barefoot man, the scapegoat, is carrying a large wooden Cross. Meanwhile the sacred notes of the 'Miserere', a very moving funeral march composed by the local musician Francesco Masciangelo at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reach into their homes who are unable to attend. The procession also includes children, youth, adults, and all of them are dressed in black, while the faithful are very touched at the sight of all the symbols of the Passion. There are many faithful and political authorities in the last lines, while someone tries to make one's way through the crowd. People are everywhere and the traffic is always amazing.

On Easter morning, people exchange Easter eggs and gifts and the faithful go to Mass. A very attractive religious ceremony takes place at midday in front of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Ponte where the statue of St. John, carried on the shoulders

by the faithful and coming from the church of Sant'Agostino, meets that one of the Virgin Mary, that came from the nearby church of the Purgatorio, and bowing towards her three times he announces the successful resurrection of her son; then the Madonna meets with the statue of Our Saviour, who came from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, and they give a nod with each other, while a black veil falls from the Madonna's face with a warm applause of the devout; finally, the three statues go and remain into the Cathedral until the following Tuesday.

The day after Easter, early in the morning, some people go on picnics in neighboring countries or other cities, while those who stay at home are enjoying the "solitary" Lanciano.

On Tuesday after Easter, at midday, the Holy Week ends with another sacred representation in Piazza Plebiscito. The statues of the Virgin Mary, Our Saviour and St. John leave the Cathedral and exchange greetings with one another; while the statues of St. John and the Madonna return in their respective churches, that one of Our Saviour goes back to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore where, in a crypt, thirteen poor people, with their hands tied behind their backs, eat thirteen dishes of home-made pasta.

### **The Rocco Carabba's Publishing House**

After the invention of printing, in the late fifteenth century, books were diffusing everywhere in the world and Lanciano was the seat of important book-trades during its glorious medieval fairs.

The art of printing was brought to Lanciano by Rocco Carabba (Lanciano 1854-1924). He founded a Publishing House that would become very famous in Italy and in the world in the late nineteenth century and in the earliest decades of the twentieth century.

In 1870 Rocco Carabba made his first print, the 'Primo Vere' of the unknown young poet Gabriele D'Annunzio.

They were then published other important literary works, as the regional folkloristic books of Gennaro Finamore and Giovanni Pansa, and the writings of Salvatore Di Giacomo and Matilde Serao. Plus other famous plays of Galileo Galilei, Aristotle, Calvin, Kierkegaard, Bergson and so on.

In the year 1900 he published an "Italian Grammar", written by the modern Latin poet Cesar De Titta (born in Sant'Eusanio del Sangro), which spread to many of Italian schools.

What's more, various new series of novels, collections of sonnets and philosophic books, were sent to press like that of: "Scrittori Nostri" ("Our Writers") and "L' Italia negli Scrittori Stranieri" ("Italy view by Foreign Writers"), to compare the foreign culture and the national one; "La Cultura dell' Anima" ("The Culture of the Soul"), directed by

Giovanni Papini; the “Classici Antichi e Moderni” (“The Ancient and Modern Classics”); the “Libri per Fanciulli” (“Books for Children”).

It was also published the entire series of works of the famous Indian philosopher Rabindranath Tagore, who won Nobel Literature Prize in 1913.

When Rocco Carabba died in 1924 his work was continued by his sons Gino and Giuseppe who published a series of books called “Italiani e Stranieri” (“Italian and Foreign Authors”) and the “Scritti Vari” (“Various Writings”), plus the works of Giovanni Gentile, Corrado Alvaro, Alberto Moravia, Eugenio Montale and so forth.

Unfortunately the glorious Rocco Carabba Publishing House ceased its activities in 1950, due mainly to the considerable damages caused by the Second World War and the lack of capital.

The building of the famous Publishing House of Carabba’s family was near the church of Santa Chiara.

#### **The Revolt of October 5 and 6, 1943**

The Revolt of October 5 and 6, 1943 constitutes a tragic and glorious event of the local history, so that in 1952 the town of Lanciano got a gold medal for its past martyrdom by the Italian Republican government.

The Fascism fell on July 23, 1943 and the divisions among the Italian people were not resolved

from the armistice of September 8 but they were accentuated by the flight of the king.

Nazi forces were in retreat and took control of Lanciano on September 12, 1943. They made pillages and abuses of all sorts, but local population didn't comply with invaders. Then it happened that a twelve-year-old-boy Eustacchio Giovannelli had stolen a rifle from the enemies and confessed himself guilty and gave back it only when he knew some of his relatives had been arrested.

The Nazis sacked homes and shops until October 4, when the local retired general Ginesio Mercadante went to protest to the German headquarters that was at the Villa Paolucci in the Marcianese hamlet. People thought of his arrest and the population was about to rebel, but the return of general clarified the misunderstanding; in the same evening, the curfew was imposed.

The prelude of the revolt occurred in the evening of October 5 in the countryside below San Biagio's gate, when some local youngsters attacked and burned some Nazi motor-vehicles and wounded some enemies. Trentino La Barba, a local young man, was taken prisoner and he refused to reveal the names of his accomplices. For that, the next morning, he was tortured, blinded and shot not far from the church of Santa Chiara (near where, in 1963, was inaugurated by the then President of the Italian Republic, Antonio Segni, the monument in honour of the Lancianesi martyrs of October 5 and 6, 1943). Another German vehicle was burned the same

evening in the neighborhood of the Lancianovecchia quarter.

On October 6, at 9 o'clock in the morning, local rebels were waiting for their better organized enemies with rudimentary weapons stolen in some barracks. All the street of the historical centre were the theatre of the unequal struggle and the bloody event ended in the early afternoon, with the unconditional surrender of local insurgents.

Eleven local patriots were killed in action: Trentino La Barba (then decorated with a gold medal); Remo Falcone (silver medal); Nicolino Trozzi (silver medal); they were also decorated with a bronze medals, Vincenzo Bianco, Giovanni Calabrò, Giuseppe Castiglione, Achille Cuonzo, Adamo Giangiulio, Giuseppe Marsilio, Guido Rosato, Raffaele Stella.

Twelve civilians were killed in retaliation as: Maria Auricchio, Alberto Cicchitti, Luigi Cioppi, Giovanni De Chellis, Gaetano Di Campli, Giuseppe Iacobitti, Dora Manzitti, Giuseppe Orfeo, Francesco Paolo Piccirilli, Leopoldo Salerno, Pierino Sammaciccia and Camillo Trozzi.

The VIII English Army, also including Canadian, Indian and New Zealand soldiers, defeated the Nazis in the battle of the Sangro river in the last four days of November 1943. Lanciano was liberated on December 3 and 4, 1943.

### **Lanciano's Musical Tradition**

Lanciano's Musical Tradition began around the year 1450, when a music chapel was established into the first cathedral of Santa Maria dell'Annunziata.

This period was marked by the madrigals of Hippolito Sabino, the first important city musician.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century they were founded bands as the "Communal Band of Lanciano", conducted by Nicola Tatasciore, and another directed by Nicola Centofanti senior. These bands perfected their repertoire with the works of the great classical composers and became very famous in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The most famous local musician is Fedele Fenaroli (1730-Napoli 1818) to whom the city theatre is dedicated, and whose operas and sacred music were performed in the major Italian cities and directed by himself in Lanciano and in the principal Italian towns, while his six musical books, the "Partimenti", are cited in the most important musical encyclopedias. Other celebrated local musicians were: Francesco Masciangelo (1823-1906), who composed music dramas and sacred works as the "Miserere", which you can hear during the Good Friday Procession, and Father Cristoforo, alias Mattia Cipollone (1837-1905), who dedicated his entire life to sacred music.

Since 1972, Lanciano has a highly international reputation by staging each year, from July 10 to August 31, the "Corsi Musicali Estivi di

Perfezionamento Musicale” (“Summer Schools of Musical Specialization”). When young Italian and foreigner artists had a very deep musical specialization and the best of them are members of the symphony orchestra “Fedele Fenaroli”, under the leadership of world-wide orchestra directors.

Each day, at 7 o'clock in the evening, you can hear classical music concerts, and also of jazz and popular music, into the Auditorium Diocleziano or in some other place. Twice a week, at half past nine in the night, the symphony orchestra plays nearby historical monuments, in the main city squares and in some other towns.

#### **The ‘Agriculture’s Fair’ and other exhibitions**

The secular tradition of Lanciano’s fairs is renewed every yearannually with a series of events that take place in the Fiera area near the church of the hamlet Iconicella, outside and inside large pavilions, among which the most important is the “Fiera dell’Agricoltura” (“Agriculture’s Fair”) in April.

A first “Motor Market” took place in 1959 along the main local promenade soon after Corso Trento e Trieste and continued intermittently until 1966, when it became the “Market of Agrarian Mechanics”, sponsored by the communal municipality and some local agencies.

They were only local exhibitions with the participation of a few firms and an expositive limited space, so they was not included in the national

calendar of fairs (and its promoters had no political supports).

It became the very important “Fiera dell’Agricoltura” in 1970 while in 1975 there was that decisive development that prompted the city council, on November 4, 1978, to establish an Independent Agency Fair that, since then, runs a series of fairs with a great public success, of national importance, regarding cars and motor-cycles, building industry and furnishings, extreme sports, hunting, fishing, dog lovers, books trade, foodstuffs and “Fierabilandia” for children.



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## Appendix

### A SENSATIONAL HISTORIC DISCOVERY

In the 1324-25 *Rationes Decimarum* I found out some Lanciano's churches not registered by ancient e present local historians.

Other churches mentioned in the 1324-25 *Rationes Decimarum* but it is impossible to located them, never wirtten in Lanciano's history books.

*S. Margarite*, number 3745.  
*S. Silvestri*, n. 3746.  
*S. Herasmi de Silva*, n. 3748  
*S. Herasmi de Collina*, n. 3750  
*S. Nicolai de Cesis*, n. 3755.  
*S. Pancratii*, n. 3759.

These churches can stay everywhere in Lanciano's area and only some digging could be its solution.

After my book *Contradando per Lanciano*, the 1<sup>st</sup> history of Lanciano's 33 hamlets, and *Ia Storia di tutto il territorio di Lanciano-1st History of the entire Lanciano's territoryII*, I made a press release, to local authorities and to the Press marking evidence to point out:

1) The fundamental discoveries in *Contradando per Lanciano*, as the first datings of some churches (as those, among others, in the hamlet Torre Sansone at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the hamlet Villa Carminello in 1904), two Towers (in the hamlets Torre Sansone and Costa of Chieti), the calendar of the patronal festivities, the processions, etc.

They have only interested some closely students engaged in their graduation thesis and ordinary people, while many books had been published, by excluding many territories and inhabitants as those of hamlets Serroni, Torre Sansone, Serre, Villa Pasquini, etc.

Finally, I have accomplished my engagement, with an open letter sent on April 29, 2003, and filed on the same day to Lanciano' Municipality offices, to the 'civil and religious authorities, (in primis, therefore, to Mr. Mayor and the Excellency Archbishop) of the city of Lanciano in April 2003'.

I sent also the same one to Lucera, to the press and I publicized it further on.

Nobody answered from the two cities, while some papers of Lanciano and Lucera, and some Internet site of the two towns, related about it.

I engaged myself in it asking, with some extracts from *Contradando per Lanciano*:

to dedicate some road to Monsignor Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa, to remember him with a memorial plaque, also proposing a twinning of the hamlet Torre Sansone with Lucera town.

to name some road to Theodor Mommsen, as a must by hamlet S. Giusta towards him;

to call 'Via della Gallina Morta', that is 'death hen', in the hamlet Villa Martelli, in honour of Francis Petri, the author of the wonderful Santa Maria Maggiore's gothic facade;

to preserve the Tower in the hamlet Costa of Chieti;

to consider the problems in the hamlet Serroni, divided in two uncommunicating zones, while inhabitants refer to two churches and go to the polls in one constituency.

Then, in September 2007, I wrote and I sold to local authorities and to the Press:

2) I have to rectify some errata that could alter the true story of Lanciano. Regarding some mistakes persisting on books, opuscles published by September Feast's committees and Internet sites, about the dating of the following Lanciano's hamlets churches:

the Immaculate Conception in the hamlet Torre Sansone was built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

and not at the beginning of the same one, and it is a fact that Monsignor Giuseppe Maria Cotellessa lying buried under it was born in 1820 while his brother Gioacchino, the supporter of its foundation, was born in 1823;

the church of Madonna of the Carmine in the hamlet Villa Carminello was built in 1904 (and not in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and inhabited and officiated by the Fathers Carmelitani who were living, instead, in the convent of the S. S. Crocifisso worshiped as S. Mauro, as it can be seen in a famous lithography of Lanciano in 1600, where it stands outside the city historical centre in the immensity of the countryside; the church of Sant'Antonio of Padua in the hamlet Serre was built in 1947, and not in 1950, its year of the entry door' foundation, as it is written in a small iron engraved on it;

the Our Lady Of Lourdes' church in the hamlet Colle Campitelli was built in 1983 and not in 1980;

Badia di Frisa isn't a Lanciano's hamlet.