



The Longobards and Their Places of Power 568 – 774 A.D. A SINGLE SITE FOR SEVEN PLACES PART II

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BASILICA DI SAN SALVATORE (SPOLETO)

The Basilica of San Salvatore in Spoleto, Umbria, situated in the duchy of Langobardia Minor within the Perugia province, is a testament to early Christian and Lombard architecture. Originally dating back to the 4th or 5th century, this ancient Christian structure was entirely rebuilt by the Longobards in the 8th century. It is renowned for blending Greek and medieval Italian architectural elements, making it one of Umbria's oldest surviving Christian structures.

The basilica follows a traditional plan with three naves and a presbytery covered by a distinctive octagonal vaulted ceiling. The façade is elegant, featuring a rose window and a Romanesque portico. Visitors can admire an impressive Doric frieze, Corinthian columns, and three entrance portals. The interior is richly decorated, with well-preserved frescoes and a 16th-century wooden choir. The crypt houses ancient frescoes and remnants from the early Christian era, highlighting the basilica's historical and architectural significance.

The Basilica of San Salvatore is a prime example of how early Christian, Gothic, and Lombard influences were seamlessly integrated into a single monumental structure.

The exterior features a well-preserved 8th-century façade adorned with classical designs. Inside, the space is embellished with decorative elements, such as the striking Doric and Corinthian columns that encircle the presbytery and separate the three naves. The basilica has three main sections: a stunning chancel area with a vaulted ceiling. The apse, a semi-circular area at the rear of the church, is sealed by a straight wall. Within the apse, fragments of paintings from various periods remain, including a 16th-century depiction of the crucifixion and a monogrammed cross from the earliest series of frescoes.

To the west of the monastic complex lies the monumental area, which includes the Capitolium, the Republican sanctuary, and the Roman theatre. The Roman Forum houses the oldest religious building, dating back to the end of the 1st century B.C.

The Temple of Clitumnus is a small tetrastyle Corinthian temple near the Clitunno River between Spoleto and Foligno in Umbria. It features 7th-century



frescoes depicting religious themes and artistic motifs reflecting the community's spiritual life. The Temple is a remarkable example of early Christian architecture, blending classical and early medieval design elements. It dates back to the late 4th to early 5th centuries A.D., during the later Roman Empire. The Tempietto del Clitunno was built on a previous pagan sanctuary dedicated to the river god Clitumnus, known for the purity and sanctity of the Clitunno River. The river was famous for its clear waters and was believed to have divine properties, inspiring poets like Virgil and Pliny the Younger. During the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the Temple was repurposed as a Christian church, reflecting the transition from paganism to Christianity.

This remarkable monument combines Ancient Greek and Early Medieval styles, blending classical influences with Christian symbolism. Dedicated to the river god Clitumnus, whose clear waters flow nearby and have long been revered as a vital natural resource, the Temple's design and location reflect a deep reverence for the surrounding natural landscape. The simplicity



Basilica di Salvatore

and elegance of its rectangular plan, adorned with Corinthian columns and topped with a tiled roof, creates a harmonious and classical aesthetic that has captivated observers for centuries.

The Temple of Clitumnus is a remarkable blend of historical layers, showcasing the evolution of architectural and religious practices from the Roman Empire to early Christianity. Its significance lies not only in its architectural beauty but also in its representation of a pivotal era in Italian and European history. It was built using a mix of materials from an ancient Pagan sacellum and new creations, giving the Clitunno



Temple of Clitumnus

Tempietto a unique architectural style. While some sculpted decorations might have been reused from older buildings, many of the Temple's adornments are original, showcasing the skill and creativity of its builders. The Tempietto is considered one of the masterpieces of Lombard art for its skillful reuse of classical remains and reinterpretation of Roman architecture.

The Temple's exterior features a rectangular plan with a portico supported by four Corinthian columns. The front facade is decorated with a tympanum and classical entablature. The interior of the Clitunno Tempietto features a small apse, a vaulted ceiling, weathered Christian frescoes, and a rare example of monumental Early Middle Ages epigraphy. It stands out for its rare monumental epigraphy from the Early Middle Ages, particularly the large square Roman capitals. These provide essential information about the early medieval period and the site's significance. The Tempietto's rear apse walls feature faded eighth-century frescoes of Jesus and Saints Peter and Paul, making them the oldest in Umbria. These frescoes resemble those found in Rome's 5th-century Santa Maria Antiqua church. They were painted over in the early 20th century but restored in 1985. Additionally, the apse features a shrine and a column screen, similar to those in the Pantheon.

SANTA SOFIA COMPLEX OF BENEVENTO

The Santa Sofia Complex in Benevento, Italy, is a historic site that represents the diverse cultures and civilizations of the early Middle Ages. It is located in Benevento, the capital of the Province of Benevento, in the southern Italian region of Campania. The complex includes the Church of Santa Sofia, a Roman Catholic church built in the 8th century with Lombard architecture, the Arch of Trajan, and the Roman Theatre.

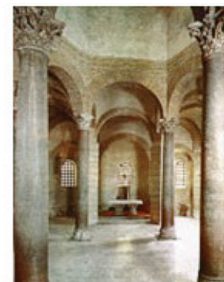
The Church of Santa Sofia was founded by Arechis II of Benevento in the 8th century A.D. Modeled after the Palatine Chapel in Pavia, it became a refuge for Lombards after their kingdom fell in 774. The church, dedicated to Holy Wisdom, showcases Lombard, Byzantine, and Romanesque influences. It also includes a Benedictine convent and houses the relics of Saint Mercurius. The complex features an inner hexagon surrounded by a decagonal ring with white limestone piers. Original frescoes can still be seen on the side apses. The monastery, rebuilt in the 13th century, completes the complex.

Earthquakes in 1688 and 1702 damaged the Church of Santa Sofia. Under the supervision of Cardinal Orsini, the church was reconstructed in a Baroque style, featuring a circular design with two side chapels and changes to the apse, facade, and pillars. Unfortunately, many original frescoes were destroyed, but fragments depicting the Stories of Christ and Mary remain. With a diameter of 23.5 meters, the church's central plan is similar to the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Visitors can admire the crypt's intricate frescoes and ancient Roman sarcophagi. The Santa Sofia Complex represents a blend of Roman, Byzantine, and Lombard cultures, displaying the geopolitical and cultural landscape of the early Middle Ages. The church itself showcases exceptional craftsmanship and ingenuity.

The Arch of Trajan and the Roman Theatre within the complex provide insight into the site's layered history and the enduring influence of ancient Roman civilization. The Arch of Trajan is a Roman triumphal arch built



The portal of the church



Internal view of the church



Detail of the frescoes, with the Annunciation of Zacharias



MONTE SANT'ANGELO

Monte Sant'Angelo, in the Province of Foggia in Apulia, offers natural beauty and historical significance. Situated atop Mount Gargano, the town offers breathtaking views of the Adriatic Sea and the surrounding countryside. Monte Sant'Angelo has ancient roots and a rich culture, drawing visitors from around the world. The Sanctuary of San Michele, also known as the Sanctuary of Monte Sant'Angelo, is a religious and historical site dating back to the 5th century, when the Archangel Michael appeared to a local bishop in a cave on Mount Gargano. This divine encounter led to the establishment of the Sanctuary of San Michele, one of the oldest and most revered sanctuaries dedicated to Saint Michael in the Christian world. It became a popular pilgrimage site in medieval Europe, attracting travelers from across the continent. One of its main features is the Grotto of Saint Michael, a cave church transformed into a place of worship. The sanctuary showcases both Romanesque and Gothic architectural elements and features exquisite bronze doors with intricate depictions. The sanctuary holds great religious and cultural importance as the Archangel Michael is the patron saint of warriors and protector of the Catholic Church. In 2011, it was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Over the centuries, the sanctuary has grown into a complex of chapels and churches, visited by many popes and saints. The sanctuary of Monte Sant'Angelo also hosts religious and cultural events and houses a collection of frescoes, artifacts, and artworks that reflect its rich history. It includes a library and a museum that preserve ancient manuscripts and historical documents. The Cave of the Archangel Michael in Monte Sant'Angelo is a revered pilgrimage site that draws numerous visitors each year. Its frescoes and serene ambiance provide a peaceful sanctuary for pilgrims seeking spiritual solace amidst the beautiful Gargano landscape.

Conclusion

These sites offer invaluable insights into the Lombards' cultural and artistic achievements in Italy. They showcase their ability to synthesize diverse artistic traditions and leave a lasting legacy that continues to captivate and inspire visitors today. □

between 114 and 117. It marks the entrance to the city along the Via Appia and has undergone several restorations. Constructed from limestone and clad in Parian marble slabs, it stands 15.60 meters high and 8.60 meters wide, with intricate carvings on both main facades. The bas-relief panels show scenes such as the homage of the province's divinities and the founding of colonies. Inside, Trajan is shown being welcomed by the Capitoline Triad and in the Forum Boarium. The arch represents Trajan's victory parade, reign, and key symbols such as the Danube River and Roman citizenship. At the top, there are carvings of Fortune and Rome. The arch also features sculptures depicting scenes from Trajan's life in Benevento and a decorated ceiling depicting the emperor crowned by Victory.

The Roman Theatre in Benevento was constructed during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, around the 2nd century A.D. Its diameter is about 90 meters and can accommodate between 10,000 and 15,000 spectators. The theater played a significant role in public entertainment and now serves as a cultural and historical attraction, hosting events and performances.