

SAN GINESIO

Location

Also called the "Balcony of the Sibillini", springs up on a hill along the west side of the Fiastrella Valley, from which one can observe the splendid panorama of the mountains of the national park.

Origins of the name

Not certain but in all probability imposed by Charlemagne.

Historical interest

Of medieval origins, born from the ruins of a pre-Christian settlement around 1100. It acquired notable power between twelve and thirteen hundred, in opposition to the expansion of the town of Fermo. In 1362 Albornozi signed it over to the Varano family of Camerino. Between the 14th and 15th centuries the fortifications were restored and a second defensive wall was realised (the existing wall today). The era of the Mercenary Knights signalled the passing of the authority of the town to Francesco Sforza, so the Pope, in the hope of regaining the entire Territory of Ancona, allied himself to Alfonso d'Aragona. In 1434 a bloody popular uprising signalled the end for the Lords of Varano, while, in 1450 the local ruling council condemned 300 citizens found guilty of supporting the lords to permanent exile.

Only later, thanks in part also to the future Pope Pius II, were they allowed to return to the town from exile in Siena, as is still remembered today in the historical re-enactment every three years of the "Return of the Exiles".

San Ginesio is the home town of the famous jurist Alberico Gentili (San Ginesio 1552- Londra 1608) known as the father of International Law.

Itinerary

The departure point is the Remembrance Park (1) found outside the wide circular town walls which are still intact and which embrace the prestigious and grand architecture of San Ginesio. In fact immediately after the Porta Picena entrance (2) on the right is the 12th century Pilgrims' Hospital (3), so called for its role of assistance and aid to the pilgrims that passed by during their difficult journey to Rome. The construction includes a low-columned portico with low gothic arches and airy 15th century loggia.

The route proceeds along the Via dei Tiratori, hugging the impressive town walls, then along via Vittorio Veneto, until reaching Via Matteotti, where there is a splendid medieval loggia (4).

A short distance on is the entrance to the ex-convent of Sant'Agostino, now a school, situated around the cloister (5). Adjacent to this building is the Auditorium of S. Agostino (6) built from the pre-existing church of S.M.Maddalena, of romanesque foundations. The route then follows Via Savini and Via Merelli, along which is found the Pinacoteca Comunale "S.Gentili" (7), until reaching the Piazza Alberico Gentili. On one side of the square, is the Collegiata (8), dedicated to SS. Annunziata, and the only late gothic church of its kind in Marche. It represents a rare example of the combination of romanesque and gothic styles. Its frontage is composed of a lower section, dating from the 11th century, with a gothic section built above in 1421 by Enrico Alemanno. Still in the square, above the loggia, is the Teatro Comunale "G.Leopardi" (9) opened in 1877.

Walking the entire via Capocastello the route arrives at the Porta Alvaneto (10) which leads on to the Colle Ascarano (11). The panorama opens out onto a view which justifiably gives rise to San Ginesio's title, the "Balcony of the Sibillini". Returning along the via Capocastello the route meets the following: Porta Ascarana (12), the Monastero delle Clarisse, with the Church of Santa Clara (13), the Palazzo Municipale (14), an ex-Franciscan convent, where the rich and prestigious Historical Archive is housed, and the modern section of the "S.Gentili" civic museum. Join Via J. Solleciti and continue on to the Church of S. Francesco (15), renowned for its beautiful romanesque entrance and the romanesque-gothic polygonal apse, inside which is housed a wonderful series of giottesque frescos.

Walking the entire via Trento and Trieste the route meets Via Brugiano along which is found the ruins of the house of Alberico Gentili (16), the Church of San Gregorio Magno (17) and the group of valuable architectural structures of SS. Tommaso e Barnaba. The last section takes in the Porta Offuna (18), from which the route then turns along via Roma, to the initial departure point.