

ITINERARY V

metres

Teatro Massimo, Politeama Garibaldi, Viale della Libertà.

We proceed

as far as

From the Quattro Canti go along Via Maqueda. At the end of this street

is the Piazza Giuseppe Verdi where the ^{huge structure} ~~massive bulk~~ of the Teatro Massimo Vittorio Emanuele rises. It ^{covers an area of} ~~surface~~ is 7730 square ^{metres} ~~metres~~ and is one of the ^{largest theatres} ~~greatest~~ in Italy. This theatre was begun in 1875 by

G.B. Philip Basile and brought to an end by his son Ernesto. This building has not before it a space sufficient to put in relief its bulk. On both

sides of the entrance stair are monumental groups in ^{bronze} ~~Bronze~~; a ^{statue} ~~lion~~ with figure of Tragedy by B. Civiletti and a lion with the figure of Lyric Poetry by M. Rutelli. The theatre contains three rows of boxes (155 in all).

In the ^{auditorium} ~~inside~~ on the curtain is ^{a painting of} ~~by S. Sciuti~~ Roger the Norman that from the Royal Palace betakes himself to the Cathedral to be crowned by G. Sciuti.

Via Ruggero Settimo is a ^{continuation} ~~prolongation~~ of Via Maqueda. ^{We proceed} ~~Going along~~ it you will soon reach a cross-road that takes its name ^{from} ~~from~~ Marquis Re-

galmici, but it is usually called Quattro Canti di Campagna. At the end of Via Ruggero Settimo there are two large fine squares; on the left

Carlo Cottone square, prince of Castelnuovo, with a marble monument; on the right Ruggero Settimo square. The monument to Settimo is by Benedetto

Delisi. Behind the monument to the Prince of Castelnuovo rises the pompeyan

bulk of Politeama Garibaldi (1874). The halls ^{adjacent} ~~connected~~ to the theatre are

the seat the Galleria d'Arte Moderna (Gallery of Modern Art) with entrance

Cottone Square, prince of Castelnuovo, with a monument on the right Ruggero Settimo Square. The monument to Settimo is

by Benedetto Delisi. Behind the monument to the Prince of Castelnuovo rises the pompeyan bulk of the Politeama Garibaldi (1874)

in Via Politeama presided by prof. Frank Restivo.

Via della Libertà, a famous street, one of the finest promenades in the world, ^{lined with} ~~rich in plane trees~~ and ^{many} ~~bordered~~ with splendid villas, is a continuation of Via Ruggero Settimo. Going along it we meet Piazza Antonio Mordini and Piazza Francesco Crispi (commonly called alle Croci) then on the right the Giardino Inglese, and on the left ^{an equestrian statue of} ~~a monument to~~ Garibaldi, ^{executed} ~~on horseback~~, a work by Vincenzo Ragusa, with bas-reliefs and a lion in the base by Mario Rutelli. Via della Libertà continues a long way always bor-

1915-1918 have

there are ~~concerns~~ ^{three rows of} boxes (125 in all). In the inside, on the curtain is painted Roger the Norman that from the Royal Palace betakes himself to the Cathedral to be crowned, by G. Sciuti.

Via Ruggero Settimo is a prolongation of Via Maqueda. Going along it you will ^{soon} reach a cross-road that takes its name after ~~the~~ Marquis Regalmici, but it is ~~not~~ usually called Luigi Cauti di Campagna. At the end of Via Ruggero Settimo there are two large fine squares: on the left Carlo Cottone Square, Prince of Castelnuovo, with a marble monument; on the right Ruggero Settimo Square. The monument to Settimo is by Benedetto Pisi. Behind the monument to the Prince of Castelnuovo rises the pompeyan bulk of the Politeama Garibaldi (1874)

(Teatro Massimo, Politeama Garibaldi, Viale della Libertà)

From the Quattro Canti go along Via Maqueda. At the end of this street there is the Piazza Giuseppe Verdi where the majestic bulk of the Teatro Massimo Vittorio Emanuele rises. Its surface is 4730 square metres and is one of the greatest in Italy. This theatre was begun in 1875 by G. B. Philip Basile and brought to an end by his son Ernest: this building has not before it a space sufficient to put in relief its bulk. On both sides of the entrance stairs are monumental groups in bronze: a lion with the figure of Tragedy by B. Civiletti and a lion with the figure of Lyric Poetry, by M. Rutelli. The theatre contains three rows of boxes (155 in all). In the inside, on the curtain is painted Roger the Norman that from the Royal Palace betakes himself to the Cathedral to be crowned, by G. Sciuti.

Via Ruggero Settimo is a prolongation of Via Maqueda. Going along it you will reach ^{soon} a cross-road that takes its name after ~~the~~ Marquis Regalmici, but it is ~~not~~ usually called Quattro Canti di Campagna. At the end of Via Ruggero Settimo there are two large fine squares: on the left Carlo Cottone Square, prince of Castelnuovo, with a marble monument; on the right Ruggero Settimo Square. The monument to Settimo is by Benedetto Pini. Behind the monument to the Prince of Castelnuovo rises the pompous bulk of the Politeama Garibaldi (1874).

The halls annexed to the theatre are the seat the Galleria d'Arte Moderna (Gallery of Modern Art) with entrance in Via Politeama, presided by prof. Frank Restivo and directed by prof. John Rutelli, and the Associazione degli Scrittori ed Artisti (Writers and Artist Society), with entrance in Via Amerigo Amari, presided by the writer Frederick De Maria. This last is a school of cultural initiatives and art.

Via della Libertà, a famous street, one of the finest promenades in the world, rich in plane trees and bordered with splendid villas, is a continuation of Via Ruggero Settimo. Going along it we meet Piazza Antonio Mordini and Piazza Francesco Crispi (commonly called alle Croci) then on the right the Giardino Inglese and on the left a monument to Garibaldi on horseback, a work by Vincenzo Ragusa, with bas-reliefs and a lion in the base by Mario Rutelli. Via della Libertà continues a long way always bordered with villas as far as ~~the~~ the Memorial of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Deliverance of Palermo, afterwards dedicated to the Dead during the War against Austria (1915-1918) —

Keeping straight ahead - going northward-Via Ruggero Settimo, there starts Viale della Libertà, which is regarded as one of the best promenades in the world, lined with tall and shady maple trees, where splendid villas and private flat buildings are situated on both sides of the avenue.

Here are located the American and the French Consulates as well as the U.S.-I.S. and the British Consulate.

At the left, right opposite the English Style Park, there arises the equestrian statue of Giuseppe Garibaldi, an artistic work of Vincent Ragusa, whose base is pannelled with bas reliefs of historical scenes; at the foot of which a fiery lion in the act of snatching and breaking the chain of Bourbon power over the Island now freed by the Great Hero of the Two Continents. This last work is sculptured by Mario Rutelli' .

M O N R E A L E

(68)

Chateaubriand in his "Les Martyrs," wrote: "There are climates dangerous to virtues for their extreme voluptuousness."

Monreale easily calls to mind the words of the French writer. To a soul sensible to beauty all contributes, Nature and Art to give the feeling of a full and pure voluptuousness. Odorant orange-groves, almond-trees in full bloom, a ~~blue~~ sky of cobalt, healthiness of the air, splendour of the sun, ~~the~~ sea-blueances, in Spring (while on the way from Palermo to Monreale - about seven Km.) give a light and piercing rapture that every trouble of the mind, every tribulation of life is forgotten. ^{This rapture} ~~This~~ then reaches the highest point in the contemplation of the wonders of art, gathered in the Duomo, shining with gold and crowded with hieratic images. A day of deep emotion, then, the one dedicated to the visit of this small town.

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The hill on which Monreale rises makes part of the ramifications of Mount Caputo. ~~The hill~~ ^{It} was formerly within

the limits of the park of the Norman Kings and for this reason the town that rose there took the name of Monte Reale or Monreale. 68

The Church originated from a dream of William II to whom the legend says he found a precious treasure that he employed for the creation of another treasure, still more valuable, because it was an expression of supreme beauty.

Almost at the same time of the building of the Church (1172) rose the Monastery and the Cloister. This last, ~~is~~ a genuine plastic-architectonic jewel, still constituting the wonder of every visitor. Through a typical narrow street of the little town, the first ~~that~~^{thing} seen is the apsis of the Church that, above humble houses, majestically rises in its tricore shape, adorned with ~~beadwork~~ interlaced archings and detached from the bottom in limestone, with the black of the lavic stone. A sober two-coloured whole that enlivens the harmonious architectonic masses.

The two massive and solemn towers ^{entrance} flanking the portico (built again in the XVIII century) did not preserve the primitive forms, as, in consequence of an earthquake, one of them has remained mutilated. Yet their bulk gives structural firmness to the architectonic whole and this points out to the spiritual firmness to the christian ideal of the civilization in the midst of which it was born.

The mural structure of the rest of the sacred building is modest, only improved by a ^{side} portico by Gagini in the XVI century. But as soon as one oversteps the threshold of the entrance one has an unexpected feeling of a pleasant surprise. We at once perceive to be in the House of God. The width of the three naves (meters 102 x 40), their height, particularly of the central ~~main~~ nave; the sumptuousness of the marble of the floor and of the wall socles, the strong and slender columns supporting rich ~~capitals~~ Corinthian capitals (of Roman-classic origin) and the pointed arcades of Eastern derivation. The polychromatic mosaic ornament in wide sacred combinations (square meter 0340); the beams of the roof shining with gold as well as the mosaic tesserae of the wall-bottoms give such an æsthetic emotion that passes from the intellect to the senses in a deeply moved agitation of the soul. The sudden apparition of Christ Pantocrator. of the Cofino of the Apsis (a monumental figure full of spiritual and representative energies which blesses with the right hand while with the left ~~shows~~ points out an open book: the Gospel, with the words: Ego sum Rex mundi etc.) instinctively, full of a great wonder, causes us to bend our head in an attitude of worship. All the mosaic compositions represent one idea: the triumph of Christianity in the threefold glory of the

prophecies, of the accomplishment and of the
majesty of the Church founded by Christ.

(70)

In the larger nave are represented the beginnings
of the world, from the Chaos — the six days of the
creation — the sin — the punishments of God — the building
of the Ark, which save Noah from the Universal
Flood. And then the histories of the patriarchs
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In the arch-bends of the presbytery we may see the
sequel of Christ's forefathers, and in the walls of the
same the life of St. John the Baptist — the birth
of Christ — the beginnings of his life until the
Baptism.

In the right wing continues the life of Christ, which
is developed along the walls of the two little naves and
ends in the left wing of the Presbytery, where the
Descent of the Holy Ghost binds the life of the
Saviour by the Acts of the Apostles, that are repre-
sented in the Diaconicon and in the Prothesis.

In this, on the right, are represented the life and
the miracles of St. Paul; in the Diaconicon, on
the left, the episodes of St. Peter's life.

Round the pillars of the arches and in the arch-bends
the visitor may see in full figure and at half length Popes,
Bishops, Presbyterians, Deacons, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins,

Hermits.

71

In the Sanctuary, then, where is enclosed all the Church, besides the figure of the Pantocrator, already mentioned, are: Angels, Cherubs, Seraphs, Prophets. The God Creator is in the bosom of the Virgin Mother (the Zeotocos) surrounded by the Apostles. The ceiling of the Church is a span-roof in the central nave, a shed-roof in the side naves.

It is in sculptured wood, painted and gilt; but it is not the original ceiling, as in 1811 it was destroyed by a fire, in the middle part. On that occasion all was restored even in those parts that had remained uninjured, as they were worn out.

But the primitive style was accurately reproduced. The floor is paved with marble slabs and rounds of porphyry: it was not completed at the time of the building of the Church, but in 1559, under Cardinal Garnese as is testified by the inscriptions.

Under the third arch of the right side nave is the Baptistry, carried here from the ancient Chapel. The little bronze statue of the Saint is a work of an unknown author of the XVI century and it was executed when Ludovic Torres was Archbishop. The little column of porphyry that supports the little statue comes from the ancient font-stone which

rose near the triumphal arch (on the right)
under a canopy supported by ten little porphyry
pillars.

72

As the limits of this chapter do not allow us to illustrate every mosaic composition, we have hinted at the general idea of the iconographic arrangement, which is the one suggested by the Byzantine canon.

Let us ~~off~~ now give a short hint of the other decorative elements both plastic and of pictures.

The side naves are, in the soles, covered with white marble lined with mosaics and at the borders are adorned with a frieze and dentilulations of Arabian taste. In the left side nave there is an entrance whose ^{bronze} door was executed in 1179 by Barisano of Trani. The two shutters are divided into 28 compartments, 14 in each shutter, with figures of saints and of evangelists.

The shutters of the main entrance (m. 8.30 x 3.60) were cast by Bonanno Pisano in 1186 who had, some years before, executed those of the door St. Raineri in the Duomo of Pisa. The compartments are 12 and bear figures in elegant relief, biblical episodes illustrated by short inscriptions in Latin mixed with Italian. In the lower part, almost in full relief, are sculptured two lions and two griffins, as symbols of vigilant watch and ~~emblems~~ heraldic Norman emblems.

73

The portal is wonderful: it is adorned with sculptures of leaves which, for the length of m. 2.20 cover the door-ports and the archivolt.

The High Altar situated on seven steps - all in silver and gilt bronze, was executed by Lewis Valadier who made it in Rome by the order of Archbishop Francis Testa.

The altar of St. Louis IX, King of France (brother of Charles of Anjou) placed on the wall of the left nave, was erected to him after his death that took place ~~in the~~ ^{at the time of} the plague during the siege of Tunis (August 25th 1270.)

His body ~~had~~ had temporarily been buried here. Afterwards, by the initiative of his son, Philip III, in 1278 was brought to Paris in the Abbey of St. Denis. In the Duomo of Monreale only the intestines were left: they are kept in an urn under the table of the altar.

The tombs of the Norman Kings are remarkable.

The original ones were destroyed by the conflagration of 1841 and the present ones were sculptured in 1845, imitating the ancient ones.

In these sarcophagi were deposited in 1882 the ashes of the Kings and members of their family (Margaret of Navarre, wife of William I (1183) and her

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sons Henry (1171) and Roger (1161) until then kept in the Chapel of St. Benedict.

74

In the other wing, by the Presbytery are the tombs of William the First and of William the Second. The first, in porphyry, is the original tomb; the other, in white marble, was executed in 1578 by the order of Cardinal Ludovic I Torres.

It is thought that the inscriptions were composed by Antonio Veneziano.

Beyond the perimetral walls of the Temple, with the entrance in the inside of it, in adjoining rooms are three Chapels of a relative importance:

1st) Chapel of the Crucifix of the ^{XVII}~~XVIII~~ century in mischi polychromic marbles. It was erected by the initiative of Archbishop Roano on a plan conceived by the Capuchin friar John of Monreale. From 1688 it was continued by the Jesuit Architect friar Angel Maria of Licata, who furnished the drawings of the marble polychromic decoration.

2nd) Chapel of St. Castrese. It was erected in 1596 by the order of Cardinal Ludovic II Torres. In an urn, executed in 1637 by the order of Archbishop Cosmus Torres, is kept the body of the Saint that William II received as a gift from Alfano, Bishop

of Capua, in 1176.

75

In the sacristy of this Chapel are kept some valuable manuscripts of the XV century and a breviary rich in precious miniatures, of Cardinal Torres himself.

3rd) Chapel of St. Benedict. It was built in 1569 by the Benedictines for their burial place. The reliefs in marble on the walls are by John Marino (1728). The splendid high-relief of the altar is a valuable work by Ignace Marabitti, who executed it in 1760.

Before going out of the Church we advise the visitor to go upon the roof (180 steps) to enjoy the immense splendid panorama of the Conca d'Oro, rich in luxuriant vegetation scattered with houses and villages, limited by the azure of the sea and by the mountains of Gibbiera and Grifone.

One may see Altofonte, a stormy park, where Frederick II the Dragonese founded a monastery dedicating it to St. Mary of Altofonte.

Close to the Church is the monumental Cloister of the Monastery — square in shape (m. 47 x 47) and six meters large in the passages — 26 arcades, each of which is supported by ~~the~~ coupled pillars. The arches of the corners are supported by four pillars. There are 228 pillars in all, with capitals almost all different in ornaments and figurations,

and therefore they may be attributed to different artists. Some show Arabian taste, others a national taste, others a Byzantine taste. On the tile of the ninth capital of the North passage may be read: "Ego Romanus filius Constantinus marmorarius." In the eight capital (Western passage) beginning to count from the fountain, William II is seen in royal mantle: he offers the model of the Church to the Holy Virgin.

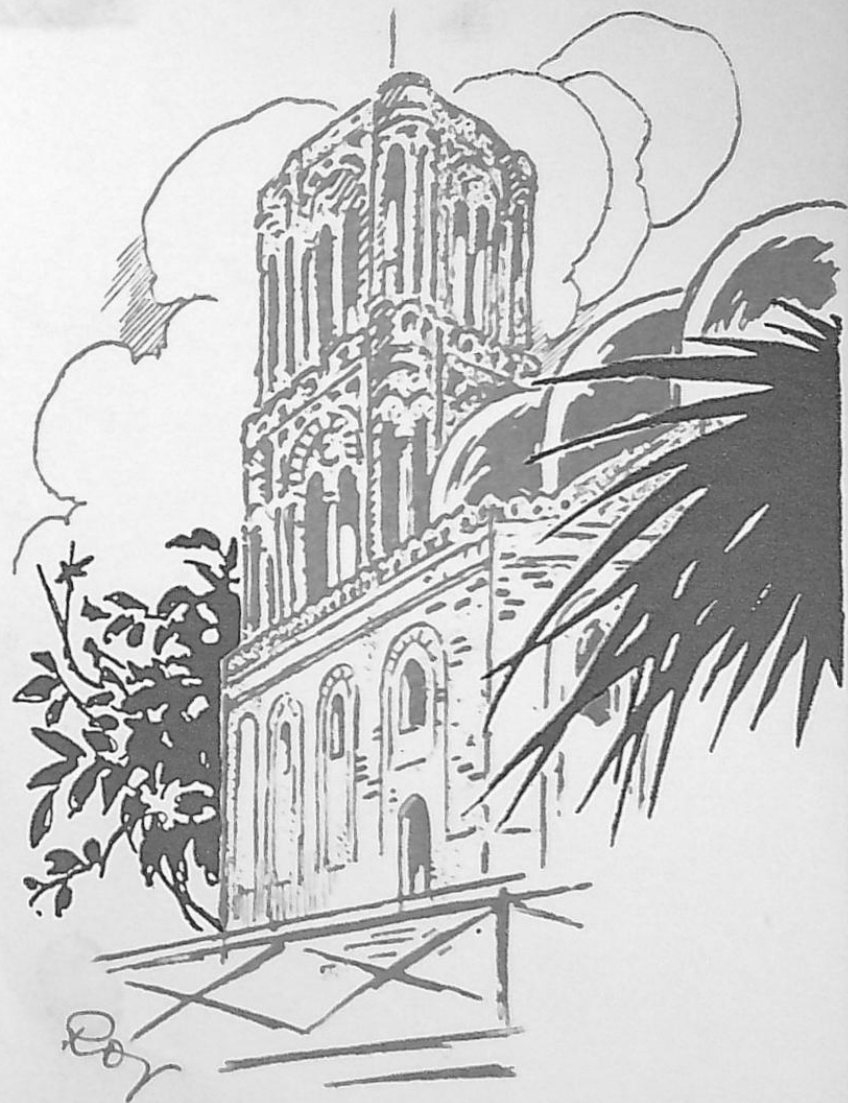
Originally the little columns were adorned with mosaics, in bands, with vertical stripes, at zig-zag, spiral, fish-bone shaped etc. Now very little remains. The groups of the four corner pillars bear flower adornments in relief. In the South-West corner, in a square space, closed within three arches on every side, is a fine fountain of Arabian style—especially the ~~the~~ column with zig-zag ornaments, that rises, like a magnificent marble stem, from the middle of the basin and ending with a ball adorned with figures and heads of animals that shed ~~the~~ ^{its} rhythmic murmur increases the high sense of poetry of the sacred place and gives reality to the wonderful dream of the numerous troop of artists.

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Before going out of the garden of the (77)
monastery to admire again the splendid pa-
norama, you must remember to give a look
an authentic masterpiece: "St. Benedict who
founds the religious ~~and~~ orders and the orders of
Knighthood." by Peter Novelli (called the Monrealese-
1603-1644) a magnificent painting composition, of great
value, which shows the high cleverness of the Sicilian
artist.

Philip Meli.



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