

A destra è la Via Immacolatella. Al n.5

l'Oratorio di San Lorenzo della Compagnia di S. Francesco d'Assisi. Gran fortuna sarà per il turista potersi avvalere dei lumi del Sacerdote Prof. Filippo Mell, uno dei più noti cultori italiani di Storia dell'Arte, che nella casa attigua ha la sua residenza. La guerra ha in parte danneggiato il prezioso patrimonio artistico dell'Oratorio consistente nelle splendide decorazioni in stucco di Giacomo Serpotta che profuse nell'opera tutta la sua iresca e aggraziata giovinezza di artista. In una cornice di putti restanti e in un'atmosfera di pietà viva e raccolta insieme, trionfa l'arte del Serpotta che trova soprattutto in dieci statue simboliche (tra cui la Carità e l'Elemosina) e in otto piccoli quadretti che rappresentano scene della vita di S. Lorenzo e di S. Francesco, la sua più alta affermazione.

La tela dell'altare raffigurante la Natività, con San Lorenzo e San Francesco (il primo titolare della Chiesa e il secondo titolare della Compagnia) è opera pregevolissima di Michelangelo Caravaggio, che l'esegui nell'anno 1609, di ritorno da Malta. I sedili di legni pregevoli, intarsiati in avorio e madreperla, sono opera del Secolo XVIII. Quasi tutti gli stucchi della parete parallela alla via, con la composizione figurativa del Martirio di S. Lorenzo sono stati distrutti il 15 febbraio 1943 per lo spostamento d'aria provocato dalla caduta di una bomba a pochi metri di distanza sul Palazzo Mirto.

## LA MARTORANA

"One of the most imposing  
Christian monuments in this  
town is called the Church of  
Antioch" IBN Gubayr

## ITINERARY 1

(Quattro Canti, Palazzo Pretorio, Teatro Bellini, La Martorana, S. Cataldo,  
the University, Casa Professa, the Municipal Library, S. Antonio).

Quattro Canti or Piazza Vigliena takes its name from the Marquis de Villena, Viceroy of Sicily, who "on St. Thomas's Day, December 1, 1608 laid the foundation stone for the building of the four corners of the street".

The square is octagonal with four facades which separate the intersecting streets. Each facade has three orders, Doric, Ionic, and Composite.

In the first are four fountains representing the seasons. In the second there is a niche, containing statues of the Spanish Kings of Sicily from Charles V. to Philip IV. The third contains statues of the Four Virgin Martyrs of Palermo - Oliva, Christina, Nympha and Agatha;

In the Sixteenth Century this square was the heart of Palermo and today, although the main traffic has been diverted elsewhere, it is still a busy centre.



A guide book by Gaspar Palermo published early in the nineteenth century hints at the activity of the square. "All those who want servants or coachmen, he says, "come to this square because all of those who are unemployed gather here."

A short distance from the Quattro Canti, to which the centuries have added a characteristic picturesqueness, is the Palazzo Pretoria; it stands almost at the entrance of Via Maqueda (named after the Viceroy who, in the Sixteenth Century, opened it). The Palazzo stands at one of the sides of Piazza Pretoria. By the entrance gate can be seen the historic bell which announced the meetings of the Senate. High up in a niche a statue of Santa Rosalia watches over the town. The monument to John Meli in the inner yard is of little value.

At the foot of the state stairs in the left corner is the Genuis of Palermo (XVth Century) on a half column of porphyry. A few years ago the palace was enriched by the transfer from the Palazzo Sclafani to the Sala delle Lapidi (Hall of memorial Plates) of the celebrated fresco Triumph of Death. The fact that there is some doubt about the identity of the artist does not lessen the value of the work. In the scene which occupies almost the whole of a wall stands Death on horseback striking an attitude of terror, while on the left the old and the unhappy beseech him in vain to turn his deadly darts against them. The tourist should not forget to make enquiries about the difficult and happy transfer of the fresco from one place

to another.

The Superintendent of the monuments (Royal Palace) is in a position to illustrate the phases of this difficult and very interesting work.

On the evening of May 30th, 1860, at a crucial moment for the enterprise of "The Thousand", Garibaldi appeared on the balcony of the Palazzo Pretoria to tell the Palermitans about the failure of the armistice with the Bourbon Army. The city was under the murderous fire of the enemy's Artillery; "The Thousand" were but a handful of torn heroes to whom the people could give only the questionable assistance of their unarmed generosity : the Bourbon soldiers were twenty thousand strong and were supported by the fleet.

The square was then and is now filled with numerous statues that surround a monumental fountain. <sup>This</sup> It was made about 1554 by the Florentine sculptors Francesco Camilliani and Angelo Vagherino for the brother of D. Garcia di Toledo, Viceroy of Sicily, by whom it was sold to the Senate of Palermo for twenty thousand lire. It is a forest of marble Gods whose pagan nakedness once shocked the nuns. Every statue has some characteristic <sup>lines</sup> / appropriate to the God or Goddess, which affords the studious cause for meditation not unmixed with humour.

For instance it is written of Diana : "Me saxum sine veste vides, si numina temnes mutata cervus, fronte madebis aqua "

"You see me naked in stone if you scorn ~~my~~ divinity  
You will be drenched ~~from head (to foot)~~ with water"

and changed into a stag."

The water-jets no longer function today : the thirty-seven statues, covered with the dust of time, have lost something of their gaiety; even the distichs have lost what they had of wit. But the monumental and ornamental work remains, and there is still much worthy of attention.

Through a short street situated at the left hand corner of the Palazzo Pretorio the visitor can reach Piazza Bellini where the following buildings are to be seen.

(a) The Teatro Bellini, founded in 1726 and called S. Lucia, It was destroyed and rebuilt in 1808 and renamed Carolino. Its importance has declined and today it is seldom open to the public. In the eighteenth century the Teatro Bellini was the favourite rendez-vous of the Palermitan haut-ton and, during the carnaval masked balls, were held there.

(b) Chiesa di S. Caterina (St. Catherine's Church) with an attached Dominican monastery. The church which is an example of the Sicilian baroque style is notable for its polychromatic marbles and its elaborate ornamentation, for the works by Vito d'Anna, Filippo Randazzo, and, above all, the work of Antonello Gagini/ to whom we owe the statue of the saint to whom the church is dedicated.

The church was famed for its dolci di badia (sweetmeats of the Abbey) prepared in the adjoining monastery and eagerly sought

for by the Palermitan public and by visitors to the city. The Church and the Monastery were damaged during the war and the nuns have moved to Via Venezia 36.

The monastery of St. Caterina, like many other monasteries in Palermo, excelled in the art of sweet-making. Pitre', in his memoirs of the time, refers to the rivalry that existed between different cloisters.

'Every monastery had a dainty pie that was its particular speciality. Sometimes the pie was incorporated in the emblem of the monastery, carved in marble or wood above the gate. All the pastry-cooks of the town rivalled one another in making every kind of delicacy, but who could achieve the perfection of the feddi (slices) of the Cancelliere, of the frutti (fruits) of sweet almond paste of the Martorana, of the risodolce (sweet rice) of the Salvatore? All prepared conserva di scursunera (preserved scorzonera) but none achieved the perfection of Montevergine in the preparation of this delicacy. Many boasted of their pane di Spagna (Spanish bread), a kind of pat of butter but compared to that prepared by the Pieta' the pastry-cook's was very inferior. The monastery of the Stimate was famous for its sfinci ammilati (honeyed balls of flour boiled in butter) and its sfinci fradici (a mixture of eggs and cream).

(c) La Martorana or St. Maria dell'Ammiraglio, one of the most interesting of Norman churches, was founded in 1143 by George of Antioch, King Roger's valiant admiral. According to the inscription on the outside the church was dedicated by the Antiochian to the Holy Virgin. Soon after the Sicilian Vespers it became the meeting place of the Sicilian Barons who resolved to offer the crown to Peter of Aragon.

A short time after its erection in 1184 La Martorana was visited by an Arabian traveller, Ibn Gubayr. Time has not yet dimmed the images that the Oriental visitor carried away with him when he left the island for other countries. Let us try to recapture them together with the Palermo of the time when Christian and Musselman mingled together in the swarming crowd before the Church of the Ammiraglio and the red domes of S.Cataldo.

'One of the most imposing Christian monuments in this town is the Church of the Antioch. We saw it on Christmas Day, one of the chief Christian festivals, so that a great crowd of men, women, and children had gathered there. It is impossible to describe the church, since no words can convey an impression of it, and we are obliged to pass over it in silence. It is one of the finest monuments in the world. The inner walls are of gilt, or rather all one piece of gold with coloured marble the like of which it is impossible to see elsewhere. All is inlaid with gold mosaic, crowned with leaves. Above there is a row of gold-coloured glass windows that almost blinded us with the gleam of their rays. We were told that the founder of this church, whose name it has taken, spent a fortune in gold on it. This church has a belfry supported by many coloured marble columns and crowned by a dome supported by other columns. It is called 'Sauma at-as-sawari' (the belfry of the columns). It is one of the most admirable buildings ever seen. May God with his favour and power ennoble it amongst ~~others~~ us'.

The name of Martorana was derived from the union of the church with an adjacent convent, founded in 1193 by Godfrey de Martorana and his wife Eloise. Gaspar Palermo in his guide book refers to the freedom allowed the nuns of the convent who were able to reach the Corso Emahuele by an underground passage. 'They enjoy the privilege of being allowed, on several days of the year, to leave the monastery to go for a walk or to dine together in the country'. This privilege somewhat ~~softened~~ lessened the rigours of seclusion. ~~just now~~ There are no longer any nuns in the Martorana, the order having become extinct long ago.

The visitor should note among the mosaics the one depicting the Admiral dedicating his church to the Virgin. Also worthy of attention are the frescoes by William Borremans, a Flemish artist who came to Palermo in the Eighteenth Century.

(d) the Cappella di S.Cataldo (the Chapel of St. Cataldo) adjoins the Martorana and belongs to the same period.

Restoration work carried out towards the end of the Nineteenth Century by the architect Patricolo have revived its original architectural lines. The outside arcades and the three cupolas give it an oriental appearance. The interior is of a hieratic

bareness and the floor is original. We have a certain knowledge of its antiquity. According to an inscription on the sepulchre containing the bones of Mathilde, ~~daughter~~ daughter of Count Silvester of Marsico, the chapel was built in 1161.

In front of Piazza Bellini stands the Palazzo dell'Universita' (the University). There is a remarkable Geological Museum in the building which is worth a visit.

To the right of the Palazzo is the Via dell'Universita'. It was here on the first day of the Insurrection in 1848 that Pietro Modei fell to the bullets of a Bourbon patrol. He was one of the instigators of the revolution and his was the first blood to be shed.

Proceeding along Via Maqueda we come to Via Ponticello and, after a short walk, come to the Chiesa di Casa Professa belonging to the Society of Jesus. On this same site there is said to have been a temple dedicated by Basilian monks to S. Filippo di Argiro'. All this quarter has suffered from air raids and the church itself has been badly damaged. The baroque decoration of inlaid work, the marble statues, the stuccoes of the vaults, and the frescoes have all been damaged.



## ITINERARY 11

Leaving the Quattro Canti, we enter the Corso Vittorio Emanuele in the direction opposite to the sea we reach the church of S. Giuseppe dei Teatini which has two entrances, one in Via Maqueda, the other in Corso Vittorio Emanuele. This baroque church in the form of a Latin cross has three naves divided by fourteen monolithic marble columns, by Billiemi, and is rich in gilt stuccoes and frescoes, the work of Filippo Tancredi of Messina. These frescoes representing episodes in the life of St. Gaetano were completely destroyed in the air-raids of 1943. The visitor should make a point of seeing St. Gaetano in Worship, by Pietro Novelli when it is restored to its old place. The wooden crucifix attributed to Friar Umile Pintorno, in the chapel on the right, and the large crypt under the church, are worthy of careful inspection. The crypt which is devoted to the worship of Our Lady of Providence inspires a religious meditation and is much frequented by believers on Wednesdays.

Continuing along the Corso Vittorio Emanuele we reach Piazza Bologni whose air of austerity is due to the two palaces of Villafranca and Riso. The centre of the piazza is occupied by a statue of Charles V, designed by Scipione Li Volsi. In the 16th and 17th century this statue was the favourite place for displaying lampoons and satires against the government. Anonymous round complaints hung during the night ~~XX~~ the slender neck of the Emperor were the only means of protest in those troublesome times.

It was in the Palazzo Villafranca that Garibaldi rested for some after after he had overcome the resistance of the enemy.

Proceeding along the Corso Vittorio Emanuele we come to S. Salvatore, a Norman church which has been closed to the public for some time to allow repairs to be undertaken. Opposite ~~this church~~ stands the ancient Jesuit College, now the home of the National Library. The large reading-room on the first floor was struck by bombs and many valuable books were buried under the debris and are only now being slowly recovered. The work of the library goes on on the ground floor, admittance from Via delle Scuole. It was in the Jesuit College that the Sicilian Barons met in 1812 and ~~some~~<sup>3</sup> solemnly voted the end of their privileges.

Near the entrance of the library on May 29th 1860 two patrician brothers, Pascal and Salvatore de Benedetto, died in the act of opposing a Bourbon patrol. Their family deserves comparison with Cairoli for, seven years' later, the eldest brother fell in the Agro Romano campaign during the desperate attempt to liberate Rome.

And now we are in the large rectangular Piazza del DUOMO which is surrounded by a marble balastrade adorned with a row of saints. Within this enclosure there are flower beds, but, unfortunately they are little cared for.

The noble edifice of the cathedral is imposing even at a distance. On this site first arose a Christian Basilica which the Arabians, when they first conquered the island in the 9th century, converted into a Mosque. The Norman kings later changed it into a Catholic church its founder being Walter of the Mill, Archbishop of Palermo who is buried in a sepulchre

Concious Finlay

Church of San Domenico,  
ITINERARY III

(Saint Dominic Church, Storia Patria, S. Zita, Saint George,  
National Museum, Graffacello, S. Eulalia Cala).

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Go to the Quattro Canti and follow Corso Vittorio Emanuele towards the sea. After a short way you will reach Via Roma. Turn to the left and after a short walk you will find on your right Piazza S. Domenico, the traditional Piazza Imperiale. (Imperial Square) so called as a homage to the Emperor Charles VI. In the midst of square rises the marble Colonna dell'Immacolata (Column of the Immaculate) 80 metres high. On its top is a bronze statue representing the Madonna. The foundation of the column, according to Mongitore, is due to the fact that in the Spanish city of Barcelona the enemies of Charles VI destroyed a column dedicated to the Immaculate. About that same time the Palermitan Dominican Friars made a request to the Emperor to elevate in their town a column to the Madonna of the Rosary. The Emperor who was displeased for what had happened in Barcelona, thought this was an opportunity for redressing the affront made to the Immaculate and therefore he ordered that the column whose foundation was solicited by the Palermitan Dominican friars were dedicated not to the Madonna of the Rosary, but to the Immaculate. And it was so.

As long as 1848 near the column were the statues of Charles III and Queen Mary Amalia, his wife: the fury of the revolution did not spare them.

Behind the column rises the structure of the Chiesa di S. Domenico (Saint Dominic Church) so large as to contain 12,000 persons. It was founded by the Dominican Friars in the early years of the XIV century. Though afterwards it has been completely re-built (1414-1468) and enriched with side-steeple (1726), some part of it, the cloister, dates back to its foundation.

This Church is the Pantheon of the Sicilian glories, the Palermitan Santa Croce. Among the great men that sleep there their last we mention the Abbot John Meli, the greatest poet of Sicily; Francis Crispi, the illustrious statesman; Roger Settimo, that was the Chief of the Sicilian

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Max Finlay

Oxon Finlay, Esq.  
the British Council  
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High-King

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Government in the fatal year 1848; Michael Amari the historian; Peter Novelli the painter of Monreale, the historian of the Sicilian literature Dominic Scinà; the astronomer Joseph Piazzi (though born in Valtellina); Joseph Pitrè the folklorist; Henry Petrella the musical composer and among the heroes of the Garibaldine and Mazzinian Resurrection the bold precursor of Garibaldi in his hardy enterprise: Rosalino Pilo. In this Church are ~~two~~ two heroes of the war 1915-18: General Antonino Cascino that excited his Sicilian soldiers on Mount Santo with the superhuman incitement *Sicilians, be the avalanche that gets up!* and Eugene Di Maria d'Alleri in whose name is resumed all the glory of the legendary Sassari Brigade. In 1935 were solemnly brought here the mortal remains of the Hungarian Colonel Lewis Tuköry, fallen at Palermo while preceding the red garibaldine advance-guard: a symbol of the everlasting friendship between Italy and Hungary. Nor can we pass under silence, especially because the memory of Roger Settimo breathes over the tumulus that contains his ashes, the Sicilian Parliament that was met here in 1848 and of the fierce cry of war uttered by them against the Bourbons on that occasion.

The tourist must not forget to pay a visit to the cloister whose entrance has a Renaissance door close to the main entrance of the Church. This door also access to the premises of the *Società Siciliana di Storia Patria* (Sicilian Association of Home History) which has a more modest entrance in via Gagini (Gagini Street).

This society, has played a part, in the past, highly patriotic and has had among its Presidents men of great renown. On the ground floor of the cloister of the XIII century we have just hinted at, is the *Museo del Risorgimento* (Museum of the Resurrection) that contains numerous relics of the Sicilian patriots of the Insurrection, among them those of Francis Crispi.

Do not fail to visit on the upper floor of the Società of Storia Patria the large *Sala Di Maggio* (Di Maggio Hall), one of whose walls, with frescoes by Gino Morici, represent with liveliness of costumes, the Court of Frederick II in Palermo at the time of the greatest splendour of Sicily. In the *Sala Lodi* (Lodi Hall) are gathered the papers of the patriots of the Insurrection.

Behind the Church of St. Dominic is *Via Rabinat* and its continuation takes its name after *Square Calupo*, a

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knight of Pisan origin who in 1517, with a little band of conjurators rose against the Viceroy and even succeeded in making him prisoner; a daring deed that astonished a future great historian, Thomas Fazello, then a mere novice. But this action did not remain unpunished, as Squarcialupo, some time after, was stabbed with many of his followers. Along the streets Bambinai-Squarcialupo there are however other artistic monuments more remarkable, as the *Oratorio della Compagnia del Rosario di S. Domenico* (Oratory of the Company of the Rosary of St. Dominic), which possesses a large painting by Van Dyck, many paintings by P. Novelli, L. Giordano, Stomer, and also valuable stuccoes by James Serpotta; *S. Zita* which may boast works by Antonello Gagini, haut-reliefs by Joachin Vitaliano and rich polychromie decoration; *S. Giorgio dei Genovesi* a graceful building which rose at the initiative of the Genoese living in Palermo in the XVI century, without portals and whose inside is of the purest Renaissance. On the floor there are many grave-slabs among which one of the family Colombo (perhaps related to the celebrated navigator) and in the chapels several paintings, some of them attributed to Genoese painters. Near the main gate is a well that dates back to an epoch before the building of the Church. It is believed that the Blessed Peter Geremia succeeded in calling to life again a little girl that had perished there.

In order to visit the *Oratorio della Compagnia del Rosario di S. Zita* one must ~~from Squarcialupo St.~~ turn into Via Valverde (Valverde St.) ~~that~~ joins the ~~south~~ street with Via Roma (~~Roma St.~~), one of the largest and most modern thoroughfares in Palermo. The Oratory is along the left side of St. Zita Church. The value of the Oratory consists in the splendid decoration in stuccoes ~~due to~~ Serpotta: certainly as to the conception, as realization in collaboration with his apprentices. Above all ~~pay attention to~~ the entrance wall, opposite the altar, where, in the middle, is, with an extraordinary liveliness the battle of Lepanto. The height of the effect is reached in the reproduction of two children that are at the foot representing the sorrowful consequences of the war: poor orphan children recommended to the Holy Virgin, innocent victims of tragical events.

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The square where the Church of St. George dei Genovesi rises is in communication with the *Piazza delle XIII Vittime* (Square of the Thirteenth Victims).

A monument by sculptor Salvatore Valenti calls to mind that here on April 14th 1860, thirteen men of the people were taken arms in hand, some in Palermo at the Gancia and some in the country and shot ~~down~~ by the Bourbon soldiers who illuded themselves by this act of force to suffocate the revolutionary spirit of the Sicilian people. Among them was the father of the animator of the insurrection, the fountain-maker Francesco Riso, who lay deadly wounded in the hospital of the prisons. In this painful moment the Head of the Police Maniscalco presented himself to him and deceitfully promised him his father's life, already shot, in exchange for informations that could involve other conspirators; but the magnanimous young man did not give in, he was informed in time of the hateful proceeding and breathed his last with the regret not to have been able to take a revenge of the last ignominy.

The *Castellammare*, a Bourbonic bulwark existing since the Arabian age once threatening and stately now limits itself to give the name to the ward and is no more than an historical remembrance.

Via Valverde St leads, as we have said, to Rome. Opposite Valverde rises the monumental structure of the *Palazzo delle Poste e dei Telegrafi* (General Post and Telegraph Office) of recent construction. Close by is the building of the *Muse Nazionale* (National Museum) but the entrance is in *Via Bara all'Olivella*: it is a building whose outside is without value, nay, we may affirm, it quite lacks in line and grace. In such disorganized ambient, and at any rate, insufficient, the great patrimony of the Museum has had (mixing the ancient with the new, until the emergency) its often irrational and inadequate settlement, notwithstanding the efforts of the Management Staff which has been compelled to fight against difficulties, greater than their good will that has indeed been great.

A description of the material of the Museum is no without interest because it is all amassed without any possibility to be visited by tourist.

Through the populous and modern Rome we come back to Corso Vittorio Emanuele. So for a few steps along the Corso and then turn to the left: this is *Via dei Pannieri*,

a building with the

Via Roma

We proceed



and  
a noisy street, full of pork-butcher's shops, of fruit-seller's shops. Here there are almost in the heart of the most ancient and picturesque market in Palermo: the *Bocceria grande o vecchia* (the large or old Bocceria) from the French *boucherie*. The heart, throbbing with life of the ancient market is always *Piazza Caracciolo*, the ancient *Piazza della Bocceria Vecchia* (Old Bocceria Square) whose aspect is not different from the description that a gentleman, Vincent Di Giovanni made in his times (1615): *Piazza della Bocceria* is abundant in what one may desire. Its square-shaped. On the West side there are the shops of those who sell dairy-produce, sausages and salt-meats. on the North and South the sell fruits and vegetables of every kind; on the East the sell also fruits; on the right and on the left there are middlemen that sell cloth by auction. As is this square remains a space in the middle, there is a raising in the ground and in the middle of this another raising where there is a marble fountain with a triton shedding water in a large basin for the use of the people of this square.

The basin and the triton due to the magisterial art of Vincent Gagini was removed in 1777.

In 1783 Viceroy Caracciolo ordered this square deprived of the monument that characterized it, to be settled, caused some porticoes and a fountain fed by four little marble lions, to be built there, and there exist no more. Many are the fish and meat shops, and moreover the baskets full of fish invade the square and almost obstruct the passage. The crowd must often give way to some cart that carries other fish. The square swarms with seller of what is rationed or forbidden: from the American cigarettes to the occupation dollars, from the matches to the cigarette-paper, from the white bread to military shoes, from military coverlets to coffee; while sellers of boiled pork-feet or boiled polyps, of *panelli* (cakes of chick flour) of *quagghi* (mad apples boiled in oil) or mad-apples in slices, of sheets of figs or cannoli of butter-milk or cakes of rice with cream (*trisi*) or cakes with tomatoes and salt sardines sell their goods shouting and employing the most persuasive adjectives. And in the midst of this bustle the hand-organ tries to cover the discordant voices with the motives of the songs in vogue and the robust voice of the seller of the most wonderful remedies, perched on a chair or on a provisional platform adds something to the confusion.

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Other streets lead to *Piazza Caracciolo*, streets famous for the history of the trade-people that had there their seat: the *Via dei Maccheroni* that joins it to S. Dominic Square whose characteristic is to be sided with carts and detachable booths where they sell hardwares and trisles of different kinds (ribbons, buttons, needles, lace, pins, shoe-laces, shoe-blackening, etc. the *Via dei Coltellieri* (Cutler Street) once called of the Garillo, after the name of a celebrated aromatarian of the XVI century who had shops here. *il Vicolo dei Mezzani* (Middlemen Lane) where since many centuries they sell old clothes, and at last the *Via Argenteria*, the most popular of the whole town in one of its shops (Drug-store De Martino) may be seen, hanging from the ceiling a stuffed crocodile.

Going along *Via Argenteria* we meet on the left the *Chiesa di S. Eulalia dei Catalani* (Church of St. Eulalia of the Catalans. You might pass it without perceiving it, as the building is set back among the shops. On the entrance three busts of Catalan kings look over the swarming crowd.

We are at n. 81 of this street but it is useless to look for some one in order to have the church opened. Going on we arrive at *Piazza del Garraffello*, once a remarkable centre of business owing to the Genoese merchants trading there and that kept there an open gallery (adoggia) that still now is recognizable at n. 160 of the square. Continuing along the same street for a few steps the visitor will be before the *Cala* (the Bay), a circular harbour where are gathered numerous fishing sail-boats. Once the sight of the sea insinuating itself in the little harbour gave a sense of joy; now all the horse-shoe shaped shore offers a row of destroyed houses that raise their livid broken walls to the sky, and the sails have something pirate like.

## ITINERARY 11

S.Giuseppe, Piazza Bologna, the Cathedral, Diocesan Museum, Palazzo Scialfani, the Royal Palace, the Palatine Chapel, S.Giovanni degli Eremiti.

A short distance from the Quattro Canti is the church of S.Giuseppe de'Teatini which has two entrances, one in Via Maqueda, and the other in the Corso Vittorio Emanuele. The plan is a Latin cross with three naves divided by fourteen columns, the work of Billiemi. This church is remarkable for its gilt stuccoes and frescoes. The frescoes which are by Filippo Tancredi of Messina representing episodes in the life of Saint Gaetano have been completely damaged in air raids. The visitor should make a point of seeing Saint Gaetano in Worship when it has been restored to its old place. The wooden crucifix attributed to Friar Umile Pintorno in the chapel on the right, and the vast crypt under the church called La Donna della Provvidenza, also deserve inspection. The crypt inspires a religious devotion and is much frequented by believers on Wednesdays.

Continuing along the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, we come to Piazza de'Bologna, a handsome square bounded on one side by the Palazzo di Barone di Riso, and on the other by Palazzo Villafranca. The statue of Charles V, by Scipione Li Volsi was, particularly in the 16th and 17th century a favourite place for displaying lampoons and satires criticising the government of the day. Anonymous complaints hung during the night to the neck of the slender figure of the Emperor were the only means of

protest in those times. It was in the Palazzo Villafranca that Garibaldi rested for some hours after overcoming the resistance of the Bourbons. At the bottom of the square is Via S. Chiara in which stands the Palazzo Raffadali or Speciale.

Retracing our steps along the Corso Vittorio Emanuele we come to ~~the~~ church of S. Salvatore, a Norman church which has been closed to the public for some time while restoration work is being carried out. Opposite is the ancient Jesuits College, now the home of the National Library. The large reading room on the ~~ground~~ first floor received a direct hit during the aerial bombardment of Palermo and many books are still being recovered from the ruins. Meanwhile the work of the library goes on on the ground floor, the entrance being in Via Delle Scuole.

It was near to the entrance of the Library on May 29th 1860 that the two brothers Pasquale and Salvatore Di Benedetto were killed in a sortie with Bourbon troops while they were attempting to set up a barricade. Their family deserves comparison with that of the Cairoli for, seven years' later, the eldest brother fell heroically in the Agro Romano campaign to liberate Rome.

Continuing our course we now reach the Piazza della Cattedrale, a vast rectangular square surrounded by a marble balustrade on which are statues of the saints.

The Cathedral owes much to the Piazza whose size is impressive even at a distance. Here, from earliest times, there have been monuments sacred to worship. At first there was a Christian Basilica which the Arabs converted into a Mosque when they conquered the island in the 9th century. The Mosque was

afterwards reconverted into a Catholic church by the Norman kings. The cathedral was founded by Walter of the Mill, the English Bishop of Palermo, in 1185. He lies buried in the crypt.

The style of the cathedral is quite out of harmony with the general style of the building. The original Norman building that was both a church and a fortress~~has~~ has lost its original form owing to modifications and additions, particularly those executed by the Florentine Ferdinando Fuga. Of the original Cathedral of Offamilio only the apses with the corresponding belfries and a part of the nave now remain. Every century witnessed an addition or modification to the ancient edifice and, if in many cases this improved the whole, this cannot be said of the work carried out by Fuga. Charged with undertaking some urgent repairs he took upon himself the task of modifying the whole building. And what an unfortunate renovator he was! To him we owe the transverse nave, the 17th century dome, and the heavy unpleasant battlements. He also changed the once magnificent decorations so that there remains only a part of the great tribune by Antonello Gagini.

A witness of the Saracen period is a Kufic inscription on one of the columns in the southern porch. It is taken from the Sura VII, v.55 and runs as follows: 'Your Lord created the day which is followed by the night; the moon and the stars are forced to labour at His command. Are not all created things His? His dominion? Blessed be God, the Lord of Ages!'

The interior of the Cathedral seems squalid in comparison to the rich and monumental appearance of the exterior. The visitor should not forget to visit the treasure, the crypt, and the royal tombs. These are the real attractions of the Cathedral.

In the treasure are housed the most precious objects found in the royal tombs. The crown of Constance of Aragon and the Spanish altar-frontal deserve close inspection.

The crypt is dark and damp and difficult of access. Underneath the cross-vaulting, alongside two naves, there are about ten sarcophagi of Archbishops of Palermo including the sarcophagus of Walter of the Mill, the founder of the Cathedral. The figure in relief on the sixth sarcophagus is of Archbishop Giovanni Paterno and is attributed to Antonello Gagini.

The Royal Tombs are six in number and are situated in two chapels bounded by railings at the beginning of the right nave. Four of them are under canopies and two are set in the wall. The one in the wall is the tomb of Constance of Aragon, the wife of Frederick II. She died in 1222 and at her feet was found a wooden box containing an imperial crown which is now preserved in the treasury of the Cathedral. The tomb of Duke Guglielmo, the son of Frederick II, is also in the wall. Under rich canopies supported by pillars covered with mosaics are the tombs of King Ruggiero II and his daughter, the Empress Constance, mother of the famous Frederick II. Less rich, though under canopies,



in arches of porphyry, are the tombs of the Emperors Henry VI and Frederick II.

Norman, Aragon, and Swabian blood once flowed in the bodies now enclosed within these sarcophagi. All that once splendid epoch of Sicily lies in the name and glory of her Kings and Emperors who now sleep their last in the ~~Cathedral~~ Cathedral. In the brief but none-the-less constructive period of their lives Palermo saw the erection of splendid churches, majestic palaces rose, victorious armies returned, ambassadors from distant countries paid their respects. Palermo saw also the beginning of the Sicilian poetic school which originated with Frederick. It is the tomb of Frederick II which attracts the largest number of reverent visitors. Here is what remains of him who waged war against Pope, Commons, Saracens, and upon the feudataries of Italy and Germany. He was a hard figure in arms, kind at Court. Today his name and deeds live not only in Palermo, but in Italy, in Germany, and in the Levant.

In 1781 the eminent Sicilian historian, Rosario Gregorio was charged to draw up a report on the royal tombs which had had to be opened. He has left us an interesting ~~report~~ account of his findings in his report:

'Upon the body of the Emperor Frederick lay two others. One of the bodies which lay on his, arrayed in a royal mantle, and with a sword by its side, was thought to be the corpse of Peter II of Aragon. The other body, of smaller size, wrapped in a faded cloth and with two rings beside it, could not be identified. Frederick's corpse lay beneath these two corpses.

~~His head, covered~~

The head, surmounted by an open crown studded with precious stones, rested upon a leather pillow. Three tunics covered the corpse; the first appeared to be a cope of embroidered cloth tied at the breast by an amethyst set in gold and having twenty small emeralds and four large pearls at each of its four corners; the second tunic appeared to be a dalmatic with sleeves of broad gold lace edged with narrow silk lace adorned with silver roses.

## ITINERARY III.

Saint Dominic Church

(~~S. Domenico~~<sup>(1)</sup> - Storia Patria - S. Zita - ~~S. Zita~~  
~~S. George~~<sup>(2)</sup> - ~~Museo Nazionale~~<sup>(3)</sup> - Garaffello - S.  
~~Eulalia dei Catalani~~ - Cala<sup>(4)</sup>).

Go to the Quattro Conti and follow Corso Vittorio Emanuele ~~lattera~~ towards the sea. After a short way you will reach Via Roma. Turn<sup>to</sup> the left and <sup>after a short walk</sup> you will find on your right Piazza S. Domenico, the traditional "Piazza Imperiale" (Imperial Square) so called as an homage to the Emperor Charles VI. In the midst of the square gracefully rises the marble Colonna dell'Immacolata (Column of the Immaculate) 30 metres high. ~~At the~~ On its top is a bronze statue representing the Madonna. The foundation of the column, according to Mongitore, is due to the fact that in the Spanish city of Barcelona the enemies of Charles VI destroyed a column dedicated to the Immaculate. About that same time the Palermitan

(1) Saint Dominic Church. (2) Home History Palace (3) National Museum H. The Bay.

Dominican Friars made a request to the Emperor to elevate in their town a column to the Madonna of the Rosary. The Emperor who was displeased for what had happened in Barcelona, though this was an opportunity for redressing the ~~affront~~ affront made to the Immaculate and therefore he ordered that the column ~~of whose~~ ~~of which~~ ~~it was the~~ foundation was solicited by the Palermitan Dominican friars were dedicated not to the Madonna of the Rosary, but to the Immaculate. And it was so. ~~As~~ As long as 1848 ~~the~~ near the column were the statues of Charles III and Queen Mary Amalia, his wife: the fury of the revolution did not spare them.

Behind the column rises the structure of the Chiesa di S. Domenico (Saint Dominic Church) so large as to contain 12,000 persons. It was founded by the Dominican Friars in the early years of the XIV century, though afterwards it has been completely re-built (1414-1458) and enriched with side-spirals (1726), some part of it, as the cloister, dates back to its foundation. This Church is the Pantheon of the Sicilian glories, the Palermitan Santa Croce. Among the great men that sleep there their last we mention the Abbot John Meli, the greatest poet of Sicily; Francis

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Crispi, the illustrious statesman; Roger Settimo, that was the Chief of the Sicilian Government in the fatal year 1848; Michael Amari the historian; Peter Novelli the painter of Monreale; the historian of the Sicilian literature Dominic Scina; the astronomer Joseph Piaggi (though born in Valtellina); Joseph Pitre the folklorist; Henry Petrella the musical composer and among the heroes of the ~~1848~~ ~~Garibaldine~~ Garibaldine and Mazzinian Resurrection the bold precursor of Garibaldi in his hardy enterprise: Rosalino Pilo. In this Church are too two heroes of the war 1915-18: General Antonine Cascino that excited his Sicilian soldiers on Mount Santo with the superhuman incitement Sicilians, be the avalanche that gets up! and Eugene Di Maria d'Alleri in whose name is resumed all the glory of the legendary Sassari Brigade. In 1935 were solemnly brought here the mortal remains of the Hungarian Colonel Lewis Tuköry, fallen at Palermo while preceding the red garibaldine advance-guard: a symbol of the everlasting friendship between Italy and Hungary. Nor can we pass under silence especially because the memory of Roger Settimo breathes over the tumulus that contains his ashes, of the Sicilian Parliament that was met here in 1848 and of the fierce cry of war uttered



by them against the Bourbons on that occa<sup>sion</sup>, (58

The tourist must not forget to pay a visit to the cloister whose entrance has a Renaissance door close to the main entrance of the Church. This door gives also access to the premises of the Società Siciliana di Storia Patria (Sicilian Association of Home History) which has a more modest entrance vi via Gagini (Gagini Street). This society, ~~presided at present by an eminent master of historical and diplomatic sciences, prof. Charles Albert~~ ~~was a living celebrity of Sicilian culture~~, has played a part, in the past, highly patriotic and has had among its Presidents men of great renown. On the groundfloor of the cloister <sup>the XIII century</sup> we have just hinted at, is the Museo del Risorgimento (Museum of the Resurre<sup>ction</sup>) that contains numerous relics of the Sicilian patriots of the Insurrection, among them those of Francis Crispi.

Do not fail to visit on the upper floor of the Società di Storia Patria the large Sala Di Maggio (Di Maggio Hall), one of whose walls, with frescoes by Gino Morici, represents with liveliness of costumes, the Court of Frederick II in Palermo at the time of the greatest splendour of Sicily. In the Sala Lodi (Lodi Hall) are gathered the papers of the patriots of the Insurrection.



Behind the Church of St. Dominic is Via  
Bambinai and its continuation takes its name  
after Squarcialupo, a knight of Pisan origin who  
in 1517, with a little band of conjurators rose against  
the Viceroy and even succeeded in making him pris-  
oner; a daring deed that astonished a future great  
historian, Thomas Gazzo, then a mere novice. But  
this action did not remain unpunished, as Squarcialupo,  
some time after, was stabbed with many of his followers  
in the ~~Chiesa della S. Annunziata that is in the street~~  
~~now dedicated to the bold conjurators and which recem-~~  
~~ber its fame more to the memory of the tragic~~  
~~deed than to its artistic beauties, though it~~  
~~possesses fine capitals (by Dominic Gagini) supporting~~  
~~ogival arches. Along the street Bambinai-Squarcia-~~  
lupo there are however other artistic monuments more  
remarkable, as the Oratorio della Compagnia del Rosa-  
rio di S. Domenico (Oratory of the Company of the Rosa-  
ry of St. Dominic), which possesses a large painting  
by Van Dyck, many paintings by P. Novelli, L. Giordano,  
Stomer, and also valuable stuccoes by James Serpotta;  
S. Zita which may boast works by Antonello Gagini,  
haut-reliefs by Joachin Vitaliano and rich polychrome  
decoration; S. Giorgio dei Genovesi a graceful building  
which rose at the initiative of the Genoese living

in Palermo in the XVI century, without por- (60)  
tals and whose inside is of the purest Renaissance.

On the floor there are many grave-slabs among which one of the family Colombo (perhaps related to the celebrated navigator) and in the chapels several paintings, some of them attributed to Genoese painters. Near the main gate is a well that dates back to an epoch before the building of the Church. It is believed that the Blessed Peter Geremia succeeded in calling to life again a little girl that had perished there.

In order to visit the Oratorio della Compagnia del Rosario di S. Zita one must from Squarcialupo St., turn into Via Valverde (Valverde St.) that joins the said street with Via Roma (Rome St.), one of the largest and most modern thoroughfares in Palermo. The Oratory is along the left side of St. Zita Church. The value of the Oratory consists in the splendid decoration in stuccoes due to Serpotta <sup>certainly</sup> was to the conception, as realization in collaboration with his apprentices. Above all pay attention to the entrance wall, opposite the altar, where, in the middle, is, with an extraordinary liveliness the battle of Lepanto. The height of the effect is reached in the reproduction of two children ~~that are~~ that are at the foot representing the sorrowful consequences of the war: poor orphan children recommended to the Holy Virgin, innocent victims of tragical events.

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The square where the Church of St. George dei Genovesi rises, is in communication with the Piazza delle XIII Vittime (Square of the Thirteenth Victims).

A monument by the sculptor Salvatore Valenti calls to mind that here on April 14th 1860, thirteen men of the people were taken arms in hand, some in Palermo, at the Gancia and some in the country and shot here by the Bourbonic soldiers who illuded themselves by this act of force to suffocate the revolutionary spirit of the Sicilian people. Among them was the father of the animator of the insurrection, the fountain-maker Francesco Riso, who lay deadly wounded in the hospital of the prisons. In this painful moment the Head of the Police <sup>Maniscalco</sup> presented himself to him and deceitfully promised him his father's life, already shot, in exchange for informations that could involve other conspirators; but the magnanimous young man did not give in, he was informed in time of the hateful proceeding and breathed his last with the regret not to have been able to take a revenge of the last ignominy.

The Castellammare, a Bourbonic bulwark existing since the Arabian age, once threatening and stately, now limits itself to give the name to the ward and is no more than an historical remembrance.

Valverde St. leads, as we have said, to Rome St. Opposite Valverde St. rises the monumental structure of the



Palazzo delle Poste e dei Telegrafi (General  
Post and Telegraph Office) of recent construction.

(62)

Close by is the building of the Museo Nazionale  
(National Museum) but its entrance is in Via Bora all'Or-  
livella: it is a building whose outside is without value, nay,  
we may affirm, it quite wants in line and grace. In  
Such, disorganized, ambient, and at any rate, insuffi-  
cient, <sup>the great patrimony of the Museum</sup> it has had (mixing the ancient with the new, until  
the emergency) its often irrational and inadequate settle-  
ment, notwithstanding the efforts of the Management  
Staff which has been compelled to fight against  
difficulties, greater than their good will that has indeed  
been great.

A description of the material of the Museum is now  
without interest because it is all amassed without any  
possibility to be visited by tourists. ~~As it is not possible~~  
~~to foresee the time when it may be put in order again, it~~  
~~may be interesting to read the article of the Superin-~~  
~~tendence to Antiquities, written by prof. Gale Basiglio, com-~~  
~~published in the special section of this guide book, the~~  
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~~more rational plan which the Direction of the Museum~~  
~~desire to follow in the future arrangement of the~~  
~~material.~~

Through the popular and modern Rome St. come back to Corso Vittorio Emanuele. ~~Then~~ Go ~~for~~ for a few steps along the Corso and then turn to the left: this is Via dei Panzeri, a noisy street, full of pork-butcher's shops, of fruit-seller shops. Here we are almost in the heart of the most ancient and picturesque market in Palermo: the Bocceria grande o vecchia (the large ~~or~~ old Bocceria) from the French boucherie. The heart, throbbing with life of the ancient market is always Piazza Caracciolo, the ancient Piazza della Bocceria Vecchia (Old Bocceria Square) whose aspect is not different from the description that a gentleman, Vincent Gi. Giovanni made in his times (1615): Piazza della Bocceria is abundant in what one may desire. It is square-shaped. On the West side there are the shops of those who sell dairy-produce, sausages and salt-meat; on the North and South they sell fruits and vegetables of every kind; on the East they sell also fruits; on the right and on the left there are middlemen that sell cloth by auction. As in this square remains a space in the middle, there is a raising in the ground and in the middle of this another raising where there is a marble fountain with a triton shedding water in a large basin ~~cento~~ for the use of the people of this square. The basin and the triton due to the magisterial art of Vincent Gagini was removed in 1777 elsewhere.



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In 1783 Viceroy Caracciolo ordered this square  
deprived of the monument that characterized it to  
be settled, caused some porticoes <sup>and a fountain fed by four little fountains</sup> to be built there, ~~but~~  
<sup>and</sup> that exist no more. Many are the fish and meat shops,  
and moreover the baskets full of fish invade the square  
and almost obstruct the passage. The crowd ~~then~~ often give  
way to some cart that carries other fish. The square swarms  
with seller of what is rationed or forbidden: from the Ame-  
rican cigarettes to the occupation dollars, from the matches  
to the cigarette-paper, from the white bread to military  
shoes, from the military coverlets to coffee; while sellers of  
boiled pork-feet or boiled polyps, of panelli (cakes of  
chick flour) of quagghi (mad-apples boiled in oil) or mad ap-  
ples in slices, of sweets of figs or cannoli of butter-milk  
or cakes of rice with cream (iris) or cakes with tomatoes  
and salt sardines sell their goods shouting and employing  
the most persuasive adjectives. And in the midst of this  
bustle the hand-organ tries to cover the discordant voices  
with the motives of the songs in vogue and the robust  
oice of the seller of the most wonderful remedies, perched  
on a chair or on a provisional platform adds something  
to the confusion.

Other streets lead to Piazza Caracciolo, streets famous  
for the history of the <sup>little</sup> ~~trade-association~~ that had  
there their seat: the Via dei Maccheronai that joins  
it to S. Dominic Square whose characteristic is to

be sided with carts and detachable booths where they sell hardware and trifles of different kinds (ribbons, buttons, needles, lace, pins, shoe-laces, ~~and~~ shoe-blackings, etc.) the Via dei Coltellieri (Cutler Street) once called of the Garillo, after the name of a celebrated aromatarian of the XVI century who had a shop here, at Vicolo dei Mezzani (Middle-men Lane) where since many centuries they sell old clothes, and, at last, the Via Argenteria, the most popular of the whole ward in one of its shops (Drug-store de Martino) may be seen, hanging from the ceiling a stuffed crocodile.

Going along Via Argenteria we meet on the left the Chiesa di S. Eulalia dei Catalani (Church of St. Eulalia of the Catalans). You might pass it without perceiving it, as the building is set back among the shops. On the entrance three busts of Catalan Kings look over the ~~war~~ many crowd. We are at N° 31 of this street but it is useless to look for some one in order to have the church opened. going on we arrive at Piazza del Garraffello, once a remarkable centre of business owing to the Genoese merchants trading there and that kept their ~~entire~~ <sup>adjoining</sup> open gallery that still now is recognizable at N° 16 of the square. Continuing along the same street for a few steps the visitor will be before the cala (the Fay), a circular harbour where are gathered numerous fashions.