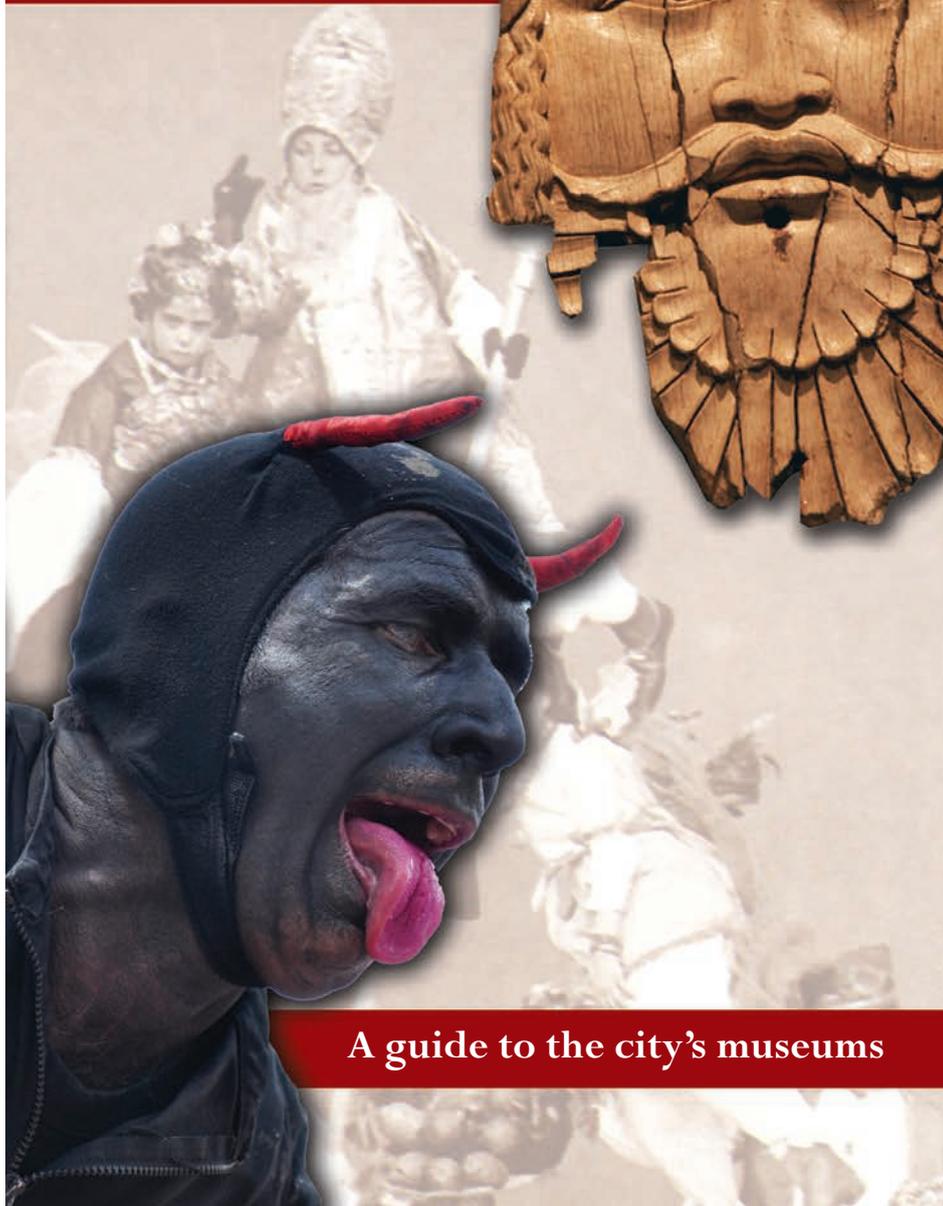
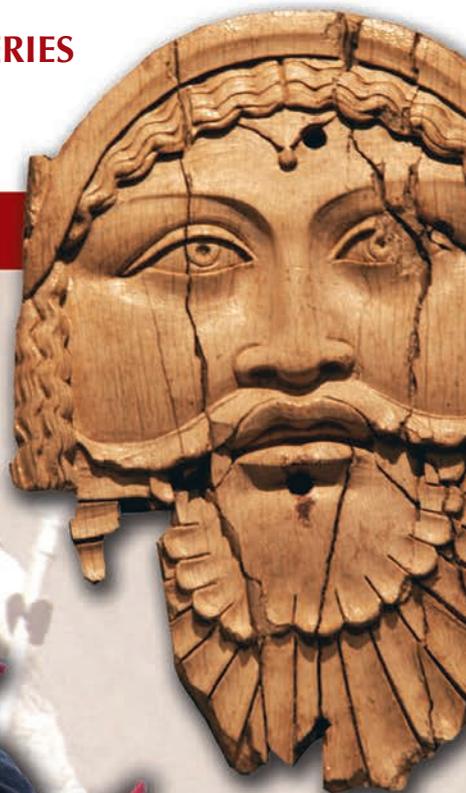


CAMPOBASSO

- MUSEUM OF MYSTERIES
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A guide to the city's museums

Map of the historical center



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CAMPOBASSO

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MUSEUM OF MYSTERIES



SAMNITE MUSEUM



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The City of Campobasso

Its name first appears in the form of “Campibassi” (meaning “lower fields”) in a IX century document and seems to derive from the particular position of the city. (“campus detto basus” in latin, is in relation to a more elevated location: etymologically corresponds to the position of the village in respect to the castle that dominates it). There is evidence of the first settlements on the hill that dominates the city and where today we can still see the ruins of a fortified structure dating to the Samnite period.

Campobasso began to gain importance in the Lombard period, under the Normans it became the county’s capital, where count Hugo II of Molise settled and fixed residence. Given its proximity to the tratturo system (rural paths created for the migration of cattle, sheep, and other animals during the seasons), Campobasso continued to grow and after the earthquake of 1456, under the direction of Cola Monforte erected its walls. In 1495, the city was given to Andrea di Capua. At the end of the XVI century, it was passed to the

Gonzaga, sold to Ottavio Vitigliano in 1638, who passed it on to Giambattista Carafa whose heirs kept until 1742 before redeeming himself and giving over 100,000 Ducat.

Architectural Growth

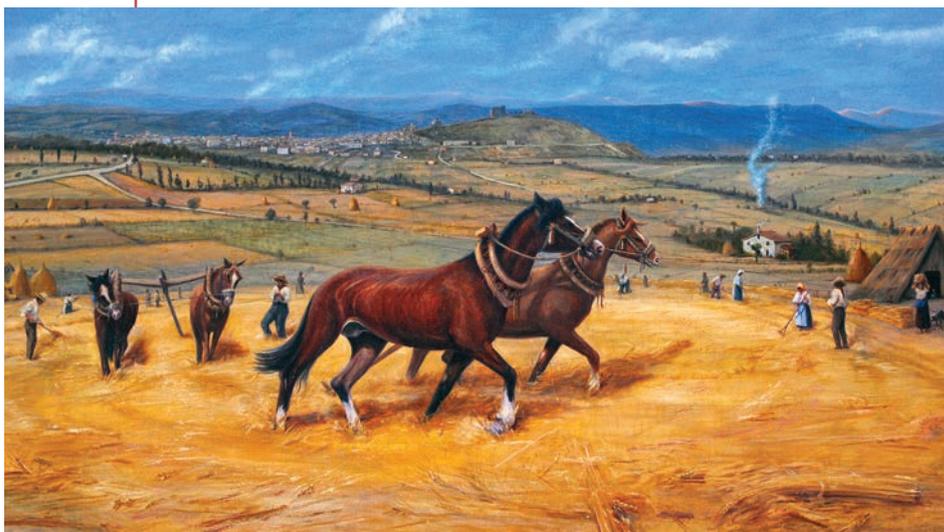
From the beginning of the XIX century Campobasso began to expand beyond the city walls, this part of the city became known as the “murtatiana.” This urban development led to the construction of new buildings that, still today, are some of the main attractions Campobasso has to offer tourists. The Government Palace in Piazza Gabriele Pepe, offices of Banca di Italia and Banca di Napoli. Adjacent to the government Palace one can find the cathedral, projected by architect Berardino Musenga in neoclassical style on the same site as the previous church destroyed by the 1805 earthquake. Another important site is the City Hall, constructed 1874-1876 on the ruins of the Celestini convent. The City’s Villa (park) also known as the Villa de Capua reminisces the 1700’s. In its 16,000 square meters, one can find nume-



On pag. 4: Monforte Castle, symbol of the city. Below, San Giorgio Palace. Above: Neoclassic cathedral and Gabriele Pepe Square.

rous rare species of plants, vegetation, and adornments such as various marble statues. One of the most representative buildings of the city is the Mario Pagano National Boarding School. With its massive three stories, it is composed of the main building and has two opposing wings with a large main hall at the center of it decorated with paintings of the local landscapes and traditions and costumes of the region painted by Romeo Musa and Marcello Scarano. In the oratory, one can admire the altarpiece depicting the nativity scene. The Savoia Theatre also is worth a visit, with its beautiful frescoes by Arnaldo De Lisio. An artistic delight,

the churches in the historical center: the Romanesque, San Giorgio, San Bartolomeo and San Leonardo and the Renaissance, Sant' Antonio Abate. Surely, the first thing that catches the eye of all visitors in Campobasso is the Monforte Castle. A square structure with round turrets at the corners, that from the top of the hill dominates the city and from where the view extends all the way from the Majella Mountains to the Tavoliere. Without hesitation, one should also visit the Misteri Museum and the Samnite Museum which are the two main cultural attractions that will be discussed in a more detailed manner in this guide.





On pag.6: Inside the Savoia Theatre, Capua Villa. Below: A painting of Romeo Musa. Above: S. Giorgio church, S. Bartolomeo church with Torre Terzano, S. Leonardo church and the inside of S. Anthony Abbot church.

Museum of Mysteries

The museum is situated on Via Trento, number three, Campobasso. The building presents itself painted in vibrant colors, yellow and orange, flags flying in the wind, a flowerbed a well and two benches. This is where the Museum of Mysteries is located, an exhibition that gives the visitor an idea of the suggestive spectacle prepared with the original "contraptions" of the artist Paolo Saverio Di Zinno.

Theatrical Catechism

Born in the Middle Ages, the use of setting up sacred representations in which actors staged the *mysteries* of the Church making it easier for the people, often illiterate, to approach the great themes of faith. Born by the ingenious artistic creativity of Di Zinno around 1740 and by the mastery of the talented blacksmiths and welders of Campobasso, the Mysteries have given life to this ancient form of theatrical catechism that continues to renew itself every year.

"Mysteries and Traditions"

The venue open to the public is managed by the association "Misteri e Tradizioni", owned by the Teberino family, starting from the, late, father Cosmo, the true propulsive engine. Founded in 1997, the Association intends to restore the originality of time to the contraptions, both at the level of structures and in the cultural, touristic and spiritual projection. With the intent to propose a strong invitation for the people: "The My-



Above: Iron sign of the Mysteries and Traditions Association. Bottom: The building in Via Trento that houses the Museum. on the next page: Liberato, Cosmo and Giovanni Teberino photographed in 2006 and below the staff of the 2016 edition.



steries belong to everyone and everyone has the right-duty to make them grow." The will is to continue and innovate the most significant event in the entire region.

The Teberino

The story of Giovanni, like that of the late father Cosmo and his brother Liberato, is tied by the double strand to the Misteri event. Their family has always been the jealous custodians of the tradition. "I have mounted the contraptions of Di Zinno for almost half a century", explains Giovanni, who since childhood has interpreted the various

characters of the biblical scenes reproduced in the form of living paintings. Today the Teberino brothers are among the most committed organizers of the imposing event that, on the day of Corpus Christi in Campobasso, brings about seven hundred people. They select the actors who will hover in the skies of the city. There are many calls, coming not only from Molise, but also from aspiring candidates who long to sit on one of those ancient and suggestive contraptions. Children are chosen according to age, weight, height, physiognomy and experience. They are subjected to medical examinations and only then, if everything is checks out, they can start as early as three years to take on roles in the mysteries. *"It is not a true Campobassano he who has not at least once mounted the contraptions of Di Zinno."*



The preparations of the parade

Two months before the fateful day of the parade, carpenters and blacksmiths meet to check the status of the contraptions and intervene where necessary. The seamstresses are at



Guido De Renis / Associazione Misteri e Tradizioni - (CB)

work to prepare the costumes and check for measurements. The thirteen leaders are hard at work: searching for the bearers (from twelve to twenty depending on the mystery), finding the attendants for the stands (two for each painting), those responsible of carrying the ladders, useful in case someone needs to come down. The attendants, who follow the whole path of the procession, and contact the five bands that with one hundred musicians will resonate the notes of the usual march, overall, an impressive organizational machine is set in motion to guarantee the repetition of an unchanged tradition over time. T

The Legend of the King

In September 1832, the King of Naples Ferdinand II of Bourbon visited Campobasso, they presented six Mysteries in his honor. The impression was so strong that the king expressed the desire to take them in procession to the Neapolitan capital. Hence the belief, actually baseless, that if by chance the parade should not repeat itself one year, the mysteries could end up in Naples. It has become a simple way of enticing the Campobassani to perpetually carry on the tradition.

The depot of the "Mysteries"

The contraptions are exhibited in the gymnasium (ex Enal) which already served as storage for mysteries since 1984: a large hall that allows the machines to be placed and stored in their full functionality without being dismantled. Four hundred square meters accommodate workshops, dressing rooms, a large hall with the thirteen Mysteries, an exhibition area with the splendid costumes from the 1950's until the 2000. A projection room of the historical and recent films help the visitor savor the magical atmosphere of the procession. Arranged next to each other "march" the eyes of S. Isidoro, S. Crispino, S. Genaro, Abraham, Mary Magdalene, St. Anthony Abbot, the Immaculate Conception, S. Leonardo, S. Rocco, L'Assunta, S. Michele, S. Nicola and the SS. Heart of Jesus.

The focal point is on the wooden bases on the forged iron structures that branch vertically, on the harnesses, from the straps and on the stage furnishings that neatly adorn each contraption. Panels illustrate and explain the characteristics of all the paintings. Among the various vintage footage, the short film made in



Guido De Remis / Associazione Misteri e Tradizioni - (CB)



Guido De Remis / Associazione Misteri e Tradizioni - (CB)

Above: The Gino Aurisano projection room, comfortably seats 40 for the viewing of the Mysteries Procession of 1929, 1948, 1952, 1958, Rome 1999 and the ones from the recent years. Below, the manifest exhibition.



"Associazione Misteri e Tradizioni" Campobasso

1948 by the director Giuseppe Folchi is one to be seen. Black and white images are breathtaking while the final commentary reads, "Once seen the spectacle of the mysteries it can no longer be forgotten." All the bowls in terracotta are exhibited in the projection room, each indicating the mystery they belong to, used by the porters of the paintings

to contain the generous monetary offers made by the crowd during the procession. On the walls of the museum, there are photos and giant pictures depicting the event. The procession of St. Peter's Square in Rome in 1999 and the one in Assisi in 1991 and 2011 are considered immortal, in the middle of two wings of crowds celebrating in awe.

On this page: The contraption hall dedicated to Cosmo Teberino, where one can observe up close and in detail each contraption, support structure and also the costumes and objects used by the children and adults for each scene.



Guido De Renus / Associazione Misteri e Tradizioni - (CB)



Paolo Saverio Di Zinno

Born in Campobasso on December 3, 1718 to Andrea and Lucia Di Socio. Since his childhood he showed a strong artistic disposition, he moved to Naples to study sacred sculpture and statuary in wood. He worked for years as an apprentice to one of the most esteemed masters of the Neapolitan capital, Gennaro Franzese. Upon his return to Campobasso he opened his own workshop and began a popular sculptural activity linked to the sacred art. He soon gained the reputation of an experienced artist of the

South eighteenth century Baroque. He also played a number of public office roles, becoming a full name among the protagonists of the political and social history of Campobasso. Many of the statues made during his long activity are found today, not only in Molise and neighboring regions but also in Dalmatia. Despite the valuable sculptural artistic production, his name and fame are linked in a way that is now indissoluble to the conception of the mysteries. The genius Molise artist died on 29 April 1781 in his city of birth.



On the side: General view of the museum, since opening its doors up until today, it has become the most visited museum in all of Molise, with over 220,000 visitors, 200 events, 90,000 catalogued photographs, 300 dated documents and 500 videos. On this page: Plaque on the outside of the home of Di Zinno in the historical center of Campobasso, vintage press and photos from the Trombetta archive of photography.

The procession of "Mysteries"

Attending the procession of Mysteries "from the inside" is something completely different than to assist by the sidelines on one of the Campobassane streets, under the sun and in the overflowing crowd of the day. In Via Trento, seat of the Cultural association "Mysteries and Traditions", active since 1997 to "give back the mysteries the originality of a time", you have to arrive very early in order to find parking. First, to assist the dressing and staging of characters, who will soon set out to assemble on the "contraptions" and parade

through the city. Many mothers preparing their children, but also many grandmothers, are the ones who are the busiest, the most worried, those that "hinder" the most. Outside the gates, the musical bands and the many who didn't make it in. In front of the depot, where all the year the "contraptions" are kept, four are ready: It is Sant'Isidoro, San Crispino, San Gennaro and Abraham. Professional and Sunday photographers, reporters, politicians, communal and association staff, bearers more or less robust-many young people



with earrings, goggles and bandana to protect themselves from the sun that begins to beat (only one day until Summer solstice) – and family groups waiting for the car that hosts their child "to set in motion". The safest is the custodian of the depot, the real icon of the representation, Cosmo Teberino, ready to oversee every departure. Here we go. At ten o'clock the gates open and the tradition perpetuates: first the music band, which always plays the same melody, then S. Isidoro, who opens the long procession: they soften the

little angels looks with the fresh curls, the joint hands and white socks on their feet. Then another band and then San Crispino: Here too three little angels who jiggle in their harness, one, two, three, down! And the contraption is placed on two "stands" before taking to the city streets. Followed by San Gennaro, an incense-blowing contraption. Abraham, who also houses a lamb, which he lets himself be admired for his composure; Mary Magdalene, a very heavy device, in order to carry it as many as 18 bearers are needed. St. An-



thyony Abbot, illustrate the contrast of an unleashed devil and another who assumed the likeness of a graceful damsel in wedding dress; The Immaculate Conception with its numerous courting of angels, this time barefoot; And then San Leonardo and San Rocco, a sight to behold for the exemplary dog, who, fully committed to its role, neither moves nor barks. Sumptuous is the contraption of Assunta, which is the tallest and heaviest, the device that causes the most anguish for the crowded town

and worries the bearers the most, forced to bend to lower the contraption as to avoid the forest of flying ribbons and balconies from whose position of the many privileged throw candies for children. The same for all the contraptions. Also for St. Michael, the most ostentatious, the most thunderous, the most talkative, with three devils that do not hush for a second and face the crowd in bloodied hands with ox tails, which they also hurl at the crowd that retreats screaming. Then its St. Nicholas, the



most crowded contraption, with two adults and six children, of which are very small, the most admired and cherished by the crowd. The long procession closes with the Holy Heart of Jesus with Joseph, Mary and four little angels supporting a heart-shaped garland with the inscription JHS (Jesus Hominum Salvator). It is the festival of Campobasso, the one that

fills with applauding crowds every corner of the several kilometers of city route under the heat. With the trickles of sweat of the bearers, the little legs of the children who long to stretch, the imminence of the arrival in the square Town Hall for the customary blessing. The procession resumes between the excitement of the bearers and the sea of jubilant crowds.

The Misteries Procession (from pag. 14 to pag. 17): 1. Saint Isidoro 2. Saint Rocco 3. Mary Magdalene 4. Saint Michael 5. Saint Nicholas 6. Saint Gennaro 7. Sacred Heart of Jesus 8 The "tunzella" of Saint Anthony Abbot 9. Immaculate Conception 10. Saint Crispino 11. Saint Leonard 12. Abraham 13. The Assunta.



The Samnite Museum

The museum was founded in 1881 and it is located, with the provincial library, in the prefecture building. The first cataloguing of the material was by archaeologist Antonio Sogliano, who published the inventory in 1889. Since then the museum and the library have experienced alternating and multiple changes of venue until 1995, when the museum was set up in the premises of the eighteenth-century Palazzo Mazzarotta in the historical center of Campobasso.

Inside, the collections are both based on the original nineteenth-century provincial collection, and on the findings that occurred during modern archaeological excavations in the province of Campobasso. The permanent exposition is catalogued according to a chronological and thematic criterion. On the ground floor, the Bronze Age and the first Iron Age, with the rise and consolidation of the Warrior Aristocracies:

Of particular relevance the weapons of the final Bronze Age and the amber jewels of the Iron Age. On the first floor are the Samnites, their sanctuaries, their businesses, their graves: report a rich collection of votive statues of Hercules, terracotta ornaments from the sanctuaries and some votive treasures.

On the second floor, the Roman influence of Sannio, with materials coming also from the Roman city of Sepino: of particular interest the marble sculptures and many small objects of daily life, such as keys, female toilet elements and bronze furnishings.

Also on the second floor, the High Middle Ages represented by the rich tombs of Bulgarian knights found in the Plain of Bojano: among them the complete reconstruction of the tomb of a warrior and his steed with rich silver harness; in the Appendix, a short section with low medieval materials, in particular ceramics.



Before the Samnites: The emergence of the warrior societies in Molise

The itinerary begins with the showcase containing a selection of male and female funeral attire from the Iron Age: here the ceramic materials of dauna origin or the large bronze receptacles of Etruscan tradition, demonstrate the external cultural influences that contributed to the formation of the Samnites. However, the material testimonies of the pre-samnite communities date back from the Bronze Age, when the first complex societies were consolidating: from the storage of ancient bronze axes in Vinchiatiuro, to the reproduction of the interior of a hut of the Fortified village of Campomarino, to an example of armament of a warrior of the final Bronze Age. The male burials that followed of VII-V century B.C. confirm the existence of a warrior aristocracy.

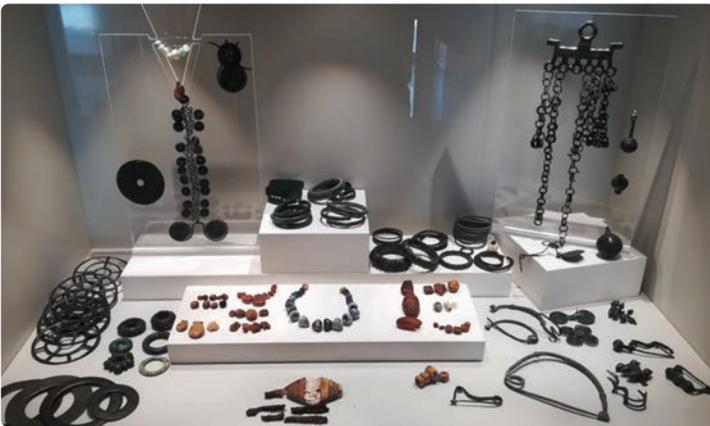


Mibac / Polo Museale del Molise - (CB)



Mibac / Polo Museale del Molise - (CB)

On pag. 18: Mazzarotta Palace, access door to the Samnite museum in via Chiarizia. Above: Display showcases with helmets and lance tips from the pre-Samnite. Below: Equestrian statue, ornaments for the attire of Samnite women and amber jewels of the Iron Age.



Mibac / Polo Museale del Molise - (CB)



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The Samnites: Materials, cults and external relations

On the first floor, there is the proper Samnite world, with showcases dedicated to trade with other areas of Italy and the Mediterranean, with examples of writing on ceramics, with abundant vascular production and with the exposition of two burials of Samnite warriors with their

Above: Clay and tools for body care with the mask of Dionysus in evidence. Bottom: Ceramic pots with ancient coins. On pag. 21: Terracotta lanterns, and bottom, Bronze Hercules.

large bronze belts. A showcase containing a rich variety of bronze statues depicting Hercules stands out, the hero divinized in the dedicated sanctuaries, together with fortified centers, along the paths of transhumance that characterized the territorial planning of the Samnite region. The Jewels and funeral attire also make it possible to distinguish the cultural character of the different ethnicities, such as those of the Frentani (coastal strip) and the Pentri (internal Apennine zone), attested in the region.



Miazzi / Foto Museale del Molise - (CB)



Milac / Polo Museale del Molise - (CB)

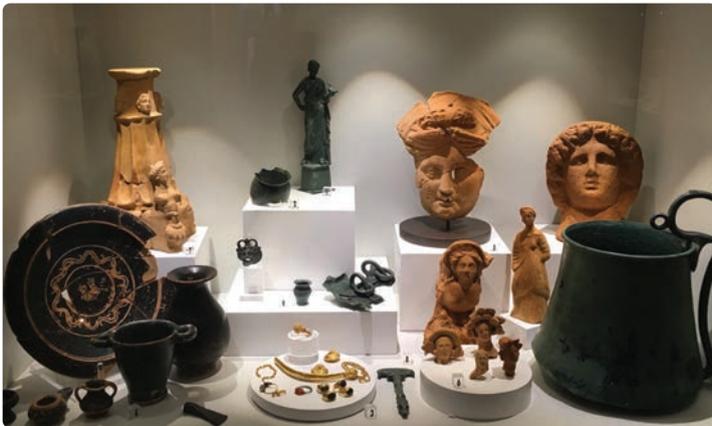
The cult of Hercules

Significant is the collection of Italian bronze statues conserved in the museum of Campobasso, of which remains a good number of pieces of the forty-five cataloged by Sogliano. Unfortunately, for many of them there is no news on the context of acquirement (it is mostly of exvotos reported casually in the light of locations not identified from the archaeological point of view), for the exhibition we have availed ourselves of the stylistic and iconographic analysis. The subjects depicted are for the majority of deities, inclu-

ding the paramount image of Hercules, for the interpretation in the Samnite sphere, the collection of the Samnite museum represents a fundamental document. It is an iconographic theme widespread among the italic populations, who inserted Hercules in their pantheon even before the Romans. Twenty bronze images of this exposition are in fact dedicated to Hercules (dated in the chronological period between the V and the II century B.C.), to which they add a representation of Mars (or perhaps of a warrior). Another one of Mercury, ie Lares (Gods re-



Milac / Polo Museale del Molise - (CB)



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sponsible for the protection of the House, of Etruscan origin, were widespread in the Roman ambient), three male figures (perhaps one of them is Hercules), a bidder, two female offerers, a hand, a applique forged in the guise of a bust of Vittoria, and a Dolphin deriving from an iconographic context not yet identified.

Above: Pottery used as a vows and bronze statues depicting the goddess Mefite. Bottom: Terracotta pots and glass receptacles.

The Sannio after the Samnites: from the Roman domination to the end of the Middle Ages

On the second floor, the world of Sannio opens after the Roman conquest: Objects of personal use, furnishings, ceramic and bronze artifacts, sculptures and architectural and decorative elements coming, in particular, from the cities of Larinum (Larino), Saepinum (Altilia-Sepino) and their territories bear witness to the domestic, funerary



Mibac / Foto Museale del Molise - (CB)



MiBac / Polo Museale del Molise - (CB)

Hercules at rest: Statuette in marble depicting Hercules, in this case according to the Lysippus scheme, that is to say in rest (Saepinum, 2nd century AD).



Milieu / Polo Museale del Molise - (CB)

Clay of Venus between two figures of Priapo framed by Tortile balusters.

The chariot Ururi

A terracotta model of a chariot with galloping horses: a recent discovery of the sepulchral area of Ururi, established among the most interesting archaeological sites in the center-south.

The exhibit dates from the fourth to the sixth century before Christ and is an "exceptional" piece that has shown itself in the 200 square meters of the Molise booth at the Milan Expo in 2015.





Milaz / Polo Museale del Molise - (CB)

and religious customs of the Roman Sannio.

A striking rich collection of lamps with various decorations, the reconstruction of the bow of a merchant ship with original Amphorae and a gallery with examples of marble sculptures. The early Medieval age is evidenced by the two necropolis of Campochiaro (VII century A.D.), which have returned hundreds of male, female and infantile graves related to a group of Proto-Bulgarians who arrived in the region to serve the Lombard duke of Benevento, Romualdo. A section of notable interest is the large showcase

with the complete reconstruction of the burial of a knight deposited along with his horse. Another noteworthy finding is the ring bearing some symbols of power attributed to the descendants of the leader of this group of Bulgarians, Alzacone. In the last room, testimonies of the low medieval period are exhibited, when the new feudal powers transform once again the aspect of the territory, which sees the rise of villages and castles.

Below: Reconstruction of the Lombard Tomb No. 29 of the Necropolis of Vicenne in Campochiaro. Top: Bow of a merchant ship with original amphorae and marble carving.



Useful Information and Numbers

Museum of Mysteries

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Orari di visita / Opening times

Monday Friday

16,00-8,00

(For other times and holidays

reservation is welcome)

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The Samnites museum

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Visiting hours

Tuesday-Sunday

from 9.30 am to 6.30 pm

Closing day: Monday

Entrance ticket

full price: € 4.00

Reduced: € 2.00 euros

(integrated with Palazzo Pistilli): € 5.00

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