

# Studying the Historic Apulian Places through Images

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*Abstract:* - This paper presents the results of a long searching work regarding the valorization, through images, of the natural, artistic and architectonic heritages of the several places, more or less known, in the Apulia Region (of the South of Italy). A visual trip has been done starting from the Palaeolithic and Neolithic Ages (the dolmen in the territory near Bisceglie, the man of Altamura, etc.) across the Magna Graecia Age (the two Doric columns in Taranto, the peninsula of Salento, where legends report Aeneas landed while escaping from burning Troy), across the Byzantin Age (the St. Nicholas of Bari, built in 1087 on the place occupied by Byzantin katapanate) to the splendid Baroque Age (the architecture that characterized the civil and religious buildings in Lecce). At the end, historical and unforgettable architectural elements, obtained by the passage in the XIX century from the "old town" of Bari to the "modern town" (the Murat town), are shown.

*Key-Words:* - Apulia, Natural Foreshortening, Prehistorical Pictures, Old Town, Architectonic Elements, Apulian Musicians.

## 1 Introduction

It is a plurennial research intended to present the Apulia and its long history, become into the Paleolithic period and characterized by the crossing of different cultures, that in the past centuries have been alternated by means of the particular geographic position.

## 2 Apulia through Images

Apulia, thanks to its slightly hilly territory and to the extension of its mainly low coasts, had been inhabited since the Paleolithic. It has been a land of meeting and of fight of different populations, each of them has left traces of its passage. Just for this reason it presents to the traveler a cross-section of history, in which different cultures and traditions (even gastronomic), arts, civilizations are mixed together; they are testified by a great abundance of archaeological findings and monuments, many of them restored, distributed all over the territory; they are admired by the travelers who are not accustomed to find so many cultural remnants in every town and in every land of this region; moreover these monuments are even more charming for the natural scenery in which they are situated.

Among the different regions of Italy and perhaps of the whole Europe, Apulia is a district that reveals significant traces of the oldest periods of active presence of man. Near Lamalunga, next to Altamura, rich town West of Bari, the remnants of the so-called man of Altamura have been

discovered. He lived in an age between 250,000 and 180,000 years ago, in the age of Homo erectus, while those of a woman with child, named Delia, were found in the province of Ostuni, near Brindisi; they are dated back to 25,000 years ago, at the age of Palaeolithic.

Since this very old and geographically limited record, our knowledge of the Apulian prehistory becomes richer and richer and also more extended thanks to the discovery of some villages and settlements in grottoes (Romanelli grotto between Castro and Santa Cesarea spa, Paglicci grotto near Rignano Garganico), where consistent and well stratified traces of life have been found.

At the Neolithic Age, that starts from the VI millennium and ends at the III, some traces of Neolithic civilization came back. They were found in the grottoes near the North side of the Pulo of Altamura, some entrenched villages that were discovered in the Northern part of Apulia (Passo di Corvo) and along the valley of the river Ofanto; they were characterized by large trenches dug all around. Also some settlements in grottoes spread in Central Apulia (grotto of thieves between Cozze and Polignano) and in the Southern part of Apulia (grotto of the Cyclops at Massafra, the rocky village Petruscio at Mottola) and in the Gargano where, in particular, near Peschici, an industry of stones and flint splinters roughly worked, produced materials for exchanges with the nearby populations.

At a short distance from the town of Molfetta, a large town situated on the coast 20 km. North of Bari, we can visit the Pulo, one of the largest

Apulian doline (170 m. long, 130 m. large, 35 m. deep) in its rocky wales some grottoes are situated, as it is testified by remnants kept in the archaeological museum of Bari; these grottoes during the Neolithic Age were used as shelters; so it was also for the many other grottoes existing in the italic gorges of Massafra, Mottola, Ginosa, Gravina and others, often used in following years. In these area a vegetation, now rare, of shrubs and creepers grows; typical plants of the Mediterranean bush.

We can date back to the 4,000 and 3,000 the several hunting scenes which are one of the most sensational prehistorical pictures discovered till now in Italy; they were found in a grotto of Badisco harbour, in the extreme part of the peninsula of Salento, where legends report Aeneas landed while escaping from burning Troy.

Another testimonial of the presence of a prehistoric civilization in Apulia is constituted by megalithic architecture which may number, between dolmens and menhir, a total of about 150 monuments more or less well kept, distributed in an heterogeneous manner with a greater concentration in some areas near Bari and in the Salento's peninsula, near Giurdignano. Among the Menhir we must bring to notice the one situated between Modugno and Bitonto, along the state road leading to Foggia, called "the monk" with a quadrangle shape; it is m. 3,70 tall, m. 0,40 large at its base, and it is dug in the soil for more than one metre.

Much has been written on these strange stones. Scholars do not agree on the interpretation of the meaning of these "big stones"; some consider them prehistoric monuments, perhaps funerary; some think they are the representation of a phallic cult or of a cult of the Sun or of the Mother earth; some attribute to them the simple meaning of boundary; some scholars interpret them as signals to point out the way to a grotto or sanctuary (P. Malagrino), but whatever their origin and their destination, the Menhir have always had a great spell on the collective imagination and therefore they are still alive in the legends: "When a full moon was rising towards the zenith at midnight, some people, adult or child, went to bed, in the mercurial shade that the sacred stone castled under the beams of the nocturnal moon. After a short initial and a spell, the magician put his left hand on the forehead of the subject, then with right hand, embraced the monolith. This with these light swingings, seemed to answer the questions put at a low tone" (M. Moreau, *La tradition celtique dans l'art roman*).

Among numerous dolmens, these mysterious archetypes of prehistoric architecture, the dolmen in the territory near Bisceglie is well known. Perfectly

kept in its final part, the old monument is composed by a quadrangular cell m. 1,80 high, delimited by three vertical large slabs on which a fourth slab is situated as a roof. On the open side, oriented to the East, as it may be noticed in all dolmens, a long corridor departs m. 7,60 long; it is flanked by stone slab put into the ground.

It is certain that Apulia has constituted since protohistory the landing of different populations coming from different regions of the Mediterranean, looking for new vital spaces; this phenomenon was evident during the metal age when forms of protourban life started to develop in a different mixture of ethnic and cultural trends of various origin (native, from the Apennines, from Mykonos), for example at the rock of tunny-fish and at Saturno near Taranto. Very different sepulchres were found near the farm of Porto, near Gioia del Colle, South of Bari, and some hypogeums were recently dug in the territory of Trinitapoli and San Ferdinando, in the province of Foggia, in which archaeological findings coming back to the Age of Bronze, remnants of rooms used for religious ceremonies, tombs and funeral equipments consisting in ceramic objects, weapons and female ornaments among which ambers, metal rings and other objects, have been found.

The civilization that developed in Apulia and in some nearby areas during the last millennium thanks to the inhabitants of Japigia, a population perhaps of Illiric origin, is linked to the protohistory and it developed peculiar characteristics handed down from legends collected by historians as Herodotus, Varrone, Strabone and others; in Apulia therefore there is no intermission between the end of the Age of Bronze and the beginning of the Age of Iron, when the real Greek colonization started. (E. De Juliis).

The civilizations of Daunia, Messapia, Peucetia, spread in Apulia already at the beginning of the first millennium are revealed moreover through monumental testimonials and numerous findings of ceramics from Japigia and stone findings as the steles from Daunia, kept in the National Museum of Manfredonia.

The flourishing civilizations from Apulia soon had to live together in a conflictual way with Greek peasants. These, already in the VIII century, coming from Sparta, founded the town of Tarentum that till the 272, when Rome was conquered, was the most beautiful town of Magna Graecia, as we may deduce from the greatness of the two Doric columns that are still situated in front of the Aragon castle, from the numerous splendid findings kept in the National Museum and from the several votive

gifts found during different archaeological excavations.

Other towns were founded by the inhabitants of Messapia, and by other Greek populations along the Ionian bay and the coasts of Salento from which a particular artistic culture was spread; it came in contact with the local cultures of many town of the hinterland (Cavallino, Oria, Manduria, Altamura, Gravina, Rutigliano, Ceglie, Ruvo, Canosa, Arpi and many others), it influenced them and was influenced by them giving origin to a refined ceramic art which testifies the extraordinary economic civil and artistic flourishing of that period, of which so many findings are testimonials; some of them are exhibited in Provincial and National Museums, while many others, thanks to the uncivil activity of theft of the "tomb-thieves", may be found in English, German and American Museums, where they often constitute the show piece of their exhibitions.

The traces of the following Roman colonization are spread all over the territory of the region that in Augustus' age became Regio secunda of the Empire; they may be admired following the route of the Appian way that, starting from Beneventum, went through the towns of Venosa and Gravina, and, crossing Basilicata, linked Rome to Tarentum and Brindisi, both along the Trajan way, the long via publica built by the emperor Trajanus in 109 a.C. pecunia sui that starting from Beneventum crosses the territory of Troy (Aecae), Ortona (Herdonia), Cerignola (milestone), Canosa, Ruvo, Bari, Egnazia, reaching Brindisi where it ended with two imposing columns built by Septimius, one of which is still standing in the harbour.

Particularly, in the territories through which the Appian-Trajan way winded and in these nearby, testimonials of the Latin civilization of various kind are offered to the sight or kept in several museums: remnants of old towns, (Canne, Egnathia), Roman villas, bridges, mosaics, statues, epigraphs (M. Silvestrini [1]) and various fragments, often used in medieval or following buildings; they are clear signs of a richness of those years throughout the whole region and kept at least till the fifth century, thanks above all to its geographical position, its industries (wool, ceramics) and to its produce for which is even now well known: olive oil, wine, wheat, ship breeding, fishing, salt and thanks to the remarkable increase of commercial activities, mainly maritime, that started the beginning of flourishing of the coast towns from Manfredonia (the old Siponto) till Gallipoli, testified for example, by the marvellous bronzes of Brindisi and by the so many findings of

the epoch that underwater archaeologists bring to light frequently (R. Cassano, Going by sea).

Between the fourth and the fifth century a. C., while the strong structure of the Western Roman Empire started to creak under the clash of the barbaric invasions in some way controlled by the Byzantine occupation, the Christian religion started to spread (see *Vetera Christianorum*) of which the so many paleochristian churches are testimonials, among them we may remember the one dedicated to St. Leucio near Canosa, and also the bishoprics that in those dark years very soon became a point of reference also administrative, important for the whole population menaced by barbarous invaders.

In 569 the Longobards came to Italy with Alboin; they came till Beneventum where they constituted an autonomous state that very soon fought the Byzantines who lived on the hills of Daunia; to them they took off a part of Northern Apulia, particularly the peninsula of Gargano, where some traces of their religious culture are still existing at Monte S. Angelo, in the Sanctuary of St. Michael, the warrior angel worshipped as protector of the Longobardic region; the seat become destination of pilgrimage for all the Christians that cross Apulia to reach the Holy Land.

During the eight century with the help of the Franks, also the temporal power of the Church began to prevail; with its bishoprics and Benedictine monasteries had a great influence on the events of Southern Italy which became a land of comparison and fight with the Eastern Church, also for the doctrinaire fights that started in 731, when the Emperor of Byzantium Leo III Isauricus had issued a decree against sacred images causing the first great flight towards West of those who did not want to give up the cult of the images and going away they brought with them relics and icons that are still worshipped in many countries of Southern Italy.

In this period Arabs and Berbers started to sack systematically above all the towns on the coast and, after constituting in 831 a garrison in Palermo, invaded Southern Italy, occupying various territories among which Tarentum and Bari (840), where they constituted an emirate, of which only a few traces remain, that ended in 871, after a siege that lasted over two years, with the emperor of Germany Ludovico II, who was asked for help by the Pope John VIII.

The menace of the invasions of the Saracens, who not only sacked the towns, but also killed those who opposed them, reducing in slavery women and children, convinced many Apulian towns to submit themselves to the emperor of Constantinople (Basilio I), so that the Byzantines strengthened their

possession of Southern coasts and, after a strict alliance with the Pope, they conquered again the town of Tarentum (880) and they created with a function against the Arabs the “theme” of Calabria, constituted by the peninsula of Salento with the town of Otranto as a capital, and the “theme” of Longobardic South, with Bari as a capital to fight the ambitions of expansion of the Longobards of Beneventum.

In 975 the two territories were unified and Bari became the seat of the Katapan of Italy [2], that is the capital of all the Byzantine possessions in Southern Italy. In the meanwhile, just to reinforce the territorial victories fought and in order to spread Greek culture in the lands of Southern Italy, the emperor of Byzantium, Niceforo, in 968 named the Church of Otranto as a metropolitan seat depending directly from Constantinople; all other churches and bishoprics were dependent of it both in Apulia and in Basilicata, also to make easier the diffusion of Greek monarchism made by the Basilian monks (papàs) fled from Sicily after the Arabs’ occupation; they found a shelter in our Southern regions.

In Apulia, Basilians settled mainly in Salento and along the flanks of the “gravine” in front of the gulf of Tarentum, devoting themselves to the cultivation of grapes and olive; they started that typical architecture, that we may admire even now visiting hypogeal trappeti, coenobies, and rural churches of Mottola, Massafra, Ginosa, Laterza, Gravina and so many other towns of Apulia and Lucania, dug in tufa and frescoed with images of saints and of very beautiful Madonnas with slanting eyes and with an evocative image of Pantocrator Christ that often stands out of them.

At the beginning of the ninth century, together with the original nucleus of Latin population, prevailing in Capitanata and in the Land of Bari, in Apulia lived ethnic groups of various origins: in the peninsula of Salento Greek communities prevailed, while scattered all over the territory there were Jewish, Venetian, from Amalfi, Saracen, Armenian, Slavic communities, however all submitted to the domination of a ruling class formed by Longobards or Greeks, always fighting each other, with the Pope and the Arabs who dominated from the Mediterranean and more and more often, starting from their shelters on the Dalmatian Coast sacked the towns on the coast of Apulia and left behind them mourning and smoking ruins.

In this occasion, in the Apulian towns some attempts of conquest of autonomy and of emancipation from the Byzantine power happened. The most sensational episode took place in Bari where the town patricians, supported by the

Longobards of Beneventum, by the middle class, and by the Latin clergy, violently turned against the Byzantines, led by the rich owner from Bari named Melo, that after various vicissitudes ended with the battle of Cannae of 1018.

In this occasion for the first time Normans appeared in Apulia, they were recruited by Melo and very soon they settled in the town as conquerors with William of Hauteville (Iron-arm) duke of Apulia and Matera (1042).

In 1071 Robert Guiscard, duke of Apulia and Calabria banished the Byzantines from Bari and Brindisi and finally thwarting every desire of autonomy, started the process of feudality of Southern Italy; it culminated in 1139, when Roger II became king of Sicily and Duke of Apulia and gave a great impulse to that military architecture, castles and tower of defence and sighting, that are a testimonial of the Norman domination on this region [3].

Among these events characterized by fights for the supremacy, during the XI century the rebirth of the urban civilization started and with this also the flourishing of religious life that provoked the increase of the pilgrimages in the Holy Land. When, during the first Crusade banished by Urban II in 1095, pilgrims and crusaders to reach the Holy Land started to arrive massively towards the coast towns of Apulia, Bari and Brindisi became the natural seat of embarking for those who wanted to move from the West to the East to pray, to trade, to conquer, using Venetian, Amalfitan, Genoese, Pisan ships that since a long time from Apulian harbours had started rich trades with the East to export oil and cereals and to import spices, metals and wood. Ports were enlarged and fortified, large warehouses were built for the merchandise coming from the hinterland and addressed to the Northern Adriatic of the opposite Dalmatian side and to the East. To receive and heal the Crusaders leaving or returning from the Holy Land many hospitals (hospitalia) were built by the monastic order of the Templars and of Teutonic knights at first and then by the knights of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, which later on became the Order of Knights of Malta (H. Filipponio) of whom even now some consistent traces still remain above all in the coast towns where those orders acquired large possessions from which they took the necessary means to hold their territories in the Holy Land.

But what mainly testifies the great vitality of the Apulian towns in this period, are the Apulian romanesque cathedrals often built in an imposing style, on the fundamentals of old paleochristian churches or, sometimes, of roman and Greek

temples; many building materials belonging to those preexisting constructions were used.

The cultural climate inspired to the spirituality and to the religiosity that marked the XI and XII centuries, above all in the artistic production wanted to express an ideological message and tried to build an image of magnificence and power in the person of the king. So architects who built churches, palaces, castles, the artisans who made sculptures, mosaics, paintings supplied the most magnificent supports to this epiphany of power, so that they caused wonder, but also fear (C. D. Fonseca).

The Norman politics in Southern Italy not only defined the administrative order, according to the feudal system, that preferred the tower and the castle as a symbol of its suspicious and tyrannical power, but also at first supported the politics of the Pope, promoting the building of churches and guiding the first Crusade (Boemondo), determining also the resumption of the relationships of the Southern Churches with the Church of Rome, and contrasting in many ways the influence of the Patriarch of Constantinople on monarchism and on Southern clergy. There was a great commitment of religious architecture after the left of the relies of the bishop of Myra with the building of the basilica of St. Nicholas of Bari, built in 1087 just on the place already occupied by Byzantin katapanate and inaugurated in 1098 by the Pope Urban II.

Nevertheless, Norman Italy looked again beyond the Mediterranean, towards Byzantium, for various reasons, mainly to find an alliance against the Papacy, which became the cenare catalyst of Italian politics, especially when Leo IX started to fear for the constitution of an independent state in Southern Italy.

With the death of William II and the marriage of his only heir Constance with Henry Hohenstaufen, in 1197, in Southern Italy the house of Swabia settled, mainly represented by Frederick II who was particularly linked to Apulia so that he fixed there his usual residence. The building activity that Frederick II started after his return from Germany regarded both the recovery and enlargement of the defensive structures preexisting inherited by the Normans and the building of new castles and residences, and exceptionally of consecrated places (we may only be sure of the Cathedral of Altamura, consecrated in 1232, that Frederick II wanted for political reasons).

To discover and visit the so many Apulian castles, it is possible to follow a real itinerary.

At the beginning of the Tavoliere, we may notice some emerging hills, which forecast the mountains of Daunia, in the length that from San Severo

reaches Castelnuovo. Far away we see in the distance the town of Troy and, towards the East, Civitate that, together with Castel Fiorentino, where Frederick II died on the thirteenth of December 1250, constituted a system of fortifications previously started by the Byzantine Katapan Basilius Boiannes, then fortified by the Normans and by Frederick II with a system of towers that may be reached at the first floor, strong at their basement, sometimes isolated, sometimes built at a short distance one from another for a mutual defence.

An example of primitive isolated tower may be a part of the Castle of Monte S. Angelo, not very far from Lucera, where Frederick II quartered his Saracen troops brought from Sicily when he decided to move his interest in Apulia.

The reconstruction of the castles of Barletta, Bari, Trani and Brindisi followed. For the last castle, in particular, we know that for its execution (1227) old structures were demolished, a church entitled to St. Mary of the Teutronics was demolished and some building materials taken from the old walls of Roman Brindisium.

Together with the building and reconstruction of some defence castles, Frederick wanted the building of many palaces and hunting castles scattered all over Apulia to satisfy his passion for falconry. One of them in Gravina of Apulia, is mentioned by Vasari in the "Lives", quoting the name of the architect Fuccio, who was charged by Frederick to plan it and to bring to an end its works. Built or reconstructed entirely by the Emperor would be the castles of Lucera, Oria, Otranto, Gioia del Colle. But, mainly, the memory of Frederick II of Swabia, is linked in the collective imagination to Castel del Monte. About this castle there are various, long and learned controversies on the attribution, dating, and influence, but about one thing even the more convinced sceptics cannot object: Castel del Monte encloses in itself all the esoteric, astrological, architectural knowledge of the XIII century man.

After the death of Frederick II, the Southern reign was governed by his son Manfred till 1266; Dante in his Divine Comedy so described him: "Fair he was and of a kind countenance". His reign was characterized by a remarkable wildness provoked by the continuous rebellions of the feudatories and by the strong aversion of the papacy which culminated in the offer to Charles of Anjou of the crown of Sicily, conquered with the weapons in the cruel battle of Beneventum on February 26 1266, when Manfred himself lost his life. His memory is committed, besides Dante's verses, to the town of Manfredonia, that he built in 1263. When the House

of Anjou reached Naples, besides renewing feudality with French elements, they gave large grantings to churches and monasteries, among which a particular relevance had the convent of Conversano, that had already had grants from the Normans, as well as to monastic-chivalric orders.

During the Anjou's domination, notwithstanding the appropriation of the incomes of the estate taken off from the cavaliers after their suppression ordered by the Council of Vienna in 1312, the financial heavy expenses towards the papacy, the effort for the long war of the Vespri, which ended with the transfer of Sicily to the Aragon House, and the loss of incomes provoked by the establishment of the Tarentum principedom granted to Charles' II son, convinced Philip, in 1294, to grant many towns of the Reign to Florentine and Sienese merchants, to merchants from Pisa and Genoa, but above all from Venice; they, at the time of Joan I, practically monopolized trades in Apulia harbours, where even now the signs of their long stay are still visible. A further enlargement of the most typical Apulian product followed: oil (hypogeous "trappeti" scattered all over the peninsula of Salento and on the coast near Bari), with the following increase in export, particularly in the harbours of Giovinazzo, Monopoli and Gallipoli for oil, while from Manfredonia, Barletta and Trani ships loaded with cereals, almonds, cheese left; they came back loaded with wood, metals, skins and spices.

Menaced by the fast expansion of the Turks all over the Balkan peninsula, the House of Anjou enlarged several castles and equipped them with new walls; in particular, during the reign of Charles I of Anjou, the first project to protect our coasts from the Saracens' attacks was planned, with a system of sighting towers cleverly distributed to prevent the attacks of the Saracens.

In 1442 Alfonso of Aragon was installed on the throne of Naples; he introduced in 1447 the custom for transhumance of sheeps in Capitanata (over 350,000 hectares) to establish a balance between agriculture and sheep-rearing; he gave regulations to the use of pastures in the Tavoliere and the management of them directly to the State.

The Aragon domination was characterized by a strengthening of the old feudal system (in particular of the Acquaviva of Conversano and of the Orsini del Balzo of Tarentum and Lecce) and by a further feudal domination in the towns of the Reign, often in favour of merchants from Genoa, Florence, Milan, from Catalonia. It is emblematic the granting of Monte S. Angelo and S. Giovanni Rotondo to the Prince George Castriota Scanderbeg from Albany as a reward for the military aids obtained. The Turks

took up again their attacks, that culminated in the huge, well-known slaughter of 1480; a terrible memory of it is kept in the cathedral.

With the treaty of Granad (November 11th 1500), France and Spain decided to invade the Reign of Naples. Except for Tarentum and Manfredonia, that were still a dominion of the house of Aragon, and Trani, Mola, Polignano, Monopoli, Brindisi and Otranto held by the Venetians till 1508, Apulia was occupied by the Spanish. French people wished to conquer Capitanata which, thanks to the Custom on sheep transumance, cashed from 80 to 100,000 ducats per year; for this reason they fought on Apulian territory. The quarrel was put to an end with the battle of Cerignola where Consalvo of Cordova defeated the French army. In that same year, while the Spanish army quartered in Barletta, the famous Challenge, then immortalized by Massimo d'Azeglio, took place.

In the second half of the XVI century, Apulia was administratively reorganized by the Spanish and the towns belonging to the State, where Lawcourts and Royal Hearings took place, had a remarkable increase; they became larger and richer with beautiful public and private buidings. Foggia, Manfredonia, Lucera, Trani, Monopoli and Lecce became great centres. But plague arrived, and Saracens attacked the coast, in the fields brigands assaulted people, Turks came back along the coast, and with them pirates, who from their shelters in Albany and Montenegro often assaulted the Apulian coasts. In the meantime, just to remember the most famous events, in 1537 the town of Castro was sacked and demolished by the pirate Barbarossa and in 1554 Vieste was sacked and its inhabitants were all deported by the terrible pirate Dragut.

The continuous assaults by the Turks induced the Spanish to think of a remarkable military plan. The system of sighting was reinforced, the coast castles were fortified and the walls of the towns more exposed to the attacks were reinforced (Monopoli). New castles were built to defend the most important towns and fortified towns were built; Acaya, near Lecce, is still almost untouched. It was built in 1535 by the military architect G. James of Acaya.

The victory of Lepanto, in 1571, put an end in some way to the nightmare of the Turkish attacks, but very soon brigands in the fields together with pirates from the sea, forced the population to find system to hide their harvest, to shelter in towns that were further strengthened or to hide in some way to escape from the ferocious financial system of the Spanish who dominated Southern Italy during the XVI and XVII century. The Spanish, to pay for the so many expenses necessary for the war against

France and against the Turkish empire, treated with ferocity farmers and peasants. Often they tried to hide themselves in stone shelters built in woods or in uninhabited places, buildings, with the approval of the feudal lords, some incredible houses built with stones without mortar: the trulli that even now can be seen by visitors in the valley of Itria (Alberobello, Locorotondo, Cisternino, Martina Franca, Ceglie). They look like tents of prehistoric wanderers transformed into stone houses; the most remarkable group, the town of Alberobello, has been included in the list of the monuments of worldly interest to protect under the sponsorship of the UNESCO.

The victory of the Turks at Lepanto marked the beginning of the splendid baroque architecture that characterized the civil and religious buildings all over the Salento till Ostuni and Martina Franca and it had the maximum splendour in the town of Lecce, so that we may talk of Lecce Baroque art, characterized by a sumptuous variety of decorations with wine-shoots and fruit festoons that take their inspiration from the economy of the territory and remind us of the vitality of nature after the Turkish period represented in an aspect of submission, for example, in the caryatids on the façade of Santa Croce in Lecce [4].

In the meanwhile the principality of Tarentum fell to pieces, and many small feuds were constituted, a phenomenon helped by the Spanish who undertook a real "extraordinary sale" of towns in favour of rich merchants and bankers, so that, for example, the marquisate of Oria was yielded up to the Imperials; the town of Acquaviva was given up to the De Mari, rich merchants from Genoa; Altamura was given to Ottavio Farnese; the Gonzaga settled in Molfetta. Between the XVI and XVII century the life of the most crowded towns grew rich with splendid buildings, built "ex novo" or on the basement of old castles to which splendid façades were sometimes added, and became lively also for the contribution of big and small "universitates", of old feudal lords belonging to the high bureaucracy, of convents, or of high clergymen who enriched their churches with splendid many-coloured marbles or built new churches in baroque style. Just the patronage of these clergymen substituted the enjoyment for the Venetian paintings imported from Venice, such as by P. Veronese, Tiepolo, Tintoretto and its school, Palma the young, A. and B. Vivarini, A. Fracanzano, P. Bordon, imported by the Venetian families resettled or married into Apulian families in the previous centuries, a new pleasure coming from the capital of the viceroyalty, inspired to the baroque style, that was mainly expressed in statues,

altars, organs, ceramic floors and decorations of old buildings with precious marbles and the building of new churches of Jesuit architecture, above all commissioned by the confraternities to Neapolitan artists (M. Pasculli Ferrara): painters such as L. Giordano, F. De Mura, L. Castellano, F. Guarino, Solimena, A. Miglionico, D. A. Vaccaro, P. DeMatteis, P. Finoglio, M. Pino, with some presence from Rome (G. Brandi, A. Bordone), and Flemish (Gaspare Hovic), sculptors and even more architects. So started a taste that will follow in the next century thanks to Apulian painters, among them C. Rosa, C. Giaquinto, painter at the Spanish Court, of whom we keep many works, O. Tiso pupil of Solimena, N. Gliri, D. A. Carella and others [5, 6].

Starting from the XVIII century, the structure of the towns changed, the mighty fortifications became less protective, as fire arms were used more and more on a large scale. The external walls of the coast castles were modified so that they might absorb the strokes of the artillery without crushing into pieces; in the towns of the hinterland castles were transformed into palaces, while the phenomenon of the fortified farmhouses was intensified, because brigands still infested those areas.

A decisive change towards a modern town was given by G. Murat's edict, that permitted the urban extension beyond the old walls and allowed to build new boroughs, that slowly substituted old historical centres and surrounded convents and farms previously isolated. Sometimes, even the walls and the towers were encircled in the new buildings or were dug to obtain various spaces, while the Spanish guns that were threatening on them, were put underground and became mooring places for ships.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, also in Apulia the definitive assertion of the middle-class started; towns were endowed with theatres, sometimes entitled to glorious Apulian musicians of the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Piccinni, Giordano, Paisiello, Mercadante); public buildings of various destinations were built and we must certainly mention the Athenaeum, the seat of the University of Bari.

### 3 Conclusion

This paper has presented an example that contributes to spread the culture and the artistic wealth of the Southern of Italy. It is a prestigious work on natural Apulian places, by showing their characteristics and beautiful scenario, since they are

unique examples in all over the world. In addition, an historical point of view has been done by describing the old centre of Bari against its modern structure.

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