

ANTHROPOLOGICAL WAYFINDING

POINT 1– “FOR LA PORTA” (OUTSIDE THE DOOR)

An emblematic location in Civitanova and the town's meeting place.

The name derives from the fact that it was probably the site of one of the five gates of the medieval settlement, and perhaps the most important one.

For la porta is the meeting place – *t aspett a for la porta* – where you catch the bus and where people meet in the evening and on Sundays to chat, talk about politics, the weather, and sports.

In summer, the monumental plane tree and linden tree (or lime tree) provide shelter from the heat, and the small square with its benches makes for pleasant conversations. The square is completed by the Benedictine cross in local stone, carved by Cola di Civita Nova as a testimony to the stay in Civitanova of St.

Bernardino da Siena, who later became its patron saint, and the fountain, bearing a verse from the Canticle of the Creatures on its front and composed of numerous “spouts” with perfectly drinkable water, testifying to the abundance of spring water that benefits the town.

POINT 2 – “ALLA FIERIA A SAN FELICE TE L'ACCATT” (AT THE SAN FELICE FAIR I'LL BUY IT FROM YOU)

In this 111-meter widening, the Lucera-Castel di Sangro sheep track enters the town of Civitanova.

On August 28, the first day of the feast of San Felice Martire (co-patron saint of the town), a large animal fair used to take place. On this day, we could hear the cries of hundreds of different animals that had been brought from all over to be traded or sold: the sounds of cowbells mingled with the cries of bargaining and the handshakes that followed; old donkeys, grayed by age, were temporarily refurbished with a little soot and sold as young foals.

This was only the beginning of the fair.

As you climbed up the village towards the church, the items on sale changed from animals to wooden vats (cylindrical containers of various sizes).

Translated by
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Civitanova was, in fact, a village of vat makers: master craftsmen who created watertight containers from raw wood alone, before moving on to ceramic pottery and the copper containers of the famous coppersmiths of Agnone. The scent of watermelons freshly cut open by vendors—stacked in large pyramids—would envelop visitors who ventured into the crowds at the fair, but they would also have been stunned by the cries of the street vendors and the many different smells, such as the pungent aroma of *scapece* (pickled cod) or that of the famous Civitanova tomatoes, which are still grown today. Arriving very early in the morning, visitors might have encountered a donkey with a strange load in its *piunzi* (wooden containers used for transport that were tied to the chest): here they might have seen ice, a real rarity at a time when refrigerators did not exist. At the end of winter, some men climbed our mountain to its highest point—1,400 meters—and there, in a karst sinkhole, they dug a pit where, after piling up and crushing the snow, they covered it so that it would last until summer, when it was cut into blocks, brought to the village, and used for the famous *srbetta* (sorbet) – eaten during the festivities of St. Felice – as well as for classic ice cream.

POINT 3 – ALLE CIERCHE MANCINE (THE LEFT-HANDED OAKS)

The name, using a play on words, is a little sinister, but there is a reason for it: the elders gathered around the fire on winter evenings, with the wind passing under the old shutters making sounds that almost made the flames flicker and the embers turn red as blood, began to tell stories of witches.

Legend has it that the witches of the village gathered in this place to hold their sabbaths: after kidnapping a child, they would take him to the left-handed circles and, once a large fire had been lit, they would pass him ‘along the chain’, striking him with their evil spells, until, night after night, the child wasted away so much that his thin little body would fit through the rings of a chain, like those used in the fireplace to hang the pot.

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In more modern times, this place has changed its function: from macabre stories of centuries past to the 1930s, when this road, which welcomed those coming from Rome or Naples to Civitanova, was renamed *Viale del Duce* (even today, although very faded, the words *Credere Obbedire Combattere* - Believe Obey Fight) can still be read on the house on the bend). After the war, the street was renamed *Viale Arciprete Emilio Battista*, and in the 1970s, a man who had returned from abroad, known to everyone as “Tonino”, decided to open a bar and restaurant here, calling it *Tony Le Querce*. He also added rooms to the bar and restaurant, and it immediately became a great success, especially among young people, who preferred it to the cantine, the old taverns in the town.

Tony Le Querce has now become a historic venue in the town and is still a favorite among the young people of Civitanova.

POINT 4 – “LE TERRAIN” (THE EMBANKMENT)

It is one of the most eventful places in the long history of the town.

The embankment was once a wall of the ducal palace which, following a violent earthquake, collapsed, filling the front part with its rubble and thus creating the so-called embankment.

At the beginning of the century, we could have met illustrious figures sitting at the tables of the café on the embankment. Senator and doctor Antonio Cardarelli, Italian academic Giuseppe Pianese, and others who, coming from Naples, gave the place the nickname “Naplitte”.

Coincidentally, the town of Civitanova shares the meaning of its name: in Greek, *nea polis* means new city, which in Latin is translated as *Civitas nova*. Today, the rooms of the Ducal Palace overlooking the embankment house private residences, the post office, and a municipal library.

POINT 5 – IL COLLE (THE HILL)

Considered the historic center of the town and its oldest district.

It is characterized by a labyrinth of alleys, accessible only on foot, which wind around the Mother Church. Many of these alleys are dead ends, while others lead back to the starting point or open onto small squares.

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Here, visitors can admire the numerous stone portals and decipher the symbols carved into them. In addition to the date of construction, there are figures or objects that are not random: many allude to the trades of the owners of the houses, such as hammers or anvils for blacksmiths; others are symbols to ward off the evil eye, such as masks with monstrous faces or sticking out their tongues; finally, there are symbols of prosperity, such as vases of flowers.

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