

# NOLI

*History and Nature*



Uno dei  
Borghi  
più belli  
d'Italia



CITTÀ DI NOLI





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## Foreword

Thanks to the commitment, reflections and studies of several people, we have been able to set up a small, but hopefully handy Tourist and History Guide to our ancient village, so dear to those of us who were born here and to the many tourists who spend some of their time in this place.

The whole City Council wished to share a free, ready-to-use handbook with anyone interested in Noli, especially its history, its hinterland and the main events it holds.

In the first part of this book, you will find some themes concerning the contemporary urban context and the several opportunities which

have developed over the latest decades in the fields of tourism, sports and food.

In the second part, some itineraries will be suggested to discover the huge historical and cultural heritage that the old city centre proudly presents.

I wish to thank the many people who gave their free contribution to this work; we have tried to make the most of them through this book, with the aim of sharing as much as possible with those who will enjoy reading it.

Ambrogio Repetto  
*The Mayor of Noli*

# Welcome to Noli!

Noli is a charming town: the sea and the inland embrace an historical and cultural heritage that is extremely relevant and distinguishes every street and every view. The historical framework includes contemporary events and initiatives that meet tradition and mingle with it.

Walking across the old village means jumping back in time, through the houses, towers, churches, buildings and squares that suddenly appear among the alleys. The Romanesque St. Paragorio's Church, the Town Hall, the ancient *loggia* and Monte Ursino Castle are the most prominent examples of the monuments and historical sites that can be

viewed and visited.

The city's ancient fishing technique is a Slow Food presidium; as well as being home to the fishermen, the beaches and the clear blue sea which have attracted swimmers and tourists since the 1960s.

Together with Bergeggi, Spotorno and Vezzi Portio, Noli is one of the four member towns of the *Golfo dell'Isola* (Island Bay), the organization that has been promoting this territory home and abroad and its tourist-oriented, sports, commercial, productive and food-and-beverage activities since 2012.

Since 2005 Noli has been a member of the *Borghi più belli d'Italia* (Italy's







most beautiful villages) network and for several years now the town has received the Blue Flag and the Green Flag.

Noli has four twin towns: Langenargen, Germany (since 2005), Ribeira Grande de Santiago, Cape Verde (since 2018), Orosei, Sardinia (since

2021) and Sainte Tulle, France (since 2024).

In February, 2024 Noli was honoured with the title of 'Città Dantesca' (Dante's Town), thanks to the thorough studies carried out by the *Fondazione Culturale Sant'Antonio* (St. Anthony Cultural Foundation).



# The events

The first major event of the season is usually held at the end of April; 2024 was the 16<sup>th</sup> year of **Passeggiata Dantesca** (Dante's Trail), a non-competitive walk along the paths on the hills around Noli and back into the old town.

*'Vassi in San Leo e discendesi in Noli'* (You walk up to Sanleo and go down to Noli): thus wrote Dante about Noli in the 4<sup>th</sup> Canto of his Purgatory, emphasizing the harshness of the land and of the paths he had to walk on the headland.

On this day, several associations, committed in the social and cultural fields to work together to open and clean the paths, hand out the food and beverage supplies along the trail, describe the territory and

the monuments encountered along the way, give support and help when needed. This event is a golden opportunity for everybody to give a hand, a meaningful example of cooperation.

All through the Summer season the City Council organizes **Noli Musica Festival**, a prestigious 15-year-old set of events with opera, classical music and World Music concerts, under the management of three renowned Artistic Directors. The opera concerts are usually set in the enchanting castle of Monte Ursino; in 2023 the show "Madame Butterfly, or The Ship and the Butterfly", written by Matteo Peirone and co-produced with Teatro della Tosse, Genoa, was





held there.

Besides Noli Musica Festival, every year in Spring and Summer the Municipal Event Management Office, together with many local associations organize a number of concerts, games, plays, stand up comedies, literary talks, films, and pageants, with the aim of offering citizens and tourists a wide choice of opportunities to suit every age and interest. More events are organized at Christmas time and around New Year's Day. The complete list of the events is shared on the City Council website and on the "Comune di Noli, Ufficio Turismo" Facebook page (the QR Code is in the back cover).

## THE PATRON SAINT FESTIVITIES

**Saints Peter and Paul** are celebrated on 29<sup>th</sup> June, in the church dedicated to them in Voze, on the hills overlooking Noli. The second Sunday of July is dedicated to the **Patron Saint Eugene**; the relics of the Saint are held in a portable urn, while the bone of an arm is kept in a golden casket, finely worked and recently restored. Both containers are inside St. Peter's Cathedral. Along with the services dedicated to the Saint, the whole weekend is dedicated to events and markets which end up with fireworks on Monday evening after the last religious event. On 31<sup>st</sup> July, a feast dedicated to **St. Ignatius of Loyola** is organized in the hamlet of Tosse.





## THE BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF NOLI

On 7<sup>th</sup> August, the volunteers of *Civitas Nauli* commemorate the birth of the Republic of Noli. The event is played inside St. Paragorio's Church, once the city cathedral, where the Consul, Gandolfo Guasco signed the document which put an end to the feudal power over Noli, on the same day in 1192.

In this guide you can read the parch-

ment document dating back to 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1196, on which Emperor Henry VI officially confirmed the transfer of the feudal rights from the Marquises of Savona to the citizens of Noli, as stated in the 1192 document.

The translation of this relevant paper from Latin into Italian has been made by the students of the final year of classical studies of the Liceo Classico G. Chiabrera school in Savona, within a project in cooperation with the Noli City Council.



## THE BIRTH OF THE COMMUNE

With the following document, written on parchment and dated 1196, the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI allowed the citizens of Noli to “act in common”: these rights were usually given through a charter which cities could obtain on payment of a huge amount of money. Henry VI of Swabia (1165-1197) became the Emperor in 1190, when his father Frederick I Barbarossa died. Henry was the father of the famous Frederick II of Swabia.



IN THE NAME OF THE HOLY AND INSEPARABLE TRINITY, HENRY VI, EVER AUGUST EMPEROR OF THE ROMANS AND KING OF SICILY WITH THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD'S MERCY

The goodness of our imperial excellence, responding with benevolence to the requests of their faithful subjects, has always appraised the issues submitted and given orders in their interest, when they comply with the laws. After this reasonable consideration, according to the request from our faithful city of Noli, so that no ambiguity or controversy may arise in the future on the business transaction between the said city and the well-known Marquis, Henry the Brave<sup>1</sup>, we inform all the present and future subjects of our empire that we have confirmed with the imperial authority the sale and

donation made by Marquis Henry the Brave<sup>1</sup> in his own name and his sons, Henry and Otto, in their own names and in the name of their heirs to the community of Noli: on the market, on the toll and on the whole forage tax<sup>2</sup> that the marquises used to collect from the citizens; on the whole forest and wood; on the rights to build defence walls and fortifications both in the castle and in the village<sup>3</sup>; on the right to sentence on murder, perjury, adultery, and to enforce the laws, the vengeance, the penalties and bans concerning all the other sentences; on the pine wood; on the mills, ovens, fish markets, on the beach of Noli; on the area of the castle of Segno; on the whole village<sup>4</sup> and on everything belonging to the

1 He was Henry I del Carretto, nicknamed *Enrico il Guercio* (Henry the one-eyed, a false adaptation of the German word *wert*, meaning “brave”); as well as a faithful ally to Frederick I Barbarossa, he was the Marquis of Savona – with a wide territory covering approximately today's province; he split his feud in two for his sons: Otto received the mark of Savona, Henry II got that of Finale.

2 A *fodrum* was a tax collected by the feudal lords to feed soldiers and horses. It was part of the power of ban, that is the emperor's or lord's power to order work, taxes and tariffs and impose prohibitions.

3 In the Middle Ages, a *castrum* was the part of a village inside the castle walls; a *burgus* was the part of the village outside the walls; the *bourgeois* were the peasants who lived there but left the countryside after year 1000 and went to live in the villages, often working as craftsmen.

4 A *curtis* was a typically medieval organization, a sort of economic version of the feud: every *curtis* belonged to a feudal lord and was divided in two parts, not necessarily bordering: a *pars dominica*, where serfs worked, and a *pars massaria*, cultivated by free peasants.

territory of the castle itself; on the houses along the road; on the 25% of the silver coins; on the whole wood of Illiceta from the stream Marcellino as far as the sea, on the stone road to the village of Orco, the village of Mallare as far as the mountain range, the stairs, the village of Segno and on everything else they have legally let or sold to the community of Noli, in case they did, as reported in their books and on their documents written by a notary public in legal terms, according to the customs of the Longobards.

We also confirm the rights of the community on all the activities, laws and properties held and owned by our subjects anywhere in our empire, except our imperial general forage taxes and order and strictly prescribe that no bishop, duke, marquis, earl, viscount, no city, no community and nobody belonging to the lower or upper common people<sup>5</sup>, lay or clerical, shall in any way dare oppress or hinder the said community of Noli in opposition to the decision of our majesty about what is listed above.

Should anyone attempt to do so, they shall pay a penalty of 200 gold-pounds, half of which to our treasury and half to the offended party.

In order to guarantee the righteousness of this document in the future, by or order it shall be marked with our majesty's golden seal as soon as it is written.

Witnesses thereof are: William archbishop of Ravenna, Angelo arch-

bishop of Taranto, Albert bishop of Vercelli, Otto bishop of Tortona, Peter, imperial officer, Bonifacius marquis of Monferrato, William marquis of Palo, Azo marquis of Este, Gunter earl of Käfernburg, Arnold of Horemberc, the senechal Marquardus, Thomas of Nona and many others.

The seal of the sovereign Henry the Sixth, undefeated emperor of the Romans and king of Sicily.

I, Conrad Hildenes, elected chancellor of the imperial hall, as a representative of the archbishop of Cologne, Adelphus and of the whole archchancellorship of Italy, have certified this document in A. D. 1196, on the fourteenth indiction<sup>6</sup>, under the reign of king Henry the Sixth, the glorious emperor of the Romans, in his twenty-seventh reigning year, properly the sixth as emperor<sup>7</sup> and the second as king of Sicily.

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*Translated by Sofia Acquarone, Riccardo Gigliotti, Maria Lugaro, Greta Tortarolo (3C Liceo Classico Chiabrera). Introduction and footnotes by Maria Carlini and Azzurra Perfumo (3Q Liceo Artistico Martini)*

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6 In the Middle Ages, an indiction was a time of tax collection over a period of fifteen years; it was also used as a time measure.

7 Henry VI was appointed king of the Romans already in 1168, when he was three years old and the emperor was his father Frederick I Barbarossa. The latter died during the Third Crusade, in 1190; then Henry VI succeeded on the imperial throne; in 1194 he married the Norman queen, Constance of Altavilla, and also became king of Sicily. In the Middle Ages, only the king of the Holy Roman Empire could aspire to the imperial crown, which could only be received from the Pope, after his consecration.

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5 In the Middle Ages, *popolo grasso* (fat people) referred to craftsmen, merchants, bankers, notaries – people who were not noble but eminent for status and wealth; *popolo minuto* (thin people) instead were all those who owned no businesses and often worked for the fat people.





## THE FOOD AND DRINK EVENT

The first half of September is the time for “La Repubblica del Gusto” (Taste Republic), the great event

dedicated to the excellence of food and drink and to the fish caught in Noli; several businesses, including many Slow Food Presidia, take part with their stalls.



# *Sports and nature hikes*

Noli is a renowned and well-known meeting point for sportsmen and sea lovers. Windsurfing, underwater sports, sailing and rowing are practiced all year round throughout the *Golfo dell'Isola* (Gulf of the Island), thanks to the favourable weather and sea conditions. Windsurfing is encouraged by the orientation of the coast, exposed to the north wind which allows excursions just a few metres away from the shore. The activity is free from September to May. The local section of the Italian Naval League organizes regattas and sailing classes (Optimist, 4.20, Catamaran) as well as windsurfing. Also, the coast near Capo Noli has become a popular destination for divers.

Outdoor sports lovers cannot miss a chance of mountain biking, hiking, paragliding, and climbing rocks above the sea or inland. The steep limestone cliffs of Capo Noli, rising straight from the sea, immediately below the Via Aurelia, is a fascinating setting for free climbing and is the longest crossing route in Italy. In recent years, Noli has also become the scene of important open water swimming, enduro MTB and trail running sports competitions which have witnessed the variety and uniqueness of its outdoor sports panorama for enthusiasts and professionals.

In the Noli area there are over 35km of natural walks which offer wonder-







ful chances to enjoy spectacular views ranging from the deep blue of the Ligurian Sea to the uncontaminated nature as soon as your eyes turn to the hillside.

The municipal trail network currently has 14 itineraries that embrace the territory from East to West and connect the seaside with the hinterland:

❶ **“Noli - Capo Noli”** (Pilgrim’s Path): a panoramic path halfway up the hillside that climbs from the centre of Noli to Capo Noli, above the picturesque cliffs rising from the sea. Rare and endemic plant species are preserved here, and birds of prey find this an ideal environment. Along the path you can also meet the ruins of the Church of St. Lazarus, with the adjoining leper hospital, and those of the Church of St. Margaret. The scenic coastal route features educational panels. Distance: 3.8 km. Elevation gain: 266 m. Walking time: ascent 1 hr 30’, descent 1 hour.

❷ **“Grotta dei Falsari”** (The Fakers’ Cave): from path (1), at the hairpin bend past St. Margaret’s Church, walk down to the steep cliffs, until you reach the cave which pierces the rock, offering a breathtaking view of the sea. From the cave, along a steep downhill path, you can walk down directly to the Via Aurelia (no sidewalk/pavement). Distance: 0.5 km. Elevation loss: 30 m. Walking time: round trip 45 minutes.

❸ **“Capo Noli - Torre delle Streghe”** (Witches’ Tower): a short but interesting path that leads to the Witches’ Tower, standing above the cliffs of Malpasso, on the municipal border; in ancient times it was a lookout point above the sea, just like other watchtowers clearly visible along the coast to the west. Distance: 0.6 km. Elevation gain: 35 m. Walking time: round trip 45 minutes.

❹ **“Noli - Villa Ada”**: from Noli, passing by the historic Bishop’s Palace, the itinerary runs halfway up



the hillside, along narrow, cobblestone paths, the remains of ancient trails which leads through terraced slopes, some of which are still tended nowadays, all the way to Spertorno. Distance: 2.3 km. Elevation gain: 80 m. Walking time: outward 45 minutes, return 45 minutes.

⑤ **“Amico Sentiero”** (Friendly path): a natural trail with explanatory boards set along the route to explain the different green environments being crossed and the most typical and significant species of plants and animals. Dry ridges alternate with cooler, wetter watersheds, which almost always offer a view of Noli and its coast. The path also leads to the ruins of the small Romanesque St. Michael’s church, from which you can walk down to Noli. Distance: 3.4 km. Elevation gain: 250 m. Walking time: 2 hours.

⑥ **“Capo Noli - Bric dei Monti”**: from the observatory on Capo Noli, along the Manie plateau, it follows the ridge of Bric dei Crovi in a dominant and panoramic position above Noli and its territory; unfortunately, the natural environment in this section has been severely damaged by fires. The path crosses the provincial road of Le Manie towards Bric dei Monti. Distance: 6.9 km. Elevation gain: 250 m. Walking time: outward journey 2.30 hours, return 2 hours.

⑦ **“Buongiardino ring trail”**: a bottom-of-the-valley itinerary that runs along both banks of the Rio Acquaviva stream, crossing terraced land, partly tended and partly abandoned, providing interesting evidence of the local peasant culture. Distance: 1.3 km. Elevation gain: 70 m. Walking time: 45 minutes.

⑧ **“Acquaviva trail”**: a bottom-of-the-valley itinerary that connects the





Manie plateau with the town of Noli, descending along the left side of the Rio Acquaviva valley, first through the woods and then through the tended fields. Distance: 2.2 km. Elevation gain: 280 m. Walking time: ascent 1 hr 15', descent 45 minutes.

⑨ **“Noli - Luminella - Voze”**: from Noli it heads towards the village of Voze along the watershed of the Rio Luminella stream; it is a densely inhabited area, but a very interesting sample of semi-natural environment created by man with rural activities. Distance: 2.5 km. Elevation gain: 210 m. Walking time: ascent 1 hr 15', descent 1 hour.

⑩ **“Noli - Voze Roman Road”**: an itinerary along the Roman route that led from Noli to Voze, an important transit station along the ancient Ligurian Roman coastal road. The great importance of this road system, even after the Roman times, is testified by

the presence of several sections that still have the original stone pavement. Distance: 2.5 km. Elevation gain: 210 m. Walking time: ascent 1 hr 15', descent 1 hour.

⑪ **“Noli, Castle, Bric Groppino - Voze”**: the path runs along the panoramic ridge that starts from Noli, passes by the Castle and reaches Voze, crossing lands mainly covered with olive trees and inhabited areas. Distance: 2.8 km. Elevation gain: 220 m. Walking time: ascent 1 hr 30', descent 1 hr 15'.

⑫ **“Spotorno - Voze Roman Road”**: a secondary ridge route along the stretch of Roman road that left the coastline and ran up from Spotorno towards Voze. You cross inhabited areas and others that have grown a very thick Mediterranean scrub after a fire. Distance: 2.1 km. Elevation gain: 210 m. Walking time: ascent 1 hr 15', descent 1 hour.



**13 “Voze - Tosse municipal road”:** a route half-way up the hill that follows the ancient connection between the hamlets of Voze and Tosse; the area crossed shows an alternation between mixed forest and crops and is a splendid sample of ancient routes. Distance: 3 km. Elevation gain: 125 m. Walking time: outward 2 hrs, return 1 hr 45’.

**14 “Voze - Bric del Monti”:** a ridge path that connects the hamlet of Voze with Bric dei Monti, the main

peak in the area, which gives a good view of the east Ligurian coast and the Finale area. Distance: 1.8 km - Elevation gain: 200 m. Walking time: 1 hour outward journey, 40 minutes return.

The trail network is largely accompanied by information boards that give plentiful information about the fauna, flora and history of the sites on the way. The reference maps are available at the City Hall Tourist Office as well as on the main smartphone applications.





# Fishing

Fishing is the most traditional and ancient activity in Noli.

It is carried out every morning using age-old techniques, on small rowing boats, with crews of two or three people and is an attraction for lovers of ancient crafts and good food.

Every morning freshly caught fish is sold directly by the fishermen on the waterfront, where a pink marble area has been set up for the Fishermen's Market. Mostly blue fish are caught, along with squid, bonito, octopus, cuttlefish and hake, but the most characteristic product of Noli

fishing is the *ciciarello*, a small, tapered, scale-free fish, typical of these waters.

The artisanal fishery has been recognised as a Slow Food presidium since 2000.

The origins of the fishing tradition go back as far as the period when Noli was proclaimed an independent city (late 1100s - early 1200s); in fact, fishing became one of the economic bases for the development of the municipality and even then, as now, the 'Fishermen's Beach' was dedicated to this activity.





The professional fishermen here belong to the Luigi Defferrari Cooperative, founded as a friendly society of fishermen in 1909; they work with

traditional gill nets, trawl lines and fish traps.

They are the main heirs of this tradition.



# *Nemo's Garden*

Nemo's Garden is an innovative underwater farming project hosted in the sea of Noli. The idea of growing plants underwater materialised in 2012 thanks to Sergio Gamberini (President of Ocean Reef Group), who wished to find creative solutions to the challenges of food production in a fast-changing world.

Thanks to a group of visionary friends, keen on the sea and sustainability, among whom was his son Luca, the project came to life and attracted considerable inter-

est both at home and abroad. The main aim of Nemo's Garden is to promote sustainable food production while reducing the environmental impact of farming.

The underwater cultivation facility in Noli, currently characterised by 9 transparent hemispherical globes called biospheres, serves as an ideal and protected habitat (no pesticides are used) for a variety of plants, including basil, mint and lemon balm cultivated with special hydroponic technology.

This cutting-edge approach al-



lows the production of fresh, nutritious food (enriched with essential oils and antioxidants), as well as giving a contribution to the preservation of the local sea ecosystem.

Nemo's Garden represents a solid example of how innovation and sustainability can go hand in hand

to address global challenges related to food safety and marine conservation.

The project continues to inspire and engage both the local and international communities, showing the potential of creative solutions for a more sustainable future.





# The old town

The latest archaeological excavations have drawn an unprecedented urban topographical layout of Noli, from the Roman Republican Age through the Imperial period to the Late Roman and Early Medieval settlement. A docking facility, used from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. to the Late Empire, was brought to light, with remains of warehouses, lots of ceramic material and an extensive Roman incineration necropolis dating back to the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries A.D. with rich grave goods. The most sensational find was the one made in a small hole under the floor of a Roman building where a treasure of thirteen gold coins had been hidden at around the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century AD. The most recent coin, a true rarity in numismatics, pertains to Emperor Petronius Maximus, who reigned for only two months in 455 AD.

During the Byzantine period, 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, Noli developed around the early Christian baptistery of San Paragorio, brought to light by archaeological excavations last century. In the early medieval period, the settlement stretched between Capo Noli and the present-day village with almost urban dimensions, overlapping with the Roman phase both in the area of the harbour and in that of the necropolis, which would be burnt down at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, maybe due to a Saracen raid.

The gradual economic development of the early Middle Ages enabled the Noli community to take part in the



Map of the maritime republics  
(source <https://www.turistacurioso.it>)

First Crusade, aimed at the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, gaining considerable wealth and privileges. During the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Noli managed to buy out its independence from Marquis Henry II *del Carretto*, when a deed signed in the church of San Paragorio on 7 August 1192 turned Noli into an independent municipality ruled by its own consuls elected among all the heads of families. The Statutes of Noli are one of the rare surviving documents of the early municipal order in Liguria. For this reason, after careful studies of the archive documents, the Town Council declared Noli the fifth Maritime Republic, with resolution No. 20 of 12/05/1999.

## *Map of the old town*

## THE TOWERS

1. Torre Papone, via L. Defferrari
2. Torre del Canto, via C. Colombo
3. Tower, n°13, via A. Sartorio
4. Tower, via A. Sartorio
5. Tower, n°15, via D. Manin
6. Tower, n°3, piazzetta I. Mariconi
7. Tower and Casa Pagliano, n°1, corso Italia

## LOGGIA HOUSES

8. Casa Repetto, n°3, piazzetta E. Praga  
9. Loggia House, n°5, vico Biestro

## PALAZZI

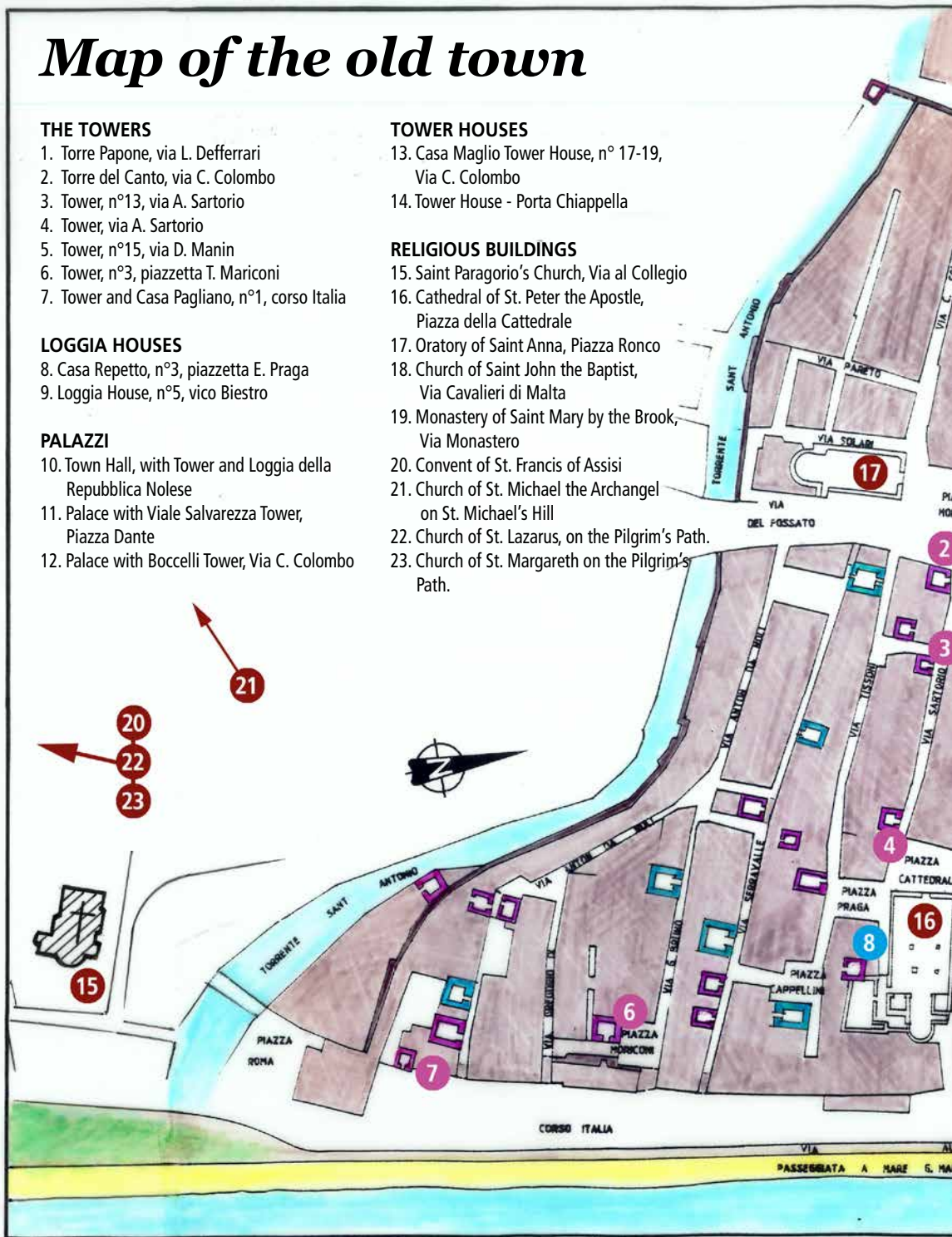
10. Town Hall, with Tower and Loggia della Repubblica Nolese
11. Palace with Viale Salvezza Tower, Piazza Dante
12. Palace with Boccelli Tower, Via C. Colombo

## TOWER HOUSES

13. Casa Maglio Tower House, n° 17-19,  
Via C. Colombo
14. Tower House - Porta Chiappella

## RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

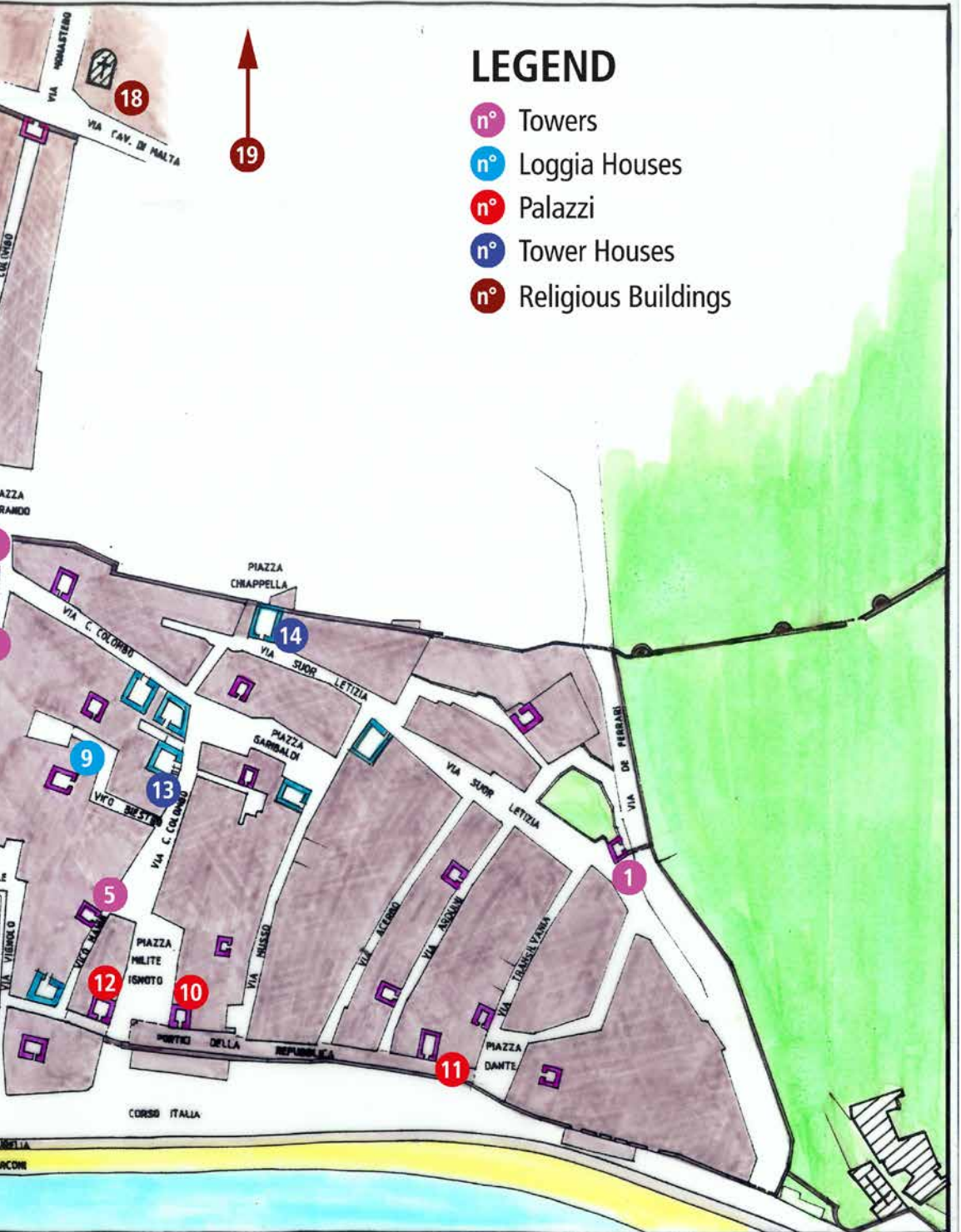
15. Saint Paragorio's Church, Via al Collegio
16. Cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle,  
Piazza della Cattedrale
17. Oratory of Saint Anna, Piazza Ronco
18. Church of Saint John the Baptist,  
Via Cavalieri di Malta
19. Monastery of Saint Mary by the Brook,  
Via Monastero
20. Convent of St. Francis of Assisi
21. Church of St. Michael the Archangel  
on St. Michael's Hill
22. Church of St. Lazarus, on the Pilgrim's Path.
23. Church of St. Margareth on the Pilgrim's  
Path.





- Towers
- Loggia Houses
- Palazzi
- Tower Houses
- Religious Buildings

- Towers
- Loggia Houses
- Palazzi
- Tower Houses
- Religious Buildings





*Bishop's palace and Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie*

In 1202, an alliance was made with the Republic of Genoa, according to which Noli had full sovereignty over its internal government but was linked to Genoa in foreign policy and overseas trade.

In 1239, Pope Gregory IX raised Noli to the dignity of a bishopric, in recognition of its role played in the war against Frederick II. The diocese of Noli stayed independent until 1820, when Pius VII united the diocese to that of Savona with a bull, or official decree, of 9<sup>th</sup> October; the memory of the ancient bishopric is preserved in the title: diocese of Savona and Noli.

The bishop's palace stands at the foot of Monte Ursino; today's shape of the building dates back to 1554 but is the result of earlier alterations and extensions. Originally, the palace also housed a chapel and a prison for the clergy. In front of the building stands the Church of Our Lady of Graces, built at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century on the remains of a *pervetustum informe templum* (very old temple in ruins) as inscribed on the marble

epigraph on the inside of the façade, which was restored in 1769. With the union to the diocese of Savona, the palace lost its function as a bishop's residence and thus began a slow and progressive degradation to the point that, in the last century, it was used as military housing. In 1998, in-depth studies of the building complex were carried out, leading to a conservative restoration of the building with a change of use.

On Monte Ursino stands the castle with the same name, which has an irregular polygonal wall with a mighty circular keep in the centre, twenty-four metres high. Two curtains descended from the castle along the slopes of the hill: one towards the town of Noli, equipped with a series of semicircular watchtowers, connected by a patrol walkway; the other towards the east, where it reached the coast, near today's tunnel.

The castle was built by the marquises of Savona, who took the name *del Carretto* in 1182, and was already mentioned in a document dated 1004; it



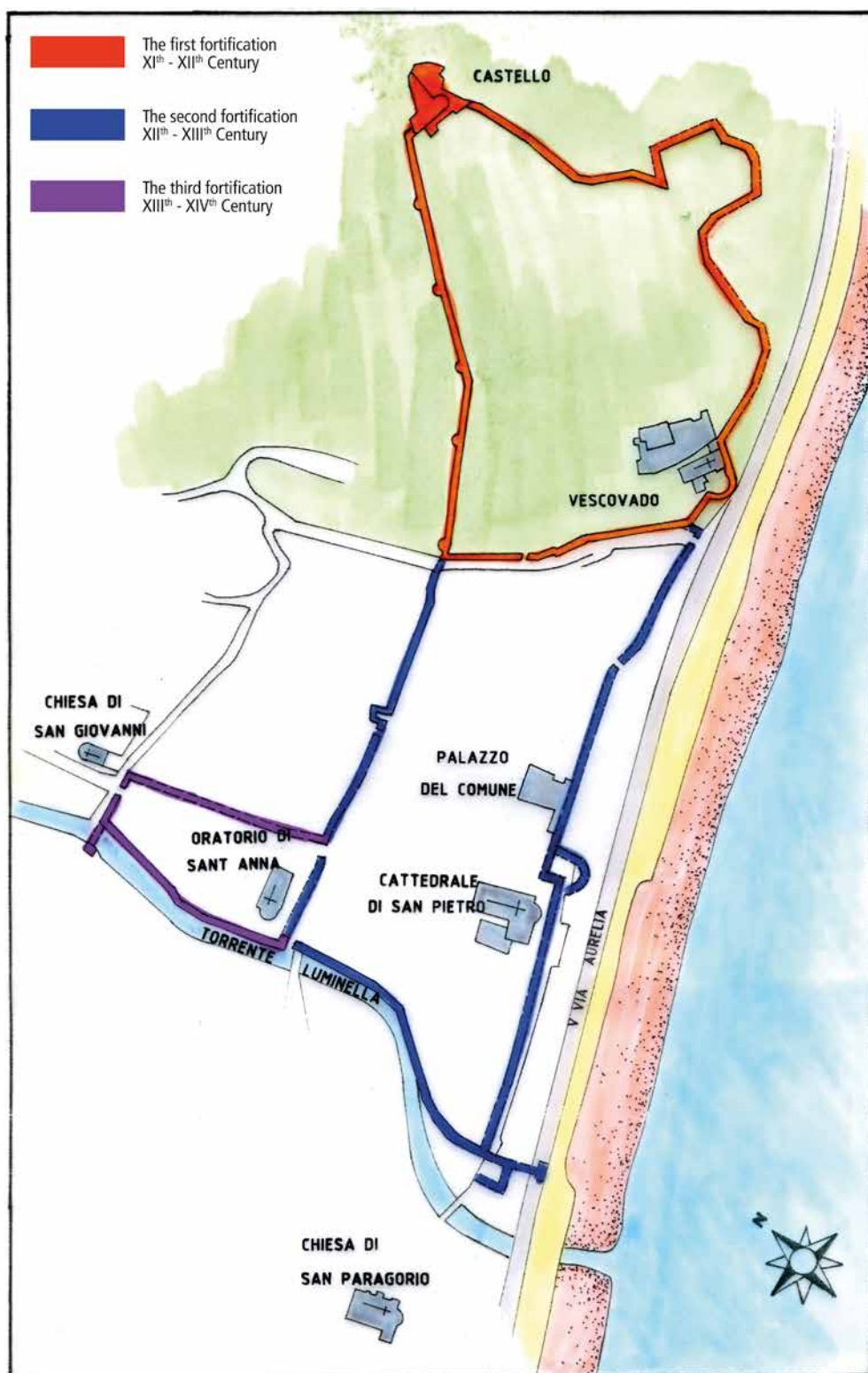


*Monte Ursino Castle and a part of the first city wall*

did not have a residential function but only a defensive one, which is why, in 1552, Genoa wanted to adapt the two towers (still visible on the sides of the keep) and the walls to the new combat weapons - bombards and pusher-barrels that used gunpowder. In fact, on the walls that run down from the castle, the ancient battlements are still visible, typical elements of medieval military architecture, which


had ended their original function of protecting the besieged from the use of throwing projectiles. The old document tells us that on the hill of Monte Ursino, within the walls, there was a rural settlement, the *casazze*: these were small stone buildings arranged in rows, located along the slopes of the hill amidst olive trees and dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century.


The city of Noli was rich and flour-






ishing for most of the Middle Ages, until the 14<sup>th</sup> century; this is shown by its building expansion, which took place in two distinct phases over two centuries, first along the coast and then inland. The change in the urban layout involved the expansion of the defensive system to protect against constant incursions; the curtain wall that ran down from the castle of Monte Ursino was extended, first along the coast towards the west and then inland, occupying the rural areas.

 **The first fortification**, dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, as mentioned above, included the castle and the two curtains that ran down along the slopes.

 **The second fortification**, or rather the first extension, known as *della Marina*, dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, was connected to the pre-existing curtain wall, near the tunnel, followed along the coast, then climbed up along the embankment of the Sant'Antonio Torrent and then joined Torre Paponi, connected to the 1st fortification by means of a brick archway, which crosses today's Via Defferrari; its function was probably to protect the gap opened in the first curtain wall. These were the most prosperous centuries of the Republic of Noli and the architectural items that characterise the area date back to this period and include the towers, loggia houses and tower houses.

 **The third one** corresponds to the second extension, known as "the borough", dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the urbanisation of the area of the vegetable gardens along the route to Voze was implemented. The curtain wall continued from the pre-existing one on the Tor-

rente Sant'Antonio, extending its perimeter as far as the tower with the same name, connected to the tower and gate San Giovanni by a large semi-circular brick archway with a walkway for the garrison; a few metres further, the curtain wall turned towards the coast to connect to the second fortification, near Torre del Canto.

The construction of a railway line in 1871 disrupted the urban structure as a part of the fortifications and the old dwellings were brought down. Two main routes can be traced in the city structure that correspond to the natural ones: they are shown by the access openings in the curtain walls which connect the main outside routes.

The morphology of the coast of Noli stretches from Monte Ursino to Capo Noli and develops inland towards Voze. In fact, the first main route is the one, parallel to the coast, that connects the hill of San Michele, behind the Capo, with Monte Ursino, on which a section of the second fortification is built. Two city gates open here: Porta del Canto and, not far away, Porta Chiappella.

The other main route crossed the first almost orthogonally, connecting Porta Piazza, on the coast, to Porta Chiappella and following towards Voze, which was an important crossroads for the ancient road system.

As the urban centre grew, new routes were born and modified the layout; they ran perpendicular to the main routes. By watching the urban layout, we can identify the original routes, which have remained unchanged over the centuries, maybe because, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the area faced a slow economic decline; as a consequence, the building develop-



*Porta di Piazza, the main city gate, in the second city wall*

ment stopped, due to the decrease in privileges coming from the alliance with the Superba (i.e. Genoa).

Today, Porta Piazza is the main entrance to the old centre of Noli. It shows a semi-circular stone archway topped by a fresco of 'Mary with the two patron saints, Saint Paragorio and Saint Eugenio', painted in 1788

by Vicente Suarez.

The safety of these large openings was guaranteed by a tower which was an observation point and gave protection.

# The most common building types in the Old Town

## LE TORRI

The towers are the main feature of the medieval urban layout of Noli: they were built between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, although they have come down to us reduced in number and height. They are recognisable by their slim size, they have a square or rectangular plan, massive walls and a single opening on the main front. Their construction shows a high basement in local green stone (porphyry) and a very high brick elevation. Once their military function of controlling and protecting the city walls was over, the towers were cut down, incorporated into adjoining buildings and converted into dwellings, thus providing batches of bricks to be re-used in other buildings.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the city had presumably lost a large number of towers, while others were given up in the first half of the following century to build roads and create a new urban layout. The dating of the towers comes from the comparisons of different studies, such as the mensiochronology (dating) of stones and bricks, the chronotypology of the gates (how the design and construction changed over time) and the mortar analysis carried out with the help of the University of Genoa.



### 1. Torre Papona, via L. Defferrari

It stands opposite the brick gate that gives access to Via Vescovado and is connected to the first city wall by a large brick archway with a walkway. It was probably built to defend the gate, where the second extension of the city wall started from. Unlike the other towers, *Torre Papona* was never included into a new building and converted into a dwelling, probably due to its isolated position.

It is remarkable that the same type of guard outpost is visible in the second extension of the city walls with *Porta-Torre San Giovanni* and *Torre Sant'Antonio*, located beyond the stream with the same name. The tow-





*Torre del Canto, the only tower which has retained its original height.*

er, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, has undergone many alterations over the centuries: in 1581 it was used as a gunpowder store, while in 1920 extensive restoration works were carried out that completely altered its view.

## **2. Torre del Canto** via C. Colombo n° 63

*Torre del Canto* is pivotal in the most important road hub in the historic centre of Noli; it is located on the main route of the Borgo, built after the downgrading of the Marina forti-

fication, which led to the rural area as far as Voze.

The tower room is now used as a business premises; it has a trapezoidal plan, perhaps to fit in with the urban layout, and is the only exception to the characteristic square or rectangular shape; perhaps this choice was determined by strategic necessity, but this is no longer visible today, due to the disruption of the topography of the area. The base is made of green porphyry (a hard igneous rock containing crystals of feldspar) ash-lars (large square-cut stones) from a local site – they have different sizes, but all are squared, trimmed and ashlar-worked. Of the original portal, only the blind stone lunette above the lintel can be seen. Thanks to the analyses carried out on the building, the tower could be dated back to around 1250: its height measures approximately thirty-eight metres, probably corresponding to its original size, making it the tallest tower in Noli.

## **3. Tower, via A. Sartorio n°13**

This tower has a perfectly square plan; the basement is made of large, square and trimmed porphyry ash-lars. The tower, dating back to around 1230, still measures twenty-four metres in height, rising well above the rooftops of the surrounding houses.

## **4. Tower, via A. Sartorio**

It stands on the corner of the building block and has two open fronts, one of which faces the church. The tower has a square plan, with a porphyry base, made of squared and trimmed ash-lars with a slight overhang. The slender original gateway consists of a lintel, supported by carved corbels



*The tower in via Sartorio, on the corner of Cathedral Sq.*

and surmounted by a lunette with a blind, pointed arch. The tower dates back to around 1250 and retains only thirteen metres of its original height, as it has undergone a process of building incorporation, having been joined to the house to the south side and converted into a dwelling.

## 5. Tower, via D. Manin n°15

It stands next to a medieval house with a brick archway and a mullioned window above; the two adjoining buildings are now of the same height.

The tower has a rectangular plan, a high porphyry base, squared and trimmed ashlar. The original gate consists of a simple, almost round arch, with no lintel or lunette, and is rather narrow. The tower dates back to around 1230.

## 6. Tower, piazzetta T. Mariconi

This tower, which originally over-looked the loggia along the Marina walls, has a rectangular plan, with a massive basement made of large porphyry ashlar (the largest of all Noli towers); they are all squared and trimmed and roughly worked. The original gateway has been walled up and is no longer used but is perfectly visible; it shows a monolithic lintel, surmounted by a blind stone lunette. The tower dates back to around 1150; it is only fifteen metres high, just high enough to jut out above the roofs of the nearby houses.

## 7. Pagliano Tower and House corso Italia n°1



*Tower in piazzetta Mariconi, with the follow-up of the Loggia della Repubblica Nolese*



*Pagliano Tower and House*

The square-plan tower has a porphyry base, with squared, trimmed and roughly worked ashlar. The entrance portal consists of a monolithic lintel, resting on concave corbels and surmounted by a blind, pointed lunette. The tower dates back to the 12th century according to a lithic analysis but was later reshaped; its current appearance dates back to 1320. Its height has been reduced to only fourteen metres, in line with the medieval house nearby. The two buildings were originally separated by an alley, which was later closed and annexed to the house dating back to the 14th century; on the façade, three-mullioned windows (windows with vertical beams that divides the window into smaller glass units) are visible inside ogival (curved or pointed) brick arches, resting on a decorative frame with hanging brick arches, while on the upper floor there is a pair of mullioned windows with two lights. The building, formerly the seat of the Knights of Malta, underwent a major restoration in 1906 by architect Alfredo d'Andrade, then the Director of the Regional Office for the Conservation of Monuments in Piedmont and Liguria.

## **THE LOGGIA HOUSES**

*An early development of the private towers led to the building of a new type, the Loggia House, a single-family dwelling in which the pre-existent defensive tower was united with a dwelling unit, consisting of a pseudo-terraced house or terraced house, and a front loggia generally with two or three arches.*

*The development in height was of one or more storeys to better respond to the function of the house-workshop unit.*

### **8. Casa Repetto piazzetta E. Praga n°3**

It is a dwelling with a side tower and front loggia (a type of porch or open gallery). It has three pointed brick arches and two octagonal stone pillars on the front, now partially closed. On the façade, three-light and two-light mullioned windows with a decorative brick hanging arch framework dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century are visible. The house was damaged by the 1887 earthquake and underwent restoration directed by architect D'Andrade in 1889.

### **9. Casa Loggia, vico Biestro n°5**

This is another dwelling with a side tower and a front loggia; it has two arches, one ogival in brick and the other one round with a double brick arch, in the centre of which a pillar was inserted, perhaps to support the structure; all that remains of the original pillar of the loggia is a thin stone capital frame. The loggia was closed in a later period, retaining only a few openings. The building can be dated back to the 14th century.



## THE PALACES

*Around the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, a new type of dwelling was identified: the palace, which originated as a global elaboration of pre-existing residential units, which were wholly incorporated into the new buildings. Real building renovation projects were carried out; naturally, the palace was meant for the aristocracy or the rich middle class.*

### 10. The Town Hall, its Towers and the Loggia della Repubblica Nolese

It has always been the centre of the city political life. The building, erected at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, underwent a number of extensions and restorations between 1797 and 1850, but some original architectural elements are still recognisable, such as the polyphores with marble columns set in pointed brick arches.

The square clock tower, bordered by



*Repetto House, a Loggia House*

one-metre-thick walls, reaches a height of thirty-five metres and is topped by battlements; the base is made of porphyry with ashlars of different sizes, all squared and trimmed: some are roughly worked, while others are simply flattened. The original entrance portal is under the Loggia della Repubblica Nolese and has a monolithic lintel supported by quarter-circle shaped corbels (a type of stone bracket for supporting something), carved in the lower surface, with a blind pointed arch lunette above. Analyses carried out on the building have allowed the tower to be dated back to the 12th-13th centuries, although its elevation has been altered over the centuries.

Another tower, located at no. 9, Via Musso, was incorporated into the same building and can only be seen inside the stairwell, which leans on the outer wall of the tower.



*Loggia House in vico Biestro n°5*



*The Town Hall*

The tower has a square plan and a very high basement, with squared, trimmed, roughly cut ashlar. There is no trace of the entrance portal. The building dates back to the 13th century.

The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century *Loggia* has two brick arches and a stone column with ashlar capitals; the prison was located here, a reminder of which is the iron ring still hanging from the vault – it was used for torture. The *loggia*, which originally ran along the whole perimeter of the Marina walls, is still preserved in small portions, as most of it has been incorporated into buildings of later periods. Its wall shows five marble epigraphs (inscriptions), one of which bears decrees from the ancient statutes of Noli, while the other four remind us of famous people who are somehow connected with the city: ancient decrees of good government, dating back to 1666: the plaque bears an edict declaring that foreigners were to



*Loggia della Repubblica Nolese*

be charged a tax of 300 coins.

Dante Alighieri mentioned Noli in his *Comedy*: 'Vassi in San Leo e discesi in Noli' (Purgatorio, Canto IV, 25). This is the starting point of the tourist route called 'La Calla del Purgatorio'.

Christopher Columbus set sail from the harbour of Noli on 31 May, 1476 to start the voyages that would take him to the discovery of the New World.

Philosopher Giordano Bruno spent several months of 1576 in Noli teaching grammar to children at the old seminary located in Via Bartolomeo Silvano detto Acerbo n°14.

Noli was the place of origin of the navigator, Anton da Noli, who discovered the Cape Verde Islands in 1460.

## **11. The palace with Tower Viale Salvarezza, corso Italia**

It stands above the Loggia della Repubblica Nolese and has its main façade on Corso Italia (formerly Corso Carlo Alberto and Via alla Marina). The tower, called *della Marina*, can be accessed from the Loggia della Repubblica Nolese and is now used as commercial premises.

It was the largest and most majestic tower in the city; it dates back to the



Viale-Salvarezza Palace

12<sup>th</sup> century.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Viale family built their large residence around the tower and a second one, located in the street behind it, the ownership of which passed to the Salvarezza family in the following century. In 1840, the tower was reduced in height to obtain bricks for re-use.

The entrance to the palace is near the tower located in Piazza Dante No. 1, which has been partially incorporated into the building; it has a rectangular plan, a high porphyry basement with large squared ashlar, trimmed and roughly worked in high relief.

## **12. The Palace with Boccelli Tower, via C. Colombo**

It has its main front on Via C. Colombo (formerly Via Mercato).

The palace is the result of the reconstruction of several pre-existing buildings, including a tower. Vincenzo Vignolo Boccelli, once the city Mayor, received and hosted many political and religious authorities there in Noli during his office, including Kings Carlo Alberto and Vittorio Emanuele II and Prime Minister Camillo Benso Earl of Cavour.

The tower, located at No. 1, Via

Terrizzani (formerly Via della Cattedrale), is now used as commercial premises; it is reduced in height, although it is still taller than the building that includes it. From the alley it overlooks, the porphyry base with roughly worked ashlar is still visible, as well as the portal, which retains only the lintel supported by decorated corbels. The tower dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

## **THE TOWER HOUSES**

*The tower houses represent another variation of the building types found in the historic centre of Noli. Their existence is recorded in a document dated 2nd November 1170, where the people of Noli were forbidden to erect towers or tower-houses over twenty feet high. Unlike the towers, the tower-houses have larger size and two gateways on the main front: in general, one is high and narrow, the other one is lower and wider; perhaps the inner room had the function of a 'workshop', leading back to the loggia-house type. The building technique is unchanged, characterised by a high porphyry basement and the top made of bricks. The function of this building type was defensive but also residential, in fact it grew on one or two floors. Some of the most significant tower-houses in the town centre are described below.*

## **13. Casa Maglio**

**via C. Colombo n°17-19**

On the front of the building there are two entrances: one is narrow and very high, rising four steps above





*Casa Maglio, a sample of Tower House*

street level, it has a lintel with a pointed arch and a blind lunette, and gives access to the staircase.

The nearby gateway is wider and lower and features a pointed arch with no lintel; the entrance threshold is made of bricks set on their narrow side. On the floor above, we can see a single-light brick window surmounted by two mullioned windows inserted in a pointed arch. Analyses carried out on the building dated the tower house to around 1250.

A study of their position in a medieval building context, after taking into account that many connecting roads have been closed, suggests that they usually stood at a corner or in a strategic position to control the route, a function they shared with the towers.



*Tower House next to Porta Chiappella*

#### **14. Tower House** **via Suor Letizia n°19-21**

It stands next to the gate of Porta Chiappella, with a high porphyry base; near the street level, there are large ashlars like those used for the towers.

On the front side there are two portals: the first one is very tall and narrow, with eight access steps (only the first two of which are in porphyry), a high lintel and a brick lunette, partially coated with plaster; inside it, a small, clearly modified niche has been fitted; the second portal is lower, has a pointed arch with a very thin lintel, probably added at a later date. The tower house dates back to around 1250.

# Religious buildings in Noli and in the surroundings

## 15. Sainy Paragorio via al Collegio

In 1239, the church received the title of Cathedral of the new diocese of Noli, after Genoa had managed to have it separated from the Savona bishopric. When the flourishing maritime republic was forced to withdraw within the medieval walls, the title had to be passed to the church of *San Pietro dei Pescatori* (*St. Peter patron of the Fishermen*) because the latter was safer for the faithful and the clergy. Archive documents show that both churches were the centre of public life, acts were signed there, and assemblies were held.

This is one of the most interesting pre-Romanesque sacred buildings on the Ligurian Riviera. Studies made in the late 19th century and in the following century showed different periods of the building layout, starting with a primitive one with memorial shrines dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, probably corresponding to the nave of today's crypt. This phase was to be followed by the building of the baptistry, with an elongated plan and an apse and a pinkish earthenware floor, dated to around the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, of which only the octagonal font is preserved. Between the end of the 8th and the mid-9th century, there was a further expansion of the complex.

The church in its present shape dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the best-preserved Roman-

esque churches in Liguria. The complex stands on an ancient necropolis that was used until the 19th century, when it was moved to the hill of Monte Ursino, due to the construction of the railway line. The outside features the typical decoration with strips and coupled arches, above which, in the apse area, are inset eleven Islamic ceramic basins. The presence of these decorations is of great importance for the dating of the church.

Inside, the church has a basilica layout with three aisles divided by massive pillars which support round arches with double lancet rings. Near the high altar is a copy of the bishop's chair, as evidence of the period when the church was the cathedral of the Noli diocese (1239-1572); the wooden back bears the coat of arms attributed to the Genoese Paolo Gustiniani, the bishop of Noli from 1459 to 1485. The original chair is preserved in a reliquary set near the sacristy door.

After the severe damages caused by the 1887 earthquake, the building underwent a radical restoration, at the end of which it was declared a national monument on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1890, following the advice of architect D'Andrade.

## 16. Saint Peter's Cathedral, piazza della Cattedrale

Today's Baroque cathedral stands on top of a pre-existing church, *San Pietro dei Pescatori* (*Saint Peter pa-*



*Saint Paragorio with the archaeological area*

*tron of the Fishermen*), dating back to the 13th century and built by the people of Noli with the proceeds of fishing; seafarers used to turn to the saints for protection in difficult times. After it was raised to the title of cathedral, in 1572, it was enlarged, upgraded and provided with furnishings suitable for religious functions. The name was also changed, losing the paternity of those who had erected it by donating their earnings. Of the medieval building, rows of large regular ashlars on the outer walls, as well as some stone curls in the bases of the columns inside are still visible.

Inside, the cathedral is divided into three aisles with two rows of columns covered in marble-like stucco (rendering); the raised presbytery is divided by a balustrade made of black and white marble, with the high altar, also made of inlaid polychrome marble by Anselmo Quadro is located;

behind it is the 15th-century polyp-tych (a painting, typically an altarpiece, consisting of more than three leaves or panels joined by hinges or folds), attributed to Vincenzo Foppa.

The fresco on the barrel vault of the central aisle was created by the Piedmontese painter, Giovanni Rovero in the 20th century. The façade was built in the Baroque period; above the tympanum of the central portal stands a statue of St. Peter by Batta Casale, placed in 1613.

*Cathedral of Saint Peter, the Apostle*







*Saint Anna's Oratory*

### **17. Saint Anna's Oratory** **piazza G. Ronco**

The members of the Brotherhood of Saint Anna decided to build a new Oratory in 1750, as the old church was seriously deteriorated. The work was completed in 1771. The church, in Baroque style, has a simple plan with a single aisle in a rectangular shape; inside there are valuable stuccoes dating back to the early 19th century, 18th-century wooden furnishings and works by Giuseppe Bozano, Antonio Brilla from Savona and the Spaniard painter, Vicente Suarez. The main façade has a high basement with unfinished decoration; only the upper part, bordered by a stringcourse (a continuous, projecting horizontal band on a building's exterior), is plastered, painted and decorated. The side walls are also in exposed stone because the coating has never been completed.

### **18. Church of Saint John, the Baptist, via Cavalieri di Malta**

It stands outside the curtain wall of the Borgo and gave its name to

the opposite tower-gate; it was built on the main route that led to Voze, where the Monastery of Santa Maria del Rio also stood.

The church was built by the Order of the Knights Hospitaller and may have had a hospice for pilgrims, as it had the typical features of the hospice buildings erected by religious orders in the Middle Ages. Inside, it has a rectangular aisle, but during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18th centuries the building was deeply modified and in the following century the orientation was reversed, as the apse was originally set eastwards, according to the custom of the time. The church, no longer used for worship, retains traces of the original decoration in the side entrance portal dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

### **19. Monastery of Saint Mary of the Stream, via Monastero**

The building was located on the main route to Voze. The access to the remains goes through a brick arch that leads to the ancient cloister with a beautiful stone well in the centre - the areas where the nuns lived stood around it. The memory of the ancient complex still remains in the name of the road. The monastery housed Cistercian nuns from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the 16<sup>th</sup> and was later sold to the Olivetan Fathers of Finalpia; it was originally dedicated to the cult of St. Mary and then to that of St. Benedict.

The ancient church, now converted into a dwelling, had a single aisle, a presbytery with three steps and stone walls. The building was surrounded by gardens used for agriculture, to ensure livelihood to the nuns.



*The ancient cloister of the Monastery*

## **20. Monastery of Saint Francis of Assisi, piazza Don Vivaldo**

The complex consists of the church and the adjoining monastery. It stands outside the city walls and was built after 1291 on demand of Bishop Leonardo Fieschi: a church bell bears the year 1303, while the other one, on display in the Town Hall, bears the year 1362. The fri-



*Church of St. Francis from Assisi*

ars certainly had a great influence on the inhabitants, so much so that the church in the 16th century had

*Church of St. Michael Archangel*





*Church of St. Lazarus – a detail of the apse*

as many as seven richly decorated altars, some with their own income because they were supported by Noli families.

In the 17th century it underwent extensive repair that reversed its orientation, keeping its rectangular plan with a single aisle. Inside, several marble tombstones of illustrious families are preserved.

## **21. Church of St. Michael Archangel, San Michele Hill**

Formerly it consisted of a small chapel and an adjoining hospice; it takes its name from the hill it stands on top of. It was built by the Benedictine monks of Lérins in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century and originally consisted of a single aisle with a semicircular apse, covered by a barrel vault; then, in the 11th century a left aisle was added and later the bell tower.

In 1963, it underwent a conservative restoration, and archaeological excavations were carried out that brought to light the original structure.

## **22. Church of St. Lazarus the Pilgrim's Path**

It was built on the path from the village to Capo Noli at the end of the 9th century and is mentioned in a 1177 testament.

In 1255 it was extended in Romanesque style and in the same period a hospice (*Lazzaretto*) was adjoined, for the shelter of Noli sailors suffering from contagious diseases: perhaps for this reason its dedication was changed from St. Julian to St. Lazarus of Bethany.

## **23. Church of St. Margaret, the Pilgrim's Path**

It stands on the hill of Capo Noli on private land; it dates back to the 11th -14th centuries and may have been built on the ancient remains of a temple dedicated to St. Julia.

The church, in Romanesque style, had three aisles divided by brick pillars and arches; the outside walls are in exposed stone, while the façade is plastered.

During the Second World War, it was burnt down and partly demolished and the stones were taken for reuse.

*Church of St. Margaret.*





# Villages and buildings on the hills.

## Voze

In ancient times, the settlement of Voze stood at the crossroads of the route from the coast to the other side of the Ligurian Alps and the Ligurian coastal road, while the consular Julia Augusta Road could be reached towards the east. Voze may have been a small station where travellers could stop and rest.

Of the ancient road system, the place name *Strada Romana* still survives in the path that runs through today's village. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, before today's *Via Aurelia* was built, the prefect of the French Republic, Chabrol still described this route as the only one used for trade, pointing out that the need to improve the road system had long been underlined, as it was very bad and unsafe.

An epigraph from the feudal period is preserved in *Piazza degli Olmi*, above the door of the ancient parish church, marking the boundary of the Republic of Noli with the territory of the Marquis of Finale; it was not far away from the town's control post, consisting of a small, hexagonal stone building, used for the collection of tariffs, whose present shape dates back to 1773.

In the bordering areas, each territory had its own border control station with a garrison: the documents say that the one on the other side stood only eight steps away, but no trace of it has remained.



*The epigraph showing the border of the Republic of Noli.*

## Church of Saints Peter and Paul

Until 1474, it was a country chapel under the parish of Noli, but the distance from the city and the poor condition of the road to the coast got the inhabitants to request a proper church on the hill. An apostolic visitor in 1585 described the poor condition of the building and the restoration and extension work to be carried out to make it functional.

The building site opened on 3rd September 1775 and the church was consecrated by Bishop Antonio Maria Arduini on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1789. Next to it stands the Oratory of Saints Sebastian and Rocco, where meetings, public assemblies and even theatri-



*Church of Saints Peter and Paul*

cal performances were held.

### **Tosse**

The village was mentioned for the first time in a document dated 1189 regarding disputes between the bishop and citizens of Savona and the people of Tosse.

The Tosse territory lies between two streams: the Coreallo and the Crovetto; the former was the cause of several border disputes with the people of Spotorno.

The ancient settlement was located in the site called Cardavia, where the few remaining houses are now mostly abandoned and covered by vegetation. Another small settlement grew near the church.

### **Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola**

In 1590 there was a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary; later, in 1687, another one was built and



*Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola*

dedicated to St Ignatius and Francis Xavier. On 23rd June, 1747, the people of Tosse sent a petition to Monsignor Arduino, Bishop of Noli, asking for the chapels to be made into a parish independent from that of Spotorno, given the considerable distance between the two territories; permission was granted on 31st December of the same year. The church still preserves a white Carrara marble tabernacle dating back to 1523 and a wooden crucifix from the mid-14th century.

The recent restoration has enriched the list of wooden sculptures in Liguria between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: in fact, the work is among the oldest surviving objects in the area of the ancient Noli diocese.

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[biblioteca.noli@comune.noli.sv.it](mailto:biblioteca.noli@comune.noli.sv.it)

**St. Antonio Cultural Foundation**

Via Suor Letizia, 27  
[fondazione.culturale@comune.noli.sv.it](mailto:fondazione.culturale@comune.noli.sv.it)

**City Police**

Piazza Milite Ignoto 6  
Tel. 019.7499583 - Cell. 335.1358115

**Carabinieri**

Via Defferrari 7  
Tel. 019.748905

**Sanitary Emergency Call**

Via Repetto, 4  
Tel. 019.7490176 (segreteria)  
Guardia Medica Tel. 800 556 688

**“Monte Ursino” Chemist’s**

Corso Italia, 10 - Tel. 019.748936

**Fire Emergency Call**

Via Repetto, 5 Tel. 019.7499012,  
Cell. 342.8847041 (reperibile h24)

**Post Office**

Via Monastero, 147 - Tel. 019.748968

**Taxi**

Corso Italia - Cell. 347.7935942