

Ferentino

The Paths of Art



Ferentino - Aulo Quintilio Prisco's "Last will and testament"
1st-2 centuries AD

" ... puer(is) plebis sine distinctione libertatis nucum sparsion(em) mod(iorum) XXX et ex vini urnis VI potionum eminstration(em) digne incrementis praestiterint. "



Ferentino

The Paths of Art

Don Giuseppe Morosini Centre of Studies, headed by Corrado Collalti, in accordance with its by-laws organizes and welcomes initiatives related to the artistic disciplines to promote the knowledge of the archaeological, architectural and monumental cities of art heritage, especially of Ferentino.

The Centre of Studies has partnered with Maco Museum to develop the project "***The Paths of Art***", aimed at territorial promotion through art and culture.

Corrado Collalti
Presidente del Centro Studi "Don Giuseppe Morosini"

A short history of Ferentino

text by *Biancamaria Valeri*

Horace, famous roman poet in the Augustan age, invited your friends to go on holiday in Ferentino: "*Si te grata quies et primam somnus in horam delectat, si te pulvis strepitusque rotarum, si laedit caupona, Ferentinum ire iubebo; nam neque diitibus contingunt gaudia solis, nec vixit male, qui natus moriensque fefellit*" (Horace, *Epist.* I, 17, 6-10)



Ferentino, View – photo by Pietro Scerrato

On your hill Ferentino looks at the Valley where flows Sacco river. Romans conquered on 361 BC the Town to control *Via Latina* (now: *Via Casilina*). Ferentino was loyal ally of the Romans always.

In the Middle Age was into the *Patrimonium Sancti Petri* and became diocese immediately subject to the Holy See. During this period many Popes visited the Town: Pasquale II, Eugenio III, Alessandro III, Innocenzo III; also Kings and Emperors, because Ferentino was an important and strategic nod to dominate a large portion of southern Latium and through its control it was possible to rule the circulation of men and goods.

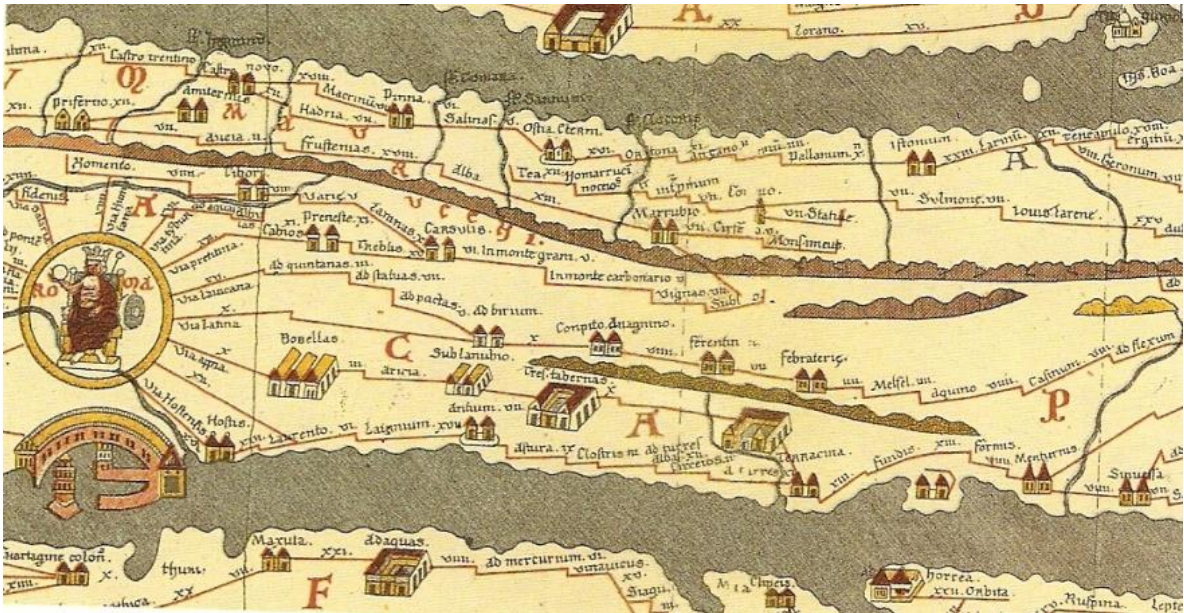


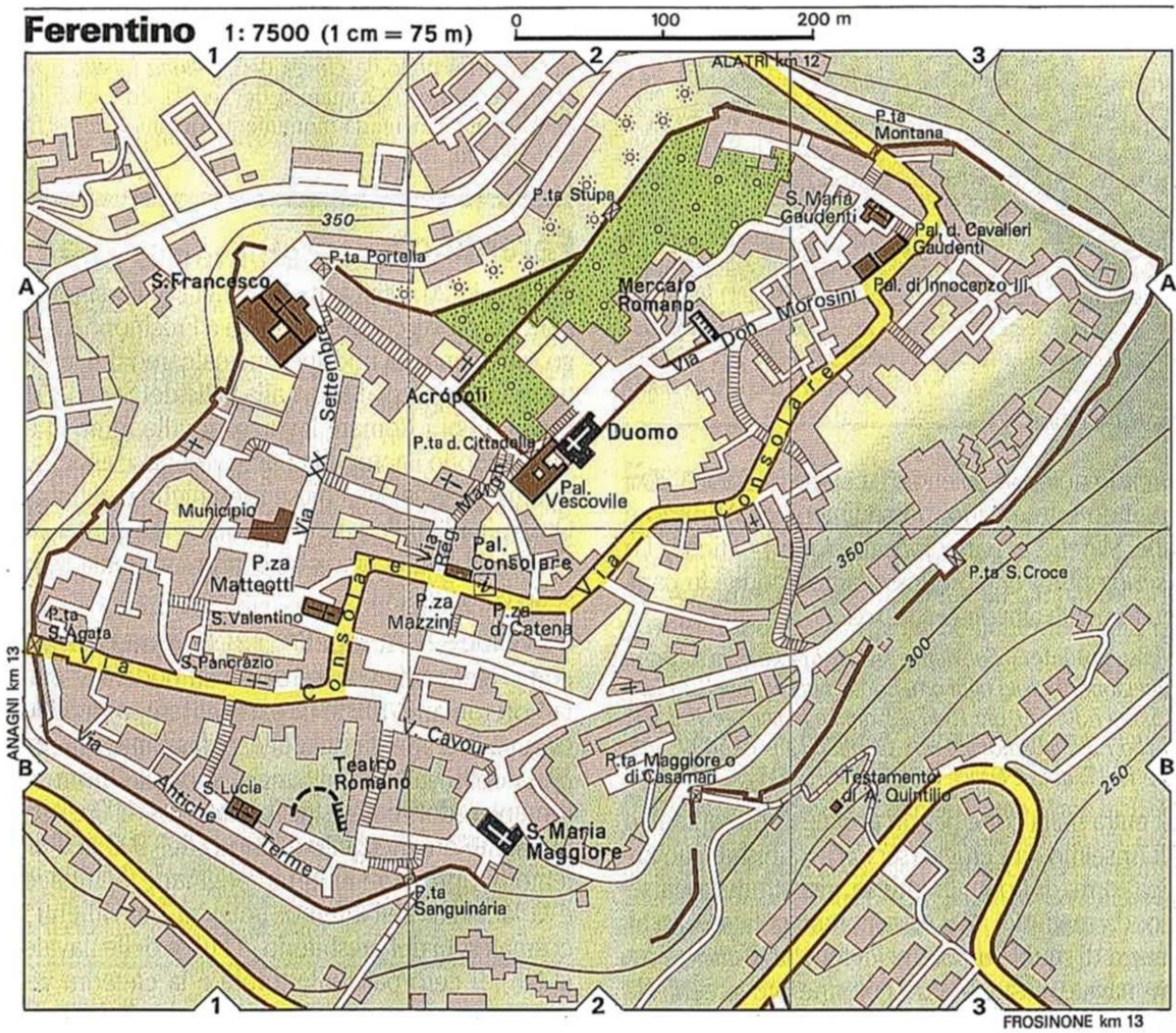
Illustration of Via Latina in Tabula Peutingeriana (12th AD)
 Ferentino in the image is indicated by two small houses

In 1144 Ferentino suffered from Norman sacking. Henry Hohenstaufen in 1186 besieged the city; but in 1197 spent seven days at this city peacefully.

In the Middle Age were built many wonderful churches and palaces in Cistercian style.

Pianta di Ferentino

Map of Ferentino



Ferentino – The most famous monuments

Photo by Angelo Pignataro



On the left

Aulo Quintilio Prisco monument, called “Last will and Testament” (1st-second centuries AD);
S. Maria Maggiore (13th AD)

On the right

Cathedral SS. John and Paul (12th AD)
Porta Maggiore, called “Archi di Casamari” (second century BC)

Ferentino – Ancient Roman walls
(4th-second century BC)



Ferentino – Ancient Roman walls, southern section
Aerial view

Ferentino is one of the most important centres of Ciociaria with its ancient Roman walls, constructed in polygonal and square work.

The huge limestone blocks of the walls, wedged together without cement mortar, have given since ancient times the suggestion of having been put in place from the mythical Cyclops or from the Pelasgians, ancient inhabitants of Greece where similar walls are found in Mycenae, Tyrins and Argo.

The walls of Ferentino date back to a construction phase from the IV to the II sec. BC for the part in polygonal work and for the part in square work; in the Middle Ages with the construction of towers for the part characterized by stones of irregular shaped cemented with mortar in modern times for the renovation and restoration of the walls in those affected areas by landslide movements of the hill.



Ferentino – Roman walls near Porta Sanguinaria
from: <https://www.megalitico.it/italia/lazio/ferentino/>

Ferentino - Ancient Roman Gates



In the middle: Porta Maggiore (also called “Archi di Casamari”)
On the left (*from above*): Porta Sanguinaria e Porta Montana
On the right (*from above*): Porta S. Agata (also called “del Borgo”),
Porta Posterula (also called “S. Francesco”)

Photo by Angelo Pignataro

The names of the Ferentino ancient gates are in ***Statuta Civitatis Ferentini***, laws of the city in force in the Middle Age. The town was divided in four neighborhoods (in it. *quartiere*), in which people enter across the gate *Porta Sanguinaria*, or *Porta S. Agata*, or *Porta Posterula* (or *S. Francesco*), or *Porta Montana*.

Porta Sanguinaria is South, Porta Montana is North; they were, in the roman age, on the *Kardo massimo*. Porta S. Agata is West, Porta Maggiore is East; they were, in the roman age, on *Decumano massimo*.

Porta Sanguinaria, Porta Maggiore (also called Casamari), Porta S. Francesco retain their roman structure; Porta Montana and Porta del Borgo (also called S. Agata) were restored in 17th and 18th AD.

Porta Casamari or Porta Maggiore
(second century BC)

 FERENTINO Città d'ARTE



Porta Maggiore o Archi di Casamari - II sec. a.C.

Photo by Fulvio Bernola

In Ferentino in the south-east of roman walls is built, in square construction, Porta Casamari also called “Maggiore”. It is also called “Casamari”, because in the Middle Age linked Ferentino with Casamari Abbey, where the monks came from to build in 13th AD the church of St. Maria Maggiore.

It is formed by two arches to all sixth.

Between the two arches there is a square chamber, called in latin “*propugnaculum*”; when enemies, broken down the first door, were trapped inside “*propugnaculum*” and were killed by defenders.

Ferentino - Porta Sanguinaria - Bloody Gate (second century BC)

 FERENTINO Città d'ARTE



Porta Sanguinaria - IV/II sec. a.C.

Photo by Fulvio Bernola

Porta “Sanguinaria” is antique gate at the south of the town. This is the Roman gate most unique in all Roman gates in all of Ferentino; in fact it remained intact in its original structure and is the largest conservative example of the area.

The name suggests wars and battle between Ernici, ancient Italic people, who inhabited this area, and Romans, between Ernici and Volsci, between Romans and Hannibal.

It is conjectured that the condemned went out of the door; the centurion Ambrose, patron saint of Ferentino, also went out the door to reach the place of his execution.

Porta Sanguinaria in its masonry presents various construction techniques: of Roman times the lower band in polygonal and square work without the use of cement mortar; the upper band, built in the Middle Age, with scaly splinters, drowned in cement mortar.

The pretty medieval window, open in the elevation, suggests paths of sentinels



Porta Sanguinaria (from: E. Dodwell, *Cyclopean, or Pelasgic remains in Greece and Italy ...* intended as a supplement to his classical and topographical tour in Greece, during the years 1801, 1805 and 1806, London, 1834)

Covered Roman Market
(second century BC)

 FERENTINO Città d'ARTE



Mercato Romano Coperto - II/I sec. a.C.

Photo by Fulvio Bernola

Roman Market at Ferentino was built in second century BC. It consists of a large longitudinal room, on which five square-shaped shops are opened. It was a very important space used for trade and as secondary road that linked the esplanade of roman acropolis and the market.

Roman Acropolis – southern face
(second century BC)



Photo by Marco De Castris

Full of charm in the Roman Acropolis of Ferentino with buildings still intact. It rises on a grandiose terracing called by the scholars "southern avancorpo". The "avancorpo" is consisting of an imposing band of walls with a quadrangular plan. The interior has three rectangular rooms, surrounded by four corridors, covered in barrel vaults.

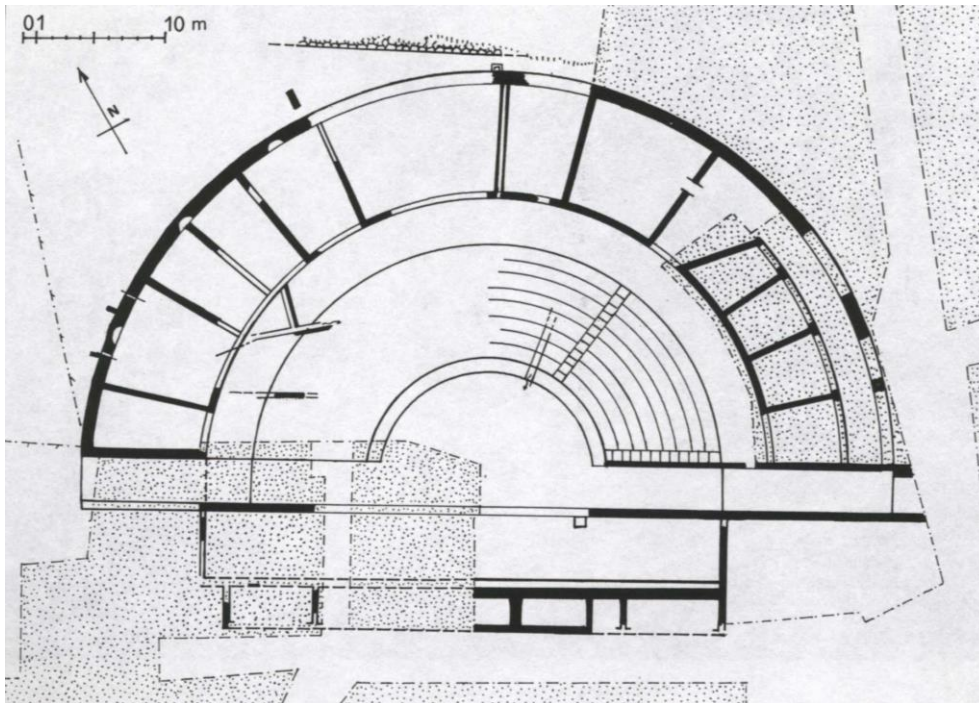
The large stones that make up the wall band are stuck together without cement mortar.

The "avancorpo" rises from the ground for 33 feet, about 14 meters high. Aulo Irzio and Marco Lollio were the censors patrons of the great building work.

Ferentino - Roman theatre

Second century AD

Alfonso Bàrtoli was discoverer of Roman theatre in Ferentino, built in second century AD. The cavea of this theatre has calcareous steps near orchestra; instead upper steps they are in *opus lateritium*. The vaults that supported the upper cavea were made in cement work. It is estimated that the cavea could well contain 3000 spectators.



Ferentino, map of the Roman theatre
Rendering by Quilici - Gigli

Titinio, latin comedy writer second century BC, in his play *Psaltria seu Ferentinas* writes "*Ferentinàtis pòpulus res graecas studet*, because ancient people of Ferentino like living as greeks, like art, theatre, thermal baths.

In ancient Roman theatre tradition identifies the tribunal where S. Ambrogio, centurion in the Roman army become Christlike, was sentenced to death by Daciano's court.



Ferentino, Roman theatre
Photo by Francesco Porretti



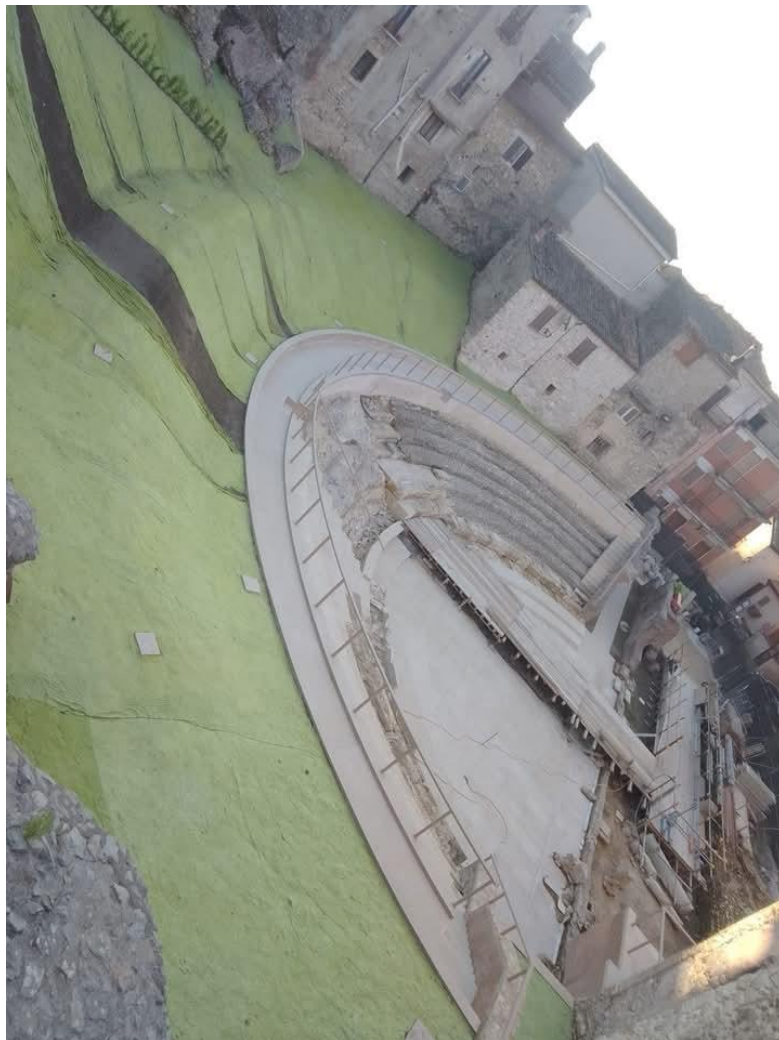
Ferentino, Roman theatre, archaeological dig (2022)
photo by Leda Virgili



Ferentino, Roman theatre, archaeological (2023)



Ferentino, Roman theatre, archaeological (2023)



Ferentino, 7th May 2025, Roman theatre restoration work



Ferentino, 12th May 2025, Roman theatre
restoration work

Ferentino - Aulo Quintilio Prisco's "Last will and testament"

1st-2 centuries AD



Photo by Angelo Pignataro

Aulo Quintilio Prisco was Aulo's son. He belonged to the tribe Palatina (NB = in ancient in Rome there were defined 4 city tribes: Suburbana (the Celius), Palatina, Esquilina, Collina). He was an important political man in Ferentino; he held many public offices during 1th A. D.: *Quatuorviro di edilizia potestà, Quatuorviro per l'amministrazione della giustizia, Quatuorviro quinquennale, Pontefice, Prefetto dei Fabbri*. For his merits the Senate in Ferentino suggested to put a statue of him on the forum square.

Aulo Quintilio accepted and paid all the expenses. He ransomed for 70.000 sesterces several rural lands and returned them to Community of Ferentino.

He ruled that every five years in his birthday, on may 10th, at his dining room citizens attended a lunch in his honor, also the old and youth people.

Ferentino – The Cathedral of St. John and St. Paul
(12th century)



Ferentino – The Cathedral of St. John and St. Paul
Photo by *Ciro D'Angelo*

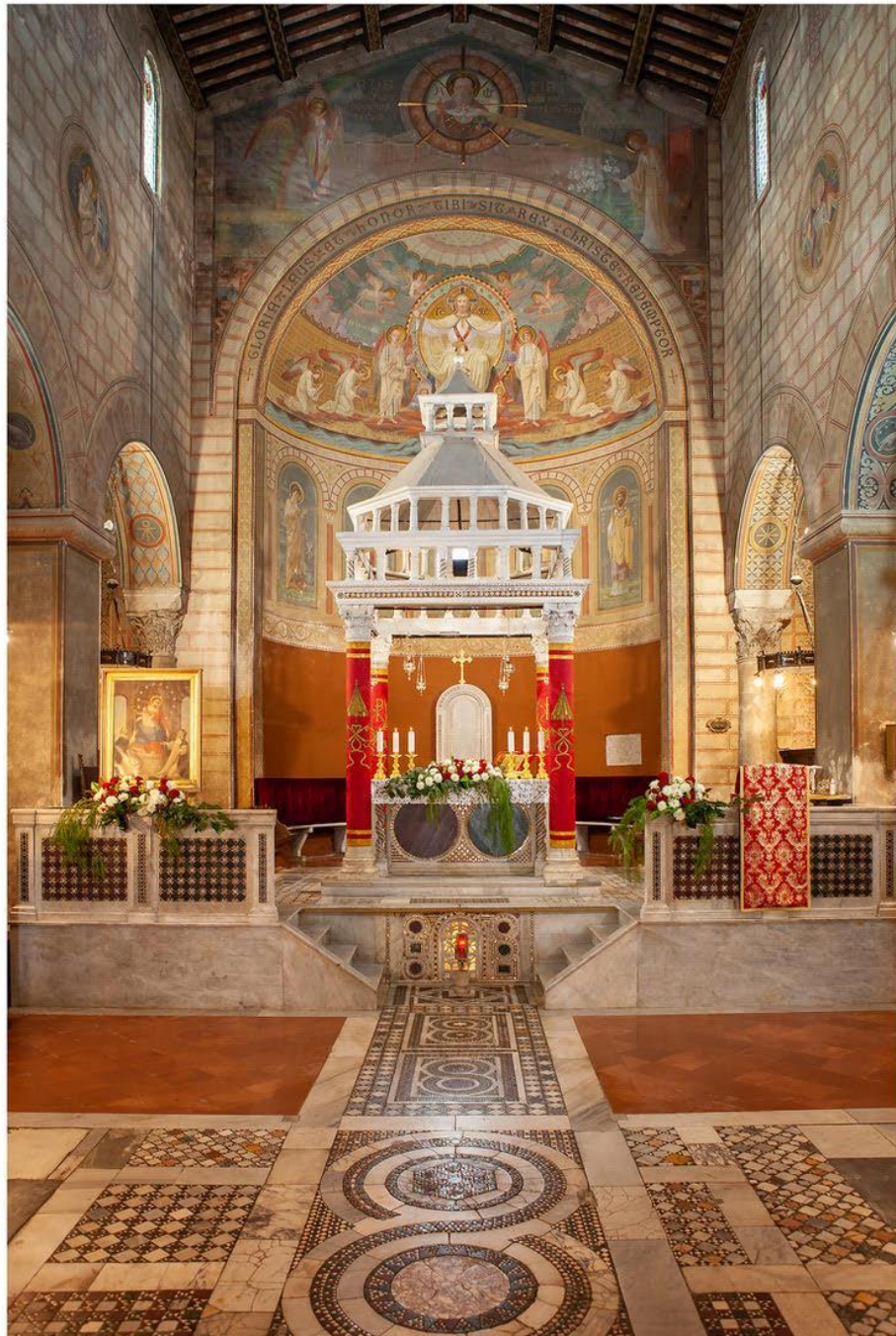
The cathedral of Ferentino is an architectural masterpiece that has undergone numerous transformations from the paleochristian to the modern age. It was built using the remains of previous pagan temples and buildings, built on the esplanade of the acropolis. The first building dates back to the ninth century during episcopacy of Bishop Pasquale. This era has left us some fascinating examples of religious architecture, early medieval architectural styles: plutei and the marble arches of a ciborium dating back to the IX century. During the episcopacy of Bishop Augustine at the beginning of the 12th century it is dedicated to the Roman martyr brothers John and Paul. The same bishop on the right lateral nave made build the chapel of S. Ambrogio martyr and decided to decorate in a cosmatesco style the church by marmoraro Paolo.

The front of the church is sober; the central door and the doors on right and on left are decorated with lunettes. In the early 1900 the painter Eugenio Cisterna frescoed the three lunettes of the portals with new decorations: the painting of the lunette over the main portal depicts the Madonna and child between Saints John and Paul; the painting of the lunette on the right door represents St. Ambrose with his white horse; the painting of the lunette on the left door represents St. Peter, in memory of the church dedicated to him and destroyed in the middle-nineteenth for a new cathedral never built.

The interior of the church is made beautiful from the mosaics that the Cosmati have realized in the thirteenth century. The floor was the work of Paul. The high altar, which is

accessed by five steps, is adorned by the ciborium of the Roman marble worker DRUDO DE TRIVIO (in the first half of the 13th century).
On the walls, on triumphal arch and on arch apse there are frescoes, decorative painting by Eugenio Cisterna in 1904. Very interesting fresco of the triumphal arch which depicts the Annunciation of Mary; such as the fresco of the arch apse which depicts Christ Pantocrator in Majesty.

 FERENTINO Città d'ARTE



Cattedrale SS. Giovanni e Paolo Sec. XII (Presbiterio)

Photo by Fulvio Bernola

St. Ambrose martyr patron of Ferentino



Reliquary statue of St. Ambrose m. work of Fantino Taglietti (1641)
Photo by Fulvio Bernola

The patron of Ferentino is St. Ambrose, a centurion in the Roman army. He was martyred on 16 August 304 AD during the persecution of Diocletian. The remains of St. Ambrose are kept in the Ferentino cathedral under the high altar.

The feast of St. Ambrose falls on May 1, date of discovery of relics (in latin: *inventio*) in 1639. On that date a solemn procession takes place to the streets of the City. During the procession 16 men (called "*incollatori*") carry on the shoulder the processional canopy with the silver statue of the Saint, work of the Roman silversmith Fantino Taglietti (1641).

La “Macchina di S. Ambrogio”

Processional canopy of St. Ambrose
(1735)



Ferentino, cattedrale, Processional canopy of St. Ambrose
Printed in 1749 to remember the martyrdom of St. Ambrose

In 1735 the processional canopy of St. Ambrose was commissioned by the Municipality of Ferentino to roman woodcarver Filippo Cianfarani.

Ferentino - Church St. Maria Maggiore
(13th AD)



Photo by Marco De Castris

In Ferentino St. Maria Maggiore is a church which merits a visit. The church was built to the middle of the 13th century in Cistercian gothic architecture; it is one of the most important medieval building in Ferentino. This holy building rises on pre-existing early Christian churches, whose foundations came to light during the restoration of the upper church over the years of the 70s of the last century.

A Roman inscription of the fourth century AD, preserved in the church, remembers that in that place stood the domus of Valerius Gaius, destroyed by persecution of Diocletian, and rebuilt at his expense by wife's Gaius, *Dolcissima*.

The church is dedicated to the Madonna Assunta; it has three naves. The central nave has the largest gate to the west and the apse to the east. On the transept rises the octagonal lantern of the bell tower, unfinished. The main door finely decorated with a precious protrum with column-bearing lions; the upper part is decorated with five tiles with the symbols of the Evangelists and with the cruciferous lamb in the centre.

According to tradition the decorative heads of the archivolt of the left door are identified in Frederick of Swabia (Hohenstaufen dynasty) and his mother Costance of Hauteville.

Inside the church you can see two interesting decorations: the holy water with Lamon, gift of the Municipality (13th century), and the fresco of the Madonna delle Grazie (14th century Roman school).

Ferentino - Church of S. Antonio abbot and Monastery of Celestini

(13th century)

The most interesting monument is the church of S. Antonio Abbot and Monastery of Celestini Monks, built in 13th century with typical Gothic – Cistercian elements. It was founded by Peter Angelerio, known as Pope Celestin Vth, on 1260-1263, over “Colle del Fico” in a hermitage dedicated to St. Anthony abbot.



Chiesa di S. Antonio Abate - XIII sec. (facciata)

fotografia - Fulvio Bernola

Photo by Fulvio Bernola



Ferentino - Church of S. Antonio abbot and Monastery of Celestini, southern side
Da: <https://www.ferentino.org/media/oggi/chiese/#sant-antonio-abate-veduta-esterna>

The church, directly based on a large tufa bench, in 13th century, was painted with valuable frescoes, of which synopses remain because the church was tampered with in sec. XVIII. The church has a simple gabled facade with bell tower set on one of the sloping. The facade is characterized by a single portal surmounted by a lunette all sixth. The building has a plan with three naves with three chapels per side and transept. The end wall is straight and was decorated with stucco in 18th century. In 1984 the restorations work have brought to light medieval frescos and a fresco dating from the early 14th century, life-size depicting St. Peter Celestine. The church preserves, excavated in the central nave, the tomb, which guarded the body of Celestine V per thirty years (1296-1330).



Ferentino, Church of S. Antonio abbot, Celestine's tomb

Very interesting is the monastery complex, which leans over the church, recently restored; the Congregation of Celestini monks held it until the eighteenth century. The 13th century monastery has been defaced over the centuries, but still retains evident traces of the medieval period, especially in the cloister.

Celestin Vth, canonized in 1313 on May 5th, was proclaimed by the people patron of the city along with St. Ambrose martyr.

Ferentino preserves the precious relic of Celestines's incorrupt heart.



Ferentino – Celestine's Relic of Celestine's incorrupt heart

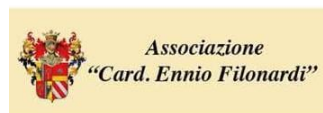
VISIT FERENTINO



Photo by Fulvio Bernola

© Testo di Biancamaria Valeri

Con la partecipazione e sponsorizzazione delle Associazioni ferentinati consociate:



Comitato "Giovanni Ballina"; Associazione Culturale "Vivi Ferentino"