

# Italy Tuscia

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## ISTITUTO COMPRENSIVO “PIETRO EGIDI” IN VITERBO



Our school takes its name from Pietro Egidi (1872- 1929), a famous historian specialized in Medieval history who was born in Viterbo. It was founded in 1968.

It is in Piazza Gustavo VI Adolfo, in the neighbourhood Ellera, not far from the city centre.

It is a “Istituto Comprensivo” that means it is formed by 4 different school complexes: one kindergarten (3-6 years), two primary schools (6-11 years) and one secondary middle school (11-13). It employs about 90 teachers and it counts around a thousand of students. It is the biggest in our town!

It is a school that is like a Music Academy, that is students can attend instrument lessons, chosen between piano, violin, clarinet or guitar, like an “extra-school” activity. It is the only one in Viterbo. I.C. Egidi has participated in different Erasmus Projects: *Erasmus + Join Us* (as leading school), *Erasmus + Welcome Among Us* and *Erasmus + LeaF*.

The school has the purpose to enhance meritorious pupils and to support pupils with special needs.

I. C. Egidi also offers a wide variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities, such as open classes activities, Christmas market, drama club, sport competitions, foreign languages labs, music labs (and a lot of concerts during the school year)

## VITERBO AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

Viterbo and the surrounding area offers a unique combination of art and history, making it a vital cultural focus of Northern Lazio. It's one of the richest areas in the region in terms of cultural and environmental attractions. The town has undoubtedly had a long and glorious history, as we can see from the quality of the layout and the buildings in the old town. The Middle Ages, in particular, were a Golden Age for Viterbo: popes and nobility met and fought on its streets. One of the most of the time-the ancient Via Cassia, grew up as a pilgrim route under the name of Via Francigena-bringing merchants, armies and travellers close to its gates. Strolling through the town that lies within the town's defensive walls, we can see traces of the Middle Ages in San Pellegrino district, but also reminders of the period of papal rule and the rise to power of the noble Farnese family in some of its most majestic palaces. The monuments in the oldest part of Viterbo are some of the finest expressions of mediaeval art in Lazio. Some of them-like the Popes' Palace-played an important role in the history of the Church.



## HISTORY AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Viterbo grew up on the site of Etruscan settlements conquered by the Romans in the early 4th century BC. Of these, only a few walls survive.

The town was founded at the confluence of two streams, now the site of Piazza S. Lorenzo. It declined when the Roman Empire fell and was then chosen by the Lombards as a defensive stronghold. It became the seat of a bishop in 1192. In the following century, Viterbo enjoyed its period of greatest splendour, after the end of the struggle against Frederick II. It was retaken by Cardinal Raniero Capocci and thanks to the heroics of a local girl named Rose (who was celebrated on 3 September with a traditional procession). After the death of Clement IV in 1268, the longest and most fiercely disputed conclave was held here, culminating in the election of Gregory X in 1271. When the papal seat still lay vacant after more than 1,000 days, the exasperated people of Viterbo locked the cardinals in the Popes' Palace, hence the word, conclave.

From the 17th century, architecturally speaking the town altered little until Italian Unification, following the same destiny as the Papal States. In 1927, it became the capital of the most northerly province in the region of Lazio.



## FONTANA GRANDE

Fed by a Roman aqueduct, the old fountain consists of a basin in the shape of a Greek-cross, with two levels of smaller basin supported by a pillar, culminating in a spire. Dating from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was inaugurated in 1279. This is the first and finest example of a type of fountain which became very popular in and around Viterbo. The fountain was restored in 1424.

On nearby Via Cardinale La Fontaine, the house of the medieval Gatti family, formerly the house of the Capitano del Popolo (governor), is what remains of a complex belonging to a Guelph family which was demolished in 1496. The family tried to impose its rule on the town by force in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. On Via Saffi there is another interesting mediaeval building: the 14<sup>th</sup> –century Casa Poscia (restored), with its elegant external profferlo (arched staircase).



## PIAZZA DEL PLEBISCITO



This 13th century square was the focus of the town's political life in mediaeval times and is still today. On the north-west side of the square is Palazzo dei Priori, now the town hall, a late 15th century building with an unusual facade, a portico of columns and Guelph cross windows (note the crest of Sixtus IV Della Rovere between the rows of windows). It has a courtyard with a portico and a fine 17th century loggia with views of the city walls and the Faul Valley. On the left-hand side of the courtyard are six Etruscan sarcophagus lids and, at the far end, a nice 17th century fountain. On the first floor the Throne Room has 16th century frescoes by Baldassarre Croce (Origins of the town and episodes in its

history) and a few portraits. The Sala della Madonna and the Chapel of the Comune are also frescoed: in the former is a Madonna attributed to 'Il Fantastico' (1488) and the Miracles of the Madonna della Quercia (in the barrel vault); the chapel contains some early 17th century frescoes by Filippo Caparozzi and Maurizio Ganassini. An arch links the town hall to Palazzo della Podestà (governo's palace), of mediaeval origin, but it was radically altered in later periods. On the top is a clock-tower 44 m high, which was rebuilt in 1487. Opposite, Palazzo Apostolico, now Palazzo della Prefettura, was built in the 13th century but altered in the 18th century. The corners of both buildings are decorated by columns bearing a lion, the symbol of the Viterbo town rest.

## SAN PELLEGRINO

The people of Viterbo, the Viterbans, are very proud of this ancient part of the town: it is so beautiful and famous that many movies are often shot here!

As you can see, there are narrow streets, as there were no cars or big carriages in the Middle Ages, so there was no need for wide streets....and as you can see, there are no footpaths and the streets are almost totally covered with paving stones.

We call these stones SAMPIETRINI as they are similar to those used to pave St. Peter's Square, in Rome.



The small houses are built in PEPERINO, a local grey volcanic stone.

In the last few years SAN PELLEGRINO has hosted "SAN PELLEGRINO IN FIORE"..a lovely exhibition of flowers...

The most important Palace in the square is the ALESSANDRI PALACE which belonged to one of the most powerful families in VITERBO during the MIDDLE AGES.

As you can see, this palace, which is now used for exhibitions and conferences, has no outer staircase: the stairs are inside and receive light from a balcony closed with a wide archway.

Actually, the whole square is a jewel....look at the arches...the columns...the towers!!!

Don't you feel as you have been transported back to that Age? Can't you imagine the square with working craftsmen, people, animals and carriages passing by?

And now, let us continue our walk across via San Pellegrino and pass under the arch of PALAZZO DEGLI ALESSANDRI. Look up: observe the wooden beams supporting the house built over it.

They are black and actually seem to be in bad condition...but just think how long they have been there!!! Will our homes last so long???



## PROFFERLO



Is the most famous outside staircase. Although the name may seem strange, it is easy to understand what it is...

IT IS AN OUTSIDE PEPERINO STONE STAIRCASE BUILT OVER AN ARCH.

It leads to a balcony which is often decorated with flowers and plants...

Let us walk across via SAN PELEGRINO... Have you noticed that there are no supermarkets or clothes shops...there are many antique and art collectors...On Saturdays and Sundays stalls of the antique market can be found along the streets of SAN PELLEGRINO...you can find second hand books, photographs and drawings, old furniture...or objects..

## PIAZZA DELLA MORTE or DEATH SQUARE!!!



Actually, this was not its original name. In 1200, the inhabitants of Viterbo built this square and first called it NEW SQUARE then ST. THOMAS SQUARE.

A long time afterwards, a religious community known as the CONFRATERNITY OF PRAYER AND DEATH had its headquarters here.. this is the reason why the square has this name today.

Look at the fountain: this is one of the oldest SPINDLE SHAPED FOUNTAINS which are so characteristic of our city. They are all decorated with the LION HEAD and large LEAVES on the top of the spindle. It was built in 1206

## PALAZZO FARNESE



On the right, you can see PALAZZO FARNESE. People from Farnese family were very powerful noblemen, included a POPE, ALESSANDRO FARNESE, POPE PAUL III.

Look at the beautiful windows!!THEY ARE MULLIONED WINDOWS with two openings: each is divided by a central mullion, or column...if you wish, come inside to see the inner courtyard which is wonderfully preserved!! I like the staircase which forms part of the courtyard wall. Now let's go to PIAZZA DEL DUOMO.

Look at the big stones on the right and on the left: do you know what they are? They are the remains of the city walls dating back to the times of the ETRUSCANS and the ROMANS.

## PIAZZA SAN LORENZO



Three wonderful monuments in this square: on the left the elegant thirteenth-century house belonged to Valentino della Pagnotta, with mullioned windows, large arches and stone walls...



## THE CATHEDRAL (1369)

Facing us, we can see the cathedral facade with the bell tower built in GREY AND WHITE STRIPES. A legend says that in ETRUSCAN TIMES there was a temple here dedicated to HERCULES who was a kind of PROTECTOR of the city...like St. Rosa today...It seems that the early St. Lorenzo church was built on the ruins of that temple...late to be enlarged and transformed into the present cathedral... Its interior is divided into three corridors (a nave and two aisles) with two rows of columns, whose capitals are all different. There are some valuable paintings here, and on the wall next to the door, there is a stone grave: it is the tomb of POPE JOHN XXI

## LA LOGGIA

However, we can enter the gate on the right of the door and see the LOGGIA, a beautiful and elegant terrace. LOOK: with the arches and mullions it looks more like lace



than like a building!

Once, popes appeared at this balcony to bless the faithful.

## PIAZZA DEL GESÚ

I have so many things to tell you about this place, that I don't know where to start. The first town-hall was located in this square until 1270 when anew palace was built in PIAZZA DEL PEBLISCITO. The earlier building, which no longer exists, was probably on the left side of the square, where the tower of BORGOGNONE now rises.



The church had a sadder but more famous story. In the Middle Ages a murder was committed inside the church. In the morning on March 13th 1271 Henry of Cornwall, who had come to Viterbo with many other noblemen, was at Mass in this church. Guido and Simone de Montfort went into the church.



They wanted to kill him to take revenge for their father's death. When the young Henry saw them, he ran towards the altar, as he thought they would not touch him there. But the brothers did not stand stabbed him, and two other men who tried to protect him, to death.

In his Divine Comedy, DANTE ALIGHIERI cited this as an example of brutal violence.



## LA MACCHINA DI SANTA ROSA

The transport of the Macchina di Santa Rosa is an important part of the history and culture of the city of Viterbo. In 2013 it received the prestigious UNESCO recognition becoming intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

The Macchina di Santa Rosa is an enlightened tower with a height of 30 metres and a weight of about 5 tons.

Every year, on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, it is carried on shoulders by over 100 men called “facchini”, across the narrow and dark streets of the old town centre.

“GLORIA” is the new design of Santa Rosa “tower” for the years 2015 to 2019, that won the competition published by the municipal district of Viterbo.





## **BAGNAIA - VILLA LANTE**

Bagnaia is a pretty holiday resort near the Cimini Mountains.

It was already popular in the 15<sup>th</sup> century when it became a summer residence for bishops and cardinals. In the old town, the Bishop's Palace, with a round tower, overlooks a rectangular square decorated with a fountain.

Above the old town is VILLA LANTE with a vast park created by Cardinal Gianfrancesco

Gambara (1568) designed by Vignola. It is a splendid example of a Mannerist residence with an Italian style gardens.

The large fountain in the centre of the square consists of a triple circle placed in the centre of a large square basin and decorated with the sculpture of THE FOUR MOORS.

The water features of the fountains in the park behind the palaces are famous.

One long fountain looks like a table. The water flowing from the centre of the table was once used for removing the leftovers after a banquet. To entertain the guests, to the right of the villa a small theatre was built.

## **BOLSENA and its lake**



This volcanic lake lies at 305 m above sea-level with a surface area of 114 km and an average depth of about 150 m is the largest volcanic lake in Europe.

It is a famous beauty spot and for the purity of its water, has a thriving fish population (eels, whitefish, carp and tench).

The islands of Martana and Bisentina are probably the remains of secondary volcanic craters.





The town of Bolsena has many beautiful churches to be visited: the church of Santa Cristina is the most important.

St Cristina in 292, before Christianity was officially recognised, she was tortured and thrown into the lake with a stone tied round her neck.

She was miraculously returned to the shore by stone, which floated on the surface.

You can see the stone, bearing the indelible imprints of her feet, in the church.

An important event happened in Bolsena in 1263

During a mass celebrated by a Bohemian priest, Peter of Praga, who had doubts about the dogma of transubstantiation, a few drops of blood fell from a wafer that had been broken in half, staining the corporal and some of the stones in the floor.

It was because of this miracle that Pope Urban IV instituted the festival of Corpus Domini (1264).

## **CIVITA DI BAGNOREGIO**



Civita looks like a town suspended in the middle of a sea of crete... It can only be reached on foot by a long high bridge spanning the countryside around it.

Nowadays ancient Civita di Bagnoregio has very few inhabitants.but so many tourists!!!

It is well known in all the world!!!

## TARQUINIA

Tarquinia lies on the western side of Tuscia looking at the Tyrrhenian sea. This town was one of the most ancient of the Etruscan confederation in the Viterbo region and preserves the well-known painted tombs which are a treasure of inestimable value.

The archaeological collection of the national museum is remarkable and worthy a visit.

Equally enchanting are the mediaeval Tarquinia as well as the countryside surrounding the town located on a hill from which you can see the horizon on the sea.



## THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

It is housed in Palace Vitelleschi which was built in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the centre of the town.



At the ground floor is placed a series of sarcophagi as valuable testimony of the funerary sculpture of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Upstairs we can see urns, terracotta candelabra, vases called “buccheri” wonderful jewellery. Today the town is of exceptional archaeological importance for the vast Etruscan necropolis and the National Museum.



## TUSCANIA



The town has remarkable Etruscan and mediaeval reminders that make it an exclusive tourist destination. The historical centre, which was reconstructed after the earthquake of 1971, is a treasure of 15<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> century architecture. There are two splendid Romanesque basilica of San Pietro and Santa Maria Maggiore.



Of very ancient origins, Tuscania is one of the most important towns of Etruria in the Viterbo region plenty of many monuments from the Etruscan till to our days.

The historical centre of Tuscania offers to the visitors exclusive and surprising scenes: alleys and little squares, old buildings, ancient churches, severe towers nice “trattorie” (small restaurants which offer very good local food), little hotels and B&B inns with picturesque views of the roofs of the houses.

The Cathedral square is like a dining room, where you can stop for a while, during summer, and enjoy the cool air coming from the 18<sup>th</sup>- century fountain. eating a delicious ice cream!!

... and then you find the “belvedere” with splendid sights and tidy lawns along the town walls.