



CALLED "THE LAKE OF THE SAILS", TODAY IT IS PROTECTED FROM POLLUTION

LAKE BRACCIANO ANGUILLARA SABAZIA

A few kilometers from Rome, there lies the landscape of Tuscia, rich in historical interest and natural beauties. An intense volcanic activity, occurred five hundred thousand years ago, caused a lowering of the area called Sabatino, now the basin of Lake Bracciano and Lake Martignano that, together with the thermal springs (Stigliano, Fonte Claudia and Vicarello), prove the volcanic structure of the region.

LAKE BRACCIANO: ITS HISTORY

In the heart of Southern Etruria, north of Rome, there is a really fascinating territory: it consists of a natural land suitable both for farming and breeding, as well as for hunting and fishing. The area has a really important historical-archaeological and natural heritage, to be wholly known and valued, as done before by the Villanovans, Etruscans and Romans. In 1999 it was established the Parco Regionale del Complesso Lacuale Bracciano-Martignano; since then the historical, artistic and natural heritage of Lake Bracciano has been protected and its

ancient splendor regained. The area of the lakes, alternating with the hills rich in crops, pastures, forests and shrubs, is populated by a varied fauna and a significant number of waterfowl. When Lake Bracciano got rid of the noise and environmental pollution and recovered its bathing water, thanks to the prohibition of the navigation of motor boats and to the presence of a particular wind on the coast, it was named "Lake of the Sails" or "Lake of the Wings". Sabatinus was the ancient name of the lake, whose water reflects some typical villages such as Anguillara Sabazia, Bracciano and Trevignano Romano. These places, located on the Via Clodia (the consular road built between the end of the third century and the beginning of the second century BC, connecting via Aurelia with via Cassia, Roma with north-western Etruria) and inhabited since ancient times, reached a considerable development especially in Roman times. At the end of the nineteenth century, the establishment of the railroad Roma-Capranica-Viterbo made it possible to reach the locations of Tuscia, Lake Bracciano and the hot springs (known since ancient times those of Stigliano called "Bagnarello"), marking the beginning of a new season for this area both from the rural point of view and for the development of other activities not related to land, such as the ironworks and paper mills. A lock very efficient, built in the late seventeenth century by Pope Paul V to provide water to the Vatican, still now feeds the aqueduct and keeps steady the lake level.

For several years, in times of water scarcity, the key role of reservoir of high quality drinking water for the city of Rome, has been played by lake of Bracciano, today also thanks to the support of the purifier CooBIS and to the prohibition of the navigation of motor boats. Only sailing boats can sail the lake, with the exception of the ferry that several times a day, for tourism and local traffic connects the coastal villages. Lake Bracciano is one of the most popular lakes for Italian sailing regattas. For long time, also the fishing activity, one of the economical resource of the local population, has been protected and has taken advantages from a varied quality of fish such as pike, perch, tench, carp, eel, smelt and mullet.

ANGUILLARA SABAZIA

From the ring road of Rome, take the Via Cassia (SS 2) towards Viterbo; when you arrive at Madonna di Bracciano, take the left-Claudia-Braccianese (SS 493). After 7 miles, at Osteria Nuova, take the Anguillarese road. Anguillara Sabazia, a picturesque medieval old town built on a promontory overlooking the center of the lake, is now a town of over 17,000 inhabitants, located at about 37 km from the capital. Its name derives from Angularia, villa belonged to Rutillia Polla, a Roman matron at the time of Trajan, who wanted it built on an inlet of the lake, where the coastline forms a right angle. It is not so sure the exact origin of the name Sabazia, perhaps added in memory of the ancient Etruscan town of Sabate, in 1872. The dynasty of the Roman family of Anguillara finished in 1488 and the city, at first a papal fief, in 1492 was ruled by the Orsini family, then by Francesco Grillo de 'Mari and by the Duke of Eboli. In the following centuries, the maladministration, as well as the brigandage and malaria made Anguillara become a quite desolate town. Today it is again a vibrant country, visited by tourists who spend there long or short periods, but always very interested in catching the opportunity to visit a historical, archaeological and natural heritage of considerable importance. We recommend a visit to the Piazza del Comune, with the Fontana delle Anguille (Fountain of the Eels) by Ignazio Jacometti, the sixteenth-century Palazzo Orsini with paintings attributed to the school of Giulio Romano, the Collegiata di Santa Maria Assunta, located on the highest point of the city, with an historical organ of the eighteenth century, the Piazza del Lavatoio and the eighteenth-century Chiesa di San Biagio, the patron saint of the town. Not far from the town center, characterized by the round Torrione della Rocca overlooking the lake, with a sixteenth-century monumental gate surmounted by a clock and featured by a rustic arch, there is the fifteenth-century Chiesa di San Francesco and, along the lakeside, you can visit the seventeenth-century Chiesa della Madonna delle Grazie. Near Anguillara, there is the modern factory of Acqua Claudia, natural effervescent water, whose name is traced back even to the Emperor Claudius, or more likely to the consular Via Clodia. Nearby, the remains of a Roman villa of the first century BC, with a large cistern which used to supply water to the complex, was brought to light. Another important historical find consists of a structure of great archaeological importance: they are the remains of a magnificent Roman villa dating back to the first and second centuries AD, a country residence with beautiful ornaments, that in medieval time was converted into a conventual building dedicated to Santo Stefano. The construction technique was studied by Andrea Palladio and Pirro Ligorio. The Museum of Rural Life and Popular Culture "Augusto Montori", housed in three rooms of the medieval tower of the historical town center, exhibits hundreds of agricultural, pastoral, fishing and household objects: a cross-section of life of the early twentieth century, when central Italy was essentially devoted to agriculture.

The Neolithic Village

The most amazing discovery consists of the remains of a Neolithic village, one of the oldest in Western Europe, dated between 5750 and 5260 BC. Discovered in 1989, near Anguillara, in a place called La Marmotta, 8 feet deep and about 360 meters from the lake, the village has gradually provided many important finds, including five wooden canoes with a crutch, obsidian tools, ceramic objects, figurines, eloquent

testimonies of the life of a Neolithic sedentary community that began to develop agriculture. The finds are housed in the Museo Centro Espositivo del Neolitico in Anguillara and at the Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico L. Pigorini in Rome.

Tourist information:

Viale R. Belloni,
c/o Piazza del Molo,
Anguillara Sabazia
tel. 06 9968415 / 348 2650775.

BRACCIANO

Usciti da Anguillara, seguendo la circumlacuale in senso orario e superato il Museo Storico dell'Aeronautica Militare. When you leave Anguillara, go along the road around the lake and, after passing the Museo Storico dell'Aeronautica Militare in Vigna di Valle - headquarters of the experimental Air Force in the twentieth century, head towards Bracciano, which can be easily recognized thanks to its imposing castle. The name Bracciano perhaps dates back to "Brachium Jani", a Roman deity to whom the place could have been devoted, or can come from a noble Roman family, the gens Braccia. Anyway, the Roman presence in the town was certainly linked to the construction of the Via Clodia, which connected Rome with the northern provinces of Lazio. Around the eleventh century, when the Saracen invasions became more dangerous, various fortifications were built and the town of Bracciano turned into a veritable fortress with walls. Later it was ruled by the Vico family, then by the Orsini that, between 1470 and 1490, built the castle and strengthened the city, in the meantime become important, with new walls. In the sixteenth century, when the Ducky of Bracciano was established and a new aqueduct was built, even the economy - previously depending only on agriculture and grazing, flourished. Then, slowly, the decay started and the ownership of Bracciano passed to the Princes Odescalchi.

To be visited in the town: Castle Orsini-Odescalchi, one of the most beautiful European residences of the Renaissance, which greets you from afar, with its round towers majestically overlooking the western shore of the lake. The importance of the advent of the Orsini and the impetus they gave to the development of economic activities were witnessed by the staying of important characters in the castle, such as Pope Sixtus IV and King Charles VIII of France. In addition to many pieces of furniture, many works of art can be admired inside, including the busts of Paolo Giordano I Orsini and his wife Isabella de' Medici by Bernini. Many valuable objects are also preserved in the chiesa di Santo Stefano, the Cathedral, built in the medieval village in the thirteenth century and then rebuilt in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. 4 km from Bracciano, along the Braccianese-Claudia road, towards Manzanita, in the hamlet of Pisciarelli, you can admire the Chiesa di San Lorenzo, built in the mid-sixteenth century by Paolo Giordano Orsini, with an interesting fresco of the Assumption of the Virgin (1745) by Vincenzo Stringelli in the apse. On the road around the lake, towards Trevignano Romano, inside the Sanminiatielli-Odescalchi estate, there is the Romanesque Chiesa di San Liberato (the first construction goes back to the ninth century) with its adjoining convent of Augustinian friars (fifteenth century). The damaged bell tower of the church is almost certainly one of the oldest examples of Romanesque art in Lazio countryside.

Tourist information:

Ufficio Turistico Comunale,
Piazza IV Novembre,
Bracciano - Tel. 06 9840062.

TREVIGNANO ROMANO

After leaving Bracciano and going towards Trevignano Romano, you can see the remains of the Roman baths, built with the aim to exploit the waters rich in strong healing powers. Located near the ancient village of Vicarello, the baths, including a tepidarium, a caldarium and other ancient structures - unfortunately not yet totally brought to light, were fully utilized in the imperial age (under the emperor Domitian). Continuing along the road around the lake, you reach Trevignano, a town inhabited since the Bronze Age. Mythical origins are attributed to the site, referring to the Etruscan city of Sabate, later submerged by the lake. After the fall of Veio, the area was dominated by the Romans, which is evidenced by the presence on the spot of a major Roman villa, called Triboniana.

Decayed because of the barbarian invasions, Trevignano returned to flourish thanks to the construction of the fortress and the city walls to defend the feudal village, since its natural location made the place a control point for strategic communications. It also underwent several changes of ownership and had to endure the struggles with the Papacy, that made the city life quite complicated, increasing the precarious conditions of its inhabitants. The Porta dell'Orologio, in the past inserted in the defensive walls, is of particular interest to visitors: it was built by Pope Innocent III in the thirteenth century and was used until the late seventeenth century. The Rocca degli Orsini, built in the thirteenth century. and destroyed in 149 by Giovanni Borgia, had a square layout and stood in an excellent strategic position: provided by walls that surrounded also the houses of the village, it had two gates, one looking towards Rome, the other looking towards Vicarello. Inside the medieval village, not to be missed the Chiesa dell'Assunzione dating back to the sixteenth century, now completely resto-

red. The bell is even older, built on the ruins of one of the towers of the fortress. You can visit the Civico Museo Etrusco housed on the ground floor of the Town Hall, with various archaeological remains (about 350) coming from the necropolises of Olivetello and Rigostano, which lie behind the town. In addition to pottery, studs, buckles, vases and golden ornaments, there is a very interesting skeleton of a warrior of the seventh century with bronze accessories.

Tourist information:

Trevignano Romano,
Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, 1
tel. 06 99919979.

A tavola

Even if influenced by the Roman cuisine, the traditional local dishes, rich in freshwater fish and vegetables, are provided in the towns lying around the lake. Do not miss the simply grilled lake fish cooked "a scottadito" and seasoned with olive oil, salt, pepper, parsley and lemon juice. Among the first courses, you can taste the excellent spaghetti with sauce of eel, made with pieces of eel fried in olive oil with garlic and chilli, then cooked with the addition of chopped tomatoes and a pinch of salt. Among the second courses, we would like to recommend the tench stewed with peas.

Getting to Bracciano

By car: From Firenze: Motorway A1, exit Magliano Sabino - Civita Castellana - Nepi - SS Cassia towards Roma until junction Settevene - Trevignano - Bracciano.

From Roma: Via Flaminia (GRA) exit Cassia bis Veietana direction Viterbo (exit Cesano) - continue towards Bracciano.

From Napoli: Motorway A1,

By bus: Bus service from Roma Saxa Rubrata to Bracciano.

By train: The station of Bracciano, in the town centre, can be reached from Roma Ostiense.

By air: Flights to Roma Fiumicino or Ciampino airport; then continue by train, car or bus.