

**CALABRIA**  
STRAORDINARIA

DIARY OF A  
**CALABRIAN**  
JOURNEY

**ART  
AND CULTURE**





**CALABRIA**  
STRAORDINARIA

Regione Calabria  
Dipartimento Turismo,  
Marketing territoriale e Mobilità

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[www.calabriastroordinaria.it/en/](http://www.calabriastroordinaria.it/en/)

This guide is part of a series of five *Diaries of a Calabrian journey*, each on a particular way of experiencing this region:

- **Nature reserves and parks**
- **Art and culture**
- **The historic centres and old villages**
- **The coasts and the sea**
- **Wine, food and the land**

The *Diaries* are meant to be a ready to use tool for anyone about to travel round Calabria, wanting to experience it in its fullness and complexity but, in particular, with the intention of looking at it with the eyes of a true traveller.

They are guides, full of advice and suggestions, on the physical and also mental paths that help the traveller not to miss any of the wonders in the area without stopping him/her from following their own instinct, interests and way of existence.

The word 'diary' automatically evokes a book whose pages are normally full of notes, supplemented by sketches or photos. That's why it was chosen as the metaphor for the journey and a very particular way of describing it using both words and pictures - more emotional than educational. It's an experience that purposely recalls the *Grand Tour* which, from the 18th to the early 20th centuries, included an almost compulsory trip into Calabria for European intellectuals of that time who, luckily, left an indelible trace for us in the pages of their invaluable travel diaries.

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Translations Opitrad srl, Milano

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V.le Europa - Catanzaro



Stilo, La Cattolica, fresco







WE REACH ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL **SHRINES**  
WE HAVE EVER BEHELD  
IN EFFECT IT CONTAINS A SOLE RELIC  
BUT, EVEN ALONE IT STIRS EXTRAORDINARY FEELINGS  
IT IS A DORIC **PILLAR**  
THE ONLY ONE LEFT OF THE LARGEST GREEK TEMPLE IN ITALY  
THE **TEMPLE** OF JUNO LACINIA

THIS **SINGLE** PILLAR  
WHICH CERTAINLY WASN'T MORE RESISTANT  
OR BUILT DIFFERENTLY  
THAN THE OTHER **47 STONE COMPANIONS**  
THIS PILLAR TO WHICH CAPRICE OR FATE  
ASSIGNED THE ROLE  
OF RELIABLE **DOCUMENT** OF ANCIENT ART

AND WE ALMOST DO NOT SEE IT  
AS ANY ARCHITECTURAL **AXIOM**  
BUT I START TO REREAD IT  
LIKE A PHILOSOPHICAL **THEORY**  
AN IDEA REPRESENTING THE **MENTALITY**  
AND SERIOUSNESS OF THE CREATIVE **GENIUS**

KAZIMIERA ALBERTI, L'ANIMA DELLA CALABRIA, 1950

Catanzaro, Monastery of S. Antonio da Padova, Francesco Solimena, painting



# Travel notes

Calabria is land that has been inhabited since prehistory with a succession of many peoples over the centuries, from the settlers who founded the splendid, wealthy cities of Magna Graecia to the conquerors who brought the myth of Ancient Rome to the area. However, the Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Swabians, Angevins, Aragonese, Spanish, Bourbons and French all passed here, until the endeavours of Garibaldi and his Thousand definitively opened the door to the unity of Italy. It's as a result of this mixture of peoples, certainly favoured by its position at the centre of the Mediterranean, that the words art and culture associated with Calabria sound especially familiar, because of the extension and importance of the archaeological and cultural heritage in the region.

The ancient origins of Calabria, its history - as complex as it is full of stimuli and opportunities for cultural exchange, have given the land the legacy of the civilisations of the past and their deep, valuable traces, luckily still clearly visible. A seemingly endless wealth of evidence from a more or less remote past, that can be enjoyed here in a relatively small space and time span, and just looking at it can pass on the emotions that centuries of history have accumulated and kept for us. The remains of the Ancient Greek and Roman cities, the historic-artistic heritage in the many archaeological parks and museums, which include the famous, magnificent Riace Bronzes, are easily available to visitors - and also the historic-anthropologic evidence and the art of more recent centuries, with the architectural and figurative works which, in a great variety of shapes and styles, also emanate a very particular charm.

Since prehistory, the land has inspired the feeling of beauty amongst the peoples who have lived there from time to time. Thus, this beauty still lives in the Aurochs in the Romito Cave at Papasidero, a drawing sketched by a pioneer artist on the bare rock walls of the cave where he or she



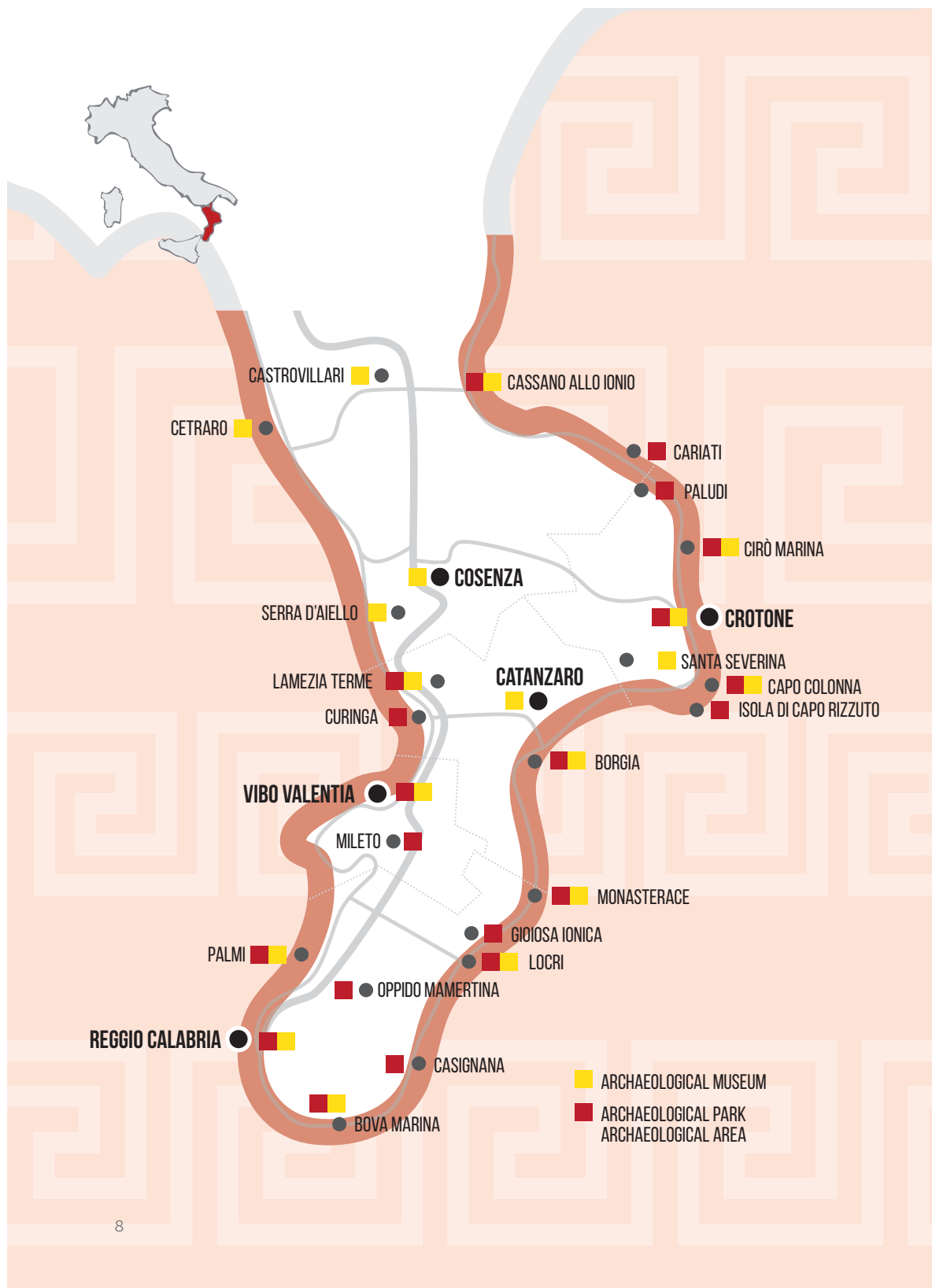




lived and, moving through centuries of history, in the *Codex Purpureus Rossanensis* (Rossano Gospels) or the mosaic floors of St Adrian's Abbey at San Demetrio Corone. Or, to stay among the Byzantines, an architectural gem such as the Cattolica di Stilo or the church of S. Giovanni Therestis at Bivongi. Then there are the buildings at Gerace, which compete with the splendid cathedral in rousing the interest of visitors, or the historic centre of Santa Severina and moving forward in time, there's the Baroque of the Santuario della Madonna della Serra at Montalto Uffugo, the Santuario di San Francesco di Paola, the paintings of Mattia Preti, the Calabrian Cavalier, at Taverna, the fortified towers and castles overlooking the sea - the Frederician Castle at Roseto Capo Spulico and the Aragonese castle of Le Castella.



Tropea, Sanctuary of S. Maria dell'Isola



# ARCHEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Archaeology has had it easy in revealing the treasure inherited directly from the past and now kept in the many archaeological parks and museums of Calabria. Plans and remains of Ancient Greek and Roman cities, statues, mosaics, coins, vases and everyday objects which became buried and were kept for centuries, reserving the privilege of bringing them once to the light of day to a discoverer and making them available so that people like us can now find the spirit of those times and ancient cultures. Among the many sites with traces of a more or less recent past, Calabria offers the chance to visit four archaeological parks, all with the remains of old cities dating to the Greek-Roman period - **Sibari** in the province of Cosenza, **Scolacium** at Roccelletta di Borgia, near Catanzaro, **Capo Colonna** on the promontory of the same name at Croton and **Locri** in the province of Reggio Calabria.



Monasterace, Archaeological Museum

Tiriolo, Archaeological Museum







## THE SIBARI ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Greek colonisation of the coasts of southern Italy started in the 8th century BC and Sybaris was the first colony founded by the Achaeans on the Ionian coast of Calabria. The fertile plain where it was erected, between two rivers, soon made the colony rich and famous. It was one of the most powerful cities of Magna Graecia which extended its dominion over what was defined as a true 'empire'. After the destruction of Sybaris by the Crotonians, the city of Thurii arose and this, in the end, became an ally of Rome and a Roman settlement with the name Copia. The remains of the three cities that succeeded each other can be seen in the archaeological area although the most recent ones from the Roman era near the surface predominate. The National Archaeological Museum of the Sibari area near to the Park can be visited.

Sibari, Archaeological Museum

Sibari, Archaeological Park









## THE SCOLACIUM ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

This was the chosen site for the establishment of the old Greek city Scylletium (from the 6th century BC), and then the Roman city Scolacium (appeared in 123-122 BC) on the Ionian coast in one of the two extreme points of the narrowest isthmus of the Italian peninsula, between the Gulf of Squillace and that of Lamezia Terme. This allowed a land crossing from the Ionian Sea to the Tyrrhenian Sea in half a day on foot, avoiding the Strait of Messina. A large theatre, built in the Greek manner against a hill, remains of the Roman city, in addition to the ruins of the Forum. The imposing basilica dedicated to Santa Maria della Roccella was built between the 12th and 13th centuries in the Norman period. It features a triple apse, whose construction was probably interrupted by an earthquake. There is also an archaeological museum in the Park.

Borgia, Scolacium Archaeological Park  
and Museum

Borgia, Scolacium Archaeological Park







## THE CAPO COLONNA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

The Capo Colonna promontory has a central, preeminent position on the Ionian coast of Calabria. It has a slight slope down into the sea and a characteristic profile that can even be seen from afar. To the north, it forms a creek used as a safe haven from stormy seas since ancient times. There was a temple here to Juno (Hera) Lacinia, one of the most important sanctuaries of Magna Graecia, from the 6th century BC. Today, only a few ruins of the temple can be seen and just a single Doric, equally imposing, pillar just over 8 metres tall of the original 48. This pillar has resisted time and the habit in later periods of re-using material in constructing more modern buildings. The finds made at Capo Colonna, including Juno's treasure with the golden diadem and the mysterious bronze Nuragic boat, are in the National Archaeological Museum in Crotona.

Crotona, Capocolonna Archaeological Park  
and Museum

Crotona, Capocolonna Archaeological Park







## THE LOCRI EPIZEPHYRII ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Locri Epizephyrii was founded in the 8th century BC by settlers from the Lokris area in central-southern Greece. Its layout gives a picture of Greek land use in the West with a composite structure where there's an area for religious life, another for manufacturing and another for the theatre. The most important finds from the sacred area of the city, and Persephone's Sanctuary in particular, are terracotta votive tablets, known as *pinakes* (singular *pinax*), dating to the 5th century BC, which present scenes from the life of the goddess from her infancy to adulthood. Many of the *pinakes* from Locri, with the *Dioscuri* (Castor and Pollux) group, are in the National Museum of Reggio Calabria but some are in the National Museum of Locri Epizephyrii, at the entrance to the Park, with other interesting finds.

Locri, Archaeological Museum

Locri, Archaeological Park



## OTHER MAIN CALABRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

In addition to the leading parks, there are many archaeological sites in Calabria, places where history seems to have stood still to preserve the remains of the cultures of the many peoples who, over the centuries, have lived there and have shaped it to form Calabria as we know it today. There are the remains of a large Roman villa from the 1st century AD, renovated in the 4th century AD, at Casignana, at the foot of Aspromonte, close to the Ionian coast, alongside State Road (S.S.) 106. The villa is famous for its mosaics which recall those of Piazza Armerina in Sicily. The complex is very large and consists of a residential area, near to the sea, and a very well-preserved spa area where the Nereids' Room has one of the most beautiful mosaics with four female figures riding a lion, bull, horse and a tiger, which all have a fish tail, however.

There are the remains of a Roman-age synagogue from the 4th century, unique in southern Italy, at Bova Marina, on the southern Ionian coast. A small museum with some items found in the synagogue has been set up alongside the site and a beautiful mosaic depicting some Jewish sacred symbols, like the looped square and the cedar tree, has been reconstructed. Only a few ruins have come to light to date in old Mileto, near Vibo Valentia; however, some old prints show that the town was quite large and important. In mediaeval times, in the 11th century, Mileto became capital of the Norman kingdom under Roger I of Sicily.

The cave settlement of the Sbariati at Zungri, a centre on the Monte Poro plateau opposite the Gulf of Tropea, is surprising for its magnificent state of preservation. It dates to mediaeval times, has dozens of caves of various shapes and sizes, obtained by skilfully exploiting the conformation of the terrain and rocks. The caves, some dwellings and others craftsman workshops, the streets and access stairs are an effective model of cliff urbanisation, whose origins date to the Basilian monks who started to use the caves as hermitages and *coenobia* (monastic communities).



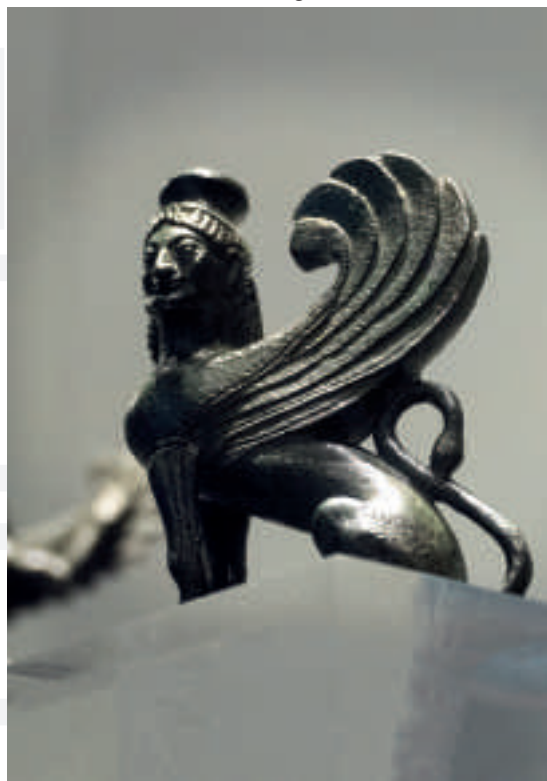


Casignana, Roman villa, mosaics

Vibo Valentia, Archaeological Museum



Crotone, Archaeological Museum





# ECCLESIASTIC HERITAGE

As in the rest of Italy, the ecclesiastic heritage in Calabria is also predominant for the importance that Christian roots and Catholic culture have had in the development of Italian civilisation over the centuries. The first hermits, Basilian monks who came from the east in search of the peace of a cave to live in, meditate and pray, lived in Calabria. Traces of them remain in many quiet, secluded places, such as near Gerace, where there is the **Grotta di San Ierunio** and the rock church of **Cofino**. Signs of Byzantine religiosity can also be seen in the architecture and frescoes of the **Cattolica** di Stilo or the **Spedale** church in Scalea while the great cathedrals and monasteries, in Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque styles, are scattered all over the region.



Gerace, Church of San Francesco d'Assisi, doorway

Vibo Valentia, Cathedral of San Pantaleone





## MAIN ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

There are many, many examples of ecclesiastical heritage in Calabria, all very interesting, but there are some truly special ones for their structure and history. These include the *Chiesetta di Piedigrotta* (literally the little church of Piedigrotta), at Pizzo, a well-known tourist centre on the Tyrrhenian Sea, where tourists can enjoy not only a seaside holiday but also visit the historic monuments and naturalistic beauty. The church was excavated in the rock (tuff) near a beach not far from the centre. The inside is decorated with many statues and sculpted groups, also in tuff, with a specially evocative effect. Legend says that some sailors who survived a terrible storm started the cult of the Madonna in a cave on the beach but then, over the centuries, it was the local fishermen and the Barone, a dynasty of sculptors, who created the church as it's seen today.

Gerace cathedral is known to be one of the most imposing religious buildings in Calabria and also one of the most important. It was started in the late Byzantine period and ended in the Norman era; therefore, it has a Byzantine layout and the typical features of the Norman cathedral. It was consecrated for the first time in 1042 and a second time in 1222, under the Swabians, apparently to pay homage to the passage of Gerace to Frederick II of Swabia.

Another Calabrian detail is the cathedral of San Nicola di Mira, at Lungro, an Arbëreshë municipality which still preserves the ancient traditions, language and culture of Albanian origin. The centre is the home of the Eparchy which has jurisdiction over all the Albanian churches in southern Italy. Here, the liturgy is in Albanian and still follows the old Greek- Byzantine rite.

Bova, Cathedral



Paola, Sanctuary of S. Francesco di Paola



Lungro, Cathedral







San Marco Argentano, Cathedral crypt

Stilo, La Cattolica, interior



San Giovanni in Fiore, the Abbey





Altomonte, Sacred Art Museum

## SACRED ART MUSEUMS

Countless works of art, often particularly fine, are kept in each of the many Sacred Art Museums found all over Calabria.

### **Altomonte, Sacred Art Museum**

Here there is the St Ladislaus by Simone Martini, a panel painted in the Gothic style of the first half of the 14th century, and the Madonna delle Pere, a 15th century panel painting attributed to Paolo di Ciacio from Mileto.

### **Corigliano Rossano, Diocesan and Codex Museum**

The *Codex Purpureus Rossanensis*, a gospel book with the texts of Matthew

and Mark, and one of the oldest in the world, stands out in this museum. The manuscript is extremely valuable because of its miniatures and is considered a true masterpiece of Byzantine art; it takes the name 'purpureus' from the reddish colour of its pages. Another significant work is the Tavola della Pietà (the Pietà Panel), a 15th century painting by Andra Paviyas.

**Cassano allo Ionio,  
Diocesan Museum**

The museum provides the chance to see the 16th century Triptych '*Madonna in trono col Bambino fra i santi Teodoro e Girolamo*' (Virgin with Child enthroned between Saints Theodore and Jerome), attributed to Pietro Be-fulco, and the Polyptych of the '*Trinità con i santi Antonio da Padova, Caterina d'Alessandria, Agostino e Girolamo*' (Trinity with Saints Anthony of Padua, Catherine of Alexandria, Augustine and Jerome) also 16th century, attributed to Pietro Negroni.

**Cosenza, Diocesan Museum**

The Staurotheke, a 12th century reliquary of Norman production, is a true gem found in this museum. It is a gilded silver cross with enamel medallions depicting the four Evangelists and Christ. The 15th century 'Torquemada' chalice, of Iberian manufacture, is also worth mentioning.

**Catanzaro, Diocesan Museum  
of Sacred Art**

This museum has the silver Sicilian Chalice, dating to the 17th century, and the Adoration of the Magi, a canvas by Francesco Saverio Mergolo of the 18th century.

**Gerace, Diocesan Museum  
Cathedral Treasury**

This museum is a real treasure house; the most notable articles include the Staurotheke in gilded silver and semi-precious stones, attributable to the 12th century and probably made



Cosenza, Diocesan Museum, Staurotheke

Gerace, Cathedral Treasury







Lamezia Terme, Diocesan Museum

in Jerusalem, the 17th century silver bust of Santa Veneranda by Gregorio Juvarra, and a splendid silver 360° sculpture of Mary Immaculate, from the 18th century.

***Lamezia Terme, Diocesan Museum***

This is one of the most beautiful and best arranged diocesan museums. It houses the 15th century statue of Our Lady of Graces in Carrara marble by Domenico Gagini, the 12th century painted ivory chest of Arabic-Sicilian production, and many sacred vestments in finely decorated silk.

***Nicotera, Diocesan Museum***

The most important works include the 15th century polychrome carved wooden crucifix, by Jacopo Colella of the Donatello School, and the 18th century solar monstrance, in silver and semi-precious stones, by Biagio Giordano.

***Oppido Mamertina, Diocesan Museum***

Here, the San Sebastiano by Benedetto da Maiano, a 15th century marble statue, and the carved marble Tabernacolo from a Messina workshop, dating from the second half of the 16th century, are worthy of special note.



Tropea, Diocesan Museum

Santa Severina, Diocesan Museum

***Reggio Calabria, Diocesan Museum  
and Little San Paolo Museum***

This museum has many items in silver including the 18th century solar monstrance, in embossed and chiselled silver, by Pietro Donia. The 18th century San Giovanni Evangelista, a painted wooden statue by Brother Diego da Careri, also worth seeing.

***San Marco Argentano,  
Diocesan Museum***

In this museum there is a cross-shaped reliquary in embossed silver and wood. Dating from the 13th century, it depicts Christ triumphing over death



on the back and the Lamb of God and the symbols of the Evangelists on the other side. There is also a 16th century painted panel by Teodoro D'Errico, depicting Jesus Christ carrying the cross between Saints Peter and Paul.

***Santa Severina, Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art***

The painted polychrome wooden statue depicting St Michael Archangel, and the gold, enamelled, pearl and filigree cope morse in the shape of a flower with six petals from a French goldsmith's workshop, both the 18th century, stand out.

***Squillace, Diocesan Museum***

The most significant works include a Neapolitan altar cross from the 18th century, and a chalice in silver and precious stones, also from the 18th century and from a Neapolitan school. The 16th century red satin chasuble, known as 'the Borgia chasuble', decorated and set with seven medallions depicting sacred figures, is also worth seeing.

***Serra San Bruno, Certosa (Carthusian Monastery) Museum***

This museum reproduces the life inside the monastery, normally barred to people from outside, through articles and

Nicotera, Diocesan Museum, wooden crucifix





settings. The works housed include an 18th century silver bust of St Bruno, which is a reliquary on a finely decorated base, created by Luca Baccaro.

### ***Tropea, Diocesan Museum***

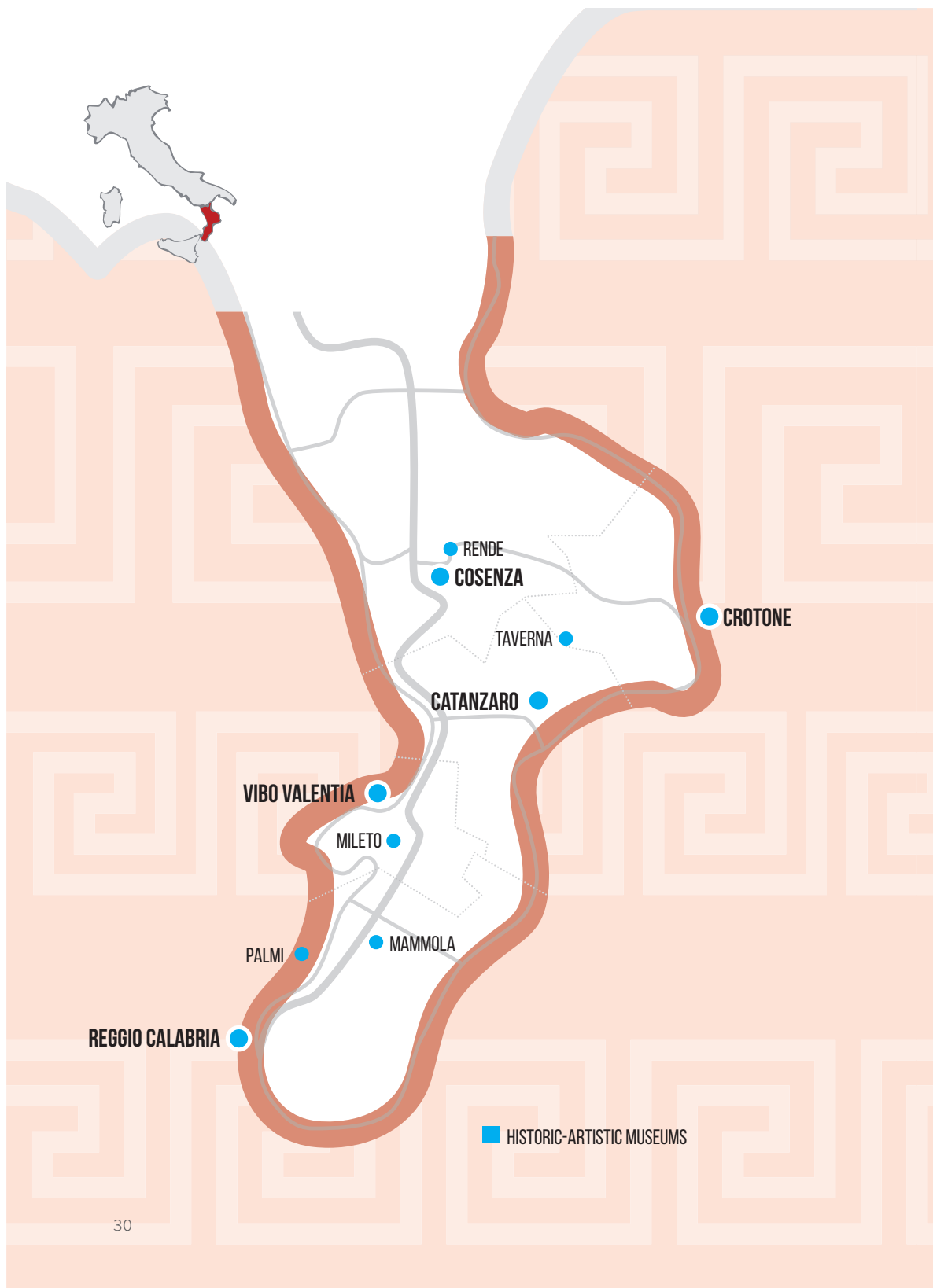
In this museum, the exhibition of wooden busts and reliquaries, and also a series of paintings from the 14th-17th centuries, are of notable importance. The embossed and chiselled silver statue of St Domenica da Tropea, made by the artists Gaetano and Nicola Avellino in the 18th century, is also worth seeing. There is also a finely worked crosier in gilded silver and enamel from the 15th century.



Squillace, Diocesan Museum

Serra San Bruno, Carthusian Monastery Museum





# FIGURATIVE ARTS

The figurative arts, from painting to sculpture, have had important interpreters in Calabria, from the Renaissance painter **Marco Cardisco**, born in Tiriolo, who has a work in the *Pinacoteca Nazionale* (National Art Gallery) in Palazzo Arnone, Cosenza, to **Mattia Preti**, the Cavalier Calabrian, born in Taverna, who reinterpreted the stylistic features typical of the great Caravaggio in the 17th century. Many of Preti's works are displayed in the Museum and two churches in his home town. There are also examples of modern and contemporary art, including **Mimmo Rotella**, born in Catanzaro, well-known internationally for his *décollage*, and whose works can be seen in the Foundation of the same name in Catanzaro or many private collections. Sculpture is also well-represented through the work of maestros like **Antonello Gagini**, **Francesco Jerace**, **Michele Guerrisi**, **Giuseppe Rito** and **Giuseppe Correale**.



Cosenza, National Art Gallery, a work by Marco Cardisco

Catanzaro, Fondazione Mimmo Rotella, self-portrait







## HISTORIC-ARTISTIC MUSEUMS

### **Catanzaro, MARCA Art Museum**

The museum hosts a permanent exhibition with the paintings of Mattia Preti, Battistello Caracciolo and Andrea Cefaly. Francesco Jerace's statues are also notable. The museum is enriched by an open-air contemporary art section consisting of sculptures and installations in the neighbouring *Parco Internazionale della Scultura* (International Sculpture Park).

### **Catanzaro, the San Giovanni monuments**

This is in an area that was part of the Norman castle erected by Robert Guiscard in the 11th century. It includes the sculpture of the '*Cavatore*' (Quarry hand) by Giuseppe Rito, one of the symbols of the city, and Charles V's tower. This is now an exhibition space that hosts noteworthy shows of past and contemporary artists; the most important of these are the exhibitions of paintings by Mattia Preti and Andrea Cefaly.

### **Cosenza, National Gallery**

The gallery is in Palazzo Arnone, a majestic 16th century building, and hosts significant examples of the art of the 15th-19th centuries with a predominance of works created by Calabrian painters

Taverna, Church of San Domenico,  
Work by Mattia Preti



Mammola, MUSABA, Work by Nik Spatari



Mileto, National Museum, bas-relief

Catanzaro, MARCA Museum, Work by F. Ierace





Palma, Casa della Cultura 'Leonida Rèpaci', Art Gallery, Work by Giorgio di Chirico



Reggio Calabria, Civic Art Gallery, Work by Rubens Santoro

such as Marco Cardisco, Mattia Preti, Francesco Cozza and Pietro Negroni. There is also a section on the graphic works of Umberto Boccioni, who was also born in Calabria.

### **Mileto, State Museum**

The museum is in the Palazzo Vesco-vile in the town centre and has important objects from the former Benedictine abbey of SS. Trinità and the old Norman cathedral. The interesting Norman art collection is the most important in Calabria and includes a series of marble capitals and bas-reliefs from the 11th and 12th centuries.

### **Palma, Casa della Cultura 'Leonida Rèpaci'**

This space is dedicated to all arts and hosts various museums, including the *Pinacoteca 'Leonida e Albertina Rèpaci'*, one of the most important in southern Italy, which has a precious collection of paintings and sculptures, and the *Gipsoteca 'Michele Guerrisi'* (Michele Guerrisi Plaster Cast Gallery), which has many casts of classically-inspired statues and busts, created by the sculptor.

### **Rende, Civic Museum/MAON Museum of 19th and 20th century art**

The Civic Museum is in the old Palazzo Zagarese. The section on paintings hosts works by Mattia Preti, Cristoforo Santanna and some contemporary painters such as Carrà, De Chirico, Sironi and Guttuso. The MAON is in the historic centre of the town and is named after Achille Capizzano, an artist from Rende, and exhibits several of his works.

### **Reggio Calabria, Pinacoteca Civica (Civic Art Gallery)**

The museum is in the Palazzo del Teatro Comunale. It has works of great importance in its beautiful rooms such as two 15th century wooden tablets by Antonello da Messina depicting a penitent St Jerome and three angels visiting Abraham. The other paintings on display include works by Mattia Preti, Andrea Cefaly and Giuseppe Benassai, Francesco Jerace and Ignazio Lavagna Fieschi.

### **Taverna, Civic Museum**

The most important figure in this museum, housed in a 15th century Dominican



coenobium and some churches in the village, is Mattia Preti, the great painter who was born in Taverna. The paintings by him include 'Il San Francesco di Paola', 'Il Martirio di San Sebastiano' (St Sebastian's Martyrdom), 'La Madonna della Purità' (The Virgin of Purity), 'Il Cristo Fulminante' (Christ with Flames or St Dominic's Vision), 'Il Redentore Infante' (The Infant Redeemer) and 'Il San Giovanni Battista' (St John the Baptist), with the famous self-portrait of the artist dressed as a Cavalier of Malta. In addition, there are also works by Gregorio Preti, a lesser-known artist and the great Calabrian painter's brother.

#### **Mammola, MuSaBa**

This museum can be found near to Mammola and is part of the Aspromonte National Park. MuSaBa is an open-air park-museum whose creation was started in 1969 by the artists **Nik Spatari and Hiske Maas. It is an artistic workshop** where new works are continually created that go to implement the continuously evolving museum. It's managed by the Fondazione Spatari/Maas which is concerned with art, architecture, the environment, archaeology, botany, and organic cultivation and research, with special reference to the artistic-cultural legacy of the Mediterranean.

#### **Crotone, Civic Museum and MACK Museo Arte Contemporanea Krotone**

The Civic Museum is in the Torre Aiutante of Charles V's Castle and is divided into topical sections that have collected a series of heraldic crests, finds from local houses that have now

disappeared, prints and photos from the late 19th century to 1950, mediaeval costumes, a collection of cold weapons and pieces of artillery from ships, terracotta and ceramics.

The MACK, previously in the Palazzo Fonte Calojro, has been in the new premises of Palazzo Barracco since 2008. It has contemporary works that give documentary evidence of trends in Italian art from the Second World War to date and hosts contemporary art shows.

#### **Vibo Valentia, Limen Museo Arte Contemporanea**

The Limen Museum is promoted by the Vibo Valentia Chamber of Commerce and follows the idea that social-economic development and the spread of legality can be aided through art and culture. It has more than 200 works of contemporary art by Italian and foreign artists who have won the 'Premio Internazionale Limen Arte' (Limen International Art Award) or acquired by donation. It has three topical areas - Geometry, Signs and Scenes. Further spaces are for workshops on innovation in artistic handicrafts and industrial design, and the promotion of art for schools.

Rende, MAON Museum



περι τῶν ἱερῶν ἐκείνων

1945-1946



13. Alpena  
14. Chapman

ΕΠΙΤΑΦΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ  
ΕΛΕΝΑΝ ΤΟΥΤΟΥ

# CALABRIAN EXCELLENCES

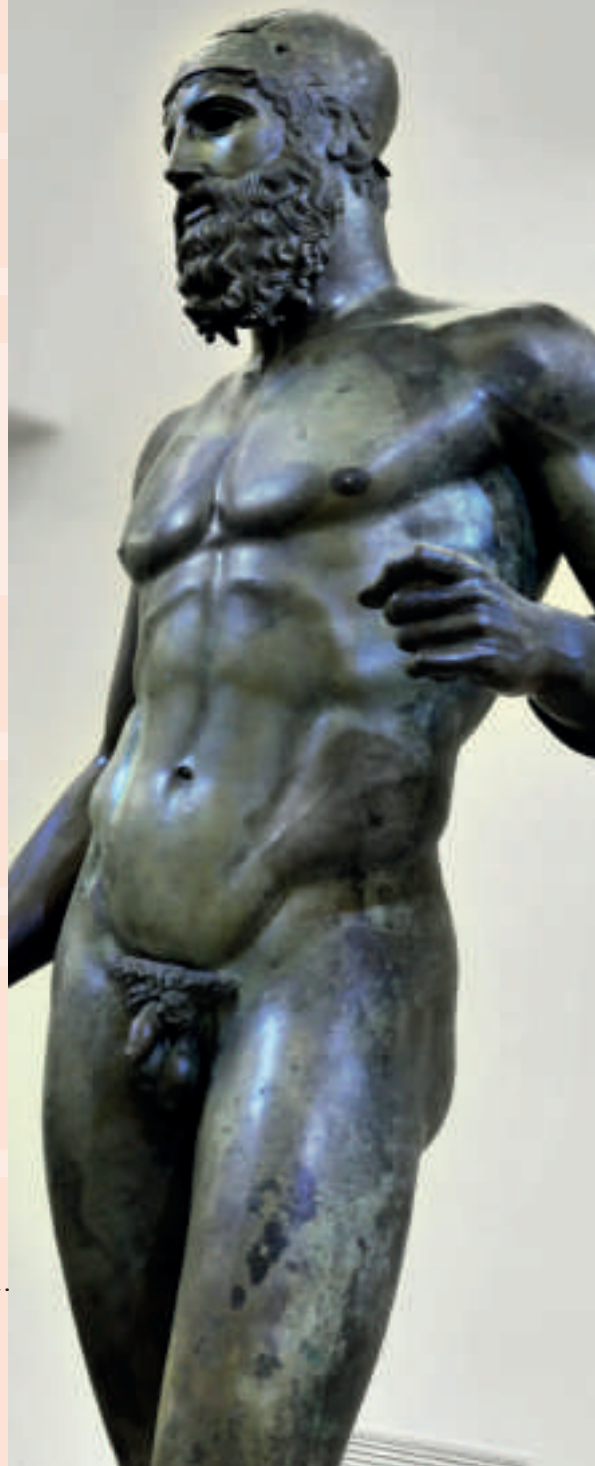
Whoever visits Calabria can't leave without seeing the **Riace Bronzes**, the two imposing 5th century BC Greek statues, scientifically named Statue A and Statue B by the archaeologists but everyone knows as the Young Man and the Old Man or the Hero and the Strategist. The two bronze statues were raised from the seabed at Riace in 1972 by Stefano Mariottini, an amateur diver from Rome, and are now in the National Archaeological Museum in Reggio Calabria. Another object visitors should see is the **Codex Purpureus Rossanensis**, an illuminated codex of Byzantine origin kept in Rossano Diocesan Museum. There are also the mosaic floors of various eras - the Greek ones in the **Temple of Caulonia** at Monasterace, the Roman ones in **Casignana Villa**, and the Byzantine ones in the church of **St Adrian** at San Demetrio Corone. There are also many other artistic excellences that Calabria can boast of.

Reggio Calabria, Archaeological Museum, the Riace Bronzes

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Rossano Calabro, Diocesan Museum, Codex Purpureus

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# CASTLES AND TOWERS

Danger, in the form of frequent Saracen raids, came mainly from the sea and these forced the Calabrians to perfect effective defensive systems - from watchtowers, dotted along the uplands overlooking the coast and which gave the alarm if enemy ships were seen on the horizon, to fortified castles frequently seen, particularly near the coast if not overlooking the sea, like the Frederician castle at **Roseto Capo Spulico**, or in the sea, such as the splendid Aragonese **Le Castella** castle, built on a small island connected to the beach by a slender strip of land. Many of these fortifications were destroyed after wars and earthquakes or only a few ruins remain.



Caccuri, Castle

Corigliano Calabro, Castle





Santa Severina, Norman Castle

## MAIN CASTLES AND TOWERS

There are many castles scattered throughout Calabria and some stand out for the organisation of events that are specially attractive to tourists or because of their excellent availability. The Murat di Pizzo castle is Aragonese and gets its name from the fact that Gioacchino Murat, appointed King of Naples by Napoléon Bonaparte, was imprisoned and summarily executed there by a firing squad. The castle was founded in the Angevin period, at the end of the 14th century, but it was only a watchtower at that time. A century later, it became a true castle under Ferdinand I of Aragon, as defence against the Saracen raids. However, it is mainly known for the last days of Gioacchino Murat, captured by the Bourbon gendarmerie in a vain attempt to reconquer his kingdom. A well-researched historical re-enactment, with extras in costumes from the area, all over Italy and even from abroad, is made each October, on the anniversary of Murat's landing.

The castle at Fiumefreddo Bruzio, founded at the beginning of the 13th century, was later modernised and became a noble residence, and then reworked by the bombardments of the Napoleonic troops at the start of the 19th century. The castle attracted the attention of the great Sicilian artist Salvatore Fiume's halfway through the 1970s. He decided



to revitalise the old centre of Fiumefreddo Bruzio, free of charge, masterfully painting not only the cupola of San Rocco but also some walls of the castle with scenes inspired by mediaeval life and the Saracen invasions.

The imposing ducal castle at Corigliano-Rossano is considered one of the most beautiful and best preserved in southern Italy. It was built in the Norman period, probably for Robert Guiscard, while it was the residence of feudal and noble houses in the following centuries. The castle was perfectly restored between 1988 and 2002 and is now open to visitors. The same can be said for Oriolo Castle, dating from the Aragonese era, which dominates the well-preserved mediaeval village; Scilla, the fortress that belonged to the Ruffo di Calabria, built on the promontory dividing Marina Grande from Chianalea and one of the best features of the fishing village; Santa Severina Castle, from the Norman period, has imposing bastions and a museum with the archaeological finds discovered inside it and the surrounding area; the Norman-Swabian castle at Vibo Valentia houses the archaeological museum, and, lastly, there's



San Marco Argentano, Norman Tower



Rocco Imperiale, Frederician Castle

Pizzo Calabro, Murat Castle



the Aragonese castle of Reggio Calabria which, in more modern times was one of the last obstacles of the Bourbons to the advance of Garibaldi's troops.





# SACRED ROUTES

## RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS AND RITUALS

There are still many religious rituals, processions and holy performances in Calabria, which can still be considered as one of the most authentic expressions of its culture. The performances of the *Via Crucis* (Stations of the Cross) are spectacular and also strongly felt, like those of **Badolato**, where more than 100 extras take part, or **Cassano allo Ionio**, with dozens of hooded figures dressed in white carrying Christ in procession for the whole of Good Friday. The most dramatic Holy Week ceremonies are those of **Verbicaro** and **Nocera Terinese**, where the procession of the Addolorata (Our Lady of Sorrows) is accompanied by the ritual of the 'Vattienti', believers who flagellate themselves until blood runs. The most suggestive of the many processions dedicated to the Virgin are those held at sea, with the statue loaded onto a boat that leads the long procession of other fishing boats. Processions of this type can be seen at **Tropea**, **Nicotera**, **Soverato** and many other coastal villages.

Bova, Palm Sunday,  
the 'Puppet' Ritual



Catanzaro Lido, Porto Salvo  
Procession of the Madonna

Nocera Terinese, I "Vattienti"







Badolato, Holy Week rituals

The many sanctuaries in Calabria are the destination for pilgrimages and processions; almost all the sanctuaries have been built outside the towns and villages in places with very attractive landscape. There, processions take place in the valleys, like that of the Santuario della Madonna di Polsi in **Aspromonte**, or in the mountains, like that of the Madonna delle Armi on the Pollino or the Madonna del Pettoruto at **San Sosti**. There are also processions in the towns, as happens for San Francesco di **Paola**, not only one of the most venerated in Calabria but also its

Monasterace, Procession of Sant'Andrea Avellino



patron saint. In some cases, as for the procession of Sant'Andrea Avellino at **Monasterace**, the whole town is crossed, from the old centre to the countryside, and even sometimes go as far as the sea.

La Varia of Palmi, recognised by UNESCO as an Intangible Heritage, is undoubtedly one of the largest and most imposing processions in Calabria, as is the procession of the Madonna della Consolazione in **Reggio Calabria**, which involves the whole city, with dozens of bearers of the 'vara' with the sacred effigy of the Virgin Mary.



San Luca, Madonna di Polsi Procession

Cassano allo Ionio, Holy Week rituals









# CALABRIA AND UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is committed to building the prerequisites to ensure international peace and the prosperity of the nations, promoting intercultural co-operation, respect for the environment and best practices for sustainable development. UNESCO has already recognised some places in Calabria as World Heritage Sites and is currently assessing other candidacies:

- **Duomo di Cosenza** (Cosenza Cathedral), recognised as a Heritage site for the Culture of Peace.
- The **Cattolica di Stilo** and Byzantine Basilian complexes, candidates for recognition.
- **Codex Purpureus Rossanensis**, a candidate among the leading assets of the World Artistic Heritage.
- The **Varia di Palmi**, recognised as an Intangible Heritage.
- **Calabrian Greek** (spoken in the Calabrian Greek area in southern Aspromonte), mentioned in the Red Book as one of the languages at risk of extinction.



Cosenza, Cathedral, Central nave

Palmi, La Varia

a space to fill

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