

Virle Piemonte

*Various archaeological findings in the St. Paul area confirm the presence of installations in the late imperial Roman age. In the early Middle Ages the inhabited area already had a **parish church**, dedicated to St. Paul but the progressive depopulation, due to wars and pestilences, brought to the rise of a new fortified village located in the area towards Castagnole. In a diploma of July 31st 1001, the emperor Otho the Third confirmed to the marquis of Susa the possession on Virle and its territory. In 1026, the emperor Conrad confirmed the third part of Virle to Bosone and Guidone, children of Arduino the Fifth marquis of Ivrea. In 1163 the emperor Frederick The Barbarossa invested of Virle Olivero, Guidone and Ardizzone of the marquises of Romagnano, whose descent submitted a part of the inhabited area to the prince Phillip of Acaja. The latter, in 1307, sold his part to Giorgio Asinari of Camerano. The last of the Asinaris, Gian Michele, left every possession to his daughter, who married a count Piossasco of None. In the 18th century, the family of the Piossascos of None tried to compete with the Romagnanos for the political control over the territory. Virle suffered many damages during the wars, particularly in 1544 and in 1630. With the extinction of the Romagnanos of Virle (1839), the feud passed to Nicanore Provana of the Sabbione. The determinant "Piedmont" was given with a Royal Decree. Under the fascist regime, Virle and Osasio became hamlets of Pancalieri. Only after the 2nd world war Virle became again an autonomous town.*

In spite of the demolition of the defensive structures, the historical centre of Virle preserves the characteristics of a fortified village, gathered around the parish church and the two castles. The current **parish Church of St. Siro**, dedicated to the first bishop of Pavia, was erected between 1733 and 1735 on a preexisting construction of the 12th century (of which it still preserves the bell tower and the font). The design is due to the military architect Antonio Maria Lampo. In the inside, we can find the pulpit and the choir (17th century) coming from the destroyed convent of St. Clare in Carignano, valuable wooden works of the Baroque age, ordered by the prince Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy-Carignano. At its sides, the high altar and, also very interesting, the private chapels of the Marquises of Romagnano and the Counts Piossasco of None. The **Portassa** (also called Gate Boni Loci) is the only rest of the defensive wall around the medieval village. The **Castle of the Romagnanos** has lost each trace of its defensive functions and has been turned into a splendid noble residence for the Marquis' family. It preserves the angular towers, and a beautiful garden inside the walls. In the inside, worthy of note, is the "big hall", the ceiling of which is decorated by more than five hundred dishes of Piedmontese porcelain (probably from the manufacture of Vinovo). Very scenic is also the **Oven square**, elegantly inserted among the parish church, the town hall and the castle of Romagnanos. Not very far from here the **Castle of the Piossascos of None** rises: commissioned in the '700 from the Count Gian Michele Piossasco adapting a medieval building, it preserves the splendid frescoes of the hall (1729), work of Giuseppe and Niccolò Dallamano from Modena, a great staircase and the 19th century chapel. Luigia Birago of Vische, widow of the last Count, in 1862 gave the building to the institute St. Vincent de' Paoli, founded by her. Next to the Portassa, rises the baroque **Church of St. Bernardino** (16th century), with an elegant bell tower. The town territory offers numerous curiosities related to its millenary history. In the countryside it still preserves the **Uia**, an ancient hydraulic work in stone, used to divide the stream Lemina into two directions. An interesting devotional route can be followed among frescoes, kiosks and chapels, which testifies a great artistic vitality. To be noticed: the fresco of the Holy Shroud (1933, Shroud supported by the Madonna, and the Saints Anthony from Padua and Joseph); the votive kiosk (1902, dedicated to the Madonna and S. Lawrence) on the road towards Castagnole); the chapel dedicated to St. Anthony The Abbot (17th century), at the beginning of the town; the chapel dedicated to St. Pancrazio the Martyr (18th century), where many old crutches can be found, as ex-voto; the chapel of St. Sebastian (17th century) in the cemetery; the ancient parish church of St. Paul, today reduced to few ruins.

Events

Fair of St. Ann (last Sunday of July): typical town fair, in which it is possible to stroll in the happy atmosphere of a small rural community.

Fair of the medlars and the pumpkin (second Sunday of November): typical products in the autumn, medlars and pumpkin are the protagonists of a nice fair, where is possible to taste dishes realized with the recipes of the country tradition.

For information:

Town hall, 6 Via Birago, tel. 011.9739223

www.virle.it