



Bitritto

Geographical Features

Coordinates	41°03'00"N 16°50'00"E
Altitude	102 m s.l.m.
Surface	17,98 sqkm
Inhabitants	11.246 (31-01-2015)
Population Density	625,47 inhab./sqkm
Neighbouring Towns	Adelfia, Bari, Bitetto, Modugno, Sannicandro di Bari



Bitritto is a rural, commercial and industrial town situated in the inland of the city of Bari. Its municipal territory is mostly flat and it is close to the Apulian Murge tableland. Thanks to its geographical position, as many of the neighbouring towns, it has been crossed by the most important lines of communication which run along the coasts and mountain slopes. In the 80s Bitritto changed its rural aspect when the coming of

the industrial production through the first factories, such as the Olivetti, broke off the long-standing

relationship between the town and the environment. Besides, the population increase and the expansion of the urban areas due to the influx of people from Bari have led to the planning of an underground which has to connect the town to the central station of Bari and other suburban districts of the city. Finally, a recently orbital road enables Bitritto to divert traffic towards the regional capital from neighbouring areas (Sannicandro di Bari, Cassano delle Murge and Altamura).

THE APULIAN KARSTIFICATION

The Murge tableland is characterized by hilly landscapes and karstic phenomena both on the surface and subterranean level. It is a dry and rocky region sculpted by rainwater. Millenary erosion has left its marks everywhere: caves, deep craters and ravines are typical elements of this environment. In this area men learnt to build both on and in the rock founding karst subterranean villages such as the towns of Gravina, Laterza and Ginosa. Bitritto too preserves signs of karstification with its **“Saint John’s or Mapane Cave”**.

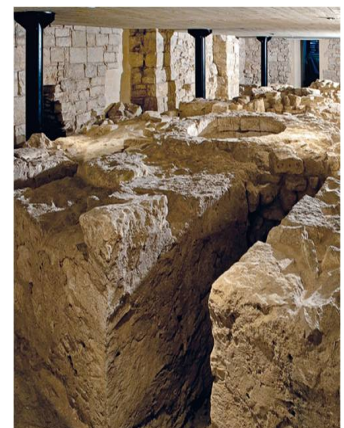


BRIEF HISTORY

The history of Bitritto is closely related to the events of the territory it belongs to, that is to say the built-up area of Bari (*conca barese*). As other anthropic and protohistoric settlements of the territory, analyzing the *Mapane Cave*, scholars argue that the first inhabitants living in the area had to be found in karstic hypogea which later became hamlets (*vici*) and that nowadays take the name of the quarters (*contrade*) of Saint Mark, Saint John, Randa and so on. Around the VII and VI centuries, on the contrary, we can assume the existence of an ancient *“pagus”* (land) of Bitritto which rose in the area today known as



“Pendio” in the old town centre. This part of the town is thought to be the acropolis, the highest, more defensible and healthy place located close to sources and fertile lands. However, at the turn of the IV century, the *pagus* proved to be unfit to meet the population increase so people began to settle in the surrounding area in the north- west, reaching a high level of civilization as the vase findings of Saint Andrew’s necropolis evidence. In the Roman period a *villa* sprang up where



today we can find the Norman Castle. Exactly beneath the current library we can notice the presence of archeological findings of an oil mill-wine press. Besides, this villa was important because it was located close to both the decumanum of Bari (*ager varinus*) and the *“Cardo Massimo”*, one of the most important lines of communication and exchange of goods (today Via Cardo-Carrera). In reference to this, the toponym of Bitritto *Vitaritum* (vineyard)

acquires a meaning as the *villa* was surrounded by fields planted with grapevine as well as olive and wheat, ancient Mediterranean crops, which provided a significant economic production.



After the fall of the Roman Empire and the Greek- Gothic Battle, Longobards settlements sprang up as the erection of the “*Casa-Torre*” located in Piazza Leone and, in the beginning, used as guard post. During the Byzantine era Bitritto developed southwards with a primitive road system (Via Minghetti, Via Monaco, Via Loconte) turning into a common pan-Mediterranean “*koine*” . In the same period monks and then Benedictines began to settle in karstic hollows and started to build churches and monasteries such as San Michele Arcangelo’s Church, later Collegiate Church, located outside the built-up area. It preserved an ancient bassorilievo in the Byzantine style, now lost, of which we have stock photographs. This work of art displayed the distinctive features of the Byzantine art portraying a benedictory Christ between the Virgin and Archangel Gabriel. During the Norman period Bitritto looked different: it

was a fortified town with enclosing walls and a castle which stood in place of the ancient Roman *villa*. Between the XI and XV centuries the economy of the “*castrum*”(fortified hamlet) became so much flourishing that it caused legal and military battles which opposed the royal authority, the ecclesiastical power and lay feudal lords in order to take possession of the feud which, finally, was awarded to the Archbishop of Bari. In the XVI century, during the Counter-Reformation, the Mother Church, in honor of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli, was built when a plague epidemic ended and non-clerical confraternities were set up too. During the XVIII century the inhabitants of Bitritto decided to rebuild the Mother Church exploiting public money earned through self-assessment and iniquitous taxes levied by the royal authority. This represents a starting point for the spread of lay power.



In the same period the world witnessed the birth of a new social class, the middle one, whose economic and political interests clashed with diocesan power all over the Kingdom of Naples. In Bitritto, for the first time, the “*commune*”(in those days called University) emerged as a self-governing subject in order to free itself from the bishop’s revenue of Bari. To achieve this aim, in 1799, the feud supported the “*sanfediste*” troupes against the Republican Government of Bari.

Beginning from the Napoleonic decade (1806-1815) the abolition of feudalism (August the 2nd 1806) and other similar provisions of the law gave Bitritto the chance to enact Municipal Statutes. However, the political progress of this period did not affect the social sphere: within the family, wife and children were still property of tyrannical fathers. Children were still considered as slaves (*famuli*) who could be emancipated following a specially provided ceremony while the rules governing the marriage could be still traced in the Roman and Longobard Law as laid down by the medieval “*Consuetudines Barenses*”. During the Restoration a Carbonari movement known as “*La Speranza*” was set up and kept under control by the Bourbon police; in 1821 many carbonaro from Bitritto joined up



the provincial legion led by Colonel Carlo Nicolai di Canneto and fought in the lieutenant general Pepe's army against Austrians. On the eve of the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, in February 1861, the popular anger, repressed for a long time, broke out. The inhabitants of Bitritto devastated the yard of the bishop's revenue and its fields to open up a repeatedly denied access towards the town of Sannicandro. The town planning actually became one of the most important issues of the new local government after the unification. However, the 1888 wine and agrarian crisis together with the breaking off of trade agreement with France slowed down production forcing many small landowners to emigrate.



At the beginning of the twentieth century hundreds of people left Bitritto to reach USA. It was not a limited phenomenon. It actually became more massive from the years after the Second World War to the 80s. Meanwhile, those who remain witnessed the accomplishment of the Apulian waterworks (1915) provided by Nicola Balenzano, an illustrious citizen of Bitritto, in those days Minister for Public Works. In the 20s and 30s, moreover, there were the construction of a sewerage system, a power line and telephone installation. However, during the Second World War, the expansion of urban area came to a standstill as the war effort involved all resources, even bronze monuments. In 1944 the casings of the Town Hall, broken into fragments during the last air raid over the regional capital, were repaired using pieces of glass of fascist figures' portraits: it is the starting point of the reconstruction after the war. The proper reconstruction has actually

entailed a process of transformation from the 60s until today characterized by a considerable population increase, a widespread economic welfare and a consequential expansion of urban area which places Bitritto within the wider metropolitan area¹.

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ROUTES



The Defence System

The Norman-Angevin Castle of Bitritto: visiting the Norman-Angevin Castle tourists can deal with the topic of its historical and social function as a nucleus. The Castle is actually a museum within the museum as, in former times, it hosted an anthology of historical figures (from the Norman Knights to Queen Giovanna D'Angiò) and nowadays it is used as the Town Hall with its back-offices confirming its life tied to contemporary history.

The Conflicts

Path: "The Battles of Bitritto"

Starting from the uncertain etymology of the name of the city BIS-TRITUM (destroyed twice) or VITRICTUM (old local vine), our tourist route will take us to the old town centre in search of the "Arco della Resa" and of the two breaches, still visible today, made on the walls which surrounded the city. We will relive the historical Hungarian siege established by King Luigi and we will learn how the hamlet changed when the invaders fled.

The Middle Ages

Path: "Between symbols and functions"

The Medieval Hamlet; through this guided tour visitors will find out the historical progress and town planning growth of the hamlet. We will start from Piazza Leone, the oldest square of the town, and then we will visit the *Casa-Torre*, a typical medieval construction, in those times, symbol of the political and ecclesiastical power. Afterwards, we will admire the old town centre and we will go down its tangle of little streets which will lead us to the Giusti-De Stefano Palace, last barons of Bitritto, dwelling upon its historical and architectural context. Our tourist route will end in the ancient moat, today Via Bonghi, which will give us the opportunity to observe the blockhouse and the fourteenth-century defensive works commissioned by the bishop Carafa.

The Churches

Path: "Between religion and tradition"

The Churches of Bitritto; this tourist route will affect Purgatorio's Church (1725) and the Mother Church of Bitritto, Santa Maria di Costantinopoli (1750). We will admire a wonderful painting by the artist De Filippis, once preserved at the University of Bari, the sixteenth-century wooden statues, the eighteenth-century altars and we will discover the lost picture gallery of Bitritto consisting of lots of paintings preserved in Purgatorio's Church.

The Underground Town

Path: "Between past and future"

"Bitritto sotterranea"; during this guided tour we will start from the exterior of the Norman-Angevin Castle dwelling upon its architectural structure and then we will go indoors to visit the "Sala Castello", the Courtyard and the Lord's Floor. Finally we will look backwards visiting the hypogeum of Bitritto, that is to say

archeological findings of an oil mill wine press discovered beneath the current library, proofs of the fact that Bitritto hosted an ancient Roman *villa*.

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

THE CASTLE



The first document concerning the Castle of Bitritto dates back to 1070 and it is a deed of transfer of a church dedicated to St. Thomas and built *in loco Vitricto* (Bitritto) by a priest from Bari named Basilio and his wife Gaita. The beneficiary of this assignment was another inhabitant of Bari, a certain Mr Mele, son of Calogiovanni and known as “Demonioso” with whom Basilio signed a contract. According to the contract, Mele had to “protect” *the locus Vitrictum* (the town) from the *iniqui Normanni* (“wicked Normans”) in exchange for the produce of the soil and the authority of the church for himself and his heirs.

Birth and phases of development of the Castle

Between the tenth and eleventh centuries a new economic and social development, due to the restocking and the expansion of crops in the countryside, fostered the birth of new towns in the Apulia region. They were “*casali*” (hamlets mostly sprung up around churches or remote monasteries) and “*castra o oppida*” (small fortified towns grown around a castle or a tower). As others neighbouring town, Bitritto presumably expanded during the Byzantine or Norman period maybe to colonize the territory or with a military function. As documentary sources suggest, we can refer to Bitritto with three different appellatives according to its growth dynamics:

-*locus*, when there was not an important urban area; probably the territory had not been colonized yet and it was uncultivated; this would explain the word *vetus* (untilled soil) from which the name *Vitritum* derives (as Colella argues);

-*casale*, when about 1082, after the foundation of Saint Thomas’s Church, country people began to organize and set up a small village (*borgo*) close to the above-mentioned church;

-*castrum*, during the Norman period (XII century) when Saint Thomas’s Church was replaced or incorporated in a military building. So, with the name *castrum* we refer to both the Castle and the fortified small village.

As mentioned before, all the documents we can consult are notarial deeds concerning Bari’s Chapter’s claim on the *casale* or *castrum*: they do not furnish details about the growth of the built-up area and do not refer to the real value of the sought-after estate. As regards the Castle, a traditional research work was not helpful to explain the Castle’s process of architectonic growth since the building underwent several structural changes over the centuries. Therefore experts had recourse to an experimental method relied on a careful reading of the masonry and remaining structures timing six different architectonical developing phases:

phase A: about 1087-1210;

phase A1: about 1210-1350;

phase B: about 1350-1480;

phase C: about 1480-1700;

phase D: about 1700-1870;

phase E: about 1870-1976.

According to the document dating back 1070 and preserved at the Archives of Saint Nicholas' Basilica in Bari, we know for certain that there was in Bitritto a church dedicated to Saint Thomas even if we do not know where it stood. In this connection scholars conjectured two possibilities: according to the first one, the above-mentioned chapel was built in place of the current Castle; according to the second hypothesis, it was located where today we can find Saint Anthony's small church.



First phase of development: the Norman Castle

The Norman Castle (1087-1210)



The original structure of the Castle dates back to the Norman period. It was probably built to protect the "*casale*" which was born and expanded around a Byzantine church later replaced or most likely incorporated in the fortress. In the beginning the Castle consisted of three square plant towers joined together by low buildings used as dormitories or stables. In the west and south sides, the courtyard was surrounded by walls. The Castle was endowed with two entrances, still existing today: the north one allowed the entrance from the outside while the south one was directed to the inside of

the "*casale*". The defensive system consisted of some loopholes placed on the towers and on the boundary wall which separated the courtyard of the Castle from the "*casale*". A wooden staircase and hanging walking areas connected the towers and the Castle's wall; finally there were some arrow loops pointed towards the courtyard on the ground floor.

II phase of development:

The Comestabulo Palace (1210-1350)

In this period the extension works, probably commissioned by Frangalio, *Comestabulo* of Bitritto (head of the military district), concerned the addition of an extra storey to the low buildings between the towers and the erection of an avant-corps leant on the inner façade in the north side. The buildings erected on the ground floor remained unchanged while the



rooms on the first floor were used as residential area and were reachable via a new flight of stairs added to the pre-existent one. During this phase of development, the Castle definitely assumed its military-defensive structure. The defence system became more sophisticated as new walking areas, located near the courses of eaves masonry and reachable via a spiral staircase, gave access to other loopholes distributed on the first floor.

III phase of development:

The extension works during the Angevin Period (1350-1480)²

As a result of the extension and restoration works, probably commissioned by the Archbishop of Bari Bartolomeo Carafa, the Castle lost, to some extent, its military functions. On the ground floor, in the internal courtyard of the Castle, some low arcades were erected with lobbies connected to the residential area via a more comfortable stone staircase while, in the eastern stateroom on the first floor, the Lord's Floor, an elegant groined vaulted ceiling replaced the previous truss covering. Moreover, all the loopholes, made on the boundary wall of the courtyard as well as on the roofings, were bricked up.



Purgatorio's Church



Purgatorio's Church , also known as the Immaculate Conception's, was built in 1600 in place of the ancient Saint John's Church whose entrance stood where today we can find the high altar. Its façade was built in 1725 in the late Baroque style. On the portal we can notice the presence of a niche with a polychromatic statue portraying the Virgin while, indoors, there is a nave and five altars dedicated to: the Immaculate Conception, Saint Francis from Paola, Saint Nicholas, Saint Rose and Saint Dominic. Among the statues, they are worthy of mention the ones dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Sorrow and Saint Filomena while among the

paintings the ones portraying Saint Francis from Paola, Saint Rose and the Immaculate Conception. Purgatorio's Church is also the seat of the Pio Monte Purgatorio Confraternity.

St. Maria di Costantinopoli's Church

Santa Maria di Costantinopoli' s Church was built for the first time in 1530 within the walls of the town and then reconstructed in 1774.

It became the Mother Church together with the pre-existing "Sant'Angelo's".

Its façade is in the late Baroque style while its flank wall is composed of ashlar veneers. Its bell tower ends in a belfry and above this we can find a statue of the Virgin. It is an aisleless church with a low barrel vault. All around we can observe sham painted marbles and stucco-works. Its cupola is divided into eight webs and is held up by four pendentives portraying the four Evangelists. The high altar presents an altar-piece which portrays Our Lady of Assumption. It is a Michele Montrone's work of art dating back to 1865 and it is an accurate copy of an altar-piece preserved at Bari Cathedral. On the upper side of the presbytery, next to a large window, there are two lunettes portraying Saint Peter and Saint Paul. The side altars are respectively dedicated to Saint Michael Archangel, in honor of the first Mother Church of the town, and to Madonna of Costantinopoli with a beautiful painting of the Virgin wearing an ochre robe and a brown mantle. She is wrapping the Holy Child bending her head over Him. The lunette presents the Resurrected Christ surrounded by angels. The Church also houses four chapels respectively in honor of Saint Joseph, Our Lady of Sorrows, The Virgin of Pompeii and the Holy Sacrament. One of the most important works of art is Saint Sebastian's altar-piece. According to the traditional iconography, the Saint is depicted as a young martyr shot with arrows. It is also worth remembering a polychromatic stone roundel representing the Virgin and Child and set in the wall of the room which allows the entrance to the bell tower. Finally, Santa Maria di Costantinopoli's Church is home to protomartyr Saint Stephen's reliquary which holds the Saint's bone. It is a silver and gold work of art shaped like a forearm with a square plant base. On the base we can notice three engraved blazons: the first represents the façade of the original Mother Church; the second is Bishop Caracciolo's family coat of arms because he donated the reliquary to the church; the third represents a bird with outspread wings which is a Christological symbol.



Saint Peter's Church

Saint Peter's is a small Rural Chapel located in Bitritto in Via Carlo Alberto formerly Via Pagano which was connected to the *mulis vectabilis via per Peucetios* as Strabone quotes. Scholars cannot date its erection. According to Mrs Colonna it was built during the sixteenth century thanks to Bishop Puteo's episcopal activity as, at that time, the Tridentine Council provided the construction of new churches. In corroboration of this hypothesis, the façade of the church bears Bishop Puteo's family coat of arms. However, lots of questions concerning the issue go unanswered. Why did such an outstanding person as Bishop Puteo confer his family coat of arms to a chapel extra moenia? Why was the chapel built on such an important road as the *mulis vectabilis*? Young researchers are trying to find an answer to these questions rebuilding the history of a town rich in secrets and hidden treasures. A lot of restoration works have changed the original structure of the church: the masonry was completely plastered while a section of the building was incorporated for the erection of a modern small house. The church presents a rectangular plant, a pitched roof with a ribbed bell tower in the middle and, on the right side, a small column bearing an iron cross. The proper façade is characterized by a portal, in all probability previously architraved, which is symmetric with the bell tower. On the top of the portal we can notice a small skylight which provides the building with natural lightning. Indoors, the eighteenth-century altar is decorated with a fresco depicting the Holy Child between Saint Peter and Saint Paul who are recognizable by their iconographic features.

RELIGIOUS EVENTS

The Cult of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli



The cult of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli, also known as “Hodegitria”, is a widespread creed all around Apulia region and dates back to 733 during the Iconoclastic Controversy. On the first Tuesday of March 733 the “Hodegitria” icon, which had to reach Rome from Costantinopoli through the agency of some Basilian friars, “landed” at Bari. The monks considered their shipwreck as the Virgin’s will to stay there and took the sacred image to the Cathedral to give the population the opportunity to venerate it. Moreover they fixed that date in order to celebrate the event every year with all due ceremony. Such veneration was later widened to Bitritto thanks to Bari’s Archbishops who ruled the territory. In 1865 the town of Bitritto, plague-stricken many times, asked for Santa Maria di Costantinopoli’s intercession to conquer a cholera epidemic. The Virgin did not hesitate to answer her devotees’ prayers and, in that

occasion, she was officially elected the Patron Saint of the country town and celebrated on every first Tuesday of March and on November the twenty-first.

CULTURE

Cuisine

The town of Bitritto is also important for its cuisine which has its roots in ancient and rich traditions. It is a poor man’s diet which has been transformed into an excellent cuisine thanks to the wise use of the produce of the soil. Agriculture is still today the mainstay of the territorial economy thanks to countless olive and almond groves which foster extra-virgin olive oil production and dried fruit processing firms growth. Among typical specialities of the territory we can notice wild vegetables dishes (chicory, turnip tops, broccoli) pulses dishes (broad bean purée, “black” chickpeas, pasta-and-bean soup, pasta-and lentil soup), home-made pasta



(orecchiette “ little ears of pasta” and cavatelli made with water, flour and semolina) and lots of meat and fish dishes (especially lamb, rabbit and dried salt cod). During holy days typical of Bitritto’ s gastronomy are onion folded-over pizzas at Easter, cartellate (fritters with vin cotto), almond nougats and almond fancy cakes at Christmas and boiled, fried or bitter “lampascioni” (a type of onion bulb) on the Patron Saint’s day.

Illustrious Names ³

-Mons. Giuseppe Tommaso Giusti (1685-1764): archpriest of Bitritto from 1715 to 1723, he took a degree in Canon and Civil Law at Sapienza University in Rome and was consecrated bishop of Venosa in 1743;

-Dr Nicola Festa (1879-1885): surgeon and mayor of the town; advocate of Liberalism and Risorgimento ideals, during his mandate he promoted commerce, establishing a village fair on 18-19-20 of August until 1900, and fostered welfare services for the needy and abandoned children;

-Mons. D. Vito Antonio Fioni (1840-1916): archpriest of Bitritto; Philosophy and Law teacher he was consecrated bishop of Larino by Pope Leone XIII in 1887. He led Bitritto' s parish for 36 years;

-Sen Nicola Balenzano (1848-1919): after Law graduation he refused to be a magistrate and embarked on a political career. He was elected deputy from the XVIth until the XXIth Parliament and was member of different Parliamentary Committees. He was decorated with the title of Commanding Officer of the "Mauriziano" Order and of the Legion of Honor. Moreover he was Parliamentary Undersecretary of Ministry of Justice (1900-1901) and then Minister for Public Works. In order to prevent the drought and epidemics caused by the lack of water, he promoted the accomplishment of the Apulian Waterworks;

-Raffaella Zuccaro (1850-1914): noblewoman, she was a devotee of Madonna di Costantinopoli. She had no children but she loved them so she decided to donate lots of her possessions to the Charitable Institution in order to build a nursery school. Citizens named after her the piazza opposite the building and dedicated to her a sculpture bust;

-Mr. Francesco Festa (1873-1964): pedagogist and music lover, he was headmaster and was awarded a gold medal for his innovative work by Ministry of Education;

-Mons. Antonio Masellis (1880-1960): archpriest of Bitritto for 44 years, he took a degree in Theological Studies and Canon Law. He promoted the building of Istituto Sacro Cuore (from 1928 until 1933) and restoration works for the Mother Church(1919-1925). He started and was the editor of the parish paper "Buona Parola";

-Rev. Domenico Giusti (1886-1959): priest; he took an Arts degree at Naples University and started to teach Latin and Italian in high schools of Veneto and Apulia. He wrote several books such as : "Vita e Opere dell'Abate Giacinto Gimma", "Antonio Canova nella storia e nell'arte", "Ugo Foscolo: sua italianità nella vita e nelle opere", "Massimiliano d'Austria imperatore del Messico", "Racconti popolari e filosofia del popolo" and "Canti del cuore";

-Mr. Francesco Cotugno (1897-1967): he took a degree in French Literature and in Economics and devoted all his energy to teaching. Fond of reading, he was a supporter of clever students; he founded scholarship for those who came from less well-to-do families;

-Dr Edoardo Loconte (1899-1956): well-known as "Don Eduard"; he was a brilliant district doctor, specialist in Hygienics, Puericulture and Pediatrics. He did his job with self-sacrifice and was always ready to aid those in need. For these reasons the year after his untimely death the citizens of Bitritto dedicated to him a sculpture bust while, after twenty seven years, they named after him the town nursery school;

-**Don Ambrogio Grittani** (1907-1951): he lost his parents and began to study at Bari Archbishop's seminary and local seminary in Molfetta. He took a degree in Theological Studies and Classical Literature at Cattolica University in Milan. During his apostolate he devoted himself to beggars and, in order to help them, he stripped himself of all possessions and set up a lodging house the "Casa dell'Opera". The Church applied for his canonization.

-**Mons. Costantino Alberga** (1917-1983): priest; he took a degree in Canon Law in Rome and taught Religion in high schools. He was appointed judge of the Ecclesiastical Court and founded Saint Gabriel's Parish in Bari;

-**Mr Arturo Carone** (1918-1987): primary-school teacher for over thirty years within the teaching district of Bitritto. He took an Arts degree at Urbino University and fought during the Second World War. He experienced the imprisonment in Germany in 1943. He occupied different political positions: Christian Democrat party leader, town councilor and deputy mayor (between the 50s and 60s). Moreover he was appointed chairperson of "Associazione Combattenti e Reduci" ("War Veterans Association") and of school system "Dante Alighieri".

-**Mr Nicola Valerio** (1923-2006): he took a degree in Nautical Sciences and taught Art of Navigation, Astronomy, Meteorology and Oceanography in nautical colleges "Carnaro" in Brindisi and "Caracciolo" in Bari. He was appointed headmasters of these high schools. He took care to help his former pupils to look for a job;

-**Prof Natale Grandolfo** (1923-1996): he took an Arts degree and was a teacher and headmaster of teaching districts. The neighbouring town of Bitonto conferred him the honorary citizenship for his work within the local school. He was also a folklorist and wrote several books concerning the history of Bitritto: "Bitritto e la sua Chiesa Matrice", "Bitritto attraverso i palazzi, le strade e le piazze", "Vetritte lengh'e stritte", "Bitritto e le sue tradizioni". Among these we can also find an incomplete study about Bitritto dialect. He was a devotee of Madonna di Costantinopoli and became commissioner of Charitable Institution "Maria SS di Costantinopoli", waiving his fee.

-**On Vincenzo Binetti** (1937-1997): he took a Law degree with honours at Bari University and became a judge. He was the chairman of the Court of Cassation and group leader of Christian Democrat Party. He held important political positions: town councilor, regional councilor, deputy during the Xth Parliament, member of the Parliamentary Committee for Constitutional Affairs, Interior and Justice and Parliamentary Undersecretary of Ministry of Justice during the Ciampi Government. He upheld the unprivileged people's rights and was interested in the concern for the problems of Southern Italy.

CULTURAL EVENTS

- La Notte degli Angeli. Cultural event characterized by exhibitions, concerts, theatrical performances, guided tours and local products tasting. It takes place in the beginning of October to coincide with Saint Michael's Day.
- Bitritto Sotterranea. Temporary archeological exhibition. In summer months: May-June.
- La sagra del Vino e delle Castagne. Grape-harvest and chestnut festival characterized by concerts, plays, guided tours and local products tasting. It takes place on every first Saturday of November.
- Il falò di San Giuseppe. Saint Joseph's bonfire: folk event characterized by local products tasting. It takes place on March 18-19-20.

- E...state a Bitritto. A series of cultural events sponsored by Bitritto Municipality during Summertime.

Premio Nazionale di Letteratura per l'Infanzia "Giacomo Giulitto". National Book Award for Young People's Literature "Giacomo Giulitto" characterized by art laboratories for children, readings and theatrical performances. Its prize-giving ceremony takes place on the 8th of December every two years.

Cultural associations and recreational activities

- Associazione musicale e culturale "Nuove Armonie".
- A.S. POLISPORTIVA BASKET
- F.C.D. VIRTUS
- GOSHINDO KARATE
- PERFECT FITNESS
- Ass. MUSICALE "S. CECILIA"
- Ass. Culturale "Il FILO DEL DISCORSO"
- Ass. Arcobaleno Bitritto O.N.L.U.S.
- Ass. Culturale Orizzonti Musicali
- Associazione "Bitrittesi nel Mondo"
- Ass. Culturale "Europe - Languages and Cultures"
- Coop. Sociale Sole Luna
- Coop. Sociale "ALA DI RISERVA"
- A.A.C. "La Torre del Drago"
- Ass. Gli Amici di Bitritto
- Coop. Sociale Giovanni Paolo II
- Ass. "Operatori Servizio Sanitario ONLUS"
- C.P.E.S.
- A.S.C.I.
- Coop. Sociale CC.DD. Bitritto
- U.P.S.A Confartigianato
- Ass. Turistica PROLOCO
- A.C. BITRITTO AL CENTRO

- Circolo ricreativo culturale e sportivo " ACRAS CL
- Associazione Culturale PugliArte
- Cooperativa Sociale I BAMBINI DI TRUFFAUT
- "progettarci"
- Empateya Edizioni
- Associazione Culturale Conoscere il Territorio
- Cicli HABANEROO
- UNIVERSITA' DELLA TERZA ETA' E DEL TEMPO LIBERO
- Ass. culturale Amici del Parco
- CIF Centro Italiano Femminile

COME AND SEE US

- From Bari by SITA buses. Departures every half hour Via Capruzzi.
- Leave the highway at the exit Bari Nord and then take the provincial road 236 towards Cassano.