



THE ORIGINS OF FIUMEFREDDO BRUZIO

Fiumefreddo Bruzio

(Photo by n.a)



Fiumefreddo Bruzio is a little town, in the province of Cosenza, located along the coast of the south Tyrrhenian Sea, on a breezy and sunny hill (220 meters above sea level). It has two breathtaking belvedere-squares, “la Torretta” and “la Rupe”,

overlooking the blue Tyrrhenian sea, from where it seems to touch the sea with a finger..., from where you can admire and enjoy, far on the horizon, the Aeolian islands, among which Stromboli stands majestically. This small village is deservedly titled “one of the most beautiful ‘borghi’ (ancient small villages) of Italy”, where Salvatore Fiume, (the great Italian painter, sculptor, architect, writer and stage designer, who was born at Comiso, Sicily, on October the 23rd, 1915, and died in Milan on June the 3rd, 1997- see page 148 -), placed two bronze sculptures: **la Fontana** and **la Fortuna (The Monumental Fountain and The Fortune)**. “The Maestro”, since he ‘discovered’ this town, fell in love with it, and here, he desired to fulfil “the dream of the artist on Fiumefreddo Bruzio”, his “second home”, by adorning, in 1977, the church of Saint Rocco, with dramatic scenes of people ravaged by pain and grief who pray the Saint that he may save them and their loved ones, from the scything Death, (black death spread over Italy in the year 1348, and, in a

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Fiumefreddo Bruzio.

*Ancient alley with cobbled paving. (The whole town is paved with cobblestones). →
(Photo by n.a.)*



symbolic way, over Fiumefreddo, too), and by depicting, in 1996, the walls of a room (room of desires) of the Castle della Valle, with wonderful paintings illustrating

the daily life in the castle, in times past. Fiumefreddo isn't only naturally beautiful, but it has a great artistic wealth, cultural importance, great historical fame. The access to the old town, which in the past, as a means of some protection, was surrounded by walls and nowadays we can see their remains, is through the "Porta di Sopra": on the inside you can admire ancient buildings: Palazzo Pignatelli, Palazzo Gaudiosi, Palazzo Barone Del Bianco, Pascaletti's house, Palazzo Pitellia, Palazzo Zupi, Palazzo municipale (Town Hall) ex monastery of the Minims, the castle della Valle. Churches: the Mother Church (Chiesa Madre) (1540), Fiumefreddo Bruzio's most distinctive religious feature and a symbol of spiritual refuge for the inhabitants of this town, enlarged over the years and restored after the 1638 devastating earthquake, la Madonnella, (around the XI century), San Rocco (second half of the XVII century), San Francesco (1709). In Saint Francis's there are the graves of Pietro Gonzales de Mendoza and of Pascaletti, the great painter born in Fiumefreddo (1699/1757) (see page 149), Santa Chiara (1552). Outside the boundary city walls there is the Church del Carmine (XV century). Three kilometers north-east of Fiumefreddo, in a green valley called Badia, lies the abbey of "Santa Maria di Fonte Laurato". At the beginning of the ninth century, in the place that nowadays is called "Badia", the Basilian monks built a church and dedicated it to Saint 'Domenica'. The church was situated next to a cenoby which had been built long before. This old cenoby, was passed on to the Benedictines, who owned it up to the year 1035. The church and the cenoby, for unknown reasons, were neglected for a long time and, therefore, they fell to ruin. Simon Mamistra, governor of Calabria and ruler of Fiumefreddo, in the year 1201 made a donation of the church and of the cenoby, supplied with property, to Joachim of Fiore, (see page 147) where the abbot, on request and with the

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The abbatial compound of Fonte Laurato. →
Badia. Fiumefreddo Bruzio. (Photo by N.A.)



help of Mamistra, built a new religious building, called abbey of “Fonte Laurato”. The appellative “Santa Maria” was added to worship the Virgin Mary. This abbey became the second mother house of the Florense Congregation. Today we notice the traces of the main cloister, the dormitory, the

refectory, the herb garden. At the end of the seventeenth century, the abbey was given to the order of the Cistercians. On the 13th of February 1807 it was suppressed as a consequence of the Calabrian anti-napoleonic revolution. Nowadays the families Mazzarone take care of the Abbey. All these religious buildings deserve your visit, and your attention. They are embellished with wonderful paintings by Pascaletti, Solimena, Negroni, Menzele. All the churches show wonderful stucco works, artistic portals, altar made of polychrome marble (Mother Church), a precious coffered ceiling (Saint Clare’s) and many other artistic wonders that a careful visitor couldn’t do without them. The origins of this ancient village go back into the mist of time. It is a place of myth and legend. According to a legend, Calabrians’ ancestors were the Ausones, ancient Italic tribe settled in the South of Italy, perhaps from the 16th century B. C. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Greek historian and teacher of rhetoric (60/65- 7 BC), (1 11,2-4 / 12,1) says that the Arcades, led by Enotrius, son of Lycaon, who was born 17 generations before the Trojan war, (one generation is about 30 years), arrived at “the other Sea”, the **Ausonian sea**, the sea which washes the western regions of Italy, so called because **THE AUSONES** settled along its coast. From these few fragments, we draw a conclusion that the Ausones settled in Calabria around the XVI century B.C. They settled in the area of Reggio Calabria, and then, from there, they moved northwards. Strabo, Greek geographer and historian, indicates Temesa as the colony founded by the Ausones. Temesa was mentioned by Homer in the Odyssey (Canto I, lines 180-184) (the Italian, Calabrian Temesa or Tempa, not to be confused with the Cyprian Tamasus), by Lycophron (Alessandria, lines of verse 1067- 1069), by Pliny the Elder (Natural History, III 71- 74). Between the IX and VIII centuries B.C., Temesa was a centre of trading, in particular with Greek civilization, in copper, in handicrafts, in metallic compositions, in nectareous wine “Temesio” etc.

WHERE DOES TEMESALIE? *

“...20 miles, south of Paola, is supposed to be the site of the city Temesa or Tempsa, mentioned by Homer. Ovid refers to its mines...” (*Augustus J. C. -John Cuthbert- Hare. – Cities of Southern Italy-*) *My note:*...At the time of the ancient Romans, the length of a "mile" could vary from place to place and at different times, for this reason we shouldn't pay so much attention if there are some miles more or less than we expect in the measurement of the distance, e.g., between one site and another, reported by the authors.

“ The **Peutingerian tables** refer to two towns with the name **Temesa: one located in front of the Tyrrhenian Sea, nearby SanLucido**, the other one between Turio and Cosentia, on the Ionian side...**The reference to the Temesio wine** (*Tyrrhenian Temesa*) **could be a local production.**” (*That's what Walter d'Arconte, in a discussion board on the internet- topic Temesa- says to have read.*)

“ **The Peutingerian Table positions Clampetia 40 Roman miles therefore Temesa had to be situated on the coast between Fiumefreddo Bruzio and San Lucido, where actually ancient remains have been discovered...**” (*Megale Hellas- glossary of ancient toponyms- "Clampetia (Plin., Liv., Mel.) Clampesa (Peut.) (MH Brutium, Cs –unknown etymon.)*)

“...The work (*the draft of a book*) takes a long time, ...In the meantime I did a lot of reading and research. One of which made me discover the existence of a wine whose name was Temeso or Temisio with a precise geographic reference, in other words in our area, before the town of Paola.” (*Emilio Alberto Labrosciano on the Internet, writes on the group Malvito.*) (*N.A.: in a geographic consecutio from south to north, this area coincides with a site nearby San lucido, in the land of Fiumefreddo Bruzio.*)

Quattromani, rectifying Barrio, says that Temesa is at (*nearby*) San Lucido. (*Page 56, "Ancient historical topography of the kingdom of Naples... of abbot Domenico...by Domenico Romanelli"*)

*...Unfortunately none of the towns along this line of coast (*South Tyrrhenian coast*) can be fixed with anything like certainty. (*Cluver. Ital. p. 1286; Romanelli, vol. i. p. 35.*)

(Contradictory and unreliable news about Temesa has been written and circulates on the internet). **Temesa** should lie in the land of Fiumefreddo Bruzio, nearby San Lucido, in front of the Tyrrhenian Sea, not too far from Paola, between Fiumefreddo Bruzio and San Lucido, called '**Piano della corte**', below 'Timpone dell'aria', "contrada Cotura". Many people think Temesa might be in the land of Fiumefreddo B. and I think so, too, but we need a more convincing proof which, perhaps, might arrive. (In the meantime I keep believing in this thesis -until proved to the contrary). The Temesians, after many mishaps, dreadful times and a long silence about their existence, reappeared during the second Punic war (218/201 B.C.). "(During the Second Punic War, Temesa suffered severely at the hands, first of Hannibal, and then of the Romans; but some years after the close of the war, it was one of the places selected by the Romans for the establishment of a colony, 194 B.C. (Liv. xxxiv. 45.). Its copper mines,

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Della ValleCastle(Photo by N.A.) ~~which are~~ → alluded to, by several writers (Ovid, Met. xv. 706; Stat. Silv. i. l. 42), had ceased to be productive in the days of Strabo (between 64 BC and 23 A.D.) (Strab. vi. p. 256). The only mention of Tempesa which occurs in Roman history is in connection with the great servile insurrection under



Spartacus (71 B.C.), when the remnants of the servile force established themselves at Tempesa, and for a time maintained possession of the town. Its name is afterwards found in all the geographers, as well as in the Tabula, so that it must have subsisted as a town throughout the Roman Empire - 27 BC / 476 AD - (Strab. l. e.; Plin. iii. 5. s. 10; Ptol. iii. 1. § 9; Tab. Peut.). Pausanias expressly tells us it was still inhabited in his day, and Pliny (24/79 AD) also notices it, for the excellence of its wine. (Paus. vi. 6. § 10; Plin. xiv. 6. s. 8.)." (This text is from: *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography (1854)* (ed. William Smith, LLD). Cited September 2004 from [The Perseus Project](http://www.perseusproject.org/))." .

In the vicinity of Temesa there was a sacred grove, surrounded by wild olives, with the shrine of Polites, one of the companions of Ulysses. Both, Ulysses and Polite, after the Trojan war, wandering through the sea, arrived at Temesa. One day, Polites, blind drunk, deflowered a young virgin Temesian girl. Odysseus abandoned his companion and went on with his roving, while Polites was stoned to death by the Temesians. Polites's ghost, vanished into a near river instead of dying, and continued to torment the inhabitants by wandering about the town and killing townspeople of all ages, to the point that they submitted to pay him a tribute, according to the suggestion of a certain oracle: the Temesians had to build him a shrine and present to him their fairest maiden in town each year, as a "bride in death". This was done and Polites, thereafter called "Hero", (daimon for Paus.) ceased his murderous raids. Thus, it became a proverb among them: "Do not allow anyone to offend the hero of Temesa," for they said that he should torment them. But Euthymus, a historical figure, a famous Locrian pugilist, who won three times the Olympic crown for boxing in 484, 476, 472 B.C., one day arrived at Temesa and ventured to wrestle with the "Hero". Euthymos defeated the Hero, constrained him to free the inhabitants from further molestation, rescued the girl who was just going to be offered to the Hero, and married the rescued maiden. The "Hero" received such a drubbing, that he fled Temesa and plunged beneath the waves, never to return. (Strab. vi.

p.25.5; Paus. vi. 6. §§7-11 Suid. V. tmeuixos) – E.H.B. The new inhabitants of the Roman colony could have settled at "Piano della Corte", (Cotura) which is an agricultural field of Fiumefreddo, just below 'Timpone dell'aria', and **where important, significant archaeological finds from that Roman period, have been located lately**). During the coming of the Christian era, Temesa was an Episcopal see. Its Diocese consisted of three towns: Nepetia (Amantea), Terina (Nocera Terinese), Tyllesium (Aiello). Later, Temesa became Longobards' dominion where they fixed first the southern borders of Benevento's dukedom, and then of Salerno's principedom. In the IX - X centuries, the Saracens devastated Temesa. From now on, we don't know anything about Temesa. "The period of its destruction is unknown, the name wholly disappears, and its exact site has never been determined." (*Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography (1854)* (ed. William Smith, LLD). After a hundred years or so, a group of descendants of those Temesians **whosurvived the misadventures above mentioned**, were reconstituted and found, thereabouts, a magic hill "kissed by the sun and by the breeze...", where they founded a new

colony, the name of which was changed from Temesa, just to exorcise its past bad luck, to Flumen Frigidum, for the cold waters of the river (Fiume di Mare) which are still flowing at its foot, and to Fiumefreddo, afterwards. (Some historians assert that the toponym of Fiumefreddo derives



from the Hebraic name **Hup Hug**). The flow of waters of the “Fiume di Mare” has diminished, for a long time, because its waters have been conveyed from its source, to the aqueduct which supplies Fiumefreddo and many neighbouring towns, with drinkable water. “Gola del Castiglione” (Gorge of the Castiglione). Photo n.a. “The inhabitants of

this new group, (the surviving Temesians), very soon resumed the traditional, commercial activity, specially the mining. The trading Port of Flumen Frigidum, which was already operative at the time of the old Temesa, made easier their trade in the Mediterranean area. The landing place was at the “Gola del Castiglione”, a narrow opening between a rocky face and a sloping edge through which, nowadays, the river “Fiume di Mare” runs and it is almost one kilometer from the river’s mouth; at that time the waters of the Tyrrhenian sea arrived at the gorge. The Port of Fiumefreddo is mentioned in a document dating back to the year 1276 in which is described the shipwreck of the “Sanctus Nicolaus”, a ship directed towards Tunis, taking Pisan merchants.” (Franco del Buono: “Comunità Montana- Appennino Paolano”- and on the internet- translated from Italian by n.a.-). Another legend, that deserves to be remembered, is the origin of Calabria (“Kalon-brion”, in Italian “Faccio sorgere il bene”): Aschenez, who is mentioned in the Bible (Genesis, 10-2-3), was the son of Gomer who was son of Iafet, (Noah-Jafet-Gomar-Askenaz) therefore **“Aschenez was Noah’s great grandson. He was the first inhabitant of this Region after Noah’s Flood. He called this Region, at first Auxena, then changed the name from Auxena to Ausonia. Conjecture!...”** (Nicola Leoni. *Della Magna Grecia e delle tre Calabrie, 1844*). Saint Jerome, in his “Jewish questions on the Genesis”, asserts that all those who were called Reggini by Greeks, were direct descendants of Aschenez. It follows that Reggio Calabria, and, probably, many other towns of Calabria, might have been founded by Aschenez who gave the name **Ausonia** to the modern **Calabria**. The first documental traces of the origins of Fiumefreddo go back to the year 1050 when the Normans occupied this Region and *Flumen Frigidum*

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was conquered by Robert Guiscardo in the eleventh century, who realized that the Village was a suitable site for better withstanding a possible siege. For this reason Fiumefreddo was fortified and surrounded by walls and, in a strategic corner of the village, was built a Norman tower, close to the

'Castello della Valle'. The stairs take to the upper floors sheer drop of "Vallone Scuro". where were a large meeting room and the bed chambers. N.A. This tower became "the castle"



a long time afterwards. Briefly, these are some of the "Signori" of Fiumefreddo. In

1190 Simon Mamistra settled himself in the Tower and ruled the town for many years, as a governor. Then the command of the town passed to G. De Flenis. Later, in 1457, Ferdinando d'Aragona, duke of Calabria, gave the Feud of Fiumefreddo to Luca Sanseverino. Then the castle was residence of the duke of Somma. In 1535, Charles the fifth gave the feud to Fernando De Alarcon, viceroy of Calabria and marquis della Valle (whence the name "Castello della Valle". In 1536 De Alarcon brought the final elegant looking to the Castle. Fernando's daughter, Isabella, married Pietro Gonzales De Mendoza, famous Spanish captain. Angelica Alarcon y De Mendoza, was the last heir of the noble family Alarcon y De Mendoza. The decline of the castle began in 1807, as a consequence of the Calabrian anti-napoleonic revolution (1806/1807), when general Reynier, who was under Joseph Bonaparte's command, ordered colonel Berthelot, to storm the castle. The castle was almost destroyed by the cannonades coming from hostile gun pits. Berthelot conquered and looted the castle on February 12th, 1807. The town of Fiumefreddo suffered the consequences of the French soldiers' abuse of power. The castle, later on, passed to the Baron Del Giudice of Belmonte and to his heirs and, lately, to the local government, which has been taking care of the castle's restoration and nowadays we can visit and admire the ruins of the castle. In the year 1860 the town Council deliberated to add the appellative **Bruzio**, to the name **Fiumefreddo**.

Fiumefreddo Bruzio. 'Piazza Europa'. On the left: Pignatelli building (XVI century). (n.a.)



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Myths and legends hover over the historical truths of antiquity and very often they are as potent as history. Is up to the reader to catch as many grains of real truth as possible, which are present in the mythical writing of ancient times, e.g.: Odyssey, Iliad, etc. Nino Andreotti

MY BEAUTIFUL TOWN

Fiumefreddo Bruzio

*The small, beautiful town, where I was born,
is Fiumefreddo, land of vine and corn,
kissed by the sun and by the breeze:
those who come here, feel really at ease.*

*An old church here, the stately castle there,
cheerful schools and retail shops everywhere.
Old buildings, ancient squares and narrow streets,
witnesses have been to our fathers' feats.*

*When summertime in our old town arrives,
the sun shines bright and the nature revives.*

*Mountains we have with their tops in the sky,
where wild boars grunt and darting hawks high fly,
and the sea, whose blue and clean waters reach
in gentle waves, the sparkling, sandy beach,
where sunlight pleasant rays, blandly caress
people trying to relieve strain and stress,
where everybody wishes to forget
trouble, and only sea cuddles to get...*

WE LOVE FIUMEFREDDO...

*Fiumefreddo is a little town
but it's of a great renown.
Sunny, live, never still,
it lies on a breezy hill.*

*Only goodness is its guide,
love and beauty are its pride.*

*Here sunrise is just ravishing
and sunset is really astonishing.
Flowery meadows scent the air...
we love Fiumefreddo now as e'er!*

